

The martir- dome of K. Edmund in North- tolke.

Some say that the king flying to Thetford, there pitched a field with the Danes, but the Danes prevailing, the good king from thence did flee to the Castle of Halidon about mentioned: where he being pursued of the Danes was there taken, and at length being bounde to a stake, there, of the raging Danes was shot to death. And thus much to the good kings.

A Questio, Whether kings which made themselves Monkes did well in so doing of not.

Now as concerning those kings which made themselves Monks (which in number be vij. or viij.) although the example be rare & straunge, and much commended of the chroniclers of that time yet I cannot rashly assent to their commendation, albeit the case thereof is no matter of our history. First in altering their estate from kings to monkes, if they did it to finde more ease, and lesse trouble thereby: I see not howe that excuse standeth with the office of a good man, to change his publicke vocation, for respect of private comodity. If feare of losse by a danger did drive them therunto what praise and commendation they deserve, in so doing let the monkish histories iudge what they list: we seemeth so much prayse as they deserve in providing their owne safetie, so much they deserve againe to be discommended in forsaking the common weal. If they did it (as most like it is) for holines sake, thinking in that kinde of life to serve and please God better: or to merite more toward their saluacion than in the estate of a king, therein they were far deceaued: not knowing that the saluacion which cometh of God, is to be measured & esteemed, not by mans merits, or by any perfection of life, or by difference of any vocation more of one than another, but only by the free grace of the gospel, which freely iustifieth all them, that faithfully beleue in Christ Iesu. But were it to be saide against peraduenture, in the solitary life of Monkery, be fewer occasions of euils, than in kings courses, wherefore that life serueth more to holines, & more is to be preferred than the other. To this I answer, to auoid the occasions of euill is good where strength lacketh to resist. But otherwise, where duety & charge bindeth to tary, there to auoide the occasions of euill, where rather they are to be resisted: rather declareth a weakenes of the man, than serueth any prayse. As it is truly saide of Tullie: Out of Asia, saith he, to hinc, a good life, is no godanerity: but in Asia where so great occasions of euils abound, there to liue a good man that is praiseworthy. With the like reason I may iudge if a man be called to be a king, there not to change the vocation for avoiding of occasions; but rather to resist occasions, & to keepe his vocation, declareth a good & perfect man. But of these dynasties hitherto sufficient.

Answer. Where vocation by death to tary there nor to flye but to resist the occasions of euill, it is a good mans part.

Four per- secutions in Brittain before the coming of Austen into Eng- land.

These things now thus premised, concerning the order & raigne of kings, as is aboue prefixed: consequently it remaineth to enter the tractation of such things, as in the time and raigne of the foresaide kings happened in the Church: first putting the Reader againe in minde of the former persecutions within the realme, partly before touched in the time of the Brittain kings, which speciall were three or foure before the coming of Austen into Englande.

The persecu- tion of Dioclesian about the year of our Lord, 310. The persecu- tion of Gnauius and Melga, The perfec- tion of Hengist in Brittain. The fourth destruction of Christen fayth in Brittain by Gurmundus, an 595. This Gurmundus, as some stories record, leaving hys kingdome at home to hys brother sayd he would possesse no kingdome, but which he should win with his sword

1. The first was vnder Dioclesian, and that not onely in Englande, but generally throughout all the Romaine Monarchie, as is aboue specified. In this persecution Albanus, Iulius, Aaron, with a great number more of other good Christian Brittaines, were martyred for Christs name.

2. The seconde persecution or destruction of Christian fayth, was by the invading of Gnauius and Melga, whereof, the first was captaine of the Hunnes, the other of the Scythians. These two tyrantes, after the cruell slaughter of Ursula, and other, 11000 noble virgines, made their roade into Brittain hearyng the same to be destitute of strength of men. At what time they made miserable murder of Christs Saints, spoiling & wasting Churches, without mercy either of women or children, sparing none.

3. The third persecution came by Hengist, and the Saxons: who likewise destroyed and wasted the christen congregations within the lande, like raging wolves sleepeing vpon the sheepe, & spilling the blood of Christians, til Aethelric Ambrosius came, and restozed againe the Churches destroyed.

4. The fourth destruction of Christen fayth & Religion was by Gurmundus a pagan king of the Africanes: who sojnyng in league with the Saxons, wrought much greuaunce to the christians of the land. In so much that Theonus Bishop of London, and Thadioceus Bishop of Yorke, with the rest of the people so many as were left, hauing no place wherin to remaine with safety, did flee some to Corn wall, and some to the mountaines of waile: about the yere of our Lord 550, and this persecution remained to the tyme of Ethelberd king of Kent, an. 589.

In the raigne of this Ethelberd, which was then the 5,

king of Kent, the faith of Christ was first receaued of the Saxons or Englishmen, by the means of Gregory Bishop of Rome, in maner and order as here followeth, out of old histories collected and recozded.

First then to ioyne the order of our history together: The Church first receiued of king Lucius, embour in Brittain till this time, neare vpon the season of CCC. yeares and odde: when by Gurmundus Africanus, (as is saide) syghting wyth the Saxons against the Byrtaynes, it was neare extinct in all the land, during the space about fortye foure yeares. So that the first springing of Christs Gospell in thys land, was an. 180. The coming of the Saxons was, an. 449. or an. 469. The coming of Austen, was an. 596. From the first entring in of the Saxons to their compleat conquest, and the driving out of the Byrtaynes (which was about the latter tyme of Gadowalader) were 240. yeares. In summe from Christ to Lucius were, 180. yeares. The continuance of the gospell fro Lucius to the entring of the Saxons was 302. yeares. The decay of the same to the entring of Austen, was, 143. yeares which being added together make from Lucius to Austen, 445. from Christ to Austen they make 588. yeares. In this yere then, 598. Austen being sent from Gregory came into Englande: the occasion wherupon Gregory sent him hether was this.

King Lucius dyed 428 before the coming of Austen.

The computation of tymes concerning the continuance and decay of Christs Gospell betwene the Brittaines and the Saxons:

Anno. 598.

In the daies of Pelagius Bishop of Rome, Gregory chauncing to see certayne chylidren in the market place of Rome (brought thither to be sold out of Englande) being faire and beautifull of visage, demanded out of what coltrye they were: and vnderstanding they were Heathenly out of Englande, lamented the case of y land being so beautifull and Angelicall, so to be subiecte vnder the sinne of darkness. And asking moreouer out of what prouince they were it was answered, out of Deyra a part of Northampton: wherof as it is to be thought, that which we now call Deyrham taketh his name. When he alluding to the name of Deyra, these people (saith he) are to be deliuered de Deira, which is from Gods wrath, whosoever vnderstanding the kings name of that prouince is be Alle (about mentioned) alluding likewise to his name: there (saith he) ought Alleuia to be song to the liuing God. wherupon being moued and desirous to go and helpe the conversion of that country, was not permitted of Pelagius and the Romanes for that time to accomplish his desire. But afterwarde being Bishop himselfe next after Pelagius, he sent thither the foresaide Austen with other preachers nere about to the number of xl. But by the waye, howe it happened I cannot saye: As Austen with his company were passing in the y journey, such a sodaine feare entred in their hearts (that as Antonius saith) they returned all. Other wyte that Austen was sent backe to Gregory againe, to reueale them of that viage so dangerous and vncertaine, amongst such a barbarous people: whose language neither they knewe, nor whose rudenes they were able to resist. The Gregory wyth pitye perswasions confirming and comfortyng him, sent him againe with letters both to the Bishop of Arelensis, willing him to helpe and aide the said Austen, and his company in all whatsoeuer his neede required. Also other letters be directed by the foresaid Austen, vnto his fellowes, exhortyng them to go forward boldly in the Lords work, as by the tenour of the said Epistle here following maye appeare.

Beda Polychronicon, li. 5. ca. 8. G. Malesburichus de regib. Henr. Huntington lib 3. Fabianus part. 5. cap. 119. Liber bibliothecae tornalenfis.

Deyrham in Northumbria land.

Episcopus Arelensis.

Gregorius seruus seruorum Dei, seruis Domini nostri. Quia melius fuerat bona non incipere, quam ab his quae cepta sunt cogitatione retorsum redire, &c. In English. Gregory the seruaunt of Gods seruaunts, to the seruaunts of the Lord. Forasmuch as it is better not to take good things in hande, then after they be begon, to thinke to reuolt backe from the same againe therefore now you may not nor cannot (deare children) but with all seruent study and labor, must needs go forward in that good busines, which through the helpe of God you haue well begunne. Neither let the labor of your journey, nor the slanderous tongues of men appalle you, but that with all instance and seruency yee proceede, and accomplish the thing which the Lord hath ordeined you to take in hande: knowing that your great trauell shalbe recompensed with rewarde of greater glorye hereafter to come. Therefore as we sende here Austen to you againe, whom also we haue ordeined to be your gouernour, so doe you humblye obey him in all things, knowing that it shall be profitable so for your soules, whatsoeuer at his admonition yee shall doe. Almighty God with his grace defend you and graunt me to see in the eternal country the fruite of your labour, that although I can not labour as I woulde wyth you, yet I may be found partaker of your retribution, for that my will is good to labour in the same fellowship with you together. The Lord God keepe you safe, most deare and welbeloued children. Dated the x before the Calendes

Es Henr. Huntington lib 3. The Epistle of Gregory to them whiche went to preach in Englande.

The Bishop of Rome calleth the Emperours hys Lord.