

Psalms was born. It is the opening of a man's heart, only, as it were, for a moment, and yet between the opening and the shutting there has gushed out a spiritual melody that has throbbled in the very air ever since." I could spend our whole time in simply quoting versions and appreciative criticisms of this Psalm.

I think it was Beecher who said that this Psalm is among psalms what the nightingale is among birds. It is a small bird, he says, and of homely plumage; but with what throbbing melody he pours out his notes! and he goes on to describe what it has done ever since it was penned: how it has soothed the sorrowful, cheered the lonely, dried the eyes of mourners, comforted those who were dying, and consoled those who were left behind. And then he says, that its work is not done. It was at first full of quiet, but intense spiritual power, like the heaving of a silent sea, and it is full of it as ever it was. It will go on singing to your children and my children, and will not fold its wings and cease until the last pilgrim has reached the Father's house, to dwell there for evermore.

Then, he says, it will fold its wings and fly away back to the God who gave it, to mingle its song with the mighty anthems which for ever shall circle round the throne. Oh that we might begin where it begins, and end where it ends! It is a short Psalm. If I may say so, it is a little step-ladder, but a little step-ladder will suffice to lift a man from the pavement up to the shining street-lamp. So may it be with this little Psalm; although it has only six verses, it is always long enough to stretch from the gloom and the darkness of this present evil world to the breakings of the brightness which shall shine more and more till the perfect day. As I have said, the note that throbs all through this nightingale Psalm is that exquisitely melodious spiritual note—"God is with me, and I am with Him;" so simple, so profound—so simple, that the smallest child here can, in a measure, understand it,—so profound, that to all eternity we shall never have done wondering at it, and admiring its beauty.

"God is with me, and I am with Him."

"Rise, my soul, adore and wonder.

Why, O Lord, such love to me?

Grace has put me in the number

Of the Saviour's family.

Hallelujah! Thanks, eternal thanks, to Thee."

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Let us begin with confidence, dear friends, especially as we are gathered round the Communion Table this morning. It is a plain proposition, as logical as logical can be, and therefore most helpful and encouraging to us in spiritual things; for, oh, we are apt

to think that the ordinary rules of logic that apply to ordinary themes, and the treatment of them, do not quite apply in spiritual things and in spiritual experiences. They do.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." There is to be no argument then. Says the writer of this Psalm, "I am not going to examine foundations. I am not going into doctrine. I am not going into history. I am simply to muse, and to treat of my own experience, and as I muse, the fire burns, and out comes this ruddy glow of simple assurance, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.'" Say it in your heart. Begin with it. Look round about upon all that would cause trouble and distress, and look up then to the Great Shepherd; "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." How these two things go together, and, alas! alas! how often we separate them. I was at a marriage here during the week. Down there the two knelt, and they made their covenant, and I sealed it with a life long seal, with the words, "Whom God has joined together let no man put as assunder." So have we come to Christ, if we have come at all.

We have made our covenant with Him. Both sides of it are expressed in this very opening line: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." And yet how often what God hath joined, our unbelief violently divorces. With the one breath we say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," with the other breath, there are a thousand disquietudes, and fears, and alarms, and perplexities, and murmurings. It is not easy to say the simplest of God's words. On the surface they seem to be only like other words. But how round and full, how vast and wide they are when we enter into them. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." That is a fact. If the first be a fact, so is the second. Then bid "good-bye" to fear and care, O soul of mine, if thou canst say like the Psalmist, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Be gone, dull care. I prithe, begone from me, for "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." These two things go together. I shall want for nothing—for the body, for time, for eternity, for the life that now is, or for that which is to come. We shall want for nothing as regards ourselves, as regards our business, or as regards our children. All is included within the sweep and grasp of the heavenly covenant. What a good shepherd is to his sheep, that surely, and more, the heavenly Shepherd will be to us. "The King of Love my Shepherd is." It was well for David to sing a Psalm through this metaphor, for he knew what shepherding was; he knew the faithfulness which it needed; he knew the perils which it brought a man into. He