

## Pastor and People.

### FEED MY SHEEP.

That was a narrow street  
Where trod Thy blessed feet ;  
And that a noisy throng  
That followed Thee along ;  
And many a one was such  
We scarce would deign to touch ;  
But Thou wast pressed upon by the unfolded sheep.  
And very close to them Thy place didst keep.  
And it is thus  
Thou sayest to us  
"O, if ye love Me, feed My sheep !"

And that was a toilsome way,  
That a sultry day,  
When Thou didst, by the well,  
Of living water tell,  
And kindly speak to one,  
As if that one alone,  
The straying one, of all the world had need most  
deep.  
And Thou no thought but to reclaim Thy sheep.  
And it is thus  
Thou sayest to us :  
"O, if you love Me, feed My sheep !"

That was a loveless word  
Which, by strange spirit stirred,  
Forbade the children grace  
To see Thy shining face ;  
But Thou didst call them near,  
And smile away their fear ;  
And one such little one the symbol seemed to  
Thee  
Of Thy great heavenly kingdom yet to be !  
And it is thus  
Thou sayest to us :  
"O, feed My lambs, if ye love Me !"

That was a green hillside,  
By Galilee's soft tide ;  
And sweet the garden's shade  
By ancient Olives made.  
We often follow there  
Thy words of life to share.  
But O, the multitude of Thine untended sheep !  
Speaks there a voice within our spirits deep,  
Thy voice to us,  
And speaks it thus :  
"O, if you love Me, feed My sheep !"  
—*The Advance.*

### OLD AGE. PSALM LXXI.

BY REV. JAMES STALKER, D. D.

Our century receives much credit for attention to the young. Services for children are multiplied without number ; and it is impossible to open the paper on Saturday without seeing notices of sermons to young men. This is a good sign of the times ; a great deal of care should be expended on those who are just entering upon the journey of life or are feeling for the door of the kingdom. But we never hear of a sermon to old men. Yet age has also its claims ; Christ has a message for the old as well as for the young. Preachers may neglect the aged, but the Bible does not ; and the Psalter, which voices all the moods of the soul, supplies expression also for the memories, the trials, the testimony and the faith of old age.

I.—Its Memories (vv. 1-6). This Psalm was composed by an old man, and it is the privilege of old age to grow eloquent on the memories of the past. This singer's most outstanding reminiscence is that God has been his trust from his youth. This has gladdened his days, and, like Halyburton, who on his deathbed said, "Bless the Lord that ever I was born," he expresses (verse 6) his gratitude that he has been privileged to enjoy the gift of living. He puts in several forms his experience of the Lord's loving-kindness ; but it is principally summed up in this, that God had been to him a strong habitation whereunto he could continually resort (verse 3). It was fabled in ancient times that the heroes whose mothers were divine were sometimes protected in battle by being rendered invisible at critical moments. But it is no fable that those who have learned to know God can at any moment pass from time into eternity. In the busiest scenes of common life they have always beside them a little wicket gate, by which they can disappear from the presence of man and instantly be in the presence of God. Prayer is the door of a fortress, in which the man of prayer can at once take refuge, and find peace and strength in the midst of turmoil or opposition. If at any stage of life we have discovered this secret—though it be after spending the half of our existence in the service of the world—it is a theme for eternal gratitude ; but happiest of all are those who have been guided into the narrow way at the beginning of life and, looking back, can say that they have trusted God from their youth.

II.—Its Trials (vv. 7-12). A lifetime of godliness does not always exempt from trial ; and this psalm was written in a time of great suffering. So great were the writer's calamities that he says (verse 7), "I am a wonder unto many," just as it was said of another, "Many were astonished at thee ; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." His suffering was aggravated by his old age ; for age has not in itself the powers of self-assertion and self-defence which belong to youth. His enemies, therefore, thought that he was their prey, not knowing the help on which he could reckon.

Old age brings inevitable infirmities ; and, as friends die, and activity is circumscribed, and power fails, and the glory of manhood passes away, life seems to lose its value. Secular poetry has always said,  
That age is best which is the first.  
When youth and blood are warmer,  
But, being spent, the worse and worst  
Times still succeed the former.

Age, too, from the religious point of view, has its own peculiar temptations. There have been eminent men of God, like Eli, Solomon and Asa, who have suffered shipwreck in their old age. The trials of certain natures are at the beginning of life, when the fires of passion blaze out in flames that are difficult to stifle but, being past, leave the man in comparative safety ; but there are other natures, filled with less combustible materials, whose real trial comes at the close of life. Hence there is always need at every stage of a religious career to turn to God with renewed faith, and the cry of this psalm is becoming to the lips of all who are growing old. "Cast me not off in the time of old age ; forsake me not when my strength faileth."

III.—Its Testimony (vv. 13-18). Although the psalmists complain much of their sufferings, and denounce their enemies, it is a beautiful trait that the deepest fear in their minds seems always to be lest their calamities should reflect dishonor upon God and discourage those who might otherwise become His servants. It is for this reason that in the present case the sufferer appeals to God to help him. He has been all his life a witness for God (verse 17) ; and now he desires to be delivered from his great calamity, that he may show God's strength to his own generation and His power to every one that is to come (verse 18).

The testimony of the aged is among the most precious possessions of the church. Those who in their youth have accepted Christ are sometimes fervent in their witness-bearing ; and this sometimes exerts an irresistible influence. Yet it is open to scoffers to say, "Wait a little ; give their excitement time to cool ; they will soon exhaust themselves and desist from such heroics." But, when those who have served God for a lifetime are able to testify that it had been a good thing to trust in the Lord, and when their testimony is backed by a sunny disposition and by weight of character, it is difficult for even the most sceptical to ignore the force of such an appeal. And it is a happy coincidence when their outward circumstances also add to the force of their testimony, carrying to young minds the impression that in every sense they have made the best of life.

IV.—Its Faith (vv. 19-24). Like many other psalms, this one rises gradually out of the depths to the heights : it begins with the minor notes of complaint, but it ends with the music of the psalter and the loud notes of the harp (verse 22). One advantage which age has over youth in the time of trouble is that in all probability it has been in similar straits before. To youth calamity is overwhelming ; it is a surprise, because life has all been looked upon as a happy dream. Youth imagines that there have never been sorrows equal to its own, and its first calamity is supposed to be also the last, because fatal to all the joy of life. But age is wiser. Not only does it remember its own past troubles, but it is aware that these are only the common lot. In verse 20 the Hebrew gives "us" instead of "me." The writer takes in all the saints, knowing his own experience to be only a sample of what has been common in all ages. This does not destroy the reality of suffering, but it enables the heart to see beyond it. There is no final gloom for the

children of God. Black as the night may be, the day-spring will yet break from the east ; and the darkest hour just precedes the dawn.  
—*Christian Leader.*

### CHILD CONVERSION.

BY EDWARD JUDSON, D.D.

Becoming a Christian is like crossing a river from bank to bank ; passing from the worldly country to Immanuel's land. Now, if we follow a river up beyond its affluents, we find it keeps getting smaller, and at last it is only a silver thread, winding through the meadow. You have to part the grasses to find it. Like Jean Ingelow's streamlet—

"A tiny bright beck it trickles between."

Only a step will take you across, and you may even pass from bank to bank without knowing it.

Child conversion is like that. The change of position is imperceptible, but there is a world-wide difference in the ultimate result. Now, suppose a person does not cross the river near its source where it is so slender that the grasses touch each other about it—in other words, is not converted in childhood, but travels along down the stream on the wrong bank, pursuing the natural course of the worldly life. By and by the river becomes wide and deep and arrowy. He says at last to himself, "I must cross the river." He plunges in. He buffets the waves. At last he gains the opposite shore. Drenched and panting, but full of joy, he clammers up the bank. There he meets a person who crossed the river when it was a tiny stream, and has been travelling down the right bank in Immanuel's land. These people are sure to misunderstand each other. The one who has forded the stream lower down will have a long and stirring experience to relate of the anguish he endured while wrestling with the flood, of the joy which he felt upon arriving at the bank, and which he can scarcely find words to express. The other, who crossed the stream near its source, will reply : "I never experienced any thing of that kind. In fact, I hardly know of the exact time when I crossed the stream." Then the other may say, "Then you never have crossed the stream at all." "But," the answer will come, "I seem to be on the same bank you are on. I am conscious of forgiveness. I am living the Christian life. I love the people of God. His word is sweet to my taste." "Well," the other will say, "that makes no difference. Unless you have passed through experiences similar to mine, you are not a Christian."

What a mistake this is ! The fact is, that many of the best Christians in our churches crossed the stream in early childhood, and so cannot tell you the exact date of their conversion. Those who are converted in maturer life, and have such wonderful experiences to tell, are prone to bring with them, into the church, worldly habits ; they are less docile, more worldly wise. Happy the church in which the children are growing up whose second birth follows close on the first ! Blessed the garden in which these tender plants are springing up like willows by the water-courses !  
—*S. S. Times.*

### A GOOD INVESTMENT.

BY MRS. ANNA ROSS.

In these days of financial quaking, good investments are in demand. I would much like to draw attention to one that has been strangely overlooked, which is absolutely safe and bears a high rate of interest.

Jesus Christ our Lord has a great enterprise on foot in this world : "To bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." To "deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper."

But this enterprise needs funds. He who commissioned our Lord to this work saw that, and gave Him a promise of an adequate supply. "Yea, He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba." But something seems to be wrong. The "gold of Sheba," even that abundant share of it that has been put into the hands of our

Lord's own blood—bought followers ; gets away in other directions, in bank stock, mortgages, and sundry curious and often shaky speculations.

Who will try Christ's enterprise of preaching the "glad tidings to every creature," His work for the myriad "poor and needy," as an "investment ?" The principal is absolutely secured by a note of hand properly drawn out, signed, sealed and published. "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again." The rate of interest is publicly announced. "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, brethren, sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time . . . and in the world to come, life everlasting."

Will those who have money to invest please look thoughtfully at the offer ? The principal guaranteed by a note of hand of the King of Kings Himself. Interest at one hundred per cent. to be paid in this life—not merely the next—promised by Him upon whose faithfulness each one of us has already counted it safe to risk our own soul's salvation, and promised in terms that have the full solemnity of an oath, for they are preceded by His emphatic, "Verily I say unto you."

I bespeak for the Indore College, not gifts, but the taking of shares as a business investment with the certainty of handsome profit. Who will risk his hundreds or his thousands on the same security that he has already deemed safe enough to be trusted with his soul ?

### A SKEPTIC CORNERED BY A BLIND MAN.

A noted skeptic was travelling in a railway carriage in company with several clergymen, and thought it a splendid opportunity to ridicule Christianity and exhibit his cleverness before the other passengers.

After some discussion which grew rather hot for the infidel, he noticed a blind man away in a corner of the compartment, and addressed himself to him in the following strain : "Do you sir, believe in a God who has made this beautiful earth, and the sun to shine upon it, and who has adorned the heavens with myriads of stars and without any cause on your part, has deprived you forever of the power of beholding them ?"

"I am surprised, my dear sir," replied the man, "that you should ask me such a question. I believe in the existence of God as firmly as I do in my own, and I could doubt the one as easily as the other. There is, however, one thing that strikes me as being very peculiar in what you said. When you reason of God you do not seem to be governed by the same principles as when reasoning about men and the common affairs of everyday life."

The skeptic denied the inference, and the blind man continued : "When we shall have reached our destination, the sun, of which you so eloquently spoke, shall have withdrawn his light, and the earth will be enveloped in comparative darkness. Suppose, on reaching your home, and on entering your room, you find a lighted lamp upon the table—what will be your conclusion ?"

"Why," answered the infidel, with a sneer, "I shall conclude that some one placed it there."

"Well, then, when you look up into the heavens and see those innumerable lights of which you have spoken, why do you not come to the same conclusion, that some intelligence being placed them there ?"

The skeptic declined to talk any more upon the subject, but it was evident to all the passengers that he felt thoroughly humbled and uncomfortable.

There were two blind men in that company. One was blind in body and the other was blind in soul. And what the one lacked the other had. The man to be envied as the happier was the one who had his spiritual sight, and could see glories which were far beyond the confines of an earthly horizon. The spiritual sight of the Christian would one day be perfected, but the temporal sight of the infidel was destined to go out, and leave him in eternal darkness if he did not repent.—*Rev. John Mitchell.*