

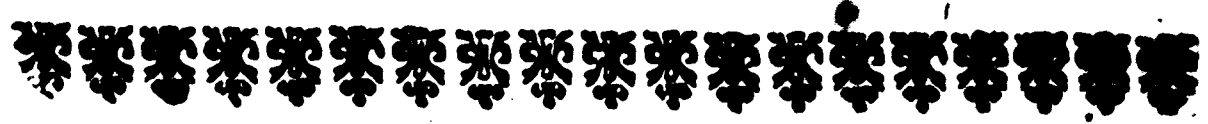
Samuel Johnson
July 19th 1734. (cost 2^s)



Mr. *Pigot's* SERMON,

upon *January* 4th. 1729--30.

With a P R E F A C E.



A
VINDICATION

Of the Practice of the *Antient Christian,*

As well as the *Church of England,*

And other *Reformed Churches,*

In the Observation of

CHRISTMAS-DAY;

In Answer to the Uncharitable Reflections

OF

Thomas de Laune,

Mr. Whiston, and

Mr. John Barnard of Marblehead:

In a Sermon preach'd on the 4th. of *January, 1729-30.*

By *George Pigot, W. D. M.*
at *Marblehead.*

Published at the Desire of the Church-Wardens & Vestry.

Παρά τῶν ἀκροῦς ταῦτα εἰδόντων, καὶ τῆς πόλιος ἐκείνης
οικέντων, παρελήφθαμεν τῆς ἡμέρας.

Chryf. Hom. in Nativ. ad Antioch.

*BOSTON, Printed by T. Fleet, at the Heart and
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T H E

P R E F A C E.

THAT I am, as it were, compelled to appear in *Print*, is no very pleasing Thing, to *Me*, who have neither *Skill*, nor *Leisure*, nor *Library* sufficient, to discuss those nicer Points of *Chronology*, which have puzzled the greatest *Wits* of the Last and Present Age.

However my own *Inclination*, and the *Duty* I owe to the *Office* I am in, induce *Me* to say something, by way of Answer, to those petty *Reflections*, and more sly *Insinuations*, of Mr. B ————'s long-expected and much-applauded Performance.

Now before I remark upon any particular Passages either of his *Sermon* or *Appendix*, I think My self obliged to satisfy the World, of the Occasion of this *needless* Controversy.

On *Christmas-Day* 1729, Mr. B ————, being designedly, or accidentally to preach a *Lecture* in his own Church, made it his *Business* to suit his Discourse to the Solemnity

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nity of the *Day*. But then, as if conscious of the Mischief of so doing, He laid Himself out to decry ~~his~~ his own Practice, together with that of the whole *Christian* Church. His Performance was looked on by his credulous Hearers as an unanswerable Argument against the *Church of England* in particular; insomuch that *Some* of his greatest Admirers did frequently and loudly upbraid the Members of my Church, even in the very Streets, with such Tauntings as these: — *What is become of your Christmas-Day now; for Mr. B——d has proved it to be Nothing else but an Heathenish Rioting? — Will you never have done with your Popish Ceremonies, that you must have Four or Five Days running, to observe, what Mr. B——d has made out to be no such Thing as You pretend? —* These and other unseemly *Scoffings* made the Generality of my Hearers uneasy, and brought divers and hourly Complaints to my Ears. In short, I was forced, by way of Antidote, and in Order to repel the Stream of *their* Insolence, and my own People's Dissatisfaction, to preach the following *Sermon*. After I had done so, I was urged, by *Many* of my Congregation, to print it immediately; tho' Others called on Me to publish my *Sermon* on *Christmas-Day* first. Indeed I was so far from yielding to *either*, that I did not consent to the sending *This* abroad, till after I had heard the *Vote* of my

my *Vestry*. I told 'em then, as I did now, that I was truly sensible of my Incapacity for stating these Points nicely, and in such Manner as They fully required. I also manifested my slackness in this Affair, by assuring Them once and again, that I would do Nothing therein, either without *their* Consent, or at *my own* Expence. Upon this, the Management was committed to a certain *Person*, who *purposely* never exerted Himself in the Collection. It is now almost a Year and Five Months since the Talk of this Matter, except in a continued Threatning of some *elaborate Lucubration*; but it would no more have passed beyond *Marblehead*, had not Mr. B———d surprized us all with the Publication of his *Sermon* and *Appendix*.

The chief Design of this *Preface* is, to establish, what I have declared in my *Sermon*, and therefore I do not look upon Myself, obliged to follow his *obscure* and *inconsistent Chronology*; no farther than to prove his *Postulata* absurd and impossible: For if the Foundation be unsound, all that is built thereon must be ruinous and unsafe.

To begin with his *Sermon*; ——— Here I am little concerned till P. 27, because the Points, He had urged before, were general, and such as Himself acknowledges to have received from Dr. *Prideaux*. However I shall take

take the Liberty to reprehend Him in such Passages, *where* I think he deserves it.

In P. 2, I am forced to take Notice of that *Tautology* in Him, which my innate Candour would let pass in *Another*; for what else is the *Prophet Haggai*, *One of the Last of the Prophets*? — In the same Page, I cannot help remarking the *Geographical Skill* of the *Learned Mr. B — d*; for what *Coalescence* is there between *Persia* and *Greece*? He had forgot those *adjacent* or *intermediate* Countries of *Cilicia*, and the *Lesser Asia*, but above all *Egypt*: in each whereof were vast Numbers of *Jews*; but few, if any, in *Greece*. — These may seem to be *Cavils*, unbecoming a Man of good Nature, and beyond the Controversy in Hand, to Persons unacquainted with the *severe* and *ostentatious Mr. B — d*.

P. 5. If I understand the *Division* of a *Sermon*, *Mr. B — d* has missed it in *his*; for He has created *Three Heads* out of *One*. His *Proposition* should have stood thus:

There are several Things observable in the Words of my Text; but the Proposition which I shall more particularly take Notice of, to discourse on, at this Time, is; (or, shall be:)

The Birth or Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Now

Now here I shall consider,

I. *First, The Manner, or, (as He phrases it) The Certainty of this Birth.*

II. *Secondly, The Time, ——— And,*

III. *Thirdly, The great End and Design thereof.*

Accordingly He should have subdivided ; for I appeal to all Men of sufficient Understanding, whether his *Two Last Propositions* can anywise, without Incorrectness, be removed and disjoyned from his *First*, on which They so absolutely and evidently depend. ——— Here I may fairly and justly ask Him, for Reasons best known to Himself : *Who can make Sermons now ? Does He thus study to shew Himself approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth ? ———* Besides This, in his General Proposition, He confounds those *Two distinct Points* of the *Incarnation and Birth* of Our Blessed Saviour, by placing 'em as One : Herein varying from the current Language of the *Primitive Church*, which always distinguished these *Two*, as *separate Articles of Faith*. And if Mr. B——d had had any Regard to the *Christian Creeds*, He could not have forgot, that in Them it
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is asserted of *Jesus Christ*, that He was *Incar-*
nate of the *Holy Ghost*, and *Born* of the *Virgin*
Mary.

P. 7. Here he falls into the contrary Ex-
treme of Obscurity, and leaving his former
hasty Brevity attempts the *Long Period*; by
which Means He first writes down, and af-
terwards prints, what I shall deem either
Nonsense or *Absurdity*. — His Words are ;
For when Joseph and Mary had travelled from
Nazareth to Bethlehem, to be taxed or enrolled,
[They found an empty Inn, and yet took up
with the Stable; for He tells us afterwards,
When They had done so, then] *that Decree*
of Augustus, which necessitated the Jews to re-
tire to their own City, to which They and their
Families originally belonged, had brought a great
Concourse of People to Bethlehem, so that the
Inn, where the Mother of Our Lord took up
her Lodgings, was so full, that she could have
no Conveniency, [because she had missed her
former Opportunity] answerable to her Cir-
cumstances of falling into Travail, &c. to the
end of the Period. It is true, this Language
will go down at Marblehead very glibly; but
then, Who would print it ?

At P. 11. I should be glad to know, what
sort of *Virgin* that must be, who shall have
another Son. Here Mr. B——d mistakes
the Assertion of the latter *Jews*, and the
present *Infidels*; for they supposed the *Pro-*
phet

phet was to take another Wife that was then a *Virgin*, and not the former *Prophetess*.

In *P. 13.* *God will certainly*, should be, *God would certainly*.

In *P. 22.* After an *Error* (as I suppose) of the *Press* at the Top, he calls *Darius*, the Son of *Hystaspis*; whereas He was the Son of *Hystaspes*, and mentioned in *Justin*, and other *Latin* Authors, under the Title of *Darius Hystaspis*, to which the Word *Filius*, in Imitation of the *Greek* Idiom, must be understood.

And now I am come to his *particular Consideration*, which has occasioned so much Search to the *Curious* and *Unsteady*. — Here I must appologize for some Passages of my own *Sermon*, which seem to refer to what he had preached to his Audience. — And, *First*, I shall take Notice of that Expression, *Could any of You stay out in One of our severe Frosts?* Thus it was brought to Me, by One that is his good *Friend* and great *Admirer*; tho' He has thought fit to drop it in the *Printing*. And that some such Expression had scaped his Mouth, appears from the general *Remarks*, consequent thereupon, all over *Marblehead*, of what Persons had *perished* in that *Neighbourhood*, by being overtaken with the *Night*, in the *Severity* of *Winter*. — So again, was I informed, that He had reflected upon the *Common-Prayer-Book*, for
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inserting that Passage of, *as at this Time,* (which He was reported to express by, *as on this Day,*) in the *Christmas-Collect.* — But above all, He has cautiously left out the *Five or Six Hundred Years,* during which, he told his Audience, the *First Christians* were ignorant of the Observation of *Christmas-Day*: (Unless his *Parenthesis,* in *P. 35.* may be presumed to take in his former Assertion.) It was wise so to do, because he has since heard of my *Proofs* to the contrary. But what Influence such unsteady Fluctuating will have upon his People, I leave Himself and the World to judge. Especially, when He afterwards patches This over with a *perhaps,* that the *Church of Rome* (which indeed was at that Time the *Glory of the Christian World*) might be moved to convert the *Pagan Festivals* to a *Christian Use.* — And since He is so plump, that this Usage was *firstly* (as He expresses it) introduced by the *Roman Church,* 'tis great Pity, he did not deliver down the *exact Time* of its Introduction, and under what *Bishop,* or by whose *Decretal,* it had first obtained.

At *P. 29 & 30.* He talks very confidently of the *exact Age* of Our Blessed *Lord,* both at the Time of his Entrance upon his *Publick Ministry,* and also at his *Death*; and pretends (I will not say how *vainly*) to define That, which has never yet been made clear by
 Arch-Bishop

Arch-Bishop *Usher*, Bishop *Pearson*, and even Dr. *Prideaux* himself. Thus he takes it for granted, that Our *Saviour* was exactly *Thirty Years* old at his *Baptism*; whereas that Expression of the *Third* of *St. Luke* never has been, nor can be, proved to mean, what he has hastily drawn from it. — Now to try his Hand at *Unravelling*, I will propose to him One *Difficulty* in this very Matter; — We read in *Scripture*, that *John Baptist* was a *Priest*; and that the *Priests* never entred upon their Publick Office till *Thirty Years* old: We also may learn from thence, that Our *Saviour* was *Six Months* younger than *John*. Now I presume that the *Baptist* did not break in upon the *standing* Law of his *Nation*; for if he had, he would have gained but little *Credit* or *Respect* among them. Besides, We do not find *This* objected to him, by those *Messengers* that were sent from *Jerusalem*: They do not say, *Why then dost thou enter upon thy publick Charge before thy Time?* but, *Why then baptizest Thou, seeing thou art not the Christ?* If then *John* (as he says) entred upon his Ministry *Two* (or *Three*) *Years* and an *Half* before *Christ*, it appears from hence, that Our *Lord* was at least *Two* (or *Three*) *Years* older than *Thirty*, when he began to preach the glad Tidings of the *Kingdom of God*.

In P. 32. He tells us, that the *Roman Church* were ignorant of the *true Time* of the *Nativity* of *Christ*; whereas *St. Chrysoſtom* (whose Authority in a Matter of Fact is far preferable to *Mr. B——d's*) assures us of the contrary, in that *Paſſage* quoted in the *Title-Page*. — As to his *Wiſh*, in the ſame *Page*, he may depend upon it, that I *wiſh* the ſame; and that the vile Rout, and Firing of Guns, at *Marblehead*, on *Chriſtmas-Day*, were ſuppreſſed by *Authority*; and that the ſame Reſpect at leaſt were paid to *that Day*, and the *Thirtieth* of *January*, from his People, as is given, by Church-Men, to their *Thaſgiving* and *Faſt Days*. For *our Feſtivals* are founded upon as good Authority as *Theirs* can be; and if the *Act* of *Toleration* ſecures Them, from the Penalty of the Law, for not obſerving 'em; ſo likewiſe ought the *Rule* of *Moderation* to ſecure us from being inſulted upon their Account: Except the Word *Moderation* muſt extend altogether to *One Party*, and be looked on and conſtrued as never deſigned for the *Other*. How far *this* is *Chriſtian*, let *St. Paul* judge; who calls upon us, to *let our Moderation be known to all Men*.

At P. 23. He aſſerts, that the *Weekly Sabbath* has a *Divine Sanction*; ſo had the *Three Times* of my *Text*: And the ſame Authority, which could alter the *Obſervation* of the *One*, might

might likewise be influenced to establish *That* of the *Others*.

At *P. 35*. I leave all the World to judge, how easy it is, to prove any Thing, with Mr. *B——d's* strong *Presumption*; when he more than conjectures, that there was no *Keeping of Christmas*, before *Dionysius Exiguus* had introduced the *Christian Æra*, *An. 527*. How does This prove it any more than that there was no *Keeping of Easter*, or the *Christian Sabbath*, before *that Time*? Upon such sandy Foundations does this *Gentleman* build, which are easily over-turned by the weakest *Opposition*. He first begs the *Question*, and then carries all before Him: Like an *Actor* upon the *Stage*, who forgets his *Part*, and fancies he can create *Probabilities* from the *Larva*; tho' at the same *Time* it ought to be remembered, that the *Pulpit* should stand clear of such *Theatrical Imitations*.

In *P. 38*. You have another *Sketch* of Mr. *B——d's* florid *Style*, in *Christ's* rescuing the *World of Mankind* (among other *Adversaries*) from the *World*.

In *P. 39*. He tells us, that *Christ's Laws* are to be observed, and not the *Tradition* and *Inventions* of Men, in the *Worship of God*. Did the *Church of England* ever teach or practise the contrary? But if he means, (and mean he must something;) that the *Church and State* cannot appoint Rules of Order and Decency,

Decency, I am afraid, there will be but little *Say* for his *Baptismal-Covenant*: Surely, the *Convocation* and *Parliament* at *Home* have as much *Right* to *sanctify* our *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, as the *Guises* had to *invent*, and *Cardinal Ricblieu* to *recommend* the *Scotch solemn League and Covenant*, on which *his* depends.

In *P. 43*. *We* are interested, should be, *We be interested*.

At *P. 45*. He tells *his* Audience, that *They* have not so learned *Christ*, viz. *by flying in the Face of the Holy Saviour*, while *They* pretend to do *Him Honour*. Pray, *Holy Sir*, Who have so learned *Him*? Why is not their *Duty* inculcated to *Church-Men*, who think themselves obliged to keep *Christmas-Day*, as effectually as to *Dissenters*, who think themselves not obliged to it? — And thus I have done with his *Sermon*.

To proceed with his *Appendix*; — In examining *This*, I shall first remark his *Blunders* and *Incorrectness*, and then his *Absurdities* and *Assumingness* in *Chronology*.

P. 47. He here, in the very *First Side* of his *Appendix*, gives us a broad Hint, that he had never attained to a full Understanding of his *Syntax*. I desire to know what *Case* my own *Difficulty* is of; if it be *Nominative*, then and copulates between the Difference and

and it : if *Accusative*, then it has *them* for it's *Co-Copulate*. I suppose he designs the *former*, because the *other* is stupid Nonsense. Now, *Learned Sir*, have you forgot, or did you never learn, that *Two Nominatives singular require a Verb plural*? If not, I wonder the *long Time* you have spent in the *Composing* your *Enquiry* had not qualified you to write *true English*.

In *P. 49*. We have another Prospect of his *wrongly Dividing*; for he makes the *Corollary* of his preceeding Argument, *One* of his chiefest *Propositions*: He thus marks it,

II. *The Time of our Saviour's Death, &c.*

P. 53. Here is the same *Blunder* again of a *Verb singular* instead of a *plural*, which I leave Him to find out: As also those *Two Synchysis's* of *P. 34* and *52*, which I reserve to another *Opportunity*.

P. 53. After *Two Since's*, he says *this* strongly concludes; from whence we may perceive, that he had no Regard to the *numbring* any Thing but the *Julian Period*: A farther Display whereof we have in *P. 64*. where it follows after *Allowances*. — I am so weary of tracing his *Incorrectness* in Expression, that I shall now, without farther *Scrutiny*, convert Myself to the examining his *Whistonian Chronology*.

I was surprized to find Him maintaining Two different Schemes in his Sermon and Appendix, when I came to this Last; but now take it for granted, that in his Answer to *This*, He will crave leave to start a New System from Sir *Isaac Newton* or Mr. *Johnson*, if either of their *Chronological Computations* should in the mean Time fall into his Hands. For the very Foundation of his *Appendical Scheme* is false and conjectural.

In P. 49. He takes it for granted (because Mr. *Whiston* and Dr. *Whitby* have done so before him) that Our Lord was crucified upon *Friday the Fifteenth of Nisan*, and boasts of the Evidence of This from all the *Evangelists*, by asserting, with his usual Confidence, that this *Crucifixion* happened on the *Jews Passover*. I have compared his several Quotations, and do collect from thence, that He has picked this Bone very slightly; for the *Evangelist John* has plainly demonstrated, in his 19th. Chapter at the 31st. Verse, that the Day on which Our Lord suffered, was *Παρασκευή*, *The Preparation-Day*, on which they generally killed the *Passover*; and consequently that He was crucified on *Friday the Fourteenth of Nisan*. That *This* was the Day of his Passion, appears yet farther from the *Jews Concern*, lest he should remain on the Cross on the *Sabbath-Day*; (for that *Sabbath-Day* was an high Day, because the *Passover* fell exactly

at Our Saviour's Death, on the same Day of the Week, as the Sabbath did.) — But that which should make a Christian-Man not singular (such as Mr. Whiston is well known to be) in this Particular, is, the First Controversy that ever happened in the Primitive Church, (even in the very next Age to the Apostles) concerning the Observation of the Christian Passover. For when the Asiatics contended for its being kept on the Fourteenth of Nisan, and the Western Christians, on the Sunday following; this Controversy was styled the Quarto-deciman, upon this very Account, because They All more than supposed our Lord's Passion to have happened on the Fourteenth Day. — From hence it appears, that He must go to Mr. H——, to procure a New Calculation, and have it made plain to a Demonstration, in what Year, the Fourteenth of Nisan may fall upon a Friday, in Order to lay the Foundation of his Third System.

In P. 50. He asserts That concerning Our Lord's Appearance in publick, which I will not at present make it my Endeavour to disprove; viz. that there were Five Passovers in the Time thereof. I beg leave to put in a perhaps as well as He; perhaps there were More, which He will descry, when he comes to calculate Good-Friday anew.

In P. 51. He is very busy in suggesting to his Readers the Passages of Six exact Months,

so as to bring back Our *Lord's Baptism* to the *Feast of Tabernacles*, in Order to make out *Four Tears and an Half's Ministry*; but in all This he makes but *Guess-Work*, except in asserting with such *Expositors* as he deals with, that the *Time* of that *Baptism* happened in the Month *Tisri* or *September*. Now my *Expositors* assure Me, that *Christ* was baptized on the *Sixth* of *January*, which Day is therefore stiled by the *Holy Catholic Church*, *The Epiphany*; i. e. *The Manifestation*: Because on that Day *Christ* was manifested to *St. John Baptist*, by the *Spirit's* descending and resting upon Him. And accordingly the *Church of England* hath appointed *Is. 40.* concerning the *Mission* of the *Baptist*, for the *First Lesson* of the *Morning-Service* of *Twelfth-Day*, as She has the *Former* part of *St. Luke's Third Chapter*, which ends with the *Baptism* of *Christ*, for the *Second*. I know, *Mr. B——d* does not value the *Testimony* of the *Catholic Church* equally with *One Positive Assertion* of *Mr. Whiston's*: However I hope he will pay some *Deterence* to *Those*, of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, an *Heathen*, (concerning *Julian the Apostate*, about *1400 Years* ago;) and of *Alcas Cyriacus*, (an *ancient Arabian Astronomer*, and so far upon a *Level* with *Mr. Whiston*) who assures us in his *Manuscript*, (in the *Oxford-Library*) that the *Sixth* of *January* was the *Feast* of the *Benediction of Waters*, because on

that

that Day Our Blessed Lord was baptized in Jordan. (See Dr. Hammond, P. 86 & 537.)

In P. 54 & 58. After his usual *perhaps's*, *doubtless's*, and *I suppose's*, he sums it up, that Herod died in a very short Time, nay within a few Weeks, after Christ's Birth. Now the Absurdity of his wrong Computation appears from these *Incidents*: That the *Appearance of the Star to the Wise Men in the East*, their *Journey to Jerusalem and Enquiry there*, together with their *passing from thence to Bethlehem*, and *secret Return towards their own Country*; That the *Flight of Joseph and Mary into Egypt*; and that the *Destruction of the Innocents*; All happened within these few Weeks. As certainly They must, if Herod died so soon; for not only these *Events*, but also *Herod's Death and Archelaus's Succession*, together with *Joseph's Return out of Egypt*, and *Settlement at Nazareth*, must at that Rate have *All* been brought to pass within *Forty Days*: For at the Expiration of that Term, we find Our Lord in the Temple, presented (without Fear of Archelaus) by his Holy Mother. Does Mr. B——d consider how long the *Journey between Persia and Palestine* must be? Has he never read of the vast and scorching *Deserts*, thro' which these *Magi* must have passed? His few Weeks would not have sufficed for their *Journey alone*, setting aside all the other *Incidents*; except they had

had been brought, (as *Habbacuc* was) by the *Hair of their Heads*. 'Tis Pity, he did not think upon *This*; for such a *perhaps* would have salved the Difficulty of resolving this Objection. — Now the Truth must be, that *their Arrival* happened long after *Mary's Purification*; for *St. Luke* (*Chap. 2.*) plainly insinuates, that, in Order to *This*, they went up from *Bethlehem* to *Jerusalem*: Which proves the *Coming* of the *Wise Men* must needs have been *after* their Return thither. As to the *Returning* to *Nazareth*, mentioned at the 39th. *Verse* of that *Chapter*; That (tho' immediately following the *Purification-story*) must refer to the *Coming* out of *Egypt*, and cannot be imagined before the *Going* thither, which appears farther upon the whole *Relation* of the *Second* of *St. Matthew*, to have been from *Bethlehem*. This, together with the *Length* and *Fatigue* of their *Journey*, renders it no improbable *Conjecture*, that their *Coming* to *Bethlehem*, was, (as the *Church* commemorates it) a *Twelve-Month* after *Christ's Birth*. To which agrees that *Circumstance* of *Herod's* slaying all the *Male-Children*, from *Two Years Old* and *under*; because, (as *St. Matthew* particularly remarks) He was craftily inquisitive after the *exact Time* of the *Star's Appearance*, and gathered from their *Intelligence*, that the *Child*, whose *Greatness* he was apprehensive of, must have been, at
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the *Time* of his *Enquiry*, considerably advanced in *Months*. — But letting all *This* pass, we are sure, from the most *authentic Record*, that *Herod* did not die in *November*; for *Josephus*, in his *17th. Book of Antiquities*, chap. *11th*, testifies, that *Herod* expired a few *Days* before the *Passover*: and consequently *Herod's Death* happened in *March*.

As to what he says afterwards, concerning *Archelaus's Banishment*, in the *37th. Year* of the *Actiac Victory*, and his *Conjectures* in that *Computation*, he may improve *Them* as he pleases; for I have neither *Leisare*, nor *Library*, (as I said at first) to *A. J. P.* Him.

Again, As to his *long* and *unnecessary* *Remarks* upon *Zacharias's Ministration*, they are all to no *Purpose*, except first begging the *Question*, and afterwards running away with it. His *Calculations* are all *Vapour*, as having no real *Basis* to support their *Evidence*. However since *Mr. Whiston* acknowledges the *Time* of *Zacharias's Ministration* to fall on the *Beginning* of *September*, and with *Mr. B——d* places greater *Confidence* in *One Jewish Chronicle* than *All the Christian Writings*; I will try my *Hand*, and make it my *Endeavour*, to find out fairly, at what *Season*, *Our Saviour* was *born*, according to this *Period*. Be it allowed therefore, that *Zacharias* returned *Home* very quickly after He was struck *Dumb*, and also that *Elisabeth* conceived as
shortly

shortly after his *Return*. These *Occurrences* may well be supposed (for why may not I *guess* as well as He?) to take up a *Week* at least, and so will bring us to the 10th, 11th, or 12th. of *September*, for the *Time* of *Elisabeth's Conception*. Let us carry *this Period Six Months* forwards, and then *Elisabeth's Sixth Month* (which Mr. B——d, against the *Current* of all *Antiquity*, goes on to suppose to be *Five Months and one Week*) will bring us to near the *same Time* in *March*. Again, Let us reckon *Nine Months* more, and We shall clearly perceive (unless We are resolved not to see it) that *Christ's Birth* happened on *some Day* in *December*. To sum up all, Let our *Calendar* be duly rectified from the *Overplus-Mistakes* of the *Julian Year*, and our *Twenty fifth* of *December* will fall out, at or very near to the *Winter-Solstice*. And *That* is the *Period* I have fixed in my *Sermon* for *Our Lord's Nativity*; for our *Tenth* or *Eleventh* of *December*, at the *Time* of *this Birth*, was so far back as the *Twenty fifth Day*: Which is owing to the *Difference* between the *Natural* and the *Julian Year*, and will fall right, when the *Civil Government* think fit to *rectify*, and *establish* it by *Law*.

I did design to say something, by Way of *Detection* of Mr. B——d's *Unskilfulness* in *Chronology*, concerning that famous *Fifteenth Year of Tiberius*, mentioned by *St. Luke*, in his

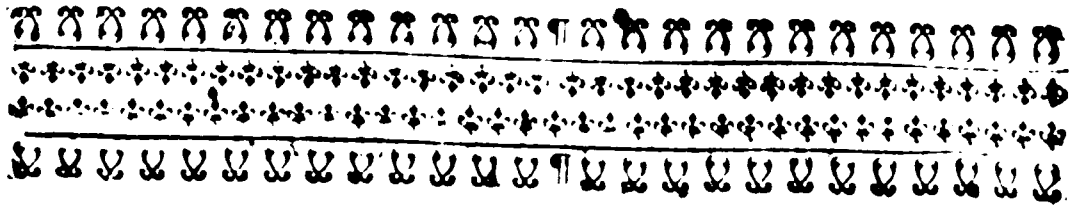
his *Third Chapter*; Which is the Period, agreed on by all Hands, when *John* began to preach the *Baptism of Repentance*, and the *Approach of the Kingdom of Heaven*: But I find, He has shifted *Dr. Prideaux*, and couch'd Himself under *Mr. Whiston's* Protection. Therefore I shall spare Him at present: As I shall also upon that *other Passage* of the *same Chapter*, concerning *Jesus's beginning to be about Thirty Years of Age*. When He has chosen *Whom* to abide by, then it will be Time enough for me, to give Myself the Trouble of making a *Scrutiny* into his *Positions*, and not before; because I have not the *Books* by Me. — And thus I have done with his *Appendix*.

Marblehead, June 5th.

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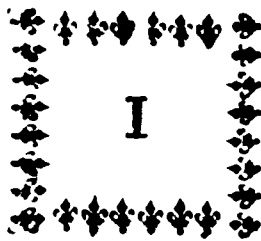
The



T H E
Jewish Oeconomy,
A Foundation
For the Christian.

DEUT. XVI. 16.

Three Times in a Year shall all thy Males appear before the Lord thy God, in the Place which He shall choose : In the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles : And They shall not appear before the Lord Empty.



I

Have the rather chosen to treat upon this Text, because the Minds of Many are so blinded thro' Ignorance or Prejudice, that They have looked upon the Oeconomy of the *Mosaic* Law, as altogether *needless* and *unfundamental*. Whereas in Truth that Dispensation was wisely designed to prepare Mankind for One more General, and from

from the Instance of a particular People co-venanting with God, to chalk out a Path of Obedience and Duty to the whole Species. Hence it was, that the Apostle *Paul*, in the *Tenth* of his *First Epistle*, told the *Corinthians*, that the *Jews* were (a) *our Fathers*, and that their Sacraments were (b) *Types* or *Rough-Draughts* of the *Christian*; And hence He argued, that their Punishments for Disobedience and Perverseness were exemplary to us, and Warnings to every One standing upon this *Christian* Foundation, to take Heed, lest He also, as well as this People of God heretofore, should fall (c). Hence also it was, that the same Apostle writing to the *Hebrews*, after having first ascertained this *Christian* to be the (d) *Last Dispensation*, that should ever be revealed from the God of Truth, took especial Care afterwards to secure the main Argument; (which was indeed *Argumentum ad Homines*;) that the Rites and Sacrifices of the *Jewish Law*, were distant and less perfect Shadows of the *Christian*, and (e) *Figures* of that Last and Truer Oeconomy.

This was the Reason, why the First Hereticks (such as *Valentinus*, *Cerdo*, *Marcion*, and indeed the whole *Clan* of the *Gnosticks*) would never acknowledge the *Divine* Enaction of the *Mosaic Law*: because the latter Prophets

(a) *V.* 1. (b) 6. (c) 12. (d) *Ch.* 1. 2. (e) *Ch.* 9. 24.

had studiously pressed the Observance thereof, and deduced a Moral Meaning, out of every Precept. For such an Interpretation would be a manifest Contradiction to their Schemes and Practices, and had a Tendency to discover the vain Pretensions of these *Men of Light*; that their (*f*) *Knowledge* did but *puff up*, and laid no Restraint upon their impure and immoral Conversation. To secure this Point therefore, together with their wild Distinctions of the *Good and Evil God*, they were forced, with the *Manichees*, to reject all the *Old Testament*, with the whole Code of *St. Paul's Writings*.

Not so absurdly did the *Primitive Christians* act; who always looked upon and acknowledged the *Synagogue* for the *Church's Elder Sister*, and were glad to imitate her Piety in every Practice, which was not merely *ritual and ceremonial*, and consequently antecedent to, and typical of, some better Performance. Hence her *Weekly Sabbath & Anniversary Feasts* were converted by the *Church* into sounder Commemorations, and from *Her* we have taken up & improved our solemn *Liturgies*. It were endless to undertake the Proof of all This in *One Sermon*, and therefore I shall take it for granted, until called upon to make it appear, to those Persons,

(*f*) 1 Cor. 8: 1.

4 *The Jewish Oeconomy, a*

whose restless and invidious Study it is, to call every Thing, practised by our Graver Church, into Question. Therefore, without farther needless Dispute or haughty Provocation, I shall take upon Me at this Time, to set before you *Three* Things, offered from these Words :

I. *First*, What were the *Times* and Meanings of the *Jewish* Feasts.

II. *Secondly*, The Correspondence of the *Christian* Feasts with *These*. — And,

III. *Thirdly*, How far We *Christians* are affected by this Precept, and what Application We ought to make thereof.

I. As to the *First* Point, What were the *Times* and Meanings of the *Jewish* Feasts ; We ought to take Notice, that there were More than *Three* Feasts in the *Jewish* Year, for every *New-Moon* was so ; but there were but *Three* Feasts, wherein all the *Males* of *Israel* were convocated to appear in a Body before the Lord. These are the *Three Times* of my Text, and distinguished by

1. The Feast of *Unleavened Bread*,
2. The Feast of *Weeks*, and
3. The Feast of *Tabernacles* ;

To all which I shall severally speak in their Order.

1. The *First* of These, The Feast of *Unleavened Bread*, was the *Beginning* of the *Jewish* Year, in the Month *Abib* or *Nisan*, when God commanded Them to kill and eat the *Passover*, and (g) *by-Night brought Them forth out of Egypt*. This Month was appointed upon that Occasion to (h) *be the Beginning of Months, and the First of their Year*. On the *Tenth* Day of this Month it was, that every Family took a *Lamb*, to be kept for Examination, concerning its being unblemished, unto the (i) *Even of the Fourteenth of the said Month*. This was called the *Passover-Feast*, because at the Rise of the *Full-Moon*, they made Themselves ready to depart: Which Departure was put in Execution, after the Destroying Angel had *passed over* their Houses, and in the same *Night* had slain the *First-Born* of the *Egyptians*. This was also (as in my Text) called the Feast of *Unleavened Bread*; because in their Hurry they were forbidden to put *Leaven* into their Dough, and obliged to bind their *Kneading-Troughs* among the rest of their *Baggage*, to transport Them together. This Month *Abib*, or *Beginning* of their Year, (according to the best and truest Cal-

(g) *Exod. 12, 2.* (h) *Exod. 12, 2.* (i) 6.

culations) fell out in *March*, about the Time of the *Vernal Equinox*, when the Day and Night were *Equal*; and is supposed to be appointed of God, as a New *Æra* of the Year, whose Beginning, before this Alteration, commenced from the *Autumnal Equinox*, at the Feast of *Trumpets*, in the Month *Tisri* or *September*. It was with the *Jews*, as with Us in the *Church of England*, that They computed by *Two Æra's*, by an *Ecclesiastical* and a *Civil Year*: Their *Ecclesiastical Year* commenced much about the same Time, as Ours, (if duly rectified) would do; That is, At the Time of *Equal Day and Night* in the *Spring*, exactly *Nine Months* before our *Mid-winter-Day*. But their *Civil Calculation* was from the supposed Time of the *Creation* in the *Fall*, as Ours is from the Beginning of the old *Julian Year*.

This *Passover Feast of Unleavened Bread*, so called from God's sparing and *passing over* the Families of *Israel*, and their carrying forth *Bread without Leaven* for a long Journey, was also called the Feast of *First-Fruits*. And as *St. Paul*, in the *Fifth* of the *First* to the *Corinthians*, alludes to the former Titles, by saying, that *Christ, Our Passover, is sacrificed for Us*, and therefore that We should not *keep the Holy Season with Old Leaven*; so does He likewise, in the *Fifteenth* Chapter, to this *Latter*, by saying, that *Christ is risen from the Dead,*

Dead, and become the First-Fruits of Them that slept. Now the *First-Fruits* of the *First* or *Barley Harvest*, were to be brought, by God's own Order, to be waved by the Priest as an *Hallowing* of the Crop, on *the (k) Morrow* after the *Sabbath* next following the *Passover*. And that this *Sabbath* fell out in the *Passover-Week*, appears from the Computation of the *(l) Pentecost-Feast*, which is defined in the *Law* to commence from that *Wave-Offering*. And thus I am led to descend to some Account of the

2. *Second, The Feast of Weeks.* This *Feast of Weeks*, or *First-Fruits* of the *Second* or *Wheat-Harvest*, was so called from the counting *Seven Weeks* complete from the *Offering* of the *Barley-Harvest* to *That* of the *Wheat-Harvest*; which then, and not till then, was permitted to be reaped, and therefore at the *Ninth Verse* is mentioned by that *Time*, when the *Jews* should begin to put the *Sickle* to the *Corn*.

This Computation of *Weeks* from the *Morrow* after the *Jewish Sabbath*, is, (or ought to be) a satisfactory Intimation, that God in these *Last Days* would be worshipped on a *New Sabbath*; when *Old Things* (such as these *Types* and *Jewish Rituals*) should be *done away*, and a better Method of computing suc-

(k) *Lev.* 23. 11. (l) 15.

ceed in their Room: The Prophet *Jeremiah* enforces This, in his 23^d. Chapter at the 7th. and 8th. Verses: *Therefore, behold! the Days come, saith the Lord, that They shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the Children of Israel, out of the Land of Egypt: But, The Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the Seed of the House of Israel out of the North-Country.* For this Construction seems easy, and more than plausible, to any, who consider (according to the Purport of the 12th. Verse of the Chapter of my *Text*) that these Two *Former* Feasts were naturally and pathetically Commemorations of their Deliverance from the *Egyptian* Bondage: Which, compared with *That* of the *North-Country*, viz. *That* of *Sin* and *Satan*, from which (m) *the Lord our Righteousness* hath set us free, seems not to bear the least Shadow of Competition. —. Therefore,

3. *Thirdly*, I pass on to speak something, concerning the *Third* and *Last* Feast of the *Jewish* Year, the Feast of *Tabernacles*. As the Two *Former* were instituted for the *Hallowing* their several *Harvests*; So this *Last* was a *Thanksgiving* for the whole *Crop* of (n) *the Floor* and *the Wine-Press*. And again, As the Two *Former* were Commemorations of

(m) *V. 6.* (n) *V. 13.*

Foundation for the Christian. 9

their full Redemption from the Bondage of *Egypt*, (from their First *Exod* on the *Passover-Night*, to their Arrival at *Mount Sinai*, and receiving the *Law* from thence exactly *Fifty Days* after ;) So this *Last Feast* was to commemorate their *Journeying* to and fro in the *Wilderness*, under the safe Conduct of an *Almighty Protector*, during *Forty Years*.

All these *Feasts* were appointed to the *Jews*, to be celebrated in *One-Place*, which was to be the *Centre of Unity* to the whole Nation. And *All of Them* had this particular Sanction annexed to Them, that they had a *Week of Festivity* to solemnize Them. Thus also has been from the Beginning the Practice of the *Christian Church*, as I am now about to make appear, under my

II. *Second General Head*: Which was, to evince the Correspondence of the *Christian Festivals* with these *Jewish* already described.

i. And, *First*, To begin with the *Passover*. To this Feast, that of our *Easter* so nearly squares, as always to happen on the *First Sunday* next after the *Jewish Passover*. For if the *Dionysian Æra*, and the *84 Years-Cycle*, from which is calculated the *Nicene Determination* of the *Ecclesiastical Full-Moon*, be an imperfect Calculation ; yet still it is the Method, by which the *Modern Jews* determine their

their *Passover*. Therefore it behoves those puny Cavillers, who find Fault with *This*, to devise some better *Cycle* to oblige the World with, or else to stop their Mouths from spitting in the Face of their Superiors, and to order *Themselves* more lowly and reverently towards their *Betters*. But to proceed; On the *Morrow* after the *Sabbath* of the *Passover-Week*, it was, that the *Wave-Offering* of the *First-Fruits* was lifted up before the Lord: Correspondent whereto, Our *Jesus*, the *Passover* sacrificed for us, on the *Friday* precedent to that Feast, became the *First-Fruits* of the *Resurrection*, and was lifted from the Grave on the *Sunday* following. And as their *First-Fruits* coincided with the Time of their *Redemption* from *Egypt*, so Our *Redeemer* reinstated our Nature at the same Season, and rescued us from a Slavery worse than *Egyptian*, viz. from the Bondage of *Death*, and *Hell*, and *Sin*, and *Satan*.

Who now after *This* can cavil at the Observation of this properly-*Christian* Festival? And does it not become *Us*, as well as the *Jews*, to be thankful for God's preserving Providence? *Us*, who have a better Hope than *Those* our *Forerunners*? Whose Bondage was not a Temporal One, like *Theirs*; but who (o) have been called out of *Darkness* into

(o) 1 Pet, 2. 9.

his marvellous Light? (p) A Light to lighten the Gentiles? And all This, (e) that we might shew forth his Praises? And when can This be done better than at that Time, when those of his Church heretofore have shewed Us the way of rejoicing unto Him? At that Time, when our Spiritual Enemies lie vanquished and slain, and whose Defeat is infinitely of more Consequence than the Overthrow of 10000 Egyptian Pharaohs? No, Let Us, with the Nicene Fathers, establish it for a Rule to keep this Christian Jubilee, and let every Easter be (as it signifies) a Resurrection to Us: A Renovation of our Spiritual Lives; and let us then especially take Courage, under our glorious Leader, and so weaken our Adversaries, that They may not prevail over us any more. Let us also with the First Christian Age (before there was any Humane Authority to interfere in such Matters) not break Communion about Calendary Mistakes: but as Polycarp and Anicetus sat down together, notwithstanding they differed in their Opinions, about the Quarto deciman Controversy; so let us strive to heal the sad Breaches of Christianity, and be zealous to promote that Unity and Love, which may cement all sober Christians, to the Glory of God, and the Benefit of his Church. And let Us, with St. Paul,

(p) St. Luke 2. 32.

observe this Feast, (g) *not with Old Leaven, neither with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness; but with the Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.*

2. Secondly, I am to shew, that our *Pentecost* or *Whitsuntide*, is the same with the *Jewish Feast of Weeks*: For this Feast also exactly corresponds with that other, as we are informed, in the 2d. of the *Acts*, by that Expression, of *the Day of Pentecost being fully come*. And as this Day was the *Fiftieth* from the *Wave-Offering* of the *First Harvest* among the *Jews*; so also is it the *Fiftieth* from the *First-Fruits* of the *Resurrection*, in the Person of our *Blessed Lord*, among Us *Christians*. Thus, as the Time of *Christ's Death* and *Resurrection* corresponded with that of *Killing* the *Jewish Passover*, and *Offering* their *First-Fruits*; so again, did the *Coming* of the *Holy Ghost*, to publish the *New & Last*, entirely agree with the *Day* of the *Publication* of the *Old* and *First Law*. And as then the *First-Fruits* of their *Second* or *Wheat-Harvest* were brought by the *Jews*, then also it was, that the *Holy Spirit* first poured forth the *Evangelical First Fruits* upon our *Lord's Disciples*, and enabled Them to bring Him that very *Day* no less an *Offering* than of 3000 *Souls*. And then it was, that the *Seculum*

(g) 1 Cor. 5. 8.

Spiritus Sancti ; *The Reign of the Holy Ghost*, first commenced, which our *Modern Enthusiasts* of several Sizes are now so fond to appropriate to their own Persons and Times.

And who is there among sober *Christians*, that will take upon Him, to condemn this serious Practice of commemorating our *final* Redemption, at this Season ? *When*, we have not only offered Thanks for our Deliverance from our *Spiritual* Enemies, and the *first Display* of our *Spiritual Increase*, by the Resurrection of our Great Redeemer, but are now at last brought to the *Mount* of God's *Glory*, and are personally instructed in the *Sum* of our Duty, and taught by a *nearer* Communication of the *Divine Spirit*, than ever was manifested to the World before ? Let us therefore submit to the Guidance of this Spirit : And tho' we have not the same visible Demonstrations of the *Shechinah*, as the *Jews* at *Mount Sinai*, or of the *Fiery Tongues*, as the *Apostles* at *Jerusalem*, on this Day ; Yet we may be sure of that *abiding* Influence, which now *can be* necessary and sufficient for us. And when we are in the Path of this *Divine* Direction, let us take Heed, not to *grieve*, or *quench*, or *resist*, this *Inward Light* ; but let us testify our Assent, by *doing that Truth, and so coming thereto, that our*
Deeds

Deeds may be made manifest, that They are wrought in God (r).

3. *Thirdly*, I come at last to shew the *Agreement* between the *Jewish Feast of Tabernacles*, and our *Christmas*. Now tho' this *Feast* indeed was a *Completion* of all the *Rest*, and by the *Law* was pinned down to a (s) particular *Day*, which was to be a *Restraint* upon the *Ingathering* of their *Corn* and *Wine*; and therefore frequently (if not generally) fell out in our *Month of September*, in that hot *Country* whose *Barley* was ripe in *March*: Yet our *Christian Feast of the Nativity* is not in *Scripture* assigned to any particular *Day*; but was then displayed, when the *Ripeness* of the *Moral Law*, (as explained by the latter *Prophets*) had completed the *Expectation* of *God's own People*, and the *Desire* of all *Nations*. And after the *Fulfilling* of all the *Prophecies* concerning the *Messiah*, and the *lowest Ebb* of the *Hopes* of *Mankind*, it was, that our *Blessed Lord Jesus Christ* (like the *Sun* at the *Winter-Solstice*) began to *enlarge* our better *Day of Light*: (t) *To visit us with the Day-Spring from on high, to give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, and to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace.*

(r) *St. John* 3. 21. (s) *Lev.* 23. 34. (t) *St. Luke* 1. 78, 79.
Indeed,

Indeed, *Some* of our *Great Men*, such as *Lightfoot* and *Mede*, have been of *Opinion*, that our *Saviour's Birth* exactly corresponded with the *Time* of the *Jewish Feast of Tabernacles*: And have given some *Reasons* to induce *Others* to fall in with their *Way of thinking*.

One was that *Expression* of *St. John*, in his *first Chapter* at the *14th. Verse*; *And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us*. Now that *Word*, which is in our *Translation dwelt*, is in the *Original* *ἰσχυρῶς*, and signifies, *was tabernacled, or pitcht his Tabernacle among us*. From hence these *Men* have gathered, that the *Word took Flesh* at the *Feast of Tabernacles*. But with *Submission* to these *Great Names*, I think that the same *Scripture* is more fairly and deducibly interpreted, by *Other* as *Learned Men*, such as *Bishop Pearson, Whitby and Echard*, who expound this *Passage* by the *Schechinah* or *Glory*, that appeared upon the *Tabernacle* of *Old*, residing now in our *Flesh*. Agreeably whereto it is, that *St. John* immediately subjoyns; *And We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father*: Alluding possibly either to *Christ's Transfiguration* in the *Mount*, or to that *Appearance* we read of, in the *first* of the *Apocalypse*.

Another *Reason* for their concluding *Our Lord's Birth* to have happened at the *Feast of Tabernacles*, was the exact *Correspondence* of

the *Two* preceeding Feasts ; Therefore (say they) the *Three Festival-Times*, enjoyned by God in the Chapter of my *Text*, and (u) *elsewhere*, were Preludes of Three more accomplished Feasts, in the Season of (x) *Grace and Truth*. In Answer to This, it is urged by Others, that the latter *Jewish Feast* was *Particular and Local*, and had no farther View than to that People, while They remained unmixt in their own Land ; and was to give Way to a Season, which should be *General*, and wherein all *Mankind* should find their Concern. And therefore it was necessary, that some other Season, besides *This* of preserving the *Jewish Nation* in the *Wilderness*, should be pitcht upon to draw the Attention and Respect of *Mankind* in *General*. And what Season could be more proper than *That*, wherein Our Meek Redeemer not only εὐκρίνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, but (y) ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν, emptied *Himself*, for our sakes : and at the lowest *Ebb and Decrease*, became not a *Covenanted Jew* only, but an *Humane Creature* ; and by assuming that *Creature* into his *Divine Nature*, hath added such an *Increase of Light* to our *Hopes*, that from thenceforward we have been advanced into *perfect Day*, and have been rowled from walking any longer in the *Night*,

(u) *Exod. 23. Lev. 23. (x) St. John 1. 14.*

(y) *Phil. 2. 7.*

Since this (2) Sun of Righteousness first appeared with Healing in his Wings?

There are other Arguments offered by these Expositors, but None worth considering after These. — Therefore I shall here turn Myself to another sort of Objector, who has made it his Endeavour, unseasonably to expose the Ordinances of our Church and Nation, by undertaking to prove a Negative.

This Man, you have All heard, was inspired by I know not what Spirit, to decry our Observation of Christmas, & to prove that Our Saviour was not born on the 25th. of December. In Order whereunto He took Notice of the Silence of Scripture in this Particular, and from thence concluded, that there was no Credit to be given to Antiquity; and (as some Quakers say of Our Lord's Body) that it was hid from Mankind like the Body of Moses: Inferring thereby, that it is Idolatrous to observe the Day of Our Lord's Nativity. It is true, that the Scripture is silent concerning Christmas-Day, nor is there any sure Thread therein to guide us into this impervious Labyrinth. For, neither are We directed, on what Day Daniel had his Vision of the Seventy Weeks; nor at what Time Zachary (tho' of the Course of Abia) administered by Lot in the Temple; nor when his Wife

(2) Mal. 4 2.

Elisabeth conceived afterwards; nor on what Day the *Cense* or *Enrolment* commenced at *Bethlehem*. These Things (tho' obscure to Us) were thought altogether needless by the Holy Penmen, because so well known to every Person, for whose Conviction their Writings were then designed. I shall not therefore give You, or Myself, the Trouble of a needless Chace, in tracing a tedious Explication of these Points, but immediately descend to consider One Passage of Scripture, which plainly discovers to Me, tho' not the Day, yet the Season, when Our Saviour was born; and ought to be a sufficient Intimation to considerate Persons, that His Birth happened in our Winter: And that Passage is of the Shepherds, in the 2d. of St. Luke, watching their Flocks by Night.

This Our Objector, as I think, not very fairly, has asserted to be improbable, if, not impossible, in *Judæa*, which He made Them believe to be as cold as *New-England*. Whereas it is notorious, that all *Syria*, (the Southernmost Part whereof *Judæa* was) is more Southernly than any Country of *Europe*, even than *Italy* or *Spain*; and tho' we read in Scripture of *Frosts* and *Snow*, yet Travellers assure Us, that the Open Countrey is seldom or never visited by These. It is owing to the Mountains of *Libanus* and *Orizans*, that They are at all invaded with a bleak Air; and were They

not thus relieved by their happy Situation at the Foot of these Mountains, the Inhabitants of that Country would be subject to almost, as intense an Heat as the Neighbouring *Arabia*. Let those Poor People then well consider, which Way they are led, by such Persons, as wrack and twist Scripture to their own Convenience. Poor Souls! Who have no Idea of the World's Situation, and were induced to believe, it was as difficult to keep Watch in *Judæa* in *December*, as in their *New-England*. Could Any of You stay out in One of our severe Frosts? was an Home-Argument, and such as reached the Feeling of every Hearer. But not to lose Time about such trifling Disputes, I shall now observe, that it is not usual, and was not necessary, for the Shepherds of *Palestine*, to watch their Flocks by Night, in the *Summer*- or *Autumnal*-Season; because then the Wild-Beasts could supply Themselves with Prey, without breaking in upon the Folds, or Inclosures. But in the *Winter*, when the Brooding-Season was over, and several Beasts and Birds were migrated into other Countries: Then they were compelled by Hunger to invade the Folds by Night, and supply their Necessities from thence. But this Argument does not need enforcing even in this Country, where Many can remember how it was at the Settlement of *New-England*, before the *Wolves* were destroyed.

stroyed. And not many Years since, You may *All* recollect, at what Season, the *Bears* spread Themselves all over the Countrey; after the *Summer-Food* had failed Them in the vast Deserts beyond Us. Nay, What is more, tho' *Old-England* be at least 20 *Degrees* Northward of *Judæa*, yet the Shepherds there tend their Flocks all the *Winter*; notwithstanding They have no savager a Beast than a *Fox* to annoy Them: But what are They in Comparison of the *Lions* and *Bears* of *Palestine*, such as *David*, when a Shepherd, slew ?

I shall in the next Place, take Notice of another *peremptory* Assertion of this *Objector*, and That is, that *Christmas-Day* was not observed till *Five* or *Six Hundred Years* after *Christ*, when the *Pope's* Authority became so powerful, as to give Sanction to this, among other, Errors. This is a Proof, what *Spittle* may be willingly licked up from *De Laune* and his Associates; who may be sufficiently exposed as a Venter of Falshoods, as well as *Improbabilities*. For if we examine, and get acquainted with more antient, & less distrustful, *Authors*, We may easily perceive that the
(a) *Apostolical Canons*, (*Sound Scripture* in Mr. *Whiston's*

(a) For the Sake of the more Illiterate, I will give Them the Words of the Canon, as Mr. Gregory has transcribed

Whiston's Esteem) (b) St. Clement, (or Whosoever else was the Author of the Constitution,) (c) Justin Martyr, (d) Theophilus Caesariensis, (e) Tertullian, (f) Origen, (g) St. Cyprian,

scribed it into English, out of Joseph the Egyptian's Arabic Code: — Also that you constitute an Anniversary-Feast at the Nativity of the Lord Christ, on the Day on which He was born; and That was the Five and Twentieth of the First Canon (i. e. of December:) for This is the Principal of all the Feasts. Also that Ye do every Year celebrate the Baptism of the Lord Christ, upon the Day in which He was baptized by John his Forerunner; and That was the Sixth Day of the Second Canon, (i. e. of January.)

(h) τὰς ἡμέρας τῶν ἰογῆς φυλάσσετε, καὶ πρώτην γε τὴν γενέθλιον. Keep the Days of the Feasts, and the principal, That of (Christ's) Birth. L. 5. C. 13.

(c) ὡς καὶ μαθεῖν δύνασθε ἐκ τῆς ἀπογραφῶν. Even as You may learn: from the Censual-Tables. Apol. 1. So that St. Chrysostom, was not the First, that asserted the Certainty of those Tables: Which in short were Records, written upon Parchment, and put into Frames, within the Capitol at Rome, by the Care of the Censors, whensoever a Lustration of the City or Provinces was made. Among Others remained that Record of the Cense at Bethlohem, for many Hundred Years; (till the Inundation of the Goths and Vandals) and is often referred to, by the Christian Writers. For so again Tertullian, as you will perceive in his Place.

(d) See Cave's Primitive Christianity. P. I. Ch. 7.

(e) pendentibus adhuc recensibus Augustiani Censibus. The Censual-Tables of Augustus hanging up yet fresh. And again, Sed et Censur constat. But even the Censual-Record remains. And once more, Censur Augusti, fassimum testem Dominica Nativitatis Romana Archives custodiunt. The Roman Archives keep safe the Censual-Record of Augustus, as the most faithful Witness of our Lord's Nativity. Contra Marc. l. 4. c. 19.

(f) Rom. 3. in Marbaum, And, Contra Gelsum, lib. 8. too long to be inserted in Greek.

(g) St. Cyprian hath an whole Treatise upon this Day, as Dr. Hammond tells Me; but not having his Writings by me, I cannot at present refer to the Place,

(h) From

arian, The most ancient Christian (h) Martyrologists, (i) St. Basil, (k) Nazianzen, (l) St. Chrysostom, have all asserted, that Jesus Christ was born on the 25th. of December, or that such a Festival was observed by Most Christians in their Time. Yet These were no Novel-Writers, but lived Many of Them in that very Syria, where this Birth happened, and long

(b) From These we have both in Nicephorus and Bazonius, that sad Story, wherein it is related; That when the Persecution, under Dioclesian, had begun in Nicomedia, that cruel Emperor, finding vast Multitudes of Christians, Young and Old, met together in the Church; upon the Day of Christ's Nativity, to celebrate that Festival, commanded the Church to be shut up, and Fire to be put thereto, which in a short Time reduced both Them and it to Ashes. Nic. L. 7. c. 6. Bar. p. 41.

(j) (k) (l) These Three have Sermons still extant, upon the very Day.

(i) St. Chrysostom when urging the Antiochians to observe Christmas-Day to good Purpose, tells 'em, that the Western Christians had celebrated the 25th. of December, a long Time, and as from ancient Tradition: οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπισημαίνοντες τὴν γενετὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμεῶν.

Now the Time of the above-Proofs was as follows; viz. The Apostolical Canon and The Constitutions were so ancient as deservedly to stand in the first Place.

Justin Martyr wrote his Apology. An. 150.

Theophilus, Bishop of Casarea lived and wrote. 192.

Tertullian. 207.

Origen. 249.

St. Cyprian. 252.

Dioclesian's Persecution was. 301.

St. Basil flourished. 372.

St. Gregory Nazianzen. 375.

St. Chrysostom. 381.

There were an infinite Number of Proofs after their Times; but I think These are sufficient to all, but especially to those Men, who are not so much as to be before

before this *Objector's* Period, or the *Pope* of *Rome's* Usurpation. There were indeed some mistaken People, set right in this Matter by *St. Chrysaſtom*; who, by a Misconſtruction of the Word *Ἐπιφάνεια*, were led to conclude that *Jeſus Chriſt* was *maniſteſted in the Fleſh* on our *Twelfth-Day*.

A *Third* Reflection of this *Objector*, which I think it worth my while to remark, is, that *Chriſtmas-Day* was taken up among *Chriſtians*, in Imitation of the Heathen *Saturnalia*: This is the very *Venom* of *De Laune*, and the *Father* of *Slanders*: For, that *Chriſtians*, who for ſome Centuries were continually offering their Lives, in Defence of their Faith, againſt the *Heatheniſh* Superſtitions; Who at their Baptiſm publicly renounced the Poms and Vanities of the World, and could therefore never be perſwaded to be preſent at the publick Diverſions of the Theatre; Who would never imitate the Heathens in Matters even Indifferent, for Fear of *Paganizing*, ſhould nevertheless graſſ the moſt diſorderly of the *Heatheniſh* Feſtival-Revels into their own *Religious* Commemorations, is ſo wild and extravagant an Aſſertion, that Nothing can account for, but the moſt inveterate Prejudice, or the moſt ſtupid Ignorance. Why did not *This Man* tell his credulous * *Fiſhermen*, that

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* At this Word great Offence was taken, by the Con-
trivance

the *Saturnalia* were Feasts naturally resembling the *Churchman's Christmas*, and that every Master put his Man drunk to Bed, 12 Nights successively?

Upon the whole, This Objector was pleased to rally our serious *Liturgie*, and to wonder at the *Shame* of that Expression in the *Collect* for the *Christmas-Week*; *Almighty God, who hast given Us thy only-begotten Son to take our Nature upon Him, and as at this Time to be born, of a pure Virgin: As at this Time was very shocking to this accurate Gentleman, because He could discover more than Any before Him, without making the World at all the wiser for his Discovery.*

I shall say no more to his *pungent* Remarks; but appeal to all *Sober and Pious Christians*, whether *this Man* had any Call, on *Christmas-Day* last, to undertake so hard a Province, as to prove the *25th. of December*, not the *Day* on which *Christ* was *born*. What Provocation

affiance of some *meddlesome* Persons, that sometimes *show* their *Faces* at my *Church*: Inasmuch that I was forced to explain the Difference between my *Fishermen* and *his*, in a subsequent Discourse; Between those *Fishermen* that constantly hear the Word of God *read*, and *Them* that take what They hear upon *Trust*. No Man of *Candour* would have construed this *Word* otherwise than I meant it; and That was, that *Fishermen* were *plain* and *honest* Men, and easily induced to believe any Thing conveyed to Them in an *authoritative* Way.

had

had He to insult his Brethren, unless the Vindication of *Christ's Divinity*, against the *Arians* and *Socinians*, be so in his Opinion? And, supposing that *Christ* was not *born* on *that Day*; Must We therefore have no *Periodical* Season, of thanking God for, and exhibiting the Benefits of, so great a Mercy; since He was *born* on *some Day*? Must *Angels* rejoyce, and *Men* be silent, upon this Occasion; because *some* sower Spirits are not satisfied about the Time of this rejoycing? Must there be no Order nor Authority in God's World; because *some* Men are resolved to be *blind*, or at least *unable* or *unwilling* to see the Light? And, because *blind* Themselves, must They quarrel with their Brethren, for feeling out and discerning the Right? Let this *Objector* fairly determine, *what Day* of *September* or *October*, our Saviour was *born* on; and We will petition the *King* and *Parliament* to fix *Christmas-Day* anew.

Is this the Method taken by *some Men*, to bring *Christians*, (m) to be perfectly joyned together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment? Is this to hold to the same (n) Head by *Joynts* and *Bands*; when *Christians* seek more for *Mistakes* and *Motes*, in a different

(m) 1 Cor. 1. 10. (n) Col. 2. 19.

Perswasion, than pry into their own Station
 in that Mystical *Body*? *St. Paul* could tell
 the *different* Assemblies of his Time, that (o)
He that regardeth the Day, regardeth it unto
the Lord, and He that regardeth not the Day,
to the Lord He doth not regard it; but now
 One wiser than *St. Paul* makes it his Endeavour
 to prove this *Regard* an *Heathenish* Superstition,
 tho' sanctified by the greatest *Authority* under
 Heaven. Would it not be very absurd, for a
Church-Minister, on One of their *Fest-*
or Thansgiving Days, to tell his People,
 that it was a *Rebellious* Custom to observe
 such Days; and that no such Practice was
 ever found among *Christians*, till after 1600
 Years, and in Order to cut off *King Charles's*
 Head? Would it not sound very oddly, to
 treat the *Solemnities* of *New-England* with such
 Contempt, and to challenge Them to prove
 these Practices from Scripture? Now all
 This, tho' never so much truer than our
Objector's Animadversions, would only demon-
 strate a *turbulent* Spirit, and unfit such an
 One to be a *Minister* of the Gospel of Peace.
 Quite contrary, the *Church Ministers* have al-
 ways paid a Decency to those Days, without
 flying in the Face of their proper Superiors:
 And I dare say, They always will do so,
 unless countermanded by a still-higher *Au-*

(?) *Rev. 15. 6.*

thority. But I think it high Time to pass to my

III. *Third Head*: Which was to shew, how far We *Christians* are affected by the Precept of my *Text*, and what Application We ought to make thereof.

Under this Head, I shall propose to You the following Considerations ;

1. Who are the proper *Persons*,
2. What are the peculiar *Places*, And
3. What the most needful *Qualifications*, for a due Observance of these *Three grand Festivals*.

1. *First*, As to the *Persons* properly subject to this Precept ; They were of old All the *Males* of *Israel*, or as it is expressed in my *Text*, *All thy Males*. *All thy Males*, that is, *All the Persons* of this peculiar People, comprehended within the Covenant of *Abraham*, by the Outward Token of *Circumcision*. Not that the *Women* were excluded from this Convocation ; for even *These* were frequent *Resorters* to the Annual Festivals. Thus we are informed by *St. Luke*, in his 3^d. Chapter at the 41st. Verse, that the *Mother* of Our Lord

Lord made it her Business, as well as *Joseph*, to be present *at the Passover-Feast at Jerusalem every Year*. And at their Attendance upon the *Twelfth* Passover after *Christ's* Birth, it was, that He was left behind, and after *Three Days* found and questioned by his *Mother* in the *Midst* of the *Sanhedrim*. I wonder *some* of our *New-fangled* Commentators have never attempted to prove Our Saviour's *Birth* to have happened about the *Passover-Season*; since the *42d. Verse* of that *Chapter* is thus expressed: *And when He was Twelve Years old, They went up to Jerusalem after the Custom of the Feast*. Now since these Men are willing to catch at the least Straw, that might save this sinking and exploded Cause of *Novellism*; it is strange to Me, how *this Text* escaped their *Observation*.

Thus it was with God's *People* heretofore; But with Us *Christians*, who are neither distinguished by (*p*) *Jew nor Greek*, by *Bond nor Free*, by *Male nor Female*; this Attendance is required of every Person within the Pale of the *Covenant of Baptism*. No One can be excused for wilful Neglect, and none that understands the *Command of God*, or his *own Duty* or *Interest* aright, will be excused, from this *Attendance*. Nor is it enough

(p) Gal. 3. 28.

to come and gaze on, but They must partake of the *Passover* also, and offer their *First-Fruits*, and *Final Thanksgivings*, before They can be *raised* from *Dead Works*, and *sanctified* and *born anew* to a *Spiritual Life*. 'Tis with this View, that our tender *Mother the Church*, has so cautiously given us that Precept, in One of her *Rubricks*, of her Children receiving the Blessed Sacrament, at least *Three Times* every Year. For in large Parishes, where Many Persons live at an inconvenient Distance, and wheresoever the Sick and Weak are under great Difficulty of a more constant Attendance, this Injunction of but *Three Times* in a Year, seems reasonable and necessary: But Us of *this Church*, whose Festival is renewed with every *New-Moon*, (besides the *Three Times* expressed in my *Text*) there is Nothing can excuse; but We must fall under the Censure either of Irreligion or Contempt, if We do not frequent it. And if it was required of every (q) *Jew and Jewess*, of *their Sons and Daughters*, of *their Men-Servants and their Maid-Servants*, and *the Levite that was within their Gates*, and *the Stranger*, and *the Fatherless*, and *the Widow*, that were among them; Surely much more is it required of every One of Us. The *Christians* of former Ages were duly sensible of their Duty in this

(q) *V. 11.*

Particular, and therefore We never read of *Any* among Them, who lived out of Communion, except They were secluded for some enormous Crime. And it was owing to the *Confusions* of the *Last Century*, that this listless Behaviour was first taken up among Us; the Cure whereof can be brought about by no Means less effectual, than what will likewise heal the unhappy Divisions of all *Sober Protestants*: And That is, *Unity in Opinion and Practice*, as far as is possible.

This was That, which all along was the Burden of *St. Paul's Epistles* to the several Churches, especially of *Those* to the *Romans* and the *First* to the *Corinthians*; In Both which, as well as Others, He laid Himself out (as All Good Christians ought to do) to reconcile any seeming Differences. Indeed, We have not now-a-days the same Inclination towards *Judaizing* as was then; but yet We have (I am sorry to say) worse and more unhappy Divisions among the same Professors now. It was *their* Peculiar to divide about retaining to the *Law of Moses*, or rejecting it, without any authorized Person to determine the Bounds of Agreement and Uniformity: But, alas! it is *Ours* to stand it out against acknowledged Authority, and to calculate Establishments of our Own, without any Regard to such Agreement or Unity.

If the People of this *Country* were to meet the *Church* half-way, (which is no more than the Duty of well-disposed Children;) how happy would it be for the Peace of both Sides? How additional to the Glory of God? And how mutual the Benefit of the *Protestant*, as well as the *Catholic*, Church? It is owing to the Want of this Union, that the Common Enemies of the *Christian* Religion are enabled to play Parties among us. And by widening this Difference it is, that our *Divided House* so totters, and becomes so unable to resist the violent Impressions of *Deism* and *Infidelity*, and sinks under every Storm of *Latitudinarian Novelty*. Would They but submit to a *Moderate Episcopacy* (such as is warranted by the *Word* of God, and the *Practice* of all Ages) without the Addition of *Worldly Grandeur* and *Titles*; I dare say, that the *Fathers* of the *Church*, considering the *Bent* and *Genius* of *New-England*, would consent to such a *Plat-form* of *Church-Government*, and such a *Restriction* of the *Ceremonial* Part of Religion, as would make this People, the *Favourites* of Heaven, the *Envy* of their Neighbours, and the *Applause* of *Christians* in General.

There can never happen a more Critical Juncture for this happy Accomplishment, than *This* at present, when we are blessed

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with a *Prince*, whose Study it is, to provide for the future *Peace* and *Security* of his People; and *Who* is seconded in these *Auspicious* Designs, by a *Pious*, *Prudent* and *Benevolent* Consort.

I don't know, how I may be relished among *some* Persons for this Freedom; but This I am sure of, that a greater Blessing must attend this *Pacific* Disposition, of reconciling and uniting *Christian* Churches, who were divided before, than *That* of bringing together, either *Private* Persons, or *Publick* Communities. And it would redound more to the Glory of God, and the saving of Souls, to unite the divided Churches of *Old* and *New-England*, than even that glorious Achievement of uniting the *Kingdoms* of *South* and *North-Britain*.

I have urged this Argument more than once before *Men* in Authority, and have been sometimes treated very rudely for so doing; as if (as *Mr. Baxter* complains) *Uniting* were become the Cause of Satan, and *Dividing* the Cause of Christ. Would such Men but consider the (r) *Woe* pronounced against all Authors of *Stumbling-Blocks*, by Our Blessed *Saviour*, and They would soon see Cause to

(r) *St. Mat. 18. 7*

alter their Behaviour, as well as their Opinion, in this untoward and *Antichristian* Practice. Then might They easily perceive, *Who* was the *High-Plyer*, and *Whose* restless Employment and Study it is, to keep open this *Breach* between Us. For I can speak for Myself, as *St. Paul* did in Relation to his Brethren the People of the *Jews*, that I could wish Myself an (c) *Anathema*, (were it proper *so* to speak) so that I could remove this *Scandal* to the *Protestant Reformation*.

I have said as much to this particular *Unity* at present, as I think necessary; and therefore I shall make it my next Endeavour, to speak something concerning the

2. *Places* peculiar to these *Festival Solemnities*: Expressed in my *Text* by these Words, *in the Place which the Lord shall choose*.

Now this *Place* was *Jerusalem*, and that particular Part thereof, which was known by the Name of *Mount Sion*, and which lay within the *Tribe* of *Benjamin*. For *Here* it was that God was pacified, when the *Pestilence* had begun in the City: Upon which Occasion the *Angel* of the Lord appeared to (r) *Gad David's Seer*, in the *Threshing-Flour* of *Ornan*

(c) *Rom. 9. 3.* (r) *1 Chron 21. 18.*

the Jebusite. Here afterwards the Temple was built, which God once again pointed out as the Place of his Choice, by the Descent of the Schechinah, or Cloud, after (u) Solomon's Induction of the Ark.

Hither it was that the most distant Israelites resorted to their Annual Feasts, and Here it was that Our Blessed Lord and his Parents made their constant Appearance at those Publick Seasons. Here he was presented by his Pious Mother, and of This He foretold the utter Destruction with many Tears and great Lamentation. (w) Nay, What is more, to This He gave the Preference before the Schismatical Temple on Mount Gerizzim; by telling that ingenious, tho' immoral Woman of the Samaritan Separation, who discoursed with Him at Jacob's Well, that (x) Salvation was of the Jews. For this Woman, having first perceived Him to be a Prophet, was then immediately curious enough to inquire concerning the Differences of Those who professed Obedience to the same God and Law; (y) Our Fathers (said She) worshipped in this Mountain, and Ye (Jews) say that in Ferusalem is the Place where Men ought to worship. Now Our Lord, to give some Check to her vain Curiosity, was pleased to say, that the (z) Time

(u) 2 Chr. 5. 13. (w) St. Lu. 19. 41. (x) St. Jo. 4. 22.

(y) 20. (z) 21.

of worshipping God in either of these disputable Places was near at an End: But yet, to shew his Aversion to *unwarrantable Schism*, He was pleased to add, that the *Samaritans* worshipped they *knew not what*, that the *Jews* *knew what they worshipped*, and that *Salvation* (as well as the *Establishment*) was of *their Church*.

And tho' We cannot appropriate the Presence of the *Almighty* to *All*, or *Any*, of our *Churches*, in so peculiar and distinguishing a Manner as the *Jews* could to their *Temple*; Yet we have Reason to believe that God's immediate Presence is in *Every One of These*. He has promised to be *present*, (a) *wheresoever Two or Three are gathered together*, with Intention to ask Him any Thing, in his *Son's Name*; Which how true soever of every *other Place* (which may be accidentally made Use of for that End) must more certainly be so of *those Places*, which are purposely set apart for his *Publick* Worship. We indeed deny not the *Presence* of God in every *Closet* or *Bed-Chamber*; for Who shall confine the *Ubiquity* of the *Deity*? Which, we are told, in the *139th. Psalm*, *to be about our Path, and about our Bed, and to be acquainted with all our Ways; to reside in Heaven, to be in Hell, and*

(a) *St. Mat. 18. 20.*

to remain in the uttermost parts of the Sea; and to whom the Darkness and the Light are both alike? Therefore in all those Places, where the general Worship of God is carried on with *Spirit and Truth*, there We may be sure of his more *immediate* Presence and Favour. And we must not only (like the *Jews*) pay our Adoration in *Outward and Preceptive* Religion, by conforming to the *Truth*; but (like *true Christians*) We must also offer the *Inward* Devotion of the *Heart*, by the Application of our *Spirits* as well as our *Bodies*.

I hope by this Time my *Audience* will perceive the Necessity, as well as Piety, of fitting up *these* Places, so as to suit the *Inhabitant* expected *here*. For it is well known how profuse the *Jews* were in this Particular, (c) and yet We never find *This* among the *Abuses* objected by Our Saviour to that People. Quite contrary, They were charged with Irreverence to God's House, for having converted it (d) to a *Den of Thieves*; and for turning That, which was designed for an *House of Prayer* and Propitiation, into an Exchange or (e) *House of Merchandize*. And the Occasion of his Lamentation over *this Temple* was taken from the Observation of his *Disciples*, who were industrious to shew

(b) St. Jo. 4. 24. (c) St. Luke 21. 1. (d) St. Mat. 23. 17.
(e) St. Jo. 2. 16.

Him the magnificent (f) *Buildings* of the same; and (g) *how it was adorned with goodly Stones and Gifts*. This shews, that Our Lord thought it no *discommendable* Quality for God's Servants to lay Themselves out upon the *Places* of his *Publick* Worship. Therefore let Us (as we have *begun*) take Care so to *adorn* Ours, that it may be clear of *Superstitious Foppishness* on the one Hand, and of *Dirr* and *Deformity* on the other.

But above all let us beware of *absenting* Ourselves from *hence* upon any Occasion; unless disenabled for this Attendance by Sick-ness, or such Avocation, whereto we can justly and unfeignedly plead the Acceptance of (h) *Mercy rather than Sacrifice*. For by such Absence We become more listless towards our Duty, more hardened in our Obstinacy, less pliable to Reproof; and at last are tempted not only to despise the *Altar*, but the *Altar's Hallower*. We are forced to take Refuge under that too common & unmanly Excuse, of shifting off our Neglects upon *Another*; and would fain charge our own Irreligion upon the *Defects*, or (what is more common) upon the *Disgusts*, of the *Preacher*. Whereas it is altogether owing to our *Unbelief*, or *Enkewarmness*, or *Sloth*, in which it is

(f) St. Mat. 24. 1. (g) St. Lu. 21. 5. (h) H. f. 6 6.
impossible

impossible for the *Preacher* to have the least Concern: Unless we are afraid or ashamed to have our *Case* fairly displayed in *Open Church*. This is a melancholy, as well as unthankful Subject, and therefore I shall now convert Myself to my

3. *Last Particular*, inferred under this Head, and shew, What are the most needful *Qualifications* of a due Observance of these Festivals. Such, I mean, as I shall gather from this *Text*, and the *present Occasion*. And Those are,

- (1.) *Liberality*, and
- (2.) *Largeness of Soul*.

Both of which I take to be comprehended in that latter Clause of my *Text*, and *They shall not appear before the Lord Empty*.

(1.) As to the *First*; We may be almost tempted to conclude, from some *Passages* of Scripture, that *This* ought to be extended to the utmost Stretch. Such is that Case of the (i) *Rich Young Man*, who was commanded (as a Trial of his retaining to *Jesus*) to sell *All he had*, and to give to the Poor. And such that generous Offer of (k) *Zacchæus*, upon

(i) St. Lu. 18. 22. (k) 19. 8.

embracing the *Salvation*, of the Gospel, not only of making a Restitution according to the Law, but also of *giving One Half of his Possessions to the Poor*. But These were *exempt Cases*, and are not to be drawn into Example by Professors in our Days. However we must be so *Liberal*, as to distinguish Ourselves from those less perfect Patterns that have gone before Us. For if *Jews* were commanded *not to appear Empty before the Lord*, at those solemn Convocations, but to bring of their Best to celebrate their Solemnities; and if *They* opened their Hearts as well as their Treasures, upon these Occasions: If the *Gentiles* also, without any such Command, could see Cause by the mere Force of Reason, to imitate this Practice; and if *These* could offer their *Ἀροθία*, the *Tops of their Corn-Heaps*: Surely much more it becomes us *Christians* to be not only *Liberal*, but *Lavish*, of our *Contributions*. I wish those *Persons* would consider This, who are too retentive of their *Oblations*, at the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*; Since This is all the *Alms*, presented in *this Church*, throughout the whole Year.

(2.) But then, besides this *Liberality*, and *Outward Generous Demcanour*, there is also a *Largeness of Soul* expected from Us; by which I mean such an *Inward Generosity*, as
I may

may in this Particular give a vast Preference to the *Christian*, before either *Jewish* or *Gentile* Behaviour. We are not only to offer *Gifts, out of the Abundance of our Riches*; but to present before the Lord Hearts, full of Praise and Thanksgivings, for God's multiplied Benefits, and full of Candour and tender Concern, for the Good of *One Another*, and of *Mankind* in General. This seems to be the Design of *congregating* whole Societies at such particular Seasons; and therefore *Those Men* ought well to consider, what Injury they do to their Fellows in general, when They make it their Attempt to debar Us of this *Priviledge*, and strive to render all Mankind as *narrow-spirited* as *Themselves*, by laying a Restraint upon that free Conversation and mutual Benevolence, accruing from these *General Assemblies*.

As to our *Objector's* good Advice, concerning the *sober* Observation of *Christmas*, I truly and sincerely return Him Thanks. And if he had not personated another Shape under this *Sheep's Cloathing*, We should never have given Ourselves the Trouble of *vindicating* the *Old Christian*, as well as the *Church of England*. I well know, that the best Commentators have interpreted those *Fruits*, whereby We are to distinguish and (1) *beware of False Prophets*,

(1) *St. Mat.* 7. 15.

by such Persons disguising Falshoods under Truth, and gilding their Poyson and venomous Doctrines with sober, solid, and prudent Advice. Let out *Objector* clear Himself of this *ravening* Design, and We will rejoyce to judge of, as well as act *charitably* towards, his otherwise (as We hear) *well-garbed* Performance. But if He shall persist in his *calumnious* Reflections, let Him turn Himself against Mr. *Fitch* of *Piscataqua*, and [I may now add] *His Excellency* JONATHAN BELCHER *Esq;* and He will in *Them* perceive a more Generous and truly-Christian *Example*.

I close All with this Petition, drawn from the *Collects* of our *Three Times*, that *the God of all Truth* would grant *Us the Grace of that Regeneration, which is the Renewal of his Holy Spirit ; And that Prevention, whereby We may conceive in our Minds all good Desires, and by his continual Help may bring the same to good Effect ; With that Joy in his Holy Comfort, which may bring Us to a right Judgment in all Things ; thro' the Merits of Christ Jesus Our Saviour : Who liveth and reigneth with the Father, in the Unity of the Holy Ghost, One God, World without End.*

Amen.



ERRATA.

I. In the Preface.

- P. (5) l. 13. for *Peformance* read *Performance*.
P. (6) l. 3. dele *his*.
P. (11) l. 16. for *appologize* read *apologize*.
P. (14) l. 15. insert Two *Hyphens*.
P. (15) l. 7. for *Exignus* read *Exiguus*.
P. (16) l. 6. after *recommmend* insert a *Comma*.
P. (17) l. 15. for P. 53. read P. 50.
P. (22) l. 17. for *upon* read *from*.
P. (24) l. 23. insert an *Hyphen* between
Twenty fifth.

2. In the Sermon.

- P. 9. l. 28. for *it is* read *this last is*.
P. 18. l. 5. for *know* read *known*.
l. 21. for *Them* read *his Audience*.
P. 21. l. 26. after *Vandals* insert a *Semi-Colon*.
P. 22. l. 29. for *Casarea* read *Cæsarea*.
P. 23. l. 14. for *who* read *Who*.
l. 15. for *their* read *the*.
P. 25. l. 11. *Time* should be in *Italick*.
P. 26. l. 1. for *Perfwasion* read *Persuasion*.
l. 12. for *Thansgiving* read *Thanksgiving*.
P. 34. l. 16. after *immoral* insert a *Comma*.
P. 38. l. 15. dele *of*.

