

The Church Times.

"Evangelical Truth—Apostolic Order."

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Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day	MORNING.	EVENING.
1. June 24	10 Mark 14; Job 24, 25	22; 1 Cor 11
2. "	10 Job 28	23
3. "	10 Job 29, 30	24
4. "	10 Job 31	25
5. "	10 Job 32, 33	26
6. "	10 Job 34, 35	27
7. "	10 Job 36, 37	28
8. "	10 Job 38, 39	29
9. "	10 Job 40	30
10. "	10 Job 41	31
11. "	10 Job 42	1
12. "	10 Job 43	2
13. "	10 Job 44	3
14. "	10 Job 45	4
15. "	10 Job 46	5
16. "	10 Job 47	6
17. "	10 Job 48	7
18. "	10 Job 49	8
19. "	10 Job 50	9
20. "	10 Job 51	10
21. "	10 Job 52	11
22. "	10 Job 53	12
23. "	10 Job 54	13
24. "	10 Job 55	14
25. "	10 Job 56	15
26. "	10 Job 57	16
27. "	10 Job 58	17
28. "	10 Job 59	18
29. "	10 Job 60	19
30. "	10 Job 61	20
31. "	10 Job 62	21

Proper Lessons—1st Lesson Job, I, to end of ver 9; 2nd Lesson, Rom. 13. Proper Psalms, Morning, 20, 21, 101.

Poetry.

THE NEAR, NOT THE FAR.

Es reden und traumen die Menschen viel
Von bessern künftigen Tagen:
Nach einem glücklichen, goldenen Ziel
Sieht man sie rennen und jagen,
Die Welt wird alt und wird wider jung,
Doch der Mensch hofft immer Verbesserung.

Why thus longing, thus for ever sighing,
For the far off, unattained, and dim;
While the beautiful, about thee lying,
Offers up its low, perpetual hymn?

Wouldst thou listen to its gentle teaching,
All thy restless yearnings it would still;
Leaf and flower and laden bee are preaching,
Thine own sphere, though humble, first to fill.

Poor indeed thou must be, if around thee
Thou no ray of light and joy canst throw;
If no silken cord of love hath bound thee
To some little world through weal and woe.

If no dear eyes thy fond love can brighten,
No fond voices answer to thy own;
If no brother's sorrow thou canst lighten,
By daily sympathy and gentle tone.

Not by deeds that win the crowd's applauses,
Not by works that give the world renown,
Not by martyrdom or vacillating crosses,
Canst thou win and wear the immortal crown.

Daily struggling, though unmarked and lonely,
Every day a rich reward will give:
Thou wilt find by hearty striving only,
And true loving, thou canst truly live.

—N. Y. Church Journal.

Religious Miscellany.

EVILS OF PUBLIC EXTENSIVE PRAYER.

The following is one of Mr. Henry Ward Beecher's late *Star* papers in the *Independent*:

One man falls into a whining tone, another prays in an inaudible whisper, another exalts his voice far beyond the natural conversational pitch, and others lose the natural tones entirely, and pray in a kind of sacred falsetto. Some talk in tenor, but pray in bass; some converse in upper-bass notes, but pray in tenor notes. If a brother first speaks and then prays, a stranger listening from the outside would think two different men had been speaking. This habit becomes very marked in the administrations of clergymen, many of whom come, at length, to have a conversation voice, a praying voice, a hymn voice, a reading voice, and a preaching voice.

Men are seldom entirely true to themselves and natural in their prayers. There is a certain round of topics supposed to be necessary to a symmetrical prayer. True they punctiliously introduce, whether their heart craves such utterance or not. Of all forms of prayer extemporaneous forms are the worst. They have all the evils of written prayers without their propriety. If, when a Christian brother were in full tide of prayer along the regular succession of topics, Christ should really appear before him, how extremely impertinent would most of the petitions seem, addressed to a living and visible Saviour. Thus a man's real feeling is not expressed, and matters quite good in themselves, but almost wholly indifferent to him, constitute the bulk of petition. Reverential tones and well-connected sentences, expressing very proper ideas, do not constitute prayer. The very essence of praying is, that it conveys the real desires or thoughts of the supplicant. When a man really reveres God, how simple is the language of veneration! But if his heart is breaking with sorrow, or depressed by care, or fretted by ill-adjusted affairs, why should he leave the real strain of feeling, and strike into a false key?

It is remarkable how skilfully men will contrive to avoid all real interests, and express almost wholly those which are not real to them. A man prays

for the glory of God, for the advance of His Kingdom, for the evangelization of the world; but, in that very time, he will not allude to the very things in which his very life may stand, nor to the wants which, every day, are working their impress upon his character. The cares, the petty annoyances, the impatience of temper, pride, self-indulgence, selfishness, conscious and unconscious, or, on the other hand, the gladnesses of the daily life, the blessings of home, the felicities of friendship, the joys and success of life—in short, all the things which one would talk of to a venerable mother, in an hour of confidence, are excluded from prayer among the brotherhood. Without a doubt there is to be reserve and delicacy exercised in the disclosure of one's secret and private experiences. But this is not to be carried so far as to strip prayer of all its leaves and blossoms, and leave it like a formal bush or tree in winter, with barren branches standing in cold outline against a cold sky.

We must enter a solemn protest against the desecration of the name of God, so very common in prayer. There would seem to be no necessity, in a prayer of ordinary length, of more than one or two repetitions of the divine name. Instead of this, it is often repeated from twenty to forty times. Every sentence begins, "O Lord!" Often the middle of a sentence is pivoted upon the divine name. It is a word used simply to begin a sentence or to close it up. In short, the name of God degenerates into a mere rhetorical embellishment, and is the wasteful word of the prayer. For our own part, prayers interlarded in this manner are extremely repulsive, and even shocking. Nor can we consent, any more, to be moved by the interjections and epithets of prayer. Many prayers are full of O's, and the voice runs through half a semi-circular scale of gracious intonation with every other sentence. It is, O do this, and O do that, O send, O give, O bless, O help, O teach, O look, O smile, O come, O forgive, O spare, O hear, O let, O snatch, O watch—O! O! O! through the whole petition, with every variation of inflection. Some O's are deep and sad; some are shrill and short, some are blunt and decisive, but more are long, very long, affectionately long!

It is painful to see men getting their prayers to a close. After advancing through the topics for a proper time, it seems as if it were thought necessary to throw in a number of very short petitions, or to come to the close through a certain cadence of petitions, until at last the gate is reached, and the man comes out in regular style through the "forever and ever, Amen!" And so habituated have men become to this, that a prayer that begins without a certain conventional opening, and closes without the regular gradations, is thought singular and irreverent. The familiarity of deep feeling, the boldness of love, the artless sentences of unconscious sincerity, are, to some underout, while the cramming a prayer with all manner of conventionalisms gives no offence, if the manner is only solemn. Solemnity is a mask behind which levity and thoughtlessness heap up endless fantasies. It is the arch patron of hypocrisy.

The use of Scriptural language in prayer becomes often a serious vice. Of course, when fully used, no language can be more elevated and appropriate. But when texts or scraps and fragments of texts are strung together, or when certain favorite texts recur in every prayer, long after they have ceased to convey to the hearer the thoughts originally coupled with them, the use of Scripture, instead of edifying, injures. A prayer is not a thread on which men are to see how many texts they can string.

An improper use of figurative language in prayers, is a source of positive mischief. We take no exception to figurative language when it springs fresh from the imagination. Then it augments the tide of thought and feeling. But there are certain figures, and not all of them Biblical, which have been repeated over and over, until all sense is gone from them, except a false sense. They come to be, at length, in effect, the assertion of literal truths; and a figure that was meant simply to kindle the imagination, finds itself in a didactic position, teaching the strangest conceivable things.

Some men are always "opening the windows of heaven," "raining a rain of mercy," "laying down the weapons of rebellion," "Stony hearts," "un-

clean hands," "blind eyes," "deaf ears," at length transfer the thoughts to the outward symbol, and quite hide the inward and specific spiritual state. Some men never say humble, or humility, except by such expressions as "on the bended knee of the soul," and "going down into the valley of humiliation." Many men have apparently forgotten the name of Christ. They always use the word "Cross" instead. They pray to be reconciled to the Cross, they exhort men to come to the Cross, to look up at the Cross, to lay down their sins at the foot of the Cross. We heard an ordination sermon of great ability, upon salvation by Christ, in which that name was not once mentioned, the Cross becoming the synonyme. Had a heathen stranger been present, he would have supposed the name of the God whom he worshipped to be "Cross." This is the more unfortunate, because it not only sinks the power of a living personality, but substitutes in its stead a symbol which, however precious and historically affecting, may, by too great familiarity, lose entirely the Saviour, and leave only the Wood, a relic worse than any which Romish superstition has presented.

There are other correlative topics; but these will suffice for the present.

* PARABLES.—The greater part of the parables delivered in Galilee, are grouped in the discourse from the fishing vessel off the beach of the plain of Genesareth. Is there anything on the spot to suggest the images thus conveyed? So (if I may speak for a moment of myself,) I asked, as I rode along the track under the hill side, by which the plain of Genesareth is approached, so I asked, at the moment seeing nothing but the steep sides of the hill alternately of rocks and grass. And when I thought of the parable of the sower, I answered that here at least was nothing on which the divine teaching could fasten. It must have been the distant cornfields of Samaria or Esdraelon on which His mind was dwelling. The thought had hardly occurred to me when a slight recess on the hill side, close upon the plain, disclosed at once, in detail, and with a conjunction which I remember nowhere else in Palestine, every feature of the great parable. There was the undulating cornfield descending to the water's edge. There was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling, here and there on either side of it, or upon it; itself hard with the constant tramp of horse and human foot. There was the "good" rich soil, which distinguishes the whole of that plain, and its neighborhood, from the bare hills elsewhere descending into the lake, and which, where there is no interruption, produces one vast mass of corn. There was the rocky ground of the hillside, protruding here and there through the cornfields, as elsewhere through the grassy slopes. There were the large bushes of thorn—the "Nabk," that kind of which tradition says that the crown of thorns was woven—springing up like the fruit trees of the more inland parts, in the very midst of the waving wheat.

This is the most detailed illustration of the Galilean parables. But the image of the cornfields generally must have been always present to the eye of the multitude on shore of the Master and disciples in the boat—as constantly as the vineyards at Jerusalem. "The earth, bringing forth fruit of itself," "the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear;" "the reapers coming with their sickles for the harvest," could never be out of place in the plains of Genesareth. And it is probable that these cornfields would always have exhibited the sight which had been observed in the plain of the Upper Jordan beyond the Lake of Merom, and in the great cornfields of Samaria,—women and children employed in picking out from the wheat the tall green stalks, still called by the Arabs "Zuwau," apparently the same as "Zizania," which, in the Vulgate, is rendered "Lollia," in our version "tare," and which, it can be easily imagined, if sowed designedly throughout the fields, would be inseparable from the wheat, from which, even when growing naturally, and by chance, they are at first sight hardly distinguishable.

Of the rest of the imagery in that series of parables, it is perhaps not necessary to speak. Yet the