

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 8.

“Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.” -- Isa. xxxiii. 17.

“Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.” -- Matt. v. 8.

Who are they that shall see the King in his beauty? Only those whose eyes have been opened to perceive that beauty, for, to the natural eye, he still “hath no form nor comeliness.” Men would find it easy to admire one like themselves, or excelling themselves only in blindness to their sins, which they would call mercy. Not such is the beauty of our King; but we must learn the beauty of holiness if we would know wherein lies His glory; and it is only through the teaching of the holy spirit, that our sinful natures can be so changed as to enable us to admire it. This promise is not to be taken as wholly belonging to a future state; even now, with the eye of faith, the Christian beholds the King in his beauty; the pure in heart sees God. We may see Him in His Word, where He reveals to us His mind and will; we may trace Him in His works, where His power and goodness, and wisdom are displayed; but if we would see our King in His highest glory, the beauty of His holiness, and the majesty of His love, we must gaze with the eye of faith upon the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“What object, Lord, my soul should move  
If once compared with Thee!  
What beauty should command my love  
Like what in Christ I see!”

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November 9.

“Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?” -- Jer. viii. 22.

How natural it is for the afflicted heart that knows not Christ to answer -- “No, there is no balm for my grief, no sorrow like my sorrow. The iron has entered into my soul beyond the reach of any physician!” This may be nature’s voice, but it is not the voice of grace. The Lord will not permit his children to speak thus in the hour of trial. When no earthly voice can comfort them He speaks to them: “I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her;” or, as in the margin, “speak to *her heart*.” He reveals and applies the balm of true healing. He comes as the Physician when none else can cure, and never is His power to comfort and heal known till then; for “they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick!” Therefore, when the sufferings and sorrows of some of God’s dear children arise before us, and make us marvel that it is so with them, and that “waters of a full cup are thus wrung out to them,” let us not forget, that *God* knows and sees their sorrows, and let us remember that “*God is love*.” If he wounds, there is a reason for it, a reason of love. And for those who are wounded, however deeply, *there is* balm in Gilead -- *there is* a Physician there.

“See, in the Saviour’s dying blood,  
Life, health, and bliss abundant flow;  
‘Tis only this blest sacred flood  
Can ease thy pain and heal thy woe.”

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November 10.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” -- Matt. vi. 13.

“Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.” -- Matt. xxvi. 41.

The Christian can never in this world get beyond the need of praying this prayer, for he can never here below get beyond the reach of temptation. But our adversary the devil shows his cunning in nothing so much as in the nature of the temptations he presents to us, and the believer, finding that those things which were snares to his youth, are no longer attractive to his mature years, may be deceived into fancying that he is past that stage of his journey wherein temptations abound, not perceiving that the real change is neither in himself nor in his enemy, but only in the mode of attack. The man who is no longer dazzled by youthful gaities, may be misled quite as fatally by engrossing cares of busy manhood; the girl who is no longer liable to be beguiled by admiration of her person, maybe quite as much puffed up with vanity in more advanced years by the homage paid to her talents, influence, or position. When we hear of the failings or follies of others, let us be humbled with the thought that, but for God's grace, we, if tempted like them, might even thus gone astray; and let us cleave all the closer to Him who is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.

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November 11.

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.” Eph. i. 11.

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” -- Col. i. 12.

We cannot buy an “inheritance;” we cannot earn it by any doings of our own. The very word implies that it cannot become ours by purchase, but only by the higher right revealed in the words, “*if children, then heirs*; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Our inheritance depends on our union with Christ. By Him we are adopted into the family of God, and restored to more than all that our first parents forfeited; and through Him not only is our inheritance secured, but it is promised that we shall be made meet to be partakers of it. Oh, it is wonderful that Christian men are content to pass through this world with so few thoughts of the glory which Christ has set before them! How can they be meet for a home of which they seldom think? How can they become happy inhabitants of a country whose language they have never learned, whose customs they love not? Let us *think much* of our inheritance if we would be prepared for it; and let us give thanks with the apostle, that the Father has Himself promised to give that meetness which we, of ourselves, can never attain.

“Wilt thou not crown at length  
The work Thou hast begun?  
And with a will, afford me strength  
In all Thy ways to run.”

November 12.

“Jesus left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And he *must needs* go through Samaria.” -- John iv. 3, 4.

“The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went.” -- Acts viii. 26.

To save the soul of a poor sinner, and through her to bring all the men of her city to hear the gospel of the grace of God, Jesus “must needs” go through Samaria. To enlighten the inquiring Ethiopian of great authority in his own land, Philip was sent through the desert by the angel. Perhaps we have found sometimes that, in the providence of God, we must needs go through some Samaria where none knew of Jesus, or some desert where none could be expected to meet us. And we have found that it was there that God had some special work for us to do; some opportunity wholly unexpected occurred, and we were made to feel that the guiding hand of our God had led us there. Let us then take courage in committing our way and our work to Him. Let us ask Him to use us as His instruments, and to strengthen us for the work. Let us think, when we find ourselves in some unlooked for circumstances or place, “It may be that there is someone here for whose sake I have been brought hither.” And let the blessed example of Him who “wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well,” and made it a well of life to His hearer, stimulate us (at the cost of our own ease if necessary) to improve opportunities, and *make* opportunities to do good. Let us “in *all* our ways acknowledge God, and He will direct our steps.”

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November 13.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” -- John xiv. 23.

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.”  
-- Rev. xxi. 3.

“The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”  
-- Rev. xxi. 23.

“His servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.” -- REV. xxii. 3, 4.

To dwell with Him is the joy of heaven; to have Him dwelling with us is the highest joy of earth. If, then, we would know wherein the happiness of heaven consists, we must seek to know more and more of that blessed communion with the Father and the Son, which He has promised to those who love Him and keep His words. We cannot by searching find out where heaven lies; but we may have a heavenly foretaste within our hearts, if the Lord deign, according to His word, thus to manifest Himself to us. It is vain to speculate on the future state; the intellect cannot discover it, but the heart may know something of it, by having even here its “conversation in heaven.”

“My knowledge of that life is small,  
The eye of faith is dim;  
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,  
And I shall be *with Him*.”

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November 14.

“I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.” -- Ps. cxix. 94.

Consider what it is to be able to say this: “I am Thine!” not the world’s, not Satan’s, not my own, but Thine, O my God, for Thou hast redeemed me. “Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). “The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John xvii. 14). “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. i. 13). Therefore we may say, “I am Thine!” And if so, how great is our happiness, how high are our privileges, how complete is our safety; and let us never forget how deep are our responsibilities to live as His own redeemed ones ought to live; for “in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (1 John iii. 10). “*I am Thine!*” let this thought be our comfort in sorrow, our strength in weakness, and our warning when temptation assails us. “We are Thine!” and if so, He has said to us, “All are yours, and ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s!”

“O tell me, Lord, That thou art mine;  
What can I wish beside?  
My soul shall at the fountain live  
When all the streams are dried.”