

The Church Times.

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Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day & date	MORNING.	EVENING.
S. April 10. Sun after Easter.	Num. 23; Acts 7	Num. 25; Heb. 13
M. " 11. "	1 Sam. 27	1 Sam. 29
T. " 12. "	27	29
W. " 13. "	29	31
Th. " 14. "	31	1 Sam. 1
F. " 15. "	2 Sam. 2	3
S. " 16. "	4	5
M. " 17. "		6

Poetry.

HE STANDETH AT THE DOOR AND KNOCKETH.

In the silent midnight watches,
List—the bosom door,
How it knocketh, knocketh, knocketh,
Knocketh evermore!
Say not thy pulses beating;
Tis thy heart for aie;
Tis thy Saviour knocks and crieth,
“Alas and let me in!”

Death comes down with reckless steps,
To the hall and the
Think you death will tarry knocking
When the door is shut?
Jesus saith, waiteth, waiteth,
But the door is fast;
Ordered, away thy Saviour goeth;
Death breaks in at last.

There is time to stand entreating
Christ to let thee in;
At the gate of heaven beating,
Waiting for thy sin?
Say, alas! thou gaily creature,
Hast thou then, then, forgot?
He has waited long to know thee?
Now He knows thee not!

Religious Miscellany.

A CALL TO PRAYER.

By Rev. J. C. COCHRAN, B. A., CURATE CHURCH,
OXFORD, BAZON OF HILTONIAN, SUFFOLK.

(Continued.)

“Ask daily whether you pray, because prayer is one of the best receipts for happiness and contentment.”

We live in a world where sorrow abounds. This has always been its state since sin came in. There cannot be sin without sorrow. And until sin is driven out from the world, it is in vain for any one to suppose he can escape sorrow.

Some without doubt have a larger cup of sorrow to drink than others. But few are to be found who live long without sorrows or cares of one sort or another. Our bodies, our property, our families, our children, our relations, our servants, our friends, our neighbors, our worldly callings, each and all of these are fountains of care. Sicknesses, deaths, losses, disappointments, partings, separations, ingratitude, slander, all these are common things. We cannot get through life without them. Some day or other they find us out. The greater are our afflictions the deeper are our afflictions, and the more we love the more we have to weep.

And what is the best receipt for cheerfulness in such a world as this? How shall we get through this valley of tears with least pain? I know no better receipt than the habit of asking every day to God to pray.

This is the plain advice that the Bible gives, both in the Old Testament and the New. What says the Testament? “Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” (Psalm l. 15.) “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” (Psalm lv. 22.) What says the apostle Paul? “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God:

and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Phil. iv. 6, 7.) What says the apostle James? “Is any afflicted among you? let him pray.” (James v. 13.)

This was the practice of all the saints whose history we have recorded in the Scriptures. This is what Jacob did when he feared his brother Esau. This is what Moses did when the people were ready to stone him in the wilderness. This is what Joshua did when Israel was defeated before Ai. This is what David did when he was in danger at Keilah. This is what Herkiah did when he received the letter from Sennacherib. This is what the Church did when Peter was put in prison. This is what Paul did when he was cast into the dungeon at Philippi.

The only way to be really happy in such a world as this is to be ever-casting all our cares on God. It is the trying to carry their own burdens which so often makes believers sad. If they will only tell their troubles to God, He will enable them to bear them as easily as Sampson did the gates of Gaza. If they are resolved to keep them to themselves, they will find one day that the very grasshopper is a burden.

There is a friend ever waiting to help us if we will only unboast to Him our sorrow—a friend who pitied the poor, afflicted, and sorrowful, when He was upon earth—a friend who knows the heart of a man, for He lived for thirty-three years as a man amongst us—a friend who can weep with the weeper—he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—a friend who is able to help us, for there never was earthly pain He could not cure. That friend is Jesus Christ. The way to be happy is to be always opening our hearts to Him. Oh! that we were all like that poor Christian negro who only answered when threatened and punished, “I must tell the Lord.”

Jesus can make those happy who trust Him and call upon Him, what ever be their outward condition. He can give them peace of heart in a prison—contentment in the midst of poverty—comfort in the midst of bereavements—joy on the brink of the grave. There is a mighty fulness in Him for all his believing members—a fulness that is ready to be poured out on every one that will ask in prayer. Oh! that men would understand that happiness does not depend on outward circumstances, but on the state of the heart!

Prayer can lighten crosses for us however heavy. It can bring down to our side one who will help us to bear them. Prayer can open a door to us when our way seems hedged up. It can bring down one who will say, “This is the way, walk in it.” Prayer can determine a ray of hope when all our earthly prospects seem darkened. It can bring down one who will say, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” Prayer can obtain relief for us when those we love most are taken away, and the world feels empty. It can bring down one who can fill the gap in our hearts with Himself, and say to the waves within, “Peace be still.” Oh! that men were not so like Hagar in the wilderness, blind to the well of living waters close beside them!

Reader, I want you to be happy. I know I cannot ask you a more vital question than this—Do You Pray?

And now, reader, it is high time for me to bring this tract to an end. I trust I have brought before you things that will be seriously considered. I heartily pray God that this consideration may be blessed to your soul.

1. Let me speak a parting word to those who do not pray. I dare not suppose that all who read these pages will be praying people. If you are a

prayerless person, suffer me to speak to you this day on God's behalf.

Prayerless reader, I can only warn you, but I do warn you most solemnly. I warn you that you are in a position of fearful danger. If you die in your present state you are a lost soul. You will only rise again to be eternally miserable. I warn you that of all professing Christians you are most utterly without excuse. There is not a single good reason that you can show for living without prayer.

It is useless to say you know not how to pray. Prayer is the simplest act in all religion. It is simply speaking to God. It needs neither learning nor wisdom, nor book-knowledge to begin it. It needs nothing but heart and will. The weakest infant can cry when he is hungry. The poorest beggar can hold out his hand for alms and does not wait to find fine words. The most ignorant man will find something to say to God, if he has only a mind.

It is useless to say you have no convenient place to pray in. Any man can find a place private enough, if he is disposed. Our Lord prayed on a mountain. Peter on the house-top: Isaac in the field: Nathaniel under the fig tree: Jonah in the whale's belly. Any place may become a closet, an oratory and a Bethel, and be to us the presence of God.

It is useless to say that you have no time. There is plenty of time if men will only employ it. Time may be short, but time is always long enough for prayer. David had all the affairs of a kingdom on his hands, and yet he says, “Evening and morning and at noon will I pray.” (Psalm iv. 17.) When time is really wanted, time can always be found.

It is useless to say you cannot pray till you have faith and a new heart, and that you must sit still and wait for them. This is to add sin to sin. It is bad enough to be unconverted and going to hell. It is even worse to say, “I know it, but will not cry for mercy.” This is a kind of argument for which there is no warrant in Scripture. “Call ye upon the Lord,” saith Isaiah, “while he is near.” (Isaiah lv. 2.) “Take with you words and turn unto the Lord,” says Hosea, (Hos. xiv. 1.) “Repent and pray,” says Peter to Simon Magus. (Acts viii. 22.) If you want faith and a new heart, go and cry unto the Lord for them. The very attempt to pray has often been the quickening of a dead soul.

Oh! prayerless reader, who and what are you that you will not ask anything of God? Have you made a covenant with death and hell? Are you at peace with the worm and the fire? Have you no sins to be pardoned? Have you no fear of eternal torment? Have you no desire after heaven? Oh! that you would awake from your present folly! Oh! that you would consider your latter end! Oh! that you would arise and call upon God! Alas! there is a day coming when many shall pray loudly, “Lord, Lord, open to us,” but all too late;—when many shall cry to the rocks to fall on them, and the hills to cover them, who would never cry to God. Reader, in all affliction, I warn you. Beware lest this be the end of your soul. Salvation is very near you. Do not lose heaven for want of asking.

2. Let me speak in the next place to those who have real desires for salvation, but know not what steps to take or where to begin. I cannot but hope that some readers may be in this state of mind, and if there be but one such I must offer him encouragement and advice.

In every journey there must be a first step. There must be a change from sitting still to moving forward. The journeying of Israel from Egypt to Canaan was long and wearisome. Forty years passed away before they crossed the Jordan. Yet there were some who moved first when they marched from Ramah