

Good Words for Every Day of the Year,
Good Words, 1860. Editor, Norman MacLeod, DD.
Edinburgh: Alexander Strahan and Co. London: Sampson Low, Son, and Co.

December 29.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is thine own eye?” -- Matt. vii. 3.

Much need have we to guard against this sin -- the spirit of *ensoriousness*. We cannot help *seeing* faults in others, motes in the eye of a brother. It is not in seeing them that the danger lies, but in that spirit which makes men *watch* for them and forget their own; perhaps their own are greatly worse. This evil habit requires to be guarded against; it is no light evil; and the true antidote is to cultivate charity, that more excellent way,” which “thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things.” Let us seek also the humility of mind which esteemeth others better than ourselves, and that love of purity and heart holiness which will not suffer us to rest til we have cast out every beam out of our own eyes! Then only shall we see clearly, without partiality, envy, or censoriousness, and be enabled in true Christian meekness to cast out the mote out of our brother’s eye.

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December 30.

“Not as though I had attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” -- Phil. iii. 12.

Progress is the word of the day in all human affairs, and is the Christian to be content to stand still? The man of science, of art, or of commerce, is never satisfied unless he is advancing; and shall not the man of faith too seek to advance in grace, as he cannot help advancing in years? Let me ask myself, Have I been thus advancing? Let me look at the apostle, and seek to emulate his spirit of holy and heavenward progress. Like him, may I never look upon what I have attained, but to aim at attaining more. Let me follow after him, as he followed Christ, remembering the help that is so freely promised, even the Holy Spirit, who is given by the Father to all those who ask Him. He is willing to lead us into *all* truth, to strengthen us with all strength, to work in us all those graces of the Christian character which are the “fruits of the Spirit.” May we, then, resolve in His strength to “reach for unto the things that are before,” and to take as our watchword the *Christian Excelsior!*

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December 31.

“What is your life? It is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” -- James iv. 14.

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.”
--2 Cor. vi. 2.

A “vapour,” yet a “day of salvation;” two very different aspects of life, but both true. Short and fleeting as it is, for us it is a time of infinite moment. Each has a soul to be saved or lost; each may do something towards saving or ruining the souls of others; and this life, this “vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away;” vanisheth not into empty space, but into an awful eternity of happiness or misery! While another year of our brief time on earth is closing, let us pause to consider life in its vanity -- life in its momentous importance. The greatest works and thoughts that end with *time* are but as wreaths of the swiftly vanishing vapour; but those which are for *eternity*, however apparently humble, have in them the nature of the infinite. O Lord, enable us wisely to discern between trifles and realities! Teach us to make the right use of “the accepted time” Enable us so to live to thy glory now, that when the “vapour” of this mortal life has vanished away, our souls, redeemed by Thy grace, may enter into Thy glory everlasting!