

Benedict, enioyning to them a prescribed forme of goyng, of wearing, of watching, sleeping, rising, praying, of tilde, of sole life and diet, and all thinges almost differing from the vulgar sort of common Christians.

Whereby men seeing theyr austeritie, beganne to haue them in great admiration. And thus growing vp in opinion of holines, of lay men and laborers they came at length to be Clergy men, and great doctrs of all other in Christs religion: In so muche that at last there was none reputed almost for a religious man or perfect christian vntiles he were a monk: neither almost was any aduanced to any dignity of the Church, but either he was a monk, or after ward he put on a monkes weede: According as in the stories of this Realme is to be seene, home in the tyme of Dunstane Archbishop of Canterbury, of Ethelwold Bpsh of Winchester, and of Oswald Bishop of Worcester, Pope John. 13. writing to king Edgar, willed him in hys letters, to see in his Cathedral Churches none to be promoted to be Bishops, but such as were of the Monasticall religion; and willed him moreover to exclude the secular prebendaries at Winchester, and to place in Monkes, and that none of the secular Clerkes there should be chosen bishop, but either taken out of the same Conuent of that church, or of some other Abbey.

So was also king Henry the second commaunded to do in the house of Waltham, where the secular Canons were removed out, and regular Canons intruded. The same did Oswald Bishop with the Church of Worcester, likewise in their Sees did Dunstane Archbishop of Canterbury, Oskereillus Archbishop of York, Ethelwold Bishop of Worcester (who in story is reported to be Mulcorum fundator Monasteriorum,) Aelwinus also Bishop of Worcester, with other Bishops moe about the time and reign of king Edgar, an. 934. after his election refused to take that dignity vpon him, before he had received the habit of a monk in the Abbey of Florency in France, because as the story telleth (if it be true) Nullus ad id tempus nisi monachalichemate indutus, Archiepiscopus fuisse. &c. That is, Because all the Archbishops of Caunterbury before him, had bene Monkes. &c. In like manner Baldowinus also an. 1114. after he was elected Archb. of Caunterbury, tooke vpon him the habit and profession of Chertren Abbey. And so did Reginaldus his next successor after him, &c.

As concerning therefore the origene of Monkes, ye haue heard how first they began of lay me onely, leading a straiter life from the society of other persons, who then following the rule of S. Benedict, were called regulars & botaries, and yet all this while had nothing to do with any Ecclesiasticall ministry, til the time of Pope Bonifacius the fourth an. 606. who then made a decree, that monkes might vse the office of preaching, of the christening, of hearing confessions and alloying the of their sinnes: differing from priests onely in this, that they were called Regulars, and priests were called Seculares; the monkes were botaries, the priests had free liberty to haue wiues, til the time of Lanfranke and Anselme, as is aforesayd. Albeit Athanasius in his Epistle Ad Dracontium, witnesseth also, that he knewe Monkes in the olde time and Bishops, which were married and had children. Furthermore, as ignorance & superstition with time encreased, so the number and swarme of monkes still more and more multiplied; in such sort, as not onely they thurst out secular priests fro their houses, but also out of them were made, Popes, Cardinales, Archbishops, and Bishops, to gouerne Churches. Of which number began Austen the first Archbishop of the See of Cant. and the most part of all other Archbishops after him, vntill the time of the Conquest, and after.

All this while the Friers were not yet come, neyther the discipline of S. Dominike, nor the Testament of S. Fraunces, nor the order of the Austen brothers, nor of the Carmelites was yet heard of. which last of all came in by theyr pageans, and played theyr part likewise, an. 1120. being much more full of Hypocrisy, blindnesse, Idolatry, and superstition. than were the monkes: So that, what with monkes of f one side, & with the friers, of the other side, while all thinges were ruled by the Rules of S. Benedict, by the Canons of the Pope, by the doctrine of S. Dominike, and by the Testament of S. Fraunces, Chriftes Testament was trode vnder foote, the rule of Gods word neglected, true Christian religion defaced, sayth forgotten, the right way of saluation abolished, found doctrine oppressed, Chriftes seruants persecuted, and the peoples soules vncomforted: yea and the true Church of Christ almost cleane extirped, had not almighty God (who can not forgette his promise, provided remedy in time, in rayling vp this Cromwel his scoundrell, and other like champions, to cut vpp from the roote of the houses of them, which otherwise would utter-

ly haue rooted vpon the house of the Lord, & had subuerted a great part already.

Wherefore, whosoever findeth himselfe agreued with Cromwells doinges in suppressing these Monasteries of Monkes and Fryers, let him wisely consider with himselfe, first the doctrine, lawes and traditions of these men, which he shall find rebelling to the religion of Christ, pernicious to our saluation, derogatory to Chriftes glory, full of much blasphemy and damnable idolatry. Secondly, let him likewise well aduise the horrible and execrable sinnes of these Cloysterers, or at least search out the rolles and registers of matters found out by inquisition in king Henry the eight his dayes, agaynst them: which here is not to be spoken of, vnles we will speake as the Jewe Paris speaketh of the Court of Rome: Cuius foetor vique ad nubes fumum terebrimum exhalabat: That is, Whose fleshy stinche (saith he) did breath vp a most pestiferous fume, euen vnto the cloudes of heauen, &c.

All which thinges well considered, what marvell is it then, if God of his iust iudgement did let by the force of the Lord Cromwell to destroy these sinfull houses, who theyr owne corruptions could suffer no longer to stand? And as touching the dissipation of theyr landes and possessions to the handes of such as they were bestowed vpon: if it so pleased the king in bestowing those Abbey landes vpon his Nobles and Gentlemen, either to restore them againe vnto them from whence they came, or els to graunte his nobility, by that meanes of pollicie not to mulkt his doings, what is that to Cromwell? But they might (say you) haue bene much better employed to other more fruitfull vses. Briefely to answer the tenent, what may be done presently in a common wealth, is not enough to say: but what may also follow must be considered. If this throwing downe of Abbeyes had happened in such free and reformed cities or countreyes, as are amongst the Germanes, where the State gouerned & directed by lawes, rather than by rulcers, remaineth alwayes alike and immutable: who doubteth but such houses there standing still, & possessions might well be transposed to such vses aforesayd, without any feare or perill? But in such Realmes and Kingdomes as this, where Lawes and Parliaments be not alwayes one, but are subiect to the disposition of the prince: neither is it certayne alwayes what Princes maye come: the surest way therefore to send Monkerie & Popery packing out of the realme, is to doe with theyr houses and possessions as king Henry here did, through the motion of Cromwell. For els who seeth not in Queene Maries time, whether the houses of monkes had stand or their landes had bene otherwise disposed than into the handes of such as they were, how many of them had bene restored & replenished agayn? monkes & fryers, in as ample wise as euer they were? And if Dukes, Barons and the Nobilities scarce were able to retayne the landes and possessions of Abbeyes distributed to them by king Henry, from the deuotion of Queene Mary, seeking to build agayne the walles of Hierico, what then shoulde the meaner sorte haue done, let other men coniecture. Wherefore it is not vnlike, but that Gods heauenly providence did well foresee and dispose these thinges before by this man, in working the destruction of these Abbeyes: whereupon, as often as he sent out any men to suppress any monastery, hee vsed commonly to send them with this charge, that they shuld throw downe those houses cuen to the foundation.

Which wordes although may seeme percale to some to be cruelly spoken of hym: yet contrariwise doe I suppose the doing thereof not to be without Gods speciall providence and secret guiding: For els we might peradventure haue had such swarmes of fryers and monkes possessed in theyr nestes agayne, before this day in England, in so great a number, that renne Cromwells afterward vnto should haue suffered to haue vnhoused them.

Wherefore, if the plantation which the Lord God neuer planted, be pluckt vpon by the rootes, let God alone wyth his working, and let the monasteries goe.

Now that you haue seene, what this Malleus Monachorum hath done in defacing the Synagogue of the pope: let vs see howe the sayd Cromwell againe did traunple in setting vpon Chriftes church and congregation.

After that the bishop of Romes power and authoritie was banished out of England, the bishops of his sect neuer ceased to seeke all occasion, how eynher to restore hys head agayne, being broken and wounded, or at the least to keepe vppright those thinges which yet remaine: where in although they laboure were not altogether fruitfull, yet had they brought much more to passe, if Cromwell (as a mighty wall and defence of the church) had not resisted continually theyr enterprises.

It happened, that after the abolishing of the Pope, certainc

The life of Monkes and Fryers considered.

The Lord Cromwell defended in suppressing Abbeyes.

Dissipation of Abbay landes in England expedit.

The utter ruine of Monasteries, was Gods worke.

March. 15.

Malleus Monachorum Cromwellian.

Cromwell the Forte & defence of the Church. An assembly of learned men appointed by the king.

Monkes diuers from other in apparell.

Monkes of lay men made Clergy men. Pope John 13. wrote to K. Edgar, that none should be made Bishops but Monkes.

Secular Priests put out, and Monkes intruded into Churches.

Floreny Ex Galiel, Malinche, in vica Odornis. Ex Neaburgens. lib. 4. cap. 33.

Monkes first lay men, the made regulars and votaries: at length made Churchmen Pope Bonifac.

Difference betweene Monkes Priests.

The coming in of the Fryers.