

His Scrip

# The Church Times.

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### Calendar.

#### CALENDAR WITH LESSONS

Day	Date	MORNING.	EVENING.
S.	Dec. 28	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	29	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	30	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	31	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	1	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	2	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	3	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	4	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	5	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	6	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	7	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	8	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	9	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	10	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	11	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	12	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	13	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	14	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	15	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	16	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	17	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	18	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	19	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	20	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	21	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	22	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	23	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	24	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	25	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	26	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	27	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	28	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	29	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	30	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3
S.	31	1. Gen. 22	2. John 3

### Psalm.

#### THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

The Christmas tree! the Christmas tree!  
 'Tis a gay, a noble sight;  
 With its glossy robe of unfading green,  
 And mantle of starry light.

Its lofty head is hid in light,  
 And its graceful arms spread wide;  
 And they offer gifts, "without money or price,"  
 To thy guests on every side.

The old, the young, the fair, the plain,  
 The simple, the wise of heart,  
 The rich, the poor, the weak, the strong;  
 E'en the stranger has his part.

And each has the gift that befits him best,  
 Though some have many and rare,  
 And the babe is as pleased with his painted toy,  
 As the bride with her costly share.

For love has chosen every gift,  
 And love is present now;  
 And every heart and hand and eye,  
 To his gentle sway must bow.

No angry word or look is here,  
 And every brow is bright,  
 As if each unkind thought had fled  
 Before his glance of light.

Ah! should not this fair stately sight,  
 Direct our hearts above,  
 Where the Tree of Life for ever stands,  
 And scatters gifts of love?

That Tree which in God's Paradise  
 Beside Life's crystal river,  
 In bloom unchanging bears a store  
 Of priceless fruit forever.

And nations by its leaves are healed  
 From the deep wounds of sin,  
 While every hand that plucks its fruit  
 Rich gifts of love shall win.

And thus when Christmas-tide is come  
 In times of gayest mirth,  
 We raise a symbol frail of him,  
 Who for us came on earth.

Of Him, the True, Eternal Tree;  
 Whose fruit supports our life,  
 That shields from storms, and heals our hearts  
 Received in Satan's strife.

### Religious Miscellany.

(From the London Guardian.)

The forcible and persuasive eloquence of the Bishop of Oxford was employed on Tuesday in last week in delivering an inaugurating lecture for the season to the members of the Literary, Scientific, and Mechanics' Institution at Reading. The subject was "National Life, in what it consists, what are its products, what the responsibilities and duties which it entails." The right rev. prelate did not shrink from the full breadth of his subject, which he expanded with eloquent illustration. Defining a nation as a gathering of individual men into one community under a fixed form of government, so that the body might be treated as possessing a common life, a common moral aim, and so united that it might be spoken of in a certain way as constituting a personality, he illustrated its growth by describing first that of the Jewish nation:—

"There was, first, among them community of blood, they were sprung from one family. Between those who were thus related there existed, notwithstanding individual differences, in comparison with others, a tendency to community of feeling, thought, and action, that was to say, there was in men a capacity for likeness in the mind and in all the inner and more spiritual life, which each one of them was leading, just as there was in the constitution of their

bodies; and thus, generally speaking, and allowing for individual divergency from the common type, there was, in consequence of that community of blood in the Jewish people, a tendency to reproduce the firmness of character, that veneration, and those other-marked traits which under God's grace had grown in Abraham into the typical character of faith, just as there was to reproduce those peculiar features of the face which could be traced in this day in our streets among the children of Abraham. And then, next, this tendency to unity from similarity of bodily, mental, and spiritual conformation was strengthened by the possession of the common inheritance of the remarkable events amid which the first members of their family were cradled. These, and the songs and traditional usages in which they were recorded, were living centres of new influences, moulding into a common shape the plastic minds of the bulk of succeeding generations—bands holding in enduring unity the strong hearts of vigorous manhood. From this common unity of origin was sprung another mighty bond of enduring oneness, for it involved of course unity of tongue—the welding together of hearts by the lisping of infancy, by the whispering of love, by the stirring of ballads, by the harmony of hymn, by the unity of undivided worship, and the mighty entrancement of a common devotion."

The conditions provided for the growth of God's ancient people, from mere tribes into the nation of the Jews were thus, that they should spring from a common stock, inherit common traditions, speak a common tongue, possess by fixed occupancy a common land; further that they should be held together by one set of laws, and wedded into ecclesiastical union by a common faith, and, lastly, that they should exist as a nation for the highest moral aim which it was possible to set before any of the fallen children of men, that they might be to Jehovah a people of possession, to His peculiar people, maintain among them His truth, and witness His unity and holiness. These were the great conditions, needful for creating and upholding national life. Where all of these conditions were found, even in any measure, their national life would be well and vigorously developed. Where any number of these conditions were wanting, or were imperfectly developed, there, just in proportion to that lack, was the unity of national life rendered impossible or threatened with dissolution." This position the Bishop illustrated in the decay of the Roman Empire and the national life of England. "Another, and, to Englishmen, a far more interesting instance of the process may be found in the early history of that national life which, thank God! still throbbled with such unabated vigour in our own native land. Go back along the stream of time for some eight centuries, and remember how divided then was that English life which was now so truly one that nothing but a curious fancy could even trace the separate existence of the two intervening skeins out of which the seemingly homogeneous thread has been woven. Yet our common daily language bore indelible marks of the utterly different state in which our ancestors once lived. To make but a single instance of this, why was it that we had in England a different set of names for the same animals which we consumed their joints upon our tables and fed and cared for them in our homesteads or our stalls? Why did ox's flesh become beef, the sheep's leg a leg of mutton, the calf's flesh veal, the chicken's wing the pinion of a pullet? This was nothing but a record of that era of our social state in which these domestic animals, so long as they needed the care and toil and labour of man to bring them to or keep up their perfection, were the charge of the working Saxon, and were therefore in his dialect the ox, the calf, the sheep, or the chicken; but as soon as they were transferred by the butcher's hand from an object of to a means of luxury and enjoyment they passed out of the Saxon range into the dominion (in a double sense) of the tongue of his Norman masters, and were no longer the ox to be fed, but the *boeuf* to be eaten, no longer the calf to be fattened, but the *veau* to be roasted on, no longer the sheep to be folded, but the *mouton* to be devoured; no longer the chicken to be tended, but the *poulet* to be fried. Nor was this evidence to be found only in the language of the kitchen. All the words commonly used when describing the toils of the working men were Saxon

to the back-bone; use those which spoke of luxury and enjoyment, and you would have to leave the homely tongue of our Teutonic ancestors for the Norman of the newer race; while the common estimation which the early names of honest hard-working countrymen born among ourselves was no slight indication of the degree in which the haughty Norman looked down upon the Saxon 'churl,' or 'boor,' or 'knave,' who tilled the soil or did his bidding. This record of our language recalled the relation of the two distinct races who at this time dwelt side by side together, welded into one national life, in this our land of England. And what here, also, was the great agent for bringing into one these discovered races?—for softening their mutual asperities, bred of naughtiness on the one side and sullenness on the other?—or tempering the too brilliant temperament of the Norman steel by the due admixture of the tougher Saxon metal, at a bringing out of the compound that Anglo-Saxon race which should be able, on the fields of Poitiers, Agincourt, and Cressy, to stand the shock of Europe's finest chivalry as the granite rock breasts the fury of the surge it scatters into spray, or on the plain of Waterloo, with bulldog resolution to bear and break the charges of the invincible Imperial Guard's—which should make the empire of the Sea the hereditary right of their land—which should subdue nature by their persevering skill—which should pilot, and guard and hand on through 800 years their birthright of free action, free speech and free thought? (Cheers)

What, he repeated, was the agent which by healing such a gaping wound, or by knitting into unity and life such justly attempered, though as yet repulsive, particles, brought about so glorious a result? What, again, but community of faith and community of worship? Who, save God's minister, wading the terrors of the unseen world, could have stood before the haughty Norman soldier, in his pride and violence and won from his unreasoning power justice and the rights due to his Saxon brother? When the last Saxon sword was sheathed, when the banners of Hereward floated no longer even among the fens and morasses in which he had found his last retreat, not only did Wulstan and Ingulph, prelates of English blood, but Lanfranc and Anselm and many more interpose their croziers between the oppressive Norman and his Saxon victim. Here, too, followed the other conditions on the presence of which, as they had seen, depended the due development of national life; for inter-marriages produced a common race, while, even in defiance of William's determined introduction of the French into the language alike of the palace and the courts of justice, the vigorous Saxon blood, instead of being displaced by the Norman, firmly held its own, retained its power over the inflections of the common language, and put forth, like the oak of its native soil, its limbs and boughs after its own type, enriched, indeed, and adorned, but substantially unaltered by the graceful festoons of the lighter Norman, which, with varied flower, and leaf, and berry everywhere encircled and enriched its masculine, unyielding stem. (Applause)

The laws, too, which preserved the feudal rights of the nobles and his nobles were attempered to a common code by the free principles of Saxon representative government; the stern old Wittenagemot growing with Saxon strength and long endurance by degrees into the all-powerful House of Commons. And then the inheritance of the free soil of England from the earliest times bred in our race that indomitable resolution rather to die upon a thousand well-fought fields than to bear a foreign yoke, or truckle to a foreign Power, which was one of God's best gifts to a free and noble people. Here, then, we might see this one condition of a common faith, reproducing around it all the other conditions needful for a nation's life, and becoming the sufficient instrument for its production and support."

Next the Bishop showed how in the case of Italy the policy of the Papacy had kept her from renewing the national organisation she possessed under Imperial Rome. "Nor was this evil influence confined to Italy, although it was concentrated there.—Aiming as she did at a universal supremacy, and everywhere secularising the supremacy she sought to usurp, she was everywhere the antagonist of truly national life. She waged war with the independence