

FESTORUM METROPOLIS.

THE

2

Metropolitan Feast.

OR THE

K. 13

BIRTH-DAY

Of our SAVIOUR

Jesus Christ,

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

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

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

Johannes Calvinus Harmon: Evang: in Luc: 2.
Notior fuit Christi Nativitas, quam ut in questionem vocari debeat.

Written by PASTOR FIDO:

LONDON: August. 16.

Printed by MATTHEW SIMMONS, 1652.

TO THE
MASTER
OF THE
FEAST,
MY
LORD *and* MASTER
JESUS CHRIST.

LORD, I dare Dedicate my Book
to none but Thee.

Be Thou the Patron then, of It, Thy
Day, and Mee.



To

To the Worshipfull, much
Honoured, and Munificent
Gentleman,
JOHN DUTTON.
Of sheirborne in the County of
GLOUCESTER,
Esquire.

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

Your Servant **B**

To

To the READERS.

Poore Pastor Fido,

Exiled a while agoe.

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

Come zealous Lovers, solemnize with me,
The despis'd day of Christs Nativity.
Wake Lungs, wake Heart, wake Tongue, and let us sing,
The glorious praises of our now-borne King.
Sing, sing aloud, feare not Time serves God,
Let them serve Hogs, Themselves, while we serve God.
Let ruffet Hables, apion Levites prate,
Their squirrel-pated fancies 'gainst the state,
And old ag'd honour of this reverend day,
They nothing know, being but of yesterday.
Their standing, and their understanding both, all one,
Inspired Coxcombs, idle pates, O none.
The keeping of this day wee'll justify,
By Scripture, Reason, and Antiquity.
For Sixteene hundred years, and more out-told,
'Gainst them that love new Christs, but not the O.T.D.
If these perswade not, then our word's like thunders,
Shall rattle in their ears, point proving wonders.

Job 8. 9.

Let's Feast it therefore, Banquet on the Babe; O Men, (then
With Lute, and Harp, and Tongue, let's Musick make, and
To

To make the Scottish Michals big with scoffes to prauunce
 Barren, and tongue-ti'd both, wee'l lead them *David's* daunce.
 Christ he shall lead, the Apostles, Fathers follow,
 To waken Sleepers, Moderne Divines shall Hollow.
 The Lovely Spouse shall foot it, Angels they shall sing,
 Poore Pastor he shall Pipe, the Saints cast in a Ring,
 Shall cheare his rowling heart, so that come good or ill,
 Though Pastor have no pay, he will be *Fido* still.

God send you a merry Christmas.

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

Yours,

PASTOR FIDO.

**Ad Librum.
 Ex Ovid Trist: Elegia j^a**

Vade liber, verbisq; meis loca grata saluta.
 Contingam certe quo licet illa pede.
 Vade sed incultus qualem deget Exulis esse.
 Infelix habitum temporis hujus habe
 Siquis, ut in populo nostri non immemor illo,
 Siquis, qui quid agam forte requirit, erit.
 Vivere me dicas, saluum tamen esse negabis,
 Id quoq; quod vivam, munus habere Dei.

Names

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

Anno Dom.		Anno Dom.	
1. Clemens Romanus	70	21. Chrysostome	398
2. Ignatius	71	22. Augustine	430
3. Justine Martyr	150	23. Orosius	425
4. Irenaeus	180	24. Cyrillus Alex:	430
5. Tertullian	203	25. Theodoret	431
6. Clemens Alex:	204	26. Cassianus	440
7. Origen	226	27. Leo magnus	444
8. Cyprian	240	28. Prosper	445
9. Arnobius	285	29. Vigilius	495
10. Lactantius	290	30. Fulgentius	500
11. Athanasius	326	31. Rupertus	580
12. Hillarius	355	32. Isidorus Hisp:	596
13. Optatus	365	33. Bede	700
14. Basil the Great	370	34. Jo: Damascen	731
15. Gregory Nazianzen	371	35. Rabanus Maurus	830
16. Epiphanius	373	36. Haymo	850
17. Ambrosius	374	37. Theophylact	880
18. Gregory Nyssen	380	38. Oecumenius	1070
19. Hieronimus	385	39. Bernardus patrum ultimus	1120
20. Prudentius	390		

Dionysius exiguus 532
 Nicephorus 1305
 Marcus Antonius 1500
 Bonaventura

Petrus de natalibus
 Johannes Lucidus
 Alstedius

Confessiones Ecclesiarum reformatarum.

	Anno Dom.		Anno Dom.
<i>Augustana</i>	1530	<i>Suevica</i>	1530
<i>Basiliensis</i>	1531	<i>Wittembergensis</i>	1552
<i>Saxonica</i>	1551	<i>Helvetica Posterior</i>	1566
<i>Gallica</i>	1559	<i>Belgica</i>	1566
<i>Helvetica prior</i>	1536	<i>Bohemica</i>	1573

Ecclesiae Nationales.

Polonia
Sabaudie
Hungarie



Anglia
Scotia
Lituanie



Russia
Samogitia
In praxi sua

Consensus Protestantium
Synodus Sendmorensis.

1541
1570

Moderne Divines.

Calvin
Bullinger



Melanchton

Festus Hommius



Hemmingius

Zanchius



Cum multis
alijs, &c.

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

The

THESES.

The Birth-day of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the 25th of Decemb. ought yearly to be kept holy by all Christians.

PETER the Apostles chiefe, and Christ's 2 Pet. 2. 1,
 companion, did Prophecy that in the latter dayes there should come *false Cheaters*; the word I confesse in our Translation is *Teachers*, but we may reade either, for they are both one; the one word doth anagrammatize the other, and both words and deeds doe prove them to be the same in these dayes, when Cheaters turne Teachers, and Teachers Cheaters; cheating Christ of his glory, denying the Lord that bought them, themselves of salvation, bringing upon themselves swift destruction: the way of truth, of its reputation, making it to be evil spoken of, Christ of his followers, they following them, and men of their moneyes, with feigned words, making merchandise of them.

Anagr:

Teachers
Cheaters.

Verse 3.

The Preface.

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

My

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

*To begin then with the Scripture, Gods
owne Word, to prove the honour of his Day,
who in the beginning was the word.*

IN the first of the *Hebrews* at the sixth verse, when Scripture.
the Lord brings in the first begotten into the Heb. 1. 6.
world, he saith, *Let all the Angels of God worship him;*
in the words, commanding those glorious creatures
to set the day of Christs birth aside, for such an holy
worship. And

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

Verse 14.

Verse 16.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Shall

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

A third place to prove this truth we have in the hundred and tenth *Psalme*, verse the third, where the Prophet speaking of the comming and Kingdome of Christ, saith, *In the day of thy power the people shall bring the free-will offerings with an holy worship, the dew of thy birth is as the womb of the morning*: Or as our last Translation reads it, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holinesse, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth*. Here the Prophet makes mention of a day, in which all people should bring free willing offerings unto Christ, with an
holy

Psalm. 110. 3.

Scripture.

holy worship which is to be tendred unto him in the beauties of holinesse, that is, in the particular places of Assembly, the Churches, and therefore to be kept holi day, nay must, for it runs, the people shall bring thee free will offerings, or they shall be willing in that day, shewing it to be their duty, when ever the day comes so to doe.

Now what day is this, but Christs birth-day? and therefore we have it here called the dew of his birth, *Tal jalduthekab*, most properly according to the Originall, which was either as the womb of the morning, as one Translation, or from the womb of the morning, as the other, the first shewing that the birth of Christ, and dew or fruit thereof, was like the mornings womb, comfortable and pleasant unto all, according to the Angels testimony, *Luke 2. 10.* Or that he was borne in the beginning of the morning at cock-crowing, before perfect day, as appears in the same place. Further, that the day here meant was the day of Christs birth, appears especially in this, that it is called the day of his power, in the morning whereof, his power was manifested in breaking open the gates of *Maries* womb; nay more properly the day of his power, because *Initium regni*, the beginning of his reigne being as this day born King of the *Jews*, *Mat. 2. 2.* When Kings came to doe homage to this King of Kings that now was borne, and whereupon he set his King upon his holy hill of *Zion*, and therefore the day of his power, *Psal. 2. 6.* when he said, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, vers. 7. That is to say, I have manifested thee by being borne as upon this day, to be my first begotten from all eternity, giving thee the Heathen for

Psal. 110. 1.
compared
with *Psal. 2. 6.*

for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession, that thou mayest break them with a rod of iron, and bruise them to pieces like a potters vessel: all arguments of great power, vers. 8, 9. concordant with the words of the hundred and tenth *Psalm*, vers. 5, 6, 7. Behold the day of Christs power upon that day, therefore every year that the Prophecy may be fulfilled, the people that beleeve in him, are to bring him not legall Sacrifices, which figured him to come; but the free-will offerings of praise, and thanksgiving for his gracious comming, to be rendred unto God in the beauties of holinesse, the places where we meet together to exercise holy duties, and the reason is, because the dew of his birth like the womb of the morning did refresh all; so for that, refreshing thanks is to be given by all.

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

Now, if he, the Father of the faithful did so many years before, rejoyce and was glad to see that day a comming; surely all the Sonnes of the faithfull *Abraham* will in their successive generations be glad, rejoyce, and give thanks that it is come and past, and e-
Almost
2000.

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

This is that great Festivall called by the Easterne Church *Ἐπιφάνια*, Or *Ἐορταία*, Gods appearing, *ὅτι ἕφαν ὁ θεὸς ἀνθρώποις διὰ γενέσεως* because God appeared to men by his Birth; so Basil^a and Nazianzen^b or to use the Apostles phrase, *God was manifested in the flesh.*^c

^a De humana
Christi gen :
^b Orat. 38.
^c 1 Tim. 3. 16.

2. *Ἐπιφάνια* the Epiphanie or the appearing *κατέβη* implying that this appearing excelled all other whatsoever. But here two things are worthy to be noted. The one is, that the Churches in Egypt, because they celebrated Christs Birth and also his Baptisme, upon one and the same day, called both these Feasts promiscuously *Epiphanie*.^d The other is, that the moderne Churches have through the use and custome of speech, restrained the word *Epiphanie* unto the Feast commonly called the *Twelfth day*, celebrated in memory of the miraculous appearance of the Star which led the wise men to Christ.^e

^d Nazian: orat:
in S. lum.
Chrysost hom :
de Epiph : do :
Magdeb cent 4.
c. 6.
Beroald Chron.
l. 4. c. 2.
^e Mat. 2. 7.

^f Nazian:
orat. 38.

^g Chrys. orat:
de philog.

3. *Γενεθλία τοῦ σωτῆρος*^f The Birth-day of the Saviour.

4. *ἡ εὐροτὴ μέγιστη καὶ τῶν εὐροτῶν μητρόπολις*^g The greatest and Metropolitan Feast.

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

^h Ambr : ferm:
12. 13.

ⁱ John 1. 5. 9.

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

^k Hieron. tom
9. 82.

3. *Dies Natalis Domini vel Natalitia Domini*.^k The Birth-day of our Lord; we call it *Christmas*, or *Christs Messe*, not from the Popish Masse said thereupon, but from our ancient word *Messe*, which signifies a Feast,
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so that *Christmas* is no more then a *messe* or Feast provided on the day of Christs birth, in a way of rejoycing as *Abraham* did, foretold by *Jacob* ¹ *Gen.* 49. 10. Marked out by the Prophet *Isaiah*, as a speciall and wonderfull day; ^m nay, so ravished he is with the consideration thereof, that he rejoyceth with the Church as if the day of Christs birth were then come. ⁿ *They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoyce when they divide the spoile: For unto us a child is borne, unto us a son is given.* And he is seconded by the Prophet *Zechariah*, ^o saying, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I will bring forth my servant (CHRIST) the Branch. In that day shall ye call every man his neighbour, under the vine and under the figge tree.*

¹ *Gen.* 49.

^m *Isa.* 7. 14.

ⁿ *Isa.* 9. 6.

^o *3. 8. 10.*

Zech. 3. 8. 10.

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

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

Such was the Feast of *Purim* instituted by the Church of
G 2
the

The Practice of the Church.

Esther 9. 20,
21, 22.

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

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

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

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

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

Solstice

Solstice in our Saviours time was upon the 25. of *December*, as also the *Vernal Equinox* upon the 25. of *March*, as all Astronomers confesse, and shall more plainly appear in the following Treatise, and so are all the Fathers to be understood, that say with *St. Augustine* that Christ was *Conceptus, in æquinoctio verno: natus in solstitio hyberno*, conceived in the vernal æquinox, and borne in the winter *solstice*, that he was borne on the eight of the calends of *January* that is to say, on the 25. day of *December*, as we in *England* have affirmed.

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

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

First then, *St. Augustine* in his 118 Epistle to *Januarius*, speaking of the yearly Feasts then observed, saith, *Illa quæ non Scripta, sed traditi custodimus, quæ quidem toto terrarum orbe observantur, dantur intelligi, vel ab ijs Apostolis, vel plenariis conciliis, quorum est in ecclesia saluberrima authoritas, commendata atque statuta retineri; sicuti quod Domini passio, & resurrectio, & ascensio in cælum, & adventus de cælo Spiritus sancti, anniversaria solemnitate celebrantur.* Those Feasts

concerning which we have no expresse Scripture, but only traditions, which are now observed all the world over; we ought to know that the keeping of them was commended unto us, and instituted (or commanded) either by the Apostles themselves, or generall Councils, of which there is a most wholesome use in the Church of God; such are the Feasts of our Lords Passion, Resurrection, Ascension into Heaven, and the comming downe of the holy Ghost, which are now kept holy with a yearly solemnity.

Ep. 119.

Oportet,
it is needfull,
it is our duty.

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

Floruit. Anno
420.

These words were written more then 1200. years agoe, when the forementioned dayes, and especially that of the Nativity, were kept Festivall and holie, *Ubiq; se diffundit terrarum universitas universa quacunq; se diffundit ecclesia*, even to the worlds end, wheresoever the Church did extend her selfe as he doth maintaine, *Lib. 32. cont. Faustum cap 12.*

Floruit. Anno
370.

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

compendium doth affirme, that the Christians of the Primitive Church, did fast upon all the Friday's in the year, except the day of Christs Nativity, fell upon a Friday, which the Church (saith he) excepted by an Apostolicall tradition, not fasting, but feasting thereupon.

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

Dionysius
Exiguus, Anno
532. Floruit.

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

Clemens Ro-
manus, Anno
70.

Phil. 4. 3.

*Dies natalis Domini nostri Jesu Christi,
sti, celebretur, vicesimo quinto die
mensis*

The Aposto-
licall Decree
for the Day of
Christs Birth.

*mensis noni (i: Decembris) nu-
merando a Martio.*

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

And againe,

*Dies Festos agitate fratres ac primum
quidem diem Natalis.*

Brethren, keep diligently the Feast dayes, and truly in the first place the day of Christs birth.

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

Constit. Lib.
5. c. 12.

Justine, An:
150.

Suppose it true, which is not, that *Justine Martyr*, *Irenaeus* and *Tertullian*, those first Fathers who flourished in the age next to the Apostles, make no mention of the keeping of this day, have not a line in all their

their writings now extant, to exhort the people to observe the same, shall we therefore conclude that the day was not therefore annually solemnized? No in no wise (for those purer Christians did doe it without all doubt, though many times privately for fear of persecution) but their silence concludes rather, that the Christians then needed no exhortations to so holy a duty, nor no informations concerning the day and year of our Saviours birth, they having in perfect memory what the Apostles had delivered concerning this particular.

Irenæus, Anno
180.

Tertullian, Anno
203.

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

D

matter,

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

*Clemens Alex-
and. Anno
204.*

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

*Telesphorus,
Ep. dec: Tom.
1. cor. pag. 117.*

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

Theophilus:

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

Origen. 226.

Origen Scholar to *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, famous about the year 226. in diverse parts of his works, records

records the annuall and universall observation of this blessed day.

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

Cyprian: 240.

His words follow.

Adest Christi multum desiderata, & diu expectata Nativitas. Adest sollemnitas inclyta, & impræsentiarum Salvatori grates, & laudes, visitatori suo per orbem terrarum Sancta reddit ecclesia. Gaudia nobis cælitus nuntiantur, letitia imperatur, nox ista sacri partus conscia, nobis fulgoribus illustratur; Gloriantur in cælestibus superi, prax in terra, bona voluntas hominibus confirmatur. Adsunt Angeli, loquuntur Pastoribus, non dedignantur loqui personis humilibus, & cum ipsi sublimis sunt, infirmos non aspernantur.

Serm: de Nat. Do:

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

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

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

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

Basilus Mag-
14. 370.

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

bright Star of *Cappadocia* inlightned the Christian world. And witnesseth that for his time, the blessed day was annually kept with all solemne observance; and he honours it with a new title, calling it *Diem Seoparias* as others after him, *Epiphaniam*, or τὴ ἐπιφάνια the day of Gods appearance, and that most elegantly, because that upon that day θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκὶ God was manifested in the flesh. Further, he hath left us one Sermon Preached thereupon, now extant.

1 Tim. 3. 16.
Tom. I. p. 466.

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

Gregorius Nazianzenus.
372.

Vol 4. l. 1. c.
19 Theis.

Epiphanius, that great light of *Cyprus*, who flourished at the same time with the two fore mentioned Fathers, and continued under the Emperours, *Valens*, *Gratian*, *Theodosius*, in his Book intituled, *Compendiaria, vera Doctrina, de fide catholica, & Apostolica, ecclesiae*, reckoning up the annuall Feasts then kept, & solemly observed by the Catholick Church, mentions the day of Christs Birth for one of the principall and chiefe. And further, in his 51. *Heresie*, affirms,

Epiphanius,
Anno 373.

affirms, that Christ was borne *circa Januarium mensem*, about the month of *January*; who hath left us six Sermons all Preached on the very day.

Ambrose. 374.

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

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

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

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

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

Gregorius Nyssenus. 380.

In hac die minui tenebræ incipiunt, noctisq; modi augescente radio, ad defectum rediguntur, Mysterium natura exponit perspicacioribus, ac docet quid sibi velit, quid in adventu Domini dies crescit, nox decurtatur.

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

Ego talia quædam dicentem mihi videor audire, Creaturam; Vides noctem ad summam longitudinem progressam,

Gregory Nyssen.

ſam atq; ulterius currere ac proferri deſiſtere, & in contrarium reſolvi. Animadverta quod improba peccati nox, quoad ejus fieri poterat, aucta atq; extremam nequitiae magnitudinem aſſecuta, hodie ulterius progredi, ac ſibi quaſi poſſidendo uſu capere prohibita eſt, atq; dehinc ad defectionem redigitur. Vides lucis radium diutius durare, & Solem eſſe ſolito ſublimiorem, animadvertite verae lucis adventum, quæ radijs Evangelicis orbem illuminat.

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

*Hieronimus,
Tom. 9. p. 82.
c. 1.*

*Prudentius,
Anno 390.*

*Hymnus 8. Cal.
Jan. pag. 60.*

The next is, *Aurelius Prudentius*, who in his *Cathe- merion* gives us a Carrol, a Divine Hymne by him penned and made in honour of Chriſt, who was born that day. I ſhall give you it both in Latine and Engliſh, that it may be like *Moses* his ſong, *Deut. 31. 28.* a record againſt them that keep not the day, which the old Father ſo devoutly merry did 200. years agoe, ſo much honour with a piece of Divine poeſie. His ſtraines follow.

Quid

*Quid est quod arcum circum,
Sol jam recurrens deserit,
Christus ne terris nascitur,
Qui lucis anget tramitem?*

How happens it that now the Sun,
From th' arctick circle backdoth run:
Is Christs Birth-day now come in light,
That doth augment the train of light?

*Hec Quam fugacem gratiam
Festinaolvebat Dies?
Quam pene subductam facem
Sensim recisa extinxerat?*

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

*Cælum nitefcet letius
Gratetur & gaudens humus,
Scandit gradatim denuo
Jubar priores lineas.*

The Heaven may glister with more state,
And the glad earth congratulate,
For now againe upon this day
The Sun doth climb his former way.

*Emerge dulcis Pusio
Quem matris edit Castitas,
Parens, & ex pectus Conjugis
Mediator, & duplex genus.*

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

*Ex ore quamlibet Patris
Sis ortus, & verbo editus,
Tamen paterno in pectore,
Sophia Callebas puer.*

Although sprung from thy Fathers
(mouth,
And publish'd by the word of truth,
Thou wast that wisdom that did rest
Before thy Birth, in Fathers Breast.

*Quæ prompta Cælum Condidit
Cælum diemq; & cætera,
Virtute verbi effecta sunt:
Hæc cuncta namque unum Deus.*

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

*Sed ordinatis Seculis,
Rerumq; digesto statu,
Fundator ipse & artifex
Permansit in patris Sinu.*

And now the world's ordered,
And state of things established,
The founder yet, and work-man maine:
In Fathers bosome did remaine.

*Quid est quod arcum circum,
Sol jam recurrens deserit,
Christus ne terris nascitur,
Qui lucis anget tramitem?*

How happens it that now the Sun,
From th'artick circle backdoth run:
Is Christs Birth-day now come in light,
That doth augment the train of light?

*Hec Quam fugacem gratiam
Festinaolvebat Dies?
Quam pene subductam facem
Sensim recisa extinxerat?*

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

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Gratetur & gaudens humus,
Scandit gradatim denuo
Iubar priores lineas.*

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And the glad earth congratulate,
For now againe upon this day
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Quem matris edit Castitas,
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Mediator, & duplex genus.*

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

*Ex ore quamlibet Patris
Sis ortus, & verba editus,
Tamen paterno in pectore,
Sophia Callebas prius.*

Although sprung from thy Fathers
(mouth,
And publish'd by the word of truth,
Thou wast that wisdom that did rest
Before thy Birth, in Fathers Breast.

*Quæ prompta Cælum Condidit
Cælum diemq; & cætera,
Virtute verbi effecta sunt:
Hæc cuncta pater verbum Deus.*

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

*Sed ordinatis Seculis,
Rerumq; digesto statum,
Fundator ipse & artifex
Permanfit in patris Sinu.*

And now the world's ordered,
And state of things established,
The founder yet, and work-man maine:
In Fathers bosome did remaine.

*Donec rotata annalium
Transvolvorentur millia
Atq; ipse peccantem diu
Dignatus orbem viseret*

*Nam caeca vis mortalium
Venerans inanes nantias,
Vel æra, vel saxa algida
Velligna credebat Deum.*

*Hæc dum sequuntur perfidi
Prædonis in jus venerant
Et mancipatam sumido
Vitam bacathro immerserant*

*Stragem sed istam non tulit
Christus cadentum gentium
Impune, ne forsan sui
Patris periret fabrica.*

*Mortale Corpus induit
Ut excitato corpore
Mortis Catenam frangeret;
Hominemq; portaret patri*

*Hic ille Natalis Dies
Quo te Creator arduus
Spiravit, & limo indidit
Sermone carnem glutinans.*

*Sentis ne virgo nobilis
Matura per fastidia,
Rudoris intactum decem
Honore partus Crescere.*

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

For mortals superstition blinde,
Worshipping vaine toys of minde,
Brass, wood, cold stoner, beleev'd to be
The onely God in persons three.

By this means then did fall all Lands,
Into the trayterous Robbers hands,
Their enslav'd souls without reason,
Plunging in Hels smoaky prison.

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

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

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

O Noble Virgin do'st not see
(Made pregnant by humility)
The honour of thy chastitie
By him enhaunc'd: that's borne of thee.

O how

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*O quanta rerum gaudia
Alvus publica continet.
Ex qua novellum secum
Procedit, & lux aurea.*

*Vagitus ille. Exordium
Vernantis orbis prodidit.
Nam tunc renatus sordidum
Mundus veterum depulit.*

*Sparſiſſe tellurem reor.
Rus omne denſis floribus
Ipaſq; harenas Syrtium
Fragaffe nardo & neſtare.*

Te cuncta nascentem (puer)
Sensere dura, & barbara:
Victusq; saxorum rigor
Obduxit herbam cotibam.

Jam mella de saopulis fluunt
 Jam Gallatilis exarido
 Sudans a momum stipite:
 Jam sunt myriosis balsama.

O sancta praesepio tuum
Aeternae Rex cunabula
Populisq; per seculum sacra
Munis O ipsi Credita

Adorat hæc brutum pecus:
Indocta turba scilicet,
Adorat excois maribus,
Vis cuius in pasto sua est

...and the ...

*Sed cum fidei spiritu.
Concurrat ad præsepia,
Pagana gens, & quadrupes
Sapiatq; quod brutum fuit.*

*Negat patrum præsepia,
Perosa presentem Deum:
Credas venenis ebriam,
Furijfq; lymphatam rapi.*

*Quid prona per scelus ruis?
Agnosce, si quicquam tibi
Assentis recedit integræ,
Ducem tuorum principum.*

*Hunc quem latebræ, & obstetrix
Et virgo fata, & Cunnula
Et imbecilla infantia,
Regem dederunt gentibus.*

*Peccator intueberis
Celsum coruscis nubibus,
Dejectus ipse, & irritis
Plangens reatum stetibus.*

*Cum vasta signum buccina
Terris cremandis miserit
Et scissus axis cardinem
Mundi ruentis solverit.*

*Insignis ipse, & præminens
Meritis rependet congrua:
His, lucis usum perpetis,
Illis, Gehennam, & tartarum.*


*Judea, tunc fulmen Crucis
Exporta qui sit, senties,
Quem, te furoris præfule,
Mors hancsit, & mox reddidit.*

Let Pagans with a stable sp'rit
Unto the Stable run outright;
Let four-footed Beasts discern
What four-footed Beasts concerne.

Their Fathers Sons, they this deny,
Hating God, now us so nigh. (drunk
Thou wouldst beleeve them poison
With furies into madnesse sunk.

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

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

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

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

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

Then to Judea, Judge shall he
(The Crosse a thunder-bolt shall) be
To those feirce men, who to death
Judg'd him, which stopt, and gave him
(breath.

The next is *Chrysostome*, who lived at the same time with *Aurelius Prudentius*, about the year 398. of whom the Christians of *Tauro Cilicia*, were wont to say, that it was better that the Sun should withdraw his shining, then that *Chrysostomes* mouth should be stopt from speaking. He was first a Priest of *Antioch*, after that Bishop of *Constantinople*, called *Golden mouth*, and not without cause; *Demosthenes christianorum*, the Christians *Demosthenes*. He in an especiall manner spends his Rhetorick in magnifying the celebration of this day, in an high straine, as followeth; and first, in his Oration *De beato Philogonio*: saying,

Chrysost: Anno
398.

Appetit jam Festum omnium festorum maxime venerandum, adorandumq; quod si quis appellet omnium Festorum Metropolin, haud quaquam abberret; Quid autem hoc est? Christi juxta carnem Nativitas; Ab hoc enim illustrato Die, Festum Epiphaniarum, ac Sacrum Pascha, Ascensio, & Pentecoste, originem ac fundamentum ducunt. Nisi enim secundum Carnem natus esset, Christus nequaquam baptizatus fuisset, nam ideo est Festum Theophaniorum, nequaquam fuisset crucifixus, hoc enim est festum paschae, nequaquam missus esset Spiritus Sanctus, hoc enim est Festum Pentecostes. Itaq; ab hoc, seu fonte quopiam hi diversi amnes orti, nata sunt nobis haec Festa.

Now that Feast is come, the most to be revered, and adored of all other Feasts; But what Feast is that? The Birth-day of our Saviour Christ according to the flesh, which if any man shall call it the *Metropolitan Feast*, he is no way in an error; for from this day, made so illustrious in its observation, the Feast of the Epiphanie, Passeover, Ascension, and Pentecost, have their ground, and original; for if he had not been borne according to the flesh, he had not beene Baptized, which is the Feast of the

Chrysost. 398.

Theopha-

Theophanies, he had not been crucified, which is the Feast of the Pasſeover; he had not ſent down the holy Ghoſt, which is the Feast of Pentecoſt. Therefore from this, thoſe diſverſe Rivelets doe ſtream, as from their proper Fountaine; and from his Birth thoſe Feaſts have their Birth and breeding.

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

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

Verum, non ob hoc tantum, par est hunc Diem cæteris anteponi, sed ob id, quod in hoc natum est, & cæteris omnibus est venerabilius. Nam, quod Christus homo factus, mortuus est, qui nullum peccatum pertraxisset, quid huic poterit adjungi miraculo? Sed mortale corpus assumpsit, hoc quoque admirandum. Cæterum, quod Deus cum esset voluerit homo fieri, tantumque se dumittere Sustinuerit, quantum

Chryſoſt. 397.

quantum ne cogitatione quidem complecti queas; hoc est omnium maxime reverendum, stuporisq; plenum quod quidam Paulus admirans dicebat, magnum esse pietatis mysterium, deus declaratus in carne, & alibi, non enim angelis apprehendit Deus semer, sed semen Abrahæ apprehendit ut poterat fratribus in omnibus assimilari.

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

Heb. 2.

Propter hoc, perissimum diligo Diem hunc, amoq; & amorem ejus in medium propono, ut vos amatorij hujus pharmoni participes reddam; Eaq; vos omnes obtestor, rogoq;, ut summo studio, summaq; alacritate, velit is adesse; sed prius suam unusquisq; domum repurget, ut videamus dominum nostrum in cunis jace rem. Quid enim excusabimus: aut quam veniam obtinebimus? Si quum ipse nostra causa descenderit de Cælis nos ad illum ex ædibus nostris ire gravemur? Quum alienæ Barbariq; ex Perside accurrant, ut illam videant in præsepi jacere m,

Christmas-day bid holy by St. Chrysostome.

It was the use of the Church then so to do, as shal appear.

Chap. 333

*tu vero ne breve quidem spacium emittiri sustines, ut hoc
 felici spectaculo perfruaris? Nam si cum fide accessimus
 procul dubio videbimus illum, in praesepe, jacentem; Si-
 quidem Mensa vicem explet praesepe.*

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

Christs Birth-
 day a Sacra-
 ment-day.

Againe, the same Father in his second Tome, and the third Homilie, Preached upon the day of our Saviours Nativity, speaking of the different keeping of the day by the Christians in *Armenia*, *Aegypt*, and all the rest of the world besides, they observing the sixt of *January*, on the day of the *Epiphanie*, when he was Baptized, and these the twenty fifth of *Decem-ber*, thus ends the controversie.

Tractemus in corde nostro, quod hodierno Die Christus nascitur (25. Scilicet Decembris) Alij putant quod

in Epiphanijs nascitur; Non damnemus aliorum opinionem, nostram sequimur doctrinam; Unusquisq; in suo sensu abundet, & forsitan revelabit unicuiq; Dominus. Et illi qui dicunt tunc nasci Salvatorem, & nos qui hodie dicimus nasci, unum dominum colimus, unum infantulum suscipimus. Sed videamus quod magis rationabilius! Ratio nostra non reprehendit alios, sed nos probat. Non sunt nostra quæ loquimur, Majorum sententia est; Universus mundus contra hujus provincie opinionem loquitur; Hic Apostoli fuerunt, hic traditio fuit; Nos dicimus quia hodie Christus natus est, in Epiphanijs renatus. Mundus ipse testimonium nostrum, Creatura nobiscum testatur, usq; ad hunc diem crescunt tenebræ, ab hoc die crescit Dies, decrescit nox; Errorem veritas subit, hodie nobis sol Justitiæ nascitur.

Let us meditate in our hearts that as upon this day (to wit, December the twenty fifth) Christ was borne: Others are of opinion, that he was borne upon the day of the *Epiphanie*; We doe not condemne other mens opinions, yet we will follow our own doctrine; Let every man be resolved in his own mind, and may be the Lord will also reveale this particular to every man. For both they that think our Saviour Christ to be borne at that time, and we that maintaine him to be borne as this day, doe worship the same Lord, and embrace the same Babe. But let us consider whose ground is the stronger. Our reason reprehends not others, it justifies our selves. The words we speak, are not ours, they are the definitive sentence of our ancestors. The whole world speaks against the opinion of that one province; The Apostles are for us, their Tradition takes our part, and we say that Christ was borne as upon this day, and

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borne

Being Bapti-
zed in *Jordan*
thereupon.

Chryst. Anno
398.

borne againe upon the *Epiphanie*. The world is our witnesse, the Creature doth testifie with us, to this day the nights encrease, from this day they doe decrease. Truth comes in the place of error. This day the Sun of righteousnesse rose upon us.

Chryst. 398.

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

I now laugh to think how the ignorant opponent doth begin to insult upon these seeming contradictions, and calls the old Father dotard, and is ready to daunce a gig for joy, if he had but a Scottish Bagpipe; but they that are wise know that he betrayes but his owne ignorance in Chronologie, and shewes himselfe a fool; for the day of the winter *Solstice*, the twenty fifth of *December*, and the eight of the Calends of *January*, will prove all one day, if we call but to mind what we noted before, that in our Saviours time the Vernal Equinox was upon the 25. of *March*, according to our English and Julian account, which was the eighth of the Calends of *April*, according to the account of the Hebrews; their *Nisan*, their first month in the year, beginning in the middle of our *March*, and having in it fourteen dayes of our *April*, so that the twenty fifth of *March* with us, is the eight of *April*, according to them; and the eight of *January* with them, the twenty fifth of *December* with us, and the twenty fifth of *December* then (when Christ was borne) was the day of
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the winter solstice. As *Vallerius Bellavensis*, in his *Compendium* on the Spheare, p. 224. both wit- *Chrysoſt. Anni*
neſſe in theſe words, *Tempore Auguſti Octaviani ut* 398.
obſervat Plinius, brumæ dies vigefſimo quinto Decembris
erat quo die, natus eſt Chriſtus aſſertor noſter. In the
time of *Auguſtus Octavian*, as *Plinie* obſerves, the
ſhorteſt day was on the twenty fifth of *December*, on
which day Chriſt our Redcemer was borne. See alſo
the *Julian* and *Romane* Kallenders, in *Baronius*, *Ge-*
nebrard Chron. lib. 3. Gualterius, Tab. Chron. Gordon
Leſmor, Chron.

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

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

Augustine that Famous Father

Bishop of *Hippo*, in *Affrick*, we may name the
chiefe, who flouriſhed in the year 420. and hath
four and twenty Sermons in print, Preached upon
the very day of Chriſts Birth; in which he witneſ-

Augustine,
Anno 420.

Augustine,
Anno 420.

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

Filius Dei, idemq; filius hominis, sine Matre de patre natus, creavit omnem Diem, sine patre de matre natus consecravit hunc Diem, divina nativitate invisibilis, humana visibilis, utraq; mirabilis.

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

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

Augustine,
Anno 420.
Christ borne
upon Sunday.

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

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

Augustine,
Anno 420.

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

Christs Birth-day a Sacrament-day.

Ep. 118.

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

The day bid holy in St. Augustines time.

ner,

Augustine,
Anno 420.
Ser. 1. in Dom:
1. Adventus.

ner, then, to receive the Sacrament of his body and blood. The forme of his bidding followes.

Appropinquante jam sacratissima sollemnitate, qua Salvator noster inter homines nasci misericorditer voluit, (Fratres Charissimi) attentius considerate, qualiter oporteat nos, in adventu tantæ potentie preparari: ut Regem ac dominum nostrum leti atq; gaudentes, cum gloria & laudibus mereamur suscipere, & in conspectu ejus inter felices catus Sanctorum, gratulando exultare, magis quam ab eo, propter fætitatem nostram repulsi inter peccatores eternam confusionem mereri.

Et ideo rogo, moneoq; ut quantum possumus cum Dei adjutorio laboremus: ut illo die cum sincera, & pura conscientia, & mundo corde, & casto corpore, ad altare Domini possumus accedere, & corpus, & sanguinem ejus non ad judicium, sed ad remedium animæ nostræ mereamur accipere (& Paulo post)

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

Matth. 5. 18.

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

Therefore I exhort and give warning, that we labour

bour with Gods help to our utmost power, upon that day to come to the Lords Table with a sincere and pure conscience, a clean heart, and a chaste body, that we may be worthy to receive his body and blood, not to condemnation, but for our owne soules health, (and then a little after.)

Augustine,
Anno 420.

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

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

Augustine. 420

Considerate queso (Fratres) quando aliquis homo potens vel nobilis; Natalem suum, aut filij sui celebrare desiderat, quanto studio, ante plures Dies quicquid in domo sua sordidum invenerit ordiatur emundari, quicquid ineptum, & incongruum proijci, quicquid utile & necessarium præcipit exhiberi. Domus etiam si obscurata fuerit dealbatur, Pavimenta scopis mundantur, & diversis respersa floribus ornantur; Quicquid etiam ad lætitiā, & corporis delicias pertinet omni sollicitudine providetur. Ut quid ista (fratres charissimi) nisi ut Dies natalitius cum gaudio celebretur hominis morituri? Si ergo tanta præparas in Natalitio tuo, aut filij tui: quanta & qualia præparare debes Susceptoris Natalem Domini tui? Si talia præparas morituro, qualia præparare debes eterno.

Consider my Brethren, I beseech you, that when a great or noble man doth desire to solemnize his own or his Sons Birth-day, vvith vvhat eagerneffe he gives his Servants order many dayes before to make clean vvhat

Augustine,
Anno 420.

vvhat shall be found foule in his house, to cast out vvhat shall be found unfitting, or undecent, to provide vvhat shall be profitable or necessary. The wals are vvhited, pavements vvashed, and strevved vvith fine flovvres of diverse sorts, and vvhatsoever belongs to the merry-making of the soule, or the delighting of the body, nre procured vvith all care. And to vvhat end is all this great preparation (my beloved Brethren) but to grace and glad the Birth-day of a mortall man? If then thou preparest so great and gay things upon thine ovvne birth-day, or that of thy Son, hovv much greater and farre more excellent, oughtest thou to prepare against the Birth-day of thy Lord? If thou preparest such things to honour him that shall die, vvhat manner of provision oughtest thou to make in honour of him that lives for ever?

Therefore vvhatsoever thou vvouldest be sorry to have found in thine ovvne house in the day of thine ovvne Nativity, have a care that God may not find the like in thy soule, upon the Birth-day of his onely Son.

Augustine. 420

The Father goes on, *Certe si te Rex terrenus, aut quicumq; pater-familias ad Natalitium suum invitaret, qualibus vestimentis studueris ornatus incedere, quam novis, vel nitidis, vel splendidis, quorum nec vetustas, nec vilitas, nec aliqua seditas, oculos invitantis offenderet? Tali ergo studio in quantum praevalēs, Christo auxiliante, contende, ut diversis virtutum ornamentis anima composita, Simplicitatis gemmis, & sobrietatis floribus adornata, ad sollemnitatem Regis aeterni: id est, ad Natalem Domini Salvatoris, cum securā conscientia procedat, castitate nitida, charitate splendida, elemosynis candida. Christus enim*

enim dominus, si te ita compositum natalitium suum celebrare cognoverit: Ipse per se venire, & animam tuam, non solum visitare, sed etiam requiescere, & perpetuo in illa dignabitur habitare. Sicut 2 Cor. 6. Apoc. 3. 20. Et quam fœlix est ista anima quæ vitam suam ita, deo auxiliante studuerit, gubernare, ut Christum hospitem & habitatorem mereatur accipere!

Augustine.

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

2 Cor. 6.

Rev. 3. 20.

The next is Orosius, St. Augustines Schollar, and afterwards a Priest in Spaine, about the year 425. who writ seaven Books of History, which he dedica-

Paulus Orosius,
Arno 425.

Irosius.

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

Cassianus,
Anno 440.

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

And with him accords *Nicephorus*, *Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. c. 12.* saying, *Vigessimus & quintus tum mensis Decembris, erat Dies quum ineffabile pietatis, & amoris, erga genus humanum tue (Verbum Dei) maximumq; inerrabilis partus perficitur mysterium.* It was then the twenty fifth of *December*, when thou, O word of God, the unspeakable mystery of thy goodnesse and love towards mankinde, and the exceeding great Birth was accomplished. Following *Maximus*, Bishop of *Tours* in *France*, of the same time with *Leo the great*, who hath six Sermons Preached upon the day, extant: And *Chrysologus* who hath one, *Sect. 172.*

Leo Magnus,
Anno 440.

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

Servator noster hodie natus est, gaudeamus, neq; fas est

*est locum esse tristitia: ubi Natalis est vitæ, quæ con-
sumpto mortalitatis timore, nobis ingerit de promissa eter-
nitate letitiam. Nullus ab hujus alacritatis participa-
tione Secernitor, una cunctis communis letitiæ est ratio.*

Leo Magnus,
Anno 440.

Our Saviour was borne this day, let us be glad: It is not lawfull to give place to sadnesse ou the Birth-day of life, which taking away the fear of death, prompts unto us the joy of promised Eternity. Let no man dare to separate himselfe from the partaking of this dayes rejoycing, seeing there is the same universall ground of joy to all.

And againe in his second Sermon.

*Exulemus, quia nobis illuxit Dies redemptionis no-
stræ, reparationis antiquæ, felicitatis eternæ. Repara-
tur enim nobis salutis nostræ annua revolutione Sacra-
mentum; in initio promissum, in fine redditum, sine fine
mansurum.*

A Sacrament
day in Leo's
time.

Let us rejoyce because this day of our redempti-
on, ancient reparation, and eternall happinesse, doth
shine within our doors, for as this day, the Sacrament
or Seale of our salvation is renewed unto us by the
years revolution; which was promised in the begin-
ning of time, performed in the fulnesse of time, and
continued when time shall be no more. So much he,
shewing in his time the strict annuall observation of
the day.

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

*Cyrill of Alexandria, President of the Councell
of Ephesus, against Nestorius, Anno 430.*

Cyrill Alex:
430.

Theodoret of Cyprus.

Theodoret, 432.

Prosper of Aquitaine, in the year 443. And

Vigilius, who flourished about the year, 425. in

Prosper, 445.
Vigilius, 495.

whose dayes the forementioned Feast was kept universally, constantly, annually.

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

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

In the sixth Century then, we meet with *Rupertus*, the Apostle of *Bavaria*, famous in the year 580. who in his third Book, *De divinis officiis*, and cap. 16. witnesseth the generall observation of the day in that age, and saith, that Christ was borne *Nocte dominica*, in the preceeding night, or about the dawning of the Lords day. And the reason was, saith he, *Ut quo die dixit fiat lux & facta est, lux ejusdem dei, nocte orieretur in tenebris lumen erectis corde, & visiteret nos Oriens ab alto: illuminare eos qui in tenebris & in umbra mortis sedebant.*

Rupertus,
Anno 580.

Christ borne
about day-
break.

That

That upon what day he said, *Let there be light, and there was light*, in the night of that, light should spring out of darknesse to the upright in heart, and the morning should visit us from on high, to give light to them that fate in darknesse, and in the shadow of death. To this alludes that of St. *John*, even no doubt to the hour of Christs Birth, *The light shined in darknesse, and the darknesse comprehended it not.*

Isa. 9. 2.

Luke 2. 9.

John 1. 9.

John 1. 5.

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

Fulgentius. 500

Isidorus, Junior, of *Hispalis* in *Spain*, after him, about the year 596. And

Isidor: Hisp:

396.

Evagrius Scholasticus, who writ his Ecclesiasticall History, ending in the year 597. And

Evagrius.

596.

Gregory the great, who lived at the same time, to whose works I refer you. But especially, take notice, that in this age about the year 523. *Justine* the Emperour of the East, decreed that the Feast of the holy Nativity of Christ, should be observed, as *Nicephorus* observes, *Hist. Eccl. l. 7. c. 28.* If any one object, that therefore it was not kept before, he may as well argue, that the Lords day was never kept in *England*, before this Parliament sate, because they have made a blessed Act for the strict observation of the same.

Gregory Mag:

500.

For the next Century, from the year 600. to 700. we shall produce *Bede* our owne Countrey-man, who was famous in this age, and hath writ to the purpose in this particular; (I mean venerable *Bede*) and so fully, that he hath delivered in a few words, all that hath been said before, especially concerning the time when Christ was borne, to give you a tast, which will relish well with a discreet palate.

Bede, 700.

He

Bede.

He in the nineteenth Chapter, *Lib. 1. De naturarum*, relating that definitive sentence of his forefathers, that Christ was *Concep̃tus Equinoctio verno, natus solstitio kyberno*, conceived in the Vernall Equinoxe, and borne in the winter Solstice, hath these words.

De Equinoctijs quod & de Calendarum Aprilium 1. 2^a. Martij, & de Calendarum Octoberum (1) 24. Septembris, & de Solstij, & de Calendarum Juliarum, id est, 24. die Junij, & de Calendarum Januariarum, id est, 25. Decembris, notanda sint. Multorum late, & sapientum seculi, & Christianorum sententia claret.

Marke this
well.

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

Bede, 700.

He then brings in, first the testimonies of *Plinie*, and *Hippocrates*, those Heathens, then adds, that all the famousst Fathers of the Church are of the same opinion, in affirming, that Christ our Lord vvas conceived upon the eighth day of the Calends of *Aprill* which is the same day vwith the 25. of our *March* the day of the Vernall Equinox, and that upon that very day he also suffered, and died, and that he vvas borne upon the day of the vvinter *Solstice*, upon the eight of the Calends of *January*, that is to say, upon the

he twenty fifth day of our *December.*

Bede.

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

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

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

Bede, Anno 700.

Bede.

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

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

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

John 1. 6, 7, 8, 9.

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

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

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

Johannes Damascen, 351.

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

Rabanus Maurus, Abbot of *Fulda*, and afterward Bishop of *Mentz*, and President of the great Synod there, held under *Lotharius* the Emperour, for convicting of *Godescalcus*, Anno 848. He was a man, *Tantæ Eruditionis at nec similem Italia, nec parem Germania habuerit.*

Rabanus Maurus, 830.

Haymo, Bishop of *Halberstad*, Kinsman to *Bede*, and Schollar to *Alcuinus* our Countrey-man.

Haymo. 850.

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

Theophylact, Anno 880.

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

Oecumenius, 1070.

For the next, mellifluous *St. Bernard*, the last of all the Fathers, who though he lived in the time of the School-men, whose beginning we reckon from the yeare 1050. (of whom *Lanfranke*, Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, was the first) yet he is reckoned for a Father, and gives us a clear testimony of the due observation of the day, in an especiall manner for his time, in those many Sermons that he preached thereupon.

Bernard, 1120.

As,

In his first Sermon, *Grandis quidem (dilectissimi) hodierna dominicæ Nativitatis sollemnitas, sed Dies vis cogit abbreviare sermonem, nec mirum si nos fa-*

Bernard. 1120. *imus breve verbum, quia hodie deus Pater verbum fecit abbreviatum.*

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

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

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

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

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

England, following the ancient and laudable custome of the Primitive Church. Reformed Churches.

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

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

First for the Confessions.

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

And the first shall be the *Augustane* Confession, exhibited to the Emperour, CHARLES the Fifth, in the year One thousand, five hundred, and thirty. The Augustana.
Anno 1530.

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words whereof in the fourth Article, are as followeth.

Docemus non damnandas esse traditiones, quæ nihil præcipiunt contra mandata Dei, & habent finem politicum, videlicet, quæ ad hoc conditæ sunt, ut ordine res in ecclesiâ gerantur, Cujusmodi sunt, traditiones de feriis, Natali, paschate, & reliquis, & hujus generis veteres ritus libenter retinemus in nostris Ecclesiis.

We teach (say they) that we ought not to condemn those traditions, which appoint nothing contrary to Gods Commandements, and have a civill use, or end, to wit, for good order in the Church: such are the traditions concerning Holi-dayes, Christs Birth-day, Easter, and the rest; and those ancient customs we willingly retain in our Churches.

The second shall be the *Bohemian* Confession, published in the year 1532. cap. 16.

Bohemica.
Anno 1532.

Servamus Dominicos festos Dies, illosq; eximiarum Feriarum Dies qui consecrati sunt celebrationi operum Christi, Nativitati, Cinciatibus, resurrectioni, &c. Itemq; Memorie Sanctorum, ut Virginis Mariæ, Apostolorum aliorumq; Sanctorum, &c. & hæc quidem propter Verbum Dei, & cultus Divina causa, propterq; gloriam Dei a nobis fiant. That is to say,

We keep the Lords day holy, and those chiefe Festivalls which are consecrated to the Commemoration of Christs works, his Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, &c. As also those which are consecrated to the memory of Saints; as of the Virgin *Mary*, the Apostles, and other Saints, especially of those of whom mention is made in holy writ. All these things are done of us, by the Authority of Gods word, and in worship of God, and for his glory.

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The third shall be the latter Confession of *Helvetia* ^{Helvetia Po} ^{stercor. 1566.} published in the year 1566. which was subscribed by all the Churches of *Sabaudia*, *Poland*, *Hungarie*, and revolted *Scotland*, as *Alsted* doth witness in the 37. Chapter of his *Chronologie*, page 392. edit: *nl.* 1650.

They in their 24 Chapter, tell us thus much, *Si Ecclesie pro Christiani literate memoriam Dominice Nativitatis Circumcisionis, Passionis, Resurrectionis, Ascensionis in Cælum, & Missionis Spiritus Sancti in discipulos religiose celebrent, maximopere approbamus.* That is, Scots Subscribing to the keeping of Christmas day.

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

Note here I pray you, to the Scots everlasting shame, that all the Churches or Kirks of Scotland, did subscribe this Confession of *Helvetia*, and that now at this day they generally speake against the keeping of Christs Birth-day. How true then is our Northerne Proverb, *As false as a Scot*. No marvell then, if they scold their King, that thus slight their faith, and despise the comming of the King of Kings.

Nay more, they have herein with *Ephesus*, forsaken their first love, for if we read the life of *William Curper*, Bishop of *Galloway*, in the 12. page we may find, that the Scottish Church for 800. years after Christ, before ever it was polluted with Popery, did give the Communion upon the 25. day of *December*, by them accounted the day of Christs Nativity: which

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which is also avouched by Mr. *Ley*, in his *Sundaya Sabbath*, pag. 173.

With these forementioned Confessions, agree all the rest, as that of the four Cities, *Argentine*, *Constance*, *Memminge*, and *Lindavia*, called by some, the Confession of *Sweetland*, published in the year 1530. That of *Basil*, 1531, that of *Saxorie*, 1551. that of *Wittemberge*, 1552. that of *France*, 1559. that of *Germany*, 1556.

Adde to these, the joint answer of the Protestants, in the yeare 1541. with the consent of all the Reformed Churches of *Poland*, the greater and the lesse; also the Churches of *Russia*, *Lituania*, *Samogitia*, in that famous Synod of *Sendmore*, in the year 1570. *Denmarke*, *Sweden*, and all the *Lutherans*, as appears by *Luthers Hymns* sung by them upon the day.

Adde lastly to them all the late Nationall Scottish Covenant, wherein the words that are to be vowed, protested, and sworne by them that take it; are,

Scottish Covenant, Art. 1.

That they shall endeavour the reformation of the Church of England, in Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship, according to Gods Word, and the Example, and Practice, of the best reformed Churches.

Now all the best reformed Churches keep the day of Christs Birth, as a day of holy worship, and thanksgiving, even all of them at this day, and ever since their

their reformation. Then, I beseech you note, that whosoever he be, or whether a faithlesse Scots-man, or a Scottified English-man, that hath taken that Covenant, and doth not endeavour, and labour yearly to keep holy the twenty fifth day of *December*, or the annuall day of Christs Nativity, is in plain English, and gu'd Scotch, absolutely forsworne, for not worshipping God and Christ thereupon, in the publick Congregation, as they of the best reformed Churches doe.

The notkeeping of *Christ-mas* Day is a breach of the Covenant.

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

Moderne Divines.

First, Calvin, Instit. lib. 4. cap. 10. In verba Augustin: approves the keeping of them, and in his Epistle to *Hallerus*, sorrowes very much that these Festivalldayes were put downe in diverse places. And moreover for the day of Christs Birth, he saith and avoucheth, *Harm. Evangel. in cap secundum lucæ*, that the day of Christs Birth was better knowne then that it should now be called in question; and calls the Anabaptists that question it, *Aeris Dæmones, Aerie Devils*. And accordingly the Church of *Geneva* doth annually celebrate it, as we may read in *Perth's Assembly* confuted, p. 85. And in *France*, their most notable Preachers give the Communion on that day.

Calvinus.

Secondly, Zanchie, that treasurer of learning and knowledge, *Vol. 4. lib. 1. cap. 19. in quartam præcept: thesi secunda*, proves at large, that it was kept holy in the purer times, and that it ought to be so kept, and yearly

yearly observed by all true Christians at this day, by
 found Reasons, which you shall read anon. *Secondly*,
Thirdly, *Zuinglius*, Rector of the Church of *Zu-
 rich*, accounts the Birth-day of our Lord among
 those holi-dayes that he would have observed. *Tom.
 1. Art. 25.*

Fourthly, *Bullinger*, Decan: & Sermon. 4. sayth, *Quam
 vis nullibi legatur, &c.* Though it is nowhere read
 that the Lords day was enjoined in the writings of
 the Apostles; yet because in the fourth Commande-
 ment of the first Table the care of Religion, and the
 diligent exercise of outward worship is commanded,
 it were contrary to piety, and Christian charity, not
 to sanctifie the *Lords Day*, especially seeing that out-
 ward worship cannot consist, without a set time, and
 an holy rest: the same we ought to judge of the ho-
 li-dayes, or Feasts of our Lord Christ, in which we ce-
 lebrate the memory of his Nativity, Incarnation,
 Circumcision, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, into
 Heaven, and sending downe of the holy Ghost upon
 his Disciples.

Fifthly, *Relanus*, professor of Divinity in the Uni-
 versity of *Basil*, placeth the Feast of Christs Nativity,
 under the title of *The Anniversary Feasts of the New
 Testament*; which he defines to be holy times appointed
 among Christians for the worship of God in publike; that
 is, *To maintaine the consent of faith among themselves,*
for the Preaching of Gods word, and the use of the
Sacraments, and with one accord to yeild due wor-
ship unto God in the due Sacrifice of thanksgiving,
Prayers, and Alms. *Syntagma Theolog. lib. 9. c. 35.*

Sixthly, *John Gerhard* Professour of Divinity in the
 University of *Jene*, who hath gathered together ma-
 ny

ny godly sentences out of the ancient Fathers, for the furtherance, and help of our meditations *on the day of Christs Nativity.* Reasons.

And what should we say more? For the time would faile us, to tell of *Melanchton*, in *Responsione protestantium. Festus Homini*, in the name of all the reformed Churches, *Coll: Antibellar: disp: 41. thesi 3.* Of *Bucer* in *Matth. cap. 12. loco de feriis.* Of *Ursin*, *Tract. Theol: in 4. præcep:* Of *Hemmingius lib: hom:* Of *Chytraeus in disposit: Epistol: Sub initio:* Of our Countreyman *Hooker*, *Eccl. pol. l. 5.* Of famous *Andrews*, in his Sermons; Of learned *Reynolds*, in his Conference with *Hart*, c. 8. *divis: secunda*, and many others, famous for piety and learning, who by their Sermons, writings, examples, have justified the yearly observation of *Christs Birth-Day*, upon the 25. of *December*, grounding upon the word of God, the traditions of the Apostles, and the practice of the Primitive and Reformed Churches.

Next to the Practice of Gods Church, Reason comes in as an Armed man, to confirme the truth, and to maintaine the particular observation of the forementioned day. The reasons are many, for brevity sake we shall onely for the present alledge three, which *Zanchie*, that great Treasurer of Learning, and Religion, doth prompt unto us in the forecited place.

His first Reason is drawne, A laudabili, Because it is praise-worthy to observe this day, grounded upon the chiefe ends for which Feasts were instituted among the *Jewes*, which are three, as *Thomas Aquinas* recites them, *2^a parte Summæ, quest. 102. art. 4.* Ratio 1.

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

Reasons.

The second, To give God thanks for them.

The third, That at such times they might freely offer large gifts, for the releife of the Priests, and poor people.

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

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

Ratio 2^a

His second Reason is drawne, Ab honesto, We ought to solemnize the Feast of our Saviours Nativity, and those other of his Resurrection, &c. Because it is a point of honesty so to doe; for if that be honest (as *Cicero* defines it) which though it be not actually praised

praised, yet it is praise-worthy, it must needs follow, that it is a point of honesty, to solemnize those Feasts which the ancient Church graced with a solemnity before us; because it is a point of honesty, and praise-worthy to follow antiquity in things not evill in themselves, but indifferent; for it ought to be our judgement, that the ancients had a sufficient, and a well grounded cause for the doing of such things, especially in the instituting and, appointing of such Festivall dayes.

His third Reason, is drawne, Ab utili, We ought *Ratio 3^a* (saith he) to keep holy the Birth-day of our Saviour, and his other Feasts, by reason of the great profit that accrews unto us, and others in the observati-
on of the same: For it is not (saith he) in the tongue of man to expresse what great profit the common people doe gain by the due observing of those dayes, and comming to Church to give God thanks there-
upon; whereupon the passages of those things that were done by our Saviour, for the good and salvation of their souls, are read and explained unto them, and a treasure of good things are brought in them. Let me
adde, all the Articles of the *Creed*, are in a mannere-
very yeare more and more made knowne unto them; and they upon every Festivall built up in their most
holy faith; and that increased by the annuall Expo-
sition, and confirmation, they being taught to be-
leeve in God, that made Heaven and Earth, by his
Son, by whom he made the World, Jesus Christ his
onely Son, our Lord, who was *Conceived by the holy*
Ghost, upon the day of the Annuntiation, upon which
day the world was created.

Annuntiation

March 25.

Decem. 25

To beleeve that he was *Borne of the Virgin Mary,*

upon the Feast of his Nativity.

Good-Friday.

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

Easter.

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

Holy-Thurs-
day.

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

Whit-Sunday

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

2 Tim. 1. 13.

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

Gal. 4. 19.

sits

sits at the right hand of God, upon *Holy Thursday*, that he may send downe the holy Ghost into their hearts, to lead them into all truth, upon the day of *Pentecost*, and into this truth above others, that they *kisse the Son of God*, upon the day of his *Nativity*, and so they perish not from the right way, which (*with grieve of heart I write it*) too many have done that have neglected the Celebration of this *Blessed Day*. *Alas, alas!* how many poor, unlearned people are there, that cannot reade any thing concerning Christ, or what they are to beleve concerning him, nor hear any thing of Christ, but when they come to Church upon *such Festivall dayes*.

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

I conclude my Reasons with the words of Saint *Augustine*; *Post Sacras literas ea nobis servanda sunt, quæ vel ab Apostolis per traditionem, vel ab universalibus Conciliis definita fuisse judicantur; Talia autem sunt quæ, toto terrarum orbe, leguntur observata fuisse, qualia sunt hæc festa veteris puriorisq; ecclesiæ quæ omnia fuerunt de Christo, scilicet Diei Dominici, Paschatis, Pentecostes, Ascensionis, Passionis, Cene Domini, & Nativitatis.*

Next after the holy Scriptures, we are to observe those

Reasons.

those rites and customes, which came either from the Apostles, by Tradition, or are judg'd to be decreed by generall counsels; such are those Feasts *of the ancient and purer Church, annually observed over the whole world, all which were kept in the honour of Jesus Christ: to wit, the Lords Day, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension, Passion, Supper of the Lord, and the Nativity.*

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

Zanchie, loc.
Citate:

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

How much more ought the day of our Saviours Birth, in a more excellent, devout, and rejoycing manner, annually to be observed and kept by all that bear the name of Christian, and hope for salvation by
that

Miracles.

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that blessed Babe, that now came into the world to save sinners, whereof they must needs be the chiefe that despise the day of so great Salvation; work, and follow their Callings, when it should be their onely work to remember what the Lord Jesus upon this day did for them, and sing praise to his name. 1 Tim. 1. 15.

Me-thinks what hath been said already might persuade any reasonable Christian to the due observati-on of the day. But alas, I find of late, Jewes in *England*, to whom Christ came and they received him not, *John 1. 11.* Who unlesse they see signes and wonders, they will not beleeve, and then neither; so stupid they are, and obstinate; yet whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, whether they will beleeve or continue in unbelieve, and beleeve no man but themselves; let them know, that divers and sundry Miracles have been wrought in diverse Nations, upon the twenty fifth day of *December*, to confirme it to have been the very day of our Saviours Birth; as the Fountain of Oyle breaking out in *Rome*, the tongue-tying of the Divels Oracles, the amity of the Beasts, and many more, which you may finde in *Gregory Turonensis*, which I may not now repeat; but especially two wrought here in *England*, confirming that the keeping of the day, upon the twenty fifth of the foresaid Moneth, according to the old *Julian* account, is authentick, true, and Orthodoxe. Isa. 5. 12.

The one is the *Oake* in the new Forrest, *sacra Jovi Quercus*, an Oake consecrate to the Son of God, left as a lasting witnesse of this truth, even there, where so many Churches were demolished, wherein it should have been Preached. *Abraham* the Father of the Faithfull, feasted the Son of God in the likenesse of Man, Mirac. l. 1.

Oake in the new Forrest.

Gen. 18. 8.

John 8. 56.

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

The Thorne by
Glastenbury,
called Joseph's
Thorne,

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

That very *Thorne* in a mysterious manner, pricking deep, and reprovng to the quick, the dead unthankfullnesse of many men, while that poor Thorne, as it were, in way of thankfullnesse to its Creator, doth gratefully shut forth his blossomes upon the very day

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

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

day of its coming; hath been among us of this Island, beleived, and yearly is confirmed by Miracles, and yet many blinded ones among us, both of Clergy and Laity, shut their eyes and will not see, loving darknesse rather then light.

Rev. I. 10.

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

Loco super
citato.

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

SUR-

Sundayes in the year, became to be called *Lords dayes*, the truth whereof will appear as clear as the Sun, to any that will take the paines to compare *Ignatius* in his Epistle, *ad Magnes*, with *Justine Martyr*, apol. 2. *ad finem*, *Euseb. lib. 4. c. 23. Irenæus l. 4. c. 23. ad Victorem Romanum apud Sozomen: Tertullian, lib. de idolat. pag. 376. lib. de Corona Militis, August. Tom. 2. Ep. 119. ad Januar. de civit. dei lib. 22. c. 30. de verbis Apostoli Ser 15. Cyrill in Johan. lib. 17. cap. 58. Euseb. lib. 1. cap. 23, 24. Socrates, lib. 5. cap. 22.* And to shut up all, take here the words of a most eminent *Divine*, whose Learning and Piety hath placed him beyond exception, Bishop *Andrewes* (I mean) in his Sermon upon *John*, Chap. 8. vers. 56. There is (*saieth he*) no day so properly *Christs*, as his *Birth-Day*, which may appear, if we set it in comparison with other dayes of most honourable note, as the day of his *Passion*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension*: for the day of his *Passion*, that was not so properly his, because two Thieves suffered with him at the same time, in the same place, after the same manner, *Luke 23. 32, 33.* Nor the day of his *Resurrection*, for as he rose from the dead, so did others, the same day, and went into the holy City, *Mat. 27. 52, 53.* Nor the day of his *Ascension*, for *Enoch* and *Elias*, had their *Ascension* too, and long before his, *Gen. 5. 24. 2 Kings 2. 11.* But his *Birth-Day* was his without a fellow: None ever so borne, none ever born such; and therefore (as no *Festivity* is besides it) it is attended as *Christ* himselfe, with an Apostolicall retinue of *Holi-dayes*.

What we have written may be sufficient to satisfie

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

Christian Ca-
veat.

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

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

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

2. The Shepherds were then in the fields, watching
ing

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

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

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

The Scripture saith as much, *Lev.* 23. 5. 6. 10. 11. For in regard that a sheafe of the first fruits of Harvest, was yearly offered on the second day after the Passeover, which was the 16. day of *Abib*, and is with us the 27. of *March* (which 27 according to the true account falls upon the 15. of our *March*) it must necessarily follow, that the temperature of
the

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the more in *December* in the Land of *Canaan*, is answerable to our *May*, if not *June*; the season then of the year, could no way hinder, either the execution of *Cæsars* Decree, or the Shepherds being in the Fields, nor our Saviours going into the River *Jordan*, in *December*. What they urge out of the first of *Luke*, concerning the Conception of *John*, that it should be in the beginning of *July*, because the Course of *Abiab*, *Zacharies* course, the eighth course of the Priests, fell in the end of *June*, and that Course lasted a fortnight, is not onely disclaimed by *Berosus*, their Patron, who not fitting to be a Chronologer, *lib. 4. c. 2.* confesseth, *We doe neither understand when the Course of Zacharias was, nor how long it lasted*; But proves them to be naturall Bruit-beasts that cannot number; we desire no better Argument then this Computation to prove the very day, for let them compute from the third day of the moneth *Adar*, and the sixth year of *Darius*, *Ezra 6. 15.* When the Priests were set in their divisions, and their courses began, being in all twenty four, and every Course continuing one whole week, till the year of the world, wherein *John* was conceived, and they shall find that *Zacharies* Course fell in *September*, and then that by their owne Argument, *Johns* Conception must be in that month, then in the sixth moneth after Christs, *Luke 1. 26. &c.* which is *March*; then let them goe to any Teaming Sister, and she will assure them, that Christ (according to Scripture, and the common course of women) must be borne in *December*.

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

Clement

Clemens of Alexandria, saith that in his dayes there was a question about the certainty of Christs Birth? Men in these dayes question both his *God-head*, and *Man-hood*, *Quid ergo?* Is he therefore neither God nor Man?

Strom. lib. 1.

But *Cyrril* saith, that the *Church of Alexandria*, celebrated at first, the Birth-day of *John the Baptist*, on the twenty third day of *Aprill*, in his *Homilies*, or twelve *Books on John*, and therefore Christ must be borne in *Q^uatern.*

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

But grant, the words of the forged *Cyrril* were true, and that they kept *Johns Birth-day*, *Aprill 23.* it seems they fell from the observation, and found themselves in an error, and judged the *Greek* and *Latine Churches*

es to be in the right, who kept it annually and constantly on the twenty fourth of *June*, as *Causabon* confesseth. ¶ *ad*. I would they would leave their errours likewise.

May be they would, but that *Epiphanius* (say they) saith, that Christ was borne the fifth of *January*; take heed, that was in winter, and one of the twelve dayes, I doubt you will turne small Feasts, but let me tell you, as for lyars, we had rather have their room then their company; and you belie your Father, for *Epiphanius* who if he were alive, would put you in the Catalogue of his Hereticks, doth indeed twice affirm, that Christ was borne in the 37. year of the first *Herod*, the Son of *Antipater*, which was the forty second year of *Augustus Caesar*, as you may read, *lib. 1. cont. heres. har. 20. lib. 3. har. 78.* But not a word, either of the moneth, nor day of the moneth.

De ratione
tempor: c. 46.

Will you yield yet? No, for our Countrey-man *Bede* tells us, that for certaine the *Indictions* began on the 24. of *September*, and that our Lord vvas borne (*Indictione quarta ineunte*) vwhen the fourth *Indiction* began, therefore Christ vvas borne on the 24. of *September*. Help Neighbours! Borne in *October*, saith *Cyrill*, in *January*, saith *Epiphanius*, and now in *September*, saith *Bede*, and all lies; for the two former said no such matter, neither the last, for our Countreyman doth not say that Christ vvas borne vwhen the fourth *Indiction* began, but in the fourth, and an *Indiction*, according to *Bachelzerus*, being the space of fifteen years, Christ might very well be borne in the beginning of the *Indiction*, though he vvas borne three moneths after the first day thereof.

Well

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

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

But 2. The Church of *England* doth not celebrate the true day of *Christs* Birth, nor the Churches beyond Sea, because the *Gregorian account* errs almost two dayes, and the *Julian* more then twelve, therefore the Church of *England* errs?

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

L. days

Ratio 1^a

Ratio 2^a

Ifag. Chron.
c. 8.

AN. 1601. 2.
101. 2. 1.

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dayes Feast, kept after the Passeeover.

Chap. 9.

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

Objection 3.

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

Sirs, give over for shame, all these are as false as the Almanack, for our word *Yule* is from the Norman word *Nule*, or *Ule*, which signifies new, the sheafe was not offered to *Ceres* in *December*, nor the Hymne in her praise, but at her owne Feast, which was in *Aprill*, as *Ovid* avers, *Fastor lib.* 4. Nor did the *Saturnalia*, which lasted for three dayes, begin on the 25. of *December*, but on the 27. as *Macrobius* doth witnesse; but suppose the contrary; May not Christians set a day a part to Gods service, in that month that Heathens made Feasts to their *Idolls*? If so, we must

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must bid adieu to all publick services, and serve your humours, and conclude, that the *Jewes* did very well to keep their *Feast* of *Tabernacles*, according to Gods command, in the moneth of *September*, seeing the *Heathens* kept their *Bacchanalia*, after the same manner, at the same time? So *Plutarch*. *Symposiacis.*

But lastly, your Feasting doth offend us: Your *Plum pottage*, and *Mirced-Pies*, doe offend our tast and smell; your *Bayes* and *Rosemary*, *Hollie*, and *Ivie*, *Box*, and *Privet*, with all your green *Strewings*, and trimming your Churches, and houses, doe offend our pure eyes, and your *Carrolls* and songs doe offend our sanctified ears.

Alas Brethren, we cannot help it; we must not offend God, in striving not to offend you; it is not we that give, but you that take; and we may not neglect our duty, to please your humours.

We keep the day Festively, we ought to doe it, as we have shewne already, we have warrant for it, *Esth.* 9. 22. from the *Jewes* practise, who for a lesse blessing, kept the 14. and 15. of *Adar* yearly, as the dayes wherein the *Jewes* rested, and the moneth which was turned unto them, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day; that they should make them dayes of Feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and of gifts to the poor. And likewise from the command of *Nehemiah*, and *Ezra*, in the like case; This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourne not, nor weep; goe your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is our strength. Tell me, did ever the Church

Nehem. 8.
9, 10.

of *England* celebrate this day, in any other manner then the *Jewes* were commanded to doe those? Did you ever know any yule game suffered thereupon? Was it not as religiously and devoutly kept, by hearing the word, receiving the Sacrament, offering up the Sacrifice of thanksgiving for Christs comming into the world, and relieving his poor members, as ever you did any Sabbath-day in the year? Nay, I will affirme that you never heard any Harp or Violl in our Feasts upon that day (as the *Jewes* had) but our chiefe work was to remember, as we ought, the *work of the Lord* thereupon, and the *operation of his hands*, that as this day the *Word was made flesh*, and *dwelt among us*, and we saw his glory, as the glory of the *only begotten Sonne of God*, upon the morning of this day, breaking out in darknesse, he making the day his owne, by being borne thereupon, we will therefore be glad, and rejoyce in it.

Isa. 5. 12.

John 1.

Psal. 118. 24.

Plum-pottage, and
Minc'd Pies.

As for our *Plum-pottage*, and *Minc'd-Pies*, stand off, and doe not let them trouble you, we dare eat, making no question for conscience sake, because our stomachs are strengthened by that forecited piece of invitation, *Nehem. 8. 10. Eat the fat, and drinke the sweet*. And Brethren, though you will not put your Spoons into our Platter, yet give me leave to reach a Spoon-full of instruction to your souls, from our Pie and Potage, that you would endeavour to joine with us in the maine of our Feasting, which is, *to taste and see how sweet our Lord Jesus is*. Doe not you cry out *praphane* now, if you doe, *St. Paul* will stop your mouth, who makes the same use of, and raiseth the like instruction from, the unleavened Bread that the *Jewes*

Jewes used in the Passeover; 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened, for even Christ our Passeover is crucified for us: Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, nor the leaven of malice and wickednesse, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Behold two table doctrines, one of Easter, the other of Christmas, both raised from the viands.

As for our Baies and Rosemary, and other green trimmings of our Churches, and houses, truly Brethren, we doe, and may doe it, by the same warrant that the Israelites in the Feast of Tabernacles, Neh. 8. 16. did goe out to the Mountaine, and fetcht Olive, Myrtle, and Palme branches, to adorne their Booths withall, they are as significant as these; their Booths so trimmed up with those Branches, and built in the streets, according to Gods command, signified, and put them in minde, that they were Pilgrims in the Wildernesse, and that their Fathers dwelt in Tabernacles: So as our meat vvhich is more choice then at other times, puts us in mind on that day of Christs sinlesse humanity, and our strong drink of his spirituall consolation: So our Churches and Houses, decked vvith Baies and Rosemary, Hollie, and Ivie, and other Plants vvich are alvvayes green, Winter and Summer, signifie, and put us in minde of his Dietty, that the Child that novv vvvas borne, vvvas God and Man, should spring up like a tender plant, should alvvayes be green and flourishing, and live for evermore. Therefore thus the Spouse entertains her Beloved, vvwhose Bed is alvvayes green, Cant. 1. 16. and she vvves Jesus Christ to be yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever.

Baies, and
Rosemary.

As

Carrols.

Deut. 32.

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

Conclusion.

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

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

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Sic docent Sacrae literæ; sic Patres: Sic nostri seculi pii doctores: Sic vetus Consuetudo, atq; Usus in omnibus, & omnium locorum, & Gentium ecclesiis receptus, & approbatus confirmat (Addo) Sic deniq; Miracula.

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



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

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

Opus Dei in Die suo.

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

Amen, HALLELUJAH.