

The Church Times.

"Evangelical Truth--Apostolic Order."

VOL. 8. HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, SATURDAY, MAY 16, 1857. NO. 20.

Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day	Date	MOORNING.	EVENING.
M.	May 17	Gen. 22. 1-14.	Deut. 1. 1-17.
T.	18	2 Kings 18. 1-13.	19. 1-13.
W.	19	20. 1-13.	21. 1-13.
T.	20	22. 1-13.	23. 1-13.
F.	21	Deut. 10. 1-17.	Luk. 11. 1-13.
S.	22	Exra. 1. 1-11.	1. 11-17.
S.	23	2. 1-11.	2. 11-17.

* Proper Prayers for Ascension Day—Morn. 8, 16, 21. Even. 21, 27, 108. The Athanasian Creed to be used.
 a Begin ver. 11. b To ver. 17.

Poetry.

STANZAS SUGGESTED BY A CONFIRMATION.

Oh! ye who choose to-day
 Your Saviour's narrow way,
 Through the straight gate entering resolved and bold,
 Hope not at once to feel
 Soft airs around you steal;
 Hope not for summer's warmth 'mid spring's young cold!

Hope not with love to glow,
 Hope not zeal's gushing flow;
 No sudden burst of joy or sweet surprise,
 Hope not with raptur'd ear
 Heaven's strains at once to hear,
 Nor with blest visions to glad entranced eyes!

Hope not at once to find
 Earth's clinging chains unwind,
 Leaving your soul to God entirely free,
 Too much of natural sin
 Must linger still within,
 Too much of aced sin ingrained may be.

Not all unstained and white,
 In God's unerring sight,
 The robes baptismal that again ye wear;
 E'en partial human eye
 Some spots must needs espay,
 Traces of earthly guilt and earth's low care.

Hast thou, since first thy soul
 Knew God and law's control,
 Bowed to that holy yoke thy constant neck?
 Nursing, in humble mood,
 Sent from God's throne thy wandering will to check.

Or hast thou mann'd thy heart,
 Slighting the better part,
 Firmly to hold thy own irregular way?
 Greedy to take thy fill
 Of pleasure, good or ill,
 As one who reck'd not of the Spirit's sway?

Ransack the records sad
 Of passions wild and bad,
 That in thy heart have left their mark unclean;
 In spite of shame and pride
 Still settling side by side
 All that thou art with all thou might'st have been!

Therefore with trembling breath,
 As yet in sight of death,
 Though from his icy grasp by Christ set free,
 Pray at each step for aid,
 As one to fall afraid
 Save when His holy arm thy star may be.

Yet keep thy high intent!
 Heavenward thy glance be bent
 On the bright towers thou yet may'st hope to win!
 Twice made a child of grace,
 Set thou thy altered face
 Ne'er to look back on cherished haunts of sin!

Think not thy race is run;
 Hope not till set of sun
 At Jesus' feet to lay thy armour down;
 Where, for the saints secure
 Who to the end endure,
 Gleams on the Tree of Life each deathless crown!

Yet, let those visions dear,
 Distant, yet ever near,
 Gild with reflected light thy present road!
 Yet strive amidst the noise
 Of earthly cares and joys
 To catch the far-off harmonies of God!

Earth is thy battle-field,
 Therefore still humble wield
 All the keen weapons that thy Lord hath given;
 Heaven is thy destined prize,
 Therefore still keep thine eyes
 Raised above earth to promised joys of heaven!

Cautious, yet hopeful, too,
 Should be Christ's faithful crew,
 Tost on the billows of this troublesome world;
 'Mid winds' and waters' night
 Keeping the port in sight
 Where on the God-lit shore all sails are furled!

—London Guardian.

FAULTS.—To hide one fault by another is both unwise and wicked: Sin is overcome only when by God's grace we repent of it, abhor it, and forsake it.

Religious Miscellany.

REVIVALS AND BACKSLIDINGS.

The *Southern Churchman* gives us an excellent article on this subject, of which we here give the conclusion:—

"But it appears also, that the persons who profess to be converted by the means employed, do most earnestly believe they are converted, and they are encouraged to this belief, by the preachers and conductors of the revivals. The process is one after this kind. A series of meetings are originated, in which a given congregation is taught to expect a revival. Many go to the meeting. Exciting subjects are the themes of exhortations. A peculiar kind of singing is resorted to, tending to produce excitement. When this is finished, prayers are offered, accompanied by "coachings of the breath," groans, tears, and loud Amen's. We doubt whether there is generally, much hypocrisy in this. These are considered the means of producing a revival, and as such are used. When these means have been tried a sufficient length of time, then the conductors proceed through the aisles, clapping their hands, crying "Glory, Glory," and such like. It is not at all strange that after all these efforts, some nervous female or weak-minded man should begin to yield and grow excited. When this is seen in any one, he or she is approached by a preacher, and exhorted to come up to the altar. When this is done, it is no wonder the person should give way to loud cries and even convulsions. And this is the signal for the pent up feelings of others to show themselves. Here take place loud cryings and groans from others. These are brought forward to the altar also. They come with minds exceedingly agitated and with feelings deeply depressed. And thus, these persons are taught to look upon as conviction of sin! That with some there may be an Evangelical conviction, we have no doubt. But we are to speak of the majority. We have to account for the "army of backsliders" made known to us, by our religious contemporaries. These depressed, awfully depressed feelings, being looked upon as a wholesome conviction of sin; the groans and fears and bodily contortions, as true evidences of a genuine repentance, this is the beginning of the fatal error. From this all the evil originates. True conviction of sin, is by reason of the feeling "it is against God that I have sinned." True repentance is giving up sin; not crying out about its consequences. It is very well indeed to look at the consequences of sin—even the eternal torment in reserve for it. But this, only in order to the making us forsake it. But when people look upon cries, and groans and tears and faintings and convulsions as true conviction and genuine repentance, it is no wonder all the work is spoiled. Those at the anxious bench, believing that their misery is the sign of conviction, also believe, if their miserable feelings can undergo a revulsion, that from great unhappiness, they are suddenly made to feel "happy," then this revulsion of feelings is a conversion, the new birth of the soul from Satan to God and from sin to holiness. Why, all these things can take place, do take place at every modern revival, and yet are only the natural acts of the mind, in which the Spirit of God may have nothing more to do, than He has with the unhappiness and happiness of every day.

Here then we have the secret of the "backslidings:" (1) Deep distress and excitement, are looked upon as conviction of sin. (2) The cries, groans, convulsions, &c., are regarded as true evidences of repentance. (3) The natural change in the feelings from unhappiness to happiness, is called "Conversion." Thousands upon thousands who have undergone these "experiences" and nothing more; called "converts," so called by the preachers themselves; these persons are after some probation admitted to the Church. But their hearts have not been changed at all. Is it any wonder that in time of temptation they should fall away? They do fall away, as we have seen by the statistics given by a religious paper, by thousands. Some of them, who believe this is the only way of conversion, repeat the process quite often. At every revival they are seen at the altar; they "get through" again; and again go back. Others are made infidels.

They had what Christians told them was "religion;" they found there was nothing in it; and hence they believe nothing. They have found out the falsity of the whole subject. Others without becoming infidels, are hardened in their sins—the Gospel has but little power over them, and their prospect of eternal life, is far worse than before. These are great and serious evils connected with this matter of "revivals." We have written with no unkind feeling toward those who practise such things. Much has Methodism for instance, done for the world. We rejoice at it. All we could ask of them or any others who do such things is, enquire first, not how they may keep the converts, but first enquire, have they been converted at all.

We append an extract bearing on this subject, taken from Rev. Dr. Alexander's "Religious Experiences" on the power of *Sympathy* well worthy of reflection.

"I should be unwilling to bring before the religious public all the scenes that I have witnessed under the name of religious worship. But as the subject of sympathy is still under consideration, I will relieve the reader by a short narrative. Being in a part of the country where I was known, by face, to scarcely any one, and hearing that there was a great meeting in the neighbourhood, and a good work in progress, I determined to attend. The services had commenced before I arrived, and the house was so crowded that I could not approach near the pulpit, but sat down in a kind of shed connected with the main building, where I could see and hear the preacher. His sermon was really striking and impressive, and in language and method, far above the common run of extempore discourses. The people were generally attentive, and so far as I could observe, many were tenderly affected, except that in the extreme part of the house, where I sat, some old tobacco planters kept up a continual conversation in a low tone, about tobacco plants, seasons, &c. When the preacher came to the application of his discourse he became exceedingly vehement and boisterous, and I could hear some sounds in the centre of the house which indicated strong emotion. At length, a female voice was heard, in a piercing cry, which thrilled through me and affected the whole audience. It was succeeded by a low murmuring sound from the middle of the house; but, in a few seconds, one and another rose in different parts of the house, under extreme and visible agitation. Casting off bonnets and caps, and raising their folded hands, they shouted to the utmost extent of their voice; and in a few seconds more the whole audience was agitated, as a forest when shaken by a mighty wind. The sympathetic wave, commencing in the centre, extended to the extremities; and at length it reached our corner, and I felt the conscious effort of resistance as necessary as if I had been exposed to the violence of a storm. I saw few persons through the whole house who escaped the prevailing influence; even careless boys seemed to be arrested and to join in the general outcry. But what astonished me most of all was, that the old tobacco-planters, whom I have mentioned, and who, I am persuaded, had not heard one word of the sermon, were violently agitated. Every muscle of their brawny faces appeared to be in a tremendous motion; and the big tears chased one another down their wrinkled cheeks. Here I saw the power of sympathy. The feeling was real, and propagated from person to person by the mere sounds which were uttered; for many of the audience had not paid any attention to what was said; but nearly all partook of the agitation. The feelings expressed were different, as when the foundation of the second temple was laid; for while some uttered the cry of poignant anguish, others shouted in the accents of joy and triumph.—The speaker's voice was soon silenced, and he sat down and gazed on the scene with a complacent smile. When this tumult had lasted a few minutes, another preacher, as I suppose he was, who sat on the pulpit steps, with his handkerchief spread over his head, began to sing a soothing and yet lively tune, and was quickly joined by some strong female voices near him; and in less than two minutes the storm was hushed, and there was a great calm. It was like pouring oil on the troubled waters. I experienced the most sensible relief to my own feel-