

HERE BEGINS *THE* PASSAGE¹ OF *THE BLESSED ABBOT*² FURSEI

CHAPTER 1

There was a man of a venerable way of life, Fursei by name, noble by birth, but nobler by faith.³ He was famous among his own people by this age's dignity, but distinguished everywhere by the grace of divine gifts. This man's infancy flashed with certain evident sacred portents of miracles. **2** Under the highest priests (who had foresight through divine grace) he was educated in sacred letters⁴ and monastic disciplines. But while he was increasing in age and in the grace of foresight, he was daily increasing affection for all these things.

3 For he was distinguished in form, especial in body, devout in mind, affable in conversation, lovely in looks,⁵ furnished with prudence, famous in temperance, firm in internal fortitude, steadfast in discernment of justice, fervent in longsuffering, robust in patience, gentle in humility, considerate in love; **4** and wisdom adorned him with the beauty of all the virtues to such an extent, that his speech was always in grace, seasoned with salt, in accordance with what the emissary Paulus stated.

(Colossians 4:6)

5 Therefore, filled with the fruits⁶ of grace and good works, leaving his parents and fatherland,⁷ he spent certain years in the studies of the sacred⁸ writings. And, after being sufficiently instructed, he constructed a monastery in a certain place to where religious men from all parts flowed-together. He even took care to be calling-forth his parents with dutiful considerateness.

6 For⁹ this cause, while he was hastening to his fatherland to be visiting his parents, and was sowing among them the spiritual seeds of the sacred word with his discourse, on a certain day he was seized by a discomfort upon his sickening body. So his friends persuaded him to migrate to his father's house.

7 Going out from there, leaning on the hand of another, he, arriving not far from that house, at the time that the evening-hour psalm-song starts, was intent on prayer. **8** He stood still, suddenly surrounded by darkness. For being infirm, he could not move his legs. But like one already dead, he was borne to the nearest cottage.

9 And when he saw that he was surrounded¹⁰ by a mist of darkness, he perceived three¹¹ hands extended to him from above, which held him by the arms, flying upon snowy-white wings. **10** Their hands were under their wings, which held him up on either side. And, as though it were through a mist, he discerned the body of each of these beings.

11 But coming higher, he discerned the faces of the holy heavenly-messengers, shining as the marvelous lightning, or (I say more exactly) he looked on the brightness of exalted light from the very countenances of the heavenly-messengers. **12** He did not perceive¹² anything bodily, except for the brightness of light. **13** He noticed a third heavenly-messenger going before him, armed with a white shield and a radiant sword, and who was excellent in brightness.¹³

14 These three heavenly-ones, shining with equal radiance, by the sound of their wings, by the melody of their singing, and by the beauty of their appearance, filled his soul with a marvelous sweetness of pleasantness.

15 They all chanted, with one beginning:

"The holy-ones will advance from virtue to virtue; the God of gods will be seen in Zion."
(Psalm 84:7)

16 Their tune was elevated, and alighted at the end. He heard another song of many thousands of heavenly-messengers, which was unknown to him, and of which he could only understand a few words, "They have gone out to meet the Anointed-One."

17 Truly, the faces of all the heavenly-messengers, as far as he could understand, were of the same likeness; although it was very certain, that due to the brightness of the light, he was able to see nothing of their form.

18 Then one of the supreme hosts commanded the heavenly-messenger who went armed before him, to return the venerable man into his body and to have the task of taking Fursei with him. **19** Therefore, immediately, the holy heavenly-messengers, obedient to this command, made their journey back to the place from where they came.

20 Then, for the first time, the holy man, understanding that he had taken off his body, inquired of his holy companions, "Where were you* taking me?"

21 The holy heavenly-messenger standing at his right hand said, "It is fitting that you should receive your own body until you complete your due task."

22 Then the holy man, overcome with grief at parting from the fellowship of the heavenly-messengers, said, that he did not want to be separated from them.

23 A holy heavenly-messenger of the Lord responded, "After you have finished the aforementioned task, we will return to welcome you."

And they sang the verse, "The God of gods will be seen in Zion."

24 Then his soul, made joyous by the sweetness of this song, entered his body, but he did not understand how. **25** And then, at cockcrow, at the instant when the tunes of the heavenly-messengers ceased, his countenance was suffused with a rosy color. He heard the words of the men who looked on. In a little while, these men removed the clothes which had been placed over him, and they uncovered his face.

26 Then the man of God said to those who were standing around, "Why are all of you*, while being-astonished, uttering¹⁴ disquieting words?"

27 And responding to him, they told him in order, how, that from the evening-hour until cockcrow, his body, without a soul, had remained in their midst.

28 But he, sitting up, turned over in his mind the brightness and sweetness of the heavenly-messengers, and he considered what sort of task this was which he had been advised to accomplish. **29** He was sad, because in that place he did not have a wise human with him who might have been able to clearly expound to him the things which he had seen, so that, while the heavenly-messengers were returning, they might not find him unprepared. **30** He asked for and accepted the communion of the sacred body and blood. He remained infirm that day and the next.

CHAPTER 2

On the third¹⁵ day, in the middle of the night, the men appeared¹⁶ while many kinsmen and friends and neighbors were visiting the illustrious man, a darkness came suddenly upon him, and his legs were overcome by cold and stiffened. **2** Extending his hands in prayer, he gladly received death. He remembered the exceedingly pleasant vision, which he had seen previously, after having suffered the same symptoms.¹⁷ He fell down on his bed as if weighed-down by sleep.

3 He heard horrible voices of a great multitude clamoring and demanding for him to be coming-out. **4** Opening his eyes, he saw nothing but the three aforementioned holy heavenly-messengers: two were set on either side, the third standing armed at his head. **5** In a marvelous manner, he saw the aforementioned holy heavenly-messengers with the appearances and voices of a human, and he heard their songs with all sweetness of pleasantness.

6 Then the heavenly-messenger of the Lord at his right hand, consoling him, said, "Do not be filled-with-fear; you have a defense."

7 And as the heavenly-messengers lifted him up, he, perceiving no roof or house, passed through the midst of howling and clamoring demons. **8** He heard one of them saying, "May we be moving-in to wage war in front of his face." **9** Then he saw a black cloud on the left side, curling in front of him, forming into a battle line in front of his face.

10 Now the bodies of the demons, as far as they were being-able to appear to his soul, were full of deformity¹⁸ and blackness,¹⁹ long-necked, filled with meagerness and filthiness and every horror; their heads swelled into the likeness of cauldrons. **11** But when the demons flew or fought,²⁰ he could not see the shape of their body,²¹ only a horrible and flittering shadow. **12** (But what prudent reader does not know, that these things are done by the unclean spirits due to the terror of the soul which beholds them?) **13** And due to the horrible darkness, he was never able to be seeing their faces, exactly-as he also did not see those of the holy heavenly-messengers due to the brightness which was too-much.

14 The demons warred, shooting fiery arrows against them. But all these most wicked weapons were extinguished by the heavenly-messenger's shield. **15** Truly, the adversaries fell back before the countenance of the heavenly-messenger who was fighting, who said like a rationalizer, "Do not delay our journey, for this human is not a participant of your* perdition."

16 The adversaries, contradicting and reviling, said, "It is unjust for God, for a human who consented to a sinner to be having no condemnation, when it might be having been written: 'Not only the ones who are doing such things are worthy of death, but even the ones who are consenting to the ones who are doing them.'"

(Romans 1:32)

17 Truly, while the heavenly-messengers were fighting, the holy man was estimating, that the clamor of the fight and the crying of the demons was able to be being heard in all the earth.

18 When the spiritual-adversary was conquered, he raised up his venomous head like a bruised serpent, saying, "He often brought forth idle speeches; he is not entitled to enjoy a blessed life unharmed."

¹ H / others "LIFE"

² H / some others add

³ Bede *, of noble Scottish blood, but much more in soul than in birth."

⁴ Bede "books"

⁵ literally "aspect"

⁶ H / CRP add

⁷ H / others add

⁸ H / others add

⁹ literally "Out of"

¹⁰ H, some (Lat "circumdari") / others (Lat "circumdare")

¹¹ H / others "four"

¹² others / H omit "could" & "perceive"

¹³ others / H omit "He noticed...brightness." (likely by scribal error)

¹⁴ literally "emitting"

¹⁵ others (supported by Bede) / H has an erasure here the exact length of this word

¹⁶ others / H add

¹⁷ literally "signs"

¹⁸ may also be translated to "ugliness"

¹⁹ others / H omit "were" & "and blackness"

²⁰ others / H omit "or fought"

²¹ others / H "not see a body"

19 The holy heavenly-messenger said, "Unless you might bring-forward principal crimes, he will not perish on account of minute ones."

20 The ancient accuser said, "It is written: 'If you* might not forgive humans their sins, neither will your* heavenly Father forgive you* of your* trespasses.'" (Matthew 6:14-15/Mark 11:26 TR)

21 The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "When did he avenge himself, or to whom has he done wrong?"

22 The slanderer said, "It is not written: 'if you* might not be avenging'; but: 'If any you* might not have forgiven from your* hearts.'" (Matthew 18:35)

23 The heavenly-messenger of the Lord said, "May we be judged before the Lord."

24 The conquered enemy replenished his viperine venoms, speaking, "If the Lord is just, this human will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens; for it is written: 'Unless you* have been converted, and have become like little children, you* will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens.' This man has minimally fulfilled this word." (Matthew 18:3)

25 The holy heavenly-messenger, explaining, said, "He had innocence¹ in his heart, but he continued according to the custom of a human."

26 The slanderer responded, "As he has accepted evil from the custom, so may he be accepting vengeance from the supreme judge."

27 The holy heavenly-messenger said, "May we be judged before the Lord."

As the holy heavenly-messenger fought on, the adversaries were crushed.

CHAPTER 3

Then the holy heavenly-messenger, who was at his right hand, said,² "Look at the world."

2 Then the holy man looked. And³ he saw a dark valley set in the deepest part beneath him.⁴ And he saw four fires in the air, at a distance from each other by some spaces.⁵

3 And the holy heavenly-messenger said again,⁶ "What are these fires?"

The man of the Lord responded, "I do not know."⁷

4 And the heavenly-messenger said, "These are four fires which burn up and consume⁸ the world."

5 "The first: After all the sins of individuals have been forgiven in immersion, after their confession and their renunciation of the Slanderer,⁹ and all¹⁰ his works and pomps¹¹—but lying about these things which they have promised to renounce, they burn in the fire of lies.

6 "The second¹² is the fire of desire, which is inflamed by the lies of the promise and by the lies of the renunciation of the age.¹³

7 "The third is the fire of dissension, which is born from desire.¹⁴

8 "But the fourth is the fire of mercilessness,¹⁵ which arises from dissension. And from this fire are¹⁶ impiety and deceit (through which the weak are despoiled without mercy), contention, envy, and whatever is similar to these.¹⁷

9 "Each one kindles a fire, because, by the augmentation of evil, sins increase from faults."

10 Truly, the fires grew, being made into one great flame, which approached him. Fearing the menacing fire, he¹⁸ said to the holy heavenly-messenger who was talking with him, "Lord,¹⁹ The fire is approaching me."

11 The heavenly-messenger responded, "Because you have not kindled it, it²⁰ will not burn you. 12 For although this fire is terrible and great, nevertheless, it will examine each person according to the merits of his works, because the desire of each and every person will burn in this fire. 13 For in the same way that the body burns²¹ because of an unlawful lust,²² so it²³ will burn because of a due punishment."

14 Then he saw the holy heavenly-messenger who was²⁴ going before him divide the flame of the fire²⁵ into two walls on either side; and two holy heavenly-messengers on either side²⁶ defended him from the peril of²⁷ the fire.

¹ H / others "clemency"

² Bede "ordered"

³ Bede (starting at "Then the...") "And casting his eyes downward,"

⁴ H has several omissions and mis-arrangements in this section

⁵ Bede "air, not far distant from each other"

⁶ Bede "And he asked the heavenly-messengers"

⁷ Bede omit "The man of the Lord responded, 'I do not know.'"

⁸ Bede "which were to burn up and consume"

⁹ Bede "Spiritual-Adversary"

¹⁰ Bede add

¹¹ Bede "and do little to fulfill it"

¹² literally "other"

¹³ Bede "desire, when we prefer the riches of the world to the love of the heavenly-things"

¹⁴ Bede "dissension, when we do not fear to offend the souls of our neighbors even in superfluous things."

¹⁵ Bede "impiety"

¹⁶ others / H omit "But the fourth...from this fire are" (by scribal error?) / Bede omit "mercilessness...from this fire are" (by scribal error?)

¹⁷ Bede "impiety, when we consider it as no crime to rob and defraud infirm men."

¹⁸ Bede "grew, approaching each other, and were made into one great flame. As they approached, he was very fearful and""

¹⁹ Bede add

²⁰ Bede "What you did not kindle"

²¹ Bede "that one burns in the body"

²² others, Bede / H "will"

²³ H / Bede "so he, released from the body" / others "so the soul"

²⁴ Bede "saw one of the three heavenly-messengers who were"

²⁵ Bede "fires"

15 He also²⁸ beheld unclean demons flying through the fire, waging a horrible war in the midst of the fire.²⁹ And one of them said, "The servant, who knows his lord's will and does not do it, was much beaten."³⁰ (Luke 12:47)

16 The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "But what part of his lord's will did he not fulfill?"³¹

17 The spiritual-adversary responded, "It is written: 'The Most-High is disapproving the offerings of an iniquitous person.'³² This man has received gifts from unrighteous persons."³³ (Sirach 34:19)

18 The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "For he believed that each one of them had changed their mind."

19 The slanderer said, "He should have tested their perseverance in this change-of-mind, and, in this way, to have received the fruit of having done it. 20 For 'gifts blind the eyes of wise-men, and pervert the words of righteous men.'" (Deuteronomy 16:19)

21 The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "We are judged before the Lord."

22 The deceitful slanderer, succumbing into revilements against the Author of everything, erupted, saying, "Until now we estimated that the Lord was truthful."

23 The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "For what else is he?"

24 The most impudent demon said, "Because he promised, that every sin which is not being purged on the earth will be judged in the heaven, 25 Isaiah the prophet crying: 'But if any of you* are willing and might hear me, you* will eat the good of the earth; if you* might not will this and might provoke me to anger, the sword will devour you*.' (Isaiah 1:19-20)

26 "This human has not purged his sins on the earth, nor is he receiving his vengeance here. Where, then, is the justice of God?"³⁴

27 The holy heavenly-messenger, rebuking them, said, "You, adversary, do not revile, while all of you* might not be knowing the hidden judgments of the Lord."

28 The slanderer responded, "What is this thing which has been hidden?"

29 The holy heavenly-messenger said, "As long as a change-of-mind is hoped for, divine mercy attends a human."

30 The spiritual-adversary responded, "But here, however, there is no place for a change-of-mind."

31 The heavenly-messenger responded, "All of you* are-ignorant of the depth of the mysteries of God; for perhaps there will even be."

32 The slanderer responded, "Therefore, may we be parting, while there is not a reason for a judging."

33 Truly, another of his henchmen said, "There still remains for that man a narrow gate, through which none but a few enter. There we can overcome that man: 'You will love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Leviticus 19:18)

34 The heavenly-messenger responded, "This man did good to his neighbors."

35 The adversary responded, "It is not sufficient to work good, unless he has loved them as himself."

36 The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "The fruit of love is to work good, for the Lord will reward every person according to his works." (Rom. 2:6)

37 The dishonest demon said, "But because he has not fulfilled the word of God with love, he should be condemned."

38 Truly, the impious multitude fought again,³⁵ but the holy heavenly-messengers were the victors.

39 The defeated enemy, as was his custom, erupted into revilement, speaking, "If the Lord is not unjust, and if lying and transgressions of his word displease him, this man will not be free from punishment. 40 For he promised³⁶ to renounce the age, and, on the contrary, he has loved it, against the emissary's teaching, which says: 'Do not love the world, nor the things³⁷ which are in the world', and the other writings.³⁸ Neither have the words of this man's own promise restrained him, nor by the emissary prohibiting it." (1 John 2:15)

41 The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "He has loved the things which are of the age, to be dispensed, not only to himself, but to all those who go in."³⁹

42 The most impious slanderer said, "It does not matter whatever way⁴⁰ he might be loved, it is contrary to the divine precept and against the promise⁴¹ of Christianity which is made in immersion."

43 The heavenly-messengers were victorious over their conquered adversaries, and the slanderer returned to his cunning accusations, speaking, "It is written: 'Unless you announce to a wicked person to turn from his wickedness, I

²⁶ others / Bede "and two flying around on either side" / H omit altogether

²⁷ Bede add

²⁸ Bede "However"

²⁹ Bede "waging conflagrations of wars against righteous men"

³⁰ H / others "does not do it worthily, will be beaten with many stripes."

³¹ Verses 16-17 are accidentally inserted into verse 22 between "saying" and "until now"

³² others / H strangely has "The holy heavenly-messenger responded, 'But...unrighteous.'" after "broke forth, speaking"

³³ others / H omit "This man has received gifts from unrighteous persons."

³⁴ others / H omit "nor has he received...of God"

³⁵ others / H omit "again"

³⁶ others / H partially erased / H-corrector "he gave advice"

³⁷ others / H omit "the things"

³⁸ others / H omit "writings"

³⁹ Possible emendation "all the needy"

⁴⁰ literally "mode"

⁴¹ literally "sposion"

will require his blood from your hand.' This *man* has not announced *these things* to sinners in a fitting way for them to have a change-of-mind." (Ezekiel 3:18)

44 The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "But about this time, it is written: 'The prudent man will keep silence at that time, for it is an evil time.' 45 For when the hearers despise the word, even the teacher's tongue is hindered; for he sees that the preaching being heard is despised." (Amos 5:13)

46 The ancient accuser responded, "He ought to be announcing even to the point of suffering, neither consenting, nor keeping-silent."

47 But amid¹ all these demons' contradictions, an excessively very-strong battle persisted, until (since the Lord is the judge), the heavenly-messengers were being triumphant, and their adversaries, having been crushed, were having been defeated. 48 The holy man was surrounded by an immense brightness, with the choirs of the holy heavenly-messengers chanting together, "No labor should seem hard, it is not a long time by which the glory of eternity is acquired." 49 All were filled, both with joy and sweetness.

CHAPTER 4

Then, looking upwards, he saw immense ranks of heavenly-messengers, flashing with exalted brilliance, and of the holy humans, going before and flying as if they had wings envired by an immense scintillation, surrounding him and driving far away all the formidability: the fire and the terrors of demons.

2 He saw two venerable men of the province which Fursei, the man of the Lord, was from. Seeing these,² whom he believed had died (who were prelates, pre-eminent in the remembrance of everyone even up to our time), they came nearer to him. 3 And they declared their own names with friendliness, which were called Beoan and Meldan; and they began to be uttering with him.

4 Then he beheld a great serenity in the heaven, and two heavenly-messengers returning to the delight of the heaven, entering as though by a door. 5 And around them, burst out a very great brightness, and, as it were, four choirs of multitudes of heavenly-messengers were singing and speaking, "HOLY HOLY HOLY LORD God of Hosts."

6 Then his soul, intent on the sweetness of the supreme melody and the sound of ineffable joy sounding beyond the heavens, flashed out. 7 And surrounding him were ranks of heavenly-messengers, standing even at his right hand. 8 Unharmful in feeling, divided of undivision, he heard and saw the words of the heavenly-messenger.³

9 Then the holy heavenly-messenger, standing at his right hand, said, "Do you know where this joy and happiness is from?"

He responded, "I do not know."

The holy heavenly-messenger responded, "At the supreme convention, where we are from."

10 Then his mind forgot all the labor and tribulation and he was filled with immense happiness;⁴ for he heard the supreme songs resonate more brightly and melodiously. He reasoned that they were singing for himself alone. Marveling, he related, "It is a great joy to listen to these tunes."

11 The heavenly-messenger of the Lord said to him, "We are often deprived of this hearing because of the ministry⁵ of human dispensation; and what we labor to announce, the human demons by corrupting, are dissipating the hearts."

12 And again, the heavenly-messenger of the Lord said to the blessed man, who was intent upon hearing the heavenly tunes, "Never in this heavenly kingdom is any sadness raised, except on account of the perdition of humans."

13 Then he beheld the aforementioned priests coming toward him, proceeding from the secret place of the heaven, but they were radiant like heavenly-messengers. 14 And they directed him to return to this age. But at this news, he was silent and stunned by sadness. 15 In a moment, he was returned to the holy heavenly-messengers who were bringing him back, but the aforementioned men requested a space of time to utter with him. And they were saying, "Why are you fearing? It is but a one day journey which you will labor to be preaching. Therefore, be announcing to all men, that vengeance is in the near future."

16 The blessed Fursei interrogated them about the end of the world.

They were declaring, "This time is not the end of the creation, as though it is near; but the human race is to be vexed with a famine and a deadly pestilence. 17 It is decreed that, even as a sign, the sun will hide its rays for one year, shining continually in the manner of the moon.

18 "There are two manners of famine: The one is a famine in the abundance of wisdom—understanding the word of the Lord and being filled by it. 19 But the other is a hardness of mind, in the abundance of riches. 20 But they are both generated by one root of bitterness. 21 For as an avaricious person is not satisfied with money, (because the bitterness of avarice does not enjoy the sweetness of the goods which he has already obtained), lusting after those which are unlawful, even so, souls filled and held back by the bitterness of evil are not satisfied with the sweetness of the word of the Lord. 22 Truly, death is held back for a time because of the patience of the Lord. But whoever sees these signs or disdains the

admonishments of a holy writing, if he does not have a change-of-mind, death is near to him.

23 "And although the divine admonishments already threaten those who despise the Supreme Judge, yet he is primarily wrathful against teachers of the assembly and princes, 24 because the souls of faithful-ones are perishing through the enticing vices of this world, through the suggestions of the militant slanderer, through the negligence of teachers, through the bad examples of depraved princes.

25 "For teachers who are studying⁶ the books of the prophets, ought to understand and recognize the manner of this present time. 26 For men are in the middle of this work, because by the mercy of almighty God some have obtained the grace of generosity, but are slippery with unrestraint of the flesh. 27 Truly others, indeed, are chaste of body, but are desirous with the tides of avarice. 28 Others also have the grace of leniency, but are feeble-souled with rancor of soul. 29 However, others, by not recording their injuries, are swiftly pardoning them; but, by guarding their hearts less cautiously and being more swift to anger, they are provoking quarrels. 30 Therefore, truly others, because God has given largely to each of them, glory in this, as though they had acquired this by their own labor. 31 Truly, others, have overcome what they are attacking with a watchful heart, and yet have failed to conquer in the perseverance of good works.

32 "There are also some who are attacked by spiritual vices,⁷ neglecting these, they afflict their bodies with abstinence for the sake of the mere word, esteeming the vices but nocturnal illusions or venial crimes. 33 For that pride which cast down the heavenly-messengers from the supreme heaven, they compute to be nothing; 34 nor do they denounce the avarice, which expelled the first human from the delight of the Garden; 35 nor the envy, by which Cain the parricide killed his brother Habel; 36 also the false testimony, by which the Savior was condemned; nor do they denounce revilement. They do not consider how many and great vengeance have settled over those who do similar things.

(Enoch 6~16; Genesis 3~4)

37 "Many indeed, although they abstain from food⁸ which God has created to be taken with thanksgiving, take the following impious things almost as if permitted:⁹ 38 that is, pride, avarice, envy, false testimony, revilement (by which they tear as it were the flesh of a neighbor, eating it with his blood)—and what is lighter in the judgment of God, they judge to be graver, but they think the graver things lighter.¹⁰

39 "Therefore, every teacher ought to prescribe suitable medicines for each vice. 40 For he who estimates these vices to be lighter than gluttony and sexual-immorality is to be judged an enemy of souls rather than a teacher. 41 Therefore, the cure for pride is public reproof¹¹ and frequent humbling in mud and ash. 42 Truly for avarice, the medicine is dispensation of generosity among¹² everyone universally. 43 Envy is medicined by benevolence of kindness. 44 However, false testimony is met by humbly confessing to the person whom he committed the false words against, and by seeking pardon from him. 45 The evil of revilement is healed likewise by medicine: by humility, subjection, and refraining the tongue from all useless speaking, and by perseverance in prayer. 46 For contrary vices are healed by contrary virtues. 47 It is not enough to afflict the body, if the soul is not healed from malice and wickedness.

48 "Therefore, princes and most Christian teachers of the assembly, ought to call forth the minds of the faithful-ones to the medicine¹³ of a change-of-mind from their sins, and should make them strong again by the spiritual fodder of teaching and by sharing in the sacred body and blood. 49 They ought to excommunicate those who are unwilling, lest they incur the guilt of condemnation by neglect. 50 They ought to plant the elm for the vine, and the alder for the olive; 51 yet they esteem earthly and unfruitful labor more than love, which is recognized to be the root and summit of all good works.

52 "The Lord is angered against teachers who neglect the divine books, who are pursuing the cares of this age with all delight. 53 For if by reading, they had understood the sayings of the prophets, and him who had been stood-up from the dead humans, they would have brought more fear and pricking of the heart to the hearers. 54 But there is no one who might be prohibiting nor who might be propelling. For king and priest, each according to what is written, does what is right in his own eyes. (Judges 17:6; 21:25)

55 "Truly, the cause and root of all evil is pride. 56 For a people rises up against a ruler, an allotted-one against a priest, a monk against an abbot, children against parents, youths against elders; by being proud they imagine divers things. 57 But in the same way that each one of them, subject to a prelate, has not learned to display the obedience of humility—so, by the just judgment of the Lord, none of them will be humbly subjected to him as the prelate of others; 58 and whatever another unjustly sustains by his proud behavior, he will hurtfully suffer the same by the other through the strict justice of the Judge. 59 Therefore, the evil of pride,

⁶ literally "considering"

⁷ others / H "roads" (or "routes")

⁸ others / H omit "food"

⁹ others / H "pleasures"

¹⁰ others / H omit "things lighter"

¹¹ literally "reproof before all"

¹² literally "in"

¹³ H / others "lamentation"

¹ literally "in"

² text from "He saw two...dead" is uncertain. / Following H, while others omit "seeing these"

³ H, some / most omit "Unharmful...messenger."

⁴ H / others add

⁵ others / H "mystery"

which subverts and ruins *even the* supreme congregation-of-heavenly-messengers, ruins *the* present age, confusedly perverting *it*.¹

CHAPTER 5

The aforementioned priest, Beoan, who had diligently brought this speech to an end, turning to the blessed Fursei, was declaring, **2** “Be preserving your life by using the creation¹ of God; reject and deny everything which is evil.

3 “Be like a faithful steward, claiming nothing for yourself but sustenance and clothing, moderate in taking or increasing gain. **4** For he who receives this gift as it was given to *him* will be able to open *the* mouth of *the* mute, begging for nothing nor denying anyone. **5** It is hateful to God for you to be seeking after *what belongs* to others and to be retaining *what is your* own. **6** For it is fitting to seek out a poor-person and *someone who* has been bound, and for *those who are* having *possessions* to be dispensing *them* to indigent-persons. **7** But alms are to be dispensed to poor-persons, *even if* none of *them* should ask. **8** Good will also be worked among² all humans, especially among *those who are* of-the-household of faith. **9** Truly, may the gifts of wicked *persons* be being given to³ a poor person, and all solace to a destitute person. **10** Truly, may the gifts of the holy-ones be being imparted among⁴ the necessities to be being fully-enjoyed by ‘poor-persons in spirit’ or by *those who* were corrected from *their* vices.⁵

11 “Therefore, may there be no discord in the assembly of God,⁶ but those who have taken up⁷ the order of the emissaries will persevere in the holy teaching.

12 “Truly, those who spend their time in monasteries will eat their own bread, working in silence. **13** Truly, there are some who excuse themselves from the office of teaching, and leap out into public *affairs* because of the cares of the age. **14** Investing in *the* good which they do in private, they hide *the* light of a good example from their neighbors; **15** but pursuing causes or contentions of *the* age in public, they publicly pour the venom of deadly desire into their hearts.

16 “Therefore, may you not show yourself always remote from the age, nor always in public. **17** But when you might be wanting to be remote, guard yourself with all watchfulness, observing all *the* divine precepts. **18** And when you might precede into public, may you adhere *your* soul intently to the salvation of souls, not to *the* pressing gains of *this* world. **19** But even if someone might bring to you gifts in the first hour of the day, and then might change-his-mind before the evening-hour: exactly-as you have freely received, so restore *these* gifts to him joyfully.

20 “May you not be applying yourself to a patrimony and a guarding of wealth, nor to diligence and intentness of heart for the cares of this age. **21** But make-supplication for *your* enemies to the Highest God with all *the* concession of a pure⁸ heart⁹ toward all *those who are* being-adverse or *are* contradicting *you*, repaying good for evil. **22** For he who preserves the leniency of a peaceful¹⁰ heart toward those who contradict or resist him, converts *the* fierceness of every wild animal and beast into mildness. **23** For not-one sacrifice of good works is found so acceptable to God as *the* mildness of the leniency of a most patient heart against all injuries, through which he, in *the* Lord, accepts all adversities and damages as gains and prosperity, joyful in the hope of a future recompense.

24 “For there are two *things* which are proved to be enemies to a human soul: *the* Slanderer and *the* world. And each of them alternately insinuates *the* mutual enticement of *the* other, so that, through this, a soul which will be laid-beneath *the* allurements of this world might be being held in possession by *the* conquering adversary.

25 “Therefore, go, announcing *the* word of God to *the* princes of this earth of Hibernia,¹¹ so that, after they have relinquished iniquity, they might be reaching, by a change-of-mind, to the salvation of souls. **26** Next, be announcing this to *the* more excellent priests of the holy assembly, that *the* Almighty is a jealous God, if they love *this* age more than himself. **27** For neglecting the prosperity of *the* soul, they wait on *the* gains of this age, and preach a change-of-mind to a late death; and then, receiving their gifts, they endure *the* fire of their torments.”

28 When he had said these things, that supreme rank of heavenly-messengers was received into the heaven.¹²

CHAPTER 6

Also, as the blessed Fursei was about to return to the earth with three heavenly-messengers only, *the* great fire drew near. **2** But *the* heavenly-messenger of the Lord, as before, split *the* fire of flame,¹³ dividing it in *the* middle. **3** But when *the* man of God approached *the* passage which opened between *the* flames.¹⁴ And one

¹ others / H “creator”

² literally “in” (also later in version)

³ literally “in”

⁴ literally “in”

⁵ others / H omit “Truly, may the gifts...vices.”

⁶ H / others add

⁷ H / others “but the people of”

⁸ others (Lat “puri”) / H “equal” (Lat “pari”)

⁹ literally “breast”

¹⁰ others (Lat “pacati”) / H “long-suffering” (Lat “pati”)

¹¹ that is, Ireland

¹² Bede “When they had finished speaking and had returned to the heaven with *the* spirits of *the* heavenly-messengers”

¹³ Bede add

¹⁴ Bede add

man who was leaping out of¹⁵ the fire, *the* demons,¹⁶ throwing that man onto Fursei’s¹⁷ shoulder, pressed his jaw to Fursei’s jaw. **4** And he recognized *the* human because he had bequeathed his clothes to Fursei¹⁸ when he was dying. **5** And while *the* man was setting-fire to Fursei’s shoulder and jaw, he was cast out by *the* heavenly-messenger into *the* fire from where he came. **6** *The* heavenly-messenger who walked¹⁹ on *the* left stood between *the* blessed man and *the* fire, and *the* right-hand heavenly-messenger apprehended him and²⁰ cast him into the flame.²¹

7 Then *the* slanderer, *the* ancient serpent,²² repeating²³ his fallacies, said, “It is not lawful to²⁴ be repelling a man whom you previously accepted. As you had accepted his goods,²⁵ so you ought to be a participant of his punishment.”

8 *The* heavenly-messenger of the Lord responded,²⁶ “It was not because of avarice that he accepted *it*, but because of liberating²⁷ *this* man’s soul.” And *the* fire ceased.

9 Then *the* heavenly-messenger of the Lord said,²⁸ “What you have kindled has burned²⁹ in you. If you had not accepted *the* clothes³⁰ of this man, dead in his sins, his punishments would not burn in your body.³¹ **10** Therefore, preach to everyone, in order for a change-of-mind to be undergone and to be received by a priest even to *the* last hour. **11** But nothing of *the* sinner’s sustenance will be received, nor will his body be buried in a holy place. **12** Now it must be preached vividly, to what extent the heart of a guilty person will taste the bitterness of conviction. And when it is purged, he, having renounced all previous iniquities, will distribute alms lavishly to poor persons. **13** Nevertheless, from that time onward, nothing will be accepted by *the* priest who is preaching for him, but, near his tomb, his goods will be divided among poor persons, lest others be partakers of *that* individual’s iniquities.”

14 Having been instructed by these and other discourses and exhortations, he stood on the roof of the assembly building between the holy heavenly-messengers. **15** Contemplating his body, he was not able to either see *the* walls of *the* building, nor *the* crowd of *the* mourners, nor yet *the* clothes of his body. **16** He was commanded by *the* heavenly-messenger to identify his own body and to take it back.

17 Then Fursei, fearing his cadaver as though it was unknown to him, would not approach it.

18 *The* heavenly-messenger responded to him, “Do not be wishing to fear to take up this body, which, though weak, you may assume without any revulsion of infirmity, nor of repugnant sins. **19** In this tribulation, you have overcome unlawful desires, so that old sins will not prevail against you.”

20 Then he saw that *the* body was opening in *the* chest.

21 *The* heavenly-messenger said to him, “Pour spring-water upon your reviving body, and you will be able to be sensing no pain, with *the* sole exception of *the* burn. **22** If you are working beneficial-things in your every step to *the* end, we will see you, and, in this manner, take you up with joy.”

This is the end of the vision.

23 However, rising as it were from *the* depth of death, *the* holy man quietly beheld *the* multitude of parents and neighbors, even of allotted-ones, groaning at *the* magnitude of human foolishness. **24** And while he was admiring *the* arduous and difficult passage and *the* magnitude of the reward of those who came to *the* seat of blessedness, he was announcing *the* events in³² order. **25** And after being covered with water, *the* burn between his shoulders and in his face, which he had received from *the* iniquitous man, appeared clearly. Marvelously, what he had received in his soul alone was manifested in his flesh.

26 Coming out from there, he preached *the* word of God, announcing to all *the* people of the Scots what he had seen or heard. **27** Truly, there was in him an incomparable grace, **28** seeking nothing earthly from anyone, **29** giving to everyone who asked, **30** and being subjected equally to both prelates and inferiors, **31** and showing proper fear to great-men and kings, **32** and feared by those who are humble and despisers³³ of the age; **33** he was amiable to all good persons, **34** terrifying to iniquitous persons and sinners, **35** famous for divine

¹⁵ Bede “who was being tormented in”

¹⁶ Bede “The unclean spirits”

¹⁷ literally “that man’s”

¹⁸ Bede “because Fursei had received his clothes”

¹⁹ H / others “flew” [some text before this point, present in both H and Bede, are missing from all other texts due to scribal error]

²⁰ Bede add

²¹ Bede “fire”

²² H / others omit “the serpent”

²³ others / H omit “repeating” (Bede (reading instead of “Then...fallacies”) “The malign enemy”

²⁴ Bede “Do not”

²⁵ Bede “accepted the goods of a sinner”

²⁶ Bede “contradicted”

²⁷ Bede “of the salvation”

²⁸ Bede “turned to him”

²⁹ Bede “kindled is burning”

³⁰ Bede “money”

³¹ Bede “not be burning you”

³² literally “through”

³³ literally “contemners”

virtues. **36** For he was even causing demons to flee from possessed bodies, **37** and was refreshing poor *persons*.¹

CHAPTER 7

The third vision.

And while he traveled for the space of one year among the people of the island of Hibernia (*that is, Ireland*) studying teaching, the anniversary arrived of when he, *in a vision*, had seen himself taken out of the body. **2** He was always recalling of the injunction concerning his one day's journey. **3** For with many wise and religious men accompanying him, on the same night, he was attacked by a bodily discomfort; life throbbled only in his little breast.

4 He saw a heavenly-messenger of the Lord announcing to him *the things which were congruent for the work of preaching*. **5** He explained the 'one day's journey', which foretold twelve years to be completed in the work of preaching. And it was so.

6 Truly, when he had completed² all 10 years³ in announcing the word of God to everyone in Scotland⁴ without⁵ respect of persons, he could not bear the gathering multitude of people; and apprehending that some souls, moved by envy, moved themselves against him, he left all that he seemed to have.

7 With a few brothers, he set out for a certain small islet in the sea. And from there, not long after, he left the cliff-bound shores of Hibernia (*that is, Ireland*). [Going through]⁶ Britannia, he came into Saxonia,⁷ where he was honored by King Sigebryht.⁸ Taking up the word of the Lord, he tamed the heart of the barbarians.⁹

8 Now when the twelve years which the heavenly-messenger had foretold were completed, the holy-one, being attacked by a certain infirmity, enjoyed a vision of heavenly-messengers, in which he was still admonished to press-into the proclamation of the Good-Message. **9** He heard about no end to his life. *But* one day in silence he was admonished by the Good-Message precept: 'All of you*, be watching and be praying, because you* are not knowing the day nor-even the hour.'¹⁰

10 The man of the Lord fully understood this precept. He hastened to construct a building in the place which the aforementioned king Sigebryht had given to him for a monastery.¹⁰ **11** This monastery was constructed in a certain castle,¹¹ pleasantly near to both the woods and the sea. Anna, king of that people,¹² who was faithful to the holy Fursei, together with the nobles, adorned it with grander¹³ buildings and gifts.

12 When these things were properly¹⁴ achieved, the holy man, desiring to separate himself from all secular care, even of the monastery, took counsel with wise brothers. **13** He had with him some of the most reverend and truly spiritual men, who profited by the example of such a man in a monastic probationary-period and in divers works of life for the sake of humility and love. **14** Among these men, he had even his own brother Fuilan, truly a most holy man, to whom he allotted the monastery and left the care of souls, along with Gobban and Dicull.¹⁵

15 Another, Ultan, after a long monastic probationary-period, had been left by Fuilan to the life of a hermit. **16** Abandoning all abandoned cares and things, he went naked and alone to his brother, who was already feeding his life on contemplation. **17** There, given to daily labor and continual prayer, they philosophized for one whole year.¹⁶

18 Then, as certain troubles increased, he was called, no, compelled, to a great council by the leaders of the people or by the king, and he left the hermitage which he had desired. **19** He observed all of them with a most watchful soul; he understood that the province was troubled with an incursion of other nations, and

¹ Bede add here "He always took care, as he had done before, to show to everyone the works of virtue, both by example and by preaching sermons. But he would expound the story of his visions only to those who questioned him because they desired a change-of-mind. There is still alive a certain senior brother of our monastery, who often relates how a certain very reliable and pious man told him that he had himself seen Fursei in the province of East Angles, and had heard these visions from his own mouth. He added that it was very hard, ice-bound winter weather, when the man, sitting in thin clothing, had sweated as he was speaking as if in a midsummer heat-wave — because of either the great fear or delight that he remembered."

² Literally "while he was completing"

³ Literally "completed all of 10" / Bede "many years"

⁴ Bede add

⁵ others / H omit "without"

⁶ Possible reconstruction of an erased word (supported by Bede)

⁷ Bede "he, with a few brothers, came into the province of the Angles"

⁸ Old English equivalent (also known in modern English as "Sigebert" or "Sigeberht") / Latin "Sigibereht"

⁹ Bede summarized and expands here "Now while Sigberct still held the ribbons of the realm, there came over from Ireland a holy man named Fursei, famous in word and deeds but also noted for his outstanding virtues. He yearned to lead a pilgrim's life for the Lord, wherever he might find an opportunity. When he had come to the province of the East Angles, he was received honorably by the aforesaid king. And following his usual task of proclaiming a good-message, by his example of virtue and encouragement of his teaching he both converted many unbelievers to the Anointed-One, and confirmed believers further in the faith and love of the Anointed-One."

¹⁰ Bede "to construct a monastery in the place which he had received from the aforementioned king Sigebryht, and to institute regular disciplines."

¹¹ Bede add here "which is called in the English tongue Cnobheresburg, that is "City of Cnobhere"

¹² Bede "province"

¹³ Bede add

¹⁴ H / others add

¹⁵ Bede add

¹⁶ Bede "And [he] lived with him for one whole year in austerity and prayer, and in working daily with his hands"

he foresaw that the monastic order would not endure there for long.¹⁷ **20** Leaving everything in order, he sailed to the shore of Gallia. There he was honorably received by Chlodoric king of the Franks or by his patrician Erkenwald.¹⁸ He constructed a monastery in a place called Latiniacum.

21 Not long after, he, having instituted brothers, while going on a journey with the king and the patricians, was attacked by an infirmity. **22** Lying there, he was frequently visited by noble men and even by the most reverend king himself by reason of the speeches from his mouth; he took on the seasoning of eternal life, and, leaving the present age in this way, he migrated to eternal kingdoms.

23 Truly, his body, having been retained by the illustrious patrician Erkenwald,¹⁹ was placed in a cottage in the village whose name is Perrona,²⁰ by reason of the assembly building which he was grandly constructing for himself. **24** And because the dedication of the assembly building was 30 days from then, the holy body was, in the meantime, kept with the greatest attention in a certain place in the portico. And after so many days it was so found unharmed, as if the light had gone out of it that same hour. It was laid reverently near the altar, according to custom. Therefore, it remained there for nearly four years.

25 Now a little-house was constructed on the east side of the altar of the assembly building. And there, after so many years, the immaculate body was conveyed by overseers Eligius and Audoperth, without any putrefaction.²¹

26 Whereby, to those who seek a right faith, his merits are bright with divine virtue, BY THE HELP OF OUR LORD JESUS THE ANOINTED-ONE, WHO WITH THE FATHER AND THE SPIRIT LIVES AND REIGNS TO THE AGES OF THE AGES, MAY IT BE!!!!

¹⁷ Bede "and foresaw that the monasteries were also threatened with danger"

¹⁸ Old English equivalent / most manuscripts, Bede "Erchynwald" / H omit "Erkenwald"

¹⁹ Old English equivalent / most manuscripts "Erchynwald" / H "Gehynwald" / Bede "Ercunwald"

²⁰ others, Bede / H "Personna"

²¹ Bede "His body was taken by the same nobleman Ercunwald, and put in one of the porches of a certain assembly building, which he was building in his town of Peronna, until the assembly building itself was consecrated. This happened 27 days afterwards, and the body itself was taken from the porch to be buried near the altar; it was found undamaged, as if the light had gone out of it that same hour...."

But four years later a more elaborate shrine was built to the east of the altar for his body; it was still found without any spot of corruption, and was translated there with due honor. [There it is often recognized that his merits have shone with miracles by the operation of God. We have briefly touched on these matters and on the incorruption of his body, so that it may be better known to readers how very sublime the man was. All these matters, and those of his other comrades, are more fully dealt with in the booklet, and whoever reads it will find them.]