

# A Love . . . beyond Comprehension

“And one shall say unto Him . . . What are these wounds in Thy hands?  
then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends . . . !”  
Zechariah 13:6 and Isaiah 49:14-16

“Who is this that cometh from Edom (red, ruddy), with dyed garments from Bozrah (the sheepfold)? He that is glorious in His apparel, and traveling in the greatness of His strength? *yea*, I that speak in righteousness *Am* Mighty to save . . . !” Isaiah 63:1

*The Ninety and Nine -*

*There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
In the shelter of the fold,  
But one was out on the hills away,  
Far, far from the gates of gold--  
Away on the mountains wild and bare,  
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.*

*“Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine;  
Are they not enough for Thee ?”  
But the Shepherd made answer . . . “One of Mine  
Has wandered away from Me,  
And although the road be rough and steep,  
I go to the desert to find My sheep.”*

*But none of the ransomed ever knew  
How deep were the waters crossed,  
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed  
through ere He found His sheep that was lost.  
Far out in the desert He heard its cry--  
Fainting and helpless, and ready to die.*

*“Lord, whence are these blood drops all the way  
That mark out the mountain’s track ?”*

*“They were shed for one who had gone astray,  
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back.”*

*“Lord, why are Thy hands so rent and torn ?”  
“They were pierced tonight by many a thorn.”*

*But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,  
And up from the rocky steep,  
There rose a cry to the gate of heaven,  
“Rejoice, I have found My sheep!”  
And the angels sang around the throne,  
“Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!”*

-- Hymn by Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830 - 1869

**“Jesus knows the circumstances** of every soul. The greater the sinner’s guilt, the more he needs the Saviour. His (our King and Saviour’s) heart of divine love and sympathy is drawn out most of all for the one who is the most hopelessly entangled in the snares of the enemy. With His Own blood He has signed the emancipation papers of the race . . . Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration !”

- Ministry of Healing, p.89-90

“The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way *back* to God.

*“I Am the good Shepherd, and the good Shepherd giveth His Life for the sheep . . . !”* John 10:11

The Shepherd Who discovers that one of His sheep is missing does not look carelessly upon the flock that is safely housed, and say, “I have ninety and nine, and it will cost me too much trouble to go in search of the straying one. Let him come back . . . and I will open the door of the sheepfold, and let him in.”

No, no sooner does the sheep go astray than the Shepherd is filled with grief and anxiety. He counts and recounts the flock. When He is sure that one sheep is lost, He slumbers not. He leaves the ninety and



nine within the fold, and goes in search of the straying sheep. The darker and more tempestuous the night and the more perilous the way, the greater is the shepherd's anxiety and the more earnest His search. He makes every effort to find that one lost sheep.

With what relief he hears in the distance its first faint cry. Following the sound, he climbs the steepest heights, he goes to the very edge of the precipice, at the risk of his own life. Thus he searches, while the cry, growing fainter, tells him that his sheep is ready to die. At last his effort is rewarded; the lost is found.

**Then He does not scold it** because it has caused him so much trouble. He does not drive it with a whip. He does not even try to lead it home. In his joy he takes the trembling creature upon his shoulders; if it is bruised and wounded, he gathers it in his arms, pressing it close to his bosom, that the warmth of his own heart may give it life. With gratitude that His search has not been in vain, He bears it back to the fold.

Thank God, He has presented to our imagination no picture of a sorrowful Shepherd returning without the sheep. The parable does not speak of failure but of success and joy in the recovery. **Here is the divine guarantee that not even one** of the straying sheep of God's fold is overlooked, not one is left unsuccored. Every one that will submit to be ransomed, Christ will rescue from the pit of corruption and from the briers of sin.

**Desponding soul, take courage** . . . even though you have done wickedly. Do not think that perhaps God will pardon your transgressions (rebellion and apostasies), and permit you to come into His Presence, *for* God has made the first advance. While you were *yet* in rebellion against Him (enemies – Romans 5:10), He went forth to seek you. With the tender heart of the Shepherd He left the ninety and nine and went out into the wilderness to find that *one* which was lost. The soul, bruised and wounded and ready to perish, He encircles in His arms of love and joyfully bears it to the fold of safety.”  
– Christ Object Lessons, p.187-189

“The parable of the lost sheep presents to the world a lesson of the greatest importance.

O, that every soul understood the mercy, the goodness, the love, of the character of God! His willingness to forgive sin and transgression is a subject that may be dwelt upon through time and eternity. Every true follower of Christ will love souls for whom Christ died. He will leave his pleasant fireside, and the case of the wandering and lost sheep will engage his attention.

**The lost sheep never returns to the fold unless he is sought for and brought back;** and frequently when the lost one hears the call of the anxious searcher, he runs from the one who is trying to rescue him and bring him into a safe refuge. When the Shepherd finds the straying sheep, He does not beat it as it frantically struggles to get free; but He pulls it from the mire, or draws it from the thicket, and, with a heart filled with love and pity, *and in gladness He* places it on his shoulder, and takes it back to the fold.



Jesus is the Good Shepherd Who has given His Life for the sheep. Every soul that will submit to be ransomed, Jesus will bear from the pit of corruption or from the briers of sin. He bore our sins, He carried

our sorrows (Isaiah 53:1-12).

Jesus takes the soul, sinful and polluted, upon His shoulders, and joyfully bears it to the haven of safety. Not a solitary (single) soul would have entered *into* the fold of Christ if the divine Shepherd had not made **a personal effort** . . . He came to save that which was lost. He tasted death for every man . . . !” *ref: Romans 5:12-19.*

- The Youth’s Instructor, December 30, 1897