

THEANTHROPOS:
OR,
God made Man.

A TRACT
PROVING
THE NATIVITY
OF OUR
SAVIOUR

to be on the 25, of December.

By JOHN SELDEN, that eminently-learned
Antiquary, late of the Inner-Temple

LONDON

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Angel in *Corn-hill*, 1661

Preface to 2010 Edition

John Selden was one of the greatest minds and men of his day; his learning and reputation were internationally renowned. He was elected to many of his nation's highest offices and honors, and moved in its greatest circles. Selden lived during the tumultuous times of Charles the First, Oliver Cromwell, and the Revolution which brought the Puritans to power. He was a member of Parliament and was imprisoned in 1628 with other members of that body in its conflict over the prerogatives of the Crown. Among the issues of the day was reformation of the Anglican Church. Puritan attempts to abolish Christmas disaffected the people and even provoked riots in Canterbury. Some of England's leading men, including Selden, produced tracts defending the traditional date and celebration of Christ's birth. His *Theanthropos* is the most learned defense of the Dec. 25th birth of Christ ever written. It has been said of Selden

“His Stile in all his Writings seems harsh and sometimes obscure; which is not wholly to be imputed to the abstruse Subjects of which He commonly treated, out of the Paths trod by other Men; but to a little undervaluing the Beauty of a Stile, and too much Propensity to the Language of Antiquity.”

The difficulty of the subject matter and Selden's style of writing mean that this work is one that must be read several times to fully grasp its power and depth. However, the original tract is now almost 400 years old and copies are poor and hard to read. The purpose of this edition is to preserve in modern fonts the text of Selden's work as it appeared in 1661. Spelling, punctuation, and other peculiarities, have been retained to preserve something of the feel of the original. The Greek fonts of the 17th century were oftentimes unrecognizable; we therefore cannot be absolutely assured of our accuracy in reproducing them here. In all cases of doubt, the original should be consulted. Page numbers of the original are preserved for easier reference and occur in brackets thus [56]. We hope that that fully modernized edition can be produced at a later time, but for the present must content ourselves with this small contribution toward preserving and handing on Selden's most worthy work.

Kurt Simmons

October, 2010

TO THE
LEARNED GENTRY
OF THE
INNER TEMPLE.

WERE it not to comply with the mode of the Times, an Epistle had been altogether useless; for to expatiate upon his desert, were but actum agere, since the British world hath been sufficiently sensible thereof. Opus authoris nomine insignatur. The author's name in the Frontispiece commends the work above my ability, and will save me a labour. Now that this was the issue of the famous Selden's brain, is indisputable, since he that is never so meanly acquainted with the style, will soon acknowledge it. 'Twere pity that so elaborate a Treatise should sleep in the grave of oblivion; especially, when there are so many persons in this age, (whose misguided zeal christens all that thwarts the grain of their phanatique opinions with the nick-name of superstition) that do so much oppugne the subject and verity of this discourse; but, beyond all contradiction, they that peruse it must be convinced or manifest themselves obstinately stubborn. 'Tis a mystery to me that I could never fathom, that any LEVITE should so much rely upon Christ for salvation; and yet deny, nay, be offended, at the celebrations of his Nativity: But, if either Divine or Humane authority the practice of the Primitive times, or the Institution of our Holy Mother the Church of England, carry strength or prevalency along with them, I am confident of their recantation. This abolishing of decency and solomnisations, hath quite consumed the substance of Religion; and the sad effects thereof, have been of late years too apparent among us; Instead of endeavoring to order, they did ordure the House of

God; Temple were turn'd into Stercoraries, into a confusion. But now, since it hath pleas'd the Supreme Architect of Heaven and Earth, that transvolves Crowns, and tumbles down Diadems at his pleasure, to make us meet like so many lines in the centre (that hath been so long eccentricque in the Ecclesiastique and the Poleticque capacity,) there is a certainty of a resettlement of Ecclesiastique affairs according to the old and true form of the Church of England. To which this Tractate of it conduce not, I presume 'twill no ways impede it; since it is not only solid but full fraught with variety of learning; insomuch that it will require three lives in the Law at least to purchase, and peruse those printed pieces, and manuscripts, out of which he hath collected his quotations: But I must not be so uncivil as to detain you too long in the Porch by a prolix Epistle; nor so injurious to withhold you from prying into the more sublime and refined sense of the Author: Now if your perusal be with as much candor, gravity and moderation, as the learned Selden penned it – though now deceased) 'will certainly force you to acquiesce with him, and affirm, That the day of the Nativity of our Saviour is not onely to be celebrated, but also absolutely, and undeniably on the 25 of December.

Vale.

G.F.

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JOANNIS SELDENI

EPITAPHIUM.

Joannes Seldenus

Heic juxta situs;

Natus est XVI Decembris MDLXXXIV

Salvitonia;

Qui viculus est Terring Occidentalis

In Sussexia Maritimis;

Parentibus honestis,

Joanne Seldeno Thoma filie,

Quinis secundo.

Anno MDXLI nato,

Et

Margarete filia & Harede unica Thoma

Bakers de Rushington ex Equestri Bakero-

rum in Cantio familia, filius e cunis

Superstitum unicus, Aetatis fere

LXX annorum.

Denatus est ultimo die Novemberis,

Anno salutis reparate

MDCLIV

Per quam expectat heic Resur-

Rectionum feliciem.

[1]

Of the Birth-day of our SAVIOUR.

*Briefly, of the Anniversary Celebration of
Birth-dayes: The state of the Question,
and the Discourse digested into parts.*

In the review of the 4 Chap. having occasion to speak of the authority of the *Clementines*, the eighth book of Constitutions, attributed to the Apostles, in which an expresse constitution is, that the Birth-day of our Saviour should be celebrated on the 25 of *December* (or of the ninth month, as it is there called, being accounted from *April* as the first) I noted that Constitution for one character of that volum's being supposititious; in regard that in the Eastern Church (where those Constitutions being in Greek must by all probability have been inmost use) the Celebration of that day was not received on the 25 of *December*, till the ancient tradition of it was learn'd from the Western, about 400 years after Christ; [2] and some touch also I have there of the opinion of them that think that day not to be the true time of his birth. This

passage hath been so conceiv'd as if I had purposely call'd in question the celebration of that sacred day (which is ἡ τιοϛ καλαν απαντων,) as¹*St. Chrysostome* styles it, ἀ'κρίπολιϛ, ἡ πηγῆ καί ριζα πασα ἡων ἀγαθων, that is, as the main font of all happinesse, and the fountain and root of all good that we enjoy; and to call it in question, as if I supposed it were observ'd at the time without sufficient ground, as if I were too inclining to the part of the hot-brain'd and disturbing Puritans, which impiously deny the keeping of a day as an anniversary feast consecrated to the birth of our blessed Saviour; from which my conscience was ever, and is most clearly free. For I knew, first, both from sacred & profane Story, that the anniversary days,² not only of Princes, but of some private men also, were with frequency ever observ'd, and the beginning of Cities under that name yearly celebrated: and even among the Heathen, those that professed such Philosophy as was nearest to true Divinity, that is, *Platonists*, were most religious in keeping their *Plato's* birth-day, which they received by tradition to be the ³same with *Apollo's*, that is, the 7 day of the Attique moneth *Thargelion* (which answers to our *April*;) and this was still [3] observed until the time of *Plotinius* and ⁴*Porphyry*, who lived about 270 year after our Saviours birth; and after the discontinuance of it for many ages, it was revived

¹ *Tom. 7, Edit. Siviana, page 375. λογ. ια*

² 200 *Theodos. & Justin. de feriis. Sed de hac re plene Martinus de Roa tib. de die Natali.*

³ *Plutarch συμμ. cap. I. Laertius in vita Plat. &c.*

⁴ *Marsil. Ficinus comment. ad Plat. Sympos. cap. 1.*

in the days of our Grand-fathers with much solemnity in the Dutchy of *Florence* by *Lorenzo Medices*. But he misplaced it in the year, while he and his guests being better *Platonists* than Chronologers, took the 7 of *Thargelion* to be the 7 of *November*: As also the old trifling Astrologers committed a like fault, while in the scheme⁵ of his Nativity they place the Sun in *Pisces*, which must denote our *February*, or the Attique *Anthesterion*. But however, an anniversary day was observ'd for his Birth: so was there anciently for some false Gods; for they had their certain days for the births of ⁶*Mars, Apollo, Diana, Minerva, the Muses, Hercules*, and others, and carefully observ'd them; and for Princes, and private persons, even to this day a celebration is in use at the yearly returning of their Birth-days. To deny therefore, with that wayward Sect, such an anniversary honour to the Saviour of the Word, were but to think him lesse worthy of it than the false Gods were esteemed by the Gentiles, than Princes by their Subjects, than private friends by their greater friends, whose birth-dayes they yearly celebrated. But of this I trust no man that truly deserves a [4] name among Christian will make scruple. Some indeed (and those not a few among the learned) have doubted of the just time of the birth of our Saviour; which while they doubt, they offer the more occasion to others to question and impugne the celebration of it, as it is now settled in the Church; For if that were not the true day (as they argue) it follows that

⁵ *Firmicus Mathes. lib. 6. cap. 30.*

⁶ *Calend. vet. Rom. à G. Herwarto, naper editum, &c.*

there were no more reason (save only what comes from the latter, and arbitrary constitutions of the Church) to keep that day than any other throughout the whole year, unless also some other day were found to be the exact time of it. But for my self here, as I was far from questioning the duty of it, so was I also from doubting of the right of Celebration of it on the very day of *December* whereon it is now kept. And to make clear my mind here, I shall now more largely, according to what His Majesties most leaned instructions have taught me, declare the certainty of that feast, as it is at this day observed, even from the eldest of the Christian times, and Apostolical tradition, received even from the practice of his Disciples; for it is one thing to deny (as I have done) that it was so ordained by the Apostles in those *Clementines*, (which I think all learned and ingenuous men will deny) and another and far-different thing to affirm that the tradition of that day, as it is now kept, is both Apostolical, and as ancient as [5] the birth itself; as I shall presently deliver in the deduction of the continuance of it, according as it is now observed through all Christendom. For although in the feast and in all others unmoveable, there be the known difference of ten dayes (which were taken out of *Octob.* In the year MDLXXXII⁷ by Pope *Gregory* the Thirteenth, when he reformed the *Julian Kalendar*) ‘twixt us, with some few other States, and those which have received the *Gregorian Kalendar*; yet both they and we agree in

⁷ *Constit. Sum Pontif. P. 775. & Clavius in Kal. Greg. live. tom. 5.*

this, that upon the 25. of that Moneth (that is with us of our *Julian December*) this feast is ever to be observed. So that we meddle not here at all with any part of the differences 'twixt the *Julian* and *Gregorian* year, but onely endeavour to make it certain, that on this day of that Moneth *December* that Feast hath ever been settled in the Western Church; from whence the Eastern also anciently received it. For it is clear, that upon what day soever of any Moneth an unmoveable feast is to be kept in our *Julian* year, on the same day of the Month it is to be kept in the *Gregorian*; so that the proof here is equal for the use of both Accounts. Thus appears the state of the Question; and to this purpose, for orders sake shall be shewed,

1. The Authorities of keeping it on this day both in the Eastern and Western Churches, about [6] 400. years after our Saviour, and that then it was ancient tin the Western Church, and known also under the name of the Winter-Solstice-day; which is especially here observable.

2. For preparation of more particular proof of the tradition of this Feast-day, the supposition the most primitive Ages had touching the time of the Solstices and Aequinoxes.

3. That the keeping of it on this day was so received from tradition, even of the eldest time since our Saviour; and this justified from the Fathers, supposing it to have been on the very day of the ancient Winter-Solstice.

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7. Some other Opinions among the Ancients it, and how some of them may agree with what we have received, and the rest are of no weight against it: And then more especially of the ancient confusion of this Feast with that of the Epiphany.

SECT. 1

[7] *The Authorities of keeping it on this day both in the Eastern and Western Churches about 400. Years after our Saviour; and that then it was ancient in the Western Church, and known also under the name of the Winter-Solstice day; which is especially here observable.*

For the first, that is, the Authorites of the received use of keeping this Feast on the 25 of *December* 400 years after Christs Birth, they are frequent in *S. Ambrose, S. Chrysostome, S. Augustin,* and others of the Father that liv'd about the end of those 400 years. Those three especially have many Sermons appropriated to the celebration of the day, and they frequently tell people confidently that the Birth of our Saviour was on the 25 of *December,* or the 8 Kalends of *January;* as also that the birth of Saint *John* Baptist was on the 8 Kalends of July, or the 24 day of June according as to this day they are observed. *Ecce,* saith ⁸ Saint *Abrose, in nativitate Christi dies crescit, & Johannis nativitate decrescit; illo oriente lux proficit, hoc nascente minuitur:* That is, On our Saviours Birthday the days begin to lengthen, and on St. *Johns* to shorten; for the Fathers herein supposed the 25 of *December* to be the Winter-Solstice, at what time ever the days begin to lengthen and the 24 of *June* to be the Summer-

⁸ *Serm. De Temp. 3. & 10.*

[8]-solstice, in which they contrariwise begin to shorten: and this was according to the ancients Astronomy, out of which supposition in this Feast-day, the antiquity of the tradition shall be also presently confirmed. And to this purpose of the Summer-solstice at St. *Johns* Birth, and of the Winter at our Saviours, they apply (I dispute not how well) that in St. *John*, ⁹εκεινον δει αυξανειν, εμε δε ελαττουσθαι, i. He must increase, but I must be diminished. So St. *Augustine* also, *Natus* ¹⁰*est Johannes hodie, ab hodierno minnuntur dies; natus est Christus 8 Kalend. Januariar, ab illo die crescent dies.* And enough to this purpose occurs in other of that ¹¹age, wherein these two Births were observed, and only these two, and that in all, or the greatest part of Christendom; *Solius Domini* (saith ¹²St. *Augustine*) & *Beati Johannis dies Nativitatis in universe mundo celebrator & colitur.* But it being clearly plain that about this time of 400 years past after our Saviour, this 25 day was so observ'd, and taken generally for his Birth-day, it falls next to inquire the original whence it was so taken: Had those *Clementines* been of sufficient credit, there had been no need to have made any further inquiry; for then we might have thence resolved that the Apostles had ordained it; and it had been fit for them that stand so much for the Authority of those Constitutions, to have proved that the Apostles had done so, that so they might [9] have

⁹ *D. Joan. c. 3 commen. 30.*

¹⁰ *D. Aug. serm de d versis 40. & 59. l. 4. advers: Crescon. C. 37. & in Psalm. 132.*

¹¹ *D. Hiero. In epist. de celebr. Pasch.tom. 4.*

¹² *Serm. de. sanctis 2*

cleared that suppositious Volume of such a Character of falshood. For doubtless had such a Constitution been published in that Volume, and by the apostles, the eastern Church had not so long been ignorant of it, as it appears by St. *Chrysostom* they were: For untill some 10 years before his Sermon ¹³made upon this day, especially for the truth of the time of the Feast, that Church had not been generally instructed with this certainty of it; for then it was newly learn'd from the Western Church, in which even from *Thrace* to *Cadiz* (as he tells us from such as instructed him) it was so observe'd. But although that Ordinance touching it in the *Clementines*, attributed to the Apostles, be suppositious, yet there is great reason for us to think that the tradition of this Feast to be so kept on that day was Apostolical, that is, taught and deduced into the Church (though not in writing) both from the apostles, and first Disciples and Observers of our Saviour. *Quid autem* (saith ¹⁴*Irenaeus*) *si neque Apostoli quidem scripturas reliquissent nobis, nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditinonis quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant Ecclesia?* And we shall here use aptly enough the very words also of *Tertul.* ¹⁵ speaking of diverse observations in both Sacraments, and other parts of Christian Religion in his time, which was near the Apostles; *Harum & aliarum ejusmodi Disciplinarum si legem expoltules scripturarum, nullam [10]*

¹³ *D. Chrys. edit. Saviliana', tom. 5: λογ. οβ. p. 511*

¹⁴ *Advers. Heres. l. 3. c. 4.*

¹⁵ *De corona militis c. 4.*

invenies: But, traditio pratendatur auctrix, consuetude confirmatrix, & fides observatrix. But for the order of proof here (it being first cleared that this tradition was about the time of those Fathers that testifie it was commonly received in Christendom) before we come to the particular deductions of it out of the elder ages that precede them, we shall here not untimely first note, that as it was commonly received as a thing then settled, so was it generally thought of as what was then very ancient. So saies St. *Chrysostom* expresly, being ¹⁶instructed from learned men of the Western Church, it was then *ανωθεν και προ παλλων παραδοθεισα ετων*, that is of ancient time, and delivered in the Church many years before, as his words are; and yet, saith he, it is new too, new in the Eastern Church, because (as he writes) we have so lately learn'd it, that is, within ten years since; but he calls it *παλαιαν δε και αρχαιαν δια το ταις πρεσβυτεριας ταχεως ομηλιχα γενεσθαι* & i. old and very ancient, in that it is even of equal age with the ancients feasts dayes which they had received: and again, though it came but lately into the Eastern Church, yet it was, saith he, *παρα τοις εσπεραν οικουσιν ανοθεν γνωριζομενη* i. well known from ancient time to those that were of the Western Church. And St. *Augustine* also ¹⁷expresly says that the birth was upon this day, *sic trades Ecclesia*; which denotes great [11] great antiquity

¹⁶ *Serm. dictum in hom. 34. tom. 2 ed. Bagl. & in serm. 27. de nat. Jo. Baptis. eodem tom.*

¹⁷ *Ennarat. in Psalm. 132.*

even in his time: and in ¹⁸another place speaking of the celebration of St. John Baptists birth-day, which was received with this, it seems, by a like tradition, *Hoc majorum traditione suscepimus*, (saith he) *hoc ad pasteros imitanda devotione transmittimus*. These passages alone are enough testimony that this Feast day thus placed was reputed in those time, that is about 400. years after Christ, every ancient: But to know how ancient it was more particularly, it behoves us to look backward from those times by such degrees, as that by careful observing one of them after another, up toward the times of our Saviour, we may be herein instructed according to the occurrence of such testimony as may make to the end of the inquiry: and I doubt not but we shall so well enough at length find it receiv'd in the Church, in the Western Church, even from Apostolical tradition deriv'd from observation while yet our Saviour was on the earth. But to begin this course of inquiry by looking back by degrees from the time of St. *Chrysostom*, and the rest of the Fathers of about his age, we shall first look on the time of near 100 years before them, that is, of *Constantine* the Great, and the first general Council of *Nice*, held in the year of 325. at which time we shall with sufficient arguments first shew, that this Feast was kept on the 25. *December*, as now it is, and that then also from ancients [12] time; against those which suppose the beginning of it no elder than after or about

¹⁸ *Serm. de sanct. 4.*

Constantine: And from thence we shall go upward to the Apostles. But because that hath first reference to the time of this Council, and make much otherwise also for confirmation of the antiquity of this, and the celebration of the day (as shall be presently shewed) consists especially in observation of the name of the time under which those Fathers received, denoted and celebrated it, that is, of the very day of the Winter-Solstice, with reference to the Spring-Aequinox, as to the time of the conception of our Saviour, and to the Summer-Solstice, and Autumn-Aequinox, as to St. *Johns* birth and conception; it is first here requisite that we shortly open the ancient supposition which the most primitive time had touching those four beginnings of the Quarters of the year, which (being much different from what was received, both at the time of the Council of *Nice* and before it, and somewhat is also yet retain'd in Church cycles) will make way for confirmation of the receiv'd opinion of that sacred Birth-day. [13]

SECT. II.

For preparation of more particular proof of the Tradition of the Feast-day, the supposition which the most Primitive Ages had touching the time of the Solstices and Aequinoxes.

The ancient and civil supposition of the Solstices and Aequinoxes, (in which an express character is found of the Antiquity of this Tradition, as shall be presently shewed) was both before and about our Saviours Birth-day, (especially in the Roman

Empire) of another kind from that which either at this day is, or at the time of the Birth was agreeable to the more accurate and naturall Astronomy; I mean, the supposition which was generally received in their Characters and *Parapegmata*, which denoted both their Sacrifices, Feast-days, and Country observations for matter of Husbandry: For they supposed in those Calendars, that the Suns entrance into the 1 degree of *Aries* was on the 15 Kalends of *April* in the *Julian* year, that is, on the 18 day of *March*; but that the spring-aequinox was not until the 8 Kalends of *April*, that is, the 17 of *June*, they placed the Suns first entrance into *Cancer*; but the Solitice on the 8 Kalends of *October*, or the 17 of *September*, was their supposed time of the Suns first entrance into *Libra*; but the [14] Autumun-aequinox on the 8 Kalends, or the 24 of *September*; and according to these the first entrance of the Sun into *Capricorn* they placed on the 15 Kalends of *January*, or the 18 of *December*: So that the Aequinoxes and Solstices were not supposed in the first entrance, or in the 1 degree of those 4 signes (as at this day they are, and many ages since have been) but at such time as the Sun held the 8 degrees of them. For the Suns proper Diurnal motion being about a degree, it so fell out in their Calculation, that 8 days being reckon'd from the first entrance into every of those signs (as it is seen in the examples) on the 8 day the Sun was in the 8 degrees of those signes, and then made the supposed time of

Solstices and Aequinoxes. The testimonies of this kind of placing in those time are frequent. *Ovid*¹⁹ expressly teacheth us so for the Summer-solstice. But in the Calendar that is commonly joined with him, and received by others, it is therein mistaken. The like for all four do *Pliny*²⁰, *Columel*²¹, *Vitruvius*²², *Martianus Capella*²³, the Scholiast on *Germanicus* his *Aratus*, and the Author of the fragment joyn'd with *Censorinus*: And of the natural forces of the two Tropiques or Solstices, to this purpose *Manilius*²⁴,

Has quidam vires octava in parce reponunt;

Sunt quibus esse placet decimas; nec defui Autor

Qui prima momenta daret, franosque dierum.

[15] Meaning that the common opinion was, they were (with the Aequinoxes) in the eight part of their signs, but that some thought them otherwise; some in the tenth, some (as they ought) in the first. But this opinion of eight parts, and so by consequence of those times of the Aequinoxes and Solstices was a most ancient tradition, and retained still in their Calendars, or *Fasti*, made for civil, sacred and rustic use; notwithstanding that the more accurate Astronomers had found it to be an error; nor otherwise then at this day those which keep the *Julian* and *Dionysian* account in the Church, (as we in *Great Britain*) suppose the spring-aequinox on the 21 of *March*, though the known Astronomy teach us that it anticipate about

¹⁹ *Fastorum* l. 6.

²⁰ *Hist. nat.* l. 2. c. 19. l. 18. c. 25. & 29.

²¹ *De re Rustica* c. 14 & l. 11. c. 2

²² *Architect.* l. 9. c. 5.

²³ *Nupt. Philol. & Mercur.*

²⁴ *Astron. L.* 3. *ad extreme.*

11 days. And as it happens in like cases, they still retain'd what had been from ancient time settled in the State, neglecting the corrected Astronomy; and that especially because those old Calendars were already fitted to their Feasts and Sacrifices, and were more known to the people, who could not but have been much troubled with an innovation of the time of all their publick solemnities. Neither *Sosigenes* in his divers amendments of the year made upon *Julius Caesars* commands, or the rest after him so employed, alter any thing in this supposition: All which is fully expressed in that *Columella*, in his Precepts of Husbandry; where having first spoken of [16] the Solstices and Aequinoxes, falling upon the 8 degrees of those signes, he presently thus admonishes: ²⁵*Nec me fallist* (saith he) *Hipparchi ratio, que docet Solstitia & Aequinoctia non octavis, sed primis partibus signorum confici: Verum in hac ruris disciplina sequor Eudoxi & Metonis, antiquorumque fastos Astrologorum, qui sunt aptati publicis sacrificiis; quia & notior est ista vetus Agricolis concept opinio.* He gives here the true reason why that supposition was retrined; but, by the way, is deceived in this, that he takes *Eudoxus* and *Meton* to be of those ancients Astronomers from whom it was received. It is true indeed that in the old ²⁶*Parapegmata*, which shew us that according to *Calippus* and *Euctemon*, the Solstice and Aequinoxes were at the first entrance of the Sun into the signes proper for them: *Eudoxus* yet had otherwise placed them; as for purpose, the spring-aequinox on the 6 day after the Sun's entrance into *Aries*, and the Winter-solstice on the 4 day after the 1 entrance into *Capricorn*:

²⁵ *Agricult.* l. 9. c. 14.

²⁶ *Parap. quod gemino subnectitur.*

But we find not that the had taught this learning of the 8 days or parts; no more do we that *Meton* was any teacher of it; although also for this particular, beside the published *Parapegmata*, I made speciall search also for it in *Ptolemies* ²⁷ **ΦΑΣΕΙΣ** **ΑΠΛΑΝΩΝ** **ΑΣΤΕΡΩΝ** **ΚΑΙ** **ΣΥΝΑΓΩΓΗ** **ΕΠΙΣΗΜΑΣΙΩΝ**, a Book never yet printed, but fraught with divers pieces of the *Parapegmata* both of *Meton* and *Eudoxus*; and [17] wholly another thing from that which goes under a like name for *Ptolemies*, published at the end of some Editions of *Ovids Fasti*. Beside, it is certain that the Summer-Solstice observd by *Meton* with *Euctemon* in the 316 year of *Nabonassar*, that is about CCCCXL. Before Christ, was upon the 21. Of the *Egyptian* Moneth *Phamenoth*, as *Ptolomy* expressly²⁸ testifies, which for that time agrees with the 27. of the *Julian June*. Neither *Eudoxus* therefore, nor *Meton*, thus placed the Solstices on the 8 Kalends of their Moneths. Other of lat time have much troubled themselves to find the ground or original whence this supposition came among the Ancients; as especially Cardinal *Contaren*, *Genesius de Sepulveda* and most of all *Joseph Scaliger*; but their conjectures are most uncertain, and too weak to rely on. Neither, I guess, will the original be found among any of the Ancients that are classic in Authority, but in a transcript of some parts of a Latine Translation by *Abraham de Balmis*, of a Book title²⁹ *Isagogicon Astrologia Ptolomei*, (which indeed appears to be *Geminus Phenomena*) compar'd with the Greek; I find

²⁷ *Cod. Ms. est V.C. Henrici Savill Eq. Aurati; mihi vero communicavit pro sud huminitate V.C.T. Bambridge Medicine D & Mathematicus egregious.*

²⁸ *Mathemat. Syntax. l. 3.*

²⁹ *Copiam mihi perhumaniter fecit v. c. Jac. Usherus, sacra Theol. D. undiquas doctimssimus.*

these words, as if they were but translated from the first Author, *Uterque Tropicus, & ambo Aequinoxia, secundam Astrologorum Graecorum opinionem, fiunt in primis gradibus horum Signorum; sed secundum Chaldeorum opinionem in octavis gradibus*: but the Greek copy [18] had no such thing; though it be like enough that the copy whence he translated it had, that is an Arabick copy of *Geminus*, who, as *Euclide* also, *Ptolomy*, *Aristotle*, much of *Galen* and other Greek Authors, was turned out of Greek into Arabick, and thence into Latine, long before the Greek it self was translated immediately into Latine, as we have it at this day: and it appears that his translation was from an Arabick copy, in that alone, that the *parapegma* which is at the end of this Latine *Geminus*, hath the names of *Eudoxus*, *Calippus*, *Euctemon*, *Dolitheus* and *Meton*, so varied as frequently other names are, which are expressed out of Arabick letters into Latin in like translations; as for *Eudoxus*, it hath *Orchatis*; for *Calippus*, *Philidis*; for *Euctemon*, *Octiman*; for the other two, *Dussionius* and; all which plainly mistaken by the translator, when he found either the names written without essential points in the Arabick character, or else mis-transcribed, as it might easily be, by such a writer that was not worthy to be trusted to; for the misshaping of a letter, or the doubling of a point, and the like, soon makes such variance of names expressed out of that Language. But for the matter of the 8 degrees, and the Solstices and Aequinoxes referred to them, here is authority that it had original from³⁰ the *Chaldees*, which I yet think is as far from truth as that of *Columel's*; neither is [19] this a fit place to

³⁰ 9 Kal. Jan. Brumale solstitium observant Chaldaei, ait Columella, l. 11. c. 2.

make larger inquiry after it. It here sufficeth to shew it manifest, that this placing of those parts of the year was observed from ancient time, and that especially in the State of Rome; as we see also in those their old Country-Feasts, the *Robegalia*, the *Floralia*, the *Vinalia*; which were the three main Feasts wherein from ancient time they made intercession to their gods against all hurt that might happen to their green Corn, and the ripening of the fruits, and their Vintage; and were kept and so noted by³¹ *Varro*, according to another account of the Suns place or motion then is before delivered. And according to this account are the Aequinoxes and Solstices in Veverable *Bede's* Ephemeris, noted with the addition of *juxta quosdam* to be understood, although in the Print they somewhat vary it: but it is clear, that in his *December* the *Solstitium juxta quosdam*, and in his *March* the *Aequinoctium juxta quosdam*, are both placed a day before they should be, that is, they ought to be on the 8 Calends, (not the 9.) the one of *January*, the other of *April*; with which the *Sol* in *Capricorn*, and the *Sol* in *Aries*, there before noted, to the 15. Calends, exactly suppose the Solstice in the 8. degree of *Capricorn*, and the Aequinox in the 8. of *Aries*, that is, in the 25. dayes of their Moneths; reference being still had to this ancient account, which he, being most curious in the cycles of time [20] would not omit; although his *Ephemeris* were purposely made for the *Dianysian* year, which also he hath together expressed in the same colums: But, I suppose the chief reason why these two stand so displaced, is, because the noting of the birth of St. *Anastasia* was thought more necessary to the 8 Cal. of *Ian.* than this old supposed Solstice to be added, it was cast upon a

³¹ *Apud Plin. l. 8. c. 19. & Scholiaest. Aratea prognostica.*

void place in a line next preceding. The same way may be said of the Spring-aequinox, which had no room on the 8 Kalend of *April* in the Column, by reason of the conception and passion of our Saviour together noted to that day; and that he is so to be understood, he himself elsewhere is ³²testimony enough, expressly relating this ancient course of accounting the Solstices and Aequinoxes: So that his *Ephemeris* is a special example of it, if rightly understood; as also it that *Calendarium Romanum*, lately cut in Brass, and so published from the print, as a suppose to be as ancient as *Constantine* the Great; where the Summer-solstice is indeed by the cutters or transcribers fault set to the 7 Kalend of *July*, which plainly should have been on the eighth, and the Suns entrance into *Cancer* is on the 17 Kalend which should be on the 15. as also the Suns entrance into Aries should have been placed on the 15 Kalend of *April*, which agrees just with the Feast of *Hilaria* being on the 8 Kalend. And according to this supposition of the ancients, did [21] that learned Gentleman, *George Herwart van Hochenburg*, (out of whose Library this Calendar was lately published) Judiciously declare the reason of those difference that appear in it from the later Astronomy; and in his Letter written to Seignior *Haleander*, a Gentleman of curious learning in *Rome*, the Copy whereof was thence sent me through the hand of that learned and worthy Gentlemen Monseieur *Pierese*, an Advocate in the Parliament of *Aix*; and this some two years since, when 'twixt him and my self, and from him to *Haleander* diverse Letters passed touching the particulars and authority of that Calendar.

³² *De Temp. ratione, c. 28.*

SECT. III.

That the keeping of it this day was so receiv'd from tradition, even of the eldest time since our Saviour; and this justified from the Fathers, supposing it to have been on the very day of the ancient Winter-solstice.

The ancient supposition of the Solstices and Aequinoxes being thus hitherto first opened, let us in looking back by degrees, (as is before proposed) begin with the time of the Council of *Nice*, held in the year of our Saviour 325, It will so appear, that before that Council, this Feast was established in the Western Church and that by the generall [22] testimony of those Fathers, which with one voice suppose it as formerly placed on the very day of the Winter-solstice; for had it been begun after or about the time of that Council, and withal supposed to have ought been kept on the Winter-solstice day, then doubtless would they have placed it on that day which was received in the Church to be the Winter-solstice-day, after or about the same Council, as at this day in the *Gregorian* year, who doubts but that a Feast to be newly instituted on an Aequinox or Solstice, or with reference to either of those times, would be placed by them which have received that Reformation on the Aequinoxes or Solstices, or with reference to the according as they are in the corrected Calendar, and not as they fall in the *Julian* or *Dionysian* year? For example also, what

greater testimony were there (if all other were lost) to prove the antiquity of that very kind of keep the Feast of *Easter* as we do in our Church, to be of the Primitive time, than this, that the *Paschales termini* are retain'd still according to the Spring-aequinox receiv'd in the Primitive times? Now to make clear our purpose, here it is also certain that about and after that Council of *Nice*, the Spring-aequinox according whereunto the Paschal-cycles were made, was supposed in the Church upon the 21 of *March*, as it is seen also in the Paschal-account used to this [23] day in the Church of *England*; so that it was become for dayes sooner than in those elder times, when it fell in common opinion on the 25 day: but when the Spring-aequinox was so changed, and according to the change also received, it could not but follow that the beginning of the other three parts of the year must also be altered, that is plainly seen in the known course of the Suns motion. And therefore the Solstice and the other Aequinoxes must also vary in their moneths, and by a like or very³³ near like difference of days anticipate, as they are accordingly cited in *Bede's Ephemeris*, who³⁴ elsewhere also admonishes us as much. Therefore it must follow too, that about and after that generall Council the time of the Winter-solstice was placed (and so supposed in Ecclesiastical account) upon the 21 or 22 of *December*. But if it had been so receiv'd when this Feast-day was first ordained, and specially placed

³³ *Vide Sis Marcel. Francolin. de temp. hor. canonic. c. 75. & 76.*

³⁴ *De temp. Nat. c. 18.*

on the Solstice-day (as the Fathers generally by tradition from former time place it) there had been necessary cause enough to have had it fallen yearly three or four days sooner than it did, both in the Primitive times and at this day, that is, on the 21 or 22 of the same moneth. By consequence it was then ordained or receiv'd in the Church, at such time as the Winter-solstice was not supposed on the 21 or 22 day of the same moneth, but on the 25, that is, at [24] least before that Council of *Nice*, or *Constantine* the great, howsoever too rashly some have delivered³⁵ of it, that *post speculum Constantini Romae haec observatio instituta est*. Neither can Objection have power here, which perhaps may obviously be brought to impugne this kind of argument; that is, that it might notwithstanding be ordained first in the later part of the primitive times, or after *Constantine*, or that Council, in such sort that it might be placed on the day of the Solstice that was received at the time of the birth, that is, the 25. day, and not that which the received account had so innovated: for this Objection is partly answered before in the passage of Feasts at this day to be ordain'd, with reference to the Solstices in the Gregorian Calendar: and besides, if the Church about this time after *Constantine* had regarded in a new Institution the Solstice of the time of the birth, according as it was then to be found in the Moneth, it must be that they either regarded the true and natural, or the receiv'd and civil Solstice. For the

³⁵ *Jos. Scal. de emendat. Temp.*. l. 6. p. 510. & *Calvisius Isagog. chron.* c. 46.

first, if they had been so curious as to have sought what the true place of the Winter-solstice to this purpose had been in the age of that birth, as they had indeed sought for the true Aeqinox of their own time for their direction of *Easter*; they had found that the true Solstice anticipated the 25. day about two dayes; for, by the most accurate [25] calculation to the noon of the Meridian of *Bethlehem* on the 25 *December*, in the year commonly attributed to the birth of our Saviour, the Sun was in the second degree of *Capricorn*, and some minutes over, as ³⁶*Cardan* also places it in the scheme of that nativity; whence it must clearly follow, that about the 23. day was the very point of the Winter-solstice, the diurnal true motion of that time of the year in the *Perigaum* being somewhat more than a degree. No place was then for this true Solstice in such their consideration of the birth-time, if they had thus inquired after it, unless they would have instituted the Feast (under that name of time) on the 23. day, and not on the 25. For that second, what color have we to think that they should in those times have retain'd the old supposition of the civil Solstice for their Institution of this Feast-day, and yet so carefully alter the formerly-received aequinox for *Easter*? This of the birth being as the head and rule of the chiefest immovable Feasts, as that the Passion and Resurrection is of the moveable. Would they have retained the same

³⁶ *Comment ad Ptolem. quadripartite. l. 2. Com. 54. & vide sis Clavium ad cap. 1. Jab. de Sacro bosco Alter quidem colurus, p. 297. Edit. 4. 1601.*

error upon institution of a new Feast, which with so much curiosity they correct in establishing the certainty of the old one? It rests firmer therefore, that whensoever it was first instituted for anniversary celebration, it was in such an Age as had the supposition of the [26] Winter-solstice being on the 25. day of *December* yet retain'd in the Church: otherwise what dependence were there 'twixt the name of the Feast and the Solstice? But that dependence is by the consent of the Fathers fully testified, as a tradition of former times: and the later Age which in the Church retain'd that supposition, must at least be before the Council of *Nice*, as is already shewed: therefore at least the Institution of it must precede that Council.

This being hitherto deduced, it will in the next degree of searching backward follow also, if we can prove the received supposition of the Church touching the time of the Winter-solstice to have been long before this Council, agreeable to that which here is shewed to the time of it, that the first observation or institution of this Feast under the name of the Solstice upon the 25. day, was also long before that Council. Now as the Spring-aequinox changed from the 25. to the 21. so did the Winter-solstice of necessity change also, as is before shewed: But the Spring-aequinox was also at least some 50 years before that Council, upon the 21. or 22 of *March* by the received supposition of them from whose direction the Church-cycles were principally guided, that is, of the *Aegyptians*, and especially those of *Alexandria*; so is the

express³⁷ testimony of *Anatolius*, born and bred in *Alexandria*, [27] but Bishop of *Laodicea* in the time of *Aurelian*, about 270 years after our Saviour. He shews that then the 11 Kalends of *April*, that is, the 22. of *March* was the supposed Aequinox; which agrees well enough with that of the 21, if regard be had to that variation which the hours out of which the Leap-year is made must of necessity be a cause of as *Bede*³⁸ withal in explanation of *Anatolius* hath taught us: The same *Bede* well admonishing, that it was *Regula Nicene probate Councilio*, not *statuata*,³⁹ to have that time receiv'd for the Spring-aequinox. And indeed the very words of the Epistles sent out of the Council touching it, and the Church stories plainly prove it to have been generally known and receiv'd in the Church, both the West, North, South, and part of the East long before, In *Constantines* Epistle⁴⁰ to the Churches of Christendom sent presently upon the Council, it is expressed that it was so generally received before; and *Ruffinus* speaking to the Council, tells us, that,⁴¹ *De observatione Paschae, antiquum Canonem, per quem nulla de reliquo varietas oriretur tradiderunt*. Nothing therefore can be clearer then that the aequinox of the 21 or 22 of *March*, according to the difference before noted, was ancient in the traditions of the Church, long before the *Nicene* Council: Otherwise they

³⁷ *Apud Euseb. hist. eccles. l. 7. c. 26.*

³⁸ *In epist. Ad Wichred de Paschatia celebration, tom. 2.*

³⁹ *Wilfrid apud Bedam, hist. Angl. l. c. c. 25.*

⁴⁰ *Euseb. de vita Constant. l. 3. c. 18. Socrat. Hist. l. 5. c. 21. Nicephor. l. 12. c. 33.*

⁴¹ *Hist. eccles. l. 10. c. 6.*

had as well in expresse terms innovated the aequinox, as established uniformity in observing [28] their Easter by it. Therefore also was the Winter-solstice about the 21 or 22 of December in the traditions of the Church long before that Council then: what follows hence touching the institution of the Feast which we inquire after, is according to the former inferences most apparent, for so much time as those testimonies reach back unto.

To go further up in a third degree, it will be also justified, that the Aequinox, and by consequence another Winter-solstice then that of the 25 day of *December*, was not only ancienter then the *Nicene* Council in the Church-cycles, but also equal to the Apostles times. For although we find in the Church-story great differences of the Primitive times touching the keeping of Easter, and diverse cycles and Canons made for it, yet those differences are chiefly about the day of the week whereon it should be kept; as between the *Tessaeskaidecatoi* and the Churches of the West, but never (in any testimony of credit) about the diversity of supposition of the aequinox that directs it otherwise than according to that in *Anatolins*, which stands with the received time of the 21 of March, as is already noted; I say in any testimony of credit, for under favour of the learned, I conceive not that attributed to *Theophilus* Bishop of *Caesaria*, and published in the end of *Bedes* Epistle to ⁴²*Wichred*, [29] where

⁴² *Tom 2. p. 232 edit. Colon.*

the 25 day is supposed for the Aequinox to be other then suppositious, the whole shape of it hath the Character of counterfeiting: But the Aequinox is still (for ought appears) supposed the same in that Controversie about *Easter* had under ⁴³Pope *Victor* about the CXC. as it was in the Council of *Nice*, and the same also before *Victor*, even up to the time of the Apostles. What else is denoted in that of *Proterius*, Patriarch of *Alexandria* to *P. Leo* the First, where he tells ⁴⁴him that *St. Mark* had taught the *Aegyptians* (according as he had learned from *St. Peter*) that *Easter* was to be observed after the XIV. moon of the first moneth, the first moneth here was known by the spring-aequinox, of which if they had not been agreed, as much trouble (or more) would have been in establishing of that, as there was in clearing what day of the week the sacred Feast of *Easter* was to be kept on. The like is affirmed of the Apostolical tradition of the uniform celebration of *Easter*, by *Ceolfrid* in his Epistle to *Naitan* King of the *Picts*: And to confirm more full that the observation of it established by the *Nicene* Council was such as had been from the beginning of Christianity, or the Apostles times, the very words of the Epistle send by that Council to the Churches of *Aegypt* and *Africk* are, that now the controversie was ended touching Eastern, and that those of the Eastern [30] Church that had before followed the *Jews* in observing it on the

⁴³ *Euseb. eccles. Hist. l. 5. c. 22 & c.*

⁴⁴ *Apud Bed. de temp. rat. 6. 42. & vide sis Ceolfrid apud eund. Hist. eccl. l. 5. c. 22.*

XIV Moon, did hold it⁴⁵ Συμφωνως Ρωμαιοις και ημιν, και πασιν υμιν τοις εξ αρχης μεθ ημων φυλαττουσι το πασχα, *i.* Agreeable to the Romans, to us, and to all you who from the beginning observe *Easter* as we do; or, *Consone cum Romanis, & vobiscum, & cum omnibus ab initio Pascha custodientibus*, as ⁴⁶ *Cassidore* anciently translated it; which shews also that in *Socrates* he read εξ αρχης, that is, from the beginning, as some Copies are; and not εξ αρχαιου, *i.e.*, from ancient time, as in others the reading is. It followes therefore, that even from the beginning, that is, from the Apostles time, the same Spring-aequinox was receiv'd in the Church, that is, the 21 or 22 of *March* as was afterwards, and that it was thence established on the 21 by the Council of *Nice*, and that by consequence, in those times of the Apostles, the formerly-receiv'd aequinox was altered from the 25 to the 22 or 21; and so also (as of necessity it followes) the Winter-solstice from the 25 of *December* to near about the 21 or 22 of the same moneth. Whence also it is to be concluded, that this Feast-day was receiv'd to be kept on the 25 day even before the Apostles time, and that among the Disciples of our Saviour, while he was yet on earth that is, while in common reputation the 25 day of *December* was taken for the Winter-solstice: Otherwise what colour were [31] there why the consent of the Fathers should denote it by that civil Winter-solstice which was

⁴⁵ *Socrat. Hist. eccles. l. 1, c. 6.*

⁴⁶ *Hist. Tripart. l. 2.c. 12.*

out of use in the Church, both in their time, and been so likewise from the times of the Apostles, that is, from some time after the Passion of our Saviour, before which there was no need at all (for the establishing of our *Easter*, which was to be ruled by the Spring-aequinox) to vary the placing of those points of the Quarters of the year? But it being commonly received, out of the account and Kalendar of the Gentiles, that the 25. of *December* was the Solstice, and that on the same day our Saviour was born, it grew familiar, it seems, and so was delivered down to those Fathers, that the birthday was on the very Winter-solstice, which they so often inculcate: But the Apostles and Evangelists not being able perhaps in the infancy of the Church to settle the anniversary celebration of *Easter*, until about their later times, that is, about 100. years after this birth, carefully observed, and especially St. *Peter* and St. *Mark*, where the natural aequinox was, according to which the Solstices ever vary, and so found it in the time about the 22. or 21 of *March*, as by exact calculation it will happen, according to that before noted touching *Anatolius*; and hence they delivered knowledge of the change of those Quarters of the year to posterity. But also, because [32] even from the very birth itself the 25. day of *December* had been kept, or known for it, notwithstanding that it was in vulgar opinion conceived to have been on the day attributed to the civil Solstice,⁴⁷ which anticipated it three dayes, as is before shewed, but was proper to the 25. day of

⁴⁷ *In common reputation among the Gentiles; yet would they not vary it from that day, because indeed it had no reference to the Solstice.*

December onely, as it was the 25. day of that Moneth: Although those Fathers, being none of the best Astronomers, thought still however the Solstice was altered in their times, that at the time of the birth the natural Solstice had fallen on the 25. day, and then onely they so often note it, mistaking vulgar supposition delivered in the Kalendar of the Gentiles for exact calculation.

SECT. IV.

Expresse testimonies to the same purpose out of ancient History, and a Confirmaiton from the general use in the severall Churches of Christendom.

Neither is this antiquity of certainty only thus proved from the common joining the Feast with the Winter-solstice in the Fathers expressions of it, but also from expresse testimonies denoting as much in relations of the ancients. In which to observe first a like course, as before, in going upward from the time of those Fathers toward [33] the Apostles, we find that many years before the Council of *Nice*, that is, under *Diocletian*, this feast was thus celebrated, and that in some part of the Eastern Church also; however that Church was not generally instructed in it, till in St. *Chrysotoms* age: For in the Church story⁴⁸ it appears, that under that Emperour, *Anthimus* Bishop of *Nicodemia*, together with many thousand Christians, were

⁴⁸ *Niceptor. calistus, l. 7. c. 6*

assembled to keep that Feast-day, when the Emperour, or his fellow-Persecutor *Maximinus*, commanded fire to be put to the Church wherein they were assembled, and that none of them should escape that would not sacrifice presently to *Jupiter Victor*; whereupon they all willingly receiv'd the Crown of Martyrdom: and in the ancient Martyrology of *Rome*, the passion of those Martyrs placed on the 25 of *December* in these words, *Nicomedia passio multorum millium Martyrum, qui cum in Christi natali ad dominicum convenissent, &c.* which also for the time is justified by the Greek ⁴⁹ *Menologie*, where the words συναθροισας (Ανθιμος) εν ὑπ αυτον εκκλησια του τους Χριστου λαου τω γαρ τωικαυτα η εορτη της Χριστου γενησεως συνεορταζον αυτοις, &c. that is, *Anthimus* assembling in his Church a multitude of Christian on the Feast-day of Christs Birth, kept the Feast with them &c. But indeed the Greek Church casts this Feast of the Martyrs on the 28 of *December*, as they do also [34] upon other dayes the memories of St. *Eugenia* and St. *Anastasia* (both which the Western Churches retain with this Birth-day on the 25) the one on the 22, the other on the 24 day. But this was done by them only, because the more single honour might be given both to our Saviours Birth, and to those other names, being so divided: *Ut horum solemnitatem* (speaking of those Martyrs saith ⁵⁰ *Baronius*) *celebrius agerent, eam*

⁴⁹ Ad Δεχ. χε

⁵⁰ *Old Martyrol. 8 Kalend Jan.*

transtulerunt. As also among the *Jews* Translation was often used of their feasts from one day to another, that two Sabbaths or great Feasts might not concur, as their ⁵¹Doctors deliver. Hence then it is enough also manifest, first, that by ancient testimony of the Monuments of the Church, this Feast was thus observed before *Constantine*, or that Council of *Nice* which was held many years after the death of *Dioclesian*.

But also to look farther upon the times preceding this Martyrdom, we shall find good testimony that it was taught to posterity to be kept so, even by the Apostles, who knew it as a clear certainty while our Saviour was yet on earth: For though they ordain'd it not in those Constitutions falsely attributed to them, or in any other Writer, yet might they teach it as a tradition to be receiv'd ever to the Church, as they did the changing of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first of the week; the solemn [35] Renunciation of the Devil at Baptism; the keeping of Easter on the Sunday, or the like, *quas sine ullius Scripturae instrumento*, as ⁵²*Tertullian* says, *solius traditionis titulo, exinde consuetudinis patrocinio, vindicamus*. To this purpose, among St. *Chrysostoms* Works in Latine, one Homily is ⁵³*De Nativitate Domini*, as the Latine title is, for the Greek of that Homily I have not yet seen; wherein he confidently, as elsewhere, teaches, that this day of *December* is the just day of that birth, and for his authority brings no less

⁵¹ *Talmud. Masec. Rosh. Hassana.*

⁵² *De corona militis, c. 3.*

⁵³ *Edit. Basile. tom. 2. hom. 39.*

than St. *Peters* testimony; *Petrus*, are the words, *qui hic fuit cum Joh. qui hic fuit cum Jac. nos in occidente docuit*; which hath plain reference to that before noted out of his long Oration for the same matter, where he tells ⁵⁴us also that in the controversies of those time touching this Feast, such as defended it as what ought to be kept on this day, justified that it was Παλαια και αρχαια, και ανωθεν τοις απο Θρακης μεχει Γαδειρων δικουσι καταδιηλος και επισημος, i. *Very ancient and from old time known, and famous from Thract to Cadis, that is in the whole Western Church*. To these may be added that of *Euodius*, whom *Nicephoras* calls the Successor of the Apostles, and it is delivered ⁵⁵that it was ordained by St. *Peter* himself in Antioch; that we may so distinguish him from that other *Euodius* Bishop of *Uzalis* in St. *Augustines* time; he in an Epistle touching the times of the Passion of our Saviour, [36] of St. *Stephens* Martyrdome, of the death of the blessed Virgin, and the like, sayes expressly of her, (as the Latine is in ⁵⁶*Nicephorus*, translated by *Langiun*, for neither have I the Greek of him) *Peperit autem mundi ipsius lucem, annum agens quindecimus 25. die mensis Decembris*. And likewise in an old Greek Author (the Book being written about the time of Pope *Honorius* the First) in the Library of St. *Mark's* in *Florence*, express testimony is, *Apostlos memoriae*

⁵⁴ *Edit. Savil. tom. 5. p. 512.*

⁵⁵ *Suid. In verb. Nadzurgith, & Xelsianos. Cuius nomini aferibuntur opera aliquot ad fin tom. 10. D. Aug. sub juncta edit. Lovani.*

⁵⁶ *Eccles. Hist. l. 2. c. 3.*

*prodidisse Christum ex Vigine natum Bethlehemae 25. Decemberis, as Albertus Widemonstadius of his own sight wineseth in his Notes on that impious Book called Mahomets Divinity, and brings also Hesychius his authority to the same purpose. And to these may be added Cedren, Orosius, and some ancient Manuscripts Fasti cited by Cuspinan upon Cassidore; and there is authority also,⁵⁷ that however Epiphanius in his Works have another designation of the day of this birth, (as anon is shewed) yet out of the Monuments of the Jews he learned, and then taught, that this was the very day; which they say was justified also by some Writers brought to Rome from Jerusalem by Titus; which also is strengthened by that of St. Chrysostome, when he sayes⁵⁸ expressly, that in publick Records kept at Rome in his age, the exact time of the [37] description under Quirinus, spoken of by St. Luke, (which cold not but be a special character of the time of our Saviours birth) was expressed; and then he goes on, *But what is this to us, saith he, that neither are at Rome, nor have been there, that so we might be sure of it? Yet hearken, saith⁵⁹ he, and doubt not; for we have received the day παρα τοις ακειβως ταυτα ειδοτων, i. from those which accurately know these things, and dwell at Rome; and that they ανωθεν και εκ παλαιας**

⁵⁷ *Catholicus Armeniorum in legatione ad Arvenius male legitur 10. Dec. Eam in Biblioth. Patrum edit. Paris. tom.3, p. 864. quam in edit. Colon. tom. 12. part. 1 p. 891. Nam Graece. erat χε. Δεχ. quod videre est apud Jos. Scalig. in I sagog. chron. l 3. p. 30.*

⁵⁸ *Tom. 5. edit. Savil. fol. 512.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid. p. 513.*

παραδοσεως αυτην επιτελουντες αυτοι νυν
αυτης ημιν την γνωσιν, i. *having from ancient
time and old tradition celebrated it, have now also
sent us the knowledge of it.* This is likewise
confirmed by an old barbarous Translation of what
was taken out of *Africanus* and *Eusebius*, and
published in the noble *Scaliger's Thesaurus
Temporum*, where the words are, *Aug. & Sylvano
Coss Dominus noster Jesus Christus natus est sub
Augusto 8 calendas Januarias:* and then, *In ipsa
die in qua natus est pastures viderunt stellam,
chuae 28.* which should rather be 29. for so agrees
the 25. of *December* to that of the *Aegyptian
Choiac*, which the Author means. And *Prudentius*
upon the day, supposing the ⁶⁰old tradition of the
concurrence of the Solstice with it,

Quid est quod arctum circum

Sol jam recurrens deferit?

Christusne terras nascitur,

Qui lucis auget tramitem?

[38] *Hic*

Hic ille natalis dies,

Quo te Creator ardaui

Spiravit, & limo indidit,

Sermone carnem glutinant.

⁶⁰ *In hymn ad calend. 8 Jan.*

And of later time the authorities are infinite.

The testimonies being compared with the consent of the Father, that about 400. years after Christ have written that it was ancient, as is already shewed; and being confirmed by the arguments made against the supposed later institution of it, out of the place of the received Winter-solstice, enough manifest the antiquity and certainty of this ancient Feast-day, according as we now observe it; and that even from the age wherein it first brought forth the redemption of Mankind. And to these we may adde the consent of the Christian Churches ever since about those 400. Years; for after that the Eastern or Greek Church of *Asia* had learned the truth of it from the Western, (as is delivered) this celebration of it yearly increased, and grew still more famous through Christendom: so expressly St. *Chrysostom*, καθ' εκαστου ετος επιδιδωσι και λαμπροτερα γινεται, saith he, i e. *every year it increased and grew more famous*. But indeed, because in some places it was not as yet so received, but that old erroneous opinion touching it [39] (as it happens in like cases, and shall anon be more particularly shewed) still held there place among some that were too wayward to be brought to prefer truth newly discovered to them before their own errors, therefore about 100. years after St. *Chrysostom* it was expressly ordained by the Emperor *Justin* (if my Author deceive not) that in every place of the Christian world it should be thus observed: My Author here is *Nicephorus*

⁶¹*Calistus*, who (as the Translation of him is) tells us first of *Justinian*, that he *Primum Servatoris exceptionem* (that is, the *Hypatants*, which in our Western Church is the Purification of the blessed Virgin) *toto orbe terrarum festo die honorare instituit*: and then he addes, *sicut Justinus de Sancta Christi nativitate fecit*. And according hereto are the Kalendars and Book of Divine service, not onely of the Western, which are every where common, but the Eastern Churches also: In the Menology of the Greek Church in *December*, τω αυτω εικος η πεμπτη εχτι σιρκα γενναις του κυειου και θεου και Σωτηρος ημιν Ιησου Χριστου, i *On the 25 of the same month the Feast of the Incarnation of our Lord, and God, and Saviour, Jesus Christ*: and

Παρθενεκη Μαριη θεου εικαδι γειγατο πεμπτη.

That is, *The Virgin Mary brought forth our Saviour on the 25. Day*. Other volumes of [40] their Divine service, as their *Apostolo-Evangela*, and the like, enough shew this also. And for other Churches which are not under the name of the Greek, as those of *Antioch*, or *Syria*, of *Aethiopia*, and of *Elcopti* or *Aegypt*, alththoug we have not their Calendars published with such exactness of the placing of their feasts, as we have those of the Greek Church, yet have we testimonies enough of them also, whence we may collect that they agree with us in this anniversary celebration: As, first,

⁶¹ *History eccles. l. 17. c. 18.*

for that of *Antioch*, they keep this ⁶²birth upon the same day with us in their Moneth *Canun* the former; and in *Alfragan* (as he is translated) we read in his enumeration of the *Syriack* Moneth, *Canun prior 31. dierum, cujus 25. nox vocatur nox Nativitatis*: So in the *Aethiopian* Church on the 29. of their Moneth ⁶³*Thachsasch* they kept it, which agrees always with the 25. of our *December*, though their Intercalation falling before ours (and in their *Mascharum*, or our *August*) changes the day of the Week every Leap-year into the next after what we keep: And for that of *Elkopi* we see in a short description of their account, received from an Aethiopian ⁶⁴Priest, that their *Almolad*, or the feast of the Nativity, is placed against their Moneth *Chiach*; which answers to our *December*, and the succession of their Feasts is just as in the *Syriack* account; and therefore reason enough is, that thence [41] we collect the very dayes in both to be the self-same. And to conclude here, what greater testimony can there be that it was received into the Church, even from the Disciples and Apostles of our Saviour, than this, that it was so anciently observed, and hath been ever since so generally received through Christendom? For so of the like things that great Father St. *Augustine* pronounces, ⁶⁵*Illa quae non scripta, saith he, sed tradita, custodimus, quae quidem toto terrarium orbe observantur, daritrur intellege vel ab ipsis*

⁶² *Widimonstad. In epist. subnexa Test. Syriac. & vide sis computum Antioch. apud Jos. Saclig. l. 7 de emendat. temp. p. 670.*

⁶³ *Jos. Scalig. dicto l. p. 650.*

⁶⁴ *Apud Scalig. dicto l. p. 661.*

⁶⁵ *Epist. ad Januarium 118*

Apostolis, vel a plenaris Concilis, quorum est in Ecclesia saluberrima autoritas, commendata atque statute retineri: Sicuti quod Domini Passio, & Resurrectio, Ascensio in caelum, & adventus de caelo Spiritus Sancti, anniversaria solemnitate celebrantur; & si quid aliud tale occurrerit quod servatur ab universa quacunq; se diffundit Ecclesia: All such things he supposes either delivered by the Apostles, or ordained by general Councils; for Councils, here we have no testimony that they ordained it; therefore it rests by this argument, that we derive it from the eldest tradition that may be in Christianity. But we end here this inquiry; and resolve with that old Hymne of St. Ambrose, used in the service of this day in the Church of *Rome*:

Sic praesens testator dies,

Currens per anni circulum,

[42] Quod solus a sede Patris

Munid salus advneris:

Hunc caelum, terra, hunc mare,

Hunc omne quod in eis est,

Auctorem adventus tui

Laudans exultat cantico.

Neither find I any Christian Church that in the later ages hath otherwise celebrated it, save only that of

the *Armenians*, who ⁶⁶retained an ancient custom of confounding it with the *Epiphany*, and that to the time of *Manuel Comnenus*, which is about 440 years since, and perhaps yet do; of which confusion of those feasts more in the last Paragraph. But, because in these proofs hitherto declared, the common and most received grounds and reason brought for it out of the holy Text, and some other, are omitted; as also on the other side, some objections are made in later time against it, and that by such as beat even the greatest name in the state of Learning; and some ancient testimonies also impugne what we have hitherto concluded: It follows next, (lest the inquiry should seem done with too much negligence) that we both consider of those common grounds and reason, and then shew why they were not here used; and furthermore, that we give such answer to those objections, and ancient testimonies, as that they may not at all hinder the credit of [43] those arguments which before have so demonstratively instituted it.

SECT. V.

The common Reasons used out of the holy Text to justify this day, and how they are mistakenly, and therefore not used here; together with what some would prove from the Scheme of his Nativity.

⁶⁶ *Catholicus Armeniorum in legas. ad Arm.*

Of those which have generally received it, the Ancient about 400. years after it have striv'd to fetch reason for it out of the holy Writ, (being unhappily not contented to rely wholly upon the tradition) and some of later time justifie it by Astrological observation; both being deceived, the first by mis-understanding the Text, the other by too much mingling their errors in the consideration of Nature with the thoughts of this most sacred birth-day. For those ancients, they knew out of ⁶⁷*Moses*, that the High Priest did onely once every year enter into the Holiest place, or the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; and this is ordained to be on the 10. day of the 7. Moneth, that is, the Feast of *Kippurim*, or Expiations in *Tisri*: Then out of St. *Luke*, they supposed that the Angel appeared to *Zachary*, being High Priest and sacrificing there on the same day which they would make agree with the 24. of *September*, [44] (although for the very day they have somewhat differed in the Eastern Church, and some have also ⁶⁸ supposed the conception in *October*, some in *November*) and that on the night following *Zachary's* Wife *Elizabeth* conceived St. *John Baptist*, as the Apostle foretold him: From hence, according to the Evangelist, they accounted 6. Moneths; at the end of which time the blessed Virgin *Mary* conceived, that time falls into the 25. of *March*, from which 9. Moneths being accounted, (the common time of a birth) the 25. *December* found the very birth-day of our Saviour: This is the

⁶⁷ Lev. 16. & 23.

⁶⁸ *Stephanus Gobarus Trith. apud Photium, cod. 232.*

summe of the calculation us'd out of the holy Text by the ⁶⁹ Ancients, although not without some confusion of Moneths; while by reason of application of old Lunar Moneths to the *Roman*, which are Solar, they confound herein sometimes *April* with *March*, and *September* with *October*.

The other sort which would prove it by Astrology, shews us the Scheme of this Nativity, erected for the altitude and Meridian of *Bethlehem*, to the midnight following the 25. of *December*, and then telling how wonderfully it is (by the Rules of the Art) agreeable to so wonderful a birth; and anticipating some part of the accusation they might justly look for, they declare themselves that they mean not that anything touching his Divinity, his Miracles, his [45] Holiness of life, or sending forth the Gospel, depended at all on the Stars, but they say, that as naturally he was of the best temperature, and exactest beauty, and had continuall health, and so singular gravity of aspect. *Sic etiam Deus opimus & gloriosus* (as *Candan's* ⁷⁰ words are) *optima constitutione astrorum atque admirabili Genesin illus adornavit*; which constitution of the Heavens if the Almighty, says he, had not to this purpose ordained to have concur'd and have been observed, one of these two things had happened; either that the very day, and hour, and minute of the hour of that birth, had not bee so constantly and diligently ever kept in the Church, or else that all the significations, in the

⁶⁹ *D. Chrysostom. In saepe laudato Panegyrico. Anatasius Antiochenus, Cedrenus chronici Alexandrini autor, & c.*

⁷⁰ *Ad Ptolem. Tetrabib. l. 1. text. 54.*

Scheme had not been *adeo singularia*, as he writes, *magnifica, gloriosa, & tanto concurs digna, tum vero omnibus qua successerunt de vitae sanctitate, de morum gravitate, &c. adeo congruentia, ut nil exactius*; and after the particulars largely declared, he too boldly concludes against such as justly enough impugn the art of Astrology as groundless, with this, that they can now have nothing else left to speak against it, as *Ptolomy* teaches it, than this onely, that they should perhaps object, that *Ptolomy*, to gain credit to the profession, wrote his whole *Quadripartite*, according to the agreement 'twixt this Scheme, which it is most likely he never saw, and the parts of our Saviours life denoted by it; than which, [46] saith he, as he well might, nothing can be more absurd. But out of this we may easily see, that such as stand upon those learned errors cannot but think with him, that the very day and hour of this birth is fully confirmed by that Scheme: Neither is there cause (so their grounds were certain) but that they might hence conclude also that this were the very time, although no other testimony were extant of it: For what want they in this pretence of that knowledge of the ancient *Tarutius*, who was able (as he made some learned men believe) not onely to foretell out of the Scheme of a Nativity, but also to find out of the circumstances of any life and fortune, the very point of the birth and so frame the Scheme itself? As *Plutarch* sayes he did both in the search after *Romulus* his birth-day, and the first foundation of *Rome*; and the finding the exact Scheme is the same with finding the exact time of birth; which

those Astrologers, it seems, think they have done, as well out of the congruity (as they suppose) of the Scheme to what they apply it, as out of any testimony or tradition of the Church.

But the truth is, that both this of some Astrologers, and that other of calculation out of the holy Text, deserve nor place nor name of reason to this purpose: For that of the Calculation of the months out of the holy Text, the chief ground on which it insists, [47] and which being taken away it all becomes merely vain, is that of *Zacharias* being a High-Priest, and in his sacrificing in the holiest place, or *Sanctum Santorum*, or in the Oracle, as the names of it are varied. For a sacrifice in that place was only in the feast of Expiation, that is, the 10 of Tishri, or 7 month, and this only by the High Priest: But it is most clear that *Zacharias* was no High Priest, but only one of those 24 courses of stations of Priests which weekly served at the Temple. For David distinguished the ⁷¹posterity of *Eleazar* and *Ithamar* by Lots for the continuall and daily service and sacrifice into 24 courses, and of those courses every one had a week for attendance, so that after every 24 weeks the first came to attend again; as also it was in the 24 course of the Levites, their weeks in attendance always ending on the morning of the Sabbath. Hereof is plentiful testimony both in holy ⁷²writ and in the Jews Liturgies, besides *Josephus* and the old Fathers, and it is fully and shortly expressed by

⁷¹ *I Paral.* 2.

⁷² *I Paral.* 9. *Comm.*. 25. *Jos. Arch.* L. 7. C. 11 & *in vita sua*, & 2 *adv. Apionem*.

⁷³ *Eucharías, Erant sortes 24* (saith he) & *sacerdotum, & Levitarum & Janitorum qui per totidem septimanas sibi ex ordino succederent, sabbato nova turma intranet ad officium, & post sabbatum, en quae proxima septimana ministraverat domum redeunte.* In these 24 course the 8 is the family of *Abia*; of his 8 course was *Zacharia* a Priest, and was at [48] this time in the week of his course burning incense in the Temple, but not in the Holiest place; so is the Text of St. *Luke*; a certain Priest ἐξ εφημερίας Αβια, i. of the course of *Abia*, speaking of *Zachary*; and afterward, as soon as the ministrations were accomplished, &c. what course or special dayes of ministration to be accomplished could here belong to the Priests of the Jewes? But as *Mathias*, and *Flavius Josephus* were ⁷⁴ Priests of the Sons, or course of *Jehoiarid* (that is, of the 1 course) so was *Zacharie* of *Abia*, or of the 8. Neither was any High Priest of that age bearing any such name: But he that was High priest at the birth was *Joazar*, and his predecessors were *Joseph* ⁷⁵ *Mathias*, *Simon*, &c. So that nothing is more certain then this, that *Zacharie* was not High-Priest; although anciently very great names were deceived, while they took him to be so, as St. *Ambrose*, St. *Chrysostome*, *Anastasius* ⁷⁶ Patriarch of *Antioch*, and others expressly *Zachary* then being no High Priest, it plainly follows that their whole calculation of

⁷³ *Ad. l. 4. Reg. c. 23*

⁷⁴ *I Macab. C. 2. Comm. I Jos. In Αρχ. l. 12. c. 8 & in vita sua.*

⁷⁵ *Niceph. Patriarch. In chronal. &c.*

⁷⁶ *MS. apud Jos. Scalig. l. 6. p. 509.*

Months here from the 10. of *Tishri* (in which only the High Priest entered into the Oracle) proves nothing at all, but supposes merely false grounds; and so no proof of the certainty of this day can be extracted out of that holy Story; and *Zacharies* Sacrifices, for ought appears here, might indifferently be on any other day of the year. We [49] omit here their supposition of an exact number of days for the natural time of a Birth, which plain can never be known, and in so clear a point thus much is too much then enough.

For that other reason or confirmation (as they would have it) out of Astrology, doubtless it is most vain (that we may speak no worse of it) both in regard of the Art it self, and also of this application of it. For the Art itself though very many Authors are of it, yet there is none extant of any great antiquity; and of those which are, very few agree to any purpose among themselves. *Ptolomy*, who is the ancientest of them, whose Volumes of it are publickly extant, and lived about CXL. years after our Saviour, varied⁷⁷ from the *Chaldeans* before him had observed. The *Arabians*, as *Haly*, *Albumazar*, *Messalath*, the Author of *Alcabitius*, *Zabel*, and such more have another Doctrine from his. The Latins, as *Manilius* and *Julius Firmicus*, neither agree among themselves nor with others; to omit the numerous differences that are in the many Volumes of it written in the middle and latter ages. What certainty can there be in that Art whose Professors

⁷⁷ *Tetrabib. l. 2. comm.. 57, 58, &c.*

do make no other pretence then long continuance of constant observation of signes, and things signified to justifie themselves; and yet in truth they have no testimony of such continuance of [50] observation? And I trust that no man will think that by rationally collection only as in some other faculties without a preceding and constant observation of many ages at least, it is possible to discover the nature of this or that Star, or of the various positions of the Heavens which every minute produces. Besides, without supposition of a certainty, not onely of the degrees, but in some particulars of the minuets also in which this or that Planet is, the Astrologer proceeds not; yet it is most known that the Astronomers, from whose noble search these suppositions are patiently taken by Astrologers, are herein even almost as differing among themselves as the Astrologers in denoting of effects; witsse the difference of hours in Calculation by the *Alphonsine* Tables from the *Prutenique*, made according to *Copernicus*, and of both of the restored motions of *Tycho Brahe*. And two of the Planets, *Mars* and *Mercury*, which bear no small rule in the precepts of Astrology, have hitherto scarce lesse conceal'd their motions and places in the Heavens, then *Proteus* would have done his true shape. Yet still what the Astronomer knows is uncertain, and ingenuously confesses to be so; the Astrologer for the most part slothfully believing, and so fixing himself on that belief, takes for his infallible ground, and so deceives, and is deceived in his aspects (which he resolves partile, when [51] they may perhaps be platique,

and platique when they may be partile) in his directions in the print of his *Horoscope*, and the other three of his Figure in his *Fines*, in his *Ferdriae*, in his *Conjunctions*, and in what else stands upon such exactnesse of calculation. But this is no place to speak more in particular of that Art: Enough hath been said of the vanity of it by *Mirandula*, *Alexander ab Angelis* and others that have purposely written Volumes against it. But for the application of it to this of our Saviours Birthday, it is both too groundlesse also in respect of the hour to which the Figure is erected, and withal impious in the rest of the suppositions. For the hour, it is erected to midnight following the 25. of *December*, for so we must understand that which *Cardan* designes the time by; *Diebus 6. (saith he) horis 12. Ante radicem Astrologorum, qui anni initium sumunt in Calendis Jannuaris:* This falls upon 12. of the clock of the night following the 25. of *December*. But whence, I wonder, was *Cardan* so sure that this was the minute of the hour of the Birth? Some indeed that among the Ancients erroneously placed it on the 6. of *January*, took the point of midnight to be the very minute, as we see out of those collections out of *Stephenus*, *Gobarus*, *Trsheites* in *Photius*. And insome part of the *Asiatique Churches* (especially of *Syria*) the night of this day hath the name of the night of the Nativity, which [52] *Alfragan* remembers. But that testimony of the Nativity cited out of an old Greek Manuscript in St. *Marks* Library at *Florence*⁷⁸ by

⁷⁸ *Ad Theolog. Muchamed. not. 12.*

Widmonstadius, saies, it was *hora diei sexta*: *Hesychius* there also mentioned put in on *hora diei septima*; wit which agrees that Chronicle of *Alexandria*, or the *Fasti* ⁷⁹ *Siculi* ωρα 7 της ημερας, *i. e.* the 7. hour of the day. And though none of those are of credit enough to justifie the very hour; yet, it seems, they all meant it a Birth of the day, and not of the night, the hours of which they also note by the name of the hours of the night; neither can it be cleared in the holy Text, whether it were in the night or in the day. The Angel in the night saies to the Shepherds, *For unto you is born this day*, (that is, ετεχθη σνμερον) a Saviour, out of which words it wre too much rashness to resolve whether the point of the Birth were in the night or in the day. If then *Cardan*, or his followers had been led by authority, they should have rater erected the figure (if at all they erected it) to the 6. or 7. hour of the day, that is about 12. hours before their supposed time; and so the whole Scheme had been changed, and *Aries* had been the Horoscope instead of *Libra*, and *Capricorn* in mid-heaven for *Cancer*. Besides also, had the mid-night following the 25. day been the just time, those which in *Jewry* propagated the tradition to Posterity, should (by all probabality) have deliver'd it [53] to have been on the 26. day of the *Julian December*, not the 25. For by the use of the *Jews*, their naturall days⁸⁰ were accounted from Evening to Evening: So that the night

⁷⁹ *Editione Ridertana p. 532.*

⁸⁰ *Severus Anitiochenus apud Anastas. sinast: quaest. 152. praeter litt. saecras.*

following the 25. was part of their account of the 26. day, as also the Ecclesiasticall account of days by the Cannon-Law,⁸¹ and that from ancient time. Neither can it for this reason alone be salved, unless advantage of a different account of days be taken from the old use in the State of *Rome*, whereunto *Jewry* was then subject: For in that State the naturall day was from midnight⁸² to midnight; yet according to that too it stands but indifferent to which of the two days the Birth should be referred, being thus placed at the very point of midnight which parts them. Besides also, the Church of *Rome* have taken it to have been in the nighttime preceding the 25. day, for they in the Vigil of the Feast celebrate the Shepherds watching, and in the morning they have a special Masse with reference⁸³ to the Shepherds visitation of our Saviour, at that time in the Manger: So that according to their supposition, that Scheme is not for the birth, but for a day after: In summe, the hour is every way uncertain, their proof therefore being thus shewed groundless in regard of the exact hour of the natural day (which is unknown) I hope there needs not much be said to justifie that suppositions of dependence [54] ‘twixt any working or signification of the Stars, and that great and most sacred mystery of the Incarnation are most impious; although it were so that otherwise the traditions of that art had their place: As if either

⁸¹ *Quod die dest. 75. & extra de feriis c. I Francolin de horis canonic c. 43. & synod. In Trullo canico. 91.*

⁸² *F tit. De feriis l. 8. & Plutarch in prob. Rom. 84.*

⁸³ *Ordo Roman. sed & vide sis Hugo de S. Victore erudite. Theo. l. 3. c. 5.*

the common objects of sense, or uncertain collections of mans weak understanding, had so much to do with what but at the best we are able to apprehend by Father onely. But *Cardan* had herein example to follow in those who long before him had impiously referr'd the beginning of Christian⁸⁴ Religion to a certain number of revolutions of *Saturn*. And therefore also he makes that Comet which in 1133. appeared in *Aries* under the Northern part of the Milky way, and was (as he supposed) of Martial, Jovial and Mercuriall quality, to denote the Schisms and Changes of Religion which soon after fell in this Kingdom under Henry 8. For to *Aries* (saies *Ptolemy*) is this Island subject as to a tutelary sign. And in this Nativity also, that Star which St. *Matthew* speaks of, *Cardan* takes for a signifying Comet, and places it in the Ascendant, because it seems he read in the Evangelist that the wise men saw it in the East. But there is good authority among the Ancients, & that by collection out of the holy Text, that their seeing of it in the East was a continuall seeing of⁸⁵ it for two years times before the birth in the Countries that lay East from *Jewry*; and doubtless also it could not be [55] of any such heights as Comets are at the lowest supposed to be, neither could it have designed a particular House in *Bethlem*, if it had been so might as to have been carried either as Stars or Comets are in the

⁸⁴ *Albumaz in de conjunct. differ. 8. tract. 2. & apud Rog. Bacon in opere majori MS. ad clem. P.P. 4*

⁸⁵ *D. August. in serm. I. edit. Paris. edit. Lovaniens. tom. 10. p. 431. Nicephor. Calist. l. 1 c. 13.*

Diurnall motion of the Heavens. But enough hereof is already said against him by that great *Tycho Brahe*, with whose ⁸⁶ words also we conclude here, that *Cardan* and his followers, *plus impie quam justa ratione, quomodo eunque tandem excusent, hoc asseverant ut reliqua; pudein. referre quae Astrologicis suis commeneis hac de re inseriut, no adducam.*

There was reason enough therefore why neither of these first kind of arguments (whereof the one is taken from a groundless calculation of Moneths in the holy Text, the other from the vanities of Astrology) were used among the proofs brought for the certainty of this Birth-day: For he that endeavours to establish a truth by arguments, should no less religiously abstain from false premises, than he ought carefully to meet with the sharpest objections; lest while the conclusions of it self true, and would clearly appear so if no other but true grounds were used to induce it; the credit of it be therefore still questioned, because in the foundations whereof it is so made to insist there is such use of apparent falsehoods: At least, he rather seems too willing than truly able to prove, who so mixes truth, doubts [56] and falsehood in deducing his conclusion, that either some of his premises first patiently received and credited by himself, and then offered in his arguments, have indeed much more need of proof, but are less proved by him than his conclusion: or else are every way false, and so utterly betray both the conclusion and

⁸⁶ *Progymnasm. De nova stella p. 316.*

his judgment. But we leave these, and go next (as is before purposed) to the Objections of late time made against what is hitherto concluded touching the just day of this sacred birth.

SECT. VII.

The chief Objections that are made against this dayes being the true time of the birth, with plain Answers to them.

The Ojections against this received opinion or tradition of the day made in later time are chiefly two; the one taken out of the enumeration of those circular courses of the Priests divided into their 24 families i. as is before expressed. The other from the circumstances of the time of year of this birth mentioned in holy Writ. For the first, divers Chronologers, after they have according to their own fancies altered the years of account from our Saviours birth, (some making it one, some two, some three, some more years ancients than [57] the *Dionysian Epocha* received in the Church) then, that they may settle also the very day of the birth, or at least the time of the year wherein the day fell, they calculate by those weekly ministrations of the 24 course of the Priests, to find out the weeks wherein the courses of *Abia* (of which *Zachary* was) ministered in the Temple; for then would it follow, that the time of *Johns* conception, from which the conception, and birth of our Saviour was accounted would nearly, if not exactly be found also. For the Text is, That *after*

those dayes (of his ministration) *his wife* Elizabeth conceived, and hid her self five months, &c. For example, some here supposing in their chronology that the birth was two years before the vulgarly received time, and in the XXXDCCXI. year of the *Julian* period, thus work in calculation to find out the time of the year when our Saviour was born; they observe first that *Anitiochus* polluted the Temple, and discontinued the daily Sacrifices and so by consequence the continuance of these courses; then they say that *Judas Macchabeus*, upon the new Dedication of the Temple recontinued the daily Sacrifices, and by a like consequence restored the courses, and in restoring of them began with the first, that is, the course of *Jehoiarid*, and this in the 25. day of the Hebrew Moneth *Casleu*, in the MMMXXLIX. Year of the *Julian* period, which agrees with the 24. of [58] *November* of that year; this day fell on Munday so that the continuance of the course of *Jehoiarid* was (according to the first constitution) till the morning of the Sabbath following, the next Sabbath before this new Dedication of the Temples falling so on the 22 of *November*: From this renewing of the courses they thus reckon; from the course of *Jehoiarid*, being the first, to that of *Abia*, being the eighth, must intercede 49. dayes; so that the course of *Abia* began on the 10. of *January* MMMMDL. year of the *Julian* Period, and that the conception of *St. John* was in the year preceding, that is, in the year MMMDCCX. they account over the whole cycles of those 24. courses that intercede form the course of *Abia* in *January* of the year MMMMDL.

and thence observe at what time the course of *Abia* falls again that MMMDCCX. year of the *Julian* Period; thus they find that in those 160 years 349. of those courses being past, the course of *Abia* being the last (in this computation, which begins at the next from it) of the 349. falls exactly to begin upon the 21. of *July* (being the Sabbath) of the year MMMMDCCX. and so ends upon the 28. of the same *July*, that is, the morning of the Sabbath following: By which they conclude, that upon or immediately after the [59] 28. of the same *July* St. *John* was conceived; according to the Text, that tells us, *After the dayes of Zacharies ministration, &c.* This being granted, it would follow that the birth of our Saviour (according to the vulgar calculation from the time of St. Johns conception) would be in *October* or *November* of the following year, that is, of the MMMMDCCXI. of the *Julian* Period. Others by another liberty in this kind of numbering, placing it in *September*, others otherwise, while they fetch their arguments out of the revolutions of their courses.

The other Objections, that is, from the circumstances of the time of the year of this birth, is out of the holy Text; where it is⁸⁷ written, that *there were Shepherds in the same country abiding in the fields και φυλασσουντες φυλακας της νυκτος επι την ποιμναην αυτων*, i. *and keeping watch over the flock by night*, and this at the time of the birth: This, say some, of all times fits not the midst of Winter, or

⁸⁷ *D. Luc. c. 2. comm.. 8.*

December; but rather the Spring, Summer or Autumn, when the temper or heat of the night permit both sheep and shepherd to be in the fields.

But neither of these reasons have any weight against that received tradition of the 25. of *December*, First, for the 24 courses, it were something indeed if we exactly new with which of the courses *Judas Machabeus* began his Instauration of the Sacrifices; [60] for supposing then that from this beginning and new dedication until *Zacharias* ministration no disturbance of the continuance of those courses had happened, & also that had the just number of years fully agreed upon from the same dedication to our Saviours Birth, it were such an argument as could not in any way be exceeded, so that we also otherwise allow the common calculation of time that was used by the Fathers out of St. *Luke*, in regard only of the distance between the conception of St. *John*, and the conception and Birth of our Saviour. For St. *John* was, as they commonly agree conceived presently upon the end of *Zacharies* Ministration, and this conception once fixed were a constant *Epocha* (according to the vulgarly-receive'd interpretation of *Luke*) from whence the time of the year at least of our Saviours Birth-night may be clearly collected. But on the other side, if we fail in the certainty of the beginning of the courses, who sees not that nothing can be concluded out of them to satisfie such conjecturall inferences without an open clearnesse in their antecedents? Now for that matter, no old Stories have mention

of the name of that particular course with which *Judas Macchabaus* began; but they⁸⁸ onely shew the new dedication, in which it may be granted that there was an instauration of the courses; but whether by [61] beginning again (as they suppose) with that of *Jehoiarid*, which is first in *Dauids* distribution, or with that of *Jedaiah*, being the second or with any other of the 24. Nothing is left to instruct us; and we know that through *Antiochus* his prophanation of the Temple, the courses were discontinued in the 143. year from *Selucus Nicanor*, and that upon the 25. of *Calseu*, and that upon the same day five years after the sacrifice, and by consequence the course were restored. But it is neither known what course was then in Ministration, when *Anitiochus* prophan'd the Temple for we have no certain *Epocha* from which that can be deduced) or with what course the first week after the dedication was served: How then is it possible to reckon by the cycles of those courses, and so find the just time of this of *Abia*, or the eight? No more then it might be possible for one who knew only we had 12 moneths in the year, but withal were wholly ignorant when the first began, could yet tell at what season the 8. fell? And for that their conjecture of the beginning with the course of *Jehoiarib*, because that was the first in *Dauids* distribution, it is both in itself a very weak one and perhaps expressly against the strictness u'd among the Jews in observation of those courses. For besides that, no testimony at all

⁸⁸ *Lib. Hasmonarum c. I. 20 &c 4.52. Epit. Jasonis c. 10. 15. item Joseph Ben Gorion l. 3:13.*

assures us but that any other of the courses as well as that of *Jehoiarib* (according to the [62] opportunity of time, and fitness of persons) might be the first at that new dedication. We have it confessed by the greatest of them which this way impugne the receiv'd tradition, that the certainly of the cycles of those 24. courses was so carefully kept so long as the sacrifices continued, that no one course might supply the room of another, against the order of succession in their cycles: For example, if that of *Jehoiarib* were for this week, then of necessity that of *Jedaiah*, being the second in the cycle, and be for the week following, and that of *Harim* for the third week that of *Sevrim* for the fourth, and so the rest according to their succession in the cycle, and this insomuch, that if (for the purpose) that of *Harim* should have missed at the Temple at the third week, after the end of the course of *Jedaiah*, yet might not the service be supplied either by the following course of *Sevrim*, or by the continuance of that of *Jedaiah*; neither might any other minister in the Temple that week, nor might that of *Sevrim* (being the next in the cycle) begin till the Sabbath following: And to this purpose also, ⁸⁹they bring that old Canon of the Jews, באיתות כלכותן וכל לוי שנכנסו בצנורות וזבחו חוץ i. *Every Priest and every Levite that puts himself into the ministrations of any of his fellows is punishable with death.* And by this also they understand that in *Josephus*,

⁸⁹ *Vide sis in priis Jos. Scalig. Isag. Canon. l. 3. p. 298.*

⁹⁰where he saies that the daily [63] sacrifice failed upon the 17. day of the *Macedonian* moneth *Punemus* (which was the 17. day of their *Tammuz*, whereon the Jews keep a solemn Fast to this day) and that his was *ανδρων απορια*, i. for want of those that should Minister, as if onely (as they understand it) the reason were, because the courses of that week failed, and might not be by their Canons supplied either by the preceding course, or that which was the next week to succeed, nor by any other. This being thus confessed by them, they should otherwise have searched in their way of proof out of those courses accounted from the new Dedication under *Judas Macchabeus*: For upon this supposition, they should first have been sure what had been the last course at the time of *Antiochus* his prophanation; then should reckoned over the cycles from that course, and so have observed from which of the 24. the Ministration beginning on the Sabbath, being the 23. of *Casleu* in the 148. year (of *Selucus*, or *Dilkarnon*) would happen and thence might they have reckoned forward to search out that of *Abia*, in this question of *Zacharies* Ministration. For if there were such a carefull avoiding of supplying the course of one by aother, then followes it plainly, that it was so certainly known at the time of *Antiochus* his prophanaiton, to which of the courses the Ministration five years from that week would [64] necessarily belong as it was then known what course was in the present ministration: For

⁹⁰ Περὶ ἀχωσέως. ζ. κεφα. η.

example, admit five years were complete from the end of the week of the prophanation and discontinuance of the courses under *Antiochus* to the end of the week of the Dedication; and supposes also that the first course, that is *Jehoiarid*, had served in the Temple in the week of prophanation, then must it necessarily first follow, that the t course of *Jedaiah* on the second, must have served in the week following, that is, the first week of those five years: Now in those five years (taking in about a day to make the numbers round in the example) we have CCLXI. weeks, and 261. weeks are ten complete cycles of those 24. courses, and 21. week of advantage to go on with to make an eleventh cycle: If then the strict observation of keeping every course to his own week (which was as well foreseen always by the revolution of those cycles as any immoveable Feast, or the Dominical letter in our Ecclesiastick accounts is fore-known) were in such use, then clearly what course soever should have served in the sixth week of this eleventh cycle, which in our example falls to that of *Jedaiah*: Reckon with him in this eleventh cycle till the 21. course (as the weeks require) and then the course of *Gamul* is proper to the very week of the new Dedication; and this way, if the course which [65] served at the prophanation were known, were easie to him which of them should by that tradition of the *Jews* have served at the Dedication: But when we neither know which of them served at the prophanation, nor which at the Dedication, what rashness is it to rely upon a bare conjecture; and that also such as one as is adverse

to that received tradition of the exact keeping of the cycles, and in substance confessed to be so by such as have used it? These things thus considered, it follows that they which insist upon this argument, taken from the beginning of the 24. courses in that of *Jeoiarib* under *Judas Macchabeus*, fail in their ground, and prove nothing at all against our received tradition: The weakness of their Objection also is therein increased, that their chronology in it is so uncertain, that they know not clearly in what year to fix the birth; some of them making it one, some two, some three or more years before the common *Epocha*, and this also upon conjecture. But while they vary so much in the year, they have little reason to be confident (out of their own grounds only, wherein they refuse this so ancient tradition) that they can in their supposed years be sure of the very day of which no other old testimony instructs them, then either what we have before remembered, or that which shall presently be both delivered, and so cleared also [66] that it may not have weight against what is already justified. And it might easily fall out, that the certain year of the birth might be forgotten, or at least not so remembered, or the memory of it not so preserved, as that later posterity could clearly have notice of it; and yet that the day of the moneth on which the Birth fell, might by the continuance of tradition (as it hath been) be clearly known. That anniversary celebration gave the day certain to posterity, which could not thence find any thing to rectifie them in the exactnesse of the year, as we see also in an

example of the Roman States. They clearly know that the birth of *Servius Tullius*, who was the first that was King there against the will of the common people, first fell upon the *Nones* of some moneth, but they ⁹¹knew not at all of what moneth, or in what year, for ought appears: And therefore they avoided publick meetings in those City upon the *Nones* of every moneth through the year, that so they might be sure to avoid them (as supposed most unlucky to the State) anniversarily upon his birth-day. This anniversary avoiding publick meetings, or Fairs, on the *Nones*, continued the certainty of his being born on the *Nones* of some moneth, though the moneth were unknown; and so did the anniversary celebration continue from the Disciples to the day of the moneth, though perhaps the year [67] be not clearly enough certain. And there was other reason also why the certainty of the year might be unknown: For there is nothing that preserves such a certainty, but either such expresse testimonie of Authors as cannot be questioned, or else a continuance of vulgar supputation of time from, or very near from the time of the Birth itself. But we have herein had neither of these. For the first, that is, the testimony of old Authors, they vary in the years of *Augustus* and of the Consuls, which are the Characters by which they design it; and besides, they are not of such antiquity as that we can clearly rely upon them; and for that of the vulgar supputation of time, the common account either in Instruments,

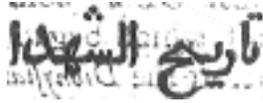
⁹¹ *Macrobius l. I. Saturnal. c. 13.*

Letters, Receipts, or the like was not all made by the years of our Lord, till between D. and DC. After the Birth; that is, after the time that *Dionysius* made his cycle of the Sun into the Golden number, and from that time brought ⁹²in (according to his own suppositions) the supputation of time by the years of our Lord. For before that age the Christian use was, either to note times by Consuls of the year, as the ancient course of Rome was; and as we see in old General Councils, and in Receipts of the Emperors, in the Codes of *Theodosius* and *Justinian*; whence also *Constantine* ordained it for a ⁹³Law, that if any Edicts or [68] Constitutions of the Emperours should be found *sin die & Consule*, they should be held of no authority; or else by that *Aera* (commonly called *Aera Hispanica*) which began under *Augustus* 38. years before the *Dionysian Epocha* of our Saviour, and was chiefly used in Spain; as we see both in the Titles of the old Councils of *Sivil*, *Bracara* and *Toledo*, and in the Inscriptions of that Country; but also it was in use in *Africk* and *France*, as we may collect by most of the Titles of the Councils of *Carthage*, of *Arles*, and *Valence*; unless we suppose that *Isidore* (from whose Volumes of Councils we have these) being a *Spaniard*, used the supputation by that *Aera* in the Titles, without arrant of the original Copies. But we have in the very Acts of the fourth Council of *Arles* use of this *Aera*, which was also in the accounts of time at *Rome*, as is seen in the Epistles

⁹² *Beda de Temp. rat at .c 45.*

⁹³ *C. Theodos. Tit. De constit. prim. l. I. si quide*

of Pope *Leo* subscribed with the years of it. Others denoted the years by an account from some regaining of their freedom; as those of *Antiochus* did from epocha 48. years before our Saviour, which is *χρηματισμος της Αντιοχειας*, so frequently spoke of in *Evagrius* his Church-story; or from that of *Seleucus* or *Dhilkarnun*, beginning after *Alexanders* death. Others from the year of Creation as the Greek Church: others from a time that fell 283. years after our Saviour (as those of *Aegypt*, and the adjoining Churches) that is, from [69] *Diocletians* persecution; which in *Aegypt* and *Aethiopia* is to this day ⁹⁴ retained; and by the Christians that use *Arabique* called



Tarick Alshehuda, i. The *Epocha* of the martyrs; and among the *Aethiopians*:



amath Michrath, i. The year of Grace. So was also that of *Spain* in common use there, till somewhat above 300. years since it was by special constitution abrogated, and the year of our Lord made the beginning of the account of time; and this alteration is by the *Spanish* Lawyers referred to *John* the first King of *Castile*. *Duravit (Aera) usque ad tempora Johannis primi* (saith ⁹⁵ *Lozez*) *qui jussit apponi annos Nativitatis Domini*. So also writes *Azevedo*, ⁹⁶ so other of them; whence it appears, that anciently, till long after our Saviour, no account

⁹⁴ *Jos. Scalig. de emendat. Temp. p. 465, &c 619.*

⁹⁵ *ad l. 52. partit. 3. tit. 18. de les escrituras.*

⁹⁶ *ad l. c. Recopil. l. 2. tit. 1. de las leges.*

was vulgarly made by the years of his birth in which the true year might be by a continuall tradition retain'd: and also, that although about the of *Justinian* (that is, when *Dionysius* began his cycle) the course of reckoning from the Birth was brought into use, yet it was received but in few parts of Christendom, & that principally within *Italy*, in the instruments, it seems, of the Court of *Rome*. And it is observable here also, that with us in *England* however our ancientest Stories of the time since Christianity, both in *Saxon* [70] and *Latine* are deduced by distinction made out of the years of our Saviour, and that according to the court of *Rome*, our Church-proceedings and instruments belonging to that jurisdiction they have anciently had, and still retain an account by those years; yet the characters of time, both in the pleadings and instruments of the secular jurisdiction, hath been ever and is chiefly by the years only of our Sovereigns, Kings or Queens; so are our Records distinguished, of Pleas, Patents, Parliaments, and the like; so are the instruments of conveyance, and what else is of that nature: In which, doubtless, the ancient course of computation is so retained that it shews us that none other hath been ever proper to the practice of our secular jurisdiction. And although indeed at this day clearly it be not of exception or erroneous, if the times in a pleading or instrument be distinguished onely by the year of our Lord, yet anciently it was much stood upon by⁹⁷ *Edward* the

⁹⁷ 23 Ed.3. fol. 21b. 24 Ed. 3. fol. 51a. & 53b.

Third when in a Writ of Annuity brought by the Prior of St. *Trinity of London* against an Abbot, the Prior declared upon a composition bearing date in such a year of the Lord, and the Defendants Counsel took exceptions to it, supposing that none should declare at the Common Law of the year of our Lord, but of the King; but upon deliberation it was resolved good, for this reason onely, because the composition [71] had onely the date of the Lord; as if properly and necessarily otherwise it should have been of the year of the King: And so, doubtless, did they think who in the times of King *Henry* the Third, and King *John*, not onely carefully used the years of the King onely, as at this day, but also in the Reccognisances entred⁹⁸ for payment of money a year or two after the entry, they denoted the time of payment by the year of the King, that should happen if onely he reigned so long, as in the 41. of *Henry* the Third the Reccognisance should bind the Recognitor to pay money in the 42. or 43. year of his Reign. All which further confirms, that the computation of time by the years of our Lord, even after such time as it came at all to be in use, hath not been near so vulgarly received as the anniversary celebration of the day of the birth, under the name of the old civil Solstice or the 25. of December; and therefore it may easily be uncertain for want of such a continuance of tradition, which might have come to us from the time of the birth, if from thence a computation received at first in the Church had

⁹⁸ *Archia. de temp. reg. Joh. & Hen. 3.*

continued in. But the yearly celebration or memory continued even from the eldest of Christian time, hath taught us the exact day of the Moneth; therefore we have reason enough still to resolve on it.

But also for father search into what may [72] at all afford us any certainty of the course that Ministered at the time of St. *Johns* conception; if we first believe the perpetual continuance of them according to the succession of their cycles, and then also the testimony of an old *Jew* touching the course that serv'd at the second destruction of the Temple under *Vespasian*, shall so have another time then hath been yet mentioned for the course of *Abia* in the conception of St. *John*, and by consequence another Birth-day of our Saviour, if we keep still the vulgar supputation of time collected out of St. *Luke*. That Jew is *Rabbi Jose*, whose words in the *Seder Olam*⁹⁹*Rabba* are these; when the Temple was first destroyed, it was Evening of the Sabbath, and the end also of the Sabbatical year, that is, and the weekly course was that of *Jehoiarib*, and it was day of *Ab*; and so it was also in the time of the second destruction. If we find the course of *Jehoiarib* fixed at the second destruction under *Vespasian*, that is, in the 70. year of the vulgar account from the birth, and that about the beginning of *August*, to which the 9. day of *Ab* answers: From hence therefore reckon by the cycles backwards into the year that precedes the *Julian* year, in which our Saviours birth is

⁹⁹ *Edit. Easil. p 125.*

commonly fixed, and so between the beginning of this *August* in the year of the destruction, and the [73] beginning of *August* preceding the vulgarly supposed time of the conception of St. *John*, will intercede 72 complete years, that is, 154 cycles of those courses of 24. and 9. courses over; therefore plainly in that year the course of *Jehoiarib* is about the 9. week from the beginning of *August*, that is, in the end of *September*; and so it follows, that the end of the course of *Abia*, being the 8. fell in the end of *November*, or 8. weeks later than in the old calculation, which placed it in the end of *September*: And the birth of St. *John* (as it is now celebrated) would thus have been in the 7. Moneth from the conception, which in nature were reasonable enough; but the holy ¹⁰⁰ Text well endures the common and most ancient interpretation, which denoted it to be in the 9. at least. And were this authority of *Rabbi Jose* to be insisted on, and the perpetual succession in the cycles of those courses in this age preceding the destruction here to seek for another exposition of the time of the birth out of the words of the holy Text. For the common account from *Zacharies* Ministration will so fall wholly, unless we change the vulgarly received year of our Saviours birth, and (as some do) place three or four years back more than the *Dionysian* account doth; for so will the course of *Abia* be brought into *September*: and if we make it fall four years sooner (as *Susliga* doth) [74] that course will end also in the end of

¹⁰⁰ *D. Luc. c. I. com. 36. & 56.*

September according to the common calculation herein used by the Fathers: But I will avoid here the making of such uncertainties of chronology of years to be arguments to justify what is otherwise certain enough in the day. Neither can we rely here, either upon the perpetual succession of the course, or on the testimony of that Rabbi; for the constant continuance of the courses in their succession, there is great reason in the time after *Augustus* to doubt of it, in regard both of the Jews doing frequently otherwise than their Canons bind them, as also in regard of some meer necessity which might occasion some change in the succession, when they were in those later dayes subject to the State of *Rome*. And for that of the course of *Jehoiarib* then ministering, there is not credit enough in the Author to make us believe him: For, besides that while he tells us so, he is mistaken in the true day of the second destruction of the Temple, which fell on the 10. of *Lous* or *August*, in that ¹⁰¹year, not on the 4. which answers to his 9. of *Ab*; the Sacrifices, and so the courses of the Priests ceased about three weeks before, that is, on the 17 day of the Moneth *Tamuz*, and this for the want of priests, as *Josephus*, who knew it of himself, expressly hath written: But he tells us not a word of what course then ministered, nor more doth *Abraham Ben [75] David* in his *Cabala*, or he that extracted the *Seder Olam Zuta* out of the *Seder Olam Rabba*, where this is reported from *Rabbi Jose*; although both these Authors speaks

¹⁰¹ *Josephus δεῖ αλωσεως. l. 6. Ceph. 5*

most particularly of the second destruction of the Temple, but they abstain from this of the course then in service, as from what had been delivered without warrant by *Rabbi Jose*, who indeed had learned from an old groundless tradition, that at the first destruction under *Nebuchadnezzar*, the course of *Jehoiarib* served in the Temple, and that this second destruction was upon the same day of the same Moneth which the first was on; and because he would have all in both destructions alike, he added also, that the course of *Jehoiarib* served now at the second destruction, when indeed no service at all was in the Temple, and that the Sacrifices and Ministration were ended: So before the destruction other testimony is in the *Jews* Liturgy, which confirms that of *Josephus* to be infallible; on the Fast of their seventeenth of *Tamuz* they sing אֵיד יוֹם חֻרְסָהּ אֵיד יוֹם חֻרְסָהּ i. *Because in this day the continual Sacrifice ceased, this day the continual Sacrifice was taken away*: If the Sacrifices then, and the courses with them (for the one of them is not without the other) ceased on the 17. day of *Tamuz*, what credit is to be given to him that tells us what course ministered in the Sacrifices three weeks after? which being so cleared, there [76] is nothing remaining in the cycles of those courses that can impugne the received tradition of this birth-day.

And for that other argument of the Shepherds watching in the night, what makes that against this of *December*? as if the shepherds might not

properly be in the field watching their sheep in the night at the mid of Winter, especially in so warm and continually temperate Climate: For, although in Italy the precepts of Husbandry were, that in the Winter their sheep should be kept in ¹⁰²Coats rather than in fields, yet they had their Winter-feedings abroad also; and the Climate of *Bethlehem* is of less latitude by ten degrees than that of *Rome*, and is also by so much the more temperate always; and even in our Climate, which is much colder than either of them we have watching of sheep, feeding, or remaining in the fields, at this time of the year. The rest objected out of the circumstances of time, as that the birth of the Redeemer of all men should be on that day on which the creation of the first man was, that is, as they without ground suppose, on the 25. of *March* , and such like, are far more vain, and not worthy of mention. These things being at length cleared, we need not, I trust, be at all moved by the opposition of those learned men, *Beroald*, *Paulus de Midleburgo*, *Suslyga*, *Joseph Scaliger*, *Kepler*, (although he stand not the same [77] time of the year, but relies on the tradition of the day) *Wolfius*, *Hospinian*, *Lidiat*, *Calvisius*, *Casaubon*, and the rest that have both made it a question, and shewed also their opinions against it.

SECT. VIII.

¹⁰² *Virgil. Georg. 3. & vide co. lumel. l. 7. c. 9. Varro. l. 2. c. 2. & Paliad. In Novemb.*

Some other opinions among the ancients touching it, and how some of them may agree with what we have received, and the rest are of no weight against it; and there more especially of the ancient confusion of this Feast with David with that of the Epiphany.

But we have hitherto omitted the different opinions among the ancients, touching the day of this Birth; which shall be therefore next collected, and then also it shall be shewed, that they bear no weight against what is before concluded. Those opinions (as they are delivered) are various, and chiefly five. The first is of them who taught it to be on the 25. day of the *Aegyptian* Moneth *Pachon*, which is the 20. of *May* in the first *Aegyptian* year. For after that the Egyptian Moneth *Thoth* was fixed in the end of *August*, and 10 of the rest of the following Moneths (30. days being allowed to a Moneth, which with the five *επαγομενον* make up the whole common year) both the Fathers, and the most prophane writers [78] commonly used the *Egyptian* Moneths as fixed; and not as they are wandering in the year of *Nabonassar* in the *Almagest*, this of the 25. of *Pachon* is delivered in *Clemens Alexandrius*, that lived some eighty years after the ¹⁰³ Apostles. Εισι δε ‘οι (saith he) περιεργοτερον τη γενεσει Σωτηρος ημων, ου μονον το ετος, αλλα και τω ημερον προστιθεντες τω φαστιν ετες Κ Η Αυγουστου εν πεμπτη πασχων κια εικαδι.

¹⁰³ *Stromat. I.*

There are some also that more curiously denote, not only the year, but the very day also of the Birth of our Saviour; which they say was on the 25. of *Pachon* in the 28. year of *Augustus*, where the account is not by the common years of *Augustus* deduced from the death of *Julius Caesar*, but by the years that were past from the ¹⁰⁴ taking of *Alexandria*, and the death of *Antony*. The second (that seems to differ here) is in the Chronicle of ¹⁰⁵ *Alexandria*, where it is delivered that the birth was on the 25 day of the *Egyptian Moneth Choiaç*, which is the 21. of the Julian December. The third is of those which supposed the day to have been ¹⁰⁶ on the 24. or 25. of *Pharmathi*, (that is, the Moneth preceding *Pachon*) which agrees with the 19. or 20. of *April*: And with this may be reckoned the 4. which is found in *Mahomet*, that saies it was upon the 23. of the *Arabique Moneth Ramadhau*, but in what year he designes not. But however in the *Hagaren* or *Arabian* year, this [79] cannot come near our *December*, for according to that year of the Moneth *Ramadhau* falls in *June* and *July*, about the time of our Saviours birth, *Vigesimo tertio die Ramadhau* (are the words in the Translation of a most impious Book of his long since done by *Hermannus*) *natus est Christus filius Marie, oratines Dei super eum*. For the *Mahamedans* celebrate our Saviour as a great Prophet, and his Birth of the *Virgin Mary* ¹⁰⁷ also is

¹⁰⁴ *Vide sis censorin. de die Natali c. 21.*

¹⁰⁵ *Edit. Rader. p. 533.*

¹⁰⁶ *Clem. Alex. Stromat. I.*

¹⁰⁷ *Alcor. Azoas. 5. Cantacuzon. Απολογψ νατα, του Μαωμεθ, 4. & Polstel. De Orbis concord. i. 1 c. 3 & l. 2. c. 2. ad cap. Eltur.*

related in their *Alcoran*; although with much difference from the holy Story, as most other things are which occurred there with reference to either of the Testaments. A fifth is of those who thought the day to be the 11. of the *Egyptian Moneth Tybi*, that is the 6. of our January, on which we celebrate the *Epiphany*: So *Epiphanius*,¹⁰⁸ τῶν γενεθίων ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐστὶν ἐπιφανίων τυγχάνει ἑκτη Ἰαννουαρίου μωουδς χτι οὐς Αἰγυπτίους Τυβι οὐδεκάτου ι. The Birthday (of our Saviour) that is, the *Epiphany* fell upon the 6. day of *January*, being the 11. of the *Egyptian Moneth Tybi*; which opinion is remembered by *Stephanus Gobarus*¹⁰⁹ *Tritheithes*, where yet the fifth of *January* is in the stead of the 6. as also in some places of some Editions of *Epiphanius*. But *Stephanus* plainly meant the 6. day, for he interprets it by the 8. *Ides* of *January*, which is the 6. day, and here with agrees the common opinion of the ancient Church of *Aegypt*, which kept the Feast of the Birth on the 6. [80] of *January*, so confounding it with the Feast of his Baptism: *Callian*¹¹⁰ relates so of him; *Intra Egypti regionem mos iste antique traditione servatur, ut peracto Epiphaniarum die, quem provinciae illius sacerdotes, vel Dominici Baptismi, vel seconudun carnem Nativitatis esse definiunt; & idcirco utriusque Sacramenti solemnitate, non bis ariam, ut in occiduis provinciis, set sub una diei hujus festivitate*

¹⁰⁸ *I. 2. tom. I. haeres. 51. Ita etiam ad extr. I. 3.*

¹⁰⁹ *Apud Phos. cod. 232.*

¹¹⁰ *Collat. 10 c. 2 & vide sis Orig. homil. de divers. 8.*

concelebrant, &c. And other ¹¹¹testimonies there are of their observation of the Feast on the 6. day with the Epiphany. But there is none of these opinions but that may be either so interpreted, that they may stand with what is before delivered of the 25. of *December*, or else so shewed to insist upon false, or no grounds, that they are no authority at all against it. For the first, which cast it on the 25. of *Pachon*, and is very ancient; it may be well interpreted to agree with this of *December*, for in consideration of it we must, first, remember that according to the old *Jews*, there was among the Fathers of the Primitive times a reckoning of their Moneths as well by the order of enumeration as by proper names; so that *September* and *October* were known as well by the names of the 7. and 8. Moneths (as also their names denote) as by their names themselves being accounted from *March*, which was the first. But the Greek Fathers frequently took *April*, instead of *March*, for the first Moneth of [81] the year, as we see expressly in St. ¹¹²*Chrysostom*, in *Anastasius*¹¹³ *Patriarch* of *Antioch*, in those Constitutions ¹¹⁴attributed to the Apostles, in ¹¹⁵*Macarius*, ¹¹⁶*Stephanus*, *Gobarus*, and in other testimonies of the ancients, where the *Julian April* is made the first, as the *Hebrew* Moneth *Nisan* was; and therefore also they had the very day of his Birth known by the name of the 25.

¹¹¹*D. Hieron. ad Ezechiel. l. 1: D. Chrys. tom. 2: edit. Erasmiana p. 119:*

¹¹² *Panegyri genea hmer.*

¹¹³ *MS. apud Scal. de emend. p. 509.*

¹¹⁴ *Lib. ε κεφ. 4 Cedren. p. 143 & c.*

¹¹⁵ *Homilia 5.*

¹¹⁶ *Apud Photium cod. 232.*

day of the 9 Moneth *December*, being the 9. from *April*; and this kind of nothing it is like enough to have deceived those which said it was on the 25. of *Pachon*; for *Pachon* is the 9. Moneth reckoned from *Thoth*, being the first among the *Egyptians*, as *December* is, being accounted from *April*; so that when the tradition was delivered in those terms of the 9. Moneth, no designation being of the account of the Moneths, nor of what Moneths were meant, it was perhaps rashly received by some, and instead of the 25. of the 9. Moneth in the Roman year (account to that account of the Fathers) it was apprehended to be, and so by mistaking placed on the 25. of the 9. of the *Egyptian* year; neither is this conjecture for interpretation of the originall of that mistaking so new, but others, and those which are very learned and ¹¹⁷judicious, have also used it: and by a like or easier way may the second which is before related be understood. For though the 25. of *Choiac* fall upon the 21. of *December*, taken strictly [82] according to the *Egyptian* account from the first to *Toth*, being the 29. of *August*; yet in regard that all *December*, except the last five days, falls within *Choiac*, and so the very Birth-day in the same Moneth, that is, on the 29. of *Choiac* (which truly answers to the 25. of *December*) it is reason enough that we suppose that *Choiac* was taken there for *December* itself, so that the 25. of that one and the other went with the Author for the same day: And such examples are frequent, as applying of *Hebrew*, *Arabique*, *Greek*

¹¹⁷ Herward & Keplerus. Vide Kepler. de anno natali c. 15.

and *Egyptian* Moneths to the *Roman*; and therefore also the Translator of that Chronicle hath well expressed it (presuming upon this reason) by the 25. of *December*; For the third and fourth neither of them having any ground at all, are as easily and reasonably denied and affirmed, nothing is brought to justifie them, therefore as little will serve to confute them, especially that of *Mohomet* can have little weight here, when as he is so false in the whole relation of the Birth of our Saviour, in his *Alcoran*, that he makes the Virgin *Mary* to be the same with *Marre*, or *Marriam* the Sister of *Aharon*; and talks of *Zacharies* being three days onely dumb, and of our Saviours precepts given as soon as he was born, touching Prayers and Almes (as *Robert Reading*, that anciently translated the

Alcoran, turns it, but the word [83] being  *Zathawath*, frequently occurring in the *Alcoran* for Alms or good works, is in the place by *Postellus*¹¹⁸ translated Tithes; it being indeed in the *Arabique* Testament¹¹⁹ expressly used for first fruits also) with other impudent falsehoods like the rest which are every where in that absurd Volume of his Law; and there also the season of the year is noted by a tale of the Blessed Virgins having dates presently upon the Birth (which as the *Musulmans* say)¹²⁰ is yet growing. But for the fifth opinion, which is from confounding of the Feasts of the *Epiphany* with this of the Birth, (a custom also retained in

¹¹⁸ *De Orbis Concordia* l. 2. c. 2.

¹¹⁹ *Epist. ad Ebud.* c. 7. *comm.* 4.

¹²⁰ *Postellus de Orbis Concordia* l. 2. c. 2.

the latter ages ¹²¹in the Churches of *Armenia*) and made by *Stephanus, Gobarus, Treitheites* in his *Contrarieties of ancient opinions of the Church*, to be the main and as the onely one that crosses that of the 25. of *December*; however it be so often taken clear in *Epiphanius*, and rashly also affirmed by the General or Patriarch of the *Armenians*, that all Churches had observed it so ever from the Apostles: yet doubtless there is great reason that we should think that this confusion began both without any sufficient ground, and was also bred by some such mistaking as may be observed to have been in their consideration, both of [84] the name and time of the Feast of the *Epiphany*. For their grounds (besides what is in mistaking the name and circumstances of the time of this Feast) there appears none that hath any color of power of truth among those which have so noted it: But for the name first of the *Epiphany*, the Feast being anciently observed for the ¹²²Baptism of our Saviour in *January* as at this day; and that in the Eastern Churches, before such time as they had learned of the Western the true day of the Birth, they first thought that the tradition of the Feast under the name of *επιφανεια*, or *επιφανια* might well denote the Birth it self, and so teach them that on this very day our Saviour was born; for the Birth being of it self the first apparition of the Son of God in the Flesh, and *Epiphania* denoting in the language of the then both past and

¹²¹ *Catholicus Armen. In legat. ad Armenios.*

¹²² Vide sis _____. Marcel. L. 21. In Constantio & _____ ano. & _____ homil. De a_____sis 8.

present ages the apparition of a Deity (as is especially noted also by the most learned *Casaubon*) they took it at length here to denote also the first apparition of our Saviour to the World, and that in the Feast-day kept on the 6. of *January*; and so concluded that this was the Birth-day. Now for the circumstance of the time of the *Epiphany*, this confusion of the Feasts doubtless was much confirmed to them by an interpretation of a passage of Saint *Luke*, where the Baptism of our [85] Saviour (which is celebrated in the *Epiphany*, though *Epiphanius* place that also upon another day in *November*) is delivered to have been, when he was $\omega\sigma\epsilon\iota\ \epsilon\tau\omega\nu\ \tau\rho\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\ \alpha\rho\chi\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ beginning to be about 30. Years of age; which words are interpreted by some as if he had been of 30. complete, and beginning to be 31. on that day, which must so of necessity be on his birth-day: And so this way also one and the same day became sacred among them to the Baptism and the Birth. But all this and what other mistaking the Greek Church herein had was embraced by the most of them, but till they were better informed from the Western Church: and the Generall of the Armenians expressly tells *Theorianus* (who objects to him that Sermon of Saint *Chrysostom* touching it) that they knew not yet, nor had not heard of any Sermon of St. *Chrysostoms* to this purpose: So that want of instruction onely continued this error among them, which hath been long since reformed in the *Syrian*, *Egyptian*, and *Ethiopian* Churches as well as in the Greek; as is before shewed in their agreement with us in the celebration of this Birth:

But for those collections out of the name of the *Epiphany*, and circumstances of time of the Baptism, it will soon appear that they justify nothing here against the received tradition. And first [86] for that of the name of *Epiphania*, denoting the apparition of a Deity, it is otherwise enough satisfied; and there was no need at all to have it restrained to the noting of the Birth-day: For though the word *επιφανεια* be used in the holy ¹²³Text, both for the first appearing of our Saviour, or his Incarnation, as also for his coming at the ¹²⁴last day; yet in the first institution of this Feast of the *Epiphany*, it was used (I suppose) for neither, but for that publick apparition or Manifestation (by which the Latin Fathers denote *Epiphania*) of him to the World at his Baptism, in regard whereof he was before but privately known. So expressly Saint *Chrysostom*, whose authority is here beyond exception; *Τινος ουν εγεκεν*, saith he, *επιφανεια λεγεται; επειδαν ουχ οτε ετεκθη τοτε πασιν εγενετο καταδιπλος, αλλ οτε εβαπτεζατα μεχρι γαρ τευτης ηγνοντο της ημερης τοις πολλοις*. Why then is it called *Epiphanie*? (in regard, as he before had said, it is not the celebration of the Birth-day, but to the day of the Baptism;) because (saith he) when he was born, he was not then manifested to all men, but when he was baptized; for till then he was unknown to the multitude: and to this purpose also he brings that of Saint *John*, *I baptize with water*,

¹²³ *Epist. 2. ad Timoth. c. I. comm. 10.*

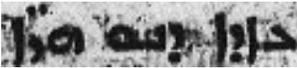
¹²⁴ *Panegy. ος το αφιον βαπτισμα tom. 5. edit. Savil. p. 525.*

but there standeth one among you whom ye know not, speaking of our Saviour: and the same [87] Evangelist expressly; I knew him not, but ἵνα φανερωθῆ τῷ Ἰσραηλ, i. That he might be manifested to Israel; therefore I came baptizing with water. So Saint Jerom tells us what the name Epiphany denotes; significat (saith he) baptisma in quo aperti sunt Christo Coeli, & Epiphaniarum dies hucusque venerabilis est, non, ut quidem putant, natalis in carne, tunc enim absconditus est & non apparuit. Other of the Fathers have as much.

Here may be added the consent of posterity after such time as the true day of the birth was discovered to them in the Eastern Church; and in a poem (as they call it) used in the Service of the *Epiphany* in the Greek Church, made by *Sophronius* Patriarch of *Jerusalem*, an express passage is full to this purpose, Δοξαζομψ σε τον απατορα εκ ματερα και αματωρα εκ πατρος εν γαρ πραλαβουση εορτη νηπεον σε ειδεωψ, εν η τη παρουση τελειον σε ορωμψ τον εν τελειου τελειον επιφανεντα θεον ημων, i, *We glorifie thee that art without Father of a Mother, and without Mother of a Father, and in a preceding Feast (of the Nativity) we know thee an Infant, but in this present Feast (of the Epiphany) we see thee at full growth, appearing to be our most perfect God.* According whereto also *St. Augustine* hath express word, and that often: For however they had anciently in the Greek Church confounded the Feast of the Baptism, or [88] *Epiphany*, and the Nativity; yet, being admonished

by the western Church, they confessed their error in this, that they sever'd the commemoration of the Baptism from this of the Birth, and placed the Birth on its proper day in *December*; and yet they retained still for the Baptism the name of *Epiphania*, which also is sometimes ¹²⁵ Θεοφανια as in the *Menology*, and in the *Apostoloevangela* of the Greek Church, τη αυτης μωρη 6 η αγιε Θεοφανια του κυπιου ηωδ Ιησου Χριστου, i.e. *On the sixth of the same moneth the holy Theophania of our Lord Jesus Christ; for then was the first public apparition of his Godhead.* In the Church of *Egypt* also this day is severally kept by

the ¹²⁶name of  *Alchamim*, i. the feast of Washing or Bathing; *Quod Ecclesia vtus Aegyptiaca baptismum eo die iteraret*, sayes *Joseph Scaliger*; though perhaps that name may have reference to that old custom used in the Church of providing water in the night of that day for the holy uses of the whole year following; which *St. Chrysostom* ¹²⁷remembers, and is yet retained in the Greek Church (as it appears by their *Euchologium* or Common-Prayer-Book) as also in the *Syriack* Church, which hath this Feast severed (as ours here) from the Birth, and keeps it under

the [89] name of  *Ihada dinohora*, i. της φωτωγι εορτη, (as *Nazianzen*

¹²⁵ *Vide sis Theonhil. Alexand. In edicto. tom. bibl Partrum edit. Paris. P. 161.*

¹²⁶ *Comput. Elcohi apud Scalig. de emendat. l. 7. p. 661.*

¹²⁷ *Panegyris οις το αλογιον Βαπτισθυε. edit. Sivil. P. 524. tom 5. Widismonstad. In subaexis Test Syriaco.*

calls it) or the Feast of Lights; and 
Didinacha, i.e. Of Light appearing in the East; according whereto also they, as others, use in this Feast great store of lights, which hath reference to the very word *Epiphania* doubtless, which denoted Enlightening also, or Illumination in the Vulgar Translation of the New Testament, and both in that sense, and also in the other of Apparition or Manifestation, it may verbally beside signifie the apparition of the Star to the Wise men:

Stella, qua Solis rotam

Vincit decore ac lumine.

As Prudentius of it: and Sedulius of the Wise men,

Stellam sequentes praeviam,

Lumen requirunt lumine.

Both in their Hymnes made proper to this of the *Epiphany*.

So that the name of the *Epiphany* is from the ancient and primitive times fully is satisfied either in that of the Baptism, or in the apparition of the Star: Whence also the [90] *Dutch, French, Italian* and *Spaniard* note it by The day of the three Kings, for so those wise men are commonly reputed to have been; and also the Feast it self hath been long since, after the trust learned from the Western Church, observed apart by it self, as having in the first observation of it no community with this of the Birth-day; and that among those

which before had confounded them. It follow then, that even by their own confession that had been the Authors of this confusion, they had been deceived in application of the name of *Epiphany* to the birth of our Saviour: and for that collection of time out of the testimony of St. *Luke*, it is clear that no certainty of the day can be thence extracted; the word $\omega\sigma\epsilon\iota$, i. as it were about, expressly excludes such certainty: So St. *John*, $\omega\rho\alpha \eta\nu \omega\varsigma \delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\eta$, i. *it was about the tenth hour*, which clearly denotes not the beginning or end of the hour; neither needs there farther proof of the weakness of that collection.

At length to conclude therefore, the Authorities of the Ancients, and the consent of Christian Churches for this Birth-day, as it is now anniversarily kept, being as before declared, the mistaken reasons being rejected (lest their falsehoods might prejudice the clearness of the Truth) the Objections of later time being answered, and the different Opinions of the ancients touching it being [91] either groundless, or not in truth opposing it; it rests that we resolve on it, as upon as certain and clear a Truth of Tradition, as by rational inference, by express testimony of the Ancients, by common and continual practice of several Churches, and by accurate inquiry may be discovered.

FINIS.
