

November 15.

“I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”
--Ps. xxxiv. 4.

“I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.
Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as
long as I live.” -- Ps. cxvi. 1, 2.

It is a great thing to be enabled to say, “I love the Lord for *he is good*,” it is still better to feel “he is *good to me*,” “who forgiveth all thine iniquities;” but it is best of all when we can say, “He hath *heard my voice*!” What am I that He who dwelleth in the highest heaven should open for me this door of mercy, and incline me to pray, and receive my feeble prayer, and “deliver me from all my fears.” Surely when first the thought bursts upon a man, “the Lord hath heard me,” he may well feel overwhelmed; he may well feel his heart burn as if with a new-born sense. And as we advance in our pilgrimage, and have occasion to say many a time this wonderful word, “the Lord has heard me,” let us be on our guard against losing the freshness of the feeling, or forgetting, like the ungrateful nine cured lepers to return and give thanks. Rather let the resolution of the Psalmist be ours: *‘He has heard me; therefore I will call upon him as long as I live!’*

“Prayer makes the darkening cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings richest blessings from above.”

November 16.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it."
--Luke xix. 41.

"Many walk, of whom I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."
-- Phil iii. 18.

What caused those tears of the holy Saviour? What caused the tears of His servant shed in the very spirit of his Lord? It was sin seen in its true light; sin against God; sin in the city of God, the favoured Jerusalem; sin in the Church of God, where, alas! many walked as enemies of the Cross, while yet professing to be followers of Christ. It is easy to look upon sin with indignation; it is not so easy to enter into the mind of Jesus, and *weep* over it. And yet there is abundant cause to move us to tears, when we see how many still walk as enemies of the Cross of Christ, bringing a reproach upon their profession, hindering the progress of others, and working for themselves a fearful doom, "whose end is destruction." Therefore that very apostle who says to us "Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say, Rejoice," finds a sorrow, in which all who are likeminded with him will tenderly participate, in considering the grievous sin and the awful end of the enemies of the Cross; and as his master, in the very hour of His triumph, wept over Jerusalem, so does he, and so will we, if of His spirit, weep, even while we "rejoice in the Lord," over those unhappy ones who dare to be His enemies.

"Ye hearts who love the Lord,
If at the sight ye burn;
See that in thought, and deed and word
Ye hate what made Him mourn!"

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.

November 17.

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." -- Ps. cxix. 37.

"He that walketh righteously,and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off." -- Isa. xxxiii. 15, 17.

The Christian who would live in the spirit of the Psalmist's prayer, must turn from many, many a sight which the world admires; or, if he does behold "*vanity*," it must be with the prayer to be preserved from loving it, and with his eye open to perceive the "handwriting on the wall" of its palaces, and the trail of the serpent in the midst of its flowers. But when he hears men praising such sights, and pitying what they call his blindness to their beauty, he may comfort himself with thoughts of that far higher joy which is laid up for him, and may say to them, "What is it to me to lose these things, shortlived, deceitful, and vain as they are?" "Mine eyes shall see the King in his beauty!" Yes, we may well *wait*; it will be but for a little while, and then, oh, who can tell the sight which "eye hath not seen, prepared for him that wait for him!" "The King in his beauty!" and that King the Lord whom we love, the Lord who hath bought us, the Saviour who gave Himself for us! The land of promise may seem "a land very far off;" but faith is the glass that brings it near, and the more we use it, gazing up the long perspective of glory, the less shall we be tempted to turn our eyes towards vanity.

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November 18.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." Neh. viii. 10.

"I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith."--Phil. i. 25.

The apostle connects the joy of faith with the "furtherance" of the believer. His joy in the Lord springs from faith, and thus it is his strength and help in his Christian course, doing good both to himself and others. This joy is not nature's joy, it is that which is from a higher source, and therefore depends not on outward circumstances, and ceases not to flow when earthly comforts are dried up. It is the Holy Spirit's gift, the "fruit of the Spirit," the work of the Spirit, through faith implanted in the heart. Let me think of all that God hath wrought for me, and say if I have not cause for joy. Let me remember what Christ has promised to be to me, now and hereafter. Let me consider what the blessed Spirit of God is willing to do to cleanse my poor sinful heart, and fill it with holy joy; thus let me seek to increase in this heavenly grace, not for the sake of the joy merely, but that it may be my *strength* in serving the Lord, and in glorifying Him before others.

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November 19.

" Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." -- James i. 19.

This is a difficult passage to expound, but the practical teaching in it is very plain; let me seek to enter into it for myself. When I am in the house of God, let me be "*swift to hear.*" When God's people converse upon holy subjects, when holy books are read, or profitable and wise remarks are dropped, let me be "swift to hear;" may I seek to have the mind awake to every good impression from without, and not content with living upon my own stores of thought and opinion, may I be diligent in gaining wisdom from every outward source. Again, when the voice of conscience speaks, let me be "swift to hear;" it is perilous to trifle with its slightest warning. And let me be "swift to hear when God speaks in his voice of providences; sudden alarms, dangers, sicknesses, death, have all voices of warning, reproof, or admonition, which I must be "swift to hear." The tongue is an unruly member, therefore I must be careful in the use of it, and when tempted to rash utterances, I must I must be "slow to speak;" not slow to speak words of kindness to others, or words of truth for God's service; not slow to speak, when I may do good by speaking, but when tempted to hasty and angry utterances, foolish or uncharitable words vain or trifling words, then I must remember the wise apostles's law of silence, and be slow to speak. "*Slow to wrath;*" how often the breath of words blows up the fire of wrath, and the anger which would have subsided if we had been silent, grows hot through our own warm words! Grant me meek and lowly spirit, O Lord, then shall my ears receive wisdom and my tongue utter words of grace and goodness!

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November 20.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous."
-- Heb. xii. 11.

Ah, how many a mourner has echoed these words from the depths of an aching heart! "*not* joyous but grievous, most grievous!" And it is a comfort to find that God's Word admits of our saying so, and does not command us to wear the stoic's unmoved look, and to deny what nature so loudly asserts. *He* knows our frame, and does not forbid us to weep; nay, rather, He would have us to *feel* when He chastens us, else it would be no chastening at all. But while He chastens He knows how to comfort; He tells the sufferer of a great good that is to come out of all this evil. He points to the seed of sorrow, as bringing forth the fruit of righteousness, "unto them which are exercised thereby," and thus He calls us, in the day of adversity, to consider and see that we miss not the benefit designed for us. There is deep comfort in this verse; it touches the wounded heart with a tender yet faithful hand; it does not bid us rejoice *now*, when oppressed with the *grievous* chastening, but it leads us onward to the result, not *now but afterward* to be produced. God grant that such may be the fruit of all His dealings with me!

"Then let our hearts no more despond,
Our hands be weak no more;
Still let us trust our Father's love,
His wisdom still adore."

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November 21.

"Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." -- Psalm li. 16, 17.

David, in his contrition, perceives and asserts the deep spirituality of the law of God; he sees that sacrifices and burnt offerings are not what God desires. He must have the service of the heart -- a heart broken for sin. And have I come thus before the holy and heart-searching God; or have I been content with offering those outward services which are indeed types of the spiritual worship, but can never supply the place of it? Oh, let me search and test my offerings of praise and sacrifices of whatever kind by this holy trial! "Thy commandment is exceeding broad" *now* as ever. Thou lookest not on outward appearance, but on the heart; and how often dost Thou behold, in the service of Thy house, many kneeling, but few, very few praying! Thanks be to God there is a Sacrifice by which the sins of His own people are for ever put away! May this thought make my sacrifice of praise a true thank-offering from a heart broken for sin and melted with Thy love!