

November 1.

"How much owest thou unto my Lord?" -- Luke xvi. 5.

This question is asked still, both by faithful and false stewards; let us take heed to ourselves and beware lest we are misled. "How much owest thou," O Christian! Let the question rather be, -- "What dost thou *not* owe unto the Lord who gave his blood for thee?" Is there any part of thy heart that thou darest to withhold from Him? any part of thy long future eternity which thou wouldst desire to spend out of His sight, unblest by his presence? How much owest thou? Thou owest Him thy present peace, thy future hope, thy happiness in time and in eternity. Thou owest the pardon of sin to His blood, the hope of glory to His merits, and the sanctification of thy poor sinful fallen nature in the power and work of His blessed Spirit! And yet there are teachers now, like the steward in the parable, who say to men still, "For thy hundred measures, take thy bill and write fifty." Thou dost owe to thy Lord thy creation, thy preservation, the blessings of life, and the teachings of a pure and holy morality, and unwary hearers perceive not, till too late, that such teachers turn away from *the "unspeakable gift," Christ and Him crucified!*

"Bought with Thy service and Thy blood,  
We doubly, Lord, are Thine;  
To Thee our lives we would devote,  
To Thee our deaths resign."

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 2.

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." -- Phil. iv. 19.

What a rich promise is this for the poor and needy! May we have faith to lay hold of it, and plead it before the Throne of Grace! May we embrace it for our strength and consolation in the time of weakness and *felt need*, for why should any Christian despond when God has promised him help according to such a measure as this -- the measure, not of man's feebleness and faithlessness, -- the measure of *His own* riches in glory by Christ Jesus. "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me;" it is better to be in this happy poverty than to have all the riches of the ungodly; and if we listen to what the Spirit of God saith to the churches, we shall hear Him declare those to be most of all "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," who are saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Let me then take courage from my very necessities, and make my poverty my plea; He will never weary of supplying the needs of His people, nor turn away His ear from their cry!

"Approach, my soul, the mercy seat,  
Where Jesus answers prayer,  
There humbly fall before His feet,  
For none can perish there.

"Thy promise is my only plea,  
With this I venture nigh;  
Thou callest burdened souls to Thee,  
And such, O Lord, am I!"

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November 3.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." -- 1 John iv. 7, 8.

It is not written, "God is truth," "God is power," "God is wisdom," or "God is holiness;" but it is written "*God is love*," "God is light" (1 John i. 5), "God is a Spirit" (John iv. 24). We can love, for we have spirits as well as bodies; we may then through love become like God; and if we have His Spirit dwelling in us, we cannot choose but love. He calls us to the love of man as well as to the love of God. He has given a second as well as a first commandment; alas! that our hearts are so far gone astray, that we have no love till He puts it into us; no life towards Him till He breathes into us the breath of life. Let us listen to the loving and beloved disciple's voice. How it goes to the root of the matter! How it teaches all holy morality, and destroys all self-seeking and worldly-mindedness! "Beloved, let us love one another;" let us love our fellowmen; let us love especially our fellow-Christians; not merely for their own qualities, or because they love us; a deeper spring must supply the stream of this love -- a spring that never ceases to flow; let us love, *for love is of God*.

"Jesus, united by the grace,  
And each to each endeared,  
With confidence we seek thy face,  
And know our prayer is heard.  
"Still let us own our common Lord,  
And bear thy easy yoke;  
A band of Love, a threefold cord,  
Which never can be broke!"

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November 4.

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" -- Gen. iii. 1.

"Whom resist steadfast in the faith." -- 1 Peter v. 9.

It is awful to think of the subtlety of our adversary the devil, and of the variety of his deceits and devices for tempting the poor sons and daughters of Eve. But "greater is he that is for us than all they that can be against us;" and faith in Him is a strong and unfailing shield by which to quench the fiery darts of the devil, as well as of the wicked, who are often his agents. It was by an attack upon the faith of the woman that her wily enemy brought about her fall, "Yea, hath God said?" The doubt was fatal; and how often does the subtle serpent still overcome by the same evil suggestion! May the Lord keep us "stedfast in the faith!" May the great example of Him who overcame the tempter in the desert, be our pattern as well as our encouragement! May we, like Him, repel the subtle "*hath God said?*" with the clear, firm, undoubting "it is written," until we are beyond the reach of the tempter, and safe for ever in the presence of Him who conquered for us!

"Thus preserved from Satan's wiles,  
Safe from dangers, free from fears,  
May I live upon thy smiles  
Till the promised hour appears  
When the sons of God shall prove  
All their Father's boundless love."

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November 5.

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appear before God." -- Ps. lxxxiv. 5-7.

The "valley of Baca" -- the "vale of misery," in the Prayer-book version--is a part of the heavenward journey that few or none of God's pilgrims can escape, but there are rich blessings for them in it. It seems a dry and barren land, but there are those who know how to turn it into a fruitful land; they know the power that can bring living waters there, and in His strength they make it a well, not of tears, but of waters of life; *they* make the well, digging deep down where they know that comfort is to be found, and the rain comes from above, the blessing descends as they seek it, and fills all the pools to overflowing, where there seems to the eye of sense nothing but barrenness and draught. Thus the Christian goes on "from strength to strength;" for though he is very weakness in himself, his "strength is *in Thee*," and of such it is said, "Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."

"Spring up! spring up, O well  
Of living waters clear,  
That life, eternal life,  
My thirsty soul may cheer,  
In this dry parched land,  
Fresh from my Saviour's hand!"

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November 6.

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. -- Isa. xl. 31.

If we would work for the Lord, we must wait upon the Lord; we have no strength in ourselves to serve Him; no power to mount up as eagles on the wings of faith and love; the strength and the grace must come from Him, and be sought continually from Him. It is not the grace of one day that will do for the next, nor the strength given on one sweet and refreshing Sabbath of the Lord that will enable us to “walk and not faint,” to the end of our journey; we must wait upon Him for *daily* strength, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Perhaps it is for ourselves one of the best effects of trying to do something in His service, that we are *made* to feel how entirely we depend on Him for our strength to do it. And as we have no strength in ourselves to *work* for God, so neither have we strength to bear what He appoints for us unless we wait upon Him. Days, and months, and years of suffering are the appointed portion of many of God’s dear children; and yet how often do we see them rejoicing and singing His praise, mounting up in holy meditation strong in the Lord, when the body is most weak, or the heart most afflicted! Let us then, never despair of obtaining this strength; let us never be faint and weary for want of asking it!

“Show me what I have to do,  
Every hour my strength renew;  
Let me live a life of faith,  
Let me die Thy people’s death!”

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November 7.

“Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” -- Gal. iv. 6.

A loving and tender father is willing to give of his best to his children; our Lord Himself speaks of this as a part of man's nature, even in his fallen state, “If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” What, then, is the gift which our Father, in the exercise of His fatherly love and His kingly power, will give to His favoured happy children? Is it wealth, honour, proud distinction among men? Is it mental riches, power of mind exceeding his fellows; or is it freedom from sorrow, exemption from pain, a state of perfect bodily health, and the buoyant spirits of youth all through life's pilgrimage? No; these are not his *best* gifts, these would be but as the gift of a stone for bread. He will give thee something far better, O child of God! Because He hath loved thee and called thee His son, He will send forth *the Spirit of His Son* His only begotten and well-beloved Son, into thine heart, crying, Abba, Father! He will give thee Himself! He will manifest Himself to thee, and He has said, O listen to His voice, “Ask, and it shall be given unto you!”