

above twenty years in banishment; learning more heartily to despise earthly vanities, and making it his whole study to serve the King of kings. His subjects groaning under the yoke of an insupportable tyranny, took up arms against their oppressors, and induced the royal prince, upon motives of compassion for their distress and a holy zeal for religion, to put himself at their head. Several battles were prosperously fought; but at length the pious prince was murdered by the contrivance of King Eardulf, the usurper, as Matthew of Westminister, Simeon of Durham, and Florence, of Worcester say. Dr. Brown Willis, in his *Notitia* of parliamentary boroughs, writes, with some ancients, that he was slain by the Danes, about the year 819. His body was interred at Lilleshult, in Shropshire: but afterwards translated to Derby, where he was honoured with great devotion as patron of the town, on the 19th of March. An old manuscript sermon preached in his church at Derby, about the year 1140, extant in a manuscript collection of sermons of that age in my hands, folio 138, gives a particular history of this translation of his relics to Derby, where his church became famous for miracles, and for the resort of pilgrims. See on this saint the history of John of Glastenbury, Matthew of Westminister, the manuscript sermon above mentioned, and Henschenius, t. 3. Mart. p. 47.

MARCH XX.

ST. CUTHBERT, CONFESSOR,

BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE.

From his life written by Bede, and from that author's Church History, b. 4. c. 27 to c. 32. Simeon Dunelm, or rather Turgot, *Hist. Dunelm.* published by Bedford: the old Latin hymn on St. Cuthbert, MS. in Bibl. Cotton. n. 41. apud Wanley, p. 184. and four Latin prayers, in honour of St. Cuthbert, MS. n. 190. in the library of Durham Church. Warnly, *Catal.* t. 2. p. 297. Harpsfield, *sec.* 7. c. 34. Hearne on Langtoft, t. 2. p. 687. N.B. The history of Durham, which is here quoted, was compiled by Turgot, prior of Durham, down to the year 1104, and continued to the year 1161 by Simeon.

A.D. 687.

WHEN the Northumbrians, under the pious King Oswald, had, with great fervour, embraced the Christian faith, the holy bishop St. Aidan founded two monasteries, that of Mailros, on

the bank of the Tweed and another in the isle of Lindisfarne, afterwards called Holy Island, four miles distant from Berwick. In both he established the rule of St. Columba; and usually resided himself in the latter. St. Cuthbert* was born not very far from Mailros, and in his youth was much edified by the devout deportment of the holy inhabitants of that house, whose fervour in the service of God, and the discharge of the duties of a monastic life, he piously endeavoured to imitate on the mountains where he kept his father's sheep. It happened one night that, whilst he was watching in prayer, near his flock, according to his custom, he saw the soul of St. Aidan carried up to heaven by angels, at the very instant that holy man departed this life in the isle of Lindisfarne. Serious reflections on the happiness of such a death determined the pious young man to repair, without delay, to Mailros, where he put on the monastic habit, whilst Eata was abbot, and St. Boisil prior. He studied the holy scriptures under the latter, and in fervour surpassed all his brethren in every monastic exercise. Eata being called to govern the new monastery of Rippon, founded by King Alcfrid, he took with him St. Cuthbert, and committed to him the care of entertaining strangers; which charge is usually the most dangerous in a religious state. Cuthbert washed the feet of others, and served them with wonderful humility and meekness, always remembering that Christ himself is served in his members. And he was most careful that the functions of Martha should never impair his spirit of recollection. When St. Wilfrid was made abbot of Rippon, St. Cuthbert returned with Eata to Mailross; and St. Boisil dying of the great pestilence, in 664, he was chosen provost or prior in his place.

In this station, not content by word and example to form his monks to perfect piety, he laboured assiduously among the people to bring them off from several heathenish customs and superstitious practices which still remained among them. For this purpose, says our venerable historian, he often went out sometimes on horseback, but oftener on foot, to preach the way of life to such as were gone astray. Parochial churches being at this time very scarce in the country, it was the custom

* Cuthbert signifies IPustring for skill; or Guthbertus, Worthy of God.

for the country people to flock about a priest or ecclesiastical person, when he came into any village, for the sake of his instructions; hearkening willingly to his words, and more willingly practising the good lessons he taught them. St. Cuthbert excelled all others by a most persuasive and moving eloquence; and such a brightness appeared in his angelical face in delivering the word of God to the people, that none of them durst conceal from him any part of their misbehaviour, but all laid their conscience open before him, and endeavoured by his injunctions and counsels to expiate the sins they had confessed, by worthy fruits of penance. He chiefly visited those villages and hamlets at a distance, which, being situate among high and craggy mountains, and inhabited by the most rustic, ignorant, and savage people, were the less frequented by other teachers. After St. Cuthbert had lived many years at Mailros, St. Eata, abbot also of Lindisfarne, removed him thither, and appointed him prior of that larger monastery. By the perfect habit of mortification and prayer the saint had attained to so eminent a spirit of contemplation, that he seemed rather an angel than a man. He often spent whole nights in prayer, and sometimes, to resist sleep, worked or walked about the island whilst he prayed. If he heard others complain that they had been disturbed in their sleep, he used to say, that he should think himself obliged to any one that awaked him out of his sleep, that he might sing the praises of his Creator, and labour for his honour. His very countenance excited those who saw him to a love of virtue. He was so much addicted to compunction and inflamed with heavenly desires, that he could never say mass without tears. He often moved penitents, who confessed to him their sins, to abundant tears, by the torrents of his own, which he shed for them. His zeal in correcting sinners was always sweetened with tender charity and meekness. The saint had governed the monastery of Lindisfarne, under his abbot, several years, when earnestly aspiring to a closer union with God, he retired, with his abbot's consent, into the little isle of Farne, nine miles from Lindisfarne, there to lead an austere eremitical life. The place was then uninhabited, and afforded him neither water, tree nor corn. Cuthbert built himself a hut with a wall and trench about it, and, by his prayers, obtained a well of fresh water in his own cell. Having brought with him instruments of husbandry, he sowed first wheat, which

failed; then barley, which, though sowed out of season, yielded a plentiful crop. He built a house at the entry of the island from Lindisfarne, to lodge the brethren who came to see him, whom he there met and entertained with heavenly conferences. Afterwards he confined himself within his own wall and trench, and gave spiritual advice only through a window, without ever stirring out of his cell. He could not however, refuse an interview with the holy abbess and royal virgin Elfleda, whom her father King Oswi, had dedicated to God from her birth, and who in 680, succeeded St. Hilda in the government of the abbey of Whitby. This was held in the isle of Cocket, then filled with holy anchorets. This close solitude was to our saint an uninterrupted exercise of divine love, praise, and compunction; in which he enjoyed a paradise of heavenly delights, unknown to the world.

In a synod of bishops, held by St. Theodorus at Twiford, on the river Alne, in the kingdom of Northumberland, it was resolved, that Cuthbert should be raised to the episcopal see of Lindisfarne. But as neither letters, nor messengers, were of force to obtain his consent to undertake the charge, King Egfrid, who had been present at the council, and the holy bishop Trumwin, with many others, sailed over to his island, and conjured him, on their knees, not to refuse his labours, which might be attended with so much advantage to souls. Their remonstrances were so pressing, that the saint could not refuse going with them, at least to the council, but weeping most bitterly. He received the episcopal consecration at York, the Easter following, from the hands of St Theodorus, assisted by six other bishops. In this new dignity the saint continued the practice of his former austerities; but remembering what he owed to his neighbour, he went about preaching and instructing with incredible fruit, and without any intermission. He made it every where his particular care to exhort, feed, and protect the poor. By divine revelation he saw and mentioned to others, at the very instant it happened, the overthrow and death of King Egfrid, by the Picts, in 685. He cured, by water which he had blessed the wife of a noble Thane, who lay speechless and senseless at the point of death, and many others. For his miracles he was called the Thaumathurgus of Britain. But the most wonderful of his miracles was that which grace wrought in him by the perfect victory which it gave him over his passions. His zeal

for justice was most ardent ; but nothing seemed ever to disturb the peace and serenity of his mind. By the close union of his soul with God, whose will alone he sought and considered in all things, he overlooked all temporal events, and under all accidents his countenance was always cheerful, always the same : particularly in bearing all bodily pains, and every kind of adversity with joy, he was invincible. His attention to, and pure view of God in all events, and in all his actions arose from the most tender and sweet love, which was in his soul a constant source of overflowing joy. Prayer was his centre. His brethren discovered sometimes that he spent three or four nights together in that heavenly exercise, allowing himself very little or no sleep. When St. Ebba, the royal virgin, sister to the kings St. Oswald and Oswi, abbess of the double monastery of Coldingham, invited him to edify that house by his exhortations, he complied, and staid there some days. In the night, whilst others were asleep, he stole out to his devotions according to his custom in other places. One of the monks who watched and followed him one night, found that the saint, going down to the sea-shore, went into the water up to the arm-pits, and there sung praises to God. In this manner he passed the silent time of the night. Before the break of day he came out, and having prayed awhile on the sands, returned to the monastery, and was ready to join in morning lauds.

St. Cuthbert, foreseeing his death to approach, resigned his bishopric, which he had held two years, and retired to his solitude in Farne Island, to prepare himself for his last passage. Two months after he fell sick, and permitted Herefrid, the abbot of Lindisfarne, who came to visit him, to leave two of his monks to attend him in his last moments. He received the viaticum of the body and blood of Christ from the hands of the abbot Herefrid, at the hour of midnight prayer, and immediately lifting up his eyes, and stretching out his hands, sweetly slept in Christ on the 20th day of March, 687. He died in the island of Farne : but, according to his desire, his body was buried in the monastery of Saint Peter in Lindisfarne, on the right side of the high altar. Bede relates many miracles performed at his tomb ; and adds, that eleven years after his death, the monks taking up his body, instead of dust which they expected, found it unputrified, with the joints pliable and the clothes fresh and

entire.(1) They put it into a new coffin, placed above the pavement, over the former grave: and several miracles were there wrought, even by touching the clothes which covered the coffin. William of Malmesbury(2) writes, that the body was again found incorrupt four hundred and fifteen years afterwards at Durham, and publicly shown. In the Danish invasions, the monks carried it away from Lindisfarne; and after several removals on the continent, settled with their treasure on a woody hill almost surrounded by the river Were, formed by nature for a place of defence. They built there a church of stone, which Aldhune, bishop of Lindisfarne, dedicated in 995, and placed in it the body of St. Cuthbert with great solemnity, transferring hither his episcopal see.* Many princes enriched exceedingly the new monastery and cathedral, in honour of St. Cuthbert. Succeeding kings, out of devotion to this saint, declared the bishop a count palatine, with an extensive civil jurisdiction.† The great king Alfred, who honoured St. Cuthbert as his particular patron, and ascribed to his intercession some of his greatest victories, and other blessings which he received, was a special benefactor to this church.(3) The present cathedral was built in 1080. When the shrine of the saint was plundered and demolished by the order of King Henry VIII. the body of St. Cuthbert, which was found still entire, as Harpsfield testifies, met with greater regard than many others; for it was not burned, as were those of St. Edmund, king and martyr, St. Thomas, and others. After the king's officers had carried away the plunder of his shrine, it was privately buried under the place where the shrine before stood, though the spot is now unknown. His ring, in which a sapphire is enchased, was given by Lord Viscount Montaigne to the bishop of Chalcedon,(4) who had long been sheltered from the persecution in the house of that nobleman,‡ and

(1) Bede, Hist. b. 4. c. 30.

(2) L. 4. Pontif. Angl.

(3) See Hickee, Thes. Ling. Septentr. Præf. p. 8.

(4) Bp. Smith, Flores Hist. Eccles. p. 120.

* Dunelm, or Durham, signifies a hill upon waters, from the Saxon words Dun, a hill, and Holme, a place situate in or among the waters.

† See Dugdale's history of the cathedral of Durham; and Dr. Brown Willis on the same.

‡ Dr. Richard Smith, bishop of Chalcedon, relates in his life of Margaret Lady Montaigne, that Queen Elizabeth, out of her singular regard for this

was by him left in the monastery of English canonesses at Paris, which is also possessed of a tooth of St. Cuthbert. A copy of St. John's gospel, which, after the example of his master St. Boisil, he often read to nourish the fire of divine love in his soul, was put into his coffin when he was buried, and found in his tomb. It is now in the possession of Mr. Thomas Philips, canon of Tongres, on whom the present earl of Litchfield bestowed it. The copy is judged undoubtedly genuine by our ablest Protestant antiquaries, who carefully examined it.

The life of St. Cuthbert was almost a continual prayer. There was no business, no company, no place, how public soever, which did not afford him an opportunity, and even a fresh motive to pray. Not content to pass the day in this exercise, he continued it constantly for several hours of the night, which was to him a time of light and interior delights. Whatever he saw seemed to speak to him of God, and to invite him to his love. His conversation was on God or heavenly things, and he would have regretted a single moment, which had not been employed with God or for his honour, as utterly lost. The inestimable riches which he found in God, showed him how precious every moment is, in which he had it in his power to enjoy the divine converse. The immensity of God, who is present in us and in all creatures, and whom millions of worlds cannot confine or contain; his eternity, to which all time coexists, and which has neither beginning, end, nor succession; the unfathomed abyss of his judgments; the sweetness of his providence; his adorable sanctity; his justice, wisdom, goodness, mercy, and love, especially as displayed in the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation, and in the doctrine, actions, and sufferings, of our Blessed Redeemer; in a word, all the incomprehensible attributes of the Divinity, and the mysteries of his grace and mercy, successively filled his mind and heart, and kindled in his soul the most sweet and ardent affections in which his thirst and his delight, which were always fresh and always insatiable, gave him a kind of anticipated taste of paradise. For holy contemplation discovers to a soul a

lady, from the time she had been lady of honour in the court of Queen Mary and King Philip, tacitly granted her house a kind of privilege, by never allowing it to be searched on account of religious persecution; so that sometimes sixty priests at once lay hidden in it.

new most wonderful world, whose beauty, riches, and pure delights astonish and transport her out of herself. St. Teresa, coming from prayer, said she came from a world greater and more beautiful beyond comparison, than a thousand worlds, like that which we behold with our corporal eyes, could be. St. Bernard was always torn from this holy exercise with regret, when obliged to converse with men in the world, in which he trembled, lest he should contract some attachment to creatures, which would separate him from the chaste embraces of his heavenly spouse. The venerable priest, John of Avila, when he came from the altar, always found commerce with men insipid and insupportable.

ST. WULFRAN, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS,

AND APOSTOLIC MISSIONARY IN FRISELAND.

HIS father was an officer in the armies of King Dagobert, and the saint spent some years in the court of King Clotaire III. and of his mother St. Bathildes, but occupied his heart only on God, despising worldly greatness as empty and dangerous, and daily advancing in virtue in a place where virtue is often little known. His estate of Maurilly he bestowed on the abbey of Fontenelle, or St. Vandrille, in Normandy. He was chosen and consecrated archbishop of Sens, in 682, wick diocess he governed during two years and a half with great zeal and sanctity. A tender compassion for the blindness of the idolators of Friseland, and the example of the English zealous preachers in those parts, moved him to resign his bishopric with proper advice, and after a retreat at Fontenelle, to enter Friseland in quality of a poor missionary priest. He baptized great multitudes, with a son of King Radbod, and drew the people from the barbarous custom of sacrificing men to idols. The lot herein decided, on great festivals, who should be the victim; and the person was instantly hanged or cut in pieces. The lot having fallen on one Ovon, St. Wulfran earnestly begged his life of King Radbod; but the people ran tumultuously to the palace, and would not suffer what they called a sacrilege. After many words, they consented that if the God of Wulfran should save Oven's life, he should ever serve him, and be Wulfran's slave. The saint betook himself to prayer, and the man, after hanging