

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1)*

Were there no other benediction in the twenty-third Psalm, the simple statement, "I shall not want," is blessing enough to move all sane people to seek the Lord as their shepherd.

Is not "want" the misery of all mankind? What is it that makes us miserable but not having what we desire to have? In whatever realm you may think of, the thing that spoils it is want. Immediately we think of food, shelter, clothing, necessities of life. And such is rightly taken to apply to the text. The word "shepherd" means feeder. The Lord feeds His sheep.

But there are other wants. Want of love, of understanding, of companionship, of a sense of fulfillment in life, of security. Want of a healthy body, of a clear and sound mind; want of physical ability, of desirable talents. These are the things that make men miserable and discontent.

But we must not think that the Lord's sheep are given everything that men may crave. It is not said that they shall be given everything, or that they can claim anything the depraved nature of man might lust for. This is the teaching of a number of "health, prosperity and happiness" preachers of today's perverted Christianity. They erroneously teach that the object of redemption is to bring man into a state of unlimited carnal and sensual blessedness in this life. Not at all! The Bible teaches that the children of God suffer and groan with the rest of creation waiting for the full redemption of the body. Therefore, we do expect to be without many things, even what we might call necessities. We expect to suffer, physically and psychologically. And we will be abused and persecuted.

But those whose Shepherd the Lord is shall never want for anything that is good for them. We do not know what is good and what is not good for us but the Shepherd does; and He will withhold from us no good thing. What we cannot have, we can be sure He has kept from us for our good. Knowing this, we experience a peace and contentment that no one else on earth can know. We not only have all we can have, we have all we want. That is contentment.

-C.M.