

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.

August 8.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High."—Ps. xcii. 1.

"Be ye thankful."—Col. ii. 15.

I believe that much of our happiness as well as of our holiness depends on our cultivation of a thankful spirit, not merely a *cheerful* spirit which enjoys God's gifts, but a *thankful* one, which habitually looks up, lovingly, to the Hand that gives; "giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." In order to attain and keep in exercise this spirit, let me seek to trace God's hand in even the most common blessings of life: food and raiment, health and a home, are not *due* to me more than others—they are God's gifts; alas, how men complain when deprived of them! how little do they thank God while possessed of them! These are the blessings for which even nature tells us to give thanks; but how much higher are those to which revelation points! Alexander wept that he had no more worlds to conquer, but faith reveals another world conquered for the Christian, and bids him "give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

To Him let every tongue be praise,

And every heart be love!

All grateful honours paid on earth,

And nobler songs above!

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## August 9.

"Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep; O Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God? therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." --Ps.xxxvi. 6,7.

When difficult questions arise as to God's government of the world, and dealings with the heathen, let us turn to the contemplation of *His glorious character* as a solution of all our perplexities. Let us look up to the "great mountains" of His righteousness. Let us gaze down into the mighty deep of His judgments; what are we that we should venture to sound it? As we consider His greatness and infinite wisdom, our own wisdom seems folly, our own strength weakness. "He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth," and "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Let us not doubt that His justice, mercy, wisdom, and loving-kindness shall *all* be one day gloriously displayed, when He shall come to judge the world, and render to every man according to his works. He knoweth all hearts; He knows the opportunities men have had of turning to Himself; He knows the strivings of His Spirit with them; He marks the faintest spark of spiritual life. *He will judge the world in righteousness!*

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August 10.

“I would have you without carefulness.” --1 Corinthians vii. 32.

“Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” --1 Peter v. 7.

It is as much our duty as it is our privilege to avoid cherishing a careful anxious spirit. But we are not to do this by going to the opposite extreme, and living thoughtlessly and rushing into gaiety in order to drive away care; but rather by following the Apostle’s holy advice, and “casting all our care upon him, for he careth for us.” The promise helps us to fulfil the precept, and can only find its accomplishment when we obey it; for it is when we seek to cast our cares on the Lord that we learn His care for us. But some may tell us that their cares are not of a nature that can be cast upon Him; if so, they may fear that they are entangling themselves with *sinful* cares, for only such are beyond the reach of His promise and the power of His love to remove. There are cares caused by “hasting to be rich,” cares caused by schemes of worldliness, and cares caused by covetousness of that which is another’s. Christian, “from such withdraw thyself;” let thy care be to *grow in grace*, and trust thy Lord with all thy other cares, for “he careth for thee!”

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August 11.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” --Matt. x. 29-31.

The least of God’s creatures is not forgotten by Him, far less are we, *His children*; “without *your Father*,” says Jesus, a sparrow shall not fall; the name “your Father,” says much to us. The eye that sees all and provides for all that His hand has created, rests very differently on those to whom He is *a Father*; they “are of more value than many sparrows;” they are objects of special care and love; He is to others a bountiful Creator, to them He is a tender Father. He sees them wherever they are, or under whatever disguise they are hidden; they may be in poverty, sorrow, sickness or affliction; they may be brought so low as to say “Is his mercy clean gone for ever?” yet they are of those “the very hairs of whose head are numbered,”--of those to whom Jesus says, “*Fear ye not*, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” If God’s poor afflicted children are thus valuable in *His* eyes, let *us* beware of slighting them. Let us be tender of them for His sake, and thankful if we may but be sharers with them of the kingdom of our Father in heaven when time shall be no more.

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August 12.

“What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” --Mark viii. 37.

What a precious jewel is the never-dying soul. If men only knew its value, how differently would they treat it, how changed would be their aims in life! The Christian knows something of its preciousness; but the Lord Jesus Christ alone, who has bought it with a price, even His own blood, knows the true worth of the human soul. Men value the safety and health of the body; they shelter it from injury, guard it from enemies, fly to the physician when its health is impaired, and spare no trouble to obtain remedies for its diseases, or balm for its wounds. But how careless are they of the soul's health! Even Christians are too regardless of it. Let us learn its true worth, and watch against all that might injure its health or enfeeble its powers, even more carefully than we do for the body. Let us no longer treat the clay tabernacle so much better than its never-dying inmate; let us not be content to feed the body and starve the soul, --to warm the body and suffer the soul to grow cold, --to adorn the body which will so soon perish, while we leave the soul all bare and destitute, unadorned for time, unclothed for eternity!

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August 13.

“Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.” --Psalm lxxxv. 1.

“In him we live, and move, and have our being.” --Acts xvii. 28.

Do we sufficiently realize *how near God is*? Do we strive to maintain a sense of His presence declared to us in His wondrous works? Many who are far from owning the folly of the fool, who “saith in his heart, There is no God,” are equally far from possessing the wisdom that sees God in everything. And yet how closely are we surrounded with the proofs of His power and His presence, His love and His long-suffering patience, His wisdom and tender care for us! He is near us, nearer than our best friends can be, for the secrets of our hearts are before him! When, after long absence, a beloved child returns to his home, how does it thrill his heart to trace all around him tokens of his mother’s care for his comfort, and preparations made for his enjoyment long days before by her loving heart and busy hands working for him when he knew it not! Thus do we find, when we return to our Father in heaven, that while we have been wandering from Him, He has not forgotten us; His wondrous works all around declare His name, and it only needed that our eyes and our hearts should be opened to perceive His hand, and own that He is near us of a truth.

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August 14.

“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” --John 1. 16.

Our part is to *receive*; we are far too ready to think that we must *do* something or *be* something pleasing to God, forgetting that we must first and last be in the attitude of *receiving from God*. Even the sense of our own utter emptiness must come from Him, and we only know our emptiness when we are receiving of His fullness. “Without me ye can do nothing,” says our Lord; “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,” says His servant. Let us then *look up*, ask and expect to receive of His fulness. “The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God;” it is only when it *drinketh in* the rain that it can bring forth, and in doing so it again “receiveth blessing.” If we indeed “receive of His fulness,” how can we but bring forth fruit to His praise? What is it that “we receive?” What does God give? He gives Christ, the “unspeakable gift;” He gives the Holy Spirit; He gives “every good and every perfect gift of His fulness freely, liberally; and if we receive what His grace bestows, we shall assuredly abound in faith and love and holiness, to the glory of His name. “Ask, and ye shall *receive*.”