

would they die.—Millions of idolaters might be easily converted, if there were more preachers who would sincerely mind the interests of Jesus Christ, and not their own. But the saint required missionaries who are prudent, charitable, mild, perfectly disinterested, and of so great a purity of manners, that no occasions of sin could weaken their constancy.(1) “In vain,” says he, “would you commit this important employ to any, howsoever learned and otherwise qualified, unless they are laborious, mortified, and patient: unless they are ready to suffer willingly, and with joy, hunger, and thirst, and the severest persecutions.”(2) This saint was a model of such preachers, formed upon the spirit of the apostles. So absolute a master he was of his passions, that he knew not what it was to have the least motion of choler and impatience, and in all events was perfectly resigned to the divine will; from whence proceeded an admirable tranquillity of soul, a perpetual cheerfulness, and equality of countenance. He rejoiced in afflictions and sufferings, and said that one who had once experienced the sweetness of suffering for Christ will ever after find it worse than death to live without a cross.(3) By humility the saint was always ready to follow the advice of others, and attributed all blessings to their prayers, which he most earnestly implored. Of himself he always sincerely spoke as of the basest and most unworthy of men, with the most perfect sentiments of distrust in himself. The union of his soul with God by holy prayer raised him above the world. Ingulphed in deep meditations, he was sometimes found suspended in the air, with beams of glory round his countenance, as many ocular witnesses deposed.(4)

### ST. BIRINUS, FIRST BISHOP OF DORCESTER, C.

BIRINUS, a priest of Rome, addressed himself to Pope Honorius for leave to preach the gospel to the idolaters in Britain. The pope commended his zeal, and caused him to be ordained bishop. The apostolic missionary landed in the kingdom of the West-Saxons, and, with many others, baptized King Cynegils,

(1) Id. l. 2, ep. 9. See Lett. Edif. et Curi. des Mission. Recueils, l. 7, p. 70.

(2) Id. l. 4, ep. 9.

(3) S. Fr. Xav. l. 1, ep. 1, p. 25.

(4) See his Life by F. Boulhours, b. 6, p. 673.

who began to reign in 611, and filled the throne thirty-one years, being the sixth from Cerdic, who founded that kingdom in 519. Birinus fixed his see at Dercis, now at Dorchester, on the Thames, in Oxfordshire, upon the edge of Berkshire :\* he built and consecrated many churches, gained many souls to God, and departing to him was buried in the same city, about the year 650. His remains were translated to Winchester by Bishop Hedda, and there laid in the church of SS. Peter and Paul. Of the painted windows in Dorchester church which have escaped the fury of the plunderers, Mr. Hearne, in his notes on William of Newborough, vol. 3, p. 773, makes this remark: "I know of no truly religious person but what is affected with what now remains of the historical painting in Dorchester windows, relating to Brinius's voyage thither, and his converting the heathens." See on St. Birinus, Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, p. 247; Bede, l. 3, c. 7, and Neve's *Fasti Anglicani*, p. 137. 283.

### ST. SOLA, HERMIT.

THIS saint was an Englishman, who, following St. Boniface into Germany, became his disciple, and the faithful imitator of his virtues, and was ordained priest by him. Called by the sacred impulse of the Holy Ghost into the desert, the more securely to find the narrow way that leads to life, by the advice of his experienced master, he retired into the wilderness of Solenhoven upon the banks of the river Altmona, near Ayschstat, where, in a little cell, remote from man, he passed his days with God, making penance and holy prayer his only busi-

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\* The sees of Salisbury, Exeter, Wells, Litchfield, Worcester, and Hereford, were afterwards formed out of this of Dorchester which was soon transferred to Winchester. For Agilbert, a Frenchman, who succeeded St. Birinus, understood not sufficiently the English language; for which reason he returned to France in 660. Wina being appointed bishop of the West-Saxons, at Winchester, Eleutherius, and after him Hedda, in 676, succeeded to that see in the same place. King Oswy appointed, in 680, Dwina, bishop of Litchfield, for the Midland English. In the same country of Mercia another bishopric was erected in 678, when Eadhead was made bishop of Sidsæstor; this see was removed to Legecester, now Leicester, in 872, and soon after to Lorchester, which continued the see of the bishops of East Mercia and Lyndeey, till, in 1072, the bishop Remigius of Feschamp translated it to Lincoln. See Godwin, *de Præsul. Angl.* ed. nov. and Le Neve, p. 188.