SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

The Life of Saint Malachy

Vita S. Malachiae

SABBATISMUS

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153)
Vita S. Malachiae · The Life of Saint Malachy

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PREFACE TO ABBOT CONGAN

1

It has always been worth the labour to write the illustrious lives of the saints, that they may serve as a mirror and an example, and as a kind of seasoning for the life of men upon earth. For by this means they live on among us in some sort even after death, and they summon many of those who are dead while they live, and call them back, to the true life. But now above all the rarity of holiness requires it, and our age, so plainly poor in men. This poverty, indeed, we feel has grown so strong upon us that no one can doubt we are struck by that saying: Because iniquity will abound, the charity of many will grow cold (Mt 24:12). And, as I suspect, he is either here or near, of whom it is written: Want goes before his face (Job 41:14). Unless I am mistaken, that is Antichrist, whom famine and barrenness of every good both go before and accompany. Whether, then, it is the herald of one already present or the forerunner of one about to come at any moment, the want is plain to see. I say nothing of the common people, nothing of the base multitude of the children of this world: I would have you lift your eyes to the very pillars of the Church. Whom can you show me, even among those who seem to have been given as a light to the nations, who from his height is not smoking rather than flaming? If the light that is in you, he says, is darkness, how great is the darkness! (Mt 6:23). Unless perhaps you will say (which I do not believe) that

those give light who reckon gain to be godliness; who in the inheritance of the Lord seek not the things that are the Lord's, but rather their own. Why do I say, their own? Let a man be counted perfect and holy even while he seeks his own and keeps his own, provided he holds back his heart and his hands from what belongs to others. Yet let him who perhaps thinks he has come thus far remember that the same degree of holiness is required even of a heathen. Are not soldiers bidden to be content with their wages, that they may be saved? (Lk 3:14) A great thing indeed for a doctor of the Church, if he be like one of the soldiers; or surely (as the prophet says to their reproach) if it be as with the people, so with the priest (Is 24:2)! What a disfigurement! Is he then rightly to be reckoned the highest who, falling from the highest step, will barely cling to the lowest so as not to be swallowed by the abyss? And yet how rare is even such a one among the clergy! Whom, again, will you give me who is content with what is necessary and despises what is superfluous? Yet a law was laid down by the Apostles for the successors of the Apostles: Having food and clothing, they say, let us be content with these (1 Tim 6:8). Where is this pattern? We see it in books, but not in men. Yet of the just man you have it that the law of his God is in his heart (Ps 37:31), and not in a book. Nor is that the degree of perfection. The perfect man is ready to go without even what is necessary. But I grant you that for nothing. Would that a limit were set to superfluities! Would that we did not crave with-

out end! But what then? Would you perhaps find one who could do even this? That indeed is hard; but see what we have come to. We were looking for a man of the highest excellence, the deliverer of many; and see, we labour to find one who can save himself. The best man today is he who is not too wicked.

2

Since, therefore, the holy man has failed from the earth (Ps 12:2), it seems to me not superfluous to call back into our midst, from among those who were purchased from the earth (Rev 14:3), Malachy the bishop, a man truly holy, and of our own times, of singular wisdom and virtue. He was a burning and a shining lamp (Jn 5:35); yet it has not been put out, only taken away. Who could justly be angry with me if I set it near us again? Nay rather, the men of my age have no cause to be ungrateful to me, nor has any generation still to come, if with my pen I call back one whom the common lot has carried off; if I give back to the world one of whom the world was not worthy (Heb 11:38); if I keep in the memory of men a man whose memory is in blessing (Sir 45:1) for all who will deign to read; if, as I rouse a sleeping friend, the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land (Song 2:12), saying: Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Mt 28:20). Then, too, he is buried among us: this work falls to us in a special way. What of the fact that the saint counted me among his special friends, and in such a place that I believe I was

second to none in this glory? Nor is my familiarity with such holiness without its reward: I have already received the first-fruits. He lay at his end, or rather at his beginning, according to that saying: When a man has finished, then he begins (Sir 18:7). I ran to him, that the blessing of the dying man might come upon me (Job 29:13). And he, though he could no longer move his other limbs, was strong to give a blessing: raising his holy hands over my head, he blessed me, and I possess the blessing as an inheritance (1 Pet 3:9). How then could I keep silent about him? Lastly, you lay this charge upon me, Abbot Congan, my reverend brother and sweet friend, and together with you (as you write from Ireland) all that church of saints of yours. I gladly obey, especially since you ask not for eloquence but for a narrative. I shall take pains that it be clear and plain, instructing the devout without wearying the fastidious. As for the truth of the narrative, I am at ease, since it was made known to me by you, who beyond doubt testify to nothing but what you have found out with the greatest certainty.

I. THE BOYHOOD AND YOUTH OF SAINT MALACHY

1

Our Malachy was born in Ireland, of a barbarous people; there he was brought up, there he was taught his letters. But from the barbarism of his birth he took nothing, any more than the fish of the sea take anything from the salt of their

mother. How delightful it is that a barbarism so uncultivated in our eyes should have brought forth so courteous a fellow citizen of the saints and member of the household of God (Eph 2:19)! He who brings honey out of the rock and oil out of the hardest stone (Dt 32:13), he has done this. His parents, however, were great in birth and in power, like the name of the great ones that are on the earth (2 Sam 7:9). But his mother, nobler in mind than in blood, was eager, at the very beginning of his ways, to make the ways of life known to her little one, valuing this for him above the windy knowledge of worldly letters. For both, however, he did not lack talent for his age. At school he was taught letters, at home the fear of the Lord, and by his daily progress he answered well enough to both, his master and his mother. From the beginning, in truth, he had received a good spirit as his lot, through which he was a teachable boy and very lovable, wonderfully pleasing to everyone in everything. Instead of milk he drank from his mother's breast the waters of saving wisdom, and day by day he grew wiser than himself. Wiser, shall I say, or holier? If I say both, I shall not regret it, for I shall be speaking the truth. He was an old man in his ways, a boy in years, a stranger to boyish wantonness. And although for this he was an object of reverence and wonder to all, he was not found the more insolent for it, as so often happens, but rather quiet and submissive in all meekness. He was not impatient of teaching, nor did he shun discipline, nor weary of reading, nor, lastly, han-

ker after games, which that age above all is wont to hold sweet and familiar. And he advanced beyond all his companions of the same age in such learning as befitted his years. For in the discipline of conduct and the growth of the virtues he soon shone out even above all who taught him; though his teacher in this was not so much his mother as the anointing. At its prompting he exercised himself without sloth in divine things as well: seeking solitude, forestalling the night watches, meditating on the law, eating more sparingly, praying more often. And since his studies left him no time to frequent the church, and his modesty made him unwilling, he would lift up pure hands to heaven in every place (1 Tim 2:8), wherever, however, he could do it in secret. For even then he was careful to shun the poison of the virtues, vainglory.

2

There is a village near the city in which the boy was at school, where his master often used to go, with him as his only companion. As the two of them walked along together, he, as he used to tell afterwards, would hold back his foot and stop his step, and, standing behind his master without his noticing, would spread out his hands to heaven and, swiftly as it were, send up a prayer like a dart; and so, hiding what he had done, he would follow his master again. With pious thefts of this kind the boy often outwitted the one who was at once his companion and his master. It is not possible to tell all the things that adorned his

beginnings with the colour of a good disposition: we must hasten on to greater and more useful things. One thing, however, I will still relate, because, in my judgment at least, it gave a striking sign of hope in the boy, a hope not only good but great. Once, stirred by the reputation of a certain master (for he was famous in the disciplines they call liberal), he went to him out of desire to learn. For, reaching now the end of boyhood, he longed for those studies. But as he entered the house he saw the man playing with an awl and scoring the wall with repeated strokes in some odd fashion. Offended by that sight alone, because it savoured of frivolity, the serious boy recoiled from him, and thereafter did not care even to see him. Thus, though he was most eager for learning, this lover of virtue held it cheap in comparison with what was seemly. By some such prelude the boy was being prepared for the conflict that awaited him at a stronger age; and already he was challenging the adversary. Such, then, was Malachy's boyhood. His youth, moreover, he passed in like simplicity and purity, except that as his age increased there increased with it wisdom and grace before God and men (Lk 2:52).

3

From then on, that is, from the beginning of his youth, it began to appear more plainly what was in the man, and that the grace of God in him was not in vain (1 Cor 15:10). For the diligent youth, seeing how the world lies in wickedness (1 Jn 5:19), and pondering what spirit he had re-

ceived, said within himself: "This is not the spirit of this world. What has the one to do with the other? There is no fellowship of the one with the other, any more than of light with darkness. Mine is from God, and I know the things that have been given me in him. From it comes, for the present still, my innocence of life; from it the beauty of continence; from it the hunger for justice; from it too that glory of mine, the safer for being the more hidden, the testimony of my conscience (2 Cor 1:12). None of these is safe for me under the prince of the world. Then, too, I have this treasure in an earthen vessel (2 Cor 4:7). I must fear lest it strike against something and be broken, and the oil of gladness that I carry be spilled. And indeed, not to strike against the stones and rocks of this crooked and winding way and life is most difficult. Shall I then lose in a moment, all at once, the blessings of sweetness with which I was forestalled from the beginning? Rather I give them back to him from whom they come, and myself with them. For I too am his. I lose my very soul for a time, lest I lose it for ever. And what I am, and all that I have, where would they be as safe for me as in the hand of their Maker? Who is so careful to keep, so mighty to hold, so faithful to give back? He will keep it safely; he will give it back in due season. Without holding back I give myself to serve him with his own gifts. Nothing can be lost to me of all that I spend on the work of piety. Perhaps I may even hope for something more. He who gives freely is wont to repay with interest. So it is. He will even heap up and multiply virtue

in my soul." This he thought, and this he did, knowing that without the deed the thoughts of men are vain.

II. HIS APPRENTICESHIP IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

4

There was a man in the city of Armagh (the very city in which Malachy was brought up), and that man was holy and of very austere life, an unrelenting chastiser of his own body, who had a cell beside the church. There he dwelt, serving with fastings and prayers night and day (Lk 2:37). To him Malachy betook himself, to receive a pattern of life from one who had condemned himself, while still alive, to such a burial. And see his humility. From his earliest years he had had God (there is no doubt of it) for his master in the holy art; and see, he became once more the disciple of a man, he who was meek and humble of heart (Mt 11:29). If we did not know it, he proved it to us by this alone. Let those read this who try to teach what they have never learned, heaping up disciples for themselves though they were never disciples, blind leaders of the blind (Mt 15:14). Malachy, taught by God, nonetheless sought a man to teach him, and that cautiously and wisely. What could he have done, I ask, like this, in which he might at once give and receive a proof of his progress? If Malachy's example counts for little with them, let them consider what Paul did. Did he not judge that his Gospel, which he had

received not from man but from Christ, ought nevertheless to be laid before men, lest perhaps he should be running, or had run, in vain (Gal 1:12; 2:2)? Where he is not sure of himself, neither am I. If anyone is sure of this, let him look to it, lest it be not so much assurance as rashness. But this belongs to another time.

5

Now what had been done was noised abroad in the city, and the whole city was stirred at so unlooked-for a novelty. All were amazed and admired his virtue, the more because it was less usual in a fierce people. Then you might have seen the thoughts of many hearts revealed (Lk 2:35). Most, weighing the deed with human feeling, lamented and grieved that a youth so beloved of all and so delicately reared should have given himself over to such hard labours. Others, suspecting fickleness because of his age, doubted his perseverance and feared a fall. Some, charging him with rashness, were indignant and raged against him, because without counsel he had undertaken a hard thing beyond his age and strength. But he did nothing without counsel. For he had counsel from the Prophet, who says: It is good for a man when he has borne the yoke from his youth; and adds: He shall sit alone and keep silence, because he has raised himself above himself (Lam 3:27-28). The young man sat at the feet of Imar (for that was the man's name), and either learned obedience or showed that he had learned it. He sat, as one quiet, as one meek, as

one humble. He sat and kept silence, knowing, according to the prophet, that the service of justice is silence (Is 32:17); he sat as one who perseveres, he kept silence as one who is modest, save that by that silence of his he spoke in the ears of God with holy David: I am young and despised; I have not forgotten your statutes (Ps 119:141). And meanwhile he sat alone, because he was without companion and without example. For who before Malachy would even have thought of attempting that man's most rigorous way of life? All held it a thing to admire, not to imitate. Malachy persuaded them that it could be imitated, merely by sitting and keeping silence. Within a few days he had not a few imitators, stirred by his example. So he who at first sat alone, the only son of his father, now becomes one of many; from only-begotten he becomes the firstborn among many brethren (Rom 8:29). And as he was first in that way of life, so he was the most exalted in it; and he who came before all shone out above all in virtue, by the judgment of all. And to the bishop and to his master alike he seemed worthy to be promoted to the order of deacon. And they compelled him.

III. ORDAINED, HE ACTS IN THE BISHOP'S STEAD

6

From then on, a levite of the Lord, he girded himself publicly for every work of piety, but most of all for those tasks in which there seemed to be some indignity. His greatest care, in short,

was the burial of the poor who died, because to him this savoured no less of humility than of humanity. Nor did our new Tobias lack the old temptation from a woman, or rather from the serpent through a woman. His sister, shuddering at what seemed to her the indignity of the office, said: "What are you doing, madman? Let the dead bury their dead (Mt 8:22)." And this she threw at him in reproach every day. But the foolish woman was answered according to her folly (Prov 26:5): "Wretched woman, you have the sound of the chaste word, but you know nothing of its power." So the ministry to which he had come under compulsion he held devoutly and exercised untiringly. Hence they judged that the priestly office too should be laid upon him. And so it was done. He was about twenty-five years old when he was ordained priest. If in both his ordinations anything seems to have gone beyond the rule of the canons, as truly it does seem (for he received the levitical ministry before his twenty-fifth year and the dignity of the priesthood before his thirtieth), it must surely be pardoned both to the zeal of him who ordained and to the merits of him who was ordained. For my part, I advise that this be neither censured in a saint nor claimed by one who is not a saint. Nor was the bishop content with this: he also committed to him his own office, to sow holy seed in an unholy people, and to give to a rude people, living without law, the law of life and discipline. He received the charge with all eagerness, being fervent in spirit (Rom 12:11); not brooding over his talents, but greedy for gain.

And see, with the hoe of his tongue he began to root up, to destroy, to scatter (Jer 1:10), day by day making the crooked straight and the rough ways smooth (Lk 3:5). He rejoiced like a giant (Ps 19:6) to run his course everywhere. You would have called him a burning fire, consuming the brambles of crime. You would have called him an axe or an adze, cutting down evil plantings, rooting out barbarous rites, planting those of the Church. All the inveterate superstitions (and not a few were found) he abolished, and whatever malignities, wherever he detected them, had been sent in by evil angels (Ps 78:49).

7

In short, whatever disorderly, whatever unseemly, whatever crooked thing he came upon, his eye did not spare; but as hail strikes the unripe figs from the tree, and as the wind drives the dust from the face of the earth, so he strove with all his might to drive out such things before his face and blot them out from his people. And in place of all these things that excellent lawgiver handed on the laws of heaven. He gave laws full of justice, full of moderation and decency. Moreover he established in all the churches the apostolic sanctions and the decrees of the holy Fathers, and above all the customs of the holy Roman Church. Hence it is that to this day in those churches the canonical Hours are sung and chanted according to the custom of the whole earth. For before that it was not done at all, not even in the city. He himself had learned chant in his youth, and soon had

it sung in his own monastery, when as yet neither in the city nor in the whole diocese did they know how, or wish, to sing. Then Malachy instituted anew the most wholesome use of Confession, the sacrament of Confirmation and the contract of marriage, all of which they either did not know or neglected. And let these serve as examples of such things. For throughout the whole course of the story we pass over a great deal for the sake of brevity.

IV. HE ATTACHES HIMSELF TO BISHOP MALCHUS FOR FULLER INSTRUCTION

8

Since he had the greatest zeal and care for the worship of divine things and the reverence due to the Sacraments, lest perhaps he should establish or teach anything about them otherwise than as the rite of the universal Church holds, it came into his mind to go to Bishop Malchus, who would instruct him more fully in everything. He was an old man full of days and of virtues, and the wisdom of God was in him. Irish by birth, he had lived in England in the habit and profession of a monk in the monastery of Winchester; from there he was taken to be bishop in Lismore, a city of Munster, and the noblest among the others of that kingdom. There such grace was bestowed on him from above that he was renowned not only for his life and teaching but also for signs. Of these I set down two by way of example, so that all may know what kind of teacher Malachy

had in the science of the saints. A boy out of his mind, one of those they call lunatics, he healed with the holy anointing while confirming him. This was so well known and certain that he soon made him porter of his house, and the same boy lived on in that office in good health until he reached manhood. He restored hearing to a deaf man, who confessed that something wonderful happened to him in it: when the saint put a finger into each of his ears, he felt as it were two little pigs come out of them. As his fame spread because of these and like deeds, he gained a great name, so that Scots and Irish flocked to him, and he was honoured by all as the one father of all. To him, then, Malachy came safely, having received the blessing of his father Imar and been sent by his bishop, and he was kindly received by the old man; and he stayed with him some years, to drink more fully, during that stay, from that veteran breast, knowing that it is written: In the ancients is wisdom (Job 12:12). But I think there was also this further reason for it: that the great Provider of all things willed that his servant Malachy, who was to be of service to all, should become known to all in so famous a place. For he could not fail to be loved by those to whom he became known. In fact, one thing happened meanwhile through which, in some measure, what was known to God in him was made manifest to men.

9

A quarrel arose between the king of Munster (which is the southern part of Ireland) and his

brother; the brother got the upper hand, and the king, driven from his kingdom, took refuge with Bishop Malchus. Not, however, in order to recover his kingdom by his help; rather the devout prince gave place to wrath (Rom 12:19), and turned necessity into virtue, choosing to lead a private life. And when the bishop was preparing to receive the king with due honour, he refused, saying that he would rather be as one of those poor brethren who lived with him, lay aside royal pomp and be content with the common poverty, and wait for the will of the Lord rather than recover his kingdom by force; nor did he wish, for the sake of his earthly honour, to shed human blood that would cry to God against him from the earth (Gen 4:10). Hearing this, the bishop rejoiced, and, admiring his devotion, granted his wish. What more need be said? A poor little house was given to the king to live in, and Malachy as his master, and for food bread with salt and water. And for his delights the king had enough in Malachy's presence, his life and his teaching, so that he said to him: How sweet are your words to my palate! more than honey to my mouth (Ps 119:103). Besides this, every night he watered his couch with his tears (Ps 6:7), and with a daily bath of cold water he quenched the ill heat of lust in his flesh. And the king, praying, said with the King: See my lowliness and my toil, and forgive all my sins (Ps 25:18). And God did not turn away his prayer, nor his mercy from him (Ps 66:20). And his prayer was heard, though otherwise than he himself intended. For he was anxious for his soul;

but God, the avenger of innocence, wishing to show men that there is a posterity for the peaceable man (Ps 37:37), was meanwhile preparing to do justice to him who suffered wrong (Ps 146:7), a thing he did not hope for at all. And God stirred up the spirit of a neighbouring king: for Ireland is not one kingdom, but is divided into many. He then, seeing what had been done, was filled with zeal: indignant on the one hand at the licence of the plunderers and the insolence of the proud, and pitying on the other the desolation of the kingdom and the downfall of the king, he went down to the poor man's little cell; he urged him to return, but did not persuade him. Yet he presses him, promises help, urges him not to doubt of success; he promises that God will be with them, whom all his adversaries will not be able to resist (Lk 21:15). He sets before him also the oppression of the poor and the laying waste of his country, and makes no headway.

10

But when the bishop's command and Malachy's counsel were added, on which he wholly depended, at last, though barely, he consented. The king follows the king, and at the king's word, as was the will in heaven (1 Macc 3:60), the plunderers were driven out with all ease, and the man was brought back to his own amid the rejoicing of his people, and restored to his kingdom. From that time that king loved Malachy and always revered him, and the more readily because he had found in the holy man

more fully what was worthy of veneration and love. For he could not be ignorant of the holiness of one whose close friendship he had been granted in his adversity. Therefore all the more in his prosperity he honoured him with lasting friendship and devoted service, and heard him gladly, and when he had heard him did many things (Mk 6:20). Enough of this. Yet I do not think it happened by chance that the Lord already then so magnified him in the sight of kings; but because he was to him a vessel of election, to carry his name before kings and princes (Acts 9:15).

V. BY OFFERING THE SACRIFICE HE HELPS HIS DEAD SISTER

11

Meanwhile that sister of his of whom we spoke before died. Nor must we pass over the visions he saw concerning her. The saint had shuddered at her carnal life, and with such zeal that he vowed he would not see her while she lived in the flesh. But when she was loosed from the flesh, the vow was loosed, and he began to see in the spirit her whom he had refused to see in the body. One night he heard in a dream a voice telling him that his sister was standing outside in the courtyard, and that for thirty whole days she had tasted nothing; and waking, he quickly understood for want of what food she was wasting away. And carefully reckoning the number of days he had heard, he found that it was exactly the time since

he had last offered for her the living Bread from heaven. Then he, who hated not his sister's soul but her sin, took up again the kindness he had broken off. Nor was it in vain. Not long after, she appeared to him to have reached the threshold of the church, but not yet able to enter; she appeared, moreover, in a dark garment. And as he persevered, taking care that on no day should she be cheated of the accustomed alms, he saw her a second time in a garment almost white, admitted now within the church, but not allowed to touch the altar. The third time, at last, she was seen joined to the company of those robed in white, and in a white garment. Do you see, reader, how much the unceasing prayer of the just man (Jas 5:16) avails? Truly the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent bear it away (Mt 11:12). Does it not seem to you that Malachy's prayer played in some sort the part of a housebreaker at the gates of heaven, when a sinful woman obtained by her brother's arms what was denied to her own merits? This violence, good Jesus, you who suffer it also do it, mighty and loving to save, showing mercy and might with your arm, and keeping it in your Sacrament for the saints who are on earth, until the consummation of the world. This Sacrament, plainly, is mighty to consume sins, to overthrow the powers that stand in the way, to bring into heaven those who return from earth.

VI. HE RESTORES THE RUINED MONASTERY OF BANGOR

12

So, then, the Lord in the district of Lismore was preparing his beloved Malachy for the glory of his name. But those who had sent him, no longer able to bear his absence, recalled him by letters. When he had been restored to his own, and better instructed now in all that was needful, behold a work prepared and kept by God for Malachy. A rich and powerful man who held the place of Bangor and its possessions, inspired by God, at once gave everything he had into his hands, and himself as well. And he was his uncle. But with Malachy kinship of the spirit counted for more than kinship of the flesh. The chief also handed over to him the very place of Bangor, from which he took his name, that he might build a monastery there, or rather rebuild one. For under its first father, Comgall, it had been most renowned, the begetter of many thousands of monks, the head of many monasteries. A place truly holy and fruitful in saints, bearing fruit to God most abundantly, so that one of the sons of that holy congregation, Luanus by name, is said by himself alone to have founded a hundred monasteries. I mention this so that from this one example the reader may gather how vast was the rest of the multitude. In short, its offspring so filled Ireland and Scotland that those verses of David seem to have sung beforehand of those times above all: You have visited the earth and watered it abundantly; you have greatly enriched it. The river of God is filled with water; you have prepared their food, for so is its preparation. Wa-

ter its furrows abundantly, multiply its offspring; in its showers it shall rejoice as it springs up (Ps 65:10-11). And so on with the verses that follow. And not only into the lands named, but into foreign regions too, those swarms of saints poured themselves out as in a flood. One of them, Saint Columbanus, coming up into these Gallic parts of ours, built the monastery of Luxeuil, and became there a great people. They say it was so great that, with choirs succeeding one another in turn, the solemn offices were kept up without a break, so that not a moment of day or night was empty of praise.

13

Let this be said of the ancient glory of the monastery of Bangor. This monastery, destroyed long ago by pirates, Malachy embraced, as one about to replant a paradise, because of the mark of its ancient dignity, and because many bodies of saints slept there. For, to say nothing of those who were buried in peace, they say that nine hundred were killed together by pirates in a single day. The possessions of that place were indeed vast; but Malachy, content with the holy place alone, gave up all the possessions and lands to another. For from the time the monastery was destroyed there had always been someone to hold it with its possessions. For they were even appointed by election and were called abbots, keeping in name, though not in fact, what had once existed. And though many urged him not to alienate the possessions but to keep the whole

together for himself, this lover of poverty would not consent; but he had someone elected according to custom to hold them, keeping the place, as we have said, for himself and his own. And perhaps, as appeared afterwards, he would have done more wisely to keep the whole, had he not looked more to his humility than to peace.

14

So, at the bidding of his father Imar, he took with him about ten brethren, came to the place, and began to build. There one day, as he himself was cutting with an axe, one of the workmen by chance carelessly stepped into the spot where the blow was aimed, just as he swung the axe in the air; and it fell on his backbone, with all the force he had been able to put into the stroke. The man fell; all ran up, thinking him either struck to death or dead. And his tunic indeed was torn from top to bottom; but the man was found unhurt, the skin so slightly and superficially grazed that scarcely a mark appeared on the surface. The man whom the axe had felled stood there unharmed, while those standing round looked on in amazement. And so they were made more eager, and from then on were found readier for the work. And this was the beginning of Malachy's signs. Within a few days the oratory was finished, of smoothed timbers, but fitly and firmly put together, an Irish work, and fair enough. And from then on God has been served in it as in the days of old, with like devotion, though not in equal numbers. Malachy presided over that place

for some time, by the appointment of his father Imar, himself the ruler, himself the rule of the brethren. They read in his life how they should live, and he went before them in justice and holiness before God; except that besides the common observances he did many things of his own, in which he went still further ahead of all, and none of the others could follow him to such heights. At that time and in that place a certain man was sick, and the devil, standing by him and speaking openly, urged him never to believe Malachy's warnings, but, if he came in to him, to go at him with a knife and kill him. When those who waited on him learned this, the sick man himself betraying it, they carried word to Malachy to forewarn him. But he, seizing his accustomed weapons of prayer, fearlessly attacked the enemy, and put to flight both the sickness and the demon. The man's name was Malchus. He is the brother according to the flesh of our Christian, abbot of Mellifont. Both are still alive, and now more truly brothers in the spirit. For he, as soon as he was set free, at once, not ungrateful, turned to the Lord in that same place and changed both his habit and his heart. And the brethren knew that the evil one envied their good; and they were edified, and became more watchful thereafter.

VII. HE CURES A MAN SUFFERING FROM DYSENTERY

15

A cleric named Michael, suffering from dysentery and given up for lost, he healed in that same place by sending him something from his table. A second time, when the same man was seized by a most grievous illness, he cured him in body and in mind alike. For at once he cleaved to God and to Malachy his servant, fearing lest something worse should befall him if he were found ungrateful once more for so great a kindness and a miracle. And now, as we have heard, he presides over a monastery situated in the parts of Scotland; and this is the last of all those that Malachy founded. Through such things Malachy's reputation and his community grew day by day, and he had a great name at home and abroad, yet not greater than the reality. Indeed he went on living there even after he was made bishop, because the place was near the city.

VIII. HE ACCEPTS, THOUGH UNWILLING, THE BISHOPRIC OF CONNOR

16

At that time the episcopal see was vacant, and had long been vacant, because Malachy would not consent; for it was he whom they had elected. But as they persisted, at long last he gave way, when the command of his master, and of the metropolitan too, was added to compel him. In about the thirtieth year of his age Malachy was consecrated bishop and brought to Connor; for that is the name of the city. But when he had begun to act according to his office, the man of

God understood that he had been sent not to men but to beasts. Never yet, in all the barbarism he had known, had he met their like; nowhere had he found men so shameless in their morals, so savage in their rites, so impious in faith, so barbarous in law, so stiff-necked against discipline, so foul in life. Christians in name, pagans in fact. They paid no tithes, no first-fruits, did not enter into lawful marriage, made no confessions; there was no one at all to be found who asked for penance or who gave it. The ministers of the altar were very few. But what need was there of more, when even those few sat almost idle among the laity? There was nothing in which their offices could bear fruit among a worthless people. For in the churches neither the voice of a preacher nor of a singer was heard. What was the Lord's athlete to do? He must either yield shamefully or fight at his peril. But he who knew himself to be a shepherd and not a hireling chose to stand rather than flee, ready even to lay down his life for the sheep (Jn 10:11), if need be. And though all were wolves and there were no sheep, he stood, a fearless shepherd, in the midst of wolves (Mt 10:16), resourceful in every way as to how he might make sheep out of wolves. He admonished them in common, rebuked them in private, wept over them one by one; now harshly, now gently he dealt with each, as he saw would help each best. For those with whom he made less headway by these means, he offered a contrite and humbled heart (Ps 51:19). How often he spent whole nights in watching, stretching out his hands in prayer!

And when they would not come to the church, he went out to meet them, unwilling as they were, in the streets and squares; and going round the city, he searched breathlessly for someone he might win for Christ.

17

Moreover he travelled often through the country districts and towns outside, with that holy band of his disciples who never left his side. He went and dealt out, even to the ungrateful, their measure of heavenly wheat. Nor did he ride a horse, but went on foot, proving himself in this too an apostolic man. Good Jesus! How much your warrior suffered for your name at the hands of wicked sons! How much he bore from those very men to whom he spoke, and for whom he spoke good to you! Who could worthily tell in how many things he was harried, with what insults he was assailed, with what injuries provoked, how often worn out with hunger, how often afflicted in cold and nakedness (2 Cor 11:27)? Yet with those who hated peace he was peaceable (Ps 120:7), and none the less insistent in season, out of season (2 Tim 4:2). Reviled, he entreated; wronged, he held up the shield of patience, and overcame evil with good (Rom 12:21). Why should he not have conquered? He persevered in knocking, and at long last, according to the promise, to him who knocked it was opened (Lk 11:9). How could what the Truth had foretold fail to follow? The right hand of the Lord has done mightily (Ps 118:16), because the mouth

of the Lord has spoken the truth. Hardness gave way, barbarism grew quiet; and the rebellious house (Ezek 2:5) little by little began to soften, little by little to accept correction and receive discipline. Barbarous laws are done away, Roman ones brought in; the customs of the Church are everywhere received, and contrary ones rejected; basilicas are rebuilt, and clergy ordained to serve in them. The solemn rites of the Sacraments are duly celebrated, confessions are made, the people come together to church, the celebration of marriage gives honour to those who had lived in concubinage; in short, all things were so changed for the better that today there fits that people what the Lord says through the prophet: Those who before were not my people are now my people (Hos 2:25).

IX. HE BUILDS THE MONASTERY OF IBRACH

18

Some years later it happened that the city was destroyed by the king of the northern part of Ireland, for out of the north every evil spreads (Jer 1:14). And perhaps that evil was a good for those who used it well. For who knows whether by such a scourge God willed to blot out the old evils of his people? Driven by this necessity, Malachy too went out with the band of his disciples. Nor was his going out idle. On this occasion the monastery of Ibrach was built, Malachy going there with his brethren, a hundred and thirty in number. There King Cormac came to meet

him. He is the one who, once driven from his kingdom, received consolation from the mercy of God under Malachy's care. And that place lay in his kingdom. The king rejoiced to see Malachy, and placed himself and all he had at the disposal of him and of those who were with him, as one neither ungrateful nor unmindful of a kindness. At once many beasts were brought for the use of the brethren, and much besides in gold and silver was given with royal generosity for the cost of the buildings. He himself, too, went in and out among them, diligent and serviceable, a king in his dress, but in his heart a disciple of Malachy. And the Lord blessed that place for Malachy's sake. And in a short time it became great in goods, in possessions and in persons. There, as though beginning anew, the bishop and master himself bore, more than any, the law and discipline he laid upon others. He himself, when his turn came, served in the kitchen; he himself waited on the brethren at table. Among the brethren who took turns to sing or to read in church, he would not let himself be passed over, but vigorously did the office himself in his place, as one of them. Of holy poverty he showed himself not only a sharer but a prince, emulating it more abundantly than all others.

X. HE BECOMES ARCHBISHOP, OR PRIMATE, OF IRELAND

19

While these things were going on, Archbishop Celsus fell ill (he it was who had ordained Malachy deacon, priest and bishop); and knowing that he was dying, he made a kind of testament, that Malachy should succeed him, since no one else seemed worthier to be made bishop in the first see. This he declared to those present, this he enjoined on those absent, this he commanded especially to both the kings of Munster and to the chief men of the land, by the authority of Saint Patrick. Out of reverence and honour for him, as the apostle of that nation who converted the whole country to the faith, that see, over which he presided in life and where he rests in death, has from the beginning been held in such veneration by all that not only bishops and priests and those of the clergy, but the whole body of kings and princes as well, are subject to the metropolitan in all obedience, and he alone presides over all. But through the devilish ambition of certain powerful men a most evil custom had grown up, that the holy see should be obtained by hereditary succession. For they would suffer no one to be bishop except those of their own tribe and family. And this accursed succession had gone on for no short time, some fifteen generations having already passed in this wickedness. And that evil and adulterous generation (Mt 12:39) had so established for itself this wicked right, or rather this wrong deserving every kind of death, that even if at times clerics of that blood were lacking, bishops never were. In short, there had already been eight before Cel-

sus who were married men and without orders, though men of letters. Hence came all that dissolution of ecclesiastical discipline throughout the whole of Ireland of which we spoke above, the weakening of censure, the emptying of religion; hence that savage barbarism brought in everywhere in place of Christian gentleness, or rather a kind of paganism introduced under the Christian name. For (a thing unheard of since the very beginning of Christianity) bishops were changed and multiplied without order or reason at the pleasure of the metropolitan, so that one bishopric was not content with one bishop, but almost every single church had its own bishop. No wonder: for how could the members be healthy when the head was so diseased?

20

Grieving deeply over these and like evils of his people (for he was a good and God-fearing man), Celsus took every care to have Malachy as his successor, because he trusted that through him the evilly rooted succession could be plucked up; for he was dear to all, all strove to be like him, and the Lord was with him. Nor was he disappointed in his hope. For when he died, Malachy was put in his place, though not at once, nor easily. For behold, from the wicked seed came one to seize the place, Maurice by name. For five years, relying on secular power, he brooded over the Church, not a bishop but a tyrant. For the wishes of the devout had rather come together upon Malachy. Accordingly they urged him to take up

the burden according to the disposition of Celsus; but he, who shunned every height no otherwise than his own downfall, thought he had found a good excuse, in that at that time his entry could not be a peaceful one. All pressed on so holy a work and urged him; above all two bishops, Malchus and Gilbert: the first is the old man of Lismore mentioned above; the other, the one who they say was the first to hold the legation of the Apostolic See throughout all Ireland. Three years having now passed in this usurpation of Maurice and this holding back of Malachy, they could no longer bear the adultery of the church and the dishonour of Christ; and calling together the bishops and princes of the land, they went with one mind to Malachy, ready to use force. But he refused at first, pleading the difficulty of the thing: the numbers, the strength, the ambition of that noble family; it was a great matter for a poor man like him to set himself against so many, so great, such men, so deeply rooted, who for nearly two hundred years had held the sanctuary of God as by inheritance, and now too had seized it beforehand; they could not be rooted out, not even at the cost of men's lives; it was no concern of his that human blood should be shed on his account; lastly, he was bound to another bride, whom he might not put away.

21

But they on the contrary pressed him, crying out that the word had gone forth from the Lord (Gen 24:50); and with all their authority they

commanded him to take up the burden, threatening anathema. "You are leading me to death," he said, "but I obey in hope of martyrdom; on this condition, however: that if, according to your faith, the matter turns out well, and God claims back his inheritance from those who plunder it, then at last, when all is accomplished and the Church is at peace, I may return to my former bride and beloved, poverty, from whom I am being torn away, and put another in my place there, whoever may then be found fit." Mark, reader, the man's virtue and the purity of his mind, neither coveting honour nor fearing death for the name of Christ. What could be purer or braver than this mind, that, exposing himself to danger and toil, he should yield to another the fruit, the very security and peace of the place of authority? This he does when by the agreement he keeps for himself the freedom to return to poverty once the peace and liberty of the Church are restored. When they gave their promise, he at last yielded to their will, or rather to God's, by whom, as he remembered, what he now grieved to see happen to him had long since been foreshown. For while Celsus was already ill, there appeared to Malachy, who was far away and knew nothing of it, a woman of tall stature and venerable countenance. When he asked who she was, the answer was that she was the wife of Celsus. And handing him the pastoral staff she held in her hand, she vanished. A few days later Celsus, dying, sent his staff to Malachy as to the one who was to succeed him; and when he saw it, he recognised it as the very one he

had seen. It was above all the memory of this vision that frightened Malachy: lest, if he refused any longer (as he had evaded it long enough), he should now seem to be resisting the will of God. Even so, he did not enter the city while that usurper lived, lest on this account anyone should happen to die among those to whom he was coming rather to minister life. So for two years (for so long did that man live on) he stayed outside the city and vigorously carried on the work of a bishop throughout the whole province.

XI. HE ESCAPES A PLOT UNHARMED, AND ITS AUTHORS PERISH MISERABLY

22

When that man had been taken out of the way by a swift death, a certain Nigellus, or rather, in very truth, the blackest of the black, seized the see in his turn. And Maurice, while still alive, had provided for his own soul in this, that he should have this man as his heir; so that he who was going out to damnation persisted, through him, in adding to the works of damnation. For he too was of the accursed stock, a kinsman of Maurice. The king, however, and the bishops and the faithful of the land came together none the less, to bring Malachy in. And behold, the counsel of the wicked set against them. One of the sons of Belial, quick to malice and mighty in iniquity, knowing the place where they had decided to meet, gathered many to himself and secretly occupied a high hill nearby, facing it, from which, while they

were busy with other matters, they might fall upon them unawares in a sudden attack and kill the innocent. For they had agreed to slaughter the king as well as the bishop, so that there should be no one left to avenge the just blood. The matter became known to Malachy, and entering the church (for it was near) he raised his hands and prayed to the Lord; and behold, clouds and gloom, and dark waters in the clouds of the air (Ps 18:12), turned the day into night. Lightning too, and thunder, and dreadful blasts of storm threaten the last day, and all the elements menace them with death close at hand.

23

And that you may know, reader, that it was Malachy's prayer that shook the elements: the storm caught only those who sought his life; the dark whirlwind wrapped only those who had prepared the works of darkness. In short, the very man who had been the leader of so great an evil was struck by lightning and perished with three others; and those who had been partners in the crime were companions in death. The next day their bodies were found half-burnt and rotting, hanging in the branches of the trees where the wind had lifted each one and dashed him. Three others were found half-dead; all the rest were scattered far and wide. But those who were with Malachy, though very near the place, the storm did not touch at all, nor did it do them any harm. In this deed we have a fresh proof of the truth of that saying, that the prayer of the just pierces the

heavens (Sir 35:21). And a new example, too, of an ancient miracle, by which once, when all Egypt was plunged in darkness, Israel alone remained in light, as Scripture says: Wherever Israel was, there was light (Ex 10:23). Here too there comes to my mind the deed of holy Elijah, now drawing clouds and rain from the ends of the earth (1 Kgs 18:45), now calling down fire from heaven upon blasphemers (2 Kgs 1:10). And now in like manner God has been glorified in his servant Malachy.

XII. BY STRENGTH OF MIND AND STEADFAST FAITH IN GOD HE SOFTENS THE ENEMIES AND RIVALS ARMED AGAINST HIM, AND WINS THEM OVER

24

In the thirty-eighth year of his age the poor man Malachy, the usurper having been driven out, entered Armagh, bishop and metropolitan of all Ireland. But when the king and the others who had brought him in had gone back to their own homes, he remained in the hand of God, and there remained for him fightings without, fears within (2 Cor 7:5). For behold, the brood of vipers, gnashing their teeth and crying out that they were being disinherited, rose up in full force, within and without, against the Lord and against his Christ (Ps 2:2). Moreover Nigellus, seeing that flight was upon him, took with him certain insignia of that see: the book of the Gospels which had belonged to blessed Patrick, and a staff covered with gold and adorned with most

precious gems, which they call the Staff of Jesus, because the Lord himself (so the belief goes) held it in his hands and shaped it. And these things are of the highest dignity and veneration among that people. For they are most famous and renowned among the people, and held in such reverence by all that whoever is seen to have them, the foolish and senseless people (Dt 32:6) takes for its bishop. The man went about as a vagabond, and like another Satan went round about the earth and walked through it (Job 1:7), carrying the sacred insignia about with him; showing them everywhere, he was everywhere received for their sake, winning over by them the minds of all, and turning away from Malachy as many as he could. So much for him.

25

Now there was a certain chief, one of the more powerful of that wicked stock, whom the king, before leaving the city, had compelled to swear to keep peace with the bishop, taking many hostages from him besides. After the king's departure this man nonetheless entered the city and took counsel with his kinsmen and friends how they might take the saint by craft and kill him; but they feared the people (Mk 14:1; Lk 22:2). And conspiring for Malachy's death, they fixed the place and the day, and the traitor gave them a sign (Mt 26:48). On that very day, while the prelate was celebrating the evening office in the church with all the clergy and a multitude of the people, that wicked man sent to him with peace-

able words in deceit (1 Macc 1:30), asking that he would deign to come down to him to make peace. Those standing by replied that he should rather come to the bishop himself; the church was a fitter place for confirming peace: for they had sensed the treachery. Those who had been sent added that this was not safe for the chief: he feared for his life, and would not trust himself to the crowds, which a few days before had nearly killed him for the bishop's sake. As they argued in this way, the one side that he should go, the other that he should not, the bishop, eager for peace and unafraid of death, said: "Let me be, brethren, let me imitate my Master. In vain am I a Christian if I do not follow Christ. Perhaps I shall bend the tyrant by humility; and if not, I shall still conquer, showing him, a shepherd to a sheep, a priest to a layman, what he owed to me. And you too, as far as in me lies, I shall edify not a little by such an example. For what if I should happen to be killed? I do not refuse to die, so that you may have from me an example of life. A bishop must, as the Prince of bishops says, not lord it over the clergy, but become a pattern to the flock (1 Pet 5:3). And surely no other pattern than the one we received from him who humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death (Phil 2:8). Who will grant me to leave it to my sons sealed with my blood? You shall surely find out whether your priest has learned well enough from Christ not to fear death for Christ." And rising, he began to go, while all wept and begged him not to desire so much to die

for Christ that he would leave so great a flock of Christ desolate.

26

But he, putting all his hope in the Lord, went on with all eagerness, accompanied by only three disciples, ready to die with him; and as soon as he had crossed the threshold of the house and suddenly come into the midst of the armed men, himself protected by the shield of faith (Eph 6:16), the faces of all fell, for dread came upon them, so that the bishop could say: My enemies who trouble me, they have grown weak and have fallen (Ps 27:2). This word is true. You would have seen the victim standing, the executioners standing round on every side with hands armed with steel; and there was no one to sacrifice him. You would have thought their arms were benumbed: so it was that no one stretched out a hand. For even he who seemed the head of the wickedness rises to greet him rather than rises against him. Where, I ask, O man, is the sign you had given for the bishop's death? This is a sign of honour rather than a token of death. This is to defer to him, not to deal him death. A wonderful thing! Those who had prepared his murder offer peace. Nor has he any reason to refuse it, who had sought it even at the risk of his life. So peace was made, and so firm a peace that from that day the priest had his enemy not only at peace with him, but subject to him, and devoted. When they heard of it, all the faithful rejoiced, because not only was innocent blood saved that day, but the souls of many

guilty men too, by Malachy's merits, escaped to salvation. And fear seized all round about, as they heard how God had thus by sudden power laid low two of his enemies who seemed the fiercest and strongest of their generation: I mean the one we have in hand, and the one of whom I spoke above. For the one terribly punished in body, the other mercifully changed in heart, he wonderfully caught both in the counsels they devised (Ps 10:2).

27

This done, the bishop now began to dispose and order in the city with full freedom all that belonged to his ministry, though not without continual danger to his life. For though there was now no one to do harm openly, yet because of those who lay in wait for him no place was safe enough for the bishop, and no time free from danger. And armed men were assigned to guard him day and night; but he trusted rather in the Lord. It was decided, however, to pursue the schismatic already mentioned, because he was leading many astray by the insignia he carried, persuading all that he ought to be bishop, and so stirring up the people against Malachy and against the unity of the Church. And he did so; and without difficulty, in a short time, by the grace given him by the Lord and the favour he had with all, he so hedged in all his ways that the evil man was forced to give in, return the insignia, and remain quiet thereafter in all submission. So Malachy, though through many dangers and

labours, prospered day by day and grew stronger and stronger, abounding in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:13).

XIII. GOD PUNISHES MALACHY'S DETRACTORS

28

Nor did God chastise only those who did Malachy harm, but those who spoke against him too. One man, for instance, who had the favour of princes and powerful men, and even of the king himself, because he was a flatterer and a chatterer and mighty with his tongue, favoured Malachy's adversaries in everything and impudently defended their party; he withstood the saint to his face (Gal 2:11) when he was present and disparaged him when he was absent, meeting him with irreverence in every place, and above all where he knew him to be present at the larger assemblies. But he was soon rewarded with the wages his impudent tongue deserved. His slanderous tongue swelled and rotted, swarming with worms that streamed out over his whole blasphemous mouth; and vomiting them without ceasing for about seven days, at last he spat out his wretched soul along with them.

29

Once, while Malachy was speaking in public and exhorting the people, a certain unhappy woman dared to interrupt his sermon with

shameless shouting, showing no deference to the priest or to the Spirit who was speaking. She was of the impious stock, and, having breath in her nostrils (Is 2:22), she spewed out blasphemies and insults against the saint, calling him a hypocrite and an invader of another's inheritance, and even taunting him with his baldness. But he answered her nothing, modest and meek as he was; but the Lord answered for him. By the Lord's judgment she was turned to madness, and crying out again and again that Malachy was choking her, at last she paid for the sin of blasphemy by a horrible death. Thus the wretched woman, taking up against Malachy the taunt once thrown at Elisha (2 Kgs 2:23-24), truly found him to be another Elisha for her.

30

Moreover, since on account of a pestilence that had broken out in the city he had led the multitude of clergy and people out of it in solemn procession with the relics of the saints, this too must not be passed over: that as Malachy prayed, the pestilence at once ceased. From this time there was no one to mutter against him, those who are of the seed of Canaan (Dan 13:56) saying: Let us flee from Malachy, for the Lord fights for him (Ex 14:25). But this came too late: for the zeal of the Lord, meeting them everywhere, pursued them even to destruction. How within a few days their memory perished with a noise (Ps 9:7)! How they were brought to desolation; they suddenly ceased, they perished because of their

iniquity (Ps 73:19)! Even today the swift blotting out of that generation is a great wonder, above all to those who had known their pride and their power. There were indeed many other signs by which God glorified his name and strengthened his servant amid sweat and dangers. Who could worthily recount them? Yet we do not pass over them all, though we are not equal to them all. But lest the thread of the narrative be broken, we keep for the end some of what we have to tell.

XIV. HAVING RESTORED THE METROPOLITAN SEE TO PEACE, HE RESIGNS IT

31

So Malachy, within three years, having rendered a recompense to the proud (Ps 94:2) and restored the liberty of the Church, with barbarism driven out and the ways of the Christian religion everywhere reformed, seeing all things at peace, began to think of his own peace too. And mindful of his resolve, he appointed in his place Gelasius, a good man and worthy of such an honour, with the consent of clergy and people, or rather with their acquiescence because of the agreement. For otherwise it seemed altogether hard to them. When Gelasius had been consecrated and carefully commended to the kings and princes, Malachy himself, renowned for miracles and triumphs, returned to his own diocese, though not to Connor. And hear the reason, which is worth the telling. That diocese is said to have had in ancient times two episcopal sees,

and to have been two bishoprics. That seemed better to Malachy. And so what ambition had fused into one, Malachy restored into two, ceding one part to another bishop and keeping one part for himself. And for that reason he did not come to Connor, because he had already ordained a bishop there; but he betook himself to Down, dividing the dioceses as in the days of old. O pure heart! O dove's eye! He gave to the new bishop the place that seemed better provided and was held the more important: the place in which he himself had sat. Where are those who go to law over boundaries, keeping up endless feuds with one another for the sake of one little village? I do not know whether that ancient prophecy touches any kind of men more than these: They ripped up the women with child of Gilead, to enlarge their borders (Amos 1:13). But of this elsewhere.

32

Once made bishop of Down, Malachy at once, after his custom, took care to gather to himself, for his comfort, a community of regular clerics from among his sons. And behold, like a new recruit of Christ he girds himself again for the spiritual combat; again he puts on the weapons mighty to God (2 Cor 10:4): the humility of holy poverty, the rigour of monastic discipline, the leisure of contemplation, constancy in prayer; all of which, however, he was able to keep for long in desire rather than in deed. For all flocked to him; not only the common sort, but the noble and powerful too hastened to commit themselves

to his wisdom and holiness, to be instructed, corrected and ruled. And from time to time he himself went out to sow his seed (Lk 8:5), arranging and deciding the affairs of the Church with full authority, like one of the Apostles. And no one said to him, By what authority do you do these things? (Mt 21:23), since all saw the signs and wonders he did; and because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor 3:17).

XV. HE RESOLVES TO GO TO ROME TO ASK THE POPE FOR THE PALLIUM

33

It seemed to him, however, that these things were not being done safely enough without the authority of the Apostolic See, and he resolved to go to Rome; above all because the metropolitan see still lacked, and had lacked from the beginning, the use of the pallium, which is the fullness of honour. And it seemed good in his eyes that the Church for which he had laboured so much should gain through his zeal and labour what it had never had until then. There was also another metropolitan see, which Celsus had newly established, though subject to the first see and to its archbishop as primate. And for this one too Malachy wished nonetheless to obtain the pallium, and to have confirmed by the authority of the Apostolic See the prerogative it had been granted through the kindness of Celsus. When his plan became known, it displeased the brethren, and also the great men and the people

of the land. For all judged so long an absence of the loving father of all to be unbearable, and they feared for his life.

34

Meanwhile it happened that his brother died, Christian by name, a good man, full of grace and virtue. He was a bishop, second to Malachy indeed in fame, but in holiness of life and zeal for justice perhaps not his inferior. His death frightened everyone the more, and made Malachy's departure the more grievous. They said that they must by no means consent to the journey of their only patron, lest the whole land be left desolate if it were deprived of two such pillars at one moment of time. So all with one voice opposed it. And they were using force, when he threatened them with the vengeance of God. Yet they did not desist until lots had been cast and the will of God on the matter had first been asked. Though he forbade it, they cast them nonetheless; but the lot was found to have answered three times for Malachy's side. For they were not content with once, so eager were they to keep him. At last, giving way, they let him go, though not without much weeping and wailing. But that he might leave nothing unfinished, he began to consider how he might raise up seed for his dead brother (Mt 22:24). And calling three of his disciples to him, he was anxiously uncertain which of them seemed worthier, or more useful, for this work. And looking carefully at each: "You, Edan," he said (for so one of them was called), "take up the

burden." When he hesitated and wept, he said: "Do not be afraid: you have been designated for me by the Lord, for I have already seen on your finger the golden ring with which you are to be wedded." He consented; and Malachy, having consecrated him, set out.

35

When he had left Scotland and reached York, a priest named Sycarus looked at him and recognised him. Not that he had ever seen his face before; but since he had the spirit of prophecy, it had been revealed to him long before concerning him. And now, without hesitation, pointing him out with his finger to those standing by, he said: "This is the one of whom I had said that a holy bishop would come from Ireland who knows the thoughts of men." So the lamp could not be hidden under a bushel (Mt 5:15), for the Holy Spirit who had lit it betrayed it through the mouth of Sycarus. For Sycarus also told him many secret things about himself and his companions, all of which he recognised to be, or to have been, so. And when Malachy's companions asked about their return, Sycarus answered without hesitation (as the event afterwards proved) that very few of that number would return with the bishop. Hearing this, they suspected death; but God fulfilled it otherwise. For on his way back from Rome he left some with us and some in other places to learn the pattern of the religious life, and returned home, according to the word of Sycarus, with very few. So much for Sycarus.

36

In the same city of York there came to him a man noble according to the world, Waltheof by name, then prior of the regular brethren at Kirkham, and now a monk and father of monks in the monastery of Melrose, of our order; and he devoutly and very humbly commended himself to Malachy's prayers. Noticing that the bishop had many companions and few horses (for besides servants and other clerics there were five priests with him, and only three horses), he offered him his own, on which he himself rode, saying that he was sorry only that it was a pack-horse with a hard gait. And he added: "I would have given it more gladly if it had been better; but if you will deign to, take it with you, such as it is." "And I," said the bishop, "accept it all the more gladly as you call it the poorer; for nothing can be poor to me that so precious a goodwill has offered." And turning to his own men: "Saddle this one for me," he said, "for he is easy enough, and will serve for a long while." This done, he mounted; and at first he found it hard, as indeed it was, but afterwards, by a wonderful change, he found it very easy for him and smooth in its pace. And that none of the word he had spoken should fall to the ground (1 Sam 3:19), it did not fail him until the ninth year, in which he himself died, having become an excellent and most precious palfrey. And, what made the miracle plainer to those who saw it, from blackish it began to

grow white, and not long after there was hardly a whiter horse to be found.

XVI. ON HIS WAY TO ROME, AND ON HIS RETURN, HE VISITS CLAIRVAUX

37

To me too it was given on this journey to see the man, and by the sight of him and by his word I was refreshed, and I delighted as in all riches (Ps 119:14). And I in turn, sinner though I am, found favour in his eyes from then on and thereafter until his death, as I said in the preface. He also deigned to turn aside to Clairvaux, and when he saw the brethren he was moved to compunction; and they were edified not a little by his presence and his words. And taking the place and us to himself, and gathering us into his inmost heart, he bade us farewell and went away. Crossing the Alps, when he came to Ivrea, a city of Italy, he at once healed his host's little son, who was ill and at the point of death.

38

There was at that time on the Apostolic See Pope Innocent the Second, of happy memory, who received him kindly and felt very humanely for him over his long pilgrimage. And first of all Malachy, with many tears, begged for what he had fixed most deeply in his mind: that he might be allowed to live and die at Clairvaux, by the leave and blessing of the supreme Pontiff. And he asked this, not forgetting what he had come

for, but moved by the longing for Clairvaux with which he had come. But he did not obtain it, because the Apostolic Father judged that the man should rather be employed for richer gains. Yet he was not wholly disappointed of the desire of his heart, for it was granted him to die there, if not to live there. He spent a whole month in Rome, going round the holy places and visiting them often to pray. And when during that time the supreme Pontiff had often and carefully inquired of him, and of those with him, about the state of his country, the customs of the people, the condition of the churches and how great things God had done in that land through him, as he was now preparing to return home he committed to him his own office, appointing him legate for all Ireland. For Bishop Gilbert, who, as we mentioned above, had been legate until then, had informed him that because of old age and bodily weakness he could no longer discharge the stewardship. After this Malachy asked that the establishment of the new metropolis be confirmed, and that the pallia of both sees be given to him. The privilege of confirmation he received at once. "But as for the pallia," said the supreme Pontiff, "that must be done more solemnly. Calling together the bishops and clergy and chief men of the land, you shall hold a general council; and so, with the consent and common wish of all, you shall ask for the pallium through worthy persons, and it shall be given to you." Then, taking the mitre from his own head, he put it on Malachy's; and he gave him also the stole with the maniple which he

himself used to wear when offering the sacrifice. And greeting him with the kiss of peace, he sent him away, strengthened with apostolic blessing and authority.

39

Returning by way of Clairvaux, he bestowed his blessing on us a second time. And sighing deeply because he might not stay as he wished, he said: "These, I pray you, keep meanwhile in my place, that they may learn from you what they may afterwards teach us." And he went on: "They shall be for us a seed, and in this seed the nations shall be blessed (Gen 22:18), those nations too which from days of old have heard the name of monk, but have not seen a monk." And leaving four of his company behind, he went away; and they, having been tried and found worthy, were made monks. Some time later, when the saint was back in his own land, he sent others, and it was done with them likewise. When they had been instructed for some time and taught in heart in wisdom, we gave them holy brother Christian, who was one of them, as their father, and sent them out, adding as many of our own as were needed to make up the number of an abbey. That abbey conceived and bore five daughters; and so, the seed having multiplied, the number of monks grows day by day, according to the desire and the prophecy of Malachy. Now let us take up again the order of the narrative.

XVII. VARIOUS GIFTS OF HEALING GRANTED THROUGH HIM

40

Malachy, setting out from us, came safely to Scotland. And he found King David, who is still alive today, at one of his castles; and his son was sick unto death. He went in to him, was received with honour by the king and humbly entreated to heal his son; he sprinkled the young man with water he had blessed, and looking at him said: "Take heart, son, you will not die this time." He said this; and on the next day, according to the prophet's word, health followed, and upon health the father's joy, and the shouting and clamour of the whole rejoicing household. The word went out to all; for what had happened in the royal house and to the king's son could not be hidden. And behold, everywhere there resounded thanksgiving and the voice of praise, both for the recovery of their lord and for the novelty of the miracle. This is Henry; for he still lives, his father's only son, a brave and prudent knight, taking after his father, they say, in pursuing justice and in his love for the man of God. And both of them loved Malachy as long as he lived, as one who had called the son back from death. They begged him to stay some days; but he, shunning glory, would not suffer delay, and in the morning went on his way. As he passed through a village called Crugeldum, a dumb girl met him. As he prayed, the bond of her tongue was loosed, and she spoke rightly (Mk 7:35). Then, entering

a village they call the Church of Saint Michael, he cured before all the people a frenzied woman brought to him bound with ropes, and, having sent her away sound, went on. Coming to the port of Laperasperi, he waited there some days for a crossing; but the delay did not pass idly at all. Meanwhile an oratory is built of rods woven into a fence, he himself ordering it and working at it as well. When it was finished he surrounded it with a rampart, and blessed the space within as a cemetery. The merits of him who blessed it are made plain enough by the miracles which, it is said, are worked there to this day.

41

Hence it is that people from the neighbouring places are wont to bring the sick and ailing there, and many are healed. A woman with all her limbs paralysed, carried there in a cart, went home on her own feet, having waited in the holy place for the mercy of the Lord, and not in vain, for a single night. Another woman was spending the night there in prayer, when a barbarous man, happening to find her alone, inflamed with lust and not master of himself, rushed upon her in a frenzy. She turned, trembling, and, looking up, saw that the man was full of a devilish spirit. "Ho there," she said, "wretch, what are you doing? Consider where you are; reverence these holy things; defer to God, defer to his servant Malachy, and spare yourself too." He did not stop, driven on by wicked furies. And behold (dreadful to tell) a venomous, swollen creature, which they call a

toad, was seen crawling out from between the woman's thighs. What more need be said? Terrified, the man sprang back and, in a few leaps, rushed out of the oratory. He went away confounded, and she remained untouched, by a great miracle of God and by the merit of Malachy. And fittingly, in a foul and abominable deed, a foul and abominable monster intervened. It was not at all fitting that bestial lust should be quenched otherwise than by a most cold reptile, nor that rash daring should be curbed and its attempt frustrated otherwise than by a vile and useless little beast. And for this place let these few out of many suffice; now let us go on with the rest.

XVIII. RETURNING TO HIS COUNTRY, HE GIVES HIMSELF WHOLLY TO PASTORAL CARE AND REFORM

42

Malachy went on board ship and, with a prosperous voyage, put in at his monastery of Bangor, so that his first sons might receive the first grace. What do you think they felt, when their father was given back to them safe from so long a journey, and such a father? No wonder if their whole hearts poured themselves out in joy at his return, when swift rumour soon brought incredible gladness even to the foreign peoples round about. In short, from cities and castles and villages they run to meet him; and wherever he turns aside he is received with the rejoicing of the whole land. Yet the honour has no savour for him.

The work of the legation is carried out: many assemblies are held in many places, lest any region, or part of a region, be cheated of the fruit and benefit of the legation. He sows beside all waters (Is 32:20); there is no one who can hide himself from the work of his care. No account is taken of sex, age, condition or calling. Everywhere the saving seed is scattered, everywhere the heavenly trumpet thunders. Everywhere he runs about, everywhere he breaks in, with the sword of his tongue drawn, to execute vengeance upon the nations and rebukes upon the peoples (Ps 149:7). The terror of him is upon evildoers. He cries to the wicked, Do not act wickedly; and to the sinners, Do not lift up the horn (Ps 75:5). Religion is everywhere planted, spread and cherished. His eyes are upon them, and his care is for their needs. In the councils held here and there ancient traditions are revived, such as were shown to have been good but had fallen into disuse through the negligence of priests. And not only are old things restored; new ones are framed as well; and whatever he promulgated was accepted as if sent down from heaven, held fast, and committed to writing for the memory of those to come. Why should they not be believed sent from heaven, when so many heavenly miracles confirm them? And to win belief for what I say, I will touch briefly on a few. For who could recount them all? Though I confess I would more gladly dwell on what is to be imitated than on what is to be admired.

XIX. THE MARKS OF HIS VIRTUES, AND A WAY OF LIFE WORTHY OF A TRUE PRELATE

43

And in my judgment the first and greatest miracle that he worked was himself. For, to say nothing of his inner man, whose beauty, strength and purity his conduct and his life showed well enough, he bore his outward self always in one and the same manner, and that most modest and seemly, so that nothing whatever appeared in him that could offend those who looked on him. And indeed he who does not offend in word is a perfect man (Jas 3:2). But who ever, however curiously he watched, caught Malachy in an idle —I do not say word, but even gesture? Who ever saw him move hand or foot to no purpose? Nay, what was there in his gait, his look, his bearing, his countenance, that did not edify? In short, the cheerfulness of his face was neither darkened by sadness nor made light by laughter. All in him was disciplined, all a mark of virtue, a pattern of perfection. Serious in all things, but not austere. Relaxed at times, never dissolute. Neglecting nothing, though for the time being overlooking much. Often at rest, but never at any time idle. From the first day of his conversion to the end of his life he lived without anything of his own. He had no menservants, no maidservants, no estates, no villages, nor, in short, any revenue, ecclesiastical or secular, even in his bishopric itself. Nothing at all had been established or assigned to the episcopal table on which the bishop

might live. For he had not even a house of his own. He was almost ceaselessly going round all the parishes, serving the Gospel and living by the Gospel, as the Lord ordained for him, saying: The labourer is worthy of his hire (Lk 10:7). Except that more often, making the Gospel itself without charge (1 Cor 9:18), he took from his own labours and those of his companions the means to support himself and those who laboured with him in the work of the ministry. If at times he needed to rest, he did so in the holy places he himself had scattered through all Ireland; and with whomever he chose to stay, he conformed himself to their customs and observances, content with the common life and table. There was nothing in his food, nothing in his clothing, by which Malachy could have been told apart from the other brethren: so much, being greater, did he humble himself in all things.

44

In short, when he went out to preach, he too went on foot with those on foot, bishop and legate though he was. This is the apostolic pattern; and it is the more wonderful in Malachy, the rarer it is in others. Truly he is the heir of the apostles who does such things. But one may notice how he divides the inheritance with his brethren, who are no less the descendants of the Apostles. They lord it over the clergy: he, though he was free of all, made himself the servant of all (1 Cor 9:19). They either eat without preaching the Gospel, or preach the Gospel in order

to eat: Malachy, imitating Paul, eats in order to preach the Gospel. They reckon pomp and gain to be godliness: Malachy claims as his inheritance the work and the burden. They think themselves happy if they have enlarged their borders: Malachy glories in enlarging charity. They gather into barns and fill their casks to load their tables: Malachy gathers into deserts and solitudes, to fill the heavens. They, though they receive tithes and first-fruits and offerings, and besides, by Caesar's favour, tolls and tributes and countless other revenues, are anxious nonetheless what they shall eat and what they shall drink (Mt 6:31): Malachy, having none of these things, yet enriches many from the storehouse of faith. For them there is no end of greed or of anxiety; Malachy, desiring nothing, yet knows not how to take thought for the morrow (Mt 6:34). They exact from the poor what they give to the rich: he solicits the rich for the support of the poor. They empty the purses of their subjects: he heaps the altars with vows and peace offerings for their sins. They raise lofty palaces and lift towers and walls to the skies; Malachy, not having where to lay his head (Mt 8:20), does the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5). They ride on horses with a crowd of men eating bread for nothing, and not their own; Malachy, surrounded by a company of holy brethren, goes round on foot carrying the bread of angels (Ps 78:25) with which to satisfy hungry souls. They do not even know their people: he instructs them. They honour the powerful and tyrants: he punishes them. O apostolic man, ennobled by so

many and such signs of his apostleship! What wonder, then, if he worked wonders, being himself so wonderful? Nay rather, not he, but God in him. For, as it says, You are the God who works wonders (Ps 77:15).

XX. HE FREES THOSE POSSESSED AND TORMENTED BY DEMONS

45

There was a woman in the city of Coleraine who had a demon. Malachy was called; he prays for the captive, he presses the invader; it comes out. But, its wickedness not yet sated, it invades a poor little woman who happened to be standing near. And Malachy said: "I did not take that one from you so that you might seize this one: come out of her too." It obeys, but goes back to the first. Driven from her again, it runs back into the other. So for some time it tormented them by turns, fleeing now to one, now to the other. Then the saint, indignant at being mocked by a demon, gathered his spirit, groaned, and making an onslaught on the adversary with all the strength of his faith, drove it out of both; and indeed it was no less tormented than those it had tormented. But do not think, reader, that the saint's delay was owing to his power, but to God's dispensation: so that by it both the presence of the evil one and Malachy's victory might be made the plainer. Now hear what he did elsewhere, and not by his presence. And certainly what he could do when absent he could do when present.

46

In a district of the northern part of Ireland a sick man lay in a house, beyond doubt through the witchcraft of demons. For one night he heard them talking, one saying to the other: "Take care that this wretch does not touch that hypocrite's bed or straw, and so escape our hands." The man knew that they were speaking of Malachy, who, he remembered, had spent the night in that same house not long before. And the straw was still in its place; taking courage, and with what effort he could, he began to crawl, weak in body but strong in faith. And behold, in the air a shouting and clamour: "Stop him, stop him! Hold him, hold him! We are losing our prey!" But he, carried by faith and the desire to escape, the more they shouted, the more he struggled on with hands and knees and hastened to the remedy. And reaching it, he climbed onto the bed, rolled in the straw, and heard the howling of them as they lamented: "Alas, alas! We have betrayed ourselves; we are cheated; he has escaped!" And quicker than words the terror and horror of the demons that he was suffering left him, and all his sickness with it. In the city of Lismore a man tormented by a demon was set free through Malachy. Again, once as he was passing through Leinster, a child who had a demon was brought to him, and was carried home sound. In the same district he ordered a frenzied woman bound with ropes to be loosed and washed in water he had blessed. She was washed, and she was healed.

Another woman too, at Saul in the district of Ulidia, who was tearing her own limbs with her teeth, he cured by praying and touching her. A madman who foretold many things to come was brought to the man of God by his friends and kinsmen, bound fast with ropes, because his very frenzy had made him strong to do harm, and very terrible. Malachy prays; and at once the sick man is healed and set loose. This was done in a certain place whose name we pass over, because it sounds too barbarous, as do many others. At another time, in the city of Lismore already mentioned, the parents of a dumb girl brought her to him in the middle of the street as he passed, begging him with much entreaty to deign to help her. Malachy stops, and having prayed, touched her tongue with his finger, put spittle into her mouth, and sent her away speaking.

XXI. KINDNESSES SHOWN TO THE DYING AND TO WOMEN IN CHILDBIRTH

47

Coming out of a church, he met a man with his wife, who could not speak. Asked to have pity on her, he stood in the doorway with the people standing round, and having given her his blessing, he bade her say the Lord's Prayer. She said it, and the people blessed the Lord. In the city called Antrim a certain rich man lay in bed who had for twelve days lost the use of his tongue; at the bidding of the saint who visited him he recovered his speech and received the Eucharist,

and, so fortified, breathed his last in a good confession. O fruitful olive in the house of God (Ps 52:10)! O oil of gladness (Ps 45:8), anointing and shining! By the splendour of the miracle he enlightened the healthy, and by the sweetness of the kindness he anointed the sick man, for whom, as he was about to die, he obtained the saving power to confess and receive communion. One of the nobles came in to him, having something to say to him. While they talked, full of faith, he piously stole three rushes from the bed on which Malachy was sitting and took them with him; and God worked many things through that pious theft, by the man's faith and the prelate's holiness. He had happened to come to a city named Duevania. And as he sat at table, a nobleman of that city came in and humbly pleaded for his pregnant wife, who had already passed all the usual time of giving birth, so that all wondered at it, and no one believed that anything but danger to her life was at hand. Nehemiah, the bishop of that city, who was sitting beside him, joined in the request; so did all the others who were at table together. Then he said: "I feel for her, because she is a good and chaste woman." And holding out to the man a cup he had blessed: "Go," he said, "give her to drink, knowing that once she has taken the draught of blessing she will give birth without delay and without danger." What he commanded was done, and that same night what he promised followed. He was sitting in the open field with the Count of Ulidia, dealing with certain matters, and a great multi-

tude was round them. A woman came who was with child, and heavy with it indeed. She declared that, against all the laws of nature, she had been carrying her child for fifteen months and twenty days. Malachy, pitying so strange and unheard-of an affliction, prays, and the woman gives birth. Those who were present rejoiced and wondered. For all saw with what ease and speed she was delivered in that same place, and the grievous danger of a birth withheld changed by a miracle into gladness.

XXII. HE FORETELLS RUIN TO AN OBSTINATE CONCUBINARY

48

In the same place there happened something equally miraculous, but of a very different outcome. He saw a man who was said to keep his brother's concubine openly; and he was a knight, an officer of the Count. And rebuking the incestuous man publicly, he showed himself to him another John: "It is not lawful for you," he said, "to have your brother's concubine (Mk 6:18)." But he, playing Herod to him all the same, not only did not listen to him but answered him proudly, and swore before them all that he would never put her away. Then Malachy, moved, burning as he was with zeal for justice, said: "Then may God separate you from her, even against your will." Making light of it, he went off at once in indignation. And coming upon a woman who was standing not far from the crowd, he ravished her

by force, wholly given over as he was to Satan, to whom he had shortly before been handed over. Nor was the outrage hidden. A maidservant who was with her mistress ran home (for it was not far from the place) and breathlessly told what wrong had been done. At her words the woman's brothers, who were at home, burning to avenge their sister's dishonour, flew there with all speed and, catching the enemy of chastity in the very place and act of his crime, ran him through with many wounds and killed him. The assembly had not yet broken up when, behold, his squire brought word of what had happened. And all wondered that Malachy's sentence had taken effect so swiftly. All the wicked who heard of it were afraid (for there were many in the land), and in their terror they were cleansed, washing their hands in the blood of the sinner (Ps 58:11).

XXIII. VARIOUS HEALINGS GRANTED TO VARIOUS PEOPLE

49

Count Diarmait, who had long been lying in bed, he rebuked harshly for being a bad man, too much the slave of his belly and his gullet; then, sprinkling him with blessed water, he made him rise at once, so strong that he mounted a horse on the spot, quite beyond the hope of himself and his household. In the city of Cashel a man came before him with a paralysed son, asking that he be healed; and he, praying briefly, said: "Go, your son will be healed." He goes, and the

next day comes back with his son, but not healed at all. Then Malachy rose and, standing over him, prayed for a longer while, and the boy was healed. And turning to the father: "Offer him to God," he said. The man agreed, but did not keep his word; and some years later the boy, now a young man, fell back into the same state, without doubt because of the father's disobedience and his breaking of the pact. Another man, coming from far away when Malachy was in the borders of Munster, brought him his son, who had wholly lost the use of his feet. Asked how this had come upon him, he said: "By the malice of demons, as I suspect." And he added: "While he was playing in a meadow, unless I am mistaken, they sent a sleep upon him, and when the little boy woke he found himself like this." Saying this, he poured out his prayer with tears and begged for help. Malachy, taking pity on him, prayed, and told the sick boy meanwhile to sleep there on the ground. He slept; and he rose up healed. Because he had come from far away, Malachy kept him in his company for some while, and he walked with him.

50

In the monastery of Bangor a poor man was kept on the alms of the brethren. He received a daily allowance, doing some small service in the bakehouse. Lame for twelve years, he crawled on the ground on his hands, dragging his dead feet behind him; and one day Malachy, finding him sad and grieving before his cell, asked him the

cause. And he said: "You see how long I, poor wretch, have been afflicted, and the hand of the Lord is upon me (Job 19:21); and see, to crown my misery, men who ought to pity me mock me instead, reproaching me with my wretchedness." When he heard him, moved with pity, he looked up to heaven, raising his hands as well. And having made a short prayer, he went into his cell, and the man rose up. And standing on his feet he wondered whether what he had all but taken for a dream were really so. Yet he began to move little by little: for he did not quite believe he could walk. At last, as if waking from a heavy sleep, he knew the mercy of the Lord upon him; he walks firmly and returns to the bakehouse, leaping and exulting and praising God (Acts 3:8). When they saw him, those who had seen and known him before were filled with amazement and ecstasy, thinking him a phantom. Likewise he healed by prayer a man with dropsy, who at once remained in the monastery and was made shepherd of the sheep.

51

A city of Ireland called Cork was without a bishop. The election was discussed; the parties disagreed, each, as usually happens, wishing to set up a prelate of its own, not God's. Malachy came there, having heard of the dissension. Calling together clergy and people, he took care to unite even the hearts and wishes of those at odds. And having persuaded them that the whole matter ought to be entrusted to him, on whom

the care of that church above all rested, as of the other churches throughout Ireland, he at once named for them not one of the nobles of the land, but rather a certain poor man whom he knew to be holy and learned; and he was a foreigner. He is sought; word comes that he is lying in bed, and so weak that he cannot go out at all unless carried in the arms of those who wait on him. And Malachy said: "Let him rise in the name of the Lord; I command it; obedience will make him whole." What was he to do? He wished to obey, but felt himself unfit; for even if he could walk, he dreaded being made a bishop. So, while his will to obey was fighting against a double enemy, the weight of his sickness and the fear of the honour, it won nonetheless, with the hope of health given it for help. So he makes the attempt, moves, tries his strength, and finds himself stronger than usual. Faith grows together with strength, and faith, made stronger, gives increase in its turn to strength. Now he can rise by himself, now walk a little better, now feel no weariness in walking; at last, free and eager, he reaches Malachy without any man's help. And Malachy, taking him, set him on the bishop's chair, with clergy and people applauding. This was done thus in peace, because they did not dare to oppose Malachy's will in anything, seeing the sign he had worked; nor did he hesitate to obey, made surer of the Lord's will by so evident a proof.

52

A certain woman suffered from a flow of blood; she was noble, and very dear to Malachy, though more for the nobility of her character than of her birth. She was failing altogether, her strength drained away with her blood, and, now at the point of death, she sent to the man of God, asking him to help her soul in what remained, since she would not see him again in the body. When Malachy heard, he was distressed, because she was a woman of virtue, and her life was fruitful in deed and example. And seeing that he could not hasten there in time, he called Malchus, because he was young and quick (he is the one we mentioned above, the brother of Abbot Christian), and said: "Hurry, take her these three apples, over which I have called upon the name of the Lord. I trust in him that when she has tasted of them, she shall not taste death (Mk 9:1) before she sees us, though we follow somewhat later." Malchus hastened according to the command, and coming in to the dying woman showed himself another servant of Elisha (2 Kgs 4:29), except that his errand was the more effective. He bids her receive the blessing Malachy has sent her, and taste it, if she possibly can. And she, cheered at hearing the name of Malachy, so that she might obey, signs with a nod that she wishes to be raised a little; for she could not do it with a word. She is raised, she tastes; having tasted she is strengthened, speaks and gives thanks. And the Lord sent a deep sleep upon her (Gen 2:21), and she rested most sweetly in it, having long gone without it as without food. Meanwhile the blood

was stayed, and waking after a little while she found herself well, except that she was still weak from long fasting and loss of blood. If anything was still lacking, the longed-for coming and sight of Malachy the next day made it complete.

XXIV. HE RAISES TO LIFE A WOMAN WHO HAD DIED WITHOUT THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

53

A nobleman lived in the neighbourhood of the monastery of Bangor, and when his wife fell sick unto death, Malachy was asked to come down and anoint the sick woman with oil before she died. He came down and went in to her; and at the sight of him she rejoiced, quickened by the hope of health. And as he was preparing to anoint her, it seemed to everyone better to put it off until morning. For it was evening. Malachy agreed, and having given his blessing over the sick woman, he went out with those who were with him. But a little later, suddenly, there arose a cry, a wailing and a great uproar through the whole house; for the word rang out that she was dead. Malachy, hearing the tumult, ran back, and his disciples followed him. And going up to the bed, when he had made sure that she had breathed her last, he was dismayed in spirit, laying it to his own charge that she had died cheated of the grace of the Sacrament. And lifting up his hands to heaven he said: "I beseech you, Lord, I have done foolishly (1 Chr 21:8). I, I am the one who sinned,

I who delayed; not she, who wished it." Saying this, he declared in the hearing of all that he would receive no consolation, and give his spirit no rest, unless he were allowed to restore the grace he had taken away. And standing over her, he laboured all night in his groaning; and instead of holy oil, bathing the dead woman in a great shower of tears, he gave her, as far as he could, what stood in place of the anointing. So he for his part; but to his own he said: "Watch and pray (Mt 26:41)." And so they in psalms, he in tears, kept the whole night in vigil. And when morning came, the Lord heard his holy one, because it was the Spirit of the Lord who was pleading for him, he who pleads for the saints with unutterable groanings (Rom 8:26). What more? She who had been dead opens her eyes; and, as those do who wake from a heavy sleep, rubbing her forehead and temples with her hands, she raises herself up on the bed, and recognising Malachy, bows and devoutly greets him. And mourning being turned into joy, amazement seized everyone, both those who saw and those who heard. And Malachy too, giving thanks, blessed the Lord. And he anointed her none the less, knowing that in this Sacrament sins are forgiven, and that the prayer of faith shall save the sick (Jas 5:14-15). After this he went away, and she recovered; and having lived in good health for some time, so that the glory of the Lord might be made manifest in her, she completed the penance Malachy had laid upon her, fell asleep again in a good confession, and passed to the Lord.

XXV. VARIOUS OTHER BENEFITS CONFERRED ON VARIOUS PEOPLE

54

There was likewise a woman whom a spirit of anger and fury so mastered that not only did her neighbours and kinsfolk shun her company, but even her own sons could scarcely bear to live with her. Shouting, and rancour, and a violent storm, wherever she was. Bold, and hot, and headlong, to be feared for tongue and hand, unbearable to all, and hated. Her sons, grieving both for her and for themselves, drag her into the presence of Malachy, pouring out their pitiful complaint with tears. The holy man, pitying both the mother's peril and the sons' distress, calls her aside, and asks her earnestly whether she has ever confessed her sins. She answered: "Never." "Confess," he said. She obeys. And laying a penance on her as she confessed, and praying over her that almighty God would give her a spirit of meekness, he commands her in the name of the Lord Jesus to be angry no more. There followed such meekness that it was plain to all that this was nothing other than a wonderful change of the right hand of the Most High (Ps 77:11). She is said to be living still today, and to be of such patience and gentleness that she who used to exasperate everyone can now be exasperated by no losses, insults or afflictions. If I too may, according to the Apostle, abound in my own sense (Rom 14:5), let each take it as he will: I judge that this is to be preferred to the miracle above of the dead

woman raised, because there it was the outward man who came back to life, but here the inward. And now let us hasten on to the rest.

55

A man honourable according to the world and God-fearing according to God came to Malachy and complained to him of the barrenness of his soul, begging him to obtain for him from almighty God the grace of tears. And Malachy, smiling because a spiritual desire in a man of the world pleased him, laid his cheek against the man's cheek as if in a caress, and said: "Be it done to you as you have asked." From then on his eyes ran down with streams of waters (Ps 119:136) so abundant and almost unceasing that the word of Scripture seemed fit to be applied to him: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters (Song 4:15). There is an island of the sea in Ireland, from of old rich in fish; and the sea there teems with fish. For the sins of the inhabitants, as is believed, its accustomed plenty was taken away, and she that had many children was weakened (1 Sam 2:5), and withered utterly from so great a bounty of hers. While the dwellers there grieved and the people bore the heavy loss hard, it was revealed to a certain woman that a remedy could be brought by the prayers of Malachy; and this became known to all, for she made it public. By God's will it happened that Malachy came there. For as he went about and filled the region with the Gospel, he turned aside there, to impart the same grace to them also. But the barbarians, who

cared more for fish, beg him with all insistence rather to deign to look upon the barrenness of their island. He answered that he had by no means come for that, and that he desired a catch of men rather than of fish; yet seeing their faith, he knelt on the shore and prayed to the Lord that he would not refuse to those who asked with such faith, unworthy though they were, the benefit once granted them. Up went the prayer, and up came the multitude of fish, more plentiful perhaps than in the days of old; and it has lasted for the people of that land to this very day. What wonder if the prayer of the just, which pierces the heavens, pierced the depths too, and called up from the bottom of the sea such plenty of fish?

56

Once three bishops came to the township of Faughart, which they say is the birthplace of the virgin Brigid; and the fourth was Malachy. The priest who had received them as guests said to him: "What shall I do, for I have no fish?" And when he answered that he should seek some from the fishermen, the priest said: "It is two years since any fish were found in the river; so that the fishermen have quite lost heart and given up their trade." And he said: "Order the nets to be let down in the name of the Lord." It was done, and twelve salmon were taken. A second time they cast, and twelve salmon were taken. They cast again, and, as many being taken, they bring to the table a dish no one had looked for, and a miracle besides. And that it might be quite clear

that this was granted to the merits of Malachy, for the two years that followed the same barrenness continued none the less.

XXVI. HE DEFENDS THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S BODY IN THE EUCHARIST

57

There was a certain cleric at Lismore, of a commendable life, as is said, but not so of faith. Knowing a little and wise in his own eyes, he presumed to say that in the Eucharist there is only the sacrament and not the reality of the sacrament, that is, a mere sanctification and not the truth of the body. Malachy took him to task about this privately, and often, but in vain; then he was called before an assembly, apart, however, from the laity, so that, if it could be, he might be healed and not put to shame. And so in an assembly of the clergy the man was given leave to answer for his opinion. And when he strove with all the strength of his wit, in which he was no mean master, to assert and defend his error, Malachy disputing against him and refuting him, he was overcome by the judgement of all, and left the assembly confounded indeed, but not corrected. He said, moreover, that he had been beaten not by reason but by the weight of the bishop's authority. "And you, Malachy," he said, "have put me to shame today without cause, speaking against the truth, to be sure, and against your own conscience." Malachy was saddened for a man so hardened, but grieving more at the injury to the

faith, and fearing the danger, he calls the church together; he rebukes the erring man publicly, and publicly warns him to come to his senses. When, though the bishops and the whole clergy urged the same, he would not give way, they pronounce anathema on the obstinate man, declaring him a heretic. Not even so did he awake, but said: "You all favour the man rather than the truth; I am no respecter of persons, to forsake the truth." At this word the saint, somewhat provoked, said: "May the Lord make you confess the truth, even if by necessity." And when he answered "Amen", the assembly broke up. Branded with such an iron, he plans flight, unable to bear living infamous and without honour. And straightway he gathered up his things and was departing, when behold, seized by a sudden sickness, he halts, and, his strength failing, throws himself down on the ground in that very place, panting and spent. By chance a certain wandering madman, happening on that spot, came upon the man and asked what he was doing there. He answers that he is gripped by a grievous sickness, and able neither to go on nor to go back. And the other said: "That sickness is nothing other than death itself." Now this he said not of himself (Jn 11:51); but the Lord fittingly rebuked through a madman one who would not yield to the sound counsels of men of sense. And he adds: "Go back home; I will help you." At last, with him for guide, he returns to the town; he returns to his heart, and to the mercy of the Lord. In the same hour the bishop is sent for, the truth is acknowledged, the error cast off. Having

confessed his guilt he is absolved, he asks for the Viaticum, reconciliation is granted; and almost in one moment his unbelief is renounced with his mouth and washed away by death. So, to the wonder of all, the word of Malachy was fulfilled with all speed, and with it that of Scripture, which says that vexation gives understanding to the hearing (Is 28:19).

XXVII. HE WONDERFULLY BRINGS PEACE AND CONCORD AMONG THOSE AT STRIFE

58

Once a grievous discord arose between the peoples of certain regions. Malachy is called upon to make peace between them; and since he was hindered by other business, he lays this task upon one of the bishops. When the bishop excused himself and refused, saying that it was Malachy, not he, who had been asked for, that he would be despised and did not wish to weary himself in vain, Malachy said: "Go, and the Lord will be with you." And he said: "I consent; but if they will not hear me, know that I shall appeal to your Paternity." Malachy smiled and said: "So be it." Then the bishop, having called the parties together, lays down the terms of peace; they consent, they are reconciled to one another; pledges being given on either side, the peace is made fast; and so he dismissed them. But one side, seeing that their enemies, now feeling safe, were unprepared, since, peace being made, they suspected no harm, spoke among themselves,

and each man said to his neighbour: "What were we minded to do? Victory is in our hands, and vengeance on our foes." And they began to pursue them. What was happening became known to the bishop; and running up he took their leader to task for his wickedness and treachery, but was scorned by him. He invoked the name of Malachy against him, and the man made nothing of it, but mocking the bishop said: "Do you think that for your sake we ought to let go our evildoers, whom God has delivered into our hands?" And the bishop remembered the words he had had with Malachy, and weeping and wailing, his face turned towards Malachy's monastery, he said: "Where are you, man of God? Where are you? Is not this, my father, what I told you? Alas, alas, I came to do good and not evil; and behold, through me they all perish, those in body, these in soul!" He said many things of this kind, lamenting and bewailing, and as if Malachy were present, urging and summoning him against the wrongdoers. Meanwhile the wicked did not cease pursuing those with whom they had made peace, to destroy them; and behold, a lying spirit in the mouth (1 Kgs 22:22) of certain men, to deceive them. For men met them on the way, announcing that their own lands had been overrun by their adversaries; that everything was being put to the edge of the sword, their goods plundered, their wives too and children seized and carried off. Hearing this, they turned back in haste. Those at the rear followed those at the front, not knowing where they were going or what had happened.

For not all had heard the men speaking. And when they arrived, and found none of the things that had been reported, they were confounded, caught in their own malice. And they knew that they had been given over to a spirit of error because of Malachy's envoy, whom they had deceived, and his name, which they had scorned. Then the bishop, hearing that the traitors had been thwarted in the wickedness they had devised, went back joyfully to Malachy, relating in order all that had befallen him.

59

Malachy, knowing that the peace had been disturbed on such an occasion, found a fitting time and took care to restore the peace between them anew in person, and to make it firm once restored, pledges and oaths being given and received on both sides. But those against whom the peace had been broken before, mindful of the wrong, disregarding the covenant and the command of Malachy, plotted to pay them back in kind. And all gathered together, they went to fall upon them unprepared, and to return upon their heads the evil they had themselves thought to do to them. And having forded with great ease a great river that lay between, they were held back by a little stream they came upon not far from it. For it no longer appeared a little stream, but plainly a huge river, denying passage at every point to those who wished to cross. All marvelled, knowing that it was now so great and before had been so small, and they said among themselves:

"Whence this flood? The air is clear, there is no rain, nor do we remember any lately. And even if it had rained much, which of us ever remembers it, in any flood however great, swelling so as to cover the land and spread over the sown fields and meadows? This is the finger of God (Ex 8:15), and the Lord has hedged in our ways because of his holy one Malachy, whose covenant we have broken, whose command we have transgressed." So these too, their business left undone, went back home no less confounded. The word was spread abroad through the whole region; and they blessed God, who catches the wise in their own craftiness (1 Cor 3:19), and, breaking the horns of sinners (Ps 75:11), exalted the horn of his anointed (1 Sam 2:10).

60

One of the nobles who had offended the king was reconciled through the hand of Malachy. For he did not trust the king enough to make peace with him except with Malachy as mediator, or someone whom the king equally revered. And not without reason, as afterwards appeared. For when the man had grown secure and was no longer on his guard, the king seized him and thrust him into chains, himself the more held captive by an old hatred. The man's people demand him at the hand of the mediator; for his friends looked for nothing but his death. What was Malachy to do? There is nothing he can do but run back to that accustomed and only refuge of his. Having gathered an exceeding strong

army, a great throng of his disciples, he goes to the man and demands the prisoner; he is refused. And Malachy said: "You act wickedly against the Lord, and against me, and against yourself, in breaking the covenant: if you make light of it, I do not. The man trusted himself to my good faith: if he should die, it is I who betrayed him, I who am guilty of his blood. Why have you seen fit to make me a traitor and yourself a covenant-breaker? Know that until he is set free I shall taste nothing, nor shall these." Having spoken thus, he enters the church; with his own anxious groanings and those of his people he pleads with almighty God that he would deign to rescue the man unjustly condemned out of the hand of the covenant-breaker and the unjust. And that day and the night following they persevered in fasting and prayer. What was happening was reported to the king; and his heart was the more hardened by the very thing that should have softened it. He takes to flight, a carnal man, fearing that if he stayed near he could not withstand the power of the prayer. As though it could not find him hidden, or not reach him far away! Do you set bounds, wretched man, to the prayers of the saints? Is prayer an arrow shot, that you should flee from before the bow (Ps 60:6)? Whither will you go from the Spirit of God, who carries it, and whither will you flee from his face? (Ps 139:7) In the end it pursues you in your flight, and finds you in hiding: and you shall be blind, not seeing (Acts 13:11), so that you may see better, and understand that it is hard for you to kick against the goad (Acts

9:5). Feel it at last, now at least, that the sharp arrows of the mighty (Ps 120:4) have reached you; which, though they rebounded from your heart, for it is of stone, did not rebound from your eyes. Would that through the windows of the eyes at least they may reach the heart, and vexation give understanding (Is 28:19) to blindness. You might see Saul once more led by the hand and brought to Ananias, the wolf, that is, to the sheep, to give back his prey (Acts 9:8-17). He gave it back, and received his sight, because Malachy was so truly a sheep that he took pity even on the wolf. Mark well from these things, reader, among whom Malachy dwelt, what manner of princes, and what manner of peoples. How was he not also a brother to dragons, and a companion of ostriches (Job 30:29)? And therefore the Lord gave him power to tread upon serpents and scorpions (Lk 10:19), to bind their kings with fetters, and their nobles with manacles of iron (Ps 149:8). Hear, finally, what follows.

XXVIII. SETTING ABOUT A SACRED BUILDING, HE SUFFERS AN ADVERSARY, WHO IS SOON STRUCK BY DIVINE VENGEANCE

61

The man to whom he had ceded the possessions of the monastery of Bangor, ungrateful for the kindness, from then on bore himself always most insolently towards him and his, hostile in everything, lying in wait everywhere, and disparaging his deeds. But not with impunity. He

had an only son, who, imitating his father, and himself daring something against Malachy, died that same year. And he died in this way. It seemed good to Malachy that an oratory of stone should be built at Bangor, like those he had seen built in other countries. And when he had begun to lay the foundations, all the natives marvelled, because in that land such buildings were not yet to be found. But that worthless man, presumptuous and insolent as he was, did not marvel but took offence. And from this indignation he conceived sorrow, and brought forth iniquity (Ps 7:15). And becoming a whisperer among the people (Lev 19:16), he would now disparage in secret, now blaspheme openly; he censured the frivolity, shuddered at the novelty, exaggerated the cost. With venomous talk of this kind, stirring up many and leading them to forbid it, he said: "Follow me, and let us not allow to be done against us what ought not to be done except through us." And so, with as many as he could persuade, he went down to the place, and finding the man of God he accosted him, himself the chief speaker, as he was the beginning of the mischief: "Good sir, what has possessed you to bring this novelty into our regions? We are Irish, not French. What frivolity is this? What need was there of a work so superfluous, so proud? Where will you, poor and needy as you are, find the means to finish it? Who will see it finished? What presumption is this, to begin what you cannot, I do not say finish, but even see finished? Though it is more the part of a madman than of a presumptuous

man to attempt what exceeds measure, outstrips strength, and surpasses means. Stop, stop, cease from this madness; otherwise we will not allow it, we will not endure it." This he said, showing what he wished, not considering what he could do. For those on whom he relied, and whom he had brought with him, were changed at the sight of the man, and no longer went with him.

62

To him the holy man, using all freedom of speech, said: "Wretched man, the work you see begun, and begrudge, will without doubt be finished; many will see it finished. But you, because you do not wish it, will not see it; and you will die, which you do not wish: take heed to yourself, lest you die in your sin." So it was: he died, and the work was completed; but he did not see it, for, as we said before, he died that same year. Meanwhile the father, soon hearing what the holy man had foretold of his son, and knowing that his word was living and effectual (Heb 4:12), said: "He has killed my son." And at the devil's prompting he blazed against him with such fury that before the duke and the chief men of Ulidia he did not fear to charge with falsehood and lying a man who was most truthful, both a disciple and a lover of the truth; and he heaped abuse on him, calling him an ape. And Malachy, taught not to render railing for railing (1 Pet 3:9), was dumb, and opened not his mouth (Ps 39:10), while the sinner stood against him (Ps 39:2). But the Lord had not forgotten the word he had

spoken: Vengeance is mine, and I will repay (Deut 32:35). That same day the man, returning home, paid for the rashness of his unbridled tongue, with the very one for avenger at whose prompting he had let it loose. The demon seized him and threw him into the fire; but he was quickly pulled out by the hands of those standing by, burned, however, in part of his body, and out of his mind. And while he raved, Malachy was called and came, and found the slanderer twisting his foaming mouth, terrifying everything with horrible cries and movements, and so convulsed in his whole body that several could scarcely hold him; and the man of all perfection, praying for his enemy, was heard, but in part. For at once, as the saint prayed, the man opened his eyes and recovered his senses. But an evil spirit from the Lord (1 Sam 19:9) was left in him to buffet him, that he may learn not to blaspheme (1 Tim 1:20). We believe he is living still, and to this day paying for the great sin he sinned against the saint; yet at certain times, they say, he is moonstruck. Further, the possessions mentioned above, since he was no longer able to hold them, being weak and useless, returned in peace to the place to which they had belonged. Nor did Malachy refuse them, after much vexation at last, for the sake of peace.

63

But now let our discourse return to the work of the building Malachy had undertaken. And indeed Malachy had nothing with which, I do not say to finish it, but to do anything at all. But

his heart had confidence in the Lord. And the Lord provided that, though he did not hope in treasures of money, money should not be lacking. For who else brought it about that a treasure should be laid up in that place, and, once laid up, should not be found until the time and the work of Malachy? The servant of God found in God's purse what was lacking in his own. And rightly so. For what more just than that one who for God's sake had nothing of his own should enter into partnership with God, and that the two should have one purse? For to the faithful man the whole world is full of riches. And what is the world but a kind of purse of God? Indeed he says: The world is mine, and the fullness thereof (Ps 50:12). Hence it was that Malachy did not lay up again the many pieces of silver he had found, but laid them out. For he orders the whole gift of God to be spent on the work of God. He considers not his own needs, nor those of his own people; but he casts his care upon the Lord (Ps 55:23), to whom he does not doubt he may have recourse as often as need requires. Nor is there any doubt that it was God's work, which Malachy foresaw by God's revelation. He had first conferred with the brethren about that work; and many, because of their poverty, agreed less than willingly. So, anxious and unsure what to do, he began in prayer to seek earnestly what the will of God might be. And one day, returning from a journey, as he drew near the place, he looked out from afar; and behold, an oratory appeared, great, of stone, and very beautiful. And looking carefully

at its site, form and structure, he took up the work with confidence, having first, however, told the vision to the senior brethren, though only to a few. Indeed, all that he had attentively noted of the place, the manner and the kind, he observed with such care that, when the work was done, the building appeared most like what he had seen, as if he too had heard said to him with Moses: See that you make all things according to the pattern that was shown you on the mount (Ex 25:40). By the same kind of vision that which stands at Saul was also shown to him beforehand, before it was made, not only the oratory but the whole monastery.

XXIX. HE SHINES WITH THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY AND WITH EVERY GRACE OF MIRACLES

64

As he was passing through a certain city, and a great multitude was running together to him, he chanced to see among the rest a young man eager to see him. He had climbed onto a stone, and standing on tiptoe, his neck stretched out, intent upon him with eyes and mind, he showed Malachy a kind of new Zacchaeus (Lk 19:2-9). Nor was it hidden from Malachy, the Holy Spirit revealing it, that he had truly come in the spirit and power of Zacchaeus. Yet for the time he gave no sign, and passed by in silence. But that very night, at his lodging, he told the brethren how he had seen him, and what he had foreseen concerning

him. And on the third day, there he was, with a certain nobleman, his lord, who, making known the young man's vow and desire, asked Malachy to deign to receive him on his recommendation and keep him henceforth among his own. And Malachy, recognising him, said: "There is no need for man to commend one whom God has already commended." And taking him by the hand he handed him over to our Abbot Congan, and he to the brethren. The young man himself, still living, unless I am mistaken, the first lay brother of the monastery of Suir, has the witness of all that he lives a holy life among the brethren according to the Cistercian Order. And the disciples knew that in this too Malachy had the spirit of prophecy; and not only in this, but also in what we are about to add.

65

When he was offering the Sacraments, and a deacon had come near him to do something belonging to his office, the priest looked at him and groaned, for he had sensed that something unbefitting lay hidden in him. When the sacrifice was over, being asked privately about his conscience, he confessed, and did not deny (Jn 1:20) that he had been deluded by a dream that very night. Laying a penance on him, Malachy said: "You ought not to have ministered today, but modestly to have withdrawn from the sacred rites and shown deference to mysteries so great and so divine, so that, cleansed by this humility, you might minister more worthily thereafter." Likewise on

another occasion, when he was offering the sacrifice and praying at the hour of sacrifice with the holiness and purity of heart that was usual with him, it seemed to the deacon standing by that a dove came in through the window in a great brightness. With it the priest is bathed all over, with it the whole church, somewhat dark before, shines out. And the dove, flying round for some time, at last settles upon the cross before the priest's face. The deacon was astounded; and trembling at the strangeness both of the light and of the bird, for that is a rare bird on earth, he fell on his face, and, scarcely breathing, dared to rise only when the needs of his office required it. After Mass Malachy took him aside, and ordered him on peril of his life by no means to betray the secret of what he had seen as long as he himself lived. Once, when he was at Armagh with one of his fellow bishops, rising by night he began to go round in prayer the shrines of the saints, which are many in the cemetery of Saint Patrick; and behold, they see one of the altars suddenly ablaze. For both saw this great sight, and both marvelled. But Malachy, understanding it to be a sign of the great merit of him, or of those, whose bodies rested beneath that altar, ran, and plunging into the midst of the flames, embraced the sacred altar with outstretched arms. What he did there, or what he felt, there is no one who knows; but that he came out of that fire kindled more than usual with heavenly fire, I think there is none of the brethren who were with him then who does not know.

66

These things have been told, few indeed out of many, but many for the times. For these are not times of signs, according to that saying: Our signs we have not seen; there is now no prophet (Ps 74:9). Whence it is plain enough how great in merits was my Malachy, who abounded so in signs, and in so great a scarcity of them. For in what kind of the miracles of old did Malachy not shine? If we consider well the few things that have been told, he lacked neither prophecy, nor revelation, nor vengeance on the wicked, nor the grace of healing, nor the changing of minds, nor, lastly, the raising of the dead. Blessed in all things be God, who so loved and adorned him, who also magnified him in the sight of kings, and gave him a crown of glory. The love is proved in his merits, the adornment in his signs, the magnifying in the vengeance on his enemies, the glorifying in the bestowal of his rewards. You have in Malachy, diligent reader, something to wonder at, and you have something to imitate. Now attend eagerly to what you may hope for from these things. For their end is a precious death (Ps 116:15).

XXX. HE FORETELLS THE PLACE AND DAY OF HIS DEATH, AND FOR THE PALLIUM UNDERTAKES ONCE MORE THE JOURNEY TO POPE EUGENIUS

67

Asked once in what place, if the choice were given him, he would prefer to spend his last day

(for the brethren were asking among themselves what place each would choose for himself), he hesitates, and does not answer. When they pressed him, he said: "If I depart hence, nowhere more gladly than where I may rise again together with our Apostle." He meant Saint Patrick. "If I must be on pilgrimage, and God so permits, I have chosen Clairvaux." Asked likewise about the time, he answered: the solemn day of All the Faithful Departed. If it is thought a simple wish, it was fulfilled; if a prophecy, not one iota passed away (Mt 5:18). As we heard, so have we seen, both of the place and of the day. Let us tell briefly in what order this came about, and on what occasion. He bore it very ill that Ireland had until then been without the pallium, zealous as he was for the sacraments, of which he would not have his people defrauded of a single one. And he remembered that it had been promised him by Pope Innocent; and so he was the more saddened that, while Innocent still lived, no one had been sent for it. And finding his occasion in that Pope Eugenius held the supreme government, and was reported to have come at that time as far as France, he rejoiced that he had found the opportunity of asking for it. He counted on him, a man of such quality and taken up from such a profession; still more, because he had been a special son of his own Clairvaux, he did not fear to meet with any difficulty from him. So the bishops are called together, a council is assembled; for three days the pressing matters of the time are dealt with; on the fourth day the plan of seeking the pallium is

laid open. It is approved, but on condition that it be sought through another. Yet because the way seemed shorter, and for that reason the journey more bearable, there was no one who presumed to oppose his counsel and will. And Malachy, the council dissolved, sets out on the journey. The brethren who had gathered accompany him as far as the shore, not many, however, for he himself forbade it. One of them, Catholicus by name, said to him with tearful voice and face: "Alas, you are going away, and you know well in what almost daily affliction you leave me, and you do not take pity on me and bring me help! If I deserve to suffer, what have the brethren done amiss, who are scarcely allowed a single day or night free from so laborious a care and watch over me?" At these words and tears of his son (for he was weeping), the father's heart was shaken, and he embraced him tenderly, and making the sign of the cross on his breast, said: "Be assured that you will suffer nothing of the kind until I return." Now he was an epileptic, and fell often, so that sometimes he suffered it not once but many times in a day. He had laboured under this dreadful disease for six years now; but at Malachy's word he was perfectly healed. From that hour he has suffered nothing of the kind; and nothing of the kind, as we trust, will he suffer hereafter, since Malachy is never to return.

68

At the very boarding of the ship two of those who were most closely attached to him came up,

venturing to ask something of him. He said to them: "What do you want?" "We will not say," they answer, "unless you promise to grant it." He promises. And they said: "We wish to have a firm promise from your graciousness that you will return safe to Ireland." And all the rest pressed him too. Then, deliberating a little, he at first regretted that he had bound himself, finding no way out. There was distress on every side (Dan 13:22), since nothing occurred to him that was safe from one danger or the other, that of his wish, namely, or of his promise. At last it seemed best to choose what pressed more at the present moment, and to commit the rest to the disposition of heaven. He assented, sadly indeed; but still more he was unwilling to sadden them; and promising them what they wished, he went on board. And when they had already gone about half the way across the sea, suddenly a contrary wind drives the ship back and brings it again to the land of Ireland. Going ashore, he spent the night in the port itself, in a church of his own. And he gave thanks joyfully to the counsel of divine providence, by which it had come about that he had now done enough to keep his promise. But in the morning, boarding the ship, he crossed that same day with a favourable passage and came to Scotland. On the third day he reached the place called Green Lake, which he had had made ready in order to establish an abbey there. And having left there some of his sons, our brethren, a community of monks with an abbot (for he had brought them

with him for this very purpose), he bade them farewell and departed.

69

And as he passed on, King David met him and received him with joy, and kept him for some days; and having done many things pleasing to God, he took up again the journey he had begun. And passing through Scotland, at the very entrance of England he turned aside to the church of Guisborough, where religious men dwell, leading the canonical life, long his friends for their devotion and uprightness. There a woman was brought to him suffering from the disease commonly called cancer, dreadful even to look on; and he healed her. For when the places of the sores were sprinkled with water he had blessed, she felt no pain. And on the following day the sores scarcely appeared. Going on from there, he came to the sea; but passage is refused. The cause, unless I am mistaken, was a certain quarrel that had arisen between the supreme pontiff and the king of England, so that the king suspected some harm or other from that good man if he crossed; for he would not let other bishops cross either. This hindrance, though contrary to Malachy's will, was yet not contrary to his wish. He grieved to be held back from his desire, not knowing that by this it would rather be fulfilled. For had he crossed at once, he would have had to pass by Clairvaux as well, in order to follow the supreme pontiff. For he had already gone away, and was at Rome, or near Rome. But as it was, the delay

coming between, it came about that, crossing later, he arrived in good time for the place and the hour of his most holy death.

XXXI. HE COMES AGAIN TO CLAIRVAUX, TO DIE IN THE PLACE AND AT THE TIME HE HAD DESIRED

70

He was received by us as one coming from the West, yet a true Dayspring from on high visiting us (Lk 1:78). O how much that sun of brightness, shining upon it, added to our Clairvaux! How joyful the festal day that dawned on us at his coming! This is the day which the Lord has made: there was exulting and rejoicing in it (Ps 118:24)! How swiftly and leaping I ran at once to meet him, trembling and weak though I was! How gladly I rushed to kiss him! With what glad arms I embraced the grace sent to me from heaven! With what eager face and heart, my father, I brought you into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me (Song 3:4)! What festal days I spent with you thereafter, but few! And what was he to us in return? Truly our pilgrim showed himself cheerful, truly affable to all, beyond belief pleasing to all. How good and how pleasant (Ps 133:1) a guest he was among those whom he had come to see, no less, from the ends of the earth (Mt 12:42), not to hear a Solomon, but to show us one! In short, we heard his wisdom, we had his presence, and we have it still. Four or five days of this festival of ours

had now slipped by, when behold, on the feast of blessed Luke the Evangelist, having celebrated Mass for the community with that holy devotion of his, he was seized with fever and took to his bed; and all of us with him. Mourning takes hold of the end of our joy (Prov 14:13), though more temperate, since for the time the fever seemed rather slight. You might have seen the brethren hurrying about, eager to give, or to receive. Who did not find it sweet to see him? Who did not find it sweeter to serve him? Both were delightful, both wholesome. It was a matter of kindness to render him service, and of each man's own profit, since he carried away grace in return. All stood by, all were busy with constant service: seeking out medicines, applying poultices, urging him often to take food. To them he said: "These things are to no purpose; but for love of you I do whatever you bid." For he knew that the time of his departure was at hand.

71

And when the brethren who had come with him pressed him more confidently, saying that he ought not to despair of life, for no signs of death appeared in him, he said: "Malachy must go out of the body this year." And he adds: "See, the day draws near which, as you know very well, I have always wished to be the day of my dissolution. I know whom I have believed, and I am certain (2 Tim 1:12); I shall not be cheated of the rest of my desire, I who already hold part of it. He who in his mercy has brought me to the place I sought will

not deny me the end I equally wished for. As for this poor body, here is my rest (Ps 132:14); as for the soul, the Lord will provide, who saves those who hope in him. And no small hope is laid up for me in that day on which so many benefits are bestowed on the dead by the living." Nor was that day far off when he spoke thus. Meanwhile he asks to be anointed with the holy oil. When the community of brethren was coming out so that it might be done solemnly, he would not allow them to come up to him; he himself came down to them. For he lay in an upper room of the house. He is anointed, and having received the Viaticum, commending himself to the prayers of the brethren, and the brethren to God, he returns to his bed. He came down from the high upper room on his own feet, and went up again none the less on his own feet; and he said that death was at the doors. Who would believe this man was going to die? He alone, and God, could know it. His face did not seem paler, nor thinner; no wrinkled brow, no sunken eyes, no pinched nostrils, no drawn lips, no parched teeth, no wasted and slender neck, no bent shoulders, no flesh wasted away in the rest of his body. Such was the grace of his body, and such the glory of his countenance (2 Cor 3:7), which does not pass away, not even in death. As he was while he lived, so he appeared also in death, more like one living.

72

We have run as far as this; but now we falter, because Malachy has finished his course (2 Tim

4:7). He stands still, and we likewise stand still with him. Besides, who would gladly run towards death? Above all yours, holy father: who could tell of it? Who would wish to hear? And yet we loved each other in life; in death we shall not be parted. Brethren, let us not forsake in death him whom we have followed in life. From furthest Scotland he ran all the way here to his death: let us also go, that we may die with him (Jn 11:16). It must be, it must be told, since it had to be seen. The feast of All Saints, famous everywhere, was at hand; but according to the old saying, a tale out of time is as music in mourning (Sir 22:6). We are there, we sing, though unwillingly. Weeping we sing, and singing we weep. Malachy, though he does not sing, does not weep either: for why should he weep who is drawing near to joy? To us who are left behind, mourning is left; Malachy alone keeps the feast. For what he cannot do in body he does in mind, as it is written: The thought of man shall give praise to you, and the remainders of the thought shall keep holiday to you (Ps 76:11). The instrument of the body failing him, the organ of his mouth silent, the office of his voice at an end, what remains is that he should keep the solemnity with the jubilation of the mind. Why should not a saint keep the solemnity, who is being led to the solemnity of the saints? He renders to them what will soon be due to himself. A little while yet, and he himself is one of them.

73

At nightfall, when the celebration of the day had somehow been completed by us, Malachy had drawn near, not to twilight, but to dawn. Is it not dawn for him for whom the night is passed, and the day is at hand (Rom 13:12)? And so, as the fever grew stronger, a sweat began to break out from within, burning, over his whole body, so that, as it were passing through fire and water, he might be brought out into refreshment (Ps 66:12). Now his life is despaired of, now each man blames his own judgement, now no one doubts that Malachy's word prevails. We are called; we come. And he, lifting up his eyes on those standing round, said: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch (Lk 22:15) with you. I give thanks to the goodness of heaven: I have not been cheated of my desire." Do you see a man secure in death, and, not yet dead, already certain of life? Nor is it any wonder. Seeing that the night he had awaited was at hand, and that in it day was dawning for him, he seems, as if triumphing over the night, to mock the darkness, and as it were to say: "Now I will not say, Perhaps darkness shall cover me, for this night is my light in my pleasures (Ps 139:11)." And comforting us gently, he said: "Keep me in your care; I, if it be allowed me, will not forget you. And it will be allowed. I have believed in God, and all things are possible to him that believes (Mk 9:23). I have loved God; I have loved you; and charity never falls away (1 Cor 13:8)." And looking up to heaven he said: "O God, keep them in your name (Jn 17:11); and not them only, but also all who through my word (Jn 17:20) and ministry

have bound themselves to your service." Then, laying his hands on each, and blessing all, he bids them go and rest, because his hour was not yet come (Jn 7:30).

74

We go; we return about the middle of the night: for at that hour it is announced that the light shines in darkness (Jn 1:5). The house is filled; the whole community is there, and many abbots too who had gathered. With psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles (Col 3:16) we accompany our friend as he returns to his homeland. In the fifty-fourth year of his age, in the place and at the time he had chosen beforehand and foretold, Malachy, bishop and legate of the holy Apostolic See, taken up by angels as it were out of our hands, fell happily asleep in the Lord. And truly he fell asleep. His peaceful face was the token of a peaceful passing. And indeed the eyes of all were fixed on him; yet there was no one who could have noticed when he went forth. Dead, he was thought to be alive, and living, dead: so little came between to mark the one from the other. The same liveliness of face, the same serenity, such as is usually seen in one asleep. You would have said that death had taken none of these away, rather had greatly increased them. He was not changed, but he changed everyone. In a wonderful way the mourning and groaning of all is suddenly stilled; grief is changed into joy, singing shuts out lament. He is carried out, voices are carried up to heaven, he is carried into the oratory

on the shoulders of abbots. Faith has conquered, love triumphs, things have come to their right state: all is done in order, all proceeds by reason.

75

And in truth what reason is there to mourn Malachy beyond measure, as if his death were not precious (Ps 116:15), as if it were not sleep rather than death, as if it were not the haven of death and the gate of life? Malachy our friend sleeps (Jn 11:11), and shall I mourn? This mourning defends itself by custom, not by reason. If the Lord has given sleep to his beloved, and such a sleep, in which is the inheritance of the Lord, children, the reward, the fruit of the womb (Ps 127:2-3), which of these seems to call for weeping? Am I to weep for him who has escaped weeping? He dances for joy, he triumphs, he has been brought into the joy of his Lord (Mt 25:21); and shall I lament him? I long for these things for myself; I do not begrudge them to him. Meanwhile the funeral rites are prepared; the sacrifice is offered for him; all things are completed according to custom with the greatest devotion. At a distance stood a boy from whose side hung a dead arm, more a hindrance to him than a use. When I learned of it, I beckoned him to come near; and taking the withered hand, I laid it on the hand of the bishop, and it gave it life. For the grace of healing lived on in the dead man; and his hand was to the dead hand what Elisha was to the dead man (2 Kgs 13:21). That boy had come from afar, and the hand he had brought hanging he carried back sound to

his own country. Now, all things being duly performed, he is laid to burial in the very oratory of holy Mary, Mother of God, in which Malachy was well pleased, in the year of the Lord's Incarnation one thousand one hundred and forty-eight, on the fourth day before the Nones of November. Yours, good Jesus, is the deposit that has been entrusted to us; yours the treasure that is laid up with us. We keep it, to be given back at the time when you shall see fit to ask for it again: only grant that he go not forth without his companions, but that we may have as our leader him whom we had as our guest, to reign with you and with him alike for ever and ever. Amen.