

and who can tell
begins?" (8)
grace loses itself

The valley of
the dark ravines
near ruin. There
behind the rocks
refers not only
but sorrow of life.
will come, and it
er it, because the
every trial, and
is but for a mo-
ment exceeding and
start with me-
Scripture, felt by
my staff. In the
a staff, one end
uted. With this
nder away, beats
x, and punishes
my comfort me.
ngs comfort to the

dest. **A table.**
re of a shepherd
as a pursued wan-
derful king as a
In the pres-
have hunted and
palace, but they
secure from at-
tence of his royal
head with oil.
the hair and beard
illing oil preceded
runneth over.
There is an excess

venture. **Good-**
and grace. All
God's riches can

people shall prove
geable love;
their temples adorn,
on my bosom be

of the Lord for-
is phrase may be
unt Moriah. But
onably here also—
er in close relation
olar should be im-
at it is only impos-
n grace and beu-
er in the house of
union with God.

CRITICAL NOTES.

The Lesson Council.

Question 4. *Wherein is the relation between the shepherd and his sheep an illustration of that between the Lord and the disciples?*

David, the shepherd king, appreciated the relation between the shepherd and his flock. God's peculiar dealings with him had given new significance to old, familiar thoughts. The true shepherd is a fair type of Christ because: 1. His relation to the flock is a very tender one. 2. He is responsible for their safety and support; as Faber teaches, we need have no fear or anxiety so long as we are under the Shepherd's care. 3. He cares for each member (Luke 15, 4); he knows the names of all (John 10, 3, 14). 4. He goes before them, prepares the way, and watches constantly; so long as they regard his voice none need be lost. 5. The good shepherd loves his sheep, and does not hesitate to give his life for them (John 10, 11, 15).—*Rev. A. C. Locks.*

As the Palestinian shepherd had the general care of his own flock of sheep; providing food in all seasons, either from pasturage or green leaves, tender twigs and branches, furnished by the trees of the wilderness; leading out to pastures near and far; guiding over streams and through dangerous ravines, or to places for water, repose, refreshment, or shelter; causing those with young to move gently and carrying weary lambs in his arms when necessary; searching for the wandering, finding and restoring to the flock or fold; controlling with rod or voice; making choice allotments to favorites; knowing each, watching, protecting, and defending with staff from all enemies, and even dying, if need be, to save the sheep from drowning waters, devouring beasts, or human robbers, so, likewise, the Lord cares for his disciples always.—*Rev. C. D. Mills, D.D.*

The typical shepherd has proprietorship in his flock by original purchase, and enlargement by increase. The flock of the Good Shepherd is the purchase of his blood, and the multiplication by spiritual birth. The faithful shepherd will lose his life for his sheep. Christ lay down his life for his sheep, and would, if necessary lay it down again in their defense. It is the care of the shepherd to make the fold safe. Christ makes his sheep perfectly safe in his fold—nowhere else. Like a good shepherd he supplies all their wants, and carries the lambs in his bosom.—*A. A. Gee, D.D.*

The shepherd was almost every thing to his flock. Of all animals the sheep is the most defenseless. 1. It was the shepherd's duty to see that the wants of his flock were fully supplied. So he made them "lie down in green pastures," and led them "beside the still waters." This is

The critical questions connected with this psalm are few, but its exquisite beauty is not equalled by any thing found in the religious literatures of the world. The idea that it was composed by David when a shepherd boy in charge of his father's flocks is a pure fancy, and has against it the mention of the "house of Jehovah" in verse 6. The house of Jehovah is an expression which naturally, in the psalms, points to post-Davidic times, and the main figures of a shepherd and a royal host are too common to be in themselves any sure sign of particular authorship and date. But on the other hand there is no sufficient ground for denying the Davidic authorship. The tabernacle which contained the ark at Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6, 17) may well have been called the "house of Jehovah" (comp. 1 Sam. 1, 24; 3, 3), and verses 5 and 6 are capable of peculiarly happy explanation, if the psalm be supposed to have been written during Absalom's rebellion, when David was away from Jerusalem and supplied with provisions in the manner described in 2 Sam. 17, 27-29. So Jehovah prepared a table for him in the very presence of his enemies. Psalms 3 and 4, which are generally referred to the same occasion, breathe the same confiding trust in God.

Verse 2. Still waters. Rather, "Waters of rest," or restful waters; allusion to the shady places by streams of water, where the shepherd let his flock repose during the noontide heat.

3. Restoreth my soul. Not conversion, nor restoration from a backslidden state; but "reviving," "refreshing," and renewal of strength, such as comes to the wearied flock when resting by the waters.

4. Valley of the shadow of death. Not death itself, or the experience of dying, but stages of life so perilous that one is exposed to sudden death. The allusion is to those numerous deep valleys, or wadies, in mountainous parts of Palestine, which often abound in caves and haunts of wild beasts. The flock was exposed to great peril when passing through such a dark ravine, but the bold and fearless shepherd, armed with rod and staff, going before his flock, gave a sense of security and comfort. Compare David's prowess as a defensive shepherd in 1 Sam. 17, 34-36.

6. Surely. The word may also be translated "only," and the meaning be, "nothing but" goodness and mercy shall follow me. The common version is, however, preferable. **I will dwell.** Read according to its common punctuation in the Hebrew, this may be translated, "I will return." This would imply the poet's absence from the house of the Lord, and favors the reference of the whole psalm to the time of Absalom's rebellion, as observed above. The idea of "dwelling" seems, however, best to fit the context, and is favored by the concluding word, **forever**, or "length of days," as the margin reads.