

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

CHAPTER 1

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

3 He was distinguished in figure, pure in body, devout in mind, affable in conversation, lovely in looks, furnished with prudence, famous in temperance, firm in internal fortitude, steadfast in discernment of justice, fervent in longsuffering, robust in patience, gentle in humility, considerate in love; **4** and wisdom adorned him with the beauty of all the virtues to such an extent, that his speech was always in grace, seasoned with salt, in accordance with what the emissary Paulus stated. (Colossians 4:6)

5 Therefore, filled with the fruits⁵ of grace and good works, leaving his parents and fatherland,⁶ he spent certain years in the studies of the sacred⁷ writings. And, after receiving sufficient instruction, he built a monastery in a certain place to where religious men from all parts gathered. He even took care to invite his parents with dutiful considerateness.

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

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

9 And when he saw that he was surrounded⁸ by a mist of darkness, he perceived three⁹ hands extended to him from above, which held him by the arms, flying upon snowy-white wings. **10** Their hands were under their wings, which held him up on either side. And, as though it were through a mist, he discerned the body of each of these beings.

11 But coming higher, he discerned the faces of the holy heavenly-messengers, shining as the marvelous lightning, or (I say more exactly) he looked on the brightness of exalted light from the very countenances of the heavenly-messengers. **12** He could not perceive¹⁰ anything bodily, except for the brightness of light. **13** He noticed a third heavenly-messenger going before him, armed with a white shield and a radiant sword, and who was excellent in brightness.¹¹

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

15 They all chanted, with one beginning:
"The holy-ones will advance from virtue to virtue; the God of gods will be seen in Zion."
(Psalm 84:7)

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

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

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

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

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

22 Then the holy man, overcome with grief at parting from the fellowship of the heavenly-messengers, said, "I do not want to be separated from all of you."

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

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

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

26 Then the man of God said to those who were standing around, "Why are all of you marveling and uttering disquieting words?"

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

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

CHAPTER 2

On the third¹² day, in the middle of the night, the men appeared¹³ while many kinsmen and friends and neighbors were visiting the illustrious man, a darkness came suddenly upon him, and his legs were overcome by cold and stiffened. **2** Extending his hands in prayer, he gladly received death. For he remembered the exceedingly pleasant vision, which he had seen previously, after having suffered the same symptoms;¹⁴ he fell down on his bed as if weighed-down by sleep.

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

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

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

10 Now the bodies of the demons, as far as they could appear to his soul, were full of deformity¹⁵ and blackness,¹⁶ long-necked, filled with meagerness and filthiness and every horror; their heads swelled into the likeness of cauldrons. **11** But when the demons flew or fought,¹⁷ he could not see the shape of their body,¹⁸ only a horrible and fluttering shadow. **12** (But what prudent reader does not know, that these things are done by the unclean spirits due to the terror of the soul which beholds them?) **13** And due to the horrible darkness, he could never see their faces, exactly as he could not see those of the holy heavenly-messengers due to the brightness which was too great.

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

16 The adversaries, contradicting and reviling, said, "It is unjust of God that a human who consented to a sinner should have no condemnation, since it is written: 'Not only the ones who are doing such things are worthy of death, but even the ones who are consenting to the ones who are doing them.'"
(Romans 1:32)

17 Truly, as the heavenly-messengers fought, the holy man supposed, that the shouting of the battle and the crying of the demons could be heard in all the earth.

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

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

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

¹ H / others "LIFE"

² H / some others add

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

⁴ Bede "books"

⁵ H / CRP add

⁶ H / others add

⁷ H / others add

⁸ H, some (Lat "circumdari") / others (Lat "circumdare")

⁹ H / others "four"

¹⁰ others / H omits "could" & "perceive"

¹¹ others / H omits "He noticed...brightness." (likely by scribal error)

¹² others (supported by Bede) / H has an erasure here the exact length of this word

¹³ others / H adds

¹⁴ literally "signs"

¹⁵ may also be translated to "ugliness"

¹⁶ others / H omits "were" & "and blackness"

¹⁷ others / H omits "or fought"

¹⁸ others / H "not see a body"

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

22 *The slanderer* said, “It is not written: ‘if any of you do not avenge’; but: ‘if any of you do not forgive from your hearts.’” (Matthew 18:35)

23 *The heavenly-messenger of the Lord* said, “Let us be judged before the Lord.”

24 *The conquered enemy* replenished his viperine venoms, speaking, “If the Lord is just, this man will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens; for it is written: ‘Unless you are converted, and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens.’ He has barely fulfilled this word.” (Matthew 18:3)

25 *The holy heavenly-messenger*, explaining, said, “He had innocence¹ in his heart, but he continued according to the custom of men.”

26 *The slanderer* responded, “As he received evil from the custom, so let him accept vengeance from the supreme judge.”

27 *The holy heavenly-messenger* said, “Let us be judged before the Lord.” As the holy heavenly-messenger fought on, the adversaries were crushed.

CHAPTER 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ H / others “clemency”

² Bede “ordered”

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

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

⁵ Bede “air, not far distant from each other”

⁶ Bede “And he asked the heavenly-messengers”

⁷ Bede omits “The man of the Lord responded, ‘I do not know.’”

⁸ Bede “which were to burn up and consume”

⁹ Bede “Spiritual-Adversary”

¹⁰ Bede adds

¹¹ Bede “and do little to fulfill it”

¹² literally “other”

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

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

¹⁵ Bede “impiety”

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

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

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

¹⁹ Bede adds

²⁰ Bede “What you did not kindle”

²¹ Bede “that one burns in the body”

²² others, Bede / H “will”

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

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

²⁵ Bede “fires”

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

²⁷ Bede adds

16 *The holy heavenly-messenger* responded, “But what part of his lord’s will did he not fulfill?”

17 *The spiritual-adversary* responded, “It is written: ‘The Most-High is displeased with the offerings of an iniquitous man.’³¹ This man has received gifts from unrighteous men.”³² (Sirach 34:19)

18 *The holy heavenly-messenger* responded, “But he believed that each one of them had changed their mind.”

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

21 *The holy heavenly-messenger* responded, “We are judged before the Lord.”

22 *The deceitful slanderer*, relapsing into revilements against the Author of everything, broke forth, speaking, “Until now we deemed that the Lord was truthful.”

23 *The holy heavenly-messenger* responded, “What else is he?”

24 *The most impudent demon* said, “Because he promised, that every sin which is not purged on the earth will be avenged in the heaven. 25 Isaiah the prophet cried: ‘But if any of you are willing and heed me, you will eat the good of the earth; but if any of you refuse and provoke me to anger, the sword will devour you.’” (Isaiah 1:19–20)

26 “This human has not purged his sins on the earth, nor is he receiving his vengeance here. Where, then, is the justice of God?”³³

27 *The holy heavenly-messenger*, rebuking them, said, “Do not revile, while you do not know the hidden judgments of the Lord.”

28 *The slanderer* responded, “What is that hidden thing?”

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

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

31 *The heavenly-messenger* responded, “You are ignorant of the depth of the mysteries of God; and perhaps there will be.”

32 *The slanderer* responded, “Let us part, since there is no reason for a judging.”

33 Truly, another of his henchmen said, “There still remains for him a narrow gate, by which none but a few enter. There we can overcome him: ‘You will love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Leviticus 19:18)

34 *The heavenly-messenger* responded, “This man did good to his neighbors.”

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

36 *The holy heavenly-messenger* responded, “The fruit of love is to work good, for the Lord will reward every man according to his works.” (Romans 2:6)

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

38 Truly, the impious multitude fought again,³⁴ but the holy heavenly-messengers were the victors.

39 *The defeated enemy*, as was his custom, burst out into revilement, speaking, “If the Lord is not unjust, and if lying and transgressions of his word displeased him, this man will not be free from punishment. 40 For this man promised³⁵ to renounce the age, and, on the contrary, he has loved it, against the emissary’s teaching, which says: ‘Do not love the world, nor the things³⁶ which are in the world’, and the other writings.³⁷ Neither have the words of this man’s own promise restrained him, nor by the emissary prohibiting it.” (1 John 2:15)

41 *The holy heavenly-messenger* responded, “He has loved the things which are of the age, to be dispensed, not only to himself, but to all those who go in.”³⁸

42 *The most impious slanderer* said, “No matter how they are loved, it is contrary to the divine precept and against the promise of Christianity which is made in immersion.”

43 *The heavenly-messengers* were victorious over their conquered adversaries, and the slanderer returned to his cunning accusations, speaking, “It is written: ‘Unless you warn a wicked man to turn from his wickedness, I will require his blood at your hand.’ This man has not warned sinners in a fitting way to have a change-of-mind.” (Ezekiel 3:18)

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

²⁸ Bede “However”

²⁹ Bede “waging conflagrations of wars against righteous men”

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

³¹ others / H strangely has “The holy heavenly-messenger responded, ‘But...unrighteous.’” after “broke forth, speaking”

³² others / H omits “This man has received gifts from unrighteous men.”

³³ others / H omits “nor has he received...of God”

³⁴ others / H omits “again”

³⁵ others / H partially erased / H-corrector “he gave advice”

³⁶ others / H omits “the things”

³⁷ others / H omits “writings”

³⁸ Possible emendation “all the needy”

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

47 Now while all these demons' contradictions were going on, a most mighty battle was continuing, until (since the Lord is the judge), the heavenly-messengers were triumphant and their adversaries were crushed and defeated. 48 The holy man was surrounded by an immense brightness, with the choirs of the holy heavenly-messengers chanting together, "No labor should seem hard, it is not a long time by which the glory of eternity is acquired." 49 All were filled, both with joy and sweetness.

CHAPTER 4

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

2 He saw two venerable men of the province which Fursei, the man of the Lord, was from. Seeing these,¹ whom he believed had died, who were prelates, pre-eminent in the remembrance of everyone even up to our time, they came nearer to him. 3 And they declared their own names with friendliness, which were called Beoan and Meldan; and they began to talk to him.

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

6 Then his soul, intent on the sweetness of the supreme melody and the sound of ineffable joy sounding beyond the heavens, flashed out. 7 And surrounding him were ranks of heavenly-messengers, standing even at his right hand. 8 Unharméd in feeling, divided of undivision, he heard and saw the words of the heavenly-messenger.²

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

He responded, "I do not know."

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

10 Then his mind forgot all the labor and tribulation and he was filled with immense happiness;³ for he heard the supreme songs resonate more brightly and melodiously; he reasoned that they were singing for himself alone. Marveling, he related, "It is a great joy to listen to these tunes."

11 The heavenly-messenger of the Lord said to him, "We are often deprived of this hearing because of the ministry⁴ of human dispensation; and what we labor to announce, the human demons destroy, corrupting the hearts."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

32 "There are also some who are attacked by spiritual vices;⁵ neglecting these, they afflict their bodies with abstinence for the sake of the mere word, esteeming the vices but nocturnal illusions or venial crimes. 33 For that pride which cast down the heavenly-messengers from the supreme heaven, they compute to be nothing; 34 nor do they denounce the greed, which expelled the first human from the delight of the Garden; 35 nor the envy, by which Cain the parricide killed his brother Abel; 36 also the false testimony, by which the Savior was condemned; nor do they denounce revilement. They do not consider how many and great vengeance have settled over those who do similar things.

37 "Many indeed, although they abstain from food⁶ which God has created to be taken with thanksgiving, take the following impious things almost as if permitted:⁷ 38 that is, pride, greed, envy, false testimony, revilement (by which they tear as it were the flesh of a neighbor, eating it with his blood)—and what is lighter in the judgment of God, they judge to be graver, but they think the graver things lighter.⁸

39 "Therefore, every teacher ought to prescribe suitable medicines for each vice. 40 For he who considers these vices to be lighter than gluttony and sexual-immorality is to be judged an enemy of souls rather than a teacher. 41 Therefore, the cure for pride is public reproof⁹ and frequent humbling in mud and ash. 42 Truly for greed, the medicine is dispensation of generosity to all men. 43 Envy is medicined by benevolence of kindness. 44 However, false testimony is met by humbly confessing to the man whom he committed the false words against, and by seeking pardon from him. 45 The evil of revilement is healed likewise by medicine: by humility, subjection, and refraining the tongue from all useless speaking, and by perseverance in prayer. 46 For contrary vices are healed by contrary virtues. 47 It is not enough to afflict the body, if the soul is not healed from malice and wickedness.

48 "Therefore, princes and most Christian teachers of the assembly, ought to call forth the minds of the faithful to the medicine¹⁰ of a change-of-mind from their sins, and should make them strong again by the spiritual fodder of teaching and by sharing in the sacred body and blood. 49 They ought to excommunicate those who are unwilling, lest they incur the guilt of condemnation by neglect. 50 They ought to plant the elm for the vine, and the alder for the olive; 51 yet they esteem earthly and unfruitful labor more than love, which is recognized to be the root and summit of all good works.

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

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

CHAPTER 5

The aforementioned priest, Beoan, who had diligently brought this speech to an end, turning to the blessed Fursei, said, 2 "Guard your life by using the creation¹¹ of God; reject and deny everything which is evil.

3 "Be like a faithful steward, claiming nothing for yourself but sustenance and clothing, moderate in taking or increasing gain. 4 For he who receives this gift as it was given to him will be able to open the mouth of the mute, begging for nothing nor denying anyone. 5 It is hateful to God for you to seek after what

⁵ others / H "roads" (or "routes")

⁶ others / H omits "food"

⁷ others / H "pleasures"

⁸ others / H omits "things lighter"

⁹ literally "reproof before all"

¹⁰ H / others "lamentation"

¹¹ others / H "creator"

¹ text from "He saw two...dead" is uncertain. / Following H, while others omit "seeing these"

² H, some / most omit "Unharméd...messenger."

³ H / others add

⁴ others / H "mystery"

belongs to others and to hold back *what is* your own. **6** For it is fitting to seek out poor *men* and captives, and for those who have *possessions* to dispense *them* to the needy. **7** But alms are to be dispensed to the poor, *even if none of them should ask*. **8** Good will also be done to all humans, especially to those who are of the household of faith. **9** Truly, the gifts of wicked *men* will be distributed to a poor *man*, and all comfort to a destitute *man*. **10** Truly, let the gifts of the holy-ones be distributed to be used by those who are poor in spirit or to those who were corrected from *their sins*.¹

11 “Therefore, let there be no discord in the assembly of God,² but those who have taken up³ the order of the emissaries will persevere in the holy teaching.

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

16 “Therefore, do not show yourself always remote from the age, nor always in public. **17** But when you desire to be remote, guard yourself with all watchfulness, fulfilling all of the divine precepts. **18** When you go out in public, apply your soul intently to the salvation of souls, not to the pressing gains of this world. **19** But if anyone has brought you gifts in the first hour of the day, and then changes his mind before the evening-hour: as you have freely received, so restore these gifts to him joyfully.

20 “Do not apply yourself to being a custodian of an inheritance, nor apply diligence and intentness of heart to the cares of this age; **21** but pray for your enemies to the Highest God with all the generosity of a pure⁴ heart toward all those who oppose or contradict you, repaying good for evil. **22** For he who preserves the leniency of a peaceful⁵ heart toward those who contradict or resist him, converts the fierceness of every wild animal and beast into mildness. **23** For no sacrifice of good works is found so acceptable to God as the mildness of the leniency of a most patient heart against all injuries, through which he, in the Lord, accepts all adversities and damages as gains and prosperity, joyful in the hope of a future recompense.

24 “For there are two things which are proved to be enemies to a human soul: the Slanderer and the world; and each of them alternately insinuates the mutual enticement of the other, by which a soul that is subverted by the allurements of this world is held in possession by the conquering adversary.

25 “Therefore, go; announce the word of God to the princes of this land of Hibernia,⁶ so that, by abandoning iniquity, they may reach, by a change-of-mind, to the salvation of souls. **26** Next, announce this to the more excellent priests of the holy assembly, that the Almighty is a jealous God, if they love this age more than himself; **27** for neglecting the prosperity of the soul, they wait on the gains of this age, and preach a change-of-mind to a late death; and then, receiving their gifts, they endure the fire of their torments.”

28 When he had said these things, that supreme rank of heavenly-messengers was received into the heaven.⁷

CHAPTER 6

Also, as the blessed Fursei was about to return to the earth with three heavenly-messengers only, the great fire drew near. **2** But the heavenly-messenger of the Lord, as before, split the fire of flame,⁸ dividing it in the middle. **3** But when the man of God approached the passage opened between the flames,⁹ The demons¹⁰ seized a man who was leaping out of¹¹ the fire, and threw him out onto Fursei’s shoulder, pressing his jaw to Fursei’s jaw. **4** He recognized the human because he had bequeathed his clothes to Fursei¹² when he was dying. **5** When the man had set fire to Fursei’s shoulder and jaw, he was cast out by the heavenly-messenger into the fire from where he came. **6** The heavenly-messenger who walked¹³ on the left stood between the blessed man and the fire; the right-hand heavenly-messenger apprehended him and¹⁴ cast him into the flame.¹⁵

7 Then the slanderer, the ancient serpent,¹⁶ repeating¹⁷ his fallacies, said, “It is not lawful to¹⁸ reject a man whom you previously accepted; and as you had accepted his goods,¹⁹ so you ought to be a partaker of his punishment.”

¹ others / H omits “Truly, let the gifts...sins.”

² H / others add

³ H / others “but the people of”

⁴ others (Lat “puri”) / H “equal” (Lat “pari”)

⁵ others (Lat “pacati”) / H “long-suffering” (Lat “pati”)

⁶ that is, Ireland

⁷ Bede “When they had finished speaking and had returned to the heaven with the spirits of the heavenly-messengers”

⁸ Bede adds

⁹ Bede adds

¹⁰ Bede “The unclean spirits”

¹¹ Bede “who was being tormented in”

¹² Bede “because Fursei had received his clothes”

¹³ H / others “flew” [some text before this point, present in both H and Bede, are missing from all other texts due to scribal error]

¹⁴ Bede adds

¹⁵ Bede “fire”

¹⁶ H / others omit “the serpent”

¹⁷ others / H omits “repeating” (Bede (reading instead of “Then...fallacies”) “The malign enemy”

¹⁸ Bede “Do not”

8 The heavenly-messenger of the Lord responded,²⁰ “It was not because of greed that he accepted it, but because of liberating²¹ this man’s soul.” And the fire ceased.

9 Then the heavenly-messenger of the Lord said,²² “What you have kindled has burned²³ in you. Had you not accepted the clothes²⁴ of this man, dead in his sins, his punishments would not burn in your body.²⁵ **10** Therefore, preach to everyone, in order that a change-of-mind may be accomplished and be received by a priest even to the last hour; **11** but nothing of the sinner’s sustenance will be received, nor will his body be buried in a holy place. **12** Now it must be preached vividly, to what extent the heart of a guilty man will taste the bitterness of conviction. And when it is purged, he, having renounced all previous iniquities, will distribute alms lavishly to poor men. **13** Nevertheless, from that time onward, nothing will be accepted by the priest who is preaching for him, but, near his tomb, his goods will be divided among poor men, lest others be partakers of that man’s iniquities.”

14 Having been instructed by these and other discourses and exhortations, he stood on the roof of the assembly-building between the holy heavenly-messengers. **15** Contemplating his body, he could neither see the walls of the building, nor the crowd of the mourners, nor yet the clothes of his body. **16** He was commanded by the heavenly-messenger to identify his own body and take it back.

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

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

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

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

This is the end of the vision.

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

26 Coming out from there, he preached the word of God, announcing to all the people of the Scots what he had seen or heard. **27** Truly, there was in him an incomparable grace: **28** seeking nothing earthly from anyone; **29** giving to everyone who asked; **30** equable to both prelates and inferiors; **31** showing proper fear to great-men and kings; **32** to be imitated by those who are humble and despisers of the age; **33** amiable to all good men; **34** terrifying to iniquitous men and sinners; **35** famous for divine virtues; **36** and causing demons to flee from possessed bodies, **37** and refreshing poor men.²⁶

CHAPTER 7

The third vision.

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

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

6 Truly, when he had completed 10 full²⁷ years in announcing the word of God to everyone in Scotland¹ without² respect of persons, he could not bear the

¹⁹ Bede “accepted the goods of a sinner”

²⁰ Bede “contradicted”

²¹ Bede “of the salvation”

²² Bede “turned to him”

²³ Bede “kindled is burning”

²⁴ Bede “money”

²⁵ Bede “not be burning you”

²⁶ Bede adds here “He always took care, as he had done before, to show everyone the works of virtue, both by example and by preaching sermons. But he would expound the story of his visions only to those who questioned him because they desired repentance. There is still alive a certain senior brother of our monastery, who often relates how a certain very reliable and pious man told him that he had himself seen Fursei in the province of the East Angles, and had heard these visions from his own mouth. He added that it was very hard, ice-bound winter weather, when the man, sitting in thin clothing, had sweated as he was speaking as if in a midsummer heat-wave — because of either the great fear or delight that he remembered.”

²⁷ literally “completed all of 10” / Bede “many years”

gathering multitude of people; and apprehending that some souls, moved by envy, moved themselves against him, he left all that he seemed to have.

7 With a few brothers, he set out for a certain small islet in the sea. And from there, not long after, he left the cliff-bound shores of Hibernia (*that is, Ireland*). [Going through]³ Britannia, he came into Saxonia,⁴ where he was honored by King Sigebryht.⁵ Taking up the word of the Lord, he tamed the heart of the barbarians.⁶

8 Now when the twelve years which the heavenly-messenger had foretold were completed, the holy-one, being attacked by a certain infirmity, enjoyed a vision of heavenly-messengers, in which he was encouraged even to perseverance in preaching. 9 He heard about no end to his life; but one day in silence he was admonished by the Good-Message precept: 'Watch and pray, for none of you know the day or the hour.' (Matthew 25:13/Mark 13:33)

10 The man of the Lord fully understood this precept. He hastened to construct a building in the place which the aforementioned king Sigebryht had given him for a monastery.⁷ 11 This monastery was constructed in a certain castle,⁸ pleasantly near to both the woods and the sea. Anna, king of that people,⁹ who was faithful to the holy Fursei, together with the nobles, adorned it with grander¹⁰ buildings and gifts.

12 When these things were properly¹¹ achieved, the holy man, desiring to separate himself from all secular care, even of the monastery, took counsel with wise brothers. 13 He had with him some of the most reverend and truly spiritual men, who profited by the example of such a man in a monastic probationary-period and in divers works of life for the sake of humility and love. 14 Among these men, he had even his own brother Fuilan, truly a most holy man, to whom he allotted the monastery and left the care of souls, along with Gobban and Dicull.¹²

15 Another brother, Ultan, after a long monastic probationary-period, had been left by Fuilan to the life of a hermit. 16 Abandoning all abandoned cares and things, he went naked and alone to his brother, who was already feeding his life on contemplation. 17 There, given to daily labor and continual prayer, they philosophized for one whole year.¹³

18 Then, as certain troubles increased, he was called, no, compelled, to a great council by the leaders of the people or the king, and he left the hermitage which he had desired. 19 He observed all of them with a most watchful soul; he understood that the province was troubled with an incursion of other nations, and foresaw that the monastic order would not endure there for long.¹⁴ 20 Leaving everything in order, he sailed to the shore of Gallia. There he was received with honor by Chlodoric king of the Franks or by his patrician Erkenwald.¹⁵ He constructed a monastery in a place called Latiniacum.

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

23 Truly, his body was kept by the illustrious patrician Erkenwald,¹⁶ and placed in a cottage in the village whose name is Perrona,¹⁷ by reason of the assembly-building which he was grandly constructing for himself. 24 And because the dedication of the assembly-building was 30 days from then, the holy body was, in the meantime, kept with the greatest attention in a certain place in the portico. And after so many days it was so found unharmed, as if the light had gone out of it that same hour. It was laid reverently near the altar, according to custom. Therefore, it remained there for nearly four years.

25 Now a little-house was constructed on the east side of the altar of the assembly-building. And there, after so many years, the immaculate body was conveyed by overseers Eligius and Audoperth, without any putrefaction.¹⁸

¹ Bede adds

² others / H omits "without"

³ Possible reconstruction of an erased word (supported by Bede)

⁴ Bede "he, with a few brothers, came into the province of the Angles"

⁵ Old English equivalent (also known in modern English as "Sigebert" or "Sigebert") / Latin "Siggiberth"

⁶ Bede summarized and expands here "Now while Sigbert still held the ribbons of the realm, there came over from Ireland a holy man named Fursei, famous in word and deeds but also noted for his outstanding virtues. He yearned to lead a pilgrim's life for the Lord, wherever he might find an opportunity. When he had come to the province of the East Angles, he was received honorably by the aforesaid king. And following his usual task of proclaiming a good-message, by his example of virtue and encouragement of his teaching he both converted many unbelievers to the Anointed-One, and confirmed believers further in the faith and love of the Anointed-One."

⁷ Bede "to construct a monastery in the place which he had received from the aforementioned king Sigebryht, and to institute regular disciplines."

⁸ Bede adds here "which is called in the English tongue Cnobheresburg, that is "City of Cnobhere"

⁹ Bede "province"

¹⁰ Bede adds

¹¹ H / others add

¹² Bede adds

¹³ Bede "And [he] lived with him for one whole year in austerity and prayer, and in working daily with his hands"

¹⁴ Bede "and foresaw that the monasteries were also threatened with danger"

¹⁵ Old English equivalent / most manuscripts, Bede "Erchynoald" / H omits "Erkenwald"

¹⁶ Old English equivalent / most manuscripts "Erchynoald" / H "Gehynoaldo" / Bede "Ercunuald"

¹⁷ others, Bede / H "Personna"

¹⁸ Bede "His body was taken by the same nobleman Ercunuald, and put in one of the porches of a certain assembly-building, which he was building in his town of Peronna, until the assembly-building itself was

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

consecrated. This happened 27 days afterwards, and the body itself was taken from the porch to be buried near the altar; it was found undamaged, as if the light had gone out of it that same hour....

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