

Well, about fifty-five years before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into the world, the astronomers found that there were very grave mistakes in the Calendar. The seasons somehow would not come right, and the years were always losing ground, if I may so say. The sun had got into the wrong place in the heavens, or the earth had, and the Almanacks were abominably full of mistakes. Then the great Julius Cæsar said we must have our Almanacks and our Calendars corrected. (Mind, corrected means *made straight*!) And, as what Julius Cæsar said must be done had to be done, the Calendar *was* corrected, and they started afresh, and they went on again, and managed pretty fairly for another sixteen hundred years. Then a certain Pope of Rome, in the year 1582 A.D., who goes by the name of Gregory XIII., by the help of certain commissioners, who were the greatest mathematicians and astronomers of their age, introduced some very important Reforms into the Calendar which were sorely needed. The Calendar, in fact, was found to be ten days wrong, and what was set down as the 1st of January, for instance, was found to be really the 10th of January. So in that year, 1582, by the Pope's orders, *ten days were dropped out*, and treated as if they had suddenly vanished.

England and Englishmen rebelled against this innovation, and would not change their Calendars at the bidding of the Pope, and they went on in the old way for nearly another two centuries. England, in fact, kept to what was called the *Old Style*, though almost the whole of Europe was now following the *New Style* of Pope Gregory. At last it was found so inconvenient to go on in the old-fashioned and foolish way, that in the year 1752 it was ordered by Act of Parliament that the 2nd of September should be called the 14th of September, and since that time all the Christian world has been using

the Gregorian Calendar, and is likely to continue using it till time shall be no more.

Ever since there were Calendars, and the days, and the weeks, and the months were set down in them, there were always certain special days or Festivals, which were distinguished by the makers of the Calendars as days on which some great events were commemorated, some great religious ceremonies were to be observed, or the deaths or births of some great men were brought to the notice of the people among whom such Calendars were recognised. We have only to call to mind the Feast of the Passover among the Jews (for one such instance is as good as a dozen), to see that the setting apart a day as a great day of remembrance is no new thing. Every civilised nation on the face of the earth has had its festival days, the keeping of which has been imposed by authority upon the nation at large, and has been observed with more or less scrupulous obedience by the authority which fixed it. And what nations do that we all do in our smaller family circles. We keep our wedding days and our birthdays, and some of us keep many other days in the year to bring to our remembrance the great events of our lives. Sometimes it is a birth, sometimes it is a death, sometimes it is a great success, and sometimes it is a great deliverance which we *keep* in one way or another as the year rolls round. The anniversary (that means the *turning of the year*, mind!) brings each of these things to our remembrance.

When the Church of Christ began to grow into a large and highly organized society, it was only *natural* that Christians too, as subjects of the kingdom of Christ, should see and feel that they too ought to have their special days of commemoration, their annual festivals, the anniversaries of their great deliverances, the birthdays of their heroes and wise men, of their great teachers and examples, who by