

THE CHURCH GUARDIAN,

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DECISIONS REGARDING NEWSPAPERS.

1. Any person who takes a paper regularly from the Post office, whether directed to his own name or another's, or whether he has subscribed or not, is responsible for payment.

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CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER.

Dec. 6th—2nd Sunday in Advent.

" 13th—3rd do do (Notice of
Ember Days, Ember Coll:
daily.)

" 16th }
" 18th } Ember Days
" 19th }

" 20th—4th Sunday in Advent (Notice of
St. Thomas Christmas, and St.
Stephens.)

" 21st—St. Thomas, Ap. and Martyr.

" 25th—Christmas Day—Pr. Psalm M. 19,
45, 85 : E. 39, 110, 132 : Athanasius's Creed : Prop. Pref. in
Comm. Service till Jan. 1st :
Coll. for Christmas until New
Years Eve.

" 27th—1st Sunday after Xmas, St. John Ap.
and Evangelist. (Notice of In-
nocents' Day and the Circum-
cision.

" 28th—The Innocents' Day.

1892.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

To all our readers. We would their number
might be doubled before the year runs out.

CHRISTMAS.

THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH.

LITTLE did the Bethlehemites think what a
guest they refused, else they would gladly
have opened their doors to Him, who was
able to open the gates of heaven to them. Now
their inhospitality is punishment enough in itself;
they have lost the honour and happiness of being
host to their God. Even still, O blessed

Saviour! Thou standest at our doors and knock-
est; every motion of Thy good Spirit tells Thou
art there. Now Thou comest in Thine own
Name, and there Thou standest while Thy head
is full of dew, and Thy locks wet with the drops
of the night. No sooner do the shepherds hear
the news of a Saviour than they run to Bethlehem
to seek Him. Those that left their beds to tend
their flocks, have left their flocks to enquire after
their Saviour. No earthly thing is too dear to
be forsaken for Christ. If we suffer any worldly
occasion to stay us from Bethlehem, we care
more for our sheep than our souls. It is not
possible that a faithful heart should hear where
Christ is, and not labour to the sight, to the
the fruition of Him. Where art Thou, O Saviour,
but at home in Thine own house, in the assembly
of Thy saints? Where art Thou to be found
but in Thy word and sacraments? Yea, there
Thou seekest for us: if there we haste not to
seek for Thee, we are worthy to want Thee,
worthy that our want of Thee here, should make
us want the presence of Thy face forever.—
Bishop Hall.

CHRISTMAS.

FOR a long time the Churchman was accus-
tomed to begin his Christmas sermon,
with an explanation of the feast, and a
reason why it should be observed. But now
"All the world keeps Christmas Day." It has
grown to be almost fashionable; and when any
of the Church's observances are taken up by the
world, or by those who have no place for them
in their own religious systems, the feast is likely
to be marred, and its chief significance to be lost
sight of.

The object of Christmas Day is to commemo-
rate and keep constantly before the mind of the
Church that greatest of all great events in the
world's history, the Incarnation of the Son of
God. The Annunciation and miraculous con-
ception of the Humanity of our Lord, was made
to the Blessed Virgin on March 25th. Then
"He was conceived of the Holy Ghost." On
December 25th. He "was born of the Virgin
Mary." This profound mystery was the fulfill-
ment of the promise given to our first parents at
the time of the expulsion from the Garden of
Eden. For in accordance with the mercy of our
Heavenly Father, the punishment and the pro-
mise were put close together.

Not only is this a great mystery: it is also a
great revelation. The Lord God took dust of
the ground, and out of it He made the man,
Adam. From the side of the man, He took
material out of which He made the woman. So
it came to pass that the body of that first man is
the sole fount and origin of human existence.
And, as all generations are in a sense the exten-
sion of the body of the first Adam, therefore it is
that all of his descendants have necessarily shared
in his nature, and become partakers of his fall,
even though "they have not sinned after the
similitude of Adam's transgression." But inas-
much as we are not responsible for our exist-
ence, or for the inheritance of a fallen nature
which has fallen to our lot, therefore having had
an Adam, we also have the Christ, Who is the
Second Adam: the originator of a new human-
ity; and the Holy Catholic Church is His Eve,
the Mother of us all. So we have first the man

from the dust of earth: Eve from the side of the
man; Christ from the seed of the Blessed Virgin
Mary: the Church from the side of the God-
man on the Cross when the "deep sleep" of
death had fallen upon Him. How with every
stage of progress the material is improved out of
which God's instruments are created and made!

Generally the day is given up to feasting and
jollity; and whether our Lord was born on the
25th of December or any other day, is a matter
of no moment to those who have substituted
"Santa Claus" for the Christ-Child. But the
Churchman not only keeps the day with festivity,
but first and chiefly as a Holy Day unto the
Lord. And not only a Holy Day, which has
been chosen as a good one to celebrate an event
without regard to its chronological exactness;
but as the very identical day which the Church
has kept from the beginning. The Greek Church
for a long time observed the sixth day of Jan-
uary—or the Epiphany—as the day of the Nati-
vity: for all the records that were taken in the
census under Cyrenius were transmitted to Rome,
just as our deeds and valuable papers are depo-
sited in the Recorder's office where they are
open to the inspection of the public. And it
was not until the Christians at Rome had read
the records there, that the Greeks learned the
exact day of the Birth of the Son of Man. If
space permitted, it would be of much interest
to give the testimony of the early Christian
writers to the place and fact of the birth of Christ.
For instance, Justin Martyr, after quoting the
prophecy of Micah, in his Apology (A.D. 140)
says to the Emperor and the senate:—

"There is a village in the land of the Jews,
35 stadia from Jerusalem, in which Jesus Christ
was born, *as you can ascertain also from the
registers of the taxing made under Cyrenius,
your first Procurator in Judea.*"

Tertullian evidently quoting from those reg-
isters says that among "the Romans (the Bless-
ed Virgin) is described in the census as 'Mary
from whom Christus (or Christ) is born.'"

St. Augustine declares:—

"As the Church has delivered down, John was
born on the eighth before the Kalends of July
(June 24th), when the days begin to diminish.
*But the Lord was born on the eighth before the
Kalends of January (December 25th) when now
the days begin to increase.* Hear John himself
confessing: "He must increase, but I must
decrease."

Thus the place, day and month of our Lord's
Nativity has been handed down to us by the
Church: and when we commemorate the Incarn-
ation, we do so at a time that has been common
to the Church from the beginnings of Christian-
ity.

In the approaching Christmas then, let us first
and chiefly remember the purpose of the Fes-
tival, and observe it as a holy day unto the Lord,
not omitting indeed, the happiness that pertains
to this world as well, but keeping our mirth
within bounds and appropriate to the season.

There is another question which it is well to
consider, whether it is a good lesson to teach
little children that not Christ but Santa Claus
brings them all their good things, and makes
Christmas what it is to the child. Absolutely,
to-day the Saviour is completely lost sight of in
the celebrations of Christmas; and one con-
stantly hears from them "what Santa Claus
brought me," and never a word about the divine