

Chapter 1

The Annunciation and Conception, firft of the Precurfour: 26. and fix months after, of Chrift alfo him felf. 39. The Vifitation of our Ladie, where both the mothers doe Prophecie. 57. The Natiuitie and Circumcifion of the Precurfour, where his father doth prophecie. 80. The Precurfour is from a child an Eremite.

Becaufe many haue gone about to compile a Narration of the things that haue been accomplifhed among vs; ² according as they haue deliuered vnto vs, who from the beginning them felues faw and were Miniſters of the Word; ³ it feemed good alfo vnto me ⁴ hauing, diligently attained to al things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, Good Theophilus, ⁴ that thou maiſt know the veritie of thoſe wordes wherof thou haſt been inſtructed.

Act. 1, 1.

⁵ There was in the daies of Herod the King of Iewrie, a certaine Prieſt named Zacharie, of the courſe of Abia; & his wife of the daughter of Aaron, and her name Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both ¹iuſt before God, walking ¹in al the commandements ¹and iuſtifications of our Lord without blame, ⁷ and they had no ſonne: for that Elizabeth was barren, and both were wel ſtriken in their daies. ⁸ And it came to paſſe, when he executed the prieſtly function in the order of his courſe before God, ⁹ according to the cuſtome of the Prieſtly function, he went forth by lot to offer incenſe, entring into the Temple of our Lord; ¹⁰ and al the multitude of the People was ^apraying without at the houre of the incenſe. ¹¹ And there appeared to him an Angel of our Lord, ſtanding on the right hand of the Altar of incenſe. ¹² And Zacharie was troubled, feeling him; and feare fel vpon him. ¹³ But the Angel ſaid to him: Feare

1. Par. 24, 10.

Exo. 3, 17.

Leu. 16, 16.

The firſt part of the Infancie both of the Precurfour and of Chriſt himſelf.

^a We ſee here that the Prieſt did his dutie within, the People in the meane time praying without; and that the Prieſts functions did profit them, though they neither heard nor ſaw his doings.

not Zacharie, for thy praier is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth fhall beare thee a fonne and thou fhalt cal his name Iohn: ¹⁴ and thou fhalt haue ^aioy and exultation, and many fhall reioyce in his natiuitie. ¹⁵ For he fhall be great before our Lord; ^a)and wine and ficer he fhall not drinke; and he fhall be replenifhed with the Holy Ghofteuen from his mothers womb. ¹⁶ And he fhall conuert many of the children of Ifrael to the Lord their God.

Mal. 4, 6. ¹⁷ And he fhall goe before him in the fpirit and vertue of Elias; that he may conuert the harts of the Fathers vnto the children, and the incredulous to the wifedom of the iuft, to prepare vnto the Lord a perfect People. ¹⁸ And Zacharie faid to the Angel: Whereby fhall I know this? for I am old; and my wife is wel ftricken in her daies.

Mt. 11, 14. ¹⁹ And the Angel anfwering faid to him: I am Gabriel that affift before God; and am fent to fpeake to thee, and to Euangelize thefe things to thee. ²⁰ And behold, ^b)thou fhalt be dumme, and fhalt not be able to fpeake vntil the day wherein thefe things fhall be done; for becaufe thou haft not beleued my wordes, which fhall be fulfilled in their time. ²¹ And the People was expecting Zacharie; and they marueled that he made tariance in the Temple. ²² And comming forth he could not fpeake to them, and they knew that he had feen a vifion in the Temple. And he made fignes to them, and remained dumme. ²³ And it came to paffe, after the daies of his office were expired, ^a)he departed into his houfe. ²⁴ And after thefe daies Elizabeth his wife conceaued; and hid herfelf foue months, faying: ²⁵ For thus hath our Lord done to me in the daies wherein he had refpect to take away my reproch among men.

Mt. 1, 18. ²⁶ And in the fixt month, the Angel Gabriel was fent of God into a citie of Galilee, called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a Virgin efpoufed to a man whose name was Iofeph, of the houfe of Dauid; and the Virgins name was MARIE.

^a This abftinence foretold and prefcribed by the Angel, fheweth that it is a worthie thing, and an act of religion in S. Iohn, as it was in the Nazarites.

^b Zacharie punished for doubting of the Angels word.

²⁸ And the Angel being entred in, faid vnto her: ♪**HAILE** *ful of grace, our Lord is with thee: Bleffed art thou among women.* ²⁹ Who hauing heard, was troubled at his faying, and thought what manner of falutation this fhould be. ³⁰ And the Angel faid to her: Feare not MARIE, for thou haft found grace with God. ³¹ Behold thou fhalt conceaue in thy womb, and fhalt beare a Sonne; and thou fhalt cal his name IESVS. ³² He fhall be great, and fhall be called the Sonne of the moft High, and our Lord God fhall giue him the feat of Dauid his Father: ³³ and he fhall reigne in the houle of Iacob for euer, and of his Kingdom there fhall be no end. ³⁴ And MARIE faid to the Angel: ^a)How fhall this be done, ♪because I know not man? ³⁵ And the Angel anfwering, faid to her: The Holy Ghofte fhall come vpon thee, and the power of the moft High fhall ouerfhadow thee. And therfore alfo that which of thee fhall be borne Holy, fhall be called the Sonne of God. ³⁶ And behold ♪Elizabeth thy cofin, she alfo hath conceaued a Sonne in her old age; and this month, is the fixt to her that is called barren; ³⁷ becaufe there fhall not be impoffible with God any word. ³⁸ And MARIE faid, ^b)**BEHOLD** *the handmaid of our Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.* And the Angel departed from her.

³⁹ And MARIE rifing vp in thofe daies, went vnto the hil countrie with fpeed into a citie of Iuda. ⁴⁰ And she entred into the houle of Zacharie, and faluted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And it came to paffe; as Elizabeth heard the falutation of MARIE, the c)infant did leap in her womb. And Elizabeth was replenifhed with the Holy Ghofte: ⁴² and fhe cried out with a loud voice, and faid, ♪**BLESSED art thou among women, and Bleffed is the fruit of thy womb.** ⁴³ And whence is this to me, that the ♪mother of

The beginning of the AVE MARIE, See the reft v. 42.

Efa. 7, 14.

Dan. 7, 14, 27.

^a She doubted not of the thing as Zacharie, but enquired, of the meanes.

^b At this very moment when the B. Virgin gaue confent, fhe conceaued him perfect God and perfect man.

^c Iohn the Baptift being yet in his mothers wōb, reioyced & acknowledged the prefēce of Chrift and his mother.

my Lord doth come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold as the voice of thy falutation founded in mine eares, the infant in my womb did leap for ioy. ⁴⁵ And Bleffed is she that beleueed because those things shal be accomplished that were spoken to her by our Lord. ⁴⁶ And MARIE said:

MY OVLE doth magnifie our Lord:

Magnificat at
Euenfong.

⁴⁷ *And my fpirit hath reioyced in God my Sauour.*

⁴⁸ *Because he hath regarded the humilitie of his handmaid; for behold from hence forth ^aal Generations shal cal me Bleffed.*

⁴⁹ *Because he that is mightie hath done great things to me: and holy is his name.*

⁵⁰ *And his mercie from Generation vnto Generations, to them that feare him.*

⁵¹ *He hath shewed might in his arme: he hath disperfed the proud in the conceit of their hart.*

⁵² *He hath depofed the mightie from their feat, & hath exalted the humble.*

⁵³ *The hungrie he hath filled with good things: and the rich he hath fent away emptie.*

⁵⁴ *He hath receaued Ifrael his child, being mindful of his mercie,*

⁵⁵ *As he fpake to our Fathers, to Abraham and his feed for euer.*

⁵⁶ And MARIE taried with her about three months: and she returned into her houle.

⁵⁷ And Elizabeths ful time was come to be deliuered; and she bare a Sonne. ⁵⁸ And her neighbours and kinsfolke heard that our Lord did magnifie his mercie with her, and they did congratulate her. ⁵⁹ And it came to paffe; on the eight day they came to circumcife the child, and they called him by his fathers name Zacharie. ⁶⁰ And his mother anfwering, said: Not fo, but he shal be called Iohn. ⁶¹ And they said to her, That there is none in thy kinred that is called by this name. ⁶² And they made signes to his father, what he would haue him

^a Haue the Proteftāts had alwaies Generations to fulfil this prophecie? or doe they cal her Bleffed, that derogate what they can from her graces, bleffings and al her honour?

called. ⁶³ And demanding a writing table, he wrote, faying: *John is his name. And they al marueled.* ⁶⁴ And forthwith his mouth was opened, and his tongue, and he fpake bleffing God. ⁶⁵ And feare came vpon al their neighbours; and al thefe things were bruited ouer al the hil-countrie of Iewrie: ⁶⁶ and al that had heard, laid them vp in their hart, faying: What an one, trow ye, fhall this child be? For the hand of our Lord was with him. ⁶⁷ And Zacharie his father was replenifhed with the Holy Ghof; and he prophecied, faying:

⁶⁸ *BLESSED BE OVR LORD God of Ifrael: becaufe he hath vifited and wrought the redemption of his People:*

Benedictus at
Laudes.

⁶⁹ *And hath erected the horne of faluation to vs, in the houle of Dauid his feruant.*

⁷⁰ *As he fpake by the mouth of his holy Prophets, that are from the beginning:*

⁷¹ *Saluation from our enemies, and from the hand of al that hate vs:*

⁷² *To worke mercie with our Father; and to remember his holy Teftament,*

Gen. 22, 6. ⁷³ *The oth which he fware to Abraham our father, ⁷⁴ that he would giue to vs.*

That without feare being deliuered from the hand of our enemies, we may ferue him,

⁷⁴ *In holines and iuftice before him, al our daies.*

Mal. 3, 1. ⁷⁵ *And thou child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Higheft: for thou shalt goe before the face of our Lord to prepare his waies.*

⁷⁶ *To giue knowledge of faluation to his People, vnto remiffion of their finnes,*

Zac. 3, 9. ⁷⁷ *Through the bowels of the mercie of our God, in which the Orient, from on high, hath vifited vs.*

Mal. 4, 2. ⁷⁸ *To illuminate them that fit in darkenes, and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace.*

79 And the child grew, and was strengthened in spirit, and was ^ain the deserts vntil the day of his manifestation to Ifrael.

ANNOTATIONS

3 Hauing diligently attained) Hereby we see, that though the Holy Ghost ruled the penne of holy Writers that they might not erre, yet did they vse humane meanes to search out and find the truth of the things they wrote of. Euen so doe Councils, and the Prefident of them, Gods Vicar, discusse and examine all causes by humane meanes, the assistance of the Holy Ghost concurring and directing them into all truth, according to Christs promise *Io. 16, 13*: as in the very first Council of the Apostles then felues at Hierusalem is manifest. *Act. 15. 7. and 28*. Againe here we haue a familiar preface of the Authour as to his friend or to euery godly Reader (signified by Theophilus) concerning the cause and purpose & manner of his writing, and yet the very same is confessed Scripture, with the whole booke following. Maruel not then if the Authour of the second booke of the Machabees vse the like humane speeches both at the beginning and in the later end; neither doe thou therefore reiect the booke for no Scripture, as our Heretikes doe; or not thinke him a sacred Writer.

Sacred Writers & holy Councils.

The second booke of the Machabees.

6 Iust before God) Against the Heretikes of this time, here it is euident that holy men be iust, not only by the estimation of men, but in deed and before God.

6 In all the commandements) Three things to be noted directly against the Heretikes of our time. first, that good men doe keepe all Gods commandements: which (they say) are impossible to be kept. Againe, that men be iustified not by only imputation of Christs iustice, nor by faith alone, but by walking in the commandements. Againe, that the keeping and doing of the commandements is properly our iustification.

True iustification by obseruing the commandements.

δικαιώματα

6 Iustifications) This word is so vsual in the Scriptures (namely in the *Psal. 118*) to signifie the commandements of God, because the keeping of them is iustificatio, and the Greeke is alwaies so fully correspondent to the same, that the Heretikes in this place (otherwise pretending to esteeme much of the Greeke) blush not to say, that they auoid this word of purpose against the iustification of the Papists. And therefore one useth Tullies word forfooth, in Latin *constituta*: and his scholars in their English Bibles say, *Ordinances*.

Corrupt translation of Heretikes.

Beza in Annot.
no. Text. 1556.

^a Marke that he was a voluntarie Eremite, and chose to be solitarie from a child, til he was to preach to the People, in so much that antiquitie counted him the first Eremite. *Hiero. in vit. Pauli*.

14 Ioy and exultation) This was fulfilled, not only when he was borne, but now also through the whole Church for ever, in ioyful celebrating of his Natiuitie.

23 He departed) In the old Law (faith S. Hierom) they that offered Hostes for the People, were not only not in their houses, but were purified for the time, being separated from their wives, and they drank neither wine nor any strong drink, which are wont to provoke concupiscence. Much more the Priests of the new Law that must always offer Sacrifices, must always be free from matrimony. *Li. 1. c. 6. 19. adu. Iovin. and ep. 50. c. 3.* See *S. Ambrose in 1. Tim. 3.* And therefore if there were any religion in Calvins Communion, they would at the least give as much reverence in this point, as they in the old Law did to their Sacrifices, and to the loaves of proposition, *1. Reg. 21.*

The continence of Priests.

Ministers not so perfect as the Priests of the old law.

Often saying of the Ave Marie.

28 Haile ful of grace) Holy Church and all true Christian men do much and often use these words brought from Heaven by the Archangel, as well to the honour of Christ and our B. Lady, as also for that they were the words of the first glad tidings of Christ's Incarnation & our Salvation by the same; and be the very abridgement and summe of the whole Gospel. In so much that the Greeke Church used it daily in the Masse.

Liturg. S. Iacobi & Chrys.

28 Full of grace) Note the excellent prerogatives of our B. Lady, and abhor those Hereticks which make her no better than other vulgar women, and therefore to take from her fulness of grace, they say here *Haile freely beloved*, contrary to all signification of the Greeke word, which is at the least, *endued with grace*, as S. Paul saith it *Ephes. 1.* by S. Chrysostom's interpretation: or rather *ful of grace*, as both Greeke and Latin Fathers have always here understood it, and the Latines also read it, namely S. Ambrose thus, *well is she only called full of grace, who only obtained the grace, which no other woman deserved, to be replenished with the author of grace.* And if they did as well know the nature of these kind of Greeke words, as they would seem very skillful, they might easily observe that they signify fulness, as when they selves translate the like word (*Luc. 16. 20.*) full of fores Beza, *ulcerofus*.

Corrupt translation of Hereticks.

κεχαριτωμένη

ἐχαρίτωσε

S. Athanasius de S. Deip. S. Ephrem. in orat. de laud. B. Virg. Amb. in 1. Lu. l. 2. Hier. ep. 140. in exp. Pf. 44.

ἡλκωμένος

34 I know not man) These words declare (faith S. Augustine) that she had now vowed virginity to God. For otherwise neither would she say, *How shall this be done?* nor have added, *because I know not man.* Yea if she had said only the first words, *how shall this be done?* it is evident that she would not have asked such a question, how a woman should bear a sonne promised her, if she had married meaning to have carnal copulation *c. 4. de Virg.* As if he should say, If she might have known a man and so have had a child, she would never have asked, *How shall this be done?* but because that ordinary way was excluded by her vow of virginity, therefore she asketh, *How?* And in asking, *How?* She plainly declareth that she might not have a child by knowing man, because of her vow. See *S. Grego. Nyssene de sancta Christi Natiuitate.*

Our B. Lady vowed virginity.

36 Elizabeth thy cofin) By this that Elizabeth and our Lady were cofins, the one of the Tribe of Leui the other of Iuda, is gathered that Chrift came of both Tribes, Iuda and Leui, of the Kings and the Priefts himfelf both a King & a Prieft, and the Anointed (to wit) by grace fpiritually, as they were with oile materially and corporally. *Auguft. li. 2. de Confenf. Euang. c. 1.*

Chrift came of both Tribes, Iude and Leui.

42 Bleffed art thou) At the very hearing of our Ladies voice, the infant and fhe were replenifhed with the Holy Ghoft, and fhe fang praifes not only to Chrift, but for his fake to our B. Lady, calling her Bleffed and her fruit Bleffed, as the Church doeth alfo by her words and example in the AVE MARIE.

The Bleffed Virgin Marie.

43 Mother of my Lord) Elizabeth being an exceeding iuft and Bleffed woman, yet the worthines of Gods mother doth fo far excel her and al other women, as the great light the litle ftarres. *Hiero. Praef. in Sophon.*

Her excellēcie.

48 Shal cal me Bleffed) This Prophecie is fulfilled, when the Church keepeth her Feftiual daies, & when the Faithful in al Generations fay the Aue Marie, and other holy Anthems of our Lady. And therfore the Caluiniftes are not among thofe Generations which cal our Lady Bleffed.

Her honour in al the world.

63 Iohn is his name) We fee that names are of fignification and importance, God him felf changing or giuing names in both Teftaments; as, Abraham, Ifrael, Peter, and the principal of al others, IESVS; and here Iohn, which fignifieth, Gods grace or mercie, or, God wil haue mercie. For he was the Precurfour and Prophet of the mercie and grace that enfued by CHRIST IESVS. Note alfo that as then in Circumcifion, fo now in Baptifme (which anfwereth therevnto) names are giuē. And as we fee here & in al the old Teftamēt, great refpect was had of names: fo we muft beware of ftrange, profane, & fecular names (now a daies too common) & rather according to the Catechifme of the holy Council of Trent, take names of Saints and holy men, that may put vs in mind of their vertues.

Myfterie and fignification in names.

c. de Bap. in fine.

What names to be giuen in Baptifme.

74 Iuftice before him) Here alfo we fee that we may haue true iuftice, not only in the fight of men, or by the imputation of God, but indeed before him and in his fight and that the comming of Chrift was to giue men fuch iuftice.

True iuftice, not imputatiue.

77 The Orient) Maruel not if Heretikes countrole the old authentical tranflation, as though it differed from the Greeke: wheras here they make fuch a doe to countrole not only al the Greek Interpreters of the old Teftament, but alfo S. Luke him felf, for the word ἀνατολή, as differing from the Hebrew.

The Heretikes countrole both Greeke and Latin text.

Beza.