

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 1.

"O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted! behold I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires."  
--Isa. liv. 11.

"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." --Mal. iii. 17.

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." -- 1 Peter ii. 5.

The Lord's own people are precious in His sight. He calls them His jewels. They are the lively stones with which the spiritual house is built up; and it is of them that He speaks in the promise to the afflicted and tempest-tossed church uttered by Isaiah, a promise which reminds us of the description of the new Jerusalem in Revelation xxi. 13. Her foundations shall be "garnished with all manner of precious stones;" her twelve gates shall be twelve pearls, her street "pure gold, as it were transparent glass;" and the varied lustre and beauty of the gems, with which (in a fulfillment of promise in Isaiah) this glorious Church of the future is to be adorned, are described with a minuteness which shows how precious in the sight of the Lord is each and every one of His jewels. Their various gifts and graces shall then shine out in full brightness, each contributing its own share to the radiant glory of the city of our God, each fashioned by His own hand and fitted to its own place, "as cornerstones polished after the similitude of a temple."

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September 2.

"And it was the third hour, and they crucified him." -- Mark xv. 25.

Words few and simple, but full of awe and mystery! Words fit to make angels weep! They bear record of the most dread hour of this world's history, and fall with a terrible distinctness upon the heart, striking all the more because so simple, so brief, so plain. O may we never become so familiarized with these words as to lose freshness of feeling, and read them with unheeding eye! May the Holy Spirit, who inspired the record of this awful fact, so inspire life into our hearts, that we may ever gaze with wonder and love, with lowliest repentance and liveliest gratitude, upon this great sight -- men crucifying the Son of God! Let us feel our own share in the event of that hour, our share in the guilt, our share in the redemption, and say, That cross was *for me*! For me He lived on earth, for me He died, for me He endured all those untold agonies so much worse than death; and if He died for me, for me He also rose again that I might live not unto myself, but unto Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Remember thee and all thy pains,  
And all thy love to me;  
Yes, while a breath, a pulse remains,  
I will remember thee!

"And when these failing lips grow dumb,  
And mind and memory flee;  
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,  
Jesus, remember me!"

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### September 3.

"Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." -- John xxi. 21, 22.

Thus does the Master still answer His servants when, in the indulgence of profitless curiosity, they busy themselves with asking of each other's destiny, instead of making sure their own. It is the voice of my Lord to me, and oh, what a path does He place before me, what "Follow thou me!" Follow in a way of holiness, a way of devotion, a way of meekness and humility, of self-denial, yea, even self-sacrifice! Follow through good and bad report, through life and death; follow to glory, honour, and immortality. He has gone before, both to point the way and to open the door of access; He goes with His people still to enable them to walk in the way. But when He says, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." it is not that I may shut myself up in a selfish, Cain-like spirit, saying, "Am I my brother's keeper?" for the path in which I am to follow is not only in a path to God, it is a path of love to man even unto the death! "Follow thou me!" "Love one another, even as I have loved you!" This is the standard set before us, this is the path marked out for us by His blood-stained footprints! "He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." And when He says, "Follow thou me," let me answer, "Yes, Lord! draw me, we will run after thee!"

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Sept. 4

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”  
-- Philippians iv. 11.

Happy the man who could say this! His was the secret of true felicity, and outward storms had no power to ruffle the calm of such a soul. But let us not think that this was owing to anything peculiar in the constitution of St. Paul's mind unattainable by ordinary mortals. He tells us himself that he had learned this secret, -- it was not born with him; he had laboured for it and attained it, -- no doubt it was a hard lesson, but well worth learning! Let us fix this point in our minds, that such a state as he describes may be attained and ought to be laboured for by us. It is a holy art earnestly to be sought after; a heavenly secret greatly to be desired. For in this world we are exposed to trials of various kinds, and we know not to what conditions of unexpected poverty, sorrow, or suffering we may be reduced. Let us learn to bring our minds to our conditions as St. Paul did, seeking to gain such a glimpse of eternal glory as shall enable us to pass unmoved through the vicissitudes of our present state.

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## September 5.

"I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." --Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

How tender and minute is the care of the Good Shepherd for each one of His flock! Well does He know the case and the wants of each, and wisely does He deal with every one of them accordingly. The assurance that we are so cared for and thought of, not lost in the mass, but remembered in detail by Him without whom not a sparrow falls, is of itself a most consoling balm to the afflicted heart, and helps to "bind up that which is broken." It is especially soothing to those who are depressed by long continuing sickness: for in the weary hours of suffering, when mind and body are brought low by sleepless nights and painful days, the adversary of God's people is apt to tempt the afflicted Christian to cry, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me!" Ah! poor sufferer, listen to His own answer; by it "He strengtheneth that which was sick:" "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." When the Lord compares His love to that of a mother, may not sufferer take comfort from the thought that of all her children, *the one that is sick* is the one least likely to be forgotten by the mother's heart?

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September 6.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” -- Matt. vi.11.

“I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.”  
-- Job xxiii. 12

“Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.” -- John vi. 35.

*Christ* is as needful for the life of the soul as daily bread is for that of the body; let me then never pass a day without seeking and obtaining this bread of life as my daily bread, for without it the soul must starve. Our gracious God, who openeth His hand liberally and “satisfies the desire of every living thing” is as ready to satisfy the longing soul as to give food to the body; He waits to be gracious, and loves to hear His children cry, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” In the desire after it, He beholds the work of His own Spirit, for the natural man desires not *Christ*, feels no *need* of *Christ*, and contents himself with longing and labouring for the “bread which perisheth,” neither believing in nor feeling his need of spiritual sustenance. There are no circumstances in which we can be placed that are beyond the need of our *daily* receiving this food, or beyond the power of our obtaining it from God. Let me remember this when surrounded by outward privileges, lest I become careless in seeking in private that daily secret communion which feeds the soul. Let me remember this when *deprived* of outward privileges; nor let me fear that God will ever fail to feed the hungry soul.

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September 7,

“The Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah...But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.” -- Jonah iv. 6-7.

He who prepares gourds for us, can as easily prepare worms to destroy; let us not forget the insecurity of our earthly blessings, nor cling to them with too close a grasp; and when the time of sore bereavement comes, and the beloved sheltering gourd lies all blighted, let us not be unmindful of the Hand that first granted the blessing; and gave it to us (though but for a little while) as a pledge of a divine love which no change can affect. When Job was smitten, he said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” When Jonah was afflicted, though only by the loss of a gourd which came up in a night and perished in a night, he cried “I do well to be angry, even unto death!” Which is to be your pattern of these two, O Christian sufferer? Can you look at the contrast between them, and fail to see the beauty of submission, the blessedness of resignation, and the comfort that springs from acknowledging in all things that befall us the hand of a wise and loving God?