

Five-Minute Additional Lessons.

[It is suggested that these lessons be given following the opening exercises, and be set apart from the lesson teaching by song or other exercises.]

SHEPHERD PSALM—CONTINUED.

Lesson I.

"He restoreth my soul."

David the king often thought of the days when he had been a shepherd boy, and of the Bethlehem fields, and the sheep and lambs that he loved and cared for there. He loved them, though there were often foolish and willful ones among them that gave him great trouble. They would lose themselves in the thickets, or wander down the rocky valleys, leading other sheep with them. The shepherd had a great deal of trouble in finding them, but, once restored to the green pastures and still waters and the safe fold, they were far happier. When David grew older he had great trials and sometimes did wrong, but he was very sorry afterward and felt himself to be like one of the foolish sheep he used to keep. Then he would call upon the Lord, his heavenly Shepherd, to restore his soul—to bring him back into the way of truth; and when he felt the peace of the Lord's forgiveness he knew he was like a lost sheep restored to the flock and to the fold.

If you have sometime had a very unhappy heart because of doing wrong, and have felt it grow light and happy after all was forgiven and made right, then you also may say, "He restoreth my soul."

Lesson II.

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

After David had become a man he knew that he would sometime be king of Israel, for Samuel had anointed him while he was yet with the flocks, and had said that the Lord had chosen him. To be king, and rule over many people, one must first know how to rule one's self, and so David tried to become a true and kingly man. When he went to live with King Saul he was gentle and humble, and tried to serve him faithfully; and though he was troubled by the king's jealousy, he did not return evil for evil. When the king tried to kill him by throwing his spear at him he only darted aside and let the spear strike the wall. Perhaps he felt so sure of the Lord's promise that he should be king that he did not feel afraid. He wanted to do right—to be led in the paths of righteousness, and the Lord alone could lead him there. He trusted the Lord to lead him "for his name's sake." Have you ever learned that beautiful little verse, "God is love"?

Then you know that Love is a name of God, and that you, too, may trust him and say, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's [love's] sake."

Lesson III.

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

When King Saul's hatred for David grew very bitter David went into the mountains and hid in the caves to keep out of his sight. He took a little band of faithful men with him whose hearts God had touched, and then they lived in caves, hunted from place to place by Saul and his men, and often near to death from hunger and thirst. Yet David was sorry for Saul, and spared him when he found him asleep. The great rocky desert down by the Dead Sea was hot and dry, with few streams or springs, and few growing things. Many died of the great heat who passed through its narrow, rocky valleys in summer, and David knew that he was often near to death from heat, hunger, and thirst, as well as from hatred. He called it the "shadow of death," but he did not fear it. He believed in the Lord, who had called him from the sheepfolds to be king, and so he said what we may say when we are passing through great troubles: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

Lesson IV.

"For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

When Saul was following David through the great rocky wilderness of Judea trying to take his life he could not say of the Lord what David, hiding in the caves, could say—"Thou art with me." He had shut the door of his soul against God, and it was all dark within him. He had a band of strong soldiers with him, and David had only his few faithful followers, but he was sure that the Lord was with him, so he feared no evil. The Lord is divine love and divine wisdom, and when he puts forth these to help us we call it the divine power. If David had seen the arm of the Lord stretched forth to save him in time of danger he could not have felt more sure of being saved, for he had faith in God. He leaned upon the Lord's strength as he would lean upon a staff, though he could not see him or hear him speak, and so he had comfort when there seemed to be but a step between him and death.

The Lord is your strength, little children, and if ever you are in danger or trouble you may say with David, "Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."