

**THE CALENDAR OF THE PRAYER-
BOOK ILLUSTRATED: WITH AN
APPENDIX OF THE CHIEF CHRISTIAN
EMBLEMS. FROM EARLY AND
MEDIEVAL MONUMENTS**

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The Calendar of the Prayer-Book Illustrated: With an Appendix of the Chief Christian Emblems. From Early and Medieval Monuments by Anonymous

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The Calendar of the Prayer-Book.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a matter of considerable interest at the present era, when the principles of the Church are so anxiously scrutinized by friends and foes, to recollect how and in what manner our present Calendar of Festivals and Saints' days was formed. Our Reformers truly and reverently proceeded upon the principle of honouring antiquity. They found 'a number of dead men's names, not over- eminent in their lives either for sense or morals, crowding the calendar, and jostling out the festivals of the saints and martyrs.' The mediæval Church, as the Romanists still do, distinguished between the days of Obligation and days of Devotion. Now, under the Reformation only some of the former class, the feasts of Obligation, were and are retained, being such as are dedicated to the memory of our Lord, or to those whose names are pre-eminent in the Gospels;—the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, the Baptist as the Precursor, and S. Stephen as the Proto-martyr: S. Mark and S. Luke as Evangelists: S. Paul and S. Barnabas on account of their extraordinary call: the Holy Innocents, as the earliest who suffered on Christ's account; the Feast of S. Michael and all Angels, to remind us of the benefits received by the ministry of angels; and All Saints, as the memorial of all those who have died in the faith.

Surely no better method could have been devised for making time, as it passes, a perpetual memorial of the Head of the Church.

The principle upon which certain festivals of Devotion still retained in the Calendar prefixed to the Common Prayer, and usually printed in italics, were selected from among the rest, is more obscure. Many of them indeed naturally commemorate names which had been peculiarly honoured of old in the Church of England; S. Alban, the proto-martyr of Britain; S. Augustine, the apostle of the English race; Venerable Bede, and King Edward the Confessor, the real patron of England, supplanted in the age of pseudo-chivalry by the legendary S. George. Others must have been chosen for their high station in the earlier ages of the Church—S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, S. Jerome, S. Martin, and S. Cyprian; and others from their local celebrity, as Swithun of Winchester, and Hugh of Lincoln.

It is a very curious fact, and, as we believe, one hitherto quite unnoticed, that these Saints' days, now often considered as badges of Romanism, continued to retain their stations in our popular Protestant English almanacks until the alteration of the style in 1752, when they were discontinued. Poor Robin's Almanack affords much matter for consideration. He shews that the tradition respecting the appropriation of the days to particular Saints was considered by the common people as eminently *Protestant*, that is to say, as a part and parcel of the Church of England; and that an almanack without saints for every day was nought. The secular power

came to the aid of the Church by the statute 5 and 6 Edw. VI., c. 3. This Act commands all our present liturgical festivals to be observed; and their non-observance is by no means an act of discretion, but a breach of the law of the land. Of the peculiar sports and observances which had been attached by ancient usage and custom to peculiar days—the dancing round the may-pole on the festival of S. Philip and S. James, the bonfires on the feast of the Baptist, and the like—it is unnecessary to speak: but the main feature, anterior to the Reformation, was the cessation from work and labour upon such festivals. The people had a time provided to rejoice before the Lord; and the exceptions in the Act shew that such was still the spirit of the age; those who chose to work are merely *permitted* to labour*.

Wheatly gives the following reasons for the retention of what are termed the “black-letter saints’ days,” in the Calendar of the Anglican Prayer-book. “Some of them were retained upon account of our courts of justice, which usually make their returns upon these days, or else upon the days before or after them, which are called in the writs, Vigil., Fest., or Crast., as Vigil. Martin, Fest. Martin, Crast. Martin, and the like. Others are probably kept in the Calendar for the sake of such tradesmen, handicraftsmen, and others, as are wont to celebrate the memory of their tutelary saints, as the Welchmen do of S. David, the shoemakers of S. Crispin, &c. And again, churches being in several places dedicated to some or other of these saints, it has been the usual custom in such places to have wakes

* Quarterly Review, No. cxliii.

or fairs kept on such days, so that the people would probably be displeased if either in this or the former case their favourite saints' names should be left out of the Calendar. Besides, the histories which were writ before the Reformation do frequently speak of transactions happening upon such a holyday, or about such a time, without mentioning the month, relating one thing to be done at Lammastide, and another about Martinmas, &c., so that were these names quite left out of the Calendar, we might be at a loss to know when several of these transactions happened."

To a certain extent Wheatly may be right in these remarks, but we cannot accept as a whole a definition basing the retention of these names upon an entirely *civil* arrangement, especially when we discern among those commemorated such an array of the Bishops, Doctors, and Martyrs of the Church; besides, his theory will not at all apply to those saints about whom we are most in doubt, and whose lives and acts are so uncertain that we know little of them beyond their names, who were associated with no particular craft, and who have no churches dedicated in their names in this country, such as S. Prisca, S. Nicomede, S. Eaurchus, &c. Again, if the reasons he alleges did actuate the compilers of our Liturgy, how can we account for the omission of such names as S. Anthony, S. Barbara, S. Christopher and S. Botolph, S. Olave, S. Patrick, and S. Cuthbert, all of whom were more popular in mediæval times than many who were retained in the Calendar? We candidly confess that we are unable to offer any satisfactory solution of the question, and there-

fore leave it as we found it, in the hope that it may ere long receive the attention which it deserves from the hands of our ritualists.

The curious symbols used in the fourth column of the following calendar, and occasionally inserted in the text, are taken from the ancient Clog almanacks, of which Dr. Plot gives a long description, from which the following account is abridged^b.

“Canutus reigned sole king of England for 20 years: during which time and the reigns of his two successors, also Danish kings of England, many of their customs and utensils, no doubt on’t, obtained here, amongst which I guess I may reckon an ancient sort of Almanacks they call Cloggs, made upon square sticks, *still* (A.D. 1686) *in use here* among the meaner sort of people, which I cannot but think must be some remains of the Danish government, finding the same with little difference to have been used also formerly both in Sweden and Denmark, as plainly appears from Olaus Magnus^c, and Olaus Wormius^d: which being a sort of antiquity so little known, that it hath scarce been yet heard of in the southern parts of England, and understood now but by few of the gentry in the northern, I shall be the more particular in my account of them. . . . They are here called *Cloggs*, for what reason I could not learn, nor indeed imagine, unless from the English log, a term we usually give to any piece of wood, or from the likeness of

^b Plot's *Natural History of Staffordshire*, folio, Oxford, 1686, pp. 418—420.

^c *Histor. Genium Septentrionalium*, lib. I. cap. 54; et lib. xvi. cap. 20.

^d *Fæsti Danici*, lib. II. cap. 2, 6.

some of the greater sorts of them to the cloggs, wherewith we usually restrain the wild, extravagant, mischievous motions of some of our dogs.

"There are some few of brass, . . . but the most of them are of wood, and these chiefly of box; others there are of fir and some of oak, but these not so frequent. Wormius tells us that there were some of them made of bone, and some ancient ones of horn; but I met with none of these in this county, though all people no question made them of such materials as they thought fittest for their purpose. As for the kind of them, some are perfect, containing the Dominical letters, as well as the Prime and marks for the feasts, engraven upon them, and such are our *Primestaves* in the Museum at Oxford. Others imperfect, having only the Prime and immoveable feasts on them, and such are all those I met with in Staffordshire; which yet are of two kinds also, some publick, of a larger size, which hang commonly here at one end of the mantletree of their chimneys, for the use of the whole family: . . . and others private, of a smaller size, which they carry in their pockets."

This almanack is usually a square piece of wood, containing three months on each of the four edges. The number of days in them are expressed by notches; the first day by a notch with a patulous stroke turned up from it, and every seventh by a large-sized notch. Over against many of the notches are placed on the left hand several marks or symbols, denoting the golden number, or cycle of the moon. The festivals are marked by symbols of the several saints issuing from the notches. One