

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 1.

"Thou God seest me."—Gen. xvi. 13.

This is a truth owned by many, felt by few; owned at the very beginning of the Christian course, as it startles the awakened sinner; but, alas! not *felt* as he would wish it to be by even the most advanced saint. If in our journey of life we had always at our side a bright angel walking with us, a native of heaven whose white raiment and holy looks, words, and ways continually reminded us of the holy place from whence he came, how would the presence of such a monitor check us in every trifling pursuit, and hush every vain, foolish, angry, or unkind word; how watchful would we become, and how diligent in the use of the means of grace; how humble would the sight of his excellencies make us ; and how would we long to become like him! It may be that such a heavenly messenger is even now the appointed companion, though unseen, of every one of God's people. But whether it be so or not, we do assuredly know that the Lord of angels Himself is ever beholding us. He compasseth our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways. O may He look upon us in mercy, through the atonement and merits of His own dear Son, "forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask," but for His sake.

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August 2.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."— Matt. vii. 12.

Let me take these words of Jesus as a standard and rule of morality in all my dealings with others. I may not lower this standard by reference to the ways of the world, nor to the claims of self-interest, nor by reading these words (as so many *seem* to do), "whatsoever ye *expect* that men should do to you, do ye to them." Jesus has given His followers a very different rule, and has illustrated it by His own example. In transactions of business, let me take the spirit of His precept for my guide; for why should the business life of a Christian be so severed from his spiritual life that he cannot in the one as well as in the other listen to the voice which says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus?" In buying and selling, in dealing with servants, in judging of the conduct of those around me, in words, thoughts, and deeds, let me seek to maintain a strict watch over myself lest I transgress this truly "Golden Rule;" and may God give me grace to keep it in spite of all temptations which selfishness may suggest.

"Who is the honest man?

He that doth still and strongly good pursue,  
To God, his neighbour, and himself most true;  
Whom neither force nor fawning can  
Unpinne, or wrench from giving all their due."

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August 3.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord."—Lev. iv. 2.

Here we have a whole chapter devoted to the law of sin-offerings for sins of ignorance; the priest's offering; the offering for "the whole congregation of Israel;" the offering when a ruler hath sinned; and even the offering for the poorest, "when any one of the common people sin through ignorance." None were excused on account of ignorance if they sinned against any of the commandments of the Lord; for in chosen Israel, they were *guilty* if they were ignorant: the Lord had shown them His statutes and His judgments; He had "not dealt so with any nation;" and it was a crime in even the poorest person among them so to neglect acquainting themselves with His will as to be found transgressing it through ignorance. And is not ignorance a great sin among us also? God has made known His holy Word and will to us in these latter times, so that we are left without excuse. O Lord, enlighten my eyes in the full knowledge of thy will! Keep back thy servant from sins of ignorance! "Thy commandment is exceeding broad," and "who can tell how oft he offendeth?" "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin," but thanks be unto God for the One perfect Sacrifice that cleanseth from all iniquity— through Him we may come and ask thee "*to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances!*"

August 4.

"A certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house."

—Luke x. 38.

"He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."— Matt. x. 40.

"What a happy woman was Martha, to be able to receive Jesus into her house! To have her Lord sitting at her table, to hear him speak words of holy wisdom, to be honoured to minister to Him—all this was indeed a privilege; and we are ready to cry, O that I had been in Martha's, or still more in *Mary's* place! But have we enough thought of His own words, "He that receiveth *you* receiveth *me*?" His disciples are still among us, they come to us asking help and comfort, fellowship, kindness, and sympathy,—let us hasten to open our hearts to them for His sake. Let us look upon them *as His*, seeking to forget their frailties in the remembrance of their faith. Let us remember *whose* they are; the mark of their royal sonship may be but dim through the infirmities of sinful nature; yet if they are believers, and pilgrims to the better country, let us beware how we despise "one of the least of these little ones." O how liberally Jesus rewards those who receive His disciples! Not a cup of cold water given to them in His name shall lose its reward.

"Let us for each other care,

Each the other's burden bear,

To thy church the pattern give,

Show how true believers live!"

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August 5.

"Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?"—Luke xiii. 16.

This woman was a "daughter of Abraham;" "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham;" and coming in her faith to the synagogue, in spite of her infirmity, she found herself cured through the power and mercy of Him who delights in mercy. She was one of the many whom He cured on that Sabbath-day, to the great indignation of the Pharisees, who were blind to the higher principle asserted by Him, of doing *good* on the day set apart for God's service. And it is still the Lord's day of cures. How many a son and daughter of Abraham has gone to His house in heaviness, "bowed together," and unable to lift up their hearts any more than this poor woman could lift up her body, and on His day and in His house, the bond has been loosed, and they have been made to glorify God. Let me take this case for my encouragement, and go to the sanctuary of God, in full belief of the power and will of the Lord Jesus, to undo the heavy burden of sin with which Satan has sought to bow down the soul.

"When, along life's thorny road,  
Faints the soul beneath the load,  
By its cares and sins opprest,  
Finds on earth no peace or rest:  
"When the wily tempter's near,  
Filling us with doubts and fear,  
Jesus, to thy feet we flee,  
Jesus, we will look to thee!"

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## August 6.

"The Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them; I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel."—Numb. xviii. 20.

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people."—1 Pet. ii. 9.

Happy Aaron! how rich was his portion, how high his privileges! but high as they were, they are excelled by those of the "royal priesthood," of whom he was a type. If the Lord has indeed chosen us to be His, let us think to what a portion He has called us, and let us thankfully accept the lot of being "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," if we can but say, "*The Lord* is the portion of mine inheritance. "May the Lord fill our hearts with a sense of His love, so that we may be constrained to cry out with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee?" Whatever he gives us *here*, will be good if He gives us *Himself* along with it; and whatever He withholds from us, He can more than make up for, even in this life, and in the world to come He will give "life everlasting" as his people's inheritance.

"No more, believers, mourn your lot;

But if ye are the Lord's,

Resign to those that know him not

Such joys as earth affords."

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### August 7.

"Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust."—Ps. cxliii. 8.

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."  
—Ps. xxx. 5.

"God shall help her, and that right early."— Ps. xlvi. 5.

It is night with the Christian when his Lord hides His face from him, but the darkness will not continue always, and it is in hope and confidence of being heard, that he prays, "Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness." Long, dark, and full of weeping as the night hours may be, *there is* a morning for every afflicted child of God, and "*joy cometh in the morning;*" joy from God, joy in a restored sense of God's loving-kindness, and light in again beholding the light of His countenance. Whatever darkness we may have to pass through here, may the Lord enable us to hold fast our belief that the morning *will* come, if not in this world assuredly in the next; such a hope has cheered the heart of many a sufferer, and many a martyr for God's truth; it has been to them like the thought of morning to shipwrecked mariners through the dreary and dreadful night of tempest—giving them strength to hold out, and courage to cling to the last to the raft that sustains them. "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."