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HERMAN H. PITTS.

vation for the world, and they fling it away to the lowest and vilest purpose. The vessels of the sanctuary are made drinking-cups, degraded to a profane use.

O sinner, look at thyself, and see what sin is doing with thee, how it is wrecking all thy promise, blighting and blasting all thy hope, and ruining thee forever. Perhaps thine eyes are already opened to see thy misery, the ruin that has come to thee, and thou art even now bewailing the state thou art in. Thou art weeping bitter tears, and saying to thyself: "I am like a broken vessel! My drunkenness has degraded me. My folly has ruined me. There is no hope for me. My friends have cast me off. No one loves nor cares for me now. It is too late to hope. I am lost!"

But, sinner, the salvation that saved the prodigal son, that brought him back from his ruin; will save you. The grace of God can make so much of the vessel that sin has broken. David himself was a broken vessel. Mary Magdalene was a broken vessel. The thief was a broken vessel. The jailer was a broken vessel. Paul was a broken vessel. John Bunyan was a broken vessel. And a great multitude of others that might be named. And the love of Jesus sought and won them in their broken and cast-away state, and the blood of Jesus washed them, and the Spirit of God re-consecrated them, and now they are vessels for the Master's use, gems for His crown, trophies of His grace, wonders of His power.

O sinner, there is hope for thee. The grace that saved them can save thee, the blood that washed them can wash thee. Say not then: "I am like a broken vessel! No hope for me!" But like David, let the mercy of God do for thee as it can do for thee and thou wilt yet be a cup of blessing to many, a gold cup in the hand of the king. There is hope for thee, for thy Saviour was broken on the cross to save thee. Oh what hope for broken vessels where the Christ with His broken heart comes! And He comes to thee here to-night with His blessed healing and help.

Only a Glass of Cider.

It was only a glass of cider,
From the hands of a fair young girl!
How could he decline the kindness?
She would deem him a mannerless churl.

It was only a glass of cider,
But it kindled anew the flame
Which had burned up his noble manhood
And left him in grief and shame.

He had broken away from the tempter,
He stood on the rock again,
No longer the penniless drunkard—
He stood a man among men.

When "only a glass of cider"
Threw open the gates again
To a pathway of pain and sorrow,
To a death of hopeless pain.

How One Home Was Ruined.

"No, sir; no woman ever had a happier home than I had. No one ever had a better husband at the first. He was gentlemanly, refined, intelligent. He was a good provider, and easily earned his \$35 a week. No, sir; I remember just when the trouble began. It was many years ago. My husband was troubled with indigestion. He had tried all sorts of remedies, but nothing did him any good. At last he happened to hear of a French physician, and consulted him. This physician said, 'Certainly I can cure you. Simple and pleasant remedy. Take a half-glass of wine at each meal. You'll come around all right.'"

"Oh, sir, I remember the very day that first demijohn came to our house. I had an awful feeling of apprehension. Such a thing had never entered our doors before. I said to my husband, 'My dear, I wouldn't. Surely there must be some other cure. Really, I'm afraid of the consequences. Don't touch it, dear.' But he became irritated; said he wasn't a fool; that he knew how to take care of himself; and that I needn't have any fears for him; that he was simply doing what the doctor—an experienced man—had told him to do, and that it was all right. Well, sir, I remember it so well; that meal he took a half-glass of the wine and filled the glass with water. I could see even then, at the close of the meal, by his flushed face and changed manners, that the wine—little as it was—had gone to his head. Soon after he took his wine without water, and it was not many months before five demijohns a week were brought into our once temperate and beautiful home.

"Oh sir, that was years ago. To-day—but I must not tell you where he is or how he looks. He is my husband still. Is there no place where he can be put for reformation? I have tried everything. He fairly pleads with me now—in his sober hours—to save him. He seems to be utterly unable to resist temptation. When he is away from the drink, he does quite well for a time. When he sees it he must have it. He often says to me, 'You don't know, you cannot tell how I want to be a man again. You have borne with me so long. I have tried you so often. I cannot wonder you have lost patience with me at last. I cannot blame you if you leave me.' Oh sir he seems so humble, so penitent, yet so helpless and hopeless. All his will power is gone. What can he do. What shall I do?"—Bedford Street Record.

The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter-Lesson XII.—Sept. 20.

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—JOHN 10:1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*—Ps. 23:1.

THE ALLEGORY OF THE SHEEPFOLD.—Vers. 4-6. This passage is an allegory rather than a parable. The sheepfold. A sheepfold in the east is a mere enclosure surrounded by a wall of loose stones with thorn-bushes upon the top, and is usually an effectual barrier against the wolves. The door consists of a few sticks laid across the entrance, and here the shepherd and his dog watch all night. There are low, flat buildings sometimes within the enclosure in which the flocks are sheltered in severe weather. The sheep are brought into it in the evening, several flocks. The shepherds after commit them to the care of a common keeper, the porter. The sheepfold, in this parable, answers primarily to Israel, the then visible church of God, but secondarily to the church of Christ in all ages, in which the professed disciples of Christ are gathered for protection. *He that entereth not by the door.* There is only one door to Oriental sheepfolds. When it was time to lead out the flocks, each shepherd would come to the door, and the door-keeper would recognize him, and open to him; so that, if any one entered in any other way, it was a sign that he had no right, and had come for some bad purpose. The door is the way appointed by God for entering his kingdom. Christ is represented as the door. *But climbeth up some other way.* These are they who enter the ministry, or become teachers of religion from selfish motives, without consecration to God and devotion to the good of men, simply to gain honor, or money or a living. *The same is a thief and a robber.* He receives the honor and emoluments of his office without performing its duties. He leads the sheep astray. This was a picture of the Pharisees, though they recognized it not. *But he that entereth in by the door.* Openly, with no need to conceal his purposes. *Is the shepherd.* It should be "a shepherd." There were several shepherds for each of the larger flocks. *Shepherd of the sheep.* The guide, leader, and teacher of the children of God. *To him the porter (the doorkeeper of the fold) openeth.* The Holy Spirit, acting through his appointed ministers. *And the sheep hear his voice.* Listen obediently. *He calleth his own sheep.* Who in the fold are mingled with other flocks. *By name.* The naming of sheep is a very ancient practice. It is a remarkable fact in Oriental husbandry that in a flock of hundreds or thousands each individual sheep has its name, knows it, and is known by it. Jesus takes a living, personal interest in each redeemed soul; bending over it continually with infinite tenderness, watching each doubt, each fear, each trial, each temptation, each fall, each rising again, each conflict, each victory, each defeat, with a solicitude as special and particular as if it were upon it that the exclusive regard of his loving heart were fixed. He knows each individual's want, nature, and circumstances, so that he ministers to each exactly what he requires. He metes out our lives to us as individuals. He assigns to each the work fitted for him to do. Christ loves us individuals. He calls us by name. No one but a divine Saviour could know all his disciples by name, and be present everywhere to hear their prayers and grant them aid. *And leadeth them out.* He guides them to the best things in life, to whatever will enlarge their souls, develop their capacities, increase their usefulness. *He goeth before them.* The Eastern shepherd goes before his flock, leading, not driving, the sheep. The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. So our good Shepherd goes before us; he leads us where he would have us go; he is a perfect example of what he would have us to be; he lays no burden upon us that he does not bear himself. So every pastor and teacher should go before his flock, an example, a leader in every good work. *And the sheep follow him.* This is the proof that we belong to his flock. *They know his voice.* This is true to the letter. A traveller in Greece found three shepherds with flocks of six or seven hundred each, all mingled together, but the sheep would answer to their names when called by their owner, but not if called by another. This traveller experimented with them. He called, and the sheep took no notice. The shepherd called and, they came. Then he said that the

sheep knew the shepherd by his dress and not by his voice. But when the shepherd exchanged clothes with the traveller the sheep would not obey the strange voice; but when in the traveller's dress, the shepherd called, the sheep came at his bidding. So the Christian knows Christ's voice. He knows whether a teaching or an influence is from him, (1) by the inner witness of the Spirit; (2) by comparing it with the Word of God; (3) by its truth and righteousness; (4) by its tendency. *And a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice.* The true disciples recognize a different spirit and purpose and so will not follow. *This parable they understood not.* They did not understand how it applied to them.

FIRST APPLICATION OF THE ALLEGORY; CHRIST THE DOOR.—Vers. 7-10. *I am the door of the sheep.* In saying 'I am the door of the sheep,' Jesus says in effect, (1) that through him alone has any true guardian and guide of the sheep entered into the fold; (2) that through him alone will the sheep within the 'fold' be led out into the open pastures. How is Jesus the door? Through him all enter into the blessings of salvation. Jesus brought the truth of salvation from God. He made the only atonement for sin. He brought to men the new spiritual, divine life, without which no one can see God. He brought in himself every power which could lead men to be good. *All that ever came before me.* Not all teachers, or prophets, but all who came confessing to be the Messiah; or who, pretending to be teachers from God, substituted for the divine teachings which pointed to Christ, false doctrines and principles, formalities, and all methods of salvation which do not really save. *Are thieves and robbers.* Teachers opposed to Christ were robbing the people of salvation, of the Messiah, and all the blessings he brings. *But the sheep did not hear them.* The true people of God did not go after the Messiahs. They saw in Jesus the marks of the true Messiah. *By me if any man enter in.* To the fold, to the kingdom of God. *He shall be saved.* Safe from false teachers; safe from the sins that would ruin. But being safe is far from all. *He shall go in and out.* He can go in and out under the care of the Shepherd and everywhere be safe, and have freedom of activity for all his powers. *And find pasture.* Satisfaction for every need of the soul. *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.* False teachers are seeking their own advantage, and are willing to teach error to mislead others, if only they themselves may gain something. *I am come that they might have life.* The true religion comes first to give this present life more abundant development, and eternal life. *And that they might have it more abundantly.* Omit the "more." The spiritual life is to be overflowing. It will be abundant in quantity, abundant in quality, overflowing with every good.

SECOND APPLICATION OF THE ALLEGORY; CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—Vers. 11-16. *I am the good shepherd.* He feeds the sheep, leading them by the still waters and into green pastures. He provides a home for them. He defends them from all dangers. He rules over them with justice and kindness. He has a personal love for each one. He will do all these even at the expense of his life. *The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* In Palestine, at any moment, sheep are liable to be swept away by some mountain-torrent, or carried off by hill-robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save them by personal hazard. The shepherd-king tells us how, in defence of his father's flock, he slew a lion and a bear. Every hour of the shepherd's life is risk. So Jesus gave his life for the sheep. He that will save others cannot save himself. If the shepherd had not sacrificed himself, the sheep must have been the sacrifice. The good shepherd may or may not be called on to die for his sheep; but he lays down his life for them. To lay down the life is to devote it to the flock; as a mother, who is always ready to die for her children, but who, living or dying, belongs to her children, and surrenders herself to them. So we ought also lay down our lives for the brethren. *But he that is a hireling.* Not every one that receives pay is a hireling, but one who serves only for pay, without love for the work, or care for the employer. He is a hireling who is seeking his own interests, more than the good of the flock. The true pastor never works for his pay, but the people support him so that he may give all his time to the care of the sheep. *The wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.*