

but He has left no trace of anything. Therefore, though we may die, it is gain if we do. It is to an inheritance incorruptible.

Then we come to a third point in the chapter, that is, the being kept along the way. There are difficulties, and trials, and temptations : it is well that we should look them in the face. Everybody is not passing smoothly through this life, though some may be more so than others. There are plenty of difficulties and trials, and we have to make straight paths for our feet. Still, we are "kept by the power of God," but, mark this, it is "through faith." We have to remember that, and this is why the trials come in. We can count upon the whole power of God, but it is exercised in sustaining our faith in God, as the Lord says to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." He does not take us out of trial ; on the contrary, it is said, "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." There may be this heaviness through trial ; no such thing as doubting God's goodness, but the pressure, whether of sorrow or of that which might tend to make our feet slip, may produce heaviness of spirit. But after all it is "only for a season," and "if need be." Do not make yourselves uneasy : the One who holds the reins of the need-be is God. He does not take pleasure in afflicting. If there is the need-be for it, we go through the trial, but it is only for a moment. It is a process that is going on, and do you fancy that you do not want it?