

the traits of all true shepherds. *Giveth his life.* The shepherd in oriental lands is responsible for the sheep in his care. He must find them when lost; must if need be fight wild beasts and robbers to protect them. Christ saw the cross always rising before his view.

**12, 13. A hireling.** A hired man, working for his wages only. There are such professedly as under-shepherds of Christ, who preach for a living, instead of living to preach the gospel. *Whose own the sheep are not.* He does not love them, makes no sacrifices for them, cares only to shear them and to get a living out of them. *The wolf.* Here placed to represent every enemy of the cause of Christ.

**14, 15. Know my sheep.** We have a Saviour and a Shepherd who has a personal knowledge and notice of each one among his

many million followers, as though that were the only one. *Known of mine.* Each true disciple knows his Lord, and has loving fellowship with him. *As the Father knoweth.* The Revised Version shows the thought more clearly: "I know mine own, and mine know me; even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." The relation between Christ and his flock is as close as that between the Father and the Son.

**16. Other sheep I have.** Here is a hint of the souls to be gathered from the Gentile world. *Shall hear my voice.* They had not heard it as yet, but were soon to hear it through the lips of Paul, and Timothy, and other broad-minded teachers. *One fold.* Rather, as in the Revised Version, "one flock." There may be many flocks for Christ's sheep, but they all belong to one great flock.

## CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

### ENIGMAS FOR THE BLIND AGAIN.

We saw in the two "parable lessons" in May (Matt. 13. 1-8, 18-23; 13. 24-33) that Jesus began the use of parables in response to the wilful perverseness of his enemies. They rejected and perverted the truth, therefore he veiled the truth. It is worth while to note that immediately preceding his beginning of the use of the parable the Jews had declared that he wrought his miracles by the power of Beelzebub (Matt. 12. 24). That declaration drew from him his words concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost (Matt. 12. 31, 32), and from that time his teachings were for them thrown in the form of parables, the purpose of which he declared was that they might not understand. The same situation is revealed in the case with which this lesson is connected. Jesus had just healed a man born blind, a miracle which could only be attributed to God, and yet the Jews said of him, "We know that this man is a sinner" (John 9. 24). A little later on they said, "He hath a devil, and is mad" (John 10. 20). That reveals the spirit of these Jews at Jerusalem to have been the same as that of those at Capernaum at an earlier date. And so when some of the Pharisees interrupted him in his discourse, referring to the blind man to whom he had given sight, with the question, "Are we blind also?" (John 9. 40), he replied with this parable or allegory of the good shepherd—a gracious revelation of truth to such as have

spiritual understanding, but to them an enigma which they could not solve (verse 6).

### FALSE SHEPHERDS.

It must be recognized first of all that Jesus spoke this allegory against the rulers of the Jews. Their treatment of the blind beggar to whom he had given sight was the occasion of the illustration. They the self-appointed and selfish keepers of the Church had cast out one whom the true Shepherd had just rescued and received. They were the thieves and robbers who had not entered through the door, but had climbed up some other way, as others had done before them. It is a lesson for all time. Any man who exercises authority over the Church of Christ except by the authority of Christ and in the spirit of Christ, is guilty of spiritual brigandage.

### SPIRITUAL RECOGNITION

The true sheep know the true shepherd. There are false sheep and false shepherds, but only the true of both recognize each other. It was the misfortune of the people in Christ's time that they were unshepherded. This aspect frequently stirred Jesus to the deepest compassion, for he saw the people "were as sheep not having a shepherd" (Mark 6. 34). Rulers they had who preyed upon them, but not shepherds who cared for them. And so, however they may have obeyed, the spiritual voices of their rulers

"The sheep, this sacrifice. But it shepherds give them is at suffering by us a test examination our lives from suffering. The man does not boldness. I my life great man