

EVENTIDE.

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
Long and hard has been the day;
I have come a weary way
Since life's morning, but at last
Night is falling sweet and fast.
Now I lay me down to sleep."

"I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
I have tried—alas! in vain—
From the world's dark soil and stain
To keep it. Weak and worn,
With my strength all overborne,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep."

"If I should die before I wake,
Treasures have slipped fast away
From my keeping day by day,
And I shrink from coming ill—
This thought holdeth joy's glad thrill—
If I should die before I wake."

"I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take."
From all the sorrow it hath known—
Sin and loss, and tear and woe—
To the dear ones gone before,
To Thy presence evermore,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take."

"This I ask for Jesus' sake,"
Name alone that can prevail,
Anchor-hold within the veil!
Every other plea hath flown;
Worth or merit claim I none;
"This I ask for Jesus' sake."

—Kate W. Hamilton, in *Forward*.

The Pulpit.

THE SHEPHERD-SPIRIT THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

BY REV. C. C. PIERCE.

"What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, till he find it?"—Luke xv. 4.

The teaching of Jesus was novel, and the life that illustrated it was peculiar. His utter disregard of the formal rules of the Pharisees, and the nice distinctions and proprieties that were insisted upon as the very essence of religion, made him the subject of criticism that threatened seriously to interfere with his work. On other occasions than the present he had permitted himself to be found in the presence of those who might be designated as the lower classes, and had been running the fearful risk of being contaminated by their foulness, and of being ostracised from the circle of religious respectability.

As for the lower classes themselves, they were attracted by his manner and his message, and were desiring to know more of the true religion as it was being brought to light through his preaching. And now they draw near, perhaps in unusual numbers, to listen to the truths he may be pleased to announce. And as they come and receive, apparently, as warm a welcome as the Scribes and Pharisees, these representatives of the upper caste murmur that "this man receiveth sinners." Their pet theory has been that "none but a sinner will receive a sinner," and that it is the mark of a holy man to spurn every one whose life was not marked by the formalism of the Pharisee. They plead for the dignity of religion, and protest against such a lowering of the standard as will extend the privileges of worship to those whom they have branded as sinners. To the mind of the cavaliers this was a crushing criticism, that he would mingle with publicans,—offensive because of their occupation, and sinners noted for their flagrant violations of the holy law. To their mind asceticism was the highest form of holiness, or, at least, so much of hermit life as to withdraw them from all contact with those who were weighed in the rabbinical balance and found wanting. Probably with so marked an absence of spirituality in their natures, there was danger of their falling into the ditch with the blind whom they in their blindness would attempt to lead.

But the type of holiness which Jesus represented, and the type of manhood he should foster in his followers, had no need of asceticism in order to retain their purity. The new quality of lives that was henceforth to bless the world, would come into contact with the diseases of humanity without fear of pollution. The rabbinical policy of shunning the sinner would be superseded by the Christian policy of seeking the lost. To win the sinner required a new type of manhood; a winning man, attracting by the purity of his life, the magnanimity of his spirit, and the disinterestedness of his purpose. The sunlight is not tarnished or polluted, because it pushes down into the dark and damp places of the earth, nor is the Sun of Righteousness to be dimmed or darkened by bringing his light into the society of sinners. The sun brings with it a power to sweeten and purify, and the poisonous vapors which it seeks to permeate are robbed of their power to harm. So it is with this grander Sun, bringing healing in his beams. But the Saviour quickly presents to their view another aspect of the subject in vindication of his policy of mingling with the common people. "What man is there among you," said he, "who having one hundred sheep, and one of them has strayed away, does not leave the ninety and nine safe in the pasture, and go out searching for the lost one until it is found?" No man among them would do otherwise. To admit the wisdom of that policy is to vindicate the policy of Christ.

The policy of Christ is to be the

policy of the Christian. The mission of Christ is to be the mission of the Christian. "As the father hath sent me, even so have I sent you." It has seemed to me that the text gives a very faithful illustration of the missionary spirit, as exhibited by him whose life is the world's legacy and who seeks to beget in us the same spirit that made him willing to lay down his life for the lost. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep and having lost one of them, etc. The missionary spirit is the shepherd spirit. Not that of the hireling whose own the sheep are not—of him who deserts his flock because the wolf is coming—but the spirit of the good Shepherd, who counts no night too dark, and no storm too wild, and no difficulty too stupendous, and no wanderer too worthless, to push out from the comforts of home in the hope of leading the lost one back to the fold. I care not, my friends, whether you attempt the evangelization of cities, or the evangelization of continents, the principle is the same, and the work is to be prosecuted in the same spirit, regardless of climate, or color, or culture. There may be those who have selected the most attractive classes and the nearest at hand as the sole objects of their Christian endeavor, and vainly imagine themselves to be in harmony with the spirit of Christ; but when his life is made indeed a pattern there will be an effort not so much to save the model man as to save the universal man.

It is very evident that in the line of missionary work there are those who are imitating the Rabbin of old, who sought perfection of experience by a careful performance of their ceremonies and customs. This modern class to which we refer are seeking blamelessness in the sight of God and absolution from the claims of the heathen, by giving a mere pittance for the spread of the gospel whenever a public collection is taken and hoping that such collections will be like angels' visits, few and far between. Such Christians are strangers to the missionary spirit. They are Christians of the lower type. No thought was more firmly impressed by our Lord upon the mind of his disciples than that he coveted the world. Not only did he set them the example of incessant service in the line of evangelization, but personally sent them out to search for the "other sheep" who were not yet of his fold. And his last words spoken from the spot of his ascension revealed the fact that their work would be done only when there could no longer be found upon the earth a soul needing to be saved, and a Christian needing to be trained. But he did not seek the performance of the great commission by them as a mere routine or as an obligation which they must discharge. It was something aside from a sense of obligation which brought him to the earth and made him the missionary that he was. Love for souls impelled him to come and a love for souls sent him hurrying along with a message of mercy to each Palestinian home. This love and the enthusiasm for saving which love begets, he sought to create in the hearts of his people. Seeking among the sisterhood of graces for one to make their queen, he placed the crown upon love. Nor was the decision made arbitrarily. Love was the queen before she wore the crown. And the coronation was only a fitting recognition of her queenliness in suffering long, in envying not, in vaunting not herself, in seeking not her own, in being unprovoked, in bearing all things, believing all things, enduring all things, and never failing. Oh, that we might all have the nature of the good Shepherd, the love of the shepherd-life, and the interest of Christ in the lost. Let us have a brief analysis of the interest of the shepherd in the straying and let us pray meanwhile that our study may bring us into possession of the missionary spirit.

I. Personal interest in the straying. The missionary spirit as illustrated in the shepherd-life involves a personal interest in the straying. The parabolic painting before us represents the personal interest of the shepherd in a light by no means dim or mistakable. It is the shepherd who notes the absence and who feels the loss. It is the shepherd who institutes the search. It is the shepherd who finds the sheep, and who, when found, layeth it upon his own shoulders for the homeward journey. His own shepherdliness will not admit of his delegating the mission to others, for while it is a mission of mercy it is likewise a mission of love. His own heart has been touched by the loss, and his own interest is to be enhanced by the recovery. Turning aside from the figure of the fact, look at the real life of the Son of Man. The deputation of angels sent upon earthly missions, had their place under the old dispensation, and were destined to have their place in the future so long as there could be found hearts in need of their ministry. It needed a personal interest to send forth such deputations

upon such missions. But the interest was so personal that it impelled the Saviour to come to the world, seeking himself, for the lost. The love that sent the angels stirred up the question, "What can I do to win the wanderers?" You listen in vain if you think to hear him questioning within himself as to the necessity for any personal sacrifice upon his part. Not once is he found seeking to soothe himself with the idea that the combined efforts of angels, and priests, and prophets will be sufficient to lead back all the lost. You will find no indication of an endeavor upon his part to ease his conscience by convincing himself that the wanderers will come home again without his personal search. "It isn't a question of conscience at all. It isn't a question of obligation. 'Tis a question of desire, a question of loss and of love."

Take, if you please, the three parables that our Lord joins together in this chapter to teach one grand truth, and, while you read, ask yourself why it is that the shepherd takes so personal an interest in the lost sheep, and the woman so personal an interest in the lost coin, and the father so personal an interest in the lost boy. The shepherd is anxious because it is his sheep that is lost. The woman is anxious because her coin is missing. The father carries a heavy heart because it is his boy that has become the swine-herd. There is a sense of ownership in every case; a sense of loss in their loss, and a prospective feeling of joy and comfort in their hoped-for recovery. There is in the shepherd-heart a spirit of unrest because of the wanderers and the dangers to which they are exposed. And it would matter little to him how many others were searching, the anxiety of his soul would repel every temptation to satisfaction and ease, until the cause of his anxiety should be removed in the saving of the lost. He would joyously welcome the aid of other seekers, but with love so full and anxiety so intense, he could do no other than to go and search himself. The very life that is capable of directing others in their search is most capable of searching for itself. Hence, when the Saviour had enlisted the sympathy of his disciples in behalf of the multitude already lost, and had sent them forth in different directions to lead the masses home again, he evinced an interest deeper and more personal, by going forth to seek and to save.

Oh, that those who have taken upon themselves a name that means nothing if not likeness to Christ, might have more of the shepherdly spirit of him whose name they bear! Paul had much of that spirit, and to his life every modern missionary is glad to look for an example and inspiration. Like the Master to whom he was so loyal for the joy set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame. In the days of the French Empire, a soldier of the realm lay wounded. As the surgeons in the hospital were probing near his heart to find the ball, they heard from his lips a whisper of heroic devotion, "Probe a little deeper and you will find the name of the Emperor." Probe into the deeper experience of the great Missionary Apostle, and when you reach the heart you will find upon it the name of the King. This is the secret of his life of service in search of those who were once repulsive in his sight. He was interested in those in whom Christ was interested. He experienced the sense of ownership in the lost. What belonged to Christ belonged to him. What does he mean in writing to the Romans of the rich inheritance of the sons of God? Believers are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. We commonly quote his saying for the consolation of our own hearts; but read the verse to which he closely joins it, "Joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." Ours is then an inheritance of suffering and service here, and an inheritance of glorification by and by. Paul's passion for Christ-likeness caused him to feel that what Christ had lost he had lost, and that he was a joint-inheritor of every jewel that came into possession of the Lord of hosts. Thus he came to have the missionary spirit, the shepherd-spirit, exhibiting his personal interest in a personal search for that which was lost. Where there is the sense of ownership there is a personal interest, and when Christians appreciate the saying of Jesus, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; they also must I bring, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd," and when they realize that Christ's "other sheep" are their "other sheep," there will be a sense of responsibility, and a shepherd-like enthusiasm for saving that will not permit the work to be delegated unto others. This personal interest for souls is to contribute largely to the joy of heaven. Jesus likens the joy of the shepherd who has found the sheep to the joy in heaven over the repentant sinner. I used to

think that this joy in heaven was the joy of the angels; but a closer study of the parable has given me a different conception. "There shall be joy in heaven." Does it not mean that the consciousness of having brought a sinner to the Saviour will constitute our great joy in heaven? I know that all the hosts of heaven rejoice in harmonious measure over the convert. But it seems to me that the parable alludes to the joy that will come in view of the one who has been saved as a result of our personal search.

Mr. Harrold, the private secretary of Mr. Spurgeon, relates a touching incident that once occurred under his personal observation. While waiting for his steamer to move out to sea from one of the harbors on the southeast coast of England, he saw that two young girls who had been bathing near the shore had gone beyond their depth, and were in imminent danger of drowning. A little steam-tug happened to be near and one of the girls was rescued. But one of them for the moment had sunk from sight and could not be reached. In a moment a brave sailor plunged overboard to rescue the sister of the saved girl. But, to the consternation of all who beheld the sight, he was seen to rise to the surface of the water alone. Again and again and again he plunged into the water in his heroic search, until it was evident that the life could not be saved. Nor was the body seen again till all life was gone. In the evening when the ship had gone out to sea, Mr. Harrold had a talk with the sailor who had so heroically imperilled his own life to save the girl. In the moonlight his face and hands covered with the bruises he had received from the rocks beneath the water, in his hopeless plunges, could be plainly seen, and also the heroic flash from his eye, when asked the question, "Why did you take such pains and run such risks in trying to save the life of one you had never seen?" Said he, "I felt just as if it had been my own sister." His own sister. Thus it is always. The keenest and most painstaking and sacrificing personal interest comes from a sense of ownership in the lost. Oh, that we might have so personal an interest in all who are straying from the fold of Christ.

II. Absorbing interest in the lost. The missionary spirit as illustrated in the shepherd-life, involves an absorbing interest in the lost. Look at the portrait of the faithful shepherd in the parable. "What man of you having an hundred sheep if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, till he find it?" His whole life and energy seem to be absorbed in the search. He leaves the ninety and nine in a safe place and seems to feel that the difficulties in the way of recovering the lost are such as to demand his very best efforts and his undivided attention. More over his anxiety for the lost one is such that other occupations could be entered upon only mechanically, and his whole mind and heart would be constantly going out for the straying one. When a man is in trouble he thinks of little else; he is wholly absorbed in viewing the clouds that hang between him and the sunlight. The shepherd is filled with trouble when the sheep are without the fold, and that trouble engrosses all his attention. See how Jesus reveals his shepherdliness by absorption in the task of saving. How quickly does he spurn the suggestion of the devil to turn aside from his redemptive work and enjoy something of worldly honor. He has no time for this. When in the ecstasy of the transfiguration scene, Peter suggests a continual abode above the clouds and in companionship with heaven, how quickly does Jesus lead the trio down to the dark scenes of the valley, where the lost are to be found. Heaven will bring its sweetness by and by. Meanwhile whole-hearted searching must be done. When the multitude came near, as he tarried in Simeon's house, and sought to keep him among them to heal the human infirmities of the people, how earnestly did he say, "I must preach the gospel of the kingdom to other cities also." And with what sublime impatience did he reply to the entreaty of Peter to turn aside from further sacrifice, "Get thee behind me Satan, for thou savorest not the things that be of God." The whole life was the shepherd-life—absorption in the search. Not an occasional, spasmodic effort, but a concentration of aim in this direction, and a majestic disinclination to think of aught else than the purpose of his life.

III. Persistent interest. The missionary spirit as illustrated in the shepherd-life involves a persistent interest. This thought is closely related to the preceding, and is perhaps the sweetest of them all. How grandly does the question close, "Until he find it." The search which Jesus institutes is so often rewarded with success, because he seeks till he finds. How many things there are to tempt an abandonment

of the search; the weariness of the flesh and the multitudinous diversions along the pathway of life, and the lack of faith and hopefulness among Christian associates. How the Saviour flashes out from his nature the stubborn hopefulness of the mother, who regardless of his distance from the path of rectitude will not believe her boy to be beyond recovery so long as he lives! Here is the poor woman who has sinned so grievously that the law says she is only fit to die. The leaders of the people can see no encouragement for tempting to win her back to purity, and she is brought to the Saviour for a sentence. And what a hopeful sentence it will be! Perhaps even father and mother have given her up, and so far as the people are concerned there is to be no further effort for her salvation. But the persistency of Christ in his search for the lost, is just the thing to save a wretch like her; and with his hopeful word, he lifts her from the pit and places her feet upon the solid rock. "Until he find it." That persistency of search has enabled the shepherd to find his sheep, the woman her coin, and the father his boy. To that persistency you and I owe our heart-burnings with Christ to-day, and our inheritance in the promised land. Such persistency, "until he find it," has brought to the "Lone Star Mission," of not long ago, a pentecostal gathering of Telugus. "Until he find it," proves the search to be a shepherd's.

My brethren, let us not forget that the true missionary spirit involves a personal, an absorbing and a persistent interest in the lost. Why, in the three-fold parable of this chapter Jesus speaks of one sheep, one coin, and one boy, I know not, unless to impress the fact that one is worth the sacrifice and the saving, and that the true missionary spirit causes a man to enquire if there be a single one that is self-excited from the protection and the plenteousness of home. I see great cause for sadness in the life of the Christian who is always delegating the work of seeking the lost to others, or who excuses himself for coldness or lack of interest in the foreign work on the plea of heathen at home. The work is one; and the field is the world. He who embraces in his affections anything less than the world has too small a heart. He who is always questioning the necessity for this or that expenditure of means or men in view of the results to be attained is an hireling whose own the sheep are not.

It seems to me that a Christian who questions the necessity for doing that which the great Lord has encouraged is doing a very impertinent thing, and showing but little likeness to his pattern. Those who are ingeniously adopting excuses for lukewarmness in regard to missions, home or foreign, cannot be full, rounded Christians. Jesus was a foreign missionary—Jesus was a city missionary. And the Christians who most truly honor the name they bear, are those who have determined not to be satisfied with the achievements of the church, so long as there can be found a human being outside the kingdom. Let us be done, then, with these ignoble excuses for refusing to co-operate with our more heroic and Christ-like brethren. Money and men in greater quantities than ever before ought to be forthcoming, if the church proposes to be Christ's representative to the world in anything more than a feeble sense. Think a thousand times before you utter your first word against any form of missionary or philanthropic work.

There must be a William Carey to go down into the gold mine, but there must also be an Andrew Fuller to hold the ropes. And if the rope holders grow weary of their task, let them have a thought of those whom the ropes are holding, toiling patiently in the darkness and unhealthfulness of the mine below. In connection with our foreign work, to very few of you will be given, any greater blessedness than that of holding the ropes. And in this hour when the policy of the management of one of our beloved societies is being severely criticised, it seems to me that there comes a shout alike from heaven and from the bottom of the pit where our brethren are laboring, "Don't let go the ropes!" Policies may be wrong; men may be injudicious; but the missionary spirit is neither to be criticised or changed. Too many are looking for excuses to bolster up their lukewarmness. The fact is that a good or a bad policy would make no difference in the attitude of such toward the mission work. The trouble is not with the policy but with the heart. We all need more of the missionary spirit, which involves a personal interest, an absorbing interest, and a persistent interest in all the lost. Oh that we might have the shepherd spirit, which is its best illustration, so that we might go forth after that which is lost, and weary not nor murmur "until we find it."—*Standard*.

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