

knew the temptation to become a hireling, and save his own skin and secure his own comfort, by leaving the sheep to the present danger. But just because he knew so well what a tax shepherding puts on body and heart and brain, therefore he is entitled to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd; and if I risked my life, as I did—for I have wrestled with the lion and the bear to save the helpless lamb of my flock—how much more will He, the Lord Jehovah, extend to me His power and faithfulness! 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.' No, I shall not!" Here is your bank. It will never fail. There is a vast deal more of ready money in there than the poor saints have ever yet taken out of it. There is a vast deal more of present help in perplexity than troubled and perplexed saints have ever taken out of it. There is everything that we need in that God who has revealed Himself to us indubitably, in these last days, in the person of His Son, who has expressly said to us, "I am the Good Shepherd; I give my life for the sheep." He has done the deed, and this morning we are celebrating the memorial thereof. Come near Him, man. Come near Him, woman. Gather round about this great Good Shepherd. Lay hold, at any rate, of the skirts of His garments; and, as you cling to them, get some sense and feeling of the mighty shoulders from which those garments depend.

I once said in this same church to a servant girl who had got into a good family, "Are you happy where you are?" She had got what for a servant was a good situation, and I shall not forget the quietly confident way in which with beaming face she said, "Oh, yes, sir, I have £22 a year, and all found." "The Lord is my Shepherd," and all is found. "I shall not want." "All found." That was evidently more to her than the small sum total of the actual pounds. She dwelt upon that, and said with emphasis, "and all found."

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters." How simply, how artlessly this Psalm is composed. That is what makes it so difficult to expound, it is artlessly artful. David in his ripeness is just breathing out his own experience. He sees himself once more a shepherd lad back on the hillsides of Judaea, and he hears in his ears the bleating of his flock. There are few who keep close to him, but see yonder wild one, and this other, dashing off here, and bre'king off there. All his shepherd experience comes upon him as he details in the second and third verses, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." How David

here puts all things into the category of the sovereignty of grace

I am sure there is none of us who will feel that his part in grace is being overlooked, because David lifts God up so high and so splendidly. He makes all right. He maketh me to lie down. The very syntax helps us. "He causeth me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." for He is the Shepherd, and the Shepherd keeps the sheep, not the sheep the shepherd, as has often been remarked.

May we enter just now into this gracious simplicity of the relationship that exists between us and the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

"Green pastures, still waters," or, as the margin has it, "waters of quietness." The vision before David's mind, no doubt, is a vision of a sunny day in some quiet place in Israel—one of the days that instinctively made him sing—one of the days when he was preparing himself to be the sweet psalmist and harper of Israel: just such a day as you saw this past summer, when, perhaps, this very scene was before your eyes. Out came the sheep, and out came the shepherd, and in a short time they were scattering themselves through the meadow, or all along the gentle slopes of the hill, and, as you looked, this scene rose up before your eyes.

"He maketh me to lie down." He is seeking to do that to-day; for very often, like sheep, we are very restless, and we need to be made to lie down. We need to be urged to come off the wing; we need to have our souls steadied and settled and brought to rest. To change the figure. He needs to say to us, as He said to the wind and the agitated sea, "Peace! be still!" You need to say it to your children. The bed is very soft and downy and white. The resting time has come, and the child is lying on the bed, and ought to be enjoying it, but the little thing is so restless that there is something more needed. The mother, the father or the nurse needs to say, "My child, lie still." So does God. May it be a word of power to our hot and restless hearts to-day. "Lie still. What is it that aileth thee?"

"He restoreth my soul." That is hard work. I think that we are apt to have romantic notions about shepherds. I do not know anything about it practically, but I did once make the acquaintance of a shepherd, and I went with him two or three times, and I got to see that it was not so romantic as poets would make out. It is a toilsome, unromantic business. I had no idea that sheep caused so much trouble until I went with