

THE STUDY OF THE TYPES

PRIESTS AND LEVITES - A Type of the Church

BY

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CHAPTER 15

Types of CHRIST as the Shepherd

THE various aspects of our Lord's work for His people are brought before us in many different ways. One character alone would not be sufficient to give us any idea of His many-sided official relationships; so He appears as Prophet, Priest, King, Leader, Commander, Conqueror, Saviour, Surety, and Shepherd. And in studying anyone of these aspects it is helpful to group together the Bible characters who thus typify our Lord's work.

As an illustration of this method - taking the last-named of these offices - we have a beautiful cluster of types in the records of the Old Testament shepherds; and it will be seen as in other groups that each separate type seems to emphasize some special point, so that together they give a complete picture of the character, duties, and devotion of the shepherd.

Abel, the first shepherd, as we know from Hebrews 12, is a type of CHRIST: "**The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel.**" We know very little about Abel except in connection with his sacrifice and his death. GOD said to Cain, "**The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.**" It cried out for vengeance on the murderer; but "**the blood of sprinkling,**" referred to in Hebrews, called, not for vengeance, but for pardon. This passage does not clearly state to which of the Levitical types reference is made, for the blood of Abel is here shown to be a type of a type; but it points probably to the sin-offerings, where alone the blood was sprinkled on the earth itself.

At the slaying of the red heifer the blood was sprinkled before the Tabernacle (Numbers 19); in the sin-offering for the priest and congregation, the blood was sprinkled before the vail; and on the great Day of Atonement, before the mercy-seat. All these were sin-offerings, and in each case the blood was sprinkled on the ground. It spoke of forgiveness and cleansing, and typified the blood that would be shed on Calvary when the good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep.

Abel had himself offered a lamb from his flock to atone for his own sin, and thus the lamb died for the shepherd; but on Calvary the Shepherd died for the lambs.

We learn another lesson about the shepherd in Genesis 24, where we see that the wealth of the shepherd lies in his flocks.

The servant of Abraham who had been sent to find a bride for Isaac says to Rebekah and her friends, "**The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and He hath given him flocks and herds.**" The Great Shepherd of the sheep looks on His flock as His

choicest possession; and thus the Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian saints, that they might know what were "**the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.**" "**The Lord's portion is His people**"; and so precious were they in His sight, that He became poor in order that He might purchase them with His Blood.

Jacob, in speaking to Laban of his twenty years of service, shows something of what a shepherd's duties involve. There is the responsibility of the shepherd. He says, "**That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.**"

The shepherd was personally responsible for the safety of every one of the sheep; and the Good Shepherd in John 10 tells us that He has made Himself responsible for everyone who has been given into His care - "**They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.**" Jacob could not thus secure Laban's flock - many of them probably perished; but the Lord JESUS could say, "**Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none.**"

He has pledged Himself to keep the feeblest lamb; and with Paul we can say, "**I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.**"

Then, too, we learn from Jacob the endurance of the shepherd.

He adds, "**Thus I was: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.**" The Lord knew what it was to suffer thus Twice over we read of His asking for something to quench His thirst. In John 4, He says to the woman of Samaria, "**Give Me to drink**"; and on the Cross He cries, "**I thirst.**"

We do not hear of that request being granted, and His bodily thirst was unsatisfied; but He that said, "**I have meat to eat that ye know not of,**" on both occasions found refreshment by giving the water of life to thirsty ones - the woman who took her first draught, and hurried away to bring others to Him; and the dying thief who recognised Him as Lord.

The work of the shepherd in the East involves careful guarding by night as well as by day; and thus the shepherds of Bethlehem kept watch over their flocks by night. It must have been literally true of our Lord that sleep departed from His eyes. He had not where to lay His head, and He spent the night hours in prayer for His flock.

During the stormy night when the disciples were tossing on the Sea of Galilee, He was alone on the mountain praying, and "**saw them toiling in rowing.**" And this is still true, for "**He that keepeth thee will not slumber: behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.**" He will watch over His flock all through the hours of darkness and danger, "**till the day break, and the shadows flee away.**"

There will then be no more danger from the roaring lion, for it is in the night that "**all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey. . . . The sun ariseth; they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens**"; and GOD's flock at the sunrise will be safe from all their enemies.

In Jacob's answer to Esau we see the care of the shepherd (Genesis 33:13):

"If men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die": reminding us of Him of whom it is said, **"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."**

In his early youth we read of Joseph feeding the flock with his brethren; and the thought emphasized in his history is the hatred of the other shepherds. Those who should have loved and protected him, hated him, and were filled with envy, and said, **"Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?"**

When the Lord JESUS was here upon earth, those who should have been shepherds of GOD's sheep hated Him without a cause: they themselves were like the shepherds mentioned in Ezekiel 34, who neglected the flock, so that when the Lord Himself, the Good Shepherd came, His heart was moved with compassion, because He saw the people **"as sheep, having no shepherd."**

In John 9, we see how these shepherds treated one who came to Him - they **"cast him out."** The Lord at once goes on to show in the tenth chapter that He leadeth out His own sheep - He putteth them forth. They may be cast out of the fold by men, but it is really He Himself that is putting them forth; for the word in verse 4 is the same as that used in chap. 9:35. In chap. 10:16, He says, **"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, . . . and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd."** Nothing stirred the hatred of the false shepherds so much as to hear that He was turning away from the fold of Judaism and calling Gentiles into the flock; and, like Joseph's brethren, they said, **"We will not have this man to reign over us."**

Moses is the next shepherd-type of whom we read. For forty years he kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, as a preparation for the last forty years of his life, when he was to shepherd GOD's flock, as we read in Isaiah 63:11, 12.

In his history we have the thought of the leading of the shepherd. We are told in Exodus 3 that **"he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of GOD, even to Horeb";** and in the twelfth verse GOD says, **"When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain."**

A short time afterwards he led the whole flock of the children of Israel to the same desert and to the same mountain; and where he had first heard GOD speaking to him out of the burning bush, the Lord spake once more **"in Horeb out of the midst of the fire."**

The Lord still makes His own people to go forth, and guides them in the wilderness like a flock; and He leads them on safely, so that they fear not. And thus Moses speaks to us of the Good Shepherd, of whom we read that He leadeth out His sheep, and **"goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him."**

David, the shepherd-king, like Moses, was keeping the sheep when GOD called him to shepherd his people; so that GOD could say, **"I took thee from the sheepcote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over My people Israel"** (I Chronicles 17:7).

The incident which David himself relates to Saul, tells of deliverance by the shepherd. At the risk of his own life he rescued the lamb from the mouth of the lion and the bear (I Samuel 17:34). Only one of the flock seems to have been in danger; but that was enough for the shepherd. Like the man in Luke 15, who left the ninety and nine to go after that which was lost, so David left those who were in safety to rescue the one that was in such sore peril. Our **"adversary the devil, as a roaring lion,"** seeketh whom he may devour; but the Shepherd has conquered him.

The Lord might have said with David, **"He arose against Me"**; for his enmity was against the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and he had to cry in Psalm 22, **"Save me from the lion's mouth."** It seemed on Calvary as if Satan had indeed conquered; for though **"He saved others, Himself He cannot save"** - the Good Shepherd must give His life for the sheep. In this respect David, as a shepherd, falls far short of the Antitype.

When David was sent by his father to enquire after his brethren, **"he left the sheep with a keeper."** Eliab asked him, **"With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?"** but David had seen that they were safe before he left them.

The Chief Shepherd has had to leave His little flock in the wilderness; but He has left them in the care of the **"other Comforter,"** and has commissioned His servants to feed His flock: so that Paul says, **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood."**

It is interesting to trace in the Psalms of David and in his after-history the influence of his earlier years amongst the flocks.

GOD's people in all ages have abundant reason to bless him for the precious Psalm where he puts himself amongst the flock and says, **"The Lord is my Shepherd."**

- It has often been pointed out that the twenty-second Psalm tells of **"the Good Shepherd"** that died;
- the twenty-third of the **"Great Shepherd"** that rose and now cares for His flock;
- and the twenty-fourth of the **"Chief Shepherd"** that shall appear.

When GOD's judgment fell on account of David's sin in numbering the people, he pleaded for the flock, and said, "[/b]Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?[/b]" GOD's judgment on Calvary did indeed fall on the Shepherd, that the sheep might be delivered; for we read in Zechariah, **"Awake, a sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."**

He was **"smitten of God and afflicted"**; not for His own sin, as in David's case, but **"He was wounded for our transgressions."** In this passage (Zechariah 13:7), we see **"the Good Shepherd that giveth His life for the sheep"**; while in 11:17, in the **"idol shepherd that leaveth the flock,"** we have **"the hireling"** spoken of by our Lord, who **"fleeth, because he is an hireling."**

David, who interceded for the sheep and begged that the stroke might fall upon himself, is like the former; but Saul reminds us of the hireling that "**careth not for the sheep.**" When he had disobeyed the Lord, he tried to put all the blame on the people. "**Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord; . . . but the people took of the spoil.**" How different from the man after GOD's own heart!

A picture of one of the duties of the shepherd is given in I Chronicles 4.

Certain princes of the sons of Simeon went forth "**to seek pasture for their flocks. And they found fat pasture and good; and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable**"; and having utterly destroyed the enemies that were found there, "**they dwelt in their rooms, because there was pasture there for their flocks.**"

The sheep have not to find their own pasture. This, the shepherd is engaged to do: and our Shepherd has won the pasture-land from the enemy, and now He makes us "**to lie down in green pastures.**" The sheep will not rest till they are satisfied; but where He leads His flock there is an abundant supply. The sheep of His pasture "**go in and out and find pasture.**"

Sometimes, alas! the sheep try and find it for themselves; and wandering away from the Shepherd, are lost for a time, till He goes after them and brings them back from the wilderness or the mountain.

In Matthew 18, the lost sheep is represented as having gone astray among the mountains; and, as one has said, GOD's sheep often wander by getting up too high. The pasture is very poor on the mountain tops, and there are many dangers - so we read in Hosea 13:6: "**According to their pasture, so were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten Me.**" The Good Shepherd, if need be, "**goeth into the mountains and seeketh that which is gone astray.**"

Thus in these groups of Old Testament shepherds, so different in character and history, we have brought before us:

- the death of the shepherd in Abel;
- the wealth of the shepherd in Isaac;
- the responsibility, endurance, and care of the shepherd in Jacob;
- the hatred of other shepherds in Joseph;
- the leading of the shepherd in Moses;
- the deliverance by the shepherd in David;
- the pasture of the shepherd in the sons of Simeon.

Though all falling far short of the Antitype, together they give us a beautiful picture of Him who will shepherd the flock till the time when His sheep "**They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes**" (Revelation 7:16, 17). The green pastures of earth will then be exchanged for the richer fields of Heaven, and the still waters for these

living fountains. In the earthly fields of the promised land He will yet shepherd His people Israel, when "**He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.**"

~ end of chapter 15 ~

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