

STRAYING ONES CORRECTED

It is said that shepherds sometimes have to break one of the legs of wayward sheep that consistently wander off from the flock. To break their legs and reset them, and then hand-feed them until they are mended, teaches them obedience. They will then stay close to the shepherd, and this not only saves their own lives but keeps them from endangering the lives of others that they were leading off with them. To some this approach to discipline would seem cruel and harsh, but when one considers what is accomplished by it, it does not appear overly severe at all. The shepherd loves the straying sheep as well as the others. He does not desire any harm to any of them, and hence he must correct the straying ones for the benefit of all. Just so does God deal with His own straying sheep that He deigns to save from temporal ruin or destruction.

He breaks their stubborn will and so cripples them as to make them feel and know their utter dependence upon Him. David was a shepherd, and he himself said that "*Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I have kept Thy word,*" and "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes*" (Psalm. 119:67, 71). Bible readers will recall that God crippled Jacob at the time He changed his name to Israel. (Gen. 32:24-32). And has not the Lord also made us spiritual cripples, that we might be made more sensible of our dependence upon Him and that our propensity for straying from Him might be weakened or abated? Some of His children, like the writer, have been hard students, and it has required some rather severe measures to teach us not to stray. —Elder Ralph Harris