

The Life of Ansgar  
By Rimbert  
Translation and footnotes by Scott A. Mellor

Chapter 1

[The Introduction to the life and conversion of Saint Ansgar, the first archbishop of Nordalbing<sup>1</sup> and holy archbishop of the land of the Swedes and the Danes as well as the Slavs.]

The sons and disciples of the most reverend Father Ansgar, to whom has been granted everlasting happiness, greet the blessed fathers and brothers who are soldiers for God at the sacred cloister of Corbie. Special veneration and affection out of the love for Christ are due to these soldiers, and we disciples of Ansgar pray for the peace and welfare of those who rule over them in the name of the Lord. ...

Chapter 2

[As a child Ansgar lacked an enlightened spirit, but he is inspired by heavenly revelation. Soon after the death of his mother, he was sent to be educated. Ansgar learned that his mother was in the company of Saint Mary through a vision, and through this vision he was reminded of the Lord. Fleeing his own vanity, he began to be serious about life.]

Already as a young boy, Ansgar's sanctity and piety began to increase. The older he grew, the more copious his holiness became. Even in his infancy, he received spiritual revelations from heaven. By the grace of God, he was visited from above and told to turn his thoughts from earthly things and to embrace with all his heart the heavenly. He confessed these revelations to some of us who were close to him with the understanding that they should not be told to others during his life.

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Chapter 3

[After the death of emperor Charlemagne, on the holy night of Pentecost, Ansgar, with remorse, was drawn from this world toward death by the grace of God. He was brought from this world first through the fire of purgatory and then even to the majestic presence of the Lord by the blessed John the Baptist and Saint Peter.]

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<sup>1</sup>Nordalbing is the Archbishopric that becomes Hamburg-Bremen.

## Chapter 4

[Through a vision, Ansgar saw the Lord Christ in the oratory of the Blessed John the Baptist, and Christ said to him “Confess your sins so that you might be judged” and forgiven.]

## Chapter 5

[Ansgar sees in a heavenly vision how the soul of a certain schoolmate, named Fulbert, is taken from his body into heaven by an angel and placed with the heavenly host of martyrs.]

## Chapter 6

[Ansgar devoted himself to holiness and grace and goes to study at the new Corbie.]

## Chapter 7

After this, it happened that a certain king Harold, who ruled over some of the Danes, was beset by hatred and enmity and was driven from his kingdom by other kings of that same province. King Harold came to his serene majesty, the emperor Louis<sup>2</sup>. King Harold asked if he might be seen as worthy to receive the emperor’s help to recover his kingdom. The emperor kept the king with him at his court and urged him personally, as well as through others, to accept the Christian faith because then there would be a more intimate relationship between them. And a Christian people would be more eager to come to the aid of their friends if both worshiped the same God. At last, with the help of divine grace, the emperor converted him to the faith. When the waters of holy baptism had been poured over him, the emperor himself received him from the sacred baptismal font and adopted him as his own son.

When the emperor wanted to send King Harold back to his own country so that he could reclaim his kingdom with his help, he began to make serious enquiries about finding a holy and devoted man who could leave with the king, who would continue to be with him, who would teach the king and his people the doctrine of salvation, and who might convince them to receive the faith of the Lord and thereby strengthen them. At a public meeting of his chief men, the emperor brought up this issue with his priest and general laymen. He

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<sup>2</sup> Louis the Pious was the son of Charlemagne.

passionately asked them all to search for such a man who was both willing and worthy of such a task. They all refused and explained that they did not know anyone possessed with such great devotion who would be willing to go on such a dangerous journey in the name of Christ. Finally, Wala, who was the venerable abbot of our monastery at that time, stood up and told the emperor that he knew a monk in his monastery who burned with passion for the holy faith and was eager to endure suffering in the name of God. He praised both his knowledge and his manner of life and declared that he would be well suited for this journey, though he did not know for certain whether he would be willing to undertake such a mission. Why say more? At the emperor's command, Ansgar was summoned to the court. The abbot explained to him everything that had happened and been said, and what he was being asked to do. He replied that he was prepared to serve God in all things. He was brought before the emperor and asked whether he, for the sake of God, would become King Harold's companion in order to preach the gospel among the Danish people. He answered emphatically that he was wholly willing. The abbot further explained that he would by no means order him to do this difficult task, but if, of his own free will, he chose to do it, he would be pleased and would give him his authoritative consent. Ansgar answered that he, none the less, chose this burden and by all means wanted to do it.

At last it was announced publicly, and everyone who lived in the abbot's house learned of this. Many were astonished at Ansgar's strength of purpose and that he was so willing to abandon his country and his friends and the brethren with whom had been brought up and who loved him in order to visit foreign lands and talk with alien and barbarous people. There were many who disapproved of his action, and accosted him with reproaches, while others tried to change his mind, but the man of God remained unmoved from his decision. While day by day the abbot went to the court, Ansgar remained at home. He avoided all company and chose a lonely spot in a neighboring vineyard for himself. He devoted his time to prayer and reading.

At this time, there was a certain monk with the abbot at our monastery by the name of Autbert. Autbert saw that Ansgar was anxious and distressed and that each day he sat in solitude and did not speak or associate with anyone. He began to feel pity for Ansgar. One day Autbert went to the place where Ansgar was sitting alone in the vineyard and asked him if he really wanted to go on this journey. Ansgar, who hoped that this question had not been asked out of pity, but out of some further objection, answered "Why do you care about this? Do not bother me with such questions." But Autbert assured him that he was not making any pretenses, but that he really wanted to know if he was determined to go through with this mission. Then Ansgar thanked him for his kindness and said, "You are asking me if I am willing on God's behalf to go to pagan people in order to preach the gospel. I have in no way dared not to do this. Indeed I wish with all my might that I might be given

the chance to undertake this journey and that none will be able to discourage me from this my intension.” Then the aforementioned monk said to him, “As far as I am concerned, I would never let you go alone. For the love of God, I would like to go with you, if you can obtain the consent of the lord abbot.”

So it was that they entered into this holy agreement. And when the abbot came back to the monastery, Ansgar went and explained to him that he had found a companion, who, of his own free will, was willing to share the journey. The abbot asked who it was, and Ansgar said it was brother Autbert. The abbot was greatly surprised. He could not believe that this monk, who belonged to a noble family and was his intimate friend and was highly regarded as the chief administrator of the monastery after the abbot himself, would be willing to undertake such an errand. Nevertheless, the abbot summoned Autbert and questioned him on the matter. He said that, under no circumstances could he let Ansgar go alone, but that he, in the name of Christ, wanted to be his comforter and helper, if he could gain the consent of the abbot and the monks of the monastery. The lord abbot replied that he would give his consent if he chose to undertake this journey of his own free will, since he would not compell anyone in his house to servitude unless they were willing. The venerable abbot did not do this out of any lack of love for Ansgar, but rather because at that time it seemed to him abhorrent and wrong to force anyone against his will to live among pagans.

The two monks were brought before the emperor. He was gratified by their willingness and desire to go and gave them what they would need to conduct services, writing cases, tents, and other things which would be useful and necessary for a long journey. He told them to go with Harold and to take great care with his profession of faith. He entrusted them with strengthening in faith by their godly exhortations both Harold and his companions, who had been baptized together with him, so that they would not return to their old ways by the instigation of devil, and, at the same time, to urge others to accept the Christian religion by their preaching.

Then the emperor dismissed them. They had no one to help them with menial tasks, since no one in the abbot’s household would go with them of their own free will, and the abbot would not force anyone to go against his will. And Harold, in whose protection they were entrusted, was still ignorant and uneducated in the ways of the faith. He was unaware how God’s servants ought to behave. Nor did his companions who had only recently been converted and who were raised in a very different faith pay them any heed. Therefore, having started with great difficulties, they arrived at Cologne. At that time there was a venerable bishop Hadebald, who sympathized with their needs and gave them with a good boat in which they could put all their possessions. On it there were two well-appointed cabins for them. When king Harold saw the boat, he decided to stay with them on it, so that he and they each could have a cabin. Because of this, goodwill and friendship increased

between them. From that time forward, his companions also showed them greater consideration.

On leaving the boat they passed through Dorstadt<sup>3</sup> and crossing the vicinity of Frisia came to the Danish border. Since Harold could not take peaceful possession of his kingdom for the time being, the emperor gave him a district beyond the river Elbe so that he might be able to take refuge there if need be.

## Chapter 8

[The servants of God search for boys from amongst the Danes whom they might teach for the service of God. They establish a school for these boys. However, brother Autbert becomes gravely ill and is carried back to New Corbie where he dies.]

## Chapter 9

Meanwhile, ambassadors from the Swedes came to Emperor Louis. Among other errands, they informed the gentle emperor that there were many among their people who wished to convert to the Christian faith. Even their king was favorably inclined to the suggestion and he would allow God's priests to reside there, provided the emperor was generous enough to send suitable preachers to them. His devout majesty heard this with great pleasure. Once more, he began to seek out those whom he might send to this country. He wanted them to determine whether these people were prepared to accept the Christian faith, as the ambassadors had assured him they were, and to preach Christianity to them. Therefore, his majesty, the emperor, once again began to discuss with your abbot, if he possibly could find anyone amongst his monks who was willing to go to this country in Christ's, or at least someone who could stay with king Harold, so that God's servant Ansgar, who was with him now, could take up this new mission. And so it was that Ansgar was summoned by royal command to the palace, and was ordered not to stop even to shave before coming into the royal presence.<sup>4</sup>

Ansgar, this man of God, who already beforehand knew why he had been called, burned with fervor and love in his heart for God and considered it a great joy that he might be allowed to win souls for Him. If, on such a voyage,

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<sup>3</sup> The Frisian city near modern Utrecht (Wijk te Duerstede). The city gained great importance for the Nordic countries during Christianization.

<sup>4</sup> Dreves in *Leben des heiligen Ansgar* (1864) suggests this is a reference to shaving his tonsure, not his beard.

any harm or misfortune might come on him, he would bear it with patience for Christ's sake. He did not hesitate in the least to take up this task because he found comfort in the divine visions he had already had. Earlier, when he was living with you and already had had heavenly inspiration from two visions, he had another one night, in which he had come into a house where several preachers were standing prepared to go out and preach. Standing among them, he was suddenly struck with rapture and saw an unending, clear light, stronger than the radiance of the sun, which came down from heaven and engulfed him. When he wondered what it was, a voice was heard rather like the voice he said he had heard in his first vision, and said to him, "Your sin is forgiven." Filled with the holy spirit, as we believe, he answered, saying, "My Lord, what do you want me to do?" And again the voice was heard, saying, "Go and proclaim the word of God to the people."

As God's servant, Ansgar, pondered this vision, he rejoiced in the Lord, because he perceived that what had been commanded of him was already partly fulfilled. And he wished to add to his labors by preaching the word of God to the Swedes. When Ansgar had been brought before the emperor and was asked by him if he was willing to take up this task, Ansgar answered readily that he was prepared to do anything that the emperor, in power of his authority, resolved to order him to do for Christ's sake.

## Chapter 10

With the help of God's providence, the venerable Abbott found a companion for Ansgar, namely a monk by the name of Witmar in your cloister, who was both suitable and willing to take up this mission. Further, he arranged that the good father Gislemar, a man approved by faith and good works and by his most fervent zeal for God, should go to be with King Harold. Then Ansgar embarked on the mission committed to him by the emperor, namely to travel to the land of the Swedes and find out if these people were prepared to accept the Christian faith, as the ambassadors had suggested. What great and difficult misfortunes he experienced on this journey, as father Witmar who himself was on that trek can attest to. It is sufficient for us to say that they met up with Vikings when they had reached but half way on their journey.<sup>5</sup> The merchants, who were traveling with them, defended themselves vigorously and, at first, were successful. However, in the end, they were conquered and overcome by the Vikings who took the ships and everything that they had from them, and they themselves barely escaped to land on foot. Therefore, they lost the gifts the emperor had given to them to give to the

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<sup>5</sup> The exact word in Latin is pirate (pyratas), but given where they were and the time period, they were undoubtedly Viking marauders.

Swedes, and everything else they had except a few small items which they were luckily able to carry with them when they had jumped from the ship. Among the items that were lost were nearly forty books, which they had gathered together for the service of God, but which now were in the hands of the Vikings. After this event, some wished to turn back, while others wanted to continue. But God's servant, Ansgar, could by no means be persuaded to relinquish the mission he had started. Quite the contrary, he committed everything that was going to happen to him into God's hands and decided not to turn back before he, through some sign from God, found out whether or not it was possible to preach in this land.

## Chapter 11

With great difficulty, they accomplished their long journey on foot, traveling the intervening seas by ship whenever possible. They eventually arrived at the Swedish port called Birka.<sup>6</sup> They were well received there by the king who was called Björn.<sup>7</sup> The king was informed by his messengers of the reason why they had come. After the king had heard the reason for their mission and had discussed the matter with his friends and all had given their approval and consent, he granted them permission to remain there and preach the gospel of Christ. He also gave each who wanted permission to seek out their teachings. God's servants now saw with pleasure that they had luckily attained everything they had desired and began to proclaim the word of salvation for the people there. There were many who liked their message and willingly listened to teachings of the Lord. Furthermore, there were many Christian captives among them who rejoiced that they were able now at last to participate in the Holy Sacraments. Everything proved to be exactly as the ambassadors had told the emperor, and some of them earnestly wished to receive the grace of baptism. Among them was the town's prefect, a man named Herigar who was a councillor to the king and much beloved by him. He received the gift of holy baptism and was a most staunch believer in the Catholic faith. Later, this same man built a church on his familial estates and served God with the greatest piety. Many remarkable deeds were carried out by this man and there are many signs of his invincible faith, as we shall eventually clarify.

## Chapter 12

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<sup>6</sup> Birka, modern Swedish Björkö, was a town in Sweden that lies near Stockholm and has been extensively excavated during the last two decades.

<sup>7</sup> Björn II, son of Erik I, was king of Sweden

[Ansgar returns to the emperor. By the consensus of the episcopate, Albia is formed into an archbishopric and the most holy father Ansgar is consecrated as its archbishop. Further, since this diocese was situated in a dangerous region, the monastery in Gaul, called Turholt, is subjugated to Ansgar.]

### Chapter 13

[Through a directive from Rome, Pope Gregory IV confirms the foundation of the apostolic see not only by papal authority, but also by the gift of the pallium. Ansgar is appointed papal legate amongst the Swedes and the Danes, and also the Slavs and all peoples in the regions of the north. He is to share authority with Ebo, the archbishop of Rheims, who has also been entrusted the same office.]

### Chapter 14

[Gautbert is ordained a bishop and sent by Ebo to Sweden to preach to the king and his people. Ebo also gives Gautbert his monastery, Welanao, as a place of refuge.]

### Chapter 15

[Ansgar takes up his duties as archbishop in his diocese and he begins to buy Danish and Slavic boys from slavery in order to train them for God's service.]

### Chapter 16

[Viking marauders come to the town of Hamburg and the clerics and people are forced to flee. Everything used in the service of the Church is pillaged or destroyed by fire.] Ansgar repeated again and again the words of the blessed Job: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; the Lord's will be done. Blessed is the name of the Lord."<sup>8</sup>

### Chapter 17

After these incidents, the bishop and his people were plagued by distress and misfortune, and the brothers in his Order wandered through various

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<sup>8</sup> Job 1, 21



regions with the holy relics, and nowhere did they find rest on account of the devices of the wicked one. At this time also, at the instigation of the Devil, the Swedes were taken by a fanatical fury against the bishop Gautbert and began to persecute him by insidious means. And so it happened that some of the people conspired and broke into the house that he lived in in order to plunder it. They killed his relative, Nithard, and, we believe, made him into God's martyr since they murdered him in hatred of Christianity. They bound Gautbert himself and those who were there with them. And after plundering everything they could find in the house, they drove them from their country with insults and abuse. This was not done with the king's consent, but came about as a plot devised by the people.

## Chapter 18

God's mild majesty did not allow this crime to go unavenged, but almost all those who were present were soon punished, though in different ways. Much might be said concerning this, but in order not to tire the reader unnecessarily, we have decided to name only one person whose fate might show how the rest were also punished and their crimes avenged. There was a rich man in this country whose son had participated in this plot and taken his portion of the booty to his father's house. After this, his father's fortunes decreased and his flocks and family began to die off. Even his son was stricken by God's vengeance and died. Later, even his wife died, and a son and a daughter in short succession. When the man now saw that he had lost everything except a young son, he began to fear the anger of the gods and to imagine that he was suffering all these calamities because he had offended some god. Therefore, following the local customs, he went to a soothsayer and asked him to find out by casting lots which god he had offended and to tell him how he could appease the god. The soothsayer took all the measures that he was accustomed to observe in connection with such rites and answered that all the gods were well disposed to him, but the Christian god was incensed against him. "Christ," he said, "has punished you. It is because there is something consecrated to him hidden in your house. That is why you have been tormented by all these evils. And you will not be free of them as long as it remains in your house." When he heard this, he considered anxiously what it might be, and he remembered that his son had brought a certain book as part of the booty mentioned above. Because of this he was stricken with fear and trembling, but since there were now no priests around, he did not know what to do with the book. Nor was he willing to have it in his home any longer.

At last the man came up with a plan and openly showed the book to the people who were in the same village and told them how he had suffered. Everyone told him that they did not know what to advise in this matter, and everyone was afraid to take the book or to keep it in their houses. The man

was afraid to keep it any longer, and so he fastened it up carefully and tied it to a fence with a note telling anyone who wanted it to take it. For the offence he had committed, he also promised voluntarily to make amends with the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the Christians took the book and carried it to his own house. We understand this from his own statement. Later he showed such faith and devotion that he learned to say the psalms with us without reading them. In this same way the others were finally punished with death or sickness and loss of worldly possessions. It was clear to everyone that they had been most gravely punished by our Lord Jesus Christ because they had presumed to outrage and plunder God's holy bishop and his companions.

## Chapter 19

For nearly seven years after this there was no priest in Sweden. The Lord and our father Ansgar were very downhearted and anxious about this. And since he could not bear that the Christian religion which had begun to be established there should perish, and because he grieved greatly for his dear son in Christ, Herigar, who has been named before, he sent a hermit named Ardgar into those parts and told him especially to help Herigar. When Ardgar arrived there, he was courteously received by Herigar and his presence brought great joy to the Christians who were there. And they began to do the things they had done before, namely to strive with fervor for God and observe with a willing mind the Christian rites. None of the unbelievers were able to resist his preaching because they remembered with fear the punishment which had come upon those who had expelled God's servants from there. On Herigar's suggestion, and with the then king's command and permission, he began to celebrate the Sacraments in public.<sup>9</sup>

At the time when there was no priest there, the most faithful Herigar had endured many admonishments at the hands of the unbelievers, but because of divine grace and his own prayers, the true faith was proclaimed and accompanied by signs from the heavens. Some of these signs, as we promised above, we have added to the narrative in order to prove his invincible spirit of faith. On one occasion, a stage had been arranged for council on an open plain and he was sitting at the assembly. In the course of the discussion, some praised their own gods, by whose favor they had secured great prosperity, while others criticized him alone, who by accepting a worthless belief had set himself apart. Then he, being passionate in spirit, is said to have replied, "If there is so much doubt about His divine majesty, which should not be doubted by anyone, let us prove who the more powerful is by a miracle, the many whom you call

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<sup>9</sup> Waitz suggests that this implies that Björn II was no longer king, and that this was probably his brother, Anound.

your gods or my one, the Almighty Lord Jesus Christ. Look, it is going to rain.” - a rain shower was imminent - “call on the names of your gods and ask for it not to rain on you, and I will ask my Lord Jesus Christ that not a drop of rain should touch me, and the one who answers the prayer is God.” This was mutually agreed on. They all sat on one side and he and one small boy sat on the other. They all began to pray to their own gods, and he prayed to the Lord Christ. Then a great stream of rain poured down from heaven, and they were so completely soaked that it seemed as though they had been thrown into a river with their clothes on. Even the leaves from the branches out of which the meeting place had been constructed fell in on them and proved to them that they were overcome by divine power. Not a single drop fell on Herigar and the boy who was with him. They were confused and astonished when this happened. “You see,” said Herigar, “who is God. Do not try to take me away from His worship, you unhappy men. Instead, be amazed and renounce the error of your ways, learn the way of the truth.”

On another occasion, Herigar had a great pain in his leg and could only move out of his place by being carried. After having endured this distress for some time, many people came to visit him and some tried to convince him to sacrifice to their gods in order to regain his health. Others taunted him with jeers, saying that his illness was due to the fact that he had no god. This, they repeated several times, and he resisted steadfastly their evil suggestions. And when he could bear their reproaches no longer, he replied that he would not look for aid from vain images but from his Lord Jesus Christ who, if He wished, could cure him of his sickness in a moment. Then he called for his servants and told them to carry him to his church. When he had been placed there, he poured out his prayers to the Lord in the presence of all the bystanders, saying “My Lord Jesus Christ, grant to me your servant my former health in this very moment, so that these wretches will know that you are the only God and that there is no God except you, and that your enemies will be shown your mighty works and will turn from the error of their ways to the knowledge of your name. I beseech you, oh Lord, to do what I ask for the sake of your holy name, which is blessed now and forever, that whosoever believes in You will not be confused.” Immediately after saying this, he was healed by the grace God and became whole. Then unaided he walked out of the church and thanked God for his health. He was strengthened by the faith of Christ and confused more and more the unfaithful.

At about this same time, a certain Swedish king named Anound had been driven out of his kingdom and was in exile among the Danes. He wanted to regain his kingdom, and was seeking aid from the Danes. He promised that if they would follow him he would reward them well. Anound offered them the aforementioned town Birka because there were a lot of rich merchants there, and an abundance of goods and money and treasure. He promised to lead them to a place where they could get what they wanted without great loss to

their army. The Danes were enticed by the promise of gifts and eager to acquire treasure, and therefore they equipped twenty-one ships with men ready for battle and set sail with him. Besides these, he had eleven ships of his own. After leaving Denmark, they came without warning to Birka. The king was by chance far from town, and the chieftains and people were unable to meet together. Only Herigar, the prefect of this place, was there together with the merchants and the people who remained there. In this critical situation, they fled to a neighboring town.<sup>10</sup> They began to promise and offer their gods, who were demons, many pledges and sacrifices so that with their help they might escape this danger. But since the town was not terribly strong, and they themselves were too few to defend it, they sent out a messenger to the attackers to sue for friendship and an alliance. King Anound told them to pay a hundred pounds of silver to ransom Birka. On those conditions they would get peace. They sent the asked for amount at once, and the king took the payment.

The Danes, however, were not pleased with this agreement because it had not gone as they had planned. They wanted to attack the place immediately and pillage and burn it completely. They pointed out that each of the merchants there owned more than they had offered them and that the Danes could not bear such a trick to be played on them. As they were discussing the matter and preparing to pillage the town to which the Swedes had fled, their plot became known to the people in the town. They gathered together then for a second time and, since they had no power to resist and no hope of securing refuge, they urged each other to make pledges and to offer great sacrifices to their own gods. However, Herigar, the faithful servant of the Lord, was angry with them and said, "Your vows and sacrifices to idols are accursed by God. How long will you serve devils and injure and impoverish yourselves by your useless vows. Look, you have made many offerings and more vows. You have given a hundred pounds of silver. How has it benefitted you? Look, your enemies are coming to destroy all you have. They will take away your wives and sons as captives. They will burn your city and town and will destroy you with the sword. What use are your idols to you?"

With these words, they were all terrified. They did not know what to do, and they replied as one, "Tell us your plan for our safety and we will not fail to do what you suggest." Then he said to them, "If you wish to make vows, vow and perform your vows to the Lord God almighty, who reigns in heaven and whom I serve with pure conscience and true faith. He is the Lord of all, and all things are subject to His will, nor can anyone resist his will. If you seek his help with all your heart, you will see that his almighty power will not disappoint." They accepted his council, and as one and with free will they all

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<sup>10</sup> Probably the town of Sigtuna.

went out to a field, as was their custom, where they all promised the Lord Christ to fast and give alms for their deliverance from the Danes.

Meanwhile, the king proposed to the Danes that they should cast lots to find out if it was the will of their gods to ravage this place. “There are many great and powerful gods, and there was even a Christian church built there once. There are many people there who worship Christ, who is one of the strongest gods. He can help those who put their hope in Him in any way he wishes. We must seek to determine whether it is the will of the gods that we are urged to do this thing.” This was in accord with their ways and they could not refuse it. In this manner, they sought to discover by casting lots the will of the gods. They determined that it would be impossible to achieve their goal without endangering their own welfare and that God would not permit this place to be taken by them. Further they asked where they should go to acquire riches for themselves so that they would not have to go home frustrated and empty handed. Then the lots showed that they should go to a certain town situated on a distant border to the Slavs.<sup>11</sup> The Danes now believed that they had been given a divine order to retire for that place and hastened to go by a direct route to that other town. They suddenly attacked those people, who were living in peace and quiet, and seized it by force of arms. And after having captured much booty and treasure, they returned home. However, King Anund, who had come to plunder the Swedes, made peace with them and gave back the money he had just taken from them. He stayed with them for a while since he wanted to reconcile with their people.

Thus, through his servant Herigar, the Lord in His mercy saved the people of this place from the attack of their enemies and restored their possessions. After these events, Herigar brought forth a proposal in the public assembly advising that they seek out who God was with more zeal, saying, “You wretches now must certainly understand that it is useless to seek help from demons who cannot assist those who are in trouble. Accept the faith of my Lord Jesus Christ who has proven to be the true God and who in His compassion has brought comfort to you who have no refuge from sorrow. Do not look to superstitious worship or appease your idols by useless sacrifice. Worship the true God who rules all things in heaven and earth, submit yourselves to Him, and adore His almighty power!” He was more willing to come forth, both publicly and otherwise because his own faith had been strengthened by the abounding goodness of the Lord. He told them of the power of the Lord and the grace from faith in Him, sometimes by reproach and

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<sup>11</sup> No one really knows which town is meant here. Dreves suggests Bineta on the Island of Wollin off the Polish coast, whereas Kruse suggests Novgorod in modern day Russia. For logistic reasons, the former may be more likely.

at others by persuasion. In this way he continued the good fight until the end of his days. And when his good deeds were completed and his weakness had increased, he received Holy Communion and departed this life happily in Christ, having been commended to the mercy of God in the presence of the priest Ardgar. Much more might be said concerning his steadfast faith, but this must suffice since we desire our narrative to be brief.

## Chapter 20

At that time there was also a very pious matron among the Swedes. The impudence of wicked men had been unable to turn her from the true faith. When she was placed in difficult positions, it was suggested to her that she should offer sacrifice to idols, according to their customs. However, she remained unmoved in her faith and did not abandon her duties. She said it was useless to pray for help to deaf and dumb images and that she considered it despicable to turn back to those whom she had renounced in baptism and abandon her promise to Christ. She said, "If it is an evil thing to lie to men, isn't it even worse to lie to God? And if it is a good thing to remain faithful to each other, then doesn't a person who has received the faith of the Lord have an obligation to remain steadfast in that faith and not to mix vanity with truth?" She continued, "My Lord Jesus Christ is all powerful. If I continue to remain faithful to Him, He can give me health and everything I need according to His good will." This pious woman, named Frideborg, was deserving of praise for the goodness in her life and remained faithful even to old age.

When she now thought that her death was upon her, and there was no priest in that place since the death of Gautbert, she yearned to receive the Christian ceremony of which she had heard, called the Eucharist. She had some wine that she had bought saved in a certain vessel. She then asked her daughter, who was also woman devout in the faith, to drop some wine into her mouth when her last moments came, since she could not receive the sacrament, so that she might at least in this way commend her departure from this world to the mercy of the Lord. This wine she kept hidden for almost three years by which time the priest Ardgar had arrived there. After his appointment, she continued to perform piously her duties as long as she had the strength and asked him eagerly to celebrate the mass and to preach sermons of salvation. Finally weakness overtook her and she became sick. In the face of her death, she became anxious and asked for the priest to be summoned. She received the Eucharist she had wished for from him, and she departed with joy to the Lord. She had always been intent on giving alms, and since she was rich in goods of this world, she had charged her daughter, named Catla, that she should distribute all her possessions among the poor

after her departure from this life. She said, “since there are so few poor here, as soon as you have the chance, sell everything that has not been given away and take the money to Dorstadt. There are many churches, priests, and clergy there, and a multitude of poor people. When you arrive, seek out faithful people who can advise you how to distribute this money, and give everything away as alms for the benefit of my soul.”

After her mother had died, Catla promptly did everything her mother had told her to do. She took the journey to Dorstadt, and on her arrival she sought out some devout women who took her to the holy places in the town. They told her what to give each person. And on one day, they were visiting the holy places for the sole purpose of giving charity and half had already been given away. Catla said to her companion, “We are tired now. We better buy some wine to refresh ourselves so we can finish the work we have begun.” She took out four *denarii* for the refreshments. They recovered their strength and finished their task. When the work was completed, Catla returned to her hostel and placed the empty sack, which had contained the money, in a certain place. When she later went to that place, she found that the sack was just as full as it had been before, due to a gift bestowed from above. Amazed by such a great miracle, she summoned those religious women who had gone with her and told them what had happened. In their presence, Catla counted the money that was now in the bag and found that it was the exact sum that she had brought there except the four *denarii*.

At the others urging, Catla went to those priests seen as the most laudable in that place and told them what had happened. They gave thanks to God for His great goodness and said that the Lord had repaid her for her labors and intentions this way. They said, “Since you have obeyed your mother and kept your pledge to her and accomplished her generous purpose by undertaking this toilsome journey, the Lord of all goodness, who repays and rewards, has given you this as a reward and as a contribution to your well-being. He is almighty and self-sufficient and needs nothing. In the kingdom of heaven, He will also repay everything that was given by the faithful in His name for the sake of the poor and His servants. By this miracle, our Lord has wanted to assure you that this is true, so that you will not doubt or regret having given away your fortune. And by this same sign, be assured that your mother is safe with the Lord. And admonished by this miracle, do not be afraid to give your property for the sake of Christ, rather know that the Lord will repay you in heaven. This is God’s gift to you. You may do with the money in accordance with your own will. What you used for your own purpose, God has not restored, because in His kindness, He gave back only what had been given to the poor out of love for Him.

After the death of Herigar, the priest Ardgar was moved by the desire to lead a solitary life as he had done before and he departed those parts and sought out his own place. The Christians who lived here were deprived once

again of the presence of a priest. In this way it became clear that the hermit Ardgar had been sent to this region in part to strengthen the faith of Herigar and in part to strengthen the faith of the matron mentioned above, and also that he might commend their departure to the mercy of God and that, in accordance with their constant desire, they might receive the sacrament of the Holy Communion to serve as their final *viaticum*.

#### Chapter 21

[Emperor Louis dies and King Charles takes possession of the monastery at Turholt and sets it free from slavery, which his father had ordained.]

#### Chapter 22

[The most gracious lord and ruler King Louis<sup>12</sup> arranges to give Ansgar Bremen as an episcopal see which was to include part of the neighboring diocese and the town of Hamburg.]

#### Chapter 23

[The venerable Gunthar is consecrated archbishop of Cologne, to which the dioceses of Bremen was subject, and he opposes the divisions of diocese laid out by the emperor. Bishop Salomon, the Bishop of Constanz, is sent to the apostolic see in order to promote the division. The venerable Pope Nicholas I confirms by his own authority the wishes of the emperor. Ansgar is authoritatively established as the first archbishop of Northalbing and legate among the surrounding races of Swedes, Danes, and Slavs (later manuscripts include the Faeroes, Norway, Greenland, Iceland and Finland).]

#### Chapter 24

[Archbishop Ansgar becomes friends with King Horic of Denmark and urges him to become a Christian. The king grants permission and allows Ansgar to build a church at Sliaswic (also known as Hedeby).]

#### Chapter 25

Meanwhile, our lord and father, Ansgar, was greatly distressed on behalf of the Swedish people because they were without a priest. He begged King Horic, his intimate friend, to help make an effort to reach this kingdom. The king supported this request with the greatest goodwill and promised to do

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<sup>12</sup> This is Louis the Pious son.



everything he could to help. Ansgar began to discuss this issue with Bishop Gautbert, saying that a further attempt must be made to find out if this people who had been divinely scolded would permit priests to live with them, so that the Christian faith which had been established there would not die out by neglect. Bishop Gautbert, who was also called Simon, answered that since he had been driven out of that country, he would not go back and that to attempt such a journey could not be to any advantage, but it would be dangerous and people should remember what had happened earlier before raising a disturbance because of him. He said that it seemed to him more fitting for the one who had been the first to undertake this journey and who had been treated best there to go and that he would send his nephew with him. His nephew would remain there, if he found an opportunity to preach, and would perform the duties of priest among the people.

They agreed about this and sought king Louis and told him the reason for this action and asked him to permit this. Louis asked if they were in agreement on this. The venerable Bishop Gautbert replied, saying: "We are and have always been united in the service of God. It is our unanimous desire to do this." The king, who was always ready to further God's work, charged our holy father with this mission. The King further gave Ansgar a personal message for the Swedish king, just as his father had done before him.

Our devout father then made preparations for the journey and was eager to accomplish it with the utmost speed. Furthermore, he believed he was commanded by heaven to undertake this mission. He was influenced by a vision he had previously had. In the vision he was very worried about the journey, which he was about to undertake. He seemed to come to a place where there were big buildings and a number of different dwellings. In that place he met a man who said to him, "Do not be afraid for this journey that you fear or which is in your thoughts. There is a certain prophet in this place who will tell you all about it. And so that no doubt will hang over you, I will tell you who the prophet is. It is the once renowned abbot, Adalhard, who now has been sent to you as a prophet by the Lord.<sup>13</sup> He will tell you what is about to happen." Ansgar was greatly encouraged by what he heard in his vision, and said: "Where will I find him, O Lord?" The reply was, "You will find him by your own works, and no one is permitted to bring him to you." Then it seemed to Ansgar that he went among the houses and looked for the prophet, at the same time he was contemplating this. "If he will tell me what is on my mind without me asking him, then I will be satisfied that he is a real prophet." He came then to a bright and beautiful house, and there he saw the prophet sitting on his throne, and he recognized him at once. The prophet looked at him and

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<sup>13</sup> Adalhard was the grandson of Charles Martel and became the Abbot of Corbey, where Ansgar was a young monk. He died in 826.

immediately said: "Islands, listen to me, pay attention, remotest peoples. The Lord has called you before you were born, from your mother's womb he has pronounced your name. He made your mouth a sharp sword, and hid you in the shadow of His hand. He made you into a sharpened arrow, and concealed you in His quiver. He said to you, 'You are my servant in whom I will be glorified.'" Having said this, the prophet stretched out his arm and lifted his right hand to Ansgar. When Ansgar saw this he went up to his knees hoping that the prophet would be willing to bless him. And the prophet added, "And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed you from the womb to be his servant, I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. Kings will stand up when they see you, and princes will bow, for the sake of the Lord God who has been faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you."

Now when God's servant had had this vision, long before the journey, he was convinced that it was God's will that he should go to those parts, especially with the words that had been said, "Islands, listen to me" since most of that country consisted of islands, and also when, "I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth," was added, since the end of the world in the north was in Swedish territory. Finally the words quoted from the end of Jeremiah's prophecy: "who has chosen you," encouraged his eager desire since he thought that this referred to the crown of martyrdom that had been promised to him long before.<sup>14</sup>

## Chapter 26

Ansgar then set out on his journey. He took with him the message and token given to him by King Horic. King Horic sent namely the following personal message to the Swedish king, named Olaf: The servant of God, who comes now to his land and is sent by king Louis, is well known by him, and that he had never seen in his whole life such a good person and he had never before met anyone so dependable. When he had gotten to know Ansgar's righteousness and goodness, he had allowed him to do whatever he wished to advance the Christian religion in his kingdom. He himself now asked that King Olaf would permit Ansgar to establish the Christian religion in his own kingdom in the same way, as he wished, since he did not want to do anything other than that which was right and good.

After spending nearly twenty days in a ship, Ansgar arrived at Birka, accomplishing the journey on which he had set out. He discovered that the

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<sup>14</sup> Rimbart is wrong here. This quote comes not from Jeremiah, but from Isaiah 49, 1-7, though the person is changed from first to second and some lines omitted.

king and a large number of the people were confounded by error. At the instigation of the devil who knew beforehand that this good man was coming, someone had come there and said that he had been present at the meeting of the gods who were believed to be the owners of this land, and he had been sent by them to announce to the king and the people, saying: "You have long enjoyed our goodwill and protection, and with our help you have lived on your land with great abundance in peace and prosperity for a long time. You have also given us the sacrifices and vows that we have desired, and we appreciate your homage. But now you are holding back offerings, and you are displeasing us greatly by introducing a foreign god to supplant us. If you wish to enjoy our goodwill, give us the sacrifices that you have withheld from us and pay us greater vows. And you will not accept the God from another culture, whose teachings goes against ours. Nor will you pay attention to serving him. Furthermore, if you want to have more gods and we are not enough, we will agree to summon your former king, Eric, to join us so he may become one of the gods."<sup>15</sup> This devilish announcement, which was made public on the arrival of bishop Ansgar, greatly disturbed the minds of all, and great disquiet and disillusionment took hold over the people. They built a temple in honor of the late king and began to make vows and give offerings to him as a god. When now the bishop came there, he asked some friends who had been there from before, how he should take up his mission with the king. Everyone advised him decisively and with assurance that he could effect nothing with his mission for the time being, and that if he had anything of value with him, he should give it to the king so that he would escape with his life. He said, "I would not give anything to save my life, because if my Lord wills it, I am ready to submit to torments and suffer death for His sake." Since he was largely uncertain in regard to this matter, he acted on the advice he had been given, and invited the king to partake of his hospitality. As a fellow guest, Ansgar gave the king the finest gifts he could, those that had been entrusted to him. The reason for his coming had already reached the king by King Horic's messengers and the bishop's friends who lived there. The king was delighted with Ansgar's kindness and generosity, and said that he would gladly do what Ansgar advised. "However," he said, "formerly there have been clerics here before who were driven out by an uprising of the people and not by the command of the king. Therefore, I neither am able nor dare approve your mission until I can consult our gods by casting lots and until I can ask the will of the people in regard to this matter. Your messengers can come with me to the next assembly, and I will talk to my people on your behalf. You may do what you ask if the gods consent and the people approve. If not, I will let you know." It is their custom that every public matter is decided more by unanimous will of

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<sup>15</sup> This is probably Eric III, a predecessor of the aforementioned Björn.

the people then that of the king's authority. Our most devoted father turned to the Lord for refuge when he heard the king's reply, and with heartfelt contrition he humbled himself before God.

## Chapter 27

Ansgar was in a difficult position and the time of the assembly drew near. One day he was performing the service of Mass and the priest was standing by the altar and was blessing the Holy Sacraments.<sup>16</sup> An inspiration from heaven came on Ansgar as he prostrated himself on the ground. Then he was strengthened by the Holy Spirit and was seized with the most complete confidence. He knew that all would turn out as he desired. After the Mass, he told the priest who was close to him in all things, that he did not need to have the slightest trepidation, since God's grace was with him. When the priest asked him how he knew this, Ansgar answered that it had been made clear to him through divine inspiration. The monk recognized Ansgar's spiritual inspiration, since he had seen many earlier signs that Ansgar had been comforted by God. His confidence was justified almost at once as things developed. The king called first his chieftains and began to discuss our father Ansgar's mission with them. They decided to enquire by casting lots to find out what the gods thought about this. They went out on to a field, as was their custom, and cast lots. The lot decided that it was the will of God that the Christian religion should be established there. One of the chieftains, who was a friend of the bishop, told him at once told him to be comforted. He said, "Be strong and act with vigor. God has not denied your wish nor rejected your mission." Then Ansgar found courage and with joyful spirits exulted in the Lord.

The day of the assembly came and it was held in Birka. As was the custom, the king made a proclamation to the people through a herald to inform them about the object of their mission. The people who had been led into error held discordant and confused opinions when they heard this. In the midst of the noise and tumult one of the older men among them said, "Listen to me your majesty and my people. In regard to the worship of this God, it is well known to many of us that He can offer much of help to those who place their hope in Him. Many of us have found this to be the case on several occasions when in peril on the sea and in other crises. Why do we reject that which we know to be both useful and serviceable? On several occasions some of us have been in Dorstadt and have adopted this form of religion of our own accord, believing it to be beneficial. Now there are many who threaten our way there and the route is made dangerous by Viking attacks. Why don't we take what seemed so

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<sup>16</sup> Klippel identifies this priest as Rimbart himself.

appealing when it was far away and is now brought to us? Why shouldn't we gladly agree to continue as His servants, when we have frequently found that help from this God can be useful to us? People, consider carefully and do not throw away what will be to your advantage. Since we cannot be sure that our own gods will favor us, it is good to have the help of this God who is always, and under all circumstances, able and willing to support those who cry out to Him."<sup>17</sup> When he had finished his speech, the gathering was united and decided that they would allow a priest with them and that everything that belonged to the Holy Sacraments would be allowed without hindrance.

The king rose up at the assembly and, at once, sent his own messenger together with the bishop's messenger to tell Ansgar that the people had unanimously accepted his will. The king said, however, that, though he valued their decision, he could not yet give Ansgar definitive permission until he had announced this resolution for the inhabitants in another part of his kingdom at another assembly which he was to hold there. Again our father of blessed memory sought for divine assistance, as was his custom, and eagerly prayed for God's mercy. The time for that assembly came. Through the herald, the king proclaimed why the bishop had come and everything that had been said and done at the previous assembly. By divine providence, the hearts of all there became as one and they adopted the resolution that had passed the former assembly and declared that they would give their entire and complete consent.

## Chapter 28

[Ansgar is told of the outcome of the assembly and preparations are made to build churches. Bishop Gautbert's nephew is left there to perform the Sacraments. Ansgar prepares to return from Sweden.]

## Chapter 29

While he was preparing for his departure, our most holy father Ansgar saw in advance the mental and spiritual anguish he would have during his journey through a revelation from our Lord. He had a vision one night that the time had come for the passion of our Lord and that he himself was present when our Lord Jesus Christ was led from Pilate to Herod and then back to Pilate. When Christ endured being spat on and jeered at by the Jews and the soldiers and tortured all over. In his dream, Ansgar would not allow Him to be punished in this way, but rather gave his own back to the torturers and

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<sup>17</sup> This passage is very similar to a passage found in Bede's Ecclesiastic History of the English Church. See the preceding article.

received the blows that had been meant for Him. Only Christ's head was not protected by Ansgar because He was taller of stature than him.

Christ's invincible soldier did not understand what this meant until his return journey, when he considered how much insult and mockery he had borne and in what jeopardy he had been placed and what blasphemies against God he had endured there. As far as he was concerned, he had undoubtedly suffered there on Christ's behalf and Christ, through his servant, bore again the reproaches that were directed against Him. That he could not protect Christ's head symbolized the fact that the suffering that the saints endure in this world on Christ's behalf fall in part on God's own majesty, for the head of Christ is God. God in His sympathy endures them for a time, but one day he will judge severely, as it is written: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay."<sup>18</sup>

### Chapter 30

Nor shall we forget to mention how the power of the Lord was manifested to the Swedes after the journey was completed. A certain people named Courlanders, who lived far from the Swedes, were subjugated by them.<sup>19</sup> They had a long while since rebelled and refused to be subjugated. The Danes knew this. And at the time when the bishop had come to Sweden, they had gathered together a great fleet and sailed off to Courland eager to seize their goods and subjugate the Courlanders to themselves. There were five towns in their kingdom. When the inhabitants now heard that the Danes had arrived, they gathered together in one place and resisted bravely and defended their property. They were victorious and massacred half the Danes and plundered their ships, getting their gold and silver and other goods.

When King Olaf and the Swedes had heard this, they wanted to win for themselves the reputation that they could do what the Danes could not. And because this people had been previously subjugated to them, they gathered together an immense army and proceeded to Courland. First they came to a city in their country called Seeburg.<sup>20</sup> There were seven thousand well armed men there. They ravaged and plundered it thoroughly and burned it to the ground. They left it with lifted spirits. They sent away their ships and set out with wild enthusiasm on a five day journey and came to another town called

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<sup>18</sup> Romans xii., 19; Hebrews x., 30; and Deuteronomy xxxii., 35.

<sup>19</sup> Courland is in modern day Latvia.

<sup>20</sup> This might be Seleburg on the River Duna.

Apulia.<sup>21</sup> In this town there were fifteen thousand armed men. When the Swedes had come there, the inhabitants shut themselves up in the town. The Swedes began to lay siege to the town from without and the Courlanders bravely defended from within. This went on for eight days, though they waged war from morning to night and many fell on both sides, but no one won victory. On the ninth day the Swedish army began to be exhausted by the daily slaughter and they were beginning to get worried and began to consider how they might get out of this. They said, "We have nothing to win here and our ships are a long way away." As has already been said, it was a five day trek back to where they had harbored their ships.

They were very disturbed and did not know what they should do. They decided to cast lots to find out if their gods were willing to help them, to see if they would win a victory, or at least get away with their lives. They cast lots, but could not find any god willing to help them. "What should we unhappy people do?" they said. "The gods have left us and none of them is willing to help us. Where shall we flee to? Our ships are such a long way away, and if we flee, our enemies will follow us and kill us to the last man. What kind of hope do we have?" In that dark hour, some merchants remembered the teaching and instruction given to them by the bishop and offered them advice, saying: "The God of the Christians frequently helps those who cry to Him and His help is all powerful. We will enquire if He is willing to be on our side, and with a glad heart we will offer Him vows that will be agreeable to Him." Unanimously they agree and cast lots again and discovered that Christ was willing to help them. When this had been made public knowledge, everyone regained his courage again so that they were ready at once to renew the attack on the town without fear. "What do we need to fear or dread now? Christ is with us. Lets fight and behave like men. Nothing can stand against us. We cannot fail to gain the victory because we have the mightiest of the gods as our helper."

The whole force gathered together, they attacked the town with courage and joy of spirit. When they had encircled the town and were eager to start the fight, a message came from the people in the town to speak with them. The Swedish king agreed and the townspeople said, "We would rather have peace than war, and we wish to enter into an agreement with you. Firstly, we are prepared to give you all the gold and arms that we took as spoil from the Danes last year for the sake of securing an alliance with you. Also, we offer one half pound silver for each person in the town. Further we are willing to pay you the tribute that we used to pay and will give you hostages because we want to be subject and obedient to your rule as we were in former times from this day forward." Despite the offer, the young warriors could not control themselves.

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<sup>21</sup> This is probably the town of Pilten on the River Windawa.

They became even more inflamed and undaunted and wanted nothing other than to wage war. They said they would destroy the town and everything the people had, and would carry the people off as slaves. However, the king and chieftains were more level-headed and accepted their offer and they entered into an agreement with them. They gladly returned home taking with them countless treasures and thirty hostages.

When at length peace had been established between the two peoples, the Swedes praised your Lord Christ's omnipotence and glory and declared that He was greater than all other gods. They began to think with solicitude about what they should give the one who had given them their victory. At the suggestion of some of the Christian merchants who were there at that time, they promised to observe a fast that would be acceptable to the Lord Christ. Everyone was to abstain from eating meat for seven days after they had been home for seven days. And after forty days, they would all abstain from eating meat for the forty days following that. And this they did. Everyone who had been with them agreed to this. Afterward, there were many who, on account of reverence and love for Christ, began to stress the fasts observed by Christians, and on almsgiving, and they began to help the poor because they had learned that it was pleasing to Christ. In this way, the priest Erimbert was free to perform everything having to do with the services of God and as long as everyone valued God's power, the Christian Religion began to grow ever stronger in those areas without meeting opposition from anyone.

### Chapter 31

Meanwhile, it happened that, by divine judgement, King Horic was killed in war during an attack by Vikings in connection with an invasion of his kingdom by a few of his relatives. Those who were friends and acquaintances of Bishop Ansgar, all the chieftains of that land, fell with him by the sword. Horic the younger was installed as king. Some of his chief men, who were not so well known to the bishop, tried to persuade the king to tear down the church which was there and to abolish the Christian religion that had been established. They said that their gods were angry and that these great evil had come on them because they had accepted the worship of another and unknown god. The count of the village of Slesvig, named Hovi, who was especially opposed to this religion, urged the king to destroy the Christian faith. He ordered the church that had been built there shut and forbade the observance of the Christian religion. The priest who was in the town departed due to this bitter persecution.

### Chapter 32

Bishop Ansgar became very anxious and deeply distressed. At king Horic



the younger's court, he did not have any of the friends whose loyalty he had acquired with magnificent gifts and who could now help him win over the king for the Lord. Since he had now no human help, he hastened to seek divine assistance, as was his custom. Nor was he disappointed in his hope. The Lord consoled him with spiritual comfort, and he became completely convinced that the Christian faith which had begun to be established in that place would never perish, as the enemies of Christ were planning. With the help of the Lord, this consolation was soon confirmed. When Ansgar prepared to travel to the king because of this matter, he was forestalled by the grace of the Lord. Before Ansgar could leave, the king expelled the count from the town without ever taking him in his graces again. Then, of his own accord, he sent a messenger to the lord bishop asking him to send back his priest to his church. The king assured him that he, no less than Horic the elder, wished to deserve Christ's favor and to obtain the friendship of the lord bishop. Our venerable shepherd Ansgar went himself to the king with the help of the most illustrious count Burghard. Burghard had also helped him earlier with Horic the elder in all matters and had a lot of influence with both kings since he was their kin. Ansgar was graciously received by king Horic the younger. The king immediately promised to permit Ansgar to carry out all actions that his predecessor had wanted for the benefit of Christiandom in his kingdom. Furthermore, he allowed a bell to be put in the church, which the pagans regarded as unlawful. He also gave a site in another village in his kingdom, called Ripa,<sup>22</sup> for the building of a church and granted permission for a priest to be installed there.

### Chapter 33

[Bishop Gautbert sends Ansfrid to Sweden but Ansfrid returns when Bishop Gautbert dies. Ragembert and Rimbart are sent in replacement.]

### Chapter 34

[Despite difficulties, Ansgar does not abandon the mission in the North. The spiritual fervor of Ebo, Archbishop of Rheims, who helps in this task, affords him some comfort.]

### Chapter 35

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<sup>22</sup> The site, called later Ribe, became the seat of a bishopric in 948. The priest, according to Adam of Bremen, was named Rimbart, but was probably not the same Rimbart who wrote this *Life*, since that Rimbart was not yet a priest.

[Concerning the daily life and faith of the holy father Ansgar and how he views the salvation of his own soul.]

#### Chapter 36

[Ansgar has many visions and revelations. Having bought them from Northmen or Slavs, he trains slaves to work in the monasteries.]

#### Chapter 37

[Ansgar sees himself as shepherd through two visions.]

#### Chapter 38

[Ansgar is critical of the Northalbingians taking captives as slave. He frees them.]

#### Chapter 39

[People are healed by Ansgar's prayers.]

#### Chapter 40

[Ansgar's body fails him, he suffers from illness.]

#### Chapter 41

[Ansgar worries about the fate of his mission to the heathens. He takes the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and says over and over, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," and "O Lord, into Your hands I commit my spirit."<sup>23</sup> Finally, worn out by his illness, he dies.]

#### Chapter 42

[Conclusion. Ansgar is an example of a holy life and he is with the martyrs, because of his bodily suffering for Christ's sake.]

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<sup>23</sup> Luke 18, 13 and 23, 46 respectively.