

Actes, the memorabile examples, and worthy vertues not drowned by ease of honour in him, but increased rather, & quickened by aduancement of authoritie & place, to work moze abundantly in the common wealth. Among which his woorty actes and other manyfolde vertues, in thys one chiefly aboue all other richly his commendation, for his singular zeale and laborious trauaile bestowed in restoring the true Church of Christ, and subuerting the Synagogue of Antichrist, the Abbeyes, I meane, and religious houses of Friers and Monkes. For so it pleased almighty God by the meanes of the said Lord Cromwell, to induce the King to suppress first the Chauntries, then the Friers houses and small Monasteries, till at length all the Abbeyes in England both great and lesse, were utterly ouerthrowne and pluckt vp by the rootes. The which acte and enterprise of him, as it may geue a president of singular zeale to all Realmes christened, which no Prince yet to this day scarce dare follow: so to this Realme of Englande it wrought such benefit & commoditie, as the fruite thereof yet remaineth, and will remaine still in the Realme of Englande, though we seeme little to feele it. Rudely and simply I speake what I suppose, without prejudice of other which can inferre any better reason. In the meane time my reason is this: that if God had not raised vp thys Cromwell as he did, to be the instrument of rooting out of the Abbeyes and Celles of strange religion, what other men see, I know not: for my part I neuer yet saw in thys Realme any such Cromwell since Cromwells time, whose hart and courage might not sooner haue bene subuerted with the money and bribes of Abbots, than he to haue subuerted any Abbey in all England.

But here I must of necessitie answer the complaynt of certayne of our country men. For so I heare of many, the subuersion of these Monasteries to be reprehended, as euill and wicked. The building (say they) mighte haue bene conuerted vnto schooles and houses of learning. The goodes and possessions might haue bene bestowed to much better and moze godly vse of the poore, and maintaining of hospitalitie. Neither do I denie, but that these things are well and godly spoken of them, and could willingly embrace their opinion with my whole hart, if I did not consider herein a moze secret and deeper meaning of Gods holy prouidence, than at the first blinly peraduenture to all men doth appeare.

And first to omit the wicked and execrable life of these religious orders, full of al febricie, & found out by the Kings visitours, and in their Registers also recorded, so horrible to be heard, so incredible to be beleued, so stinking before the face of God and man, that no maruaile it is if Gods vengeance from heauen prouoked, should not suffer any stone or monument of these abominable houses to be unplucked vp. But (as I sayd) letting these things passe vnder chaste silence, which for very shame will abhorre any storie to disclose: let vs now come to the first institution of these orders and houses of Monkerie, and consider howe and to what end they were first instituted and erected here among the Saxons, at the first foundation of them, about the time 666.

In the former parte of thys Hypstoric, declaration was made before, page 132, 134. first by whome, and at what time these Monkish houses here in England among the Saxons (showing no doubt out of the order of Saint Bennet, and brought in by Augustine) began first to be founded, as by Augustine the Monke, Fulcius, Adolphus, Aidanus, Cadda, King Alsterus, Oswins, Edeveda, King Oswys daughter, Kineburga, Hilda, Borulphus, Edeveda, King Oswald, Edgar, Erkenwaldus Bishop, Ethelwoldus Bishop of Winchester, Osketellus Archbishop of Yorke, Oswalduus Bishop of Worcester, Aelfwinius Bysshop of Dorchester, Dunstane, and diuers other.

The end and final cause why they were builded, appeareth in Stoics to be, pro remissione & redemptione peccatorum: pro remedio & liberatione animæ: pro amore coelestis patriæ: in elemosinam animæ: in remissionem criminum: pro salute Regnorum: pro salute & requie animarum patrum & matrum, fratrum, & sororum nostrarum parentum, & omnium benefactorum: in honorem gloriosæ Virginis, &c. As may appeare in ancient histories, in olde Charters and donations vnto religious houses, and in the Chronicle of Ingulphus, as also all other stoues be full of the same.

So King Ethelstane for building his brother Eworne, builded two Monasteries, Eadleton, and Michelney, for his soule, page. 134. which doctrine and institution, for so much as it tendeth and foundeth directly against the foundation of Christian religion, against the Testament of God, the Gospel of Iesus Christ, the freedom of our redemption, and free iustificacion by fayth, it is therefore to be condemned as execrable and horrible, as euill or worse than the life

of the persons, and not only woorty to be suppressed to the foundation, but to be maruelled rather that God would suffer it to stand so long. Albeit Gods mighty vengeance and scourge hath not ceased from time to time, to worke againste such impious foundations from the time of they first setting vp. For besides the inuasions of the Danes, (whiche may seeme to be stirred by of God, especially for the subuersion of Abbeyes) let old histories be searched, what Monasterie almost in all this Realme, was eyther least by the Danes, or redified agayne after the Danes, but by some notorious casualty of fire sent by Gods hand, it hath bene burnt vp.

First, the Monasterie of Caunterbury, called the house of S. Gregory, was burnt, an. 1145. and afterward againe burnt, an. 1174. Ex hist. Geruasi.

The Abbey of Croyland also was twice burnt. Ex hist. Ingulphi.

The Abbey of Peterborow twice set on fire, an. 1070. Ex Chron. Peterb.

The Abbey of S. Maries in Yorke burnt, with the hospital also.

The Abbey of Norwich burnt.

The Abbey of S. Edmunds Bury burnt and destroyed, Ex Chron. S. Edmund.

The Abbey of Worcester burnt.

The Abbey of Gloucester was also burnt.

The Abbey of Chichester burnt.

The Abbey of Glaffenbury burnt.

The Abbey of S. Mary in Southwarke burnt.

The Church of the Abbey at Beuerley burnt.

The steeple of the Abbey of Euesham burnt.

These, with many other monasteries mo. God brought downe to the ground, so that few or none of all the Monastical foundations in all England, either before the Conquest escaped the hands of the Danes and Scottes, or else after the Conquest escaped destruction of fire, and that not without iust cause deserued: for as the trade of their lynes was too wretched and bestiall, so the profession of they doctrine was intolerable, fraught with all superstition, full of much Idolatrie, and vterely contrary to the grace of the Gospell and doctrine of Christ.

Furthermoze, the more these Abbeyes multiplied, and the longer they continued, in time the more corruption still they drew vnto them. And albeit we reade the name of Monkes to haue continued from the old ancient time, yet notwithstanding the Monkes of those dayes were not like to the Monkes of our time, nor their houses then, like to our Abbeyes now. So we reade of the Monkes of Bangor before the coming of Augustine: but those Monkes got their living with toyle and labour of theyr hands, and had no other lands nor lordships to liue vpon. Againe, neither were they as Ministers then, but as Lay men: according as Hierome describeth the Monkes of his time, saying: Monachus non docentis, sed plangentis habet officium. And againe he sayeth: Alia causa est Monachi, alia Clerici. Clerici oues pascunt. Ego pascor. That is, A Monkes office is not to preache, but to mourne. The state of a Monke is one thing, and the state of a Priest is another. Priestes feede the flocke of Christ. I am fedde, &c.

Also in the storie of Ingulphus Abbot of Croylande, thus I finde, an. 1075, In Croylandia primus installatus inueni tunc in isto Monasterio Croylandesi Monachos numero, 62. Quorum quatuor laici fratres erant, præter aliorum Monasteriorum Monachos nostri capituli conprofessos, &c. That is, Being installed in the Abbey of Croyland, I found there to the number of 62. Monkes. Of which Monkes, foure of them were lay brethren, besides the Monkes of other Monasteries, which were also professed to our Chapter, &c.

The like matter also appeareth in the fourth Canon of the Councell of Chalcedon, where it is provided Ne Monachi se Ecclesiasticis negotiis immisceant, &c. Et Leo Epist. 62. Verat Monachos & laicos est scientiæ nomine gloriantur, admittit ad officium docendi & concionandi. wherof reade more page. 154.

Thus it appeareth about or before the time of Hierome, that Monkes in the first persecutions of the Primitive Church were lay men, and companies of Christians associating themselves together, eyther for feare of persecution, or for eschewing the company of heathen Scullards. Afterward in continuance of time, when the Gentiles began to be called to Christianity, the monkes yet keeping theyr name, & growing in superstition, would not ioyne with other Christians, but keepe still their brotherhoodes, distancing themselves from other Christians, and professing a kinde of life strange and diuers from the common trade. Vpon this diuersitie of life and profession, followed also like diuersitie of garments and attire differing from theyr other brethren. After this mozoner came in the rule of S. Benedict.

The actes and doings of the L. Cromwell, described.

The L. Cromwell a profitable instrument in suppressing Abbeyes.

The defence of the L. Cromwell for ouerthrowing the Abbeyes.

The abominable life in Monasteries, bewrayed by their owne confessio.

Read aforepag. 133. 134.

The first beginning of religious houses in the time of the Saxons.

The end and cause of building religious houses.

The damnable doctrine and institutions of religious sectes and orders.

Gods continual plague agaynt Monasteries.

Ex Chron. Geruasi, Ingulphi, Peterborow, Walteri, Weekes, Houedeni, Gaulteri Couentra, Fabiani, Williel, Malmeib.

Abbeyes burnt and plagued with fire.

The doctrine of the monkes worse then their liues.

16. q. 1. Monachus r. 16. q. 2. Alia causa, Glo. fa.

Ex Chron. Ingulphi Abbat. Croylandes.

Lay men recued for Monkes into monasteries.

Monkes forbidden to intermeddle in ecclesiasticall matters.

Monkes distancing themselves from other men in trade of life, Monkes distancing themselves from other in apparel.