RIMBERT

The Life of Saint Anskar

Vita S. Anscharii

SABBATISMUS

Rimbert (c. 830–888)
Vita S. Anscharii · The Life of Saint Anskar

Latin text: public domain.
Translation, alignment and edition © 2026 Inversiones San Juan Diego (Sabbatismus). Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Facing-page bilingual edition: Latin on the left-hand pages, English on the right.
Sabbatismus is the imprint of the Inversiones San Juan Diego foundation, San Pedro Sula, Honduras.
Set in EB Garamond and Cinzel.
sabbatismus.com

Contents

Preface. To the Monks of Old Corbie 7
Here Begins the Life 9
3. As a monk, hearing of the death of Charles, he grows more fervent. 11
4. In ecstasy he is led by the saints into purgatory. 11
5. Then into paradise. 13
6. He learns that he will be a martyr; how. 15
7. As master of the school he is admonished by Christ to confess his sins. 17
8. He sees the soul of Fulbert caught up into heaven. 17
9. He moves from Old Corbie to the New, where he becomes master and teacher 19
10. On what occasion he was sent to Denmark with King Harald, at the request of Louis the Pious. 21
11. The brethren disapprove of his pilgrimage, though Wala consents. 21
12. Autbert joins him. 23
13. Both set out for Denmark with Harald. They are well received at Cologne. They reach the borders of the Danes. 25
14. They instruct the pagans and open schools for boys. Autbert dies at Corbie. 27
15. When the Swedes ask for preachers, Anskar is sent to them by Louis, fired with the desire to suffer by a heavenly vision. 27
16. He is given Witmar as companion, Gislemar taking his place in Denmark. He is robbed by pirates. 29
17. Kindly received by the king of Sweden, he happily undertakes the conversion of the people. 31
18. Anskar reports the matter to the emperor. 31
19. He obtains the see of Hamburg, designated by Charles and established by Louis. He is consecrated archbishop. 33
20. Confirmed by Gregory IV, he is made legate to the peoples of the North. 35
21. He receives Bishop Gautbert as his helper, and others from Old Corbie. 37
22. When Hamburg is laid waste by pirates, Anskar bears the loss of all things patiently. 39
23. Gautbert is harassed by the Swedes; Nithard is slain. 39
24. The Swedes are punished. 41
25. After seven years Anskar sends Ardgar to them. 43
26. Herigar, having himself suffered much, works miracles. 45
27. Further miracles of the same man. 45
28. King Anund attacks the people of Birka with the Danes. 47
29. Herigar persuades the people of Birka to call upon Christ. 47
30. When this is done they are delivered from the enemy's attack. 49
31. Herigar urges the inhabitants to believe in Christ; then he dies devoutly. 51
32. Frideburg, constant in the faith, has wine kept for her viaticum. 51
33. She orders her goods to be distributed to the poor. As her daughter carries it out, the money does not diminish. 53
34. Ardgar returns from Sweden to his solitude. 55
35. After the death of Louis the Pious, Anskar is left without the necessities of life. He is deserted by his companions. 57

36. Through the efforts of Louis, king of Germany, he receives the bishopric of Bremen, with the approval of a council. . . . 57
37. Part of the diocese is restored to the bishop of Verden; he himself keeps the see of Hamburg. . . . 59
38. The bishop of Cologne at first disapproves of this union. . . . 59
39. Envoys are sent to Rome, and Nicholas I ratifies this union. The legation for the northern regions is granted to Anskar. . . . 61
40 . . . 65
41. Anskar, on friendly terms with Horik, king of the Danes, builds a church with his consent, and freedom is granted to the Christian religion. . . . 65
42. Why some put off baptism, and how others received it together with bodily health. . 67
43. Anskar, having asked Horik's leave, and Gautbert declining, undertakes the mission to the Swedes once more. . . . 69
44. He is encouraged by a heavenly vision. . . . 71
45. Commended by Horik to the king of the Swedes, he comes to Sweden, which is in turmoil at the prompting of demons. . . . 73
46. Though his friends advise against it, he invites the king to a banquet; the king approves the mission, on condition of a casting of lots. . . . 75
47. Anskar is strengthened by divine inspiration. The lots favour his undertaking. . . . 77
48. The assembly too gives its consent. . . . 77
49. He receives leave to build a church. . . . 79
50. By contemplating the Passion he learns to bear adversity. . . . 81
51. The Swedes attack the Curonians, victors over the Danes. . . . 81
52. Having called on their gods in vain, they turn to Christ. . . . 83
53. They win the victory through a treaty; they vow fasts; they devote themselves to almsgiving. . . . 85
54. When Horik the Younger succeeds his father, access to the church is closed, then granted again at the king's wish; leave is given to found another. . . . 87
55. Various ministers are sent to the Swedes. . . . 89
56. Anskar is strengthened again and again by Ebbo. He bears adversity with an even mind. . . . 91
57. Anskar, a worthy monk; as bishop, an imitator of the saints. He wears a hair shirt constantly. He loves solitude. . . . 93
58. Sparing in his diet and tempted to vainglory on that account, he is freed from this vice by God. In old age he makes up for his abstinence with almsgiving. . . . 95
59. Out of zeal for devotion Anskar writes books. Given to tears, he uses the sayings of Scripture to that end. . . . 95
60. He recited different psalms according to the place and the time. . . . 97
61. Generous to the poor, he endows a hospice for their sake. He cares for all. He carries a purse in his belt. In Lent he feeds four poor people and serves them. . . . 99
62. He knows the future beforehand; he consults God in what he must do. He learns from heaven beforehand that he will be the shepherd of the church of Bremen. . . . 101
63. At Torhout he brings up boys of the Northmen. He foresees Reginar's punishment for taking them away from there. . . . 103
64. How solicitous he was for his flock; gentle and severe in his preaching. . . . 105

65. He forbids work on a feast day. God punishing the transgressors 105
66. He secures the freeing of captives. 107
67. He heals the sick with oil. He shuns vainglory. 109
68. A martyr all his life. Stricken with dysentery. He grieves that martyrdom has been snatched from him. 109
69. He is comforted by God. He has the privileges granted to him copied out, commending their execution to the king. 111
70. He longs to die on the day of the Purification of Blessed Mary, and on its eve orders three candles to be lit. On the feast, after Masses have been said for him, he waits fasting for the public Mass. 113
71. After the litanies have been said, he receives viaticum following the Masses. He redoubles his prayers for himself and for others. He dies. 113
72. All mourn. The epilogue of his praise. 115
73. How he was a martyr. 117
74 119

Praefatio. Ad Corbeiae veteris monachos.

Dominis sanctissimis, et in Christi amore praecipua veneratione recolendis ac diligendis Patribus et fratribus in sacratissimo Corbeiae monasterio Deo militantibus, filii atque discipuli reverendissimi Patris ANSCHARII perennem perpetuae felicitatis orant in Domino dominantium pacem et salutem.

Diu per Domini gratiam pastoris boni munere delectati, praedicationibus et exemplis informati, meritis et intercessionibus suffulti; nunc tandem ejus praesentia desolati, satis perpendimus, quid pro nobis gemendum, quidve pro eo gratulandum sit. Etenim verus Dei cultor abstinens se ab omni opere malo, et in simplicitatis modestia permanens, certam de se praebuit fiduciam, quod hinc sublatus, ad Deum, quem semper tota devotione dilexit, cuique semper animo intendebat, sine cunctatione pervenerit. Unde pro retributionis ejus praemio vere nobis gratulandum credimus; pro nostra autem desolatione necessario supplicandum: ut qui humanitus tanto destituti sumus pastore, coelitus divino muniri mereamur auxilio. Inter varias etenim pressurarum angustias positi, veraciter jam sentimus quid amiserimus, et quid pro nobis dolere debeamus satis intelligimus. Vivente enim ipso, nihil nobis deesse credebamus. Ejus namque sanctitatem reges honorificabant, pastores Ecclesiarum venerabantur, clerus imitabatur, populus universus admirabatur: et dum illum cuncti sanctum et justum praedicarent, nos quoque tanquam corpus capitis, pro ejus bonitate venerandi ac laudabiles videbamur. At nunc tanto munere frustrati, de nostris meritis non praesumimus, quin magis timido corde expavescimus, ne peccatis promerentibus, luporum patere incipiamus morsibus. Mundus namque in maligno positus, magis ea quae justa et sancta sunt, evertere, quam religiosa quaerit erigere: et inimicus humani generis diabolus, quanto sanctiorem ac religiosiorem quemque conspexerit ducere vitam, tanto majori conamine adversa quaeque objicit: ut ea quae sancta sunt destruat, et ne ab aliis imitentur, callida suasione ac pravis intentionibus auferat. Nos itaque inter formidolosa pericula suspirantes, licet multiplicia mala temporaliter timeamus, divinum tamen adjutorium nobis, licet indignis, non defuturum credimus. Ideoque vestram devotissimam sanctitatem supplici corde rogamus et petimus, ut memores nostri intercedere pro nobis ad Dominum dignemini: quo nunc nos ejus misericordia non derelinquat; sed adjutor noster benignissimus noxia cuncta a nobis depellat: sitque nobis refugium in tribulatione, qui non deserit sperantes in se.

Preface. To the Monks of Old Corbie

To the most holy lords, the fathers and brethren who serve as soldiers of God in the most sacred monastery of Corbie, to be remembered with singular veneration and loved in the love of Christ, the sons and disciples of the most reverend Father ANSKAR pray, in the Lord of lords, for the unending peace and salvation of everlasting happiness.

Long delighted, by the grace of the Lord, with the gift of a good shepherd, formed by his preaching and example, upheld by his merits and intercessions, and now at last left desolate by the loss of his presence, we weigh carefully what we must mourn for ourselves and what we must rejoice in for him. For this true worshipper of God, keeping himself from every evil work and abiding in the modesty of simplicity, gave us sure confidence that, taken from this world, he came without delay to God, whom he always loved with all devotion and towards whom his mind was always turned. Therefore we believe that we must truly rejoice at the prize of his reward; but for our own desolation we must needs make supplication, that we who in human terms are bereft of so great a shepherd may deserve to be defended from heaven by divine help. For, set amid the manifold straits of affliction, we now truly feel what we have lost, and we understand well enough what we have to grieve for on our own account. While he lived, we believed that we lacked nothing. Kings honoured his holiness, the shepherds of the Churches revered it, the clergy imitated it, the whole people admired it; and while all proclaimed him holy and just, we too, as the body of such a head, seemed worthy of veneration and praise because of his goodness. But now, deprived of so great a gift, we do not presume upon our own merits; rather we tremble with a fearful heart lest, as our sins deserve, we begin to lie open to the bites of wolves. For the world, which is seated in wickedness, seeks rather to overthrow what is just and holy than to raise up what is devout; and the devil, the enemy of the human race, the holier and more devout the life he sees anyone lead, the greater the effort with which he sets every adversity against him, that he may destroy what is holy and, by cunning persuasion and wicked designs, take it away lest it be imitated by others. So we, sighing amid fearful dangers, though we fear manifold evils in this present time, yet believe that divine help will not fail us, unworthy as we are. Therefore with suppliant hearts we ask and beseech your most devout holiness to remember us and deign to intercede for us with the Lord, that his mercy may not now forsake us, but that our most kind helper may drive all harm away from us, and that he who does not desert those who hope in him may be our refuge in tribulation.

De illius itaque praesentia praesumentes, spemque nostram in ejus misericordia collocantes, et quid nobis continget, vel qualiter in futurum subsistere debeamus, illius judicio derelinquentes; pietatis ejus gratiam toto cordis ac mentis affectu collaudamus et gratificamur, qui nobis vel ad tempus tanto concessit uti patrono. Vestrae quoque sanctissimae paternitati gratiarum actiones immensas referimus, quia vestro beneficio ac licentia talem meruimus Patrem habere: cujus exempla si quis imitari voluerit, coelestem quodammodo in terris habebit conversationem. Si quis doctrinae ejus recordatus fuerit, viam mandatorum Dei sine errore incedere poterit. Si quis monita adhortationis attenderit, laqueos inimici praecavere studebit. Hujus itaque sanctissimi Patris memoriam stylo exarare decrevimus; et qualiter apud nos vixerit, quidque de eo nobis cognitum exstiterit, vestrae reverentiae scriptis intimare, quo et divinam clementiam in beato viro vestra quoque nobiscum collaudet affectio, et imitari volentibus exemplum salutis fiat ejus sanctissima devotio.

Vita incipit

2. Puer a ludicris inanibus coelitus revocatur Anscharius.

Beatissimi Patris Anscharii religionis sanctitas, divina largiente gratia, ab ineunte crescere coepit aetate, et per singula aetatum momenta virtutum multiplicavit augmenta. Namque ab infantia spiritalibus revelationibus coelitus inspiratus, et per Domini gratiam superna visitatione est saepius admonitus, quo mentem suam a terrenis disjungens, toto corde coelestibus inhiaret. Quas quidem revelationes ipse quibusdam nostrum, qui ei familiarius adhaerebant, innotuerat; eo tamen tenore, ne tempore vitae suae cuiquam manifestarent. Quas nos ad laudem Domini post obitum ejus huic operi interserere elegimus, ut quique legentes agnoscant, quanta gratia Dominus servum suum a primaeva aetate corrigere, ac deinceps succedentibus bonorum operum meritis clarificare dignatus fuerit. Referebat namque, quod in tempore pueritiae suae, cum quinque fere esset annorum, mater sua in Dei timore admodum religiosa defuncta fuerit, ac non multo post tempore ipsum pater suus, causa discendi litteras ad scholam miserit. Ubi cum esset positus, coepit, ut aetati tali familiare est, cum coaevis suis pueriliter agere, et discursibus inanibus atque jocis magis operam dare, quam discendae disciplinae instare. Cumque puerili aetati taliter deditus esset, visum est ei quadam nocte, quod esset in quodam loco, nimis lutoso et lubrico, ita ut inde non nisi magna difficultate exire valeret: secus illum vero locum esse viam amoenissimam, in qua videbat procedentem quasi quamdam dominam omni ornatu et honestate praeclaram; plures vero alias feminas dealbatas, cum quibus erat et mater sua.

Trusting, then, in his presence, placing our hope in his mercy, and leaving to his judgement what will befall us and how we are to stand in the future, we praise and give thanks with all the affection of heart and mind for the grace of his goodness, who granted us, even for a time, to enjoy so great a patron. To your most holy fatherhood also we return boundless thanks, because by your kindness and leave we were found worthy to have such a Father: whoever is willing to imitate his example will in some manner have a heavenly way of life on earth. Whoever remembers his teaching will be able to walk without straying in the way of God's commandments. Whoever heeds the counsels of his exhortation will take care to beware of the snares of the enemy. We have therefore resolved to set down in writing the memory of this most holy Father, and to make known to your reverence in writing how he lived among us and what came to our knowledge about him, so that your affection too may join us in praising the divine clemency shown in this blessed man, and his most holy devotion may become an example of salvation to those who wish to imitate it.

Here Begins the Life

2. The boy Anskar is called back from empty games by a sign from heaven.

The holiness of the devout life of the most blessed Father Anskar began, by the gift of divine grace, to grow from his earliest years, and at every stage of his age it multiplied its increase in virtues. For from infancy he was inspired from heaven by spiritual revelations, and by the grace of the Lord was often admonished by visitations from on high, so that, separating his mind from earthly things, he might long with his whole heart for the things of heaven. These revelations he had made known to some of us who were closer to him, but on the condition that they should reveal them to no one during his lifetime. These we have chosen, to the praise of the Lord, to insert into this work after his death, so that all who read may recognise with what grace the Lord deigned to correct his servant from his earliest years and thereafter to glorify him through the merits of good works that followed. He used to relate that in the time of his boyhood, when he was about five years old, his mother, a woman most devout in the fear of God, died, and not long afterwards his father sent him to school to learn letters. When he had been placed there he began, as is natural at that age, to behave childishly with his companions, and to give himself to idle running about and games rather than to apply himself to learning his lessons. And while he was thus given to the ways of childhood, it seemed to him one night that he was in a place exceedingly miry and slippery, so that he could get out of it only with great difficulty; and beside that place was a most pleasant road, on which he saw advancing a lady, as it seemed, resplendent in all adornment and dignity, and many other women clothed in white, among whom was his mother.

Cumque eam recognovisset, coepit velle ad eam accurrere: sed loco illo coenoso et nimis lubrico non facile exire poterat. Chorus autem ille feminarum cum ei appropiasset, visum est illi, eam, quae quasi domina aliarum videbatur, quam ille indubitanter sanctam Mariam esse credebat, ei dixisse: Fili, vis ad matrem tuam venire? Cui cum ille respondisset, inhianter se velle, rursus illa intulit: Si nostrae voluntatis particeps esse volueris, omnem debes vanitatem fugere, et jocos pueriles dimittere, ac temetipsum in gravitate vitae custodire. Valde enim nos detestamur omnia quae vana et otiosa sunt; nec potest in nostro conventu esse, quicunque his fuerit delectatus. Post hanc itaque visionem, statim se coepit gravius agere, et puerilia consortia vitare: lectione autem, meditatione, caeterisque utilitatibus arctius se occupare: ita ut socii ejus valde mirarentur quod tam subito in aliam mutatus sit conversationem.

3. Monachus audita Caroli morte fit ferventior.

Cumque post haec apud vos tonsuratus, atque in monasticis disciplinis positus adolescentior fuisset factus, humana subrepente fragilitate aliquantulum coepit a propositi prioris rigore frigescere. Interim vero contigit eum domini excellentissimi Caroli imperatoris obitum audisse, quem ipse antea in magna potentia gloriosum viderat, atque cum magna prudentia regni sceptra laudabiliter gubernasse audierat. De tanti itaque imperatoris excessu ipse nimio terrore atque horrore perculsus, rursus coepit ad se redire, et admonitionis sanctae Dei genitricis ad memoriam verba reducere: sicque omni postposita levitate, compunctionis divinae coepit amore languescere, totumque se in Dei servitium convertens, orationi et vigiliis, atque abstinentiae operam dabat.

4. In extasi a sanctis ducitur in purgatorium.

Cumque his virtutum exercitiis verus athleta Dei insisteret, atque in hac gravitate permanenti mundus illi mortuus fieret, et ipse mundo, adveniente sancto die Pentecostes, gratia Spiritus sancti, quae in eadem festivitate super apostolos effusa est, etiam mentem illius (ut credimus) illustrante atque exhilarante, visum est illi eadem nocte, quod quasi casu subitaneo mori deberet, et in ipso mortis articulo, sanctum Petrum apostolum, et beatum Joannem Baptistam in adjutorium sibi invocasset.

When he recognised her, he wanted to run to her; but he could not easily get out of that muddy and slippery place. When that company of women had drawn near to him, it seemed to him that she who appeared to be the lady of the others, and whom he believed without any doubt to be holy Mary, said to him: "Son, do you wish to come to your mother?" And when he had answered that he longed to, she went on: "If you wish to share in our will, you must flee all vanity, give up childish games, and keep yourself in seriousness of life. For we greatly abhor all that is vain and idle; and no one who delights in such things can be in our company." After this vision, then, he at once began to conduct himself more gravely and to avoid the company of children, and to busy himself more strictly with reading, meditation and other profitable things, so that his companions marvelled greatly that he had so suddenly changed to another way of life.

3. As a monk, hearing of the death of Charles, he grows more fervent.

After this he received the tonsure among you, and had been placed under monastic discipline; and when he had grown into youth, as human frailty crept upon him, he began little by little to grow cold in the rigour of his former purpose. Meanwhile it happened that he heard of the death of the most excellent lord, the Emperor Charles, whom he had formerly seen glorious in great power and whom he had heard to have ruled the sceptre of the kingdom laudably and with great wisdom. Struck with exceeding fear and dread at the passing of so great an emperor, he began to come back to himself and to call to mind the words of the admonition of the holy Mother of God; and so, putting aside all levity, he began to languish with love of divine compunction, and, turning himself wholly to the service of God, he gave himself to prayer, vigils and abstinence.

4. In ecstasy he is led by the saints into purgatory.

While this true athlete of God persevered in these exercises of virtue, and in this abiding seriousness the world was becoming dead to him and he to the world, the holy day of Pentecost came; and as the grace of the Holy Spirit, which was poured out upon the apostles on that feast, illumined and gladdened his mind also (as we believe), it seemed to him that same night that he was to die as if by a sudden mishap, and that at the very moment of death he had called upon holy Peter the apostle and blessed John the Baptist to help him.

Cumque anima, ut ipsi videbatur, egrederetur a corpore, ac statim in alia pulcherrima specie corporis omni mortalitate ac sollicitudine carentis appareret; sub eodem momento mortis et admirationis apparuerunt praefati viri: quorum erat unus senior, cano capite, capillo plano et spisso, facie rubenti, vultu subtristi, veste candida et colorata, statura brevi, quem ipse sanctum Petrum esse, nemine narrante statim agnovit; alius vero juvenis erat, statura procerior, barbam emittens, capite subfusco atque subcrispo, facie macilenta, vultu jocundo, in veste serica, quem ille sanctum Joannem esse omnino credidit. Hi itaque eum hinc inde circumsteterunt. Porro anima ejus egressa statim in immensa claritate, qua totus mundus implebatur, sibi videbatur esse: per quam claritatem illum nullatenus in aliquo laborantem sancti supradicti miro et ineffabili modo ducentes, cum pervenissent ad locum quemdam, quem ipse ignem purgatorium esse, nemine narrante, certissime sciebat, ibi eum dimiserunt, ubi cum multa passus esset, praecipue tamen tenebras densissimas pressurasque immanissimas et suffocationes visus est tolerasse; atque omni memoria ablata, haec solum vix cogitare sufficiebat, quomodo tam immanis posset aliqua exsistere poena. Cumque per triduum, ut ipse putabat, ibi cruciaretur, quod spatium illi mille annis longius propter immensam poenam visum est; rursum redeuntes jam dicti viri, iterumque illum hinc inde circumstantes, et longe majori quam prius alacritate laetantes, atque in omnibus multo suavius incedentes, per majorem, si dici possit, claritatem gressu immobili sine via corporea ambulantes, ducebant.

5. Dein in paradisum.

Et, ut verbis ipsius utamur: « Videbam, inquit, a longe diversos sanctorum ordines, quosdam vicinius, quosdam vero longius, ab oriente assistentes, ad orientem tamen respicientes, ipsumque, qui in oriente apparebat, collaudantes; quidam submissis capitibus, quidam supinis vultibus, pansisque manibus adorabant. Cumque pervenissemus ad locum orientis, ecce viginti quatuor seniores, secundum quod in Apocalypsi scriptum est, in sedibus sedentes, servato introitu amplissimo apparuerunt: qui et ipsi reverenter ad orientem respectantes, ineffabiles Domini laudes promebant. Laudes vero in commune canentium suavissimam mihi refectionem ingerebant; sed post reversionem ad corpus retinere nullo modo poteram. In ipso vero orientis loco, erat splendor mirabilis, lux inaccessibilis, nimiae atque immensae claritatis, cui inerat omnis color pretiosissimus, omnisque jocunditas: omnes vero sanctorum ordines, qui undique laetantes circumstabant, ab ipso gaudium hauriebant. Qui splendor tantae magnitudinis erat, ut nec initium ejus, nec finem contemplari valerem.

And as his soul, so it seemed to him, went forth from the body and at once appeared in another, most beautiful bodily form, free from all mortality and care, at that same moment of death and wonder the men already named appeared. One of them was older, with white hair, straight and thick, a ruddy face, a somewhat sorrowful countenance, a garment white and coloured, and short of stature; he recognised him at once, with no one telling him, as holy Peter. The other was young, taller in stature, his beard just growing, his hair darkish and somewhat curly, his face lean, his countenance joyful, clothed in silk; and he fully believed him to be holy John. These two stood about him, one on either side. His soul, once gone forth, seemed to itself to be at once in a boundless brightness with which the whole world was filled; and through that brightness the saints just named led him in a wonderful and unspeakable manner, without his labouring in any way. When they had come to a certain place which he knew most surely, with no one telling him, to be the fire of purgatory, they left him there; and there he suffered many things, but above all he seemed to endure the thickest darkness, the most terrible oppression and suffocation; and with all memory taken from him, he was scarcely able to think of this one thing: how any punishment could be so terrible. When he had been tormented there for three days, as he thought (a span that seemed to him longer than a thousand years because of the immense pain), the men already named returned, and, standing again on either side of him, rejoicing with far greater gladness than before and moving in all things much more sweetly, they led him on, walking with motionless step and by no bodily path, through a still greater brightness, if one may say so.

5. Then into paradise.

And, to use his own words: "I saw," he said, "from afar, the various orders of the saints, some nearer, some farther off, standing towards the east yet looking towards the east, and praising him who appeared in the east; some worshipped with heads bowed, others with faces upturned and hands outstretched. When we had come to the place of the east, behold, the twenty-four elders, as it is written in the Apocalypse, appeared seated on their thrones, a very wide entrance being left open; and they too, looking reverently towards the east, poured forth unspeakable praises of the Lord. The praises of those singing together gave me the sweetest refreshment; but after my return to the body I could in no way retain them. In that place of the east itself there was a wondrous splendour, light unapproachable, of exceeding and immeasurable brightness, in which was every most precious colour and every delight; and all the orders of the saints, who stood rejoicing round about, drew their joy from it. That splendour was of such greatness that I could behold neither its beginning nor its end.

Et cum circumquaque longe vel prope respicere possem, in ipsa immensitate luminis, quid intus haberetur, contemplari non poteram, sed tantum superficiem cernebam: ipsum tamen inibi esse credebam, de quo Petrus ait: In quem desiderant angeli prospicere. Ab ipso namque claritas immensa procedebat, ex qua omnis longitudo et latitudo sanctorum illustrabatur. Ipse quoque quodammodo erat in omnibus, et omnes in eo; ipse omnes exterius circumdabat, ipse omnes interius satiando regebat; ipse superius protegebat, ipse inferius sustinebat. Sol vero et luna nequaquam lucebant ibi, nec coelum ac terra ibidem visa sunt. Sed neque ipsa claritas talis erat, quae oculos contemplantium impediret, sed quae oculos gratissime satiaret. Et cum seniores sedentes dixerim, in ipso quodammodo sedebant: nam nil corporeum erat ibi, sed erant cuncta incorporea, licet speciem corporum habentia, et ideo ineffabilia. Circa sedentes vero splendor ab ipso procedens, similis arcui nubium, tenebatur.

6. Martyrem se fore intelligit; quomodo.

« Cum itaque a praefatis viris coram hac immensitate luminis, ubi mihi majestas Dei omnipotentis, nemine monstrante, esse videbatur, praesentatus fuissem, vox suavissima, omni sonoritate clarior, quia mihi omne saeculum visa est complevisse, ab eadem majestate procedens, ad me facta est dicens: Vade, et martyrio coronatus ad me reverteris. Ad quam vocem omnis conventus sanctorum Deum hinc inde laudantium, conticuit, atque submissis vultibus adoravit. Denique speciem, a qua haec vox formata esset, prorsus non vidi. Post quam vocem tristis factus, quia ad saeculum redire compellebar, sed de revertendi promissione securus, cum praedictis ductoribus exinde remeabam: qui mecum tam euntes, quam redeuntes nihil locuti sunt, sed tam pio affectu in me respiciebant, quemadmodum mater unicum filium contemplatur. Sicque ad corpus redii. In eundo vero ac redeundo, nec labor erat, nec mora: quia quo tendebamus, statim aderamus. Et licet aliqua visus sim de tanta dulcedine dulcedinum enarrasse, fateor tamen, quia nequaquam stylus tanta exprimere potuit, quanta animus sentit. Sed nec ipse animus sentit, ut fuit: quia illud esse mihi videbatur, quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit. » Ex hac itaque visione, quam, sicut ipse dictaverat, verbis illius enarravimus; praefatus servus Dei et perterritus et consolatus, coepit se sollicitius in divino exercere timore, bonisque operibus de die in diem ardentius inhaerere, spemque de Dei misericordia praesumere, quod quadam ipse disponeret occasione, et ad palmam martyrii posset pertingere.

And although I could look all around, far and near, I could not behold what was within, in that immensity of light, but saw only its surface; yet I believed that he was there of whom Peter says: on whom the angels desire to look (1 Pet 1:12). For from him proceeded a boundless brightness, by which all the length and breadth of the saints was illumined. He too was in some manner in all, and all in him; he surrounded all without, he ruled all within by satisfying them; he protected them from above, he sustained them from below. Sun and moon did not shine there at all, nor were heaven and earth seen there. Nor was that brightness such as to dazzle the eyes of those who beheld it, but such as to satisfy the eyes most pleasingly. And when I say that the elders were seated, they were seated in some manner in him: for nothing bodily was there, but all things were incorporeal, though having the appearance of bodies, and therefore unspeakable. Around those who were seated a splendour proceeding from him spread, like the rainbow in the clouds.

6. He learns that he will be a martyr; how.

"When, therefore, I had been presented by the men already named before that immensity of light, where the majesty of almighty God seemed to me to be, with no one showing me, a most sweet voice, clearer than any sound, which seemed to me to fill the whole world, came forth from that same majesty and spoke to me, saying: 'Go, and you shall return to me crowned with martyrdom.' At that voice the whole assembly of the saints, who were praising God on every side, fell silent and worshipped with faces bowed. Yet I did not see at all any form from which that voice was formed. After that voice I grew sad, because I was compelled to return to the world, but, assured by the promise that I would come back, I went back from there with my guides; and they, both going and returning, said nothing to me, but looked upon me with as tender an affection as a mother gazes upon her only son. And so I returned to the body. In going and returning there was neither toil nor delay, for wherever we were bound, we were there at once. And though I seem to have told something of so great a sweetness of sweetnesses, I confess that the pen can in no way express as much as the mind feels. Nor does the mind itself feel it as it was: for it seemed to me to be that which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man (1 Cor 2:9)." By this vision, then, which we have related in his own words just as he dictated it, the servant of God was both terrified and consoled; and he began to exercise himself more carefully in the fear of God, to cleave more ardently from day to day to good works, and to take hope from the mercy of God that he himself would arrange some occasion by which he might attain the palm of martyrdom.

Quod tamen quia corporaliter gladio imminente non contigit, qualiter in mortificatione crucis, quam jugiter in suo corpore pro Christi nominis honore portavit, Deo miserante completum sit, cum de obitu illius narrare coeperimus, latius explicabimus.

7. Magister scholae a Christo admonetur de confessione peccatorum.

Post haec vero, cum magister fuisset scholae ad sanctum Petrum, eundo vel redeundo ad claustrum, consuetudinem sibi fecerat in oratorio beati Baptistae Joannis secretius insistere. Itaque post duos annos superioris visionis, quadam nocte visum est ei, quod ad idem oratorium causa orandi divertisset. Cumque oratione surrexisset, ecce vir per ostium veniebat, statura procerus, Judaico more vestitus, vultu decorus; ex cujus oculis splendor divinitatis, velut flamma ignis. Radiabat, quem intuitus, omni cunctatione postposita, Christum Dominum esse credebat, atque procurrens ad pedes ejus corruit. Cumque prostratus in facie jaceret, ille ut surgeret imperavit. Cumque surgens coram illo reverenter astaret, atque prae nimio splendore oculis ipsius emicante in faciem ejus intendere non valeret, blanda voce illum allocutus est dicens: Dic, ait, iniquitates tuas, ut justificeris. Cui servus Dei respondit: Domine, quid necesse est tibi dicere? tu omnia nosti, et nihil te latet. Ille autem subsecutus ait: Scio quidem omnia, sed ideo volo ut confiteantur mihi homines peccata sua, ut remissionem accipiant. Cui cum omnia quae ab infantia gesserat, indicasset, et illo post haec in orationem prostrato ipse erectus astaret, dixit: Noli timere, quia ego sum qui deleo inquitates tuas. Post quam vocem ille qui apparuerat recessit: et vir Dei excitatus somno, de fiducia remissionis peccatorum suorum confortatus, immenso tripudiabat gaudio.

8. Fulberti animam rapi videt in coelis.

Quo etiam tempore contigit, quod vestrae reverentiae notissimum est, ut quidam puerulus in schola, Fulbertus nomine, a socio suo tabula percussus, ad mortem usque perductus sit. Pro qua re praedictus servus Dei nimium tristis effectus est, quod sub cura magisterii sui tanta negligentia inter subditos sibi acciderit. Verum appropinquante hora exitus ipsius pueri, vir Domini forte sopori deditus lectulo incubabat, cum ecce vidit in somnis ipsius animam a corpore sublatam angelico ministerio ad coelum deferri: se quoque miro et ineffabili ministerio, Deo disponente, pariter comitari.

Yet because this did not come about bodily, under the threatening sword, we shall explain more fully, when we come to tell of his death, how by God's mercy it was fulfilled in the mortification of the cross, which he constantly bore in his body for the honour of Christ's name.

7. As master of the school he is admonished by Christ to confess his sins.

After this, when he was master of the school at Saint Peter's, he had made it his custom, going to and returning from the cloister, to spend time in private prayer in the oratory of blessed John the Baptist. And two years after the vision described above, it seemed to him one night that he had turned aside into that same oratory to pray. When he had risen from prayer, behold, a man came in through the door, tall of stature, dressed in the manner of the Jews, comely of countenance; and from his eyes the splendour of the Godhead, like a flame of fire, shone forth. Beholding him, and putting aside all hesitation, he believed him to be Christ the Lord, and, running forward, fell at his feet. And as he lay prostrate on his face, the other commanded him to rise. And when he had risen and stood reverently before him, unable to look into his face for the exceeding splendour that flashed from his eyes, he spoke to him in a gentle voice, saying: "Tell your iniquities, that you may be justified (Isa 43:26)." The servant of God answered him: "Lord, what need is there to tell you? You know all things, and nothing is hidden from you." He replied: "I do indeed know all things, but I wish men to confess their sins to me for this reason, that they may receive forgiveness." When he had declared to him all that he had done from infancy, and had afterwards cast himself down in prayer while the other stood upright, he said: "Fear not, for I am he who blots out your iniquities (Isa 43:25)." After these words he who had appeared withdrew; and the man of God, waking from sleep and strengthened in confidence that his sins were forgiven, exulted with boundless joy.

8. He sees the soul of Fulbert caught up into heaven.

It was at that time too that there happened what is very well known to your reverence: a little boy in the school named Fulbert, struck by a companion with a writing tablet, was brought even to death. Over this the servant of God was greatly saddened, that such negligence had occurred among those under him while they were in the care of his teaching. But as the hour of the boy's death drew near, the man of the Lord happened to be lying asleep on his bed, when behold, he saw in his sleep the boy's soul taken from the body and borne to heaven by the ministry of angels, and himself, by God's arrangement, accompanying it in a wonderful and unspeakable manner.

Cumque coeli secreta penetrassent, pueri praefati animam in quamdam purpuream mansionem conspexit introduci; et inter agmina martyrum collocari. Ibique ei datum est agnovisse, quod, quia ipse puer vulnus sibi illatum satis patienter tulit, et animam fratris usque ad mortem diligens, pro percussore suo nimium benigne intercessit, patientiam et benignitatem ejus divina remunerante pietate, inter martyrum choros deputatus sit. Hoc autem tam celerius in hora mortis ejus ei demonstratum est, ita ut dum is adhuc moreretur, venerandus Pater Witmarus (qui cum eo tunc scholam puerorum regebat, et hujus rei testis praesens adest) cum pro hoc ipso illum excitans, obitum discipuli nuntiaret; ille se hoc quoque ante scire responderit. Quod profecto Domini gratia causa consolationis ei videre concessit, ut quia pro hac re nimium tristabatur, ex salute pueri moestitiam sui relevaret animi.

9. E Corbeia veteri migrat in novam, ubi fit magister et doctor

His itaque et aliis quamplurimis revelationibus atque visionibus vir Dei coelitus inspiratus, quanta inter vos postmodum sanctitatis gratia ac bonitatis excreverit, vestrorum, qui tunc adfuere, testimonio melius comprobabitur. Nobis autem ea, quae apud nos gesta sunt, narrare cupientibus, primo indagandum videtur, propter eos qui hujus rei forte minus conscii sunt, qua occasione a loco stabilitatis suae huc secesserit; et cum apud vos Deo oblatus sit. ibique obedientiam promiserit, quo instinctu ad has partes emigraverit, atque ad Episcopatus officium apud nos sublimatus sit. Hoc autem ideo scribere necessarium duximus, ne forte aliquis levitati assignet, quod vir Dei divinae compunctionis instinctu et peregrationis amore pro salute animarum suscepit. Coeptum est itaque olim in his partibus, videlicet Saxoniae, monasterium fieri, quod auctoritate et magisterio sanctitatis vestrae et primo fundatum, et succedenti tempore, Deo donante, feliciter consummatum est; nomenque mutuatum a loco habitationis vestrae accepit, ut vocaretur nova Corbeia. Ad hunc ergo locum Dei famulus una cum aliis fratribus vestris primo directus est, ut inibi officio fungeretur docendi, in qua re ipse per omnia tam probabilis et acceptus inventus est, ut omnium electione publice quoque in ecclesia verbum Dei populis praedicaret. Sicque factum est, ut ejusdem loci ipse primus et magister scholae et doctor fieret populi.

And when they had entered the secret places of heaven, he saw the boy's soul led into a dwelling of purple and placed among the ranks of the martyrs. And there it was given him to know that, because the boy had borne patiently enough the wound inflicted on him, and, loving his brother's soul even unto death, had interceded most kindly for the one who struck him, the divine goodness had rewarded his patience and kindness by numbering him among the choirs of the martyrs. And this was shown to him so swiftly, at the very hour of the boy's death, that while the child was still dying, the venerable Father Witmar (who was then directing the boys' school with him, and is present as a witness of this) woke him for this very purpose and told him of his pupil's death; and he answered that he knew it already. This the grace of the Lord surely granted him to see for his consolation, so that, since he was so deeply grieved over the matter, he might lighten the sorrow of his heart by the salvation of the boy.

9. He moves from Old Corbie to the New, where he becomes master and teacher

How greatly the man of God, inspired from heaven by these and very many other revelations and visions, afterwards grew among you in the grace of holiness and goodness will be better proved by the testimony of those of you who were present then. But since we wish to relate what was done among us, it seems that we must first inquire, for the sake of those who may know less of the matter, on what occasion he withdrew hither from the place of his stability; and, since he had been offered to God among you and had promised obedience there, by what prompting he moved to these parts and was raised among us to the office of bishop. We have thought it necessary to write this lest anyone should perhaps put down to fickleness what the man of God undertook at the prompting of divine compunction and out of love of pilgrimage for the salvation of souls. Some time ago, then, a monastery was begun in these parts, that is, in Saxony, which by the authority and direction of your holiness was both first founded and in course of time, by God's gift, happily completed; and it took a name borrowed from the place of your dwelling, so as to be called New Corbie. To this place, then, the servant of God was first sent together with others of your brethren, to fulfil there the office of teaching; and in this he was found so approved and acceptable in everything that, by the choice of all, he also preached the word of God publicly to the people in church. And so it came about that he became the first master of the school in that place, and also the teacher of the people.

10. Qua occasione missus in Daniam cum Herioldo rege, Ludovico Pio petente.

Post haec vero contigit ut Herioldus quidam rex, qui partem tenebat regni Danorum, ab aliis ipsius provinciae regibus odio et inimicitia conventus, regno suo expulsus sit. Qui serenissimum adiit imperatorem Ludovicum, postulans ut ejus auxilio uti mereretur, quo regnum suum denuo evindicare valeret. Qui eum secum detentum tam ipse, quam per alios ad suscipiendam Christianitatem cohortatus, quo scilicet inter eos ita major familiaritas esse posset, populusque Christianus ipsi ac suis promptiori voluntate in adjutorium sic veniret, si uterque unum coleret Deum; tandem, gratia divina tribuente, ad fidem convertit, et sacro baptismate perfusum ipse de sacro fonte suscepit, sibique in filium adoptavit. Quem cum iterum ad sua reducere vellet, et ejus auxilio munitus regni sui fines repeteret, coepit diligentius quaerere, si quem inveniret sanctae devotionis virum, qui cum eo ire posset, eique continuo adhaereret, fieretque illi et suis ad corroborandam suscipiendamque fidem Domini magister doctrinae salutaris. De hoc itaque praedictus Augustus in publico conventu optimatum suorum, cum sacerdotibus caeterisque fidelibus suis tractare coepit, et ut sibi aliquem ad tale opus et voluntarium et condignum invenirent, sollicitius omnes rogare.

11. Hujus peregrinationem, Wala annuente, fratre, improbant.

Quod cum universi abnuerent, nullatenus se quemquam scire tantae devotionis virum, qui peregrinationem tam periculosam pro Christi nomine suscipere vellet; exstitit tunc temporis venerabilis abbas monasterii vestri Wala, qui memorato imperatori dixit, unum se scire monachum in monasterio suo, qui multo ardore circa divinam religionem ferveret, ac pro Dei nomine multa pati desideraret: cujusque pariter institutionem ac mores laudavit, et quod ad hoc opus satis esset idoneus indicavit, se tamen nescire testatus est, utrum ad hanc peregrinationem tolerandam voluntarius esset. Quid plura? Jubente rege evocatus est ad palatium Anscharius, cui abbas cuncta quae acta sunt, retulit, et ad quid vocaretur, aperuit. Qui se ad Dei servitium in omnibus, quae in causa obedientiae injungerentur, paratum esse respondit. Deductus itaque ad praesentiam Augusti, cum ab ipso interrogaretur utrum pro Dei nomine, causa in gentibus Danorum Evangelium praedicandi, comes fieri vellet Herioldi, omnino se velle constanter respondit.

10. On what occasion he was sent to Denmark with King Harald, at the request of Louis the Pious.

After this it happened that a certain king, Harald, who held part of the kingdom of the Danes, was set upon with hatred and enmity by the other kings of that land and driven from his kingdom. He went to the most serene Emperor Louis, asking that he might be granted his help so as to be able to win back his kingdom. The emperor kept him at his side and, both in person and through others, urged him to accept Christianity, so that there might be greater friendship between them and the Christian people might come the more readily to the help of him and his men if both worshipped the one God; and at length, by the gift of divine grace, he converted him to the faith, and when he had been washed in holy baptism, he himself received him from the sacred font and adopted him as his son. When he wished to send him back to his own land, so that, protected by his help, he might seek again the borders of his kingdom, he began to inquire diligently whether he could find some man of holy devotion who could go with him and remain constantly with him, and be to him and his people a teacher of saving doctrine, to strengthen them in receiving the faith of the Lord. The emperor therefore began to discuss this in a public assembly of his nobles, with the priests and his other faithful men, and to ask all of them earnestly to find him someone both willing and worthy for such a work.

11. The brethren disapprove of his pilgrimage, though Wala consents.

When all declared that they knew of no man of such devotion as would be willing to undertake so dangerous a pilgrimage for the name of Christ, there arose Wala, at that time the venerable abbot of your monastery, who told the emperor that he knew of one monk in his monastery who burned with great ardour for divine religion and longed to suffer much for the name of God; he praised both his learning and his character and declared him well suited to this work, but testified that he did not know whether he would be willing to bear such a pilgrimage. What more need be said? At the king's command Anskar was summoned to the palace, and the abbot told him all that had passed and disclosed what he was called for. He answered that he was ready for the service of God in everything that might be laid upon him under obedience. Brought, then, before the emperor, and asked by him whether he was willing, for the name of God, to become Harald's companion in order to preach the Gospel among the peoples of the Danes, he answered firmly that he was entirely willing.

Cui etiam cum abbas intulisset, nullatenus se tantum onus jubendo illi imponere; si ipse tantum hoc sua sponte eligeret, sibi gratum esse, et suae auctoritatis ei licentiam dare, quod ille nihilo minus se et eligere, et modis omnibus perficere velle respondit. Denique cum haec publice protestarentur, essetque cognitum omnibus qui in domo conversabantur abbatis, coeperunt multi tantam ejus admirari immutationem: quod scilicet relicta patria, et propinquis suis, fratrum quoque cum quibus educatus fuerat, dulcissima affectione, alienas expetere vellet nationes, et cum ignotis ac barbaris conversari. Multi quoque cum super hoc detestari, et improperiis lacessere; quidam a proposito revocare conabantur. Sed vir Dei in coepta voluntate immobilis permanebat. Denique cum abbas per dies singulos ad palatium iret, ipse domi residens consortia omnium fugiebat, et in quadam vinea juxta posita solitarium sibi locum eligens, orationi et lectioni vacabat.

12. Autbertus ipsi adjungitur.

Erat autem etiam tunc cum domno abbate quidam frater monasterii vestri, nomine Autbertus, qui cum eum sollicitum nimis ac tristem, et quotidie secretius sibi consistere et nullius consortio vel colloquio uti videret, coepit ei compati. Et quadam die pergens ad locum, ubi in supradicta vinea solus sedebat, coepit ab eo inquirere, utrum veraciter peregrinationem illa vellet suscipere. Qui sperans eum hoc non ob compassionem, sed propter astutiam magis inquirere, respondit: Quid vobis curae est super hoc? nolite mentem meam tali inquisitione conturbare. Illi vero nihil omnino se deceptionis in hac re protendere testabatur; sed magis veraciter scire velle, utrum ille in proposita voluntate disponeret perseverare. Tunc ipse congratulans ejus benevolentiae, respondit: Ego interrogatus sum si pro Dei nomine vellem in gentes peregrinas ire ad praedicandum Evangelium Christi, cui propositioni ego nequaquam reniti ausus sum, imo totis viribus exopto, ut mihi ad hoc detur copia eundi: nullusque ab hac intentione mentem meam immutare poterit. Tunc praefatus frater ei respondit: Et ego te nunquam patiar solum ire, sed pro Dei amore tecum proficisci cupio, tantum ut domni abbatis licentiam mihi impetres. Firmata itaque inter eos hac religiosa contentione, redeunti abbati ipse obvius adstitit, et quod sibi socium inventum haberet, qui hujus profectionis comes esse voluntarius vellet, indicavit.

And when the abbot added that he would by no means lay so heavy a burden on him by command, but that if he chose it of his own free will this would please him, and he would give him leave by his authority, he answered no less that he both chose it and was resolved to carry it out by every means. When this had been declared publicly and was known to all who lived in the abbot's household, many began to marvel at so great a change in him: that, leaving his homeland and his kinsfolk, and the sweetest affection of the brethren with whom he had been brought up, he should wish to seek out foreign nations and live among strangers and barbarians. Many also cursed him for it and assailed him with reproaches; some tried to call him back from his purpose. But the man of God remained immovable in the resolve he had begun. And while the abbot went to the palace every day, he stayed at home, shunned the company of all, and, choosing for himself a solitary spot in a vineyard nearby, gave himself to prayer and reading.

12. Autbert joins him.

There was also then with the lord abbot a brother of your monastery named Autbert, who, seeing him so anxious and sad, keeping himself apart every day and seeking no one's company or conversation, began to feel for him. And one day, going to the place in the vineyard where he sat alone, he began to ask him whether he truly wished to undertake that pilgrimage. Supposing that he was asking not out of compassion but rather out of guile, he answered: "What concern is this of yours? Do not trouble my mind with such questioning." But the other assured him that he intended no deceit whatever in the matter, but rather truly wished to know whether he meant to persevere in the purpose he had set before him. Then, welcoming his goodwill, he replied: "I have been asked whether I am willing, for the name of God, to go to foreign peoples to preach the Gospel of Christ; I have by no means dared to resist this proposal; rather I long with all my strength that the means of going may be granted me, and no one will be able to turn my mind from this intention." Then the brother answered him: "And I will never let you go alone; for the love of God I desire to set out with you, if only you will obtain for me the leave of the lord abbot." When this devout agreement had been settled between them, he went to meet the abbot on his return and told him that he had found a companion who was willing to go with him on this journey of his own accord.

Cujus personam cum abbas requireret, et ille fratrem Autbertum nominaret, multo miraculo obstupuit, nequaquam putans eum, qui et nobilis prosapiae in saeculo, et apud eum tunc familiaris, ac post eum domus ejus procurator habebatur, talia velle, advocatum tamen eum super hoc interrogavit. Qui respondit se nequaquam pati posse, ut ille solus iret: sed pro Christi nomine se velle ei solatio et adjutorio fieri, si suam et fratrum haberet licentiam. Cui domnus abbas se daturum licentiam, si ille spontanee hanc profectionem eligeret, respondit, nullum tamen eis ex familia sua comitem deputaturum ad obsequium servitii: nisi forte ipsi aliquem ad hoc provocare possent, ut sua sponte cum eis ire vellet. Hoc autem venerabilis abbas non de inaffectione faciebat, sed quia abominabile et injustum videbatur, ut quis invitus inter paganos conversari cogeretur.

13. Ambo Daniam petunt cum Herioldo. Coloniae bene accepti. Ad confinia Danorum perveniunt.

Post haec itaque ambo deducuntur ad regem: quorum voluntati et desiderio condelectatus, ipse dedit eis et ecclesiastica ministeria, et scrinia atque tentoria, caeteraque subsidia, quae tanto itineri videbantur necessaria: et cum praefato Herioldo ire praecepit, denuntians, ut ejus fidei maximam impenderent sollicitudinem, eumque et suos, qui simul cum eo baptizati fuerant, pia exhortatione, ne ad pristinos reducerentur diabolo instigante errores, continue laborarent; simulque etiam alios ad suscipiendam Christianitatem verbo praedicationis strenue commonerent. Dimissi itaque ab imperatore nullum habuerunt socium, qui eis aliquid servitii impenderet: quoniam nemo ex familia abbatis cum eis sua sponte ire, nec ille quemquam ad hoc invitum cogere volebat. Herioldus quoque, cui commissi fuerant, adhuc rudis et neophytus, ignorabat qualiter servi Dei tractari debuissent. Sui quoque tunc nuper conversi, et longe aliter educati, non multa super eos cura intendebant. Cum gravi itaque difficultate hanc suscipientes peregrinationem, pervenerunt Coloniam, ubi tunc temporis venerandus antistes Hadelbodus compatiens eorum necessitati, dedit eis navem optimam, ubi sua reponerent, in qua erant duae mansiunculae satis optime praeparatae. Hanc itaque praedictus Herioldus conspiciens, elegit in eadem navi cum illis manere, ut ipse una, et illi potirentur altera mansiuncula, sicque inter eos familiaritas coepit et benevolentia crescere: sui quoque exhinc servitium eis diligentius impendebant. Inde ingressi per Dorstatum, et vicina Fresonum transeuntes, ad confinia pervenerunt Danorum. Et quia interdum pacifice in regno suo Herioldus rex consistere non poterat, dedit ei memoratus Augustus ultra Albiam beneficium, ut si quando ei necessarium esset, ibi subsistere posset.

When the abbot asked who he was, and he named Brother Autbert, the abbot was amazed and astonished, never thinking that one who was of noble lineage in the world and at that time close to him, and was regarded as the steward of his household next after himself, would wish for such things; nevertheless he summoned him and questioned him about it. He answered that he could not possibly allow Anskar to go alone, but that for the name of Christ he wished to be his comfort and help, if he had his leave and that of the brethren. The lord abbot answered that he would give him leave if he chose this journey of his own accord, but that he would assign them no companion from his household to serve them, unless perhaps they themselves could persuade someone to go with them of his own will. The venerable abbot did this not from want of affection, but because it seemed abominable and unjust that anyone should be compelled against his will to live among pagans.

13. Both set out for Denmark with Harald. They are well received at Cologne. They reach the borders of the Danes.

After this both were brought to the king; and he, delighted with their will and desire, gave them vessels for the church's ministry, chests and tents, and the other provisions that seemed necessary for so long a journey; and he commanded them to go with Harald, charging them to devote the greatest care to his faith and to labour constantly, by devout exhortation, that he and his men who had been baptized with him should not be led back by the devil's prompting into their former errors, and at the same time to urge others vigorously, by the word of preaching, to receive Christianity. Dismissed by the emperor, then, they had no companion to do them any service, since no one of the abbot's household would go with them of his own accord, and he would not compel anyone to it against his will. Harald too, to whom they had been entrusted, being still untaught and a neophyte, did not know how servants of God ought to be treated. His men also, lately converted and brought up very differently, paid them little attention. Undertaking this pilgrimage, then, with great difficulty, they came to Cologne, where the venerable bishop of that time, Hadebald, taking pity on their need, gave them an excellent ship in which to stow their belongings, with two little cabins very well fitted out. When Harald saw it, he chose to stay with them in that same ship, so that he had one cabin and they the other; and so friendship and goodwill began to grow between them, and from then on his men too served them more attentively. From there they went on by way of Dorestad and, passing through the neighbouring lands of the Frisians, came to the borders of the Danes. And because King Harald could not for the time being remain peacefully in his own kingdom, the emperor gave him a benefice beyond the Elbe, so that he might stay there whenever it was necessary.

14. Paganos erudiunt, pueris scholas aperiunt. Autbertus Corbeiae obit.

Praefati itaque servi Dei cum eo positi aliquando inter Christianos, aliquando inter paganos constituti, coeperunt verbo Dei insistere; et quoslibet poterant ad viam veritatis monere. Multi enim exemplo et doctrina eorum ad fidem convertebantur, et crescebant quotidie qui salvi fierent in Domino. Ipsi quoque divino inspirati amore ad promulgandam devotionis suae religionem, coeperunt curiose pueros quaerere quos emerent, et ad Dei servitium educarent. Praefatus quoque Herioldus ex suis aliquos sub eorum cura erudiendos posuit, sicque factum est, ut scholam inibi parvo tempore statuerint duodecim aut eo amplius puerorum. Alios quoque hinc inde sibi adsciverunt servitores et adjutores: coepitque eorum fama et religio in Dei nomine fructuosius crescere. Cum itaque in hoc sancto proposito biennio aut eo amplius morarentur, contigit jam dictum fratrem Autbertum infirmitatis gravari molestia. Qua de causa inde ad novam Corbeiam deductus, languore diutino ingravescente, felici (ut credimus) transitu in tempore Paschae, sicuti et ipsi antea a Domino revelatum fuerat, diem inibi clausit extremum.

15. Suecis petentibus praedicatores, Anscharius a Ludovico dirigitur ad ipsos, desiderio patiendi animatus ex viso coelesti.

Interim vero contigit legatos Sueonum ad memoratum venisse Ludovicum, qui inter alia legationis suae mandata clementissimo Caesari innotuerunt, esse multos in gente sua, qui Christianae religionis cultum suscipere desiderarent. Regis quoque sui animum ad hoc satis benevolum, ut ibi sacerdotes Dei esse permitteret: tantum ejus munificentia mererentur, ut eis praedicatores destinaret idoneos. Quos religiosissimus audiens imperator, plurimum exhilaratus, denuo quaerere coepit quos in illas partes dirigeret, qui probarent utrum populus ille ad credendum paratus esset, sicuti missi illi intimaverant, et cultum Christianae religionis illis tradere inciperent. Unde factum est, ut iterum cum memorato abbate vestro serenissimus imperator tractare coeperit, si quem forte de suis monachis invenire posset, qui pro Christi nomine in illas partes ire vellet: aut certe qui cum Herioldo moraretur, et is qui cum eo erat, servus Dei Anscharius illam susciperet legationem.

14. They instruct the pagans and open schools for boys. Autbert dies at Corbie.

The servants of God, then, living with him, sometimes among Christians and sometimes among pagans, began to devote themselves to the word of God and to urge whomever they could towards the way of truth. Many were converted to the faith by their example and teaching, and those who were being saved in the Lord increased daily. Inspired by divine love to spread the religion of their devotion, they also began to seek out with care boys whom they might buy and bring up for the service of God. Harald also placed some of his own people under their care to be taught; and so it came about that in a short time they established a school there of twelve boys or more. They also gathered to themselves other servants and helpers from here and there, and their fame and religion in the name of God began to grow more fruitfully. When they had remained in this holy purpose for two years or more, it happened that Brother Autbert was afflicted by a grievous illness. For this reason he was taken from there to New Corbie, and, as his long sickness grew worse, he ended his last day there at Eastertide, by a happy passing (as we believe), just as had been revealed to him beforehand by the Lord.

15. When the Swedes ask for preachers, Anskar is sent to them by Louis, fired with the desire to suffer by a heavenly vision.

Meanwhile it happened that envoys of the Swedes came to Louis, who, among the other matters of their embassy, made known to the most merciful emperor that there were many in their nation who desired to receive the worship of the Christian religion. And their king, they said, was well enough disposed to allow priests of God to be there; only they hoped to obtain from his generosity that he would send them suitable preachers. Hearing them, the most religious emperor was overjoyed, and began once more to seek men to send to those parts, who might find out whether that people was ready to believe, as the envoys had said, and begin to hand on to them the worship of the Christian religion. And so it came about that the most serene emperor again began to consult with your abbot whether he might perhaps find one of his monks willing to go to those parts for the name of Christ, or at least one who would stay with Harald, so that the one who was with him, Anskar the servant of God, might undertake that mission.

Qua de re contigit ut regio jussu abhinc ad palatium vocaretur. Cuique denuntiatum est, ne se raderet antequam ad praesentiam imperatoris veniret. Vir autem Dei ad quod vocaretur omnino praenoscens, coepit toto cordis fervore in amore Dei exardescere, et omne gaudium existimare, si lucrandis sibi animabus liceret insistere. Si quid quoque in hujusmodi profectione contrarietatis sive adversitatis ei potuisset accidere, proposuit animo patienter pro Christo tolerare: nihilque dubietatis in corde pro tali gerebat opere, quoniam visionis divinae, quam ante praeviderat consolabatur munere. Siquidem supradicto tempore, cum apud vos maneret, et jam duabus visionibus coelitus inspiratus haberetur, quadam nocte visum est ei, quod venisset in quamdam domum, ubi plures ex ordine Praedicatorum ad praedicandi officium praeparati astabant: coram quibus subito in excessu mentis raptus, videbat immensi luminis claritatem super solis radium de coelo emissam se circumfulsisse. Cumque miraretur quid hoc esset; vox quoque pene similis illi, quam in prima visione se audisse narraverat, facta est ad eum, dicens: Dimissum est peccatum tuum. Cui ille divino, ut credimus, afflatus Spiritu, respondit, dicens: Domine, quid vis ut faciam? Et iterum vox sonuit, dicens: Vade et annuntia gentibus verbum Dei. Hanc itaque visionem servus Dei pertractans animo, laetus gaudebat in Domino, videns jam ex parte impletum, quod sibi imperatum fuerat, et ad majorem laboris sui cumulum etiam Sueonibus verbum Dei nuntiare cupiens.

16. Witmarum socium sortitur, Gislemaro in Dania substituto. A piratis spoliatur.

Cum itaque ante praesentiam Caesaris adductus, interrogatus ab eo fuisset, utrum legationem istam suscipere vellet, libera voce respondit, se paratum ad omnia quae illi pro Christi nomine sua auctoritate decrevisset injungere. Tunc Dei providentia socium illi ex vestra fraternitate venerabilis abbas invenit nonnum Witmarum, tanto operi satis condignum et voluntarium. Porro cum Herioldo esse disposuit Patrem devotissimum Gislemarum, fide et operibus bonis probatum, atque in zelo Dei ferventissimum. Suscepit itaque legationem sibi a Caesare injunctam, ut in partes iret Sueonum, et probaret utrum populus ille ad credendum paratus esset, sicuti missi supradicti innotuerant. In qua legatione, quanta, quamque gravia perpessus sit mala, melius ipse, qui interfuit, praedictus Pater Witmarus intimare poterit. Nobis hoc tantum narrasse sufficiat, quod dum in medio fere essent itinere, in piratas offenderunt.

For this reason it came about that he was summoned from there to the palace by the king's command. And he was told not to shave before he came into the emperor's presence. The man of God, knowing full well beforehand what he was being called for, began to burn with all the fervour of his heart in the love of God, and to count it all joy if he might be allowed to devote himself to winning souls. And whatever opposition or adversity might befall him on such a journey, he resolved in his heart to bear patiently for Christ; nor did he carry any doubt in his heart about such a work, since he was consoled by the gift of a divine vision which he had seen beforehand. For at the time mentioned above, when he was living among you and had already been inspired from heaven by two visions, it seemed to him one night that he had come into a house where many of the order of preachers stood ready for the office of preaching; and before them he was suddenly rapt in ecstasy of mind, and saw that the brightness of an immense light, sent down from heaven above the rays of the sun, shone round about him. And as he wondered what this might be, a voice, almost like the one he had related that he heard in the first vision, came to him, saying: "Your sin is forgiven." Inspired by the divine Spirit, as we believe, he answered him, saying: "Lord, what do you wish me to do?" And again the voice sounded, saying: "Go and proclaim the word of God to the nations." Pondering this vision in his mind, the servant of God rejoiced gladly in the Lord, seeing that what he had been commanded was already in part fulfilled, and desiring, to heap up still more his labour, to proclaim the word of God to the Swedes as well.

16. He is given Witmar as companion, Gislemar taking his place in Denmark. He is robbed by pirates.

Brought, then, before the emperor and asked by him whether he was willing to undertake this mission, he answered freely that he was ready for whatever the emperor should decree by his authority to lay upon him for the name of Christ. Then, by God's providence, the venerable abbot found him a companion from your brotherhood, Dom Witmar, well worthy and willing for so great a work. And to be with Harald he appointed the most devout Father Gislemar, proved in faith and good works and most fervent in zeal for God. He undertook, then, the mission laid on him by the emperor: to go to the regions of the Swedes and find out whether that people was ready to believe, as the envoys had made known. What evils and how grievous he suffered on that mission, Father Witmar, who was there, will be better able to tell. Let it be enough for us to relate this much: that when they were about halfway on their journey, they fell in with pirates.

Et cum negotiatores, qui cum eis ibant, se viriliter defenderint, et primo quidem victoriam ceperint; in secundo tamen ab iisdem piratis devicti ac superati sunt, ita ut naves et omnia quae habebant, eis tulerint, et ipsi vix pedibus ad terram fugientes evaserint. Ibi itaque et munera regia, quae illuc deferre debuerant, et omnia quae habuerant, perdiderunt, excepto parum quid, quod forte prosilientes e navi secum auferre et asportare poterant. Inter quae et pene quadraginta libros, quos ad servitium Dei sibi aggregaverant, illis diripientibus amiserunt. Hoc itaque facto cum quidam reverti, quidam in antea ire disponerent, servus Dei a coepto itinere nulla ratione flecti potuit, quin potius in Dei ponens arbitrio quid illi contingeret, nequaquam redire disposuit, antequam nutu Dei dignosceret, utrum in illis partibus licentia praedicandi fieri posset.

17. A Sueoniae rege benigne exceptus, conversionem gentis aggreditur feliciter.

Cum gravi itaque difficultate pedibus post hoc per longissimam viam incedentes, et, ubi congruebat, interjacentia maria navigio transeuntes, tandem ad portum regni ipsorum, qui Byrca dicitur, pervenerunt: ubi benigne a rege eorum, qui Bern vocabatur, suscepti sunt, missis ejus referentibus, qua de causa advenerint. Cognita itaque legatione eorum, et cum suis de hujusmodi negotio pertractans fidelibus, omnium pari voto atque consensu dedit licentiam eis ibi manendi et Evangelium Christi praedicandi, concessa libertate, ut quicunque vellent, eorum doctrinam expeterent. Itaque alacri corde servi Dei, videntes prospere ea quae optaverant, successisse, populis ibi constitutis verbum salutis annuntiare coeperunt. Plures quoque erant, qui eorum legationi favebant. Multi etiam apud eos captivi habebantur Christiani, qui gaudebant jam tandem se mysteriis posse participari: probatumque est omnia ita veraciter constare, sicuti missi ipsorum serenissimo Caesari innotuerunt, et baptismi gratiam nonnulli devote expetebant. Inter quos praefectus vici ipsius et consiliarius regis, admodum illi amabilis, Herigarius nomine, sacri baptismatis donum suscepit, atque in fide catholica firmissimus extitit. Ipse namque in haereditate sua ecclesiam fabricavit, et in Dei servitio semetipsum religiosissime exercuit. Hujus viri diversa exstant insignia, et ejus invictae fidei multa probantur indicia, quae in sequentibus evidentius exponemus.

18. Rem ad imperatorem refert Anscharius.

The merchants who were travelling with them defended themselves manfully and at first won the victory; but in a second encounter they were defeated and overcome by the same pirates, who took from them their ships and all they had, and they themselves barely escaped, fleeing to land on foot. There they lost the royal gifts which they were to have carried there and all that they had, except some small things which they happened to be able to take and carry with them as they leapt from the ship. Among these losses, plundered by the pirates, were almost forty books which they had gathered for the service of God. When this had happened, and some were minded to turn back and others to go on, the servant of God could by no means be turned aside from the journey he had begun; rather, leaving to God's will whatever might befall him, he resolved by no means to return until he learnt, at God's bidding, whether leave to preach could be had in those parts.

17. Kindly received by the king of Sweden, he happily undertakes the conversion of the people.

After this, travelling with great difficulty on foot along a very long road, and crossing by boat the seas that lay between where it was fitting, they came at length to a port of their kingdom called Birka, where they were kindly received by their king, who was named Björn, when his messengers had reported why they had come. Having learnt the purpose of their mission, and having discussed the matter with his faithful men, he gave them, with the like wish and consent of all, leave to remain there and preach the Gospel of Christ, granting freedom to whoever wished to seek their teaching. So the servants of God, with eager hearts, seeing that what they had longed for had turned out well, began to proclaim the word of salvation to the people living there. And there were many who favoured their mission. Many Christian captives too were held among them, who rejoiced that at last they could share in the mysteries; and it was proved that everything was truly as their envoys had made known to the most serene emperor, and not a few devoutly sought the grace of baptism. Among them the prefect of the town and the king's counsellor, very dear to him, named Herigar, received the gift of holy baptism and stood most firm in the Catholic faith. He built a church on his own inherited land and exercised himself most devoutly in the service of God. Various signal deeds of this man are recorded, and many proofs of his unconquered faith are attested, which we shall set out more clearly in what follows.

18. Anskar reports the matter to the emperor.

Peracto itaque apud eos altero dimidio anno, praefati servi Dei cum certo suae legationis experimento, et cum litteris regia manu more ipsorum deformatis, ad serenissimum reversi sunt Augustum; qui honorifice et cum maxima pietatis benevolentia ab eo suscepti, narraverunt quanta Dominus secum egerit, et quod ostium fidei in illis partibus ad vocationem gentium patefactum fuerit. Hoc itaque devotissimus audiens imperator, immenso laetificabatur gaudio: pariterque recolens, quae jam olim apud Danos circa Dei cultum concepta fuerant, et laudes et gratias omnipotenti Domino referens, ardore fidei succensus quaerere coepit, quomodo in partibus Aquilonis, in fine videlicet imperii sui, sedem constituere posset episcopalem: unde congruum esset episcopo ibi consistenti causa praedicationis illas frequentius adire partes, et unde etiam omnes illae barbarae nationes facilius uberiusque capere valerent divini mysterii sacramenta. Cum itaque pro hujusmodi sollicitudine cura vigilanti instaret, quibusdam fidelibus suis referentibus ei innotuit quod cum gloriosae memoriae pater suus Carolus Augustus omnem Saxoniam ferro perdomitam et jugo Christi subditam per episcopatus divisit, ultimam partem ipsius provinciae, quae erat in Aquilone ultra Albiam, nemini episcoporum tuendam commisit, sed ad hoc reservare decrevit, ut ibi archiepiscopalem constitueret sedem: ex qua Domini gratia tribuente etiam successio fidei in exteras proficeret nationes. Qua de re primitus etiam ibi ecclesiam per quemdam episcopum Galliae, Amalarium nomine, consecrari fecit. Postea etiam ipsam parochiam presbytero, Heridach nomine, specialiter gubernandam commisit: nec omnino voluit ut vicini episcopi aliquid potestatis super eum locum haberent. Quem etiam presbyterum consecrari disposuerat episcopum, sed velocior ejus de hac luce transitus hoc ne fieret, impedivit.

19. Sedem Hammaburgi a Carolo designatam a Ludovico erectam obtinet. Archiepiscopus consecratur.

Post obitum itaque tantae memoriae Augusti, filio ejus, supradicto videlicet imperatore Ludovico, in sede regni ejus collocato suggerentibus quibusdam, partem illam provinciae, quae ultra Albiam erat, in duo divisit, et duobus vicinis episcopis interim commendavit. Non enim satis attendit patris sui super hoc constitutionem, aut certe omnimodis ignoravit.

When they had spent a year and a half among them, the servants of God returned to the most serene emperor with sure proof of their mission and with letters drawn up by the king's own hand in their fashion; and, received by him with honour and with the greatest kindness and goodwill, they told him how great things the Lord had done with them, and that a door of faith had been opened in those parts for the calling of the nations. Hearing this, the most devout emperor rejoiced with immense joy; and recalling at the same time what had already been begun long before among the Danes for the worship of God, and giving praise and thanks to almighty God, he was kindled with the ardour of faith and began to consider how he might establish an episcopal see in the regions of the North, that is, at the edge of his empire, from which it would be fitting for a bishop residing there to visit those parts often for the sake of preaching, and from which also all those barbarous nations might more easily and more abundantly receive the sacraments of the divine mystery. While he pursued this concern with watchful care, he learnt from some of his faithful men that when his father of glorious memory, the Emperor Charles, had subdued all Saxony by the sword, brought it under the yoke of Christ and divided it into bishoprics, he had committed the farthest part of that province, which lay to the north beyond the Elbe, to the protection of none of the bishops, but had decided to reserve it in order to establish there an archiepiscopal see, from which, by the grace of the Lord, the spread of the faith might advance to foreign nations as well. For this reason he had first had a church consecrated there by a bishop of Gaul named Amalarius. Afterwards he committed that parish to a priest named Heridag, to govern it specially; and he would by no means allow the neighbouring bishops to have any authority over that place. He had also arranged for this priest to be consecrated bishop, but his own swift passing from this light prevented it.

19. He obtains the see of Hamburg, designated by Charles and established by Louis. He is consecrated archbishop.

After the death of that emperor of so great memory, when his son, namely the Emperor Louis already mentioned, had been set on the throne of his kingdom, at the suggestion of certain persons he divided that part of the province which lay beyond the Elbe into two, and entrusted it for the time being to two neighbouring bishops. For he did not pay sufficient heed to his father's arrangement in this matter, or else he was entirely unaware of it.

Ita vero facta occasione, qua jam fides Christi in partibus Danorum atque Sueonum per gratiam Dei fructificare coeperat, cognito patris sui voto, ne quid ejus studii imperfectum remaneret, una cum consensu episcoporum ac plurimo synodi conventu, in praefata ultima Saxoniae regione trans Albiam, in civitate Hammaburg sedem constituit archiepiscopalem, cui subjaceret universa Nordalbingorum Ecclesia, et ad quam pertineret omnium regionum aquilonalium potestas, ad constituendos episcopos sive presbyteros in illas partes pro Christi nomine destinandos. Ad hanc ergo sedem domnum et Patrem nostrum Anscharium praedictus imperator solemniter consecrari fecit archiepiscopum, per manus Drogonis Metensis praesulis et summae sanctaeque palatinae dignitatis tunc archicapellani, astantibus archiepiscopis, Ebone Rhemensi, Hetti Treverensi, et Otgario Magontiacensi, una cum pluribus aliis, in conventu imperii, praesulibus congregatis; assistentibus quoque, et consentientibus ac pariter consecrantibus Helingaudo et Willerico episcopis: a quibus jam dictas parochiae illius partes commendatas coeperat. Et quia dioecesis illa in periculosis fuerat locis constituta, ne propter barbarorum imminentem saevitiam aliquo modo deperiret, et quia omnimodis parva erat. quamdam cellam in Gallia, Turholt vocatam, ad eamdem sedem perpetuo servituram ejus legationi tradidit.

20. A Gregorio IV confirmatus, constituitur legatus Septentrionalium.

Et ut haec omnia perpetuum suae stabilitatis retinerent vigorem, eum honorabiliter ad sedem direxit apostolicam, et per missos suos venerabiles Bernoldum et Ratoldum episcopos, ac Geroldum illustrissimum comitem, omnem hanc rationem sanctissimos papae Gregorio intimari fecit confirmandam. Quod etiam ipse tam decreti sui auctoritate, quam etiam pallii datione, more praedecessorum suorum roboravit, atque ipsum in praesentia constitutum legatum in omnibus circumquaque gentibus Sueonum sive Danorum, necnon etiam Sclavorum, aliarumque in Aquilonis partibus gentium constitutarum, una cum Ebone Rhemensi archiepiscopo, qui ipsam legationem ante susceperat, delegavit, et ante corpus et confessionem sancti Petri apostoli publicam evangelizandi tribuit auctoritatem, et ne horum quidquam in futurum irritum fieret, omnem resistentem et contradicentem, vel quolibet modo his sanctis studiis piissimi imperatoris insidiantem, anathematis mucrone percussit, atque perpetua ultione reum diabolica sorte damnavit. Porro, ut praemisimus, eadem legatio auctoritate Paschalis papae Eboni Rhemensi archiepiscopo prius commendata fuerat.

But now that this occasion had arisen, since the faith of Christ had begun by the grace of God to bear fruit in the regions of the Danes and the Swedes, having learnt of his father's wish, and lest any part of his endeavour remain unfinished, with the consent of the bishops and a great gathering of the synod he established an archiepiscopal see in that farthest region of Saxony beyond the Elbe, in the city of Hamburg, to which the whole Church of the Nordalbingians should be subject, and to which should belong authority over all the northern regions, to appoint bishops or priests to be sent into those parts for the name of Christ. To this see, then, the emperor had our lord and Father Anskar solemnly consecrated archbishop by the hands of Drogo, bishop of Metz and at that time archchaplain of the high and holy dignity of the palace, in the presence of the archbishops Ebbo of Reims, Hetti of Trier and Otgar of Mainz, together with many other prelates assembled at the imperial diet; with the bishops Helingaud and Willerich also present, consenting and consecrating with them, to whom those parts of that diocese had been entrusted. And because that diocese was situated in dangerous places, lest it should in some way perish through the threatening savagery of the barbarians, and because it was in every respect small, he gave to his mission a monastic cell in Gaul called Torhout, to serve that same see in perpetuity.

20. Confirmed by Gregory IV, he is made legate to the peoples of the North.

And so that all this might keep the enduring strength of permanence, he sent him with honour to the Apostolic See, and through his envoys, the venerable bishops Bernold and Ratold and the most illustrious Count Gerold, he had the whole arrangement made known to the most holy Pope Gregory for confirmation. And he confirmed it, both by the authority of his decree and by the gift of the pallium, after the manner of his predecessors; and he appointed Anskar, there in his presence, as legate among all the surrounding peoples of the Swedes and Danes, and also of the Slavs and of the other nations settled in the regions of the North, together with Ebbo, archbishop of Reims, who had earlier received that same legation; and before the body and confession of the holy apostle Peter he gave him public authority to preach the Gospel; and lest any of this should in future be made void, he smote with the sword of anathema all who should resist or oppose, or in any way plot against, these holy endeavours of the most pious emperor, and condemned the guilty to everlasting punishment with the devil's portion. Now, as we have said, this same legation had earlier been entrusted by the authority of Pope Paschal to Ebbo, archbishop of Reims.

Siquidem ipse (ut credimus) divino afflatus Spiritu, pro vocatione gentium, et maxime Danorum quos in palatio saepius viderat, et diabolico deceptos errore dolebat; ferventissimo ardebat desiderio, et pro Christi nomine se suaque omnia ad salutem gentium tradere cupiebat. Cui etiam domnus imperator locum unum ultra Albiam, qui vocatur Welanao, dederat, ut quoties illas in partes pergeret, locum subsistendi ibi haberet. Multoties itaque ipse ad eumdem venit locum, et pro lucrandis animabus multa in Aquilonis partibus dispensavit, ac plurimos religioni Christianorum adjunxit, atque in fide catholica roboravit.

21. Gauzbertum episcopum adjutorem accipit, aliosque ex Corbeia veteri.

Verum post ordinationem domni et Patris nostri Anscharii superius comprehensam, visum est illis, de eadem legatione inter se conferentibus necessarium esse, ut aliquis illi ordinaretur adjutor, qui in partibus Sueonum ministerii episcopalis officio fungeretur: quoniam in regione tam longe posita praesens adesse deberet pontifex, et ipse solus ad utrumque locum minus sufficeret. Cum consensu itaque et voluntate praedicti imperatoris, venerabilis Ebo quemdam propinquum suum, Gauzbertum nomine, ad hoc opus electum, et pontificali insignitum honore, ad partes direxit Sueonum; cuique ministeria ecclesiastica et necessarios sumptus tam ex sua quam ex datione regia abunde tribuit, eumque quasi vice sua qui ibidem praedicandi officium prius auctoritate apostolica suscepisset, legatum in gentibus Sueonum esse constituit, cui etiam postea clementissimus Augustus, suggerente eodem venerabili praesule Ebone, cellam quam ipse in loco memorato Welanao construxerat, quasi locum refrigerii tradidit, ut scilicet ad ipsius ministerium officii perpetua stabilitate deserviret. Praedictus itaque Gauzbertus, quem ipsi consecrantes honore apostolici nominis Simonem vocaverunt, ad partes veniens Sueonum, honorifice et a rege et a populo susceptus est, coepitque cum benevolentia et unanimitate omnium ecclesiam inibi fabricare, et publice Evangelium fidei praedicare: fiebatque gaudium salutis Christianis ibi degentibus, et de die in diem numerus credentium augebatur. Interim quoque domnus et pastor noster in dioecesi sibi commissa et in partibus Danorum strenue suum implebat officium, et exemplo bonae conversationis multos ad fidei gratiam provocabat. Coepit quoque ex gente Danorum atque Sclavorum nonnullos emere pueros, aliquos etiam ex captivitate redimere, quos ad servitium Dei educaret. Quorum quosdam ad cellam praedictam Turholt nutriendos posuit: fueruntque cum eo hic ex societate vestra sancti Patres nostri et magistri, quorum doctrina et institutione feliciter nobiscum religionis divinae crevit opinio.

For he, inspired (as we believe) by the divine Spirit, burned with a most fervent desire for the calling of the nations, and above all of the Danes, whom he had often seen at the palace and grieved to see deceived by the devil's error; and for the name of Christ he longed to give himself and all he had for the salvation of the nations. The lord emperor had also given him a place beyond the Elbe called Welanao, so that whenever he went to those parts he might have a place to stay there. He came to that place many times, and for the winning of souls he spent much in the regions of the North, and joined very many to the Christian religion and strengthened them in the Catholic faith.

21. He receives Bishop Gautbert as his helper, and others from Old Corbie.

After the ordination of our lord and Father Anskar related above, it seemed necessary to them, as they conferred together about that legation, that someone should be ordained as his helper to carry out the office of the episcopal ministry in the regions of the Swedes: for in a land lying so far away a bishop ought to be present in person, and he alone was hardly sufficient for both places. With the consent and will of the emperor, therefore, the venerable Ebbo sent to the regions of the Swedes a kinsman of his named Gautbert, chosen for this work and adorned with the episcopal dignity; he gave him abundantly vessels for the church's ministry and the necessary means, both from his own resources and from the king's gift, and, as one who had earlier received the office of preaching there by apostolic authority, he appointed him as legate among the peoples of the Swedes in his own stead. To him also the most merciful emperor afterwards, at the suggestion of the same venerable bishop Ebbo, gave the cell which Ebbo had built at the place called Welanao, as a place of refreshment, that it might serve the ministry of his office in perpetual stability. So Gautbert, whom those who consecrated him called Simon, in honour of the apostle's name, came to the regions of the Swedes and was received with honour by both king and people; and with the goodwill and accord of all he began to build a church there and to preach the Gospel of the faith publicly; and there was joy of salvation among the Christians living there, and from day to day the number of believers increased. Meanwhile our lord and shepherd too was zealously fulfilling his office in the diocese entrusted to him and in the regions of the Danes, and by the example of his good life he drew many to the grace of the faith. He also began to buy some boys of the Danish and Slav peoples, and to ransom others from captivity, to bring them up for the service of God. Some of them he placed in the cell of Torhout to be brought up; and with him here were holy Fathers and masters of ours from your community, by whose teaching and training the renown of divine religion happily grew among us.

22. Hammaburgo a piratis vastato, omnium rerum jacturam fert patienter Anscharius.

Verum cum haec in utraque parte laudabiliter et Deo digne agerentur, contigit ex improviso piratas advenientes Hammaburgensem civitatem navigio circumdedisse. Quod cum inopinate et subitanee accidisset, spatium non fuit pagenses congregandi; quippe cum et comes, qui eo tempore praefecturam loci illius tenebat, illustrissimus vir Bernarius tunc deesset; domnus vero episcopus ibi positus cum his qui aderant in urbe ipsa, vel in suburbio manentibus, primo quidem audito adventu eorum locum ipsum continere voluit, donec majus veniret auxilium; sed impellentibus paganis, et civitate jam obsessa, cum eis resisti non posse conspicit, quomodo pignora sanctarum reliquiarum asportarentur, praeparavit. Sicque ipse clericis huc et illuc fuga dispersis, etiam sine cappa sua vix evasit. Populi quoque a loco ipso exeuntes et hac illacque palantes, plurimis aufugientibus, quidam capti, plerique etiam perempti sunt. Denique hostes direpta civitate, et omnibus quae in ea vel in vico proximo erant spoliatis, cum vespertino tempore eo adventassent, noctem ipsam cum sequenti die et nocte ibi consederunt: sicque succensis omnibus ac direptis, egressi sunt. Ibi ecclesia miro opere magisterio domni episcopi constructa, una cum claustris monasterii mirifice compositis, igni succensa est. Ibi bibliotheca, quam serenissimus memoratus imperator eidem Patri nostro contulerat, optime conscripta, una cum pluribus aliis libris, igni disperiit; sicque omnia, quae inibi aut in ecclesiasticis ministeriis, aut in aliis thesauris et facultatibus habuerat; aut praedatione aut igne, hostili impetu direpta sunt, ut quasi nudum eum dimiserint. Quippe cum pene nihil exinde prius elatum sit, nec tunc quidem aliquid subventum, nisi quod quisque fugiens casu arreptum secum forsitan exportare potuit. Pro quibus omnibus domnus et Pater sanctissimus nullatenus vel animo molestabatur, vel labiis peccavit; sed cum omnia fere, quae ab initio episcopatus aggregare vel in fabricam aedificiorum componere potuerat, uno velut momento perdidit, illud beati Job saepius verbis replicabat: Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est: sit nomen Domini benedictum.

23. Gauzbertus a Sueonibus vexatur, Nithardus perimitur.

22. When Hamburg is laid waste by pirates, Anskar bears the loss of all things patiently.

But while these things were being done in both regions in a praiseworthy manner and worthily of God, it happened that pirates came unexpectedly and surrounded the city of Hamburg with their ships. Since this happened unexpectedly and suddenly, there was no time to gather the people of the district; for the count who at that time held the governorship of the place, the most illustrious Bernhar, was then absent. The lord bishop, who was there with those in the city itself or living in the suburb, wished at first, when he heard of their coming, to hold the place until greater help should come; but as the pagans pressed on and the city was already besieged, seeing that they could not be resisted, he made arrangements for the precious relics of the saints to be carried away. And so, his clergy scattered in flight this way and that, he himself barely escaped, without even his cloak. The people too, leaving the place and wandering hither and thither, many fled, some were captured, and very many were killed. Then the enemy, having sacked the city and plundered everything in it and in the neighbouring village, since they had arrived in the evening, remained there that night with the following day and night; and so, when everything had been burnt and plundered, they departed. There the church, built with wonderful workmanship under the direction of the lord bishop, together with the cloisters of the monastery, wonderfully laid out, was set on fire. There the library which the most serene emperor had bestowed on our Father, most excellently written, perished in the fire together with many other books; and so everything he had had there, whether in vessels for the church's ministry or in other treasures and goods, was carried off by the enemy's assault, either by plunder or by fire, so that they left him as it were naked. For almost nothing had been carried out beforehand, nor was anything saved then, except what each one in flight happened to snatch up and could perhaps take away with him. For all this our lord and most holy Father was in no way troubled in mind, nor did he sin with his lips; but having lost as it were in a moment almost all that he had been able to gather or put into the fabric of buildings from the beginning of his episcopate, he often repeated those words of blessed Job: The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; as it has pleased the Lord, so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21).

23. Gautbert is harassed by the Swedes; Nithard is slain.

His itaque ita peractis, cum domnus episcopus cum suis in multis esset pressuris et calamitatibus, et fratres congregationis ejus una cum sanctissimis pignoribus varia loca circumeundo huc illucque vagarentur, et nusquam sederent quieti; praevalescente iniqui machinatione contigit etiam diabolico instinctu, ut populus Sueonum, fervore zeli accensus, praefatum Gauzbertum episcopum insidiose persequi coeperit: factumque est, ut ad domum, in qua manebat, unanima conventione pars quaedam populi, causa direptionis, irruerit, et nepotem quidem ipsius, Nithardum nomine, gladio peremerit, et odio Christiani nominis percussum Dei (ut credimus) martyrem fecerit. Ipsum vero cum caeteris sociis, qui simul aderant, ligaverunt, et diripientes omnia quae apud eos invenire potuerunt, contumelia et opprobriis affectos a finibus suis expulerunt; quod tamen non regio jussu factum, sed populari tantum conspiratione est perpetratum. Divinae vero majestatis clementia hoc nequaquam inultum abire passa est: sed pene omnes qui adfuere, quamlibet diverso modo in parvo tempore puniti sunt: de quibus multa dici poterant; sed ne fastidium legentibus inferamus, unius tantum mentionem curavimus facere, ut qua poena caeteri evindicati fuerint, ex hujus perditione patefiat.

24. Sueones puniuntur.

Quidam namque in terra illa potens exstitit, cujus filius in eadem conspiratione cum aliis fuerat, et quae sibi de spoliis inibi captis provenerant, in domum patris sui contulit. Post quod factum coepit substantia illius minui, et pecora ac familia deperire: ipse quoque filius divina ultione percussus interiit: sed et uxor ejus cum filio ac filia, non multo interjacente spatio, obiit. Cum itaque se, excepto filio parvulo, omnibus bonis suis defraudatum videret, coepit miser deorum iras expavescere, et quod haec omnia alicujus Dei offensione pateretur, mente tractavit. Qua de re, sicut ibi moris est, quemdam adiit divinum, rogans, ut cujus Dei offensam haberet, et qualiter eum placere deberet, ipsi indicaret. Agens itaque ille, quae circa cultum hujusmodi observare solebat, omnes deos illorum ipsi placatos; Deum vero Christianorum illi omnimodis infensum: Christus, inquit, sic te habet perditum; et quia quodlibet eorum, quod illi consecratum fuerat, in domo tua manet conditum, ideo venerunt super te omnia mala haec, quae passus es: nec poteris ab his liberari, donec illud in domo tua manserit.

When these things had happened in this way, and the lord bishop and his people were in many afflictions and calamities, and the brethren of his community, going round various places with the most holy relics, wandered this way and that and nowhere settled in peace, the scheming of the wicked one prevailed, and it came about by the devil's prompting that the people of the Swedes, inflamed with the heat of zeal, began to persecute Bishop Gautbert by treachery; and it happened that a part of the people, by common agreement, broke into the house where he was staying in order to plunder it, and slew with the sword his nephew, named Nithard, and, striking him down out of hatred for the Christian name, made him (as we believe) a martyr of God. Gautbert himself, with the other companions who were with him, they bound, and plundering all they could find among them, they drove them from their borders, loaded with insults and reproaches; this, however, was done not by the king's command but only by a conspiracy of the people. But the clemency of the divine majesty by no means allowed this to go unpunished: almost all who took part were punished within a short time, though in different ways. Much could be said of them; but lest we weary our readers, we have taken care to mention only one, so that from his ruin it may be made plain with what punishment the rest were requited.

24. The Swedes are punished.

There was a powerful man in that land whose son had been in that conspiracy with the others, and he brought into his father's house what had fallen to him from the spoils taken there. After this his wealth began to dwindle, and his cattle and household to perish; the son himself, struck by divine vengeance, died; and his wife too, with a son and a daughter, died not long after. When he saw himself bereft of all his goods except one little son, the wretched man began to dread the anger of the gods, and turned over in his mind that he was suffering all this through offending some god. For this reason, as is the custom there, he went to a soothsayer, asking him to tell him which god he had offended and how he ought to appease him. The man, having performed the rites he was accustomed to observe in such worship, told him that all their gods were well disposed towards him, but that the God of the Christians was utterly hostile to him: "Christ," he said, "has thus brought you to ruin; and because something that was consecrated to him is kept hidden in your house, therefore all these evils which you have suffered have come upon you; nor will you be able to be freed from them as long as it remains in your house."

Hoc ille audito, mente pertractans sollicita quid illud esse posset, de filio suo recordatus est, quod ex spoliis supradictis quemdam librum in domum suam advexerit. Qua de re horrore nimio percussus, et quia sacerdotis tunc inibi deerat praesentia; quid de eodem libro faceret omnimodis nescius, secum illum longius retinere nullatenus ausus est. Tandem vix reperto consilio, in conspectu eum populi, qui in eadem villa manebat, attulit, et quae passus sit, retulit. Cumque se omnes ignaros consilii super hac re dicerent, et tale aliquid in domo sua recipere vel habere pertimescerent; ipse eum diutius apud se retinere obstupescens, honeste compositum ad quamdam ligavit saepem, denuntians ut quicunque vellet, eum inde sumeret, et pro reatu commisso Domino Jesu Christo voluntariam satisfactionem vovit. Quem librum quidam Christianorum exinde sublatum in sua advexit domo, ex cujus ore etiam ista cognovimus: qui postea magnae fidei et devotionis exstitit, ita ut psalmos apud nos postea memoriter sine litteris didicerit. Taliter ergo et caeteri, sive morte, sive peste, et damno rerum suarum puniti sunt; et liquido omnibus patuit, quia qui sanctum Dei pontificem et suos inhoneste tractare et spoliare praesumpserant, gravissimam Domini nostri Jesu Christi senserint ultionem.

25. Post annos septem Ardgarium ad eos mittit Anscharius.

Post haec itaque locus ille septem fere annis sine sacerdotali fuit praesentia: pro qua re domnus et pastor noster Anscharius nimio moerore anxius Christianae religionis fidem ibi coeptam perire non sufferens, et maxime pro filio suo quem supra memoravimus, Herigario condolens, quemdam anachoretam, Ardgarium nomine, illas in partes direxit, et ut specialius eidem adhaereret praecepit. Ipse itaque eo adveniens, officiose susceptus est ab ipso Herigario, et Christianis qui ibi aderant, magnum suae praesentiae exhibuit gaudium. Coeperuntque, sicuti primo fecerant, ea quae Dei sunt, devote quaerere, et ritum Christianitatis lubenti animo custodire. Nemo quoque incredulus ejus praedicationis audebat resistere, quia qua poena mulctati fuerunt, qui servos Dei inde expulerant, mente pavida meminerant. Suggestione quoque praefati Herigarii, regis qui tunc erat jussu et licentia, publice coepit Dei celebrare mysteria. Qui videlicet fidelissimus vir Herigarius, tempore quo sacerdotalis ibi deerat praesentia, multa ab infidelibus sustinuit opprobria: sed largiente divina gratia, signis coelestibus ejus petitione verae fidei declarata sunt praeconia. Ex quibus, ut promissimus, aliqua hic interserere curavimus, quo ejus fidei invictus declaretur animus.

Hearing this, and anxiously pondering what it might be, he remembered that his son had brought a certain book into his house from those spoils. Struck with exceeding dread at this, and since there was then no priest present there, not knowing at all what to do with the book, he by no means dared keep it with him any longer. At last, having with difficulty found a plan, he brought it before the people who lived in that village and told them what he had suffered. And when they all said they knew of no counsel in the matter and were afraid to receive or keep any such thing in their houses, he, dismayed at the thought of keeping it longer with him, wrapped it decently and tied it to a fence, declaring that whoever wished might take it from there; and he vowed to the Lord Jesus Christ a voluntary satisfaction for the guilt he had incurred. A certain Christian took the book from there and brought it into his house, and from his mouth we learnt these things too; he afterwards became a man of great faith and devotion, so that later, among us, he learnt the psalms by heart without letters. In this way, then, the others too were punished, by death, by pestilence or by loss of their goods; and it was clear to all that those who had presumed to treat the holy bishop of God and his people shamefully and to plunder them had felt the most grievous vengeance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

25. After seven years Anskar sends Ardgar to them.

After this that place was for almost seven years without the presence of a priest; and on this account our lord and shepherd Anskar, deeply anxious and grieved, unable to bear that the faith of the Christian religion begun there should perish, and above all feeling for his son Herigar, of whom we spoke above, sent to those parts a hermit named Ardgar, and charged him to attach himself especially to Herigar. When he arrived there he was dutifully received by Herigar himself, and his presence brought great joy to the Christians who were there. And they began, as they had done at first, to seek devoutly the things of God and to keep the rite of Christianity with willing hearts. Nor did any unbeliever dare to resist his preaching, for they remembered with fear what punishment had fallen on those who had driven the servants of God out from there. And at the suggestion of Herigar, by the command and leave of the king who then reigned, he began to celebrate the mysteries of God publicly. This most faithful man Herigar, at the time when there was no priest present there, endured many insults from the unbelievers; but by the gift of divine grace, at his prayer the true faith was proclaimed by heavenly signs. Of these, as we promised, we have taken care to insert some here, so that the unconquered spirit of his faith may be made known.

26. Herigarius et ipse multa passus, patrat miracula.

Quadam namque vice ipse in quodam sedebat placito, scena in campo ad colloquium parata: ibi cum inter alias locutiones illi deos suos laudassent, quorum favore prospera sibi multa provenirent, et illi, quod solus a consortio omnium inan fide aberraret, improperarent; ipse, ut erat spiritu fervens, respondisse dicitur: Si tanta est de divina majestate dubietas, quod tamen dubium esse nullo modo deberet, probemus miraculis, quis sit majoris potentiae, vestri multi quos dicitis dii, an meus solus omnipotens Dominus Jesus Christus. Ecce tempus adest pluviae (siquidem pluvia tunc imminebat), invocate vos nomina deorum vestrorum, ne pluvia super vos descendat, et invocabo Dominum meum Jesum Christum, ne aliqua stilla pluviae me contingat, et si quis in hac parte se invocantes exaudierit, ipse sit Deus. Hac itaque facta inter se conventione, cum illi omnes in una parte sederent, ipse vero cum uno puero in altera, coepit unusquisque eorum invocare Deum suum, ille quoque invocabat Dominum Jesum Christum. Et descendens immensa de coelo pluvia ita omnes illos aquis infudit, ut quasi in flumine cum vestimentis jactati viderentur, etiam folia ramorum de umbraculo ibi facto super ipsos decidentia, virtute divina illos oppressos ostenderent; super ipsum vero et puerum qui cum eo erat, nec una descendit pluviae gutta. Quo facto confusis illis et admirantibus: Ecce, inquit, videtis quis sit Deus: nolite me, infelices, ab ejus cultura revocare, quin potius ab erroribus vestris confundamini, et veritatis viam discite.

27. Ejusdem alia miracula.

Alio quoque tempore contigit, ut dolorem in tibia sua sustineret nimium, ita ut non aliquo modo se movere a loco in quo erat, posset, nisi portaretur. Cum hanc ergo diutius sustineret molestiam, coeperunt multi ad eum causa visitandi venire; et quidam adhortationibus, quo pro salute sua diis sacrificaret, commonere; quidam improperiis, quod sine Deo esset, lacessere, et idcirco eum salute carere. Cum itaque haec saepius agerentur, et ipse constanter malis eorum suggestionibus resisteret; postremo non ferens eorum calumniam, respondit, nequaquam se a vanis simulacris auxilium petere velle, sed a Domino suo Jesu Christo, qui posset in momento, si vellet, eum ab infirmitate sua sanare.

26. Herigar, having himself suffered much, works miracles.

Once, for instance, he was sitting in an assembly, a canopy having been set up in a field for the meeting; and there, when among other talk they had praised their gods, by whose favour many good things came to them, and reproached him because he alone, apart from the fellowship of all, strayed in an empty faith, he, fervent in spirit as he was, is said to have answered: "If there is so great a doubt about the divine majesty, which nevertheless ought in no way to be doubtful, let us prove by miracles which is of greater power: your many so-called gods, or my one almighty Lord Jesus Christ. See, the time for rain is here (for rain was then threatening): call you upon the names of your gods that the rain may not fall upon you, and I will call upon my Lord Jesus Christ that not one drop of rain may touch me; and whichever on this side hears those who call upon him, let him be God." When this agreement had been made between them, they all sat on one side and he with one boy on the other, and each of them began to call upon his god, while he called upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And an immense rain came down from heaven and so drenched them all with water that they seemed to have been thrown into a river with their clothes on; even the leaves of the branches of the shelter made there, falling upon them, showed that they were overwhelmed by divine power; but upon him and the boy who was with him not a single drop of rain fell. When this had happened, and they were confounded and amazed, he said: "See, you behold who is God: do not, unhappy men, call me away from his worship; rather be ashamed of your errors and learn the way of truth."

27. Further miracles of the same man.

At another time it happened that he suffered such pain in his leg that he could not move at all from the place where he was unless he was carried. As he bore this affliction for a long time, many began to come to visit him; some urged him with exhortations to sacrifice to the gods for his recovery, others assailed him with reproaches that he was without a god and that was why he lacked health. When this had happened often, and he steadfastly resisted their evil suggestions, at last, unable to bear their slander, he answered that he would by no means seek help from empty idols, but from his Lord Jesus Christ, who could heal him of his infirmity in a moment if he so willed.

Et accitis illico domesticis suis, ut ad suam eum deferrent ecclesiam praecepit; ubi positus coram cunctis qui astabant, supplices ad Dominum preces effudit, dicens: Domine mi Jesu Christe, ut sciant hi miseri, quia tu es Deus solus, et non est alius praeter te, da mihi servo tuo in hac hora pristinam corporis sanitatem; ut videntes inimici magnalia tua, de suis erroribus confundantur, et ad agnitionem tui nominis convertantur. Fac, quaeso, quod peto propter nomen sanctum tuum quod est benedictum in saecula; ne sit confusio confidentibus in te, Domine. Post quam vocem, divina eum medicante gratia, confestim sanissimus est redditus, et de ecclesia per semetipsum egressus, pro salute sua Deo gratias agebat, et in Christi fide convalescens magis magisque incredulos confundebat.

28. Avoundus rex cum Danis Bircenses oppugnat.

Per idem fere temporis accidit, ut etiam quidam rex Sueonum, nomine Avoundus, ejectus regno suo, apud Danos exsul fuerit. Qui fines regni quondam sui denuo repetere cupiens, coepit ab ipsis auxilium quaerere; spondens quod, si se sequerentur, multa eis donaria possent provenire. Proponebat enim eis vicum nominatum Byrca, quod ibi multi essent negotiatores divites, et abundantia totius boni, atque pecunia thesaurorum multa. Ad illum itaque vicum se illos promittebat ducturum, ubi sine exercitus sui damno, multo suae necessitatis fruerentur commodo. Illi ergo promissis muneribus delectati, et thesaurorum acquisitione avidi, in auxilium ejus expeditorum ad pugnam hominum viginti et unam naves impleverunt, et cum eo destinaverunt. Ipse vero de suis naves habebat undecim. Exeuntes ergo de Danis, ad vicum insperate venerunt memoratum, et forte tunc rex ipsorum longius inde aberat, et principes ac populi multitudo congregari non poterant. Tantum supradictus Herigarius praefectus hujus loci, cum eis qui ibi manebant negotiatoribus et populis, praesens aderat. In magna ergo angustia positi, ad civitatem quae juxta erat, confugerunt; coeperunt quoque diis suis, imo daemonibus, vota et sacrificia promittere et offerre, quo eorum auxilio in tali servarentur periculo. Sed quia civitas ipsa non multum firma erat, et ipsi ad resistendum pauci; miserunt ad eos legatos, dexteram et foedus postulantes. Quibus rex praefatus mandavit, ut pro redemptione ipsius vici centum libras argenti persolverent, sicque pacem haberent. Quod illi, ut petebat, statim miserunt, et a rege jamdicto susceptum est.

29. Herigarius auctor est ut Bircenses Christum invocent.

And at once he called his servants and ordered them to carry him to his church; and there, placed before all who stood by, he poured out suppliant prayers to the Lord, saying: "My Lord Jesus Christ, that these wretched men may know that you alone are God and there is no other besides you, grant to me your servant in this hour the former health of my body, so that your enemies, seeing your mighty works, may be confounded in their errors and turned to the knowledge of your name. Do, I pray, what I ask, for the sake of your holy name, which is blessed for ever; let there be no confusion, Lord, for those who trust in you." After these words, healed by divine grace, he was at once restored to perfect health, and, walking out of the church by himself, he gave thanks to God for his recovery, and, growing strong in the faith of Christ, he confounded the unbelievers more and more.

28. King Anund attacks the people of Birka with the Danes.

About the same time it happened that a king of the Swedes named Anund, driven from his kingdom, was living in exile among the Danes. Wishing to regain the borders of what had once been his kingdom, he began to seek help from them, promising that if they followed him they could win many gifts. For he held out to them the town called Birka, because there were many rich merchants there, and abundance of every good thing, and much treasure of money. To that town he promised to lead them, where, without loss to their army, they would gain great advantage for their needs. Delighted with the promised rewards and greedy to acquire treasure, they filled twenty-one ships with men ready for battle to help him, and sent them with him. He himself had eleven ships of his own. Setting out, then, from the Danes, they came unexpectedly to that town; and it happened that their king was then far away, and the chief men and the mass of the people could not be gathered. Only Herigar, the prefect of the place, was present, with the merchants and people who lived there. Placed in great straits, they fled to the stronghold that was nearby; and they began to promise and offer vows and sacrifices to their gods, or rather to demons, that by their help they might be saved in such peril. But because the stronghold was not very strong and they were few to resist, they sent envoys to them asking for a pledge of peace and a treaty. The king sent them word that they should pay a hundred pounds of silver for the ransom of the town, and so they would have peace. They sent it at once, as he asked, and it was received by the king.

29. Herigar persuades the people of Birka to call upon Christ.

Porro Dani graviter hujusmodi conventionem ferentes, quia non sicuti disposuerant actum fuisset, coeperunt velle super eos subito irruere, et locum ipsum funditus depraedari atque incendere, dicentes unum quemlibet negotiatorem plus ibi habere, quam sibi oblatum fuisset; et nullo modo se tantam calumniam sufferre posse. Cum haec ergo inter se agerent, et ad diripiendam urbem, in quam confugerant, se praepararent, hoc quoque illis innotuit. Unde rursus pariter congregati, cum nullo modo vires haberent resistendi, nullaque eis spes esset refugii, ad vota et sacrificia majora diis suis offerenda se invicem cohortabantur. Contra quos iratus fidelis Domini Herigarius: Maledicta sint, inquit, a Deo nostro vota et sacrificia vestra cum idolis vestris. Quandiu vultis daemonibus servire, et vos ipsos ad perniciem vestri votis inanibus in paupertate redigere? Ecce multa obtulistis, et ampliora vovistis, insuper et centum libras argenti dedistis, quid profuit vobis? Ecce omnia quae habetis, veniunt diripere, uxores vestras et filios vestros ducent captivos, civitatem et vicum igni succendent, et vos gladio peribitis. Quid ergo vobis prosunt simulacra vestra? Ad quam vocem illic omnes perterriti, et quid agerent nescii, unanimiter responderunt: Salus nostra et consilium sit in tua deliberatione, et quidquid nobis suggesseris, sine dubio faciemus. Quibus ille: Si, inquit, vota spondere vultis, vovete et reddite omnipotenti Deo qui regnat in coelis, et cui ego in conscientia pura et fide recta deservio. Ipse omnium Dominus est; in voluntate ejus omnia sunt posita, nec est qui ejus ditioni possit resistere. Si itaque ejus auxilium toto corde petieritis, omnipotentiam ipsius vobis non defuturam sentietis. Accepto igitur ab eo consilio, tunc unanimes et voluntarii exeuntes, sicut ibi consuetudinis erat, in campum, pro liberatione sibi jejunium et eleemosynas Domino Christo devoverunt.

30. Quo facto liberantur ab hostium incursu.

Interim rex praefatus cum Danis agere coepit, ut sorte perquirerent utrum voluntate deorum locus ipse ab eis devastandus esset. Multi, inquit, dii sunt ibi potentes, ibi etiam ecclesia olim constructa est, et cultura Christi a multis Christianis ibi excolitur, qui fortissimus est deorum, et potens sperantibus in se, quocunque modo vult auxiliari. Necessario ergo quaerendum est, utrum divina ad hoc voluntate incitemini. Quod illi, quia sic apud eos mori erat, nequaquam abnuere potuerunt.

But the Danes, taking such an agreement ill because things had not been done as they had planned, began to wish to fall upon them suddenly and plunder the place utterly and burn it, saying that any one merchant there had more than had been offered to them, and that they could by no means put up with such a trick. While they were discussing this among themselves and preparing to sack the stronghold in which the people had taken refuge, this too became known to the people. Gathering together again, since they had no strength at all to resist and no hope of refuge, they urged one another to offer greater vows and sacrifices to their gods. Angered at them, Herigar, the faithful man of the Lord, said: "Cursed by our God be your vows and sacrifices, together with your idols. How long will you serve demons and reduce yourselves to poverty, to your own ruin, with empty vows? See, you have offered much and vowed more, and on top of that you have given a hundred pounds of silver: what has it profited you? See, they are coming to plunder all you have; they will lead your wives and your children captive, they will set fire to the stronghold and the town, and you will perish by the sword. What, then, do your idols profit you?" At these words all who were there were terrified and, not knowing what to do, answered with one voice: "Let our safety and our counsel rest on your judgement; whatever you advise us, we will do without hesitation." He said to them: "If you wish to make vows, vow and pay them to almighty God, who reigns in heaven, and whom I serve with a pure conscience and right faith. He is the Lord of all; all things are placed in his will, and there is none who can resist his rule. If, then, you seek his help with your whole heart, you will find that his almighty power will not fail you." Taking his advice, then, they went out with one accord and of their own free will into the field, as was the custom there, and vowed to the Lord Christ a fast and almsgiving for their deliverance.

30. When this is done they are delivered from the enemy's attack.

Meanwhile the king began to urge the Danes to inquire by lot whether it was the will of the gods that the place should be laid waste by them. "There are many powerful gods there," he said; "a church too was once built there, and the worship of Christ is practised there by many Christians; and he is the strongest of the gods, and able to help those who hope in him in whatever way he wills. We must therefore of necessity inquire whether you are moved to this by the will of the gods." This they could by no means refuse, since such was their custom.

Quaesitum est igitur sortibus, et inventum quod cum sua hoc prosperitate nequaquam perficere possent, neque locum ipsum eorum depraedationi a Deo concessum. Iterum quaesitum est, in quam partem ituri essent, ubi sibi pecuniam acquirerent, ne vana spe frustrati ad sua vacui remearent. Cecidit sors, quod ad urbem quamdam longius inde positam in finibus Sclavorum ire deberent. Hoc ergo Dani divinitus sibi imperatum credentes, a loco memorato recesserunt; ad urbem ipsam directo itinere properarunt, irruentes super quietos et secure habitantes, improvise illam urbem armis ceperunt, et captis in ea spoliis ac thesauris multis, ad sua reversi sunt. Rex vero ille, qui ad eos praedandos venerat, pace cum eis foederata, argentum quod ab eis acceperat, reddidit, et apud eos aliquandiu resedit, volens genti suae reconciliari. Sicque Domini gratia, propter fidem servi sui Herigarii, populum illius loci ab hostium incursu liberans bonis suis restituit.

31. Herigarius incolas hortatur ut Christo credant; dein pie moritur.

Quo facto ipse in conventu publico eamdem rem proposuit, et ut quis Deus esset, intentius providerent monuit, dicens: Heu miseri, vel jam nunc intelligite, quod vanum sit a daemonibus auxilium petere, qui non possunt in tribulationibus subvenire! Suscipite fidem Domini mei Jesu Christi, quem probastis verum Deum esse, qui vobis nullum habentibus refugium suae miserationis tribuit auxilium. Nolite ultra culturam superstitiosam quaerere, et inani sacrificio idola vobis placare. Verum Deum, qui omnium quae in coelis et in terris sunt, dominatur, colite, et ipsi vos subjicite; ipsius omnipotentiam adorate. Denique post haec, tanto alacrior quanto frequentibus Domini beneficiis in fide robustior factus, publice ubicunque aderat, partim exsultando, virtutem Domini et fidei gratiam cunctis nuntiabat. Sicque bonum certamen usque ad finem suae perduxit vitae: consummatoque boni operis cursu, languore ingravescente, astante jam dicto Ardgario sacerdote divinae commendatus clementiae, communione sacra percepta, feliciter in Christo obiit: de cujus fidei constantia multa adhuc dici poterant; sed quia brevitati studuimus, haec dicta sufficiant.

32. Frideburgis in fide constans, vinum in viaticum reservari curat.

The question was put to the lots, then, and it was found that they could by no means accomplish this with good fortune, and that the place had not been granted by God to be plundered by them. Again the question was put as to which direction they should go to win money for themselves, so as not to return home empty, cheated of a vain hope. The lot fell that they should go to a certain city lying far from there, in the lands of the Slavs. Believing, then, that this had been commanded them by the gods, the Danes withdrew from that place and hastened to that city by a direct course; falling upon its people, who were living in quiet and security, they took the city by arms without warning, and having seized much spoil and treasure in it, they returned home. And the king who had come to plunder them made a treaty of peace with them, returned the silver he had received from them, and stayed among them for some time, wishing to be reconciled with his people. And so the grace of the Lord, for the faith of his servant Herigar, delivered the people of that place from the enemy's attack and restored them to their goods.

31. Herigar urges the inhabitants to believe in Christ; then he dies devoutly.

When this had happened, he set the matter before a public assembly and urged them to consider more attentively who was God, saying: "Alas, wretched men, understand now at least how vain it is to seek help from demons, who cannot come to your aid in tribulation! Receive the faith of my Lord Jesus Christ, whom you have proved to be the true God, who granted you the help of his mercy when you had no refuge. Seek no longer superstitious worship, nor appease idols with empty sacrifice. Worship the true God, who rules over all things in heaven and on earth, and submit yourselves to him; adore his almighty power." After this, the more eager as he was made the stronger in faith by the Lord's frequent benefits, he proclaimed to all publicly, wherever he was, partly with exultation, the power of the Lord and the grace of the faith. And so he carried on the good fight to the end of his life; and when the course of good works was finished, as his sickness grew worse, with the priest Ardgar standing by, he was commended to the divine clemency, received holy communion and died happily in Christ. Much more could still be said of the constancy of his faith, but because we have aimed at brevity, let what has been said suffice.

32. Frideburg, constant in the faith, has wine kept for her viaticum.

Illis quoque temporibus apud eos matrona quaedam fuit valde religiosa, quam nulla unquam improborum perversitas a fidei suae rectitudine pervertere potuit. Cui frequenter in quacunque necessitate positae, ut more eorum idolis sacrificaret, suggestum est; sed illa immobilis fidei suae munia non reliquit, vanum esse dicens, a simulacris mutis et surdis auxilium quaerere, et abominabile sibi videri, ut his quibus in baptismo renuntiaverat, denuo intenderet; et sponsionem quam Christo promiserat, falleret. Si enim, inquit, malum est hominibus mentiri, quanto magis Deo? et si bonum est inter homines fidem constare, quanto magis qui fidem Domini accipit nullatenus debet ab ea immutari? Dominus, inquit, meus Jesus Christus omnipotens est. Ipse mihi, si in ejus fide perseveravero, et sanitatem, et omnia quibus indiguero, praestare poterit. Praedicta religiosa femina, Frideburg nomine, in bonitate vitae et fidei constantia laudabilis, dies vitae suae usque ad tempus produxit senectutis. Cum jam appropinquaret dies mortis suae, et post discessum domini Simonis nullus tunc ibi adesset sacerdos; ipsa amore sacrificii, quod audierat viaticum esse Christianorum, de vino aliquantulum in quodam fecit reservari vasculo, et filiae suae in fide commendans, ut si quando ei ultimum tempus instaret, de ipso vino, quia sacrificium non habebat, ei in os distillaretur: ut vel sic Domini gratiae exitum suum commendaret. Illud itaque vinum tribus fere annis apud eam conservatum est; sicque contigit illuc praedictum adventasse sacerdotem Ardgarium. Quo ibi posito, ipsa, quandiu vires habuit, religionis suae devotionem exercuit, missarum solemnia et salutaria monita sedulo ab eo exquirens. Verum inter haec, languore se praeoccupante, coepit infirmari: sollicita de obitu suo memoratum ad se accersiri fecit presbyterum, et accepto de ejus manu viatico optato, feliciter migravit ad Dominum.

33. Res suas pauperibus distribui jubet. Filia ejus id exsequente pecunia non decrescit.

Ipsa vero eleemosynis intenta semper, quia in saeculi rebus dives erat, filiae suae praedictae Cathlae nomine injunxerat, ut post suum ex hac luce discessum, cuncta quae illius erant, in pauperes dispensaret. Et quia hic pauperes minus inveniuntur: Post obitum, inquit, meum, cum tibi primum opportunitas evenerit, venditis omnibus, quae hic dispensata non fuerint, sume tecum argentum, et vade Dorstadum; ibi sunt ecclesiae plurimae et sacerdotes ac clerici, ibi indigentium multitudo. Illo adveniens, quaere qui te doceant fideles quomodo ea dispenses, et pro animae meae remedio omnia distribue.

In those times also there was among them a very devout matron, whom no perversity of the wicked could ever turn from the uprightness of her faith. Often, whenever she was in any need, it was suggested to her that she should sacrifice to the idols after their custom; but she, immovable, did not abandon the duties of her faith, saying that it was vain to seek help from dumb and deaf images, and that it seemed to her abominable to turn again to those things which she had renounced in baptism and to break the pledge she had made to Christ. "For if it is evil," she said, "to lie to men, how much more to God? And if it is good to keep faith among men, how much more ought one who receives the faith of the Lord never to be turned from it? My Lord Jesus Christ," she said, "is almighty. If I persevere in his faith, he will be able to grant me both health and all that I may need." This devout woman, named Frideburg, praiseworthy in goodness of life and constancy of faith, prolonged the days of her life into old age. When the day of her death was already drawing near, and since the departure of Dom Simon there was then no priest there, out of love for the sacrifice, which she had heard was the viaticum of Christians, she had a little wine kept in a small vessel, and charged her daughter, on her faith, that when her last hour was at hand she should let some drops of that wine fall into her mouth, since she did not have the sacrifice, so that even in this way she might commend her passing to the grace of the Lord. That wine was kept by her for almost three years; and so it happened that the priest Ardgar came there. While he was there, she practised the devotion of her religion as long as she had strength, earnestly seeking from him the solemnities of Mass and salutary counsel. But meanwhile, overtaken by sickness, she began to grow weak; anxious about her death, she had the priest summoned to her, and, receiving from his hand the viaticum she had longed for, she passed happily to the Lord.

33. She orders her goods to be distributed to the poor. As her daughter carries it out, the money does not diminish.

She, always intent on almsgiving, since she was rich in the goods of this world, had charged her daughter, named Catla, to distribute to the poor, after her departure from this light, all that was hers. "And because the poor are few here," she said, "after my death, as soon as the opportunity comes to you, sell everything that has not been distributed here, take the silver with you and go to Dorestad; there are many churches there, and priests and clerics, and a multitude of the needy. When you arrive there, look for faithful people to teach you how to distribute it, and give it all away for the good of my soul."

Post excessum itaque matris, filia quae mater jusserat, strenue adimplevit: arreptoque itinere perveniens ad Dorstadum, religiosas exquisivit ibi feminas, quae cum ea loca sancta circuirent, et quid cuique dispensare deberet, eam instruerent. Cum quadam die dispensandi causa loca sancta circuirent, et medietas jam distributa esset, dixit sociis suis: Nunc lassae sumus, melius est ut aliquid de vino ematur, ut refocillemur, et sic demum coepta peragamus. Datis igitur ad hoc quatuor denariis, et viribus resumptis, quod coepere peregerunt; quibus completis, ipsa ad hospitium suum rediens, saccum, in quo argentum fuerat, in quodam loco vacuum posuit: sed largiente superno munere denuo ipsum locum adiens, sicut ante fuerat, plenum invenit: quae tanto obstupefacto miraculo, ascitis ad se feminis quae secum prius ierant, quod sibi contigerat ostendit, coram quibus quid inibi esset computans, tantum invenit quantum illo adduxit, exceptis quatuor denariis. Consilio itaque ab eis accepto, ivit ad sacerdotes qui ibi probabiliores videbantur, et ipsum miraculum eis innotuit. Qui gratiam Dei pro tanta ejus bonitate laudantes, quod ejus labori ac boni intentioni Dominus ea retribuerit, intimabant. Quia cum, inquiunt, matri tuae obediens fuisti, et fidem tuam circa eam illibatam servasti, et eleemosynas illius strenue implesti, Dominus omnium bonorum retributor pro necessitatis tuae subsidio ista tibi contulit, ipse est omnibus sufficiens, nullius indiget: ipse omnia quae pro ejus distributa fuerint nomine, in coelesti regno recompensabit. Quod ita esse ne aliquo modo dubitares, et ne te census dati distributio poeniteret, hoc te Deus miraculo certificare dignatus est. Hoc jam signo, quod mater tua cum Domino salva sit, firmiter crede: hoc miraculo admonita, tu quoque pro Christo tua dare ne timueris.

34. Ardgarius e Suecia redit in solitudinem.

Igitur post excessum praedicti viri Herigarii jam memoratus sacerdos Dei Ardgarius, amore solitariae quam antea duxerat vitae ab illis partibus egressus, locum suum repetiit; sicque denuo Christiani inibi positi sacerdotali sunt praesentia destituti. Quare manifesto patuit indicio, quod ad corroborandum fidem praefati viri Herigarii, necnon supradictae matronae, pariterque ut exitum eorum divinae commendaret clementiae, et quod fideliter desideraverant, mysterium videlicet sacrae communionis, pro ultimo viatico perciperent, jam dictus anachoreta Ardgarius ad illas partes destinatus fuerit.

After her mother's death, then, the daughter diligently carried out what her mother had commanded; she set out on the journey and, arriving at Dorestad, sought out devout women there to go round the holy places with her and instruct her what she should give to each. One day, when they were going round the holy places to distribute alms and half had already been given away, she said to her companions: "Now we are tired; it is better that some wine be bought to refresh us, and then we shall finish what we have begun." So four pence were given for this, and, their strength restored, they finished what they had begun. When this was done, she returned to her lodging and put the bag in which the silver had been, now empty, in a certain place; but by the gift of heaven, going to that place again, she found it full as it had been before. Astonished at so great a miracle, she called to her the women who had gone with her before and showed them what had happened to her; and counting in their presence what was in it, she found as much as she had brought there, except for the four pence. Taking their advice, then, she went to the priests who seemed most worthy of trust there and made the miracle known to them. They, praising the grace of God for such great goodness, told her that the Lord had rewarded her labour and good intention with this. "Because," they said, "you have been obedient to your mother, kept your faith towards her unbroken and diligently carried out her almsgiving, the Lord, who rewards all good deeds, has bestowed this on you to help in your need; he is sufficient for all and needs nothing; he will repay in the heavenly kingdom all that is distributed in his name. So that you should in no way doubt that this is so, and that you should not regret the distribution of the wealth you gave, God has deigned to assure you by this miracle. By this sign believe firmly that your mother is safe with the Lord; and, admonished by this miracle, do not you either be afraid to give what is yours for Christ."

34. Ardgar returns from Sweden to his solitude.

After the death of Herigar, then, the priest of God Ardgar, out of love for the solitary life he had led before, left those parts and returned to his own place; and so the Christians living there were once more deprived of the presence of a priest. From this it was made plain by clear evidence that the hermit Ardgar had been sent to those parts to strengthen the faith of Herigar and of the matron spoken of above, and likewise to commend their passing to the divine clemency, and that they might receive what they had faithfully longed for, namely the mystery of holy communion, as their last viaticum.

35. Ludovico Pio mortuo Anscharius rebus necessariis destituitur. Deseritur a sociis.

Verum inter haec superius comprehensa, contigit bonae memoriae Ludovicum serenissimum imperatorem divino ordinante judicio vita praesenti decessisse. Post cujus obitum cum de regni divisione magna fieret perturbatio, pastoris quoque nostri aliquando labefactari coepit legatio. Nam cum cella supradicta Turbolt in partem cessisset venerandi regis Caroli, ipse eam a servitio quod pater suus disposuerat, amovit; et vobis bene cognito dedit Reginario. Pro qua re cum a fratribus suis gloriosissimis regibus, et a multis quoque aliis saepius fuisset admonitus, et ipse eorum petitioni nullatenus assentiret, jam dictus Pater noster tunc coepit atteri necessitatibus et indigentiis. Unde contigit, ut et fratres vestri qui tunc cum eo hic aderant, ad vestram societatem redierint; et multi quoque alii causa paupertatis eum dereliquerint. Ipse tantum cum paucis qui cum eo substiterant, prout poterat, se agebat; et licet in paupertate degens, injunctum sibi officium nequaquam deserere voluit.

36. Ludovico Germaniae rege agente accipit Bremensem episcopatum, probante concilio.

Dominus quoque humilitatem ejus et patientiae fortitudinem conspiciens, quia cor regis in manu Domini est, clementissimi Domini et senioris nostri Ludovici regis, qui post patrem suum hujus regni gubernacula suscepit, ad hoc animum incitavit, ut quaerere inciperet, unde ei solatium subsistendi facere posset, quo legationis suae mandatum perficere posset. Et quia in hac provincia cellam nullam huic legationi habebat congruam, erat autem ibi juxta episcopatus Bremensis Ecclesiae tunc desolatus pastore, illum ei dare disposuit. Unde publico conventu episcoporum caeterorumque fidelium suorum tractare cum eis coepit, utrum hoc ei facere canonica auctoritate liceret. Domnus enim et pastor noster hoc sibi periculosum esse aliquo modo formidans, et ne a quibuslibet naevo cupiditatis reprehenderetur, caute providens, non facile huic dispositioni assentiebat. Jubente itaque rege haec eadem res in concilio episcoporum ventilata est. Qui multis praecedentibus exemplis probaverunt bene posse fieri, ut quia dioecesis illa, ad quam ipse ordinatus fuerat, admodum parva erat (nam nonnisi quatuor baptismales habebat ecclesias), et haec ipsa multoties jam barbarorum incursibus devastata, ista ei causa solatii adjungeretur.

35. After the death of Louis the Pious, Anskar is left without the necessities of life. He is deserted by his companions.

Now, during the events related above, it happened that the most serene Emperor Louis of good memory departed this present life by the ordering of divine judgement. After his death, when there was great disturbance over the division of the kingdom, the mission of our shepherd too began for a time to totter. For when the cell of Torhout had fallen to the share of the venerable King Charles, he removed it from the service his father had appointed, and gave it to Reginar, well known to you. And although he was often admonished about this by his most glorious brothers the kings, and by many others too, and would by no means consent to their request, our Father then began to be worn down by want and need. Hence it came about that your brethren who were then here with him returned to your community, and many others too left him because of poverty. He alone, with the few who had stayed with him, managed as best he could; and though living in poverty, he would by no means abandon the office laid upon him.

36. Through the efforts of Louis, king of Germany, he receives the bishopric of Bremen, with the approval of a council.

And the Lord, seeing his humility and the strength of his patience, since the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord (Prov 21:1), stirred the mind of our most gracious lord and sovereign, King Louis, who took up the government of this kingdom after his father, to begin to seek how he might provide him with means of support, so that he could carry out the charge of his mission. And because he had in this province no cell suitable for this mission, and there was nearby the bishopric of the Church of Bremen, then bereft of its shepherd, he resolved to give it to him. He therefore began to discuss with them, in a public assembly of the bishops and his other faithful men, whether he might lawfully do this by canonical authority. For our lord and shepherd, fearing that this might in some way be dangerous for him, and taking care that he should not be blamed by anyone for the stain of covetousness, did not readily consent to this arrangement. At the king's command, then, this same matter was debated in a council of bishops. They showed by many earlier precedents that it could well be done: that, since the diocese to which he had been ordained was very small (for it had only four baptismal churches), and had already been laid waste many times by the raids of the barbarians, this see should be joined to it for his support.

37. Ferdensi episcopo reddita parte dioecesis, ipse Hammaburgensem retinet sedem.

Verum ne in aliquo scrupulum Ferdensis pateretur episcopus, quod etiam partem de suo episcopatu ultra Albiam sumptam ipse cum Bremensi tota simul parochia retineret, statuerunt ut, sicut tempore domini Ludovici primo fuerant, episcopatus ipse et Bremensis et Ferdensis restituerentur, et ipse teneret Bremensem, ex qua major pars dioecesis suae sumpta erat, quae etiam tunc erat praesentia pastoris desolata. Quo decreto ita ab episcopis constituto, ipse jubente rege, Bremensem suscepit dioecesim gubernandam. Porro partem parochiae, quae ultra Albiam ad se pertinere debebat, Waldgarius recepit tunc Ferdensis episcopus. Quod cum ita aliquandiu esset, iterum diligentius ipsa re in alio concilio episcoporum ventilata, visum est eis non bonum esse ut sedes, ad quam ille ordinatus fuerat, ab alio episcopo teneretur (nam Hammaburg tunc in partem cesserat Waldgarii); potestatem quidem regis esse dicentes, ut dioecesim parvam et admodum captivatam augeret, locum tamen ad episcopalem dignitatem auctoritate apostolica firmatum, nullatenus immutandum. Unanimo ergo consensu, cum voluntate regis praedicti piissimi Ludovici, episcopi ibi constituti censuerunt, ut sedem ad quam consecratus fuerat, Pater noster Anscharius reciperet; et si quid ultra Albiam ex Ferdensi ipse retineret dioecesi, ex Bremensis Ecclesiae parochia illius sedis restitueret episcopo. Quod ita et regio jussu, et synodali episcoporum decreto, ipsius quoque Waldgarii memorati Ferdensis episcopi voluntate et assensu perfectum est.

38. Eam unionem primo improbat Coloniensis antistes.

Porro cum haec agerentur, Colonia civitas, ad quam Bremensis parochia suffraganea erat, eo tempore absque benedictione episcopali degebat, quod quia diuturnum exstitit, illud etiam sine illius loci pontificis praesentia necessario decernendum fuit. Postea tamen consecrato ad eum locum venerabili praesule Gunthario, hoc ipsum domnus et Pater noster ei suggerere studuit, ut sua quoque auctoritate firmaretur, cui tamen rei ipse admodum contrarius exstitit.

37. Part of the diocese is restored to the bishop of Verden; he himself keeps the see of Hamburg.

But so that the bishop of Verden should not be troubled by any scruple, in that Anskar would be keeping, together with the whole diocese of Bremen, the part taken from his own bishopric beyond the Elbe, they decreed that the bishoprics both of Bremen and of Verden should be restored as they had been at first in the time of the lord Louis, and that he should hold Bremen, from which the greater part of his diocese had been taken, and which was also at that time bereft of the presence of a shepherd. When this decree had been so established by the bishops, he, at the king's command, took up the government of the diocese of Bremen. And the part of the diocese beyond the Elbe which ought to have belonged to him was taken back by Waldgar, then bishop of Verden. When this had been so for some time, the matter was debated again more carefully in another council of bishops, and it seemed to them not good that the see to which he had been ordained should be held by another bishop (for Hamburg had then fallen to Waldgar's share); they said that it was indeed in the king's power to enlarge a small and much ravaged diocese, but that a place confirmed in episcopal dignity by apostolic authority should by no means be changed. With one accord, therefore, and with the will of the most pious King Louis, the bishops assembled there decided that our Father Anskar should receive the see to which he had been consecrated; and that if he kept anything of the diocese of Verden beyond the Elbe, he should make it good to the bishop of that see from the territory of the Church of Bremen. This was carried out by royal command and by synodal decree of the bishops, and with the will and assent of Waldgar himself, the bishop of Verden.

38. The bishop of Cologne at first disapproves of this union.

Now while these things were being done, the city of Cologne, to which the diocese of Bremen was suffragan, was at that time without episcopal blessing; and because this lasted a long time, the matter had of necessity to be decided without the presence of the bishop of that place. Afterwards, however, when the venerable bishop Gunthar had been consecrated to that see, our lord and Father took care to propose this same matter to him, so that it might be confirmed by his authority too; but he was strongly opposed to it.

Qua de causa postmodum in Wormatia civitate positis duobus regibus, Ludovico scilicet et Lothario, coram multa episcoporum utriusque regni frequentia, praesente venerabili Patre nostro, haec eadem res exposita est. Quod cum ab omnibus bene ita ordinatum probaretur, ut praedictus quoque pontifex Guntharius hoc ipsum sua auctoritate firmaret, cuncti rogaverunt. Qui primo quidem fortiter his reniti coepit, justum non esse multipliciter ostendens ut sedes suffraganea in archiepiscopalem sedem verteretur; nec se debere honorem sedis suae in aliquo minuere: postremo tamen et ipsis regibus, et cunctis simul episcopis ibi aggregatis, pro hoc ipso eum rogantibus, et omnino causa necessitatis id licitum fore dicentibus, respondit, si apostolica auctoritate firmaretur, ex se quoque ratum esse.

39. Missis Romam legatis, Nicolaus I ratam habet hanc unionem. Legatio septentrionalium regionum Anschario conceditur.

Quo responso accepto, cum etiam omnes suffraganei ejus haec eadem consensissent, piissimus rex jam dictus Ludovicus cupiens et patris sui eleemosynam in omnibus augmentare, et quod ipse disposuerat, per omnia ratum fieri; reverendissimum Salomonem Constantiae civitatis episcopum pro hoc ipso ad sedem direxit apostolicam, cum quo etiam domnus et Pater noster Anscharius, quia ipse per se non poterat, filium suum fratrem nostrum Nordfridum misit presbyterum, qui officiosissime a sancto suscepti papa Nicolao, legationis suae mandatum ei plane et dilucide retulerunt. Qui prudenter et sollicite ea quae ab ipsis dicebantur, mente pertractans, et Deo inspirante pro lucrandis animabus gentilium hanc constitutionem justam esse decernens, voluntatem regis nostri sua auctoritate firmavit. Denique ut ipsam rem diligentius ab eo elucubratam manifestius aperire possimus, verba ipsius interponere decrevimus. Cum enim causam legationis ejus et caetera superius comprehensa plene et breviter recapitulasset, denique subjunxit: « Cujus delegationis et auctoritatis et pallii acceptionis pagina nobis est a Ludovico filio nostro per Salomonem sanctissimum episcopum destinata, juxta morem sanctae Ecclesiae Romanae bullata. Per cujus tenorem paginae haec ita fuisse comperimus, sicut pietas nobis jam fati regis per fidelem virum, Salomonem scilicet episcopum, intimavit.

For this reason, afterwards, when two kings, namely Louis and Lothar, were at the city of Worms, this same matter was set out before a great gathering of the bishops of both kingdoms, in the presence of our venerable Father. And since all approved that it had been well so ordered, they all asked that Bishop Gunthar too should confirm it by his authority. At first he began to resist strongly, showing in many ways that it was not just for a suffragan see to be turned into an archiepiscopal see, and that he ought not to diminish the honour of his see in any way; but at last, when the kings themselves and all the bishops gathered there together asked him for this very thing, and said that it would be entirely lawful by reason of necessity, he answered that if it were confirmed by apostolic authority, it would be valid on his side too.

39. Envoys are sent to Rome, and Nicholas I ratifies this union. The legation for the northern regions is granted to Anskar.

When this answer had been received, and all his suffragans too had consented to the same, the most pious King Louis, wishing both to increase his father's alms in every way and to have what he himself had arranged made valid in every respect, sent the most reverend Solomon, bishop of the city of Constance, to the Apostolic See for this very purpose; and with him our lord and Father Anskar, since he could not go in person, sent his son, our brother Nordfrid, a priest. They were received most graciously by the holy Pope Nicholas, and set out to him plainly and clearly the charge of their embassy. He, weighing prudently and carefully in his mind what they said, and judging by God's inspiration that this arrangement was just for the winning of the souls of the heathen, confirmed our king's will by his authority. In order, then, to show more plainly the matter as he worked it out with great care, we have decided to insert his own words. For when he had recapitulated fully and briefly the cause of Anskar's legation and the other matters related above, he went on: "The document of this delegation, of his authority and of his receiving of the pallium, sealed according to the custom of the holy Roman Church, has been sent to us by our son Louis through the most holy bishop Solomon. From the tenor of that document we have found that these things were just as the piety of the said king made known to us through a faithful man, namely Bishop Solomon.

Unde nos vestigia tanti pontificis et praedecessoris nostri sequentes Gregorii, omnemque ibi Deo dignam statutam providentiam agnoscentes, magnorum principum votum, Ludovici videlicet divae recordationis Augusti, et aequivoci ejus filii excellentissimi regis, tam hujus apostolicae auctoritatis praecepto, quam etiam pallii datione, more praedecessorum nostrorum, roborare decrevimus: quatenus tanta fundatus auctoritate praenominatus Anscharius, primus Nordalbingorum archiepiscopus, et per ipsum successores ejus lucrandis plebibus insistentes, adversus tentamenta diaboli validiores existant. Ipsum quoque filium nostrum jam dictum Anscharium legatum in omnibus circumquaque gentibus Sueonum, sive Danorum, necnon etiam Sclavorum, vel in caeteris ubicunque illis in partibus constitutis divina pietas ostium aperuerit, publicam evangelizandi tribuimus auctoritatem, ipsamque sedem Nordalbingorum, Hammaburg dictam, in honore sancti Salvatoris sanctaeque ejus intemeratae genitricis Mariae consecratam, archiepiscopalem deinceps esse decernimus. Atque ut strenui praedicatoris episcopi post decessum crebro dicti Anscharii archiepiscopi persona tanto officio apta eligatur semper successura, sub divini judicii obtestatione statuimus. Verum quia Carolus rex, frater saepe dicti regis Ludovici, post decessum imperatoris patris sui piae memoriae Ludovici, abstulit a praenominato loco, qui dicitur Hammaburg, monasterium quod appellatur Turholt, utpote quod post partitionem inter fratres suos in regno suo conjacere videbatur, situm in occidentali Francia, quod ille genitor suus ad supplementum et victum episcopo et clericis ejus dederat; coepere, sicut fertur, omnes ministri altaris recedere: deficientibus quippe necessariis sumptibus, ab ipsis recesserunt gentibus, et eadem ad gentes legatio per hujusmodi factum defecit: ipsa quoque metropolis Hammaburg pene deserta facta est. Igitur dum haec agerentur, mortuus est dioeceseos Bremensis episcopus, quae huic contigua esse dicitur. Cumque saepe dictus rex et hanc dioecesim vacantem, et illam novellam institutionem cerneret deficientem, insuper et utramque hanc Ecclesiam Dei permittente occulto judicio, per barbarorum saevitiam admodum attenuatam; quaerere coepit, qualiter praedicta Bremensis Ecclesia praedictae novellae archiepiscopali uniretur ac subderetur sedi, nostro hoc votum roborante decreto. Unde per saepe nominatum venerabilem missum, Salomonem videlicet Constantiae civitatis episcopum, nobis hoc relatum est confirmandum, ac postulatum est nostra auctoritate roborandum. Nos igitur id subtili perpendentes examine, animadvertimus propter instantem necessitatem, et animarum lucra in gentibus demonstrata, utile fore. Omnia enim quae proficua Ecclesiae probantur existere, et divinis non resultant praeceptionibus, licita et facienda esse non dubitamus: maxime in tam novellae Christianitatis plantatione, in qua varii solent eventus contingere.

Therefore, following in the footsteps of so great a pontiff, our predecessor Gregory, and recognising all the provision there laid down as worthy of God, we have decided to confirm the wish of great princes, namely of the Emperor Louis of blessed memory and of his son of the same name, the most excellent king, both by the precept of this apostolic authority and by the gift of the pallium, after the manner of our predecessors: so that, founded upon so great an authority, the aforesaid Anskar, first archbishop of the Nordalbingians, and after him his successors, devoting themselves to winning the peoples, may stand the stronger against the temptations of the devil. To our son Anskar himself, as legate among all the surrounding peoples of the Swedes and Danes, and also of the Slavs, and among the others settled in those parts wherever the divine goodness shall open a door, we grant public authority to preach the Gospel; and we decree that the see of the Nordalbingians itself, called Hamburg, consecrated in honour of the Holy Saviour and of his holy and spotless Mother Mary, shall henceforth be archiepiscopal. And we ordain, under the solemn warning of the divine judgement, that after the death of the oft-named Archbishop Anskar a person always fit for so great an office, a bishop and an energetic preacher, be chosen to succeed him. But because King Charles, brother of the oft-named King Louis, after the death of his father, the Emperor Louis of pious memory, took away from the aforesaid place called Hamburg the monastery called Torhout, situated in western Francia, on the ground that after the division among the brothers it seemed to lie within his kingdom (the monastery which his father had given to the bishop and his clergy for their support and sustenance), all the ministers of the altar, so it is said, began to withdraw: for, as the necessary means failed, they withdrew from those peoples, and through this deed the legation to the nations came to a halt; and the metropolis of Hamburg itself was left almost deserted. While these things were happening, the bishop of the diocese of Bremen, which is said to adjoin this one, died. And when the oft-named king saw that this diocese was vacant and that the new foundation was failing, and moreover that both these Churches, by God's hidden judgement, had been greatly weakened by the savagery of the barbarians, he began to seek how the Church of Bremen might be united to and placed under the new archiepiscopal see, with our decree confirming this wish. For this reason it has been referred to us for confirmation through the oft-named venerable envoy, Solomon, bishop of the city of Constance, and we have been asked to strengthen it by our authority. We, then, weighing it with careful examination, judge that it will be useful, because of the pressing need and the gain of souls shown among the nations. For we do not doubt that all things which are shown to be profitable to the Church and do not conflict with divine precepts are lawful and ought to be done, above all in the planting of so new a Christianity, in which various chances are wont to occur.

Quamobrem auctoritate omnipotentis Dei, et beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et hoc nostro decreto decernimus, secundum reverendissimi regis Ludovici votum, ipsas praedictas dioeceses, Hammaburgensem videlicet et Bremensem, non deinceps duas, sed unam esse et vocari, subdique sedi quae praedecessoris nostri decreto archiepiscopali est munere sublimata; restituta duntaxat de Bremensis Ecclesiae rebus episcopatui Ferdensi parte inde ablata. Nullus vero archiepiscopus Coloniensis ullam sibi deinceps in eadem dioecesi vindicet potestatem. Quin imo et ipsi et omnibus omnino suademus verae religionis cultoribus, ut sacra hac legatione fungentibus adjutorio et solatio sint, quatenus gratia hujus beneficii plenam mercedem recipere mereantur ab eo qui dixit: Ite, docete omnes gentes, etc.; Quicunque receperit vos, me recipit. Itaque omnia a dilecto filio nostro rege Ludovico ad hoc Deo dignum officium deputata, nostra etiam pia ejus vota auctoritate firmamus. Et quia casus praeteritorum nos cautos faciunt in futurum, omnem quoque adversantem, vel contradicentem, atque piis nostris his studiis quolibet modo insidiantem, anathematis mucrone percutimus, atque perpetuae ultionis reum diabolica sorte damnamus: ut culmen apostolicum, more praedecessorum nostrorum, causamque Dei pro affectu zelantes, ab adversis hinc inde partibus tutius muniamur. »

40

His itaque decretis atque institutionibus papae sanctissimi Nicolai, Bremensis Ecclesia adjuncta et unita sedi Hammaburgensi, quae prius metropolis constituta fuerat, facta est archiepiscopalis.

41. Anscharius Horico Danorum regi familiaris, cum ejus consensu ecclesiam construit, Christianae religionis concessa libertate.

Verum quia de dioeceseos illius ratione ita firnata haec praeoccupando diximus (multum enim temporis fuit ex quo sedem illam gubernandam suscepit, priusquam auctoritate apostolica firmaretur) ad ea quae prius gesta sunt redeamus. Namque suscepta Bremensi parochia, iterum spiritu coepit fervere intimo, quia jam tunc quid daret, habebat, si quid posset in partibus Danorum pro Christi elaborare nomine.

Wherefore, by the authority of almighty God and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by this our decree, we decree, in accordance with the wish of the most reverend King Louis, that the aforesaid dioceses, namely of Hamburg and of Bremen, shall henceforth be not two but one, and be so called, and be subject to the see which by the decree of our predecessor was raised to archiepiscopal rank; provided only that the part taken from the bishopric of Verden be restored to it out of the possessions of the Church of Bremen. And let no archbishop of Cologne henceforth claim for himself any authority in that diocese. Nay rather, we urge him and all worshippers of the true religion without exception to be a help and comfort to those who carry out this sacred legation, so that by the grace of this kindness they may deserve to receive the full reward from him who said: Go, teach all nations (Mt 28:19), and so forth; Whoever receives you receives me (Mt 10:40). Accordingly, all that has been assigned by our beloved son King Louis to this office worthy of God, his pious wishes, we too confirm by our authority. And because the misfortunes of the past make us cautious for the future, we smite with the sword of anathema anyone who opposes or contradicts, or in any way plots against, these pious endeavours of ours, and we condemn the guilty to everlasting punishment with the devil's portion: so that, zealous as we are for the apostolic dignity, after the manner of our predecessors, and for the cause of God, we may be more safely defended against adversaries on every side."

40

By these decrees and ordinances of the most holy Pope Nicholas, then, the Church of Bremen, joined and united to the see of Hamburg, which had earlier been constituted a metropolis, became archiepiscopal.

41. Anskar, on friendly terms with Horik, king of the Danes, builds a church with his consent, and freedom is granted to the Christian religion.

But since we have spoken of these matters in anticipation, concerning the settlement of that diocese thus confirmed (for much time passed after he took up the government of that see before it was confirmed by apostolic authority), let us return to what was done earlier. For when he had taken over the diocese of Bremen, he began once more to burn inwardly in spirit, since he now had something to give, if he could accomplish anything in the regions of the Danes for the name of Christ.

Unde frequentius Horicum adire, qui tunc solus monarchiam regni tenebat Danorum, et muneribus eum, et quibuscunque poterat obsequiis, conciliare studuit: ut sua licentia, praedicationis officio in regno ejus frui valeret. Aliquoties namque regia etiam legatione ad eum mittebatur, et quae ad foedera pacis et utriusque regni utilitatem pertinebant, strenue et fideliter peragebat. Qua de re cognita fide et bonitate sancti viri, praedictus Horicus rex multo eum affectu coepit venerari, et libenter ejus consilio uti, ac familiarissimum in omnibus habere: ita ut et inter secreta sua, dum de negotiis regni cum consiliariis tractaret, ipsi liceret interesse. Ea quoque quae inter populum hujus terrae, videlicet Saxonum, ac regnum ipsius, causa foederis debebant constitui, non aliter nisi de fide illius volebat firmari: hoc sibi dicens omnino fidissimum esse, quod ille ei et laudasset et spopondisset. Hac itaque familiaritate potitus, coepit etiam illi persuadere, ut fieret Christianus. Ille quoque omnia quae ei ex divina intimabat Scriptura, benigne audiebat, et bona prorsus ac vere salutaria esse laudabat, seque his plurimum delectari, ac libenter Christi velle gratiam promereri. Cui post talia vota Pater sanctissimus patienter suggerere coepit, ut Christo Domino concederet hanc benevolentiam, quod ei gratissimum foret, ut in regno suo ecclesiam fieri permitteret, ubi sacerdos omni tempore praesens adesset, et verbi divini semina, ac baptismi gratiam quibuscunque suscipere volentibus traderet. Quod ille benignissimo concessit affectu, et in portu regni sui ad hoc aptissimo, et huic regioni proximo; Scleaswich vocato, ubi ex omni parte conventus fiebat negotiatorum, ecclesiam illi fabricare permisit, tribuens locum in quo presbyter maneret: data pariter licentia, ut quicunque vellet in regno suo, fieret Christianus.

42. Baptismus cur a quibusdam dilatus, ab aliis receptus cum sanitate corporis.

Hac ergo domnus episcopus noster accepta licentia, statim quod diu desideraverat perfecit: et constituto ibi presbytero, gratia Dei in eodem loco fructuosius crescere coepit. Multi namque ibi antea erant Christiani, qui vel in Dorstado, vel in Hammaburg baptizati fuerant: quorum quidam primores ipsius vici habebantur, et gaudebant facultatem sibi datam Christianitatem suam observandi. Quorum exemplo multi quoque alii et viri et feminae, relicta superstitiosa idolorum cultura, ad fidem Domini conversi baptizabantur.

Hence he often visited Horik, who alone then held sole rule over the kingdom of the Danes, and strove to win him over with gifts and whatever services he could, so that with his leave he might be able to exercise the office of preaching in his kingdom. Several times, too, he was sent to him on an embassy from the king, and he carried out zealously and faithfully whatever concerned treaties of peace and the advantage of both kingdoms. For this reason, having come to know the faithfulness and goodness of the holy man, King Horik began to hold him in great affection and veneration, to make glad use of his counsel and to treat him in all things as his closest friend, so that he was allowed to be present even at his secret meetings, when he discussed the affairs of the kingdom with his counsellors. And whatever had to be settled by treaty between the people of this land, that is, the Saxons, and his kingdom, he would have confirmed on no other pledge than his, saying that whatever Anskar had approved and guaranteed to him was to him the most trustworthy of all. Having gained this friendship, he began also to persuade him to become a Christian. And he listened kindly to all that Anskar made known to him from divine Scripture, and praised it as altogether good and truly salutary, and said that he took great delight in it and would gladly gain the grace of Christ. After such professions, the most holy Father began patiently to suggest to him that he should grant to Christ the Lord this favour, which would be most pleasing to him: to allow a church to be built in his kingdom, where a priest might be present at all times to impart the seeds of the divine word and the grace of baptism to all who wished to receive them. This he granted with the kindest goodwill, and in a port of his kingdom very well suited for it and nearest to this region, called Schleswig, where merchants gathered from every quarter, he allowed him to build a church, granting a place where a priest might live, and giving leave at the same time for anyone in his kingdom who wished to become a Christian.

42. Why some put off baptism, and how others received it together with bodily health.

Having obtained this leave, then, our lord bishop at once carried out what he had long desired; and when a priest had been placed there, the grace of God began to grow more fruitfully in that place. For there were many Christians there before who had been baptized either at Dorestad or at Hamburg, some of whom were reckoned among the leading men of that town, and they rejoiced that they had been given the opportunity to practise their Christianity. Following their example, many others too, both men and women, abandoned the superstitious worship of idols, were converted to the faith of the Lord and were baptized.

Factumque est gaudium magnum in ipso loco: ita ut etiam gentis hujus homines absque ullo pavore, et (quod antea non licebat) et negotiatores tam hinc, quam ex Dorstado vicum ipsum libere expeterent, et hac occasione facultas totius boni inibi exuberaret. Et cum multi inibi baptizati supervixerint, innumerabilis tamen albatorum multitudo exinde ad regna conscendit coelorum. Quia libenter quidem signaculum crucis recipiebant, ut catechumeni fierent, quo eis ecclesiam ingredi, et sacris officiis interesse liceret: baptismi tamen susceptionem differebant, hoc sibi bonum dijudicantes, ut in fine vitae suae baptizarentur; quatenus purificati lavacro salutari, puri et immaculati vitae aeternae januas absque aliqua retardatione intrarent. Multi quoque apud eos infirmitatibus detenti, cum se frustra idolis pro salute sua sacrificasse viderent, et a propinquis suis desperarentur; ad Domini misericordiam confugientes, Christianos se fieri devovebant cumque accito sacerdote baptismi gratiam percepissent, statim incolumes divina largitate fiebant, sicque crevit in eodem loco Dei miseratio, et ad fidem Domini conversa est multitudo.

43. Anscharius petita Horici licentia, recusante Gauzberto, legationem ad Suecos iterum suscipit.

Inter haec vero domnus et Pater noster Anscharius etiam pro gente Sueonum, eo quod sacerdotis praesentia tunc desolati essent, nimio condolens affectu, a praefato poscere coepit rege Horico sibi in omnibus familiarissimo, uti sui auxilio fines illius regni petere posset. Qui cum maxima bene volentia hanc quoque petitionem ejus suscipiens, ita se per omnia facturum promisit. Qua de causa domnus episcopus noster cum praefato coepit Gauzberto pontifice de hoc ipso tractare, necessarium esse dicens, ut iterum probaretur, si forte gens illa divinitus monita sacerdotes secum manere pateretur, ne fides Christi illis in partibus coepta, eorum negligentia aliquando deperiret. Praedictus vero pontifex Gauzbertus, qui et Simon, se inde expulsum, rursum locum illum repetere non ausum respondit: nec id valde proficuum fore posse, imo magis periculosum, si denuo priorum reminiscentes, aliquid perturbationis circa eum excitarent, sibi magis congruum videri, ut ille iret, qui hanc legationem primo susceperat, quique benignissime ibi habitus fuerat. Ipse vero cum eo nepotem suum mitteret, qui ibi si locus praedicandi inveniretur, remaneret, et sacerdotali apud eos officio fungeretur.

And there was great joy in that place, so that the people of this land, and merchants both from here and from Dorestad, sought out that town freely and without any fear (which had not been permitted before), and by this means there was an abundance of every good thing there. And although many who were baptized there lived on, yet a countless multitude of those clothed in white ascended from there to the kingdom of heaven. For they gladly received the sign of the cross in order to become catechumens, so that they might be allowed to enter the church and attend the sacred offices; yet they put off receiving baptism, judging it good for themselves to be baptized at the end of their lives, so that, cleansed by the saving bath, they might enter pure and spotless through the gates of eternal life without any delay. Many among them too, held fast by illness, when they saw that they had sacrificed to the idols for their health in vain, and their kinsfolk despaired of them, took refuge in the mercy of the Lord and vowed to become Christians; and when a priest had been summoned and they had received the grace of baptism, they were at once made whole by the divine bounty. And so the mercy of God grew in that place, and a multitude was converted to the faith of the Lord.

43. Anskar, having asked Horik's leave, and Gautbert declining, undertakes the mission to the Swedes once more.

Meanwhile our lord and Father Anskar, grieving with deep affection for the people of the Swedes too, because they were then bereft of the presence of a priest, began to ask King Horik, who was his closest friend in everything, that with his help he might seek out the borders of that kingdom. He received this request too with the greatest goodwill and promised to do everything accordingly. For this reason our lord bishop began to discuss this very matter with Bishop Gautbert, saying that it was necessary to try again whether that people, admonished by God, might perhaps allow priests to remain with them, lest the faith of Christ begun in those parts should someday perish through their negligence. But Bishop Gautbert, who was also called Simon, answered that, having been driven out from there, he did not dare go back to that place; nor could it be very profitable, but rather more dangerous, if, remembering what had happened before, they should stir up some disturbance against him; it seemed to him more fitting that the one should go who had first undertaken this mission and who had been treated there with the greatest kindness. He himself would send his nephew with him, to remain there if an opportunity for preaching were found, and to carry out the priestly office among them.

Hoc itaque ratum inter se decernentes, coram praesentia clementissimi regis venerunt Ludovici, causamque hujuscemodi ei retulerunt, atque ut ejus licentia ita fieri permitteretur exorabant. Qui sciscitatus utrum ipsi in hac voluntate concordes fuissent, responsum a venerabili Gauzberto pontifice tale accepit: In Dei, inquit, servitio, nos semper concordes et fuimus et sumus, et istud unanimo consensu ita fieri cupimus. Itaque serenissimus rex in Dei causa semper voluntarius, secundum quod inter eos convenerat, legationem hanc pro Christi nomine pastori nostro injunxit religiosissimo, suae quoque partis, sicuti et pater ejus fecerat, ad regem Sueonum mandata ei committens.

44. Visione coelesti animatur.

Igitur devotissimus Pater noster ad hoc iter praeparare se coepit, et ut quantocius hoc expleret, ferventiori incitabatur spiritu. Siquidem et hoc coelitus sibi injunctum credebat, visione quadam imbutus, quam antea viderat. Visum namque est ei, quod pro ipso itinere valde esset sollicitus, et quod ad quemdam deveniret locum, in quo erat structura aedificiorum magna, et mansiones diversae, ubi obvius sibi quidam factus locutus est ei, dicens: De itinere quo sollicitaris, et de his quae sunt in corde tuo, ne supra modum contristeris: quia hic est quidam propheta, qui te de his omnibus certum reddet; et ne aliqua menti tuae super hoc insideat dubitatio, dicam tibi quis sit ille propheta. Abbas quidam clarissimus Adalhardus ipse nunc est propheta a Domino ad te missus, qui tibi ea quae proventura sunt, annuntiabit. Quo ille audito exhilaratus animo, visus est illi respondisse: Domine, ubi inveniam eum? Et ille: Tu, inquit, cum labore invenies eum, nec est licitum tibi cuiquam insinuare. Tunc visum est ei, quod iret per circuitum mansionis ipsum quaerendo, et in mente sua tractaret. Si, inquit, non interrogatus a me annuntiaverit mihi quae sunt in animo meo, tunc verum illum prophetam comprobabo. Ad quamdam ergo perveniens mansionem, speciosissimam, vidit eum ibi in solio suo sedentem, et statim recognovit. Ille quoque confestim pronuntians, intentus in eum dicere quoque coepit: « Audite, insulae, et attendite, populi de longe. Dominus ab utero vocavit te, de ventre matris tuae recordatus est nominis tui, et posuit os tuum quasi gladium acutum: in umbra manus suae protexit te, et posuit te quasi sagittam electam; in pharetra sua abscondit te, et dixit tibi: Servus meus es tu, quia in te gloriabor. » Quo dicto, extento brachio manum dexteram ad eum coepit erigere. Ille autem, hoc viso, ad genua ejus accessit, sperans eum se velle benedicere.

Having settled this between them, they came into the presence of the most gracious King Louis, told him of the matter and begged that with his leave it might be allowed to be done. When he asked whether they were of one mind in this wish, he received this answer from the venerable bishop Gautbert: "In the service of God," he said, "we have always been and are of one mind, and we desire with one accord that this be done." And so the most serene king, always willing in God's cause, in accordance with what had been agreed between them, laid this mission upon our most devout shepherd for the name of Christ, entrusting him also with messages on his own behalf to the king of the Swedes, as his father too had done.

44. He is encouraged by a heavenly vision.

Our most devout Father, then, began to prepare himself for this journey, and was urged on by a more fervent spirit to accomplish it as quickly as possible. For he believed that this too had been laid upon him from heaven, being filled with the memory of a vision which he had seen before. It seemed to him that he was very anxious about this journey, and that he came to a place where there was a great complex of buildings and various dwellings; and there someone came to meet him and spoke to him, saying: "Do not be grieved beyond measure about the journey that troubles you and about the things in your heart; for there is a prophet here who will make you certain about all these things; and so that no doubt may linger in your mind about this, I will tell you who that prophet is. A certain most renowned abbot, Adalhard: he is now the prophet sent to you by the Lord, who will announce to you the things that are to come." Hearing this, he was gladdened in mind and seemed to answer him: "Lord, where shall I find him?" And he said: "You will find him with labour, nor is it permitted to you to tell anyone." Then it seemed to him that he went round the dwelling seeking him, and pondered in his mind. "If," he said, "without being asked by me, he tells me what is in my mind, then I shall know that he is a true prophet." Coming, then, to a most beautiful dwelling, he saw him there sitting on his throne, and at once recognised him. And he at once began to prophesy, and, looking intently at him, began to say: "Hear, O islands, and give heed, you peoples from afar (Isa 49:1). The Lord called you from the womb, from the body of your mother he remembered your name, and he made your mouth like a sharp sword: in the shadow of his hand he protected you, and made you like a chosen arrow; in his quiver he hid you, and said to you: You are my servant, for in you I will glory (Isa 49:1–3)." When he had said this, he stretched out his arm and began to raise his right hand towards him. Seeing this, Anskar came to his knees, hoping that he wished to bless him.

At ille subjunxit: « Dedi te in lucem gentium, ut sis illis in salutem usque ad extremum terrae. Reges videbunt, et consurgent principes, et adorabunt Deum tuum et sanctum Israel, quia glorificavit te. » Hanc ergo visionem servus Dei cum ante profectionem illam longe vidisset, certum tenebat animo, Dei se imperio ad partes illas incitari; et maxime in verbo quod dictum est illi: Audite, insulae, quia omnis fere patria illa in insulis est constitua. Et quod subjunctum est: Eris illis in salutem usque ad extremum terrae, quia finis mundi in Aquilonis partibus in Sueonum conjacet regionibus. Denique verbum, quod cum propheta Jeremia in fine commutatum est, scilicet, quia glorificabit te, ardorem desiderii, illi maximum nutriebat, quia palmam martyrii olim sibi promissam hoc significare putabat.

45. Sueonum regi ab Horico commendatus, venit in Sueciam daemonum instinctu in se turbatam.

Profectionem itaque hanc suscepturus, jam dicti regis Horici missum pariter et signum secum habuit, qui regi Sueonum, nomine Olef, partis suae mandatum tale intimari jussit, servum Dei, qui ex parte regis Ludovici missus, fines regni ejus peteret, sibi per omnia cognitum fore, ac se in vita sua nunquam tam bonum vidisse hominem; nec in quolibet mortalium aliquando tantam fidem invenisse, ideoque cognita ejus sanctissima bonitate, omnia quae illi in regno suo causa Christianae religionis disponere vellet, se ei concessisse: ipsumque petere, ut similiter in regno suo ei permitteret culturam Christianitatis, quam optabat statuere, quia ipse nihil aliud quam quod bonum et rectum foret, vellet perficere. Susceptum itaque peragens iter, viginti ferme diebus navigio transactis, pervenit ad Byrcam, ubi invenit regem et multitudinem populi nimio errore confusam. Instigante enim diabolo, adventum beati viri omnimodis praesciente, contigit eo ipso tempore, ut quidam illo adveniens diceret, se in conventu deorum, qui ipsam terram possidere credebantur, adfuisse, et ab eis missum, ut haec regi et populis nuntiaret. Vos, inquiunt, nos vobis propitios diu habuistis, et terram incolatus vestri cum multa abundantia nostro adjutorio in pace et prosperitate longo tempore tenuistis; vos quoque nobis sacrificia et vota debita persolvistis, grataque nobis vestra fuerunt obsequia.

But he went on: "I have given you as a light to the nations, that you may be their salvation to the end of the earth (Isa 49:6). Kings shall see, and princes shall rise up, and they shall worship your God and the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you (Isa 49:7)." Since the servant of God had seen this vision long before that journey, he held it certain in his mind that he was being urged by God's command to go to those parts; and above all in the word that was said to him, Hear, O islands, because almost the whole of that country lies in islands. And in what was added, You shall be their salvation to the end of the earth, because the end of the world lies in the regions of the North, in the lands of the Swedes. Lastly, the word that was changed at the end from the prophet Jeremiah, namely for he will glorify you, fed in him the greatest ardour of desire, because he thought that it signified the palm of martyrdom once promised to him.

45. Commended by Horik to the king of the Swedes, he comes to Sweden, which is in turmoil at the prompting of demons.

As he was about to undertake this journey, he had with him an envoy of King Horik, together with his token, who was charged to give this message on his behalf to the king of the Swedes, named Olof: that the servant of God who, sent on the part of King Louis, was coming to the borders of his kingdom was well known to him in every respect, and that he had never in his life seen so good a man nor ever found such faithfulness in any mortal; and that therefore, knowing his most holy goodness, he had granted him everything he wished to arrange in his kingdom for the sake of the Christian religion; and he asked Olof likewise to allow him in his kingdom the practice of Christianity which he wished to establish, since he would do nothing but what was good and right. Pursuing the journey he had undertaken, after nearly twenty days spent at sea, he came to Birka, where he found the king and a multitude of the people thrown into confusion by a great error. For at the devil's instigation, who foresaw in every way the coming of the blessed man, it happened at that very time that a certain man arrived there saying that he had been present at an assembly of the gods who were believed to possess that land, and had been sent by them to announce this to the king and the people. "You," they said, "have long had us well disposed towards you, and for a long time, by our help, you have held the land where you dwell in great abundance, in peace and prosperity; and you have paid us the sacrifices and vows that were due, and your services have been pleasing to us.

At nunc et sacrificia solita subtrahitis, et vota spontanea segnius offertis; et, quod magis nobis displicet, alienum Deum super vos introducitis. Si itaque nos vobis propitios habere vultis, sacrificia omissa augete, et vota majora persolvite, alterius quoque Dei culturam, quae contraria nobis docetur, ne apud vos recipiatis, et ejus servitio ne intendatis. Porro si etiam plures deos habere desideratis, et vobis nos non sufficimus, Ericum quondam regem vestrum nos unanimes in collegium nostrum adsciscimus, ut sit unus de numero deorum. Hoc ergo diabolicum mandatum publice denuntiatum, in adventu domni episcopi mentes cunctorum perturbabat, et error nimius ac perturbatio corda eorum omnium confuderat. Nam et templum in honore supradicti regis dudum defuncti statuerunt, et ipsi tanquam deo vota et sacrificia offerre coeperunt.

46. Amicis dissuadentibus, regem ad epulas invitat, qui legationem approbat, sortium conditione interposita.

Adveniens itaque illuc domnus episcopus, ab amicis suis, quondam ibi cognitis, quaerere coepit, quomodo regem super hac re interpellaret. Qui omnes toto adnisu contradicentes, asserebant nihil omnino ea vice legationem ejus proficere posse: sed, si quid haberet pretii, ea ratione eum dare debere, ut vivus inde evaderet. Quibus ille: Non, inquit, pro vitae meae redemptione aliquid hic daturus sum: quia si Dominus meus ita disposuerit, pro ejus nomine paratus sum hic et tormenta subire, et mortem pati. Cum ergo pro hac re in maxima esset positus anxietate, tandem accepto consilio regem ad suum invitavit hospitium. Cui convivium exhibens, dona quae potuit obtulit, et legationis suae mandata retulit: nam et antea per missum Horici, et per fideles domni episcopi, qui ibi manebant, causa adventus ipsius eidem regi denuntiata fuerat. Delectatus itaque et claritatis ipsius benevolentia, et munerum datione, se quidem quae ille suggesserat gratanter velle respondit. Antea tamen hic, inquit, fuerunt clerici, qui populari seditione hinc, non regio jussu, ejecti sunt. Quapropter et ego hanc legationem vestram confirmare nec possum, nec audeo, priusquam sortibus deos nostros consulam, et populi quoque super hoc voluntatem interrogem. Sit missus tuus in placito mecum proximo, et ego pro te loquar populo, et siquidem diis fautoribus illi tuae consenserint voluntati, quod quaesiisti prosperabitur: sin autem, et hoc tibi notum faciam. Sic quippe apud eos moris est, ut quodcunque negotium publicum magis in populi unanima voluntate quam in regia consistat potestate.

But now you withhold the customary sacrifices and offer your freewill vows more sluggishly; and, what displeases us more, you are bringing in a foreign god over you. If, then, you wish to have us well disposed towards you, increase the sacrifices you have omitted and pay greater vows; and do not receive among you the worship of another god, whose teaching is contrary to ours, nor devote yourselves to his service. Furthermore, if you desire to have more gods, and we are not enough for you, we unanimously admit Eric, once your king, into our fellowship, that he may be one of the number of the gods." This devilish message, publicly announced, disturbed the minds of all at the coming of the lord bishop, and great error and turmoil had confounded the hearts of them all. For they had set up a temple in honour of the king who had died long before, and had begun to offer vows and sacrifices to him as to a god.

46. Though his friends advise against it, he invites the king to a banquet; the king approves the mission, on condition of a casting of lots.

When the lord bishop arrived there, he began to ask his friends, whom he had known there in former days, how he should approach the king on this matter. They all opposed it with all their might, declaring that his mission could achieve nothing whatever on that occasion; rather, if he had anything of value, he ought to give it for this purpose, that he might escape from there alive. To them he said: "No, I will give nothing here to ransom my life; for if my Lord has so ordained, I am ready to undergo torments here and to suffer death for his name." While he was in the greatest anxiety over this, at length, having taken counsel, he invited the king to his lodging. Giving him a banquet, he offered him such gifts as he could and set before him the charge of his mission; for the reason for his coming had already been made known to the king through Horik's envoy and through the lord bishop's faithful friends who lived there. Delighted, then, both by the goodwill of so illustrious a man and by the gifts he had been given, the king replied that he did indeed gladly wish for what the bishop had proposed. "But before this," he said, "there were clerics here who were driven out by a rising of the people, not by the king's command. Therefore I neither can nor dare confirm this mission of yours before I have consulted our gods by lots and have also asked the will of the people about it. Let your envoy be with me at the next assembly, and I will speak to the people on your behalf; and if, with the gods' favour, they consent to your wish, what you have asked will prosper; but if not, I will let you know that too." For such is their custom, that any public business rests on the unanimous will of the people rather than on the power of the king.

47. Anscharius divina inspiratione confirmatur. Sortes favent coeptis ejus.

Hoc ergo pastor noster devotissimus responso regis accepto, totum se ad Domini convertit refugium, jejuniis et orationibus vacans, atque in contritione et afflictione cordis seipsum in conspectu. Dei humilians. Verum ipso inter has pressurarum angustias posito, cum dies placiti appropinquaret, quadam die inter sacra missarum solemnia, dum sacerdos altari astans mysteria sacra benediceret, illi in terra prostrato coelestis infusa est inspiratio. Siquidem Spiritus sancti dono interius roboratus, et fiducia maxima in anima confortatus, cognovit sibi omnia proventura uti vellet. Unde eidem sacerdoti sibi in omnibus familiarissimo post missam denuntiavit, nihil trepidationis se habere debere, quia gratia Dei secum comitaretur. Cui interroganti quomodo id sciret, divinitus sibi inspiratum respondit. Quam mentis ejus illustrationem frater ille satis recognovit, quia taliter eum consolari divinitus multis antea probavit indiciis. Hanc ergo animi ejus fiduciam statim rei confirmavit eventus. Nam rex, congregatis primo principibus suis, de hac Patris nostri legatione cum eis tractare coepit, qui sortibus quaerendum statuerunt, quae super hoc deorum voluntas esset. Exeuntes igitur morte ipsorum in campum, miserunt sortes, ceciditque sors quod Dei voluntate religio Christianorum ibi fundaretur. Quod factum unus ex primoribus, amicus domni episcopi, statim ei innotuit, et ut consolaretur animo admonuit, dicens: Confortare, viriliter age, quia Deus voluntati et legationi tuae non abnuit. Sicque ipse fiducia sumpta spiritu interiori laetificatus exsultabat in Domino.

48. Placiti etiam accedit consensus.

Deinde cum dies placiti advenisset, quod in praedicto vico Byrca habitum est, sicut ipsorum est consuetudo, praeconis voce rex quae esset eorum legatio, intimari fecit populo. Quo illi audito, sicut erant antea errore confusi, diversa sentire et tumultuare coeperunt. Quibus ita perstrepentibus, consurgens unus, qui erat senior natu, in medio plebis dixit: Audite me, rex et populi: de cultura ipsius Dei pluribus nostrum bene est jam cognitum, quod in se sperantibus magnum possit facere subsidium. Nam multi jam nostrum saepius et in marinis periculis, et in variis necessitatibus hoc probaverunt.

47. Anskar is strengthened by divine inspiration. The lots favour his undertaking.

Having received this answer from the king, our most devout shepherd turned wholly to the Lord as his refuge, giving himself to fasting and prayer, and in contrition and affliction of heart humbling himself in the sight of God. And while he was in these straits of distress, as the day of the assembly drew near, one day during the holy solemnities of Mass, while the priest standing at the altar was blessing the sacred mysteries, a heavenly inspiration was poured into him as he lay prostrate on the ground. Strengthened inwardly by the gift of the Holy Spirit and comforted in soul with the greatest confidence, he knew that everything would turn out as he wished. So after Mass he told that same priest, who was his closest friend in all things, that he need have no fear, because the grace of God was going with him. When the priest asked how he knew this, he answered that it had been inspired in him by God. That brother well recognised this enlightening of his mind, for he had known from many signs before that God consoled him in this way. And the outcome of the matter at once confirmed this confidence of his. For the king first gathered his chief men and began to discuss with them this mission of our Father; and they decided that the will of the gods in this matter should be sought by lots. Going out, then, into the field according to their custom, they cast lots, and the lot fell that by God's will the religion of the Christians should be founded there. One of the chief men, a friend of the lord bishop, at once made this known to him and urged him to take heart, saying: "Be strong and act manfully, for God has not refused your wish and your mission." And so, taking confidence, he rejoiced in the Lord, gladdened in his inmost spirit.

48. The assembly too gives its consent.

Then, when the day of the assembly had come, which was held in the town of Birka already mentioned, the king, as is their custom, had the purpose of their mission proclaimed to the people by the voice of a herald. When they heard it, confused as they had been before by error, they began to be of different minds and to raise an uproar. While they were clamouring in this way, one of them, who was older in years, rose up in the midst of the people and said: "Hear me, king and peoples. The worship of this God is already well known to many of us: we know that he can give great help to those who hope in him. For many of us have already proved this again and again, both in perils at sea and in various needs.

Quare ergo abjicimus, quod necessarium nobis et utile scimus? Aliquando nempe quidam ex nobis Dorstadum adeuntes, hujus religionis normam profuturam sibi sentientes, spontanea voluntate suscipiebant. Nunc multae interjacent insidiae, et piratarum infestatione periculosum valde nobis iter illud factum est. Quod ergo tam longe positum prius quaerebamus, hic nobis modo oblatum, quare non suscipimus? et qui hujus Dei gratiam nobis in multis utilem probavimus, quare servos ejus nobiscum manere non libenter assentiamus? Attendite, populi, consilium nostrum, et nolite abjicere utilitatem vestram. Nobis enim quando nostros propitios non possumus habere deos, bonum est hujus Dei gratiam habere, qui semper in omnibus potest et vult ad se clamantibus auxiliari. Hoc ergo ita perorante, omnis multitudo populi unanimis effecta, elegit ut secum et sacerdotes essent, et quae competebant mysteriis Christi, sine ulla contradictione fierent. Rex itaque a placito surgens, statim cum misso domni episcopi suum direxit nuntium, mandans populi unanimitatem ad suam voluntatem conversam, sibique per omnia placere: necdum tamen se plenam ei licentiam concedere posse, donec in alio placito, quod erat in altera parte regni sui futurum, idipsum populis ibi positis nuntiaret. Tunc iterum bonae memoriae Pater noster consueta sua sibi requirens subsidia, divinam clementiam intentius exorabat. Et ecce placiti tempus advenit, et rex praeconis voce legationem domni episcopi, atque omnia pariter quae in priori placito dicta et acta fuerant, intimari fecit. Divina ergo providentia largiente, omnium corda ita adunata sunt, ut prioris placiti consensum cuncti laudarent, et se quoque his assentiri velle modis omnibus faterentur.

49. Ecclesiae construendae accipit facultatem.

Hoc itaque facto, convocato ad se rex domno episcopo, quae fuerant gesta retulit. Sicque omnium unanima voluntate et consensu decrevit, ut apud eos et ecclesiae fabricarentur, et sacerdotes adessent; et quicunque vellet de populo, absque contradictione fieret Christianus. Domnus autem et pastor noster praedictum nepotem venerabilis Gauzberti episcopi, Erimbertum nomine, manibus regis commendavit, ut suo auxilio et defensione munitus, divina mysteria ibidem ageret. Cui etiam rex in praefato vico atrium unum ad oratorium dedit fabricandum. Domnus quoque episcopus presbytero ad habitandum alterum cum domo emit, praebensque idem rex benignissimum circa domnum episcopum dilectionis suae favorem fidelissimum quoque in omni parte suis circa Christianae religionis cultum se fore velle pro misit. Sicque per Domini gratiam rite omnibus peractis, domnus episcopus ad sua reversus est.

Why, then, do we reject what we know to be necessary and useful to us? Indeed at one time some of us, going to Dorestad and perceiving that the rule of this religion would profit them, embraced it of their own free will. Now many dangers lie in the way, and through the attacks of pirates that journey has become very perilous for us. Why, then, do we not accept what is now offered to us here, which before we used to seek so far away? And since we have proved the favour of this God useful to us in many things, why should we not gladly consent that his servants remain among us? Give heed, you peoples, to our counsel, and do not cast away your own advantage. For when we cannot have our own gods well disposed towards us, it is good for us to have the favour of this God, who always and in all things can and will help those who cry to him." When he had finished speaking thus, the whole multitude of the people became of one mind and chose that there should be priests among them, and that whatever belonged to the mysteries of Christ should be done without any opposition. So the king, rising from the assembly, at once sent his messenger together with the lord bishop's envoy, to tell him that the people had been unanimously won over to his wish and that he himself was pleased with everything; but that he could not yet grant him full permission until he had announced the same thing to the peoples living there at another assembly, which was to be held in another part of his kingdom. Then once again our Father of blessed memory, seeking his accustomed aid, besought the divine mercy more earnestly. And behold, the time of the assembly came, and the king had the lord bishop's mission proclaimed by the voice of a herald, together with all that had been said and done at the earlier assembly. And by the bounty of divine providence the hearts of all were so united that they all praised the consent of the earlier assembly and declared that they too wished in every way to agree to these things.

49. He receives leave to build a church.

When this had been done, the king summoned the lord bishop and told him what had taken place. And so, with the unanimous will and consent of all, he decreed that churches should be built among them and priests be present, and that whoever of the people wished might become a Christian without hindrance. Our lord and shepherd then commended into the king's hands the nephew of the venerable Bishop Gautbert of whom we spoke, named Erimbert, so that, protected by his help and defence, he might celebrate the divine mysteries there. The king also gave him a plot in that same town on which to build an oratory. The lord bishop also bought another, with a house, for the priest to live in; and the king, showing the lord bishop the kindest favour of his affection, promised that he would also be most faithful in every respect to his people in what concerned the worship of the Christian religion. And so, when by the grace of the Lord everything had been duly accomplished, the lord bishop returned home.

50. Passionis consideratione discit tolerare adversa.

Porro angustiam maximam mentis, quam in ipso perpessus est itinere, dum illud iter pararetur, Domino revelante, Pater noster sanctissimus ante praescivit. Visum namque est illi quadam nocte, quod tempus esset passionis Domini, et quod ille praesens adesset, cum Dominus Jesus Christus a Pilato duceretur ad Herodem, et rursus ab Herode ad Pilatum; denique cum a Judaeis et militibus sputa et opprobria patiens, per omnia membra verberibus, ut ipsi videbatur, afficeretur; ipse non sufferens sic illum puniri, accurrens, opposuit se post dorsum ejus verberantibus, omniaque verbera, quae illi infligebantur, ipse in corpore suo susciperet, excepto quod statura procerior, capite illo eminentior videbatur, et idcirco illud defendere non poterat. Hanc itaque visionem miles invictus Christi, quid significaret prius non cognovit, quam de hoc itinere reversus mente tractavit, quanta opprobria et irrisiones ibi sustinuerit, et in quanta angustia fuerit, quantasque blasphemias in Deum illatas ibi sustulerit. Nam quantum ad ejus pertinuit animum, ibi ille sine dubio pro Christo passus est, et ibi Christus in servo suo prius sibi illata denuo sustinuit improperia. Porro quod caput illius defendere non poterat, hoc significare putabat, quia caput Christi Deus, quod passiones, quas sancti in hoc mundo pro Christo sustinent, partim etiam ad ipsam Dei pertineant majestatem: quas ipse in se quodammodo compatiendo suscipiens, ad tempus quidem tolerat, sed quandoque districte judicat.

51. Curlandos de Danis victores Sueci oppugnant.

Nec praetereundum quoque videtur qualiter virtus Domini post hanc profectionem jam dictis Sueonibus patefacta sit. Gens enim quaedam longe ab eis posita, vocata Chori, Sueonum principatui olim subjecta fuerat; sed jam tunc diu erat, quod rebellando eis subjici dedignabatur. Denique Dani scientes tempore supradicto, quod domnus episcopus jam in partes Sueonum advenerat, navium congregata multitudine ad eamdem perrexerunt patriam, volentes et bona eorum diripere, et sibi eos subjugare. Regnum vero ipsum quinque habebat civitates.

50. By contemplating the Passion he learns to bear adversity.

Now the very great anguish of mind that he suffered on this journey our most holy Father knew beforehand, by the Lord's revelation, while the journey was being prepared. For one night it seemed to him that it was the time of the Lord's Passion, and that he was present himself when the Lord Jesus Christ was led from Pilate to Herod, and back again from Herod to Pilate; and then, when he was suffering spitting and insults from the Jews and the soldiers and, as it seemed to him, was being struck with blows over all his limbs, he could not bear to see him punished so, and ran and set himself behind his back, facing those who were striking him, and took on his own body all the blows that were being dealt him — except that the Lord, being taller in stature, seemed to rise above him by the head, and so he could not shield the head. What this vision meant, Christ's unconquered soldier did not understand until, after returning from this journey, he turned over in his mind how many insults and mockeries he had endured there, in what anguish he had been, and how many blasphemies uttered against God he had borne there. For as far as his own will was concerned, he undoubtedly suffered there for Christ, and there Christ, in his servant, bore once again the reproaches that had been heaped upon him before. And that he could not shield the head he took to mean — since the head of Christ is God (1 Cor 11:3) — that the sufferings which the saints endure in this world for Christ touch in part the very majesty of God, who, taking them upon himself in a certain manner by suffering with them, bears them indeed for a time, but will one day judge them strictly.

51. The Swedes attack the Curonians, victors over the Danes.

Nor, it seems, should we pass over how the power of the Lord was made manifest to the Swedes after this journey. A certain people, living far from them and called the Curonians, had once been subject to the rule of the Swedes; but it was by then a long time since they had rebelled and disdained to be subject to them. Then the Danes, knowing at the time mentioned above that the lord bishop had already come into the regions of the Swedes, gathered a multitude of ships and went to that same country, wishing both to plunder their goods and to subject them to themselves. That kingdom had five cities.

Populi itaque inibi manentes, cognito eorum adventu, conglobati in unum coeperunt viriliter resistere, et sua defendere: dataque sibi victoria, medietate populi Danorum caede prostrata, media quoque navium eorum diripuerunt, auro et argento spoliisque multis ab eis acceptis. Quod audiens praedictus rex Olef populusque Sueonum, volentes sibi nomen acquirere, quod facere possent, quae Dani non fecerant; et quia sibi etiam antea subjecti fuerant, innumerabili congregato exercitu, illas adierunt partes. Et primo quidem improvise ad quamdam urbem regni ipsorum, vocatam Selburg, in qua erant septem millia pugnatorum, devenientes, penitus illam devastando et spoliando succenderunt. Exinde confortati animo, dimissis navibus, iter quinque dierum arripientes, ad aliam urbem ipsorum, quae Apulia dicebatur, effero corde properabant. Erant autem in ea urbe quindecim millia bellatorum. Cum itaque illo advenissent, conclusis ipsis in civitate, isti a foris urbem debellare, illi de intus coepere viriliter repugnare: illi intrinsecus defendebant, isti exterius impugnabant, sicque transierunt dies octo, ut omni die a mane usque ad vesperam dimicantes bello instarent, et multi hinc et inde caderent, neutra tamen pars victoriam obtineret.

52. Diis frustra invocatis, ad Christum se convertunt.

Cum ecce nono die populus Sueonum diutina caede fatigatus, coepit angustiari, et timido corde expavescens hoc solum cogitare quomodo inde evaderet. Hic, inquiunt, non proficimus, et naves nostrae longe absunt. Nam quinque dierum, ut praediximus, iter erat ad portum, in quo naves eorum stabant. Cum ergo quid sibi esset agendum, nimium turbati omnimodis nescirent, quaerendum sortibus statuerunt, utrum dii eorum vellent auxiliari, ut vel victoriam caperent, vel vivi inde evaderent. Missis itaque sortibus, neminem deorum qui eis subsidio esse vellet, reperire potuerunt. Quod cum denuntiaretur in populo, ululatus et gemitus immensus excitatus est in castris, omnisque virtus ab eis recessit. Quid, inquiunt, infelices acturi sumus? dii recesserunt a nobis, et nullus eorum adjutor est nostri! Quo fugiemus? Ecce naves nostrae longius sunt positae fugientibusque nobis isti insequentes usque ad internecionem nos delebunt; quid ergo nobis erit? Cum itaque in tanta essent angustia positi, quidam negotiatorum memores doctrinae et institutionis domni episcopi, suggerere eis coeperunt.

The peoples living there, learning of their coming, gathered together and began to resist manfully and to defend their own; and victory was granted them: half of the Danish host was cut down in slaughter, and they plundered half of their ships as well, taking from them gold and silver and much booty. Hearing this, King Olof and the people of the Swedes, wishing to win a name for themselves by being able to do what the Danes had not done, and because these people had once been subject to them, gathered a countless army and went to those parts. And first, coming unexpectedly upon a city of their kingdom called Seeburg, in which there were seven thousand fighting men, they utterly laid it waste, plundered it and set it on fire. Heartened by this, they left their ships and, setting out on a five days' march, hastened with fierce hearts to another of their cities, called Apulia. In that city there were fifteen thousand warriors. When they arrived there, the townsmen shut themselves up in the city; the besiegers began to storm it from without, the besieged to fight back manfully from within: these defended it inside, those attacked it outside; and so eight days went by, as they pressed the fight every day from morning until evening, and many fell on both sides, yet neither side gained the victory.

52. Having called on their gods in vain, they turn to Christ.

And behold, on the ninth day the Swedish host, worn out by the long slaughter, began to lose heart and, terrified and fearful, to think only of how they might escape from there. "Here," they said, "we are getting nowhere, and our ships are far away." For, as we said, it was five days' journey to the harbour where their ships lay. Since, then, in their great distress they had no idea at all what they should do, they resolved to ask by lots whether their gods were willing to help them, so that they might either win the victory or escape from there alive. When the lots were cast, they could find none of the gods who was willing to come to their aid. When this was announced among the people, a vast wailing and groaning arose in the camp, and all their courage left them. "What shall we do, unhappy men that we are?" they said. "The gods have left us, and not one of them is our helper! Where shall we flee? See, our ships lie far off, and if we flee, these men will pursue us and destroy us to the last man. What then will become of us?" While they were in such straits, some of the merchants, remembering the teaching and instruction of the lord bishop, began to counsel them.

Deus, inquiunt, Christianorum, multoties ad se clamantibus auxiliatur, et potentissimus est in adjuvando. Quaeramus an ille nobiscum esse velit, et vota illi placita libenti animo spondeamus. Omnium itaque rogatu supplici missa sors, et inventum quod Christus eis vellet auxiliari. Quod cum publice denuntiatum cunctis innotuisset, omnium corda ita subito roborata sunt, ut confestim ad urbem expugnandam intrepidi vellent accedere. Quid, inquiunt, nobis nunc formidandum, quidve pavendum est? Christus est nobiscum, pugnemus et viriliter agamus, nihil nobis obstare poterit: nec deerit nobis certa victoria, quia potentissimum deorum nostri adjutorem habemus. Conglobati ergo omnes laeto et forti animo ad debellandam profecti sunt urbem.

53. Victoriam obtinent foedere facto; jejunia vovent; eleemosynis vacant.

Cumque in circuitu astantes pugnam inire vellent, ab his qui intrinsecus erant, postulatum est ut copia eis daretur loquendi. Quod cum rex Sueonum annuisset, illi subsecuti sunt: Nobis jam pax magis quam pugna placet, et foedus vobiscum inire cupimus. Et primo quidem quidquid ex spoliis Danorum praeterito anno in auro et armis acquisivimus, vobis pro munere foederis damus. Deinde pro unoquoque hominum in hac urbe constitutorum dimidiam libram argenti offerimus; et insuper censum, quem antea solebamus vobis dare, persolvimus: et datis obsidibus, abhinc subjecti et obedientes, sicut antea fuimus, vestro imperio esse volumus. Cum haec itaque oblata fuerint, necdum tamen animi juvenum sedari poterant: verum alacriores facti, et absque metu imperterriti, pugnare tantum desiderantes, se armis urbem et omnia quae haberent, vastaturos, ipsosque captivos abducturos dicebant. Rex vero et principes saniori consilio dextras ab eis accipientes, foedus inierunt, et thesauris innumerabilibus, atque obsidibus triginta sibi collatis, cum gaudio ad sua reversi sunt. Denique pace inter eos foederata, statim Sueones Christi Domini nostri omnipotentiam collaudantes, ejusque magnificentiam, quod vere magnus esset super omnes deos, totis viribus praedicantes, quid ipsi per quem tantam obtinuissent victoriam, vovere deberent, sollicite quaerere coeperunt. Unde a Christianis edocti negotiatoribus qui simul aderant, Christo Domino placitum devoverunt jejunium, ita ut, ad sua reversi, postquam domi septem dies essent alios septem a carne omnes pariter abstinerent, sed et post hoc quadraginta diebus evolutis, ipsi quoque unanima conventione quadraginta sequentes similiter a carne abstinentiam agerent.

"The God of the Christians," they said, "often helps those who cry to him, and he is most mighty to help. Let us ask whether he is willing to be with us, and let us gladly pledge him vows that will please him." So at the humble request of all the lot was cast, and it was found that Christ was willing to help them. When this had been publicly announced and became known to all, the hearts of all were suddenly so strengthened that they wished to go forward at once, fearless, to storm the city. "What," they said, "have we now to dread, or what to fear? Christ is with us; let us fight and act like men; nothing will be able to stand against us, nor shall we lack certain victory, for we have the mightiest of the gods as our helper." So they all massed together and set out with glad and stout hearts to take the city.

53. They win the victory through a treaty; they vow fasts; they devote themselves to almsgiving.

And when they had taken up their positions all around and were about to join battle, those within asked to be given leave to speak. When the king of the Swedes had agreed, they went on: "Peace now pleases us more than war, and we desire to make a treaty with you. First, whatever we won last year from the spoils of the Danes, in gold and in arms, we give to you as the gift of the treaty. Then for each of the men in this city we offer half a pound of silver; and besides, we will pay the tribute that we used to give you before; and, giving hostages, we wish from now on to be subject and obedient to your rule, as we were before." Although these things had been offered, the spirits of the young men could not yet be calmed; rather, grown more eager and undaunted, without fear, wanting only to fight, they said that they would lay waste with their arms the city and all that its people had, and carry them off as captives. But the king and the chief men, following sounder counsel, accepted their right hands and made the treaty; and having been given countless treasures and thirty hostages, they returned home with joy. Then, when peace had been made between them, the Swedes at once praised the almighty power of Christ our Lord and proclaimed with all their strength his greatness, that he was truly great above all gods; and they began to ask earnestly what they ought to vow to him through whom they had won so great a victory. Instructed, then, by the Christian merchants who were with them, they vowed to Christ the Lord a fast pleasing to him: that when they had returned home, after they had been at home seven days, they would all alike abstain from meat for seven more; and further, when forty days had passed after that, they would by unanimous agreement likewise keep abstinence from meat for the forty days following.

Quod et factum est, omnesque qui ibi adfuerant, hoc statutum libenti perfecerunt animo: multi etiam post hac reverentia et amore Christi apud eos jejuniis, quae Christiani observabant, insistere incipientes, et eleemosynis (namque hoc Christo gratum didicere), quoslibet pauperes adjuvare coeperunt. Sicque favore omnium praedictus Erimbertus sacerdos libere apud eos quae Dei sunt agere, et cunctis Christi potentiam laudantibus, religionis divinae in illis partibus devotio augmentum sui ab illo tempore sine ullius contradictione coepit habere.

54. Horico juniore patri succedente, ecclesiae aditus occlusus, dein rege volente concessus; alterius condendae facultas data.

Inter haec vero divino contigit judicio, ut piratarum infestatione memoratus Horicus rex, quibusdam propinquis hujus regnum ipsius invadere conantibus, bello interemptus sit: cum quo pariter omnes primores terrae illius, qui olim domno episcopo familiares et amici habebantur, gladio interierunt. Deinde post haec constituto in regno ipsius Horico juniore, quidam illorum, quos ille tunc habebat principes, et minus antea domno cogniti fuerant episcopo, persuadere ei coeperunt ut ecclesia apud eos facta destrueretur, et religio Christianitatis ibi coepta annihilaretur, dicentes deos suos sibi iratos esse, et quod ideo tanta eos mala invenerint, quia alterius et incogniti Dei culturam apud se receperint. Qua de re comes praefati vici, Scleaswich videlicet, nomine Hovi, qui huic religioni praecipue resistebat, et ad destruendam Christianitatis fidem regem provocabat, ecclesiam ibi factam jussit claudi, religionemque Christianitatis ibidem prohibuit observari: unde et presbyter qui ibi aderat, persecutionis acerbitate compulsus, inde recessit. Pro hac itaque re domnus episcopus nimium sollicitus et tristis effectu fuerat; quia nullum tunc cum Horico juniore de amicis habebat, quos antea largissimis donationibus sibi familiares acquisierat, per quos eum ad Domini voluntatem conciliare posset. Unde quia humano destitutus fuerat, ad divinum solito more concurrit auxilium. Nec spes sua eum fefollit. Consolatus est quippe eum Dominus spiritali in animo consolatione, et certus omnino factus est, quod nullo modo, ut hostes Christi machinarentur religio ibi coepta deperiret: quod ita Domino annuente non multo post contigit.

And so it was done: all who had been there carried out this resolution with a willing heart; and afterwards many among them, out of reverence and love for Christ, began to keep the fasts that the Christians observed, and to help any of the poor with alms (for they had learned that this was pleasing to Christ). And so, with the goodwill of all, the priest Erimbert began to carry out freely among them the things of God; and as all praised the power of Christ, devotion to the divine religion in those parts began from that time to grow, without opposition from anyone.

54. When Horik the Younger succeeds his father, access to the church is closed, then granted again at the king's wish; leave is given to found another.

Meanwhile it came about by the judgement of God that, when certain of his kinsmen tried to seize his kingdom with an onslaught of pirates, King Horik was killed in battle; and with him all the chief men of that land, who had once been the lord bishop's intimates and friends, perished by the sword. After this, when Horik the Younger had been set over his kingdom, some of those whom he then had as his chief men, and who had been less well known to the lord bishop before, began to urge him to destroy the church that had been built among them and to bring to nothing the Christian religion begun there, saying that their gods were angry with them, and that such great evils had befallen them because they had received among them the worship of another and unknown god. For this reason the count of that town, namely Schleswig, whose name was Hovi, who resisted this religion above all and stirred up the king to destroy the Christian faith, ordered the church built there to be shut and forbade the practice of the Christian religion in that place; and so the priest who was there, driven by the bitterness of the persecution, withdrew. Over this the lord bishop had become exceedingly anxious and sad, because he then had none of his friends with Horik the Younger — those whom he had earlier made his intimates by the most generous gifts — through whom he could win him over to the Lord's will. So, being deprived of human help, he hastened, as was his custom, to the help of God. Nor did his hope deceive him. For the Lord comforted him in his soul with spiritual consolation, and he was made entirely certain that the religion begun there would by no means perish, as the enemies of Christ were scheming; and so, by the Lord's will, it came about not long afterwards.

Nam cum pro hac sola eadem causa ad praedictum regem ire disponeret, Domini praeveniente gratia, idem rex, expulso prius de vico memorato jam dicto comite, ita ut nunquam postea in ejus gratiam redire potuerit, ad domnum episcopum suum gratis direxit legatum, mandans ut sacerdotem suum ad propriam remitteret ecclesiam: non se minus quam seniorem Horicum Christi velle gratiam promereri asserens, domnique episcopi amicitiam obtinere. Quo facto, cum ipse quoque reverendissimus Pater noster ad ejusdem regis praesentiam cum adjutorio Burchardi illustrissimi comitis venisset, qui etiam antea apud Horicum seniorem adjutor illi in omnibus fuerat, et apud regem utrumque bene poterat, quia propinquus erat ipsorum, tanta gratia a juniore susceptus est Horico, ut statim ei omnia quae antecessor suus causa Christianitatis in regno suo fieri permiserat, ipse quoque concederet. Insuper etiam, quod antea nefandum paganis videbatur, ut clocca haberetur in ecclesia consensit. In alio quoque vico regni sui, Ripa vocato, similiter locum ubi ecclesia fabricaretur, tribuit: et ut ibi sacerdos praesens adesset, suae potestatis licentiam dedit.

55. Ministri varii ad Sueones missi.

Denique dum haec agerentur, praedictus venerabilis Gauzbertus episcopus ad gentem Sueonum quemdam misit presbyterum, nomine Anfridum, qui ex gente Danorum oriundus erat, et a domno Ebone ad servitium Domini educatus fuerat. Qui cum illo advenisset, memoratus Erimbertus sacerdos exinde reversus est, et ille ibi cum multa omnium ambitione tribus demoratus est annis aut amplius. Post hoc vero audito domni Gauzberti obitu, ipse quoque exinde reversus, et apud nos aliquandiu conversatus, aggravescente dolore defunctus est. Quo facto domnus episcopus, non sufferens fidem Christianitatis ibi coeptam perire, suum illuc misit presbyterum, nomine Raginbertum, qui cum satis ad hoc idoneus, et tantae profectionis valde esset voluntarius, et ad portum memoratum Sleaswich pergeret, diabolica machinatione, in via Danorum latrocinantium insidiis circumactus, et his quae habebat spoliatus, die Assumptionis sanctae Mariae ipse quoque in bonae voluntatis cursu feliciter consummatus est. Quod cum Domni episcopi animum nimio affecisset moerore, nequaquam tamen a coepta retrahi potuit voluntate: verum in hoc opus alium ordinavit episcopus Presbyterum, ex gente Danorum progenitum, nomine Rimbertum, quem cum ad illas partes pro Christi nomine destinasset, benigne ibi a rege et populo susceptus, divina apud eos mysteria largiente Domino libere hactenus celebravit.

For while he was planning to go to the king for this one reason alone, the grace of the Lord went before him: the king first drove that count out of the town, so that he was never afterwards able to return to his favour, and then of his own accord sent his envoy to the lord bishop, asking him to send his priest back to his own church; for he declared that he wished, no less than Horik the Elder, to earn the grace of Christ and to have the lord bishop's friendship. When this had been done, and our most reverend Father himself had also come into the king's presence with the help of the most illustrious Count Burchard — who had earlier been his helper in everything with Horik the Elder, and had great influence with both kings, being their kinsman — he was received by Horik the Younger with such favour that the king at once granted him, for his part too, everything that his predecessor had allowed to be done in his kingdom for the sake of Christianity. Moreover, he even agreed to something that had before seemed abominable to the pagans: that the church should have a bell. In another town of his kingdom too, called Ribe, he likewise granted a site on which a church might be built, and gave leave by his own authority for a priest to be present there.

55. Various ministers are sent to the Swedes.

While these things were taking place, the venerable Bishop Gautbert sent to the people of the Swedes a priest named Ansfrid, who was of Danish birth and had been brought up for the service of the Lord by the lord Ebbo. When he arrived there, the priest Erimbert returned from that country, and Ansfrid remained there three years or more, much sought after by all. After this, hearing of the death of the lord Gautbert, he too returned from there, and after living among us for some time he died as his illness grew worse. Upon this the lord bishop, unable to bear that the Christian faith begun there should perish, sent there a priest of his own named Raginbert, who was well suited to the task and most willing to undertake so long a journey; but as he was making his way to the port of Schleswig, by the devil's scheming he was surrounded on the road by an ambush of Danish robbers and stripped of what he had, and on the day of the Assumption of Holy Mary he too was happily brought to his end in the very course of his good will. Although this had filled the lord bishop's heart with very great grief, he could by no means be drawn back from the purpose he had begun; rather, the bishop ordained for this work another priest, of Danish birth, named Rimbert; and when he had sent him to those parts for the name of Christ, he was kindly received there by the king and the people, and by the Lord's bounty he has celebrated the divine mysteries among them freely to this day.

Denique et ipsi, sicut et caeteris, quos inter paganos ante constituerat, denuntiavit sacerdotibus, ut nullius aliquid concupisceret, neque peteret: sed ut magis exemplo beati Pauli apostoli, ipsi quoque manibus laborarent, et victu ac vestimento contenti essent, pie eos adhortatus est: quibus tamen ipse et sequacibus eorum, quidquid necessarium habebant, insuper et si quid pro amicis acquirendis dandum erat, de suo abundanter ministrabat.

56. Anscharius ab Ebone identidem confirmatur. Adversa fert aequo animo.

Porro inter has multiplices variasque angustiarum pressuras, quas, uti commemoravimus, de eadem legatione, ut praedictum est, semper inspiratione roboraretur, ne a coepto desisteret opere; tamen domni quoque Ebonis memorati Rhemensis archiepiscopi, qui hanc legationem primo susceperat, non modice eum in hac causa et devotio mentis et fervor consolabatur animi: si quidem ipse intimo pro vocatione gentium flagrans spiritu, jugiter eum ad fidei gratiam in partes istas promulgandam incitabat, et ut coepta non desereret, strenue commonebat. Cujus verbis exhortationis, et maximo ardore mentis, quo ad hoc fervebat, iste beatus vir provocatus, indubitanter officii sibi commissi curam agebat: nec aliqua unquam incommoditatis adversitate a coepto opere averti poterat. Et licet innumera fuerint praedicti pontificis suasoria monita, quibus Pater noster intimo consolabatur gaudio, illius tamen semper recordabatur sermonis, quem de hujus legationis causa in ultimo collocutionis suae habuere tempore. Nam cum domnus episcopus noster, dinumeratis multis quae sibi contigerant angustiis, quid de eadem legatione sibi videretur ipsum requireret, qualemque consolationem sibi super hoc dicere vellet, ab eo sollicite exposceret, ille quasi prophetico afflatus spiritu, respondit. Certus sum, inquit, quia quod nos pro Christi nomine elaborare coepimus, fructificare habet in Domino. Nam ita est fides mea, et sic firmiter credo, immo veraciter scio: quia, etsi aliquando propter peccata quodammodo impeditum fuerit, quod nos in illis coepimus gentibus, non tamen unquam penitus extenuetur, sed fructificabit in Dei gratia et prosperabitur, usquequo perveniat nomen Domini ad fines orbis terrae. Haec itaque fides fuit eorum, hac voluntate exterarum gentium fines petierunt, hujus religionis amore pro Domino certaverunt, a quo et praemium laboris sui sine dubio percepturi sunt.

To him, as to the other priests whom he had previously placed among the pagans, he gave the charge that he should covet or ask for nothing belonging to anyone; rather, he lovingly exhorted them that, after the example of the blessed apostle Paul, they too should work with their hands and be content with food and clothing; yet he himself supplied them and their followers abundantly, from his own means, with whatever they needed, and besides with anything that had to be given to win friends.

56. Anskar is strengthened again and again by Ebbo. He bears adversity with an even mind.

Moreover, amid these many and various pressures of distress which, as we have related, he met with in this mission — though, as has been said, he was ever strengthened by inspiration not to desist from the work he had begun — he was also comforted in no small measure in this cause by the devotion of mind and the fervour of spirit of the lord Ebbo, the archbishop of Reims already mentioned, who had first undertaken this mission; for Ebbo, burning in his inmost spirit for the calling of the nations, constantly urged him to spread the grace of the faith in these parts, and earnestly admonished him not to abandon what he had begun. Spurred on by his words of exhortation and by the very great ardour of mind with which he burned for this, our blessed man unhesitatingly carried out the charge of the office entrusted to him, and no adversity or hardship could ever turn him from the work he had begun. And although that bishop's words of encouragement were countless, by which our Father was consoled with inward joy, yet he always remembered the conversation they had held about this mission the last time they spoke together. For when our lord bishop, having recounted the many hardships that had befallen him, asked him what he thought about this mission, and earnestly begged him to say what comfort he could give him on this matter, he answered as if breathed upon by a prophetic spirit: "I am certain," he said, "that what we have begun to labour at for the name of Christ will bear fruit in the Lord. For such is my faith, and so I firmly believe — nay, I truly know — that, even if what we have begun among those nations should at some time be hindered in some way on account of sins, yet it will never wholly come to nothing, but will bear fruit in the grace of God and prosper, until the name of the Lord reaches the ends of the earth." Such, then, was their faith; with this will they sought the lands of foreign nations; for love of this religion they fought for the Lord, from whom they will also without doubt receive the reward of their labour.

Hujus devotionis voluntas ab animo Domini et Patris nostri nunquam recessit, et pro salute gentium nunquam orare cessavit: quin potius cum assidua fere piratarum infestatione, quae ex gentibus jam dictis veniebat, parochia illius in circuitu vastaretur, ac familia diriperetur; ille tamen pro adversantibus et insidiantibus sibi jugiter exorabat, et pro conversione eorum qui sibi malefaciebant, apud Dei misericordiam sine cessatione rogabat; petens ne statueretur illis in peccatum, quod ignorantes Dei justitiam, errore diabolico decepti, Christianorum rebus essent infesti. Cujus sollicitudinis causa in tantum fervebat, ut etiam in infirmitate positus novissima, jam dictae suae legationis causam nunquam antea tractare et disponere omiserit, quousque ultimum exhalaverit spiritum vitae. In quo religionis ardore a saeculo susceptus, credimus, quod maxima secum comitante fidelium multitudine, quos ex gente Danorum atque Sueonum Domino lucratus fuerat, initium boni certaminis illius; divina remunerante clementia, in die resurrectionis omnium, gloriose et feliciter regna penetravit.

57. Anscharius monachus probus; episcopus sanctorum aemulus. Cilicio assidue utitur. Amat solitudinem.

Sane quia de legationis ejus causa et cura, qua alios servare cupiebat, multa jam diximus; qualis in semetipso, et pro salute propriae animae exstiterit, qualiterque corpus suuis in semetipso, et pro salute propriae animae exstiterit, qualiterque corpus suum afflixerit, jam nunc tempus est enarrandi. Qualis namque apud vos in monasterio in omni devotionis suae studio effulserit, vobis optime est compertum. Tamen, ut auditum habemus, ipse adolescens et juvenis senibus et grandaevis mirandus videbatur et imitandus. Jam vero sumpto apud nos episcopatu, hoc omnino quod in monasterio inchoaverat, modis omnibus augmentare, et vitam omnium sanctorum imitari studuit, specialius tamen beati Martini. Cilicio namque ad carnem non solum in die, sed etiam in nocte usus est, et magnopere populis verbum Domini praedicando studebat prodesse. Interdum tamen, ut semetipsum in divina exerceret philosophia, in solitudine manebat: ad quod opus cellam aptam sibi constructam habebat, quam appellabat quietum locum et amicum moerori. Ubi cum paucis demoratus, quotiescunque a praedicatione et ecclesiasticis officiis, ab inquietudine paganorum liber esse poterat, habitavit: ita tamen ut nunquam proprium commodum et solitudinis amorem gregis sibi commissi praeponeret utilitati.

The will to this devotion never left the heart of our lord and Father, and he never ceased to pray for the salvation of the nations; nay rather, when his diocese was laid waste all around by the almost unceasing raids of pirates who came from those same nations, and his household was plundered, he nevertheless prayed continually for those who opposed him and lay in wait for him, and begged God's mercy without ceasing for the conversion of those who did him harm, asking that it should not be laid to their charge as sin that, not knowing the justice of God and deceived by the devil's error, they were hostile to the property of Christians. And he burned with this concern to such a degree that even in his last illness he never ceased to deal with and order the affairs of his mission, until he breathed out his last breath of life. Taken from the world in this ardour for religion, he has — so we believe — entered the kingdom gloriously and happily, with a very great multitude of the faithful accompanying him, whom he had won for the Lord from the peoples of the Danes and the Swedes, the beginning of that good fight of his, the mercy of God rewarding him on the day of the resurrection of all.

57. Anskar, a worthy monk; as bishop, an imitator of the saints. He wears a hair shirt constantly. He loves solitude.

Since we have already said much about his mission and the care with which he sought to save others, it is now time to tell what he was like in himself and in what concerned the salvation of his own soul, and how he afflicted his body. How he shone among you in the monastery in every pursuit of his devotion, you know very well. Yet, as we have heard, even as a boy and a young man he seemed to the old and the aged a man to be wondered at and imitated. And once he had taken up the episcopate among us, he strove in every way to increase all that he had begun in the monastery, and to imitate the life of all the saints, but most especially that of blessed Martin. For he wore a hair shirt next to his skin not only by day but also by night, and he strove greatly to benefit the peoples by preaching the word of the Lord. At times, however, in order to exercise himself in divine philosophy, he stayed in solitude; for this purpose he had a suitable cell built for himself, which he called a quiet place and a friend to sorrow. There he stayed with a few companions, and lived there whenever he could be free from preaching and the duties of the Church and from the disturbances of the pagans; yet in such a way that he never put his own convenience and his love of solitude before the good of the flock entrusted to him.

58. Parcus in victu, ob id vana gloria tentatus, divinitus eo vitio liberatur. Senex parcimoniam supplet eleemosynis.

Porro quousque juventutis aliquatenus potitus est robore, persaepe panem in pondere et aquam in mensura sumebat; maxime quandiu solitudine ei uti licitum erat. Quo tempore non modice, ut ipse affirmabat, a spiritu tentatus est cenodoxiae. Studebat namque inimicus humani generis peste jam dicta animam illius inficere, et magnus ipse oculis suis videbatur, quia taliter abstineret. Qua de re tristis factus, et ad Domini pietatem in oratione conversus, postulabat ut sua eum gratia ab hac perniciosissima impietate liberaret, quod et factum est. Cumque pro hac re sollicitius intentus esset precibus, quadam nocte sopori deditus, vidit se quasi usque in coelum rapi, et totum saeculum ac si in teterrimam vallem collectum; ex quo tamen et beatorum animae, licet raro, angelico ministerio rapiebantur, et ducebantur in coelum, in qua videlicet tenebrosa valle, ostensum est ei etiam quasi sementinum quoddam, ex quo genus humanum ducit originem. Cumque haec omnia admirans et horrescens aspiceret, jussus est ut attenderet, quo initio in hanc vitam veniret; ac dictum est: Unde, inquit, homini ulla jactantia esse poterit, qui de tam vili origine in convalle lacrymarum procreatus sit? et quidquid boni habuerit, non a se, sed ab eo a quo omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum est, acceperit? Si igitur ulterius, inquit, ab ulla tentatus fueris cenodoxiae peste, istud in mentem reducens memorare unde progenitus sis, et cum Dei gratia liberaberis. Quod ita et factum est. Jam vero postquam senuit, non adeo potuit de cibo abstinere: potus tamen ei semper aqua fuit, nisi quod propter vanam gloriam vitandam magis, quam aliquam suavitatem capiendam, aliquantulum ipsi aquae quam bibiturus erat, de potu admisceret. Quia tamen in senectute sua solita nequivit uti parcimonia, studuit hoc eleemosynis et orationibus multisque aliis bonis compensare. Hujus rei gratia multos redemit capti vos, quibus libertatem dedit; nonnullos tamen eorum ad Dei servitium educandos, litteris divinis instruere jussit.

59. Devotionis studio libros scribit Anscharius. Lacrymis deditus, usus ad hoc Scripturae sententiis.

58. Sparing in his diet and tempted to vainglory on that account, he is freed from this vice by God. In old age he makes up for his abstinence with almsgiving.

Now as long as he still enjoyed something of the strength of youth, he very often took bread by weight and water by measure, especially while he was able to live in solitude. At that time, as he himself declared, he was tempted not a little by the spirit of vainglory. For the enemy of the human race was striving to infect his soul with this plague, and he seemed great in his own eyes because he abstained in this way. Saddened by this, he turned in prayer to the Lord's loving kindness and asked that by his grace he might free him from this most pernicious impiety; and so it was done. And while he was earnestly intent on prayer for this, one night, having fallen asleep, he saw himself caught up, as it were, even to heaven, and the whole world gathered as though into a most foul valley, out of which, however, the souls of the blessed, though rarely, were caught up by the ministry of angels and led into heaven; and in that dark valley there was also shown to him a kind of seed, as it were, from which the human race takes its origin. And as he looked on all this with wonder and horror, he was told to consider from what beginning he had come into this life; and it was said to him: "What room can there be for any boasting in a man who was begotten from so base an origin in the vale of tears, and who has received whatever good he has, not from himself, but from him from whom comes every best gift and every perfect gift (Jas 1:17)?" "If, then," it said, "you are ever again tempted by any plague of vainglory, call this to mind and remember from what you were begotten, and by the grace of God you will be set free." And so it came to pass. But when he had grown old, he could no longer abstain so strictly from food; his drink, however, was always water, except that, more to avoid vainglory than to enjoy any pleasure, he would mix a little of some other drink into the water he was about to drink. And since in his old age he could not keep his accustomed abstinence, he strove to make up for it with alms and prayers and many other good works. For this reason he ransomed many captives and gave them their freedom; and some of them he had instructed in sacred letters, to be brought up for the service of God.

59. Out of zeal for devotion Anskar writes books. Given to tears, he uses the sayings of Scripture to that end.

Porro ad devotionem sibi in Dei amore acuendam quam studiosus fuerit, testantur codices magni apud nos, quos ipse propria manu per notas conscripsit, qui solummodo illa continere noscuntur, quae ad laudem omnipotentis Dei pertinent, et ad peccatorum redargutionem, ad laudem quoque beatae et aeternae vitae, et terrorem gehennae; et quidquid ad compunctionem pertinet, et lamentum. Testes sunt et fratres apud nos et in nova Corbeia degentes, quos pro hoc opere frequenter postulavit; quique illi nonnulla hujuscemodi conscripta miserunt. Sed nunquam illi sat esse poterat, quin omnem vitam suam in luctu et lacrymis exigere vellet. Nam licet illi compunctio cordis lacrymas excitaret, non tamen ei unquam sufficientes videbantur, nisi quod in ultimo aetatis suae anno hanc gratiam diu quaesitam Domino largiente promeruit, ut quotiescunque vellet, ploraret. Denique ex ipsis compunctivis rebus, ex sacra Scriptura sumptis, per omnes psalmos propriam aptavit oratiunculam, quod ipse pigmenta vocitare solebat: ut ei psalmi hac de causa dulcescerent. In quibus videlicet pigmentis, non compositionem verborum curabat, sed compunctionem cordis tantum quaerebat: in quibus pigmentis aliquando Dei laudat omnipotentiam, et judicium; aliquando semetipsum vituperat; aliquando sanctos, qui Deo obediunt, beatificat; aliquando miseros et peccatores luget, quibus omnibus semetipsum semper deteriorem dicebat. Quae tamen, aliis canentibus cum eo, finito psalmo, ipse solus tacitus ruminare solebat. Nec ulli ea manifestare volebat. Quidem tamen nostrum, qui ei familiarissimus erat, magna vi precum vix obtinuit ab eo, ut ei ipsa pigmenta, sicut ille cantare solitus erat, dictaret. Quae tamen ipse conscripta vivente eo nemini innotuit, sed post obitum ejus quibusque legere volentibus exhibuit.

60. Psalmos pro loco et tempore varios recitabat.

Inter psalmos autem cantandum frequenter etiam manibus operari solebat, nam his temporibus rete operabatur. De ipsis vero psalmis dispositum habuit, quos in die, quos in nocte cantaret; quos, dum se ad missam praeparabat, cantaret; quos, dum discalceatus ad lectum ire volebat. Mane autem semper quando se calceabat, et lavabat manus, litanias cantabat: et sic ad ecclesiam profectus, tres aut quatuor missas celebrari faciebat, ipse astans et officium agens: statuto tamen legitimo tempore in die publicam missam, nisi aliqua ei incommoditas accidisset, ipse cantabat.

How zealous he was to sharpen his own devotion in the love of God is witnessed by the great volumes in our keeping which he wrote with his own hand in shorthand; they are known to contain only what pertains to the praise of almighty God and the rebuke of sins, to the praise also of the blessed and eternal life and the terror of hell, and whatever pertains to compunction and lament. Witnesses too are the brethren living among us and at New Corbie, whom he often asked for help in this work, and who sent him a number of writings of this kind. Yet nothing could ever be enough for him; he wished to spend his whole life in mourning and tears. For although compunction of heart moved him to tears, they never seemed enough to him — except that in the last year of his life, by the Lord's bounty, he obtained the grace he had long sought, of weeping whenever he wished. Indeed, from these same words of compunction, taken from Holy Scripture, he fitted a short prayer of his own to each of the psalms, which he used to call his 'spices', so that the psalms might grow sweet to him on this account. In these spices he cared nothing for the composition of words, but sought only compunction of heart: in them he sometimes praises the almighty power and the judgement of God; sometimes he blames himself; sometimes he calls blessed the saints who obey God; sometimes he mourns the wretched and the sinners, than all of whom he always said he himself was worse. These, however, when others were singing with him, he used to ponder alone and in silence at the end of each psalm. Nor would he reveal them to anyone. One of us, however, who was very close to him, with great force of entreaty barely prevailed on him to dictate to him these spices as he was accustomed to sing them. He wrote them down, but made them known to no one while Anskar lived; after his death, however, he showed them to all who wished to read them.

60. He recited different psalms according to the place and the time.

While singing the psalms he would often also work with his hands, for at such times he made nets. As for the psalms themselves, he had them arranged: which he would sing by day, which by night; which while he prepared himself for Mass; which when he had taken off his shoes and was about to go to bed. In the morning, while he put on his shoes and washed his hands, he always sang the litanies; and then, going to the church, he had three or four Masses celebrated, himself standing by and taking part in the office; but at the appointed and proper time of the day, unless some indisposition prevented him, he himself sang the public Mass.

61. Liberalis in pauperes, xenodochium dotat in gratiam pauperum. Omnium curam gerit. Sacculum portat in zona. In Quadragesima reficit pauperes quatuor, et eis ministrat.

In eleemosynis vero dandis quam ipse liberalissimus fuerit, quis enarrare poterit, cum omnia quae habebat in Domini voluntate, necessitatem patientibus subministrare cupiebat? Ubicunque enim aliquem in necessitate positum sciebat, ex quanto poterat eum adjuvare satagebat. Et non solum in propria parochia, sed etiam in longinquis regionibus positis subsidium sui adjutorii ministrabat: specialius tamen hospitale pauperum in Brema constitutum habebat, ad quod decimas de nonnullis villis disposuit, ut ibi cum quotidiana susceptione pauperum aegroti recrearentur. Per omnem episcopatum suum decimas animalium et omnium reddituum, decimasque decimarum, quae ad eum pertinebant, in pauperum expensionem distribuebat: et quidquid argenti vel cujuslibet census illi proveniebat, in usus indigentium decimabat. Insuper in quinto anno omnium animalium, licet antea decimata fuerint, ad eleemosynarum dationem iterum ex integro decimationem faciebat: de argento etiam quod ad ecclesias in monasteriis veniebat, quartam partem ad hoc ipsum destinabat. Curam ergo pupillorum et viduarum maximam semper habebat, et ubicunque anachoretas esse sciebat, sive viros, sive feminas, frequentibus visitationibus et donis ipsos in Dei servitio confortabat, et necessariis subsidiis adjuvare studebat. Habebat quoque in zona propria semper sacculum cum nummis, ut, si quando egens veniret, et dispensator eleemosynae suae deesset, ipse sine mora quod daret haberet. Studebat enim illud beati Job dictum per omnia implere, ut nec saltem oculos viduae aliquando exspectare faceret: sicque et oculus caeco et pes claudo et pater pauperum omnino esse studebat. In Quadragesimae vero tempore quatuor pauperes quotidie in Brema ad escam suscipi jubebat, duos scilicet viros et duas feminas, et viris quidem ipse cum fratribus pedes lavabat; feminas autem in praedicto hospitali pauperum, vice illius, quaedam Deo sacrata quam ipse in Dei voluntate et religionis amore probatam habebat. Denique cum parochias more episcopali circuiret, antequam ipse ad convivium accederet, pauperes praecipiebat introduci: quibus aquam etiam ad manus lavandas exhibebat, et eulogiis datis miscebat; et mensa ante ipsos posita, sic demum ad convivium suum cum hospitibus accedebat.

61. Generous to the poor, he endows a hospice for their sake. He cares for all. He carries a purse in his belt. In Lent he feeds four poor people and serves them.

Who could tell how very generous he was in giving alms, since he desired, according to the Lord's will, to give all that he had to those who suffered need? For wherever he knew of anyone in need, he took pains to help him as far as he could. And he gave the support of his help not only in his own diocese but also to those living in distant regions; but in particular he had established a hospital for the poor in Bremen, to which he assigned the tithes of several estates, so that there, besides the daily reception of the poor, the sick might be restored. Throughout his whole diocese he distributed for the support of the poor the tithe of the animals and of all the revenues, and the tithe of the tithes, that belonged to him; and of whatever silver or revenue of any kind came to him he set aside a tenth for the use of the needy. Moreover, every fifth year, although they had already been tithed, he again took a full tithe of all the animals for the giving of alms; and of the silver that came to the churches in the monasteries he set aside a fourth part for this same purpose. He always took the greatest care of orphans and widows; and wherever he knew there were anchorites, whether men or women, he strengthened them in the service of God by frequent visits and gifts, and took pains to help them with what they needed. He also always carried a little purse of coins in his own belt, so that if ever a needy person came when the steward of his alms was not there, he himself would have something to give without delay. For he strove to fulfil in every respect that saying of blessed Job, never to make the eyes of the widow wait (Job 31:16); and so he strove to be in every way both an eye to the blind and a foot to the lame and a father of the poor (Job 29:15–16). In the season of Lent he had four poor people received for a meal every day in Bremen, two men and two women; and he himself, with the brethren, washed the feet of the men, while the feet of the women were washed in his stead, in the hospital for the poor already mentioned, by a woman consecrated to God whom he had proved in obedience to God's will and in love of religion. Again, when he went round the parishes in the manner of a bishop, before he himself went to table he had the poor brought in; he gave them water to wash their hands, handed them blessed bread and poured them drink; and when a table had been set before them, only then would he go to his own meal with his guests.

Et ut misericordiae ac pietatis ejus viscera exemplis approbemus, vidimus quondam, cum inter multos alios cujusdam viduae filium in longinqua regione captivum abductum, in Sueonum videlicet, pretio redemptum, ipse secum ad propria reduxisset; et cum ipsum mater sua gaudens videret reversum, (sicuti mos est feminarum) prae gaudio in conspectu astans lacrymata fuisset; ipse quoque episcopus compunctus non minus flere coeperit, statimque filium ipsum viduae libertate donatum matri reddidit, domumque gaudentes ire permisit.

62. Futura praenoscit; in agendis Deum consulit. Bremensis Ecclesiae se fore pastorem coelitus praediscit.

Et quia conversatio ejus, secundum beatum Paulum apostolum, semper erat in coelo, nonnunquam ipse coelestibus revelationibus (sicuti jam praefati sumus, licet multa omiserimus) illustrabatur in terra, ita ut fere omnia quae ei proventura erant, antea semper, sive per somnium, sive per intimam revelationem in mente, sive per excessum, ipsi cognita fierent. Nam quod diximus fieri in mente, hujusmodi esse putamus, sicut in Actibus apostolorum legitur: Dixit, inquit, Spiritus Philippo. Ad omnia enim quae forte praecipua definire debebat, spatium cogitandi habere volebat; et nihil temere disponebat, antequam gratia Dei illustratus, ipse in mente sua sentiret quid melius esset: sicque superna visitatione certificatus in mente, sine cunctatione quae agenda erant, disponebat. Porro ea quae per somnium videbat, sicuti jam superius multa comprehensa sunt, tam vera erant, ut nunquam ea cassata reminiscamur. Nam ut ad probationem hujus rei omissa referamus, antequam ad Bremensem invitaretur Ecclesiam, quadam nocte visum est ei quod venisset in quamdam regionem amoenissimam, in qua invenit beatum Petrum apostolum. Cumque illum admiraretur, veniunt quidam homines petentes, ut ipse beatus videlicet Petrus eis pastorem et doctorem destinare deberet. Quibus cum ille respondisset: Iste est, quem debetis habere pastorem, domnum episcopum coram se stantem proponens; visum est ipsi quod terrae motus fieret magnus, et ipse in terram cecidisset, et quod venisset vox super eum, et magna suavitas in mente, unctio videlicet Spiritus sancti, ita ut se quasi innovatum sentiret in gratia Christi. Vox vero quae venit, quasi benedictionem super eum fudit.

And to prove by examples the tender depths of his mercy and compassion: we once saw how, when among many others he had ransomed the son of a certain widow, who had been carried off captive to a distant land, namely to the Swedes, and had brought him back home with him, and the mother, seeing her son returned, stood before him weeping for joy (as is the way of women), the bishop too was moved and began to weep no less; and at once he gave the widow's son his freedom, restored him to his mother, and let them go home rejoicing.

62. He knows the future beforehand; he consults God in what he must do. He learns from heaven beforehand that he will be the shepherd of the church of Bremen.

And because, in the words of the blessed apostle Paul, his way of life was always in heaven (Phil 3:20), he was at times enlightened on earth by heavenly revelations (as we have already said, though we have left out much), so that almost everything that was to happen to him was always made known to him beforehand, whether in a dream, or by an inward revelation in his mind, or in ecstasy. What we have called a revelation in the mind we take to be of the kind we read of in the Acts of the Apostles, where it says: The Spirit said to Philip (Acts 8:29). For in all the more important matters he had to decide, he wished to have time to reflect, and he settled nothing rashly until, enlightened by the grace of God, he perceived in his own mind what was best; and so, made certain in his mind by a visitation from on high, he arranged without hesitation what was to be done. And the things he saw in dreams, many of which have already been set down above, were so true that we do not remember any of them ever coming to nothing. To prove this, let us relate something we passed over: before he was called to the church of Bremen, one night it seemed to him that he had come into a most delightful country, where he found the blessed apostle Peter. And while he was gazing at him in wonder, some men came asking that blessed Peter himself should appoint a shepherd and teacher for them. And when Peter had answered them, "This is the one whom you are to have as your shepherd," pointing to the lord bishop as he stood before him, it seemed to him that there was a great earthquake and that he fell to the ground, and that a voice came upon him, and a great sweetness in his mind, the anointing, that is, of the Holy Spirit, so that he felt himself made new, as it were, in the grace of Christ. And the voice that came seemed to pour out a blessing upon him.

Post haec iterum, sicut ipsi videbatur, jam dicti viri admonuerunt apostolum, quo eis doctorem quemlibet destinaret (contrarii enim esse videbantur iis quae ille eis ante proposuerat); quibus ille quasi indignando respondit: Nonne dixi vobis quia hic esse deberet, qui in praesentiarum stat? quid dubitastis? nonne audistis vocem super eum Spiritus sancti ad hoc delapsam, ut eum vobis consecraret pastorem? Quo dicto, somno expergefactus, quod triennio ante viderat quam ad Bremensem regendam invitaretur ecclesiam, certus omnino factus est, quod alicubi in nomine Domini ire deberet: sed quo, nesciebat. Postquam vero regio jussu ad Bremensem ecclesiam venit, et eam in honore sancti Petri consecratam didicit, et nonnullos quoque invenit, qui eum non libenti reciperent animo, recordatus est visionis suae: hacque de causa consensit, ut illam regendam susciperet dioecesim. Non aliter nunquam se hoc facere voluisse attestando dicebat.

63. Turholti nutrit pueros Nortmannicos. Praevidet Reginarii poenam ob eos inde abductos.

Eo quoque tempore quando cellam praedictam Turholt habuerat, quoniam omnis ei cura de vocatione gentium erat, ut eis in sua legatione prodesse potuisset, nonnullos pueros, ex Nortmannis vel Sclavis emptos, in eadem cella causa discendi ad sacram militiam nutriendos posuerat. Quorum quosdam praedictus Reginarius, quando illi cella ipsa data est, inde abstulit, et ad suum servitium misit. Qua de causa, cum nimium esset domnus episcopus anxiatus, post paululum visum est illi quod venisset in quamdam domum, invenissetque ibi et venerandum regem Carolum et ipsum Reginarium. Quos ipse, ut ei videbatur, de iisdem pueris increpavit, asserens quod eos ad Dei omnipotentis servitium nutrire disposuerat, non ut Reginario servirent. Quo dicto visum est ei, quod idem Reginarius, levato pede suo ad os calcitraret domni episcopi. Denique hoc facto mox visum est ei, quod Jesus Christus prope eum astaret, diceretque regi praefato pariter et Reginario: Cujus, inquit, hic hominem vos tam turpiter dehonestatis? scitote, quia iste Dominum habet, et vos de hac causa non eritis immulctati. Quo dicto ipsi exterriti facti conturbati sunt: domnus vero episcopus evigilavit. Quod illi ostensum quam verum fuerit, testatur ultio divina, quae super ipsum venit Reginarium. Nam non multo post iram regis meruit, et cellam ipsam una cum omnibus, quae ex parte regis habebat, perdidit, nec ulterius in gratiam pristinam redire potuit.

After this, as it seemed to him, the same men urged the apostle again to appoint some teacher or other for them (for they seemed to be against what he had proposed to them before); and he answered them as if indignant: "Did I not tell you that it should be this man who stands here before you? Why did you doubt? Did you not hear the voice of the Holy Spirit come down upon him for this very purpose, to consecrate him your shepherd?" At these words he awoke from sleep; and from this vision, which he saw three years before he was called to govern the church of Bremen, he became entirely certain that he was to go somewhere in the name of the Lord; but where, he did not know. But when, at the king's command, he came to the church of Bremen and learned that it was consecrated in honour of Saint Peter, and also found some who received him unwillingly, he remembered his vision; and for this reason he consented to take that diocese under his rule. He used to declare, solemnly affirming it, that otherwise he would never have been willing to do so.

63. At Torhout he brings up boys of the Northmen. He foresees Reginar's punishment for taking them away from there.

At the time, too, when he held the cell of Torhout mentioned above, since all his care was for the calling of the nations, so that he might be of use to them in his mission, he had bought a number of boys from among the Northmen and the Slavs and placed them in that same cell, to be brought up and taught for the sacred service. Some of them Reginar, of whom we spoke, took away from there when that cell was given to him, and put them to his own service. The lord bishop was greatly distressed at this, and a little while afterwards it seemed to him that he had come into a certain house and found there both the venerable King Charles and Reginar himself. He rebuked them, as it seemed to him, about those boys, declaring that he had meant to bring them up for the service of almighty God, not to serve Reginar. When he had said this, it seemed to him that Reginar raised his foot and kicked the lord bishop in the mouth. When this was done, it seemed to him at once that Jesus Christ stood near him and said to the king and to Reginar alike: "Whose man," he said, "is this, whom you dishonour so shamefully? Know that this man has a Lord, and you will not go unpunished for this." At these words they were terrified and thrown into confusion; and the lord bishop awoke. How true this showing was is witnessed by the divine vengeance that came upon Reginar himself. For not long afterwards he incurred the king's anger and lost that cell, together with everything he held from the king, and was never again able to return to his former favour.

64. De grege quam sollicitus; in praedicatione suavis et severus.

Verum de pastorali ejus gratia qualis quantusque exstiterit, praeterisse ne videamur; in illo certe probavimus, quam verum sit, quod beatus Gregorius in figura pastorum, qui in Nativitate Domini super gregem suum vigilabant, de pastoribus Ecclesiae dixit: Quid est, inquit, hoc, quod vigilantibus pastoribus angelus apparuit, eosque Dei claritas circumfulsit? nisi quod illi prae caeteris videre sublimia merentur, qui fidelibus gregibus praeesse sollicite sciunt? Dumque ipsi pie super gregem vigilant, divina super eos gratia largius coruscat. In omni enim actione illius gratiam Dei cum eo comitasse multis experimentis probavimus. Nam quod ipse super gregis sui custodia sollicitus, multa sublimia videre promeruit, et in mente superna frequentius visitatione inspiratus sit, superius jam in multis comprehensum ostendimus. Denique etiam exterius gratia Dei in eo largius coruscante, sermo quoque praedicationis illius multa suavitate perfusus, partim erat horribilis: ut certo probaretur judicio, infusione spiritali verba ejus moderari: in quo miscens terroribus blandimenta, vim divini praetenderet judicii, in quo veniens Dominus terribilis peccatoribus, et blandus apparebit justis. Hac quippe gratia in verbis et vultu admirandus erat: ita ut eum potentes et divites, maxime tamen contumaces et protervi terribilem attenderent; mediocres vero quasi fratrem complecterentur; pauperes autem quasi patrem piissimo venerarentur affectu.

65. Prohibet laborem in die festo. Deus transgressores puniens

Porro licet signa virtutum, velut instrumenta jactantiae, caute fugeret, tamen eo non quaerente et haec ipsa non deerant: quod evidenti probatum est indicio, quia scilicet mandatum Domini ex ore illius in irritum prolatum non cessit. Nam cum quodam tempore in Frisia, in pago Ostergao, in die Dominica praedicaret populo, et inter alia prohiberet, ne quis in die festo opus servile exerceret, quidam illorum, ut sunt contumaces et stolidi, domum reversi, quia serenus erat aer, in pratum euntes, collecto feno acervos fecerunt.

64. How solicitous he was for his flock; gentle and severe in his preaching.

But lest we seem to have passed over what and how great he was in the grace of a shepherd: in him we have indeed proved how true is what blessed Gregory said of the shepherds of the Church, taking as a figure the shepherds who kept watch over their flock at the Nativity of the Lord: "What does it mean," he says, "that the angel appeared to the shepherds as they kept watch, and the brightness of God shone round about them, if not that those above all deserve to see sublime things who know how to watch with care over faithful flocks? And while they keep loving watch over the flock, the grace of God shines upon them more abundantly." For we have proved by many experiences that the grace of God went with him in all that he did. That he, being careful in guarding his flock, was found worthy to see many sublime things, and was often inspired in his mind by a visitation from on high, we have already shown above in many instances. And as the grace of God shone forth abundantly in him outwardly too, his preaching, though steeped in great sweetness, was in part fearful, so that it could be judged with certainty that his words were governed by a spiritual inpouring: mingling gentleness with terrors, he set before his hearers the force of the divine judgement, at which the Lord, when he comes, will appear terrible to sinners and gentle to the just. By this grace he was admirable in word and look, so that the powerful and the rich, and above all the stubborn and the insolent, regarded him as fearsome; people of middling station embraced him as a brother; and the poor revered him as a father with the most loving affection.

65. He forbids work on a feast day. God punishing the transgressors

Now although he carefully shunned miraculous signs as instruments of boasting, yet even these were not lacking, though he did not seek them; and this was proved by a clear sign, namely that the Lord's command, uttered by his mouth, did not go for nothing. For once, when he was preaching to the people on the Lord's Day in Frisia, in the district of Ostergo, and among other things forbade anyone to do servile work on a feast day, some of them, stubborn and dull-witted as they are, went home and, because the weather was fine, went out into the meadow, gathered the hay and made ricks of it.

Quibus factis, advesperascente die, omnes illi acervi, qui eadem die facti fuerant, divinitus igni consumpti sunt, illaesis illis permanentibus qui in anterioribus diebus in medio praeparati constabant. Quo facto, populi in circuitu manentes, fumum a longe cernentes, hostes adesse putantes, timuerunt valde: sed diligentius rei veritatem perscrutantes, contumaciam nonnullorum probaverunt esse multatam.

66. Captivorum liberationem procurat.

Nec silendum arbitramur quia cum quodam tempore gens Nordalbingorum plurimum deliquisset, quorum delictum hujusmodi erat, videlicet cum nonnulli miseri captivi de Christianis, qui apud barbaros affligebantur, inde effugerent, et ad Christianos venirent ad praedictos Nordalbingos, qui proximi noscuntur esse paganis; ipsi eos capiebant, et in vinculis ponebant: quorum alios iterum paganis vendebant, alios suo mancipabant servitio, aut aliis Christianis venundabant. Cum igitur hoc domno innotuisset episcopo, et de hac re nimium anxius esset, quod in sua dioecesi tantum nefas contigisset; sed qualiter id emendari potuisset, non satis ratione colligebat: quoniam in hoc nefandissimo scelere erant plurimi irretiti, qui potentes apud eos et nobiles habebantur. Denique cum de hac re nimium esset anxius, quadam nocte divina ei apparuit consolatio. Videbatur namque illi, quod Dominus Jesus esset in praesenti saeculo, sicut olim fuit, quando suae praesentiae doctrinam et exempla populis praedicabat: visumque est ei, quod esset cum multitudine fidelium, et quod ipse domnus episcopus cum eo in eodem esset itinere laetus et gaudens; et, ut ipsi videbatur, erat in omnibus contumacibus terror divinitus illatus, et ereptio fiebat oppressorum, et quies magna in omnibus, ita ut nihil contrarietatis in ipso videretur esse itinere. Post hanc itaque visionem confirmatus, ad praedictum populum suum ipse paravit profectionem, ea videlicet voluntate, ut et miseros qui irrationabiliter servituti addicti fuerant et venditi, quoque pacto liberaret; et ne in posterum aliquis tantum malum committere auderet, cum Domini gratia prohiberet. In qua profectione tantam illi Dominus gratiam concessit, tantumque auctoritatis ejus contumacibus terrorem incussit, ut, licet essent nobiles et male potentes, nullus tamen illorum suo imperio auderet contradicere: sed quaerebantur miseri ubicunque venditi fuerant: et donati libertate, dimittebantur, ut irent quocunque vellent.

When this was done, as evening came on, all the ricks that had been made that day were consumed by fire through the power of God, while those that had been made ready on the days before and stood among them remained unharmed. At this the people living round about, seeing the smoke from afar, thought that enemies had come and were greatly afraid; but looking more carefully into the truth of the matter, they found that the stubbornness of certain men had been punished.

66. He secures the freeing of captives.

Nor do we think we should pass over in silence that at one time the people of the Nordalbingians had sinned grievously; and their offence was of this kind: when some wretched Christian captives who were being ill-treated among the barbarians escaped from there and came to Christians, to these same Nordalbingians, who are known to be the nearest neighbours of the pagans, they would seize them and put them in chains; and some of them they sold again to the pagans, others they made their own slaves, or sold to other Christians. When this became known to the lord bishop, he was exceedingly troubled that so great a wickedness had taken place in his diocese; but he could not well see how it might be set right, since very many who were held to be powerful and noble among them were entangled in this most abominable crime. And while he was so deeply troubled over this, one night a divine consolation appeared to him. For it seemed to him that the Lord Jesus was in this present world, as he once was when he preached to the peoples by the teaching and the example of his presence; and it seemed to him that he was with a multitude of the faithful, and that the lord bishop himself was with him on the same journey, glad and rejoicing; and, as it seemed to him, a terror sent by God had fallen upon all the stubborn, and the oppressed were being delivered, and there was great peace among all, so that nothing contrary seemed to be found on that journey. Strengthened by this vision, he prepared to set out himself to that people of his, with this purpose: to free by whatever means the wretched men who had been unjustly bound to slavery and sold, and, by the grace of the Lord, to forbid anyone thereafter to dare commit so great an evil. On this journey the Lord granted him such grace, and struck the stubborn with such terror of his authority, that, noble and wickedly powerful though they were, none of them dared to gainsay his command; the wretched men were sought out wherever they had been sold, and, given their freedom, were let go wherever they wished.

Insuper ne ulla fraus in futurum pro eadem re obtenderetur, conventionem talem fecerunt, ut non juramento nec testibus se ullus eorum, qui in praedicta rapacitate maculati fuerant, defenderet; sed judicio omnipotentis Dei se committeret, aut ipse, qui pro tali scelere impetebatur, aut certe captivus quem alius impetebat. Hoc ergo facto in ipso itinere Dominus veraciter exhibuit, quod fidelibus pollicitus est, dicens: Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem saeculi. Tanta prosperitate et gaudio iter illud perfecit, ut quidam cum eo comitantes dicerent, nunquam se in vita sua tam bonum et tam suave iter egisse.

67. Oleo sanat aegrotos. Vanam gloriam fugit.

Quanti vero oratione illius et unctione olei sanati sunt, enumerare non possumus. Hoc enim multorum assertione comperto, certatim ad eum non solum de ipsius dioecesi, sed etiam de longinquo venire solebant aegrotantes, medicinam ab eo salutis poscentes. Ipse tamen haec omnia semper occultari maluit quam vulgari. Nempe cum de hujusmodi virtutum signis aliquando coram eo fieret sermo, ipse cuidam suo dixit familiari: Si dignus essem apud Deum meum, rogarem quatenus unum mihi concederet signum, videlicet ut de me sua gratia faceret bonum hominem.

68. Martyr tota vita. Affectus dysenteria. Tristatur ob martyrium sibi praereptum.

Praeterea cum talis ei esset vita, in infirmitate tamen corporis proprii pene assidue laborabat. Omnis quippe vita ejus fere martyrium fuit, quippe in laboribus plurimis infra dioecesim propriam, propter incursiones et depraedationes barbarorum, necnon et contradictiones malignantium; insuper et cruciatione propria, quam sibi ipse in corpore suo pro amore Christi nunquam cessavit inducere. Sed quid facimus, qui post tot dulcia et salubria illud cogimur referre, quod sine nostro luctu non valemus explicare? Nam aetatis suae anno sexagesimo quarto, episcopatus vero trigesimo quarto, gravi coepit corporis morbo laborare, dysenteria scilicet jugi, qua cum per multos dies, mensibus videlicet quatuor et amplius, acriter laboraret, et se ad mortem urgeri sentiret, semper Deo gratias agebat, minoremque ipsum laborem esse dicebat, quam sua mereretur iniquitas; illud beati Job saepius decantans: Si bona suscepimus de manu Dei, quare mala non suscipiamus?

Moreover, so that no fraud might be pleaded in this matter in future, they made an agreement that none of those who had been stained by this rapacity should clear himself by oath or by witnesses, but should submit himself to the judgement of almighty God — either the man himself who was accused of such a crime, or else the captive whom another claimed. In this deed, then, on that very journey, the Lord truly showed what he promised to his faithful, saying: Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Mt 28:20). He completed that journey with such success and joy that some of those who went with him said they had never in their lives made so good and so pleasant a journey.

67. He heals the sick with oil. He shuns vainglory.

How many were healed by his prayer and by anointing with oil we cannot count. For when this became known through the testimony of many, the sick used to come to him eagerly, not only from his own diocese but also from far away, asking him for the remedy of health. He himself, however, always preferred that all this should be kept hidden rather than made known. Indeed, when on one occasion there was talk in his presence of such miraculous signs, he said to one of his close companions: "If I were worthy in the sight of my God, I would ask him to grant me one sign: that by his grace he would make of me a good man."

68. A martyr all his life. Stricken with dysentery. He grieves that martyrdom has been snatched from him.

Furthermore, though such was his life, he suffered almost constantly from bodily infirmity. Indeed his whole life was almost a martyrdom: in the very many labours within his own diocese caused by the raids and plunderings of the barbarians and also by the opposition of the malicious; and besides, in the torment of his own making, which he never ceased to inflict on his body for the love of Christ. But what are we to do, who after so many sweet and wholesome things are compelled to relate what we cannot tell without grief? For in the sixty-fourth year of his age and the thirty-fourth of his episcopate he began to suffer from a grave bodily illness, namely a continual dysentery; and though he suffered sharply from it for many days, that is, for four months and more, and felt himself pressed towards death, he always gave thanks to God, and said that this suffering was less than his wickedness deserved, often repeating that saying of blessed Job: If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil? (Job 2:10).

Tamen se propter supradictas visiones martyrio potius quam tali infirmitate credebat consummari, tristis admodum factus, sibimetipsi et peccatis suis coepit reputare, quod quasi spe certissima sua esset culpa defraudatus, illud Psalmigraphi saepius decantans: Justus es, Domine, et rectum judicium tuum. Quem videlicet moerorem cum suo fidelissimo discipulo, qui ei conscius, quaerendo revelaret; et eum ipse consolari intentius studuisset, dicens, quod non ei promissum fuisset, ut gladio trucidaretur, aut igne cremaretur, aut in aqua necaretur; sed ut cum corona martyrii ad Dominum venire deberet; nullatenus tamen consolationem recipere potuit. Denique cum saepius de eadem re cum discipulo suo, qui ei conscius pene in omnibus fuit, colloqueretur; et summopere eum consolari voluisset, ad memoriam ejus revocare studens, quantam in Dei servitio sustinuerit, quantamque corporis sui pertulerit molestiam, et quod etiam ipsa infirmitas novissima gravis nimium et diuturna et satis ipsi pro martyrio reputari potuisset; ipse tamen nullo modo consolationem recipiens, sed in supradicto manebat moerore.

69. A Deo confortatur. Privilegia sibi concessa describi curat, exsecutionem regi commendans.

Unde factum est, ut Dominus servum suum, non jam ut prius per somnium, sed apertius consolari dignatus sit, quatenus tanto moerori suae gratiae praestaret remedium. Nam cum quadam die ad missam in oratorio consistens, pro hoc ipso nimium sollicitus esset; subito in excessum mentis raptus audivit vocem quasi vigilans, quae ipsum vehementer increpabat, quod nullatenus de Dei promissione dubitare debuisset, quasi aliqua iniquitas Dei potuisset pietatem vincere. Firmissime crede, inquit, et nullatenus dubites, quia utrumque tibi Deus sua gratia faciet, id est et peccata dimittet, pro quibus modo sollicitus es, et omnia quae promisit, implebit. Qua consolatione suscepta, ipse quoque consolabatur semetipsum. Et exinde sollicitius quaeque in dioecesi sua procurando coepit disponere: insuper privilegia apostolicae sedis, quae erant de legatione ejus facta, in multis libellis jussit describere, et per omnes pene domini Ludovici regis episcopos destinare. Ipsi quoque regi Ludovico, filioque ejus aequivoco, hoc ipsum dirigens, addens et sui nominis litteras, quibus postulavit, ut haec in memoriam haberent, simul etiam, prout dictaret res, adjutorio essent: quatenus legatio ipsa, Dei auxiliante gratia, et ipsis adjuvantibus, fructificare et crescere in gentibus potuisset.

Yet because, on account of the visions spoken of above, he had believed that he would be perfected by martyrdom rather than by such an illness, he became very sad, and began to impute it to himself and to his sins that by his own fault he had been cheated of what was, as it were, a most certain hope, often repeating the words of the Psalmist: You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right (Ps 119:137). And when he revealed this grief, lamenting, to his most faithful disciple, who was privy to his secrets, and the disciple tried earnestly to console him, saying that it had not been promised him that he would be slain by the sword, or burned with fire, or put to death in water, but that he would come to the Lord with the crown of martyrdom, he could in no way accept consolation. And when he spoke of the same matter again and again with his disciple, who shared his secrets in almost everything, and the disciple tried with all his might to console him, striving to bring back to his memory how much he had endured in the service of God and how much bodily affliction he had borne, and that even this last illness, being so very grave and so long, could well be counted to him as martyrdom, he still would by no means accept consolation, but remained in the grief we have described.

69. He is comforted by God. He has the privileges granted to him copied out, commending their execution to the king.

So it came about that the Lord deigned to console his servant, no longer as before by a dream, but more openly, so as to grant the remedy of his grace to so great a grief. For one day, as he was standing in the oratory at Mass, deeply troubled over this very thing, he was suddenly caught up in ecstasy and, as though awake, heard a voice which rebuked him sharply, saying that he ought by no means to have doubted God's promise, as if any wickedness could overcome the loving kindness of God. "Believe most firmly," it said, "and do not doubt at all, that God by his grace will do both things for you: that is, he will forgive the sins over which you are now troubled, and he will fulfil all that he has promised." Having received this consolation, he too comforted himself. And from then on he began to set everything in order in his diocese with greater care; moreover, he ordered the privileges of the Apostolic See that had been granted concerning his mission to be copied out in many little books and sent to almost all the bishops of the lord King Louis. To King Louis himself, too, and to his son of the same name he sent the same, adding a letter in his own name in which he asked them to keep these things in mind and also to give their help as occasion required, so that the mission itself, with the help of God's grace and with their support, might bear fruit and grow among the nations.

70. Optat mori die Purificationis beatae Mariae, in cujus vigilia tres cereos accendi jubet. In die festo missis pro se dictis, missam publicam exspectat jejunus.

Porro cum jam per tres menses continuos praedicta laboraret infirmitate, et Epiphania Domini transisset, optare coepit, quatenus eum in Purificatione sanctae Mariae ad Domini gratiam transire liceret. Qua ergo festivitate appropinquante, praecepit clero et pauperibus convivium praeparare, ut in ipso sanctissimo die epularentur. Jussit etiam ut tres fierent cerei magni ex sua speciali cera. Quibus factis, in ipsa vigilia praedictae festivitatis fecit eos ante se ferri, et unum ante altare sanctae Mariae accendere praecepit, alterum vero ante altare sancti Petri, tertium ante altare sancti Joannis Baptistae, optans ut ipsi eum de corpore susciperent egredientem, qui in supradicta visione olim ejus fuerant ductores. Caeterum praedicta infirmitate ita erat fatigatus et attritus, ut pene jam in corpore ejus nihil remaneret, exceptis ossibus nervis ligatis, et corio tectis. Attamen ipse semper in Domini laude se exercebat. Illucescente vero jam dictae festivitatis die, pro eo missas, sicut quotidie soliti fuerant, cuncti qui adfuere sacerdotes, celebrarunt. Ipse vero ordinare coepit, qualiter ad populum fieret sermo, asserens se nihil eodem die gustaturum, donec publica finiretur missa. Qua finita, cum parumper comedisset et bibisset, per omnem diem studiosius suos commonere, et ad Domini servitium accendere studuit, nunc communiter, nunc sigillatim quemque, prout poterat, ad divinum animans servitium, maxime tamen ejus cura et sollicitudo fuit de sua legatione ad gentes. Noctem quoque sequentem in talibus admonitionibus perduxit continuam.

71. Litaniis dictis, post missas viaticum recipit. Ingeminat preces pro se et pro aliis. Moritur.

70. He longs to die on the day of the Purification of Blessed Mary, and on its eve orders three candles to be lit. On the feast, after Masses have been said for him, he waits fasting for the public Mass.

Now when he had suffered from this illness for three months on end, and the Lord's Epiphany had passed, he began to long that he might be allowed to pass to the grace of the Lord on the Purification of Holy Mary. So as that feast drew near, he ordered a banquet to be prepared for the clergy and the poor, that they might feast on that most holy day. He also ordered three large candles to be made from his own wax. When they had been made, on the very eve of that feast he had them carried before him, and ordered one to be lit before the altar of Holy Mary, another before the altar of Saint Peter, and the third before the altar of Saint John the Baptist, desiring that those who had once been his guides in the vision told above should receive him as he went forth from the body. He was so worn down and wasted by that illness that almost nothing remained of his body but bones bound by sinews and covered with skin. Yet he was always occupied in the praise of the Lord. When the day of that feast dawned, all the priests who were present celebrated Masses for him, as they had been accustomed to do every day. He himself began to arrange how the sermon to the people should be given, declaring that he would taste nothing that day until the public Mass was over. When it was finished and he had eaten and drunk a little, he strove all day long to admonish his people more earnestly and to kindle them to the service of the Lord, encouraging them to the service of God, now all together, now each one singly, as far as he was able; but his greatest care and concern was for his mission to the nations. The following night, too, he spent entire in such admonitions.

71. After the litanies have been said, he receives viaticum following the Masses. He redoubles his prayers for himself and for others. He dies.

Fratres vero qui aderant, cum litaniam facerent, et psalmos ex more pro ejus exitu decantarent, admonuit ipse, ut etiam hymnum ad laudem Dei compositum, id est Te Deum laudamus, pariter cantarent: fidem quoque catholicam a beato Athanasio compositam. Mane vero facto omnibus qui aderant, sacerdotibus sacra solemnia missarum pro eo celebrantibus, Dominici corporis et sanguinis communione percepta, elevatis manibus precabatur, ut quicunque in eum quoquomodo peccasset, divina ei hoc pietas dimitteret. Deinde versiculos istos coepit frequentius repetere: Secundum misericordiam tuam memento mei tu, propter bonitatem tuam, Domine; et: Deus, propitius esto mihi peccatori; et: In manus tuas Domine, commendo spiritum meum. Cum haec ipse saepius repeteret, et frequenti anhelitu jam ea frequentare non valeret; cuidam fratri praecepit ut haec eadem vice illius frequentando cantaret. Sicque oculis in coelum intentis, Domini gratiae commendatum spiritum exhalavit.

72. Lugent omnes. Epilogus ejus elogii.

Cujus corpore ex more curato, feretroque imposito, cum ad ecclesiam deferretur, iterari visus est luctus omnium, et vox una plangentium, maxime tamen clericorum, orphanorum, viduarum, pupillorum et indigentium. Quamvis enim de illius salute non sit dubitandum, quis religiosorum aut fidelium se a fletu continere poterit, cum ille nos desolatos reliquerit, in quo solo pene omnium antiquorum vigebant exempla sanctorum? Siquidem, ut ab ipso electorum omnium capite incipiamus, Christum inopem inops ipse secutus est, cum apostolis omnia dereliquit, et cum sancto Joanne Baptista primaevum tempus a turbarum frequentia remotum ducens, monasterii solitudinem expetiit: videlicet cum temporis processu quotidiano profectu excrevisset, et de virtute in virtutem ivisset, vas electionis ad portandum Christi nomen coram gentibus cum beato apostolo Paulo deputatus; pascendarum Christi ovium postmodum curam cum principe apostolorum Petro suscepit: in quo regimine qualem se quantumque exhibuerit, hoc vel maxime probare videtur, quod inter coelum et terram medius, inter Deum et proximum sequester, nunc divinae visioni et coelestibus revelationibus intererat, nunc commissorum sibi actus et vitam disponebat: ad quas active et contemplative geminas alas ideo ipse sufficiebat, quia cum mundicordes soli juxta Evangeliorum fidem Dominum credantur visuri, ipse virgo ab eo electus, cum sancto apostolo et evangelista Joanne, et mente et corpore virgo in aevum permansit; et tanta insuper ad cunctos charitate tenebatur, ut cum beato protomartyre Stephano etiam oraret pro suis persecutoribus.

And when the brethren who were present were saying the litany and chanting the psalms for his departure, as is the custom, he urged them to sing also the hymn composed in praise of God, that is, the Te Deum laudamus, and the Catholic faith composed by blessed Athanasius. In the morning, when all the priests who were present had celebrated the holy solemnities of Mass for him, and he had received the communion of the Lord's body and blood, he raised his hands and prayed that the divine loving kindness would forgive whoever had sinned against him in any way. Then he began to repeat these verses again and again: According to your mercy remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord (Ps 25:7); and: God, be merciful to me a sinner (Lk 18:13); and: Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit (Ps 31:6). When he had repeated these many times and, his breath now coming short and fast, could no longer go on repeating them, he told one of the brethren to keep singing these same verses in his stead. And so, with his eyes fixed on heaven, he breathed forth his spirit, commended to the grace of the Lord.

72. All mourn. The epilogue of his praise.

When his body had been prepared according to custom and laid on the bier, and was being carried to the church, the mourning of all seemed to break out anew, and there was but one voice of lamentation, above all of the clergy, of orphans, widows, wards and the needy. For although there can be no doubt of his salvation, who among the religious or the faithful could keep from weeping, now that he has left us desolate, he in whom alone the examples of almost all the saints of old flourished? For, to begin with the very Head of all the elect, he, poor, followed the poor Christ; with the apostles he left all things; and with Saint John the Baptist, spending his early years far from the throng of the crowds, he sought the solitude of the monastery. Then, when with the passing of time he had grown by daily progress and gone from virtue to virtue (Ps 84:8), he was appointed, with the blessed apostle Paul, a chosen vessel to carry the name of Christ before the nations (Acts 9:15); and afterwards, with Peter, the prince of the apostles, he took up the care of feeding the sheep of Christ. What and how great he showed himself in that government is proved above all by this: that, standing between heaven and earth, a mediator between God and his neighbour, he now took part in divine vision and heavenly revelations, now ordered the deeds and the life of those entrusted to him. And he was equal to these twin wings of the active and the contemplative life because — since, according to the faith of the Gospels, the pure in heart alone are believed to be destined to see the Lord — he, chosen by him as a virgin, remained, like the holy apostle and evangelist John, a virgin in mind and body for ever; and he was moreover possessed by such charity towards all that, like the blessed protomartyr Stephen, he prayed even for his persecutors.

O vere beatum et omni laudis praeconio dignissimum virum, quem talem ac tantum imitari, quem solum plurimorum, tot simul habere virtutes contigit! qui mente sanctus et corpore castus, cum virginibus agnum, quocunque ierit, sequetur: qui semper in confessione Christi perseverans gloriosum admodum inter confessores locum habebit: qui in sublimi illa cum apostolis judicum sede in regeneratione sessurus est, ac mundum, quem contempserat, judicaturus, et cum martyribus justitiae coronam et palmam martyrii adepturus.

73. Martyr quomodo.

Martyrii duo genera esse constat, unum in pace Ecclesiae occultum, alterum persecutionis articulo ingruente manifestum: utrumque voluntate tenuit; ad alterum effectu pervenit. Quia enim quotidie semper lacrymas, vigilias, jejunia, carnis macerationem, et desideriorum carnalium mortificationem in ara cordis Deo mactabat, martyrium profecto, quod pacis tempore non potuit, voto consecutus est. Quia vero ad apertum corporis martyrium persecutoris sibi animus non defuit, quod opere minus potuit, voluntate adeptus est. Quamvis hoc quoque martyrium opere eum habuisse omnino negare nequeamus, si tantos ejus pro Domino labores juxta Apostolum attendamus, in itineribus saepe, periculis fluminum, periculis latronum, periculis ex genere, periculis ex gentibus, periculis in civitate, periculis in solitudine, periculis in mari, periculis in falsis fratribus: in labore et aerumna, in vigiliis multis, in fame et siti, in jejuniis multis, in frigore et nuditate: praeter illa quae extrinsecus sunt, instantia ejus quotidiana, sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum. Quis infirmabatur, et ipse non fuit infirmus? quis scandalizabatur, et ipse non urebatur? Qui ergo tot ac tantis est pro Domino et corporis adversitatibus, et animi aestibus excoctus, quomodo martyr esse jure negabitur? Nam si sola vita per passionem terminata martyrio deputaretur, nequaquam sanctum evangelistam Joannem calicem suum Dominus bibiturum esse testaretur, quem minime vitam martyrio finivisse scimus. Proinde si illum juxta dominicam sententiam inter martyrum numerum ascribendum esse non dubitamus, de eo quoque, quem praemisimus, sancto plane ac beato admodum viro omnino ambigere non debemus. Martyr enim fuit, quia juxta Apostolum et ipsi mundus et ille mundo crucifixus erat. Martyr fuit, quia inter diaboli tentamenta, inter carnis illecebras, inter persequentes paganos, inter obsistentes Christianos semper imperterritus, et immobilis, et invictus in Christi confessione usque ad exitum vitae permansit.

O truly blessed man, most worthy of every tribute of praise, who was granted to be so true and so great an imitator, and alone to possess at once the virtues of so many! Holy in mind and chaste in body, he will follow the Lamb wherever he goes (Rev 14:4) with the virgins; persevering ever in the confession of Christ, he will have a most glorious place among the confessors; he will sit with the apostles on that lofty seat of judges in the regeneration, and judge the world he had despised; and with the martyrs he will receive the crown of justice and the palm of martyrdom.

73. How he was a martyr.

It is agreed that there are two kinds of martyrdom: one hidden, in the Church's time of peace; the other open, when the hour of persecution breaks upon her. He held both in will; the one he attained in deed. For since every day he constantly offered to God on the altar of his heart tears, vigils, fasts, the chastening of the flesh and the mortifying of carnal desires, he truly attained by his longing the martyrdom which he could not attain in a time of peace. And since he did not lack the courage to face a persecutor in the open martyrdom of the body, what he could not achieve in deed he achieved by his will. And yet we cannot altogether deny that he had this martyrdom too in deed, if, following the Apostle, we consider his great labours for the Lord: in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from his own race, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and hardship, in many watchings, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness; besides those things that are without, his daily pressure, the care of all the churches (2 Cor 11:26–28). Who was weak, and he was not weak? Who was made to stumble, and he did not burn? (2 Cor 11:29). How then can one who was tried as in a furnace for the Lord by so many and such great adversities of body and burnings of soul rightly be denied the name of martyr? For if only a life brought to its end by suffering were reckoned as martyrdom, the Lord would never have declared that the holy evangelist John would drink his chalice, though we know that John by no means ended his life in martyrdom. If, then, according to the Lord's word, we do not doubt that John is to be enrolled among the number of the martyrs, neither ought we to have any doubt at all about this man of whom we have spoken, so plainly holy and so truly blessed. For he was a martyr, because, in the Apostle's words, the world was crucified to him, and he to the world (Gal 6:14). He was a martyr, because amid the temptations of the devil, amid the allurements of the flesh, amid persecuting pagans, amid resisting Christians, he remained ever undaunted, unmoved and unconquered in the confession of Christ until the end of his life.

Martyr fuit, quia dum μάρτυρ testis dicatur, ipse divini semper verbi, et Christiferi nominis exstitit testis. Qua in re nemo miretur eum ad hoc, quod summo ipse desiderio optabat, et sibi repromissum putabat, martyrium non pervenisse; quia nec hoc sibi pollicitum juxta hujus nominis interpretationem probatur. Et certe poterat in accepto corporis martyrio aliqua forte suae menti elatio subrepere: quod ut caveretur, hoc divina prudentia et spopondit et concessit; videlicet ut meritis suis nihil minueretur, et humilitati, quae omnium est custos virtutum, provideretur.

7 4

Quocirca, quia jam ex his quae superius commemoravimus, claret quantae vir iste sanctitatis, quanti apud Deum meriti fuerit; restat ut sicut ipse Christi imitator in omnibus fuit, sic nos quoque ejus imitatores esse studeamus. Sic quippe fieri quibit, ut et ipse semper usque ad consummationem saeculi nobiscum vivere possit in terris, et nos post praesentis vitae transcursum cum eo in coelis vivere mereamur. Vivet namque nobiscum in terris, si eum vitae sanctitas et doctrinae recordatio nobis repraesentat: vivemus nos cum ipso in coelis, si ejus exempla sequentes, ad eum semper toto desiderio et tota virtute tendamus, ad quem nos ille praecessit Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

He was a martyr, because, since μάρτυρ means 'witness', he was always a witness to the divine word and to the Christ-bearing name. In this matter let no one wonder that he did not attain that martyrdom which he longed for with the greatest desire and believed had been promised him; for, by the meaning of this word, it is shown that this was not what had been promised him. And surely, had he received the martyrdom of the body, some pride might perhaps have crept into his mind; and to guard against this, the divine wisdom both promised and granted him this: that nothing should be taken from his merits, and that his humility, which is the guardian of all the virtues, should be provided for.

74

Therefore, since it is now clear from what we have recorded above how great was this man's holiness and how great his merit with God, it remains for us that, as he was in all things an imitator of Christ, so we too should strive to be imitators of him. For so it will come about that he may live with us on earth always, even to the consummation of the world, and that we, after the passing of this present life, may deserve to live with him in heaven. He will live with us on earth if the holiness of his life and the remembrance of his teaching make him present to us; and we shall live with him in heaven if, following his example, we always press on with all our desire and all our strength towards him to whom he has gone before us, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, God, for ever and ever. Amen.