

BEHOLD, THE LAMB

By Maude Carolan Pych

1.

In a grassy field in Bethlehem
a rugged old shepherd
tenderly smooths the woolly coat
of a pregnant ewe
as she bleats in labor
almost ready to deliver her offspring

He's been through this many times—
Patiently, the shepherd remains with her
prepared to assist as she gives birth

Immediately following the delivery
he wisely wipes the membrane away
from the lamb's face
so it can breathe
while the mother instinctively
licks it all over with her tongue
In a few minutes
it rises on wobbly legs
and manages a few shaky steps

Then the shepherd picks it up
and carefully examines
every limb and joint and crevice
Finding no blemish
he wraps strips of swaddling cloth
around its delicate little hooves
to protect them
from splintering or cracking

He'll raise this spotless little lamb
with utmost care—

and present it to the Levitical priests
designated for sacrifice
upon the altar
at the Temple in Jerusalem

as an atonement for sin

2.

The old shepherd
warms himself by the fire
with the younger men
when suddenly the sky is alight
with angels singing praises to God
and announcing with joy
the birth of Jesus, Savior of the World

Filled with great jubilation
the shepherds set off
with their flock, to honor Him
They don't have far to travel

In a lowly stable outside an inn
they find the Babe with His mother, Mary
and her husband, Joseph

Baby Jesus is without blemish
swaddled and sleeping
in a make-shift cradle
that is actually a feeding trough for animals

Years go by—
and in the fullness of time
the Man, Jesus, presents Himself
to John, the Baptizer
on the shore of the Jordan River

As He approaches
John proclaims to all who will listen

***Behold, the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world!***¹

A few years later
Jesus, Son of God, the spotless Lamb
does exactly that, once and for all—

at the Cross

¹John 1:29 NASB