

Subjects in the English tongue.

Moreouer, toward the poore and needie, his pittie & tendernes was such, being notwithstanding of so highe & princely calling: that vpon a time being then Easter day, he sitting with the saide Aidanus at meate and serued after the maner of kings in siluer, there cometh to him one of the seruantes bringing him word, that there was a great multitude of poore people sitting in the streete, which desired some almes of the king. Hee hearing this, commaundeth not only the meate prepared for his owne table to be caried vnto them, but also taking a Siluer platter whiche stode before him, brake it in peeces and sent it among the: And so relieved his poore subiectes, not only with y meate of his table, but with his dishes also. Aidanus the Bishop seing this and maruiling therat, taketh him by the hand, wishing and praying in this wise. This hand, sayth he, I pray God may continue and neuer putrefie, what the stories say moze concerning this hand of Oswald, I cuted not to medle farther then simple, true, and due probalitie will beare me out. In those dayes and partly by the means of the said Oswald Kynigillus king of the West Saxons was conuerted to Christes faith, especially through the godly laboz of Berinus which was sent by Pope Honorius to preach in England, and was then made Bishop of Dorchester. To whom Quicelinus brother of Kynigillus after he had also receiued baptisme of the said Berinus gaue to him y sayd Erie to make there his sea. And as Guydo witnesseth the said Quicelinus gaue after to the Bishop of Winchester, seauen myles compasse of land, to builde there the Bishops sea, the which was accomplished and finished Kenwalkus hys sonne.

Of this Berinus Malmesbery, Polychronicon, with dyuers other writers do report, athing straunge and myzacious which if it be a fable as no doubt it is, I cannot but maruel that so many authoys so constantly agree in reporting and affirming the same. The matter is this: this Berinus being sent as is said, by Honorius to preach in England, and there to preach the Gospell, where the name of Christ was neuer heard. Thus he setting forward in his iourney passeth through France, and so to the sea side, where hee found a passage ready, and the wilde serued so faire, that he was called vpon in such hast, that he had no leysure to remember himselfe to take all things with him, which hee had to carie. At length as he was on the sea sailing and almost in the middle course of his passage, remembered himselfe of a certaine relique left behinde him for hast: which Honorius had giuen him at his comming out. Malmesberienus calleth it Corporalia, Hifloria Tornalenfis calleth it Pallulam super quam Corpus Christi consecraret, which wee call a Corporas or such a like thing, and what eis enclosed with in it I can not tell. Here Berinus in great sorow coude not tell what to doe, if he should haue spoken to the Weather mariners, to turne their courde backe againe, they would haue mocked him, and it had bin in vaine. Wherefoze as y stories write, he boldly stepped into the Sea, and walkeing on foote back again, taketh to him that which was left behind, & so returneth to his company againe, hauing not one thied of his garments wet. Of his miracle, or whether I should cal it a fable rather, let the reader iudge thereof, as he thinketh, because it is not witten in the Scripture we are not bound to beleue it. But if it were true, it is then thought to be wrought of god not for any holmes in the man: or in the Corporas, but a speciall gifte for the conuersion of the heathen, for whose saluation God suffereth oft many wonders to be done. This Berinus being receiued in the ship againe with a great admiration of the Maryners, beyng therewith conuerted and Baptyed: was driuen at last by the weather, to the coast of the West Saxons, where Kynigillus and his brother Quicelinus aboue mentioned did raigne. which tye kings, the same time by y preaching of Berinus were conuerted, and made Christen men, with the people of the country, being before rude and barbarous. It happened the same time when the foresaid kings should bee christened, that Oswaldus (mentioned a litle before) king of Northumberland, was the present, and the same day married Kynigillus his daughter, and also was godfather to the king.

Thus Oswald after he had reigned ix. yeares in such holmes and perfectnes of life, as is aboue specified, was slayne at length in the field called Marfield, by wicked Penda, king of the Mercians, which Penda, at length after all his tyranny was ouercome and slaine by Oswy brother of Oswald, next king after Oswald of Northumberland, notwithstanding he had thye y people which Oswy had: this Penda being a Danim had iij. sonnes Wulfenus, Weda, and Egfridus. To this seconde sonne Weda, Oswy had before

time married his daughter, by consent of Penda hys father. The which Weda by helpe of Oswy was made King of Southmercia, the which Lordship is seuered from Northmercia by the ryuer of Trent. The same Weda moreouer, at what time he married the daughter of Oswy, promised to him that he would become a christen man, which thing he performed after the deathe of Penda his father, but afterward within iij. yeares of his reigne, he was by reason of his wife slaine: And after him the kingdome fell to Wulfenus the other brother, who beyng wedded to Ermenilda, daughter of Ercomber kyng of Kent, was shortly after christened, so that he is accounted the first christened king of Mercia. This Wulfenus conquered Kenwalcus King of Kent, and gat y yle of Wight, which after he gaue to Sigbert King of the East Angles, vpon condition he would be christened. And thus the East Angles, which before had expelled Mellitus their bishop, as is declared recovered againe the Christian faith vnder Sigbert their King, who by the means of the foresayd Wulfenus was reduced and Baptyed by Finanus the Bishop.

But to returne againe to Oswy, from whom we haue a litle digressed, of whom we shewed before how he succeeded after Oswald in the prouince of Bernicia, to whom also was ioyned Oswynus hys cousin, ouer the prouince of Deira, and therewith his fellow, Oswy, raigned the space of vij. yeres: this Oswyne was gentle, & liberal to his people and no lesse deuout toward God: who vpon a time had giuen to Aidanus the bishop aboue mentioned, a princely horse with the trappers, & al that appertained thereto: because he should not to much travel on foote but some tyme ease himselfe withall. Thus Aidanus the Scottishe Bishop as he was riding vpon his kingly horse, by the way meteth him a certaine poore man asking and crauing hys charite. Aidanus hauing nothing els to giue him: lighted down, and giueth to him his horse trapped and garnished as he was. The King vnderstanding this, & not contented therewith, as he was entering to dinner with the sayd Aidanus what ment you father Bishop, (sayd he) to giue away my horse I gaue you, vnto the begger? Had not I other horses in my stable that might haue serued him well enough, but you must giue awaye that which of purpose was pickt out for you among the chiefest? To whome the Bishop made answer againe saying or rather rebuking the king, what be these wordes (O king saide he) that you speake? why let you more price by an horse, which is but the sale of an horse, then you do by him which is the sonne of Mary, yea which is the sonne of God? He said but thys when the king forthwith vngirding his sword set about him (as he was then newly come in from hunting) falleth downe at the feete of the Bishop, desiring him to forgiue him that, and he would neuer after speake word to him, for any treasure he should afterward giue away of his. The Bishop seing the king so meckely affected, hee then takyng him vp, & cherishing him againe with wordes, began shortly after to weepe & to be very heauy, his minister asking the cause thereof, Aidanus answered in his scottisly language saying to him: I weepe faith he for that this king cannot lue lög. This people is not worthy to haue such a Prince as he is to raigne among them. And so as Aidanus sayd, it came to passe. For not long after Oswy the king of Bernicia disdaining at him, when Oswyne either being not able or not willing to ioyne with him in Battaille, caused hym traiterously to be slaine. And so Oswy, with his sonne Egfride raigned in Northumberland alone.

In the time & also in the house, of this Oswy king of Northumberland, was a certaine man named Benedict, who was the bringer vp of Bede from his youth, & toke him to his institution, whē he was but leuen yere old, & so taught him during his life. This Benedict, or Benet, descending of a noble stocke and rich kinne & in good fauour with Oswy: forsoke fruite, house, and al his kindred to serue Christ, & wet to Rome (where he had bene in his life time v. times) and brought from thence bookes, into Monasteries, with other things which he thought then to serue for deuotion. Thys Benedict surnamed Bishop, was the first that brought in the arte and vse of glasing into this lande. For before that, glasse windowes were not knowen, either in churches, or in houses.

In the raigne of the foresaid Oswy and Egfride hys sonne, was Botolphus Abbot: which builded in the East part of Lincoln an Abbey. Also Aidanus, Finanus, & Colmannus, with iij. Scottisly Bishops of Northumberlande holy men, held with y Britaines, against the Romishe order, for the keeping of Easter daye. Moreouer Cutbertus Iarumannus, Cedda, and Wilfridus liued the same time, who as I iudge to be Bishops of an holy conuersation, so I thought it sufficient here only to name them. As touching their

The goodnes and charitie of Oswald toward the poore.

Hifloria tornalenfis. Polychronicon. lib. 5. cap. 12.

Kynigillus King of the West Saxons, conuerted to Christes fayth.

Ex Polycron. lib. 5. cap. 13. Fabian part. 5. Landes geuen to Winchester.

Malmesberienfis lib. de pontifi. Angl. Cestrenfis. lib. 5. Hist. tornalenfis.

Hunting lib. 3. Berinus walkeing on the sea with lye and al.

Oswaldus godfather and sonne in lawe to Kynigillus, and all in one day.

Kyng Oswald slaine in the field.

Anno. 643. Penda King of Mercians slayne. Oswy King of Northumberland.

The conuerting of the Mercians to the fayth of Christ. Wulfenus first christened king of Mercia.

The East Angles reduced to the Christian fayth.

Oswy and Oswyne fellow kinges in Northumberland.

Note the worthy liberality in the king, and no lesse in the bishop.

H Hunting de historia Anglorum. lib. 9. Example of true almes.

A perfect example of humilitie in a Prince.

Oswyne traiterously murdered.

An. 651.

Benedict or Benet the bringer vp of Bede. The vse of glasing first brought in to this Realme. Botolphus. Aidanus. Finanus. Colmannus. Cutbertus. Iarumannus. Cedda. Wilfridus.