

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

July 22.

"Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"—John xiv. 8, 9.

Jesus may have been near us—may have been in the midst of us for long years—and yet, like Philip, we may have never known Him, till He has Himself suddenly withdrawn the veil from our eyes, and taught us the mighty lesson, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Philip had seen the works, and heard the words of Him who spake as never man spake; he had followed the Lord when to do so was perilous; he had brought another to follow Him, even Nathanael, with the words, "Come and see," John i. 46; and yet this great truth lay all hidden from his own eyes, till the prayer, "Show us the Father," brought forth the revelation now made. And it is thus that Jesus sometimes deals still with men; some He gladdens at once with a revelation of His glorious person and character; but to others He reveals truth by slow degrees, leading them on patiently in all their ignorance, till of a sudden they long for a fuller light, and the veil is taken from their eyes. Then they *know Jesus*; then they feel that He is indeed their God; the words He speaks are their Father's words, and they rejoice in their adoption as children of God.

"Strangers now no more to roam,
In our Father's house at home
Sons and daughters may we be,
One with Jesus, one with Thee !"

July 23.

"I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts."—Ps. cxix. 45.

"Uphold me with thy free Spirit."—Ps. li. 12.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." —2 Cor. iii. 17.

How glorious is the liberty of the child of God! He is a paradox which the world cannot understand. He is set free, in order that he may serve, but in that service is perfect freedom, a freedom which he never knew till he became the Lord's servant! "Thy free Spirit," a beautiful expression; *Thy* Spirit, free in His workings, free in His power, freely given, and setting the soul free; uphold me with Thy free Spirit! The grace of God is free ; may we receive it as it is offered, feeling that we have nothing to give, nothing that we can return to Him, but hearts which He must Himself renew. O may we highly prize, and jealously guard this noble Christian freedom which God's free Spirit bestows!

May it neither fall into the licentiousness of Anti-nomianism, nor be lost in the bondage of outward ceremonies! While we "walk at liberty," let it be because we "seek thy precepts;" it is in seeking to be holy that we shall be made free from the greatest of all slavery, the slavery to which that of the body is a light yoke, the slavery of *sin*.

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside! There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
Can cast around him, but he throws it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes."

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July 24.

"Be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."—Heb. xiii. 5.

Blessed voice of comfort from Him who alone can give true comfort! May I ever listen to it; nor turn aside in the hour of trial to seek consolation from any broken cistern, while this Fountain of living waters is so freely offered. "*He* hath said, I will never leave thee." "Who is it that speaks thus? it is the Lord himself who created and redeemed me; it is He who hath bought me with a price, even the precious blood of Christ; is not *His* presence life, and His loving-kindness better than life? Let me beware of turning away from this sunshine, or raising a cloud of earthly cares between my soul and my soul's light; *discontent* is such a cloud, and the apostle warns against it; may I watch against the faintest approach of any such feeling, and learn to be content with whatever He sends, even though sickness, poverty, or affliction may be in my cup.

"Why should sorrow overcome me?

If of Christ

I am possest,

Who can take Him from me?

"Who can rob me of the heaven

God's own Son

For me hath won,

And by Faith hath given?"

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July 25.

"I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me."
—Ps. cix. 22.

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names."
—Ps. cxlvii. 3, 4.

There are heart wounds which no human eye can see, no human hand can cure. How tenderly does the Lord deal with such! how gently does He speak in His word to all such deeply wounded ones, and assure them of a pity and compassion equally powerful and tender, so that none need despair when such a Helper is near! He *knows* the case of every afflicted one; yet He invites each to *tell* his griefs, and pour out his heart, for in this there is relief. We shut up our sorrows from unsympathizing ears, but we find relief in expressing them where we are sure of being understood, and who can understand or sympathize like the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Observe how the pity and the power of our God are both brought forward; He who *heals*, is He who tells the number of the stars!

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July 26.

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."—Col. i. 13.

All who live in a country of gospel light are, in a certain sense, "delivered from the power of darkness;" but as the rays of the noonday sun shine in vain upon a blind man's eye, so the outward rays of truth and light shine in vain on many a blind and darkened and ignorant mind in the midst of gospel privileges. Until the Lord opens the eyes of the understanding, there can be no real deliverance from the power of darkness, and it is a *fearful* power! It blinds the heart to the love of truth; it makes the conscience sleep the sleep of death; it darkens the eye, so that it cannot discern good from evil, nor see the path which leads to life; it makes men mistake friends for enemies, and fly from their soul's true Friend to their deadliest foe! Blessed be Jesus who hath overcome the prince of darkness that He might save His people from the power of darkness! Let those who have been so delivered, see that they are found walking as "children of the light," and avoiding every appearance of return to the dreadful gloom of the "power of darkness."

"Lord, I am blind, be Thou my sight!

Lord, I am weak, be Thou my might!

A helper of the helpless be,

And let me find my all in Thee!"

July 27.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."—Isa. xl. 31.

How easy does everything appear when we have *strength* to do it! and the promise that the Lord will strengthen our heart, seems to offer us the very thing we want when we are low and discouraged, and that is *heart* in our work and our way; *heart* to run in the way of His commandments, and whatsoever we do, to do it *heartily*, as to the Lord, and not to men. Perhaps we have not much *bodily* strength; for this also we must wait on the Lord, not pining because we cannot do more, but seeking to do cheerfully, *for His sake*, any little thing that we can do, and trying to feel an interest in it. When things are right between our souls and Him who is their life, everything else is right! but many forget this, begin at the wrong end, and get discouraged. "Be of good courage;" "Be of good cheer;" "Be of good comfort;" let us look at the reasons connected with these three words of hope and comfort. "Be of good courage; He will strengthen thine heart." "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." "Be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." (Ps. xxvii. 14; Matt. ix. 2, 22.)

"No strength of our own,
Or goodness we claim,
Yet since we have known
The Saviour's great name,
In this our strong tower,
For safety we hide;
The Lord is our power,
The Lord will provide."

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July 28.

"Rooted and grounded in love."—Eph. iii. 17.

Very different is the mere passing *sentiment* of love to Jesus, ebbing and flowing like a human affection, according as our feelings are moved, from that love to Jesus, which must be received *from Himself*. A coal from off the altar must at first kindle it, and nothing can keep it alive, or feed the flame, but the Spirit taking anew of the things of Christ, and showing them unto us. Nor need we fear that He will fail to perform this part of the work of our redemption. He *delights*, if we may so express it, to glorify Christ, to testify of Him to poor perishing sinners! He sees from afar those whom the Father has from all eternity elected to everlasting life, and hastens, even while they are a far way off, to reveal Christ to them in all the riches of His grace and mercy, to plant His love in their hearts, and so to make them partakers of the Divine nature. How truly we may say, " Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" May we, having Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, and being "rooted and grounded in love, be enabled to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God."