

many of the best men in all ages have not been entirely free. He, in conjunction with some other bishops, endeavoured to bring the "Scots who inhabited Ireland" to a conformity with the English church; but in vain. Other difficulties arose which, for a time, impeded the work. Some of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy that had embraced Christianity apostatized, in consequence of princes coming to the crown who were idolaters. It seemed, then, to be a matter of course that the people should follow the example of their chief, in embracing or renouncing Christianity, either of which was effected with equal ease. The Christian bishops were, in many instances, expelled from their dioceses, and the fruits of their labours seemed for a time to be lost. Not a few of these rapid transitions from Paganism to Christianity, and the reverse, took place before the whole Saxon Heptarchy was finally evangelized. From the low character of that Christian profession which was propagated in England by its Roman teachers, it was to be expected that the errors of that church, as they arose, would be imported. The evils thus produced may be traced to the ambition of the clergy, the ignorance of the people, and the superstitious weakness of the reigning princes.

Eadbald, the son and successor of Ethelbert, in Kent, who had professed and supported the Gospel, not only despised Christianity, but lived in incest with his father's wife; whence all who had acted from motives purely secular were easily induced to relapse into idolatry.

Sabereth, King of the East Saxons, who had followed the example of his uncle Ethelbert, was succeeded by his three sons, who became joint heirs of his kingdom. They, and many of their subjects, relapsed into idolatry. Mellitus, bishop of London, having offended them by refusing them the Eucharist, was banished from the

kingdom, and retired into France. Laurentius intended to follow him; but Eadbald, being struck with horror for his crimes, and fearing to lose the benefit of his instruction, forbade his departure, was reformed in his own life and manners, was baptized, and from that time became a zealous supporter of the profession of Christianity. He recalled Mellitus, and, on the death of Laurentius, appointed him the third Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Saxon Heptarchy still continued. Seven kingdoms, often at war with one another, and also with the old native Britons, exhibited throughout the land scenes of the most painful nature. But the gospel was now introduced into the north, where Edwin reigned king of the Northumbrians. A woman was once more honoured as the instrument of making the Gospel known to a king, her husband, and to many of his subjects. Edwin had sent to Eadbald to desire his sister Ethelburg or Tale in marriage. The Kentish prince, with Christian sincerity, answered that it was not lawful to marry his sister to an infidel. Edwin replied that he would certainly grant free liberty of conscience to the princess and her attendants, adding that he himself would receive the same religion if it appeared more worthy of God. Eadbald consented, and sent his sister into the north, attended by Paulinus, who was now made a bishop. His instructions were useful to the young princess; and feeling a strong desire to propagate the gospel in those regions, he preached with great assiduity and some success. Edwin having obtained a victory over the West Saxons, whose king had intended to murder him, resolved to forsake idolatry, and to examine seriously the grounds and reasons of Christianity. He attended the instructions of Paulinus, held conferences with prudent and well-informed persons, and was himself observed frequently to com-