

11-2010

Bede and the Rewriting of Sanctity

Sally Shockro

Merrimack College, shockros@merrimack.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/his_facpub



Part of the [European History Commons](#), and the [Medieval History Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Shockro, S. (2010). Bede and the Rewriting of Sanctity. *The Haskins Society Journal*, 21, 1-19.

Available at: http://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/his_facpub/1

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Merrimack ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Merrimack ScholarWorks.

The Denis Bethel Prize Essay

Bede and the Rewriting of Sanctity

Sally Shockro

Scholars have often identified texts that influenced the style or content of many of Bede's works, but the resulting text is frequently too far removed from the known sources to suggest a linear connection. In the case of Bede's prose *Life of Cuthbert* (hereafter *VC*), however, the connection between Bede's source material and his finished text is much more direct. Bede acknowledged that the majority of information in his *VC* came from the Anonymous *Life of Cuthbert* (hereafter *VA*) written by a monk of Lindisfarne.¹ Bede not only used the *VA* as a source of information about Cuthbert's life and miracles but also retained, for the most part, the sequence of events from this earlier text. Thus, for the *VC*, we have both the text that was Bede's main source and the finished product of his own writing process. The amount of material that Bede retained from the *VA* allows us to isolate Bede's alterations and examine them as representative of his authorial method and goals. The goal, therefore, is not to understand provenance but mutation: to examine how Bede transformed material from the *VA* into his new text.

Although we know Bede's main source, his purpose in writing the *VC* is unclear. Considering how much of the *VA*'s content and structure Bede adopted into his own text, it appears that he did not consider the Anonymous's information or organization to be faulty. Many scholars have reasoned that the desire for a new *Life of Cuthbert* was rooted both in the needs of the English Church at large and the Lindisfarne community in particular. Catherine Cubitt, on the one hand,

¹ Published in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, trans. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1940). Bede writes of his dependence on the *VA* when he describes the sources for his passages about Cuthbert in the preface to the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*. 'In this respect it is to be noted that what I have written about the most holy father Bishop Cuthbert, either in this volume or in his biography, I took partly from what I had previously found written about him by the brethren of the church at Lindisfarne, accepting the story I read in simple faith.' Bede goes on to attribute his additional information to 'reliable witnesses'; Bede, *EH, Praefatio*, 6–7. For more on the possible and important connections between Bede's *VC* and his exegetical works, see Eric Knibbs, 'Exegetical hagiography: Bede's prose *Vita sancti Cuthberti*', *Revue bénédictine* 114 (2004), 233–52.

perceives Bede's removal of Melrose-centered topography and the addition of a causation-driven narrative as efforts to help reconcile the saint with the possibly contentious Lindisfarne community as well as to aid in the establishment of Lindisfarne itself as a cult center.² Clare Stancliffe, on the other, views Bede's *VC* as an attempt to recast Cuthbert as the ideal Romanized monk-bishop, an effective leader in the affairs of both this world and the next, in contrast to the Anonymous's portrayal of a traditional, Irish-style ascetic who scorns the worldly involvement required by pastoral care.³ Walter Goffart and Alan Thacker each see the troubled politics of the early eighth century – inseparably both political and ecclesiastical – as the motivation behind Bede's decision to write a new *Life*. Indeed, Goffart argues that the rising Wilfridian sentiment necessitated a public statement of power from the Lindisfarne community in the form of a new *vita* of their saint written by a well-known author.⁴ Thacker also roots Bede's new *Life* in the ecclesiastical turmoil of the time and the power that could be generated by a figure who exemplified both unity and reform.⁵ Pursuing a somewhat different line of argument, Walter Berschin argues that Bede undertook his *VC* because, while working on his earlier metrical *Life of Cuthbert*,⁶ he developed abstract ideas about Cuthbert as the perfect holy man,

² Catherine Cubitt, 'Memory and narrative in the cult of early Anglo-Saxon saints', in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Y. Hen and M. Innes (Cambridge, 2000), 29–66. For more on Cuthbert's popularity and role as patron, see D.W. Rollason, ed., *Cuthbert: Saint and Patron* (Durham, 1987). W. Trent Foley also writes that at least part of the impetus for a new *Life* came from the need to realign the spirituality of the Lindisfarne monks along more orthodox lines. Foley goes on to argue that Bede added the new instances of holy and purifying suffering in the *VC* to advocate for a more Gregorian, and therefore Roman, spirituality. W. Trent Foley, 'Suffering and Sanctity in Bede's Prose *Life of St. Cuthbert*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 50 (1999), 102–16.

³ Clare Stancliffe, 'Cuthbert and the Polarity between Pastor and Solitary', in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200*, ed. G. Bonner, D. Rollason, and C. Stancliffe (Woodbridge, 1989), 21–44. Simon Coates also sees the need for an episcopal exemplar at the heart of Bede's purpose in writing the *VC*. Simon Coates, 'The Bishop as Pastor and Solitary: Bede and the Spiritual Authority of the Monk-Bishop', *JEH* 47 (1996), 601–19.

⁴ Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (repr. Notre Dame, IN, 2005), 235–328, esp. at 293.

⁵ Alan Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', in *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner, Rollason, and Stancliffe, 103–22 at 117–22 and Alan Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal of Reform', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. P. Wormald, D. Bullough, and R. Collins (Oxford, 1983), 130–53. For other views on the way in which Bede's new *Life* reflects the desire to create a text that promoted reform and responded to contemporary ecclesiastical concerns, see D.P. Kirby, 'The Genesis of a Cult: Cuthbert of Farne and Ecclesiastical Politics in Northumbria in the Late Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries', *JEH* 46 (1995), 383–97, Carole E. Newlands, 'Bede and images of Saint Cuthbert', *Traditio* 52 (1997), 73–109, and Joel T. Rosenthal, 'Bede's *Life of Cuthbert*: Preparatory to *The Ecclesiastical History*', *Catholic Historical Review* 68 (1982), 599–611. For more on the *VC*'s potential to broaden the appeal of Cuthbert, see Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600–899* (London, 1996), 18–19.

⁶ Bede had also written another version of Cuthbert's *Life* in metrical verse many years before he composed his prose version. Michael Lapidge provides an excellent discussion of Bede's metrical *Life* and his possible motives in writing it; Michael Lapidge, 'Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*', *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner, Rollason, and Stancliffe, 77–93. For a discussion of the earliest surviving

and that these ideas necessitated a prose *Life* for their full realization.⁷ Any explanation of Bede's *VC* must account for both his extensive appropriation of the Anonymous's materials and his determination to write a new prose *Life* of a saint for whom one, written in the saint's own monastery, already existed.

Since Bede took the majority of his material along with its structure and order from the *VA*, it could be argued that Bede was not rewriting the *VA* at all but rather editing a less talented writer's prose. But, as many have noted, there is more to Bede's *VC* than a cosmetic refinish. The changes he made to this text were more than superficial and would have been both obvious and fundamental to his contemporaries. If we are to see Bede's purpose in writing a new *Life of Cuthbert*, we must look not only at what Bede adopted from the *VA* but also at what he removed and altered.⁸ For through a close examination of how Bede worded his version of Cuthbert's *Life* in comparison with that of the Anonymous, we shall gain crucial insights into his larger intentions.⁹

The *VA* contains thirty-eight allusions to the Bible. In some of them, the Anonymous explicitly mentions biblical incidents and words, while in others the words of the Bible are used without note. Broadly speaking, these allusions refer to moments in the Bible that possess a superficial similarity to events in the *VA*.¹⁰ This is not to suggest that the biblical allusions in the Anonymous's work were meaningless either to the Anonymous or to his readers.¹¹ Rather, their presence

manuscript of this text, see Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, 'The earliest manuscript of Bede's metrical *Vita S. Cudberti*', *ASE* 32 (2003), 43–54.

⁷ Walter Berschin, 'Opus deliberatum ac perfectum: Why did the Venerable Bede Write a Second Prose *Life of Cuthbert*?', *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner, Rollason, and Stancliffe, 95–102. Berschin also observes that Bede organized both his prose and metrical *Lives* into 46 chapters (a perfect number) and the broader claim that the modifications of the *VA* in his rewritten text are not simply stylistic but reflect an actual agenda. For another assessment of Bede's purpose in writing the *VC* that also addresses numeric symbolism, see John C. Eby, 'Bringing the *Vita* to Life: Bede's Symbolic Structure of the *Life of St. Cuthbert*', *American Benedictine Review* 48 (1997), 316–38.

⁸ Bede certainly considered his audience when arranging his material. For a discussion of the ways in which Bede's use of Cuthbert's miracles in his prose *Life of Cuthbert* differs from his use of the same material in the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, see Karl Lutterkort, 'Beda hagiographicus: meaning and function of miracle stories in the *Vita Cuthberti* and the *Historia ecclesiastica*', in *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk & Northumbrian*, ed. L.A.J.R. Houwen and A.A. MacDonald (Groningen, 1996), 81–106.

⁹ For other views on what we can learn about Bede's purpose and method from his manipulation of the material in the *VA*, see Lenore Abraham, 'Bede's *Life of Cuthbert*: A Reassessment', in *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 1, 18 September 1976 (Villanova, PA, 1978), 23–32, and Sandra Duncan, 'Signa De Caelo in the Lives of St Cuthbert: The Impact of Biblical Images and Exegesis on Early Medieval Hagiography', *Heythrop Journal* 41 (2000), 399–412. Both Abraham and Duncan see Bede's handling of the biblical material he found in the *VA* as telling of his goals, a view with which I very much agree.

¹⁰ Benedicta Ward has commented on the 'slightly artificial biblical references with which the anonymous author surrounded his account of Cuthbert', as opposed to Bede's more considered selections; Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (New York, 2002), 98.

¹¹ For more on the value of examining what medieval writers removed from their sources in order to understand the conscious construction of medieval writing, see James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory: New Perspectives on the Past* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 144–72 at 148.

appears to have been intended as a continual reaffirmation that elements present in Cuthbert's life and miracles also happened in the Bible, and, therefore, that Cuthbert existed in a paradigm of holiness.

Bede's treatment of the *VA*'s simple, one-dimensional use of biblical allusions is key to understanding his method of writing and his goal for his text. Bede entirely realigned the biblical framework of the Anonymous's text by removing all but one of the thirty-eight references to the Bible in the *VA*,¹² a daunting task considering that these allusions ran throughout the Anonymous's prose. Furthermore, Bede removed from the *VA* both explicit and implicit allusions to Scripture, a powerful reminder of his ability to spot biblical phrasing regardless of its context. Given this invasive editing, how Bede then went about constructing his own *VC* offers even more telling evidence of his intentions. As we shall see, Bede did not remove these allusions to the Bible because he felt that biblical allusions *per se* compromised the text. He himself inserted four dozen new allusions to the Bible, both explicit and implicit, during his reworking of this material.¹³ Rather it was the Anonymous's particular biblical allusions and the associations they created that Bede rejected.

After dismantling the biblical scaffolding upon which his source material hung, Bede rebuilt it, referencing an entirely new set of biblical verses. In some instances, Bede removed one of the Anonymous's biblical allusions only to replace it with another of his own choosing at the same point in the text. At other times, he inserted biblical material at places in the text where the Anonymous had not made any biblical connections.¹⁴ This consistent filtering

Fentress and Wickham see Bede as a writer whose manipulation of his material was purposeful. For a discussion of Bede's ability to alter the tone and style of his prose to fit the need at hand, see Richard Sharpe, 'The Varieties of Bede's Prose', in *Aspects of the Language of Latin Prose*, ed. T. Reinhardt, M. Lapidge, and J. N. Adams (New York, 2005), 339–55.

¹² The one biblical reference in the *VA* that Bede retains in the *VC* is to the Book of Tobias. In *VA* I.iv, the Anonymous describes how young Cuthbert was pained by a swollen knee and was unable to walk. God sent an angel to instruct Cuthbert how to make a healing paste for his knee, and Cuthbert soon made a full recovery. The Anonymous ends this story by noting that Cuthbert had been cured by an angel sent by God 'even as He had healed Tobias when he was blind' ('... sicut cecato Tobie ... curantem dederat') (*VA* I.iv, 68–9). Although Bede added other biblical allusions to his version of this story (Matt 25:29, 2 Macc 11:8), he kept this reference to the healing of old Tobias at the end of his account of Cuthbert's healed knee as well. In light of the spiritual significance that Bede saw in the story of old Tobias's healing at the end of young Tobias's journey, it is not surprising that Bede would have found the similarity too satisfying to remove. From his own *Commentary on Tobias* it is clear that Bede saw the story of the Book of Tobias, which culminates in the healing referenced here, as evidence of God's involvement in the lives of those he loves, a theme Bede attached to Cuthbert. In the *VC*, Bede gives his Cuthbert a moment of recognition of the true identity of the angel much like the one Tobias himself had: 'He recognized that he who had given him this advice was an angel, sent by One who once deigned to send the archangel Raphael to cure the eyes of Tobias'; *VC* ii, 160–1.

¹³ The tally of 49 biblical allusions includes the 48 of Bede's own creation and the one that he retained from the *VA*.

¹⁴ A good example of this is *VC* xxvii. The content of the chapter is from the *VA* (IV.viii), but in the *VA* the text contains no allusions to the Bible nor, indeed, to any other text. Bede adopts this

and reframing of the Anonymous's material exposes Bede's presence as a writer. Indeed, Bede's reworking of the *VA* into the *VC* reveals how heavily his authorial method rested on his management of this biblical material – and how opaque Bede's method would be if we did not possess a copy of the *VA*. This purge of the biblical associations from the Anonymous's material, combined with Bede's interpolation of scores of new biblical citations, says much about Bede's method of writing, and also perhaps something about the nature of writing and rewriting itself in the early medieval world. For if using much the same material and similar words but different biblical references was a 'rewriting', one must wonder how essential these references were to the conception of this work as a new piece.

Yet, Bede did not just remove and replace the biblical passages in those chapters that he adapted from the *VA*. Although the majority of the material that Bede used in his *VC* came from the Anonymous's text, some of it he learned elsewhere, whether from interviews with those who remembered Cuthbert himself or from stories about him current in Northumbria.¹⁵ In these chapters for which we have no textual source, Bede again peppered his narrative with biblical allusions, just as he did those derived from the *VA*. Although in the case of the source-less passages we cannot directly trace Bede's method of writing, we can see that in relation to this material, too, Bede expressed and maintained his agenda in the *VC* through a host of biblical allusions.¹⁶ Let us now look more closely at the transformations that Bede carried out.

As noted above, both the *VA* and *VC* are texts saturated with references to the Bible, sometimes in the form of direct quotations and other times in the form of allusions to biblical imagery. In the *VA*, these references are often explicit, taking the form of a direct comparison between Cuthbert and his actions and an individual or incident from the Bible. These comparisons are often based on some external similarity, and although the Anonymous was perhaps not a masterful author, these associations make clear that he was attempting to create a parallel in his reader's mind between the events of Cuthbert's life and the events in the Bible. For example, in the *VA*, the youthful Cuthbert is reproved

story of Cuthbert receiving a vision of Ecgfrith's military loss and death and adds three biblical references.

¹⁵ Bede tells us this both in the *HE* and the *VC*. '... I also made it my business to add with care what I was able to learn myself from the trustworthy testimony of reliable witnesses': *HE*, *Praefatio*, 6–7. 'These things a priest named Ingwald, a monk of our monastery at Wearmouth, related that he had heard from Cuthbert himself, who was then a bishop. This Ingwald now, thanks to a lengthy old age, no longer with carnal eyes gazes on things earthly, but rather, with a pure heart, contemplates things heavenly': *VC* v, 170–1. It is curious that Bede would attribute the story to Ingwald in a chapter of the *VC* so clearly informed by the corresponding chapter of the *VA*.

¹⁶ Chapters in the *VC* which do not have their source in the *VA* also possess biblical allusions. For example, see *VC* viii and ix. There is an uncharacteristic section of the *VC*, however, stretching from *VC* xxx to xxxiii, which contains content that does not appear in the *VA*, has no allusions to the Bible or any other text, and begins the longest stretch without reference to the Bible in the *VC* (lasting through c. xxxvi – although some of the intervening material came from the *VA*).

by another child for his frolicking because it was not suitable behavior for one who would someday hold such a distinguished position (see Table 1).¹⁷ Young Cuthbert did not understand the other child's inspired words but remembered them nonetheless. The Anonymous author wrote that Cuthbert's remembrance of the other child's prophecy (that Cuthbert would someday hold a high office) was much like Mary's recollection of the prophecies she heard, but only partially understood, about her own child.¹⁸ Already the Anonymous's comparison (Cuthbert/Mary) is unusual, to say the least. Instead of focusing on those about whom the prophecies were made (Cuthbert/Jesus), he has instead looked to those who remember half-understood prophecies that predict future spiritual greatness. Although there is nothing objectionable in this comparison, it does little to further the reader's understanding of Cuthbert as a saint or as imitating the figure of Christ.

The Anonymous was not content with the Cuthbert/Mary comparison; he went on to say that God often graciously makes known his chosen ones before their own works declare their holiness,¹⁹ and then quoted the words of the prophecy of Malachi: 'Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated.'²⁰ The brothers Jacob and Esau, and their respective descendants, received different treatment from God: Esau's descendants were punished justly, but Jacob's children were chosen by God for favor, not because they merited it – in fact they were frequently unappreciative – but simply because God chose them. This passage from the Bible highlights the unpredictable nature of God's favor: sometimes it is earned, and sometimes it is given to those who have done little to deserve it. But the snippet that the Anonymous quoted appears to showcase a capricious God rather than to reinforce the Anonymous's larger point that the gifted (in this case the prophet Malachi) can sometimes see whom God has chosen, even if the subject of God's choice himself remains unaware.

There is nothing in itself inappropriate in the Anonymous using this biblical verse to make this point, but neither is it very effective. For those who knew the verse casually, the point that the Anonymous was laboring over in this chapter might be made: for reasons mankind cannot know, God chooses special people,

¹⁷ 'O holy Bishop and priest Cuthbert, these unnatural tricks done to show off your agility are not befitting to you or your high office': *VA* I.iii, 64–5. For more on the figure of Cuthbert and episcopal expectations, see Simon Coates, 'The construction of episcopal sanctity in early Anglo-Saxon England: the impact of Venantius Fortunatus', *Hist. Res.* 71:174 (1998), 1–13.

¹⁸ 'Revertensque ad domum suam, prophetiae verba in mente retinens, sicut sancta Maria omnia verba praedicta de Iesu memorans conservabat': *VA* I.iii, 66–7. Compare Luke 2:51: 'Et descendit cum eis et venit Nazareth et erat subditus illis et mater eius conservabat omnia verba haec in corde suo.' Although the Anonymous made the comparison explicit by explaining the similarity he saw between the texts, he also replicated the words 'omnia verba' and 'conservabat' of the verse. Even if this replication may seem excessive, it proves that the Anonymous understood the purpose of such verbal echoes and could execute them well.

¹⁹ 'Behold, brethren, how even before he is recognized by the performance of his works, he is shown by the providence of God to be elect; ...': *VA* I.iii, 66–7.

²⁰ For a comparison of the texts, see Table 1.

sometimes clearly marked, to carry his message. But those who knew the chapter more thoroughly might be unclear as to why an instance of God punishing those who behaved poorly and rewarding those who behaved only marginally better, would give insight into any aspect of Cuthbert's story. Cuthbert's behavior is impeccable and his sanctity undeniable, meaning that God's choice of Cuthbert required no explanation.

The Anonymous then went on to say that both Samuel and David were shown to be precious to God while still children, as were Jeremiah and John the Baptist, who were known to be destined for God's work even before birth.²¹ The Anonymous included all of these examples to stress the point that sometimes God's purpose for an especially important individual is present from childhood, perhaps with the concomitant notion that God's plan was determined long ago, and the child Cuthbert was already a saint who would be revealed with the passage of time. Yet, the Anonymous rendered his presentation less effective by offering examples in great quantity but with little depth. The comparison of Cuthbert to David, Samuel, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist seems excessive, especially when a fuller comparison with John the Baptist alone might have yielded a cogent commentary on the fated nature of prophets and saints.

The two longer comparisons, between Cuthbert and Mary, and the quotation from the Book of Malachi, are likewise puzzling. Both are connected to the moment in the Cuthbert narrative by theme, not meaning, for they both address a general topic that occurs in this period of Cuthbert's life, but neither allusion relates to the actual meaning of these themes in the *VA*. That Mary and Cuthbert both remembered prophecies, and that God can choose to favor whom he will, be it Cuthbert or Jacob, give little to the reader trying to grasp the person and sanctity of Cuthbert. These associations are not so much damaging to the narrative as irrelevant, registering little more than the Anonymous's biblical knowledge. Indeed, their quality is indicative of the other instances in which the Anonymous attempted to link the life of Cuthbert to Scripture.

Later in the *VA*, for example, when Cuthbert was traveling near Chester-le-Street, he was delayed by a storm and sheltered in a hut with his horse.²² They had no supplies, and the hungry horse began to nibble at the thatch of the roof, exposing a packet of food divinely provided for Cuthbert.²³ The Anonymous describes the grass or thatch of the roof that the horse ate in the words of Psalm 128.²⁴ The phrase is only two words (*foeni/faenum tectorum*), yet they are unusual enough in combination to make it certain that the Anonymous used them

²¹ 'Samuel and David are both found to have been chosen in their infancy. The prophet Jeremiah, too, and John the Baptist are said to have been sanctified for the work of the Lord from their mother's womb': *VA* I.iii, 66–7. For further biblical associations, see Table 1.

²² *VA* I.vi, 70–1.

²³ 'As he was praying to the Lord, he saw his horse raise its head up to the roof of the hut and, greedily seizing part of the thatch of the roof, draw it towards him;' ('... oransque sibi ad Dominum, vidit equum capud sursum elevantem ad tecta domunculi partemque foeni tectorum avidè adprehendens traxit ad se.') *VA* I.vi, 70–1.

²⁴ Compare, Ps 128:6: 'Fiant sicut faenum tectorum quod priusquam evellatur exaruit'.

intentionally. The psalm from which the words are drawn tells of the strength of the Church of God and the futile actions of her oppressors. Yet neither Cuthbert nor the English have faced turmoil or oppression as yet in the Anonymous's text (nor has Cuthbert's more abstract spiritual turmoil begun, since his life as a holy man only commences two chapters later). The point of this passage of the narrative was to show that God treated Cuthbert specially, presumably because he was particularly holy and important to God's plan. The theme of Psalm 128 seems wholly unconnected to the action in this chapter of Cuthbert's life on any level; the association rests merely on the presence of roofing thatch and the fact that the Anonymous knew a phrase for it with a biblical pedigree. This appears to say more about the breadth of the Anonymous's vocabulary and his desire to showcase his biblical repertoire than it does about any meaningful spiritual parallels between the texts.

Bede's realignment of the Anonymous's biblical material in these two examples reveals his qualities and agenda as a writer. We have already noted that these were both events into which the Anonymous inserted biblical allusions of questionable quality; in both cases Bede removed all of these allusions. In Bede's version of the *Life*, the story begins with the very young Cuthbert being rebuked by another boy for his childish ways because they were unbecoming to one of his elevated spiritual status (see Table 2).²⁵ Bede attributes Cuthbert's childish behavior to his ignorance of his future life, but he does so using the words of the Bible that describe the prophet Samuel's own ignorance of his gifts,²⁶ removing Samuel's name and substituting Cuthbert's in its place. This was not a comparison but rather a direct substitution, in which Bede rewrote a verse from the Bible substituting Cuthbert for Samuel. Thus, before the end of this first passage of the *VC*, Bede had already poured Cuthbert into the mold of an Old Testament prophet-in-the-making. Bede continued his commentary on this story by saying that his readers should not be surprised that the young child who rebuked Cuthbert used such words, because Balaam, the Old Testament prophet, was miraculously rebuked by his own donkey which had been given the

²⁵ "Why, O Cuthbert, most holy bishop and priest, do you do these things so contrary to your nature and your rank? It is not fitting for you to play among children when the Lord has consecrated you to be a teacher of virtue even to your elders": *VC* i, 156–9.

²⁶ 'For up to the eighth year of his age, which is the end of infancy and the beginning of boyhood, he could devote his mind to nothing but the games and wantonness of children, so that it could be testified of him as of the blessed Samuel: "Now" Cuthbert "did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." This was spoken as a prelude to the praise of his boyhood, for, when he became older, he was to know the Lord perfectly ...' ('Siquidem usque ad octauum aetatis annum, qui post infantiam puericiae primus est, solis parvulorum ludis et lasciviae mentem dare noverat, ita ut illud beati Samuelis tunc de ipso posset testimonium dici. Porro Cuthbertus necdum sciebat Dominum, neque revelatus fuerat ei sermo Domini. Quod in praeconium laudis dictum est puericiae illius, qui aetate maior perfecte iam cogniturus erat Dominum ...') *VC* i, 154–5. 'Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither had the word of the Lord been revealed to him.' ('Porro Samuhel necdum sciebat Dominum neque revelatus fuerat ei sermo Domini') 1Sam 3:7.

power of speech for the purpose of correcting the prophet.²⁷ Here again, Bede used biblical allusions to create a symmetry not only between Cuthbert and an Old Testament figure but also between the characters that surround Cuthbert and those who participate in biblical events.

A few chapters later Bede tells the story of Cuthbert finding the food divinely provided for him on the roof of his shelter.²⁸ In Bede's version of the story, Cuthbert is fasting while on a preaching tour and stops at the house of a religious woman. She urges him to break his fast and eat before he enters a region of wilderness.²⁹ Cuthbert refuses to compromise his fast and goes into the uninhabited area with no prospect of food. Upon finding he could not finish his journey that day, Cuthbert and his horse shelter in a summer hut, resigned to passing a hungry night. But as the horse begins to eat the straw from the roof, a package falls. When Cuthbert unwraps the package, he finds it contains meat and bread, supplied to him from a heavenly source as a reward for his holiness and staunch fasting. That Bede would want to associate this attractive example with a biblical parallel is not surprising but his choice of verses may be. Completely bypassing the food miracles in the New Testament, Bede compared Cuthbert's divine feeding to the divine feeding of Elijah by the ravens, again linking Cuthbert to an Old Testament figure.

At the end of the story of the miraculous thatch, Bede referred to a passage from a psalm which observes that God is watching all mankind and that his Chosen Ones are, in fact, the ones who are always watching back and who fear him.³⁰ After a rather abrupt end and with no further commentary, Bede then tells his reader that he heard this story from a monk who was now dead. This may well have been true, but Bede also knew this story from the *VA* because he adopted almost all of his material (minus the biblical allusions) from it and maintained the order of the *VA*'s version as well. So while Bede may, indeed, have heard this story from a monk, the point of including that fact may have nothing to do with the story's origins. Bede had just told us, implicitly, that Cuthbert was a new Elijah, or at least a new figure in the tradition of Old Testament prophets. Without any explanation, Bede then refers to a psalm in which those who concern themselves with God will be those God chooses for his own. This psalm emphasizes both the connection between God and Cuthbert, and also between God and the pious English. The placement of the psalm suggests that

²⁷ For the comparison see Table 2.

²⁸ *VC* v, 168–71.

²⁹ 'The woman received him and kindly and earnestly begged him to allow her to prepare him a morning meal to refresh him. The man of God refused saying, "I cannot eat yet because it is a fast day."' *VC* v, 168–9.

³⁰ The excerpt from the psalm follows immediately after Bede's comparison of Cuthbert's feeding to Elijah's (ending with '... no man there to minister to him'): 'His eyes are upon them that fear Him and that hope in His mercy, in order that He may snatch their soul from death and feed them in a time of famine': *VC* v, 170–1. Compare Ps 32: 18–19: 'Behold the eyes of the Lord are on them that fear him: and on them that hope in his mercy. To deliver their souls from death; and feed them in famine.'

it was not only Cuthbert himself, but also the faithful of England represented by the deceased monk, who had been chosen because their eyes were fixed on God.

In these episodes of Cuthbert's early unepiscopal behavior and his divinely-given food, Bede found the narrative fully formed in the *VA*, but this was not so for all of the material he adapted. The Anonymous had recounted Cuthbert's entry into the monastic life in a surprisingly short chapter.³¹ Bede's chapter on Cuthbert's arrival at the monastery and his relationship with his mentor, Boisil, in contrast, makes for a much longer episode and one that sets the stage for Cuthbert's later greatness.³² Bede claims to have heard this story from a priest, Sigfrith, who was a witness to the first meeting of Boisil and Cuthbert.³³ In this episode of the *VC*, Cuthbert, determined to become a monk, went to Melrose (instead of Lindisfarne) because he wanted to meet Boisil. Upon arriving, Cuthbert dismounted and gave his horse and spear to a passing servant before he entered the church to pray. Boisil witnessed Cuthbert's actions and was so struck (by a prophetic notion) that, 'foreseeing in spirit how great the man whom he saw was going to be in his manner of life, he uttered this one sentence to those standing by: "Behold the servant of the Lord!" thereby imitating Him who, looking upon Nathanael as he came towards Him, said: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile".'³⁴ Bede tells the reader that this utterance was in imitation of Christ's own greeting of Nathanael recorded in the Gospel of John, after which Christ explained to Nathanael that he had known him even before they had met – which, for Nathanael, was definitive proof of Christ's holiness.³⁵

This biblical allusion in Bede's *VC* is especially interesting because of its similarity to the episode of the child Cuthbert in the *VA*. In that episode, the child Cuthbert remembers a prophecy made about him, just as, the Anonymous noted, Mary remembered prophecies made about the infant Jesus. The Anonymous's likening of the child Cuthbert and Mary had been unhelpful: though not theologically problematic, it neither illuminated Cuthbert's character (either as a child

³¹ The Anonymous opens Book II of the *VA* saying that Cuthbert had decided 'to bind himself by the more rigid rule of life in a monastery' despite the extraordinary holiness in which he lived in the outside world. The rest of this brief chapter describes Cuthbert's personal piety; *VA* II.i, 74–7.

³² Bede's description also attributed an additional motivation to Cuthbert's actions: Boisil's presence. The Anonymous presents a Cuthbert who, moved by his piety, wanted to pursue a more demanding spiritual life. Bede's Cuthbert wants this as well, but he had also been directed to Melrose by a vision and his previous knowledge of the excellence of Boisil, even though many holy men were conveniently located at Lindisfarne: *VC* vi, 172–3.

³³ 'Thus is wont to testify that pious and veteran servant and priest of God Sigfrith, who was standing with others near Boisil himself when he said these words': *VC* vi, 172–3.

³⁴ 'Previdensque in spiritu quantus conversatione esset futurus quem cernebat, hoc unum dixit astantibus, *Ecce servus Dei*, imitatus illum qui venientem ad se Nathanael intuitus, *Ecce inquit vere Israelita in quo dolus non est . . .*': *VC* vi, 172–3.

³⁵ Compare: 'Vidit Iesus Nathanahel venientem ad se et dicit de eo ecce *vere Israhelita in quo dolus non est* dicit ei Nathanahel unde me nosti? respondit Iesus et dixit ei *priusquam te Philippus vocaret cum esses sub ficu vidi te* respondit ei Nathanahel et ait *Rabbi tu es Filius Dei tu es rex Israhel*': Jn 1:47–49.

or an adult) nor introduced a larger theme of the work. But in the *VC*, Bede's comparison was not fruitless; rather it set up the rest of the story of Cuthbert and Boisil in which Boisil teaches Cuthbert the Gospel of John and reveals to Cuthbert the details of his future and of Boisil's own death. Bede's account of Boisil's foresight-filled greeting thus paints Cuthbert as a very special person in God's eyes, as both a type of apostle coming to learn the faith and a premier Old Testament figure ('an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile'). In contrast to the Anonymous's, Bede's choice of biblical reference allows those readers who knew the Bible to have a richer understanding of the saint.

At the end of this pivotal chapter of the *VC* in which Cuthbert enters the monastery at Melrose, Bede described how Cuthbert was fastidious about observing all of the rules of the monastery, in some cases with more zeal than the established brothers.³⁶ Bede's Cuthbert could not forgo food, lest he lose his strength, but, like Samson, Bede reminded us, he would not drink alcohol.³⁷ But Bede did not simply compare Cuthbert to Samson; instead he referred to him as Samson 'who was once a Nazarite'. This detail would draw the minds of those who knew the verse from the Book of Judges to the announcement by the angel to Samson's mother that she would bear a son who would be a 'Nazarite of God', and that she herself should not drink alcohol and should take care as to what she ate.³⁸ Through this incidental tidbit about Cuthbert, Bede connected the habits of Cuthbert with the habits of a figure of strength from the Old Testament, just as the knowledgeable reader could see that Cuthbert was the beneficiary of an inheritance of strength from, or in the manner of, Old Testament figures. Here Bede used the well-chosen and well-placed reference to the angel's visit to Samson's mother to remind us that Cuthbert's own greatness and sanctity had been revealed to many, his childhood playmate and Boisil included, just as Samson's birth was foretold by the angel.

The reference to Samson was an explicit one on Bede's part, but the same passage also contained another much more subtle biblical reference. As noted above, Bede said explicitly that Cuthbert willingly abstained from alcohol, like

³⁶ *VC* vi, 174–5.

³⁷ 'Moreover in accordance with the example of Samson the strong, who was once a Nazarite, he sedulously abstained from all intoxicants; but he could not submit to such abstinence in food, lest he should become unfitted for necessary labour. For he was robust of body and sound in strength and fit for whatever labour he cared to undertake.' ('Sed et iuxta exemplum Samsonis fortissimi quondam Nazarei ab omni quod inebriare potest sedulus abstinebat. Non autem tantam escarum valebat subire continentiam, ne necessariis minus idoneus efficeretur operibus. Erat enim robustus corpore, et integer viribus, atque ad quaecunque volebat aptus exercitia laboris.'). *VC* vi, 174–5.

³⁸ Compare Judg 13:3–7: 'Cui apparuit angelus Domini et dixit ad eam sterilis es et absque liberis sed concipies et paries filium cave ergo ne vinum bibas ac siceram ne immundum quicquam comedas quia concipies et paries filium cuius non tanget caput novacula erit enim nazareus Dei ab infantia sua et ex matris utero et ipse incipiet liberare Israhel de manu Philistinorum quae cum venisset ad maritum dixit ei vir Dei venit ad me habens vultum angelicum terribilis nimis quem cum interrogassem quis esset et unde venisset et quo nomine vocaretur noluit mihi dicere sed hoc respondit ecce concipies et paries filium cave ne vinum bibas et siceram et ne aliquo vescaris immundo erit enim puer nazareus Dei ab infantia sua et ex utero matris usque ad diem mortis suae.'

Samson. What is less obvious is that Bede said this by using the words of a passage from the Book of Numbers in which God tells Moses the way for the people of Israel to be consecrated to the Lord.³⁹ Bede thereby strengthened the association – for the learned reader – between Cuthbert’s actions and the process of a Chosen People consecrating themselves to God. Yet, unlike the reference to Samson, if the reader did not know the verse, he would assume that the prose was Bede’s own. Here in a single sentence we can see the way in which Bede’s two methods of incorporating biblical allusions, one explicit and the other implicit, deepen the meaning of the text.

Although the dozens of biblical references and allusions in the *VC* are spread throughout the text, there are pivotal moments, like Cuthbert’s meeting with Boisil, around which Bede recast Cuthbert’s character through the careful shifting of biblical allusions. Another such moment comes in the middle of the *VC* when Bede spoke about Cuthbert’s struggle to make the island of Farne inhabitable.⁴⁰ Part of Cuthbert’s task was to find a source of water on the rocky island, which he does after prayerfully instructing the brothers where to dig.⁴¹ Bede included in this description a psalm alluding to Moses drawing water from a rock, and, therefore, to the power and glory of God, thereby emphasizing Cuthbert’s affinity with an important figure from the Old Testament.⁴² At the very heart of this story, just as Cuthbert has told the brothers to dig, Bede alluded to a psalm,⁴³ which itself referred to passages in Isaiah and Deuteronomy,⁴⁴ all of which talk about God hovering over his Chosen People to protect them. If Bede’s intention was to imply that Cuthbert was a saint in the mode of an Old

³⁹ Num 6:3: ‘Vino et omni quod inebriare potest abstinebunt acetum ex vino et ex qualibet alia potione et quicquid de uva exprimitur non bibent uvas recentes siccisque non comedent.’ For the similarity, compare Bede’s ‘ab omni quod inebriare potest sedulous abstinebat’ with Numbers’s ‘et omni quod inebriare potest abstinebunt’.

⁴⁰ *VC* xviii.

⁴¹ *VC* xviii, 216–19: ‘At vero ipsa eius mansio aquae erat indiga, utpote in durissima et prope saxea rupe condita. Accitis ergo vir Domini fratribus, necdum enim se ab aduentum secluserat aspectibus, Cernitis, inquit quia fontis inops sit mansio quam adii, sed rogemus obsecro illum qui convertit solidam petram in stagnum aquae et rupes in fontes aquarum, ut non nobis sed nomini suo dans gloriam de hac quoque rupe saxosa nobis venam fontis aperire dignetur.’

⁴² ‘Compare Ps 113:8–9: ‘Qui convertit petram in stagnum aquarum et rupem in fontes aquarum non nobis Domine non nobis sed nomini tuo da gloriam,’ which itself recalls both Exodus 17:6: ‘En ego stabo coram te ibi super petram Horeb percutesque petram et exibit ex ea aqua ut bibat populus fecit Moses ita coram senibus Israel,’ and Num 20:11: ‘Cumque elevasset Moses manum percussit virga bis silicem egressae sunt aquae largissimae ita ut et populus biberet et iumenta.’ That Bede should choose a psalm that recalls this verse of Exodus in particular is especially telling, since this is the verse from Exodus which the Anonymous used in his *VA* and Bede removed.

⁴³ Ps 35:9: ‘They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure.’

⁴⁴ Is 31:5: ‘As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts protect Jerusalem, protecting and delivering, passing over and saving;’ and Deut 32:10–11: ‘He found him in a desert land, in a place of horror, and of vast wilderness: he led him about, and taught him: and he kept him as the apple of his eye. As the eagle enticing her young to fly, and hovering over them, he spread his wings, and hath taken him and carried him on his shoulders.’

Testament figure, then the logical extension of that reading was that the English were the new Chosen People who were being protected by God.⁴⁵

Not surprisingly, Bede drew this story of Cuthbert finding water on Farne from the *VA* but had excised all of the Anonymous's biblical allusions. For the Anonymous's version of Cuthbert finding water on Farne was framed biblically in much the same way as his version of Cuthbert's childhood reproof had been. In both cases, the Anonymous alluded to episodes of the Bible in which the literal events paralleled those of the current action in Cuthbert's life. In this case, as Cuthbert receives water from a rocky outcropping, the Anonymous explicitly mentioned two instances in the Bible when God provided water from unlikely places for holy people in need.⁴⁶ The Anonymous had Cuthbert explain to the brothers that his request for water was reasonable because God had twice previously granted such requests, to Moses and Samson. This was indeed accurate, but beyond the superficial similarity, there is little else to link these biblical events. Samson cried to God for water after he had slaughtered the Philistines and destroyed their crops and trees. At the end of this rampage, which avenged the loss of his wife, Samson received water from God from the jawbone of an ass that he had used to dispatch the final thousand Philistines and hoped the water would revive him before his enemies could overtake him.⁴⁷ Moses was in similarly dire straits. Facing so much unrest from the thirsty people of Israel that he was afraid that they would stone him if he did not provide them with water, Moses asked for and received God's assistance in finding water in a rock in the desert.⁴⁸ This is, to be sure, the same event to which Bede referred, but while the Anonymous referred to the passage in Exodus when Moses is troubled and in peril, Bede chose to craft his reference to this event from the verses of

⁴⁵ Indeed, this passage in which Bede appears to imply that Cuthbert, as an Old Testament figure, is leading the new Chosen People into God's love, is only one of many in Bede's *VC*. In the middle of the *VC* Bede told of Cuthbert's prayers stopping a fire (*VC* xiv, 200–1) and said after this act that Cuthbert perfectly embodied the prophecy from Is 43:2: 'When thou shalt pass through the waters, I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not cover thee: when thou shalt walk in the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, and the flames shall not burn in thee,' a prophecy that concerns the Chosen People being redeemed by God and that these people will be found at the very ends of the earth – a place that Bede believed England occupied.

⁴⁶ *VA* III.iii, 98–9 '... then after his sermon he began to say: "Beloved brethren, you know that this place is almost uninhabitable owing to lack of water; so let us pray to God for help and do you dig this rocky ground in the middle of the floor of my dwelling, because God is able from the stony rock to bring forth water for him who asks; for he once gave water to the thirsty people from a rock when Moses struck it with a rod, and he also gave Samson drink, when he was thirsty, from the jaw-bones of an ass."

⁴⁷ Judg 15:19: 'Then the Lord opened a great tooth in the jaw of the ass and waters issued out of it. And when he had drunk them, he refreshed his spirit, and recovered his strength. Therefore the name of that place was called The Spring of him that invoked from the jawbone, until this present day.' For the rest of the story of Samson's revenge, see Judg 15:1–20.

⁴⁸ Ex 17:6: 'Behold I will stand there before thee, upon the rock Horeb, and thou shalt strike the rock, and water shall come out of it that the people may drink. Moses did so before the ancients of Israel.' For the people's dissatisfaction with Moses because of their thirst, see Ex 17:1–6.

the Psalms, in which the story of Moses receiving water from a rock was an example of the limitless possibility of God's power.

As we have seen, the texts of Bede and the Anonymous author are very close in both their information and arrangement, but I contend that the two authors' use of biblical quotations and allusions suggests that they had fundamentally different visions of the place of Cuthbert, and England, in sacred history and in the purpose and meaning of their texts. The biblical references in the *VA* essentially restate what the Anonymous has stated explicitly in the text. They back up his point but certainly do not make a new one or nuance the reader's understanding of Cuthbert's character. For Bede, in contrast, the web of scriptural connections he created in his rewriting engendered multiple layers of meaning, but meaning that was not available to everyone. For Bede, the literal reading of his version of Cuthbert's life, though essential, was not its sole, nor even its primary, meaning. Indeed, Bede strove in his text to make sure that multiple, simultaneous readings could exist without contradiction or confusion.⁴⁹ To a reader who knew the Bible well and could see the connections between the texts of the *VC* and the Bible, Bede was saying that the saints of England, although doubtless in the spiritual line of Christ, were also, simultaneously, figures in another tradition – that of the prophets, holy men, and warriors of God in the Old Testament. For the reader sensitive to the presence of the words of Bible, the experience of reading Bede's *VC* must have stood in shocking contrast to that of reading the *VA*.

Using the *VA* as his principal source, Bede removed the Anonymous's biblical imprint and added his own. Through this shift in the biblical references associated with the material in Cuthbert's *Life* Bede both exposed his own method of writing (and, indeed, rewriting) and recreated the image of Cuthbert. Biblical allusions provided a lens of interpretation through which the events of a *Life* could be seen, and so when the allusions changed, the meaning changed as well. It was Bede's wholesale alteration of the biblical material in these texts

⁴⁹ This was one of the readings of the *VC* that was available to those who knew the text of the Old Testament but there were certainly others. For those in Bede's audience who knew texts other than the Bible, other readings of Cuthbert's *Life* were possible. For example, those who knew the *Lives* of Benedict and Anthony would have heard some of the phrasing and imagery from those *Lives* infused into episodes in Bede's *VC*. Parallels with Benedict: stopping a fire (*VC* xiv and Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* I.6), birds obey his command (*VC* xx and Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* II.8), superior relics (*VC* xli and Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* II.16); parallels with Anthony (*PL* 73): non-washing (*VC* xviii and *Vita Antonii*, 23), tempting by devils (*VC* xxii and *Vita Antonii*, 20), called on by crowd (*VC* xxii and *Vita Antonii*), death gifts (*VC* xxxvii and *Vita Antonii*, 58), burial-place anxiety (*VC* xxxvii and *Vita Antonii*, 58), farewell speech warning of heretics (*VC* xxxix and *Vita Antonii*, 58), as recognized by Colgrave, *Two Lives*, 341–59. These connections would have served to place Cuthbert himself into the company of the most powerful saints in Christendom. These readings, though simultaneously present, are not contradictory but rather enhance and deepen each other, since Cuthbert could be all of these characters at once and elevated by all of the associations. The most sophisticated reader would have grasped them all, and perhaps others, and seen the fullness of Cuthbert's, and England's, sanctity. Yet even a less skilled reader would still have been able to appreciate the enormous holiness of the saint.

that allowed him to present a new perspective on the place of Cuthbert and England in the progress of sacred history.

Appendix

Table 1

The chapter of the VA in which the young Cuthbert is reproved for his inappropriate behavior and the biblical texts the VA recalls.

VA I.iii	The Bible
<p>Primum quidem ponimus quod in prima aetate accidisse relatu multorum didicimus, ex quibus est sanctae memoriae episcopus Tumma, qui spiritalem Dei electionem predestinatam a sancto Cuðberhto audiens didicit, et presbiter nostrae aecclesiae Elias dicentes, Dum ergo puer esset annorum octo, omnes coaetaneos in agilitate et petulantia superans, ita ut sepe postquam fessis menbris requiescebant alii, ille adhuc in loco ioci quasi in stadio triumphans aliquem secum ludificantem expectaret. Tunc congregati sunt quadam die multi iuuenes in campi planicie, inter quos ille inuentus est, ioci varietatem, et scurilitatem agere ceperunt. Alii namque stantes nudi uersis capitibus contra naturam deorsum ad terram, et expansis cruribus erecti pedes ad coelos sursum prominebant. Alii sic, alii vero sic fecerunt. Interea quidam infans erat cum eis ferme trium annorum qui incipiebat constanter ad eum dicere, Esto stabilis, et relinque uanitatem ioci amare, et iterum negligenti eo uerba precepti eius plorans et lacrimans quem pene nullus consolari potuit. Postremo tamen interrogatus quid sibi esset, clamare cepit, O sancte episcope et presbiter Cuðberhte, hec tibi et</p>	

tuo gradui contraria nature propter agilitatem non conueniunt. Ille vero non plene intellegens, adhuc tamen ioci uanitatem derelinquens, consolari infantem cepit. Reuertensque ad domum suam, prophetiae uerba in mente retinens, sicut sancta Maria omnia uerba praedicta de Iesu memorans *conseruabat*. Videte fratres quomodo iste antequam per laborem operum suorum agnoscat, per prouidentiam Dei electus ostenditur. Sicut de patriarcha per prophetam dicitur, *Iacob dilexi, Esau autem odio habui*. Samuhel quoque et Daud, utrique in infantia electi inueniuntur. Hieremias uero propheta, et Iohannes baptista, in officium Domini a uulua matris *sanctificati* leguntur. Sicut doctor gentium adfirmavit dicens, *Quos autem predestinauit, hos et uocauit*, et reliqua.

et descendit cum eis et venit Nazareth et erat subditus illis et mater eius conservabat omnia uerba haec in corde suo (Luke 2:51)

Dilexi vos dicit Dominus et dixistis in quo dilexisti nos nonne frater erat Esau Iacob dicit Dominus et dilexi Iacob Esau autem odio habui et posui montes eius in solitudinem et hereditatem eius in dracones deserti (Mal 1:2–3)

Priusquam te formarem in utero novi te et antequam exires de vulua sanctificavi te prophetam gentibus dedi te (Jer 1:5)

Quos autem praedestinavit hos et uocavit et quos uocavit hos et iustificavit quos autem iustificavit illos et glorificavit (Rom 8:30)

Table 2

The chapter of the *VC* in which the young Cuthbert is reproved for his inappropriate behavior and the biblical texts the *VC* recalls.

VC i	The Bible
<p>Principium nobis scribendi de uita et miraculis beati patris Cuthberti Ieremias propheta consecrat, qui anachoreticae perfectionis statum glorificans ait, <i>Bonum est uiro cum portauerit iugum ab adolescentia sua, sedebit solitarius et tacebit, quia leuabit se super se.</i> Huius nanque boni dulcedine accensus uir Domini Cuthbertus, ab ineunte adolescentia iugo monachiae institutionis collum subdidit, et ubi oportunitas iuuuit, arrepta etiam conuersatione anachoretica, non pauco tempore solitarius sedere, atque ob sua uitatem diuinae contemplationis ab humanis tacere delectabatur alloquiis. Sed ut haec in maiori aetate posset, superna illum gratia ad uiam ueritatis paulatim a primis iam puericiae incitauerit annis. Siquidem usque ad octauum aetatis annum, qui post infantiam puericiae primus est, solis paruulorum ludis et lasciuiae mentem dare nouerat, ita ut illud beati Samuelis tunc de ipso posset testimonium dici. <i>Porro Cuthbertus necdum sciebat Dominum, neque reuelatus fuerat ei sermo Domini.</i> Quod in praeconium laudis dictum est puericiae illius, qui aetate maior perfecte iam cogniturus erat Dominum, ac sermonem Domini reuelata cordis aure percepturus. Oblectabatur ergo ut diximus iocis et uagitibus, et iuxta quod aetatis ordo poscebat, paruulorum conuenticulis interesse cupiebat, ludentibus colludere desiderabat, et quia agilis natura atque acutus erat ingenio, contendentibus ludo sepius preualere consueuerat, adeo ut fessis nonnunquam, caeteris ille indefessus adhuc si quis ultra secum uellet certare, quasi uictor laetabundus</p>	<p><i>TETH bonum est viro cum portauerit iugum ab adulescentia sua IOTH sedebit solitarius et tacebit quia levavit super se</i> (Lam 3:27–8)</p> <p><i>Porro Samuhel necdum sciebat Dominum neque reuelatus fuerat ei sermo Domini</i> (1Sam 3:7)</p>

nquireret. Siue enim saltu, siue cursu, siue luctatu, seu quolibet alio membrorum sinuamine se exercerent, ille omnes aequueos, et nonnullos etiam maiores a se gloriabatur esse superatos. *Cum enim esset paruulus, ut paruulus sapiebat, ut paruulus cogitabat*, qui postmodum *factus uir*, plenissime ea *quae paruuli erant deposuit*. Et quidem diuina dispensatio primitus elationem animi perilis digno se pedagogo compescere dignata est. Nam sicut beatae memoriae Trumwine episcopus ab ipso Cuthberto sibi dictum perhibebat, dum quadam die solito luctamini in campo equodam non modica puerorum iturba insisteret, interesset et ipse, et sicut ludentium leuitas solet contra congruum naturae statum uariis flexibus membra plerique sinuarent, repente unus de paruulis triennis ferme ut uidebatur accurrit ad eum, et quasi senili constantia coepit hortari ne iocis et otio indulgeret, sed stabilitati potius mentem simul et membra subiugaret. Quo monita spernente, luget ille corruens in terram, et faciem lacrimis rigans. Accurrunt consolaturi caeteri, sed ille perstat in fletibus. Interrogant quid haberet repentinum, unde tantis afficeretur lamentis. At ille tandem exclamans, consolanti se Cuthberto, Quid inquit sanctissime antistes et presbiter Cuthberte haec et naturae et gradui tuo contraria geris? Ludere te inter paruulos non decet, quem Dominus etiam maioribus natu magistrum uirtutis consecrauit. Audiens haec bonae indolis puer, fixa intentione suscepit, mestumque infantem piis demulcens blanditiis, relicta continuo ludendi uanitate domum rediit, ac stabilior iam ex illo tempore animoque adolescentior existere coepit, illo nimirum spiritu interius eius praecordia docente, qui per os infantis extrinsecus eius auribus insonuit. Nec mirandum

Cum essem paruulus loquebar ut paruulus sapiebam ut paruulus cogitabam ut paruulus quando factus sum vir euacuavi quae erant paruuli
(1 Cor 13:11)

cuiquam paruuli lasciuam per paruulum potuisse Domino agente cohiberi, qui ad *prohibendam prophetae insipientiam*, ore *subiugalis muti* rationabilia uerba cum uoluit edidit, in cuius laude ueraciter dictum est, quia *ex ore infantium et lactantium perfecisti laudem*.

Correptionem uero habuit suae uesaniae subiugale mutum in hominis uoce loquens prohibuit prophetae insipientiam (2 Pet 2:16)
Ex ore infantium et lactantium perfecisti laudem propter inimicos tuos ut destruas inimicum et ultorem (Ps 8:3)