Introduction

Having just escaped from Doubting Castle and Giant Despair by using the Key of Promise, Christian and Hopeful are in great need of rest and healing. By Diffidence’s wicked counsel, they have been beaten without mercy, deprived of food, drink, and light, and have barely escaped with their lives.
After they fled from the castle, weak and weary, they continued on their journey until they came to the Delectable Mountains where they met four shepherds who welcomed them and attended to their needs. Bunyan’s metaphors in this chapter move us to consider two vital questions:

1. Who is investing in my life?
2. Am I investing in the lives of others?
“Every time you build into the life of another person, you launch a process that ideally will never end.”
The Delectable Mountains

“They went up to the mountains to admire the gardens and orchards, the vineyards and fountains of water. They also drank, bathed, and ate from the vineyards. Now shepherds were feeding their flocks on the tops of these mountains.”
Delectable

• **Delectable**, *adj.*, “affording delight; delightful, pleasant” (OED).

• It is seldom used in ordinary speech, except ironically or humorously; however, it is used seriously in poetry and elevated prose.

• Henry James (1843-1916) used the word in his story, *Benvolio*: “The old man had told him that he had a delectable voice.”
John Milton (1608-1674) used the word *delectable* in his masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*, when he wrote about the Garden of Eden:

He brought thee into this delicious grove,  
This garden, planted with the trees of God,  
**Delectable** both to behold and taste;  
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food  
Gave thee, all sorts are here that all th’ earth yields, Variety without end.
Origin of “Immanuel’s Land”

• “The Lord is about to bring against them the mighty flood waters of the River – the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, O Immanuel!” (Is. 8:7-8).

• Immanuel’s Land is Palestine.
“Shepherd My sheep” was not a viable option but a direct command to Peter from our Lord Jesus Christ” (John 21:16). These three words entail a multitude of responsibilities for the people whom God as chosen for the task of shepherding His flock.
Distressed and Downcast

• “And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt. 9:36).

• The first participle basically means skinned, then completely worn out, fatigued, exhausted. The second means thrown (on the ground), and so lying down in an utterly helpless and forsaken condition (Hendriksen).
Christian and Hopeful met four shepherds on the Delectable Mountains, whose names were:

- Knowledge
- Experience
- Watchful
- Sincere
• **The shepherd must be a believer.** There is no place in God’s church for hirelings. “He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them” (John 10:12).

• **The shepherd must keep himself free from sin.** “Keep yourself free from sin” (I Tim. 5:22).
The Shepherd’s Relationship with God

• The shepherd must keep faith and a good conscience. “Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith” (I Tim. 1:19).

• The shepherd must strive to be holy. “But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior” (I Pt. 1:15).
The Shepherd’s Relationship with God

• The shepherd must discipline himself for the purpose of godliness. “But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (I Tim. 4:7).
The Shepherd’s Relationship with Others

• Above reproach (one in whom there is no just cause for blame).
• Temperate (sober in mind, watchful, circumspect).
• Prudent (used of one who follows sound reason and restrains his passions).
• Respectable (well-ordered, well-behaved, discreet).
The Shepherd’s Relationship with Others

• Hospitable (loving strangers).
• Able to teach.
• Not addicted to wine (sitting long beside wine).
• Not pugnacious (a striker; one apt to strike).
• Gentle (not only passively non-contentious, but actively considerate).
• Uncontentious (disinclined to fight).
The Shepherd’s Relationship with Others

• Free from the love of money.
• A good reputation with those outside the church.
• Must not be accused of dissipation or rebellion.
• Not self-willed.
• Not quick-tempered.
• Not fond of sordid gain.
The Shepherd’s Relationship with Others

• Loving what is good.
• Must be just.
• Devout (pure from all crime).
• Self-controlled.
• These qualities are enumerated in I Timothy and Titus.
Three Functions of a Shepherd

• Instruction
• Protection
• Attention
1 - Instruction by Precept

• **Instruction by precept.** “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?...the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep” (Ezekiel 34:2,8).
Instruction by Precept

• It is the shepherd’s duty to feed God’s sheep...and feed them well. “I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel” (Ezek. 34:14). It is the shepherd’s duty to ensure that God’s sheep are not famished or undernourished.
Instruction by Precept

• The instruction must be sound. Paul exhorts Timothy, “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching” (I Tim. 4:16). “Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). “Handle accurately the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15).

• The instruction must be based on God’s Word. The shepherd’s duty is to utilize the
Instruction by Precept

Word of God to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort with great patience and instruction” (II Tim. 4:2).

• The means of instruction is love. The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart (I Tim. 1:5). Instruction without the proper motivation of love is ugly.
Instruction by Example

• Paul exhorts Timothy to “show yourself an example of those who believe” (I Tim. 4:12).

• Peter states the same principle: “Proving to be examples to the flock” (I Peter 5:3).

• Paul commands the Philippians: “Join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Phil. 3:17).
• **The shepherd goes before his flock.** “Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God” (Ex. 3:1). “O God, when you went out before your people...” (Ps. 68:7). He guides and leads them: “He leads me beside still waters...He leads me in paths of righteousness” (Ps. 23).
2 - Protection

• The shepherd uses his staff for protection. “Your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4).

• He carries the lambs in his arms. “He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young” (Is. 40:11).
2 - Protection

- He goes after the enemy. “But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him’” (I Sam. 17:34-35).
• “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:28-29).
• **Sheep need attention.** They get sick, so the shepherd must reach forth his hand and strengthen them. “The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd” (Ezek. 34:4).
“These names imply much useful instruction, both to ministers and Christians, by showing them what endowments are most essential to the pastoral office. The attention given to preachers should not be proportioned to the degree of their confidence, vehemence, accomplishments, graceful delivery, eloquence, or politeness; but to that of their knowledge of the Scriptures, and of every subject that relates
The Shepherds

to the glory of God and the salvation of souls; their experience of the power of divine truth in their own hearts, of the faithfulness of God to his promises, of the believer’s conflicts, difficulties, and dangers, and of the manifold devices of Satan to mislead, deceive, pervert, defile, or harass the souls of men: their watchfulness over the people, as their constant business and unremitted care, to caution them
against every snare, and to recover them out of every error, into which they may be betrayed; and their sincerity, as manifested by a disinterested, unambitious, unassuming, patient, and affectionate conduct; by proving that they deem themselves bound to practice their own instructions, and by a uniform attempt to convince the people, that they ‘seek not theirs, but them’” (Scott).
The Hill of Error

• “Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:17-18).

• Shepherds: “Those you see dashed to pieces at the bottom of this mountain are those who listened to them.”
“It is well for us to be much on this mount. We have constant need of caution. ‘Take heed and beware,’ says our Lord constantly, and by his Spirit, Paul takes the Corinthians up to this Mount Caution, and shows them what awful things have happened to professors of old; and he leaves this solemn word for us – ‘Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall’ (I Cor. 10:12).”
“The glass of God’s word of grace and truth held up by the hand of faith to the eye of the soul. So Paul speaks: ‘Beholding as in a glass (the gospel) the glory of the Lord’ (II Cor. 3:18). But unbelieving doubts and fears will make the hand tremble, and the sight dim” (Mason).
Final Gifts from the Shepherds

• **First Shepherd:** A map to show them the right way to go.

• **Second Shepherd:** Encouraged Christian and Hopeful to beware of the Flatterer.

• **Third Shepherd:** Warned them not to sleep on the Enchanted Ground.

• **Fourth Shepherd:** Wished them God’s blessing.
Thus by the shepherds, secrets are revealed,
Which from all other men are kept concealed:
Come to the shepherds then, if you would see
Things deep, things hid, and that mysterious be.