

## THE LIFE OF ST. CUTHBERT, BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE\* WHOM THE HOLY CHURCH COMMEMORATES ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH

### PREFACE

This very ancient and anonymous life of St. Cuthbert was written by the desire of Bishop Edfrid and the Monks of Lindisfarne between A.D. 698, when Edfrid became Bishop, and 705, the year of Aldfrid's death, who is spoken of as the reigning sovereign. ["De Alfrido qui nunc regnat pacifice;" Bede, *Opera Historica Minora*: London, 1841, p. 274.] It is dedicated to the same Edfrid, Bishop of Holy Island, a fact which of itself is a sufficient security for the accuracy of the narrative.

Further evidence of its historical value may be gathered from Bede's own words, in the preface to his *Life of St. Cuthbert*. "After I had digested my little work, I kept it back in manuscript, and showed it frequently to our most reverend brother Herefrid [Herefrid was abbot of the Monastery of Lindisfarne (Bede's *Life* §13), and had attended Cuthbert during his last illness (§59). Bede therefore, could not easily have found a more competent critic.] the priest, when he came here, as well as to several other persons who, from having long dwelt with the man of God, were thoroughly acquainted with his life, that they might read it, and deliberately correct or expunge what they should judge advisable. Some of these amendments I have carefully adopted at their suggestion, as seemed good to me; and thus, all scruples having been entirely removed, I have ventured to commit the result of the careful research, conveyed in simple language, to these few sheets of parchment. And when I transmitted to you (Bishop Edfrid) what I had written, that it might be either corrected if false, or approved if true ... my little work was for

\* written anonymously about the year A.D. 700. Edited by W. Forbes-Leith, S.J., F.S.A. Scot. [Edinburgh: printed for private circulation 1888]. Further edited for style SJKP 2013. A liturgical service for St. Cuthbert and a later derivative *Life* were published in *Living Orthodoxy* #188 (March-April 2012)

the space of two days read before the elders and more learned members of your congregation; and after every part had been shrewdly weighed and had passed under your examination, it was found unnecessary to change any single word, and all that had been written was pronounced worthy by common consent to be read without any doubt." [Bede's *Life of St. Cuthbert*, translated by the Rev. J. Stevenson, §7, p. 3.] The historical value of the *Anonymous Life* may now easily be ascertained by noticing, as Sir Thomas D. Hardy observes, that "nearly the whole of this narrative in substance, and sometimes in expression, is incorporated by Bede in his *Life of St. Cuthbert*, and it is perhaps this work to which he alludes when he says that his materials have been derived from written information obtained from the monks of Lindisfarne. [Sir T. Duffus Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials*, Vol. 2, p. 297.] We may then be assured that we are here in possession of an authentic narrative, written by an eye-witness, who lived with Cuthbert at Melrose [§§8, 13] and at Lindisfarne [§§44, 45, 46], who had ample means of ascertaining every particular respecting the life of the saint, and who took care, as he himself states, to record nothing of the accuracy of which he was not fully informed.

The *Anonymous Life* is the account of a saint by his friend and contains valuable details omitted by Bede. The venerable historian, for instance, does not state where Cuthbert was keeping watch over the flocks committed to his charge, whereas the *Anonymous Life* states that they were near the River Leader in Scotland. [The Leader empties into the Tweed near Melrose.] The route of his journey [A.D. 681] is more clearly marked by the *Anonymous Life*, the circumstances are recorded with greater precision, and various incidents of Cuthbert's life are related with additional particulars as to the persons and places.

In the following translation of the *Anonymous Life* we have followed the text edited for the Historical Society by the Reverend J. Stevenson, S.J.

## PROLOGUE

§1. Would that it were in my power, O holy bishop Edfrid,\* to fulfill your command, and the wish of your community, with all the effect that I desire. The task which you have set me is difficult, and the resources of my understanding are insufficient for it. I am, to say truth, in danger of being overwhelmed by the great amount of precious material at my disposal, nor can I hope to turn it all to account. I must therefore satisfy myself with an attempt to render obedience to your injunction to the best of my ability, and if I cannot accomplish all that you desire, I shall at least have paid the debt of duty which I owe. Should you be in any degree disappointed with the work when it is finished, I must implore you, in justice, to take into consideration my weakness, and the magnitude of the task you have imposed upon me, and ascribe its imperfection to want of capacity rather than of good will. To my mind, it will be the most signal proof of my respect and esteem for you, and for your reverend associates, that I have undertaken, at your request, more than I am able to accomplish.

§2. Should I succeed in producing anything worthy of your perusal, it will undoubtedly be owing to Divine aid and assistance. It will also be due in great measure to your kindness and benevolence, which is capable of moving even the idle to exertion, and to that confidence with which you encourage me to undertake the work, this being itself a pledge and assurance that I shall be able to complete what you so trustingly confide to me. Your prayers have certainly preceded and lightened the burden of the commission you have asked me to fulfill, as I judge from the pleasure with which I received the commands of your charity. Whatever I have to record of the holy Cuthbert is so much clear gain and advantage to myself since the knowledge of what he was shows to me the perfect

\* Edfrid, Bishop of Lindisfarne from A.D. 698 to 721 — (Flor. Wigorn., I, 45-50). He rebuilt the oratory on Farne Island where Cuthbert had lived in solitude. He wrote and illuminated the *Evangeliarium*, known as the *Durham Book*, or *Lindisfarne Gospels*, which is one of the most beautiful MSS. in Europe. Smith asserts that this volume was written for the express use of St. Cuthbert. It is preserved in the Cottonian Library, Nero, D. IV. See Wanley's Catalogue, appended to Hickeys' Thesaurus, p. 250.]

path to virtue. If you accept all that popular report has said concerning him — as you may safely do — even then you will have gathered but a small portion of the truth, for I feel sure that you yourself cannot be acquainted with his whole history.

§3. I therefore undertake to write the life of Saint Cuthbert, narrating what he was before he became a bishop, as well as how he exercised the duties of the episcopate; though I know how impossible it is for me to describe his virtues in all their fullness. There was much, marking his own interior life, which is known neither to me nor to any other, for he never sought the praise of men; and as far as in him lay, would have wished his great qualities hidden from the view of everyone. I have even omitted many facts known to myself, as I thought it would suffice to write down only those things which are more remarkable and excellent, having some consideration for my readers, who might be wearied with too great an accumulation of detail. Let me earnestly assure them, however, that they may accept, without the smallest hesitation, everything which I shall advance, and I beg them so to accept it, and to believe that I say nothing of which I am not absolutely certain. I have preferred to be silent where I ran any risk of saying what is false. And as nothing that can be spoken or written of him can add anything to the value of the works themselves which he wrought, I shall without further preface proceed to the narrative of what he did during his life.

## BOOK I

### *Cuthbert's Life*

#### *up to the Time of his Entrance into the Monastery*

§4. We will first relate an incident which occurred in his earliest years, and which we have heard recorded by a number of persons, among whom was Bishop Tuma,\*\* of holy memory, as also Elias, a priest of our Church, who had heard and repeated

\*\* Tuma, more generally called Trumwine, a bishop of the Picts (Bede's *Eccl. Hist.*, IV, 12, §288, 341), was amongst those who in the year 685 induced Cuthbert to accept the bishopric of Lindisfarne (IV, 28, §347). Upon the death of Egfrith, King of Northumbria, in A.D. 684, he was driven from his diocese and compelled to take refuge in the Monastery of Streonshalch or Whitby (IV, 26, §341). An outline of his life may be seen in the *Acta SS. mens.*, Feb. 2, 414.

from the mouth of St. Cuthbert himself this proof of God's spiritual election and predestination to his future course of life. Their account is as follows: When he was a child of eight years he excelled all his companions of the same age in activity and playfulness, so that often, when the others were tired out and obliged to rest, he would remain by himself, as though triumphant, on the playground, challenging any of them to contend longer with him. One day a number of lads were assembled in the meadow, he himself amongst them, when they began to engage in all manner of wild and extravagant freaks. Some actually took their clothes off and stood on their heads, with their feet and legs in the air, performing other antics and feats of strength.

§5. One of their number, a little boy only three years old, kept repeatedly calling out to him, "O be quiet, and leave off this foolish play!" Receiving no attention, he insisted more and more, and at last began to cry and sob violently, being quite inconsolable. After they had repeatedly asked him what was the matter, he called out, "O holy bishop and priest Cuthbert, these tricks of agility are quite unsuitable to your character and position." Cuthbert did not at the time understand the meaning of these words, yet he left off his play to comfort the child and, returning to his home, revolved the word of prophecy in his mind, as holy Mary kept the words foretold of Jesus, pondering them in her heart (Luke 2:51).

§6. You see, brethren, how it was intimated that this saint had been chosen by the Providence of God, even before he became known through his labors and his works, as was declared of the patriarch by the prophet, "Jacob, I have loved, but Esau have I held in hatred" (Mal. 1:2,3); and as Samuel and David are both found to have been chosen in their childhood, so the prophets Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15, 44) are said to have been consecrated in their mothers' wombs to the service of God. And this the Apostle of the Gentiles has asserted, when he says, "Whom He predestined, them He also called" (Rom. 8:30).

§7. While he was still about the same age, the Lord distinguished him by another miracle as one predestined to election. When yet a child, as I have said, and a layman, he was subject for a long time to the burden of a painful malady. His knee

became swollen and the nerves contracted, so that he went lame, one foot unable to reach the ground. On a certain day, when they carried him outside and laid him beneath the wall in the sunshine, he saw a man of noble appearance and extraordinary beauty, clad in white garments, riding up towards him from a considerable distance, seated on a horse magnificently caparisoned. As the stranger drew near, saluting and graciously accosting the child, he inquired whether he was willing to offer hospitality to him as his guest. The boy, showing his bodily infirmity, answered fearlessly, "If it were God's will, and if He had not bound me for my sins with the bond of this infirmity, I would not be backward in ministering to strangers for the honor of His name." The rider thereupon dismounted and examined his knee, which he had already explained had not been treated by any surgeon, and gave him this direction: "You must boil wheat with milk, and bathe your knee with it when quite warm." After his guest was gone, the boy, upon carrying out this prescription, perceived that he had been visited by an angel of God. In a few days he was healed, according to his faith, and returned thanks for the mercy of God, who had granted to him a complete and perfect cure, as He had to blind Tobias, by the healing hand of His angel. From this time forward he ever received the help of the angels when he asked it of God, on occasions of great difficulty, as he himself acknowledged to persons whose statements are entirely dependable.

§8. At another time during his youth, and while leading a secular life among the hills in the neighborhood of the River Leader, being engaged in the care of his master's flock along with other shepherds, he remained awake all night, as was his custom, having his mind deeply rooted in faith and occupied with frequent and fervent prayers. He then saw in a vision the heavens opened out to him — not by any actual unclosing of the elements, but by the acuteness of his spiritual sight, as did the blessed patriarch Jacob in Luza, called Bethel (Gen. 35:6) — showing the angels ascending and descending, and bearing in their hands a holy soul, carried to heaven as in a globe of fire. Immediately arousing the other shepherds, he related this marvelous appearance to them as he had seen it, assuring

them prophetically that this was the soul of the holy Bishop Aidan,\* who had reposed on the same night and at the same hour in which he saw the vision.

§9. One other miracle which occurred in his youth must not be omitted. When traveling from the south towards the River Wear, on reaching a place called Leunckester, [probably the present Lanchester, situated near the River Wear, not far from Durham] he crossed the river and, rainy weather coming on, went for refuge to some buildings inhabited only during spring and summer. As it was then winter time, the place was entirely deserted, so that he found no one to speak to or give him refreshment. But he and his horse were tired and hungry so, taking off its saddle, he led the animal into the house and tied it up to the wall. Here he engaged in prayer to God and waited for the weather to clear. All at once he observed the horse raise its head to the roof of the shed and eagerly draw down some hay from the thatch, bringing along with it a quantity of bread, still warm, wrapped in a linen napkin. He finished his prayer, and on reflection felt convinced that the food was intended for him, sent from God by the hand of an angel, who often came to his assistance in his necessities. So he returned thanks to God, blessed and ate, and then, refreshed and sustained by this Divine nourishment; loudly praising the Lord, he set out again and successfully accomplished his journey.

§10. I pass over in silence many other wonderful incidents of his earlier years, that I may not weary the reader, being also anxious to enter upon a particular recital of the more mature fruits of his advanced manhood, as shown in his practice of the virtues of Christ, and in his service before God. I do not dwell upon the fact that, when in the field with the army, though his salary was a mere pittance,

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\* [†31 August 651. Aidan, a monk of Iona, Apostle of Northumbria, and first Bishop of Lindisfarne, enjoyed the highest reputation for holiness and practical wisdom. Bede, who was born twenty years after his death, “has made his character and life the subject of one of the most eloquent and attractive pictures ever drawn by the pen of the venerable historian” (Montalembart, *Monks of the West*, IV, 23, translation). Simeon of Durham records the same wonderful vision, “*juxta iluvium Leder*” (Ch. 3, p. 24). The Leder flows from the north, and joins the Tweed two miles below Melrose.]

he had during all this time abundance of food, so that Providence even gave him stronger health, just as Daniel and the three children, who refused the king’s food, marvelously thrived upon a sparing use of the fare of slaves. Moreover, I forbear to tell how he saw the soul of his general carried up to heaven at his death, or how wonderfully he put the devils to flight and cured madness by his prayers.

## BOOK II

### *His Monastic Life, Extended Prophecies, and Other Miracles [A.D. 651-661]*

§11. Having now made the excellent resolve to dedicate himself to a severe mode of life in a monastery and to relinquish his habits as a secular, pious and innocent though they were, for the pursuit of a higher state, he patiently addressed himself to those pious customs which long practice in the voluntary service of God had by frequent use become natural and easy for him. His extraordinary endurance of watching and fasting amazed even the incredulous. He constantly spent whole nights in prayer, sometimes remaining thus for two or three days and nights continuously, taking rest only on the fourth day; for he remembered the words of the Apostle Paul, “All discipline for the present indeed seemeth not to bring with it joy, but sorrow, but afterwards it will yield to those who are exercised by it the most peaceable fruit of justice.” O my brethren, I do not presume to think myself worthy of having enjoyed his conversation; no words could ever express what that was like. He was as an angel in his appearance, graceful in his language, holy in all he did, pure in body, brilliant in genius, great in counsel, catholic in faith, most patient in hope, and unbounded in charity. I will endeavor, nevertheless, to explain somewhat more in detail by what steps he trod the path of virtue.

The vision of the soul of Aidan carried up to heaven by angels was the turning-point in the life of Cuthbert, for from this moment, impressed with the vanity of earthly things, and eager to imitate the glorious termination of a saint’s career, he resolved to renounce the world and consecrate himself wholly to God in the monastic state. “He knew that the Church of Lindisfarne contained many holy men, by whose teaching and example he might be instructed; but he was moved by the great reputation of Boisil — better known as St.



Boswell — a monk and priest of surpassing merit, to choose for himself an abode in the Abbey of Mailros” (Old Melrose, two miles to the east of Melrose Abbey). At this time Eata was abbot of the monastery, and Boswell was prior. We next meet with Cuthbert at the gate of the Monastery of Mailros. “As he leaped from his horse, and was about to enter the church to pray, he gave his horse to an attendant, as well as the spear which he held in his hand. Boisil was standing at the door and saw him first. As soon as he set his eyes upon him, he recognized in Cuthbert the future saint: ‘Behold a servant of God!’ he exclaimed to those who stood near him. Boisil, without saying more, kindly received Cuthbert as he approached, and when he had heard the cause of his coming, namely, that he preferred the monastery to the world, he kept him near himself.” — (Bede, *Life of St. Cuthbert*, ch. 6). After spending a few quiet but fruitful years in the peaceful cloisters of Mailros, Cuthbert was transferred from the banks of the Tweed to the banks of the Ure.

§12. Soon after he had taken in the Monastery of Ripon the yoke of Christ’s service and the tonsure of Peter, [On this subject *cf.* Innes, *Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, p. 242; Lingard, *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. 1, ch. 1] formed in imitation of the crown of thorns which encircled the head of Christ, according to the testimony of unimpeachable witnesses, another special grace was conferred upon him in confirmation of his sanctity: “The neophyte was immediately chosen from the other brethren to wait upon strangers coming to the house. Amongst these, one morning during the winter season, when snow was on the ground, an angel of the Lord visited him under the appearance of a grave man of mature age, as the angels manifested themselves under the appearance of men to the patriarch Abraham in the vale of Mambre (Gen. 18:1). He received him kindly, according to his wont, believing him to be of mortal, not angelic nature; he washed his hands and feet, and wiped them with a towel, and in all humility rubbed his hands and warmed his feet on account of the cold, after which he entreated him to wait until the third hour of the day, that he might breakfast; and when the stranger objected on the ground that he was obliged to proceed on his journey, he pressed him, till at length he obtained his consent by adjuring him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The signal for the Third Hour being given, and the prayer concluded, he laid the table, placing on it such food as he could find;

and because it chanced that there was no bread at hand, he put on the table only the crumbs that had been collected for blessed bread. He then went to the monastery to obtain some more, but not getting it, as the bread was still baking in the oven, he returned to his guest, whom he had left eating alone. But he found him not, nor any trace of his footsteps, though snow covered all the ground. Greatly amazed, and now convinced that his visitor was an angel of God, he removed the table to an inner chamber, and upon entering at once sensed the fragrance of a marvelous pleasant odor as of fresh bread, while he saw lying beside him three hot loaves; and so gave thanks to God, because in his person had been fulfilled the saying of the Lord: “He who receiveth you receiveth Me; and he who receiveth Me receiveth Him Who sent Me” (Matt. 10:40). And again: “He who receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive the reward of a prophet; and he who receiveth a just man in the name of a just man shall receive the reward of a just man” (Matt. 10:41). And often after this day the Lord fed him when he was hungry, as he acknowledged to faithful brethren, not boastingly, but for the edification of many, even as St. Paul related many things of himself from the same motive.

Cuthbert’s sojourn at Ripon was brief. He returned to Mailros, and shortly after, A.D. 661, England was visited by that terrible scourge known as the Yellow Pest. Boisil, the Prior of Melrose, was one of those attacked by it. Summoning Cuthbert to his bedside, he said, “I have but seven days to live;” and then he told him to take and read for their mutual instruction a copy of the Gospel of St. John, which was divided in seven parts, that thus reading and commenting on one each day, they might have it ended before his death. During the familiar intercourse which took place during his illness between the aged prior and St. Cuthbert, Boisil foretold that the virulence of the pestilence which was then raging should continue for three years — that is, from 661 to 664. He revealed also to his disciple all the events of his future life, and that he would one day be a bishop. When the seven days were accomplished, St. Boisil’s soul entered into the joys of eternal life (Bede, ch. 8). Cuthbert succeeded Boisil as prior, and inherited not only his eminent wisdom and sanctity, but his burning zeal and love for souls. He displayed the fervor of an apostle in converting the surrounding populace far and wide from their former foolish life, and leading them to the love of heavenly joys. He was wont chiefly to seek out and preach in those remote villages which were situated far from the world in wild mountain places, remote and fearful to

behold, which, as well by their poverty and distance up the country, prevented intercourse with such as could instruct their inhabitants (Bede, ch. 9).

§13. This circumstance is also worthy of being related, which I heard from several excellent persons, amongst whom was the priest Pleculf. During the time that he was with us at the monastery of Mailros, he was sent for by Ebba\* the holy widow, and mother of us all in Christ. He accordingly went as invited, to the monastery called Coldingham,\*\* and remained there some days, and in nothing altering his usual habits of life he began at night to walk along the seashore, singing and watching as was his custom. He was observed by one of the brothers of the monastery, who secretly followed him at a distance, wishing to know how he passed the night. The man of God, Cuthbert, resolutely drawing near to the sea walked into it up to his waist, the waves in succession rising as high as his armpits. When he came back from the sea otters immediately followed his footsteps, stretched themselves on the sand before him, licking his feet, wiping them dry with their fur, and warming them with their breath. As soon as this service was rendered, Cuthbert gave them his blessing and dismissed them to their native element.

§14. At cock-crow the man of God returned to say office with the brethren in the church. Meantime the aforesaid monk, terrified and frightened at the sight, remaining hid among the rocks, spent all the night in sore distress and at death's door. On the following day he cast himself at the feet of the man of God, and in piteous accents begged for forgiveness. The holy man replied in words that

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\* Ebba, a daughter of Ethelfrid, King of Northumbria. Her brother King Oswy gave her a small Roman camp on the Derwent, in the western part of the country of Durham, which she changed into a monastery, and which was called Ebchester after her. The village church is also dedicated to her (Surtees, Durham, II, 301).

\*\*Colodesbyrig in the MS., *i.e.*, Coldingham, in Berwickshire, about ten miles from the borders of England. Ebba was also Abbess of Coldingham and gave her name to St. Abb's Head, the black rock close by, which juts into the sea. Coldingham was a double monastery, *i.e.*, an establishment in which monks and nuns resided apart indeed, but under one head.

showed his enlightenment from on high, "What is the matter, brother? Did you approach me nearer than was meet? As you own your fault, I will pardon you on this condition, that you promise never to reveal what you have seen to any one before my death." The brother promised as he was desired, and departed from him with his benediction. He kept his promise as long as Cuthbert lived, but took care to publish what he had seen to many after Cuthbert's death, in proof of the submission of the animal creation to him, as we read that the lions were submissive to Daniel, and because it showed that Cuthbert had detected him by spiritual insight when he was in concealment and watching his conduct, as Peter saw Ananias and Sapphira when they were tempting the Holy Spirit.

§15. On another occasion he traveled from Mailros with two brethren and, after sailing to the territory of the Picts, arrived without incident among the Niduari.\*\*\* There they remained for some days in great destitution, as they had nothing to eat, and stormy weather prevented their putting to sea. The man of God spent the night on the shore of the sea in prayer, and rejoined the others in the morning, it being the Feast of the Lord's Epiphany, for they had set out on their journey after Nativity. He gave them this advice, "Let us go and search, and pray to God according to his promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.' I think our Lord will bestow something upon us, to aid us in celebrating the day on which the magi adored Him with their gifts, and on which the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove, when He was baptized in Jordan, on which also He turned the water into wine at Cana in Galilee, to strengthen the faith of His disciples."

§16. Then they rose and went out, he himself walking in front of them, as though to show the way, and leading them toward the sea. On reaching it they found three pieces of the flesh of a dolphin, as if cut by human hands and washed clean in

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\*\*\* Niduari is the reading in Bede for the corrupt Mudsieralegis given by the MS. By Niduari is probably meant a people dwelling by the banks of the River Nith, that falls into the Solway.

water, and on bended knees they gave thanks to God. Then Cuthbert said, "Take them up and bear them away, and bless the Lord. For see, these three portions will be sufficient for three men during three days and nights, and on the fourth day the weather will be fine enough to allow us to set sail." They took the fish and cooked it, and were delighted with the wonderful sweetness of its taste. The tempest continued with great violence for three days, but on the fourth, as he had predicted, they resumed their voyage under a serene sky, and reached their harbor in safety. This was related to us in the presence of many witnesses, by one of the two brethren present, named Tydi, who is still living and is a priest. And he glorified God Whose mercy once sent flesh to Elijah in the desert, as now He did to this holy man who, imbued with the same spirit as the Apostle Paul recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, foretold both tempest and fine weather to his fellow-voyagers (Acts 27:22).

§17. The same priest Tydi told us also of this other miracle known to a large number of persons. The saint was traveling one day near the River Tesgesta [possibly a misreading for Tevyota, the Teviot, which joins the Tweed at Kelso.] in the direction of the south, teaching and baptizing the country people who dwelt among the hills. He asked a boy who was walking with him as his companion, "Have you any idea who is preparing dinner for you today?" Upon his answering that he knew no one on the road, and had no expectation of receiving kindness from strangers, the servant of God said to him again, "Have confidence, my son; God will provide food for those who hope in Him, for He has said, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added to you,' and He will fulfill the words of the prophet (Ps. 36:25), 'I have been young, and have grown old, and I have not seen the just abandoned'; and again, 'The laborer is worthy of his hire'" (Luke 10:7).

§18. Cuthbert, looking upwards and seeing an eagle flying in the sky, said to the boy, "It is this eagle that God has commanded to prepare our dinner today." Going further, they saw the eagle sitting on the bank of the river. Then the boy ran to the eagle, at the command of the servant of God, and stopped upon seeing a very large fish, which he brought back

to Cuthbert. But the man of God said to the boy, "Why have you not given our fisherman his share?" The young lad did as he was told and, cutting the fish into two parts, gave one to the eagle; they took away the rest and boiled it at the first house to which they came, both eating it themselves and giving of it to others to eat. Having had enough, they prayed to the Lord and returned thanks according to the will of God, and continued their journey to the mountains, as has been already narrated, teaching the people and baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

§19. At the same time, while baptizing amidst the mountains and preaching the Word of life to a number of persons who were assembled in a certain village, Cuthbert suddenly foresaw in spirit that the old enemy was present among them to hinder the work of salvation. Whereupon anticipating his snares, "O beloved brethren," he cried, "if any temptation suddenly arises from outside, do you nevertheless remain steadfast, and not run out of doors, for it is only a delusion to induce you to put off listening to the Word of God." After these words, he resumed the thread of his discourse which he had interrupted. Soon they heard loud voices and cries of fire, as if a house were burning, and nearly all the people present, except a few whom he kept back with outstretched hand, rushed out and hastened to the building which they supposed to be in flames, trying to pull down the walls and put out the fire. Then all at once they could see neither fire nor trace of smoke and, discovering that they had been mocked by some delusive and phantom fire which the devil had raised up, they came back to the man of God and on bended knees besought his pardon, confessing that they now understood the crafty and manifold artifices of seduction which are practiced by evil spirits. Thus one and all of them, greatly improved and strengthened by his teaching, returned rejoicing to their own homes.

§20. About the same time the holy man of God was invited by a woman named Kenswith, [miswritten Kensped] who is still living, a widow devoted to a religious life, who had brought him up from the age of eight years until the time when he attained his full growth and entered on the service of God. He called her his mother on this account,

and often visited her. He went one day to the village in which she lived, named Heringham, [probably Wrangholm, Bleau's Wrangumm, between the Rivers Leader and Tweed] when a house situated at the extreme eastern end of the town was observed to be on fire, and the wind blowing very strongly from that quarter, the conflagration began to spread. His mother ran back in alarm to her own house, where he was, and implored him in goodness to ask the help of God for the preservation of their homes from the masses of fire which were flying on all sides. Showing no signs of alarm, he desired her to keep quiet saying, "Fear not, this flame will not hurt you." He cast himself on his face to the ground in front of the door and prayed in silence, and as soon as he began to pray a strong wind began to blow from the west and drove the whole force of the flame in the opposite direction, where it could do no harm. Thus they perceived that the Divine power of God had evidently exerted itself through him, and that they had been preserved from great danger by His protection, wherefore they gave thanks and blessed the Lord.

§21. There was a certain religious man especially dear to the servant of God, whose name was Hildmer, whose wife was greatly vexed by a devil. She was quite wasted away and brought nearly to the gates of death, and used to gnash her teeth and cry out with a lamentable voice. Her husband, assured she would come to some miserable end, hastened to our monastery and begged to see St. Cuthbert, who was at that time the provost of our church. He said that his wife was sick even to death, but did not reveal that her disease was madness, as he felt at the moment ashamed to let it be known that one who was formerly a religious woman should now be harassed by an evil spirit, being not aware that Christian people are frequently liable to such possession. He only requested to have a priest sent with him, and a spot assigned for her burial. The man of God at once went to bid someone go with him, but suddenly turned back and, moved by the Spirit of God, called to him: "I ought not send another, but go myself with you to visit her."

§22. Then the man of God got ready, and they all set out on horseback. He perceived that his companion was deeply affected and in tears,

caused first from the fear of losing his wife and seeing his children left orphans, but especially from a sense of the degraded and miserable condition into which her insanity had brought her, knowing that the man of God would find her utterly forlorn, without care for herself, and filthy and driveling in her habits. But Cuthbert gently comforted him, intimating that he was aware of all that had been concealed from him, and with prophetic lips he added, "As soon as we reach your house, the wife, whom you think is dying, will come out to meet me and take the bridle of my horse, which I hold at this moment; for by the help of God the demon shall be cast out, and she herself will minister to us." On their arrival at the mansion — as the man of God had said — the lady, as if roused from sleep, came forth to meet them and, at the first touch of the bridle, the devil was completely put to flight. She was restored to her former health and, joyfully giving thanks to God, offered hospitality to them.

### BOOK III

*His Removal to Farne; Miracles, Etc. [A.D. 664]*

§23. St. Cuthbert admirably discharged the duties of provost in the above-mentioned monastery of Mailros, serving the Lord Who wrought many miracles by his instrumentality, such as I have endeavored to relate, on account of the weakness of those who were infirm in faith. At length he took flight from the glory of the world and withdrew into a life of more perfect solitude. Afterwards, at the urgent summons and invitation of holy Bishop Eata, he came across, with the help of God's holy will, to this island of ours, which is called Lindisfarne and here, whether present or absent, healed those who were possessed and cured many suffering from various kinds of disease. He lived according to the precepts of Holy Scripture, preserving the spirit of the contemplative life though engaged in active duties, and for the first time drew up for us the rule which we observe to this day, in conjunction with that of St. Benedict. After some years he determined to remove to the island called Farne, a desolate spot in the midst of the waves, and there lead a solitary life for a time, an enterprise which no one had ever attempted before, because of certain appearances of evil spirits in that place. He put the



demons to flight by his fearless courage and dug a chamber in the solid rock to the depth of nearly a cubit (about 17”), adding to it a wall which was truly extraordinary. Besides being a cubit high, it was built of stones so large that no one who did not know the amount of strength God had given him could believe they had been placed by him in their present position. His dwelling-place was divided into two rooms, so constructed that he could behold nothing from them except the heavens above.

Simeon of Durham states that this change of residence occurred A.D. 664 (lib. 1, ch. 6).

This was after a residence of twelve years at Lindisfarne which, dating from A.D. 664, carries us on to 676.

§24. In the interior of the island he had found a stone, which one day he asked some brothers who were on a visit to fetch for him on the cart, that he might place it in his building. They went with prompt obedience to bring it, but were obliged to leave it when only half the journey was accomplished, fearing that its weight might break down their cart, or do them some injury. A few days afterwards, when the same brothers sailed



across to the island again, they found the stone they had been unable to move now neatly laid in its place in the structure which the servant of God was rearing, and so praised and glorified God, who does such marvelous works through his servants, remembering that “God is admirable in his saints.”

§25. On another occasion some of the brethren came to visit him, to whom, according to his custom, he first preached the word of God, and then said to them, “My beloved brethren, you know that this spot is almost uninhabitable for want of water; therefore let us implore the help of God, and do you dig in this stony bit of ground, in the middle of the pavement of my abode, seeing that the Lord God is able to bring water out of the hard rock for those who pray to him, as he once gave water to the thirsty people when Moses struck the rock with his staff; and again gave Samson water to drink, when he was thirsty, from the jaw of an ass.” The brethren accordingly dug in the ground as he had desired, and at his prayer they immediately saw a spring of living water break forth from the stony ground and flow towards him. We have tasted of this spring, and thankfully experienced its extraordinary sweetness, which continues to this day. And I know from the testimony of reliable witnesses that the holy anchorite and servant of God confessed that in this water, which God had given him, he could discover the sweet taste of all other liquors.

§26. There is another miracle I will not pass over, which God wrought out of love for His valiant soldier. As he was in want of a beam twelve feet in length to form the foundation of some part of his building, he asked the brethren who came to visit him to bring him one. The waves of the sea reached the end of the hollow place he had dug in the rock, and sometimes flowed into it, and he proposed to fix in this spot the beam of wood I have mentioned, and build upon it as a foundation. But he could not obtain that favor from his brethren (may God not impute it to them to their hurt). Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, to Whom he addressed this prayer, came to his aid, for that very night the sea waves brought with them a beam twelve feet long floating on the water, and deposited it, in answer to the servant

of God, exactly at the edge of the rock where he wanted to place it for his building. The brethren, who were watching during the night, saw it in the morning, and gave thanks to God that in Christ's honor the sea should have rendered more obedience than men to the holy anchorite; and at this very day the building, resting on the traverse beam, is plainly evident to all who sail by.

§27. As the sea was subservient to the man of God, so also were the birds of the air. He was one day engaged in digging the ground in his island, for during the first two or three out of the many years which he spent there, before he closed his doors and remained constantly within, he used to labor with his hands for his daily subsistence, according to the words, "He who does not labor must not eat." He saw that day two ravens, old denizens of the island, preparing to make their nest by pulling away the thatch from the roof of a house which stood on the landing-place built for sailors. He waved them away by a movement of his hands, lest their depredations should occasion trouble to the brethren. But when they paid no attention to his signal, he changed his tone and sternly ordered them in the name of Jesus Christ to take themselves off and leave the island. Without an instant's delay they both abandoned their homes in obedience to his command. Three days afterwards one of the two returned and, lying at the feet of the man of God as he was digging in the ground, spread out its wings over the furrow and bent its head to the ground, as though suing humbly for his pardon. Then the man of God, seeing that it was repentant, gave permission for its return. Peace being concluded, both the ravens came back the same hour bearing a gift with them, for each carried in its beak a large piece of pork, which it laid at his feet. He forgave them their fault, and they are living in the island to the present day. I have been assured of the truth of this story by witnesses who could not be mistaken and who, when visiting him, used to oil their shoes with the fat of this pork for twelve months afterwards.

§28. The consecrated virgin and royal abbess Elfreda humbly requested this holy anchorite to come to meet her on Coquet Island. The

handmaid of God went down on her knees and put many questions to him, and at last solemnly adjured him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the nine orders of angels, and all the holy saints, to tell her how long her brother King Egfrid had to live. Thus urged, and fearing to offend our Lord, the man of God began in many words, yet without directly answering the question, to remind her of the brevity of human life, adding these words, "O handmaiden of God, surely it is no slight privilege for one to be secure of life for even twelve months!" She understood that he spoke with design and foreknowledge and wept bitterly, and a year afterwards her grief, and that of multitudes of others, was only too painfully renewed at seeing the fall of the royal house, struck down by the focman's [ploughman, or tenant] sword, wielded with such a cruel hand. She next went on to ask: "By that same Holy Unity and Trinity I adjure you to tell me whom he will have for his heir." He paused a few moments, and said: "Him you may take for your brother, not less than the other." This she seemed unable to understand, and earnestly inquired where the person was to be found. He listened to her with great gentleness, and replied: "O servant of God, why should you wonder if he were now in an island in this sea?" Upon this she remembered that his words must apply to Alfrid, now happily reigning, who was at that time in the island called Hy. She then proceeded to question him about himself, knowing that the king wished to call him to the episcopate, and asked whether the king's wish would take effect, and how long he was to be bishop. He declared himself unworthy of this honor, but added that it was impossible for him to avoid it by concealing himself on land or sea, "and within the brief space of two years," said he, "I shall find the reward of my labors. But do you also listen to what I enjoin you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and see you tell this to no one as long as I live." Then after many other prophetic words, which all beyond doubt came true, he entered his boat and returned to Farne.

§29. Thus he continued to live for many years in solitude, withdrawn from the sight of men; but under all circumstances he was always the same in

his expression of countenance and the disposition of his mind. He was always joyful and glad-hearted; no recollection of sin ever saddened his face; no praises or marks of surprise and admiration ever elated him. His language, modest but full of point and ready wit, comforted the sad, instructed the ignorant, and calmed the angry, convincing all who heard him that nothing is to be preferred to the love of Christ. And before the eyes of all he habitually placed the greatness of the good things that are to come, and of the gifts which God has already bestowed upon us, Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for the salvation of all men.

#### BOOK IV

##### *Cuthbert as Bishop of Lindisfarne — His Miracles His Death [A.D. 684]*

§30. Having been chosen to the episcopate of our church of Lindisfarne at the request of King Egfrid, of the Saxon Bishops, and of the senate, the king in person, and Bishop Trumwin of holy memory, together with some chosen members of our household, went to him, the synod being assembled with closed doors within the monastery and, falling on their knees, adjured him by our Lord Jesus Christ to accede to their request. Most reluctantly, with many tears and expressions of grief, he was conducted before the synod, at which Archbishop Theodore presided, and after the usual delay was admitted to the episcopate. It is not within my power or province to express how excellent and great he was in the exercise of this office, although it is better to give some account than to omit all mention. He continued ever what he had been before, unchanged in the sympathy of his heart, in the simplicity of his outward appearance. Thus, with all authority and grace, he filled the dignified post of bishop, without departing, however, from either the strict rule of the monk or the virtue of the anchorite. In all things he remembered to observe the teaching of St. Paul to Titus: "A bishop must be without crime." His discourse was equally pure and resolute, equally grave and straightforward, full both of sweetness and grace, when he spoke upon the ministry of the law, or the teaching of faith, or the virtue of continence, or the practices of a just life. To every one he gave

varied and suitable instructions, because he always knew beforehand what to say, and to whom, when and how to say it. Above all other things, it was his special care to join fasting, prayer, and watching to the study of the Scriptures. His memory, keeping always before his mind the canons of the Church, and enabling him to recall the virtue of the saints, stood him in place of books. He fulfilled all the duties of brotherly love towards his brethren, and practiced humility and that super-eminent charity without which every other virtue is valueless. He took care of the poor, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, harbored strangers, redeemed the captives, and protected widows and orphans, that he might merit the reward of eternal life in the company of the choirs of angels with our Lord Jesus Christ.

§31. The holy Cuthbert, being thus deeply rooted in the virtues befitting the exercise of the episcopal office, was advanced by our Lord to the fullest and highest degree of dignity and authority by many miracles and prodigies, and as it was said to the apostles, "Whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," so his priests and deacons have assured us these words were fulfilled in him not only spiritually, but by bodily act as well, and there were wrought, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, many signs and wonders among the people.

§32. Of these we may narrate the following. One of the earls of King Egfrid named Heunna, living in the country called Henitis, had a wife who fell dangerously ill, so that her life was almost despaired of. As our holy bishop was traveling and preaching the word of God among the people, he arrived at the place inhabited by the above-mentioned earl. The latter at once went forth to meet the bishop and, returning thanks to God for his coming, kindly and hospitably received him and his companions, and washed their hands and feet. He then made known to the holy bishop the dangerous condition of his wife, which occasioned much grief and sorrow to all the household, asking him to bless some holy water for her use, as he thought she would then depart more easily if she were to die, or would recover more quickly were her life to be spared. The holy bishop blessed the water before them all, and gave it to his priest Beta, who is still living. Entering into her bed-chamber, where she lay like one half

dead, the priest sprinkled her and her bed and, opening her mouth, he poured a little of the water. She immediately recovered consciousness and gave thanks and blessed God, Who had vouchsafed to send so many and so great guests to visit and cure her. Without delay, she rose up in sound health and, like the mother-in-law of Peter, ministered to them with her own hands, being the first of this noble family to offer the cup of joy to the bishop, who had removed from her lips the cup of death.

§33. The priest Ethelwold, now abbot of the Monastery of Mailros, related to me another instance of a cure which he himself witnessed. “One day,” he said, “we came with the holy bishop to a town called Bedesfeld. A girl in that place, who was a near relative of mine, was very ill, and for almost a whole year had suffered severe pain in her head and down one side, which no physician had been able to cure or alleviate. Our bishop, having heard of the girl’s illness, at our request had compassion on her and anointed her with oil consecrated by himself. Immediately from that hour she began to amend, and in a few days was restored to perfect health.”

§34. Another miracle of the same kind I heard from the testimony of many witnesses, whose statement leaves no room for doubt. Amongst these, Heunna related: “One day the holy bishop set out from Hagustaldese, and traveled in the direction of Carlisle. He broke his journey on the way in the region named Alise. A great number of people had assembled there, and he remained two days laying his hand on the head of each one, anointing them with the oil he had consecrated, and preaching the word of God. When, lo! there suddenly appeared some women carrying on a litter a young man wasted by a long and grievous sickness; and, setting him down at the outlet of the forest, not far from our tents, where the holy bishop was, they sent to beg him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that he would grant the poor man his blessing, and that of the other holy men with him, and would pray for him to the Lord that he might obtain pardon for his sins, on account of which he was bound under the Divine vengeance. When the bishop perceived their unhesitating faith, he sent us away, and gave his blessing to the youth, whose malady he cured, and restored him to health, glorifying God for having

come to the aid of His servant who had trusted in Him. Rising up the same hour, and refreshed with a little food, the youth walked away in company with the women, giving thanks and magnifying the Lord, Who works such wonders in His saints.”

§35. The priest Tydi, whom I have already mentioned, gave me the following account: “Our holy bishop was in a town called Methelwong\* during the pestilence which devastated both that neighborhood and many others, and was preaching the Word of God to such of the people as were left, when he turned to me and asked in a low tone, ‘Is there any one in this town still sick of the pestilence, to whom I can go to carry blessing and consolation?’ I pointed out to him a poor woman standing at a distance, appealing to him with many tears in behalf of one son who had just died, while she held in her arms his brother, now swollen and gasping for breath in his mortal agony. Cuthbert instantly rose and, going to her, blessed and kissed her child, and then assured her, ‘O woman, weep not; the son you have lost is saved; neither shall any of your family henceforth die of this pestilence.’ The mother and son are both living and bear witness to the truth of this narrative.”

§36. Neither may I omit what was related by a priest of ours, still alive, but at that time a layman in the service of a certain earl, who recounted this deed of mercy in his presence: “When our holy bishop began to preach the Word of God among the country people, he was invited by my lord, whose name was Tibba, one of the earls of King Egrid, who lived near the river called Treed,\*\* to come to his town, and so arrived in procession with his companions, singing psalms and hymns. My lord received him most cordially, and informed him of the desperate condition of one of his servants, lying there very ill, in fact drawing his last breath. The holy bishop, sharing the suffering of his case, blessed water for him, and gave it to me, as I was attending him, with this injunction, ‘Go and give the sick person this

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\* In the MS. Medilpong, obviously an error for Methelwong, the Field of Discussion. (*Vita Sti. Cuthberti, auctore anonymo.*, Note §35)

\*\* In the Latin text Opide, most probably the Tweed, according to Bede’s narrative, which informs us that Cuthbert was then on his way from Mailros to Lindisfarne.



water which, by God's help and according to our faith, is about to place him in safety, because the Lord will pardon the sins for which he is afflicted and grant him rest from his labor — either now, by restoring him to health, or in the world to come, if he is going to die.' I went immediately to the sick man as I was desired, and while I was pouring a little of it for the third time into his mouth the patient, through the help of God, returned to consciousness and recovered his former health. He is still living, and gives thanks to God, calls down blessings on the bishop, and prays for him continually."

§37. While King Egfrid was laying waste the kingdom of the Picts where, according to the predestined judgment of God, he was ultimately overthrown and slain, our holy bishop in the course of his progress visited the city of Leul (now Carlisle),\* in which the queen was then staying, awaiting the issue of the war. On Saturday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, as is affirmed by the priests and deacons, many of whom are alive to this day, while all present were inspecting the city wall, and also a fountain of marvelous workmanship formerly constructed by the Romans, as they were told by their guide, Waga,\*\* provost of the city, the good bishop, as he leaned on his staff, suddenly bent his face toward the ground then, again raising himself, he lifted his eyes to heaven and, groaning deeply, three times exclaimed, "Ah! ah! ah! I fear the war is over, and that judgment has been pronounced against our people engaged in it." When all inquired of him what had happened, he replied ambiguously, "O my children, do you not see how marvelously changed and disturbed the air has become? And who among mortals is sufficient to search out the judgments of God?" Within a few days the sad and unexpected intelligence of the result of the

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\* Luel, i.e., Lugubalia, which is corruptly called Luel by the Angles. (Bede, *Life of St. Cuthbert*, Ch. 27).

\*\* Waga, hitherto printed Paga, but incorrectly. The description of a fountain, in which the traces of Roman workmanship are still discernible, is given in Lyson's *Magna Brit. Cumberland*, p. 208. Smith appears to have had the same information from Nicolson, then Bishop of Carlisle. Carlisle was the Lugurallium of the Romans, a station on the great Roman Wall. On the frequency of Roman remains at Carlisle, see *Camd. Brit. Col.*, 1024.

battle, which was fought and ended on the very day and at the very hour in which it had been revealed to Cuthbert, was known all over the country.

§38. In this same city of Carlisle there came to him from the western islands a venerable anchorite named Herbert, who had often previously visited him, and now came according to his wont to resume his spiritual colloquy with Cuthbert. After much pious discourse, in which he gave him wholesome exhortations, the holy bishop said prophetically, in the hearing of a number of persons, "Bethink you, beloved brother, of anything you may have need to ask me, and speak to me about it for, as Paul predicted to the Ephesians, never in this world, from this hour, shall we see one another again." On hearing this, Herbert fell at his feet and, shedding many tears, answered mournfully, "I beseech you, through Jesus Christ the Son of God, pray to the Holy Trinity not to leave me in this world deprived of your presence, but to receive me along with you into the joy of His eternal kingdom." The bishop, after praying for a moment, bade him, as he still lay on the ground, "Rise, and rejoice; for," said he, "you shall certainly receive from the Lord Jesus Christ that which you have sought from him." The issue of the story needs not many words. At the same time, on the same night — Wednesday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 687 — at the same hour of the night, the bishop and the anchorite both died, and now reign together with Christ for ever and ever.

We learn from Bede (ch. 127) that Herbert was first purified by a long infirmity, and this perhaps by the dispensation of our Lord's mercy, that the continual pain of a long sickness might supply whatever deficiency of merit he might have in comparison with the blessed Cuthbert, so that, he being made equal in grace to his intercessor, they both might depart together at the same hour, and on one and the same day, be thought worthy to be admitted to one and the like seat of everlasting blessedness.

§39. The most faithful Abbess Elfleda revealed to me another instance of miraculous knowledge in the holy bishop. As he was seated with her at table in her Monastery of Osingadun (near Whitby), Cuthbert became enwrapped in contemplation; his eyes were fixed, and the knife which he held in his hand dropped upon the table. Hastily bending towards him she asked, "I beseech you,

my lord bishop, tell me what you have seen.” “I have seen,” he replied, “the soul of a certain holy person of this monastery borne up by the hands of angels to heaven, and placed among the choir of angels and holy martyrs.” On her proceeding to ask the name of the person, his answer was, “Tomorrow, when I am celebrating liturgy, you yourself shall tell me his name.” Upon hearing this, the abbess at once sent to the monastery to inquire who had lately departed this life, but the messenger brought word that all were safe and well. Making further inquiry, however, they learned that one of the shepherds had met his death by falling from a tree which he had incautiously climbed. The abbess, when told of it, ran to the bishop, who was then consecrating the church, and had reached the prayer of the liturgy beginning “Remember, O Lord, all of us gathered...”; she at once gave him the name of the deceased brother, which was Haduald. Thus was made manifest to all the abundant spirit and power of prophecy which was granted to the mind of the holy man, whose apostolic foresight in many ways clearly anticipated the time of his own death.

§40. Having spent two years in the government of his diocese, Cuthbert, imbued with the prophetic spirit of God, and foreseeing that the day of his departure was at hand, threw off the burden of the pastoral office and, drawn by the love of his former life of solitude, returned to the island whence he had been forcibly withdrawn, and there dwelt alone, satisfied with the converse and ministry of angels, and fixing his faith and hope firmly upon God, though very ill in body and borne down by much infirmity.

§41. As his weakness increased, and he drew near his end, he sent for a tried and faithful brother, now living, by name Walhstod, who was then suffering from dysentery, desirous that he should come to him and minister to him in his cell. Walhstod gladly went, and the moment that his hand touched the bishop, as he is wont to relate with tears, his sickness and weakness completely left him; and whereas he had previously felt depressed under the belief that he was about to die, he now felt himself restored to life and health, as with thanksgiving to God he informed the brethren.



§42. After this Cuthbert the bishop, of holy memory, having received communion, raising his hands to heaven and commending his soul to God with his last breath, calmly seated, without a groan departed to the joys of the kingdom of Heaven. The brethren brought his remains to our island in a boat, washed the body, wrapped the head in a handkerchief, placed the sacramental elements on his holy breast, robed him in the sacerdotal vestments, with sandals on his feet to be ready to meet Christ, and after enclosing the body in a cerecloth, while the soul rejoiced with Christ, they laid the incorruptible remains, apparently but asleep, to rest with all due honor in his sepulcher within the church.

§43. Eleven years afterwards, moved thereto by the Holy Spirit, with the advice of the chief person in the monastery and with the consent of the holy Bishop Eadberth, they formed the resolution to raise from the tomb the bones of the saintly Bishop Cuthbert, the most illustrious member of

their body. As soon as they opened the tomb they found, wonderful to relate, the whole body as entire as when they had first buried it, eleven years before. The limbs were not set and stiff with shrunken sinews and skin dried up, bearing every mark of antiquity, but were flexible, with full suppleness in the joints. When they raised his body out of the tomb, they could move the knees and neck like those of a living man. His shoes and such part of his robes as had come in contact with his skin were in nowise decayed. The cloth in which his head had been enveloped was as bright as when first made, and along with the new sandals that he wore, is to this day kept as witness thereof among the relics in our church.

§44. Our Lord, for the honor of His holy servant, granted the favor of miraculous cures to a considerable number of persons after his death. In the case of a boy tormented by a most cruel spirit, so that he yelled, howled, and strove to destroy everything within his reach, yea, even to tear his own flesh, the priest Tydi, whom I have so often mentioned, found himself unable to work a cure or put the evil spirit to flight. Wherefore he counseled his father to take the boy in a cart to the monastery, and pray to God for him before the relics of the holy apostles and martyrs which were there. The cries and screams of the unhappy demoniac struck horror into all who heard him, and many despaired of the possibility of finding any relief for the miserable child. But one of the priests, who was strong in faith and purity of life, placing his hope in God, and invoking the aid of the holy Cuthbert, took compassion on him. He blessed some water, went to the spot where the water had been poured wherewith the saint's dead body had been washed and, taking thence a little portion of the mold, placed it in the water. The boy, having tasted the water blessed by him, ceased screaming and gibbering, and on the following day, accompanied by his father, with many thanks to God, visited the relics of the saints, for whose sake he believed God had cured him, and prayed in presence of our community, after which he returned home glorifying God in his saints.

§45. The Lord God has been willing to fulfill, in honor of this holy confessor of God and his incorruptible body, what Jesus Christ at His

departure predicted of John the Evangelist, "I will that he remain thus till I come" (John 21:22), and many wonderful things are every day taking place in our presence by His permission. One of these occurred recently. A certain clerk of Bishop Wilibrord [first Bishop of Utrecht, in Holland] came from the parts beyond the sea, and was received and entertained in our house and, while a guest among us, was taken with a very grievous malady which, by continually increasing, for a long time reduced him to a very hopeless condition. One Sunday he said to his attendant, "Take me today after liturgy, if you can possibly do so, to the tomb of the most holy man of God. For I trust and hope in God, with simple faith and confidence, that for the honor of His servant, whose body is there perfect and incorruptible, He will either grant complete recovery to my limbs now wasted with sickness, or assign to me, set free from the bonds of suffering, some share of that celestial glory which Cuthbert now possesses." I need not make a long story of it. When with much trouble they had led him to the tomb he knelt down and, bowing his head to the ground, prayed that he might be healed; no sooner had he done this than he gave thanks to God, rising up cured. Without assistance he walked back to the hospice, and a few days afterwards, his strength being entirely restored, he proceeded on his journey home.

§46. I will not omit another miracle, very similar to this, which occurred during the present year. There was in a neighboring community a young man afflicted with palsy, who was brought in a cart to consult the skillful physicians of our monastery. They gave every attention to his case, and did for him everything that could be done, but nearly all his limbs had become mortified, his whole body had lost the power of motion or feeling, and after long efforts they were at last obliged to give the case up as hopeless. The youth, finding himself deserted by the physicians of the body, said to his attendant with tears and groans, "This insensibility and mortification began at my feet and has thence spread through all my limbs; beg, therefore, of the abbot to let me have the shoes which covered the feet of the incorruptible man of God." His attendant did so, bringing him the shoes and putting them on his feet the same night,

at the usual time for going to rest. At the hour of matins next morning, wonderful to relate, he rose up and sang the praises of God, though before he could not move any of his limbs or scarcely use his tongue. During the day he visited all the shrines of the holy martyrs, [possibly a portion of those relics of the martyrs which Benedict Biscop had brought into England a few years previously, and distributed among the neighboring churches. See his life by Bede, §6.] returning thanks to God, that by the merits of the holy bishop, in answer to his own faith, he had been restored to his former health.

These few particulars I have dictated, brethren, while omitting a far greater number which I have not included only lest the reader should be surfeited with their number, and so give up reading my narrative altogether. I will but say briefly, with reference to these, that in many places infirm and possessed

persons acknowledged that the demons quit them at his coming, often even before he came, and they never returned; others were healed by his presence, and with a single word. In many cases brethren proposed in their own hearts and without the knowledge of anyone, to ask him to pray for the favors they required, and he anticipated them through his prophetic spirit, procuring for them the desire of their hearts before they had asked him. Of which spirit Paul says, "He has revealed it to us by the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. 2:10). Neither will I describe the marvelous production of blessed bread, which in such quality and quantity took place on two occasions, or the draught of water which he blessed, so that those who drank after him tasted therein the sweetness of every liquor; or how the deacon of the holy Bishop Winfrid was on two occasions healed of sickness by the relics of this confessor of God.

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