ODO OF CLUNY

The Life of Saint Gerald of Aurillac

Vita S. Geraldi

SABBATISMUS

Odo of Cluny (c. 879–942)
Vita S. Geraldi · The Life of Saint Gerald of Aurillac

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The Author's Dedicatory Letter

To the lord Abbot Aymo, to be remembered with affection for his merits, Odo, fellow servant of the brethren, wishes everlasting salvation in Christ.

The little book on the life and miracles of the blessed man Gerald, venerable father, which you lately urged me so imperiously to compose as best I could, I now take in hand, though trembling. For if I do it, I fear presumption, as one who goes beyond his strength; and if I do not, I dread contumacy, as one who disobeys. Trusting, then, in obedience and in the goodness of Christ, I set about it, and I beg you to implore the clemency of that same Christ that, for love of his servant Gerald, he may deign so to temper the account that it be not wholly unworthy of the man whom he has resolved to glorify, nor a cause of transgression for me. To escape that transgression I pass over a number of things for which you may perhaps reproach me, and weave together only what was made known to me by trustworthy witnesses, when you too were present.

Farewell.

Preface

Many are wont to doubt whether the things told of blessed Gerald are true. Some of them think it not true at all, but a mere fancy. Others, as though seeking excuses for their sins, extol him without discernment, saying, that is, that Gerald was powerful and rich, and lived in comfort, and is a saint all the same. These, no doubt, are trying to excuse their own life of pleasure by his example. It has seemed good to us, then, to answer them a little, as far as we are able. For we too, though we had long since heard the report of his miracles, nonetheless doubted them, chiefly because in certain places, through rumours spread by I know not whom, popular gatherings are apt to spring up of a sudden and little by little to die away as an empty thing. But when business obliged us to visit the brethren of the monastery of Tulle, we were glad to turn aside to his tomb. Then we called four of those whom he had brought up, namely Hugh the monk, Hildebert the priest, and Willard and another Hildebert, noble laymen, and many others besides, and inquired into his ways and the manner of his life: now together, now apart, we eagerly examined what each one said and whether they agreed with one another in the telling, silently weighing whether his life had been such as miracles might

fitly accompany. And when we had learnt how devoutly he had lived, and that God had shown by many signs that he was in his grace, we could no longer doubt his holiness. We wonder rather why, in this age of ours, when charity has almost wholly grown cold and the time of Antichrist is at hand, the miracles of the saints should have to cease. But he is surely mindful of his promise, for he says through Jeremiah: I will not cease to do good to my people (Jer 32:40). And to this kindness of his the Apostle bears witness, saying that God, in no age leaving himself without witness, doing good, fills the hearts of men with gladness (Acts 14:17). If, then, it pleases his divine goodness that he who did wonders with the fathers should be glorified in our times also, we ought by no means to be unbelieving. That this divine dispensation works both in this present time and through a man of our own day seems truly to be because all the deeds and sayings of the saints of old have by now faded from the heart like one dead (Ps 31:13). And since this man of the Lord has been found, as in the days of Noah, one who lived according to the law, God sets this very man before the eyes of beholders as a witness, so that, seeing how justly and devoutly he lived, the eye of their heart may awaken to imitate him, shining as he does close at hand. Nor let the keeping of God's commandments be thought burdensome or impossible, since we see that they were kept by a layman and a man of power. Nothing feeds sloth of mind worse than this: that the reward of good or evil works which awaits us after this

life is not called to mind in the present. Against this Scripture warns us to remember our last end in all our works (Sir 7:36). God, therefore, exalts on earth too, before those who despise him, the servant whom he rewards in heaven, so that by what is done outwardly the despisers of God may see inwardly that he is not in vain who serves God (Mal 3:14), but that, as he himself testifies, those who glorify him he will glorify, and those who despise him shall be brought to dishonour (1 Sam 2:30). And since we believe that this man of God has been given as an example to the powerful, let them see to it how they imitate him, one who stands close beside them, raised up from their own order and set before them, lest perhaps, as the queen of the South the Jews, so he should condemn them at the judgement (Mt 12:42). For our part, taking occasion from his deeds, we add here and there, where opportunity offers, something to admonish these same powerful men, as you asked. For the lord Bishop Turpio and the venerable Abbot Aymo, most dear to me, with many others, compelled me by great force of entreaty to undertake this. And when I pleaded the true excuse of my want of skill, they declared that this would be ill done, and that these things should rather be taken in hand and set forth in writing. But I, weighing that a showy narrative ill befits a man who was humble, have kept faithfully to what the witnesses said. They told of few of the signs that the crowd sets great store by, but of no few things about his disciplined manner of life and the works of mercy, which please God

more. For at the judgement the King will say to many who prophesied, and to many who did worthy deeds: I know you not (Mt 25:12). But those who work justice, in which Gerald grew to the very highest degree, shall hear: Come, you blessed of my Father (Mt 25:34). And truly, what sort of deeds are those by which Job, David, Tobias and many others are called blessed, if not such as Gerald is proved to have done? Having weighed these things, then, I am persuaded to believe that Gerald is worthy of the fellowship of the saints, and that through him the heavenly Rewarder deigns also to work miracles. But in weaving this apologetic preface we have spoken at length; let us now, in the name of Christ, come to the beginning of our tale.

BOOK ONE

I

Gerald, then, the man of the Lord, came from that part of Gaul which the ancients called Celtica, from the territory, namely, that borders on the Auvergne, the Quercy and the Albigeois; he was born in the town or estate of Aurillac, of Gerald his father and Adaltrude his mother. He was so outstandingly illustrious in nobility of blood that his lineage seemed among the noblest of the families of Gaul, as much in wealth as in uprightness of life. For it is said that his forebears held modesty and religion as a kind of hereditary dowry. Of this there are two witnesses sprung from the same stock, well fitted to prove

it: Saint Caesarius, bishop of Arles, and blessed Aredius the abbot. And since the Lord is in the just generation (Ps 14:5), and Gerald's generation is of those that seek the Lord (Ps 24:6), it follows that the generation of the upright shall be blessed (Ps 112:2). How rich they were is shown by the estates full of serfs, spread far and wide, which came to this same Gerald by right of succession. But the beauty of mind he had drawn from his parents shone forth in him many times increased. For by a certain grace his parents are the more renowned for having deserved to beget so happy an offspring.

II

His father, indeed, strove so earnestly to keep himself chaste within marriage itself that he often withdrew from his wife's bed and lay alone, giving himself for a time, as the Apostle says, to prayer (1 Cor 7:5). One night, it is said, he was warned in his sleep to know his wife, for he was to beget a son. For they say that word was sent him to call the child Gerald, by his own name. He was told, too, that the child would be a man of great merit. On waking, he rejoiced at the vision. Then, when he had fallen asleep again, it seemed to him that from the big toe of his right foot a little shoot sprang up, which grew little by little into a great tree, and presently, spreading its leaves, stretched out on every side. Then, as though calling workmen, he bade them set props of forked stakes and poles beneath it. And though it grew exceedingly great, he felt no

weight at all on his toe. Visions in dreams, indeed, are not always empty. And if faith may be given to a dream, this vision seems to agree with the fulfilment of things to come. He knew his wife, therefore, and she conceived a boy, as the vision had foretold. But perhaps this may be doubted, as being a dream. Then there followed another sign of power, plain to all.

III

When his mother was near her time, nine days, that is, before he was born, it happened that she lay awake beside her husband, who was awake too. And while they were talking together of I know not what, the infant uttered a cry which both of them heard. Astonished, and wondering what it could be, though they could not fail to know that the voice had sounded in the mother's womb, the father called the chambermaid and bade her bring a light and search for where the wailing had come from. When she, equally astonished, declared that there was no infant there at all who could have uttered that cry, the child sounded a second time. And after a short interval it sounded a third time, just as a newborn babe is wont to cry. Three times, then, he was heard in his mother's womb, a thing as wonderful as it plainly was contrary to the course of nature. And since it happened not by chance but by the disposing of God, who orders all things, perhaps that voice already foretold that, though shut in by this mortality, he would perform the acts of true life. For as the unborn child dwelling in its

mother's womb lives indeed but has no use of the senses, so the whole human race in this life, after the guilt of the first man, is kept shut up as in the narrow confines of the womb, where, although it lives by faith in the hope of the glory of the sons of God, it exercises nothing spiritual, such as seeing, nor any power of the senses such as the first man had before sin or the saints receive after this life, except feebly and with difficulty. Rightly, then, did Gerald sound in his mother's womb, since, exercising himself beyond the common vigour of others in faith in the Holy Trinity, he signified by that little voice the happy fame with which he was to fill the world.

IV

Once he was born and weaned, and had reached that tender age at which the character of children is usually tested, a certain pleasing disposition glowed in him, from which those who watched him carefully guessed that he would be a man of virtue. For in early childhood, as we often see, children, spurred by corrupt nature, are apt to grow angry, to envy, to want revenge, or to attempt other things of the kind. But in the boy Gerald a certain sweetness of spirit, together with the modesty that so greatly adorns youth, graced even his childish doings. By the providence of divine grace he was set to the study of letters, though his parents intended only that, once he had gone through the psalter, he should at once be trained in worldly exercises, as is the custom with noble boys. That is, that he should

run Molossian hounds, become an archer, and learn to loose falcons and hawks with a proper cast. But lest, given over to an idle pursuit, he should let the time suited to learning letters pass in vain, it was arranged by the will of God that he should be ill for a long while. His illness, moreover, was of such a kind as to draw him away from worldly exercise but not to hinder his eagerness to learn. For he was so continually covered with small pustules that, as they dragged on for a long time, it was thought they could never be cured. For this reason his father, together with his mother, decided that he should be applied more closely to the study of letters. So that, if he proved less fit for the uses of the world, he might be made suitable for the service of the Church. So it came about on this occasion that he not only learnt chant but also had a first taste of grammar. This profited him much afterwards, for the edge of his mind, sharpened by that exercise, was made keener for whatever he wished. He had, moreover, a lively shrewdness of mind, quick enough to learn whatever he wished.

V

When boyhood was past and he was growing into youth, the strength of his limbs consumed the harmful humour of his body. And he became so agile that he could vault over horses' backs with an easy leap. And since he was growing strong and nimble in body, it was sought to accustom him to armed service. But by now the sweetness of the Scriptures had taken the young

man's mind as its pledge, and he longed for their study with deeper affection. So, although he excelled in the exercises of arms, he was drawn nonetheless by delight in letters: in the former he was slow with a willing sluggishness, in the diligent pursuit of the latter he was well practised. I believe he already perceived that, as Scripture testifies, wisdom is better than strength (Wis 6:1), and nothing is richer than she (Wis 8:5). And since she is easily seen by those who love her, she took possession of the young man's mind beforehand, showing herself to him first (Wis 6:12–13), so as to be the sweet converse of his thoughts. No hindrance, then, could so occupy Gerald that he did not run back to the love of learning. Hence it came about that he learnt almost the whole course of the Scriptures, and surpassed in his knowledge of them many clerics, however well-read.

VI

When his parents died and all power came into his hands, Gerald did not grow puffed up, as young men are wont who grow proud in an early lordship, nor did he change the modesty of heart he had begun. His power as lord grew, but his humble mind in no way grew insolent. But he was compelled to busy himself with ordering and defending the possessions which, as we have said, he had claimed by hereditary right, and to go out from that sweetness of heart which he had already in some measure tasted into the bitterness of earthly business. He bore it ill to leave

this secret place of his heart, yet as soon as it was possible he hurried back to it. But when he seemed, as it were, to fall from the height of contemplation through earthly business, then, as is the way of the ibex, which in falling catches itself on its horns lest it die, so he, running back to the love of God or to the meditation of Holy Scripture, escaped the ruin of inward death: breathed upon already, I think, by that spirit of David with which David in his fervour gave no sleep to his eyes until, freed from the day's affairs, he should find a place for the Lord within himself (Ps 132:4–5), where, exulting secretly under his tongue, he might taste how sweet the Lord is (Ps 34:9). Perhaps, as in that saying of Job, the rock, Christ, poured out for him streams of oil (Job 29:6), lest many waters should be able to quench the lamp of charity in him (Song 8:7). And he longed with fixed desire for this refreshment of the heart, but his household and his intimates pressed him to break off his leisure and spend himself for the good of others.

VII

So he admitted, against his will, gnawing cares because of the complaints of those who cried out to him. For his men complained, saying in querulous tones: "Why should a powerful man suffer violence from the lowest of persons, who are plundering his goods?" And they added that, since these had found out that he would not avenge himself, they laid waste the more savagely all that was his; that it was holier and more

honourable for him to acknowledge the right of armed force, to draw the sword against his enemies and to curb the boldness of the violent; that it was better for the reckless to be put down by force of arms than for the country folk and the unarmed to be unjustly oppressed by them. Hearing this, Gerald, urged on not by impulse but by reason, was moved to pity and to help. And, committing himself wholly to God's ordering and mercy, he considered how he might visit the orphans and widows, according to the Apostle's precept, and so keep himself unspotted from this world (Jas 1:27).

VIII

So he now set himself to curb the insolence of the violent, taking care above all to offer his enemies peace and the readiest reconciliation. He strove for this so that either he might overcome evil with good or, if they refused, justice would already have taken his side more fully before the eyes of God. And sometimes, indeed, he would soften them and bring them back to peace. But when the insatiable malice of some mocked the peaceable man, then, putting forth the sharpness of his heart, he broke the jaws of the wicked, so as to snatch the prey from their teeth, according to that saying of Job (Job 29:17). Yet he did this not, as is the way of many, spurred by a lust for revenge or enticed by love of popular praise, but burning with love for the poor, who could not defend themselves. And he acted so lest, if he grew torpid in an idle patience, he should seem

to have neglected the precept concerning the care of the poor. For it commands that the poor be rescued, and the needy delivered from the hand of the sinner (Ps 82:4). Rightly, then, he would not lend his horn to the sinner. Sometimes, however, when an unavoidable need to fight pressed upon him, he commanded his men in a voice of authority to fight with the points of their swords turned back and their spears held reversed before them. This would have been laughable to the enemy, had not Gerald, strengthened by the power of God, at once become unbearable to those same enemies. It would have seemed very foolish to his own men too, had they not learnt by experience that Gerald, whom compassion overcame in the very moment of battle, was always unconquerable. So, when they saw that he triumphed by a new kind of warfare mingled with compassion, they turned their mockery into wonder. Sure of victory, too, they eagerly kept to what he commanded. For it was never heard that the fortune of victory failed either him or the soldiers who fought under his allegiance. And this too is quite certain: that he himself never wounded anyone, nor was he ever wounded by anyone. For Christ was, as it is written, at his side, who, looking into the eye of his heart, saw plainly that for love of him he was so kindly that he did not wish to strike at the enemies themselves, but only to bring their boldness to nothing. Let no one be troubled, then, that a just man sometimes made use of fighting, which seems unbecoming to religion. Whoever he may be, if he judges the case with an even

balance, he will find that not even in this respect is Gerald's glory to be darkened. For some of the Fathers, though they were most holy and most patient, nevertheless, when the cause of justice required it, manfully took up arms against their adversaries: such as Abraham, who to rescue his nephew routed a huge multitude of enemies. And King David, who sent his legions even against his own son. Gerald fought not by invading what belonged to others, but by defending what was his own, or rather the rights of his people. He was not unaware that the rhinoceros, that is, any powerful man, is bound with a thong so that he may break the clods of the valleys (Job 39:10), that is, the oppressors of the lowly. Nor, as the Apostle says, does the judge bear the sword without cause; for he is God's avenger (Rom 13:4). It was lawful, then, for a layman placed in the order of fighting men to bear the sword, so as to defend the unarmed people, as a harmless flock, from the evening wolves, as it is written. And so restrain, either by the law of war or by the power of the courts, those whom the censure of the Church cannot bring to heel. It does not darken his glory, then, that he fought for the cause of God, for whom the whole world fights against the senseless (Wis 5:20); rather it adds to his praise that he always conquered openly, without deceit or the help of ambushes, and yet was so protected by God that, as we said above, he never stained his sword with human blood. Moreover, whoever takes up arms against his enemies by his example, let him by his example also seek not his

own advantage but the common good. For you may see some who for love of praise or gain boldly throw themselves into dangers and gladly bear the evils of the world for the world's sake: and when its bitterness befalls them, they lose, so to speak, the very joys they were seeking. But theirs is another matter. Gerald's work, however, is full of light, for it is measured by simplicity of heart.

IX

The ancient deceiver had spied out the young man's ways, and, guessing that there was something divine in him, he burned with envy, and for that reason strove with all the deceits of temptation he could to overwhelm him. But he had already learnt to flee in prayer to the bosom of God's mercy, and through the grace of Christ to refute the other's devices. And the enemy, insatiably envious, having found by experience that he could not reign in him through the pleasure of the flesh, stirred up against him, as we said above, whirlwinds of war through wicked men, so as to assail through them the citadel of piety in his heart, which by himself he could in no way break into. But against his chastity, to return to his younger years, which the young lad loved with zeal, the most cunning enemy was fiercely inflamed. For it was a new and unwonted thing to him that any youth should escape unharmed the shipwreck of purity. So he pressed upon him insistently with lust, which is either the greatest or the first of his powers for deceiving the human race. And when he rejected it utterly, the enemy

was in torment, because he could not even bring it to the door of his heart. For this reason he went back to his age-old deceit and had recourse to the instrument of deception by which Adam and his posterity are most often deceived: to woman, I mean. For he thrust before his eyes, it is said, a certain young girl. And as he unwarily gazed at the colour of her fair skin, he soon began to soften in delight of her. Oh, if only he had at once seen with his understanding what lay hidden beneath the skin! For surely nothing of the flesh is beautiful but the paint of the hide. He turned away his eyes, but the image they had pressed upon his heart remained. And so he was in anguish, he was enticed, and he was scorched by a hidden fire. At length, overcome, he sent to the girl's mother someone to announce that he would come by night. Following after the messenger, he was hastening headlong to the ruin of his soul. Meanwhile, as captives in their chains are wont to remember their former freedom with groans, Gerald sighed, and called to mind the familiar sweetness of the love of God. And though with a sick desire, he prayed God that this temptation might not swallow him up altogether. He came to the appointed place; the girl entered the house, and, because it was cold, stood facing him by the fire: but the grace of God had already looked upon Gerald. To him that same girl at once appeared so ugly that he would not believe she was the one he had seen, until her father declared that it was she. Then he, understanding that it was not without the will of God that the girl no longer

had the same beauty in his eyes, at once gathered himself back to the mercy of Christ, and, sighing deeply, quickly mounted his horse and without delay, giving thanks to God, made haste to be gone. A bitter cold had happened to set in, and he let himself be frozen in it the whole night, so that the icy harshness might punish the warmth of a small pleasure. And at once he ordered the father to give her in marriage. He gave her her freedom, and granted her a small estate by deed. Perhaps, distrustful of his own frailty, he had her marriage hastened. That is why, by way of alms, he endowed her with her freedom as a dowry, so that her marriage should not be delayed. But you, who were to be a cedar of Paradise, how could you be so shaken? Surely so that you might learn what you were of yourself. For that patron of yours too, the prince of the apostles, to whom you afterwards committed both yourself and all you had, would not have known himself well enough had not the moment of temptation stolen upon him. But now that you have learnt what a man is by himself and what he is by the grace of God, do not disdain to have compassion on the frailty of those who call upon you. Let us know, then, that it is nothing unusual for saints to be tempted. For they are born with the vices of corrupt nature grafted into them, so that, wherever they strive, striving they may conquer, and conquering they may be crowned. But it makes all the difference whether a man takes in the pleasure of vice and succumbs, or resists it and conquers, filling his mind rather with delight in

the virtues, and drives from him by the antidote of devout prayer the poison of wicked pleasure which he may have swallowed for an hour. And this young man, made wiser by the experience of danger, like someone on slippery ground after a stumble, walked more warily, taking good care that his eyes should report nothing to his heart by which death might creep in to his soul through their windows (Jer 9:20).

X

But the Lord, sweet and upright (Ps 25:8), who had saved his servant Gerald from fornication by the sweetness of his mercy, did not fail, by the judgement of his justice, to punish him for his desire. For when no great number of days had passed, he struck his culprit with the blindness of a cataract for a year and more, so that the eyes which had looked on what was unlawful could not, for a time, see even what was lawful. And yet no defect at all appeared either on his eyelids or in his pupils. His household knew of the blindness, and his pupils, clear to look at, hid it from strangers with the greatest care. But he, humbling himself under the hand of the Lord who struck him, kept silent, as one ready for his scourges. He did not, indeed, refuse bodily medicine, nor did he seek it urgently, but waited patiently for when or how his Lord, having fulfilled his will to strike, would be pleased to take away the blows. For he knew that every son is scourged (Heb 12:6). The inward Judge cleanses even the smallest stains in his elect here and

now, lest there be anything in them afterwards to offend his eyes. And for that reason he brought this scourge upon him, so that his youthful mind might be both cleansed of the past and kept purer for the future. So when God had fulfilled his will in him, he removed the scourge and restored the light to his eyes.

XI

From then on, his senses refined, as it were, by affliction, he led a very honourable life, and kept to the middle path of discretion, leaning to neither side. That is, so that he should neither defraud worldly business of its due nor entangle himself in earthly occupation to the neglect of religion, he joined to himself as close companions the more honourable men and clerics of better repute, with whom, at home or abroad, he performed the divine office, either together or each on his own. A Sunday had come, and he had to attend a court by appointment, at which certain noblemen were to meet. So that he should not seem to keep them waiting by coming late, he took care to rise early and to set out before daybreak. For in this he guarded against swollen pride, lest he should show himself slow or difficult to anyone, as is now the way with some who, coming forth as from their bridal chamber, give themselves up to drunkenness before they attend to their friends, against that saying of Scripture: Woe to the land whose princes eat in the morning (Eccl 10:16). But not so Gerald. For he thought it most unworthy that one who was set over many

and was their lord should become a slave to the lordship of vices. He went fasting to the court, lest, with his sobriety drowned, he should lack the judgement of reason. And he would ask what was of Christ, what was for peace, and what favoured the common good. If he had to set out anywhere after the night Office of Lauds, the solemnity of Mass followed; and so, committing himself and his men to the mercy of God, he would depart. On that Sunday, however, since he had had to set out before dawn, he had missed Mass; and when he hoped to hear it once the court was over, it proved nowhere possible. So, very sorrowful, he went hither and thither, looking for any place where there might be some hope of finding one. But when it was all in vain, he called the clerics who happened to be there, and with them all the knights who knew the psalms, and said: "It is my own fault that this holy day is passing in vain for us. But there is something we can do to the praise of God, so that we may not seem to have spent the holy day to no purpose." So he spoke, and with them he ran through the psalter from the beginning, uttering nothing mortal. From then on he made it his custom to recite the psalter almost every day. And when he had gone through it, as though he had feasted spiritually, he seemed to rejoice, as a man is wont to be glad when his ambition is satisfied.

XII

It seems worth the labour to set down something about the appearance of his body. For

although the flesh profits nothing (Jn 6:63), although grace is deceitful and beauty vain (Prov 31:30), yet since these are apt to be kindling for lust and pride in some, it is to be praised in this man that he was handsome and yet did not soil himself in the mire of lust. Gerald, then, was of middle height, and, as they say, wholly euphormis, that is, well formed. And though each of his limbs was graced with its own beauty, his neck was so white and so perfectly shaped, as if to a rule, that you would think you had scarcely seen anything so comely. The beauty of his soul adorned the elegance of his body. So the disposition of his heart shone out upon his countenance. Scripture too bears witness to this, saying that the laughter of the teeth and the bearing of the face show the quality of the inner man (Sir 19:30). He had already tasted how sweet the Lord is, and how gentle the embrace of the heavenly Bridegroom; and for that reason he would not suffer the fair form of his soul to be defiled in the eyes of that Bridegroom by the allurement of the flesh. His people would joyfully kiss his neck, and yet he did not take it ill of them, for pride, which is always unapproachable, could find no seat in him. He was, besides, very swift in the nimbleness of his body and powerful in the strength of his limbs. This is worth recalling so that it may be seen how praiseworthy is the man who, having matter for pride, has kept himself low in humility. And, by contrast, how blameworthy are those who swell up while having little or nothing of these things. But after

he applied himself more fully to the pursuits of the mind, that agility of body withered away altogether. He was, moreover, most pleasant in ordinary conversation, and deep in the acuteness of his counsel in handling and ordering affairs. And though he avoided buffoonery in his speech, he spoke of serious things in such a way that in this too he pleased his people. He was neither too free with threats nor tenacious in nursing injuries. But neither was he quick to grant favours of any kind, nor fickle in taking back those he had granted. And whatever he affirmed, he carried out without fail, unless perhaps he perceived that it was a sin.

XIII

He was so devoted to sobriety that he kept not only himself but his people too from drunkenness. For his table companions were neither gluttons nor drinkers. He never pressed even his guests to drink, nor did he himself take more draughts than all the other guests. So he ordered the meal that no one rose from it either drunk or downcast. And though he sometimes had his guests, to whose kindly entertainment he gave himself wholly, served a meal in the morning, he himself did not eat before the third hour of the day, or, on fast days, before the ninth. The blessed prince kept that precept of Scripture, as one who eats in due season, for refreshment and not for riotousness (Eccl 10:17). For what more fitting thing could he guard against than drunkenness, which, besides being the death of the

soul and shutting men out of the kingdom of God, as the Apostle testifies, like murder, is also shown to be very harmful to the body? Hence the complaints of failing strength, trembling limbs, dulled senses and untimely old age. Sight, speech and countenance are disgraced, and every grace of religion is corrupted. No one, indeed, can be filled at once with wine and with the Holy Spirit, and no one can by any means guard Jerusalem from the fire of fornication if he will not keep Nebuzaradan, the chief of the cooks, from besieging it.

XIV

Seats were always set before him for the poor, and sometimes tables were set for them, so that he might see for himself what and how much was given them for their meal. Nor was any fixed number kept of those to be received, but when more happened to be present whose persons seemed fit to be received, more were brought in to him. No one was ever turned away from the door without being given alms. His servants saw to it that he always had dishes at hand which he himself might give them. Drink too was brought, which he looked at and tasted and then sent on, so that they might drink first; and to them he also gave half of his own bread. Believing that in them he received Christ, and reverently honouring him in them, through them he brought in to himself the One whose refreshment, according to the prophet, is to refresh the weary (Is 28:12). This reward for hospitality is foolishly diminished by

those who, though they send alms out of doors, do not bring the poor in to themselves. For in this way they seem to shut out of their houses Christ, who says: I was a stranger and you took me in (Mt 25:35). And so that his justice might exceed that of the Pharisees, according to the Lord's command, he had a ninth part of the revenues of his lands set aside. From it the poor were fed in some of his houses; from it they were given clothing and shoes. To those who met him on the way he constantly gave, secretly, either himself or through a trusted servant, the coins he carried for this purpose. Sometimes, when coins were being given out on someone's behalf, he took them himself along with the needy, rejoicing and longing to be made like the poor; but he gave them away at once, repaying the little gift he had received with much performance of the divine office.

XV

At mealtimes great reverence was kept in his presence. Chatter and buffoonery did not prevail there, but talk was either of needful or of honourable things, or indeed of the divine word. For at all seasons he dined once a day, unless perhaps on summer days, when he would take something light or uncooked in the evening. At his table there was first a long reading; but, to come down to the level of the laymen, he would sometimes break off the reading and ask the clerics what was being said in it, though only those whom he knew to be able to answer. For he brought

up noble clerics, on whom both uprightness of conduct and the training of the mind were zealously bestowed. With those reaching manhood he showed himself the more severe, saying that the time of that age is very dangerous, when a youth puts off the likeness of his mother's voice or face and begins to take on his father's voice and look; and that whoever strove to keep himself pure then would easily overcome the incitements of the flesh thereafter. So when those whom he questioned about the reading asked him rather to speak himself, he would at length bring forth what no pompous discourse, but a learned simplicity, supplied him. Meanwhile, since there were never lacking those who at once began some witticisms or jests, as usually happens, he checked them not with biting indignation but as if jesting in turn. Yet he never allowed idle talk to be drawn out in his presence. For he knew that all Christians alike are commanded each to eat his own bread in silence (2 Thess 3:12). And at the end of the meal the reader always took up the reading again. So Gerald spent most of the mealtime either speaking of God or with God speaking to him through the reading. Let them take note of this example of his who, against the prophet's rebuke, have the harp and the lyre played at their feasts (Is 5:12). They delight in sports, and rejoice at the sound of the organ (Job 21:12). They regard not the work of the Lord (Is 5:12), for amid the voices of the revellers they do not even hear the cry of the poor. What then? True is what Christ, who is the Truth, said: that out of the abundance

of the heart the mouth speaks (Mt 12:34). As for those who always talk of worldly things and of God little or seldom, it is plain what they love more, or what abounds in their hearts. Would that, like Gerald, they took thought for their last end, and whether they ate or drank, did all things, according to the Apostle's precept, to the praise of God (1 Cor 10:31). On three days of the week, and throughout every season dedicated to abstinence, he abstained from meat. If, however, a yearly feast fell on one of those days, he relaxed the abstinence in such a way that on some free day he abstained in place of the one he had relaxed, and, on account of that feast, also fed one poor man beyond the usual number. But if a fast fell on a Sunday, he by no means relaxed it, nor let it go by on that pretext, but kept the solemn fast on the Saturday before. And if such a diet seems unfitting for a holy man, let him whom this perhaps troubles know that to the clean all things are clean (Titus 1:15), that is, to those who eat without the vice of concupiscence. And that the inward Judge looks not to the kind of food but to the need, or the appetite, with which it is taken. This the prophet Elijah and Esau prove by their example. It was lawful, then, for a layman, especially one so just, to use what was lawful; which is not lawful for those whose profession forbids it. For that tree of Paradise brought death not because it was bad, but because it was presumed upon against a prohibition.

XVI

As for clothing, he always wore wool or linen, not in the fashion that has now been presumed upon and devised by the sons of Belial, who are indeed without a yoke, but in the old way, woven only so that it neither smacked of studied display nor was marked by common rusticity. With silks or costly garments he never took care to adorn himself more than usual, not even for the sake of some feast or in the presence of some marquis. The strap by which the sword is usually bound to the loins he did not trouble to change or renew for twenty years, if it could last so long. What shall I say of baldrics or showy belts, or brooches, or the trappings of horses, since he would suffer not only not to wear gold but not even to own it? For he did not think gold his strength (Job 31:24), nor did he glory in the multitude of riches (Ps 49:7), but in God. Unlike even some professed religious, who are anxious with shameless and untiring zeal to adorn the body, striving with all their might to beg from onlookers, at least by the show of costly clothing, the reverence they rob themselves of by their conduct. It would surely profit them rather to give their time to adorning the soul, which could grow ever more beautiful.

XVII

The poor and those who had suffered wrong always had free access to him, and they had no need to bring him any little gift to commend their cause to him. Indeed, the more needy he saw each one to be, the more fully did his need plead with Gerald's eyes. By now his kindness

was spoken of not only in neighbouring but in distant regions too. And because all knew how kindly he was towards everyone, many settled their needs through him. Nor did he disdain, either in person or through his men, to take part in the affairs of the poor and to lend them his support as far as he could. Often, when he knew that hard quarrels were raging between men at odds, on the day their case was to be tried he had Masses celebrated for them. And for those whom he could not help by human means he called down the help of God. Nor would he suffer any lord to take away fiefs from his vassal on account of some fit of temper; but, bringing the case into the open, partly by entreaty, partly by command, he would calm the agitation of the angered mind. In this one thing alone might you have thought that the firmness of his justice leaned to one side. Whenever a poor man happened to be held liable to a more powerful one, he would press to sustain the weaker in such a way as to break the stronger without harming him. For, truly hungering after justice (Mt 5:6), he would not suffer it to be violated, whether among his own people or among strangers.

XVIII

The thirst for justice, like the hunger, burned in him in due measure. For neither did simplicity or kindness abandon the sternness of zeal, nor the sternness of zeal the kindness of simplicity. Just as it is said of Job that he was simple and upright (Job 1:1), so this man, though he cared

much for the poor, was yet by no means drowsy in punishing the guilty, knowing well that it is granted by God to some to atone with a temporal punishment for a crime that cannot remain unpunished. So King David too, on his deathbed, ordered Joab and Shimei to be punished. Robbers had taken over a certain forest and were robbing and murdering travellers and neighbours. When Gerald heard of it, he at once sent men to capture them. And it happened that a certain countryman had just then come to them, driven by fear. But the soldiers who caught them, fearing that the lord Gerald might either let them go or blame them for bringing them before him unpunished, at once put out the eyes of them all. And so it came about that the countryman was blinded along with them. He afterwards withdrew to the Toulouse country. A long time afterwards, when the lord Gerald heard of him that he had not been a companion of the robbers, he was greatly grieved, and asked whether he was alive and where he had gone. And when he learnt that he had gone to the province of Toulouse, he sent him, so they say, a hundred shillings, bidding the bearer ask his pardon on his behalf.

XIX

Likewise, how gently he consoled the afflicted, or how often he took pity on the guilty, let this example make clear. As a quarrel grew, his neighbours had so maltreated a certain priest that they put out his eyes. The lord consoled him much with words, urging him to patience. But

lest consolation in words should seem meagre, he made over to him, by solemn deed, a church of his own. Some little time had passed, and one of those who had done violence to the priest was seized by the officials and shut up in prison. And this was at once reported to the lord, as to one who would be glad of it. He at once made for the prison, as though hastening with the desire to punish. But other cases had arisen which had to be settled the next day. On this pretext, then, he ordered the culprit to be held until then. But in the evening, when the officials had gone home, he secretly ordered the gaoler to refresh him with food and drink. And, since he was barefoot, to give him shoes and let him escape. The next day, when the people of the court were flocking to the lord from every side, he ordered the culprit to be brought. Certain men whom the gaoler had prepared to speak for him reported, trembling, that the culprit had escaped. And he, wishing to conceal what he had done, made as if to threaten the gaoler. But presently he said likewise: "It is well done, since the priest had already forgiven them the injury."

XX

Again, two men in chains, whom a great crime had made answerable before him, had been brought to him. The accusers pressed him to order them to be put to death at once by hanging. But he dissembled, since he did not wish to free them openly. For in every work of mercy he so tempered himself that his very mercy could not

seem excessive. So, looking round at the accusers, he said: "If, as you say, they must die, let us first, as the common saying goes, give them a meal." Then he ordered food and drink to be brought them and their bonds loosed so that they could eat. And when they had eaten, he gave them his knife, saying: "Go and fetch, yourselves, the withy from which you are to be hanged." Not far off was a wood grown thick with undergrowth. They went into it and, as if looking for a withy, made their way little by little deeper in, suddenly disappeared, and so escaped the hour of death. Those who were present, understanding that he had consented, did not dare to search for them among the thickets. As far as can be gathered from his even-handedness towards persons, those offenders who had set themselves on a course of evil he either restrained with fines or branded with a burning mark. But those who had committed some wrong not out of habitual malice but in some other way he let go unharmed. Yet it was never heard that anyone in his presence was punished with death or with the loss of a limb.

XXI

We record, indeed, only a few of his many deeds, one by one, such as may suffice to show certain acts of his mercy that have come to our knowledge. For this reason we put in even the smallest things, by which his great zeal may be shown; such as this: once, as he was going along the public highway, a countrywoman was

driving a plough in a little field next to the road. He asked her why she, a woman, had presumed to do a man's work. She answered that her husband had long been sick, that the time for sowing was passing, that she was alone and had no one to help her. Pitying her misfortune, he ordered her to be given as many coins as there seemed to be days of sowing left, so that she might hire a labourer for each day and herself give up a man's work from then on. Nature, as Ambrose says, shrinks from everything counterfeit, and God, her author, abhors what is against her. This thing, then, is small in itself, but the feeling of an upright man, in harmony with the laws of nature, makes it grow great.

XXII

Likewise, when he was on a journey another time, a countryman was harvesting chickpeas not far off. When the young men who rode ahead of the lord took some and munched them, he, seeing it, spurred his horse and came quickly to the man, asking whether the lads had taken the chickpeas. And he said: "I gave them freely, my lord." And the lord said: "May God do good to you."

XXIII

Of the same kind is what happened another time, when his servants were preparing a meal under the shade of some cherry trees: the little branches hanging with ripe fruit, which those

servants had broken off before he came, he paid for in silver to the countryman who protested. Someone will perhaps say that these things are unworthy of being told; but by these small things we are showing the mind of a God-fearing man, so that it may be understood indirectly that one who did not despise small things could not fall little by little into greater ones (Sir 19:1). Was not the widow's love proved by the Lord through her two mites?

XXIV

Towards those who were under his rule he was so kindly and so peaceable that it was a wonder to those who considered it. For they often reproached him with being soft and timid, since he let himself be wronged by the lowest of persons, as if he were powerless. Yet he did not, as lords are wont to be quick to anger, grow even slightly indignant against those who reproached him. Once he met a good number of country people who had left their holdings and were moving to another province. When he recognized them and asked where they were going with their belongings, they answered that they had been wronged by the man to whom he himself had granted them in fief. The soldiers who rode about the prince urged him to order them to be flogged and forced to go back to the cottages they had left. But he would not. For he knew that his Lord and theirs was one in heaven, and he was used rather, according to the Apostle, to forbear threatening (Eph 6:9), as one who would not lift up the hand

of his power against the fatherless (Job 31:21). So he let them go wherever they thought it best for them, and gave them leave to settle there. As for what I lately heard, not without shame, from a certain chatterer, namely that he would never remit to a debtor what was owed on a pledge, it is wholly false, as those testify who often saw him remit not only the increase on the pledge but even the principal of the debt.

XXV

His country people and the clerics, who loved him tenderly as a father, would often bring him little cakes of wax, which he received as though they were great gifts, giving many thanks. Yet he did not allow any of that wax to be burnt for his own use, but ordered it all to be lit as candles before the altar, or before the holy relics, which he likewise had carried with him. And when wax prepared from elsewhere for his service happened to be lacking, the chamberlains set strips of birch bark or pine torches before him and for their own duties. But since he took such care that gifts given to him freely should not be used for private purposes, how could it follow that he would have exacted payments on pledges without indulgence? On the contrary, he often of his own accord remitted to his debtors what was owed him by right. He also, according to the Apostle's precept, forbore threatening his servants (Eph 6:9). For he sometimes suffered fraud, and, as the same Apostle says, accepted the plundering of his goods (Heb 10:34).

XXVI

Let this be proved by an example: once a thief entered his tent by night, when a candle was burning by his bed as usual, and the lord happened to be awake. For he was wont, on his bed, to feed on the love and sweetness of Christ in the exercise of prayer. The thief, running his curious eye over everything, was looking to see whether he could spot anything he might carry off. His eye happened to fall on a cushion which had a silk cover. He stretched out his hand and was drawing it towards him. Then the lord said: "Who are you?" The robber took fright and hesitated, dumbfounded. Then he said: "Do what you are doing, and go away carefully, lest anyone notice." So he persuaded the robber to go off freely with his theft. Who but Gerald would have done such a thing in such a way? It certainly seems to me that this is more worthy of wonder than if he had made the thief stiffen into hard stone.

XXVII

How earnestly he strove to keep what the Apostle commands, Do not defraud your brother in business (1 Thess 4:6), will likewise be clear from the following example. Once, returning from the city of Rome, as he passed by Pavia, he pitched camp not far off. The Venetians and many others, learning of it at once, came out to him straightaway. For by now he was very well known all along that road, and famous with everyone for his religion and his generosity. So,

while the merchants, as is their way, were running about among the tents and asking whether anyone wished to buy anything, some of the more respectable came to the lord's tent and asked his servants whether perhaps the lord count (for so everyone called him) would order cloths or spices to be bought. Then he called them to him and said: "What pleased me I bought in Rome; but I should very much like you to tell me whether I made a good bargain." Then he ordered the cloths he had bought to be brought out before them. One of them was very precious. A Venetian, looking at it, asked what had been given for it. And when he learnt the sum paid, he said: "Truly, if it were at Constantinople, it would be worth even more there." When he heard this the lord was afraid, shuddering as at a great crime. And afterwards, when he met some Rome-farers whom he knew, he entrusted to them as many shillings as the Venetian had said the cloth was worth above the price paid, giving them directions where to find the seller of the cloth. Truly, though men are wont to feel compunction for other kinds of sin and to think of amendment, rarely, or rather not even rarely, will you see anyone besides Gerald grieve that he has offended in this kind of sin. But he surely knew that God is offended by every sin, and he would not offend, even in the least things, the One whom he loved with his whole heart.

XXVIII

Not forgetting that the justice of Christians must surpass the justice of the Pharisees, when

all his harvests had been most exactly tithed he ordered a ninth part as well to be stored separately, to be spent on the various needs of the poor. From it, when need required, clothes were bought for the poor who came at various times. Besides this he constantly carried coins with him, which he gave as secretly as he could to the needy who met him, either himself or through someone who was in the secret. And though the revenues of his fields and vineyards were abundant enough, it was never heard that his stewards had lent out anything at interest; nor did he himself ever buy an estate, except one small field that happened to lie within one of his own properties: whereas all rich men are wont to burn fiercely for this, forgetting the prophet's terrible threat, where he says: Woe to you who join house to house and lay field to field (Is 5:8). For Gerald, according to the precept of the Gospel, was content with his wages. And as he did violence to no one, nor accused anyone falsely (Lk 3:14), so the Lord, who disposes all things, kept what was his safe from the wicked and from usurpers. For he held so many estates under his rule in various provinces that, from the very places of which he had his fill, he might truly be called rich. Yet the number of his estates did not make him proud, since, as the Psalmist says, he desired nothing upon earth from the Lord (Ps 73:25). And the Lord surely added all these things to him, because he sought from him the kingdom of God, which comes first (Mt 6:33). So greatly, indeed, had he prospered by the gift of God, and so protected and

unharmed had he remained, that the words of Job seem to fit him: You have hedged him round, and his possession has increased in the land (Job 1:10).

XXIX

That it may be clear how he was wont to overcome evil with good, according to the Apostle's precept (Rom 12:21), let this deed of his be recorded as an example. When, on the way back, he had come to the crossing at Piacenza, a certain cleric who was in charge of the crossing came up. For, as is the custom there, he expected a very profitable fare from the Rome-farers. He, stirred to bile for some reason or other, was hurling words of indignation, so that he assailed the bishop of Rodez and other noblemen too with insulting reproaches. The man of the Lord happened to be standing opposite, and, fearing that a quarrel would break out, restrained his fellow travellers from making any harsh reply. The cleric he broke down with gentle speech, and gave him some little gifts. And he, seeing how easily with a word he had restrained both the bishop and the rest from answering the insults, and how gently he had brought himself back to his senses, asked him who he was. When he answered that he was an Aquitanian and a person of no great account, the cleric, considering him both in his looks and in his speech, turned wholly to his favour, remitted to everyone in his company whatever was owed for the fare, and filled both his flasks and wineskins and those of the others with wine. For

the lord had this gift from God, that both he and his speech were full of grace. And not only to ordinary persons, but to the great themselves. Indeed, he was always dear to kings and held in reverence by them.

XXX

And rightly was he loved by all, since he himself loved everyone. Let us tell, then, what he did with a certain runaway, as though with a friend. For on that same journey he came upon this runaway, who some years before had left his town. Among the people with whom he was living he was even held to be a great and wealthy man. The lord Gerald's servants found him and brought him, trembling and fearful, before their master. But he asked him apart how he was faring. And when he learnt from him that he was held in no small honour in that place, he said: "Nor will I dishonour you." Then he ordered his men that no one should reveal what the man had been in his own country. Then, in the sight of the man's neighbours, he gave him some little gifts, honoured him very markedly in conversation and at table, and sent him away in peace. Who but Gerald would do this? But he did it who was no slave of avarice, but had given himself wholly to mercy.

XXXI

Again, on the same journey, a man from the Bourges country had broken his hip not far from

Rome. Abandoned by his companions, he was left alone with his wife. A certain Boniface, one of the lord Gerald's knights, found him by chance, and hearing of his need, brought him to the lord Gerald, saying: "See, my lord, I have found, as you desire, something I bring you that will please you: here is a man in need of help." The man of the Lord received him gladly into his protection, and brought him, well provided for, as far as the town of Brioude. Then he gave him ten shillings besides, so that he might have support until he reached his own people. These deeds and others like them bear witness to the compassion which divine inspiration bountifully breathed into him.

XXXII

But let us know that the wheat harvest must needs grow with the darnel, and that for a while the chaff lies on top and weighs down the grain of wheat: and for this reason wicked Cain had to exercise the patience of just Abel. Gerald too, that he might be shown, like Job, to be a brother of dragons and a companion of ostriches (Job 30:29), was often harassed by certain men of the provinces. For the state of the commonwealth was by now so disordered that the insolence of the marquises had subjected the royal vassals to themselves. By now, then, it had been proved by experience in many cases that, as it is written, the Almighty was against Gerald's enemies. To them he seemed so unconquerable that the evil they schemed to build up against him rebounded rather upon themselves, as it is

written: He who digs a pit for his neighbour shall fall into it first (Prov 26:27). William, duke of the Aquitanians, a good man and praiseworthy in many things, when at length he had grown very powerful, sought, not indeed with threats but with entreaties, that Gerald should leave the king's service and commend himself to him. But he, on the strength of the count's favour he had lately won, would by no means consent. He did, however, commend to him his nephew, Rainald by name, with a great number of knights. And William was by no means angry with him, for he did not forget that his father Bernard, out of love, had commended him to the lord Gerald while still a youth. And therefore he always cherished him with very sweet companionship and great veneration. When some matter pressed, he would come to confer with him. And sometimes William, delighted by the charm of this gracious man, would press him with entreaties to stay longer with him. And often, when setting out on some business, he made him go a long way with him.

XXXIII

It happened once, when matters required it, that Gerald spent a long time with him in a certain region into which William had marched as an enemy. Meanwhile all the provisions brought on Gerald's packhorses gradually ran out. And the army, turned to plunder, was laying waste the whole of that region, as if pursuing William's enemies. For this reason the inhabitants, fearing

for themselves, abandoned their goods and fled, and no one could be found to sell provisions to his servants. So, since they found nothing to buy and were not allowed to touch anything of the plunder, he endured no small want on that expedition. For he would not allow anything to be accepted from those who were plundering, lest by sharing with them he should become a partner in their sin. Yet he bore with his friend's company, and did not desert him for all his hardship. Some laughed at this, that while others ran riot with the plunder, he and his men went in want. But many who had sounder understanding called him blessed, groaning deeply that they were not fit to imitate him. And so from that time on he earned this surname, that he was called by everyone alike Gerald the Good.

XXXIV

He was held in such esteem by this same William that he wished to give him his sister in marriage, his mother Ermengard desiring it very much, for she loved this man with a devout affection. But Christ, the Son of the Virgin, had long since made the love of chastity sweet to him, and he had embraced it from his earliest years so closely that he would not suffer himself to be torn from it even in view of so excellent a match. How greatly he abhorred the uncleanness of the flesh may be seen from this, that he never suffered a nocturnal illusion without grief. For whenever that misfortune of human nature befell him in his sleep, a chamberlain who was in his confidence

would bring him apart, in a suitable place, a change of clothes always kept ready for this, a towel and a vessel of water. When he came in (for he would not suffer himself to be seen naked), the servant at once withdrew and shut the door. So did this lover of inward purity shun defilement of the body that this alone, which befell him in his sleep, he washed away not only with baths but even with tears. This conduct of his might seem foolish, but plainly only to those whose miry mind breathes out the filth of vice. Who, though they defile themselves either by nature or by will, yet disdain to wash away their uncleanness themselves. But Gerald knew that it is written: Keep your heart with all watchfulness (Prov 4:23). And again: He who despises small things shall fall little by little (Sir 19:1). I would have you weigh, then, how highly it is to be esteemed that, amid the riches of the world and set on an earthly height, he kept his chastity. What could he do that was more magnificent? You need seek nothing greater or more excellent. For, as blessed Martin declares, nothing is to be compared with virginity.

XXXV

Count Adhemar too pressed him hard to submit to his lordship, which he could by no means extort from him. For he would not consent to commend himself not only to this Adhemar but not even to Duke William, who at that time enjoyed the greater abundance of wealth. I believe this man had Mordecai in mind, who scorned to

submit himself to proud Haman and to pay him the honour given by God to kings. But when, bound in friendship with William, he seemed to have peace, Satan, so that persecution should not be lacking to a man living in Christ, stirred up against him the aforesaid Count Adhemar. Though he assailed him with many and various trials, he could not bring him into subjection. For it happened once that he was spending the night in a meadow with a few knights, when Adhemar, sending a scout, learnt for certain where he was and with how many. Rejoicing greatly at having found so fit an occasion to seize him, he gathered a troop of armed men and led his force to the place. Now Gerald, lying in one part of the meadow, was asleep, it is said, with all his men. But he who keeps Israel did by no means slumber for the innocent man (Ps 121:4). For as it is written of the prophet Jeremiah that the Lord hid him (Jer 36:26), so God hid this man too, so that though they rode all round the meadow and back again through the middle, they could by no means find him. Then Adhemar, his effort frustrated, withdrew, grieving that his wickedness had been mocked. But the just man, as it is written, with clean hands added strength (Job 17:9), the strength of praise in the Lord.

XXXVI

Likewise, Count Adhemar's henchmen seized a castle of his. When Gerald heard of it, he took with him the few knights who happened to be with him at the time and hastened to the town.

Adhemar, for his part, was preparing to follow the invaders of the town with a strong band of troops. But when they were not far off, learning that Gerald had hurried ahead to besiege the castle, he held back his army, which was flying forward, saying: "We must find out with what multitude of fighters Gerald is fortified, since he has dared to forestall us in besieging the town. For he would not have thrown himself into this danger had he not been surrounded by the help of a crowd of countrymen." So he spoke, and sent swift horsemen to find this out. Night had now fallen: the scouts hastened without delay and carefully searched out what Gerald's camp might be. And, as usually happens at night, seeing from afar, with uncertain sight, some whitish stones, they took them for the tents of the besiegers. At once, pale and terrified, they ran back to Adhemar and declared that they had seen a huge multitude of camps. For they had come back by way of a certain lady, to whom they told the same thing; and through her this very thing that the scouts had seen became known afterwards to the man of God. So Adhemar, shaken by the will of God, went back home with his army. The next day the usurpers of the castle, learning that Adhemar would not come to their aid, asked Gerald for peace, begging him to let them withdraw without disgrace. And this the man of God Gerald granted at once. But his knights, roused in spirit, took it ill that they should not at least be stripped of their arms. Yet Gerald's mercy prevailed: he made them stand still, and allowed the enemy a

way out as they fled through a narrow lane. He even posted two of his men in arms, standing on either side, to see that no one presumed to snatch anything from the belongings of those who were leaving. So Gerald triumphed, driving out his enemies without bloodshed. So Christ, after his wont, ennobled his soldier the more gloriously by this very adversity.

XXXVII

Godfrey, the well-known count of Turenne, once gathered a band of knights and was hastening to attack this man of God in war or to lay waste what belonged to him. But it happened that he was wounded by the very sword with which he had armed himself, so that he could by no means complete the journey he had begun. At length, understanding that he had been wounded because of the wrong he meant to do the man of God, he gave up his malice, seeing that the words of Moses fitted him well: Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord fights for them against us (Ex 14:25).

XXXVIII

Likewise the brother of the aforesaid Adhemar stole secretly into the town which stands above the monastery. But because he had already learnt from the experience of others that Gerald, with God fighting for him, always prevailed over his enemies, he did not dare to stay there. Yet he carried off everything that could be taken away and

fled in haste. Not long afterwards, when certain honourable men rebuked him for that crime, he gave everything back, and coming to the man of God, asked pardon for his rashness. For by now he was held in such reverence by all who knew him that whoever harmed him was sure, as though he had committed sacrilege, that it would not turn out well for him. And though the sons of darkness troubled the son of light both in the ways we have related and in many others, he never failed to protect the poor wherever he could. For he forgave those who harmed him so readily that you would think he was more willing to forgive than they were to be reconciled. The cause of the poor always weighed more heavily on him, for his soul suffered with them, and he could more easily neglect his own cause than theirs. For as some most skilful physician, lying wounded himself, may still strive to heal the wounds of others, so he, even while he was being harmed, did not fail to protect the powerless.

XXXIX

To his enemies he was so unconquerable that the evil they schemed to build up against him rebounded rather upon themselves. This is proved by some of the things related above, and by the present example. Adalelm, brother of Count Adhemar, besides the wrong he had done the lord Gerald when he broke into the castle of Aurillac, a wrong which Gerald had willingly forgiven him, still raged in his malice and was stubbornly driven to harm the holy man. So, gathering a

troop of henchmen, he tried to break into the castle where the lord Gerald happened at that time to be attending the solemnity of Mass. But those who were outside, seeing him from afar coming on headlong, suddenly shut the gate. And when a din of shouting arose in the castle, the knights who were at Mass with the lord wanted to rush out. But he checked them with his words, and would by no means let them go out until the work of God was finished. Meanwhile Adalelm's henchmen, roaming round the castle walls, found only seven horses, which they drove off. And soon, seeing that they had broken in to no purpose, they began, ashamed, to go back. It is said that the man of the Lord, keeping back his knights, took his psalter and hurried up above the gate, and sang to the Lord something or other from the psalms. And the tyrant who had made the heart of the just to mourn (Ezek 13:22) was by no means allowed to go home rejoicing. I am about to tell marvellous things, almost unbelievable, were they not attested by a quite reliable witness. For of their horses nearly sixty died within a short space of time. And Adalelm, after the fourteenth day, died so terribly that a violent whirlwind laid bare the whole place where he lay. Adalbert, who was present, bears witness to this, the monk who is wont to preach the word of God to the people at Limoges. He was keeping at Turenne the treasure of Saint Martial, which had been carried there some time before for fear of the pagans. And those who had taken the horses,

seeing what had happened, sent them back to the man of God.

XL

Sometimes he was forced against his will to put forth the strength of his power and to bend the necks of the wicked by force of arms, as was done with a certain very evil man called Arlald. He held a little town called Saint-Serenus, from which, going out like an evening wolf, he made raids on the lord Gerald's people. Gerald, for his part, spoke peaceably to him who hated peace (Ps 120:7), and even gave him some little gifts, and arms fit for soldiers, so as to soften his savage ways by kindness. But the foolish and brutish man, putting this down not to mercy but to cowardice, raged the more boldly against those people. At length, then, Gerald, considering that the madness of the foolish man could not be curbed without the whip, gathered a band of knights and made for the castle. And by an unbelievable stroke of victory he dragged that beast from his chamber without anyone being killed. And when he stood before him full of confusion, he spoke to him not insultingly but reasoning with him as far as was fitting. When he, trembling, had answered in most humble and beseeching words, the man of the Lord said to him: "See, you have learnt that you cannot stand against me by your own strength: beware, then, of raging; beware of practising malice any further, lest it fall back more heavily upon your own head. And I will let you go," he said, "in such a way that I shall

not trouble to take either a hostage or any oath from you. Nor will I allow anything to be taken from your belongings, not even in compensation for the plunder you are wont to carry off." So he let the man go, chastened, and from then on he took good care not to presume to harm Gerald's people.

XLI

By now, as we said above, his adversaries were ceasing, struck with the fear of God. For though, after the example of Job, he was a brother of dragons and a companion of ostriches, yet the beasts of the field were at peace with him (Job 5:23). For though his allodial land began at Postomia, and from there his great estates followed one upon another, so that as far as the great mountain Greo he could always lodge in his own chapels going and returning, yet he had no need to commend any estate to some powerful man for protection, except one small property called Taladiciacus. For it lay apart among very bad neighbours, far removed from the rest. For this one his officials made him, against his will and unwilling, commend it to a certain Bernard for protection. This he bore patiently, even with a certain cheerfulness, saying: "It has turned out well for me, that I may learn that it is good to trust in the Lord rather than in man (Ps 118:8)." We have been pleased to record this so that it may be clear from it that whenever God allowed anything to happen to test him, he turned it not to sadness but to humility. This also shows that

this man lived by faith, since he knew that all things are subject to God's ordering, and was not unaware, as it is written, that nothing on earth happens without a cause (Job 5:6).

XLII

See, we have set out something of his outward deeds and of his ordinary manner of life, from which it is very easy to see that this man was a lover of justice and, according to the Apostle's precept, lived soberly, devoutly and justly (Titus 2:12). Since, then, he walked blameless in the ordinances of the Lord (Lk 1:6), it ought not to seem incredible if the Lord himself magnifies his mercy with him. We therefore urge those to whom everything that rumour now spreads about this holy man seems incredible to examine his case again more carefully and diligently. For if it seems an obstacle that he was powerful in the world, it must be considered that it is a greater and more praiseworthy virtue to have had matter for pride and yet humbly to have kept down the height of power. For there is no power but from God (Rom 13:1). And he, according to Scripture, does not cast away the mighty, since he himself is mighty (Job 36:5). Although, then, he was raised high in worldly glory, it ought not to seem incredible if God glorifies him who glorified God by keeping his commandments. Were not King David, Hezekiah and Josiah men of power and of war? In more recent times too it has been heard of some, such as Oswald, king of the English, whom God glorifies by signs because they strove

to glorify him by keeping his commandments. In short, in every age of this life the divine goodness does many things that serve to rouse a religion trodden down and forgotten. Hence the Apostle says that God leaves no age without witness to himself. This sometimes happens even through the ungrateful, as under Moses many signs were wrought among those of whom it is written that with most of them God was not well pleased (1 Cor 10:5). And truthful and reliable witnesses affirm some things that are scarcely believable, as blessed Jerome tells of a man who was once violent and a robber, who afterwards, converted to Christ, made the sun stand still for a long time so that he might finish his journey, and then entered bodily into the room of his disciples through a closed door. If, then, God, who did wonders with the fathers, deigns in our times also, to revive devotion to a religion trodden down, to work signs through a man who, as in the days of Noah, was found just, it ought not to seem incredible. Rather is he to be glorified who, leaving no age without witness to his goodness and mindful of his promise, does not cease to do good to his people (Jer 32:40). As for the deeds this man did after he had given himself wholly to the service of God, we keep what must be said of them for the following book, and here, in the name of God, let us end this one.

Preface to the Second Book

Those who argue rashly about the merits of the lord Gerald may be satisfied by considering and examining the quality of his life. For, sitting as it were on some tribunal, they decide whether he ought to be a saint or not; whereas this lies under the judgement of God, by which signs are often worked even through the reprobate for the benefit of the good. Let them be satisfied, then, by the testimony of the miracles which Christ deigns to work through him, both while he lived and after his death. As for those who glory in saying that Gerald was powerful and is a saint, we urge them not to applaud themselves for this, for unless they are poor in spirit (Mt 5:3) and, like him, have seasoned their power with religion, their house cannot be a lowly one. Rather, by comparison with him they will be convicted of having been able to live justly in the same way, but of not having wished to; and as for the gluttons and tipplers, to speak of certain professed religious, who, inventing excuses for their sins, are wont to declare over their cups that Gerald ate meat and is a saint, their own profession plainly convicts them. For many things are lawful for a layman that are not lawful for a monk. Adam was condemned not because the tree in Paradise was bad, but because he presumed against a

prohibition. Gerald, indeed, lawfully used what was allowed to his order, since he both abstained from what was unlawful and ate with the poor. For he knew that wine was created for sobriety. For Elijah too was fed with meat, and was found worthy to be carried up into paradise. Yet through the concupiscence which drives some men, Esau lost his birthright for a dish of lentils. Gerald's case, then, is one thing, theirs another. And those who rave that he can be called neither martyr nor confessor, let them know that both can be said, not only of him but of everyone who either bears the cross by resisting vices or glorifies God by doing good. For God is confessed by deeds, as John testifies: By this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments (1 Jn 2:3); and he is also denied by deeds, as the Apostle says of some: They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny him (Titus 1:16). Since, then, a confessor is so called from confessing, and God is either denied or confessed by deeds, Gerald can be called a confessor all the more rightly, the more just the deeds by which he confessed God. As for those who, like the Jews, seek signs, what do they make of John the Baptist, who, we read, worked no sign after his birth? For although miracles are by no means lacking in this man's case, we give this one answer: that since he did not put his hope in money and treasures, he did wonders in his life, as it is written (Sir 31:8–9).

BOOK TWO

I

The athlete of the heavenly army, long contending in the arena of worldly life, manfully overthrew the battalions of the vices. Then, holding fast the word of life in the midst of a perverse generation (Phil 2:15–16), he shone like a lamp. And since he was to be proved in the secret place of the storm (Ps 81:8), the malignant enemy tried with all the deceits he could, both by himself and through his henchmen, to put out this lamp. But just as a flame stirred by the wind usually burns the more strongly, so the little fire of divine love, which had been kindled in Gerald's breast from boyhood, could not be quenched by any shower of temptation. Rather, as his age now ripened and every vice was little by little subdued, he grew daily stronger than himself in the virtues. Already he was setting ascents in his heart (Ps 84:6); already he was rising, as in that word of the prophet, above the heights of the earth (Is 58:14). You could see the dawn of his holiness brightening into a festal day; you could see the lily grown among thorns (Song 2:2), and the nearer it came to ripeness, the more widely it spread its open flowers of virtue. So, as one set on the summit of things, he had fixed the affection of his mind on that heavenly blessedness. And since, through his heavenly longing, an inner light shone upon him, he was able to judge the darkness of worldly desire. Shall I not call earthly desire darkness, by which the lovers of the world are blinded so that they love vanity? But Gerald had learnt to separate the precious from the vile (Jer 15:19), and thought it most unworthy that one who

knew himself called to the supper of the heavenly Lamb (Rev 19:9) should lick the dust. He grieved rather over those who through friendship with the world are made enemies of God (Jas 4:4). And after he had tasted how sweet the Lord is, he scorned to lap up the stolen waters, which are sweeter (Prov 9:17). He mourned rather for those who, as blessed Job says, run with clamour to gnaw the root of the juniper (Job 30:4), that is, the desire for gain, full of pricks. So worldly power, which was his in abundance, he had trodden underfoot in contempt of mind. But, as it is the part of a shrewd man to turn everything to his own profit, he considered how he might so dispose of what he possessed in time that it would profit him for ever.

II

So he called Gausbert, a venerable bishop and truly worthy of praise, with certain other honourable men, and told them in confidence what thought was stirring his mind. For this lord Gausbert was very dear to the man of God, and because of their common holiness they kept close company with one another. He explains, then, that he is weary of this present life and longs for the habit of religion; that he wishes to go to Rome and to make over his estates by deed to blessed Peter, prince of the apostles. And when this had been discussed at length, the man of the Lord, Gausbert, looking into the matter with deeper counsel, at last persuaded him to keep the secular habit in outward appearance, for the

common welfare of the people of the province, but to dedicate his possessions to blessed Peter as he wished. And he, lest by clinging too stubbornly to his own resolve he should seem to have acted disobediently, consented. Yet, mindful of the Apostle, who says that the Jew, which is interpreted "one who confesses", is greater and better in secret than in the open (Rom 2:29), he was tonsured in such a way that it was hidden from men but manifest to the One who sees from above. He cut off his beard with a razor, and, drawing the razor round his head in the form of a crown, he also cut away part of his hair. And so that this should be completely concealed, he bound by oath some of the chamberlains who knew of it never on any account to reveal it as long as he lived. By this deed of his, then, he seems to have won for himself a double reward. For on the one hand, burning with love of the Lord, he offered God the work of conversion; on the other, full of love for his neighbours, he made himself, unwillingly, remain for their benefit in a habit he did not want. For what kind of life could he offer God more pleasingly than this, in which he neither neglected the common good nor lessened in any way the perfection of his own conversion? And was not this way of life the more precious, the more it was both useful to many and known to God alone? For God, as it is written, directed his counsel, so that, though he made him enter into marriage with Leah, he did not deprive him of the longed-for embraces of Rachel.

III

He easily found a device for hiding his tonsure. For he kept his beard cut short, as though it were a burden; and since the hair had fallen away from the back of his head, he hid the crown on the top, covering it by always wearing a cap. He wore garments of skins over his linen clothes, because clerics and laymen alike are wont to use that kind of garment. Yet he never had two fur garments at once. But when a new one had to be brought, he ordered the old one to be given away at once. When he rode, a sword was usually carried before him by someone, but he himself never touched it with his hand. For he had long since ordered a golden cross to be made from his sword-belt and the trappings of his girdle. He never used to sit on a horse with trappings. In these things and others like them it was plain enough how, striving for moderation, he had despised the height of his power.

IV

So, after he had given himself over entirely to the service of God, that he might consecrate his possessions also to the Lord, he went to Rome, and by solemn deed made over his famous estate of Aurillac to blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, together with appurtenances great enough to supply every need of the monks whom he had resolved to gather there. For his mind burned to establish there a monastic dwelling, where monks might lead the common life with an abbot

of their own order. He also assigned a rent to be paid every year to the shrine of blessed Peter. So, as he had conceived it in his fervent mind, he set out as arranged, and by God's favour accomplished what he had resolved. On his return he ordered stonecutters and masons to be gathered from everywhere, and commanded the foundations to be opened for building a church in honour of blessed Peter. But Satan, envious of all good, by I know not what art deceived the foresight of the master builders. For they laid the foundations weakly, and when a great sum of money had already been spent and the walls were raised high, the joints of the squared stones suddenly came apart and fell. Yet this man was not too greatly saddened by it. For, as it is written, whatever befalls the just man shall not sadden him (Prov 12:21). He trusted truly that, although the work was delayed on this account, the reward of the lost work would by no means be lost. He saw that by God's judgement this loss had been allowed to happen; and indeed it is almost always so in every undertaking, that whatever is offered more pleasingly to God is accomplished with greater difficulty. And certainly in the nature of things, what grows quickly declines quickly, but what grows with difficulty lasts longer.

V

Lent had come, when the milder air was already smiling on the work of building. One morning, when he had finished his usual prayers, Gerald went out from the town that stands above

that place. When he had gone a little way, he began, casting his eyes this way and that, to consider where the fabric of the church might best be founded. At length he chose a place already foreknown by divine providence. He orders the craftsmen to come back, their zeal to be rekindled, the interrupted work to be opened up again and the work begun to be pressed on with skill, and the church which his father had once built in honour of Saint Clement to be rebuilt at a fitting size and in vaulted form. For, as we said before, his father was a devout man, as one descended from a devout lineage.

VI

While he carried on with building the house, he was always turning over in his mind how he might find monks of good character who could inhabit the place under the rule. But since the scarcity of them made it hard to find any, he was anxious, and did not know what to do. Then he sent certain noble boys to the monastery of Vabres. For the fervour of regular observance was then growing warm there, so that among that brotherhood these boys might be formed under the rule. Of these one survives to this day, who tells what he saw with blessed Gerald, the things we are describing, and writes them down with his own hand. But when these boys were ordered to return, since they lacked masters, they soon went slack with a girlish softness and neglected the rigour of discipline. And so it came about that the plan did not take effect; yet, driven by neces-

sity, he set one of them over the rest. But since that one lived a lax life, the man of the Lord was deeply distressed, because he could not correct him, nor had he anyone else to put in his place. So when he saw either him or his accomplices walking the path of a corrupt life, he would say, with a deep sigh, those words of David: O Lord, scatter the counsel of Ahithophel (2 Sam 15:34).

VII

Sometimes, too, breaking into a voice of lament over men whom he saw inclined to evil, he groaned in weariness, as if making complaint that these men were perishing for love of the world, that mercy was failing, that iniquity was overflowing, that almost all were now losing innocence from their hearts and truth from their lips. He would not, however, involve himself in their quarrels, but prayed that almighty God would bring them all to peace, ordering the solemnity of Mass to be celebrated, and often repeating those words of Hezekiah: O Lord, only let there be peace and truth in my days (Is 39:8); and that other: O how the holy man fails! O how truths are diminished among the sons of men! (Ps 12:2).

VIII

Burning for heavenly things, he had despised the earthly, and he hoped that his longing might find comfort if he could find companions in that same longing. Therefore his mind seethed day

and night, and he could not forget his longing to gather monks, often speaking of it with his household and intimates. For he was driven to it with such longing that he would sometimes exclaim: "Oh, if only someone would grant me to find devout monks on these terms! I would give them everything I possess, and spend the rest of this life begging! For I would not delay a moment in entering into such a bargain." Likewise, when once his intimates answered him, saying: "Are there not many monks to be found in these regions, from whom you could gather as many as you wish?" He uttered a very strong judgement: "If monks are perfect," he said, "they are like the blessed angels; but if they go back to worldly desire, they are rightly compared, by their apostasy, to the apostate angels, who did not keep their own dwelling (Jude 6). For I confess to you that a good layman is incomparably better than a monk who breaks his vows." And when they added: "Why, then, have you been accustomed to bestow such great benefits on monks not only nearby but far away?" He, despising his own deeds with his usual humility, said: "I do nothing. But if, as you say, I did something, I am sure that he is true to his promise who promised to reward a cup of cold water given in his name (Mt 10:42). Let them see to what they are in the eyes of God. Certainly it is true that he who receives a just man in the name of a just man shall receive the reward of a just man (Mt 10:41)." In these words of his and others like them it appears that he was weary of the delight of the present life,

that he burned with heavenly longing, and that he would have left all he had, had there not been lacking those to whom he could reasonably hand it over. True is the common proverb, that the will is counted for the deed. Hence even he who hates his brother is declared to be a murderer (1 Jn 3:15). And John the Evangelist drank the chalice of the Passion, though he died in peace. If, then, the will is counted for the deed, Gerald is by no means deprived of the reward of those who renounce all.

IX

So he was held in the world against his will. And although he lacked companions with whom to renounce that same world, he nonetheless gave himself wholly, in a wonderful manner, to the work of God. For he was so intent on hearing readings, and on prayers in turn, now with others, now apart, that it is a wonder how he could have such zeal for these things, or how he was willing always to complete so great a number of psalms. All the more since at times he also had other business to dispatch. For he was not so stubborn as to hold himself too much aloof from necessary affairs; but, having given them a little attention as occasion required, he would soon gather himself back in haste to the sweetness of psalmody that he had tasted. How reverently he stood in church cannot be told well enough; you would have thought him to be contemplating something divine, and with rapt countenance to be following that word of the prophet: The Lord lives, in whose sight I stand (1 Kgs 17:1).

To show this by an example: the feast of the Lord's Ascension had come, and he hastened to the monastery of Solignac to celebrate it as the solemnity requires. For he would not allow the office of so great a feast to be gone through other than festively, nor, as many are accustomed to do, the course of the office to be cut short in the celebrating. So when they had come there, the monks, as befitted a person so great and of such worth, prepared for him a seat and a rest to lean on, spread with ornaments. When he had gone to it after making the round of the oratories, the brethren began to celebrate the office solemnly, drawing it out at length, as the custom is. But the lord, until it was completed, stood so rapt in contemplation that he neither sat down nor leant even a little on the rest, showing by the very stillness of his body the devotion and constancy of his mind. But we are not so: praying before the face of God as though in secret, we utter the divine praises with a showy voice rather than with a simple heart. And whereas the understanding of the mind ought to accord with the voice, we make the voice run after the levity of the mind. Gerald, however, pondering that word of the Apostle, But to God we are manifest (2 Cor 5:11), bore himself as one in the sight of a judge who sees all things.

X

And so that the divine goodness might glorify before men him who glorified God before the unruly by carrying out his commandments, God, although with the time of Antichrist now at hand

the miracles of the saints must cease, yet mindful of his promise, in which it is said, Those who glorify me I will glorify (1 Sam 2:30), deigned to glorify this servant of his by a certain grace of healing. This kind of healing was such that, although out of humility he shrank from laying his hand on the sick, he nevertheless often came to their aid, both when absent and against his will. For the sick used to steal the water in which he had been accustomed to wash his hands, and many were healed. And that this may seem the more credible, it is fitting to name certain persons. For a certain countryman near the monastery of Solignac had a blind son; and after long lamenting that blindness and poverty alike weighed upon him, he was warned in a vision to go to the lord Gerald and pour over his son's eyes the water in which Gerald's hands had been washed. The man believed the vision, and came and told what he had dreamt. When the lord heard this, he trembled, dismayed in mind, and, shrinking from such presumption, said that it was a delusion, which was deceiving the man and wished to deceive him too into attempting what was not granted; that the man was in error, asking such things in empty hope. The father, whom his son's blindness tormented, groaned; and, understanding that the man of the Lord would by no means consent, because of his humility, he pretended to go away, and obtained the water from one of the servants. Returning home, he bathed his son's darkened eyes, calling on the name of

Christ, and the boy received his sight. Another work followed upon this deed.

XI

There lived at Aurillac a little boy who was lame, and he was entrusted to a smith to learn a craft by which he might earn his living. Meanwhile he was told in his sleep to ask for the water in the same way; but the smith, who was to obtain it, knowing that the man of the Lord was very stern in this matter, did not dare to ask for the water openly, but obtained it secretly through the servants. And as soon as he sprinkled the useless limbs with that water, the divine power at once restored them to their proper use. When report little by little spread this deed abroad, it came to the lord's knowledge as well. But he, struck by the strangeness of the thing, said that it had happened not by his merit but by the faith of those who had given that water to the smith, which they all vied with one another to keep hidden from him; and when he could not find the giver, he was moved to a vehement threat, that no one should ever again presume such a thing, declaring that if a serf did it, he would lose his limbs, and if a free man, he would no longer be his man. For there was nothing he feared more than praise. And though he was kind to his enemies, to those who praised him he seemed stern.

XII

At Postomia, a notable allod of his own, a blind woman received her sight from the water of his hands. This was spread abroad among everyone, but it was hidden from him with the greatest care, chiefly for the sake of one of the servants, who had given the woman the water. For his people could not make light of the ruin he had long before threatened for this offence, knowing that it would not go unpunished if he caught the giver.

XIII

Again, he was staying in the chapel that stands near the estate called Crucicula, when another woman, one of his bondwomen, likewise received her sight from the water of his hands. When he learnt of it, he searched hard for the man who had given the water, Rabbold by name, found him, and at once put him out of his service. Some time later a nobleman named Ebbo came to reason with the lord, saying that perhaps he was acting against the will of God, since, under the pretext of an indiscreet humility, he had neglected a grace granted from heaven, and had left in their distress those whom he could help; that it was better to spend on them the grace which had perhaps been given him for their sake, and to grant those who pleaded with him what their need required; that pride was not to be feared, since he was not greedy for praise; nor presumption either, since those who asked for help declared that they had been admonished by God; above all, since it had already been proved by

experience that the benefit of healing which had been sought from him had more than once taken effect, even without his knowing. And he pressed this argument reasonably. But Gerald sighed and wept, saying that he feared it was rather a fraud of the devil, which wished to deceive him under this pretext and had contrived to rob him of the reward of whatever good he had ever done. At length, then, overcome by entreaty or by reason, he took back the man he had dismissed, and ordered twelve coins to be given to the woman.

XIV

Knowing that the state of the mind is better kept by this alternation, if one gives oneself from time to time to reading after prayer, he had the divine words read aloud before him, as we said above. Hence he also adopted the practice of having reading at his meals, and the reader was not to leave it off even when guests were present. By way of condescension, he would sometimes bid the reader stop, and ask those who might happen to know what the reading meant. And when those he questioned would beg him to speak instead, he would at length answer eloquently and knowledgeably, like a learned man, yet in such a way as not to put even the clerics to shame. And when, after the meal, each had gone off to his own affairs, there would again be read before him chiefly those passages that remained over from the lessons read in church. While he was intent on reading, hardly anyone presumed to interrupt him for any cause whatever. For, as in that word

of Job, he was held in awe by those under him, and the light of his countenance did not fall to the earth (Job 29:24). Wonderful things are told of his speech and conversation. For in what he said with a cheerful mind he was most delightful. But what he uttered by way of rebuke seemed like goads, so that it was feared almost as something more than words. In giving anything he was very slow to decide. But once he had given, he did not take it back. If he heard that a priest was of bad repute, he did not on that account despise the office of the Mass at his hands, for he knew that that sacred mystery cannot be made worse by a sinful man. And though in judging the deeds of others he was either sharp or gentle according to the merits of each case, his own works he held cheap. And these, indeed, he commended the more preciously to the One who looks down from above, the more cheaply he valued them himself.

XV

And since he drank in heavenly longing in fuller floods, so to speak, his mouth was so filled out of the abundance of the heart (Mt 12:34) that the law of the Lord was almost always sounding in it. For he had marked out for himself certain sacred words that seemed suited to the actions of the body. Such as this: in the morning, before he began to speak, he would say, Set a guard, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round about my lips (Ps 141:3), and other words of this kind, which he fitted to each action: when he awoke, when he rose from bed, when he put on his shoes, when he

took up his garment or his belt, or indeed when he began a journey or anything else, so that, according to the Apostle's saying, he seemed to do all things in the name of the Lord (Col 3:17). Sometimes, indeed, when he happened to be sitting with a few, or alone, he would meditate on I know not what in long silence, and, bathed in tears, would draw a sigh from the depths of his breast that shook his whole frame, so that anyone could easily perceive that his mind hung upon something elsewhere and found no comfort in the present. Such was his conversation, and such his silence, that his mouth proclaimed the praise of the Lord (Ps 51:17), and the meditation of his heart was in his sight (Ps 19:15).

XVI

His own people knew that he longed with all his strength for the habit of religion. But, being prudent, and considering that those who profess a lofty purpose fall the more heavily from on high when they are corrupted by love of the world, he judged it better to remain as he was than to attempt so arduous a thing without proven fellow workers. If, then, you look at his intention, he kept faith with Christ in the monastic profession by his devotion. And it is a very high praise to serve the purpose of religion in a secular habit, just as, on the contrary, it is most shameful to have sought the world under the garment of that same religion. Since, then, as we said before, this man had no brethren with whom he might dwell well and pleasantly together in unity (Ps 133:1),

he bore the sojourn of this life with weariness. And just as Noah's dove once, finding nowhere outside to rest, returned to the ark and to Noah himself, so this man, amid the waves of this world, ran back to the secret place of his heart and rested in the delight of Christ. For he did not, like that raven, cling to the carrion of bodily pleasure, since his soul refused to be comforted by the glory of the present life; but, mindful of his God, he was delighted (Ps 77:3–4), and, running back to the secret place of his heart as to an ark, he exulted under his tongue. For he did not allow himself to regard iniquity in his heart for long, fearing lest perhaps the Lord should not be willing to hear him (Ps 66:18). Rather, the sins without which the human condition cannot be, which to us seem rather light but to him seemed grave, he strove always to acknowledge before his eyes, in such a way that he did not doubt he would receive from God, in his mercy, the forgiveness of the impiety of his heart. For this reason his King and Lord mercifully directed his way in his sight, and graciously attended to the prayer of his voice. He took such pains always to lodge beside a church that through the course of many years he spent not a single night away from an oratory, except one, on the feast of the Innocents, which came about because of a journey. A large company of clerics always went with him, with whom he laboured unceasingly in the divine work. All the church furnishings needed for the ministry were likewise carried with him, and with them the work of divine service was performed with great

care and reverence, above all on feast days. At night he used to come to the oratory long before everyone else; and when that was over, he was wont to remain alone. And then he tasted the savour of inward sweetness all the more sweetly for tasting it more secretly. Then at length, glad and eager, he would go out, either to his bed, as the hour allowed, or to his people. For he had fixed for himself such a manner of living in his conduct that anyone of sound judgement would marvel that so much heavenly grace had flowed together in him. He kept this way of life in his outward conduct too, so that his servants knew how he would conduct himself in each season of the year.

XVII

He had made it his custom to go to Rome often. It is said that he travelled there a great many times. Our informants, however, are certain of seven. For since it is the bent of human nature always to wish to look upon the light, this man, being spiritual, longed spiritually to behold those two lights of the world, namely Peter and Paul. And since he did not yet look to behold them in person, he often visited their shrines and churches, and made over his possessions to that same blessed Peter. He had laid down this law for himself, that every second year he would go back to their tomb and, like a suppliant serf, bring to his Lord, as a kind of tribute, ten shillings hanging from his own neck. But who could worthily set forth how devoutly he fulfilled it?

He was so generous to the needy that his bounty passed over hardly a single one of the poor, who swarmed there in crowds, for he trusted confidently that he himself would be heard if he heard the poor when they cried out. He also gave much to the monasteries along the road. And so the fame of his great kindness had resounded far and wide, everywhere. Hence monks and pilgrims, and the needy as well, and those who were his hosts, would ask eagerly, at the season when the Rome-farers usually pass through, whether Count Gerald was coming, or when he would come. Even the Marruci, those hardy dwellers of the Alps, thought nothing more profitable than to carry Gerald's baggage over the ridges of Mount Jove.

XVIII

Once, too, he was making this journey. When he came to the city called Asti, a thief stole two of his packhorses. But when he came to a certain stream, he could not force them to cross, until he was caught by the lord Gerald's men. And once the packhorses had been recovered, he did the thief no harm.

XIX

Once, when he was making that journey, he took with him a monk named Aribert, a man of great abstinence. For such company was sweet to him: whenever he found anyone of religious life, he always took the more affectionate delight in

him. It happened once that there was no dish for that abstemious man to eat with his bread. The lord asked carefully whether the servants had prepared the food he was used to. When they answered that they had nothing but bread, he was distressed, saying: "Oh, what has befallen us today? We all have a full meal, and this servant of God is to go short." It was, moreover, a day free from abstinence. The time for washing hands had already come, and Samuel, who was present and tells of it, ran to fetch water, when by chance he found a little fish lying on the bank and flapping, which had leapt out of the water before his very eyes. Seizing it, he ran joyfully to the lord, saying: "Look, God sends you this fish; for I found it lying beside the water." And he answered: "Thanks be to God." And meanwhile, while it was being cooked, he went into his tent, knelt down, and prayed for some time with tears. For such was ever his custom, to put nothing before Christ, but rather to give him devout thanks for each thing that befell him. When he rose from prayer, he stood before them all full of joy. Then, when they had sat down at table, the abstemious man ate his fill; and since some part of the fish was still left, the lord pressed him, saying: "Why, brother, do you hold back from eating a little fish, when you will have nothing else?" When he declared that he was already full, the lord tasted it, to see whether it might be good. And finding it of excellent flavour, he too ate as much as he needed, and gave little pieces to all who were present as a blessing. All gave thanks to God, recognising a

divine gift both in the finding of the fish and in its having been more than enough. For it had been only half a foot long.

XX

Likewise, when he was on his way to Rome and had reached the Tuscan city called Lucca, a woman thrust herself in his path, saying that she had been bidden in a vision to have him give sight to her son. When he heard this, he rebuked the woman and, urging on the mule he was riding, made off in haste. The woman, however, asked whomever she could how she might obtain the hoped-for benefit from the man of God. Then by chance one of the servants told the woman that miracles had already been worked by the water from his hands. But the lord, made more watchful because of the woman, would have the water poured out on the ground before him every time he had washed his hands. The woman, however, kept following him, until he no longer took any care to have the water poured out. At last the woman obtained it without his knowledge and bathed the eyes of her blind son, and he at once returned to the light. So when the man of the Lord came back from the City, the woman we have spoken of presented her son to him, now seeing. And while all were extolling this deed, he went on his way silent and weeping, and no one dared to say anything of this or of anything like it in his hearing.

XXI

I shall tell of something wonderful, and perhaps incredible. Yet I do so trusting two witnesses who affirm it, who relate that the man of the Lord was returning from Italy by the road by which one comes from the city of Turin to Lyons. He had already crossed the Alps, and, as the journey required, they were passing through certain places that were, it is said, utterly without water. And it happened that the wine in the skins also ran out. And since that region had long since been left desolate by the Saracens, with no water and no wine to be found, they began to burn with excessive thirst. They strove to get through that stretch of the journey more quickly, if it were possible, but the men on foot and the packhorses were failing. So the lord had no choice but to order them to halt for a little while. The men lay disheartened on the grass; the packhorses, wandering here and there, roamed over the pastures, driven by thirst. Then one of the clerics went off to bring the packhorses back for loading, since no one wished that halt to be prolonged. The cleric, then, found a little hollow full of liquid; he wondered at it, and, wishing to find out what it might be, bent down, and meanwhile the liquid breathed out the savour of wine. Then, full of joy, he ran back to the lord and told him that he had found something or other like wine. But he said: "Are you out of your mind? If only you had found water! For where would wine come from here?" But the young cleric took a little vessel, drew some of that liquid, and brought it before him. What was brought plainly showed both the

colour and the taste of wine. Then the lord ordered the chaplains to take the cross and the little caskets of relics, and to perform over the hollow with that liquid the exorcism used for holy water. And then he bids them, in the name of Christ, find out by tasting what it was. Finding, then, that it was wine, the man of the Lord, with great wonder and joy, gave thanks to God together with them all, and before drinking himself he ordered that it be given to everyone; yet he did not allow any of it to be carried away in flasks. Let this be said on the word of those who assert that they saw it. Yet the things that now happen at his tomb persuade us to believe what is heard of him, both this and the rest.

XXII

This journey the holy man made often. For he no longer cared to go to the palaces of kings or the halls of margraves, and certainly not to the gatherings of princes; but he longed, as was said above, to visit often the consuls of heaven, namely Peter and Paul. Other holy places, too, he visited with eager devotion, namely the tomb of the most holy lord Martin, and that of blessed Martial as well. I believe he was contemplating in spirit how those hosts of the blessed rejoice in the court of the heavenly Capitol. And since he was soon to be joined to them, he was already in some measure tasting beforehand the joy of his Lord (Mt 25:21).

XXIII

There is a rushy field beyond Sutri, near the township called Saint Martin's, where the Rome-farers usually pitch their camp. So when the servants had pitched the tents there, the lord happened to be standing apart, and a certain man had himself led up to him. Imploring him humbly, he begged him none the less to deign to give him water touched by his hands. He told him to stand there and keep silent. Then, going into the tent, he prayed for a little while before the holy relics. The servants were each intent on the work they had to do. So, while they were busy elsewhere, seeing that it could be done in secret, he called someone to bring the man to him unobserved. Then he washed his hands carefully, dipped his fingers in fresh water, and signed it with the holy relics. As soon as the blind man poured it over his sightless eyes, he was granted sight at once. The man of the Lord held back his voice from crying out, and himself gave thanks with him to the divine majesty; and he had him clothed in one of his own garments, namely a curcinbald, and led secretly out of the tents.

XXIV

Again, when he was returning from the City, he came on a Saturday to a certain church, near the place where heaps of sulphur are to be seen. And when his people wished to set out on the morrow, he held them back, saying that out of reverence for the Lord's day they should wait at least until None. Nor was that delay without some temporal benefit too: for when the office of

the Mass had been solemnly completed, and they were already setting out after their meal, a man came riding a horse which had been lost on the outward journey; and the lord Gerald had it taken back without any harm to its rider. Before they reached Abricola, a blind man sitting by the road was asking the passers-by whether anyone called Gerald was coming in that company. It happened that one of our brethren, then still a canon, was travelling in the lord Gerald's company; walking on foot for devotion's sake, he came up, weary, to the blind man. When the blind man asked him about the lord Gerald, he answered that he was following close behind him. “But why,” he said, “are you asking after him so anxiously?” And he said: “It is nine years since I have been weighed down by the affliction of blindness; and this night I was told in my sleep to come here and look for Gerald, the pilgrim of Saint Peter, to ask him to wash his hands, and to bathe my blinded eyes with that water.” When the cleric heard this, he stopped, and meanwhile Gerald, the man of the Lord, came up. Now it was his custom to ride alone with his head covered, so as to give himself more freely to psalmody. So when he came up, the cleric said quietly to the blind man: “Here he is.” And the blind man begged him to be so good as to stop for a moment. And he went on to tell what he had seen in his dream. But the lord, blushing, and showing by the change in his countenance how he abhorred what he had heard, began to move away. But the blind man, uttering certain fearful adjurations, begged him to stop, to help

a wretched man, and not to deny him the benefit he hoped for. And those who were present humbly besought him for the same. Then, after a moment's thought, mindful, I believe, that according to the Apostle he ought not to neglect the grace given him (1 Tim 4:14), he answered with his customary word, saying: "Come to help, you saints of God"; and he stopped. And a stream, as is usual among those low hills, flowed close by. Water was brought at once. Then he dismounted and washed his hands, saying: "God's will be done." And he began to make off in haste. The blind man, without the least delay, applied the water to himself, nor did the miraculous outcome fail him. For he received his sight so suddenly that he ran straight after him, crying: "O holy Gerald, O holy Gerald, thanks be to God, look, I can see!" But he spurred on his mule so as not to hear the voices of those praising him, and passed through Abricola, and his fellow travellers could not catch up with him until two days later. For one may observe that those hands through which this healing power was conferred shone with cleanness, and that no stain clung to them, but that he had shaken them free of every bribe (Is 33:15). Most unhappy, by contrast, are those whose right hand is full of bribes (Ps 26:10). For, as it is written, fire devours those who gladly take bribes (Job 15:34).

XXV

Several other things are also told of him from his journeys, which we deliberately pass over to

avoid prolixity. But let us add one more, because it is a miracle of another kind. Once, when he was on his way to Rome and was already in Italy, he heard a voice in the air calling him and making known to him its own departure. It seemed to him to be the voice of a man named Girbald, whom he had left at home. So he called some of his people and asked whether they knew anything of Girbald. They answered that they had left him sick. He therefore orders the time to be noted, and the service of psalms to be celebrated for him. On his return, asking after that man, he found that he had passed away on the very day on which he had heard the voice in the air.

XXVI

When the journey of his holy devotion was over, he now delighted to frequent more secluded places, as though following that word of the Psalmist in which he says: I have gone far off in flight, and I have stayed in the wilderness (Ps 55:8). For there he wished to rest from the throng of worldly men and the din of lawsuits, so as to give himself more freely to the service of God. So when, for this purpose, he was staying at the chapel called Catuserias, the feast of Saints John and Paul came round. A countrywoman had gone into her little garden and was doing some work or other, when suddenly a large drop of blood appeared on her hand, which soon began to swell. Terrified, the woman ran wailing to the man of God, and, showing him her hand, begged him to have pity on her. At once he orders the clerics to

come and Mass to be celebrated for her, then water to be exorcised and the drop of blood washed off with that water; he himself, however, stood apart out of humility, lest the sign of that miracle should perhaps be ascribed to him. As soon as the woman's hand was washed, the blood and the swelling vanished on the spot, and she went away healed.

XXVII

Since that place is rather remote and secluded, such as we said he wished for, he often stayed there. So once, when he had celebrated the Assumption of Mary, the holy Mother of God, at that same church, and the solemnities of Mass were over, he went out to his people. For it was his way, after long and unbroken prayers, to make himself available for general conversation, so that anyone who had cause to speak might also have the chance to do so. So when he had gone out to his people, the man in charge of preparing the food said to him: "We are sorry, my lord, for on this solemn feast we can find nothing for your meal but salted meat." And he said: "Let it not trouble you; for if it pleased the Mother of God, not even this would be wanting to us on her feast." He had spoken, and a stag hurled itself down from the rock that overhangs that place. The servants, rejoicing and marvelling alike, took it up, and, since venison is then in season, prepared from it a delicate dish for the lord. Nor should it seem incredible that the divine bounty granted him food unexpectedly, since, doing all

things to the glory of God, as the Apostle bids (1 Cor 10:31), he used to eat his morsel with the poor. As those he brought up, who were with him, testify, he never turned his ear away from the cry of the poor. This holy man, according to that word of the Psalmist, Blessed is he who considers the needy and the poor (Ps 41:2), whenever he heard the voices of those crying out, used to sigh deeply and answer with words of compassion.

XXVIII

You knew Count Raymond, the son of Odo. He had treacherously seized and was holding a nephew of the lord Gerald named Benedict, the viscount of Toulouse. But Rainald, his brother, gave himself up as a hostage and got his brother back. When the lord Gerald heard that he had pledged himself for his brother, he was greatly moved to come to his nephew's aid. But Raymond kept putting off the matter of giving him back, secretly scheming to seize Benedict again and hold them both. Seven months had now gone by, and Gerald, the man of the Lord, could make no headway in rescuing his nephew. One day, making a kind of complaint about this to his sister Avigerna, he said: "Why do you cease to pray to Christ for your son? Surely either we are wavering in faith, or, what is truer, we are not worthy to be heard." And as he said this, he dissolved in tears. At that time he gave himself over to the Lord in prayer to the very marrow, so to speak. And he sent Abbot Rodulf to Raymond once more; but he, still unable to achieve anything, had started

back and had gone only a short way. But the following night it seemed to Raymond in a dream that Gerald, the man of the Lord, stood before his bed and struck him with his hand. "Why," he said, "do you not hear me, who have pleaded with you so many times? Know for certain that if you hold the hostage any longer, it will by no means turn out well for you." After these words Raymond awoke, and, considering the vision, he trembled; he called his men and told them what he had dreamt. And indeed one of them, at whose instigation he had chiefly held out until then, being for some reason likewise terrified, urged him to grant the lord Gerald's request with all speed; otherwise, he reminds him, they would have to die. Raymond at once sent to Abbot Rodulf's lodging and bade him return. When he came back, Raymond told him openly how the man of the Lord had terrified him in a vision; he gave up the hostage on the spot, and humbly asked Rodulf to win back for him the lord Gerald's favour. Thus Gerald prevailed by God's help, and, according to that word of Scripture, humbled the glorious of the earth (Is 45:2).

XXIX

Likewise, once when he was hurrying to a conference with that same Count Raymond, as he drew near the river called the Aveyron, mention was made that he had no fish to eat that day. Those who were walking along with the lord, while they were talking of this, saw a fish called a chub swimming towards them. One of them,

who tells this very story, stretched out a gaff and wounded the fish. The fish, on being wounded, was driven back a little, but made again for the bank it had been heading for before, and lingered there until one of them stretched out his hand and caught it. And it was of no small size. So the man of the Lord, giving thanks to God, tried to restrain the others, who were extolling this as a miracle, as though it had happened by chance. And perhaps someone may say that this could happen by chance; yet I believe he will not remember ever having seen a fish which, in a broad river such as the Aveyron is, rushed of its own accord onto the bank at the men.

XXX

It is rightly reckoned a miracle that a fish once leapt out of the water, or that a stag fell unexpectedly from a rock, and this too, that a fish in the river offered itself to be caught. But far more wonderful is it that on another occasion a fish was brought from heaven for that same man of God to eat. For not far from the monastery of Friacum there is a village consecrated in honour of Saint Gregory, over which a priest named Gerald presided, who for his holiness was very dear to that same man of God Gerald and close to him, and who before the end of his life even shut himself up as a recluse for the love of God. To him, then, Gerald, the man of the Lord, once turned aside, and after praying he kissed him and said: "What will you give us to eat, brother Gerald? See, we have come to dine with you." He said this

because of the close friendship which that priest enjoyed with him. And he, rejoicing, said: "If it please your goodness, my lord, you shall not go away fasting. But I have nothing to set before you except bread and wine; still, I will look and see whether I can find some cheese or eggs." Then the lord said: "Do not trouble yourself, for it is a day of abstinence, and it will be good if, since there is no feast to be had, we take this occasion to eat more sparingly." So when the priest was hurrying about to make ready, he went into an inner room and saw a fish on a dish. Then, astonished, he quietly asked his servant who had brought that fish. He said he did not know, declaring that no one had been there who could have brought the fish. So the priest went out and begged the lord to be pleased to come into the room. When he followed, he showed him the fish. He, astonished and full of wonder, gave thanks to God together with the priest. Yet he bound the priest and his servant by oath not to reveal it to anyone as long as he lived. But the matter little by little became known to many, for the divine dispensation, which glorifies all the saints, sometimes makes them known even against their will. Truly the Lord is still mindful of his promise, and those who seek him shall not want for any good thing (Ps 34:11). Nor, after all, should this seem incredible, since we often read that God has deigned to provide his servants with drink or food from heaven to supply their need.

XXXI

Not far from Aurillac there is a district called Marculiscus, near which there lies a stone, round by nature. Once, when the lord Gerald was passing over against it, one of his retinue named Adrald declared to his fellow travellers that he could leap up onto that stone. And he did so at once, to the wonder of all. Now it was said that this Adrald knew spells and sorceries. When the lord came up behind, those who had gone ahead stood waiting and told him of the man's leap. But he, considering that the man could by no means do this by his own agility, raised his hand and made the sign of the cross. After that, though the man tried many times, he could by no means leap up onto the stone. And so it was known that his nimbleness came by enchantment, which could not stay with him after the sign, and that great was the power of the lord Gerald, after whose sign the power of the enemy availed nothing.

XXXII

And since we have told this of his sign, let us add what he likewise did by making the sign. The feast of Saint Lawrence had come, and he was keeping that feast in a chapel of his that lies not far from the township of Argentat. Now one of his bondwomen there was grievously tormented. So when he looked towards her during prayer, and she, there as she was in the midst of the people, was gnashing her teeth most fiercely and raving, everyone begged the man of the Lord to deign to make the sign over her. This, out of his customary humility, he put off for a long time.

But since she did not cease raging, and those present pleaded with him more urgently, at length he raised his hand and signed her with the sign of the cross. And she, vomiting purulent blood, was healed at once. When everyone was ringing out with the praises of God and extolling him, he checked them with a severe rebuke, saying that they should magnify only the mercy of God, and of Saint Peter, whose church it is. It is the same church in which he was staying when the blind woman named above received her sight from the water of his hands.

XXXIII

A man named Herloard fell from his horse and badly bruised one of his knees. Because of the pain he had now gone six days without food. And when he could find no remedy, he sent to Captennacum and had water from the lord Gerald's hands secretly brought to him. Wonderful to tell, as soon as he sprinkled that water on his knee, he was freed from all pain and rose up sound. Several other things are told of him which are worthy either to be related or to be wondered at. But because they are reported by common talk and not by the four witnesses mentioned before, we prefer to pass them over in silence, though we are not unaware that he did many things which either no one or few came to know. For, as is the custom of devout and good men, he was always careful to guard humility as the eye of the heart. And so he hid his works as much as he could. And

for those that came to light against his will he could not bear to hear praise.

XXXIV

Let this suffice, then, concerning his miracles, which may satisfy those who measure the glory of any saint not by the quantity of his good works but by the number of his signs. In their eyes his holiness would perhaps be held cheaper if they had heard nothing of the miracles he worked in his lifetime. Those, indeed, who are devoutly held by love of him and venerate him with a discerning affection are more pleased by the works of justice that he practised. But since both meet together in him, justice and sanctification on the one hand and the glorifying of signs on the other, they honour him with greater confidence and readier devotion. For had he perhaps possessed the spirit of prophecy, no one, I think, would deny that he was a saint. But he certainly did more, for he overcame avarice. For what did it profit Balaam that he prophesied so deep a mystery, when he was rejected for his avarice? Seek, then, no greater miracle in Gerald than this, that he did not put his hope in money or treasures (Sir 31:8). For this, as we have already said, is to have done wonders. For so rarely will you find one who does not hope that happiness lies in riches that, because of this very rarity, the divine word put in the question: Who is he? And when such a one is found at all, he is worthy of praise, as is added there: We will praise him, for he has done wonders in his life (Sir 31:9). That Gerald did wonders of this kind

there are many proofs. For it is well established that he held what had been bestowed on him by his parents or by kings in such a way that he dispensed it not as its slave but as its master; that he grew in goods on earth without injury to anyone, and yet laid up treasure in heaven; that he was lofty in power, and yet remained poor in spirit. Wherefore, as the same writer continues, it should seem neither wonderful nor incredible if his goods are established in the Lord (Sir 31:11). Though this stands out incomparably among his deeds, that he persevered in chastity into old age. For chastity alone imitates the purity of the angels. Since, then, he conquered lust, which is Satan's greatest strength, it is no wonder if he now commands that same Satan whom he utterly defeated by keeping chastity. It is not incredible that he now frees those possessed by demons, he who, by conquering avarice, cast the prince of mammon out of his heart. For rightly does he now hold the spirit of pride in subjection, who showed himself meek at the very summit of earthly power.

Book Three

Since the foregoing account has set out in detail how the venerable Gerald was distinguished by the power of signs, it remains for us now to set down with our pen how he sent forth his spiritual being from its bodily covering. For it is certain that this man, though he tamed bodily appetite by sparing frugality, was nevertheless vigorous in strength. Nor was he weak in body or wanting in force and vigour. But when the time was now near for him, as a man of many years, to be released from his completed service, he began to waste away and slip from his wonted vigour. Nor did it escape him that the draining away of his strength was rather a sign laid open of his coming end. And seeing present many of those who had been accustomed to keep closest to him, he began to address them with a deep, inward sob and a failing voice: "Come, my dear vassals and most beloved companions, do you not see that I am bereft of my former strength? Mark that the lot of my laying aside is drawing near, in which the spirit, led by its Maker, is to be carried over to the dwelling appointed for it, and this most frail nature brought back to dust." The torment of his sickness did not keep him from his usual abstinence. A wonderful thing: not even that weakness which usually constrains

the aged could persuade his steadfast mind to go beyond its accustomed rule. Plainly because the softness of the flesh had been unable to weaken the firmness of his mind. So while his soul was being fattened on these virtues and others like them, he was losing the strength of his body. But since, despising himself in his own eyes, he did not know himself for a man of virtues, he did not well understand whence this weakness of his strength had crept upon him. By now the spiritual power that had grown to fullness in him had all but slain his bodily strength. For such is the way with the saints: the divine power would have been less strong in them had it not worn down their bodily vigour. Hence Daniel, when he had seen the angelic vision, languished for many days. Hence Jacob, as he gripped the angel, began to limp. For he who is filled with spiritual grace is drained of bodily strength. So the outward man was wasting away, while the inward was being renewed from day to day (2 Cor 4:16).

I

One day, when he was in the town that overlooks Aurillac, he looked at the building of the house and wept abundantly. When one of his intimates asked why he was weeping, he answered: "Because," he said, "I can in no way bring to fulfilment the desire I conceived long ago for this place. For this is my rest; here will I dwell (Ps 132:14). All the other things that seem suited to the use of monks I have, by God's favour, easily made ready; only the monks are lacking, only

they cannot be found. And so, as one alone and bereaved, I am worn down with grief; yet I hope that almighty God, when it pleases him, will deign to fulfil my desire. Nor is it any wonder if I, a sinner, am kept waiting in this desire of mine, since King David was forbidden to build a temple to the Lord, though the Lord himself gave him one who would complete that work after him. And though I may not see this in this life, the mercy of Christ will yet grant what I long for, when it pleases him. I would have you know that the walls of this house will often be too narrow for the crowds who will gather to it." How he had learnt this, he did not say. But among those who know that he said this, now that they see the crowds thronging that place as he foretold, the opinion has arisen that he knew what he said by divine revelation. By now his mouth was so filled out of the abundance of the heart (Mt 12:34) that the law of the Lord sounded in it always and fully. For the rest, following the example of that same David, he took care to make ready whatever he foresaw the future inhabitants would need, in relics of the saints, in church vessels and vestments, and indeed in the revenues of lands.

II

But so that, as Scripture says, he who is holy might be sanctified still (Rev 22:11), this man of God had to be polished by the scourge before his death. And it happened to him as to blessed Job and to Tobias: because he was acceptable, he had to be proved by temptation (Tob 12:13). So for

seven years and more he lost the light of his eyes. Yet they looked so clear that he was not thought to suffer any blindness. Under this stroke he not only did not grieve, but even rejoiced greatly in the Lord that he had deigned to scourge him. For he well knew that though not everyone who is scourged is a son, yet there is no son who is not scourged. And this was his consolation, that the heavenly Judge had loosed his hand to strike him, and was punishing in the present the sins without which no one lives here. Now, then, secure in the Lord's mercy, he trusted that he would deign to free from the eternal lash the one he had deigned to press beneath the scourge in the present. And if he could add anything to his former practices, it was this: the more he had withdrawn, because of his blindness, from outward entanglements, the more attentively he applied himself to prayer. And the less he could look upon the fashion of the world, the more clearly he turned his heart to contemplate the true light. He gave up lawsuits and outward affairs, and applied himself wholly to the practice of prayer or to unwearied reading.

III

Two years before he died, he had the church solemnly dedicated. In its altars so many relics of the saints were placed that those who know are amazed. And to those who perhaps hear of it from those who know, it may seem almost incredible. For that holy father, as long as he lived, took every pains to gather them from every

quarter whenever the opportunity offered. These he obtained both at Rome and everywhere else, as one would expect of a man who was gracious in speech and countenance, munificent in the prices he paid, and, what is more, reliant on divine grace in whatever he had to do. For it is well known that he often gave costly tents, well-fed horses and great weights of money to obtain these relics. In the right-hand altar he placed a tooth of Saint Martial, with relics of the most blessed lord Martin and of Saint Hilary as well; that tooth none of those who were giving it could pull from the holy body, from the holy jaw, though they tried for a long time; but he, after first praying, drew it out at once. Something wonderful happened concerning this same altar on the very day of the dedication. For a certain youth, while the crowds were pressing forward, took the cloth from the top of it to hand it back to the minister, though some of the bystanders told him not to presume to do so. But since he would not leave off taking it, he was at once seized by violent anguish, and first his hands lost their skin. Then little by little his whole body was stripped of its skin, so that he could scarcely recover after six weeks. The place, as he had long since resolved, he made over to the authority of monks, though he himself stayed there little from then on.

IV

In the time he survived, he took the utmost care to leave all who belonged to him at peace, lest any occasion of strife should arise among

them. The estates and serfs that he had not made over to blessed Peter he left to certain kinsmen and knights, or indeed to his servants. To some, however, on the condition that after their death what they had received should return to Aurillac. Of his serfs he then gave freedom to a hundred only. For at other times and in various places those he set free were countless. Many of them, however, bound by love of him, refused their freedom and preferred to remain in his service. From this it may plainly be seen how gentle a lordship he exercised over them, since they chose to prefer his service to their own freedom. Some of his people urged him to release from the yoke of servitude a larger number of his household, of whom he had a great abundance. To them he said: "It is right that the law of the world should be observed in this"; and so, he said, the number fixed in that law ought not to be exceeded. Let this be recorded so that it may be clear from it how closely he held to the divine commandments, when he submitted himself thus even to the precepts of law, and human ones at that.

V

When the time of his passing was now at hand, he was staying at Cezerviacum (Cézerac), at a church of his own consecrated in honour of Saint Cyricus. There, moved to compunction more than usual, he sighed more deeply, so that it was quite plain that the desire of his heart was reaching elsewhere and that he had no comfort in the present. Amid his sighs he was

bathed in tears, and, raising his eyes to heaven again and again, he prayed to be delivered from this world, often repeating and saying: "Come to help, you saints of God." For this word had always been familiar on his lips; this he would cry out whenever anything happened suddenly. Not long afterwards his vital strength began to waste away under a kind of spasm, and the strength of his limbs and the harmony of his whole body to be little by little dissolved. Knowing, then, that his dissolution was now at hand, he bids Bishop Amblard be summoned, to fortify his passing with his prayers, and, as shepherd, to commit to Christ, the Shepherd of all, the sheep that was going back to the pastures of paradise. Meanwhile, with sound mind and unimpaired memory, he sets in order everything that his funeral or the needs of those remaining behind would require. When swift report had suddenly spread the news round about that Gerald, the man of the Lord, was drawing near his passing, all came running, as if mourning a common loss: throngs of clerics and monks mingled with noblemen, bands of the poor, and the common folk of the countryside; and as these mourned, the weeping of others was stirred. Breaking out amid sobs and tears, as though making complaint, each one redoubled his cries of lament over his kindness, his charity, his care for the poor, his protection of the powerless. Some, then, said weeping: "O what a comfort the world is losing!" And others: "O Gerald, rightly called good, who will now be, as you were, the support of the needy? Who the

nurturer of orphans, or the defender of widows? Who the comforter of those who mourn? Who, surely, will bow the height of your power so low to the poor? Or who, as you did, will weigh the needs of each and meet them? Most indulgent father, how gentle, how kind you always were! You drew to yourself the goodwill of all; by the fame of such great goodness you had drawn to yourself the affection even of strangers." These things and others like them, which the force of grief is wont to heap up amid sobs, they poured out in such mournful lamentation that you would have thought those tears could never cease. So it went on day after day, until the very end of his calling was reached. But he could not forsake his custom even at the end, but ordered every kind of provision to be given to each who wished to receive it.

VI

Truly blessed and happy would I call him who was such that he left no debt of charity unpaid by his works on earth, and has been received into the charity of the saints in heaven. Truly happy, he who, though raised high in worldly power, yet harmed no one, oppressed no one, and against whom no one raised even a small complaint. For if Nathanael is called truly an Israelite because there was no guile in him (Jn 1:47), rightly would I call this man an Israelite too, whom the ear that hears calls blessed, and to whom, after the example of blessed Job, the eye that sees bears witness (Job 29:11). So while all mourned together, he alone remained joyful. For he knew that for those

who hope in the Lord a noonday brightness shall rise at evening (Job 11:17), and that when he gives them sleep, this is the inheritance (Ps 127:2–3). Though, then, his flesh may have feared, as mortal nature does, yet his spirit, fixed on the sight of glory, exulted, as one who trusted that he was now about to receive in reality the hope he had long desired. For since, as it is written, the just man trusts in his death (Prov 14:32), you would have thought him fastened to that same hope and not fearing death at all. So he seemed full of joy, for he did not utter even the least word by which he showed himself even slightly afraid. Throughout the whole time of his sickness he so drove his failing limbs to the divine service that he would not suffer even one night office to be celebrated except in church; and, placed before the altar, he would hear one Mass proper to the day and another for the dead. And when, his limbs now grown very stiff, he could not walk a step by himself, nor even when supported, his spirit, still enduring in its fervour, compelled them to carry his poor body into the oratory in the arms of bearers: surely so that, drawing out the tunic of good works to the ankle, he might sing the praise of his virtue at the end.

VII

For on the Friday, as day was dawning, feeling himself grow worse, he ordered the chaplains to perform the night office in his presence, while the bishop celebrated it with his clergy in the church; and he himself chanted the psalms with those

who chanted, until, after the morning office, he had completed all the hours of the day as well. Then, as he finished Compline, he armed himself with the sign of the holy cross and added that word which had always been familiar to him, saying: "Come to help, you saints of God." Having said this last of all, he fell silent and closed his eyes. Those present, seeing that he had stopped speaking, called the bishop. They also laid his holy limbs on haircloth; and while the others chanted psalms for his passing, one of the priests hastily celebrated Mass and brought the most holy mystery. And when some said that he had already departed, he, still keeping his senses, opened his eyes, and by this sign showed that he had not yet departed. Then he received of his own accord the Lord's Body, for which he had been waiting, and so that happy soul passed to heaven. And, as if hinting at his own case by the very number of the day of the week, he showed that he had well completed the good work, which belongs to the number six, and had passed over to the true Sabbath, which is rest. And he, as we believe, now sees what he longed for; what he hoped for he now holds. Yet to many he left no small grief. For though their very sorrow was sprinkled with a certain sweetness, because they knew that he had been such a man that one should rather rejoice over him than mourn, yet they lamented with a great outcry that they were deprived of the company of one whose like they did not hope to see. They were sad, as men are; but the angels, we believe, were rejoicing. For if

there is joy before those same angels over one sinner who repents (Lk 15:10), how much more over this just man, who grew old amid the works of virtue? But the joy of his Lord (Mt 25:21), into which he was received by those same angels, faith beholds; meanwhile it is hidden from bodily eyes, which saw indeed the corpse that had paid the debt of death, but could not yet see how greatly the soul was glorified in heaven. So Gerald dies, but, according to that word of David, by no means as cowards are wont to die (2 Sam 3:33), for his lot is among the saints (Wis 5:5). And if he paid the debt of that word of the Psalmist, But you shall die like men (Ps 82:7), yet to him belongs what is said there just before: I have said: You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High (Ps 82:6). The evangelist bears witness: We are the sons of God, but it has not yet appeared what we shall be (1 Jn 3:2). Happy, then, is Gerald, who separated the precious from the vile (Jer 15:19). For after he had tasted how sweet the Lord is, he by no means gave himself up to the delights of this life in contempt of that same Lord. But this life, which is precious to the reprobate, he counted vile, and death, which for them is the worst of evils, he found precious. Truly blessed is he whose days passed in sorrow and his years in sighing (Ps 31:11), for he has now experienced how great is the multitude of the sweetness which God has hidden for those who fear him (Ps 31:20). And this God shows in some measure even in the sight of the sons of men (Ps 31:20), through one sign after another. O how great is

the difference between him and the vedii, that is, the wickedly rich! For to him his tears were his bread (Ps 42:4), and he received drink in tears, and in measure (Ps 80:6). But they spend their days in good things (Job 21:13), and, according to that word of the Gospel, have their consolation (Lk 6:24) in the present. But he has now passed with the voice of exultation into the place of the tabernacle of God (Ps 42:5). Of them it is said that in a moment they go down to hell (Job 21:13). For the rest, even if anyone could relate something worthy of his outward way of life, yet the delights at the right hand of the Lord which filled him to the end (Ps 16:11), none of us is able, I do not say to set forth in words, but even to reach with the understanding, unless perhaps someone perceives within himself what it is to delight in the salvation of God.

VIII

And since God is wonderful in his saints (Ps 68:36), in whom we are bidden to praise him, as Scripture says, Praise the Lord in his saints (Ps 150:1), therefore, O blessed Gerald, we render to him for you such praises as we can. We praise him that he chose you, and that he justified you; that he made his mercy wonderful in you; that he led you by right ways (Wis 10:10); that he himself caused the fruit of your work to be found; and lastly, that even to old age and grey hairs he did not forsake you (Ps 71:18); and, what is more, that he numbered you among the sons of God (Wis 5:5), and glorifies you besides in the eyes of all.

But since praise becomes the saints, to his praise we praise you also: that, as Jeremiah says, you bore the yoke of Christ from your youth (Lam 3:27); that you did not spurn the grace of his calling; that you made no barter of your soul; that you did not receive his salvation in vain; that you did not cast away the inward affections you had conceived from the love of Christ; that you did not fall away in the time of temptation; that you did not pour yourself out on the outward joys of the present life; that you did not grow weary in doing good. Yet do you, O Lord God, do you, for his sake, pardon our presumption. For we fear that we have overstepped in this account, since we have attempted what we are in no way fit to do. For though he in whom you are praised is worthy of praise, yet we, O Lord, are unworthy to render it, because praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner (Sir 15:9). Let your saints, then, as it is written, bless you, and let your works give praise to you (Ps 145:10). But since your eyes see the imperfection of the Church (Ps 139:16), and its stones will have pity on its earth (Ps 102:15), we pray that those who for the solidity of their lives are called stones may deign to come to the help of us who, by the desert of our wickedness, are earth: so that we who have not the garment of justice may embrace the stones (Job 24:8), and by their merits may cover our nakedness. May this servant of yours, then, turn towards us the tender pity which your charity planted deep within him, and from that everlasting court of the Capitol, where he now sits among the consuls of

heaven, look down with kindness on this valley of tears from which he has escaped; may he hear the prayers of each and obtain from you what all need, through the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and is glorified, God, for endless ages of ages. Amen.

IX

His passing, as usually happens with a person of eminence, swiftly resounded on every side. And soon an incredible multitude of people began to pour in from every side: swarms of noblemen, countless bands of country folk and of the needy, many monks, and columns of priests. All mourned him with a kind of brotherly and most tender affection, and, by I know not what divine prompting, they wept for him with deeper compunction and yet more sweetly, because they knew well that he had pleased God.

X

When, as is the custom, he had been stripped for washing, Ragambert and the other servants who were doing it laid both his hands upon his breast; and suddenly his right arm stretched out, and his hand was laid upon his private parts in such a way as to cover them under its palm. Thinking that this had happened by chance, they pressed the hand back to his breast. But again, as before, it stretched out and placed itself so as to cover his sex. Now they began to be amazed; but,

wishing to know the matter more surely, they bend the arm back yet a third time and bring the hand back over the breast to the other. At once, with the greatest speed, it went back to those parts, as before, and covered them. Then those preparing the body, struck with wonder and fear alike, at last perceived that this could by no means have happened without divine power. For perhaps heaven was showing by this that, while it lived, that flesh had always kept itself modest in guarding the shamefastness of chastity. So they quickly covered the poor body. And after it had been clothed, that hand never stretched itself out anywhere again.

XI

His people, accompanied by great crowds, carried that holy body to Aurillac, as he himself had ordered, and laid it in a stone coffin on the left side of his basilica, beside the altar of Saint Peter, so that his tomb is reckoned to be on the right, and he himself likewise faces to the right. But let us now bring this little book to an end, lest it displease by its prolixity as well as by its rusticity. If anything in it has delighted the reader, let him reckon it granted by the merits of the lord Gerald. What has displeased him he will put down to my want of skill; yet he will find in it an occasion for pity. And so I humbly beseech him, considering that I presumed to do this because I was bidden, to ask pardon for me from the Judge of hearts.

XII

It would indeed have been enough for blessed Gerald that that faithful witness who is in heaven (Ps 89:38), whom he always strove to please, rewards him with himself in that region of paradise; but how great is the glory he possesses within, that same witness, Christ, deigns to make manifest without. For it is written that God renews his witnesses against us (Job 10:17). For whoever keeps his commandments is his witness against us, that we could indeed keep those same commandments as he did, but will not. For, to speak of those like me, we are by now weary of reading all the sayings of the devout, and we neglect to imitate their examples too, though we are tirelessly busy with idle or worldly talk. But in doing this we prove ourselves to be of those whom the Apostle's voice marks out, saying: They will turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned aside to fables (2 Tim 4:4). To check in some measure this sloth and the other monstrous vices, therefore, Christ, the ordainer of the ages, sets up this witness of his against us, and makes him illustrious before us by many miracles, so that, since we have closed our eyes, as was said, to the examples of the devout, we may at least look up at the splendour of this man, flashing as it were close at hand. For he kept the divine commandments in our own time. But since the dead man quickly passes from the heart (Ps 31:13), we at once consign this to oblivion, and, not thinking on the reward that awaits his holy works, we grow wretchedly sluggish in imitating them. For this reason, then, he deigns to

work miracles, which perhaps happen for a time, so that in this way at least we may understand the glory he has within, and turn the eye of the mind to the works by which he was brought to that same glory, as to things newly done, and strive to grow strong to imitate them. But now, with God's help, let us relate such of these miracles as accord with reason.

BOOK FOUR

I

So on the Sunday following his passing, accompanied, as we said, by great crowds, he was carried to Aurillac. While choirs of psalm-singers kept vigil all night around the bier, a nobleman named Gibbo laid beneath that bier his daughter, whom the falling sickness had seized; and afterwards she suffered nothing more of that illness. She is now the mother of a family, and she herself, in her good health, bears witness to this miracle.

II

A man named Grimald, who lived in the village, saw in a dream that he was trying to wrench off the lid of Gerald's sarcophagus. On waking, he found his arms, from the elbows down, and his hands so withered that he could do nothing with them. Having remained crippled in this way for about fifteen days, he came to the tomb to make supplication, and at once recovered his health.

III

A moonstruck bondwoman of a man named Lambert was told in a dream to come to Gerald's tomb and make supplication. She told this to her master. But he, fearing it would be a delusion and a laughing-stock if no miraculous effect followed the vision, forbade her. Then, being warned in a vision a second and a third time all the same, she begged her master to let her go there. This he now granted. So the woman went, and, keeping vigil before the tomb, went away completely healed.

IV

Meanwhile a little grassy plot, round like a wheel, appeared before the crypt. Though it was thick with grass, the ground all round it was bare and dusty. Those who passed through the cemetery, when they saw that little plot and the dusty furrow that ran round it, marvelled, knowing that neither man nor beast had worn that furrow by treading. It remained for some time, and afterwards disappeared. The following summer it was seen in the same place in the same way, but now much wider. And it had round it a border worn bare, as before, and dusty. Likewise in the third summer the wheel appeared, grassy as before and girdled as if by a dusty path, but now spread much wider. And thereafter, for several years, it was seen to extend itself, spreading little by little outwards. Those who considered the matter more carefully believed it to be some portent, conjecturing that the green wheel perhaps figured the fame of blessed Gerald, full of the greenness of virtue. This fame spreads again

and again among the peoples who are barren through dryness of good works, whom the dusty ring would signify, and makes them, as it were, fruitful by his example, as for love of him they undertake a welcome pilgrimage and its toil, as they offer gifts, and as some return with their ways amended: just as that wheel, extending outwards, filled up in part the dryness of the dusty ring. Whether it signified this, the Ordainer of all things knows. Yet it is certain that nothing on earth happens without a cause (Job 5:6).

V

A cleric of good repute lives in the city of Rodez. He, if faith may be given to a dream, saw a vision of this kind: there was, as it were, a high place, where a great splendour was shining. To that splendour one went up by four steps. Before the first step there was a kind of railing of iron. The second step had a railing of bronze. The third, one of silver. The fourth, one of gold. Then, at the first step, he saw two men approaching, most resplendent in countenance and in dress. Two others followed them, who were leading a third between them by the hands. And the cleric who saw this was told that the first two were Saint Paul and Saint Martial; the other two who followed, Saint Peter and Saint Andrew. And the third, whom they were leading, was Saint Gerald. That cleric had never known him while he remained in this life. But when he afterwards related of what stature and face he had seen him, those who had known him recognised his ap-

pearance. When they had come to the first step, they sang what seemed a psalm. After it Saint Peter said a collect. When it was finished, they answered: "Amen." So they did a second, a third and a fourth time. While the others stood still, blessed Peter went on as far as the place of that splendour. And, prostrate on the ground, he lay there for some time in adoration. Then he rose, and prostrated himself again, up to three times. Then a voice, as if answering from that splendour, asks what he wished. And he said: "Lord, I entreat your mercy for your servant Gerald." And then someone or other, holding as it were a book, seemed to be reading out his life. And when he had read for some time, the cleric could make out only this: He who could have transgressed, and did not transgress; and could do evil, and did not do it (Sir 31:10). Then the voice said to him: "Do with him what you will." And it held out something like a sceptre, giving it to him, by which he might have power to exalt him. The cleric heard the voice of the giver, but saw nothing except the sceptre. Then blessed Peter returned rejoicing to those who were waiting for him. And at the place where they stood there appeared a kind of sloping ascent reaching all the way to heaven. And blessed Peter, holding Gerald, the beloved of God, by the hand, and beginning to climb by those steps, cried out with a loud voice: "Te Deum laudamus." And so, singing psalms, they made their way to heaven with him. This vision was followed by another sign, a visible one, concerning his tomb.

VI

In the seventh year after he had passed away, the sarcophagus, which had been covered up to the middle of its lid with earth trodden down by men's heels, began little by little to rise above that earth. Yet the earth around it was seen neither to rise nor to sink. The inhabitants, however, had not yet noticed this. Meanwhile a cleric coming from the Limousin asked the monks whether the lord Gerald's sarcophagus had yet risen up. And he added that he had been told in a dream to come to his tomb, because his sarcophagus had now begun to appear. Then the monks went with him to the tomb, and, pulling off the linen cloth that lay over it, found it just as the cleric had seen in his sleep. At that time it stood out only a little. But now it is seen to be not a little higher. Whoever observes this cannot fail to recognise that it is some divine power. From then on, therefore, miracles began to happen frequently.

VII

The feast of the Lord's Circumcision had come, when a vassal named Adrald ordered a sorcerers' fire to be kept burning all night in his house. But at the dead of that night the demons fell upon the men watching over the fire. These were so stricken by them that the demons killed one and, crippling the limbs of another, robbed him of his bodily health. This man, afterwards living by begging, was carried to Aurillac. While he was living there for some days, certain violent

men were committing an outrage against the jurisdiction of that place. For this reason the monks began to ring the bells and to persist in litanies. Then the crippled man begged those standing round to carry him to the lord Gerald's tomb. When they had done so, he prayed that he would deign to help him. After a little while he rose up healed, and, his limbs restored, he recovered in all of them in a moment. From then on miracles began to be worked repeatedly, and the fame of his miracles to resound more surely and more widely. If anyone perhaps doubts them, since they are often repeated in the sick, he can test them with his own eyes, and by this gain faith in those of the past. But what the divine condescension deigns again and again to repeat in those weighed down by various sicknesses, we have passed over to avoid prolixity. Yet we have touched briefly on some, to commend the glory of this blessed man, lest we seem to have passed them over thoughtlessly.

VIII

It is well known that this holy man, while he lived, brought many relics of the saints to Aurillac. For, as was said above, he was most zealous in this matter, and had no small grace from God for obtaining what he wished. Among the other treasures of the saints that are kept there, there is a piece of the wood of the Lord, in which, as frequent experience shows, there is such power that if anyone carries it on horseback, the horse soon dies; and if anyone should perhaps perjure

himself, he becomes epileptic. Indeed, not a few have already been struck with the falling sickness for this sin. The inhabitants of that region used to have very savage ways, but by the example of the holy man, or from reverence for him, they seem to be somewhat milder. When they lawfully settle a treaty or some great oath, they have it brought to them by some monk or cleric, who must, however, go on foot.

IX

Some, indeed, arguing rashly about blessed Gerald's glory, assert that this grace of healings is conferred not by his merits but by the power of these relics. But we, considering the matter more carefully, believe that the benefits of healing are bestowed through those holy relics in such a way that the power of blessed Gerald is not denied its share in the work. For the very nature of what happens persuades us to believe this, since he is wont to appear to the sick in visions, and to confer the benefit of health chiefly before his own tomb. So it was with the son of John, the viscount of the Auvergne, whom his father brought there dumb and deaf, with one hand crippled. Prostrating himself before the tomb, he gave himself to prayer. When the night was half spent, blood burst from the boy's ears and his hand was straightened, and he stretched it out, sound, round his father's neck, and, uttering his first words, asked him for bread. And the father, giving thanks for his son, filled the whole church with his cries, and gave an allod of his own to

the holy tomb. We mention this one by name because, being a miracle worked on a person of eminence, it came to the knowledge of many. Others, unlike this or of a different kind, were at first noted down by the inhabitants; but when their number grew immense, the care of counting them was given up.

X

In the town of Aurillac, before the doors of the church, there was a block of stone from which he used to mount his horse. When the sick kiss it for love of him, they are wont to recover their health. For this reason it has now been moved into the church by the inhabitants and covered with a cloth like an altar. Not far from the town which the country people call Mulsedonum, the man of God had had a house. Now the townsfolk agreed among themselves to carry off his table, which was still in that house, to eat at. And so they did. The bearers happened to throw it down in front of a certain house. When at the coming of noon a man wished to sleep on it, he was suddenly struck blind and out of his mind. Then, when a dog too trod on that table, it at once went stiff in all its limbs. Yet before they had noticed what was happening, another man likewise threw himself down on it, and he too was at once struck blind. At last, understanding that they had suffered these things because of the holy man's table, hallowed by his frequent meals at it, they covered it with a linen cloth and carried it to the church of blessed Martin, which is near by. There

it may be seen to this day, hanging from the roof. At another table of his, which was on the estate of Vaxia, a priest had come with his neighbours for a feast. And as they were chattering over the food, as people do, and trading jokes, suddenly a great dread so struck them all that they at once broke off their buffoonery and withdrew to another place to eat. The table they carried to that oratory which was built at the place where the bearers had set down the bier to change the pall. In that place, whenever the cattle wandering round about happened, while grazing, to touch the little spot where, as we said, the bier had been set down, they at once began to be tormented, and several died. The inhabitants, understanding the reason from what had befallen the animals, built that oratory on the spot. There, it is certain, many of the sick have since obtained their health. Besides this, something wonderful and almost incredible has happened, were it not proved by use. For since then a little spring has bubbled up in that same place, which is enough to give drink to wayfarers.

XI

Rainald, whom the man of the Lord, holding him in suspicion, had bound by oath while he was still alive, as was said above, broke the faith of that oath, and with his men was very hostile to the household of serfs that Gerald had made over to the monastery. And each of them, amid the plundering they suffered, used to call upon the name of the lord Gerald. One night it seemed

to Rainald himself that he saw the man of God standing beside him. He demanded of him the faith of his oath, and at the same time warned him to cease from harassing the household from then on. On waking, he told the vision to his wife. And she urged him, now that he had at least been warned, to keep his oath. And he, touched with compunction for the moment, told the same to his men, ordering them, but feebly, not to disturb the household. But after a little while they went back to their usual rapacity. Nor did Rainald stand in their way, for he was prone to evil. And though he was near to the holy man in blood, he was far removed from his goodness. Then the holy man appeared to him again, threatening, and in great wrath reproached him with the good things he had done him, for which he was returning evil; and, striking him on the head, he warned him that death would soon follow.

XII

In the province called Alemannia there was a nobleman possessed by demons. His kinsmen and his knights took him round to many relics of the saints, so that through their intercession at least divine grace might free him. But the Giver of all good things, who had resolved to glorify his chosen one, reserved this miracle for him. Yet the name of the blessed man had not yet been heard in that province. And while his kinsmen were leading him before the bodies of the saints, the demons often cried out that they would by no means come out of his body except through

the intercession of blessed Gerald. Then the possessed man's kinsmen ran hither and thither, to hear at least of the province in which blessed Gerald was. And some Rome-farers, or some pilgrim or other, I know not which, told them the province and the place. They came in haste to Aurillac. As soon as he came before the tomb, the demons began to cry out through the possessed man: “O Gerald,” he said, “why do you mock us? Why do we burn by your power?” At once he fell to the ground and vomited them out together with blood. From that hour onwards he remained sound.