

March 1.

"O love the Lord, all ye his saints."—Ps. xxxi. 23.

"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength."—Ps. xviii. 1.

Blessed be God that our hearts are not left without love in this world! He has given us an object worthy of our highest affections; He has given us *Himself* to love ! Here we may safely love, and here alone—for here there can never come the fear of change or of loss; we cannot love our God too well,—alas, that we love Him so little ! In our earthly attachments there must ever be insecurity ; we rest upon those who are removed from us or we from them, and we are taught by bitter experience that the best and holiest of earthly ties cause our deepest sorrows as well as our greatest joys, by the sore partings which they entail. How desolate is then the heart that has never learned to love the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,"—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!" Let us pray, "Teach us to love Thee, Lord!" Our hearts are by nature so estranged, that the vainest vanities of time too often come between us and our God, and unless He opens our eyes to behold His beauty by the power of His Holy Spirit, we cannot either believe or love. The Psalmist says, " I will love thee, O Lord, *my strength*;" let us believe that *strength to love Him* is His own gift, which He is more ready to give than we are to ask;— surely it may well be reckoned as among those "good things" which our Father in heaven is so willing to bestow on them that ask Him!

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.

March 2.

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." — 2 Pet. iii. 18.

A question for me—Am I growing in grace? am I growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? This is not merely a question of progress, it is a question of *life*—the dead cannot grow—but every living *child* must grow, and so must the child of God. "We can grow only by union with our living Head, hence the need of growing "in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Lord, make me earnest in praying for, and seeking after *spiritual growth*; watchful over myself in avoiding all that hinders it, and earnest in following all that helps it. May the means of grace be truly means of *growth* in grace to me. May I not rest content unless I gain something by each sermon and Sunday, and especially by each time of nearest approach to my Lord, when I partake of that bread and that wine which are fitted most of all to bring me into the knowledge of His love and His grace towards me. May I grow in humility, heavenly-mindedness, and diligence in His service, and may I be always longing after more growth in grace, and never resting content as though I had already attained or were already perfect.

"Never leave me nor forsake me—

More and more reveal Thy love,

Till Thou shalt a pillar make me

In the house of God above."

March 3.

"Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son."—Ps. lxxii. 1.

"Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee."
—Matt. xxi. 5.

The seventy-second Psalm is a glorious and most heart-cheering one; it is a prophecy of the future glories of our Heavenly King, when the prayer of His Church for ages shall be at last accomplished—"Thy kingdom come." There is so much sin and sorrow in this world, that sometimes the oppressed heart can only say, in the mournful words of the Preacher, "This is also vanity and vexation of spirit." How cheering is it, at such times of depression, to lift our thoughts from a gloomy present, and carry them on, by the help of the sure word of prophecy, to a glorious future, when the Lord *shall* reign, and His kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord!" In the seventy-second Psalm we have set before us the righteousness, goodness, glory, and eternal duration of Christ's kingdom; and if the King Himself is dear to our hearts, His glory must be the object of our fondest hopes. We know not *when* or *how* these things shall be, but that they *shall* be there can be no doubt—

"The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

"Come then, and, added to Thy many crowns,

Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,

Thou who alone art worthy!"

March 4.

"What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." —Mark xiii. 37.

"Take heed to your spirit."—Mal. ii. 15.

There is not a day in which we may not hear that "Voice saying unto us, and unto all, "Watch." Especially is it heard when He calls away by a sudden death some one from the midst of us; then we are startled from our careless state, and we cannot help asking ourselves, "Why was it not I? I may be the next." But this may be merely a passing feeling: we must "take heed to our spirit," and seek to attain that true state of watchfulness which looks for the coming of the Lord with joy, as to the return of a long absent but dearly-loved master, whose arrival will be a blessed day for us. Lord, enable me *this day* to watch! May I love to remember that Thou mayest be nearer me than I think! May my faith repose with full trust upon Thy work of righteousness and Thy blood of atonement, so that I may not shrink from, but rather long to behold Thy face; and oh, may my thoughts, words, and actions be those of a faithful servant before Thee, when the hour comes that shall try every man's work!

"Lord, I wait for Thy returning—

Waiting, hoping in Thy word;

More than they that watch for morning,

Waits my soul upon the Lord!"

March 5.

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification." —1 Thess. iv. 3.

"God, who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."—2 Tim. i. 9.

What an animating thought is it for those who desire to be holy, that "this is the *will of God*, even your sanctification." It is His own purpose concerning His people; He saves them from sin, and calls them with an *holy* calling; and this not on account of their works, or desires, or aspirings after holiness, (which they feel with shame to be so faint and few,) but according to *His own purpose* and grace in Christ Jesus. Well may we wonder and adore the greatness of His saving love! Never would any fallen man have *chosen* the path of holiness had not the Lord put forth His saving hand, and led the sinner into it Himself; therefore we may be sure that He will perfect the good work wherever He has begun it; and how should this thought encourage us in our Christian course! We have, indeed, "no power of ourselves to help ourselves," but we believe that He who cast out devils with a word, has power to "keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls," according to His own purpose and grace.

"He wills that I should holy be;

What can withstand His will?

The counsel of His grace in me

He surely will fulfil."

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.

March 6.

"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."— 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

It is fearful to think how far a man may go without going far enough—how much he may have, and yet not have enough; and we may well ask ourselves what we have of this charity, without which we are *nothing*. We may have eloquence, (ver. 1,) prophecy, knowledge, faith, liberality, and even self-sacrifice, and yet not have the "most excellent gift of charity." All these are of the head; charity or love is of the heart, and the Lord looks on the heart. Giving all our goods to feed the poor may coexist with a heart given to the world, and untouched by love to either God or man; and giving the body to be burned, is a proof of devotedness which has often actually been given by men who have had so little charity, that they have, in their day of power, themselves given the bodies of other men to be burned for their opinions. Where, then, shall we find the true pattern of charity? Where but in our blessed Lord himself, who, for the great love wherewith He loved us, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor —though He was Lord of all, for our sakes took on Him the form of a servant—and "who His own self bear our sins in His own body on the tree."

"One is kind above all others—

Oh, how He loves!

His is love beyond a brother's—

Oh, how he loves!"

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.

March 7.

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."— James i. 26.

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."—James iii. 2.

We have much need to pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips;" for which of us is not in danger from sins of the tongue? There is but one bridle strong enough to restrain this unruly member; it is the bridle of *love*. Were our hearts filled with love to God and love to man, it would be impossible for such fountains of "sweet waters" to send out at the same place bitter streams. Were we closely united to Christ the Vine, it would be impossible for us to bear strange fruit—"wild grapes." "If any man offend not *in word*;"—we may offend in word by the *pen* as well as by the tongue; this also requires bridling. Many persons write things which they dare not speak; and, in these days of much writing, much watchfulness is needed, lest we be found guilty of having a *pen*, rather than a *tongue*, "set on fire of hell." There is a kind of self-denial much needed by some spirits, and to them far more irksome than the self-denial which mortifies the body alone; it is the self-denial of refraining from the bitter, clever word which wounds another. The biting sarcasm, the powerful invective may be admired by men of the world; but the Christian seeks to have in his heart, the "meekness of wisdom;" on his tongue, the "law of kindness."

"To walk as children of the day,
To mark the precept's holy light,
To wage the warfare, watch, and pray,
Shew who are pleasing in His sight."