

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.

September 22.

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." -- Isa. xliii. 1.

Our names may be despised or unknown among men, but if the Lord has said, "Thou art mine." they are known to him who calleth the stars by their names, and if He is for us, who can be against us! Infinite is His knowledge and wisdom, as well as His power. Nothing is too great for Him, and the least and lowest of His people is not too humble for Him to notice. The question for us is, Hath He written my name in His book of life?" if so, I need not fear that He will forget me, unworthy as I am of the least place in His regard. He created, He formed, He redeemed His own chosen Israel; and now He comforts with the strongest consolation, when He says Fear not, for there can be no just cause of fear to those unto whom the Lord deigns to say, "I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine."

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September 23.

"God, who hath commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." -- 2 Corinthians iv. 6.

Great was the putting forth of Divine power in the first creating word, "Let there be light." We see something of the glorious change that light produces, when we see the sun arise, true to his time, morning by morning, on a benighted world; yet this can give us but a faint idea of the *first* morning, when the first beam of new-created day pierced the moonless, starless darkness of the night of creation. It is to this that St. Paul compares the dawn of light in the heart; no less a power is required to produce it; no less a change takes place when it is wrought in us; "old things are passed away, all things are made new" in the heart, now enlightened by the "knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus." Light shows many things that were hidden by the darkness; it reveals not only the glory of the heavens above, but many dark and evil things beneath; and so it is with the heart newly enlightened; its evils are revealed, hidden sins are discovered, and many things formerly loved and admired are seen in the new and holy light of heaven to be hateful in God's sight.

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September 24.

“For we know, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” -- 2 Cor. v. 1.

How glorious is the prospect set before the Christian in the thought of leaving the “earthly tabernacle!” He is not left to wander forth alone in the darkness; his God has prepared for his departing spirit, “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” and the angels that carried Lazarus to Abraham’s bosom, stand ready waiting to convey in safety each one of God’s dear children to their future inheritance of glory, as soon as the last breath of this mortal life leaves the worn-out bodily frame. What will it matter then, whether the saved and happy spirit takes its flight from a bed of down or a bed of straw, from a couch surrounded by loving friends and the tenderest care, or from such a deathbed as that of Lazarus, where the dogs that licked his sores were his only helpers! The “building of God” into which the redeemed of God enter, will soon make them forget all the sorrows of their earthly abode!

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September 25.

“I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.” --Jer. xxxi. 25.

The soul has a mighty capacity; all the world cannot fill it; who is this then that says, “I have satisfied the weary soul?” I know His voice; it is He who also says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” It is to the weary that He speaks, and it is by giving them *Himself* that He gives them rest. He gives not as the world gives; the world promises much, and men readily believe its flattering lies, and strive unto death to win its glittering prizes, and find even when they win them that they can give no *rest* to the soul; anything, everything, but rest! What was the experience of the man who attained of all men the largest share of the earth’s delights? He sums up the record of each new pursuit after pleasure, with the intensely dreary words -- “*This also* is vanity and vexation of spirit!” How different is it with the weary soul that has come to Christ!

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September 26.

“When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.”
-- Ps. cxlii. 3.

There are many persons who would pity us if we lost a limb, but who could not comprehend the suffering of neuralgia; and in the same way would offer us their sympathy for some great outward reverse of fortune, but would have none to bestow on the anguish of a wounded spirit. They are too *strong* for us; too gay for our sadness; too inexperienced in the path of sorrow to be able to give us a helping hand. But there is One who knows us; every throbbing of the broken heart is known to Him; every sigh that we could not breathe to a human ear is heard by Him; and what a soothing thought it is to us to remember that He who thus knows us is tender and full of compassion, and if acquainted with us and our distresses, He is also One who when on earth was Himself “a *Man of sorrows* and *acquainted with grief*.” It has been said that in order to be able to comfort, one must have known sorrow, and yet be no longer in sorrow; how low did Jesus humble Himself! how highly hath God exalted Him! How well He knows us when our spirit is overwhelmed! How well is He able to give consolation!

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September 27.

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." -- 2 Cor. v. 8.

There is no intimation here of any middle state in which the soul may slumber, or in which a process of purification may be carried on, between death and the resurrection. The hope of the apostle, that he shall be "present with the Lord," is that which makes him confident and willing to be "absent from the body;" but for this hope the state of presence in the body in which he *served* the Lord would be preferable. "*Present with the Lord,*" -- wonderful thought! Present and not only with angels and archangels, saints and martyrs, and apostles and prophets, and our own dear ones, whom we have so long loved and mourned; this would be a high hope, but not *the highest*; the Christian would not be satisfied with this, -- he would be present with *the Lord,*" he would *see Jesus!* This is the hope set here before us.

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September 28.

"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.

O may the Lord, who gave this precious and wonderful promise, enable me to lay hold of it by a lively faith; and believing that He will indeed "come unto me," may I so love Him as to keep His words. He only can make my way perfect and my heart perfect, -- and shedding abroad the love of God in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us. It was in the strength of his God that the Psalmist resolved to walk within his house with a *perfect*, that is, a sincere heart, having a single aim to serve God in all his household ways and family life. May I bring to the same test my daily home habits, and seek to glorify God in the family, where I am best known, by the cultivation of holy tempers and dispositions, which need great watchfulness. If Thou, Lord, dost indeed deign to come unto me, do Thou thyself prepare my heart, for "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof."