



²⁹ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. (John 1:29-30)

³⁵ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; ³⁶ And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! (John 1:35-36)

Consider the great astonishment of the multitude as John the Baptist pronounced this truth of prophecy. There were many poor and lowly people present who had no knowledge at all of prophecy and its meaning. They had relied upon the corrupt and cunning rulers of Israel to 'tell them what they wanted them to believe' much as the multitudes of today rely upon false evangelists and ministers to tell them what they want to hear instead of confirming all things through dedicated Bible study. So those gathered about the Banks of Jordan had no idea what John could have meant by referring to a person (Jesus) as a Lamb, and particularly the Lamb of God.

These people had faithfully kept the Passover Feast for all of their conscious lives, but never fully comprehended the significance of this Feast. These had not been taught the deeper things of God, and could not have understood that the lambs, goats, and oxen sacrificed at the Temple were only faint and unworthy types of that greater Lamb that God would be offered to absolve the believer of sin and wickedness. The Ram, whose horns were caught in the thicket of briar, was a direct shadow of the true substitute to follow in the fullness of time in the form of the Lamb of God. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: ⁴ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. ⁶ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. ⁷ Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Gal 4:3-7)

Now there was a young girl who was a virgin living in the remote province of Israel (Galilee) who would not have understood John's proclamation had she not known sooner by the Annunciation of the Archangel some thirty years removed from John's words by Jordan Waters. She was by no means a girl of popular society. Nazareth was a small hamlet of Galilee derided by the Jews as one of total insignificance. Many times, those people and places of insignificance to the world are the very people and places that are central to the heart of God. So it was with Mary. God had known this young woman from the remote ages of Eternity, and arranged that

this young virgin would be mother to His only Begotten Son through the agency of the Holy Ghost.

I was blessed in the first grade to have a wonderful and Godly teacher, Mrs. Dorothy Painter, who reinforced that same faith taught in my home and in church concerning the fundamentals of the Christian faith. For doing the same today, she would probably be scourged, ostracized and banned from further teaching as a 'child abuser.' She not only had her first graders recite the pledge of allegiance each morning, but also to read, and memorize, selections from the Psalms. One lesson I vividly remember was that of Mary's Lamb.



Almost every man or woman my age will remember Mary's Lamb written by a famous and influential writer and editor of the 1800's named Sarah Josepha Hale (1788-1879). Mrs. Hale was the main proponent in convincing Abraham Lincoln to declare Thanksgiving Day as a national holiday to be observed throughout the United States. She wrote these words that are as applicable today as they were when written at a time of national crisis when our country was involved in the War Between the States: *Everything that contributes to bind us in one vast empire together, to quicken the sympathy that makes us feel from the icy North to the sunny South that we are one family, each a member of a great and free Nation, not merely the unit of a remote locality, is worthy of being cherished.* Her famous child's poem was published in a collection of children's poems in 1830. Her poem was later made into a song which every school child could sing by heart:

Mary's Lamb

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,
Which was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play
To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned it out,
But still it lingered near,
And waited patiently about
Till Mary did appear.

Why does the lamb love Mary so?
The eager children cry;
Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,
The teacher did reply.

Mrs. Painter was able to discover truth and beauty that often evaded those who were looking too low to find it. *Yes, Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow, taught Mrs. Painter. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:6-7)* And, yes, its fleece was white as snow because it was the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. Remember that first Passover in Egypt: *5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: 6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. (Ex 12:5-7)* That vertical and horizontal application of the blood of an innocent Lamb foreshadowed the vertical and horizontal bar of the Cross of Calvary upon which the blood of the Lamb of God was shed for us as the Passover of the Lord. *7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our PASSOVER is sacrificed for us. (1 Cor 5:7)*

The Lamb followed Mary everywhere, even to the Feast of the Passover in Jerusalem. *41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. (Luke 2:41-42)* Do we go with Jesus everywhere, or do we wander away as a lost lamb at frequent moments?

If Christ is not welcomed where your travels take you, perhaps you could reconsider the kind of places to which you travel: *It followed her to school one day, Which was against the rule; It made the children laugh and play To see a lamb at school.* I wonder when did it become against the rule for Christ to be taught in school. Certainly, Christ was taught in the schools of the author's day as well as the days of my youth. But wherever Christ goes, even if against the rule, He brings joy and celebration to the hearts of the innocent.

And so the teacher turned it out, But still it lingered near, And waited patiently about Till Mary did appear. In 1962, a godless US Supreme Court overruled the 1st Amendment of the US Constitution by prohibiting prayer in public school. The original intent of the Framers was to protect religious faith from government, not government from religious faith. But wherever hearts are stayed on Him, Christ will not be vanquished, but lingers ever near. ***Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*** (Rev 3:20)

Why does the lamb love Mary so? The eager children cry; Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know, The teacher did reply. The lamb was sweet and innocent. It loved Mary at first glance, and that love was returned by Mary because *Deep calleth unto Deep. 17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.* (Prov 8:17) Mary was young and innocent. The innocent respond easily to love. She loved the Lamb and the Lamb loved her. This is the simplicity of the Gospel in a single verse from Proverbs 8:17. If we love our Lord, it is unassailable evidence that we are His. Would it not be a great blessing if we had teachers such as Mrs. Painter today? God bless her and the greatest generation from which she sprang.