

# The Online Library of Liberty

A Project Of Liberty Fund, Inc.

---

Saint Bede, *The Complete Works of Venerable Bede*, 8 vols. [1843]

---



## The Online Library Of Liberty

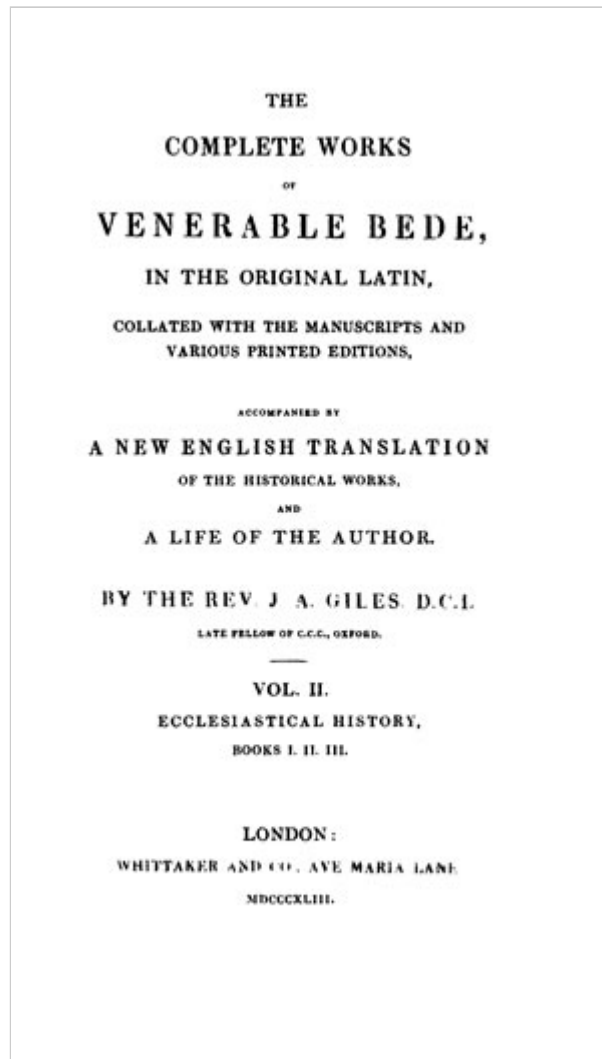
This E-Book (PDF format) is published by Liberty Fund, Inc., a private, non-profit, educational foundation established in 1960 to encourage study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals. 2010 was the 50th anniversary year of the founding of Liberty Fund.

It is part of the Online Library of Liberty web site <http://oll.libertyfund.org>, which was established in 2004 in order to further the educational goals of Liberty Fund, Inc. To find out more about the author or title, to use the site's powerful search engine, to see other titles in other formats (HTML, facsimile PDF), or to make use of the hundreds of essays, educational aids, and study guides, please visit the OLL web site. This title is also part of the Portable Library of Liberty DVD which contains over 1,000 books and quotes about liberty and power, and is available free of charge upon request.

The cuneiform inscription that appears in the logo and serves as a design element in all Liberty Fund books and web sites is the earliest-known written appearance of the word “freedom” (amagi), or “liberty.” It is taken from a clay document written about 2300 B.C. in the Sumerian city-state of Lagash, in present day Iraq.

To find out more about Liberty Fund, Inc., or the Online Library of Liberty Project, please contact the Director at [oll@libertyfund.org](mailto:oll@libertyfund.org).

LIBERTY FUND, INC.  
8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Suite 300  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250-1684



## Edition Used:

*The Complete Works of Venerable Bede, in the original Latin, collated with the Manuscripts, and various printed editions, and accompanied by a new English translation of the Historical Works, and a Life of the Author.* By the Rev. J.A. Giles (London: Whittaker and Co., 1843). \* 8 vols.

Author: [Saint Bede](#)

Translator: [Rev. J.A. Giles](#)

## About This Title:

An 8 volume collection of the works of Bede including his poetry, letters, Ecclesiastical history, historical and scientific tracts, homilies, and commentaries on the scriptures. Vol. 2 contain Ecclesiastical History Books I-III in Latin and English.

## About Liberty Fund:

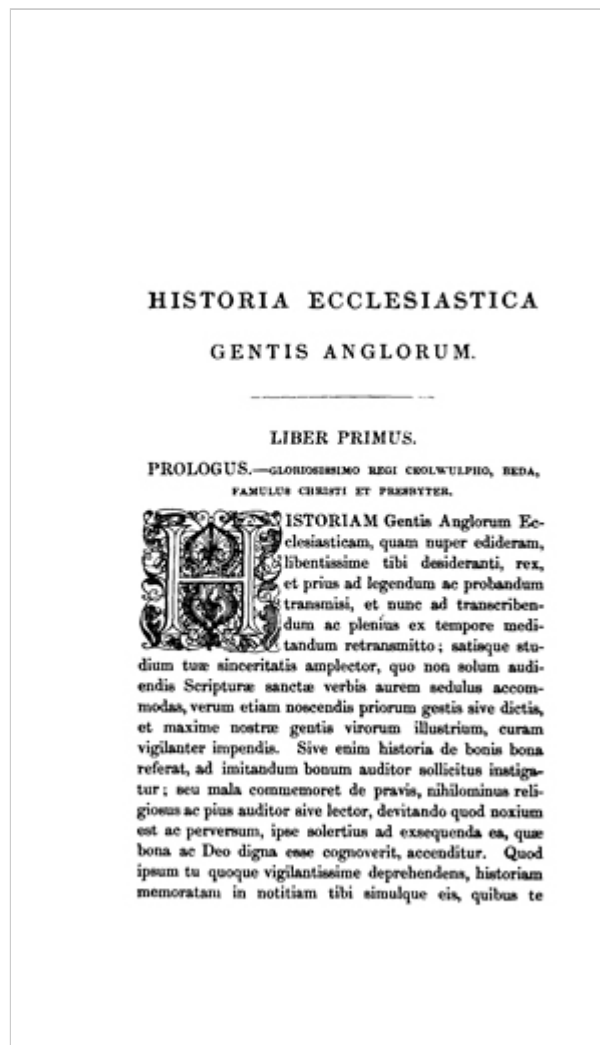
Liberty Fund, Inc. is a private, educational foundation established to encourage the study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals.

## Copyright Information:

The text is in the public domain.

## Fair Use Statement:

This material is put online to further the educational goals of Liberty Fund, Inc. Unless otherwise stated in the Copyright Information section above, this material may be used freely for educational and academic purposes. It may not be used in any way for profit.



## Table Of Contents

[Preface.](#)

[Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum.: Liber Primus.: Prologus.—](#)

[Gloriosissimo Regi Ceolwulpho, Beda, Famulus Christi Et Presbyter.](#)

[Cap. I.—: De Situ BritanniÆ Vel HiberniÆ, Et Priscis Earum Incolis.](#)

[Cap. II.—: Ut Britanniam Primus Romanorum Caius Julius Adierit.](#)

[Cap. III.—: Ut Eandem Secundus Romanorum Claudius Adiens, Orcadas  
Etiam Insulas Romano Adjecerit Imperio; Sed Et Vespasianus Ab Eo Missus  
Vectam Quoque Insulam Romanis Subdiderit.](#)

[Cap. IV.—: Ut Lucius Britannorum Rex, Missis Ad Eleutherum Papam Literis,  
Christianum Se Fieri Petierit.](#)

[Cap. V.—: Ut Severus Receptam BritanniÆ Partem Vallo a Cetera Distinxit.](#)

[Cap. VI.—: De Imperio Diocletiani, Et Ut Christianos Persecutus Sit.](#)

[Cap. VII.—: Passio Sancti Albani Et Sociorum Ejus, Qui Eodem Tempore Pro  
Domino Sanguinem Fuderunt.](#)

[Cap. VIII.—: Ut, Hac Cessante Persecutione, Ecclesia In Britanniis  
Aliquantulum Usque Ad Tempora ArianÆ VesaniÆ Pacem Habuerit.](#)

[Cap. IX.—: Ut, Regnante Gratiano, Maximus In Britannia Imperator Creatus,  
Cum Magno Exercitu Galliam Redierit.](#)

[Cap. X.—: Ut, Arcadio Regnante, Pelagius Brito Contra Gratiam Dei Superba  
Bella Susceperit.](#)

[Cap. XI.—: Ut, Regnante Honorio, Gratianus Et Constantinus In Britannia  
Tyranni Creati, Et Mox Prior In Britannia, Secundus In Gallia Sint  
Interempti.](#)

[Cap. XII.—: Ut Britones a Scotis Vastati Pictisque Romanorum Auxilia  
QuÆsierint, Qui Secundo Venientes Murum Trans Insulam Fecerint; Sed Hoc  
Confestim a PrÆfatis Hostibus Interrupto, Majore Sint Calamitate Depressi.](#)

[Cap. XIII.—: Ut, Regnante Theodosio Minore, Cujus Tempore Palladius Ad  
Scotos In Christum Credentes Missus Est, Britones Ab Ætio Consule  
Auxilium Flagitantes Non Impetraverint.](#)

[Cap. XIV.—: Ut Britones, Fame Famosa Coacti, Barbaros Suis E Finibus  
Pepulerint; Nec Mora, Frugum Copia, Luxuria, Pestilentia, Et Exterminium  
Gentis Secutum Sit.](#)

[Cap. XV.—: Ut Invitata Britanniam Gens Anglorum Primo Quidem  
Adversarios Longius Ejecerit; Sed Non Multo Post, Juncto Cum His FGEDere,  
In Socios Arma Verterit.](#)

[Cap. XVI.—: Ut Britones Primam De Gente Anglorum Victoriam, Duce  
Ambrosio Romano Homine, Sumserint.](#)

[Cap. XVII.—: Ut Germanus Episcopus Cum Lupo Britanniam Navigans Et  
Primo Maris Et Postmodum Pelagianorum Tempestatem Divina Virtute  
Sedaverit.](#)

[Cap. XVIII.—: Ut Idem Filiam Tribuni CÆcam Illuminaverit, Ac Deinde Ad  
Sanctum Albanum Perveniens Reliquias Ibidem Et Ipsius Acceperit, Et  
Beatorum Apostolorum Sive Aliorum Martyrum Posuerit.](#)

- [Cap. XIX.—: Ut Idem Causa Infirmittatis Ibidem Detentus, Et Incendia Domorum Orando Restinxerit, Et Ipse Per Visionem a Suo Sit Languore Curatus.](#)
- [Cap. XX.—: Ut Iidem Episcopi Britonibus In Pugna Auxilium Cœleste Tulerint, Sicque Domum Reversi Sint.](#)
- [Cap. XXI.—: Ut, Renascentibus Virgultis Pelagianæ Pestis, Germanus Cum Severo Britanniam Reversus, Prius Claudio Juveni Incessum, Deinde Et Populo Dei, Condemnatis Sive Emendatis Hæreticis, Gressum Recuperarit Fidei.](#)
- [Cap. XXII.—: Ut Britones, Quiescentibus Ad Tempus Exteris, Civilibus Sese Bellis Contriverint, Simul Et Majoribus Flagitiis Submerserint.](#)
- [Cap. XXIII.—: Ut Sanctus Papa Gregorius, Augustinum Cum Monachis Ad Prædicandum Genti Anglorum Mittens, Epistola Quoque Illos Exhortatoria, Ne a Laborando Cessarent, Confortaverit.](#)
- [Cap. XXIV.—: Ut Arelatensi Episcopo Epistolam Pro Eorum Susceptione Miserit.](#)
- [Cap. XXV.—: Ut Veniens Britanniam Augustinus Primo In Insula Taneto Regi Cantuariorum Prædicaret; Et Sic, Accepta Ab Eo Licentia, Cantiam Prædicaturus Intraverit.](#)
- [Cap. XXVI.—: Ut Idem In Cantia Primitivæ Ecclesiæ Et Doctrinam Sit Imitatus Et Vitam, Atque In Urbe Regis Sedem Episcopatus Acceperit.](#)
- [Cap. XXVII.—: Ut Idem Episcopus Factus Gregorio Papæ Quæ Sint Britannicæ Gesta Mandarit, Et Simul Necessariis Ejus Responsa Petens Acceperit.](#)
- [Cap. XXVIII.—: Ut Papa Gregorius Epistolam Arelatensi Episcopo, Pro Adjuvando In Opere Dei Augustino, Miserit.](#)
- [Cap. XXIX.—: Ut Idem Augustino Pallium, Et Epistolam, Et Plures Verbi Ministros, Miserit.](#)
- [Cap. XXX.—: Exemplar Epistolæ, Quam Mellito Abbati Britanniam Pergenti Misit.](#)
- [Cap. XXXI.—: Ut Augustinum Per Litteras, Ne De Virtutibus Suis Gloriaretur, Hortatus Sit.](#)
- [Cap. XXXII.—: Ut Ethelberto Regi Literas Et Dona Miserit.](#)
- [Cap. XXXIII.—: Ut Augustinus Ecclesiam Salvatoris Instauraverit, Et Monasterium Beati Petri Apostoli Fecerit; Et De Primo Ejus Abbate Petro.](#)
- [Cap. XXXIV.—: Ut Ethelfridus, Rex Northanhumbrorum, Scotorum Gentes Prælio Conterens Ab Anglorum Finibus Expulerit.](#)
- [The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation. Book I](#)
- [Preface.— to the Most Glorious King Ceolwulph, Rede, the Servant of Christ and Priest.](#)
- [Chap. I.—: Of the Situation of Britain and Ireland, and of Their Ancient Inhabitants.](#)
- [Chap. II.—: Caius Julius Cæsar, the First Roman That Came Into Britain.](#)
- [Chap. III.—: Claudius, the Second of the Romans Who Came Into Britain, Brought the Islands Orcades Into Subjection to the Roman Empire; and Vespasian, Sent By Him, Reduced the Isle of Wight Under Their Dominion.](#)
- [Chap. IV.—: Lucius, King of Britain, Writing to Pope Eleutherus, Desires to Be Made a Christian.](#)

- [Chap. V.—: How the Emperor Severus Divided That Part of Britain Which He Subdued, From the Rest By a Rampart.](#)
- [Chap. VI.—: The Reign of Diocletian, and How He Persecuted the Christians.](#)
- [Chap. VII.—: The Passion of St. Alban and His Companions, Who At That Time Shed Their Blood For Our Lord.](#)
- [Chap. VIII.—: The Persecution Ceasing, the Church In Britain Enjoys Peace Till the Time of the Arian Heresy.](#)
- [Chap. IX.—: How During the Reign of Gratian, Maximus, Being Created Emperor In Britain, Returned Into Gaul With a Mighty Army.](#)
- [Chap. X.—: How In the Reign of Arcadius, Pelagius, a Briton, Insolently Impugned the Grace of God.](#)
- [Chap. XI.—: How During the Reign of Honorius, Gratian and Constantine Were Created Tyrants In Britain; and Soon After the Former Was Slain In Britain, and the Latter In Gaul.](#)
- [Chap. XII.—: The Britons, Being Ravaged By the Scots and Picts, Sought Succour From the Romans, Who, Coming a Second Time, Built a Wall Across the Island; But the Britons Being Again Invaded By the Aforesaid Enemies, Were Reduced to Greater Distress Than](#)
- [Chap. XIII.—: In the Reign of Theodosius the Younger, Palladius Was Sent to the Scots That Believed In Christ; the Britons Begging Assistance of Ætius, the Consul, Could Not Obtain It.](#)
- [Chap. XIV.—: The Britons, Compelled By Famine, Drove the Barbarians Out of Their Territories; Soon After There Ensued Plenty of Corn, Luxury, Plague, and the Subversion of the Nation.](#)
- [Chap. XV.—: The Angles Being Invited Into Britain, At First Obligated the Enemy to Retire to a Distance; But Not Long After, Joining In League With Them, Turned Their Weapons Upon Their Confederates.](#)
- [Chap. XVI.—: The Britons Obtained Their First Victory Over the Angles, Under the Command of Ambrosius, a Boman.](#)
- [Chap. XVII.—: How Germanus the Bishop, Sailing Into Britain With Lupus, First Quelled the Tempest of the Sea, and Afterwards That of the Pelagians, By Divine Power.](#)
- [Chap. XVIII.—: The Same Holy Man Gave Sight to the Blind Daughter of a Tribune, and Then Coming to St. Alban's, There Received Some Relics of His, and Left Others of the Blessed Apostles, and Other Martyrs.](#)
- [Chap. XIX.—: How the Same Holy Man, Being Detained There By an Indisposition, By His Prayers Quenched a Fire That Had Broken Out Among the Houses, and Was Himself Cured of His Distemper By a Vision.](#)
- [Chap. XX.—: How the Same Bishops Procured the Britons Assistance From Heaven In a Battle, and Then Returned Home.](#)
- [Chap. XXI.—: The Pelagian Heresy Again Reviving, Germanus, Returning Into Britain With Severus, First Healed a Lame Youth, Then Having Condemned Or Converted the Heretics, They Restored Spiritual Health to the People of God.](#)
- [Chap. XXII.—: The Britons, Being For a Time Delivered From Foreign Invasions, Wasted Themselves By Civil Wars, and Then Gave Themselves Up to More Heinous Crimes.](#)

- [Chap. XXIII.—: How Pope Gregory Sent Augustine, With Other Monks, to Preach to the English, and Encouraged Them By a Letter of Exhortation, Not to Cease From Their Labour.](#)
- [Chap. XXIV.—: How He Wrote to the Bishop of Arles to Entertain Them.](#)
- [Chap. XXV.—: Augustine, Coming Into Britain, First Preached In the Isle of Thanet to King Ethelbert, and Having Obtained Licence, Entered the Kingdom of Kent, In Order to Preach Therein.](#)
- [Chap. XXVI.—: St. Augustine In Kent Followed the Doctrine and Manner of Living of the Primitive Church, and Settled His Episcopal See In the Royal City.](#)
- [Chap. XXVII.—: St. Augustine, Being Made Bishop, Sends to Acquaint Pope Gregory With What Had Been Done, and Receives His Answer to the Doubts He Had Proposed to Him.](#)
- [Chap. XXVIII.—: Pope Gregory Writes to the Bishop of Arles to Assist Augustine In the Work of God.](#)
- [Chap. XXIX.—: The Same Pope Sends Augustine the Pall, an Epistle, and Several Ministers of the Word.](#)
- [Chap. XXX.—: A Copy of the Letter Which Pope Gregory Sent to the Abbot Mellitus, Then Going Into Britain.](#)
- [Chap. XXXI.—: Pope Gregory, By Letter, Exhorts Augustine Not to Glory In His Miracles.](#)
- [Chap. XXXII.—: Pope Gregory Sends Letters and Presents to King Ethelbert.](#)
- [Chap. XXXIII.—: Augustine Repairs the Church of Our Saviour, and Builds the Monastery of St. Peter the Apostle; Peter the First Abbot of the Same.](#)
- [Chap. XXXIV.—: Ethelfrid, King of the Northumbrians, Having Vanquished the Nations of the Scots, Expels Them From the Territories of the English.](#)
- [Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum.: Liber Secundus.](#)
- [Cap. I. De Obitu Beati Papæ Gregorii.](#)
- [Cap. II.—: Ut Augustinus Britonum Episcopus Pro Pace Catholica, Etiam Miraculo Cœlesti Coram Eis Facto, Monuerit; Quæve Illos Spernentes Ultio Secuta Sit.](#)
- [Cap. III.—: Ut Idem Mellitum Ac Justum Episcopos Fecerit; Et De Obitu Ejus.](#)
- [Cap. IV.—: Ut Laurentius Cum Coepiscopis Suis Scotos Unitatem Sanctæ Ecclesiæ, Et Maxime In Pascha Observando, Sequi Monuerit, Et Ut Mellitus Romam Venerit.](#)
- [Cap. V.—: Ut, Defunctis Ethelberto Et Saberto Regibus, Successores Eorum Idololatriam Resuscitarint, Ob Quod Et Mellitus Ac Justus a Britannia Discesserint.](#)
- [Cap. VI.—: Ut Correptus Ab Apostolo Petro Laurentius Eadbaldum Regem Ad Christum Converterit, Qui Mox Mellitum Et Justum Ad Prædicandum Revocaverit.](#)
- [Cap. VII.—: Ut Mellitus Episcopus Flammas Ardentis Suæ Civitatis Orando Restrinxerit.](#)
- [Cap. VIII.—: Ut Bonifacius Papa Justo Successori Ejus Pallium Et Epistolam Miserit.](#)
- [Cap. IX.—: De Imperio Regis Edwini, Et Ut Veniens Ad Evangelizandum Ei Paulinus Primo Filiam Ejus Cum Aliis, Fidei Christianæ Sacramentis Imbuerit.](#)

- [Cap. X.—: Ut Papa Bonifacius Eundem Regem, Missis Literis, Sit Hortatus Ad Fidem.](#)
- [Cap. XI.—: Ut Conjugem Ipsius, Per Epistolam, Salutis Illius Sedulam Agere Curam Monuerit.](#)
- [Cap. XII.—: Ut Edwinus Per Visionem Quondam Sibi Exsuli Ostensam Sit Ad Credendum Provocatus.](#)
- [Cap. XIII.—: Quale Consilium Idem Cum Primatibus Suis De Percipienda Fide Christi Habuerit; Et Ut Pontifex Ejus Suas Aras Profanaverit.](#)
- [Cap. XIV.—: Ut Idem Edwinus Cum Sua Gente Fidelis Sit Factus; Et Ubi Paulinus Baptizaverit.](#)
- [Cap. XV.—: Ut Provincia Orientalium Anglorum Fidem Christi Susceperit.](#)
- [Cap. XVI.—: Ut Paulinus In Provincia Lindissi Prædicaverit; Et De Qualitate Regni Edwini.](#)
- [Cap. XVII.—: Ut Idem Ab Honorio Papa Exhortatorias Literas Acceperit, Qui Etiam Paulino Pallium Miserit.](#)
- [Cap. XVIII.—: Ut Honorius, Qui Justo In Episcopatum Dorovernensis Ecclesiæ Successit, Ab Eodem Papa Honorio Pallium Et Literas Acceperit.](#)
- [Cap. XIX.—: Ut Primo Idem Honorius, Et Post Joannes, Literas Genti Scotorum Pro Pascha Simul Et Pro Pelagiana Hæresi Miserit.](#)
- [Cap. XX.—: Ut, Occiso Edwino, Paulinus Cantiam Rediens, Rhofensis Ecclesiæ Præsulatum Susceperit.](#)
- [The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation.: Book II.](#)
- [Chap. I.—: Of the Death of the Blessed Pope Gregory.](#)
- [Chap. II.—: Augustine Admonished the Bishops of the Britons to Catholic Peace and Unity, and to That Effect Wrought a Heavenly Miracle In Their Presence; of the Vengeance That Pursued Them For Their Contempt.](#)
- [Chap. III.—: How St. Augustine Made Mellitus and Justus Bishops; and of His Death.](#)
- [Chap. IV.—: Laurentius and His Bishops Admonish the Scots to Observe the Unity of the Holy Church, Particularly In Keeping of Easter; Mellitus Goes to Rome.](#)
- [Chap. V.—: How, After the Death of the Kings Ethelbert and Sabert, Their Successors Restored Idolatry; For Which Reason, Both Mellitus and Justus Departed Out of Britain.](#)
- [Chap. VI.—: Laurentius, Being Reproved By the Apostle, Converts King Eadbald to Christ; Mellitus and Justus Are Recalled.](#)
- [Chap. VII.—: Bishop Mellitus By Prayer Quenches a Fire In His City.](#)
- [Chap. VIII.—: Pope Boniface Sends the Pall and an Epistle to Justus, Successor to Mellitus.](#)
- [Chap. IX.—: The Reign of King Edwin, and How Paulinus, Coming to Preach the Gospel, First Converted His Daughter and Others to the Faith of Christ.](#)
- [Chap. X.—: Pope Boniface, By Letter, Exhorts the Same King to Embrace the Faith.](#)
- [Chap. XI.—: Pope Boniface Advises Queen Ethelberga to Use Her Best Endeavours For the Salvation of Her Consort, King Edwin.](#)
- [Chap. XII.—: King Edwin Is Persuaded to Believe, By a Vision He Had Seen When He Was In Exile.](#)



- [Chap. XIII.—: Of the Council He Held With His Chief Men About Embracing the Faith of Christ, and How the High Priest Profaned His Own Altars.](#)
- [Chap. XIV.—: King Edwin and His Nation Become Christians; Paulinus Baptizes Them.](#)
- [Chap. XV.—: The Province of the East Angles Receives the Faith of Christ.](#)
- [Chap. XVI.—: How Paulinus Preached In the Province of Lindsey; and of the Reign of Edwin.](#)
- [Chap. XVII.—: Edwin Receives Letters of Exhortation From Pope Honorius, Who Also Sends Paulinus the Pall.](#)
- [Chap. XVIII.—: Honorius, Who Succeeded Justus In the Bishopric of Canterbury, Receives the Pall and Letters From Pope Honorius.](#)
- [Chap. XIX.—: How the Aforesaid Honorius First, and Afterwards John, Wrote Letters to the Nation of the Scots, Concerning the Observance of Easter, and the Pelagian Heresy.](#)
- [Chap. XX.—: Edwin Being Slain, Paulinus Returns Into Kent, and Has the Bishopric of Rochester Conferred On Him.](#)
- [Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum.: Liber Tertius.](#)
- [Cap. I.—: Ut Primi Successores Edwini Regis Et Fidem Su/E Gentis Prodidit, Et Regnum Porro Oswaldus Christianissimus Rex Utrumque Restauravit.](#)
- [Cap. II.—: Ut De Ligno Crucis, Quod Idem Rex Contra Barbaros Pugnaturus Erederat, Inter Innumera Sanitatum Miracula, Quidam a Dolentis Brachii Sit Languore Curatus.](#)
- [Cap. III.—: Ut Idem Rex, Postulans De Gente Scotorum Antistitem, Acceperit Aidanum, Eidemque In Insula Lindisfarnensi Sedem Episcopatus Donaverit.](#)
- [Cap. IV.—: Quando Gens Pictorum Fidem Christi Perceperit.](#)
- [Cap. V.—: De Vita Aidani Episcopi.](#)
- [Cap. VI.—: De Religione Ac Pietate Miranda Oswaldi Regis.](#)
- [Cap. VII.—: Ut Provincia Occidentalium Saxonum Verbum Dei, PrÆdicante Birino, Susceperit; Et De Successoribus Ejus Agilberto Et Eleuthero.](#)
- [Cap. VIII.—: Ut Rex Cantuariorum Earconbertus Idola Destruere PrÆceperit; Et De Filia Ejus Ercongota Et Propinqua Ethelberga, Sacris Deo Virginibus.](#)
- [Cap. IX.—: Ut In Loco, In Quo Occisus Est Rex Oswaldus, Crebra Sanitatum Miracula Facta; Utque Ibi Primo Jumentum Cujusdam Viantis, Ac Deinde Puella Paralytica Sit Curata.](#)
- [Cap. X.—: Ut Pulvis Loci Illius Contra Ignem Valuerit.](#)
- [Cap. XI.—: Ut Super Reliquias Ejus Lux CÆlestis Tota Nocte Steterit; Et Ut Per Eas Sint DÆmoniaci Curati.](#)
- [Cap. XII.—: Ut Ad Tumbam Ejus Sit Puerulus E Febre Curatus.](#)
- [Cap. XIII.—: Ut In Hibernia Sit Quidam Per Reliquias Ejus a Mortis Articulo Revocatus.](#)
- [Cap. XIV.—: Ut, Defuncto Paulino, Ithamar Pro Eo Rhofensis EcclesiÆ PrÆsulatum Susceperit; Et De Humilitate Mirabili Regis Oswini, Qui Ab Oswio Crudeli CÆde Peremptus Est.](#)
- [Cap. XV.—: Ut Episcopus Aidanus Nautis Et Tempestatem Futuram PrÆdixerit, Et Oleum Sanctum, Quo Hanc Sedarent, Dedit.](#)
- [Cap. XVI.—: Ut Idem Admotum Ab Hostibus Urbi RegiÆ Ignem Orando Amoverit.](#)

- [Cap. XVII.—: Ut Apposta Ecclesiæ, Cui Idem Accumbens Obierat, Ardente Cetera Domo, Flammis Absumi Nequiverit; Et De Interna Vita Ejus.](#)
- [Cap. XVIII.—: De Vita Vel Morte Religiosi Regis Sigeberti.](#)
- [Cap. XIX.—: Ut Furseus Apud Orientales Anglos Monasterium Fecerit; Et De Visionibus Vel Sanctitate Ejus, Cui Etiam Caro Post Mortem Incorrupta Testimonium Perhibuerit.](#)
- [Cap. XX.—: Ut, Defuncto Honorio, Pontificatu Sit Functus Deusdedit; Et Qui In Tempore Illo Orientalium Anglorum, Qui Rhofensis Ecclesiæ, Fuerint Antistites.](#)
- [Cap. XXI.—: Ut Provincia Mediterraneorum Anglorum Sub Rege Peada Christiana Sit Facta.](#)
- [Cap. XXII.—: Ut Orientales Saxones Fidem Quam Dudum Abjecerant, Sub Rege Sigeberto, Prædicante Cedd, Receperint.](#)
- [Cap. XXIII.—: Ut Idem Episcopus Cedd Locum Monasterii Construendi Ab Ethelwaldo Rege Accipiens Orationibus Ac Jejuniis Domino Consecraverit; Et De Obitu Ipsius.](#)
- [Cap. XXIV.—: Ut Provincia Merciorum, Occiso Rege Penda, Fidem Christi Susceperit: Et Oswius, Pro Adepta Victoria, Possessiones Et Territoria Ad Construenda Monasteria Dederit.](#)
- [Cap. XXV.—: Ut Quæstio Sit Mota De Tempore Paschæ Adversus Eos, Qui De Scotia Venerant.](#)
- [Cap. XXVI.—: Ut Colmanus Victus Domum Redierit, Et Tuda Pro Illo Episcopatu Sit Functus; Qualisque Illis Doctoribus Fuerit Habitus Ecclesiæ.](#)
- [Cap. XXVII.—: Ut Egbertus, Vir Sanctus De Natione Anglorum, Monachicam In Hibernia Vitam Duxerit.](#)
- [Cap. XXVIII.—: Ut, Defuncto Tuda, Wilfridus In Gallia, Ceadda Apud Occidentales Saxones, In Provincia Northanhumborum Sint Ordinati Episcopi.](#)
- [Cap. XXIX.—: Ut Wighardus Presbyter, Ordinandus In Archiepiscopum, Roman De Britannia Sit Missus; Quem Remissa Mox Scripta Papæ Apostolici Ibidem Obiisse Narraverint.](#)
- [Cap. XXX.—: Ut Orientales Saxones Tempore Mortalitatis Ad Idololatriam Reversi, Sed Per Instantiam Jarumanni Episcopi Mox Sint Ab Errore Correcti.](#)
- [The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation.: Book III.](#)
- [Chap. I.—: How King Edwin's Next Successors Lost Both the Faith of Their Nation and the Kingdom; But the Most Christian King Oswald Retrieved Both.](#)
- [Chap. II.—: How Among Innumerable Other Miraculous Cures Wrought By the Cross, Which King Oswald, Being Ready to Engage Against the Barbarians, Erected, a Certain Youth Had His Lame Arm Healed.](#)
- [Chap. III.—: The Same King Oswald, Asking a Bishop of the Scottish Nation, Had Aidan Sent Him, and Granted Him an Episcopal See In the Isle of Lindisfarne.](#)
- [Chap. IV.—: When the Nation of the Picts Received the Faith.](#)
- [Chap. V.—: Of the Life of Bishop Aidan.](#)
- [Chap. VI.—: Of King Oswald's Wonderful Piety.](#)

- [Chap. VII.—: How the West Saxons Received the Word of God By the Preaching of Birinus; and of His Successors, Agilbert and Eleutherius.](#)
- [Chap. VIII.—: How Earconbert, King of Kent, Ordered the Idols to Be Destroyed; and of His Daughter Earcongota, and His Kinswoman Ethelberga, Virgins Consecrated to God.](#)
- [Chap. IX.—: How Miraculous Cures Have Been Frequently Done In the Place Where King Oswald Was Killed; and How First, a Traveller's Horse Was Restored, and Afterwards a Young Girl Cured of a Palsy.](#)
- [Chap. X.—: The Power of the Earth of That Place Against Fire.](#)
- [Chap. XI.—: Of the Heavenly Light That Appeared All the Night Over the Bones of King Oswald, and How Persons Possessed With Devils Were Delivered By Them.](#)
- [Chap. XII.—: Of a Boy Cured of an Ague At St. Oswald's Tomb.](#)
- [Chap. XIII.—: Of a Certain Person In Ireland That Was Recovered, When At the Point of Death, By the Bones of King Oswald.](#)
- [Chap. XIV.—: On the Death of Paulinus, Ithamar Was Made Bishop of Rochester In His Stead, of the Wonderful Humility of King Oswin, Who Was Cruelly Slain By Oswy.](#)
- [Chap. XV.—: How Bishop Aidan Foretold to Certain Seamen a Storm That Would Happen, and Gave Them Some Holy Oil to Lay It.](#)
- [Chap. XVI.—: How the Same Aidan, By His Prayers, Saved the Royal City When Fired By the Enemy.](#)
- [Chap. XVII.—: How the Post of the Church On Which Bishop Aidan Was Leaning When He Died, Could Not Be Burnt When the Rest of the Church Was Consumed By Fire; and of His Inward Life.](#)
- [Chap. XVIII.—: Of the Life and Death of the Religious King Sigebert.](#)
- [Chap. XIX.—: How Fursey Built a Monastery Among the East Angles, and of His Visions and Sanctity, of Which, His Flesh Remaining Uncorrupted After Death, Bore Testimony.](#)
- [Chap. XX.—: Honorius Dying, Deusdedit Is Chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, of Those Who Were At That Time Bishops of the East Angles, and of the Church of Rochester.](#)
- [Chap. XXI.—: How the Province of the Midland Angles Became Christian Under King Peada.](#)
- [Chap. XXII.—: How the East Saxons Again Received the Faith, Which They Had Before Cast Off Under King Sigebert, Through the Preaching of Cedd.](#)
- [Chap. XXIII.—: Bishop Cedd, Having a Place Given Him By King Ethelwald, Consecrates the Same to Our Lord With Prayer and Fasting. of His Death.](#)
- [Chap. XXIV.—: King Penda Being Slain, the Mercians Received the Faith of Christ, and Oswy Gave Possessions and Territories to God, For Building Monasteries, In Acknowledgment For the Victory Obtained.](#)
- [Chap. XXV.—: How the Controversy Arose About the Due Time of Keeping Easter, With Those That Came Out of Scotland.](#)
- [Chap. XXVI.—: Colman, Being Worsted, Returned Home; Tuda Succeeded Him In the Bishopric; the State of the Church Under Those Teachers.](#)
- [Chap. XXVII.—: Egbert, a Holy Man of the English Nation, Led a Monastic Life In Ireland.](#)

[Chap. XXVIII.—: Tuda Being Dead, Wilfrid Was Ordained, In France, and Ceadda, In the Province of the West Saxons, to Be Bishops of the Northumbrians.](#)

[Chap. XXIX.—: How the Priest Wighard Was Sent From Britain to Rome, to Be Consecrated Archbishop, of His Death There, and of the Letters of the Apostolic Pope Giving an Account Thereof.](#)

[Chap. XXX.—: The East Saxons, During a Pestilence, Returning to Idolatry, Are Immediately Brought Back From Their Error By the Bishop Jaruman. Original Prospectus.](#)

[Conditions of Publication.](#)

[Names of Subscribers.](#)

VENERABILIS

BEDÆ

OPERA QUÆ SUPERSUNT OMNIA,

NUNC PRIMUM IN ANGLIA,

OPE CODICUM MANUSCRIPTORUM,

EDITIONUMQUE OPTIMARUM

EDIDIT J. A. GILES, LL.D.,

ECCLESIAE ANGLICANÆ PRESBYTER,

et coll. corp. chr. oxon. olim socius.

VOL. II.

HISTORIAE ECCLESIASTICÆ

LIBRI I, II, III.

LONDINI:

VE NEUNT APUD WHITTAKER ET SOCIOS.

MDCCLXIII.

THE

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

of

VENERABLE BEDE,

IN THE ORIGINAL LATIN,  
COLLATED WITH THE MANUSCRIPTS, AND  
VARIOUS PRINTED EDITIONS,

accompanied by

A NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
OF THE HISTORICAL WORKS,

and

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

BY THE REV. J. A. GILES, D.C.L.

late fellow of c.c.c., oxford.

VOL. II.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

BOOKS I. II. III.

LONDON:

WHITTAKER AND CO., AVE MARIA LANE.

MDCCLXIII.

LONDON: william stevens, printer, bell yard, temple bar.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## PREFACE.

A complete edition of the works of Venerable Bede has long been a desideratum in English literature. That want is now likely to be supplied, and the publication of this volume, containing the First Part of the Ecclesiastical History, announces that the whole works of England's first and most valuable writer will, ere long, be laid before the public. Another volume, containing the last part of the same important historical record, will speedily appear: after which, a series of volumes will be published, which, when finished, will comprise all that is known to have proceeded from Bede's pen; and the first volume of the series will contain a Memoir of the Author and his Works, wherein will be collected together all that we know of the life and character of this remarkable man.

The Ecclesiastical History was first published on the Continent: the following is a list of the editions which were there printed:—

1. Una cum Petri Trecensis (alias Comestoris) Historia Scholastica, et Eusebii Historia Ecclesiastica, [Editor: illegible word] Rufinum et cum additione Rufini, Argentinensi, 500.
2. Ead. ed. repet. Hagenau, 1506.
3. Antverpiæ, 1550.
4. Lovanii, 1566.
5. In "Britannicarum rerum Scriptores, Heidelbergæ, fol. 1587."
6. Lugduni, 1587.
7. Coloniae, 1601.
8. In "Bedæ Opera, &c. Parisiis, per Jametium, 1544."
9. Ead. ed. repet. 1554.
10. In "Bedæ Opera, &c. Basil., per Joannem Hervagium, 8 tom. fol. 1563."
11. Ead. ed. repet. Coloniae, 1612.
12. Ead. ed. repet. 1688.

It was first published in England by Wheloc, fol. Cantab. 1643-4, with an Appendix containing the Anglo-Saxon translation by King Alfred the Great, under the following title, "Historiam Ecclesiasticam gentis Anglorum, una cum adnotatione et analectis, e publicis veteris ecclesiae Anglicanae homiliis aliisque MSS. Saxonice excerptis, nec antea Latine editis; ut et Saxonice Chronologiam, seriem hujus imprimis historicam

complectentem, e Bibl. publica Cantab.; accedunt Anglo-Saxonicae leges, et ultimo leges Henrici I., edidit A Whelocus. Cantab. 1644.

The next critical edition was that of Chifflet, together with Fredegarius Scholasticus, under this title:—*Bedæ Presbyteri et Fredegarii Scholastica Concordia ad senioris Dagoberti definiendam monarchiæ periodum, atque ad primæ totius Regum Francorum stirpis Chronologiam stabiliendam, in duas partes divisa, quarum prior continet Historiam Ecclesiasticam Gentis Anglorum, cum notis et Dissertatione de auctore hujus Historiæ, posterior Dissertatio de annis Dagoberti Francorum Regis, eo nomine primi. Auctore P. F. Chiffletio, Soc. Jesu Presbyt. Parisiis, 1681.*

To this succeeded the edition of Smith, which superseded all the preceding. It is thus entitled:—*Bedæ Venerabilis Hist. Eccl. gentis Anglorum, una cum reliquis ejus Operibus Historicis in unum volumen collectis, cura Johannis Smith S. T. P. et Eccl. Dunelmensis non ita quidem Canonici. Cantabrigiæ, 1722.* The basis of this edition was a MS. formerly belonging to More, Bishop of Ely, and now deposited in the public library at Cambridge. [Kk, 5, 16.] At the end of the volume, which is written in Anglo-Saxon letters, are the following notes in a somewhat later handwriting.

ANNO DXLVII Ida regnare cœpit a quo regalis Nordanhymbrorum prosapia originem tenet et XII annos in regno permansit. Post hunc Glappa I annum, Adda VIII, Ædilric IV, Theodric VII, Fridwald VI, Hussa VII, Aldfrid XX, Osred XI, Coinred I, Osric XI, Ceolwulf VIII.

Baptizavit Paulinus ante an. CXI.

Eclipsis ante an. LXXIII.

Penda moritur ante an. LXXIX.

Pugna Ecgfridi ante an. LXIII.

Ælfvini ante an. LVIII.

Monasterium æt Wiræmoda ante an. LXIV.

Cometæ visæ ante an. VIII.

Eodem anno pater Ecgberct transivit ad Christum.

Angli in Brittaina ante an. CCXCII.

By calculating these dates it would appear that the volume was copied in the year 737, *i. e.* two years after Bede's death, and probably from the author's original manuscript.

In addition to More's MS., Smith collated two others from the Cottonian Library [Tib. C, II and A, XIV], and one in the King's Library, besides referring to a large number of others. His text, however, appears to be almost a fac-simile of More's MS., and he

has given the readings of the other copies, which he collated, at the bottom of the page.

The last edition of this celebrated and valuable work is that of Stevenson, published by the English Historical Society, Lond. 8vo. 1838. The editor professes to have used the same MS. of Bishop More, and to have occasionally collated four others [Cotton. Tib. C, II, Tib. A, XIV., Harl. 4978, and King's MS. 13 C, V.]. Prefixed to the volume is a copious and valuable notice of the author and his work, from which we take the liberty of making the following long extract, as containing the most judicious account of this our author's greatest work, and of the aids which he enjoyed in executing it.

“The scope of the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* is sufficiently indicated by its title. After some observations upon the position, inhabitants and natural productions of Britain, the author gives a rapid sketch of its history from the earliest period until the arrival of Augustine in 597, at which æra, in his opinion, the Ecclesiastical History of our nation had its commencement. After that event, he treats, as was to be expected, for a time exclusively of the circumstances which occurred in Kent; but, as Christianity extended itself over the other kingdoms into which England was then divided, he gradually includes their history in his narrative, until he reaches the year 731. Here he concludes his work, which embraces a space of one hundred and thirty-four years, with a general outline of the ecclesiastical state of the island.

“The Introduction, which extends from the commencement of the work to the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity, is gleaned, as Beda himself informs us, from various writers. The chief sources for the description of Britain are Pliny, Solinus, Orosius and Gildas; St. Basil is also cited; and the traditions which were current in Beda's own day are occasionally introduced. The history of the Romans in Britain is founded chiefly upon Orosius, Eutropius, and Gildas, corrected, however, in some places by the author, apparently from tradition or local information, and augmented by an account of the introduction of Christianity under Lucius, of the martyrdom of St. Alban, copied apparently from some legend, and of the origin of the Pelagian heresy,—all of them circumstances intimately connected with the ecclesiastical history of the island. The mention of Hengist and Horsa, and the allusion to the tomb of the latter at Horstead, render it probable that the account which Beda gives of the arrival of the Teutonic tribes, and their settlement in England, was communicated by Albinus and Nothhelm. It is purely fabulous, being, in fact, not the history, but the tradition, of the Jutish kingdom of Kent, as appears from circumstances mentioned elsewhere in this work, as well as from the authorities there quoted. The two visits of Germanus to England, so important in the history of its religion, are introduced in the very words of Constantius Lugdunensis, and must therefore have been copied from that author. The ante-Augustine portion of the history is terminated by extracts from Gildas, relative to the conflicts between the Saxons and Britons. As the mission of Augustine in 596 is the period at which Beda ceases to speak of himself as a compiler, and assumes the character of an Historian, it becomes incumbent upon us to examine into the sources upon which he has founded this, by far the most interesting portion of his History. The materials which he employed seem to have consisted of (i.) written documents, and (ii.) verbal information. (i.) The written materials may be divided into (1.) Historical information drawn up and communicated by his correspondents for the



express purpose of being employed in his work; (2.) documents pre-existing in a narrative form, and (3.) transcripts of official documents.

“(1.) That Beda’s correspondents drew up and communicated to him information which he used when writing this History, is certain from what he states in its Prologue; and it is highly probable that to them we are indebted for many particulars connected with the history of kingdoms situated to the south of the river Humber, with which a monk of Jarrow, from his local position, was probably unacquainted. Traces of the assistance which he derived from Canterbury are perceptible in the minute acquaintance which he exhibits not only with the topography of Kent, but with its condition at the time when he wrote; and the same remark is applicable, although in a more limited degree, to most of the other southern kingdoms.

“(2.) Documents pre-existing in an historical form are seldom quoted: amongst those of which use has been made may be numbered the Life of Gregory the Great, written by Paulus Diaconus; the miracles of Ethelburg, abbess of Barking; the Life of Sebbi, king of East Saxony; the Legend of Fursey; and that of Cuthberht of Lindisfarn, formerly written by Beda, but now augmented by himself, with additional facts. These, together with some extracts from the Treatise of Arculf De locis sanctis, are all the written documents to which the author refers.

“That other narratives, however, were in Beda’s possession, of which he has made liberal use, is certain from his express words, and may also be inferred from internal evidence. Albinus and Nothhelm appear to have furnished him with Chronicles, in which he found accurate and full information upon the pedigrees, accessions, marriages, exploits, descendants, deaths, and burials of the kings of Kent. From the same source he derived his valuable account of the archbishops of Canterbury, both before and after ordination, the place and date of consecration, even though it took place abroad, the days on which they severally took possession of that see, the duration of their episcopate, their deaths, burial-places, and the intervals which elapsed before the election of a successor. It is evident that the minuteness and accuracy of this information could have been preserved only by means of contemporary written memoranda. That such records existed in the time of the Saxons cannot be doubted, for Beda introduces a story, by which it appears that the Abbey of Selsey possessed a volume in which were entered the obits of eminent individuals; and the same custom probably prevailed throughout the other monastic establishments of England.

“The history of the diocese of Rochester was communicated by Albinus and Nothhelm. It is exceedingly barren of particulars; and probably would have been even more so, had it not been connected with the life of Paulinus of York, concerning whom Beda appears to have obtained information from other quarters.

“The early annals of East Anglia are equally scanty, as we have little more than a short pedigree of its kings, an account of its conversion to Christianity, the history of Sigiberct and Anna, and a few particulars regarding its bishops, Felix, Thomas, Berctgils, and Bisi, which details were communicated in part by Albinus and Nothhelm.

“The history of the West Saxons was derived partly from the same authorities, and partly from the information of Daniel, bishop of Winchester. It relates to their conversion by Birinus, the reigns of Caedwalla and of Ini, and the pontificate of Vine, Aldhelm and Daniel. To this last named bishop we are indebted for a portion of the little of what is known as to the early history of the South Saxons and the Isle of Wight, the last of the Saxon kingdoms which embraced the Christian faith. It relates to the conversion of those districts by the agency of Wilfrith. A few unimportant additions are afterwards made in a hurried and incidental manner, evidently showing that Beda’s information upon this head was neither copious nor definite.

“The monks of Læstingæu furnished materials relative to the ministry of Cedd and Ceadda, by whose preaching the Mercians were induced to renounce Paganism. The history of this kingdom is obscure, and consists of an account of its conversion, the succession of its sovereigns, and its bishops. The neighbouring state of Middle Anglia, which, if ever independent of Mercia, soon merged in it, is similarly circumstanced, and we are perhaps indebted to its connexion with the princes and bishops of Northumbria for what is known of its early history.

“Lindissi, part of Lincolnshire, although situated so near to the kingdom of Northumbria, was both politically and ecclesiastically independent of it, and Beda was as ignorant of the transactions of that province as of those which were much more remote from Jarrow. He received some materials from bishop Cyniberct, but they appear to have been scanty, for the circumstances which relate to Lincolnshire are generally derived from the information of other witnesses.

“The history of East Saxony is more copious, and is derived partly from the communications of Albinus and Nothhelm, and partly from the monks of Læstingæu. To the first of these two sources we must probably refer the account of the pontificate of Mellitus, and the apostasy of the sons of Saeberct; circumstances too intimately connected with the see of Canterbury to be omitted in its annals. To the latter we are indebted for the history of the reconversion of East Saxony; an event in which the monks of Læstingæu were interested, as it was accomplished by their founder Cedd. From them Beda also received an account of the ministry of Ceadda. Some further details respecting its civil and ecclesiastical affairs, the life of Erconuuald, bishop of London, and the journey of Offa to Rome, conclude the information which we have respecting this kingdom.

“In the history of Northumbria, Beda, as a native, was particularly interested, and would probably exert himself to procure the most copious and authentic information regarding it. Although he gives no intimation of having had access to previous historical documents, when speaking of his sources of information, yet there seems reason to believe that he has made use of such materials. We may infer from what he says of the mode in which Oswald’s reign was generally calculated, that in this king’s time there existed Annals, or Chronological Tables, in which events were inserted as they occurred, the regnal year of the monarch who then filled the throne being at the same time specified. These annals appear to have extended beyond the period of the conversion of Northumbria to Christianity, although it is difficult to imagine how any chronological calculation or record of events could be preserved before the use of

letters had become known. But the history of Eadwine, with its interesting details, shows that Bede must have had access to highly valuable materials which reached back to the very earliest æra of authentic history; and we need not be surprised at finding information of a similar character throughout the remainder of his history of Northumbria. Accordingly we have minute accounts of the pedigrees of its kings, their accession, exploits, anecdotes of them and sketches of their character, their deaths, and the duration of their reigns; details too minute in themselves, and too accurately defined by Bede, to have been derived by him from tradition. Similar proofs might, if necessary, be drawn from the history of its bishops.

“(3.) The *Historia Ecclesiastica* contains various transcripts of important official documents. These are of two classes: either such as were sent from the Papal Court to the princes and ecclesiastics of England, or were the production of native writers. The first were transcribed from the Papal Regesta by Nothhelm of London, during a residence at Rome, and were sent to Bede by the advice of his friend Albinus of Canterbury. They relate to the history of the kingdoms of Kent and Northumbria. The letters of archbishops Laurentius and Honorius, concerning the proper time for celebrating Easter, were probably furnished by the same individual. The proceedings of the Councils of Herutford and Haethfeld, may have been derived from the archives of Bede’s own monastery; since it was customary in the early ages of the Church for each ecclesiastical establishment to have a ‘tabularium’ in which were deposited the synodal decrees by which its members were governed.

“(ii.) A considerable portion of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, especially that part of it which relates to the kingdom of Northumberland, is founded upon local information which its author derived from various individuals. On almost every occasion, Bede gives the name and designation of his informant; being anxious, apparently, to show that nothing is inserted for which he had not the testimony of some respectable witness. Some of these persons are credible from having been present at the event which they related; others, from the high rank which they held in the Church, such as Aecci, bishop of Hexham, Guthfrith, abbot of Lindisfarn, Bercthun, abbot of Beverley, and Pecthelm, bishop of Whithern. The author received secondary evidence with caution, for he distinguishes between the statements which he received from eyewitnesses, and those which reached him through a succession of informants. In the last of these instances, the channel of information is always pointed out with scrupulous exactness, whatever opinion we may entertain, as in the case of some visions and miracles, of the credibility of the facts themselves.”

After so many previous editions, the editor acknowledges that under ordinary circumstances he would not have hesitated to reprint the *Ecclesiastical History* from the latest and most valuable existing edition, trusting that a work so often revised would have been already in a fit state to lay before the reader; and thus he would hope to be enabled to devote more time (and with greater benefit to the reader) to the other works of Bede which have been less fortunate than the *Ecclesiastical History*. But on coming to examine the text of the edition recently published by the English Historical Society, he discovered a considerable augmentation of his labours. It has been previously observed, and seems hitherto not to have been generally known, that Smith’s text is accurately copied from the MS. of More, and that every thing, but the

most manifest blunders of the copyist, is therein preserved. Indeed, Smith the younger, who edited the volume which his father had prepared, acknowledges that he has not suffered himself to depart from the readings of a volume so ancient, even in the minutest particular. His words are these: “Patri religio fuit de codicis tam admirandæ vetustatis fide, nisi ubi librarium falso scripsisse aperte deprehenditur, vel aliquantulum decedere.” This is the reason why More’s Manuscript, in general so superior to every other, has been followed by its editor, even where the reading is, owing to want of care or fatigue on the part of the copyist, manifestly corrupt. To guard, however, against mistake, Smith has in every case subjoined as foot-notes the corrections with which other MSS. or existing editions supplied him. And for following this plan there is good reason: it was an object of interest to every scholar to see a fac-simile of a MS. written so near the time of the author, and some editors have not scrupled to represent even the forms of the letters in which such a volume was written. But after Smith’s edition had been so long familiar to the world, it would be highly inexpedient for a future editor to follow the same plan. It would appear rather incumbent on him to collect the best text from every MS. or printed edition that had preceded, and in every instance to substitute such good readings in the place of those which might appear inferior in the text of Smith; nor can it be alleged that there would be no room for the adoption of such plan, on the ground of More’s MS. being perfect, or at least free from gross errors. For, however valuable it may be for antiquity and general excellence, it nevertheless abounds with most glaring errors of all descriptions. It, in several instances, omits altogether words necessary to the sense; it not unfrequently adopts the worst of two readings; it occasionally presents gross errors in grammar; and, indeed, is not free from any of those defects, to which every volume, written by the hand, and admitting no revision or correction, as in the case of printed books, is liable.

It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Stevenson’s volume, being almost a verbatim reprint of Smith’s, is exposed to this objection, and to a somewhat greater degree still, from the omission of the footnotes containing the corrections of the corrupt passages. The two following instances will more fully explain this. In Chap. XIX., towards the beginning, More’s MS. reads *ad eum habitaculum*, and Smith, following the MS., subjoins as a correction, *illud habitaculum*. In the reprint, however, we find *eum habitaculum* retained without the note. Again, in Chap. III., where Claudius is mentioned, More’s MS. reads *cupiens monstrare*. Smith so reprints it, but adds in a note, *cupiens se monstrare*, which no doubt is the true reading. Here, also, in the recent edition, we read *cupiens monstrare*, and with no note subjoined. Finding that this system had been acted upon throughout, the present editor saw the necessity of a new and entire revision of the text, and accordingly he turned his attention to the Heidelberg edition, found in *Scriptores Britannicarum Rerum*, published by Commelin, and apparently, as far as Bede is concerned, unknown to previous editors. Of this volume he had before formed a very high opinion, and was glad to find its character fully sustained in the present instance. The learning and taste displayed by Commelin, the editor, are beyond commendation: as regards the text of Bede, it is superior in every respect to any other edition, and appears to have been very little, if at all, examined by preceding editors. The present edition will be found to contain all that could be gathered by a diligent and complete collation of the editions of Heidelberg, Smith and Stevenson. The best reading has in every instance been

adopted, and the result of the collation will be given in a chapter of various readings, at the end of the next volume. In addition to this, different Manuscripts have been referred to whenever the text appeared corrupt or unintelligible; but, it is right to add, with very little benefit. It is hoped, therefore, that in this volume will be found the best text of the Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation that has yet been published.

Of the value of this work we can have no better evidence than the fact of its having been so often translated into the vernacular tongue. King Alfred thought it not beneath his dignity to render it familiar to his Anglo-Saxon subjects, by translating it into their tongue.

The first version in modern English was that of Stapleton, bearing the following title, "The History of the Church of Englande, compiled by Venerable Bede, Englishman, translated out of Latin into English by Thomas Stapleton, Student in Divinity. Antw. by John Laet, 1565." The object of the translator was to recal the affections of the people to the Theological forms and doctrines which in his time were being exploded. In the dedication to Queen Elizabeth occurs the following passage:—"In this History Your Highnes shall see in how many and weighty pointes the pretended reformers of the Church in Your Graces dominions have departed from the patern of that sounde and catholike faith planted first among Englishemen by holy s. augustin our Apostle, and his virtuous company, described truly and sincerely by *Venerablebede*, so called in all Christendom for his passing vertues and rare learning, the Author of this History. And to thentent Your Highnes intention bent to weightier considerations and affaires may spende no longe time in espying oute the particulars, I have gathered out of the whole History a number of diversities betwene the pretended religion of Protestants, and the primitive faith of the English Church."

The work was again translated into English by John Stevens, Lond. 8vo. 1723; and a third time (with some omissions) by W. Hurst, Lond. 8vo. 1814, and apparently with the same object which influenced Stevenson. The translation, attached to the text in this volume, is that of Stevens, but corrected without scruple, wherever it was necessary. It was first published separately, Lond. 8vo. 1840, forming the first volume of a series of the Monkish Historians of Great Britain, and has since been again carefully revised throughout, and in some passages altogether retranslated; so that it is hoped the English reader will find it to convey a tolerably accurate notion of the style and sense of the original.

J. A. G.

Windlesham Hall, Surrey,

*March*, 1843.

BEDÆ VENERABILIS  
Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ

GENTIS ANGLORUM  
LIBRI TRES PRIORES.

HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA  
GENTIS ANGLORUM.

LIBER PRIMUS.

PROLOGUS.—

GLORIOSISSIMO REGI CEOLWULPHO, BEDA, FAMULUS  
CHRISTI ET PRESBYTER.

HISTORIAM Gentis Anglorum Ecclesiasticam, quam nuper edideram, libentissime tibi desideranti, rex, et prius ad legendum ac probandum transmisi, et nunc ad transcribendum ac plenius ex tempore meditandum retransmitto; satisque studium tuæ sinceritatis amplector, quo non solum audiendis Scripturæ sanctæ verbis aurem sedulus accommodas, verum etiam noscendis priorum gestis sive dictis, et maxime nostræ gentis virorum illustrium, curam vigilanter impendis. Sive enim historia de bonis bona referat, ad imitandum bonum auditor sollicitus instigatur; seu mala commemoret de pravis, nihilominus religiosus ac pius auditor sive lector, devitando quod noxium est ac perversum, ipse solertius ad exsequenda ea, quæ bona ac Deo digna esse cognoverit, accenditur. Quod ipsum tu quoque vigilantissime deprehendens, historiam memoratam in notitiam tibi simulque eis, quibus te regendis Divina præfecit auctoritas, ob generalis curam salutis latius propalari desideras.

Ut autem in his quæ scripsi, vel tibi, Magnanime Rex, vel ceteris auditoribus sive lectoribus hujus historiæ, occasionem dubitandi subtraham, quibus hæc maxime auctoribus didicerim breviter intimare curabo. Auctor ante omnes atque adjutor opusculi hujus Albinus abbas reverendissimus vir per omnia doctissimus exstitit; qui in ecclesia Cantuariorum a beatæ memoriæ Theodoro archiepiscopo et Hadriano abbate, viris venerabilibus atque eruditissimis, institutus, diligenter omnia, quæ in ipsa Cantuariorum provincia, vel etiam in contiguis eidem regionibus, a discipulis beati papæ Gregorii gesta fuere, vel monumentis literarum vel seniorum traditione cognoverat; et ea mihi de his, quæ memoria digna videbantur, per religiosum Londoniensis ecclesiæ presbyterum Nothelmum, sive literis mandata, sive ipsius Nothelmi viva voce referenda, transmisit. Qui videlicet Nothelmus postea Romam veniens, nonnullas ibi beati Gregorii papæ simul et aliorum pontificum epistolas, perscrutato ejusdem sanctæ ecclesiæ Romanæ scrinio, permissu ejus, qui nunc ipsi ecclesiæ præest, Gregorii pontificis, invenit, reversusque nobis nostræ historiæ inserendas, cum consilio præfati Albini reverendissimi patris, attulit. A principio itaque voluminis hujus usque ad tempus quo gens Anglorum fidem Christi percepit, ex priorum maxime scriptis hinc inde collectis ea, quæ promeremus, didicimus. Exinde autem usque ad tempora præsentia, quæ in ecclesia Cantuariorum per discipulos beati papæ Gregorii, sive successores eorum, vel sub quibus regibus gesta sint, memorati abbatis Albini industria, Nothelmo, ut diximus, perferente,

cognovimus. Qui etiam provinciæ Orientalium simul et Occidentalium Saxonum, nec non et Orientalium Anglorum atque Northanhumbrorum, a quibus præsulibus vel quorum tempore regum gratiam Evangelii perceperint, nonnulla mihi ex parte prodiderunt. Denique, hortatu præcipue ipsius Albini, ut hoc opus aggredi auderem, provocatus sum. Sed et Daniel, reverendissimus Occidentalium Saxonum episcopus, qui nunc usque superest, nonnulla mihi de historia ecclesiastica provinciæ ipsius, simul et proxima illi Australium Saxonum, nec non et Vectæ insulæ, literis mandata declaravit. Qualiter vero per ministerium Cedd et Ceaddæ, religiosorum Christi sacerdotum, vel provincia Merciorum ad fidem Christi, quam non noverat, pervenerit, vel provincia Orientalium Saxonum fidem, quam olim exsufflaverat, recuperaverit, qualis etiam ipsorum patrum vita vel obitus exstiterit, diligenter a fratribus monasterii, quod ab ipsis conditum Lestingau cognominatur, agnovimus. Porro in provincia Orientalium Anglorum quæ fuerint gesta ecclesiastica, partim ex scriptis vel traditione priorum, partim reverendissimi abbatis Esii relatione, comperimus. At vero in provincia Lindissi, quæ sint gesta erga fidem Christi, quæve successio sacerdotalis exstiterit, vel literis reverendissimi antistitis Cuneberti, vel aliorum fidelium virorum viva voce, didicimus. Quæ autem in Northanhumbrorum provincia, ex quo tempore fidem Christi perceperunt usque ad præsens, per diversas regiones in ecclesia sint acta, non uno quolibet auctore, sed fidei innumerorum testium, qui hæc scire vel meminisse poterant, assertionem cognovi, exceptis his quæ per me ipsum nosse poteram. Inter quæ notandum, quod ea quæ de sanctissimo patre et antistite Cuthberto vel in hoc volumine vel in libello gestorum ipsius conscripsi, partim ex eis quæ de illo prius a fratribus ecclesiæ Lindisfarnensis scripta reperi, assumpsi, simpliciter fidem historiæ, quam legebam, accommodans; partim vero ea, quæ certissima fidelium virorum attestazione per me ipse cognoscere potui, solerter adjicere curavi. Lectoremque suppliciter obsecro ut, si qua in his quæ scripsimus aliter quam se veritas habet posita repererit, non hoc nobis imputet, qui, quæ vera lex historiæ est, simpliciter ea quæ, fama vulgante, collegimus, ad instructionem posteritatis literis mandare studuimus.

Præterea omnes ad quos hæc eadem historia pervenire poterit nostræ nationis legentes sive audientes suppliciter precor, ut pro meis infirmitatibus et mentis et corporis apud Supernam clementiam sæpius intervenire meminerint; et in suis quique provinciis hanc mihi suæ remunerationis vicem rependant, ut, qui de singulis provinciis sive locis sublimioribus, quæ memoratu digna atque incolis grata credideram, diligenter annotare curavi, apud omnes fructum piæ intercessionis inveniam.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. I.—

### DE SITU BRITANNIÆ VEL HIBERNIÆ, ET PRISCIS EARUM INCOLIS.

BRITANNIA, oceani insula, cui quondam Albion nomen fuit, inter septentrionem et occidentem locata est, Germaniæ, Galliæ, Hispaniæ, maximis Europæ partibus, multo intervallo adversa; quæ per millia passuum octingenta in Boream longa, latitudinis habet millia ducenta, exceptis duntaxat prolixioribus diversorum promonteriorum tractibus, quibus efficitur ut circuitus ejus quadragies octies septuaginta quinque millia compleat. Habet a meridie Galliam Belgicam, cujus proximum litus transmeantibus aperit civitas quæ dicitur Rutubi Portus, a gente Anglorum nunc corrupte Reptacestir vocata, interposito mari a Gessoriaci Morinorum gentis litore proximo, trajectu millium quinquaginta, sive, ut quidam scripsere, stadiorum quadringentorum quinquaginta. A tergo autem, unde oceano infinito patet, Orcadas insulas habet. Opima frugibus atque arboribus insula, et alendis apta pecoribus ac jumentis; vineas etiam quibusdam in locis germinans; sed et avium ferax terra marique generis diversi. Fluviis quoque multum piscosis ac fontibus præclara copiosis, et quidem præcipue issicio abundat et anguilla. Capiuntur autem sæpissime et vituli marini et delphines, necnon et balænæ; exceptis variorum generibus conchyliorum, in quibus sunt et musculæ, quibus inclusam sæpe margaritam omnis quidem coloris optimam inveniunt, id est, et rubicundi, et purpurei, et hyacinthini, et prasini, sed maxime candidi. Sunt et cochleæ satis superque abundantes, quibus tinctura coccinei coloris conficitur, cujus rubor pulcherrimus nullo unquam solis ardore, nulla valet pluviarum injuria pallescere; sed quo vetustior est eo solet esse venustior. Habet fontes salinarum, habet et fontes calidos, et ex eis fluvios balnearum calidarum, omni ætati et sexui per distincta loca juxta suum cuique modum accommodos. Aqua enim, ut sanctus Basilius dicit, fervidam qualitatem recipit, quum per certa quædam metalla transcurrit, et fit non solum calida sed et ardens. Quæ etiam venis metallorum, æris, ferri, et plumbi, et argenti, fecunda, gignit et lapidem gagatem plurimum optimumque; est autem nigrogemmeus et ardens igni admotus, incensus serpentes fugat, attritu calefactus applicita detinet æque ut succinum. Erat et civitatibus quondam viginti et octo nobilissimis insignita præter castella innumera, quæ et ipsa muris, turribus, portis, ac seris erant instructa firmissimis. Et quia prope sub ipso septentrionali vertice mundi jacet, lucidas æstate noctes habet, ita ut medio sæpe tempore noctis in quæstionem veniat intuentibus, utrum crepusculum adhuc permaneat vespertinum, an jam advenerit matutinum, utpote nocturno sole non longe sub terris ad orientem boreales per plagas redeunte; unde etiam plurimæ longitudinis habet dies æstate, sicut et noctes contra in bruma, sole nimirum tunc Libycas in partes secedente, id est, horarum decem et octo. Plurimæ item brevitatis noctes æstate et dies habet in bruma, hoc est, sex solummodo æquinoctialium horarum; cum in Armenia, Macedonia, Italia, ceterisque ejusdem lineæ regionibus, longissima dies sive nox quindecim, brevissima novem compleat horas.



Hæc in præsentī, juxta numerum librorum quibus Lex Divini scripta est, quinque gentium linguis unam eandemque summæ veritatis et veræ sublimitatis scientiam scrutatur et confitetur; Anglorum videlicet, Britonum, Scotorum, Pictorum, et Latinorum, quæ meditatione Scripturarum ceteris omnibus est facta communis. In primis autem hæc insula Britones solum, a quibus nomen accepit, incolas habuit; qui de tractu Armorico, ut fertur, Britanniam advecti, Australes sibi partes illius vindicarunt. Et cum plurimam insulæ partem, incipientes ab Austro, possedissent, contigit gentem Pictorum de Scythia, ut perhibent, longis navibus non multis oceanum ingressam, circumagente flatu ventorum, extra fines omnes Britanniae Hiberniam pervenisse, ejusque septentrionales oras intrasse, atque, inventa ibi gente Scotorum, sibi quoque in partibus illius sedes petiisse, nec impetrare potuisse. Est autem Hibernia insula omnium post Britanniam maxima, ad occidentem quidem Britanniae sita; sed sicut contra aquilonem ea brevior, ita in meridiem se trans illius fines plurimum protendens, usque contra Hispaniae septentrionalia, quamvis magno æquore interjacentē, pervenit. Ad hanc ergo usque pervenientes navigio Picti, ut diximus, petierunt in ea sibi quoque sedes et habitationem donari; respondebant Scoti, quia non ambos eos caperet insula, “sed possumus,” inquit, “salubre vobis dare consilium quid agere valeatis. Novimus insulam esse aliam non procul a nostra contra ortum solis, quam sæpe lucidioribus diebus de longe aspicere solemus. Hanc adire si vultis, habitabilem vobis facere valetis; vel, si qui restiterint, nobis auxiliariis utimini.” Itaque petentes Britanniam Picti habitare per septentrionales insulæ partes cœperunt, nam austrina Britones occupaverant. Cumque uxores Picti non habentes peterent a Scotis, ea solum conditione dare consenserunt, ut ubi res veniret in dubium, magis de feminea regum prosapia quam de masculina regem sibi eligerent; quod usque hodie apud Pictos constat esse servatum. Procedente autem tempore, Britannia, post Britones et Pictos, tertiam Scotorum nationem in Pictorum parte recepit; qui, duce Reuda, de Hibernia progressi, vel amicitia vel ferro sibimet inter eos sedes, quas hactenus habent, vindicarunt; a quo videlicet duce usque hodie Dalreudini vocantur, nam lingua eorum ‘daal’ partem significat.

Hibernia autem et latitudine sui status, et salubritate ac serenitate aerum, multum Britanniae præstat, ita ut raro ibi nix plus quam tridua remaneat; nemo propter hiemem aut fœna secet æstate, aut stabula fabricet jumentis; nullum ibi reptile videri soleat, nullus vivere serpens valeat; nam sæpe illo de Britannia allati serpentes, mox ut, proximante terris navigio, odore aeris illius attacti fuerint, intereunt; quin potius omnia pene, quæ de eadem insula sunt, contra venenum valent. Denique vidimus, quibusdam a serpente percussis, rasa folia codicum, qui de Hibernia fuerant, et ipsam rasuram aquæ immissam ac potui datam, talibus protinus totam vim veneni grassantis, totum inflati corporis absumsisse ac sedasse tumorem. Dives lactis ac mellis insula, nec vinearum experts, piscium volucrumque, sed et cervorum caprearumque venatu insignis. Hæc autem proprie patria Scotorum est; ab hac egressi, ut diximus, tertiam in Britannia Britonibus et Pictis gentem addiderunt. Est autem sinus maris permaximus, qui antiquitus gentem Britonum a Pictis secernebat, qui ab occidente in terras longo spatio erumpit, ubi est civitas Britonum munitissima usque hodie, quæ vocatur Alcluith, ad cujus videlicet sinus partem septentrionalem Scoti, quos diximus, advenientes, sibi locum patriæ fecerunt.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. II.—

### UT BRITANNIAM PRIMUS ROMANORUM CAIUS JULIUS ADIERIT.

Verum eadem Britannia Romanis usque ad Caium Julium Cæsarem inaccessa atque incognita fuit; qui, anno ab Urbe condita sexcentesimo nonagesimo tertio, ante vero incarnationis Dominicæ tempus anno sexagesimo functus gradu consulatus cum Lucio Bibulo, dum contra Germanorum Gallorumque gentes, qui Rheno tantum flumine dirimebantur, bellum gereret, venit ad Morinos unde in Britanniam proximus et brevissimus transitus est; et, navibus onerariis atque actuariis circiter octoginta præparatis, in Britanniam transvehitur, ubi acerba primum pugna fatigatus, deinde adversa tempestate correptus, plurimam classis partem et non parvum numerum militum, equitum vero pene omnem, disperdidit. Regressus in Galliam legiones in hiberna dimisit, ac sexcentas naves utriusque commodi fieri imperavit; quibus iterum in Britanniam primo vere transvectus, dum ipse in hostem cum exercitu pergit, naves in ancoris stantes tempestate correptæ vel collisæ inter se, vel arenis illisæ ac dissolutæ sunt; ex quibus quadraginta perierunt, ceteræ cum magna difficultate reparatæ sunt. Cæsaris equitatus primo congressu a Britannis victus, ibique Labienus tribunus occisus est; secundo prælio cum magno suorum discrimine victos Britannos in fugam vertit. Inde ad flumen Tamesim profectus, in hujus ulteriore ripa, Cassibellauno duce, immensa hostium multitudo consederat, ripamque fluminis ac pene totum sub aqua vadum acutissimis sudibus præstruxerat, quarum vestigia sudium ibidem usque hodie visuntur, et videtur inspectantibus quod singulæ earum ad modum humani femoris grossæ et circumfusæ plumbo immobiliter hæreant in profundum fluminis infixæ. Quod ubi a Romanis deprehensum ac vitatum est, Barbari, legionum impetum non ferentes, silvis sese obdidere, unde crebris irruptionibus Romanos graviter ac sæpe lacerabant. Interea Trinovantum firmissima civitas, cum Androgeo duce, datis quadraginta obsidibus, Cæsari sese dedit; quod exemplum secutæ urbes aliæ complures in fœdus Romanorum venerunt. Iisdem demonstrantibus, Cæsar oppidum Cassibellauni inter duas paludes situm, obtentu insuper silvarum munitum, omnibusque rebus confertissimum, tandem gravi pugna cepit. Exin Cæsar a Britannia reversus in Galliam, postquam legiones in hiberna misit, repentinis bellorum tumultibus undique circumventus et conflictatus est.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. III.—

UT EANDEM SECUNDUS ROMANORUM CLAUDIUS  
ADIENS, ORCADAS ETIAM INSULAS ROMANO  
ADJECERIT IMPERIO; SED ET VESPASIANUS AB EO  
MISSUS VECTAM QUOQUE INSULAM ROMANIS  
SUBDIDERIT.

Anno autem ab Urbe condita septingentesimo nonagesimo octavo Claudius imperator, ab Augusto quartus, cupiens se utilem reipublicæ ostentare principem, bellum ubique et victoriam undecunque quæsit; itaque expeditionem in Britanniam movit, quæ excitata in tumultum propter non redhibitos transfugas videbatur. Transvectus in insulam est, quam neque ante Julium Cæsarem neque post eum quisquam adire ausus fuerat, ibique, sine ullo prælio ac sanguine, intra paucissimos dies plurimam insulæ partem in deditionem recepit. Orcadas etiam insulas, ultra Britanniam in oceano positas, Romano adjecit imperio, ac sexto quam profectus erat mense Romam rediit, filioque suo Britannici, nomen imposuit. Hoc autem bellum quarto imperii sui anno complevit, qui est annus ab incarnatione Domini quadragesimus sextus; quo etiam anno fames gravissima per Syriam facta est, quæ in Actibus Apostolorum per prophetam Agabum prædicta esse memoratur. Ab eodem Claudio Vespasianus, qui post Neronem imperavit, in Britanniam missus, etiam Vectam insulam, Britanniae proximam a meridie, Romanorum ditioni subjugavit; quæ habet ab oriente in occasum triginta circiter millia passuum, ab austro in boream duodecim, in orientalibus suis partibus mari sex millium, in occidentalibus trium, a meridiano Britanniae litore distans. Succedens autem Claudio in imperium Nero nihil omnino in re militari ausus est; unde, inter alia Romani regni detrimenta innumera, Britanniam pene amisit, nam duo sub eo nobilissima oppida illic capta atque subversa sunt.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. IV.—

UT LUCIUS BRITANNORUM REX, MISSIS AD  
ELEUTHERUM PAPAM LITERIS, CHRISTIANUM SE  
FIERI PETIERIT.

Anno ab incarnatione Domini centesimo quinquagesimo sexto, Marcus Antoninus Verus, decimus quartus ab Augusto, regnum cum Aurelio Commodo fratre suscepit; quorum temporibus cum Eleutherus vir sanctus pontificatui Romanæ ecclesiæ præesset, misit ad eum Lucius Britanniarum rex epistolam, obsecrans ut per ejus mandatum Christianus efficeretur, et mox effectum piæ postulationis consecutus est; susceptamque fidem Britanni usque in tempora Diocletiani principis inviolatam integramque quietam in pace servabant.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. V.—

## UT SEVERUS RECEPTAM BRITANNIÆ PARTEM VALLO A CETERA DISTINXERIT.

Anno ab incarnatione Domini centesimo octogesimo nono, Severus, genere Afer, Tripolitanus, ab oppido Lepti, decimus septimus ab Augusto, imperium adeptus, decem et septem annis tenuit. Hic natura sævus, multis semper bellis lacesitus, fortissime quidem rempublicam sed laboriosissime rexit. Victor ergo civilium bellorum, quæ ei gravissima occurrerant, in Britannias defectu pene omnium sociorum trahitur, ubi magnis gravibusque præliis sæpe gestis, receptam partem insulæ a ceteris indomitis gentibus, non muro, ut quidam æstimant, sed vallo distinguendam putavit. Murus etenim de lapidibus, vallum vero, quo ad repellendam vim hostium castra muniuntur, fit de cespitibus, quibus circumcisis e terra, velut murus exstruitur altus supra terram, ita ut in ante sit fossa, de qua levati sunt cespites, supra quam sudes de lignis fortissimis præfiguntur. Itaque Severus magnam fossam firmissimumque vallum, crebris insuper turribus communitum, a mari ad mare duxit; ibique apud Eboracum oppidum morbo obiit. Reliquit duos filios, Bassianum et Getam; quorum Geta hostis publicus judicatus interiit, Bassianus, Antonini cognomine assumpto, regno potitus est.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. VI.—

## DE IMPERIO DIOCLETIANI, ET UT CHRISTIANOS PERSECUTUS SIT.

Anno incarnationis Dominicæ ducentesimo octogesimo sexto, Diocletianus, tricesimus tertius ab Augusto, Imperator ab exercitu electus, annis viginti fuit, Maximianumque cognomento Herculium socium creavit imperii. Quorum tempore Carausius quidam, genere quidem infimus sed consilio et manu promptus, cum ad observanda oceani litora, quæ tunc Franci et Saxones infestabant, positus, plus in perniciem quam in provectum reipublicæ ageret, ereptam prædonibus prædam nulla ex parte restituendo dominis, sed sibi soli vindicando; accedens suspicionem, quia ipsos quoque hostes ad incursandos fines artifici negligentia permetteret. Quam ob rem a Maximiano jussus occidi purpuram sumsit, ac Britannias occupavit; quibus sibi per septem annos fortissime vindicatis ac retentis, tandem fraude Allecti socii sui interfectus est. Allectus postea ereptam Carausio insulam per triennium tenuit, quem Asclepiodotus præfectus Prætorio oppressit, Britanniamque post decem annos recepit. Interea Diocletianus in oriente, Maximianus Herculius in occidente, vastari ecclesias, affligi interficique Christianos, decimo post Neronem loco, præceperunt; quæ persecutio omnibus fere ante actis diuturnior atque immanior fuit, nam per decem annos incendiis ecclesiarum, proscriptionibus innocentum, cædibus martyrum, incessabiliter acta est. Denique etiam Britanniam tum plurima confessionis Deo devotæ gloria sublimavit.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. VII.—

### PASSIO SANCTI ALBANI ET SOCIORUM EJUS, QUI EODEM TEMPORE PRO DOMINO SANGUINEM FUDERUNT.

Siquidem in ea passus est sanctus Albanus, de quo presbyter Fortunatus in Laude Virginum, cum beatorum martyrum, qui de toto orbe ad Dominum venirent, mentionem faceret, ait;

Albanum egregium fecunda Britannia profert.

Qui videlicet Albanus paganus adhuc, cum perfidorum principum mandata adversum Christianos sævirent, clericum quendam persecutores fugientem hospitio recepit; quem dum orationibus continuis ac vigiliis die noctuque studere conspiceret, subito Divina gratia respectus, exemplum fidei ac pietatis illius cœpit æmulari, ac salutaribus ejus exhortationibus paulatim edoctus, relictis idololatriæ tenebris, Christianus integro ex corde factus est. Cumque præfatus clericus aliquot diebus apud eum hospitaretur, pervenit ad aures nefandi principis confessorem Christi, cui necdum fuerat locus martyrii deputatus, penes Albanum latere. Unde statim jussit milites eum diligentius inquirere; qui cum ad tugurium martyris pervenissent, mox se sanctus Albanus pro hospite ac magistro suo, ipsius habitu, id est, caracalla, qua vestiebatur indutus, militibus exhibuit, atque ad judicem vinctus perductus est.

Contigit autem judicem ea hora, qua ad eum Albanus adducebatur, aris assistere ac dæmonibus hostias offerre; cumque vidisset Albanum, mox ira succensus nimia quod se ille ultro pro hospite, quem susceperat, militibus offerre ac discrimini dare præsumsisset, ad simulacra dæmonum, quibus assistebat, eum jussit pertrahi; “Quia rebellem,” inquit, “ac sacrilegum celare quam militibus reddere maluisti, ut contemtor divum meritam blasphemiæ suæ pœnam lueret, quæcumque illi debebantur supplicia tu solvere habes, si a cultu nostræ religionis discedere tentas.” At sanctus Albanus, qui se ultro persecutoribus fidei Christianum esse prodiderat, nequaquam minas principis metuit; sed accinctus armis militiæ spiritualis, palam se jussis illius parere nolle pronunciabat. Tum judex, “Cujus,” inquit, “familiæ vel generis es?” Albanus respondit, “Quid ad te pertinet qua sim stirpe genitus? sed si veritatem religionis audire desideras, Christianum jam me esse Christianisque officiis vacare cognosce.” Ait judex, “Nomen tuum quæro, quod sine mora mihi insinua.” Et ille, “Albanus,” inquit, “a parentibus vocor, et Deum verum ac vivum, qui universa creavit, adoro semper et colo.” Tum judex repletus iracundia dixit, “Si vis perennis vitæ felicitate perfrui, diis magnis sacrificare ne differas.” Albanus respondit, “Sacrificia hæc, quæ a vobis redduntur dæmonibus, nec auxiliari subjectis possunt, nec supplicantium sibi desideria vel vota complere; quin immo, quicumque his sacrificia simulacris obtulerit æternas inferni pœnas pro mercede recipiet.”

His auditis, iudex nimio furore commotus, cædi sanctum Dei confessorem a tortoribus præcepit, autumans se verberibus, quam verbis non poterat, cordis ejus emollire constantiam; qui cum tormentis afficeretur acerrimis, patienter hæc pro Domino, immo gaudenter, ferebat. At ubi iudex tormentis illum superari, vel a cultu Christianæ religionis revocari, non posse persensit, capite eum plecti jussit. Cumque ad mortem duceretur, pervenit ad flumen quod muro et arena, ubi feriendus erat, meatu rapidissimo dividebatur; viditque ibi non parvam hominum multitudinem utriusque sexus, conditionis diversæ et ætatis, quæ, sine dubio, Divinitatis instinctu ad obsequium beatissimi confessoris ac martyris vocabatur, et ita fluminis ipsius occupabat pontem, ut intra vesperam transire vix posset; denique, cunctis pene egressis, iudex sine obsequio in civitate substiterat. Igitur sanctus Albanus, cui ardens inerat devotio mentis ad martyrium ocius pervenire, accessit ad torrentem, et dirigens ad cælum oculos, illico siccato alveo, vidit undam suis cessisse ac viam dedisse vestigiis. Quod cum inter alios etiam ipse carnifex, qui eum percussurus erat, vidisset, festinavit ei, ubi ad locum destinatum morti venerat, occurrere; Divino nimirum admonitus instinctu, projectoque ense, quem strictum tenuerat, pedibus ejus advolvitur, multum desiderans ut cum martyre, vel pro martyre, quem percutere jubebatur, ipse potius mereretur percuti.

Dum ergo is ex persecutore factus esset collega veritatis et fidei, ac, jacente ferro, esset inter carnifices justa cunctatio, montem cum turbis reverendissimus Dei confessor ascendit; qui opportune lætus, gratia decentissima, quingentis fere passibus ab arena situs est, variis herbarum floribus depictus, immo usquequaque vestitus; in quo nihil repente arduum, nihil præceps, nihil abruptum, quem lateribus longe lateque deductum in modum æquoris natura complanat, dignum videlicet eum, pro insita sibi specie venustatis, jam olim reddens, qui beati martyris cruore dicaretur. In hujus ergo vertice sanctus Albanus dari sibi a Deo aquam rogavit, statimque, incluso meatu, ante pedes ejus fons perennis exortus est, ut omnes agnoscerent etiam torrentem martyri obsequium detulisse; neque enim fieri poterat ut in arduo montis cacumine martyr aquam, quam in fluvio non reliquerat, peteret, si hoc opportunum esse non videret. Qui videlicet fluvius, ministerio persoluto, devotione completa, officii testimonium relinquens, reversus est ad naturam. Decollatus itaque martyr fortissimus ibidem accepit coronam vitæ, quam repromisit Deus diligentibus se; sed ille, qui piis cervicibus impias intulit manus, gaudere super mortuum non est permissus, namque oculi ejus in terram una cum beati martyris capite deciderunt.

Decollatus est ibi tum etiam cum eo miles ille, qui antea, superno nutu correptus, sanctum Dei confessorem ferire recusavit; de quo nimirum constat, quia etsi fonte baptismatis non est ablutus, sui tamen est sanguinis lavacro mundatus, ac regni cœlestis dignus factus est ingressu. Tum iudex, tanta miraculorum cœlestium novitate percussus, cessari mox a persecutione præcepit, honorem referre incipiens cædi sanctorum, per quam eos opinabatur prius a Christianæ fidei posse devotione cessare. Passus est autem beatus Albanus die decimo kalendarum Juliarum juxta civitatem Verolanium, quæ nunc a gente Anglorum Verlamacestir sive Varlingacestir appellatur, ubi postea, redeunte temporum Christianorum serenitate, ecclesia est mirandi operis atque ejus martyrio condigna exstructa. In quo videlicet loco usque ad hanc diem curatio infirmorum et frequentium operatio virtutum celebrari non desinit.



Passi sunt ea tempestate Aaron et Julius, Legionum Urbis cives, aliique utriusque sexus diversis in locis perplures, qui diversis cruciatibus torti et inaudita membrorum discerptione lacerati animas ad supernæ civitatis gaudia, perfecto agone, miserunt.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. VIII.—

UT, HAC CESSANTE PERSECUTIONE, ECCLESIA IN  
BRITANNIIS ALIQUANTULUM USQUE AD TEMPORA  
ARIANÆ VESANIÆ PACEM HABUERIT.

At ubi turbo persecutionis quievit, progressi in publicum fideles Christi, qui se tempore discriminis silvis ac desertis abditisve speluncis occulerant, renovant ecclesias ad solum usque destructas; basilicas sanctorum martyrum fundant, construunt, perficiunt, ac veluti victricia signa passim propalant; dies festos celebrant; sacra mundo corde atque ore conficiunt. Mansitque hæc in ecclesiis Christi, quæ erant in Britannia, pax usque ad tempora Arianæ vesaniæ, quæ, corrupto orbe toto, hanc etiam insulam extra orbem tam longe remotam veneno sui infecit erroris; et hac quasi via pestilentiae trans oceanum patefacta, non mora, omnis se lues hæreseos cujusque, insulæ, novi semper aliquid audire gaudenti et nihil certi firmiter obtinenti, infudit. His temporibus Constantius qui, vivente Diocletiano, Galliam Hispaniamque regebat, vir summæ mansuetudinis et civilitatis, in Britannia mortem obiit. Hic Constantinum filium ex concubina Helena creatum imperatorem Galliarum reliquit; scribit autem Eutropius, quod Constantinus in Britannia creatus imperator, patri in regnum successerit. Cujus temporibus Ariana hæresis exorta et in Nicæna synodo detecta atque damnata, nihilominus exitiabile perfidiæ suæ virus, ut diximus, non solum orbis totius, sed et insularum ecclesiis, aspersionem.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. IX.—

UT, REGNANTE GRATIANO, MAXIMUS IN BRITANNIA  
IMPERATOR CREATUS, CUM MAGNO EXERCITU  
GALLIAM REDIERIT.

Anno ab incarnatione Domini trecentesimo septuagesimo septimo, Gratianus, quadragesimus ab Augusto, post mortem Valentis sex annis imperium tenuit; quamvis jamdudum antea cum patruo Valente et cum Valentiniano fratre regnaret; qui, cum afflictum et pene collapsum reipublicæ statum videret, Theodosium Hispanum virum, restituendæ reipublicæ necessitate, apud Sirmium purpura induit, Orientisque et Thraciæ simul præfecit imperio. Qua tempestate Maximus, vir quidem strenuus et probus atque Augusto dignus, nisi contra sacramenti fidem per tyrannidem emersisset, in Britannia invitus propemodum ab exercitu imperator creatus, in Galliam transiit. Ibi Gratianum Augustum, subita incursione perterritum atque in Italiam transire meditantem, dolis circumventum interfecit, fratremque ejus Valentinianum Augustum Italia expulit. Valentinianus in orientem refugiens, a Theodosio paterna pietate susceptus, mox etiam imperio restitutus est; clauso videlicet intra muros Aquileiæ, et capto atque occiso ab eis Maximo tyranno.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. X.—

## UT, ARCADIO REGNANTE, PELAGIUS BRITO CONTRA GRATIAM DEI SUPERBA BELLA SUSCEPERIT.

Anno ab incarnatione Domini trecentesimo nonagesimo quarto, Arcadius filius Theodosii, cum fratre Honorio, quadragesimus tertius ab Augusto, regnum suscipiens, tenuit annos tredecim. Cujus temporibus Pelagius Brito contra auxilium gratiæ supernæ venena suæ perfidiæ longe lateque dispersit, utens cooperatore Juliano de Campania, quem dudum amissi episcopatus intemperans cupido exagitabat. Quibus sanctus Augustinus, sicut et ceteri patres orthodoxi, multis sententiarum catholicarum millibus responderunt, nec eorum tamen dementiam corrigere valebant; sed, quod gravius est, correpta eorum vesania, magis augescere contradicendo quam favendo veritati voluit emendari. Quod pulcre versibus heroicis Prosper Rhetor insinuat, cum ait,

“Contra Augustinum narratur serpere quidam  
Scriptor, quem dudum livor adurit edax.  
Quis caput, obscuris coniectum utcunque cavernis,  
Tollere humo miserum propulit anguiculum?  
Aut hunc fruge sua æquorei pavere Britanni,  
Aut huic Campano gramine corda tument.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XI.—

UT, REGNANTE HONORIO, GRATIANUS ET  
CONSTANTINUS IN BRITANNIA TYRANNI CREATI, ET  
MOX PRIOR IN BRITANNIA, SECUNDUS IN GALLIA  
SINT INTEREMPTI.

Anno ab incarnatione Domini quadringentesimo septimo, tenente imperium Honorio Augusto, filio Theodosii minore, loco ab Augusto quadringentesimo quarto, (ante biennium Romanæ irruptionis, quæ per Alaricum regem Gothorum facta est, cum gentes Alanorum, Suevorum, Vandalorum, multæque cum his aliæ, protritis Francis, transito Rheno, totas per Gallias sævierunt,) apud Britannias Gratianus Municeps tyrannus creatur et occiditur. Hujus loco Constantinus ex infima militia, propter solam spem nominis sine merito virtutis, eligitur; qui continuo ut invasit imperium in Gallias transiit, ibi sæpe a barbaris incertis fœderibus illusus detrimento magis reipublicæ fuit. Unde mox, jubente Honorio, Constantius comes in Galliam cum exercitu profectus, apud Arelatem civitatem eum clausit, cepit, occidit; Constantemque filium ejus, quem ex monacho Cæsarem fecerat, Gerontius comes suus apud Viennam interfecit.

Fracta est autem Roma a Gothis anno millesimo centesimo sexagesimo quarto suæ conditionis, ex quo tempore Romani in Britannia regnare cessarunt, post annos ferme quadringentos septuaginta ex quo Caius Julius Cæsar eandem insulam adiit. Habitabant autem intra vallum quod Severum trans insulam fecisse commemoravimus, ad plagam meridianam, quod civitates, fana, pontes, et stratæ ibidem factæ usque hodie testantur; ceterum ultiores Britanniae partes, vel eas etiam quæ ultra Britanniam sunt insulas, jure dominandi possidebant.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XII.—

UT BRITONES A SCOTIS VASTATI PICTISQUE  
ROMANORUM AUXILIA QUÆSIERINT, QUI SECUNDO  
VENIENTES MURUM TRANS INSULAM FECERINT; SED  
HOC CONFESTIM A PRÆFATIS HOSTIBUS  
INTERRUPTO, MAJORE SINT CALAMITATE DEPRESSI.

Exin Britannia in parte Britonum omni armato milite, militaribus copiis universis, tota floridæ juventutis alacritate, spoliata, quæ tyrannorum temeritate abducta nunquam ultra domum rediit, prædæ tantum patuit, utpote omnis bellici usus prorsus ignara; denique subito duabus gentibus transmarinis vehementer sævis, Scotorum a circio, Pictorum ab aquilone, multos stupet gemitque per annos. Transmarinas autem dicimus has gentes, non quod extra Britanniam essent positæ, sed quia a parte Britonum erant remotæ, duobus sinibus maris interjacentibus, quorum unus ab orientali mari, alter ab occidentali, Britanniaë terras longe lateque irrumpit, quamvis ad se invicem pertingere non possint. Orientalis habet in medio sui urbem Giudi; occidentalis supra se, hoc est, ad dexteram sui, habet urbem Alcluith, quod lingua eorum significat ‘Petram Cluith,’ est enim juxta fluvium nominis illius.

Ob harum ergo infestationem gentium Britones legatos Romam cum epistolis mittentes, lacrimosis precibus auxilia flagitabant, subjectionemque continuam, dummodo hostis imminens longius arceretur, promittebant. Quibus mox legio destinatur armata, quæ, ubi in insulam advecta et congressa est cum hostibus, magnam eorum multitudinem sternens, ceteros sociorum finibus expulit, eosque interim a dirissima depressione liberatos hortata est instruere inter duo maria trans insulam murum, qui arcendis hostibus posset esse præsidio; sicque domum cum triumpho magno reversa est. At insulani murum, quem jussi fuerant, non tam lapidibus quam cespitibus construentes, utpote nullum tanti operis artificem habentes, ad nihil utilem statuunt. Fecerunt autem eum inter duo freta vel sinus, de quibus diximus, maris, per millia passuum plurima; ut ubi aquarum munitio deerat, ibi præsidio valli fines suos ab hostium irruptione defenderent. Cujus operis ibidem facti, id est, valli latissimi et altissimi, usque hodie certissima vestigia cernere licet. Incipit autem duorum ferme millium spatio a monasterio Abercuring ad occidentem, in loco qui sermone Pictorum Peanfahel, lingua autem Anglorum Penneltun, appellatur; et tendens contra occidentem terminatur juxta urbem Alcluith.

Verum priores inimici, ut Romanum militem abiisse conspexerant, mox advecti navibus irrumpunt terminos cæduntque omnia, et quasi maturam segetem obvia quæque metunt, calcant, transeunt; unde rursum mittuntur Roman legati, flebili voce auxilium implorantes, ne penitus misera patria deleteretur, ne nomen Romanæ provinciæ, quod apud eos tam diu claruerat, exterarum gentium improbitate obrutum vilesceret. Rursum mittitur legio, quæ inopinata tempore autumnii adveniens magnas hostium strages dedit eosque, qui evadere poterant, omnes trans maria fugavit, qui

prius anniversarias prædas trans maria, nullo obsistente, cogere solebant. Tum Romani denunciavere Britonibus, non se ultra ob eorum defensionem tam laboriosis expeditionibus posse fatigari; ipsos potius monent arma corripere et certandi cum hostibus studium subire, qui non aliam ob causam, quam si ipsi inertia solverentur, eis possent esse fortiores. Quin etiam, quod et hoc sociis, quos derelinquere cogebantur, aliquid commodi allaturum putabant, murum a mari ad mare recto tramite inter urbes, quæ ibidem ob metum hostium factæ fuerant, ubi et Severus quondam vallum fecerat, firmo de lapide locarunt; quem videlicet murum hactenus famosum atque conspicuum, sumtu publico privatoque, adjuncta secum Britannorum manu, construebant, octo pedes latum et duodecim altum, recta ab oriente in occasum linea, ut usque hodie intuentibus clarum est; quo mox condito, dant fortia segni populo monita, præbent instituendorum exemplaria armorum. Sed et in litore oceani ad meridiem, quo naves eorum habebantur, quia et inde barbarorum irruptio timebatur, turres per intervalla ad prospectum maris collocant, et valedicunt sociis tanquam ultra non reversuri.

Quibus ad sua remeantibus, cognita Scoti Pictique reditus denegatione redeunt confestim ipsi, et solito confidentiores facti omnem aquilonalem extremamque insulæ partem pro indigenis ad murum usque capessunt. Statuitur ad hæc in edito arcis acies segnis, ubi trementi corde stupida die noctuque marcebat; at contra non cessant uncinata hostium tela, ignavi propugnatores miserrime de muris tracti solo allidebantur. Quid plura? relictis civitatibus ac muro, fugiunt, disperguntur; insequitur hostis, accelerantur strages cunctis crudeliores prioribus. Sicut enim agni a feris, ita miseri cives discernuntur ab hostibus; unde a mansionibus ac possessiunculis suis ejecti, imminens sibi famis periculum latrocinio ac rapacitate mutua temperabant, augentes externas domesticis motibus clades, donec omnis regio totius cibi sustentaculo, excepto venandi solatio, vacuaretur.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XIII.—

UT, REGNANTE THEODOSIO MINORE, CUJUS TEMPORE  
PALLADIUS AD SCOTOS IN CHRISTUM CREDENTES  
MISSUS EST, BRITONES AB ÆTIO CONSULE AUXILIUM  
FLAGITANTES NON IMPETRAVERINT.

Anno Dominicæ incarnationis quadringentesimo vigesimo tertio, Theodosius junior post Honorium quadragesimus quintus ab Augusto, regnum suscipiens viginti et sex annis tenuit; cujus anno imperii octavo, Palladius ad Scotos in Christum credentes a pontifice Romanæ ecclesiæ Celestino primus mittitur episcopus. Anno autem regni ejus vigesimo tertio Ætius, vir illustris, qui et patricius fuit, tertium cum Symmacho gessit consulatum. Ad hunc pauperculæ Britonum reliquiæ mittunt epistolam, cujus hoc principium est; “Ætio ter consuli, gemitus Britannorum;” et in processu epistolæ ita suas calamitates explicant; “Repellunt barbari ad mare, repellit mare ad barbaros; inter hæc oriuntur duo genera funerum, aut jugulamur, aut mergimur.” Neque hæc tamen agentes quicquam ab illo auxilii impetrare quiverunt, utpote qui gravissimis eo tempore bellis cum Bledla et Attila, regibus Hunnorum, erat occupatus. Et quamvis, anno ante hunc proximo, Bledla Attilæ fratris sui sit interemtus insidiis, Attila tamen ipse adeo intolerabilis reipublicæ remansit hostis, ut totam pene Europam, excisis invasisque civitatibus atque castellis, corroderet. Quin et iisdem temporibus fames Constantinopolim invasit; nec mora, pestis secuta est, sed et plurimi ejusdem urbis muri cum quinquaginta septem turribus corruerunt; multis quoque civitatibus collapsis, fames et aerum pestifer odor plura hominum millia jumentorumque delevit.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XIV.—

UT BRITONES, FAME FAMOSA COACTI, BARBAROS  
SUIS E FINIBUS PEPULERINT; NEC MORA, FRUGUM  
COPIA, LUXURIA, PESTILENTIA, ET EXTERMINIUM  
GENTIS SECUTUM SIT.

Interea Britones famae illa praefata magis magisque afficiens, ac famam suae malitiae posteris diuturnam relinquens, multos eorum coegit victas infestis praedonibus dare manus, alios vero nunquam; quin potius confidentes in Divinum ubi humanum cessabat auxilium, de ipsis montibus, speluncis ac saltibus continue rebellabant; et tum primum inimicis, qui per multos annos praedas in terra agebant, strages dare coeperunt. Revertuntur ergo impudentes grassatores Hiberni domum, post non longum tempus reversuri; Picti in extrema parte insulae tunc primum et deinceps quieverunt, praedas tamen nonnunquam exinde et contritiones de Britonum gente agere non cessarunt.

Cessante autem vastatione hostili, tantis frugum copiis insula, quantas nulla retro aetas meminit, affluere coepit; cum quibus et luxuria crescere, et hanc continuo omnium lues scelerum comitari acceleravit; crudelitas praecipue, et odium veritatis amorque mendacii, ita ut, si quis eorum mitior et veritati aliquatenus propior videretur, in hunc, quasi Britanniae subversorem, omnium odia telaque sine respectu contorquerentur. Et non solum haec seculares viri, sed etiam ipse grex Domini ejusque pastores egerunt; ebrietati, animositati, litigio, contentioni, invidiae, ceterisque hujusmodi facinoribus, sua colla, abjecto levi jugo Christi, subdentes. Interea subito corruptae mentis homines acerba pestis corripuit, quae in brevi tantam ejus multitudinem stravit, ut ne sepeliendis quidem mortuis vivi sufficerent; sed ne morte quidem suorum nec timore mortis hi, qui supererant, a morte animae, qua peccando sternebantur, revocari poterant; unde non multo post acrior gentem peccatricem ultio diri sceleris secuta est. Insuper namque est consilium quid agendum, ubi quaerendum esset praesidium ad evitandas vel repellendas tam feras tamque creberrimas gentium aquilonalium irruptiones, placuitque omnibus cum suo rege Vortigerno, ut Saxonum gentem de transmarinis partibus in auxilium vocarent; quod Domini nutu dispositum esse constat, ut veniret contra improbos malum, sicut evidentius rerum exitus probavit.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XV.—

UT INVITATA BRITANNIAM GENS ANGLORUM PRIMO  
QUIDEM ADVERSARIOS LONGIUS EJECERIT; SED NON  
MULTO POST, JUNCTO CUM HIS FÆDERE, IN SOCIOS  
ARMA VERTERIT.

Anno ab incarnatione Domini quadringentesimo quadragesimo nono, Marcianus cum Valentiniano, quadragesimus sextus ab Augusto, regnum adeptus, septem annis tenuit. Tunc Anglorum sive Saxonum gens, invitata a rege præfato, in Britanniam tribus longis navibus advehitur, et in orientali parte insulæ, jubente eodem rege, locum manendi, quasi pro patria pugnatura, re autem vera hanc expugnatura, suscepit. Inito ergo certamine cum hostibus, qui ab aquilone ad aciem venerant, victoriam sumserunt Saxones. Quod ubi domi nunciatum est, simul et insulæ fertilitas ac segnitia Britonum, mittitur confestim illo classis prolixior armatorum ferens manum fortio-rem, quæ præmissæ adjuncta cohorti invincibilem fecit exercitum. Susceperunt ergo qui advenerunt, donantibus Britannis, locum habitationis inter eos, ea conditione ut hi pro patriæ pace et salute contra adversarios militarent, illi militantibus debita stipendia conferrent.

Advenerant autem de tribus Germaniæ populis fortioribus, id est, Saxonibus, Anglis, Jutis. De Jutarum origine sunt Cantuarii et Vectuarii, hoc est, ea gens quæ Vectam tenet insulam, et ea quæ usque hodie in provincia Occidentalium Saxonum Jutarum natio nominatur, posita contra ipsam insulam Vectam. De Saxonibus, id est, ea regione, quæ nunc Antiquorum Saxonum cognominatur, venere Orientales Saxones, Meridiani Saxones, Occidui Saxones. Porro de Anglis, hoc est, de illa patria quæ Anglia dicitur, et ab eo tempore usque hodie manere deserta inter provincias Jutarum et Saxonum perhibetur, Orientales Angli, Mediterranei Angli, Mercii, tota Northanhumbrorum progenies, id est, illarum gentium quæ ad Boream Humbri fluminis inhabitant, ceterique Anglorum populi, sunt orti. Duces fuisse perhibentur eorum primi duo fratres Hengist et Horsa; e quibus Horsa, postea occisus in bello a Britonibus, hactenus in orientalibus Cantiaë partibus monumentum habet suo nomine insigne. Erant autem filii Victgils, cujus pater Vitta, cujus pater Vecta, cujus pater Woden, de cujus stirpe multarum provinciarum regium genus originem duxit.

Non mora ergo, confluentibus certatim in insulam gentium memoratarum catervis, grandescere populus cœpit advenarum, ita ut ipsis quoque, qui eos advocaverant, indigenis essent terrori. Tum subito inito ad tempus fœdere cum Pictis, quos longius jam bellando pepulerant, in socios arma vertere incipiunt; et primum quidem annonas sibi eos affluentius ministrare cogunt, quærentesque occasionem divortii, protestantur, nisi profusior sibi alimentorum copia daretur, se cuncta insulæ loca, rupto fœdere, vastaturos; neque aliquanto segnius minas effectibus prosequuntur. Siquidem, ut breviter dicam, accensus manibus paganorum ignis, justas de sceleribus populi Dei ultiones expetiit, non illius impar qui quondam a Chaldæis succensus

Hierosolymorum mœnia, immo ædificia cuncta, consumsit. Sic enim et hic agente impio victore, immo disponente justo Iudice, proximas quasque civitates agrosque depopulans, ab orientali mari usque ad occidentale, nullo prohibente, suum continuavit incendium, totamque prope insulæ pereuntis superficiem obtexit. Ruebant ædificia publica simul et privata, passim sacerdotes inter altaria trucidabantur, præsules cum populis, sine ullo respectu honoris, ferro pariter et flammis absumebantur; nec erat qui crudeliter interemtis sepulturæ traderet. Itaque nonnulli de miserandis reliquiis in montibus comprehensi acervatim jugulabantur; alii fame confecti procedentes manus hostibus dabant, pro accipiendis alimentorum subsidiis æternum subituri servitium, si tamen non continuo trucidarentur; alii transmarinas regiones dolentes petebant; alii perstantes in patria trepidi pauperem vitam in montibus, silvis, vel rupibus arduis, suspecta semper mente, agebant.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XVI.—

UT BRITONES PRIMAM DE GENTE ANGLORUM  
VICTORIAM, DUCE AMBROSIO ROMANO HOMINE,  
SUMSERINT.

At ubi hostilis exercitus, exterminatis dispersisque insulæ indigenis, domum reversus est, cœperunt et illi paulatim vires animosque resumere, emergentes de latibulis, quibus abditi fuerant, et unanimo consensu auxilium cœleste precantes, ne usque ad internecionem usquequaque delerentur. Utebantur eo tempore duce Ambrosio Aureliano, viro modesto, qui solus forte Romanæ gentis præfatæ tempestati superfuerat, occisis in eadem parentibus regium nomen et insigne ferentibus. Hoc ergo duce, vires capessunt Britones, et victores provocantes ad prælium victoriam ipsi, Deo favente, suscipiunt; et ex eo tempore nunc cives nunc hostes vincebant, usque ad annum obsessionis Badonici montis, quando non minimas eisdem hostibus strages dabant, quadragésimo circiter et quarto anno adventus eorum in Britanniam. Sed hæc postmodum.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XVII.—

UT GERMANUS EPISCOPUS CUM LUPO BRITANNIAM  
NAVIGANS ET PRIMO MARIS ET POSTMODUM  
PELAGIANORUM TEMPESTATEM DIVINA VIRTUTE  
SEDAVERIT.

Ante paucos sane adventus eorum annos hæresis Pelagiana, per Agricolam illata, Severiani episcopi Pelagiani filium, fidem Britannorum fœda peste commaculaverat. Verum Britanni, (cum neque suscipere dogma perversum, gratiam Christi blasphemando, ullatenus vellent, neque versutiam nefariæ persuasionis refutare verbis certando sufficerent,) inveniunt salubre consilium, ut a Gallicanis antistitibus auxilium belli spiritualis inquirant. Quam ob causam, collecta magna synodo, quærebatur in commune, qui illuc ad succurrendum fidei mitti deberent; atque omnium iudicio electi sunt apostolici sacerdotes Germanus Autissiodorensis et Lupus Trecaenæ civitatis episcopi, qui ad confirmandam fidem gratiæ cœlestis Britannias venirent. Qui, cum prompta devotione preces et jussa sanctæ ecclesiæ suscepissent, intrant oceanum, et usque ad medium itineris, quo a Gallico sinu Britannias usque tenditur, secundis flatibus navis tuta volabat. Tum subito occurrit pergentibus inimica vis dæmonum, qui tantos talesque viros ad recuperandam tendere populorum salutem inviderent; concitant procellas, cœlum diemque nubium nocte subducunt, ventorum furores vela non sustinent, cedebant ministeria victa nautarum, ferebatur navigium oratione non viribus; et casu dux ipse vel pontifex, fractus corpore, lassitudine ac sopore resolutus est. Tum vero, quasi repugnatore cessante, tempestas excitata convaluit, et jam navigium superfusus fluctibus mergebatur. Tum beatus Lupus omnesque turbati excitant seniores elementis furentibus opponendum, qui periculi immanitate constantior Christum invocat, et assumpto in nomine Sanctæ Trinitatis levi aquæ aspergine, fluctus sævientes opprimit, collegam commonet, hortatur universos, oratio uno ore et clamore profunditur; adest Divinitas, fugantur inimici, tranquillitas serena subsequitur, venti e contrario ad itineris ministeria revertuntur, decursisque brevi spatiis pelagi, optati litoris quiete potiuntur. Ibi conveniens ex diversis partibus multitudo excepit sacerdotes, quos venturos etiam vaticinatio adversa prædixerat; nunciabant enim sinistri spiritus quod timebant, qui imperio sacerdotum dum ab obsessis corporibus detruduntur, et tempestatis ordinem et pericula, quæ intulerant, fatebantur, victosque se eorum meritis et imperio non negabant.

Interea Britanniarum insulam apostolici sacerdotes raptim opinione, prædicatione, virtutibus, impleverunt; divinusque per eos sermo quotidie, non solum in ecclesiis, verum etiam per trivia, et per rura, prædicabatur; ita ut passim et fideles catholici firmarentur, et depravati viam correctionis agnoscerent. Erat illis, Apostolorum instar, et gloria et auctoritas per conscientiam, doctrina per literas, virtutes ex meritis; itaque regionis universitas in eorum sententiam prompta transierat. Latebant abditi sinistrae persuasionis auctores, et more maligni spiritus, gemebant perire sibi populos evadentes; ad extremum, diuturna meditatione concepta, præsumunt inire conflictum.

Procedunt conspicui divitiis, veste fulgentes, circumdati assentatione multorum; discrimenque certaminis subire maluerunt, quam in populo, quem subverterant, pudorem taciturnitatis incurrere, ne viderentur se ipsi silentio damnavisse. Illic plane immensa multitudo, etiam cum conjugibus ac liberis excitata convenerat, aderat populus et spectator et futurus iudex, adstabant partes dispari conditione dissimiles; hinc divina fides, inde humana præsumtio; hinc pietas, inde superbia; inde Pelagius auctor, hinc Christus. Primo in loco beatissimi sacerdotes Germanus atque Lupus præbuerunt adversariis copiam disputandi, quæ sola nuditate verborum diu inaniter et aures occupavit et tempora; deinde antistites venerandi torrentes eloquii sui cum apostolicis et evangelicis imbribus profuderunt, miscebatur sermo proprius cum divino, et assertiones molestissimas lectionum testimonia sequebantur. Convincitur vanitas, perfidia confutatur; ita ut ad singulas verborum objectiones errare se, dum respondere nequirit, fateretur; populus arbiter vix manus continet, iudicium tamen clamore testatur.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XVIII.—

UT IDEM FILIAM TRIBUNI CÆCAM ILLUMINAVERIT,  
AC DEINDE AD SANCTUM ALBANUM PERVENIENS  
RELIQUIAS IBIDEM ET IPSIUS ACCEPERIT, ET  
BEATORUM APOSTOLORUM SIVE ALIORUM  
MARTYRUM POSUERIT.

Tum subito quidam tribunitiæ potestatis cum conjugæ procedit in medium, filiam decem annorum cæcam curandam sacerdotibus offerens, quam illi adversariis offerri præceperunt; sed hi, conscientia puniente, deterriti, jungunt cum parentibus preces et curationem parvulæ a sacerdotibus deprecantur; qui inclinatos animo adversarios intuentes orationem breviter fundunt, ac deinde Germanus plenus Spiritu Sancto invocat Trinitatem. Nec mora, adhærentem lateri suo capsulam cum sanctorum reliquiis collo avulsam manibus comprehendit, eamque in conspectu omnium puellæ oculis applicavit, quos statim, evacuatis tenebris, lumen veritatis implevit. Exsultant parentes, miraculum populus contremiscit; post quam diem ita ex animis omnium suasio iniqua deleta est, ut sacerdotum doctrinam sitientibus desideriiis sectarentur.

Compressa itaque perversitate damnabili, ejusque auctoribus confutatis, atque animis omnium fidei puritate compositis, sacerdotes beatum Albanum martyrem, acturi Deo per ipsum gratias, petierunt; ubi Germanus omnium Apostolorum diversorumque martyrum secum reliquias habens, facta oratione, jussit revelli sepulcrum, pretiosa ibidem munera conditurus; arbitrans opportunum ut membra sanctorum ex diversis regionibus collecta, quos pares meritis receperat cælum, sepulcri quoque unius teneret hospitium. Quibus depositis honorifice atque sociatis, de loco ipso, ubi beati martyris effusus erat sanguis, massam pulveris secum portaturus abstulit, in qua apparebat, cruore servato, rubuisse martyrum cædem, persecutore pallente. Quibus ita gestis, innumera hominum eodem die ad Dominum turba conversa est.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XIX.—

UT IDEM CAUSA INFIRMITATIS IBIDEM DETENTUS, ET  
INCENDIA DOMORUM ORANDO RESTINXERIT, ET IPSE  
PER VISIONEM A SUO SIT LANGUORE CURATUS.

Unde dum redeunt, insidiator inimicus, casualibus laqueis præparatis, Germani pedem lapsus occasione contrivit, ignorans merita illius, sicut Job beatissimi, afflictione corporis propaganda; et dum aliquamdiu uno in loco infirmitatis necessitate teneretur, in vicina, qua manebat, casula exarsit incendium, quod, consumtis domibus, quæ illic palustri arundine tegebantur, ad illud habitaculum, in quo idem jacebat, flabris stimulantibus ferebatur. Concursus omnium ad antistitem convolvavit, ut elatus manibus periculum quod imminere evaderet, quibus increpatis, moveri se fidei præsumptione non passus est; at multitudo omnis desperatione perterrita obviam currit incendio. Sed ut Dei potentia manifestior appareret, quicquid custodire tentaverat turba consumitur; quod vero jacens et infirmus defenderat, reserato hospitio sancti viri, expavescens flamma transilivit ultra citraque desævians, et inter globos flammantis incendii incolume tabernaculum, quod habitator inclusus servabat, emicuit. Exsultat turba miraculo, et victam se divinis virtutibus gratulatur. Excubabat diebus ac noctibus ante tugurium pauperis vulgus sine numero; hi animas curare cupientes, hi corpora. Referri nequeunt, quæ Christus operabatur in famulo, qui virtutes faciebat infirmus; et cum debilitati suæ nihil remedii pateretur adhiberi, quadam nocte candentem niveis vestibus vidit sibi adesse personam, quæ, manu extensa, jacentem videretur attollere, eumque consistere firmis vestigiis imperabat. Postquam horam ita, fugatis doloribus, recepit pristinam sanitatem, ut, die reddito, itineris laborem subiret intrepidus.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XX.—

## UT IIDEM EPISCOPI BRITONIBUS IN PUGNA AUXILIUM CŒLESTE TULERINT, SICQUE DOMUM REVERSI SINT.

Interea Saxones Pictique bellum adversum Britones junctis viribus susceperunt, quos eadem necessitas in castra contraxerat; et cum trepidi partes suas pene impares judicarent, sanctorum antistitum auxilium petierunt, qui, promissum maturantes adventum, tantum paventibus fiducia contulerunt, ut accessisse maximus crederetur exercitus. Itaque apostolicis ducibus Christus militabat in castris. Aderant etiam Quadragesimæ venerabiles dies, quos religiosiores reddebat præsentia sacerdotum, in tantum, ut quotidianis prædicationibus instituti certatim populi ad gratiam baptismatis convolarent; nam maxima exercitus multitudo undam lavacri salutaris expetiit, et ecclesia ad diem resurrectionis Dominicæ frondibus contexta componitur, atque in expeditione campestri instar civitatis aptatur. Madidus baptisate procedit exercitus, fides fervet in populo, et, conterrita armorum præsidio, divinitatis expectatur auxilium. Institutio vel forma castitatis hostibus nunciatur, qui victoriam quasi de inermi exercitu præsumentes, assumta alacritate festinant; quorum tamen adventus exploratione cognoscitur. Cumque emensa sollemnitate Paschali, recens de lavacro pars major exercitus arma capere et bellum parare tentaret, Germanus ducem se proelii profitetur, eligit expeditos, circumjecta percurrit, et e regione, qua hostium sperabatur adventus, vallem circumdatam mediis montibus intuetur; quo in loco novum componit exercitum ipse dux agminis. Et jam aderat ferox hostium multitudo, quam appropinquare intuebantur in insidiis constituti. Tum subito Germanus signifer universos admonet et prædicat ut voci suæ uno clamore respondeant; securisque hostibus, qui se insperatos adesse confiderent, “Alleluiam” tertio repetitam sacerdotes exclamabant. Sequitur una vox omnium, et elatum clamorem, repercusso aere, montium conclusa multiplicat; hostile agmen terrore prosternitur, et super se non solum rupes circumdatas sed etiam ipsam cœli machinam contremiscunt, trepidationique injectæ vix sufficere pedum pernitas credebatur. Passim fugiunt, arma projiciunt, gaudentes vel nuda corpora eripuisse discrimini, plures etiam timore præcipites flumen, quod transierant, devoravit. Ultionem suam innocens exercitus intuetur et victoriæ concessæ otiosus spectator efficitur; spolia colliguntur exposita, et cœlestis palmæ gaudia miles religiosus amplectitur; triumphant pontifices, hostibus fuis sine sanguine; triumphant victoria fide obtenta, non viribus. Composita itaque insula securitate multiplici, superatisque hostibus vel invisibilibus vel carne conspicuis, reditum moliuntur pontifices. Quibus tranquillam navigationem et merita propria et intercessio beati martyris Albani paraverunt, quietosque eos suorum desideriiis felix carina restituit.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXI.—

UT, RENASCENTIBUS VIRGULTIS PELAGIANÆ PESTIS,  
GERMANUS CUM SEVERO BRITANNIAM REVERSUS,  
PRIUS CLAUDO JUVENI INCESSUM, DEINDE ET  
POPULO DEI, CONDEMNATIS SIVE EMENDATIS  
HÆRETICIS, GRESSUM RECUPERARIT FIDEI.

Nec multo interposito tempore, nunciatur ex eadem insula Pelagianam perversitatem iterato, paucis auctoribus, dilatari; rursusque ad beatissimum virum preces sacerdotum omnium deferuntur, ut causam Dei, quam prius obtinuerat, tutaretur. Quorum petitioni festinus obtemperat; namque adjuncto sibi Severo totius sanctitatis viro, (qui erat discipulus beatissimi patris Lupi, Trecassenorum episcopi, et tunc Treveris ordinatus episcopus gentibus primæ Germaniæ verbum Dei prædicabat,) mare conscendit, et, consentientibus elementis, tranquillo navigio Britannias petiit.

Interea sinistri spiritus pervolantes totam insulam, Germanum venire invitis vaticinationibus nunciabant; in tantum ut Elafius quidam, regionis illius primus, in occursum sanctorum sine ulla manifesti nuncii relatione properaret, exhibens secum filium, quem in ipso flore adolescentiæ debilitas dolenda damnaverat; erat enim arescentibus nervis contracto poplite, cui per siccitatem cruris usus vestigii negabatur. Hunc Elafium provincia tota subsequitur. Veniunt sacerdotes, occurrit inscia multitudo; confestim benedictio et sermonis divini doctrina profunditur. Recognoscunt populum in ea, qua illum reliquerant, credulitate durantem; intelligunt culpam esse paucorum, inquirunt auctores, inventosque condemnant. Tum subito Elafius pedibus advolvitur sacerdotum, offerens filium, cujus necessitatem ipsa debilitas etiam sine precibus allegabat. Fit communis omnium dolor, præcipue sacerdotum, qui conceptam misericordiam ad divinam clementiam contulerunt; statimque adolescentem beatus Germanus sedere compulit, attrahat poplitem debilitate curvatum, et per tota infirmitatis spatia medicabilis dextera percurrit, salubremque tactum sanitas festina subsequitur. Ariditas succum, nervi officia, receperunt; et in conspectu omnium filio incolumitas, patri filius, restituitur. Implentur populi stupore miraculi, et in pectoribus omnium fides catholica inculcata firmatur. Prædicatio deinde ad plebem de prævaricationis emendatione convertitur, omniumque sententia pravitatis auctores, qui erant expulsi insula, sacerdotibus adducuntur ad mediterranea deferendi, ut et regio absolute et illi emendatione fruerentur. Factumque est ut in illis locis multo ex eo tempore fides intemerata perduraret. Itaque, compositis omnibus, beati sacerdotes ea, qua venerant, prosperitate redierunt.

Porro Germanus post hæc ad Ravennam pro pace Armoricanæ gentis supplicaturus advenit, ibique a Valentiniano et Placidia matre ipsius summa reverentia susceptus migravit ad Christum; cujus corpus honorifico agmine, comitantibus virtutum operibus, suam defertur ad urbem. Nec multo post Valentinianus ab Ætiii Patricii,

quem occiderat, satellitibus interimitur, anno imperii Marciani sexto, cum quo simul Hesperium concidit regnum.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXII.—

UT BRITONES, QUIESCENTIBUS AD TEMPUS EXTERIS,  
CIVILIBUS SESE BELLIS CONTRIVERINT, SIMUL ET  
MAJORIBUS FLAGITIIS SUBMERSERINT.

Interea in Britannia cessatum quidem est parumper ab externis, sed non a civilibus bellis. Manebant exterminia civitatum ab hoste dirutarum ac desertarum; pugnabant contra se invicem, qui hostem evaserant, cives. Attamen, recente adhuc memoria calamitatis et cladis inflictæ, servabant utcunque reges, sacerdotes, privati, et optimates suum quique ordinem; at, illis decedentibus, cum successisset ætas tempestatis illius nescia, et præsentis solum serenitatis statum experta, ita cuncta veritatis ac justitiæ moderamina concussa ac subversa sunt, ut earum, non dicam vestigium, sed ne memoria quidem, præter in paucis et valde paucis, ulla appareret. Quin, inter alia inenarrabilium scelerum facta, quæ historicus eorum Gildas flebili sermone describit, et hoc addebant, ut nunquam genti Saxonum sive Anglorum, secum Britanniam incolenti, verbum fidei prædicando committerent. Sed non tamen divina pietas plebem suam, quam præscivit, deseruit, quin multo digniores genti memoratæ præcones veritatis, per quos crederet, destinavit.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXIII.—

UT SANCTUS PAPA GREGORIUS, AUGUSTINUM CUM  
MONACHIS AD PRÆDICANDUM GENTI ANGLORUM  
MITTENS, EPISTOLA QUOQUE ILLOS EXHORTATORIA,  
NE A LABORANDO CESSARENT, CONFORTAVERIT.

Siquidem anno ab incarnatione Domini quingentesimo octogesimo secundo, Mauricius, ab Augusto quinquagesimus quartus, imperium suscipiens, viginti et uno annis tenuit; cujus anno regni decimo Gregorius, vir doctrina et actione præcipuus, pontificatum Romanæ et Apostolicæ sedis sortitus, rexit annos tredecim, menses sex, et dies decem. Qui divino admonitus instinctu, anno decimo quarto ejusdem principis, adventus vero Anglorum in Britanniam anno circiter centesimo quinquagesimo, misit servum Dei Augustinum, et alios plures cum eo monachos timentes Dominum, prædicare verbum Dei genti Anglorum. Qui cum, jussis pontificalibus obtemperantes, memoratum opus aggredi cœpissent, jamque aliquantulum itineris confecissent, percussi timore inertes redire domum (potius quam barbaram, feram, incredulamque gentem, cujus ne linguam quidem nossent, adire,) cogitabant, et hoc esse tutius communi consilio decernebant. Nec mora, Augustinum, quem eis episcopum ordinandum, si ab Anglis susciperentur, disposuerat, domum remittunt, qui a beato Gregorio humili supplicatu obtineret ne tam periculosam, tam laboriosam, tam incertam peregrinationem adire deberent. Quibus ille exhortatorias mittens literas, in opus eos verbi, divino confisos auxilio, proficisci suadet. Quarum videlicet litterarum ista est forma.

“Gregorius, servus servorum Dei, servis Domini nostri. Quia melius fuerat bona non incipere, quam ab his, quæ cœpta sunt, cogitatione retrorsum redire, summo studio, dilectissimi filii, oportet ut opus bonum quod, auxiliante Domino, cœpistis, impleatis. Nec labor vos ergo itineris, nec maledicorum hominum linguæ deterreant, sed omni instantia omnique fervore, quæ inchoastis, Deo auctore, peragite; scientes quod laborem magnum major æternæ retributionis gloria sequitur. Remeanti autem Augustino præposito vestro, quem et abbatem vobis constituimus, in omnibus humiliter obedite; scientes hoc vestris animabus per omnia profuturum, quidquid a vobis fuerit in ejus admonitione completum. Omnipotens Deus sua vos gratia protegat, et vestri laboris fructum in æterna patria videre concedat; quatenus et si vobiscum laborare nequeo, simul in gaudio retributionis inveniar, quia laborare scilicet volo. Deus vos incolumes custodiat, dilectissimi filii.

“Data die decimo kalendarum Augustarum, imperante domino nostro Mauricio Tiberio piissimo Augusto anno decimo quarto, post consulatum ejusdem domini nostri anno decimo tertio, indictione decima quarta.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXIV.—

## UT ARELATENSI EPISCOPO EPISTOLAM PRO EORUM SUSCEPTIONE MISERIT.

Misit etiam tunc idem venerandus pontifex ad Ætherium, Arelatensem Archiepiscopum, ut Augustinum Britanniam pergentem benigne susciperet, literas, quarum iste est textus.

“Reverendissimo et sanctissimo fratri Ætherio coepiscopo, Gregorius, servus servorum Dei. Licet apud sacerdotes habentes Deo placitam caritatem religiosi viri nullius commendatione indigeant, quia tamen aptum se tempus scribendi ingressit, fraternitati vestræ nostra mittere scripta curavimus; insinuantes, latorem præsentium Augustinum servum Dei, de cujus certi sumus studio, cum aliis servis Dei, illuc nos pro utilitate animarum, auxiliante Domino, direxisse; quem necesse est ut sacerdotali studio sanctitas vestra adjuvare, et sua ei solatia præbere festinet. Cui etiam, ut promptiores ad suffragandum possitis existere, causam vobis injunximus subtiliter indicare; scientes quod, ea cognita, tota vos propter Deum devotione ad solatiandum, quia res exigit, commodetis. Candidum præterea presbyterum, communem filium, quem ad gubernationem patrimonioli ecclesiæ nostræ transmisimus, caritati vestræ in omnibus commendamus. Deus te incolumem custodiat, reverendissime frater.

“Datæ die decimo kalendarum Augustarum, imperante domino nostro Mauricio Tiberio piissimo Augusto, anno decimo quarto, post consulatum ejusdem domini nostri anno decimo tertio, indictione decima quarta.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXV.—

UT VENIENS BRITANNIAM AUGUSTINUS PRIMO IN  
INSULA TANETO REGI CANTUARIORUM PRÆDICARET;  
ET SIC, ACCEPTA AB EO LICENTIA, CANTIAM  
PRÆDICATURUS INTRAVERIT.

Roboratus ergo confirmatione beati patris Gregorii Augustinus, cum famulis Christi qui erant cum eo, rediit in opus verbi, pervenitque Britanniam. Erat eo tempore rex Ethelbertus in Cantia potentissimus, qui ad confinium usque Humbræ fluminis maximi, quo meridiani et septentrionales Anglorum populi dirimuntur, fines imperii tetenderat. Est autem ad orientalem Cantiae plagam Tanetos insula non modica, id est, magnitudinis, juxta consuetudinem æstimationis Anglorum, familiarum sexcentarum, quam a continenti terra secernit fluvius Vantsumu, qui est latitudinis circiter trium stadiorum et duobus tantum in locis est transmeabilis, utrumque enim caput protendit in mare. In hac ergo applicuit servus Domini Augustinus et socii ejus, viri, ut ferunt, ferme quadraginta. Acceperunt autem, præcipiente beato Papa Gregorio, de gente Francorum interpretes, et mittens ad Ethelbertum mandavit se venisse de Roma ac nuncium ferre optimum, qui sibi obtemperantibus æterna in cœlis gaudia et regnum sine fine cum Deo vivo et vero futurum sine ulla dubietate promitteret; qui, hæc audiens, manere illos in ea quam adierant insula, et eis necessaria ministrari, donec videret quid eis faceret, jussit. Nam et antea fama ad eum Christianæ religionis pervenerat, utpote qui et uxorem habebat Christianam de gente Francorum regia, vocabulo Bertham; quam ea conditione a parentibus acceperat, ut ritum fidei ac religionis suæ cum episcopo, quem ei adiutorem fidei dederant, nomine Luidhardo, inviolatum servare licentiam haberet.

Post dies ergo venit ad insulam rex, et residens sub divo jussit Augustinum cum sociis ad suum ibidem advenire colloquium; caverat enim ne in aliquam domum ad se introirent, vetere usus augurio, ne superventu suo, si quid maleficæ artis habuissent, eum superando deciperent. At illi non dæmonica, sed divina virtute præditi veniebant, crucem pro vexillo ferentes argenteam, et imaginem Domini Salvatoris in tabula depictam; litaniasque canentes pro sua simul et eorum, propter quos et ad quos venerant, salute æterna, Domino supplicabant. Cumque ad jussionem regis residentes Verbum ei vitæ una cum omnibus, qui aderant, ejus comitibus prædicarent, respondit ille dicens, “Pulcra sunt quidem verba et promissa quæ affertis; sed quia nova sunt et incerta, non his possum assensum tribuere, relictis eis, quæ tanto tempore cum omni Anglorum gente servavi. Verum, quia de longe huc peregrini venistis, et ut ego mihi videor perspexisse, ea quæ vos vera et optima credebatis nobis quoque communicare desiderastis, nolumus molesti esse vobis; quin potius benigno vos hospitio recipere, et quæ victui sunt vestro necessaria ministrare curamus, nec prohibemus quin omnes quos potestis fidei vestræ religionis prædicando societis.” Dedit ergo eis mansionem in civitate Dorovernensi, quæ imperii sui totius erat metropolis, eisque, ut promiserat, cum administratione victus temporalis licentiam quoque prædicandi non abstulit.

Fertur autem, quia appropinquantes civitati, more suo, cum cruce sancta et imagine magni regis, Domini nostri Jesu Christi, hanc litaniam consona voce modularentur. “Deprecamur te, Domine, in omni misericordia tua, ut auferatur furor tuus et ira tua a civitate ista et de domo sancta tua, quoniam peccavimus. Alleluia.”



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXVI.—

UT IDEM IN CANTIA PRIMITIVÆ ECCLESIAE ET  
DOCTRINAM SIT IMITATUS ET VITAM, ATQUE IN URBE  
REGIS SEDEM EPISCOPATUS ACCEPERIT.

At ubi datam sibi mansionem intraverant, cœperunt apostolicam primitivæ ecclesiæ vitam imitari; orationibus videlicet assiduis, vigiliis, ac jejuniis serviendo, verbum vitæ quibus poterant prædicando, cuncta hujus mundi velut aliena spernendo, ea tantum quæ victui necessaria videbantur ab eis quos docebant accipiendo, secundum ea quæ docebant ipsi per omnia vivendo; et paratum ad patiendum adversa quæque, vel etiam ad moriendum, pro ea, quam prædicabant, veritate, animum habendo. Quid mora? crediderunt nonnulli et baptizabantur, mirantes simplicitatem innocentis vitæ ac dulcedinem doctrinæ eorum cœlestis. Erat autem prope ipsam civitatem ad orientem ecclesia in honorem sancti Martini antiquitus facta, dum adhuc Romani Britanniam incolerent, in qua regina, quam Christianam fuisse prædiximus, orare consueverat; in hac ergo et ipsi primo convenire, psallere, orare, missas facere, prædicare et baptizare cœperunt, donec, rege ad fidem converso, majorem prædicandi per omnia et ecclesias fabricandi vel restaurandi licentiam acciperent.

At ubi ipse etiam inter alios delectatus vita mundissima sanctorum et promissis eorum suavissimis, quæ vera esse miraculorum quoque multorum ostensione firmaverant, credens baptizatus est, cœpere plures quotidie ad audiendum verbum confluere ac, relicto gentilitatis ritu, unitati se sanctæ Christi ecclesiæ credendo sociare. Quorum fidei et conversioni ita congratulatus esse rex perhibetur, ut nullum tamen cogeret ad Christianismum, sed tantummodo credentes arctiori dilectione, quasi concives sibi regni cœlestis, amplecteretur; didicerat enim a doctoribus auctoribusque suæ salutis servitium Christi voluntarium, non coactitium, esse debere. Nec distulit quin etiam ipsis doctoribus suis locum sedis, eorum gradui congruum, in Doroverni metropoli sua donaret, simul et necessarias in diversis speciebus possessiones conferret.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXVII.—

UT IDEM EPISCOPUS FACTUS GREGORIO PAPÆ QUÆ  
SINT BRITANNIÆ GESTA MANDARIT, ET SIMUL  
NECESSARIIS EJUS RESPONSA PETENS ACCEPERIT.

Interea vir Domini Augustinus venit Arelas, et ab archiepiscopo ejusdem civitatis Ætherio, juxta quod jussa sancti patris Gregorii acceperant, archiepiscopus genti Anglorum ordinatus est; reversusque Britanniam misit continuo Romam Laurentium presbyterum et Petrum monachum, qui beato pontifici Gregorio gentem Anglorum fidem Christi suscepisse ac se episcopum factum esse referrent; simul et de eis, quæ necessariæ videbantur, quæstionibus ejus consulta flagitans. Nec mora, congrua quæsitui responsa recipit; quæ etiam huic historiæ nostræ commodum duximus indere.

*Prima Interrogatio beati Augustini Episcopi Cantuariorum Ecclesiæ.*—De episcopis, qualiter cum suis clericis conversentur; vel de his quæ fidelium oblationibus accedunt altari, quantæ debeant fieri portiones, et qualiter episcopus agere in ecclesia debeat?

*Respondit Gregorius Papa Urbis Romæ.*—Sacra Scriptura testatur, quam te bene nosse dubium non est, et specialiter beati Pauli ad Timotheum Epistolæ, in quibus eum erudire studuit qualiter in domo Dei conversari debuisset. Mos autem sedis apostolicæ est ordinatis episcopis præcepta tradere, ut in omni stipendio, quod accedit, quatuor debeant fieri portiones; una, videlicet, episcopo et familiæ propter hospitalitatem atque susceptionem, alia clero, tertia pauperibus, quarta ecclesiis reparandis. Sed quia tua fraternitas monasterii regulis erudita, seorsum fieri non debet a clericis suis in ecclesia Anglorum, quæ, auctore Deo, nuper adhuc ad fidem adducta est, hanc debet conversationem instituere, quæ initio nascentis ecclesiæ fuit patribus nostris; in quibus nullus eorum ex his, quæ possidebant, aliquid suum esse dicebat, sed erant eis omnia communia.

Si qui vero sunt clerici extra sacros ordines constituti, qui se continere non possunt, sortiri uxores debent et stipendia sua exterius accipere. Quia et de eisdem partibus, de quibus præfati sumus, novimus scriptum quod dividebatur singulis prout cuique opus erat. De eorum quoque stipendio cogitandum atque providendum est, et sub ecclesiastica regula sunt tenendi, ut bonis moribus vivant, et canendis psalmis invigilent, et ab omnibus illicitis et cor et linguam et corpus, Deo auctore, conservent. Communi autem vita viventibus jam de faciendis portionibus, vel exhibenda hospitalitate et adimplenda misericordia, nobis quid erit loquendum, cum omne quod superest in causis piis ac religiosis erogandum est? Domino omnium magistro docente, [Luc. xi. 41,] *Quod superest, date eleemosynam, et ecce omnia munda sunt vobis.*

*Secunda Interrogatio Augustini.*—Cum una sit fides, cur sunt ecclesiarum diversæ consuetudines, et altera consuetudo missarum in sancta Romana ecclesia atque altera in Galliarum tenetur?

*Respondit Gregorius Papa.*—Novit fraternitas tua Romanæ ecclesiæ consuetudinem, in qua se meminit nutritam. Sed mihi placet, sive in Romana, sive in Galliarum, seu in qualibet ecclesia, aliquid invenisti quod plus omnipotenti Deo possit placere, sollicite eligas, et in Anglorum ecclesia, quæ adhuc ad fidem nova est, institutione præcipua, quæ de multis ecclesiis colligere potuisti, infundas. Non enim pro locis res, sed pro bonis rebus loca amanda sunt. Ex singulis ergo quibusque ecclesiis quæ pia, quæ religiosa, quæ recta sunt, elige; et hæc, quasi in fasciculum collecta, apud Anglorum mentes in consuetudinem depone.

*Tertia Interrogatio Augustini.*—Obsecro, quid pati debeat, si quis aliquid de ecclesia furtu abstulerit?

*Respondit Gregorius.*—Hoc tua fraternitas ex persona furis pensare potest, qualiter valeat corrigi. Sunt enim quidam, qui habentes subsidia furtum perpetrant, et sunt alii, qui hac in re ex inopia delinquant; unde necesse est ut quidam damnis, quidam vero verberibus, et quidam districtius, quidam autem levius, corrigantur. Et cum paulo districtius agitur, ex caritate agendum est et non ex furore, quia ipsi hoc præstatur qui corrigitur, ne gehennæ ignibus tradatur. Sic enim nos fidelibus tenere disciplinam debemus, sicut boni patres carnalibus filiis solent, quos et pro culpis verberibus feriunt, et tamen ipsos, quos doloribus affligunt, habere heredes quærunt; et quæ possident ipsis servant, quos irati insequi videntur. Hæc ergo caritas in mente tenenda est et ipsa modum correptionis dictat, ita ut mens extra rationis regulam omnino nihil faciat. Adde etiam, quomodo ea, quæ furtu de ecclesiis abstulerint, reddere debeant; sed absit ut ecclesia cum augmento recipiat quod de terrenis rebus videtur amittere, et lucra de vanis quærere.

*Quarta Interrogatio Augustini.*—Si debeant duo germani fratres singulas sorores accipere, quæ sunt ab illis longa progenie generatæ?

*Respondit Gregorius.*—Hoc fieri modis omnibus licet; nequaquam enim in sacris eloquiis invenitur, quod huic capitulo contradicere videatur.

*Quinta Interrogatio Augustini.*—Usque ad quotam generationem fideles debeant cum propinquis sibi conjugio copulari? et novercis et cognatis si liceat copulari conjugio?

*Respondit Gregorius.*—Quædam terrena lex in Romana republica permittit ut, sive fratris et sororis, seu duorum fratrum germanorum, vel duarum sororum, filius et filia misceantur; sed experimento didicimus ex tali conjugio sobolem non posse succrescere, et Sacra Lex prohibet cognationis turpitudinem revelare. Unde necesse est ut jam tertia vel quarta generatio fidelium licenter sibi jungi debeat; nam secunda, quam prædiximus, a se omni modo debet abstinere. Cum noverca autem miscere grave est facinus, quia et in Lege scriptum est, [Lev. xviii. 7,] *Turpitudinem patris tui non revelabis*. Neque enim patris turpitudinem filius revelare potest; sed, quia scriptum est, [Gen. ii. 24,] *Erunt duo in carne una*, qui turpitudinem novercæ, quæ

una caro cum patre fuit, revelare præsumserit, profecto patris turpitudinem revelavit. Cum cognata quoque miscere prohibitum est, quia per conjunctionem priorem caro fratris fuerat facta. Pro qua re etiam Johannes Baptista capite truncatus est et sancto martyrio consummatus, cui non est dictum ut Christum negaret, et pro Christi confessione occisus est; sed quia idem Dominus noster Jesus Christus dixerat, [Jo. xiv. 6,] *Ego sum veritas*, quia pro veritate Johannes occisus est, videlicet et pro Christo sanguinem fudit.

Quia vero sunt multi in Anglorum gente qui, dum adhuc in infidelitate essent, huic nefando conjugio dicuntur admixti, ad fidem venientes admonendi sunt ut se abstineant, et grave hoc esse peccatum cognoscant. Tremendum Dei iudicium timeant, ne pro carnali dilectione tormenta æterni cruciatus incurrant. Non tamen pro hac re sacri corporis ac sanguinis Domini communione privandi sunt, ne in eis illa ulcisci videantur, in quibus se per ignorantiam ante lavacrum baptismatis adstrinxerunt. In hoc enim tempore sancta ecclesia quædam per fervorem corrigit, quædam per mansuetudinem tolerat, quædam per considerationem dissimulat, atque ita portat et dissimulat ut sæpe malum, quod adversatur, portando et dissimulando compescat. Omnes autem qui ad fidem veniunt admonendi sunt, ne tale aliquid audeant perpetrare. Si qui autem perpetraverint, corporis et sanguinis Domini communione privandi sunt; quia, sicut in his, qui per ignorantiam fecerunt, culpa aliquatenus toleranda est, ita in his fortiter insequenda, qui non metuunt sciendo peccare.

*Sexta Interrogatio Augustini.*—Si longinquitas itineris magna interjaceat, ut episcopi non facile valeant convenire, an debeat sine aliorum episcoporum præsentia episcopus ordinari?

*Respondit Gregorius.*—Et quidem in Anglorum ecclesia, in qua adhuc solus tu episcopus inveniris, ordinare episcopum non aliter nisi sine episcopis potes; nisi aliqui de Gallis episcopi veniunt, qui in ordinatione episcopi testes assistant. Sed fraternitatem tuam ita volumus episcopos ordinare, ut ipsi sibi episcopi longo intervallo minime disjungantur; quatenus nulla sit necessitas ut, in ordinatione episcopi, alii convenire non possint; pastores quoque, quorum præsentia valde est utilis, facile debeant convenire. Cum igitur, auctore Deo, ita fuerint episcopi in propinquis sibi locis ordinati, per omnia episcoporum ordinatio, sine aggregatis tribus vel quatuor episcopis, fieri non debet. Nam in ipsis rebus spiritualibus, ut sapienter et mature disponantur, exemplum trahere a rebus etiam carnalibus possumus. Certe enim dum conjugia in mundo celebrantur conjugati quique convocantur, ut qui in via jam conjugii præcesserunt, in subsequentis quoque copulæ gaudio misceantur. Cur non ergo et in hac spirituali ordinatione, qua per sacrum ministerium homo Deo conjungitur, tales conveniant, qui vel in propectu ordinati episcopi gaudeant, vel pro ejus custodia omnipotenti Deo preces pariter fundant?

*Septima Interrogatio Augustini.*—Qualiter debemus cum Galliarum Britanniarumque episcopis agere?

*Respondit Gregorius.*—In Galliarum episcopis nullam tibi auctoritatem tribuimus; quia ab antiquis prædecessorum meorum temporibus pallium Arelatensis episcopus accepit, quem nos privare auctoritate percepta minime debemus. Si igitur contingat ut

fraternitas tua ad Galliarum provinciam transeat, cum eodem Arelatensi episcopo debet agere qualiter, si qua sunt in episcopis vitia, corrigantur; qui, si forte in disciplinæ vigore tepidus exsistat, tuæ fraternitatis zelo accendendus est; cui etiam epistolas fecimus, ut cum tuæ sanctitatis præsentia in Galliis, et ipse tota mente subveniat, et quæ sunt Creatoris nostri iussioni contraria, ab episcoporum moribus compescat. Ipse autem ex auctoritate propria episcopos Galliarum iudicare non poteris; sed suadendo, blandiendo, bona quoque opera eorum imitationi monstrando, pravorum mentes ad sanctitatis studia reforma, quia scriptum est in Lege, [Deut. xxiii. 25,] *Per alienam messem transiens falcem mittere non debet, sed manu spicas conterere et manducare.* Falcem enim iudicii mittere non potes in ea segete, quæ alteri videtur esse commissa; sed per affectum boni operis frumenta dominica vitiorum suorum paleis expolia, et in Ecclesiæ corpore monendo et persuadendo, quasi mandendo, converte. Quicquid vero ex auctoritate agendum est, cum prædicto Arelatensi episcopo agatur, ne prætermitti possit hoc, quod antiqua patrum institutio invenit. Britanniarum vero omnes episcopos tuæ fraternitati committimus, ut indocti doceantur, infirmi persuasione roborentur, perversi auctoritate corrigantur.

*Octava Interrogatio Augustini.*—Si prægnans mulier debeat baptizari? aut postquam genuerit, post quantum tempus possit ecclesiam intrare? aut etiam, ne morte præoccupetur, quod genuerit, post quot dies hoc liceat sacri baptismatis sacramenta percipere? aut post quantum temporis huic vir suus possit in carnis copulatione conjungi? aut, si menstrua consuetudine tenetur, an ecclesiam intrare ei liceat, aut sacræ communionis sacramenta percipere? aut vir suæ conjugii permixtus, priusquam lavetur aqua, si ecclesiam possit intrare, vel etiam ad mysterium communionis sacræ accedere? Quæ omnia rudi Anglorum genti oportet haberi comperta.

*Respondit Gregorius.*—Hoc non ambigo fraternitatem tuam esse requisitam, cui jam et responsum reddidisse me arbitror; sed hoc, quod ipse dicere et sentire potuisti, credo quod mea apud te volueris responsione firmari. Mulier etenim prægnans cur non debeat baptizari, cum non sit ante omnipotentis Dei oculos culpa aliqua fecunditas carnis? Nam cum primi parentes nostri in Paradiso deliquissent, immortalitatem, quam acceperant, recto Dei iudicio perdiderunt. Quia itaque idem omnipotens Deus humanum genus pro culpa sua funditus extinguere noluit, immortalitatem homini pro peccato suo abstulit, et tamen pro benignitate suæ pietatis fecunditatem ei sobolis reservavit. Quod ergo naturæ humanæ ex omnipotentis Dei dono servatum est, qua ratione poterit a sacri baptismatis gratia prohiberi? In illo quippe mysterio, in quo omnis culpa funditus exstinguitur, valde stultum est, si donum gratiæ contradicere posse videatur.

Cum vero enixa fuerit mulier, post quot dies debeat ecclesiam intrare, Testamenti Veteris præceptione didicisti, ut pro masculino diebus triginta tribus, pro femina autem diebus sexaginta sex, debeat abstinere. Quod tamen sciendum est, quia in mysterio accipitur. Nam si hora eadem, qua genuerit, actura gratias intret ecclesiam, nullo peccati pondere gravatur; voluptas etenim carnis, non dolor, in culpa est. In carnis autem commixtione voluptas est, nam in prolis prolatione gemitus. Unde et ipsi primæ matri omnium dicitur, [Gen. iii. 16,] *In doloribus paries*; si itaque enixam mulierem prohibemus ecclesiam intrare, ipsam ei pœnam suam in culpam deputamus. Baptizare autem vel enixam mulierem, vel hoc quod genuerit, si mortis periculo urgetur, vel

ipsam hora eadem qua gignit, vel hoc quod gignitur, eadem qua natum est, nullo modo prohibetur; quia sancti mysterii gratia, sicut viventibus atque discernentibus, cum magna discretione providenda est, ita his, quibus mors imminet, sine ulla dilatione offerenda; ne, dum adhuc tempus ad præbendum redemptionis mysterium quæritur, interveniente paululum mora, inveniri non valeat, qui redimatur.

Ad ejus vero concubitum vir suus accedere non debet quoadusque, qui gignitur, ablactetur. Prava autem in conjugatorum moribus consuetudo surrexit, ut mulieres filios, quos gignunt, nutrire contemnant, eosque aliis mulieribus ad nutriendum tradant, quod, videlicet, ex sola causa incontinentiæ videtur inventum, quia, dum se continere nolunt, despiciunt lactare quos gignunt. Hæ itaque, quæ filios suos ex prava consuetudine aliis ad nutriendum tradunt, nisi purgationis tempus transierit, viris suis non debent admisceri; quippe qui et sine partus causa, cum in suetis menstruis detinentur, viris suis misceri prohibentur, ita ut morte Lex sacra feriat si quis vir ad menstruatam mulierem accedat. Quæ tamen mulier, dum consuetudinem menstruam patitur, prohiberi ecclesiam intrare non debet, quia ei naturæ superfluitas in culpam non valet reputari; et per hoc, quod invita patitur, justum non est ut ingressu ecclesiæ privetur. Novimus namque quod mulier, quæ fluxum patiebatur sanguinis, post tergum Domini humiliter veniens vestimenti ejus fimbriam tetigit, atque ab ea statim sua infirmitas recessit. Si ergo in fluxu sanguinis posita laudabiliter potuit Domini vestimentum tangere, cur, quæ menstruam sanguinis patitur, ei non liceat Domini ecclesiam intrare? Sed dicis, Illam infirmitas compulit; has vero, de quibus loquimur, consuetudo constringit. Perpende autem, frater carissime, quia omne, quod in hac mortali carne patimur ex infirmitate naturæ, est digno Dei judicio post culpam ordinatum; esurire namque, sitire, æstuare, algere, lassescere, ex infirmitate naturæ est; et quid est aliud contra famem alimenta, contra sitim potum, contra æstum auras, contra frigus vestem, contra lassitudinem requiem, quærere, nisi medicamentum quoddam contra ægritudines explorare? Feminæ itaque et menstruus sui sanguinis fluxus ægritudo est. Si igitur bene præsumsit, quæ vestimentum Domini in languore posita tetigit, quod uni personæ infirmanti conceditur, cur non concedatur cunctis mulieribus, quæ naturæ suæ vitio infirmantur?

“Sanctæ autem communionis mysterium in eisdem diebus percipere non debet prohiberi. Si autem ex veneratione magna percipere non præsumit, laudanda est; sed si perceperit, non judicanda. Bonarum quippe mentium est, et ibi aliquo modo culpas suas agnoscere, ubi culpa non est; quia sæpe sine culpa agitur quod venit ex culpa; unde etiam cum esurimus sine culpa comedimus, quibus ex culpa primi hominis factum est ut esuriamus. Menstrua enim consuetudo mulieribus non aliqua culpa est, videlicet, quæ naturaliter accidit. Sed tamen quod natura ipsa ita vitiata est, ut etiam sine voluntatis studio videatur esse polluta, ex culpa venit vitium, in quo se ipsa, qualis per judicium facta sit, humana natura cognoscat; et homo, qui culpam sponte perpetravit, reatum culpæ portet invitus. Atque ideo feminæ cum semetipsis considerent, et si in menstrua consuetudine ad sacramentum Dominici corporis et sanguinis accedere non præsumant, de sua recta consideratione laudandæ sunt; dum vero percipiendo ex religiosæ vitæ consuetudine, ejusdem mysterii amore rapiuntur, reprimendæ, sicut prædiximus, non sunt. Sicut enim in Testamento Veteri exteriora opera observantur, ita in Testamento Novo, non tam quod exterius agitur, quam id quod interius cogitatur, sollicita intentione attenditur, ut subtili sententia puniatur.

Nam cum multa Lex velut immunda manducare prohibeat, in Evangelio tamen Dominus dicit, [Matth. xv. 11,] *Non quod intrat in os coinquinat hominem, sed quæ exeunt de ore, illa sunt quæ coinquinant hominem;* atque paulo post subjecit exponens, [Matth. xv. 19,] *Ex corde exeunt cogitationes malæ.* Ubi ubertim indicatum est, quod illud ab omnipotente Deo pollutum esse in opere ostenditur, quod ex pollutæ cogitationis radice generatur. Unde Paulus quoque apostolus dicit, [Tit. i. 15,] *Omnia munda mundis, coinquinatis autem et infidelibus nihil est mundum;* atque mox ejusdem causam coinquinationis annuncians subjungit, *Coinquinata sunt enim et mens eorum et conscientia.* Si ergo ei cibus immundus non est, cui mens immunda non fuerit, cur, quod munda mente mulier ex natura patitur ei in immunditiam reputetur?

Vir autem cum propria conjuge dormiens, nisi lotus aqua, intrare ecclesiam non debet; sed neque lotus intrare statim debet. Lex autem veteri populo præcepit, ut mixtus vir mulieri et lavari aqua debeat, et ante solis occasum ecclesiam non intrare; quod tamen intelligi spiritualiter potest. Quia mulieri vir miscetur, quando illicitæ concupiscentiæ animus in cogitatione per delectationem conjungitur; quia, nisi prius ignis concupiscentiæ a mente deferbeat, dignum se congregationi fratrum æstimare non debet, qui se gravari per nequitiam pravæ voluntatis videt. Quamvis de hac re diversæ hominum nationes diversa sentiant, atque alia custodire videantur, Romanorum tamen semper ab antiquioribus usus fuit, post admixtionem propriæ conjugis, et lavacri purificationem quærere, et ab ingressu ecclesiæ paululum reverenter abstinere. Nec hæc dicentes culpam deputamus esse conjugium, sed quia ipsa licita admixtio conjugis sine voluptate carnis fieri non potest, a sacri loci ingressu abstinendum est, quia voluptas ipsa esse sine culpa nullatenus potest. Non enim de adulterio, vel fornicatione, sed de legitimo conjugio natus fuerat, qui dicebat, [Ps. i. 6,] *Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.* Qui enim in iniquitatibus conceptum se noverat, a delicto se natum gemebat; quia portat arbor in ramo humorem vitii, quem traxit ex radice. In quibus tamen verbis non admixtionem conjugum iniquitatem nominat, sed ipsam, videlicet, voluptatem admixtionis. Sunt etenim multa, quæ licita probantur esse ac legitima, et tamen in eorum actu aliquatenus fœdamur; sicut sæpe irascendo culpas insequimur, et tranquillitatem in nobis animi perturbamus; et cum rectum sit quod agitur, non est tamen approbabile quod in eo animus perturbatur. Contra vitia quippe delinquentium iratus fuerat, qui dicebat, [Ps. vi. 7,] *Turbatus est præ ira oculus meus;* quia enim non valet nisi tranquilla mens in contemplationis se lucem suspendere, in ira suum oculum turbatum dolebat; quia, dum male acta deorsum insequitur, confundi atque turbari a summorum contemplatione cogebatur. Et laudabilis ergo est ira contra vitium, et tamen molesta, qua turbatum se aliquem reatum incurrisse æstimat. Oportet itaque legitimam carnis copulam, ut causa proles sit, non voluptatis; et carnis commixtio creandorum liberorum sit gratia, non satisfactio vitiorum. Si quis vero sua conjuge, non cupidine voluptatis raptus, sed solummodo creandorum liberorum gratia, utitur, iste profecto sive de ingressu ecclesiæ, seu de sumendo Domini corporis sanguinisque mysterio, suo est iudicio relinquendus; quia a nobis prohiberi non debet accipere, qui in igne positus nescit ardere. Cum vero non amor procreandæ sobolis, sed voluptas dominatur in opere commixtionis, habent conjuges etiam de sua commixtione quod defleant. Hoc enim eis concedit sancta prædicatio; et tamen de ipsa concessione metu animum concutit. Nam cum Paulus apostolus diceret, [1 Cor. vii. 9, 6,] *Qui se continere non potest, habeat uxorem suam,* statim subjungere curavit, *Hoc autem dico secundum*

*indulgentiam, non secundum imperium.* Non enim indulgetur quod licet, quia justum est; quod igitur indulgere dixit, culpam esse demonstravit.

Vigilanti vero mente pensandum est, quod in Sina monte Dominus ad populum locuturus prius eundem populum abstinere a mulieribus præcepit. Et si illic, ubi Dominus per creaturam subditam hominibus loquebatur, tanta provisione est munditia corporis requisita, ut qui verba Dei perciperent mulieribus mixti non essent; quanto magis mulieres, quæ corpus Domini omnipotentis accipiunt, custodire in se munditiam carnis debent, ne ipsa inæstimabilis mysterii magnitudine graventur? Hinc etenim ad David de pueris suis per sacerdotem dicitur, ut si a mulieribus mundi essent panes propositionis acciperent, quos omnino non acciperent, nisi prius mundos eos David a mulieribus fateretur. Tunc autem vir, qui post admixtionem conjugis lotus aqua fuerit, etiam sacræ communionis mysterium valet accipere, cum ei juxta præfinitam sententiam etiam ecclesiam licuerit intrare.

*Nona Interrogatio Augustini.*—Si post illusionem, quæ per somnium solet accidere, vel corpus Domini quilibet accipere valeat; vel, si sacerdos sit, sacra mysteria celebrare?

*Respondit Gregorius.*—Hunc quidem Testamentum Veteris Legis, sicut et in superiori capitulo jam diximus, pollutum dicit, et nisi lotum aqua usque ad vesperam intrare ecclesiam non concedit. Quod tamen aliter populus spiritualis intelligens sub eodem intellectu accipiet, quo præfati sumus; quia quasi per somnium illuditur, qui tentatus immunditia veris imaginibus in cogitatione inquinatur, sed lavandus est aqua, ut culpas cogitationis lacrimis abluat; et nisi prius ignis tentationis recesserit, reum se quasi usque ad vesperum cognoscat. Sed est in eadem illusionem valde necessaria discretio, quæ subtiliter pensari debet ex qua re accidat menti dormientis; aliquando enim ex crapula, aliquando ex naturæ superfluitate vel infirmitate, aliquando ex cogitatione, contingit ita. Et quidem cum ex naturæ superfluitate vel infirmitate evenerit, omnimodo hæc illusio non est timenda; quia hanc animum nescientem pertulisse magis dolendum est, quam fecisse. Cum vero ultra modum appetitus gulæ in sumendis alimentis rapitur, atque idcirco humorum receptacula gravantur, habet exinde animus aliquem reatum, non tamen usque ad prohibitionem percipiendi sancti mysterii, vel missarum solennia celebrandi; cum fortasse aut festus dies exigit, aut exhiberi mysterium, (pro eo quod sacerdos alius in loco deest,) ipsa necessitas compellit. Nam si adsunt alii, qui implere ministerium valeant, illusio per crapulam facta a perceptione sacri mysterii prohibere non debet; sed ab immolatione sacri mysterii abstinere, ut arbitror, humiliter debet: si tamen dormientis mentem turpi imaginatione non concusserit. Nam sunt quibus ita plerumque illusio nascitur, ut eorum animus, etiam in somno corporis positus, turpibus imaginationibus non fœdetur. Qua in re unum ibi ostenditur ipsa mens rea, non tamen vel suo iudicio libera, cum se, etsi dormienti corpore, nihil meminit vidisse, tamen in vigiliis corporis meminit in ingluviem cecidisse. Sin vero ex turpi cogitatione vigilantis oritur illusio dormientis, patet animo reatus suus; videt enim a qua radice inquinatio illa processerit, quia, quod cogitavit sciens, hoc protulit nesciens. Sed pensandum est, ipsa cogitatio utrum suggestionem, an delectationem, vel, quod majus est, peccati consensu acciderit. Tribus enim modis impletur omne peccatum, videlicet, suggestionem, delectationem, consensu. Suggestio quippe fit per diabolum, delectatio per carnem,



consensus per spiritum; quia et primam culpam serpens suggessit, Eva, velut caro, delectata est, Adam vero, velut spiritus, consensit; et necessaria est magna discretio, ut inter suggestionem atque delectationem, inter delectationem et consensum, iudex sui animus præsideat. Cum enim malignus spiritus peccatum suggerit in mente, si nulla peccati delectatio sequatur, peccatum omnimodo perpetratum non est; cum vero delectari caro cœperit, tunc peccatum incipit nasci; si autem ex deliberatione consentit, tunc peccatum cognoscitur perfici. In suggestione igitur peccati initium est, in delectatione fit nutrimentum, in consensu perfectio. Et sæpe contingit ut hoc, quod malignus spiritus seminat in cogitatione, caro in delectationem trahat; nec tamen anima eidem delectationi consentiat. Et cum caro delectari sine animo nequeat, ipse tamen animus carnis voluptatibus reluctans in delectatione carnali aliquo modo ligatur invitus, ut ei ex ratione contradicat, nec consentiat; et tamen delectatione ligatus sit, sed ligatum se vehementer ingemiscat. Unde et ille cœlestis exercitus præcipuus miles gemit dicens, [Rom. vii. 23,] *Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meæ, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quæ est in membris meis.* Si autem captivus erat, minime pugnabat, sed et, si pugnabat, quare captivus erat? repugnabat igitur legi mentis, cui lex, quæ in membris est, repugnabat. Si autem pugnabat, captivus non erat. Ecce itaque homo est, ut ita dixerim, captivus et liber; liber ex justitia quam diligit, captivus ex delectatione quam portat invitus.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXVIII.—

UT PAPA GREGORIUS EPISTOLAM ARELATENSI  
EPISCOPO, PRO ADJUVANDO IN OPERE DEI  
AUGUSTINO, MISERIT.

Hucusque responsiones beati Papæ Gregorii ad consulta reverendissimi antistitis Augustini. Epistolam vero, quam se Arelatensi episcopo fecisse commemorat, ad Virgilium Ætherii successorem dederat; cujus hæc forma est.

“Reverendissimo et sanctissimo fratri Virgilio coepiscopo, Gregorius servus servorum Dei.

“Quantus sit affectus venientibus sponte fratribus impendendus, ex eo quod plerumque solent caritatis causa invitari, cognoscitur. Et ideo, si communem fratrem Augustinum episcopum ad vos venire contigerit, ita illum dilectio vestra, sicut decet, affectuose dulciterque suscipiat, ut et ipsum consolationis suæ honore foveat, et alios, qualiter fraterna caritas colenda sit, doceat. Et quoniam sæpius evenit ut hi, qui longe sunt positi, prius ab aliis, quæ sunt emendanda, cognoscant; si quas fortasse fraternitati vestræ sacerdotum vel aliorum culpas intulerit, una cum eo residentes subtili cuncta investigatione perquirite, et ita vos in ea, quæ Deum offendunt et ad iracundiam provocant, districtos ac sollicitos exhibete, ut ad aliorum emendationem et vindicta culpabilem feriat, et innocentem falsa opinio non affligat. Deus te incolumem custodiat, reverendissime frater.

“Datæ die decimo kalendarum Juliarum, imperante domino nostro Mauricio Tiberio piissimo Augusto anno decimo nono, post consulatum ejusdem domini nostri anno decimo octavo, indictione quarta.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XXIX.—

### UT IDEM AUGUSTINO PALLIUM, ET EPISTOLAM, ET PLURES VERBI MINISTROS, MISERIT.

Præterea idem Papa Gregorius Augustino episcopo, quia suggesserat ei multam quidem sibi esse messem, sed operarios paucos, misit cum præfatis legatariis suis plures cooperatores ac verbi ministros, in quibus primi et præcipui erant Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, Rufinianus; et per eos generaliter universa, quæ ad cultum erant ac ministerium ecclesiæ necessaria, vasa videlicet sacra et vestimenta altarium, ornamenta quoque ecclesiarum, et sacerdotalia vel clericalia indumenta, sanctorum etiam apostolorum ac martyrum reliquias, nec non et codices plurimos. Misit etiam literas, in quibus significat se ei pallium direxisse, simul et insinuat qualiter episcopos in Britannia constituere debuisset, quarum literarum iste est textus.

“Reverendissimo et sanctissimo fratri Augustino coepiscopo, Gregorius servus servorum Dei. Cum certum sit pro omnipotente Deo laborantibus ineffabilia æterni regni præmia reservari, nobis tamen eis necesse est honorum beneficia tribuere, ut in spiritualis operis studio ex remuneratione valeant multiplicius insudare. Et quia nova Anglorum ecclesia ad omnipotentis Dei gratiam, eodem Domino largiente et te laborante, perducta est, usum tibi pallii in ea ad sola missarum solennia agenda concedimus; ita ut per loca singula duodecim episcopos ordines, qui tuæ subjaceant ditioni, quatenus Londoniensis civitatis episcopus semper in posterum a synodo propria debeat consecrari, atque honoris pallium ab hac sancta et apostolica, cui, Deo auctore, deservio, sede percipiat. Ad Eboracam vero civitatem te volumus episcopum mittere, quem ipse judicaveris ordinare, ita duntaxat ut, si eadem civitas cum finitimis locis verbum Dei receperit, ipse quoque duodecim episcopos ordinet, et metropolitani honore perfruatur; quia ei quoque, si vita comes fuerit, pallium tribuere, Domino favente, disponimus, quem tamen tuæ fraternitatis volumus dispositioni subjacere; post obitum vero tuum ita episcopis, quos ordinaverit, præsit, ut Londoniensis episcopi nullo modo ditioni subjaceat. Sit vero inter Londoniæ et Eboracæ civitatis episcopos in posterum honoris ista distinctio, ut ipse prior habeatur, qui prius fuerit ordinatus; communi autem consilio et concordi actione, quæcunque sunt pro Christi zelo agenda, disponant unanimiter, recte sentiant, et ea, quæ senserint, non sibimet discrepando perficiant.

“Tua vero fraternitas non solum eos episcopos, quos ordinaverit, neque eos tantummodo, qui per Eboracæ episcopum fuerint ordinati, sed etiam omnes Britannicæ sacerdotes habeat, Deo Domino nostro Jesu Christo auctore, subjectos; quatenus ex lingua et vita tuæ sanctitatis et recte credendi et bene vivendi normam percipiant, atque officium suum fide ac moribus exsequentes ad cœlestia, cum Dominus voluerit, regna pertingant. Deus te incolumem custodiat, reverendissime frater.

“Datae die decimo kalendarum Juliarum, imperante domino nostro Mauricio Tiberio piissimo Augusto anno decimo nono, post consulatum ejusdem domini anno decimo octavo, indictione quarta.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXX.—

## EXEMPLAR EPISTOLÆ, QUAM MELLITO ABBATI BRITANNIAM PERGENTI MISIT.

Abeuntibus autem præfatis legatariis, misit post eos beatus pater Gregorius literas memoratu dignas, in quibus aperte, quam studiose erga salvationem nostræ gentis invigilaverit, ostendit, ita scribens.

“Dilectissimo filio Mellito abbati, Gregorius servus servorum Dei. Post discessum congregationis nostræ, quæ tecum est, valde sumus suspensi redditi, quia nihil de prosperitate vestri itineris audiisse nos contigit. Cum ergo Deus omnipotens vos ad reverendissimum virum fratrem nostrum Augustinum episcopum perduxerit, dicite ei quid diu mecum de causa Anglorum cogitans tractavi, videlicet, quia fana idolorum destrui in eadem gente minime debeant; sed ipsa, quæ in eis sunt, idola destruantur, aqua benedicta fiat, in eisdem fanis aspergatur, altaria construantur, reliquiæ ponantur. Quia, si fana eadem bene constructa sunt, necesse est ut a cultu dæmonum in obsequium veri Dei debeant commutari; ut dum gens ipsa eadem fana sua non videt destrui, de corde errorem deponat, et Deum verum cognoscens ac adorans ad loca, quæ consuevit, familiarius concurrat. Et quia boves solent in sacrificio dæmonum multos occidere, debet eis etiam hac de re aliqua solennitas immutari; ut die dedicationis, vel natalitiis sanctorum martyrum, quorum illic reliquiæ ponuntur, tabernacula sibi circa easdem ecclesias, quæ ex fanis commutatæ sunt, de ramis arborum faciant, et religiosiis conviviis solennitatem celebrent, nec diabolo jam animalia immolent, sed ad laudem Dei in esu suo animalia occidant, et donatori omnium de satietate sua gratias referant; ut dum eis aliqua exterius gaudia reservantur, ad interiora gaudia consentire facilius valeant. Nam duris mentibus simul omnia abscindere impossibile esse non dubium est; quia et is, qui summum locum ascendere nititur, gradibus vel passibus, non autem saltibus, elevatur. Sic Israelitico populo in Ægypto Dominus quidem innotuit; sed tamen eis sacrificiorum usus, quæ diabolo solebat exhibere, in cultu proprio reservavit, ut eis in suo sacrificio animalia immolare præciperet; quatenus cor mutantibus aliud de sacrificio amitterent, aliud retinerent, ut etsi ipsa essent animalia, quæ offerre consueverant, vero tamen Deo hæc et non idolis immolantes, jam sacrificia ipsa non essent. Hæc igitur dilectionem tuam prædicto fratri necesse est dicere, ut ipse in præsentibus illic positus perpendat qualiter omnia debeat dispensare. Deus te incolumem custodiat, dilectissime fili.

“Data die decimo quinto kalendarum Juliarum, imperante domino nostro Mauricio Tiberio piissimo Augusto anno decimo nono, post consulatum ejusdem domini anno decimo octavo, indictione quarta.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXXI.—

## UT AUGUSTINUM PER LITTERAS, NE DE VIRTUTIBUS SUIS GLORIARETUR, HORTATUS SIT.

Quo in tempore misit etiam Augustino epistolam super miraculis, quæ per eum facta esse cognoverat, in qua eum, ne per illorum copiam periculum elationis incurreret, his verbis hortatur.

“Scio, frater carissime, quia omnipotens Deus per dilectionem tuam in gentem, quam eligi voluit, magna miracula ostendit, unde necesse est ut de eodem dono cœlesti et timendo gaudeas, et gaudento pertimescas. Gaudeas, videlicet, quia Anglorum animæ per exteriora miracula ad interiorem gratiam pertrahuntur; pertimescas vero, ne inter signa quæ fiunt, infirmus animus in sui præsumptione se elevet, et unde foras in honorem tollitur, inde per inanem gloriam intus cadat. Meminisse etenim debemus quia discipuli cum gaudio a prædicatione redeuntes, dum cœlesti magistro dicerent, [Luc. x. 17,] *Domine, in nomine tuo etiam dæmonia nobis subjecta sunt*, protinus audierunt, [Luc. x. 20,] *Nolite gaudere super hoc, sed potius gaudete, quia nomina vestra scripta sunt in cælo*. In privata enim et temporali lætitia mentem posuerant, qui de miraculis gaudebant; sed de privata ad communem, de temporali ad æternam lætitiā revocantur, quibus dicitur, *In hoc gaudete, quia nomina vestra scripta sunt in cælo*. Non enim omnes electi miracula faciunt, sed tamen eorum nomina omnium in cælo tenentur adscripta. Veritatis etenim discipulis esse gaudium non debet, nisi de eo bono, quod commune cum omnibus habent, et in quo finem lætitiæ non habent.

“Restat itaque, frater carissime, ut inter ea, quæ, operante Domino, exterius facis, semper te interius subtiliter judices, ac subtiliter intelligas, et temetipsum quis sis, et quanta sit in eadem gente gratia, pro cuius conversione etiam faciendorum signorum dona percepisti. Et si quando te Creatori nostro seu per linguam, sive per opera, reminisceris deliquisse, semper hæc ad memoriam revoces, ut surgentem cordis gloriam memoria reatus premat. Et quidquid de faciendis signis acceperis vel accepisti, hæc non tibi, sed illis, deputes donata, pro quorum tibi salute collata sunt.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XXXII.—

### UT ETHELBERTO REGI LITERAS ET DONA MISERIT.

Misit idem beatus Papa Gregorius eodem tempore etiam Regi Ethelberto epistolam, simul et dona in diversis speciebus perplura; temporalibus quoque honoribus regem glorificare satagens, cui gloriæ cœlestis suo labore et industria notitiam provenisse gaudebat. Exemplar autem præfatæ epistolæ hoc est.

“Domino gloriosissimo atque præcellentissimo filio Ethelberto regi Anglorum, Gregorius episcopus. Propter hoc omnipotens Deus bonus quosque ad populorum regimina perducit, ut per eos omnibus, quibus prælati fuerint, dona suæ pietatis impendat. Quod in Anglorum gente factum cognovimus, cui vestra gloria idcirco est præposita, ut per bona, quæ vobis concessa sunt, etiam subjectæ vobis genti superna beneficia præstarentur. Et ideo, gloriose fili, eam quam accepisti divinitus gratiam sollicita mente custodi, Christianam fidem in populis tibi subditis extendere festina, zelum rectitudinis tuæ in eorum conversione multiplica, idolorum cultus insequere, fanorum ædificia everte; subditorum mores ex magna vitæ munditia, exhortando, terrendo, blandiendo, corrigendo, et boni operis exempla monstrando, ædifica; ut illum retributorem invenias in cœlo, cujus nomen atque cognitionem dilataveris in terra. Ipse enim vestræ quoque gloriæ nomen etiam posteris gloriosius reddet, cujus vos honorem quæritis et servatis in gentibus.

“Sic etenim Constantinus quondam, piissimus imperator, Romanam rempublicam a perversis idolorum cultibus revocans, omnipotenti Deo Domino nostro Jesu Christo secum subdidit, seque cum subjectis populis tota ad eum mente convertit. Unde factum est, ut antiquorum principum nomen suis vir ille laudibus vinceret, et tanto in opinione præcessores suos, quanto et in bono opere, superaret. Et nunc itaque vestra gloria cognitionem unius Dei, Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, regibus ac populis sibimet subjectis festinet infundere, ut et antiquos gentis suæ reges laudibus ac meritis transeat, et quanto in subjectis suis etiam aliena peccata deterserit, tanto etiam de peccatis propriis ante omnipotentis Dei terribile examen securior fiat.

“Reverendissimus frater noster Augustinus episcopus, in monasterii regula edoctus, sacræ Scripturæ scientia repletus, bonis, auctore Deo, operibus præditus, quæcunque vos admonet, audite, devote peragite, studiose in memoria reservate; quia, si vos eum in eo, quod pro omnipotente Domino loquitur, auditis, idem omnipotens Deus hunc pro vobis exorantem celerius exaudiet. Si enim, quod absit, verba ejus postponitis, quomodo eum omnipotens Deus poterit audire pro vobis, quem vos negligitis audire pro Deo? Tota igitur mente cum eo vos in fervore fidei stringite, atque adnissum illius virtute, quam vobis Divinitas tribuit, adjuvate, ut regni sui vos ipse faciat esse participes, cujus vos fidem in regno vestro recipi facitis et custodiri.

“Præterea scire vestram gloriam volumus, quia, sicut in Scriptura sacra ex verbis Domini omnipotentis agnoscimus, præsentis mundi jam terminus juxta est, et

sanctorum regnum venturum est, quod nullo unquam poterit fine terminari. Appropinquante autem eodem mundi termino, multa imminet, quæ antea non fuerunt; videlicet, immutationes aeris terroresque de cælo, et contra ordinationem temporum tempestates, bella, fames, pestilentia, terræ motus per loca; quæ tamen non omnia nostris diebus ventura sunt, sed post nostros dies omnia subsequuntur. Vos itaque, si qua ex his evenire in terra vestra cognoscitis, nullo modo vestrum animum perturbetis; quia idcirco hæc signa de fine seculi præmittuntur, ut de animabus nostris debeamus esse solliciti, de mortis hora suspecti, et venturo iudici in bonis actibus inveniamur esse præparati. Hæc nunc, gloriose fili, paucis locutus sum, ut cum Christiana fides in regno vestro excreverit, nostra quoque apud vos locutio latior excrescat, et tanto plus loqui libeat, quanto se in mente nostra gaudia de gentis vestræ perfecta conversione multiplicant.

“Parva autem xenia transmisi, quæ vobis parva non erunt, cum a vobis ex beati Petri apostoli fuerint benedictione suscepta. Omnipotens itaque Deus in vobis gratiam suam, quam cœpit, perficiat, atque vitam vestram et hic per multorum annorum curricula extendat, et post longa tempora in cœlestis vos patriæ congregatione recipiat. Incolumem excellentiam vestram gratia superna custodiat, domine fili.

“Datæ die decimo kalendarum Juliarum, imperante domino nostro Mauricio Tiberio piissimo Augusto anno decimo nono, post consulatum ejusdem anno decimo octavo, indictione quarta.”



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXXIII.—

UT AUGUSTINUS ECCLESIAM SALVATORIS  
INSTAURAVÉRIT, ET MONASTERIUM BEATI PETRI  
APOSTOLI FECERIT; ET DE PRIMO EJUS ABBATE  
PETRO.

At Augustinus, ubi in regia civitate sedem episcopalem, ut prædiximus, accepit, recuperavit in ea, regio fultus adminiculo, ecclesiam, quam ibi antiquo Romanorum fidelium opere factam fuisse didicerat, et eam in nomine sancti Salvatoris Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi sacravit, atque ibidem sibi habitationem statuit et cunctis successoribus suis. Fecit autem et monasterium non longe ab ipsa civitate ad orientem, in quo, ejus hortatu, Ethelbertus ecclesiam beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli a fundamentis construxit ac diversis donis ditavit, in qua et ipsius Augustini et omnium episcoporum Dorovernensium, simul et regum Cantiaë, poni corpora possent; quam tamen ecclesiam non ipse Augustinus, sed successor ejus Laurentius, consecravit.

Primus autem ejusdem monasterii abbas Petrus presbyter fuit, qui legatus Galliam missus demersus est in sinu maris, qui vocatur Amflea, et ab incolis loci ignobili traditus sepulturæ; sed omnipotens Deus ut qualis meriti vir fuerit demonstraret, omni nocte supra sepulcrum ejus lux cœlestis apparuit, donec animadvertentes vicini, qui videbant, sanctum fuisse virum, qui ibi esset sepultus, et investigantes unde vel quis esset, abstulerunt corpus, et in Bononia civitate, juxta honorem tanto viro congruum, in ecclesia posuerunt.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXXIV.—

UT ETHELFRIDUS, REX NORTHANHUMBRORUM,  
SCOTORUM GENTES PRÆLIO CONTERENS AB  
ANGLORUM FINIBUS EXPULERIT.

His temporibus regno Northanhumborum præfuit rex fortissimus et gloriæ cupidissimus, Ethelfridus, qui plus omnibus Anglorum primatibus gentem vastavit Britonum; ita ut Sauli quondam regi Israeliticæ gentis comparandus videretur, excepto duntaxat hoc, quod divinæ erat religionis ignarus. Nemo enim in tribunis, nemo in regibus plures eorum terras, exterminatis vel subjugatis indigenis, aut tributarias genti Anglorum aut habitabiles fecit. Cui merito poterat illud, quod benedicens filium patriarcha in persona Saulis dicebat, aptari; [Gen. xlix. 27;] *Benjamin lupus rapax, mane comedat prædam, et vespere dividet spolia.*

Unde motus ejus profectibus Ædan rex Scotorum, qui Britanniam inhabitant, venit contra eum cum immenso ac forti exercitu; sed cum paucis victus aufugit. Siquidem in loco celeberrimo, qui dicitur Degsastan, id est, Degsa lapis, omnis pene ejus est cæsus exercitus; in qua etiam pugna Theodbaldus frater Ethelfridi, cum omni illo, quem ipse ducebat, exercitu, peremptus est. Quod videlicet bellum Ethelfridus anno ab incarnatione Domini sexcentesimo tertio, regni autem sui, quod viginti et quatuor annis tenuit, anno undecimo, perfecit; porro anno Focatis, qui tum Romani regni apicem tenebat, primo. Neque ex eo tempore quisquam regum Scotorum in Britannia adversus gentem Anglorum usque ad hanc diem in prælium venire audebat.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

### BOOK I.

#### PREFACE.—

#### TO THE MOST GLORIOUS KING CEOLWULPH, REDE, THE SERVANT OF CHRIST AND PRIEST.

I FORMERLY, at your request, most readily transmitted to you the Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, which I had newly published, for you to read, and give it your approbation; and I now send it again to be transcribed, and more fully considered at your leisure. And I cannot but commend the sincerity and zeal, with which you not only diligently give ear to hear the words of the Holy Scripture, but also industriously take care to become acquainted with the actions and sayings of former men of renown, especially of our own nation. For if history relates good things of good men, the attentive hearer is excited to imitate that which is good; or if it mentions evil things of wicked persons, nevertheless the religious and pious hearer or reader, shunning that which is hurtful and perverse, is the more earnestly excited to perform those things which he knows to be good, and worthy of God. Of which you also being deeply sensible, are desirous that the said history should be more fully made familiar to yourself, and to those over whom the Divine Authority has appointed you governor, from your great regard to their general welfare. But that I may remove all occasion of doubting the truth of what I have written, both from yourself and other readers or hearers of this history, I will briefly intimate from what authors I chiefly learned the same.

My principal authority and aid in this work was the learned and reverend Abbot Albinus; who was educated in the Church of Canterbury by those venerable and learned men, Archbishop Theodore of blessed memory, and the Abbot Adrian, and transmitted to me by Nothelm, the pious priest of the Church of London, either in writing, or by word of mouth of the same Nothelm, all that he thought worthy of memory, that had been done in the province of Kent, or the adjacent parts, by the disciples of the blessed Pope Gregory, as he had learned the same either from written records, or the traditions of his ancestors. The same Nothelm afterwards went to Rome, and by permission of the present Pope Gregory, searched into the archives of the holy Roman Church, where he found some epistles of the blessed Pope Gregory, and other popes; and on his return home, by the advice of the aforesaid most reverend father Albinus, he brought them to me, to be inserted in my history. Thus, from the beginning of this volume to the time when the English nation received the faith of Christ, have we collected the writings of our predecessors, and from them gathered matter for our history; but from

Albinus Abbot of  
Canterbury.

Abbot Adrian.

Nothelm.

Bishop Cunebert.

St. Cuthbert.

that time till the present, what was transacted in the Church of Canterbury, by the disciples of St. Gregory or their successors, and under what kings the same happened, has been conveyed to us by Nothelm through the industry of the aforesaid Abbot Albinus. They also partly informed me by what bishops and under what kings the provinces of the East and West Saxons, as also of the East Angles, and of the Northumbrians, received the faith of Christ. In short, I was chiefly encouraged to undertake this work by the persuasions of the same Albinus. In like manner, Daniel, the most reverend Bishop of the West Saxons, who is still living, communicated to me in writing some things relating to the Ecclesiastical History of that province, and the next adjoining to it of the South Saxons, as also of the Isle of Wight. But how, by the pious ministry of Cedd and Ceadda, the province of the Mercians was brought to the faith of Christ, which they knew not before, and how that of the East Saxons recovered the same, after having expelled it, and how those fathers lived and died, we learned from the brethren of the monastery, which was built by them, and is called Læstingau. What ecclesiastical transactions took place in the province of the East Angles, was partly made known to us from the writings and tradition of our ancestors, and partly by relation of the most reverend Abbot Esius. What was done towards promoting the faith, and what was the sacerdotal succession in the province of Lindsey, we had either from the letters of the most reverend prelate Cunebert, or by word of mouth from other persons of good credit. But what was done in the Church throughout the province of the Northumbrians, from the time when they received the faith of Christ till this present, I received not from any particular author, but by the faithful testimony of innumerable witnesses, who might know or remember the same; besides what I had of my own knowledge. Wherein it is to be observed, that what I have written concerning our most holy father, and Bishop Cuthbert, either in this volume, or in my treatise on his life and actions, I partly took, and faithfully copied from what I found written of him by the brethren of the Church of Lindisfarne; but at the same time took care to add such things as I could myself have knowledge of by the faithful testimony of such as knew him. And I humbly entreat the reader, that if he shall in this that we have written find any thing not delivered according to the truth, he will not impute the same to me, who, as the true rule of history requires, have laboured sincerely to commit to writing such things as I could gather from common report, for the instruction of posterity.

Moreover I beseech all men who shall hear or read this history of our nation, that for my manifold infirmities both of mind and body, they will offer up frequent supplications to the throne of Grace. And I further pray, that in recompense for the labour wherewith I have recorded in the several countries and cities those events which were most worthy of note, and most grateful to the ears of their inhabitants, I may for my reward have the benefit of their pious prayers.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. I.—

OF THE SITUATION OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND, AND OF THEIR ANCIENT INHABITANTS.

BRITAIN, an island in the ocean, formerly called Albion, is situated between the north and west, facing, though at a considerable distance, the coasts of Germany, France, and Spain, which form the greatest part of Europe. It extends 800 miles in length towards the north, and is 200 miles in breadth, except where several promontories extend further in breadth, by which its compass is made to be 3675 miles. To the south, as you pass along the nearest shore of the Belgic Gaul, the first place in Britain which opens to the eye, is the city of Rutubi Portus, by the English corrupted into Reptacestir. The distance from hence across the sea to Gessoriacum, the nearest shore of the Morini, is 50 miles, or as some writers say, 450 furlongs. On the back of the island, where it opens upon the boundless ocean, it has the islands called Orcades. Britain excels for grain and trees, and is well adapted for feeding cattle and beasts of burden. It also produces vines in some places, and has plenty of land and water fowls of several sorts; it is remarkable also for rivers abounding in fish, and plentiful springs. It has the greatest plenty of salmon and eels; seals are also frequently taken, and dolphins, as also whales; besides many sorts of shell-fish, such as muscles, in which are often found excellent pearls of all colours, red, purple, violet, and green, but mostly white. There is also a great abundance of cockles, of which the scarlet dye is made; a most beautiful colour, which never fades with the heat of the sun or the washing of the rain; but the older it is, the more beautiful it becomes. It has both salt and hot springs, and from them flow rivers which furnish hot baths, proper for all ages and sexes, and arranged according. For water, as St. Basil says, receives the heating quality, when it runs along certain metals, and becomes not only hot but scalding. Britain has also many veins of metals, as copper, iron, lead, and silver; it has much and excellent jet, which is black and sparkling, glittering at the fire, and when heated, drives away serpents; being warmed with rubbing, it holds fast whatever is applied to it, like amber. The island was formerly embellished with twenty-eight noble cities, besides innumerable castles, which were all strongly secured with walls, towers, gates, and locks. And, from its lying almost under the North Pole, the nights are light in summer, so that at midnight the beholders are often in doubt whether the evening twilight still continues, or that of the morning is coming on; for the sun, in the night, returns under the earth, through the northern regions at no great distance from them. For this reason the days are of a great length in summer, as on the contrary, the nights are in winter, the sun then withdrawing into the southern parts, so that they are eighteen hours long. Thus the nights are extraordinarily short in summer, and the days in winter, that is, of only six equinoctial hours. Whereas, in Armenia, Macedonia, Italy, and other countries of the same latitude, the longest day or night extends but to fifteen hours, and the shortest to nine.

Britain.
Its situation.
Its productions.

This island at present, following the number of the books in which the Divine law was written, contains five nations, the English, Britons, Scots, Picts, and Latins, each in its own peculiar dialect cultivating the sublime study of Divine truth. The Latin tongue is, by the study of the Scriptures, become common to all the rest. At first this island had no other inhabitants but the Britons, from whom it derived its name, and who coming over into Britain, as is reported, from Armorica, possessed themselves of the southern parts thereof. When they, beginning at the south, had made themselves masters of the greatest part of the island, it happened, that the nation of the Picts, from Scythia, as is reported, putting to sea, in a few long ships, were driven by the winds beyond the shores of Britain, and arrived on the northern coasts of Ireland, where, finding the nation of the Scots, they begged to be allowed to settle among them, but could not succeed in obtaining their request. Ireland is the greatest island next to Britain, and lies to the west of it; but as it is shorter than Britain to the north, so, on the other hand, it runs out far beyond it to the south, opposite to the northern parts of Spain, though a spacious sea lies between them. The Picts, as has been said, arriving in this island by sea, desired to have a place granted them in which they might settle. The Scots answered that the island could not contain them both; but “we can give you good advice,” said they, “what to do; we know there is another island, not far from ours, to the eastward, which we often see at a distance, when the days are clear. If you will go thither, you will obtain settlements; or if they should oppose you, you shall have our assistance.” The Picts, accordingly, sailing over into Britain, began to inhabit the northern parts thereof, for the Britons were possessed of the southern. Now the Picts had no wives, and asked them of the Scots; who would not consent to grant them upon any other terms, than that when any difficulty should arise, they should choose a king from the female royal race rather than from the male: which custom, as is well known, has been observed among the Picts to this day. In process of time, Britain, besides the Britons and the Picts, received a third nation, the Scots, who, migrating from Ireland under their leader Reuda, either by fair means, or by force of arms, secured to themselves those settlements among the Picts which they still possess. From the name of their commander, they are to this day called Dalreudins; for in their language Dal signifies a part.

Its inhabitants

Ireland, in breadth, and for wholesomeness and serenity of climate, far surpasses Britain; for the snow scarcely ever lies there above three days: no man makes hay in the summer for winter’s provision, or builds stables for his beasts of burden. No reptiles are found there, and no snake can live there; for though often carried thither out of Britain, as soon as the ship comes near the shore, and the scent of the air reaches them, they die. On the contrary, almost all things in the island are good against poison. In short, we have known that when some persons have been bitten by serpents, the scrapings of leaves of books that were brought out of Ireland, being put into water, and given them to drink, have immediately expelled the spreading poison, and assuaged the swelling. The island abounds in milk and honey, nor is there any want of vines, fish or fowl; and it is remarkable for deer and goats. It is properly the country of the Scots, who, migrating from thence, as has been said, added a third nation in Britain to the Britons and the Picts. There is a very large gulf of the sea, which formerly divided the nation of the Picts from the Britons; which gulf runs from the west very far into the land, where, to

Of Ireland.

this day, stands the strong city of the Britons, called Alcluith. The Scots arriving on the north side of this bay, settled themselves there.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. II.—

CAIUS JULIUS CÆSAR, THE FIRST ROMAN THAT CAME INTO BRITAIN.

Britain had never been visited by the Romans, and was, indeed, entirely unknown to them before the time of Caius Julius Cæsar, who, in the year 693 after the building of Rome, but the sixtieth year before the incarnation of our Lord, was consul with Lucius Bibulus, and afterwards, whilst he made war upon the Germans and the Gauls, which were divided only by the river Rhine, came into the province of the Morini, from whence is the nearest and shortest passage into Britain. Here, having provided about eighty ships of burden and vessels with oars, he sailed over into Britain; where, being first roughly handled in a battle, and then meeting with a violent storm, he lost a considerable part of his fleet, no small number of soldiers, and almost all his horse. Returning into Gaul, he put his legions into winter-quarters, and gave orders for building six hundred sail of both sorts. With these he again passed over early in spring into Britain, but, whilst he was marching with a large army towards the enemy, the ships, riding at anchor, were by a tempest either dashed one against another, or driven upon the sands and wrecked. Forty of them perished, the rest were, with much difficulty, repaired. Cæsar's cavalry was at the first charge defeated by the Britons, and Labienus, the tribune, slain. In the second engagement, he, with great hazard to his men, put the Britons to flight. Thence he proceeded to the river Thames, where an immense multitude of the enemy had posted themselves on the farthest side of the river, under the command of Cassibellaun, and fenced the bank of the river and almost all the ford under water with sharp stakes: the remains of these are to be seen to this day, apparently about the thickness of a man's thigh, and being cased with lead, remain fixed immovably in the bottom of the river. This being perceived and avoided by the Romans, the barbarians, not able to stand the shock of the legions, hid themselves in the woods, whence they grievously galled the Romans with repeated sallies. In the mean time, the strong city of Trinovantum, with its commander Androgeus, surrendered to Cæsar, giving him forty hostages. Many other cities, following their example, made a treaty with the Romans. By their assistance, Cæsar at length, with much difficulty, took Cassibellaun's town, situated between two marshes, fortified by the adjacent woods, and plentifully furnished with all necessaries. After this Cæsar returned into Gaul, but he had no sooner put his legions into winter-quarters, than he was suddenly beset and distracted with wars and tumults raised against him on every side.

Cæsar.

55.

Cæsar defeated.

London.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

### CHAP. III.—

## CLAUDIUS, THE SECOND OF THE ROMANS WHO CAME INTO BRITAIN, BROUGHT THE ISLANDS ORCADES INTO SUBJECTION TO THE ROMAN EMPIRE; AND VESPASIAN, SENT BY HIM, REDUCED THE ISLE OF WIGHT UNDER THEIR DOMINION.

In the year of Rome 798, Claudius, fourth emperor from Augustus, being desirous to approve himself a beneficial prince to the republic, and eagerly bent upon war and conquest, undertook an expedition into Britain, which seemed to be stirred up to rebellion by the refusal of the Romans to give up certain deserters. He was the only one, either before or after Julius Cæsar, who had dared to land upon the island; yet, within a very few days, without any fight or bloodshed, the greatest part of the island was surrendered into his hands. He also added to the Roman empire the Orcades, which lie in the ocean beyond Britain, and then returning to Rome the sixth month after his departure, he gave his son the title of Britannicus. This war he concluded in the fourth year of his empire, which is the forty-sixth from the incarnation of our Lord. In which year there happened a most grievous famine in Syria, which, in the Acts of the Apostles, is recorded to have been foretold by the prophet Agabus. Vespasian, who was emperor after Nero, being sent into Britain by the same Claudius, brought also under the Roman dominion the Isle of Wight, which is next to Britain on the south, and is about thirty miles in length from east to west, and twelve from north to south; being six miles distant from the southern coast of Britain at the east end, and three only at the west. Nero, succeeding Claudius in the empire, attempted nothing in martial affairs; and therefore among other innumerable detriments brought upon the Roman state, he almost lost Britain; for under him two most noble towns were there taken and destroyed.

46 Claudius invades Britain.
Orcades.
Isle of Wight.
Nero.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. IV.—

LUCIUS, KING OF BRITAIN, WRITING TO POPE  
ELEUTHERUS, DESIRES TO BE MADE A CHRISTIAN.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 156, Marcus Antoninus Verus, the fourteenth from Augustus, was made emperor, together with his brother, Aurelius Commodus. In their time, whilst Eleutherus, a holy man, presided over the Roman church, Lucius, king of the Britons, sent a letter to him, entreating, that by his command he might be made a Christian. He soon obtained the object of his pious request, and the Britons preserved the faith, which they had received, uncorrupted and entire, in peace and tranquillity until the time of the Emperor Diocletian.

156. Lucius embraces Christianity.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. V.—

### HOW THE EMPEROR SEVERUS DIVIDED THAT PART OF BRITAIN WHICH HE SUBDUED, FROM THE REST BY A RAMPART.

In the year of our Lord 189, Severus, an African, born at Leptis, in the province of Tripolis, received the imperial purple. He was the seventeenth from Augustus, and reigned seventeen years. Being naturally stern, and engaged in many wars, he governed the state vigorously, but with much trouble. Having been victorious in all the grievous civil wars which happened in his time, he was drawn into Britain by the revolt of almost all the confederate tribes; and, after many great and dangerous battles, he thought fit to divide that part of the island, which he had recovered from the other unconquered nations, not with a wall, as some imagine, but with a rampart. For a wall is made of stones, but a rampart, with which camps are fortified to repel the assaults of enemies, is made of sods, cut out of the earth, and raised above the ground all round like a wall, having in front of it the ditch whence the sods were taken, and strong stakes of wood fixed upon its top. Thus Severus drew a great ditch and strong rampart, fortified with several towers, from sea to sea; and was afterwards taken sick and died at York, leaving two sons, Bassianus and Geta; of whom Geta died, adjudged a public enemy; but Bassianus, having taken the surname of Antoninus, obtained the empire.

Severus.

189.

Severus dies at York.  
Caracalla and Geta.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VI.—

### THE REIGN OF DIOCLETIAN, AND HOW HE PERSECUTED THE CHRISTIANS.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 286, Diocletian, the thirty-third from Augustus, and chosen emperor by the army, reigned twenty years, and created Maximian, surnamed Herculius, his colleague in the empire. In their time, one Carausius, of very mean birth, but an expert and able soldier, being appointed to guard the sea-coasts, then infested by the Franks and Saxons, acted more to the prejudice than to the advantage of the commonwealth; and from his not restoring the booty taken from the robbers to its owners, but keeping all to himself, it was suspected that by intentional neglect he suffered the enemy to infest the frontiers. Hearing, therefore, that an order was sent by Maximian that he should be put to death, he took upon him the imperial robes, and possessed himself of Britain, and having most valiantly retained it for the space of seven years, he was at length put to death by the treachery of his associate, Allectus. The usurper, having thus got the island from Carausius, held it three years, and was then vanquished by Asclepiodotus, the captain of the Prætorian bands, who thus at the end of ten years restored Britain to the Roman empire. Meanwhile, Diocletian in the east, and Maximian Herculius in the west, commanded the churches to be destroyed, and the Christians to be slain. This persecution was the tenth since the reign of Nero, and was more lasting and bloody than all the others before it; for it was carried on incessantly for the space of ten years, with burning of churches, outlawing of innocent persons, and the slaughter of martyrs. At length, it reached Britain also, and many persons, with the constancy of martyrs, died in the confession of their faith.

286. Diocletian and Maximian.

Carausius.

Allectus.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VII.—

### THE PASSION OF ST. ALBAN AND HIS COMPANIONS, WHO AT THAT TIME SHED THEIR BLOOD FOR OUR LORD.

At that time suffered St. Alban, of whom the priest Fortunatus, in the Praise of Virgins, where he makes mention of the blessed martyrs that came to the Lord from all parts of the world, says—

St. Alban martyred.

305.

In Britain's isle was holy Alban born.

This Alban being yet a Pagan, at the time when the cruelties of wicked princes were raging against Christians, gave entertainment in his house to a certain clergyman, flying from the persecutors. This man he observed to be engaged in continual prayer and watching day and night; when on a sudden the Divine grace shining on him, he began to imitate the example of faith and piety which was set before him, and being gradually instructed by his wholesome admonitions, he cast off the darkness of idolatry, and became a Christian in all sincerity of heart. The aforesaid clergyman having been some days entertained by him, it came to the ears of the wicked prince, that this holy confessor of Christ, whose time of martyrdom had not yet come, was concealed at Alban's house. Whereupon he sent some soldiers to make a strict search after him. When they came to the martyr's house, St. Alban immediately presented himself to the soldiers, instead of his guest and master, in the habit or long coat which he wore, and was led bound before the judge.

It happened that the judge, at the time when Alban was carried before him, was standing at the altar, and offering sacrifice to

305.

devils. When he saw Alban, being much enraged that he should thus, of his own accord, put himself into the hands of the soldiers, and incur such danger in behalf of his guest, he commanded him to be dragged up to the images of the devils, before which he stood, saying, "Because you have chosen to conceal a rebellious and sacrilegious person, rather than to deliver him up to the soldiers, that his contempt of the gods might meet with the penalty due to such blasphemy, you shall undergo all the punishment that was due to him, if you abandon the worship of our religion." But St. Alban, who had voluntarily declared himself a Christian to the persecutors of the faith, was not at all daunted at the prince's threats, but putting on the armour of spiritual warfare, publicly declared that he would not obey the commands. Then said the judge, "Of what family or race are you?"—"What does it concern you," answered Alban, "of what stock I am? If you desire to hear the truth of my religion, be it known to you, that I am now a Christian, and bound by Christian duties."—"I ask your name?" said the judge; "tell me it immediately."—"I am called Alban by my parents," replied he; "and I worship and adore the true and living God, who created all things." Then the judge, inflamed with anger, said, "If you will enjoy the happiness of eternal life, do not delay to offer sacrifice to the great gods." Alban rejoined, "These

sacrifices, which by you are offered to devils, neither can avail the subjects, nor answer the wishes or desires of those that offer up their supplications to them. On the contrary, whosoever shall offer sacrifice to these images, shall receive the everlasting pains of hell for his reward.”

The judge, hearing these words, and being much incensed, ordered this holy confessor of God to be scourged by the executioners, believing he might by stripes shake that constancy of heart, on which he could not prevail by words. He, being most cruelly tortured, bore the same patiently, or rather joyfully, for our Lord’s sake. When the judge perceived that he was not to be overcome by tortures, or withdrawn from the exercise of the Christian religion, he ordered him to be put to death. Being led to execution, he came to a river, which, with a most rapid course, ran between the wall of the town and the arena where he was to be executed. He there saw a multitude of persons of both sexes, and of several ages and conditions, which was doubtlessly assembled by Divine instinct, to attend the blessed confessor and martyr, and had so taken up the bridge on the river, that he could scarce pass over that evening. In short, almost all had gone out, so that the judge remained in the city without attendance. St. Alban, therefore, urged by an ardent and devout wish to arrive quickly at martyrdom, drew near to the stream, and on lifting up his eyes to heaven, the channel was immediately dried up, and he perceived that the water had departed and made way for him to pass. Among the rest, the executioner, who was to have put him to death, observed this, and moved by Divine inspiration, hastened to meet him at the place of execution, and casting down the sword which he had carried ready drawn, fell at his feet, praying that he might rather suffer with the martyr, whom he was ordered to execute, or, if possible, instead of him.

Whilst he thus from a persecutor was become a companion in the faith, and the other executioners hesitated to take up the sword which was lying on the ground, the reverend confessor, accompanied by the multitude, ascended a hill, about 500 paces from the place, adorned, or rather clothed with all kinds of flowers, having its sides neither perpendicular, nor even craggy, but sloping down into a most beautiful plain, worthy from its lovely appearance to be the scene of a martyr’s sufferings. On the top of this hill, St. Alban prayed that God would give him water, and immediately a living spring broke out before his feet, the course being confined, so that all men perceived that the river also had been dried up in consequence of the martyr’s presence. Nor was it likely that the martyr, who had left no water remaining in the river, should want some on the top of the hill, unless he thought it suitable to the occasion. The river, having performed the holy service, returned to its natural course, leaving a testimony of its obedience. Here, therefore, the head of our most courageous martyr was struck off, and here he received the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. But he who gave the wicked stroke, was not permitted to rejoice over the deceased; for his eyes dropped upon the ground together with the blessed martyr’s head.

At the same time was also beheaded the soldier, who before, through the Divine admonition, refused to give the stroke to the holy confessor. Of whom it is apparent, that though he was not regenerated by baptism, yet he was cleansed by the washing of his own blood, and

Verulam, now St.  
Alban’s.

rendered worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven. Then the judge, astonished at the novelty of so many heavenly miracles, ordered the persecution to cease immediately, beginning to honour the death of the saints, by which he before thought they might have been diverted from the Christian faith. The blessed Alban suffered death on the twenty-second day of June, near the city of Verulam, which is now by the English nation called Verlamacestir, or Varlingacestir, where afterwards, when peaceable Christian times were restored, a church of wonderful workmanship, and suitable to his martyrdom, was erected. In which place, there ceases not to this day the cure of sick persons, and the frequent working of wonders.

At the same time suffered Aaron and Julius, citizens of Chester, and many more of both sexes in several places; who, when they had endured sundry torments, and their limbs had been torn after an unheard-of manner, yielded their souls up, to enjoy in the heavenly city a reward for the sufferings which they had passed through.

Aaron and Julius  
suffered also.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VIII.—

### THE PERSECUTION CEASING, THE CHURCH IN BRITAIN ENJOYS PEACE TILL THE TIME OF THE ARIAN HERESY.

When the storm of persecution ceased, the faithful Christians, who, during the time of danger, had hidden themselves in woods and deserts, and secret caves, appearing in public, rebuilt the churches which had been levelled with the ground; founded, erected, and finished the temples of the holy martyrs, and, as it were, displayed their conquering ensigns in all places; they celebrated festivals, and performed their sacred rites with clean hearts and mouths. This peace continued in the churches of Britain until the time of the Arian madness, which, having corrupted the whole world, infected this island also, so far removed from the rest of the globe, with the poison of its errors; and when the plague was thus conveyed across the sea, all the venom of every heresy immediately rushed into the island, ever fond of something new, and never holding firm to any thing.

313. Peace is restored.

At this time, Constantius, who, whilst Diocletian was alive, governed Gaul and Spain, a man of extraordinary meekness and courtesy, died in Britain. This man left his son Constantine, born of Helen his concubine, emperor of the Gauls. Eutropius writes, that Constantine, being created emperor in Britain, succeeded his father in the sovereignty. In his time the Arian heresy broke out, and although it was detected and condemned in the Council of Nice, yet it nevertheless infected not only all the churches of the continent, but even those of the islands, with its pestilent and fatal doctrines.

407.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. IX.—

### HOW DURING THE REIGN OF GRATIAN, MAXIMUS, BEING CREATED EMPEROR IN BRITAIN, RETURNED INTO GAUL WITH A MIGHTY ARMY.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 377, Gratian, the fortieth from Augustus, held the empire six years after the death of Valens; though he had long before reigned with his uncle Valens, and his brother Valentinian. Finding the state of the commonwealth much impaired, and almost gone to ruin, he looked round for some one whose abilities might remedy the existing evils; and his choice fell on Theodosius, a Spaniard. Him he invested at Sirmium with the royal robes, and made him emperor of Thrace and the Eastern provinces. At which time, Maximus, a man of valour and probity, and worthy to be an emperor, if he had not broken the oath of allegiance which he had taken, was made emperor by the army, passed over into Gaul, and there by treachery slew the Emperor Gratian, who was in a consternation at his sudden invasion, and attempting to escape into Italy. His brother Valentinian, expelled from Italy, fled into the East, and was entertained by Theodosius with fatherly affection, and soon restored to the empire. Maximus the tyrant, being shut up in Aquileia, was there taken and put to death.

377. Gratian.

Theodosius.

Maximus the tyrant.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. X.—

## HOW IN THE REIGN OF ARCADIUS, PELAGIUS, A BRITON, INSOLENTLY IMPUGNED THE GRACE OF GOD.

In the year of our Lord 394, Arcadius, the son of Theodosius, the forty-third from Augustus, taking the empire upon him, with his brother Honorius, held it thirteen years. In his time, Pelagius, a Briton, spread far and near the infection of his perfidious doctrine against the assistance of the Divine grace, being seconded therein by his associate, Julianus of Campania, whose anger was kindled by the loss of his bishopric, of which he had been just deprived. St. Augustine, and the other orthodox fathers, quoted many thousand catholic authorities against them, yet they would not correct their madness; but, on the contrary, their folly was rather increased by contradiction, and they refused to embrace the truth; which Prosper, the rhetorician, has beautifully expressed thus in heroic verse:—

394. Arcadius  
emperor.

“A scribbler vile, inflamed with hellish spite,  
Against the great Augustine dared to write:  
Presumptuous serpent! from what midnight den  
Durst thou to crawl on earth and look at men?  
Sure thou wast fed on Britain’s sea-girt plains,  
Or in thy breast Vesuvian sulphur reigns.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XI.—

### HOW DURING THE REIGN OF HONORIUS, GRATIAN AND CONSTANTINE WERE CREATED TYRANTS IN BRITAIN; AND SOON AFTER THE FORMER WAS SLAIN IN BRITAIN, AND THE LATTER IN GAUL.

In the year 407, Honorius, the younger son of Theodosius, and the forty-fourth from Augustus, being emperor, two years before the invasion of Rome by Alaric, king of the Goths, when the nations of the Alani, Suevi, Vandals, and many others with them, having defeated the Franks and passed the Rhine, ravaged all Gaul, Gratianus Municeps was set up as tyrant and killed. In his place, Constantine, one of the meanest soldiers, only for his name's sake, and without any worth to recommend him, was chosen emperor. As soon as he had taken upon him the command, he passed over into France, where being often imposed upon by the barbarians with faithless treaties, he caused much injury to the Commonwealth. Whereupon Count Constantius, by the command of Honorius, marching into Gaul with an army, besieged him in the city of Arles, and put him to death. His son Constans, whom of a monk he had created Cæsar, was also put to death by his own Count Gerontius, at Vienne.

407.

Honorius

Rome was taken by the Goths, in the year from its foundation, 1164. Then the Romans ceased to rule in Britain, almost 470 years after Caius Julius Cæsar entered the island. They resided within the rampart, which, as we have mentioned, Severus made across the island, on the south side of it, as the cities, temples, bridges, and paved roads there made, testify to this day; but they had a right of dominion over the farther parts of Britain, as also over the islands that are beyond Britain.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XII.—

THE BRITONS, BEING RAVAGED BY THE SCOTS AND PICTS, SOUGHT SUCCOUR FROM THE ROMANS, WHO, COMING A SECOND TIME, BUILT A WALL ACROSS THE ISLAND; BUT THE BRITONS BEING AGAIN INVADED BY THE AFORESAID ENEMIES, WERE REDUCED TO GREATER DISTRESS THAN BEFORE.

From that time, the south part of Britain, destitute of armed soldiers, of martial stores, and of all its active youth, which had been led away by the rashness of the tyrants, never to return, was wholly exposed to rapine, as being totally ignorant of the use of weapons. Whereupon they suffered many years under two very savage foreign nations, the Scots from the west, and the Picts from the north. We call these foreign nations, not on account of their being seated out of Britain, but because they were remote from that part of it which was possessed by the Britons; two inlets of the sea lying betwixt them, one of which runs in far and broad into the land of Britain, from the Eastern Ocean, and the other from the Western, though they do not reach so as to touch one another. The eastern has in the midst of it the city Giudi. The western has on it, that is, on the right hand thereof, the city Alcluith, which in their language signifies the Rock Cluith, for it is close by the river of that name.

383.  
The Picts and Scots.  
400.

On account of the irruption of these nations, the Britons sent messengers to Rome with letters in mournful manner, praying for succours, and promised perpetual subjection, provided that the impending enemy should be driven away. An armed legion was immediately sent them, which, arriving in the island, and engaging the enemy, slew a great multitude of them, drove the rest out of the territories of their allies, and having delivered them from their cruel oppressors, advised them to build a wall between the two seas, across the island, that it might secure them, and keep off the enemy; and thus they returned home with great triumph. The islanders, raising the wall, as they had been directed, not of stone, as having no artist capable of such a work, but of sods, made it of no use. However, they drew it for many miles between the two bays or inlets of the seas, which we have spoken of; to the end that where the defence of the water was wanting, they might use the rampart to defend their borders from the irruptions of the enemies. Of which work there erected, that is, of a rampart of extraordinary breadth and height, there are evident remains to be seen at this day. It begins at about two miles' distance from the monastery of Abercurnig, on the west, at a place called in the Pictish language, Peanfahel, but in the English tongue, Penneltun, and running to the westward, ends near the city Alcluith.

414.  
416.

But the former enemies, when they perceived that the Roman soldiers were gone, immediately coming by sea, broke into the borders, trampled and overran all places, and, like men mowing ripe corn, bore down all before them. Hereupon messengers are again sent to Rome, imploring aid, lest their wretched country should be utterly extirpated, and the name of a Roman province so long renowned among them, being overthrown by the cruelties of barbarous foreigners, might grow contemptible. A legion is accordingly sent again, and arriving unexpectedly in autumn, made great slaughter of the enemy, obliging all those that could escape, to flee beyond the sea; whereas before, they were wont yearly to carry off their booty without any opposition. Then the Romans declared to the Britons, that they could not for the future undertake such troublesome expeditions for their sake, advising them rather to handle their weapons, like men, and undertake themselves the charge of engaging their enemies, who would not prove too powerful for them, unless they were deterred by cowardice; and, thinking that it might be some help to the allies, whom they were forced to abandon, they built a strong stone wall from sea to sea, in a straight line between the towns that had been there built for fear of the enemy, and not far from the trench of Severus. This famous wall, which is still to be seen, was built at the public and private expense, the Britons also lending their assistance. It is eight feet in breadth, and twelve in height, in a straight line from east to west, as is still visible to beholders. This being finished, they gave that dispirited people good advice, with patterns to furnish them with arms. Besides, they built towers on the sea-coast to the southward, at proper distances, where their ships were, because there also the irruptions of the barbarians were apprehended, and so took leave of their friends, never to return again.

After their departure, the Scots and Picts, understanding that they had declared they would come no more, speedily returned, and growing more confident than they had been before, occupied all the northern and farthest part of the island, as far as the wall. Hereupon a timorous guard was placed upon the wall, where they pined away day and night in the utmost fear. On the other side, the enemy attacked them with hooked weapons, by which the cowardly defendants were dragged from the wall, and dashed against the ground. At last, the Britons, forsaking their cities and wall, took to flight and were dispersed. The enemy pursued, and the slaughter was greater than on any former occasion; for the wretched natives were torn in pieces by their enemies, as lambs are torn by wild beasts. Thus being expelled their dwellings and possessions, they saved themselves from starvation, by robbing and plundering one another, adding to the calamities occasioned by foreigners, by their own domestic broils, till the whole country was left destitute of food, except such as could be procured in the chase.

The wretched state of the Britons.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XIII.—

IN THE REIGN OF THEODOSIUS THE YOUNGER,  
PALLADIUS WAS SENT TO THE SCOTS THAT  
BELIEVED IN CHRIST; THE BRITONS BEGGING  
ASSISTANCE OF ÆTIUS, THE CONSUL, COULD NOT  
OBTAIN IT.

In the year of our Lord 423, Theodosius, the younger, next to Honorius, being the forty-fifth from Augustus, governed the Roman empire twenty-six years. In the eighth year of his reign, Palladius was first sent by Celestinus, the Roman pontiff, to the Scots that believed in Christ, to be their first bishop. In the twenty-third year of his reign, Ætius, a renowned person, being also a patrician, discharged his third consulship with Symmachus for his colleague. To him the wretched remains of the Britons sent a letter, which began thus:—"To Ætius, thrice Consul, the groans of the Britons." And in the sequel of the letter they thus expressed their calamities:—"The barbarians drive us to the sea; the sea drives us back to the barbarians: between them we are exposed to two sorts of death; we are either slain or drowned." Yet neither could all this procure any assistance from him, as he was then engaged in most dangerous wars with Bledla and Attila, kings of the Huns. And, though the year before this, Bledla had been murdered by the treachery of his brother Attila, yet Attila himself remained so intolerable an enemy to the Republic, that he ravaged almost all Europe, invading and destroying cities and castles. At the same time there was a famine at Constantinople, and shortly after, a plague followed, and a great part of the walls of that city, with fifty-seven towers, fell to the ground. Many cities also went to ruin, and the famine and pestilential state of the air destroyed thousands of men and cattle.

423.
Theodosius emperor.
446.
Ætius.
The groans of the Britons.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XIV.—

### THE BRITONS, COMPELLED BY FAMINE, DROVE THE BARBARIANS OUT OF THEIR TERRITORIES; SOON AFTER THERE ENSUED PLENTY OF CORN, LUXURY, PLAGUE, AND THE SUBVERSION OF THE NATION.

In the meantime, the aforesaid famine distressing the Britons more and more, and leaving to posterity lasting memorials of its mischievous effects, obliged many of them to submit themselves to the depredators; though others still held out, confiding in the Divine assistance, when none was to be had from men. These continually made excursions from the mountains, caves, and woods, and, at length, began to inflict severe losses on their enemies, who had been for so many years plundering the country. The Irish robbers thereupon returned home, in order to come again soon after. The Picts, both then and afterwards, remained quiet in the farthest part of the island; save that, sometimes, they would do some mischief, and carry off booty from the Britons.

The Britons recover their courage.

When, however, the ravages of the enemy at length ceased, the island began to abound with such plenty of grain as had never been known in any age before; with plenty, luxury increased, and this was immediately attended with all sorts of crimes; in particular, cruelty, hatred of truth, and love of falsehood; insomuch, that if any one among them happened to be milder than the rest, and inclined to truth, all the rest abhorred and persecuted him, as if he had been the enemy of his country. Nor were the laity only guilty of these things, but even our Lord's own flock, and his pastors also, addicting themselves to drunkenness, animosity, litigiousness, contention, envy, and other such like crimes, and casting off the light yoke of Christ. In the meantime, on a sudden, a severe plague fell upon that corrupt generation, which soon destroyed such numbers of them, that the living were scarcely sufficient to bury the dead: yet, those that survived, could not be withdrawn from the spiritual death, which their sins had incurred, either by the death of their friends, or the fear of their own. Whereupon, not long after, a more severe vengeance, for their horrid wickedness, fell upon the sinful nation. They consulted what was to be done, and where they should seek assistance to prevent or repel the cruel and frequent incursions of the northern nations; and they all agreed with their King Vortigern to call over to their aid from the parts beyond the sea, the Saxon nation; which, as the event still more evidently showed, appears to have been done by the appointment of our Lord himself, that evil might fall upon them for their wicked deeds.

The Saxons invited.

447.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XV.—

THE ANGLES BEING INVITED INTO BRITAIN, AT FIRST OBLIGED THE ENEMY TO RETIRE TO A DISTANCE; BUT NOT LONG AFTER, JOINING IN LEAGUE WITH THEM, TURNED THEIR WEAPONS UPON THEIR CONFEDERATES.

In the year of our Lord 449, Martian being made emperor with Valentinian, and the forty-sixth from Augustus, ruled the empire seven years. Then the nation of the Angles, or Saxons, being invited by the aforesaid king, arrived in Britain with three long ships, and had a place assigned them to reside in by the same king, in the eastern part of the island, that they might thus appear to be fighting for their country, whilst their real intentions were to enslave it. Accordingly they engaged with the enemy, who were come from the north to give battle, and obtained the victory; which being known at home in their own country, as also the fertility of the island, and the cowardice of the Britons, a more considerable fleet was quickly sent over, bringing a still greater number of men, which, being added to the former, made up an invincible army. The new comers received of the Britons a place to inhabit, upon condition that they should wage war against their enemies for the peace and security of the country, whilst the Britons agreed to furnish them with pay. Those who came over were of the three most powerful nations of Germany—Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. From the Jutes are descended the people of Kent, and of the Isle of Wight, and those also in the province of the West-Saxons who are to this day called Jutes, seated opposite to the Isle of Wight. From the Saxons, that is, the country which is now called Old Saxony, came the East-Saxons, the South-Saxons, and the West-Saxons. From the Angles, that is the country which is called Anglia, and which is said, from that time, to remain desert to this day, between the provinces of the Jutes and the Saxons, are descended the East-Angles, the Midland-Angles, Mercians, all the race of the Northumbrians, that is, of those nations that dwell on the north side of the river Humber, and the other nations of the English. Their first two commanders are said to have been Hengist and Horsa. Of whom, Horsa, being afterwards slain in battle by the Britons, was buried in the eastern parts of Kent, where a monument, bearing his name, is still in existence. They were the sons of Victgilsus, whose father was Vecta, son of Woden; from whose stock the royal race of many provinces deduce their original. In a short time, swarms of the aforesaid nations came over into the island, and they began to increase so much, that they became terrible to the natives themselves who had invited them. Then, having on a sudden entered into a league with the Picts, whom they had by this time repelled by the force of their arms, they began to turn their weapons against their confederates. At first they obliged them to furnish a greater quantity of provisions; and seeking an occasion to quarrel, protested, that unless more plentiful supplies were brought them, they would break the confederacy, and ravage all the island; nor were they backward

The Saxons arrive.
449.
Hengist and Horsa.
The Saxons turn against the Britons.



in putting their threats in execution. In short, the fire kindled by the hands of these pagans, proved God's just revenge for the crimes of the people; not unlike that which, being once lighted by the Chaldeans, consumed the walls and city of Jerusalem. For the barbarous conquerors acting here in the same manner, or rather the just Judge ordaining that they should so act, they plundered all the neighbouring cities and country, spread the conflagration from the eastern to the western sea, without any opposition, and covered almost every part of the devoted island. Public as well as private structures were overturned; the priests were everywhere slain before the altars; the prelates and the people, without any respect of persons, were destroyed with fire and sword; nor was there any to bury those who had been thus cruelly slaughtered. Some of the miserable remainder, being taken in the mountains, were butchered in heaps. Others, spent with hunger, came forth and submitted themselves to the enemy for food, being destined to undergo perpetual servitude, if they were not even killed upon the spot. Some with sorrowful hearts fled beyond the seas. Others, continuing in their own country, led a miserable life among the woods, rocks, and mountains, with scarcely enough food to support life, and expecting every moment to be their last.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVI.—

### THE BRITONS OBTAINED THEIR FIRST VICTORY OVER THE ANGLES, UNDER THE COMMAND OF AMBROSIUS, A BOMAN.

When the victorious army, having destroyed and dispersed the natives, had returned home to their own settlements, the Britons began by degrees to take heart, and gather strength, sallying out of the lurking places where they had concealed themselves, and unanimously imploring the Divine assistance, that they might not utterly be destroyed. They had at that time for their leader, Ambrosius Aurelius, a modest man, who alone, by chance, of the Roman nation had survived the storm, in which his parents, who were of the royal race, had perished. Under him the Britons revived, and, offering battle to the victors, by the help of God, came off victorious. From that day, sometimes the natives, and sometimes their enemies, prevailed, till the year of the siege of Baddesdown-hill, when they made no small slaughter of those invaders, about forty-four years after their arrival in England. But of this hereafter.

Ambrosius defeats the Saxons.

466.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVII.—

### HOW GERMANUS THE BISHOP, SAILING INTO BRITAIN WITH LUPUS, FIRST QUELLED THE TEMPEST OF THE SEA, AND AFTERWARDS THAT OF THE PELAGIANS, BY DIVINE POWER.

Some few years before their arrival, the Pelagian heresy, brought over by Agricola, the son of Severianus, a Pelagian bishop, had sadly corrupted the faith of the Britons. But whereas they absolutely refused to embrace that perverse doctrine, so blasphemous against the grace of Christ, and were not able of themselves to confute its subtilty by force of argument, they thought of an excellent plan, which was to crave aid of the Gallican prelates in that spiritual war. Hereupon having gathered a great synod, they consulted together what persons should be sent thither, and by unanimous consent, choice was made of the apostolical priests, Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus of Troyes, to go into Britain to confirm it in the faith. They readily complied with the request and commands of the holy Church, and putting to sea, sailed half way over from Gaul to Britain with a fair wind. There on a sudden they were obstructed by the malevolence of demons, who were jealous that such men should be sent to bring back the Britons to the faith. They raised storms, and darkened the sky with clouds. The sails could not bear the fury of the winds, the sailors' skill was forced to give way, the ship was sustained by prayer, not by strength, and as it happened, their spiritual commander and bishop, being spent with weariness, was fallen asleep. Then the tempest, as if the person that opposed it had given way, gathered strength, and the ship, overpowered by the waves, was ready to sink. Then the blessed Lupus and all the rest awakened their elder, that he might oppose the raging elements. He, showing himself the more resolute in proportion to the greatness of the danger, called upon Christ, and having, in the name of the Holy Trinity, sprinkled a little water, quelled the raging waves, admonished his companion, encouraged all, and all unanimously fell to prayer. The Deity heard their cry, the enemies were put to flight, a calm ensued, the winds veering about applied themselves to forward their voyage, and having soon traversed the ocean, they enjoyed the quiet of the wished-for shore. A multitude flocking thither from all parts, received the priests, whose coming had been foretold by the predictions even of their adversaries. For the wicked spirits declared what they feared, and when the priests afterwards expelled them from the bodies they had taken possession of, they made known the nature of the tempest, and the dangers they had occasioned, and that they had been overcome by the merits and authority of the saints.

The Pelagian heresy.

429.

Bishops Lupus and Germanus.

In the meantime, the apostolical priests filled the island of Britain with the fame of their preaching and virtues; and the word of God was by them daily administered, not only in the churches, but even in the streets and fields, so that the Catholics were everywhere confirmed, and those who had gone astray, corrected. Like the Apostles,

they had honour and authority through a good conscience, obedience to their doctrine through their sound learning, whilst the reward of virtue attended upon their numerous merits. Thus the generality of the people readily embraced their opinions; the authors of the erroneous opinions kept themselves in the back-ground, and, like evil spirits, grieved for the loss of the people that were rescued from them. At length, after mature deliberation, they had the boldness to enter the lists, and appeared for public disputation conspicuous for riches, glittering in apparel, and supported by the flatteries of many; choosing rather to hazard the combat, than to undergo the dishonour among the people of having been silenced, lest they should seem by saying nothing to condemn themselves. An immense multitude was there assembled with their wives and children. The people stood round as spectators and judges; but the parties present differed much in appearance; on the one side was Divine faith, on the other human presumption; on the one side piety, on the other pride; on the one side Pelagius, on the other Christ. The holy priests, Germanus and Lupus, permitted their adversaries to speak first, who long took up the time, and filled the ears with empty words. Then the venerable prelates poured forth the torrent of their apostolical and evangelical eloquence. Their discourse was interspersed with scriptural sentences, and they supported their most weighty assertions by reading the written testimonies of famous writers. Vanity was convinced, and perfidiousness confuted; so, that at every objection made against them, not being able to reply, they confessed their errors. The people, who were judges, could scarcely refrain from violence, but signified their judgment by their acclamations.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVIII.—

### THE SAME HOLY MAN GAVE SIGHT TO THE BLIND DAUGHTER OF A TRIBUNE, AND THEN COMING TO ST. ALBAN'S, THERE RECEIVED SOME RELICS OF HIS, AND LEFT OTHERS OF THE BLESSED APOSTLES, AND OTHER MARTYRS.

After this, a certain man, who had the quality of a tribune, came forward with his wife, and presented his blind daughter, ten years of age, for the priests to cure. They ordered her to be set before their adversaries, who, being convinced by guilt of conscience, joined their entreaties to those of the child's parents, and besought the priests that she might be cured. The priests, therefore, perceiving their adversaries to yield, made a short prayer, and then Germanus, full of the Holy Ghost, invoked the Trinity, and taking into his hands a casket with relics of saints, which hung about his neck, applied it to the girl's eyes, which were immediately delivered from darkness and filled with the light of truth. The parents rejoiced, and the people were astonished at the miracle; after which, the wicked opinions were so fully obliterated from the minds of all, that they ardently embraced the doctrine of the priests.

A tribune's daughter cured.

This damnable heresy being thus suppressed, and the authors thereof confuted, and all the people's hearts settled in the purity of the faith, the priests repaired to the tomb of the martyr, St. Alban, to give thanks to God through him. There Germanus, having with him relics of all the Apostles, and of several martyrs, after offering up his prayers, commanded the tomb to be opened, that he might lay up therein some precious gifts; judging it convenient, that the limbs of saints brought together from several countries, as their equal merits had procured them admission into heaven, should be preserved in one tomb. These being honourably deposited, and laid together, he took up a parcel of dust from the place where the martyr's blood had been shed, to carry away with him, which dust having retained the blood, it appeared that the slaughter of the martyrs had communicated a redness to it, whilst the persecutor was struck pale. In consequence of these things, an innumerable multitude of people was that day converted to the Lord.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XIX.—

### HOW THE SAME HOLY MAN, BEING DETAINED THERE BY AN INDISPOSITION, BY HIS PRAYERS QUENCHED A FIRE THAT HAD BROKEN OUT AMONG THE HOUSES, AND WAS HIMSELF CURED OF HIS DISTEMPER BY A VISION.

As they were returning from thence, Germanus fell and broke his leg, by the contrivance of the Devil, who did not know that, like Job, his merits would be enhanced by the affliction of his body.

429.

Other miracles.

Whilst he was thus detained some time in the same place by illness, a fire broke out in a cottage neighbouring to that in which he was; and having burned down the other houses which were thatched with reed, was carried on by the wind to the dwelling in which he lay. The people all flocked to the prelate, entreating that they might lift him in their arms, and save him from the impending danger. He, however, rebuked them, and relying on faith, would not suffer himself to be removed. The multitude, in despair, ran to oppose the conflagration; however, for the greater manifestation of the Divine power, whatsoever the crowd endeavoured to save, was destroyed; but what he who was disabled and motionless occupied, the flame avoided, sparing the house that gave entertainment to the holy man, and raging about on every side of it; whilst the house in which he lay appeared untouched, amid the general conflagration. The multitude rejoiced at the miracle, and praised the superior power of God. An infinite number of the poorer sort watched day and night before the cottage; some to heal their souls, and some their bodies. It is impossible to relate what Christ wrought by his servant, what wonders the sick man performed: for whilst he would suffer no medicines to be applied to his distemper, he one night saw a person in garments as white as snow, standing by him, who, reaching out his hand, seemed to raise him up, and ordered him to stand boldly upon his feet; from which time his pain ceased, and he was so perfectly restored, that when the day came on, he, without any hesitation, set forth upon his journey.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XX.—

### HOW THE SAME BISHOPS PROCURED THE BRITONS ASSISTANCE FROM HEAVEN IN A BATTLE, AND THEN RETURNED HOME.

In the meantime, the Saxons and Picts, with their united forces, made war upon the Britons, who, being thus by fear and necessity compelled to take up arms, and thinking themselves unequal to their enemies, implored the assistance of the holy bishops; who, hastening to them as they had promised, inspired so much courage into these fearful people, that one would have thought they had been joined by a mighty army. Thus, by these holy apostolic men, Christ himself commanded in their camp. The holy days of Lent were also at hand, and were rendered more religious by the presence of the priests, insomuch that the people being instructed by daily sermons, resorted in crowds to be baptized; for most of the army desired admission to the saving water; a church was prepared with boughs for the feast of the resurrection of our Lord, and so fitted up in that martial camp, as if it were in a city. The army advanced, still wet with the baptismal water; the faith of the people was strengthened; and whereas human power had before been despaired of, the Divine assistance was now relied upon. The enemy received advice of the state of the army, and not questioning their success against an unarmed multitude, hastened forwards, but their approach was, by the scouts, made known to the Britons; the greater part of whose forces being just come from the font, after the celebration of Easter, and preparing to arm and carry on the war, Germanus declared he would be their leader. He picked out the most active, viewed the country round about, and observed, in the way by which the enemy was expected, a valley encompassed with hills. In that place he drew up his inexperienced troops, himself acting as their general. A multitude of fierce enemies appeared, whom as soon as those that lay in ambush saw approaching, Germanus, bearing in his hands the standard, instructed his men all in a loud voice to repeat his words, and the enemy advancing securely, as thinking to take them by surprise, the priests three times cried, Hallelujah. A universal shout of the same word followed, and the hills resounding the echo on all sides, the enemy was struck with dread, fearing, that not only the neighbouring rocks, but even the very skies, were falling upon them; and such was their terror, that their feet were not swift enough to deliver them from it. They fled in disorder, casting away their arms, and well satisfied if, with their naked bodies, they could escape the danger; many of them, in their precipitate and hasty flight, were swallowed up by the river which they were passing. The Britons, without the loss of a man, beheld their vengeance complete, and became inactive spectators of their victory. The scattered spoils were gathered up, and the pious soldiers rejoiced in the success which Heaven had granted them. The prelates thus triumphed over the enemy without bloodshed, and gained a victory by faith, without the aid of human force; and, having settled the

Miraculous aid  
against the Picts.

429.

The bishops return  
home.

429.

affairs of the island, and restored tranquillity by the defeat, as well of the invisible, as of the carnal enemies, prepared to return home. Their own merits, and the intercession of the holy martyr Alban, obtained them a safe passage, and the happy vessel restored them in peace to their rejoicing people.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXI.—

THE PELAGIAN HERESY AGAIN REVIVING,  
GERMANUS, RETURNING INTO BRITAIN WITH  
SEVERUS, FIRST HEALED A LAME YOUTH, THEN  
HAVING CONDEMNED OR CONVERTED THE  
HERETICS, THEY RESTORED SPIRITUAL HEALTH TO  
THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

Not long after, advice was brought from the same island, that certain persons were again attempting to set forth and spread abroad the Pelagian heresy. The holy Germanus was entreated by all the priests, that he would again defend the cause of God, which he had before asserted. He speedily complied with their request; and taking with him Severus, a man of singular sanctity, who was disciple to the most holy father, Lupus, bishop of Troyes, and afterwards, as bishop of Treves, preached the word of God in the adjacent parts of Germany, put to sea, and was calmly wafted over into Britain.

Germanus and  
Severus return.

447.

In the meantime, the wicked spirits flying about the whole island, foretold by constraint that Germanus was coming, insomuch, that one Elafius, the chief of that religion, hastened to meet the holy men, without having received any certain news, carrying with him his son, who laboured under a weakness of his limbs in the very flower of his youth; for the nerves being withered, his leg was so contracted that the limb was useless, and he could not walk. All the country followed this Elafius. The priests arrived, and were met by the ignorant multitude, whom they blessed, and preached the word of God to them. They found the people constant in the faith as they had left them; and learning that but few had gone astray they found out the authors, and condemned them. Then Elafius cast himself at the feet of the priests, presenting his son, whose distress was visible, and needed no words to express it. All were grieved, but especially the priests, who put up their prayers for him before the throne of mercy; and Germanus, causing the youth to sit down, gently passed his healing hand over the leg which was contracted; the limb recovered its strength and soundness by the power of his touch, the withered nerves were restored, and the youth was, in the presence of all the people, delivered whole to his father. The multitude was amazed at the miracle, and the Catholic faith was firmly planted in the minds of all; after which, they were, in a sermon, warned and exhorted to make amends for their errors. By the judgment of all, the spreaders of the heresy, who had been expelled the island, were brought before the priests, to be conveyed up into the continent, that the country might be rid of them, and they corrected of their errors. Thus the faith in those parts continued long after pure and untainted. All things being settled, the blessed prelates returned home as prosperously as they came.

But Germanus, after this, went to Ravenna to intercede for the tranquillity of the Armoricans, where, being very honourably received by Valentinian and his mother, Placidia, he departed to Christ; his body was conveyed to his own city with a splendid retinue, and numberless deeds of charity accompanied him to the grave. Not long after, Valentinian was murdered by the followers of Ætius, the Patrician, whom he had put to death, in the sixth year of the reign of Marcianus, and with him ended the empire of the West.

The bishops again depart.

End of the Western Empire.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXII.—

THE BRITONS, BEING FOR A TIME DELIVERED FROM FOREIGN INVASIONS, WASTED THEMSELVES BY CIVIL WARS, AND THEN GAVE THEMSELVES UP TO MORE HEINOUS CRIMES.

In the meantime, in Britain, there was some respite from foreign, but not from civil war. There still remained the ruins of cities destroyed by the enemy, and abandoned; and the natives, who had escaped the enemy, now fought against each other. However, the kings, priests, private men, and the nobility, still remembering the late calamities and slaughters, in some measure kept within bounds; but when these died, and another generation succeeded, which knew nothing of those times, and was only acquainted with the present peaceable state of things, all the bonds of sincerity and justice were so entirely broken, that there was not only no trace of them remaining, but few persons seemed to be aware that such virtues had ever existed. Among other most wicked actions, not to be expressed, which their own historian, Gildas, mournfully takes notice of, they added this—that they never preached the faith to the Saxons, or English, who dwelt amongst them; however, the goodness of God did not forsake his people, whom he foreknew, but sent to the aforesaid nation much more worthy preachers, to bring it to the faith.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXIII.—

### HOW POPE GREGORY SENT AUGUSTINE, WITH OTHER MONKS, TO PREACH TO THE ENGLISH, AND ENCOURAGED THEM BY A LETTER OF EXHORTATION, NOT TO CEASE FROM THEIR LABOUR.

In the year of our Lord 582, Maurice, the fifty-fourth from Augustus, ascended the throne, and reigned twenty-one years. In the tenth year of his reign, Gregory, a man renowned for learning and behaviour, was promoted to the apostolical see of Rome, and presided over it thirteen years, six months, and ten days. He, being moved by Divine inspiration, in the fourteenth year of the same emperor, and about the one hundred and fiftieth after the coming of the English into Britain, sent the servant of God, Augustine, and with him several other monks, who feared the Lord, to preach the word of God to the English nation. They having, in obedience to the pope's commands, undertaken that work, were, on their journey, seized with a sudden fear, and began to think of returning home, rather than proceed to a barbarous, fierce, and unbelieving nation, to whose very language they were strangers; and this they unanimously agreed was the safest course. In short, they sent back Augustine, whom he had appointed to be consecrated bishop, in case they were received by the English, that he might, by humble entreaty, obtain of the holy Gregory, that they should not be compelled to undertake so dangerous, toilsome, and uncertain a journey. The pope, in reply, sent them a hortatory epistle, persuading them to proceed in the work of the Divine word, and rely on the assistance of the Almighty. The purport of which letter was as follows:—

St. Augustine comes to England.

596.

“Gregory, the servant of the servants of God, to the servants of our Lord. Forasmuch as it had been better not to begin a good work, than to think of desisting from that which has been begun, it behoves you (most beloved sons) to fulfil the good work, which, by the help of our Lord, you have undertaken. Let not, therefore, the toil of the journey, nor the tongues of evil speaking men, deter you; but with all possible earnestness and zeal perform that which, by God's direction, you have undertaken; being assured, that much labour is followed by an eternal reward. When Augustine, your chief, returns, whom we also constitute your abbot, humbly obey him in all things; knowing, that whatsoever you shall do by his direction, will, in all respects, be available to your souls. Almighty God protect you with his grace, and grant that I may, in the heavenly country, see the fruits of your labour. Inasmuch as, though I cannot labour with you, I shall partake in the joy of the reward, because I am willing to labour. God keep you in safety, my most beloved sons. Dated the 23rd of July, in the fourteenth year of the reign of our pious and most august lord, Mauritius Tiberius, the thirteenth year after the consulship of our said lord. The fourteenth indiction.”

Gregory's letter.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXIV.—

### HOW HE WROTE TO THE BISHOP OF ARLES TO ENTERTAIN THEM.

The same venerable pope also sent a letter to Ætherius, bishop of Arles, exhorting him to give favourable entertainment to Augustine on his way to Britain; which letter was in these words:—

His letter to Ætherius.

596.

“To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow-bishop Ætherius, Gregory, the servant of the servants of God. Although religious men stand in need of no recommendation with priests who have the charity which is pleasing to God; yet, as a proper opportunity is offered to write, we have thought fit to send you this our letter, to inform you, that we have directed thither, for the good of souls, the bearer of these presents, Augustine, the servant of God, of whose industry we are assured, with other servants of God, whom it is requisite that your holiness assist with priestly affection, and afford him all the comfort in your power. And to the end that you may be the more ready in your assistance, we have enjoined him particularly to inform you of the occasion of his coming; knowing, that when you are acquainted with it, you will, as the matter requires, for the sake of God, zealously afford him your relief. We also in all things recommend to your charity, Candidus, the priest, our common son, whom we have transferred to the government of a small patrimony in our church. God keep you in safety, most reverend brother. Dated the 23rd day of July, in the fourteenth year of the reign of our most pious and august lord, Mauritius Tiberius, the thirteenth year after the consulship of our lord aforesaid. The fourteenth indiction.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXV.—

AUGUSTINE, COMING INTO BRITAIN, FIRST  
PREACHED IN THE ISLE OF THANET TO KING  
ETHELBERT, AND HAVING OBTAINED LICENCE,  
ENTERED THE KINGDOM OF KENT, IN ORDER TO  
PREACH THEREIN.

Augustine, being strengthened by the confirmation of the blessed Father Gregory, returned to the work of the word of God, with the servants of Christ, and arrived in Britain. The powerful Ethelbert was at that time king of Kent; he had extended his dominions as far as the great river Humber, by which the Southern Saxons are divided from the Northern. On the east of Kent is the large Isle of Thanet, containing, according to the English way of reckoning, 600 families, divided from the other land by the river Wantsum, which is about three furlongs over, and fordable only in two places, for both ends of it run into the sea. In this island landed the servant of our Lord, Augustine, and his companions, being, as is reported, nearly forty men. They had, by order of the blessed Pope Gregory, taken interpreters of the nation of the Franks, and sending to Ethelbert, signified that they were come from Rome, and brought a joyful message, which most undoubtedly assured to all that took advantage of it everlasting joys in heaven, and a kingdom that would never end, with the living and true God. The king, having heard this, ordered them to stay in that island where they had landed, and that they should be furnished with all necessaries, till he should consider what to do with them. For he had before heard of the Christian religion, having a Christian wife of the royal family of the Franks, called Bertha; whom he had received from her parents, upon condition that she should be permitted to practise her religion with the Bishop Luidhard, who was sent with her to preserve her faith. Some days after, the king came into the island, and sitting in the open air, ordered Augustine and his companions to be brought into his presence. For he had taken precaution that they should not come to him in any house, lest, according to an ancient superstition, if they practised any magical arts, they might impose upon him, and so get the better of him. But they came furnished with Divine, not with magic virtue, bearing a silver cross for their banner, and the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board; and singing the litany, they offered up their prayers to the Lord for the eternal salvation both of themselves and of those to whom they were come. When he had sat down, pursuant to the king's commands, and preached to him and his attendants there present, the word of life, the king answered thus:—"Your words and promises are very fair, but as they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot approve of them so far as to forsake that which I have so long followed with the whole English nation. But because you are come from far into my kingdom, and, as I conceive, are desirous to impart to us those things which you believe to be true, and most beneficial, we will not molest you, but give you favourable entertainment, and take care to supply you with your necessary sustenance; nor do we forbid you to

Augustine arrives in Britain.

597.

preach and gain as many as you can to your religion.” Accordingly he permitted them to reside in the city of Canterbury, which was the metropolis of all his dominions, and, pursuant to his promise, besides allowing them sustenance, did not refuse them liberty to preach. It is reported that, as they drew near to the city, after their manner, with the holy cross, and the image of our sovereign Lord and King, Jesus Christ, they, in concert, sung this litany: “We beseech thee, O Lord, in all thy mercy, that thy anger and wrath be turned away from this city, and from thy holy house, because we have sinned. Hallelujah.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXVI.—

### ST. AUGUSTINE IN KENT FOLLOWED THE DOCTRINE AND MANNER OF LIVING OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, AND SETTLED HIS EPISCOPAL SEE IN THE ROYAL CITY.

As soon as they entered the dwelling-place assigned them, they began to imitate the course of life practised in the primitive church; applying themselves to frequent prayer, watching and fasting; preaching the word of life to as many as they could; despising all worldly things, as not belonging to them; receiving only their necessary food from those they taught; living themselves in all respects conformably to what they prescribed to others, and being always disposed to suffer any adversity, and even to die for that truth which they preached. In short, several believed and were baptized, admiring the simplicity of their innocent life, and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine. There was on the east side of the city, a church dedicated to the honour of St. Martin, built whilst the Romans were still in the island, wherein the queen, who, as has been said before, was a Christian, used to pray. In this they first began to meet, to sing, to pray, to say mass, to preach, and to baptize, till the king, being converted to the faith, allowed them to preach openly, and build or repair churches in all places.

St. Augustine's way of life.

597.

When he, among the rest, induced by the unspotted life of these holy men, and their delightful promises, which, by many miracles, they proved to be most certain, believed and was baptized, greater numbers began daily to flock together to hear the word, and, forsaking their heathen rites, to associate themselves, by believing, to the unity of the church of Christ. Their conversion the king so far encouraged, as that he compelled none to embrace Christianity, but only showed more affection to the believers, as to his fellow-citizens in the heavenly kingdom. For he had learned from his instructors and leaders to salvation, that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary, not by compulsion. Nor was it long before he gave his teachers a settled residence in his metropolis of Canterbury, with such possessions of different kinds as were necessary for their subsistence.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXVII.—

### ST. AUGUSTINE, BEING MADE BISHOP, SENDS TO ACQUAINT POPE GREGORY WITH WHAT HAD BEEN DONE, AND RECEIVES HIS ANSWER TO THE DOUBTS HE HAD PROPOSED TO HIM.

In the meantime, Augustine, the man of God, repaired to Arles, and, pursuant to the orders received from the holy Father Gregory, was ordained archbishop of the English nation, by Ætherius, archbishop of that city. Then returning into Britain, he sent Laurentius, the priest, and Peter, the monk, to Rome, to acquaint Pope Gregory, that the nation of the English had received the faith of Christ, and that he was himself made their bishop. At the same time, he desired his solution of some doubts that occurred to him. He soon received proper answers to his questions, which we have also thought fit to insert in this our history:—

St. Augustine's questions and Gregory's answers.

597.

*The First Question of Augustine, Bishop of the Church of Canterbury.*—Concerning bishops, how they are to behave themselves towards their clergy? or into how many portions the things given by the faithful to the altar are to be divided? and how the bishop is to act in the church?

*Gregory, Pope of the City of Rome, answers.*—Holy Writ, which no doubt you are well versed in, testifies, and particularly St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, wherein he endeavours to instruct him how he should behave himself in the house of God; but it is the custom of the apostolic see to prescribe rules to bishops newly ordained, that all emoluments which accrue, are to be divided into four portions;—one for the bishop and his family, because of hospitality and entertainments; another for the clergy; a third for the poor; and the fourth for the repair of churches. But in regard that you, my brother, being brought up under monastic rules, are not to live apart from your clergy in the English church, which, by God's assistance, has been lately brought to the faith; you are to follow that course of life which our forefathers did in the time of the primitive church, when none of them said anything that he possessed was his own, but all things were in common among them.

But if there are any clerks not received into holy orders, who cannot live continent, they are to take wives, and receive their stipends abroad; because we know it is written, that out of the same portions above-mentioned a distribution was made to each of them according to every one's wants. Care is also to be taken of their stipends, and provision to be made, and they are to be kept under ecclesiastical rules, that they may live orderly, and attend to singing of psalms, and by the help of God, preserve their hearts, and tongues, and bodies from all that is unlawful. But as for those that live in common, why need we say anything of making portions, or keeping hospitality

and exhibiting mercy? inasmuch as all that can be spared is to be spent in pious and religious works, according to the commands of Him who is the Lord and Master of all, "Give alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you."

*Augustine's Second Question.*—Whereas the faith is one and the same, why are there different customs in different churches? and why is one custom of masses observed in the holy Roman church, and another in the Gallican church?

*Pope Gregory answers.*—You know, my brother, the custom of the Roman church in which you remember you were bred up. But it pleases me, that if you have found anything, either in the Roman, or the Gallican, or any other church, which may be more acceptable to Almighty God, you carefully make choice of the same, and sedulously teach the church of the English, which as yet is new in the faith, whatsoever you can gather from the several churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things. Choose, therefore, from every church those things that are pious, religious, and upright, and when you have, as it were, made them up into one body, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto.

*Augustine's Third Question.*—I beseech you to inform me, what punishment must be inflicted, if any one shall take any thing by stealth from the church?

*Gregory answers.*—You may judge, my brother, by the person of the thief, in what manner he is to be corrected. For there are some, who, having substance, commit theft; and there are others, who transgress in this point through want. Wherefore it is requisite, that some be punished in their purses, others with stripes; some with more severity, and some more mildly. And when the severity is more, it is to proceed from charity, not from passion; because this is done to him who is corrected, that he may not be delivered up to hell-fire. For it behoves us to maintain discipline among the faithful, as good parents do with their carnal children, whom they punish with stripes for their faults, and yet design to make those their heirs whom they chastise; and they preserve what they possess for those whom they seem in anger to persecute. This charity is, therefore, to be kept in mind, and it dictates the measure of the punishment, so that the mind may do nothing beyond the rule of reason. You may add, that they are to restore those things which they have stolen from the church. But, God forbid, that the church should make profit from those earthly things which it seems to lose, or seek gain out of such vanities.

*Augustine's Fourth Question.*—Whether two brothers may marry two sisters, which are of a family far removed from them?

*Gregory answers.*—This may lawfully be done; for nothing is found in holy writ that seems to contradict it.

*Augustine's Fifth Question.*—To what degree may the faithful marry with their kindred? and whether it is lawful for men to marry their stepmothers and relations?

*Gregory answers.*—A certain worldly law in the Roman commonwealth allows, that the son and daughter of a brother and sister, or of two brothers, or two sisters, may be joined in matrimony; but we have found by experience, that no offspring can come of such wedlock; and the Divine Law forbids a man “to uncover the nakedness of his kindred.” Hence of necessity it must be the third or fourth generation of the faithful, that can be lawfully joined in matrimony; for the second, which we have mentioned, must altogether abstain from one another. To marry with one’s stepmother is a heinous crime, because it is written in the Law, “Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father:” now the son, indeed, cannot uncover his father’s nakedness; but in regard that it is written, “They shall be two in one flesh,” he that presumes to uncover the nakedness of his stepmother, who was one flesh with his father, certainly uncovers the nakedness of his father. It is also prohibited to marry with a sister-in-law, because by the former union she is become the brother’s flesh. For which thing also John the Baptist was beheaded and ended his life in holy martyrdom. For though he was not ordered to deny Christ, and indeed was killed for confessing Christ, yet in regard that the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, said, “I am the Truth,” because John was killed for the truth, he also shed his blood for Christ.

But forasmuch as there are many of the English, who, whilst they were still in infidelity, are said to have been joined in this execrable matrimony, when they come to the faith they are to be admonished to abstain, and be made to know that this is a grievous sin. Let them fear the dreadful judgment of God, lest, for the gratification of their carnal appetites, they incur the torments of eternal punishment. Yet they are not on this account to be deprived of the communion of the body and blood of Christ, lest they seem to be punished for those things which they did through ignorance before they had received baptism. For at this time the Holy Church chastises some things through zeal, and tolerates some through meekness, and connives at some things through discretion, that so she may often, by this forbearance and connivance, suppress the evil which she disapproves. But all that come to the faith, are to be admonished not to do such things. And if any shall be guilty of them, they are to be excluded from the communion of the body and blood of Christ. For as the offence is, in some measure, to be tolerated in those who did it through ignorance, so it is to be strenuously prosecuted in those who do not fear to sin knowingly.

*Augustine’s Sixth Question.*—Whether a bishop may be ordained without other bishops being present, in case there be so great a distance between them, that they cannot easily come together?

*Gregory answers.*—As for the church of England, in which you are as yet the only bishop, you can no otherwise ordain a bishop than in the absence of other bishops; unless some bishops should come over from Gaul, that they may be present as witnesses to you in ordaining a bishop. But we would have you, my brother, to ordain bishops in such a manner, that the said bishops may not be far asunder, that when a new bishop is to be ordained, there be no difficulty, but that other bishops, and pastors also, whose presence is necessary, may easily come together. Thus, when, by the help of God, bishops shall be so constituted in places everywhere near to one another, no ordination of a bishop is to be performed without assembling three or four bishops. For, even in spiritual affairs, we may take example by the temporal, that they may be

wisely and discreetly conducted. It is certain, that when marriages are celebrated in the world, some married persons are assembled, that those who went before in the way of matrimony, may also partake in the joy of the succeeding couple. Why, then, at this spiritual ordination, wherein, by means of the sacred ministry, man is joined to God, should not such persons be assembled, as may either rejoice in the advancement of the new bishop, or jointly pour forth their prayers to Almighty God for his preservation?

*Augustine's Seventh Question.*—How are we to deal with the bishops of France and Britain?

*Gregory answers.*—We give you no authority over the bishops of France, because the bishop of Arles received the pall in ancient times from my predecessor, and we are not to deprive him of the authority he has received. If it shall therefore happen, my brother, that you go over into the province of France, you are to concert with the said bishop of Arles, how, if there be any faults among the bishops, they may be amended. And if he shall be lukewarm in keeping up discipline, he is to be corrected by your zeal; to whom we have also written, that when your holiness shall be in France, he may also use all his endeavours to assist you, and put away from the behaviour of the bishops all that shall be opposite to the command of our Creator. But you of your own authority shall not have power to judge the bishops of France, but by persuading, soothing, and showing good works for them to imitate; you shall reform the minds of wicked men to the pursuit of holiness; for it is written in the Law, “When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbours, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn.” For thou mayest not apply the sickle of judgment in that harvest, which seems to have been committed to another; but by the effect of good works thou shalt clear the Lord’s wheat of the chaff of their vices, and convert them into the body of the Church, as it were, by eating. But whatsoever is to be done by authority, must be transacted with the aforesaid bishop of Arles, lest that should be omitted, which the ancient institution of the fathers has appointed. But as for all the bishops of Britain, we commit them to your care, that the unlearned may be taught, the weak strengthened by persuasion, and the perverse corrected by authority.

*Augustine's Eighth Question.*—Whether a woman with child ought to be baptized? Or how long after she has brought forth, may she come into the church? As also, after how many days the infant born may be baptized, lest he be prevented by death? Or how long after her husband may have carnal knowledge of her? Or whether it be lawful for her to come into the church when she has her courses? Or to receive the holy sacrament of communion? Or whether a man, under certain circumstances, may come into the church before he has washed with water? Or approach to receive the mystery of the holy communion? All which things are requisite to be known by the rude nation of the English.

*Gregory answers.*—I do not doubt but that these questions have been put to you, my brother, and I think I have already answered you therein. But I believe you would wish the opinion which you yourself might give to be confirmed by mine also. Why should not a woman with child be baptized, since the fruitfulness of the flesh is no

offence in the eyes of Almighty God? For when our first parents sinned in Paradise, they forfeited the immortality which they had received, by the just judgment of God. Because, therefore, Almighty God would not for their fault wholly destroy the human race, he both deprived man of immortality for his sin, and, at the same time, of his great goodness, reserved to him the power of propagating his race after him. On what account then can that which is preserved to the human race, by the free gift of Almighty God, be excluded from the privilege of baptism? For it is very foolish to imagine that the gift of grace opposes that mystery in which all sin is blotted out. When a woman is delivered, after how many days she may come into the church, you have been informed by reading the Old Testament, viz. that she is to abstain for a male child thirty-three days, and sixty-six for a female. Now you must know that this is to be taken in a mystery; for if she enters the church the very hour that she is delivered, to return thanks, she is not guilty of any sin; because the pleasure of the flesh is in fault, and not the pain; but the pleasure is in the copulation of the flesh, whereas there is pain in bringing forth the child. Wherefore it is said to the first mother of all, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." If, therefore, we forbid a woman that has brought forth, to enter the church, we make a crime of her very punishment. To baptize either a woman who has brought forth, if there be danger of death, even the very hour that she brings forth, or that which she has brought forth the very hour it is born, is in no way prohibited, because, as the grace of the holy mystery is to be with much discretion provided for the living and understanding, so is it to be without any delay offered to the dying; lest, while a further time is sought to confer the mystery of redemption, a small delay intervening, the person that is to be redeemed is dead and gone.

Her husband is not to approach her, till the infant born be weaned. A bad custom is sprung up in the behaviour of married people, that is, that women disdain to suckle the children which they bring forth, and give them to other women to suckle; which seems to have been invented on no other account but incontinency; because, as they will not be continent, they will not suckle the children which they bear. Those women, therefore, who, from bad custom, give their children to others to bring up, must not approach their husbands till the time of purification is past. For even when there has been no child-birth, women are forbidden to do so, whilst they have their monthly courses, insomuch that the Law condemns to death any man that shall approach unto a woman during her uncleanness. Yet the woman, nevertheless, must not be forbidden to come into the church whilst she has her monthly courses; because the superfluity of nature cannot be imputed to her as a crime; and it is not just that she should be refused admittance into the church, for that which she suffers against her will. For we know, that the woman who had the issue of blood, humbly approaching behind our Lord's back, touched the hem of his garment, and her distemper immediately departed from her. If, therefore, she that had an issue of blood might commendably touch the garment of our Lord, why may not she, who has the monthly courses, lawfully enter into the church of God? But you may say, Her distemper compelled her, whereas these we speak of are bound by custom. Consider then, most dear brother, that all we suffer in this mortal flesh, through the infirmity of our nature, is ordained by the just judgment of God after the fall; for to hunger, to thirst, to be hot, to be cold, to be weary, is from the infirmity of our nature; and what else is it to seek food against hunger, drink against thirst, air against heat, clothes against cold,

rest against weariness, than to procure a remedy against distempers? Thus to a woman her monthly courses are a distemper. If, therefore, it was a commendable boldness in her, who in her disease touched our Lord's garment, why may not that which is allowed to one infirm person, be granted to all women, who, through the fault of their nature, are distempered?

She must not, therefore, be forbidden to receive the mystery of the holy communion during those days. But if any one out of profound respect does not presume to do it, she is to be commended; yet if she receives it, she is not to be judged. For it is the part of noble minds in some manner to acknowledge their faults, even where there is no offence; because very often that is done without a fault, which, nevertheless, proceeded from a fault. Therefore, when we are hungry, it is no crime to eat; yet our being hungry proceeds from the sin of the first man. The monthly courses are no crime in women, because they naturally happen; however, because our nature itself is so depraved, that it appears to be so without the concurrence of the will, the fault proceeds from sin, and thereby human nature may herself know what she is become by judgment. And let man, who wilfully committed the offence, bear the guilt of that offence. And, therefore, let women consider with themselves, and if they do not presume, during their monthly courses, to approach the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, they are to be commended for their praiseworthy consideration; but when they are carried away with love of the same mystery to receive it out of the usual custom of religious life, they are not to be restrained, as we said before. For as in the Old Testament the outward works are observed, so in the New Testament, that which is outwardly done, is not so diligently regarded as that which is inwardly thought, in order to punish it by a discerning judgment. For whereas the Law forbids the eating of many things as unclean, yet our Lord says in the Gospel, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." And presently after he added, expounding the same, "Out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts." Where it is insufficiently shown, that that is declared by Almighty God to be polluted in fact, which proceeds from the root of a polluted thought. Whence also Paul the Apostle says, "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure." And presently after, declaring the cause of that defilement, he adds, "For even their mind and conscience is defiled." If, therefore, meat is not unclean to him who has a clean mind, why shall that which a clean woman suffers according to nature, be imputed to her as uncleanness?

A man who has approached his own wife is not to enter the church unless washed with water, nor is he to enter immediately although washed. The Law prescribed to the ancient people, that a man in such cases should be washed with water, and not enter into the church before the setting of the sun. Which, nevertheless, may be understood spiritually, because a man acts so when the mind is led by the imagination to unlawful concupiscence; for unless the fire of concupiscence be first driven from his mind, he is not to think himself worthy of the congregation of the brethren, whilst he thus indulges an unlawful passion. For though several nations have different opinions concerning this affair, and seem to observe different rules, it was always the custom of the Romans from ancient times, for such an one to be cleansed by washing, and for some time respectfully to forbear entering the church. Nor do we, in so saying,

assign matrimony to be a fault; but forasmuch as lawful intercourse cannot be had without the pleasure of the flesh, it is proper to forbear entering the holy place, because the pleasure itself cannot be without a fault. For he was not born of adultery or fornication, but of lawful marriage, who said, "Behold I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin my mother brought me forth." For he who knew himself to have been conceived in iniquity, lamented that he was born from sin, because the tree in its bough bears the moisture it drew from the root. In which words, however, he does not call the union of the married couple iniquity, but the pleasure of the copulation. For there are many things which are proved to be lawful, and yet we are somewhat defiled in doing them. As very often by being angry we correct faults, and at the same time disturb our own peace of mind; and though that which we do is right, yet it is not to be approved that our mind should be discomposed. For he who said, "My eye was disturbed with anger," had been angry at the vices of those who had offended. Now, in regard that only a sedate mind can apply itself to contemplation, he grieved that his eye was disturbed with anger; because, whilst he was correcting evil actions below, he was obliged to be withdrawn and disturbed from the contemplation of things above. Anger against vice is, therefore, commendable, and yet painful to a man, because he thinks that by his mind being agitated, he has incurred some guilt. Lawful commerce, therefore, must be for the sake of children, not of pleasure; and must be to procure offspring, not to satisfy vices. But if any man is led not by the desire of pleasure, but only for the sake of getting children, such a man is certainly to be left to his own judgment, either as to entering the church, or as to receiving the mystery of the body and blood of our Lord, which he, who being placed in the fire cannot burn, is not to be forbidden by us to receive. But when, not the love of getting children, but of pleasure prevails, the pair have cause to lament their deed. For this the holy preaching allows them, and yet fills the mind with dread of the very allowance. For when Paul the Apostle said, "Let him that cannot contain, have his wife;" he presently took care to subjoin, "But this I say by way of indulgence, not by way of command." For that is not granted by way of indulgence which is lawful, because it is just; and, therefore, that which he said he indulged, he showed to be an offence.

It is seriously to be considered, that when God was to speak to the people on Mount Sinai, he first commanded them to abstain from women. And if so much cleanness of body was there required, where God spoke to the people by the means of a subject creature, that those who were to hear the words of God should not do so; how much more ought women, who receive the body of Almighty God, to preserve themselves in cleanness of flesh, lest they be burdened with the very greatness of that unutterable mystery? For this reason it was said to David, concerning his men, by the priest, that if they were clean in this particular, they should receive the shewbread, which they would not have received at all, had not David first declared them to be clean. Then the man, who, afterwards, has been washed with water, is also capable of receiving the mystery of the holy communion, when it is lawful for him, according to what has been before declared, to enter the church.

*Augustine's Ninth Question.*—Whether, after an illusion, such as happens in a dream, any man may receive the body of our Lord, or if he be a priest, celebrate the Divine mysteries?

*Gregory answers.*—The Testament of the Old Law, as has been said already in the article above, calls such a man polluted, and allows him not to enter into the church till the evening after being washed with water. Which, nevertheless, spiritual people, taking in another sense, will understand in the same manner as above; because he is imposed upon as it were in a dream, who, being tempted with filthiness, is defiled by real representations in thought, and he is to be washed with water, that he may cleanse away the sins of thought with tears; and unless the fire of temptation depart before, may know himself to be guilty as it were until the evening. But discretion is very necessary in that illusion, that one may seriously consider what causes it to happen in the mind of the person sleeping; for sometimes it proceeds from excess of eating or drinking; sometimes from the superfluity or infirmity of nature, and sometimes from the thoughts. And when it happens, either through superfluity or infirmity of nature, such an illusion is not to be feared, because it is rather to be lamented, that the mind of the person, who knew nothing of it, suffers the same, than that he occasioned it. But when the appetite of gluttony commits excess in food, and thereupon the receptacles of the humours are oppressed, the mind from thence contracts some guilt; yet not so much as to obstruct the receiving of the holy mystery, or celebrating mass, when a holy day requires it, or necessity obliges the sacrament to be administered, because there is no other priest in the place; for if there be others who can perform the ministry, the illusion proceeding from over-eating is not to exclude a man from receiving the sacred mystery; but I am of opinion he ought humbly to abstain from offering the sacrifice of the mystery; but not from receiving it, unless the mind of the person sleeping has been filled with some foul imagination. For there are some, who for the most part so suffer the illusion, that their mind, even during the sleep of the body, is not defiled with filthy thoughts. In which case, one thing is evident, that the mind is guilty even in its own judgment; for though it does not remember to have seen any thing whilst the body was sleeping, yet it calls to mind that when waking it fell into bodily gluttony. But if the sleeping illusion proceeds from evil thoughts when waking, then the guilt is manifest to the mind; for the man perceives from whence that filth sprung, because what he had knowingly thought of, that he afterwards unwittingly revealed. But it is to be considered, whether that thought was no more than a suggestion, or proceeded to enjoyment, or, which is still more criminal, consented to sin. For all sin is fulfilled in three ways, viz. by suggestion, by delight, and by consent. Suggestion is occasioned by the Devil, delight is from the flesh, and consent from the mind. For the serpent suggested the first offence, and Eve, as flesh, was delighted with it, but Adam consented, as the spirit, or mind. And much discretion is requisite for the mind to sit as judge between suggestion and delight, and between delight and consent. For if the evil spirit suggest a sin to the mind, if there ensue no delight in the sin, the sin is in no way committed; but when the flesh begins to be delighted, then sin begins to grow. But if it deliberately consents, then the sin is known to be perfected. The beginning, therefore, of sin is in the suggestion, the nourishing of it in delight, but in the consent is its perfection. And it often happens that what the evil spirit sows in the thought, the flesh draws to delight, and yet the soul does not consent to that delight. And whereas the flesh cannot be delighted without the mind, yet the mind struggling against the pleasures of the flesh, is somewhat unwillingly tied down by the carnal delight, so that through reason it contradicts, and does not consent, yet being influenced by delight, it grievously laments its being so bound. Wherefore that principal soldier of our Lord's host,



sighing, said, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Now if he was a captive, he did not fight; but if he did fight, why was he a captive? he therefore fought against the law of the mind, which the law that is in the members opposed; if he fought so, he was no captive. Thus, then, man is, as I may say, a captive and yet free. Free on account of justice, which he loves, a captive by the delight which he unwillingly bears within him.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXVIII.—

### POPE GREGORY WRITES TO THE BISHOP OF ARLES TO ASSIST AUGUSTINE IN THE WORK OF GOD.

Thus far the answers of the holy Pope Gregory, to the questions of the most reverend prelate, Augustine. The epistle, he says he had written to the bishop of Arles, was directed to Virgilius, successor to Ætherius, the copy whereof follows:—

“To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow-bishop, Virgilius; Gregory, servant of the servants of God. With how much affection brethren, coming of their own accord, are to be entertained, is well known, by their being for the most part invited on account of charity. Therefore, if our common brother, Bishop Augustine, shall happen to come to you, I desire your love will, as is becoming, receive him so kindly and affectionately, that he may be supported by the honour of your consolation, and others be informed how brotherly charity is to be cultivated. And, since it often happens that those who are at a distance, sooner than others understand the things that need correction, if any crimes of priests or others shall happen to be laid before you, you will, in conjunction with him, sharply inquire into the same. And do you both act so strictly and carefully against those things which offend God, and provoke his wrath, that for the amendment of others, the punishment may fall upon the guilty, and the innocent may not suffer an ill name. God keep you in safety, most reverend brother. Given the 22nd day of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our pious and august emperor, Mauritius Tiberius, and the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord. The fourth indiction.”

Gregory's letter to  
Virgilius.

601.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXIX.—

### THE SAME POPE SENDS AUGUSTINE THE PALL, AN EPISTLE, AND SEVERAL MINISTERS OF THE WORD.

Moreover, the same Pope Gregory, hearing from Bishop Augustine, that he had a great harvest, and but few labourers, sent to him, together with his aforesaid messengers, several fellow-labourers and ministers of the word, of whom the first and principal were Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, and Rufinianus, and by them all things in general that were necessary for the worship and service of the church, viz. sacred vessels and vestments for the altars, also ornaments for the churches, and vestments for the priests and clerks, as likewise relics of the holy apostles and martyrs; besides many books. He also sent letters, wherein he signified that he had transmitted the pall to him, and at the same time directed how he should constitute bishops in Britain. The letters were in these words:—

Gregory's letter to Augustine.

601.

“To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow-bishop, Augustine; Gregory, the servant of the servants of God. Though it be certain, that the unspeakable rewards of the eternal kingdom are reserved for those who labour for Almighty God, yet it is requisite that we bestow on them the advantage of honours, to the end that they may by this recompense be enabled the more vigorously to apply themselves to the care of their spiritual work. And, in regard that the new church of the English is, through the goodness of the Lord, and your labours, brought to the grace of God, we grant you the use of the pall in the same, only for the performing of the solemn service of the mass; so that you in several places ordain twelve bishops, who shall be subject to your jurisdiction, so that the bishop of London shall, for the future, be always consecrated by his own synod, and that he receive the honour of the pall from this holy and apostolical see, which I, by the grace of God, now serve. But we will have you send to the city of York such a bishop as you shall think fit to ordain; yet so, that if that city, with the places adjoining, shall receive the word of God, that bishop shall also ordain twelve bishops, and enjoy the honour of a metropolitan; for we design, if we live, by the help of God, to bestow on him also the pall; and yet we will have him to be subservient to your authority; but after your decease, he shall so preside over the bishops he shall ordain, as to be in no way subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop of London. But for the future let this distinction be between the bishops of the cities of London and York, that he may have the precedence who shall be first ordained. But let them unanimously dispose, by common advice and uniform conduct, whatsoever is to be done for the zeal of Christ; let them judge rightly, and perform what they judge convenient in a uniform manner.

“But to you, my brother, shall, by the authority of our God, and Lord Jesus Christ, be subject not only those bishops you shall ordain, and those that shall be ordained by the bishop of York, but also all the priests in Britain; to the end that from the mouth and life of your holiness they may learn the rule of believing rightly, and living well, and

fulfilling their office in faith and good manners, they may, when it shall please the Lord, attain the heavenly kingdom. God preserve you in safety, most reverend brother. Dated the 22nd of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our most pious lord and emperor, Mauritius Tiberius, the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord. The fourth indiction.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXX.—

A COPY OF THE LETTER WHICH POPE GREGORY SENT  
TO THE ABBOT MELLITUS, THEN GOING INTO  
BRITAIN.

The aforesaid messengers being departed, the holy father, Gregory, sent after them letters worthy to be preserved in memory, wherein he plainly shows what care he took of the salvation of our nation. The letter was as follows:—

Gregory's letter to Mellitus.

601.

“To his most beloved son, the Abbot Mellitus; Gregory, the servant of the servants of God. We have been much concerned, since the departure of our congregation that is with you, because we have received no account of the success of your journey. When, therefore, Almighty God shall bring you to the most reverend Bishop Augustine, our brother, tell him what I have upon mature deliberation on the affair of the English, determined upon, viz. that the temples of the idols in that nation ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let holy water be made and sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and relics placed. For if those temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God; that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they have been accustomed. And because they have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them on this account, as that on the day of the dedication, or the nativities of the holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited, they may build themselves huts of the boughs of trees, about those churches which have been turned to that use from temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer beasts to the Devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating, and return thanks to the Giver of all things for their sustenance; to the end that, whilst some gratifications are outwardly permitted them, they may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of the grace of God. For there is no doubt that it is impossible to efface every thing at once from their obdurate minds; because he who endeavours to ascend to the highest place, rises by degrees or steps, and not by leaps. Thus the Lord made himself known to the people of Israel in Egypt; and yet he allowed them the use of the sacrifices which they were wont to offer to the Devil, in his own worship; so as to command them in his sacrifice to kill beasts, to the end that, changing their hearts, they might lay aside one part of the sacrifice, whilst they retained another; that whilst they offered the same beasts which they were wont to offer, they should offer them to God, and not to idols; and thus they would no longer be the same sacrifices. This it behoves your affection to communicate to our aforesaid brother, that he being there present, may consider how he is to order all things. God preserve you in safety, most beloved son.

“Given the 17th of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our lord, the most pious emperor, Mauritius Tiberius, the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord. The fourth indiction.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXXI.—

POPE GREGORY, BY LETTER, EXHORTS AUGUSTINE  
NOT TO GLORY IN HIS MIRACLES.

At which time he also sent Augustine a letter concerning the miracles that he had heard had been wrought by him; wherein he admonishes him not to incur the danger of being puffed up by the number of them. The letter was in these words:—

Another letter of  
Gregory's to  
Augustine.

601.

“I know, most loving brother, that Almighty God, by means of your affection, shows great miracles in the nation which he has chosen. Wherefore it is necessary, that you rejoice with fear, and tremble whilst you rejoice, on account of the same heavenly gift; viz. that you may rejoice because the souls of the English are by outward miracles drawn to inward grace; but that you fear, lest, amidst the wonders that are wrought, the weak mind may be puffed up in its own presumption, and as it is externally raised to honour, it may thence inwardly fall by vainglory. For we must call to mind, that when the disciples returned with joy after preaching, and said to their heavenly Master, ‘Lord, in thy name, even the devils are subject to us;’ they were presently told, ‘Do not rejoice on this account, but rather rejoice for that your names are written in heaven.’ For they placed their thoughts on private and temporal joys, when they rejoiced in miracles; but they are recalled from the private to the public, and from the temporal to the eternal joy, when it is said to them, ‘Rejoice for this, because your names are written in heaven.’ For all the elect do not work miracles, and yet the names of all are written in heaven. For those who are disciples of the truth ought not to rejoice, save for that good thing which all men enjoy as well as they, and of which their enjoyment shall be without end.

“It remains, therefore, most dear brother, that amidst those things, which, through the working of our Lord, you outwardly perform, you always inwardly strictly judge yourself, and clearly understand both what you are yourself, and how much grace is in that same nation, for the conversion of which you have also received the gift of working miracles. And if you remember that you have at any time offended our Creator, either by word or deed, that you always call it to mind, to the end that the remembrance of your guilt may crush the vanity which rises in your heart. And whatsoever you shall receive, or have received, in relation to working miracles, that you consider the same, not as conferred on you, but on those for whose salvation it has been given you.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXXII.—

### POPE GREGORY SENDS LETTERS AND PRESENTS TO KING ETHELBERT.

The same holy Pope Gregory, at the same time, sent a letter to King Ethelbert, with many presents of several sorts; being desirous to glorify the king with temporal honours, at the same time that he rejoiced that through his labour and zeal he had attained the knowledge of the heavenly glory. The copy of the said letter is as follows:—

Gregory's letter to Ethelbert.

601.

“To the most glorious Lord, and his most excellent son, Ethelbert, king of the English, Bishop Gregory. To this end, Almighty God advances all good men to the government of nations, that he may by their means bestow the gifts of his mercy on those over whom they are placed. This we know to have been done in the English nation, over whom your glory was therefore placed, that by means of the goods which are granted to you, heavenly benefits might also be conferred on the nation that is subject to you. Therefore, my illustrious son, do you carefully preserve the grace which you have received from the Divine goodness, and hasten to promote the Christian faith, which you have embraced, among the people under your subjection; multiply the zeal of your uprightness in their conversion; suppress the worship of idols; overthrow the structures of the temples; edify the manners of your subjects by much cleanness of life, exhorting, terrifying, soothing, correcting, and giving examples of good works, that you may find him your rewarder in heaven, whose name and knowledge you shall spread abroad upon earth. For he also will render the fame of your honour more glorious to posterity, whose honour you seek and maintain among the nations.

For even so Constantine, our most pious emperor, recovering the Roman commonwealth from the perverse worship of idols, subjected the same with himself to our Almighty God and Lord Jesus Christ, and was himself, with the people under his subjection, entirely converted to him. Whence it followed, that his praises transcended the fame of former princes; and he as much excelled his predecessors in renown as he did in good works. Now, therefore, let your glory hasten to infuse into the kings and people that are subject to you, the knowledge of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that you may both surpass the ancient kings of your nation in praise and merit, and become by so much the more secure against your own sins before the dreadful judgment of Almighty God, as you shall wipe away the sins of others in your subjects.

Willingly hear, devoutly perform, and studiously retain in your memory, whatsoever you shall be advised by our most reverend brother, Bishop Augustine, who is instructed in the monastical rule, full of the knowledge of the holy Scripture, and, by the help of God, endued with good works; for if you give ear to him in what he speaks for Almighty God, the same Almighty God will the sooner hear him praying for you.



But if (which God avert!) you slight his words, how shall Almighty God hear him in your behalf, when you neglect to hear him for God? Unite yourself, therefore, to him with all your mind in the fervour of faith, and further his endeavours, through the assistance of that virtue which the Divinity affords you, that He may make you partaker of his kingdom, whose faith you cause to be received and maintained in your own.

“Besides, we would have your glory know, we find in the holy Scripture from the words of the Almighty Lord, that the end of this present world, and the kingdom of the saints, is about to come, which will never terminate. But as the same end of the world approaches, many things are at hand which were not before, viz. changes of air, and terrors from heaven, and tempests out of the order of the seasons, wars, famines, plagues, earthquakes in several places; which things will not, nevertheless, happen in our days, but will all follow after our days. If you, therefore, find any of these things to happen in your country, let not your mind be in any way disturbed; for these signs of the end of the world are sent before, for this reason, that we may be solicitous for our souls, suspicious of the hour of death, and may be found prepared with good works to meet our Judge. Thus much, my illustrious son, I have said in few words, to the end that when the Christian faith shall increase in your kingdom, our discourse to you may also be more copious, and we may be pleased to say the more, in proportion as joy for the conversion of your nation is multiplied in our mind.

“I have sent you some small presents, which will not seem small, when received by you with the blessing of the holy apostle, Peter. May Almighty God, therefore, perfect in you his grace which He has begun, and prolong your life here through a course of many years, and after a time receive you into the congregation of the heavenly country. May heavenly grace preserve your excellency in safety.

“Given the 22nd day of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of the most pious emperor, Mauritius Tiberius, in the eighteenth year after his consulship. The fourth indiction.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXXIII.—

AUGUSTINE REPAIRS THE CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR,  
AND BUILDS THE MONASTERY OF ST. PETER THE  
APOSTLE; PETER THE FIRST ABBOT OF THE SAME.

Augustine having his episcopal see granted him in the royal city, as has been said, and being supported by the king, recovered therein a church, which he was informed had been built by the ancient Roman Christians, and consecrated it in the name of our holy Saviour, God and Lord, Jesus Christ, and there established a residence for himself and his successors. He also built a monastery not far from the city to the eastward, in which, by his advice, Ethelbert erected from the foundation the church of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and enriched it with several donations; wherein the bodies of the same Augustine, and of all the bishops of Canterbury, and of the kings of Kent, might be buried. However, Augustine himself did not consecrate that church, but Laurentius, his successor.

Augustine founds  
Canterbury Cathedral.

602.

The first abbot of that monastery was the priest Peter, who, being sent ambassador into France, was drowned in a bay of the sea, which is called Amflea, and privately buried by the inhabitants of the place; but Almighty God, to show how deserving a man he was, caused a light to be seen over his grave every night; till the neighbours, who saw it, perceiving that he had been a holy man that was buried there, inquiring who, and from whence he was, carried away the body, and interred it in the church, in the city of Boulogne, with the honour due to so great a person.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXXIV.—

ETHELFRID, KING OF THE NORTHUMBRIANS, HAVING  
VANQUISHED THE NATIONS OF THE SCOTS, EXPELS  
THEM FROM THE TERRITORIES OF THE ENGLISH.

At this time, Ethelfrid, a most worthy king, and ambitious of glory, governed the kingdom of the Northumbrians, and ravaged the Britons more than all the great men of the English, insomuch that he might be compared to Saul, once king of the Israelites, excepting only this, that he was ignorant of the true religion. For he conquered more territories from the Britons, either making them tributary, or driving the inhabitants clean out, and planting English in their places, than any other king or tribune. To him might justly be applied the saying of the patriarch blessing his son in the person of Saul, “Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.” Hereupon, Ædan, king of the Scots that inhabit Britain, being concerned at his success, came against him with an immense and mighty army, but was beaten by an inferior force, and put to flight; for almost all his army was slain at a famous place, called Degsastan, that is, Degsa-stone. In which battle also Theodbald, brother to Ethelfrid, was killed, with almost all the forces he commanded. This war Ethelfrid put an end to in the year 603 after the incarnation of our Lord, the eleventh of his own reign, which lasted twenty-four years, and the first year of the reign of Phocas, who then governed the Roman empire. From that time, no king of the Scots durst come into Britain to make war on the English to this day.

Battle of Degsastan.

603.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA GENTIS ANGLORUM.

### LIBER SECUNDUS.

#### CAP. I.—

#### DE OBITU BEATI PAPÆ GREGORII.

HIS temporibus, id est, anno Dominicæ Incarnationis sexcentesimo quinto, beatus Papa Gregorius, postquam sedem Romanæ et apostolicæ ecclesiæ tredecim annos, menses sex, et dies decem, gloriosissime rexit, defunctus est, atque ad æternam regni cœlestis sedem translatus. De quo nos convenit, (quia nostram, id est, Anglorum gentem, de potestate Satanæ ad fidem Christi sua industria convertit,) latiore in nostra Historia Ecclesiastica facere sermonem, quem recte nostrum appellare possumus et debemus apostolum; quia, cum primum in toto orbe pontificatum gereret, et conversis jamdudum ad fidem veritatis esset prælatus ecclesiis, nostram gentem, eatenus idolis mancipatam, Christi fecit ecclesiam. Ita ut apostolicum illum de eo liceat nobis proferre sermonem, quia etsi aliis non est apostolus, sed tamen nobis est, nam signaculum apostolatus ejus nos sumus in Domino.

Erat autem natione Romanus, ex patre Gordiano, genus a proavis non solum nobile sed et religiosum ducens. Denique, Felix ejusdem apostolicæ sedis quondam episcopus, vir magnæ gloriæ in Christo et ecclesia, ejus fuit atavus; sed et ipse nobilitatem religionis non minore quam parentes et cognati virtute devotionis exercuit. Nobilitatem vero illam, quam ad seculum videbatur habere, totam ad nanciscendam supernæ gloriæ dignitatis, divina gratia largiente, convertit. Nam mutato repente habitu seculari, monasterium petiit, in quo tanta perfectionis gratia cœpit conversari ut, sicut ipse postea flendo attestari solebat animo illius labentia cuncta subteressent, ut rebus omnibus quæ voluntur emineret, ut nulla nisi cœlestia cogitare soleret, ut etiam retentus corpore ipsa jam carnis claustra contemplatione transiret, ut mortem quoque, quæ pene cunctis pœna est, videlicet, ut ingressum vitæ et laboris sui præmium, amaret. Hoc autem ipse de se, non profectum jactando virtutum, sed deflendo potius defectum, quem, (ut referre consueverat,) sibi per curam pastorem incurrisse videbatur. Denique, tempore quodam secreto, cum diacono suo Petro colloquens, enumeratis animi sui virtutibus priscis, mox dolendo subjunxit; “At nunc ex occasione curæ pastoralis secularium hominum negotia patitur, et post tam pulchram quietis suæ speciem terreni actus pulvere fœdatur. Cumque se pro condensatione multorum ad exteriora sparserit, etiam cum interiora appetit, ad hæc procul dubio minor redit. Perpendo itaque quid tolero, perpendo quid amisi; dumque intueor illud, quod perdidit, fit hoc gravius quod porto.”

Hæc quidem sanctus vir ex magnæ humilitatis intentione dicebat; sed nos credere decet nihil eum monasticæ perfectionis perdidisse occasione curæ pastoralis, imo

potiorem tunc sumsisse profectum de labore conversionis multorum, quam de propriae quondam quiete conversationis habuerat; maxime quia et pontificali functus officio domum suam monasterium facere curavit; et dum primo de monasterio abstractus, ad ministerium altaris ordinatus, atque Constantinopolim apocrisiarius ab apostolica sede directus est, non tamen in terreno conversatus palatio propositum vitae cœlestis intermisit. Nam quosdam fratrum ex monasterio suo, qui eum gratia germanæ caritatis ad regiam urbem secuti sunt, in tutamentum cœpit observantiæ regularis habere; videlicet, ut eorum semper exemplo, sicut ipse scribit, ad orationis placidum litus, quasi ancoræ fune restringeretur, cum incessabili causarum secularium impulsu fluctuaret, concussamque seculi actibus mentem inter eos quotidie per studiosæ lectionis roboraret alloquium. Horum ergo consortio non solum a terrenis est munitus incursibus, verum etiam ad cœlestis vitæ exercitia magis magisque succensus.

Nam hortati sunt eum, ut librum beati Job, magnis involutum obscuritatibus, mystica interpretatione discuteret; neque negare potuit opus, quod sibi fraternus amor multis utile futurum imponebat; sed eundem librum, quomodo juxta literam intelligendus, qualiter ad Christi et ecclesiæ sacramenta referendus, quo sensu unicuique fidelium sit aptandus, per triginta et quinque libros expositionis miranda ratione perdocuit; quod, videlicet, opus in regia quidem urbe apocrisiarius inchoavit, Romæ autem jam pontifex factus explevit. Qui cum esset adhuc regia in urbe positus, nascentem ibi novam hæresim de statu nostræ resurrectionis, cum ipso, ex quo orta est, initio, juvante se gratia catholicæ veritatis, attrivit. Siquidem Eutychius, ejusdem urbis episcopus, dogmatizabat corpus nostrum in illa resurrectionis gloria impalpabile, ventis aereque subtilius, esse futurum; quod ille audiens, et ratione veritatis et exemplo Dominicæ resurrectionis probavit hoc dogma orthodoxæ fidei omnimodis esse contrarium. Catholica etenim fides habet, quod corpus nostrum illa immortalitatis gloria sublimatum subtile quidem sit per effectum spiritualis potentiæ, sed palpabile per veritatem naturæ; juxta exemplum Domini corporis, de quo a mortuis suscitato dicit Ipse discipulis, [Luc. xxiv. 39,] *Palpate et videte, quia spiritus carnem et ossa non habet, sicut me videtis habere*. In cujus assertione fidei venerabilis pater Gregorius in tantum contra nascentem hæresim novam laborare contendit, tanta hanc instantia, juvante etiam piissimo imperatore Tiberio Constantino, comminuit, ut nullus exinde sit inventus, qui ejus resuscitator existeret.

Alium quoque librum composuit egregium, qui vocatur “Pastoralis,” in quo manifesta luce patefecit quales ad ecclesiæ regimen assumi, qualiter ipsi rectores vivere, qua discretione singulas quasque audientium instruere personas, et quanta consideratione propriam quotidie debeant fragilitatem pensare. Sed et Homilias Evangelii numero quadraginta composuit, quas in duobus codicibus æqua sorte distinxit. Libros etiam Dialogorum quatuor fecit, in quibus, rogatu Petri diaconi sui, virtutes sanctorum, quos in Italia clariores nosse vel audire poterat, ad exemplum vivendi posteris collegit; ut, sicut in libris Expositionum suarum, quibus sit virtutibus insudandum, edocuit, ita etiam, descriptis sanctorum miraculis, quæ virtutum earundem sit claritas ostenderet. Primam quoque et ultimam Ezechielis prophetæ partem, quæ videbantur obscuriores, per homilias viginti et duas, quantum lucis intus habeant demonstravit. Excepto libello Responsum, quem ad interrogationes sancti Augustini primi Anglorum gentis episcopi scripsit, ut supra docuimus, totum ipsum libellum his inserentes historiis; libello quoque synodico, quem cum episcopis Italiæ de necessariis ecclesiæ

causis utilimum composuit, et familiaribus ad quosdam literis. Quod eo magis mirum est tot eum ac tanta condere volumina potuisse, quod omni pene juventutis suæ tempore, ut verbis ipsius loquar, crebris viscerum doloribus cruciabatur, horis momentisque omnibus, fracta stomachi virtute, lassescibat, lentis quidem sed tamen continuis febribus anhelabat. Verum inter hæc, dum sollicitus pensaret quia, Scriptura teste, [Hebr. xii. 6,] *Omnis filius, qui recipitur, flagellatur*, quo malis præsentibus durius deprimebatur, eo de æterna certius præsumptione respirabat.

Hæc quidem de immortalis ejus sint dicta ingenio, quod nec tanto corporis potuit dolore restringi; nam alii quidem pontifices construendis ornandisque auro vel argento ecclesiis operam dabant, hic autem totus erga animarum lucra vacabat. Quidquid pecuniæ habuerat, sedulus hoc dispergere ac dare pauperibus curabat, ut justitia ejus maneret in seculum seculi, et cornu ejus exaltaretur in gloria; ita ut illud beati Job veraciter dicere posset, [Job, xxix. 11,] *Auris audiens beatificabat me, et oculus videns testimonium reddebat mihi, eo quod liberassem pauperem vociferantem, et pupillum, cui non esset adjutor. Benedictio perituri super me veniebat, et cor viduæ consolatus sum. Justitia indutus sum, et vestivi me, sicut vestimento et diademate, judicio meo. Oculus fui cæco, et pes claudō. Pater eram pauperum, et causam, quam nesciebam, diligentissime investigabam. Conterebam malas iniqui, et de dentibus illius auferebam prædam.* Et paulo post, [Job, xxxi. 16,] *Si negavi, inquit, quod volebant pauperibus, et oculos viduæ exspectare feci. Si comedi buccellam meam solus, et non comedit pupillus ex ea. Quia ab infantia mea crevit mecum miseratio, et de utero matris meæ egressa est mecum.*

Ad cujus pietatis et justitiæ opus pertinet etiam hoc, quod nostram gentem per prædicatores, quos huc direxit, de dentibus antiqui hostis eripiens æternæ libertatis fecit esse participem; cujus fidei et saluti congaudens, quamque digna laude commendans, ipse dixit in expositione beati Job, “Ecce lingua Britannia, quæ nil aliud noverat quam barbarum frendere, jam dudum in divinis laudibus Hebræum cœpit Alleluia sonare. Ecce quondam tumidus, jam substratus sanctorum pedibus servit oceanus, ejusque barbaros motus, quos terreni principes edomare ferro nequiverant, hos pro divina formidine sacerdotum ora simplicibus verbis ligant, et qui catervas pugnantium infidelis nequaquam metueret, jam nunc fidelis humilium linguas timet. Quia enim, perceptis cœlestibus verbis, clarescentibus quoque miraculis, virtus ei divinæ cognitionis infunditur, ejusdem divinitatis terrore refrænatur, ut prave agere metuat, ac totis desideriis ad æternitatis gratiam venire concupiscat.” Quibus verbis beatus Gregorius hoc quoque declarat, quia Sanctus Augustinus et socii ejus non sola prædicatione verborum, sed etiam cœlestium ostensione signorum, gentem Anglorum ad agnitionem veritatis perducebant. Fecit inter alia beatus Papa Gregorius, ut in ecclesiis sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, super corpora eorum missæ celebrarentur. Sed et in ipsa missarum celebratione tria verba maximæ perfectionis plena superadjecit, “Diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab æterna damnatione nos eripi, et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari.”

Rexit autem ecclesiam temporibus imperatorum Mauricii et Phocatis; secundo autem ejusdem Phocatis anno transiens ex hac vita migravit ad veram, quæ in cœlis est, vitam. Sepultus vero est corpore in ecclesia beati Petri apostoli, ante secretarium, die

quarto Iduum Martiarum, quandoque in ipso cum ceteris sanctæ ecclesiæ pastoribus resurrecturus in gloria, scriptumque est in tumba ipsius epitaphium hujusmodi.

Suscipe, terra, tuo corpus de corpore sumtum,  
Reddere quod valeas, vivificante Deo.  
Spiritus astra petit, lethi nil jura nocebunt,  
Cui vitæ alterius mors magis ipsa via est.  
Pontificis summi hoc clauduntur membra sepulcro,  
Qui innumeris semper vivit ubique bonis.  
Esuriem dapibus superavit, frigora veste,  
Atque animas monitis textit ab hoste sacris.  
Implebatque actu quicquid sermone docebat,  
Esset ut exemplum mystica verba loquens.  
Ad Christum Anglos convertit, pietate magistra,  
Acquirens fidei agmina gente nova.  
Hic labor, hoc studium, hæc tibi cura, hoc, pastor, agebas,  
Ut Domino offerres plurima lucra gregis.  
Hisque Dei consul factus lætare triumphis;  
Nam mercedem operum jam sine fine tenes.

Nec silentio prætereunda opinio, quæ de beato Gregorio traditione majorum ad nos usque perlata est; qua, videlicet, ex causa admonitus tam sedulam erga salutem nostræ gentis curam gesserit. Dicunt, quia die quadam cum, advenientibus nuper mercatoribus, multa venalia in forum fuissent collata, multique ad emendum confluxissent, et ipsum Gregorium inter alios advenisse, ac vidisse inter alia pueros venales positos candidi corporis ac venusti vultus, capillorum quoque forma egregia; quos cum aspiceret interrogavit, ut aiunt, de qua regione vel terra essent allati, dictumque est quod de Britannia insula, cujus incolæ talis essent aspectus. Rursus interrogavit, utrum iidem insulani, Christiani, an paganis adhuc erroribus essent implicati, dictumque est quod essent pagani. At ille, intimo ex corde longa trahens suspiria, “Heu, proh dolor!” inquit, “quod tam lucidi vultus homines tenebrarum auctor possidet, tantaque gratia frontis speciei mentem ab interna gratia vacuam gestat!” Rursus ergo interrogavit, quod esset vocabulum gentis illius; responsum est, quod Angli vocarentur. At ille, “Bene,” inquit, “nam et angelicam habent faciem, et tales Angelorum in cœlis decet esse coheredes. Quod,” ait, “habet nomen ipsa provincia, de qua isti sunt allati?” Responsum est, quod Deiri vocarentur iidem provinciales. At ille, “Bene,” inquit, “Deiri, de ira eruti, et ad misericordiam Christi vocati. Rex provinciæ illius quomodo appellatur?” Responsum est, quod Ælla diceretur. At ille alludens ad nomen ait, “Alleluia, laudem Dei Creatoris illis in partibus oportet cantari.”

Accedensque ad pontificem Romanæ et apostolicæ sedis, nondum enim erat ipse pontifex factus, rogavit, ut genti Anglorum in Britanniam aliquos verbi ministros, per quos ad Christum converteretur, mitteret; seipsum paratum esse in hoc opus, Domino cooperante, perficiendum, si tamen apostolico papæ hoc ut fieret placeret. Quod dum perficere non posset, quia, etsi pontifex concedere illi quod petierat voluit, non tamen cives Romani, ut tam longe ab Urbe recederet, potuere permittere; mox ut ipse pontificatus officio functus est, perfecit opus diu desideratum, alios quidem

prædicatores mittens, sed ipse prædicationem ut fructificaret suis exhortationibus ac precibus adjuvans. Hæc juxta opinionem, quam ab antiquis accepimus, Historiæ nostræ Ecclesiasticæ inserere opportunum duximus.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. II.—

### UT AUGUSTINUS BRITONUM EPISCOPOS PRO PACE CATHOLICA, ETIAM MIRACULO CÆLESTI CORAM EIS FACTO, MONUERIT; QUÆVE ILLOS SPERNENTES ULTIO SECUTA SIT.

INTEREA Augustinus, adjutorio usus Ethelberti regis, convocavit ad suum colloquium episcopos sive doctores proximæ Britonum provinciæ, in loco, qui usque hodie lingua Anglorum Augustines Ac, id est, Robur Augustini, in confinio Wicciorum et Occidentalium Saxonum, appellatur; cœpitque eis fraterna admonitione suadere ut, pace Catholica secum habita, communem evangelizandi gentibus pro Domino laborem susciperent. Non enim Paschæ dominicum diem suo tempore, sed a decima quarta usque ad vicesimam lunam observabant, quæ computatio octoginta quatuor annorum circulo continetur; sed et alia plurima unitati ecclesiasticæ contraria faciebant. Qui cum, longa disputatione habita, neque precibus, neque hortamentis, neque increpationibus Augustini ac sociorum ejus assensum præbere voluissent, sed suas potius traditiones universis, quæ per orbem sibi in Christo concordant, ecclesiis præferrent, sanctus pater Augustinus hunc laboriosi atque longi certaminis finem fecit, ut diceret; “Obsecremus Deum, qui habitare facit unanimes in domo Patris sui, ut ipse nobis insinuare cœlestibus signis dignetur, quæ sequenda traditio, quibus sit viis ad ingressum regni illius properandum. Adducatur aliquis æger, et per cujus preces fuerit curatus, hujus fides et operatio Deo devota atque omnibus sequenda credatur.” Quod cum adversarii, inviti licet, concederent, allatus est quidam de genere Anglorum, oculorum luce privatus; qui cum oblatus Britonum sacerdotibus nil curationis vel sanationis horum ministerio perciperet; tandem Augustinus justa necessitate compulsus flectit genua sua ad Patrem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, deprecans ut visum cæco, quem amiserat, restitueret, et per illuminationem unius hominis corporalem, in plurimorum cordibus fidelium spiritualis gratiæ lucem accenderet. Nec mora, illuminatur cæcus, ac verus summæ lucis præco ab omnibus prædicatur Augustinus. Tum Britones confitentur quidem intellexisse se veram esse viam justitiæ, quam prædicaret Augustinus; sed non se posse absque suorum consensu ac licentia priscis abdicare moribus. Unde postulabant ut secundo synodus pluribus advenientibus fieret.

Quod cum esset statutum, venerunt, ut perhibent, septem Britonum episcopi et plures viri doctissimi, maxime de nobilissimo eorum monasterio, quod vocatur lingua Anglorum Bancornaburg, cui tempore illo Dinooth abbas præfuisse narratur, qui ad præfatam ituri concilium venerunt primo ad quendam virum sanctum ac prudentem, qui apud eos anachoreticam ducere vitam solebat, consulentes an ad predicationem Augustini suas deserere traditiones deberent. Qui respondebat, “Si homo Dei est, sequimini illum.” Dixerunt, “Et unde hoc possumus probare?” At ille, “Dominus,” inquit, “ait, [Matt. xi. 29,] *Tollite jugum meum super vos, et discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde*. Si ergo Augustinus ille mitis est et humilis corde, credibile est quia jugum Christi et ipse portet et vobis portandum offerat; sin autem immitis ac

superbus est, constat quia non est de Deo, neque nobis ejus sermo curandus.” Qui rursus aiebant, “Et unde vel hoc dignoscere valemus?”—“Procurate,” inquit, “ut ipse prior cum suis ad locum synodi adveniat, et si vobis appropinquantibus assurrexerit, scientes quia famulus Christi est, obtemperanter illum audite; sin autem vos spreverit, nec coram vobis assurgere voluerit, cum sitis numero plures, et ipse spernatur a vobis.”

Fecerunt ut dixerat, factumque est ut, venientibus illis, sederet Augustinus in sella; quod illi videntes mox in iram conversi sunt, eumque notantes superbiæ cunctis, quæ dicebat, contradicere laborabant. Dicebat autem eis, “Quia in multis quidem nostræ consuetudini, imo universalis ecclesiæ, contraria geritis; et tamen si in tribus his mihi obtemperare vultis, ut Pascha suo tempore celebretis; ut ministerium baptizandi, quo Deo renascimur, juxta morem sanctæ Romanæ et apostolicæ ecclesiæ compleatis; ut genti Anglorum una nobiscum verbum Domini prædicetis; cetera quæ agitis, quamvis moribus nostris contraria, æquanimiter cuncta tolerabimus.” At illi nil horum se facturos, neque illum pro archiepiscopo habituros esse respondebant; conferentes ad invicem, “Quia si modo nobis assurgere noluit, quanto magis, si ei subdi cœperimus, jam nos pro nihilo contemnet!” Quibus vir Domini Augustinus fertur minitans prædixisse, quia si pacem cum fratribus accipere nollent, bellum ab hostibus forent accepturi; et si nationi Anglorum nolissent viam vitæ prædicare, per horum manus ultionem essent mortis passuri. Quod ita per omnia, ut prædixerat, divino agente iudicio, patratum est.

Siquidem post hæc ipse, de quo diximus, rex Anglorum fortissimus Ethelfridus, collecto grandi exercitu, ad Civitatem Legionum, quæ a gente Anglorum Legacestir, a Britonibus autem rectius Carlegion appellatur, maximam gentis perfidæ stragem dedit. Cumque bellum acturus videret sacerdotes eorum, qui ad exorandum Deum pro milite bellum agente convenerant, seorsum in tutiore loco consistere, sciscitabatur qui essent hi, quidve acturi illo convenissent. Erant autem plurimi eorum de monasterio Bancor, in quo tantus fertur fuisse numerus monachorum, ut cum in septem portiones esset cum præpositis sibi rectoribus monasterium divisum, nulla harum portio minus quam trecentos homines haberet, qui omnes de labore manuum suarum vivere solebant. Horum ergo plurimi ad memoratam aciem, peracto jejunio triduo, cum aliis orandi causa convenerant, habentes defensorem nomine Brocmalium, qui eos intentos precibus a barbarorum gladiis protegeret. Quorum causam adventus cum intellexisset Rex Ethelfridus, ait, “Ergo si adversum nos ad Deum suum clamant, profecto et ipsi, quamvis arma non ferant, contra nos pugnant, qui adversis nos imprecationibus persequuntur.” Itaque in hos primum arma verti jubet, et sic ceteras nefandæ militiæ copias, non sine magno exercitus sui damno, delevit; extinctos in ea pugna ferunt, de his, qui ad orandum venerant, viros circiter mille ducentos, et solum quinquaginta fuga esse lapsos; Brocmalius ad primum hostium adventum cum suis terga vertens, eos, quos defendere debuerat, inermes ac nudos ferientibus gladiis reliquit. Sicque completum est præsagium sancti pontificis Augustini, quamvis ipso jam multo ante tempore ad cœlestia regna sublato, ut etiam temporalis interitus ultionem sentirent perfidi, quod oblata sibi perpetuæ salutis consilia spreverant.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

### CAP. III.—

## UT IDEM MELLITUM AC JUSTUM EPISCOPOS FECERIT; ET DE OBITU EJUS.

Anno Dominicæ incarnationis sexcentesimo quarto, Augustinus Britanniarum archiepiscopus ordinavit duos episcopos, Mellitum videlicet et Justum. Mellitum quidem ad prædicandum provinciæ Orientalium Saxonum, qui Tamense fluvio dirimuntur a Cantia et ipsi orientali mari contigui, quorum metropolis Londonia civitas est, super ripam præfati fluminis posita, et ipsa multorum emporium populorum terra marique venientium; in qua, videlicet, gente tunc temporis Sabertus, nepos Ethelberti ex sorore Ricula, regnabat, quamvis sub potestate positus ejusdem Ethelberti, qui omnibus, ut supra dictum est, usque ad terminum Humbræ fluminis, Anglorum gentibus imperabat. Ubi vero et hæc provincia verbum veritatis, prædicante Mellito, accepit, fecit rex Ethelbertus in civitate Londonia ecclesiam Sancti Pauli Apostoli, in qua locum sedis episcopalis et ipse et successores ejus haberent. Justum vero in ipsa Cantia Augustinus episcopum ordinavit in civitate Doroverni, quam gens Anglorum a primario quondam illius, qui dicebatur Rhof, Rhofescestir cognominat. Distat autem a Doroverni millibus passuum ferme viginti quatuor ad occidentem, in qua Rex Ethelbertus ecclesiam beati Andreae apostoli fecit, qui etiam episcopis utriusque hujus ecclesiæ dona multa, sicut et Dorovernensis, obtulit; sed et territoria ac possessiones in usum eorum, qui erant cum episcopis, adjecit.

Defunctus est autem Deo dilectus pater Augustinus, et positum corpus ejus foras, juxta ecclesiam beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, cujus supra meminimus, quia ea necdum fuerat perfecta, nec dedicata. Mox vero ut dedicata est, intro illatum, et in porticu illius aquilonali decenter sepultum est; in qua etiam sequentium archiepiscoporum omnium sunt corpora tumulata, præter duorum tantummodo, id est, Theodori et Berthwaldi, quorum corpora in ipsa ecclesia posita sunt, eo quod prædicta porticus plura capere nequivit. Habet hæc in medio pene sui altare in honorem beati Papæ Gregorii dedicatum, in quo per omne Sabbatum, a presbytero loci illius agendæ eorum solenniter celebrantur. Scriptum vero est in tumba ejusdem Augustini epitaphium hujusmodi.

“Hic requiescit dominus Augustinus Dorovernensis archiepiscopus primus, qui olim huc a beato Gregorio Romanæ urbis pontifice directus, et a Deo operatione miraculorum suffultus, Ethelbertum regem ac gentem illius ab idolorum cultu ad Christi fidem perduxit, et completis in pace diebus officii sui, defunctus est septimo kalendas Junias, eodem rege regnante.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. IV.—

UT LAURENTIUS CUM COEPISCOPIS SUIS SCOTOS  
UNITATEM SANCTÆ ECCLESIAE, ET MAXIME IN  
PASCHA OBSERVANDO, SEQUI MONUERIT, ET UT  
MELLITUS ROMAM VENERIT.

Successit Augustino in episcopatum Laurentius, quem ipse idcirco adhuc vivens ordinaverat, ne, se defuncto, status ecclesiae tam rudis vel ad horam pastore destitutus vacillare inciperet; in quo et exemplum sequebatur primi pastoris ecclesiae, hoc est, beatissimi apostolorum principis Petri, qui, fundata Romae ecclesia Christi, Clementem sibi adiutorem evangelizandi simul et successorem consecrasset perhibetur. Laurentius archiepiscopi gradu potitus strenuissime fundamenta ecclesiae, quae nobiliter jacta vidit, augmentare atque ad profectum debiti culminis, et crebra voce sanctae exhortationis et continuis piaer operationis exemplis, provehere curavit. Denique, non solum novae, quae de Anglis erat collecta, ecclesiae curam gerebat, sed et veterum Britanniae incolarum, necnon et Scotorum, qui Hiberniam insulam Britanniae proximam incolunt, populis pastorem impendere sollicitudinem curabat. Siquidem ubi Scotorum in praefata ipsorum patria, quomodo et Britonum in ipsa Britannia, vitam ac professionem minus ecclesiasticam in multis esse cognovit, maxime quod Paschae solennitatem non suo tempore celebrarent, sed, ut supra docuimus, a decima quarta luna usque ad vicesimam Dominicæ resurrectionis diem observandum esse putarent, scripsit cum coepiscopis suis exhortatoriam ad eos epistolam; obsecrans eos et contestans unitatem pacis et catholicæ observationis cum ea, quae toto orbe diffusa est, ecclesia Christi, tenere; cujus videlicet epistolae principium hoc est:

“Dominis carissimis fratribus episcopis vel abbatibus per universam Scotiam, Laurentius, Mellitus, et Justus, episcopi, servi servorum Dei.

“Dum nos sedes apostolica, more suo, sicut in universo orbe terrarum, in his occiduis partibus ad praedicandum gentibus paganis dirigeret, atque in hanc insulam, quae Britannia nuncupatur, contigit introisse antequam cognosceremus; credentes quod juxta morem universalis ecclesiae ingrederentur, in magna reverentia sanctitatis tam Britones quam Scotos venerati sumus, sed cognoscentes Britones, Scotos meliores putavimus. Scotos vero per Daganum episcopum in hanc, quam superius memoravimus, insulam et Columbanum abbatem in Gallis venientem, nihil discrepare a Britonibus in eorum conversatione didicimus. Nam Daganus episcopus ad nos veniens, non solum cibum nobiscum, sed nec in eodem hospicio, quo vescebamur, sumere voluit.” Misit idem Laurentius cum coepiscopis suis, etiam Britonum sacerdotibus literas suo gradui condignas, quibus eos in unitate Catholica confirmare satagit; sed quantum haec agendo profecerit, adhuc praesentia tempora declarant.

His temporibus venit Mellitus, Londoniae episcopus, Romam, de necessariis ecclesiae Anglorum cum apostolico Papa Bonifacio tractaturus; et cum idem papa

reverendissimus cogeret synodum episcoporum Italiae, de vita monachorum et quiete ordinaturus, et ipse Mellitus inter eos assedit, anno octavo imperii Phocatis principis, indictione decima tertia, tertio die kalendarum Martiarum, ut quaecunque erant regulariter decreta sua quoque auctoritate subscribens confirmaret, ac Britanniam rediens secum Anglorum ecclesiis mandanda atque observanda deferret, una cum epistolis, quas idem pontifex Deo dilecto archiepiscopo Laurentio et clero universo, similiter et Ethelberto regi atque genti Anglorum direxit. Hic est Bonifacius, quartus a beato Gregorio Romanæ urbis episcopus, qui impetravit a Phocate principe donari ecclesie Christi templum Romæ, quod Pantheon vocabatur ab antiquis, quasi simulacrum esset omnium deorum; in quo ipse, eliminata omni spurcitia, fecit ecclesiam sanctæ Dei Genetricis atque omnium martyrum Christi; ut, exclusa multitudine dæmonum, multitudo ibi sanctorum memoriam haberet.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. V.—

UT, DEFUNCTIS ETHELBERTO ET SABERTO REGIBUS,  
SUCCESSORES EORUM IDOLOLATRIAM  
RESUSCITARINT, OB QUOD ET MELLITUS AC JUSTUS A  
BRITANNIA DISCESSERINT.

ANNO ab incarnatione Dominica sexcentesimo decimo sexto, qui est annus vicesimus primus ex quo Augustinus cum sociis ad prædicandum genti Anglorum missus est, Ethelbertus rex Cantuariorum post regnum temporale, quod quinquaginta et sex annis gloriosissime tenuerat, æterna cœlestis regni gaudia subiit; qui tertius quidem in regibus gentis Anglorum, cunctis Australibus eorum provinciis quæ Humbræ fluvio et contiguis ei terminis sequestrantur a borealibus imperavit, sed primus omnium cœli regna conscendit. Nam primus imperium hujusmodi Elli, rex Australium Saxonum; secundus Celin, rex Occidentalium Saxonum, qui lingua eorum Ceaulin vocabatur; tertius, ut dixi, Ethelbertus, rex Cantuariorum; quartus, Redwaldus, rex Orientalium Anglorum, qui etiam, vivente Ethelberto, eidem suæ genti ducatum præbebat, obtinuit; quintus Edwinus, rex Northanhumbrorum gentis, id est, ejus, quæ ad borealem Humbræ fluminis plagam inhabitat, majore potentia cunctis qui Britanniam incolunt, Anglorum pariter et Britonum populis præfuit, præter Cantuariis tantum, necnon et Mevanias Britonum insulas, quæ inter Hiberniam et Britanniam sitæ sunt, Anglorum subjecit imperio; sextus Oswaldus et ipse Northanhumbrorum rex Christianissimus, iisdem finibus regnum tenuit; septimus Oswius frater ejus, æqualibus pene terminis regnum nonnullo tempore coercens, Pictorum quoque atque Scotorum gentes, quæ septentrionales Britannia fines tenent, maxima ex parte perdomuit ac tributarias fecit. Sed hæc postmodum.

Defunctus vero est Rex Ethelbertus die vigesimo quarto mensis Februarii, post viginti et unum annos acceptæ fidei, atque in porticu Sancti Martini, intra ecclesiam beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli sepultus, ubi et Bertha regina condita est. Qui inter cetera bona, quæ genti suæ consulendo conferebat, etiam decreta illi judiciorum, juxta exempla Romanorum, cum consilio sapientium constituit; quæ conscripta Anglorum sermone hactenus habentur, et observantur ab ea. In quibus primitus posuit qualiter id emendare deberet, qui aliquid rerum vel ecclesiæ, vel episcopi, vel reliquorum ordinum, furto auferret; volens scilicet tuitionem eis, quos et quorum doctrinam susceperat, præstare.

Erat autem idem Ethelbertus filius Irminrici, cujus pater Octa, cujus pater Orric cognomento Oisc, (a quo reges Cantuariorum solent Oiscingas cognominare,) cujus pater Hengist, qui cum filio suo Oisc invitatus a Vortigerno Britanniam primus intravit, ut supra retulimus.

At vero post mortem Ethelberti, cum filius ejus Eadbaldus regni gubernacula suscepisset, magno tenellis ibi adhuc ecclesiæ crementis detrimento fuit. Siquidem

non solum fidem Christi recipere noluerat, sed et fornicatione pollutus est tali, qualem nec inter gentes auditam apostolus testatur, ita ut uxorem patris haberet. Quo utroque scelere occasionem dedit ad priorem vomitum revertendi iis, qui sub imperio sui parentis, vel favore vel timore regio, fidei et castimoniam jura susceperant. Nec supernae flagella distractionis perfido regi castigando et corrigendo defuere, nam crebra mentis vesania, et spiritus immundi invasione premebatur.

Auxit autem procellam hujusce perturbationis etiam mors Saberti regis Orientalium Saxonum, qui ubi regna perennia petens tres suos filios, qui pagani perduraverant, regni temporalis heredes reliquit, coeperunt illi mox idololatriam, quam vivente eo, aliquantulum intermisisse videbantur, palam servire, subjectisque populis idola colendi liberam dare licentiam. Cumque viderent pontificem, celebratis in ecclesia missarum solenniis, eucharistiam populo dare, dicebant, ut vulgo fertur, ad eum barbara inflati stultitia; “Quare non et nobis porrigis panem nitidum, quem et patri nostro Saba, (sic namque eum appellare consueverant,) dabas, et populo adhuc dare in ecclesia non desistis?” Quibus ille respondebat; “Si vultis abluere fonte illo salutari, quo pater vester ablutus est, potestis etiam panis sancti, cui ille participabat, esse participes; sin autem lavacrum vitae contemnitis, nullatenus valetis panem vitae percipere.” At illi, “Nolumus,” inquit, “fontem illum intrare, quia nec opus illo nos habere novimus, sed tamen pane illo refici volumus.” Cumque diligenter ac saepe ab illo essent admoniti, nequaquam fieri posse ut absque purgatione sacrosancta quis oblationi sacrosanctae communicaret, ad ultimum furore commoti, aiebant, “Si non vis assentire nobis in tam facili causa, quam petimus, non poteris jam in nostra provincia demorari;” et expulerunt eum, ac de suo regno cum suis abire jusserunt. Qui expulsus inde venit Cantiam tractaturus cum Laurentio et Justo coepiscopis, quid in his esset agendum; decretumque est communi consilio, quia satius esset, ut omnes patriam redeuntes libera ibi mente Domino deservirent, quam inter rebelles fidei barbaros sine fructu residerent. Discessere itaque primo Mellitus ac Justus, atque ad partes Galliae successere, ibi rerum finem exspectare disponentes. Sed non multo tempore, reges qui praekonem a se veritatis expulerant, daemoniis cultibus impune serviebant; nam egressi contra gentem Gewissarum in proelium, omnes pariter cum sua militia corruerunt, nec, licet auctoribus perditis, excitatum ad scelera vulgus potuit recorrigi atque ad simplicitatem fidei et caritatis, quae est in Christo, revocari.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. VI.—

UT CORREPTUS AB APOSTOLO PETRO LAURENTIUS  
EADBALDUM REGEM AD CHRISTUM CONVERTERIT,  
QUI MOX MELLITUM ET JUSTUM AD PRÆDICANDUM  
REVOCAVERIT.

CUM vero et Laurentius Mellitum Justumque secuturus ac Britanniam esset relicturus, jussit ipsa sibi nocte in ecclesia beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, de qua frequenter jam diximus, stratum parari; in quo, cum post multas preces ac lacrimas ad Dominum pro statu ecclesiæ fusas, ad quiescendum membra posuisset atque obdormiisset, apparuit ei beatissimus apostolorum princeps, et multo illum tempore secretæ noctis flagellis arctioribus afficiens, sciscitabatur apostolica districtione quare gregem, quem sibi ipse crediderat, relinqueret, vel cui pastorum oves Christi in medio luporum positas fugiens ipse dimitteret. “An mei,” inquit, “oblitus es exempli, qui pro parvulis Christi, quos mihi in indicium suæ dilectionis commendaverat, vincula, verbera, carceres, afflictiones, ipsam postremo mortem, mortem autem crucis, ab infidelibus et inimicis Christi ipse cum Christo coronandus pertuli?” His beati Petri flagellis simul et exhortationibus animatus, famulus Christi Laurentius mox, mane facto, venit ad regem, et, relecto vestimento, quantis esset verberibus laceratus ostendit. Qui multum miratus, et inquirens, quis tanto viro tales ausus esset plagas infligere; ut audivit quia suæ causa salutis episcopus ab apostolo Christi tanta esset tormenta plagasque perpessus, extimuit multum, atque anathematizato omni idololatriæ cultu, abdicato connubio non legitimo, suscepit fidem Christi, et baptizatus ecclesiæ rebus quantum valuit in omnibus consulere ac favere curavit.

Misit etiam in Galliam et revocavit Mellitum ac Justum, eosque ad suas ecclesias libere instituendas redire præcepit, qui post annum ex quo abierant reversi sunt; et Justus quidem ad civitatem Rhofi, cui præfuerat, rediit; Mellitum vero Londonienses episcopum recipere noluerunt, idololatriis magis pontificibus servire gaudentes. Non enim tanta erat ei, quanta patri ipsius regni potestas, ut etiam nolentibus ac contradicentibus paganis antistitem suæ posset ecclesiæ reddere. Verumtamen ipse cum sua gente, ex quo ad Dominum conversus est, divinis se studuit mancipare præceptis; denique et in monasterio beatissimi apostolorum principis ecclesiam sanctæ Dei Genitricis fecit, quam consecravit Archiepiscopus Mellitus.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. VII.—

### UT MELLITUS EPISCOPUS FLAMMAS ARDENTIS SUÆ CIVITATIS ORANDO RESTRINXERIT.

Hoc enim regnante rege, beatus Archiepiscopus Laurentius regnum cœleste conscendit, atque in ecclesia et monasterio sancti Apostoli Petri, juxta prædecessorem suum Augustinum, sepultus est, die quarto nonarum Februariarum; post quem Mellitus, qui erat Londoniæ episcopus, sedem Dorovernensis ecclesiæ tertius ab Augustino suscepit. Justus autem adhuc superstes Rhofensem regebat ecclesiam. Qui, cum magna ecclesiam Anglorum cura ac labore gubernarent, susceperunt scripta exhortatoria a pontifice Romanæ et apostolicæ sedis Bonifacio, qui post Deusdedit ecclesiæ præfuit, anno incarnationis Dominicæ sexcentesimo decimo nono. Erat autem Mellitus corporis quidem infirmitate, id est, podagra, gravatus, sed mentis gressibus sanus, alacriter terrena quæque transiliens atque ad cœlestia regna semper amanda, petenda, et quærenda, pervolans. Erat carnis origine nobilis, sed culmine mentis nobilior.

Denique, ut unum virtutis ejus, unde cetera intelligi possint, testimonium referam, tempore quodam civitas Dorovernensis per culpam incuriæ igne correpta, crebrescentibus cœpit flammis consumi; quibus, cum nullo aquarum injectu posset aliquis obsistere, jamque civitatis esset pars vastata non minima, atque ad episcopum furens se flamma dilataret, confidens episcopus in divinum ubi humanum deerat auxilium, jussit se obviam sævientibus et huc illucque volantibus ignium globis efferri. Erat autem eo loci, ubi flammarum impetus maxime incumbibat, martyrium beatorum quatuor Coronatorum. Ibi ergo perlatus obsequentium manibus episcopus cœpit orando periculum infirmus abigere, quod firma fortium manus multum laborando nequiverat. Nec mora, ventus, qui a meridie flans urbi incendia sparserat, contra meridiem reflexus, primo vim sui furoris a læsione locorum, quæ contra erant, abstraxit; ac mox funditus quiescendo, flammis pariter sopitis atque extinctis, compescuit. Et quia vir Dei igne Divinæ caritatis fortiter ardebat, qui tempestates potestatum aëriarum a sua suorumque læsione crebris orationibus vel exhortationibus repellere consueverat, merito ventis flammisque mundialibus prævalere, et ne sibi suisque nocerent, obtinere poterat.

Et hic ergo postquam annis quinque rexit ecclesiam, Eadbaldo regnante, migravit ad cœlos, sepultusque est cum patribus suis in sæpe dicto monasterio et ecclesia beatissimi apostolorum principis, anno ab incarnatione Domini sexcentesimo vicesimo quarto, die octavo kalendarum Maiarum.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. VIII.—

### UT BONIFACIUS PAPA JUSTO SUCCESSORI EJUS PALLIUM ET EPISTOLAM MISERIT.

Cui statim successit in pontificatum Justus, qui erat Rhofensis ecclesiæ episcopus. Illi autem ecclesiæ Romanum pro se consecravit episcopum, data sibi ordinandi episcopos auctoritate a Pontifice Bonifacio, quem successorem fuisse Deusdedit supra meminimus; cujus auctoritatis ista est forma.

“Dilectissimo fratri Justo, Bonifacius. Quam devote, quamque etiam vigilanter pro Christi Evangelio elaboraverit vestra fraternitas, non solum epistolæ a vobis directæ tenor, imo indulta desuper operi vestro perfectio, indicavit. Nec enim omnipotens Deus, aut sui nominis sacramentum, aut vestri fructum laboris deseruit, dum ipse prædicatoribus Evangelii fideliter repromisit, [Matth. xxviii. 20,] *Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem seculi*. Quod specialiter, injuncto vobis ministerio, ejus clementia demonstravit; aperiens corda gentium ad suscipiendum prædicationis vestræ singulare mysterium. Magno enim præmio fastigiorum vestrorum delectabilem cursum bonitatis suæ suffragiis illustravit, dum creditorum vobis talentorum fidelissimæ negotiationis officiis uberem fructum impendens, ei, quod signare possetis multiplicatis generationibus, præparavit. Hocque etiam illa vobis repensione collatum est, qua injuncto ministerio jugiter persistentes laudabili patientia redemptionem gentis illius exspectatis, et vestris ut proficerent meritis eorum est salvatio propinata, dicente Domino, [Matth. x. 22,] *Qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit*. Salvati ergo estis spe patientiæ et tolerantiae virtute, ut infidelium corda naturali ac superstitioso morbo purgata sui consequerentur misericordiam Salvatoris. Susceptis namque apicibus filii nostri Ethelwaldi regis, reperimus quanta sacri eloquii cruditione ejus animum ad veræ conversionis et indubitatæ fidei credulitatem fraternitas vestra perduxerit. Qua ex re de longanimitate clementiæ cœlestis certam assumentes fiduciam, non solum suppositarum ei gentium plenissimam salutem, imo quoque vicinarum, vestræ quoque prædicationis ministerio credimus subsequendum; quatenus, sicut scriptum est, consummati operis vobis merces a retributore omnium bonorum Domino tribuatur. Et vere per omnem terram exiisse sonum eorum, et in fines orbis terræ verba ipsorum, universalis gentium confessio, suscepto Christianæ sacramento fidei, protestetur.

“Pallium præterea per latorem præsentium fraternitati tuæ, benignitatis studiis invitati, direximus, quod videlicet tantum in sacrosanctis celebrandis mysteriis utendi licentiam imperavimus; concedentes etiam tibi ordinationes episcoporum, exigente opportunitate, Domini præveniente misericordia, celebrare: ita ut Christi Evangelium plurimorum annunciatione, in omnibus gentibus, quæ necdum conversæ sunt, dilatetur. Studeat ergo tua fraternitas hoc, quod Sedis Apostolicæ humanitate percepit, intemerata mentis sinceritate servare intendens; cujus rei similitudine tam præcipuum indumentum humeris tuis bajulandum suscepis. Talemque te, Domini implorata

clementia, exhibendum stude, ut indulti muneris præmia, non cum reatitudine, sed cum commodis animarum, ante tribunal summi et venturi Judicis, repræsentes.

“Deus te incolumem custodiat, dilectissime frater.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. IX.—

DE IMPERIO REGIS EDWINI, ET UT VENIENS AD  
EVANGELIZANDUM EI PAULINUS PRIMO FILIAM EJUS  
CUM ALIIS, FIDEI CHRISTIANÆ SACRAMENTIS  
IMBUERIT.

Quo tempore etiam gens Northanhumborum, hoc est, ea natio Anglorum, quæ ad aquilonalem Humberæ fluminis plagam habitabat, cum rege suo Edwino, verbum fidei, prædicante Paulino, cujus supra meminimus, suscepit. Cui videlicet regi, in auspiciis suscipiendæ fidei et regni cœlestis, potestas etiam terreni creverat imperii, ita ut, quod nemo Anglorum ante eum fecit, omnes Britannicæ fines, qua vel ipsorum vel Britonum provinciæ habitantur, sub ditione acceperit. Quin et Mevanias insulas, sicut et supra docuimus, imperio subjugavit Anglorum; quarum prior, quæ ad austrum est, et situ amplior et frugum proventu atque ubertate felicior, nongentarum sexaginta familiarum mensuram juxta æstimationem Anglorum, secunda trecentarum et ultra spatium tenet.

Huic autem genti occasio fuit percipiendæ fidei, quod præfatus rex ejus cognatione junctus est regibus Cantuariorum, accepta in conjugem Ethelberga filia Ethelberti regis, quæ alio nomine Tate vocabatur. Hujus consortium cum primo ipse, missis procis, a fratre ejus Eadbaldo, qui tunc regno Cantuariorum præerat, peteret, responsum est, non esse licitum Christianam virginem pagano in conjugem dari, ne fides et sacramenta cœlestis Regis consortio profanarentur regis, qui veri Dei cultus esset prorsus ignarus. Quæ cum Edwino verba nuncii referrent, promisit se nil omnimodis contrarium Christianæ fidei, quam virgo colebat, esse facturum; quin potius permissurum, ut fidem cultumque suæ religionis cum omnibus, qui secum venissent, viris sive feminis, sacerdotibus seu ministris, more Christiano servaret. Neque abnegavit se etiam eandem subiturum esse religionem, si tamen examinata a prudentibus sanctior ac Deo dignior posset inveniri.

Itaque promittitur virgo atque Edwino mittitur, et, juxta quod dispositum fuerat, ordinatur episcopus vir Deo dilectus Paulinus, qui cum illa veniret, eamque et comites ejus, ne paganorum possent societate pollui, quotidiana exhortatione et sacramentorum cœlestium celebratione confirmaret. Ordinatus est autem Paulinus episcopus a Justo archiepiscopo, sub die duodecimo kalendarum Augustarum, anno ab incarnatione Domini sexcentesimo vicesimo quinto, et sic cum præfata virgine ad regem Edwinum, quasi comes copulæ carnalis, advenit; sed ipse potius toto animo intendens ut gentem, quam adibat, ad agnitionem veritatis advocans, juxta vocem apostoli, [2 Corinth. xi. 2,] uni viro sponso virginem castam exhiberet Christo. Cumque in provinciam venisset laboravit multum ut et eos, qui secum venerant, ne a fide deficerent, Domino adjuvante, contineret, et aliquos, si forte posset, de paganis ad fidei gratiam prædicando converteret. Sed sicut apostolus ait, quamvis multo tempore illo laborante in verbo, deus seculi hujus excæcavit mentes infidelium, ne eis fulgeret illuminatio Evangelii gloriæ Christi.

Anno autem sequente venit in provinciam quidem sicarius, vocabulo Eumerus, missus a rege Occidentalium Saxonum, nomine Quichelmo, sperans se regem Edwinum regno simul et vita privaturum; qui habebat sicam bicipitem toxicatam, ut, si ferri vulnus minus ad mortem regis sufficeret, peste juvaretur veneni. Pervenit autem ad regem primo die Paschæ, juxta amnem Derwentionem, ubi tunc erat villa regalis, intravitque quasi nuncium domini sui referens; et cum simulatam legationem ore astuto voveret exsurrexit repente, et, evaginata sub veste sica, impetum fecit in regem. Quod cum videret Lilla minister regis amicissimus, non habens scutum ad manum, quo regem a nece defenderet, mox interposuit corpus suum ante ictum pungentis; sed tanta vi hostis ferrum infixit, ut per corpus militis occisi etiam regem vulneraret. Qui, cum mox undique gladiis impeteretur, in ipso tumultu etiam alium de militibus, cui nomen erat Forthhere, sica nefanda peremit.

Eadem autem nocte sacrosancta Dominici Paschæ pepererat regina filiam regi, cui nomen Eanfleda; cumque idem rex, præsentem Paulino episcopo, gratias ageret diis suis pro nata sibi filia, e contra episcopus gratias cœpit agere Domino Christo, regique adstruere quod ipse precibus suis apud illum obtinuerit, ut regina sospes et absque dolore gravi sobolem procrearet. Cujus verbis delectatus rex promisit se, abrenunciatis idolis, Christo servituum, si vitam sibi et victoriam donaret pugnanti adversus regem, a quo homicida ille, qui eum vulneraverat, missus est; et in pignus promissionis implendæ eandem filiam suam Christo consecrandam Paulino episcopo assignavit, quæ baptizata est die sancto Pentecostes prima de gente Northanhumborum, cum undecim aliis de familia ejus. Quo tempore curatus a vulnere sibi pridem inflicto, rex, collecto exercitu, venit adversus gentem Occidentalium Saxonum; ac, bello inito, universos, quos in necem suam conspirasse didicerat, aut occidit, aut in deditionem recepit. Sicque victor in patriam reversus non statim et inconsulte sacramenta fidei Christianæ percipere voluit; quamvis nec idolis ultra servivit, ex quo se Christo servituum esse promiserat. Verum, primo diligentius ex tempore et ab ipso venerabili viro Paulino rationem fidei ediscere et cum suis primatibus, quos sapientiores noverat, curavit conferre, quid de his agendum arbitrarentur. Sed et ipse, cum esset vir natura sagacissimus, sæpe diu solus residens, ore quidem tacito, sed in intimis cordis multa secum colloquens, quid sibi esset faciendum, quæ religio servanda, tractabat.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. X.—

## UT PAPA BONIFACIUS EUNDEM REGEM, MISSIS LITERIS, SIT HORTATUS AD FIDEM.

Quo tempore exhortatorias ad fidem literas a pontifice sedis apostolicæ Bonifacio accepit, quarum ista est forma.

### Exemplar Epistolæ Beatissimi Et Apostolici Papæ Urbis Romanæ Ecclesiæ Bonifacii, Directæ Viro Glorioso Edwino, Regi Anglorum.

“Viro glorioso Edwino regi Anglorum, Bonifacius episcopus, servus servorum Dei. Licet summæ divinitatis potentia humanæ locutionis officiis explanari non valeat, quippe quæ sui magnitudine ita invisibili atque investigabili æternitate consistit, ut eam nulla ingenii sagacitas, quanta sit, comprehendere disserereque sufficiat; quia tamen ejus humanitas, ad insinuationem sui, reseratis cordis januis, quæ de semetipsa proferentur, secreta humanis mentibus inspiratione clementer infundit, ad annunciandam vobis plenitudinem fidei Christianæ, sacerdotalem curavimus sollicitudinem prorogare, ut perinde Christi Evangelium, quod Salvator noster omnibus præcepit gentibus prædicari, vestris quoque sensibus inserentes, salutis vestræ remedia propinentur.

“Supernæ igitur majestatis clementia, quæ cuncta solo verbo præceptionis suæ condidit et creavit, cælum videlicet et terram, mare et omnia, quæ in eis sunt, dispositis ordinibus, quibus subsisterent, coæterni Verbi sui consilio, et Sancti Spiritus unitate dispensans, hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem suam ex limo terræ plasmatum constituit, eique tantam præmii prærogativam indulsit, ut eum cunctis præponeret, atque servato termino præceptionis, æternitatis subsistentia præmuniret. Hunc ergo Deum Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, quod est individua Trinitas, ab ortu solis usque ad occasum, humanum genus, quippe ut Creatorem omnium atque Factorem suum, salutifera confessione fidei veneratur et colit; cui etiam summitates imperii rerumque potestates submissæ sunt, quia ejus dispositione omnium prælatio regnorum conceditur. Ejus ergo bonitatis misericordia totius creaturæ suæ dilatandæ subdi etiam in extremitate terræ positarum gentium corda frigida, Sancti Spiritus fervore in sui quoque agnitione, mirabiliter est dignata succendere.

“Quæ enim in gloriosi filii nostri Eadbaldi regis gentibusque ei suppositis illustratione, clementia Redemptoris fuerit operata, plenius ex vicinitate locorum vestram gloriam conjicimus cognovisse. Ejus ergo mirabile donum et in vobis certa spe cœlesti longanimitate conferri confidimus; cum profecto gloriosam conjugem vestram, quæ vestri corporis pars esse dignoscitur, æternitatis præmio per sacri baptismatis regenerationem illuminatam agnovimus. Unde præsentī stylo glorioses vos adhortandos cum omni affectu intimæ caritatis curavimus, quatenus, abominatis

idolis eorumque cultu, spretisque fanorum fatuitatibus et auguriorum deceptibilibus blandimentis, credatis in Deum Patrem omnipotentem, ejusque Filium Jesum Christum, et Spiritum Sanctum, ut credentes, a diabolicæ captivitatis nexibus, sanctæ et individuæ Trinitatis cooperante potentia, absoluti, æternæ vitæ possitis esse participes.

“Quanta autem reatitudinis culpa teneantur obstricti hi, qui idololatriarum perniciosissimam superstitionem colentes amplectuntur, eorum, quos colunt, exempla perditionis insinuant; unde de eis per Psalmistam dicitur, [xcv. 5,] *Omnes dii gentium dæmonia, Dominus autem cælos fecit*; et iterum, [cxiii. 5-8,] *Oculos habent et non vident, aures habent et non audiunt, nares habent et non odorabunt, manus habent et non palpabunt, pedes habent et non ambulabunt; similes ergo efficiuntur his, qui spem suæ confidentiæ ponunt in eis*. Quomodo enim juvandi quemlibet possunt habere virtutem hi, qui ex corruptibili materia inferiorum etiam suppositorumque tibi manibus construuntur? quibus videlicet artificium humanum accommodans eis inanimatam membrorum similitudinem contulisti? qui, nisi a te moti fuerint, ambulare non poterunt; sed tanquam lapis in uno loco positus, ita constructi, nihilque intelligentiæ habentes, ipsaque insensibilitate obruti nullam neque lædendi neque juvandi facultatem adepti sunt? Qua ergo mentis deceptione eos deos, quibus vos ipsi imaginem corporis tradidistis, colentes sequimini, iudicio discreto reperire non possumus.

“Unde oportet vos, suscepto signo sanctæ crucis, per quod humanum genus redemptum est, exsecrandam diabolicæ versutiæ supplantationem, qui divinæ bonitatis operibus invidus æmulusque consistit, a cordibus vestris abjicere, injectisque manibus hos, quos eatenus materiæ compage vobis deos fabricastis, confringendos diminuendosque summopere procurate. Ipsa enim eorum dissolutio corruptioque, quæ nunquam viventem spiritum habuit, nec sensibilitatem a suis factoribus potuit quolibet modo suscipere, vobis patenter insinuet quam nihil erat quod eatenus colebatis; dum profecto meliores vos, qui spiritum viventem a Domino percepistis, eorum constructioni nihilominus existatis; quippe quos Deus omnipotens ex primi hominis, quem plasmavit, cognatione, deductis per secula innumerabilibus propaginibus, pullulare constituit. Accedite ergo ad agnitionem ejus, qui vos creavit, qui in vobis vitæ insufflavit spiritum, qui pro vestra redemptione Filium suum unigenitum misit, ut vos ab originali peccato eriperet, et ereptos de potestate nequitia diabolicæ cœlestibus præmiis muneraret.

“Suscipite verba prædicatorum et Evangelium Dei, quod vobis annunciant; quatenus credentes, sicut sæpius dictum est, in Deum Patrem omnipotentem, et in Jesum Christum ejus Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, et inseparabilem Trinitatem, fugatis dæmoniorum sensibus, expulsaque a vobis sollicitatione venenosi et deceptibilis hostis, per aquam et Spiritum Sanctum renati, ei, cui credideritis, in splendore gloriæ sempiternæ cohabitare, ejus opitulante munificentia, valeatis. Præterea, benedictionem protectoris vestri beati Petri apostolorum principis vobis direximus, id est, camisiam cum ornatura in auro una, et lena Ancyriana una; quod petimus, ut eo benignitatis animo gloria vestra suscipiat, quo a nobis noscitur destinatum.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XI.—

UT CONJUGEM IPSIUS, PER EPISTOLAM, SALUTIS  
ILLIUS SEDULAM AGERE CURAM MONUERIT.

Ad conjugem quoque illius Ethelbergam hujusmodi literas idem pontifex misit.

Exemplar Epistolæ Beatissimi Et Apostolici Bonifacii Papæ  
Urbis Romæ, Directæ Ethelbergæ Reginæ Edwini Regis.

“Dominæ gloriosæ filiae Ethelbergæ reginæ, Bonifacius episcopus, servus servorum Dei: Redemptoris nostri benignitas humano generi, quod pretiosi sanguinis sui effusione a vinculis diabolicæ captivitatis eripuit, multæ providentiæ, quibus salvaretur, propinavit remedia; quatenus sui nominis agnitionem diverso modo gentibus innotescens, Creatorem suum suscepto Christianæ fidei agnoscerent sacramento. Quod equidem in vestræ gloriæ sensibus cœlesti collatum munere mystica regenerationis vestræ purgatio patenter innuit. Magno ergo largitatis Dominicæ beneficio mens nostra gaudio exsultavit, quod scintillam orthodoxæ religionis in vestra dignatus est conversione succendere; ex qua re non solum gloriosi conjugis vestri, imo totius gentis suppositæ vobis, intelligentiam in amorem sui facilius inflammaret.

“Didicimus namque, referentibus his, qui ad nos gloriosi filii nostri Eadbaldi regis laudabilem conversionem nunciantes pervenerunt, quod etiam vestra gloria, Christianæ fidei suscepto mirabili sacramento, piis et Deo placitis jugiter operibus enitescat, ab idolorum etiam cultu, seu fanorum auguriorumque illecebris, se diligenter absterneat, et ita in amore Redemptoris sui immutilata devotione persistens invigilet, ut ad dilatandam Christianam fidem incessabiliter non desistat operam commodare. Cumque de glorioso conjugate vestro paterna caritas sollicitè perquisisset, cognovimus, quod eatenus abominandis idolis serviens ad suscipiendam vocem prædicatorum suam distulerit obedientiam exhibere; qua ex re non modica nobis amaritudo congesta est, ab eo quod pars corporis vestri ab agnitione summæ et individuæ Trinitatis remansit extranea. Unde paternis officiis vestræ gloriosæ Christianitati nostram commonitionem nec distulimus conferendam, adhortantes, quatenus divinæ inspirationis imbuta subsidiis importune et opportune agendum non differas, ut et ipse, Salvatoris nostri Domini Jesu Christi cooperante potentia, Christianorum numero copuletur; ut perinde intemerato societatis fœdere jura tencas maritalis consortii; scriptum namque est, [Gen. ii. 24,] *Erunt duo in carne una*. Quomodo ergo unitas vobis conjunctionis inesse dici poterit, si a vestræ fidei splendore, interpositis detestabilis erroris tenebris, ille remanserit alienus?

“Unde orationi continuo insistens a longanimitate cœlestis clementiæ illuminationis illius beneficia impetrare non desinas; ut videlicet, quos copulatio carnalis affectus unum quodammodo corpus exhibuisse monstratur, hos quoque unitas fidei etiam post



hujus vitæ transitum in perpetua societate conservet. Insiste ergo, gloriosa filia, et summis conatibus duritiam cordis ipsius religiosa divinorum præceptorum insinuatione mollire summopere dematura; infundens sensibus ejus quantum sit præclarum, quod credendo suscepisti, mysterium, quantumve sit admirabile quod renata præmium consequi meruisti. Frigiditatem cordis ipsius, Sancti Spiritus annunciatione succende; quatenus, amoto torpore perniciosissimi cultus, divinæ fidei calor ejus intelligentiam tuarum exhortationum frequentatione succendat, ut profecto sacræ Scripturæ testimonium per te expletum indubitanter perclareat, [1 Cor. vii. 14.] *Salvabitur vir infidelis per mulierem fidelem*. Ad hoc enim misericordiam Dominicæ pietatis consecuta es, ut fructum fidei creditorumque tibi beneficiorum Redemptori tuo multiplicem resignares. Quod equidem, suffragante præsidio benignitatis ipsius, ut explere valeas, assiduis non desistimus precibus postulare.

“His ergo præmissis, paternæ vobis dilectionis exhibentes officia, hortamur, ut nos, reperta portitoris occasione, de his, quæ per vos superna potentia mirabiliter in conversione conjugis vestri submissæque vobis gentis dignatus fuerit operari, prosperis quantocius nunciis relevetis, quatenus sollicitudo nostra, (quæ de vestra vestrorumque omnium animæ salute optabilia desideranter exspectat,) vobis nunciantibus, relevetur, illustrationemque divinæ propitiationis in vobis diffusam opulentiùs agnoscentes, hilari confessione largitori omnium bonorum Deo et beato Petro apostolorum principi uberes merito gratias exsolvamur. Præterea, benedictionem protectoris vestri beati Petri apostolorum principis vobis direximus, id est, speculum argenteum, et pectinem eboreum inauratum; quod petimus, ut eo benignitatis animo gloria vestra suscipiat, quo a nobis noscitur destinatum.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XII.—

### UT EDWINUS PER VISIONEM QUONDAM SIBI EXSULI OSTENSAM SIT AD CREDENDUM PROVOCATUS.

Hæc quidem memoratus Papa Bonifacius de salute regis Edwini ac gentis ipsius literis agebat. Sed et oraculum cœleste, quod illi quondam exsulanti apud Redwaldum regem Anglorum pietas divina revelare dignata est, non minimum ad suscipienda vel intelligenda doctrinæ monita salutaris sensum illius juit. Cum ergo videret Paulinus difficulter posse sublimitatem animi regalis ad humilitatem viæ salutaris et suscipiendum mysterium vivificæ crucis inclinari, ac pro salute illius, simul et gentis cui præerat, et verbo exhortationis apud homines et apud divinam pietatem verbo deprecationis ageret; tandem, ut verisimile videtur, didicit in spiritu, quod vel quale esset oraculum regi quondam cœlitus ostensum. Nec exinde distulit quin continuo regem admoneret explere votum, quod in oraculo sibi exhibito se facturum promiserat, si temporis illius ærumnis exemptus ad regni fastigia perveniret.

Erat autem oraculum hujusmodi. Cum, persequente illum Ethelfrido, qui ante eum regnavit, per diversa occultus loca vel regna multo annorum tempore profugus vagaretur, tandem venit ad regem Redwaldum, obsecrans ut vitam suam a tanti persecutoris insidiis tutando servaret; qui libenter eum excipiens promisit se, quæ petebat, esse facturum. At postquam Ethelfridus in hac eum provincia apparuisse et apud regem illius familiariter cum sociis habitare cognovit, misit nuncios, qui Redwaldo pecuniam multam pro nece ejus offerent; neque aliquid profecit. Misit secundo, misit tertio, et copiosiora auri et argenti dona offerens, et bellum insuper illi, si contemneretur, indicens; qui, vel minis fractus, vel corruptus muneribus, cessit deprecanti, et sive occidere se Edwinum, seu legatariis tradere, promisit. Quod ubi fidelissimus quidam amicus illius animadvertit, intravit cubiculum quo dormire disponebat, (erat enim prima hora noctis,) et evocatum foras, quid erga eum agere rex promississet, edocuit, et insuper adjecit, “Si ergo vis, hac ipsa hora educam te de hac provincia, et ea in loca introducam ubi nunquam te vel Redwaldus vel Ethelfridus invenire valeant.” Qui ait, “Gratias quidem ago benevolentia tuæ; non tamen hoc facere possum quod suggeris, ut pactum, quod cum tanto rege inii, ipse primus irritum faciam, cum ille mihi nil mali fecerit, nil adhuc inimicitiarum intulerit. Quin potius, si moriturus sum, ille me magis quam ignobilior quisquam morti tradat. Quo enim nunc fugiam, qui per omnes Britannia provincias tot annorum temporumque curriculis vagabundus hostium vitabam insidias?” Abeunte igitur amico, remansit Edwinus solus foris, residensque mœstus ante palatium multis cœpit cogitationum æstibus affici, quid ageret, quove pedem verteret, nescius.

Cumque diu tacitis mentis angoribus et cæco carperetur igni, vidit subito intempestæ noctis silentio appropinquantem sibi hominem vultus habitusque incogniti; quem videns, ut ignotum et inopinatum, non parum expavit. At ille accedens salutavit eum et interrogavit, quare illa hora, ceteris quiescentibus et alto sopore pressis, solus ipse mœstus in lapide pervigil sederet; at ille vicissim sciscitabatur, quid ad eum pertineret,

utrum ipse intus an foris noctem transigeret. Qui respondens ait, “Ne me æstimes tuæ mœstitiæ et insomniorum, et forinsecæ et solitariæ sessionis, causam nescire; scio enim certissime qui es, et quare mœres, et quæ ventura tibi in proximo mala formidas. Sed dicito mihi quid mercedis dare velis ei, si quis sit, qui his te mœroribus absolvat, et Redwaldo suadeat, ut nec ipse tibi aliquid mali faciat, nec tuis te hostibus perimendum tradat.” Qui cum se omnia quæ posset, huic tali pro mercede beneficii daturum esse responderet, adjecit ille, “Quid si etiam regem te futurum, extinctis hostibus, in veritate promittat, ita ut non solum omnes tuos progenitores, sed et omnes, qui ante te reges in gente Anglorum fuerant, potestate transcendas?” At Edwinus, constantior interrogando factus, non dubitavit promittere, quin ei, qui tanta sibi beneficia donaret, dignis ipse gratiarum actionibus responderet. Tum ille tertio, “Si autem,” inquit, “is, qui tibi tanta taliaque dona veraciter adventura prædixerit, etiam consilium tibi tuæ salutis ac vitæ melius atque utilius, quam aliquis de tuis parentibus aut cognatis unquam audivit, ostendere potuerit, num ei obtemperare, et monita ejus salutaria suscipere, consentis?” Nec distulit Edwinus quin continuo polliceretur in omnibus se secuturum doctrinam illius, qui se tot ac tantis calamitatibus ereptum ad regni apicem proveheret.

Quo accepto responso, confestim is, qui loquebatur cum eo, imposuit dexteram suam capiti ejus, dicens, “Cum hoc ergo tibi signum advenerit, memento hujus temporis ac loquelæ nostræ, et ea, quæ nunc promittis, adimplere ne differas;” et, his dictis, ut ferunt, repente disparuit, ut intelligeret non hominem esse, qui sibi apparuisset, sed spiritum.

Et cum regius juvenis solus adhuc ibidem sederet, gavisus quidem de collata sibi pia ac benigna consolatione, sed multum sollicitus ac mente sedula cogitans quis esset ille, vel unde venisset, qui hæc sibi loqueretur, venit ad eum præfatus amicus illius lætoque vultu salutans eum, “Surge,” inquit, “intra, et sopitis ac relictis curarum anxietatibus, quieti membra simul et animum compone, quia mutatum est cor regis, nec tibi aliquid mali facere, sed fidem potius pollicitam servare, disponit. Postquam enim cogitationem suam, de qua tibi ante dixi, reginæ in secreto revelavit, revocavit eum illa ab intentione, admonens quia nulla ratione conveniat tanto regi amicum suum optimum in necessitate positum auro vendere, imo fidem suam, quæ omnibus ornamentis pretiosior est, amore pecuniæ perdere.” Quid plura? Fecit rex ut dictum est; nec solum exsulem nunciis hostilibus non tradidit, sed etiam eum, ut in regnum perveniret, adjuvit; nam mox redeuntibus domum nunciis, exercitum ad debellandum Ethelfridum collegit copiosum, eumque sibi occurrentem cum exercitu multum impari, (non enim dederat illi spatium quo totum suum congregaret atque adunaret exercitum,) occidit, in finibus gentis Merciorum ad orientalem plagam amnis, qui vocatur Idle; in quo certamine et filius Redwaldi vocabulo Regnhere, occisus est. Ac sic Edwinus juxta oraculum, quod acceperat, non tantum regis sibi infesti insidias vitavit, verum etiam eidem peremto in regni gloriam successit.

Cum ergo, prædicante verbum Dei Paulino, rex credere differret, et per aliquod tempus, ut diximus, horis competentibus solitarius sedere, et quid agendum sibi esset, quæ religio sequenda, sedulus secum ipse scrutari consuisset, ingrediens ad eum quadam die vir Dei imposuit dexteram capiti ejus, et, an hoc signum agnosceret, requisivit. Qui cum tremens ad pedes ejus procidere vellet, levavit eum, et quasi

familiari voce affatus, “Ecce,” inquit, “hostium manus, quos timuisti, Domino donante, evasisti; ecce, regnum, quod desiderasti, ipso largiente, percepisti. Memento ut tertium, quod promisisti, facere ne differas, suscipiendo fidem ejus, et præcepta servando, qui te et a temporalibus adversis eripiens temporalis regni honore sublimavit; et si deinceps voluntati ejus, quam per me tibi prædicat, obsecundare volueris, etiam a perpetuis malorum tormentis te liberabit et æterni secum regni in cœlis faciet esse participem.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

### CAP. XIII.—

## QUALE CONSILIUM IDEM CUM PRIMATIBUS SUIS DE PERCIPIENDA FIDE CHRISTI HABUERIT; ET UT PONTIFEX EJUS SUAS ARAS PROFANAVERIT.

Quibus auditis, rex suscipere quidem se fidem, quam docebat, et velle et debere respondebat. Verum adhuc cum amicis principibus et consiliariis suis sese de hoc collaturum esse dicebat, ut, si et illi eadem cum illo sentire vellent, omnes pariter in fonte vitæ Christo consecrarentur; et, annuente Paulino, fecit ut dixerat. Habito enim cum sapientibus consilio, sciscitabatur singillatim ab omnibus, qualis sibi doctrina hæc eatenus inaudita, et novus divinitatis, qui prædicabatur, cultus videretur. Cui primus pontificum ipsius Coifi continuo respondit, “Tu vide, rex, quale sit hoc, quod nobis modo prædicatur; ego autem tibi verissime, quod certum didici, profiteor, quia nihil omnino virtutis habet, nihil utilitatis religio illa, quam hucusque tenuimus. Nullus enim tuorum studiosius quam ego culturæ deorum nostrorum se subdidit, et nihilominus multi sunt, qui ampliora a te beneficia quam ego, et majores accipiunt dignitates, magisque prosperantur in omnibus, quæ agenda vel acquirenda disponunt. Si autem dii aliquid valerent, me potius juvare vellent, qui illis impensius servire curavi. Unde restat, ut si ea, quæ nunc nobis nova prædicantur, meliora esse et fortiora, habita examinatione, perspexeris, absque ullo cunctamine suscipere illa festinemus.”

Cujus suasioni verbisque prudentibus alius optimatum regis tribuens assensum continuo subdidit, “Talis,” inquit, “mihi videtur, rex, vita hominum præsens in terris ad comparationem ejus, quod nobis incertum est, temporis, quale cum, te residente ad cœnam cum ducibus ac ministris tuis tempore brumali, accenso quidem foco in medio et calido effecto cœnaculo, furentibus autem foris per omnia turbinibus hiemalium pluviarum vel nivium, adveniensque unus passerum domum citissime pervolaverit; qui cum per unum ostium ingrediens, mox per aliud exierit. Ipso quidem tempore, quo intus est, hiemis tempestate non tangitur, sed tamen minimo spatio serenitatis ad momentum excursu, mox de hieme in hiemem regrediens, tuis oculis elabitur. Ita hæc vita hominum ad modicum apparet; quid autem sequatur, quidve præcesserit, prorsus ignoramus. Unde si hæc nova doctrina certius aliquid attulit, merito esse sequenda videtur.” His similia et ceteri majores natu ac regis consilarii divinitus admoniti prosequabantur.

Adjecit autem Coifi, quia vellet ipsum Paulinum diligentius audire de Deo, quem prædicabat, verbum facientem; quod cum, jubente rege, faceret, exclamavit, auditis ejus sermonibus, dicens, “Jam olim intellexeram nihil esse, quod colebamus, quia videlicet quanto studiosius in eo cultu veritatem quærebam, tanto minus inveniebam. Nunc autem aperte profiteor, quia in hac prædicatione veritas claret illa, quæ nobis vitæ, salutis et beatitudinis æternæ dona valet tribuere. Unde suggero, rex, ut templa et altaria, quæ sine fructu utilitatis sacravimus, ociosius anathemati et igni tradamus.” Quid plura? præbuit palam assensum evangelizanti beato Paulino rex, et, abrenunciata

idololatria, fidem se Christi suscipere confessus est. Cumque a præfato pontifice sacrorum suorum quæreret, quis aras et fana idolorum cum septis, quibus erant circumdata, primus profanare deberet; ille respondit, “Ego. Quis enim ea, quæ per stultitiam colui, nunc ad exemplum omnium aptius quam ipse per sapientiam mihi a Deo vero donatam, destruam?” Statimque, abjecta superstitione vanitatis, rogavit sibi regem arma dare et equum emissarium, quem ascendens ad idola destruenda veniret; non enim licuerat pontificem sacrorum vel arma ferre, vel præter in equa equitare. Accinctus ergo gladio accepit lanceam in manu, et ascendens emissarium regis pergebat ad idola; quod aspiciens vulgus æstimabat eum insanire. Nec distulit ille, mox ut appropinquabat ad fanum, profanare illud, injecta in eo lancea, quam tenebat; multumque gavisus de agnitione veri Dei cultus, jussit sociis suis destruere ac succendere fanum cum omnibus septis suis. Ostenditur autem locus ille quondam idolorum non longe ab Eboraco ad orientem, ultra amnem Derwentionem, et vocatur hodie Godmundingham, ubi pontifex ipse, inspirante Deo vero, polluit ac destruxit eas, quas ipse sacraverat, aras.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XIV.—

### UT IDEM EDWINUS CUM SUA GENTE FIDELIS SIT FACTUS; ET UBI PAULINUS BAPTIZAVERIT.

Igitur accepit rex Edwinus cum cunctis gentis suæ nobilibus ac plebe perplurima fidem et lavacrum sanctæ regenerationis, anno regni sui undecimo, qui est annus Dominicæ incarnationis sexcentusimus vicesimus septimus, ab adventu vero Anglorum in Britanniam annus circiter centesimus octogesimus. Baptizatus est autem Eboraci die sancto Paschæ, pridie iduum Aprilium, in ecclesia Sancti Petri Apostoli, quam ibidem ipse de ligno, cum catechizaretur atque ad percipiendum baptisma imbueretur, citato opere construxit; in qua etiam civitate ipse doctori atque antistiti suo Paulino sedem episcopatus donavit. Mox autem ut baptisma consecutus est, curavit, docente eodem Paulino, majorem ipso in loco et augustiorem de lapide fabricare basilicam, in cujus medio ipsum, quod prius fecerat, oratorium includeretur. Præparatis ergo fundamentis, in gyro prioris oratorii per quadrum cœpit ædificare basilicam; sed priusquam altitudo parietis esset consummata, rex ipse impia nece occisus opus idem successori suo Oswaldo perficiendum reliquit. Paulinus autem ex eo tempore sex annis continuis, id est, usque ad finem imperii regis illius, verbum Dei, annuente ac favente ipso, in ea provincia prædicabat; credebantque et baptizabantur quotquot erant præordinati ad vitam æternam, in quibus erant Osfridus et Eadfridus, filii regis Edwini, qui ambo ei exsuli nati sunt de Quenberga filia Cearli regis Merciorum.

Baptizati sunt tempore sequente et alii liberi ejus de Ethelberga regina progeniti, Ethelhunus, et Etheldridis filia, et alter filius Wuscufrea, quorum primi albati adhuc rapti sunt de hac vita, et Eboraci in ecclesia sepulti. Baptizatus est et Iffi filius Osfridi, necnon et alii nobiles ac egregii viri non pauci. Tantus autem fertur tunc fuisse fervor fidei ac desiderium lavacri salutaris gente Northanhumborum, ut quodam tempore Paulinus veniens cum rege et regina in villam regiam, quæ vocatur Adgefrin, triginta sex diebus ibidem cum eis catechizandi et baptizandi officio deditus moraretur; quibus diebus cunctis a mane usque ad vesperam nil aliud ageret quam confluentem eo de cunctis viculis ac locis plebem Christi verbo salutis instruere, atque instructam in fluvio Gleni, qui proximus erat, lavacro remissionis abluere. Hæc villa tempore sequentium regum deserta, et alia pro illa est facta in loco, qui vocatur Melmin.

Hæc quidem in provincia Berniciorum; sed et in provincia Deirorum, ubi sæpius manere cum rege solebat, baptizabat in fluvio Swalua, qui vicum Cataractam præterfluit. Nondum enim oratoria vel baptisteria in ipso exordio nascentis ibi ecclesiæ poterant ædificari. Attamen in Campodono, ubi tunc etiam villa regia erat, fecit basilicam, quam postmodum pagani, a quibus Edwinus Rex occisus est, cum tota eadem villa succenderunt; pro qua reges posteriores fecere sibi villam in regione, quæ vocatur Loidis. Evasit autem ignem altare, quia lapideum erat; et servatur adhuc in monasterio reverendissimi abbatis et presbyteri Thridwulfi, quod est in silva Elmete.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XV.—

## UT PROVINCIA ORIENTALIUM ANGLORUM FIDEM CHRISTI SUSCEPERIT.

Tantum autem devotionis Edwinus erga cultum veritatis habuit, ut etiam regi Orientalium Anglorum Eorpwaldo, filio Redwaldi, persuaderet, relictis idolorum superstitionibus, fidem et sacramenta Christi cum sua provincia suscipere. Et quidem pater ejus Redwaldus jamdudum in Cantia sacramentis Christianæ fidei imbutus est, sed frustra; nam rediens domum ab uxore sua et a quibusdam perversis doctoribus seductus est, atque a sinceritate fidei depravatus, habuit posteriora pejora prioribus, ita ut in morem antiquorum Samaritanorum et Christo servire videretur et diis, quibus antea serviebat, atque in eodem fano et altare haberet ad sacrificium Christi et arulam ad victimas dæmoniorum; quod videlicet fanum rex ejusdem provinciæ Aldwulfus, qui nostra ætate fuit, usque ad suum tempus perdurasse et se in pueritia vidisse testabatur. Erat autem præfatus Rex Redwaldus natu nobilis quamlibet actu ignobilis, filius Tytili, cujus pater fuit Wuffa, a quo reges Orientalium Anglorum Wuffingas appellant.

Verum Eorpwaldus, non multo postquam fidem accepit tempore, occisus est a viro gentili, nomine Richberto; et exinde tribus annis provincia in errore versata est, donec accepit regnum frater ejusdem Eorpwaldi Sigebertus, vir per omnia Christianissimus atque doctissimus; qui, vivente adhuc fratre, cum exularet in Gallia, fidei sacramentis imbutus est, quorum participem, mox ubi regnare cœpit, totam suam provinciam facere curavit. Cujus studiis gloriosissime favit Felix episcopus, qui de Burgundiorum partibus, ubi ortus et ordinatus est, cum venisset ad Honorium archiepiscopum eique indicasset desiderium suum, misit eum ad prædicandum verbum vitæ præfatæ nationi Anglorum. Nec vota ipsius incassum cecidere; quin potius fructum in ea multiplicem credentium populorum pius agri spiritualis cultor invenit. Siquidem totam illam provinciam, juxta sui nominis sacramentum, a longa iniquitate atque infelicitate liberatam ad fidem et opera justitiæ, ac perpetuæ felicitatis dona, perduxit; accepitque sedem episcopatus in civitate Dommoc, et cum decem ac septem annos eidem provinciæ pontificali regimine præfuisset, ibidem in pace vitam finivit.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XVI.—

UT PAULINUS IN PROVINCIA LINDISSI  
PRÆDICAVERIT; ET DE QUALITATE REGNI EDWINI.

Prædicabat autem Paulinus verbum etiam provinciæ Lindissi, quæ est prima ad meridianam Humbræ fluminis ripam, pertingens usque ad mare; præfectumque Lindocolinæ civitatis, cui nomen erat Blecca, primum cum domo sua convertit ad Dominum. In qua videlicet civitate et ecclesiam operis egregii de lapide fecit; cujus tecto vel longa incuria, vel hostili manu, dejecto, parietes hactenus stare videntur, et omnibus annis aliqua sanitatum miracula in eodem loco solent ad utilitatem eorum, qui fideliter quærunt, ostendi. In qua ecclesia Paulinus, transeunte ad Christum Justo, Honorium pro eo consecravit episcopum, ut in sequentibus suo loco dicemus. De hujus fide provinciæ narravit mihi presbyter et abbas quidam vir veracissimus de monasterio Peartaneu, vocabulo Deda, retulisse sibi quendam seniore[m] baptizatum se fuisse die media a Paulino episcopo, præsentem Rege Edwino et multam populi turbam, in fluvio Trehenta, juxta civitatem, quæ lingua Anglorum Tiovulfingacestir vocatur; qui etiam effigiem ejusdem Paulini referre esset solitus, quod esset vir longæ staturæ, paululum incurvus, nigro capillo, facie macilenta, naso adunco, pertenui, venerabilis simul et terribilis aspectu. Habuit autem secum in ministerio et Jacobum diaconum, virum utique industrium ac nobilem in Christo et in ecclesia, qui ad nostra usque tempora permansit.

Tanta autem eo tempore pax in Britannia, quaquaversum imperium regis Edwini pervenerat, fuisse perhibetur, ut, sicut usque hodie in proverbio dicitur, etiam si mulier una cum recens nato parvulo vellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se lædente, valeret. Tantum quoque rex idem utilitati suæ gentis consuluit, ut plerisque in locis, ubi fontes lucidos juxta publicos viarum transitus conspexit, ibi ob refrigerium viantium, erectis stipitibus, et æreos caucos suspendi juberet, neque hos quisquam, nisi ad usum necessarium, contingere præ magnitudine vel timoris ejus auderet, vel amoris vellet. Tantum vero in regno excellentiæ habuit, ut non solum in pugna ante illum vexilla gestarentur, sed et tempore pacis equitantem inter civitates, sive villas, aut provincias suas cum ministris, semper antecedere signifer consuevisset; necnon et incedente illo ubilibet per plateas, illud genus vexilli, quod Romani Tufam, Angli vero appellant Tuuf, ante eum ferri solebat.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XVII.—

UT IDEM AB HONORIO PAPA EXHORTATORIAS  
LITERAS ACCEPERIT, QUI ETIAM PAULINO PALLIUM  
MISERIT.

Quo tempore præsulatum sedis apostolicæ Honorius, Bonifacii successor, habebat, qui, ubi gentem Northanhumbrorum cum suo rege ad fidem confessionemque Christi, Paulino evangelizante, conversam esse didicit, misit eidem Paulino pallium; misit et Regi Edwino literas exhortatorias, paterna illum caritate accendens, ut in fide veritatis, quam acceperant, persistere semper ac proficere curarent. Quarum videlicet literarum iste est ordo.

“Domino excellentissimo atque præcellentissimo filio Edwino, regi Anglorum, Honorius episcopus, servus servorum Dei, salutem: Ita Christianitatis vestræ integritas circa sui Conditoris cultum fidei est ardore succensa, ut longe lateque resplendeat, et in omni mundo annunciata vestri operis multipliciter referat fructum. Sic enim vos reges esse cognoscitis, dum Regem et Creatorem vestrum orthodoxa prædicatione edocti Deum venerando creditis, eique, quod humana valet conditio, mentis vestræ sinceram devotionem exsolvitis. Quid enim Deo nostro aliud offerre valebimus, nisi ut in bonis actibus persistentes ipsumque auctorem humani generis confitentes eum colere, eique vota nostra reddere festinemus? Et ideo, excellentissime fili, paterna vos caritate, qua convenit, exhortamur, ut hoc, quod vos divina misericordia ad suam gratiam vocare dignata est, sollicita intentione et assiduis orationibus servare omnimodo festinetis; ut, qui vos in præsentī seculo ex omni errore absolutos ad agnitionem sui nominis est dignatus perducere, etiam cœlestis patriæ vobis præparet mansionem. Prædicatoris igitur vestri domini mei apostolicæ memoriæ Gregorīi frequenter lectione occupati, præ oculis affectum doctrinæ ipsius, quem pro vestris animabus libenter exercuit, habetote; quatenus ejus oratio et regnum vestrum populumque augeat, et vos omnipotenti Deo irreprehensibiles repræsentet. Ea vero, quæ a nobis pro vestris sacerdotibus ordinanda sperastis, hæc pro fidei vestræ sinceritate, quæ nobis multimoda relatione per præsentium portitores laudabiliter insinuata est, gratuito animo attribuere illis sine ulla dilatione prævidemus; et duo pallia utroque metropolitanorum, id est, Honorio et Paulino, direximus, ut dum quis eorum de hoc seculo ad auctorem suum fuerit arcessitus, in loco ipsius alter episcopum ex hac nostra auctoritate debeat subrogare. Quod quidem, tam pro vestræ caritatis affectu, quam pro tantarum provinciarum spatiis, quæ inter nos et vos esse noscuntur, sumus invitati concedere, ut in omnibus devotioni vestræ nostrum concursum et juxta vestra desideria præberemus. Incolumem excellentiam vestram gratia superna custodiat.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XVIII.—

UT HONORIUS, QUI JUSTO IN EPISCOPATUM  
DOROVERNENSIS ECCLESIAE SUCCESSIT, AB EODEM  
PAPA HONORIO PALLIUM ET LITERAS ACCEPERIT.

HÆC inter Justus archiepiscopus ad cœlestia regna sublatus est quarto iduum Novembrium die, et Honorius pro illo est in præsulatum effectus; qui ordinandus venit ad Paulinum, et occurrente sibi illo in Lindocolino, quintus ab Augustino Dorovernensis ecclesiae consecratus est antistes. Cui etiam præfatus Papa Honorius misit pallium et literas, in quibus decrevit hoc ipsum, quod in epistola ad Edwinum regem missa decreverat; scilicet, ut cum Dorovernensis vel Eboracensis antistes de hac vita transierit, is, qui superest, consors ejusdem gradus habeat potestatem alterum ordinandi in loco ejus, qui transierat, sacerdotem; ne sit necesse ad Romanam usque civitatem per tam prolixa terrarum et maris spatia pro ordinando archiepiscopo semper fatigari. Quarum etiam textum literarum in nostra hac historia ponere commodum duximus.

“Dilectissimo fratri Honorio, Honorius. Inter plurima, quæ redemptoris nostri misericordia suis famulis dignatur bonorum munera prærogare, illud etiam clementer collata suæ pietatis munificentia tribuit, quoties per fraternos affatus unanimam dilectionem quadam contemplatione alternis aspectibus repræsentat. Pro quibus majestati ejus gratias indesinenter exsolvimus, eumque votis supplicibus exoramus, ut vestram dilectionem in prædicatione Evangelii laborantem et fructificantem, sectantemque magistri vestri et capitis sui, Sancti Gregorii regulam, perpeti stabilitate confirmet, et ad augmentum ecclesiae suæ potiora per vos suscitaret incrementa; ut fide et opere, in timore Dei et caritate, vestra acquisitio decessorumque vestrorum, quæ per domini Gregorii exordia pullulat, convalescendo amplius extendatur; ut ipsa vos Dominici eloquii promissa in futuro respiciant, vosque vox ista ad æternam festivitatem evocet, [Matth. xi. 28,] *Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.* Et iterum, [Matth. xxv. 21,] *Euge, serve bone et fidelis, quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, super multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.* Et nos quidem, fratres carissimi, hæc vobis pro æterna caritate exhortationis verba præmittentes, quæ rursus pro ecclesiarum vestrarum privilegiis congruere posse conspicimus, non desistimus impertire.

“Et tam juxta vestram petitionem, quam filiorum nostrorum regum, vobis per præsentem nostram præceptionem, vice beati Petri apostolorum principis, auctoritatem tribuimus, ut quando unum ex vobis divina ad se jusserit gratia vocari, is, qui superstes fuerit, alterum in loco defuncti debeat episcopum ordinare. Pro qua etiam re singula vestræ dilectioni pallia pro eadem ordinatione celebranda direximus, ut per nostræ præceptionis auctoritatem possitis Deo placitam ordinationem efficere; quia ut hæc vobis concederemus, longa terrarum marisque intervalla, quæ inter nos ac vos obsistunt, ad hæc nos condescendere coegerunt, ut nulla possit ecclesiarum vestrarum jactura per cujuslibet occasionis obtentum quoquo modo provenire; sed

potius commissi vobis populi devotionem plenius propagare. Deus te incolumem custodiat, dilectissime frater.

“Datae die tertio iduum Junii imperantibus dominis nostris piissimis Augustis, Heraclio anno vicesimo quarto, post consulatum ejusdem anno vicesimo tertio; atque Constantino filio ipsius anno vicesimo tertio, et consulatus ejus anno tertio; sed et Heraclio felicissimo Cæsare item filio ejus anno tertio, indictione septima, id est, anno Dominicæ incarnationis sexcentesimo tricesimo quarto.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XIX.—

### UT PRIMO IDEM HONORIUS, ET POST JOANNES, LITERAS GENTI SCOTORUM PRO PASCHA SIMUL ET PRO PELAGIANA HÆRESI MISERIT.

Misit idem Papa Honorius literas etiam genti Scotorum, quos in observatione sancti Paschæ errare compererat, juxta quod supra docuimus, solerter exhortans, ne paucitatem suam in extremis terræ finibus constitutam, sapientiolem antiquis sive modernis, quæ per orbem terræ erant, Christi ecclesiis æstimarent; neve contra Paschales computos et decreta synodalium totius orbis pontificum aliud Pascha celebrarent. Sed et Joannes, qui successori ejusdem Honorii Severino successit, cum adhuc esset electus in pontificatum, pro eodem errore corrigendo literas eis magna auctoritate atque eruditione plenas direxit; evidenter adstruens, quia Dominicum Paschæ diem a quinta decima luna usque ad vicesimam primam, quod in Nicæna Synodo probatum est, oporteret inquiri. Ne non et pro Pelagiana hæresi, quam apud eos reviviscere didicerat, cavenda ac repellenda in eadem illos epistola admonere curavit; cujus epistolæ principium hoc est.

“Dilectissimis et sanctissimis Tomiano, Columbano, Cromano, Dimano, et Baithano episcopis; Cromano, Hernianoque, Laistrano, Scellano, et Segeno presbyteris; Sarano, ceterisque doctoribus seu abbatibus Scotis, Hilarius archipresbyter, et servans locum sanctæ sedis apostolicæ, Joannes diaconus, et in Dei nomine electus; item Joannes primicerius et servans locum sanctæ sedis apostolicæ, et Joannes servus Dei, consiliarius ejusdem apostolicæ sedis.

“Scripta, quæ per latores ad sanctæ memoriæ Severinum papam adduxerunt, eo de hac luce migrante, reciproca responsa ad ea, quæ postulata fuerant, siluerunt. Quibus reseratis, ne diu tantæ quæstionis caligo indiscussa remaneret, reperimus quosdam provinciæ vestræ contra orthodoxam fidem, novam ex veteri hæresim renovare conantes, Pascha nostrum, in quo immolatus est Christus, nebulosa caligine refutantes, et quarta decima luna cum Hebræis celebrare nitentes.”

Quo epistolæ principio manifeste declaratur, et nuperrime temporibus illis hanc apud eos hæresim exortam, et non totam eorum gentem, sed quosdam ex eis, hac fuisse implicitos.

Exposita autem ratione Paschalis observantiæ, ita de Pelagianis in eadem epistola subdunt.

“Et hoc quoque cognovimus, quod virus Pelagianæ hæreseos apud vos denuo reviviscit; quod omnino hortamur, ut a vestris mentibus hujusmodi venenatum superstitionis facinus auferatur. Nam qualiter ipsa quoque execranda hæresis damnata est, latere vos non debet, quia non solum per istos ducentos annos abolita est, sed et quotidie a nobis perpetuo anathemate sepulta damnatur. Et hortamur, ne

quorum arma combusta sunt, apud vos eorum cineres suscitentur; nam quis non exsecretur superbum eorum conamen et impium, dicentium posse sine peccato hominem existere ex propria voluntate, et non ex gratia Dei? Et primum quidem blasphemiæ stultiloquium est, dicere esse hominem sine peccato; quod omnino non potest, nisi unus mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus, qui sine peccato est conceptus et partus. Nam ceteri homines cum peccato originali nascentes testimonium prævaricationis Adamæ, etiam sine actuali peccato existentes, portare noscuntur; secundum prophetam dicentem; [Ps. li. 5,] *Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.*

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XX.—

## UT, OCCISO EDWINO, PAULINUS CANTIAM REDIENS, RHOFENSIS ECCLESIAE PRÆSULATUM SUSCEPERIT.

At vero Edwinus cum decem et septem annis genti Anglorum simul et Britonum gloriosissime præset, e quibus sex etiam ipse, ut diximus, Christi regno militavit, rebellavit adversus eum Cadwalla rex Britonum, auxilium præbente illi Penda viro strenuissimo de regio genere Merciorum, qui et ipse eo tempore gentis ejusdem regno annis viginti et duobus varia sorte præfuit; et, conserto gravi prælio in campo, qui vocatur Hethfelth, occisus est Edwinus die quarta iduum Octobris, anno Dominicæ incarnationis sexcentesimo tricesimo tertio, cum esset annorum quadraginta et octo; ejusque totus vel interemtus vel dispersus est exercitus. In quo etiam bello ante illum unus filius ejus Osfridus juvenis bellicosus cecidit, alter Eadfridus, necessitate cogente, ad Pendam regem transfugit, et ab eo postmodum, regnante Oswaldo, contra fidem jurisjurandi peremtus est. Quo tempore maxima est facta strages in ecclesia vel gente Northanhumbrorum, maxime quod unus ex ducibus, a quibus acta est, paganus, alter quia barbarus erat pagano sævior. Siquidem Penda cum omni Merciorum gente idolis deditus, et Christiani erat nominis ignarus; at vero Cadwalla, quamvis nomen et professionem haberet Christiani, adeo tamen erat animo ac moribus barbarus, ut ne sexui quidem muliebri, vel innocuæ parvulorum parceret ætati, quin universos atrocitate ferina morti per tormenta contraderet, multo tempore totas eorum provincias debacchando pervagatus, ac totum genus Anglorum Britannia finibus erasurum se esse deliberans. Sed nec religioni Christianæ, quæ apud eos exorta erat, aliquid impendebat honoris; quippe cum usque hodie moris sit Britonum fidem religionemque Anglorum pro nihilo habere, neque in aliquo eis magis communicare quam paganis. Allatum est autem caput Edwini regis Eboracum, et illatum postea in ecclesiam beati Apostoli Petri, quam ipse cœpit, sed successor ejus Oswaldus perfecit, ut supra docuimus, positum est in porticu sancti Papæ Gregorii, a cujus ipse discipulis verbum vitæ susceperat.

Turbatis itaque rebus Northanhumbrorum hujus articulo cladis, cum nil alicubi præsidii nisi in fuga esse videretur, Paulinus, assumpta secum regina Ethelberga, quam pridem adduxerat, rediit Cantiam navigio, atque ab Honorio archiepiscopo et rege Eadbaldo multum honorifice susceptus est. Venit autem illuc, duce Basso milite regis Edwini fortissimo, habens secum Eanfledam filiam, et Wuscfrean filium Edwini, necnon et Iffi filium Osfridi filii ejus, quos postea mater metu Eadbaldi et Oswaldi regum misit in Galliam nutriendos regi Dagoberto, (qui erat amicus illius;) ibique ambo in infantia defuncti, et juxta honorem vel regiis pueris, vel innocentibus Christi, congruum, in ecclesia sepulti sunt. Attulit quoque secum vasa pretiosa Edwini regis perplura, in quibus et crucem magnam auream, et calicem aureum consecratum ad ministerium altaris, quæ hactenus in ecclesia Cantia conservata monstrantur.

Quo in tempore Rhofensis ecclesia pastorem minime habebat, eo quod Romanus præsul illius, ad Honorium papam a Justo archiepiscopo legatarius missus, absorptus

fuerat fluctibus Italici maris; ac per hoc curam illius præfatus Paulinus, invitatione Honorii antistitis et Eadbaldi regis, suscepit ac tenuit, usque dum et ipse suo tempore ad cœlestia regna cum gloriosi fructu laboris ascendit. In qua ecclesia moriens pallium quoque, quod a Romano papa acceperat, reliquit. Reliquerat autem in ecclesia sua Eboracensi Jacobum diaconum, virum utique ecclesiasticum et sanctum, qui multo exhinc tempore in ecclesia manens magnas antiquo hosti prædas docendo et baptizando eripuit; cujus nomine vicus, in quo maxime solebat habitare, juxta Cataractam, usque hodie cognominatur. Qui, quoniam cantandi in ecclesia erat peritissimus, recuperata postmodum pace in provincia, et crescente numero fidelium, etiam magister ecclesiasticæ cantionis juxta morem Romanorum seu Cantuariorum multis cœpit exsistere; et ipse senex ac plenus dierum, juxta Scripturas, patrum viam secutus est.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

### BOOK II.

#### CHAP. I.—

#### OF THE DEATH OF THE BLESSED POPE GREGORY.

At this time, that is, in the year of our Lord 605, the blessed Pope Gregory, after having most gloriously governed the Roman apostolic see thirteen years six months and ten days, died, and was translated to the eternal see of the heavenly kingdom. Of whom, in regard that he by his zeal converted our nation, the English, from the power of Satan to the faith of Christ, it behoves us to discourse more at large in our Ecclesiastical History, for we may and ought rightly to call him our apostle; because, whereas he bore the pontifical power over all the world, and was placed over the churches already reduced to the faith of truth, he made our nation, till then given up to idols, the church of Christ, so that we may be allowed thus to attribute to him the character of an apostle; for though he is not an apostle to others, yet he is so to us; for we are the seal of his apostleship in our Lord.

Pope Gregory dies.

605.

He was by nation a Roman, son of Gordian, deducing his race from ancestors that were not only noble, but religious. And Felix, once bishop of the same apostolical see, a man of great honour in Christ and his church, was his great-grandfather. Nor did he exercise the nobility of religion with less virtue of devotion than his parents and kindred. But that worldly nobility which he seemed to have, by the help of the Divine Grace, he entirely used to gain the honour of eternal dignity; for soon quitting his secular habit, he repaired to a monastery, wherein he began to behave himself with so much grace of perfection, that (as he was afterwards wont with tears to testify) his mind was above all transitory things; that he despised all that is subject to change; that he used to think of nothing but what was heavenly; that whilst detained by the body, he by contemplation broke through the bonds of the flesh; and that he loved death, which is a terror to almost all men, as the entrance into life, and the reward of his labours. This he said of himself, not to boast of his progress in virtue, but rather to bewail the decay, which, as he was wont to declare, he imagined he sustained through the pastoral care. In short, when he was, one day, in private, discoursing with Peter, his deacon, after having enumerated the former virtues of his mind, he with grief added, "But now, on account of the pastoral care, it is entangled with the affairs of laymen, and after so beautiful an appearance of repose, is defiled with the dust of earthly action. And after having wasted itself by condescending to many things that are without, when it desires the inward things, it returns to them less qualified to

Life of Pope Gregory.

605.

enjoy them. I therefore consider what I endure, I consider what I have lost, and when I behold that loss, what I bear appears the more grievous.”

This the holy man said out of the excess of his humility. But it becomes us to believe that he lost nothing of his monastic perfection by his pastoral care, but rather that he improved the more through the labour of the conversion of many, than by the former repose of his conversation, and chiefly because, whilst exercising the pontifical function, he provided to have his house made a monastery. And when first drawn from the monastery, ordained to the ministry of the altar, and sent as respondent to Constantinople from the apostolic see, though he now mixed with the people of the palace, yet he intermitted not his former heavenly life; for some of the brethren of his monastery, having out of brotherly charity followed him to the royal city, he kept them for the better following of regular observances, viz. that at all times, by their example, as he writes himself, he might he held fast to the calm shore of prayer, as it were with the cable of an anchor, whilst he should be tossed up and down by the continual waves of worldly affairs; and daily among them, by the intercourse of studious reading, strengthen his mind whilst it was shaken with temporal concerns. By their company he was not only guarded against earthly assaults, but more and more inflamed in the exercises of a heavenly life.

For they persuaded him to give a mystical exposition of the book of holy Job, which is involved in great obscurity; nor could he refuse to undertake that work, which brotherly affection imposed on him for the future benefit of many; but in a wonderful manner, in five and thirty books of exposition, taught how that same book is to be understood literally; how to be referred to the mysteries of Christ and the church; and in what sense it is to be adapted to every one of the faithful. This work he began when legate in the royal city, but finished it at Rome after being made pope. Whilst he was still in the royal city, he, by the assistance of the Divine grace of Catholic truth, crushed in its first rise a heresy newly started, concerning the state of our resurrection. For Eutychius, bishop of that city, taught, that our body, in that glory of resurrection, would be impalpable, and more subtile than the wind and air; which he hearing, proved by force of truth, and by the instance of the resurrection of our Lord, that this doctrine was every way opposite to the Christian faith. For the Catholic faith is that our body, sublimed by the glory of immortality, is rendered subtile by the effect of the spiritual power, but palpable by the reality of nature; according to the example of our Lord's body, of which, when risen from the dead, he himself says to his disciples, “Touch me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” In asserting which faith, the venerable Father Gregory so earnestly laboured against the rising heresy, and by the assistance of the most pious emperor, Tiberius Constantine, so fully suppressed it, that none has been since found to revive it.

He likewise composed another notable book, called “Liber Pastoralis,” wherein he manifestly showed what sort of persons ought to be preferred to govern the church; how such rulers ought to live; with how much discretion to instruct every one of their hearers, and how seriously to reflect every day on their own frailty. He also wrote forty homilies on the Gospel, which he equally divided into two volumes; and composed four books of dialogues, into which, at the request of Peter, his deacon, he collected the miracles of the saints whom he either knew, or had heard to be most

renowned in Italy, for an example to posterity to lead their lives; to the end that, as in his books of Expositions, what virtues ought to be laboured for, so by describing the miracles of saints, he might make known the glory of those virtues. He further, in twenty-two homilies, discovered how much light there is concealed in the first and last parts of the prophet Ezekiel, which seemed the most obscure. Besides which, he wrote the "Book of Answers," to the questions of Augustine, the first bishop of the English nation, as we have shown above, inserting the same book entire in this history; besides the useful little "Synodical Book," which he composed with the bishops of Italy on the necessary affairs of the church; and also familiar letters to certain persons. And it is the more wonderful that he could write so many and such large volumes, in regard that almost all the time of his youth, to use his own words, he was often tormented with pains in his bowels, and a weakness of his stomach, whilst he was continually suffering from slow fever. But whereas at the same time he carefully reflected that, as the Scripture testifies, "Every son that is received is scourged," the more he laboured and was depressed under those present evils, the more he assured himself of his eternal salvation.

Thus much may be said of his immortal genius, which could not be restrained by such severe bodily pains; for other popes applied themselves to building, or adorning of churches with gold and silver, but Gregory was entirely intent upon gaining souls. Whatsoever money he had, he diligently took care to distribute and give to the poor, that his righteousness might endure for ever, and his horn be exalted with honour; so that what blessed Job said might be truly said of him, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was the eye to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." And a little after: "If I have withheld," says he, "the poor from their desire; or have caused the eye of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof. For of my youth compassion grew up with me, and from my mother's womb it came forth with me."

To these works of piety and righteousness this also may be added, that he saved our nation, by the preachers he sent hither, from the teeth of the old enemy, and made it partaker of eternal liberty; in whose faith and salvation rejoicing, and worthily commending the same, he in his exposition on holy Job, says, "Behold, a tongue of Britain, which only knew how to utter barbarous language, has long since begun to resound the Hebrew Hallelujah! Behold, the once swelling ocean now serves prostrate at the feet of the saints; and its barbarous motions, which earthly princes could not subdue with the sword, are now, through the fear of God, bound by the mouths of priests with words only; and he that when an infidel stood not in awe of fighting troops, now a believer, fears the tongues of the humble! For by reason that the virtue of the Divine knowledge is infused into it by precepts, heavenly words, and conspicuous miracles, it is curbed by the dread of the same Divinity, so as to fear to act wickedly, and bends all its desires to arrive at eternal glory." In which words holy Gregory declares this also, that St. Augustine and his companions brought the English

to receive the truth, not only by the preaching of words, but also by showing of heavenly signs. The holy Pope Gregory, among other things, caused masses to be celebrated in the churches of the apostles, Peter and Paul, over their bodies. And in the celebration of masses, he added three words full of great goodness and perfection: “And dispose our days in thy peace, and preserve us from eternal damnation, and rank us in the number of thy elect, through Christ our Lord.”

He governed the church in the days of the Emperors Mauritius and Phocas, but passing out of this life in the second year of the same Phocas, he departed to the true life which is in heaven. His body was buried in the church of St. Peter the Apostle, before the sacristy, on the 4th day of March, to rise one day in the same body in glory with the rest of the holy pastors of the church. On his tomb was written this epitaph:—

Earth! take that body which at first you gave,  
Till God again shall raise it from the grave.  
His soul amidst the stars finds heavenly day;  
In vain the gates of darkness make essay  
On him whose death but leads to life the way.  
To the dark tomb, this prelate, though decreed,  
Lives in all places by his pious deed.  
Before his bounteous board pale Hunger fled;  
To warm the poor he fleecy garments spread;  
And to secure their souls from Satan's power,  
He taught by sacred precepts every hour.  
Nor only taught; but first th' example led,  
Lived o'er his rules, and acted what he said.  
To English Saxons Christian truth he taught,  
And a believing flock to heaven he brought.  
This was thy work and study, this thy care,  
Offerings to thy Redeemer to prepare.  
For these to heavenly honours raised on high,  
Where thy reward of labours ne'er shall die.

Nor is the account of St. Gregory, which has been handed down to us by the tradition of our ancestors, to be passed by in silence, in relation to his motives for taking such interest in the salvation of our nation. It is reported, that some merchants, having just arrived at Rome on a certain day, exposed many things for sale in the market-place, and abundance of people resorted thither to buy: Gregory himself went with the rest, and, among other things, some boys were set to sale, their bodies white, their countenances beautiful, and their hair very fine. Having viewed them, he asked, as is said, from what country or nation they were brought? and was told, from the island of Britain, whose inhabitants were of such personal appearance. He again inquired whether those islanders were Christians, or still involved in the errors of paganism? and was informed that they were pagans. Then fetching a deep sigh from the bottom of his heart, “Alas! what pity,” said he, “that the author of darkness is possessed of men of such fair countenances; and that being remarkable for such graceful aspects, their minds should be void of inward grace.” He therefore again asked, what was the

name of that nation? and was answered, that they were called Angles. “Right,” said he, “for they have an angelic face, and it becomes such to be coheirs with the angels in heaven. What is the name,” proceeded he, “of the province from which they are brought?” It was replied, that the natives of that province were called Deiri. “Truly are they *De iri*,” said he, “withdrawn from wrath, and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that province called?” They told him his name was Ælla; and he, alluding to the name, said, “Hallelujah, the praise of God the Creator must be sung in those parts.”

Then repairing to the bishop of the Roman apostolical see, (for he was not himself then made pope,) he entreated him to send some ministers of the word into Britain to the nation of the English, by whom it might be converted to Christ; declaring himself ready to undertake that work, by the assistance of God, if the apostolic pope should think fit to have it so done. Which not being then able to perform, because, though the pope was willing to grant his request, yet the citizens of Rome could not be brought to consent that so noble, so renowned, and so learned a man should depart the city; as soon as he was himself made pope, he perfected the long-desired work, sending other preachers, but himself by his prayers and exhortations assisting the preaching, that it might be successful. This account, as we have received it from the ancients, we have thought fit to insert in our Ecclesiastical History.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. II.—

AUGUSTINE ADMONISHED THE BISHOPS OF THE BRITONS TO CATHOLIC PEACE AND UNITY, AND TO THAT EFFECT WROUGHT A HEAVENLY MIRACLE IN THEIR PRESENCE; OF THE VENGEANCE THAT PURSUED THEM FOR THEIR CONTEMPT.

In the meantime, Augustine, with the assistance of King Ethelbert, drew together to a conference the bishops, or doctors, of the next province of the Britons, at a place which is to this day called Augustine's Ac, that is, Augustine's Oak, on the borders of the Wiccii and West Saxons; and began by brotherly admonitions to persuade them, that preserving Catholic unity with him, they should undertake the common labour of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. For they did not keep Easter Sunday at the proper time, but from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon; which computation is contained in a revolution of eighty-four years. Besides, they did several other things which were against the unity of the church. When, after a long disputation, they did not comply with the entreaties, exhortations, or rebukes of Augustine and his companions, but preferred their own traditions before all the churches in the world, which in Christ agree among themselves, the holy father, Augustine, put an end to this troublesome and tedious contention, saying, "Let us beg of God, who causes those who are of one mind to live in his Father's house, that he will vouchsafe, by his heavenly tokens, to declare to us, which tradition is to be followed; and by what means we are to find our way to his heavenly kingdom. Let some infirm person be brought, and let the faith and practice of those, by whose prayers he shall be healed, be looked upon as acceptable to God, and be adopted by all." The adverse party unwillingly consenting, a blind man of the English race was brought, who having been presented to the priests of the Britons, found no benefit or cure from their ministry; at length, Augustine, compelled by real necessity, bowed his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying that the lost sight might be restored to the blind man, and by the corporeal enlightening of one man, the light of spiritual grace might be kindled in the hearts of many of the faithful. Immediately the blind man received sight, and Augustine was by all declared the preacher of the Divine truth. The Britons then confessed, that it was the true way of righteousness which Augustine taught; but that they could not depart from their ancient customs without the consent and leave of their people. They therefore desired that a second synod might be appointed, at which more of their number would be present.

The synod at Augustine's Oak.
603.
Synod at Augustine's Oak.
603.

This being decreed, there came (as is asserted) seven bishops of the Britons, and many most learned men, particularly from their most noble monastery, which, in the English tongue, is called Bancornaburg, over which the Abbot Dinooth is said to have presided at that time. They that were to go to the aforesaid council, repaired first to a

certain holy and discreet man, who was wont to lead an eremitical life among them, advising with him, whether they ought, at the preaching of Augustine, to forsake their traditions. He answered, "If he is a man of God, follow him."—"How shall we know that?" said they. He replied, "Our Lord saith, Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; if, therefore, Augustine is meek and lowly of heart, it is to be believed that he has taken upon him the yoke of Christ, and offers the same to you to take upon you. But, if he is stern and haughty, it appears that he is not of God, nor are we to regard his words." They insisted again, "And how shall we discern even this?"—"Do you contrive," said the anchorite, "that he may first arrive with his company at the place where the synod is to be held; and if at your approach he shall rise up to you, hear him submissively, being assured that he is the servant of Christ; but if he shall despise you, and not rise up to you, whereas you are more in number, let him also be despised by you."

They did as he directed; and it happened, that when they came, Augustine was sitting on a chair, which they observing, were in a passion, and charging him with pride, endeavoured to contradict all he said. He said to them, "You act in many particulars contrary to our custom, or rather the custom of the universal church, and yet, if you will comply with me in these three points, viz. to keep Easter at the due time; to administer baptism, by which we are again born to God, according to the custom of the holy Roman Apostolic Church; and jointly with us to preach the word of God to the English nation, we will readily tolerate all the other things you do, though contrary to our customs." They answered they would do none of those things, nor receive him as their archbishop; for they alleged among themselves, that "if he would not now rise up to us, how much more will he contemn us, as of no worth, if we shall begin to be under his subjection?" To whom the man of God, Augustine, is said, in a threatening manner, to have foretold, that in case they would not join in unity with their brethren, they should be warred upon by their enemies; and, if they would not preach the way of life to the English nation, they should at their hands undergo the vengeance of death. All which, through the dispensation of the Divine judgment, fell out exactly as he had predicted.

For the warlike king of the English, Ethelfrid, having raised a mighty army, made a very great slaughter of that perfidious nation, at the City of Legions, which by the English is called Legacestir, but by the Britons more rightly Carlegion. Being about to give battle, he observed their priests, who were come together to offer up their prayers to God for the soldiers, standing apart in a place of more safety; he inquired who they were? or what they came together to do in that place? Most of them were of the monastery of Bangor, in which, it is reported, there was so great a number of monks, that the monastery being divided into seven parts, with a ruler over each, none of those parts contained less than three hundred men, who all lived by the labour of their hands. Many of these, having observed a fast of three days, resorted among others to pray at the aforesaid battle, having one Brocmail appointed for their protector, to defend them whilst they were intent upon their prayers, against the swords of the barbarians. King Ethelfrid being informed of the occasion of their coming, said, "If then they cry to their god against us, in truth, though they do not bear arms, yet they fight against us, because they oppose us by

Slaughter of the Britons.

613.

their prayers.” He, therefore, commanded them to be attacked first, and then destroyed the rest of the impious army, not without considerable loss of his own forces. About twelve hundred of those that came to pray are said to have been killed, and only fifty to have escaped by flight. Brocmail turning his back with his men, at the first approach of the enemy, left those whom he ought to have defended, unarmed and exposed to the swords of the enemies. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of the holy Bishop Augustine, though he himself had been long before taken up into the heavenly kingdom; that those perfidious men should feel the vengeance of temporal death also, because they had despised the offer of eternal salvation.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

### CHAP. III.—

## HOW ST. AUGUSTINE MADE MELLITUS AND JUSTUS BISHOPS; AND OF HIS DEATH.

In the year of our Lord 604, Augustine, archbishop of Britain, ordained two bishops, viz. Mellitus and Justus; Mellitus to preach to the province of the East Saxons, who are divided from Kent by the river Thames, and border on the Eastern Sea. Their metropolis is the city of London, which is situated on the bank of the aforesaid river, and is the mart of many nations resorting to it by sea and land. At that time, Sabert, nephew to Ethelbert by his sister Rricula, reigned over the nation, though he was under subjection to Ethelbert, who, as has been said above, had command over all the nations of the English as far as the river Humber. But when this province also received the word of truth, by the preaching of Mellitus, King Ethelbert built the church of St. Paul, in the city of London, where he and his successors should have their episcopal see. As for Justus, Augustine ordained him bishop in Kent, at the city which the English nation named Rhofescestir, from one that was formerly the chief man of it, called Rhof. It is almost twenty-four miles distant from the city of Canterbury to the westward, and contains a church dedicated to St. Andrew, the apostle. King Ethelbert, who built it, bestowed many gifts on the bishops of both those churches, as well as on that of Canterbury, adding lands and possessions for the use of those who were with the bishops.

Mellitus and Justus consecrated.

604.

After this, the beloved of God, Father Augustine, died, and his body was deposited without, close by the church of the apostles, Peter and Paul, above spoken of, by reason that the same was not yet finished, nor consecrated, but as soon as it was dedicated, the body was brought in, and decently buried in the north porch thereof; wherein also were interred the bodies of all the succeeding archbishops, except two only, Theodorus and Berthwald, whose bodies are within that church, because the aforesaid porch could contain no more. Almost in the midst of this church is an altar dedicated in honour of the blessed Pope Gregory, at which every Saturday their service is solemnly performed by the priest of that place. On the tomb of the said Augustine is written this epitaph:

Augustine's death.

605.

“Here rests the Lord Augustine, first archbishop of Canterbury, who, being formerly sent hither by the blessed Gregory, bishop of the city of Rome, and by God’s assistance supported with miracles, reduced King Ethelbert and his nation from the worship of idols to the faith of Christ, and having ended the days of his office in peace, died the 26th day of May, in the reign of the same king.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. IV.—

### LAURENTIUS AND HIS BISHOPS ADMONISH THE SCOTS TO OBSERVE THE UNITY OF THE HOLY CHURCH, PARTICULARLY IN KEEPING OF EASTER; MELLITUS GOES TO ROME.

Laurentius succeeded Augustine in the bishopric, having been ordained thereto by the latter, in his lifetime, lest, upon his death, the state of the church, as yet unsettled, might begin to falter, if it should be destitute of a pastor, though but for one hour. Wherein he also followed the example of the first pastor of the church, that is, of the most blessed prince of the apostles, Peter, who, having founded the church of Christ at Rome, is said to have consecrated Clement his assistant in preaching the Gospel, and at the same time his successor. Laurentius, being advanced to the degree of an archbishop, laboured indefatigably, both by frequent exhortations and examples of piety, to raise to perfection the foundations of the church, which had been so nobly laid. In short, he not only took care of the new church formed among the English, but endeavoured also to employ his pastoral solicitude among the ancient inhabitants of Britain, as also the Scots, who inhabit the island of Ireland, which is next to Britain. For when he understood that the course of life and profession of the Scots in their aforesaid country, as well as of the Britons in Britain, was not truly ecclesiastical, especially that they did not celebrate the solemnity of Easter at the due time, but thought that the day of the resurrection of our Lord was, as has been said above, to be celebrated between the 14th and the 20th of the moon; he wrote, jointly with his fellow-bishops, an exhortatory epistle, entreating and conjuring them to observe unity of peace, and conformity with the church of Christ spread throughout the world. The beginning of which epistle is as follows:—

Laurentius succeeds.

605.

“To our most dear brothers, the lords bishops and abbots throughout all Scotland, Laurentius, Mellitus, and Justus, servants of the servants of God. When the apostolic see, according to the universal custom which it has followed elsewhere, sent us to these western parts to preach to pagan nations, we came into this island, which is called Britain, without possessing any previous knowledge of its inhabitants. We held both the Britons and Scots in great esteem for sanctity, believing that they had proceeded according to the custom of the universal church; but coming acquainted with the errors of the Britons, we thought the Scots had been better; but we have been informed by Bishop Dagan, coming into this aforesaid island, and the Abbot Columbanus in France, that the Scots in no way differ from the Britons in their behaviour; for Bishop Dagan coming to us, not only refused to eat with us, but even to take his repast in the same house where we were entertained.”

His letter to the Scottish prelates.

The same Laurentius and his fellow-bishops wrote a letter to the priests of the Britons, suitable to his rank, by which he endeavoured to confirm them in Catholic unity; but what he gained by so doing the present times still declare.

About this time, Mellitus, bishop of London, went to Rome, to confer with Pope Boniface about the necessary affairs of the English church. And the same most reverend pope, assembling a synod of the bishops of Italy, to prescribe orders for the life and peace of the monks, Mellitus also sat among them, in the eighth year of the reign of the Emperor Phocas, the thirteenth indiction, on the 27th of February, to the end that he also by his authority might confirm such things as should be regularly decreed, and at his return into Britain might carry the same to the churches of the English, to be prescribed and observed; together with letters which the same pope sent to the beloved of God, Archbishop Laurentius, and to all the clergy; as likewise to King Ethelbert and the English nation. This pope was Boniface, who came fourth after Pope Gregory, and who obtained of the Emperor Phocas that the temple called by the ancients Pantheon, as representing all the gods, should be given to the Church of Christ; wherein he, having purified it from contamination, dedicated a church to the holy Mother of God, and to all Christ's martyrs, to the end that, the devils being excluded, the blessed company of the saints might have therein a perpetual memorial.

Mellitus goes to Rome.

610.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. V.—

### HOW, AFTER THE DEATH OF THE KINGS ETHELBERT AND SABERT, THEIR SUCCESSORS RESTORED IDOLATRY; FOR WHICH REASON, BOTH MELLITUS AND JUSTUS DEPARTED OUT OF BRITAIN.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 616, which is the twenty-first year after Augustine and his companions were sent to preach to the English nation, Ethelbert, king of Kent, having most gloriously governed his temporal kingdom fifty-six years, entered into the eternal joys of the kingdom which is heavenly. He was the third of the English kings that had the sovereignty of all the southern provinces that are divided from the northern by the river Humber, and the borders contiguous to the same; but the first of the kings that ascended to the heavenly kingdom. The first who had the like sovereignty was Elli, king of the South Saxons; the second, Celin, king of the West Saxons, who, in their own language, is called Ceaulin; the third, as has been said, was Ethelbert, king of Kent; the fourth was Redwald, king of the East Angles, who, whilst Ethelbert lived, had been subservient to him. The fifth was Edwin, king of the nation of the Northumbrians, that is, of those who live on the north side of the river Humber, who, with great power, commanded all the nations, as well of the English as of the Britons who inhabit Britain, except only the people of Kent, and he reduced also under the dominion of the English the Mevanian islands of the Britons, lying between Ireland and Britain; the sixth was Oswald, the most Christian king of the Northumbrians, who also had the same extent under his command; the seventh, Oswy, brother to the former, held the same dominions for some time, and for the most part subdued and made tributary the nations of the Picts and Scots, which possess the northern parts of Britain: but of these hereafter.

Death of Ethelbert.

616.

King Ethelbert died on the 24th day of the month of February, twenty-one years after he had received the faith, and was buried in St. Martin's porch within the church of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, where also lies his queen, Bertha. Among other benefits which he conferred upon the nation, he also, by the advice of wise persons, introduced judicial decrees, after the Roman model; which, being written in English, are still kept and observed by them. Among which, he in the first place set down what satisfaction should be given by those who should steal any thing belonging to the church, the bishop, or the other clergy, resolving to give protection to those whose doctrine he had embraced.

This Ethelbert was the son of Irminric, whose father was Octa, whose father was Orric, surnamed Oisc, from whom the kings of Kent are wont to be called Oiscings. His father was Hengist, who, being invited by Vortigern, first came into Britain, with his son Oisc, as has been said above.

But after the death of Ethelbert, his son Eadbald ascending the throne, proved very prejudicial to the new church; for he not only refused to embrace the faith of Christ, but was also defiled with such a sort of fornication, as the apostle testifies, was not heard of, even among the Gentiles; for he kept his father's wife. By both which crimes he gave occasion to those to return to their former uncleanness, who, under his father, had, either for favour, or through fear of the king, submitted to the laws of faith and chastity. Nor did the perfidious king escape without Divine punishment and correction; for he was troubled with frequent fits of madness, and possessed by an evil spirit. This confusion was increased by the death of Sabert, king of the East Saxons, who, departing to the heavenly kingdom, left three sons, still pagans, to inherit his temporal crown. They immediately began to profess idolatry, which, during their father's reign, they had seemed a little to abandon, and they granted free liberty to the people under their government to serve idols. And when they saw the bishop, whilst celebrating mass in the church, give the eucharist to the people, they, puffed up with barbarous folly, were wont, as it is reported, to say to him, "Why do you not give us also that white bread, which you used to give to our father Saba, (for so they used to call him,) and which you still continue to give to the people in the church?" To whom he answered, "If you will be washed in that laver of salvation, in which your father was washed, you may also partake of the holy bread of which he partook; but if you despise the laver of life, you may not receive the bread of life." They replied, "We will not enter into that laver, because we do not know that we stand in need of it, and yet we will eat of that bread." And being often earnestly admonished by him, that the same could not be done, nor any one admitted to partake of the sacred oblation without the holy cleansing, at last, they said in anger, "If you will not comply with us in so small a matter as that is which we require, you shall not stay in our province." And accordingly they obliged him and his to depart from their kingdom. Being forced from thence, he came into Kent, to advise with his fellow-bishops, Laurentius and Justus, what was to be done in that case; and it was unanimously agreed, that it was better for them all to return to their own country, where they might serve God in freedom, than to continue without any advantage among those barbarians, who had revolted from the faith. Mellitus and Justus accordingly went away first, and withdrew into France, designing there to await the event of things. But the kings, who had driven from them the preacher of the truth, did not continue long unpunished in their heathenish worship. For marching out to battle against the nation of the Gewissæ, they were all slain with their army. However, the people, having been once turned to wickedness, though the authors of it were destroyed, would not be corrected, nor return to the unity of faith and charity which is in Christ.

Mellitus and Justus  
leave Britain.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VI.—

### LAURENTIUS, BEING REPROVED BY THE APOSTLE, CONVERTS KING EADBALD TO CHRIST; MELLITUS AND JUSTUS ARE RECALLED.

Laurentius, being about to follow Mellitus and Justus, and to quit Britain, ordered his bed to be laid the night before in the church of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, which has been often mentioned before; wherein having laid himself to take some rest, after he had poured out many prayers and tears to God for the state of the church, he fell asleep; in the dead of night, the blessed prince of the apostles appeared to him, and scourging him a long time with apostolical severity, asked of him, “Why he would forsake the flock which he had committed to him? or to what shepherds he would commit Christ’s sheep that were in the midst of wolves? Have you,” said he, “forgotten my example, who, for the sake of those little ones, whom Christ recommended to me in token of his affection, underwent at the hands of infidels and enemies of Christ, bonds, stripes, imprisonment, afflictions, and lastly, the death of the cross, that I might at last be crowned with him?” Laurentius, the servant of Christ, being excited by these words and stripes, the very next morning repaired to the king, and taking off his garment, showed the scars of the stripes which he had received. The king, astonished, asked, “Who had presumed to give such stripes to so great a man?” And was much frightened when he heard that the bishop had suffered so much at the hands of the apostle of Christ for his salvation. Then abjuring the worship of idols, and renouncing his unlawful marriage, he embraced the faith of Christ, and being baptized, promoted the affairs of the church to the utmost of his power.

Laurentius remains.  
616.

He also sent over into France, and recalled Mellitus and Justus, and commanded them freely to return to govern their churches, which they accordingly did, one year after their departure. Justus, indeed, returned to the city of Rochester, where he had before presided; but the Londoners would not receive Bishop Mellitus, choosing rather to be under their idolatrous high priests; for King Eadbald had not so much authority in the kingdom as his father, nor was he able to restore the bishop to his church against the will and consent of the pagans. But he and his nation, after his conversion to our Lord, diligently followed the Divine precepts. Lastly, he built the church of the holy Mother of God, in the monastery of the most blessed prince of the apostles, which was afterwards consecrated by Archbishop Mellitus.

Mellitus and Justus recalled.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VII.—

### BISHOP MELLITUS BY PRAYER QUENCHES A FIRE IN HIS CITY.

In this king's reign, the holy Archbishop Laurentius was taken up to the heavenly kingdom, and was buried in the church and monastery of the holy Apostle Peter, close by his predecessor Augustine, on the 2nd day of the month of February. Mellitus, who was bishop of London, was the third archbishop of

Mellitus succeeds as archbishop.

619.

Canterbury from Augustine; Justus, who was still living, governed the church of Rochester. These ruled the church of the English with much industry and labour, and received letters of exhortation from Boniface, bishop of the Roman apostolic see, who presided over the church after Deusdedit, in the year of our Lord 619. Mellitus laboured under an infirmity of body, that is, the gout; but his mind was sound, cheerfully passing over all earthly things, and always aspiring to love, seek, and attain to those which are celestial. He was noble by birth, but much nobler in mind.

In short, that I may give one testimony of his virtue, by which the rest may be guessed at, it happened once that the city of Canterbury, being by carelessness set on fire, was in danger of being consumed by the spreading conflagration; water was thrown over the fire in vain; a considerable part of the city was already destroyed, and the fierce flame advancing towards the bishop, when he, confiding in the Divine assistance, where human failed, ordered himself to be carried towards the raging fire, that was spreading on every side. The church of the four crowned Martyrs was in the place where the fire raged most. The bishop being carried thither by his servants, the sick man averted the danger by prayer, which a number of strong men had not been able to perform by much labour. Immediately, the wind, which blowing from the south had spread the conflagration throughout the city, turning to the north, prevented the destruction of those places that had lain in its way, and then ceasing entirely, the flames were immediately extinguished. And thus, this man of God, whose mind was inflamed with the fire of Divine charity, and who was wont to drive away the powers of the air by his frequent prayers, from doing harm to himself, or his people, was deservedly allowed to prevail over the worldly winds and flames, and to obtain that they should not injure him or his.

This archbishop also, having ruled the church five years, departed to heaven in the reign of King Eadbald, and was buried with his predecessors in the monastery and church, which we have so often mentioned, of the most blessed prince of the apostles, in the year of our Lord's incarnation 624, on the 24th day of April.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VIII.—

### POPE BONIFACE SENDS THE PALL AND AN EPISTLE TO JUSTUS, SUCCESSOR TO MELLITUS.

Justus, bishop of Rochester, immediately succeeded Mellitus in the archbishopric. He consecrated Romanus bishop of that see in his own stead, having obtained leave of ordaining bishops from Pope Boniface, whom we mentioned above to have been successor to Deusdedit: of which licence this is the form:

Justus succeeds.

624.

“Boniface, to his most beloved brother Justus: Not only the contents of your letter, but the perfection which your work has obtained, has informed us how devoutly and diligently you have laboured, my brother, for the Gospel of Christ; for Almighty God has not forsaken either the mystery of his name, or the fruit of your labours, having himself faithfully promised to the preachers of the Gospel, ‘Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;’ which promise his mercy has particularly manifested in this ministry of yours, opening the hearts of nations to receive the mystery of your preaching. For he has enlightened the acceptable course of your endeavours, by the approbation of his grace; granting a plentiful increase to your faithful management of the talents committed to you, and which you may secure for many generations. This is by that reward conferred on you, who, constantly adhering to the ministry enjoined you, with laudable patience await the redemption of that nation, whose salvation is set on foot that they may profit by your merits, our Lord himself saying, ‘He that perseveres to the end shall be saved.’ You are, therefore, saved by the hope of patience, and the virtue of endurance, to the end that the hearts of infidels, being cleansed from their natural and superstitious disease, might obtain the mercy of their Redeemer: for having received the letters of our son Ethelwald, we perceive with how much knowledge of the sacred word your mind, my brother, has brought over his mind to the belief in real conversion and the true faith. Therefore, firmly confiding in the long-suffering of the Divine clemency, we believe there will, through the ministry of your preaching, ensue most full salvation not only of the nations subject to him, but also of those that neighbour round about; to the end, that as it is written, the reward of a perfect work may be conferred on you by our Lord, the giver of all good things; and that the universal confession of all nations, having received the mystery of the Christian faith, may declare, that their ‘Sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.’

Boniface’s letter to Justus.

“We have also, my brother, encouraged by zeal for what is good, sent you by the bearer of these, the pall, which we have only given leave to use in the celebration of the sacred mysteries; granting you likewise to ordain bishops when there shall be occasion, through the mercy of our Lord; that so the Gospel of Christ, by the preaching of many, may be spread abroad in all the nations that are not yet converted. You must, therefore, endeavour, my brother, to preserve with unblemished sincerity



of mind that which you have received through the favour of the Apostolic See, as an emblem whereof you have obtained so principal an ornament to be borne on your shoulders. And make it your business, imploring the Divine goodness, so to behave yourself, that you may present before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge that is to come, the rewards of the favour granted you, not with guiltiness, but with the benefit of souls.

“God preserve you in safety, most dear brother!”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. IX.—

### THE REIGN OF KING EDWIN, AND HOW PAULINUS, COMING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, FIRST CONVERTED HIS DAUGHTER AND OTHERS TO THE FAITH OF CHRIST.

At this time the nation of the Northumbrians, that is, the nation of the Angles, that live on the north side of the river Humber, with their king, Edwin, received the faith, through the preaching of Paulinus, above mentioned. This Edwin, as a reward of his receiving the faith, and as an earnest of his share in the heavenly kingdom, received an increase of that which he enjoyed on earth, for he reduced under his dominion all the borders of Britain that were provinces either of the aforesaid nation, or of the Britons, a thing which no British king had ever done before; and he in like manner subjected to the English the Mevanian islands, as has been said above. The first whereof, which is to the southward, is the largest in extent, and most fruitful, containing nine hundred and sixty families, according to the English computation; the other above three hundred.

Edwin, king of Northumbria.

625.

The occasion of this nation's embracing the faith was, their aforesaid king being allied to the kings of Kent, having taken to wife Ethelberga, otherwise called Tate, daughter to King Ethelbert. He having by his ambassadors asked her in marriage of her brother Eadbald, who then reigned in Kent, was answered, "That it was not lawful to marry a Christian virgin to a pagan husband, lest the faith and the mysteries of the heavenly King should be profaned by her cohabiting with a king that was altogether a stranger to the worship of the true God." This answer being brought to Edwin by his messengers, he promised in no manner to act in opposition to the Christian faith, which the virgin professed; but would give leave to her, and all that went with her, men or women, priests or ministers, to follow their faith and worship after the custom of the Christians. Nor did he deny, but that he would embrace the same religion, if, being examined by wise persons, it should be found more holy and more worthy of God.

Queen Ethelberga.

Hereupon the virgin was promised, and sent to Edwin, and pursuant to what had been agreed on, Paulinus, a man beloved of God, was ordained bishop, to go with her, and by daily exhortations, and celebrating the heavenly mysteries, to confirm her, and her company, lest they should be corrupted by the company of the pagans. Paulinus was ordained bishop by the Archbishop Justus, on the 21st day of July, in the year of our Lord 625, and so he came to King Edwin with the aforesaid virgin, as a companion of their union in the flesh. But his mind was wholly bent upon reducing the nation to which he was sent to the knowledge of truth; according to the words of the apostle, "To espouse her to one husband, that he might present her as a chaste virgin to Christ." Being come into that province, he laboured much, not only to retain those

that went with him, by the help of God, that they should not revolt from the faith, but, if he could, to convert some of the pagans to a state of grace by his preaching. But, as the apostle says, though he laboured long in the word, “The god of this world blinded the minds of them that believed not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them.”

The next year, there came into the province a certain assassin, called Eumer, sent by the king of the West Saxons, whose name was Quichelm, in hopes at once to deprive King Edwin of his kingdom and his life. He had a two-edged dagger, dipped in poison, to the end, that if the wound were not sufficient to kill the king, it might be performed by the venom. He came to the king on the first day of Easter, at the river Derwent, where then stood the regal city, and being admitted as if to deliver a message from his master, whilst he was in an artful manner delivering his pretended embassy, he started on a sudden, and drawing the dagger under his garment, assaulted the king; which Lilla, the king’s most beloved minister, observing, having no buckler at hand to secure the king from death, he interposed his own body to receive the stroke; but the wretch struck so home, that he wounded the king through the knight’s body. Being then attacked on all sides with swords, he in that confusion also slew another soldier, whose name was Forthhere.

An assassin, Eumer, assaults Edwin.

626.

On that same holy night of Easter Sunday, the queen had brought forth to the king a daughter, called Eanfled. The king, in the presence of Bishop Paulinus, gave thanks to his gods for the birth of his daughter; and the bishop, on the other hand, returned thanks to Christ, and endeavoured to persuade the king, that by his prayers to him he had obtained, that the queen should bring forth the child in safety, and without much pain. The king, delighted with his words, promised, that in case God would grant him life and victory over the king by whom the assassin had been sent, he would cast off his idols, and serve Christ; and in earnest that he would perform his promise, he delivered up that same daughter to Paulinus, to be consecrated to Christ. She was the first baptized of the nation of the Northumbrians, on Whitsunday, with twelve others of her family. At that time, the king being recovered of the wound which he had received, marched with his army against the nation of the West Saxons; and having begun the war, either slew or subdued all those that he had been informed had conspired to murder him. Returning thus victorious into his own country, he would not immediately and unadvisedly embrace the mysteries of the Christian faith, though he no longer worshipped idols, ever since he made the promise that he would serve Christ; but thought fit first at leisure to be instructed, by the venerable Paulinus, in the knowledge of faith, and to confer with such as he knew to be the wisest of his prime men, to advise what they thought was fittest to be done in that case. And being a man of extraordinary sagacity, he often sat alone by himself a long time, silent as to his tongue, but deliberating in his heart how he should proceed, and which religion he should adhere to.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. X.—

## POPE BONIFACE, BY LETTER, EXHORTS THE SAME KING TO EMBRACE THE FAITH.

At this time he received letters from Pope Boniface, exhorting him to embrace the faith, which were as follows.

Boniface's letter.

625.

### Copy Of The Letter Of The Holy And Apostolic Pope Of The Church Of Rome, Boniface, To The Glorious Edwin, King Of The English.

“To the illustrious Edwin, king of the English, Bishop Boniface, the servant of the servants of God: Although the power of the Supreme Deity cannot be expressed by human speech, as consisting in its own greatness, and in invisible and unsearchable eternity, so that no sharpness of wit can comprehend or express it; yet, in regard that the goodness of God, to give some notion of itself, having opened the doors of the heart, has mercifully, by secret inspiration, infused into the minds of men such things as he is willing shall be declared concerning himself, we have thought fit to extend our priestly care to make known to you the fulness of the Christian faith; to the end that, informing you of the Gospel of Christ, which our Saviour commanded should be preached to all nations, they might offer to you the cup of life and salvation.

“Thus the goodness of the Supreme Majesty, which by the word of his command made and created all things, the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, disposing the order by which they should subsist, hath, with the counsel of his coeternal Word, and the unity of the Holy Spirit, formed man after his own likeness, out of the slime of the earth; and granted him such supereminent prerogative, as to place him above all others; so that, observing the command which was given him, his continuance should be to eternity. This God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is an undivided Trinity, mankind, from the east unto the west, by confession of faith to the saving of their souls, do worship and adore, as the Creator of all things, and their own Maker; to whom also the heights of empire, and the powers of the world, are subject, because the bestowal of all kingdoms is granted by his disposition. It hath pleased him, therefore, of his great mercy, and for the greater benefit of all his creatures, by his Holy Spirit wonderfully to kindle the cold hearts also of the nations seated at the extremities of the earth in the knowledge of himself.

“For we suppose your excellency has, from the country lying so near, fully understood what the clemency of our Redeemer has effected in the enlightening of our glorious son, King Eadbald, and the nations under his subjection; we therefore trust, with assured confidence of celestial hope, that his wonderful gift will be also conferred on you; since we understand that your illustrious consort, which is known to be a part of your body, is illuminated with the reward of eternity, through the

regeneration of holy baptism. We have, therefore, taken care by these presents, with all possible affection, to exhort your illustrious selves, that, abhorring idols and their worship, and contemning the follies of temples, and the deceitful flatteries of auguries, you believe in God the Father Almighty, and his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, to the end that, being discharged from the bonds of captivity to the Devil, by believing you may, through the co-operating power of the holy and undivided Trinity, be partaker of the eternal life.

“How great guilt they lie under, who adhere to the pernicious superstitions and worship of idolatry, appears by the examples of the perdition of those whom they worship. Wherefore it is said of them by the Psalmist, ‘All the gods of the Gentiles are devils, but the Lord made the heavens.’ And again, ‘They have eyes and do not see, they have ears and do not hear, they have noses and do not smell, they have hands and do not feel, they have feet and do not walk. Therefore they are like those that confide in them.’ For how can they have any power to yield assistance, that are made for you out of corruptible matter, by the hands of your inferiors and subjects, to wit, on whom you have by human art bestowed an inanimate similitude of members? Who, unless they be moved by you, will not be able to walk; but, like a stone fixed in one place, being so formed, and having no understanding, but absorbed in insensibility, have no power of doing harm or good. We cannot, therefore, upon mature deliberation, find out how you come to be so deceived as to follow and worship those gods, to whom you yourselves have given the likeness of a body.

“It behoves you, therefore, by taking upon you the sign of the holy cross, by which the human race is redeemed, to root out of your hearts all those arts and cunning of the Devil, who is ever jealous of the works of the Divine goodness, and to lay hold and break in pieces those which you have hitherto made your material gods. For the very destruction and abolition of these, which could never receive life or sense from their makers, may plainly demonstrate to you how worthless they were which you till then had worshipped, when you yourselves, who have received life from the Lord, are certainly better than they, as Almighty God has appointed you to be descended, after many ages and through many generations, from the first man whom he formed. Draw near, then, to the knowledge of Him who created you, who breathed the breath of life into you, who sent his only-begotten Son for your redemption, to cleanse you from original sin, that being delivered from the power of the Devil’s wickedness, He might bestow on you a heavenly reward.

“Hear the words of the preachers, and the Gospel of God, which they declare to you, to the end that, believing, as has been said, in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the indivisible Trinity, having put to flight the sensualities of devils, and driven from you the suggestions of the venomous and deceitful enemy, and being born again by water and the Holy Ghost, you may, through his assistance and bounty, dwell, in the brightness of eternal glory, with Him in whom you shall believe. We have moreover sent you the blessing of your protector, the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, that is, a shirt, with one gold ornament, and one garment of Ancyra, which we pray your highness to accept with the same good will as it is friendly intended by us.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XI.—

### POPE BONIFACE ADVISES QUEEN ETHELBERGA TO USE HER BEST ENDEAVOURS FOR THE SALVATION OF HER CONSORT, KING EDWIN.

The same pope also wrote to King Edwin's consort, Ethelberga, to this effect:—

Boniface's letter to Ethelberga.

#### The Copy Of The Letter Of The Most Blessed And Apostolic Boniface, Pope Of The City Of Rome, To Ethelberga, King Edwin'S Queen.

“To the illustrious lady his daughter, Queen Ethelberga, Boniface, bishop, servant of the servants of God: The goodness of our Redeemer has with much providence offered the means of salvation to the human race, which he rescued, by the shedding of his precious blood, from the bonds of captivity to the Devil; so that making his name known in divers ways to the Gentiles, they might acknowledge their Creator by embracing the mystery of the Christian faith, which thing, the mystical purification of your regeneration plainly shows to have been bestowed upon the mind of your highness by God's bounty. Our mind, therefore, has been much rejoiced in the benefit of our Lord's goodness, for that he has vouchsafed, in your conversion, to kindle a spark of the orthodox religion, by which he might the more easily inflame in his love the understanding, not only of your glorious consort, but also of all the nation that is subject to you.

625.

“For we have been informed by those who came to acquaint us with the laudable conversion of our illustrious son, King Eadbald, that your highness also, having received the wonderful sacrament of the Christian faith, continually excels in the performance of works pious and acceptable to God. That you likewise carefully refrain from the worship of idols, and the deceits of temples and auguries, and having changed your devotion, are so wholly taken up with the love of your Redeemer, as never to cease lending your assistance for the propagation of the Christian faith. And our fatherly charity having earnestly inquired concerning your illustrious husband, we were given to understand, that he still served abominable idols, and would not yield obedience or give ear to the voice of the preachers. This occasioned us no small grief, for that part of your body still remained a stranger to the knowledge of the supreme and undivided Trinity. Whereupon we, in our fatherly care, did not delay to admonish your Christian highness, exhorting you, that, with the help of the Divine inspiration, you will not defer to do that which, both in season and out of season, is required of us; that with the co-operating power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, your husband also may be added to the number of Christians; to the end that you may thereby enjoy the rights of marriage in the bond of a holy and unblemished union. For it is written, ‘They two shall be in one flesh.’ How can it be said, that there is unity between you, if

he continues a stranger to the brightness of your faith, by the interposition of dark and detestable error?

“Therefore, applying yourself continually to prayer, do not cease to beg of the Divine Mercy the benefit of his illumination; to the end, that those whom the union of carnal affection has made in a manner but one body, may, after death, continue in perpetual union, by the bond of faith. Persist, therefore, illustrious daughter, and to the utmost of your power endeavour to soften the hardness of his heart by insinuating the Divine precepts; making him sensible how noble the mystery is which you have received by believing, and how wonderful is the reward which, by the new birth, you have merited to obtain. In flame the coldness of his heart by the knowledge of the Holy Ghost, that by the abolition of the cold and pernicious worship of paganism, the heat of Divine faith may enlighten his understanding through your frequent exhortations; that the testimony of the holy Scripture may appear the more conspicuous, fulfilled by you, ‘The unbelieving husband shall be saved by the believing wife.’ For to this effect you have obtained the mercy of our Lord’s goodness, that you may return with increase the fruit of faith, and the benefits entrusted in your hands; for through the assistance of His mercy we do not cease with frequent prayers to beg that you may be able to perform the same.

“Having premised thus much, in pursuance of the duty of our fatherly affection, we exhort you, that when the opportunity of a bearer shall offer, you will as soon as possible acquaint us with the success which the Divine Power shall grant by your means in the conversion of your consort, and of the nation subject to you; to the end, that our solicitude, which earnestly expects what appertains to the salvation of you and yours, may, by hearing from you, be set at rest; and that we, discerning more fully the brightness of the Divine propitiation diffused in you, may with a joyful confession abundantly return due thanks to God, the Giver of all good things, and to St. Peter, the prince of the apostles. We have, moreover, sent you the blessing of your protector, St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, that is, a silver looking-glass, and a gilt ivory comb, which we entreat your glory will receive with the same kind affection as it is known to be sent by us.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XII.—

### KING EDWIN IS PERSUADED TO BELIEVE, BY A VISION HE HAD SEEN WHEN HE WAS IN EXILE.

Thus the aforesaid Pope Boniface wrote for the salvation of King Edwin and his nation. But a heavenly vision, which the Divine Mercy was pleased once to reveal to this king, when he was in banishment at the court of Redwald, king of the Angles, was of no little use in urging him to embrace and understand the doctrines of salvation. Paulinus, therefore, perceiving that it was a very difficult task to incline the king's lofty mind to the humility of the way of salvation, and to embrace the mystery of the cross of life, and at the same time using both exhortation with men, and prayer to God, for his and his subjects' salvation; at length, as we may suppose, it was shown him in spirit what was the vision that had been formerly revealed to the king. Nor did he lose any time, but immediately admonished the king to perform the vow which he had made, when he received the oracle, promising to put the same in execution, if he were delivered from the trouble he was at that time under, and should be advanced to the throne.

Edwin's vision.

626.

The vision was this. When Ethelfrid, his predecessor, was persecuting him, he for many years wandered in a private manner through several places and kingdoms, and at last came to Redwald, beseeching him to give him protection against the snares of his powerful persecutor. Redwald willingly admitted him, and promised to perform what he requested. But when Ethelfrid understood that he had appeared in that province, and that he and his companions were hospitably entertained by Redwald, he sent messengers to offer that king a great sum of money to murder him, but without effect. He sent a second and a third time, bidding more and more each time, and threatening to make war on him if he refused. Redwald, either terrified by his threats, or gained by his gifts, complied with his request, and promised either to kill Edwin, or to deliver him up to the ambassadors. This being observed by a trusty friend of his, he went into his chamber, where he was going to bed, for it was the first hour of the night; and calling him out, discovered what the king had promised to do with him, adding, "If, therefore, you think fit, I will this very hour conduct you out of this province, and lead you to a place where neither Redwald nor Ethelfrid shall ever find you." He answered, "I thank you for your good will, yet I cannot do what you propose, or be guilty of breaking the compact I have made with so great a king, when he has done me no harm, nor offered me any injury; but, on the contrary, if I must die, let it rather be by his hand than by that of any meaner person. For whither shall I now fly, when I have for so many years been a vagabond through all the provinces of Britain, to escape the hands of my enemies?" His friend being gone, Edwin remained alone without, and sitting with a heavy heart before the palace, began to be overwhelmed with many thoughts, not knowing what to do, or which way to turn himself.



When he had remained a long time in silence, brooding over his misfortunes in anguish of mind, he, on a sudden, in the dead of night, saw approaching a person, whose face and habit were equally strange, at which unexpected sight he was not a little frightened. The stranger coming close up, saluted him, and asked him, "Why he sat there alone and melancholy on a stone at that time, when all others were taking their rest, and were fast asleep?" Edwin, in his turn, asked, "What it was to him, whether he spent the night within doors or abroad?" The stranger, in reply, said, "Do not think that I am ignorant of the cause of your grief, your watching, and sitting alone without. For I know who you are, and why you grieve, and the evils which you fear will fall upon you. But tell me, what reward you will give the man that shall deliver you out of this anguish, and persuade Redwald neither to do you any harm himself, nor to deliver you up to be murdered by your enemies." Edwin replied, "That he would give that person all that he was able for so singular a favour." The other further added, "What if I also assure you, that you shall overcome your enemies, and surpass in power, not only all your own progenitors, but even all that have reigned before you over the English nation?" Edwin, encouraged by these questions, did not hesitate to promise that he would make a suitable return to him who should so highly oblige him. Then said the other, "But if he who foretells so much good as is to befall you, can also give you better advice for your life and salvation than any of your progenitors or kindred ever heard of, do you consent to submit to him, and to follow his wholesome counsel?" Edwin did not hesitate to promise that he would in all things follow the directions of that man who should deliver him from so many calamities, and raise him to a throne.

Having received this answer, the person that talked to him laid his hand on his head, saying, "When this sign shall be given you, remember this present discourse that has passed between us, and do not delay the performance of what you now promise." Having uttered these words, he is said to have immediately vanished, that the king might understand it was not a man, but a spirit, that had appeared to him.

Whilst the royal youth still sat there alone, glad of the comfort he had received, but seriously considering who he was, or whence he came, that had so talked to him, his above-mentioned friend came to him, and saluting him with a pleasant countenance, "Rise," said he, "go in, and compose yourself to sleep without fear; for the king's resolution is altered, and he designs to do you no harm, but rather to perform the promise which he made you; for when he had privately acquainted the queen with his intention of doing what I told you before, she dissuaded him from it, declaring it was unworthy of so great a king to sell his good friend in such distress for gold, and to sacrifice his honour, which is more valuable than all other ornaments, for the lucre of money." In short, the king did as he was advised, and not only refused to deliver up the banished man to his enemy's messengers, but assisted him to recover his kingdom. For as soon as the ambassadors were returned home, he raised a mighty army to make war on Ethelfrid; who, meeting him with much inferior forces, (for Redwald had not given him time to gather all his power,) was slain on the borders of the kingdom of Mercia, on the east side of the river that is called Idle. In this battle, Redwald's son, called Regnhere, was killed; and thus Edwin, pursuant to the oracle he had received, not only escaped the danger from the king his enemy, but, by his death, succeeded him in the throne.

King Edwin, therefore, delaying to receive the word of God at the preaching of Paulinus, and using for some time, as has been said, to sit several hours alone, and seriously to ponder with himself what he was to do, and what religion he was to follow, the man of God came to him, laid his right hand on his head, and asked, "Whether he knew that sign?" The king, in a trembling condition, was ready to fall down at his feet, but he raised him up, and in a familiar manner said to him, "Behold, by the help of God you have escaped the hands of the enemies whom you feared. Behold you have of his gift obtained the kingdom which you desired. Take heed not to delay that which you promised to perform; embrace the faith, and keep the precepts of Him who, delivering you from temporal adversity, has raised you to the honour of a temporal kingdom; and if, from this time forward, you shall be obedient to his will, which through me he signifies to you, he will not only deliver you from the everlasting torments of the wicked, but also make you partaker with him of his eternal kingdom in heaven."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XIII.—

### OF THE COUNCIL HE HELD WITH HIS CHIEF MEN ABOUT EMBRACING THE FAITH OF CHRIST, AND HOW THE HIGH PRIEST PROFANED HIS OWN ALTARS.

The king, hearing these words, answered, that he was both willing and bound to receive the faith which he taught; but that he would confer about it with his principal friends and counsellors, to the end that if they also were of his opinion, they might all together be cleansed in Christ the Fountain of Life.

Edwin's nobles are converted also.

627.

Paulinus consenting, the king did as he had said; for, holding a council with the wise men, he asked of every one in particular what he thought of the new doctrine, and the new worship that was preached? To which the chief of his own priests, Coifi, immediately answered, "O king, consider what this is which is now preached to us; for I verily declare to you, that the religion which we have hitherto professed has, as far as I can learn, no virtue in it. For none of your people has applied himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I; and yet there are many who receive greater favours from you, and are more preferred than I, and are more prosperous in all their undertakings. Now if the gods were good for any thing, they would rather forward me, who have been more careful to serve them. It remains, therefore, that if upon examination you find those new doctrines, which are now preached to us, better and more efficacious, we immediately receive them without any delay."

Another of the king's chief men, approving of his words and exhortations, presently added: "The present life of man, O king, seems to me, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your commanders and ministers, and a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and snow prevail abroad; the sparrow, I say, flying in at one door, and immediately out at another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry storm; but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, into the dark winter from which he had emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space, but of what went before, or what is to follow, we are utterly ignorant. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed." The other elders and king's counsellors, by Divine inspiration, spoke to the same effect.

But Coifi added, that he wished more attentively to hear Paulinus discourse concerning the God whom he preached; which he having by the king's command performed, Coifi, hearing his words, cried out, "I have long since been sensible that there was nothing in that which we worshipped; because the more diligently I sought after truth in that worship, the less I found it. But now I freely confess, that such truth evidently appears in this preaching as can confer on us the gifts of life, of salvation, and of eternal happiness. For which reason I advise, O king, that we instantly abjure and set fire to those temples and altars which we have consecrated without reaping

any benefit from them.” In short, the king publicly gave his license to Paulinus to preach the Gospel, and renouncing idolatry, declared that he received the faith of Christ: and when he inquired of the high priest who should first profane the altars and temples of their idols, with the enclosures that were about them, he answered, “I; for who can more properly than myself destroy those things which I worshipped through ignorance, for an example to all others, through the wisdom which has been given me by the true God?” Then immediately, in contempt of his former superstitions, he desired the king to furnish him with arms and a stallion; and mounting the same, he set out to destroy the idols; for it was not lawful before for the high priest either to carry arms, or to ride on any but a mare. Having, therefore, girt a sword about him, with a spear in his hand, he mounted the king’s stallion and proceeded to the idols. The multitude beholding it, concluded he was distracted; but he lost no time, for as soon as he drew near the temple he profaned the same, casting into it the spear which he held; and rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he commanded his companions to destroy the temple, with all its enclosures, by fire. This place where the idols were is still shown, not far from York, to the eastward, beyond the river Derwent, and is now called Godmundingham, where the high priest, by the inspiration of the true God, profaned and destroyed the altars which he had himself consecrated.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XIV.—

### KING EDWIN AND HIS NATION BECOME CHRISTIANS; PAULINUS BAPTIZES THEM.

King Edwin, therefore, with all the nobility of the nation, and a large number of the common sort, received the faith, and the washing of regeneration, in the eleventh year of his reign, which is the year of the incarnation of our Lord 627, and about one hundred and eighty after the coming of the English into Britain.

Paulinus baptizes them.

627.

He was baptized at York, on the holy day of Easter, being the 12th of April, in the church of St. Peter the Apostle, which he himself had built of timber, whilst he was catechising and instructing in order to receive baptism. In that city also he appointed the see of the bishopric of his instructor and bishop, Paulinus. But as soon as he was baptized, he took care, by the direction of the same Paulinus, to build in the same place a larger and nobler church of stone, in the midst whereof that same oratory which he had first erected should be enclosed. Having, therefore, laid the foundation, he began to build the church square, encompassing the former oratory. But before the wall was raised to the proper height, the wicked assassination of the king left that work to be finished by Oswald his successor. Paulinus, for the space of six years from that time, that is, till the end of the reign of that king, by his consent and favour, preached the word of God in that country, and all that were preordained to eternal life believed and were baptized. Among whom were Osfrid and Eadfrid, King Edwin's sons, who were both born to him whilst he was in banishment, of Quenberga, the daughter of Cearl, king of the Mercians.

Afterwards other children of his by Queen Ethelberga were baptized, viz. Ethelhun and his daughter Etheldrith, and another, Wuscfrea, a son; the first two of which were snatched out of this life whilst they were still in the white garments of infancy, and buried in the church at York. Iffi, the son of Osfrid, was also baptized, and many more noble and illustrious persons. So great was then the fervour of the faith, as is reported, and the desire of the washing of salvation among the nation of the Northumbrians, that Paulinus at a certain time coming with the king and queen to the royal country-seat, which is called Adgefrin, stayed there with them thirty-six days, fully occupied in catechising and baptizing; during which days, from morning till night, he did nothing else but instruct the people resorting from all villages and places, in Christ's saving word; and when instructed, he washed them with the water of absolution in the river Glen, which is close by. This town, under the following kings, was abandoned, and another was built instead of it, at the place called Melmin.

These things happened in the province of the Bernicians; but in that of the Deiri also, where he was wont often to be with the king, he baptized in the river Swale, which runs by the village Cataract; for as yet oratories, or fonts, could not be made in the early infancy of the church in those parts. But he built a church in Campodonum, which afterwards the pagans, by whom King Edwin was slain, burnt, together with all

the town. In the place of which the later kings built themselves a country-seat in the country called Loidis. But the altar, being of stone, escaped the fire, and is still preserved in the monastery of the most reverend abbot and priest, Thridwulf, which is in Elmete wood.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XV.—

### THE PROVINCE OF THE EAST ANGLES RECEIVES THE FAITH OF CHRIST.

EDWIN was so zealous for the worship of truth, that he likewise persuaded Eorpwald, king of the East Saxons, and son of Redwald, to abandon his idolatrous superstitions, and with his whole province to receive the faith and sacraments of Christ.

The East Angles converted.

627.

And indeed his father Redwald had long before been admitted to the sacrament of the Christian faith in Kent, but in vain; for on his return home, he was seduced by his wife and certain perverse teachers, and turned back from the sincerity of the faith; and thus his latter state was worse than the former; so that, like the ancient Samaritans, he seemed at the same time to serve Christ and the gods whom he had served before; and in the same temple he had an altar to sacrifice to Christ, and another small one to offer victims to devils; which temple, Aldwulf, king of that same province, who lived in our time, testifies had stood until his time, and that he had seen it when he was a boy. The aforesaid King Redwald was noble by birth, though ignoble in his actions, being the son of Tytilus, whose father was Wuffa, from whom the kings of the East Angles are called Wuffings.

But Eorpwald was, not long after he had embraced the Christian faith, slain by one Richbert, a pagan; and from that time the province was under error for three years, till the crown came into the possession of Sigebert, brother to the same Eorpwald, a most Christian and learned man, who was banished, and went to live in France during his brother's life, and was there admitted to the sacraments of the faith, whereof he made it his business to cause all his province to partake as soon as he came to the throne. His exertions were much promoted by the Bishop Felix, who, coming to Honorius, the archbishop, from Burgundy, where he had been born and ordained, and having told him what he desired, he sent him to preach the word of life to the aforesaid nation of the Angles. Nor were his good wishes in vain; for the pious husbandman reaped therein a large harvest of believers, delivering all that province (according to the signification of his name, Felix) from long iniquity and infelicity, and bringing it to the faith and works of righteousness, and the gifts of everlasting happiness. He had the see of his bishopric appointed him in the city Dommoc, and having presided over the same province with pontifical authority seventeen years, he ended his days there in peace.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVI.—

### HOW PAULINUS PREACHED IN THE PROVINCE OF LINDSEY; AND OF THE REIGN OF EDWIN.

Paulinus also preached the word to the province of Lindsey, which is the first on the south side of the river Humber, stretching out as far as the sea; and he first converted the governor of the city of Lincoln, whose name was Blecca, with his whole family. He likewise built, in that city, a stone church of beautiful workmanship; the roof of which having either fallen through age, or been thrown down by enemies, the walls are still to be seen standing, and every year some miraculous cures are generally wrought in that place, for the benefit of those who have faith to seek the same. In that church, Justus having departed to Christ, Paulinus consecrated Honorius bishop in his stead, as will be hereafter mentioned in its proper place. A certain abbot and priest of the monastery of Peartaneu, a man of singular veracity, whose name was Deda, in relation to the faith of this province told me that one of the oldest persons had informed him, that he himself had been baptized at noon-day, by the Bishop Paulinus, in the presence of King Edwin, with a great number of the people, in the river Trent, near the city, which in the English tongue is called Tiovulfingacestir; and he was also wont to describe the person of the same Paulinus, that he was tall of stature, a little stooping, his hair black, his visage meagre, his nose slender and aquiline, his aspect both venerable and majestic. He had also with him in the ministry, James, the deacon, a man of zeal and great fame in Christ's church, who lived even to our days.

Lincolnshire  
converted to the faith.

628.

It is reported that there was then such perfect peace in Britain, wheresoever the dominion of King Edwin extended, that, as is now proverbially said, a woman with her new-born babe might walk throughout the island, from sea to sea, without receiving any harm. That king took such care for the good of his nation, that in several places where he had seen clear springs near the highways, he caused stakes to be fixed, with brass dishes hanging at them, for the conveniency of travellers; nor durst any man touch them for any other purpose than that for which they were designed, either through the dread they had of the king, or for the affection which they bore him. His dignity was so great throughout his dominions, that his banners were not only borne before him in battle, but even in time of peace, when he rode about his cities, towns, or provinces, with his officers, the standard-bearer was wont to go before him. Also, when he walked along the streets, that sort of banner which the Romans call Tufa, and the English, Tuuf, was in like manner borne before him.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVII.—

### EDWIN RECEIVES LETTERS OF EXHORTATION FROM POPE HONORIUS, WHO ALSO SENDS PAULINUS THE PALL.

At that time Honorius, successor to Boniface, was prelate of the Apostolic See, who, when he understood that the nation of the Northumbrians, with their king, had been, by the preaching of Paulinus, converted to the faith and confession of Christ, sent the pall to the said Paulinus, and with it letters of exhortation to King Edwin, exciting him, with fatherly charity, that his people should persist in the faith of truth, which they had received. The contents of which letter were as follows:—

Honorius sends a letter to Edwin, and the pall to Paulinus.

634.

“To his most noble son, and excellent lord, Edwin, king of the Angles, Bishop Honorius, servant of the servants of God, greeting: The integrity of your Christian character, in the worship of your Creator, is so much inflamed with the fire of faith, that it shines out far and near, and being reported throughout the world, brings forth plentiful fruits of your labours. For your conduct as a king is based upon the knowledge which by orthodox preaching you have obtained of your God and Creator, whereby you believe and worship him, and as far as man is able, pay him the sincere devotion of your mind. For what else are we able to offer to our God, but in endeavouring to worship, and to pay him our vows, persisting in good actions, and confessing him the Creator of mankind? And, therefore, most excellent son, we exhort you with such fatherly charity as is requisite, that you with careful mind, and constant prayers, every way labour to preserve this gift, that the Divine Mercy has vouchsafed to call you to his grace; to the end, that He, who has been pleased to deliver you from all errors, and bring you to the knowledge of his name, may likewise prepare you mansions in the heavenly country. Employing yourselves, therefore, in reading the works of my Lord Gregory, your preacher, of apostolical memory, represent before yourself the tenderness of his doctrine, which he zealously employed for the sake of your souls; that his prayers may increase your kingdom and people, and present you blameless before Almighty God. We are preparing with a willing mind immediately to grant those things which you hoped would be by us ordained for your priests, which we do on account of the sincerity of your faith, which has been often made known to us in terms of praise by the bearers of these presents. We have sent two palls to the two metropolitans, Honorius and Paulinus; to the intent, that when either of them shall be called out of this world to his Creator, the other may, by this authority of ours, substitute another bishop in his place; which privilege we are induced to grant, as well in regard to your charitable affection, as of the large and extensive provinces which lie between us and you; that we may in all things afford our concurrence to your devotion, according to your desires. May God’s Grace preserve your excellency in safety!”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVIII.—

### HONORIUS, WHO SUCCEEDED JUSTUS IN THE BISHOPRIC OF CANTERBURY, RECEIVES THE PALL AND LETTERS FROM POPE HONORIUS.

In the mean time Archbishop Justus was taken up to the heavenly kingdom, on the 10th of November, and Honorius, who was elected to the see in his stead, came to Paulinus to be ordained, and meeting him at Lincoln, was there consecrated the fifth prelate of the church of Canterbury from Augustine. To him also the aforesaid Pope Honorius sent the pall, and a letter, wherein he ordains the same that he had before established in his epistle to King Edwin, viz. that when either of the bishops of Canterbury or of York shall depart this life, the survivor of the same degree shall have power to ordain a priest in the room of him that is departed; that it might not be necessary always to travel to Rome, at so great a distance by sea and land, to ordain an archbishop. Which letter we have also thought fit to insert in this our history:—

Honorius succeeds to Justus as archbishop of Canterbury.

634.

“Honorius to his most beloved brother Honorius: Among the many good gifts which the mercy of our Redeemer is pleased to bestow on his servants, the munificent bounty of his love is never more conspicuous than when he permits us by brotherly intercourse, as it were face to face, to exhibit our mutual love. For which gift we continually return thanks to his Majesty; and we humbly beseech him, that he will ever confirm your piety in preaching the Gospel, and bringing forth fruit, and following the rule of your master and head, his holy servant, St. Gregory; and that, for the advancement of his church, he may by your means add farther increase; to the end, that the souls already won by you and your predecessors, beginning with our Lord Gregory, may grow strong and be farther extended by faith and works in the fear of God and charity; that so the promises of the word of God may hereafter be brought to pass in you; and that this voice may call you away to the everlasting happiness. ‘Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ And again, ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ And we, most beloved brothers, offering you these words of exhortation, out of our abundant charity, do not hesitate further to grant those things which we perceive may be suitable for the privileges of your churches.

The pope’s letter to Honorius.

“Wherefore, pursuant to your request, and to that of the kings our sons, we do by these presents, in the name of St. Peter, prince of the apostles, grant you authority, that when the Divine Grace shall call either of you to himself, the survivor shall ordain a bishop in the room of him that is deceased. To which effect also we have sent a pall to each of you, for celebrating the said ordination; that by the authority of our precept, you may make an ordination acceptable to God; because the long distance of

sea and land that lies between us and you, has obliged us to grant you this, that no loss may happen to your church in any way, on account of any pretence whatever, but that the devotion of the people committed to you may be more fully extended. God preserve you in safety, most dear brother! Given the 11th day of June, in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of our most pious emperor, Heraclius, and the twenty-third after his consulship; in the twenty-third of the reign of his son Constantine, and the third after his consulship; and in the third year of the most illustrious Cæsar, his son Heraclius, the seventh indiction; that is, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord, 634.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XIX.—

### HOW THE AFORESAID HONORIUS FIRST, AND AFTERWARDS JOHN, WROTE LETTERS TO THE NATION OF THE SCOTS, CONCERNING THE OBSERVANCE OF EASTER, AND THE PELAGIAN HERESY.

The same Pope Honorius also wrote to the Scots, whom he had found to err in the observance of Easter, as has been shown above, earnestly exhorting them not to think their small number, placed in the utmost borders of the earth, wiser than all the ancient and modern churches of Christ, throughout the world;

The pope's letter to the Scots.

634.

and not to celebrate a different Easter, contrary to the Paschal calculation, and the synodical decrees of all the bishops upon earth. Likewise John, who succeeded Severinus, successor to the same Honorius, being yet but pope elect, sent to them letters of great authority and erudition, for correcting the same error; evidently showing, that Easter Sunday is to be found between the fifteenth moon and the twenty-first, as was proved in the Council of Nice. He also in the same epistle admonished them to be careful to crush the Pelagian heresy, which he had been informed was reviving among them. The beginning of the epistle was as follows:—

“To our most beloved and most holy Tomianus, Columbanus, Cromanus, Dimanus, and Baithanus, bishops; to Cromanus, Hernianus, Laistranus, Scellanus, and Segenus, priests; to Saranus and the rest of the Scottish doctors, or abbots, health from Hilarius, the archpriest, and keeper of the place of the holy Apostolic See, John, the deacon, and elect in the name of God; from John, chief secretary and keeper of the place of the holy Apostolic See, and from John, the servant of God, and counsellor of the same Apostolic See. The writings which were brought by the bearers to Pope Severinus, of holy memory, were left, at his death, without an answer to the things contained in them. Lest such intricate questions should remain unresolved, we opened the same, and found that some in your province, endeavouring to revive a new heresy out of an old one, contrary to the orthodox faith, do through ignorance reject our Easter, when Christ was sacrificed; and contend that the same should be kept on the fourteenth moon with the Hebrews.”

By this beginning of the epistle it evidently appears that this heresy sprang up among them of very late times, and that not all their nation, but only some of them, had fallen into the same.

After having laid down the manner of keeping Easter, they add this concerning the Pelagians in the same epistle.

“And we have also understood that the poison of the Pelagian heresy again springs up among you; we therefore exhort you, that you put away from your thoughts all such venomous and superstitious wickedness. For you cannot be ignorant how that execrable heresy has been condemned; for it has not only been abolished these two hundred years, but it is also daily anathematized for ever by us; and we exhort you, now that the weapons of their controversy have been burnt, not to rake up the ashes. For who will not detest that insolent and impious proposition, ‘That man can live without sin of his own free will, and not through God’s grace?’ And in the first place, it is the folly of blasphemy to say, that man is without sin, which none can be, but only the Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who was conceived and born without sin; for all other men, being born in original sin, are known to bear the mark of Adam’s prevarication, even whilst they are without actual sin, according to the saying of the prophet, ‘For behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.’ ”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XX.—

### EDWIN BEING SLAIN, PAULINUS RETURNS INTO KENT, AND HAS THE BISHOPRIC OF ROCHESTER CONFERRED ON HIM.

Edwin reigned most gloriously seventeen years over the nations of the English and the Britons, six whereof, as has been said, he also was a servant in the kingdom of Christ. Cadwalla, king of the Britons, rebelled against him, being supported by Penda, a most warlike man of the royal race of the Mercians, and who from that time governed that nation twenty-two years with various success: a great battle being fought in the plain that is called Heathfield, Edwin was killed on the 12th of October, in the year of our Lord 633, being then forty-seven years of age, and all his army was either slain or dispersed. In the same war also, before him, fell Osfrid, one of his sons, a warlike youth; Eanfrid, another of them, compelled by necessity, went over to King Penda, and was by him afterwards, in the reign of Oswald, slain, contrary to his oath. At this time a great slaughter was made in the church or nation of the Northumbrians; and the more so because one of the commanders, by whom it was made, was a pagan, and the other a barbarian, more cruel than a pagan; for Penda, with all the nation of the Mercians, was an idolater, and a stranger to the name of Christ; but Cadwalla, though he bore the name and professed himself a Christian, was so barbarous in his disposition and behaviour, that he neither spared the female sex, nor the innocent age of children, but with savage cruelty put them to tormenting deaths, ravaging all their country for a long time, and resolving to cut off all the race of the English within the borders of Britain. Nor did he pay any respect to the Christian religion which had newly taken root among them; it being to this day the custom of the Britons not to pay any respect to the faith and religion of the English, nor to correspond with them any more than with pagans. King Edwin's head was brought to York, and afterwards into the church of St. Peter the Apostle, which he had begun, but which his successor Oswald finished, as has been said before. It was deposited in the porch of St. Gregory, Pope, from whose disciples he had received the word of life.

Edwin is slain at  
Heathheld.

633.

The affairs of the Northumbrians being in confusion, by reason of this disaster, without any prospect of safety except in flight, Paulinus, taking with him Queen Ethelberga, whom he had before brought thither, returned into Kent by sea, and was honourably received by the Archbishop Honorius and King Eadbald. He came thither under the conduct of Bassus, a most valiant soldier of King Edwin, having with him Eanfleda, the daughter, and Wuscfreda, the son of Edwin, as also Iffi, the son of Osfrid, his son, whom afterwards the mother, for fear of Eadbald and Oswald, sent over into France to be bred up by King Dagobert, who was her friend; and there they both died in infancy, and were buried in the church, with the honour due to royal children and to innocents of Christ. He also brought with him many rich goods of King Edwin,

among which were a large gold cross, and a golden chalice, dedicated to the use of the altar, which are still preserved, and shown in the church of Canterbury.

At that time the church of Rochester had no bishop, for Romanus, the prelate thereof, being sent to Pope Honorius, by Archbishop Justus, as his legate, was drowned in the Italian Sea; and thereupon, Paulinus, at the request of Archbishop Honorius, and King Eadbald, took upon him the charge of the same, and held it until he departed to heaven, with the glorious fruits of his labours; and, dying in that church, he left there the pall which he had received from the pope of Rome. He had left behind him in his church at York, James, the deacon, a holy ecclesiastic, who continuing long after in that church, by teaching and baptizing, rescued much prey from the power of the old enemy of mankind; from whom the village, where he mostly resided, near Cataract, has its name to this day. He was extraordinarily skilful in singing, and when the province was afterwards restored to peace, and the number of the faithful increased, he began to teach many of the church to sing, according to the custom of the Romans, or of the Cantuarrians. And being old and full of days, as the Scripture says, he followed the way of his forefathers.

Paulinus becomes  
bishop of Rochester.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA GENTIS ANGLORUM.

### LIBER TERTIUS.

#### CAP. I.—

### UT PRIMI SUCCESSORES EDWINI REGIS ET FIDEM SUÆ GENTIS PRODIDERUNT, ET REGNUM PORRO OSWALDUS CHRISTIANISSIMUS REX UTRUMQUE RESTAURAVIT.

At interfecto in pugna Edwino, suscepit pro illo regnum Deirorum, (de qua provincia ille generis prosapiam et primordia regni habuerat,) filius patrum ejus Elfrici, vocabulo Osricus, qui, ad prædicationem Paulini, fidei erat sacramentis imbutus. Porro regnum Berniciorum, (nam in has duas provincias gens Northanhumbrorum antiquitus divisa erat,) suscepit filius Ethelfridi, qui de illa provincia generis et regni originem duxerat, nomine Eanfridus. Siquidem tempore toto, quo regnavit Edwinus, filii præfati Regis Ethelfridi, qui ante eum regnaverant, cum magna nobilium juventute apud Scotos sive Pictos exulabant, ibique ad doctrinam Scotorum catechizati et baptismatis sunt gratia recreati. Qui ut, mortuo rege inimico, patriam sunt redire permisi, accepit primus eorum, quem diximus, Eanfridus, regnum Berniciorum. Uterque rex, ut terreni regni infulas sortitus est, sacramenta regni cœlestis, quibus initiatus erat, anathematizando prodidit; ac se priscis idololatriæ sordibus polluendum perdendumque restituit.

Nec mora, utrumque rex Britonum Cadwalla impia manu, sed justa ultione, peremit. Et primo quidem proxima æstate Osricum, dum se in oppido municipio temerarie obsedisset, erumpens subito cum suis omnibus imparatum cum toto exercitu delevit. Dein cum anno integro provincias Northanhumbrorum non ut rex victor possideret, sed quasi tyrannus sæviens disperderet ac tragica cæde dilaceraret, tandem Eanfridum inconsulte ad se cum duodecim lectis militibus, postulandæ pacis gratia, venientem, simili sorte damnavit. Infaustus ille annus et omnibus bonis exosus usque hodie permanet, tam propter apostasiam regum Anglorum, qua se fidei sacramentis exuerant, quam propter vesanam Britonici regis tyrannidem. Unde cunctis placuit regum tempora computantibus, ut, ablata de medio regum perfidorum memoria, idem annus sequentis regis, id est, Oswaldi, viri Deo dilecti, regno assignaretur; quo, post occisionem fratris Eanfridi, superveniente cum parvo exercitu, sed fide Christi munito, infandus Britonum dux cum immensis illis copiis, quibus nihil resistere posse jactabat, interemptus est, in loco, qui lingua Anglorum Denisesburna, id est Rivus Denisi, vocatur.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. II.—

### UT DE LIGNO CRUCIS, QUOD IDEM REX CONTRA BARBAROS PUGNATURUS EREXERAT, INTER INNUMERA SANITATUM MIRACULA, QUIDAM A DOLENTIS BRACHII SIT LANGUORE CURATUS.

Ostenditur autem usque hodie et in magna veneratione habetur locus ille, ubi venturus ad hanc pugnam Oswaldus signum sanctæ crucis erexit, ac flexis genibus Dominum deprecatus est, ut in tanta rerum necessitate suis cultoribus cœlesti succurreret auxilio. Denique fertur, quia facta citato opere cruce, ac fovea præparata, in qua statui deberet, ipse fide fervens hanc arripuerit, ac foveæ imposuerit, atque utraque manu erectam tenuerit, donec aggesto a militibus pulvere, terræ figeretur. Et hoc facto, elata in altum voce, cuncto exercitui proclamaverit, “Flectamus omnes genua, et Dominum omnipotentem vivum ac verum in commune deprecemur, uti nos ab hoste superbo ac feroce sua miseratione defendat; scit enim Ipse quia justa pro salute gentis nostræ bella suscepimus.” Fecerunt omnes ut jusserat; sic incipiente diluculo in hostem progressi juxta meritum suæ fidei victoria potiti sunt. In cujus loco orationis innumeræ virtutes sanitatum noscuntur esse patratae, ad indicium videlicet ac memoriam fidei regis; nam et usque hodie multi de ipso ligno sacrosanctæ crucis astulas excidere solent, quas cum in aquas miserint eisque languentes homines aut pecudes potaverint sive aspserint, mox sanitati restituuntur.

Vocatur locus ille lingua Anglorum Hefenfeld, quod dici potest Latine “Cœlestis Campus,” quod certo utique præsagio futurorum antiquitus nomen accepit; significans nimirum quod ibidem cœleste erigendum tropæum, cœlestis inchoanda victoria, cœlestia usque hodie forent miracula celebranda. Est autem locus ille juxta murum, ad aquilonem, quo Romani quondam ob arcendos barbarorum impetus, totam a mari ad mare præcinxere Britanniam, ut supra docuimus. In quo videlicet loco consuetudinem multo jam tempore fecerant fratres Hagulstadensis ecclesiæ, quæ non longe abest, advenientes omni anno, pridie quam postea idem Rex Oswaldus occisus est, vigiliis pro salute animæ ejus facere, plurimamque psalmodiarum laude celebrata, victimam pro eo mane sacræ oblationis offerre. Qui etiam, crescente bona consuetudine, nuper ibidem ecclesia constructa atque dedicata, sacratiorem et cunctis honorabiliorem locum omnibus fecere. Nec immerito, quia nullum, ut comperimus, fidei Christianæ signum, nulla ecclesia, nullum altare in tota Berniciorum gente erectum est, priusquam hoc sacræ crucis vexillum novus militiæ dux, dictante fidei devotione, contra hostem immanissimum pugnaturus statueret.

Nec ab re est unum e pluribus, quæ ad hanc crucem patrata sunt, virtutis miraculum narrare. Quidam de fratribus Hagulstadensis ecclesiæ, nomine Bothelmus, qui nunc usque superest, ante paucos annos dum incautius forte noctu in glacie incederet, repente corruens brachium contrivit, ac gravissima fracturæ ipsius cœpit molestia fatigari; ita ut ne ad os quidem adducere ipsum brachium ullatenus, dolore arcente,

valeret. Qui cum die quadam mane audiret unum de fratribus ad locum ejusdem sanctæ crucis ascendere disposuisse, rogavit, ut aliquam sibi partem de illo ligno venerabili rediens afferret, credere se dicens quia per hoc, donante Domino, salutem posset consequi. Fecit ille ut rogatus est, et reversus ad vesperam, sedentibus jam ad mensam fratribus, obtulit ei aliquid de veteri musco, quo superficies ligni erat obsita. Qui cum sedens ad mensam non haberet ad manum ubi oblatum sibi munus reponeret, misit hoc in sinum sibi; et dum iret cubitum, oblitus hoc alicubi deponere, permisit suo in sinu permanere. At medio noctis tempore, cum evigilaret, sensit nescio quid frigidi suo lateri adjacere, admotaque manu requirere quid esset, ita sanum brachium manumque reperit ac si nihil unquam tanti languoris habuisset.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. III.—

UT IDEM REX, POSTULANS DE GENTE SCOTORUM  
ANTISTITEM, ACCEPERIT AIDANUM, EIDEMQUE IN  
INSULA LINDISFARNENSI SEDEM EPISCOPATUS  
DONAVERIT.

Idem ergo Oswaldus mox ubi regnum suscepit, desiderans totam, cui præesse cœpit, gentem fidei Christianæ gratia imbui, cujus experimenta permaxima in expugnandis barbaris jam ceperat, misit ad majores natu Scotorum, inter quos exsulans ipse baptismatis sacramenta, cum his, qui secum erant, militibus, consecutus erat; petens, ut sibi mitteretur antistes, cujus doctrina ac ministerio gens, quam regebat, Anglorum, Dominicæ fidei et dona disceret, et susciperet sacramenta. Neque aliquanto tardius, quod petiit, impetravit; accepit namque pontificem Aidanum, summæ mansuetudinis et pietatis ac moderaminis virum, habentemque zelum Dei, quamvis non plene secundum scientiam. Namque diem Paschæ Dominicum more suæ gentis, cujus sæpius mentionem fecimus, a quarta decima luna usque ad vicesimam observare solebat. Hoc etenim ordine septentrionalis Scotorum provincia et omnis natio Pictorum illo adhuc tempore Pascha Dominicum celebrabat, æstimans se in hac observatione sancti ac laude digni patris Anatolii scripta secutum; quod an verum sit, peritus quisque facillime cognoscit. Porro gentes Scotorum, quæ in australibus Hiberniæ insulæ partibus morabantur, jamdudum ad admonitionem apostolicæ sedis antistitis, Pascha canonico ritu observare didicerunt.

Venienti igitur ad se episcopo, rex locum sedis episcopalis in insula Lindisfarnensi, ubi ipse petebat, tribuit. Qui videlicet locus, accedente ac recedente rheumate, bis quotidie instar insulæ maris circumluitur undis, bis renudato littore contiguus terræ redditur; atque ejus admonitionibus humiliter ac libenter in omnibus auscultans ecclesiam Christi in regno suo multum diligenter ædificare ac dilatare curavit. Ubi pulcherrimo sæpe spectaculo contigit, ut, evangelizante antistite, qui Anglorum linguam perfecte non noverat, ipse rex suis ducibus ac ministris interpres verbi existeret cœlestis; quia nimirum tam longo exsilii sui tempore linguam Scotorum jam plene didicerat. Exin cœpere plures per dies de Scotorum regione venire Britanniam, atque illis Anglorum provinciis, quibus regnavit Rex Oswaldus, magna devotione verbum fidei prædicare et credentibus gratiam baptismi, quicumque sacerdotali erant gradu præditi, ministrare. Construebantur ergo ecclesiæ per loca, confluebant ad audiendum verbum Dei populi gaudentes, donabantur munere regio possessiones et territoria ad instituenda monasteria, imbuebantur præceptoribus Scotis parvuli Anglorum, una cum majoribus studiis et observatione disciplinæ regularis.

Nam monachi erant maxime, qui ad prædicandum venerant. Monachus ipse episcopus Aidanus, utpote de insula, quæ vocatur Hii, destinatus; cujus monasterium in cunctis pene septentrionalium Scotorum et omnium Pictorum monasteriis non parvo tempore arcem tenebat, regendisque eorum populis præerat. Quæ videlicet insula ad jus

quidem Britanniae pertinet, non magno ab ea freto discreta, sed donatione Pictorum, qui illas Britanniae plagas incolunt, jamdudum monachis Scotorum tradita, eo quod, illis praedicantibus, fidem Christi perceperint.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. IV.—

### QUANDO GENS PICTORUM FIDEM CHRISTI PERCEPERIT.

SQUIDEM anno incarnationis Dominicæ quingentesimo sexagesimo quinto, quo tempore gubernaculum Romani imperii post Justinianum Justinus minor accepit, venit de Hibernia presbyter et abbas habitu et vita monachi insignis, nomine Columba, Britanniam; prædicaturus verbum Dei provinciis septentrionalium Pictorum, hoc est, eis, quæ arduis atque horrentibus montium jugis ab australibus eorum sunt regionibus sequestratæ. Namque ipsi australes Picti, qui intra eosdem montes habent sedes, multo ante tempore, ut perhibent, relicto errore idololatriæ, fidem veritatis acceperant, prædicante eis verbum Ninia episcopo reverendissimo et sanctissimo viro, de natione Britonum, qui erat Romæ regulariter fidem et mysteria veritatis edoctus; cujus sedem episcopalem, (Sancti Martini episcopi nomine et ecclesia insignem, ubi ipse etiam corpore una cum pluribus sanctis requiescit,) jam nunc Anglorum gens obtinet. Qui locus, ad provinciam Berniciorum pertinens, vulgo vocatur “Ad Candidam Casam,” eo quod ibi ecclesiam de lapide, insolito Britonibus more, fecerit.

Venit autem Britanniam Columba, regnante Pictis Bridio filio Meilochon, rege potentissimo, nono anno regni ejus, gentemque illam verbo et exemplo ad fidem Christi convertit; unde et præfatam insulam ab eis in possessionem monasterii faciendi accepit. Neque enim magna est, sed quasi familiarum quinque, juxta æstimationem Anglorum; quam successores ejus usque hodie tenent, ubi et ipse sepultus est, cum esset annorum septuaginta septem, post annos circiter triginta et duos ex quo ipse Britanniam prædicaturus adiit. Fecerat autem, priusquam Britanniam veniret, monasterium nobile in Hibernia, quod a copia roborum “Dearmach” lingua Scotorum, hoc est, “Campus Roborum,” cognominatur. Ex quo utroque monasterio per plurima exinde monasteria per discipulos ejus et in Britannia et in Hibernia propagata sunt; in quibus omnibus idem monasterium insulanum, in quo ipse requiescit corpore, principatum tenet.

Habere autem solet ipsa insula rectorem semper abbatem presbyterum, cujus juri et omnis provincia, et ipsi etiam episcopi, ordine inusitato, debeant esse subjecti, juxta exemplum primi doctoris illius, qui non episcopus, sed presbyter, exstitit et monachus; de cujus vita et verbis nonnulla a discipulis ejus feruntur scripta haberi. Verum qualiscunque fuerit ipse, nos hoc de illo certum tenemus, quod reliquit successores magna continentia ac divino amore regularique institutione insignes. In tempore quidem summæ festivitatis dubios circulos sequentes, utpote quibus longe ultra orbem positus nemo synodalia Paschalis observantiæ decreta porrexerat; tantum ea, quæ in prophetis, evangelicis et apostolicis literis discere poterant, pietatis et castitatis opera diligenter observantes. Permansit autem hujusmodi observantia Paschalis apud eos tempore non pauco, hoc est, usque ad annum Dominicæ incarnationis septingentesimum decimum quintum, per annos centum quinquaginta.

At tunc, veniente ad eos reverendissimo et sanctissimo patre et sacerdote Egberto, de natione Anglorum, qui in Hibernia diutius exsulaverat pro Christo, eratque et doctissimus in Scripturis et longe vitæ perfectione eximius, correcti sunt per eum et ad verum canonicumque Paschæ diem translati; quem tamen et antea non semper in luna quarta decima cum Judæis, ut quidam rebantur, sed in die quidem Dominica, alia tamen quam decebat hebdomada, celebrabant. Sciebant enim, ut Christiani, resurrectionem Dominicam, quæ prima Sabbati facta est, prima Sabbati semper esse celebrandam; sed ut barbari et rustici, quando eadem prima Sabbati, ea quæ nunc Dominica dies cognominatur, veniret, minime didicerant. Verum quia gratia caritatis fervere non omiserunt, et hujus quoque rei notitiam ad perfectum percipere meruerunt, juxta promissum apostoli dicentis, [Phil. iii. 15,] *Et si quid aliter sapitis, et hoc quoque vobis Deus revelabit.* De quo plenius in sequentibus suo loco dicendum est.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. V.—

## DE VITA AIDANI EPISCOPI.

AB hac ergo insula, ab horum collegio monachorum, ad provinciam Anglorum instituendam in Christo, missus est Aidanus, accepto gradu episcopatus; quo tempore eidem monasterio Segenius abbas et presbyter præfuit. Unde, inter alia vivendi documenta, saluberrimum abstinentiæ vel continentiæ clericis exemplum reliquit; cujus doctrinam id maxime commendabat omnibus, quod non aliter quam vivebat cum suis ipse docebat. Nihil enim hujus mundi quærere, nil amare, curabat; cuncta, quæ sibi a regibus vel divitibus seculi donabantur, mox pauperibus, qui occurrerent, erogare gaudebat. Discurrere per cuncta et urbana et rustica loca, non equorum dorso, sed pedum incessu vectus, nisi si major forte necessitas compulisset, solebat; quatenus ubicunque aliquos vel divites vel pauperes incedens aspexisset, confestim ad hos divertens, vel ad fidei suscipiendæ sacramentum, si infideles essent, invitaret, vel si fideles, in ipsa eos fide confortaret, atque ad eleemosynas operumque bonorum executionem et verbis excitaret et factis.

In tantum autem vita illius a nostri temporis segnitia distabat, ut omnes, qui cum eo incedebant, sive attonsi, seu laici, meditari deberent; id est, aut legendis Scripturis, aut psalmis discendis, operam dare. Hoc erat quotidianum opus illius et omnium, qui cum eo erant, fratrum, ubicunque locorum devenissent; et si forte evenisset, quod tamen raro evenit, ut ad regis convivium vocaretur, intrabat cum uno clerico, aut duobus, et ubi paululum reficiebatur, accelerabat ocius ad legendum cum suis, sive ad orandum, egredi. Cujus exemplis informati tempore illo religiosi quique viri ac feminae consuetudinem fecerunt per totum annum, excepta remissione quinquagesimæ Paschalis, a quarta et sexta Sabbati jejunium ad nonam usque horam protelare. Nunquam divitibus honoris sive timoris gratia, si qua deliquissent, reticebat; sed aspera illos invectione corrigebat. Nullam potentibus seculi pecuniam, excepta solummodo esca, si quos hospitio suscepisset, unquam dare solebat, sed ea potius, quæ sibi a divitibus donaria pecuniarum largiebantur, vel in usus pauperum, ut diximus, dispergebat, vel ad redemptionem eorum, qui injuste fuerant venditi, dispensabat. Denique multos, quos, pretio dato, redemerat, redemptos postmodum suos discipulos fecit, atque ad sacerdotalem usque gradum erudiendo atque instituendo provexit.

Ferunt autem quia cum de provincia Scotorum Rex Oswaldus postulasset antistitem, qui sibi suæque genti verbum fidei ministraret, missus fuerit primo alius austerioris animi vir, qui cum aliquandiu genti Anglorum prædicans nihil proficeret, nec libenter a populo audiretur, redierit patriam, atque in conventu seniorum retulerit, quia nil prodesse docendo genti, ad quam missus erat, potuisset, eo quod essent homines indomabiles et duræ ac barbaræ mentis. At illi, ut perhibent, tractatum magnum in concilio, quid esset agendum, habere cœperunt; desiderantes quidem genti quam petebantur, saluti esse, sed de non recepto, quem miserant, prædicatore dolentes. Tunc ait Aidanus, nam et ipse concilio intererat, ad eum, de quo agebatur, sacerdotem,

“Videtur mihi, frater, quia durior justo indoctis auditoribus fuisti, et non eis juxta apostolicam disciplinam primo lac doctrinæ mollioris porrexisti, donec paulatim enutriti verbo Dei ad capienda perfectiora, et ad facienda sublimiora Dei præcepta, sufficerent.” Quo audito, omnium, qui consedebant, ad ipsum ora et oculi conversi, diligenter quid diceret discutiebant, et ipsum esse dignum episcopatu, ipsum ad erudiendos incredulos et indoctos mitti debere, decernunt, qui gratia discretionis, quæ virtutum mater est, ante omnia probatur imbutus; sicque illum ordinantes ad prædicandum miserunt. Qui ubi tempus accepit, sicut prius moderamine discretionis, ita postmodum et ceteris virtutibus ornatus apparuit.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. VI.—

### DE RELIGIONE AC PIETATE MIRANDA OSWALDI REGIS.

Hujus igitur reverendissimi antistitis doctrina Rex Oswaldus cum ea, cui præerat, gente Anglorum institutus, non solum incognita progenitoribus suis regna cœlorum sperare didicit; sed et regna terrarum plus quam ulli majorum suorum, ab eodem uno omnipotente Deo, qui fecit cœlum et terram, consecutus est. Denique omnes nationes et provincias Britanniaë, quæ in quatuor linguas, id est, Britonum, Pictorum, Scotorum et Anglorum, divisæ sunt, in ditioe accepit. Quo regni culmine sublimatus, nihilominus, quod mirum dictu est, pauperibus et peregrinis semper humilis, benignus et largus fuit.

Denique fertur quod tempore quodam, cum die sancto Paschæ cum præfato episcopo consedisset ad prandium, positusque esset in mensa coram eo discus argenteus regalibus epulis refertus, et jam jamque essent manus ad panem benedicendum missuri, intrasse subito ministrum ipsius, cui suscipiendorum inopum erat cura delegata, et indicasse regi quia multitudo pauperum undecunque adveniens maxima per plateas sederet, postulans aliquid eleemosynæ a rege; qui mox dapes sibimet appositas deferri pauperibus, et discum confringi, atque eisdem minutatim dividi, præcepit. Quo viso, pontifex, qui adsidebat, delectatus tali facto pietatis, apprehendit dexteram ejus, et ait, “Nunquam inveterascat hæc manus;” quod et ita juxta votum benedictionis ejus provenit. Nam cum, interfecto illo in pugna, manus cum brachio a cetero essent corpore resectæ, contigit ut hactenus incorruptæ perdurent. Denique in urbe regia, quæ a regina quondam vocabulo Bebbæ cognominatur, loculo inclusæ argenteo in ecclesia Sancti Petri servantur, ac digno a cunctis honore venerantur. Hujus industria regis Deirorum et Berniciorum provinciaë, quæ eatenus ab invicem discordabant, in unam sunt pacem et velut unum compaginataë in populum. Erat autem nepos Edwini regis ex sorore Acha, dignumque fuit, ut tantus prædecessor talem haberet de sua consanguinitate et religionis heredem et regni.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. VII.—

### UT PROVINCIA OCCIDENTALIUM SAXONUM VERBUM DEI, PRÆDICANTE BIRINO, SUSCEPERIT; ET DE SUCCESSORIBUS EJUS AGILBERTO ET ELEUTHERIO.

Eo tempore gens Occidentalium Saxonum, qui antiquitus *Gewissæ* vocabantur, regnante *Cynegilso*, fidem Christi suscepit, prædicante illis verbum *Birino* episcopo, qui cum consilio *Papæ Honorii* venerat *Britanniam*; promittens quidem se, illo præsentem, in intimis ultra Anglorum partibus, quo nullus doctor præcessisset, sanctæ fidei semina esse sparsurum. Unde et jussu ejusdem pontificis, per *Asterium* *Genuensem* episcopum, in episcopatus consecratus est gradum. Sed *Britanniam* perveniens, ac primum *Gewissarum* gentem ingrediens, cum omnes ibidem paganissimos inveniret, utilius esse ratus est ibi potius verbum prædicare, quam ultra progrediens eos, quibus prædicare deberet, inquirere.

Itaque evangelizante illo in præfata provincia, cum rex ipse catechizatus fonte baptismi cum sua gente ablueretur, contigit tunc temporis sanctissimum ac victoriosissimum regem *Northanhumbrorum Oswaldum* adfuisse, eumque de lavacro exeuntem suscepisse, ac pulcherrimo prorsus et Deo digno consortio, cujus erat filiam accepturus in conjugem, ipsum prius secunda generatione Deo dedicatum sibi accepit in filium. Donaverunt autem ambo reges eidem episcopo civitatem, quæ vocatur *Dorcic*, ad faciendam inibi sedem episcopalem; ubi, factis dedicatisque ecclesiis, multisque ad Dominum pio ejus labore populis advocatis, migravit ad Dominum, sepultusque est in eadem civitate, et post annos multos, *Hedde* episcopatum agente, translatus inde in *Ventam* civitatem, atque in ecclesia beatorum apostolorum *Petri et Pauli* positus est.

Defuncto autem et rege, successit in regnum filius ejus *Coinwalch*, qui et fidem et sacramenta regni cœlestis suscipere renuit, et non multo post etiam regni terrestris potentiam perdidit. Repudiata enim sorore *Pendæ* regis *Merciorum*, quam duxerat, aliam accepit uxorem; ideoque bello petitus ac regno privatus ab illo, secessit ad regem *Orientalium Anglorum*, cui nomen erat *Anna*, apud quem triennio exsulans fidem cognovit ac suscepit veritatis. Nam et ipse, apud quem exsulabat, rex erat vir bonus, et bona ac sancta sobole felix, ut in sequentibus docebimus.

Cum vero restitutus esset in regnum *Coinwalch*, venit in provinciam de *Hibernia* pontifex quidam, nomine *Agilbertus*, natione quidem *Gallus*, sed tunc legendarum gratia *Scripturarum* in *Hibernia* non parvo tempore demoratus, conjunxitque se regi, sponte ministerium prædicandi assumens; cujus eruditionem atque industriam videns rex rogavit eum, accepta ibi sede episcopali, suæ genti manere pontificem, qui precibus ejus annuens multis annis eidem genti sacerdotali jure præfuit. Tandem rex, qui Saxonum tantum linguam noverat, pertæsus barbaræ loquelæ, subintroduxit in provinciam alium suæ linguæ episcopum, vocabulo *Wini*, et ipsum in *Gallia* ordinatum; dividensque in duas parochias provinciam, huic in civitate *Venta*, quæ a

gente Saxonum Vintancestir appellatur, sedem episcopalem tribuit; unde offensus graviter Agilbertus, quod hæc, ipso inconsulto, ageret rex, rediit Galliam, et accepto episcopatu Parisiacæ civitatis, ibidem senex ac plenus dierum obiit. Non multis autem annis post abscessum ejus a Britannia transactis, pulsus est Wini ab eodem rege de episcopatu; qui secedens ad regem Merciorum, vocabulo Wulfhere, emit pretio ab eodem sedem Londoniæ civitatis, ejusque episcopus usque ad vitæ suæ terminum mansit. Sicque provincia Occidentalium Saxonum tempore non paucis absque præsule fuit.

Quo etiam tempore rex præfatus ipsius gentis, gravissimis regni sui damnis sæpissime ab hostibus afflictus, tandem ad memoriam reduxit quod eum pridem perfidia regno depulerit, fides agnita Christi in regnum revocaverit; intellexitque quod etiam tunc destituta pontifice provincia recte pariter divino fuerit destituta præsidio. Misit ergo legatarios in Galliam ad Agilbertum, submissa illum satisfactione deprecans ad episcopatum suæ gentis redire. At ille se excusans, et eo venire non posse contestans, quia episcopatu propriæ civitatis ac parochiæ teneretur adstrictus, ne tamen obnixè petenti nil ferret auxilii misit pro se illo presbyterum Eleutherium, nepotem suum, qui ei, si vellet, ordinaretur episcopus; dicens quod ipse eum dignum esse episcopatu judicaret. Quo honorifice a populo et a rege suscepto, rogaverunt Theodorum, tunc archiepiscopum Dorovernensis ecclesiæ, ipsum sibi antistitem consecrari; qui consecratus in ipsa civitate multis annis episcopatum Gewissarum ex synodica sanctione solus sedulo moderamine gessit.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. VIII.—

UT REX CANTUARIORUM EARCONBERTUS IDOLA  
DESTRUI PRÆCEPERIT; ET DE FILIA EJUS ERCONGOTA  
ET PROPINQUA ETHELBERGA, SACRATIS DEO  
VIRGINIBUS.

Anno Dominicæ incarnationis sexcentesimo quadragesimo, Eadbaldus rex Cantuariorum transiens ex hac vita Earconberto filio regni gubernacula reliquit; quæ ille suscepta viginti quatuor annis et aliquot mensibus nobilissime tenuit. Hic primus regum Anglorum in toto regno suo idola relinqui ac destrui, simul et jejunium quadraginta dierum observari, principali auctoritate præcepit. Quæ ne facile a quopiam posset contemni, in transgressores dignas et competentes punitiones proposuit. Cujus filia Earcongota, ut condigna parenti soboles, magnarum fuit virgo virtutum, indesinenter semper serviens Domino in monasterio, quod in regione Francorum constructum est ab abbatisa nobilissima, vocabulo Fara, in loco qui dicitur “In Brige.” Nam eo tempore, necdum multis in regione Anglorum monasteriis constructis, multi de Britannia, monachicæ conversationis gratia, Francorum vel Galliarum monasteria adire solebant; sed et filias suas eisdem erudiendas, ac sponso cœlesti copulandas, mittebant, maxime in Brige et in Cale, et in Andilegum monasterio; inter quas erat Sethrida, filia uxoris Annæ regis Orientalium Anglorum, cujus supra meminimus, et filia naturalis ejusdem regis Ethelberga; quæ utraque cum esset peregrina, præ merito virtutum ejusdem monasterii Brigensis est abbatisa constituta. Cujus regis filia major Sexberga, uxor Earconberti regis Cantuariorum, habuit filiam Earcongotam, de qua sumus dicturi.

Hujus autem virginis Deo dicatæ multa quidem ab incolis loci illius solent opera virtutum et signa miraculorum usque hodie narrari. Verum nos de transitu tantum illius, quo cœlestia regna petiit, aliquid breviter dicere sufficiat. Imminente ergo die suæ vocationis, cœpit circuire in monasterio casulas infirmarum Christi famularum, earumque maxime, quæ vel ætate provectæ, vel probitate erant morum insigniores; quarum se omnium precibus humiliter commendans obitum proxime suum, quem revelatione didicerat, non celavit esse futurum. Quam videlicet revelationem hujusmodi esse perhibebat,—vidisse se albatorum catervam hominum idem monasterium intrare, hosque a se interrogatos, quid quærerent, aut quid ibi vellent, respondisse, quod ob hoc illo fuerint destinati, ut aureum illud numisma, quod eo de Cantia venerat, secum assumerent. Ipsa autem nocte, in cujus ultima parte, id est, incipiente aurora, præsentis mundi tenebras transiens supernam migravit ad lucem, multi de fratribus ejusdem monasterii, qui aliis erant in ædibus, jam manifeste se concentus angelorum psallentium audisse referebant, sed et sonitum quasi plurimæ multitudinis monasterium ingredientis; unde mox egressi dignoscere quid esset, viderunt lucem cœlitus emissam fuisse permaximam, quæ sanctam illam animam carnis vinculis absolutam ad æterna patriæ cœlestis gaudia ducebat. Addunt et alia, quæ in ipsa nocte in monasterio eodem divinitus fuerint ostensa miracula, sed hæc nos

ad alia tendentes suis narrare permittimus. Sepultum est autem corpus venerabile virginis et sponsæ Christi in ecclesia beati protomartyris Stephani; placuitque post diem tertium, ut lapis, quo monumentum tegebatur, amoveretur, et altius ipso in loco reponeretur; quod dum fieret, tantæ fragrantia suavitatis ab imis ebullivit, ut cunctis, qui adstabant, fratribus ac sororibus, quasi opobalsami cellaria esse viderentur aperta.

Sed et matertera ejus, de qua diximus, Ethelberga, et ipsa Deo dilectam perpetuæ virginitatis gloriam in magna corporis continentia conservavit; quæ, cujus esset virtutis, magis post mortem claruit. Cum enim esset abbatissa, cœpit facere in monasterio suo ecclesiam in honorem omnium apostolorum, in qua suum corpus sepeliri cupiebat. Sed cum opus idem ad medium ferme esset perductum, illa, ne hoc perficeret, morte prærepta est, et in ipso ecclesiæ loco, ubi desiderabat, condita. Post cujus mortem, fratribus alia magis curantibus, intermissum est hoc ædificium annis septem, quibus completis, statuerunt ob nimietatem laboris hujus structuram ecclesiæ funditus relinquere; ossa vero abbatissæ illo de loco elevata in aliam ecclesiam, quæ esset perfecta ac dedicata, transferre. Et aperientes sepulcrum ejus ita intemeratum corpus invenere, ut a corruptione concupiscentiæ carnalis erat immune; et ita denuo lotum atque aliis vestibus indutum, transtulerunt illud in ecclesiam beati Stephani Martyris; cujus videlicet natalis ibi solet in magna gloria celebrari die nonarum Juliarum.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. IX.—

### UT IN LOCO, IN QUO OCCISUS EST REX OSWALDUS, CREBRA SANITATUM MIRACULA FACTA; UTQUE IBI PRIMO JUMENTUM CUJUSDAM VIANTIS, AC DEINDE PUELLA PARALYTICA SIT CURATA.

Regnavit autem Oswaldus Christianissimus rex Northanhumbroborum novem annis, annumerato etiam illo anno, quem et feralis impietas regis Britonum et apostasia demens regum Anglorum detestabilem fecerat. Siquidem, ut supra docuimus, unanimo omnium consensu firmatum est, ut nomen et memoria apostatarum de catalogo regum Christianorum prorsus aboleri deberet, neque aliquis regno eorum annus annotari. Quo completo annorum curriculo, occisus est, commisso gravi prælio, ab eadem pagana gente paganoque rege Merciorum, a quo et prædecessor ejus Edwinus peremptus fuerat, in loco, qui lingua Anglorum nuncupatur Maserfeld, anno ætatis suæ trigesimo octavo, die quinto mensis Augusti.

Cujus quanta fides in Deum, quæ devotio mentis fuerit, etiam post mortem virtutum miraculis claruit. Namque in loco, ubi pro patria dimicans a paganis interfectus est, usque hodie sanitates infirmorum et hominum et pecorum celebrari non desinunt. Unde contigit, ut pulverem ipsum, ubi corpus ejus in terram corruit, multi auferentes et in aquam mittentes suis per hoc infirmis multum commodi afferrent; qui videlicet mos adeo increbuit, ut paulatim, ablata exinde terra, fossam ad mensuram staturæ virilis reddiderit. Nec mirandum in loco mortis illius infirmos sanari, qui semper, dum viveret, infirmis et pauperibus consulere, eleemosynas dare, opem ferre, non cessabat. Et multa quidem in loco illo, vel de pulvere loci illius, facta virtutum miracula narrantur; sed nos duo tantum, quæ a majoribus audivimus, referre satis duximus.

Non multo post interfectionem ejus exacto tempore contigit, ut quidam equo sedens iter juxta locum ageret illum; cujus equus subito lassescere, consistere, caput in terram declinare, spumas ex ore demittere, et, augescente dolore nimio, in terram cœpit ruere. Desiluit eques et, stramine substrato, cœpit exspectare horam, qua aut melioratum reciperet jumentum, aut relinqueret mortuum. At ipsum diu gravi dolore vexatum cum diversas in partes se torqueret, repente volutando devenit in illud loci, ubi rex memorabilis occubuit. Nec mora, quiescente dolore, cessabat ab insanis membrorum motibus, et, consueto equorum more, quasi post lassitudinem, in diversum latus vicissim sese volvere; statimque exurgens, quasi sanum per omnia, virecta herbarum avidius carpere cœpit. Quo ille viso, ut vir sagacis ingenii, intellexit aliquid miræ sanctitatis huic loco, quo equus est curatus, inesse; et, posito ibi signo, non multo post ascendit equum atque ad hospitium, quo proposuerat, accessit. Quo dum adveniret, invenit puellam ibi, neptem patrisfamilias, longo paralysis morbo gravatam; et cum familiares domus illius de acerba puellæ infirmitate, ipso præsentem, quererentur, cœpit dicere ille de loco, ubi caballus suus esset curatus. Quid multa? imponentes eam carro duxerunt ad locum, ibidemque deposuerunt; at illa posita in loco obdormivit

parumper, et ubi evigilavit sanatam se ab illa corporis dissolutione sentiens, postulata aqua, ipsa lavit faciem, crines composuit, caput linteo cooperuit, et cum his, qui se adduxerant, sana pedibus incedendo reversa est.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. X.—

## UT PULVIS LOCI ILLIUS CONTRA IGNEM VALUERIT.

Eodem tempore venit alius quidam de natione Britonum, ut ferunt, iter faciens juxta ipsum locum, in quo præfata erat pugna completa, et vidit unius loci spatium cetero campo viridius ac venustius; cœpitque sagaci animo conjicere quod nulla esset alia causa insolitæ illo in loco viriditatis, nisi quia ibidem sanctior cetero exercitu vir aliquis fuisset interfectus. Tulit itaque de pulvere terræ illius secum illigans in linteo, cogitans quod futurum erat, quia ad medelam infirmantium idem pulvis proficeret; et pergens itinere suo pervenit ad vicum quendam vespere, intravitque in domum, in qua vicani cœnantes epulabantur, et susceptus a dominis domus, resedit et ipse cum eis ad convivium, appendens linteolum cum pulvere, quem attulerat, in una posta parietis. Cumque diutius epulis atque ebrietati vacarent, accenso grandi igne in medio, contigit, volantibus in altum scintillis, culmen domus, quod erat virgis contextum ac fœno tectum, subitaneis flammis impleri. Quod cum repente convivæ terrore confusi conspicerent, fugerunt foras, nil ardenti domui, jam jamque perituræ, prodesse valentes. Consumta ergo domo flammis, posta solummodo, in qua pulvis ille inclusus pendebat, tuta ab ignibus et intacta remansit. Qua visa virtute, mirati sunt valde; et perquirentes subtilius, invenerunt quod de illo loco assumtus erat pulvis, ubi regis Oswaldi sanguis fuerat effusus. Quibus patefactis ac diffamatis longe lateque miraculis, multi per dies locum frequentare illum, et sanitatum ibi gratiam capere sibi suisque cœperunt.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XI.—

### UT SUPER RELIQUIAS EJUS LUX CŒLESTIS TOTA NOCTE STETERIT; ET UT PER EAS SINT DÆMONIACI CURATI.

Inter quæ nequaquam silentio prætereundum reor, quid virtutis ac miraculi cœlestis fuerit ostensum, cum ossa ejus inventa atque ad ecclesiam, in qua nunc servantur, translata sunt. Factum est autem hoc per industriam reginæ Merciorum Ofthridæ quæ erat filia fratris ejus, id est Oswii, qui post illum regni apicem tenebat, ut in sequentibus dicemus.

Est monasterium nobile in provincia Lindissi, nomine Peardaneu, quod eadem regina cum viro suo Ethelredo multum diligebat, venerabatur, excolebat, in quo desiderabat honoranda patru sui ossa recondere. Cumque venisset carrum, in quo eadem ossa ducebantur, incumbente vespera, in monasterium præfatum, noluerunt ea, qui erant in monasterio, libenter excipere; quia etsi sanctum eum noverant, tamen quia de alia provincia ortus fuerat et super eos regnum acceperat, veteranis eum odiis etiam mortuum insequabantur. Unde factum est, ut ipsa nocte reliquiæ allatæ foris permanerent, tentorio tantum majore supra carrum, in quo inerant, extenso. Sed miraculi cœlestis ostensio, quam reverenter eæ suscipiendæ a cunctis fidelibus essent, patefecit. Nam tota ea nocte columna lucis, a carro illo ad cœlum usque porrecta, omnibus pene ejusdem Lindissi provinciæ locis conspicua stabat. Unde, mane facto, fratres monasterii illius, qui pridie abnuerant, diligenter ipsi petere cœperunt, ut apud se eadem sanctæ ac Deo dilectæ reliquiæ conderentur. Lota igitur ossa intulerunt in thecam, quam in hoc præparaverant, atque in ecclesia juxta honorem congruum posuerunt; et, ut regia viri sancti persona memoriam haberet æternam, vexillum ejus super tumbam auro et purpura compositum apposuerunt, ipsamque aquam, in qua laverunt ossa, in angulo sacrarii fuderunt. Ex quo tempore factum est, ut ipsa terra, quæ lavacrum venerabile suscepit, ad abigendos ex obsessis corporibus dæmones gratiæ salutaris haberet effectum.

Denique, tempore sequente, cum præfata regina in eodem monasterio moraretur, venit ad salutandam eam abbatissa quædam venerabilis, quæ usque hodie superest, vocabulo Ethelhilda, soror virorum sanctorum Ethelwini et Aldwini, quorum prior episcopus in Lindissi provincia, secundus erat abbas in monasterio, quod vocatur Peartaneu, a quo non longe et illa monasterium habebat. Cum ergo veniens illo loqueretur cum regina, atque inter alia, sermone de Oswaldo exorto, diceret quod et ipsa lucem nocte illa supra reliquias ejus ad cœlum usque altam vidisset, adjecit regina quod de pulvere pavimenti, in quo aqua lavacri illius effusa est, multi jam sanati essent infirmi. At illa petiit sibi portionem pulveris salutiferi dari; et accipiens illigatam panno condidit in capsella et rediit. Transacto autem tempore aliquanto, cum esset in suo monasterio, venit illuc quidam hospes, qui solebat nocturnis sæpius horis repente ab immundo spiritu gravissime vexari; qui, cum benigne susceptus, post cœnam in lecto membra posuisset, subito a diabolo arreptus inclamare, dentibus

frendere, spumare, et diversis motibus cœpit membra torquere. Cumque a nullo vel teneri vel ligari potuisset, cucurrit minister, et pulsans ad ostium nunciavit abbatissæ. At illa aperiens januam monasterii exivit ipsa cum una sanctimonialium feminarum ad locum virorum; et evocans presbyterum rogavit secum venire ad patientem. Ubi cum venientes viderent multos adfuisse, qui vexatum tenere et motus ejus insanos comprimere conati nequaquam valebant, dicebat presbyter exorcismos, et quæcunque poterat prosedando miseri furore agebat. Sed nec ipse, quamvis multum laborans, proficere aliquid valebat. Cumque nil salutis furenti superesse videretur, repente venit in mentem abbatissæ pulvis ille præfatus, statimque jussit ire ministram et capsellam, in qua erat, adducere. Et cum illa afferens, quæ jussa est, intraret atrium domus, in cujus interioribus dæmoniosus torquebatur, conticuit ille subito, et quasi in somnum laxatus deposuit caput, membra in quietem omnia composuit. *Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant*, [Vir. Æ. II. 1,] quem res exitum haberet solliciti exspectantes. Et post aliquantum horæ spatium resedit qui vexabatur, et graviter suspirans, “Modo,” inquit, “sanum sapio, recepi enim sensum animi mei.” At illi sedulo sciscitabantur quomodo hoc contigisset. Qui ait, “Mox ut virgo hæc cum capsella, quam portabat, appropinquavit atrio domus hujus, discessere omnes, qui me premebant, spiritus maligni, et, me relicto, nusquam comparuerunt.” Tunc dedit ei abbatissa portiunculam de pulvere illo; et sic, data oratione a presbytero, noctem quietissimam illam duxit; neque aliquid ex eo tempore nocturni timoris aut vexationis ab antiquo hoste pertulit.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XII.—

### UT AD TUMBAM EJUS SIT PUERULUS E FEBRE CURATUS.

Sequente dehinc tempore fuit in eodem monasterio puerulus quidam longo febrium incommodo graviter vexatus; qui cum die quodam sollicitus horam accessionis exspectaret, ingressus ad eum quidam de fratribus, “Vis,” inquit, “mi nate, doceam te quomodo cureris ab hujus molestia languoris? Surge, ingredere ecclesiam, et accedens ad sepulcrum Oswaldi, ibi reside, et quietus manens adhære tumbæ. Vide ne exeas inde, nec de loco movearis, donec hora recessionis febrium transierit. Tunc ipse intrabo, et educam te inde.” Fecit ut ille suaserat, sedentemque eum ad tumbam sancti infirmitas tangere nequaquam præsumsit; quin in tantum timens aufugit, ut nec secunda die, nec tertia, neque unquam exinde, eum auderet contingere. Quod ita esse gestum, qui referebat mihi frater inde adveniens adjecit, quod eo adhuc tempore, quo mecum loquebatur, superesset in eodem monasterio jam juvenis ille, in quo tunc puero factum erat hoc miraculum sanitatis. Nec mirandum preces regis illius jam cum Domino regnantis multum valere apud eum, qui temporalis regni quondam gubernacula tenens magis pro æterno regno semper laborare ac deprecari solebat.

Denique ferunt, quia a tempore matutinæ laudis sæpius ad diem usque in orationibus perstiterit, atque ob crebrum morem orandi, sive gratias agendi, Domino semper ubicunque sedens supinas super genua sua manus habere solitus sit. Vulgatum est autem, et in consuetudinem proverbii versum, quod etiam inter verba orationis vitam finierit. Nam cum armis et hostibus circumseptus jam jamque videret se esse perimendum, oravit ad Dominum pro animabus exercitus sui. Unde dicunt in proverbio, “Deus miserere animabus, dixit Oswaldus cadens in terram.” Ossa igitur illius translata et condita sunt in monasterio, quod diximus; porro caput et manus cum brachiis a corpore præcisas jussit rex, qui occiderat, in stipitibus suspendi. Quo post annum veniens cum exercitu successor regni ejus Oswius abstulit ea, et caput quidem in cœmeterio Lindisfarnensis ecclesiæ; in regia vero civitate manus cum brachiis condidit.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XIII.—

### UT IN HIBERNIA SIT QUIDAM PER RELIQUIAS EJUS A MORTIS ARTICULO REVOCATUS.

Nec solum inclyti fama viri Britanniae fines lustravit universos, sed etiam trans oceanum longe radios salutiferae lucis spargens Germaniae simul et Hiberniae partes attingit. Denique reverendissimus antistes Acca solet referre, quia cum Romam vadens apud sanctissimum Fresonum gentis archiepiscopum Wilbrordum cum suo antistite Wilfrido moraretur, crebro eum audierit de mirandis, quae ad reliquias ejusdem reverendissimi regis in illa provincia gesta fuerint, narrare. Sed et in Hibernia cum presbyter adhuc peregrinam pro aeterna patria duceret vitam, rumorem sanctitatis illius in ea quoque insula longe lateque jam percrebuisse ferebat; e quibus unum, quod inter alia retulit miraculum, praesenti nostrae Historiae inserendum credidimus.

“Tempore,” inquit, “mortalitatis, quae Britanniam Hiberniamque lata strage vastavit, percussus est ejusdem clade pestis inter alios scholasticus quidam de gente Scotorum, doctus quidem vir studio literarum, sed erga curam perpetuae suae salvationis nihil omnino studii et industriae gerens. Qui cum se morti proximum videret, timere coepit et pavere, ne mox mortuus ob merita scelerum ad inferni claustra raperetur; clamavitque me, cum essem in vicino positus, et inter aegra tremens suspiria flebili voce talia mecum querebatur, ‘Vides,’ inquit, ‘quia jam jamque crescente corporis molestia, ad articulum subeundae mortis compellor; nec dubito me post mortem corporis statim ad perpetuam animae mortem rapiendum ac infernalibus subdendum esse tormentis, qui tempore non pauco inter studia divinae lectionis vitiorum potius implicamentis, quam divinis solebam servire mandatis. Inest autem animo, si mihi pietas superna aliqua vivendi spatia donaverit, vitiosos mores corrigere, atque ad imperium divinae voluntatis totam ex integro mentem vitamque transferre. Verum novi non hoc esse meriti mei, ut inducias vivendi vel accipiam, vel me accepturum esse confidam, nisi forte misero mihi et indigno veniam, per auxilium eorum, qui illi fideliter servierunt, propitiari dignatus fuerit. Audivimus autem, et fama celeberrima, quod fuerit in gente vestra rex mirandae sanctitatis, vocabulo Oswaldus, cujus excellentia fidei et virtutis, etiam post mortem, virtutum frequentium operatione claruerit; precorque, si aliquid reliquiarum illius penes te habes, afferas mihi, si forte mihi Dominus per ejus meritum misereri voluerit.’ At ego respondi, ‘Habeo quidem de ligno, in quo caput ejus occisi a paganis infixum est; et, si firmo corde credideris, potest divina pietas per tanti meritum viri, et hujus vitae spatia longiora concedere, et ingressu te vitae perennis dignum reddere.’ Nec moratus ille, integram se in hoc habere fidem respondebat. Tunc benedixi aquam, et astulam roboris praefati immittens obtuli aegro potandum. Nec mora, melius habere coepit, et convalescens ab infirmitate multo deinceps tempore vixit; totoque ad Deum corde et opere conversus omnibus ubicunque perveniebat clementiam pii Conditoris et fidelis ejus famuli gloriam praedicabat.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XIV.—

UT, DEFUNCTO PAULINO, ITHAMAR PRO EO  
RHOFENSIS ECCLESIAE PRÆSULATUM SUSCEPERIT; ET  
DE HUMILITATE MIRABILI REGIS OSWINI, QUI AB  
OSWIO CRUDELI CÆDE PEREMTUS EST.

Translato ergo ad cœlestia regna Oswaldo, suscepit regni terrestris sedem pro eo frater ejus Oswius, juvenis triginta circiter annorum, et per annos viginti octo laboriosissime tenuit. Impugnatus videlicet a pagano rege Penda, et ab ea, quæ fratrem ejus occiderat, pagana gente Merciorum, et a filio quoque suo Alfredo, necnon et a fratrue, id est, fratris sui, qui ante eum regnavit, filio Ethelwaldo. Cujus anno secundo, hoc est, ab incarnatione Dominica anno sexcentesimo quadragesimo quarto, reverendissimus pater Paulinus, quondam quidem Eboracensis, sed tunc Rhofensis episcopus civitatis, transivit ad Dominum, sexto iduum Octobrium die, qui decem et novem annos, menses duos, dies viginti unum, episcopatum tenuit; sepultusque est in secretario beati apostoli Andreæ, quod rex Ethelbertus a fundamentis in eadem Rhofi civitate construxit. In cujus locum Honorius archiepiscopus ordinavit Ithamar, oriundum quidem de gente Cantuariorum, sed vita et eruditione antecessoribus suis æquandum.

Habuit autem Oswius primis regni sui temporibus consortem regiæ dignitatis, vocabulo Oswinum, de stirpe regis Edwini, hoc est, filium Osrici, de quo supra retulimus, virum eximia pietatis et religionis; qui provinciæ Deirorum in maxima omnium rerum affluentia, et ipse amabilis omnibus, præfuit. Sed nec cum eo ille, qui ceteram Transhumbranæ gentis partem ab aquilone, id est, Berniciorum provinciam, regebat, habere pacem potuit; quin potius, ingravescentibus causis dissensionum, miserrima hunc cæde peremit. Siquidem, congregato contra invicem exercitu, cum videret se Oswinus cum illo, qui plures habebat auxilios, non posse bello conflagere, ratus est utilius tunc, dimissa intentione bellandi, servare se ad tempora meliora. Remisit ergo exercitum, quem congregaverat, ac singulos domum redire præcepit, a loco qui vocatur Wilfares-dun, id est, Mons Wilfari, et est a vico Cataractone decem ferme millibus passuum contra solstitialem occasum secretus; divertitque ipse cum uno tantum milite sibi fidelissimo, nomine Tondhere, celandus in domo comitis Hunwaldi, quem etiam ipsum sibi amicissimum autumabat. Sed, heu, proh dolor! longe aliter erat; nam ab eodem comite proditum eum Oswius cum præfato ipsius milite per præfectum suum Ethelwinum detestanda omnibus morte interfecit. Quod factum est die decimo tertio kalendarum Septembrium, anno regni ejus nono, in loco qui dicitur “Ingethlingum;” ubi postmodum castigandi hujus facinoris gratia, monasterium constructum est; in quo pro utriusque regis, (et occisi, videlicet, et ejus, qui occidere jussit,) animæ redemptione, quotidie Domino preces offerri deberent.

Erat autem rex Oswinus et aspectu venustus, et statura sublimis, et affatu jucundus, et moribus civilis, et manu omnibus, id est, nobilibus simul atque ignobilibus, largus; unde contigit, ut ob regiam ejus et animi, et vultus, et meritorum, dignitatem ab omnibus diligeretur, et undique ad ejus ministerium de cunctis prope provinciis viri etiam nobilissimi concurrerent. Cujus inter ceteras virtutis et modestiæ, et, ut ita dicam, specialis benedictionis, glorias, etiam maxima fuisse fertur humilitas, et uno probare sat erit exemplo.

Donaverat equum optimum antistiti Aidano, in quo ille, quamvis ambulare solitus, vel annum fluentia transire, vel si alia quælibet necessitas insisteret, viam peragere posset; cui cum, parvo interjecto tempore, pauper quidam occurreret eleemosynam petens, desiliens ille præcepit equum, ita ut erat stratus regaliter, pauperi dari, erat enim multum misericors et cultor pauperum, ac velut pater miserorum. Hoc cum regi esset relatum, dicebat episcopo, cum forte ingressuri essent ad prandium, “Quid voluisti, domine antistes, equum regium, quem te conveniebat proprium habere, pauperi dare? Nunquid non habuimus equos viliores plurimos, vel alias species, quæ ad pauperum dona sufficerent, quamvis illum eis equum non dares, quem tibi specialiter possidendum elegi?” Cui statim episcopus, “Quid loqueris,” inquit, “rex? Nunquid tibi carior est ille filius equæ, quam ille filius Dei?” Quibus dictis, intrabant ad prandendum, et episcopus quidem residebat in suo loco. Porro rex, venerat enim de venatu, cœpit consistens ad focum caleferi cum ministris, et repente inter calefaciendum recordans verbum, quod dixerat illi antistes, discinxit se gladio suo, et dedit illum ministro, festinusque accedens ante pedes episcopi corruit, postulans, ut sibi placatus esset, “Quia nunquam,” inquit, “deinceps aliquid loquar de hoc, aut judicabo quid, vel quantum, de pecunia nostra filiis Dei tribuas.” Quod videns episcopus multum pertimuit, ac statim exurgens levavit eum, promittens se multum illi esse placatum, dummodo ille residens ad epulas tristitiam deponeret. Dumque rex, jubente ac postulante episcopo, lætitiâ reciperet, cœpit e contra episcopus tristis usque ad lacrymarum profusionem effici. Quem dum presbyter suus lingua patria, quam rex et domestici ejus non noverant, quare lacrymaretur interrogasset, “Scio,” inquit, “quod non multo tempore victurus est rex; nunquam enim antehac vidi humilem regem. Unde animadverto illum citius ex hac vita rapiendum, non enim digna est hæc gens talem habere rectorem.” Nel multo post dira antistitis præsagia tristi regis funere, de quo supra diximus, impleta sunt. Sed et ipse antistes Aidanus non plus quam duodecimo post occisionem regis, quem amabat, die, id est, pridie kalendarum Septembrium, de seculo ablatus perpetua laborum suorum a Domino præmia recepit.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XV.—

UT EPISCOPUS AIDANUS NAUTIS ET TEMPESTATEM  
FUTURAM PRÆDIXERIT, ET OLEUM SANCTUM, QUO  
HANC SEDARENT, DEDERIT.

Qui cujus meriti fuerit, etiam miraculorum signis internus arbiter edocuit, e quibus tria memoriæ causa ponere satis sit. Presbyter quidam nomine Utta, multæ gravitatis ac veritatis vir, et ob id omnibus, etiam ipsis principibus seculi, honorabilis, cum mitteretur Cantiam ob adducendam inde conjugem regi Oswio, (filiam videlicet Edwini regis, Eanfledam,) quæ, occiso patre, illuc fuerat adducta; qui terrestri quidem itinere illo venire, sed navigio cum virgine redire, disponebat, accessit ad episcopum Aidanum, obsecrans eum, pro se suisque, qui tantum iter erant aggressuri, Domino supplicare. Qui benedicens illis ac Domino commendans, dedit etiam oleum sanctificatum, “Scio,” inquit, “quia, ubi navem ascenderitis, tempestas vobis et ventus contrarius superveniet; sed tu memento, ut hoc oleum, quod tibi do, mittas in mare; et statim, quiescentibus ventis, serenitas maris vos læta prosequetur, ac cupito itinere domum remittet.”

Quæ cuncta, ut prædixerat antistes, ex ordine completa sunt. Et quidem imprimis, furentibus undis pelagi, tentabant nautæ, ancoris in mare missis, navem retinere, neque hoc agentes aliquid proficiebant. Cumque, verrentibus undique et implere incipientibus navem fluctibus, mortem sibi omnes imminere, et jam jamque adesse viderent, tandem presbyter reminiscens verba antistitis, assumpta ampulla, misit de oleo in pontum, et statim, ut prædictum erat, suo quievit a fervore. Sicque factum est, ut vir Dei et per prophetiæ spiritum tempestatem prædixerit futuram, et per virtutem ejusdem spiritus hanc exortam, quamvis corporaliter absens, sopiverit. Cujus ordinem miraculi non quilibet dubius relator, sed fidelissimus mihi nostræ ecclesiæ presbyter, Cynemundus vocabulo, narravit, qui se hoc ab ipso Utta presbytero, in quo et per quem completum est, audiisse perhibebat.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XVI.—

UT IDEM ADMOTUM AB HOSTIBUS URBI REGIÆ  
IGNEM ORANDO AMOVERIT.

Aliud ejusdem patris memorabile miraculum ferunt multi, qui nosse potuerunt. Nam tempore episcopatus ejus, hostilis Merciorum exercitus, Penda duce, Northanhumbrorum regiones impia clade longe lateque devastans pervenit ad urbem usque regiam, quæ ex Bebbæ quondam reginæ vocabulo cognominatur, eamque quia neque armis, neque obsidione, capere poterat, flammis absumere conatus est; discissisque viculis, quos in vicinia urbis invenit, advexit illo plurimam congeriem trabium, tignorum, parietum, virgeorum, aliarumque rerum, et his urbem in magna altitudine circumdedit a parte quæ terræ est contigua, et dum ventum opportunum cerneret, illato igne, comburere urbem nisus est.

Quo tempore reverendissimus antistes Aidanus in insula Farne, quæ duobus ferme millibus passuum ab urbe procul abest, morabatur, illo enim sæpius secretæ orationis et silentii causa secedere consueverat; denique usque hodie locum sedis illius solitariae in eadem insula solent ostendere. Qui cum, ventis ferentibus, globos ignis ac fumum supra muros urbis exaltari conspiceret, fertur, elevatis ad cælum oculis manibusque, cum lacrymis dixisse, “Vide, Domine, quanta mala facit Penda.” Quo dicto, statim mutati ab urbe venti in eos, qui accenderant, flammarum incendia retorserunt, ita ut aliquot læsi, omnes territi, impugnare ultra urbem cessarent, quam Divinitus juvari cognoverant.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XVII.—

UT APPOSTA ECCLESIAE, CUI IDEM ACCUMBENS  
OBIERAT, ARDENTE CETERA DOMO, FLAMMIS  
ABSUMI NEQUIVERIT; ET DE INTERNA VITA EJUS.

Hunc cum dies mortis egredi e corpore cogeret, completis annis episcopatus sui sexdecim, erat in villa regia, non longe ab urbe, de qua præfati sumus. In hac enim habens ecclesiam et cubiculum, sæpius ibidem diverti ac manere, atque inde ad prædicandum circumquaque exire, consueverat; quod ipsum et in aliis villis regis facere solebat, utpote nil propriæ possessionis, excepta ecclesia sua et adjacentibus agellis, habens. Tetenderunt ergo ei ægrotanti tentorium ad occidentalem ecclesiæ partem, ita ut ipsum tentorium parieti hæreret ecclesiæ. Unde factum est, ut acclivis destinæ, quæ extrinsecus ecclesiæ pro munimine erat apposita, spiritum vitæ exhalaret ultimum. Obiit autem septimo decimo episcopatus sui anno, pridie kalendarum Septembrium. Cujus corpus mox inde translatum ad insulam Lindisfarnensium, atque in cœmeterio fratrum sepultum est. At interjecto tempore aliquanto, cum fabricata esset ibi basilica major, atque in honorem beatissimi apostolorum principis dedicata, illo ossa ejus translata atque ad dexteram altaris, juxta venerationem tanto pontifice dignam, condita sunt.

Successit vero ei in episcopatum Finanus, et ipse illo ab Hii Scotorum insula ac monasterio destinatus, ac tempore non paucis in episcopatu permansit. Contigit autem post aliquot annos, ut Penda Merciorum rex cum hostili exercitu hæc in loca perveniens, cum cuncta, quæ poterat, ferro flammaque perderet, vicus quoque ille, in quo antistes obiit, una cum ecclesia memorata, flammis absumeretur. Sed mirum in modum sola illa destina, cui incumbens obiit, ab ignibus circum cuncta vorantibus absumi non potuit. Quo clarescente miraculo, mox ibidem ecclesia restaurata, et hæc eadem destina in munimentum est parietis, ut ante fuerat, forinsecus apposita. Rursumque, peracto tempore aliquanto, evenit per culpam incuriæ, vicum eundem, et ipsam pariter ecclesiam, ignibus consumi. Sed ne tunc quidem eandem tangere flamma destinam valebat, et cum magno utique miraculo ipsa ejus foramina ingrediens, quibus ædificio erat affixa, perederet, ipsam tamen lædere nullatenus sinebatur. Unde tertio ædificata ibi ecclesia, destinam illam, non ut antea deforis in fulcimentum domus apposuerunt, sed intro ipsam ecclesiam in memoriam miraculi posuerunt, ubi intrantes genu flectere, ac misericordiæ cœlesti supplicare, deberent. Constatque multos ex eo tempore gratiam sanitatis in eodem loco consecutos, quin etiam, astulis ex ipsa destina excisis et in aquam missis, plures sibi suisque languorum remedia conquisivere.

Scripti autem hæc de persona et operibus viri præfati, nequaquam in eo laudans vel eligens hoc, quod de observatione Paschæ minus perfecte sapiebat, imo hoc multum detestans, sicut in libro, quem De Temporibus composui, manifestissime probavi; sed quasi verax historicus simpliciter ea, quæ de illo, sive per illum, sunt gesta, describens, et quæ laude sunt digna in ejus actibus laudans, atque ad utilitatem

legendium memoriæ commendans: studium videlicet pacis et caritatis, continentiae et humilitatis; animum iræ et avaritiæ victorem, superbiæ simul et vanæ gloriæ contemptorem; industriam faciendi simul et docendi mandata cœlestia, solertiam lectionis et vigiliarum, auctoritatem sacerdote dignam redarguendi superbos ac potentes, pariter et infirmos consolandi, ac pauperes recreandi vel defendendi clementiam. Qui, ut breviter multa comprehendam, quantum ab eis, qui illum novere didicimus, nil ex omnibus, quæ in Evangelicis, vel Apostolicis, sive Prophetis literis facienda cognoverat, prætermittere, sed cuncta pro suis viribus operibus explere, curabat.

Hæc in præfato antistite multum complector et amo, quia nimirum hæc Deo placuisse non ambigo. Quod autem Pascha non suo tempore observabat, vel canonicum ejus tempus ignorans, vel suæ gentis auctoritate ne agnitum sequeretur devictus, non approbo, nec laudo. In quo tamen hoc approbo, quia in celebratione sui Paschæ non aliud corde tenebat, venerabatur, et prædicabat, quam quod nos, id est, redemptionem generis humani per passionem, resurrectionem, et ascensionem in cœlos, mediatoris Dei et hominum hominis Jesu Christi. Unde et hanc non, ut quidam falso opinantur, quarta decima luna in qualibet feria cum Judæis, sed die Dominica, semper agebat, a luna quarta decima usque ad vicesimam; propter fidem videlicet Dominicæ resurrectionis, quam una Sabbati factam, propterque spem nostræ resurrectionis, quam eadem una Sabbati, quæ nunc Dominica dies dicitur, veraciter futuram cum sancta ecclesia credebatur.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XVIII.—

### DE VITA VEL MORTE RELIGIOSI REGIS SIGEBERTI.

His temporibus regno Orientalium Anglorum post Earpwaldum, Redwaldi successorem, Sigebertus frater ejus præfuit, homo bonus ac religiosus; qui dudum in Gallia, dum inimicitias Redwaldi fugiens exsularet, lavacrum baptismi percepit, et patriam reversus, ubi regno potitus est, mox ea, quæ in Galliis bene disposita vidit, imitari cupiens, instituit scholam, in qua pueri literis erudirentur; juvante se episcopo Felice, quem de Cantia acceperat, eisque pædagogos ac magistros juxta morem Cantuariorum præbente.

Tantumque rex ille cœlestis regni amator factus est, ut ad ultimum, relictis regni negotiis et cognato suo Ecgrico commendatis, qui et ante partem ejusdem regni tenebat, intraret monasterium, quod sibi fecerat, atque accepta tonsura, pro æterno magis regno militare curaret. Quod dum multo tempore faceret, contigit gentem Merciorum, duce rege Penda, adversus Orientales Anglos in bellum procedere, qui dum se inferiores in bello hostibus conspicerent, rogaverunt Sigebertum ad confirmandum militem secum venire in prælium. Illo nolente ac contradicente, invitum de monasterio eruentes duxerunt in certamen, sperantes minus animos militum trepidare, minus, præsentate duce quondam strenuissimo et eximio, posse fugam meditari. Sed ipse, professionis suæ non immemor, dum optimo esset vallatus exercitu, nonnisi virgam tantum habere in manu voluit; occisusque est una cum rege Ecgrico, et cunctus eorum, insistentibus paganis, cæsus sive dispersus exercitus.

Successor autem regni eorum factus est Anna, filius Eni, de regio genere, vir optimus, atque optimæ genitor sobolis, de quibus in sequentibus suo tempore dicendum est; qui et ipse postea ab eodem pagano Merciorum duce, a quo et prædecessores ejus, occisus est.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XIX.—

UT FURSEUS APUD ORIENTALES ANGLOS  
MONASTERIUM FECERIT; ET DE VISIONIBUS VEL  
SANCTITATE EJUS, CUI ETIAM CARO POST MORTEM  
INCORRUPTA TESTIMONIUM PERHIBUERIT.

Verum, dum adhuc Sigebertus regni infulas teneret, supervenit de Hibernia vir sanctus, nomine Furseus, verbo et actibus clarus, sed egregiis insignis virtutibus, cupiens pro Domino, ubicunque sibi opportunum inveniret, peregrinam ducere vitam. Qui, cum ad provinciam Orientalium pervenisset Anglorum, susceptus est honorifice a rege præfato; et solitum sibi opus evangelizandi exsequens multos et exemplo virtutis et incitamento sermonis, vel incredulos, ad Christum convertit, vel jam credentes amplius in fide atque amore Christi confirmavit.

Ubi quadam infirmitate corporis arreptus angelica meruit visione perfrui, in qua admonitus est cœpto verbi ministerio sedulus insistere, vigiliisque consuetis et orationibus indefessus incumbere; eo quod certus sibi exitus, sed incerta ejusdem exitus esset hora futura, dicente Domino, [Matth. xxiv. 42,] *Vigilate itaque, quia nescitis diem neque horam*. Qua visione confirmatus curavit locum monasterii, quem a præfato rege Sigeberto acceperat, velocissime construere, ac regularibus instituere disciplinis. Erat autem monasterium silvarum, et maris vicinitate amœnum, constructum in castro quodam, quod lingua Anglorum “Cnobheresburg,” id est, Urbs Cnobheri, vocatur; quod deinde rex provinciæ illius Anna ac nobiles quique augustioribus ædificiis ac donariis adornaverunt. Erat autem vir iste de nobilissimo genere Scotorum, sed longe animo quam carne nobilior. Ab ipso tempore pueritiæ suæ curam non modicam lectionibus sacris simul et monasticis exhibebat disciplinis, et, quod maxime sanctos decet, cuncta, quæ agenda didicerat, sollicitus agere curabat.

Quid multa? Procedente tempore, et ipse sibi monasterium, in quo liberius cœlestibus studiis vacaret, construxit; ubi correptus infirmitate, sicut libellus de vita ejus conscriptus sufficienter edocet, raptus est e corpore, et a vespera usque ad galli cantum corpore exutus, angelicorum agminum et aspectus intueri et laudes beatas meruit audire. Referre autem erat solitus, quod aperte eos inter alia resonare audiret, “Ibunt sancti de virtute in virtutem;” et iterum, “Videbitur Deus deorum in Sion.” Qui reductus in corpore et die tertia rursus eductus vidit non solum majora beatorum gaudia, sed et maxima malignorum spirituum certamina, qui crebris accusationibus improbi iter illi cœleste intercludere contendebant; nec tamen, protegentibus eum angelis, quicquam proficiebant. De quibus omnibus si quis plenius scire vult, id est, quanta fraudis sollertia dæmones et actus ejus et verba superflua, et ipsas etiam cogitationes, quasi in libro descriptas replicaverint, quæ ab angelis, sanctisque ac viris justis sibi inter angelos apparentibus, læta vel tristia cognoverit, legat ipsum, de quo dixi, libellum vitæ ejus, et multum ex illo, ut reor, profectus spiritualis accipiet.

In quibus tamen unum est, quod et nos in hac historia ponere multis commodum duximus. Cum ergo in altum esset elatus, jussus est ab angelis, qui eum ducebant, respicere in mundum; at ille oculos in inferiora deflectens, vidit quasi vallem tenebrosam subtus se in imo positam. Vidit et quatuor ignes in aere, non multo ab invicem spatio distantes. Et interrogans angelos, qui essent hi ignes, audivit hos esse ignes, qui mundum succedentes essent consumturi. Unum mendacii, cum hoc, quod in baptismo abrenunciare nos Satanæ et omnibus operibus ejus promisimus, minime implemus; alterum cupiditatis, cum mundi divitias amori cœlestium præponimus; tertium dissensionis, cum animos proximorum, etiam in supervacuis rebus, offendere non formidamus; quartum impietatis, cum infirmiores spoliare et eis fraudem facere pro nihilo ducimus. Crescentes vero paulatim ignes usque ad invicem sese extenderunt, atque in immensam adunati sunt flammam. Cumque appropinquassent, pertimescens ille dicit angelo, “Domine, ecce ignis mihi appropinquat.” At ille, “Quod non incendisti,” inquit, “non ardebit in te; nam etsi terribilis iste ac grandis esse rogas videtur, tamen juxta merita operum singulos examinat, quia uniuscujusque cupiditas in hoc igne ardebit. Sicut enim quis ardet in corpore per illicitam voluptatem, ita solutus corpore ardebit per debitam pœnam.”

Tunc vidit unum de tribus angelis, qui sibi in tota utraque visione ductores affuerunt, præcedentem ignis flammam dividere, et duos ab utroque latere circumvolantes ab ignium se periculo defendere. Vidit autem et dæmones per ignem volantes, incendia bellorum contra justos struere. Sequuntur adversus ipsum accusationes malignorum, defensiones spirituum bonorum, copiosior cœlestium agminum visio; sed et virorum de sua natione sanctorum, quos olim sacerdotali gradu non ignobiliter potitos, fama jam vulgante, compererat; a quibus non pauca, quæ vel ipsi, vel omnibus, qui audire vellent, multum salubria essent, audivit. Qui cum verba finissent, et cum angelicis spiritibus ipsi quoque ad cœlos redirent, remanserunt cum beato Furseo tres angeli, de quibus diximus, qui eum ad corpus referrent. Cumque præfato igni maximo appropinquarent, divisit quidem angelus, sicut prius, ignem flammæ. Sed vir Dei ubi ad patefactam usque inter flammam januam pervenit, arripientes immundi spiritus unum de eis, quos in ignibus torrebant, jactaverunt in eum, et contingentes humerum maxillamque ejus incenderunt; cognovitque hominem, et quod vestimentum ejus morientis acceperit, ad memoriam reduxit, quem angelus sanctus statim apprehendens in ignem rejecit. Dicebatque hostis malignus, “Nolite repellere, quem ante suscepistis; nam sicut bona ejus peccatoris suscepistis, ita et de pœnis ejus participes esse debetis.” Contradicens angelus, “Non,” inquit, “hoc propter avaritiam, sed propter salvandam ejus animam suscepit;” cessavitque ignis. Et conversus ad eum angelus, “Quod incendisti,” inquit, “hoc arsit in te. Si enim hujus viri in peccatis suis mortui pecuniam non accepisses, nec pœna ejus in te arderet.” Et plura locutus, quid erga salutem eorum, qui ad mortem pœniterent, esset agendum, salubri sermone docuit.

Qui postmodum in corpore restitutus, omni vitæ suæ tempore signum incendii, quod in anima pertulit, visibile cunctis in humero maxillaque portavit; mirumque in modum, quod anima in occulto passa sit, caro palam præmonstrabat. Curabat autem semper, sicut et antea facere consueverat, omnibus opus virtutum et exemplis ostendere et prædicare sermonibus. Ordinem autem visionum suarum illis solummodo, qui propter desiderium compunctionis interrogabant, exponere volebat. Superest adhuc frater quidam senior monasterii nostri, qui narrare solet, dixisse sibi

quendam multum veracem ac religiosum hominem, quod ipse Furseum viderit in provincia Orientalium Anglorum, illasque visiones ex ipsius ore audierit; adjiciens, quia tempus hiemis fuerit acerrimum, et glacie constrictum, cum sedens in tenui veste vir iste ita inter dicendum propter magnitudinem memorati timoris vel suavitatis, quasi in media æstatis caumate, sudaverit.

Cum ergo, ut ad superiora redeamus, multis annis in Scotia verbum Dei omnibus annuncians tumultus irruentium barbarum non facile ferret, relictis omnibus, quæ habere videbatur, ab ipsa quoque insula patria discessit; et paucis cum fratribus per Britones in provinciam Anglorum devenit, ibique prædicans verbum Dei, ut diximus, monasterium nobile construxit. Quibus rite gestis, cupiens se ab omnibus seculi hujus, et ipsius quoque monasterii, negotiis alienare, reliquit monasterii et animarum curam fratri suo Fullano, et presbyteris Gobbano et Dicullo, et ipse ab omnibus mundi rebus liber in anachoretica conversatione vitam finire disposuit. Habuit alterum fratrem, vocabulo Ultanum, qui de monasterii probatione diuturna ad eremiticam pervenerat vitam. Hunc ergo solus petens, annum totum cum eo in continentia et orationibus, in quotidianis manuum vixit laboribus.

Dein turbatam incursione gentilium provinciam videns, et monasteriis quoque periculum imminere prævidens, dimissis ordinate omnibus, navigavit Galliam, ibique a rege Francorum Clodovico, vel patricio Erconwaldo, honorifice susceptus monasterium construxit in loco Latiniaco nominato, ac non multo post infirmitate correptus diem clausit ultimum. Cujus corpus idem Erconwaldus patricius accipiens servavit in porticu quadam ecclesiæ, quam in villa sua, cui nomen est Perrona, faciebat, donec ipsa ecclesia dedicaretur. Quod cum post dies viginti septem esset factum, et corpus ipsum de porticu ablatum prope altare esset recondendum, inventum est ita illæsum, ac si eadem hora de hac luce fuisset egressus. Sed et post annos quatuor, constructa domuncula cultiore receptui corporis ejusdem, ad orientem altaris adhuc sine macula corruptionis inventum, ibidem digno cum honore translatum est; ubi merita illius multis sæpe constat, Deo operante, claruisse virtutibus. Hæc de corporis ejus incorruptione breviter attigimus, ut quanta esset viri sublimitas legentibus notius existeret. Quæ cuncta in libello ejus sufficientius, sed et de aliis commilitonibus ipsius, quisquis legerit inveniet.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XX.—

UT, DEFUNCTO HONORIO, PONTIFICATU SIT FUNCTUS  
DEUSDEDIT; ET QUI IN TEMPORE ILLO ORIENTALIUM  
ANGLORUM, QUI RHOFENSIS ECCLESIAE, FUERINT  
ANTISTITES.

Interea, defuncto Felice, Orientalium Anglorum episcopo, post decem et septem annos accepti episcopatus, Honorius loco ejus ordinavit Thomam diaconum ejus de provincia Girviorum; et hoc, post quinque annos sui episcopatus, de hac vita subtracto, Bertgilsum, cognomine Bonifacium, de provincia Cantuariorum loco ejus substituit. Et ipse quoque Honorius, postquam metas sui cursus implevit, ex hac luce migravit, anno ab incarnatione Domini sexcentesimo quinquagesimo tertio, pridie kalendarum Octobrium; et, cessante episcopatu per annum et sex menses, electus est archiepiscopus cathedræ Dorovernensis sextus Deusdedit de gente Occidentalium Saxonum, quem ordinaturus venit illuc Ithamar, antistes ecclesiæ Rhofensis. Ordinatus est autem die septimo kalendarum Aprilium, et rexit ecclesiam annos novem, menses septem, et duos dies; et ipse, defuncto Ithamar, consecravit pro eo Damianum, qui de genere Australium Saxonum erat oriundus.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CAP. XXI.—

### UT PROVINCIA MEDITERRANEORUM ANGLORUM SUB REGE PEADA CHRISTIANA SIT FACTA.

His temporibus Middilangli, id est, Mediterranei Angli, sub principe Peada filio Pendæ regis, fidem et sacramenta veritatis perceperunt; qui, cum esset juvenis optimus ac regis nomine ac persona dignissimus, prælatus est a patre regno gentis illius, venitque ad regem Northanhumbrorum Oswius, postulans filiam ejus Elflendam sibi conjugem dari, neque aliter, quod petebat, impetrare potuit, nisi fidem Christi ac baptismum, cum gente cui præerat, acciperet. At ille, audita prædicatione veritatis, et promissione regni cœlestis, speque resurrectionis ac futuræ immortalitatis, libenter se Christianum fieri velle confessus est, etiamsi virginem non acciperet; persuasus maxime ad percipiendam fidem a filio regis Oswii, nomine Alfrido, qui erat cognatus et amicus ejus, habens sororem ipsius conjugem, vocabulo Cynebergam, filiam Pendæ regis.

Baptizatus est ergo a Finano episcopo, cum omnibus, qui secum venerant, comitibus ac militibus, eorumque famulis universis, in vico regis illustri, qui vocatur “Ad Murum;” et acceptis quatuor presbyteris, qui ad docendam baptizandamque gentem illius et eruditione et vita videbantur idonei, multo cum gaudio reversus est. Erant autem presbyteri Cedda, et Adda, et Betti, et Diuma, quorum ultimus natione Scotus, ceteri fuere Angli. Adda autem erat frater Uttan, presbyteri illustris, et abbatis monasterii, quod vocatur “Ad Capræ Caput;” cujus supra meminimus. Venientes ergo in provinciam memorati sacerdotes cum principe, prædicabant verbum, et libenter auditi sunt, multique quotidie et nobilium et infirmorum, abrenunciata sorde idololatriæ, fidei sunt fonte abluti. Nec prohibuit Penda rex quin etiam in sua, hoc est, Merciorum natione, verbum si qui vellent audire, prædicaretur; quin potius odio habebat et despiciebat eos, quos fide Christi imbutos opera fidei non habere deprehendit, dicens contemnendos et miseros esse eos, qui Deo suo, in quem crederent, obedire contemnerent. Cœpta sunt hæc biennio ante mortem Pendæ regis.

Ipsa autem occiso, cum Oswius rex Christianus regnum ejus acciperet, ut in sequentibus dicemus, factus est Diuma, unus ex præfatis quatuor sacerdotibus, episcopus Mediterraneorum Anglorum simul et Merciorum, ordinatus a Finano episcopo. Paucitas enim sacerdotum cogebat unum antistitem duobus populis præfici. Qui cum paucis sub tempore non paucam Domino plebem acquisisset, defunctus est apud Mediterraneos Anglos, in regione, quæ vocatur Infepingum. Suscepit pro illo episcopatum Ceollach, et ipse de natione Scotorum, qui non multo post, relicto episcopatu, reversus est ad insulam Hii, ubi plurimorum caput et arcem Scoti habuere cœnobiorum; succedente illi in episcopatum Trumhere, viro religioso et monachica vita instituto, natione quidem Anglo, sed a Scotis ordinato episcopo; quod temporibus Wulfhere regis, de quo in sequentibus dicemus, factum est.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXII.—

UT ORIENTALES SAXONES FIDEM QUAM DUDUM  
ABJECERANT, SUB REGE SIGEBERTO, PRÆDICANTE  
CEDD, RECEPERINT.

Eo tempore etiam Orientales Saxones fidem, quam olim, expulso Mellito antistite, abjecerant, instantia regis Oswii receperunt. Erat enim rex ejusdem gentis Sigebertus, qui post Sigebertum cognomento Parvum regnavit, amicus ejusdem Oswii regis, qui cum frequenter ad eum in provinciam Northanhumbrorum veniret, solebat eum hortari ad intelligendum deos esse non posse, qui hominum manibus facti essent; dei creandi materiam lignum vel lapidem esse non posse, quorum recisuræ vel igni absumerentur, vel in vasa quælibet humani usus formarentur, vel certe despectui habita foras projicerentur, et pedibus conculcata in terram verterentur. Deum potius intelligendum majestate incomprehensibilem, humanis oculis invisibilem, omnipotentem, æternum, qui cælum et terram et humanum genus creasset, regeret, et judicaturus esset orbem in æquitate; cujus sedes æterna non in vili et caduco metallo, sed in cœlis esset credenda: meritoque intelligendum, quia omnes, qui voluntatem ejus, a quo creati sunt, discerent et facerent, æterna ab illo præmia essent percepturi. Hæc et hujusmodi multa cum rex Oswius regi Sigeberto amicabili et quasi fraterno consilio sæpe inculcaret, tandem, juvante amicorum consensu, credidit, et facto cum suis consilio, cum exhortatione, faventibus cunctis et annuentibus fidei, baptizatus est cum eis a Finano episcopo in villa regia, cujus supra meminimus, quæ cognominatur “Ad Murum.” Est enim juxta murum, quo olim Romani Britanniam insulam præcinxere, duodecim millibus passuum a mari orientali secreta.

Igitur rex Sigebertus, æterni regni jam civis effectus, temporalis sui regni sedem repetiit, postulans ab Oswio rege, ut aliquos sibi doctores daret, qui gentem suam ad fidem Christi converterent ac fonte salutari abluerent. At ille mittens ad provinciam Mediterraneorum Anglorum, clamavit ad se virum Dei Cedd, et dato illi socio altero quodam presbytero, misit prædicare verbum genti Orientalium Saxonum. Ubi cum omnia perambulantes multam Domino ecclesiam congregassent, contigit quodam tempore eundem Cedd redire domum, ac pervenire ad ecclesiam Lindisfarnensem, propter colloquium Finani episcopi; qui ubi prosperatum ei opus evangelii comperit, fecit eum episcopum in gentem Orientalium Saxonum, vocatis ad se in ministerium ordinationis aliis duobus episcopis. Qui, accepto gradu episcopatus, rediit ad provinciam, et majore auctoritate cœptum opus explens fecit per loca ecclesias, presbyteros et diaconos ordinavit, qui se in verbo fidei et ministerio baptizandi adjuvarent, maxime in civitate, quæ lingua Saxonum Ithancestir appellatur, sed et in illa, quæ Tilaburg cognominatur: quorum prior locus est in ripa Pentæ amnis, secundus in ripa Tamesis; in quibus, collecto examine famulorum Christi, disciplinam vitæ regularis, in quantum rudes adhuc capere poterant, custodire docuit.

Cumque tempore non paucis in præfata provincia, gaudente rege, congaudente universo populo, vitæ cœlestis institutio quotidianum sumeret augmentum, contigit

ipsum regem, instigante omnium bonorum inimico, propinquorum suorum manu interfici. Erant autem duo germani fratres, qui hoc facinus patrarunt; qui cum interrogarentur quare hoc facerent, nil aliud respondere potuerunt, nisi ob hoc se iratos fuisse et inimicos regi, quod ille nimium suis parcere soleret inimicis, et factas ab eis injurias mox obsecrantibus placida mente dimitteret. Talis erat culpa regis pro qua occideretur, quod evangelica præcepta devoto corde servaret; in qua tamen ejus morte innoxia, juxta prædictum viri Dei, vera est ejus culpa punita. Habuerat enim unus ex his, qui eum occiderunt, comitibus illicitum conjugium, quod cum episcopus prohibere et corrigere non posset, excommunicavit eum, atque omnibus, qui se audire vellent, præcepit, ne domum ejus intrarent neque de cibis illius acciperent. Contempsit autem hoc rex præceptum, et rogatus a comite, intravit epulaturus domum ejus; qui cum abiisset, obviavit ei antistes. At rex intuens eum mox tremefactus desiluit de equo, ceciditque ante pedes ejus, veniam reatus postulans. Nam et episcopus pariter desiluit, sederat enim et ipse in equo. Iratus autem tetigit regem jacentem virga, quam tenebat manu, et pontificali auctoritate protestatus, “Dico tibi,” inquit, “quia noluisti te continere a domo perditum et damnatum illius, tu in ipsa domo mori habes.” Sed credendum est quia talis mors viri religiosi non solum talem culpam diluerit, sed etiam meritum ejus auxerit; quia nimirum ob causam pietatis, quia propter observantiam mandatorum Christi contigit.

Successit autem Sigeberto in regnum Suidhelmus, filius Sexbaldi, qui baptizatus est ab ipso Cedd in provincia Orientalium Anglorum, in vico regio, qui dicitur Rendelsham, id est, Mansio Rendili; suscepitque eum ascendentem de fonte sancto Ethelwaldus rex ipsius gentis Orientalium Anglorum, frater Annæ regis eorundem.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXIII.—

UT IDEM EPISCOPUS CEDD LOCUM MONASTERII  
CONSTRUENDI AB ETHELWALDO REGE ACCIPIENS  
ORATIONIBUS AC JEJUNIIS DOMINO CONSECRAVERIT;  
ET DE OBITU IPSIUS.

Solebat autem idem vir Domini, cum apud Orientales Saxones episcopatus officio fungeretur, sæpius etiam suam, id est, Northanhumbrorum provinciam exhortandi gratia revisere; quem cum Ethelwaldus filius Oswaldi regis, qui in Deirorum partibus regnum habebat, virum sanctum et sapientem, probumque moribus videret, postulavit eum possessionem terræ aliquam a se ad construendum monasterium accipere, in quo ipse rex et frequentius ad deprecandum Dominum verbumque audiendum advenire, et defunctus sepeliri deberet. Nam et seipsum fideliter credidit multum juvari eorum orationibus quotidianis, qui illo in loco Domino servirent. Habuerat autem idem rex secum fratrem germanum ejusdem episcopi, vocabulo Celin, virum æque Deo devotum, qui et ipsi ac familiæ ipsius verbum et sacramenta fidei, erat enim presbyter, ministrare solebat, per cujus notitiam maxime ad diligendum noscendumque episcopum pervenit. Favens ergo votis regis antistes, elegit sibi locum monasterii construendi in montibus arduis ac remotis, in quibus latronum magis latibula ac lustra ferarum, quam habitacula fuisse videbantur hominum; ut, juxta prophetiam Isaïæ, in cubilibus, in quibus prius dracones habitabant, oriretur viror calami et junci, id est, fructus bonorum operum ibi nascerentur, ubi prius vel bestię commorari, vel homines bestialiter vivere consueverant.

Studens autem vir Domini acceptum monasterii locum primo precibus ac jejuniis a pristina flagitiorum sorde purgare, et sic in eo monasterii fundamenta jacere, postulavit a rege, ut sibi per totum Quadragesimæ tempus, quod instabat, facultatem ac licentiam ibidem orationis causa demorandi concederet. Quibus diebus cunctis, excepta Dominica, jejunium ad vesperam usque juxta morem protelans, ne tunc quidem nisi panis permodicum, et unum ovum gallinaceum cum parvo lacte aqua mixto percipiebat. Dicebat enim hanc esse consuetudinem eorum, a quibus normam disciplinæ regularis didicerat, ut accepta nuper loca ad faciendum monasterium vel ecclesiam prius orationibus ac jejuniis Domino consecrent. Cumque decem dies Quadragesimæ restarent, venit, qui clamaret eum ad regem. At ille, ne opus religiosum, negotiorum regalium causa, intermitteretur, petiit presbyterum suum Cynebillum, qui etiam frater germanus erat ipsius, pia cœpta complere. Cui cum ille libenter acquiesceret, expleto studio jejuniorum et orationis, fecit ibi monasterium, quod nunc Lestingau vocatur, et religiosis moribus, juxta ritus Lindisfarnensium, ubi educatus erat, instituit.

Qui cum annis multis et in præfata provincia episcopatum administraret, et hujus quoque monasterii statutis propositis curam gereret, casu contigit, ut ad ipsum monasterium tempore mortalitatis adveniens tactus ibidem infirmitate corporis obiret;

qui primo quidem foris sepultus est, tempore autem procedente, in eodem monasterio ecclesia est in honorem beatæ Dei Genitricis de lapide facta, et in illa corpus ipsius ad dexteram altaris reconditum.

Dedit autem episcopus regendum post se monasterium fratri suo Ceadda, qui postea episcopus factus est, ut in sequentibus dicemus. Quatuor siquidem hi, quos diximus, germani fratres, Cedd et Cynebil et Celin et Ceadda, quod raro invenitur, omnes sacerdotes Domini fuere præclari, et duo ex eis etiam summi sacerdotii gradu functi sunt. Cum ergo episcopum defunctum ac sepultum in provincia Northanhumbroborum audirent fratres, qui in monasterio ejus erant in provincia Orientalium Saxonum, venerunt illo de suo monasterio homines circiter triginta, cupientes ad corpus sui patris, aut vivere si sic Deo placeret, aut morientes ibi sepeliri; qui libenter a suis fratribus et commilitonibus suscepti, omnes ibidem, superveniente præfatæ pestilentiæ clade, defuncti sunt, excepto uno puerulo, quem orationibus patris sui a morte constat esse servatum. Nam cum multo post hæc tempore viveret, et Scripturis legendis operam daret, tandem didicit se aqua baptismatis non esse regeneratum, et mox fonte lavacri salutaris ablutus etiam postmodum ad ordinem presbyterii promotus est, multisque in ecclesia utilis fuit; de quo dubitandum non crediderim, quin intercessionibus, ut dixi, sui patris, ad cujus corpus dilectionis ipsius gratia venerat, sit ab articulo mortis retentus, ut et ipse sic mortem evaderet æternam, et aliis quoque fratribus ministerium vitæ ac salutis docendo exhiberet.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXIV.—

UT PROVINCIA MERCIORUM, OCCISO REGE PENDA,  
FIDEM CHRISTI SUSCEPERIT: ET OSWIUS, PRO ADEPTA  
VICTORIA, POSSESSIONES ET TERRITORIA AD  
CONSTRUENDA MONASTERIA DEDERIT.

His temporibus rex Oswius (cum acerbas atque intolerabiles pateretur irruptiones sæpedicti regis Merciorum, qui fratrem ejus occiderat,) ad ultimum, necessitate cogente, promisit se ei innumera et majora, quam credi potest, ornamenta regia vel donaria in pretium pacis largiturum, dummodo ille domum rediret, et provincias regni ejus usque ad internecionem vastare desineret. Cumque rex perfidus nullatenus precibus illius assensum præberet, qui totam ejus gentem a parvo usque ad magnum delere atque exterminare decreverat, respexit ille ad divinæ auxilium pietatis, quo ab impietate barbarica posset eripi; votoque se obligans, “Si paganus,” inquit, “nescit accipere nostra donaria, offeramus ei, qui novit, Domino Deo nostro.” Vovit ergo quia, si victor exsisteret, filiam suam Domino sacra virginitate dicendam offerret, simulque duodecim possessiones prædiorum ad construenda monasteria donaret; et sic cum paucissimo exercitu se certamini dedit. Denique fertur quod tricies majorem pagani habuerint exercitum, siquidem ipsi triginta legiones ducibus nobilissimis instructas in bello habuere; quibus Oswius rex cum Alfrido filio, perparvum, ut dixi, habens exercitum, sed Christo duce confisus, occurrit. Nam alius filius ejus Egfridus eo tempore in provincia Merciorum apud reginam Cynwise obses tenebatur. Filius autem Oswaldi regis Ethelwaldus, qui eis auxilio esse debuerat, in parte erat adversariorum, eisdemque contra patriam et patrum suum pugnaturis ductor exstiterat, quamvis ipso tempore pugnandi sese pugnæ subtraxerat, eventumque discriminis tuto in loco exspectabat. Inito ergo certamine, fugati sunt et cæsi pagani, duces regii triginta, et qui ad auxilium venerant, pene omnes interfecti; in quibus Ethelhere frater Annæ regis Orientalium Anglorum, qui post eum regnavit, auctor ipse belli, perditis militibus sive auxiliis, interemtus; et quia prope fluvium Vinwed pugnatum est, qui tunc præ inundantia pluviarum late alveum suum, imo omnes ripas suas, transierat, contigit ut multo plures aqua fugientes, quam bellantes perderet ensis.

Tunc rex Oswius, juxta quod Domino voverat, pro collata sibi victoria gratias Deo referens, dedit filiam suam Elfledam, quæ vixdum unius anni ætatem impleverat, perpetua ei virginitate consecrandam; donatis insuper duodecim possessiunculis terrarum, in quibus, ablato studio militiæ terrestri, ad exercendam militiam cœlestem, supplicandumque pro pace gentis ejus æterna, devotioni sedulæ monachorum locus facultasque suppeteret. E quibus videlicet possessiunculis, sex in provincia Deirorum, sex in Berniciorum dedit; singulæ vero possessiones decem erant familiarum, id est, simul omnes centum viginti. Intravit autem præfata regis Oswii filia Deo dedicanda monasterium, quod nuncupatur Heruteu, id est, Insula Cervi, cui tunc Hilda abbatissa præfuit; quæ post biennium, comparata possessione decem familiarum, in loco qui dicitur Streaneshalch, ibi monasterium construxit, in quo memorata regis filia, primo

discipula vitæ regularis, deinde etiam magistra exstitit, donec, completo undesexaginta annorum numero, ad complexum et nuptias Sponsi cœlestis virgo beata intraret. In quo monasterio et ipsa, et pater ejus Oswius, et mater ejus Eanfleda, et pater matris ejus Edwinus, et multi alii nobiles in ecclesia sancti Apostoli Petri sepulti sunt. Hoc autem bellum rex Oswius in regione Loidis, tertio decimo regni sui anno, decimo septimo die kalendarum Decembrium, cum magna utriusque populi utilitate confecit. Nam et suam gentem ab hostili paganorum depopulatione liberavit, et ipsam gentem Merciorum finitimarumque provinciarum, desecto capite perfido, ad fidei Christianæ gratiam convertit.

Primus autem in provincia Merciorum, simul et Lindisfarnorum ac Mediterraneorum Anglorum, factus est episcopus Diuna, ut supra diximus, qui apud Mediterraneos Anglos defunctus ac sepultus est; secundus Ceollach, qui, relicto episcopatus officio, vivens ad Scotiam rediit, uterque de genere Scotorum; tertius Trumhere, de natione quidem Anglorum, sed edoctus et ordinatus a Scotis, qui erat abbas in monasterio, quod dicitur Ingethlingum. Ipse est locus in quo occisus est rex Oswinus, ut supra meminimus. Nam regina Eanfleda propinqua illius, ob castigationem necis ejus injustæ, postulavit a rege Oswio, ut donaret ibi locum monasterium construendi præfato Dei famulo Trumhere, quia propinquus et ipse erat regis occisi; in quo videlicet monasterio orationes assiduæ pro utriusque regis, (id est, et occisi, et ejus, qui occidere jussit,) salute æterna fierent. Idem autem rex Oswius tribus annis post occisionem Pendæ regis, Merciorum genti, necnon et ceteris Australium provinciarum populis, præfuit; qui etiam gentem Pictorum maxima ex parte regno Anglorum subjecit.

Quo tempore donavit præfato Peadæ, filio regis Pendæ, eo quod esset cognatus suus, regnum Australium Merciorum, qui sunt, ut dicunt, familiarum quinque millium, discreti fluvio Treenta ab Aquilonalibus Merciiis, quorum terra est familiarum septem millium. Sed idem Peada proximo vere multum nefarie peremptus est, proditione, ut dicunt, conjugis suæ, in ipso tempore festi Paschalis. Completis autem tribus annis post interfectionem Pendæ regis, rebellarunt adversus regem Oswium duces gentis Merciorum Immin, et Eafa, et Eadbert, levato in regem Wulfhere, filio ejusdem Pendæ adolescente, quem occultum servaverant; et, ejectis principibus regis non proprii, fines suos fortiter simul et libertatem receperunt: sicque cum suo rege liberi, Christo vero regi, pro sempiterno in cœlis regno, servire gaudebant. Præfuit autem rex idem genti Merciorum annis decem et septem, habuitque primum episcopum Trumhere, de quo supra diximus, secundum Jaruman, tertium Ceaddam, quartum Winfridum. Omnes hi per ordinem sibimet succedentes sub rege Wulfhere, gentis Merciorum episcopatu sunt functi.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXV.—

## UT QUÆSTIO SIT MOTA DE TEMPORE PASCHÆ ADVERSUS EOS, QUI DE SCOTIA VENERANT.

Interea, Aidano episcopo de hac vita sublato, Finanus pro illo gradum episcopatus a Scotis ordinatus ac missus acceperat; qui in insula Lindisfarnensi fecit ecclesiam episcopali sedi congruam, quam tamen, more Scotorum, non de lapide, sed de robore secto, totam composuit atque arundine texit, quam tempore sequenti reverendissimus archiepiscopus Theodorus in honore beati apostoli Petri dedicavit. Sed episcopus loci ipsius Eadbertus, ablata arundine, plumbi laminis eam totam, hoc est, et tectum et ipsos quoque parietes ejus, cooperire curavit.

His temporibus quæstio facta est frequens et magna de observatione Paschæ, confirmantibus eis, qui de Cantia, vel de Galliis, advenerant, quod Scoti Dominicum Paschæ diem contra universalis ecclesiæ morem celebrarent. Erat in his acerrimus veri Paschæ defensor, nomine Ronan, natione quidem Scotus, sed in Galliæ vel Italiæ partibus regulam ecclesiasticæ veritatis edoctus, qui cum Finano confligens multos quidem correxit, vel ad solertiores veritatis inquisitionem accendit; nequaquam tamen Finanum emendare potuit, quin potius, quod esset homo ferocis animi, acerbiorum castigando et apertum veritatis adversarium reddidit. Observabat autem Jacobus, diaconus quondam (ut supra docuimus) venerabilis archiepiscopi Paulini, verum et Catholicum Pascha, cum omnibus, quos ad correctiorem viam erudire poterat. Observabat et regina Eanfleda cum suis juxta quod in Cantia fieri viderat, habens secum de Cantia presbyterum catholicæ observationis, nomine Romanum; unde nonnunquam contigisse fertur illis temporibus, ut bis in anno uno Pascha celebraretur, et cum rex Pascha Dominicum, solutis jejuniis, faceret, tunc regina cum suis persistens adhuc in jejunio diem Palmarum celebraret. Hæc autem dissonantia Paschalis observantiæ, vivente Aidano, patienter ab omnibus tolerabatur, qui patenter intellexerant, quia etsi Pascha contra morem eorum, qui ipsum miserant, facere non potuit, opera tamen fidei, pietatis, et dilectionis, juxta morem omnibus sanctis consuetum, diligenter exsequi curavit; unde ab omnibus, etiam his, qui de Pascha aliter sentiebant, merito diligebatur, nec solum a mediocribus, verum ab ipsis quoque episcopis, Honorio Cantuariorum, et Felice Orientalium Anglorum, venerationi habitus est.

Defuncto autem Finano, qui post illum fuit, cum Colmanus in episcopatum succederet, et ipse missus a Scotia, gravior de observatione Paschæ necnon et de aliis ecclesiasticæ vitæ disciplinis controversia nata est; unde merito movit hæc quæstio sensus et corda multorum, timentium ne forte, accepto Christianitatis vocabulo, in vacuum current, aut cucurrissent. Pervenit et ad ipsas principum aures, Oswii videlicet regis, et filii ejus Alfridi, qui nimirum Oswius a Scotis edoctus ac baptizatus, illorum etiam lingua optime imbutus, nihil melius quam quod illi docuissent autumabat. Porro Alfridus magistrum habens eruditionis Christianæ Wilfridum virum doctissimum, (nam et Romam prius propter doctrinam ecclesiasticam adierat, et apud

Dalfinum archiepiscopum Galliarum Lugduni multum temporis egerat, a quo etiam tonsuræ ecclesiasticæ coronam susceperat,) hujus doctrinam omnibus Scotorum traditionibus jure præferendam sciebat; unde ei etiam donaverat monasterium quadraginta familiarum, in loco qui dicitur Inrhypum, quem videlicet locum paulo ante eis, qui Scotos sequebantur, in possessionem monasterii dederat. Sed quia illi postmodum, data sibi optione, magis loco cedere, quam suam mutare consuetudinem, volebant, dedit eum illi, qui dignam loco et doctrinam haberet, et vitam.

Venerat eo tempore Agilbertus, Occidentalium Saxonum episcopus, cujus supra meminimus, amicus Alfridi regis et Wilfridi abbatis, ad provinciam Northanhumbrorum, et apud eos aliquandiu demorabatur; qui etiam Wilfridum, rogatu Alfridi, in præfato suo monasterio presbyterum fecit. Habebat autem secum ipse presbyterum, nomine Agathonem. Mota ergo ibi quæstione de Pascha, vel tonsura, vel aliis rebus ecclesiasticis, dispositum est ut in monasterio, quod dicitur Streaneshalch, quod interpretatur “Sinus Phari,” cui tunc Hilda abbatissa Deo devota femina præfuit, synodus fieri et hæc quæstio terminari deberet. Veneruntque illo reges ambo, pater scilicet et filius; episcopi, Colmanus cum clericis suis de Scotia, Agilbertus cum Agathone et Wilfrido presbyteris. Jacobus et Romanus in horum parte erant; Hilda abbatissa cum suis in parte Scotorum, in qua erat etiam venerabilis episcopus Cedd, jamdudum ordinatus a Scotis, ut supra docuimus, qui et interpres in eo concilio vigilantissimus utriusque partis exstitit.

Primusque rex Oswius, præmissa præfatione, quod oporteret eos, qui una Deo servirent, unam vivendi regulam tenere, nec discrepare in celebratione sacramentorum cœlestium, qui unum omnes in cœlis regnum exspectarent; inquirendum potius, quæ esset verior traditio, et hanc ab omnibus communiter esse sequendam; jussit primo dicere episcopum suum Colmanum, qui esset ritus et unde originem ducens ille, quem ipse sequeretur. Tunc Colmanus, “Pascha,” inquit, “hoc, quod agere soleo, a majoribus meis accepi, qui me huc episcopum miserunt, quod omnes patres nostri, viri Deo dilecti, eodem modo celebrasse noscuntur. Quod ne cui contemnendum et reprobandum esse videatur, ipsum est quod beatus Evangelista Joannes, discipulus specialiter Domino dilectus, cum omnibus, quibus præerat, ecclesiis, celebrasse legitur.” Quo hæc et his similia dicente, jussit rex et Agilbertum proferre in medium morem suæ observationis, unde initium haberet, vel qua hunc auctoritate sequeretur. Respondit Agilbertus, “Loquatur, obsecro, vice mea discipulus meus Wilfridus presbyter, quia unum ambo sapimus cum ceteris, qui hic assident ecclesiasticæ traditionis cultoribus; et ille melius ac manifestius ipsa lingua Anglorum, quam ego per interpretem, potest explanare quæ sentimus.”

Tunc Wilfridus, jubente rege ut diceret, ita exorsus est. “Pascha, quod facimus,” inquit, “vidimus Romæ, ubi beati Apostoli Petrus et Paulus vixere, docuere, passi sunt et sepulti, ab omnibus celebrari; hoc in Italia, hoc in Gallia, quas discendi vel orandi studio pertransivimus, ab omnibus agi conspeximus; hoc Africam, Asiam, et Ægyptum, Græciam, et omnem orbem, quacunque Christi ecclesia diffusa est, per diversas nationes et linguas, uno ac non diverso temporis ordine gerere comperimus; præter hos tantum, et obstinationis eorum complices, Pictos dico et Britones, cum quibus de duabus ultimis oceani insulis, et his non totis, contra totum orbem stulto labore pugnant.” Cui hæc dicenti respondit Colmanus, “Mirum quare stultum



appellare velitis laborem nostrum, in quo tanti apostoli, qui super pectus Domini recumbere dignus fuit, exempla sectamur; cum ipsum sapientissime vixisse omnis mundus noverit.” At Wilfridus, “Absit,” inquit, “ut Joannem stultitiæ reprehendamus, cum scita legis Mosaicæ juxta literam servaret, judaizante adhuc in multis ecclesia, nec subito valentibus apostolis omnem legis observantiam, quæ a Deo instituta est, abdicare. Quomodo simulacra, quæ a dæmonibus inventa sunt, repudiare omnes, qui ad fidem veniunt, necesse est; videlicet, ne scandalum facerent eis, qui inter gentes erant, Judæis. Hinc est enim quod Paulus Timotheum circumcidit, quod hostias in templo immolavit, quod cum Aquila et Priscilla caput Corinthi totondit; ad nihil videlicet utile, nisi ad scandalum vitandum Judæorum. Hinc quod eidem Paulo Jacobus ait, [Act. xxi. 20,] *Vides, frater, quot millia sunt in Judæis, qui crediderunt; et omnes hi æmulatores sunt legis.* Nec tamen hodie, clarescente per mundum Evangelio, necesse est, imo nec licitum, fidelibus vel circumcidi, vel hostias Deo victimarum offerre carnalium. Itaque Joannes, secundum legis consuetudinem, quarta decima die mensis primi ad vesperam incipiebat celebrationem festi Paschalis, nil curans utrum hæc Sabbato, an alia qualibet feria, proveniret. At vero Petrus, cum Romæ prædicaret, memor quia Dominus prima Sabbati resurrexit a mortuis ac mundo spem resurrectionis contulit, ita Pascha faciendum intellexit, ut secundum consuetudinem ac præcepta legis quartam decimam lunam primi mensis, æque sicut Joannes, orientem ad vesperam semper exspectaret; et, hac exorta, si Dominica dies, quæ tunc prima Sabbati vocabatur, erat mane ventura, in ipsa vespera Pascha Dominicum celebrare incipiebat, quomodo et nos omnes hodie facere solemus. Sin autem Dominica non proximo mane post lunam quartam decimam, sed sexta decima, aut septima decima, aut alia qualibet luna, usque ad vicesimam primam esset ventura, exspectabat eam, et præcedente Sabbato, vespere, sacrosancta Paschæ solennia inchoabat; sicque fiebat, ut Dominica Paschæ dies non nisi a quinta decima luna usque ad vicesimam primam servaretur. Neque hæc evangelica et apostolica traditio legem solvit, sed potius adimplet, in qua observandum Pascha a quarta decima luna primi mensis ad vesperam, usque ad vicesimam primam lunam ejusdem mensis ad vesperam, præceptum est; in quam observantiam imitandam, omnes beati Joannis successores in Asia post obitum ejus, et omnis per orbem ecclesia conversa est. Et hoc esse verum Pascha, hoc solum fidelibus celebrandum, Niceno Concilio non statutum noviter, sed confirmatum est, ut Ecclesiastica docet Historia.

“Unde constat vos, Colmane, neque Joannis, ut autumatis, exempla sectari, neque Petri, cujus traditioni scientes contradicitis, neque legi, neque Evangelio, in observatione vestri Paschæ congruere. Joannes enim, ad legis Mosaicæ decreta tempus Paschale custodiens, nil de prima Sabbati curabat; quod vos non facitis, qui non nisi prima Sabbati Pascha celebratis. Petrus a quinta decima luna usque ad vicesimam primam diem Paschæ Dominicum celebrabat, quod vos non facitis, qui a quarta decima usque ad vicesimam lunam diem Dominicum Paschæ observatis; ita, ut tertia decima luna ad vesperam sæpius Pascha incipiatis, cujus neque lex ullam fecit mentionem, neque auctor ac dator Evangelii Dominus in ea, sed in quarta decima, vel vetus pascha manducavit ad vesperam, vel Novi Testamenti sacramenta, in commemorationem suæ passionis, ecclesiæ celebranda tradidit. Item, lunam vicesimam primam, quam lex maxime celebrandam commendavit, a celebratione vestri Paschæ funditus eliminatis; sicque, ut dixi, in celebratione summæ festivitatis neque Joanni, neque Petro, neque Legi, neque Evangelio, concordatis.”

His contra Colmanus, “Numquid,” ait, “Anatolius vir sanctus et in præfata Historia Ecclesiastica multum laudatus, legi vel Evangelio contraria sapuit, qui a quarta decima usque ad vicesimam Pascha celebrandum scripsit? Numquid reverendissimum patrem nostrum Columbam, et successores ejus viros Deo dilectos, qui eodem modo Pascha fecerunt, divinis paginis contraria sapuisse, vel egisse credendum est? cum plurimi fuerint in eis, quorum sanctitati cœlestia signa, et virtutum quæ fecerunt miracula, testimonium præbuerunt; quos ipse sanctos esse non dubitans, semper eorum vitam, mores et disciplinam, sequi non desisto.”

At Wilfridus, “Constat,” inquit, “Anatolium virum sanctissimum, doctissimum, ac laude esse dignissimum; sed quid vobis cum illo, cum nec ejus decreta servetis? Ille enim in Pascha suo, regulam utique veritatis sequens, circulum decem et novem annorum posuit, quem vos aut ignoratis, aut agnitum et a tota Christi ecclesia custoditum pro nihilo contemnitis. Ille sic in Pascha Dominico quartam decimam lunam computavit, ut hanc eadem ipsa die, more Ægyptiorum, quintam decimam lunam ad vesperam esse fateretur. Sic idem vicesimam die Dominico Paschæ annotavit, ut hanc, declinata eadem die, esse vicesimam primam crederet. Cujus regulam distinctionis vos ignorasse probat, quod aliquoties Pascha manifestissime ante plenilunium, id est, in tertia decima luna, facitis. De patre autem vestro Columba et sequacibus ejus, quorum sanctitatem vos imitari, et regulam ac præcepta cœlestibus signis confirmata sequi perhibetis, possum respondere, quia multis in judicio dicentibus Domino, quod in nomine ejus prophetaverint, et dæmonia ejecerint, et virtutes multas fecerint, responsurus sit Dominus, quia nunquam eos noverit. Sed absit, ut de patribus vestris hoc dicam; quia justius multo est de incognitis bonum credere, quam malum. Unde et illos Dei famulos ac Deo dilectos esse non nego, qui simplicitate rustica, sed intentione pia, Deum dilexerunt. Neque illis multum obesse reor talem Paschæ observantiam, quamdiu nullus advenerat, qui eis instituti perfectioris decreta, quæ sequerentur, ostenderet; quos utique credo, si qui tunc ad eos catholicus calculator adveniret, sic ejus monita fuisse secuturos, quomodo ea, quæ noverant ac didicerant, Dei mandata probantur fuisse secuti.

“Tu autem et socii tui, si audita decreta sedis apostolicæ, imo universalis ecclesiæ, et hæc literis sacris confirmata, sequi contemnitis, absque ulla dubitatione peccatis. Etsi enim patres tui sancti fuerunt, numquid universali, quæ per orbem est, ecclesiæ Christi, eorum est paucitas uno de angulo extremæ insulæ præferenda? Et si sanctus erat ac potens virtutibus ille Columba vester, imo et noster, si Christi erat, num præferri potuit beatissimo apostolorum principi, cui Dominus ait, [Matth. xvi. 18,] *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam, et portæ inferi non prævalebunt adversus eam, et tibi dabo claves regni cælorum.*”

Hæc perorante Wilfrido, dixit rex, “Verene, Colmane, hæc illi Petro dicta sunt a Domino?” Qui ait, “Vere, rex.” At ille, “Habetis,” inquit, “vos proferre aliquid tantæ potestatis vestro Columbæ datum?” At ait ille, “Nihil.” Rursum autem rex, “Si utrique vestrum,” inquit, “in hoc sine ulla controversia consentiunt, quod hæc principaliter Petro dicta, et ei claves regni cælorum sint datæ a Domino?” Responderunt etiam “Utrique.” At ille ita conclusit, “Et ego vobis dico, quia hic est ostiarius ille, cui ego contradicere nolo; sed in quantum novi vel valeo, hujus cupio in omnibus obedire statutis; ne forte, me adveniente ad fores regni cælorum, non sit qui reseret, averso

illo, qui claves tenere probatur.” Hæc dicente rege, faverunt assidentes quique sive adstantes, majores una cum mediocribus; et abdicata minus perfecta institutione, ad ea, quæ meliora cognoverant, sese transferre festinabant.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXVI.—

UT COLMANUS VICTUS DOMUM REDIERIT, ET TUDA  
PRO ILLO EPISCOPATU SIT FUNCTUS; QUALISQUE  
ILLIS DOCTORIBUS FUERIT HABITUS ECCLESIAE.

Finitoque conflictu ac soluta concione, Agilbertus domum rediit. Colmanus videns spretam suam doctrinam, sectamque esse despectam, assumtis his, qui se sequi voluerunt, (id est, qui Pascha catholicum, et tonsuram coronæ, nam et de hoc quæstio non minima erat, recipere nolebant,) in Scotiam regressus est, tractaturus cum suis, quid de his facere deberet. Cedd, relictis Scotorum vestigiis, ad suam sedem rediit, utpote agnita observatione catholici Paschæ. Facta est autem hæc quæstio anno Dominicæ incarnationis sexcentesimo sexagesimo quarto, qui fuit annus Oswii regis vicesimus secundus; episcopatus autem Scotorum, quem gesserunt in provincia Anglorum, annus tricesimus. Siquidem Aidanus decem et septem annis, Finanus decem, Colmanus tribus, episcopatum tenuere.

Reverso autem patriam Colmano, suscepit pro illo pontificatum Northanhumbro- rum famulus Christi Tuda, qui erat apud Scotos austrinos eruditus atque ordinatus episcopus, habens juxta morem provinciæ illius coronam tonsuræ ecclesiasticæ, et catholicam temporis Paschalis regulam observans; vir quidem bonus ac religiosus, sed permodico tempore ecclesiam regens. Venerat autem de Scotia, tenente adhuc pontificatum Colmano, et diligenter ea, quæ ad fidem et veritatem pertinent, et verbo cunctos docebat et opere. Porro fratribus, qui in Lindisfarnensi ecclesia, Scotis abeuntibus, remanere maluerunt, præpositus est abbas jure vir reverendissimus ac mansuetissimus Eata, qui erat abbas in monasterio, quod dicitur Mailros; quod aiunt Colmanum abiturum petiisse et impetrasse a rege Oswio, eo quod esset idem Eata unus de duodecim pueris Aidani, quos primo episcopatus sui tempore de natione Anglorum erudiendos in Christo accepit. Multum namque eundem episcopum Colmanum rex pro insita illi prudentia diligebat. Ipse est Eata, qui non multo post eidem ecclesiæ Lindisfarnensis episcopus factus est. Abiens autem domum Colmanus assumsit secum partem ossium reverendissimi patris Aidani; partem vero in ecclesia, cui præerat, reliquit, et in secretario ejus condi præcepit.

Quantæ autem parsimoniæ, cujusque continentiæ fuerit ipse cum prædecessoribus suis, testabatur etiam locus ille, quem regebant, ubi, abeuntibus eis, excepta ecclesia, paucissimæ domus repertæ sunt; hoc est, illæ solummodo, sine quibus conversatio civilis esse nullatenus poterat; nil pecuniarum absque pecoribus habebant; si quid enim pecuniæ a divitibus accipiebant, mox pauperibus dabant; nam neque ad susceptionem potentium seculi, vel pecunias colligi, vel domus prævideri, necesse fuit, qui nunquam ad ecclesiam, nisi orationis tantum et audiendi verbi Dei causa, veniebant. Rex ipse, cum opportunitas exegisset, cum quinque tantum aut sex ministris veniebat, et, expleta in ecclesia oratione, discedebat. Quod si forte eos ibi refici contingeret, simplici tantum et quotidiano fratrum cibo contenti nil ultra

quærebant. Tota enim fuit tunc sollicitudo doctoribus illis Deo serviendi, non seculo; tota cura cordis excolendi, non ventris.

Unde et in magna erat veneratione tempore illo religionis habitus, ita ut ubicunque clericus aliquis aut monachus adveniret, gaudenter ab omnibus tanquam Dei famulus exciperetur; etiam si in itinere pergens inveniretur, accurrebant, et flexa cervice vel manu signari, vel ore illius se benedici, gaudebant; verbis quoque horum exhortatoriis diligenter auditum præbebant. Sed et diebus Dominicis ad ecclesiam, sive ad monasteria certatim, non reficiendi corporis, sed audiendi sermonis, Dei gratia confluebant; et si quis sacerdotum in vicum forte deveniret, mox congregati in unum vicani verbum vitæ ab illo expetere curabant. Nam neque alia ipsis sacerdotibus aut clericis vicos adeundi, quam prædicandi, baptizandi, infirmos visitandi, et, ut breviter dicam, animas curandi, causa fuit; qui in tantum erant ab omni avaritiæ peste castigati, ut nemo territoria ac possessiones ad construenda monasteria, nisi a potentibus seculi coactus, acciperet. Quæ consuetudo per omnia aliquanto post hæc tempore in ecclesiis Northanhumbrorum servata est. Sed de his satis dictum.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXVII.—

UT EGBERTUS, VIR SANCTUS DE NATIONE  
ANGLORUM, MONACHICAM IN HIBERNIA VITAM  
DUXERIT.

Eodem anno Dominicæ incarnationis sexcentesimo sexagesimo quarto, facta est eclipsis solis die tertio mensis Maii, hora circiter decima diei; quo etiam anno subita pestilentia lues, depopulatis prius australibus Britanniaë plagis, Northanhumbroꝝ quoque provinciam corripuens, atque acerba clade diutius longe lateque desævians, magnam hominum multitudinem stravit. Qua plaga præfatus Domini sacerdos Tuda raptus est de mundo, et in monasterio, quod dicitur Pegnalech, honorifice sepultus. Hæc autem plaga Hiberniam quoque insulam pari clade premebat. Erant ibidem eo tempore multi nobilium simul et mediocrium de gente Anglorum, qui tempore Finani et Colmani episcoporum, relicta insula patria, vel divina lectionis vel continentioris vitæ gratia, illo secesserant. Et quidam quidem mox se monasticæ conversationi fideliter mancipaverunt, alii magis circumeundo per cellas magistrorum, lectioni operam dare gaudebant; quos omnes Scoti libentissime suscipientes victum eis quotidianum sine pretio, libros quoque ad legendum et magisterium gratuitum, præbere curabant.

Erant inter hos duo juvenes magnæ indolis, de nobilibus Anglorum, Ethelhun et Egbertus, quorum prior frater fuit Ethelwini, viri æque Deo dilecti, qui et ipse ævo sequente Hiberniam gratia legendi adiit, et bene instructus patriam rediit, atque episcopus in provincia Lindissi factus multo ecclesiam tempore nobilissime rexit. Hi ergo cum essent in monasterio, quod lingua Scotorum Rathmelsigi appellatur, et omnes socii ipsorum, vel mortalitate de seculo rapti, vel per alia essent loca dispersi, correpti sunt ambo morbo ejusdem mortalitatis, et gravissime afflicti; e quibus Egbertus, (sicut mihi referebat quidam veracissimus et venerandæ canitie presbyter, qui se hæc ab ipso audiisse perhibebat,) cum se æstimaret esse moriturum, egressus est tempore matutino de cubiculo, in quo infirmi quiescebant, et residens solus in loco opportuno cœpit sedulus cogitare de actibus suis, et compunctus memoria peccatorum suorum faciem lachrimis abluibat, atque intimo ex corde Deum precabatur, ne adhuc mori deberet, priusquam vel præteritas negligentias, quas in pueritia sive infantia commiserat, perfectius ex tempore castigaret, vel in bonis se operibus abundantius exerceret. Vovit etiam votum, quia adeo peregrinus vivere vellet, ut nunquam in insulam, in qua natus est, id est Britanniam, rediret; quia præter solennem canonici temporis psalmodiam, si non valetudo corporis obsisteret, quotidie Psalterium totum in memoriam divinae laudis decantaret, et quia in omni septimana diem cum nocte jejunos transiret. Cumque, finitis lacrimis, precibus et votis, domum rediret, invenit sodalem dormientem; et ipse quoque lectulum conscendens cœpit in quietem membra laxare. Et cum paululum quiesceret expergefactus sodalis respexit eum et ait, “O frater Egberte, O quid fecisti? Sperabam quia pariter ad vitam æternam intraremus.

Veruntamen scito quia, quæ postulasti, accipies.” Didicerat enim per visionem, et quid ille petiisset, et quia petita impetrasset.

Quid multa? ipse Ethelhun proxima nocte defunctus est. At vero Egbertus, decussa molestia ægritudinis, convaluit, ac multo postea tempore vivens, acceptumque sacerdotii gradum condignis ornans actibus, post multa virtutum bona, ut ipse desiderabat, nuper, id est, anno Dominicæ incarnationis septingentesimo vicesimo nono, cum esset ipse annorum nonaginta, migravit ad regna cœlestia. Duxit autem vitam in magna humilitatis, mansuetudinis, continentiæ, simplicitatis et justitiæ perfectione. Unde et genti suæ, et illis in quibus exsulabat nationibus Scotorum sive Pictorum, exemplo vivendi, et instantia docendi, et auctoritate corripiendi, et pietate largiendi de his, quæ a divitibus acceperat, multum profuit. Addidit autem votis, quæ diximus, ut semper in quadragesima non plus quam semel in die reficeretur, non aliud quam panem ac lac tenuissimum, et hoc cum mensura, gustaret; quod videlicet lac pridie novum in phiala ponere solebat, et post noctem ablata superficie crassiore, ipse residuum cum modico, ut diximus, pane bibebat. Cujus modum continentiæ etiam quadraginta diebus ante natalem Domini, totidem quoque post peracta solennia Pentecostes, hoc est, Quinquagesimæ, semper observare curabat.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXVIII.—

UT, DEFUNCTO TUDA, WILFRIDUS IN GALLIA,  
CEADDA APUD OCCIDENTALES SAXONES, IN  
PROVINCIA NORTHANHUMBROTORUM SINT ORDINATI  
EPISCOPI.

INTEREA rex Alfridus misit Wilfridum presbyterum ad regem Galliarum, qui eum sibi suisque consecrari faceret episcopum. At ille misit eum ordinandum ad Agilbertum, de quo supra diximus, qui, relicta Britannia, Parisiacæ civitatis factus erat episcopus; et consecratus est magno cum honore ab ipso, convenientibus plurimis episcopis, in vico regio, qui vocatur in Compendio. Quo adhuc in transmarinis partibus propter ordinationem demorante, imitatus industriam filii, rex Oswius misit Cantiam virum sanctum, modestum moribus, Scripturarum lectione sufficienter instructum, et ea, quæ in Scripturis agenda didicerat, operibus solerter exsequentem, qui Eboracensis ecclesiæ ordinaretur episcopus. Erat autem presbyter vocabulo Ceadda, frater reverendissimi antistitis Cedd, cujus sæpius meminimus, et abbas monasterii illius, quod vocatur Lestingau. Misitque rex cum eo presbyterum suum vocabulo Eadhedum, qui postea, regnante Egfrido, Rhipensis ecclesiæ præsul factus est. Verum illi Cantiam pervenientes invenerunt archiepiscopum Deusdedit jam migrasse de seculo, et necdum alium pro eo constitutum fuisse pontificem. Unde diverterunt ad provinciam Occidentalium Saxonum, ubi erat Wine episcopus; et ab illo est vir præfatus consecratus antistes, assumtis in societatem ordinationis duobus de Britonum gente episcopis, qui Dominicum Paschæ diem, ut sæpius dictum est, secus morem canonicum a quarta decima usque ad vicesimam lunam celebrant. Non enim erat tunc ullus, excepto illo Wine, in tota Britannia canonicè ordinatus episcopus.

Consecratus ergo in episcopum Ceadda mox cœpit ecclesiasticæ veritati et castitati curam impendere; humilitati, continentiæ, lectioni operam dare; oppida, rura, casas, vicos, castella, propter evangelizandum, non equitando, sed apostolorum more pedibus incedendo, peragrarè. Erat enim discipulus Aidani, eisdemque actibus ac moribus juxta exemplum ejus, ac fratris sui Cedd, suos instituere curavit auditores. Veniens quoque Britanniam Wilfridus jam episcopus factus et ipse perplura catholicæ observationis moderamina ecclesiis Anglorum sua doctrina contulit; unde factum est, ut, crescente per dies institutione catholica, Scoti omnes, qui inter Anglos morabantur, aut his manus darent, aut suam redirent ad patriam.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXIX.—

UT WIGHARDUS PRESBYTER, ORDINANDUS IN  
ARCHIEPISCOPUM, ROMAN DE BRITANNIA SIT  
MISSUS; QUEM REMISSA MOX SCRIPTA PAPÆ  
APOSTOLICI IBIDEM OBIISSE NARRAVERINT.

HIS temporibus reges Anglorum nobilissimi, Oswius provinciæ Northanhumborum, et Egbertus Cantuariorum, habito inter se consilio, quid de statu ecclesiæ Anglorum esset agendum, intellexerat enim veraciter Oswius, quamvis educatus a Scotis, quia Romana esset catholica et apostolica ecclesia, assumerunt, cum electione et consensu sanctæ ecclesiæ gentis Anglorum, virum bonum et aptum episcopatu presbyterum, nomine Wighardum, de clero Deusdedit episcopi, et hunc antistitem ordinandum Romam miserunt; quatenus, accepto ipse gradu archiepiscopatus, catholicos per omnem Britanniam ecclesiis Anglorum ordinare posset antistites. Verum Wighardus Romam perveniens, priusquam consecrari in episcopatum posset, morte præreptus est; et hujusmodi literæ regi Oswio Britanniam remissæ sunt.

“Domino excellentissimo filio Oswio regi Saxonum, Vitalianus episcopus, servus servorum Dei.

“Desiderabiles literas excellentiæ vestræ suscepimus, quas relegentes cognovimus ejus piissimam devotionem ferventissimumque amorem, quem habet propter beatam vitam; et quia, dextera Domini protegente, ad veram et apostolicam fidem sit conversus, sperans, sicut in sua gente regnat, ita et cum Christo in futuro conregnare. Benedicta igitur gens, quæ talem sapientissimum et Dei cultorem promeruit habere regem; quia non solum ipse Dei cultor exstitit, sed etiam omnes subjectos suos meditatur die ac nocte ad fidem catholicam atque apostolicam pro suæ animæ redemptione converti. Quis enim audiens hæc suavia non lætetur? Quis non exultet et gaudeat in his piis operibus? Quia et gens vestra Christo omnipotenti Deo credidit, secundum divinorum prophetarum voces, sicut scriptum est in Isaïa, [xi. 10,] *In die illa radix Jesse, qui stat in signum populorum, ipsum gentes deprecabuntur.* Et iterum, [xliv. 1,] *Audite insulæ, et attendite populi de longe.* Et post paululum, [xliv. 6,] *Parum, inquit, est, ut mihi sis servus ad suscitandas tribus Jacob, et fæces Israel convertendas. Dedi te in lucem gentium, ut sis salus mea usque ad extremum terræ.* Et rursum, [xliv. 7,] *Reges videbunt, et consurgent principes, et adorabunt.* Et post pusillum, [xliv. 8,] *Dedi te in fœdus populi, ut suscitares terram, et possideres hereditates dissipatas, et diceres his, qui vincti sunt, “Exite,” et his, qui in tenebris, “Revelamini.”* Et rursum, [xlii. 6, 7,] *Ego Dominus vocavi te in justitia, et apprehendi manum tuam, et servavi; et dedi te in lucem gentium et in fœdus populi, ut aperires oculos cæcorum, et educeres de conclusione vinctum, de domo carceris sedentes in tenebris.*

“Ecce, excellentissime fili, quam luce clarius est, non solum de vobis, sed etiam de omnibus prophetarum gentibus, quod sint credituræ in Christo omnium conditore. Quamobrem oportet vestram celsitudinem, utpote membrum existens Christi, in omnibus piam regulam sequi perenniter principis apostolorum, sive in Pascha celebrando, sive in omnibus, quæ tradiderunt sancti apostoli Petrus et Paulus, qui, ut duo luminaria cœli illuminant mundum, sic doctrina eorum corda hominum quotidie illustrat credentium.”

Et post nonnulla, quibus de celebrando per orbem totum uno vero Pascha loquitur;

“Hominem denique,” inquit, “docibilem, et in omnibus ornatum antistitem, secundum vestrorum scriptorum tenorem, minime valuimus nunc reperire pro longinquitate itineris. Profecto enim dum hujusmodi apta repertaque persona fuerit, eum instructum ad vestram dirigemus patriam, ut ipse et viva voce, et per divina oracula, omnem inimici zizaniam ex omni vestra insula cum divino nutu eradicet. Munuscula a vestra celsitudine beato principi apostolorum directa, pro æterna ejus memoria suscepimus, gratiasque ei agimus, ac pro ejus incolumitate jugiter Deum deprecamur cum Christi clero. Itaque qui hæc obtulit munera de hac subtractus est luce, situsque ad limina apostolorum, pro quo valde sumus contristati cum hic esset defunctus. Veruntamen gerulis harum nostrarum literarum vestris missis, beneficia sanctorum, hoc est, reliquias beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et sanctorum martyrum Laurentii, Joannis et Pauli, et Gregorii atque Pancratii eis fecimus dari, vestræ excellentiæ profecto omnes contradendas. Nam et conjugii vestræ, nostræ spirituali filiæ, direximus per præfatos gerulos crucem clavem auream habentem, de sacratissimis vinculis beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli; de cujus pio studio cognoscentes tantum cuncta sedes apostolica una nobiscum lætatur, quantum ejus pia opera coram Deo fragrant et vernant.

“Festinet igitur, quæsumus, vestra celsitudo, ut optamus, totam suam insulam Deo Christo dicare. Habet enim profecto protectorem, humani generis Redemptorem, Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui ei cuncta prospera impertiet, ut novum Christi populum coacervet, catholicam ibi et apostolicam constituens fidem. Scriptum est enim, [Mat. vi. 31,] *Quærite primum regnum Dei, et justitiam ejus, et hæc omnia adjicientur vobis*. Nimirum enim quærit, et impetravit, et ei omnes suæ insulæ, ut optamus, subdentur. Paterno itaque affectu salutantes vestram excellentiam, divinam precamur jugiter clementiam, quæ vos vestrosque omnes in omnibus bonis operibus auxiliari dignetur, ut cum Christo in futuro regnetis seculo.

“Incolumem excellentiam vestram gratia superna custodiat.”

Quis sane pro Wighardo repertus ac dedicatus sit antistes, libro sequente opportunius dicitur.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CAP. XXX.—

UT ORIENTALES SAXONES TEMPORE MORTALITATIS  
AD IDOLOLATRIAM REVERSI, SED PER INSTANTIAM  
JARUMANNI EPISCOPI MOX SINT AB ERRORE  
CORRECTI.

Eodem tempore provinciæ Orientalium Saxonum post Suidhelmum, de quo supra diximus, præfuere reges Sighere et Sebbi, quamvis ipsi regi Merciorum Wulfhere subjecti. Quæ, videlicet, provincia cum præfatæ mortalitatis clade premeretur, Sighere cum sua parte populi, relictis Christianæ fidei sacramentis, ad apostasiam conversus est. Nam et ipse rex, et plurimi de plebe sive optimatibus, diligentes hanc vitam et futuram non quærentes, sive etiam non esse credentes, cœperunt fana, quæ derelicta erant, restaurare, et adorare simulacra; quasi per hæc possent a mortalitate defendi. Porro socius ejus et coheres regni ejusdem Sebbi magna fidem perceptam cum suis omnibus devotione servavit, magna, ut in sequentibus dicemus, vitam fidelem felicitate complevit.

Quod ubi rex Wulfhere comperit, fidem videlicet provinciæ ex parte profanatam, misit ad corrigendum errorem, revocandamque ad fidem veritatis provinciam, Jarumannum episcopum, qui successor erat Trumheri; qui multa agens solertia, (juxta quod mihi presbyter, qui comes itineris illi et cooperator verbi exstiterat, referebat,)—erat enim religiosus et bonus vir,—longe lateque omnia pervagatus, et populum et regem præfatum ad viam justitiæ reduxit: adeo ut relictis, sive destructis, fanis arisque, quas fecerant, aperirent ecclesias, ac nomen Christi, cui contradixerant, confiteri gauderent, magis cum fide resurrectionis in illo mori, quam in perfidiæ sordibus inter idola vivere, cupientes. Quibus ita gestis, et ipsi sacerdotes doctoresque eorum domum rediere lætantes.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

### BOOK III.

#### CHAP. I.—

### HOW KING EDWIN'S NEXT SUCCESSORS LOST BOTH THE FAITH OF THEIR NATION AND THE KINGDOM; BUT THE MOST CHRISTIAN KING OSWALD RETRIEVED BOTH.

Edwin being slain in battle, the kingdom of the Deiri, to which province his family belonged, and where he first began to reign, devolved on Osric, the son of his uncle Elfric, who, through the preaching of Paulinus, had also received the faith. But the kingdom of the Bernicians—for into these two provinces the nation of the Northumbrians was formerly divided—was

On Edwin's death, Osric becomes king of Deira, Eanfrid of Bernicia.

633.

possessed by Eanfrid, the son of Ethelfrid, who derived his origin from the royal family of that province. For all the time that Edwin reigned, the sons of the aforesaid Ethelfrid, who had reigned before him, with many of the nobility, lived in banishment among the Scots or Picts, and were there instructed according to the doctrine of the Scots, and received the grace of baptism. Upon the death of the king, their enemy, they returned home, and Eanfrid, as the eldest of them, mentioned above, became king of the Bernicians. Both those kings, as soon as they obtained the government of their earthly kingdoms, renounced and lost the faith of the heavenly kingdom, and again delivered themselves up to be defiled by the abominations of their former idols.

But soon after, the king of the Britons, Cadwalla, slew them both, through the rightful vengeance of Heaven, though the act was base in him. He first slew Osric, the next summer, for, being besieged by him in a strong town, he sallied out on a sudden with all his forces, by surprise, and destroyed him and all his army. After this, for the space of a year, he reigned over the provinces of the Northumbrians, not like a victorious king, but like a rapacious and bloody tyrant, and at length brought to the same end Eanfrid, who unadvisedly came to him with only twelve chosen soldiers, to sue for peace. To this day, that year is looked upon as unhappy, and hateful to all good men; as well on account of the apostacy of the English kings, who had renounced the faith, as of the outrageous tyranny of the British king. Hence it has been agreed by all who have written about the reigns of the kings, to abolish the memory of those perfidious monarchs, and to assign that year to the reign of the following king, Oswald, a man beloved by God. This last king, after the death of his brother Eanfrid, advanced with an army, small, indeed, in number, but strengthened with the faith of Christ; and the impious commander of the Britons was slain, though he had most numerous forces,

which he boasted nothing could withstand, at a place in the English tongue called Denises-burn, that is, Denis's-brook.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. II.—

### HOW AMONG INNUMERABLE OTHER MIRACULOUS CURES WROUGHT BY THE CROSS, WHICH KING OSWALD, BEING READY TO ENGAGE AGAINST THE BARBARIANS, ERECTED, A CERTAIN YOUTH HAD HIS LAME ARM HEALED.

The place is shown to this day, and held in much veneration, where Oswald, being about to engage, erected the sign of the holy cross, and on his knees prayed to God that he would assist his worshippers in their great distress. It is further reported, that the cross being made in haste, and the hole dug in which it was to be fixed, the king himself, full of faith, laid hold of it and held it with both his hands, till it was set fast by throwing in the earth; and this done, raising his voice, he cried to his army, “Let us all kneel, and jointly beseech the true and living God Almighty, in his mercy, to defend us from the haughty and fierce enemy; for He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our nation.” All did as he had commanded, and accordingly advancing towards the enemy with the first dawn of day, they obtained the victory, as their faith deserved. In that place of prayer very many miraculous cures are known to have been performed, as a token and memorial of the king’s faith; for even to this day, many are wont to cut off small chips of the wood of the holy cross, which being put into water, men or cattle drinking of, or sprinkled with that water, are immediately restored to health.

King Oswald.

635.

The place in the English tongue is called Heavenfield, or the Heavenly Field, which name it formerly received as a presage of what was afterwards to happen, denoting, that there the heavenly trophy would be erected, the heavenly victory begun, and heavenly miracles be wrought to this day. The same place is near the wall with which the Romans formerly enclosed the island from sea to sea, to restrain the fury of the barbarous nations, as has been said before. Hither also the brothers of the church of Hagulstad, which is not far from thence, repair yearly on the day before that on which King Oswald was afterwards slain, to watch there for the health of his soul, and having sung many psalms, to offer for him in the morning the sacrifice of the holy oblation. And since that good custom has spread, they have lately built and consecrated a church there, which has attached additional sanctity and honour to that place: and this with good reason; for it appears that there was no sign of the Christian faith, no church, no altar erected throughout all the nation of the Bernicians, before that new commander of the army, prompted by the devotion of his faith, set up the same as he was going to give battle to his barbarous enemy.

Nor is it foreign to our purpose to relate one of the many miracles that have been wrought at this cross. One of the brothers of the same church of Hagulstad, whose name is Bothelm, and who is still living, a few years since, walking carelessly on the

ice at night, suddenly fell and broke his arm; a most raging pain commenced in the broken part, so that he could not lift his arm to his mouth for the violence of the anguish. Hearing one morning that one of the brothers designed to go to the place of the holy cross, he desired him, at his return, to bring him a bit of that venerable wood, saying, he believed that with the help of God he might thereby be healed. The brother did as he was desired; and returning in the evening, when the brothers were sitting at table, gave him some of the old moss which grew on the surface of the wood. As he sat at table, having no place to lay up that which was brought him, he put the same into his bosom; and forgetting when he went to bed to put it by, left it in his bosom. Awaking in the middle of the night, he felt something cold lying by his side, and putting his hand to feel what it was, he found his arm and hand as sound as if he had never felt any such pain.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

### CHAP. III.—

## THE SAME KING OSWALD, ASKING A BISHOP OF THE SCOTTISH NATION, HAD AIDAN SENT HIM, AND GRANTED HIM AN EPISCOPAL SEE IN THE ISLE OF LINDISFARNE.

The same Oswald, as soon as he ascended the throne, being desirous that all his nation should receive the Christian faith, whereof he had found happy experience in vanquishing the barbarians, sent to the elders of the Scots, among whom himself and his followers, when in banishment, had received the sacrament of baptism, desiring they would send him a bishop, by whose instruction and ministry the English nation, which he governed, might be taught the advantages, and receive the sacraments of the Christian faith. Nor were they slow in granting his request; but sent him Bishop Aidan, a man of singular meekness, piety, and moderation; zealous in the cause of God, though not altogether according to knowledge; for he was wont to keep Easter Sunday according to the custom of his country, which we have before so often mentioned, from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon; the northern province of the Scots, and all the nation of the Picts, celebrating Easter then after that manner, and believing that they therein followed the writings of the holy and praiseworthy Father Anatolius; the truth of which every skilful person can discern. But the Scots which dwelt in the South of Ireland had long since, by the admonition of the bishop of the Apostolic See, learned to observe Easter according to the canonical custom.

Oswald gives to Aidan the see of Lindisfarne.

635.

On the arrival of the bishop, the king appointed him his episcopal see in the isle of Lindisfarne, as he desired. Which place, as the tide flows and ebbs twice a day, is enclosed by the waves of the sea like an island; and again, twice in the day, when the shore is left dry, becomes contiguous to the land. The king also humbly and willingly in all cases giving ear to his admonitions, industriously applied himself to build and extend the church of Christ in his kingdom; wherein, when the bishop, who was not skilful in the English tongue, preached the Gospel, it was most delightful to see the king himself interpreting the word of God to his commanders and ministers, for he had perfectly learned the language of the Scots during his long banishment. From that time many of the Scots came daily into Britain, and with great devotion preached the word to those provinces of the English, over which King Oswald reigned, and those among them that had received priest's orders, administered to them the grace of baptism. Churches were built in several places; the people joyfully flocked together to hear the word; money and lands were given of the king's bounty to build monasteries; the English, great and small, were, by their Scottish masters, instructed in the rules and observance of regular discipline; for most of them that came to preach were monks. Bishop Aidan was himself a monk of the island called Hii, whose monastery was for a long time the chief of almost all those of the northern Scots, and all those of



the Picts, and had the direction of their people. That island belongs to Britain, being divided from it by a small arm of the sea, but had been long since given by the Picts, who inhabit those parts of Britain, to the Scottish monks, because they had received the faith of Christ through their preaching.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. IV.—

### WHEN THE NATION OF THE PICTS RECEIVED THE FAITH.

IN the year of our Lord 565, when Justin, the younger, the successor of Justinian, had the government of the Roman empire, there came into Britain a famous priest and abbot, a monk by habit and life, whose name was Columba, to preach the word of

St. Columba converts the Picts.

565.

God to the provinces of the northern Picts, who are separated from the southern parts by steep and rugged mountains; for the southern Picts, who dwell on this side of those mountains, had long before, as is reported, forsaken the errors of idolatry, and embraced the truth, by the preaching of Ninias, a most reverend bishop and holy man of the British nation, who had been regularly instructed at Rome, in the faith and mysteries of the truth; whose episcopal see, named after St. Martin the bishop, and famous for a stately church, (wherein he and many other saints rest in the body,) is still in existence among the English nation. The place belongs to the province of the Bernicians, and is generally called the White House, because he there built a church of stone, which was not usual among the Britons.

Columba came into Britain in the ninth year of the reign of Bridius, who was the son of Meilochon, and the powerful king of the Pictish nation, and he converted that nation to the faith of Christ, by his preaching and example, whereupon he also received of them the aforesaid island for a monastery, for it is not very large, but contains about five families, according to the English computation. His successors hold the island to this day; he was also buried therein, having died at the age of seventy-seven, about thirty-two years after he came into Britain to preach. Before he passed over into Britain, he had built a noble monastery in Ireland, which, from the great number of oaks, is in the Scottish tongue called Dearn-ach—The Field of Oaks. From both which monasteries, many others had their beginning through his disciples, both in Britain and Ireland; but the monastery in the island where his body lies, is the principal of them all.

That island has for its ruler an abbot, who is a priest, to whose direction all the province, and even the bishops, contrary to the usual method, are subject, according to the example of their first teacher, who was not a bishop, but a priest and monk; of whose life and discourses some writings are said to be preserved by his disciples. But whatsoever he was himself, this we know for certain, that he left successors renowned for their continency, their love of God, and observance of monastic rules. It is true they followed uncertain rules in their observance of the great festival, as having none to bring them the synodal decrees for the observance of Easter, by reason of their being so far away from the rest of the world; wherefore they only practised such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolical writings. This manner of keeping Easter continued among them for the space of 150 years, till the year of our Lord's incarnation 715.

But then the most reverend and holy father and priest, Egbert, of the English nation, who had long lived in banishment in Ireland for the sake of Christ, and was most learned in the Scriptures, and renowned for long perfection of life, came among them, corrected their error, and reduced them to the true and canonical day of Easter; the which they nevertheless did not always keep on the fourteenth moon with the Jews, as some imagined, but on Sunday, although not in the proper week. For, as Christians, they knew that the resurrection of our Lord, which happened on the first day after the Sabbath, was always to be celebrated on the first day after the Sabbath; but being rude and barbarous, they had not learned when that same first day after the Sabbath, which is now called the Lord's day, should come. But because they had not laid aside the fervent grae of charity, they were worthy to be informed in the true knowledge of this particular, according to the promise of the apostle, saying, "And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Of which we shall speak more fully in its proper place.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. V.—

### OF THE LIFE OF BISHOP AIDAN.

From the aforesaid island, and college of monks, was Aidan sent to instruct the English nation in Christ, having received the dignity of a bishop at the time when Segenius, abbot and priest, presided over that monastery; whence, among other instructions for life, he left the clergy a most salutary example of abstinence or continence; it was the highest commendation of his doctrine, with all men, that he taught no otherwise than he and his followers had lived; for he neither sought nor loved any thing of this world, but delighted in distributing immediately among the poor whatsoever was given him by the kings or rich men of the world. He was wont to traverse both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity; and wheresoever in his way he saw any, either rich or poor, he invited them, if infidels, to embrace the mystery of the faith; or if they were believers, to strengthen them in the faith, and to stir them up by words and actions to alms and good works.

The life of Aidan.

635.

His course of life was so different from the slothfulness of our times, that all those who bore him company, whether they were shorn monks or laymen, were employed in meditation, that is, either in reading the Scriptures, or learning psalms. This was the daily employment of himself and all that were with him, wheresoever they went; and if it happened, which was but seldom, that he was invited to eat with the king, he went with one or two clerks, and having taken a small repast, made haste to be gone with them, either to read or write. At that time, many religious men and women, stirred up by his example, adopted the custom of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, till the ninth hour, throughout the year, except during the fifty days after Easter. He never gave money to the powerful men of the world, but only meat, if he happened to entertain them; and, on the contrary, whatsoever gifts of money he received from the rich, he either distributed them, as has been said, to the use of the poor, or bestowed them in ransoming such as had been wrongfully sold for slaves. Moreover, he afterwards made many of those he had ransomed his disciples, and after having taught and instructed them, advanced them to the order of priesthood.

It is reported, that when King Oswald had asked a bishop of the Scots to administer the word of faith to him and his nation, there was first sent to him another man of a more austere disposition, who, meeting with no success, and being unregarded by the English people, returned home, and in an assembly of the elders reported, that he had not been able to do any good to the nation he had been sent to preach to, because they were uncivilized men, and of a stubborn and barbarous disposition. They, as is testified, in a great council seriously debated what was to be done, being desirous that the nation should receive the salvation it demanded, and grieving that they had not received the preacher sent to them. Then said Aidan, who was also present in the council, to the priest then spoken of, "I am of opinion, brother, that you were more severe to your unlearned hearers than you ought to have been, and did not at first,

conformably to the apostolic rule, give them the milk of more easy doctrine, till being by degrees nourished with the word of God, they should be capable of greater perfection, and be able to practise God's sublimer precepts." Having heard these words, all present began diligently to weigh what he had said, and presently concluded, that he deserved to be made a bishop, and ought to be sent to instruct the incredulous and unlearned; since he was found to be endued with singular discretion, which is the mother of other virtues, and accordingly being ordained, they sent him to their friend, King Oswald, to preach; and he, as time proved, afterwards appeared to possess all other virtues, as well as the discretion for which he was before remarkable.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VI.—

### OF KING OSWALD'S WONDERFUL PIETY.

King Oswald, with the nation of the English which he governed, being instructed by the teaching of this most reverend prelate, not only learned to hope for a heavenly kingdom unknown to his progenitors, but also obtained of the same one Almighty God, who made heaven and earth, larger earthly kingdoms than any of his ancestors. In short, he brought under his dominion all the nations and provinces of Britain, which are divided into four languages, viz. the Britons, the Picts, the Scots, and the English. When raised to that height of dominion, wonderful to relate, he always continued humble, affable, and generous to the poor and strangers.

Oswald's piety.

635

In short, it is reported, that when he was once sitting at dinner, on the holy day of Easter, with the aforesaid bishop, and a silver dish full of dainties before him, and they were just ready to bless the bread, the servant whom he had appointed to relieve the poor, came in on a sudden, and told the king, that a great multitude of needy persons from all parts were sitting in the streets begging some alms of the king; he immediately ordered the meat set before him to be carried to the poor, and the dish to be cut in pieces and divided among them. At which sight, the bishop who sat by him, much taken with such an act of piety, laid hold of his right hand, and said, "May this hand never perish." Which fell out according to his prayer, for his arm and hand, being cut off from his body, when he was slain in battle, remain entire and uncorrupted to this day, and are kept in a silver case, as revered relics, in St. Peter's church in the royal city, which has taken its name from Bebbu, one of its former queens. Through this king's management the provinces of the Deiri and the Bernicians, which till then had been at variance, were peacefully united and moulded into one people. He was nephew to King Edwin by his sister Acha; and it was fit that so great a predecessor should have in his own family so great a person to succeed him in his religion and sovereignty.

Bamborough.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VII.—

### HOW THE WEST SAXONS RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD BY THE PREACHING OF BIRINUS; AND OF HIS SUCCESSORS, AGILBERT AND ELEUTHERIUS.

At that time, the West Saxons, formerly called Gewissæ, in the reign of Cynegils, embraced the faith of Christ, at the preaching of Bishop Birinus, who came into Britain by the advice of Pope Honorius; having promised in his presence that he would sow the seed of the holy faith in the inner parts beyond the dominions of the English, where no other teacher had been before him. Hereupon he received episcopal consecration from Asterius, bishop of Genoa; but on his arrival in Britain, he first entered the nation of the Gewissæ, and finding all there most confirmed pagans, he thought it better to preach the word of God there, than to proceed further to seek for others to preach to.

Birinus converts the West Saxons.

635.

Now, as he preached in the aforesaid province, it happened that the king himself, having been catechised, was baptized together with his people, and Oswald, the most holy and victorious king of the Northumbrians, being present, received him as he came forth from baptism, and by an alliance most pleasing and acceptable to God, first adopted him, thus regenerated, for his son, and then took his daughter in marriage. The two kings gave to the bishop the city called Dorcic, there to settle his episcopal see; where having built and consecrated churches, and by his labour called many to the Lord, he departed this life, and was buried in the same city; but many years after, when Hedde was bishop, he was translated thence to the city of Winchester, and laid in the church of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul.

The king also dying, his son Coinwalch succeeded him in the throne, but refused to embrace the mysteries of the faith, and of the heavenly kingdom; and not long after also he lost the dominion of his earthly kingdom; for he put away the sister of Penda, king of the Mercians, whom he had married, and took another wife; whereupon a war ensuing, he was by him expelled his kingdom, and withdrew to Anna, king of the East Saxons, where living three years in banishment, he found and received the true faith, and was baptized; for the king, with whom he lived in his banishment, was a good man, and happy in a good and pious offspring, as we shall show hereafter.

King Coinwalch succeeds Cynegils.

But when Coinwalch was restored to his kingdom, there came into that province out of Ireland, a certain bishop called Agilbert, by nation a Frenchman, but who had then lived a long time in Ireland, for the purpose of reading the Scriptures. This bishop came of his own accord to serve this king, and preach to him the word of life. The king, observing his erudition and industry, desired him to accept an episcopal see, and stay there as his bishop. Agilbert complied with the prince's request, and presided over those people many years. At length the king,

See of Dorchester.

who understood none but the language of the Saxons, grown weary of that bishop's barbarous tongue, brought into the province another bishop of his own nation, whose name was Wini, who had been ordained in France; and dividing his province into two dioceses, appointed this last his episcopal see in the city of Winchester, by the Saxons called Vintancestir. Agilbert, being highly offended, that the king should do this without his advice, returned into France, and being made bishop of the city of Paris, died there, aged and full of days. Not many years after his departure out of Britain, Wini was also expelled from his bishopric, and took refuge with Wulfhere, king of the Mercians, of whom he purchased for money the see of the city of London, and remained bishop thereof till his death. Thus the province of the West Saxons continued no small time without a bishop.

During which time, the king of that nation, sustaining very great losses in his kingdom from his enemies, at length bethought himself, that as he had been before expelled from his kingdom for his infidelity, and had been restored when he received the faith of Christ, his kingdom, being destitute of a bishop, was justly deprived of the Divine protection. He, therefore, sent messengers into France to Agilbert, humbly entreating him to return to the bishopric of his nation. But he excused himself, and affirmed that he could not go, because he was tied to the bishopric of his own city; however, that he might not seem to refuse him assistance, he sent in his stead thither the priest Eleutherius, his nephew, who, if he thought fit, might be ordained his bishop, saying, "He thought him worthy of a bishopric." The king and the people received him honourably, and entreated Theodore, then archbishop of Canterbury, to consecrate him their bishop. He was accordingly consecrated in the same city, and many years zealously governed the whole bishopric of the West Saxons by synodical authority.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. VIII.—

### HOW EARCONBERT, KING OF KENT, ORDERED THE IDOLS TO BE DESTROYED; AND OF HIS DAUGHTER EARCONGOTA, AND HIS KINSWOMAN ETHELBERGA, VIRGINS CONSECRATED TO GOD.

In the year of our Lord 640, Eadbald, king of Kent, departed this life, and left his kingdom to his son Earconbert, which he most nobly governed twenty-four years and some months. He was the first of the English kings that of his supreme authority

Earconbert, king of Kent.

640.

commanded the idols, throughout his whole kingdom, to be forsaken and destroyed, and the fast of forty days before Easter to be observed; and that the same might not be neglected, he appointed proper and condign punishments for the offenders. His daughter Earcongota, as became the offspring of such a parent, was a most virtuous virgin, always serving God in a monastery in France, built by a most noble abbess, called Fara, at a place called Brie; for at that time but few monasteries being built in the country of the Angles, many were wont, for the sake of monastical conversation, to repair to the monasteries of the Franks or Gauls; and they also sent their daughters there to be instructed, and delivered to their heavenly bridegroom, especially in the monasteries of Brie, of Chelle, and Andelys. Among whom was also Sethrid, daughter of the wife of Anna, king of the East Angles, above mentioned; and Ethelberga, natural daughter of the same king; both of whom, though strangers, were for their virtue made abbesses of the monastery of Brie. Sexberga, that king's eldest daughter, wife to Earconbert, king of Kent, had a daughter called Earcongota, of whom we are to speak.

Many wonderful works and miracles of this virgin, dedicated to God, are to this day related by the inhabitants of that place; but it shall suffice us to say something briefly of her passage out of this world to the heavenly kingdom. The day of her departure drawing near, she visited the cells of the infirm servants of Christ, and particularly those that were of a great age, or most noted for probity of life, and humbly recommending herself to their prayers, let them know that her death was at hand, as she knew by revelation, which she said she had received in this manner. She had seen a number of men, all in white, come into the monastery, and being asked by her, "What they wanted, and what they did there?" they answered, "They had been sent thither to carry away with them the gold medal that had been brought thither from Kent. That same night, at the dawn of morning, leaving the darkness of this world, she departed to the light of heaven. Many of the brethren of that monastery that were in other houses, declared they had then plainly heard concerts of angels singing, and the noise as it were of a multitude entering the monastery. Whereupon going out immediately to see what it might be, they saw an extraordinary great light coming down from heaven, which conducted that holy soul, set loose from the bonds of the flesh, to the eternal joys of the celestial country. They add other miracles that were

wrought the same night in the same monastery; but as we must proceed to other matters, we leave them to be related by those to whom such things belong. The body of this venerable virgin and bride of Christ was buried in the church of the blessed protomartyr, Stephen. It was thought fit, three days after, to take up the stone that covered the grave, and to raise it higher in the same place, which whilst they were doing, so great a fragranciness of perfume rose from below, that it seemed to all the brothers and sisters there present, as if a store of the richest balsams had been opened.

Her aunt also, Ethelberga above mentioned, preserved the glory so pleasing to God, of perpetual virginity, in great continency of body, but the extent of her virtue became more conspicuous after her death. Whilst she was abbess, she began to build in her monastery a church, in honour of all the apostles, wherein she desired her body might be buried; but when that work was advanced half way, she was prevented by death from finishing it, and buried in the very place of the church where she had desired. After her death, the brothers occupied themselves with other things, and this structure was intermitted for seven years, at the expiration whereof they resolved, by reason of the greatness of the work, wholly to lay aside the building of the church, but to remove the abbess's bones from thence to some other church that was finished and consecrated; but, on opening her tomb, they found the body as free from decay as it had been from the corruption of carnal concupiscence, and having washed it again and put on it other clothes, they removed the same to the church of St. Stephen, Martyr, whose nativity (or commemoration-day) is celebrated with much magnificence on the 7th of July.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. IX.—

### HOW MIRACULOUS CURES HAVE BEEN FREQUENTLY DONE IN THE PLACE WHERE KING OSWALD WAS KILLED; AND HOW FIRST, A TRAVELLER'S HORSE WAS RESTORED, AND AFTERWARDS A YOUNG GIRL CURED OF A PALSY.

Oswald, the most Christian king of the Northumbrians, reigned nine years, including that year which is to be held accursed for the brutal impiety of the king of the Britons, and the apostacy of the English kings; for, as was said above, it is agreed by the unanimous consent of all, that the names of the apostates should be erased from the catalogue of the Christian kings, and no date ascribed to their reign. After which period, Oswald was killed in a great battle, by the same pagan nation and pagan king of the Mercians, by whom his predecessor Edwin had been slain, at a place called in the English tongue Maserfield, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, on the 5th day of the month of August.

Oswald slain.

642.

How great his faith was towards God, and how remarkable his devotion, has been made evident by miracles since his death; for in the place where he was killed by the pagans, fighting for his country, infirm men and cattle are healed to this day. Whereupon many took up the very dust of the place where his body fell, and putting it into water, thereby did much good to their friends who were sick. This custom came so much into use, that the earth being carried away by degrees, there remained a hole as deep as the height of a man. Nor is it to be wondered that the sick should be healed in the place where he died; for, whilst he lived, he never ceased to provide for the poor and infirm, and to bestow alms on them and assist them. Many miracles are said to have been wrought in that place, or with the earth carried from thence; but we have thought it sufficient to mention two, which we heard from our ancestors.

It happened, not long after his death, that a man was travelling near that place, when his horse on a sudden began to tire, to stand stock still, hang down his head, and foam at the mouth, and, at length, as his pain increased, he fell to the ground; the rider dismounted, and throwing some straw under him, waited to see whether the beast would recover or die. At length, after much rolling about in extreme anguish, the horse happened to come to the very place where the aforesaid king died. Immediately the pain ceased, the beast gave over his struggles, and, as is usual with tired cattle, turned gently from side to side, and then starting up, perfectly recovered, began to graze on the green herbage, which the man observing, being an ingenious person, he concluded there must be some wonderful sanctity in the place where the horse had been healed, and left a mark there, that he might know the spot again. After which he again mounted his horse, and repaired to the inn where he intended to stop. On his arrival he found a girl, niece to

Miracles performed where he fell.

the landlord, who had long languished under a palsy; and when the friends of the family, in his presence, lamented the girl's calamity, he gave them an account of the place where his horse had been cured. In short, she was put into a cart and carried and laid down at the place. At first she slept awhile, and when she awaked found herself healed of her infirmity. Upon which she called for water, washed her face, put up her hair, and dressed her head, and returned home on foot, in good health, with those who had brought her.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. X.—

### THE POWER OF THE EARTH OF THAT PLACE AGAINST FIRE.

About the same time, another person of the British nation, as is reported, happened to travel by the same place, where the aforesaid battle was fought, and observing one particular spot of ground greener and more beautiful than any other part of the field, he judiciously concluded with himself that there could be no other cause for that unusual greenness, but that some person of more holiness than any other in the army had been killed there. He therefore took along with him some of that earth, tying it up in a linen cloth, supposing it would some time or other be of use for curing sick people, and proceeding on his journey, came at night to a certain village, and entered a house where the neighbours were feasting at supper; being received by the owners of the house, he sat down with them at the entertainment, hanging the cloth, in which he had brought the earth, on a post against the wall. They sat long at supper and drank hard, with a great fire in the middle of the room; it happened that the sparks flew up and caught the top of the house, which being made of wattles and thatch, was presently in a flame; the guests ran out in a fright, without being able to put a stop to the fire. The house was consequently burnt down, only that post on which the earth hung remained entire and untouched. On observing this, they were all amazed, and inquiring into it diligently, understood that the earth had been taken from the place where the blood of King Oswald had been shed. These miracles being made known and reported abroad, many began daily to frequent that place, and received health to themselves and theirs.

Of other miracles performed at the same place.

642.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XI.—

### OF THE HEAVENLY LIGHT THAT APPEARED ALL THE NIGHT OVER THE BONES OF KING OSWALD, AND HOW PERSONS POSSESSED WITH DEVILS WERE DELIVERED BY THEM.

Among the rest, I think we ought not to pass over, in silence, the heavenly favours and miracles that were shown when King Oswald's bones were found, and translated into the church where they are now preserved. This was done by the zealous care of Ofthrida, queen of the Mercians, the daughter of his brother Oswy, who reigned after him, as shall be said hereafter.

Of a light which shone on it from heaven.

642

There is a noble monastery in the province of Lindsey, called Peardaneu, which that queen and her husband Ethelred much loved, and conferred upon it many honours and ornaments. It was here that she was desirous to lay the venerable bones of her uncle. When the waggon in which those bones were carried arrived towards evening at the aforesaid monastery, they that were in it refused to admit them, because, though they knew him to be a holy man, yet, as he was originally of another province, and had reigned over them as a foreign king, they retained their ancient aversion to him even after death. Thus it came to pass that the relics were left in the open air all that night, with only a large tent spread over them; but the appearance of a heavenly miracle showed with how much reverence they ought to be received by all the faithful; for during that whole night, a pillar of light, reaching from the waggon up to heaven, was seen by almost all the inhabitants of the province of Lindsey. Hereupon, in the morning, the brethren who had refused it the day before, began themselves earnestly to pray that those holy relics, so beloved by God, might be deposited among them. Accordingly, the bones, being washed, were put into a shrine which they had made for that purpose, and placed in the church, with due honour; and that there might be a perpetual memorial of the royal person of this holy man, they hung up over the monument his banner made of gold and purple; and poured out the water in which they had washed the bones, in a corner of the sacred place. From that time, the very earth which received that holy water, had the virtue of expelling devils from the bodies of persons possessed.

Lastly, when the aforesaid queen afterwards made some stay in that monastery, there came to visit her a certain venerable abbess, who is still living, called Ethelhilda, the sister of the holy men, Ethelwin and Aldwin, the first of which was bishop in the province of Lindsey, the other abbot of the monastery of Peartaneu; not far from which was the monastery of Ethelhilda. When this lady was come, in a conversation between her and the queen, the discourse, among other things, turning upon Oswald, she said, that she also had that night seen a light reaching from the relics up to heaven. The queen thereupon added, that the very dust of the pavement, on which the water

that washed the bones had been spilt, had already healed many sick persons. The abbess thereupon desired that some of the said dust might be given her, which she tied up in a cloth, and putting it into a casket, returned home. Some time after, when she was in her monastery, there came to it a guest, who was wont often in the night to be on a sudden grievously tormented with an evil spirit: he being hospitably entertained, and gone to bed after supper, was on a sudden seized by the Devil, and began to cry out, to gnash his teeth, to foam at the mouth, and to distort his limbs in a most strange manner. None being able to hold or bind him, the servant ran, and knocking at the door, acquainted the abbess. She, opening the monastery door, went out herself with one of the nuns to the men's apartment, and calling a priest, desired he would go with her to the sufferer. Being come thither, and seeing many more present, who had not been able, though they endeavoured it, to hold the tormented person and prevent his convulsive motions, the priest used exorcisms, and did all he could to assuage the madness of the unfortunate man, but, though he took much pains, could not prevail. When no hopes appeared of easing him, the abbess bethought herself of the dust, and immediately ordered her servant to go and fetch her the casket in which it was. As soon as she came with what she had been sent for into the porch of the house, in the inner part whereof the possessed person was tormented, he was presently silent, and laid down his head, as if he had been falling asleep, stretching out all his limbs to rest. All present were silent, and stood attentive to see the end of the affair. After some time, the man that had been tormented sat up, and fetching a deep sigh, said, "Now I am like a sound man, for I am restored to my senses." They earnestly inquired how that came to pass, and he answered, "As soon as that virgin drew near the porch of this house, with the casket she brought, all the evil spirits that vexed me departed, and were no more to be seen." Then the abbess gave him a little of that dust, and the priest having prayed, he had a very quiet night; nor did he, from that time forward, receive the least disturbance from his old enemy.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XII.—

### OF A BOY CURED OF AN AGUE AT ST. OSWALD'S TOMB.

Some time after, there was a certain little boy in the said monastery, who had been long troubled with an ague; he was one day anxiously expecting the hour when his fit was to come on, when one of the brothers, coming in to him, said, "Shall I tell you, child, how you may be cured of this distemper? Rise, go into the church, and get close to St. Oswald's tomb; stay there quiet, and do not leave it; do not come away, or stir from the place, till the time that your fit is to go off; then I will go in and fetch you away." The boy did as he was advised, and the disease durst not affect him as he sat by the saint's tomb; but fled so absolutely, that he felt it no more, either the second or third day, or ever after. The brother that came from thence, and told me this, added, that at the time when he was talking with me, the young man was then still living in the monastery, on whom, when a boy, that miraculous cure had been wrought. Nor is it to be wondered that the prayers of that king, who was then reigning with our Lord, should be very efficacious with him, since he, whilst yet governing his temporal kingdom, was also wont to pray and take more pains for that which is eternal. In short, it is reported, that he often continued in prayer from the hour of morning thanksgiving till it was day; and that by reason of his constant custom of praying or giving thanks to God, he was wont always, wherever he sat, to hold his hands turned up on his knees. It is also given out, and become a proverb, "That he ended his life in prayer;" for when he was beset with weapons and enemies, he perceived he must be immediately killed, and prayed to God for the souls of his army. Whence it is proverbially said, "Lord have mercy on their souls, said Oswald, as he fell to the ground." His bones, therefore, were translated to the monastery which we have mentioned, and buried therein: but the king that slew him, commanded his head, hands, and arms to be cut off from the body, and set upon stakes. But his successor in the throne, Oswy, coming thither the next year with his army, took them down, and buried his head in the church of Lindisfarne, and the hands and arms in his royal city.

Of a boy cured at his tomb.

642.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XIII.—

### OF A CERTAIN PERSON IN IRELAND THAT WAS RECOVERED, WHEN AT THE POINT OF DEATH, BY THE BONES OF KING OSWALD.

Nor was the fame of the renowned Oswald confined to Britain, but, spreading the rays of his healing brightness even beyond the sea, reached also to Germany and Ireland. In short, the most reverend prelate, Acca, is wont to relate, that when in his journey to Rome, he and his bishop Wilfrid stayed some time with

Miracles wrought in Ireland by his bones.

642.

Wilbrord, now the holy bishop of the Fresons, he had often heard him talk of the wonders which had been wrought in that province at the relics of that most reverend king. And that in Ireland, when, being yet only a priest, he led a pilgrim's life therein for love of the eternal country, the fame of that king's sanctity was already spread far and near. One of the miracles, among the rest, which he related, we have thought fit to insert in our history.

“At the time,” said he, “of the mortality which made such great havoc in Britain and Ireland, among the rest, the infection reached a certain scholar of the Scottish race, a man indeed learned in worldly literature, but in no way solicitous or studious of his eternal salvation; who, seeing his death near at hand, began to fear, lest as soon as he was dead he should be hurried away to hell for his sins. He sent for me, who was in that neighbourhood, and whilst he was trembling and sighing, with a mournful voice made his complaint to me, in this manner: ‘You see that my distemper increases, and that I am now reduced to the point of death. Nor do I question but that after the death of my body, I shall be immediately snatched away to the perpetual death of my soul, and cast into the torments of hell, since for a long time, amidst all my reading of divine books, I have rather addicted myself to vice, than to keep the commandments of God. But it is my resolution, if the Divine Mercy shall grant me a new term of life, to correct my vicious habits, and totally to reform my mind and course of life in obedience to the Divine will. But I am sensible, that I have no merits of my own to obtain a prolongation of life, nor can I confide in it, unless it shall please God to forgive me, through the assistance of those who have faithfully served him. We have heard, and the report is universal, that there was in your nation a king, of wonderful sanctity, called Oswald, the excellency of whose faith and virtue is become renowned even after his death by the working of miracles. I beseech you, if you have any relics of his in your custody, that you will bring the same to me; in case the Lord shall be pleased, through his merits, to have mercy on me.’ I answered, ‘I have indeed some of the stake on which his head was set up by the pagans, when he was killed, and if you believe, with a sincere heart, the Divine Goodness may, through the merit of so great a man, both grant you a longer term of life here, and render you worthy of admittance into eternal life.’ He answered immediately, ‘That he had entire faith therein.’ Then I blessed some water, and put into it a chip of the aforesaid oak, and gave it the sick

man to drink. He presently found ease, and recovering of his sickness, lived a long time after, and being entirely converted to God in heart and actions, wherever he came, he spoke of the goodness of his merciful Creator, and the honour of his faithful servant.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XIV.—

### ON THE DEATH OF PAULINUS, ITHAMAR WAS MADE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER IN HIS STEAD, OF THE WONDERFUL HUMILITY OF KING OSWIN, WHO WAS CRUELLY SLAIN BY OSWY.

Oswald being translated to the heavenly kingdom, his brother Oswy, a young man of about thirty years of age, succeeded him on the throne of his earthly kingdom, and held it twenty-eight years with much trouble, being harassed by the pagan king, Penda, and by the pagan nation of the Mercians, that had slain his brother, as also by his son Alfred, and by his cousin-german Ethelwald, the son of his brother who reigned before him. In his second year, that is, in the year of our Lord 644, the most reverend Father Paulinus, formerly bishop of York, but then of the city of Rochester, departed to our Lord, on the 10th day of October, having held the bishopric nineteen years, two months, and twenty-one days; and was buried in the sacristy of the blessed Apostle Andrew, which King Ethelbert had built from the foundation, in the same city of Rochester. In his place, Archbishop Honorius ordained Ithamar, of the Kentish nation, but not inferior to his predecessors for learning and conduct of life.

King Oswy succeeds.  
Ithamar becomes  
bishop of Rochester.

642.

Oswy, during the first part of his reign, had a partner in this royal dignity called Oswin, of the race of King Edwin, and son to Osric, of whom we have spoken above, a man of wonderful piety and devotion, who governed the province of the Deiri seven years in very great prosperity, and was himself beloved by all men. But Oswy, who governed all the other northern part of the nation beyond the Humber, that is, the province of the Bernicians, could not live at peace with him; but on the contrary, the causes of their disagreement being heightened, he murdered him most cruelly. For when they had raised armies against one another, Oswin perceived that he could not maintain a war against one who had more auxiliaries than himself, and he thought it better at that time to lay aside all thoughts of engaging, and to preserve himself for better times. He therefore dismissed the army which he had assembled, and ordered all his men to return to their own homes, from the place that is called Wilfares-dun, that is, Wilfar's Hill, which is almost ten miles distant from the village called Cataract, towards the north-west. He himself, with only one trusty soldier, whose name was Tondhere, withdrew and lay concealed in the house of Earl Hunwald, whom he imagined to be his most assured friend. But, alas! it was otherwise; for the earl betrayed him, and Oswy, in a detestable manner, by the hands of his commander, Ethilwin, slew him and the soldier aforesaid. This happened on the 20th of August, in the ninth year of his reign, at a place called Ingethlingum, where afterwards, to atone for this crime, a monastery was built, wherein prayers were to be daily offered up to God for the souls of both kings, that is, of him that was murdered, and of him that commanded him to be killed.

King Oswin was of a graceful aspect, and tall of stature, affable in discourse, and courteous in behaviour; and most bountiful, as well to the ignoble as the noble; so that he was beloved by all men for his qualities of body and mind, and persons of the first rank came from almost all provinces to serve him. Among other virtues and rare endowments, if I may so express it, humility is said to have been the greatest, which it will suffice to prove by one example.

He had given an extraordinarily fine horse to Bishop Aidan, which he might either use in crossing rivers, or in performing a journey upon any urgent necessity, though he was wont to travel ordinarily on foot. Some short time after, a poor man meeting him, and asking an alms, he immediately dismounted, and ordered the horse, with all his royal furniture, to be given to the beggar; for he was very compassionate, a great friend to the poor, and, as it were, the father of the wretched. This being told to the king, when they were going in to dinner, he said to the bishop, "Why would you, my lord bishop, give the poor man that royal horse, which was necessary for your use? Had not we many other horses of less value, and of other sorts, which would have been good enough to give to the poor, and not to give that horse, which I had particularly chosen for yourself?" To whom the bishop readily answered, "What is it you say, O king? Is that foal of a mare more dear to you than the Son of God?" Upon this they went in to dinner, and the bishop sat in his place; but the king, who was come from hunting, stood warming himself, with his attendants, at the fire. Then, on a sudden, whilst he was warming himself, calling to mind what the bishop had said to him, he ungirt his sword, and gave it to a servant, and in a hasty manner fell down at the bishop's feet, beseeching him to forgive him; "For from this time forward," said he, "I will never speak any more of this, nor will I judge of what, or how much of our money you shall give to the sons of God." The bishop was much moved at this sight, and starting up, raised him, saying, "He was entirely reconciled to him, if he would sit down to his meat, and lay aside all sorrow." The king, at the bishop's command and request, beginning to be merry, the bishop, on the other hand, grew so melancholy as to shed tears. His priest then asking him in the language of his country, which the king and his servants did not understand, why he wept, "I know," said he, "that the king will not live long; for I never before saw a humble king; whence I conclude that he will soon be snatched out of this life, because this nation is not worthy of such a ruler." Not long after, the bishop's prediction was fulfilled by the king's death, as has been said above. But Bishop Aidan himself was also taken out of this world, twelve days after the king he loved, on the 31st of August, to receive the eternal reward of his labours from our Lord.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XV.—

### HOW BISHOP AIDAN FORETOLD TO CERTAIN SEAMEN A STORM THAT WOULD HAPPEN, AND GAVE THEM SOME HOLY OIL TO LAY IT.

How great the merits of Aidan were, was made manifest by the all-seeing Judge, with the testimony of miracles, whereof it will suffice to mention three as a memorial. A certain priest, whose name was Utta, a man of great gravity and sincerity, and on that account honoured by all men, even the princes of the world, being ordered to Kent, to bring from thence, as wife for King Oswy, Eanfleda, the daughter of King Edwin, who had been carried thither when her father was killed; and intending to go thither by land, but to return with the virgin by sea, repaired to Bishop Aidan, entreating him to offer up his prayers to our Lord for him and his company, who were then to set out on their journey. He, blessing and recommending them to our Lord, at the same time gave them some holy oil, saying, “I know that when you go abroad, you will meet with a storm and contrary wind; but do you remember to cast this oil I give you into the sea, and the wind shall cease immediately, you will have pleasant calm weather, and return home safe.”

Aidan's miracles.

651.

All which fell out as the bishop had predicted. For in the first place, the winds raging, the sailors endeavoured to ride it out at anchor, but all to no purpose; for the sea breaking in on all sides, and the ship beginning to be filled with water, they all concluded that certain death was at hand; the priest at last remembering the bishop's words, laid hold of the phial and cast some of the oil into the sea, which, as had been foretold, became presently calm. Thus it came to pass that the man of God, by the spirit of prophecy, foretold the storm that was to happen, and by virtue of the same spirit, though absent, appeased the same. Which miracle was not told me by a person of little credit, but by Cynemund, a most faithful priest of our church, who declared that it was related to him by Utta, the priest, on and by whom the same was wrought.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVI.—

### HOW THE SAME AIDAN, BY HIS PRAYERS, SAVED THE ROYAL CITY WHEN FIRED BY THE ENEMY.

Another notable miracle of the same father is related by many such as were likely to have knowledge thereof; for during the time that he was bishop, the hostile army of the Mercians, under the command of Penda, cruelly ravaged the country of the Northumbrians far and near, even to the royal city, which has its name from Bebba, formerly its queen. Not being able to enter it by force, or by a long siege, he endeavoured to burn it; and having destroyed all the villages in the neighbourhood of the city, he brought to it an immense quantity of planks, beams, wattles and thatch, wherewith he encompassed the place to a great height on the land side, and when the wind set upon it, firing the mass, designed to burn the town.

Aidan, by his prayers,  
raises the siege of  
Bamborough

651

At that time, the most reverend Bishop Aidan resided in the isle of Farne, which is nearly two miles from the city; for thither he was wont often to retire to pray in private, that he might be undisturbed. Indeed, this solitary residence of his is to this day shown in that island. When he saw the flames of fire and the smoke carried by the boisterous wind above the city walls, he is reported, with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, to have said, "Behold, Lord, how great mischief Penda does!" Which words were hardly uttered, when the wind immediately turning from the city, drove back the flames upon those who had kindled them, so that some being hurt, and all frightened, they forbore any further attempts against the city, which they perceived was protected by the hand of God.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVII.—

### HOW THE POST OF THE CHURCH ON WHICH BISHOP AIDAN WAS LEANING WHEN HE DIED, COULD NOT BE BURNT WHEN THE REST OF THE CHURCH WAS CONSUMED BY FIRE; AND OF HIS INWARD LIFE.

Aidan was in the king's country-house, not far from the city of which we have spoken above, at the time when death separated him from his body, after he had been bishop sixteen years; for having a church and a chamber there, he was wont often to go and stay there, and to make excursions to preach in the country round about, which he likewise did at other of the king's country-seats, having nothing of his own besides his church and a few fields about it. When he was sick they set up a tent for him close to the wall at the west end of the church, by which means it happened that he gave up the ghost, leaning against a post that was on the outside to strengthen the wall. He died in the seventeenth year of his episcopacy, the last day of the month of August. His body was thence translated to the isle of Lindisfarne, and buried in the churchyard belonging to the brethren. Some time after, when a larger church was built there, and dedicated in honour of the most blessed prince of the apostles, his bones were translated thither, and deposited on the right hand of the altar, with the respect due to so great a prelate.

Aidan's death.

651.

Finan, who had likewise come from the same monastery of Hii in the Scottish island, succeeded him, and continued a considerable time in the bishopric. It happened some years after, that Penda, king of the Mercians, coming into these parts with a hostile army, destroyed all he could with fire and sword, and burned down the village and church above mentioned, where the bishop died; but it fell out in a wonderful manner that the post, which he had leaned upon when he died, could not be consumed by the fire which consumed all about it. This miracle being taken notice of, the church was soon rebuilt in the same place, and that very post was set up on the outside, as it had been before, to strengthen the wall. It happened again, some time after, that the same village and church were burned down the second time, and even then the fire could not touch that post; and when in a most miraculous manner the fire broke through the very holes in it wherewith it was fixed to the building, and destroyed the church, yet it could do no hurt to the said post. The church being therefore built there the third time, they did not, as before, place that post on the outside as a support, but within, as a memorial of the miracle; and the people coming in were wont to kneel there, and implore the Divine mercy. And it is manifest that since then many have been healed in that same place, as also that chips being cut off from that post, and put into water, have healed many from their distempers.

Finan succeeds.

I have written thus much concerning the person and works of the aforesaid Aidan, in no way commending or approving what he imperfectly understood in relation to the observance of Easter; nay, very much detesting the same, as I have most manifestly proved in the book I have written, “De Temporibus;” but, like an impartial historian, relating what was done by or with him, and commending such things as are praiseworthy in his actions, and preserving the memory thereof for the benefit of the readers; viz. his love of peace and charity; his continence and humility; his mind superior to anger and avarice, and despising pride and vainglory; his industry in keeping and teaching the heavenly commandments; his diligence in reading and watching; his authority becoming a priest in reproving the haughty and powerful, and at the same time his tenderness in comforting the afflicted, and relieving or defending the poor. To say all in a few words, as near as I could be informed by those that knew him, he took care to omit none of those things which he found in the apostolical or prophetic writings, but to the utmost of his power endeavoured to perform them all.

Aidan's life.

These things I much love and admire in the aforesaid bishop; because I do not doubt that they were pleasing to God; but I do not praise or approve his not observing Easter at the proper time, either through ignorance of the canonical time appointed, or, if he knew it, being prevailed on by the authority of his nation, not to follow the same. Yet this I approve in him, that in the celebration of his Easter, the object which he had in view in all he said, did, or preached, was the same as ours, that is, the redemption of mankind, through the passion, resurrection and ascension into heaven of the man Jesus Christ, who is the Mediator betwixt God and man. And therefore he always celebrated the same, not as some falsely imagine, on the fourteenth moon, like the Jews, whatsoever the day was, but on the Lord's day, from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon; and this he did from his belief of the resurrection of our Lord happening on the day after the Sabbath, and for the hope of our resurrection, which also he, with the holy Church, believed would happen on the same day after the Sabbath, now called the Lord's day.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XVIII.—

### OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE RELIGIOUS KING SIGEBERT.

At this time, the kingdom of the East Angles, after the death of Earpwald, the successor of Redwald, was subject to his brother Sigebert, a good and religious man, who long before had been baptized in France, whilst he lived in banishment, flying from the enmity of Redwald; and returning home, as soon as he ascended the throne, being desirous to imitate the good institutions which he had seen in France, he set up a school for youth to be instructed in literature, and was assisted therein by Bishop Felix, who came to him from Kent, and who furnished him with masters and teachers after the manner of that country.

Sigebert, king of East Anglia.

635.

This king became so great a lover of the heavenly kingdom, that quitting the affairs of his crown, and committing the same to his kinsman Ecgric, who before held a part of that kingdom, he went himself into a monastery, which he had built, and having received the tonsure, applied himself rather to gain a heavenly throne. Some time after this, it happened that the nation of the Mercians, under King Penda, made war on the East Angles; who finding themselves inferior in martial affairs to their enemy, entreated Sigebert to go with them to battle, to encourage the soldiers. He refused, upon which they drew him against his will out of the monastery, and carried him to the army, hoping that the soldiers would be less disposed to flee in the presence of him, who had once been a notable and brave commander. But he, still keeping in mind his profession, whilst in the midst of a royal army, would carry nothing in his hand but a wand, and was killed with King Ecgric; and the pagans pressing on, all their army was either slaughtered or dispersed.

Anna, the son of Eni, of the blood royal, a good man, and father of an excellent family of children, succeeded them in the kingdom. Of whom we shall speak hereafter; he being also slain by the same pagan commander as his predecessor had been.

King Anna.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XIX.—

### HOW FURSEY BUILT A MONASTERY AMONG THE EAST ANGLES, AND OF HIS VISIONS AND SANCTITY, OF WHICH, HIS FLESH REMAINING UNCORRUPTED AFTER DEATH, BORE TESTIMONY.

Whilst Sigebert still governed the kingdom, there came out of Ireland a holy man called Fursey, renowned both for his words and actions, and remarkable for singular virtues, being desirous to live a stranger for our Lord, wherever an opportunity should offer. On coming into the province of the East Saxons, he was honourably received by the aforesaid king, and performing his usual employment of preaching the Gospel, by the example of his virtue and the efficacy of his discourse, converted many unbelievers to Christ, and confirmed in his faith and love those that already believed.

Saint Fursey arrives from Ireland.

633.

Here he fell into some infirmity of body, and was thought worthy to see a vision from God; in which he was admonished diligently to proceed in the ministry of the word which he had undertaken, and indefatigably to continue his usual watching and prayers; inasmuch as his end was certain, but the hour of it would be uncertain, according to the saying of our Lord, “Watch ye therefore, because ye know not the day nor the hour.” Being confirmed by this vision, he applied himself with all speed to build a monastery on the ground which had been given him by King Sigebert, and to establish regular discipline therein. This monastery was pleasantly situated in the woods, and with the sea not far off; it was built within the area of a castle, which in the English language is called Cnobheresburg, that is, Cnobher’s Town; afterwards, Anna, king of that province, and the nobility, embellished it with more stately buildings and donations. This man was of noble Scottish blood, but much more noble in mind than in birth. From his boyish years, he had particularly applied himself to reading sacred books, and following monastic discipline, and, as is most becoming holy men, he carefully practised all that he learned was to be done.

In short, he built himself the monastery, wherein he might with more freedom indulge his heavenly studies. There, falling sick, as the book about his life informs us, he fell into a trance, and quitting his body from the evening till the cock crew, he was found worthy to behold the choirs of angels, and to hear the praises which are sung in heaven. He was wont to declare, that among other things he distinctly heard this: “The saints shall advance from one virtue to another.” And again, “The God of gods shall be seen in Sion.” Being restored to his body at that time, and again taken from it three days after, he not only saw the greater joys of the blessed, but also extraordinary combats of evil spirits, who by frequent accusations wickedly endeavoured to obstruct his journey to heaven; but the angels protecting him, all their endeavours were in vain. Concerning which particulars, if any one desires to be more fully informed, that is,

with what subtle fraud the devils represented both his actions and superfluous words, and even his thoughts, as if they had been written down in a book; and what pleasing or disagreeable things he was informed of by the angels and saints, or just men who appeared to him among the angels; let him read the little book of his life which I have mentioned, and I believe he will thereby reap much spiritual profit.

But there is one thing among the rest, which we have thought may be beneficial to many if inserted in this history. When he had been lifted up on high, he was ordered by the angels that conducted him to look back upon the world. Upon which, casting his eyes downward, he saw, as it were, a dark and obscure valley underneath him. He also saw four fires in the air, not far distant from each other. Then asking the angels, what fires those were? he was told, they were the fires which would kindle and consume the world. One of them was of falsehood, when we do not fulfil that which we promised in baptism, to renounce the Devil and all his works. The next of covetousness, when we prefer the riches of the world to the love of heavenly things. The third of discord, when we make no difficulty to offend the minds of our neighbours even in needless things. The fourth of iniquity, when we look upon it as no crime to rob and to defraud the weak. These fires, increasing by degrees, extended so as to meet one another, and being joined, became an immense flame. When it drew near, fearing for himself, he said to the angel, "Lord, behold the fire draws near me." The angel answered, "That which you did not kindle shall not burn you; for though this appears to be a terrible and great fire, yet it tries every man according to the merits of his works; for every man's concupiscence shall burn in the fire; for as every one burns in the body through unlawful pleasure, so when discharged of the body, he shall burn in the punishment which he has deserved."

Then he saw one of the three angels, who had been his conductors throughout both visions, go before and divide the flame of fire, whilst the other two, flying about on both sides, defended him from the danger of that fire. He also saw devils flying through the fire, raising conflagrations of wars against the just. Then followed accusations of the wicked spirits against him, the defence of the good angels in his favour, and a more extended view of the heavenly troops; as also of holy men of his own nation, whom he had long since been informed to have been deservedly advanced to the degree of priesthood, from whom he heard many things that might be very salutary to himself, or to all others that would listen to them. When they had ended their discourse, and returned to heaven with the angelic spirits, the three angels remained with the blessed Fursey, of whom we have spoken before, and who were to bring him back to his body. And when they approached the aforesaid immense fire, the angel divided the flame, as he had done before; but when the man of God came to the passage so opened amidst the flames, the unclean spirits, laying hold of one of those whom they tormented in the fire, threw him at him, and touching his shoulder and jaw, burned them. He knew the man, and called to mind that he had received his garment when he died; and the angel, immediately laying hold, threw him back into the fire, and the malignant enemy said, "Do not reject him whom you before received; for as you accepted the goods of him who was a sinner, so you must partake of his punishment." The angel replying, said, "He did not receive the same through avarice, but in order to save his soul." The fire ceased, and the angel, turning to him, added, "That which you kindled burned in you; for had you not received the money of this

person that died in his sins, his punishment would not burn in you.” And proceeding in his discourse, he gave him wholesome advice for what ought to be done towards the salvation of such as repented.

Being afterwards restored to his body, throughout the whole course of his life he bore the mark of the fire which he had felt in his soul, visible to all men on his shoulder and jaw; and the flesh publicly showed, in a wonderful manner, what the soul had suffered in private. He always took care, as he had done before, to persuade all men to the practice of virtue, as well by his example, as by preaching. But as for the matter of his visions, he would only relate them to those who, from holy zeal and desire of reformation, wished to learn the same. An ancient brother of our monastery is still living, who is wont to declare that a very sincere and religious man told him, that he had seen Fursey himself in the province of the East Angles, and heard those visions from his mouth. Adding, that though it was in most sharp winter weather, and a hard frost, and the man was sitting in a thin garment when he related it, yet he sweated as if it had been in the greatest heat of summer, either through excessive fear, or spiritual consolation.

To return to what we were saying before, when, after preaching the word of God many years in Scotland, he could no longer bear the crowds that resorted to him, leaving all that he seemed to possess, he departed from his native island, and came with a few brothers through the Britons into the province of the English, and preaching the word of God there, as has been said, built a noble monastery. These things being rightly performed, he became desirous to rid himself of all business of this world, and even of the monastery itself, and forthwith left the same, and the care of souls, to his brother Fullan, and the priests Gobban and Dicull, and being himself free from all that was worldly, resolved to end his life as a hermit. He had another brother called Ultan, who, after a long monastical probation, had also adopted the life of an anchorite. Repairing all alone to him, he lived a whole year with him in continence and prayer, and laboured daily with his hands.

Afterwards seeing the province in confusion, by the irruptions of the pagans, and presaging that the monasteries would be also in danger, he left all things in order, and sailed over into France, and being there honourably entertained by Clovis, king of the Franks, or by the patrician Erconwald, he built a monastery in the place called Latiniacum; and falling sick not long after, departed this life. The same Erconwald took his body, and deposited it in the porch of a church he was building in his town of Peronne, till the church itself should be dedicated. This happened twenty-seven days after, and the body being taken from the porch to be reburied near the altar, was found as entire as if he had just then died. And again, four years after, a more decent tabernacle or chapel being built for the same body to the eastward of the altar, it was still found free from corruption, and translated thither with due honour; where it is well known that his merits, through the Divine operation, have been declared by many miracles. These things, and the incorruption of his body, we have taken notice of, that the sublimeness of this man may be the better known to the readers. All which, whosoever will read it, will find more fully described, as also about his fellow-labourers, in the book of his life beforementioned.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XX.—

HONORIUS DYING, DEUSDEDIT IS CHOSEN  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, OF THOSE WHO WERE  
AT THAT TIME BISHOPS OF THE EAST ANGLES, AND  
OF THE CHURCH OF ROCHESTER.

In the meantime, Felix, bishop of the East Angles, dying, when he had held that see seventeen years, Honorius ordained Thomas his deacon, of the province of the Girvii, in his place; and he departing this life when he had been bishop five years, Bertgils, surnamed Boniface, of the province of Kent, was appointed in his stead. Honorius himself also, having run his course, departed this life in the year of our Lord 653, on the 30th of September; and when the see had been vacant a year and six months, Deusdedit, of the nation of the South Saxons, was chosen the sixth archbishop of Canterbury. To ordain whom, Ithamar, bishop of Rochester, came thither. His ordination was on the 26th of March, and he ruled nine years, four months, and two days; when he also died. Ithamar consecrated in his place Damian, who was of the race of the South Saxons.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXI.—

### HOW THE PROVINCE OF THE MIDLAND ANGLES BECAME CHRISTIAN UNDER KING PEADA.

At this time, the Middle Angles, under their Prince Peada, the son of King Penda, received the faith and sacraments of the truth. Being an excellent youth, and most worthy of the title and person of a king, he was by his father elevated to the throne of that nation, and came to Oswy, king of the Northumbrians, requesting to have his daughter Elflada given him to wife; but could not obtain his desires unless he would embrace the faith of Christ, and be baptized, with the nation which he governed. When he heard the preaching of truth, the promise of the heavenly kingdom, and the hope of resurrection and future immortality, he declared that he would willingly become a Christian, even though he should be refused the virgin; being chiefly prevailed on to receive the faith by King Oswy's son Alfrid, who was his relation and friend, and had married his sister Cyneberga, the daughter of King Penda.

The Middle Angles  
converted.

653.

Accordingly he was baptized by Bishop Finan, with all his earls and soldiers, and their servants that came along with him, at a noted village belonging to the king, called At the Wall. And having received four priests, who for their erudition and good life were deemed proper to instruct and baptize his nation, he returned home with much joy. These priests were Cedda and Adda, and Betti and Diuma; the last of whom was by nation a Scot, the others English. Adda was brother to Utta, whom we have mentioned before, a renowned priest, and abbot of the monastery of Gateshead. The aforesaid priests, arriving in the province with the prince, preached the word, and were willingly listened to; and many, as well of the nobility as the common sort, renouncing the abominations of idolatry, were baptized daily. Nor did King Penda obstruct the preaching of the word among his people, the Mercians, if any were willing to hear it; but, on the contrary, he hated and despised those whom he perceived not to perform the works of faith, when they had received the faith of Christ, saying, "They were contemptible and wretched who did not obey their God, in whom they believed." This was begun two years before the death of King Penda.

But when he was slain, and Oswy, the most Christian king, succeeded him in the throne, Diuma, one of the aforesaid four priests, was made bishop of the Midland Angles, as also of the Mercians, being ordained by Bishop Finan; for the scarcity of priests was the occasion that one prelate was set over two nations. Having in a short time gained many people to our Lord, he died among the Midland Angles, in the country called Feppingum; and Ceollach, of the Scottish nation, succeeded him in the bishopric. This prelate, not long after, left his bishopric, and returned to the island of Hii, which, among the Scots, was the chief and head of many monasteries. His successor in the bishopric was Trumhere, a religious man, and educated in the

monastic life of the English nation, but ordained bishop by the Scots, which happened in the days of King Wulfhere, of whom we shall speak hereafter.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXII.—

### HOW THE EAST SAXONS AGAIN RECEIVED THE FAITH, WHICH THEY HAD BEFORE CAST OFF UNDER KING SIGEBERT, THROUGH THE PREACHING OF CEDD.

At that time, also, the East Saxons, at the instance of King Oswy, again received the faith, which they had formerly cast off when they expelled Mellitus, their bishop. For Sigebert, who reigned next to Sigebert, surnamed The Little, was then king of that nation, and a friend to King Oswy, who, when he often came to him into the province of the Northumbrians, used to endeavour to persuade him that those could not be gods that had been made by the hands of men; that a stock or a stone could not be proper matter to form a god, the remains whereof were either burned in the fire, or framed into any vessels for the use of men, or else were cast out as refuse, trampled on and bruised to dust. That God is rather to be understood as of incomprehensible majesty and invisible to human eyes, almighty, eternal, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of mankind; who governs and will judge the world in righteousness; whose everlasting seat is in heaven, and not in vile and fading matter; and that it ought in reason to be concluded, that all those who have learned and obeyed the will of Him by whom they were created, will receive from Him eternal rewards. King Oswy having often, in a friendly and brotherly manner, said this and much more to the like effect, at length, with the consent of his friends, he believed, and after consulting with those about him, and exhorting them, they all agreed and gave their approbation, and were baptized with him by Bishop Finan, in the king's village above spoken of, which is called At the Wall, because it is close by the wall with which the Romans formerly divided the island of Britain, at the distance of twelve miles from the eastern sea.

The East Angles  
recovered from  
idolatry.

653.

King Sigebert, being now become a citizen of the eternal kingdom, returned to the seat of his temporal kingdom, requesting of Oswy that he would give him some teachers, who might convert his nation to the faith of Christ, and baptize them. Oswy, accordingly, sending into the province of the Midland Angles, invited to him the man of God, Cedd, and giving him another priest for his companion, sent them to preach to the East Saxons. When these two, travelling to all parts of that country, had gathered a numerous church to our Lord, it happened that Cedd returned home, and came to the church of Lindisfarne to confer with Bishop Finan; who, finding how successful he had been in the work of the Gospel, made him bishop of the church of the East Saxons, calling to him two other bishops to assist at the ordination. Cedd, having received the episcopal dignity, returned to his province, and pursuing the work he had begun with more ample authority, built churches in several places, ordaining priests and deacons to assist him in the work of the faith, and the ministry of baptizing, especially in the city which, in the language of the Saxons, is called Ithancestir, as also in that which is named Tilaburg; the first of which places is on the bank of the



river Pente, the other on the bank of the Thames, where, gathering a flock of servants of Christ, he taught them to observe the discipline of regular life, as far as those rude people were then capable.

Whilst the doctrine of everlasting life was thus, for a considerable time, making progress, to the joy of the king and of all the people, it happened that the king, at the instigation of the enemy of all good men, was murdered by his own kindred. They were two brothers who did this wicked deed; and being asked what had moved them to it, had nothing else to answer, but that they had been incensed against the king, and hated him, because he was too apt to spare his enemies, and easily to forgive the wrongs they had done him, upon their entreaty. Such was the crime for which the king was killed, because he observed the precepts of the Gospel with a devout heart; in which innocent death, however, his real offence was also punished, according to the prediction of the man of God. For one of those earls that murdered him was unlawfully married, which the bishop not being able to prevent or correct, he excommunicated him, and commanded all that would give ear to him not to enter within his house, nor to eat of his meat. The king made slight of this inhibition, and being invited by the earl, went to an entertainment at his house, and when he was going thence, the bishop met him. The king beholding him, immediately dismounted from his horse, trembling, and fell down at his feet, begging pardon for his offence; for the bishop, who was likewise on horseback, had also alighted. Being much incensed, he touched the king lying in that humble posture, with the rod he held in his hand, and using his pontifical authority, spoke thus: "I say to you, forasmuch as you would not refrain from the house of that wicked and condemned person, you shall die in that very house." Yet it is to be believed, that such a death of a religious man not only blotted out his offence, but also added to his merit; because it happened on account of his pious observance of the commands of Christ.

Sigebert was succeeded in the kingdom by Suidhehn, the son of Sexbald, who was baptized by the same Cedd, in the province of the East Angles, at the king's country-seat, called Rendlesham, that is, Rendil's Mansion; and Ethelwald, king of the East Angles, brother to Anna, king of the same people, was his godfather.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXIII.—

### BISHOP CEDD, HAVING A PLACE GIVEN HIM BY KING ETHELWALD, CONSECRATES THE SAME TO OUR LORD WITH PRAYER AND FASTING. OF HIS DEATH.

The same man of God, whilst he was bishop among the East Saxons, was also wont several times to visit his own country, Northumberland, to make exhortations. Ethelwald, the son of King Oswald, who reigned among the Deiri, finding him a holy, wise, and good man, desired him to accept some land to build a monastery, to which the king himself might frequently resort, to offer his prayers and hear the word, and be buried in it when he died; for he believed that he should receive much benefit by the prayers of those who were to serve God in that place. The king had before with him a brother of the same bishop, called Celin, a man no less devoted to God, who, being a priest, was wont to administer to him the word and the sacraments of the faith; by whose means he chiefly came to know and love the bishop. That prelate, therefore, complying with the king's desires, chose himself a place to build a monastery among craggy and distant mountains, which looked more like lurking-places for robbers and retreats for wild beasts, than habitations for men; to the end that, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, "In the habitations where before dragons dwelt, might be grass with reeds and rushes;" that is, that the fruits of good works should spring up, where before beasts were wont to dwell, or men to live after the manner of beasts.

Of Bishop Cedd.

The man of God, desiring first to cleanse the place for the monastery from former crimes, by prayer and fasting, that it might become acceptable to our Lord, and so to lay the foundations, requested of the king that he would give him leave to reside there all the approaching time of Lent, to pray. All which days, except Sundays, he fasted till the evening, according to custom, and then took no other sustenance than a little bread, one hen's egg, and a little milk mixed with water. This, he said, was the custom of those of whom he had learned the rule of regular discipline; first, to consecrate to our Lord, by prayer and fasting, the places which they had newly received for building a monastery or a church. When there were ten days of Lent still remaining, there came a messenger to call him to the king; and he, that the religious work might not be intermitted, on account of the king's affairs, entreated his priest, Cynebil, who was also his own brother, to complete that which had been so piously begun. Cynebil readily complied, and when the time of fasting and prayer was over, he there built the monastery, which is now called Lestingau, and established therein the religious customs of Lindisfarne, where they had been educated.

660.

Monastery of  
Lestingau.

Cedd for many years having charge of the bishopric in the aforesaid province, and of this monastery, over which he had placed superiors, it happened that he came thither at a time when there was a mortality, and fell sick and died. He was first buried in the

open air, but in the process of time a church was built of stone in the monastery, in honour of the Mother of God, and his body interred in the same, on the right hand of the altar.

The bishop left the monastery to be governed after him by his brother Ceadda, who was afterwards made bishop, as shall be said in its place. For the four brothers we have mentioned, Cedd and Cynebil, Celin and Ceadda, which is a rare thing to be met with, were all celebrated priests of our Lord, and two of them also came to be bishops. When the brethren who were in his monastery, in the province of the East Saxons, heard that the bishop was dead in the province of the Northumbrians, about thirty men of that monastery came thither, being desirous either to live near the body of their father, if it should please God, or to die there and be buried. Being lovingly received by their brethren and fellow-soldiers in Christ, all of them died there by the aforesaid pestilence, except one little boy, who was delivered from death by his father's prayers. For when he had lived there a long time after, and applied himself to the reading of sacred writ, he was informed that he had not been regenerated by the water of baptism, and being then washed in the laver of salvation, he was afterwards promoted to the order of priesthood, and proved very useful to many in the church. I do not doubt that he was delivered at the point of death, as I have said, by the intercession of his father, whilst he was embracing his beloved corpse, that so he might himself avoid eternal death, and by teaching, exhibit the ministry of life and salvation to others of the brethren.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXIV.—

KING PENDA BEING SLAIN, THE MERCIANS RECEIVED THE FAITH OF CHRIST, AND OSWY GAVE POSSESSIONS AND TERRITORIES TO GOD, FOR BUILDING MONASTERIES, IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR THE VICTORY OBTAINED.

At this time, King Oswy was exposed to the fierce and intolerable irruptions of Penda, king of the Mercians, whom we have so often mentioned, and who had slain his brother; at length, necessity compelling him, he promised to give him greater gifts than can be imagined, to purchase peace; provided that the king would return home, and cease to destroy the provinces of his kingdom. That perfidious king refused to grant his request, and resolved to extirpate all his nation, from the highest to the lowest; whereupon he had recourse to the protection of the Divine goodness for deliverance from his barbarous and impious foe, and binding himself by a vow, said, “If the pagan will not accept of our gifts, let us offer them to him that will, the Lord our God.” He then vowed, that if he should come off victorious, he would dedicate his daughter to our Lord in holy virginity, and give twelve farms to build monasteries. After this he gave battle with a very small army against superior forces: indeed, it is reported that the pagans had three times the number of men; for they had thirty legions, led on by most noted commanders. King Oswy and his son Alfrid met them with a very small army, as has been said, but confiding in the conduct of Christ; his other son, Egfrid, was then kept an hostage at the court of Queen Cynwise, in the province of the Mercians. King Oswald’s son Ethelwald, who ought to have assisted them, was on the enemy’s side, and led them on to fight against his country and uncle; though, during the battle, he withdrew, and waited the event in a place of safety. The engagement beginning, the pagans were defeated, the thirty commanders, and those who had come to his assistance, were put to flight, and almost all of them slain; among whom was Ethelhere, brother and successor to Anna, king of the East Angles, who had been the occasion of the war, and who was now killed, with all his soldiers. The battle was fought near the river Vinwed, which then, with the great rains, had not only filled its channel, but overflowed its banks, so that many more were drowned in the flight than destroyed by the sword.

Penda defeated and slain by Oswy.

655.

Then King Oswy, pursuant to the vow he had made to our Lord, returned thanks to God for the victory, and gave his daughter Elfleda, who was scarce a year old, to be consecrated to him in perpetual virginity; delivering also twelve small portions of land, wherein earthly warfare should cease, and in which there should be a perpetual residence and subsistence for monks to follow the warfare which is spiritual, and pray diligently for the peace of his nation. Of those possessions six were in the province of the Deiri, and the other six in that of the Bernicians. Each of the said possessions

contained ten families, that is, a hundred and twenty in all. The aforesaid daughter of King Oswy, thus dedicated to God, was put into the monastery, called Heruteu, or, "The Island of the Stag," where, at that time, the Abbess Hilda presided, and, two years after, having acquired a possession of ten families, at the place called Streaneshalch, she built a monastery there, in which the aforesaid king's daughter was first a learner, and afterwards a teacher of the monastic life; till, being sixty years of age, the blessed virgin departed to the nuptials and embraces of her heavenly bridegroom. In that same monastery, she and her father, Oswy, her mother, Eanfleda, her mother's father, Edwin, and many other noble persons, are buried in the church of the holy Apostle Peter. King Oswy concluded the aforesaid war in the country of Loidis, in the thirteenth year of his reign, on the 15th of November, to the great benefit of both nations; for he both delivered his own people from the hostile depredations of the pagans, and, having cut off the wicked king's head, converted the Mercians and the adjacent provinces to the grace of the Christian faith.

Diuma was made the first bishop of the Mercians, as also of Lindisfarne and the Midland Angles, as has been said above, and he died and was buried among the Midland Angles. The second was Ceollach, who, quitting the episcopal office whilst still alive, returned into Scotland, to which nation he belonged as well as Bishop Diuma. The third was Trumhere, an Englishman, but taught and ordained by the Scots, being abbot in the monastery that is called Ingethlingum, and is the place where King Oswin was killed, as has been said above; for Queen Eanfleda, his kinswoman, in satisfaction for his unjust death, begged of King Oswy that he would give the aforesaid servant of God a place there to build a monastery, because he also was kinsman to the slaughtered king; in which monastery continual prayers should be offered up for the eternal health of the kings, both of him that had been slain, and of him that caused it to be done. The same King Oswy governed the Mercians, as also the people of the other southern provinces, three years after he had slain King Penda; and he likewise subdued the greater part of the Picts to the dominion of the English.

At which time he gave to the above-mentioned Peada, son to King Penda, who was his kinsman, the kingdom of the Southern Mercians, consisting, as is reported, of 5,000 families, divided by the river Trent from the Northern Mercians, whose land contained 7,000 families; but that Peada was the next spring very wickedly killed, by the treachery, as is said, of his wife, during the very time of celebrating Easter. Three years after the death of King Penda, Immin, and Eafa, and Eadbert, generals of the Mercians, rebelled against King Oswy, setting up for their king, Wulfhere, son to the said Penda, a youth, whom they had kept concealed; and expelling the officers of the foreign king, they at once recovered their liberty and their lands; and being thus free, together with their king, they rejoiced to serve Christ the true King, that they might obtain the everlasting kingdom which is in heaven. This king governed the Mercians seventeen years, and had for his first bishop Trumhere, above spoken of; the second Jaruman; the third Ceadda; the fourth Winfrid. All these, succeeding each other regularly under King Wulfhere, discharged the episcopal duties to the Mercian nation.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXV.—

### HOW THE CONTROVERSY AROSE ABOUT THE DUE TIME OF KEEPING EASTER, WITH THOSE THAT CAME OUT OF SCOTLAND.

In the meantime, Bishop Aidan being dead, Finan, who was ordained and sent by the Scots, succeeded him in the bishopric, and built a church in the Isle of Lindisfarne, the episcopal see; nevertheless, after the manner of the Scots, he made it, not of stone, but of hewn oak, and covered it with reeds; and the same was afterwards dedicated in honour of St. Peter the Apostle, by the reverend Archbishop Theodore. Eadbert, also bishop of that place, took off the thatch, and covered it, both roof and walls, with plates of lead.

Of Bishop Finan.

652.

At this time, a great and frequent controversy happened about the observance of Easter; those that came from Kent or France affirming, that the Scots kept Easter Sunday contrary to the custom of the universal church. Among them was a most zealous defender of the true Easter, whose name was Ronan, a Scot by nation, but instructed in ecclesiastical truth, either in France or Italy, who, disputing with Finan, convinced many, or at least induced them to make a more strict inquiry after the truth; yet he could not prevail upon Finan, but, on the contrary, made him the more inveterate by reproof, and a professed opposer of the truth, being of a hot and violent temper. James, formerly the deacon of the venerable Archbishop Paulinus, as has been said above, kept the true and Catholic Easter, with all those that he could persuade to adopt the right way. Queen Eanfleda and her followers also observed the same as she had seen practised in Kent, having with her a Kentish priest that followed the Catholic mode, whose name was Romanus. Thus it is said to have happened in those times that Easter was twice kept in one year; and that when the king, having ended the time of fasting, kept his Easter, the queen and her followers were still fasting, and celebrating Palm Sunday. This difference about the observance of Easter, whilst Aidan lived, was patiently tolerated by all men, as being sensible, that though he could not keep Easter contrary to the custom of those who had sent him, yet he industriously laboured to practise all works of faith, piety, and love, according to the custom of all holy men; for which reason he was deservedly beloved by all, even by those who differed in opinion concerning Easter, and was held in veneration, not only by indifferent persons, but even by the bishops, Honorius of Canterbury, and Felix of the East Angles.

But after the death of Finan, who succeeded him, when Colman, who was also sent out of Scotland, came to be bishop, a greater controversy arose about the observance of Easter, and the rules of ecclesiastical life. Whereupon this dispute began naturally to influence the thoughts and hearts of many, who feared, lest having received the name of Christians, they might happen to run, or to have run, in vain. This reached the ears

Bishop Colman.

661.

of King Oswy and his son Alfrid; for Oswy, having been instructed and baptized by the Scots, and being very perfectly skilled in their language, thought nothing better than what they taught. But Alfrid, having been instructed in Christianity by Wilfrid, a most learned man, who had first gone to Rome to learn the ecclesiastical doctrine, and spent much time at Lyons with Dalfin, archbishop of France, from whom also he had received the ecclesiastical tonsure, rightly thought this man's doctrine ought to be preferred before all the traditions of the Scots. For this reason he had also given him a monastery of forty families, at a place called Rhyfum; which place, not long before, he had given to those that followed the system of the Scots for a monastery; but forasmuch as they afterwards, being left to their choice, prepared to quit the place rather than alter their opinion, he gave the place to him, whose life and doctrine were worthy of it.

Agilbert, bishop of the West Saxons, above-mentioned, a friend to King Alfrid and to Abbot Wilfrid, was at that time come into the province of the Northumbrians, and made some stay among them; and at the request of Alfrid, he made Wilfrid a priest in his monastery, and had in his company a priest, whose name was Agatho. The controversy being there started, concerning Easter, or the tonsure, or other ecclesiastical affairs, it was agreed, that a synod should be held in the monastery of Streaneshalch, which signifies the Bay of the Lighthouse, where the Abbess Hilda, a woman devoted to God, then presided; and that there this controversy should be decided. The kings, both father and son, came thither, the bishops Colman, with his Scottish clerks, and Agilbert, with the priests Agatho and Wilfrid, and James and Romanus, were on their side; the Abbess Hilda and her followers were for the Scots, as was also the venerable Bishop Cedd, long before ordained by the Scots, as has been said above, and he was in that council a most careful interpreter for both parties.

King Oswy first observed, that it behoved those who served one God to observe the same rule of life; and as they all expected the same kingdom in heaven, so they ought not to differ in the celebration of the Divine mysteries; but rather to inquire which was the truest tradition, that the same might be followed by all; he then commanded his bishop, Colman, first to declare what the custom was, which he observed, and whence it derived its origin. Then Colman said, "The Easter which I keep, I received from my elders, who sent me bishop hither; all our forefathers, men beloved of God, are known to have kept it after the same manner; and that the same may not seem to any contemptible or worthy to be rejected, it is the same which St. John the Evangelist, the disciple beloved of our Lord, with all the churches over which he presided, is recorded to have observed." Having said thus much, and more to the like effect, the king commanded Agilbert to show whence his custom of keeping Easter was derived, or on what authority it was grounded. Agilbert answered, "I desire that my disciple, the priest Wilfrid, may speak in my stead; because we both concur with the other followers of the ecclesiastical tradition, that are here present, and he can better explain our opinion in the English language, than I can by an interpreter."

Then Wilfrid, being ordered by the king to speak, delivered himself thus:—"The Easter which we observe, we saw celebrated by all at Rome, where the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, lived, taught, suffered, and were buried; we saw the same done in Italy and in

Controversy between  
Colman and Wilfrid.

France, when we travelled through those countries for pilgrimage and prayer. We found the same practised in Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece, and all the world, wherever the church of Christ is spread abroad, through several nations and tongues, at one and the same time; except only these and their accomplices in obstinacy, I mean the Picts and the Britons, who foolishly, in these two remote islands of the world, and only in part even of them, oppose all the rest of the universe.” When he had so said, Colman answered, “It is strange that you will call our labours foolish, wherein we follow the example of so great an apostle, who was thought worthy to lay his head on our Lord’s bosom, when all the world knows him to have lived most wisely.” Wilfrid replied, “Far be it from us to charge John with folly, for he literally observed the precepts of the Jewish law, whilst the church still Judaized in many points, and the apostles were not able at once to cast off all the observances of the law which had been instituted by God. In which way it is necessary that all who come to the faith should forsake the idols which were invented by devils, that they might not give scandal to the Jews that were among the Gentiles. For this reason it was, that Paul circumcised Timothy, that he offered sacrifice in the temple, that he shaved his head with Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth; for no other advantage than to avoid giving scandal to the Jews. Hence it was, that James said, to the same Paul, ‘You see, brother, how many thousands of the Jews have believed; and they are all zealous for the law. And yet, at this time, the Gospel spreading throughout the world, it is needless, nay, it is not lawful, for the faithful either to be circumcised, or to offer up to God sacrifices of flesh.’ So John, pursuant to the custom of the law, began the celebration of the feast of Easter, on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening, not regarding whether the same happened on a Saturday, or any other day. But when Peter preached at Rome, being mindful that our Lord arose from the dead, and gave the world the hopes of resurrection, on the first day after the Sabbath, he understood that Easter ought to be observed, so as always to stay till the rising of the moon on the fourteenth day of the first moon, in the evening, according to the custom and precepts of the law, even as John did. And when that came, if the Lord’s day, then called the first day after the Sabbath, was the next day, he began that very evening to keep Easter, as we all do at this day. But if the Lord’s day did not fall the next morning after the fourteenth moon, but on the sixteenth, or the seventeenth, or any other moon till the twenty-first, he waited for that, and on the Saturday before, in the evening, began to observe the holy solemnity of Easter. Thus it came to pass, that Easter Sunday was only kept from the fifteenth moon to the twenty-first. Nor does this evangelical and apostolic tradition abolish the law, but rather fulfil it; the command being to keep the passover from the fourteenth moon of the first month in the evening to the twenty-first moon of the same month in the evening; which observance all the successors of St. John in Asia, since his death, and all the church throughout the world, have since followed; and that this is the true Easter, and the only one to be kept by the faithful, was not newly decreed by the Council of Nice, but only confirmed afresh; as the Church History informs us.

“Thus it appears, that you, Colman, neither follow the example of John, as you imagine, nor that of Peter, whose traditions you knowingly contradict; and that you neither agree with the law nor the Gospel in the keeping of your Easter. For John, keeping the Paschal time according to the degree of the Mosaic law, had no regard to the first day after the Sabbath, which you do not practise, who celebrate Easter only on the first day after the Sabbath. Peter kept Easter Sunday between the fifteenth and



the twenty-first moon, which you do not, but keep Easter Sunday from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon; so that you often begin Easter on the thirteenth moon in the evening, whereof neither the law made any mention, nor did our Lord, the author and giver of the Gospel, on that day, but on the fourteenth, either eat the old passover in the evening, or deliver the sacraments of the New Testament, to be celebrated by the church, in memory of his passion. Besides, in your celebration of Easter, you utterly exclude the twenty-first moon, which the law ordered to be principally observed. Thus, as I said before, you agree neither with John nor Peter, nor with the law, nor the Gospel, in the celebration of the greatest festival.”

To this Colman rejoined: “Did Anatolius, a holy man, and much commended in church history, act contrary to the law and the Gospel, when he wrote, that Easter was to be celebrated from the fourteenth to the twentieth? Is it to be believed that our most reverend Father Columba and his successors, men beloved by God, who kept Easter after the same manner, thought or acted contrary to the Divine writings? Whereas there were many among them, whose sanctity is testified by heavenly signs and the working of miracles, whose life, customs, and discipline I never cease to follow, not questioning their being saints in heaven.”

“It is evident,” said Wilfrid, “that Anatolius was a most holy, learned, and commendable man; but what have you to do with him, since you do not observe his decrees? For he, following the rule of truth in his Easter, appointed a revolution of nineteen years, which either you are ignorant of, or if you know it, though it is kept by the whole church of Christ, yet you despise it. He so computed the fourteenth moon in the Easter of our Lord, that according to the custom of the Egyptians, he acknowledged it to be the fifteenth moon in the evening; so in like manner he assigned the twentieth to Easter-Sunday, as believing that to be the twenty-first moon, when the sun had set, which rule and distinction of his it appears you are ignorant of, in that you sometimes keep Easter before the full of the moon, that is, on the thirteenth day. Concerning your Father Columba and his followers, whose sanctity you say you imitate, and whose rules and precepts you observe, which have been confirmed by signs from heaven, I may answer, that when many, on the day of judgment, shall say to our Lord, ‘That in his name they prophesied, and cast out devils, and wrought many wonders,’ our Lord will reply, ‘That he never knew them.’ But far be it from me, that I say so of your fathers, because it is much more just to believe what is good, than what is evil, of persons whom one does not know. Wherefore I do not deny those to have been God’s servants, and beloved by him, who with rustic simplicity, but pious intentions, have themselves loved him. Nor do I think that such keeping of Easter was very prejudicial to them, as long as none came to show them a more perfect rule; and yet I do believe that they, if any catholic adviser had come among them, would have as readily followed his admonitions, as they are known to have kept those commandments of God, which they had learned and knew.

“But as for you and your companions, you certainly sin, if, having heard the decrees of the Apostolic See, and of the universal church, and that the same is confirmed by holy writ, you refuse to follow them; for, though your fathers were holy, do you think that their small number, in a corner of the remotest island, is to be preferred before the universal church of Christ throughout the world? And if that Columba of yours, (and,

I may say, ours also, if he was Christ's servant,) was a holy man and powerful in miracles, yet could he be preferred before the most blessed prince of the apostles, to whom our Lord said, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven?' "

When Wilfrid had spoken thus, the king said, "Is it true, Colman, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord?" He answered, "It is true, O king!" Then says he, "Can you show any such power given to your Columba?" Colman answered, "None." Then added the king, "Do you both agree, that these words were principally directed to Peter, and that the keys of heaven were given to him by our Lord?" They both answered, "We do." Then the king concluded, "And I also say unto you, that he is the door-keeper, whom I will not contradict, but will, as far as I know and am able, in all things obey his decrees, lest, when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys." The king having said this, all present, both great and small, gave their assent, and renouncing the more imperfect institution, resolved to conform to that which they found to be better.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXVI.—

### COLMAN, BEING WORSTED, RETURNED HOME; TUDA SUCCEEDED HIM IN THE BISHOPRIC; THE STATE OF THE CHURCH UNDER THOSE TEACHERS.

The disputation being ended, and the company broken up, Agilbert returned home. Colman, perceiving that his doctrine was rejected, and his sect despised, took with him such as would not comply with the Catholic Easter and the tonsure, (for there was much controversy about that also,) and went back into Scotland, to consult with his people what was to be done in this case. Cedd, forsaking the practices of the Scots, returned to his bishopric, having submitted to the Catholic observance of Easter. This disputation happened in the year of our Lord's incarnation 664, which was the twenty-second year of the reign of King Oswy, and the thirtieth of the episcopacy of the Scots among the English; for Aidan was bishop seventeen years, Finan ten, and Colman three.

Colman departs; Tuda is made bishop.

664.

When Colman was gone back into his own country, God's servant, Tuda, was made bishop of the Northumbrians in his place, having been instructed and ordained bishop among the Southern Scots, having also the ecclesiastical tonsure of his crown, according to the custom of that province, and observing the Catholic time of Easter. He was a good and religious man, but governed his church a very short time; he came out of Scotland whilst Colman was yet bishop, and, both by word and example, diligently taught all persons those things that appertain to the faith and truth. But Eata, who was abbot of the monastery of Melros, a most reverend and meek man, was appointed abbot over the brethren that stayed in the church of Lindisfarne, when the Scots went away; they say, Colman, upon his departure, requested and obtained this of King Oswy, because Eata was one of Aidan's twelve boys of the English nation, whom he received when first made bishop there, to be instructed in Christ; for the king much loved Bishop Colman, on account of his singular discretion. This is the same Eata, who, not long after, was made bishop of the same church of Lindisfarne. Colman carried home with him part of the bones of the most reverend Father Aidan, and left part of them in the church where he had presided, ordering them to be interred in the sacristy.

The place which he governed shows how frugal he and his predecessors were, for there were very few houses besides the church found at their departure; indeed, no more than were barely sufficient for their daily residence; they had also no money, but cattle; for if they received any money from rich persons, they immediately gave it to the poor; there being no need to gather money, or provide houses for the entertainment of the great men of the world; for such never resorted to the church, except to pray and hear the word of God. The king himself, when opportunity offered, came only with five or six servants, and having performed his devotions in the church, departed. But if they happened to take a repast there, they were satisfied with only the

plain and daily food of the brethren, and required no more; for the whole care of those teachers was to serve God, not the world—to feed the soul, and not the belly.

For this reason the religious habit was at that time in great veneration; so that wheresoever any clergyman or monk happened to come, he was joyfully received by all persons, as God's servant; and if they chanced to meet him upon the way, they ran to him, and bowing, were glad to be signed with his hand, or blessed with his mouth. Great attention was also paid to their exhortations; and on Sundays they flocked eagerly to the church, or the monasteries, not to feed their bodies, but to hear the word of God; and if any priest happened to come into a village, the inhabitants flocked together to hear from him the word of life; for the priests and clergymen went into the villages on no other account than to preach, baptize, visit the sick, and, in few words, to take care of souls; and they were so free from worldly avarice, that none of them received lands and possessions for building monasteries, unless they were compelled to do so by the temporal authorities; which custom was for some time after observed in all the churches of the Northumbrians. But enough has been now said on this subject.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CHAP. XXVII.—

### EGBERT, A HOLY MAN OF THE ENGLISH NATION, LED A MONASTIC LIFE IN IRELAND.

In the same year of our Lord's incarnation, 664, there happened an eclipse of the sun, on the 3rd of May, about ten o'clock in the morning. In the same year, a sudden pestilence also depopulated the southern coasts of Britain, and afterwards extending into the province of the Northumbrians, ravaged the country far and near, and destroyed a great multitude of men. To which plague the aforesaid priest Tuda fell a victim, and was honourably buried in the monastery of Pegnaeth. This pestilence did no less harm in the island of Ireland. Many of the nobility, and of the lower ranks of the English nation, were there at that time, who, in the days of the Bishops Finan and Colman, forsaking their native island, retired thither, either for the sake of Divine studies, or of a more continent life; and some of them presently devoted themselves to a monastical life, others chose rather to apply themselves to study, going about from one master's cell to another. The Scots willingly received them all, and took care to supply them with food, as also to furnish them with books to read, and their teaching, gratis.

Eclipse of the sun,  
and pestilence.

664.

Among these were Ethelhun and Egbert, two youths of great capacity, of the English nobility. The former of which was brother to Ethelwin, a man no less beloved by God, who also afterwards went over into Ireland to study, and having been well instructed, returned into his own country, and being made bishop in the province of Lindsey, long governed that church worthily and creditably. These two being in the monastery which in the language of the Scots is called Rathmelsigi, and having lost all their companions, who were either cut off by the mortality, or dispersed into other places, fell both desperately sick of the same distemper, and were grievously afflicted. Of these, Egbert, (as I was informed by a priest venerable for his age, and of great veracity, who declared he had heard those things from his own mouth,) concluding that he was at the point of death, went out of his chamber, where the sick lay, in the morning, and sitting alone in a convenient place, began seriously to reflect upon his past actions, and, being full of compunction at the remembrance of his sins, bedewed his face with tears, and prayed fervently to God that he might not die yet, before he could make amends for the offences which he had committed in his infancy and younger years, or might further exercise himself in good works. He also made a vow that he would, for the sake of God, live in a strange place, so as never to return into the island of Britain, where he was born; that, besides the canonical times of singing psalms, unless prevented by corporeal infirmity, he would say the whole Psalter daily to the praise of God; and that he would every week fast one whole day and a night. Returning home, after his tears, prayers and vows, he found his companion asleep, and going to bed himself, began to compose himself to rest. When he had lain quiet awhile, his comrade awaking, looked on him, and said, "Alas! Brother Egbert, what

Of Ethelhun and  
Egbert.

have you done? I was in hopes that we should have entered together into life everlasting; but know that what you prayed for is granted." For he had learned in a vision what the other had requested, and that his prayer was granted.

In short, Ethelhun died the next night; but Egbert, shaking off his distemper, recovered and lived a long time after to grace the priestly office, which he had received, by his worthy behaviour; and after much increase of virtue, according to his desire, he at length, in the year of our Lord's incarnation 729, being ninety years of age, departed to the heavenly kingdom. He led his life in great perfection of humility, meekness, continence, simplicity, and justice. Thus he was a great benefactor, both to his own nation, and to those of the Scots and Picts among whom he lived a stranger, by his example of life, his industry in teaching, his authority in reprovng, and his piety in giving away much of what he received from the bounty of the rich. He also added this to his vow above-mentioned; during Lent, he would eat but one meal a day, allowing himself nothing but bread and thin milk, and even that by measure. That milk, new the day before, he kept in a vessel, and the next day skimming off the cream, drank the rest, as has been said, with a little bread. Which sort of abstinence he likewise always observed forty days before the nativity of our Lord, and as many after the solemnity of Pentecost, that is, of the Quinquagesima.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXVIII.—

TUDA BEING DEAD, WILFRID WAS ORDAINED, IN FRANCE, AND CEADDA, IN THE PROVINCE OF THE WEST SAXONS, TO BE BISHOPS OF THE NORTHUMBRIANS.

In the meantime, King Alfrid sent the priest, Wilfrid, to the king of France, to be consecrated bishop over him and his people. That prince sent him to be ordained to Agilbert, who, as was said above, having left Britain, was made bishop of the city of Paris; and by him Wilfrid was honourably consecrated, several bishops meeting together for that purpose in a village belonging to the king, called Compiegne. He made some stay in the parts beyond the sea, after his consecration, and Oswy, following the example of the king his son, sent a holy man, of modest behaviour, well read in the Scripture, and diligently practising those things which he had learned therein, to be ordained bishop of the church of York. This was a priest called Ceadda, brother to the reverend prelate Cedd, of whom mention has been often made, and abbot of the monastery of Lestingau. With him the king also sent his priest Eadhed, who was afterwards, in the reign of Egfrid, made bishop of the church of Ripon. On arriving in Kent, they found that Archbishop Deusdedit was departed this life, and no other prelate as yet appointed in his place; whereupon they proceeded to the province of the West Saxons, where Wine was bishop, and by him the person abovementioned was consecrated bishop; two bishops of the British nation, who kept Easter-Sunday according to the canonical manner, from the fourteenth to the twentieth day of the moon, as has been said, being taken to assist at the ordination; for at that time there was no other bishop in all Britain canonically ordained, besides that Wine.

Wilfrid, bishop of York.

665.

Bishop Ceadda.

Ceadda, being thus consecrated bishop, began immediately to devote himself to ecclesiastical truth and to chastity; to apply himself to humility, continence, and study; to travel about, not on horseback, but after the manner of the apostles, on foot, to preach the Gospel in towns, the open country, cottages, villages, and castles; for he was one of the disciples of Aidan, and endeavoured to instruct his people, by the same actions and behaviour, according to his and his brother Cedd's example. Wilfrid also being made a bishop, came into Britain, and in like manner by his doctrine brought into the English Church many rules of Catholic observance. Whence it followed, that the Catholic institutions daily gained strength, and all the Scots that dwelt in England either conformed to these, or returned into their own country.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXIX.—

HOW THE PRIEST WIGHARD WAS SENT FROM BRITAIN TO ROME, TO BE CONSECRATED ARCHBISHOP, OF HIS DEATH THERE, AND OF THE LETTERS OF THE APOSTOLIC POPE GIVING AN ACCOUNT THEREOF.

At this time the most noble King Oswy, of the province of the Northumbrians, and Egbert of Kent, having consulted together about the state of the English Church, (for Oswy, though educated by the Scots, perfectly understood that the Roman was the Catholic and Apostolic Church,) with the consent of the holy church of the English nation, accepted of a good man, and fit priest, to be made a bishop, called Wighard, one of Bishop Deusdedit's clergy, and sent him to Rome to be ordained bishop, to the end that he, having received the degree of an archbishop, might ordain Catholic prelates for the churches of the English nation throughout all Britain. But Wighard, arriving at Rome, was cut off by death, before he could be consecrated bishop, and the following letter was sent back into Britain to King Oswy:—

Wighard sent to Rome to be consecrated.

665.

“To the most excellent Lord, our son, Oswy, king of the Saxons, Vitalian, bishop, servant of the servants of God. We have received your excellency's pleasing letters; by reading whereof we understood your most pious devotion and fervent love to obtain everlasting life; and that by the protecting hand of God you have been converted to the true and apostolic faith, hoping that as you reign in your nation, so you will hereafter reign in Christ. Blessed be the nation, therefore, that has been found worthy to have such a wise king and worshipper of God; forasmuch as he is not himself alone a worshipper of God, but also studies day and night the conversion of all his subjects to the Catholic and apostolic faith, to the redemption of his own soul. Who will not rejoice at hearing such pleasant things? Who will not be delighted at such good works? Because your nation has believed in Christ the Almighty God, according to the words of the Divine prophets, as it is written in Isaiah, ‘In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to him shall the Gentiles seek.’ And again, ‘Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken ye people from far.’ And a little after, ‘It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation to the ends of the earth.’ And again, ‘Kings shall see, princes also shall arise and worship.’ And presently after, ‘I have given thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, and possess the desolate heritages; that thou mayst say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.’ And again, ‘I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a light of the Gentiles, and for a

Vitalian's letter to Oswy.



covenant of the people; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoner from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison-house.’

“Behold, most excellent son, how plain it is, not only of you, but also of all the nations of the prophets, that they shall believe in Christ, the Creator of all things. Wherefore it behoves your highness, as being a member of Christ, in all things continually to follow the pious rule of the prince of the apostles, in celebrating Easter, and in all things delivered by the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, whose doctrine daily enlightens the hearts of believers, even as the two heavenly lights, the sun and moon, daily illumine all the earth.”

And after some lines, wherein he speaks of celebrating Easter uniformly throughout all the world, he adds—

“We have not been able now to find, considering the length of the journey, a man, docile, and qualified in all respects to be a bishop, according to the tenor of your letters. But as soon as such a proper person shall be found, we will send him well instructed to your country, that he may, by word of mouth, and through the Divine oracles, with the assistance of God, root out all the enemy’s tares throughout your island. We have received the presents sent by your highness to the blessed prince of the apostles, for an eternal memorial, and return you thanks, and always pray for your safety with the clergy of Christ. But he that brought these presents has been removed out of this world, and is buried at the church of the apostles, for whom we have been much concerned, because he died here. However, we have ordered the blessed gifts of the holy martyrs, that is, the relics of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and of the holy martyrs, Laurentius, John, and Paul, and Gregory, and Pancratius, to be delivered to the bearers of these our letters, to be by them delivered to you. And to your consort also, our spiritual daughter, we have by the aforesaid bearers sent a cross, with a gold key to it, made out of the most holy chains of the apostles, Peter and Paul; at whose pious endeavours all the Apostolic See rejoices with us, as much as her pious works shine and blossom before God.

“We therefore desire your highness will hasten, according to our wish, to dedicate all your island to Christ our God; for you certainly have for your protector, the Redeemer of mankind, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will prosper you in all things, that you may bring together a new people of Christ; establishing there the Catholic and apostolic faith. For it is written, ‘Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.’ Truly your highness seeks, and shall no doubt obtain, that all your islands shall be made subject to you, as is our wish and desire. Saluting your excellency with fatherly affection, we always pray to the Divine Goodness, that it will vouchsafe to assist you and yours in all good works, that you may reign with Christ in the world to come. May the Heavenly Grace preserve your excellency in safety!”

In the next book we shall have a more suitable occasion to show who was found out and consecrated in Wighard’s place.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

CHAP. XXX.—

THE EAST SAXONS, DURING A PESTILENCE,  
RETURNING TO IDOLATRY, ARE IMMEDIATELY  
BROUGHT BACK FROM THEIR ERROR BY THE BISHOP  
JARUMAN.

At the same time, the Kings Sighere and Sebbi, though subject to Wulfhere, king of the Mercians, governed the province of the East Saxons after Suidhelm, of whom we have spoken above.

The East Saxons  
relapse into idolatry,  
but are brought back.

That province labouring under the aforesaid mortality, Sighere, with that part of the people that was under his dominion, forsook

665.

the mysteries of the Christian faith, and turned apostate. For the king himself, and many of the commons and great men, being fond of this life, and not seeking after another, or rather not believing that there was any other, began to restore the temples that had been abandoned, and to adore idols, as if they might by those means be protected against the mortality. But Sebbi, his companion and coheir in the kingdom, with his people, very devoutly preserved the faith which he had embraced, and, as we shall show hereafter, ended his faithful life with much felicity.

King Wulfhere, understanding that the faith of the province was partly profaned, sent Bishop Jaruman, who was successor to Trumhere, to correct that error, and restore the province to the truth. He proceeded with much discretion, (as I was informed by a priest who bore him company in that journey, and had been his fellowlabourer in the word,) for he was a religious and good man, and travelling through all the country, far and near, reduced both the aforesaid king and people to the way of righteousness, so that either forsaking or destroying the temples and altars which they had erected, they opened the churches, and rejoiced in confessing the name of Christ, which they had opposed, being more desirous to die in him with the faith of the resurrection, than to live in the filth of apostacy among their idols. These things being performed, the priests and teachers returned home with joy.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## ORIGINAL PROSPECTUS.

In an age when every work of value, either in our own or in foreign literature, has been anxiously sought out and laid before the public, it appears extraordinary that no complete edition of the Works of Venerable Bede has ever been undertaken; and yet the benefits which he conferred on the literature of our country are more than have been derived from any other author whatever in modern times. He is our first historian, our first mathematician, our first divine, and our first metaphysical writer. A portion of his historical writings has lately issued from the press, under the sanction of the English Historical Society, but the great mass of his writings are almost entirely unknown. Bede does not deserve to be thus neglected: he is the great intellectual father of our country, and his Works deserve to be preserved as lights which shone in their day. The simplicity of his character, so well depicted in his writings, the fervor of his piety, the zeal which he shows in recording the truth, as far as it lay in his power to discover it, can never be too highly spoken of, and they will remain as his highest panegyric to the latest posterity. Two or three centuries have elapsed since his Works were collected on the Continent, and three times published in eight folio volumes, of mean typography, disagreeable in appearance, and cumbersome in size, without a syllable to smooth the reader's path to a knowledge of their contents; and both these editions, notwithstanding their bulky dignity, do not contain all Bede's Works, but are filled with spurious and useless lumber that has long passed under his name and obscured his reputation. The lives of the Abbots of Weremouth, one of his most interesting productions, is omitted, and several smaller pieces also are not to be found therein. His Historical Works, published by Smith, do not contain more than the eighth part of all his writings; and the Edition published by the English Historical Society, forming part of a series illustrating English History, does not contain all of what may fairly be called his Historical Works; and it has been well remarked, with respect to selections from an author's works, that such editions have invariably failed to give general satisfaction. These considerations have induced the Editor to determine on devoting his attention to the revision and republication of the genuine Works of Bede, including every thing that has yet seen the light, and whatever else may be obtained from public libraries. He invites the co-operation of all those who entertain a sentiment of regard towards our early Authors, and particularly to him who is the first in merit as the earliest in point of time. The task is one of great labour, and worthy to be undertaken at the national expense; but from the flattering manner in which his proposal has been hitherto entertained, he devotes himself to the Work with confidence of success.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## CONDITIONS OF PUBLICATION.

1. The Work will be published by subscription, in 8vo. cloth boards, one Volume of between four and five hundred pages to be delivered, from time to time, price 10s., to be paid on the delivery of the Volume.
2. The Work will contain the best text, with collations, as may be necessary, of different manuscripts; and will be accompanied with an English Translation of the Historical and Biographical Works, &c., and English Notes, to illustrate particular passages, and, as far as possible, remove every difficulty.
3. The first Volume will contain a life of Bede, in English.
4. It is guaranteed that the Work shall not exceed twelve Volumes.
5. A limited number of copies will be printed, and the Work will not go to press until the preparations are sufficiently advanced to render the Work in every respect most accurate and complete.

J. A. GILES.

*Windlesham Hall, near Bagshot.*

*March, 1842.*

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## NAMES OF SUBSCRIBERS.

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Winchester

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Bangor

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Carlisle

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Llandaff

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Exeter

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Salisbury

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of St. David's

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Chichester

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Guiana.

Rev. J. H. Abrahall, M.A. Bruton

Mr. Abrams, Oxford—2 copies

J. Allen, Esq. Burnham, near Bridgwater

Rev. M. Anderson, M.A. East Dulwich

Rev. W. Archer, M.A. Rect. of Churchill, Somerset

The late Rev. Dr. Arnold, Head M. of Rugby Sch. & Prof. of Mod. Hist. Oxf.

Rev. T. K. Arnold, Rector of Lyndon

Rev. James Bagge, Torquay, Devon

G. T. Bagot, Esq. Ex. Coll. Oxford

Rev. J. B. Bennett, M.A. Second Master of Macclesfield Gram. Sch.

G. Berford, Esq. Upper Clapton

Rev. E. Bickersteth, Vicar of Watton, Herts

Mr. Black, Wellington Street, North

Rev. J. Blakesley, M.A. Fellow and Tutor of Trin. Coll. Cambridge

Mr. Jas. Bohn, King William Street, London—25 copies

Rev. H. K. Bonney, King's Cliff, near Wansford

J. W. Bramah, Esq. Merton Coll. Oxford

Rev. Dr. Bridges, President of C.C.C. Oxford

Messrs. T. G. & T. E. Brown, Leicester

G. Burges, Esq. M.A. 20, Bayham Street, Camden Town

Venerable Archdeacon Butler, Gayton, Northampton

Rev. G. Butt, Hampstead

Rev. G. Cattermole

J. D. Chamber, Esq. Oriel Coll. Oxford

The Very Rev. Dr. Chandler, Dean of Chichester

The Library of C.C.C. Oxford

Mr. Cochran, Strand—2 copies

Rev. E. Coleridge, M.A. Eton

Rev. W.J. Coope, M.A. Rect. of Falmouth

Bolton Corney, Esq. Greenwich

Mr. Cornish, Newgate Street—2 copies

Mr. W. Cornish, 37, New Street, Birmingham—2 copies

Mr. Cornish, Middle-Row, Holborn—3 copies

Rev. H. Cotterill, Chaplain to the Hon. E. I. Comp. Madras

Rev. C. B. Dalton, Fulham Palace

Mr. Darling, Clerical Circulating Library

Messrs. J. and S. Deighton, Cambridge—6 copies

H. Dickinson, Esq.

Rev. Sol. Donovan, Carnew, Ireland

Rev. J. B. Dyne, Master of Cholmely Sch. Highgate

East India College Library, Haileybury

Mr. Ede, Dorking

Rev. R. Eden, Vassal Road, Kennington

Rev. N. Ellison, Rector of Huntspill, Somerset

T. G. B. Estcourt, Esq. M.P.

Dean and Chapter of Exeter

Rev. James Ford, Exeter

Rev. Dr. Gaisford. Reg. Prof. of Greek, & Dean of Ch. Ch. Oxford

W. Giles, Esq. jun. Frome

Rev. J. D. Giles, M.A. Vicar of Swinstead, Lincolnshire

H. Giles, Esq. Stourbridge

Rev. J. A. Gower, M.A. Stoke, Bucks

Mr. Graham, Oxford—2 copies

Rev. E. Greswell, B.D. Fellow of C.C.C. Oxford

Rev. C. Greswell, Rector of Tortsworth, near Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire

J. Harmer, Esq. Ingress Abbey

Rev. T. Hartwell Horne, B.D. London

Rev. C. A. Heurtley, M.A. Fellow of C.C.C. Oxford

T. M. Horsford, Esq. Barrister at Law, Lincoln's Inn

Rev. W.J. Irons, B.D. Vicar of Brompton

Rev. J. Keble, Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford

Mr. Kerslake, Bristol—2 copies

T. H. King, Esq. Northwick Terrace, Maida Hill

G. R. Kingdon, Esq. Trin. Coll. Camb.

Mr. Leslie, 52, Great Queen Street—2 copies

W. Lockhart, Esq. Ex. Coll. Oxford

Rev. F. V. Lockwood

T. Lowndes, Esq. Eaton Place, Belgrave Square

Venerable Archdeacon Lyall

L. M. Mackenzie, Esq. Ex. Coll. Oxford

Rev. R. Macmullen, M.A. Fellow of C.C.C.

Mr. Macpherson, Oxford—2 copies

Rev. Dr. Major, Head M. of King's College School

Rev. Fr. Martin, Fellow of Trinity Coll. Cambridge

Rev. H. Melvill, B.D. Camberwell Grove

W. Middleton, Esq.

Rev. J. H. Newman, Fell. of Or. Coll.

Mr. Nutt, Fleet Street, London—10 copies

Mr. Parker, Oxford—25 copies

F. C. Parry, Esq. Court of Bankruptcy

Mr. Pocock, Bath—2 copies

J. C. Prior, Esq. Camberwell

Rev. Dr. Pusey, Reg. Prof. of Hebrew, Ch. Ch. Oxford

Rev. Dr. Richards, Rector of Ex. Coll. Oxford

Mr. Rodd, 9, Great Newport Street

Mr. Rodwell, 46, New Bond St.—4 copies

Rev. T. Russell, Manor Place, Walworth



Rev. Dr. Singer, Sen. Fell. Trin. College, Dublin.

W. H. Sloggett, Esq. Saltash, Cornwall

J. P. Snow, Esq. Trin. Coll. Cambridge

Mr. Stewart, King William Street, London—2 copies

T. Stow, Esq. Greenwich Hospital

Mr. Straker, 3, Adelaide Street—2 copies

Rev. W. Symes, Stratford-le-Bow

Rev. Dr. Symons, Warden of Wadham Coll. Oxford

Rev. A. C. Tait, D.D. Head Master of Rugby School

Rev. W. H. Thompson, Fellow of Trin. Coll. Cambridge

Venerable Archdeacon Thorp, Fellow and Tutor of Trin. Coll. Cambridge

Rev. W. Thorpe, M.A. Vicar of Wookey, near Wells

Rev. J. J. Toogood, M.A. Vicar of North Petherton

Rev. Dr. Whewell, Master of Trin. Coll. Cambridge

J. L. Wigglesworth, Esq. Magd. Coll. Cambridge.

William Stevens, Printer, Bell Yard, Temple Bar.