



A
CHRISTIAN CAVEAT
TO THE
Old and New SABBATARIANS.

SECTION I.

The Occasion and Method of this Treatise.

EVer since the establishment of *an uniformity of Doctrine* (a) and *Publique Service in the Church of England*, (b) many zealous and godly Ministers have from time to time greatly bewailed the increase of Sectaries. (c) Queen Elizabeth, finding that no admonitions nor threats could silence their bitter and envenomed tongues, was forced to (d) banish them; King James, after a judicious and patient hearing of their *Weak and slender objections*, (e) enjoyned them to conforme, and by *Ecclesiasticall censures* restrained the disobedient. (f)

But now, it is strange to conceive, what liberty they take unto themselves; *What tempests of railing and disgraces they heap upon those who crosse their ficklenesse with constant vindications, and assertings of the true doctrine of faith & life*: whereby they verifie that of S. Paul, (g) *Evill men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

It makes me (saith a worthy Divine) (*) *to pity this great and famous City, when I behold a COLLUVIES, A VERY RABBLE OF ALL OPINIONS, and such a going and comming, touchings at, and saylings off from the land of uprightnesse: One week this is a truth, and almost an Article; the next*

(a) Anno Do. 1562.
3 Eliz.

(b) See the Act before the Common-Prayer booke.

(c) *Ecclesiasticall union*, Pag. 4, 5, 14. Rogers Articles, in the Preface.

The Epist. of the Translat. of the Bible to K. James.

(d) Anno Do. 1593.
April 10.

(e) See the Conference at Hampton-Court.

(f) Proclam. 5. Mart. 1603. Proclam. 16. Jul. 1604.

(g) 2 Tim. 3. 13.

* M. Obad. Sedgwick, in his Treatise, entitled, *Christs counsell to his languishing Church of Sardis*, pag. 229, 230.

week it is no such matter, but some other thing is the right. And truly, what else can be expected, whilst men doe use their liberty, not as the servants of God, but for a cloak of malici-ousnesse; (b) intermixing and sowing the teares of errour and division with the seeds of truth and peace? (c)

Take a tast of their new, fiery-new Divinity. They say, that the Church of England hath not the Sacraments duly administered, nor the word truly preached, and so wants the markes of a true Church. (d) They deny the Baptisme of Infants to be lawfull. (e) They call the Liturgie and Publique service of our Church ranke Atheisme, a proud inveigling strumpet; a cursed Masse of superstition, full of serpents, bathed in the blood of bodie, souls, and estates; the reliques or leavings of the Popish dregs; not the stump or limb, but the head of the Dragon, no better then the conjuring or juggling of Magicians: (f) The Character of Antichrist or Antichristianisme. (g) They say that a set forme of Publique Prayer is a main branch of Popery: (h) yet we find that set formes of Prayer have ever been used and approved in Gods Church. (i) They say, that the thirty nine Articles of our Church are stuffed with Popery and Arminianisme: (k) and they have so vilified the booke of Homilies, that the very name of them is unto the vulgar become contemptible. Whence is it too too evident (let them make what pretence they please) that their aime is to confound and root out our Religion. For (as Mr. Prynne once well observed) the whole body of our Religion is included in our Common-Prayer Booke, our Articles, and our Homilies. (l)

No marvaile then, if THE X. refuse to celebrate the Nati- vity of Christ; who (by their own confessions) have revolted from the Church of Christ; who disgrace, hate, slander, and persecute (m) the most Orthodoxe, the most eminent, and chiefest of all the Reformed Churches, the Church of Eng- land. (n) No marvaile, if THE Y. revive those old, rotten

(b) 1 Pet. 2. 16.
 (c) *Permiscuit recta perversis; ut ostendendo bona, auditores ad se trahant: & exhibendo mala, lateu- ti cos peste cor- rumpant.* Greg. Mag. Moral. l. 5. c. 11.
Error per seipsum non ostenditur, ne de- nudatus deprehenda- tur. Irenæus advers. Hæret. in Proœmio.
 (d) Protestation pro- tested, pag. 8.
 (e) See Mr. Spels- berries True Subject of Baptisme.
 (f) The Anatomy of the Service-book. pag. 2, 3, 13, 17. 25, 26.
 (g) Protestation pro- tested. pa. 7.
 (h) *Protest. ibidem.* Smeclymnus, Sect. 2.
 (i) Exod. 15. 1.
 1. Chron. 16. 7. unto verse 37. Psal. 44. & 85. & 92. & 102. as appeareth by the ti- tles of those Psalmes. Joel 2. 17. Luk. 11. 2.
 Just. Mart. Apol. 2.
 Tertul. advers. gentes, c. 39 Euseb. de vit. Constant. l. 4. c. 18. p. 106. Calv. ad protest. Angl. ep. 87. Muscul. in Psal. 95. The booke of Hom. Tom. 2. Hom. 9. pag. 138. Dr. Preston in his Sermon styled, *The Saints daily exercise.* (k) Saltmarsh his *Examinat. of Mr. Fullers Ser- mon*, pag. 2. (l) A survey of *Cozens Couz. Devot.* in the Epist. Ded. (m) Gal. 4. 29. (n) See Mr. Smiths Treatise, called, *Gods Arrows against Atheists*, Chap. ult.

(3)

errours of the PETROBRUSIANS (d), (affirming, that Christians ought not to keepe or observe Feasts) who have a long time endeavoured to bring in all manner of Heresies and Schismes, and consequently Atheisme, which in milder speech is called Libertinisme (e). No marvaile, if they reject the tradition of our Church touching the day of our Saviours Nativity, who dare wilfully and impiously reject (f) that most absolute, most excellent, most Divine (g) Prayer; which, Gods Word recordeth (h), was taught the Disciples even by our Saviour himselfe.

Now for the perfect discovery of the perversnesse, grosse mistakes, and ignorance of these men; and also for the full and cleare vindication of our Church from this foule aspersion of maintaining a superstitious Novelty (i); we shall set downe these two Positions.

quas impias novitates, etiam & nos (Ecclesie Anglicanae filios) conantur arguere, dicamus. August. de verb. Apost. Serm. 14.

(d) In vita Bernard. l. 3. c. 4.

(e) Videl. de Arcan. Armin. l. 1. c. 1.

(f) The Lords Prayer pleading for better contentment, p. 28.

(g) Divino plane artificio constans. Pola. Synt. Theol. l. 9. c. 17.

(h) Luke 11. 2.

(i) Quia isti differunt, & disputant nescio, quod aliquod novum.

1. That Christian Magistrates may lawfully constitute and ordaine Feast-daies, or daies of solemne Thanksgiving; and require Obedience unto such Constitutions.

2. That the Church of England doth upon just and good grounds celebrate the NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, on the 25. day of December.

In the discussing of the latter Position, we shall shew:

1. The severall names and titles of this Feast.

A 3

2. That

(4)

2. That the Feast of the Nativity is grounded upon the Scriptures.
3. That this Feast was duly Celebrated by the Christians in all ages.
4. That our Saviour was borne on the 25. day of December.
5. The worke of the day.

After which, we shall (God willing) conclude with a patheticall exhortation unto the true sonnes of the Church of England.

SECTION II.

That Christian Magistrates may lawfully constitute and ordain Feast-daies, or daies of solemne Thanksgiving, and require obedience unto such Constitutions.

THE truth of the former part of this Position (to wit, *That Christian Magistrates may lawfully constitute and ordaine Feast-daies*) is cleared by foure reasons.

THE FIRST Reason. *They that by Gods Word have power to limit things indifferent, may lawfully constitute Feast-daies.* Because Feast-daies are in themselves things indifferent, as S. Paul testifieth, (†) *He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.*

But Christian Magistrates by Gods Word have power to limit things indifferent. (*) For the power given unto Magistrates by Gods Word, (a) is not over such things as are precisely commanded or forbidden by God (b).

Therefore Christian Magistrates may lawfully constitute Feast-daies.

THE SECOND Reason. *They that set apart speciall times to meditate on the goodnesse of God in Christ Jesus,*
and

(†) Rom. 14. 6.

(*) 1 Cor. 14. 40.
*Res adiaphoræ sunt quæ
à D E O, nec præ-
cepta, nec vetita sunt.*

Polan. Syntag. Theol. lib. 6. cap. 38. Becan. loc. com. 33. sect. 13. (a) Mat. 17. 27. & chap. 22. 21. Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Pet. 2. 17. (b) *Præcepta humana sunt determinationes circumstantiarum necessarie & utiles ad servanda præcepta moralia prima vel secunda Tabule.* Ursin. explicat. Catechet. part. 3. quest. 96.

and render thanks for the same, doe that which is lawfull (c).

Festorum veteris Testamenti genus, quod morale & naturale est, abrogatum in novo non est, ut nemirum homo deputet aliquod tempus vitæ suæ ad vacandum Divinis; sed species tantum, quatenus festa illa expresso mandato Dei ad certas circumstantias temporum determinata & alligata erant, sub peccato mortali & poena damnationis. Hospi. de orig. fest. Christian. c. 1.

But Christian Magistrates when they constitute Feast-daies, set apart speciall times to meditate on the goodnesse of God in Christ Jesus, and to render thanks for the same (d).

Therefore Christian Magistrates when they constitute Feast-daies, doe that which is lawfull.

THE THIRD Reason. In times of Gods extraordinary Judgements upon a Nation, Christian Magistrates may lawfully constitute extraordinary daies of solemne mourning, or Fast-daies (e).

Therefore (by the rule of Contraries) in times of Gods extraordinary blessing upon a Nation, Christian Magistrates may lawfully constitute extraordinary daies of solemne thanksgiving, or Feast-daies.

THE FOURTH Reason. That which may be lawfully observed, may be lawfully ordained.

But Feast-daies may be lawfully observed. For our Saviour kept not onely the Legall Feast (f); but the Feast of Dedication (g) which Judas Maccabæus instituted (h). The Apostles also observed Feast-daies (i); and Saint Paul saith, That he basted if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost (k). And in another place, I must by all means keepe this Feast that cometh in Jerusalem (l).

Therefore Feast-daies may be lawfully ordained.

Seeing then that Christian Magistrates may justly and lawfully constitute Feast-daies, it followes undeniably, that they may require obedience unto such constitutions: for they are the Ministers of God, and beare not the sword in vaine (m). Nay we must needs be subject, not onely for wrath, but also for Conscience sake. Men are bound by God in their Conscience (saith Augustinus).

(c) Mr. Perkins
Comment on the
Galatians, c. 1. v. 24.

(d) Polan. Syntag.
Theol. 1. 9. c. 35.
Willers Synopf. in the
9. generall controver-
tie, quæst. 7. p. 494;
495. & quæst. 8. p.
506. Fulk. annot. Ap-
ocalyp. 1. sect. 6.
The Pract. of Piety,
printed by R. T. pag.
364.

(e) Iudg. 10. 26.
1 Sam 7. 6. 2 Chron:
20. 3. Ezra 8. 21, 22,
23. Neh. 9. 1. 36, 37.
Hest. 4. 3. Joel 2. 12,
15. Mat. 6. 16, 17, 18.
1 Cor. 7. 5.

(f) Iohn 2. 13, 23.
& 5. 1. & 2. 14.

(g) Iohn 10. 22, 23.

(h) 1 Maccab. 4. 59.

(i) Act. 2. 1. 1 Cor.
16. 8.

(k) Act. 20. 16.

(l) Δεῖ με πύλωσ.
Act. 18. 21.

(m) Rom. 13. 4, 5.

(a) *Ad justas leges humanas justo modo observandas obligantur homines in conscientia suis à Deo.* Amel. cal. consc. li. 1. c. 2. (b) *Harum legum obedientia necessario praestatur, nec sine offensione Dei negligitur propter ipsum mandatum Magistratum.* Ursin. explicat. Catechet. quæst. 96.

Amelius) to observe the just laws of men in a just manner (a). The neglect of obedience is an offence to God (b).

Here three Objections are commonly brought.

THE FIRST Objection is taken out of the words of Saint Paul to the Galatians; *After that ye have knowne God, (saith he) or rather are knowne of God, how turne ye againe to the weake and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire againe to be in bondage? ye observe daies; and monthes, and times, and yeares; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vaine* (c). Where the Apostle seemes to condemne the observation of all daies whatsoever.

(c) Gal. 4. 9, 10, 11.

THE ANSWER. These words must not be understood in so large a sense; for then the Apostle should condemne both himselfe in observing Feasts (d), and also all good Christians in observing daies unto the Lord (e); which were impious to imagine, and implies a contradiction: But (as Augustin, Jerome, Theodoret, Bruno, Zanchy, and others, expound the place) he reproveth the Galatians for observing daies after that Jewish superstitious manner (f), giving reverence unto them (g), as if they had beene expressly commanded by God, whereby they brought themselves under the Law, and were entangled againe with the yoke of bondage. (h).

(d) Acts 20. 16.

1 Cor. 5. 8. & 16. 8.

(e) Rom. 14. 6.

(f) August. ad Ianuarium, Ep. 118. & ad Adamant. cap. 16. Theodoret, Bruno in dd. locum.

Non simpliciter abro-

gari sunt dies festi; sed tantum ex parte, quatenus legales erant, & per Moysen populo Israelitico praescripti. Zanch. in 4. præcept. de diebus Festis, q. 1. Hookers Eccles. Polic. l. 5. sect. 70.

(g) Nos non similiter observamus: non enim calendæ colimus, nec dies festos, sicut illi in luxuria & epulis, sed in sinceritate æquæ iubilamus. Hieron. in Epist. ad Galat. c. 4. (h) Galat. 4. 21. & 5. 1.

(i) Galat. 5. 1.

THE SECOND Objection is of the Anabaptists, who alledge, That the Magistrates power of making things indifferent to become necessary, destroyes Christian liberty, in which, we are commanded by the Apostle to stand fast. Therfore such power is unlawfull.

THE ANSWER. Necessity is two-fold; Externall, Internall.

The

Magistrates power neither does nor can make things indifferent to become absolutely necessary *in themselves*: For that were to *destroy the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free* (a). But the Magistrates power makes things indifferent to be necessary in respect of *external necessity*, for the *avoyding of the contemp of authority, and for the avoyding of scandall or offence* (b). And in this, our Christian Liberty does not conflict; For in all things indifferent G O D commands us to yeild obedience unto the Magistrate (c).

generall controversy, q. 7. pag. 495. Becan. loc. Commun. 33. Sect. 15. *Obligant tantum scandalis & contemptus ratione*. Hospin. de orig. Fest. Christian. c. 2. Wolleb. Theol. Christianæ. l. 2. c. 7. Sect. 14. (c) Actions indifferent in the case of offence, cease to be indifferent, and come under some Commandment of the Morall Law. *Perkins cases of Conf. l. 1. c. 5. Sect. 5.*

THE THIRD Objection. Feast-daies are Holy-daies (d): But no Magistrates can make Holy-daies: (because *to sanctifie daies, or make them holy, is the priviledge of Gods power* (e)). Therefore no Magistrate can make Feast-daies.

THE Answer. 'Tis true; no Magistrates can so sanctifie daies unto holy uses, as *to impose them upon the Church necessarily and perpetually to be observed of all and every Christian, under Pain of damnation of soul and body*: For this is the priviledge of Gods power (f). But Christian Magistrates, in their own Dominions, have authority from God to sanctifie or appoint daies unto holy uses, so that *the snare of absolute necessity be not laid upon mens consciences* (g). Wherefore Feast-daies are Holy-daies, not in themselves, (by a quality of holinesse inherent, and under the Paine of the great curse (h) to be observed, as the Papists fondly imagine (i)) but in respect of their holy use. In which sense also, *the Temple, the Water in Baptisme, the Bread and Wine at the Communion, are often called holy* (k).

(b) ἀλλὰ θεοῦ ἐστίν. Gal. 1. 8, 9. (i) Concil. Trident. Sess. 7. Can. 13. Bel'arm. c. 10. propos. 2. Apoc. 1. Sect. 6. Rhemist. Apoc. 1. Sect. 6. (k) Aug. quæst. 57. super Levit. Basil. Moral. Reg. 30. Ursin. explicat. catechet. quæst. 77. & quæst. 122. Sect. 2. *Willels* Synopf. pag. 494.

Thus much for the first Position. We come now unto the second, (to wit, *That the Church of England doth upon just and good grounds celebrate the Nativity of our Lord on the 25th day*

(a) Acts 15. 9, 10, 28. Rom. 14. 14. 1 Cor. 3. 22. 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Coloss. 2. 16. (b) *Master Perkins* Comment on the Galat. Chap. 5. *Willels Synopsis*, 9.

Obligant tantum scandalis & contemptus ratione. Hospin. de orig. Fest. Christian. c. 2. Wolleb. Theol. Christianæ. l. 2. c. 7. Sect. 14. (c) Actions indifferent in the case of offence, cease to be indifferent, and come under some Commandment of the Morall Law. *Perkins cases of Conf. l. 1. c. 5. Sect. 5.*

(d) In the end of the Calendar before the Booke of Common-Prayer.

(e) *Perth Assembly* refused. p. 66, 67, 68.

(f) Compare Gen. 2. 2, 3. & Exod. 20. 10, 11, with Deut. 27. 26.

(g) *Modo conscientis absoluta necessitate laqueus non injiciatur*. Wolleb. Theol. Christianæ, ibidem.

day of December) which will evidently appeare, when the forementioned particulars are discussed and proved.

SECTION III.

The severall names and titles of this Feast.

(a) ὅτι ἐφάνη Θεός
ἀνθρώποις διὰ γεν-
νήσεως.

Greg. Naz. Orat. 38.
Basil. de humana
Christi generat.

(b) Θεός. ἑαυτοῦ ἐάνθι-
νόν σαρκί. 1 Tim. 3. 16

(c) Naz. Orat. in S.
Lumin. Chrylost.

Hom. de Epiph. Do.

(d) In argumento E-
piphaniae. Theophibi etiam
Epiphaniarum appella-
tionem accommodatam
in Aegypto fuisse ad
diem natalis Domini o-
stenditur: quo nomine
et diem Baptismi Chri-
sti nuncuparunt & u-
tramq; festivitatem una
eademq; simul die so-
lemni celebrarunt.

Magdeb. Cent. 4 c. 6.
Beroald chro. l. 4. c. 2.

(e) τὸ φαινομένον α-
νθρώποις. Mat. 2. 7.

(f) See the Collect,
Epistle and Gospel
for the Feast of the
Epiphany.

(g) Naz. Orat. 38.

(h) Chrylost. Orat. de
Philogon.

(i) Amb. Serm. 12,
13, 14, 15.

(k) John 1. 5, 9.

(l) Hieron. Tom. 9.

High and excellent were the titles which the Christian Churches gave unto this Feast.

The Greeke or Easterne Church called it, 1. Θεοφάνεια, vel Θεοφανία Gods appearing; because God appeared unto them by the Nativity (a); or (to use the Apostles phrase) God was manifested in the flesh (b).

2. Επιφάνεια, (c) THE appearing, καὶ ἐξοχλῆ; implying that this appearing excelled all other whatsoever. But here two things are worthy to be noted: The one is, That the Churches in Egypt, because they celebrated Christ's birth, and also his Baptisme, upon one and the same day, called both those Feasts promiscuously, Epiphania (d). The other is, That the Moderne Churches have through use and custome of speech, restrained this word, Epiphany, unto the Feast commonly called, Twelfth-day: which is celebrated in memory of the miraculous appearing of a starre (e); by the leading whereof, God did manifest his onely begotten Sonne to the Gentiles (f).

3. γενέθλια τῷ σωτῆρι (g), The Birth-day of THE Sa-
viour.

4. ἡ ἁγία μέγιστη, καὶ ἡ ἁγία μνηστρονία (h); The great-
est Feast, and the Mother or chiefe of all Feasts.

The Latine or Westerne Church called it, 1. Dies Nativitatis (i), The day of THE Nativity, by way of eminency and dignity.

2. Luminaria, The Feast of light; because they used many Lights and Candles at this Feast: or rather, because Christ, the light of all lights, that true light (k) then came into the world.

3. Dies natalis Domini (l), vel Natalitia Domini, The Birth-day of our Lord.

The Church of England, as she is seated in the West, so she imitates the Latine, styling this Feast *Christ's Birth day, The Nativity of Christ, or Christmas day* (a). The signification of which word, *Christmas*, because the name is by some much excepted against, we shall briefly unfold.

The word *Masse* without all question comes from the Latine word *Missæ*: but whether *Missæ* be derived from the Hebrew tongue, or be a Latine word corrupted, is no small controversy (b).

They that derive *Missæ* from the Hebrew, conceive that it comes from *מסב* *Missab*, which signifies an oblation or offering (c); and is framed by adding the letter *ן* unto the end of *סב*, a word signifying *Personall service or tribute*. (d).

They that account *Missæ* to be a Latine word corrupted, conceive that the Fathers used it in stead of *Missio*, which signifies a sending away: For in antient times, when the *Liturgie* or *Publique service* was ended (e), and the Communicants addressed themselves to be partakers of the *Lords Supper*, it was a custome (as it is unto this day) to send away the younger sort, such as were not yet fully instructed and *Catechised* (f). Hence it came to passe, that *Missæ* was taken for, and signified the *Lords Supper*; and so a sacrifice, an oblation or offering. 1. Because the *Lords Supper* is an *Eucharistick sacrifice*; being a solemn remembrance and celebration of the Propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. 2. Because in the *Lords Supper* we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (g). 3. Because when the *Lords Supper* is celebrated, we offer up almes for the reliefe of the needy members of Christ; which is a kinde of spirituall sacrifice (h).

We see then however the derivation of the word *Missæ* may be disputed, yet on both sides it is agreed, that the signification thereof is a sacrifice, an oblation, or offering. And if so, why may not the day on which we solemnize *Christ's birth*, be properly and fitly called *Christmas day*; it being a day full of Offerings, full of Sacrifices (i) unto Christ? On this day we offer up spirituall sacrifices (k): we offer sacrifices of

(a) Booke of Homil. Tom. 2. Hom. 12. See Proper Psalms and Lessons in the Booke of Common-Prayer. (b) Bucan. loc. com. 48. Sect. 1. Urfin. explic. catechet. qu. 80.

מסב נתן (c) Oblationem sponsam manna tuæ. Deur. 16. 10.

(d) Reuchlin. de Rudiment. Hebr. lib. 2.

(e) Post λειψυγίαν publicam. Urfin. Explicat. Catechet. quest. 75. sect. 1.

(f) Ambr. epist. l. 5. epist. 33. Fit Missæ Catechumenis. Aug. de Temp. Serm. 237.

(g) Rom. 12. 8.

(h) Phil. 4. 18. Heb. 13. 16.

Est enim Eleemosyna hostia quedam, quam D B O offerimus, benefaciendo egenis Christi membris. Pastor. Lex, pag. 297.

(i) Sacrificale opus est annuciare. Evangelium. Orig. in Epist. ad Rom. li. 10.

ἀεὺς γὰρ ἡ ἰδ. ὁμῶς γινώσκ. ὅτι Θεῷ. Rom. 13. 16.

Ipsum mihi sacerdotium est predicare & evangelizare: hanc offero oblationem. Chrylost. in Epist. ad Rom. Homil. 103.

(k) 1 Pet. 2. 5.

(a) Heb. 13. 15.

(b) Psal. 107. 22. & 116. 17.

Amos 4. 5.

(c) Psal. 27. 6.

praise (a); we offer sacrifices of thanksgiving (b); we offer sacrifices of joy (c); we offer sacrifices of righteousness (d); and the Scriptures tell us, with such sacrifices God is well pleased (e)

(d) Deut. 33. 19. Psal. 4. 5. & 51. 19. (e) Heb. 13. 16.

SECTION IV.

That the Feast of the Nativity is grounded upon the Scriptures.

(a) Gen. 3. 14, 15.

* Iohn 8. 56.

(b) Gen. 49. 10.

See The Scriptures Harmony, pag. 44. 45.

(c) Quoad dies, a quales omnes, quoad res, quae in his peraguntur una est praestantior alia. Hospin. de orig. Fest. Christian. c. 2.

(d) Isa. 7. 14.

(e) Isa. 9. 2, 3, 6.

(f) Zech. 3. 8, 10.

(g) Cujus nomen est German: hoc est quod all prophetae praedixerunt, vocaruntq; German. ut Isa. 4. 2. German. Dominus; & Jer. 33. 15. German. David, vel German. Justitiae. Quibus locis Chaldaeus Paraphr. vertit Messiam. Vatab. in dict. locum.

(h) Isa. 2. 4. & 9. 6,

7, 8. & 11. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Paul. Oros. l. 6. c. 21.

Isidor. Pelusiota. li. 4.

Ep. 203. Nat. & Do-

mini, Nat. est pacis.

Leo. Mag. in Solemn.

Nat. Ser. 6. c. 5. Vig.

Strigel. Schol. Hist. an

THE Scriptures, as well the Old as the New Testament, abundantly set forth the great esteeme we ought to have of the Birth day of Christ.

GOD promised this day, when He said unto the Serpent, The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head (a).

The Patriarch Abraham (saith our Saviour) rejoiced to see this day *.

The Patriarch Jacob foretold this day, saying, The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from betwene his feet, untill SHILOH (that is, CHRIST) come (b).

The Prophet Isaiah markes out this day as a speciall (c) and wonderfull day; BEHOLD, a Virgin shall conceive and beare a Sonne, and shall call his name Immanuel (d). Nay, so ravished is he with the consideration thereof, that he rejoices with the Church, as if the day of Christs birth were then come: The People (saith, he) that walked in darknesse, have seene a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath he shined. They joy before thee, according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoyce when they divide the spoile. For unto us a Child is borne, unto us a Sonne is given (e).

In the Prophecy of Zechariah (f), Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, BEHOLD, I will bring forth my Servant (Christ) the BRANCH (g). In that day shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine, and under the figge-tree. For at the Birth of our Saviour the Prince of Peace, there was peace throughout the whole world (h).

Chro. Melanct. l. 2. dc 3. Mon. p. 119. Func. Chro. f. 91. Genebr. Chro. p. 479.

This

This day the Apostle calls *the fulness of time* (i); when this day came, men and Angels were filled with unspeakable joy and admiration. **BEHOLD**, (said the Angel of the Lord unto the Shepherds) *I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is borne THIS DAY, in the City of David, a Saviour, which is CHRIST THE LORD. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising GOD, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men* (k).

vit plenitudinem temporum ad optatum venisse, & proximasse regnum cælorum, & inhabitare intra homines credentes in eum qui ex Virgine natus est Immanuel. Iren. advers. Hæres. l. 3. c. 25. (k) Luke 2. 10, 11, 13, 14.

Having then the Patriarchs, Prophets, the people of GOD, and the very Angels themselves for an example of our rejoicing at the day of Christs Birth: It is agreeable to the Word of God, and manifestly grounded thereon, that the Feast or day of our Saviours Birth, should be celebrated with all possible joy and publique thanksgiving unto God.

SECTION V.

That this Feast was duly celebrated by the Christians in all ages.

THOUGH we cannot with some (a) peremptorily affirm, that the Feast of the Nativity was kept by the Apostles; yet will we not with others (b) obstinately deny it: Because the Apostles and other Christians, as they used other things indifferent, so also they freely used Feasts (c), and might in probability use this; it being a Feast observed in the times of the Apostles. For **CLEMENT**, a glorious Martyr of Christ Jesus, (whom S. Paul reckons (d) amongst his fellow

(i) Ἰδὲ πληρώμα τῆς χρόνου. Gal. 4. 4. *Idem Spiritus Dei, qui in Prophetis quidem præconavit, qui & qualis esset adventus Domini, in senioribus autem interpretatus est bene. que bene præconata fuerant: ipse & in Apostolis annuncia-*

(a) Perhibent, Apostolos, ut omnes illi dies quibus Servator noster ad salutem atq; disciplinam nostram aliqua peregrisset mysteria, sacri essent, atq; apud posteros majori haberentur venerationi, eos primum religiose coluisse quamdiu vixisset.

sent. Cujusmodi sunt dies Dominici, Natalis, &c. Polyd. Virgil. de invent. rerum, lib. 6. c. 8. (b) Perib Assembly refused, pag. 79, 80. (c) Apostoli & alii Christiani, ut aliis rebus adhiberent, ita etiam festis libere usi sunt. Magdeb. Centur. l. 1. c. 6. (d) As Eusebius saith, Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 4.

(e) Phillp. 4. 3.

(f) Dies Fester agitate fratres, ac primum quidem Dicm Natalis.

Labourers in the Gospel, whose names are in the Book of life (e) writes thus unto the Chritian Church; Brethren, keepe diligently Feast daies, and truly in the FIRST place the day of Christs Birth (f).

Clement. Const. Apost. lib. 5. cap. 12. This Author is cited by Mr. Lox, in his Sunday a Sabbath, p. 167. and by Mr. R. Bysfield, in his Doctrine of the Sabbath, p. 150. Why should any grudge us the same liberty?

In the second age.

From the yeare 100. unto 200.

(g) Statutum est, nocte sancta Nativitatis Domini Salvatoris, Liturgias celebrent, & hymnum Angelicum in eis solemniter decantent, quoniam & eadem nocte ab Angelo pastoribus nunciatus est, sicut ipsa veritas testatur. Telesph. Epist. decret. Tom. 1. Concil. pag. 117.

TELESOPHUS in his Decretall Epistle saith (g) It is ordained, that in the holy night of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, they doe celebrate Publique Church services, and in them solemnly sing the Angels Hymne, because also the same night he was declared unto the Shepherds by an Angel, as the truth it selfe doth witnessse (h).

THEOPHILUS Bishop of Cesarea in Palestine, saith, that We OUGHT to celebrate the Birth-day of our Lord, on what day soever the 25. of December shall happen (i).

In the third age.

From the yeare 200. unto 300.

(b) Luke 2. 8. unto verse 20.

CYPRIAN begins his Treatise on the Nativity in this manner; The much wished for, and long expected Nativity of Christ is come, the famous solemnity is come; and in the presence of her Saviour the holy Church throughout the world doer render thanks and praises unto her Visitor (k).

In the fourth age.

From the yeare 300. unto 400.

(i) Domini natalem quocumque die 8. Calend. Jan. venerit, debemus celebrare. Magdeb. Centur. 2. c. 6. Hospin. de orig. Fest. Christ. Meni. Decemb. die 25. Theoph. Approved by M. Perkins 2. Vol. In his Demonstration of the Probleme, p. 197.

At NICOMEDIA (a City of Bithinia) when the Festival day of Christs Birth came, and a multitude of Christians of all ages, had assembled together in the Temple to celebrate this Birth-day, Dioclesian the Tyrant, having gotten as it were a fit time, and an advantageous occasion, whereby he might accomplish his madnesse and fury, sent men thither to invade the Temple, and to set it on fire. Cypr. de nativ. Christi, Tom. 3. Approved by Zanchy in 4. precept. q. 2. Theol. 2. and Mr. Perkins dd. ll. p. 492.

round about; and so consumed them all to ashes, even twenty thousand persons (d).

multitudo atatis omnis, qua Christi nomine censetur, in Templo Nazalem cum Dioclesianus tyrannus veluti opportunum tempus & iustam occasionem ratus, per quam vesaniam & furorcm suum adimpleret; misit eo qui templum clauderem, & ignem circumcirca accenderem; & sic eos omnes viginti millium numerum expletes in cinerem redegit. Niceph. Hist. Eccles. l. 7. c. 6.

NAZIANZEN in an Oration upon the day of Christ's Nativity, saith, I am confident that the heavenly powers doe also this present day celebrate the Feast together, and leap exceedingly for joy; if verily they be endued with the love of GOD and men (m).

AMBROSE hath left us six most Divine Sermons which he preached on the Anniversary day of Christ's Birth (n).

EPIPHANIUS recordeth this day among the solemne Feasts of the Catholique Church (o).

HIEROME saith, that the day kept in memory of our Lords Nativity, is the day on which the ancient report runnes he was borne (p).

VALENTINIAN, Emperour of the West; THEODOSIUS the Great, and his sonne ARCADIUS, Emperours of the East, by Imperiall decrees authorized the Feast of the Nativity (q).

In the first age.

From the yeare 400. unto 500.

CHRYSOSTOME hath one Homily or Sermon on the day of Christ's Birth (r). MAXIMUS Bishop of Tours in France hath six (s). LEO the Great hath ten (t). CHRYSOLOGUS one (u). FULGENTIUS one (x). Hitherto are the daies of the Pure and Apostolique Church (y).

Now that the Birth day of Christ was duly solemnized from the first 500 yeares downward (z), even to the times of Reformation, is as cleare as the Sunne at noone day (a): And therefore we shall omit the prooffe thereof, (esteeming it no lesse ridiculous then unprofitable, to insist on that

lica nomine intelligo, usq; tempora Gelasii Episc. Rom. Zanch. in 4. precept. Theol. 2. de dieb. festis. (r) Justin Emperour of the East, about the year of salvation, 523. decreed, that the Feast of the holy Nativity of Christ should be observed. Niceph. Hist. Eccles. l. 7. c. 28. (s) See the Magdeburg Centuriatours in every Century, c. 6.

(d) Apud Nicomediam quum natalis Christi festus adesset dies, &

celebratura convenisset, ac latitia gestire confido; si quidem bonum Deiq; amore presidia sint. Greg. Naz. Orat. 38.

(m) Virutes caelestes quoque hodie die simul Festum celebrare, ac latitia gestire confido; si quidem bonum Deiq; amore presidia sint. Greg. Naz. Orat. 38.

(n) Ambr. Serm. 12. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

(o) Epiph. libro, cui titulus est, Compendiaria vera doctrina de fide Cathol. & Apost. Eccles.

(p) Dies, qua traditur natus Hieron. Tom. 9. pag. 82. G.

(q) Zaga Zabo, quoted by Willet in his Synopl. 9. gen. controvers. 9. B. p. 406.

(r) Vide Chrysostr. opera, post exposit. cap. 1. Lucæ.

(s) Vide Homil. Hyemiles Maximil. Episc. Turonens.

(t) Leo. Mag. in solemn. Nativ. Dom.

(u) Chrysol. sect. 175.

(x) Fulgent. Hom. l. 1.

(y) Ecclesie Aposto-

(z) Theol. 2. de dieb. festis.

(a) See the Magde-

burg Centuriatours in every Century, c. 6.

which

which no man denies) and come directly unto the Reformed Churches, whose judgement and practice in this particular, we shall faithfully deliver; that the mouthes of all such may be stoppt, who under a false and vaine pretence of seeking an Uniformity in Discipline with other Reformed Churches (b), doe defame and endeavour to suppress the most antient and commendable observations of this and all other Feast. daies whatsoever.

(b) Perth Assembly refused, pag. 85, 86.

The Churches of HELVETIA, or Switzer-land. If (say they) the Churches doe religiously celebrate the memory of the Lords Nativity according to Christian liberty, we doe very well allow of it (c).

(c) The latter confession of Helvetia, chap. 24.

The Churches of BOHEMIA. Many of the antient Ceremonies (say they) and such as were brought in by custome, so neare as may be, are retained among us even at this day: of this sort be certaine daies appointed for Feast-daies and Holy-daies; as the Lords day, the Nativity of Christ, &c. (d)

(d) Confel. of Bohemia, chap. 15.

The Church of BREMEN keeps the Festivall day of Christs Birth (e).

(e) See the second Register in the end of the Psalms, translated by Ambr. Lobwasser.

The Church of AUSPURG. As for us we teach that those traditions are not to be condemned, which command nothing against the Lawes of God, and have a civill use and end; namely, such as are ordained to this end, that things might be done orderly in the Church. Of which sort are the traditions about Holy-daies, the Lords-day, the Nativity, &c. (f)

(f) Conf. of Augsburg, Art. 4.

The Churches of SAVOY, POLAND, HUNGARY, SCOTLAND, FRANCE and THE LOW-COUNTRIES, doe allow the Feasts that belong to Christ; his Nativity, Circumcision, Passion, &c. *

* Dr. Rainolds. conf. with Hart. c. 8. d. 2.

The Churches of DENMARK, SWEDEN, and all other LUTHERAN Churches, doe solemnly observe the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, and on that day use proper Hymnes of thanksgiving, made by Martin Luther himselfe (g).

(g) See the Psalmes, Hymnes, and spirituall songs of Dr. Martin Luther, commonly used in their Churches

The Church of GENEVA, does celebrate the day of the Nativity (h).

(h) Perth Assembly refused, pag. 85.

In FRANCE their most notable Preachers give the Communion on that day; as did also the antient Primitive Churches

Churches throughout the world (i). So did the SCOTTISH Church also for 800. years after Christ, before ever it was polluted with Popery (k).

ZUINGLIUS, Rectour of the Church of Zurich, accounts the Birth day of our Lord amongst those Holy-dayes, which he would have observed (l).

ZANCHY, Professour of Divinity in the University of Heidelberg, and an eminent Father of the Protestant Church, expressly affirmeth, *Though the Church of Christ be at liberty to choose unto her selfe what dayes she would have to be sanctified, or set apart unto holy uses; yet it is better, more worthy of praise, and more profitable to sanctifie those which the Ancients, the Apostolique, and the purer Church hath also accustomed to sanctifie. Of which number he accounts the day of Christs birth to be one* (m).

POLANUS, Professour of Divinity in the University of Basil, placeth the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, under the title of *The anniversary Feasts of the New Testament*; which he defines to be, *Holy times appointed among Christians for the worship of God in publique; That is, For to maintaine the consent of faith amongst themselves by the preaching of Gods Word, and the use of the Sacraments, and with one accord to yeeld due worship unto God, in the sacrifice of thanksgiving, prayers and almes* (n).

JOHN GERHARD, Professour of Divinity in the University of Jena, hath gathered together many excellent and godly sentences out of the Fathers for the furtherance and help of our meditations on the day of Christs Nativity (o).

We see then apparently that the Celebration of this Feast, is confirmed by the judgment and practice of the Christian Church in all Ages.

fidei consensum inter ipsos per predicationem verbi Dei & usum Sacramentorum, & exhibendum unanimiter cultum Deo debitum in sacrificio gratiarum actionis precum & elemosinarum. Polan. Syn. & pag. 63. usque ad pag. 70. (o) *Ex veteribus Ecclesie doctoribus collegi. Gerhard. Aphorif. Epist. Ded.*

(i) Ambros. Serm. 17. *Alii quædã die com-
municant corpori &
sanguini Dominico,
alii certis diebus ac-
cipiunt; alibi nullus
dies intermittitur, quo
non offeratur, alibi Sab-
bato tantum & Domi-
nico, alibi tantum Do-
minico: Et si quid ali-
ud hujusmodi animad-
verti potest, totum hoc
genus rerum liberis ha-
bet observationes. Aug.
Ep. 118.*

(k) See the life of Will: Cowper Bishop of Gallogway. p. 12.

(l) Zuingl. Tom. 1. Art. 25.

(m) *Quæquam Ec-
clesie Christi liberum
est, quos velit, dies sibi
sanctificandos eligere;
honestius tamen est,
laudabilius, atque utilius,
eos sanctificare, quos e-
riã veteris atque Apostolica
puriorque Ecclesia san-
ctificare solita est.
Zanch. in 4. præcept.
de diebus Festis,
quæst. 2. Theol. 2.
& sequent.*

(n) *Tempora sacra cul-
tûi divino inter Chri-
stianos destinata pub-
lice, — ad alendum*

S E C T. V I.

That our Saviour was borne on the 25. day of December.

FOR the right understanding of this Position, we must know, that *Julius Caesar*, 44. yeares before the birth of *Christ*, (a) observing the falsenesse of the Accompt then in use, ordained the year to consist of 365. dayes and 6. houres, which 6. houres in 4. yeares made 24. houres, or a day Civill, and were added unto the end of *February*: By reason whereof every fourth yeare contained 366. dayes, and was called *Annus Bissextilis*, the Bilextile or Leap-year, because the sixth of the Calends of March was twice written (b).

This Accompt for many yeares seemed to have no sensible error; (c) yet in progresse of time it was discovered to be not so exactly agreeable with the naturall motion of the Sun. For the *Julian* year exceeding the true *Solar* year 10. minutes and 48. seconds, caused the *Equinoxes* and *Solstices* yearly to change their places and fly back so many minutes and seconds. Whereupon Pope *Gregory* the XIII. by the advice and direction of *Antoninus Lilius*, and other excellent Mathematicians, in the year of *Christ* 1582. did correct the Calender; making the year to consist of 365. dayes, 5. houres, 49. minutes, 12. seconds: (d) And that the *Vernal Equinox*, when then was on the 11. day of March, might be reduced unto the 21. of March, as it was at the time of the first *Nicene Conncell*, (e) he commanded 10. dayes in the month *October*, viz. from the 4. day to the 14. to be left out; so as the 4. day of the month was accounted for the 14. day (f). Hence it comes to passe, that the new Accompt is alwayes 10. dayes before the old.

But as to the precise day of *Christ's Nativity*, both Accompts are erroneous: For if we summe up the excesse of the *Julian* year (which is, as we said, 10. minutes and 48.

(a) Bucholz. Ind. Chronol. pag. 114. 115.

(b) Nam. 24. Februar. divi Matthiae vigilia celebratur, atque hic festus dies 25. differitur, nihilo secius tam die vigiliae, quam die festo 6. Calend. Martias dicitur. Vide Compendium Pier. Valerian. Bellunnes. in Sphaeram. pag. 223.

(c) Sol abscondit circum signorum in 365 diebus, & quarta unius diei praterrem modicam, quae nullius est sensibilitatis. Sphaer. Johan. a Sacrobosco. c. 4.

(d) Eustach. Phyl. parte 2. Tract. 1. de Mundo & Coelo. quaest. 6.

(e) An. Dom. 325. according to Bucholzerius, but 320. or 322. according to others.

(f) Fuffit Papa in mense Octobri à 4. usq; ad Octob. 14. prateriri dies 10. ita ut quartus mensis dies haberetur pro decimo quarto die: ut equinoctiorum ac solstitorum dies reducerentur ad antiquas illas metas, quas in Concilio Niceno determinavit S. S. Patres. Bucholz. Ind. Chron. pag. 714.

seconds,

seconds) from the time of *Augustus Caesar*, when our *Saviour* was borne, untill the yeare 1643. we shall finde that the *Winter Solstice* is gone back from the 25. day of *December*, (g) 12. dayes 7. houres, 44. minutes, 24. seconds: And therefore the *Gregorian Accompt* (being grounded on the *Nicene Councell*, when as it should have been reduced to the time of *Christs Nativity*) erreth almost 2. days; but the *Julian Accompt* more then 12 dayes; and which is so much worse, is going every year farther and farther from the truth (h). Neverthelſſe we grant that the *Julian Accompt*, though it remaine un-reformed, may yet for some hundred of yeares be used without any grosse and palpable disordering of the times.

on which day *Christ* our Redeemer was borne. (h) *Nisi annus aliquando corrigatur futurum olim est, ut salutis nostrae natalitii dies, qui brumales olim crans, in verum tempus irruant, Pascha in etatem.* Valer. Bellunenſ. dd. l.

Having now laid open, wherein and why these Accompts differ, as also how they may with ease be reduced unto the just and exact day of *Christ Nativity*; we proceed to the proof of that wherein both Accompts agree, (i) *to wit, That Christ was borne on the 25. day of December*, which we shall evidence by the clear testimonies of the Fathers and other approved Writers, Ancient and Moderne.

A M B R O S E his expression is divine and elegant, (k) *Length of nights had possessed the whole day, had not the comming of Christ shined gloriously in the very shortnesse of dayes: who, as by his Birth he dispelled the darknesse of mens sins, so also in the day of his Nativity he cut off the darknesse of night; and by one and the same rising brought light as well to men as days. Whence it is no marvaile if the day encrease, which is cloathed with a double spendour of brightnesse.*

AUGUSTINE saith (l) *John was borne as the Church by cut ortu suo humani generis peccatorum tenebras discussit, ita & die Nativitatis suae caliginem tenebras amputavit, & ita eodemque ortu lucem pariter intulit & hominibus & diebus. Unde non est mirum si crescit dies, que gemino fulgoris splendore vestiur.* Ambros. Ser. 13. (l) *Joannes natus est, sicut tradit Ecclesia, Octavo Calendas Julias, cum jam incipiunt minui die: Dominus autem natus Octavo Calendas Januariis quando jam incipiunt crescere. Audi ipsum Joannem confitentem: Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui.* August. in Psal. 132. & de Trin. lib. 3. c. 5.

(g) *Tempore Augusti Octaviani, ut observat Plinius, brumae dies vigesimo quinto Decemb. erat: quo die natus est Christus assertor noster.* Valer. Bellunenſ. compend. in Sphaeram, p. 224. In the time of *Augustus Octavian*, as *Plinie* observeth, the shortest day was on the 25 of *December*,

(i) *Vide Calend. Julianum & Rom. Baron. apparat. ad annal. Eccles. sub finem. Genebr. Chron. l. 3. pag. 479. Gualterius. Tab. Chronograph. a Christo nato, fol. 2. Gordon. Lesmor. Chron. Tom. 2. in Apparat. c. 4.*

(k) *Occupaverat totam diem noctium longitudo, nisi in ipsa die brevitate Christi resisteret adventus: qui si-*

(m) According to the true account; from which the Julian hath varied more then 10. dayes, as we shewed before.

(n) John 3. 30.

Ο ον ον αυραφ
πρω σοφδς σοφ
οφρνε παδρες; ο
τις εν Βυζαντιω εν
λασσιας η παδρε
οφραυδς. Id. Delu
stra. lib. 1. Epist. 156.

(p) Christus qui in
nativitate Joannis jam

trium mensium incorrupta

vulva fuerat conceptus, supererant ei, ut ipse secundum humanam mortalitatem suppleret menses novem, alii menses sex, qui nunc ex octavo Calendas Julias in Octavo Calendas Januarias sunt menses sex. Quibus suppletis novem mensibus, initiante decimo Christus mundo natus est. Vide Chrylost. expos. cap. 1. Luca,

tradition teaches, on the 24. day of June; even when the dayes begin to shorten; (m) but our LORD was born on the 25. day of December even when the dayes begin to lengthen. Thus John himself confessing; He must increase, but I must decrease (n)

CHRYSOSTOM, that wise Interpreter of the secrets of God, the eye of the Church in Byzantium (now called Constantinople) and of all other Churches (o), after an inquisitive debate of this point, concludeth thus. Christ, who at the Nativity of John had now been conceived three months in the pure and undefiled womb; so the end that he himself also should fulfill nine months according to the course of humane birth, there remained for him six moneths more; which six moneths are from the 24. of June unto the 25. of December. And when nine months were ended, in the beginning of the tenth, CHRIST was borne in the world (p).

(q) Natus est Christus VIII. Kalend. Januarii, quando primum incrementa anni vernalis incipiunt. P. Oros. lib. 7. cap. 2.

(r) Hieme natus est, nocte natus est Christus. Bern. in Nat. Dom. Serm. 3.

(s) Viginti et quintus tunc mensis Decembris erat dies, quam ineffabile pietatis et amoris erga genus humanum suae, Verbum Dei, maximamque inenarrabilem partem perficitur mysterium. Niceph. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 12.

(t) Fulgarius opinio est, 25. diem Decembris esse memoria Natalis Domini

OROSIUS saith, Christ was born on the 25. day of Decemb. when all increases of the ensuing yeer do first begin (q).

BERNARD saith, Christ was born in winter, he was born in the night (r).

NICEPHORUS saith, (s) It was then the 25. day of Dec. when, O THOU WORD OF GOD, the unspeakable mystery of thy goodnesse and love towards mankind, and the exceeding great mystery of thy marvailous birth was accomplished.

CHEMNITIUS saith, It is the common opinion that the 25. day of December should be hallowed for a remembrance of the day of our Lords nativity.

GENEBRARD hath shewed out of their own Accounts and Kalenders, that the Egyptian and Greek Churches did celebrate the Birth-day of Christ as we doe, on the 25. day of December (u).

And though concerning this matter the Scriptures have given no peremptory determination, (for then dispute were impious, and tradition needlesse) yet so farre are they from

factum. Chem Harm. Evangel. c. 8. (u) Genebr. Chron. l. 2. p. 266, 267. being

being repugnant, that upon a judicious examination they will appear very consonant thereunto.

When our Saviour was baptized of John, he began to be about thirty years of age, saith Saint Luke (x). Had he onely said he was about thirty yeares, we might have conceived him to have been as well somewhat more as lesse; but by adding these words, He began to be, the Evangelist implies, that he was not full thirty years, and yet that he wanted but little, perhaps one day or two; for he was well nigh, he BEGAN (saith he) to be about thirty years of age. And indeed the entering into his Ministry at the time of his Baptisme (which all men grant he did (y)) is a sufficient prooffe that he wanted very little and no considerable time of being Thirty yeares old (z.)

(x) Luk. 3. 21. 23.

(y) Beroald Chron. lib. 3. c. 1. Chemnii. Harm. Evangel. in Prolegom. c. 3. Po-

lan. Syntag. Theol. lib. 6. c. 55. Bezan. Loc. commun. 47. sect. 37. (z) Numb. 4. 23. 30. 47. Si quis triginta annos non impleverit, nullo modo presbyter ordinatur, etiam si valde sit dignus: quia et ipse Dominus tricesimo aetate baptizatus est, et cepit docere. Mart. Brach. lib. can. Græc. c. 20.

After this Baptisme immediately the spirit driveth him into the Wildernesse a. And though beyond Jordan b there were many Wildernesses at hand; yet let us admit for his journey 5 dayes.

a Mark. 1. 12.

b John 1. 28.

He was there in the Wildernesse c

40 dayes.

When these dayes were ended the Devil taketh him up into the holy City, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the Temple: Afterwards, taketh him up into an exceeding high mountaine, and sheweth him all the Kingdomes of the world, and the glory of them in a moment of time d. For which (though for ought we know these temptations might be within the space of one day) yet we admit 2 da.

c Mat. 4. 1. 2. Mark 1. 13. Luke 4. 2.

d Mat. 4. 5. 8. Luke 3. 5.

The Devill having left him, Christ returneth unto Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was Baptizing e. For which let us admit, as we did for his progresse 5 da.

e John 1. 28.

He was with John f

3 da.

The day following, he began his journey towards Cana of Galilee g; a Towne distant from Bethabara 66 English miles h. For which let us admit 6 da.

f The first day is expressed, Joh. 1. ver. 26. The second, ver. 29. The third, ver. 35.

g Compare Joh. 1. 43. Mr. John More, and

with chap. 2. 1. h According to the description of Canaan set forth by Mr. John Speed, which are of all others the exactest.

i John 2. 1.

There was a marriage in the said Cana, after his coming thither

k Judges 14. 10, 17.

And because we read of a marriage-feast that lasted seven dayes k, we shall admit that this feast also, (though probably it was not so long) lasted

l John 2. 12.

After this marriage feast, that is, when this feast was ended, Christ went downe to Capernaum l; a Town distant from Cana of Galilee neer 30 English miles. For which journey let us admit

m John 2. 12.

He continued not there many dayes m: let us grant

n John 2. 13.

Then the Jewes passeover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem n; distant from Capernaum, 72 English miles. For which journey let us allow

o Compare John 2. ver. 14. with ver. 23.

He was at Jerusalem some certaine dayes before the Feast of the Passeover o: let us admit

In all 92 dayes.

These summed up, amount unto 92 dayes, or 3 months; so that (if conjectures guided by reason doe not very much fail) our Saviour at the first Passeover after his Baptisme was 30 yeares old, and about 3 monthes: At the second Passeover p was 31 yeares old, and about 3 moneths: At the third Passeover q was 32 yeares old and about 3 months: At the fourth Passeover r was 33 yeares old, and about 3 moneths: on the eve whereof he was crucified, which the Jewes call the Preparation day t; and was the 25 day of March u. Now accompting 92 dayes backward from the 25 day of March, the Birth-day of our Saviour will fall neer the 25 day of December according to the testimonies of the Fathers and Writers before alledged, and the tradition of the Churches of God.

p John 5. 1.
q John 6. 4.
r John 13. 1.

f See the Scriptures Harmony, p. 46, 47.
t Mat. 27. 62. Mar. 15. 42. Job. 19. 31. 42.
u Octavo Calendas Aprilis conceptus, quo & passus. Aug. de Trin. 4. c. 5. Conceptus & passus Christus mense Martio 8. Calend. Aprilis.

Howbeit of late there are risen up a sort of wild-brained Zelots; who carried on with an earnest desire of intro-

Chrosost. Expos. c. 1. Lucæ. Two things we must note. One is, that the 25. day after the true Accompt, is on the 13. day of our March here in England; because the Julian which we follow, doth erre somewhat more then 12. dayes. The other is, that the Hebrew Month, Abib, alias Nisan, doth begin on the last day of our February: but on the 12. of March, according to the true Accompt.

ducing

ducing all manner of novelties (whereby the ancient and Apostolicall Church of England * might be rendred contemptible) have buzzed into the heads of some ignorant people, that Christ was born in the month of September, when the Sun entering into Libra makes the second Equinoctiall. An opinion not dreamed of, untill Beroaldus published his Chronology: and it is worth our paines to observe, how well the Matter and Schollars doe agree touching the age of our Saviour:

Beroaldus saith, that Christ lived 32 yeares and an half*. And by those words of Saint Luke, *Jesus began to be about thirty yeares of age**, he understands he was almost 29 yeares old: As if when the Scriptures expresse about 5000^b. their meaning was, almost 4000. But his prime Schollar noting the absurdity of this exposition, grants Christ to be 30 yeares old at his Baptisme; yet by coyning one Pasleover, he outruns the truth, and makes him to have lived 34 yeares and an halfe^c. Others affirme, that he was about 33 yeares old when he suffered^d; which expression does best please these Doctours; for whether he were 32 and an halfe, or 33 and a quarter, or 33 and an halfe; yet still they are in the right who say, he was about 33.

And because they cannot produce so much as one poore, stumbling Writer for the countenancing of their paradoxes, they endeavour to subvert the common and Orthodox opinion by cavils, halfe-reasons, and forgeries: whereof we shall here by way of objection, deliver a just and exact catalogue, faithfully collected.

THE FIRST Objection. *In the midst of the weeke, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease^e. The Prophet speaketh here of the last weeke, which if you divide into two equall parts, you shall finde the middle of it to be in the seventh month of the fourth yeare, because the weeke ends in the month MARCH, wherein our Lord suffered^f. Therefore our Saviour was baptized, and consequently borne in September.*

THE Answer. Christ may be said to cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, two manner of waies: either by way of consummation, or, by way of preparation. 1. By way of consummation; and this was not in the midst, but in the

* Usserius Archieps Armach. de Britan. Eccles. primordiis. c. 1.

y Anno Dom. 1577.

* *Certe mortuum illum fuisse pro nobis in cruce oportet anno Tiberii 18. tum quum aetatis annum ageret 33. id est, quum annos complevisset triginta duos & dimidion.* Beroald. Chro. l. 3. c. 8.

a' *Αυτὸς ὡς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὡσεὶ ἐπὶ τετάρτου ἀρχόμενος.* Luk. 3. 23.

b *ὡσεὶ πεντακισήλιος.* John 6. 10.

c Scalig. de emendat. temporum, l. 6

d Wolph. Chron. l. 1. H. Broughtons Consent of Scripture.

e Dan. 9. 27.

f *In dimidio hebdomada cessare faciet sacrificium & oblationem. Loquitur hic Propheta de ultima hebdomada, quam quia disinit in mense Nisan, quo passus est Dominus, si dividat in duas partes aequales, medietatem suam in diebus quarti mense Tivi habere deprehendes.* Beroald. chron. l. 4. c. 22.

g Heb. 9. 26. & chap. 7. 18. 19. & chap. 8. 13. Coloss. 2. 17. *Sacrificia exteriora ac typica omnia Christus suo sacrificio implevit & abrogavit.* Polan. Syn. Theol. 1. 9. c. 30. Urfin. explicat. catechet. quæst. 92. sect. 3. h John 19. 30. i Mat. 27. 51. Mark 15. 38. John 4. 23. *Velum Templi fissum est in duas partes à summo usq; adimum ut indicaretur abrogatam esse typicam ingrossionem Summi Sacerdotis Levitici in sanctum sanctorum & deinceps inutilem fore, una cum aliis ceremoniis Legalis sacerdotii.* Polan. Syn. tag. Theol. lib. 6. cap. 18. k The Scriptures Harmony, pag. 48. l Mark 1. 2, 3, 4. m Matth. 11. 13. Luke 16. 16. *Joannis Baptista Anno 15. Tiberii Cæs. vocatione divina excitatus poenitentiam predicare incipit; veteris Testamenti abrogationem instituto Baptismo orditur.* Bulchoz. Ind. Chronol. pag. 145. n Levit. 23. 24. Numb. 29. 1. Func. Comment. in Chronolog. lib. 2.

The end of the last week by the sacrifice of himself; implied in those words, *Consummatus est, It is finished*; and also by the *valle of the Temple rent in twain*. By way of Preparation; and this was either *Immediately*, by himselfe, when he was baptized and entred into his Ministry; being *neare the midst*, but not precisely in the midst of the last weeke. For by the fore-going particular examination of the daies; we have sufficiently shewed, that the time betwixt the Baptisme of Christ, and the next Paskeover, cannot with any probability be extended beyond the space of 3 months. Or *MEDIA*TLY by his fore-runner, herald, and messenger, *John the Baptist*, who preaching the Baptisme of repentance, did so prepare the way of the Lord, that all sacrifices, oblations, Legall rites and ceremonies, were afterwards without scruple forsaken and abandoned. Hence our Saviour saith, *The Law and the Prophets were untill John*; and thus in the midst of the last weeke, Christ preparatively by John caused the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; For John the Baptist began to preach in the month September; soone after the Feast of Trumpets.

o Luke 2. 8. 23, 24. p Luke 1. 5. q Chr. 24. 10. r Exod. 12. 3. s Luke 1. 36. t 1 Chr. 9. 25. Joseph. Antiqu. Jud. l. 7. c. 11. Godwins *Moses and Aaron*, l. 1. c. 5. The Annot. of the Assembly of Div. on 1 Chron. 24. 9.

THE SECOND Objection. John was conceived presently after Zacharias had executed the Priests office before GOD in the order of his course; who was of the course of *Abia*, the eighth course of the Priests; But the eighth course of the Priests fell in the end of June; for every course continued a fortnight, and eight fortnights make foure months; which four months (accounting from the beginning of *Abib*, now called *March*, the first month of the year) will end in June; Therefore John was conceived in June; and by consequence, not Christs Birth, but his Conception (which was six months after Johns) must be in December.

THE Answer. We grant the *Major*; but the *Minor* is notoriously false; For First, The Priests course was *weekly*, and continued from Sabbath to Sabbath.

Secondly,

Secondly, It supposeth that the Priests courses and the years began together; which is against common sense; for there being but 24 courses^u, it must needs be that at the end of the 24th course, the first began, and so could have no relation to the month or time of the year.

Thirdly, It supposeth that the month *Abib*, was wholly the same with our *March*, which is contrary to all Writers; who doe at the most admit that *Abib* tooke part of *March*, and part of *April*^x; And sometimes (saith *Willet*) it may be all without *March*; as; when the Hebrewes every third year put in a month to make the years agree with the course of the Sunne^y.

Wherefore the said Argument being built upon so many falsities and uncertainties, can conclude nothing.

And, herein our Opposite *Beroaldus* speaks very ingenuously, both himselfe and his faction; *We* (saith he) doe neither understand when the course of *Zacharias* was, nor how long it lasted.^{*}

THE THIRD Objection. *Clemens Alexandrinus* writeth, that they who very curiously have sought after the year and day of our Lords Birth, have referred it some unto the 25. day of the month of *May*, some unto the 25. day of *April*^o. Therefore in his time^p the day of Christs Birth was not certainly knowne^q.

THE Answer. If this argument be good, then there is no point either in Divinity or Philosophy certainly knowne; because there is no point which is not through ignorance, wilfulnesse, or an itching affectation of singularity by some contradicted; at least questioned. Howsoever, had these curious searchers shewed us where *S. Luke* saith, that *Christ* was conceived in the sixth month of the Legall year, we would have concluded with them, that *Christ* was borne either in *May*, by reckoning from *August* exclusively; or in *April*, by accompting from *August* inclusively: but there can be nothing more certaine then that they are mistaken. For the *Angell Gabriel* does directly say, *this is the sixth month* (not from the beginning of the year, but) with her, who was called barren^r; that is, from the conception of *John the Baptist*.

^u 1 Chr. 24. 18.

^x See the Vulgar Notes on Exod. 12.

² Godwins *Moses and Aarou*, l. 3. c. 1.

^y *Willetts* six-fold Com. on Exod. c. 12.

q. 5.

* *Zacharias ad Abie familiam pertinebat; cui sorte octavo loco ministerium obeundum erat in Sacrario: sed quando aut quemdiu, non intelligitur a nobis.* *Beroald. Chron. l. 4. c. 2.*

^o *Eos qui curiosius annum nati Domini et diem requisierunt, partim retulisse ad vigesimum quintum diem mensis πάχων Aegyptiorum, partim retulisse ad vigesimum quintum diem παρμυθί, scribit.* *Clem. Alexandr. Strom. lib. 1.*

^p About the year of the Lord, 195.

^q *Beroald. Chron. lib. 3. c. 8.* *Scalig. de emendat. Temp. lib. 6. Calvis. Isag. Chronolog. c. 46.*

^r *Luke 1. 36.*

Not does *Clement Alexandrinus* afford these *scribes* any more credit than the bare mentioning of their groundlesse phantasies; which truly is more then they deserved.

THE FOURTH OBJECTION. *Beda* affirms, that the *Indictions* began on the 24. day of *September* (f); and that our *Lord* was borne (*Indictione quarta incunte*) when the fourth *Indiction* began: Therefore *Christ* was borne on the 24. day of *September* (r).

THE ANSWER. *Beda* does not say, that our *Lord* was borne when the fourth *Indiction* began, but in the fourth *Indiction*, according to *Dionysius* (u); which words are too generall for us to conclude thence the yeare of *Christ's* Birth, much lesse the month, least of all the day. And yet considering that an *Indiction* is the space of 15. yeares (x), he might very well have said so; though *Christ* were not borne till the end of 3. months after the first day of the *Indiction*: As we say frequently, that such a thing was or hapned in the beginning of our *Kings* reigne, though it were 3. 6. or 10. months after the first day of His reigne.

THE FIFTH OBJECTION. Taxes and Collections of Tribute began on the 24. day of *September*; as appears by the *Indictions*, which were instituted to beare account of the payment of tribute (y): Therefore *Augustus* *Casars* Decree at our *Saviours* Birth, that all the world should be taxed, went out (z) on the 24. of *Sept.* and so *Christ* was born on that day (a).

THE ANSWER. We deny the Argument: For it is a most absurd inference, viz. because the ordinary and yearly taxes, collections of tribute, and *Indictions* (which were invented in the time of *Constantine* the Great, and ordained by Him 312. yeares after *Christ* (b)) began on the 24. day of *September*; therefore that extraordinary and most remarkable tax decreed by *Augustus* *Cesar* when our *Saviour* was born, began on the same day. Nay, here is a cluster of absurdities: For if the issuing forth of *Casars* decree, and our *Saviours* Birth were on the selfe-same day, then was the decree sent from *Rome* to *Nazareth*, above a 100 miles distant, and from *Nazareth* *Ioseph* with *Mary* his espoused wife great with child (c), and expecting every houre to be deli-

vered,

(f) *Incipiunt Indictiones ab VIII. Calendas Octobris, ibidemq; terminantur.* *Beda* libro de ratione Temporum, c. 46.

(r) *Beroald.* Chron. lib. 3. c. 8.

(u) *Quarta indictione secundum Dionysium natus est Dominus.* *Beda* lib. dd. c. 47.

(x) *Indictio est spatium quindecim annorum.* *Bulchoz.* Chronol. pag. 131.

(y) *Hoptons* Concordancy of yeares, c. 32.

(z) *Luk.* 2. 1.

(a) *Beroald.* ibid. m.

(b) *Era indictionum Casares, in scriptoribus Græcis usitatissima, incipit 24. Septembris, Anno Christi, 312. instituta fuit à Constantino Magno.* *Bulchoz.* Ind. Chronol. p. 212. *Calvil.* Itag. Chron. c. 9.

Cyclus indictionum institutus est in Concilio Nicæno, qui post quindecim annos in orbem redeat. Romani hanc æram indictionum inceperunt à

Calendis Jan. sequentibus: quos, & nos hodie sequimur. *Alfred.* Chronol. Epocharum. sect. 6.

(c) *Luk.* 2. 4, 5.

vered, must forthwith post 95 English miles unto *Bethlehem*, all in one day. But who knowes not that *Error begets Error*?

THE SIXTH Objection. *A few (d) would not soone believe that a wise Emperour as Augustus was, would command poore men to come in Winter to their owne Townes. Neither was it the fit time for the Shepherds to be in the field. And as Baptisme was according to his Birth-month, it was not wholsome for men to goe up to the head in water in mid-winter. Therefore Christ was not borne in December (e).*

THE Answer. The land of *Canan* (now called *Palestine (f)*) is found to extend it selfe from the degree 30. and 52. scruples, unto the degree 33. and 44. scruples of Latitude or Elevation; And for Longitude, it is placed betwixt the degree 64. 32. minutes, and the degree 69. and 10. minutes (g): so that it is included fully and wholly within the third Climate (h): the same Climate in which *Fex* and *Morocco (i)* are situate; where the winter-season (as every Geographer and Mariner will tell us) is hotter then our *May* here in *England*; and yet *Palestine* in heate exceeds *Fex* and *Morocco*, because it lyeth above 40. degrees nearer the East then they doe (k).

This also may be collected out of the Scriptures; For in regard that *a sheafe of the first fruits of harvest* was yearly offered on the second day after the *Passover (l)*, which was the 16. day of the Jewes month *Abib*, alias *Nisan (m)*, and is with us the 27. of *March (n)*, (which 27. according to the true account, falls on the 15. of our *March*) It must necessarily follow, that the temperature of the month *December* in the land of *Canan*, is answerable to our *May*, if not *June*: Though therefore

(d) No marvaile if these *Septembrians* oppose the tradition of *Christs Church*, when the Jewes beliete is the rule of their doctrine.

(e) Beroald. lib. dd. c. dd. Hospinian. de orig. fest. Christ. mens. Decemb. Calvil. Ifag. Chron. c. 46. Broughtons *Adversifement of Corruptions*. p. 43. 44.

(f) *Quasi terra Palestinorum*, the land of the Philistines. Vide *Vatabl. transl. Bibl.*

(g) According to the observation of Mr. *John More*, and Mr. *John Speed*.

(h) *Eustach. in Append. Tract. 1. part. 2. de Phys.*

(i) Note, that *Africa* tooke its name from *a & qelun*, that is, without cold.

(k) *Carpenters Geography. lib. 2. c. 3. Theoreme. 10.*

(l) *Levit. 23. 16, 17. compared with Deut.*

16. 1; 9. 10. (m) *Secunda ex mense die, quae est mensis hujus decima sexta, frugibus demissis & hactenus incultis incipit frui: aequumque vari Deum hujus ubertatis auctorem per gratitudinem honorari, hinc primitias offerri.* Joseph. *Antiqu. Jud. lib. 3. cap. 10.* See *Parkins. 2. volum. pag. 680. 13. Palestina Messon hordeaceam inchoatam fuisse statim post Pascha, & ante Pentecosten absolutam fuisse etiam triticam messem certum & manifestum est. Chemnitz. *Blatun. Evang. Prolegom. cap. 3.* (n) After the *Geneva* and *Vulgar* accounts.*

6) Rom. 10. 21.

a disobedient and gain-saying (o) Jew will not believe, yet an understanding Christian cannot but grant, that the season of the year did no way hinder the convenient execution of Cæsars decree ; nor the Shepherds being in the fields, nor our Saviours going into the River Jordan in December.

THE SEVENTH Objection. The Church of England does not celebrate the true day of Christs Birth : therefore the Church of England is erroneous.

THE Answer. We deny the Antecedent ; for though the Church of England does not celebrate the true day exactly and precisely taken, as we said before : yet she celebrates the true day according to the Julian Accompt, which Accompt is yet generally embraced by the Protestants, and not to be despised (p). Nevertheless it is not the day, but the benefit we remember, which no good Christian will deny should be done (q).

THE EIGHT, and last Objection. Christ was borne in the night (r) : Therefore he was not born on the 25. day of December.

See the life and death of William Cooper, Bishop of Galloway. pag. 8.

THE Answer. The day is of two sorts; Naturall or Civill; The Naturall day is the time from Sun-rising unto Sun-setting; whose opposite is the night, from Sun-set unto Sun-rising. The Civill day is the space of 24. houres, in which time the Sunne is by the first orbe carried round about the world : It containes as well the night as the true day; and is therefore termed by the Greeks (s) νυχθημερον, and may in Latine be aptly translated noctidivm. The former is meant when God called the light, day. The latter, when it is said, the evening and the morning made the first day (t). And of the latter we ought here to be understood when we speak of the 25. day of December; For our Saviour was borne presently after 12. a clock in the night (u), at which

(p) Ea est anni forma Juliana, cui omnes assuevimus: hæc sola est certissimum temporis vehiculū, cum omnibus sit notissima, familiarissima, cognita & observari facillima, & ad temporum a creatione mundi huc usque laboriosam seriem deducendum accomodatissima. Calvil. Ifag. Chron. cap. 8. (q) See the life and death of William Cooper, Bishop of Galloway. pag. 8. (r) Luke 2. 8.

(s) Quamquam Johannes a sacrothesco. Et quidcum sequuntur nominatim permutantur. Et quem nos naturalem, illi civilem seu artificialem; quem nos civilem, illi naturalem diem vocant. Polan. Syntag. Theol. lib. 1. c. 45. & lib. 5. c. 16. Hanc diem naturalem & artificialem appellationem. Vnde et barbaram semper credidi, quisque eam primus nobis tradiderit. Vide scholion. Blize Vineti in sphaeram Joan. a sacrothesco. c. 3. (t) νυχθημερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ περὶ οὐρα. 2 Cor. 11. 25. (u) Gen. 1. 5. (x) Luke 2. 8.

time

time the Civill day began according to the custome of the Romans(y).

The vanity and weaknesse of all objections to the contrary being discovered we conclude that the 25. day of December is the just, true, and exact day of our Saviours Birth.

in his viginti quatuor horis (id est quibus, & luce media) actum est, perinde est quasi quavis hora lusus actum esset. Paulus I Crus Digest. jur. Civil. l. 2. tit. 12.

(y) More Romano dies a media nocte incipit, & sequentis noctis media parte finitur: Itaque quicquid

est quasi quavis hora lu-

S E C T. VII.

The Work of the day.

O How good, how pleasant, how kind a thing it is to remember the work of the day in its own day (a).

This worke, whether at home or in publique consists of three parts or duties. The first is, a reverend explanation;

I. OF THE PERSON INCARNATED: Which was Christ the Lord (b). The Word, the eternall Sonne of God, the second person of the most glorious Trinity, was made flesh (c); not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh (d), but by assuming unto the Godhead the nature (not the person (e)) of man, and all the naturall infirmities thereof, sinne excepted (f); which nature the Father formed in the Sonne by the Holy Ghost, of the substance of the blessed Virgin Mary, who was of the Tribe of Judah, of the Royall Family of David (g). Wherefore Christ was perfect God, and so equall to the Father (h); perfect man, and so inferior to the Father (i).

2. HOW CHRIST WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY: and that was by opening of the womb (k) after the ordinary way; not utero Clayso, the womb being shut, as the Papists imagine (l).

3. WHERE HE WAS BORN: to wit, In the land of Judah, in Bethelchem (m) which signifies, the house of bread (n);

(a) Luk. 1. 32. (h) Joh. 10. 30. Phil. 2. 6. (i) Joh. 14. 28. (k) Luk. 2. 7. 23. (l) Catechism. Rom. parte. 1. cap. 4. Respons. ad quest. 4. (m) Mat. 2. 6. (n) Pas. Lexicon.

(a) Opus diei in die suo.

(b) Luke 2. 11.

(c) ὁ Λόγος & σὰρξ ἐγένετο. John 1. 14.

(d) Vide Symbolum Athanasii.

(e) Wollēb. Christ. Theolog. lib. 1. c. 16.

(f) Heb. 2. 17. & 4. 15.

ἡμολογούμεν ὅτι πάντα τὰ φουσιὰ καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη

ἀνθρώπου ἀνέλαβεν ὁ λόγος γὰρ τὸ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πάντα τὰ τῶ ἀνθρώπου ἀνέλαβεν,

πλὴν Ἰησοῦ ἀμαρτίας.

Damascen. Ortho-

doxa fidei. lib. 3. c. 20.

(g) Luk. 1. 32. (h) Joh. 10. 30. Phil. 2. 6. (i) Joh. 14. 28. (k) Luk. 2. 7. 23. (l) Catechism. Rom. parte. 1. cap. 4. Respons. ad quest. 4. (m) Mat. 2. 6. (n) Pas. Lexicon.

(b) Joh. 6. 33. 35.

(p) Luke 2. 7.

teaching us, that *Christ was the true bread of life which came downe from heaven* (o) In a stable; and was laid in a manger; because there was no room for them in the Inn; (p) teaching us by his example to beare corporall poverty with patience.

4. WHEN HE WAS BORNE: and that was 1. when a Decree went out from Augustus Caesar that all the world should be taxed. 2. When Cyrenius was Governour of Syria (q). The Evangelist sayes not of Judea, because Judea was at that time joyned unto the province of Syria (r): teaching us, that the true *Messiah, Christ, was come*; For the Scepter was then departed not onely from the tribe of Judah (s) but even from the Jews. 3. In the night (t); signifying that the day spring from an high visited us, to give light to them that sat in darknesse and in the shadow of death (u).

5. OF GODS GRACIOUS AND MIRACULOUS DISCOVERY OF HIS BIRTH. 1. To the poore Shepherds, neer *Bethlehem*, by an Angel (x). 2. To the rich Wisemen in the East by a Star (y): teaching us, that poore and rich, simple and wise, Jew and Gentile, neere and farre off, are all alike accepted by God, in, through, and for *Christ*.

6. Of the glorious celebration of *Christs* nativity by a multitude of the heavenly host praising GOD (z)

The second part is a pious meditation on the *Beauty and Necessity* of *Christ* Birth; and that was threefold. 1. That Gods promises a, and the predictions of his servants the Prophets b, might be accomplished. 2. That God might thereby manifest his love towards mankind c. 3. That redemption might be to them that were under the Law d: otherwise eternall death had passed upon all men, for that all have sinned e.

The third and chiefest part is, an humble and sincere thanksgiving unto GOD for those great and unestimable benefits which we receive by the sacred Birth of our Lord *CHRIST, the Saviour of the world*: outwardly expressing our thankfulness. 1. In *Psalms and Hymnes, and spirituall songs*. 2. In a larger and more liberall use of Gods Creatures then at ordinary times. 3. In

our

(q) Luke 2. 1. 2.

(r) Josephus calleth him *Quirinius*; and in placing this Taxe after the degrading of *Archelaus*, erreth 4. yeeres. See *Josephus Antiqu. Iud. lib. 17. ult. & lib. 18. c. 1.*

(s) Gen. 49. 10.

(t) Luke 2. 8.

(u) Luke 1. 78, 79.

(x) Luke 2. 8, 9, 10, 11.

(y) Mat. 2. 1, 2, 11.

(z) Luke 2. 13, 14.

a Gen. 3. 15. & 12.

3. & 18. 18. & 22. 8.

b Psal. 22. 18. Isa.

7. 14. & 9. 6, 7. Jer.

23. 5. Micha. 5. 2.

Hos. 11. 1. Hag. 2. 9.

Zech. 8. 9, 10. & 6.

12. & 9. 9.

c John 3. 16, 17.

d John 4. 9, 10.

e Gal. 4. 4, 5.

f Rom. 5. 12.

g John 4. 42.

h 1 Chron. 16. 7.

i Ephel. 5. 19.

j Gen. 21. 8.

k 1 Chron. 12. 39, 40. & 16. 3.

our charity unto the needy members of Christ (i). (i) Luke 14. 13.

Whosoever therefore regardeth this day aright, must regard it unto the Lord, giving God thanks (k): and not spend (k) Rom. 14. 6.

it in rioting and drunkenness, nor in chambering and wantonness (l) as too many have done, to the high dishonour of Almighty God, the reproach of our Church; and the fearfull hazard of their own soules.

(l) Rom. 13. 13.

The daies which are chosen out to serve as publique memorials whereby their difference

of Gods mercies, ought to be cleashed with those outward robes of holinesse, from other daies may be made sensible. Hook. Eccles. Policy. lib. 5. sect. 70.

S E C T. VIII.

A patheticall exhortation unto the true Sonnes of the Church of England.

ARE these things so? May Christian Magistrates constitute Feast-daies, and require obedience unto such Constitutions (a)? Has the Church of England ordained that the Birth-day of Christ should be yearly kept festivall (b)? Is this Ordination grounded upon the Scriptures (c)? Is it confirmed by the practice of the Christian Church from the time of the Apostles unto this day (d)? Is the 25. day of December the Birth-day of our Saviour (e)? Does the worke of the day tend to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and comfort of his Church (f)? What wretched Herodians are they then, who revile and envy the solemnization of Christs Birth, calling it Judaisme (g), and most blasphemously perswading the people, (h) That a Feast celebrated unto the honour of CHRIST, is no better then that Feast which the Israelites made unto the molten Calse (i)?

(a) Sect. 2.

(b) See the Act for Uniformity: Proper Lessons, and the Collects for that day.

(c) Sect. 4.

(d) Sect. 5.

(e) Sect. 6.

(f) Sect. 7.

(g) Neque damnavi potest Ecclesia quasi Judaizarit quia diem Dominicum jam

inde ab Apostolorum temporibus sanctificavit, et certos alios dies festos paulo post Apostolorum tempora sibi delegerit ad sanctificandum. Zanch. in 4. Præcept. de Diebus Festis, q. 1. (h) These words, or to the same effect, were uttered in the Church of S. Mich. Cornhill, on the Lords day, the 25. of February, 1643. God give the speaker repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, 2 Tim. 2. 25. (i) Exod. 32. 4, 5, 6.

But let us, Brethren, who have not so learned Christ (k), k Ephes. 4. 20. be subject to Principalities and Powers: let us obey Magistrates, and be ready to every good worke (l): let us be-

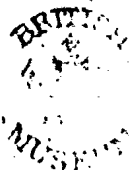
l Titus 3. 1.

WARE

ware of those who are presumptuous, self-willed; not afraid to speake evill of Dignities; who are spots in our feasts of charity, wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; while they promise liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption, to whom the mist of darknesse is reserved for ever. (m). Let us stand fast, and hold the traditions which we have been taught (n): let us make them knowne to our children, that the generations to come may know them, even the children which shall be borne; who shall arise and declare them to their children, that they may not forget the workes of GOD (o); And principally, may keepe the memoriall of CHRIST'S Nativity (p); continuing the celebration of this Feast, unto the second comming of SHILOH.

m 2 Pet. 2. 10. 13,
17, 19. Jude 8. 12, 13.
n 2 Thes. 2. 15.

o Psal. 78. 5, 6. 7.
p See Willets Synop-
fis. 9. generall Con-
troverſie. quaest. 8.
pag. 505.



Hallelu-jah.