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 Publick 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) enjoyed them to conform, 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 oppose their ficklenesse with constant vindications, and assertions of the true doctrine of faith & life: whereby they verify that of S. Paul, (g) Evill men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

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

(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.
(g) 2 Tim. 3. 13. *M. Obad. Sedgwick, in his Treatife, entitle," Christs counsell to his languishing Church of Sardis, pag. 229, 230.

A 2
week it is no such matter, but some other thing is the right. And truly, what else can be expected, whilst men do use their liberty, not as the servants of God, but for a cloak of malici-
onneste; (b) intermixing and sowing the tears of error and division with the seeds of truth and peace? (c)

Take a taste of their new, fiery-new Divinity. They say, that the Church of England hath not the Sacraments daily administered, nor the word truly preached, and so wants the marks of a true Church. (d) They deny the Baptism of Infants to be lawfull. (e) They call the Liturgie and Publique service of our Church ranke Atheisme, a proud inveigling Absurdity, a cursed Masse of superstition, full of serpents, bathed in the blood of bodies, souls, and estate; the relics or leavings of the Popish dregs; not the stump or limb, but the head of the Dragon, no better then the conjuring or orgling 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 forms 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 viliified 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 aim is to confound and root out our Religion. For (as Mr. Pryme 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 they refuse to celebrate the Nativ-
ity of Christ; who (by their own confessions) have revolted from the Church of Christ; who disgrace, hate, slander, and persecte (m) the most Orthodoxye, the most eminent, and chiefeft of all the Reformed Churches, the Church of Eng-
land.(n) No marvaile, if they revive those old, rotten

---

(b) 1 Pet. 2.16. (c) Permissiffae rea corporis; ut offendendo bona, auditores ad se trahant: & exhibendo mala, lasciviosos pelle corrupiant. Greg. Mag. Morall. 5. c. 11.

(d) Protestation protestata, pag. 8.

(e) See Mr. Spel-

berrie True subject of Batafme.


(g) Protestation protested. pa. 7.

(h) Prist. ibidem.

James, S. Eccl. 2.

(i) Exod. 15. 1.

2. Chron. 16. 7. unto verse 37. Psal. 44. & 89. & 92. & 102. as appeareth by the titles of those Psalms.

Joel 2.17. Luk. 11. 2.


106. Calv. ad protet.

Angl. ep. 87. Mutil. in Psal. 95. The book 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 Coresin. Cov. Devor. in the Epist. Ded. (m) Gal. 4. 29. (n) See Mr. Smith's Treatise, called, Gods Arrows against Atheists, Chap. uk.
errors of the Petrobrianians (d), (affirming, that Christians ought not to keep or observe Feasts) who have a long time endeavoured to bring in all manner of Herefies and Schisms, and consequently Atheism, which in milder speech is called Libertinisme (e). No marwaille, 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 perversenesse, 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 Superstition Novelty (i); we shall set downe these two Positions.


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,

2. That:
5. 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 25th 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 four 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 tellifieth, (†) 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 special times to meditate on the goodness of God in Christ Jesus, and

(*) 1 Cor. 14. 40.
Res adiaphora sint qua à D E O, nec pra- cepta, nec velitas sint.
and render thanks for the same, doe that which is lawfull.

Restit. veteris Testamenti gen. que. morale & naturale est, abrogasum in novo non est; ut neminem homo deputet aliquod tempus sive suae ad vacandum Divinis; sed species hominem, quattuor fissa ella expresso mandato Dei ad certas circumstantias temporum determinata & alligata erant, sub peccato mortali & pena damnationis. Holpin. de orig. Felt. Christian. c. 1.

But Christian Magistrates when they constitute Feast-dies, set apart special times to meditate on the goodness of God in Christ Jesus, and to render thanks for the same.

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

The Third Reason. In times of God's extraordinary Judgements upon a Nation, Christian Magistrates may lawfully constitute extraordinary days of solemn mourning, or Feast-dies.

Therefore (by the rule of Contraries) in times of God's extraordinary blessings upon a Nation, Christian Magistrates may lawfully constitute extraordinary days of solemn thanksgiving, or Feast-dies.

The Fourth Reason. That which may be lawfully observed, may be lawfully ordained.

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

Therefore Feast-dies may be lawfully ordained.

Seeing then that Christian Magistrates may judgely and lawfully constitute Feast-dies, it followeth undeniably, that they may require obedience unto such constitutions: for they are the Ministers of God, and bear not the sword in vain (m). Nay we must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for Conscience sake. Men are bound by God in their Consciences (faith).
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 known God, (faith he) or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? ye observe dainties; and months, and times, and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain (c). Where the Apostle seems to condemn the observation of all days whatsoever.

The Answer. These words must not be understood in so large a sense; for then the Apostle should condemn both himself and observing Feasts (d), and also all good Christians in observing days 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 reproved the Galatians for observing days after that Jewish superstitious manner (f), giving reverence unto them (g), as if they had been expressly commanded by God, whereby they brought themselves under the Law, and were entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

The Second Objection is of the Anabaptists, who alledge, That the Magistrates power of making things indifferent to become necessary, destroys Christian liberty, in which we are commanded by the Apostle to stand fast (h). Ther fore such power is unlawful.

The Answer. Necessity is two fold; External, Internal.
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 avoiding of the contempt of authority, and for the avoiding of scandal or offence (b). And in this, our Christian Liberty does not consist; For in all things indifferent God commands us to yield obedience unto the Magistrate (c).


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 same of absolute necessity be not laid upon mens consciences (g). Wherefore Feast-daies are Holy-daies, not in themselves, (by a quality of holinessse inherent, and under the Pain 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).

(a) Ad. 15, 9, 10, 18. Rom. 14, 14, 1 Cor. 3. 22. I Tim. 4, 1, 2, 3. 4, 5. Coloss. 2, 16. (b) Master Perkins Comment on the Galat. Chap. 5. (d) In the end of the Calendar before the Book of Common Prayer. (e) Perth Assembly relat. p. 66, 67, 68. (f) Compare Gen. 2, 2, 3. & Exod. 20, 10, 11, with Deut. 27, 26. (g) Modo conscientiae absolute necessitatis legibus non infraex. Wollob. Theol. Christianæ, ibidem.

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

S E C T I O N  I I I.
The several names and titles of this Feast.

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

The Grecian or Easter Church called it, 1. ὁ θεόσφαξ, vel
θεοπαραγωγα. God appearing; because God appeared unto them
by the Nativity (a); or (to use the Apostles phrase) God was
manifested in the flesh (b).

2. ἁγιασμὸς (c) The appearing, καὶ ἱλαρωπία; 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 Baptism, upon one and the same day, called both
these Feasts promiscuously, Epiphania (d). The other is,
That the Modern Churches have through use and custom of
speech, restrained this word, Epiphany, unto the Feast
commonly called, Twelfth-day: which is celebrated in me-
memy of the miraculous appearing of a starre (e); by the lead-
ing whereof, God did manifest his only begotten Sonne to the
Gentiles (f).

3. Χιλιάδα ὅ τι σαλπηρία (g), The Birth-day of the Sa-
vior.

4. ἡ ἱστορία τῆς προφητείας (h); The great-
est Feast, and the Mother or chiefe of all Feasts.

The Latine or Western Church called it, 1. Dies Nativ-
itas (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 natales Domini (l), vel. Natales 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 Birthday, 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 brieft, unfold.

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

They that derive Missa from the Hebrew, conceive that it comes from מֶסֶס Mish'seb, which signifies an oblation or offering (c); and is framed by adding the letter מ unto the end of וֶס, a word signifying Personal service or tribute (d).

They that account Missa to be a Latin word corrupted, conceive that the Fathers used it in stead of Missio, which signifies a sending away: For in ancient times, when the Liturgical or Publick service was ended (e), and the Communicants addressed themselves to be partakers of the Lord's Supper, it was a custom (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 pass, that Missa was taken for, and signified the Lord's Supper; and so a sacrifice, an oblation or offering. 1. Because the Lord's Supper is an Eucharistic sacrifice; being a solemn remembrance and celebration of the Propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. 2. Because in the Lord's Supper we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (g). 3. Because when the Lord's Supper is celebrated, we offer up alms for the relief of the needy members of Christ; which is a kind of spiritual sacrifice (b).

We see then, however the derivation of the word Missa 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 (v) unto Christ? Oh this day we offer up Universal Sacrifices (h): we offer sacrifices of praise,

(a) Book of Common Prayer.
(c) Oblationem prouersionem manum suscit.
(d) Deut. 16. 10.
(e) Reuchlin. de Rudiment. Hebr. lib. 2.
(h) Rom. 14. 8.
(i) Phil. 4. 18.
(j) Heb. 13. 16.
(l) Sacrificium opus annuntiat Evangelium. Orig. in Epist. ad Rom. li. 10.
(m) B 2
(n) 1 Pet. e. 5.
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).

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

The Scriptures, as well the Old as the New Testament, abundantly set forth the great eiseme 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 (faith 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 between his feet, until Shiloh (that is, Christ) come (b).

The Prophet Isaiah marks out this day as a special (c) and wonderful day; Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear 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 Christ's birth were then come: The People (faith he) that walked in darkness, have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them bath he shined. They joy before thee, according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoile. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Sonne is giv

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 figtree. For at the Birth of our Saviour the Prince of Peace, there was peace throughout the whole world (h).
This day the Apostle calleth 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 born 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, good will towards men (k).

Having then the Patriarchs, Prophets, the people of God, and the very Angels themselves for an example of our rejoicing at the day of Christ's Birth: It is agreeable to the Word of God, and manifestly grounded thereon, that the Feast or day of our Saviour's 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

---

Sabbatarias in the Gospel, whose names are in the Book of life (e) writes thus unto the Chitlian Church; Brethren, keep diligently Feast days, and truly in the First place the day of Christ's Birth (f).

Clement. Conf. Apost. lib. 5. cip. 15. This Author is cited by Mr. Ley, in his Sunday Sabbath, p. 167, and by Mr. R. Byfield, in his Doctrines of the Sabbath, p. 150. Why should any grudge us the same liberty?

In the second age.

From the yeare 100, unto 200.

Telesphorus in his Decretall Epistle faith (g) it is ordained, that in the holy night of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, they doe celebrate Publicke 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 is selfe doth witness (h).

Theophilus Bishop of Cesarea in Palaestina, faith, that we ought to celebrate the Birth-day of our Lord, on what day forever the 25. of December shall happen (i).

In the third age.

From the yeare 200, unto 300.

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 doth render thankes and praises unto her Visitation (k).

In the fourth age.

From the yeare 300, unto 400.

At Nicomedea (a City of Bithimia) when the Festival day of Christ's Birth came, and a multitude of Christians of all ages, had assembled together in the Temple to celebrate that Birth-day, Dioclesian the Tyrant, having gotten as it were a fit time, and an advantageous occasion, whereby he might accomplish his malice, and fury, first adscendeth the Temple, and to set up a fire else, and in profanation Salvatoris' graces and laudes vicit aborta suoper orbem terrarum sancta, redit Di- clesia. Cypr. de nativit. Chirili, Tom. 3. Approved by Zanchy in 4. prsecept. q. 2. Thes. 2. and Mr. Perkins dd. II. p. 493.
round about; and so consumed them all to ashes, even twenty thousand persons. (1)


NAZIANZEN in an Oration upon the day of Christ's Nativity, faith, I am confident that the heavenly powers doe also this present day celebrate the Feast together, and leap exceedingly for joy; if truly 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).

EPIDHANUS recorded this day among the solemn Feasts of the Catholique Church (o).

HIEROM hath said, that the day kept in memory of our Lord's Nativity, is the day on which the ancient report runnes he was borne (p).

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

In the lst age.

From the yeare 400. unto 500.

CHRYSOSTOM hath one Homily or Sermon on the day of Christ's Birth (r). MAXIMUS Bishop of Tarsus in France hath six (f). LAO the Great hath ten (t). CHRYSOLOGUS one (n). FULGENTIUS one (x). Hitherto are the dates of the Pure Apostolique Church (y).

Now that the Birth day of Christ was duly solemnized from the first 500 years downward (z), even to the times of Reformation, is as cleare as the Sunne at noone day (a); And therefore we shall omit the proofe thereof, (believing it no lesse ridiculous then unprofitable, to insist on that thing;) from the time of the Blessed Episcop of the West, about the year of salvation 523. decreed, that the Feast of the holy Nativity of Christ should be observed. Niceph. Hist. Eccles. 1. 7. c. 28. (s) See the Magdeburg Centuriae in every Century. c. 6. (m) Virtutes celestes quoque bodierno die sancti Fesitum celebrare, as levisia gellare confido; qui dum hominum Dei et amor proditius fim. Greg. Naz. Oecu. 3. 8.


(o) Epiph. libro, cui titulus est, Compendiaria vera doctrina de side Carbol. et Apoll. Eccles.

(p) Dies, quattuor timocr. Hierou. Tom. 9. pag. 8. G.


(r) Vide Chrysofor. opera, post expost: cap. 1. Luca.


(x) Fulgent. Hom-lt. 1.

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

The Churches of Helvettia, or Switzerland. 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).

The Churches of Bohemia. Many of the antient Ceremonies (say they) and such as were brought in by custom, 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)

The Church of Bremer keeps the Festivall day of Christ's Birth (e).

The Church of Aupsburg. As for us we teach that those traditions are not to be condemned, which command nothing against the Laws of God, and have a civil 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)

The Churches of Savoy, Poland, Hungary, Scotland, France and The Low-Countries, doe allow the Feast that belong to Christ; his Nativity, Circumcision, Passion, &c. *

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).

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

In France their most notable Preachers give the Communion on that day; as did also the antient Primitive Churches.
Churche throughout the world. So did the SCOTTISH Church also for 800. years after Christ, before ever it was polluted with Popery.

ZINNING, Rector of the Church of Zurich, accounts the Birthday of our Lord amongst those Holy-days, which he would have observed.

ZANCHEY, Professor 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 itself what days 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 Apostles, and the pure Church hath also accustomed to sanctifie. Of which number he accounts the day of Christ's birth to be one.

POLANUS, Professor of Divinity in the University of Basil, placeth the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, under the title of The anniversaries Feasts of the New Testament; which he defines to be, Holy times appointed among Christians for the worship of God in public; That is, For to maintain the consent of faith amongst themselves by the preaching of God's Word, and the use of the Sacraments, and with one accord to yield due worship unto God, in the sacrifice of thanksgiving, prayers and alms.

JOHN GERMARD, Professor 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 Christ's Nativity.

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

That our Saviour was born 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 falseness of the Accompt then in use, ordained the year to consist of 365. dayes and 6. hours, which 6. hours in 4. yeares made 24. hours, or a day Civil, and were added unto the end of February: By reason whereof every fourthe yeare contained 366. dayes, and was called Annus Bissextile, the Bislextile 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 progress of time it was discovered to be not so exactly agreeable with the natural motion of the Sun. For the Julian yeare 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. hours, 49. minutes, 12. seconds: (d) And that the Vernal Equinoxe, 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 Council, (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 accompted for the 14. day (f). Hence it comes to passe, that the new Accompt is always 10. days before the old.

But as to the precise day of Christ's Nativity, both Accompts are erronous: For if we summe up the excess of the Julian year (which is, as we said, 10. minutes and 48. seconds, pro decimo quarto die: quod equinomium ac solstitium dies reducere est ad antiquas illas metas: quas in Concilio Niceno determinavimus S. S. Paules, Bucholz, Ind. Chron. pag. 714.)
seconds) from the time of Augustus Caesar, when our Saviour was borne, until the year 1643. We shall finde that the Winter Solstice is gone back from the 25. day of December; (g) 12. dayes 7. hours, 44. minutes, 24. seconds: And therefore the Gregorian Accompint (being grounded on the Nicene Council), when as it should have been reduced to the time of Christ's Nativity erreth almost 2. days; but the Julian Accompont more then 12 dayes; and which is so much worse, is going every year farther and farther from the truth (h). Neverthelesse we grant that the Julian Accompint, though it remaine unreformed, 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 alienando corrigeretur futurum olum est, ut salvis nostrae Natalissa dies, qui brumales olme erant, in vernum tempus invadat, Pascha in aeternum. Valer. Bellunen, dd. I.

Having now layed open, wherein and why these Accompints differ, as also how they may with ease be reduced unto the just and exact day of Christ's Nativity; we proceed to the proof of that wherein both Accompints 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.

Ambrose his expression is divine and elegant, (k) Length of nights had possest 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 darkness of mens sins, so also in the day of his Nativity he cut off the darkness 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 encreaseth, which is cloathed with a double spendor of brightness.

Augustine saith (l) John was borne as the Church by


(g) Tempore Augusti Octavianus, ut observavit Plinius, brumae dies vicegesimo quinto Decembris: quo die natus est Christus afferret noster Valer. Bellunen, compend. in Sphaeram, p. 124. In the time of Augustus Octavianus, as Plinius observeth, the shortest day was on the 25 of December.


(k) Occupavere tostam diem noctium longinquo, nisi in ipsis dies crevit Christi revelatio: advenit adventus: qui hic...
(m) According to the true account from which the Julian calendar varied more than 10 days, as we shewed before.

(n) John 3: 30.

(o) O vix oculis auro-
punctis sparsis, ac-
quitites pedibus, o-
tis eu Bebathio eu-
nusias, u parum
eraquam. Ebd. Pel-
scetis lib. 2. p. 286.

(p) Christmas qui in
nativitate Ioannis jam
trium mensium incorruptae
ulvae fructus conceptus,
supercavit ei, ut ipse secundum humanum natur-
tatem suppleret menses nonum, ali menses sex, qui num ex aedivo Calendas Julya in Octavo Calendas
Sanmaris jam menses sex. Quibus suppleatis novem mensibus, instante die ximo Christus natus est. Vide Chrysostom, expos. cap. 1, Luca.

(q) Natus est Christus
VIII. Kalendar. Salm-
arii, quand epimium
incrementa anna anni
venturus, incipit. P;
Oros. lib. 7. cap. 2.

(r) Hiems janua est,
hoic natus est Christus.
Brev. in Nat. Dom. Sinm. 3.

(s) Vigilia
mensis December, crat
dies, quam inefectisse
potest et amors erga
genus humanum, ut
Verbum Dei max-
imenquae imperavit.

(t) Vulgatur nottio et
25. dieb December esse
memoria Natalis Domini.

(TH9) Tradition teaches, on the 24. day of June, when (the days) begin to shorten, (m) but our LORD was born on the 25. day of December, even when the days begin to lengthen. (n) Hence John himself confessing, He must increase, but I must decrease. (o)

CHRYSOSTOME, 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 inquisition of this point, concluded thus. Christ, who at the Nativity of John had now been conceived three months in the pure and undisturbed womb, that is, there for himself also should fulfill nine months according to the course of human birth, there remained for him six months more, which six months 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 born in the world (p).

OROSUS saith, Christ was born on the 25. day of December, when all increases of the ensuing year 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 December, when O thou Word of God, the unutterable mystery of thy goodness, and love towards mankind, and the exceeding great mystery of thy marvellous birth was accomplished.

CUMNITIUS saith, It is the common opinion that the 25. day of December should be hallowed for a remembrance of the day of our Lord's nativity.

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

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 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, faith Saint Luke (x), Had he only said he was about thirty years, we might have conceived him to have been as well somewhat more as less; 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 (faith he) to be about thirty years of age. And indeed the entering into his Ministry at the time of his Baptism (which all men grant he did) is a sufficient proof that he wanted very little and no considerable time of being Thirty years old (x).

After this Baptism immediately the Spirit driveth him into the Wilderness (c). And though beyond Jordan there were many Wilderesses at hand; yet let us admit for his journey 5 days.

He was there in the Wilderness (c) 40 days. When those days 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 mountain, and showeth 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 days.

The Devil having left him, Christ returneth unto Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was Baptizing (e): For which let us admit, as we did for his progress (f) 5 days.

He was with John (g) 3 days. The day following, he began his journey towards Cana of Galilee (h); a Towne distant from Bethabara 66 English miles (i). For which let us admit 6 days.

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

C 3
There was a marriage in the said Cana, after his coming thither. And because we read of a marriage-feast that lasted seven days, we shall admit that this feast also, (though probably it was not so long) lasted 7 days.

After this marriage feast, that is, when this feast was ended, Christ went down to Capernaum; a Town distant from Cana of Galilee, near 30 English miles. For which journey let us admit 3 days.

He continued not there many days; let us grant 6 days.

Then the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem; distant from Capernaum, 72 English miles. For which journey let us allow 8 days.

He was at Jerusalem some certain days before the Feast of the Passover; let us admit 4 days.

In all 92 days.

These summed up, amount unto 92 days, or 3 months; so that (if conjectures guided by reason do not very much fail), our Saviour at the first Passover, after his Baptism was 30 years old, and about 3 months; at the second Passover 31 years old, and about 3 months; at the third Passover 32 years old, and about 3 months; at the fourth Passover was 33 years old, and about 3 months; on the eve whereof he was crucified, which the Jews call the Preparation day; and was the 25 day of March. Now accounting 92 days backward from the 25 day of March, the Birth-day of our Saviour will fall near the 25 day of December, according to the testimonies of the Fathers and Writers before alleged, and the tradition of the Churches of God.

Howbeit of late there are risen up a sort of wild-brained Zealots; who carried on with an earnest desire of intro-
And by those words of Saint Luke, Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, he understands he was almost 29 years old: As if when the Scriptures express about 5000: their meaning was, almost 4000. But his prime Schollar noting the absurdity of this exposition, grants Christ to be 30 years old at his Baptism; yet by coining one Palaeover, he out-runs the truth, and makes him to have lived 34 years and an half: Others affirm, that he was about 33 years old when he suffered: 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 countenance 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 catalogke, faithfully collected.

The First Objection. In the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. The Prophet speaketh here of the last week, which if you divide into two equal parts, you shall find the middle of it to be in the seventh month of the fourth year, because the weeks ends in the month March, where in our Lord suffered. 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. By way of consummation; and this was not in the midst, but in

(21)

ducimg 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 Equinoxiall. An opinion not dreamed of, untill Beroldus published his Chronology: and it is worth our pains to observe, how well the Maiter and Schollars doe agree touching the age of our Saviour.

Beroldus faith, that Christ lived 32 yeares and an half: * Ufserius Archipe: Armach. de Britan. Ecclef. prid. c.t.

And by those words of Saint Luke, Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, he understands he was almost 29 years old: As if when the Scriptures express about 5000: their meaning was, almost 4000. But his prime Schollar noting the absurdity of this exposition, grants Christ to be 30 years old at his Baptism: yet by coining one Palaeover, he out-runs the truth, and makes him to have lived 34 years and an half: Others affirm, that he was about 33 years old when he suffered: 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 countenance 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 catalogke, faithfully collected.

The First Objection. In the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. The Prophet speaketh here of the last week, which if you divide into two equal parts, you shall find the middle of it to be in the seventh month of the fourth year, because the weeks ends in the month March, wherein our Lord suffered. 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. By way of consummation; and this was not in the midst, but in

* Ciceron mortuum illum frusser-pro nobis in curre

opertor anno Tiberii 18.

sum quum aratis annum

ageret 33. Id est, quum

annos compleverit tri-

ginem duas & dimidi-

ationem Berolad. Chro.

l. 3. c. 8.

a Λόδος ὑ ὁ Ἰωνᾶς

ὁσιεῖ ἐθεηῖ θεοκοινα

ἀγοράκεντοι. Líchk. 3.

23.

b ωσὶ νευλαμιχι-


c Scalig. De emendat.

temporum. I. 6

d Wolph. Chro. 1. 1.

H. Broughrons Con-

sent of Scripture.

e Dan. 9. 27.

f In dimidio hebdom-

dae coelar facies sacrifi-

cium & oblationem.

Logitur hic Propheta

de ultima hebdomada,

quum quia disstit in

mense Nifan, quae passa

est Dominus, est dividita

e in duo partes agiales,

medicamenta, quain in di-

nā: quartā: mense Tifh

habère deprehendere. Be-

roakd. chron. 1. 4. c. 2.
The end of the last verse by the sacrifice of himself, is implied in these words, Consummationis est, it is finished, and also by the valve of the Temple rent in twain. By way of preparation; and this was either immediately, by himselfe, when he was baptized and entered into his Ministry; being near the midst, but not precisely in the midst of the last weekes. For by the fore-going particular examination of the dais, we have sufficiently shewed, that the time between the Baptisme of Christ, and the next Pasch over, cannot with any probability be extended beyond the space of 3 months. Or immediately by his forerunner, herald, and messenger, John the Baptist, who preaching the Baptisme of repentance, did to prepare the way of the Lord, that all sacrifices, oblations, legal rites and ceremonies, were afterwards without scruple forsaken and abandoned. Hence our Saviour faith, The Law and the Prophets were until John: and thus in the midst of the last week, 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.

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 four 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 Christ's Birth, but his Conception (which was six months after John) must be in December.

The Answer. We grant the Major; but the Minor is notoriously false; For First, The Priest's course was weekly, and continued from Sabbath to Sabbath.
Secondly, it supposeth that the Priests courses and the yeares began together; which is against commone sense; for there being but 24 courses" it must needs be, that at the end of the 24th course, the first began; and so would have no relation to the month or time of the yeare.

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"; and sometimes (faith Willet) it may be all without March; as, when the Hebrews, every third year, put a month to make the yeare agree with the course of the Sunne.

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

And herein our Opposite Beroaldus speakes very ingeniously, both himselfe and his faction; "We (faith 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 yeare and day of our Lords Birth, have referred it some unto the 25th day of the month of Adar, some unto the 25th day of April." Therefore in his time the day of Christs Birth was not certainly knowne.9

The Answer. If this argument be good, then there is no point either in Divinity or Philosophy certainely knowne; because there is no point which is not through ignorance, wilfulness, or an itching affectation of singularity by some contradicted; at least questioned. Howsoever, had these curious searchers shewed us where S. Luke faith, that Christ was conceived in the sixth month of the Legall yeare, we would have concluded with them, that Christ was borne either in May, by reckoning from August exclusively; or in April, by accepting from August inclusively: but there can be nothing more certain, 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," that is, from the conception of John the Baptist.
Not does Clemens Alexandrinus afford these searchers any more credit than the bare mentioning of their groundless phantasies; which truly is more than they deserved.

The Fourth Objection. Bede affirms, that the Indictions began on the 24th day of September (f), and that our Lord was borne (Indictione quarta inuncta) when the fourth Indiction began: Therefore Christ was borne on the 24th day of September (g).

The Answer. Bede does not say, that our Lord was borne when the fourth Indiction began, but in the fourth Indiction. According to Dionysius (h), which words are too general for us to conclude thence the year of Christ's Birth, much less the month, least of all the day. And yet considering that an Indiction is the space of 15 years (i), 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 happened in the beginning of our King's reign, though it were 3, 6, or 10 months after the first day of his reign.

The Fifth Objection. Taxes and Collections of Tribute began on the 24th day of September; as appears by the Indictions, which were instituted to bear account of the payment of tribute (j): Therefore Augustus Cæsar's Decree at our Saviour's Birth, that all the world should be taxed, were not (k) on the 24th of September, and so Christ was born on that day (l).

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 years after Christ (m)) began on the 24th day of September; therefore that extraordinary and most remarkable tax decreed by Augustus Cæsar when our Saviour was born, began on the same day. Nay, here is a cluster of absurdities: For if the issuing forth of Cæsar's decree, and our Saviour's Birth were on the selfe-same day, then was the decree sent from Rome to Nazareth, above a 100 miles distant, and from Nazareth, Joseph, with Mary, his espoused wife, great with child (n), and expecting every hour to be delivered,
(25.

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 now believe that a wise Emperor as Augustus was, would command poor men to come in Winter to their own 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 wholesome 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 Canaan (now called Palestine (f)) is found to extend it selfe from the degree 30. and 52. meridional, unto the degree 33. and 44. meridional of Latitude or Elevation; And for Longitude, it is placed between 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 Fez 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 Fez 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 sheaf of the first-fruits of harvest was yearly offered on the second day after the Passover (d), which was the 16. day of the Jews 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 Canaan, is answerable to our May, if not June: Though therefore (d) No marwai if the shee Sepembrians oposse the tradition of Crist's Church, when the Fewes believe is the rule of their doctrine.


(f) Quasi terra Pagellionum, the land of the Philistines. Vide Vatabl. translat. Bibl.

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

(h) Buitach. in Append. Tract. 1. part. 2. de Phyf.

(i) Note, that Africa tooke its name from a B. Ge as, that is, without cold.

(k) Carpenters Geography. lib. 2. c. 30. Theoreme. 10.

(l) Levin. 25. 36. 10. compared with Deur.
a disobedient and gain-saying 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 Caesar's 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 Christ's 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 Account, which Accompst 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 born in the night (r); therefore he was not born on the 25th day of December.

The Answer. The day is of two sorts; Natural or Civil; the Natural day is the time from Sun-rising unto Sun-setting; whose opposite is the night, from Sun-setting unto Sun-rising. The Civil day is the space of 24 hours, in which time the Sunne is by the first or second carried round about the world: It contains as well the night as the true day; and is therefore termed by the Greeks (c) υπερήμερον, and may in Latine be aptly translated vesperdum. 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 (c). And of the latter we ought here to be understood, when we speak of the 25th day of December: For our Saviour was born presently after 12, a clock in the night (w), at which time


time the Civil day began according to the custome of the Romans.

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 quater horas (id est quibus, & luce media) actum est, perinde est quasi quavis horae lucis actum est. Paulus ICrus Digest. jur. Civil. 2. tit. 12.

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 work, whether at home or in publice consists of three parts or duties. The first is, a reverend explanation:

1. 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, finer 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 inferiour 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 Clavso, the womb being shut, as the Papists imagine (l).

3. Where he was Born: to wit, In the land of Judah, in Bethlehem (m) which signifies the house of bread (n); (b) Luke 2.11. (c) δλης-σαφες. John 1.14. (d) Vide Symbolum Athanasii. (e) Heb. 2.17 & 4.15. (f) ομομοιοθετημεν απαντα παντα τα φυσικα της δε ανθρωπες ανεκλαβες. (g) Luke 1.27. & 1.28. (h) Joh. 1.20. & 1.21. (i) Lat. Lexicon. (j) Catechism. Rom. part. cap. 4. Respons. ad quaest. 4. (m) Mat. 2.6. (n) John 1.20. teaching
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 Inne; (p) teaching us by his example to beare corporall poverty with patience.

2. When he was borne: and that was 1. when a Decree went out from Aug. Cesar that all the world should be taxed. 2. When Cyrenius was Governor of Syria (q) The Evangelist saies 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 vised us, to give light to them that sate in darknesse and in the shadow of death (w).

5. Of God's gracious and miraculous Discovery of his Birth. 1. To the poor shepheardes, neer Bethlehem, by an Angel (x). 2. To the rich Wifemen in the East by a Star (y) teaching us, that poore and rich, simple and wise, Jew and Gentile, were and tarre off, are al aliike accepted by God, through, and for Christ.

6. Of the glorious celebration of Christ's nativity by a multitude of the heavenly host praising God (z).

The second part is a pious meditation on the Ewes and Nature of Christ's Birth, and that was threefold. 1. That God's promisses, and the predictions of his servants the Prophets, might be accomplished. 2. That God might thereby manifest his love towards mankind. 3. That redemption might be to them that were under the Law; otherwise eternall death had past upon all men, for that we have joyned.

The third and chiefeft part is, an humble and sincere thanksgiving unto God for those great and unestimable benefits which we receive by the laced Birth of our Lord Christ, the Saviour of the world: outwardly expressing our thankfulness. 1. In Psalmes and Hymnes, and Spiritual songs. 2. In a larger and more liberal use of God's Creatures then at ordinary times. 3. In
Sect. VIII.

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

Are these things so? May Christian Magistrates constitute Feast-daisies, 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 Christ's Birth, calling it Judaisme (g), and most blasphemously persuading the people, (h) That a Feast celebrated unto the honour of Christ, is no better then that Feast which the Israelisites made unto the molten Calfe (i)?

But let us, Brethren, who have no so learned Christ (k), be subject to Principalities and Powers: let us obey Magistrates, and be ready to every good work (l): let us be wise. 

(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) Negque damnari potest Ecclesia quasi Judaeratis quia dicat Dominicum jam inde ab Apostolorum temporibus sanctificavis, & certos alios dictus festos pulso post Apostolorum temporibus deligerit ad santificandum. Zanch. in 4. Precept. de Diebus Palletis, 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.

1 Tim. 2. 25. (i) Exod. 32. 4, 5, 6.

(j) Ephes. 4. 20.
ware of those who are presumptuous, self-willed; not afraid to
speak evil 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 darkness is reserved for ever.

Let us stand fast, and hold the traditions which we have
been taught: 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 works of God; And
principally, may keep the memoriall of Christ’s Nativity;
continuing the celebration of this Feast, unto the
second coming of Shiloh.

Hallelu-jah.