FESTORUM METROPOLIS.

THE METROPOLITAN FEAST;

OR THE 13TH BIRTH-DAY

OF OUR SAVIOUR

Jesus Christ,

Annually to be kept holy, by them that call upon him in all Nations.

Proved by Scriptures, the practice of the Church Primitive, and Reformed; the Testimonies of the Fathers, and Moderne Divines; strong Reasons, grounded on the Word of God; confirming Miracles, &c.

John 8. 56. Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my Day, and saw it, and was glad.

Notior fuit Christi Nativitas, quam ut in questionem vocari deberat.

Written by Pastor Fido:

LONDON: August 16.

Printed by Matthew Simmons, 1652.
TO THE
MASTER
OF THE
FEAST,
MY
LORD AND MASTER
JESUS CHRIST.

Lord, I dare dedicate my Book
to none but Thee.
Be Thou the Patron then, of It, Thy
Day, and Mee.
To the Worshipfull, much Honoured, and Munificent Gentleman,

JOHN DUTTON,
Of Sheirborne in the County of Gloucester, Esquire.

Ext to my Master Christ (kind Sir) to you or none,
This thankful piece pertains, who when the Sheep were gone,
Did comfort Pastors heart, with words most debonnaire,
And with soul-saving deeds did keep him from despair.
God made my Christ, Christ you, my Freind, tis then but due,
That thanking God for Christ, I likewise should thank you.
The Feast of thanks will come, I know you'll keep the day,
This Present I present, to justifie you may.
My Pen and Prayers, Sir, now all my riches are,
My Pen subscribes that I, my Prayers will not spare.
To wooe the blessed Fafe, your royall heart to cheare,
And life with health prolong, to Feast him many a yeare.
That I poor Pastor may, long joy in blest f. D.
And long may weare the Title of

Your Servant B
To the Readers.

Poore Pastor Fido,
Exiled a while ago.

Grace, Mercy, Mirth, Peace, doth wish to all these,
That love the Babe Jesus in his swaddling clothes.

Ome zealous Lovers, solemnize with me,
The despin'd day of Christ's Nativity.
Wake Lungs, wake Heart, wake Tongue, and let us sing,
The glorious praises of our now-born King.
Sing, sing aloud, fear not, Time serves God,
Let them serve Hogs themselves, while we serve God.
Let us, yea, let us, pour out our hearts with praise,
Their squirrel-pated fancies against the state,
And old age, for the honour of this reverend day.
They nothing know, being but of yesteryear.

Their standing, and their understanding both, all one,
Inspired Coxcombs, idle paste, O none.
The keeping of this day we therefore,
By Scripture, Reason, and Antiquity.

For Sixteen hundred years, and more out-sold,
Gainst them that love new Christ, but not the Old.
If these persuade not, then our words like thunders,
Shall rattle in their ears, point proving wonders.

Let's feast it therefore, Banquet on the Babe; O Men,
(Then with Lute, and Harp, and Tongue, let's Musick make, and
To
To make the Scottish Michals big with scoffes to prauence Barren, and tongue t'ed both, we'll lead them David's daunce. Christ he shall lead, the Apostles, Fathers follow. To waken Sleepers, Moderne Divines shall Hollow. The Lovely Spouse shall foot it, Angels they shall sing. Poore Pastor he shall pipe, the Saints eat in a Ring. Shall cheare his rowsing heart, so that come good or ill, Though Pastor have no paye, he will be Fido stil.

God send you a merry Christmas.

From the Valley Exile, in the Land of Noe, near the Cape of Good Hope. 1652.

Yours,

PASTOR FIDO.

Ad Librum.
Ex Ovid Trist. Eleg. 1

Vade liber, verbis meis loca grata Saluta;
Contingam certe quo licet illa Pede.
Vade sed inculatus qualis deget Exulis esse.
Infelix habitum temporis heius habe.
Si quis ut in populo nostri non immemoria.
Signis, qui quid agam forte requirit, erit.
Vivere medicas. Salutem tamen esse negabimus.
Id quosque, quod vivam, minus habere Dei.

Names
Names of the Fathers, Historians, Moderne Divines, and other Writers, that illustrate the truth in the following Treatises, and the time wherein they flourished.

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Conspicuous Ecclesiarum reformatorum.

Anno Dom. 1530 Svecia
Anno Dom. 1531 Wittembergenis
Anno Dom. 1552 Helvetica Posterior
Saxonia 1553 Belgica
Gallica 1559 Bohemica
Helvetica prior 1536

Ecclesiae Nationales.

Polonia 1541
Sabaudea
Hungarie

Anglie
Scotia
Lituanie

Russia
Samogitia
In praxi sua

Consensus Protestantum
Synodus Sendmorensis

Moderne Divines.

Calvin 1547
Bullinger
Melanchthon
Festus Hommius
Zunghius

Hemmingius
Cum multis
aliis, &c.

Old Fathers thirty nine, lae, Christmas keep with me,
And hundred thousands more of brave young Gallantry,
Most zealous Sparks they are, they’ll keep it every yeare,
For Christ, and for his day, they’ll spend their blood so dear.
Let’s hear what they can say, they for themselves shall speak,
Their words they will make way, while others are to seek.

The
THE S I S.

The Birthday of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the 25th of December, ought yearly to be kept holy by all Christians.

Peter, the Apostle's chief, and Christ's companion, did Prophecy that in the latter days there should come false cheaters; the word I confess in our Translation is Teachers, but we may read either, for they are both one; the one word doth anagramatize the other, and both words and deeds do prove them to be the same in these days, when Cheaters turne Teachers, and Teachers Cheaters; cheating Christ of his glory, denying the Lord that bought them, themselves of salvation, bringing upon themselves swift destruction: the way of truth, of its reputation, making it to be evil spoken of, Christ of his followers, they following them, and men of their moneys, with feigned words, making merchandise of them.

These
The Preface.

These dayes are now upon us, and now these men, these unclean spirits like unto Frogs, Revel. 16. 13. doe not only creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, as Paul foretold, 2 Tim. 3. 6. but even to their bed-chambers, and beds, as those that plagued Egypt; and not only there, but openly and abroad, like to many tinkling Copper-Smiths, cry downe Christ Jesus to magnifie the Diana of their owne inventions; upon the pikes of whose opinions, Christ and his truth are tossed daily in such a severemanner, that it is now grown disputatione, whether Christ suffered more in his body, by the fury and violence of the hand, or in his Divinity, and Divine Ordinances, by the scourge and fling of venomous and depraving tongues; denying not only the Lord that bought them, but all that any way belongs to him, leaving him more naked then he was between the two Theives upon the Cross, who stole nothing from him. One would have him no God; another no man; this againe would have him a meer man, and that denies him a true body; one strips him quite of flesh, another cloaths him with it, but makes it sinfull; this would have him an Angel, that little better then a Davel, or at least that he used one. One forsakes the Assembly of Saints, another his Sacraments: One denies his Prayer to be said, another his Birth-day to be kept, as if his comming to save sinners were not worth the thanksgiving. Thus when men meddle too much with Christ, he gives them over to themselves, and will have nothing to doe with them, and then every head is frantick with a strange opinion, and that with some wild phantasie, which all meet in the same improbabillity, and foot following falsehood.
Scripture Proofs.

My task must be to confute them that doe deny that the twenty fifth day of December, the day whereon our Saviour Christ came into the world, is to be kept holy. In traversing of which, give me leave to make use of that Apologie unto all (in this case) which Ambrose did once to Gratian the Emperour, in the case of Christ's Divinity, Nolo argumento credas (sane Imperator) & nostra disputationi Scripturas interrogemus, interrogemus Apostolos, Prophetas, Christum. Leave not so much to my strength of Argument and disputation, as to sacred authority and proof: Let us ask the Scriptures, Patriarchs, Prophets, Evangelists, Apostles, Christ; let me adde (for so both my task and industry require) Churches, Fathers, &c. Let us ask of the former dayes, and them that are more aged then we, the sacred Ecclesiastical Histories. Let's give Antiquity her due, and not paddle in a new-raised puddle at our owne doors, while we may have our fill at a pure and clear fountain, wherein we drink, wherein, we may see the truth cleared which we maintain.

To begin then with the Scripture, God's own Word, to prove the honour of his Day, who in the beginning was the Word.

In the first of the Hebrews at the sixth verse, when the Lord brings in the first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the Angels of God worship him; in the words, commanding those glorious creatures to set the day of Christ's birth aside, for such an holy worship.

Scripture.
Heb. 1. 6.

And
Scriptures.

And so they did, for so we read, Luke 2. 7, 8, 9, 10, &c. no sooner had Mary brought forth her first-borne son, and laid him in a Manger, but immediately the Angels, according to the former command, descend from Heaven in multitudes, to make merry, and keep holy-day with the wakeful Shepheard, in the fields of Ephrata; Heaven and Earth, Church Militant and triumphant, Angels and men thus met in one to solemnize this glorious day, to make it so, and to consecrate it for a future worship, the glory of the Lord shone round about them; the Angel preacheth the Sermon, and his Text is suitable to the time and Auditory, directed to them that were to teach others; the words, Fear not you, for behold I bring you 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, &c. The Sermon ended, the multitude of the heavenly hosts do sing the Psalm, the burden whereof was, Glory be to God on high, in earth peace, and good will towards men. This done, the Angels depart, and leave their brethren the Shepheard, to finish what they began; for this purpose they, as they were commanded by the Angels, goe in haste to Bethlehem, and worship the new-born Babe, which service once performed, they return not to their Flocks, but leave them to the protection of the new-born Shepheard, and goe up and downe all that day, preaching what they had heard and seen, and make them to wonder, and well they might, being great was this Mystery of Godlinesse, God manifested in the flesh, seen of Angels, by them preached unto the Shepheard, believed on by the Jews, and all upon this day.

Verse 14.

Verse 16.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Shall
Scriptures.

Shall Angels then, that have no sin, preach and sing, and exhort their hearers to a celebration, and shall men be silent that are nothing but sin? Shall Shephards leave their flocks, and Christians goe to plough; Here we have Gloriam Dei diem illuminantem, Angelum predicantem multitudinem canentem, Pastores feriantes, the glory of God, the day inlightning, one Angel preaching, the multitude singing, the Shephards keeping holyday, what better warrant for the sanctifying of this day? Shall the day then of Christes resurrection be kept holy once a week, his birthday from the Grave, & shall not the day of his Nativity, or of his birth from the womb, be solemnized once a year? Especially seeing we have more warrant for keeping of this, then that, for that we have onely the practife of a few Churches, as of Troas, Galatia, and Corinth, who used to meet together upon the first day of the week, but not one word of precept, but for keeping the day of Christes Nativity, we have both precept of God and Angels, in the Church triumphant, the practife of the Shephards and Christians in all ages in the Church militant.

A third place to prove this truth we have in the hundred and tenth Psalm, verse the third, where the Prophet speaking of the coming and Kingdome of Christ, saith, In the day of thy power the people shall bring the free-will offerings with an holy worship, the dew of thy birth is as the womb of the morning: Or as our last Translation reads it, Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth. Here the Prophet makes mention of a day, in which all people should bring free willing offerings unto Christ, with an holy
holy worship which is to be tendred unto him in the beauties of holiness, that is, in the particular places of Assembly, the Churches, and therefore to be kept holi day, nay must, for it runs, the people shall bring thee free will offerings, or they, shall be willing in that day, shewing it to be their duty, when ever the day comes so to doe.

Now what day is this, but Christ's birth-day? and therefore we have it here called the dew of his birth, Tat jalduthekab, most properly according to the Originall, which was either as the womb of the morning, as one Translation, or from the womb of the morning, as the other, the first shewing that the birth of Christ, and dew or fruit thereof, was like the mornings womb, comfortable and pleasant unto all, according to the Angels testimony, Luke 2. 10. Or that he was borne in the beginning of the morning at cock-crowing, before perfect day, as appears in the same place. Further, that the day here meant was the day of Christ's birth, appears especially in this, that it is called the day of his power, in the morning whereof, his power was manifested in breaking open the gates of Marias womb; nay more properly the day of his power, because Initium regni, the beginning of his reign being as this day born King of the Jews, Mat. 2. 2. When Kings came to doe homage to this King of Kings that now was borne, and whereupon he set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, and therefore the day of his power, Psal. 2. 6. when he said, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, vers. 7. That is to say, I have manifested thee by being borne as upon this day, to be my first begotten from all eternity, giving thee the Heathen for
for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the
earth for thy possession, that thou mayest break them
with a rod of iron, and bruise them to pieces like a
potters vessel: all arguments of great power, vers. 8,
9. concordant with the words of the hundred and
tenth Psalm, vers. 5, 6, 7. Behold the day of Christ's
power upon that day, therefore every year that the
Prophecy may be fulfilled, the people that believe
in him, are to bring him not legal sacrifices, which
figured him to come; but the free-will offerings of
praise, and thanksgiving for his gracious coming,
to be rendered unto God in the beauties of holiness,
the places where we meet together to exercise holy
duties, and the reason is, because the dew of his birth
like the womb of the morning did refresh all; so that
refreshing thanks is to be given by all.

A fourth and last place, is, John 8. 56. where our
Saviour Christ faith unto the Pharisees, your father
Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was
glad: What day was this? It was not the day of his
passion, nor of his Resurrection, nor of his Ascension
into heaven, for these were to come when our Sa-
vior spake the words, but that day was part of which
he then spake; it could then be no other but the day
of his coming and manifestation in the flesh (ac-
cording to the current of Interpreters) that blessed day
of his Nativity which Abraham by the eye of faith
beheld, and saw so many years before.

Now, if he, the Father of the faithful did so many
years before, rejoice and was glad to see that day a
coming; surely all the Sons of the faithfull Ab-
raham will in their successive generations be glad, re-
joyce, and give thanks that it is come and past, and e-

very year solemnize the same in remembrance of what
they got by his coming, 1 Tim. 1. 15. 1.

This is that great Festival called by the Eastern Church 
Ἐπιφανεία, or Ἐπιφανία, God's appearing, διὰ εἰρήνης ἡν ἐγενέσθαι, because God appeared to men by
his Birth, to Basil a and Nazianzen b or to use the
Apostles phrase, God was manifested in the flesh. c

2. Ἐπιφανεία the Epiphanie or the appearing καὶ ἐξισορροπή
implying that this appearing excelled all other what-
soever. But here are two things are worthy to be noted.
The one is, that the Churches in Αἴγυπτος, because they
celebrated Christ's Birth and also his Baptism, upon
one and the same day, called both these Feasts pro-
miscuously Ἐπιφανεία. d The other is, that the mo-
derne Churches have through the use and custome of
speech, restrained the word Ἐπιφανεία unto the Feast
commonly called the Twelfth day, celebrated in me-
memory of the miraculous appearance of the Star which
led the wise men to Christ. e

3. τοῦ σοβόρου The Birth-day of the Saviour.
4. τοῦ σοβόρου καὶ τῶν εὐσεβῶν μητροπόλις The greatest and
Metropolitan Feast.

The Western Church called it Dies Nativitatis,
the day of the Nativity. f By way of eminency and
dignity.

2. Luminaria, The Feast of lights, either because they
used many lights and candles at this Feast, or rather
because Christ the light of lights, that true light then
came into the world.

3. Dies Natalis Domini vel Natalitia Domini. k The
Birth-day of our Lord; we call it Christmas, or Christ's
Messe, not from the Popish Masse said thereupon, but
from our ancient word Messe, which signifies a Feast,
Scripture.

So that Christmas is no more then a mesele or Feaste provided on the day of Christ's birth, in a way of rejoicing as Abraham did, foretold by Jacob 1 Gen. 49. 10. Marked out by the Prophet Isaiah, as a speciall and wonderfull day; nay, so ravished he is with the consideration thereof, that he rejoiceth with the Church as if the day of Christ's birth were then come. n 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 borne, unto us a Son is given. And he is seconded by the Prophet Zechariah, o saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I will bring forth my servant (Christ) the Branch. In that day shall ye call every man his neighbour, under the vine and under the figge tree.

So much de jure, that the day may and ought to be kept holy of all them that have any part in Christ, and that by Scripture.

Now we come to prove that de facto, that it hath been kept holy in all ages, in all parts of the Christian world; and our witness shall be the practise of God's Church both East and West, in Asia, Africa, and Europe, in the primitive times, and of all the reformed Churches in Christendome (Scotland only excepted, and yet not altogether) in these times wherein we live. Which practise is sufficient to prove the point, though there were only general grounds out of Scripture to support and back it; the Church having power for any publick benefit, to appoint a day of thanksgiving yearly to be kept holy in remembrance of the same, and by the general practise thereof, all the children of the Church being bound to keep the same, in their succeeding generations.

Such was the Feaste of Parim instituted by the Church of G 2 the
The Practice of the Church.

the Jews, and commanded yearly to be observed by all their posterity in remembrance of their deliverance from Haman's cruelty.

Such was the Feast of the dedication of the Temple, at which Christ was annually present, yet neither of these were commanded by God.

Such is our Lord's day, commonly so called, or the first day of the week, by us kept holy in remembrance of Christ's resurrection (or his birth, or both) thereupon, for the keeping whereof we have no expresse command out of the word of God, but onely the bare practice of some few Churches in the Apostles time, and the constant observance of all particular Churches over all the world, ever since their time, which with us is so prevailing an authority, and sure warrant for observation, that we should account him that should speake against the keeping of the Lord's day holy, an Anathema Maranatha.

Such then also is the day of our Lord's Nativity, which hath alwayes generally, universally, constanty been kept holy in all Nations from the Apostles time, to ours. For which we now come to produce our Witnesses; and first for the Primitive times, those purer days of Christianity.

The sum of whose evidence is, that our Saviour Christ was borne in winter, near unto, or upon the very day of the winter solstice, or (as all agree) he was then borne when the days began to increase and lengthen, upon the 25. day of December say some, upon the eight of the calends of January, say others, and yet all say one and the same thing, for the eight of the calends of January, and the 25. of December, according to diverse accounts, are all one, and the winter solstice...
Primitive Church.

Solstice in our Saviour's time was upon the 25. of December, as also the Vernal Equinox upon the 25. of March, as all Astronomers confess, and shall more plainly appear in the following Treatise, and so are all the Fathers to be understood, that say with St. Augustine that Christ was concepturn, natus in solsticio aestivalo, conceived in the vernal equinox, and born in the winter solstice, that he was born on the eight of the calends of January that is to say, on the 25. day of December, as we in England have affirmed.

2. They say and affirm, that this day was in the Primitive times kept holy by Apostolical tradition grounded upon the word of God; and such traditions we are bound to observe, even by the word of God, as if they had been written by the Apostles themselves, as we may be assured by those two texts, 2 Thess. 2. 15. 1 Cor. 11. 2. And such an Apostolical Ordinance is the solemnizing of the Birth-day of our Saviour Christ Jesus.

To prove the last first: let two or three Witnesses speak to this particular, and you shall have the rest open their mouths in the maintenance of the other, in the times wherein they lived.

First then, St. Augustine in his 118 Epistle to Januarius, speaking of the yearly Feasts then observed, faith, *illa que non Scripta, sed tradita custodimur, quae quidem tota tractione orbis observantur, dantur intelligi, vel ab insis Apostolis, vel plenariis consiliis, quorum est in ecclesia Saluberrima auctoritas, commendata atque statuta retinere, sicuti quod Domini passio, & resurrectione, & ascensio in coelum, & adventus de caelo Spiritus sancti, anniversaria solemnitate celebrantur. Thoso Feasts*
concerning which we have no expresse Scripture, but only traditions, which are now observed all the world over; we ought to know that the keeping of them was commended unto us, and instituted (or commanded) either by the Apostles themselves, or generall Councils, of which there is a most wholesome use in the Church of God; such are the Feasts of our Lords Passion, Resurrection, Ascension into Heaven, and the coming downe of the holy Ghost, which are now kept holy with a yearly solemnity.

But here the prophane opponent may reply, where is the Feast of the Nativity all this while? I answer, he makes a more speciall and honourable mention of it in the very next Epistle (as not to be named the same day with the former for the surpassing excellency thereof) saying, Hic primum opportet, ut Die Nativitatis Domini Sacramenta celebramus, & ipsum revolutum anni Diem festa devotione celebrare. Here it chiefly behoves us (more then in the forementioned Feasts) that upon the day of our Lords Nativity, we should receive the Sacrament in remembrance of him that was borne upon it, and upon the returne of the yeare to celebrate the very day with a Feastinge devotion.

These words were written more then 1200. years agoe, when the forementioned dayes, and especially that of the Nativity, were kept festival and holy, ubique, se diffundit terrarum universitas universa quacunque, se diffundit ecclesia, even to the worlds end, wherefover the Church did extend herselfe as she doth maintain, Lib. 32. cont. Fustum cap 12.

To leave him for a while, Epiphanius, a Father more ancient then he by one hundred and fifty years, in his com.
Fathers.

Compendium doth affirm, that the Christians of the Primitive Church, did fast upon all the Friday's in the year, except the day of Christ's Nativity, fell upon a Friday, which the Church (faith he) excepted by an Apostolical tradition, not fasting, but feasting thereupon.

We must not here omit, that ever since the time of Christ, according to the vulgar account, our Saviour hath been held to be borne on the 25th day of December, in the year of the world, 3949, which account hath been received over all Christendom for so much as belongs to that day; it is called the Vulgar and Dionysian account, because Dionysius Exiguus, Abbot of Rome, in the time of Justinian the Emperor, about the year 532, got it established for the only true and orthodox account, because it was the sole account used by the Christians that lived before, but especially by Eusebius, Jerome, and Prosper of Aquitaine, who use none but it in their Ecclesiastical Histories of the Primitive times.

But to put it beyond all doubt, Clemens the Scholar of the Apostles, mentioned by St. Paul, and called Clement of Rome, to distinguish him from the other of Alexandria, who flourished in the seventieth year of Christ, when all the Apostles (James excepted) were alive, who was Register unto them, and wrote the Book of the Apostles' constitutions, in the thirteenth Chapter of the said Book sets this downe for one.

Dies natalis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, celebratur, vicecessimo quinto die mensis
Fathers.

mensis noni (i.e. Decembris) numerando a Martio.

Let the Birthday of our Saviour Jesus Christ be celebrated on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month (that is to say, of December) beginning to reckon from March.

And again,

Dies Festos agitate frатres ac primum quidem diem Natalis.

Brethren, keep diligently the Feast days, and truly in the first place the day of Christ's birth.

Behold the constitution it selfe, word for word, and his exhortation annexed; by which, and what hath been already said, and what shall be said hereafter, it doth, and shall appear, that the twenty-fifth day of December hath even from the Apostles time, been kept holy by all Christians, solemnly meeting together in their several Congregations, for the Birthday of our Saviour Christ, thereupon joining together in publick prayers, hearing the word, receiving the Sacraments, and giving thanks for his coming into the world; all building upon this constitution, grounded upon the fote-cited places of the word of God.

Suppose it true, which is not, that Justine Martyr, Iræneus and Tertullian, those first Fathers who flourished in the age next to the Apostles, make no mention of the keeping of this day, have not a line in all their
their writings now extant, to exhort the people to observe the same, shall we therefore conclude that the day was not therefore annually solemnized? No in no wise. (for those purer Christians did doe it without all doubt, though many times privately for fear of persecution) but their silence concludes rather, that the Christians then needed no exhortations to so holy a duty, nor no informations concerning the day and year of our Saviours birth, they having in perfect memory what the Apostles had delivered concerning this particular.

But when afterwards the mystery of iniquity began to work, and diverse Christians in those times of persecution and seducement, forgot their duty, and diverse hereticks, the filthy spawne of Ebion and Cerinthus, began to deny the God-head of our Saviour, as Montanus, Theodotion, Proclus, Alcibiades, Themison, Patroclus, Artemon, Alexander, who with many more crept into the Church, about the year 200. denying not only his Deity, affirming him a mere man, conceived of mans seed, but denying also his Birth-day to be kept holy, and dehorting their Proselytes from worshipping thereupon, lest they should seem to honour and acknowledge him for God. Here-upon the Fathers, those Primitive lights, to vindicate our Saviours Deity, and to shew that Divine worship was due to him, began vehemently to urge the keeping of the day, urging the tradition and forementioned constitution of the Apostles, the examples of their fore-fathers, and the Churches universal practice, in the times that they lived in, bringing in the custome of the Churches of God, as a maine argument, as the Apostle likewise doth, in a smaller
Fathers.

matter, 1 Cor. 11. 16. It is true what Tertullian faith; that Christ was called truth, not custome; and that custome without truth is nothing worth; but know, that the custome of the Church, grounded upon truth, is like an armed man to fight for, and maintain it.

To proceed then, to the following Fathers, Clemens Alexandrinus, who flourished at the same time with Tertullian, in the year 204. reposes and censures the followers of Basilides, for Hereticks, who held, that our Saviour Christ was borne on the twenty fourth, or twenty fifth of Pharmuth, or Aprill, and others that said he was borne on the twenty fifth of Pachon, or May, contrary to the ancient and received tradition, Lib. 10. Stromatum. Differences about it argue the observation.

Next after him, Telesphorus in his decretall Epistle, faith, Statutum est, &c. It is ordained, that in the holy night of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, they doe celebrate the publique Church services, and in them solemnly sing the Angels hymne, because also the same night he was declared unto the Shepheards by an Angel, as the truth it selfe doth witnesse.

Next after him, Theophilus, Bishop of Caerace in Palestine, a man approved by Mr. Perkins in his demonstration of the Problem, Vol. 2. p. 597. affirms, that wee ought to celebrate the Birth-day of our Lord, on what day soever the 25. of December shall happen. He is cited by the Magdeburgenses, Cent. 2. c. 6. and by Hospinian, de orig: Festorum Christianorum.

Origen Scholar to Clemens of Alexandria, famous about the year 226. in diverse parts of his works, records
records the annual and universal observation of this blessed day.

After him, Cyprian (who lived in the same age with Arnobius and Laetantius) and flourished in the year 240. Bishop of Carthage, and a glorious Martyr, hath one whole Sermon, now extant in his Workes, preached upon the very day of Christ's birth, part whereof we shall here in gross, which will give excellent light to the truth of this particular.

His words follow.

\[ \text{Serm. de Nat. Do:} \]

\[ \text{Adest Christi multum desiderata, \& diu expectata} \]

\[ \text{Nativitas. Adest sollemnis inctura, \& impressentia-} \]

\[ \text{rum Salvatoris grates, \& laudes, visitatori suo per} \]

\[ \text{bem terrarum San\&a reddit ecclesia. Gaudia nobis cæ-} \]

\[ \text{litus nuntiantur, latitia imperatur, nox ista sacri partus} \]

\[ \text{conscia, nobis fulguribus illustratur; Gloriantur in co-} \]

\[ \text{lestibus superi, prax in terra, bona voluntas hominibus} \]

\[ \text{confirmatur. Adsunt Angeli, loquentur Pastoribus, non} \]

\[ \text{designantur loqui personis humilibus, \& cum ipsi sub-} \]

\[ \text{limes sunt, infermos non asperrantur.} \]

The much desired, and long looked for, day of Christ's Nativity, is now present with us, that famous solemnity is now upon us, and as upon this present day the holy Church, throughout the whole world gives thanks to her Saviour, and renders praise to him, that as this day, visited her from on high. Joyes are preached from Heaven, and merry-making commanded on earth. The fore-going night conscious of that sacred Birth, is by us turned to day by bright burning lamps and torches. The powers above give glory to God in the highest, peace is promised upon earth, and good will confirmed unto men. The Angels are present, and speak to the Shepheards, they
Fathers.

does not now disdain to open their mouths to mean persons, and though they be the most glorious creatures, yet they delibe not those who are weak. &c. So far he, and the Fathers that lived before the Council of Nice in the first, second, and third Century.

To come to the fourth, in the very beginning thereof, Nicephorus in the seventh Book of his Ecclesiastical History, and the sixth Chapter, assures us, that at Nicomedes (a City of Bethenia) when the Festival of Christ's Birth-day came, and a multitude of Christians in all ages had assembled together in the Temple to celebrate that Birth-day. Dioclesian the tyrant, having gotten an advantageous occasion whereby he might accomplish his madness and fury, sent men thither to inclose the Temple, and to set it on fire round about, and so consumed them all to ashes, even twenty thousand persons. Never was such a bonfire on a thanksgiving day, never such a sacrifice on the day of Christ's Nativity; so many zealous Saints ascending up to heaven like Manasseh's Angel in the flame, to sup with Christ above, the beginning of whose day they kept with the Church below.

But in the same age, more honour was done unto the day by Valentinian Emperor of the West, Theodosius the great, and his Son Arcadius, Emperors of the East, who by their imperial decrees authorized the Feast of the Nativity, as Zago Zobo, doth witnessse, an Author quoted by Doctor Willet in his Synopsis, 9. gen. cont. q. 8. p. 406.

If any man shall dispute his credit, there is mention made of it by Basil the great, that glorious lamp of Caesarea, whose contemporaries were Athanasius, Hilarius, and Optatus, about the year 370, when this bright
Fathers.

bright Star of Cappadocia inlightned the Christian world. And witnesseth that for his time, the blessed day was annually kept with all solemn observance; and he honours it with a new title, calling it Diem Incarnationis as others after him, Epiphanius, or ἐπιφανία the day of God's appearance, and that most elegantly, because that upon that day ὁ Θεός ἐκπεφανής εἰς σάρκα God was manifested in the flesh. Further, he hath left us one Sermon Preached thereupon, now extant.

And Gregory Nazianzen, who lived and flourished at the same time, hath an Oration made to the people upon that day, intituled, Oratio in Sancta Epiphancia lumina. An Oration upon the hallowed lights of the Epiphanies (by which name, faith the learned Zanchie) the Fathers did not understand the day commonly so called, when Christ was worshipped by the wise men of the East, but the day of his Birth and Baptism. Nay more, in his 38. Oration he breaks out into this admirable expression, Virtutes celestes gog, hodierno die, &c. I am confident, that even the heavenly powers doe also this present day celebrate the Feast together, and leap exceedingly for joy, seing they are endued with the love of God and men.

Epiphanius, that great light of Cyprus, who flourished at the same time with the two forementioned Fathers, and continued under the Emperours, Valens, Gratian, Theodosius, in his Book intituled, Compendiaria, vera Doctrina, deside catholica, & Apostolica, ecclesiae, reckoning up the annual Feasts then kept, & solemnly observed by the Catholic Church, mentions the day of Christ's Birth for one of the principall and chief. And further, in his 51. Heresie, affirms,
affirms, that Christ was borne circa Januarii mensem, about the month of January; who hath left us six Sermons all Preached on the very day.

Ambrose. 374.

The next is Ambrose, Bishop of Milan in Italy, who flourished at the same time under the Emperours, Gratian and Theodosius, about the year 374. who doth witnesse for the Western Churches, that in them in his dayes, this day was generally kept holy; and in his second Sermon preached thereupon, discanting upon the Birth-dayes of Christ, and John the Baptist, his forerunner, affirms John to be borne at Midsummer, and our Saviour in the Winter; his words are these.

Ecce in Nativitate Christi dies crescit, in Nativitate Johannis decrescit, Christo oriente lux proficit, Johanne nascente minuitur; Ipsa enim quodam modo temporam simulat partus suis. Cum detrimentum faciunt Servus gignitur, cum autem Dominus nascitur augmentum consequuntur; profectione plane facit Dies cum mundi salvator oritur, defection patitur, cum ultimus propheta generatur. Scribitur enim Lex & propheta usq; ad Johannem, atq; ideo necesse erat ut obscuraretur legis observatio, ubi evocatio ubi Evangelij gratia, refulgebant, & cessaret prophetia reteris testamenti, cum novi testamenti gratia Succedebat. Ergo in Nativitate Domini proficit Dies quem splendidissima lux veritatis illumina.

Behold (faith he) at the Birth of Christ the day doth encrease, at the Birth of John it doth decrease: Christ rising, the light is augmented, John being borne, it is lessened. For the very times in a manner doe wait upon their severall Nativities; when they loose, the servant is borne, when they gaine, the Ma-
Fathers.

... is brought forth. The day doth sensibly encrease when the Saviour of the world came into it; but decrease, when the last of the Prophets was borne in it: for it is written, that the Law and the Prophets continued till John; and therefore it was needful that the observation of the Law should be darkned, when the calling and grace of the Gospel began to shine clear: and that the Prophecy of the old Testament should cease, when the grace of the new did succeed. Therefore upon the Lord's birth, the day doth encrease, because the brightest light of truth doth enlighten it.

The next is Gregory Nyssen, Brother to Basil the great, and of the same time with St. Jerome, he was present at the first Council of Constantineople, and writ the Creed confirmed in that Council, he flourished about the year 380. and witnesses the very same thing with St. Ambrose, in his Oration made upon the day of Christ's Nativity: saying,

In hac die minui tenebrae incipiunt, noctisque modi ausgescente radio, ad defectum redignatur. Mysterium naturae exposuit perspicaciorem, ac docebat quid sibi velit, quid in adventu Domini dies crescit, nox decurrit.

Upon this day the darkness begins to diminish, and the nights by the increasing Sun-shine, begin to grow shorter; nature herself expounds the mystery to the more prudent, and teacheth us what is meant by this, that at the coming of Christ into the world, the day increaseth, and the night diminisheth. Then he adds the exposition in most elegant terms following.

Ego talia quaedam dicentem mibi videor audire, Crea-
turam... Vides noctem ad summam longitudinem progres-
sum,
Fathers.

Sanctus uterius currire ac prosferri desistere, & in contrarium resolvit. Animadvertere quod improbus peccatine
quo ad ejus fieri poterat, aucta atq; extremam nequitiae
magnitudinem esseruta, bodie uterius progresi, ac sibi
quasi posidendo usu capere prohibita est, atq; debincad
defectionem redigitur. Vides lucis radium diutius dur-
vare, & Solem esse solito sublimiorum, animadvertere vere
lucis adventum, quae radis Evangelicior orbem illuminat.

Me thinks I heare the Creature speaking such like
words as these unto me. Thou seest the night hath
gain'd his utmost length, and ceaseth now to run out,
or to be extended any further, but as it were to re-
treat. Take notice then, that now the dishonest
night of sin, having encreased it selfe as far as it was
possible, and reached the extreme point of ungodli-
nesse, was this day prohibited to reach any further,
and hereupon became shorter and shorter. Thou
seest the Sun to shine longer then it did the dayes be-
fore, and to appear higher in the Heaven then it was
wont; take notice then of the true light that at this
time sprung up among us, and by the beams of the
Gospel enlightens every one that comes into the
World. And St. Hierome seconds him, saying, That
the day kept in memory of our Lords Nativity, is the
day on which the ancient report is, he was borne.

The next is, Aurelius Prudentius, who in his Cathe-
merion gives us a Carrol, a Divine Hymne by him
penned and made in honour of Christ, who was born
that day. I shall give you it both in Latine and Eng-
lish, that it may be like Moses his song, Deut. 31. 28.
a record against them that keep not the day, which the
old Father so devoutly mery did 1200. years agoe,
so much honour with a piece of Divine poesie. His
straines follow.

Hieronymus
Tom. 9. p. 82.
c. 1.

Prudentius
Anno 390.

Hymnus 8. Cal.
Jan. pag. 60.

Quid
Quid est quod aratum circumim.
Sol jam revocens deserit,
Christus ne terris nascitur,
Qui lucis aget transitem?

Heu quam fugacem gratiam
Festina voluete Dies?
Quam dene subdictum facere
Sensum recisa extinxerat?

Columnitis latius.
Grantur gaudens humus,
Scandit gradatim desuvo.
Jubat prioraes lineas.

Emerge dulcis custos
Quem mater edit Casitas,
Parentes, et expers canjigiae
Mediator, et duplex genus.

Ex ore quamlibet Patris
Ssit ortus, & verbo editus,
Tamen paerno in patrone,
Sophia Calessis prius.

Que prompta Celum Condidit
Celum dieum, & cetera
Virtute verbi effecta sunt.
Homo est quasi verbum Deus.

Sed ordinatis Seculus,
Rerum, digo, seam,
Fundator ipsi, & artificex
Permanest in patriae sita.

Hoc happens it that now the Sun
from th'artick circle backeth run.
Is Christ's Birth day now come in light,
That doth augment the train of light?

How did the hasty day, alas!
Before rowle up his flying grace?
How did it piece-heale part away,
Almost put out the lamp of day?

The Heaven may blister with more hate,
And the glad earth congratulate.
For now again begin this day.
The Sun doth climb his former way.

Then shew thy self, Babe sweet in feature,
Thou God and Man, our Mediator,
Brought forth by a most chaste creature.
Who knew no Man, and yet a Mother.

Although sprung from thy Fathers
And published by the word of truth.
Thou wast that wisdom that did rest
Before thy Birth, in Fathers Breast.

Which ever prompt the Heaven did
And all things ere that we can name;
As Heaven, and day, and all abroad.
The word made all, the word was God.

And now the world's ordered,
And state of things established.
The founder yet, and workman maine;
In Fathers bosom did remaine.
Quid est quod arum circumvnm,
Sol jam recurrens descripsit,
Christum non terris nascitur,
Qui lucis angel transtulit?

Hoc happens it that now the Sun,
From th'artick circle back doth run;  
Is Christ's Birth day now come in light,
That doth augment the train of light?

Hen Quam sugacem gratiam
Festina volvebat Dies?  
Quam pene subductam sacre
Sensim recisa exstinctemer?

How did the hasty day, alas!
Before rowle up his flying grace?
How did it piece-meale parted away,
Almost put out the lamp of day?

Columnit cat latius
Gratetur & gaudens humus,
Scandit gradatim deno
Jubar priores lineas.

The heaven may glitter with more state,
And the glad earth congratulate,
For now again upon this day,
The sun doth climb his former way.

Emerge dulcis Pusio,
Quem matris edit Casitas,
Parens, et exposu conjingis
Mediator, et duplex genus.

Then shew thy self, babe sweet in feature,
Thou God and Man, our mediator;
Brought forth in a most chaste creature.
Who knew no Man, and yet a mother.

Ex ore quamlibet Patris
Sororum & verba edita
Lumen paterno in patiore
Sophia, Callebras prius.

Although sprung from thy fathers
And published by the word of truth,
Thou wouldest wise, a child did rest;
Before thy birth, in father's breast.

Que prompta Celum Condidit
Celum deusa & cetera,
Virtute verbi effeque sunt;
Hacet in manem verbum Dens.

Which ever prompt the heaven did
And all things else that we can name,
As heaven, and day, and all abroad,
The word, made all, that word was God.

Sed ordinatis Seculis
Requiescet digito Atun,
Fundator ipsi ejus artificis,
Permanit in patris hum.

And now the world's ordered,
And state of things established,
The founder yet, and work-man maine:
In fathers bo'some did remaine.
Prudentius his Carroll

Till many thousand years run round,
Courting o're them that dwelt on
(ground,
He did vouchsafe to visit then,
The world of daily sinning men.

For mortals superstition blinde,
Worshipp'g vaine toyes of minde,
Brais,wood, cold flones, beleev'd to be
The onely God in perfons three.

By this means then did fall all Lands,
Into the swarverous Robbers hands,
Their enslav'd souls without reason,
Plunging in Hells smokey prisone.

But Christ could not endure the fall
And slaughter of his Gentiles all,
Unpunished, lest in that day
His Fathars fabrick should decay.

A mortall Body he did take,
That therein moving, he might break
The chaine of death, pull out the string,
And man unto his Father bring.

This, O Christ, was thy Birth-day,
When the Creator cloath'd with clay,
Thee Breath'd by Him, and then at last,
The Word unto the flesh glu'd faile.

O Noble Virgin do not see
(Made pregnant by humility.)
The honour of thy chastitie
By him enhau'c'd: that's borne of thee.
On the Day of Christ's Nativity.

O quam nunc gaudia
Alius practica continet
Ex qua novum Seculum
Procedit; & lux aurea.

Vagitus ille Exordium
Vernantis orbis producit
Nam functa novarum Cordium
Mundus veternum depulit.

O how great joyes them selves entomb
Of things below in thy chast womb,
Out of which, this day came in light
A new age, and a golden light.

The crying of thy Babe began
The world's forns, before the Sun.
For then the world made new that day:
Her old foule coat did cast away.

Then, I suppose, the Earth indeed
With flowers all, thick the Country
And even the Indian quick sands, they
With Ner and Ner, breath'd that day.

O Babe, things rude and barbarous
All of thy Birth were conscious:
The stones therin hardnesse did let paffe,
And hardest when stones sprouted graffe.

Now honey from the rock did spill,
The dry stocks elm they'd its good will,
In sweating forth sweet scented Gum,
And shrubs in dropping pure Balsom,

Eternall King borne in a Stable,
Thy holy Swathed bands, Manger, Cradle,
Were sacred held, by ages past,
Beleeved by dumb men at the last.

These things the Blind-beast & the Bore,
The unlearned rout (I mean) adore,
An heartless Nation, who indeed
Know not what else but how to feed.
Prudentius his Carroll, &c.

Sed cum sidi spiritu.
Concurrat ad presapia,
Pagana gens, & quadrupes
Sapiatq, quod brutum fuit.

Negat patrum prosapia,
Perosus presentem Deum:
Credas venenis ebriam,
Furijssq, lymphatam rapi.

Qui d prona per secelus ruiss?
Agnosce, si quicquam tibi
Mentis recedit integre,
Ducem tuorum principum.

Hunc quem latebra, & obsietrix
Et virgo fata, & Cunula
Et imbexilla infantia,
Regem dederunt gentibus.

Pecator intuerebatur
Celsum coruscis nubibus,
Dejectus ipse, & irritis
Plangens deatam sitibus.

Cum vastra signum buccina
Terris crientidis miserit
Et sejus axis cardiacem
Mundi ruentis solvereit.

Insignis ipse, & preminens
Meritis rependit congrua:
Hic, lucis sum perpetis,
Illis, Gehennam, & tantarum.

Judae, tune fulmen Crucis
Exspecta qui sit, sentiess,
Quem te furoris presule,
Mors hancit, & mox reddidit.

Let Pagans with a stable spirit
Unto the Stable run outright;
Let four-footed Beasts discern
What four-footed Beasts concern.

Their Fathers Sons, they this deny,
Hating God, now us so nigh. (drunk
Thou wouldst believe them poison
With furies into madness and funk.

Why dost thou headlong run to sin?
If some sound reason be within?
Acknowledge Christ, who is indeed
Of all thy Princes, the chiefe head.

This Babe whom Midwife, cradle, night,
And Virgin lighted, brought to light,
And Nonage weak, now forth did bring
Unto the Gentiles for a King.

Sinner, thou shalt one day espie
In Heavens bright clouds exalted high,
Dejected then, thou shalt in vaine
Lament with tears thy guilt a maine.

When as he with loud trumpets sound,
Shall give a signe, to burne the ground,
And the broke axtree: by his fall
Unhinge the Center, ruine all.

He Judge Supreme then, all a part,
Shall give to all men their desert,
To Martyr's light: Hells night for aye,
To such as did despise his day.

Then to Iuda, Judge shall he
(The Cross a thunder-bolt shall be)
To those fierce men, who to death
Judg'd him, which stope, and gave him
(breath.
The next is Chrysostome, who lived at the same time with Aurelius Prudentius, about the year 398, of whom the Christians of Tauro Cilicia, were wont to say, that it was better that the Sun should withdraw his shining, then that Chrysostome's mouth should be stoped from speaking. He was first a Priest of Antioch, after that Bishop of Constantinople, called Golden mouth, and not without cause; Demosthenes Christianorum, the Christians Demosthenes. He in an especial manner spends his Rhetorick in magnifying the celebration of this day, in an highest straine, as followeth; and first, in his Oration De beato Philogonio: saying,

Appetit jam Festum omnium festorum maxime venerandum, adorandum, quod si quis appellet omnium Festivalum Metropolin, haud quaquam abberet; Quid autem hoc est Christi juxta carmen Nativitas; Ab hoc enim illustrato Dic, Festum Epiphaniorum, ac Sacrum Pascha, Ascensionis, et Pentecostes, originem ac fundamentum ducunt. Nisi enim secundum Cænum natus esset, Christus nequaquam baptizatus esset, nam ideo est Festum Theophaniae, nequaquam esset Christus crucifixus, hoc enim est Festival Pascha, nequaquam esset Spiritus Sanctus, hoc enim est Festival Pentecostes. Itaque ab hoc, euntes quopiam hic diversi anni sunt, nata sunt nobis bacc Festas.

Now that Feast is come, the most to be reverenced, and adored of all other Feasts; But what Feast is that? The Birth-day of our Saviour Christ according to the flesh, which if any man shall call it the Metropolitan Feast, he is no way in an error; for from this day, made so illustrious in its observation, the Feast of the Epiphania, Pascover, Ascension, and Pentecost, have their ground, and original; for if he had not been borne according to the flesh, he had not beene Baptized, which is the Feast of the Theopha-
Theophanes, he had not been crucified, which is the Feast of the Passover; he had not sent down the holy Ghost, which is the Feast of Pentecost. Therefore from this, those diverse Rivelets do stream, as from their proper Fountain; and from his Birth those Feasts have their Birth and breeding.

Note here, that Justine Martyr, one of the most ancient of the Fathers, who flourished in the year 150, in his second Apology, ad finem, and before him, Ignatius St. John's Disciple, who flourished in the 171. year after Christ, in his Epistle to the Magnesians, and Irenæus, who was famous about the year, 180, writing to Victor the Bishop of Rome, and Tertullian, who writ in the year 203. Lib. de Corona Milita, doe witnesse, that the Feasts forementioned by Chrysostome, were generally observed and kept in their dayes, and therefore the Feast of the Nativity not mentioned in their writings not extant, must be then kept and observed also, it being according to the Father the foundation of them all.

This I thought good to note by the way, against them that build much of their hay and rubble, against the honour of his Birth-day that was borne in the Stable, upon the silence of the first Fathers. We now proceed with holy Chrysostome, who further adds, in the forecited place.

Verum, non ut hoc tantum, par est hunc Diem ceteris anteponi, sed ubi, quod in hoc natura est, & ceteris omnibus est venerabilis. Nam, quod Christus homo factus, mortus est, quis nullum peccatum pertransisset, quid huic poterit adjungi miraculo? Sed mortale corpus assumptum, hoc quoq admirandum. Ceterum, quod Deus cum effici voluerit homo fieri, tantumq; sed imittere sustinuerit, quantum

Chrysost. 397.
Fathers.

quintum ne cogitatione quidem completi ques, hoc est omnium maxime reverendum, stuporis quam quod dem Paulus admirans dicebat, magnum esse pretatis mysterium, deus declaratus in carne, & salvi, non enim angelis apprehendit Deus semer, sed semer Abraham apprehendit ut poterat fratribus in omnibus afferendi.

But not only for this reason, is it thought meet that Christ's Birth-day should be preferred before those of his Baptism, Passion, Ascension, and Pentecost; but for that which was borne thereupon, it ought to be held more venerable than all other; for that Christ made man, should die who had contracted no sin; what can be added to this miracle but that he did assume a mortal body? This is also wonderful, and to be admired. But that being God he should be made man, and so far debase himself, as cannot enter into the mind of man to conceive, this is of all the other, the most wonderful, and full of amazement, which Paul admiring, cries out, Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, and again in another place, He took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, that he might be made like to his brethren in all things.

Propter hoc potissimum diligò Diem hunc, amog, et amorem ejus in medium propono, ut vos amatorij hujus phræmati partícipe reddam; Ergo vos omnes obtexor, rogò, ut summo studio, summaq, alacritate, velitis adeste; sed primum suam unusquisque, domum repurger, ut videamus dominum nostrum in canis jacem

Quid enim excusabimus: aut quam veniam obtinebimus? Si quum ipse nostra causa descenderit de Celis nos ad illum ex eodem nostris ire gravemus? Quum alegens Barbaria ex Perside accurrant us illum videant in præsepia jacentem, tu

Christmas-day bid holy by St. Chos-ßone.

It was the use of the Church then to do, as shall appear.
For this very reason, I love this day in an especial manner, and propose unto you the love thereof, that I may make you partakers of this lovely medicine. Therefore, I exhort, and beseech you all that you will be present thereupon, with all diligence, and all alacrity. But first of all, let every one of us purge his owne house; that we may see our Lord Christ lying in his swaddling cloaths. For what excuse shall we make? Or what plea shall we put in for our absence? If that upon that day when he came down from Heaven for our sakes, we should think much to goe out of our owne houses to worship him? If when Strangers, and Barbarians did take a far journey out of Persia, that they might see him lying in the Manger, we should grudge to goe a little way to Church to enjoy that blessed sight. For without all doubt if we come hither by faith, we shall see him Cradled in the Manger, because the Lords Table supplies the place of that Manger unto us.

Again, the same Father in his second Tome, and the third Homilie, Preached upon the day of our Saviours Nativity, speaking of the differenc keeping of the day by the Christians in Armenia, Egypt, and all the rest of the world besides, they observing the sixt of January, on the day of the Epiphanie, when he was Baptized, and these the twenty fifth of December, thus ends the controversy.
Let us meditate in our hearts that as upon this day (to wit, December the twenty fifth) Christ was borne: Others are of opinion, that he was borne upon the day of the Epiphany; We doe not condemn other mens opinions, yet we will follow our own doctrine; Let every man be resolved in his own mind, and may be the Lord will also reveale this particular to every man. For both they that think our Saviour Christ to be borne at that time, and we that maintaine him to be borne as this day, doe worship the same Lord, and embrace the same Babe. But let us consider whose ground is the stronge. Our reason reprehends not others, it justifies our selves. The words we speak, are not ours, they are the definitive sentence of our ancestors. The whole world speaks against the opinion of that one province; The Apostles are for us, their Tradition takes our part, and we say that Christ was borne as upon this day, and
borne againe upon the Epiphanie. The world is our witness, the Creature doth restifie with us, to this day the nights encrease, from this day they doe decrease. Truth comes in the place of error. This day the Sun of righteousness rose upon us.

Once more, for the time, the Father adds in the foresaid Homilie, that the Annuntiation and the Conception of our Lord was upon the eigh of the Calends of Aprill, and that he was borne in the moneth of December, in the winter time, upon the eigh of the Calends of January, upon the day of the winter Sylstice.

I now laugh to think how the ignorant opponent doth begin to insult upon these seeming contradicti ons, and calls the old Father dotard, and is ready to daunce a gig for joy, if he had but a Scottish Bagpipe; but the wise know that he betrays but his owne ignorance in Chronologie, and shewes himselfe a fool; for the day of the winter Sylstice, the twenty fift of December, and the eigh of the Calends of January, will prove all one day, if we call but to mind what we noted before, that in our Saviours time the Vernall Equinox was upon the 25. of March, according to our English and Julian account, which was the eigh of the Calends of April, according to the account of the Hebrews; their Nisan, their first month in the year, beginning in the middle of our March, and having in it fourteen dayes of our April, so that the twenty fift of March with us, is the eigh of April, according to them; and the eigh of January with them, the twenty fift of December with us, and the twenty fift of December then (when Christ was borne) was the day of th
the winter Solstice. As Valerius Bellanensis, in his Compendium on the Sphære, p. 224. Both witnesse in these words, Tempore Augusti Octaviani ut observas Plinio, bume dies vigesimo quinto Decembris erat quo die, natus est Christus afferior nostro. In the time of Augustus Octavian, as Plinio observes, the shortest day was on the twenty fifth of December, on which day Christ our Redeemer was born. See also the Julian and Romane Kalendarers, in Baromini, Genebrard Chron. lib. 3. Gualtarius, Tab. Chron. Gorden Lesmor, Chron.

Note one thing more, and that is the great zeale of the Christians in those dayes, almost 1300. years agoe, and their strictnesse in computing and observing the very day of the Birth of our Saviour Christ, and keeping it holy, appearing especially in this, that they would not allow the Armenians, or Egyptians, an eleven dayes difference; Yea, so hainous a thing it was accounted to keep it on any other day but on the twenty fifth of December, that their Doctours, those bright lights of the Primitive Church, both writ and preached against it, and the whole world did withstand it.

So much for Chrysofstome, and too much for any Scottish Piper to play No fyke matter. Yet we have as pregnant witnesses as he, among whom

Augustine that Famous Father

Bishop of Hippo, in Africk, we may name the chiefe, who flourished in the year 429. and hath four and twenty Sermons in print, Preached upon the very day of Christ's Birth; in which he witnes-
Fathers.

Seth diverse times, that in his time this day was set aside by all Christians, throughout the whole world, for such holy exercises, as Preaching, Prayer, receiving of the Sacrament, thanksgiving, and rejoicing, and that it was consecrated, set a part, and sanctified to that end, not by the visible Sun of this world, but by the invisible Creator thereof; in his nineteenth Sermon, de tempore, being the fifteenth upon the day, and more plainly in his twelfth Sermon, de tempore, and the eighth upon the day, he faith,

Filius Dei, idemque filius hominis, sine Matre de patre natus, creatit omnem Diem, sine patre de matre natus consecravit hunc Diem, divina nativitate invisibilis, humana visibilis, utraque mirabilis.

The Son of God, and the same the Son of man, one person, borne of his Father without a Mother, created every day, borne of his Mother without a Father, consecrated this day; Invisible in his Birth Divine, visible in his Birth humane, wonderfull in both.

2. That he was borne upon the shortest day of the year, that is the day of the winter Solstice, that was then upon the twenty fifth of December, he doth answer in his sixteenth Sermon, de tempore, and the twelfth upon the day, giving the reason why he was borne upon this day, Quo die minor dies nulius in terris, then which no shorter shines upon Earth, because, faith he, he humbled himselfe into the meanest condition; therefore he chose the meanest and shortest day to be borne upon.

3. That that day that he was borne upon was then the first day of the week, or our Sunday: in the night foregoing (the night being before the day, according
Fathers.

ing to the Scriptures computation, Gen. 1. 1) December the twenty fifth, he testifyeth in his Commentary upon the 132. Psalm, in his fourth Book, de Trin. cap. 5. and in the end of his nineteenth Sermon, de tempore, he gives the reason thereof in these words, Diem in quo creavit lucem, Lux in quo creavit egegit, that is to say, Christ the light chose that day to be created, or borne upon, in which he created the light itself. And after him, of the same opinion is Nicephorus, Eccl. hist. 1. 1. c. 12. Dominus Antonius in parte hist. 5. 4. cap. 10. Bonavent. de vita Christi, Petrus de Natalibus, Lucidus, and divers others.

4. That the day of Christ's Birth was every year kept holy by all Christians in his time, and that upon that day they were bound by especial duty to receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, he doth most vehemently testify, and is line upon line, and precept upon precept, throughout his works to exhort them thereunto, as in his sixth and eighth Sermons, de Natalitiea Christi, his 26. de tempore, but in his 119. Epistle to Januarius, he is more peremptory, for having spoken of keeping the Feasts of Easter, and Pentecost before, as if he were angry for forgetting the chiefe of all, he layes on with an Hic primum opportunet, ut die Nativitatis Domini Sacramentum Celebrabis, in memoriam illius qui natus est, et ipsum revolutum anni Diem festa devotione celebrare.

It is our duty more then upon any day, to receive the Sacrament every year upon the Lords Birth-day, and to keep that day festivall and holy. And further, in his first Sermon, de tempore, he bids the day, and gives the people warning to come to Church thereupon, and to prepare themselves in an especial manner,
Fathers.

Augustine.
Anno 420.
Ser 1. in Dom.
1 Ad fontem.

nner, then, to receive the Sacrament of his body and blood. The form of his bidding followeth.

Appropinquente jam sacratissima solennitate, qua Salvator nostrum inter homines nasci misericordius voluit, (Fratres Charissimi) attentius considerate, qualiter oporteat nos, in adventu tantae potestiae preparari: ut Regem ac dominum nostrum lati atq; gaudentes, cum gloria & laudibus mereamur suscipere, & in conspectu ejus inter salices causas Sanctorum, gratulando exultare, magis quam ab eo, propter facitatem nostrum repulsus inter peccatores aeternam confusiolem mereri.

Et ideo rogo, moneo, ut quantum possimus cum Dei adjutorio laboremus: ut illo die cum sincera, & pura conscientia, & mundo corde, & casto corpore, ad altare Domini possimus accedere, & corpus, & sanguinem ejus non ad judicium, sed ad remedium animae nostra mereamur accipere (et Paulo posl)

Licer, nos omni tempore bonis operibus ornatos, ac splendidos esse conveniatis, praecipue in die Natalis Domini: Sicut in Evangelio docuit, Lucere debent hominibus opera vestra.

Most Dear Brethren, the most sacred solemnity now approaching, wherein our Saviour mercifully vouchsafed to be borne among us, consider more attentively: how we ought to prepare our selves for the advent of so great a Power, that we may be counted worthy to receive our Lord with joy, and rejoicing, with glory and praise, and in his right firmament in giving thanks, in the midst of those happy Assemblies of the Saints, rather then suffering his repulse for our filthinesse, deserve eternall confusion among sinners.

Therefore I exhort and give warning, that we la-
bour with God's help to our utmost power, upon that day to come to the Lord's Table with a sincere and pure conscience, a clean heart, and a sound body, that we may be worthy to receive his body and blood, not to condemnation, but for our owne soules health, (and then a little after.)

Though at all times we ought to be adorned, and beautified with good works, yet especially upon the day of our Lord's Nativity, as we are taught in the Gospel, ought our lights to shine before men, that they being our works may then glorifie our Father in Heaven.

The Father Preacheth on, and I cannot chuse but take the notes, and present them to you, they are so sweet.

Considerate queso (Fratres) quando aliquis homin potens vel nobilis; Natalem sum, aut filij sui celebrare desiderat, quanto studio, ante plures Dies quicquid in domo tua fordidum invenerit or diat or mundari, quicquid inceptum, & incongruum proiici, quicquid utile & necessarium pretcipit exhiberi. Domus etiam si obscurata fuerit dealbatur, pavimenta scopis mundantur, & diversas res psera floribus ornantur; quicquid etiam ad latitiam et corporis delicias pertinet omni sollicitudine providetur. Ut quid ista (fratres charissimi) nisi ut Dies natalitius cum gaudio celebratur hominis mortuus? Si ergo tanta preparar in Natalitio tuo aut filij tui: quanta & qualia preparare debes Suscepturus Natalem Domini tui? Si talia preparar moritura, qualia preparare debes eterno.

Consider my Brethren, I beseech you, that when a great or noble man doth desire to solemnize his owne or his Son's Birth-day, with what eagerness he gives his Servants order many dayes before to make clean
what shall be found foule in his house, to cast out
what shall be found unsitting, or undecent, to pro-
 vide what shall be profitable or necessary. The walls
are whited, pavements washed, and streved with
fine flovvrres of diverse sorts, and whatsoever belongs
to the merry-making of the foule, or the delighting
of the body, are procured with all care. And to
what end is all this great preparation (my beloved
Brethren) but to grace and glad the Birth-day of a
mortall man? If then thou preparest so great and
gay things upon thine owne birth-day, or that of thy
Son, how much greater and farre more excellent,
oughtest thou to prepare against the Birth-day of
thy Lord? If thou preparest such things to honour
him that shall die, what manner of provision ought-
est thou to make in honour of him that lives for
ever?
Therefore whatsoever thou wouldst be sorry
to have found in thine owne house in the day of
thine owne Nativity, have a care that God may not
find the like in thy foule, upon the Birth-day of his
only Son.

The Father goes on, Certa si te Rex terrrenus, aut
quicunqu, pater-familias ad Natalitium suum invitaret,
qualibus vestimentis studueris ornatus incedere, quam no-
vir, vel nitida, vel splendidis, quorum nec vetustas, nec vi-
litas, nec aliqua caditas, oculos invitantis offenderet? Tali
ergo studio in quantum prevales, Christo auxiliante, con-
tende ut diversis virtutum ornamentis anima composita,
Simplicitatis geminis, & sobrietas floribus adornata,
ad solennitatem Regis externi: id est, ad Natalem Domi-
ni Salvatoris, cum secura conscientia procedat, castitate
nitida, charitate splendida, elemosynis candida. Christi
enim
enim dominus, ut te ire compositum natalitium suum celeb- 
brare cognoverit: Ipse per se venire, & animam tuam, 
non solum visi tare, sed etiam requiescere, & perpetuo in 
illa dignabitur habitare. Sicut 2 Cor. 6. Apoc. 3. 20. Et 
quam felix est ista anima que vitam suam ita, deo auxi-
liante studuerit, gubernare, ut Christum hospitem & ha-
bitatorem mereatur accipere!

Certainly if an earthy King, or any House-keeper, should invite thee to the Feast of his Nativity, thou wouldest care to cloath thy selfe with such new, neat, and gallant attire, of which neither the oldnesse, coursness, or foulness, might offend the eyes of him that invited thee. Doe thou strive then, by the help of Christ, as much as possible thou canst, to a-
dorne thy selfe with divers, vertuous ornaments, as 
the Jewels of simplicity, and the flowers of sobriety, 
against the great Solemnity of the Eternall King, 
that is to say the Birth-day of our Lord and Saviour, 
that thy soule may draw near with a safe Conscience, 
purified by chastity, shining through charity, and 
made white with alms-deeds. For if Christ thy Lord 
doe know that thou being thus fitted, doest sanctifie 
his Birth-day in this composure: he will come unto 
thee himselfe, and will not onely vouchsafe to visit 
thy soule, but to take up his rest and dwell therein, 
and how happy is the soule of that man, who by Gods 
assistance, so orders his life, that he may be counted 
worthy to have Christ for his guest and inmate: So 
much shall suffice to have glanced out, of this holy 
Father, for the clearing of this particular.

The next is Orosius, St. Augustines Schollar, and 
afterwards a Priest in Spain, about the year 415, 
who writ seaven Books of History, which he dedica-
G

Paulus Orosius
Anno 425,
Fathers.

red to his forefald Master, in the seventh and second Chapter, affirming the very same things, concerning the honour, time, and day of Christ's Birth, that his Master did before him, that it was on the twenty fifth of December.

In the same age flourished Cassianus a Priest of Massilia in France, Anno 440. who testifieth the very same, and agrees with the former; who further speaking of the Egyptians, who did (as he affirms) antiqua traditione, by ancient tradition, observe the day of the Epiphane, in remembrance both of Christ's Birth and Baptism, adds, that they did not disapprove the different custom of the Western Christians, who kept it on the 25th of December.

And with him accords Nicephorus, Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. c. 12. saying, Vigesimius & quintus tum mensis December, erat Dies quum ineffabile pictatis, & anor, erga genus humanum tuæ (Verbum Domini) maximum, incrabilis partus perfectur mysterium. It was then the twenty fifth of December, when thou, O word of God, the unspakable mystery of thy goodnesse and love towards mankinde, and the exceeding great Birth was accomplished. Following Maximus, Bishop of Tours in France, of the same time with Leo the great, who hath six Sermons Preached upon the day, extant: And Chrysologus who hath one, Sect. 172.

Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome in that time also, an holy and famous man, that sat at the stern of that Church for almost one and twenty yeares, even in those purer times, when Rome had not forsaken her first love, hath ten Sermons Preached upon the day; in the first whereof he proves the point, saying,

Servator nostrer hodie natus est, gaudeamus, nay; est.
Fathers.

Our Saviour was born this day; let us be glad: It is not lawful to give place to sadness on the Birthday of life, which taking away the fear of death, prompts unto us the joy of promised Eternity. Let no man dare to separate himself from the partaking of this day's rejoicing, seeing there is the same universal ground of joy to all.

And again in his second Sermon.

Exultemus, quia nobis illuxit Dies redemptionis nostra, reparatorum antiquae, felicitatis aeternae. Reparatur enim nobis salus nostra annua revolutione Sacramentum; in initio promissum, in fine readium, fine pro multis.

Let us rejoice because this day of our redemption, ancient reparation, and eternal happiness, doth shine within our doors, for as this day, the Sacrament or Seal of our salvation is renewed unto us by the years revolution; which was promised in the beginning of time, performed in the fulness of time, and continued when time shall be no more. So much he, shewing in his time the strict annual observation of the day.

In the same age, and at the same time did live and flourish.

Cyril of Alexandria, President of the Council of Ephesus, against Nestorius, Anno 430.

Theodore of Cyprus.

Prosper of Aquitaine, in the year 445. And Vigilius, who flourished about the year 475. in whose
whose dayes the forementioned Feast was kept universally, constantly, annually.

Thus have we proved by sufficient witnesses, whom none will or can deny, but they who believe none but themselves, the point in hand, for five hundred years after Christ, for which time the Church of God continued a Virgin, without any notable spot or blemish, and Apostolical; now she began to be defiled, her beauty to be spotted, yet she did never so far fall away from her first love, Jesus Christ, in any place where she wandered, as not to follow the example of those purer times, and forementioned Christians; and every year boldly to observe the Feast of our Saviour's Nativity. Nay, I believe the thankless adversary will willingly grant so much, because he would make it like every thing which his Ignorance mislikes, a piece of Popery; but what hath been said already, hath prevented that objected fopperie.

It shall suffice then, for every hundred year following, to bring in one witness or two, till the time of the Fathers be fulfilled, to prove the general continuance of this religious observance.

In the sixth Century then, we meet with Rupertus, the Apostle of Bavaria, famous in the year 580, who in his third Book, De divinis officiis, and cap. 16, witnesseth the general observation of the day in that age, and faith, that Christ was borne Nocte dominica, in the preceding night, or about the dawning of the Lords day. And the reason was, faith he, Ut quo die dixit fiat lux & facta est, lux ejusdem dei, Nocte orieretur in tenebris lumen electis corde, & visitaret nos Oriens ab alto: illuminare eos qui in tenebris & in umbra mortis sedebant.
That upon what day he said, *Let there be light,* and there was light, in the night of that light should spring out of darkness to the upright in heart, and the morning should visit us from on high, to give light to them that hate in darkness, and in the shadow of death. To this alludes that of St. John, even no doubt to the hour of Christ's Birth, *The light shined in darkness,* and the darkness comprehended it not.

In this age also, before him, flourished Fulgentius of Carthage, about the beginning of the Century, who hath one Sermon extant in honour of the day.

Isidorus, Junior, of Hispalis in Spaine, after him, about the year 596. And Evagrius Scholasticus, who writ his Ecclesiasticall History, ending in the year 597. And Gregory the great, who lived at the same time, to whose works I refer you. But especially, take notice, that in this age about the year 523. Justine the Emperor of the East, decreed that the Feast of the holy Nativity of Christ, should be observed, as Nicephorus observes, Hist. Eccl. l. 7. c. 28. If any one object, that therefore it was not kept before, he may as well argue, that the Lords day was never kept in England, before this Parliament sat, because they have made a blessed Act for the strict observation of the same.

For the next Century, from the year 600. to 700. we shall produce Bede our owne Countrye-man, who was famous in this age, and hath writ to the purpose in this particular; (I mean venerable Bede,) and so fully, that he hath delivered in a few words, all that hath been said before, especially concerning the time when Christ was borne, to give you a tast, which will relish well with a discreet palate.
He in the nineteenth Chapter, Lib. 1. De natura rerum, relating that definitive sentence of his forefathers, that Christ was Conception est Equinoxio verno, natus Solsticio hyberno, conceived in the Vernal Equinox, and born in the winter Solstice, hath these words.


Concerning the Equinox alls, that they are to be placed on the eight of the Calends of April, that is, upon the 25. day of March, and upon the eight of the Calends of October, that is, upon the 24. day of September; and concerning the Solstices, that they are to be placed, the one upon the eighth day of the Calends of July, that is, upon the 24. day of June, and the other upon the eighth day of the Calends of January, that is upon the 25. day of December, is the definitive sentence of diverse Doctors, both Heathen and Christian, over the whole World.

He then brings in, first the testimonies of Pliny, and Hippocrates, those Heathens, then adds, that all the famous Fathers of the Church are of the same opinion, in affirming, that Christ our Lord was conceived upon the eighth day of the Calends of April, which is the same day with the 25. of our March the day of the Vernal Equinox, and that upon that very day he also suffered, and died, and that he was born upon the day of the winter Solstice, upon the eight of the Calends of January, that is to say, upon the
he twenty fifth day of our December.

As also, that John the Baptist, his fore-runner, was conceived upon the eighth of the Calends of October, which is all one with the twenty fourth of September, the day of the Autumnal Equinoctial, and was borne upon the day of the Summer Solstice, being then upon the eight of the Calends of July, according to that times account, which according to ours, is the 24. day of June, adding this exposition, that it was meet that the Author of light eternally, should both be conceived and borne in the increase of light temporal: and that the Preacher of Repentance, who ought to be lessened with the lessening of the light, should at such a time of diminution both be conceived and borne, according to that saying of John himself: John 3. 30. He must increase, but I must decrease.

And againe, in his Homilie upon the Nativity of John the Baptist, he faith, that it is not without a great mystery that John was borne when the day did decrease, and Christ when the day did increase; for Christ did increase, because it was to be known over all the world, that he was Christ. John did, and must decrease, because he was thought to be Christ, being onely his fore-runner: and by very good right it was, that the shortened day should gain length when Christ was borne, because God before being onely knowne in Jury, now Christ appeared to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to spread abroad the heat of his love over the whole earth.

And moreover, it is apparent, that though Bede in one place dote not seem to approve of the strictness of that sentence, as that our Saviour Christ should be precisely borne on the day of the winter Solstice,
Fathers.

...solstice, yet it is manifest that he doth not goe from it by his words that follow, descanting upon the time.

Hoc tempore in insimum Cali punctum Sol devenit, justitiae vero Sol Christus, in insimum Orbis locum praeposuit, et descendit. At this time the Sun of this world did decline to the lowest point in the Heavens, and Christ the Son of righteousness did descend into the Manger, the meanest and lowest place on earth.

Hoc tempore reverti incipit ad nos Sol, accipientis dies nostris incrementum lucis, ac per Christi nativitatem Sol justitiae, ad nos conversus est, lux vero gratiae magnis est aucta incrementis, secundum illud, John 1. 7, 8, 9. Johannes non erat illa lux, lux erat, sed accrescens, mixta tenebris, non illa lux, id est, Christus, lux clara incrementum recipiens.

At this time the Sun begins to return to us, and our dayes receive their increase of light. Upon the day of Christ's Nativity, the Sun of righteousness came and arose upon us, and the light of grace received a great increase; John was not that light, he was a light indeed, but a decreasing one, mixt with darkness; but Christ was that light, that clear light, increasing unto perfect day.

So much our venerable Countrey-man, making it clear unto us, that the day of the winter solstice, and the eight of the Calends of January, and the twenty fifth day of December, were all one and the same day; that our Saviour was borne thereupon, and that it was kept holy in the remembrance thereof, over the whole World, by God's Children in their severall ages; and throughout the dayes that he lived in.
Fathers.

For the next Century, we produced John Damascen, who flourished about the year 731, and is a witness of the general observation of this day; from 700 to 800, who was equal to Bede, and as Bede did witness for the West, so be he for the East.

For the next Century, extending to the year 900, we shall produce

Rabanus Maurus, Abbot of Fulda, and afterward Bishop of Mentz, and President of the great Synod there, held under Lotharius the Emperor, for convicting of Godofalcus, Anno 848. He was a man, Tantæ eruditionis at nec similem Italia, nec parem Germannia habuerit.

Haymo, Bishop of Halberstäd, Kinsman to Bede, and Schollar to Alcuin us our Countr y-man.

Theophylact, Arch-Bishop of Bulgariæ, in his Commentaries upon Luke, all which did flourish in this Century.

For the next Century, and the next following, till the year 1070, we bring in Occumenius a Greek Father, famous in that dark age.

For the next, mellifluous St. Bernard, the last of all the Fathers, who though he lived in the time of the School-men, whose beginning we reckon from the year 1056, (of whom Lanfranke, Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, was the first,) yet he is reckoned for a Father, and gives us a clear testimony of the due observance of the day, in an especial manner for his time, in those many Sermons that he preached thereupon.

As,

In his first Sermon, Grandis quidem (dilectissimi) t hodierna dominicae Nativitatis solennitas, sed Dies evis cogit abbreviare Sermonem, nec mirum si nos fas

H cellimus
Great (my dearly Beloved) is the solemnization of the day of our Lords Nativity. But the shortness of the day will compell me to make a short Sermon; and no marvail, seeing the Father did as this day, shorten or abbreviate the WORD.

Againe in his second Sermon, he puts the Question, why he was borne in the winter, in the night, in such cold weather, in the dark? Shall (faith he) we believe that it was done by chance?

He answers, Other Children doe not chuse the time when they shall be borne, because they have no use of reason, liberty of choyse, faculty of deliberation; but Christ although he was man, was in the beginning with the Father: He was then God, the same in wisedome and power that he is now, as being the power and wisedome of God; therefore he the Son of God, being about to be borne, in whose power it was, to chuse what time he pleased, he chose that which was most troublesome, chiefly for a little Child, and the Son of a poor Mother, who scarce had any clours to wrap him in, to shew that he was not from the earth, but from Heaven.

Much more might be collected out of the works of this holy Father, but so much may suffice.

Thus have we proved by the testimony of so many Fathers, men famous in their generations, that for almost twelve hundred years, the day of Christ's Birth was kept constantly, annually, universally, by all Christians over the whole world, religiously, holily, and that upon the twenty fifth day of December, according as it hath been the custome of the Church of England,
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England, following the ancient and laudable custom of the Primitive Church.

The corrupt time of the Church followes, from the forementioned time till the year 1517, when the Church began to be reformed in diverse Nations, yet she did never in the time of her corruption, so far fall away from the love of her Saviour, as not to keep the day of his Birth, though with diverse superstitions, as is willingly objected, and confessed.

We come therefore in the next place, to prove, that all the Protestant Churches beyond the Seas, ever since the Reformation, have in their several Congregations, religiously kept the Feast of our Saviour's Nativity, according to the use of the Primitive Church, upon the 25. day of December, and have accounted it, and maintained it to be their duty so to do; and not only the Feast of the Nativity, but of the Circumcision, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost, as is manifested at large in the Harmony of their Confessions, lately printed in English, to which I refer the English Reader. As also, by their several Confessions, generall practice, and the testimonies of their reverend and learned Divines.

First for the Confessions.

We shall not urge the words of every one of them in particular, because it would be too tedious, and because they are the same in substance, & the grounds and reasons of each accord: Two or three therefore of the chief shall suffice.

And the first shall be the Augustana Confession, exhibited to the Emperour, Charles the Fifth, in the year One thousand, five hundred, and thirty. The words
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words whereof in the fourth Article, are as followeth.

"Docemus non damnandas esse traditiones, quae nihil
precipiant contra mandata Dei, & habenti sinem politi-
cum, videlicet, quae ad hoc condition sunt, ut ordi-
ne res in ecclesiam gerantur. Cuju' modi sunt, tradi-
tiones de feriis, Natali, pa'chate, & reliquis, & hu-
us generis veteres ritus libenter retinamus in nostris Ec-
clesiis.

We teach (say they) that we ought not to con-
demn those traditions, which appoint nothing con-
trary to God's Commandments, and have a civill
use, or end, to wit, for good order in the Church:
such are the traditions concerning Holy-dayes,
Christ's Birth-day, Easter, and the rest; and those
ancient customs we willingly retain in our Churches.

The second shall be the Bohemian Confession, pub-
lished in the year 1532. cap. 16.

Servamus Dominicos festos Dies, illosq' extimiarum
Feriarum Dies qui consecrati sunt celebrationi operum
Christi, Nativitatis, Crucifixius resurrectioni, &c. Itemq' ;
Memoriam Sanctorum, ut Virginis Marie, Apostolorum
altorumq' ; Sanctorum, &c. & ha quidem propter Ver-
lum Dei, & cultus Divinae causae propterq' ; gloriam Dei
a nobis fiant. That is to say,

We keep the Lords day holy, and those chiefe Fe-
stivalls which are consecrated to the Commemora-
tion of Christ's works, his Nativity, Passion, Resurre-
cution, &c. As also those which are consecrated to
the memory of Saints; as of the Virgin Mary, the
Apostles, and other Saints, especially of those of
whom mention is made in holy writ. All these things
are done of us, by the Authority of Gods word, and
in worship of God, and for his glory.
Consession of Reformed Churches.

The third shall be the latter Consession of Hildesbia, published in the year 1566, which was subscribed by all the Churches of Sabulia, Poland, Hungary, and revolted Scotland, as Affeerteth witnesseth in the 37. Chapter of his Chronologie, page 322, edit. alt. 1650.

They in their 24 Chapter, tell us thus much, Si Ecclesia pro Christianarum liberatam memoriam Domincum Nativitatis Circumcisionis, Passionis, Resurrectionis, Ascensionis in Caenum et Missarum Spiritus Sancti in discipulos religiosos celebret, maximeque approbat. That is,

If the Churches according to their Christian liberty, do, or shall religiously celebrate the memory of our Lords Nativity, Circumcision, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension into Heaven, and sending of the Holy Ghost upon the Disciples, we doe in an especial manner approve of it.

Note here I pray you, to the Scots everlasting shame, that all the Churches, or Kirs of Scotland, did subscribe this Consession of Hildesbia, and that now at this day they generally speak against the keeping of Christs Birth-day. How true then is our Northern Proverb, as false as a Scot. No marvel then, if they would their King, that thus slight their faith, and despise the coming of the King of Kings.

Nay more, they have herein with Bishops, forlaken their first love; for if we read the life of William Comper, Bishop of Galloway, in the 12. page we may find, that the Scottish Church for 809 years after Christ, before ever it was polluted with Popery, did give the Communion upon the 25. day of December, by them accounted the day of Christs Nativity; which
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which is also avouched by Mr. Ley, in his Sundaya
Sabboath, pag. 173.
With these forementioned Confessions, agree all
the rest, as that of the four Cities, Argentine, Con-
stance, Memmingen, and Lindavia, called by some, the
Confession of Saeathland, published in the year 1530.
That of Basel, 1531, that of Saxone, 1531. that of
Witteremerge, 1532. that of France, 1559. that of Ger-
many, 1556.
Adde to these, the joint answer of the Protestants,
in the yeare 1541. with the consent of all the Re-
formed Churches of Poland, the greater and the lesse;
also the Churches of Russia, Lituania, Samogitia, in
that famous Synod of Sendmore, in the year 1570.
Denmark, Sweden, and all the Lutherans, as appears by
Luthers Hymns sung by them upon the day.
Adde lastly to them all the late Nationall Scottish
Covenant, wherein the words that are to be vowed,
protested, and sworne by them that take it; are,

Scottish Co-
venant, Art. 1.

That they shall endeavour the refor-
mation of the Church of England,
in Doctrine, Discipline, and Wor-
ship, according to Gods Word, and
the Example, and Practice, of the
best reformed Churches.

Now all the best reformed Churches keep the day
of Christes Birth, as a day of holy worship, and thank-
giving, even all of them at this day, and ever since
their
their reformation. Then, I beseech you note, that whoever he be, or whether a faithlesse Scots-man, or a Scottified English-man, that hath taken that Covenant, and doth not endeavour, and labour yearly to keep holy the twenty fifth day of December, or the annual day of Christ’s Nativity, is in plain English, and gu’d Scotch, absolutely forsworne, for not worshipping God and Christ thereupon, in the publick Congregation, as they of the best reformed Churches doe.

In the next place, we adde the testimony of the best and most famous Divines of those Reformed Churches, who concerning the keeping of these Festivals, stoutly mainaine, both by Scripture and Reason, what their Churches delivered in their Confessions. I shall name onely the chiefe.

First, Calvin, Inst. lib. 4. cap. 10. In verba Augustin: approves the keeping of them, and in his Epistle to Hallerus, sorrowes very much that these Festivall dayes were put downe in diverse places. And moreover for the day of Christ’s Birth, he saith and avoucheth, Harm. Evangel. in cap secundum uce, that the day of Christ’s Birth was better knowne, then that it should now be called in question; and calls the Anabaptists that question it, Aerti Damones, Aerie Dives. And accordingly the Church of Geneva doth annually celebrate it, as we may read in Perths Assembly confounded, p. 85. And in France, their most notable Preachers give the Communion on that day.

Secondly, Zanchie, that treasurer of learning and knowledge, Vol. 4. lib. 1. cap. 19. in quartam precept: these secunda, proves at large, that it was kept holy in the purest times, and that it ought to be so kept, and yearly
yearly observed by all true Christians at this day, by
sound Reasons, which you shall read anon. But
Thirdly, Zwingius, Pastor of the Church of Zwei-
rich, accounts the Birth-day of our Lord among
those holy days that he would have observed; Ten-
April 25.
Fourthly, Bullinger, Dean: &c. he saith, Quam
tus quidem legatur, &c. Though it is nowhere said
that the Lords day was enjoyned in the writings of
the Apostles; yet because in the fourth Command-
ment of the first Table the care of Religion, and the
diligent exercise of outward worship is commended
it were contrary to piety, and Christian charity, not
to sanctifie the Lords Day, especially seeing that out-
ward worship cannot consist, without a set time, and
an holy rest: the same we ought to judge of the ho-
i-days, or Feasts of our Lord Christ, in which we cel-
brate the memory of his Nativity, Incarnation,
Circumcision, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, into
Heaven, and sending downe of the holy Ghost upon
his Disciples.
Fifthly, Bucer, professor of Divinity in the Uni-
versity of Basilea, placeth the Feasts of Chri-
s Nativity, 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 publicke, that
is, To maintaine the consent of faith among themselves,
for the Preaching of Gods word, and the use of the
Sacraments, and with one accord to yeild due wor-
ship unto God in the due Sacrifice of thanksgiving,
Prayers, and Alms. Syntagma Theolog. lib. 9. c. 35.
Sixthly, John Gerhard Professor of Divinity in the
University of Jena, who hath gathered together ma-
ny
ny godly sentences out of the ancient Fathers, for the furtherance, and help of our meditations on the day of Christ's Nativity.

And what should we say more? For the time would fail us, to tell of Melancthon, in Responsionale protestantium. Festus Hommianus, in the name of all the reformed Churches, Coll. Antibollar: dist. 41. thesi. 3. Of Bucer in Matth. cap. 12. loco de festis. Of Ursin, Tract. Theol. in 4. praecep: Of Hemmingius lib. hom: Of Chytræus in disposit: Epistol: Sub initio: Of our Countryman Hooker, Eccl. pol. l. 5. Of famous Andrews, in his Sermons; Of learned Reynolds, in his Conference with Hart, c. 8. divis: secunda, and many others, famous for piety and learning, who by their Sermons, writings, examples, have justified the yearly observation of Christ's Birth-Day, upon the 25. of December, grounding upon the word of God, the traditions of the Apostles, and the practice of the Primitive and Reformed Churches.

Next to the Practice of God's Church, Reason comes in as an armed man, to confirm the truth, and to maintain the particular observation of the forementioned day. The reasons are many, for brevity sake we shall only for the present allude three, which Zanchie, that great Treasurer of Learning, and Religion, doth prompt unto us in the forecited place.

His first Reason is drawn, A laudabili, Because it is praise-worthy to observe this day, grounded upon the chief ends for which Feasts were instituted among the Jews, which are three, as Thomas Aquinas recites them, 2ª parte Summae, quest. 102. art. 4.

The first, That they might remember the works of the Lord, and the blessings that at such times they had received.
Reasons.

The second, To give God thanks for them.
The third, That at such times they might freely offer large gifts, for the releife of the Priests, and poor people.

If therefore ( faith he ) for the Commemoration of such benefits and blessings at such times bestowed by God, Feasts were instituted among the Jewes; why then should any man dare to affirm, that the Church of Christ may not also institute and keep the Feasts that we have mentioned, that by observing those sollemne dayes, those blessings may be kept in mind, which we have received from the bounty of Jesus Christ, and the famous works which he upon those dayes did performe for us, the certaine Historicall relation whereof we have in the Evangelists.

Therefore, upon such Festivall dayes, seeing they are to be kept holy in remembrance of such benefits received from Christ, and of all that he did and suffered for us, the Histories of those particulars ought to be read, and explained to the people, which the ancient Primitive Church was alwayes wont to doe; wherefore ( faith he ) I doe utterly condemn those Ministers, who upon such dayes doestrictly prosecute their ordinary Texts, that if upon Easter-day a Text of Christ's Passion, doe come in their way, they will explaine that, and will by no means chuse any of those that make mention of the Resurrection.

His second Reason is drawn, Ab honestio, We ought to sollemnize the Feast of our Saviours Nativity, and those other of his Resurrection, &c. Because it is a point of honesty so to doe; for if that be honest (as Cicero defines it) which though it be not actually praised
praised, yet it is praise-worthly, it must needs follow, that it is a point of honesty, to solemnize those Feasts which the ancient Church graced with a solemnity before us; because it is a point of honesty, and praise-worthly to follow antiquity in things not evil in themselves, but indifferent; for it ought to be our judgement, that the ancients had a sufficient, and a well grounded cause for the doing of such things, especially in the instituting and, appointing of such Festivall dayes.

His third Reason is drawne, Ab utili, We ought \(\text{a} \text{d} \text{i} \) to keep holy the Birth day of our Saviour, and his other Feasts, by reason of the great profit that accrueth unto us, and others in the observation of the same: For it is not \(\text{a} \text{d} \text{i} \) in the tongue of man to express what great profit the common people doe gain by the due observing of those dayes, and comming to Church to give God thanks there-upon; whereupon the passages of those things that were done by our Saviour, for the good and salvation of their souls, are read and explained unto them, and a treasure of good things are b got in them. Let me adde, all the Articles of the Credi, are in a manner every yeare more and more made knowne unto them; and they upon every Festivall built up in their most holy faith; and that increased by the annuall Exposition, and confirmation, they being taught to beleive in God, that made Heaven and Earth, by his Son, by whom he made the World, Jesus Christ his onely Son, our Lord, who was Conceived by the holy Ghost, upon the day of the Annuntiation, upon which day the world was created.

To beleive that he was Borne of the Virgin Mary, Decem. 25.
Reasons.

upon the Feast of his Nativity.

Good-Friday.

That he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, and descended into hell, upon the day of his Passion.

Easter.

That the third day He rose againe from the dead, and that we by vertue of his Resurrection shall rise againe at the last day, and have everlasting life after death, upon the Feast of his Resurrection.

Holy-Thursday.

That he ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, and shall come againe to judge both quick and dead, upon the Feast of his Ascension.

Whit-Sunday.

That he sent downe the holy Ghost, the Comforter, to gather unto him an Holy Catholick Church, in which he would establish a Forgiveness of sins, and a Communion of Saints, upon the Feast of Pentecost.

2 Tim. 1. 13.

Behold the forme of sound words, which we are to hold fast, and the body of that faith without which our souls cannot be saved, delivered upon those Festivals; so that by the labour and industry of Orthodoxe and painfull Ministers, Christ Jesus may day by day be formed in the hearts and souls of their people, they yearly with St. Paul, travelling in Birth of them, may make them so grow in grace, and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, that they may bring them up at last to be perfect men and women in him. Begetting them at the Conception, bringing them forth new creatures upon the Nativity, cutting of the foreskin of their hearts at the Circumcision, enlightening their minds, and bringing them out of darkness into his marvellous light, upon the Epiphanie; teaching them to crucifie their affections and lusts on Good Friday, and to rise to newnesse of life on Easter-day; to set their affections upon things above, where Christ
Reasons.

sits at the right hand of God, upon Holy Thursday, that he may lend downe the holy Ghost into their hearts, to lead them into all truth, upon the day of Pentecost, and into this truth above others, that they kiss the Son of God, upon the day of his Nativity, and so they perish not from the right way, which (with grieve of heart I write it) too many have done that have neglected the Celebration of this Blessed Day. Alas, alas! how many poor, unlearned people are there, that cannot reade any thing concerning Christ, or what they are to beleive concerning him, not hear any thing of Christ, but when they come to Church upon such Festivall dayes.

Let me adde another Reason also, that we should keep these Dayes holy, and that a grand one; It is that we may give no offence to the weaker Brethren, who if the observation of these dayes should be laid aside, and we should contermne and despise the keeping of them, those poor ignorant souls would be verily persuaded that we did not care for, nor regard those great things that Christ either did or suffered for us, and that we did not count them worth the thanksgiving.

I conclude my Reasons with the words of Saint Augustine; Post Sacras literas ea nobis servanda sunt, que vel ab Apostolis per traditionem, vel ab universalibus Conciliis definita suisse judicantur; Tali autem sunt qua, toto terrarum orbe, leguntur observata suisse, qualia sunt hac festa veteris puriorisq; ecclesia qua omnia fuerunt de Christo, scilicet Dier Dominici, Paschatis, Pentecostes, Ascensionis, Passionis, Cana Domini, & Nativitatis.

Next after the holy Scriptures, we are to observe those
those rites and customs, which came either from the Apostles, by Tradition, or are judged to be decreed by generall councils; such are those Feasts of the ancient and purer Church, annually observed over the whole world, all which were kept in the honour of Jesus Christ: to wit, the Lords Day, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension, Passion, Supper of the Lord, and the Nativity.

Give me leave to adde the words of worthy Zanchie, concerning the particular Feast of the Birth-Day of our Saviour Christ, and then I shall have almost done.

We know (faith he in the forecited place) that it was a received custom among all Nations to celebrate the Birth-day of every particular Man, how meane soever, especially of Princes and Great ones, as of Herod, of which we read in the Gospel, and that not without reason, for it is an especiall blessing that any one created by God, in the womb of his Mother, should be brought alive into this world; therefore as God would have the Sabbath to be kept holy, in remembrance of the creation of the world, that thanks might be given to the Creator for so great a benefit: so it must needs be a piece of great thankfulnesse too, and well accepted of Almighty God, that any man shall keep in memory the day that he was borne, and regard and honour it more then other dayes, in rejoicing thereupon, giving thanks to God, soberly Feasting with his Neighbours, and giving more largely to the poor, then at other times.

How much more ought the day of our Saviours Birth, in a more excellent, devout, and rejoicing manner, annually to be observed and kept by all that bear the name of Christian, and hope for salvation by that
that blessed Babe, that now came into the world to save sinners, whereof they must needs be the chief; that despite the day of so great Salvation, work, and follow their Callings, when it should be their onely work to remember what the Lord Jesus upon this day did for them, and sing praise to his name.

Me-thinks what hath been said already might persuade any reasonable Christian to the due observati-
on of the day. But alas! I find of late, Jewes in England, to whom Christ came and they received him not, John 1.11. Who unless they see signes and wonders, they will not believe, and then neither; so stupid they are, and obstinate; yet whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, whether they will believe or continue in unbelief, and believe no man but themselves; let them know, that divers and sundry Miracles have been wrought in diverse Nations, upon the twenty-fifth day of December, to confirme it to have been the very day of our Saviours Birth; as the Fountain of Oyle breaking out in Rome, the tongue-tying of the Divels Oracles, the amity of the Beasts, and many more, which you may finde in Gregory Turonensis, which I may not now repeat; but especially two wrought here in England, confirming that the keeping of the day, upon the twenty-fifth of the foresaid Moneth, according to the old Julian account, is authentick, true, and Orthodoxe.

The one is the Oake in the new Forrest, sacra Jovi Quercus, an Oake consecrate to the Son of God, left as a lasting wittnesse of this truth, even there, where so many Churches were demolished, wherein it should have been Preached. Abraham the Father of the Faithfull, feasted the Son of God in the likeness of Man,
Miracles.

Man, even Abraham that rejoiced to see his day, and saw it, and was glad, under the Oake of Mamre; and this Oake so long after desires to shew unto the faithfull, the day of his Incarnation, and to solemnize the same by wearing every year upon this very day, new and green leaves upon it: as shewing to posterity, that as this day Truth sprung out of the earth of Mary's womb, and righteousness looked downe from Heaven; signifying also, that in his dayes the righteous should flourish, and that he should grow up as a tender plant in a dry ground, his fruit should make like Lebanon, and be green as grass upon the earth; that he is the chiefe of our strength, and that as the leaves, bark, and fruit of that Tree, are all Medicinal, so should Christ be that Tree of Life, Rev. 22. 2. whose leaves should heale the Nations.

The other is that Thorne by Glastenburie, growing, as the Tradition goes, on Joseph's Grave. But whether that be true or no, I know not, it may be; this I am certaine, that the whole Countrey cries it up for a truth, and a knowne one, that time out of mind, even to this day, it hath every year blossomed in full measure, upon the Twenty fifth day of our December, near that place where Joseph of Arimathea, that buried our Saviour Christ, first arrived, and first Preached the Gospel in this our Island, to witnesse to all posterity, that our Saviour Christ did as that day, bud and blossom out of the earth.

That very Thorne in a mysterious manner, pricking deep, and reproving to the quick, the dead unthankfullnesse of many men, while that poor Thorne, as it were, in way of thankfullnesse to its Creator, doth gratefully shut forth his blossomes upon the very day
day of his Birth, who did honour and grace all
Thornes so much, as to weare a Crowne of Thornes
upon the day of his death; and signifying by the
white blossomes, that that King that was borne
that day, and wore the Thorny Crowne when
he died, is now risen againe, and wears a Crowne of
Glory; and moreover, by the long-livednesse of the
same, intimates to dull mortalls, that he that was
that day borne, and died on Good-Friday, Crowned in
that manner, is still alive, and lives for evermore.
And further yet, that those men that are of such a
thorny disposition, and touchy froward behaviour,
as not to suffer their souls as this day to send out the
white and pleasant blossomes of thanksgiving, for
his Birth, shall at the day of their death, like thornes
that are dead, be cast into unquenchable fire. Christ
then comming to destroy all such bryars and thorns,
as the Souldiers of the King of Assyri, are called,
who came to destroy Jerusalem, the holy City, Gods
Temple, Priestes, and Ordinances, and to put an end
to the sollemne Feasts, Isa. 10. 17. to whom for
such an intention the Prophet tells them, That the
light of Israel should be for a fire, and his holy one for a
flame, and it should burne and devour all such briars and
thornes in one daye: And shall consume the glory of his
Forrest, and his fruitful field, both Soul and Body, ver. 18.

What shall I say more? But, that if the things that
have been done in England, had been done among the
wild and savage Americans, they had beleeved in
Christ, and honoured his day long agoe: But here is
the condemnation, that the marvellous light as this
day came into the world, and that this day, was the
K

day
day of its coming, hath been among us of this Island, believed, and yearly is confirmed by Miracles, and yet many blinded ones among us, both of Clergy and Laity, that their eyes and will not see, loving darkness rather than light.

Pardon me (Or if you will not, choose) for I am full of godly jealousy for the honour of my Saviour's Birth-day, and will affirm even to my last Breath, that it was upon the twenty fifth day of December, and is every year to be kept holy, and that ἡμέρα Κυρίου, that Dies Dominica, that Lords day ἐκεῖνη by way of eminence, from which our Lords day, kept every first day of the week, doth take its denomination, and name, rather then from that of the Resurrection, and that it was that ἡμέρα Κυρίου that Lords day mentioned by St. John, Rev. 1. 10. upon which he was in the Spirit, upon which Christ Jesus did appear unto him in that glorious shape, which is the opinion of divers and good Divines; and the first Primitive Fathers doe also persuade me to believe it, while they, in their Writings, as Zanchie well observes, doe affirm, that the Churches of God did everywhere, in their time, yearly and solemnly celebrate the Feast of the Lords Day, besides the Feast of the Passeover, Easter, and the Resurrection, as the chiefest Feast in the year, as a distinct Feast from the same.

This great and principall Feast then, of the Lords Day, could be no other (being by them so precisely distinguished from the day of Christ's Resurrection) but the Feast of Christmas, or the day of our Lords Nativity, from which, and not from Easter day, all the
Miracles.

Sundays in the year, became to be called Lord’s dayes, the truth whereof will appear as clear as the Sun, to any that will take the paines to compare Ignatius in his Epistle, ad Magnes, with Justine Martyr, apol. 2. ad finem, Euseb. lib. 4. c. 23. Irenæus l. 4. c. 23. ad Victorin Romanum apud Sozomen: Tertullian, lib. de idolat. pag. 376. lib. de Corona Militis, August. Tom. 2. Ep. 119. ad Januar. de civit. dei lib. 22. c. 30. de verbis Apostoli Ser. 15. Cyrill in Johan. lib. 17. cap. 58. Euseb. lib. 1. cap. 23, 24. Socrates, lib. 5. cap. 22.

And to shut up all, take here the words of a most eminent Divine, whose Learning and Piety hath placed him beyond exception, Bishop Andrewes (I mean) in his Sermon upon John, Chap. 8. ver. 56.

There is (saith he) no day so properly Christ’s, as his Birth-Day, which may appear, if we set it in comparison with other dayes of most honourable note, as the day of his Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension: for the day of his Passion, that was not so properly his, because two Thieves suffered with him at the same time, in the same place, after the same manner, Luke 23. 32, 33. Nor the day of his Resurrection, for as he rose from the dead, so did others, the same day, and went into the holy City, Mat. 27. 52, 53. Nor the day of his Ascension, for Enoch and Elias, had their Ascension too, and long before his, Gen. 5. 24. 2 Kings 2. 11. But his Birth-Day was his without a fellow: None ever So borne, none ever born such; and therefore (as no Feasticity is besides it) it is attended as Christ himselfe, with an Apostolicall retinue of Holi-dayes.

What we have written may be sufficient to satsifie all
all gain-sayers, and to make the Sun dimming clouds of all fantasticall Objections, for to vanish, and to bring in the clear morning of the day; but Beroaldus: the Author of the Scripture Almanack, with their foolish Hemmings, and others their followers, have told their lies so often, that they believe them to be truths, and the Sun of righteousness, that was borne this Day, hath given them over, that they should believe a lye, because they received not the love of this truth concerning the Birth-Day of the Son of God; so that counting themselves wise, they are become fools.

That worthy, learned, laborious, judicious Gentleman, Edward Fisher, hath lately, sufficiently brayed them and their foolish objections, in a morter; yet I doubt they will never be the wiser. Their objections are so ridiculous, self confuting, idle, vaine, erroneous, that I would not defile my paper with them, but that Solomon bids me, Answer a fool in his folly, least he seem wise in his owne conceit.

These Jesuites, ex ignorantia, crie out as Campian the Jesuite did, Scripture Patres Concilia Rationes, &c. Scriptures, Fathers, Councells, Reasons, &c. all are on our side, they are indeed, but as rods for the backs of fools.

For Scripture, Christ (say they) was born when Augustus made the whole world to be Taxed, & all went to be Taxed, every one to his owne City, Luke 2. 1, 3. which could not be in the winter, because it is not to be believed that wise Emperour would Command poor men to come in winter to their owne Townes.

2. The Shepheards were then in the fields, watching
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ing over their flocks, v. 8. and the winter was no
fitting time for it: A Sheepish Argument, fitter
for a Shepheards boy, then a Shepheard of Israel.
Christ ( Man ) was not borne in England, but in Ju-
dea, and there were wolves there, and therefore the She-
pehards were to watch their flocks at all times; or become
like many of our English, who when the Wolfe comes, flie
away.

But 3. Christ ( say they ) according as our affir-
mation, was borne and baptized about the same time,
it could not then be in mid-winter, it being not
wholesome for men to goe up then to the head in
water.

To kill these three Birds with one bolt. The Land
of Canaan is found to extend it selfe for latitude from
the 36. degree and 52. minutes, to the 33. and 44.
minutes, and for longitude, it is placed between the
64. degree, and 22. minutes, and the 69. degree and
ten minutes, so that it is included fully and wholly
in the third Climat, in which Fez and Morocco are
situated, where the winter season ( as every Geo-
grapher, and Marriner will tell us ) is hotter then our
May here in England, and yet Canaan in heat exceeds
Fez and Morocco, lying about 40. degrees nearer the
East then they doe.

The Scripture faith as much, Lev. 23. 5. 6. 10. 11.
For in regard that a sheafe of the first fruits of Har-
vest, was yearly offered on the second day after the
Passeover, which was the 16. day of Abib, and is
with us the 27. of March ( which 27 according to
the true account falls upon the 15. of our March )
it must necessarily follow, that the temperature of
the
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the more h December in the Land of Canaan, is answerable to our May, if not June; the season then of the year, could no way hinder, either the execution of Caesar's Decree, or the Shepherds being in the Fields, nor our Saviours going into the River Jordan, in December. What they urge out of the first of Luke, concerning the Conception of John, that it should be in the beginning of July, because the Course of Abia, Zacharias course, the eighth course of the Priests, fell in the end of June, and that Course lasted a fortnight, is not only disclaimed by Berosus, their Patron, who not fitting to be a Chronologer, lib. 4. c. 2, confesseth, we do neither understand when the Course of Zacharias was, nor how long it lasted; But proves them to be natural Bruit-beasts that cannot number; we desire no better Argument then this Computation to prove the very day, for let them compute from the third day of the Moneth Adar, and the sixth year of Darius, Ezra 6. 15. When the Priests were set in their divisions, and their courses began, being in all twenty four, and every Course continuing one whole week, till the year of the world, wherein John was conceived, and they shall find that Zacharias Course fell in September, and then that by their owne Argument, John's Conception must be in that month, then in the sixth moneth after Christs, Luke 1. 26. &c. which is March; then let them goe to any Teaming Sister, and she will assure them, that Christ (according to Scripture, and the common course of women) must be borne in December.

As for their Fathers they urge, they will not help them.

Clement
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Clemens of Alexandria, saith that in his dayes there was a question about the certainty of Christ's Birth. Men in these dayes question both his Godhead, and Manhood, Quidergo? Is he therefore neither God nor Man?

But Cyril faith, that the Church of Alexandria, celebrated at first, the Birth-day of John the Baptist, on the twenty third day of April, in his Homilies, or twelve Books on John, and therefore Christ must be borne in O'Teacher.

Like Father, like Sons, both Baithards, these works of the Father accounted so, both by Papists, and Protestants, it being certaine, that Iodocus Cillicosus wrote four Books of the twelve, and the rest are accounted Spurious, both by Mr. Perkins, prepar: ad demons: problems: and by Bellarmin, Catalog. Eccl. Scriptorum ad an: 430. Neither is it likely to be true, that the Church of Alexandria should at the first celebrate the Birth-day of John the Baptist, in April, seeing the Egyptian Churches (of which that of Alexandria was the chiefe) did ever maintaine that Christ was borne on the twenty-fifth day of December, and yearly kept that day Festivall in memory thereof, as Genebra hath shewed out of their owne accounts, and Kalenders, and not onely they, but the Greek Churches, and to did the Arabian, Persian, Syriak Churches, as learned Mr. Gregory hath fully proved, in his Notes, and Observations, Chap. 34.

But grant, the words of the forged Cyril were true, and that they kept John's Birth-day, April 23, it seems they fell from the observation, and found themselves in an errour; and judged the Greek and Latine Churches...
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es to be in the right, who kept it annually and constantly on the twenty fourth of June, as Causington confesseth. I doubt they would have their errors likewise.

May be they would, but that Epiphanius (say they) faith, that Christ was borne the fifth of January; take heed, that was in winter, and one of the twelve days, I doubt you will turne smell Feasts, but let me tell you, as for lyars, we had rather have their room then their company; and you belie your Father, for Epiphanius who if he were alive, would put you in the Catalogue of his Heretics, doth indeed twice affirm, that Christ was borne in the 33. year of the first Herod, the Son of Antipater, which was the forty second year of Augustus Cæsar, as you may read, lib. 1. cont. heres. bæ. 20. lib. 3. bæ. 78. But not a word, either of the moneth, nor day of the moneth.

Will you yield yet? No, for our Countrey-man Bede tells us, that for certaine the Indictions began on the 24. of September, and that our Lord was borne (Indictione quinta insurripit) when the fourth Indiction began, therefore Christ was borne on the 24. of September. Help Neighbours! Borne in October, faith Cyril, faith Epiphanius, and now in September, faith Bede, and all lies; for the two former said no such matter, neither the last, for our Countryman doth not say that Christ was borne when the fourth Indiction began, but in the fourth, and an Indiction, according to Baccolzerus, being the space of fifteen years, Christ might very well be borne in the beginning of the Indiction, though he was borne three moneths after the first day thereof.
Objections Answered.

Well poor Babes, your Fathers for sake you, will your Reasons take you up? I doubt they are too weak to heave such blocks from the ground; but let's try their strength.

1. Taxes and Collections of Tribute began on the twenty fourth day of September, as appears by the Indictions which were instituted to bear account of the payment of Tribute by Constantine the Great, Anno Dom. 312. Therefore Augustus his Decree, that all the World should be taxed, went out on the twenty fourth of September, and so Christ was borne on that day. Hysteron Proteron, brains and stairs.

But 2. The Church of England doth not celebrate the true day of Christ's Birth, nor the Churches beyond Sea, because the Gregorian account errs almost two days, and the Julian more then twelve, therefore the Church of England errs.

No such matter; for though we do not celebrate the very day exactly and precisely taken, yet we celebrate the true day according to the Julian account, which account is yet generally embraced by the Protestants, and not to be despised, faith Calvinus; well, suppose it be not the very day, I hope you will maintain that the day of Christ's Resurrection, or Easter-day, is yearly to be kept holy. I pray you tell me, how often it falls in the same moneth, or on the same day? Suppose the day were not certainly knowne, yet the Church hath power to ordain one annally to be kept in remembrance of so great a mercy, and that of her selfe, by her owne power, it being not so much the day, as the benefit, we remember. Tolle & lige, 2 Chron. 30. 23. And consider that free-will yeaven dayes.
Objections Answered.

dayes Feast, kept after the Passover.

Again, in case we know the Day strictly, yet it is not absolutely necessary for us to keep it on that day always, if the Church appoint, or think the contrary; for the Jewes did not keep their Purim on the same day of the year whereon their deliverance was given them, but on the next day after, as you may read in Esther; The Passover was to be eaten in the first moneth, Exod. 12. 2, 3. yet Hezekiah and his people kept it in the second moneth, contrary to the institution in that particular, 2 Chron. 30. 2, 3. and yet they were accepted, as you may read, vers. 20.

Yea, but 3. 1. H. tells us, in his Scripture Almanack, that the Saturnalia, those mad Feasts to Saturne, the Father of the Gods, were kept at the same time by the Heathen, that the Christians keep their Christmas, and that you have your Harvists from Ceres, the Goddess of Corne, in which Feasts at the same time, a sheafe was offered to her; and that you have your word rule, or Ule, from αὐλος or σκύλος; an Hymne then offered in her praise.

Sirs, give over for shame, all these are as false as the Almanack, for our word rule is from the Norman word Nule, or Ule, which signifies new, the sheafe was not offered to Ceres in December, nor the Hymne in her praise, but at her owne Feast, which was in Aprill, as Ovid avers, Fastor lib. 4. Nor did the Saturnalia, which lasted for three dayes, begin on the 25. of December, but on the 27. as Macrobius doth witnesse; but suppose the contrary; May not Christians set a day a part to Gods service, in that month that Heathens made Feasts to their Idols? If so, we must
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must bid adieu to all publick services, and serve your
humours, and conclude, that the Jews did very well
to keep their Feast of Tabernacles, according to
Gods command, in the moneth of September, seeing
the Heathen kept their Bacchanalia, after the same
manner, at the same time? So Plutarch.
But lastly, your Feasting doth offend us: Your
Plum-pottage, and Minced-Pies, doe offend our tast
and smell; your Bayes and Rosemary, Hollie, and Luie,
Box, and Privet, with all your green Strewings, and
trimming your Churches, and houses, doe offend
our pure eyes, and your Carrolls and songs doe of-
fend our sanctified ears.
Alas Brethren, we cannot help it; we must not
offend God, in striving not to offend you; it is not
we that give, but you that take; and we may not neg-
lect our duty, to please your humours.
We keep the day Festively, we ought to doe it, as
we have shewne already, we have warrant for it, Esth.
9. 22: from the Jews practice, who for a lesse blest-
fing, kept the 14. and 15. of Adar yearly, as the dayes
wherein the Jews rested, and the moneth which was turned
unto them, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a
good day; that they should make them dayes of Feasting
and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and of
gifts to the poor. And likewise from the command
of Nehemiah, and Ezra, in the like case; This day is
boly unto the Lord your God, mourn not, nor weep; goe
your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send porti-
sions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day
is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry, for the joy of
the Lord is our strength. Tell me, did ever the Church
of
of England celebrate this day, in any other manner than the Jews were commanded to doe those? Did you ever know any yule game suffered thereupon? Was it not as religiously and devoutly kept, by hearing the word, receiving the Sacrament, offering up the Sacrifice of thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, and relieving his poor members, as ever you did any Sabbath-day in the year? Nay, I will affirm that you never heard any Harp or Viol in our Feasts upon that day (as the Jews had) but our chiefe work was to remember, as we ought, the work of the Lord thereupon, and the operation of his hands, that as this day the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Sonne of God, upon the morning of this day, breaking out in darkness, he making the day his owne, by being borne thereupon, we will therefore be glad, and rejoice in it.

As for our Plum-pottage, and Minc'd Pies, stand off, and doe not let them trouble you, we dare eat, making no question for conscience sake, because our stomacks are strenghtned by that forecited piece of invitation, Nehem. 8. 10. Eat the fat, and drink the sweet. And Brethren, though you will not put your Spoons into our Platter, yet give me leave to reach a Spoon full of instruction to your souls, from our Pie and Pottage, that you would endeavour to joine with us in the maine of our Feasting, which is, to taste and see how sweet our Lord Jesus is. Doe not you cry out prophane now, if you doe, St. Paul will stop your mouth, who makes the same use of, and raiseth the like instruction from, the unleavened Bread that the Jewes
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Jewes used in the Passeover, 1 Cor. 5:7,8. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened, for even Christ our Passeover is crucified for us: Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, nor the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Behold two table doctrines, one of Easter, the other of Christmas, both raised from the viands.

As for our Bases and Rosemary, and other green trimmings of our Churches, and houses, truly Brethren, we do, and may doe it, by the same warrant that the Israelites in the Feast of Tabernacles, Neh. 8:16. did goe out to the Mountaine, and fetcht Olive, Myrtle, and Palm branches, to adorne their Booths withall, they are as significant as these; their Booths so trimmed up with those Branches, and built in the streets, according to Gods command, signified, and put them in mind, that they were Pilgrims in the Wildernesse, and that their Fathers dwelt in Tabernacles: So as our meat which is more choice then at other times, puts us in mind on that day of Christ's sinfull humanity, and our strong drink of his spiritual consolation: So our Churches and Houses, decked vvyth Bays and Rosemary, Mallie, and Ivie, and other Plants, which are alwayes green, Winter and Summer, signifie, and put us in minde of his Diety, that the Child that now was borne, was God and Man, should spring up like a tender plant, should alwayes be green and flourishing, and live for evermore. Therefore thus the Spouse entertains her Beloved, whose Bed is alwayes green, Cant. r. 16. and shevves Jesus Christ to be yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever.

As
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As for our *Songs* and *Carols*, Brethren, they are collected and composed out of the Scriptures, containing matter of instruction, and edification, they implant the history and benefits of Christ’s Birth, in the minds of poor, ignorant people; and often times he is taken by a Song, that will fly a Sermon. Such Songs are like the Song of Moses, which learned by heart, put the people in mind of what God hath done for them, as upon that day, and such are most fitting for the time, and we have an order for them, under St. Paul’s own hand, Col. 3. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* Brethren, remember what the King said to those men who were bid to the Marriage of his Son, and would not come, but went about their Husbandry, and other occasions. *Not one of these shall taste of my Supper,* &c. The Day of Christ’s Birth, was the day of the Marriage of the Son of God, when the two natures formerly hand-fasted in the Conception, were now declared for ever Married, never to be severed, that Marriage-day is annually to be kept by us in remembrance. I invite you all against the next year, if you will not come, I cannot force you, I leave you to the coming of the Bridegroom, and then you shall know whether you shall taste of his Supper.

I will say no more, but that notwithstanding all your pettish oppositions, this truth shall stand fast, That,

The 25. day of December ought annually to be kept holy as a Festival, and Thanksgiving day, by all Christi
Conclusion.

Christians; let the Learned Zanchie speak the Epilogue.

Sic docent Sacra litera; sic Patres: Sic nostri seculi piij doctores: Sic vetus Consuetudo, atq; Usus in omnibus, omnium locorum, & Gentium ecclesiis receptus, & approbatus confirmat (Addo) Sic denig; Miracula.

So much the Scriptures teach, so much the Fathers, so much the holy Doctours of our dayes; In a word, The ancient use and custome, received and approved in all the particular Churches of all places and Nations, doe approve and maintaine so much as hath been spoken, and (let me adde;) so much the forementioned Miracles.

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Now he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is ignorant, let him be ignorant still. But he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Behold he comes quickly, and his reward is with him, to give every man according to his works, to them both that doe, and doe not.

Opus Diei in Die suo.

Till then, grace, and peace be to all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and the day of his appearing.

Amen, HALLELUJAH.