

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 15.

"Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."—Rev. vii. 10.

This high song of praise is even now swelling forth in the upper sanctuary, beyond that blue firmament which veils from our feeble eyes the great glory of heaven. They are singing it there as none upon earth can do, for only those who have reached their heavenly rest can tell how great is the salvation with which God has saved them. Many whom we have heard of, many, perhaps, whom we have known and loved are there; old and young, they have finished their course, whether longer or shorter, with joy, and they now know what great things God hath prepared for those that love Him. To Him and to the Lamb do they ascribe all the glory of their salvation; they make no distinction, for the love of God is the love of the Lamb of God; but we may well take note, that the name by which in heaven they praise God the Son, is in itself the recognition of His great work of redemption in dying for them. Even there, in His kingdom above, He is the Lamb that was slain, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." When we have followed some loved one to the grave, how does it revive our mourning hearts to hear, as from above, this voice of praise coming to us across the great gulf of separation; to hear the dear Christian friend with whom we have taken sweet counsel, singing now to the golden harp the wonderful salvation which God has wrought, and praising in heaven, as formerly with feeble tongue on earth, Him who has finished all this great work of redemption; "the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood."

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July 16.

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."— 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Blessed truths! "The Lord knoweth them that are His," not one of the least of them is forgotten by Him: how encouraging is this thought! And not less encouraging is the other side of the seal, the side by which *men* know those that bear it; for it is strengthening and encouraging to those who long for holiness in a wicked world, to know that it is *His will* that every one that nameth the name of Christ should depart from iniquity. Holiness is the mark by which He would have His people to be known; by uniting them to Himself He would make them "depart from iniquity." Let us pray, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm;" bring me so near to thee that I may be plainly stamped as thine, stamped with the image and superscription of the King! Naming thy holy name, may I depart from all iniquity in thought, word, and deed, and may thy Holy Spirit so renew my nature, that I may be conformed to thine image, and made meet for thy glory!

"Thine image, Lord, bestow,  
Thy presence and Thy love;  
I ask to serve Thee here below,  
And reign with Thee above!"

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July 17.

"In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience."—2 Cor. vi. 4.

"Be patient toward all men."—1 Thess. v. 14.

"Much patience!" how necessary is this grace! How needful for the minister of Christ! How needful for every Christian who tries to labour in the Lord's vineyard! It is not easy to exercise this *patience* aright, for we are too apt to grow weary in well-doing, and to give ear to the discouraging whispers of our great adversary, who tells us that we are but labouring in vain. It may be that years pass away without unfolding any fruit of our work; we may have to encounter opposition from some, and coldness from others, yet, if we would possess the mind of Christ, we must seek to follow His footprints here also, and "be patient toward all men;" we must learn to bear with men if we would bring them to God; we must seek to *be patient* with dull children in schools, remembering how slow we have been in learning Christ's lessons; and with ignorant, careless, or frivolous people in our efforts to improve them, remembering that none are too ignorant or careless to become subjects of His grace, and heirs of eternal life. Lord, teach us to be patient, remembering *how patient* Thou hast been with us!

"Lord, who hast suffered all for me,  
My peace and pardon to procure,  
The lighter cross I bear for Thee,  
Help me *with patience* to endure!"

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July 18.

"Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."—Phil. i. 23.

To be *with Christ*, this is the idea of the Apostle in connexion with his departure; this is the thought that makes him *desire* it. He does not long to have done with a world where he had suffered so much; he does not think of *rest*; he only thinks of being *with Christ*. And if we are Christ's, what a thought should this be to us also ! That we shall one day *see Jesus!* That we shall fall down before Him, and cry, Worthy is the Lamb ! That we shall see the hands that were pierced; the head that was crowned with thorns; and hear the voice that is "as the sound of many waters" speaking to *us*, calling *us* by name! These are, indeed, transporting thoughts, and we ought to cherish them, and endeavour to keep before our minds hopes of so purifying and elevating a nature. For the heart that longs to be with Jesus hereafter, cannot but long to be conformed to His image here; and that communion with Him, which the hope of being with Him inspires, will be not only the best joy of the Christian's life, but the best preparation for his passage to eternal life through the "grave and gate of death."

"Then shall my disimprisoned soul

Behold Him and adore;

Be with His likeness satisfied,

And grieve and sin no more."

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July 19.

"The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever."—Isa. xl. 6-8.

Solemn, awful, intensely mournful voice! how utterly desolate would be the heart that heard that cry, unless amidst the withering of every earthly hope, something had been presented to the mind, which no change of time, or decay of age can affect:—"the word of God shall stand for ever!" Here, then, we may rest secure. Here there is no instability, no perishableness. The word shall stand; the living Word made flesh, and revealed in Christ Jesus, shall abide for ever; and we, if united to Him by living faith, have that in us which is not fading like the grass or the flower of the field, but abideth for ever. In Him is life; in union with Him is our life; let this thought comfort us in those days of darkness, when some sore bereavement presses upon our hearts the sad truth of the fleeting nature of every earthly joy, and the only so and in our ears is that of the voice that says, "Cry, all flesh is grass!" Yes, but hear another voice; "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you!"

"Only the mortal frame can fade and die,  
All that is worthy of a Spirit's love  
Shall cleave to us throughout eternity-  
Shall dwell with us in far bright worlds above.  
Here if pains, partings, sorrows, cares molest,  
Swift flight is ours, before us lies our rest!"

July 20.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

—John xv. 13, 14.

No man can show greater love than by dying for his friends; but Christ's love was shown in that He laid down His life, not for His friends, but His enemies! "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He died to make His enemies His friends; and here He teaches His disciples that it is not to the place of servants, but to that of *friends* that He has called them: "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called *you friends*, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." He has brought His people *near* to Him; into a place of confidence and love, not of hireling servitude. And we are expected to do His will, and serve His cause far better as friends than we could as servants. The servant who has his master's interest at heart is said to be more a friend than a servant; he loves his *Master* more than his master's *wages*; he works in a friendly, not in a servile spirit; and it is this which Jesus looks for in those whom he deigns to call His friends. O Lord, bestow on us a spirit worthy of the high place to which thou callest thy people!

"To those who know the Lord I speak,  
Is my Beloved near?  
The Bridegroom of my soul I seek,  
Oh, when will He appear?  
"Grace flies before and love attends  
His steps where'er He goes;  
Though none can see Him but His friends,  
And they were once His foes ! "

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July 21.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."— Rom. v. 1.

There may be true faith where, through many infirmities, there is not a sense of peace; but there cannot be true peace with God without faith: and perhaps the measure of peace enjoyed, depends very much on the measure of faith in God, through Jesus Christ, in whom is the covenant of our reconciliation and peace with God. The great truth of justification by faith lays the foundation on which peace is built, and on which all the graces of the Christian character are built up. We do not know the thousandth part of our own guilt in God's sight, if we suppose that true peace for our souls —the peace which proceeds from *pardon*—can ever be found, except through believing in Jesus Christ, and receiving Him as our atonement. If we indeed believe, we *ought* to have peace; we should not rest content without seeking to have some sense of this great blessing; it is *in the covenant* for us; it is purchased for us, and has been promised to us, and *sin* alone prevents us from enjoying it.