

PARABLE OF THE QUARRELSOME SHEPHERDS

Once there were three shepherds who pastured their flocks in a desolate area. They went their separate ways by day but each evening they sheltered their flocks in a common fold. Although all worked for a common master they did not get along very well. One was naturally cranky, another a jealous sort and the third was very sensitive and his feeling easily hurt. Each night when the sheep were in the fold the men would gather about a common fire, eat their food and talk. Unfortunately their conversations often turned fractious and bitter. One night their quarreling grew intense. As they shouted and threatened one another, wolves were sneaking ever closer to the darkened fold. The men came to blows, it was an awful sight. While they battled each other, the wolves saw their opportunity. They dashed into the fold tearing at the sheep and scattering them. They mad off with several of the lambs.

The next morning the owner came to check on his sheep. He was shocked and angry at what he found. His sheep were scattered. Many were wounded, others were dead. The shepherds were battered and bruised but not from protecting their sheep. They had exhausted themselves fighting each other. The owner was furious. They were driven from his presence as unfit to serve him.

And the teacher explained that the sheep are God's people, the shepherds his preachers. The wolves are those who would lead the people into a new kind of faith and worship. He that hath an ear should give heed to the parable. JHW