

Meek and Mild

STRICKEN WITH FEAR the herd of sheep crowded into one corner of the corral. “My grandmother has seen it herself,” said an old sheep. “It is something most horrible and gruesome. Yet one does not know just exactly what it is. For she only passed a door that led into a dark room on her way to pasture. But there was heavy odor of blood, and as a terrible cry arose from within, my grandmother trembled violently and ran back to the fold.”

The rest of the herd shuddered and bleated in distress.

“Is your grandmother still alive?” questioned a young buck.

“I do not know, but not long after, they came and got her and she has never returned,” answered the older sheep. “They say that is always the beginning and there is no coming back.”

Just then the gate opened and a large shepherd dog, barking lustily, drove the herd down the lane and out into the pasture. There stood the shepherd talking with a man who did not have the appearance of a shepherd. Finally, with decisive steps, the stranger strode into the herd and critically sized up the various animals. Presently, he grabbed the young buck and threw a tether around his neck.

An ice cold tremor shook the body of the animal and with fearful eyes, he struggled vainly to free himself.

“I’ll take this one,” said the man, producing a dirty money sack and passing some coins to the shepherd. Thus, by the magic of money, the living flesh was transferred from life to death.

As he tugged the reluctant animal away from the



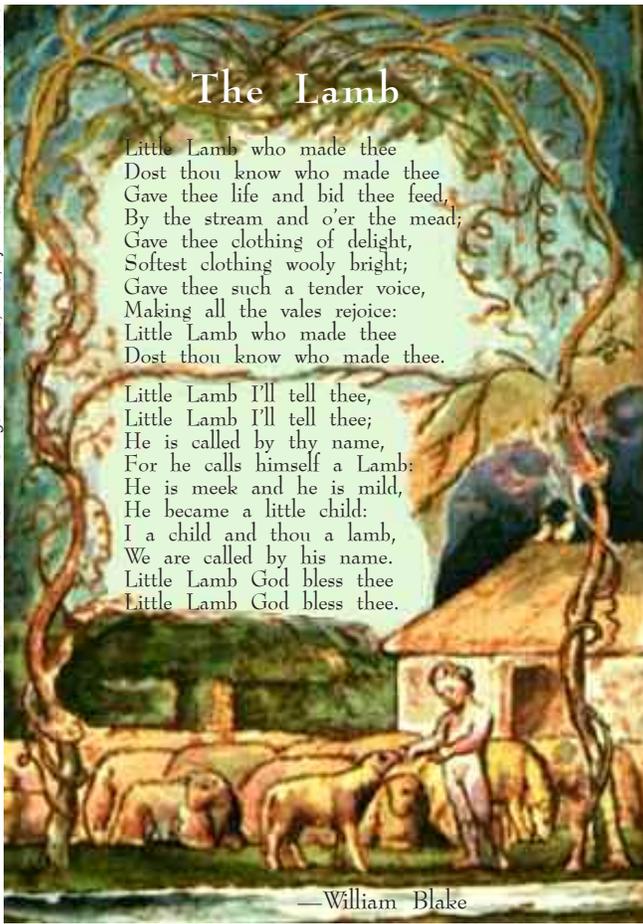
Oil on Canvas, Philippe de Champaigne (1602-1674), Musée des Granges de Port-Royal

The Good Shepherd

pasture and out onto the highway, the rest of the herd fixed wondering eyes upon the young buck, who turned his pleading eyes toward his relatives and playmates. Something inside seemed to cramp and convulse as he struggled again to return to the fold. “This is the beginning,” he thought. “I am being taken away.” But sensing the futility of resistance he mutely followed his captor.

Soon they turned a corner and as the herd and home disappeared from view, the wind carried faint sounds of the barking dog and the shepherd’s flute.

For a long time the man walked swiftly down the hot dusty road. The legs of the buck grew tired and weak; the dust was parching his throat, and the



The Lamb

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life and bid thee feed;
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice:
Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee.

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee;
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek and he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee
Little Lamb God bless thee.

—William Blake

rope was nearly choking off his breath. Finally he bleated piteously for rest and water. But the stranger dragged him onward until they came to a little town. As they passed through some narrow streets the repellent odor of blood and decayed flesh met the animal's nostrils. Soon they stopped at a gate before a small building.

"Please, oh, please, let me go home," said the buck, bleating up at the man as he opened the gate. But the dumb supplication was unheard. Quickly the man bound the helpless animal's legs and carried him inside a dark stuffy room. A paralyzing terror gripped the buck's body as he instinctively knew the worst had come.

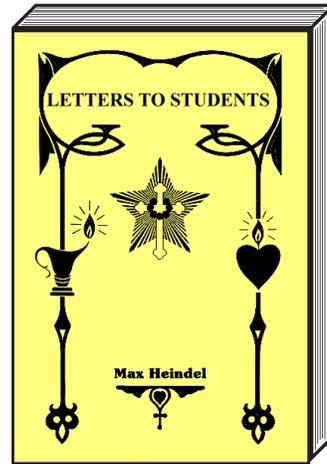
And come it did.

How full the world is of unheard prayers of man and beast! The cry of the stricken and suffering is all about us. They are all recorded in the large compassionate eyes of Christ as He walks unseen through the earth. □

—Manfred Kyber

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