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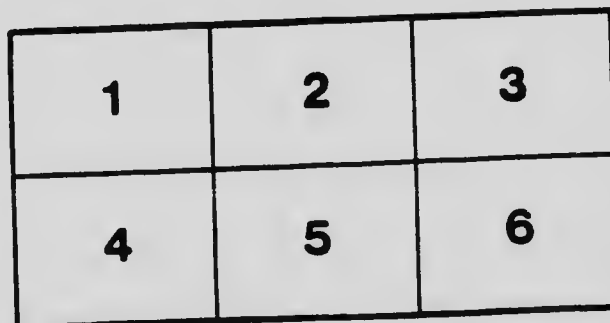
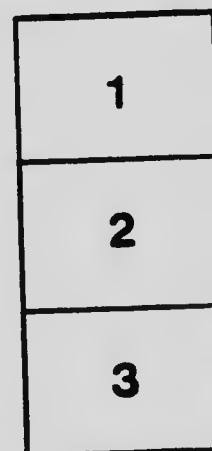
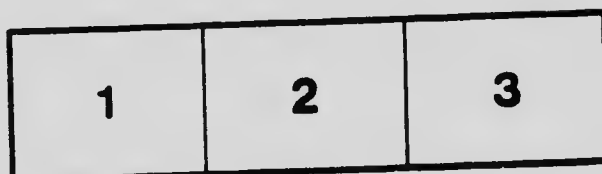
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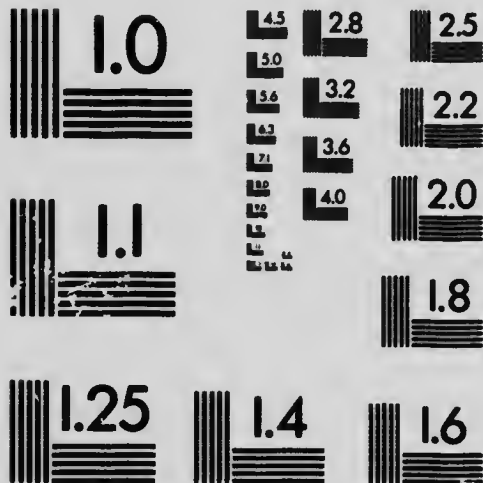
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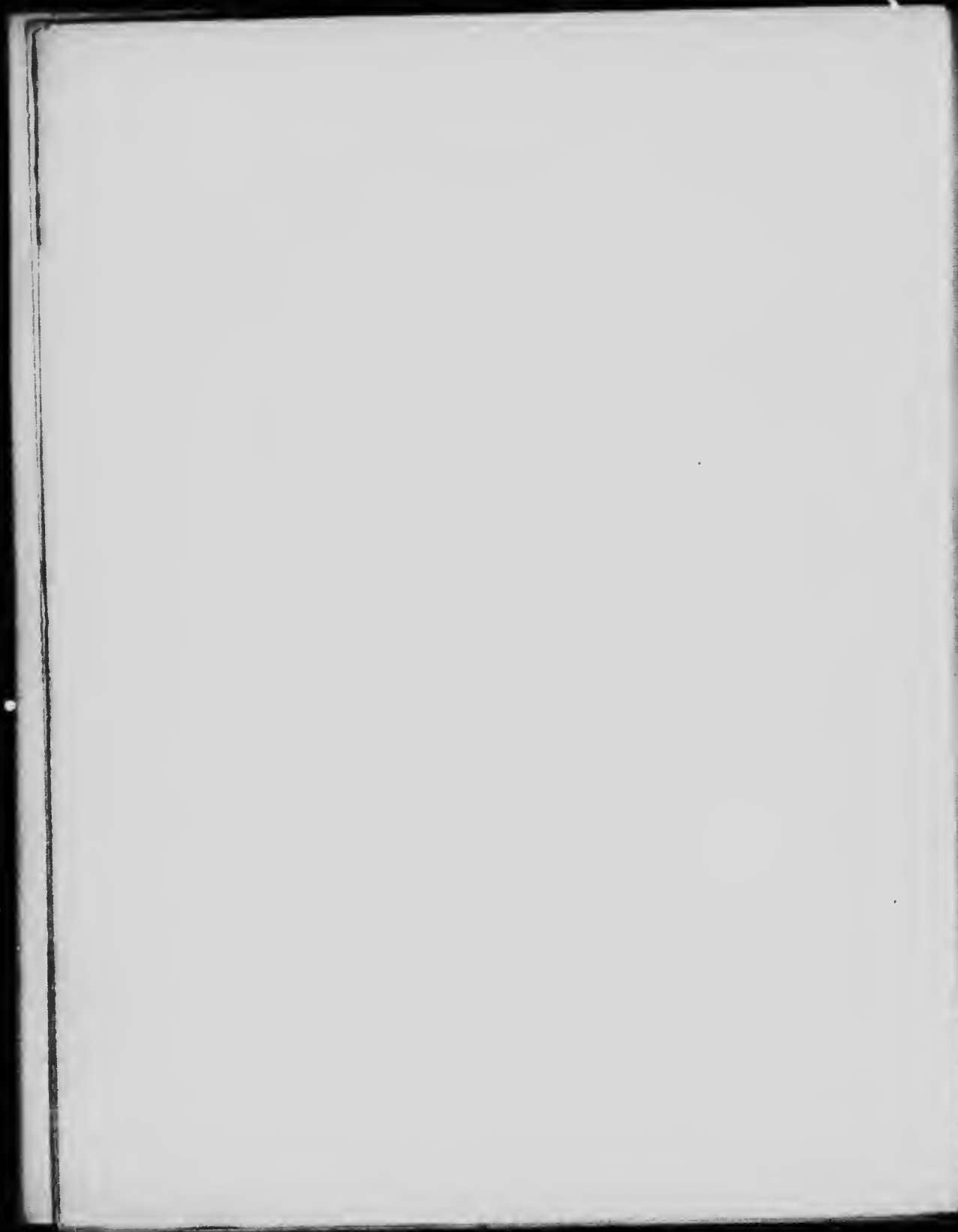
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**THE ENGLISH  
CORRESPONDENCE  
OF SAINT BONIFACE**









*The Martyrdom of St. Boniface*  
*After the fresco by Carl Hesse.*

*J. G. Schlegel del.*

1364  
THE ENGLISH CORRE-  
SPONDENCE OF SAINT  
BONIFACE : BEING FOR  
THE MOST PART LETTERS  
EXCHANGED BETWEEN THE  
APOSTLE OF THE GERMANS  
AND HIS ENGLISH FRIENDS:  
TRANSLATED AND EDITED  
WITH AN INTRODUCTORY  
SKETCH OF THE SAINT'S LIFE  
BY EDWARD KYLIE, M.A.

CHATTO & WINDUS, PUBLISHERS  
LONDON : 1917



Portrait of a young man

John Hamilton of St. Brevin  
John the young to not show

1864

THE ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE OF SAINT BONIFACE : BEING FOR THE MOST PART LETTERS EXCHANGED BETWEEN THE APOSTLE OF THE GERMANS AND HIS ENGLISH FRIENDS: TRANSLATED AND EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SKETCH OF THE SAINT'S LIFE BY EDWARD KYLIE, M.A.

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## THE ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE OF SAINT BONIFACE

No single aspect of the career of Saint Boniface so well illustrates the whole as his connection with England. Not merely was he English by birth and education, but during his residence abroad he always maintained the closest relations with the people of his own race. Indeed, he might almost be said by his loyalty and devotion to have discharged the obligations, however great, under which England placed him. Yet we should do wrong to conclude that patriotism supplied the only or the chief motive of his conduct. He had given his allegiance to the kingdom of Christ: his country merely prepared him for this grander citizenship, and helped him to discharge the duties which it imposed. In order, therefore, that the English correspondence may be regarded in its true perspective, we are required for the purposes of an introduction to take a somewhat broader view of his life and work than the letters would of themselves afford

## 2 THE ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

The effect of the barbarian settlements within the Roman Empire was determined largely by the character of the provinces into which the invaders came. Britain, though bearing outwardly the Roman impress as sharp and well defined as an imperial coin, had not been penetrated by Roman civilization. Hence the pirates from the Continent who drove the provincial population into the western and northern extremities of the island made the country Teutonic in speech, manners, and laws. But so far from pursuing consciously any pan-German mission, the conquerors were merely wild tribes in search of plunder, who, once become the possessors of a rich land, fell to fighting over the spoils. In consequence, the England of Boniface was torn by strife and showed few signs of national unity or life. Even the Church had been hindered by its dissensions from playing the part of peacemaker. The British, who had received Christianity under the Empire, took it with them on their retreat and left the task of converting their enemies to the Roman mission of Augustine, and to Irish and Scotch preachers who came in from the north. All the Christian bodies alike were affected by the changing fortunes of the states which gave them support, while differences in ecclesiastical usage separated the British and Celtic communions from that of Rome. Only after the victory of the latter at the synod

of Whitby (664) could Christianity unite its forces and proceed to weld together the people of the island.

The Continent, which had been more deeply influenced by Rome, was proportionately less altered by the strangers. The provincials of Gaul imposed their language, customs and religion upon the Franks, the survivors among their many conquerors and, by their habits of obedience, assisted the rise of a strong centralized monarchy. The monarchy in turn subdued the more purely German territories to the east of the Rhine, where the Roman eagles had winged at best a timid and uncertain flight. As a result the kingdom of France embraced really two states, Neustria, the western, Roman in character, and Austrasia, the eastern, more distinctively German. These the royal family, gradually enfeebled by the vices of an older civilization, must have failed to keep together, had not their powers been exercised by the Mayors of the Palace. The German family of the Carolings, from which the great Mayors came, saved the crown and the kingdom. The political crisis, however, as so often in history, threw into the background the interests of the Church. It had been vigorous and powerful, at the time when the barbarian invaders were breaking the continuity of the Church in Britain: it maintained large monastic establishments, an organized episcopate, and missionary forces in the Eastern

## THE ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

provinces. But the evils which beset the society of the Franks impaired its vitality. So that when Christianity, newly accepted by the English, was putting forth all the energy of youth, the ecclesiastical system in the Frankish kingdom manifested all the weakness of age. We shall not, then, be surprised to find the English Church pouring some of its best blood into the shrunken veins and hardened arteries of the neighbouring body.

Boniface was born between the years 675 and 680. If tradition be correct in making Crediton in Somersetshire his birthplace, his family must have formed the very end of the wedge which the West-Saxons were driving into the British territory on their south-western frontier. There can be little doubt, in any event, that the monastery at Exeter was his first school. From the wars which raged over the whole country the monasteries offered the safest retreat, and children of good birth were commonly sent to them for their education. But as yet the centres of church life in England were situated towards the south and east ; Exeter stood too remote to catch the waves of moral and intellectual energy which they sent forth. It was only upon joining the community at Nursling, near Winchester, that Boniface experienced the full strength of the new forces.

The new learning introduced from abroad into the

Canterbury school had spread to Nursling and was there earnestly pursued. It involved a careful study of Latin grammar and prosody. From the skill in Latin versification which he now acquired Boniface derived real pleasure and satisfaction throughout his life. But the interpretation of the Scriptures possessed an even greater attraction for him and his contemporaries. He set up as a lecturer on exegetics, and drew large audiences of the brethren and strangers alike, while, by an early extension-scheme, his notes were circulated among the women in distant convents. The academic distinction which he thus attained gave him a place among the "Apostles" of his day, the circle of Bishop Aldhelm, mystic and controversialist, scientist and poet (I). He found also an opportunity of displaying his genius for affairs, being commissioned to submit to the Archbishop of Canterbury the resolutions of a synod held in Wessex under the presidency of the king. A distinguished career in the English Church opened before him, when the call came to leave friends and fatherland for Christ's sake.

Christianity having scattered the mists which shrouded Britain during the sixth century, the island, whither, it was formerly said, there were conveyed at nightfall from the Continent mysterious cargoes of the dead, now shone in learning and piety, a beacon-light for the West. The



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mainland was astir with the passing of English pilgrims, men and women, along the road to Rome, and the impulse to share the faith with people still outside the fold was strong in the newly converted nation. Wilfrid of York and Willibrord had gone among the Frisians, and the two Hewalds among the Saxons; so that in departing for Friesland in 716 Boniface was merely taking up the burden of his race. There, however, he met insuperable difficulties. The spirit of liberty already brooded over the waters and low-lying lands of modern Holland, and the natives were resisting to the death the arms and the faith of their neighbours, the Franks. Their King, Rathbod, having consented to be baptized, had set his foot in the water, when he stopped to ask whether his ancestors were in heaven or in hell. On being told their fate, he cried, "I prefer to be with my ancestors in hell than with a few beggars in heaven," and rejected the sacrament. Before such opposition Boniface retired. On his return to England he was asked to succeed Winbert, his former abbot at Nursling. But realizing that this stern apprenticeship had not shaken his determination to undertake missionary work (II), his friend, Bishop Daniel of Winchester, persuaded the community to let the dignity pass from him.

Boniface had burned his bridges. Yet in spite of his

eagerness to press on he perceived that little could come from these individual sallies into a hostile country. It was better to submit to the designs of the universal Church. "As a limb would seek guidance from the head of the body," so he decided to seek advice and instructions from Rome. With Bishop Daniel's letter of introduction (III), and a band of English friends, he visited the churches of France, and, crossing the Alps, passed unharmed through the Lombard kingdom and the rude barbarian troops who kept the Greek power alive in Italy, to feel the joy of the pilgrim with his goal attained, when, in the late autumn of 718, he begged at the tomb of the Apostles forgiveness for his sins.

As he looked from the throne of Peter, Gregory the Second saw storm clouds hanging heavy over Italy. The Lombards threatened life and property and the independence of the Church, and no real help came from the Emperor at Constantinople, whose motley soldiers proved more dangerous to their friends than to their enemies. The Pope himself had scarcely the means of sheltering those entitled to his protection. Nor could he catch many signs of clearing skies north of the Alps. Charles Martel, the Frank Mayor of the Palace, was ready enough to grasp at missionary effort as a weapon against Frisian independence, and the Englishman, Willibrord, who had

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been ordained bishop at Rome in 695 and put in charge of the Frisian mission, was again beginning a slow advance. But as to Charles' willingness either to reform the Church in the Frankish kingdom, or to render assistance in Italy, Gregory might well entertain serious doubts.

It was only in the German provinces east of the Rhine that a ray of light pierced the gloom. There, through all the shifting phases of the barbarian invasions, Arian, Orthodox and Celtic influences had mingled, with the result that organization was lacking and the people followed still the familiar round of heathen practices. Out of this chaos the zealous English stranger might create a well-ordered Church and unite it closely with Rome. Hence, though the instructions given to Boniface were expressed in the most general terms, he was probably advised to give special attention to those provinces. Wynfrith, his homely Saxon name, assumed a Latin guise. Another barbarian passed into the legions of Rome. With a glad cry of joy he announced his success to his friend Bugga: "God has inclined the supreme pontiff to smile on my heart's wish" (IV).

In many respects the task assigned to Boniface resembled that of the missionaries whom Gregory the First had sent into England. The Irish preachers, who, assisted by the inactivity of the Frank clergy and

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their own political neutrality, did so much to prepare the way in the Eastern provinces, seem to have bequeathed to their followers the quarrel with the Roman Church. There is reason for believing that Boniface was forced to win anew the victory of Whitby on German soil. The conflict between Christianity and the older Teutonic faith also presented similar features. Boniface encountered a few priests and leading men, who, like those at the court of King Edwin in Northumbria, sought to find in reason the grounds of belief. In a remarkable letter (V) Bishop Daniel urged him when dealing with such inquirers to demonstrate by argument the absurdities of polytheism. But to shatter the popular faith the missionary had to humiliate the gods in some more striking manner. Just as Coifi cast his bold lance against the heathen idols, and Willibrord struck down the Frisian gods at Walcheren, so Boniface felled at Geismar the oak sacred to Thor. The practical Englishman rightly valued deeds above words, and the crash of the sacred tree was the death-song of heathenism in Hesse. The way stood open for the adoption of other and more conciliatory means. The instructions which Gregory the Great had given Augustine, to adapt the older temples and festivals for Christian use, Boniface himself obeyed, when, from the ruins of the sacred oak, he built a chapel in

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honour of Saint Peter. Like Paulinus on the memorable mission to the Border country, he shared the sufferings of his flock in Hesse through the year 722, and gained their love and confidence. He recognized, moreover, that it would be necessary to hedge his people about with spiritual and intellectual influences if they were not to wander carelessly into heathen paths. At places in Hesse and Thuringia, on ground given by local converts, he established monasteries like fortresses to hold a conquered country. Many of the orthodox clergy, redeemed from evil ways, lent him assistance, but for effectual aid he turned homeward to England.

On the eve of his venture in Friesland the Archbishop of Canterbury had assured Boniface that he would always be united to his home-Church by a spiritual bond. Of his older friends such as the Archbishop himself, Abbot Beorwald of Glastonbury and Bishop Aldhelm, who had so largely shaped his character and career, only Bishop Daniel of Winchester remained to give him counsel during these years. Yet the same bond held him united with the English men and women of his own generation. "When worn out by the storms of the German sea" (XII) he sought consolation and strength in their prayers (VI). Together they formed a veritable community of prayer in which neither the living nor the dead were ever

## OF SAINT BONIFACE

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forgotten. How completely this comradeship in the service of God made them all kin appears everywhere through the letters. Egburga, who had lost her mother and sister, addressed Boniface as a brother (VII), while Abbess Eangyth and her daughter, Bugga, confided to him without restraint their griefs and perplexities (VIII, IX).

Common literary interests formed another link in the chain of friendship. Archbishop Nothelm (X), Bishop Pehthelm (XI), and Abbot Duddo (XII) had at their command the libraries which English scholarship was enriching, and represented in the eyes of Boniface the best learning of the time. His own literary tastes and love of the Scriptures continued unimpaired. He asked Abbot Duddo to send him, "as a faithful son would an unlettered parent," commentaries upon the Epistles of Saint Paul and any other books likely to be useful. "I desire thee," he wrote, using to this companion of his English days his Saxon name, Wynfrith, "to remember the maxim of the wise man who said 'Hold fast to an old friend,' and not to forget in age that old friendship which we began and kept in youth, but to hold in mind thy father now grown feeble." Hildelida, abbess of the double monastery at Barking, who gave Boniface description of a vision of the after-world as marvellous and characteristic as Bede's

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account of the wonders at Barking itself, had come to Boniface under the influence of Aldhelm, and was interested in poetry and the Scriptures (XIII). When Boniface wished the Epistles of Saint Peter written in letters of gold that he might show them to his people, he trusted to the skilled hands of Abbess Eadburg (XIV, XV). From the English convents there were constantly conveyed to him presents of books, vestments and clothing, testifying not merely to the skill of the makers, but to their desire at any cost to assist and cheer their friend (XVI).

It was not, however, from his contemporaries, but from a younger generation that Boniface demanded the most complete sacrifice. English men and women, some of them formerly his pupils, came at his invitation to transplant in the German wilderness the bloom of their native piety and culture. Of the men Lul may be taken as typical. Born in Wessex, of good parents, he had been given to the monastery at Malmesbury; going thence to Nursling he came under the spiritual and literary influence of Boniface. Thoughts of sin and death consequent upon an illness sent him to Rome, where he renounced his fatherland and determined to join his former master in Germany. Wishing to train and strengthen such young assistants, Boniface allowed him

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some years of study before raising him to the priesthood and assigning him the work which poverty and the bitterness of enemies, as much as the lack of helpers, made so hard (XVII). Amidst these difficulties Lul found strength in his veneration for Boniface, in his attachment to his English friends, and in his own literary pursuits (XVIII, XIX, XX, XXI, XXII). As companions he brought Denehard, the trusted messenger of Boniface to the Papal court, and Burchard and Witta, afterwards bishops. Among the women, like a rich jewel, shone Lioba, "the beloved." At Thanet, whither she had been sent, an only child of noble Wessex parents, Abbess Eadburga taught her the art of verses and the love of Boniface. The young girl wrote her first letter to her mother's kinsman hoping that she might deserve to have him as a brother (XXIII). The friendship born of this letter led her, "beautiful as the angels, fascinating in her speech, learned in the Holy Scriptures and the Canons," to devote all her sweetness of character and her learning to his service. No missionary before Boniface had called women to his aid. Lioba, mistress of a convent at Bischofsheim, her kinswoman, Thecla, ruling two at Kitzingen and Ochsenfurt, Chunihilt, aunt of Lul, at work farther north, carried the spirit of Christian piety and virtue among German women and into German homes. Girls were given them to be



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educated (XXIV). They taught handicrafts and the fine arts. The embroidered sacrament-cloth which Boniface sent to Bishop Pethelm in 735 came almost certainly from their hands.

A service no less valuable was rendered by the English monks. New monasteries rose to be permanent centres for education and parochial effort. Wiehtberht, the English abbot of Fritzlar, faithfully visited the sick in his large parish. His brethren planted vines before their door and spread the knowledge of improved agricultural methods through the neighbourhood. That the work was dangerous and difficult appears from Wiehtberht's letter home to the monks of Glastonbury: hunger and thirst and sickness afflicted the preachers (XXV). But they had zeal and courage, as Boniface knew when he went far to meet them. Indeed the character of his English assistants furnishes the best proof of what Boniface did for Germany. They replaced immoral priests who, instead of stripping from the popular faith the encrustations of heathen beliefs, themselves sacrificed to Wodan. Through their unselfishness and culture, contrasted with the worldliness and ignorance of the Frank clergy, they created a Church in the German provinces, representing the best in Western civilization, and put flame to the torch which the great Charles was soon to hold high before the peoples of Europe.

All these subtle influences of association, learning and piety Boniface intended to make permanent for his people by means of organization. The labourers whom he called into the field were sowing the seed; it only remained to provide for the gathering in of the harvest. Consequently in 741 two bishoprics were established at Buraburg and Wurzburg for Hesse and Thuringia respectively, and the two Englishmen, Witta and Burchard, were appointed to fill them. A peculiar interest attaches to the raising, two years later, of Eichstaedt, near the Danube, into an episcopal seat, as a base for work among the Slavs, for there Willibald, the most romantic figure among the English friends of Boniface, was afterwards bishop. Willibald, who in his infancy had been given to a monastery, upon coming to manhood persuaded his elder brother, Wunnibald, and their father, to join him in a pilgrimage on the continent. The father having married again was loth to leave his home and young children; he set out, however, only to die at Lucca, while his sons pressed on to Rome. Willibald, not content, as his contemporaries usually were, with reaching this goal, became one of the early pilgrims to Jerusalem, and did his part towards creating the passion for the Holy Land which burned like a subterranean fire under the surface of mediæval life to burst forth finally in the Crusades. The weaker brother, remaining in pious

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contemplation at Rome until 738, joined the cosmopolitan throng which crowded to hear Boniface on the occasion of the missionary's third visit to the Eternal City. He followed to the North, where seven churches in Thuringia were put under his charge. Later he and his sister, Waltpurgis, ruled over the double monastery at Heidenheim, in their brother's diocese. The monastery, organized on English lines, set up the first mill to grind the peasants' corn, and taught farming, manners and morals to the people of the district. The loving hand of Waltpurgis preserved the story of the family in which is enshrined so much of the religious devotion and self-sacrificing heroism shown by the associates of Boniface.

While employed in the Eastern provinces Boniface gladly accepted the aid and protection of the Frankish government. He was accustomed to the fullest co-operation between the Church and State in England, where bishops and nobles, sitting with the king, dealt alike with men's souls and bodies. At the outset Gregory the Second had asked Charles Martel to support his efforts, and Boniface acknowledged in a letter to Daniel of Winchester that the Mayor of the Palace rendered invaluable assistance. But it was not to be expected that Charles would be as generous to Boniface as to Willibrord. He was opposed in the Eastern provinces by no such

strong national feeling as existed in Friesland, and he probably regarded with some distrust the reforming zeal of a Roman legate "trained in accordance with the institutions of the Holy Apostolic See." In fact, Charles was using the Church of the kingdom entirely to serve his own ends. Church offices were either kept vacant that the revenues might fall into his hands, or were given to laymen whose palms itched, not for the pastoral staff, but for the good sword and hunting-spear. It never crossed the minds of such prelates to do anything for the preservation of morality or discipline. Synods were no longer held. The culture of the sixth and seventh centuries was dead, and the people, left without light or leading, went astray in the morass of heathen practices.

Charles Martel died in 741. Like many a self-made man he had educated his sons to despise his ways. The new rulers, Carlomann and Pippin, who were reared at the abbey of Saint Denis, showed a desire to promote reforms in the Church. They took the natural course of inviting Boniface to co-operate with them. They saw him everywhere successful, thoroughly experienced, armed with all the prestige and authority of Rome. In Bavaria he had recently restored the shattered fabric of the Church by fixing four dioceses and taking

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the necessary steps to secure the meeting of synods and the restoration of discipline. They knew him to be a foreigner by birth and a stranger to their politics. Seeking protection for the Thuringian Christians against the heathen he had appealed to Grifo, their step-brother, in whose interests Charles Martel wished to carve out a middle kingdom, but he did not fall under suspicion of complicity in Grifo's revolt. Hence in the five synods which met between 742 and 747 his was really the guiding mind.

The programme of reform which Boniface carried through was not a new one, for the evils were such as everywhere resulted from decay, and the remedies followed the traditional lines. The ideal ecclesiastical system which the synod of 747 outlined had been the dream of Archbishop Theodore. It was apparent also that while actually framing his measures Boniface kept English precedents before his mind. Certainly in his determination to have Church-lands restored he shared the conviction of every churchman of his time, that in such a disturbed state of society a permanent organization required independent and settled revenues for its support.

Yet it would be a mistake to infer that the situation in the Frankish kingdom presented no peculiar difficulties.

In his oath to Gregory the Second, Boniface had undertaken to avoid intercourse with enemies of the Church, but he was compelled to regard as such the clerical courtiers whom he met when attending upon the mayors of the palace. Neither Gregory's recommendation that he should by persuasion recall these to the faith, nor the moderate letter so characteristic of Bishop Daniel overcame his scruples (XXVI, XXVII). He complained bitterly to Abbess Eadburga of the snares of false brethren and the lairs of wolves through which he had to pass (XXVIII). Indeed, things soon went far beyond the neglect of social amenities. Those native churchmen who had a vested interest in the maintenance of ecclesiastical abuses could not be expected to welcome the reforming efforts of this English stranger with his Roman mission. The leaders among them, the Bishops of Mainz and Trier, did not attend the first synod, where Boniface was chosen archbishop. There is reason for believing that they made an attempt on his life. Yet Carlomann and Pippin were scarcely free to cast aside the supporters of their father's policy. As a result Boniface found it extremely difficult to pierce through the general indifference and reach the body of the clergy. To all outward appearances, his efforts were crowned with success in the synod of 745. He was elected Archbishop of Cologne

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that he might stand directly at the head of the hierarchical system in the North and occupy a commanding position between the Church of the kingdom and the Church which he had created in the Eastern provinces. But in the following year the opposition prevailed upon the government to withdraw its consent to this measure. Boniface, while still archbishop and legate, was left to administer the diocese of Mainz.

Heresy constituted as great a menace as the hostility of these clerical politicians. Most of the Celtic and irregular preachers who had flourished during a period of lax discipline probably submitted to the synodal decrees. But in places the decaying tissues of the Church had become cancerous growths which needed to be cut away. Aldbert, half-mystic and whole charlatan, erected oratories in his own name, forgave sins without confession, "because everything hidden was known to him," and called the people for worship to the groves and fountains. Clemens, the Scot, a man of greater intellect and integrity, questioned the authority of the Fathers and the canon law. It was only by persistent efforts in the synods and by representations to Rome that Boniface overcame the inertia of the northern Church and silenced these heretics. In Bavaria the educated Celt, Virgil, laid some complaint against him before the Pope. Boniface weighted a counter-accusation

with the charge of heresy. Apparently Virgil had made a shrewd guess at the existence of the Antipodes. We might have expected the contemporary of Bede to take a scientific interest in such a theory, but when Boniface saw the forces of religion and science ranging themselves for a conflict he could not entertain even a momentary doubt as to the colours that he should follow.

The arms which Boniface bore during these engagements had been furnished him by the Head of the Church. At the Papal invitation he visited Rome a second time in 722, and was there consecrated bishop. He proved the orthodoxy of his opinions formed in the English school by a written statement of his belief in the Trinity. His oath followed the formula subscribed to by Italian bishops, and put him in immediate subjection to the supreme pontiff. He carried beyond the Alps a book of Church canons and letters confirming his appointment, directed to the people of Hesse and Thuringia, and to all Christians. Like Augustine, he submitted his difficulties to the Pope. Indeed, the experience of Boniface and his followers in the north resembled that of colonists everywhere: whatever distinguished them from the people of their adoption, language, manners and nationality, threw them more completely upon the support of Rome. The appointment of Boniface as archbishop in 732, his com-



## 22 THE ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

pletion of the organization in the Eastern provinces, and the reformation of the Frankish Church, prepared for what must be regarded in this connection as the climax of his career. In the clerical synod of 747 the members of the restored hierarchy declared "their desire to preserve the Catholic faith, and unity, and submission to the Roman Church, and to obey Saint Peter and his Vicar," and forwarded their pronouncement to the Pope. This momentous profession of what would now be called ultramontaniam furnishes sufficient proof of the success of Boniface in bringing the northern Church to look beyond the Alps. Pippin's negotiations with the Papacy leading to his coronation as King of the Franks showed that the temporal rulers had turned their gaze in the same direction. By his influence, both in Church and State, the English missionary had laid the foundation-stone of the imperial edifice, which rose to its full height and dignity on Christmas Day, 800.

The devotion of Boniface to the Papacy, like true devotion of any kind, was quite consistent with the maintenance of independence and self-respect. On two occasions when his opinion differed from that held at the Lateran he sought to ascertain from the body of precedents the reason for the divergence. With Saint Bernard and Robert Grosseteste he required that the

object of his love should stand above suspicion. The world must behold in Rome a vision of righteousness. When he heard the Papal court taunted with simony he put the charge frankly before Pope Zacharias. In the same spirit he complained that the continuation of a heathen festival in Rome on the first of January gave scandal to the northern peoples and rendered his preaching ineffectual. But his allegiance never wavered. In his letter of greeting to Stephen the Third he besought the new Pope to accept from him the same loyal service which he had given to the two Gregorys and to Zacharias: "If I have accomplished anything for the good of the Church during the thirty-six years of my Roman mission I still wish to complete and perfect it. And anything unwise and unjust in act or speech which is attributed to me I submit with pleasure and humility to the judgment of the Roman Church."

The heavy responsibilities which his duty to the Church laid upon Boniface, so far from crushing out his affection for his homeland, made it even more imperative for him to retain the sympathy and support of his English friends. This is noteworthy because, as can be seen from the letters, still another generation had risen, during the period of his activity in the Frankish kingdom, to rule both Church and State in England. Of his older correspondents only Bugga survived (XXIX). Yet

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the correspondence itself presents the familiar themes. Boniface asks Egbert of York, himself the author of a penitential, for guidance on church rules, and for some of the works of Bede to assist him in his preaching and Scriptural study. To Bede, death and fame had come before Boniface undertook the reformation of the Frankish Church. Hence the missionary could regard the historian "as that candle of the Church which the Holy Spirit lit" in England; he besought Egbert for "a tiny gleam from the candle" to guide him on his way (XXX, XXXI). That the last letters treating of literary matters were sent to Huetberht, Abbot of Wearmouth, and to Egbert, who had his school-library at York, indicates how English culture had passed from the south to the north, and marks the continuity between Boniface and Egbert's pupil, Alcuin, the friend and literary guide of Charles the Great (XXXII). But, as formerly, prayer was the most enduring bond between Boniface and England (XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV). During his trials in the Frank kingdom he needed the spiritual strength which friends like Herefrith, or such a community of prayer as he had formed with Ælbwald of East Anglia and his monastery, alone could give him (XXXVII). He, on his part, brought comfort by his prayers to King Æthelbert of Kent (XXXVIII, XXXIX). So,

too, the pleasure which the friends found of old in the interchange of gifts still endured. Æthelbert did not hesitate to ask for two falcons for his hunting. With good-humoured tolerance Boniface, who was himself a total abstainer, sent two jars of wine to Egbert of York "that he might make a happy day with his brethren."

Yet, though the affection of Boniface for England remained unaltered, his relations with it had necessarily undergone some change. He was no longer the adventurer in a dangerous field, but the great churchman of assured renown, standing at the head of the Northern Church. He could, therefore, with propriety, lead the eight bishops, who, jealous of the good repute of the English race, addressed a remonstrance to Æthelbald, King of Mercia, on his immoral life and his violence towards religious houses (XL, XLI). He was able also to draw upon the treasury of his continental experience for his English friends, as, for example, when he sent the decrees of the synod of 747 to Cuthbert of Canterbury (XLII). The view presented in this letter of the evils which had befallen his native Church since his English days should be compared with that of Bede in the famous letter to Egbert. Both churchmen lamented the encroachments of the State, particularly upon the integrity and

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independence of the monasteries. But it was the danger to the Church which appealed to Boniface, while in the eyes of Bede the absorption of the land by pseudo-monasteries spelt national ruin. His cosmopolitan career had its inevitable result in bringing Boniface to regard the claims of nationality as second to those of the universal Church.

When it is remembered that Boniface was a monk for several years before he entered upon his missionary labours, and that he carried with him from England his deep-rooted attachment to the monastic life, it becomes easy to understand his desire to found a model monastery in Fulda, and his habit when his synodal activity came to an end with the retirement of Carlomann in 748, of seeking rest and quiet within its walls. In its discipline the house followed the best English traditions: "The monks, obeying the Benedictine rule, were men of strict abstinence, neither using flesh, wine, or any fermented liquor, nor having any servants, but content with the labour of their own hands." Boniface visited it yearly to initiate the brothers in the practice of their vocation and in a knowledge of the Scriptures, and to bear his share of their toil. To a small hermitage on a neighbouring hill he retired for writing, prayer and meditation. Standing between the four peoples of his ministry, Fulda set the

seal upon his work and, like the famous monastic centres of England, represented the highest virtue and culture in the north.

It was concern at once for the future of this monastery, and for the fortunes of all his assistants in the East, which led Boniface to present his final request to the Frankish government. Never a politician, he had not been taken into the masterful designs of Pippin upon the crown, though as the leading churchman in the North he anointed the king (XLIII). But believing always that the first duty of the State was to assist in the service of God, he wrote, in 753, to Fulrad of Saint Denis, a letter meant for the royal ear, in which, while sending his greetings and thanks to "our glorious and lovable King Pippin," he pleaded thus for his followers: "They are almost all strangers; some of them priests stationed in many places to minister to the people; some of them monks in our monasteries, teaching children their letters; some of them are old men who have lived and laboured long with me. I am anxious about all these that after my death they may have the royal counsel and protection and may not be scattered like sheep without a shepherd, and that the peoples living near the heathen frontier may not lose the law of Christ."

These manifold and absorbing interests, the care of so

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many souls, the routine of administration, did not quench in Boniface the fire of missionary zeal. Surging over the eastern border the Saxons were a constant danger to his Church and a reproach to their Christian kinsmen. On his second and third visits to Rome the Pope addressed to them eloquent appeals to accept the faith. It was doubtless in eager expectation of himself leading a mission into their territory, that Boniface wrote the splendid letter to his English friends, in which "as an offshoot of the same stock," he urged them to join him in saving the heathen people "of one blood and of one bone" with themselves (XLV). That he could count upon the English following him to the world's end was shown by Bishop Torhthelm's reply (XLVI). But his hopes were never to be fulfilled. In vain had he looked from the rich fields of his own tilling to the eastern lands ready for the plough. He was summoned to bring again under cultivation the soil of the Frankish kingdom in which weeds and brambles had all but choked the seed of Christian faith. While the task was probably less congenial than the conduct of a mission, yet it would be an error to conclude that Boniface was torn by a struggle between the missionary impulse and his obedience to Rome. He accepted without question the guidance of the Pope, and though he did right to regard further missionary effort as the logical com-

plement of his work, he must have recognised the necessity of laying the foundations broad and deep. We cannot allow that in consequence his energy was misdirected, his genius circumscribed, and his growth dwarfed. By a hasty entrance upon a purely missionary undertaking he could neither have secured the permanence of Christianity to anything like the same degree, nor have shaped so unalterably the destinies of Europe.

As it was, Boniface proved more fortunate than most men in that the light of hope, which had shone upon his early manhood, struck across his declining years. He was free at the last to return to his original mission-field. Friesland had never been forgotten; when he first came from Rome he had turned aside to work there for three years under his fellow-countryman, Willibrord. So now he left the security and peace of Fulda, and for the last time took boat on the Rhine, which had so often borne him in his journeying. Believing that he would never return, he bade Lul put a winding-sheet for his body in the chest with his books. Lul was to follow him in Mainz, to complete the church in Fulda and the churches in Thuringia, and to guard the people from error. To Lioba he gave the command that she should remain at her task in Germany—his last testimony to the character of the work which his English friends were



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doing for the German people. She was to be buried beside him; united by their service of Christ in this world, they were to await together the Judgment Day. It was characteristic of the English scholar that he took his books with him. He hoped, with the help of the bishops, the priests, deacons, and monks who accompanied him, to found a monastery and school. Education and Christian instruction would be joined as in Hesse and Thuringia. Probably too the vision of Augustine and the Roman missionaries faring to the North was always before his eyes. Following it, he sailed down the river out of the world where he had found his career. One final act of public policy it remained for him to discharge. He found that the bishopric of Utrecht, rendered vacant upon the death of Willibrord in 739, was claimed for the Bishop of Cologne by virtue of a grant from King Dagobert, "on condition that the Bishop of Cologne should convert the Frisians to the faith of Christ and become their teacher—which he did not do." Naturally Boniface wished Willibrord's foundation to remain intact, so he applied to Rome for the letter of Pope Sergius which had made Utrecht a permanent bishopric in dependence upon the Papacy. It seemed fitting that his career should close with an appeal to the distant power to whose service he had consecrated his life.

The middle portion of Friesland which Boniface entered was not purely heathen, since Charles Martel had overrun it in 734, destroying the pagan idols. He discharged episcopal functions among a population possessing a large Christian element. At Docketing, however, on June 5, 754, a day appointed for confirmation, instead of a body of the faithful who were expected, a heathen band surrounded his tents, determined to exterminate the mission. Forbidding his companions to resist, and merely holding up his gospel-book to ward off the sword from his grey hairs, he met his death.

The crowds which accompanied the body of the martyr from Utrecht to Fulda showed in what regard he was held by his contemporaries. Evidence to the same effect is supplied by the concluding letters of the collection (XLVII, XLVIII). This popularity came to Boniface because, in Lord Macaulay's words, "The world generally gives its admiration, not to the man who does what nobody else ever attempts to do, but to the man who does best what multitudes do well." Alike in his religious views and his intellectual outlook, he saw eye to eye with his friends. He went beyond them in the zeal and ability with which he carried his ideas into action.

That he accepted implicitly the teaching of the Church goes without saying. No trace of doubt or scepticism can

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be found in him. He turned his undeniably powerful and vigorous mind, not to a critical examination into the grounds of belief, but to a more reverent comprehension and application of Christian principles. Hence in the history of religious thought he takes rank with those who uphold tradition and law and things established against those who question authority and sow the seeds of change and revolution. With what might be described as modernism he had no sympathy whatsoever; Clemens and Virgil both fell under his ban. It follows, also, from the nature of his convictions, that every observance, every detail of Christian practice became supremely important. The whole scheme of worship and discipline had to give a logical and consistent expression to the indwelling spirit of faith; a single flaw would weaken the structure, a broken link would destroy the chain. This explains the scrupulous attention to small things which shows itself slightly in the English correspondence and to a marked degree in the letters exchanged with the Popes. The attitude is one common to theologians of the conservative school: first principles being taken for granted, every care must be bestowed on their development and application.

Scrupulousness about the matter and form of belief does not always extend to the domain of conduct, but in the

case of Boniface the whole correspondence shows with how little patience he regarded any defiance of the moral law. His wrath fell particularly upon those holding high places in Church or State who by their evil manner of life endangered their own souls and the spiritual welfare of the whole people. He judged himself with even greater rigour. We search the letters almost in vain for the note of personal satisfaction, of delight over success. The prevailing tone is rather one of despondency. Life is an unending struggle with trials and temptations. In fact, the man who feels himself to be the instrument of Providence, serving not human ambition but a divine cause, can scarcely think otherwise. He can never satisfy the demands made by such a service, and must attribute even a partial success to heavenly aid. The triumph and reward which he hopes ultimately to enjoy will not come here, but with God.

Humility and a sense of weakness, acceptance of pain, and the conviction that joy is not of this world are common to Boniface and all the saints. But, unlike some of them, he had to uphold these unworldly views in the world itself, and in a worldly society. Though firmly attached to the monastic life, he was never a solitary; even at the end of his career when an opportunity for retirement presented itself he turned back into the field of action. That he found it difficult at times to reconcile

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his principles with the necessities of his position may be admitted, but there can be no question of his success in maintaining his ideals unsullied. In another respect he differed from a much greater company of the saints. The spiritual trials which they endured he seems never to have experienced. No record remains to show that he wandered from the path of virtue, or was recalled to righteousness by a great convulsion of his moral being. But if he was spared such misfortunes, he failed at the same time to enjoy the supreme consolation afforded to so many servants of God. We find no indication that like them he held ecstatic communion with Christ and heavenly visitors. He was never lifted out of the light of common day. There fell to him the more ordinary if harder lot of holding true to his faith without either the impetus which the revulsion of feeling following upon guilt has so often supplied, or that vision of his reward which the ecstatic is permitted to behold.

Religion, as the ruling motive in the life of Boniface, necessarily determined the character of his intellectual interests. He was above all else a student of the Scriptures, and gained a reputation with contemporaries for his biblical investigations (XLVII). As we have already noticed, he saw in the Venerable Bede not the historian and scientist, but the writer on scriptural subjects.

Even when he entered other fields of learning, the same influence asserted itself. Though he must have had a knowledge of the Latin classics, to judge only from the allusions in some of the letters addressed to him, and some acquaintance with Greek, yet the bulk of his reading was probably the Fathers and the growing literature of the Church, while his own compositions served a distinctly religious purpose.<sup>1</sup> The only long poem of his which remains describes ten virtues, "the golden apples of the tree of life," and ten vices, "the evil fruit of the tree of death." His verses were by no means a spontaneous outpouring of the soul like the songs and hymns of the early Franciscans, but, following the fashion of the period, were a highly artificial exercise in enigma and allegory, alliteration and acrostics. The teaching, however, which they were intended to convey gave them a certain dignity and impressiveness.

Though Boniface never abandoned his intellectual pursuits, he was not primarily a student or teacher. Religion exercised its most decisive influence upon his life by removing him from purely academic surroundings and calling him into the world. Possibly his character would have saved him from becoming, even in the narrowest

<sup>1</sup> *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, "Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini,"  
t. I.

### 36 THE ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

circles, a mere visionary or self-centred pedant. But it was in the public service of God that his real strength appeared. There is no need to dwell upon his practical ability as shown either in securing the assistance of the government without being defiled by the pitch of political intrigue, or in bringing order out of chaos, stationing his forces at the best strategic points, and completing his organization. He was one of those rare men who can give attention to details without losing grasp of principles. While at times he displayed a characteristically English willingness to compromise, yet for the most part—like other great men of action—he held resolutely, even stubbornly, to his own course. We may fairly compare his vigour and directness with the academic aloofness of Daniel of Winchester and the rhetorical ineffectiveness of Lul.

Boniface owed a large measure of his success to his power of winning and holding followers. The letters furnish constant testimony to the affection and reverence with which those working in the same field regarded him. There is no sign that, as so often happens, the nearer people came to the great man, the less remarkable he appeared. Nor do we find on his part any failure to show justice and consideration to his assistants (XLIV). We are familiar enough with that strong type of personality which commands the loyalty and devotion of subordinates, and

yet treats them as tools to be cast aside when used. The dictates of a selfish policy leave little room for genuine sympathy and confidence. But the relations between Boniface and all his friends rested on a different basis. Their common aim kept personal motives in check, and fostered those virtues and interests best calculated to preserve a lasting and sincere understanding. They became, in reality, members of an harmonious family, whose intercourse was marked, on the one hand, by freedom and the absence of restraint, and, on the other, by perfect delicacy and refinement. Wordsworth speaks somewhere of the "defrauded" lives of those who break the ties of kinship, and, in the ordinary sense of the phrase, abandon the world. He scarcely realizes that such lives may be filled not merely with spiritual hopes and joys, but with the delights and consolations of pure love and friendship. If this selection from the correspondence of Saint Boniface does anything to establish this fact, it will have fully accomplished its end.

The text upon which the translation is based is that given by Dümmler in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolarum III.*

I am indebted to my friend Mr. William Mowbray, of Upper Canada College, Toronto, for many suggestions.

EDWARD KYLIE.

*University of Toronto.*



## 38 THE ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

51

I

*Aedilwald asks Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, to instruct him. He sends poems, one treating of Wynfrith's journey abroad and addressed to him. Before 706.*

To the holy abbot, Aldhelm, bound to me, as his merits demand, by an unbreakable chain of burning love, Aedilwald, a humble suppliant of thy paternal goodness, greetings of eternal salvation in the Lord.

During the course of the summer, while this unhappy country was being terribly harassed by great expeditions of death-dealing invaders, I lingered in thy company for the sake of my reading; then thy holy wisdom—thoroughly acquainted, as I believe, with almost all literary compositions contained whether in profane volumes written in an elegant and rhetorical style or in spiritual books carefully composed after the manner of dogmatic exposition—clearly revealed to me, when the veil of stupidity and folly had been quickly torn away, the deeper studies of

<sup>1</sup> This side-figure is in each case the number of the letter in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolarum III.*

the liberal arts, which, because of their mysteries and difficult character, are barred to the ignorant mind. After the greedy jaws of my thirsty intelligence had eagerly consumed to the last the banquet laid by the well-stored intellect, my mind, still lean and pallid, was fully revived by the expectation based on thy generous and flattering promise willingly to educate and instruct me with all the means of information which my moderate industry craved. Wherefore, my beloved guide to learning undefiled, we think it well that thou shouldst readily prove the truth of thy words by corresponding action, encouraged, as we are, by the words of holy scripture: "My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, thou hast engaged fast thy hand to a stranger: thou art ensnared with the words of thy mouth, and caught with thine own words."<sup>1</sup> But if thou canst not remember that thou art tied and bound by the strong bonds of thy given promise, yet, since from my most tender infancy thou hast loved and nourished me, strengthened me with the more delicate food of thine industry, and brought me step by step to full manhood, it is thought right by all of sane intelligence that thou shouldst nourish me, fed until now upon food suited to the tender mind, with the more solid viands of deeper

<sup>1</sup> Prov. vi. 12. The Scriptural references are to the Vulgate; the English rendering is that given in the Authorised Version.

wisdom. If my humble devotion begs and insists, do not refuse to offer a feast for my nourishment, nor, though thou regardest me as of little account, to enrich thy adopted son at the right moment from the full store of thy paternal knowledge; that the hated groups of audacious rivals may not show their joy and satisfaction with the ringing laughter of eager blame, when they find that the successor is not heir to the rich treasure of paternal philosophy, but remains in the poverty of barbarous ignorance; and let me not, in my misery, be compared with Rehoboam, who, though sprung of the noble stock of King Solomon, distinguished both for his admirable wisdom and his abundant riches, was born in an unhappy hour and lacked almost entirely his father's good fortune. Wherefore, come, discharge thy promise and bring to completion the generous work of instruction once begun, assured that thou shalt win thereby the greater glory of an eternal reward, on the assurance of the Lord who says: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."<sup>1</sup>

We have added to this letter three poems suitable for singing, arranged in different ways. The first employs the dactylic hexameter, usual in heroic poetry; its metre is, I think, carefully worked out, and through chance, or, to speak more accurately, through the will of divine pro-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 22.

vidence, it is divided into seventy equal verses. The third, which has no regular metre, contains eight syllables in each verse, and one and the same letter is repeated at the beginning of the words in the same line; it has been arranged hastily with a rapid pen. I am sending it dedicated to thee, my wise teacher. The middle one, which is composed with the same arrangement of verses and syllables, deals with the journey across the sea of Wynfrith, my client and thine: I have shown and forwarded it to him. These I thought it necessary to lay before the eyes of your<sup>1</sup> holiness; it seemed proper in my poor judgment that I should first reveal to thee my feeble literary efforts. Since, if approved by your taste and corrected in accordance with the true standard, they become forthwith acceptable to great numbers of readers.

Farewell in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Aedilwald here uses the plural "you," instead of the more familiar "thou" which he has used up to this point. In practically every case where such changes occur in the letters, the translation follows the text. The writer usually lapses into the more official and correct form, as though he suddenly became conscious of the dignity of the person addressed.

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9

II

*Wynfrith encourages the youth Nithard in the pursuit of virtue and of his literary studies. 716-717.*

To Nithard, dear companion and beloved friend, whom neither a perishable gift of worldly wealth nor the pleasing charm and blandishments of flattering words won to me, but whom the splendid affinity and kinship of the spirit recently linked with me by an imperishable chain of love, Wynfrith, a suppliant, greetings of eternal welfare in Jesus Christ.

From my humble place I pray, noble youth and dear brother, that thou mayst not fail to recall the words of Solomon the wise: "In all thy works remember thy last end: and thou shalt never sin,"<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere: "Walk while ye have the light, lest the darkness of death come upon ye,"<sup>2</sup> because the things of the present will quickly pass, but those that abide for ever will soon be at hand. All the treasures of this world, whether in gleaming gold and silver, or in starlike gems, or in the strange

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus vii. 40.

Cf. John xii. 35.

diversity of sumptuous food and costly garments, by a just comparison pass like shadows, disappear like smoke, vanish like foam, for the psalmist truly says: "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth,"<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere: "My days are like a shadow that declineth: and I am withered like grass."<sup>2</sup>

Wealth-loving sybarites are known from Holy Scripture, to keep in misery a fruitless watch,<sup>3</sup> to spin vainly fragile spider-webs which catch a light breeze or dust, since, according to the psalmist, they heap up riches and know not for whom they gather them. And when death the agent of the hated Pluto, grinding his bloody teeth lurks at the threshold, terror-stricken and deprived of all heavenly aid they suddenly lose their precious and false wealth, which night and day they greedily and anxiously saved, and with it lose their souls. Then, caught away by fiendish hands, they enter the awful gates of Erebus to pay an eternal penalty.

Since all these things are true beyond a scruple of a doubt, I implore thee with the most earnest prayers which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ps. cii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. ci. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Reading for the *apo ton grammaton agiis frustratis adflicti, inservire excubiis* of the text, *apo ton grammaton agiis* (ungrammatical ἀπὸ τῶν γραμμάτων ἁγίους) *frustratis adflicti inservire excubiis*.

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my love can suggest, that having considered their truth thou wilt hasten to revive the grace of natural ability which is in thee, and wilt not extinguish in the mire and dust of earthly desires the knowledge of the liberal arts and the bright spiritual fire of divine understanding; but mindful of what the psalmist says of the happy man: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in His law doth he meditate day and night,"<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere: "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day,"<sup>2</sup> and of what is said in Deuteronomy concerning the law of Moses: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night,"<sup>3</sup> thou wilt put aside the harmful obstacles of other things, and wilt strive to pursue the study of the Holy Scriptures with all the bent of thy mind, and thereby to acquire that truly noble and splendid grace which is divine wisdom. For it is more splendid than gold, brighter than silver, more resplendent than the carbuncle, clearer than crystal, richer than topaz, and on the authority of him who speaks wisdom, all precious things are not to be compared with it. What, beloved brother, can youth more properly seek or age more soberly enjoy than the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures? Guiding the ship of our soul it will bring it, without shipwreck in the

<sup>1</sup> Ps. i. 2.      <sup>2</sup> Ps. cxxi. 97.      <sup>3</sup> Josh. i. 8.

dangerous storm, to the beautiful shore of paradise and the eternal joy of the angels in heaven. Of it the same wise man has said: "Wisdom overcometh evil. She reacheth therefore from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly. Her have I loved and have sought her out from my youth, and have desired to take her for my spouse: and I became a lover of her beauty. She glorifieth her nobility by being versant with God: yea, the Lord of all things hath loved her. For it is she that teacheth the knowledge of God."<sup>1</sup>

Wherefore, if the Omnipotent God wills that returning, as I purpose to do, I should reach those parts,<sup>2</sup> I promise to be thy faithful friend in all things and in the study of the Holy Scriptures, so far as my strength allows, thy devoted assistant.

Fare well, my brother, in youth's flower and strength,  
Mayst flourish with the Lord in His eternal home,  
Where martyrs hymn the King in heavenly choirs,  
And prophets and apostles add their meed of praise,  
Where, for eternity, the King of Kings His subjects dowers,  
There mayst thou bear the form of cherubin and seraphin,  
To the apostles heir, of prophets son.

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<sup>1</sup> Sap. viii. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Hauk (*Kirchengeschichte Deutschland*, i. 418 n. 2) conjectures that Boniface is writing here of a proposed return to Friesland.



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Nithard, avoid the dark contagion of this lowly earth,  
In punishment of Hell will it involve thee,  
The choirs above the heaven's blue seek to discover,  
Hosts singing to the God of Truth eternally,  
Angelic canticles; there in the highest place  
Resplendent stand; the golden prize of Heaven's court:  
Draw down upon thy gleaming brows, and with thy praise  
Hymn Christ on His celestial throne.

11

## III

*Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, gives the priest, Wynfrith, a general letter of introduction. 718.*

To the pious and clement kings and to all princes, to the reverend and beloved bishops, to the holy abbots, the priests, and the spiritual children of Christ, Daniel, servant of the servants of God.

The commands of God must be observed by all the faithful with sincere devotion, and the Holy Scriptures show how great is the reward of hospitality and how acceptable it is to God to discharge kind offices to travellers. The holy Abraham, because of bountiful hospitality, deserved to receive the blessed angels and to enjoy converse with them. Even so Lot, through the same discharge of pious offices, was snatched from the flames of Sodom; he was obedient to the commands of Heaven, and the grace of hospitality saved him from doom in the flames. So it will avail to your eternal salvation if you show to the holy priest and servant of the Omnipotent God, Wynfrith, who bears this letter, the love which God himself prizes and enjoins. Receiving the servants of God, you receive

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Him, for He has promised: "He that receiveth you receiveth Me."<sup>1</sup> Doing this with heartfelt devotion you fulfil the bidding of God, and trusting to the divine promise you will have eternal reward with Him.

May the grace of God protect you.

Matt. x. 40.

15

IV

*Bugga congratulates Boniface on the successful issue of his affairs. She promises that she will send later "The Sufferings of the Martyrs" for which he has asked, and sends other gifts. 720-722.*

To Boniface, or Wynfrith, honourable servant of God, distinguished by many spiritual gifts, worthy priest of God, Bugga, a lowly handmaiden, sends her undying love.

Be it known to thee, my gracious friend, that I give thanks to Almighty God without ceasing, because, as I learned from thy letter, He has poured upon thee His manifold mercies, and jealously guarded thee on thy way through unknown countries. First he inclined the pontiff, who holds the chair of Peter, to smile on thy heart's wish. Afterwards he laid low before thee, Rathbod, that enemy of the Catholic Church; and then he revealed to thee in a dream that thou wert to reap the harvest of God and to gather the sheaves of holy souls into the granary of the heavenly kingdom. Wherefore, I acknowledge the more freely that no temporal vicissitudes can move my

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mind from its steady guardianship of thy love. But the flames of that love burn the stronger in me, since I know that, through the merits of thy prayers, I have come to a harbour of some quiet. And so, again I humbly beg thee, deign to offer thy intercession before God for my poor self, that His grace may keep me safe under thy protection.

I would also have thee know that *The Sufferings of the Martyrs*, which thou didst ask to have sent thee, I have not yet been able to obtain, but I shall send it when I can. And do thou, my beloved, send to console me what thou hast promised in thy kindest of letters, some selections from the Holy Scriptures.

I beg too, that thou wilt offer holy masses for my relative \*\*\*, who was dear to me beyond all others. With this messenger I send thee now fifty shillings and an altar pall, because I could not get larger gifts. But these, though small, are sent with my fondest love.

Fare well throughout this life in sanctity and "love unfeigned." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 6.

23

V

*Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, instructs Boniface as to what means he should use in converting the heathen to Christianity. 723-725.*

To Boniface, honoured and beloved leader, Daniel, servant of the people of God.

Although, my beloved brother and fellow-priest, I rejoice that thou dost deserve the first reward of virtue, who trusting in the might of the faith hast boldly attacked the stony and hitherto barren hearts of the heathen, and working them tirelessly with the plough of gospel-preaching dost strive to change them by daily toil into fertile harvest-fields, so that the words of the prophet and of the evangelist may be applied to thee, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness"<sup>1</sup> and the rest, yet a portion of the second prize will come, not unjustly, to those who give what aid they can to such holy and saving work, and supply the needs of the preachers with the corresponding means of strength, that they may be eager to

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xl. 3; Matt. iii. 3.

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take up the task of preaching thus begun and to beget spiritual sons for Christ.

Hence, out of devotion and goodwill, I have sought to make to thy prudence a few suggestions, that thou mayst know, how best in my judgment to overcome promptly the obstinacy of ignorant minds. Thou shouldst not offer opposition to them concerning the genealogy of their false gods. Thou shouldst suffer them rather, to claim that they were begotten by others through the intercourse of man and woman ; then thou canst show that gods and goddesses who were born after the manner of men were men rather than gods, and in that they existed not before, had therefore a beginning.

When they have learned perforce that the gods had a beginning, since some were born of others, they must be asked whether they think this universe had a beginning or was always in existence. If it had a beginning, who created it? For certainly they cannot find for the gods begotten before the establishment of the universe any place where these could subsist and dwell ; by the universe I mean not merely the visible earth and sky, but the whole extent of space, which the heathen themselves can grasp with the imagination. But if they maintain that the universe always existed without a beginning, seek to refute and convince them by many arguments and proofs ; if they go

on contending, ask them : Who ruled it ? How did they reduce beneath their sway and bring under their jurisdiction a universe that existed before them ? Whence and by whom and when was the first god or goddess constituted or begotten ? Do they suppose that the gods and goddesses still beget other gods and goddesses ? If they do not, when or why have they ceased ? If they do, the number of the gods must now be infinite ; and who is the most powerful among so many and such great beings, is unknown to mortals, so a man must be on his guard for fear of offending the strongest. Do they think the gods should be worshipped for temporal and present blessings, or for an eternal and future reward ? If for a temporal, let them show in what respect the heathen are happier than the Christians. What again do the heathen mean to confer by their sacrifices upon their gods, who have all things under their sway ; or why do the gods leave it in the power of those subject to them to decide what tribute to offer ? If they need such things, why could they not themselves have made a better choice ? If they do not need them, the people are wrong to suppose that the gods can be appeased with such offerings of victims.

These questions, and many like them, which it would take too long to enumerate, thou shouldst propose to



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them in no irritating or offensive manner, but with the greatest calmness and moderation. And from time to time their superstitions should be compared with our, that is Christian, dogmas, and touched upon indirectly, so that the heathen more out of confusion than exasperation may blush for their absurd opinions, and recognize that their detestable rites and legends do not escape our notice.

It would also be natural to infer that if their gods are omnipotent and beneficent and just, not only do they reward their worshippers, but punish those who despise them. But if they do both in the temporal order, why do they spare the Christians, who turn nearly the whole world from their worship and overthrow their statutes? And these too, that is the Christians, possess the fertile lands and the provinces fruitful in wine and olives and overflowing with other riches, and have left them, that is, the heathen with their gods, only the frozen lands in which these latter, banished from the whole world, are wrongly thought to hold sway.

There must be constantly brought before them the supremacy of the Christian world: by comparison, those who persevere in the old-time vanity are very few.

And that they may not boast of the sway of the gods over these people as legitimate and existing always from the beginning, point out to them that the whole world

was given over to the worship of idols until, illuminated by the knowledge of the Omnipotent God, its creator and ruler, it was vivified through the grace of Christ and reconciled to God. For when among Christians the children of the faithful are baptized daily, what do they do but purify themselves singly from the uncleanness and guilt of paganism in which the whole world was once involved?

These things I have sought out of love for thee to bring to thy notice, though I am so weakened by bodily illness, that I can fitly say with the psalmist: "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness has afflicted me." Wherefore do I the more earnestly entreat thy reverence to pour out, together with those who with thee serve Christ in the spirit, prayers and entreaties for me, that the Lord who made me drink the wine of sorrow may hasten with His tender mercy; that as He punished justly so He may graciously pardon, and of His goodness suffer me to sing with rejoicing the verse of the prophet: "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart Thy comforts have given joy to my soul."<sup>1</sup> I pray that thou mayst fare well in Christ and remember me, dear fellow-priest.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xciii. 19.

31

VI

*Boniface urges some one to pray to God for him.  
About 735.*

To a venerable and reverend brother, connected with him by ties of spiritual kinship, Boniface, lowly servant of the servants of God, greetings of love in Christ.

With humblest entreaty we beg thee of thy brotherly mercy to be mindful of our weakness and to make intercession for us since by reason of our sins we are buffeted from all sides by the storms of a dangerous sea: asking Him who dwelleth on high and looketh down on the low things and pardoneth our faults to put the word into our mouths so that the gospel of Christ's glory may have free course and be glorified among the nations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 1.

13

VII

*Egburg writes to Wynfrith of her desolation and her regard for him. She asks his prayers. 716-720.*

To Wynfrith, holy father and true friend, by right and merit worthy of honour, filled with the grace of divine knowledge and of religion, Egburg, the lowliest of thy pupils, both men and women, sends wishes for welfare eternal in the Lord.

Thy love is as a bond that holds me; since I tasted it in my inner being, like some honeysweet essence the sweetness of it fills my soul. And now, though I have been robbed of the sight of thee, when I but scarce attained it, yet shall I always hold thy neck entwined with a sisterly embrace. Wherefore, my erstwhile beloved brother, thou shalt be called in the Lord of Lords alike father and brother, for after a bitter death and cruel took from me my brother Oshere, whom I cherished beyond all others, I put thee in my love before almost all men. And to waste words no longer, not a day unrolls its length, not a night passes away but I recall thy teaching. It is because of this, believe me before God, that I

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embrace thee with all my love. And I trust in thee because I never forget that friendly affection which I know thou didst always have for my brother. Though in knowledge and virtue he surpassed me, yet in love and regard for thee I do not come behind him. Time has run quickly on its course, but the dark cloud of my grief has never abandoned me;<sup>1</sup> the lengthening period has only added to my woes, as it is written: "The love of man brings sorrow, but the love of Christ illuminates the heart." And after my dearest sister Wethburg—a new wound, a fresh grief—suddenly vanished from my sight,<sup>2</sup> with whom I grew up and was nurtured at the same breast, for the one mother bore us, in Jesus' name I declare everywhere was sorrow and desolation, and the face of death.<sup>3</sup> I should have preferred to die, if so it had pleased God, to whom hidden things are plain, or if tardy death had not delayed. But now, what shall I say? Before that hour, not bitter death but a still more bitter parting unexpectedly divided us, he I think, the happy one, me the unhappy one, left, like something cast aside, to serve this world. I loved her so dearly, whom now, I hear, a Roman prison holds. But the love of Christ which grew and flourished in her

<sup>1</sup> *Aeneid* viii. 258.

<sup>2</sup> *Aeneid* ix. 658.

<sup>3</sup> *Aeneid* ii. 369-370.

breast, is stronger and mightier than all bonds, and "Perfect love shows fear the door." Behold, the Ruler of high Olympus,<sup>1</sup> who so enriches you with divine doctrine, grants happiness amidst unspeakable delights, and in his law thou wilt meditate day and night ; as it is written : "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."<sup>2</sup> She is now climbing the steep and narrow path ; but I lie in the depths bound by the fetters of the law of the flesh. On the Day of Judgment, rejoicing with the Lord she will say : "I was in prison and thou didst come unto me."<sup>3</sup>

Thou too, at the resurrection, when the twelve apostles are seated on their twelve seats, wilt have thy seat there ; and over all those whom thou hast won by thine own labours, wilt thou, their leader, bear to a golden crown, rejoice before the throne of the Eternal King. But I, still in this vale of tears, weep, as is right, for mine own sins, because God has made me unworthy to be joined with such friends. Therefore, believe me, not so eagerly does the storm-tossed sailor long for the harbour, nor the thirsting fields crave rain, nor the anxious mother on the curved shore await her son, as I long for a

<sup>1</sup> *Aeneid* ii. 779.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. x. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxv. 36-43.

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sight of thee.<sup>1</sup> But borne down by my sins and faults innumerable I have been brought to despair of being freed from the dangers that threaten me. Wherefore, a sinner, cast at thy feet, out of my heart's inmost recesses, I have called to thee, O my father, from the borders of the world, that, as my soul requires, thou shouldst raise me upon the rock of thy prayers, for thou hast become my hope, and a strong tower against my visible and invisible foes. And to console my boundless sorrow, and to calm the wave of my grief, let thy strength be set as a prop to my weakness, so that it may not utterly fail. And I humbly ask thee, deign to send me for my comfort, some holy relics, or a few words from thy hand, that in them I may always have thee with me.

Farewell and all success be thine, while thou dost live for God, and dost again and again intercede for me.

I too, Ealdbeorcth, a poor servant of Christ, greet thee in the Lord with all affection. I beg thee remember in thy holy prayers that friendship thou didst once pledge; so that, though separated in the body, we may be joined in memory.

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, letter to Ruffina (ed. Vallarsius, i. 10).

*Abbess Eangyth and Heaburg thank Wynfrith for his letters. They write of their misfortunes and of their desire to go to Rome. They recommend Denewald. 719-722.*

To Wynfrith called Boniface, blessed in the Lord, honourable in faith and in love, enriched with the dignity of a priest, crowned with flowers of virgin chastity as with a garland of lilies, trained in the knowledge of doctrine, Eangyth, unworthy handmaid among the Lord's handmaidens, who, though undeserving, holds the place of abbess, and her only daughter Heaburg, called Bugga, send greetings in the Holy Trinity.

To thank thee for the love and affection which thou didst send in the letter brought by the messenger from across the sea no words from our lips can avail. Happy are we if thy praise of us is merited, though we fear greatly that praise undeserved is more of a reproach than a commendation.

Beloved, brother in the spirit more than in the flesh, lavishly endowed with spiritual graces, God alone is our witness, that by the tears which thou canst see staining



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the letter, to thee alone have we wished to tell how we are weighed down by a crushing load of misery, and by the distraction of worldly affairs. As when the might of the foam-laden sea sweeps and rends the mountainous billows broken on the rocks, and the raging winds and tempests drive in headlong wrath through the long channel and the boat keels are upturned, and the ship's mast is bent under, so the vessels of our souls are shaken by a great coil of woes and the burden of many calamities ; thus the voice of Truth speaks of the house in the gospel : "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house," and the rest.<sup>1</sup>

First and beyond all the woes which the aforementioned evils from without create must be put the chain of innumerable offences, and the perfect confidence which rests upon no sure ground. It is not so much thought on our own souls, but, what is more difficult and serious, thought on the souls of all those of different sex and age committed to us. We are to serve these many and varied minds and characters and afterwards to give an account before the judgment-seat of Christ not only for manifest sins in deed or in word, but also for those hidden thoughts which escape all men, and are plain to God alone ; it is to lead a battle with one line against two, with ten thou-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 25-27.

sand in the face of twenty thousand. And to the care of souls are added difficulties with household affairs and the disputes and discords which the enemy of all goodness sows ; he infects the hearts of men with bitter malice and scatters it among all mankind, but especially among monks and the dwellings of monks, for he knows that " the mighty shall be mightily tormented." <sup>1</sup>

Besides, poverty and the scarcity of temporal things grind us and the barrenness of our land ; and the hostility of the king before whom we are accused by those who envy us, as a wise man says : " For the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things." So, too, the service of the king and queen, of the bishop and the prefect, the nobles and counts : it is all too long to tell, and can be reviewed more easily in the mind than by word of mouth.

Added to all these sorrows is the loss of our friends and the band of our relatives and kinsfolk. Neither son nor brother, father nor uncle have we, but an only daughter, almost destitute of everything valued in this life, an aged mother, her sister and their brother's son. He is very unfortunate, because of his own disposition and the hatred which the king bears his race. There is no one else of our kin, for in divers ways God has removed them. Some died in their fatherland, and their bodies

<sup>1</sup> Sap. vi. 7.

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rest in the foul dust of the earth, to rise again on the day of doom, when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and all the human race shall come forth from the dark tombs, to give its account; their spirits will be borne away on the arms of angels to reign with Christ, where all pain will cease and envy die and sorrow and lamentations flee before the faces of the saints. But others of them left their country's shores and trusted themselves to the fields of the sea, and sought the shrines of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and of the many martyrs, virgins and confessors whose number and whose names are known to God.

For these and all such reasons, which we could scarcely recount in a day, even though, as is said, it were when time lengthens in July or August, we are weary of life and find it loathsome to live. Every man who is wanting in his own cause, and trusts not his own counsels, seeks out a faithful friend whose counsels he can trust, since he trusts not his own; he will have such faith in him as to reveal and lay open to him every secret of his heart. What is sweeter, as is said, than to have a friend with whom thou canst speak of everything as with thyself? So because of all these woes which we have related in redundant phrases, it was needful for us to seek out a faithful friend, one in whom we could trust better than in ourselves, who would bear our griefs and misery and

poverty, and would feel for us and console us and sustain us with his eloquence and lift us up with the strength of his words. Long have we sought, and we trust that in thee we have found that friend whom we craved and desired. And if God would grant that by the guidance of His angel, as He sent the prophet Habakkuk into the den of lions with food for the prophet Daniel, and Philip, one of the seven deacons, to the eunuch, we could come into those foreign lands where thou dwellest, and couldst hear the living words from thy mouth, how sweet, O my master, would thy eloquence be to my palate, sweeter than honey itself to our lips.

But since by our merits we have not deserved this, but are separated from thee by a long stretch of land and sea and the borders of many provinces, yet because of that trust in thee which we have mentioned above, we would have thee know, Boniface, our brother, that for a long time we have desired, like most of our relatives and friends, and many strangers, to seek Rome, once mistress of the world, and there obtain pardon for our sins, just as many others did and still do; I myself especially had this desire, who am the more advanced in years, and in my life have transgressed and sinned the more. With this wish and purpose of mine, Wale, once my abbess and spiritual mother, was acquainted. But my only daughter

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was still in the years of her youth, and could not feel the same longing. We know there are many who attack this wish and cry down this service of love, supporting their opinions with such proofs as these: the decrees of the synods command that every one should remain where he has been placed and has made his vows, and should there discharge his vows to God. But we all live with different desires, and the judgments of God are hidden, as the prophet says: "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains: Thy judgments are a great deep."<sup>1</sup> In this case His will and law are utterly concealed from us. Therefore, amidst this uncertainty and darkness, we beg of thee, with our faces cast down in all humility, to be our Aaron, that is a mount of courage, to support us by the strength of thy intercession, and from the burning censer of thy prayers to make the incense rise before the sight of God, and to let the lifting up of thy hands be set forth as an evening sacrifice. For truly we trust in the Lord and beseech His clemency, that in answer to the entreaties from thy mouth and thy fruitful prayers, He may show us through thee, whatsoever He judges right and useful for us, whether to live in our native land or to go hence on our pilgrimage. Likewise we beg thee deign to send us thy answer across the sea,

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxv. 7.

and reply to what we have set down on these tablets, in our rustic and unpolished style. Little faith have we in those who glory in appearance and not in heart, but all in thy loyalty and devotion to God and love of thy neighbour.

The brother to whom we referred above, though we named him not, our friend and kinsman Denewald, if God decree that he should turn his course to those lands and to that mission where thou dwellest, do thou receive in love and kindness, and with thy blessing and favour, guide him, if it is his wish to go, to the venerable brother Bertheri, priest and confessor, who has long dwelt in that mission.

Farewell, brother in the spirit, faithful and beloved with a sincere and pure affection. Mayst thou attain all prosperity in the dear Lord. A friend is long sought, scarcely found, and hard to keep. Pray in our behalf, that bitter faults and transgressions may not work us harm.

*Boniface replies to Bugga, who has asked his advice about going abroad. He promises to send later the passages for which she has asked, and thanks her for her gifts. About 725 (?)*

To the lady Bugga, abbess, dearest friend and sister, in the love of Christ to be placed before all others of her sex, Boniface, a poor and unworthy bishop, sends wishes for eternal salvation in Christ.

Be it known to thee, my dearest sister, that as to the advice for which thou didst ask my unworthy self, I cannot presume either to forbid or to urge strongly upon thee a journey abroad. But I shall put the case as I see it. If to seek quiet and contemplation of the Lord thou hast put aside the anxiety which thou didst feel about the servants and the handmaidens of God and the monastic life, why shouldst thou now submit, with toil and wearing anxiety, to the words and wishes of unworthy men? It seems to me better that if, because of the world thou canst not find in thy native land the freedom of a quiet mind, thou shouldst, provided thou hast the will and

power, seek liberty for contemplation by going abroad, just as did our sister Wiethburga.<sup>1</sup> She has told me in her letters that she has found by the shrine of Saint Peter such quiet of life, as for a long time she has sought and desired. As regards thy wish—for I wrote to her about thee—she bade me have thee wait until the wars and dangers threatening from the Saracens, which have lately manifested themselves in Italy, shall have ceased, and until she herself shall send you, God willing, a letter of invitation; and this I think myself to be the best plan. And so thou shouldst prepare the necessaries for the journey and accept her advice, and afterwards do what the goodness of God shall enjoin.

Concerning the copy of the passages, which thou didst request of me, thou must pardon my sinful neglect, for, owing to pressing work and continuous travelling, I have not yet completed what thou didst ask for; but when I have it finished I shall be sure to have it sent to thee.

I thank thee for the gifts and garments which thou hast sent, and pray the Omnipotent God to grant thee an eternal reward with the angels and archangels in the heights of heaven. So I beseech thee in God's name,

<sup>1</sup> The name given in the text is retained, but the person is doubtless the same as the Wethburg mentioned above in letter VII.



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my dearest sister, nay, mother and sweet lady, to pray for me constantly, because for my sins I am worn out by tribulations and disturbed much more by anxiety and mental care than by bodily toil. Be assured that the old confidence between us never fails. Farewell in Christ.

*Boniface commends himself to the love of Nothelm, Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>1</sup> He asks him to send the questions of Saint Augustine and Saint Gregory's replies. He wishes to know if it is unlawful for a man to marry a woman for whose son he has stood sponsor at baptism, and in what year the first priests were sent by Saint Gregory into England. 735.*

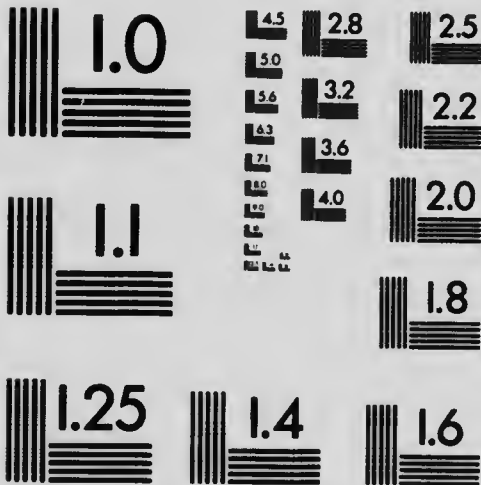
To Archbishop Nothelm, dearly beloved master, wearing the robes of the highest priestly office, Boniface, poor servant of the servants of God, sends greetings of undying love in Christ.

I beseech your holy clemency with my most earnest entreaties, that you should deign to remember me in your holy prayers, and seek to make secure in a harbourage of unshakeable rock the ship of my mind buffeted by the waves of many storms among the people of Germany, and that, just as your predecessor, Archbishop Berhtwald of honoured memory, bestowed his parental love upon me

<sup>1</sup> 735-739.



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when I was leaving my native country, so I may be bound to you in fraternal communion by a spiritual bond and tie of love, and together with my comrades in the mission may deserve to be joined always with you in the unity of the Catholic faith and the sweetness of spiritual affection.

Likewise I earnestly beg you to have sent to me a copy of that letter wherein, it is said, are contained the questions of Augustine, the first bishop and first missionary of the English, and the replies of the Pope Saint Gregory. Among other points, it mentions that the faithful of the third degree of relationship are allowed to marry. Would you examine too, with all possible care, whether this letter can be proven to be that of Saint Gregory or not, because it was not found with other copies of the Pope's letters, so the librarians say, in the library of the Roman Church?

Moreover, I seek your advice about a sin which I have committed unwittingly, by yielding to a man in regard to his marriage. The case was this: A man took a woman's son at baptism, as often happens, and raised him for his own son, and when the boy's mother afterwards became a widow he married her. This the Romans claim is a sin, and a mortal sin at that, and require divorce under such circumstances. They declare that during the time of the Christian emperors a crime of this sort was to be punished

by death or perpetual exile. Wherefore, if you can find this counted such a great sin in the decisions of the Catholic Fathers or in canon law or in Holy Scripture itself, inform me of the reference, that I may understand by my own judgment whose authority supports this decree ; I can in no way comprehend why in one case spiritual kinship in marriage is such a great sin, when all of us become in baptism sons and daughters of Christ and the Church, and thereby brothers and sisters.

I must ask you also to tell me in what year from the birth of Christ, the first missionaries sent by Saint Gregory came to England. Farewell.

*Boniface sends gifts to Pehthelm, Bishop of Hwiterne. He asks whether it is permitted for a man to marry a woman for whose son he has been sponsor at baptism. About 735.*

To his venerable and beloved fellow-bishop, Pehthelm, Boniface, humble servant of the servants of God, kind greetings of love in Christ.

With heartfelt entreaty, we beg of your parental clemency and goodness, that, as is needful amidst these dangers, we may be aided by your powerful prayers, and that since the German sea is dangerous for those who navigate it, we may come through your prayers and the guidance of the Lord, without spot or stain upon the soul, to the shore of eternal peace; and that while we are toiling to offer the light of the gospel-truth to the blind, who know not their own blindness and wish not to see, we may not be wrapped in the darkness of our own sins, nor run, nor have run in vain, but that, supported by your prayers, we may strive in purity and light towards the splendour of eternity. We have sent you some small

gifts in token of our love, a sacrament cloth ornamented with white spots and a towel to wipe the feet of the servants of God. These we beg of you to accept as a remembrance of us.

About one thing too we wish to hear your counsel and judgment. The clergy through the whole of France and Gaul, as well as those who speak for them, declare, that a man is guilty of the greatest crime in marrying a widow for whose son he has stood sponsor in baptism. This kind of sin, if it really is one, I did not know of before, and I have not learned that in the canon law or in the decrees of the pontiffs, in the writings of the Fathers or the apostles it is put in the list of sins. Therefore, if you have found it discussed anywhere in the writings of the Church, be sure to tell me, and give me also your opinion on the matter.

That you may advance in all holy virtues and long enjoy health is my wish in Christ.



*Boniface reminds Abbot Duddo of their old friendship. He asks him to send treatises on Saint Paul, and to inquire why a man should be forbidden to marry a woman for whose son he has stood sponsor in baptism. 735.*

To his dear son Abbot Duddo, Boniface or Wynfrith, servant of the servants of God, kind greetings of love in Christ.

I desire thee, my beloved son, to remember the maxim of the wise man who said, "Hold fast to an old friend,"<sup>1</sup> and not to forget in age that old friendship, which we began and kept in youth, but to hold in mind thy father now grown feeble, whose limbs are turning into the way of all earthly things. Though I was a teacher too little learned, yet as thou didst thyself allow, I sought to be devoted to you above all. Mindful of that devotion, have pity on an old man worn out by the storms of the German sea which buffet him on all sides; raise me up with thy prayers poured out to God, and aid me

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus ix. 14: Ne derelinquas amicum antiquum.

with the Holy Scriptures, and especially with the spiritual treatises of the Fathers. The spiritual treatise is recognized as being the instructor of those who read the Sacred Scriptures. I ask thee to send me as an aid to my knowledge of divine things a part of a commentary on Saint Paul, which I lack. I have commentaries on two of his Epistles, the one to the Romans, and the first to the Corinthians. So too, whatever thou shouldst find in the library of thy church and think useful but unknown to me or not in my possession, inform me of it as a faithful son would an unlettered parent, and send me, as well, thine own notes. And should it please thee, let us so arrange between ourselves that whatever . . . my son, Eaba, the priest who carries my letter will tell thee about the marriage of a mother to a man who has stood sponsor for her son at baptism. Search in the Scriptures why this is judged by the Romans to be a capital crime; and if thou findest any discussion of this sin anywhere in the writings of the Church be sure to make it known to me.

I wish thee health and prosperity in Christ.

10

XIII

*Wynfrith describes to Eadburga, Abbess of Thanet, a vision seen in the monastery at Wenlock.—About 717.*

To the holy virgin and dear lady, Eadburga, who has already discharged her term of monastic life, Wynfrith, poor servant of the Lord, love and greetings in Christ.

Thou didst ask me, dear sister, to send you an account as the venerable Abbess Hildelida gave it to me, of the wonderful vision seen by the man who recently, in the convent of Abbess Milburga, died and came back to life. I thank God that now I can the more fully meet thy wishes, because but lately I spoke with this brother myself, when he came back here from abroad; he set forth to me in his own words the marvellous spectacle which he beheld when rapt in spirit beyond the body.

He said that, amidst the pain of a sharp sickness he had been freed from the weight of the flesh. It was much as though one seeing and awake had his eyes veiled by a thick covering; this being suddenly taken away, everything would be clear which before had been invisible,

hidden and unknown. In like fashion when the covering of this mortal flesh had been thrown aside, before his gaze lay gathered the universe, so that in a single view he beheld all lands and peoples and seas. As he quitted the body, angels of such dazzling brightness that he could scarcely look upon them for their splendour, bore him up. With sweet and harmonious voices they were singing, "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy wrath: neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure."<sup>1</sup> "They raised me," said he, "high into the air, and circling the world I beheld a blazing fire, the mighty flame soaring terribly aloft, as though to grasp the whole mechanism of the world in its embrace, had not the holy angel calmed it with the sign of Christ's holy cross. When he had made the sign of the cross before the threatening flame, it gradually retired. By its terrible heat I was sorely tried, while my eyes were burned, and my sight was shattered by the brightness of the gleaming spirits until an angel, splendid to behold, touched my head with a protecting hand, and brought me safe from harm in the flames."

He added that during the time while he was out of the body, such a multitude of souls leaving the body had gathered where he was as to exceed what he had thought

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxvii. 2.

before to be the numbers of the whole human race. An innumerable band of evil spirits and a bright choir of heavenly angels had also assembled; and there was the greatest dispute between the demons and the angels over the souls leaving the body, for the demons were accusing the dead and making heavy the burden of their sins, while the angels were excusing them and lightening their load.

He had himself heard all his own sins, which he had committed since his youth, and had neglected to confess or forgotten, and some acts which he had scarcely thought sinful, cry out against him, each with its own voice, and make the most dreadful accusations. Each vice came forward in its own person to speak; "I am thy cupidity, wherewith thou didst often desire what was unlawful and contrary to the commandments of God." And another: "I am thy vainglory, wherewith thou didst boastfully exalt thyself above thy fellows." And another: "I am falsehood, wherewith thou didst sin through lying." And another: "I am the idle word, which thou spakest to no purpose." And another: "I am the sight, which thou didst abuse in looking at unlawful things." And another: "I am the contumacy and disobedience, wherewith thou wert disobedient to thy spiritual superiors." And another: "I am the torpor and laziness shown in neglect of holy studies." And another: "I am the wandering thought

and useless care with which thou didst concern thyself overmuch, either within the church or without it." And another: "I am the sleepiness oppressed by which thou didst arise late to confess thyself to God." And another: "I am the unprofitable journey." And another: "I am neglect and carelessness, which made thee indifferent to the study of the divine word." And the rest were like to these.

Everything which he did during the days of his life in the flesh and neglected to confess, and much which he had not known to be sinful, cried out bitterly against him. And the wicked spirits, joining in the accusations and bearing hard testimony, kept calling up the places and occasions of his wicked deeds, and confirmed with their cries what his sins said. He saw there too a man whom he had wounded before he had become a monk, and who was still in this life, brought to give testimony of his guilt. The bloody and open wound and the blood itself cried out with its own voice, and imputed to him the crime of shedding blood. When his sins were thus reckoned and heaped up, the old enemies declared, that as a guilty sinner he should come beyond a doubt under their sway and jurisdiction.

"Against them in excuse for me," said he, "cried out the poor virtues of the soul, such as I, wretched one, had unworthily and imperfectly practised. One of them said :

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'I am the obedience which he showed to his spiritual superiors.' Another: 'I am the fasting with which he chastised his body when warring against carnal desires.' Another: 'I am the sincere prayer which he poured out in the sight of God.' 'I am the kindly aid which he mercifully rendered to the sick.' 'I am the psalm which he sang to God in satisfaction for an idle speech.' And so each virtue, excusing me, cried out against the rival sin in my defence. And the bright angelic spirits magnified and confirmed the virtues, and spoke in my behalf. Indeed, all these virtues were much increased and seemed much greater and more excellent than could have been practised worthily by any strength of mine."

He told, too, how he had seen, as it were, in the depths of this earth many fiery pits, belching forth terrible flames, and as the awful blaze burst forth, the souls of miserable men, under the form of birds, flew through the flames lamenting and bemoaning, with human cries, their deserts and their present punishment. They rested, hanging for a little time on the edges of the pits, and then screaming, fell into the depths. One of the angels said, "This moment of rest shows that the Almighty God means to grant these souls on the Day of Judgment to come, relief from punishment and eternal rest."

But under these pits in the lowest depths, in deepest

hell, he heard the awful weeping and wailing of sorrowing souls, terrible, beyond the power of words to describe. And the angel said, "The lamentations and weeping which you hear in the depths come from those souls whom the mercy of God will never come. But everlasting flame will torture them without end."

He saw, too, a place of marvellous beauty, in which a glorious multitude of beauteous men rejoiced with exceeding joy; and they invited him to come and share their happiness, if it were permitted him. There came thence a fragrance of surpassing sweetness, because it was the gathering of the blessed in their bliss. And this place, the holy angels told him, was the renowned paradise of God.

He beheld also a river of fiery pitch boiling and blazing, wonderful and terrible to behold. Across it a beam was set for a bridge, to which the holy and glorious souls hastened as they left the assembly, eager to cross to the other bank. And some crossed with certain step. But others slipped from the beam and fell into the hellish stream. Of these some were entirely immersed, while others were only partially covered, it might be to the knees, or to the waist, or merely to the ankles. And yet each one of those who fell climbed from the river upon the other bank brighter and more beautiful than he



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was before he had fallen into the river of pitch. And one of the blessed angels said of the souls who fell : "These are the souls who, after the end of their mortal lives, had a few trivial faults not entirely washed away, and needed bountiful castigation from a merciful God, that they might be worthily offered unto Him."

Beyond the river he saw, shining with a great splendour, walls of astounding length and height immeasurable. And the holy angels said : "This is the holy and renowned city, the heavenly Jerusalem, in which these holy souls will find joy for ever." He said that these souls and the walls of the glorious city to which they hurried after crossing the river, were resplendent with such a flood of dazzling light, that the pupils of his eyes were shaken by the exceeding splendour, and he could no longer look upon them.

He told how to that gathering there had come among the other souls the soul of a man who had died while abbot. It was a fair and beautiful soul. The evil spirits seized it, and claimed that it was under their rule and sway. Thereupon one of the choir of angels replied : "I will show ye quickly, ye abandoned and miserable spirits, that this soul is not proven to be under your power." And at these words there suddenly intervened a great throng of white souls who said : "He was our

master and teacher, who, by his rule, has won us all for God. And by this price is his redemption purchased, and he is shown to be not of your law," and they made as though they would join the angels in the struggle against the demons. By the aid of the angels they snatched away the soul, and freed it from the power of the evil spirits. And an angel, driving the demons, cried, "Know ye and understand, that ye took this soul unjustly; get ye gone, spirits of evil, into eternal fire." When the angel had spoken, the demons raised a mighty lamentation and sound of weeping; in a moment, as in the twinkling of an eye, with baneful flight they hurled themselves into the pits of burning fire. But after an interval they came forth again into the assembly to dispute about the merits of souls.

The merits of different men who were still alive he had also beheld at that time. Those who were not slaves to crime, but who, by relying on holy virtues, had clearly won the favour of the Omnipotent God were kept safe by the angels and were joined to them in love and friendship. But those who were polluted with unspeakable vices and the stain of unclean lives, a hostile spirit constantly accompanied, always urging them on to sin; and, whenever they sinned in word or deed, the spirit proclaimed it to the other abandoned spirits that they

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might be glad and rejoice. And when a man sinned the evil spirit made no delay by waiting until he should sin again, but brought each error singly to the notice of the other spirits. At one moment he pressed sinful deeds upon the man, and at the next announced among the demons their accomplishment.

He told, among other things, how he had seen a girl still in this earthly life grinding corn in a mill. She saw lying near her a new distaff adorned with carving which belonged to another. It seemed beautiful to her and she stole it. Then, as if filled with a great joy, five loathsome spirits bore news of this theft to the others in the assembly declaring the girl guilty. He added: "I saw there the sad soul of a brother who had died a short time before. I attended him in his last illness and performed the burial rites; when dying he bade me relying on his word to ask his brother to manumit, for his soul's sake, a slave girl whom they owned in common. But the kinsman, bound by avarice, did not fulfil the request. And with deep sighs the soul kept accusing the unfaithful brother and making bitter complaint."

And he bore witness likewise about Ceolred, King of the Mercians, who, there is no doubt, was still in the flesh when this vision was seen. He beheld the king protected against the onslaught of demons by a screen of

angels like a great book spread out above him. But the enraged demons kept demanding of the angels that this defence be taken away and that they be permitted to work their cruel will upon him. They imputed to him a multitude of horrible and unspeakable crimes, and threatened that he must be shut in the direst dungeons of hell and there, as his sins merited, be tortured by eternal torments. Whereupon the angels, more disheartened than was their wont, said: "Alas, that a sinner should not suffer his defence to stand, and that through his own fault we cannot afford him any aid." And they took away the bulwark from above him. Then the demons with joy and exaltation gathering from all the universe in numbers he thought beyond all men who drew the breath of life harassed and tore him with infinite tortures.

Then the blessed angels enjoined him, who, rapt outside the body, had seen and heard all these things in spiritual contemplation, to return without delay to his own body, and to declare without hesitation everything which had been shown him, to those who believed and asked with good intention, but to refuse word of it to scoffers. They bade him relate to a certain woman who dwelt in a remote region, her past sins in order and intimate to her that she could still make satisfaction to the Omnipotent God if she would; and they commanded him to unfold

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all this spiritual vision to a priest, Beggan by name, and afterwards, according as he was instructed by Beggan, to announce it to men; his own sins, which the unclean spirits had imputed to him, he should confess and make amends for, according to the judgment of this priest; and on the authority of the angelic precept he should testify of this priest that, for many years, without the knowledge of man and only out of love for God, he had worn an iron girdle about the loins.

He said that while he was absent from his body he came so to despise it that, in all his vision, nothing appeared to him so hateful, nothing so contemptible, nothing reeked with such an offensive odour as his body, save the demons and blazing fire. And the brethren, whom he beheld discharging the last offices, he despised because they took such care for his hateful body. Yet at the angels' command he returned at the break of day to the body which he had quitted at the first cock-crow. After his return for a full week he could see nothing with his bodily eyes, for they were filled with tumours and frequently dropped blood.

And that everything which had been revealed to him by the angels concerning the holy priest and the sinful woman was true, he proved afterwards from their own lips. And the death of the wicked king, which soon

followed, showed beyond doubt that what he had seen concerning him was true.

He said that many other like things had been shown him which he had let slip from his memory and could not recall. Indeed after this wonderful vision his memory was less tenacious than before.

At his request I have written these things carefully as he told them to me in the presence of my holy and venerable brethren, who also heard the story; and they can be taken as witnesses to this letter.

Fare thee well; mayst thou live as a virgin the true angelic life and with good repute reign eternally in heaven with Christ.

*Boniface asks Eadburga, Abbess of Thanet, to copy for him the Epistles of Saint Peter in letters of gold. 735.*

To his revered and beloved sister, Abbess Eadburga, Boniface, poor servant of the servants of God, kind greetings of love in Christ.

I pray Almighty God, who rewards all good works, that He may grant thee in the heavenly mansions and the everlasting tabernacles, and in the court of the holy angels, an eternal recompense for all the kindnesses which thou has shown me, because, by helpful and consoling gifts of books and vestments, thou hast of thy goodness often relieved my distress. So now I beg thee to carry still further what thou hast begun, and to copy in gold the Epistles of my lord, Saint Peter, that the Holy Scriptures may be honoured and revered when the preacher holds them before the eyes of the heathen; and I long, above all else, to have with me, the words of him who guided me into this path. I have chosen the priest Eoba to write this request.

Deal then, my dear sister, with this request of mine,

as in thy kindness thou hast always been wont to deal  
with my petitions, so that here also thy works may shine  
in letters of gold for the glory of the Heavenly Father.

It is my wish that thou mayst fare well in Christ and  
advance in holy virtues to still higher things.



*Boniface thanks Eadburga, Abbess of Thanet, for books she has sent him. About 735.*

To the Abbess Eadburga, beloved sister, now long bound to him in the kinship of spiritual love, Boniface, servant of the servants of God, sends constant greetings in Christ.

May the Eternal God, who rewards just deeds, grant that my dearest sister rejoice in the celestial choir of the angels, for by sending a gift of scriptural books she has consoled with spiritual light an exile in Germany, who must trace dark and unfrequented places among the German nations, and who, unless he have the word of God as a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path, will fall into the snare of death. But beyond this, trusting constantly in thy love, I beg thee, deign to pray for me, because, for my sins, I am assailed by the storms of a dangerous sea; ask Him who dwelleth on high and looketh down on the low things and pardoneth our faults, to put into my mouth the word, that the gospel of Christ's glory may have free course and be glorified among the nations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 1.

97.

XVI

*Cenae writes to Boniface of her good-will towards him.*

723-754.

To the venerable Archbishop Boniface, lover of Christ, Cenae, unworthy one, greetings.

I confess to thee that though I behold thee but rarely with bodily eyes, yet do I never cease to look upon thee with the eyes of the spirit and the heart. These small gifts are intended rather as a sign of my love than an offering worthy of thy holiness. This also I would have thee know, that to the very end of my life I shall always recall thee in my prayers; and I beg thee by our plighted friendship to be faithful to me in my weakness, as I trust in thee, and to aid me in thy prayers that God Omnipotent may order my life according to His will. And I ask that if any one of thy people should ever come to this province he may call upon my poverty, and, if in anything I can give thee or any one of thy friends temporal or spiritual assistance, he may show me how, so that, as I believe, for the greater safety of my soul, I can fulfil thy bidding and command to the limit of my strength.

Farewell always in God.

103.

XVII

*Lul asks Boniface to grant him permission for the sake of his studies to remain longer in Thuringia. 732-754.*

To Boniface, dearest lord, my devoted master in my literary studies, wearing the robes of the highest priestly office, Lul, one of the many fruits of your piety, loving greetings of true affection in Christ.

We are warned by Holy Scripture not to do anything rashly without counsel, as it is written: "Do then nothing without counsel," and the rest. Wherefore I think it proper to address a letter from my ignorance to the heights of your sagacity, and in it to intimate the occasion, nay more, the object of my petition—that, with both in view, my wise master may decide what seems best to him, and may graciously indicate to his servant the bidding of his pleasure, resting upon which I may gladly obey. I confess, to thee, dearest of masters, that if, since I came to Thuringia with the permission of your holiness to pursue my reading and study, the feeble spark of my poor intelligence avails to understand or investigate anything, I impute it first, after God, to your goodness. But

I could not apply myself to reading so zealous'y, as I knew to be necessary for I was hindered by two causes, weakness of the eyes and headache, and especially by a third, an inward failing, torpor of the mind. May your paternity, therefore, suffer me to remain here a little longer, so that you, who according to the apostle feed with milk your thirsty son, not yet accustomed to a solid diet of bread, may, when he has grown stronger by the help of the bountiful clemency of Christ and the intercession of your prayers, receive him at the fitting time for the discharge of his service to you. But if your discretion determines otherwise, and He to whom the infinite ages will not add anything or from whom take aught away, gives me strength, at the very moment you bid me, I shall promptly return. Meanwhile, through the mercy of God, of which the earth is full, embracing thy feet as a suppliant on bended knees, I beseech thee, deign to intercede for my innumerable faults before the merciful and just Judge. I do not wish, however, to lessen hereby your highness' favour towards me, since our Jesus, the glory of heaven and the salvation of the world, to whom all things are clear, and from whom things hidden are not concealed, commands us saying: "Ask, and it shall be given you," and the rest.<sup>1</sup> Nor do I think so much to efface the marks of my own swollen

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 7.

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audacity by these means as to find a saving remedy, when I know myself to be sick and seek a physician. The little verses written below I have sent thee, dear father, for correction, wishing to deserve your comments, that I may recognize from them the ways of my errors.

May the divine Trinity, holy and undivided, keep your lofty dignity which presides ably, far and wide, over the people of the Catholic Church successful against all adversities to the very end of life's course.

May God, the Omnipotent, make thee increase  
In pious deeds, with gain perpetual of many souls,  
That rich in heaven's wealth thou mayst deserve at last  
To hear the gladsome voice of God: "Good and faithful  
servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord: thou hast  
been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler  
over many things."<sup>1</sup>

'This rest be it assured thee, this hope and this salvation,  
Through grace of God, who all things made and lives  
And reigns, before all ages, without end, without beginning  
Whose bounteous mercy bade me, wretched, come  
To thee as master, while beneath guilt's heavy load oppressed,  
With no light in my heart, I wandered far and loved my ease,  
And thought things sweet which always threaten every soul.  
But Christ the Saviour's grace drove darkness from my laden  
breast

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 1.

## OF SAINT BONIFACE

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And gave my heavy wits His goodly gifts. To Him be  
praise

And honour without end. And, O my guide on straightest  
path,

May thy reward for toil increase on heaven's heights

And thy great wisdom's crown, of which I am the lowliest  
part.

98.

XVIII

*Some one [Lul] writes to an abbess and a nun, and tells of his pilgrimage to Rome, of his loneliness and sickness. He recalls that formerly he was carefully attended by them. Instructed in the art of poetry by Boniface, he sends them some verses of his own composition. 723-754.*

To \* \* \*, endowed with virgin chastity and refreshed from on high by the honey-sweet flood of heavenly dew, ennobled not merely by high birth, but also, as is better, by the dignity of her spiritual office, governess of the daughters of Christ who bear the light yoke of God, tireless guardian of the flock entrusted to her care, and of a rule of monastic life determined in accordance with the authentic opinions of the ancient Fathers; and to the young and distinguished \* \* \*, adorned with the white garment of uncorrupted purity, steeped in the living and ever abundant waters of the broad-flowing heavenly stream, illumined not only by the outer brilliance of learning, but by the inner light of divine wisdom, \* \* \*, who, without the prior claim of merit, discharges the duties of a

spiritual office, kindly greetings on the stone of the corner, which is Christ.

I confess to your love : when, touched as I think by the beneficent warning of the divine goodness, I departed from the famous kingdoms of Britain, leaving the fruitful soil of my native island whose craggy coasts the dark green waves of the foaming sea hem in on every side, and conscious of my weakness and mindful in some measure of my sins, together with a band of almost all my kindred, crossed, by the favour of Christ, the threatening hills of the raging sea, and happy in the fulfilment of my wish rejoiced in having reached the shores of this land ; then I longed to present myself at the shrine of the blessed apostles, that I might pray to have put off from me the weight of innumerable sins, but there, after almost all my kindred had fallen into the long sleep of peace, I was left alone and widowed in this sad exile. None the less must I tell you in what distress and grief I remained. I did not escape the onslaught of the plague with my former health and robust strength of limb ; but, praise and thanks to the Scourger, all the joints of my limbs were shaken and twisted, and I am still weak and outworn . . . from my experience, both new and old, I declare, not to flatter you, but relying on the strength of truth, that I have found, among all those of your sex who dwell here, none



more faithful: while for five times five long months the heat and cold of panting fever in turn tortured my sick body, I remember with what loving kindness I was cared for. This mercy, as I am aware, you showed me in my infirmity and sickness, obeying the precepts of the Lord, and hoping for the eternal reward; and to this day you have displayed towards me as towards a brother this same unwearying affection in consideration of the divine love.

Wherefore, when I have found fitting material for writing to you, I shall celebrate, in verse, the spiritual bond of your loving kinship with us. Since Christ, the giver of all good things, in His wonderful clemency, let me share in this gift through the heavenly dew of His grace, I long held it fixed in my mind, and dear to my heart, to send you some poor verses, composed in metrical sequence, because I knew none among those who read, to whom I should more gladly send them: for with you I am certain that the tooth of suspicion will not bite, nor the claw of harsh judgment rend the writer, though the contents be faulty and the composition rough. This poetic art I have but lately learned under the instruction of our common and my special master, our revered leader Boniface, to whom,—after the Heavenly Lightbearer, before whom the secrets of the heart are revealed, and from whom the dark and the hidden things do not lie

concealed—the eye of my mind is open, and by whom my dry heart is watered daily with the heavenly shower of nectar from on high.

The verses you will find designed after a droll fashion, if you will with care scan the capital letters, that is, those which every fourth line enclose with their embrace, the others placed in the centre. Those, with which I designated your name, as that of my spiritual mother, begin at the beginning and run on regularly to the end. My pupils begin from the end of those letters devoted to you, not improperly, because the pupil should follow her mistress as does the maid her lady ;

*Esto Susanna memor Domini regnantis in ede :*

And so they begin at the end :

*Ernklind esto memor Domini celorum in arce.*

But if you find anything unsuited to the work, anything involved or contrary to the rules of grammatical art, this remember to polish, taking a file from the shop of the grammarians. And I beg of you with earnest prayers by that imperishable bond of spiritual love, not to show this work to any one without my consent, or to betray the author of it without my permission ; that a dangerous crop of envy may not grow, where the concord of true peace

should flourish. But rather be ever mindful of the plighted troth and the intimacy formed between us by the firm link of our hands. And I do humbly beseech you, deign to lighten the burden of my toil with your pure and holy prayers.

*Lul asks Dealwin, his master, to pray for him and to send him some works of Aldhelm. 732-746 (?).*

To my trustworthy brother Dealwin, long since my master, Lul, an unworthy deacon, who holds the office of deacon without the claim of merit, loving greetings in the Lord.

With earnest entreaties, I ask of thy loving mercy that thou shouldst deign to support the barque of my weakness with thy kindly prayers, so that covered by the shield of thy prayers and intercessions, I may deserve to arrive at the harbour of safety and to win pardon for my sins in this earthly prison; just as I asked thee in the past year through our brother Denewald, the bearer of my letter. Accompanying this letter are some trifling gifts, not worthy of thee but sent with a devoted mind. Likewise I pray thee to send me some work of Bishop Aldhelm, whether in prose or verse, as a consolation in my exile and in memory of that holy pastor. And do thou tell me in some of thy kindly words, what thy fatherly love can accomplish in answer to these petitions; for this I crave eagerly to hear.

That thou mayst enjoy health, increase in prosperity, and long intercede for me is my wish.

*Ingalice, a priest, replies to the deacon Lul. He sends gifts and asks to be remembered to Boniface. 732-746.*

To Lul, distinguished and beloved minister of God, Ingalice, an unworthy priest, but yet thy devoted servant through all things, affectionate greetings in the Lord.

Thy wise letter and generous gifts reached me as directed. In the letter which I read carefully and considered, after sending kindly greetings, thou didst tell us if I understood aright, of thy diverse trials and tribulations—such as are wont to assail the servants of God in this world according to the opinion of the apostle: “All that live godly in Christ suffer persecution.”<sup>1</sup> Against all the assaults thou didst humbly seek the help of our prayers, such as it is; and, indeed, all our brotherhood has been zealous in pouring out prayers to God for thy safety. But now, beloved deacon, though because of my poor ability I could not discharge my debt to thee by a worthy reply to thy learned letter, yet I know that “Charity beareth all things.”<sup>2</sup> These few words from

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 4-7.

my untrained pen together with some poor gifts, four knives made after our fashion, a silver curling iron and one towel, I have arranged to send in charge of a faithful bearer, thy, nay our brother, Aldred, to thy dear presence, merely in memory of our love. I beg thee, my brother, to receive these in the spirit in which I have sent them. To our intercessor before God, the venerable Boniface, our protector, the whole band of our brethren and the abbot desire to send greetings in the love of God.

*Lul asks Lioba not to doubt his affection for her. He wishes her to send word with Gundwin as to anything she may need. 732-754.*

To Lioba, beloved sister in Christ, Lul, the humble servant of the pupils of our master Boniface, greetings in the Lord.

I cannot believe that in thy zeal and wisdom thou art unmindful of the gospel words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."<sup>1</sup> This poverty must be borne patiently, on the authority of the same evangelist, who says: "In your patience possess ye your souls."<sup>2</sup> Retain also in thy heart these words of David, "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul."<sup>3</sup>

Though for a long time since we have been kept apart in the body, thou must not believe that our true kinship in the Lord has been given over to contempt or forgetfulness. Nor must thou suppose that I am at all weary in thy

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxi. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. xciii. 19.

business, but only, as thou shouldst know, occupied by the crafty wiles of the devil and worn out by the cunning assaults of his ministers, so that, in the words of the prophet, "I am weary of my life because of the sons of iniquity."<sup>1</sup>

Should anything be wanting to thy needs, tell me of it through the deacon Gundwin, who is to return here. Exhort him that he may not slacken in his efforts on my behalf, for any one willing to bear my tribulations along with me is but rarely found.

Farewell in God, and intercede for me the more earnestly that I am crushed by ever-increasing perplexities.

<sup>1</sup> Job x. 1.



*Lul, the deacon, urges Eadburga, Abbess of Thanet, to commend him to God. He sends gifts and mentions his own regard for her. He asks for a letter. 745-746.*

To the Abbess Eadburga, revered and beloved in Christ, Lul, an unworthy and lowly deacon, sends eternal greetings in Christ.

I beseech thy kind clemency with humblest prayers that thou mayst deign to be mindful of me in the holy protection of thy prayers, as thy gracious love promised me through my brother returning hither. This do I most earnestly beg that the ship of my weakness, which is shaken daily by violent storms of this world, may be supported by the aid of thy firmness; that I may be fortified against the poisoned shafts of the old enemy by the unfailing assistance of thy prayers. Some small presents I have sent to thy revered love, a silver style and some pieces of storax and cinnamon; so that thou mayst know from these poor gifts how pleasing to me are the presents which have come with thy greetings. And if thou shouldst wish to give any command through the

bearer of this letter, who is called Ceola, or through any other messenger, be assured, by that love which binds us in a spiritual kinship, that my weakness will strive with all its powers to fulfil it. Meantime I ask that thou mayst not refuse to send me a letter.

That thou mayst enjoy health and holy success in Christ is my wish and desire.

*Lioba asks Boniface to pray to God for her relatives and herself. She sends a gift. After 732.*

To Boniface, revered master, endowed with the highest of dignities, dearly beloved in Christ, bound to me by ties of kinship, Lioba, lowliest servant among those who bear the easy yoke of Christ, wishes for eternal welfare.

I beseech thy clemency to be mindful of the friendship which thou didst form long ago, in the regions of the West, with my father Dynne, who was taken from this light more than eight years since, and not to fail in offering prayers to God for his soul. I commend to thee the memory of my mother, Aebbe, who is joined to thee as thou knowest well, by ties of kinship; she still lives a toilsome life and has been long oppressed by infirmities. I am the only daughter of these my parents, and would, that, unworthy as I am, I could deserve to have thee in place of a brother, for in no one among men do I place such great trust as in thee. This small gift I am sending, not that it may appear worthy in thy sight, but in order that thou mayst retain some recollection of my weakness

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and not let me fall into oblivion because of the long distance which separates us, but rather that the bond of our love may hold firm for ever. And this I beg of thee fervently, beloved brother, to guard me with the shield of thy prayers, against the poisoned shafts of the hidden enemy. I ask thee too, deign to correct the homely style of this letter, and to send me for a model some words of thine, which I crave eagerly to hear.

These little verses below I tried to compose according to the rules of poetic art, in no spirit of confidence, but wishing to practise the rudiments of a graceful accomplishment and to have thy aid. The art I have learned from the teaching of Eadburga, who continues without ceasing to search into the divine law.

Farewell, pray for me and enjoy a long life here, and the happier life to come.

May the Omnipotent Judge, sole Creator of all,  
Ever resplendent with light in the Father's heavenly  
kingdom,  
Where reigns the glory of Christ, amid splendour unfailing,  
Keep thee unharmed in His justice eternal.

*Boniface grants permission to Lioba, Abbess of Bischofsheim, to have a certain girl instructed. 723-755.*

To Lioba, revered handmaiden of Christ, who will be cherished with sincere love eternally, Boniface, servant of the servants of God, kind greetings in Christ.

Be it known to thee, dear holy one, that our brother and fellow priest, Torhthat by name, told us that he obtained thy consent to lay upon a certain girl for a time the task of receiving instruction, provided that our consent should be given to it. Wherefore, be assured beyond doubt, that to whatever course in this matter thou wilt adopt, for the increase of thine own reward, our will grants assent and approval.

Farewell in Christ.

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XXV

*Wichtberht, a priest, sends word to the monks of Glastonbury that he has come into the territories of the Hessians and Saxons, and has been well received by Boniface. 732-735*

To those holy men who dwell in the monastery of Glastonbury, fathers and brothers beloved in Christ, Wichtberht, priest, your lowly servant and servant of all the servants of God, greetings in the Lord.

Blessed be God, "who will have all men to be saved and to come into a knowledge of the truth,"<sup>1</sup> in that of His will, He directed our journey into these provinces, on the confines of the heathen Hessians and Saxons, safely over the sea and among the dangers of this world, not through any merit of ours, but through your consent and prayers and His own clemency.

Be assured, my brothers, that no earthly distances divide us, whom the love of Christ binds together. Wherefore, my fraternal regard for you, and my prayers for you to God are unceasing; I would have you know

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.

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also, beloved, that Boniface, our archbishop, when he heard of our arrival, himself deigned to come far to meet us, and to receive us with great kindness. Be assured, indeed, my friends, that our toil is not vain in the Lord, and that the reward thereof will come to you, for the Omnipotent God, through His mercy and your merits, grants a good issue to our labour, though the life here is in every respect dangerous and hard, from hunger and thirst and cold, and the attacks of the heathen. Wherefore, I beg, pray diligently for us, "that utterance may be given unto us,"<sup>1</sup> and that our labours may abide and bring forth fruit.

Farewell in the Lord. Give my greetings to the brethren in the circle, especially to Abbot Ingeld and our community, and tell my mother Tetta and her sisterhood of our safe journey. I beg of you one and all, with humble prayers, to alternate with us in earnest intercession, and wish that the divine clemency may keep you safe to pray for us.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. vi. 19.

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XXVI

*Boniface consults Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, about associating with bad priests. He asks that a volume of the prophets copied by Abbot Winbert be secured for him. He sends gifts, and offers his sympathy to Daniel, who is troubled with his eyes. 742-746.*

To his beloved master, Bishop Daniel, Boniface, servant of the servants of God, affectionate greetings of love in Christ.

It is a recognized custom among men, that when something sad and grievous has happened to them, they should seek solace or counsel for the anxious mind, from those in whose friendship or wisdom and attachment they put the greatest trust. Trusting after this manner in your proved wisdom and friendship I unfold the troubles of my weary mind and seek counsel and consolation from your piety. There befall us, not merely in the words of the apostle, "fightings without and fears within"<sup>1</sup> but fightings within as well as fears, due especially to false priests and hypocrites who are adversaries of God and rush into

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 5.



destruction themselves and mislead the people by countless scandals and varied errors, saying to the people in the words of the prophet, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace"<sup>1</sup>; and the seed of the word, taken from the bosom of the Catholic and Apostolic Church and entrusted to us, which we seek to sow, they strive to oversow with cockle and suffocate or to convert into a baneful weed. And that which we plant they do not water that it may grow, but try to tear up that it may die, offering and teaching to the people new sects and errors of divers kinds; some "abstaining from food which God hath created to be received"<sup>2</sup>; some, feeding only on honey and milk, reject bread and other food; some actually declaring, and this greatly harms the people, that homicides and adulterers, even though they persevere in their crimes, can yet become priests of God. The people, in the words of the apostle, "will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will they heap to themselves teachers," and the rest.<sup>3</sup>

When seeking protection and aid in the court of the Franks, we cannot abstain from personal contact with such priests or keep apart from them as the canons enjoin, though during the celebration of the holy mass . . . the

<sup>1</sup> Jer. vi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 3.

sacred mysteries of the body and blood of the Lord we have no association with them. But their counsel and approval we avoid, for to such men our toil and struggles with the heathen and with a mixed and lowly multitude, seem quite alien. Nay more, when out of the fold of Mother Church any priest or deacon, cleric or monk departs from the way of faith and truth, then, together with the heathen they break out at once into abuse of the sons of the Church; and this is a terrible obstacle to the gospel of Christ's glory.

Wherefore, in all these things, that without injury to our souls we may complete the course of our ministry, we seek, first of all, the intercession of your paternity before God. And through Him we beg you with the most earnest prayers, to intercede for us that the merciful Consoler of those in sorrow may deign to keep our souls, amid such storms, unharmed and safe from sin.

Concerning the above mentioned intercourse with these priests I crave to hear and obey your wise counsel. Without the protection of the King of the Franks I can neither rule the people of the Church nor defend the priests and clergy, the monks and nuns of God; no, can I avail to check even the heathen rites and the worship of idols in Germany without his mandate, and the fear of him. But when, seeking aid for these causes, I come to him, I

cannot, as the canon law requires, by any means avoid personal contact with such men, even though I may not take counsel with them. I fear guilt from the intercourse, because I recall that, at the time of my ordination, according to the precepts of Gregory the Pope, I swore on the body of Saint Peter to avoid association with such if I could not turn them back to the canonical path. But I fear still more the loss of the teaching which I am bound to give to the people, if I do not come to the ruler of the Franks. Deign to point out in these matters what your paternity can decide and judge and advise for your dependent and hesitating son. I think I am really almost completely separated from them, in, where they are not canonical, I abstain from common counsel and deliberation with them and from participating with them in the services of the church.

Besides, if I may venture, I should like with earnest prayers to ask for one solace to my mission: that is, that you would send across to me the *Book of the Prophets*, which Winbert, of revered memory, once my abbot and master, left when departing this life to the Lord, and wherein the six prophets will be found written in the one volume in clear and finished letters. And if God inspires your heart to do this, you cannot send me anything which will be a greater comfort to my age, or a greater pledge

of your reward; because I cannot get in this land such a book of the prophets as I desire, and with my eyes growing dim I cannot well distinguish minute and connected letters. I ask for this book since it is written in such clearly separated and finished characters.

Meanwhile I am sending you with the priest, Forthere, this letter and a small gift as a sign of true love, a coverlet, not silken, but shaggy, mixed with goat's-wool, to cover your feet.

But lately, of a priest who came from your presence to Germany, I heard of your blindness. You know well, my master, Who said and through whom He said, "Whom the Lord loveth, He reproveth," and the rest<sup>1</sup>; and the apostle Paul: "For when I am weak, then am I strong," and "My power is made perfect in weakness"<sup>2</sup>; and the writer of the Psalms: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," and the rest.<sup>3</sup> You have, my father, as Antony of Didimus is related to have said, eyes, with which God and His angels can be seen, and the glorious delights of the heavenly Jerusalem. On this account, trusting in your wisdom and patience I believe that God has given you this illness, for the advance of your virtues and the increase of your merits, whereby you

<sup>1</sup> Prov. iii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 10, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. xxxiii. 20.

may the better with the eyes of the spirit behold those things which God enjoins and loves and the less regard and crave what God does not love but has forbidden; for in this dangerous time what are the eyes of the body but, for the most part, if I may say so, truly windows of sin, through which we either look upon sins or at sinners, or what is worse, through beholding and desiring them draw the vices to ourselves.

It is my earnest wish that your holiness may have health and may pray for me.

*Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, replies to Boniface. He urges him to persevere. He discusses the priestly character of adulterers and murderers, and the unavoidable intercourse with false brethren. He thanks Boniface for his sympathy. 742-746.*

To the most reverend lord, deserving of reverence from all orthodox Christians, conspicuously adorned with varied knowledge and the grace of many virtues, Archbishop Boniface, Daniel, servant of the people of God, the most sincere greetings in the Lord, who reigns supreme over all the summits of the heavens.

When we read thy letter we were much moved by sorrow because it seems intolerable to those who love, it a misfortune befalls those by whom they are beloved. But after much reflection we found consolation in this thought that the unfathomable guile of the crafty enemy would never have tried to storm the rites of your faith with such violence or such varied assaults of war or error through the persons of high-placed priests or any other reprobates, if he did not recognise in it the excellence of

greater merit. And so it behooves you, first of all, to attend to it, that the glorious undertaking which is, in my opinion, to be compared with the struggles of the apostles, be not abandoned because of the snares of those, who, trained in guile, are accustomed to resist saving doctrine. But the burden of difficulties laid upon us must be the more willingly borne, the more certain we are that for the saints and martyrs there is in the world only distress, but in heaven, by the promise of the Lord, the most abundant recompense. If only we have patience in tribulation we shall deserve to have Him as our helper here, and there where we shall rejoice with the Lord, as the giver of our reward. Therefore, since thy love has deigned to seek advice from my weakness, we think it will be helpful, if with unconquered patience thou dost try to endure still further what cannot come without the providence of God.

Wherefore, although the danger of attacks from without is cruel and terrible strife within works yet more fearful harm;—and at this I do not wonder, since Jesus Christ once declared that for His name's sake, brother must be delivered up to death by brother, and the child must be slain by his father and the parents by their children; though they seek to destroy the work of God by superstitious practices in the taking of food, which will perish as surely in the use of men, though, in the pursuit of false

gain, or to win flattery or praise for themselves, and abuse for you, they falsely promise the people safety, and with a feigned friendliness keep repeating the name of peace, and according to the prophecy of Isaiah, "call evil good and good evil" and the rest<sup>1</sup>; though they try to choke the seed entrusted to you by sowing with it the barren cockle which, as we shall explain more fully below, it is forbidden to root out at any time before it ripens to the harvest;—though, I say, to deceive the hearts of the ignorant they bring forth doctrines hitherto unheard of, which, when introduced for the moment, are likely to escape you, excellently trained in the Holy Scriptures, as little as the arguments which may fittingly be used against them; although, and I shall put it briefly, not to delay thee longer by proceeding from point to point, they try every wicked and factious argument to harass and vanquish you, yet, following the example of the saints who have gone before, you must at least bear with perseverance what you cannot cure by correction.

Concerning the priestly character of homicides and adulterers, who without any repentance, stubbornly persist in their sins, the holy canons and the decrees of the pontiffs give you sufficient explanation. If to homicides, who at the end of their lives do instant penance, absolu-

<sup>1</sup> Isa. v. 20.



tion, that is the grace of communion with Christ, is granted, how can the care of ruling a Christian community be entrusted to them while they are yet unchanged? But an adulterer, who even late in the day has not repented of his lust, how can he justly usurp the priestly office, when, according to the degrees of Pope Innocent and others, he who marries a widow or a second wife, must be barred, not only from the holding of ecclesiastical office, but even from the clerical state? And while concessions have been granted because of the weakness of the flesh, yet adultery is forbidden by all authorities.

From intercourse with false brethren or priests, what counsel could avail to separate thee in bodily things, unless perchance thou art to withdraw entirely from this world? These persons strive to push in everywhere and always; by such dangers the apostle Paul asserted that he was ensnared. And other founders of the Christian religion confess that they have suffered the like or that it must be borne by posterity.

Thou sayst that thou keepst entirely apart from them in the offering of the holy sacrifice, lest thou mightst seem to give the host to dogs—what Saint Augustine thought on this we shall work in below with the rest of the argument—and that thou dost never dwell among them

freely, of thine own will and consent, but only from the force of necessity; concerning which Jerome<sup>1</sup> declares: "In the gospel the will is desired and even if it has not a result it does not lose its reward." But if, let us allow for argument's sake, thou must associate with these in the taking of food or in thy habitation, did not He, "who came not to call the just but sinners to repentance,"<sup>2</sup> go to the tables of sinners, that he might have the opportunity of teaching. So if thou must associate with these so far as sometimes to approach the king with them and beg for the peace of the Church, because these pretend generally like true shepherds to intercede for the sheep, let us first of all be assured that what was written must be fulfilled: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man" and the rest,<sup>3</sup> and "to all the higher powers" and the rest.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, it must be considered that the parable of the wheat and the tares is put before us to suggest the mixture of good men and bad. And, as Augustine remarks,<sup>5</sup> "clean and unclean animals are said to have entered into the ark. Nor did the unclean animals enter in at will through a broken corner of the ark, but undisturbed

<sup>1</sup> Commentary on Matt. xi. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 13.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. xiii. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Augustine, *De fide et operibus*, c. 49.

through one and the same door, which the builder had wrought. There is not given to the good," he says, "through these figures and analogies any counsel of sloth, by which they may neglect what they ought to check, but the counsel of patience, by which they are to bear, so long as the doctrine of truth is preserved, what they cannot change." And he says,<sup>1</sup> "Wherefore when we find in the Church evildoers, whom we cannot correct or repress by ecclesiastical discipline, then let there not ascend into our hearts an unholy and harmful presumption, whereby we think that we may be separated from these, so as not to be defiled by their sins, and that we must try to bring after us clean and holy disciples, withdrawn, as it were, by a common bond from the companionship with the wicked. Let there come into the mind those parables from Scripture, which show that the bad are mingled with the good in the Church and to the end of time and the Day of Judgment, and that no harm will come to the good from a union and share in the sacraments with them because they have not consented to their deeds."

"But since with those through whom the Church is ruled there rests, without prejudice to peace, the power of discipline to be exercised against the wicked and abandoned, then, lest we should sleep in supineness and

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *De fide et operibus*, c. 49.

neglect, we must be roused by the good spur of the other precepts which enjoin stern repression. As there is a method of dissembling and of tolerating the wicked in the Church, there is likewise a way of castigating and improving them, without losing or driving them from the fold<sup>1</sup>: so that we must not grow slack in the name of patience, nor show undue severity under the pretence of diligence.”<sup>2</sup>

I shall tell thee, too, what I have gleaned from the works of ancient writers; in such dangerous and barbarous times it may usefully be committed to memory. If, perchance, in showing such toleration thou art falsely accused by any one for practising a kind of pretence or even deceit, we read that a useful simulation may be practised on occasion. Employing it Cephas “withdrew and separated himself, fearing them”<sup>3</sup> and the rest. And the vessel of election had his head shorn, and circumcised Timothy. The Son of God Himself made as though He would go farther, and as though He did not know what He knew, as it is written in the gospel, “Who is it that touched Me?”<sup>4</sup> and “Where have ye laid him?”<sup>5</sup> And the psalmist changed his counte-

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *De fide et operibus*, c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. c. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Lu. viii. 45.

<sup>5</sup> John xx. 13.

nance before Abimelech<sup>1</sup>; and Joseph spoke in jest to his brothers. So, too, Israel covered his loins with goat skins. This he did that he might be thought to be another than he was; which if studied diligently and faithfully becomes not a lie, but a mystery. By the goat skins are signified the sins and by him who concealed himself in them is denoted one who bears the sins of others.

These things we have written to thy love with much hesitation, not thinking thee unacquainted with the ancient authorities or in need of advice from our ignorance, but in order that we should not fail to meet thy wishes in anything, and because we had learned that thou hadst difficulties with powerful people. Yet we have spoken, urged on rather by love and obedience than through reliance on our own skill or courage, merely to explain, not to command. We should not wish to oppose in anything those who are beyond measure excellent.

Thine exhortations to bear patiently grievous bodily illness we have gladly received. And so far as our strength suffices, with the help of the Lord, who of His mercy has admonished us, we shall obey thy helpful words.

This in your loving kindness you should know, that

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxiv. 1.

though we are separated by a wide stretch of land, and the immensity of the sea, and the uneven climate of the sky, yet we are oppressed by the same burden of suffering. Satan's activity is the same here as there, and so I diligently beg you, that we vigorously fortify ourselves with a mutual interchange of prayer, remembering the words which the Lord has said: "For where two or three are gathered together," and the rest <sup>1</sup>

Farewell, farewell, my hundredfold beloved.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xviii 19.

<sup>2</sup> For the last words of the letter, *et alia manu*, referring possibly to a postscript in another hand, see *Neues Archiv*, IX, 25, n 2.

*Boniface asks Eadburga, Abbess of Thanet, to pray for him and for the heathen. 742-746.*

To his sister, Abbess Eadburga, to be united with him by a golden bond of spiritual love and by the pure and holy kiss of charity, Boniface, bishop, legate of the Roman Church, greetings in Christ.

We beseech your loving clemency with heartfelt prayers, deign to intercede for us with the Author of all. That you may not be ignorant of the cause of this prayer, know that because of our sins the course of our mission is threatened by many storms. Everywhere toil, everywhere sorrow. "Without, fightings, within, fears."<sup>1</sup> And most serious of all, the snares of false brethren surpass the malice of the heathen. Wherefore, entreat the sacred defender of my life, the one safe refuge of those in trouble, "the lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world,"<sup>2</sup> with His protecting hand to keep me unharmed, as I pass through the lairs of such wolves; that where there should be found the fair feet of

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 5

<sup>2</sup> John i. 29.

those who carry the lamp of the gospel of peace, there may not be discovered the footsteps of apostates who wander in darkness; but rather that the Father Most Holy, when our loins are girt up, may put burning lights in our hands and illumine the hearts of the Gentiles to behold the gospel of Christ's glory.

Meantime I pray you of your goodness to intercede for those heathen who have been entrusted to us by the Apostolic See; that the Saviour of the world may snatch them from the worship of idols and unite them with the sons of their true mother, the Catholic Church, to the praise and glory of His name "Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."<sup>1</sup>

Farewell.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.



*Boniface consoles Abbess Bugga. 723-745.*

To his honoured and beloved sister, Bugga, Boniface or Wyntrith, servant of the servants of God, greetings of love in Christ.

O my dear sister, after the fear of Christ and the love of faring abroad separated us by a long stretch of land and sea, from many lips I have heard of the storms of tribulation, which by God's will have come upon thee in thine old age. I was sad and grieved for thee thinking how, when thou hadst put aside the greater anxiety of caring for the monasteries and sought the quiet of the contemplative life, more numerous and pressing sorrows visited thee.

So now, honoured sister, feeling for thee in thy distress and mindful of thy kindness and of our old time friendship, I send across to thee a brotherly letter of cheer and consolation, and ask thee not to let pass from thy mind the word of Truth, where it says: "In your patience possess ye your souls";<sup>1</sup> and the word of Solomon the

<sup>1</sup> Luc. xxi. 19.

wise: "For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth;"<sup>1</sup> and the judgment of the psalmist: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all";<sup>2</sup> and elsewhere: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."<sup>3</sup> Recall the words of the apostle where he said: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God;"<sup>4</sup> and elsewhere: "We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed."<sup>5</sup> In that hope, my dear sister, always rejoice and be glad, because thou wilt not be made ashamed. The tribulations of this world despise with all the strength of thy mind, because all the soldiers of Christ, men and women, have looked down upon the storms and tribulations and infirmities of this life, and held them as nothing, on the witness of Saint Paul, who says: "When I am weak, then am I strong";<sup>6</sup> and elsewhere: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation?" and the rest to "him that loveth us."<sup>7</sup> Thy Father

<sup>1</sup> Prov. iii. 12.<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxxiv. 19.<sup>3</sup> Ps. li. 17.<sup>4</sup> Acts xiv. 22.<sup>5</sup> Rom. v. 3-5.<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 10.<sup>7</sup> Rom. viii. 35-37.

who loves thy virgin chastity, in the first years of thy youth, inviting thee to Him with the voice of parental love, called thee daughter, saying through the prophet : "Hearken, O daughter, and consider and incline thine ear : forget also thine own people, and thy father's house : so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." <sup>1</sup> He it is who in thy old age desires to decorate and adorn the fair beauty of thy soul with toil and tribulation. Rejoicing then, beloved, in the hope of thy future inheritance in thy heavenly home, to all adversities that assail thy heart or body, oppose the shield of faith and patience : that, with the aid of Christ thy spouse, in a happy old age thou mayst complete for the glory of God the tower of the spirit, which thou didst begin to build in the goodly days of thy youth, and that when Christ comes, thou mayst with the wise virgins carry to meet him thy lamp filled with oil and lighted. Meanwhile I beg thee with earnest entreaties to be mindful of thine old promise and to pray for me, that the Lord, who is our redeemer and the safety of all, may snatch my soul in the fruit of the spirit from these manifold dangers.

Farewell in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlv. 10, 12.

*Boniface thanks Egbert of York<sup>1</sup> for gifts. He asks Egbert to pray for him and to send him the commentaries of Bede. He tells of adulterous priests. He sends wine. 746-754.*

To a friend worthy of being embraced in the arms of love and held by the ties of spiritual kinship, wearing the robes of the highest priestly office, Archbishop Egbert, Boniface, a humble bishop, legate in Germany of the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church, greetings of imperishable love in Christ.

The gifts and books which you so kindly sent us, we received with gratitude and rejoicing. With hands lifted to heaven we have besought the King above that He may bestow upon you a bounteous reward in the heavenly court of the angels. And now we beg your holy clemency with sincere entreaties, that you may deign to pray for us struggling amidst toil and danger. Our great need forces us to seek the aid of the just, since it is written : "The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop of York from 735 to 766.

<sup>2</sup> James v. 16.

But from telling all the ills which we suffer within and without, the brevity of a letter prevents us.

We ask with earnest desire, that to bring joy into our sorrow as you have done before, you should take care to send us a tiny gleam from that candle of the Church, which the Holy Spirit lit within the limits of your province; that is, that you should deign to send across some part of the commentaries which Bede, that saintly priest and investigator of the Holy Scriptures, composed; especially, if it be possible, his *Homilies*, and his *Proverbs of Solomon*, for they will be very convenient and useful to us in our preaching. We have heard that he wrote commentaries on these subjects.

Meanwhile, the greatest necessity forces us to seek your advice and judgment. For I have found a priest who long ago fell into adultery, and after repentance was restored again to his place by the Franks; now, dwelling in a vast district occupied by faithful but erring people, alone without other priests he administers baptism, and celebrates mass. If in accordance with the most binding canons I remove this man, infants will die without the sacred waters of regeneration, owing to the scarcity of priests—provided that I have none better to take the place of the fallen one. Judge therefore between me and an erring people, whether it is better, or, at least a smaller

evil, that such a man should discharge the ministry of the holy altar, or that a multitude should die in unbelief, because they could not obtain a minister of purer life. But if amidst all our priests I find one who has fallen into the same sin and through repentance has been restored to his former rank—in whom all the priests and people have had confidence begotten of favourable opinion—if he is degraded in this manner, his secret sin will be revealed, a multitude will be scandalized, through the scandal many souls will be lost and there will result a great hatred of the priests and a distrust of the ministers of the church, so that believing in none they will look down upon all as false. Wherefore, we boldly ventured to suffer him to remain in the holy ministry, thinking the danger to one man a lighter thing than the ruin and damnation of the souls of almost all the people. But in all these matters, I desire above all else to see in writing and to hear your holy counsels, as to what I must tolerate, forced by the necessity of avoiding scandal, or what I must reject.

Lastly, we have sent across to your grace with the bearer of this letter two measures of wine as a proof of affection that, at our loving entreaty, you may use it to spend a happy day with your brethren. We pray you, therefore, so to answer these our requests that your reward may shine forth in the heights of heaven.

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XXXI

*Boniface writes Egbert, Archbishop of York, for gifts and books. He requests him to support his letter to Æthelbald, King of the Mercians. He asks for the works of Bede and sends the letter to Saint Gregory. 744-747.*

To his beloved and revered brother Archbishop Egbert, Boniface, servant of the servants of God, legate in Germany of the Apostolic See, sincere greetings of spiritual kinship in Christ.

When I received the books and gifts from thy love, lifting my hands to heaven I returned great thanks to the Omnipotent God, for having suffered me in my long exile to find such a friend, who has sent me assistance in earthly things, and divine solace in things spiritual through prayer and common intercourse. And now I entreat thy loving kindness with the most heartfelt entreaties, that, along with those who work with me, I may deserve to be united to your <sup>1</sup> synod; that thou mayst be my counsellor and helper in searching out and investigating the ecclesiastical rules which express the will of God. Be assured that I am asking, not in a mere playful

<sup>1</sup> V. note on page 41.

form of words, but sincerely ; and do not think me arrogant or proud or unduly satisfied with my own judgment. For the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church, when it sent me, an unworthy and lowly missionary, to preach to the erring or pagan people of Germany, enjoined me, if, as I moved among the Christians, I should see anywhere people in error, or the laws of the church misused by an evil practice, or men led aside from the Catholic faith into by-paths, on the authority of the Roman pontiff to strive with all my strength to win and recall them to the way of salvation

Desiring to keep this command I sent with the advice and consent of the bishops who are with me, a letter of admonition or entreaty to Æthelbald, King of the Mercians. This I bade to be submitted to thy sight, that whatsoever therein were badly put thou mightst change, but whatsoever were just thou mightst season with the salt of thy wisdom, and confirm by thine authority, and that shouldst thou see any shoot of these crimes, which in the letters are charged against the king of the Mercians, seeking to sprout forth among thy people, like a provident and wise farmer, with the sickle of the Lord's authority thou mightst cut it down in time and tear it out by the roots ; that it may not flourish in the vine, nor be of the tree of Sodom, nor their race be from



Gomorrah, nor their wine be the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps.<sup>1</sup> For it is an evil unheard of in past ages, and as servants of the Lord, learned in the Scriptures, declare, surpassing three or four fold the licence of the Sodomites, that a Christian people, against the custom of the whole world, nay more against the command of God should despise lawful matrimony and practise fornication and adultery, and commit unspeakable violence upon consecrated and veiled women.

Moreover I beg thee, deign to copy and send me some portions of the works of Bede—whom lately, as we have heard, the divine grace enriched with spiritual understanding and allowed to shine forth in your province—so that we too may enjoy light from the candle which the Lord bestowed upon you.

Meanwhile, as a sign of my love, I have sent thee copies of the letters of Saint Gregory, which I have received<sup>1</sup> from the library of the Roman Church; I did not think that they had yet come to Britain. I can send more of them at thy bidding, for I received many thence. I have sent also a sacramental cloth, and a towel to wipe the feet of the servants of God, when thou wasthest them.

It is my wish in Christ that you mayst fare well and advance in holy virtues.

<sup>1</sup> *cf.* Denton, 32, 32, 33.

*Boniface asks Huetberht, Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, to send him the works of Bede and a cloak. 744-747.*

To the most beloved and revered brother Abbot Huetberht and all the brothers of his holy congregation, Boniface, poor servant of the servants of God, greetings of fraternal love in Christ.

With the most earnest entreaties, we ask of your fraternal piety that you aid us with your holy prayers, while we toil among the wild and ignorant people of Germany and plant the gospel-seed, so that by your prayers the cruel rage of Babylonian fire may be quenched in us and the seed scattered in the furrows may spring up and multiply in the harvest. In the words of the apostle: "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase; that utterance may be given unto us and the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile we ask that you should deign to send us copies of the works of the monk Bede, that wise investi-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 7; Eph. vi. 19; 2 Thess. iii. 1.

gator of the Scriptures, who, as we have heard, through his knowledge of the Scriptures, but lately shone among you a candle of the church in the house of the Lord. We ask you also, if it is not too much trouble, to send a cloak, a great comfort in our exile. We have sent you as a token of deep affection some reading-desks of goat's-horn, as they call them here. These, though they are unworthy, we beg of you to accept for memory's sake.

May the merciful Trinity and one God keep you well, and advancing in virtue; and may He make you glorious in happiness to come, among the bright ranks of the angels.

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XXXIII

*Boniface asks Abbot Aldhere with his brotherhood to pray to God for himself, the Germans and certain departed friends. 732-754.*

To his venerable brother Abbot Aldhere, Boniface, humble servant of the servants of God, greetings in Christ.

With the most earnest and heartfelt entreaties, we beg you of your loving clemency, deign to be mindful of us in making intercession with your holy prayers, and to implore the good Lord, who is the cause of our exile, that with His right hand He may protect and steer the ship of our weakness lest it be submerged in the waves of German tempests, and bring it unharmed in His guardianship to the tranquil shore of the heavenly Jerusalem. Greet all the brothers of your holy brotherhood, our dearest brother in the Lord, with the kiss of our love and devotion. We commend ourselves to your prayers, that whether in life or in death we may be united with the fellowship of your love. And that this may be so established, we wish, by brotherly devotion to deserve

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well of you according to the favour of your clemency, in so far as our powers avail. We beg you, also, to intercede for the German peoples given over to the worship of idols, asking the Lord, who poured out His own blood for the safety of the whole world, and "will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,"<sup>1</sup> to turn them to a knowledge of the Creator and to the bosom of Mother Church. Likewise we entreat you to offer your prayers and masses for the souls of our brothers at rest, who laboured with us in the Lord. The bearer of this letter will give you their names.

It is our constant wish that you have good health and holy success in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.

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XXXIV

*Sigebald, probably Abbot of Chertsey, writes to Boniface, that through the priest Eobo, he has asked Boniface to be, with Daniel of Winchester, his bishop. He asks to be kept in memory. 732-746.*

To the most venerable lord and archbishop, Boniface, the privilege of whose parental love should be made widespread, Sigebald, most unworthy and lowly servant of the servants of God, greetings in the Lord.

With humblest prayers, as though kneeling before thee on bended knees, I beg thee to pardon the request which I have made to thee through thy priest Eobo; I have asked him to tell thee of my desire and prayer, that thou shouldst be my bishop along with my bishop Daniel. Of thy clemency thou wouldst ere this have granted my petition if he had done as I asked him to do. I thought, my master, that some word of comfort would have come to me. Be it known to thee that from that time I had thy name recorded, with the names of our bishops, whenever I celebrated the holy mass. And now I shall not cease to remember it as long as I live; and if I survive thee, I

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have thy name recorded beside the name of our father, Bishop Ercnwald. I must assure thee, however, that I write this, trusting not in my own merits, sinner that I am, but in the mercy of God, and the hope which thou hast in Him. So I pray that some memory of me, such as my lowliness deserves, may linger with thee both now and in the future. Farewell in Christ.

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XXXV

*Boniface urges a nun to pray for him. 742-746.*

To the revered and beloved handmaid of Christ, \* \* \*, Boniface, humble servant of the servants of God, greetings of pure love in Christ.

We beseech your loving clemency with heartfelt entreaties to intercede before God for us sinners, because we are buffeted and shaken by many turbulent storms, coming whether from the heathen or from false Christians or from adulterous clerks, or false priests, and that too, I fear, through our own deserts. But we beg that we may be consoled and rescued by your prayers. We trust in the Lord Jesus that through your loving prayers we may deserve to find pardon for our sins and rest from storms, since James, the apostle, who is true to his word has said: "Confess your faults one to another, that ye may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"<sup>1</sup>; and John the evangelist says in his first epistle: "And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we

<sup>1</sup> Jas. v. 16.



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desired of Him." <sup>1</sup> And I beg you not to refuse because I made this same request before ; I should ask again and again, since I would have your prayers never cease. Daily tribulations make me seek divine comfort from my brothers and sisters. I fear, moreover, that the temptations of Satan are the same there as here, according to the words of the apostle : " Be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord " <sup>2</sup> ; and again : " Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity." <sup>3</sup> And if want touches you, do not forget the gospel-words : " Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven " <sup>4</sup> If tribulation comes, be mindful of the words of truth : " In your patience possess ye your souls," <sup>5</sup> and of the psalm : " The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever " ; <sup>6</sup> if infirmity of body, let there be present with you the words of the apostle Paul where he said : " When I am weak, then am I strong," and " my strength is made perfect in weakness." <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. v. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. ix. 19

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor xii 10, 9.

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XXXVI

*Boniface urges Lioba, Tecla, Cynehilda and their sisters to pray for him. 742-746.*

To my beloved sisters worthy of all honour and affection, Lioba and Tecla and Cynehilda, and all the dear sisters in Christ who live with you, greetings of undying love.

I beseech, nay all but command you, my dear daughters, to implore God with incessant prayers, as I trust that you do now and have done and will do unceasingly, that we may be delivered, in the words of the apostle, "from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith"<sup>1</sup>—be assured that if we praise God the tribulations of our hearts are mitigated—and to pray the Lord God, who is the refuge of the poor and the hope of the humble, to snatch us from our hardships and the temptation of this evil world; "that the word of the Lord may have free course, and the glorious gospel of Christ be glorified,"<sup>2</sup> "that the grace of God which was bestowed on me may not be in vain,"<sup>3</sup> and that, since

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 10.

I am the least and the worst of all the legates, whom the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome has sent to preach the gospel, I may not die barren without some fruit of the gospel, and may not return empty-handed in the ranks of sons and daughters; that I may not be judged guilty, when the Lord comes, of hiding the talent nor because of my sins receive instead of a reward for my labour, punishment for unfruitful toil from Him who sent me. And what is worse, many who I thought would be set on the Judgment Day as sheep at the right hand of Christ, have proved to be, on the contrary, stinking and wanton goats who must be set on the left hand. Entreat the goodness of God that He who willed that I, though unworthy, should be chosen shepherd over the people, may strengthen my heart with the spirit of a ruler, so that when the wolf comes I may not flee like a hireling, but like the good shepherd may seek to defend faithfully and loyally the lambs with their mothers, that is the Church Catholic and its sons and daughters, against heretics and schismatics and hypocrites.

Moreover, "because the days are evil, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."<sup>1</sup> Wherefore, "be strong, steadfast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong; let all your things be done with

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 16, 17.

charity"<sup>1</sup>; and according to the gospel: "In your patience possess ye your souls."<sup>2</sup> Keep in mind the holy apostles and prophets: because they laboured much in the Lord, therefore have they gained eternal rewards. According to the psalmist: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all"<sup>3</sup>; and according to the gospel: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxi. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. xxxiii. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. x. 22.

*Ælbwald, King of the East Angles, writes to Boniface about mutual prayers. He commends his messenger. 747-749.*

To the most glorious lord, deserving of every honour and reverence, Archbishop Boniface, Ælbwald, by God's gift endowed with kingly sway over the Angles, and the whole abbey with all the brotherhood of the servants of God in our province who invoke Him, throned on high, with prayers night and day for the safety of the churches, greetings in God who rewards all.

First of all we would have thee know, beloved, how gratefully we learn that our weakness has been commended to your holy prayers; so that, whatever your benignity by the inspiration of God commanded concerning the offering of masses and the continuous prayers, we may attempt with devoted mind to fulfil. Your name will be remembered perpetually in the seven offices of our monasteries; by the number seven perfection is often designated. Wherefore, since this has been well ordered and by God's help the rules for the soul have been duly determined and the state of the inner man is provided for, the external

aids of earthly substance, which by the bounty of God have been placed in our power, we wish to be at your will and command, on condition, however, that through your loving kindness you have the assistance of your prayers given to us without ceasing in the churches of God. And just as the purpose of God willed thee to become a shepherd over His people, so we long to feel in thee our patron. The names of the dead and of those who enter upon the way of all flesh, will be brought forward on both sides, as the season of the year demands, that the God of Gods and the Lord of Lords, who willed to place you in authority over bishops, may deign to bring His people through you to a knowledge of the One in Three, the Three in One. Farewell, until you pass the happy goal.

P.S.—Besides, holy father, we would have thee know that we have sent across the bearer of the present letter with a devout intention; just as we have found him faithful to you, so wilt thou find that he speaks the truth in anything relating to us.

*Æthelbert the Second, King of Kent, urges Boniface, in fulfilment of a promise made to Abbess Bugga, to pray to God for him. He sends gifts, and asks for some falcons. 748-754.*

To the most blessed lord, deservedly adorned with pontifical robes, Archbishop Wynfrith, called Boniface, Æthelbert, King of Kent, greetings in the Lord of Lords.

A few years ago the venerable Abbess Bugga, after she had visited the sacred places in the city of Rome for the purpose of prayer, and returning thither had reached her fatherland and the monastery of consecrated women, which formerly she governed well under the law of the Church—when at her invitation I came at once to speech with her, among the things pleasant to hear, this especially she took care to convey to my ears, that thou hadst given her permission to speak freely in thy gracious and lovable presence of her pressing necessities, while you were both in Rome, and were zealous in visiting frequently and wearing away the threshold of the holy Apostles' shrine.

She went on straightway to tell how, reminded as it were by the ties of our blood relationship, she likewise addressed thy fraternity with humblest prayers as a suppliant on my behalf, that just as she, while present, merited to be imbued with thy salutary precepts and strengthened with the blessing of thy prayers, so too might I, though absent and unknown to thee in the body, yet present in the spirit, be enriched by thine accustomed beneficence, with this same gift so necessary to me. When she said that thou hadst promised on thy undoubted word to do this, I confess truly that I cannot easily set forth in words, how much pleasure and consolation I received therefrom. And on this account I was the more delighted because such precious gifts sprang suddenly from a hope that did not expect fulfilment.

Wherefore, it seems alike useful and proper for me to address thy holiness, distinguished far and wide, by the exchange of friendly letters or the words of faithful messengers. And this I think I can scarcely do better and more efficaciously at any time than now, when holy men from your excellency are present, who have been sent by you across hither to Britain, as prudent and faithful messengers, and deserve to return as soon as possible with God's aid to your gracious sight and presence. Hence it seemed to me best to send the bearer of this



letter, by name Ethelhun, in religion a monk, with your men on a safer and surer journey, and to forward through him my greetings and requests to your love. And first of all we declare that we all in common pay fervent thanks to the Omnipotent God, who has so bestowed on you the favour of His mercy as to convert through the words and efforts of your preaching an innumerable multitude of the Gentiles, miserably deceived by the old error of idolatry, to the rule of Christian faith. Wherefore, we still hope and desire many things through the help of God, assured that He, who has begun to work through you, will not cease to accomplish still greater things from day to day.

With the bearer of these lines my devotion has directed to your reverence some gifts accompanied by great love, a silver bowl lined with gold, weighing three pounds and a half, and two cloaks. These presents we have sent to you with no intention or expectation of receiving for them any earthly reward or temporal recompense. But instead, as is much the more necessary for me, I humbly beg, from the depths of my heart, that, since the days are evil, and there multiply daily various unexpected difficulties in this world full of scandal, thou shouldst deign to aid us with the strong and constant assistance of thy prayers. And may thy beloved and respected authority be mindful always to urge to this same course others whom it can

influence either by command or suggestion, not merely while thou hearest that I am still in this mortal flesh, but also after my death, should I deserve to have thee as my survivor.

Now that these matters have been thus briefly and summarily touched upon, one thing besides I would have you secure for me, which, from what has been told me, I do not think will be difficult for you to obtain; I mean two falcons whose skill and courage consist in freely attacking cranes, seizing them and bringing them to earth. We make of you this request, to secure and send the birds, because, in our country, that is to say in Kent, very few falcons of this kind are found, which will produce such good brood, and can be trained and subdued to quickness and courage in the aforementioned art.

Finally, at the conclusion of the letter, I beg thee to answer; and in thy letter deign to tell me, if these things which I have addressed to thee, have come safe.

May the divine goodness grant thee a long life to pray for us.

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XXXIX

*Boniface commends his messenger Ceola to Æthelbald, King of the Mercians. He expresses thanks for the kind reception given to his messengers the year before. He sends gifts. 732-751.*

To his revered and beloved lord, Æthelbald, King of the Mercians, Boniface, servant of the servants of God, greetings of deepest affection.

We pray thy highness' mercy, deign to comfort and aid this my messenger, by name Ceola, the bearer of this letter, on this journey and on any occasion, when he is in need. And may God reward thee because thou didst give every assistance to my messengers who came to thee last year, as they brought back word. Meanwhile we have sent to thee as a sign of true love and devoted friendship a hawk and two falcons, two shields and two lances. These small gifts, unworthy though they are, we ask thee to accept with our love and blessing. "Let us all

hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God and keep His commandments.”<sup>1</sup>

We beg also that if any written words of ours come to thy presence by another messenger thou shouldst deign to lend thine ear and hearken to them carefully. Farewell in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes xii. 13.

*Boniface with the other bishops recalls Æthelbald, King of the Mercians, to virtue. 745-746.*

To the dear lord, King Æthelbald, in the love of Christ to be put before all other kings, who wields the glorious sceptre of the empire of the English, Boniface, Archbishop, legate in Germany of the Roman Church, and Wera and Burghard and Werberht and Abel and Wilbalth, fellow-bishops, send greetings of undying love in Christ.

We confess before God and the holy angels, that whenever we hear, through faithful messengers, of your prosperity and your faith in God and good works before God and men, then, rejoicing and praying for you, we return thanks to God, entreating and beseeching the Saviour of the world that He may long keep you safe, steadfast in faith and upright in good works before God to rule over Christian people. But when some harm has befallen you, either from the state of your kingdom or from the issue of wars, or when, as is worse, the news of the perpetration of some crime dangerous to the safety

of souls has come to our ears, grief and sadness torture us : by the will of God we rejoice over your happiness and are saddened by your adversities.

We have heard that thou givest many alms, and upon this we congratulate thee, because those who bestow alms on the lowliest brethren in their need, by the truth of the Gospel will hear on the Judgment Day the merciful sentence of the Lord, saying : " Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me : come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." <sup>1</sup> We have heard too that thou dost strongly check theft and iniquity, perjury and rapine, and art known to be a defender of widows and the poor and hast peace established in thy kingdom. And in this too, praising God we have rejoiced, because Truth itself and our peace, which is Christ, has said : " Blessed are the peacemakers, because they shall be called the children of God." <sup>2</sup>

But among these reports one rumour of evil character concerning your highness' life has come to our hearing ; we were cast down by it, and wish that it were not true. From many sources we have learned that thou hast never taken a wife in lawful marriage. But marriage was estab-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 34, 40.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. v. 9.

lished by God from the very beginning of the world, and has been enjoined anew by the apostle Paul, who teaches : "Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." <sup>1</sup> If thou hast determined to act thus because of chastity and abstinence, that thou mayst abstain from intercourse with a wife for the love and fear of God, and hast shown this to be something truly accomplished for God's sake, we rejoice thereat ; such a course deserves not blame, but praise. If, however, as many say—God forbid—thou hast never taken a lawful wife nor preserved a chaste abstinence for God's sake, but, under the sway of lust, thou hast destroyed by licence and adultery thy glory and renown before God and men, we are greatly grieved : such conduct must be regarded as criminal in the sight of God and destructive of your reputation before men.

And what is worse, those who tell us this, add that this crime of deepest ignominy has been committed in convents with holy nuns and virgins consecrated to God. There can be no doubt that this is a twofold sin. How guilty, for instance, is the slave in the master's house who violates the master's wife ! How much more guilty is he who has stained a spouse of Christ, the Creator of heaven and earth, with the defilement of his lust ! As says the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 2.

apostle Paul: "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."<sup>2</sup> And again when he mentions and enumerates the sins he joins adultery and fornication to the slavery of idolatry: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."<sup>3</sup>

Among the Greeks and Romans the candidate, before his ordination, was asked particularly about this sin, as though any one guilty of it had committed blasphemy against God, and if found guilty of having had intercourse with a nun veiled and consecrated to God, was barred from every rank of the priesthood. For this reason, beloved son, it must be carefully considered how grievous this sin is judged to be in the eyes of the Eternal Judge. He who is guilty of it is to stand among the slaves of idolatry and to be cast from the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.



divine service of the altar, even though he has already done penance and been reconciled to God. For our bodies, consecrated to God through the offering of our own vows and the words of the priest, are called in the Holy Scripture temples of God. And so those who violate them are to be regarded, according to the apostle, as sons of perdition. Saint Peter, to check the voluptuous from lust, says: "For the time past may suffice,"<sup>1</sup> and the rest. So it is written: "For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life."<sup>2</sup> And elsewhere, "Men do not despise a thief if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry: but if he is found, he shall restore sevenfold: he shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul."<sup>3</sup>

It would take too long to enumerate how many spiritual physicians denounced the dreaded poison of this sin and laid a terrible ban upon it. Fornication is more grave and repellent than almost any other sin and can truly be called a noose of death and a pit of hell and an abyss of perdition.

Wherefore, we beseech and appeal to thy clemency,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxvi. 6.

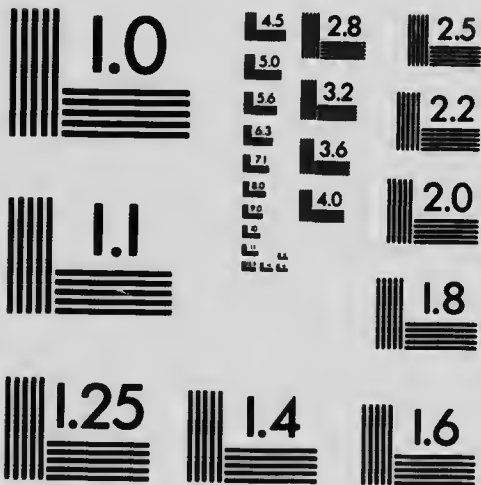
<sup>3</sup> Prov. vi. 30-32.

beloved son, through Christ the Son of God and His coming and His kingdom, that if it be true that thou livest in this guilt, thou mayest correct thy life by repentance and amend it by purification. And thou wilt reflect how improper it is for thee to change by licence the image of God created in thee to the image and likeness of a devil malignant, and for thee, whom not thine own deserts, but the abundant goodness of God made king and ruler over many, to make thyself by self-indulgence a slave to the spirit of evil, since according to the words of the apostle whatsoever sin a man has committed, of this he is the servant.

Not only by Christians but even by pagans is this sin reckoned a disgrace and a shame. The very pagans who are ignorant of the true God, in this matter observe by instinct what is lawful and what God ordained from the beginning, because, while they preserve faithfully the tie of matrimony for their own wives, they punish fornicators and adulterers. In ancient Saxony if a virgin defiles her father's house by adultery, or if a married woman, breaking the marriage-tie, commits adultery, at times they force the woman to hang herself by her own hand and so to end her life; and above the pyre on which she has been burned and cremated they hang her defiler. Or at times a multitude of women gathers, and the matrons lead the



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guilty woman bound through the village, beating her with sticks and cutting away her garments to the girdle ; they cut and prick her whole body with their knives, and send her from house to house bloody and torn by the many wounds ; new tormentors are always joining the band out of zeal for modesty and leave her dead or scarcely alive, so that others may have fear of adultery and wantonness. And the Wends, the most degraded and depraved race of men, observe the mutual love of the married state with such zeal, that a wife, when her husband dies, refuses to live ; the wife is thought deserving of praise, who brings death with her own hand and burns on the one pile with her husband.

When, therefore, the Gentiles who, according to the word of the apostle, do not know God and have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law and "shew the work of the law written in their hearts,"<sup>1</sup> it is now time that, thou, beloved son, who bearest in addition the name of Christian and of a worshipper of the true God, if in the flower of thy youth thou hast been defiled by the filth of licence and rolled in the mire of adultery and plunged in the sink of lust, as in a pit of hell, shouldst, mindful of thy Lord, escape from the snares of the devil and wash thy soul, stained by foul impurity.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ii. 14, 15.

It is now time that, from fear of thy Creator, thou shouldst not presume to repeat such a sin and to defile thyself further. It is time that thou shouldst spare the multitude of perishing people, who, following the example of their erring ruler, fall into the pit of death. As many as we draw by good example to the life of the heavenly kingdom, or lead to perdition by bad example, for so many, beyond a doubt, we shall receive either punishment or reward from the Eternal Judge.

If indeed the race of the English—as is noised abroad through these provinces, and is cast up to us in France and in Italy, and made a reproach even by the heathen—spurn lawful wedlock and live a foul life in adultery and licence like the people of Sodom, from such intercourse with harlots, a people degenerate, unworthy, mad with lust, will be born, and in the end the whole nation, turning to lower and baser ways, will cease to be strong in war or steadfast in faith, or honourable before men or beloved of God, just as has happened to other peoples of Spain and Provence and Burgundy: who turned from God and yielded to lust, until the Omnipotent Judge of such crimes allowed avenging punishment to come and destroy them, through ignorance of the law of God, and through the Saracens.

And it must be noted that under this crime another

terrible evil lies concealed, which is homicide; because when these harlots, whether in monasteries or in the world, have borne in sin children conceived in iniquity, they generally kill them; they do not fill the churches of Christ with adopted sons, but crowd graves with bodies and hell with wretched souls.

Besides, we have been told that thou hast violated many privileges of churches and monasteries, and taken from them many revenues. And this, if it is true, must be regarded as a great sin, on the testimony of Holy Scripture, which says, "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother and saith, it is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer." Our Father, without doubt, is God who created us, and our mother, the Church, which gave us spiritual regeneration in baptism. Wherefore, he who robs or plunders the moeys of Christ and the church, will be judged a homicide in the sight of the Just Judge. Of him some one of the wise has said: "He who seizes the money of his neighbour commits a crime; but he who takes the money of the church commits sacrilege."

And it is said that thy prefects and counts use greater violence and oppression towards monks and priests, than other Christian kings have ever done before. Wherefore, after the apostolic Pope Saint Gregory sent preachers of

the Catholic faith from the Apostolic See, and converted the race of the English to the true God, the privileges of the churches in the kingdom of the English remained untouched and unviolated up to the time of Ceolred, King of the Mercians, and Osred, King of the Deirans and Bernicians. At the suggestion of the devil these two kings showed, by their accursed example, that these two deadliest of sins could be committed publicly against the evangelical and apostolic precepts of our Saviour. And lingering in these sins, namely lust and adultery with nuns and the destruction of monasteries, condemned by a just judgment of God, they were cast down from their royal thrones in this life, and surprised by an early and terrible death; deprived of the light eternal they were plunged into the depths of hell and the bottom of the abyss. For while Ceolred, your worthy highness' predecessor—as those who were present testify—was feasting splendidly among his nobles, an evil spirit, which by its persuasions had seduced him into the audacious course of breaking the law of God, suddenly turned him in his sin to madness; so that without penitence and confession, insane and distraught, conversing with the devils and cursing the priests of God, he departed from this light assuredly to the torments of hell. Osred, too, the spirit of licence drove to lust and the frenzied rape of consecrated



virgins in the convents of nuns, until by a mean and contemptible death he lost his glorious kingdom, his young life and impure soul.

Wherefore, beloved son, beware the pit, in which thou hast seen others fall before thine eyes. Beware the darts of the old enemy, by which thou hast seen thine own relatives fall wounded before thee. Keep from the toils of him in ambush, in which thou has beheld thy friends and comrades strangled and lose both this life and the life to come. Do not follow the course of these to perdition. For such, according to the prophecies of Holy Scripture, are those that have afflicted the just and taken away their labours. On the Day of Judgment they will say: "We have erred from the way of truth and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us"<sup>1</sup> and "The way of the Lord we have not known" and "What hath pride profited us; or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on, and as a ship that passeth through the waves, whereof the trace cannot be found: Or as when a bird flieth through the air."<sup>2</sup> And a little later: "So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be: we are consumed in our wickedness. Such things as

<sup>1</sup> Sap. v. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Sap. v. 8-11.

these the sinners said in hell : for the hope of the wicked is as dust which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin cloth which is dispersed by the storm ; and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind ; and as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by." And elsewhere : "The number of the days of man at the most are a hundred years : as a drop of water of the sea are they esteemed." <sup>1</sup> All these things on the authority of Holy Scripture may very properly be compared. So too James, the brother of the Lord and an apostle, has declared concerning the unholy rich man : "As the flowers of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth : as also shall the rich man fade away in his ways." <sup>2</sup> And Truth itself has set it forth in the gospel : "For what is a man profited, if he shall have the whole world and lose his own soul?" <sup>3</sup> Wherefore, dear son, we beseech thee with fatherly and humble prayers, not to despise the counsel of thy fathers, who, for the love of God, wish to appeal to thy highness. For nothing is more beneficial for a good king than that such deeds when they are proven against

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus xviii. 8.<sup>2</sup> James i. 10, 11.<sup>3</sup> Matt. xvi. 26.

him should gladly be amended, for, as is said through the mouth of Solomon: "Whoso loveth instruction, loveth knowledge."<sup>1</sup> And so, beloved son, putting forth just counsel, we beg and pray through the living God and through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, that thou mayst remember, how fugitive is this present life, and how short and momentary is the delight of the impure flesh, and how ignominious it is for a man with his short life to leave an evil example for ever to posterity. Begin, therefore, to order thy life by better laws and to correct the past errors of youth, so that here thou mayst have praise before men and for the future rejoice in glory eternal. That thy highness may fare well and advance in good morals is our wish.

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xii. 1.

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## XLI

*Boniface urges Herefrith, a priest, to support the letter sent to Æthelbald, King of the Mercians. He sends gifts. 744-747.*

To his beloved and revered brother, Herefrith, priest, Boniface, servant of the servants of God, greetings of eternal love in Christ.

I beseech thy merciful clemency with the most earnest entreaties, that in thy holy prayers thou mayst deign to remember me, even as, from what those who come from thee tell me, thou hast done and will do. So that the words of Saint James the apostle may be fulfilled in us, when he said, "Pray for one another that ye may be healed," and "The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

We, the eight bishops who came together to a synod, and whose names are added below, in common entreat thee, beloved brother, that thou shouldst announce and explain the words of our admonition to Æthelbald, King

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 16.

of the Mercians, and that, reviewing and interpreting them, after the same fashion and order in which we have written and sent them to you, thou shouldst bring them to his notice. For we have heard that through fear of God thou fearest no man, and that the aforesaid king deigns at certain times, to pay some heed to thy counsels. And be it known to thy love that these words of admonition we have addressed to the king solely out of pure and loving friendship. Born and nurtured of the same English race, we remain here abroad by the command of the Apostolic See. We are glad and rejoice in the good report of our nation, but by its sins and by reproaches cast upon it we are distressed and saddened. We suffer for the disgraceful conduct of our people, whether it is Christians or pagans who say that the race of the English, spurning the custom of other nations, and treating the apostolic precepts with disdain, refuse to have lawful wives, and, after the fashion of neighing horses or braying asses, by licence and adultery, cause disgrace and confusion everywhere. Wherefore, beloved brother, if this greatest of crimes is truly ours, beloved brother, let us all join in asking the aforesaid king, that he reform himself with his people; so that the whole people may not perish here and hereafter, but that, by emending and correcting his own life, he may, through his example, again guide his people

to the way of salvation, and that where before he committed sin he may now deserve an eternal reward.

A little incense and a towel we have sent thee for a blessing and a sign of true love.

May the Holy Trinity, beloved brother, always keep thee well, rich in good works and advancing in tried virtue.

*Boniface thanks Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, for gifts and a letter. He indicates some matters which have been determined by him in a synod. He urges zeal. He adds a proposal about checking the pilgrimage of women to Rome. He suggests that monasteries should not be ruled through laymen, and condemns extravagance in dress. 747.*

To his brother and fellow-bishop Cuthbert, bound by the tie of spiritual affinity, exalted to the archiepiscopal dignity, Boniface, legate in Germany of the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church, greetings of truest love in Christ.

It is written in the book of Solomon, "Blessed be he that findeth a true friend, with whom he can speak as with himself." With great thanks to God and to you, we have received from your son, deacon Cynebert, your munificent gifts and your most welcome letter underlined with fraternal love. You also lovingly communicated with us, through him, your honeysweet words of fraternal counsel. It is our wish that, as long as God grants us to live in this mortal life, such spiritual colloquies and

advice may always be imparted with the aid of Him, from whom alone are holy desires, just counsels, and good wishes. Let us seek to instruct one another, you taking the larger and better part, whom God enriched with many powers and with great wisdom and ability, we in a few things, as a faithful and devoted brother, both united by the golden bond of heavenly love which cannot be broken.

For our labour is in the same ministry and for the same cause; and an equal obligation is imposed upon us to care for the Church and for the people, whether this take the form of teaching and restricting and advising, or of protecting canonical or popular ranks. I most humbly beseech you, therefore, not to fail to tell me, when God inspires you with wise counsels and informs your synodal deliberations with His spirit. And we must do the same if God inspires our weakness with anything necessary or agreeable to you. For a great solicitude for his churches and a greater care for the people are incumbent upon us, through our having received the pall, than upon other bishops, because they care merely for their own parishes. Wherefore, beloved, not that your prudence needs to hear or to read the decrees of our ignorance, but because we think that from your good and humble and holy disposition you would prefer to know rather than not to know,



we send you for correction and amendment the rules which the clergy here with us have drawn up.

We decreed and acknowledged in our synod that we wished to preserve to the end of our lives the Catholic faith and unity, and submission to the Roman Church; that we bowed to Saint Peter and to his vicar; that we should call a synod together every year; that the metropolitans would seek their palls from the Holy See; that we desired to follow in everything the precepts of Saint Peter, so as to be numbered among the sheep entrusted to him. To this profession we all agreed, and set our hands: we forwarded it to the body of Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles, where the Roman clergy and the Pope received it with rejoicing.

We determined that each year the canonical decrees and the laws of the Church and the rule of the monastic life should be read and re-enacted in the synod. We decreed that the metropolitan who has received the dignity of the pall should exhort and admonish the rest and examine who among them is concerned about the welfare of the people, and who is careless. The servants of God we forbade to hunt and wander in the woods with dogs and to keep hawks and falcons. We decreed, that each year, each priest should give to his bishop at Easter an account of his ministry, reporting on the Catholic faith

and baptism and on the whole order of his ministry. We decreed that each year each bishop should go carefully through his diocese, to confirm the people and to teach them, examine into and prohibit pagan practices, divinations or drawing of lots, auguries, phylacteries, incantations, and all unclean usages of the Gentiles. We forbade the servants of God to wear showy dress and military cloaks or to use arms.

We decreed that it is binding upon the metropolitan in accordance with the canon law to examine the character of the bishops subordinate to him and their solicitude for their people, of what sort it is; and that he should admonish the bishops, after coming from the synod, to meet the priests and abbots in their own parishes, and to enjoin them to keep the decrees of the synod. And each bishop, if there is anything in his diocese which he has not been able to correct or change, should mention this for correction, in the synod before the archbishop and all, as after our ordination the Roman Church bound us with an oath that if we saw the clergy or people wandering from the laws of God and could not correct them, we should always faithfully point this out to the Apostolic See and the vicar of Saint Peter for correction. Thus, unless I am mistaken, all the bishops ought to make known to the metropolitan, anything which they

find it impossible to correct among their people, and he should make it known to the Roman pontiff; and so they will be guiltless of the blood of lost souls.

For the rest, dear brother, equal toil but greater danger hangs over us than over other priests, because as all know the ancient canons enjoin the metropolitan to undertake the care of a whole province, and, to express my fears in a figure, we have undertaken to steer the ship among the waves of a savage sea, though we can neither guide it car fully nor lose it without a sin—because, as some one of the wise says<sup>1</sup>: “If it is dangerous not to guide a ship skilfully amid the waves, how much more dangerous is it to abandon it in the storm, as it struggles with the swelling waves.” Therefore, the Church, which like a great ship, sails over the sea of the world, and is buffeted by the many waves of temptation in this life, must not be abandoned, but steered. For examples in this connection we have the early Fathers Clement and Cornelius and several others in the city of Rome, Cyprian in Carthage, Athanasius in Alexandria, who under pagan emperors steered the ship of Christ, nay His beloved spouse, that is the Church, by teaching, and by struggling, and toiling and suffering even to the shedding of their blood. Truly I

<sup>1</sup> From the *De vita contemplativa* of Julianus Pomerius, l. xvi. Migne, Patrologia latina, LIX, 431.

can speak of myself in the words of the Song of Songs :  
“ My mother’s children were angry with me, They made  
me the keeper of the vineyards : But mine own vineyard  
have I not kept.”<sup>1</sup> The vineyard according to Nahum,  
the prophet of the Lord of Sabaoth, is the house of  
Israel ; now it must be understood to be the Catholic  
Church. In it, at the command of the Roman pontiff  
and the request of the rulers of the Franks and Gauls, I  
undertook to gather and exhort a synod in the hope of  
restoring the law of Christ. I dug about it, I brought  
to it a basket of dung, but I did not guard it. When I  
looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth  
but wild grapes. According to another prophet : “ The  
labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no  
meat.”<sup>2</sup> But alas ! my duty seems to be like that of a  
dog on the watch, who sees thieves and robbers break-  
ing into and bursting through and pillaging his master’s  
house, but because he has none to help him in the defence,  
only complains and grieves. But now, when, as seems  
just and wise for one placed in such danger, I seek and  
wish to know your helpful advice, I recommend liberty  
of speaking ; I speak, as in the Acts of the Apostles  
Paul the apostle advised the priests, saying : “ Wherefore  
I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the

<sup>1</sup> Cant. i. 5.<sup>2</sup> Habac. iii. 17.

blood of all men For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. I preached the Kingdom of God," said he, "as I went about among you : that I might keep myself guiltless of the ruin of all men."<sup>1</sup> For the apostle calls a priest of the Church overseer, the prophet calls him watchman, and the Saviour of the world calls him shepherd, and all agree that a teacher who is silent about the sins of the people is guilty through his silence of the blood of the lost souls. Wherefore, a great and terrible necessity forces us to show, in accordance with the words of the apostle, an example to the faithful : that is, unless my judgment errs, the priest must live so justly that from the contrast with his deeds his words may not be idle, and that, while he lives prudently for himself from his own, he may not by his silence be condemned for another's sin ; because for this purpose is one set over the church of Christ, that not only by living well he may instruct others through his example, but also that, by faithful preaching, he may set out before each man's eyes his sins, and show what punishment awaits the obstinate, what glory the

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 26-28.

obedient. Because according to the word of God to Ezekiel he, to whom the dispensation of the word is entrusted, may live justly, but yet, if he is ashamed or fears to rebuke those who live abandoned lives, together with all who perish through his silence, he likewise perishes. And what will it avail him not to be punished for his own sins, who is to be punished for another's? The silence of the priest, the Lord speaking to Ezekiel condemns terribly and calls the priest a watchman: and just as the watchman must from a loftier place see farther than all, so the priest ought to be raised higher on the elevation of his merits and to have the grace of greater wisdom, whereby he can instruct the rest of men. "Therefore hear the word of my mouth," said the divine voice, "and thou wilt give them warning from me."<sup>1</sup> He means that the priest is to declare what he has learned from divine reading, what God has given him by inspiration, not what human senses have discovered. "Thou wilt give them warning from me," said He, "from me, not from thyself; thou wilt speak my words, and wilt not boast of them as thine own. "From me," said He, "thou wilt give them warning. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life;

<sup>1</sup> Ezech. iii. 17.

the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will be required at thine hand " <sup>1</sup> It is as though He said openly : If thou hast not warned him of his sins, and if thou hast not rebuked him, that he turn from his sins and live, both thee who didst not warn and him who through thy silence sinned, I will hand over to eternal flames. Let us not, therefore, be so stony or iron or heart, that these words of the Lord do not alarm us. Let us not be so barren of faith, that we should not believe these words of the Lord ; but let us rouse up and exhort our brethren with the revered words of Saint Peter the apostle : " Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour ; whom resist, stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world " <sup>2</sup> And let us admonish the bishops who are under our synod with the exhortation of Saint Paul the apostle, when he says to Timothy : " I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his Kingdom : preach the word : be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. " <sup>3</sup> For now is the time foretold by the apostle " when they will not

<sup>1</sup> Ezech. iii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter v. 8, 9.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers"<sup>1</sup> and the rest. Let us, according to the word of the prophet, cry aloud with all our strength, we who announce peace on earth to men of good will. For he cries aloud with all his strength, whom neither fear nor shame hinders from preaching the word of life. Let us strive, with the aid of the Lord, that we may not be among those false shepherds of the sheep, whom the prophet accuses, saying: "Thus saith the Lord God: Woe be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherd feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them, and they were scattered because there is no shepherd, and they became meat to all the beasts of the field."<sup>2</sup> The woe of which the prophet speaks he has fixed for a curse: by the shepherds he signifies the bishops, by the flocks of the Lord, the faithful to be fed. But they feed themselves, because they strive not for the safety of the people, but

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 3.<sup>2</sup> Ezech. xxxiv. 2-5.



for their own pleasure. The fat and the wool of the sheep of Christ they take with daily offerings and tithes from the faithful ; and care for the flock of Christ they put to one side. They do not heal with spiritual counsel the man sick in sin ; they do not strengthen with priestly aid the man broken by many sufferings ; they do not recall the erring one to the way of salvation ; they do not seek out with pastoral solicitude the man lost through despair of forgiveness ; nor do they defend the afflicted against the violence of the powerful, who rage against them like wild beasts ; and so far from rebuking rich and powerful sinners, they do them honour. So with threats the divine word smites the pride of such, saying : " Woe to the prophets of Israel ! " <sup>1</sup> And again : " Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I am against the shepherds ; and I will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock ; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more." What is this but to say : The shepherds who feed themselves and not the flock, I will thrust down from their high dignity, among the out-cast and the accursed ! At all this who will not tremble, unless it be one who believes not in the future ? Everything which God wished to have observed He has so clearly fixed

<sup>1</sup> Ezech. xxxiv. 2, 9, 10.

and established with the authority of His name, that it would be easier to despise His words—and to say this is itself a sin—than to lie and declare that we did not understand things so clear and divine. When we hear : “ Thus saith the Lord,” who can believe that what God says will not be, unless it be one who believes not in God? With the thought of these things and things like unto them I am terrified, and “ fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror of my sins hath all but overwhelmed me ; ”<sup>1</sup> and gladly should I have abandoned the helm of the Church once taken up, had I been able to do so or could I have found examples, either from the Fathers or the Holy Scriptures to approve such a course.

Wherefore, my beloved brother, since all these things are so, and truth can be sorely tried but neither conquered nor deceived, let our wearied minds take refuge in Him, who says, through the mouth of Solomon : “ Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”<sup>2</sup> And elsewhere : “ The name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”<sup>3</sup> Let us stand fast in justice, and prepare our souls against temptation, that we may have the support of God and may say to him : “ Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.”<sup>4</sup> Let us put our

<sup>1</sup> Ps. iv. 6. <sup>2</sup> Prov. iii. 5, 6. <sup>3</sup> Prov. xviii. 10. <sup>4</sup> Ps. xc. 1.

trust in Him, who hath put the burden upon us. What we cannot carry ourselves, let us carry through Him who is Omnipotent, and says: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"<sup>1</sup> Let us stand fast in battle in the day of the Lord because the "days of tribulation and hardship" have come upon us. Let us die, if God wills it, for the sacred laws of our fathers, that with them we may deserve to win an eternal heritage. Let us not be dumb dogs nor silent watchmen, nor hirelings who flee before the wolf, but zealous shepherds, watching over the flock of Christ, preaching the whole counsel of Christ, to high and low, to rich and poor, and to all ranks or ages, so far as God gives us strength, in season, out of season, as Saint Gregory has described it in his *Pastoral Care*.

Wherefore, I do not conceal from your love that all the servants of God, who, either in the study of the Scriptures or in the fear of God are here most approved, feel that it would be for the welfare and the fair name and pure character of your Church, and would serve to conceal the disgrace, if your synod and rulers were to forbid to matrons and veiled women the journey to Rome, and the frequent halts which they make on the way thither and on the return. For the most part they perish, few remaining pure. There are few cities in Lombardy

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 30.

or in France or in Gaul, in which there is not an adulteress or a harlot of English race : which is a scandal and disgrace to your whole Church.

And this too, that a layman, be he emperor or king, or one of the prefects or counts, relying on the secular power, should seize for himself a monastery from the power of the bishop or the abbot or the abbess, and begin to rule in the abbot's stead, and have under him monks and take into his possession the money, which was gathered by the blood of Christ, such a man the Fathers of old called a plunderer, a man of sacrilege, a murderer of the poor, and a wolf of the devil entering into the fold of Christ, to be punished before the tribunal of Christ with the heaviest fetters of anathema. Concerning such remember the words of Saint Paul the apostle to Timothy : "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."<sup>1</sup> With such men, living or dead, if they do not receive the warning of the Church, for they are heathen men and publicans, the Church of God can have naught to do. In their ears let us both—for they are found here and there alike—sound the trumpet of the Lord, that by our silence we may not be condemned.

<sup>1</sup> Tim. vi. 17.

Seek by every means to check the luxury of dress which is excessive and hateful to God. Because these ornaments upon clothing—such their wearers think them to be though they are a disgrace in the eyes of others—the wide stripes and scarlet borders, are sent by Anti-christ and prepare for his coming: through his ministers he craftily introduces within the gates of the monasteries the licence of youths clad in purple garments, lust, unholy intercourse, indifference to reading and prayer, and the ruin of souls. These garments, betraying a nakedness of soul, display in themselves signs of arrogance and pride and wantonness and vanity, concerning which the wise man says: "Pride and arrogancy, and the evil w<sup>o</sup>v and the double tongue and froward mouth do I hate."<sup>1</sup>

In your parishes, it is said, the evil of drunkenness has greatly increased so that some bishops, so far from checking it, themselves become intoxicated through excess of drink, and, by offering cups unduly large, force others to drunkenness. This beyond doubt, is a crime for any servant of God to commit, or to have committed; and the canons of our Fathers bid us remove or degrade a drunken bishop or priest, and the Truth itself says: "And take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be over charged with surfeiting and drunkenness."<sup>2</sup> And Iaul the apostle:

<sup>1</sup> Prov. viii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Luc. xxi. 34.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess."<sup>1</sup> And Isaiah, the prophet: "Woe unto them that are powerful to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink."<sup>2</sup> This evil indeed is peculiar to the heathen and to our race. For neither the Franks, nor the Gauls, nor the Lombards, nor the Romans, nor the Greeks have it. Let us crush out this sin, if we can, by decrees of our synods and by the ban of the Scriptures; if we cannot, let us by shunning and forbidding it wash our souls clean of the blood of the damned.

Concerning the violent enslavement of monks for royal works and buildings, which in the whole Christian world has never been heard of, save only among the race of the English, the priests of God must not be silent nor give consent thereto. Such an abuse was unheard of in past ages.

May the hand of God guard you, beloved and honoured brother, unharmed against all adversities, while you intercede for us.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Isai. v. 22.

*Some one requests Andhune to send him clothing from Friesland. He asks whether Boniface has repaired to the synod of Pippin or to Drogo. The end of 747.*

To the father Andhune, most beloved in Christ, bound by the tie of affection, greetings from the heart.

Why hast thou not sent the clothing, which thou shouldst have sent from the province of the Frisians? Now in the name of God the Almighty have it come at once. Tell us something about our bishop: whether he has gone to the synod held by the ruler of the Western provinces<sup>1</sup> or to the son of Carlomann.<sup>2</sup> Answer us by letter. Send back quickly this messenger, Hartleih by name. I pray thee, master, to make his stay there and his journey hither easy for him.

Farewell, O flower of the church And pray for us, as we do for you, that the peace of Christ may abide in us.  
Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Pippin, afterwards king.

<sup>2</sup> Drogo, who succeeded upon Carlomann's retirement but played no conspicuous part.

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XLIV

*Boniface commends to the priest Denehard, Athalhere, a slave, about to marry. 732-755.*

Boniface, servant of the servants of God, to Denehard, priest, greetings in Christ.

I bid thee, beloved, with regard to this slave Athalhere, if any need befalls him in this case, to aid him as thou shouldst a free man, and to speak for him to his friends as for a free man, not a slave. I have sanctioned this since he is arranging to take a wife; that he may have no fears because he is a slave.

Farewell in Christ.



*Boniface urges all the English to pray for the conversion of the Saxons to the faith of Christ. About 737.*

To all the reverend bishops, venerable priests, deacons, canons, clergy, the abbots and abbesses, placed over the true flock of Christ, to the monks humble and submissive before God, to the virgins consecrated and devoted to God and all the consecrated handmaidens of Christ, and in general to all God-fearing Catholics, sprung from the English race, Boniface, or Wynfrith, an offshoot of the same stock, legate in Germany of the universal Church and servant of the Apostolic See, appointed archbishop without the claim of merit, greetings of the most humble affection and most sincere love in Christ.

We beseech your parental clemency with most earnest entreaties, that you should deign to remember our weakness in your prayers, in order that we may be delivered from the snares of Satan, the fowler, and from malicious and evil men and "that the word of God may have free course and be glorified ;"<sup>1</sup> and we beg that with your holy

<sup>1</sup> Thess. iii. 10.

prayers you should seek to obtain that our Lord and God Jesus Christ, "who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of God,"<sup>1</sup> may turn to the Catholic faith the hearts of the pagan Saxons, and that they may escape from the snares of the devil, by which they are held bound, and be united with the sons of Mother Church. Have pity on them because even they themselves are wont to say "We are of one blood and one bone," remembering that the way of the whole earth draws near, and that no one in hell will confess the Lord nor will death praise Him; and the way of the whole earth draws near. And know that for this request I have obtained the consent and approval and benediction of two Roman pontiffs. Act now upon this our appeal, so that your reward in the heavenly court of the angels may shine and increase.

May the Creator Omnipotent keep forever the unity and bond of your love strong and effectual in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.

*Torhthelm, Bishop of Lcicester, replies to Boniface. He expresses pleasure at his efforts to have the Saxons brought to the faith of Christ. He sends a gift. 737-741.*

To Archbishop Boniface, also called Wynfrith, my sweet and true master, abounding in love and above all in the grace of God, discharging the duties of his pastoral office always in Christ, Torhthelm, bishop, servant of the servants of God, greetings in the Lord.

We have received your grace's welcome letter, and on reading it again, we see the pious devotion and the burning love which you have for a holy life; how, protected by God's right hand, you meditate night and day, that the hearts of the pagan Saxons may be turned to the Catholic and Apostolic faith for the redemption of your soul. On hearing these pleasant tidings who would not be glad? Who would not exult and rejoice in these efforts, whereby our people may be brought to believe in Christ the Omnipotent God? With the bearer of your letter I send across to you, a gift, small indeed, but a pledge of great love, and assure you also that everything which you

deigned to ask of us we have very willingly undertaken ; that is to say, you are constantly remembered in holy masses and in daily prayers. So do we, conscious of our weakness, desire and earnestly pray that, as you surpass us in merit you should thereby the more faithfully render this same service on our behalf. Let your grace hasten to gather in and dedicate a new people to Christ. For truly you have as protector the Saviour of the human race, our Lord Jesus Christ. We send you greetings of brotherly love and earnestly entreat the divine mercy, which deigns to aid you and all yours in all good works, that you may reign with Christ in the world to come.

*Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury,<sup>1</sup> writes to Lul and his companions of the death of Boniface. The day of the martyrdom will be observed in England. The writer recommends mutual prayers and imitation of Boniface. The end of 755.*

To my reverend brother Lul, dear in the love of Christ, my fellow-bishop, and to the fellow-bishops working with thee and the priests of God, whose names should be written in the book of life, Cuthbert, servant of the servants of God, with the other fellow-priests of Christ and presbyters and abbots, greetings of eternal happiness and peace in the Lord.

We declare, beloved, with hearts pure in the sight of God and His chosen angels, that whenever we hear from the bearers of news that your love has made an advance towards greater peace and happiness, and progress in Christ for our holy religion, and has gathered through the conversion of others the abundant fruit of your holy preaching, rejoicing thereat and praying still more

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury from 740 to 762.

earnestly for you, we gladly return thanks to God the bestower of all good things. But when we are told of any injury done to your church, or any loss inflicted upon it, grief and sadness distress us; just as we share your joy in Christ, so do we mourn for Christ's sake over your adversities. For never can be obliterated from our memory the diverse and unceasing tribulations and sufferings which we in our hearts, but you with our father beloved of God, the martyr Boniface, of holy memory, out of love for your eternal country, long endured among persecuting pagans and leaders of heresy and schism on such a dangerous and barbarous mission; and now when in the agony of martyrdom he has departed gloriously and happily with his companions to the everlasting rest of his heavenly home, you, the survivors of such men, move, perchance amidst diverse temptations, with the more danger and difficulty, that you are deprived for the present of such a father and teacher.

Though the bitterness of this grief tears our hearts, yet a certain new and strong delight comes often to our minds to sweeten and assuage the sorrow. The more frequently we reflect thereon, the more joyously we thank the admirable, nay the ineffable goodness of God, that the race of the English settled in Britain deserved to send forth from itself openly before the eyes of all to spiritual

agonies such a famous investigator of the divine books, and such a splendid soldier of Christ, together with many well-trained and instructed disciples,—through the grace of the omnipotent God,—to the safety of many souls: that as leader and standard-bearer, going before, and with God's help, bravely overcoming opposition, through the impulse of his holy preaching, and the example of piety and goodness he might happily lead fierce nations far and wide, wandering long in by-paths, from the broad and deep pit of eternal perdition to the bright streets of the heavenly city. What has really been accomplished the outcome of events proclaims more splendidly than words, especially in those places which no teacher before him sought to visit for the purpose of preaching. Wherefore, after the choice and the number of the apostles, a mystery unequalled in the whole world, and the ministry of other disciples of Christ who preached the gospel at that time, we lovingly place this man among the splendid and glorious doctors of the orthodox faith, and praise and venerate him.

Accordingly, in our general synod—where we also conferred fully upon other things of which we can inform you only briefly—we determined to fix the day when he and the band with him suffered martyrdom, and to celebrate it with a solemn yearly feast. We seek him especially as

our patron along with blessed Gregory and Augustine ; we are indeed assured of having him for such before Christ our Lord, whom he always loved during his life, and whom, as by the favour of Christ he deserved, in death he gloriously exalted.

Moreover, as we have said above, we confess that we are always ready whenever and under whatever circumstances we can, to relieve and console with paternal words and brotherly comfort your own anxious watch and care and the flock of the servants of God under your charge, now that your strength has been diminished by the loss of the father of the family. Wherefore, to confirm the love which our hearts feel towards you, let us employ the words and sentiments of the apostle, saying with him : "Grace be unto you and peace. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers: remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."<sup>1</sup> We think it necessary to renew the mutual arrangement which was established by several letters and faithful messengers during the lifetime of Boniface of revered memory : that for ourselves and our associates, living or dead, mutual appeals and prayers and masses should be offered to the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. i. 1-3.



Living God, the Judge of all, according to the warning of the apostle : "Pray for one another, that ye may be healed,"<sup>1</sup> and the rest. For in this way, as we are assured, we shall satisfy the divine clemency, offering it the pure libation of our prayers : thus in adversity we shall find it ready to assist us. When by His own promise the help of the Lord is at hand, all opposition from the ill-disposed must give way. He Himself has said : "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."<sup>2</sup>

This we judge must be undertaken more earnestly and with prudent watchfulness, because by the prophecy of the apostle "perilous times shall come,"<sup>3</sup> and the rest to the end of the letter. There is no need of writing to you of calamities and attacks from without, such as, I think, you have often suffered, persecutions and plunder and hatred and scandals and such like. But behold how in most places the position of the Christian religion is weakened, since ecclesiastical order is disturbed both within and without, and evil sects with new ways of life have sprung up almost everywhere. Nor is it to be wondered at that, when the decrees of the early Fathers have been neglected and the

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xviii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1.

laws of the Church abandoned, many, according to their own invention, believe and declare and perform what is evil and injurious to the safety of many, as was pointed out in the past year by a man of great authority. In the face of these things what ought we to do, but demand without ceasing the aid of the holy apostles and martyrs of Christ and the venerable leaders of the Church of God, that in the work which we have been called and appointed to do, the grace of Christ may make us persevere with constant watchfulness, and that we may be not rejected but accepted, not languid but active, and may not scatter but gather, whomever we can to the fellowship of the Christian faith in the unity of the religious life? Thereby our ministry, our care and toil will avail to the praise and glory of the Omnipotent God, so that with those good servants who are pleasing to God we may deserve at length to hear: "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Verily. I say unto you that He shall make him ruler over all His goods."<sup>1</sup>

Hence, let us frequently, for the sake of the example, call to mind in what manner and with what zeal our illustrious master of honoured memory, the holy martyr Boniface, toiled in the teaching of God, what dangers

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 46, 47.

and difficulties for the love of Christ and the gain of souls, he bore cheerfully to his very death. And since he has now become the companion of the Omnipotent, your wisdom should carefully take thought how you should correspond with his admonitions, and follow vigorously the example of his goodness. For he, since he has become the companion of Him whom he loved before all else, will be able to obtain the greater favours from Him. Wherefore, if any of those subject to him, over whom the divine dispensation once placed him as master, dissent from his spiritual teachings and withdraw into evil ways of life, he who could have been their defender before the Eternal Judge, becomes rather their accuser, and with the Judge Himself, demands the more strictly an account from them. But, on the contrary, those who follow the rule of his holy precepts and teaching, may be certain of having, both living and dead, in prayer and the mass, as we have said above, eternal communion with the Roman and Apostolic Church, by which he was appointed their legate and instructor, and with all of us; that is, if to the last end, they are willing, for the sake of God and their eternal reward humbly and lovingly to obey you, their teachers and guides to salvation, and never fall away like unbelievers and hypocrites, but make progress always like well-disposed pupils, and adhere faithfully to the leaders

of their ministry in Christ until they are called by God to their reward and the glory of the heavenly kingdom.

These words of greeting we have addressed to your holiness, not that you are ignorant or need guidance from our ignorance, but for the sake of our mutual love and intercourse: we beg and entreat by the Omnipotent God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and the coming and the kingdom of Christ, that you all, beloved, together with those subject to you in Christ, may be faithful helpers one of another and co-labourers of one mind against all the enemies of the orthodox faith and heretics and schismatics and those of evil life, for thereby you will be worthy of love and praise from all good men and will be acceptable and dear to the Omnipotent God. And thus, together with the holy father himself, your predecessor, of whom we have spoken, you will deserve, each of you in the future to hear from Christ, the Judge of all, the glad words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."<sup>1</sup> Amen.

May the Omnipotent God long deign to keep you all safe in holy love and fear of Him, beloved brothers and sons.

Archbishop Cuthbert to his fellow bishop Lul.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 1.

*Milret, Bishop of Worcester,<sup>1</sup> writes to Bishop Lul concerning the death of Boniface and the love to be preserved between them. The end of 755.*

To the dear lord, beloved in Christ, Bishop Lul, Milret, servant of the servants of God.

After I departed sadly and unwillingly from thy presence and the bodily sight of that holy pastor and blessed father, Boniface, through many chances and diverse hazards,<sup>2</sup> we came, by your kindly prayers, to the land of our birth; there before the circle of the year had run, the mournful news was borne to us that the blessed father had departed from the prison-house of the flesh to the realms above, if it is right to call this a sad thing, that we have deserved to send before us to the kingdom of heaven such a patron, through whose holy intercession we trust, nay feel assured, that we are by God's help supported. And though we have mourned

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Worcester from 743 to 775.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *Aeneid* I. 204.

with many bitter tears the loss of this solace to our present life, yet the thought of him, who, by shedding his blood, has been consecrated a martyr for Christ, and, his noble work consummated by his holy agony, and his glorious end accomplished, is now the glory and support<sup>1</sup> of all those sprung from this land, soothes and calms our sorrowing hearts with a joy greater than the sorrow. We grieve for our own lot, remaining in the vale of tears, in this life full of temptations, but he, when with great efforts he had finished his labours abroad, came, a martyr of Christ, to a glorious death, and on behalf of us sinners, if the goodness of God allows, a faithful intercessor, dwells with Christ in the heavenly Jerusalem amidst the joys of the heavenly city, sharing the happy fortune of its holy citizens. So much concerning our beloved father. That thou shouldst inform me of his noble life and glorious end I do most earnestly desire.

One thing more it occurs to me to say of our fraternal union: with heartfelt prayers I beseech thy sweet love, and beg as if in reality prostrate before thy feet, that thou shouldst store up in thy heart with a remembrance, not transitory but enduring, the brotherly affection which our common father Boniface, of blessed memory, the love of Christ assenting, made firm between us with holy words

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Horace, *Odes*, II. 17, 34.

and kindly counsel. I know beyond a doubt that it will greatly benefit both thee and me if we endeavour to follow the precepts of such a noble teacher. Mayst thou not grow weary, beloved pastor, of instructing me, least in merit of all thy brethren, out of fraternal love, of fortifying me with holy precepts and strengthening me with gracious prayers. In return I declare and faithfully promise that I will gladly follow your honest commands in everything according to my strength: and so long as the soul governs these limbs and the breath of life dwells in these mortal members,<sup>1</sup> I call God to witness that I shall preserve a faithful friendship and unbroken love with thee: and with all the strength of my heart I desire that through the favour of Christ, what was written may be fulfilled: "But they had all things common."<sup>2</sup> All this, which we have briefly set down, I have asked the bearer of this letter, if the Omnipotent God grants him a safe journey, to indicate to thee more fully in words. We have sent also some small gifts, which we would have you accept with the same love, with which, God be our witness, we have sent them.

May Christ graciously keep you while you intercede for our offences.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Aeneid*, IV. p. 336.

<sup>2</sup> Acts iv. 32.

The book of Porphyrius on metre<sup>1</sup> I did not send, because Bishop Gutbert has neglected to return it. Emmanuel.

The letter of Bishop Milret to Bishop Lul.

<sup>1</sup> Reading Porphyri merit for the pyrpyri metri of the manuscripts.





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