

June 15.

"He shall sit as the refiner and purifier of silver." —Malachi iii. 3.

"I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy sin."— Isaiah i. 25.

That which the Lord promises to do for His Church, He will do for individual Christians also; and this consideration is truly comforting to those who mourn their state, as all must do who look into their own hearts and see how much dross is mingled with the gold, and how much sin cleaves to their best thoughts and actions. The Lord is faithful; "He shall sit as the Refiner"—He will work His own work in them by His Holy Spirit, taking away, though it be by a fiery ordeal of suffering, that which is so displeasing in His sight, that evil thing *sin*. Oh, may we have *courage* and faith to ask Him to work thus in our hearts; not sparing the "sin which doth so easily beset us," but enabling us to learn all the self-denying lessons of holiness which He would have us to learn! Let us believe firmly in His love, when He sees it good for us that He should chasten us; the furnace may be hot, but He will not leave us too long in it, nor try us beyond measure, for "the trial of our faith is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried in the fire." He watches while He tries us, and is never so near as when He is taking away from us all those evils which separate us from Himself! "

Love divine has seen and counted

Every tear it caused to fall;

And the storm which Love appointed

Was the choicest gift of all."

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.

June 16.

"Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."—John xi. 3.

It is so still; many of those whom He loves are sick. "We see them suffering, sorrowing, groaning, dying, yet we cannot doubt either His love to them or His power to heal them; why, then, are they thus? We think that if we had the power none of those whom we love would ever be sick, and when they are so we do all we can to heal them ; and we are *right* in so doing. But the love of Jesus is deeper than ours, and it is a far-seeing love. He knows, and those who have been taught by Him know, how often the sickness of the body is the health of the soul, and the weakness of the flesh the strength of the spirit; and if we could ask the saints in glory what they now feel with regard to their earthly sufferings, how many voices would cry, "It was good for me that I was afflicted!" Let me learn faith and submission from the example of those sisters, who were both, like their brother, loved of Jesus. They tell Him their case in lowly confidence. They appeal to His love. They believe in that Divine power to heal of which they had seen so many proofs, but they do not say, "He is God, and knows all, why need we tell Him ?" for they know that it is their part to go to Him with all their wants; nor is their faith in His love shaken by this sickness. Let me, like them, have faith for others as well as myself, and believe that whether He sends sickness or health to His loved ones, "He doeth all things well."

June 17.

"And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."—Luke vi. 5.

This saying is given by three of the Evangelists, shewing the importance they attached to it (as well they might) from its containing the true Sabbath law. In St. Mark it is accompanied with the remarkable expression given as the reason for it—"He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath," (Mark ii. 27.) Yes! it was made for *man*, not for the Jews only, but for man everywhere; made for him, not he for it; it is his privilege, his great blessing; he is not to be its slave, as the Pharisees were. And because it was made for man, "*therefore*, the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath;" it is His day, the Lord's day; He may take what day of the week it pleases Him, and He has taken the first day of the week, and He has made it the day of rest for man, and He himself is Lord of it. Shall we not thank him for it? Shall we not bless Him and praise Him for this blessed day, and seek Him to come and make it to our souls all that He meant it to be for man when He made it for man—no day of bondage, but a day of holy freedom from the world and sin, a foretaste to us of the "*rest* that remaineth for the people of God?"

"How welcome to the saints, when press'd

"With six days' noise, and care, and toil,

Is the returning day of rest

Which hides them from the world awhile?"

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June 18.

"He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel."—
Psalm cvi. 10, 12, 13.

How faithless and fickle is the human heart! How soon do even the favoured Israelites forget what God has done. We might have thought that such a deliverance as they had experienced would have at once and for ever put to silence all unbelieving doubts concerning God's power and will to bring them into the promised land; but we see that it was far otherwise—"They soon forgot his works." *Experience* is not *faith*, and will not stand in stead of faith. We are no better than those Israelites by nature. What God does for us in merciful preservations, unlooked-for recoveries from illness, escapes from great dangers, is *not* sufficient to establish our hearts in His faith and fear. Our faith requires a deeper foundation than this, or we shall be found on the first moment of trial to have "forgotten His works, and waited not for His counsel." His *word of promise* is a surer foundation than anything in our past experience can be, though this too may well afford us cause to praise Him, and such knowledge of His love as ought to incline us to trust in Him.

"Shew 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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June 19.

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."—Isa. lxvi. 2.

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified : but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."
—Isa. lxvi. 5.

A holy and reverent regard for the Word of God is here the mark by which His people are described. It is pointed out as the distinction between them and then-persecutors, who yet have the name of the Lord on their lips, and say, even while hating their brethren, and casting them out, " Let the Lord be glorified." May I be ever found on the side of those who tremble at Thy Word, O my God! May I fear to speak, or write, or think one slight or irreverent thought or word concerning that holy Word of Thine whereby I shall be judged. And may I not only fear, but *love* it. May I, like David, esteem it" better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." It is not for me to cavil at difficulties. Strange would it be were there none in a book sent from the Infinite God to finite creatures so ignorant as we are ! The poor and contrite spirit is too much in earnest to cavil. Be it mine not to *doubt* but to *tremble* at Thy Word!

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June 20.

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."—Isa. lvii. 15.

Our God is *infinite*. We cannot understand what that means, but this we may know, and understand, and exceedingly rejoice to believe, that high as He is, He is not too high to behold us; holy as He is, He is not too holy to pity us! There are heights in His glory that the highest angels have never yet seen, "which things the angels desire to look into," even the glories of His infinite grace in the salvation of sinners. Let us think of His greatness, that we may be lost in wonder at His condescension; "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?" Even because He is so great, so infinitely exalted, we may rest secure that He will fulfil all His promises,—"God is not a man that he should lie." Oh that He may find in me that contrite and humble spirit which He loves—a heart emptied of self and sin, lifting up its gates that the King of glory may enter in! Then, as the ocean tide which heaves the broad Atlantic, and yet does not forget to fill all the crystal pools by the shore, so shall He who "inhabiteth eternity" come in His abundant grace to "revive the spirit of the humble!"

"Come then Thyself! To every heart
The glory of Thy name make known;
The means are our appointed part,
The power and grace are Thine alone."

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June 21.

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."—Deut. xxxii. 2.

"As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, so shall my word be."—Isa. lv. 10, 11.

How lovely and how precious is the silent dew after the scorching heat of the summer day! How gratefully does the earth send up its tribute of fragrance through the soft evening air, and leaves, and grass, and flowers, revive beneath the refreshing drops of pearly moisture! Precious as this gift of heaven is to us in our green island of the ocean, it is still more so to the inhabitant of the parched countries of the East, and the image in these verses must have come home with wonderful power to those whose life and daily bread depended so much on seasonable, yet often precarious, supplies of rain and dew from above. Let me strive to enter into the feeling with which such a one regarded these blessings, and ask myself, "Is the word of His grace like the dew to thee? Does His doctrine drop as the rain to refresh thee? And is its sweet influence making thee 'bring forth and bud,' even as a well-watered garden, to thy Lord's praise? Oh, thou canst not too earnestly watch, seek, pray, thirst for those showers of blessing, the Holy Spirit's own gift, without which thou art but a barren desert, a fruitless garden, a desolate wilderness!"