

The world seems to be constantly changing. The one constant seems to be the turmoil as change is rarely beneficial. Mary Jane "Jennie" Bain Wilson was an American poet and hymn writer. Early in the last century she wrote a reminder to us that the world changes but God does not by penning the words to "*Hold to God's Unchanging Hand.*" Jennie Wilson was born on a farm in Cleveland, Indiana in 1856, the younger daughter of Robert Wilson and Mary Frances Russell Wilson. She survived typhoid fever as a little girl, but her spine was damaged by the bacterial infection. She used a wheelchair from childhood and she was educated at home.

Men are unreliable guides. We are not able to direct our own steps. ***Jeremiah 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*** It is God who directs our path. ***Proverbs 20:24 Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?*** So the song goes:

*Time is filled with swift transition
Naught of earth unmoved can stand
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand.*

God has given us a map to guide us home. It is God's teachings that remain steadfast and sure. Peter tells us that God's word will endure forever (1 Peter 1:25).

The world continually changes with new generations of people. Life is short; life is uncertain. James compares it to a morning fog. ***James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*** James asks us to consider the fragility of human life, and the fact that we live and move only at the permission of God. James will not discourage us from planning and doing, only from planning and doing apart from a

reliance on God. Back up to verse 13. ***James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.*** James rebukes the kind of heart that lives and makes its plans apart from a constant awareness of the sovereignty of God, and with an underestimation of our own limitations. You do not know what will happen tomorrow. We can't really plan with certainty because tomorrow is uncertain.

*Trust in Him who will not leave you,
Whatsoever years may bring,
If by earthly friends forsaken,
Still more closely to Him cling.*

God alone can give us the sense of safety. ***Psalms 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.*** To lay down in peaceful sleep is a marvelous blessing given to us by God. Many teach their young children the comfort and security of God with the little night time prayer:

*Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the lord my soul to keep.
If I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.*

God can give us the sense of safety. Even the best of friends can, at times, prove to be unreliable. Consider Paul. ***2 Timothy 4:16-17 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. (17) Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*** But you can depend on God because he cares for you. ***1 Peter 5:6-7 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he***

may exalt you in due time: (7) Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

God won't let go of us, if we stay with Him. *John 10:27-28 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* This verse does not teach once saved always saved, but it does teach that no power or authority of man can remove you from God's favor. Yet a person can by his own choice jeopardize that relationship. So we have the warning in Hebrews 3:12. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

Not only do we live in a changing world, we live in a world that is temporary. Things decay, things wear out, things break. Jesus tells us not to put our trust in things of the world that will give way to rust and corruption, but lay up spiritual treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). But not only are things temporary, so is life. We are familiar with the story of the foolish farmer in Luke 12 that had such an abundant crop and that he decided to sit back and take it easy. He planned on living the good life. *Luke 12:19-21 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. (20) But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? (21) So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

*Covet not this world's vain riches
That so rapidly decay,
Seek to gain the heav'nly treasures,
They will never pass away.*

Not only is there brevity of life, a day is coming when nothing will be left. **2 Peter**

3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. It is foolish to covet this world's riches that will so rapidly decay. Instead, let us seek to gain the heavenly treasures that will never pass away! Put our trust in God, instead. ***Hebrews 13:5-6 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.***

God's promises are sure. God has offered you and me eternal life (1 Timothy 2:4). The Hebrew writer tells us that His promise is a refuge and an anchor (Hebrews 6:17-19). We haven't received the promise yet, but we take joy in knowing it is there. ***1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,***

*When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory
Your enraptured soul will view.*

Invitation