



<sup>1</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. <sup>4</sup> And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. <sup>6</sup> This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. <sup>7</sup> Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:1-10)

A Door is used to admit guests as well as to deprive those uninvited. The door of Salvation was closed until it was made Open by the Lord Jesus Christ. Even so, it is a closed door to those who reject Him and an Open door to those who receive Him. The Door of Salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Door of the Ark of Noah was a foreshadowing of that Door to come by way of the Lord. Noah could not close the door of salvation on mankind. Only the Lord could do so. Jesus says: ***“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*** (Matt 11:28) Jesus is the place of security now, and He was in the days of Noah. ***“And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.”*** (Gen 7:1) You or I, or Noah, can close the Door of salvation to any person, only God can do that. Who closed the door to the Ark – was it Noah? ***“ . . . and the LORD shut him in.”*** (Gen 7:16) The benefits of grace will determine which side of the Door we are on when the terror of the end arise.

Charles Spurgeon was once asked about the difference in Free Will and Predestination. He described it this way: “The world is a busy thoroughfare through which all tongues, tribes and people pass daily. Along the way, there stands a large, imposing closed Door with a sign above that reads, ‘All who will may enter herein.’ Most do not notice the sign or the door. Other, even in noticing, pass on by. But some

stop, evaluate their options, and enter the Door knowing that the inside cannot be as bad as the world. Once inside, they look back over the closed Door and read these words – ‘Welcome, *ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*’” (Matt 25:34) This is a mystery, and neither Calvinist nor Arminian can reach the depth of the mystery. Every man frames his theology around those proofs that favor their particular brand of theology, but it remains an inexplicable mystery for which we must thank God, for every man chosen and elected knows he is chosen and elected – the means is a subordinate concern!

Sheep and children are closely related in character. We often refer to innocent children as ‘little lambs,’ and certainly they are, not having carnal knowledge. If the Federal Department of Education has its way, they shall attain that knowledge as early as Kindergarten! What a disgrace to inflict such immoral training on little children. If we trained little lambs to believe that they were wolves, how long would they fend for themselves in the wilds? Lambs must be provided food and shelter by their shepherd. Children must be provided the same by loving parents. Lambs have vision that is limited to only a few feet before them – so it is with little children as to insight and wisdom. The wolves are forever trying to separate out the most vulnerable lamb to satisfy an insatiable appetite. So do the wolves of the world seek out the children to corrupt and indoctrinate against the Moral Law of God.

But, as we have discussed in many devotions, Christ is our Good Shepherd and He brings us to safe lodging in protected folds. In fact, He is the very Door of the Fold through which no one can enter without Him. We never mature, as Christians, to a point in which we are mature in Christ. We may study Holy Writ 10 hours per day, and every day of our lives, but, yet, never gain a full comprehension of all that it contains of the Bread of Heaven and the Water of Life. If you did gain such a full comprehension of all that God has said in His Book, where could we go for more Bread and more Water?

Jesus said to His late night guest, Nicodemus: “*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” (John 3:3) Have we deeply considered the significance of that counsel of the Lord to the proud Pharisee? Is this counsel of Jesus not closely related to that which He gave in the Gospel of St Matthew? *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* (Matt 18:3-6) Are we not physically born into this world as little children? The same is true of the Spirit rebirth. Christ did not mean that we should be born again in the same way as our first birth, but that we become new creatures in Christ through a re-birth of our spirit. We are then as little children in the eyes of God. Even the sage theologian who loves, and has made the study of, God’s Word a lifetime endeavor will also be simply as a little child in the eyes of God. You may look long and far to find such a theologian in our day.

Do not children know and understand the voice of the parent? So do the sheep know the voice of the Shepherd? Do not we hold the hand of our little children when we lead them across streets and in public places? Does the Shepherd not likewise lead His sheep tenderly along the mountain trails? Do we not teach our children to disregard following the voice of a stranger? So the sheep follow only the voice of their Shepherd. Does not the parent plan for the future of his child and do all he can to make his lifelong and healthy? Does not the Good Shepherd offer life, and that more abundantly? So Jesus uses things that we know of, and to which we can relate, to teach of higher truths that are presently beyond our understanding. Poor Nicodemus could

not separate the symbolism from that being symbolized (at least at first). But Nicodemus never came to Christ under cover of darkness again, but publicly and openly.

How are Christian saints like children?

1. Children are heirs of all that the fathers possess: *"...if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* (Romans 8:17)
2. Trusting in our Father as the lambs trust in their shepherd, we are made children of God: *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* (Gal 3:26)
3. Children follow parents as lambs the shepherd: *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children* (Eph 5:1)

Sheep are not born of the Shepherd, but of other sheep. But those choice lambs, purchased by the Shepherd, become His charges even more than their natural parents who cannot provide for them as can the Shepherd. It is the sheep of the church that reproduce more sheep, and the Shepherd cares for them as His own. Children are begotten of parents. Saints are begotten of God.

Children inherit physical and mental traits of parents. Saints are endowed with the likeness and character of their God.

Children are given the 'family' name of the parent. Saints are called 'Christian' after Christ their Good Shepherd.

Children are not in every detail alike just as the children of God are not all alike in every detail. Each is given at least one talent with which to invest His labors for the Kingdom, but not the SAME talent!

The list of comparisons is limitless. We are all in Christ as children leaning on every word of the counsel of God with a due reverence. We are just as the lambs awaiting the Shepherds call to proceed or to stand fast; to enter the fold, or to remain without.

If we are yoked with spiritual pride, we are no longer children, and if not children, hold no part with Christ. We all, alike, must become as little children from the moment of our salvation until the closing of the long dark night of this life.

God has blessed me with so many children under my preaching in St Andrews Parish. It was EXACTLY that for which I craved. I LOVE children and find it so easy to train them up in the way that they should go. When I think back on those shiny little eyes listening attentively to my long sermons, I am amazed that they continued to return Sunday after Sunday. They had not complaint in singing the classical hymns of the church, or in reading from the King James Bible though, for most, English was their second language. What an amazing gift God gave me for more than fifteen years. I could never have brought such a lovely congregation together on my own efforts – it was the Good shepherd who opened the Door and invited them in. How much I thank Him for the privilege. Regardless of their ages, those children will ALWAYS be MY children in love.

Have you followed the Counsel given by Jesus and become (and remained) as a little child?