

& obsecramus per viuentem Deum & per filium eius Iesum Chri- stum, & per spiritum sanctum, vt recorderis quam fugitiua sit vi- ta presens, & quam breuis & momentanea delectatio spurcæ car- nis: & quam ignominiosum sit, vt breuis vite homo mala exem- pla in perpetuum posteris relinquat. Incipe ergo melioribus mo- ribus vitam componere, & præteritos errores iuuentutis corrige- re: vt hic coram hominibus laudem habeas, & in futuro æterna gloria gaudeas. Valere celsitudinem tuam, & in bonis moribus proficere optamus.

In this Epistle here is to be seene and noted, first the corruption and great disorder of yse, which alwayes from tyme to tyme hath bene found in the religious houses of Nunnies, whose professed bow of coacted chastite, hath yet neuer bene good to the Church, nor profitable to the com- mon wealth, and least of all to themselves. Of such yong & wanton widowes, S. Paul in his tyme complaineth, 1. Tim. 5. which would take upon them the wilfull profession of single life, which they were not able to perform, but fall- ing into damnable luxurie deserved worthily to be re- pehended. How much better had it bene for these lastinuous Nunnies not to haue refused the safe yoke of christian ma- trimonic, than to intangle themselves in this their super- stitious bow of perpetuall maidehood, which neither was required of them, nor they were able to keepe.

Secondly, no lesse are they to be rephended, which maintayned these superstitious orders of vnpoffurable Nunnies and of other religions: In the number of whom was this foresayd Boniface otherwile called Winfride, who although in this epistle doeth iustly rephend the vicious enormities both of secular, and of religious persons: yet he him self is not without the same or rather greater rephes- sion, for that hee gaue the occasion thereof in maintaining such superstitious orders of such lasciuious Nunnies and other religions, & restraining the same from lawfull mar- riage. For so wot we of him in stories that hee was a great letter wy & vpholder of such blinde superstition, and of all Idolerie, who being admitted by Pope Gregory the secke, Archbishop of Magunce, and indued wth full authoritie & gauntie ouer the Germanes, brought diuers countreys there, vnder the popes obedience: held many great Councils, obtained Bishops, builded Monasteries, canonized Saints, commaunded reliques to be worshipped, permit- ted religious fathers to cary about Nunnies with them a preaching. Amongst all other he founded the great mona- stery of Fulda in Germany of English monkes: into the which no women might enter, but only Lieba, & Tecla, twō English Nunnies. Item, by the authoritie of y said Arch- bishop Boniface, which he received frō Pope Zacharie, Childericus king of France, was deposed from the right of his crowne: and Pipinus traiter of his maister was confirmed, or rather intruded in. From this Boniface proceeded that be- neficall doctrine which now standeth registered in the popes decrees, Dist. 40. cap. Si Papa which in a certayne Epistle of his, is this. That in case the Pope were almost flytely liuing, and forgetfull or negligent of himselfe, and of the whole christianitie, in such sort, that he led innumera- ble soules with him to hell: yet ought there no man to re- uolte him in so doing. For he hath such power to iudge all men, and ought of no man to be iudged agayne.

In the tyme of this Archbishop, Pope Gregory the se- cond, also Gregory the third, and Pope Zachary, and before these also Pope Constantine the first: wrought great ma- leries against the Grecke Emperours, Philippicus, & Leo, and others, for the maintaining of Images to be set up in Churches. Of whom Philippicus lost both his Empire and also his eyes. Leo for the same cause likewise was extor- minate of Gregory the third. This Gregory the third (so farre as I can conuerne) was he that first wrote the foure booke of Dialogues in Grecke, falsly bearyng the name of Gregory the first, which booke afterward Zachary his successour translated out of Grecke into Latin. Item, the same Gregory the third, first brought into the Masse Land, the claue for remission beginning in Roman solemnitates ho- die in conspectu, &c. Item, brought into the sayd Canon the memorie, the offering, and sacrifice for the dead: Lyke as Zachary brought in the priests vesture and ornaments: & as the foresaid Constantine also was the first that gaue his force to be killed of the Emperours. But turne agayne in- to the course of our English story.

In the tyme of this Egbert King of Northumberland, Siebert or Sigbert reigned in Westsaxon: a man of cruell tyranny to his subiectes (turning the lawes & customes of his forefathers after his owne will and pleasure) that when he was foure or thereabouts abused by one of his nobles, an Earle called Combrant, wth challenge his maners, and to behaue him more prudently towards his people: he

therefore maliciously caused him to be put to cruell death: wherupon the sayd King Siebert continuing in his cruell conditions, by his subiectes conspyting agaynst hym, was put from his kingly dignity: and brought into such deffolation, that wandring alone in a wood without com- fort, was there slayne euen by the sawineheard of the sayd Earle, whom before he had so wrongfully murdered, as partly is aboue touched: where by is to be seene, the cruell tyranny of Princes neuer to prosper well, without the iust reuenge both of God and man.

This Siebert being slayne, in his place succeeded Kenulphus in the yeare of our Lord 748. who with the agree- ment of the Westsaxons was one of the chiefe Doers against Siebert his Brother. This Kenulphus kept stronglie his Lordshp agaynst Offa: and agaynst the power of all his enemies: still at length, after that he had reigned, as Fabian sayth 31. yeares, he resorting to a paramour which he kept at Exeter, was there belet & likewise slayne by the trayn and meanes of a certayne kinsman of the foresayd Siebert, named Clito or Cliton, in reuengment of King Siebertes death.

Wherouer in the raigne of the foresayd Egbert King of Northumberland, and in the viij. yeare of Kenulphus King of Westsaxons: Offa after he had slayne the tyrant Beor- redus, which before had slayne Ethelwald King of Mercia, and vnder to this foresayd Offa: reigned King of that Kingdom.

Of this Offa are told many notable doebes, which be- cause they concerne rather politicall affaires, and doe not greatly appertayne to the purpose of this ecclesiastical hi- story, I omit here to recite. As his warres and victories agaynst Egbert & the Northumbres, as also agaynst Ethel- red King of East Angles: Item, agaynst Egbert King of Kent, otherwile called Wren; whom Fabian sayth he took prisoner, & led him bound with him to Mercia, Malmes- bury witnesseth otherwile, this to be donee not by Offa, but by Kenulphus, as Christ willing hereafter shall appeare. After these victories Offa had such displeasure vnto the Citizens of Canterburie, that he remoued the Archbishops see, and landes of Lambeth Archbishop of Canterburie (by the a- greement of Pope Adrian) vnto Lichfield. He also cha- led the Britaines or Welshmen into Wales, and made a fa- mous wyke betwene Wales and the three bondes of Eng- land, which was called Dyche. And builded there a Church which long tyme after was called Dycheke. This Offa also married one of his daughters to Brighticus that was King of Westsaxons. And for that in his tyme was variance betwene him and the French- men, in so much that the passage of merchants was forbid- den: the Pope he sent Alcuinus a learned man, vnto Charles the great, then King of France, to common the meaus of peace: which Charles had after that, y said Alcuinus in great fauour and estimation, and afterward made him Abbot of Auxonia in France.

About the latter tyme of the raigne of Offa, King of Mercia: Ethelbert being then King of East Angles (a learned and a right godly Prince) came to the Court of Offa: prouoked by the counsell of his Nobles, to sue for the mar- riage of his daughter, wch accompanied like a prince, with his men about him. Wherupon the Queene conceyuing a false suspition, and fearing that which was neuer minded: that Ethelbert with his company vnder the pretence and made matter of marriage, was come to make some vio- lence agaynst her husband, and the kingdom of Mercia, so she perswaded with King Offa: and certtine of her counsil that night: that the next day following, Offa caused him to be trayned into his pallace aboue from his company, by one called Gyumbertus: who took him and bound him, & there stroke of his head, which shortly he had presented to the King & Queene. And thus the innocent King Ethelbert was wrongfully murdered, about the yeare of our Lord, 793. but not without a iust reuenge at Gods hand. For as the story recordeth, the foresayd Queene woker of this villanry, liued not iii. monthes after: and in her death was tormented, that she was fayne to bite and rent her song in pieces with her owne teeth. Offa vnderstanding at length the innocencie of this King, and the heynous crueltie of his fact: gaue the tith part of his goods to his holy church and to the church of Exeter, in remembrance of this Ethelbert, he builded great houses. Wherof he builded the Abbey of S. Albons, with certayne other maner houses be- side. And so afterward he went up to Rome for his penance, where he gaue to the Church of S. Peters a penny for every house in his dominion, which was called commonly Romes hot, or Peters pence, payed to the Church of S. Peter: and there at length was transformed from a King to a monke, about the yeare of our Lord, 794. wch Kearedus King

Siebert slayne.

Cruell tyranny with like crueltie reuenged.

Kenulphus King of West- saxons.

Anno. 748.

Murder reuenged with mur- der.

Offa King of Merca.

An yntruth noted in the story of Fabia- nus.

The primacy of Canterbury re- moued to Licha- field.

Lambeth Archbithop of Cant.

This Alcuinus is commended for his learning next to Adolmu and Bede a- boue all Saxons.

Ethelbert King of East Angles wrongfully murdered by Offa.

The vayne sus- pition and wic- ked counsell of a woman.

Ex hisoria tornantē S. Malmesberienſis. Cruell murder reuenged.

Offa and Ken- redus of Kinges made monkes at Rom.

The corrupt lyfe of Nunnies noted.

The popish actes and doynges of Boniface Archbishop of Magun- ce.

The Mona- stery of Fulda in Germany, builded by Boniface.

Childericus The French King deposed, and Pipinus intruded. Dist. xl. cap. Si Papa. Images in Churches subuerted by Empe- rours, mayntained by Popes. Philippicus for holdi ng agaynst I- mages, lost hys Empire & his eyes. The author of the booke called the dialogues of Gregory. Memoriall of reliques, offering and sacrifice for the dead brought in- to the masse Canon. The Popes feete first killed of the Emperours. Sieberts King of Westsax- ons.