

# The Church Times.

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## Calendar.

### CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day & date	MORNING.	EVENING.
S. May 1. (Sun after Easter.)	Deut. 8; John 1	Deut. 9; Jude 1
M. " 2. (St. P. & St. J. Ap.)	1 Kings 8; Acta 29	1 Kings 9; Rom. 1
T. " 3.	10; Matt. 2	11
W. " 4.	12; 3	13
T. " 5. Ascension Day.	Deut. 19; Luke 24	2 Kings 2; Ephe 4
F. " 6.	1 King 13; Matt. 3	1 King 17; Rom. 5
S. " 7.	18	6; 19

\*Proper Lessons for St. Phillip and St. James.—Morn. Eccles. 7—Eben. Eccles. 9. †Proper Psalms.—Morn. 8, 15, 21.—Even. 21, 47  
183. Athanasian Creed to be used.

## Poetry.

### WRITING ON A BED OF SICKNESS.

My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

WEARY of life, its cares, its pains,  
My fainting spirit craves repose;  
I fain would lay my burden down,  
Gladly in death mine eyelids close.  
Life to my thoughts has lost its charm,  
So wearily I tread its way;  
Clouds settle down upon my soul,  
And scarce I see of hope one ray.  
Thus seemeth life while here I rest  
My aching eye, nor gaze above,  
My heart and flesh doth faint and fall,  
Sadness and doubt my spirit move.  
Earth is a dreary spot, and dark,  
When lighted not by heaven's own ray;  
Afflictions press with heavy weight,  
Turning to midnight every day.  
But thou, O Lord, my portion art,  
Thou art the strength of feeble souls,  
In thee my weary spirit rests,  
And on thy love its burden rolls.  
Thou knowest the frame which thou hast made,  
'orgueing not it is but dust:  
'ben still my Father's love I'll praise,  
'll own this fearful trial just.  
by hand doth chasten me for good,  
rom earthly dross to purify;  
at yet through all, O may I see  
eamling a Father's pitying eye.  
'hen tho' this body waste away,  
My waiting soul beneath thy shade  
shall hide secure, and gather strength,  
While in thy presence grief shall fade.

CATHERINE LISDEBAT.

## Religious Miscellany.

### A CALL TO PRAYER.

By THE REV. J. C. RYLE, B. A. CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, RECTOR OF HELMINGHAM, SUFFOLK.

(Concluded.)

I commend to you in the next place, the importance of thankfulness in prayer. I know well that asking God is one thing, and praising God is another. But I see so close a connection between prayer and praise in the Bible, that I dare not call that true prayer, in which thankfulness has no part. It is not for nothing that Paul says, "By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. iv. 6.) "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving," (Coloss. iv. 5.) It is of mercy that we are not in hell. It is of mercy that we have the hope of heaven. It is of mercy that we live in a land of spiritual light. It is of mercy that we have been called by the Spirit and not left to reap the fruit of our own ways. It is of mercy that we still live and have opportunities of glorifying God actively or passively. Surely these thoughts should crowd on our minds, whenever we speak with God. Surely, we should never open our lips in prayer without blessing God for that free grace by which we live, and for that loving kindness that endureth for ever. Never was there an eminent saint that was not full of thankfulness. St. Paul hardly ever writes an Epistle without beginning with thankfulness. Men like Whitfield in the last century, and Bickersteth in our own time, were ever running over with thankfulness. Oh! reader, if you

would be bright and shining lights in our day, we must cherish a spirit of praise. And above all, let our prayers be thankful prayers.

I commend to you in the last place, the importance of watchfulness over your prayers. Prayer is that point of all others in religion at which you must be on your guard. Here it is that true religion begins;—here it flourishes, and here it decays. Tell me what a man's prayers are, and I will tell you the state of his soul. Prayer is the spiritual pulse. By this the spiritual health may always be tested. Prayer is the spiritual weather-glass. By this we may always know whether it is fair or foul with our hearts. Oh! let us keep an eye continually upon our private devotions. Here is the pith and marrow, and backbone of our practical Christianity. Sermons, and books, and tracts, and committee meetings, and the company of good men, are all good in their way, but they will never make up for the neglect of private prayers. Mark well the place and society, and the companions that unhinge your hearts for communion with God, and make your prayers drive heavy. *There be on your guard.* Observe narrowly what friends, and what employments leave your soul in the most spiritual frame, and most ready to speak with God. *To these cleave and stick fast.* Reader, if you will only take care of your prayers, I will engage that nothing will go very wrong with your soul.

Reader, I offer these points for your private consideration. I do it in all humility. I know no one who needs to be reminded of them more than I do myself. But I believe them to be God's own truth, and I would like myself and all I love to feel them more.

I want the times we live in to be praying times. I want the Christians of our day to be praying Christians. I want the Church of our age to be a praying Church. My heart's desire in sending forth this tract, is to promote a spirit of prayerfulness. I want those who never prayed yet, to arise and call upon God, and I want those who do pray, to see that they are not praying amiss. And now if any one should begin to pray more earnestly in consequence of reading this tract, I will ask him to do the writer of it one single favor, and that is, *to remember him in his prayers.*

### INTERRUPTIONS TO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

It seems to me then, that in this case as in many others, there are antagonistic and almost equally mischievous errors. There is on the one hand too much impatience of such breaks and interruptions, and on the other too great indifference to them.

In the first place, I have seen cases in which there appears to be a faulty impatience of such interruptions. A minister feels, and feels justly, that he is occupied in one of the most important offices which can employ the labourer in a fallen world. He has, as the messenger of God, to launch the thunder of eternal wrath, and to reveal the visions of unchanging glory to the opposite classes of society. He has to watch, to pray, to rebuke, to entreat, to exhort. If he is a man of an ardent spirit, he is tempted to say, "What ought to stop me for a moment? How can work such as mine bear a moment's delay? 'Forward' is the true word; and who or what is to put a drag on the wheels of the chariot?"

Now, may I entreat this zealous friend to remember that, however he may theorize on the subject, many of the obstacles and interruptions of which he complains arise, distinctly and altogether, from the appointment of God; and therefore cannot, by any possibility, be inconsistent with the great purposes of

his providence. The minister has prepared two admirable sermons for the approaching Sunday; but on Saturday he is struck dumb by a cold, or falls over the head of his pony, and cannot limp to church. Or, if no disease or accident to himself overtake and silence him, perhaps some event happens to his family which renders his sacred ministrations next to impossible. Or perhaps some secular business arises in his parish as to make his deep and constant attention to it imperative. In great cities, and indeed not unfrequently in towns and villages, large portions of time are sliced off by such occurrences. Now, it will be seen that every one of those various interruptions are not his own work, but the appointments of Divine Providence, of that all-wise and all-merciful Being who has given us the Gospel, and has called the minister to his holy occupation. No contrivance could shelter him from some of them.—They are the conditions of humanity, and he must occupy some other planet or sphere of existence, if he is to escape from them. But the person to whom I refer fails to discover this, and he deals with such circumstances as obstacles over which a zealous man is to ride, and to go on his way with all the calmness and determination with which a star seems to move in the heavens. He forgets that even these very stars meet with those disturbing forces which, for a time, interrupt, although in the end they no doubt secure the harmony and perfection of the present system of things. In this frame of mind, the man sometimes betrays painful infirmities of temper.—The visit of a parishioner frets him. Even the tender partner of all his hopes and fears, and trials and joys, receives now and then it may be, a short, if not a sharp answer. Some trifling question of his child is met a little roughly. And, in the end, his house perhaps assumes rather more the air of a workshop than a parsonage. The hammer is always going, and rest, calmness, quiet enjoyment, are almost banished from it. Now, this sort of impatience under interruption may be forgiven in worldly minds. The little, crooked, irritable poet of Queen Anne's days might perhaps be allowed to cry out, under the annoyance of perpetual visitors, "Tie up the knocker: say I'm sick—I'm dead." But I like far better the spirit of John Newton, when much tried, at his coming from Olney to London, by similar visitations, he said, "I was at first tried by continual visitors, almost beyond endurance; but I resolved, at last, to regard every visit as a message sent from God, by which I was intended to get good or to do good, and to deal with it accordingly."

Our somewhat impatient friend would also do well to remember that his blessed Master, though indefatigable in His own high and holy work, and pursuing it by day in the busy market, and by night upon the sides of the cold mountain, did not exclude the idea of cessation and rest for himself or others. Even when the ministry of the word was confined to twelve poor laborers, His language to them, and this in the midst of their work, was, "Come ye into the desert and rest awhile." Indeed, nothing can be more striking than the interposition of obstacles in the great duties of life, and the necessary occupation of the laborers in what seems to be of less importance. A little rickety child is born into the world. It struggles on through a few months of painful and uncertain existence. During these few months it occupies the mother, the nurse, the medical attendant, and partially the father and other members of the family, and then dies. Why, it may be asked, this interruption in the great business of life? Why is a little unprofitable infant to absorb the time of several people well qualified, perhaps for higher occupations? Because God sees what you do not see,