

The Church Times.

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Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day & date		MORNING	EVENING
S. March 6.	Sunday in Lent.	Gen. 43 Luke 17	Gen. 45 Col. 1
M. " 7.		Deut. 28	Deut. 29
T. " 8.		20	31
W. " 9.		32	31
T. " 10.		34	Joshua 1, Thea. 1
F. " 11.		Jobus 2	3
S. " 12.		4	6

Poetry.

THE MOTHER'S PRAYER.

The beautiful lines below, entitled the "Mother's Prayer," were written in March 1852, by one whose spirit has since taken its flight. She possessed a rare poetical talent, and gave promise of becoming an authoress of note, but hers was a frail spirit, and ere eighteen summers had passed over her head she was called to her reward.—She has left a large number of beautiful poems, written in her leisure moments, and we have been kindly favored with the following:

THE MOTHER LAY on her dying bed,
And beside her stood her son:
With one arm placed on his youthful head,
She prayed to the Holy One.

Her cheek was pale and her eye grew dim,
And faintly she drew her breath;
But she had labored through life for him,
And she strove for him in death.

"I come, I come from the scene of care
To the world where all is love;
Oh! would that I in my arms could bear
My child to the realms above!

"I've prayed with the early dawn of light,
That he might be safely kept;
And oft I've knelt by his side at night,
For him while he sweetly slept.

"I've sown good seed in his tender heart,
I've taught him from sin to flee,
But, ah! the summons has come to part,
And I leave him now to Thee.

"A Mother's care he may know no more,
But Thou canst her place supply,
Oh! keep him safe, and when life is o'er,
May she meet her boy on high!"

Her spirit flew to a better home,
And a wall rose o'er the dead,
Th' daisy springs on her lowly tomb,
And the grass waves o'er her head.

The wintry blasts and the storms of years
Have swept round that mossy stone;
Her childhood's friends have long pressed their
biers,
And her name is scarcely known.

Think ye no marks of her life remain,
Because she hath passed away;
Or that her labors were all in vain,
And lost like the ocean spray?

Nobly her mission was finished here,
And well hath she won her rest;
But do no fruits of her toil appear?
Were none by her efforts blessed?

Go mark that man who is bowed with age,
Whose brow bears the wreath of frost;
Long hath he walk o'er the world's broad stage—
Ask him if her life's lost.

For he, though changed, is the self same child,
That stood by her dying bed,
And sobbed aloud in his sorrow wild,
When he found his Mother dead.

Mark his reply. "I have wandered far,
I have swerved from duty's track,
But she hath served as a guiding star,
And her prayers have led me back.

"Oft when I've been in the festal hall,
Or stood where the wicked scoff,
Would thoughts of her on my spirit fall,
And I could not shake them off.

"And often, too, in the solemn night,
While all who were round me slept,
In dreams once more she has blessed my sight,
And I awoke and wept."

A high reward have her efforts won,
And soon 'twill be hers to meet,

Where all is light, with the darling son,
She led to the mercy seat.

Pray, Mothers, pray! for a holy power
Is there in a Mother's prayer,
To shield a child in a trying hour,
Or guard from the tempter's snare.

The Infant's heart is a tender spot,
Where lines may be quickly traced,
And though that hour we may mark them not,
They can never be erased.

A word, a look, at some fitting time,
A place in the heart may keep,
And lead your babes from the paths of crime,
When you 'neath your tombstones sleep.

Vered, March, 1852. ELIZA KNEELAND.

Religious Miscellany.

PREACHING FOR THE TIMES.

THE Rev. J. H. Gurney, Rector of St. Mary's, Marylebone, London, in a recent sermon, has the following judicious remarks on the defects of pulpit addresses, which altho' calculated for the meridian of the great city, may well be applied to our own.

"I believe one grand reason why the pulpit has so little power in this age of keen intellectual activity is, that there is a sort of divorce between the Sunday sermon and the topics and language of every day life. It is assumed that sermons, properly so-called, must be composed after a prescribed model,—that what men read about in newspapers they are not to hear about from their clergyman,—that the world and all its busy doings are to be left behind during the time of solemn meeting, and that anything of a homely kind, though it have reference to prevalent sins and neglected duties, is beneath the dignity of the place. By one set, who are very positive and imperious in their demands, and very decisive in condemning what does not accord precisely with their own standard, a limited range of subjects is allowed, and a very frequent iteration of their favorite doctrine is insisted on. By another set, matters which are controverted among theologians and ecclesiastics, are almost made the weekly fare of the Christian people; questions about Church authority and Church ceremonies, on which the holiest men have taken different sides, are gravely discussed before unlearned audiences; and many a plain man, who wants to know how best to serve God and battle with temptation, is puzzled at hearing so much from the minister about things of which the New Testament says so very little. Another large class, who belong to no set, preach what offends none and pleases many,—what is correct in taste and orthodox in doctrine,—but pointless and ineffective, because it is all vague and dreamy,—not coming home, as Dr. Chalmers would say, to men's 'business and bosoms,'—not illustrated by that which they see, know, and feel,—not applied by name to the classes for whose benefit it is intended.

"The result we know full well. Sermons that exceed the conventional half hour are accounted a weariness by most; and in the face of all we hear about advancing education and the improved morality of the people, there is the painful startling fact, that in our large towns men belonging to the working classes are hardly seen in our churches, while the most thoughtful and intelligent are those who absent themselves most regularly. I know that there are other concurring causes; what ever they are, it is a plain and urgent duty to search them out, visitation sermons and bishop's charges would be much improved, I think, in tone and quality, if this blot on our Church in its national character were frankly admitted and earnestly deplored, and if the clergy were summoned to confer together respecting the means of wiping it out, parish by parish. But, at any rate, a want of freedom in the pulpit, I have not the smallest doubt, is one hindrance operating most extensively to deaden the power of our ministry, and to drive away from our Church the very men whom it is most important to draw thither. We are cramped and fettered by the supposed necessity of excluding from our Sunday exhortations what fastidious hearers will think too secular, language is to be chosen which shall suit the refined taste of the few,

not that which best suits men doing the rough-work of life, and used to plain speaking everywhere else; devout people who can read good books at home, and do read, perhaps, twenty times as much on religious subjects as they ever hear from the pulpit, are to have the fare they like best, while the undevout, the indifferent, the worldly-minded, the burdened and tempted ones who meet seducers every day and Christian advisers almost never, are not met on their own ground, not reasoned with in terms that suit their case, not made to feel that the preacher knows their wants, and can really help them to better things.—The rule of 'giving every man his portion of meat in due season,' is sadly forgotten. Too much deference is paid to the little knot of religious critics, who acquit and condemn with reference to their own likings; while the crowd of common hearers, who are bigoted to no school of doctrine, but wish to hear about plain things in plain English, are held too cheap.

"All this needs correcting. I want to see a body of men occupying the most public positions, who shall have ability and courage to take their own ground,—who shall preach out naturally what is their thoughts, and in the people's thoughts—above all, who shall deal with the actual living world in its several aspects of good and evil as their subject, and search every corner of it with the penetrating light of God's truth. At present, many a dark place is left unexplored, and numbers hardly recognise their own faults in the phrases of studied ambiguity which are intended to describe them. The broad distinction between a 'conversation such as becometh the Gospel of Christ,' and decorum at home, accompanied with the payment of accustomed dues in the shape of almsgiving and devotion, is not insisted on in language of transparent clearness. The delusion lasts up to three-score years and ten, that baptized Christians may be worldly to the heart's core, and yet die with a good hope; partly, I cannot help thinking, because they are not often enough confronted with their own world,—the world in which they are sinning against God, and the poor, and their own souls every week,—and forced to see their evil practices and guilty shortcomings in all their naked deformity. Very plain-speaking texts are often quoted, but plain-speaking interpretation, and plain-speaking application, are wanted for sleepy hearers and dull consciences, and in these we come short.

"All of us alike come short, I mean; I am not condemning my brethren, and sparing myself. I know very well, too, how much of earnest, faithful preaching there is of a certain kind, and how much of weight is given to the exhortations of many a man of God, whose own holy life helps to expound and apply his Christian lessons. I would gladly sit at their feet, and learn from them many things which I need to know more perfectly. But I believe I do but say what intelligent, conscientious laymen think and feel, when I declare my belief that for lack of preaching that is more direct, more personal in a good sense, more answering to the felt wants of their daily life, numbers desert our churches, and many more gladly escape from them as soon as the service is concluded."

SO MANY CALLS.

'THE Foreign Mission'—the Domestic Missions'—the Education'—the Five Thousand Dollars'—this object'—that object'—and churches too numerous to mention'—so many calls!'

This is all true. There are many calls. There always have been. There always will be. Says Jenkyn. The first, the second, and the third thing, in the religion of the nineteenth century, is action. The age of sentimental and effortless prayer for the conversion of the world is gone by, and now appropriate means are cautiously chosen, and begin to be vigorously worked by spirits fresh from the 'slumbers of centuries.' If this be so, we have no reason to expect that these 'calls' will diminish in number, but on the other hand will increase. And let them increase, say we. They are calls truly, God's calls, in the course of his providence, and we should rejoice in them as such. When God in the course of events, points out to us new fields of labor we should not 'reply against God,' we should not set