

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

COLLECTION

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8 BOOKS

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BOOKS INDEX

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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CONCERNING GRACE AND FREE WILL

LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT BERNARD

LIFE OF SAINT MALACHY OF ARMAGH

ON CONSIDERATION

ON THE LOVE OF GOD

SERMONS OF SAINT BERNARD ON ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

SOME LETTERS OF SAINT BERNARD

ILLUSTRATIONS

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX COLLECTION

Bernard of Clairvaux, was a French abbot and the primary reformer for the Cistercian order. After the death of his mother, Bernard sought admission into the Cistercian order. "Three years later, he was sent to found a new abbey at an isolated clearing in a glen known as the Val d'Absinthe, about 15 kilometres (9.3 mi) southeast of Bar-sur-Aube. According to tradition, Bernard founded the monastery on 25 June 1115, naming it Claire Vallée, which evolved into Clairvaux. There Bernard would preach an immediate faith, in which the intercessor was the Virgin Mary." In the year 1128, Bernard attended the Council of Troyes, at which he traced the outlines of the Rule of the Knights Templar, which soon became the ideal of Christian nobility. On the death of Pope Honorius II on 13 February 1130, a schism broke out in the Church. King Louis VI of France convened a national council of the French bishops at Étampes in 1130, and Bernard was chosen to judge between the rivals for pope. After the council of Étampes, Bernard spoke with King Henry I of England, also known as Henry Beauclerc, about Henry I's reservations regarding Pope Innocent II. Henry I was sceptical because most of the bishops of England supported Antipope Anacletus II; Bernard persuaded him to support Innocent. Germany had decided to support Innocent through Norbert of Xanten, who was a friend of Bernard's. However, Innocent insisted on Bernard's company when he met with Lothair II, Holy Roman Emperor.

CONCERNING GRACE AND FREE WILL

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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THE TREATISE OF ST. BERNARD ABBAT OF CLAIRVAUX

CONCERNING GRACE AND FREE WILL

ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM, ABBAT OF ST. THIERRY

TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION SYNOPSIS AND NOTES BY

WATKIN W. WILLIAMS, M.A.

RECTOR OF DRAYTON ST. LEONARD

LONDON

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

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1920

CONTENTS

CONCERNING GRACE AND FREE WILL

INTRODUCTION

THE TREATISE OF ST. BERNARD CONCERNING GRACE AND FREE WILL

PREFACE
BROTHER BERNARD to the Lord William, Abbat of St. Thierry.

CHAPTER I
That to the merit of a good work is needed, together with the grace of God, the consent of the free will.

CHAPTER II
In what freedom of will consisteth.

CHAPTER III
That there is a threefold freedom: that of nature, that of grace, and that of glory.

CHAPTER IV
What kind of freedom belongeth to the holy souls in their disembodied state: what kind belongeth to God, and what kind is common to all reasonable creatures.

CHAPTER V
Whether freedom from misery, or freedom of counsel, is granted in this world.

CHAPTER VI
That grace is altogether necessary in order that we may will what is good.

CHAPTER VII
Whether the first man in Paradise was endowed with this threefold freedom, and how far his endowment was lost by sin.

CHAPTER VIII
That free choice remaineth after sin hath entered in.

CHAPTER IX
That the image and the likeness of God, in which we were created, consist in a threefold freedom.

CHAPTER X
That through Christ the likeness which properly belongeth to the divine image is restored in us.

CHAPTER XI
That neither grace, nor temptation, taketh away from freedom of choice.

CHAPTER XII

Whether one that, for fear of death or of other penalty, denieth the faith is to be excused from blame, or to be held destitute of free choice.

CHAPTER XIII
That human merits are no other than divine gifts.

CHAPTER XIV
What part is to be assigned to grace, arid what to free choice, in the work of salvation.

SYNOPSIS

CONCERNING GRACE AND FREE WILL

INTRODUCTION

THE treatise of St. Bernard De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio was written at some time shortly previous to the year 1128, and therefore before the author had attained his thirty-eighth year. St. Bernard, in a letter addressed to Hincmar, Chancellor of the Holy See, which the Benedictine editor dates as circ. an. mcxxviii, refers to the fact that Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, had asked him to send Hincmar some of his "opuscula"; he had at the time, so he thought, nothing at hand worthy of Hincmar's attention, but he adds: "Libellum tamen De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio nuper edidi; illum uobis libenter mittam, cum uos uelle cognouero" (St. Bern. Epist. LII).

That portion of the Vita Prima of St. Bernard (Books III, IV, and V) which was the work of Geoffrey of Auxerre, St. Bernard's notarius at Clairvaux and afterwards himself abbat there, contains, in Book III, chap. viii. 29, which makes mention of a certain number of St. Bernard's works and notices the extent to which they reveal his spirit, an interesting reference to the De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio: "Quam non ingratus gratiae Dei, ex his liquet quae de gratia et libero arbitrio quam fideliter, tam subtiliter disputauit."

The subject of the treatise was suggested, as is plain from the text itself, as the result of a public, or at any rate semi-public, discussion with some person unknown, in which St. Bernard, in strongly commending the work of grace, had seemed to lay himself open to the charge of unduly minimizing the function of free will. "Loquente me coram aliquando, et Dei in me gratiam commendante, quod scilicet ab ipsa me in bono et praeuentum agnoscerem, et prouehi sentirem, et sperarem perficiendum: Quid tu ergo, ait unus ex circumstantibus, operaris, aut quid mercedis speras uel praemii, si totum facit Deus?" (I, ad init.).

The Praefatio of the treatise indicates that it was formally addressed to William, Abbat of St. Thierry, near Reims, the same person to whom St. Bernard addressed the Apologia, his memorable indictment alike of the spiritual pride of his own, and of the luxury of the Cluniac Order, and who was afterwards responsible for the first book of the Vita Prima. William had entered the Abbey of St. Thierry in about the year 1120, being translated thither from that of St. Nicolas in Saltu (St. Nicolas-aux-Bois), in the diocese of Laon, both of these

houses of the Cistercian Order. He tells (Vita Prima St. Bern., I, vii. 33) the story of his visits to St. Bernard, and of the spell cast over him by the intense spirituality of the abbat. These visits appear to have begun about the time of St. Bernard's recovery from the serious illness brought on by the severe austerities which he practised during the first few years after he was ordained Abbat of Clairvaux; a recovery due, in the main, to the obedience with which he carried out the injunctions of William of Champeaux, Bishop of Châlons, given under the authority of the Chapter of the Cistercian Order. Very frail, very tender, very beautiful must the saint have appeared, in the days of his convalescence, to William of St. Thierry; beautiful with the rare beauty of contented self-submission; tender with the tenderness of self-oblivion; frail with the frailty of self-neglect. "Eodem tempore," he writes, "et ego Claram-uallam, ipsumque frequentare coepi; quem cum ibi cum quodam abbate altero uisitarem, inueni eum in suo illo tugario, quale leprosis in compitis publicis fieri solet. Inueni autem ex praecepto, ut dictum est, episcopi et abbatum seriatim ab omni sollicitudine domus, tam interiori, quam exteriori, uacantem Deo et sibi, et quasi in deliciis paradisi exultantem. Ingressusque regium illud cubiculum, cum considerarem habitationem, et habitatorem, tantam mihi, Deum testor, domus ipsa incutiebat reuerentiam sui, ac si ingrederer ad altare Dei. Tantaque affectus suauitate circa hominem illum, tantoque desiderio in paupertate illa et simplicitate cohabitandi ei, ut si optio illa die mihi data fuisset, nil tam optassem quam ibi cum eo semper manere ad seruiendum ei." Such was his first impression of St, Bernard. The physician to whose care St. Bernard had been entrusted was, it seems, an incompetent person at the very least; and it is interesting to note, as his reply to William's enquiry as to his health suggests, that the patient had not failed to take his measure. "Optime, inquit. Ego, cui hactenus homines rationabiles obediebant, iusto Dei iudicio, irrationali cuidam bestiae datus sum ad obediendum." There was no bitterness in the words; he spoke them, writes William, "modo illo suo generoso arridens nobis"; it was just that saving sense of humour which is ever characteristic of a saint.

How natural that William of St. Thierry should have been more jealous for the honour of St. Bernard than was the Abbat of Clairvaux himself! And when, on the question of free will, and again in the matter of the Cluniac controversy, reflections seemed possible, detrimental to the reputation of St. Bernard, it was William who urged him to state his case, and to whom he addressed the two masterly treatises, with one of which we are concerned. Indeed it is plain, as the Abbé Vacandard points out in a letter to the writer, that "leur amitié était si

grande, et Bernard professait pour Guillaume une telle estime qu'on s'explique qu'il lui ait dédié son ouvrage." Further information concerning the circumstances of St. Bernard's relation to William of St. Thierry will be found in the Histoire Littéraire de La France, XII, pp. 312 sqq., under the article "Guillaume de St. Thierry," as well as in Vacandard, Vie de Saint Bernard, I, Préface, and chaps. iii and vi.

An attempt has been made to present the argument of the treatise by means of a synopsis, in which it is sought to familiarize the reader with the technology of the original, an important consideration from a theological point of view. The De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio deals rather with moral than with dogmatic theology. It is less scholastic, more on the level of the plain man, than the treatise of St. Anselm, which is identically entitled; and it is more general in its outlook, if one may so say, more modern, than St. Augustine's treatises on the same subject, which, like the Canons of the Second Council of Orange (A.D. 529), are definitely addressed to the correction of a particular heresy maintained by skilled dialecticians at a particular period in history. Again, there is about it the fragrance of mystical theology; not the mystical theology of the esoteric, but that of the simple Christian living in the world. It is wonderful how this ascetic, this cloistered recluse, touches his subject with the hand of one who knows the pulsations of average humanity. The psychology—and there is much of incisive psychological analysis—is that of no mere thinker in the sphere of the abstract; it is the νοῦς πρακτικός which is at work throughout. The meaning and value of personality; its limitations; its responsibilities; its resources; its hopes; its possibilities; its destiny; all these are silhouetted with sharp distinctness of outline against a background of what we should now call Evangelicalism, only just not intense enough in its blaze to blind us to all else but the vision of grace, yet so delicately modified as to leave the impression that with no other background than this is it possible to know what human freedom really means. And it means so much! Yet, over against liberum consilium and liberum complacitum, the absolute freedom of volition as such, in other words, liberum arbitrium, libertas a necessitate which "nec peccato, nec miseria amittitur, uel minuitur," is revealed in all the glory of its creation as the imago Dei, which "sui omnino de fectum seu diminutionem non patitur."

In this connection the analysis of St. Peter's fall is masterly in its grip. Underlying it there is the distinction between, as St. Thomas defines them, the actus elicitus and the actus imperatus; at least, so it seems to the writer. The distinction between passive and active compulsion certainly suggests itself as an

anticipation of St. Thomas. But on these points the Notes must speak for themselves.

St. Bernard has a strong and clear sense of a universal unity, divinely created and providentially governed; a unity from which nothing is excluded, neither the fallen angels, nor lost men; a unity in which the Divine Word is immanent a summo coelo usque ad inferiores partes terrae; a maximo angelo usque ad minimum uermiculum; immanent, as St. Athanasius would say, κατὰ δύναμιν, and in such a fashion that He uses for His own purposes the ministeria of all created life, whether it be the insensibilis et irrationabilis creatura, or even mali, sine homines, siue angeli. It is, perhaps, needless to add that there is not in St. Bernard the faintest trace of the cruder pantheism which identifies the universe with God, nor of the more mystic type which proposes as the end of man, attained not by all but only by contemplatives in the highest grade of self-abstraction, such a union with the Deity as almost amounts to the annihilation of the separate human personality. St. Bernard's mysticism is always regulated by an ineradicable conviction of the imperishable ego, eternally free and eternally responsible. Pantheism, even in its most sublimated form, is not for him. The personality of God is too absolutely incommunicable for such a thing to be possible.

The extent to which St. Bernard is steeped in the Vulgate pre-eminently in the Gospels, the Pauline Epistles and the Sapiential Books, cannot fail to strike the reader. An attempt has been made to indicate every reminiscence that occurs; some, no doubt, will have escaped notice. It is interesting to discover that where his quotation, if it be so much as quotation, or his reminiscence, varies from the text of the Vulgate, it is frequently the case that the same variant is found when the same quotation or reminiscence occurs elsewhere in his writings. Occasionally, as might be expected, passages are made use of in a manner which the original does not support, a blemish, of course, for which, not St. Bernard, but the Latin Version is responsible.

Researches made by my friend, the Rev. Barton Mills, have led to the conclusion that Mabillon's text of St. Bernard's writings, as presented in the Benedictine folio edition and in Migne's Patrologia Latina, is far from trustworthy. It is not, perhaps, generally known that, when the Abbey of Clairvaux was sacked at the period of the French Revolution, a certain number of its literary treasures were rescued, and ultimately found an asylum in the Bibliothèque de la Ville at Troyes, where they still remain under the guardianship of the learned and courteous librarian, Mons. Morel-Payen.

Amongst these treasures are two important MSS. of St. Bernard, numbered 426 and 799, which, in the opinion of experts, represent the textus receptus of St. Bernard's works accredited at Clairvaux in the third quarter of the twelfth century. The primary concern of this edition of the De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio is, however, not textual criticism. The capitulation of Mabillon, with its summaries—there is no capitulation in the two MSS.—has been followed, but the paragraphing of the MSS. has always been indicated in the Notes; and certain illustrative variants have been recorded. The MSS. referred to in the Notes are, then, these two. Considerable portions of both of them have been carefully collated by Mr. Barton Mills, and I am deeply indebted to him in this, as in other matters connected with the work in hand. I have also to thank Mons. Vacandard, the distinguished author of the Vie de Saint Bernard, for several valuable suggestions. As regards the title of the treatise it will, doubtless, be observed that the words "liberum arbitrium" are in it translated "free will," whereas in the text they are usually rendered "free choice." The reason for this will become apparent to the reader as the argument proceeds. In St. Bernard's view liberum arbitrium, liberum consilium and liberum complacitum, are all three co-ordinated states, either actual or possible, of the one uoluntas, and their mutual relation is better expressed if "free choice," rather than "free will," be used for the first. A certain pedantic flavour, however, suggested, at so early a stage, by the terms "free choice," explains the preference of "free will" for the title. In conclusion I would say that, if anything has been written which either misrepresents the mind of St. Bernard, or is contrary to the teaching of Holy Church, I unhesitatingly withdraw it.

WATKIN WILLIAMS.

Drayton St. Leonard,

Easter, 1920.

THE TREATISE OF ST. BERNARD CONCERNING GRACE AND FREE WILL

PREFACE

BROTHER BERNARD to the Lord William, Abbat of St. Thierry.

The little work concerning grace and free will, which lately, upon the occasion that thou knowest, I began, I have now by that same grace of God, so far as I have been able, brought to a conclusion. I fear, however, that I may be found either to have spoken of high matters all too unworthily, or to have reopened needlessly the discussion of matters of which many have already treated sufficiently. Do thou therefore read it first of all and, if thou seest fit, alone; lest, should it be submitted to the judgement of men, perchance rather the temerity of the writer be exposed than the charity of the reader be established. But shouldest thou consider that it may profitably be made public, then, be there aught which seemeth to thee obscure, which, in a matter itself confessedly obscure, might be more clearly stated, due regard being had to brevity, do thou not hesitate either to amend it thyself or to refer it to me for amendment; otherwise shouldest thou defraud thyself of the promise of the Divine Wisdom, which saith: “They that bring me to light shall possess eternal life.”

CHAPTER I

That to the merit of a good work is needed, together with the grace of God, the consent of the free will.

IT happened once that, when I was publicly commending the grace of God towards me in that in any good work I both recognized that I had been prevented and felt that I was being furthered and hoped for full attainment, by its means, one of the bystanders demanded: What then is thine own work in the matter, or what recompense or reward dost thou hope for, if so be that God doeth it all? What then, I reply, dost thou advise? Give, saith he, the glory to God Who freely prevented thee, moved thee, originated thy good work, and live worthily for the time to come; so mayest thou prove thyself not ungrateful for benefits already received and not unworthy of receiving benefits in the future. Thou counsellest well, say I, provided only that thy counsel can be followed. But indeed easier is it to know what ought to be done than it is to do it; for one thing is it to lead the blind and another thing to carry the weary. Not every man that sheweth him the way giveth the wayfarer food for his journey. He that instructeth him so that his feet wander not doeth one thing; he that feedeth him so that he faint not by the way doeth another. Thus neither is every teacher also the giver of the good that he teacheth. Accordingly my need is twofold, namely, to be taught and to be helped to do what I am taught. Thou, as a mere man, truly givest excellent counsel to my ignorance, but, if the Apostle is to be believed, “The Spirit helpeth our infirmity,” yea, verily, it needeth that He Who by thy mouth giveth me such counsel, Himself give me by His Spirit help whereby I may obey it. For, see, already His gift to will is present with me, but “how to perform I find not,” nor have I any confidence that I shall ever find the way unless it be that He Who gave me the will give me also the power to perform the same. Where, then, sayest thou, are our merits? Or where is our hope?

Listen, I pray: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” What? Didst thou think, perchance, that thou hadst created thine own merits, that thou canst be saved by thine own

righteousness, who canst not even say that Jesus is the Lord, save in the Holy Spirit? Hast thou then forgotten Who it is that said: “Without Me ye can do nothing,” and “It is not of him that runneth, nor of him that willeth, but of God that sheweth mercy”?

What, therefore, thou askest, doth free will do? I answer in a word: It is saved. Take away free will and there remaineth nothing to be saved; take away grace and there is no means whereby it can be saved. This work of salvation cannot be wrought without two factors: the one, that by which it is wrought, and the other, that for which or in which it is wrought. God is the author of salvation; free will is merely receptive thereof; none can grant it save God alone, nothing can receive it save the free will. Thus then salvation is given by God alone, and it is given only to the free will; even as it cannot be wrought without the consent of the receiver, so cannot it be wrought without the grace of the giver. Accordingly free will is said to co-operate with the grace which worketh salvation, when the free will consenteth, that is to say, is saved; for to consent is to be saved. It followeth that the spirit of a brute can in no wise receive such salvation, for it lacketh the faculty of free consent whereby it may submissively obey the God that saveth it, whether by acquiescing in His commands, or by believing His promises, or by rendering thanks for His benefits. But consent of the will is one thing; natural appetite is another. The latter, indeed, is common to us with the irrational animals; nor hath it the power of giving consent to the spirit, being ensnared by the attractions of the flesh. And perhaps it is this of which the Apostle speaketh under another name as “The wisdom of the flesh,” where he saith: “The wisdom of the flesh is at enmity with God; for it is not subject to the law of God, as indeed it cannot be.” Having then (as I have said) this appetite in common with the brutes, it is voluntary consent which distinguisheth us from the same. It is a habit of the mind, self-determining. Voluntary consent is not under compulsion, nor can it be extorted. It is an act of the will; it is not subject to necessity; it neither denieth itself nor yieldeth itself to any, save only willingly. Otherwise, if it can be compelled to act when it would not, it is subject to force and not voluntary. But where there is not an act of will, there is not consent, for consent cannot be other than an act of will. Where, therefore, there is consent, there is an act of will. Moreover, where there is an act of will, there is freedom. In this sense it is that I understand the term free will.

CHAPTER II

In what freedom of will consisteth.

IN order that what is said may be made plain, and that we may the more completely attain unto the end we seek, it needeth, I think, that we go somewhat further back in our enquiry. In the material world life is not the same thing as sense-perception; nor sense-perception as appetite; nor appetite as consent. This will be the more plain if we define each of these. There is in every corporeal being a life, which is an internal and natural movement, energizing only within the confines of such a being. Whereas sense-perception, which is a movement in the body and proper to its life, energizes outside its confines. The natural appetite, however, is an active force in the living being, whose function it is to move the senses to self-gratification. But consent is spontaneous assent of the will; or, indeed (as I remember that I have already said), it is a habit of the mind, self-determining. Further, will is a movement of reason, and rules over both sense-perception and appetite. In fact will, in whatever direction it determine itself, always hath reason as its companion, we may say, as its follower: not that it is always moved by reason, but that it never moveth without reason, in such a way that it doth many things by means of reason against reason, that is to say, as it were by the aid of its ministry but against its advice or judgement. Whence we read: “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light,” and again: “They are wise to do evil.” For no creature can be intelligent, even in wrong doing, save only by the aid of reason.

But reason hath been given to the will in order to instruct it, not to destroy it. It would, however, destroy it, were it to impose upon it such necessity that it could not freely of its own choice determine itself, whether by wrongly consenting either to the appetite or to some evil spirit (in which case it would be merely animal, incapable of perceiving, in any case, of following after, the things which belong to the Spirit of God), or by accepting the leading of grace unto well-doing, and thus becoming that spiritual will which judgeth all things, but is itself judged of none. If, I say, the will were unable, owing to the

prohibition of reason to take either of these courses, then it would cease to be the will. For where necessity is there is not free will. But if right or wrong could be done under compulsion, and without the consent of free will, in such case a reasonable creature ought indeed, on no valid ground, to suffer the doom of misery, nor could it fully enjoy blessedness, seeing that that faculty in it, which alone is capable either of misery or of blessedness, namely, the will, would be lacking. The aforesaid life, sense-perception, appetite, plainly do not of themselves produce either misery or blessedness; otherwise would the plants which possess life, and the beasts which possess the remaining two attributes also, be either liable to misery or fit for blessedness, which is altogether impossible. We possess, therefore, on the one hand, life in common with the plants, and on the other hand, as well as life, sense-perception and appetite in common with the beasts, while that which distinguisheth us from both is what is called will. And it is consent of the will, free, not necessitated, which, seeing that in it consisteth our righteousness or unrighteousness, maketh us deservedly blessed or the reverse. Such consent, then, on account both of the inalienable freedom of the will, and of the inevitable judgement which reason everywhere and at all times exerciseth when we act, is not (as I think), unfittingly called free choice, being self-determining on account of the will, and self-judging on account of the reason. And rightly doth judgement accompany freedom, seeing that he that is free to determine himself, when he sinneth, judgeth himself. There is a judicial sentence passed, because, if he sinneth, he, who need not sin unless he would, justly suffereth what he would not.

Moreover, were the will not acknowledged to be free, how could either good or evil justly be imputed to it? Necessity, indeed, removeth responsibility for both of these. Further, where necessity is, there is not freedom; where freedom is not, there is neither merit, nor its correlative, judgement, excluding altogether original sin, which it is agreed is of a different order from personal sin. Thus it remaineth that whatsoever hath not this liberty of free consent, undoubtedly can neither merit nor be subject to judgement. Therefore, save only the will, all that belongeth to man, seeing that it is incapable of self-determination, is a matter neither for the award of merit nor for judgement. Life, sense-perception, appetite, memory, thought, and anything else of such kind that there may be, are subject to necessity, except in so far as they are subject to the will. But it is impossible for the will, which cannot of its very nature do otherwise than obey itself (for there is none who doth not will what he willeth, or who willeth what he doth not will), to be deprived of its freedom. The will can, indeed, be

changed, but only to another will, in such a way that it never loseth its freedom. Therefore it can no more be deprived of its freedom than it can be deprived of itself. Were a man ever able either to will nothing at all, or to will anything unwillingly, then and then only would the will be able to be deprived of its freedom. Hence it is that to the insane, to infants, and also to persons asleep, nothing which they may do, whether it be good or bad, is imputed; because, plainly, just as they are not in possession of reason, so do they not possess the use of their own wills, and therefore their freedom is not subject to judgement. Seeing, then, that the will hath nothing free save itself, it is only rightly judged as it is in itself. Indeed, neither slowness of intellect, nor lapse of memory, nor restlessness of appetite, nor obtuseness of sense-perception, nor feebleness of vitality, of themselves bring a man into condemnation, even as their contraries do not make him innocent; and this for no other reason than that these conditions are proved to be caused necessarily, and independently of the will.

CHAPTER III

That there is a threefold freedom: that of nature, that of grace, and that of glory.

IT is the will alone therefore which, seeing that by reason of its innate freedom it is compelled by no necessity either to disagree with itself or to consent in any matter in spite of itself, rightly maketh a man, as being under no compulsion to be either righteous or unrighteous, fittingly capable of blessedness or of misery; provided, that is to say, that it hath given its consent whether to righteousness or to unrighteousness. Accordingly I think that this free consent of the will, upon which (as aforesaid) every act of judgement is founded, is not unsuitably wont to be called, as we have already defined it, free choice, the word “free” having reference to the will, and the word “choice” to the reason. Yet is it not necessarily free with that liberty of which the Apostle speaketh: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” This is that freedom from sin of which he saith elsewhere: “When ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness.… But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” But who is there in the sinful flesh that can claim for himself freedom from sin? Of this liberty free choice can, I think, by no means rightly be said to be possessed. There is also a freedom from misery of which the Apostle speaketh likewise: “The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” But doth any man claim to possess such freedom in this our mortal state? Therefore we rightly refuse to call the will free in respect of this freedom. But there is a freedom which, I think, is more proper to the will, and of which we can speak as freedom from necessity, on the ground that what is necessary seemeth to be the contrary of what is free, in the sense that what is done of necessity is not freely done; and the converse.

Seeing therefore that, as may have occurred to us, there is set before us a threefold freedom, that from sin, that from misery, and that from necessity; the last of these is bestowed upon us in the state of nature, the first is restored to us

by grace, and the second is reserved for us in the fatherland. Let us then call that which is first in order of development the freedom of nature, that which is second, the freedom of grace, and that which is third, the freedom of life or of glory. By the first were we created with freedom of will to choose as we will, creatures ennobled for the service of God; by the second are we restored to innocence, newly created in Christ; by the third are we raised to the state of glory, creatures perfected in the Spirit. Thus the first freedom hath great honour, the second hath more abundant virtue, the last hath superabundant delight.

It is indeed in virtue of the first that we rule the brutes; in virtue of the second that we subdue the flesh; in virtue of the third that we overcome death; or, let us say, just as in the gift of the first freedom God put under our feet sheep and oxen and the beasts of the field, so also by means of the second freedom He in like manner casteth down and crusheth beneath our feet those spiritual beasts of this world, of which it is said: “Deliver not to the beasts the souls that confess to Thee.” Finally, in the third state of freedom, when He shall have fully subdued us to ourselves by means of victory over corruption and over death, when, that is to say, the last enemy, death, shall have been destroyed, then shall we pass unto the glorious freedom of the sons of God, the freedom wherewith Christ shall make us free when He shall deliver us over as His kingdom to God, even the Father. It was of this freedom, as also of that which we have called freedom from sin, that, as I think, He spake, when He said unto the Jews: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” He would signify that free choice needeth a liberator; but plainly not a liberator from necessity of which, by the very fact that it is the function of the will, it could know nothing; but a liberator from sin, into which it freely and of itself had fallen, and at the same time from the penalty of sin, which it had heedlessly incurred and was unwillingly bearing, from neither of which could it at all be set free, save only by means of Him Who alone of men was made free among the dead; free, that is to say, from sin, yet living in the midst of sinners.

For He alone among the sons of Adam claimeth for Himself freedom from sin, “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.” Moreover from misery also, which is the penalty of sin, was He, potentially though not actually, none the less free. No man indeed took away His life; He laid it down of Himself. Finally, as the prophet beareth witness: “He was offered because He willed so to be”; even as also, when He willed, He was “born of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law.” Thus was He Himself also subject to the law of misery; but this was because He so willed, in order

that, free among the miserable and sinners, He might break the yoke of misery and sin from off the necks of His brethren. Accordingly He possessed in full these three kinds of freedom, the first (that from necessity) in virtue both of His divine and of His human natures, and the rest in virtue of His divine power. Whether, or in what manner, and to what extent, the first man possessed in Paradise these two last-mentioned kinds of freedom we shall see later.

CHAPTER IV

What kind of freedom belongeth to the holy souls in their disembodied state: what kind belongeth to God, and what kind is common to all reasonable creatures.

WE must, however, understand that both these kinds of freedom are possessed in fulness and perfection by the disembodied souls which have been made ‘perfect, even as they are possessed by God and by His Christ and by the angels in heaven. To the holy souls indeed, who have not yet received their bodies, there lacketh something of glory; nevertheless they have no misery. Freedom from necessity, however, belongeth to all reasonable creatures, whether evil or good, equally and indifferently with God. Nor is this freedom lost, or diminished, either by sin or by misery; nor is it greater in the righteous than in the unrighteous, or more complete in the angels than in men. For even as by means of grace the consent of the human will is given to well-doing, so that, by the fact that it is willingly given and not unwillingly compelled, it maketh a man freely good and free in well-doing; thus also the consent of the will, when of its own accord turned aside to evil, maketh a man none the less both free and self-determining in evil-doing, being indeed led by his own will and not compelled by any outside force to become evil. And as the angels in heaven, or even God Himself, remain good freely, that is to say, of their own will, and not of any extrinsic necessity; so the devil both fell into evil-doing and persisteth therein equally freely, that is to say, of his own free motion, and not by the compulsion of another. Therefore freedom of will remaineth, even where there is captivity of mind, certainly as fully in the evil as in the good, though in a more ordered state in the good; it remaineth also as completely, after its proper fashion, in human creatures as it doth in the Creator, though in Him it is more powerful.

But as to the fact that men are wont to complain, and say: I will to possess a good will and I am unable so to do; this by no means implieth a restriction of its freedom, so that in such a case the will as it were suffereth violence or is subject

to necessity; but plainly witnesseth that the will lacketh that freedom which is called freedom from sin. For he that willeth to possess a good will proveth that he possesseth a will, for it is only by means of the will that he willeth to possess a good will; but if he possesseth a will, then hath he freedom, not from sin but from necessity. Truly he perceiveth of himself that he hath not freedom, so as to be able, when he willeth, to possess a good will; freedom, plainly, from sin by which it grieveth him that his will is oppressed, though not suppressed. Yet without doubt he already hath in some way a good will, when he willeth to possess such a will. What he willeth is, in fact, good; nor could he will what is good unless by a good will; even as he could not will what is evil unless by an evil will. When we will what is good, that is a good will; when we will what is evil, that is an evil will. In both cases there is will, and everywhere there is freedom: necessity yieldeth to will. But when we cannot do what we will, we perceive indeed that our freedom is by reason of sin in a certain way miserable, though not lost.

It is, therefore, simply from this freedom, by which the will is free to judge itself, whether as good, if it have consented to well-doing, or as evil, if to evil-doing (forsooth it perceiveth plainly that it is only by an act of will that it hath consented to either of the two), that we believe free determination to be so called. For freedom from sin might, perhaps, more fittingly be called free counsel, and freedom from misery free pleasure, rather than free determination. As a fact determination is judgement. But just as it belongeth to judgement to distinguish between what may and what may not be allowable, so it belongeth to counsel to show what may and what may not be expedient, and to pleasure to discover what may and what may not be agreeable. Would that we as freely took counsel for our profit as we judge concerning the allowableness of our deeds, so that, even as by judgement we freely decide as to the allowable and the non-allowable, so by counsel we were free to choose for ourselves the allowable as expedient, and to reject the non-allowable as inexpedient! For in such a case we should be not only free in judgement, but without doubt also free in counsel, and therefore free from sin. But what if either the freedom to approve what is expedient, or the freedom to judge what is allowable, give us also the other kinds of freedom? Should we not then rightly be said to possess free pleasure also, seeing that we should perceive ourselves to be free in the same manner from everything that could displease, that is from all misery? But, as it is; seeing that there are many things which by the judgement we decide ought to be either done or not done, which yet by the counsel we neither approve nor reject in

accordance with right judgement; and, again, seeing that not all things which we approve as right and expedient do we also freely welcome as well-pleasing to us, but that rather we impatiently endure them as hard and painful; such being the case, is it sufficiently plain that we possess neither free counsel nor free pleasure.

It is another question whether, even before sin entered in, the first man had free pleasure; this shall be discussed in its proper place. But quite certainly we shall possess it, when by the mercy of God we shall obtain what we pray for when we say: “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” For this shall be fulfilled when that which (as hath been said) seemeth to be common everywhere to all reasonable creatures, namely, a will free from necessity, shall be (as it is in the holy angels) both secure from sin and safe from misery in the elect of mankind also, who shall at length prove by the happy experience of a threefold freedom “what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Meanwhile, because this hath not yet come to pass, it is freedom of choice alone which in its fulness and integrity man now possesseth. For freedom of counsel existeth but in a measure only, and that in a few spiritual persons, who “have crucified their flesh with its vices and desires,” so that sin may not reign in their mortal body Thus then that sin doth not reign cometh of freedom of counsel; that sin, however, is not wholly lacking cometh of the captivity of the will. “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”; that is to say, when the judgement shall be wholly free, there shall no longer be any captivity of the will. And this it is for which every day we pray, when we say unto God: “Thy kingdom come.” Not yet is this kingdom fully established amongst us. Nevertheless every day little by little it draweth near, and with sensible increase are its borders daily extended, at least in those whose inward man is by the help of God “renewed from day to day.” Therefore in the measure in which the kingdom of grace is extended, in that measure is the power of sin diminished. But in the measure in which, on account of the body of death which “presseth down the soul,” and on account of the straitened state of our earthly habitation, which indeed “weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things,” the kingdom of grace is still restricted, in that measure in this our mortal life even they who seem to be somewhat nigh unto perfection are under necessity of confessing: “In many things we offend all,” and “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Wherefore it is that they pray without ceasing, saying: “Thy kingdom come.” But this will not be consummated even in them, until not only doth not sin reign in their mortal

body, but there neither is nor can be any sin at all in the body then immortal.

CHAPTER V

Whether freedom from misery, or freedom of counsel, is granted in this world.

WHAT now are we to say as regardeth the existence of freedom of pleasure in this wicked world, in which scarcely “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”; in which “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,” being indeed “made subject to vanity, not willingly”; where the life of man upon the earth consisteth in temptation; where even spiritual men, who “already have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, even they groan within themselves waiting for the redemption of their bodies”? Can it at all be that, under such conditions, there is any place for freedom of the kind of which we speak? For neither will innocence, nor righteousness, be found to be safe either from sin or yet from misery in a world in which the righteous man crieth out: “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” and again: “My tears have been my meat day and night.” Where nights and days are passed in mourning, there surely is no time to spare for taking pleasure. Finally, they that would live godly in Christ themselves suffer persecution the more; for judgement beginneth at the house of God. Which also He commandeth, saying: “Begin at them of my household.”

But although virtue be in no place of safety in this world, perchance vice is, and in some measure enjoyeth pleasure and escapeth misery. Far from it. For they that rejoice where they have done evil, and exult in deeds of infamy, do but laugh with the wild laughter of the mad. But no misery is more genuine than is false joy. In short, what in this world seemeth to be happiness is so far misery, that the wise man saith: “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting.” There is certainly some pleasure in the good things of the body, namely, in eating, drinking, warming oneself, and other the like comforts or coverings of the flesh. But can it be said that even in these matters we are wholly free from misery? Bread is good, but to the hungry; drink delighteth, but the thirsty; in fact, to him that is satisfied food and drink are by no means

pleasant, but distasteful. Take away hunger, and thou wilt not relish bread; take away thirst, and thou wilt decline the most limpid fountain as though it were a stagnant marsh. In like manner is it only he that is faint with heat that seeketh shade; and only he that is chilled or in the gloom troubleth himself about the sun. None of these things will be pleasing to a man unless urgent need have gone before. If the need be taken away, then the very pleasantness which seemeth to be in them is turned into loathing and disgust. It must be confessed, therefore, that, in this respect, everything which belongeth unto our present life, partaketh of misery; unless it be that, in the continual trials of our heavier labours, our lighter labours are, as it were, a kind of consolation, and, while perchance, as time passeth and conditions change, tedium and relief follow one upon another, the experience of the lesser labours seemeth unto us to be some reprieve from misery, so that sometimes the passage from the more painful to the less irksome toil is counted for felicity.

And yet it must be confessed that they who, at times rapt in spirit through excess of contemplation, are in some small measure able to taste the sweetness of heavenly felicity, are indeed, as often as they experience such a state, free from misery. Plainly these, as cannot be denied, even in the flesh, although but seldom and only in their raptures, enjoy freedom of pleasure, in that with Mary they “have chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from them.” For they that now possess what cannot be taken away from them in truth have experience of that which is to come. But that which is to come is felicity. Moreover felicity and misery cannot exist together at the same moment. As often therefore as they partake of the former, so often do they not feel the latter. Accordingly it is only contemplatives who in this life are in any degree able to enjoy freedom of pleasure, and that but in part, in very small part, and upon the rarest occasion. Beyond this there are even some righteous persons who enjoy freedom of counsel, in part certainly, but in considerable part. For the rest, freedom of will (as hath been plainly shown above) belongeth equally to all who have the use of reason; as such, it is none the less in the evil than in the good, it is as entire in the present world as in the world to come.

CHAPTER VI

That grace is altogether necessary in order that we may will what is good.

IT hath, I think, been sufficiently shown that this freedom of will is yet in certain fashion held captive, so long as the other two kinds of freedom scarcely at all, or only in a small measure, accompany it; and that from no other cause than the lack of these two kinds of freedom ariseth that defect of ours of which the Apostle speaketh, saying: “So that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” To will indeed belongeth to us in virtue of free choice, but not also the power to do what we will. I do not speak of willing what is good, nor of willing what is evil, but merely of willing. For to will what is good is a moral success, to will what is evil is a moral failure. But the simple act of willing, that it is which either succeedeth or faileth. Further, it is creative grace which gave existence to the will; it is saving grace which giveth it moral success; it is the will itself which bringeth about its own moral failure. Accordingly, free choice maketh us possessed of will; grace maketh us possessed of good will. It is in virtue of free choice that we will, it is in virtue of grace that we will what is good. For even as it is one thing simply to fear, and another thing to fear God; one thing simply to love and another thing to love God (indeed, the terms fear and love, considered merely in the abstract, signify affections, but with the addition of the object they signify virtues); so also is it one thing to will and another thing to will what is good.

The affections, truly, considered simply in themselves, belong to us by nature; in a certain sense they originate from ourselves; that they are directed towards their proper objects is due to grace. Nor, indeed, is the case otherwise than that grace ordereth aright what creation hath bestowed, so that the virtues are none else than the affections rightly ordered. It is written concerning certain men that “there they were in great fear, where no fear was.” There was fear, but it was unregulated fear. The Lord wished to regulate it aright in His disciples, when He said: “I will show you whom ye ought to fear”; so also David saith: “Come, ye

children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Thus, too, did the Lord rebuke men for unregulated love, saying: "I came as the light into this world, and men loved darkness rather than light." Therefore is it that the bride prayeth in the Song of Songs: "Order love in me aright." In like manner also were they rebuked for an unregulated will, to whom it was said: "Ye know not what ye ask." But they were taught to lead back the perverted will into the way of righteousness, when they heard: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I am about to drink of?" Then indeed by word, but afterward by example also, He taught them to order the will aright, when, praying, in the hour of His passion, that the cup might pass from Him, He added immediately: "Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt." Therefore we have received from God in the state of nature the power to will, in the same way as we have received the power to fear and the power to love, so that thus we might be simply created beings; but to will what is good, even as to fear and to love God, we receive by the visitation of grace, so that thus we may become (not simply creatures but) God's creatures.

In a certain manner then, created as our own possession for freedom of will, by means of goodness of will we are made God's possession. Moreover it is He that made the will free, Who also maketh it good; and to this end doth He make it good "that we may be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures": since, better were it for us not to have existed at all than for us to remain always our own possession. For they, who willed to be their own possession, became indeed "as gods, knowing good and evil"; but they did not then belong only to themselves, they belonged to the devil also. Accordingly free will maketh us our own; evil will maketh us the devil's; good will maketh us God's. This is the meaning of the words: "The Lord knoweth them that are His." For to them that are not His He saith: "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." When, therefore, by reason of evil will we belong to the devil, in a certain sense we do not meanwhile belong to God: even as when by reason of good will we become God's possession, we then cease to be the devil's; seeing that "No man can serve two masters." For the rest, whether we belong to God or to the devil, we do not cease to belong to ourselves also. Indeed free will remaineth to us in either case, whereby there remaineth also the ground of merit; so that deservedly we are either punished as evil persons, who have of their own will freely become such, or glorified as good, which equally we cannot be save only as free agents. In truth it is our own will, and not the power of God, which delivereth us over to the devil: it is God's grace, and not our own will, which maketh us subject to God. Our will, of

course, was (as must be confessed) created good by the good God; it will not, however, be perfect until it hath been perfectly subjected to its Creator. But far be it from us to ascribe to the will itself its own perfection, while we ascribe to God its creation only; seeing that, without doubt it is better for it to be perfect than for it to have been simply made; and that, indeed, it seemeth to be blasphemy to ascribe to God the lesser, and to ourselves the more excellent work. Finally the Apostle, perceiving what was of nature, and what was to be expected of grace, said: “To will is present with me, but how to will perfectly I find not.” He knew for a fact that he was able to will, as possessing free choice; but that, in order that he might will perfectly, he was in need of grace. For if to will what is evil is, as it were, a failure of the will, then to will what is good must be a success of the will; for the will, however, to be able to will everything that is good is its perfection.

In order, therefore, to the perfection of that will of ours, which we possess in virtue of free choice, we stand in need of a twofold gift of grace, namely, both wisdom, which is the conversion of the will to what is good, and also full power, which is its establishing in the good. Now perfect conversion is conversion to what is good, to the end that nothing may be pleasing save only what is fitting, or what is lawful; perfect establishing in the good is to the end that nothing which is thus pleasing may any longer be lacking. Then at length shall the will be perfect, when it shall have become both completely good and well satisfied. The will possesseth, certainly, a twofold goodness from the beginning of its existence; the one, a general goodness derived from the mere fact of its creation, in that it could not have been created other than good by the good God, for “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good”; the other, a special goodness derived from the freedom of choice, in virtue of which it was made even after the image of Him Who created it. Suppose now that to these two goods be added a third, its conversion to its Creator; then not unfittingly will the will be counted perfectly good; good, without doubt, as a mere created thing, better by reason of its special gift of freedom, best by reason of its being regulated aright. But the regulation of the will consisteth in its conversion in every single respect to God, in its entire and free devotion and submission to Him. To such perfect righteousness, however, is rightly due, nay, indeed, is actually joined the fulness of glory; for these two things are so united the one to the other that the perfection of righteousness cannot be possessed, save only in the fulness of glory; nor can there be fulness of glory apart from perfect righteousness. Finally, as a matter of due merit, there can be no such righteousness apart from glory, seeing that there

can be no true glory which is not derived from such righteousness; wherefore it is rightly said: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

But these are those two gifts of which we have above spoken, namely, true wisdom and full power; thus wisdom concerneth righteousness, and power concerneth glory. The terms “true” and “full” are added, the one in order to distinguish from the wisdom of the flesh, which is death, as well as from the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God, and by which men are wise in their own sight, “wise,” I mean, “to do evil”; the other, in order to distinguish from them of whom it is said: “Mighty men shall be mightily tormented.” For neither true wisdom nor full power are to be found at all, except there are joined to the free will those two possessions, to which we have earlier referred, namely, freedom of counsel and freedom of pleasure. I should say that, certainly, he alone possesseth true wisdom and full power, who is at last able not only to will in virtue of free choice, but also to will perfectly in virtue of the remaining two kinds of freedom, seeing that he can no longer will what is evil, nor fail in the attainment of what he wills; of which results the one, namely, true wisdom, cometh of freedom of counsel, and the other, namely, full power, cometh of freedom of pleasure. But who would dare to boast, because man hath it within his reach to become such and so great as this? Where, or when, is such an end attained? Surely, not in this world, is it? Were any disposed so to boast, he would be greater than Paul, who confesseth, saying: “How to will perfectly I find not.” Was Adam in Paradise such and so great as this? Surely, had it been so, never would he have been an exile therefrom.

CHAPTER VII

Whether the first man in Paradise was endowed with this threefold freedom, and how far his endowment was lost by sin.

IT is now the place to consider a question which we have so far deferred, namely, whether the first man possessed in Paradise those three kinds of freedom of which we have spoken, that is to say, freedom of choice, of counsel and of pleasure, or, in other words, freedom from necessity, from sin, and from misery, in all their fullness; or but two of them, or only one. And indeed, concerning the first of these, there is now no question, if we remember how plainly higher reason hath taught us that it is equally the possession of the righteous and of sinners. Concerning the remaining two it may not improperly be asked whether Adam ever possessed either both, or so much as one of them? For, if he possessed neither of them at all, what is it that he lost? Freedom of choice, at any rate, he always preserved intact both before and after his sin. If he lost nothing, in what did he suffer by being cast out of Paradise? But if he lost either one of them, how did he lose it? What is certain is that, from the time that he sinned, thenceforward, so long as he remained in the flesh, he was free neither from sin nor from misery. But again, he could in no measure have lost either of these freedoms, when he had once received it; otherwise he cannot be proved to have possessed in their perfection either wisdom or power, as we have above defined them, for he would have been able both to will what he ought not to have willed and to receive what he was not willing to receive. Or should it rather be said that, in a certain measure, he possessed wisdom and power, but that, because he did not possess them in their fullness, he was able to lose them? For, indeed, each of these hath two degrees, a higher and a lower. The higher degree of freedom of counsel is not to be able to sin; the lower degree is to be able not to sin. So also the higher degree of freedom of pleasure is not to be able to be disturbed; the lower degree is to be able not to be disturbed. Accordingly

[the first] man received at his creation the lower degrees of both kinds of freedom together with full freedom of choice, and, when he fell into sin, lost the two former. But he fell from the state of being able not to sin into that of not being able not to sin, having wholly lost freedom of counsel. So too did man fall from the state of being able not to be disturbed into that of not being able not to be disturbed, having wholly lost freedom of pleasure. There remained to him only freedom of choice, and that subject to punishment, in that by its means he lost the other kinds of freedom; but it he could not lose. Having, indeed, by his own will become the servant of sin, deservedly he lost freedom of counsel. Further, having by reason of sin become liable to pay the penalty of death, how was he any longer able to keep possession of freedom of pleasure?

Of the three kinds of freedom, therefore, which he had received, Adam, by the abuse of that which is called freedom of choice, deprived himself of the rest. But he abused it by the fact that, when he had received it for his glory, he made of it his disgrace, according to the testimony of the Scripture which saith: “Man when he was in honour, had no understanding; he was compared unto the foolish beasts, and become like unto them.” To man alone, amongst living creatures, was it given, on account of his prerogative of free choice, to be able to sin. But it was given to him not in order that he should accordingly sin, but in order that, if he did not sin when he was able to have sinned, he might appear more glorious. For what could have redounded more to his glory, than if it could have been said of him, as the Scripture runneth: “Who is he, and we will praise him?” Why is he thus praiseworthy? “For wondrous things he did while he lived.” What things? “Who was able to transgress,” it saith, “yet did he not transgress; to do evil yet did he not do evil.” This honour, then, he preserved so long as he did not sin; when he sinned he lost it. But he sinned, because he was free to sin; nor was he free otherwise than by virtue of freedom of choice, whence it was indeed that he had in him the possibility of sinning. Yet was it not the fault of Him who gave him free choice, but of himself who abused it, in that plainly he converted to the use of sinning the faculty which he had received for the glory of not sinning. For although he sinned by means of the power which he received, he did not sin because he possessed the power to do so, but because he willed to do so. For, when the devil and his angels sinned, the rest also of the angels did not sin; not because they were not able to sin, but because they did not will to sin.

Man’s fall, when he sinned, is to be ascribed, therefore, not to the gift of the power to sin, but to the fault of the will. Nevertheless, though he fell by an act of will, he hath it not equally in his power by an act of will to rise again free from

sin; because although there was given to the will the power so to stand that it should not fall, there was not given it the power to rise again, if it fell. For not so easy is it to get out of a pit as it is to fall into it. By an act of will alone man fell into the pit of sin; but no act of will is sufficient to enable him to rise again, seeing that now, even if he so will, he is not able not to sin.

CHAPTER VIII

That free choice remaineth after sin hath entered in.

WHAT then? Hath free choice perished, because man is not able not to sin? By no means: but man hath lost free counsel, by means of which he before possessed the power not to sin; he lost it, moreover, in such a manner that, because he is not able indeed any longer not to be disturbed, it befalleth him in his wretched state to have lost also freedom of pleasure, by means of which he before possessed also the power of being able not to be disturbed. There remaineth, therefore, even after sin, freedom of choice, which, although in a state of misery, is yet intact. And the fact that man is not able of himself to shake himself free of the bondage of sin, or of misery, doth not signify the destruction of freedom of choice, but privation of the two remaining kinds of freedom. For there neither belongeth, nor ever hath belonged, to freedom of choice, as such, to possess either power or wisdom, but merely will: it maketh us neither able, nor wise, but simply willing. Therefore we are not to be thought to have lost freedom of choice, if we cease to be either powerful or wise, but only if we cease to be willing. For where there is not will, there is not freedom. I do not say, if we ceased to will what is good, but if we ceased to will at all: it must be allowed without contradiction that, when the will—not goodness of will—no longer existeth, then also freedom of choice is lost. But if the case be that the will is merely unable to will what is good, it meaneth that it lacketh, not freedom of choice, but freedom of counsel. Again, if the will be unable, not indeed to will what is good, but to perform the good which it willeth, then let it be assured that it lacketh freedom of pleasure, not that it hath lost freedom of choice. If, then, freedom of choice everywhere accompanieth the will, in such a way that, unless the will wholly cease to be itself, it lacketh it not, but alike in evil and in good remaineth the will; thus none the less doth free choice also abide in its fulness whether in evil or in good. And as the will, even when in the state of misery, doth not cease to be the will, but is called, and is, the miserable will, as it is also called, and is, the blessed will; so also can neither any adversity, nor necessity,

either destroy or (so far as in it lieth) in any degree lessen freedom of choice.

But, although free choice remaineth everywhere equally without any diminution, nevertheless it will not find itself able of itself to revive from an evil to a good state, after the same fashion in which of itself it was able to fall from a good into an evil state. And what wonder is it if one that lieth prone be not able of himself to rise again, seeing that when standing upright he was unable by any effort of his own to advance to a better position? In fine, while freedom of choice still in some measure had with it the other two kinds of freedom, it was unable from the lower vantage ground of them to rise to higher levels, that is to say, to rise from the states of being able not to sin and being able not to be disturbed to those of not being able to sin and not being able to be disturbed: but if, even however aided by those other two kinds of freedom, it yet was not strong enough to advance from the good to the better, how much less, now that it is deprived of them, will it be able of itself to escape from evil to the good in which it stood of old?

Man, therefore, hath need of "the power of God, and the wisdom of God," even Christ, in order that, by reason of the fact that He is wisdom, He may reinfuse into him true wisdom, and thus restore to him the state of freedom of counsel, and in order that, by reason of the fact that He is power, He may re-establish in him full power, and thus restore to him the state of freedom of pleasure; in such a measure that, being in virtue of the one perfectly good, he may no longer know sin, and, being in virtue of the other completely blessed, he may suffer no adversity. But in truth it is in the future life that such perfection as this is to be expected, when both kinds of freedom now lost will be restored to free choice; not merely in the measure in which in this world they are restored to any righteous person, however perfect he may be; nor merely in the measure in which it was granted even to our first parents to possess them in Paradise; but as already now the angels possess them in heaven. Meanwhile, however, let it suffice in this body of death, and in this evil world, that by freedom of counsel we obey not sin in lust, while by freedom of pleasure we fear not to suffer adversity for righteousness' sake. But, in this sinful flesh and in this evil day, if not wholly to lack, certainly not to consent to sin, this is in no small measure to be wise; and, if not yet wholly to enjoy felicity, at least for truth's sake manfully to endure contempt, this is in no small measure to be powerful.

Truly it behoveth us here, meanwhile, by freedom of counsel to learn no longer to abuse freedom of choice, in order that in the future we may be able fully to enjoy freedom of pleasure. Thus, indeed, we are restoring in ourselves

the image of God; thus by means of grace we are being prepared to win that ancient honour which we lost through sin. And blessed is he who shall deserve to hear it said concerning himself: “Who is he, and we will praise him? For he did wondrous things while he lived; he was able to transgress, yet did he not transgress; to do evil, yet did he not do evil.”

CHAPTER IX

That the image and the likeness of God, in which we were created, consist in a threefold freedom.

NOW I think that in these three kinds of freedom consist the very image and the likeness of the Creator, in which we were created; that the image indeed consisteth in freedom of choice, while in the remaining two kinds of freedom is revealed a certain two-sided likeness. Hence it is, perhaps, that freedom of choice alone suffereth not at all any defect or diminution of itself, because it is in it above all else that, as it were, may be seen impressed the substantial image of the eternal and unchangeable Godhead. For although it had a beginning, yet it knoweth not destruction; neither hath it any increase from righteousness or from glory, nor doth it suffer any diminution from sin or from misery. What is there that, while it is not eternal, is more like unto eternity than is this? Further in the other two kinds of freedom, seeing that they can be not only partly diminished, but also wholly lost, we recognize as it were a likeness of divine wisdom, and a likeness of divine power, added to the divine image. Finally we have lost them both by sin, and we have recovered them both by grace; and every day, indeed, we either advance in them, or we fall back from them, some of us more, others of us less. They can also be so lost that they cannot any longer be recovered; and they can be so possessed that they can never at any time be either lost or diminished.

In this two-sided divine likeness of wisdom and of power, not indeed in its highest degree, but in that which is next to the highest, was man created in Paradise. For what is nearer to the state of not being able to sin, or to be disturbed (in which without doubt the holy angels are now confirmed, and in which God always exists), than that of being able not to sin and not to be disturbed, in which, we know, man was created? And he—nay, rather, we in him and with him, having by means of sin fallen from this state, have by means of grace received again, not indeed the very same degree thereof, but in place of it a certain lower degree. For we are not able to exist here in this world entirely

without sin, or without misery; although we are able, by the aid of grace, to avoid being overcome by sin, or by misery. Nevertheless Scripture saith: “Whatsoever is born of God, sinneth not.” But this is said of them that are predestined unto life, not meaning that they do not sin at all, but that sin is not imputed unto them, being either punished by befitting penance, or in love put utterly away. “Love,” indeed, “covereth a multitude of sins,” and “Blessed are they whose unrighteousnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” The angels therefore are in the highest, not the lowest grade, of the divine likeness, we are in the lowest; Adam was in the intermediate grade; the evil spirits, again, are in no such grade at all. To the angels in heaven then it was granted to endure to the end without sin and without misery; but to Adam it was granted to exist without these, though not also to continue to exist without them; to us, however, it was not granted even to exist without them, but only not to be overcome by them. For the rest, the devil and his angels, even as they never have the will to resist sin, so are they never able to escape the penalty of sin.

Seeing, therefore, that these two kinds of freedom, freedom of counsel and freedom of pleasure, by means of which wisdom and power are supplied to reasonable creatures, do, by the dispensation of God, vary according as He willeth, in respect of certain causes, places and times—so that on earth they are possessed but in very small measure; in heaven fully; in the intermediate state moderately; in hell not at all—whereas freedom of choice, wherewith reasonable beings were created, is in no degree whatsoever changed by their condition, but (so far as it is free choice) is always equally possessed in heaven, on earth, and in hell; (seeing that this is so) it is only fitting that the two former should be held to be the divine likeness, and the latter the divine image. And indeed that in hell both kinds of freedom, which belong to the divine likeness, have perished, the authority of Scripture testifieth. For that there true wisdom which cometh, we know, of freedom of counsel, doth not exist at all that passage showeth, where we read: “Whatsoever thy hand can do, do it with all thy might: for there is neither work, nor judgement, nor wisdom in the lower world, whither thou hastenest.” Moreover, concerning power, which is granted by means of freedom of pleasure, the Gospel saith as followeth: “Bind him hand and foot, cast him into outer darkness.” For what is binding of the hands and feet, if not complete deprivation of power?

But some one saith: How cometh it that there is not any wisdom there, where the ills that are suffered compel repentance for the ills that have been wrought? Surely it cannot be either that in torment a man cannot repent, or that to repent of

evil is not true wisdom? Now this objection would rightly be raised, were it the case that what is punished is merely the deed of sin, and not also the evil will. Certainly there is no doubt but that no one in torment delighteth to repeat an act of sin. But if, even in torment, the will remaineth evil, what value hath the abnegation of an evil act, that any man should therefore be accounted wise simply because now in the midst of the flames he taketh no delight in riotous living? In a word: “Into a soul that willeth evil wisdom shall not enter.” Whence, however, shall we prove that even in that state, in which the lost are punished, the will remaineth evil? To omit all else, certainly they are unwilling to be punished. But it is right that they should be punished, who have done things deserving of punishment. Therefore they do not will what is right. He, however, who doth not will what is right, hath not a righteous will. By the fact then that his will doth not consent to what is righteous it is unrighteous, and thus also evil. Two things there are, either of which proveth a will to be wicked; namely, that it pleaseth it to sin, and that it pleaseth it to have sinned with impunity (in the past). Thus to take pleasure in sin so long as it is possible to sin; and, when it is no longer possible, to will that sin remain unpunished; what of true wisdom is there in this? What good will does this show? But granted that it repenteth the lost to have sinned, can we say that the will is yet good if, were the choice given to it, it preferreth to continue in sin rather than to endure the punishment of sin? The former is a wrong choice, the latter is a righteous. But when would a good will choose rather what is wrong than what is right? Besides, they do not truly repent, who do not so much grieve that they have lived unto themselves as that now no longer are they able to live unto themselves. Finally, a man’s outward state revealeth his inward state. For so long as the body is in flames of torment, so long is it plain that the will persisteth in wickedness. Accordingly, among the lost there is nothing whatever of that likeness of God, which consisteth in freedom of counsel and freedom of pleasure; nor can there be; yet, by reason of freedom of choice the image of God abideth there immovably.

CHAPTER X

That through Christ the likeness which properly belongeth to the divine image is restored in us.

BUT in this world the likeness could nowhere reasonably be found, nay, rather the divine image would here still lie filthy and defaced, were it not that the woman of whom the Gospel tells should light her candle; that is to say, unless He who is Wisdom were to appear in the flesh, and turn inside out the house of sins and seek again the piece which He had lost, namely, His own image, which, despoiled of its native beauty, encrusted with the filth of sin lay hidden as it were in the very dust; and when found, should cleanse it to its first fair state again, making it like unto the saints in glory; nay, rather, should make it in all respects like unto Himself, when the word of Scripture should be fulfilled, which saith: “We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” And, in truth, whom did such a work befit better than the Son of God? Who seeing that He is the effulgence of the Father’s glory, and the essential form of His very being, upholding the universe by His word, manifested Himself, endowed with full power for the twofold work of restoring what was deformed and strengthening what was weak; putting to flight the darkness of sin by the effulgence of His Godhead, and restoring wisdom; and by the virtue of His word giving power against the tyranny of evil spirits.

He came, therefore, the very essential form (of God), to Whom the free choice (of man) had to be conformed: for, in order that it might receive again its original form, it needed to be reformed from the same source from which it had been formed. But the form is Wisdom; the conformation consisteth in the image doing that work in the human body which the form doth in the whole world. Now that Wisdom “reacheth from one end to another mightily, and sweetly doth it order all things.” It “reacheth from one end to another,” that is to say, from the highest heaven to the depths of earth; from the greatest angel to the very least of worms. But it “reacheth mightily,” not indeed by digressive motion or by local diffusion, nor merely by official administration of created life, its subject; rather

by a certain essential and omnipresent strength, whereby indeed He moveth, ordereth, and governeth the whole universe most potently. And all this He doeth by no necessity that compelleth Him. Nor in these matters doth He work with any difficulty; but, with a tranquil will, He “ordereth all things sweetly.” In very truth He “reacheth from one end to another,” that is, from the origin of created life even unto the end appointed for it by the Creator; whether it be the end to which fallen nature impels it, or that which judgement hastens, or that which grace concedes. He “reacheth from one end to another mightily,” seeing that none of these ends is reached, that He doth not foreordain it, as He willeth, by the power of His providence.

Therefore let free choice seek to rule its own body, even as Wisdom ruleth the world; itself also reaching “from one end to another mightily,” to wit, giving its commands to each sense and to each member with such authority that it allow not sin to reign in its mortal body, nor yield its members as weapons to iniquity, but rather present them for the service of righteousness. Thus no longer will the man be the servant of sin, when he doeth not sin; from which indeed set free, he will now begin to recover freedom of counsel and to vindicate his dignity, while he clotheth himself with a likeness befitting the divine image in himself, yea, restoreth his ancient comely state. But let him take heed that he do this not less “sweetly” than “mightily”; that is to say, “not of sorrow or of necessity,” which is but the beginning, and not the fulness of wisdom; nay, rather, with a ready and a cheerful will, which maketh a sacrifice accepted, seeing that “God loveth a cheerful giver.” And thus in all things he will follow the example of Wisdom, both withstanding vice “mightily,” and being “sweetly” at rest in conscience.

But in truth we need also the help of Him by whose example we are incited to such conduct as this; in order, plainly, that by means of Him we may be conformed unto Him, and be “transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Therefore if it be by the Spirit of the Lord that this is brought about, it is no longer by free choice. Let no one then think that free choice is so called because with equal power or facility it concerneth itself with good and evil; seeing that it was indeed able to fall by means of itself, but not to rise again, save by means of the Spirit of the Lord. Otherwise neither God, nor the holy angels—for they are in such sense good, as not to be able to be evil; nor, again, the fallen angels—for they are in such sense evil, as not to be able to be good—could be said to possess freedom of choice. Nor, moreover, shall we lose free freedom of choice after the general resurrection, when, undoubtedly, we shall have been inseparably associated,

some of us with the good, other of us with the evil, angels. For the rest, neither God nor the devil lacketh freedom of choice; for it is no weak necessity, but a will strong in the good, and a free strength of purpose, which maketh it impossible for the former to be evil; and that the latter is unable to long after the good no violent force of another effecteth but his own will, stubborn in evil, and his own free obstinacy. Therefore, then, freedom of choice is so called rather because, whether in doing good or in doing evil, it maketh the will equally free; for neither ought, nor can, any man be said to be either good or bad, except in so far as he is willingly such. On this reasoning he will fittingly be said to be equally situated towards good and towards evil, because plainly he has—not, indeed, equal facility in preferring but—equal freedom in willing the one or the other.

CHAPTER XI

That neither grace, nor temptation, taketh away from freedom of choice.

TRULY, as hath been said, by this prerogative of divine dignity the Creator hath singularly honoured the reasonable creature; in such fashion that as He Himself was independent, and was good of His own will, and by no necessity imposed by another; thus it also should in a manner be so far independent, as neither to become evil and justly to be condemned, nor to remain good and deservedly to be rewarded, save only of its own will. Not, however, that its own will could suffice unto it for salvation; but that without its own will it could take no step in the direction of salvation. No one, forsooth, is saved against his will. Nor, indeed, is what is said in the Gospel: “No one cometh unto Me, unless. My Father draw him”; and again, in another place: “Compel them to come in,” at all contrary to this; for, while certainly the loving Father, “Who willeth all to be saved,” seemeth to draw, or compel, as many as may be; nevertheless. He judgeth no one worthy of salvation, unless He have already found Him willing to be saved. And when He frighteneth men, or smiteth them, His purpose is to make them willing to be saved, not to save them against their will; in so far that, while He changeth the will from evil to good, He doth not take away its freedom, but transferreth its allegiance. As for being drawn, however, it is not always against their will that men are drawn; for neither the blind, nor the weary, are saddened for being led or borne. Moreover Paul was led by the hand to Damascus, certainly not against His will. Finally she was indeed most willing, who, in the Song of Songs, made earnest request saying: “Draw me; because of the savour of thine ointments we will run after thee.”

Then, on the other hand, there is the fact that it is written: “Each man is tempted by his own lust, having been drawn away and enticed by it”; and also that “the body which is corrupted presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things”; and that the Apostle saith: “I find another law in my members, warring against the law of my

mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members”; all these statements may be thought to imply that the will is under compulsion and deprived of its freedom. But the truth is that however a man may be pressed by temptation, whether from within or from without, his will, so far as concerneth choice, will be always free; in as much as, in spite of everything, it will be free to decide in the matter of its own consent. But so far as concerneth (freedom of) counsel or (freedom of) pleasure, as long as endureth the struggle with concupiscence and with misery, so long indeed doth the will perceive itself to be restricted in its freedom; though not on that account to be evil, save only if it consent to evil. Finally Paul, who complaineth that he is being drawn a captive to the law of sin—without doubt by reason that he hath not full freedom of counsel—nevertheless boasteth that the consent of his will is unimpaired, and now in large measure also free in well-doing, saying: “It is no longer I that do it.” Whence, Paul, this confidence? Because, saith he, “I consent to the law of God, that it is good”; and again: “For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man.” The eye being single he presumeth the whole body to be full of light. The consent of his will being unimpaired, he doth not hesitate to profess that, although drawn by sin and taken captive by misery, he is yet free in well-doing. And in this confidence it is that he concludeth generally: “There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

CHAPTER XII

Whether one that, for fear of death or of other penalty, denieth the faith is to be excused from blame, or to be held destitute of free choice.

BUT let us consider the case of those who, for fear of punishment or of death, have been nominally compelled to deny the faith; let us consider whether, perchance, according to this declaration of their compulsion, it is the fact either that no blame is due to them for denial of the faith merely by word of mouth, or that the will (as well as the tongue) could have been compelled by force to incur blame; so that, plainly, a man might will what it was admitted that he also did not will, and thus his freedom of choice be done away. And because this were impossible (for a man could not at one and the same time both will and not will the same thing), the question is asked how it is right that evil should be imputed to them that in no way will evil. For such sin is not as is original sin, by which one who, as yet unregenerate by baptism, not only in the absence of consent, but also for the most part in ignorance as to his state, is on other grounds held in bondage. Let us take, for example, the Apostle Peter. He seemed, indeed, against his own will, to deny the truth, inasmuch as he was under the external necessity of either denying it or suffering death. Fearing death he denied it. He was unwilling to deny it, but he was more unwilling to die. Accordingly he denied it against his will; nevertheless he did deny it, lest he should die. But although the man was compelled to say with his tongue, and not with his will, what he was unwilling to say, he was not compelled to will what he did not will. His tongue was moved against his will; but was his will at all changed? What was it that he willed? He willed, truly, to be what he was, a disciple of Christ. What was he saying? “I know not the man.” Why did he say this? He willed to escape death. But why was he deserving of reproach in so doing? We recognize in the Apostle two acts of will; the one, by which he willed not to die, a thing wholly free from blame; the other, by which he delighted to be a Christian, which was highly

praiseworthy. In what then was the Apostle blameworthy? Was it in that he preferred to lie rather than to die? Plainly this act of will was deserving of blame, for he willed to preserve the life of the body rather than that of the soul. “The mouth, to wit, that lieth slayeth the soul.” He sinned therefore, and not without the consent of his own will, which was feeble indeed and wretched, but certainly free. He sinned, however, not by rejecting or hating Christ, but by loving himself too much Nor did that sudden fear of death compel his will by force to this perverse self-love; but it proved it to exist. He was, without doubt, already such a man as this, but he knew it not; although he had heard Him, from whom the truth could not be hidden, say: “Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.” Thus that weakness of will, which was revealed, but not caused, by fear inspired, made known the extent to which he loved himself, and the extent to which he loved Christ—made it known however, not to Christ, but to Peter. For, even before all this happened, Christ “knew what was in man.” In so far therefore as he loved Christ, his will (so to do), it is not to be denied, plainly suffered violence, so that he spake in contradiction of himself: but in so far as he loved himself, without doubt he freely consented, so that he spake on behalf of himself. Had he not loved Christ, he would not have denied Him unwillingly; but had he not loved himself more, he would not have denied Him at all. Therefore it must be confessed that the man was compelled, although not to change, yet to dissemble his own will: compelled, I mean, not to yield in love to God, but to yield somewhat from love of self.

What then? Is all that hath been said above concerning the freedom of the will, perchance, untrue, because, without doubt, it hath been found that the will can be compelled? Yes, certainly; but only if the will could be compelled by another than itself. If, however, it was the will itself that compelled itself, being at once subjected and subjecting; then, just when it seemed to lose its freedom, it actually received it. Of a truth, the force which the will used against itself, it used of itself. Further, what it used of itself, it used as an act of will. What force it used as an act of will, it used, not as necessitated from outside itself, but as a voluntary act. But if as a voluntary act, also as a free act. Finally, one, whose own will compelled him to deny the faith, was compelled because he willed to be compelled: nay, rather, he was not compelled, but he consented, and that not to an external force other than himself, but to his own will, the will, namely, by all means to escape death. Otherwise how could some woman’s voice have availed to shape a holy tongue to wicked words, had not the will, the mistress of the tongue, assented? Finally, when afterwards he refrained himself from that

excessive love of self, and began, as he ought to do, to love Christ with all his heart and all his soul and all his strength; then could his will by no threats or penalties be forced in any measure to yield his tongue a weapon unto unrighteousness, but rather, boldly complying with the truth, he said: “We ought to obey God, rather than men.”

There is, verily, a twofold compulsion, according to which we are compelled either to suffer something, or to act, contrary to our own will. Passive compulsion (for so the former is rightly named) indeed can sometimes take place without the consent of the will of him that suffereth it, but active compulsion never can. Accordingly, the evil which is done in us, or concerning us, is not to be imputed to us, provided that our will have not consented. For the rest the evil which is done by our active agency is not done without the will incurring blame. Plainly we are proved to will evil, which would not be the case, if we did not will it. There is then, too, an active compulsion (as well as a passive), but it doth not excuse the will from blame, when it is also accepted freely. A Christian (in the case in point) was compelled to deny Christ, and that indeed regretfully, nevertheless not otherwise than as an act of will, He was all too willing to escape the headsman’s sword; and such a will ruling within him, and not the sword before his eyes, it was which opened his mouth. Thus the sword did not compel his will, but proved it to be what it was. Therefore the will itself brought itself under blame, not the sword. In a word, where the will was right, men could be slain, but they could not be bent. This it is which had been foretold them: “They shall do unto you whatsoever they will,” to your bodily members however, not to your hearts. Ye shall not do what they will; but they shall do what they will, and ye shall suffer. They shall torture your bodily members, but they shall not change your will; they shall deal savagely with your flesh, but shall have nothing that they can do unto your soul. Although the body of the sufferer may be in the power of the tormenter, yet his will is free. By their cruel dealing they shall discover whether the will be weak; they shall not compel it to be weak, if it be not weak already. Truly its weakness is from itself; but its health is not from itself, but from the Spirit of the Lord. It is healed when it is renewed.

Furthermore, it is renewed when, as the Apostle teacheth, “beholding the glory of the Lord, it is transformed from glory to glory,” that is, from strength to strength, “as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Between which divine Spirit, indeed, and the fleshly appetite, that in man which is called free choice, that is to say, the human will, taketh, as it were, a middle place: and, like unto one hanging in doubtful plight on the steep slope of a very high mountain, thus in the matter of

appetite is the will made weak through the flesh, so that, unless the Spirit by means of grace perseveringly helpeth its weakness, not merely is it unable, by ascending from strength to strength, to attain unto the summit of righteousness, which is, according to the prophet, “even as the mountains of God”; but, rolling downwards by its own weight from vice to vice, it falleth headlong, overburdened, in truth, not only by the law of sin originally implanted in its members, but in addition by the habits of its “earthy tabernacle” which use hath grafted upon the affections. Of both of which burdens of the human will Scripture, forsooth, telleth briefly in a verse, when it saith: “The body which is corrupted presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.” And these two ills of our mortal state, even as they do not injure, but rather train, them that do not consent to temptation; so also do they not excuse, but rather condemn, them that do so consent; so that neither salvation, nor condemnation, can by any means follow, unless there precede the consent of the will; lest, by any chance, freedom of choice should seem to be in a measure subject to the dictates of force.

CHAPTER XIII

That human merits are no other than divine gifts.

WHEREFORE that which in created beings is called free choice is, surely, either justly condemned, seeing that by no external force is it predetermined to commit sin; or it is mercifully saved, for no righteousness of its own sufficeth unto it for righteousness. And let the reader bear well in mind that, in what is here said, no account at all is taken of the fact of original sin. For the rest, let not the cause of the condemnation of free choice be sought outside itself, for nothing in fact condemneth it, save only its own fault; nor are the merits of salvation of itself, but mercy alone saveth it. Moreover, its efforts to do good both are in vain, if they be not aided, and do not exist at all, if they be not moved, by grace. Besides, as the Scripture telleth, the senses and the thoughts of man are prone to evil. Accordingly, as hath been said, his merits are not to be held as accruing to him of himself (as their source), but rather as descending from on high from the Father of lights; if, of course, the very merits whereby eternal salvation is gained are to be reckoned amongst the best and perfect gifts.

For God, “Who is our King of old,” when “He wrought salvation in the midst of the earth,” divided His gifts unto men into merits and rewards; to the end both that the present gifts might, as freely possessed by us, become our merits in the meantime, and that we might look forward to receiving the future gifts as gratuitously promised by Him—nay, rather, expect them as due. It is in reference to both these that Paul saith: “Ye have your fruit unto sanctification, but the end eternal life.” And again he saith: “And we ourselves who have the firstfruits of the Spirit … groan over our present state, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God”; meaning, by the firstfruits of the Spirit, sanctification, that is to say, the virtues in which we are at the present stage being sanctified by the Spirit in order that deservedly we may obtain the adoption. Again, in the Gospel the same promises are made to him that renounceth the world, where it is said: “He shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life eternal.” And thus salvation is not wrought by man’s free will, but by the Lord; nay, rather, He is Himself

salvation, and the way unto salvation, Who saith: “I am the salvation of the people”; Who showeth the road thereunto: “I am the way.” He made Himself to be the way, Who was the salvation and the life, “in order that no flesh should glory.” If then the good things of the way are merits, even as the good things of the fatherland (to which we journey) are salvation and life, and if that be true which David saith: “There is none that doeth good, none save One only,” save, that is to say, that One alone of whom it is also said, “None is good, save God alone”: without doubt, in such case, both our works and His rewards are alike the gift of God, and He Who has made Himself a debtor in respect of the latter, has also made us meritorious in virtue of the former. Nevertheless He deigns to make use of the services of His creatures in establishing their merits, not on the ground of His standing in need of such services, but on the ground of their being of profit to His creatures.

God, therefore, worketh their salvation, “whose names are in the book of life,” sometimes by means of the creature without itself, at other times by means of the creature against itself, at other times by means of the creature with itself. For, indeed, there are many things which minister to the salvation of men by means of insensible, and likewise by means of irrational, creatures, which I have spoken of as done without the creature for the reason that it cannot, for lack of understanding, be conscious of them. God also maketh many things of use for the salvation of many men by the instrumentality of the wicked, whether men or angels, who, since they do such service unwillingly, therefore act against themselves. For while they take pleasure in desiring to do hurt, it is themselves who are as much hurt by their own wicked purpose as others are profited by their useful doings. And then those with whom, as well as by means of whom, God worketh are the good, whether angels or men, who alike do and will what God willeth. For in the case of those who consent in will to what they do in act, with them God expressly shareth the work which He hath in hand. Whence Paul, when he had narrated the many good things which God, by his means, had done, saith: “Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” He might have said, “by means of me,” but, because that would have been too little, he preferred to say “with me”; representing himself to be not only a minister of the work by giving it effect, but also, by giving his consent, in a fashion a partner of Him that worketh it.

Let us consider now, in respect of this threefold manner of God’s working, which we have alleged, what it is that the creature in each case meriteth. The creature, indeed, by means of which, but without which, is done what is done,

what can it merit? But what can that merit, against which it is done, except wrath? And what that, with which it is done, if not grace? Accordingly, in the first case no merits are gained; in the second evil merits; in the last good merits. For the beasts of the field, when by their means some good or evil resulteth, do not merit good or evil; in as much as they do not possess the power of consenting to good or evil. Much less do the stones merit, for they have not even sense-perception. On the other hand the devil, or wicked men, seeing that with fulness of reason they thrive and keep their watch, thereby indeed merit, yet naught else than punishment, for they dissent from the good. But Paul, who preacheth the Gospel willingly lest, were it unwillingly that he so did, he would merely have been entrusted with a stewardship, and whoever is of like mind with him, seeing indeed that they obey with full consent of will, are well assured that there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness. God therefore useth, for the salvation of His own, the irrational, and likewise the insensible, creature, a beast of burden or a mere instrument, which, their work once done, shall be nowhere found. He useth the rational, but ill-willed, creature as it were as a rod of discipline which, when His child hath been corrected, He will cast into the fire as a useless twig. He useth both angels and men of good will as His comrades and allies, whom, the victory won, He will reward most abundantly. Finally, Paul also boldly proclaimeth concerning himself and others the like: “For we are God’s fellow-helpers.” Accordingly God, of His lovingkindness, assigneth merits to man, whenever He deigneth, by his means and with his help, to work any good work. Hence is it that we presume to be God’s fellow-helpers, fellow-labourers with the Holy Ghost, meritorious of the kingdom, because, in fact, by consent of will we are joined unto the divine will.

CHAPTER XIV

What part is to be assigned to grace, arid what to free choice, in the work of salvation.

WHAT then? Is this, therefore, all that free choice doth in the matter? Is this its sole merit, to consent? Certainly it is. Not indeed that even the very act of consent, in which consisteth its entire merit, is of itself; since not so much as “to think” (which is less than to consent) “anything as of ourselves, are we of ourselves sufficient.” These are not my words, but the Apostle’s, who attributeth to God, not to his own free choice, everything of good that can be, that is to say, to think, and “to will, and to do according to His good will.” If, therefore, God worketh in us these three, that is to say, to think, and to will, and to perform, what is good according to His good will; the first, assuredly, He doth without us, the second with us, and the third by means of us. For indeed, by sending us good thoughts, He preventeth us; by also changing our evil wills He joineth us to Himself through consent; and, by supplying to our consent the opportunity of performance, by means of our manifest work He that worketh in us maketh Himself known outwardly. Certainly we are by no means able to prevent ourselves. But He who findeth no one that is already good, saveth no one whom He doth not prevent. The beginning of our salvation is, therefore, without doubt from God; neither is it at all by our means, nor is it with our help. But the consent of the will and the work performed, although they do not originate from us, nevertheless are not without us. Thus neither the first, in which truly we do nothing; nor the last, which unprofitable fear or damnable hypocrisy doth ofttimes extort from us; but the second only is reckoned unto us as meritorious. In fact good will alone sufficeth, the rest avail nothing, if it only be wanting, I should have said: They avail nothing to the agent, nor to the beholders. Accordingly the intention availeth for merit, the action for example; the preventing thought availeth merely to excite them both.

Let us then beware lest, when we perceive these things to be invisibly enacted within us and with our co-operation, we attribute them either to our own will,

which is weak; or to any external necessity imposed upon God, of which there is none; and not to grace alone of which He is full. Grace it is which moveth free choice, when it soweth the seed of good thoughts; which healeth it, when it changeth the disposition; which strengthened it, when it persuadeth it to external action; which keepeth it, so that it may not suffer failure. But grace worketh with free choice in such a manner that, while in the first instance it only preventeth it; afterwards it accompanieth it; indeed it preventeth free choice, to the very end that in the future it may co-operate with it. Nevertheless, what has been begun by grace alone is in such fashion performed by grace and by free choice that in co-operation, not separately; at one and the same time, not by turns; the result is wrought by both of them. It is not that grace doeth part and free choice doeth part; but each doeth the entire work by its individual energy. Free choice, in truth, doeth the entire work, and so also doth grace, but, even as the whole is done in the former (by co-operation), so is the whole done of the latter (by origination).

We believe that it pleaseth the reader that we nowhere depart from the teaching of the Apostle; and whithersoever the argument may have wandered, we have often made use of his very words. For what else do we mean than what he saith: “It is therefore neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy”? Which indeed he saith, not as though any man can will or run in vain; but because he that willeth and runneth ought to glory, not in himself, but in Him from Whom he hath received the power to will and to run. In fine, he saith: “What hast thou which thou didst not receive?” Thou art created, thou art healed, thou art saved. Which of these, O man, originateth from thyself? Which of these is not impossible for free choice? Thou, who didst not exist, couldest not create thyself, nor, a sinner, couldest thou justify thyself, nor, when dead, couldest thou bring thyself again to life; so say nothing of other good things, which are either necessary to them that must be healed, or laid up in store for them that are to be saved. What we say is sufficiently plain as concerneth the first (creation) and the last (salvation). But concerning the intervening stage (justification) also no one doubteth, save he that, “knowing nothing of the righteousness of God, and willing to establish his own righteousness, is not subject to the righteousness of God.” What? Dost thou recognize the power of the Creator, the glory of the Saviour, and yet knowest not the righteousness of the Healer? “Heal me,” saith (the prophet), “and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for thou art my praise.” He recognized the righteousness of God, by Whom he hoped no less to be delivered from misery than to be healed of sin;

and therefore rightly he concluded that it was God, and not himself, that was his praise. Wherefore David also, reiterating, saith: “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory”: for it was from God that he was looking for both robes, that is to say, the robe of righteousness and the robe of glory. Who is he that knoweth not the righteousness of God? He that counteth himself righteous. Who is he that counteth himself righteous? He that claimeth for himself merits from some other source than grace. Moreover He Who made that which should be saved, also gave the means whereby it may be saved. He, I mean, Who made those to whom merits should be granted, Himself grants them. “What,” saith (the Psalmist), “shall I give back unto the Lord for all that he hath” not “given,” but “given back unto me?” Both that he existeth, and that he is righteous, he confesseth to be from God; lest, by denying one or the other, he should destroy them both, losing, indeed, the means whereby he is righteous, and thus dooming that which he is. But, so confessing, now in the last place he findeth that which in his turn he should repay: “I will receive,” he saith, “the cup of salvation.” The cup of salvation is the blood of the Saviour. Therefore, if there wholly lacketh thee, of thine own, anything which thou mayst repay even for the second gifts of God bestowed upon thee, whence dost thou provide thyself with salvation? “I will call,” saith he, “upon the name of the Lord”; upon which, undoubtedly, “whosoever calleth shall be saved.”

Therefore, they who are possessed of true wisdom confess a threefold operation, not indeed of free choice (as the agent), but of Divine grace in, or concerning, free choice. The first is creation; the second, reformation; the third, consummation. For first we were created in Christ unto freedom of will; secondly, we were reformed through Christ unto the spirit of freedom; lastly, we are to be consummated together with Christ unto the state of eternal life: inasmuch as that which did not exist needed to be created in Him who existed; the deformed to be reformed by means of the Form Himself; it needed that the members should not be made perfect save only in union with the Head. Which last result will then indeed be brought to completion when “we shall all attain unto a perfect man, unto the measure of age of the fulness of Christ; when Christ appearing, who is our life, we also shall appear with Him in glory.” Seeing then that the consummation hath to be wrought concerning us, or even in us, though not by us; whereas the creation hath been wrought also without us; that alone, which on account of our free consent is in a certain manner wrought with us, namely, our reformation, will be reckoned unto us as meritorious. This consisteth of our fasts, our vigils, our continence, our works of mercy, and the

rest of our virtuous practices, by means of which it is plainly evident that “our inward man is renewed from day to day”: while the mind, bowed under worldly cares, little by little riseth again from depths to heights, and the affection, languishing in fleshly lusts, gradually gaineth strength for spiritual love; and the memory, fouled by the infamy of ancient deeds, now clothed in the white robe of good works, daily groweth joyous. For it is in these three things that interior renewal consisteth; that is to say, in rectitude of mind, in purity of affection, and in the remembrance of good works by means of which memory shineth ever fairer in the consciousness of well-doing.

But, seeing that it is certain that these things are wrought in us by the Spirit, they are the gifts of God: yet, because they are accompanied by the consent of our will, they are our merits. “For,” saith He, “it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you,” and the Apostle asketh: “Do ye seek a proof of Him that speaketh in me, even Christ?” If, therefore, Christ, or the Holy Spirit, speaketh in Paul, doth He not also in the same way work in him? “For I do not speak,” saith he, “of the things which God doth not work through me.” What then? If both the words and the works are not Paul’s, but God’s, Who speaketh in Paul or worketh through Paul; wherefore, in such case, are the merits Paul’s? Wherefore is it that he so confidently affirmed: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day”? Was it, perchance, that he was assured that the crown was laid up for him, because it was through him that those deeds were done? But many good things are done by means of the wicked, whether angels or men; yet they are not reckoned unto them as meritorious. Or was it rather because they were done with him, that is to say, with his good will? “For,” saith he, “if I preach the gospel unwillingly, a stewardship hath been entrusted to me, but if willingly, I have whereof to glory.”

Moreover, if not so much as the very will, on which dependeth all merit, is from Paul himself; on what ground doth he speak of the crown, which he believeth to be laid up for him, as a crown of righteousness? Is it because whatsoever is even freely promised is yet asked for justly and as a matter of due? Finally he saith: “I know Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have intrusted unto Him.” The promise of God he calls his deposit; and because he believed Him that promised, he asketh for the fulfilment of the promise. What was indeed promised in mercy is yet due in justice. Thus it is a crown of righteousness that Paul expecteth; but of God’s

righteousness; not of his own. It is forsooth just that God should pay what He oweth; but it is what He hath promised that He oweth. This then is the righteousness upon which the Apostle presumeth, namely, God's fulfilment of His promise; lest, if, disdaining this righteousness, he would establish his own, he be not subject to the righteousness of God; when it was all the while God's will that he should be partaker of His righteousness, in order that He might also make him meritorious of a crown. For He constituted him partaker of His righteousness, and meritorious of a crown, when He deigned to take him as His fellow-worker in the works as a reward for which the crown of righteousness was laid up. Further He made him His fellow-worker, when He made him His willing worker, that is to say, consentient with His will. Accordingly the will is held to be God's aid; the aid it gives is held to be meritorious. If then, in such a case, the will is from God, so also is the merit. Nor is there any doubt but that both to will, and to perform according to the good will, are from God. God therefore is the author of merit, who both applieth the will to the work, and supplieth to the will the fulfilment of the work. Besides, what are called our merits may be properly described as seed-plots of hope, incentives to love, tokens of a hidden predestination, foretastes of future felicity, the way by which we reach the kingdom, not the moving cause of our kingship. In a word, not them whom He found righteous, but them whom He made righteous, did God also magnify.

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I

1. There are two factors in the work of salvation—

(a) The one a quo fit, i.e. gratia;

(b) The other cui, uel in quo fit, i.e. liberum arbitrium.

2. Thus—

(a) God is the author of salvation;

(b) Liberum arbitrium tantum capax salutis; and both these statements are exclusive; it is God alone Who can grant it, and liberum arbitrium alone which can receive it.

3. In the work of salvation—

(a) Grace operat;

(b) Free choice cooperat, dum consentit; and—consentire saluari est.

CHAPTER II

1. Distinguish uita, sensus and appetitus, which man possesses in common with the brutes, from—

(a) Consensus, which is—

(i) Nutus uoluntatis spontaneus;

(ii) Habitus animi liber sui:

(b) Voluntas, which is—

(i) Motus rationalis;

(ii) Ruling sense and appetite:

(c) Ratio, the pedissequa of uoluntas; for uoluntas—

(i) Is never moved absque ratione; and yet

(ii) Multa faciat per ipsam contra ipsam.

2. Liberum arbitrium is so called because in consensus man is —

(a) Liber sui propter uoluntatem;

(b) Iudex sui propter rationem.

3. Libertas arbitrii is the ground of—

(a) Merit (ubi libertas non est, nec meritum);

(b) Judgement (ac per hoc nec iudicium).

4. Libertas arbitrii is inalienable; for—

(a) The will cannot be deprived of its freedom any more than of itself;

(b) A man can never either will nothing at all, or will anything definite, et non uoluntate.

5. Libertas arbitrii ex se renders the uoluntas liable to judgement; for—

(a) Voluntas nil liberum habet nisi se;

(b) Neither tardum ingenium nor labilis memoria constitute a man reus, nor do the contrary constitute him innocens.

CHAPTER III

There is a threefold libertas.

1. Libertas Gratiæ; a peccato; into this restauramur a gratia, reformamur in innocentiam, noua in Christo creatura; this libertas has [compared with (3)] plurimum uirtutis.

2. Libertas Gloriæ; a miseria; this nobis reseruatur in patria, and by this sublimamur in gloriam, perfecta in Spiritu creatura; this libertas has [compared with (1) and (3)] cumulus iucunditatis.

3. Libertas Naturæ; a necessitate; by this in liberam uoluntatem ac uoluntariam libertatem conditi sumus, nobilis Deo creatura; this libertas has multum honoris.

Christ alone possessed, in His days of flesh, all three libertates (the second potentia, though not wholly actu); thus He alone is able to bestow upon man the first and the second, of which he had been deprived by sin.

CHAPTER IV

1. The saints made perfect in Paradise, while,

(a) Being disembodied, they so far lack glory, yet

(b) Possess libertas a peccato and libertas a miseria.

2. All rational creatures alike possess libertas a necessitate, which—

(a) Nec peccato, nec miseria, amittitur uel minuitur;

(b) Nec maior in iusto est, quam in peccatore;

(c) Nec plenior in angelo, quam in homine.

3. The consent of the human will, whether conuersus in bonum, or deuolutus in malum, non inuitus pertrahitur.

4. The objection may be raised: I wish to possess a good will,

and I cannot do so.

The answer is—

(a) The libertas said to be lacking is really libertas a peccato, not libertas a necessitate; for

(b) The very objection raised proves libertas a necessitate; and further,

(c) What is willed is good, and, cum bonum uolumus, bona est uoluntas.

5. These three libertates are distinguished—

(a) Libertas a necessitate, which constitutes liberum arbitrium uel iudicium, as freedom discernere quid liceat, uel quid non liceat;

(b) Libertas a peccato, which constitutes liberum consilium, as freedom probare quid expediat, uel non expediat, i.e. to choose pro iudicii rectitudine;

(c) Libertas a miseria, which constitutes liberum complacitum, as freedom experiri quid libeat, uel non libeat, i.e. to embrace what is chosen pro iudicii rectitudine, not as durum or molestum, but as bene placitum.

CHAPTER V

1. Can liberum complacitum be enjoyed in this world? Generally, no; for consider—

(a) The existence of peccatum and miseria;

(b) That ordinary pleasures of sense presuppose the absence of satiety;

(c) That all alleviation presupposes suffering.

Yet contemplatiui, rarely and in some small degree, enjoy it, when in a state of rapture; for experiuntur quod futurum est. Sed quod futurum est felicitas est, and felicitas excludes miseria.

2. Can liberum consilium be enjoyed in this world?

Yes, in a considerable measure; it is enjoyed by quilibet iusti, ex parte quidem, sed non modica.

CHAPTER VI

1. Distinguish tantum uelle, uelle bonum and uelle malum. With regard to uelle—

(a) Ipsum ut esset, creans gratia fecit;

(b) Ut proficiat, saluans gratia facit;

(c) Ut deficiat, ipsum se deiicit.

2. Thus—

(a) Free choice nos facit uolentes; it is of it that we will;

(b) Grace nos facit beneuolos; it is of it that we will what is good.

3. Further—

(a) Simplices affectiones belong to us naturaliter; they are ex nobis; donauit creatio;

(b) The additamenta are of grace; gratia ordinat quod donauit creatio.

The virtues, therefore, are no other than ordinatæ affectiones.

4. We were created quodam modo nostri in liberam uoluntatem; but—

(a) Diabolo nos mancipat uoluntas, non ipsius potestas; whereas—

(b) Deo subiicit eius gratia, non nostra uoluntas, yet, in such a way that it is per bonam uoluntatem that we become, as it were, God's possession.

Thus libertas arbitrii remains in either case intact quatenus merito uel puniamur mali uel glorificemur boni, grace being, in the latter case, described as the sole agent, because of the impropriety of attributing to God quod minus, i.e. the creation of the will, and to man quod excellentius, i.e. the perfection of the will.

5. To such perfection there needs a twofold gift of grace, viz. —

(a) Verum sapere, which consists in uoluntatis ad bonum conuersio, ut nil libeat, nisi quod deceat uel liceat;

(b) Plenum posse, which consists in uoluntatis in bono confirmatio, ut nil desit iam quod debeat.

[It should be noticed, parenthetically, that there is a threefold goodness of will —

(a) The will is bona in universitate, as part of the universe which God made, and which He saw to be ualde bona;

(b) The will is melior in suo genere, in virtue of the libertas arbitrii, in qua ad imaginem utique ipsius qui creauit condita est;

(c) The will is optima in sui ordinatione, in that its true end is omnimoda conuersio ad Deum et ex tota se uoluntaria deuotaque subiectio. From this last glory is inseparable, for nec iustitiæ possit haberi perfectio, nisi in plena

gloria; nec gloriæ plenitudo absque perfecta iustitia.]

6. (a) Verum sapere presupposes liberum consilium, for in such a state alone nec uelle ualeat quod malum sit;

(b) Plenum posse presupposes liberum complacitum, for in such a state alone nec carere ualeat quod uelit.

CHAPTER VII

Had man in Paradise liberum consilium and liberum complacitum? Not in the highest degrees; otherwise he could not have fallen, for his sin implied that he could both will what he ought not and receive what he would not.

1. There are, indeed, in liberum consilium and in liberum complacitum two degrees, viz.—

(a) Liberum consilium

(i) Superior, non posse peccare;

(ii) Inferior, posse non peccare:

(b) Liberum complacitum

(i) Superior, non posse turbari;

(ii) Inferior, posse non turbari.

It was the two inferior degrees that man possessed in Paradise, and lost by sin.

2. Man lost them by the abuse of liberum arbitrium; not culpa dantis, but culpa abutentis, qui ipsam facultatem conuertit ad usum peccandi, quam acceperat ad gloriam non peccandi. And further—

3. Although it was granted to the will posse stare ne caderet, non tamen resurgere si caderet.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Are we therefore to conclude that liberum arbitrium has perished because non potest non peccare? No; for—

(a) This inability of liberum arbitrium, which extends to miseria as well as to peccatum, signifies, not the destruction of liberum arbitrium, but duarum reliquarum libertatum priuationem; the fact being that—

(b) It does not, nor did it ever, belong properly to liberum arbitrium, quantum in se est, posse, uel sapere, sed tantum uelle; and therefore—

(c) Man is not to be held to have lost liberum arbitrium if he ceases to be potens, or sapiens, but only if he ceases to be uolens.

(d) Thus the uoluntas posita in miseria is a uoluntas misera, even as there is also a beata uoluntas; and we may conclude that liberum arbitrium (quantum in se est) can suffer neither destruction nor diminution from aduersitas or necessitas.

2. How are we to explain the fact that, while liberum arbitrium was able per se in malum corruere, it is unable per se de malo in bonum respirare? By an a fortiori argument, viz.: stans in aliquod melius nullo suo conatu ualebat proficere; iacens non ualet per se resurgere.

3. Therefore man needs—

Dei uirtutem, et Dei sapientiam, Christum. Who—

(a) As wisdom, uerum ei sapere reinfundat, in restaurationem liberi consilii; and—

(b) As power, plenum posse restituat, in reparationem liberi complaciti.

CHAPTER IX

Man has been made in the imago and in the similitudo of the Creator.

1. The imago is liberum arbitrium; for—

(a) Liberum arbitrium alone sui omnino defectum seu diminutionem non patitur; and—

(b) On it pre-eminently may be seen impressed æternæ et incommutabilis diuinitatis substantiæ quædam imago.

2. The similitudo is liberum consilium and liberum complacitum; for, in them,

(a) As being capable, not merely of being diminished, but of being wholly lost,

(b) Is to be recognized accidentalis quædam magis similitudo of the divine wisdom and power imagini superducta.

3. There are, in the similitudo, three grades—

(a) Summum gradum summi angeli tenent;

(b) Adam tenuit medium;

(c) Nos infimum; for—

To the angels was granted sine peccato et miseria perdurare; to Adam, absque his quidem esse, sed non permanere; to us, ne esse quidem absque his, sed ipsis tantum non cedere.

4. How are we to explain the fact that liberum consilium is

not possessed by the wicked in Hell? Surely the mala which they suffer move them to repentance!

(a) The mala uoluntas is not changed for the better in Hell; there is simply an abnegatio operis; nay, rather,

(b) The mala uoluntas is obdurate; for certainly it is altogether unwilling to be punished. But it is just that they who have done punienda should be punished. Nolunt igitur quod iustum est.

CHAPTER X

1. What was the effect of the fall of Adam?

(a) Nowhere in this world could be found the similitudo;

(b) Only the imago, fœda et deformis.

2. How was man to be restored to his pristine state? Whom did such a work befit better than the Son of God, Who, as—

(a) Splendor gloriæ, et

(b) Figura substantiæ Patris,

ex utroque facile munitus apparuit, et

(a) Unde reformaret deformem, et

(b) Unde debilem confortaret?

3. He is—

(a) Ipsa forma, Which gave to liberum arbitrium its pristina forma;

(b) Sapientia Dei, which "attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponit omnia suauiter."

4. Thus it is fitting that—

(a) Liberum arbitrium be reformandum from the same source and by the same agency as it had been formatum, and, moreover,

(b) A summo angelo usque ad minimum uermiculum, ab ortu creaturæ usque ad finem destinatum a Creatore, nothing lies outside His influence.

5. The restoration effected is "a claritate in claritatem, tanquam a Domini Spiritu," and if by the Spirit of the Lord, therefore not by liberum arbitrium itself; for—

(a) Liberum arbitrium is not so called quod æqua inter bonum et malum potestate aut facilitate uersetur; neither God, nor angels, nor devils are so placed; but

(b) Rather because whether in good, or in evil, æque liberam faciat uoluntatem; no one can be said to be either good or bad nisi uolens; and

thus

(c) What liberum arbitrium properly possesses is not in electione facilitas as between good and evil, but in uoluntate libertas.

CHAPTER XI

1. It is, therefore, the prerogative of the rational creature to be sui iuris, suæque ipsius uoluntatis; it has been created such that only of its own will—

(a) Aut mala fieret, et iuste damnaretur;

(b) Aut bona maneret, et merito saluaretur.

2. This statement must, however, be understood in such a sense—

(a) Not that its own will could suffice unto it for salvation;

(b) But that nullatenus sine sua uoluntate consequeretur.

3. But there are two types of expression, which may suggest that necessity is imposed upon liberum arbitrium.

(a) The tractio Patris of John 6:44, and the “compelle intrare” of Luke 14:23, on the one hand, and

(b) The lex captiuum ducens in legem peccati of Rom. 7:23, and similar terms elsewhere, on the other hand.

4. (a) The explanation of the former is that God judges no man worthy of salvation quem non ante probauerit uoluntarium;

(b) The explanation of the latter is that, quantum ad arbitrium spectat, the will is always free in the presence of temptation intus forisue; for libere de suo consensu iudicabit.

CHAPTER XII

1. There is the dilemma presented by the case of those who, under the influence of fear, deny the faith; in such a case—

(a) Either there is culpa; and the person is, therefore, not under compulsion;

(b) Or there is not culpa; and the person is, therefore, under compulsion and liberum arbitrium has perished.

2. Let us take, as an example, the Apostle Peter.

(a) We recognize in him two wills.

(i) One of these, qua uoluit non mori was penitus inculpabilis;

(ii) The other, qua sibi complacebat quod erat Christianus, was multum laudabilis.

(b) Wherein, then, was he blameworthy?

(i) In eo quod mentiri quam mori maluit, which was the act of

(ii) A uoluntas reprehensione digna, in that corporis magis quam animæ uoluit seruare uitam.

(c) Was the Apostle, therefore, subject to the compulsion of fear? No;

(i) His will was not compelled by metus ille subitus, but rather

(ii) Hic peruersus amor sui was revealed thereby;

(iii) His weakness of will per incussum timorem nota, non orta, made known the extent to which he loved Christ.

(d) Thus there is revealed in him, as it were, a dualism of will, one factor of which was ultimately supreme—

(i) Voluntas qua Christum diligebat uim passa est, ut contra se loqueretur;

(ii) Voluntas qua se diligebat proculdubio consensit, ut pro se loqueretur.

(e) Are we, therefore, to conclude that the Apostle's will was not free? Has all that has been said of the libertas uoluntatis, forsooth, to be unsaid, because inuenta est cogi potuisse uoluntas?

(1) Yes; si cogi ab alio potuit quam a seipsa;

(2) No; si sese ipsa coegit, compulsa et compellens.

What uis was used, was used by the will itself; porro quod a se uoluntas pertulit ex uoluntate fuit. But if it was ex uoluntate, it was no longer ex necessitate; it was uoluntarium.

3. There is, it should be noted, a twofold compulsion.

(a) Passiua, according to which we are compelled pati aliquid contra propriam uoluntatem; this sometimes may take place absque consensu uoluntario patientis; in such case the malum quod fit in nos, siue de nobis inuitis, non est imputandum nobis;

(b) Actiua, according to which we are compelled agere contra propriam uoluntatem; this can never take place absque consensu uoluntario agentis; in such case the malum quod fit a nobis iam non sine culpa est uoluntatis.

With regard to the Apostle, whose fall was in the category of compulsio actiua, the sword did not necessitate, it merely proved, the quality of his will. Ipsa igitur se in culpam, non gladius impellebat.

CHAPTER XIII

1. No power of its own suffices unto liberum arbitrium for righteousness; so that its efforts after goodness

(a) Et cassi sunt, si a gratia non adiuuentur;

(b) Et nulli, si non excitentur.

2. The divine gifts, in regard of salvation, are two-fold—

(a) Merita; the divine purpose being that præsentia per liberam possessionem nostra interim fierent merita;

(b) Præmia; the divine purpose being that futura per gratuitam sponsionem expectaremus, immo expeteremus ut debita.

It is to be noted that ad condenda merita God deigns sibi adhibere creaturarum ministeria.

3. Such ministeria God uses in three ways; He works salvation—

(a) Per creaturam sine ipsa, i.e. by means of the insensibilis, and also by means of the irrationabilis creatura, which—

(i) Nec boni merentur, aut mali; for

(ii) Non habent unde bono maloue consentiant;

(b) Per creaturam contra ipsam, i.e. by means of the rationalis, but maleuola creatura; per malos, siue homines, siue angelos;

(i) Quoniam inuitos, ideo contra ipsos; for

(ii) Nocere cupientes, their peruersa inuentio is so overruled as to become to others utilis actio, and to recoil injuriously upon themselves; and fittingly

(iii) Quid illa creatura mereri potest, nisi iram?

(c) Per creaturam cum ipsa, i.e. by means of the good, whether angels or men, who do His will and His works; thus they are—

(i) Not merely God's ministri, but His socii; utitur angelis et hominibus bonæ uoluntatis, tanquam commilitionibus et coadiutoribus suis; and fittingly—

(ii) Peracta uictoria, He will fully reward them; and, meanwhile, quid illa creatura mereri potest, nisi gratiam?

CHAPTER XIV

1. Is this, then, the totum opus, the solum meritum, of liberum arbitrium, quod consentit? Yes; certainly; but—

(a) Ipse consensus is not ab ipso libero arbitrio (as its originating cause); for—

(b) Nec cogitare (quod minus est quam consentire) aliquid a

nobis, quasi ex nobis, sufficientes sumus.

2. Thus the rationale of well-doing is—

(a) Bonum cogitare Deus operatur in nobis—

(i) Sine nobis,

(ii) Nec per nos utique,

(iii) Nec nobiscum;

(b) Bonum uelle Deus operatur in nobis—

(i) Nobiscum,

(ii) Non ex nobis,

(iii) Non iam tamen sine nobis;

(c) Bonum perficere Deus operatur in nobis—

(i) Per nos,

(ii) Non ex nobis,

(iii) Non iam tamen sine nobis.

Of these three it is (b) bonum uelle alone which nobis reputatur in meritum; in fact sola bona uoluntas sufficit ad meritum, and, if it be wanting, cetera non prosunt.

3. We must beware, therefore, of attributing well-doing—

(a) Either nostræ uoluntati, quæ infirma est,

(b) Or Dei necessitati, quæ nulla est, rather than

(c) Soli gratiæ, qua plenus est.

4. Nevertheless well-doing is so wrought that—

(a) What was begun by grace alone, is performed by grace and the will alike;

(b) Ut mixtim, non singillatim, simul non uicissim, per singulos profectus operentur;

And thus

(c) Non partim gratia, partim liberum arbitrium,

(d) Sed totum singula opere indiuiduo peragunt; totum quidem hoc, et totum illa;

Yet in such a fashion that

(e) Ut totum in illo sic totum ex illa.

5. The operation of divine grace in respect of liberum arbitrium is threefold; viz.—

(a) Creatio;

(b) Reformatio;

(c) Consummatio.

Of these three (b) reformatio alone, which,

(i) Propter consensum uoluntarium,

(ii) Nobiscum quodam modo fit, in merita nostra reputabitur.

Such reformatio is effected by our various uirtutum exercitia.

6. These uirtutum exercitia are at once—

(a) As diuino in nobis actitata Spiritu, Dei munera and,

(b) As cum nostræ uoluntatis actitata assensu, nostra merita.

7. If, as has been stated, and, as St. Paul (Rom. 15:18; 2 Cor. 13:3) confirms us in holding, uel ipsa uoluntas, de qua omne meritum pendet, is not a nobis; on what ground does the Apostle speak so confidently (2 Tim. 4:8) of a corona sibi reposita, a corona iustitiæ?

(a) The corona is promised gratis; and it is promised ex misericordia;

(b) It is a corona iustitiæ because, so promised, iuste iam et ex debito requiritur; it is quod ex iustitia persoluendum; and

(c) It belongs to the moral goodness of God ut reddat quod debet; debet autem quod pollicitus est.

Thus—

(a) Voluntas in auxilium,

(b) Auxilium reputatur in meritum;

And, si a Deo uoluntas, et meritum.

LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT BERNARD

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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CONTENTS

LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT BERNARD

LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT BERNARD: VOLUME 1

- PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION
- BIOGRAPHIES
- GENERAL PREFACE OF DOM JOHN MABILLON TO HIS SECOND EDITION OF THE WORKS OF S. BERNARD
  - § I. OF THE DIFFERENT EDITIONS OF THE WORKS OF S. BERNARD: THE CAUSES, REASONS, ADVANTAGES, AND USEFULNESS OF THIS NEW EDITION
  - § II. OF THE SANCTITY AND LEARNING OF BERNARD, AND HIS AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH
  - § III. WITH WHAT SUCCESS BERNARD LABOURED IN REFORMING THE LIVES OF THE CLERGY, THE MONKS, AND THE LAY PEOPLE
  - § IV. OF THE SCHISM OF ANACLETUS, WHICH WAS PUT AN END TO BY S. BERNARD
  - § V. CONCERNING THE ERRORS OF PETER ABAELARD AND OF GILBERT DE LA PORRÉE, AND S. BERNARD'S REFUTATION OF THEM
  - § VI. OF THE HENRICIANS AND OF OTHER HERETICS WHO WERE REFUTED BY BERNARD
  - § VII. OF THE CRUSADE PREACHED BY S. BERNARD AND ITS UNHAPPY ISSUE
- BERNARDINE CHRONOLOGY
- LIST AND ORDER OF THE LETTER S OF S. BERNARD, ABBOT
- LETTERS
  - LETTER I. (Circa 1119.)
    TO HIS COUSIN ROBERT, WHO HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE CISTERCIAN ORDER TO THE CLUNIAC
  - LETTER II. (Circa A.D. 1120.)
    TO A YOUTH NAMED FULK, WHO AFTERWARDS WAS ARCHDEACON OF LANGRES
  - LETTER III. (Circa 1120.)
    TO THE CANONS REGULAR OF HORRICOURT

LETTER IV. (Circa 1127.)
TO ARNOLD, ABBOT OF MORIMOND

LETTER V. (A.D. 1125.)
TO A MONK ADAM

LETTER VI. (A.D. 1125.)
TO BRUNO OF COLOGNE

LETTER VII. (A.D. 1126.)
TO THE MONK ADAM

LETTER VIII. (A.D. 1131.)
TO BRUNO, ARCHBISHOP ELECT OF COLOGNE

LETTER IX. (A.D. 1132.)
TO THE SAME, THEN ARCHBISHOP OF COLOGNE

LETTER X. (A.D. 1132.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XI. (Circa A.D. 1125.)
TO GUIGUES, THE PRIOR, AND TO THE OTHER MONKS OF THE GRAND CHARTREUSE

LETTER XII
TO THE SAME

LETTER XIII. (A.D. 1126.)
TO THE LORD POPE HONORIUS

LETTER XIV. (Circa A.D. 1126.)
TO THE SAME POPE HONORIUS

LETTER XV. (In the same year as the preceding.)
TO HAIMERIC THE CHANCELLOR

LETTER XVI. (The same year as the preceding.)
TO PETER, CARDINAL PRESBYTER

LETTER XVII. (Circa A.D. 1127.)
TO PETER, CARDINAL DEACON

LETTER XVIII. (Circa A.D. 1127.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XIX. (Circa A.D. 1127.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XX. (Circa A.D. 1127.)
TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER XXI. (Towards the end of A.D. 1127.)
TO MATTHEW, THE LEGATE

LETTER XXII. (Before A.D. 1128.)
TO HUMBALD, ARCHBISHOP OF LYONS AND LEGATE

LETTER XXIII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO ATTO, BISHOP OF TROYES

LETTER XXIV. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
TO GILBERT, BISHOP OF LONDON, UNIVERSAL DOCTOR

LETTER XXV. (A.D. 1130.)
TO HUGO, ARCHBISHOP OF ROUEN

LETTER XXVI. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
TO GUY, BISHOP OF LAUSANNE

LETTER XXVII. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO ARDUTIO (OR ARDUTIUS), BISHOP ELECT OF GENEVA

LETTER XXVIII. (In the Same Year.)
TO THE SAME, WHEN BISHOP

LETTER XXIX. (Circa A.D. 1126.)
TO STEPHEN, BISHOP OF METZ

LETTER XXX. (Circa A.D. 1126.)
TO ALBERO, PRIMICERIUS OF METZ

LETTER XXXI. (A.D. 1125.)
TO HUGO, COUNT OF CHAMPAGNE, WHO HAD BECOME A KNIGHT OF THE TEMPLE

LETTER XXXII. (Circa A.D. 1120.)
TO THE ABBOT OF SAINT NICASIUS AT RHEIMS

LETTER XXXIII. (Circa A.D. 1120.)
TO HUGO, ABBOT OF PONTIGNY

LETTER XXXIV (Circa A.D. 1120.)
TO DROGO, THE MONK

LETTER XXXV. (A.D. 1128.)
TO MAGISTER HUGO FARSIT.

LETTER XXXVI. (A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XXXVII. (A.D. 1128.)
TO THEOBALD, COUNT OF CHAMPAGNE

LETTER XXXVIII. (A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER XXXIX. (A.D. 1127.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XL. (Circa A.D. 1127.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XLI. (In the same year.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XLII
TO HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS

LETTER XLIII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME HENRY

LETTER XLIV. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER XLV. (A.D. 1127.)
TO LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

LETTER XLVI. (A.D. 1127.)
TO THE LORD POPE HONORIUS II., ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER XLVII. (A.D. 1127.)
TO THE SAME POPE, IN THE NAME OF GEOFFREY, BISHOP OF CHARTRES

LETTER XLVIII. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, ON THE SAME SUBJECT, AND AGAINST DETRACTORS

LETTER XLIX. (A.D. 1128.)
TO THE LORD POPE HONORIUS, ON BEHALF OF HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS

LETTER L. (A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER LI. (A.D. 1128.)
TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER LII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LIII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LIV. (Circa A.D. 1136.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LV. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO GEOFFREY, BISHOP OF CHARTRES

LETTER LVI. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LVII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LVIII. (Circa A.D. 1126.)
TO EBAL, BISHOP OF CHALONS-SUR-MARNE

LETTER LIX. (A.D. 1129.)
TO GUILENCUS, BISHOP OF LANGRES

LETTER LX. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LXI. (Circa A.D. 1125.)
TO RICUIN, BISHOP OF TOUL, IN LORRAINE

LETTER LXII. (Before A.D. 1129.)
TO HENRY, BISHOP OF VERDUN

LETTER LXIII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LXIV. (Circa A.D. 1129.)
TO ALEXANDER, BISHOP OF LINCOLN

LETTER LXV. (Circa A.D. 1129.)
TO ALVISUS, ABBOT OF ANCHIN

LETTER LXVI. (Circa A.D. 1129.)
TO GEOFFREY, ABBOT OF S. MEDARD

LETTER LXVII. (Circa A.D. 1125.)
TO THE MONKS OF FLAY

LETTER LXVIII
TO THE SAME, UPON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER LXIX
TO GUY, ABBOT OF TROIS FONTAINES

LETTER LXX
TO THE SAME

LETTER LXXI. (A.D. 1127.)
TO THE MONKS OF THE SAME PLACE

LETTER LXXII
TO RAINALD, ABBOT OF FOIGNY

LETTER LXXIII
TO THE SAME

LETTER LXXIV
TO THE SAME

LETTER LXXV. (A.D. 1127.)
TO ARTAUD, ABBOT OF PRULLY

LETTER LXXVI
TO THE ABBOT OF THE REGULAR CANONS OF S. PIERREMONT

LETTER LXXVII
TO MAGISTER HUGO, OF S. VICTOR

LETTER LXXVIII. (A.D. 1127.)
TO SUGER, ABBOT OF S. DENIS

LETTER LXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
TO ABBOT LUKE

LETTER LXXX. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
TO GUY, ABBOT OF MOLÊSMES

LETTER LXXXI. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
TO GERARD, ABBOT OF POTTIÈRES

LETTER LXXXII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)
TO THE ABBOT OF S. JOHN AT CHARTRES

LETTER LXXXIII. (Circa A.D. 1129.)
TO SIMON, ABBOT OF S. NICHOLAS

LETTER LXXXIV
TO THE SAME

TO WILLIAM, ABBOT OF S. THIERRY

LETTER LXXXV. (Circa A.D. 1125.)
TO THE SAME WILLIAM

LETTER LXXXVI. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LXXXVII. (Circa A.D. 1126.)
TO OGER, REGULAR CANON

LETTER LXXXVIII. (Circa A.D. 1127.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER LXXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1127.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XC. (Circa A.D. 1127.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER XCI. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
TO THE ABBOTS ASSEMBLED AT SOISSONS

LETTER XCII. (A.D. 1132.)
TO HENRY, KING OF ENGLAND

LETTER XCIII. (Circa A.D. 1132.)

TO HENRY, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

LETTER XCIV. (A.D. 1132.)
TO THE ABBOT OF A CERTAIN MONASTERY AT YORK, FROM WHICH THE PRIOR HAD DEPARTED, TAKING SEVERAL RELIGIOUS WITH HIM

LETTER XCV. (A.D. 1132.)
TO THURSTAN, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

LETTER XCVI. (A.D. 1132.)
TO RICHARD, ABBOT OF FOUNTAINS, AND HIS COMPANIONS, WHO HAD PASSED OVER TO THE CISTERCIAN ORDER FROM ANOTHER

LETTER XCVII. (A.D. 1132.)
TO DUKE CONRAD

LETTER XCVIII
CONCERNING THE MACCABEES, BUT TO WHOM WRITTEN IS UNKNOWN

LETTER XCIX
TO A CERTAIN MONK

LETTER C
TO A CERTAIN BISHOP

LETTER CI
TO CERTAIN MONKS

LETTER CII
TO A CERTAIN ABBOT

LETTER CIII
TO THE BROTHER OF WILLIAM, A MONK OF CLAIRVAUX

LETTER CIV
TO MAGISTER WALTER DE CHAUMONT

LETTER CV
TO ROMANUS, SUB-DEACON OF THE ROMAN CURIA

LETTER CVI
TO MAGISTER HENRY MURDACH

LETTER CVII
TO THOMAS, PRIOR OF BEVERLEY

LETTER CVIII
TO THOMAS OF ST. OMER, AFTER HE HAD BROKEN HIS PROMISE OF ADOPTING A CHANGE OF LIFE

LETTER CIX
TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS YOUTH, GEOFFREY DE PERRONE, AND HIS COMRADES

LETTER CX

A CONSOLATORY LETTER TO THE PARENTS OF GEOFFREY
There is no reason to mourn a son as lost who is a religious, still less to fear for his delicacy of constitution.

LETTER CXI
IN THE PERSON OF ELIAS, A MONK, TO HIS PARENTS

LETTER CXII
TO GEOFFREY, OF LISIEUX

LETTER CXIII
TO THE VIRGIN SOPHIA

LETTER CXIV
TO ANOTHER HOLY VIRGIN

LETTER CXV
TO ANOTHER HOLY VIRGIN OF THE CONVENT OF S. MARY OF TROYES

LETTER CXVI
TO ERMENGARDE, FORMERLY COUNTESS OF BRITTANY

LETTER CXVII
TO THE SAME

LETTER CXVIII
TO BEATRICE, A NOBLE AND RELIGIOUS LADY

LETTER CXIX
TO THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF LORRAINE

LETTER CXX
TO THE DUCHESS OF LORRAINE

LETTER CXXI
TO THE DUCHESS OF BURGUNDY

LETTER CXXII. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
HILDEBERT, ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS, TO THE ABBOT BERNARD

LETTER CXXIII. (Circa A.D. 1130.)
REPLY OF THE ABBOT BERNARD TO HILDEBERT, ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS

LETTER CXXIV. (Circa A.D. 1131.)
TO THE SAME HILDEBERT, WHO HAD NOT YET ACKNOWLEDGED THE LORD INNOCENT AS POPE

LETTER CXXV. (Circa A.D. 1131.)
TO MAGISTER GEOFFREY, OF LORETTO

LETTER CXXVI. (A.D. 1131.)
TO THE BISHOPS OF AQUITAINE, AGAINST GERARD OF ANGOULÊME

LETTER CXXVII. (Circa A.D. 1132.)

TO WILLIAM, COUNT OF POITOU AND DUKE OF AQUITAINE, IN THE NAME OF HUGH, DUKE OF BURGUNDY

LETTER CXXVIII. (A.D. 1132.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CXXIX. (A.D. 1133.)
TO THE CITIZENS OF GENOA

LETTER CXXX. (A.D. 1133.)
TO THE CITIZENS OF PISA

LETTER CXXXI. (A.D. 1135.)
TO THE INHABITANTS OF MILAN

LETTER CXXXII. (A.D. 1132.)
TO THE CLERGY OF MILAN

LETTER CXXXIII. (A.D. 1134.)
TO ALL THE CITIZENS OF MILAN

LETTER CXXXIV. (A.D. 1134.)
TO SOME NOVICES RECENTLY CONVERTED AT MILAN

LETTER CXXXV. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO PETER, BISHOP OF PAVIA

LETTER CXXXVI. (A.D. 1134.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CXXXVII. (A.D. 1134.)
TO THE EMPRESS OF THE ROMANS

LETTER CXXXVIII. (A.D. 1133.)
TO HENRY, KING OF THE ENGLISH

LETTER CXXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO THE EMPEROR LOTHAIRE

LETTER CXL. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CXLI. (A.D. 1138.)
TO HUMBERT, ABBOT OF IGNY

LETTER CXLII. (A.D. 1138.)
TO THE MONKS OF THE ABBEY IN THE ALPS

LETTER CXLIII. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO HIS MONKS OF CLAIRVAUX

LETTER CXLIV. (A.D. 1137.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CXLV. (Circa A.D. 1137.)
TO THE ABBOTS ASSEMBLED AT CÎTEAUX

LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT BERNARD: VOLUME 2

NOTE

NOTE ON THE SEAL OF S. BERNARD

DESCRIPTION OF THE POSITION AND SITE OF THE ABBEY OF CLAIRVAUX

LETTERS

LETTER CXLVI
TO BURCHARD, ABBOT OF BALERNE

LETTER CXLVII. (A.D. 1138.)
TO PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY

LETTER CXLVIII. (A.D. 1138.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CXLIX. (A.D. 1138.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CL. (A.D. 1133.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CLI. (A.D. 1133.)
TO PHILIP, THE INTRUDED ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS

LETTER CLII. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO POPE INNOCENT, ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP OF TROYES

LETTER CLIII. (A.D. 1135.)
TO BERNARD DESPORTES, OF THE CARTHUSIAN ORDER

LETTER CLIV. (Circa A.D. 1136.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CLV. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO POPE INNOCENT, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME BERNARD WHEN ELECTED BISHOP

LETTER CLVI. (Circa A.D. 1135 OR 1136.)
TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE CLERGY OF ORLEANS

LETTER CLVII. (A.D. 1135.)
TO HAIMERIC, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

LETTER CLVIII. (A.D. 1135.)
TO POPE INNOCENT, ON THE MURDER OF MASTER THOMAS, PRIOR OF S. VICTOR, OF PARIS

LETTER CLIX. (A.D. 1133.)

TO THE SAME, IN THE NAME OF STEPHEN, BISHOP OF PARIS, AND ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CLX. (A.D. 1133.)
TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, IN THE NAME OF THE SAME BISHOP

LETTER CLXI. (A.D. 1133.)
TO THE LORD POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CLXII. (A.D. 1133.)
TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CLXIII. (A.D. 1133.)
TO JOHN OF CREMA, CARDINAL-PRIEST, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CLXIV. (A.D. 1138.)
TO POPE INNOCENT IN THE MATTER OF THE CHURCH OF LANGRES

LETTER CLXV. (A.D. 1138.)
TO FALCO, DEAN, AND GUY, TREASURER, OF THE CHURCH OF LYONS

LETTER CLXVI. (Circa A.D. 1138.)
TO POPE INNOCENT, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CLXVII. (A.D. 1138.)
TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CLXVIII. (A.D. 1138.)
TO THE BISHOPS AND CARDINALS OF THE ROMAN COURT ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CLXIX. (A.D. 1138.)
TO POPE INNOCENT, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CLXX. (A.D. 1138.)
TO LOUIS THE YOUNGER, KING OF THE FRENCH

LETTER CLXXI. (A.D. 1139.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CLXXII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME, IN THE NAME OF GODFREY, BISHOP OF LANGRES

LETTER CLXXIII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO THE ABOVE-NAMED FALCO

LETTER CLXXIV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO THE CANONS OF LYONS, ON THE CONCEPTION OF S. MARY

LETTER CLXXV. (A.D. 1135.)
TO THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

LETTER CLXXVI. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO POPE INNOCENT, IN THE PERSON OF ALBERO, ARCHBISHOP OF TRÈVES

LETTER CLXXVII. (Circa A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME, IN THE PERSON OF THE SAME

LETTER CLXXVIII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

LETTER CLXXIX. (A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

LETTER CLXXX. (Circa A.D. 1136.)
TO THE SAME ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

LETTER CLXXXI. (Circa A.D. 1136.)
TO THE CHANCELLOR HAIMERIC

LETTER CLXXXII. (Circa A.D. 1136.)
TO HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS

LETTER CLXXXIII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO CONRAD, KING OF THE ROMANS

LETTER CLXXXIV. (A.D. 1140.)
TO THE LORD POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CLXXXV. (A.D. 1138.)
TO EUSTACE, INTRUSIVE OCCUPIER OF THE SEE OF VALENCE

LETTER CLXXXVI. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO SIMON, SON OF THE CASTELLAN OF CAMBRAY

LETTER CLXXXVII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO CALL TOGETHER THE BISHOPS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SENS AGAINST PETER ABAELARD

LETTER CLXXXVIII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO THE BISHOPS AND CARDINALS OF THE CURIA ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CLXXXIX. (A.D. 1140.)
TO POPE INNOCENT, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

NOTE TO THE FOLLOWING TREATISE

HEADS OF HERESIES OF PETER ABAELARD

I.—The shocking analogy made between a brazen seal, and between genus and species, and the Holy Trinity

II.—That the Holy Spirit is not of the Substance of the Father

III.—That God is able to do what He does, or to refrain from doing it, only in the manner or at the time in which He does so act or refrain, and in no other

IV.—That Christ did not assume our flesh in order to free us from the yoke of the devil

V.—Neither God-and-Man, nor the Man who is Christ, is one of the three Persons in the Trinity

VI.—That God does no more for a person who is saved, before he has accepted grace offered, than for one who is not saved

VII.—That God ought not to hinder evil actions

VIII.—That we have not contracted from Adam guilt, but penalty

IX.—That the Body of the Lord did not fall to the ground

X.—That man is made neither better nor worse by works

XI.—That those who crucified Christ ignorantly committed no sin; and that whatsoever is done through ignorance ought not to be counted as a fault

XII.—Of the power of binding and loosing

XIII.—Concerning suggestion, delectation, and consent

XIV.—That Omnipotence belongs properly and specially to the Father

LETTER CXC. (A.D. 1140.)
TO THE SAME, AGAINST CERTAIN HEADS OF ABAELARD'S HERESIES

CHAPTER I
He explains and refutes the dogmas of Abaelard respecting the Trinity.

CHAPTER II
In the Trinity it is not possible to admit any disparity: but equality is every way to be predicated.

CHAPTER III
The absurd doctrine of Abaelard, who attributes properly and specifically the absolute and essential names to one Person, is opposed.

CHAPTER IV
Abaelard had defined faith as an opinion or estimate: Bernard refutes this.

CHAPTER V
He accuses Abaelard for preferring his own opinions and even fancies to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, especially where he declares that Christ did not become incarnate in order to save man from the power of the devil.

CHAPTER VI
In the work of the Redemption of man, not only the mercy, but also the justice, of God is displayed.

CHAPTER VII
He severely reproves Abaelard for scrutinizing rashly and impiously, and extenuating the power of, the secret things of God.

CHAPTER VIII
Wherefore Christ undertook a method of setting us free so painful and laborious, when a word from Him, or an act of His will, would alone have sufficed.

CHAPTER IX
That Christ came into the world, not only to instruct us, but also to free us from sin.

LETTERS

LETTER CXCI. (A.D. 1140.)
TO THE SAME, IN THE PERSON OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS

LETTER CXCII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO MAGISTER GUIDO DU CHATEL, WHO HAD BEEN A DISCIPLE OF PETER, ON WHICH PETER PRESUMED TOO MUCH, AND WHO WAS AFTERWARDS POPE CELESTINE

LETTER CXCIII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO CARDINAL IVO, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CXCIV. (A.D. 1140.)
RESCRIPT OF POPE INNOCENT AGAINST THE HERESIES OF PETER ABAELARD

LETTER CXCV. (A.D. 1140.)
TO THE BISHOP OF CONSTANCE ABOUT ARNOLD OF BRESCIA

LETTER CXCVI. (A.D. 1140.)
TO GUIDO, THE LEGATE, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CXCVII. (A.D. 1141.)
TO PETER, DEAN OF BESANÇON

LETTER CXCVIII. (A.D. 1141.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CXCIX. (A.D. 1141.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CC. (A.D. 1140.)
TO MAGISTER ULGER, BISHOP OF ANGERS, CONCERNING THE GRIEVOUS QUARREL EXISTING BETWEEN HIM AND THE ABBESS OF FONTEVRAULT

LETTER CCI
TO BALDWIN, ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF RIÉTI

LETTER CCII. (A.D. 1144.)
TO THE CLERGY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SENS

LETTER CCIII. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO THE BISHOP AND CLERGY OF TROYES

LETTER CCIV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO THE ABBOT OF S. AUBIN

LETTER CCV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

LETTER CCVI
TO THE QUEEN OF JERUSALEM

LETTER CCVII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO ROGER, KING OF SICILY

LETTER CCVIII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCIX
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCX. (Circa A.D. 1139.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCXI. (Circa A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXIII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXIV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXVI. (A.D. 1142.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXVII. (A.D. 1142.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXVIII. (A.D. 1143.)
HIS LAST LETTER TO INNOCENT II.; IN SELF DEFENCE
Bernard having remarked that he had lost the favour of Pope Innocent, on account of the will of Cardinal Ivo, humbly justifies himself.

LETTER CCXIX. (A.D. 1143.)
TO THREE BISHOPS OF THE CURIA; ALBERIC OF OSTIA, STEPHEN OF PRÆNESTE, IGMARUS OF TUSCULUM, AND TO THE CHANCELLOR GERARD

LETTER CCXX
TO LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

LETTER CCXXI. (A.D. 1142.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXXII. (A.D. 1142.)
TO JOSCELYN, BISHOP OF SOISSONS, AND SUGER, ABBOT OF S. DENYS

LETTER CCXXIII. (A.D. 1143.)
TO THE BISHOP OF SOISSONS

LETTER CCXXIV. (A.D. 1143.)
TO STEPHEN, BISHOP OF PRAENESTE

LETTER CCXXV. (A.D. 1143.)
TO THE BISHOP OF SOISSONS

LETTER CCXXVI. (A.D. 1143.)
TO LOUIS, KING OF THE FRENCH

LETTER CCXXVII. (A.D. 1143.)
TO THE BISHOP OF SOISSONS

LETTER CCXXVIII. (A.D. 1143.)
TO PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY

LETTER CCXXIX. (A.D. 1143.)
PETER THE VENERABLE, TO ABBOT BERNARD

LETTER CCXXX
TO THE BISHOPS OF OSTIA, TUSCULUM, AND PRÆNESTE

LETTER CCXXXI
TO THE SAME THREE BISHOPS ON BEHALF OF THE ABBOT OF LAGNY

LETTER CCXXXII
TO THE SAME BISHOPS

LETTER CCXXXIII
TO JOHN, ABBOT OF BUZAY, WHO HAD LEFT HIS ABBEY AND BETAKEN HIMSELF TO SOLITUDE

LETTER CCXXXIV
TO HERBERT, ABBOT OF S. STEPHEN OF DIJON

LETTER CCXXXV. (A.D. 1143.)
TO POPE CELESTINE IN THE CASE OF THE DISPUTED ELECTION AT YORK

LETTER CCXXXVI. (A.D. 1143.)
TO THE WHOLE ROMAN CURIA, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CCXXXVII. (A.D. 1145.)
TO THE WHOLE ROMAN CURIA, WHEN THEY CHOSE THE ABBOT OF S. ANASTASIUS FOR POPE (EUGENIUS)

LETTER CCXXXVIII. (A.D. 1145.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS: HIS FIRST LETTER
Bernard at once congratulates and condoles with the newly-elevated Pope.

LETTER CCXXXIX. (A.D. 1145.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXL. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

LETTER CCXLI. (A.D. 1147.)
TO HILDEFONSUS, COUNT OF S. ELOY, ABOUT THE HERETIC HENRY

LETTER CCXLII. (A.D. 1147.)
TO THE PEOPLE OF TOULOUSE AFTER HIS RETURN

LETTER CCXLIII. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE ROMANS WHEN THEY REVOLTED AGAINST POPE EUGENIUS

LETTER CCXLIV. (A.D. 1146.)
TO CONRAD, KING OF THE ROMANS

LETTER CCXLV. (A.D. 1146.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS, ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP OF ORLEANS

LETTER CCXLVI. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME BISHOP OF ORLEANS, AFTER HIS DEPOSITION

LETTER CCXLVII. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE SAME, FOR THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS

LETTER CCXLVIII. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCXLIX. (A.D. 1145.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCL
TO BERNARD, PRIOR OF PORTES

LETTER CCLI. (A.D. 1147.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS

LETTER CCLII. (A.D. 1147.)
TO THE SAME, ABOUT THE DISPUTED ELECTION AT YORK

LETTER CCLIII. (A.D. 1150.)
TO THE ABBOT OF PRÉMONTRÉ

LETTER CCLIV. (A.D. 1136.)
TO WARREN, ABBOT OF S. MARY OF THE ALPS

LETTER CCLV. (A.D. 1134.)
TO LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

LETTER CCLVI. (A.D. 1146.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS

LETTER CCLVII. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE SAME, FOR BROTHER PHILIP

LETTER CCLVIII. (A.D. 1145.)
TO THE SAME, FOR BROTHER RUALENE

LETTER CCLIX. (A.D. 1145.)
TO THE SAME, FOR THE SAME

LETTER CCLX. (A.D. 1145.)
TO ABBOT RUALENE

LETTER CCLXI
TO POPE EUGENIUS

LETTER CCLXII
TO THE SAME, FOR THE MONKS OF S. MARIE-SUR-MEUSE

LETTER CCLXIII
TO THE BISHOP OF SOISSONS, FOR THE ABBOT OF CHÉZY

LETTER CCLXIV. (A.D. 1149.)
PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY, TO BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX

LETTER CCLXV. (A.D. 1149.)
TO PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY (REPLY TO THE ABOVE)

LETTER CCLXVI. (A.D. 1151.)
TO SUGER, ABBOT OF S. DENYS, TO COMFORT HIM ON HIS DEATH-BED

LETTER CCLXVII
TO THE ABBOT OF CLUNY

LETTER CCLXVIII
TO POPE EUGENIUS

LETTER CCLXIX
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCLXX. (A.D. 1151.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCLXXI. (A.D. 1151.)
TO THEOBALD, COUNT OF CHAMPAGNE

LETTER CCLXXII. (A.D. 1152.)
TO THE BISHOP OF LAON

A LETTER OF POPE EUGENIUS TO THE CISTERCIAN CHAPTER
(TO WHICH EP. CCLXXIII. WAS AN ANSWER).

LETTER CCLXXIII. (A.D. 1150.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS

LETTER CCLXXIV. (A.D. 1151.)
TO HUGH, ABBOT OF TROIS-FONTAINES, WHEN HE WAS AT ROME

LETTER CCLXXV. (A.D. 1151.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS, ABOUT THE ELECTION OF A BISHOP AT AUXERRE

LETTER CCLXXVI. (A.D. 1151.)
TO THE SAME, AFTER THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF AUXERRE

LETTER CCLXXVII. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE ABBOT OF CLUNY

LETTER CCLXXVIII. (A.D. 1150.)
TO THE SAME, FOR THE BISHOP OF BEAUVAIS

LETTER CCLXXIX. (A.D. 1152.)
TO COUNT HENRY

LETTER CCLXXX. (Circa A.D. 1152.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS ABOUT THE TROUBLE AT AUXERRE

LETTER CCLXXXI
TO ABBOT BRUNO OF CHIARRAVALLE

LETTER CCLXXXII. (A.D. 1152.)
TO LOUIS, KING OF THE FRENCH, ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP-ELECT OF AUXERRE

LETTER CCLXXXIII. (A.D. 1150.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS, ON BEHALF OF THE MONKS OF MOIREMONT

LETTER CCLXXXIV. (Circa A.D. 1151.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS, ON BEHALF OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS AND OTHER PERSONS

LETTER CCLXXXV. (Circa A.D. 1153.)
TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF ODO, ABBOT OF S. DENYS

LETTER CCLXXXVI. (A.D. 1153.)
TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

LETTER CCLXXXVII. (A.D. 1153.)
TO THE BISHOP OF OSTIA, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME ABBOT

LETTER CCLXXXVIII. (A.D. 1153.)
TO HIS UNCLE ANDREW, A KNIGHT OF THE TEMPLE

LETTER CCLXXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1153.)
TO THE QUEEN OF JERUSALEM

LETTER CCXC. (A.D. 1152.)
TO THE BISHOP OF OSTIA ABOUT CARDINAL JORDAN

LETTER CCXCI
TO POPE EUGENIUS FOR THE CHURCH OF S. EUGENDUS IN THE JURA

LETTER CCXCII
TO A CERTAIN SECULAR

LETTER CCXCIII. (Circa A.D. 1150.)
TO PETER, ABBOT OF MOUSTIER LA CELLE, ON BEHALF OF A MONK OF CHÉZY, WHO

HAD CHANGED OVER TO CLAIRVAUX

LETTER CCXCIV. (Circa A.D. 1150.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS, ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP OF LE MANS

LETTER CCXCV. (Circa A.D. 1150.)
TO CARDINAL HENRY, FOR THE SAME BISHOP

LETTER CCXCVI. (Circa A.D. 1150.)
TO THE BISHOP OF OSTIA, FOR THE SAME

LETTER CCXCVII
TO THE ABBOT OF MONTIER RAMEY, ON BEHALF OF A FUGITIVE MONK

LETTER CCXCVIII. (A.D. 1151.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS, ABOUT NICHOLAS

LETTER CCXCIX. (Circa A.D. 1150.)
TO THE COUNT OF ANGOULÊME, ON BEHALF OF THE MONKS OF S. AMAND DE BOISSE

LETTER CCC
TO THE COUNTESS OF BLOIS

LETTER CCCI. (Circa A.D. 1149.)
TO SANCHIA, SISTER OF THE EMPEROR OF SPAIN

LETTER CCCII. (A.D. 1153.)
TO THE LEGATES OF THE HOLY SEE, ON BEHALF OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE

LETTER CCCIII
TO LOUIS THE YOUNGER, KING OF FRANCE

LETTER CCCIV. (A.D. 1153.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCV. (A.D. 1153.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS

LETTER CCCVI. (A.D. 1151.)
TO THE BISHOP OF OSTIA, FOR THE ELECTION OF THOROLD, ABBOT OF TROIS-FONTAINES

LETTER CCCVII. (A.D. 1153.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCVIII. (A.D. 1153.)
TO ALFONSO, KING OF PORTUGAL

LETTER CCCIX. (A.D. 1153.)
TO POPE EUGENIUS

LETTER CCCX. (A.D. 1153.)
TO ARNOLD OF CHARTRES, ABBOT OF BONNEVAL

LETTER CCCXI. (Circa A.D. 1125.)
TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR

LETTER CCCXII. (A.D. 1130.)
TO RAYNALD, ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS

LETTER CCCXIII. (A.D. 1132.)
TO GEOFFREY, ABBOT OF S. MARY AT YORK

LETTER CCCXIV. (A.D. 1134.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCCXV. (Circa A.D. 1134.)
TO MATILDA, QUEEN OF ENGLAND

LETTER CCCXVI. (Circa A.D. 1135.)
TO HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS, AND HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR

LETTER CCCXVII. (A.D. 1138.)
TO HIS PRIOR, GODFREY

LETTER CCCXVIII. (Circa A.D. 1138.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCCXIX. (Circa A.D. 1138.)
TO THURSTAN, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

LETTER CCCXX. (A.D. 1138.)
TO ALEXANDER, PRIOR OF FOUNTAINS, AND TO HIS BRETHREN AT THE SAME PLACE

LETTER CCCXXI. (A.D. 1138.)
TO HENRY MURDACH, FIRST ABBOT OF VAUCLAIR, THEN OF FOUNTAINS, AND FINALLY ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

LETTER CCCXXII. (Circa A.D. 1138.)
TO HUGO, A NOVICE, WHO AFTERWARDS BECAME ABBOT OF BONNEVAL

LETTER CCCXXIII. (A.D. 1139.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCCXXIV. (A.D. 1139.)
TO ROBERT, ABBOT OF DUNES

LETTER CCCXXV. (Circa A.D. 1139.)
TO THE SAME, RESPECTING THE NOVICE IDIER

LETTER CCCXXVI. (Circa A.D. 1139.)
FROM ABBOT WILLIAM TO GEOFFREY, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, AND TO BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX

LETTER CCCXXVII. (Circa A.D. 1139.)
REPLY OF BERNARD TO ABBOT WILLIAM

LETTER CCCXXVIII. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE ROMAN PONTIFF

LETTER CCCXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO THE BISHOP OF LIMOGES

LETTER CCCXXX. (A.D. 1140.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCCXXXI. (A.D. 1140.)
TO CARDINAL STEPHEN, BISHOP OF PALESTRINA

LETTER CCCXXXII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO CARDINAL G …

LETTER CCCXXXIII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO CARDINAL G …

LETTER CCCXXXIV. (A.D. 1140.)
TO GUY, OF PISA

LETTER CCCXXXV. (A.D. 1140)
TO A CERTAIN CARDINAL PRESBYTER

LETTER CCCXXXVI. (A.D. 1140.)
TO A CERTAIN ABBOT

LETTER CCCXXXVII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO POPE INNOCENT, IN THE NAME OF THE BISHOPS OF FRANCE

LETTER CCCXXXVIII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO HAIMERIC, CARDINAL AND CHANCELLOR

LETTER CCCXXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCCXL. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO THE SAME POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCCXLI. (Circa A.D. 1140.)
TO MALACHI, ARCHBISHOP OF IRELAND

LETTER CCCXLII. (A.D. 1140.)
TO JOSCELYN, BISHOP OF SOISSONS

LETTER CCCXLIII. (A.D. 1140.)
FROM ABBOT BERNARD, OF ITALY, TO POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCCXLIV. (A.D. 1140.)
FROM THE SAME BERNARD TO SAINT BERNARD

LETTER CCCXLV. (A.D. 1140.)
TO THE BRETHREN OF S. ANASTASIUS

LETTER CCCXLVI. (Circa A.D. 1141.)

TO THE LORD POPE INNOCENT

LETTER CCCXLVII. (Circa A.D. 1141.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCXLVIII. (A.D. 1141.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCXLIX. (Circa A.D. 1141.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCL. (Circa A.D. 1141.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCLI.
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCLII. (A.D. 1131.)
PRIVILEGE OR GRANT MADE BY POPE INNOCENT II. TO SAINT BERNARD

LETTER CCCLIII. (Circa A.D. 1141.)
TO WILLIAM, ABBOT OF RIEVAULX

LETTER CCCLIV. (A.D. 1142.)
TO MILISENDIS, QUEEN OF JERUSALEM, DAUGHTER OF KING BALDWIN AND WIFE OF FULK

LETTER CCCLV. (Circa A.D. 1142.)
TO THE SAME QUEEN

LETTER CCCLVI. (A.D. 1141.)
TO MALACHI, ARCHBISHOP OF IRELAND

LETTER CCCLVII. (A.D. 1142.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCLVIII. (A.D. 1142.)
TO POPE CELESTINE

LETTER CCCLIX. (A.D. 1143.)
THE COMMUNITY OF CLAIRVAUX TO THE SAME CELESTINE

LETTER CCCLX. (A.D. 1143.)
TO WILLIAM, ABBOT OF RIEVAULX

LETTER CCCLXI. (Circa A.D. 1144.)
TO ARCHBISHOP THEOBALD, ON BEHALF OF JOHN OF SALISBURY

LETTER CCCLXII. (A.D. 1145.)
TO ROBERT PULLEN, CARDINAL AND CHANCELLOR

LETTER CCCLXIII. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF EASTERN FRANCE

LETTER CCCLXIV. (A.D. 1146.)
TO PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY

LETTER CCCLXV. (A.D. 1146.)
TO HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE

LETTER CCCLXVI. (A.D. 1146.)
TO THE ABBESS HILDEGARDE

LETTER CCCLXVII. (Circa A.D. 1147.)
TO THE CHANCELLOR G

LETTER CCCLXVIII. (Circa A.D. 1147.)
TO THE CARDINAL-DEACON G

LETTER CCCLXIX. (Circa A.D. 1147.)
TO ABBOT SUGER

LETTER CCCLXX. (Circa A.D. 1147.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCLXXI. (Circa A.D. 1147.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCLXXII. (Circa A.D. 1147.)
TO P., BISHOP OF PALENCIA, IN SPAIN

LETTER CCCLXXIII. (Circa A.D. 1147)
FROM THE ABBOT OF SP. TO S. BERNARD

LETTER CCCLXXIV. (A.D. 1148.)
TO THE BRETHREN IN IRELAND, ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE BLESSED BILSHOP MALACHI

LETTER CCCLXXV. (A.D. 1148.)
TO IDA, COUNTESS OF NEVERS

LETTER CCCLXXVI. (A.D. 1149.)
TO ABBOT SUGER

LETTER CCCLXXVII. (A.D. 1149.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCLXXVIII. (A.D. 1149.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCLXXIX. (A.D. 1149.)
TO THE SAME

LETTER CCCLXXX. (A.D. 1149.)
TO THE SAME

LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT BERNARD

LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT BERNARD: VOLUME 1

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

THERE are so many things to be said respecting the career and the writings of S. Bernard of Clairvaux, and so high are the praises which must, on any just view of his character, be considered his due, that an eloquence not less than his own would be needed to give adequate expression to them.

He was an untiring and transcendently able labourer; and that in many fields. In all his manifold activities are manifest an intellect vigorous and splendid, and a magnetic attractiveness of personal character which never failed to influence and win over others to his views. His entire disinterestedness, his remarkable industry, the soul-subduing eloquence which seems to have been equally effective in France and in Italy, over the sturdy burghers of Liége and the turbulent population of Milan, and above all the wonderful piety and saintliness which formed the noblest and the most engaging of his gifts—these qualities, and the actions which came out of them, rendered him the ornament, as he was more than any other man, the leader, of his own time, and have drawn upon him the admiration of succeeding ages.

We have to look at S. Bernard in more than one capacity. First and chiefly, he was a monk, for he lived in an age when the most elevated religious enthusiasm inevitably took the form of the monastic vocation. Nor is it difficult to see why this was necessarily the case. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries war, public or private, was the chief business of princes and nobles, and a constant incident of the daily life of the masses of the common people. But always when the world lives in a state of war, religion is driven to take the incorporated or associate (i.e., the monastic) form by a kind of unconscious reaction, and indeed, in order to maintain its existence at all. Exaggerated forms generate each other in turn; and the idealized unworldliness of the monastic theory was the virtual protest, and a very needful one, against the coarseness and cruelty of the world as it stood. Monastic institutions satisfied, in fact, the conscience of the age, and were popular because they did so. Even so gifted a man as Bernard, we may venture to believe, would not have been nearly so influential had he been anything but a monk; because monachism was the expression, and the necessary expression, of the religious sentiment of those times. How deeply the monastic theory was

graven into the consciousness of the twelfth century is shown by the practical paradox attempted, and actually accomplished for a time, in the welding together of characters absolutely contradictory—the soldier and the monk,—in the Knights Templars, the Knights of Calatrava and Alcantara, and other military Orders.

S. Bernard, then, was a monk and an ascetic, and as such the foremost in power and influence of his time. He was not only practically the founder of the great Cistercian Order, which was frequently called by his name, but to him was owing in great measure, though not wholly, that general reform of the monastic Orders which restored for a time the austerity of the ancient discipline, and even surpassed it. So great was the enthusiasm which he inspired that thousands of eager postulants, drawn from all classes, crowded into the convents which were reorganized or founded by him. Knights, nobles, ladies of the highest rank, were among these ardent devotees, and that in large numbers. Even reigning sovereigns, in not a few instances, descended from their thrones before middle life was well over and entered some convent. Clairvaux, while he presided over it, sent out parties of its monks to found new monasteries, at the average rate of four every year, as may be noted in our Table of Bernardine Chronology. At the death of S. Bernard the number of Cistercian Abbeys exceeded five hundred, and to such a degree did this enthusiasm grow that in 1142 the kingdom of Portugal declared itself a fief of the Abbey of Clairvaux. Under the influence of S. Bernard the endurance of austerities became a passion to be eagerly sought, not a penance reluctantly submitted to, and the heavier and sharper was the Cross voluntarily borne, the greater was held to be its glory.

Not only was he the head of this great Order, but for a whole generation his influence was paramount over the Church. He was, more than any of the Popes who succeeded each other at such short intervals, “the governing head of Christendom,” to whom every subject of importance was sure to be, in some form, referred, and the expression of whose view was equivalent to a judgment upon it. He had received, in the view of his contemporaries, unctio illa quæ docet de omnibus. His voice was the most trusted and authoritative in Europe, though he was no Bishop nor Archbishop, but only a simple Abbot. When, at the Council of Etampes, he opened his mouth to declare to King Louis VI. and all the prelates of France that Innocent, and he alone, was the legitimate Pope, his words were taken as the decision of the Holy Ghost, and unhesitatingly acted upon. Henry I. of England, the Emperor Lothair of Germany, and the Count of Aquitaine, yielded to the force of his arguments, or to the winning power of his

remarkable personality, and acknowledged Innocent as Pope, abandoning his rival.

It is no wonder that to those who looked on at these astonishing facts, occurring one after another, the character and the powers of the Abbot of Clairvaux should have seemed truly Apostolic. They saw what in that age seemed marvellous in the extreme—a monk, poor, infirm, and obscure, yet the counsellor, reverenced and obeyed, of sovereigns, and even of Popes. Nor was there any adventitious or worldly reason to account for this profound influence which he exercised. In him the ascendency of a higher intellect, of a nobler spiritual nature, a purer and more elevated purpose, of a truly religious force, in short, was felt by all. A halo of sanctity surrounded the head of the humble Bernard, and whenever a difficult question of ecclesiastical polity or of personal duty perplexed Prince, or Bishop, or monk, the great Abbot of Clairvaux was constantly the chosen referee. It would be easy to adduce instances of this, even from the few specimens of letters to him which are still extant, although the great mass of his correspondence has naturally perished.

As a theologian he was equally distinguished. Though he was not unacquainted with the writings of the Fathers and earlier commentators, his own expositions owe little to these. They have an individuality that shows them to be the utterances of a single mind. He treats all subjects on the grand scale; refers all actions to spiritual standards, and both illustrates and determines the question he is treating by principles and sanctions drawn from the most unexpected quarters, and frequently from the most awful heights of authority. He has the imagination of a poet; and his works are full of word-pictures which glow and sparkle like gems, even at the present day, through the medium of the stiff and scholastic Latin in which they are set. In his writings there are not a few of those

jewels five-words-long
That on the stretched forefinger of all Time Sparkle for ever.

Mysticism from his mouth drops most of its questionable tendencies, and becomes a thing to charm the devotional mind, and to lift the thoughtful into new and loftier regions of emotion. He is a mystic undoubtedly, but after the manner of S. Ephrem Syrus and S. Gregory the Great rather than of Eckart (b. 1260), Tauler (b. 1290), or even of his contemporaries Hugo and Richard of S. Victor, though these latter approach much nearer to him than the former. It is essentially a pure and spiritual mysticism that he inculcates, clear of all the actual sounds, sights, and odours, celestial music, Elysian fragrance, miraculous visitations, such as appear for example in the writings of S. Theresa; though no

doubt occasional extravagances of language may be found in his writings, particularly in his Sermons on the Canticles. Once, indeed, he relates that the Saviour came down from heaven, and entered into his soul; but he relates even this great distinction shown to him hesitatingly and with a reluctance and modesty in every way honourable to him. And he takes care to make it quite clear that this was a purely spiritual event, attended by no outward manifestations: “Ita igitur intrans ad me aliquoties Verbum Sponsus, nullis unquam introitum suum indiciis innotescere fecit, non voce, non specie, non incessa. Nullis denique suis motibus compertum est mihi, nullis meis sensibus illapsum penetralibus meis: tantum ex motu cordis sicut præfatus sum, intellexi præsentiam ejus; et ex fugâ vitiorum, carnaliumque compressione affectuum … percepi utcunque speciem decoris ejus.”

To a certain extent it is no doubt the case that besides being a mystical theologian, he was a mystic in another sense, that of being a theurgist, i.e., one who claimed to exercise supernatural power. It is unquestionable that he is said by his biographers to have performed vast numbers of miracles. At some periods of his life, e.g., during his progress through the cities of north Italy on behalf of Pope Innocent, and his preaching of the Second Crusade in the Rhineland, almost every action of his was regarded as miraculous, and every word he spoke as a prophecy. The possessed, the blind, the deaf and dumb, the fever stricken, and even the dying, he cured by the laying on of his hands. He worked marvellous cures with the sign of the Cross, with the sacramental Elements, with the touch of his vestments. He is said to have once performed thirty-six miraculous cures in a single day; and it was calculated that during this Rhineland mission he healed an average of thirty persons daily. One of the most striking—we had almost written of the most awful—instances in history of the magnificent power of a firmly-rooted faith, is the account of S. Bernard’s confronting William, Count of Aquitaine, bearing in his hands the sacramental species, and thus breaking down his opposition to the religious peace of the State.

But this subject of S. Bernard’s miracles we have only space just to mention here, and must hope to be enabled to consider it at greater length in the Life of S. Bernard, which will, it is hoped, conclude this edition of his works.

For a similar reason we merely refer to Bernard in his capacity as the antagonist of the brilliant and able Peter Abaelard; as the mission-preacher among the simple countrymen of Languedoc; or, lastly, as the Apostle of the Second Crusade, that unfortunate enterprise in which so many predictions were falsified, and so many lives hopelessly thrown away.

Bernard being such as he was, it is a matter of surprise that his works, almost alone among those of the Fathers, have never yet appeared in the English language. To the English reader the Sermons and Treatises of “The Last of the Fathers” are a rich mine, as yet unworked and almost unknown. Sundry versions of parts of the Works have been published by various persons at long intervals.

The following will be found (it is believed) a tolerably complete English bibliography of this subject:—

1. The Meditatons of Saint Bernard, translated by a Student of the Unyversity of Cambrydge. (Wynkyn the Worde [sic], Westmester, 1496, and again in 1545.)

2. An Epistle called the golden epistle (T. Godfray, London), 1530. (?)

3. An Epistle called the golden epistle Edited by Robert Whetford (Wynkyn de Worde, London), 1531. (?)

4. An Epistle called the golden epistle. (Rob. Wyer, London, 1531.)

5. A compēdius and a moche fruytefull treatyse of well liuynge. Translated by Thomas Paynell, London, Thomas Petyt. 8vo.

6. How to Live Well. Translated by C. B. Tyrwhitt. Oxford. 1886.

7. Devout Meditations of S. Bernard, Or, his Book of the Soul, made English by G. Stanhope. 1701.

8. S. Bernard his Meditations, by W. P., M’r. of Arts in Cambridge. 1631.

9. A Monomachie of Motives in the Mind of Man. A. Fleming. 1582.

10. A Hive of sacred Honicombes. Translated by A. Batt. Doway, 1631.

11. Christian Doctrine and Practice in the Twelfth Century. (Small Books on Great Subjects.) London. 1841.

12. Flowers of S. Bernard, selected and translated. London. 1870.

13. The Virgin Mother of God. Selections from S. Bernard arr. and trans. by a Secular Priest. London and Derby. 1886.

14. Sermon on Cant. I, 5, on the death of his brother Gerard. 1858.

15. Sermons for the Seasons of the Church. Trans, by W. B.

Flower. London. 1861.

16. Four Homilies on the Incarnation. Edinburgh. 1843.

17. Glories of the Virgin Mother. By a Catholic Priest. Boston (U.S.). 1869.

18. S. Bernard on the Love of God. Transl. by M. C. and C. Patmore London. 1st ed. 1881; 2nd, 1884.

19. The Holy War. Trans, by S. R. M [aitland]. Gloucester. 1827.

20. Letter of S. Bernard to Thomas of Beverley, on Conversion. Trans, by R. Collins. 1856.

21. The Mystic Vine. Trans, by W. R. Brownlow. 1873.

22. The Mystic Vine. Translated by Samuel J. Eales, D.C.L. London. 1889.

23. A Legendary Psalter of S. Bernard. London: Percy Society. 1842.

24. Rhythmical Prayer to the Sacred Members of Jesus. Rendered into English Rhythm by C. M. Shapcote. London. 1879.

25. S. Bernard's Verses containing the unstable felicitie of this wayfaring world. (R. Edwards, Poet) 1596.

26. The same. R. Collier. 1867.

27. A joyful ballad of the Name of Jesus. Trans. by T. G. Crippen. London. 1867.

28. The Jubilee Rhythm of S. Bernard. Trans. by Alfred Edersheim, D.D. London. 1867.

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29. Life of S. Bernard. Dublin. 1854.

30. Life of S. Bernard. Derby. 1858.

31. Biography of S. Bernard (Four Ecclesiastical Biographies), by J. H. Gurney. S.P.C.K. 1864.

32. Bernard of Clairvaux. A Biography, by T. M. Lindsay. 1882.

33. The Life and Times of S. Bernard. By Dr. Augustus Neander. Trans. from the German by Matilda Wrench. London. 12mo. 1843.

34. Life and Times of S. Bernard. By James Cotter Morison, M.A. London. 1884.

35. The Sweet Song of S. Bernard (Jesu! dulcis memoria), newly translated by the Rev. George Peirce Grantham. London: s.d. 1886. (?)

It ought, however, to be mentioned here that it was at one time proposed by the Rev. Frederick Oakeley, then Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and the Rev. J. S. Brewer, of Queen's College, Oxford, to translate and publish a complete edition of the Works of S. Bernard. Their prospectus (which is now before the Editor) was issued, it is believed, about 1844; but events which speedily followed prevented its being carried out.

The present Edition may be regarded as a revival of that plan. One single aim has been, and will be, pursued throughout by the Editor: that of producing a translation as faithful and complete as possible; and the Notes have been confined to elucidations or illustrations of the text without any comment whatever from a doctrinal point of view. The following observations made by the two scholars just mentioned, in their original proposal, may be quoted here, as they exactly express the position taken up in the present Edition, and the reasons for it:—

"It is to be distinctly understood that the various parties who may be concerned in this undertaking pledge themselves by the act no farther than to the opinion that it is, on the whole, desirable to promote acquaintance with the writings of this great Saint, and that in an unmutilated form. Any omission would seem to involve an expression of opinion both upon the part excluded and

the part retained."

The Editor feels that the right course is: to avoid intruding the expression of his personal view of S. Bernard's writings, as they are one after another translated: to put before readers, to the best of his power, the exact equivalent of what his author wrote: and then to leave it to speak for itself. He can hardly hope that in so great a mass of translation some inaccuracies will not have crept in; but a certain degree of consideration will no doubt be given to one who presents these writings for the first time in English. Letters 127–173 and 175–298 (both inclusive), with their appendant notes, have been translated by the Rev. W. F. Cobb, B.A., T.C.D. All the rest, with the Prefaces, Chronology, and Notes, by the Editor, and he is also responsible for the whole. Notes which he has added are distinguished by the letter [E.], or by [Trans.].

The references to Scripture have been made accordant with the Authorized Version, and the wording of that Version has been generally adhered to. But S. Bernard, of course, quotes the Vulgate; and the Vulgate has many renderings peculiar to itself, upon which, not unfrequently, he founds his exposition or his argument, which would be deprived of much of its appropriateness, or even rendered altogether meaningless, by the substitution of other words in the quotation. When this is the case, a translation of the text of the Vulgate is given, distinguished by the note (VULG.).

Vols. I. and II. are occupied mostly with the General Introduction and the Letters, which it seemed imperative to give first. But the characteristic excellences of S. Bernard's writings will be put fairly before the reader in Vols. III. and IV., which will contain a mass of S. Bernard's Sermons for the Christian year, and will, it is hoped, be issued at the end of 1889.

SOLI DEO GLORIA.

SAMUEL J. EALES.

GENERAL PREFACE OF DOM JOHN MABILLON TO HIS SECOND EDITION OF THE WORKS OF S. BERNARD

I. After I had given the first-fruits of my studies to the works of S. Bernard, I never so far put out of my mind that first edition of them as to cease to think of completing, of perfecting, and if I saw the necessity, of entirely recasting it. Since I was at that time very young, and an unskilful beginner, when I set my hand to that first task, I did not think the work so perfect and correct in all respects, as that with longer experience and greater literary skill, I should not be able to find many passages in Bernard of which the text might be better established, and the meaning made clearer by more laborious notes. Wherefore, although in course of time, the direction of my studies had taken me far away from that great Doctor, yet my memory of the holy man and my affection for him remained so great, that whenever in reading and studying other authors, anything came before me which might later on be of use to me for settling the text of his works, or illustrating it, I carefully made note of it, and laid it aside in readiness for the preparation, in due time, of a second edition. During a long period my other labours altogether absorbed my attention so as to hinder my occupying myself with such a task; but at length the taste for other literary occupations weakened, and in these times of continual wars, grew cold, and I was left with my S. Bernard only on my hands, as the occupation of that leisure which advancing age afforded, as it had been of the first years of my manhood. Gladly then, by the indulgence of my Superiors, did I devote this leisure to throwing fresh light upon an author who so well deserves his high repute; and I cannot refrain from saying that my coadjutors, and I myself, have devoted all our care and diligence to make this edition, not so much a reissue of the former, as an entirely new, and as far as we could make it, a perfected edition.

II. There will, perhaps, be some who disapprove of these repeated editions, and blame them as being of more inconvenience than advantage in study. Nor do I deny that it would be very desirable that authors should, in the very first edition, be presented in as near an approach to perfection as is possible to be

attained. But those who are acquainted with that kind of labour are not ignorant of the difficulty, not to say the absolute impossibility, of succeeding in editing perfectly an author whose works are contained in so great a number of ancient copies, scattered in places far removed from each other, and presenting among themselves so great a number of differences. So that after much and long labour in getting together a great number of copies, and not only of complete volumes, but of leaves scattered here and there, there is sometimes need of an Ædipus as an interpreter to determine the text of the author in the midst of a crowd of variant readings, to correct passages which had been badly treated, to throw light upon obscurities, and to distinguish between works which are authentic and others which are not. To succeed in all these objects, and to produce at the first attempt a perfect work, there will be need of a genius and a degree of good fortune, which I am far from possessing, nor do I know whether anyone could claim to have it. However that may be, I prefer to ask pardon for the fault of rashness (if the fact be so) in attempting my first edition, than either to increase my fault by making excuses, or to leave my former edition imperfect. This is why I have thought it my duty to undertake a new and more correct one, executed with greater care. I have, then, collated anew the text of the holy Doctor with the most ancient copies that I could procure; and lastly, have bound myself with my companions once more to the wearisome labours of the printing office, being cheered by an assured confidence that those who are wise will welcome not ungratefully my plan and my new labours, especially when they shall know the reasons which have prompted the undertaking of this new edition, and have understood fully the advantages which, as I hope, it will offer.

§ I. OF THE DIFFERENT EDITIONS OF THE WORKS OF S. BERNARD: THE CAUSES, REASONS, ADVANTAGES, AND USEFULNESS OF THIS NEW EDITION

III. In the first place, nothing shows more the value and the merit of the works of S. Bernard, than the number of editions which have appeared of them, both before and after the invention of printing. The number of these is a proof how eagerly the works of Bernard were procured by many persons, and how much they were read and admired by all; nor is this to be wondered at; for in his writings shines forth an intellect endued with nobility, power, and elevation, united with gentleness, urbanity, and virtue. Eloquence is natural to him, an eloquence unpretending and unforced, though not without ornament. His style is nervous, his discourse vigorous, his language appropriate, his thoughts elevated, his sentiments pious, his humour not laboured, his whole discourse breathing of

God and heavenly things. The fire of his zeal burns not to consume, but to inflame with itself. He makes the point of his weapon felt, and pierces, not to irritate but to move to action. He criticizes, he blames, but so as to attract, not to excite antipathy. He accuses, he threatens, he terrifies, but always in love, never in anger. He soothes, but does not flatter; he praises, but without extravagance. He urges, but with kindness; he reproves, without being offensive; he charms, he pleases, and he delights. His discourse, says Sixtus of Sienna, is everywhere sweet, and yet fiery; it so delights and, at the same time, inflames, that honey and milk seem to flow together from his persuasive tongue, while jets of fire and flame burst from his heart of fire. As for his knowledge, it was far beyond the common, and was fed with the sap and the very words of the Holy Scripture; and he so took into his heart the sayings of the Fathers as to make them entirely his own. He writes with such originality of Divine things, of grace and free-will, of the office and of the proper character of Bishops, of clerks, of monks, or of lay people, that his teaching shows him to be, as it were, a fountain, not a river or canal. Can we wonder if a man so gifted is appreciated and his works sought out, read, and studied by all the world? If editions of them without number appear, and if learned and experienced men employ their labour to augment, illustrate, and restore them to their original integrity? If Rome herself, lady and mistress of the world, which once received with veneration the instructions and even the reprimands of Bernard; if Rome, I say, herself suffered the Books de Consideratione, which were first presented to Eugenius III., which Nicolas V. caused to be copied out with the greatest care, at length to be published from the Papal Press under Clement VIII., and would have published the entire works of Bernard if Gerard Voss had been willing to undertake to edit them? What is less to be wondered at after this, is that in the capital of France, of which Bernard is one of the greatest lights, he has deservedly received the honour of the Royal Press.

IV. There are, however, other causes, some of them proper and even necessary, why so many editions and collations of the works of Bernard have been made. One, and, indeed, the chief is, that the writings of the holy Doctor have been very widely scattered in various and very numerous MSS., of which not all could possibly find place in a first edition. These are brought to the light one after the other as fast as they fall into the hands or come to the knowledge of scholars.

The first edition appears to have been that which Peter Schœffer issued at Mayence in 1475; it contained Sermons de Tempore, those de Sanctis, also those

de Diversis, and the Book ad Milites Templi, with some others, rightly attributed to Bernard.

About the same time appeared at Rouen, without any date, three Treatises of the blessed Father, viz., the Books de Consideratione, the Apologia to Abbot William, and the Book de Præcepto et Dispensatione.

In 1481 appeared at Brussels an edition, without name of editor or printer, which contained the Sermons de Tempore and de Sanctis, and certain of the Letters then published for the first time.

In 1494, at Paris, an edition containing three hundred and ten Letters, with the Sermons in Cantica, edited and corrected by Magister Rouald, Doctor in Theology.

The edition of Spires appeared in 1501. Two years later appeared that of Venice, but without the Letters, and already occupied to the extent of almost half by apocryphal writings and works of other authors.

Possevin places that of Brescia in the year 1495; it contained the Homilies on the Missus est, and some other Treatises.

The first edition of S. Bernard containing almost all his collected works is that of Paris, in 1508, called the Seraphic edition; and is said at the commencement to comprise the works of S. Bernard the Doctor, mellifluous and devoted, compared then for the first time, and with the greatest care, with the originals in the library of Clairvaux, and arranged into a single volume by the care and industry of Magister John Bocard, and at the cost of John Lepetit, sworn librarian of the University of Paris.

Six years later, in 1515, Jodocus Clictoveus, of Nieuport, revised the preceding edition and republished it at Lyons, the printer being a German, John Klein, adding to it the Sermons in Cantica of Gilbert of Hoyland; it was then many times reprinted both at Paris and at Lyons. In 1520 appeared another edition at Lyons by two monks of Clairvaux, Lambert Deschamps and Laurence of Dantzig, much more correct than all the others.

After these appeared many other editions, which I pass over without notice to come to that which Francis Comestor, of Arnay-le-Duc, a fellow of the College of the Sorbonne, undertook, to contain all the works of the holy Doctor, with an Epistle Dedicatory to Louis de Rie, Bishop of Geneva, in which he says that, in examining the ancient books, in which the library of the College of the Sorbonne was then very rich, he had happened upon an Appendix to the Book de Diligendo Deo, which was not found in any preceding edition, and afterwards upon a Treatise de Amore Dei ac Dignitate Amoris; he printed these books with

the works of S. Bernard, at the office of the Veuve Claude Chevallon in 1547.

This edition was reprinted many times, which, however, did not prevent Antoine Marcellin from publishing another at Bâle in 1552, which was printed by John Hervage. He prepared it, he says, with the greatest care, after consulting very ancient copies, and examined the whole works afresh and gave them in a different order, so that the Sermons were put in the first place, the Letters followed, then the Treatises, and lastly the writings attributed to S. Bernard, with some by other authors.

Before the edition of which we have just spoken, one appeared at Venice, of which mention is made by John Guillot, of Champagne, in the preface he wrote for the edition of Nivelles, published at Paris in 1572, and in which he speaks of a collation of the various texts undertaken by the theologians of the Faculty of Paris, who corrected the latest editions as well according to their own knowledge as with the help of all the MSS. they could draw from the various libraries of France. So that, says Guillot, to attempt to correct again after so many scholars, and those of such mark, would be to try to cure a man already quite well, which did not all the same prevent his declaring that he had made many important corrections. He divided, also, into chapters, with analytic titles, the Books de Consideratione, addressed to Pope Eugenius, and the Book de Præcepto et Dispensatione, the text of which Henry Cuyck, of Guttenberg, had corrected by collation with seven MS. copies. He takes great care, also, to separate the authentic works of S. Bernard from those which are spurious, and to arrange the former in a more reasonable and convenient order. Nevertheless, Guillot leaves among the genuine works some spurious, either already included, or added for the first time; also Flowers collected from the works of S. Bernard.

But six years previously, in 1566, had appeared at Paris, the publishers being William Merlin and Sebastian de Nivelles, another edition; the Letter from the same Francis Comestor, who was lately mentioned with praise, to the Bishop of Geneva, being prefixed. It was enlarged by an Appendix Hervagiana published at Bâle by the successors of John Hervage, under the care of James Pamelius, of Bruges, who published also sixteen brief Sermons by S. Bernard, the Parable concerning Christ and the Church, a book of Soliloquies, and some other writings attributed to Bernard.

The same year Louis le Mire, of Rosay, caused to be printed at Paris, by Charlotte Guillard, another Appendix which he had received from Francis Comestor.

I pass over a great many other editions which appeared during this epoch.

Indeed, scarcely a year passed without its being signalized by the appearance of one. The finest of all is that which appeared in 1586 under the sign of the Ship, with a Letter Dedicatory from John Guillot, to the Reverend Father Guy de Chartres, Abbot of Clairvaux, and a preface from the same to the reader.

In 1575 Hubert Lescot, Regular Canon, made a translation into French of the greater number of the Sermons and Treatises of S. Bernard, but without the Letters. These latter were added in 1622, having been translated by Philip le Bel, Doctor of the Faculty of Paris, according to what is stated in the latest version by the Reverend Father Gabriel, de S. Malachi des Feuillants.

V. As for the editions of S. Bernard which have appeared in our age, it would almost be a never-ending task to enumerate them, nor is it at all necessary. Two only I am glad to note, that of Edmund Tiraquellius, a monk of Cîteaux, in the year 1601, the other of Jean Picard in 1609, with notes, some additional Letters, and an Epistle Dedicatory of Tiraquellius to R. P. Edmund de la Croix, Abbot of Cîteaux, and also a Letter and Preface of Guillot.

This edition of Picard appeared also in the same year at Antwerp, printed by John Keerberg, and after that was reprinted many times; until, in 1641, appeared the best and most accurate of all, that of James Merlon Horst, a most pious and learned man. That edition threw all others into the shade, and was reprinted frequently.

VI. It will be well to say a few words respecting the mode in which this worthy man has prepared his edition. In the first place he expresses his wonder that since of all the Fathers of the Church there is none whose works are more frequently read than Bernard, he should be at the same time that one of whom the editions had been up to that time most neglected, so that they seemed to become worse and more defective the more they were multiplied, as if that Father either did not need any care at all, or was unworthy of it. He declares that this was the cause which had moved him to set his hand to cure this evil. He had submitted the whole of the works to exact and severe criticism, and divided them into six volumes, of which the first contained the Letters; the second the Sermons de Tempore and de Sanctis; the third the Sermons in Cantica; the fourth various Treatises; the fifth those writings which are not by S. Bernard; and the sixth, those of the two disciples of the Holy Doctor, Gilbert and Guerric. It is he, also, who divided the Treatises into chapters and sections, and has prefixed analytical summaries to each Letter and Treatise. He spared neither labour nor expense to procure all the editions of S. Bernard which he could find in the libraries of different countries, although he was not successful in obtaining some

of the works of that Father, of which Possevin and others have given a list. Besides these a great many introductions are added, the life of S. Bernard in seven books, with various Elogia of the Saint, and a chronology. Finally, he has inserted lengthy Notes, besides those shorter ones which are inserted in the margin throughout the work, with very full Indexes of the places of Scripture, of subjects, and of the names mentioned by S. Bernard. The reader cannot help recognizing the immense labour with which he has endeavoured to make his edition absolutely accurate. Unfortunately the work of the printer has not altogether corresponded to his wishes. This learned man was preparing an edition more complete and more careful still when he died, on the 20th April, 1644.

VII. Nevertheless it cannot be questioned that Horst was happily enabled to bring that first edition to a degree of perfection as complete as was possible to a man who, though learned, diligent, and most studious of his author, was working alone: so that his edition was received with both hands (as the saying is), approved and very often reprinted in various countries and places. But our illustrious Claude Cantelou, having collated, at the order of our superiors, the text of Horst with many MSS. in France, discovered in his work certain faults which required to be corrected by the aid of our Codices, and he published the corrected text of the Sermons de Tempore and de Sanctis in a new form. He was preparing with the same care to publish the rest of the works of S. Bernard, when he died, and left his work for me to continue. I was then a young man; a novice and inexperienced in the literary art, and it would never have occurred to me to put my labour and knowledge into comparison with those of the learned Horst, if our Superior General, the Reverend Abbot Bernard Audebert, of pious memory, had not overcome my scruples and my reluctance to continue the work of Cantelou after his death. I obeyed, however, though unwillingly, and with the useful and valuable help of James Lannoy, who put at my disposal all the originals of S. Bernard's works which existed in the library of Cîteaux, of which he was abbot, I succeeded at length in producing an edition in larger and also in smaller size of S. Bernard, as perfect—I do not say as it might and ought to have been, but as good as my young inexperience was able to make it, or rather as the selfishness of the printer, who showed himself more careful to serve his own interests than those of the public, would allow it to be.

VIII. But with time and experience in that kind of labour, I accumulated, day by day, more materials which would be of use for another and much improved edition of Bernard, and I continued, as I have said, diligently to collect these, in

order that when time and leisure should permit, I might make such an edition more correct, more elegant, and more perfect. But when I set myself to the work I found myself confronted by another difficulty, arising from the unhappy state of the laws which ruled the press, and from which I extricated myself at last in any way I could, as if taking refuge in any harbour attainable from a storm, and in a manner which there is no need to detail here.

IX. Although it is entirely foreign to my habit and to my intention to extol my own work, yet it is proper here to show, in the first place, in what respects this latest edition differs, as well from that of Horst as from my former one. I have, first, had the advantage of being able to collate a number of ancient MSS. which I had not seen at the time of my former edition, both those which I consulted and studied in the provinces that I traversed, and in the Colbertine Library, where Stephen Baluze, a man born to help and develop learned pursuits, had assembled a great many copies since my first edition had appeared. I have thus been able out of the various readings to select and restore to the text those which seemed most to accord with the manner and sentiments of Bernard, which pursuit requires an extensive acquaintance with old books, a tact acquired by habitude only, and a riper judgment than the general run of educated persons suppose, who regard us as collectors of spiders' webs when they see the importance that we attach to those things which they regard as trifles; but, let that class of men think what they please respecting me; I do not desire the applause of men for my work, but to render service to the Church and to the literary fraternity.

X. Nor have I employed the resources of criticism only in restoring the text, but also in separating the general writings of Bernard from the suppositious and spurious writings which had made their way among the genuine, as well in the edition of Horst as in my former one. Thus I have expunged two Letters of Bernard Brito which Horst had placed among those of our Bernard; I have rejected four or five Sermons from those de Tempore and de Sanctis; I have rejected also a Book of Declamations, and some others which were shown by clear signs and arguments not to be from the pen of Bernard.

XI. For that work of criticism I have found of great assistance, not only the writers of the Lives of S. Bernard, and chiefly Geoffrey, which contain a list of the principal works of the holy Doctor, but also the old MSS., the citations of ancient authors, and, most of all, the ancient Collection from the writings of Bernard, which is called Book of Flowers, Florilegium and Bernardinus, first edited at Paris in 1503. It is much to be preferred to another collection which was made in 1571 by a Canon Regular named Hubert Scutépuits, and intruded

by John Picard into his edition of Bernard. That first Collection is far more ancient, and an old MS. copy at Cîteaux has supplied to us the name of the author, for we find in it these words, with an inscription following:—"Here begins a prologue of Bernardinus, which Dom Willermus, monk of S. Martin of Tournay, has extracted and compiled from the books and sayings of the holy Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux." That prologue begins thus:—"As I was not greatly occupied in any pursuit," etc., as in the editions in which the name of the author is wanting; but it is easily inferred that he must have lived in the thirteenth century, from the age of the MSS. in which this Collection is found. The Collector does, indeed, praise certain Treatises as being Bernard's, which are not his, viz., the Letter to the Brethren of Mont Dieu, Meditations, and Book of Declamations; but, nevertheless, his authority is of considerable weight, especially in recognizing the Sermons of Bernard. Thus every time that a doubt arises on any passage of his writings, as in the Sermons de Diversis, it seemed advisable to note these citations out of Bernardinus. Nor is it wonderful that both the Letter to the Brethren of Mont Dieu, the Declamations, and the Meditations are brought forward in that Collection under the name of Bernard, since S. Bonaventure makes the same mistake as to that much-praised epistle, and the Books of Declamations and Meditations appear to be centos out of the writings of Bernard, as I shall point out in the proper places.

XII. Besides criticism of the books, I have made some changes in Horst's arrangement, both of the volumes and of the treatises. He had placed the Sermons de Tempore and de Sanctis after the Letters; then came the Sermons in Cantica and, lastly, the Opuscula and the Treatises. It appeared to me better that the Opuscula and the Treatises should follow the Letters, since the former are, for the most part, written in the form of letters, or have even been transferred out of that class to rank among the latter. From this order it results that the Sermons de Tempore and de Sanctis fall into the third place, and those in Cantica into the fourth. In the fifth place I have added the Sermons of Gilbert on the same subject, being a continuation of those of Bernard. As to the fifth and sixth volumes, I will speak more at length in the Preface to Vol. v. or even in those to the earlier volumes.

XIII. In order that all the genuine works of Bernard might be contained in one volume, I have placed at the end of Tome vi. or Vol. ii. the Books of his Life and Actions, which Horst had put at the beginning of his first volume, so that neither should the allied works of Bernard be separated from each other, nor the size of the volumes be made very unequal. At the end of the first and of the second

volume I have placed very full indexes, the former of the genuine works of Bernard, the latter of those not by him.

XIV. The more lengthy notes and observations with which the Letters and other works of S. Bernard had been enriched by Horst, or formerly by myself, have been thrown together at the end of each Tome. To the first Tome a short Chronology is prefixed, which may serve to throw light upon the notes and provide a solid framework into which they may be fitted. Such is the character of the improvements that I have introduced into this new edition of Bernard.

XV. To come in particular to the examination of Tome i., which contains the Letters of Bernard, I have devoted no little labour to correcting, arranging, illustrating, and adding to them.

For corrections I have consulted the MSS. in various libraries; of the Vatican, of the Colbertine, those of S. Peter at Ghent, and of Orval in Belgium; besides those which I used in my former edition. From one MS. at Corbey I have restored certain inscriptions of some importance. By the aid of that MS., and of two others in the Colbertine of good rank, bearing the numbers of 1410 and 2476, and containing the Opuscula of S. Bernard, with which I have collated the same Opuscula, I have added for each Letter marginal notes, which briefly explain any historical facts referred to.

XVI. Respecting the order of the Letters, I have long hesitated whether to retain the received order or to adopt a new one. There were reasons for each course. The antiquity of the existing order was a reason for retaining it, for it appears to have been adopted while Bernard was still living, at least as far as the first 310 Letters, of which the last is addressed to Arnold, Abbot of Bonneval; while as for the others, which were scattered here and there, it was not until later that they were united to the great body of Letters; nor all at once, but only at intervals, as they came to the knowledge of the editors or collectors. Then one other reason was in favour of the ancient order, viz., that in it the order of time was, on the whole, preserved; whereas it was to be feared that more inconvenience than usefulness would follow any change of the received order, because of the numerous citations of the Letters numbered on that ancient method, without mentioning the fixed and solemn order of the ancient copies. What, on the contrary, strongly made for the opposite course was the intolerable confusion of certain Letters which were arranged at a considerable distance before those to which they were the replies. From this results the farther inconvenience that the parts of a subject are by this faulty arrangement detached from each other. In these difficulties it seemed best, on the whole, to take a

middle way, and while retaining the received order for the first 310 Letters, to arrange the remainder in order of time, noting in the margin the number by which each had previously been marked. When in consequence of this new arrangement it happens that a Letter ought to follow some other, we warn the reader to defer it until the other has been first read; in that manner we have both respected the old order, and avoided the confusion that a new one would have caused.

We have said that the old order, in which we read the Letters of S. Bernard, seems to have been established even in the lifetime of their author; we find the proof of this in William, formerly Abbot of S. Thierry, who died before Bernard. For he, in the first book of his Life of the Holy Doctor, evidently written during the life of Bernard, reports that his Letter to his relative Robert (n. 50), which had not been wetted in the midst of a shower of rain, "was not unjustly placed first by his brethren in the volume of his Letters because of so great a miracle." The author of the third Life, who is no other, as we think, than Geoffrey, his secretary, relates that that arrangement was made by him.

XVII. The order of the Letters is, nevertheless, not quite uniform in all the old copies, although in most of them there is no great difference up to Letter 310. There are not quite so many as this in some copies, from which we gather that there were, not one collection of the Letters only, but many. In the three Vatican MSS. these Letters are included. Of these the finest, No. 662, contains 296, in nearly the same order as that of the editions; the last of these is the Letter addressed to the Irish Brethren on the death of the blessed Malachi. In another MS., No. 664, there is the same order in 282 Letters; of which the last is that to Hugh, Knight of the Temple. The third, No. 663, contains 240 Letters, arranged in an order entirely different; so that the first of that collection, addressed to Cardinal Haimeric, is the 313th in previous editions, and the last, addressed to Pope Eugenius on the subject of the Bishop of Autun, is the 275th. In all the other MSS. the order is pretty nearly the same as in the printed collections, with the exception of the MS. at S. Peter of Ghent, in which the collection is divided into three parts, the first containing 100 Letters, the second 164, the third 76; in which the last is from John of Casa Mario to Bernard, and that preceding it, from Bernard to Rorgon of Abbeville. And perhaps in no other MS. are more Letters of Bernard collected than in that of Ghent; and Willermus, the monk of Tournay, must have had this MS., or one similar to it, under his eyes in writing his Bernardinus, which was just now praised, since he quotes the Letters as of the first, second, or third part. But in the MS. at Clairvaux of the Cistercian Order

there are 307 Letters, and in that at Orval 306; each of these having in the last place the Letter to Abbot Arnold, which was certainly the last which Bernard wrote. It was without doubt the former of these two collections that John of Salisbury (Letter 96) begged Peter de Celles to send to him, as he thanks him "for the Letters of the blessed Bernard" in the following one.

XVIII. To speak now of the Letters added in this edition (which are in the last place to be treated of), we ought to premise that in the first edition of the Letters of Bernard, which appeared at Brussels in 1481 and at Paris in 1494, there were only 310 Letters, of which the antepenultimate is that to Arnold, Abbot of Chartres, the penultimate to the Irish Brethren on the death of the holy Bishop Malachi, and the last to Guy, Abbot of Moustier-Ramey. But the edition of 1520, executed by two monks of Clairvaux, as we have said above, contained in all 351 Letters, of which the last is addressed to the novice Hugh, who was afterwards Abbot of Bonneval. The Letter to Arnold is the 310th, and that to the Irish the 311th. The reason for this difference is that in the former edition two Letters are wanting, viz., the 84th, which is the second to Simon, Abbot of S. Nicholas, and the 147th, to Peter, Abbot of Cluny. Jodocus Clictoveus, in his edition of 1515 and those following, has only 350 Letters in all; he has omitted that to the novice Hugh, which was inserted by Antonio Marcellino into the edition of Bâle of 1552, and in all those which followed up to that of John Picard. This last editor added seventeen new Letters to those already known, but without arranging them in order. Two of these Letters are placed at the head of those which he drew from the MS. of Pithon; the others were not published till long after. He had found them in his library at S. Victor.

Horst omitted certain Letters which had been wrongly included, and so reduced the number to 366; to which he added two spurious Letters of Bernard de Brito, seventeen genuine from certain English MSS., and one of the Abbot Fastred to finish his volume, which brought the number to 386.

I had myself included eleven new Letters in my first edition, and in this the number has risen to 482. This includes not only the twenty-eight Letters of Bernard recently discovered in Germany, and added in the form of an Appendix to an edition of Horst published at Cologne, but also some other Letters of the Saint found elsewhere, and some Letters addressed to him, or written concerning him, which seemed necessary for full understanding of those which he himself wrote.

I have divided all these Letters into three parts, of which the first comprises the 310 former Letters retaining their ancient and common order; the second to

the 454th comprises the rest of the genuine epistles of Bernard; the third the doubtful, the spurious, and those written by others. These are the chief matters which have occupied my attention in editing the first Tome; other things the diligent Reader will easily observe.

XIX. I may state here that the Works of Bernard, which Horst complained were lying hidden in various libraries, are not from the pen of the Saint; a fact which I have been able to ascertain. Thus the book on the Hexæmeron is by Arnold, Abbot of Bonneval in the Chartrain; the Commentary on the Penitential Psalms by Innocent III.; the Exposition of the Psalm Afferte (Ps. 29) by Richard of S. Victor; another upon Ps. 1. by Urban II. A Commentary on the Epistles of S. Paul is, according to Possevin, by Bernard of Clavone, an Augustine monk. A Commentary on the Apocalypse has been wrongly attributed by Caramuel to Bernard, which Commentary, being placed in a MS. next following some works of Bernard, under the title of "cujusdam" (of a certain author), Caramuel read "ejusdem" (of the same author), and so ascribed it to Bernard, like the preceding. I am convinced that with the exception of certain Letters which have not been yet brought to light, there remain no important works of Bernard unpublished. These are:—A Letter to Hugh, Abbot of Pontigny, as appears from the first paragraph of Letter 33, addressed to the same Abbot; two to Innocent II. against Peter of Besançon, from Letter 195; one to the same on behalf of Peter of Pisa, from the end of Letter 213. We learn also from the commencement of Letter 253 that he had addressed many Letters to the same Pontiff on behalf of the introduction of Premonstratensian monks into the Monastery of S. Paul at Verdun. There is also in Letter 203, to Atto, reference made to a Letter to Ansellus, sub-deacon of Troyes; in the beginning of Letter 223, to Joscelin, to an apologetic Letter to Suger; in Letter 233, to the same, to two Letters to John de Buzay; in the end of Letter 284 to Pope Eugenius, to another addressed to the same Pope in favour of the Bishop of Claremont. The monk Hermann of Tournay speaks also of a Letter which Bernard wrote to Pope Eugenius on behalf of a monastery at Tournay (No. 115). The Letter formerly numbered 358, now 376, makes mention of an encyclical Letter against duels, addressed to the Archbishops of Rheims and Sens, the Bishops of Soissons and Autun, and the Counts Theobald and Raoul. Furthermore, Peter the Venerable repeats, in his Letter numbered 388 among those of Bernard, some words of a Letter which the holy Doctor had written on behalf of a certain English abbot, "as if judgment were subverted," etc., which I do not remember to have read in any of Bernard's Letters.

XX. Ordericus Vitalis also mentions a Letter of Bernard to Natalis, Abbot of Rebais, on behalf of the monks of Utica, whose abbot, named Guarin, was begging for the relics of S. Evroult from Abbot Natalis:—"Geoffrey declared that he had the intention of going to Clairvaux, and asked him to go thither with him, to which he consented willingly. They came them both together to Clairvaux with all their attendants. They were received hospitably by the brothers of that community, who strictly observe the Rule of S. Benedict. They asked to see Dom Bernard, the Abbot of that monastery, and having spoken with him and asked of him many questions, they found in him great wisdom. He replied to all their questions, treated eloquently of the Holy Scriptures, and satisfied all their wishes. When he heard of the cause of the Religious of Utica, he kindly came to the aid of Abbot Guarin, and wrote a persuasive Letter to the community of Rebais.… Abbot Guarin presented this Letter of the venerable Bernard to these Religious, who received it with pleasure, and willingly determined to comply with the request made." Thus writes Ordericus in his sixth book.

XXI. Furthermore, Ademar of Angoulême says in his Chronicle, when treating of the origin of the Carthusians:—"This Order, as Bernard bears witness, holds the first place among ecclesiastical Orders, not on account of its antiquity, but by the power of its sanctity. Wherefore he calls it the most beautiful column of the Church," which words are not found in any of the published works of S. Bernard.

XXII. Finally, John Picard cites from John de Manburg in his treatise Concerning the manner of life of Regular Canons, a letter addressed by Bernard to Fulk, from which Manburg has quoted these words:—"Instead of wearing black or grey furs round the neck, they wear furs coloured purple like women." If these words were quoted from any Letter of Bernard it has not been yet published, but in the second Letter from Bernard to Fulk, par. II, there are to be found expressions similar in sense, although not exactly alike in words. It is the same in the passage which Picard cites also from Manburg as being still inedited. It is contained in substance in the de Consideratione, B. iv. n. 12, concerning the qualities requisite for a Cardinal.

This is all that it seems necessary or interesting to say by way of preface to this new edition of the Letters of S. Bernard.

§ II. OF THE SANCTITY AND LEARNING OF BERNARD, AND HIS AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

XXIII. Before proceeding farther it will be well to consider the two titles which are commonly bestowed upon Bernard, viz., that he is called Doctor Mellifluus (the sweet-tongued or honied-worded Doctor), and the Last of the Fathers, though not unequal to the first. The title of Doctor has been yielded by the Church to those whose teaching has been approved by its general voice, particularly when that teaching is united with sanctity of life. She gives the name of Fathers to those whom their sanctity, their teaching, and at the same time their antiquity, unite to distinguish; teaching, I mean, of the Holy Scripture and of the tradition of the Church, rather than of philosophical reasonings.

Therefore holy men illustrious by their teaching may be called Doctors immediately after their death, but the name of Fathers is reserved for those whom a certain antiquity long since acknowledged renders venerable, at the same time that they are distinguished by a method of treating the subjects on which they have touched, quite different from the method of philosophical deduction. Each of these titles of honour Bernard has deservedly obtained.

As for the first, it was bestowed upon him by Pope Alexander III., even in the very Mass of his canonization, when he read the Gospel reserved exclusively for the holy Doctors, and commencing by these words: “Ye are the salt of the earth,” etc. (S. Matt. 5:13). Pope Innocent III. confirmed that title of honour in eloquent words in the Collect which he composed for the Festival of S. Bernard, and in which he is called “The Blessed Abbot Bernard and Illustrious Doctor.”

The appellative of Mellifluus (whose words are sweet as honey) is more recent, and the holy Doctor was first called by it by Theophilus Reynauld in a singular little book which is entitled the “Gallic Bee” (Apis Gallicana). The first editors of his works who gave him that title on the first page of their volumes are —first, the editor of the edition of Lyons in 1508, then Jodocus Clictoveus in 1515, and also the two monks of Clairvaux, whom I have already highly praised; and Horst restored the use of the same name after it had fallen into neglect; but among all his praises the very best is this: That merely his name at the head of his works is a title sufficient to recommend them. There can be no praise beyond that for an author; but if there is any other epithet that befits Bernard, it is surely this of θεοδίδακτος (taught of God), bestowed upon him by other authors; since the knowledge with which he was endued seems to have been not so much acquired by human powers as infused into him from above.

XXIV. That he was, notwithstanding, wanting neither in labour nor industry in reading and studying both sacred and profane authors is clear from the manner in which he sometimes quotes them. Without doubt, he had learned and studied

profane authors in his youth and when he was still in the world; and these would sometimes come back to his memory in his old age. As to theological subjects, he studied them with care and industry when he became a monk. How extensive and profound his knowledge of them was may be gathered, in the first place, from two of his Sermons in Cantica, the 80th and 81st, where he discourses in terms so just and so elevated upon the image of God, in the word and in the soul, and on the homogeneity of the Divine Nature, that no one before or after him has surpassed them. A similar remark must be made upon his Letter (190) to Pope Innocent, in which he sets forth wonderfully the satisfaction which Christ has obtained for us by His suffering; and his knowledge of the Canons, as shown in those famous Books de Consideratione, is incomparable. Hence is confirmed that saying of Leo the Great: “The true love of that which is just contains within itself both the precepts of Apostles and the authority of Canons.” Finally, the holy Doctor was versed in the Holy Scriptures, by continual perusal of them, to such a degree, and his writings show so plainly everywhere his use of that knowledge, that, to employ the words of Sixtus of Sienna, they may be called truly centos from the sacred volumes, so studded are they everywhere with phrases drawn from the Old and New Testament as to form a jewelled mosaic, so skilfully and aptly introduced, that they might be thought to be suggested by the subject. And if it is not becoming to make use of the Holy Scripture in that way at all times, and upon every subject, yet it can hardly be disapproved when treating of sacred things. Upon this point may be adduced the words of the Apostle Peter: If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God (1 S. Peter 4:11). It may be said, indeed, that Bernard sometimes employs various texts of Scripture in a sense unfounded and far from literal, so that he seems rather to play upon the words quoted, than to expound their real sense; but it is easy to reply that, there being in Scripture manifold senses, the holy man believed that he might choose that sense which seemed to him proper to edification, especially when he was not treating of any doctrine of the faith, but only proposed to himself to enlarge upon some pious thought, and thereby to attract the attention and delight of his hearers.

XXV. That S. Bernard was not only versed in Holy Scripture, but also had a knowledge of the writings of the holy Fathers, as extensive as his numerous occupations had permitted him to obtain, no one will doubt who has diligently perused his writings. He names them from time to time, and praises their sayings; and their teaching is to be found throughout all his works. Thus, when he says that he has only had “the oaks and beeches of the forest for masters”

(Life, B. i. n. 23), he must be understood to speak in the sense that he himself suggests to Cardinals in the fourth Book de Consideratione, n. 12, viz., that “in every matter we ought to count more upon prayer than upon one’s own industry or labour,” which Geoffrey has rightly applied to Bernard in this very matter (Life, B. iii. 1). But how greatly he profited from the reading of the Fathers, especially from S. Augustine, is shown easily by his Treatise de Gratia et Libro Arbitrio, which is a kind of learned and able summary of Augustine’s teaching on that subject. He joins Ambrose to Augustine in his Letter 11, or rather his Treatise addressed to Hugo of S. Victor; and he adds that from these two columns of the Church he will not easily be drawn away. He praises Athanasius in his tenth Treatise against Peter Abaelard; and not unfrequently Gregory the Great also. Finally, in terminating his Homilies de Laudibus Virginis, he acknowledges that he has borrowed many things from the Fathers. It is a wonderful thing indeed that the holy man, though suffering under so many complaints and such weak health, though distracted by so many cares and duties, not only those belonging to the community (and these could have been neither few nor light in so numerous a household of monks as that over which he presided), but also, and chiefly, public affairs, about which he was consulted, should yet have been able either to read so many books or to succeed in the composition of works so eloquent and so learned; so wonderful indeed that no one can doubt that, beyond the noble nature and rare intelligence with which he had been gifted at his birth, a certain assistance of Divine wisdom must have been bestowed upon him to enable him to speak, act, teach, and write as he did. Thus Geoffrey reports that he had “sometimes acknowledged that when in meditation or prayer he had seemed to see the whole Scripture placed and opened before his eyes” (Life, B. iii. n. 7). But he was accustomed to say that he ascertained better the meaning of the Scriptures “by drinking from the original fountain itself, than from the streams running from it, that is, the expositions of the text; yet he used to peruse pious and orthodox expositors, not with the idea of preferring his own opinion to theirs, but in order to form his own upon theirs; and following faithfully the track made by them, he too used to quench his thirst at the fountain whence they had drank before him” (Ibid. i. 24). This reverence of the holy Doctor towards the ancient Fathers shines forth everywhere in his writings, as in Letter 98, n. Serm. v. in Cantica, n. 6, and elsewhere. He had leisure to devote himself to the study of them, during the long continued malady under which he suffered, and which obliged him during the early years of his office of Abbot to withdraw himself from the society of his brethren, and to live

as a private person in the monastery. He only did this at first, according to the account of Abbot William, in obedience to the express command of William, Bishop of Chalons, and of the Abbots of his order; but afterwards the progress of the disease made it impossible for him to do otherwise (Ibid. i. 33, 40). Abbot William saw him when he was relieved of the management, internal and external, of the monastery, "rejoicing to be able to think of nothing but God and the salvation of his own soul, and enjoying, as it were, the delights of Paradise." Then the holy man discoursed to him of the Canticles, as he did at greater length later on. When Bernard had recovered a little health, he devolved a part of the administration of the monastery upon his brother Gerard, which left him sufficient leisure for the study of the Holy Scripture, and in his twenty-first Sermon in Cantica he attributes to that leisure all the progress that he had made in his spiritual studies. We learn from Sermon 51, n. 3, on the same subject, that these were his occupations; prayer, reading, composition, meditation, and such like. It was in such pursuits that the blessed Father spent the fifteen years of his life which elapsed from the foundation of Clairvaux to the schism of Peter Leonis, at which period, being brought into connection with great public events and questions of considerable difficulty, he so acquitted himself with regard to them as to excite the admiration with which the whole of Europe, not to say the whole world, afterwards regarded him.

XXVI. It was not without reason, therefore, that Nicholas Lefèvre, a great man and preceptor of Louis the Just, was accustomed to say, as we are told by Francis Balbus in his Life, that while he had the highest admiration for all the Fathers, he especially admired the divine (divus) Augustine, whose works he habitually read, and among more recent writers the divine Bernard, whom he called the Last of the Fathers, and certainly as there is none of the ancients who went before him who merited better than Bernard the praise of being second to Augustine, so there is none of those who came after him; since in none is there either a sanctity made more illustrious by actions and even by miracles, a doctrine more pure, a severer respect for tradition, an eloquence more splendid in speech and in writing, or finally, an influence more widely diffused or more powerful. To use the words of William, "What man is there to whose will as well the highest secular authority, as the highest ecclesiastical, deferred, and to whose advice it humbled itself? Proud kings, princes, and tyrants, soldiers, and even robbers so fear and even reverence him, that the saying may seem to have been fulfilled, which we read in the Gospel that the Lord spoke to His disciples: Behold I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, etc. (S. Luke

10:19). But among spiritual persons … there is in him an authority of quite a different kind. For just as it is said by the Prophet concerning those sacred Living Beings, that when there was a Voice from the firmament that was over their heads, they stood and let down their wings, so at the present time everywhere in the world, men of spiritual faculty when they hear him speak or teach are silent themselves, and yield the precedence to him, submitting their senses and their intellect to his. One sees a proof of this in his writings, etc." (Life, B. i. n. 70). Rightly, therefore, says the Monk Cæsar Heisterbach, that his authority was so great "that the purple-clad Fathers of the Church, the kings and princes of the world, used to speak through the mouth of Bernard alone, as through an oracle recognized by the whole world (De Miraculis, B. xiv. c. 17)." This estimation in which the holy Doctor was held has continued even to our own day, as is shown by the testimonies of illustrious men concerning him, among whom Bartholomæus à Martyribus, the pious Bishop of Braga, a student and admirer of Bernard, ought to hold no small place.

XXVII. What drew to him, in his life-time, so great authority in the eyes of all, was his extraordinary humility, even in the midst of honours. He himself ranked this virtue higher than any (De Laudibus Virg., Hom. iv. n. 9). This is what Ernald says: "His life is full of things admirable and worthy of praise. Some admire his teaching, others his character, others his miracles, and I," he says, "render honour to all these. But there is something which I place above them all, and to which I render more willing admiration; it is that being a vessel of election, and boldly upholding the Saviour's name before nations and kings, seeing himself obeyed by all the princes of the world, and the Bishops in every nation listening for his opinion, his advice, by a singular privilege, reverenced by the Roman Church herself; nations and kingdoms being subjected to him, as if by a general delegation; and when his actions and his words were supported even by miracles, which is a thing still more glorious, he was never thrown off his balance, never thought of himself more highly than he ought. On the contrary, he always thought humbly of himself, considered himself not the author, but the instrument, of mighty works; and when in the universal judgment he was raised above all, he was the lowest of all in his own" (Life, B. ii. n. 25). "His heartfelt humility overcame in him the elevation forced upon him, nor was the whole world able to do so much to exalt him, as he to keep himself humble" (Ibid., iii. 22). Nor did such profound sentiments of humility lower him in the opinion of others, but on the contrary raised him the more, and "the more modest and humble he showed himself, the more important were the services he

rendered to the people of God in the knowledge of their salvation" (Ibid., iii. n. 8).

XXVIII. To the sanctity of the Father Abbot responded in his sons the sentiments of piety and perfection of life, which redounded to his glory. The entire Roman Court was a witness to this, when it accompanied Pope Innocent to Clairvaux. "The Bishops wept and the Pontiff himself. All wondered at the gravity of demeanour in that community on an occasion so solemn, so happy for them. Their eyes were fixed upon the ground, nor wandered in curiosity around the assembly. It might have been thought that their eyes were closed; they saw no one, although they were themselves seen by all. The Roman saw nothing that was precious in that monastery; no costly furniture met the eye. They saw nothing in the chapel but the bare walls. The only thing that ambition could envy was the characters of the brethren, and this was not a costly treasure for the brethren, since piety is not diminished when it is shared by another" (Ibid., B. ii. 6). It was on these columns that the authority of Bernard was reared, and by these guards that it was protected. "But the sweetness of his character tempered the austerity of his life, and his sanctity preserved his authority, as if he had brought from heaven to make visible among men a marvel of purity more than human, and sought for in the presence of God" (Life, B. iii. 21; B. i. 28). His sanctity and purity were attested by miracles which were so remarkable and famous that his enemies themselves acknowledge them, so numerous and frequent that Bernard himself was struck with wonder, as Geoffrey testifies (Life, B. iii. 20).

XXIX. As his influence was so great we cannot wonder that he was able, as William reports, "to revive the ancient religious fervour in the monastic order" (Life, B. i. 42), and, according to the narrative of Geoffrey, "to correct the corrupted manners of Catholics, to restrain the violence of schismatics, and to confound the error of heretics" (Life, B. iii. 12). With what power he did all these things is shown by the history of his life, by his own writings, and, most of all, by his Letters.

§ III. WITH WHAT SUCCESS BERNARD LABOURED IN REFORMING THE LIVES OF THE CLERGY, THE MONKS, AND THE LAY PEOPLE

XXX. This holy man grieved over and deplored the morals of his age, which were everywhere corrupted, and particularly those, of the ministers of the Church, of whom he brought many to a better life. Such was the influence of his words and of his preaching that he altogether renewed the appearance of the

Church and of the clergy, particularly in France, and restored it to its ancient virtue and earnestness. It was to him that the elevation of Eugenius, a very holy man, to the See of Rome was due; and he instructed and animated in him all Roman Pontiffs to the right and legitimate administration of the duties of their charge by the admirable books which he put forth de Consideratione. Among Bishops he recalled Henry of Sens and Stephen of Paris from living as courtiers, to a manner of life worthy of their Episcopal order; many also of his own Religious he caused to be elevated to the Episcopate to serve as an example to other Bishops (Life, B. ii. 49). To all of the clerical order he has given salutary warning in his sermon addressed to clerics de Conversione.

Concerning the Episcopal office and character, Letter 42, to Henry, Bishop of Sens, may first be consulted. It is counted among the Treatises and placed now in Vol. ii. Rightly, therefore, in the History of the Bishops of Verdun, is Bernard spoken of as "he on whose counsels the Church of France, and the Realm of France, too, are firmly founded at the present day" (Spicileg., Vol. ii. p. 311).

XXXI. He had, in speaking, an extraordinary charm, "of which his pen, however elegant it might be, could not reproduce the warmth and sweetness." God had bestowed upon him the gift of speech, equally learned, pleasing, and persuasive. "He knew how to adapt what he had to say to the need of the hearer, whether consolation was needed or entreaty, exhortation or blame; he knew when and by whom each was required, and this is apparent even now in reading his writings, though they are far from having the same effect as his words had upon those who heard them" (Life, iii. 7). If his writings are able to produce such an impression upon the reader, how much greater must his words have done upon those who heard them? It is not wonderful, therefore, that God should have done so many and such great things by his means for the salvation of men of his time.

XXXII. But who could possibly recount all the efforts that he made to resuscitate the ancient fervour of the monastic orders? Some idea of this may be formed by going through his admirable letters and writings upon this subject, his Book de Præcepto et Dispensatione, his Apology to Abbot William, and various Sermons. In these he encourages monks to retain with care, and to re-establish with zeal, the original institutions of the Fathers of monachism, that is, works of penitence, mortifications, modesty and humility, poverty, contempt of the world, love of solitude and silence, and zeal for continual advance, upon which he saw that the whole monastic life turned and depended. Hence Peter the Venerable calls him, not undeservedly, "the strong and milk-white column, on which the

edifice of the monastic order is supported," and "the brilliant star, whose glowing and luminous rays give light, as it were—that is, by his example and his preaching—not only to monks, but the whole of the Latin Church in his time" (Letter 228, n. 30).

XXXIII. Laurence of Liége, in his Lives of the Bishops of Verdun, compares the Orders of Cîteaux and of Prémontré to the two Cherubim which shadowed the Mercy Seat; one of those, that of Cîteaux, under the guidance of Bernard, that Abbot of holy memory, recalled to the original rule of Apostolic life the monastic Order which in his time had almost lapsed. "That Order of Cîteaux," he continues, "spread, in the space of three years, into as many as two hundred abbeys of great reputation, merit, and number of Religious, and began to be diffused even among the barbarous Sarmatians and the farthest Scythians" (Spicileg., V. xii. p. 325). So powerful and widespread was the reputation of Bernard for sanctity and that of his disciples! Hence it came about that Bernard himself was held to be, as it were, the founder of the Cistercian Order, of which he was, in fact, the child and scholar. In his time the Cistercian Order took the name of Clairvaux from his monastery, and men began afterwards even to call the Order by the name of S. Bernard, although Innocent VIII. had forbidden that in his letter of union between the two monasteries of Clairvaux and Cîteaux. Hence in the letter of Albero, Bishop of Verdun, cited by Laurence of Liége, of whom we have spoken above, the abbots of Trois-Fontaines, and of Caladia are regarded as being of the Order of Clairvaux (loc. cit., p. 222), and Peter de Celles speaks of "the Order of Cîteaux or Clairvaux" in B. i. Letter 24. So in a letter of Samson, Bishop of Rheims, he makes mention more than once of the Order of Clairvaux (Letter 435). It is true that by these words, "the Order of Clairvaux," the single monastery at Clairvaux with those dependent upon it is intended rather than the whole Order.

XXXIV. It does not seem necessary to explain in this place how austere and rigorous was the life of the Religious of Cîteaux or Clairvaux under Bernard, since that is shown with the greatest exactness in the letters and writings of Bernard, as well as in his Life, especially in B. i. 5, in which the first inhabitants of Clairvaux are said to have served God "in poorness of spirit, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and in many watches; frequently they had no food except the leaves of the beech tree boiled, and bread made of barley, vetches, and millet." Bernard himself in his Letter to Robert (n. i.) says that the delicacies of the Monks of Cîteaux were "vegetables, beans, pottage, and coarse bread with water." Fastred makes similar statements in his Letter, which may be read

among those of Bernard. Stephen of Tournay declares (Letter 72) that “so great is their frugality in food that they use only these two dishes—either beans or pulse from the field, cabbage or vegetables from the garden. As for fish they use it so rarely that scarcely more than the name of it is known among them.” Many more details are given by the same author and by Peter of Celles. This austerity of the Order was kept up not only to the end of the twelfth century, as appears from Peter of Blois (Letter 82), but even beyond the middle of the thirteenth, according to James de Vitry, who says of them: “Meat they do not eat except in severe illness, and they commonly abstain even from the use of fish, eggs, milk, and cheese.” (Hist. Orient. et Occid. c. 13.) We see the same severity of life revived even in our own day in France in the pious monks of Notre Dame de la Trappe, and in those who have imitated them, who by the purity and austerity of their life, by their love of solitude, their silence, their labour, and other religious virtues, show that to be possible in fact, which we read of, but scarcely believe, of Bernard and his disciples.

XXXV. James de Vitry adds in the following chapter that women, who by reason of the weakness of their sex had not dared “from the beginning of the Order” to carry austerity to such a degree of severity, did at length imitate this example. Even in the lifetime of Bernard the female sex was not altogether a stranger to the rigorous observance of the Rule; as we learn from Hermann, a monk of Laon, who says in his Book of the Miracles of the B. Virgin (B. iii. c. 17) that there was near Laon a little convent of virgins of the Cistercian observance, which the Bishop Bartholomew had founded, in which the nuns, under their Abbess Guiberga, “had renounced the use of garments of linen and the use of furs, and used only tunics of wool, which they had spun and woven themselves;” and that they cultivated the earth, clearing the woodland with axe and hoe, tearing out brambles and thorns, labouring with their own hands, seeking in silence their daily bread, and imitating in all respects the life of the monks of Clairvaux.

XXXVI. It would be too long to adduce the names of all the illustrious persons, of both one and the other sex, whom we know to have been induced by Bernard to enter the monastic life. Of such were Henry, son of Louis VI. King of France, Ermengarde Duchess of Brittany, Adelais, Duchess of Lorraine, and innumerable men and women besides, but it is no less true and admirable that he persuaded men who remained in the world to adopt a pious and religious habit of life. Beyond all princes Count Theobald attached himself to him, put himself and all his resources at the disposal of the monastery of Clairvaux, put his very soul

into the hands of the Abbot, and, laying down his princely dignity, showed himself among the servants of God as a fellow-servant and not a lord, so that he would obey in all things whatsoever the lowest in the house had demanded of him (Life, ii. 52.) Abbot Ernald, from whom we have quoted these words, is a witness how much so great a prince was able to do at the advice and entreaty of Bernard, both in constructing, endowing, and assisting monasteries, in relieving the poor, and in the discharge of his high duties as sovereign, and Bernard's Letters testify to the same thing. We learn also from the 118th Letter of Bernard that Beatrice, a lady as distinguished by her piety as her birth, was glad to emulate the pious example of Theobald. Lastly, I may cite as an example how great was the influence which Bernard exercised in correcting the lives of men; the conversion of William, Duke of Aquitaine, whom he changed from a determined schismatic to be a most obedient and pious prince. To sum up all in a few words with Geoffrey: "What crimes has he not condemned; what hatreds has he not composed; what scandals has he not put an end to; what schisms has he not extinguished; what heresies has he not confuted!" But these two last subjects, viz., the schisms and the heresies, require from us special description.

§ IV. OF THE SCHISM OF ANACLETUS, WHICH WAS PUT AN END TO BY S. BERNARD

XXXVII. Although Baronius and other ecclesiastical historians have written much concerning the schism which after the death of Honorius II., in 1130, arose between Innocent and Anacletus, there still remain points requiring a fuller explication, which I shall endeavour to supply from my reading of ancient documents, so as to illustrate the Letters of Bernard upon this subject. And that we may proceed in due order we have first to inquire who or what before the schism were Gregory, Cardinal of S. Angelo, and Peter Leonis (for these were the original names of Innocent and Anacletus). Then we will examine with care the election of Innocent, its circumstances and conditions, and the opposition of Anacletus, and, lastly, the consequence following from all these facts.

XXXVIII. Peter Leonis, a Roman of the Leonine family, was at first a monk at Cluny, and was by Paschal II. (if we may believe Onuphrius) created Cardinal deacon, with the title of SS. Cosmas and Damian; afterwards he was created by Callistus II. Cardinal presbyter of S. Maria trans Tiberim, title of Callistus, in 1120. We learn from the Chronicle of Maurigny "that this Peter was son of Peter who was son of Leo. But Leo, when he made his passover, that is when he was converted from Judaism to Christianity, was baptized by Leo (Leo. IX.) and had the honour to receive his name." "This man," that is to say the convert Leo,

“because he was very learned, attained to great honour in the Court of Rome. He had a son named Peter who afterwards acquired great power and reputation. About that time began between the Sovereign of Germany, who was by succession from Charles the Great Patrician of Rome, and the Roman Church, that most violent quarrel respecting investitures. In the war which followed that man Leo showed himself so strenuous in arms, so provident in counsel, and so faithful to the Roman Church that the Pope honoured him with a particular friendship, and confided to him, with the defence of the other fortifications of Rome, the guard of the Tower of Crescentius, a kind of strong castle which resembled a second Rome, and which is constructed on the right bank of the Tiber and at the head of the bridge which is thrown across the river. From thence his greatness was wonderfully increased; his reputation became every day higher, and he grew continually in riches, possessions, and honours.” I have quoted this passage in full, since our view of what was done will depend in great measure upon the descent of Peter, his Jewish origin, his power, and to recall the name of the tower of Crescentius (which they call the Castle of S. Angelo), in which Anacletus found a safe asylum. The author of this Chronicle continues: “Among the numerous children of each sex of which this kind of Antichrist boasted must be counted this Peter of whom we are speaking now; he is reported in a letter to have been called by some ‘the precursor of Antichrist.’ ” I believe, however, that he was not called thus until after the great event of his life and the consequences which followed from it. “He repaired,” continues our author, “to France, and pursued his studies in Paris; and when he was returning into his own country he assumed the monastic habit at Cluny, that very rich and holy community. After having practised there for a certain time the rules of a religious life, he was recalled to the Court of Pope Paschal II. at the request of his father; and was made Cardinal in the time of Pope Callistus with the same Gregory who afterwards became Pope Innocent II. Then he was sent into France to hold councils at Chartres and Beauvais.” There is no mention here of the title of Cardinal deacon, which, according to Onuphrius, he had received from Pope Paschal. On this matter the authority of the Chronographer of Maurigny is the better, as he was a contemporary of Peter Leonis.

XXXIX. Gregory was, it is said, created Cardinal deacon, with the title of S. Angelo, by Urban II., then sent into Gaul as Legate by Callistus II. with Peter Leonis in 1124, and proceeded with him to Séez, in Neustria, as Ordericus reports. This is how Vincent describes the legation:—“The most excellent Cardinals, Gregory and Peter Leonis, between whom later on there was a schism

as to the Papacy, having been sent into France, performed their commission at Limoges, and during that time made a visit to the man of God, Stephen." Duchesne reports that they both attached their signatures to the constitution of Abbot Suger in 1125 as Legates in these terms:—"I, Peter, Cardinal presbyter and Legate of the Apostolic See, approve and confirm. I, Gregory, Cardinal deacon of S. Angelo and Legate of the Apostolic See," etc. At the same time Bernard wrote many epistles to a certain Cardinal deacon named Peter, who was also Legate; they are numbered 97 and following. This Peter I once supposed, with Manrique, to have been Peter Leonis. But since that Peter to whom Bernard writes appears to have been Cardinal deacon, not presbyter, these letters cannot have been addressed to Peter Leonis, who was at that time Cardinal priest, as we gather from the story of Onuphrius and from some other writers, as well as from the signature of Peter himself, which I have reported above, and from the testimony of Suger, which I am about to adduce. Perhaps this Peter, Cardinal deacon and Legate, to whom Bernard addressed the Letters we have referred to, was the same who came into Gaul by the command of Pope Honorius against Pontius, the deposed Abbot of Cluny, and his supporters; of which step Peter the Venerable speaks thus:—"The venerable Pope Callistus of whom I have written above had then departed this life, and Pope Honorius was his worthy successor. He at the news of the violent disputes at Cluny sent as Legate de latere the lord Cardinal Peter, with whom was joined Hubald, Primate of Lyons, and he condemned with a terrible anathema Pontius and all his supporters, who were then called Pontians." But it is not easy to decide of what title this Peter was Cardinal, for there were more Cardinals of that name about that time besides Peter Leonis, namely, Peter, Bishop of Porto; Peter of Pisa, of the title of S. Susanna; Peter of Burgundy, of the title of S. Marcellus; Peter, Cardinal of S. Æquitius, who was promoted in 1125 in the first creation of Cardinals by Honorius; Peter, Cardinal presbyter of S. Anastasia in the following year; and, lastly, Peter, Cardinal deacon, of the title of S. Adrian, two years later. But the Letters of Bernard seem to have been written before the creation of these two.

XL. In the meantime Pope Honorius died, in the middle of February, 1130. The Chronicle of Maurigny makes this date 1129, since it counts the year in the French manner, beginning from Easter. "Then," says the same author, "the Cardinals who were present at Rome with the Chancellor Haimeric, and had been present at the last moments of Honorius, set over themselves a certain Gregory," him, that is to say, whom we have just now mentioned, "a man distinguished for knowledge and piety, and clothe him, a little too hastily as is

said by some, in the Pontifical insignia. They say that this was done by a dispensation, so that they might frustrate the intrigues of a certain Peter who seemed to be aspiring to the Papacy by secular means. This was Peter, son of Peter, son of Leo," and so on as I have related above concerning him. Suger explains the circumstances very clearly in his Life of Louis the Fat, where he says: "At the death of Honorius the elder and wiser dignitaries of the Roman Church, for the purpose of avoiding any tumult in the Church, agreed that this important election should take place in common, according to the Roman custom, in the Church of S. Mark, and not elsewhere." But "those Cardinals whom duty or personal intimacy retained around Honorius, not daring to assemble in that place through fear of the Roman population, who were in a state of tumult, elected as Pontiff, before the decease of Honorius was generally known, Gregory, Cardinal deacon of S. Angelo, a person of high character. But those who favoured the party of Peter Leonis, having invited others according to the agreement in the Church of S. Mark, assembled there; and when the death of the lord Pope was known they elected by vote the same Peter Leonis, Cardinal presbyter, with the consent of many Bishops, Cardinals, clergy, and Roman nobles, and thus was this pernicious schism caused. The election of Innocent was, therefore, the first in date, but it was made hastily and without the attendance of all the electors. But," continues Suger, "as the party of Peter Leonis prevailed at Rome, both by the influence of his family and by the favour of the Roman nobility," Innocent left Rome, embarked for France, and "sending messengers to King Louis," entreated his assistance. Therefore Louis summoned at Etampes "a Council of Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, and Religious in order to inquire not so much concerning the election as concerning the person elected." This Council declared for Innocent, under the influence of Bernard, in whose judgment the whole of the Council coincided by their vote, as Ernald declares (Life, B. ii. c. 1). In consequence of this Suger, as he himself reports, was commanded by the King to go to meet Innocent at the Abbey of Cluny, whose Abbot, Peter the Venerable, had, with his monks, declared for Innocent, although Anacletus had formerly been a monk there, as I shall note afterwards upon Letter 126. The King himself, with the Queen and his children, went to meet the Pope as far as the Benedictine Abbey of Fleury, where "he prostrated himself at his feet, as if doing reverence at the sepulchre of Peter." Following his example, Henry, King of England, came likewise "to Chartres to meet Innocent, and devoutly prostrated himself at his feet" and promised him obedience for himself and his subjects. But Innocent "in the course of his visitation to the

Church of France arrived in Lorraine. The Emperor Lothair came to meet him in the city of Liége with an enormous attendance of Archbishops, Bishops, and dignitaries of his realm, and in the midst of the great square before the cathedral church, as if he had been the Pope's equerry, approaching him respectfully on foot in the midst of his procession, he kept off with one hand the crowd with a rod, and with the other he led by the bridle the white horse on which the Pope was mounted, like a servant conducting his lord. Then, as the ground was sloping, he supported and almost carried him, and thus greatly increased the dignity of His Paternity (the Pope) in the eyes of all." All this took place in 1130. Although Suger says nothing here of Bernard, we know from Ernald that he was a constant companion of Innocent's journey throughout France.

XLI. Before going on to other subjects it will not be out of place to remark here what took place at Liége. The Annals of Magdebourg, or Saxon MSS., inform us under the year 1131: "The Sunday before Mid-Lent, March 22nd, was held at Liége a very distinguished assembly of Bishops and Princes, thirty-six in number, in presence of the Apostolic lord Innocent, of the Emperor Lothair, with the Empress, where many wise decisions were made for the good both of the Church and of the State." There also Otto, Bishop of Halberstadt, who had been deprived of his See three years before, was restored to it by the intercession of the Emperor and the Princes. Ernald reports that in that assembly was brought forward also the question of investitures, which at length Lothair, by the influence of Bernard, restored to the Church. This Council was preceded by a synod at Wissembourg, as one of the authors of the Annals of Magdebourg contemporary with these events asserts. There was in the month of October a Council of sixteen Bishops assembled at Wissembourg by the Emperor, at which was present the Archbishop of Ravenna, as Legate of the Apostolic See, where Gregory, who as Innocent had prevailed over Peter Leonis in the election of a Pope, was recognized and confirmed by the Emperor Lothair, and all there present.

XLII. After the assembly at Liége Innocent returned into France (as Suger relates) and passed the feast of Easter at S. Denis. "Three days after Easter he went to Paris, and then when he had spent some time in visiting the churches of France, and in supplying his penury from their abundant wealth, he chose to take up his abode at Compiègne". Some time after (Suger declares) he held a Council at Rheims, the opening of which Dodéchin fixes on October 19th, and in which Louis the Younger received on the 25th of the same month the insignia of royalty from the hands of Innocent, as Robert, who has continued the Chronicle

of Sigebert, states. The Saxon MS. Annals report under 1131, “Pope Innocent on the Feast of S. Luke having again assembled together many of the clergy and laity,” that is after the Synod at Liége, “held at Rheims another assembly for some days, over which he presided.” Suger adds that having dismissed this Council the Pope made some stay at Autun, and at length returned into Italy with Lothair.

XLIII. Ernald (Life, ii. c. 1) places the Council at Rheims before that at Liége, and writes that Innocent proceeded from Liége to Clairvaux, and after a short delay in France returned to Rome in the company of Lothair. But it is quite clear that the synod at Rheims was later than that at Liége, as well from the narrative of Suger as from the Saxon Annals, and especially from the Chronicle of Maurigny, in which the journey of Innocent is carefully described. The chronicler, in fact, relates that Innocent, after having been recognized at Chartres as legitimate Pope by King Henry of England, “resolved to proceed to the Court of Lothair, Patrician of Rome, Emperor, and as his first stage on leaving Chartres was at Maurigny,” which is a Benedictine Abbey in the neighbourhood of Etampes, and in his company, besides Bishops and Cardinals, was “Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, who was the most famous preacher of the Divine Word at that time in the whole of France,” and Peter Abaelard, Monk and Abbot, who is called “a religious man, who holds an excellent school of theology.” When the Pope had consecrated the Church of Maurigny, “on the third morning he departed with his company and proceeded to his conference, which was at Liége … then, returning to Gaul, he remained a long time at Autun until the time drew near for the meeting of the Council, which had been summoned to assemble at Rheims on the Festival of S. Luke the Evangelist; then having gained over to his cause Geoffrey Martel of Tours … he returned to Paris, passing by Orleans and Etampes.” In the meantime he heard of the death of Philip, whom his father had associated with him in the kingdom. Profoundly grieved by this news he sends as his legates a latere to console the King two venerable Bishops, “Geoffrey of Châlons, and Matthew of Albano.” Then proceeding to Rheims he solemnly anointed Louis as King in a fully-attended synod. He received at the same time letters of obedience and fidelity from the Emperor Lothair and from Henry, King of England, as well as from Hildefonso the Elder, King of Hither Spain, and Hildefonso the Younger, King of Farther Spain. Besides this, it filled the Pontiff with great joy to receive “a letter from the most excellent hermits of the Chartreux, which was borne by a certain venerable Abbot of the Cistercian Order, and read in full Council by Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres.” This Abbot

was Hugo, of Pontigny, as the letter bears witness, which the same Chronicler inserts at the end of his second volume. At the commencement of the third he adds that “a little after the Council of Rheims Innocent returned to Rome, but because Peter, his unjust rival, had drawn to his own side the greater part of the city, Innocent was able to obtain only the Church of S. Peter, which is the seat of the dignity of the holy priesthood, but Peter occupied as his residence the palace of the Lateran, to which belongs Imperial dignity.” Upon this matter there is a letter of the Emperor Lothair in the Spicilegium, Vol. vi., in which Norbert, Archbishop of Magdebourg, has the title of Chancellor. He was acting as the deputy of Bruno, of Cologne, who had not proceeded into Italy with the Emperor (Chron. Saxon.) But Innocent for the sake of the City of Rome withdrew to Pisa, where he remained until the death of Peter, which took place in 1137.

XLIV. In the meantime Peter, or Anacletus, left no means unattempted to bring over persons of influence to his side. Among Bishops, Gerard of Angoulême adhered to him, who since he had fulfilled the functions of legate under the two last Popes had it much at heart to obtain the same honour from Anacletus also. He gained over to Anacletus William, Count of Poitou. Furthermore, Anacletus, in order to bring over Roger, Duke of Apulia, to his party, gave him his own sister in marriage and crowned him King of Sicily, as Ordericus states (B. xii. p. 498). Among the letters of Peter Leonis, in which he takes upon him the name of Pope, which have been preserved in the MS. of Casinum, and published in part by Baronius, there is one in which he complains vehemently of the Abbot of Farfa, whom, because he was opposed to himself, he has, as he says, “stricken with the sting of the Church,” i.e., “condemned with a sentence of excommunication.”

XLV. All these troubles and divisions which we have detailed, perhaps at greater length than was necessary, gave much occupation to Bernard, who wrote letter after letter in every direction to bring over schismatics to Innocent and to keep those who were faithful to their duty. He undertook various journeys also for the same cause, as we infer from the following epistles and from his Life (B. ii. 6 and 7).

XLVI. We now have to speak of Gerard, Bishop of Angoulême, of whom Arnulf, then Archdeacon of Séez, and afterwards Bishop of Lisieux, has left us a portrait in the treatise which he wrote against him, and which our brother Achery has published in Vol. ii. of the Spicilegium. “He was Norman by birth; the poverty of his parents obliged him to leave his father’s house, and was at length elected Bishop of Angoulême by a chance,” as there was a division among the

electors, and his election offered “a certain means of escape” from the difficulty in which they were. Then he began to confer the dignities of his Church upon his nephews, born in a low condition, to shut his eyes to crimes and leave them unpunished, to seek and to obtain the dignity of legate from the Pontiff, to act haughtily, to convoke Councils and synods in a spirit of ostentation. Arnulf adds that when Innocent was elected, Gerard at first favoured him, but not having been able to obtain the dignity of legate from him he threw himself into the party of Peter Leonis, by whom a new commission as legate was granted to him, embracing all the countries between the Alps and the ocean of the west. And it was added that “wherever he should set his foot there he should have the power of legate.” When he was reinvested with this dignity he endeavoured to gain over the Kings of England and the two Spains to the party of Anacletus, but without success. He deposed the Bishops of Poitiers and Limoges and replaced them by unworthy men. He imposed himself, Gerard, upon the See of Bordeaux, being at once Bishop and Archbishop, which Ernald also states (Life, B. ii. c. 5). Then Arnulf says, addressing Gerard, and enumerating the partisans of Anacletus, “that unbelieving troop whom you follow compose all the supporters of Peter Leonis; it is not yet purged from the leaven of Jewish corruption, and that tyrant, whom Sicily, the nurse of tyrants, sustains … it has in its ranks only the Count of Poitou, a man devoted to pleasures, a man sensual, not capable of comprehending spiritual mysteries, given over to the error because of the refusal of a request unlawful to be granted.” These are the supporters of Anacletus. “While to our side,” continues Arnulf, “we have the adhesion of the Emperor, every king, every prince, every man almost who is worthy to bear the Christian name. But in that universal consent, those whose adhesion is most significant to my eyes, whose authority strikes me, influences me, and commands my obedience, are the men to whom it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and whose conversation seems to be already in heaven; such are they in truth who dwell among the perpetual snows of the Chartreuse, and they who, shining forth from Cîteaux or Cluny, fill all the world with the rays of their light.” Thus speaks Arnulf to Gerard, whom, nevertheless, others praise, but the authority of Arnulf ought to weigh most with us. “I have written nothing,” he says, “but what I either myself knew personally or have received on good authority, or which is not, at least, affirmed by public report.” There is more respecting Gerard in the notes to Letter 127. Gerard died in 1136. Then Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, received the command of Innocent to traverse the whole of France, and especially Aquitaine, and to destroy with his own hands all

the altars which Gerard, the author and supporter of that rebellion, or which Gilo, Bishop of Tusculum, or their accomplices had consecrated in the time of the schism, “with benediction and unction of chrism,” as we read in the Chronicle of Maurigny, B. iii. But we are lingering too long upon these matters. Those who wish to learn more respecting the sentiments, life, and character of Innocent and Anacletus may consult the treatise of Arnulf just quoted. There is a letter of Paschal II. respecting the Legation of Gerard to be found in Spicileg., B. iii., and in B. iv. an account of the Synod of Laon, at which he presided in 1109.

XLVII. It may be seen (as we have already said) by the Life and in the Letters of Bernard how many journeys he accomplished, and how much trouble he went through in the long and unhappy time of that schism. Thus he thrice travelled into Italy upon this account, and it was thanks to his efforts, that the schism was terminated by the death of Anacletus in 1138. For although the schismatics gave him a successor in the anti-pope Victor, it was “not so much in order to prolong the division as to find, by delay, a suitable opportunity to reconcile themselves with Pope Innocent,” and, in fact, Victor himself came by night “to the holy man”—that is, to Bernard—“and he induced him to lay aside the insignia of Papal dignity which he had assumed, and conducted him to the feet of Innocent” (Life, ii. 47). Such was the end of this long and calamitous schism.

XLVIII. In sign of gratitude for so great a service, which was due principally to Bernard, Innocent freed by his own authority the possessions of the Cistercian Order from the tithes payable upon them, without even consulting those to whom the tithes belonged. From these new divisions arose, which caused no little trouble and annoyance to Bernard. The monks of Cluny, in particular, complained loudly against this exemption, which deprived them, without compensation, of a great part of their revenues, and their irritation rose to such a point that the monks of Gigny destroyed to the very ground a neighbouring monastery of the Cistercians named Moiremont. The detailed account of this melancholy event will be found in two Letters numbered 229 and 283, the former from Peter the Venerable, and the latter from Bernard, and in the notes upon these. Nor was this contest immediately closed, but in process of time extended into other countries also.

XLIX. We may infer this from Letter 82, which Peter of Blois wrote in the name of Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury, “To the Abbot and the Convent of Cîteaux;” for in this letter, after beginning with praises of the Cistercians, he goes on to say that “their reputation is in one respect stained by their refusal to pay to other monks and to the clergy the tithes which are due from them,” the

writer continues, “and whence comes this injurious exemption that you should be freed from the payment of tithes, to which your lands were liable before they came into your hands, and which have hitherto been paid, not with respect to the persons holding them, but by the necessary liability of the land? If those lands had passed into your possession, wherefore is the right of another person over them in this respect to be endangered? For, in common fairness, when the lands passed to you they passed with the burden that was upon them.” And when the privilege accorded to the Cistercians by Pope Innocent was brought forward as an argument against him, he replies that such a privilege “might be borne with for a while, since necessity had been the cause of its introduction at a time when the Order”—that is, of Cîteaux—“was happy in its poverty, and gladly shared with the poor its scanty resources.” But now that its possessions were multiplied, “even beyond all measure,” such a privilege must be considered rather to minister to the ambition of the Order than to be a means of assistance to piety. “Furthermore, whatever may be the extent of the privileges of the Roman Church, they cannot be made use of to usurp unjustly that which belongs to another.” At length, if the Cistercians shall show themselves pertinacious and unyielding in this matter, Richard threatens that he will bind in the bond of anathema all persons “who shall either give or sell anything to the Cistercians” to the hindrance of the right of tithes, and that he will appeal to the throne of the Supreme Judge “that none may absolve from the bond of this excommunication.” He goes even farther still, since he threatens to invoke the help of the secular arm in favour of the spiritual power, and to confiscate all that shall have been sold or given to the Cistercians against the decree which he has pronounced. This is what we read in the letter of Peter of Blois.

L. Geoffrey, Prior of Vigeois, makes similar complaints on the same subject in his Chronicle (Labbe, Biblioth. ii. p. 328), in which, after praising the Cistercians because they gave many alms from the proceeds of their own labour, because they sang their offices in choir, according to the Rule, and for many other good actions, he yet notes this against them, that they took the lands and refused to pay the tithes due to others; without counting this, that they indiscreetly threw into obscurity the memory of certain saints. He wrote this about the close of the twelfth century, at which time the tempest raised by the exemption from tithe decreed by Innocent in favour of the Cistercians had not yet subsided.

§ V. CONCERNING THE ERRORS OF PETER ABAELARD AND OF GILBERT DE LA PORRÉE,

LI. This circumstance added no little to the glory of Bernard, that he had no others as adversaries than the partisans of error or heresy, nor did he attack the men so much as their errors. Chief among the former class must be reckoned Peter Abaelard and Gilbert or Gislebert de la Porrée. Among heretics, the worst was Henry and his followers, who were called Henricians from him. We shall treat here of the two former, and of Henry and his followers in the next paragraph.

LII. Peter Abaelard gives a vivid description of himself in his history of his calamities; afterwards Otto, Bishop of Frisingen, has sketched him with a kindly pen. You have an epitome of his life in my Notes to Letter 187 of Bernard, where the defenders and supporters of Abaelard are refuted. Here we need only give a summary of what Bernard did against him. Then we shall show by the words of his defenders themselves how unjust those are towards the truth, who declare themselves in his favour in the controversy, rather than in that of S. Bernard.

LIII. First, we will commence by observing that long before his collision with Bernard he had been cited by Conon, Legate of the Holy See, to the Council held at Soissons in 1121; and in it, his Book on Theology, in which erroneous propositions were contained, was committed to the flames, the author being confined in the monastery of S. Medard. When he was dismissed thence, he proceeded to disseminate his views in all directions, and grievously resenting the imputation of being a heretic, which was thrown upon him by many people, and of which he suspected that Bernard was the origin, he cited him to the Council of Soissons, in 1140, or it might be said, dragged him thither, so unwilling was Bernard to come.

There, in presence of the Bishops and other illustrious clergy of the second order, Abaelard himself was heard a second time and confuted by Bernard, his doctrine examined and again proscribed, but the author was left unpunished, because he had appealed to the Apostolic See. But as he heard that the sentence of the synod had been approved by Innocent II., he desisted from his appeal, and on the advice of Peter the Venerable retired into the monastery of Cluny, and at last made a pious ending of his days in a monastery at Chalons sur Saône.

LIV. Bernard wrote against Abaelard various Letters, of which the most important is one to Pope Innocent (Letter 190), which is placed eleventh among the Treatises. In this letter Bernard names briefly the chief heads of the errors which he had found in the writings of Abaelard, and logically refutes them. In

this edition I place, following the Vatican MS., at the head of this Letter, or rather Treatise, fourteen propositions extracted by Bernard from the writings of Abaelard which were submitted to Innocent at the same time as the Letter. I shall treat at length the whole of this controversy in an Admonition prefixed to this particular Treatise. For the present I content myself with adding some particulars respecting the defenders of Abaelard.

LV. In the first place must be quoted Abaelard himself, who in his Apology complains that many errors had been imputed to him "by malice," and particularly that he had said "the Father is all powerful, the Son powerful, and the Holy Spirit without power," which words he repudiates as "not merely heretical, but diabolical," and affirms that they cannot be found in his writings. But of this and other heads of accusations I shall speak in observations on Treatise 11. Abaelard confesses, however, in the course of his Apology, that he had written "some things that he ought not, by error;" but protests that he had written nothing "through malice or through pride," and adds that if through his much speaking, some expressions had escaped him which were to be regretted, he was always prepared "to correct, or altogether retract, what he had spoken ill;" and finally, that he was a son of the Church, and "received what she receives, and rejected what she rejects." Well and good; I have no wish to prove Abaelard to have been a heretic; it is sufficient for the cause of Bernard to show that he erred in certain respects, and this indeed he himself does not deny.

LVI. But how far does the testimony of Otto of Frisingen tell against the holy Doctor or in favour of Abaelard? He says that "Bernard had a fervent jealousy for the Christian religion, and was credulous from his habitual gentleness of character," so that he had little love for those Professors who attached too much importance to their human reasonings and their worldly wisdom, "and if anything was reported of such persons which seemed to show that they were out of harmony with the Christian faith, he listened willingly to it" (Otto, B. i. c. 47). But this judgment is rather praise than blame for the holy Doctor, since there is nothing more in the duty of a Catholic Doctor than to repress as soon as possible men of that class, who attach too much value to their philosophical reasonings, especially when they devise new terms of philosophy, which may easily lead into error incautious persons. I may adopt the words of William, that "the excess of zeal which is blamed in him will be itself praiseworthy to pious minds … happy is he to whom the only crime which can be imputed is that which others are accustomed to consider as doing them honour" (Life, B. i. 41). But Otto himself, although he favours Abaelard, yet acknowledges that he had weakened

too much the distinctions between the Three Persons of the holy Trinity, not having followed good precedents, “and that because of this he was considered a Sabellian heretic in the provincial synod of Soissons.” How then can it be wondered at, if repeating the same errors a second time he was regarded with extreme suspicion by lovers of the orthodox faith?

LVII. I need not say much of Berengarius of Poitiers, who wrote an Apology for Abaelard, who had been his teacher, against the synod of Soissons and against Bernard himself; as well because he was a man of little or no authority, as because he, when he returned to a better mind, was unwilling to continue to be “the defender of the propositions objected to Abaelard because, although they might not be unorthodox, yet they sounded distinctly suspicious,” and he would have suppressed his book if he had been able, as he declares in his letter to the Bishop of Mende. And although we have no longer all the books of Abaelard in which he had disseminated his errors, yet in those which remain there is no lack of “difficult and dangerous” passages, as the Paris theologians have detected, and have placed at the head of his works a kind of antidote to destroy the effect of the more dangerous of these. It would have been very desirable that the Apologetic Preface should have been expunged from thence. But enough has been said of Abaelard.

LVIII. The condemnation of Gilbert de la Porrée, Bishop of Poitiers, excited no less angry feeling against Bernard than that against Abaelard. According to Otto of Frisingen, Gilbert “was born at Poitiers, studied there, afterwards became a teacher, and from a teacher he finished by being Bishop of the same city. From his youth he subjected himself to the training of the most renowned masters, and relying more on their knowledge than his own intellect, he acquired from them learning solid and profound” (Otto, B. i. c. 46), while praise of his knowledge was enhanced by the gravity of his character. These masters were, “first, Hilary of Poitiers, then Bernard of Chartres, and finally two brothers named Anselm and Ralph, both of Laon.” This Hilary was no other, I think, than the great Bishop Hilary of Poitiers, whose authority, as Geoffrey declares, Gilbert abused. Bernard of Chartres is not otherwise known to me than by the testimony of Otto; as for Ralph of Laon, he was well known to Guibert, to a monk named Hermann, of Laon, and to Geoffrey, the secretary of S. Bernard, as was also his brother Anselm, Dean of Laon. In his Commentaries on the Psalms, on the Epistles of S. Paul, and upon Boethius, he indulges in philosophical speculations concerning the Divinity and other truths of religion beyond what is permissible. Otto states that “there were among other opinions which were objected to him four

propositions concerning the Divine Majesty, namely:—That the Divine Essence is not God; that the properties of the Persons are not the Persons themselves; that the Divine Persons cannot be predicated in any proposition; that the Divine Nature is not incarnate." I will speak more fully upon these in later chapters. Minor errors also were objected to him, namely, that "no one except Christ had any merit, that no one should be baptized except those ordained to salvation," and other opinions of that kind which Geoffrey reports. (Treatise against the opinions of Gilbert, in the Appendix.)

LIX. Gilbert having given utterance to all these errors in a sermon which he preached to an assembly of his clergy, his two Archdeacons, Arnold and Calo, report the matter to Eugenius III., who was then at Sienna, in Tuscany, and was coming into France. He remitted the examination of the cause to France. In the meantime the Archdeacons obtain the support of Bernard for their side. An examination was made of the accused doctrines at Auxerre and at Paris, and they were condemned at a Council at Rheims in 1148. Otto reports briefly what was done in each of these assemblies, but Geoffrey, the secretary of Bernard, gives a more detailed account. He even wrote a short history of the proceedings respecting them at the Council of Rheims, and forty years later he wrote a letter on the subject to Henry, Cardinal Bishop of Albano. Both his letter and this history will be found at the end of Vol. vi.

LX. I have found no particulars respecting this assembly at Auxerre, of which only Otto makes mention; but there are, on the contrary, many details given of the proceedings of that at Paris. Geoffrey states that it was held "at the Festival of Easter," and therefore it must have been in 1147; since we learn from Otto that the Council assembled at Rheims "during the Lent" of the following year, and the Appendix to Sigebert fixes it as the 22nd March. "Gilbert appeared then before the Pope, the Cardinals, the Bishops, and other venerable and learned men, to explain himself on the points upon which he was accused. The debate lasted for several days. There appeared against him two celebrated doctors, Adam de Petit-Pont, a very acute reasoner, and recently made Canon of the Cathedral of Paris, and Hugh de Champfleury, Chancellor of the King, who affirmed upon their oath that they had heard from the mouth of Gilbert certain of the incriminated propositions. In the midst of the discussion which followed upon this, it was declared that Gilbert had said amongst other things that 'I confess that God the Father is God in one sense, and Father in another sense; yet not both God and Father in the same sense.' Joscelin, Bishop of Soissons, was particularly indignant at this declaration. All this took place on the first day.

Another time he was accused of having in a prosa concerning the Holy Trinity said that the ‘three Persons were three individuals.’ The Archbishop of Rouen (Hugh the Third of that name) made the matter worse by saying that it would have been better to say that God is one individual.” This is the account which Otto, Bishop of Frisingen, gives of the Council of Paris (Otto, B. i. c. 51–52).

LXI. Geoffrey relates it a little differently, and makes the synod at Viterbo which was held upon the same subject to have preceded it. He mentions but one informer against Gilbert to the Pope, the Archdeacon Arnold, upon whom he bestows the cognomen Pince-sans-rire [= qui non ridet, i.e., a dry joker]. But in the meeting at Paris he opposes Bernard to Gilbert as his only adversary, “whose concern it was wherever he might be to defend every interest of our Lord Christ. When Gilbert was required to produce his Commentary on Boethius, in which were contained some suspected propositions, he replied that he had it not at hand. But he denied that he had ever taught or believed ‘that the Divine Nature was not God,’ etc., and he called in witness of this two of his disciples, Rotold, then Bishop of Evreux, and afterwards Archbishop of Rouen, and the Magister Ivo of Chartres, another person without doubt than the illustrious Bishop of Chartres of that name.” I think that this man was a regular Canon of the Abbey of S. Victor, near Paris, and afterwards created Cardinal by Innocent II., to whom Bernard’s Letter 193 was addressed. To put an end to these altercations the Pope orders that the book in question should be brought to a future Council “which he proposed to hold during the same year at Rheims;” and although it was deferred to mid-Lent of the following year, it was none the less held within a year from the meeting at Paris, since that was held, as we have said above, during the preceding Easter.

LXII. “In the meantime the Exposition of Boethius by Gilbert was, by order of the Pope, sent to Godescalc, then Abbot of Mont S. Eloi, near Arras, and afterwards Bishop of the same town, in order that he might examine it; he noted in it many suspicious propositions, to each of which he opposed the teaching of the holy Fathers extracted from their works. Alberic, Bishop of Ostia and Legate in Aquitaine, would have brought forward the most ample information regarding the life and conduct of Gilbert if he had not been removed by a premature death a little before these discussions. At length, at the Council of Rheims,” came on the discussion of the propositions noted by Godescalc; but as he was not a practised speaker the book of Gilbert, and also the passages of the holy Fathers noted by Godescalc, were delivered by the lord Pope to S. Bernard. The Council contained Bishops from the four realms of France, Germany, England, and

Spain. Among these were personages of great renown and of no little learning, Geoffrey de l'Oratoire, Archbishop of Bordeaux, whose suffragan Gilbert was; Milo, Bishop of Térouanne; Joscelin, Bishop of Soissons; and Suger, Abbot of S. Denis, to whom Louis, King of France, when setting out for Jerusalem, had committed the administration of his entire realm; and, indeed, says Otto, he did this according to the prerogative of that community (Otto, B. i. c. 55). Geoffrey, although he did not approve the teaching of Gilbert, was favourable to his person.

LXIII. At the first session of the Council Gilbert called his clerks to bring in various enormous volumes, complaining that his adversaries had quoted against him only mutilated texts. Then Bernard spoke thus: "What need is there to delay longer about expressions of that kind? The origin of this scandal arises from nothing else but this—that a great many persons believe that you think and teach that the Divine Essence or Nature, the Divinity, Wisdom, Goodness, Greatness are not God, but the Form in which God is. If this is what you believe, avow it openly or deny it." He dared to affirm, that all this was the Form of God and not God Himself. Then Bernard replied: "Behold! here we have what we were seeking; let that confession be written down." So the supreme Pontiff directed; and then Dom Henry of Pisa, who was then sub-deacon of the Roman Church, and who at a later time became a monk at Clairvaux, the Abbot of S. Anastasius, and finally Cardinal priest, with the title of SS. Nereus and Achilles, brought at his command pen, ink, and paper. But while he was drawing up the record of that avowal of Gilbert, the latter cried out, addressing himself to Bernard: "And do you write also that the Divinity is God." To this Bernard replied: "Let it be written with an iron pen, with a point of diamond." After much disputation on one side and the other, the Cardinals declared that they would reserve their judgment. At this the Bishops murmur greatly because the Cardinals reserved to themselves alone the decision of the cause, and charged Bernard that he should draw up articles of faith in an opposite sense to those for which Gilbert was accused, fearing lest (since there were many supporters of Gilbert among the Cardinals) the Council should be dissolved without any decision. Therefore Bernard did this. Then the Bishops subscribed these articles, and sent them by Hugh, Bishop of Autun, Milo, Bishop of Térouanne, and Abbot Suger to the Pope, begging him to confirm them, which Eugenius did without difficulty. At length Gilbert, being summoned before the assembly which had met in the noble palace called Tau (the palace of the Archbishop of Rheims was thus called because of the shape of the battlements, which recalled the form of the Greek

letter T), he abjured spontaneously all the errors contained in each of his propositions. The Pope condemned them all likewise, with the book of the author of them, and strictly forbade that anyone should dare to read or transcribe that book until the Roman Church had corrected it. Gilbert having said that he would make the corrections that the Pope required, the Pope refused permission for him to do so. This is in brief summary the account of Geoffrey.

LXIV. The account of Otto gives some details which are wanting in that of Geoffrey, and in some respects does not agree with it. Thus, he places the examination of Gilbert as having been entered upon "when the synod was finished and the decrees promulgated;" then he says that it was "after the week of Mid-Lent," and when the time of the sacred Passion of the Lord was beginning to draw on, that Gilbert was brought up for judgment; and that when he had read from the books of the orthodox Fathers passages in his defence, it was Pope Eugenius, who was fatigued with all these quotations, and not Bernard, as Geoffrey asserts, who required that Gilbert should say simply "whether he believed that the supreme Essence was God," and that he, wearied by the lengthened reading, replied, without consideration, "Not," which avowal the secretary of the Council immediately caught up from his mouth. After the dismissal of the assembly he says that Gilbert employed the rest of the day and the following night in assuring himself of the support of his friends among the Cardinals, of whom he had no small number.

LXV. The next morning the record of the proceedings was read, and the Bishop was called upon to reply; but he at length so explained his view that, if the Name of God were taken to denote His very Nature, he allowed that it was God; but if it were understood to denote a Divine Person, then he could not subscribe to that, for fear (he said) that if he did so, without qualification, he might be led to allow that, whatever might be affirmed of either Person, the same might equally be affirmed of the Divine Essence; and so "be led on to say that as the Person of the Son had become incarnate and had suffered, so the Divine Essence had also been incarnated and had suffered." He supported this distinction by passages drawn from the works of the Fathers Theodoret and Hilary, and also by the authority of a Council of Toledo: "and when the Abbot of Clairvaux wished to determine the sense of this last authority, and employed certain words which were not pleasing to the Cardinals," Gilbert demanded that they might be written down, to which Bernard agreed, using the words which Geoffrey records, "Let them be written with a pen of iron and point of diamond." At length the holy Abbot assembled with the Bishops, and, together with them,

drew up a profession of faith opposed to the propositions of Gilbert, which act of the clergy of France so grievously offended the sacred college of Cardinals that they complained of the matter to the Pope, both against the Bishops and against Bernard himself, because they had ventured by drawing up their profession of faith without even consulting the Cardinals, to put the last touch, as it were, to the final sentence, which office belonged to the Roman See. Bernard being at length called upon by the Pontiff to give satisfaction to the Cardinals, replied, with deference and humility, that neither he himself, nor the lords the Bishops had made any definition with respect to the articles in question; but having been challenged by the same Bishop of Poitiers to write down his profession of faith, he had not been willing to do that alone, but had simply taken the Bishops as witnesses of his views to give more authority by their witness to that which was asked of him. At this explanation so full of humility and modesty, the previous indignation of the Cardinals was appeased, on condition, however, that the writing just read having been drawn up without reference to the Curia, should not be taken for a Creed in the Church, as being deficient in the needful weight of authority. “And thus no decision could be arrived at concerning the three propositions, because of the excitement which had before been raised.” Otto declares that this was not strange, and he adds that Gilbert differed from the other Bishops on a fourth point also, “since they professed that the Divine Nature was Incarnate but in the Son.” But Gilbert, “that the Person of the Son was incarnate not without his Nature. The Roman Pontiff spoke only on the first point, and defined that in theology no separation can be made between the Nature and the Person, and that the Divine Essence should be called God not only in an ablative sense, but also in a nominative sense.” Gilbert reverently accepted the decision of the Pope, restored his Archdeacons to favour, and returned to his diocese “in full honour, and in the completeness of his powers.”

LXVI. In all these accounts it is evident that Otto strongly favoured Gilbert, therefore it is not to be wondered at that at the end of his account he should add that it is doubtful whether “in this matter the Abbot of Clairvaux, being subject as a man to the weakness of human nature, was not deceived, or whether the Bishop, being a very learned and accomplished man, did not simply escape the judgment of the Church by cleverly concealing his real meaning.” But Radevic relates that Otto, when very near his death, caused his book to be brought in which he had written this, and delivered it to certain religious men, “that whatever he had said on behalf of the opinions of Magister Gilbert which might do harm to anyone might be corrected according to their judgment.”

Rightly does Geoffrey refer his readers with respect to the whole of this disputation to the Sermons of Bernard in Cantica, especially to Sermon 80, in which the holy man does not hesitate to declare that those are heretics who persist in defending the opinion of Gilbert, although he refrains from mentioning the name of the author because of his submission.

§ VI. OF THE HENRICIANS AND OF OTHER HERETICS WHO WERE REFUTED BY BERNARD

LXVII. Gilbert and Abaelard, who had fallen into theological errors by a perverse employment of philosophy, Bernard overcame by reason and authority. He overcame equally by his actions and his example many heretics who at that time infested the various provinces of France. These were, in Flanders, Tanchelm, a native of Antwerp; in Provence, Peter de Bruys, whose followers were called Petrobrusians; and in Aquitaine Henry. Others there were, but without any well-known leader, in Lorraine and in the districts about Cologne, whom we will therefore call Colognians. To these may be added all the followers of Arnold of Brescia.

LXVIII. It appears from the Life of S. Norbert that he opposed Tanchelm and his eager assaults, and that Frederick, Bishop of Cologne, “hindered their advance and their attacks” in the diocese of Maestricht: and on this subject there is a letter in Tengnagel from this Church to the same Frederick about “the seducer Tanchelm,” which gives an account of his heresy and its origin. Peter the Venerable also laboured against the Petrobrusians, and wrote a treatise in order to refute them. The zeal of Bernard for the Christian cause was exercised chiefly against the heresy of the Henricians, which he industriously harassed by speech and writing. His Letters 240 and 241 should be read on this subject, and the Life of Bernard, by Geoffrey, B. iii. c. 6, to all of which we will add some further information from other sources.

LXIX. Henry, whom the holy man, and Geoffrey after him, calls “an apostate monk,” is also called “a false hermit” in the Acts of the Bishop of Mans (Analecta, Vol. iii.), where his character and his perverse actions are accurately described. In what place he was born the words used do not indicate precisely. “About the same time,” that is to say, under Bishop Hildebert, “a certain hypocrite appeared on the confines of these regions whose depraved character and whose detestable doctrines rendered him worthy of the punishment of being thrown to scorpions in the manner of parricides.” He under a feigned show of learning and sanctity committed horrible excesses. He was wont to boast that he could recognize at the first glance the faults of all men, even those which were

unknown to anyone. He sent to Mans two of his disciples, who arrived in the suburbs of the city on Ash Wednesday. “They bore, according to the custom of their master, staves and a banner of the Cross, and resembled penitents in all respects by the colour of their garments, and by their kind of life.” The inhabitants of Mans, being deceived by these appearances, welcomed them as if they had been angels. Even the Bishop Hildebert received them kindly, and as he was on the point of setting out “on a journey to Rome,” he “enjoined his archdeacons amongst other things to permit the pseudo-hermit, Henry, to enter peaceably into the town and to preach to the people,” which he had afterwards reason bitterly to repent. Perhaps it may be inferred from this that Henry was originally from the neighbourhood of Mans, where he commenced to disseminate the venom of his perverse doctrine. If he had made himself known elsewhere already, Hildebert, who was a prelate both learned and vigilant, would not so easily have given him access into his city. But it may possibly be the case that he had come from a distant region, perhaps from Italy, as I am about to explain.

LXX. Scarcely had Henry entered into the city than “the common people, as they were accustomed to do, applauded his novelties.” Many of the clerks also supplied him with food, and prepared for him a platform from whence he might address the great crowds of people, which he did with “marvellous eloquence.” The effect of his addresses was to excite the anger of the people against the ecclesiastics of the town. They were treated “like heathens and publicans, so that great threatenings were uttered against their domestics, nor would anyone buy anything from them or sell anything to them.” They even went so far as “to determine not only to pull down their houses and pillage their goods, but also to stone them or to hang them to the gibbet, had not the sovereign and the nobles resisted their wicked intentions.”

LXXI. When the turn which things had taken was but too late perceived, the clergy of Mans forbade, by a written notice, the preaching of Henry and his followers. Wherefore Henry, the return of Hildebert being made known, “retired into the village of S. Carileph,” by no means desisting from his endeavours, but breaking out into more violent proceedings day by day. When Hildebert, on his return from his Roman journey, wished to give his benediction to the people, they being led away by the preaching of the heretic, treated him with great disrespect. Then he went to meet the deceiver, demanded of him “whether he had received sacred Orders, and if so, what?” He replied that he was a deacon; and having been bidden to depart out of that province, “he fled secretly, and

would have spread his serpentine venom and troubled other regions in like manner, but that happily his reputation preceded him." All that we have said upon this subject is from the Acts of Hildebert.

LXXII. During this time, two disciples of Henry, Cyprian and Peter, renounced their errors, as an encyclical letter of Hildebert (n. 78) declares. In this their master is thus depicted: "This was Henri, a principal snare of the devil and well-known soldier of antichrist. Taken captive by his appearance of religion and knowledge, these two brothers long adhered to him, until both the turpitude of his life and the errors of his doctrine became evident to them. When they had become convinced that his ways were not right, their eyes were opened as to their condition, and they came to present themselves to us. He had so infested our diocese with his doctrines, that our clergy had scarcely the liberty to oppose and confute them even within the walls of their Churches." It was thus that Hildebert was convinced, though very late, of the danger to which he had exposed himself by an incautious approbation of unknown teachers, who under an appearance of piety corrupt the minds of their hearers.

LXXIII. It is clear from what precedes, that this Henry infested the diocese of Mans long before he approached the neighbourhood of Toulouse, whence Bernard expelled him: since the journey to Rome, which Hildebert undertook while he was yet Bishop of Mans and during the time of which that wicked deceiver sowed the tares among the people of Mans, must have taken place before 1125, in which year Hildebert became Archbishop of Tours. But Bernard, on the other hand, did not go into the neighbourhood of Toulouse before 1147. In his Letter 241, which he wrote from Toulouse to Count Hildefonsus, the holy man expresses himself in these terms: "Inquire if you please, in what manner he has departed from the city of Lausanne, from Mans, from Poitiers, and from Bordeaux." It appears that such was the itinerary of that apostate in his wanderings. He began to preach at Lausanne, from whence he went to Mans; perhaps he had come to Lausanne from Italy, from which rubbish of this kind, relics of the Manichæans, passed over into every part of France. Such were those heretics called Cameracenses who had come out of Italy and were in 1025 condemned at the Council of Arras. About the same time some of them were burnt at Orleans, and indeed the Exordium Cisterciense (Life, B. vii. c. 17) calls the Henricians by the name of Manichæans, where it is reported that the legate of the Pope and other Bishops assembled at Toulouse with our Saint, "in order to confute the heresy of the Manichæans." The most illustrious Bishop of Meaux, in the excellent work which he has written concerning the Variations of Heretics,

has clearly shown (B. xi.) in what manner these heretics and their followers merited the name of Manichæans since they shared their errors.

LXXIV. The same Henrician heretics spread also in the diocese of Périgueux, under the leadership of a certain Pontius, as I learn in a letter from Heribert, in Vol. iii. of my Analecta, where the peculiar tenets of those Pontians are set out. This explains why Bernard repaired to the people of Périgord or to Perigueux, as appears from Part iii. of Book vi., which is that of his miracles; it is related in Par. 4, that he found many Arians at Toulouse, and put them to flight as he had done the heretic Henry. Not only this, but the same Henry having been previously condemned in a Council at Pisa, is said to have been committed to Bernard in order that he might become a monk at Clairvaux. But he, after he had received a letter from Bernard to the inmates of Clairvaux, preferred to persist obstinately in the error which he had once taken up, rather than to return in this brief and easy manner to the way of salvation.

LXXV. Bernard depicts Henry in vivid colours in his Letter 251 already quoted. He represents him as a man well-educated and having an appearance of piety, but given over to gaming and to bad women. He enumerates as his errors these: He made no account of priests and persons in holy Orders, he abolished sacraments and festivals, and refused baptism to infants. Of another class was that heretic, who is mentioned by Hildebert in his Letter 51, who rejected intercessions of saints, and endeavoured, without success, to draw Hildebert himself into giving patronage to his sect. But whether those heretics whom Bernard addresses himself to confute in his Sermons 65 and 66, super Cantica, are the same as the Henricians we must now inquire.

LXXVI. I was myself at one time of the opinion that they were the same, but the discovery of a letter of Evervinus, Abbot of Steinfeld, which was the occasion of these two Sermons, made me change my opinion. Those heretics were, in fact, from Cologne, and, though they shared in some points the errors of the Henricians, they differed from them in many respects. Evervinus divided the heretics from Cologne into two classes. One class pretended that they alone constituted the Church, since they only walked in the footsteps of Christ. In respect of food they forbade the use of milk and whatever was made of it. In their sacraments they covered themselves with a veil. They asserted that they consecrated every day their food and their drink to be the Body and Blood of Christ, and that other people in their sacraments were far distant from the truth. Besides the baptism of water they employed another in fire and the spirit by the imposition of hands alone. Our baptism they rejected, as also marriage. Finally

they declared that whomsoever was chosen or baptized among them had the power of baptizing others whom he thought worthy, and of consecrating upon their altar (mensa) the Body and Blood of Christ.

LXXVII. The others refused to the priests of the Church as living in a worldly manner the power of consecrating and of administering the other sacraments, baptism excepted, which latter they used to confer, not on children, but on adults alone. Every marriage contracted between persons who had ceased to be virgin they regarded as fornication. Lastly, they rejected the prayers of saints, fasting, and other bodily mortifications; also purgatory and prayers for the dead.

LXXVIII. The Henrician heretics and those of Cologne, therefore, were of similar views, inasmuch as they held in hatred the ministers of the Church, the sacraments, the baptism of infants, and marriage. They differed only in a few particulars which arose from a certain variety of disposition than from opposing principles. In one word, they were different branches, but they sprang from the same root. I have no doubt that these heretics of Cologne were produced from the workshop of Tanchelm. He was a layman, as Abaelard asserts, who disseminated his errors in Flanders, and especially at Antwerp, and at length arrived at such a point of madness that he used to call himself the Son of God, and caused a temple to be built to himself, it is said, by the people whom he had seduced. For this reason there was founded by the Bishop of Tournay, under whose jurisdiction that place then was, a company of twelve clerics in the Church of S. Michael at Antwerp, in order that they should combat these impious dogmas, which church was afterwards given over to S. Norbert. What were the perverse dogmas of Tanchelm I learn from a Letter of the Church at Maestricht to Frederick, Bishop of Cologne, “Concerning the seducer, Tanchelm.” He used to say that “the Churches of God ought to be considered places of prostitution; that what was done by the priest’s office at the table of the Lord was absolutely nothing; that the sacraments ought to be called pollutions, and that their efficacy came to them from the holiness and the merits of the ministers who performed them,” all of which agree perfectly well with the wild fancies of the heretics previously named. A certain presbyter, Evervacher, “apostatizing from his priestly dignity, adhered to the service of that execrable man and followed him to Rome.” The same person did much harm afterwards to the Church at Maestricht. The whole clergy of that city returned thanks to Frederick because “he hindered the progress and success” of Tanchelm, from which it is to be inferred that his errors had penetrated even into the diocese of Maestricht, and as far as Cologne, as is evident from the Letter of Evervinus, and

that those heretics of Cologne arose from the same author.

LXXIX. Hugo Metellus, who was then a canon regular of Toul, is a witness in his Letter to Henry, Bishop of that city, that a scourge of the same kind had crept in upon the soil of Toul. “There are hiding in your diocese,” he says, “or rather are beginning to show themselves, men who are destructive, who would be more truly called by the name of savage beasts, since they live in a similar way, for they condemn Marriage, they abhor Baptism, they make a mockery of the Sacraments of the Church, and they abhor the very name of Christian.” These were, without doubt, the miserable and ill-omened disciples of the heretics of Cologne.

LXXX. To the Henricians succeeded, or rather were added, men of the same stamp, who called themselves Cathari, that is to say, the pure; whose errors Bonacursus, who was at first their master at Milan, has laid bare and confuted in a book which has been published in Spicilegium, B. iii. These have much affinity with the tenets of the Manichæans, as also with those of the other heretics whom we have mentioned above. It is to the Cathari that Gilbert of Hoiland seems to make allusion in his Sermon 36, in Cantica, n. 6. “There shoot up,” he says, “in these days certain trees which our Heavenly Father hath not planted, trees whose origin is not from our Libanus. These are the men who boast of their endurance in labour, their patience under injuries, and their endurance of poverty. They seem to be cedars, but they are not those of Libanus. Their heart and conscience is defiled.” Ecbert, Abbot of Schönoue, also wrote Sermons against the Cathari, which still remain.

LXXXI. Bonacursus associates the Passagiens and the Arnoldists with the Cathari, the former because they declared that all the rites of the Mosaic Law ought to be observed. They equally denied the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and rejected the authority of all the Doctors of the Catholic Church, as they did also and chiefly that of the Roman Church. The latter—that is, the Arnoldists—thought that “the Sacraments of the Church ought to be avoided because of the corruption of the clergy.”

LXXXII. They took this name, I imagine, from that factious man Arnold, who, under pretext of restoring liberty and the Republic at Rome, desired all the temporal rights of the Pontiff to be abrogated, and to leave him only the power over spiritual things with tithes and free will offerings. He was born at Brescia, and was a clerk of the Church of that town. He had been a disciple of Peter Abaelard, and had a strong liking for new and singular opinions, as Otto of Frisingen testifies. After having studied in France he returned to Italy, and

assumed the habit of the Religious, the better to deceive the unwary; which, however, did not prevent him from being a hater of monks, and especially of the clergy. While he flattered laymen, he used to say that neither clerks who had property, nor Bishops who had rights of temporal lordship, nor monks who held lands, could possibly be saved, but that all these things pertained to the sovereign. “Besides this, he is said not to have held correct opinions respecting the Sacrament of the Altar, nor the Baptism of infants” (Otto Fris., B. ii. 20). Thus he was infected with the errors of the Petrobrusians and Henricians. Innocent II. expelled him from Italy and obliged him to retire to Zurich in Switzerland. Having heard of the death of Innocent, he returned to Rome at the beginning of the pontificate of Eugenius, and, finding the city ill-disposed towards the new Pontiff, he blew upon the flame of sedition. This reached so great a height that the Cardinals were maltreated, some of them wounded, and Eugenius himself driven from Rome. Bernard undertook the cause of the Pontiff, and wrote to the Romans a magnificent Letter on this subject (Letter 243). He addressed another in the same sense to the Emperor Conrad, whom the Romans had endeavoured without success by a Letter, given by Otto (B. i. 28), to draw over to their side. Thus our Saint was never found wanting to any needful work, nor to any necessity of the Church; he seemed to have been born only to labour for the common interest of the Christian Republic. At last Arnold was apprehended, attached to a post by order of the prefect of that Rome which he had so greatly flattered, and his body reduced to ashes, “so that his remains might not be held in veneration by the foolish populace.” Much more respecting him may be read in Otto and in the Notes from that author to Letter 195 of Bernard.

§ VII. OF THE CRUSADE PREACHED BY S. BERNARD AND ITS UNHAPPY ISSUE

LXXXIII. One of the last labours of Bernard was the preaching of an expedition into the Holy Land, which enterprise was for him the source of great labour and anxiety, as may be easily understood both from his Life and his writings. Otto of Frisingen attributes to Louis the Younger, King of France, the idea of this expedition. He felt himself strongly influenced by the idea of making a voyage to the Holy Places, as his brother Philip, who was “bound by the same vow,” had been prevented by death from fulfilling it. He imparted his design to the chief noblemen of his court, and they determined to take the advice of Bernard on that subject. The holy abbot being then summoned, was of opinion that a matter of such great importance should be referred “to the consideration of the Roman

Pontiff." Eugenius sanctioned and greatly approved the project, and "committed to the Abbot of Clairvaux full power of preaching and of exciting the zeal of all to this enterprise, since he was regarded as a prophet or apostle among all the peoples of France and Germany." Bernard obeyed the Apostolic letter, "and having raised the minds of very many persons to a high pitch of enthusiasm for the expedition beyond the sea, he gave the Cross at Vézelay to King Louis, to Thierry, Count of Flanders, to Henry, son of Theobald, Count of Blois, and to other barons and nobles."

LXXXIV. In the meantime a certain monk, named Ralph, whilst preaching the Crusade also in Germany, excited the Christians to commence by the murder of the Jews. Bernard repressed his zeal by a Letter, and he himself undertook to preach the Crusade in the east of France, that is to say, in that region of Germany which borders on the Rhine. Then the Emperor Conrad summoned a general assembly at Spires, whither Bernard proceeded, and, "by the working of many miracles, both in private and public, he persuaded the Emperor Conrad and his nephew Frederick and other princes and illustrious persons to take the Cross." Frederick, Duke of Suabia, whom his son had greatly displeased by taking the Cross, he succeeded in appeasing; he ordered the monk Ralph to return to his cloister, and in his place he gave to Conrad, who was travelling through Bavaria, Adam, Abbot of Eberach, to help him in urging on the departure of the expedition. There is extant a Letter of Bernard (n. 363) on this subject addressed to the peoples of the East of France; it is followed by a Letter addressed to Henry, Archbishop of Mayence, to beg him to repress the zeal of Ralph. "Thus," continues Otto, "not only the whole of the Roman Empire, but also the neighbouring realms, Western France, England, Pannonia, and many other peoples and nations, rose to take the Cross on hearing of this expedition, and almost the entire West became peaceful, so that it was regarded as a crime not only to excite private quarrels, but also for any one to bear arms in public."

LXXXV. So great an impression upon the whole of the West is to be ascribed to the preaching of Bernard; but when the success of the expedition did not answer to the hopes and prayers of the people, all the obloquy of the ill-success was thrown upon him also, as is customary with mortals who judge of things according to their issue; nor was there anything that ever caused greater grief to Bernard than that, not for his own sake, but for the cause of God. Thus he says at the commencement of Book ii. Of Consideration: "If it is needful for one of two things to happen, I prefer that the murmurs of the multitude should be against me rather than against God It would be a happy thing for me if the world would

deign to use me for a shield to ward off blows directed against Him. Willingly do I accept the detraction of evil tongues," etc. The unfortunate issue of that enterprise threw such a gloom over the minds of almost all that the holy Doctor pronounced him happy "who had not been scandalized by it." But how great was the sorrow of Bernard himself appears both from Letter 288, which he wrote upon that subject from his bed of suffering, caused probably by grief of mind, and from the Letter of John, Abbot of Casa Mario, to Bernard himself, which is now numbered 386 among those of Bernard, in which the author tries to console our Saint, whom he had heard was deeply afflicted on account of the unfortunate issue of the expedition.

LXXXVI. Yet there were not wanting those who came forward to defend Bernard, among whom must be reckoned, and not in the last place, Otto, Bishop of Frisingen, who was not in the habit of greatly favouring Bernard. He makes a digression in his Book de Gestis Friderici (chap. lx.) to excuse the failure of that expedition, in which he himself had taken part. At the end of an excursus, philosophical rather than historical, he thus concludes in favour of Bernard: "Yet if we should say that that holy Abbot was inspired by the Spirit of God to rouse us to that enterprise, but that we, disobeying the salutary commandments of God by our pride and our licence, have deservedly compromised both the success of the undertaking and the safety of those engaged in it, we should say nothing contrary to ancient example and arguments." Yet one thing, he adds, namely, that "the spirits of the prophets are not always subject to the prophets," desiring, no doubt, to indicate by these words that it is not absolutely certain that Bernard had spoken by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit respecting that expedition, when he conjectured what the event of it would be.

LXXXVII. And yet Bernard himself, at the beginning of B. ii. de Consideratione, written to Pope Eugenius, when trying to defend that enterprise from calumny, does not hesitate to say that he was impelled from above to what he did. "We have spoken of peace," he says, "and there is no peace; we have promised success, and behold confusion." Then he adds these words in his own defence: "Can it be said that I acted rashly or lightly in that matter? I have run, indeed, in it not (as the Apostle says) as uncertainly, but at your bidding, or rather at the bidding of God, through you." And a little farther on he supposes his adversaries to reproach him thus: "How do we know that your word comes from the Lord? What sign doest thou that we may believe thee?" And addressing himself to Eugenius he replies thus: "I have nothing to reply to that; modesty constrains me to be silent. Do you reply for me and for yourself according to

what you have heard and seen." In which words he, without doubt, makes a modest reference to the miracles done by him for the confirmation of his preaching.

LXXXVIII. But of all his apologists Geoffrey, his disciple, best vindicates his master from reproaches (Life, B. iii. c. 4). He first remarks that Bernard was not the original author of the enterprise; "in fact, the proved necessity of the Crusade had already won over the minds of many persons when he was called into counsel once and again by the King of France, and entrusted with the matter also, by letters from the Pope; nor did he consent to open his mouth upon this subject nor to give advice to the people until he was bidden by the express communication of the Pontiff himself to lay the matter before peoples and princes as the tongue of the Roman Church." His preaching, undertaken by him as a matter of obedience, was at length confirmed from on high by so many and so great miracles and signs that "it would be very difficult to relate them or even to enumerate them." Finally, that if the Eastern Church did not obtain freedom by that expedition, at all events the Church on high attained a joy proportioned to the number of those who, by their death, "rendered up their souls to Christ in the fruit of penitence and purified by many tribulations." And, indeed, this was the very truth which John, the holy Abbot of Casa Mario, signified to Bernard had been made known to him by revelation.

LXXXIX. But why do we delay in justifying Bernard? His authority has long been so great in the eyes of all, even of the heterodox, that his life, his extraordinary sanctity, and his teaching are approved by the general opinion and praise of all.

XC. So much it seemed proper to me to say by way of Preface to this new edition of the Works of S. Bernard. If it shall seem careful and accurate to the learned, my friends and the companions of my studies, Dom Michael Germain, D. Thierry Ruinart, and also D. Edmond Martène, who have expended their labour upon this edition with much love and industry, will have the praise. For myself I ask but one reward, as I have proposed to myself but one end, that the fruit of my labour should be, if only in some small degree, serviceable and useful to the admirers of S. Bernard, to the Church, and to the entire Christian world.

To this preface in the fourth edition, from which we have translated, the following note is appended:—

Such, with the exception of a few words, were the prefatory observations made by D. John Mabillon to his second edition of S. Bernard, which we reproduce in preference to others, inasmuch as it is considered of higher value by

the studious. In the year 1719 appeared a third edition, with various additions, respecting which we read at the end of Mabillon's preface as follows:—

"D. Massuet had made a beginning of labour upon this edition, and would have proceeded with it had not an untimely death put a period to his studies. To him are owing, in Vol. i., two recently discovered Letters, Nos. 418 and 419, a third drawn from the Miscellanea of Baluze, No. 425, and also two charters, whereof the former is for the monasteries of Lisieux and S. Évre, and the other for the monastery of S. Amand de Boisse. In the second volume there will be found new: The third book of the Epistle to the Brethren of Mont Dieu, and the Admonitio of D. Massuet, in which he claims the entire Epistle, which was ascribed to William of S. Thierry, as having been written by Guigo, fifth Prior of the Grande Chartreuse. Also another Observatio of the same writer which assigns the Treatise de Contemplando Deo, and that de Naturá et Dignitate Amoris to William of S. Thierry. Lastly, the Letter of Tromund, monk of Clairvaux, respecting the canonization of S. Bernard, which has not before been published."

In this fourth edition we have not omitted these additions, and we have furthermore included thirty-six Letters of S. Bernard which, after the above editions were completed, D. Martene transcribed from MSS., viz., thirty-four from the Vedastine, one from that of Anchin, and another spurious one from Verdun, and first made public in his Amplissima Collectio Veterum Scriptorum, etc., Tom. I., pp. 725–744. Of these the first is numbered in the common order of the Letters, 420, and the thirty-fifth, 454, the spurious one, 455. Also a Hymn of the holy Doctor, which in the same Collection (Tom. i. p. 746) D. Martene has brought forward from the Aldenberg MS., and as it is in the praise of S. Malachi, it finds an appropriate place in Vol. ii., after the Life of that Bishop. In order that this new edition might be the more correct, I have consulted not only three examples of Mabillon, but also some older copies.

BERNARDINE CHRONOLOGY

A.D.

1091. The fourth year of Pope Urban II., the 35th of the Emperor Henry IV., the 31st of Philip I., King of France, BERNARD was born in the castle called Fontaines, near Dijon, in Burgundy. His father was Tescelin Sorus, lord of Fontaines; his mother Alith, daughter of Bernard, lord of Montbar. His paternal house was lately, by the gift of Louis XIII., King of France, granted to the Feuillant Fathers for a convent.

1098. B. Robert, Abbot of Molêsmes, taking with him twenty-one monks of the same house, withdrew into the desert of Cîteaux, and there founded a new monastery, in the Diocese of Chalons, about five leagues from Dijon, with the approval and help of Walter, Bishop of Chalons, and Hugh, Archbishop of Lyons.

1099. Death of Urban II. He is succeeded by Paschal II., who had been a monk of Cluny.

B. Robert, on the complaints of the monks of Molêsmes, is commanded by the Pope to return to Molêsmes. He is succeeded at Cîteaux by Prior Alberic. This year the Church is dedicated to the honour of B. V. M.

1100. This year the monks John and Ilbodus are sent to Rome with commendatory Letters. Paschal II. confirms the foundation of Cîteaux, and confers privileges upon it.

1101. Abbot Alberic institutes a stricter observance of the Rule of S. Benedict.

1102. Odo, Duke of Burgundy, founder of Cîteaux, dies, and is buried in the Abbey Church. In the same year his son Henry puts on the monastic habit there.

1103. The Cistercians are believed to have changed from a black habit to a white; and they propose to recite daily the office of the B. V. M.

1105. Alith mother of S. Bernard, is believed to have died this year.

1109. B. Alberic, second Abbot of Cîteaux, died this year, having sat 9½ years. He is succeeded by B. Stephen Harding, of a noble English family, and formerly Prior.

1110. In this year died B. Robert, Abbot of Molêsmes, and first founder of Cîteaux.

1113. Is to be noted for the conversion of B. Bernard. He entered the community at Clairvaux, then under Abbot Stephen, with thirty companions, and thereby made it well known. The Cistercian Order begun from that time to flourish greatly.

In the same year Ferté (Firmitas), the eldest daughter-house of Cîteaux, was founded in the Diocese of Chalons. The first Abbot was Bertrand.

1114. Bernard prays for and obtains the ability to reap, which his weakness of body had hitherto prevented.

Pontigny, the second daughter-house of Cîteaux, is founded four leagues from Autun. The Church of this community was afterwards built by Theobald, Count of Champagne, who was styled the founder. The first Abbot was Hugo of Mâcon, afterwards Bishop of Autun, to whom Bernard wrote many Letters.

1115. In this year were founded Clairvaux and Morimund, third and fourth daughter-houses of Cîteaux. The former not by Theobald, as some think (confounding-the translation of Clairvaux in 1135 with its foundation), but by Hugo, Count of Troyes, and Bernard was made Abbot of it, being then in his twenty-fourth year.

Morimund was in the same diocese, and was founded by Odalric d'Egremont, and Adeline, his wife, Lords of Choiseul. These four abbeys were the daughter-houses of Cîteaux in the first degree, as it were, and it was from them that in after-time others arose.

Arnold was first Abbot of Morimund, to whom Letter 4.

1116. The first general chapter of the Cistercian Order called together by B. Stephen. It was to be summoned each year afterwards on the 13th September.

1117. Bernard, being enfeebled by illness, is by the interposition of William, Bishop of Chalons, committed to a country doctor for medical treatment. In the same year, or about that time, is believed to have taken place the conversion of Tescelin, father of Bernard, who died not long after in the reputation of sanctity.

1118. In this year began the Order of the Soldiers of the Temple, founded by Hugh de Payen and Geoffrey d'Aldhemar, and confirmed in a Council at Treves, 1128.

There was also founded the monastery of Trois Fontaines, in the Diocese of Chalons, first daughter-house of Clairvaux. The first Abbot was Roger, the second Guy, to whom Letters 69, 70.

Also Fontenay, a second daughter-house, in the Diocese of Autun. The first Abbot was Godfrey, a relative of Bernard. He afterwards returned to Clairvaux, where he became the third Prior, and at length Bishop of Langres.

1119. In this year was completed the thirty articles or chapters, fixing the usages of the Cistercian Order, and commonly called the Charter of Charity. It was drawn up by B. Stephen, Abbot of Cîteaux, with the assent of his co-abbots, twelve in all, and approved by Pope Callistus II.

1120. S. Norbert, whom Bernard calls “the reed-pipe of the Holy Spirit” (Letter 56), founds the Præmonstratensian Order in a spot of the territory of Laon, commonly known as Prémontré.

1121. A Synod is held at Soissons against Peter Abaelard, under the presidency of Conon, Bishop of Præneste, Legate of the Holy See, in which Peter himself was obliged to commit his book on the Trinity to the flames. William of Champeaux, Bishop of Chalons, died this year.

The monastery of Foigny founded, in the Diocese of Laon, to whose Abbot, Rainald, Bernard wrote Letters 72–74.

1122. Peter Maurice de Montboisier, called the Venerable, an Auvergnat, and a very dear friend of Bernard, was made Abbot of Cluny.

1123. About this year Peter, Abbot of Ferté, was chosen to be Bishop of Tarentum, being the first of the Cistercian Order to become a Bishop, and was succeeded by Bartholomew, brother of Bernard.

Suger elected Abbot of S. Denys in succession to Abbot Adam.

1125. Death of the Emperor, Henry V., and a disputed succession.

In the same year a severe famine in France and Burgundy, which gives extensive exercise to the charity of Bernard.

1126. Otto, afterwards Bishop of Frisingen, a well-known chronicler, enters upon the monastic state in the community of Morimund.

1127. About this time Stephen, who from having been Chancellor had become Bishop of Paris, was reclaimed by the admonitions of Bernard from living the life of a mere courtier to a more faithful fulfilment of the duties of his office. He was harshly treated and persecuted by King Louis, but was at length restored to favour by the efforts of Bernard. Henry, Archbishop of Sens, who not long after fell under the royal displeasure for a similar cause, was also defended by him. See Letter 45 and notes.

The monastery of Igny, fourth daughter-house of Clairvaux, was founded in the Diocese of Rheims. The first Abbot was Humbert, who not long after resigned his post through love of quiet, and returned to Clairvaux, for which Bernard, then in Italy, wrote him a letter of severe reprimand (Letter 141). The second Abbot was Guerric, a man famed alike for his piety and his writings.

1128. A Council held at Troyes, under Matthew, Bishop of Albano, at which

were present Stephen, Abbot of Cîteaux, Bernard, of Clairvaux, and other Abbots of the same Order. In it a white habit (to which Eugenius III. afterwards added a red cross) was prescribed for the Knights of the Temple, and a Rule drawn up to govern the Order.

Regny founded in Diocese of Auxerre.

1129. The same Legate holds a Council at Chalons; where by the advice of Bernard, Henry, Bishop of Verdun, was deposed from his See and another Bishop appointed.

Monastery of Ourcamp (Ile de France), in the Diocese of S. Cloud, founded by the Bishop Simon.

1130. Death of Pope Honorius II. and schism in the Church, caused by an election to the Papacy disputed between Gregory (Innocent) and Peter Leonis (Anacletus). Bernard energetically supported the cause of Innocent for eight years.

In the same year Bernard firmly refused the vacant Archbishopric of Genoa. Also Baldwin, in a Council held at Clermont, was admitted to the College of Cardinals; he was the first Cistercian to be raised to that rank.

1131. Pope Innocent is magnificently received at Liège, having come into France late in the former year. Bernard induces Lothair to abandon his demand for the cession of investitures, and the Pope crowns him King of Germany in the same place. The Imperial diadem is to be conferred in Rome two years later. After this he crowned the young Prince Louis in place of his dead brother; then consecrated a church at Cluny; and after that visited Clairvaux and other churches, Bernard accompanying him everywhere. In this year also Bernard was elected to the Bishopric of Châlons, but firmly declined it.

In this year was the murder of Thomas, Prior of S. Victor, at Paris, by the nephews of Theobald Notier, Archdeacon of Paris. In this year were founded the following daughter houses:—

Moreruela, in Castile.

S. John of Tarouca, in Portugal.

Longpont, in the Diocese of Soissons.

Charlieu, in the Diocese of Besançon.

Bonnemont, in Savoy; Diocese of Geneva.

Rievaulx, in England; Diocese of York.

1132. Bernard proceeded into Italy after departure of Pope Innocent; reconciled the Pisans and Genoese, and modestly but decidedly rejected the Archbishopric of Genoa, once more offered to him.

At this time arose that great controversy between the Cluniacs and Cistercians, arising out of the exemption of the latter from tithes by Pope Innocent. See Letters 228, 283.

In this year were founded:—

Vaucelles, in Diocese of Cambrai (Letter 186).

Fountains (Tres Fontes), in England, Diocese of York (Letters 92, 94).

1133. S. Bernard, since the forces of Innocent were not sufficient for taking Rome (the Emperor Lothair had supplied him with 2,000 soldiers only), wrote to Henry, King of England, to beg help. But at length Innocent obtained entrance into Rome, and crowned Lothair in the Lateran Church. When Lothair returned home Innocent was obliged to retire to Pisa, whence Bernard was sent into Germany to reconcile Conrad to the Emperor Lothair. At this time the holy Abbot sent the congratulatory Letter to the Pisans, because they had resisted the attempts of Anacletus to win them over to his party (Letter 130). On this journey took place the conversion of Mascelin (Life, iv. 3), and also of the Duchess of Lorraine.

1134. A Council was held at Pisa, at which Bernard attended by command of Pope Innocent, having made peace between Lothair and Conrad. He had great difficulty to avoid accepting the Archbishopric of Milan, which was pertinaciously pressed upon him.

He founded a monastery of his Order at Chiaravalle (Chara-Vallis), near Milan. Then he proceeded to Paris and Cremona to reconcile those cities; but not having succeeded at Cremona, he notified their obstinacy to Innocent (Letter 318).

In the meantime, after the Council, Norbert, founder of the Præmonstratensian Order, departed this life; also Stephen, Abbot of Cîteaux, who was at length succeeded by Raynald, son of Milo, Count of Bar-sur-Seine.

There were founded this year Hemmerode, in the Diocese of Trèves, and Vauclaire (Vallis-Clara), in that of Laon. The first Abbot (of the latter) was Henry Murdach, to whom Letter 321.

1135. Bernard, after his return through Milan from Italy, was enabled to accomplish the transfer of Clairvaux to a more convenient site (Life, ii. 5). Scarcely had he settled there than he was sent, with Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, into Aquitaine, to reclaim William, Count of Poitou, and other schismatics led away by Gerard, Bishop of Angoulême (c. 6). A little after his return he undertook his Exposition of the Canticles, at the request of another Bernard, viz., Desportes, Prior of the Chartreuse (Letters 153, 154).

This year were founded:—

Buzay, in the Diocese of Nantes, by Ermengarde, Countess of Brittany, whom he had recalled from worldly vanity during his journey just mentioned (Letters 116, 117). The first Abbot was John, to whom Letter 232.

Hautecombe, in the Diocese of Geneva.

Grâce de Dieu, in Diocese of Saintes.

Eberbach, in Diocese of Mentz.

1136. Guy, the eldest of Bernard's brothers, died away from Clairvaux, according to his brother's prediction (Life, ii. 12), namely, at Pontigny.

This year were founded:—

Balerne, Diocese of Besançon; first Abbot, Burchard, to whom Letter 146.

Maison Dieu, on the Cher, in Diocese of Bourges; the first Abbot was Robert, cousin of Bernard, to whom Letter 1.

Auberive, Diocese of Langres.

There was also adopted the Abbey des Alpes, in the Diocese of Geneva; Guarine, the Abbot, and afterwards Bishop of Sion, urging the transfer (Letter 253).

1137. Bernard is summoned into Italy for the third time by Innocent, the cause of Anacletus being still supported by his great partisan Roger of Sicily.

In this year were founded:—

Di Columba, Diocese of Placentia, in Italy.

Bocchia, Diocese of Vesprin in Hungary (although this is referred by some to 1153).

There was also adopted the monastery of Valparaiso (formerly Bellus-Fons), in Spain.

1138. The Emperor Lothair II. died this year, and was succeeded by Conrad, Duke of Franconia, his former rival.

Also the Antipope Anacletus. The successor to him elected by the Cardinals of his party, Cardinal Gregory, called Victor, resigned the Papal insignia into the hands of Bernard, and submitted to Innocent, thus closing the schism, in great measure through the zeal and prudence of Bernard. "But the holy Abbot, leaving the Roman Court without delay, returned into France, nor would he bring back anything with him by way of gift or recompense, beyond a tooth of S. Cæsarius, and other relics of saints" (Life, iv. 1). His brother Gerard died this year. He now resumed his work on the Canticles, which had been interrupted.

In this year Rainald, Archbishop of Rheims, died; and after two years Samson, Bishop of Chartres, was made his successor, Bernard himself having declined

the dignity.

This year was founded the monastery of Nisors, Diocese of Lyons, over which was set Alberic, to whom Letter 173.

There was adopted also that of Dunes, Diocese of Bruges. The first Abbot was Robert, who afterwards succeeded Bernard at Clairvaux. To him Letter 324.

1139. Lateran Council assembled at Rome. In this year Malachi, Primate of Ireland, visited Clairvaux on his way to Rome. He left there six of his companions to be trained in the Cistercian Rule, that they might introduce it into Ireland.

1140. A Council held at Sens, in which the errors of Abaelard are condemned. He retired to Cluny, and two years later died at the monastery of S. Marcellus, Châlons, where he had gone for medical treatment.

There were founded this year:—

Clairmarais, Diocese of S. Omer.

Blancheland, Diocese of S. David's, Wales.

Ossera, Diocese of Orense, Gallicia.

Rivour, Diocese of Troyes, over whom was set Alan, afterwards Bishop of Autun, compiler of a Life of S. Bernard.

Also Pope Innocent handed over to the monks of Clairvaux for reorganization the monastery of S. Anastasius, at Aquæ Salviæ; and there was set over it Bernard of Pisa, a disciple of S. Bernard, who afterwards was called to the Roman See as Eugenius III. Also were adopted that of Benchor, conveyed by Archbishop Malachi; and of Casamaria in Veroli, Italy.

1141. Pope Innocent laid King Louis under an interdict because he refused to receive the Archbishop of Bourges, whom, however, he did at length receive, and then was absolved from an oath which he had unreasonably taken (Letter 218 onwards).

In this year the same King Louis attacked Theobald, Count of Champagne, and laid waste his territories (Letters 217, 220, 222, 223).

At this time occurred the death of Humbeline, sister of Bernard (Life, i. 6).

This year was founded the Abbey of Mellifont, in the Diocese of Armagh, Ireland, by the efforts of Archbishop Malachi. It consisted of the companions whom he had left at Clairvaux for training, with some others (Letters 356, 357).

1142. Ivo, cardinal presbyter, was sent into France to pronounce sentence against Ralph, Count of Vermandois, who having repudiated his former wife Eleanor, niece of Count Theobald, had married Petronilla, the daughter of William, Duke of Aquitaine, sister of the Queen (Letters 216, 217, 220, 221).

Alfonso, King of Portugal, gave himself as tributary, and his realm to be a fief of the Abbey of Clairvaux, and assigned to it a payment of fifty double Marabotines of fine gold.

In this year died Hugo of S. Victor, called a second Augustine for his own age, an intimate friend and admirer of Bernard (Letter 70).

About this time were founded:—

Melon, Diocese of Tuy, in Gallicia.

Sobrado, Diocese of Compostella.

Haute Crète, Diocese of Lausanne, in Savoy.

1143. Pope Innocent died in this year, and was succeeded by Guido de Castello, called Celestine II., to whom Letters 234, 235.

Founded this year:—

Alvastern, Diocese Linköping, Sweden.

Nidal, in the same (some writers put this four years later).

Belle Perche, Diocese of Montauban.

Meyra, in Gallicia; Diocese of Luçon.

1144. Pope Celestine died.

Bernard succeeded in making peace between King Louis and Count Theobald (Letters 220 and onwards should be read).

In this year died Bartholomew, Abbot of Ferté, brother of S. Bernard. Also Stephen of Châlons, Cardinal Bishop of Praeneste, a member of the Cistercian Order, a man of great sanctity, to whom Bernard wrote various Letters.

Founded:—

Beaulieu, in Diocese of Rhodez.

1145. Pope Lucius died this year, and was succeeded by Bernard, Abbot of Aquas Salvias, as Eugenius III. (Letter 237 and onwards). At this time Bernard was consulted by King Louis respecting a Crusade, and devolved the decision upon the Pope.

Founded:—

La Prés, in Diocese of Bourges.

1146. Council held at Chartres to consider of the Crusade, to which Peter the Venerable was invited (Letter 364), but was not able to come, as we collect from his reply (B. vi., L. 18). Bernard was, by the direction of Eugenius, chosen as chief advocate of this warfare. He exhorted the peoples of Germany, of Eastern France, the Bavarians, the English, etc., both by letters and by preaching, to take the Cross, and was greatly assisted by many miracles (Letters 363–365, and Book of the Miracles of S. Bernard).

Founded:—

Boxley, in Diocese of Canterbury, England.

Villars, in Diocese of Namur, Brabant. This foundation the Auctarium Gemblacense fixes in the following year in these words:—"Twelve monks with their Abbot, Laurence, and five lay brethren (conversi), sent by B. Bernard from Clairvaux into Brabant, erected the monastery at Villars."

1147. Pope Eugenius was driven from Rome by Arnold (Letter 242), and took refuge in Gaul, being received in Paris with great honour by King Louis, who had taken the Cross in the previous year, on Palm Sunday, and with him his brother, Robert and Geoffrey, Count of Mellent. The King set off into Syria against the Saracens on June 14.

In a Synod at Etampes the administration of France was committed to Suger, Abbot of St. Denys, Gilbert being present.

Bernard, with Alberic, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia and Legate, and Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, proceeded into Aquitaine against the heretic Henry (General Preface, and Letter 241).

In this year Alfonso, King of Portugal, having taken the city of Santarem by the intercessions of S. Bernard, sent letters asking for monks to be sent that he may found a monastery of the Cistercian Order in his kingdom.

Founded:—

Alcobaça, Diocese of Lisbon, in Portugal, by the before-mentioned king.

Vauricher, in Diocese of Bayeux.

Margan, in Wales.

Espina, in Diocese of Palancia, in Castile, by Sanchia, the sister of King Alfonso (Letter 301).

Also the monastery of Grandselve, in Diocese of Toulouse, of the Order of S. Benedict, was adopted, its Abbot, Bernard, passing over himself with the whole house (Letter 242).

1148. This year Pope Eugenius was present at a general council of the Cistercian Order, and consecrated a new cemetery for them. Taking leave of the brethren, not without tears, he returned into Italy.

After the departure of Eugenius from France, S. Malachi, Primate of Ireland, who was on his way to Rome, to apply to the Pontiff for the pallium, happily departed this life at the place he most wished, namely, Clairvaux, and at the time also, namely, on the very day of the solemn commemoration of all the departed. His memory began to be held famous immediately upon his death (see the Epistle Consolatory, 374, to the Irish; also his Life, by S. Bernard; and two

Sermons delivered at the time of his burial). The new building for the Abbey of Clairvaux was completed at the very time that S. Malachi was lying at the point of death, and the bones of the venerable Fathers which at first had slept in the old monastery were translated from the old cemetery to the new on the Festival of All Saints (Sermon i. on S. Malachi, n. 1). His canonization is in the Chronicle of Clairvaux (given by Chifflet), referred to 1192.

In the same year died the blessed Humbert, Abbot of Igny. (For proof of this date see note on a Sermon delivered by Bernard on his death.)

Founded:—

Cambroane, in the Diocese of Cambray. The first Abbot was Fastrade, from Clairvaux, which latter Abbey he was the head of after Robert.

Also was adopted Alne, in the Diocese of Liège, previously a Benedictine Abbey, and afterwards a house of Regular Canons.

Also in this year Serlo, Abbot of Savigny, submitted his own abbey and thirty other monasteries depending upon it; viz., the Benedictine Abbey of Savigny, in the Diocese of Avranches, to Clairvaux, during the meeting of the great Chapter of Cîteaux; and four also were adopted from Stephen, the founder and father of the rising community of Obazin, in the Diocese of Limoges.

1149. In this year King Louis returned to France after the unsuccessful issue of the Crusade (see Letter 386; Lib. de Consideratione, ii. 1; and Life, iii. 4). When making preparations for a new expedition he was dissuaded by the Cistercians, as Abbot Robert reports in his Chronicle, under A.D. 1150.

In the same year Henry, brother of King Louis (Chronicle of Tours), who had before been Treasurer of S. Martin at Tours and afterwards had put on the monastic habit at Clairvaux, was made Archbishop of Beauvais (see Letter 307 and notes).

Founded this year:—

Font-Morigny, Diocese of Bourges.

Aubepierre, Diocese of Limoges.

Lonway, Diocese of Langres.

Looz, Diocese of Tournay.

Also adopted, Boulancourt, a house of Regular Canons, in the Diocese of Troyes.

1150. Bernard sends Book ii. of his de Consideratione to Pope Eugenius, now, after many conflicts, in possession of Rome, and makes it include an apology for the recent design of a Crusade. He receives a consolatory letter from John, Abbot of Casa Maria, in the town of Véroli (now Letter 386 among those of

Bernard).

1151. Abbot Rainald, of Cîteaux, died towards the end of the preceding year, and was now succeeded by Goswin, Abbot of Bonnevaux, in Poitou (Letter 270).

This year died Hugo, Bishop of Auxerre. Respecting the election of his successor, see Letters 261, 274, and onwards.

Also Suger, Abbot of S. Denys, to whom, when on his death-bed, Bernard wrote Letter 266.

Founded the Monastery of Hesron, in Diocese of Roskild, Denmark.

1152. This year died Theobald, Count of Champagne, a man of distinguished piety, the friend and patron of S. Bernard. He was buried in the monastery of Lagny, on the Marne, of which he was patron (advocatus). Bernard wrote to him Letter 271 not long before his death.

Adopted this year the Abbey of Moreilles, in Diocese of Maillezais. Also (about this time) Armentera, in Diocese of Compostella, Gallicia.

Founded:—

Abbey of Clermont, in Diocese of Mans.

1153. Pope Eugenius died this year.

Not long after died the holy Doctor Bernard, worn out with many labours for God and the Church. Though his strength was consumed by violent disease since the middle of the winter, as he writes in Letters 288, 307, 308, he had succeeded in making peace between the townsmen of Metz. He rested in peace himself at length, on the 18th of August, at nine o’clock a.m., in his sixty-third year, in the fortieth year of his monastic profession, and in the thirty-eighth year of office as Abbot. Bernard was succeeded by Robert, Abbot of Dunes.

In this very week Ascalon, the strongest city in Palestine, was taken by the Christians, according to the frequently repeated promise of the Saint (Life, iii. 4).

Founded this year monasteries at:—

Peyrouse, Diocese of Périgueux.

Mores, Diocese of Langres.

And adopted:—

Abbey of Monte Ramo, in Diocese of Orense, in Gallicia.

LIST AND ORDER OF THE LETTER S OF S. BERNARD, ABBOT

DATE.

I.

1119.

To his cousin Robert, who had withdrawn from the Cistercian Order to the Cluniac

II.

1120.

To a youth named Fulk, who afterwards was Archdeacon of Langres

III.

1120.

To the regular Canons of Horricourt

IV.

1127.

To Arnold, Abbot of Morimond

V.

1125.

To a monk, Adam

VI.

1125.

To Bruno, of Cologne

VII.

1126.
To the monk Adam

VIII.
1131.
To Bruno, Archbishop elect of Cologne

IX.
1132.
To the same, then Archbishop of Cologne

X.
1132.
To the same

XI.
1125.
To Guigues the Prior, and the other monks of the Grand Chartreuse

XII.
1125.
To the same

XIII.
1126.
To Pope Honorius

XIV.
1126.
To the same

XV.
1126.
To Haimeric, the Chancellor

XVI.
1126.

To Peter, Cardinal Presbyter

XVII.
1127.
To Peter, Cardinal Deacon

XVIII.
1127.
To the same

XIX.
1127.
To the same

XX.
1127.
To Haimeric, the Chancellor

XXI.
1127.
To Matthew, the Legate

XXII.
1128.
To Humbald, Archbishop of Lyons, and Legate

XXIII.
1128.
To Atto, Bishop of Troyes

XXIV.
1130.
To Gilbert, Bishop of London, Universal Doctor

XXV.
1130.
To Hugo, Archbishop of Rouen

XXVI.
1130.
To Guy, Bishop of Lausanne

XXVII.
1135.
To Ardutio, or Ardutius, Bishop Elect of Geneva

XXVIII.
1135.
To the same when Bishop

XXIX.
1126.
To Stephen, Bishop of Metz

XXX.
1126.
To Albero, Primicerius of Metz

XXXI.
1125.
To Hugo, Count of Champagne, who had become a Knight of the Temple

XXXII.
1120.
To the Abbot of S. Nicasius, at Rheims

XXXIII.
1120.
To Hugo, Abbot of Pontigny

XXXIV.
1120.
To Drago, or Drogo, a monk

XXXV.
1128.
To Magister Hugo Farset

XXXVI.
1128.
To the same

XXXVII.
1128.
To Theobald, Count of Champagne

XXXVIII.
1128.
To the same

XXXIX.
1127.
To the same

XL.
1127.
To the same

XLI.
1127.
To the same

XLII.
1127.
To Henry, Archbishop of Sens

XLIII.
1128.
To the same

XLIV.
1128.
To the same

XLV.
1127.
To Louis, King of France

XLVI.
1127.
To Pope Honorius II.

XLVII.
1127.
To the same Pope in the name of Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres

XLVIII.
1130.
To Haimeric, the Chancellor

XLIX.
1128.
To Pope Honorius, on behalf of Henry, Archbishop of Sens

L.
1128.
To the same

LI.
1128.
To Haimeric, the Chancellor

LII.
1128.
To the same

LIII.

1128.
To the same

LIV.
1136.
To the same

LV.
1128.
To Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres

LVI.
1128.
To the same

LVII.
1128.
To the same

LVIII.
1126.
To Ebal, Bishop of Chalons-sur-Marne

LIX.
1129.
To Guilencus, Bishop of Langres

LX.
1128.
To the same

LXI.
1125.
To Ricuin, Bishop of Toul

LXII.
1129.

To Henry, Bishop of Verdun

LXIII.
1128.
To the same

LXIV.
1129.
To Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln

LXV.
1129.
To Alvisus, Abbot of Anchin

LXVI.
1129.
To Geoffrey, Abbot of S. Medard

LXVII.
1125.
To the Monks of Flay

LXVIII.
1125.
To the same

LXIX.
1125.
To Guy, Abbot of Trois Fontaines

LXX.
1125.
To the same

LXXI.
1127.
To the Monks of the same place

LXXII.
1127.
To Rainald, Abbot of Foigny

LXXIII.
1127.
To the same

LXXIV.
1127.
To the same

LXXV.
1127.
To Artaud, Abbot of Prully

LXXVI.
1127.
To the Abbot of the Regular Canons of S. Pierremont

LXXVII.
1127.
To Magister Hugo, of S. Victor

LXXVIII.
1127.
To Suger, Abbot of S. Denys

LXXIX.
1130.
To Abbot Luke

LXXX.
1130.
To Guy, Abbot of Molêsmes

LXXXI.
1130.
To Gerard, Abbot of Pottieres

LXXXII.
1128.
To the Abbot of S. John, at Chartres

LXXXIII.
1129.
To Simon, Abbot of S. Nicholas

LXXXIV.
1129.
To the same

LXXXV.
1125.
To the same William

LXXXVI.
1130.
To the same

LXXXVII.
1126.
To the Regular Canon Oger

LXXXVIII.
1127.
To the same

LXXXIX.
1127.
To the same

XC.

1127.
To the same

XCI.

1130.
To the Abbots assembled at Soissons

XCII.

1132.
To Henry, King of England

XCIII.

1132.
To Henry, Bishop of Winchester

XCIV.

1132.
To the Abbot of a certain monastery at York, from which the Prior had departed, taking several Religious with him

XCV.

1132.
To Thurstan, Archbishop of York

XCVI.

1132.
To Richard, Abbot of Fountains, and his companions, who had passed over to the Cistercian Order from another

XCVII.

1132.
To the Duke Conrad

XCVIII.

1132.
Concerning the Maccabees, but to whom written is unknown

XCIX.
1132.
To a certain Monk

C.
1132.
To a certain Bishop

CI.
1132.
To certain Monks

CII.
1132.
To a certain Abbot

CIII.
1132.
To the brother of William, a Monk of Clairvaux

CIV.
1132.
To Magister Walter, of Chaumont

CV.
1132.
To Romanus, sub-deacon of the Roman Curia

CVI.
1132.
To Magister Henry Murdach

CVII.
1132.
To Thomas, Provost of Beverley

CVIII.

1132.

To Thomas, of S. Omer, after he had broken his promise of adopting a change of life

CIX.

1132.

To the illustrious youth, Geoffrey de Perrone, and his comrades

CX.

1132.

A consolatory letter to the parents of Geoffrey

CXI.

1132.

In the person of Elias, a monk, to his parents

CXII.

1132.

To Geoffrey of Lisieux

CXIII.

1132.

To the Virgin Sophia

CXIV.

1132.

To another holy Virgin

CXV.

1132.

To another holy Virgin, of the Convent of S. Mary, of Troyes

CXVI.

1132.

To Ermengarde, formerly Countess of Brittany

CXVII.

1132.
To the same

CXVIII.
1132.
To Beatrice, a noble and religious lady

CXIX.
1132.
To the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine

CXX.
1132.
To the Duchess of Lorraine

CXXI.
1132.
To the Duchess of Burgundy

CXXII.
1130.
To Abbot Bernard, from Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours

CXXIII.
1130.
To Hildebert, Reply of Abbot Bernard

CXXIV.
1131.
To the same, who had not yet acknowledged the lord Innocent as Pope

CXXV.
1131.
To Magister Geoffrey, of Loretto

CXXVI.

1131.
To the Bishops of Aquitaine, against Gerard of Angoulême

CXXVII.
1132.
To William, Count of Poictiers, and Duke of Aquitaine, in the person of Hugo, Duke of Burgundy

CXXVIII.
1132.
To the same

CXXIX.
1133.
To the citizens of Genoa

CXXX.
1133.
To the citizens of Pisa

CXXXI.
1135.
To the citizens of Milan

CXXXII.
1134.
To the clergy of Milan

CXXXIII.
1134.
To all the citizens of Milan

CXXXIV.
1134.
To the novices lately converted at Milan

CXXXV.

1135.
To Peter, Bishop of Pavia

CXXXVI.
1134.
To Pope Innocent

CXXXVII.
1134.
To the Empress of the Romans

CXXXVIII.
1133.
To Henry, King of England

CXXXIX.
1135.
To the Emperor Lothair

CXL.
1135.
To the same

CXLI.
1138.
To Humbert, Abbot of Igny

CXLII.
1138.
To the Monks of the Abbey of the Alps

CXLIII.
1135.
To his monks of Clairvaux

CXLIV.
1137.

To the same

CXLV.
1137.
To the Abbots assembled at Cîteaux

CXLVI.
1137.
To Burchard, Abbot of Balerne

CXLVII.
1138.
To Peter, Abbot of Cluny

CXLVIII.
1138.
To the same

CXLIX.
1138.
To the same

CL.
1133.
To Pope Innocent

CLI.
1133.
To Philip, intrusive Archbishop of Tours

CLII.
1135.
To Pope Innocent, on behalf of the Bishop of Troyes

CLIII.
1135.
To Bernard Desportes

CLIV.

1136.

To the same

CLV.

1135.

To Pope Innocent on behalf of the same when elected

CLVI.

1135.

To the same, on behalf of the clergy of Orleans

CLVII.

1135.

To Haimeric, on behalf of the same

CLVIII.

1133.

To Pope Innocent, on the murder of Magister Thomas, Prior of S. Victor, at Paris

CLIX.

1133.

To the same, in the name of Stephen, Bishop of Paris

CLX.

1133.

To Haimeric, in the name of the same Bishop

CLXI.

1133.

To Pope Innocent, on the murder of Archembald

CLXII.

1133.

To Haimeric, on the same subject

CLXIII.
1133.
To John of Crema, Cardinal Presbyter, on the same

CLXIV.
1138.
To Pope Innocent, in the matter of the Church of Langres

CLXV.
1138.
To Falco, Dean, and Guido, Treasurer, of the Church of Lyons

CLXVI.
1138.
To Pope Innocent

CLXVII.
1138.
To the same, on the same business

CLXVIII.
1138.
To the Bishops and Cardinals of the Roman Curia

CLXIX.
1138.
To Pope Innocent

CLXX.
1138.
To Louis the Younger, King of France

CLXXI.
1139.
To Pope Innocent

CLXXII.
1139.
To the same, in the name of Godfrey, Bishop of Langres

CLXXIII.
1139.
To Falco

CLXXIV.
1140.
To the Canons of Lyons, upon the Conception of S. Mary

CLXXV.
1135.
To the Patriarch of Jerusalem

CLXXVI.
1135.
To Pope Innocent, in the person of Albero, Archbishop of Treves

CLXXVII.
1139.
To the same, in the person of the same

CLXXVIII.
1139.
To the same, on behalf of the same

CLXXIX.
1139.
To the same, on behalf of the same

CLXXX.
1136.
To the same, on behalf of the same

CLXXXI.

1136.
To Haimeric, the Chancellor

CLXXXII.
1136.
To Henry, Archbishop of Sens

CLXXXIII.
1139.
To Conrad, King of the Romans

CLXXXIV.
1140.
To Pope Innocent

CLXXXV.
1138.
To Eustace, the occupier of the See of Valence

CLXXXVI.
1140.
To Simon, son of the Castellan of Cambray

CLXXXVII.
1140.
To the Bishops of the Province of Sens, to call them to an assembly against Peter Abaelard

CLXXXVIII.
1140.
To the Bishops and Cardinals of the Curia, on the same subject

CLXXXIX.
1140.
To Pope Innocent, on the same subject

CXC.

1140.
To Pope Innocent, upon certain heads of Abaelard’s errors

CXCI.
1140.
To Pope Innocent, in the person of the Archbishop of Rheims

CXCII.
1140.
To Magister Guido Du Chatel, on the matter of Peter Abaelard

CXCIII.
1140.
To Cardinal Ivo, on the same subject

CXCIV.
1140.
The rescript of Pope Innocent, on the same subject

CXCV.
1140.
To the Bishop of Constance, about Arnold of Brescia

CXCVI.
1140.
To the Legate Guido, on the same subject

CXCVII.
1141.
To Peter, Dean of Bésançon

CXCVIII.
1141.
To Pope Innocent

CXCIX.
1141.

To the same

CC.

1140.

To Magister Ulger, Bishop of Angers, on the quarrel between him and the Abbess of Fontevraud

CCI.

1140.

To Baldwin, Abbot of Riéti

CCII.

1144.

To the clergy of Sens

CCIII.

1140.

To Atto, the Bishop of Troyes and his Clergy

CCIV.

1140.

To the Abbot of S. Aubin

CCV.

1140.

To the Bishop of Rochester

CCVI.

1140.

To the Queen of Jerusalem

CCVII.

1139.

To Roger, King of Sicily

CCVIII.

1139.

To the same

CCIX.

1139.

To the same

CCX.

1139.

To Pope Innocent, on behalf of Samson, Bishop of Rheims

CCXI.

1139.

To the same, on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London

CCXII.

1139.

To the same, on behalf of the deposed Bishop of Salamanca

CCXIII.

1139.

To the same, in protest

CCXIV.

1140.

To the same, on behalf of Nicholas, Bishop of Cambray, and Abbot Godeschalc

CCXV.

1140.

To the same, on behalf of the Bishop of Auxerre

CCXVI.

1142.

To the same, about Count Ralph and his wife

CCXVII.

1142.
To the same, on behalf of Count Theobald

CCXVIII.
1143.
His last letter to the same, in self-defence

CCXIX.
1143.
To three Bishops of the Curia, and to Gerard the Chancellor

CCXX.
1143.
To Louis, King of France

CCXXI.
1142.
To the same

CCXXII.
1142.
To Joscelyn, Bishop of Soissons, and Suger, Abbot of S. Denys

CCXXIII.
1143.
To the Bishop of Soissons

CCXXIV.
1143.
To Stephen, Bishop of Præneste

CCXXV.
1143.
To the Bishop of Soissons

CCXXVI.
1143.

To Louis, King of France

CCXXVII.

1143.

To the Bishop of Soissons

CCXXVIII.

1143.

To Peter, Abbot of cluny, complaining that he did not write to him

CCXXIX.

1143.

A letter of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of cluny, to Abbot Bernard

CCXXX.

1143.

To three Bishops: of Ostia, Tusculum, and Præneste

CCXXXI.

1143.

To the same, on behalf of the Abbot of Lagny

CCXXXII.

1143.

To the same, against the Abbot of S. Theofred

CCXXXIII.

1143.

To John, Abbot of Buzay

CCXXXIV.

1143.

To Herbert, Abbot of S. Stephen of Dijon

CCXXXV.

1143.

To Pope Celestine, about the contested election at York

CCXXXVI.
1143.
To the whole Roman Curia, on the same subject

CCXXXVII.
1145.
To the same, when the Abbot of S. Anastasius was elected Pope Eugenius

CCXXXVIII.
1145.
First letter to Pope Eugenius

CCXXXIX.
1145.
To the same, about the contested election at York

CCXL.
1146.
To the same, on the same subject

CCXLI.
1147.
To Hildefonsus, Count of S. Eloy, on the subject of the heretic, Henry

CCXLII.
1147.
To the people of Toulouse, after his return

CCXLIII.
1146.
To the Romans, when they revolted against Pope Eugenius

CCXLIV.
1146.
To Conrad, King of the Romans

CCXLV.
1146.
To Pope Eugenius, on behalf of the Bishop of Orleans

CCXLVI.
1146.
To the same, on behalf of the same Bishop when deposed

CCXLVII.
1146.
To the same, on behalf of the Archbishop of Rheims

CCXLVIII.
1146.
To the same

CCXLIX.
1145.
To the same

CCL.
1145.
To Bernard, Prior of Portæ

CCLI.
1147.
To Pope Eugenius

CCLII.
1147.
To the same, about the contested election at York

CCLIII.
1150.
To the Abbot of Prémontré

CCLIV.

1136.

To Warren, Abbot of the Abbey in the Alps

CCLV.

1134.

To Louis, King of France

CCLVI.

1146.

To Pope Eugenius

CCLVII.

1146.

To the same, on behalf of brother Philip

CCLVIII.

1145.

To the same, on behalf of brother Rualène

CCLIX.

1145.

To the same, on behalf of the same

CCLX.

1145.

To Abbot Rualène

CCLXI.

1145.

To Pope Innocent, on behalf of the Abbot of S. Urban

CCLXII.

1145.

To the same, on behalf of the monks of S. Mary sur Meuse

CCLXIII.

1145.
To the Bishop of Soissons, on behalf of the Abbot of Chézy

CCLXIV.
1149.
Letter of Abbot Peter, of Cluny, to Abbot Bernard

CCLXV.
1149.
To Peter of cluny, reply of Bernard

CCLXVI.
1151.
To Suger, Abbot of S. Denys

CCLXVII.
1151.
To the Abbot of cluny

CCLXVIII.
1151.
To Pope Eugenius

CCLXIX.
1151.
To the same

CCLXX.
1151.
To the same, on behalf of the Carthusians

CCLXXI.
1151.
To Theobald, Count of Champagne

CCLXXII.
1152.

To the Bishop of Laon Epistle of Pope Eugenius to the Cistercian Chapter, prefixed to Letter

CCLXXIII.

1150.

To Pope Eugenius

CCLXXIV.

1151.

To Hugo, Abbot of Trois Fontaines, when he was at Rome

CCLXXV.

1151.

To Pope Eugenius, to support the election at Auxerre

CCLXXVI.

1151.

To the same, to reverse the will of the Bishop of Auxerre

CCLXXVII.

1146.

To the same, on behalf of the Abbot of cluny

CCLXXVIII.

1150.

To the same, on behalf of the Bishop of Beauvais

CCLXXIX.

1152.

To Count Henry

CCLXXX.

1152.

To Pope Eugenius, on the trouble at Auxerre

CCLXXXI.

1152.

To Abbot Bruno, of Charavalle

CCLXXXII.
1152.
To Louis, King of France, on behalf of the Bishop-elect of Auxerre

CCLXXXIII.
1150.
To Pope Eugenius, on behalf of the monks of Moiremont

CCLXXXIV.
1151.
To the same, on behalf of the Archbishop of Rheims and others

CCLXXXV.
1153.
To the same, on behalf of Odo, Abbot of S. Denys

CCLXXXVI.
1153.
To the same, on behalf of the same

CCLXXXVII.
1153.
To the Bishop of Ostia, on behalf of the same Abbot

CCLXXXVIII.
1153.
To his uncle Andrew, a Knight of the Temple

CCLXXXIX.
1153.
To the Queen of Jerusalem

CCXC.
1152.
To the Bishop of Ostia, about Cardinal Jordan

CCXCI.

1152.

To Pope Eugenius, on behalf of the church of S. Eugendus, in the Jura

CCXCII.

1152.

To a certain secular who endeavoured to dissuade Peter, his relative, from taking the vows

CCXCIII.

1150.

To Peter, Abbot of Moustierla-Celle, on behalf of a monk of Chézy, who had passed over to Clairvaux

CCXCIV.

1150.

To Pope Eugenius, on behalf of the Bishop of Le Mans

CCXCV.

1150.

To Cardinal Henry, on behalf of the same Bishop

CCXCVI.

1150.

To the Bishop of Ostia, on behalf of the same Bishop

CCXCVII.

1150.

To the Abbot of Montier Ramey, on behalf of a run-away monk

CCXCVIII.

1151.

To Pope Eugenius, about his secretary, Nicolas

CCXCIX.

1150.
To the Count of Angoulême, on behalf of the monks at Boissy

CCC.
1152.
To the Countess of Blois

CCCI.
1149.
To Sanchia, sister of the Emperor of Spain

CCCII.
1149.
To the Legates of the Holy See, on behalf of the Archbishop of Mayence

CCCIII.
1149.
To Louis the Younger, King of France

CCCIV.
1153.
To the same

CCCV.
1153.
To Pope Eugenius

CCCVI.
1151.
To the Bishop of Ostia, respecting the election of Thorold, Abbot of Trois Fontaines

CCCVII.
1153.
To the same

CCCVIII.
1153.
To Alfonso, King of Portugal

CCCIX.
1153.
To Pope Eugenius

CCCX.
1153.
To Arnold of Chartres, Abbot of Bonneval

CCCXI.
1125.
To Haimeric, Chancellor of the Roman Curia

CCCXII.
1130.
To Raynald, Archbishop of Rheims

CCCXIII.
1132.
To Geoffrey, Abbot of S. Mary at York

CCCXIV.
1134.
To Pope Innocent

CCCXV.
1134.
To Matilda, Queen of England

CCCXVI.
1134.
To Henry, Archbishop of Sens, and the Chancellor Haimeric

CCCXVII.

1138.
To his Prior, Godfrey

CCCXVIII.
1138.
To Pope Innocent

CCCXIX.
1138.
To Thurstan, Archbishop of York

CCCXX.
1138.
To Alexander, Prior of Fountains, and his brethren

CCCXXI.
1138.
To Abbot Henry Murdach

CCCXXII.
1138.
To Hugo, a novice

CCCXXIII.
1139.
To Pope Innocent

CCCXXIV.
1139.
To Robert, Abbot of Dunes

CCCXXV.
1139.
To the same, about the novice Idier

CCCXXVI.
1139.

From Abbot William to Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, and Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux

CCCXXVII.

1139.

Reply of Bernard to Abbot William

(Circa)

CCCXXVIII.

1140.

To the Roman Pontiff

CCCXXIX.

1140.

To the Bishop of Limoges

CCCXXX.

1140.

To Pope Innocent

CCCXXXI.

1140.

To Stephen, Cardinal, and Bishop of Palestrina

CCCXXXII.

1140.

To Cardinal G.

CCCXXXIII.

1140.

To Cardinal G.

CCCXXXIV.

1140.

To Guy, Abbot of Pisa

CCCXXXV.
1140.
To a certain Cardinal Presbyter

CCCXXXVI.
1140.
To a certain Abbot

CCCXXXVII.
1140.
To Pope Innocent, in the name of the Bishops of France

CCCXXXVIII.
1140.
To Haimeric, Cardinal and Chancellor

CCCXXXIX.
1140.
To Pope Innocent

CCCXL.
1140.
To the same

CCCXLI.
1140.
To Malachi, Archbishop of Ireland

CCCXLII.
1140.
To Joscelyn, Bishop of Soissons

CCCXLIII.
1140.
From Abbot Bernard of Italy to Pope Innocent

CCCXLIV.

1140.

From the same Bernard to Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux

CCCXLV.

1140.

To the brethren of S. Anastasius

(Circa)

CCCXLVI.

1141.

To Pope Innocent

CCCXLVII.

1141.

To Pope Innocent

CCCXLVIII.

1141.

To Pope Innocent

CCCXLIX.

1141.

To Pope Innocent

CCCL.

1141.

To Pope Innocent

CCCLI.

1141.

To Pope Innocent

CCCLII.

1131.

Privilegium granted by Pope Innocent II. to S. Bernard

(Circa)

CCCLIII.

1141.

To William, Abbot of Rievaulx

CCCLIV.

1142.

To Milisendis, Queen of Jerusalem

CCCLV.

1142.

To Milisendis, Queen of Jerusalem

CCCLVI.

1141.

To Malachi, Archbishop of Ireland

CCCLVII.

1142.

To Malachi, Archbishop of Ireland

CCCLVIII.

1142.

To Pope Celestine

CCCLIX.

1143.

The Brethren of Clairvaux to Pope Celestine

CCCLX.

1143.
To William, Abbot of Rievaulx

CCCLXI.
1144.
To Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury

CCCLXII.
1145.
To Robert Pullen, Cardinal and Chancellor

CCCLXIII.
1146.
To the Clergy and people of Eastern France

CCCLXIV.
1146.
To Peter, Abbot of Cluny

CCCLXV.
1146.
To Henry, Archbishop of Mayence

CCCLXVI.
1146.
To the Abbess Hildegarde

CCCLXVII.
1147.
To the Chancellor G.

CCCLXVIII.
1147.
To the Cardinal Deacon G.

CCCLXIX.
1147.

To Abbot Suger

CCCLXX.
1147.
To Abbot Suger

CCCLXXI.
1147.
To Abbot Suger

CCCLXXII.
1147.
To P., Bishop of Palencia in Spain

CCCLXXIII.
1147.
The Abbot of Sp. to S.Bernard

CCCLXXIV.
1148.
To the Brethren in Ireland, on the death of B. Bishop Malachi

CCCLXXV.
1148.
To Ida, Countess of Nevers

CCCLXXVI.
1149.
To Abbot Suger

CCCLXXVII.
1149.
To Abbot Suger

CCCLXXVIII.
1149.
To Abbot Suger

CCCLXXIX.

1149.

To Abbot Suger

CCCLXXX.

1149.

To Abbot Suger

LETTERS

LETTER I. (Circa 1119.)

TO HIS COUSIN ROBERT, WHO HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE CISTERCIAN ORDER TO THE CLUNIAC

He recalls, with wonderful gentleness, and affection more than fatherly, Robert, his relative; who, induced either by shrinking from a very severe Rule, the attraction of a freer life, or the blandishments and cunning suggestions of others, had withdrawn from the Cistercian Order to the Cluniac.

1. I have waited long enough, my dear son Robert, perhaps too long, [hoping] that the grace of God might deign to visit both your soul and mine, inspiring you with salutary contrition and me with joy for your repentance. But since my hope is so far not fulfilled, I am no longer able to hide my grief or express my anxiety. Thus, though wounded, I am obliged to call upon my assailant; despised, to ask for the pity of him who contemns me; though injured, to make satisfaction to my injurer; and in fine, against all rule, to beseech him who ought to beseech me. Extreme grief does not deliberate or observe limits, is not ashamed, does not fear loss of dignity; it disregards measure, and rule, and order. The powers of the mind are wholly occupied in relieving itself, by any means, of what causes it pain, or in obtaining what it suffers to be without. But you say: I have not injured nor despised anyone, but rather, being scorned and injured in many ways, I have fled from my enemy. Whom have I injured in fleeing from injuries? Is it not better to withdraw from the persecutor than to resist him?—to fly the striker than to strike back? Truly, I allow it. Not to contend have I begun to write, but to bring contention to an end. The pursuer—not the fugitive—is to be blamed for a flight from persecution. I pass over what has been done. I do not ask why or how. I do not discuss whose is the fault, and I wish to bury all remembrance of wrongs. Such [discussions] are wont to arouse, not to soften, differences. I speak only of what is more to my heart—unhappy that I am—to be deprived of you, and not to see you, death for whom would be to me life, and without whom life is death! I do not ask why you went away. I complain only because you have not returned. I speak not of the causes of your departure, but of the delay of your

return. Return only, and there shall be peace. Return, and it shall suffice, and I will sing with joy, He was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found! (S. Luke 15:32).

2. Surely it was my fault that you departed. I was rigid to a delicate youth: I was severe, and treated harshly a sensitive mind. When you were here you were wont, as far as I remember, to murmur against me, and since, as I have heard, you do not cease to blame me, though absent. It shall not be laid to your charge. I might, perhaps, allege that it was my duty to restrain the passions of petulant youth, and that those harsh beginnings of strict discipline are needful in early years, as the Scripture bears witness: Chasten thy son with a rod, and thou shalt deliver his soul from death (Prov. 23:13); and, again, Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Heb. 12:6), and that More wholesome are the wounds of a friend than the kisses of an enemy (Prov. 27:6). But let it be, as I said, that it was by my fault you went away; only let there be no contention about the offence to hinder the amends for it. I have, perhaps, sometimes and in some matters acted unwisely towards you, but never have I been ill-disposed. Therefore, spare the penitent, or at least have consideration for one who speaks frankly to you. If you fear for the future you shall find me not what I was, because I think that you are not what you were. A changed person yourself, you shall find me changed, and him whom you before feared as a master you may safely embrace as a companion. Therefore, whether you withdrew by my fault, as you think and I do not dispute, or by your own, as many think, although I do not maintain it, or by our common fault, as I incline to think, if for this reason you demur to return, you alone shall be without excuse. Would you be free from all blame? Return. If you acknowledge your fault, I forgive it. Do you also forgive me where I acknowledge mine, otherwise either you are too indulgent to yourself, when you are conscious of your fault and yet will not acknowledge it, or you are too unmerciful to me, whom you will not forgive even when I make amends.

3. Now, if you are unwilling to return, seek some other excuse wherewith to flatter your conscience, for henceforth there will be no reason for you to dread the severity of my rule. You need not fear that I shall be too severe to you when you are here, seeing that I abase myself with my whole heart to you when absent, and am bound to you by entire affection. I practise humility, I promise love, and do you still fear? You have fled from a stern [ruler]; return to a gentle one. Let my lenity recall you, since my severity drove you away. See, my son, how I wish to recall you—not in fear again and in the spirit of servitude, but in

the spirit of filial adoption, in which you may call and not be disappointed, Abba, Father! (Rom. 8:15). Though you have caused me so great grief I use not threats and terrors, but caresses and entreaties. Others would, perhaps, employ different means; would lay before you your offence, would remind you of your vow, and awake in you the fear of judgment. They would reproach you with disobedience, with apostacy in abandoning a coarse garment for a line habit, a diet of vegetables for dainties, and, in fine, poverty for riches. But I know that you are more easily induced by love than compelled by fear, and I have not thought it needful to goad the unresisting, to terrify the frightened, to confound still more him who blushes. But would it not seem an unheard-of thing that a youth, modest, simple, and retiring, should have dared to violate his vow, to leave the place of his profession against the will of his brethren, the authority of his master, the obligation of his rule? Yet it is not more strange than that the piety of David should have been beguiled (2 Sam. 11), the wisdom of Solomon mocked (1 Kings 11), the strength of Samson rendered vain (Judges 16). What wonder that he who deceived our first parents and expelled them from Paradise should have seduced an inexperienced young man in the midst of a desert solitude! Add to this that he has not been led away by beauty, as the elders of Babylon (Hist, of Susan., 8), nor by the love of money, as Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20), nor by ambitious desires, as Julian the Apostate, but holiness deceived him, religion seduced him, the authority of his elders led him astray. Do you ask how?

4. A certain great Prior was sent forth by his superiors: and he, a wolf disguised in sheep’s clothing, was admitted into the sheepfold. He attracts, he allures, he flatters; the preacher of a new Gospel, he commends drunkenness, condemns frugality; voluntary poverty he calls misery; fasts, vigils, silence, the labour of the hands, he styles folly; but, on the contrary, sloth he names contemplation; gluttony, loquacity, inquisitiveness, in short, every kind of excess, he calls discretion. What, he says, does God delight in our sufferings? Where does Scripture bid anyone to slay himself? What sort of religion is it to dig the earth, to cut wood, to carry manure? Is it not the declaration of the Truth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice (S. Matt. 9:13, Ezek. 33:11, S. Matt. 5:7). Why has God created food if it is not permitted to eat it? or given us bodies if we must not sustain them? And then, He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good (Ecclus. 14:5). What wise man ever hated his own flesh? (Eph. 5:29).

5. Thus with such pleadings a too credulous youth is seduced; he follows his deluder, he is led to Cluny; he is shorn, shaven, washed; in place of his worn,

cheap, rustic clothes he is clad in new, fashionable, and costly ones, and thus he is taken into the convent. And with what honour, triumph, and observance! He, a youth, is set above his equals, above his seniors; the entire brotherhood favours, compliments, congratulates him; they all rejoice as victors when they divide the spoil. O, good Jesus! how many things are done for the destruction of one poor soul! Whose heart, however firm, would not grow soft? whose inner eye, however spiritual it might be, would not be confused? Among such distractions who could consult his conscience, who could either recognize truth, or maintain humility?

6. Application is made on his account to Rome. Apostolic authority is approached; and that the Pope may not refuse his consent, it is suggested to him that [the youth when] an infant was offered to that monastery by his parents. There was no one to contradict this; judgment was given upon a mere statement, and against the absent. Those who did the injury are justified, those who suffered it put off altogether, and the offender absolved without making satisfaction. Too mild a sentence of absolution is confirmed by a cruel privilege, which, when reported, encouraged and rendered secure the ill-assured victim of bad advice. And among these things a soul may perish for which Christ died, because the Cluniacs choose! Profession is made upon profession, vows which will not be loosed and cannot be kept, and since the first agreement is made invalid, a pretext is found for a second, and sin heaped upon sin.

7. May He speedily come who will right wrongs judicially done and put to shame unlawful oaths, who will right those that suffer wrong, will judge the poor in justice, and contend with equity for the meek of the earth! To Thy tribunal, O, Lord Jesus, I appeal; to Thee I commit my cause, O, Lord God of Sabaoth, who judgest justly, and triest the reins and the hearts (Jer. 11:20), whose eyes, as they cannot deceive, so they cannot be deceived. Thou seest who seeks the things which are Thine, and who seeks his own (1 Cor. 13:5). Thou knowest with what gentleness I have succoured him in all his temptations, with what groanings I have wearied for him the ears of Thy Holiness, how troubled I used to be by his faults and escapades. And now I fear that it was in vain. For I think, as far as I have tried, that it is for the profit neither of the mind or body of a young man, by himself sufficiently eager and inexperienced, to apply to the one such stimulants, to the other such incentives to vanity. Therefore, Lord Jesus, be Thou my judge; let my sentence come forth from Thy presence, let Thine eyes look upon the thing that is equal (Ps. 17:2).

8. Let them see and judge which ought rather to stand good, the vow of a

father respecting his son or that of the son respecting himself, especially when he has made the vow even more perfect. Let them see how Thy servant, our law-giver Benedict, would have decided; whether what was done respecting a young infant, without his knowledge, or what he himself afterwards did advisedly of his own accord, when he was of an age to speak for himself, should hold good. It is clear that he was promised only, not given. The petition which the Rule prescribes was not made on his behalf by the parents, nor his hand with the petition folded in the covering of the altar, so that he might be offered before witnesses. A [piece of] ground is shown which is said to have been given with him and for him. But if they received him with the ground, why did they not keep him as well as the ground? Did they, perhaps, require more than its fruit, or value the land more than this soul? Otherwise, if offered to the monastery, what was he seeking in the world? If he were to be brought up for God, why was he abandoned to the devil? Why was Christ's sheep found a prey to the wolf? From the world you came, Robert, yourself being witness, not from Cluny, when you came to Citeaux. You requested admission, you begged, you entreated; but were put off for two years, on account of your tender age, though you were most unwilling to wait. Which time being patiently and blamelessly fulfilled, you begged with many prayers and even (if you remember) tears, and at length obtained, the wished-for favour and the entrance [into the Order] which you had so desired. After this, being patiently proved for a year, according to the Rule, and your demeanour being resolved and without reproach, you were professed at your own wish; then first you discarded the secular dress and put on the religious habit.

9. O, foolish boy! who has enchanted you that you should not fulfil the vows of your own lips? Shall you not be justified or be condemned out of your own mouth? Why are you careful about your parent's vow and forgetful of your own, forgetting that out of your mouth, not of his, you will be judged? Who can flatter you with talk about an apostolical absolution, while the Word of God itself holds your conscience bound? No one, He says, putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (S. Luke 9:62). Question your own heart, your intention; let your conscience answer you why you fled, why you deserted your Order, your brethren, your place, and me; me, who am near you in blood and still nearer in spirit. If you are now living more severely, more correctly, more perfectly than before, then you may be confident that you have not looked back, and glory with the Apostle who says: Forgetting the things that are behind and pressing forward unto the things that are before, I press unto the

mark (Philipp. 3:13). But if it is otherwise, be not high-minded, but fear; because whatever indulgence you give to yourself in food, in unnecessary dress, in idle words, in unregulated and inquisitive licence, beyond what you have promised and have observed here, this beyond doubt is a looking back, a wandering from the path; in short, an apostacy.

10. And these things I say to you, my son, not to distress you, but to warn you, for though you have many teachers in Christ, you have not many fathers (1 Cor. 4:14). For (if you should deem it of any value) both by word and by my example have I begotten you to religion. Does it please you that another person should glory in you, who has laboured not at all for you and in you? Like as to the harlot before Solomon, so it has happened to me: namely, to her whose little son had been secretly taken away by another, who had overlaid and destroyed her own (1 Kings 3:20).

11. Now for what advantage to you, or for what need of yours, have our friends endeavoured to do this? For as for me, if I had ever offended them in anything (which I am not conscious of having done), I would at once have made full amends. But it is strange if I have not sustained the worse reprisal; if (that is to say) I have been able to do them some such injury, as I have now endured from them. For I protest that they have taken, not the bone of my bones nor flesh of my flesh, but the very joy of my heart, the fruit of my spirit, the crown of my hope, and (as I verily feel) the half of my soul. And why? Perhaps they pitied you, and not bearing to see the blind leading the blind, they took you to their own leading, that you might not perish under mine. But could not you be saved, unless I were despoiled? And would that you may be saved even without me! But is your salvation likely to be more advanced by nicety of dress, and abundance of dainties, than by frugality of dress and living? If soft and warm garments, fine and costly cloths, full sleeves, an ample hood, a thick and soft coverlet, and fine linen make a saint, why should not I also follow the example? But these are the comforts of the sick, not the weapons of combatants. For those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses (S. Matt. 11:8). Wine and fine flour, mead and fat things, fight for the body, not the soul. With broiled meats the flesh, not the soul, is made fat. Many brethren in Egypt long served God without using even fish. Pepper, ginger, cumin, sage, and a thousand kinds of things pickled, delight indeed the palate, but inflame the passions. And do you place security in these things? or suppose that you can spend your youth safely thus? Salt, with hunger, is sufficient condiment to one who lives soberly and prudently; but if hunger is not waited for, it becomes needful to excite it with I

know not what potions.

12. But what shall he do, you say, who cannot live otherwise? I know that you are delicate and would not be able to endure a harder life, but that is only because you are accustomed to these things. But what if you could make yourself able? Do you ask how? Rise, gird yourself, shake off sloth, use your powers, move your arms, open those folded hands, do something useful, and you will soon find that you have appetite for what takes away hunger without pampering the palate. Many things which, when idle, you turn from, after labour you will take with relish. Cabbage, beans, pottage, coarse bread, with water, are little appetizing, I allow, to an idle person, but they seem great delicacies to one who has laboured. Having become unaccustomed to tunics, you are perhaps afraid to take to wear them again, as being too cold in winter and too hot in summer; but have you ever read, He who fears the hoar frost the snow shall fall upon him? (Job 6:16). Idleness produces distaste, exercise, hunger. You fear watchings, fastings, and the labour of the hands; but these things are trifles to him who meditates on the everlasting burnings. Then the remembrance of the outer darkness causes you not to shudder at solitude. If you remember that every idle word shall be called in question (S. Matt. 12:36), silence will not greatly displease you. That eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth, if brought before the eyes of the heart, will render hard mat or soft couch the same thing to you. Finally, if you have faithfully kept watch the whole time of the night which the Rule prescribes, with Psalms (Rule of S. Bened., cap. ix. seqq.), hard indeed will be the couch on which you will not sleep soundly.

13. Rise, soldier of Christ, shake off the dust, return to the battle whence you have fled, fight more bravely after your flight, and you shall conquer the more gloriously. Christ has indeed many soldiers who have set out bravely, stood fast and overcome, but few, who having turned back from flight and dared anew the peril which they had evaded, have put to flight the enemies from whom they had fled. And because every rare thing is precious, I rejoice that you should be of those who shall appear the more glorious the rarer they are. But do not think that because you have fled from the fight, you have escaped from the hands of the enemy. The adversary overtakes you with more pleasure when flying than he resists you when combating, and strikes more boldly at your back than he attacks face to face. Are you securely taking your morning slumbers, when at that time Christ rose from the dead; and thus unarmed, at once more timid yourself and less formidable to enemies? A multitude of armed ones have surrounded your house, and you are sleeping? Already they ascend the mound, they pull down the

palisade, they rush in at the postern door. Is it safer for you that they should find you alone than with others—naked in your bed than armed and in the field? Rise up, seize your arms, and fly to your fellow soldiers whom you have deserted. Let fear itself join you again to those from whom it parted you. Why do you, O, effeminate warrior, shrink from the weight and hardness of your weapons? The adversary pressing on you and the darts flying around will make the shield, the cuirass, and the helmet seem to be no burden. Even the bravest soldiers have fears when the trumpet sounds before the combat, but when they are in the thick of the fight, the hope of victory and the fear of being overcome renders them intrepid. But what can you fear when the unanimity of your brethren and fellow combatants fortifies you on all sides, when the Angels stand beside you, when Christ, the leader of the war, will go before you, cheering His own on to victory, and saying, Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world! (S. John 16:33). If Christ be for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31). You can fight safely when you are sure of victory. Safe, indeed, is warfare with and for Christ, for, though wounded, prostrate, trampled on, killed, if possible, a thousand times, yet, if only you do not fly, you shall not lose the victory. Flight, flight alone can take it from you. Woe to you if, in declining the fight, you lose at once the victory and the crown; which may God avert from you, my dearest son, since your condemnation will be the greater, if I have rightly charged you in this my letter.

LETTER II. (Circa A.D. 1120.)

TO A YOUTH NAMED FULK, WHO AFTERWARDS WAS ARCHDEACON OF LANGRES

He gravely warns Fulk, a Canon Regular, whom an uncle had by persuasions and promises drawn back to the world, to obey God and be faithful to Him rather than to his uncle.

To the honourable young man Fulk, Brother Bernard, a sinner, wishes such joy in youth as in old age he will not regret.

1. I do not wonder at your surprise; I should wonder if you were not surprised that I should write to you, a countryman to a citizen, a monk to a scholastic, there being no apparent or pressing reason for so doing. But if you recall what is written—I am debtor both to the wise and to the unwise (Rom. 1:14), and that Charity seeketh not her own (1 Cor. 13:5)—perhaps you will understand that what it orders is not mere presumption. For it is Charity which compels me to reprove you; to condole with you, though you do not grieve; to pity you, though you do not think yourself pitiable. Nor shall it be unserviceable to you to hear

patiently why you are compassionated. In feeling your pain you may get rid of its cause, and knowing your misery begin to cease to be miserable. O, Charity, good mother who both nourishest the weak, employest the vigorous, and blamest the restless, using various expedients with various people, as loving all her sons! She blames with gentleness, and with simplicity praises. It is she who is the mother of men and angels, and makes the peace not only of earth but of heaven. It is she who, rendering God favourable to man, has reconciled man to God; she, my Fulk, makes those brethren, with whom you once shared pleasant bread, to dwell in one manner of life in a house (Ps. 68:6). Such and so honourable a parent complains of being injured, of being wounded by you.

2. But in what have I injured, you reply, or wounded her? In this, without doubt, that you whom she had taken in her maternal bosom and nourished with her milk, have untimely withdrawn yourself, and having known the sweetness of the milk which can train you up for salvation, have rejected and disdained it so quickly and carelessly. O, most foolish boy! boy more in understanding than in age! who has fascinated you to depart so quickly from a course so well begun? My uncle, you will say. So Adam once threw the blame of sin upon his wife, and his wife upon the serpent, to excuse themselves; yet each received the well-deserved sentence of their own fault. I am unwilling to accuse the dean; I am unwilling that you should excuse yourself by this means, for you are inexcusable. His fault does not excuse yours. But what did he do? Did he use violence? Did he take you by force? Nay, he begged, not insisted; attracted you by flatteries, not dragged you by violence. Who forced you to yield to his flatteries? He had not yet given up what was his own. What wonder that he should reclaim you, who wast his! If he demands a lamb from the flock, a calf from the herd, and no one disputes his right, who can wonder that having lost you, who are of more value in his sight than many lambs or calves, he should reclaim you? Probably he does not aim at that degree of perfection of which it is said, If any one has taken away thy goods, seek them not again (S. Luke 6:30). But you, who had already rejected the world, what had you to do with following a man of the world? The timid sheep flies when the wolf approaches; the gentle dove when she sees the hawk: the mouse, though hungry, dares not leave his hole when the cat is prowling around; and yet you, when thou sawest a thief thou consentedst with him (Ps. 50:18). For what else than a thief shall I call him who has not hesitated to steal that most precious pearl of Christ, your soul?

3. I should wish, if it were possible, to pass over his fault, lest the truth should obtain for me only hatred and no result. But I am not able, I confess, to pass a

man untouched, who up to this very day is found to have resisted the Holy Spirit with all his power. For he who does not hinder evil when he can, even although the evil purpose may be frustrated, is not clear of that purpose. Assuredly he tried to damp my fervour when it was new, but, thanks to God, he did not succeed. Another nephew of his, Guarike, your kinsman, he much opposed, but what harm did he do? On the contrary, he was of service. For the old man at length unwillingly desisted from persecution, and as the youth, his nephew, remained unsubdued, he was the more meritorious for his temptation. But, alas! how was he able to overcome you, who was not able to overcome him? Was he stronger or more prudent than you? Assuredly those who knew both before preferred Fulk to Guarike. But the event of the combat showed that men's judgment had erred.

4. But what shall I say concerning the malice of an uncle who withdraws his own nephews from the Christian warfare to drag them with himself to perdition? Is it thus he is accustomed to benefit his friends? Those whom Christ calls to abide with Him for ever this uncle calls back to burn with him for evermore. I wonder if Christ is not reproving him when he says, How often would I have gathered thy nephews as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings and thou wouldest not? Behold thy house is left unto thee desolate (S. Matt, 23:37). Christ says, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven (S. Matt. 19:14). This uncle says, Suffer my nephews to burn with me. Christ says, They are Mine; they ought to serve Me. But their uncle says, They ought to perish with me. Christ says, They are mine, I have redeemed them. But I, says the uncle, have brought them up. You, indeed, says Christ, have fed them, but with My bread, not thine; while I have redeemed them not with thy blood, but Mine own. Thus the uncle, according to the flesh, struggles against the Father of spirits for his nephews whom he disinherits of heavenly possessions while he desires to load them with earthly. Yet Christ, not considering it robbery to draw to Himself those whom He has made and redeemed with His own blood, has done when they came to Him, what He had before promised, Him who cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out (S. John 6:37). He opened gladly to Fulk, the first who knocked, and made him glad also. What more? he put off the old man and put on the new, and showed forth in his character and life the canonical function which had existed in name alone. The report of it flies abroad, to Christ, a sweet savour; and the novelty of the thing diffused on all sides brought it to the ears of his uncle.

5. What then did the carnal guardian, who lost the carnal solace of the flesh

which he had brought up and loved after a carnal fashion? Although to others the event was a savour of life unto life (2 Cor. 2:16), not so to him. Wherefore? Because the carnal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him (1 Cor. 2:14). For if he had the spirit of Christ he would not so greatly lament on account of the flesh that which he rejoiced over on account of the spirit. But because he relishes earthly things, not those which are above, he is sad and troubled, and reflects thus within himself: What do I hear? Woe is me! from what hope have I fallen! Ought he to do anything without my advice and permission? What right, what law, what justice, what reason is it, that him, whom I have nourished up from infancy, another person should have the good of when grown up? Now that my head is white, alas! I shall spend the remainder of my life in grief, because the staff of my old age has deserted me. Woe is me! if this night my soul is required of me, whose shall those things be which I have prepared? My storehouses are full, disgorging this one into that, my sheep fruitful, abounding in their goings forth; my oxen fat, and for whom shall these remain? My lands, my meadows, my houses, my vases of gold and of silver, for whom have they been amassed? Certain of the richer and more profitable honours of my Church I had acquired for myself; the rest, although I could not have them, I hoped that Fulk should. What then shall I do? Because of him shall I lose so much? For whatever I possess, without him, I reckon as lost. Rather than that I will both retain them, and recall him if I can. What is done cannot be undone; what is heard cannot be concealed. Fulk is a Canon Regular, and if he returns to the world will be remarked and disgraced. But it is better to hear that about him than to live without him. Let integrity yield to convenience, shame to necessity. I prefer not to spare the ingenuousness of a youth, rather than to undergo miserable melancholy.

6. Adopting then this counsel of the flesh, forgetful of reason and law, as it were a lion prepared for prey, and as a lioness robbed of her whelp, raging and roaring, not respecting holy things, he burst into the dwelling of the saints, in which Christ had hidden his young soldier from the strife of tongues, who was one day to be adjoined to the company of Angels. He demands that his nephew be restored to him; he loudly complains that by him he had been wrongly deserted; while Christ resists, saying, Unhappy man, what are you doing? Why do you rob? Why persecute Me? Is it not enough that you have taken away your own soul from Me, and the souls of many others by your example, but you must tear him also from My hand with impious daring? Do you not fear the coming judgment, or do you despise My terrors? Upon whom do you wage war? Upon

the terrible One, who takes away the spirit of princes (Ps. 76:12). Madman, return to thyself. Remember thy last end and sin not, call to mind with salutary fear what you are. And thou, O youth, He says, if thou dost assent and agree to his wishes thou shalt die the death. Remember that Lot's wife was, indeed, delivered from Sodom because she believed God, but was transformed in the way because she looked back (Gen. 19:26). Learn in the Gospel that he who has once put his hand to the plough to him it is not permitted to look back (Luke 9:62). Your uncle, who has already lost his own soul, seeks yours. The words of his mouth are iniquity and guile. Do not learn, my son, to do evil (Ps. 36:4). Do not turn aside to vanities and falsehoods (Ps. 40:4). Behold in the way in which you walk he hides snares—he has stretched nets. His discourses are smooth as butter, and yet they are sharp spears (Ps. 55:21). See, my son, that you are not taken with lying lips and a deceitful tongue. Let divine fear transfix your flesh, that the desire of the flesh may not deceive you. It flatters, but under its tongue is suffering and sorrow; it weeps, but betrays; it betrays to catch the poor when it has attracted him (Ps. 10:9). Beware, I say, My son, that you do not confer with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:16), for My sword shall devour flesh (Deut. 32:42). Despise entreaties and promises. He promises great things, but I greater; he offers more, but I most of all. Will you throw away heavenly things for earthly, eternal for temporal? Otherwise it behoves you to dissolve the vows which your lips have pronounced. He is rightly required to dissolve who was not forced to vow, for, although I did not repulse you when you knocked, I did not oblige you to enter. You cannot, therefore, put aside what you promised of your own accord. Behold each of you I warn, and to each give salutary counsel. Do not you, He says to the uncle, draw back a regular to the world, for in so doing you make him to apostatize. Do not you, a regular, follow the secular life, for in so doing you persecute Me. If you seduce a soul for which I died you make yourself an enemy of My cross. He who does not gather with Me scatters (S. Matt. 12:30). How much more he who scatters what has been gathered? And you, if you consent to him you dissent from Me, for he who is not with Me is against Me (ibid.). How much more is he who was with Me against Me if he deserts? You, if you lead astray a boy who has come to Me, shall be adjudged a seducer and profaner, but you, if you destroy what you had built, shall make yourself a deceiver. Both of you must stand at My tribunal and by Me be judged—the one for his prevarication, the other for the leading astray; and if the one shall die in his iniquity his blood shall be required at the hand of his seducer (Ezek. 3:18). These and similar warnings Thou, O Christ, didst invisibly thunder to each, I

appeal to their conscience as witness. Thou didst knock at the doors of the mind of each with kindly terrors. Who would not fear them and recover wisdom in fearing, unless it were one like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear and refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely (Ps. 58:4, 5), who either does not hear, or pretends that he hears not?

7. But how far do I draw out this letter, already too long, before speaking of a thing that is worthy only of silence? In what circuitous paths do I approach the truth, fearing to draw the veil from shame! I say with shame. That what is known to many I cannot conceal if I would. But why with shame? Why should I be ashamed to write what it did not shame them to do? If they are ashamed to hear what they shamelessly did, let them not be ashamed to amend what they were reluctant to hear. Alas! neither fear nor reason could keep back the one from seduction, nor shame or his profession the other from prevarication. What more? A deceitful tongue fits hasty words; it conceiveth sorrow, and brings forth iniquity. Your Church received its scholar, whom it had better have been without. So formerly Lyons recovered, without credit, by the zeal and pertinacity of its dean, its canon whom it had well lost, the nephew of the same dean. Just as the one snatched Fulk from S. Augustine, so the other Othbert from S. Benedict. How much more beautiful that a religious youth should draw to himself a worldly old man, and so each should be victorious, than that the worldly should draw back to himself the religious, in which each is vanquished! Oh, unhappy old man! Oh, cruel uncle! who, already decrepit and soon about to die, before dying have slain the soul of your nephew, whom you have deprived of the inheritance of Christ in order that you might have an heir of your sins. But he who is evil to himself, to whom is he good? He preferred to have a successor in his riches rather than an intercessor for his iniquities.

8. But what have I to do with Deans, who are our instructors, and have acquired authority in the Churches. They hold the key of knowledge, and take the highest seats in the synagogues. They judge their subjects at their will, they recall fugitives, and when they are recalled scatter them again as they choose. What have I to do with that? I confess that because of you, my Fulk, I have exceeded somewhat the degree proper to my humility in speaking of these, since I wished to be indulgent to your fault, and make your shame little in comparison. I pass over these that they may not have ground to rail, not at the blame, but at him who blames, for they would rather find fault with my presumption than occupy themselves with their own correction. At all events it is not a prince of the Church that I have undertaken to reprimand, but a young student, gentle and

obedient. Unless, perhaps, you show yourself to be a child in sense, not in malice, and object to my boldness, saying, What has he to do with me? What do the faults which I commit matter to him? Am I a monk? And to this I confess I have nothing to answer, except that I counted, in addressing myself to you, on the sweetness of character with which you are endowed by nature, and that I was actuated by the love of God, to which I appealed in the first words of my letter. It was in zeal for Him that, pitying your error and your unhappiness, I was moved to interfere beyond my custom in order to save you, although you were not mine. Your serious fall and miserable case has moved me thus to presume. For whom of your contemporaries have you seen me reprimand? To whom have I ever addressed even the briefest letter? Not that I regarded them as saints, nor had nothing to blame in them.

9. Why, then, you will say, do you blame me especially, when in others you see what you might, perhaps, more justly find fault with? To which I reply: Because of the excessiveness of your error, of the enormity of your fault, for although many others live loosely, without rule and discipline, yet they have not yet professed obedience to these. They are sinners indeed, but not apostates. But you, however honourably and quietly you may live, although you may conduct yourself chastely, soberly, and religiously, yet your piety is not acceptable to God, because it is rendered valueless by the violation of your vow. Therefore, beloved, do not compare yourself with your contemporaries, from whom the profession which you have made separates you, nor flatter yourself so much because of your self-restraint in comparison with men of the world, since the Lord says to you, I would thou wert hot or cold (Apoc. 3:15, 16). Here is plainly shown that you please God less, being lukewarm, than if you were even such as those are, entirely cold towards Him. For them God waits patiently until their cold shall pass into heat, but you He sees with displeasure to have fallen away to lukewarmness, after having been fervent in warmth. And because I have found thee lukewarm, He says, I will vomit thee from My mouth (ibid.), and deservedly, because you have returned to your vomit and rejected His grace!

10. Alas! how have you so soon grown weary of the Saviour, of whom it is written, Honey and milk are under His tongue (Cantic. 4:11). I wonder that nourishment so sweet should be distasteful to you, if you have tasted how sweet the Lord is. Or perhaps you have not yet tasted and do not know how sweet is Christ, so that you do not desire what you have not tried; or if you have, then your taste is surely depraved. He is the Wisdom of God who says: He who eats of Me shall always hunger, and he who drinks of Me shall never cease to desire

to drink again (Ecclus. 24:29). But how can he hunger or thirst for Christ who is full of the husks of wine? You cannot drink of the cup of Christ and of the cup of demons (1 Cor. 10:21). The cup of demons is pride, detraction, envy, debauch, and drunkenness, with which when your mind and body are saturated, Christ will find in you no place. Do not wonder at what I say. In the house of your uncle you are not able to drink deep of the fulness of the house of God. Why, you say? Because it is a house of [carnal] delights. Now, as fire and water cannot be together, so the delights of the spirit and those of the flesh are incompatible. Christ will not deign to pour His wine, which is more sweet than honey and the honeycomb, into the soul of him whom He finds among his cups breathing forth the fumes of wine. Where there is delicate variety of food, where the richness and splendour of the service of the table delights equally the eyes and the stomach, the food of heaven is wanting to the soul. Rejoice, O, young man, in thy youth! but then, when temporal joy departs in time to come, everlasting sorrow will possess thee! May God preserve you, His child, from this. May He rather destroy the deceiving and perfidious lips of those who give you such advice, who say to you every day, Good, good! and who seek your soul! They are those with whom you are dwelling, and who corrupt the good manners of a young man by their evil communications (colloquia: otherwise counsels, consilia).

11. But now how long before you will come out from their midst? What do you in the town who had chosen the cloister, or what have you to do with the world which you had renounced? The lines have fallen to you in pleasant places, and do you sigh after earthly riches? If you wish to have both together, it will be said to you soon, Remember, my son, that you have received your good things when you were in life (S. Luke 16:25). You have received, He said, not you have seized; so that you may not shelter yourself under the vain excuse, that you are content with what is your own, and do not seize what belongs to another. And, after all, what are those goods which you call yours? The benefices of the Church? Certainly; you do well in rising to keep vigil, in going to Mass, in assisting at the day and night offices, so you do not take the præbend of the Church without return. It is just that he who serves the Altar should live from the Altar. It is granted therefore to you that if you serve well at the Altar you should live from it, but not that you should live in luxury and splendour at its expense, that you should take its revenues to provide yourself with gilded reins, ornamented saddles, silver spurs, furs of all kinds, and purple ornaments to cover your hands and adorn your neck. Whatsoever you take from the Altar, in short,

beyond necessary food and simple dress, is not yours, and it is rapine and even sacrilege. The Wise man prayed for necessary sustenance, not for things superfluous (Prov. 30:8). The Apostle says, having food and clothing (1 Tim. 6:8), not food and magnificent dress. And a certain other saint says, if the Lord shall give me bread to eat and raiment to cover me (Gen. 28:20). Take notice, to cover me. So then let us too be content with raiment to cover us, not with luxurious and costly clothing which is worn to please women, and makes the wearers like them. But you say: Those with whom I associate do this; if I do not do as others, I shall be remarked for singularity. Wherefore I say, go forth from the midst of them; that you may not either live with singularity in the eyes of the town or perish by the example of others.

12. What do you do in the town at all, O effeminate soldier? Your fellow soldiers whom you have deserted by flight are fighting and overcoming; they knock and they enter in, they seize heaven and reign while you scour the streets and squares, sitting upon your ambling courser, and clad in purple and fine linen. These are the ornaments of peace, not the weapons of war. Or do you say, Peace, and there is no peace (Ezekiel 13:10). The purple tunic does not put to flight lust, and pride, and avarice, nor does it protect against other fiery darts of the enemy. Lastly, it does not ward off from you the fever which you more fear, nor secure you from death. Where are your warlike weapons, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the breast-plate of patience? Why do you tremble? there are more with us than with our enemies. Take your arms, recover your strength while yet the combat lasts; Angels are spectators and helpers, the Lord himself is your aid and your support, who will teach your hands to war and your fingers to fight (Psalm 144:1). Let us come to the help of our brothers, lest if they fight without us they vanquish without us, and without us enter into heaven; lest, last of all, when the door has been shut it be replied from within to us knocking too late, Verily I say unto you, I know you not (S. Matthew 25:12). Make yourself known then and seen beforehand, lest you be unknown for glory and known only for punishment. If Christ recognizes you in the strife, He will recognize you in heaven, and as He has promised, will manifest Himself to you (S. John 14:21). If only you by repenting and returning will show yourself such as to be able to say with confidence Then shall I know even as also I am known (1 Corinthians 13:12). In the meantime I have by these admonitions knocked sufficiently at the heart of a young man modest and docile; and nothing remains for me now than to knock by my prayers also, for him, at the door of the Divine Mercy, that the Lord may finish my work if my remonstrances have found his heart ever so little

softened, so that I may speedily rejoice over him with great joy.

LETTER III. (Circa 1120.)

TO THE CANONS REGULAR OF HORRICOURT

Their praises inspire him with more fear than satisfaction. They ought not to put any obstacle in the way of the religious profession of certain regular canons of S. Augustine, whom he has received at Clairvaux.

To the Superior of the holy body of clerics and servants of God who are in the place which is called Horricourt, and to their disciples: the little flock of the brothers of Clairvaux, and their very humble servant, Brother Bernard, wish health, and power to walk in the Spirit, and to see all things in a spiritual manner.

Your letter, in which you have addressed to us an exhortation so salutary and profitable, brings us convincing proof of your knowledge and charity, which we admire, and for which we thank you. But that which you have so kindly prefixed by way of praise of me is, I fear, not founded on experience, although you have thus given me an excellent occasion to practise humility if I know how to profit by it. Yet it has excited great fear in me, who know myself to be far below what you imagine. For which of us who takes heed to his ways can listen without either great fear or great danger, to praises of himself so great and so undeserved? It is not safe for any one to commit himself to his own judgment or even to the judgment of another; for He who judgeth us is the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:4). As to the brothers concerning whose safety we recognize that your charity has been solicitous, that we should return them to you unharmed; know that by the advice and persuasion of many illustrious persons, and chiefly of that very distinguished man William, Bishop of Châlons, they have taken refuge with us, and have begged us with earnest supplication to receive them, which we have done. Though they have quitted the rule of S. Augustine for that of S. Benedict in order to embrace a stricter life, yet they do not depart from the rule of Him, who is the one Master in heaven and in earth; nor do they make void that first faith which they promised among you, and which, indeed, they promised, first of all, in baptism. They being such, therefore, and having been so received, we are far from thinking that your sense of right will be injured by our having received them, or that you ought to take it ill if we retain them; yet if they desist from their resolution during the year of probation which the Rule requires, and desire to return to you, be assured that we shall not detain them against their

will. In any case, most holy brethren, you would be wrong to resist, by an ill-considered and useless anathema, the spirit of liberty which is in them; unless, perchance (which may God avert!), you study more to promote your own interests than those of Jesus Christ.

LETTER IV. (Circa 1127.)

TO ARNOLD, ABBOT OF MORIMOND

He recalls Abbot Arnold, who had rashly left his monastery and was wandering abroad, to the care of it.

To the Lord Abbot Arnold, Brother Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, desires the spirit of compunction and prudence.

1. First of all I have to inform you that the Abbot of Cîteaux has not yet returned from Flanders, whither he had gone, passing by this place a little before your messenger came to us, and because of this he has not yet received the letter which you charged to be presented to him, and hitherto is ignorant of the great novelty which you have presumed to undertake. He would be happy, I consider, to be ignorant of such deplorable rumours as long as possible. As for yourself, that you should forbid me to write to you, and should declare useless the efforts I should have made to try to dispose you to return, because you say that your course is irrevocably taken, makes me despair. Perhaps, indeed, I ought not in reason to obey you in this; but in truth, the grief I feel will not suffer me to keep silence; and more, if I knew for certain where I should meet you, I would rather have come to you, than have sent this letter, to try if I should have more success in person than my letter is likely to obtain. Perhaps you smile at my unfounded confidence, inasmuch as you are conscious of your own strength of purpose, and hope that no force, no prayers, no persistence would be able to bend it. But I am not distrustful of His power who said: All things are possible to him that believeth (S. Mark 9:22). And I do not hesitate to apply to myself that saying: I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me (Philip. 4:13). Although I myself am not ignorant of the obstinacy of your stony heart, yet would that I could now take you aside to plead with you, whether successfully or not. Then I would put before you face to face not only in words but in looks and in countenance what I have in my heart against you, whether uselessly or not, I cannot tell. Then I would fall at your feet, I would embrace your knees; and falling upon your neck would kiss that head which is so dear to me, and which has borne many years with me the gentle yoke of Christ. Weeping, I would beg and entreat you with all

my energy, by Jesus Christ, to spare His Cross by which He has redeemed those whom you, as far as in you lies, are destroying; has collected those whom you are dispersing. You are destroying, I say, those whom you desert, and dispersing those whom you take with you, for each of whom I fear an equal peril, though of a different kind. And, lastly, spare also us your friends to whom you have left nothing but grief and tears, although undeserved. If it had been permitted to me, I could have influenced you, perhaps, by the feelings of the heart, though not by reason; and the tenderness of a brother would, perhaps, have softened that iron heart which now refuses to yield even to the fear of Christ. But, alas! even this opportunity you have taken away from us.

2. O, powerful support of our Order! Listen patiently, I beg, to your friend, though absent, who cannot bear your entire departure, and who feels with you to the very marrow your sufferings and dangers. Do you not fear, O, great support of our Order, that by your fall its entire ruin will surely and speedily follow? But I, you say, do not fall; I know what I am doing, I have a good conscience. Be it so. I believe you in what you say of yourself, but what of us, who by your departure must groan under the heavy weight of scandal, and trembling expect still heavier perils to come? Or do you know all that, and yet pretend not to know? How do you pretend that you have not made ruin for yourself when you have drawn ruin upon many others? You were not placed in this post to do what was useful to yourself, but rather that which was useful to others; then ought you not to seek not the things which are your own, but those which are for Jesus Christ? How, I ask, will you depart in safety, who have taken away by your departure every kind of security from the flock committed to you for ever? Who will protect them from the attacking wolves, who will console them in tribulations, provide for them in temptations, and resist for them the roaring lion who seeks whom he may devour? They will be exposed, without doubt, to the bites of the wicked, who devour the flock of Christ as bread. Alas! what will be the fate of those new plantations of Christ, which, by your hands, He had set in divers places, in the spots of horror and solitude? Who will dig around, who nourish them, surround them by a hedge, and cut back with care the greedy shoots which exhaust their strength? Either, when the wind of temptations shall blow, these ill rooted ones shall easily be rooted up, or growing up among thickets of thorns will be choked by them, as there is none to clear them away, and thus will bring forth no fruit.

3. This being so, consider what is this good which you have done, and whether it can be called good, in the midst of such evil consequences. However worthy

the fruits of penitence that you flatter yourself you will make, will they not be necessarily choked in the midst of thorns? Do you not, in fact, sin, even if you offer rightly, if you do not rightly divide the victim?

Will you say that you rightly divide when you trouble yourself only about your own soul, and deprive those sons who were committed to you of a father's care? O, unhappy ones, and to be pitied; the more that they see themselves orphaned even while their father lives! Then, farther, ought you not to have doubted whether you were doing well, even for your own soul, to venture on a step so unexampled without the advice of your brethren and co-abbots, without the permission of your father and master? It must also raise against you the indignation of many, that you have led away with you weak youths and delicate young men. Or, if they were strong and robust, then they were indispensable to the house now desolate; but if (as I have said) weak and delicate, they will not be fit to endure the fatigues of a hard and laborious journey. And we cannot believe that your remaining over them is because you wish still to direct their souls, since we know that you propose to lay down the burden of the pastoral charge of them, and henceforth to live for yourself alone. And, furthermore, it would be unfitting that without being called you should presumptuously resume in one place a burden which against rule you have rashly laid down in another. But you know all these things, and I do not wish to press upon you superfluous words; but, in conclusion, I faithfully promise that if you ever give me the opportunity of converse with you I will strive to find for you a means of doing as far as may be with permission, and therefore in peace of mind, what you are now attempting lawlessly and with peril. Farewell.

LETTER V. (A.D. 1125.)

TO A MONK ADAM

Bernard exhorts him not to adhere to Arnold, the Abbot of Morimond, nor make himself the companion of his journey, or rather wandering.

1. Your humility, which is well known to me, and the circumstances of peril in which you stand, oblige me to address you earnestly and reprehend you in plain words. O, foolish one! who has bewitched you to withdraw so hastily from the salutary rule of life in which you equally with me (God is witness) were lately agreed? Consider your ways, O foolish one, and turn your steps towards the testimonies of the Lord. Do you not remember that you first dedicated the first fruits of your conversion at Marmoutiers; then that you were put under my poor

direction at Foigny, and that you made your final profession at Morimond? Was it not there again that at my suggestion you frankly renounced the journeying, or rather wandering, suggested to you by Abbot Arnold, and you saw clearly that company with him was forbidden to you if he himself was not able to go forth lawfully? What then? Can you say that he departs in a lawful manner who has left a lamentable scandal amongst those committed to him, not waiting for the licence of his superior?

2. But to what purpose, you may ask, are all these details? That I may show you your manifest inconstancy; that I may show you clearly that you say both Yes and No; that I may force you to recognize and blush for your errors, and to learn, though late, from the Apostle that we must not believe every spirit (1 S. John 4:1). Learn from Solomon to have many friends, but to choose one counsellor among a thousand (Ecclus. 6:6); learn from the example of the Forerunner of the Lord not to wear soft clothing nor to be blown about with every wind of doctrine, like a reed shaken with the wind (S. Matt. 11:7, 8); learn from the Gospel to build thy house upon a rock (S. Matt. 7:24); learn also with the disciples not to forget the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove (S. Matt. 10:16); and both from these as from a great many other testimonies of Scripture you may get to understand how greatly that seducer has deceived you, who, since he was not able to arrest the beginning of good in you, envied your perseverance, considering without doubt that it would be sufficient for his malicious purpose if he could take away from you this one and only virtue which would assure you the crown. I beg you, therefore, by the bowels of the mercy of Christ, that you wander abroad no more, or at least not before you come to speak with me at a place convenient to us both, and consider what remedy may be found for the very great evils which from your departure we either feel have happened or feel will happen. Farewell.

LETTER VI. (A.D. 1125.)

TO BRUNO OF COLOGNE

Bernard begs him to take means for bringing back certain wandering monks of Morimond to their monastery.

To the very dear and most illustrious lord Bruno, Brother Bernard, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and whatever good the prayers of a sinner can bring.

Since the day when we had the pleasure to become acquainted at Rheims I

trust I have retained some small share in your remembrance; and because of this I do not write to you timidly, as to a stranger, but freely and confidently, as to a well-known and familiar friend.

1. Arnold, Abbot of Morimond, has lately quitted his monastery and scandalized our entire Order by his breach of rule, because he neither waited for the advice of his brother abbots before carrying out a plan of so doubtful a nature, nor for the licence or assent of the Abbot of Clairvaux, under whose authority he was. But being a man under authority and having soldiers under him, while he proudly threw off the yoke of his superior, he still more proudly kept his own yoke upon those subjected to him. Thus of a great multitude of monks, whom uselessly traversing sea and land he had gathered together, not for Christ, but for himself, abandoning a few only, and those the simpler and least fervent, he has taken the better and more perfect as sharers of his error. Among whom, three whose withdrawal has much troubled me, he has dared to win over and take away with him, namely, Everard our brother, Adam, whom you have known well, and that noble youth Conrad, whom some time ago, not without scandal, he carried off from Cologne. Whom, if you would kindly take the trouble, I feel sure that you would be able to recover.

2. Concerning Arnold himself, I have long known his obstinacy and unbending mind, and I do not wish to trouble you with useless efforts to recall him. But I have heard that Everard, Adam, and some of the other brethren of the same company, are now staying in your neighbourhood. If that is the case, it would be well if you would go yourself at once to see them, would win them over by entreaty, convince them by reason, and strengthen in them the simplicity of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent. Make them understand that obedience should not hold them to a man who has not himself been obedient; that they cannot lawfully follow a superior who is unlawfully wandering abroad; nor be drawn away to desert the Order they have professed for the sake of a man who has disregarded its Rule; that the Apostle bids us not to hesitate to declare anathema even an angel from heaven, who should preach another gospel; and that by the same Apostle they are taught to withdraw themselves from any brother that walketh disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6). Who may teach you also to be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches (1 Tim. 6:17), until Christ shall claim for Himself His true disciple, proved by his renunciation of all things. Farewell.

LETTER VII. (A.D. 1126.)

TO THE MONK ADAM

1. If you remain yet in that spirit of charity which I either knew or believed to be with you formerly, you would certainly feel the condemnation with which charity must regard the scandal which you have given to the weak. For charity would not offend charity, nor scorn when it feels itself offended. For it cannot deny itself, nor be divided against itself. Its function is rather to draw together things divided; and it is far from dividing those that are joined. Now, if that remained in you, as I have said, it would not keep silent, it would not rest unconcerned, nor pretend indifference, but it would without doubt whisper with groans and uneasiness at the bottom of your pious heart that saying, Who is offended, and I burn not (2 Cor. 11:29). If, then, it is kind, it loves peace, and rejoices in unity; it produces them, cements them, strengthens them, and wherever it reigns it makes the bond of peace. As, then, you are in opposition to that true mother of peace and concord, on what ground, I ask you, do you presume that your sacrifice, whatever it may be, will be accepted by God, when without it even martyrdom profiteth nothing (1 Cor. 13:3)? Or, on what ground do you trust that you are not the enemy of charity when breaking unity, rending the bond of peace, you lacerate her bowels, treating with such cruelty their dear pledges, which you neither have borne nor do bear? You must lay down, then, the offering, whatever it may be, which you are preparing to lay on the altar, and hasten to go and reconcile yourself not with one of your brethren only, but with the entire body. The whole body of the fraternity, grievously wounded by your withdrawal, as by the stroke of a sword, utters its complaints against you and the few with you, saying: The sons of my mother have fought against me (Cant. 1:5). And rightly; for who is not with her, is against her. Can you think that a mother, as tender as charity, can hear without emotion the complaint, so just, of a community which is to her as a daughter? Therefore, joining her tears with ours, she says, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me (Isa. 1:2). Charity is God Himself. Christ is our peace, who hath made both one (Eph. 2:14). Unity is the mystery even of the Holy Trinity. What place, then, in the kingdom of Christ and of God has he who is an enemy of charity, peace, and unity?

2. My abbot, perhaps you will say, has obliged me to follow him—ought I then to have been disobedient? But you cannot have forgotten the conclusion to which we came one day after a long discussion together upon that scandalous project which even then you were meditating. If you had remained in that conclusion, now it might have been not unfitly said of you, Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly (Ps. 1:1). But let it be so.

Sons ought, no doubt, to obey a father; scholars a teacher. An abbot may lead his monks where he shall please, and teach them what he thinks proper; but this is only as long as he lives. Now that he is dead, whom you were bound to hear as a teacher and to follow as a guide, why are you still delaying to make amends for the grave scandal that you have occasioned? What hinders you now to give ear, I do not say to me when I recall you, but to our God, when He mercifully does so by the mouth of Jeremiah, Shall they fall and not arise? Shall he turn away and not return? (Jer. 8:4). Or has your abbot, when dying, forbidden you ever to rise again after your fall, or ever to speak of your return? Is it necessary for you to obey him even when dead—to obey him against charity and at the peril of your soul? You would allow, I suppose, that the bond between an abbot and his monks is by no means so strong or tenacious as that of married persons, whom God Himself and not man has bound with an inviolable sacrament—as the Saviour says: What God hath joined together let no man put asunder (S. Matt. 19:6). But the Apostle asserts that when the husband is dead the wife is freed from the law of her husband (Rom. 7:2), and do you consider yourself bound by the law of your dead abbot, and this against a law which is more binding still, that of charity?

3. These things I say, yet I do not think that you ought to have yielded to him in this even when living, or that thus to have yielded ought to be called obedience. For it is of that kind of obedience that it is said in general: The Lord shall lead forth with the workers of iniquity those who deviate in their obedience (Ps. 125:5, VULG.). And that no one may contend that obedience to an abbot, even in things evil, is free from that penalty, there are words elsewhere still more precise: The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son (Ezek. 18:20). From these, then, it appears clearly that those who command things evil are not to be obeyed, especially when in yielding to wrong commands, in which you appear to obey man, you show yourself plainly disobedient to God, who has forbidden everything that is evil. For it is altogether unreasonable to profess yourself obedient when you know that you are violating obedience due to the superior on account of the inferior, that is, to the Divine on account of the human. What then? God forbids what man orders; and shall I be deaf to the voice of God and listen to that of man? The Apostles did not understand the matter thus when they said, We must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Does not the Lord in the Gospel blame the Pharisees: Ye transgress the commandment of God on account of your traditions (S. Matt. 15:3). And by Isaiah: In vain they worship Me, he says, teaching the

commands and doctrines of men (Is. 29:13). And also to our first father. Because thou hast obeyed thy wife rather than Me, the earth shall be rebellious to thy work (Gen. 3:17). Therefore to do evil, whosoever it be that bids, is shown not to be obedience, but disobedience.

4. To make this principle clear, we must note that some actions are wholly good, others wholly evil: and in these no obedience is to be rendered to men. For the former are not to be omitted by us, even if they are prohibited [by men]: nor the latter done, even though they are commanded. But, besides these, there are actions between the two, and which may be good or evil according to circumstances of place, time, manner, or person, and in these obedience has its place, as it was in the matter of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was in the midst of Paradise. When these are in question, it is not right to prefer our own judgment to that of our superiors, so as to take no heed of what they order or forbid. Let us see whether it be not such a case that I have condemned in you, and whether you ought not to be condemned. For clearness, I will subjoin examples of the distinction which I have just made. Faith, hope, charity, and others of that class are wholly good; it cannot be wrong to command, or to practise them, nor right to forbid them, or to neglect the practice of them. Theft, sacrilege, adultery, and all other such vices are wholly evil; it can never be right to practise or to order them, nor wrong to forbid or avoid them. The law is not made for things of this kind, for the prohibition of no person has the power to render null the commandments given, nor the command of any to render lawful the things prohibited. There are, finally, things of a middle kind which are not in themselves good or evil; they may be indifferently either prescribed or forbidden, and in these things an inferior never sins in obeying. Such are, for example, fasting, watching, reading, and such like. But some things which are of this middle kind often pass the bounds of indifferency, and become the one or the other. Thus, marriage is neither prescribed nor forbidden, but when it is made may not be dissolved. That, therefore, which before the nuptials was a thing of the middle kind obtains the force of a thing wholly good in regard to the married pair. Also, it is a thing indifferent for a man in secular life to possess or not to possess property of his own; but to a monk, who is not allowed to possess anything, it is wholly evil.

5. Do you see now, brother, to which branch of my division your action belongs? If it is to be put among things wholly good it is praiseworthy: if among those wholly evil it is greatly to be blamed: but if it is to be placed among those of the middle kind you may, perhaps, find in your obedience an excuse for your

first departure, but your delay in returning is not at all excusable, since that was not from obedience. For when your abbot was dead, if he had previously ordered anything which was not fitting, the former discussion has shown you that you were no longer bound to obey him. And although the matter is now sufficiently clear by itself, yet because of some who seek for occasion to object when reason does not support them, I will put the matter clearly again, so that every shade of doubt may disappear, and I will show you that your obedience and your leaving your monastery were neither wholly good nor partly good, but plainly wholly evil. Concerning him who is dead, I am silent; he has now God alone for his judge, and to his own Lord he either stands or falls; that God may not say with righteous anger, “Men have taken away from me even the right to judge.” However, for the instruction of the living I discuss, not even what he has done, but what he has ordered; whether, that is to say, his order ought to have been obligatory, inasmuch as a widespreading scandal has followed upon it. And I say this first; that if there are any who followed him when he wrongly left his cloister, but who followed in simplicity, and without suspecting any evil, supposing that he had license to go forth from the Bishop of Langres and the Abbot of Cîteaux (for to each of these was he responsible); and it is not incredible that some of those who were of his company may so have believed; this, my censure, does not touch them, provided that when they knew the truth, they returned without delay.

6. Therefore my discourse is against those only, or rather for those, who knowingly and purposely put their hands into the fire; who being conscious of his presumption, yet followed him who presumed, without caring for the prohibition of the Apostle, and his precept, to withdraw from even brother who walks disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6). Despising also the voice of the Lord himself, He who gathereth not with me scattereth (S. Matt. 12:30). To you, brethren, belongs clearly and specially that reproach spoken by Jeremiah, which I recall with grief: This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God (Jer. 7:28). For clearly that is the Voice of God pointing out His enemy from the work that he does, and, as it were, showing him with a stretched ringer to ward off simple souls from his ungodly example: He who is not with Me, He says, scatters; ought you to have followed a disperse? And when God invites you to unite with Him, ought you rather to follow a man who wishes to disperse you? He scorned his superiors, he exposed his inferiors to danger, he deeply troubled his brethren, and yet ye seeing a thief joined yourself with him! I had determined to be silent concerning him who is dead, but I am obliged, I confess, to proceed still a little

further, since I cannot blame your obedience, if his command is not shown to be altogether improper. Since the orders and the actions of the man were similar to each other, it seems impossible to praise or to blame the one without the other. Now it is very clear that orders of that kind ought not to have been obeyed, since they were contrary to the law of God. For who can suppose that the institutions of our Fathers are not to be preferred to those of lesser persons, or that the general rules of the Order must not prevail over the commands of private persons? For we have this in the Rule of S. Benedict.

7. I should be able, indeed, to bring forward the Abbot of Cîteaux as a witness, who, as being superior to your abbot as a father to a son, as a master to a disciple, and, in a word, as an abbot to a monk committed to his charge, rightly complains that you have held him in contempt because of the other. I might speak also of the Bishop, whose consent was not waited for, a contempt which was inexcusable, since the Lord says of such and to such: He who despises you despises Me (S. Luke 10:16). But as to both these might be opposed and preferred the authority of the Roman Pontiff as more weighty: by whose license it is said that you have taken care to secure yourselves (the question of that license shall be discussed in its proper place), [see below, No. 9], I rather bring forward such an one as you dare not set yourself against. Most surely He is the Supreme Pontiff, who by His own blood entered in once and alone into the Holy Place to obtain eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12), and denounces with a terrible voice, in the Gospel, that none should dare to give scandal to even the least of His little ones (S. Matt, 18:6). I should say nothing if the evil had not proceeded farther. An easy forgiveness would follow a fault which has no grave consequences. But at present there is no doubt that you have preferred the commands of a man to that of God, and have thus scandalized very many. What man of any sense would say that such an audacious act was good, or could become good, by the direction of any man, whatever his dignity? And if it is not good, nor can become good, without doubt it is wholly evil. Whence it follows that since your withdrawal was to the scandal of many, and by this contrary to the law of God, since it is neither wholly good nor even of a middle kind, it is, therefore, wholly and altogether evil; because that which is wholly is always such, and that of a middle kind can become so.

8. How then can either the permission of your abbot avail to make that permissible which is (as we have already shown beyond question) wholly evil, since (as we have said above) things of this kind, that is things purely evil, can never be rightly ordered nor permissibly done? Do you see how futile is the

excuse you draw from obedience to a man when you are convicted of a transgression against God? I hardly suppose that you would resort to that reply of the Lord respecting the scandal given to the Pharisees, Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind (S. Matt, 15:14), and that as He attached no value to their objections, so you attach no value to ours; for you know that there is no comparison in this respect between Him and you. But if you make comparison of persons, you find that on one side it is the proud Pharisees who are scandalized, on the other the poor of Jesus Christ; and as to the cause of the scandal, in the one case it is presumption, in the other truth. Again, as I have shown above, you have not only preferred a human to a Divine command, but that of a private person to a public rule, and this alone would suffice for proof; but the custom and Rule, not only of our Order, but of all monasteries, seems to cry out against your unexampled innovation and unparalleled presumption.

9. You had then just reason to fear, and were rightly distrustful of the goodness of your cause when, in order to still the pangs of your consciences, you tried to have recourse to the Holy See. O, vain remedy! which is nothing else than to seek girdles, like our first parents, for your ulcerated consciences, that is, to hide the ill instead of curing it. We have asked and obtained (they say) the permission of the Pope. Would that you had asked not his permission, but his advice; that is to say, not that he would permit you to do it, but whether it was a thing permitted to you to do! Why, then, did you solicit his permission? Was it to render lawful that which was not so? Then you wished to do what was not lawful; but what was not lawful was evil. The intention, therefore, was evil, which tended towards evil. Perhaps you would say that the wrong thing which you demanded permission to do ceased to be such if it was done by virtue of a permission. But that has been already excluded above by an irrefragable reason. For when God said, Do not despise one of these little ones who believe in Me, He did not add also, Unless with permission; nor when He said, Take care not to give scandal to one of these little ones (S. Matt, 18:6–10), did He limit it by adding, Without licence. It is then certain that except when the necessary interests of the truth require, it is not permitted to anyone to give any scandal, neither to order it, nor to consent to it. Yet you think that permission is to be obtained to do so. But to what purpose? Was it that you might sin with more liberty and fewer scruples, and, therefore, with just so much the more danger? Wonderful precaution, marvellous prudence! They had already devised evil in their heart, but they were cautious not to carry it out in action except with permission. They conceived in sorrow, but they did not bring forth iniquity until

the Pope had afforded his consent to that unrighteous birth. With what advantage? or, at least, with what lessening of the evil? Is it likely that either an evil will cease to be or even be rendered less because the Pope has consented to it? But who will deny it to be a bad thing to give consent to evil? Which, notwithstanding, I do not in any way believe that the Pope would have done, unless he had been either deceived by falsehood or overcome by importunity. In fact, unless it had been so, would he weakly have given you permission to sow scandal, to raise up schisms, to distress friends, to trouble the peace of brethren, to throw into confusion their unity, and, above all, to despise your own Bishop? And under what necessity he should have acted thus I have no need to say, since the issue of the matter sufficiently shows. For I see with grief that you have gone forth, but I do not see that you have profited in doing so.

10. Thus, in your opinion, to give assent to so great and weighty evils is to show obedience, to render assistance, to behave with moderation and gentleness. Do you, then, endeavour to whitewash the most detestable vices under the name of virtues? Or do you think that you can injure virtues without doing injury to the Lord of virtues? You hide the vainest presumption, the most shameful levity, the cruellest division under the names of obedience, moderation, gentleness, and you soil those sacred names with the vices hidden under them. May I never emulate this obedience: such moderation can never be pleasing to me, or rather seems to resemble molestation; may gentleness of this kind ever be far from me. Such obedience is worse than any revolt: such moderation passes all bounds. Shall I say that it goes beyond them or does not come up to them? Perhaps it would be more adequate to say that it is altogether without measure or bound. Of what kind is that gentleness which irritates the ears of all the hearers? And yet I beg you to show some sign of it now on my behalf. Since you are so patient that you do not contend with anybody, even with one who tries to drag you away to forbidden ground, permit me, too, I beg of you, to treat with you now somewhat more unrestrainedly. Otherwise I have merited much evil from you if you think that you must resent from me alone what you are accustomed to resent from no one else.

11. Well, then, I call your own conscience to witness. Was it willingly or unwillingly that you went forth? If willingly, then it was not from obedience. If unwillingly, you seem to have had some suspicion of the order which you carried out with reluctance. But when there is suspicion, there consideration is necessary. But you, either to display your patience or to exercise it, obeyed without discussion, and suffered yourself to be taken away, not only without

your own volition, but even against your conscience. O, patience worthy of all impatience! I cannot, I confess, help being angry with this most questionable patience. You saw that he was a scatterer and yet you followed him; you heard him directing what was scandalous and yet you obeyed him! True patience consists in doing or in suffering what is displeasing to us, not what is forbidden to us. A strange thing! You listened to that man softly murmuring, but not to God openly protesting in such words as these, like a clap of thunder from heaven, Woe to him through whom scandal cometh (S. Matt, 18:7). And to be the better heard, not only does the Lord Himself cry aloud, but His Blood cries with a terrible voice to make even the deaf hear. Its pouring forth is its cry. Since it was poured forth for the children of God who were scattered abroad that it might gather them together into one, it justly murmurs against the scatterers. He whose constant duty it is to collect souls together hates without doubt those who scatter them. Loud is His voice and piercing which calls bodies from their graves and souls from Hades. That trumpet blast calls together heaven and earth and the things that are with them, giving them peace. Its sound has gone out unto the whole world, and yet it has not been able to burst through your deafness! What a voice of power and magnificence when the words are spoken: Let the Lord arise and let His enemies be scattered (Ps. 68:2). And again: Disperse them by Thy power, O Lord, my protector, and put them down (Ps. 59:12). It is the blood of Christ, brother Adam, which raises its voice as a sounding trumpet on behalf of pious assemblies against wicked scatterers; it has been poured forth to bring together those who were dispersed, and it threatens to disperse those who scatter. If you do not hear His voice, then listen to that which rolls from His side. For how could He not hear His own blood who heard the blood of Abel?

12. But what is this to me? you say. It concerns one whom it was not right for me to contradict. The disciple is not above his master; and it was to be taught, not to teach, that I attached myself to him. As a hearer, it became me to follow, not to go before, my preceptor. O, simple one, the Paulus of these times! If only he had shown himself another Antony, so that you had no occasion to discuss the least word that fell from his lips, but only to obey it without hesitation! What exemplary obedience! The least word, an iota, which drops from the lips of his superiors finds him obedient! He does not examine what is enjoined, he is content because it is enjoined! And this is obedience without delay. If this is a right view of duty, then without cause do we read in the Church: Prove all things, hold fast that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21). If this is a right view, let us blot out of the book of the Gospel Be ye wise as serpents, for the words

following would suffice, and harmless as doves (S. Matt. 10:16). I do not say that inferiors are to make themselves judges of the orders of those set over them, in which it may be taken for granted that nothing is ordered contrary to the Divine laws, but I assert that prudence also is necessary to notice if anything does so contradict, and freedom firmly to pronounce against these. But you reply, I have nothing to do with examining what he orders; it is his duty to do that before ordering. Tell me, I pray you, if a sword were put into your hand and he bade you turn it against his throat, would you obey? Or if he ordered you to fling yourself headlong into the fire, or into the water, would you do it? If you did not even hinder him from such acts as these to the best of your ability, would not you be held guilty of the crime of homicide? Come, then, see that you have done nothing but co-operate in his crime under the pretext of obedience. Do you not know that it has been said by a certain person (for you would not, perhaps, give credence to me) that it would be better to be sunk in the depths of the sea than to give scandals (S. Matt, 18:6). Why has He said this unless that He wished to signify that in comparison to the terrible punishments that are reserved for the scandalous, temporal death would seem scarcely a punishment but an advantage? Why, then, did you help him to make a scandal? For you did so in following and obeying him. Would it not have been better, according: to the declaration of the Truth I have quoted, to hang a millstone from his neck and so to plunge him in the depth of the sea? What then? You that were so obedient a disciple, who could not bear that he, your father and master, should be separated from you for a single instant, for a foot breadth (as it is said), you have not hesitated to fall into the ditch behind him with your eyes wide open, like another Balaam? Did you think that you were labouring for his happiness when you showed toward him an obedience more hurtful for him than death? Truly, now, I experience how true is that saying: A man’s foes shall be they of his own household (Micah 7:6). If you see and feel this, do you not groan if you perceive what you have done? And if you do perceive, do you not tremble? For, indeed, your obedience (it is not my judgment, but that of the Truth Himself) has been worse for him than death.

13. If you are now convinced of this, I do not know how you can help trembling and hastening to repair your fault. Otherwise what conscience of wrong will you carry hence to that terrible tribunal where the Judge will not need witness, where the Truth will scan even purposes, and penetrate in search of faults to the hidden places of the heart, where, in short, that Divine look will try the most secret recesses of minds, and at the sudden shining of that Sun of

justice all the windings of human souls will be spread open and give to the light whatever, whether good or evil, they were hiding? Then, brother Adam, those who commit a sin, and those who consent to it will be punished with equal chastisement. Then thieves and the associates of thieves will listen to a similar sentence; the seducers and the seduced will undergo an equal judgment. Cease, then, to say again, What is it to me? Let him see to it. Can you touch pitch and say I am not defiled? Can you hide fire in your bosom and not be burned? Can you have your portion with adulterers without resembling them in some respect? Isaiah did not think so, for he reproached himself not only because he was himself unclean, but also because he was the companion of the unclean: Because, he says, I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5). For he blames himself not because he dwelt among sinners, but because he has not condemned their sins. For, so he says: Woe is me because I have been silent (Isaiah 6:5, VULG.). But when did he consent to the doing of evil, that he blames himself not to have condemned it in others? And did not David also feel that he was defiled by the contact of sin when he said: With men that work iniquity, and I will not communicate with their chosen friends (Ps. 140:4, VULG.). Or when he made this prayer: Cleanse me O Lord from my secret sins, and spare Thy servant from the offences of others (Ps. 18:12–13, VULG.). Wherefore he strove to avoid the society of sinners in order not to share in their faults. For he says farther: I have not sat in the council of vanity, and I will not enter into the company of those who do unjustly (Ps. 25:4–5, VULG.). And then he adds: I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked (ibid.). Finally, hear the counsel of the wise man: My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not (Prov. 1:10).

14. Have you, then, against these and innumerable other and similar testimonies of the truth, thought that you ought to obey anybody? O, odious perversity! The virtue of obedience which always wars on behalf of truth, is arrayed against truth. Happy the disobedience of brother Henry, who soon repenting of his error and retracing his steps, has the happiness of not persisting longer in such an obedience. The fruits of disobedience are sweeter and to be preferred [to this]; and now he tastes them with a good conscience in the peaceable and constant practice of the duties of his profession in the midst of his brethren, and in the bosom of the Order to which he has devoted himself; while some of his former companions are breaking the hearts of their ancient brethren by the scandals they are making! Whose disobedience of slackness and omission, if the choice were given me, I would even prefer, with his sense of

penitence, than the punctilious obedience of such as these, with scandal. For I consider that he does better for the keeping unity in the bond of peace who obeys charity, though disobedient to his abbot, than those who so defer to a single man as to prefer one to the whole body. I might boldly add even this, that it is preferable to risk disobedience to one person than to endanger the vows of our own profession and all the other advantages of religion.

15. Since, not to speak of other obligations, there are two principal ones to be observed by all dwellers in a monastery, obedience to the abbot and stability or constancy. But one of these ought not to be fulfilled to the prejudice of the other, so that you should thus show yourself constant in your place as not to be above being subject to the superior, and so obey the superior as not to lose constancy. Thus if you would disapprove of a monk, however constant in his cloister, who was too proud to obey the orders of his superior, can you wonder that we blame an obedience which served you as the cause or occasion for deserting your place, especially when in making a religious profession constancy is vowed in such a way as not to be at all subordinated to the will of the abbot under whom a monk may be placed.

16. But perhaps you may turn what I say against me, asking what I have done with the constancy which ought to have kept me at Cîteaux, whereas I now dwell elsewhere. To which I reply, I am, indeed, a Cistercian monk professed in that place, and was sent forth by my abbot to where I now dwell, but sent forth in peace without scandal, without disorder, according to our usages and constitutions. As long, therefore, as I persevere in the same peace and concord in which I was sent forth, as long as I stand fast in unity, I do not prefer my private interests to those of the community. I remain peaceful and obedient in the place where I have been posted. I say that my conscience is at peace, because I observe faithfully the stability I have promised. How do I compromise my vow of stability when I do not break the bond of concord, nor desert the firm ground of peace? If obedience keeps my body far distant from Cîteaux, the offering of the same devotions and a manner of life in every way similar hold my spirit always present there. But the day on which I shall begin to live, according to other laws (which may God avert), to practise other customs, to perform different observances, to introduce novelties and customs from without, I shall be a transgressor of my vows, and I shall no longer think that I am observing the constancy that I promised. I say, then, that an abbot ought to be obeyed in all things, but saving the oath of the Order. But you having made profession, according to the Rule of S. Benedict, where you promised obedience, you

promised also constancy. And if you have, indeed, obeyed, but have not been constant by offending in one point, you are made an offender in all, and if in all, then in obedience itself.

17. Do you see, then, the proper scope of your obedience? How can it excuse your want of constancy, which is not even of weight to justify itself? Everyone knows that a person makes his profession solemnly and regularly in the presence of the abbot. That profession is made, therefore, in his presence only, not at his discretion also. The abbot is employed as the witness, and not the arbiter of the profession; the helper of its fulfilment, not an assistant to the breach of it; to punish and not to authorize bad faith. What, then? Do I place in the hand of the abbot the vows that I have taken, without exception ratified by my mouth and signed by my hand in presence of God and His Saints? Do I not hear out of the Rule (Rule of S. Benedict C. 58) that if I ever do otherwise I shall be condemned by God, whom I have mocked? If my abbot or even an angel from heaven should order me to do something contrary to my vow, I would boldly refuse an obedience of this kind, which would make me a transgressor of my own oath and make me swear falsely by the name of my God, for I know, according to the truth of Scripture, that out of my own mouth I must either be condemned or justified (S. Luke 19:22), and because The mouth which lies slays the soul (Wisd. 1:11), and that we chant with truth before God, Thou wilt destroy all those who speak falsehood (Ps. 5:6), and because everyone shall bear his own burden (Gal. 6:5), and everyone shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12). If it were otherwise with me, with what front could I dare to lie in the presence of God and His angels, when singing that verse from the Psalm: I will render unto Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered (Ps. 66:13, 14).

In fact, the abbot himself ought to consider the advice which the Rule gives, addressing itself to him in particular, “that he should maintain the present Rule in all respects,” and also, which is universally directed, and no exception made, “that all should follow the Rule as guide and mistress, nor is it to be rashly deviated from by any” (Rule of S. Bened. capp. lxiv. 3). Thus I have determined to follow him as master always and everywhere, but on the condition never to deviate from the authority of the Rule, which, as he himself is witness, I have sworn and determined to keep.

18. Let me, briefly, treat another objection which may possibly be made to me, and I will bring to a close an epistle which is already too long. It seems that I may be reproached with acting otherwise than I speak. For I may be asked, if I condemn those who have deserted their monastery, not only with the consent of

their abbot, but at his command, on what principle do I receive and retain those who from other monasteries, who, breaking their vow of constancy and contemning the authority of their superiors, come to our Order? To which my reply will be brief, but dangerous; for I fear that what I shall say will displease certain persons. But I fear still more lest by concealing the truth I should sing untruly in the Church those words of the Psalmist: I have not hid my righteousness within my heart: my talk hath been of Thy truth and of Thy salvation (Ps. 40:12). I receive them, then, for this reason, because I do not consider that they are wrong to quit the monastery, in which they were able, indeed, to make vows to God, but by no means to perform them, to enter into another house where they may better serve God, Who is everywhere, and who repair the wrong done by the breach of their vow of constancy by the perfect performance of all other duties of the religious life. If this displeases anyone, and he murmurs against a man thus seeking his own salvation, the Author of salvation Himself shall reply for him: Is thine eye evil because he is good? (S. Matt. 20:15). Whosoever thou art who enviest the salvation of another, care rather for thine own. Dost thou not know that by the envy of the devil death entered into the world? (Wisd. 2:24). Take heed, therefore, to thyself. For if there is envy there is death; surely, thou canst not both be envious and live. Why seek a quarrel with thy brother, since he seeks only the best means of fulfilling the vows which he has made? If the man seeks in what place or in what manner he may best discharge what he has promised to God, what wrong has he done to you? Perhaps, if you held him your debtor for a sum of money, however small, you would oblige him to compass sea and dry land until he rendered you the whole debt, even to the last farthing. What, then, has your God deserved from you that you are not willing for Him, too, to receive what is due? But in envying one you render two hostile; since you are trying both to defraud the lord of the service due from his servant, and to deprive the servant of the favour of his lord. Wherefore do you not imitate him, and yourself discharge what is due from you? Do you think that your debt, too, will not be required of you? Or do you not rather fear to irritate God against you the more by wickedly saying in your heart, He will not require it?

19. What, you say to me, do you then condemn all who do not do likewise? No; but hear what I do think about them, and do not make futile accusations. Why do you wish to make me odious to many thousands of holy men, who, under the same profession as I, though not living in the same manner, either live holily or have died blessed deaths? I do not fail to remember that God has left to

Himself seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee before Baal (1 Kings 19:18). Listen to me, then, man envious and calumnious. I have said that I think men coming to us from other monasteries ought to be received. Have I blamed those who do not come? The one class I excuse, but I do not accuse the other. It is only the envious whom I cannot excuse, nor, indeed, am I willing to do so. These being excepted, I think that if any others wish to pass to a stricter Rule, but fear to do so because of scandal, or are hindered by some bodily weakness, do not sin, provided that they study to live a holy, pious, and regulated life in the place where they are. For if by the custom of their monastery relaxations of the Rule have been introduced, either that very charity, in which they hesitate to remove to a better on account of causing scandal, may, perhaps, be an excuse for this; according to that saying Charity covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8), or the humility in which one conscious of his infirmity regards himself as imperfect, for it is said God gives grace unto the humble (S. James 4:6).

20. Many things I have written, dear brother, and, perhaps, it was not needful to use so many words, for an intelligence such as yours, quick in understanding what is said, and a will well-disposed to follow good counsel. But although I have written specially to you, yet so many words need not have been written on your account, but for those for whom they may be needful. But I warn you, as my own former and intimate friend, in few words and with all confidence, not to keep longer in suspense, at the great peril of your own soul, the souls of those who are desiring and awaiting your return. You hold now in your hands (if I do not mistake) both your own eternal life and death, and theirs who are with you; for I judge that whatever you decide or do they will do also. Otherwise, announce to them the grave judgment which has been rightly passed with respect to them by all the Abbots of our Order. Those who return shall live, those who resist shall die.

LETTER VIII. (A.D. 1131.)

TO BRUNO, ARCHBISHOP ELECT OF COLOGNE

Bernard having been consulted by Bruno as to whether he ought to accept the See of Cologne, so replies as to hold him in suspense, and render him in awe of the burden of so great a charge. He advises him to seek counsel of God in prayer.

1. You seek counsel from me, most illustrious Bruno, as to whether you ought to accept the Episcopate, to which it is desired to advance you. What mortal can presume to decide this for you? If God calls you, who can dare to dissuade you,

but if He does not call you, who may counsel you to draw near? Whether the calling is of God or not who can know, except the Spirit, who searcheth even the deep things of God, or one to whom God Himself has revealed it? That which renders advice still more doubtful is the humble, but still terrible, confession in your letter, in which you accuse your own past life gravely, but, as I fully believe, in sincerity and truth. And it is undeniable that such a life is unworthy of a function so holy and exalted. On the other hand, you are very right to fear (and I fear the same with you) if, because of the unworthiness you feel, you fail to make profitable use of the talent of knowledge committed to you, unless you could, perhaps, find another way, less abundant, perhaps, but also less perilous, of making increase from it. I tremble, I confess it, for I ought to say to you as to myself what I feel: I tremble, I say, at the thought of the state whence, and that whither, you are called, especially since no period of penitence has intervened to prepare you for the perilous transition from the one to the other. And, indeed, the right order requires that you should study to care for your own conscience before charging yourself with the care of those of others. That is the first step of piety, of which it is written, To pity thine own soul is pleasing unto the Lord (Ecclus. 30:23). It is from this first step that a well-ordered charity proceeds by a straight path to the love of one's neighbour, for the precept is to love him as ourselves. But if you are about to love the souls that would be confided to you as you have loved your own hitherto, I would prefer not to be confided rather than be so loved. But if you shall have first learned to love yourself then you will know, perhaps, how you should love me.

2. But what if God should quicken His grace and multiply His mercy upon you, and His clemency is able more quickly to replace the soul in a state of grace than daily penitence? Blessed, indeed, is he unto whom the Lord will not impute sin (Ps. 32:2), for who shall bring accusation against the elect of God? If God justifies, who is he that condemns? This short road to salvation that holy thief attained, who in one and the same day both confessed his iniquities and entered into glory. He was content to pass by the cross as by a short bridge from the religion of death unto the land of the living, and from this foul mire into the paradise of joy (S. Luke 23:43). This sudden remedy of piety that sinful woman happily obtained, in whose soul grace of a sudden began to abound, where offences had so abounded. Without much labour of penitence her sins were pardoned, because she loved much (S. Luke 7:37–50), and in a short time she merited to receive that amplitude of charity which, as it is written, covers the multitude of sins (1 S. Peter 4:8). This double benefit and most rapid goodness

also that paralytic in the Gospel experienced, being cured first in the soul, then in the body.

3. But it is one thing to obtain the speedy forgiveness of sins, and another to be borne in a brief space from the sins themselves to the badges (fillets) of high dignities in the Church. Yet I see that Matthew from the receipt of custom was raised to the supreme honour of the Apostolate. But this again troubles me, because he did not hear with the other Apostles the charge, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (S. Mark 16:15), until after he had done penitence, accompanying the Lord whithersoever He went, bearing long privation and remaining with Him in His temptations. I am not greatly reassured, though S. Ambrose was taken from the judge's tribunal to the priesthood, because he had from a boy led a pure and clean life, though in the world, and then he endeavoured to avoid the Episcopate even by flight and by hiding himself and many other means. Again, if Saul also was suddenly changed into Paul, a vessel of election, the Doctor of the Gentiles, and this be adduced as an example, it entirely destroys the similarity of the two cases to observe that he, therefore, obtained mercy because, as he himself says, he sinned ignorantly in unbelief. Besides, if such incidents, done for good and useful purposes, can be cited, it should be, not as examples, but as marvels, and it can be truly said of them, This is the change of the right hand of the Highest (Ps. 77:10).

4. In the meantime let these provisional replies to your queries suffice. If I do not express a decisive opinion, it is because I do not myself feel assured. This must needs be the case, for the gift of prophecy and of wisdom only could resolve your doubt. For who could draw clear water out of a muddy pool? Yet there is one thing that I can do for a friend without danger, and with the assurance of a good result; that is to offer to God my petition that He will assist you in this matter. Leaving, therefore, to Him the secret things of His Providence, of which we are ignorant, I will beg Him, with humble prayer and earnest supplication, that He will work in you and with respect to you that which shall be for His glory, and at the same time for your good. And you have also the Lord Norbert, whom you may conveniently consult in person on all such subjects. For that good man is more fitted than I to explain the mysterious acts of Providence, as he is nearer to God by his holiness.

LETTER IX. (A.D. 1132.)

TO THE SAME, THEN ARCHBISHOP OF COLOGNE

He exhorts Bruno, then recently created Archbishop of Cologne, to fear.

I have received with respect the Letter of your Grace, and have attended with care to what you have enjoined. If I have succeeded, you will have proof. But enough respecting that. Permit me in the same spirit of charity to say what follows. If it is certain that all those who are called to the ministry, are chosen also to the Kingdom, certainly the Archbishop of Cologne is secure of his own salvation. But if Saul was chosen to the kingdom, and Judas to the priesthood, by no other than God Himself, and it cannot be disproved that Scripture asserts this, then it is needful for even the Archbishop of Cologne to fear. But if that declaration holds good even in our own time (and it is true that it does) that not many noble, not many powerful, not many wise are called by God (1 Cor. 1:26), has not the Archbishop of Cologne a triple cause for fearing? Let us, then, who are raised to high dignities, study not to be high-minded, but to fear, and condescend to those of low estate. Have they made you chief? it is said, be among them as one of the rest (Ecclus. 32:1); and again, The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things (Ecclus. 30:18). It is the counsel of the wise, and listen to that of Wisdom Himself, who says He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger (S. Luke 22:26). We know from other passages that those who have authority will have to meet a strict judgment (Wisd. 6:5). Fear, then, ye that are powerful. The servant, also, that knoweth his Lord’s will, and doeth it not, he shall beat with many stripes (S. Luke 12:47). Fear, then, ye that are learned. Let the noble fear, for the Judge of all is not an acceptor of persons. That triple bond of necessary reason for fear will be very difficult to break through. Do I seem hard because I do not flatter, because I inculcate fear, which is the beginning of wisdom, upon a friend? May it be granted to me always so to benefit my friends; that is, by inspiring into them a salutary fear, rather than to deceive them by flattery. To that He incites me who says: Happy is the man who feareth alway (Prov. 28:14); and He deters me from flattery who says: O My people, they who flatter thee cause thee to err (Is. 3:12, VULG.).

LETTER X. (A.D. 1132.)

TO THE SAME

He incites Bruno to a just zeal for the punishment of crime.

The duty of your office, and the injunction of the Holy See, lay upon you a double obligation to punish a crime so enormous. Yet I think it not superfluous that the admonition of a friend should be added in a matter of such importance. I

wish the one whom I regard as father and friend to be admonished of this, to punish in every case that requires it, and with a due degree of severity; so that you should not only visit an offence that is before you with a just chastisement, but should also restrain the hearer from rashly imitating it.

LETTER XI. (Circa A.D. 1125.)

TO GUIGUES, THE PRIOR, AND TO THE OTHER MONKS OF THE GRAND CHARTREUSE

He discourses much and piously of the law of true and sincere charity, of its signs, its degrees, its effects, and of its perfection which is reserved for Heaven (Patria).

Brother Bernard, of Clairvaux, wishes health eternal to the most reverend among fathers, and to the dearest among friends, Guigues, Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, and to the holy Monks who are with him.

1. I have received the letter of your Holiness as joyfully as I had long and eagerly desired it. I have read it, and the letters which I pronounced with my mouth, I felt, as it were, sparks of fire in my heart, which warmed my heart within me; as coming from that fire which the Lord has sent upon the earth (S. Luke 12:49). How great a fire must glow in those meditations from which such sparks fly forth! This, your inspired and inspiring salutation, was to me, I confess, not as if coming from man, but like words descending surely from Him who sent the salutation to Jacob. It is not for me, in fact, a simple salutation given in passing, according to the custom and usage of men, but it is plainly from the very bowels of charity, as I feel, that this benediction, so sweet and so unhoped for, has come forth. I pray God to bless you, who have had the goodness to prevent me with benedictions of such sweetness, that confidence is granted to me, your humble servant, to reply, since you have first written; for though I had meditated writing, I had hitherto not presumed to do so. For I feared to trouble, by my eager scribbling, the holy quiet which you have in the Lord, and the religious silence which isolates you from the world. I feared, also, to interrupt, even for a moment, those mysterious whispers from God, and to pour my words into ears always occupied with the secret praises of heaven. I feared to become as one who would trouble even Moses on the mountain, Elias in the desert, or Samuel watching in the temple, if I had tried to turn away ever so little, minds occupied with divine communion. Samuel cries out: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth (1 Sam. 3:10). And should I presume to make myself heard? I feared, I say, lest presenting myself out of season before you, as it were

to David engaged in flight, or abiding in solitude, you might not wish to listen, and might say, “Excuse me, I cannot hear thee now; I prefer rather to give ear to words sweeter than thine.” I will hear what the Lord God will say unto me; for He shall speak peace unto His people, and to His saints, and to those who are converted at heart (Ps. 84:9, VULG.). Or, at least, this: Depart from me, ye evil-disposed, and I will study the commandments of my God (Ps. 119:115). For could I be so rash as to dare to arouse the much-loved spouse sweetly resting in the arms of her bridegroom as long as she will? Should I not hear from her on the instant: Do not be troublesome to me; I am for My Beloved, and My Beloved is for Me; He feedeth among the lilies (Cant. 2:16).

2. But what I do not dare to do, charity dares, and with all confidence knocks at the door of a friend, thinking that she ought by no means to suffer repulse, who knows herself to be the mother of friendships; nor does she fear to interrupt for an instant your rest, though so pleasant, to speak to you of her own task. She, when she will, causes you to withdraw from being alone with God; she, also, when she willed, made you attentive to me; so that you did not regard it as unworthy of you, not merely to benignantly endure my speaking, but more, to urge me to break the silence. I esteem the kindness, I admire the worthiness, I praise and venerate the pure rejoicing with which you glory in the Lord, for the advances in virtue which, as you suppose, I have made. I am proud of so great a testimony, and esteem myself happy in a friendship so grateful to me as that of the servants of God towards me. This is now my glory, this is my joy and the rejoicing of my heart, that not in vain I have lifted up mine eyes unto the mountains whence there has now come to me help of no small value. These mountains have already distilled sweetness for me; and I continue to hope that they will do so until our valleys shall abound with fruit. That day shall be always for me a day of festival and perpetual memorial, in which I had the honour to see and to receive that worthy man, by whom it has come about that I should be received into your hearts. And, indeed, you had received me even before, if I may judge by your letter; but now with a more close and intimate friendship, since, as I find, he brought back to you too favourable reports concerning me which, doubtless, he believed, though without sufficient cause. For, as a faithful and pious man, God forbid that he should speak otherwise than he believed. And truly I experience in myself what the Saviour says: He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward (S. Matt. 10:41). I have said, the reward of a righteous man, because I am regarded as righteous, only through receiving one who is righteous. If he has reported of

me something more than that, he has spoken not so much according to the truth of the case as according to the simplicity and goodness of his heart. You have heard, you have believed, you have rejoiced, and have written, thereby giving me no little joy, not only because I have been honoured with a degree of praise and a high place in the estimation of your Holiness, but also because all the sincerity of your souls has made itself known to me in no small measure. In few words, you have shown to me with what spirit you are animated.

3. I rejoice, therefore, and congratulate you on your sincerity and goodness as I congratulate myself on the edification which you have afforded to me. That is, indeed, true and sincere charity, and must be considered to proceed from a heart altogether pure and a good conscience and faith unfeigned, with which we love our neighbour as ourself. For he who loves only the good that himself has done, or, at least, loves it more than that of others, does not love good for its own sake, but on account of himself, and he who is such cannot do as the prophet says: Give thanks unto the Lord, because He is good (Ps. 118:1). He gives thanks, indeed, perhaps, because the Lord is good to him, not because He is good in Himself. Wherefore let him understand that this reproach from the same prophet is directed against him: They will praise thee when thou doest well unto thy own soul (Ps. 49:18). One man praises the Lord because He is mighty; another because He is good unto him; and, again, another simply because He is good. The first is a slave, and fears for himself; the second mercenary, and desires somewhat for himself; but the third is a son, and gives praise to his Father. Therefore both he who fears and he who desires are each working for his own advantage; charity which is in him alone who is a son, seeketh not her own. Wherefore I think that it was of charity that was spoken, The law of the Lord is pure, converting the soul (Ps. 19:7), because it is that alone which can turn away the mind from the love of itself and of the world and direct it towards God. Neither fear nor selfish love converts the soul. They change sometimes the outward appearance or the actions, but never affect the heart. No doubt even the slave does sometimes the work of God, but because he does it not of his own free will he remains still in his hardness. The mercenary person does it also, but not out of kindness, only as drawn by his own particular advantage. Where there is distinction of persons, there are personal interests, and where there are personal interests there is a limit of willingness, and there, without doubt, a rusting meanness. Let the very fear by which he is constrained be a law to the slave, let the greedy desire, with which the mercenary is bound, be a law to him, since it is by it that he is drawn away and enticed. But of these neither is without

fault or is able to convert the soul. But charity does convert souls when it fills them with disinterested zeal.

4. Now, I should say that this charity is faultless in him who has become accustomed to retain nothing for himself out of that which is his own. He who keeps nothing for himself gives to God quite certainly all that he has, and that which belongs to God cannot be unclean. Thus that pure law of the Lord is no other than charity, which seeks not what is advantageous to herself, but that which profits others. But law is said to be of the Lord, either because He Himself lives by it or because no one possesses it except by His gift. Nor let it seem absurd what I have said, that even God lives by law, since I declared that this law was no other than charity. For what but charity preserves in the supreme and blessed Trinity that lofty and unspeakable unity which it has? It is law, then, and charity the law of the Lord, which maintains in a wonderful manner the Trinity in Unity and binds It in the bond of peace. Yet let no one think that I here take charity for a quality or a certain accident in God, or otherwise to say that in God (which God forbid) there is something which is not God; but I say that it is the very substance of God. I say nothing new or unheard of, for S. John says God is love (1 S. John 4:16).

It is then right to say that charity is God, and at the same time the gift of God. Therefore Charity gives charity, the substantial gives the accidental. Where the word signifies the Giver it is a name of the substance, and where the thing given, it is a name of the accident. This is the eternal law, Creator and Ruler of the Universe. Since all things have been made through it in weight and measure and number, and nothing is left without law, not even He who is the Law of all things, yet He is Himself none other than the law which rules Him, a law uncreated as He.

5. But the slave and the mercenary have a law, not from God, but which they have made for themselves—the one by not loving God, the other by loving something else more than Him. They have, I say, a law which is their own and not of the Lord, to which, nevertheless, their own is subjected; nor are they able to withdraw themselves from the unchangeable order of the divine law, though each should make a law for himself. I would say, then, that a person makes a law for himself when he prefers his own will to the common and eternal law, perversely wishing to imitate his Creator; so that as He is a law unto Himself, and is under no authority but His Own, so the man also will be his own master, will make his own will a law to himself. Alas! what a heavy and insupportable yoke upon all the sons of Adam, which weighs upon and bows down our necks,

so that our life is drawn near to the grave. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Rom. 7:24) with which I am so weighed down that unless the Lord had helped me, my soul would almost have dwelt in the grave (Ps. 94:17). With this load was he burdened who groaned, saving: Why hast Thou set me as a mark against Thee, so that I am a burden to myself? (Job 7:20). Where he says, I am made a burden to myself, he showed that he was a law unto himself, and the law no other than he himself had made it. But when, speaking to God, he commenced by saying, Thou hast set me as a mark against Thee, he showed that he had not escaped from the Divine law. For this is the property of that eternal and just law of God, that he who would not be ruled with gentleness by God, should be ruled as a punishment by his own self; and that all those who have willingly thrown off the gentle yoke and light burden of charity should bear unwillingly the insupportable burden of their own will.

6. Thus the everlasting law does in a wonderful manner, to him who is a fugitive from its power, both make him an adversary and retain him as a subject; for while, on the one hand, he has not escaped from the law of justice, by which he is dealt with according to his merits, on the other he does not remain with God in His light, or peace, or glory. He is subjected to power, and excluded from happiness. O Lord, my God, why dost Thou not take away my sin, and pardon my transgression? (Job 7:21). So that throwing down the heavy weight of my own will, I may breathe easily under the light burden of charity; that I may not be overborne any longer by servile fear, nor allured by selfish cupidity, but may be impelled by Thy spirit, the spirit of liberty, which is that of Thy children. Who is it who witnesses to my spirit that I, too, am one of Thy children, since Thy law is mine, and as Thou art, so am I also, in this world? For it is quite certain that those who do this which the Apostle says owe no one anything except to love one another (Rom. 13:8) are themselves as God is in this world, nor are they slaves or mercenaries, but sons. Therefore neither are sons without law, unless, perhaps, some one should think the contrary because of this which is written, the law is not made for a righteous man (1 Tim. 1:9). But it ought to be remembered that the law promulgated in fear by a spirit of slavery is one thing, and that given sweetly and gently by the spirit of liberty is another. Those who are sons are not obliged to submit to the first, but they are always under the rule of the second. Do you wish to hear why it is said that law is not made for the righteous? You have not received, he says, the spirit of slavery again in fear. Or why, nevertheless, they are always under the rule of the law of charity? But ye have received the spirit of the adoption of sons (Rom. 8:15). Listen, now, in

what manner the righteous man confesses that at the same time he is and is not under the law. I became, he says, to those which were under the law as being under the law, although I myself was not under the law: but to those who were without law, I was as being without law, since I was not without the law of God but in the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:20, 21). Whence it is not accurately said the righteous have no law, or the righteous are without law, but that the law was not made for the righteous; that is, it is not, as it were, imposed upon unwilling subjects, but given freely to willing hearts by Him to whose sweet inspiration it is due. Wherefore the Lord also beautifully says, Take My yoke upon you (S. Matt. 11:29). As if He would say, I do not impose it upon you against your will, take it if you are willing; otherwise you will find not rest, but labour, for your souls.

7. The law of charity, then, is good and sweet, it is not only light and sweet to bear, but it renders bearable and light the laws even of slaves and mercenaries. But it does not destroy these, but brings about their fulfilment, as the Lord says, I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil (S. Matt. 5:17). The one it moderates, the other it reduces to order, and each it lightens. Charity will never be without fear, but that fear is good; it will never be without any thought of interest, but that a restrained and moderated one. Charity, therefore, perfects the law of the slave when it inspires a generous devotion, and that of the mercenary when it gives a better direction to interested wishes. So, then, devotion mixed with fear does not annul those last, but purifies them, only it takes away the fear of punishment which servile fear is never exempt from; and this fear is clean and filial, enduring for ever (Ps. 19:9). For that which is written, perfect love takes away fear (1 S. John 4:18), is to be understood of the fear of punishment, which is never wanting, as we have said, to slavish fear. It is, in fact, a common mode of speech which consists in putting the cause for the effect. As for cupidity, it is then rightly directed by the charity which is joined with it, since ceasing altogether to desire things which are evil, it begins to prefer those which are better, nor does it desire good things except in order to reach those which are better; which when, by the grace of God, it has fully obtained, the body and all the good things which belong to the body will be loved only for the sake of the soul, the soul for the sake of God, and God alone for Himself.

8. However, as we are in fleshly bodies, and are born of the desire of the flesh, it is of necessity that our desire, or affection, should begin from the flesh; but if it is rightly directed, advancing step by step under the guidance of grace, it will at length be perfected by the Spirit, because that is not first which is spiritual, but

that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual; and it is needful that we should first bear the image of the earthly and afterwards that of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15:46, 49). First, then, a man loves his own self for self's sake, since he is flesh, and he cannot have any taste except for things in relation with him; but when he sees that he is not able to subsist by himself, that God is, as it were, necessary to him, he begins to inquire and to love God by faith. Thus he loves God in the second place, but because of his own interest, and not for the sake of God Himself. But when, on account of his own necessity, he has begun to worship Him and to approach Him by meditation, by reading, by prayer, by obedience, he comes little by little to know God with a certain familiarity, and in consequence to find Him sweet and kind; and thus having tasted how sweet the Lord is, he passes to the third stage, and thus loves God no longer on account of his own interest, but for the sake of God Himself. Once arrived there, he remains stationary, and I know not if in this life man is truly able to rise to the fourth degree, which is, no longer to love himself except for the sake of God. Those who have made trial of this (if there be any) may assert it to be attainable; to me, I confess, it appears impossible. It will be so without doubt when the good and faithful servant shall have been brought into the joy of his Lord, and inebriated with the fulness of the house of God. For being, as it were, exhilarate, he shall in a wonderful way be forgetful of himself, he shall lose the consciousness of what he is, and being absorbed altogether in God, shall attach himself unto Him with all his powers, shall thenceforth be one spirit with Him.

9. I consider that the prophet referred to this when he said: I will enter into the powers of the Lord: O, Lord, I will make mention of Thy righteousness only (Ps. 71:16). He knew well that when he entered into the spiritual powers of God he would be freed from all the infirmities of the flesh, and would have no longer to think of them, but would be occupied only with the perfections of God. Then, for certain, each of the members of Christ would be able to say of himself, what Paul said of their Head: If we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more (2 Cor. 5:16). There no one knows himself according to the flesh, because flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50). Not that the substance of flesh will not be there, but that every fleshly necessity will be away; the love of the flesh is to be absorbed into the love of the spirit, and the weak human passions which exist at present will be absorbed into powers divine. Then the net of charity, which is now drawn through a great and vast sea, and does not cease to bring together from every kind of fish, at length drawn to the shore, shall retain only the good, rejecting the

bad. And while in this life charity fills with all kinds of fishes the vast spaces of its net, suiting itself to all according to the time, making, in a sense, its own, and partaking of the good and evil fortunes of all, it is accustomed not only to rejoice with them that rejoice, but to weep with them that weep. But when it shall have reached the shore [of eternity], casting away as evil fish all that it bore with grief before, it will retain those only which are sources of pleasure and gladness. Then Paul will no longer be weak with the weak, or be scandalized with those who are scandalized, since scandal and weakness will be far away. We ought not to think that he will still let fall tears over those who have not repented here below; and as it is certain that there will no longer be sinners, so there will be no one to repent. Far be it from us to think that he will mourn and deplore those whose portion is everlasting fire with the devil and his angels, when in that City of God which the streams of that river make glad (Ps. 46:4), the gates of which the Lord loves more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Ps. 87:2), because in those dwellings, although the joy of victory is sometimes tasted, yet the combat always continues, and sometimes the struggle is for life; but in that dear country there is no place for adversity or sorrow, as in that Psalm we sing: The abiding place of all those who rejoice is in Thee (Ps. 87:7, VULG.), and again: Everlasting joy shall be unto them (Is. 61:7). How, then, shall any remembrance be of mercy, where the justice of God shall be alone remembered? There can be no feeling of compassion called into exercise where there shall be no place for misery, or occasion for pity.

10. I am impelled to prolong this already lengthy discourse, dearly beloved and much longed-for brethren, by the very strong desire I have of conversing with you; but there are three things which show me that I ought to come to an end. First, that I fear to be burdensome to you; that I am ashamed to show myself so loquacious; third, that I am pressed by domestic cares. In conclusion, I beg you to have compassion for me, and if you have rejoiced for the good things you have heard of me, sympathize with me also, I pray, in my too real temptations and cares. He who related these things to you has, no doubt, seen some few little things, and has valued these little things as great, while your indulgence has easily believed what it willingly heard. I felicitate you, indeed, on that charity which believes all things (1 Cor. 13:7). But I am confounded by the truth which knows all things. I beg you to believe me in what I say of myself rather than another who has only seen me from without. No man knoweth the things that are in a man save the spirit of man which is in him (1 Cor. 2:11). I assure you that I do not speak of myself by conjecture, but out of full knowledge, and that I am

not such as I am believed and said to be. I feel assured of this, and confess it frankly; that so I may obtain your special prayers, and thus may become such as your letter sets forth, than which there is nothing I desire more.

LETTER XII

TO THE SAME

He commends himself to their prayers.

To the very dear Lord and Reverend father Guigues, Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, and to the holy brethren who are with him, Brother Bernard of Clairvaux offers his humble service.

In the first place, when lately I approached your parts, I was prevented by unfavourable circumstances from coming to see you and to make your acquaintance; and although my excuse may perhaps be satisfactory to you, I am not able, I confess, to pardon myself for missing the opportunity. It is a vexation to me that my occupations brought it about, not that I should neglect to come to see you, but that I was unable to do so. This I frequently have to endure, and therefore my anger is frequently excited. Would that I were worthy to receive the sympathy of all my kind friends. Otherwise I shall be doubly unhappy if my disappointment does not excite your pity. But I give you an opportunity, my brethren, of exercising brotherly compassion towards me, not that I merit it. Pity me not because I am worthy, but because I am poor and needy. Justice inquires into the merit of the suppliant, but mercy only looks to his unhappiness. True mercy does not judge, but feels; does not discuss the occasion which presents itself, but seizes it. When affection calls us, reason is silent. When Samuel wept over Saul it was by a feeling of pity, and not of approval (1 Samuel 15:13). David shed tears over his parricidal son, and although they were profitless, yet they were pious. Therefore do ye pity me (because I need it, not because I merit it), ye who have obtained from God the grace to serve Him without fear, far from the tumults of the world from which ye are freed. Happy those whom He has hidden in His tabernacle in the day of evil men; they shall trust in the shadow of His wings until the iniquity be overpast. As for me, poor, unhappy, and miserable, labour is my portion. I seem to be as a little unfledged bird almost constantly out of the shelter of its nest, exposed to wind and tempest. I am troubled, and I stagger like a drunken man, and my whole conscience is gnawed with care. Pity me, then; for although I do not merit pity I need it, as I have said.

LETTER XIII. (A.D. 1126.)

TO THE LORD POPE HONORIUS

He begs that the election of Alberic to the See of Chalons-sur-Marne may be ratified.

To the supreme Pontiff Honorius, a certain brother, a monk by profession, and by his life a sinner, sends his humble duty.

It is said that over you the prayer of a poor man has more power than the will of the powerful. The thought of this singular nobleness in you, as well as the suggestion of charity, impels me to write without fear to your Highness. I speak to you, my lord, with regard to the Church of Chalons, and I neither am able, nor ought I, to conceal from you as far as my ability extends, the danger to which it is exposed. In fact, being in its neighbourhood, I feel already that the peace of this Church will speedily be profoundly troubled, if your Holiness should not be able to assent to the election of that distinguished man, that is, of Magister Alberic, which has united the suffrages of the whole clergy and the people in an equal vote. On that subject, if you should deign to inquire or to care for my opinion, I would say that that man is of a faith irreproachable, that his doctrine is sound, and that he has shown prudence both in divine and human things; and I hope that in the House of God (if by Him he should be chosen) he would be a vessel of honour, and would be of service not only to that house, but to the whole of the Gallican Church. It is now for your wisdom to judge, whether I am right in asking from you the giving of a dispensation from which such good effects may be expected.

LETTER XIV. (Circa A.D. 1126.)

TO THE SAME POPE HONORIUS

He commends the cause of the Church of Dijon to the Pontiff.

To the Supreme Pontiff HONORIUS, Brother BERNARD, called to be Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and all that the prayers of a sinner can do in his behalf.

God, whom we venerate in you, knows the respectful fear with which I write to you. But charity, who governs both you and me, makes me bold so to do. Being requested by the Church of Dijon, I have undertaken to make request on its behalf. But I almost doubt what I ought precisely to ask for it. For, as it is unjust to try to obtain anything contrary to justice, either by entreaty or by

purchase, so it is superfluous before one who loves justice to make great efforts on behalf of that which is just. But although I do not know precisely what request it is best to make, yet I have full confidence that your kindness will not be unfruitful, especially in the cause of Religious. And, indeed, I know not what your Holiness may think good to decide after a careful examination of the matter, but I can bear witness that I have heard, and frequently do hear, that the Abbey of Dijon has possessed by long and uncontested tenure that which the people of Luxeuil are contesting with them, so that the older inhabitants of the neighbourhood are astonished, and indignant at the unfounded claim.

LETTER XV. (In the same year as the preceding.)

TO HAIMERIC THE CHANCELLOR

To the illustrious lord HAIMERIC, Chancellor of the Apostolic See, BERNARD of Clairvaux wishes health, and the grace to follow the Apostle, forgetting the things which are behind, and looking forward to those which are before.

Our friends are not ignorant of your friendship for me, and if I were desirous of keeping the fruit of so great felicity to myself they would show themselves jealous. The monks of Dijon are very dear to me, because of the ancient associations of that Church. I beg you to let them experience that affection, whether yours for me or mine for them is not without its influence. Justice, nevertheless, being done in all respects, against which it is not right, even for a friend, to desire anything.

LETTER XVI. (The same year as the preceding.)

TO PETER, CARDINAL PRESBYTER

To his very dear lord PETER, Cardinal Presbyter, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health everlasting.

I have no cause to plead with you; yet the cause of the monks of Dijon, because they are Religious, I regard as mine. Take their cause in hand as if it were mine; yet so mine that it may be also that of justice. I believe, however, that their cause is just; and the whole country testifies with me.

LETTER XVII. (Circa A.D. 1127.)

TO PETER, CARDINAL DEACON

He excuses himself that he has not come when summoned, and replies respecting some of his writings which are asked for.

To the venerable lord PETER, Cardinal Deacon of the Roman Church, Brother BERNARD wishes health and entire devotedness.

That I have not come to you as you commanded has been caused not by my sloth, but by a graver reason. It is that, if you will permit me to say so with all the respect which is due to you, and all good men, I have taken a resolution not again to go out of my monastery, unless for precise causes; and I see at present nothing of that kind which would permit me to carry out your wish, and gratify my own by coming to you. But you, what are you doing with respect to that promise of coming here which your former letter contained? We are awaiting it still. What the writings were, which you had before ordered to be prepared for you [otherwise, for us] and now ask for, I am absolutely ignorant, and, therefore, I have done nothing. For I do not remember to have written any book on morals which I should think worthy of the attention of your Excellency.

Some of the brethren have drawn up in their own way certain fragments of my instructions as they have heard them. Of whom one is conveniently near to you, viz., Gebuin, Precentor and Archdeacon of Troyes. You can easily, if you wish, obtain of him the notes drawn up by him. Yet if your occupation would leave you the time, and you should think fit to pay to your humble sons the visit which you promised, and which they have been expecting, I would do all in my power to give you satisfaction, if I have in my writings anything which could please you, or if I were able to compose any work which should seem worthy of you; for I greatly esteem your high reputation. I respect that care and zeal about holy things which I have heard of in you, and I should regard myself as very happy if these unpolished writings, which are a part of my duty, should be in any respect agreeable to you.

LETTER XVIII. (Circa A.D. 1127.)

TO THE SAME

He protests against the reputation for holiness which is attributed to him, and promises to communicate the treatises which he has written.

1. Even if I should give myself to you entirely that would be too little a thing still in my eyes, to have recompensed towards you even the half of the kindly feeling which you express towards my humility. I congratulate myself, indeed, on the honour which you have done me; but my joy, I confess, is tempered by

the thought that it is not anything I have accomplished, but only an opinion of my merit which has brought me this favour. I should be greatly ashamed to permit myself in vain complacency when I feel assured that what is loved or respected in me is not, indeed, what I am, but what I am thought to be; for when I am thus loved it is not then I that am loved, but something in me, I know not what, and which is not me, is loved in my stead. I say that I know not, but, to speak more truly, I know very well that it is nothing. For whatever is thought to exist, and does not, is nothing. The love and he who feels it is real enough, but the object of the love does not exist. That such should be capable of inspiring love is wonderful, but still more it is regrettable. It is from that we are able to feel whence and whither we go, what we have lost, what we find. By remaining united to Him, who is the real Being, and who is always happy, we also shall attain a continued and happy existence. By remaining united to Him, I said; that is, not only by knowledge, but by love. For certain of the sons of Adam when they had known God, glorified Him not as God, nor were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations (Rom. 1:21). Rightly, then, were their foolish hearts darkened, because since they recognized the truth and despised it, they were justly punished for their fault by losing the power to recognize it. Alas! in thus adhering to the truth by the mind, but with the heart departing from it, and loving vanity in its place, man became himself a vain thing. And what is more vain than to love vanity, and what is more repugnant to justice than to despise the truth? What is more just than that the power to recognize the truth should be withdrawn from those who have despised it, and that those who did not glorify the truth when they recognized it should lose the power of boasting of the knowledge? Thus the love of vanity is the contempt of truth, and the contempt of truth the cause of our blindness. And because they did not like, he says, to retain God in their knowledge, He gave them over unto a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28).

2. From this blindness, then, it follows that we frequently love and approve that which is not for that which is; since while we are in this body we are wandering from Him who is the Fulness of Existence. And what is man, O God, except that Thou hast taken knowledge of Him? If the knowledge of God is the cause that man is anything, the want of this makes him nothing. But He who calls those things which are not as though they were, pitying those reduced in a manner to nothing, and not yet able to contemplate in its reality, and to embrace by love that hidden manna, concerning which the Apostle says: Your life is hidden with Christ in God (Cor. 3:3). But in the meantime He has given us to taste it by faith and to seek for by strong desire. By these two we are brought for

the second time from not being, to begin to be that His (new) creature, which one day shall pass into a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That, without doubt, shall take place, when righteousness shall be turned into judgment, that is, faith into knowledge, the righteousness which is of faith into the righteousness of full knowledge, and also the hope of this state of exile shall be changed into the fulness of love. For if faith and love begin during the exile, knowledge and love render perfect those in the Presence of God. For as faith leads to full knowledge, so hope leads to perfect love, and, as it is said, If ye will not believe ye shall not understand (Is. 7:9, acc. to lxx.), so it may equally be said with fitness, if you have not hoped, you will not perfectly love. Knowledge then is the fruit of faith, perfect charity of hope. In the meantime the just lives by faith (Hab. 2:4), but he is not happy except by knowledge; and he aspires towards God as the hart desires the water-brooks; but the blessed drinks with joy from the fountain of the Saviour, that is, he delights in the fulness of love.

3. Thus understanding and love, that is, the knowledge of and delight in the truth, are, perhaps, as it were, the two arms of the soul, with which it embraces and comprehends with all saints the length and breadth, the height and depth, that is the eternity, the love, the goodness, and the wisdom of God. And what are all these but Christ? He is eternity, because “this is life eternal to know Thee the true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (S. John 17:3). He is Love, because He is God, and God is Love (1 S. John 4:16). He is both the Goodness of God and the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24), but when shall these things be? When shall we see Him as He is? For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was subjected unto vanity, not willingly (Rom. 8:19, 20). It is that vanity diffused through all which makes us desire to be praised even when we are blameable, and not to be willing to praise those whom we know to be worthy of it. But this too is vain, that we, in our ignorance, frequently praise what is not, and are silent about what is. What shall we say to this, but that the children of men are vain, the children of men are deceitful upon the weights, so that they deceive each other by vanity (Ps. 61:9, lxx). We praise falsely, and are foolishly pleased, so that they are vain who are praised, and they false who praise. Some flatter and are deceptive, others praise what they think deserving, and are deceived; others pride themselves in the commendations which are addressed to them, and are vain. The only wise man is he who says with the Apostle: I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be or that he heareth of me (2 Cor. 12:6).

4. For the present I have noted down these things too hastily (because of this in not so finished a way), rather than dictated them for you, perhaps also at greater length than I should, but to the best of my poor ability. But that my letter may finish at the point whence it began, I beg you not to be too credulous of uncertain rumour about me, which, as you know well, is accustomed to be wrong both in giving praise and in attaching blame. Be so kind, if you please, as to weigh your praises, and examine with care how far your friendship for me and your favour are well-founded, thus they will be the more acceptable from my friend as they are fitted to my humble merit. Thus when praise shall have proceeded from grave judgment, and not from the error of the vulgar, if it is more moderate it will be at the same time more easy to bear. I assure you that what attaches me (humble person as I am), to you is the zeal, industry, and sincerity with which you employ yourself, as they say, in the accomplishment of your charge in holy things. May it be always thus with you that this may be said of you always with truth. I send you the book which you desire to have in order to copy; as for the other treatises of mine which you wish that I should send, they are but few, and contain nothing which I should think worthy of your attention, yet because I should prefer that my want of intelligence should be blamed rather than my goodwill, and I would rather endanger my inexperience than my obedience in your sight, be so good as to let me know by the present messenger which of my treatises you wish that I should send you, so that I may ask for them again from those persons to whom they have been lent, and send them wherever you shall direct. That you may know what you wish for, I may say that I have written a little book on Humility, four Homilies on the Praises of the Virgin Mother (for the little book has this title), upon that passage of S. Luke where it is said the Angel Gabriel was sent (S. Luke 1:26). Also an Apology dedicated to a certain friend of mine, in which I have treated of some of our observances, that is to say, those of Cîteaux, and those of Cluny. I have also written a few Letters to various persons, and finally, there are some of my discourses which the brethren who heard them have reproduced in their own words and keep them in their hands. Would that any of the simple productions of my humble powers might be of any service to you, but I do not dare to expect it.

LETTER XIX. (Circa A.D. 1127.)

TO THE SAME

He commends the deputies from Rheims.

It is the time for me to ask the fulfilment of your promise, so as to prove that I have not been wrong in putting all my confidence in you, since I have had the honour to make your acquaintance and obtain your friendship. Be assured that I shall regard as done to myself whatever assistance you are able to give to these deputies from Rheims. I venture to make this request, not because I think myself of so great importance, but because you have made me the promise. Whether you have done well, it is for you to see.

LETTER XX. (Circa A.D. 1127.)

TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

To the illustrious Lord HAIMERIC, Chancellor of the Holy Roman See, Brother BERNARD, of Clairvaux, health and prayers.

Since I have once begun, permit me to speak to you, even though I shall make myself importunate; but importunate for charity, truth, and justice. For although I am not of sufficient importance to have at Rome business of my own, yet I do not regard any of the affairs of God as things in which I have no concern. Wherefore, if I have with you still the favour which many people suppose, permit me to beg you to forward the deputies of the Lord Archbishop of Rheims in their present business. I am sure that they neither resist for themselves nor ask from another anything but what is just.

LETTER XXI. (Towards the end of A.D. 1127.)

TO MATTHEW, THE LEGATE

He excuses himself very skilfully for not having obeyed the summons to take part in settling certain affairs.

1. My heart was, indeed, prepared to obey; not so my body. It was burned up by the heats of an acute and violent fever, and exhausted by sweats, so that it was too weak to carry out the impulse of the spirit. I wished, then, to go, but my good will was hindered by the obstacle which I have mentioned. Whether this was truly so, let my friends themselves judge, who, disregarding every excuse that I can make, avail themselves of the bonds of obedience to my superiors to draw me out of my cloister into cities. I beg them to remark that this reason is not a pretext of my own invention, but a cause of much suffering to me; that they may thus learn that no project can prevail against the will of God. If I should reply to them, I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my

feet, how shall I defile them? (Cant. 5:3), they would at once be indignant. But now let them either object to or acquiesce in the ruling of Providence, for it is that which has brought about, that even if I wish to go forth, I am not in health to do so.

2. But the cause is great, they say, the necessity weighty. They must, then, have recourse to some one suitable to settle great matters. If they think me such an one, I not only think, but know, that I am not. Furthermore, whether the matters are great or small, to which they so earnestly invite me, they are not my concern. Now, I inquire, Are the matters easy or difficult which you are so anxious to lay upon your friend, to the troubling of his peace? If easy, they can be settled without me; if difficult, they cannot be dealt with by me, unless, perhaps, I am so estimated as to be thought capable of doing what no one else can do, and for whom great and impossible affairs are to be reserved. But if it be so, O, Lord my God, how are Thy designs so frustrated in me only? Why hast Thou put under a bushel the lamp, which could shine upon a candlestick; or, to speak more plainly, why hast Thou made me a monk and hidden me in Thy sanctuary during the day of evil, if I were a man necessary to the world, without whom bishops are not able to transact their business? But this, again, is a service that my friends have done me, that now I seem to speak with discomposure to a man whom I am accustomed to think of with serenity, and with the utmost pleasure. But you know (I say it to you, my father) that so far from feeling anger, I am prepared to keep your commands. But it will be a mark of your indulgence to spare me whenever you find it possible to do so.

LETTER XXII. (Before A.D. 1128.)

TO HUMBALD, ARCHBISHOP OF LYONS AND LEGATE

He commends the cause of the Bishop of Meaux.

To the most Reverend Lord and Father HUMBALD, Archbishop of Lyons and Legate of the Roman See, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and all that the prayers of a sinner can avail on his behalf.

The Lord Bishop of Meaux was on his road to visit us, as it happened, when he received your letter. Since he wished to reply before leaving us, he begged me to join in a letter with him, in the hope that as I have the honour to be known to you, it might help to forward his business. I could not deny what he wished, and have thought it well to make this known to your Reverence in a few friendly words: because if you shall listen to the complaints of men who love only their

own selves, and seek those things that are their own, against a Bishop who regards only those that are of Jesus Christ, it will be agreeable neither to your duty nor to your office.

LETTER XXIII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO ATTO, BISHOP OF TROYES

Bishop Atto had, in a sickness which he believed mortal, distributed all his goods to the poor. When he was restored to health, Bernard writes to console him, and praises what he had done.

To a poor Bishop, a poor abbot, wishes health and that he may attain the reward of poverty, which is the kingdom of heaven.

1. I should praise you, and rightly, did not that saying restrain me, Praise no man before his death (Ecclus. 11:28). It is certain that you have done a thing worthy of praise: but the praise is to be ascribed to Him, from whom you have received both to will and to do what is praiseworthy. We glorify God, therefore, by you and working in you; who also has willed to be glorified in you, only that He may render you glorious also. Who, since He is glorious in His Majesty, deigns to appear glorious in His Saints also, that He may not have glory alone. For although He Himself is sufficient unto Himself in an infinity of glory, yet He seeks glory also in His Saints, not that His own may be increased, but that He may partake it with them. For He knows them that are His: but we do not easily know them except He shall deign to reveal them to us. I know, indeed, of what kind of men it was written: They are not in the trouble of men, and shall not be plagued with men (Ps. 73:5). I know without doubt that those words do not concern you. I know also that it is written again, Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth (Prov. 3:12, and Hebrews 12:6), and when I see you stricken and thereby amended, can I infer anything else than that you are of the number of His children? I do not wish for a clearer proof that He has corrected you than your very poverty itself. A noble title is that of poverty, which God Himself commands by the mouth of the Prophet, saying, I am a man who sees my poverty (Lam. 3:1, VULG.). This title ennobles you more, and renders you more illustrious, than all the treasures of the kings of the earth.

2. I know that I have set down out of Scripture just now that a man is not to be praised during his life. But how can I refrain from the praise of him who no longer runs after gold, and who disdains to put his confidence in the treasures of

the world? Of such a man Scripture thus speaks: Who is he and we will call him blessed? For he has done wonderful things in his life (Ecclus. 31:8, 9). Perhaps man, indeed, is not to be praised during his life, inasmuch as it is a struggle upon the earth; yet ought he not to be praised when he is dead unto sin and lives unto God? That praise is indeed vain and seductive which is addressed to a sinner in his passions; whosoever calls him happy leads him into error, but will not the life of him who is able to say, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2:20) be praiseworthy and much to be commended? When, then, a man is praised in whom not himself, but Christ, lives, he is praised, not in his own life, but in the life of Christ, and because of this he is not praised against the Scripture which forbids a man to be praised in his life.

Why, then, shall he not be worthy of my praises of whom God deigns to accept the praises to His Name? As David says, the poor and needy shall give praise unto Thy Name (Ps. 74:21).

3. Job is praised because he bore the loss of his goods patiently, and shall a Bishop not be praised who has both parted with them of his own accord, and distributed them liberally? He has not waited until death came, when he would have it in his power neither to give nor to retain anything: which many do, whose testament has no force until they have ceased to live, but while still placed between the hope of life and fear of death, it was then that in life, and with goodwill, he shared his goods among the poor, that his righteousness might remain for ever and ever (Ps. 112:9). Would the money itself have remained similarly for ever and ever? Good is the recompense of righteousness for money when in exchange for that which could not be held fast. A price is given which remains happily for ever, for righteousness is incomparably better than money, because the one enriches and fills only the chest, but the other the soul. Then the priests of God are clothed with righteousness, and thus far more richly and becomingly than in robes of gold or silk.

4. But render thanks to God who has inspired in you a glorious contempt of the transitory glory belonging to these things, and at the same time stricken you with a salutary fear of the peril to your soul. O, wonderful goodness of God towards you! He has made you have trial of death so that you might not die; and made you fear it, to preserve you from its stroke. This He has done, so that your goods might not be dearer to you than yourself. A devouring fear was raging in the very marrow of your bones, and hindering the relief of perspiration, the disease grew graver day by day. And now the limbs without grow cold, while within burned a devouring fire which wasted the viscera, already exhausted by

long deprivation of nourishment. Speedily the pale and doleful image of death was before your eyes. But behold a voice, as it were from heaven, was heard: I am He who destroys (not thee, but) thy iniquities (Is. 43:25); and speedily when the priest of God had distributed all his goods to the poor, that as a poor man he might die, suddenly the sweat long unhoped-for burst forth from all its fountains; health came back equally both to body and soul, and clearly showed that what God promises in Scripture had been fulfilled in you: I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand (Deut. 32:39). He has stricken the flesh to save the soul; He has slain avarice that you might live unto righteousness. Now that you are restored to life and health, we hope that none will be able to snatch you from the hands of God, provided that you do not lose sight of that counsel in the Gospel: Behold thou art made whole; sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee (S. John 5:14). And if thy kind Father forewarns thee of this, it is because He does not desire it to happen; because he willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. And rightly. For what advantage would there be in the death of a sinner? The grave will not confess God, nor will death praise Him; but you who are living, do you bless the Lord and say: I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord; thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall, but the Lord helped me (Ps. 118:17, 13).

LETTER XXIV. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

TO GILBERT, BISHOP OF LONDON, UNIVERSAL DOCTOR

He praises Gilbert, who practised poverty in the station of Bishop.

The report of your conduct has spread far and wide, and has given to those whom it has reached an odour of great sweetness. The love of riches is extinct; what sweetness results! charity reigns; what a delight to all! All recognize you for a truly wise man, who has trodden under foot the great enemy with true wisdom; and this is most worthy of your name and of your priesthood. It was fitting that your special philosophy should shine forth by such a proof, and that you should crown all your distinguished learning by such a completion. That is the true and unquestionable wisdom which contemns filthy lucre and judges it a thing unworthy [that philosophy should] dwell under the same roof as the service of idols. That the Magister Gilbert should become a bishop was not a great thing; but that a Bishop of London should embrace a life of poverty, that is, indeed, grand. For the greatness of the dignity could not add glory to your name; but the

humility of poverty has highly exalted it. To bear poverty with an equal mind, that is the virtue of patience; to seek it of one's own accord is the height of wisdom. He is praised and regarded as admirable who does not go out of his way after money; and shall he who renounces it have no higher praise? Unless that clear reason sees nothing to be wondered at in the fact that a wise man acts wisely; and he is wise who having acquired all the science of the learned of this world, and having great enjoyment in acquiring them, has studied all the Scriptures so as to make their meaning new again. What then? You have dispersed, you have given to the poor, but money. But what is money to that righteousness which you have gained for it? His righteousness it is said, endureth for ever (Ps. 112:9). Is it so with money? Then it is a desirable and honourable exchange to give that which passes away for that which endures. May it be granted to you always so to purchase, O, admirable and praiseworthy Magister! It remains that your noble beginning should attain an ending worthy of it; and the tail of the victim be joined to the head. I have gladly received your benediction, which the perfectness of your virtue renders the more precious to me. The bearer of this letter, though exceedingly respectable for his own sake, I desire to commend for my sake also, to your Greatness. He is exceedingly dear to me for his goodness and piety.

LETTER XXV. (A.D. 1130.)

TO HUGO, ARCHBISHOP OF ROUEN

He exhorts Hugo to strive to be patient and peaceable among his Rouennais, and at the same time to temper his zeal with discretion.

1. If malice grows every day, yet let it not prevail; if it is boisterous, let it not trouble your peace. The waves of the sea are mighty, but the Lord in heaven is mightier, and the mercy from on high has dwelt with you, illustrious father, as you know, with extreme goodness even until now. For by a kindly Providence you are no sooner set to preside over sinners than you are associated with the good and pious, by whose example and company you may become good, and so may be able to dwell in the midst of sinners without ceasing to be righteous. And, indeed, to be righteous among the righteous assures salvation, but to be so among sinners assures also praise. The one is easy and sure, the other as meritorious as difficult. For the task is as it were to touch pitch and not to be defiled therewith, to walk in fire without being injured, and in the shadows without being dark. The Egyptians formerly were in darkness that might be felt,

while of the people of God the Scripture says Wheresoever Israel was it was light (Exod. 10:23). David was a true Israelite, and, therefore, spoke with preciseness that he dwelt not “in Cedar,” but with the dwellers in Cedar (Ps. 120:5), and as one who habitually dwelt in the light, although his bodily abode was with the dwellers in Cedar [Kedar]. Wherefore also he blames certain persons as not being true Israelites, because they were mingled among the heathen and learned their works, and it became a snare unto them (Ps. 106:35, 36).

2. I say, then, that it was sufficient when you were at Cluny to keep yourself innocent, as it is written, With an innocent man Thou shalt be innocent (Ps. 17:26, VULG.). But now that you are among the Rouennais (otherwise, at Rouen) you have need of patience, as the Apostle teaches: The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be patient towards all (2 Tim. 2:24). Nor must he be only patient, so as not to be overcome of evil, but also pacific, to overcome evil with good. The one that you may bear with evil persons, the other that you may do good to those whom you thus bear with. In your patience possess your soul (S. Luke 21:19), but be also pacific, that you may have control also over the souls committed to you. What so great glory as to be able to say, With those who hated peace I was pacific (Ps. 120:7). Be, then, patient, because you are among evil men; be pacific, because you have such to govern. Let your charity be zealous, but moderate your severity for a time. Censure should, indeed, never be altogether foregone, but it may often be profitably intermitted. The vigour of justice should be always keen, but never precipitate. As not everything that is pleasing is permissible, so not everything permissible is expedient. You know all this better than I, and, therefore, I do not insist farther. I beg you to pray for me earnestly, because I do not cease to fall into sin.

LETTER XXVI. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

TO GUY, BISHOP OF LAUSANNE

You have undertaken great things; you have need of courage. You have become a watcher for the house of Israel; you have need of prudence. You are a debtor both to the wise and unwise; you have need of righteousness.

Lastly, you have, above all, need of temperance and self-control, so that one who has preached to others may not become (which may God forbid!) a reprobate.

LETTER XXVII. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO ARDUTIO (OR ARDUTIUS), BISHOP ELECT OF GENEVA

He warns him that he must attribute his election to the grace of God, and strive thenceforth faithfully to co-operate with it.

I am glad to believe that your election, which I have heard was effected with so complete an assent both of the clergy and people, was from God. I congratulate you on His grace, and I do not speak of your merits, since we ought not to render to you excessive praise, but to recognize that, not because of works of righteousness which you have done, but according to His mercy He has done this for you. If you (which may God forbid!) should think otherwise, your exaltation will be to your ruin. But if you acknowledge it to be of grace, see that you receive it not in vain. Make your actions and your desires good, and your ministry holy; and if sanctity of life has not preceded, let it at least follow your elevation. Then I shall acknowledge that you have been prevented with the blessings of grace, and shall hope that after these you will receive still better graces. I shall be in joy and gladness that a good and faithful servant has been set over the family of the Lord, and you shall come to be as a son powerful and happy, meet to be set over all the good things of the Father. Otherwise, if it delights you to be in higher place rather in holier mind, I shall expect to see, not your reward, but your destruction. I hope, and pray God, that it may not be thus with you; and am prepared, if there is need, to render my aid, as far as in me lies, to assist you in whatever you think proper and expedient.

LETTER XXVIII. (In the Same Year.)

TO THE SAME, WHEN BISHOP

He exhorts him to adorn the dignity which he had obtained without preceding merits, by a holy life.

1. Charity gives me boldness, my very dear friend, to speak to you with great confidence. The episcopal seat which you have lately obtained requires a man of many merits; and I see with grief none of these in you, or at least not sufficient, to have preceded your elevation. For your mode of life and your past occupations seem in nowise to have been befitting the episcopal office. What then? Would you say, Is not God able of this stone to raise up a son of Abraham? Is not God able to bring about that the good works which ought to have gone before my episcopate may follow it? Certainly He is, and I desire nothing better

than this, if it should be so. I know not why, but that sudden change wrought by the right hand of the Highest will please me more than if the merits of your former life pleaded for you. Then I could say, This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes (Ps. 118:23). So Paul, from a persecutor, became the Doctor of the Gentiles; so Matthew was called from the toll-booth, so Ambrose was taken from the palace, the one to the Episcopate, the other to the Apostolate. So I have known many others who have been usefully raised to the Episcopate, from the habits and pursuits of secular life. How many times it has been the case that where sin abounded, grace also did much more abound?

2. So then, my dear friend, encouraged by these examples and others like them, gird up your loins, and make your actions and pursuits henceforth good; let your latest actions make the old forgotten, and the correction of your mature life blot out the demerits of your youth. Take care to imitate Paul in honouring your ministry. You will render it honourable by gravity of manners, by wise plans, by honourable actions. It is these which most ennoble and adorn the Episcopal office. Do nothing without taking counsel, yet not of all, nor of the first comer, but of good men. Have good men in your confidence, in your service, dwelling in your house, who may be at once the guardians and the witnesses of your honourable life. For in this you will approve yourself a good man if you have the testimony of the good. I commend to your piety my poor brethren who are in your diocese, especially those of Bonnemont, in the Alps, and of Hautecombe. By your bounty towards these I shall see what degree of affection you have for me.

LETTER XXIX. (Circa A.D. 1126.)

TO STEPHEN, BISHOP OF METZ

He congratulates Stephen on the restored peace of the Church, which he says is due only to the bounty of God.

TO STEPHEN, by the Grace of God, the strenuous minister of the Church of Metz, his humble brethren in Christ from Clairvaux, wish health and assure him of their prayers.

From the day when, if you remember, you deigned to associate yourself with our community, and to commend yourself humbly to our prayers, I have always been anxious, as I ought, to know something of your state, and have frequently inquired as I was able respecting your welfare, from those who could inform me, earnestly desiring and praying that your work and all your undertakings might be

prospered in God, and your steps directed in the path of His commandments. I bless God who has not rejected my prayer nor turned His mercy from you, who has made me glad by the coming of this venerable brother William, in whom I have not less confidence than in myself, and who has informed us of your good health and prosperity, and of the restoration of peace to your Church by your means. I congratulate you upon it, but I render glory to God, knowing that all you are able to do is of Him, and not of yourself. Which also I venture as a friend to warn you always to keep before your mind, that you may not fall into a kind of powerlessness either to be or to do anything, if you should think otherwise, and attribute to your own merits or powers (which God forbid) the least of your successes. Otherwise it is to be feared that your peace will be turned into trouble, your prosperity into adversity, by a just judgment of Him who is accustomed to resist the proud, but give grace unto the humble; who not only is holy with the holy, but perverse with the perverse man, as we read in the Psalm (Ps. 18:26), who not only makes peace, but creates evil, as is described by the Prophet (Is. 45:7).

LETTER XXX. (Circa A.D. 1126.)

TO ALBERO, PRIMICERIUS OF METZ

He warns Albero to wait God’s good time for the completion of a certain business which he was hurrying on, and that He requires us rather to do good for a good reason than from an interested motive.

To the very honourable ALBERO, by the Grace of God Primicerius of the Church of Metz, the brethren who serve God to the best of their power at Clairvaux, health and their prayers.

We have formerly heard and seen, and now have experienced for ourselves, your faithful zeal in the things of God. But although you were favourable and your Bishop gave prompt assent to the things proposed to him by the brethren whom we last sent to you, after your counsel: as our first duty is to know God’s good pleasure in all things, especially in matters of religion, and to know what is His good pleasure in that matter, we have thought it advisable, as was agreed between our brethren and your Bishop, not to abandon, but to defer until after the harvest (that time being convenient in itself and for you), the execution of a design of which your assistance prepares and facilitates the progress, and your help will bring, as soon as possible, to an honourable conclusion. But now if your Bishop, and you yourself, are still in the same mind as before, we have still

more confidence that it is the will of God, and that there is nothing better to do than what you propose. So that we hope to satisfy your pious desire (which is shared by us also) according as it was determined on. I think that to be accepted by God, we ought to study as much as in us lies, to be burdensome to no one, that it may not seem that we (which may God forbid) seek His glory less than our own interests; and especially that it would not be pleasing to God, nor would be in accordance with our manner of life, to make ourselves troublesome to you when there is no need for an occasion of that kind; nor to withdraw you from your other greater and more pressing occupations.

LETTER XXXI. (A.D. 1125.)

TO HUGO, COUNT OF CHAMPAGNE, WHO HAD BECOME A KNIGHT OF THE TEMPLE

He congratulates Hugo on having entered into a military Order, and promises remembrance of his benefits.

If for the cause of God you have, from being Count, become a simple soldier, and from a rich man have become a poor one, I congratulate you in the first place as is right, and in you I glorify God, knowing that this is the work of the Right Hand of the Most High. But I do not, I confess, anticipate without great regret being deprived, by the secret Providence of God, of your valued presence, and never more seeing you, in whose company I would wish always to be, were it possible. What then? Can I forget your friendship of old standing, and the benefits which you have so liberally bestowed upon our House? May God Himself, for whose love you have done this, hold you in perpetual remembrance. Nor will we be ungrateful, but will keep in mind the recollection of your great kindness, and will show it, if possible, in our actions. O, how willingly would I have provided for the needs both of your body and of your soul, if it had been granted to us to pass our lives together! But as that is not possible, it only remains to assure you that though we cannot have you present with us, we shall always pray for you in your absence.

LETTER XXXII. (Circa A.D. 1120.)

TO THE ABBOT OF SAINT NICASIUS AT RHEIMS

He consoles this abbot for the departure of the Monk Drogo and his transfer to another monastery, and exhorts him to patience.

1. How much I sympathize with your trouble only He knows who bore the

griefs of all in His own body. How willingly would I advise you if I knew what to say, or help you if I were able, as efficaciously as I would wish that He who knows and can do all things should advise and assist me in all my necessities. If brother Drogo had consulted me about leaving your house I should by no means have agreed with him; and now that he has left, if he were to apply to enter into mine I should not receive him. All that I was able to do in those circumstances I have done for you, and have written, as you know, to the abbot who has received him. After this, reverend father, what is there more that I am able to do on your behalf? And as regards yourself, your Holiness knows well with me that men are accustomed to be perfected not only in hope, but also to glory in tribulation. The Scripture consoles them, saying: The furnace proveth the potter's vessels, and temptation the righteous man (Ecclus. 27:6, VULG.); The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart (Ps. 34:18); and We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:21); and All who will live godly in Christ suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Yet none the less ought we to sympathize with our friends whom we see placed in care and grief; because we do not know what will be the issue of such, and fear lest it may be for ill; since whilst, indeed, to saints and the elect tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed (Rom. 5:3–5), to the condemnable and reprobate, on the contrary, tribulation causes discouragement, and discouragement confusion, and confusion despair, which destroys them.

2. In order, then, that this dreadful tempest may not submerge you, nor the frightful abyss swallow you up, and the unfathomable pit shut her mouth upon you, employ all the efforts of your prudence not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good. You will overcome if you fix solidly your hope in God, and wait patiently the issue of the affair. If that monk shall return to a sense of his duty, whether for fear of you, or because of his own painful condition, well and good; but if not, it is good for you to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, nor to wish uselessly to resist His supreme ordering; because if it is of God it cannot be undone. You should rather endeavour to repress the sparkles of your indignation, however just, by a reflection which a certain saint is said in a similar case to have uttered. For when some of his monks were mixing demands with bitter reproaches because he did not require back again a fugitive who had fled to another monastery in defiance of his authority, "By no means," he said, "wheresoever he may be, if he is a good man, he is mine."

3. I should be wrong to counsel you thus, if I did not oblige myself to act thus. For when one of my brethren, not only a professed religious, but also nearly akin

to me, was received and retained at Cluny against my will I was afflicted, indeed, but endured it in silence, praying both for them that they might be willing to return the fugitive, and for him, that he might be willing of his own accord to return; but if not, leaving the charge of my vengeance to Him who shall render judgment to the patient and contend in equity for the meek of the earth. Please to warn Brother Hugo, of Lausanne, with your own mouth, and as from me, not to believe every spirit, and not to be induced rashly to desert the certain for the uncertain. Let him remember that perseverance alone is always attacked by the devil, because it is the only virtue which has the assurance of being crowned. It will be safer for him simply to persevere in the vocation wherein he is called than to renounce it under the pretext of a life more perfect, at the risk of not being found equal to that which he had the presumption to attempt.

LETTER XXXIII. (Circa A.D. 1120.)

TO HUGO, ABBOT OF PONTIGNY

He writes more plainly his views about the reception of Drogo, and removes unfavourable suspicion from himself.

To his very dear brother, Hugo, Lord Abbot, Brother Bernard, of Clairvaux, health and all that he desires for himself.

1. In my former letter I, as far as I can understand from yours, wrote less clearly than I wished, or you understood it otherwise than you ought. When I spoke of the consequences that might follow to you from the reception of that monk, I truly feared, and fear still, as I wrote. But in writing to you thus I had no intention of persuading you or giving you advice; nor certainly, as you write, did I think that he ought to be sent back, since I have long known his very strong desire, and I ought rather to congratulate him that he has now accomplished it. But as his abbot, my intimate friend, and the Archbishop of Rheims required of me a letter pressingly demanding him back, in order that I might take off every suspicion from myself, if it were possible, I took pains to dictate as well as I could such a letter, in terms which would both satisfy them and forewarn you of the reproaches which would be made against you by them, by not concealing them from you. I believed that your sagacity would be able to understand my intention in that letter at once, especially when reading the note which you remember I placed at the end of it, that it should be read by you in the same spirit it was written by me. For after having set out the evils which not

unreasonably I feared for you, I went on: “It is for you to see whether you prefer to endure all these things or to send him away; the matter does not concern me.” These very words were used by me, or nearly these, and when I wrote thus at the end, how else could I secretly intimate to you that all that I had said previously was spoken by way of complaisance, not to say of pretence?

2. But as for what you have written, that I should have charged your messenger to say to the same monk, that if he wished to enter our Order his absolution should be privately obtained, I declare to you that it is not true. How could I suppose or hope that I could receive a monk from a monastery so well known to me, and whom I did not think that even you could retain without great scandal? But let it be so. Suppose that I envied you that monk, and desired to attract him to me; and that I was hoping or fancying that I might be able to do something towards obtaining his absolution. But is it for a moment to be believed that I should be willing to lay open this plan of mine which I had concocted against his own monastery to the very messenger whom you had sent to me? But to convince you that what you have believed hitherto concerning my affection towards you is well founded, I feel myself obliged, for you even more than for me, to redouble my efforts, as I have done up to the present, so that our friendship may not altogether be dissolved, but be made more close and strong. What can I say to you more? I, at least, could not believe you capable of such an action, as you have without ground suspected me of. Concerning another matter, your Blessedness knows that Count Theobald has received my letter of recommendation for Humbert, but he has not as yet replied to me. What you could do as to this your piety will best suggest, if you will have the kindness to consider the miserable state of a man unjustly stricken with exile.

LETTER XXXIV (Circa A.D. 1120.)

TO DROGO, THE MONK

He congratulates Drogo on having embraced a more severe rule, and exhorts him to perseverance.

MY VERY DEAR DROGO,

1. I find more than ever justified the great affection which I have long felt for you. You appeared to me before very lovable and accomplished in many things, but I had felt that there was something in you worthy of higher admiration than anything that I had seen or heard of you. Had you already heard the voice of the celestial Spouse, in whose arms your soul was closely clasped? Had you heard

His voice saying to your soul, His modest turtle, Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee? (Cant. 4:7). Who would believe that which you have done? The whole city is full of talk of your virtues and piety, so that it was not believed possible that anything could be added to all your good qualities, and then you, quitting your monastery as a secular might quit the world, were not ashamed to lay the burden of new observances and of a more severe Rule upon your neck, already worn with the yoke of Christ! In you now, brother, we verify that saying, When a man hath arrived at perfection then he beginneth (Ecclus. 18:7). The mark, then, of your perfectness is that you have now commenced, and in that you did not judge of that you had attained you prove that you have done so, for no one is perfect who does not desire to be more perfect, and a man shows himself more perfect, inasmuch as he aspires to greater perfection.

2. But behold, my dear friend, he by whose envy death entered into the world has bent his bow and prepared himself. Being driven from your heart, he has lost his power within, and therefore he will rage as much as is in his power without. And, to speak more plainly, do you not know that the Pharisees are scandalized at what you have done? But remember that there are scandals about which one ought not to be greatly troubled, according to the reply of the Lord, when He said, Let them alone, they are blind and leaders of the blind (S. Matt. 15:14). For would it be better that a scandal should arise than that the truth should be abandoned? (Greg. Hom. 7 in Ezekiel). Remember who it was who was born for the fall and rising again of many (S. Luke 2:34), and do not wonder if you, too, are to some as an odour of life unto life, and to others as an odour of death unto death. If they have directed maledictions against you, if they have launched at you darts of anathema, hear Isaac replying for you, He who shall curse thee shall be himself cursed, and he who shall bless thee shall be loaded with blessings (Gen. 27:29). And you, fortified by the safe defence of your conscience, reply inwardly and say, Though a host should encamp against me my heart shall not fear, although war should rise against me in this should I hope (Ps. 27:3). For you shall not be confounded when you speak thus with your enemies in the gate; but I trust in the Lord that if you stand firm against the first blows and do not yield either to their promises or threats, you will speedily bruise Satan under your feet. Then the righteous shall see and rejoice, and sinners shall be reduced to silence.

LETTER XXXV. (A.D. 1128.)

TO MAGISTER HUGO FARSIT.

He commends to him the cause of a certain Humbert, and warns him not to blush at retracting a certain erroneous opinion.

To his very dear brother and co-abbot, BROTHER BERNARD, health and assurance of the most sincere affection.

I commend to your protection, with the greatest confidence in your goodness, the poor man Humbert, who is said to have been unjustly disinherited. I have undertaken, for the love of God, to plead his cause with your Count, and I hope that you will help me, with the assistance of the Lord of Heaven, to reconcile him with his earthly prince, so that he may be restored to his country, his wife and children, his property and friends; for by taking the trouble to effect this you will both free from the hands of a sinner a man who is in distress, and will be labouring at the same time for the welfare of his oppressor. You will show yourself helpful to me in no small degree, without mentioning that by performing the office of a peacemaker you will prepare for yourself a high place among the children of God. Let us speak now of another matter. It has been reported to you, as I hear, that I have thrown into the fire the letter that your Holiness lately favoured me with. Be so kind as to believe that I preserve it carefully, for would it not have been the effect of envy, or rather of madness, rashly to condemn a work useful and praiseworthy, in which there was nothing but what was sound in faith, salutary in doctrine, and tending to spiritual edification? I ought, however, to except one passage, because between friends no timid and dangerous flattery ought to influence them against the truth. One passage, I confess, troubled and still troubles me, that in which you endeavoured to sustain and defend in beginning your work an opinion which you had put forth already in an interview between us respecting the Sacraments. If you will reflect upon the doctrine that you supported in that interview you will see whether it agrees or no with the teaching of the Church. It will be a mark of your candour and humility not to be ashamed to be corrected if you have ever held an opinion not conformable to sound doctrine. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVI. (A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME

He replies to the letter of Hugo, and advises him to desist from impugning the doctrine of a Bishop, then dead.

To his very dear friend now as formerly, and by the grace of God, holy Abbot HUGO, Brother BERNARD of Clairvaux, health and the assurance of sincere and undiminished affection.

I intended to reply more at length, as it was my duty, to the letter of your Worthiness, which was shorter than I desired, though longer than I deserved, but the haste of your messenger did not permit. Nevertheless, that he may not depart with his hands quite empty, I send in haste these few lines in reply to the much longer letter, for which I acknowledge myself the debtor. I commence by saying, in few but sincere words, as to an old and dear friend, to whom I also am dear, that from the bottom of my heart I hold you for a Catholic, a holy man, and one very dear to me. As to the purity of your faith, I trust your own confession; your high reputation vouches for the holiness of your life, and as for the affection which I have said that I feel towards you, my own heart is a sufficient witness.

You protest that you do not retain the least vestige of that opinion, which rightly, in my judgment, raised scruples in my simple mind, and I receive the assurance as willingly as I read with gladness in your last letter the concise statement of most pure truth, so that I would rather believe that it is I who have wrongly understood you than that you had put forth any proposition contrary to the faith. Now, permit me to advise you, with brotherly boldness, not to attack, now that he is dead, the doctrine of a Bishop, as holy as learned, whom you have left unmolested while he lived, lest in blaming one not now able to answer for himself you may hear the whole Church replying for him, and seem to have acted more from a want of charity than from love of the truth. For Humbert, as I have begged you, so I repeat my request, that you will afford him, as far as you are able, your advice and protection. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVII. (A.D. 1128.)

TO THEOBALD, COUNT OF CHAMPAGNE

He expresses astonishment at having been refused, in the cause of Humbert, though he asked nothing but what was right and just; he warns the Count, by the

remembrance of the Supreme Judge, not to deny help and mercy to an unfortunate man.

To the noble Prince THEOBALD, BERNARD, the unprofitable servant of the servants of God who are in Clairvaux, health and peace.

1. I am very grateful that you have been so good, as I have heard, as to be anxious about my poor health; and while I see in this a proof of your worthiness towards me, I cannot doubt of the love that you have towards God; for unless for that reason, when would one of your high rank deign to know so humble a person as myself? Since, then, it is certain that you love God, and me because of Him, I wonder the more that a small petition, preferred through confidence in God, and neither unjust, as I think, nor unreasonable, should have been refused to me by you. If I had asked of you gold or silver, or something of that kind [either I am much deceived as to your goodness, or I should certainly have received it]. But what, I say, had I asked? Already, without asking, I have received very many gifts of your generosity. But this one thing which I requested from you, not for my own sake, but in the name of God, much more in your interest than my own. What cause was there that I did not merit the granting of it? Did you think it an unworthy thing of me to ask, or of you to grant, that you should have mercy upon a Christian man, whatever might be the crime of which he was accused before you, after clearing himself of it? If you do not believe that he has fully cleared himself because he did not do this in your court, at least permit him to present himself there to establish his innocence, and thus obtain indulgence.

2. Are you ignorant of the threatenings of Him who has said, When my time shall be come I shall judge the judgments themselves (Ps. 65:2, VULG.)? And if He judges the judgments much more the injustices. Do you not fear what is written again, With what measure ye have measured it shall be again measured to you (S. Matt. 7:2)? Do you not know that if it is easy for you to deprive Humbert of his heritage, it is as easy—it is even incomparably more easy—for God to deprive Count Theobald (which may God forbid) of his? And even in such cases where the fault appears so open and inexcusable as that there is no opportunity left for mercy except at the cost of justice, even then it is only with fear and regret that you ought to punish, more because obliged by the duty of your office than from a desire to inflict punishment. But when the crime charged is either not certainly known, or is capable of excuse, not only ought you not to deny, but ought most willingly to embrace an opportunity for pardoning, and be glad that when justice is secured your mercy and indulgence have found place.

I supplicate your Highness, then, for the second time to have pity upon Humbert, as you would that God should have pity upon you; and to lend an ear either to that gentle promise of the Lord, Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy (S. Matt. 5:7), or to that terrible threat, He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy (S. James 2:13). Farewell.

LETTER XXXVIII. (A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

To the very pious Prince THEOBALD, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and prayers.

1. I am greatly afraid lest I should at length become troublesome by too presumptuously pouring my frequent appeals into your much-occupied ears. But what can I do? If I fear to offend you by writing to you too often, how much more ought I to fear to offend God, to whom still greater fear is due, by not interceding for an unfortunate man? Besides, pardon me for saying that I am unable to see without pitying the misery of that unfortunate, on whose behalf I return again to weary you with my prayers. It is still about Humbert that I speak. His lot is the more unhappy that from having been rich he has become poor and a beggar for daily bread. I cannot but compassionate his widow and orphans, who are the more unhappy because deprived of their father while he is yet alive. I render you thanks for the favour that you have been so gracious as to accord me in this matter, in deigning to permit that Humbert should come himself to make his defence before you, and in doing him the justice not to listen to his slanderers. To perfect your work of charity, you had arranged most kindly that his patrimony should be restored to his wife and children; and I cannot but wonder that your charitable orders in this respect were not at once carried out.

2. When we receive, perhaps, from other princes words untrue or untrustworthy, it is something neither new nor wonderful to us. But in the case of Count Theobald it is a matter of great surprise that his Yes and No should be without weight, since a word from him is for us equivalent to an oath, and a slight untruth is regarded as a grave perjury; since of all the virtues which dignify your high rank and render your name celebrated throughout the whole world, the chief and the most extolled is your steadfast truthfulness. Who, then, has tried to weaken, either by artifice or counsel, the intrepid firmness of your soul? who, I say, has endeavoured to enfeeble by his fraud your purpose so holy, so noble, so exemplary for all princes? Falsely, not truly, does he love you,

perfidiously, not faithfully, does he counsel you, who tries to obscure because of his cupidity your glorious reputation for truth, and endeavours by some malicious motive to render vain a word that your mouth has spoken—a word not less pleasing to God that it is worthy of you; as just as it is pious, and pious as just. I entreat you, then, by the mercy of God, that you pursue your good purpose, and not permit the wicked to boast that the poor man is ruined; rather take means for the full carrying out of the promise you have made, to Dom. Norbert and to me, that you would restore the patrimony of Humbert to his wife and children. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIX. (A.D. 1127.)

TO THE SAME

He commends the causes of various people to Theobald; then he urges him to treat with honour and reverence the Bishops assembled at Troyes to be present at a Council.

1. Among the many signs of condescension which you are pleased to display towards me, which arouse my grateful affection, that which I feel most is that, although I know I have ventured to address your Highness on behalf of many people, I never remember to have experienced a repulse from you. Having naturally become more confident, therefore, I approach you without hesitation to recommend to you the Canons of Larzicourt.

I do not ask any favour for them, because I have so much trust in your justice and observance of law that I think if your enemy came to plead a cause in your Court he need not fear that he would not receive justice; but this is the supplication which I from a distance unite with them, and for them, to make: both that you would accord to them a speedy and favourable access to the presence of your Serenity, which I know they greatly need, in order that their neighbours may render them the respect which their piety deserves, and which they will do when they learn your good disposition towards them; and that if any of your soldiers or officials have acted unjustly towards them, they may understand that they must not henceforth trouble their Godly peace without incurring your displeasure.

2. I have another request respectfully to make. I met lately, when passing through Bar, a woman very much to be pitied; she was in great trouble, and my heart was moved on hearing her sufferings. She begged with tears and prayers that I would intercede for her with you. She is the wife of that man of yours,

Belin, whom you were obliged to punish some time since for an offence which he had committed. Have mercy upon her, that God may have mercy also upon you.

3. Since I have once begun, I will continue to speak with my lord. In a duel which has lately been fought in the presence of the Prêvôt of Bar, the vanquished was condemned by your order to lose his eyes on the spot; but, besides this, as if it were not enough to be vanquished and to lose his sight, he was deprived of all his goods, as he complains, by your people. Your benevolence will find it just that they should restore to him sufficient to sustain his miserable life; and, besides, the offence of the father ought not to be imputed to his innocent children. Let them, then, at least succeed to the father's possessions if he has any.

4. In conclusion, I would beg you to treat with all the honour, of which they are well worthy, those holy Bishops who have assembled in your capital to consider together matters of religion. Deign also to show yourself devoted and obedient as far as you can in all things to the Legate himself, who has chosen to honour you and your capital by the holding of so important a Council. And be so kind as to give your support and assent to the measures and the resolutions which he shall judge advisable for the promotion of good; but especially I beg you to receive with honour the Bishop of Langres, who is your Bishop as well as mine, and for the fief which you hold of his Church you ought to render the due homage. With humble respect, farewell.

LETTER XL. (Circa A.D. 1127.)

TO THE SAME

He commends a poor religious to Theobald.

I commend unto you two things in this man whom you see: poverty and piety, that if you do not compassionate the one in him you may reverence the other, and may not deny to him what he has come so far, and at the price of so many fatigues, to ask of you. Give him, then, some help, if not for his sake, at least for your own; for if he has need of you because he is poor, you have as much and, indeed, more need of him because he is a religious. Finally, of all those many people whom I have sent unto you for the same cause, I do not know if there has been one other on whom you might bestow a benefit with greater certainty that it would be pleasing to God. Farewell.

LETTER XLI. (In the same year.)

TO THE SAME

He recommends to him an aged religious.

I fear that you are troubled by my frequent scribblings, but the law of Christ and the necessity of friends drives me to this opportunity. I entreat you not to send away empty this aged man whom I have recommended to you. He is aged as you see, and of a good and religious house, as I know. Besides this, I would ask you to be so good as to give him a letter to the King, your uncle, whom he is going to seek. I would wish that all the servants of God might become, if it were possible, your debtors, so that they may receive you one day into the everlasting habitations in return for the mammon of iniquity which you share with them. Farewell.

LETTER XLII

TO HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS

This Letter deserved a place among the Treatises, and we have removed it thither under this title: De Moribus et Officio Episcoporum Tractatus, or Letter 42 to Henry, Archbishop of Sens.

LETTER XLIII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME HENRY

He writes on behalf of the Abbey of Molesme.

The kind reception which you gave to my last request gives me room to hope to obtain what I now ask. I would first express my most earnest thanks for your previous, kindness, and then venture to beg that you would make me a second time your debtor, namely, by permitting the Abbey of Molesme to possess freely the Church, on account of which they are grieved to have lost the favour of your Serenity, and which it is certain that they possessed in the time of your predecessors. Farewell.

LETTER XLIV. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

You see how often I count on your bounty, so that I do not fear, although I have

received so much from you, to make myself again an importunate suppliant and to weary you with new demands. My presumption, indeed, is great, but it does not merit indignation, since it is caused by affection and not by want of consideration. Your Paternity remembers, I doubt not, that when I was lately at Troyes you were so good as to relinquish for the love of God, and at my entreaty, all the claims which you had made against the monks of Molesme on the Church at Senan. Now, the same monks complain that I know not what new, and, as they say, undue prærogatives are asserted over the forenamed Church. I beseech you that these also may be remitted, and trust that in this even you will not refuse me, so that, as you have granted me the greater favours, so I may be successful in obtaining the lesser. Farewell.

LETTER XLV. (A.D. 1127.)

TO LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

The monks of Cîteaux take the liberty to address grave reproaches to King Louis for his hostility to and injuries inflicted upon the Bishop of Paris, and declare that they will bring the cause before the Pope if the King docs not desist.

To LOUIS, the glorious King of France, STEPHEN, Abbot of Cîteaux, and the whole assembly of the abbots and brethren of Cîteaux, wish health, prosperity, and peace in Christ Jesus.

1. The King of heaven and earth has given you a kingdom on earth, and will bestow upon you one in heaven if you study to govern with justice and wisdom that which you have received. This is what we wish for you, and pray for on your behalf, that you may reign here faithfully, and there in happiness. But why do you of late put so many obstacles in the way of our prayers for you, which, if you recollect, you formerly with such humility requested? With what confidence can we now presume to lift up our hands for you to the Spouse of the Church, while you so inconsiderately, and without the slightest cause (as we think), afflict the Church? Grave indeed is the complaint she lays against you before her Spouse and Lord, that she finds you an opposer whom she accepted as a protector. Have you reflected whom you are thus attacking? Not really the Bishop of Paris, but the Lord of Paradise, a terrible God who cuts off the spirit of Princes (Ps. 76:12), and who has said to Bishops, He who despiseth you despiseth me (S. Luke 10:16).

2. That is what we have to say to you. Perhaps we have to say it with boldness, but at the same time in love; and for your sake we pray you heartily, in the name

of the friendship with which you have honoured us, and of the brotherhood with which you deigned to associate yourself, but which you have now so grievously wounded, quickly to desist from so great a wrong; otherwise, if you do not deign to listen to us, nor take any account of us whom you called brethren, who are your friends, and who pray daily for you and your children and realm, we are forced to say to you that, humble as we are, there is nothing which we are not prepared to do within the limits of our weakness for the Church of God, and for her minister, the venerable Bishop of Paris, our father and our friend. He implores the help of poor religious against you, and begs us by the right of brotherhood to write in his favour to the Lord Pope. But we judge that we ought first to commence by this letter to your royal Excellence, especially as the same Bishop pledges himself by the hand of all our Congregation to give every satisfaction provided that his goods, which have been unjustly taken away from him, be restored, which it seems to us justice itself requires; in the meantime, we put off the sending of his petition. And if God inspires you to lend an ear to our prayers, to follow our counsels, and to restore peace with your Bishop, or rather with God, which we earnestly desire, we are prepared to come to you wherever you shall be pleased to fix for the sake of arranging this affair; but if it be otherwise, we shall be obliged to listen to the voice of our friend, and to render obedience to the priest of God. Farewell.

LETTER XLVI. (A.D. 1127.)

TO THE LORD POPE HONORIUS II., ON THE SAME SUBJECT

They complain to the Pope that by the raising surreptitiously of the interdict, the King of France, before disposed to peace, was rendered more obstinate.

To the supreme Pontiff HONORIUS, the abbots of the poor of Christ, HUGO of Pontigny, and BERNARD of Clairvaux, health and all that the prayer of sinners can effect.

We are not able to conceal the tears and complaints of the Bishops, and, indeed, of the whole Church, of which we have the honour, however unworthy, to be sons. We speak of what we have seen. A great necessity has drawn us from our cloisters into public, and what we have seen there we report to you. We have seen and repeat sad things. In the time of Honorius the honour of the Church has been deeply wounded. Already the humility, or rather the constancy, of the bishops had bent down the anger of the King, when the supreme authority of the supreme pontiff intervening, alas! threw down constancy and set up pride! We

know, indeed, that that mandate must have been obtained from you by falsehood, as is quite evident from your letter, or you would not have ordered an interdict so just and so necessary to be put an end to. But should not the falsehood be at length detected—should not iniquity be made to feel that it has lied against itself, and not against dignity such as yours? For it is that which astonishes us, that judgment should have been given without hearing the two parties, and that the absent should have been condemned, which, indeed, we do not blame with rash presumption, but with the love of sons we suggest to the heart of our Father how greatly from this act the wicked triumphs and the poor is cast down; but how long he ought to suffer thus, and in what degree you ought to suffer with him, it is not for us, most holy Father, to prescribe to you; it is for you to consult your own heart. Farewell.

LETTER XLVII. (A.D. 1127.)

TO THE SAME POPE, IN THE NAME OF GEOFFREY, BISHOP OF CHARTRES

He explains to the Pontiff the cause why the Bishop of Paris was unjustly oppressed by King Louis. The interdict of the bishops of France had put pressure upon him, and he had promised to make restitution, when the absolution of Honorius rendered him contumacious, and prevented his fulfilling his promise.

It is superfluous to recall to you, very holy Father, the cause and order of a very afflicting history, and to linger over what you have already heard from the pious Bishop of Paris, and which must have profoundly affected your paternal heart. Yet my testimony also ought not to be wanting to my brother and co-bishop; what I have seen and heard respecting this matter, this I have undertaken to make you acquainted with in few words. When the before-mentioned Bishop had brought forward his complaint, which he did with great moderation, in our provincial assembly, where had gathered with our venerable metropolitan the Archbishop of Sens, all the bishops of the province, and certain religious also whom we had summoned, we determined to represent to the King, with all becoming humility, his unjust proceeding, and to beg that he would restore to the Bishop unjustly maltreated what had been taken from him; but we obtained no satisfaction from him. Understanding, at length, that in order to defend the Church we had decided to have recourse to the weapons of the Church, he was afraid, and promised the restitution demanded. But almost in the same hour arrived your letter, ordering that the interdict over the royal domains should be raised, thus, unfortunately, strengthening the King in his evil doings, so that he

did not perform at all what he had promised. Nevertheless, as he had given a fresh promise that he would do what we required, we presented ourselves on the day appointed. We laboured for peace, and it did not come; but instead of it worse confusion. Thus the effect of your letter has been that the goods unjustly seized are more unjustly retained, and those which remain are seized day by day, and that so much more securely, as he is assured of entire impunity in retaining them. The just (as we consider) interdict of the Bishop has been raised by your order, and as the fear of displeasing you has made us suspend that which we proposed to send forth by our own authority, and by which we hoped to obtain peace, we are made in the meantime the derision of our neighbours. How long is this to be? Let the compassion of your piety be exercised on our behalf.

LETTER XLVIII. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, ON THE SAME SUBJECT, AND AGAINST DETRACTORS

He justifies himself against attacks made upon him, and begs to be allowed to enjoy solitude and silence.

To the illustrious HAIMERIC, Chancellor of the holy Roman See, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, health eternal.

1. Does truth bring hatred even to the poor and indigent, and does not even their misery secure them against envy? Ought I to complain or to glory because I am made an enemy for speaking the truth or for doing right? That is what I leave to be considered by your brethren, who, against the law, speak evil of one deaf (Lev. 19:14), and not fearing the malediction of the Prophet, call evil good and good evil (Is. 5:20). I ask of you, O good men, what in me has displeased your brotherhood? Is it because at Chalons was deposed the Bishop of Verdun, a man everywhere decried, because he had dissipated in management the goods of his Lord committed to him in the Church over which he presided? Or was it because at Cambray, Fulbert, who conducted his monastery manifestly to its destruction, was obliged to yield his place to Parvin, a prudent and faithful servant, according to the testimony of all? Or, again, was it because, at Laon, a sanctuary of God was restored to him after having been made a shrine of Venus? For which of these things do you, I do not say stone me, so that I may not borrow the language of my Lord (S. John 10:32), but tear me to pieces? And this I should be right to reply to you with pride, if any of the credit of these things belong to me. But, now, why am I judged for what others have done? Or if for my actions, why am I accused as if I had done something wrong, when no one can be so silly as to

doubt, or so shameless as to deny that all these things were done justly and well? Choose now which alternative you please; either deny or assert that I am the author of these things. If I have done them, it is a thing worthy of praise to have brought about praiseworthy actions, and I am wrongly blamed for that which renders me worthy of praise. If I have not done them, as I have deserved no praise, I deserve no blame. It is a new kind of detraction that is employed against me, and has some resemblance to the work of Balaam, who, being brought and paid to curse the people, heaped them with blessings instead (Num. 22. and 24). What more just and more consoling for him whom the design was to blame than to see that, though willing to blame him, you unwillingly praise, and unknowingly employ the language of laudation for that of insult? Could you not find enough of real defaults in me that you reproach me for a good action as if it were evil, or rather that you impute to me what I have not done?

2. But I am not distressed by undeserved reproaches, nor do I accept unmerited praises; nothing concerns me which I have not done. Let them praise if they will or blame if they dare his lordship of Albano for the first matter, for the second his lordship of Rheims, and for the third the same archbishop, with the Bishop of Laon, with the King in the same degree, and with many other reverend persons, who will by no means disown that they have taken a principal part in them. If they have done well, or if otherwise, what is it to me? My sole and only fault is that I have been present at these assemblies, being a man deserving only of solitude, who ought to judge only myself, to be the accuser and arbiter of my own conscience only, if I wish that my life should display what my profession declares, and my name of monk describe truly my solitary habit of life. For I was present, I avow it; but it was because I had been summoned, and, as it were, forced to come. If this has been displeasing to my friends, I confess it has displeased me also. Would that I had not gone to these assemblies, would that I may not go to any similar to them! Would that I had never gone where I had the sorrow to see (as lately) a violent tyrant armed against the Church by the authority of the Holy See, as if he had not been already by himself sufficiently powerful! Then at length I felt as the Prophet says, my tongue cleave to my mouth (Ps. 137:6), when I saw that unquestionable authority bear us down with its weight, and when the Pope’s letter was brought forward. Alas! I was mute, I was humbled, I was silent even from the good: and my sorrow was renewed (Ps. 39:3, VULG.), when suddenly I saw the letter of the Pope cover the faces of the innocent with confusion, make the impious and sinners to rejoice and triumph in their wickedness. The indulgence which was shown to the

wicked, as says the Prophet, did not teach him to do righteousness; and he who dealt unjustly in the land of the righteous (Is. 26:10) was freed from the most just interdict under which his domain was held.

3. For reasons of this kind, even if there were no others, I am vexed to have meddled in the transaction of business, especially as I know that in it there is nothing that concerns me. I am vexed, yet I am forced to go. But by whom could I better hope to be relieved from this necessity than by you, O best of men! to whom in such a matter neither is power wanting nor, as I know well, the will. I rejoice, therefore, to know that my occupation in such matters is displeasing to your wisdom; you are entirely right, and I recognize in it your friendship for me. Since, then, such is your desire, or rather since you perceive and determine that it is better for your friend and more becoming to a Religious, take means, I pray you, to ensure that both your will at once and mine may be accomplished as soon as possible, that justice may be satisfied, and the safety of my soul cared for. Forbid, if you please, those clamorous and importunate frogs to come forth from their hiding-places, but let them stay contentedly in their marshes. Let them not be heard in Councils, nor enter into palaces; let no necessity, no authority draw them to mingle in the settlement of disputes or of any business. So, perhaps, your friend may be able to escape from the charge of presumption. I do not know, indeed, how there can be any occasion for it, for my resolution is fixed not to set foot out of my monastery unless summoned by the Legate of the Apostolic See, or, at least, by my own Bishop, since, as you well know, it would be altogether wrong for a humble person like myself to resist these unless by privilege of some higher authority. If ever you shall succeed in effecting this, as I sincerely hope, then, without doubt, I shall have peace myself and leave others in peace. Yet, even although I shut myself up and keep silence, I do not suppose that the murmurs of the Churches will cease, if the Roman Curia continues to do injury to the absent in order to be complaisant to those who are near at hand. Farewell.

LETTER XLIX. (A.D. 1128.)

TO THE LORD POPE HONORIUS, ON BEHALF OF HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS

To the Supreme Pontiff, HONORIUS, his servants and sons (if we are worthy to be so called), STEPHEN of Cîteaux, HUGO of Pontigny, BERNARD of Clairvaux, health and their best prayers for their most reverend lord and kind father.

Though dwelling in monasteries, to the shelter of which our sins have driven us, we do not cease to pray for you and for the Church of God committed to your charge, and share the rejoicing both of the Spouse of the Lord over so faithful a guardian, and of the friend of the Bridegroom over labouring so abundantly for her. In faith and truth we make known to you, holy Father, the evils to which we see with grief our Mother, the Church, exposed in this realm. As far as we, being on the spot, are able to judge, King Louis is hostile not so much to Bishops, as to any zeal for justice, practice of piety, and even religious living in the Bishops. That this is the fact the penetration of your Holiness will easily infer from this, that the very men who previously in secular life were highly honoured by him, judged faithful, regarded as familiar friends, are now treated as enemies, because they behave worthily in the priesthood and honour their ministry in all things. This is the cause of the insults and injuries with which the Bishop of Paris, though innocent, has been attacked, yet he has not been crushed, because the Lord arrested the King's hand when he opposed yours. Hence, also now he endeavours to weary and break down the constancy of the Archbishop of Sens, so that when the Metropolitan is vanquished (which may God forbid) he may easily, as he supposes, prevail over all the suffragans. Finally, who doubts that what he really wishes to attack is religion, which he looks upon openly as the destruction of his realm and the enemy of his crown? Another Herod holds Christ in suspicion, but it is Christ no longer in the cradle, but triumphant in the Churches, who is obnoxious to him. Nor do we think that his hostility to the archbishop has any other object than this, that he strives to extinguish in him, as in others, the spirit with which he is animated. Finally, if we are thought to be deceiving you, or to be ourselves deceived about these matters to which we bear witness, we desire that you will examine into them yourself as quickly as possible, so that (which we vehemently desire and suppliantly entreat) judgment may come forth from your presence, most holy Father, and in it we have no doubt that you will seek equity and protect innocence. But that the cause should be brought back into the presence and under the power of the King is plainly nothing else than that the just should be delivered into the hands of his enemies.

LETTER L. (A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

He demands that it should be allowed to the Archbishop to appeal to the Apostolic See.

It would be desirable, if it seems good to your authority, that the cause of the Archbishop of Sens should be discussed in your own presence, so that being, as he is, obnoxious to the King, he may not seem to be a man delivered to the will of his enemies by having to answer for himself to his adversaries in the presence and power of the King; but as whatever you direct must be inviolably adhered to, so it may be firmly hoped that whatever course you decree may issue in some good. This only we demand very humbly of your bounty, with all our Religious, viz., that if it shall happen that this Prelate should be crushed by the sovereign power (as it has happened only too often) he may be permitted to seek refuge in your fatherly bosom, because hitherto we have never heard that you have refused this refuge to a person oppressed. Otherwise let Joseph, the just man, see to it, what he must do now to save the Child and his Mother, because even now in the province of Sens Christ is sought for destruction. For, to say more plainly that which is the fact, it is clear that the King persecutes in the Archbishop of Sens his new piety, because he advanced him by all possible means and dismissed him into his Diocese with the assurance of freedom from every disturbance, as long as he lived in his former worldly life and conversation.

LETTER LI. (A.D. 1128.)

TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

To the very illustrious HAIMERIC, Chancellor of the Holy Roman See, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and all that the prayer of a sinner can avail.

How long will it be true to say, All who will live piously in Christ suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12)? How long shall the rod of sinners be extended over the heritage of the just? Who shall enable the just to stand against those who have oppressed them?

Who can bear to see so great a degree of discord between heaven and earth, that while the Angels rejoice at the amendment of the evil, the sons of Adam rage and are envious? Has not Jesus by His sufferings and His blood purified the things which are in heaven and those on earth; and was not God in Him reconciling the world unto Himself? Formerly the Archbishop had nothing but praise, when he was ruled only by the desires of his heart—nothing but approval as long as his life and conversation were worldly. But now simony is sought for under the swaddling clothes of the infancy of Jesus, and a malign curiosity searches among the rising virtues (of the prelate) for even the ashes of dead

vices. You see clearly that it is Jesus Himself who is the mark for the hostility of these men. In His name I beseech you; for His sake I am a suppliant to you. He is well worthy both of your reverence and of your pity. Stand fast for Him in the defence of the Archbishop, and remember that you yourself must one day stand before Him to be judged. Farewell.

LETTER LII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME

He declares that the Bishop of Chartres has not projected a journey to Jerusalem. He begs to be released from the weight of public affairs.

Your friend and mine, the Lord Bishop of Chartres, wished the assurance to be conveyed to you by me that he has not had either the intention or the wish to be allowed to go to Jerusalem, as we know the Pope has been made to believe. For although he would greatly have wished to make the journey, yet he was not able to leave without great scandal here to all good people, who fear that his absence would do more harm to his own flock than his presence would do good to foreigners. This is what I have to say on behalf of that Bishop.

But that I may say something also on my own behalf, according to what Scripture admonishes, saying: Have pity on your own soul if you wish to please God (Ecclus. 30:23, VULG.). Does it please you that I should be loaded with burdens and occupied with business, so that I have no leisure to attend to my own duties, being entirely immersed in those which belong to others? If I have found favour in your eyes, be so good as to relieve me of all these affairs, so that I may be able to pray God for your sins and my own. It is true that I consider nothing could be safer for me than to follow the will of my lord the Pope; but if he would be so kind as to consider the limit of my powers, he would realize that I am not able to do these things, or with how much difficulty I can do them. And upon that matter sufficient is said to an intelligent person like yourself.

The Bishop of Chartres asked of me some of my little treatises to send to you; but I have nothing at hand which seems to me worthy of your attention. There is, indeed, a little book concerning Grace and Free Will which I have lately put forth. This I will gladly send to you, if you wish it. Farewell.

LETTER LIII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME

He presents to Haimeric two religious, and in them himself.

I remembér that I have written to you on behalf of many people, and by the medium of many; but now I, who have often corresponded with you, am present before you in person. Represent to yourself three persons in the two whom you behold, since without me these are not able to exist, in whose hearts I rest in close companionship, and even more safely and sweetly than in my own. I seem to exaggerate, but only to one who has never felt the power of friendship, who is ignorant of the force of affection, who does not believe that the multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul (Acts 4:32). He, then, who sees them sees me also, though not in my own body, and what they say I say also with their tongues. I am absent in body, I confess; but the body is the least part of me. And if it is true that he who sees my face may assert with truth that he sees me and not a part of me only, when notwithstanding he sees only a part of me, and that the least considerable, how much more truly may I say that I am present, even without bodily presence, where I feel my will, my spirit, and affection, which is the greater and more worthy part of me, to be? Know, then, that we are one person in three bodies, not of equal holiness, for in this I am inferior to each of these two, but having the same will, and perfect union of souls. For why should not the bond of affection bring about the unity of several persons in one spirit, if the bond of marriage makes two to be one flesh? I could wish that you would make yourself the fourth with us, if you do not consider that unity of affection unworthy of you. This you will easily obtain, if you do not disdain it; only if you do not desire it, I beg you not to let them perceive this. Farewell.

LETTER LIV. (Circa A.D. 1136.)

TO THE SAME

He recommends the Abbot Vivian, and warns Haimeric to think seriously of the salvation of his soul.

I desire and entreat that you will assist in his business, for the love of God and for my sake, the bearer of this letter, the venerable Vivian, Abbot of Haute Combe, for whom I have a most intimate friendship, on account of his piety. This is what I have to say on his behalf; the remainder of the letter is for yourself. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (S. Matt. 16:26). Not the whole world would be sufficient. A soul, which has been redeemed with the blood of Christ, is a valuable thing. Great was the loss of the soul, which

could not be repaired except by the Cross of Christ. If, again, it shall perish by sin even unto death, whence, then, shall it be restored? Is there either another Christ, or will He be crucified again for it? Upon this subject I would wish that you would never forget the counsel of the wise man: My son, remember thy latter end, and thou shalt not ever sin (Ecclus. 7:36, 40, VULG.).

LETTER LV. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO GEOFFREY, BISHOP OF CHARTRES

He begs that Geoffrey would receive and assist a certain religious recluse who had deserted his calling, but was repentant.

To the most faithful and prudent servant of God, GEOFFREY, Bishop of Chartres, BERNARD, of Clairvaux, servant of the poor of Christ, health and the fulness of the glory of the everlasting hills.

The more fame and honour the holiness of your life procures for you, the more labour it brings you. Thus the person who brings you this letter, and on whose behalf it is written, has felt himself, like so many others, drawn to you from far, by the fragrance of your pity, and by the hope of finding in you not only counsel what he ought to do, but also aid to accomplish it. This is his case. He had for the love of God shut himself in a certain cell, intending to live as a recluse. He himself will explain to you the causes why he quitted his cell and broke his vow. Now he desires to return to his purpose; but intends to ask your help for so doing, if you will accord it to him at my request by this letter, with which he was desirous to strengthen his application. Act, therefore, in your accustomed way; give help to this unhappy man, and the more since I know you hold yourself a debtor both to the wise and to the unwise; quickly draw this wandering lamb of Christ from the jaws of the wolf, bring him back to his former pasture, and order him to be reclosed in some little cell near one of your houses; unless, perhaps, you see that some other course is the better for the man to take, and you succeed in convincing him that he ought to take it.

LETTER LVI. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME

He is uncertain respecting the pilgrimage of Norbert to Jerusalem. He does not share his opinion about Antichrist. He also recommends Humbert.

I am quite ignorant respecting the matter of which you inquire of me, namely,

whether the Lord Norbert is about to go to Jerusalem. For when I saw him last, a few days ago, he said nothing of it to me, though I was honoured in being able to drink in many words from his mouth, as it were a sweet-toned flute. But when I asked what he thought concerning Antichrist, he declared himself quite convinced that Antichrist was to be revealed during this generation that is now. I begged him to tell me on what he rested his conviction, but his reply did not convince me that he was right. But at length he asserted this, that before his own death he would see a general persecution in the Church.

Concerning another matter, permit me to recall to the remembrance of your Piety a poor exile named Humbert. He begged you lately when you were at Troyes to intercede for him with Count Theobald, who had deprived him of his goods. I also by this letter entreat for him, and with him, the same thing of your Piety. I have written on that subject to intercede with the Prince himself, but have not succeeded in obtaining the favour which I asked.

One thing I ought to tell you, which I know you will gladly hear. Stephen, your former disciple, so runs not as uncertainly, so fights not as one that beateth the air. Pray for him that he may so run that he may obtain, may so fight that he may overcome.

LETTER LVII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME

Lesser vows ought not to be a motive to hinder greater spiritual progress. This seems to be written, if I do not mistake, in the cause of the monk who is the subject of Letter 55.

As this man has reported to me from you, you have declined up to the present to accede to his desire and petition, because it seems to you to make void his first vow of proceeding to Jerusalem. Upon which, if you ask my opinion, I consider that more important vows ought not to be hindered by less important; and that God will not require the fulfilment of a good vow if it has been discharged by the performance of one still better. For would you be right to complain of a debtor who owed you twelve pence if on the appointed day he paid you a silver mark? and if it is from his Bishop that you fear some objection, you may be sure that not only will you not displease him by rendering help to this man, but that he will be very grateful to you. Farewell.

LETTER LVIII. (Circa A.D. 1126.)

TO EBAL, BISHOP OF CHALONS-SUR-MARNE

He begs Ebal to take means for the choosing of a fit man to preside over the Abbey of All Saints.

To the venerable EBAL, by the grace of God, Lord Bishop of Chalons, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and all that the prayers of a sinner can avail.

1. It is not good that you should neglect or disregard the danger of that little vessel (I speak of the Church of All Saints') which is drifting under your eyes, being deprived of its ruler. It is a matter which belongs to your charge; therefore I wonder what motive hinders you in conscience from requiring the acceptance of the post by that ecclesiastic, a pious man, as it is said, who has been elected by religious persons to the same, even although some of the monks of that abbey show themselves unworthy of your interest by their carelessness and indifference. I have understood that they have nothing to object to him who has been chosen except that he is religious, and that they have dared to desire your Greatness to permit them to choose another who appears to them more agreeable and more affable, because he is not a stranger to them, but is as agreeable as he is well known to the citizens, and being well acquainted with the customs of the country is gratified for transacting the business of the Church. In reality that which you ask (I should reply to those very cautious advisers) is someone who will not object to your faults, and who will either consent or will not dare to oppose himself to your objectionable way of life. These are not to be listened to, but rather, whether they wish it or no, action ought to be taken by you, so as to put at the head of that unfortunate Church this man, whose reputation is unquestioned, since, if he is such as he is reported to be, God will, without doubt, be with him, will pour His grace upon him, that he may be acceptable to all and successful in all his enterprises.

2. If those people are altogether unworthy of him and he cannot by any means be obtained for the post, let another be sought out who shall seem fit, from some other religious house; not such a person as those people desire, who desire nothing but what flatters their carnal tastes, but one who, as he knows how to manage the temporal administration, so also is able to prefer the care of souls in all things. Under the Lord William, your predecessor of holy memory, the two monasteries of S. Peter and S. Urban were similarly deprived of pastoral care; he was not deterred by the length of the journey, nor by the severity of the winter, but came in person twice to Cluny, and, if I do not mistake, once to Dijon.

Thence he obtained a good man, Lord Hugo, who afterwards died, and from Cluny Lord Radulf, whom he had sought with many prayers, and who still survives. These he placed one over each monastery, not judging it safe to commit that charge to any one of the monks on the spot; which I have adduced as an example, for this reason that I may impress upon your charity how it becomes you to act with no less caution and care in this matter which is now in your hands.

LETTER LIX. (A.D. 1129.)

TO GUILENCUS, BISHOP OF LANGRES

He counsels him, in order to take away any occasion for scandal and calumny, to abandon to the Church of S. Stephen at Dijon, certain articles which Garnier had left there on dying.

To his lord and father GUILENCUS, by the Grace of God, Bishop of Langres, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and his entire devotion.

On hearing of the death of the Archdeacon Dom Garnier I have thought it necessary to address a prayer to your Paternity and even to press upon you my advice, if you will deign to attend to the suggestions of one so humble. As relates to the goods which the late Abbot possessed in the Church of S. Stephen at Dijon, have the generosity to renounce the rights that you have over these things. I know well that they ought to return to you as I remember was arranged and settled in writing in the Chapter of Langres, when your son Harbert was constituted the first regular abbot of that house. But because I know that for you on any account to assert your rights over these properties which that Church has so long held would be an occasion of grave scandal to the Canons and of great reproach to the Abbot, whom they would accuse of having by coming among them established a bad precedent, since it was because of him and at his coming that their Church sustained so great a loss, I beg you, therefore, and at the same time advise and entreat you, to spare so great a scandal to so many feeble servants of Christ, and at the same time to free this vicar of Christ from such a reproach by conceding to this Church what has been theirs so long.

LETTER LX. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME

He intercedes for the Abbey of Molesme.

I hope that you will not think me an importunate meddler if I approach you to intercede on behalf of the Abbey of Molesme. There are many motives which encourage me to believe that I need not fear a refusal from you. First, because the house for which I make request is not a foreign one; it depends upon you. Next, that it asks only its right from your justice, and is not usurping that which belongs to another; and, thirdly, that our request is joined in by such a person as would be sufficient to obtain even a greater thing from your kindness. I mean Count Theobald. If I presume to add a fourth, it is with diffidence that I do so. For neither have I such distrust in my humility but that I would venture, if need were, to commit myself to your long-tried kindness in making any request that might be reasonable. Farewell.

LETTER LXI. (Circa A.D. 1125.)

TO RICUIN, BISHOP OF TOUL, IN LORRAINE

He sends back to the Bishop a man who had been sent to him for the purpose of undergoing penitence, and charges him with his restoration.

To the Reverend Lord and Father RICUIN, by the grace of God, Bishop of Toul, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and prayers.

For this sinner whom your Worthiness has thought fit to send to me, who am myself a sinner, for spiritual advice, as he says, I have no wiser counsel at the present than that he should return to the bosom of your fatherly goodness, and should learn his duty from the mouth of the priest; for I, in order to remain within the narrow limits of my powers and my office, which I ought not to transgress, am not at all accustomed to impose penance, especially for great faults, on anyone but those alone who are under my jurisdiction. For what rashness would it be in me, a sinner, and inexperienced as I am, to undertake episcopal functions and matters so important? Ought I not also, just as other men, to have recourse, as is proper, to the opinion of the bishop, as often as there presents itself among us some affair more weighty than usual, which either I know not, or dare not, or am unable to settle by myself; and am I not far from secure until I have been fortified by the opinion and advice of my bishop? Let this poor diseased sheep be provided for, then, by his own pastor, who is one who well knows the canons, with a suitable medicine of penance, that a soul for which Christ died may not (which God forbid) die in sin, and the Chief Pastor require his blood at your hand. But I have persuaded him to leave the world since God has given him a thought of so doing; if by your intercession he may

obtain the favour of being received, though an old man and poor, into some monastery of holy men within your diocese. May God one day receive you, holy and venerable father, full of days and good works, into the sacred habitations in which one day is better than a thousand passed elsewhere.

LETTER LXII. (Before A.D. 1129.)

TO HENRY, BISHOP OF VERDUN

He recommends to the bishop a woman laden with many sins, but now penitent.

To the Lord HENRY, by the grace of God, Bishop of Verdun, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and prayers.

This poor woman, whom already Satan has bound, lo! these many years, with many and tangled knots of sin, has sought counsel respecting her salvation from me, though unworthy, and has been advised by me; but after many and daily wanderings this poor lost sheep should return with confidence to the fold of her own pastor. You will succour her with the more care and speed in her distress inasmuch as you know perfectly well that you will render a strict account of her safety to the Lamb who has died for her and has committed her to your care. It was our duty to correct her when wandering, it is yours not to despise her as a sinner, but to receive her as a penitent; and if her unhappy history which she has told me be true, to reconcile her to her former husband, if he still lives, or if he is unwilling to receive her, to oblige both the one and the other to live in single life. Farewell.

LETTER LXIII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE SAME

He justifies himself respecting an imprudence of which he had been accused; he seeks his friendship, and commends to him the Abbot Guy.

Respecting those matters about which it has pleased your Excellency to make inquiry of me, either I am deceived or he who has reported them to you misinforms you. If there is any foundation of truth in those reports (for I distrust my memory, which, I know, is defective, and I would not suspect such great falseness in the brother who has spoken to you about them), at least I am quite sure, and you may believe without doubt this, that I have never used a word of blame against you at any time or to any person, nor made any accusation. May such rashness be far from a humble person like myself as to dare to speak

against bishops, especially in their absence, about matters which do not concern me, and of which, besides, I have no correct knowledge. I gratefully accept the honour which you have done me in deigning to wish for my acquaintance, and I desire both that I should be better known to you and that you should know me better. It is with the same confidence in the goodness of your Highness that I address to you a request, or rather a recommendation, in favour of that monastery which my reverend brother and co-abbot Dom Guy, of Trois-Fontaines, has undertaken to erect under your protection, and, as they say, at your request. I shall see in that which you do for him what is your regard for me, and I shall hold as done for myself all that you are so good as to do in his favour. Farewell.

LETTER LXIV. (Circa A.D. 1129.)

TO ALEXANDER, BISHOP OF LINCOLN

A certain canon named Philip, on his way to Jerusalem, happening to turn aside to Clairvaux, wished to remain there as a monk. He solicits the consent of Alexander, his bishop, to this, and begs him to sanction arrangements with the creditors of Philip. He finishes by exhorting Alexander not to trust too much in the glory of the world.

To the very honourable lord, ALEXANDER, by the Grace of God, Bishop of Lincoln, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes honour more in Christ than in the world.

1. Your Philip, wishing to go to Jerusalem, has found his journey shortened, and has quickly reached the end that he desired. He has crossed speedily this great and wide sea, and after a prosperous voyage has now reached the desired shore, and anchored at length in the harbour of salvation. His feet stand already in the Courts of Jerusalem, and Him whom he had heard of in Ephrata he has found in the broad woods, and willingly worships in the place where his feet have stayed. He has entered into the Holy City, and has obtained an heritage with those of whom it is rightly said: Now ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). He goes in and out with the saints, and is become as one of them, praising God and saying as they: Our conversation is in heaven (Philip, 3:20). He is become, therefore, not a curious spectator only, but a devoted inhabitant and an enrolled citizen of Jerusalem; but not the Jerusalem of this world with which is joined Mount Sinai, in Arabia, which is in bondage with her

children, but of her who is above, who is free, and the mother of us all (Gal. 4:25–26).

2. And this, if you are willing to perceive it, is Clairvaux. This is Jerusalem, and is associated by a certain intuition of the spirit, by the entire devotion of the heart, and by conformity of daily life, with her which is in heaven. This shall be, as he promises himself, his rest for ever. He has chosen her for his habitation, because with her is, although not yet the realization, at least the expectation, of true peace of which it is said: The peace of God which passes all understanding (Philip, 4:17). But this is true happiness; although he has received it from above, he desires to embrace it with your good permission, or rather he trusts that he has done this according to your wish, knowing that you are not ignorant of that sentence of the wise man, that a wise son is the glory of his father. He makes request, therefore, of your Paternity, and we also make request with him and for him, to be so kind as to allow the payments which he has assigned to his creditors from his prebend to remain unaltered, so that he may not be found (which God forbid) a defaulter and breaker of his covenant, and so that the offering of a contrite heart, which he makes daily, may not be rejected by God, inasmuch as any brother has a claim against him. And lastly, he entreats that the house which he has built for his mother upon Church land, with the ground which he has assigned there, may be preserved to his mother during her life. Thus much with regard to Philip.

3. I have thought well to add these few words for yourself, of my own accord, or rather at the inspiration of God, and venture to exhort you in all charity, not to look to the glory of the world which passeth away, and to lose that which abides eternally; not to love your riches more than yourself, nor for yourself, lest you lose yourself and them also. Do not, while present prosperity smiles upon you, forget its certain end, lest adversity without end succeed it. Let not the joy of this present life hide from you the sorrow which it brings about, and brings about while it hides. Do not think death far off, so that it come upon you unprepared, and while in expectation of long life it suddenly leaves you when ill-prepared, as it is written: When they say Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape (1 Thess. 5:3). Farewell.

LETTER LXV. (Circa A.D. 1129.)

TO ALVISUS, ABBOT OF ANCHIN

He praises the fatherly gentleness of Alvisus towards Godwin. He excuses himself, and asks pardon for having admitted him.

To ALVISUS, Abbot of Anchin.

1. May God render to you the same mercy which you have shown towards your holy son Godwin. I know that at the news of his death you showed yourself unmindful of old complaints, and remembering only your friendship for him, behaved with kindness, not resentment, and putting aside the character of judge, showed yourself a father in circumstances that required it. Therefore, you strove to render to him all the duties of charity and piety which a father ought to render to a son. What better, what more praiseworthy, what more worthy of yourself could you have done? But who believed this? Truly no one knows what is in man, except the spirit of man which is in him (1 Cor. 2:11). Where is now that austerity, that severity, that indignation which tongue, eyes, and countenance were accustomed to display and terribly to pour upon him? Scarcely is the death of your son named to you than your fatherly bosom is moved. Suddenly all these sentiments which were adopted for a purpose, and therefore only for a time, disappeared, and those which were truly yours, but were concealed—charity, piety, benignity—appeared. Therefore in your pious mind mercy and truth have met together, and because mercy has certainly prevailed over judgment, righteousness and peace have kissed each other (Ps. 85:10). For as far as I seem to be able to form an idea, I think I see what passed in your mind then, when truth, fired with zeal for justice, prepared to avenge the injury which it seemed to you had been done. The sentiment of mercy which, after the example of Joseph, prudently dissimulated at first, yet not enduring longer to be concealed, and in this also like to Joseph (Gen. 45:1), burst forth from the hidden fount of piety, and making common cause with truth, repressed agitation, calmed wrath, made peace with justice.

2. Then from the pure and peaceful fountain of your heart poured forth like limpid streams such thoughts as these: What need have I to be angry? Would it not be better to pity him, and not to forget what is written, I will have mercy and not sacrifice (Hos. 6:6), and to fulfil what is ordered, Study to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), so as to be able to count on what is promised, Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (S. Matt. 5:7)? After all, was not that man my son? And who can rage against his son?—unless, perhaps, he was only then my son when he was with me, and not also when he deserted me. In withdrawing from me in body for a time, has he withdrawn equally from my heart, or can even death take him away from me? Must the

necessity of the body and of place so hamper the freedom of souls which love each other? I am quite sure that neither distance of places, nor the absence, or even the death, of our bodies would be able to disjoin those whom one spirit animates, one affection binds together. Finally, if the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God (Wisd. 3:1), we, both those who are already at rest, having laid down the burden of the flesh, and those who, being still in the flesh, do not war according to the flesh, beyond a doubt are still together. Mine he was when living, mine he will be dead, and I shall recognize him as mine in the common fatherland. If there is any who is able to tear him from the Hands of God, then he may be able to separate him from me also.

3. Thus your affection, father, has enabled you to make excuses for your son. But what has it said of me, or what satisfaction from me will be worthy of you, which you could impose for the great injury inflicted upon you, because when your son left you he was received by me? What can I say? If I should plead I have not received him (would I were able to say so without sin) it would be a falsehood. If I should plead I received him, indeed, but with good reason, I should seem to wish to excuse myself. The safer way will be to answer, I did wrong. But how far did I do wrong? I do not say it by way of defence, but by whom would he not be received? Who, I say, would repel that good man from his door when he knocked, or expel him when once received? But who knows if God did not wish to supply our need out of your abundance, so that He directed to us one of the many holy men who were then in great number in your house, for our consolation, indeed, but none the less for a glory to you? For a wise son is the glory of his father (Prov. 10:1). Moreover, I did not make any solicitation to him beforehand. I did not gain him over by promises to desert you or to come to us. Quite on the contrary, God is my witness. I did not consent to receive him until he begged me to do so, until he knocked at my door and entreated to have it opened, until I had tried to send him bick to you, but as he would not agree to that I at length yielded to his importunity. But if it is a fault that I received him, a monk, a stranger, alone, and received him in the way I did, it will not be unworthy of you to pardon such a fault, which was committed once only, for it is not lawful for you to deny forgiveness even to those who sin against you seventy times seven.

4. But yet I wish that you should know that I do not treat this matter lightly or negligently, and on the contrary that I cannot pardon myself for ever having offended your Reverence in any manner. I call God to witness that often I have in mind (since I was not able to do it in body) thrown myself at your feet as a

suppliant, and I often see myself before you making apology on my knees. Would that the Holy Spirit who perhaps inspired me with these feelings make you also feel with what tears and regrets worthy of pity I humble myself at this moment before your knees as if you were present. How many times with bare shoulders, and bearing the rods in my hands, prepared, as it were, to strike at your bidding; I seek your pardon, and trembling wait for your forgiveness! I earnestly desire, my father, to learn from you, if it is not too painful for you to write to me, that you receive my excuses, so that if they are sufficient I may be consoled by your indulgence, but if on the contrary I must be more humiliated (as it is just) that I may endeavour, whatever else I can do, to give you fuller satisfaction. Farewell.

LETTER LXVI. (Circa A.D. 1129.)

TO GEOFFREY, ABBOT OF S. MEDARD

He begs Geoffrey's help in reconciling him with Abbot Alvisus, and consoles him in his tribulations.

To Dom GEOFFREY, Abbot of S. Medard, Brother BERNARD, unworthy superior of Clairvaux, health everlasting.

In the first place, I beg that you would be so good as to forward the enclosed letter to the lord Abbot of Anchin, and that you would not fail to do what you can in favour of your absent friend, as opportunity shall serve, that he obtain that which it asks. For I ought not to conceal the cause of offence, whether just or unjust, which anyone, and especially so venerable a father has against me; which that I may not do, I should perhaps have been better able to explain my meaning better by speech than by writing, for in such matters word of mouth is wont to be more acceptable than written words, and the tongue than the pen. The expression of the eye gives confidence in the words. Nor is the hand able to express our sentiments as is the countenance. But now not being able in my absence to do as I would, I have recourse to you to give satisfaction as far as I can. I entreat you, then, again and again to take away, as far as in you lies, this offence from the kingdom of God, which is on our account, lest if this resentment endure (which may God forbid) until the day when the Angels shall be charged themselves to take away that offence, we may both be left without excuse. Concerning the tribulations of which you complained to me some time since, you know that it is said, The Lord is nigh unto them who are of a troubled spirit (Ps. 34:18). Trust in Him because He hath overcome the world. He knows among what people you

are dwelling, and those who trouble you are in His sight. He who now tries you by the waters of persecution, He will grant you a refuge from the tempest. Farewell.

LETTER LXVII. (Circa A.D. 1125.)

TO THE MONKS OF FLAY

He justifies his reception of B., a monk, as being from a monastery entirely unknown to him, and having just causes for his departure.

To Dom H., Superior of the Convent of Flay, and to the brethren who are with him, the brethren in Clairvaux wish health.

1. We learn by your letter that your Reverence is aggrieved because we have received one of your monks among us. I also am much grieved, fearing that this grief of yours be not that whereof the Apostle said: Ye were made sorry according to God (2 Cor. 7:9). For if it had been according to God it would not have so provoked you, and you would not have shown so much bitterness and violence in the reproaches which you make to us, the first time that you write to us, since although we are unknown to you, and we have never yet held communication by speech or by letter, we are none the less your brethren, and if you permit me to say so, even your friends. You wonder, as you write us, that we have received Brother Benedict among us, and you address threats to us unless we immediately send him back. You remind us that the Rule forbids a monk to be received from a known monastery, and you are no doubt persuaded that yours is not unknown. But what if it is known to others, provided that it is not known to us? Even although, as you tell me, the reputation of your community has so spread that the history of your church is known even at Rome; yet it has, I know not how, so passed over us, who are a long way this side of Rome, that we have never heard speak of you the least in the world, neither of your abbot nor of your monks, nor of the very name of your house, nor have we the least knowledge of the sanctity of your life up to the present time. Nor is that wonderful, considering that we are separated from each other by a long distance, by different provinces, and by difference of language. Not only are we not residing in the same diocese, but we do not belong to the same archbishopric. We think, then, that we are prohibited from receiving monks only from monasteries which are known to us, and not from those which others know; otherwise, since there is no monastery which is not known to somebody, not one would be left from which monks might properly be received. How, then, would that be fulfilled which was

permitted and even ordered by the blessed Benedict, that a stranger monk ought not only to be received as a guest, as long as he pleases to remain, but also to be urged to remain permanently, if he is found useful to the community?

2. We, nevertheless, took another course with regard to the brother before mentioned. For when he came humbly praying to be received by us he was at first repulsed, and then bidden to return to his own monastery. But he not being willing to do this, betook himself to a hermitage near us, and there dwelt quietly almost seven months, without any evil report of him arising. But not thinking it safe for himself to live alone, he was not ashamed, after this first repulse, to ask of us again what he had asked before. We a second time admonished him about his return, and when we inquired the cause of his departure he said: "My abbot treated me not as a monk but as a physician. He obliged me to serve, or rather he himself served by means of me, not God, but the world; since, in order not to incur the ill-will of secular princes, he used to compel me to give medical care to tyrants, robbers, and excommunicate. I declared to him both in public and in private the peril which my soul incurred; but as this was to no purpose, I at length, relying on the advice of certain wise men, fled from the destruction of my soul, not from religion or from my community. Do not reject one who seeks salvation, open the door to one who knocks." At the sight of his perseverance, having heard his reason, and knowing no ill of him, we granted him admission; we approved him after his time of probation, we admitted him to make profession, and now we consider him as one of us. We did not compel him to enter, and now we will not oblige him to depart. And if we should drive him out he would not (as he asserts) return to you, but would fly still farther from you. Cease then, brethren, to persecute unoffending people with unmerited reproaches, and to trouble them with useless letters, because we will not be provoked even by reiterated insults to reply to you otherwise than with respect; nor will we be terrified into not keeping among us a monk whom we believe that we have received according to the Rule.

LETTER LXVIII

TO THE SAME, UPON THE SAME SUBJECT

To the Reverend the Abbot of Flay, to the brethren of that convent, and to certain others, Brother BERNARD wishes health.

MY GOOD BRETHREN,—

1. It would have been a proof of moderation on your part had you shown

yourselves satisfied with my former explanation in answer to your complaint, and refrained from harassing those who do not deserve it. But as to your former attacks you have added greater ones, and have thrown among us new germs of discord (which, we trust, will no more be fruitful than the former were), and as by not replying I may seem to acknowledge fault where there is none, I reply truthfully a second time to what you angrily object. This is the whole of my fault, which you consider so great; this the vast injustice that I have done to you; that a monk, alone, a wanderer, poor, miserable, flying from peril to his soul, seeking earnestly his own salvation, at his earnest application and request we have received; or that having thus received him, we do not eject him without cause, and so make ourselves prevaricators, destroyers of what we have built. For this we are considered transgressors of the Rule, of the canons, of the law of nature itself! You demand with indignation, why we have presumed to admit among us a monk of yours, excommunicated by you, which we would not suffer ourselves. But as to the excommunication, why need we reply, when you give a sufficient reply yourselves for us, since you know without doubt that he was received by us, before he was excommunicated by you? But if he was regularly received, it is a monk under our jurisdiction and not under yours, that you have excommunicated: and you will see, whether that was rightly done.

2. It remains therefore to be ascertained, whether he was rightly received; and this is the sole question between us. You indeed, since you cannot deny that a monk may regularly be received from a monastery that is unknown, contend that yours was known to us. We deny it, and you do not believe us. But if you do not believe us in a simple denial, do so when we affirm by oath. I take God to witness that I did not know you, and do not know you; I have received the writings of unknown persons and I have replied to unknown persons. I feel indeed your violence and your attacks, but yet I am not acquainted with the assailants themselves. But you for the purpose of convincing me of pretended ignorance, employ the crushing argument that those cannot be unknown to me whose name, that of the abbot and of the monastery itself I have placed in my letters; as if when you know the names of things you know the things themselves also. Since in that case I have the pleasure to know the names of Michael and Gabriel and Raphael, by the mere hearing of these words, I am already blessed by the knowledge of those blessed spirits themselves. It is no small profit to me, I say, if because I have learned from the Apostle to call by their names Paradise and the third Heaven, I have therefore, though not rapt thither with the Apostle, learned the secrets of Heaven from their names alone, and heard unspeakable

words which it is not lawful for man to utter. Foolish am I who, already knowing the name of my God, yet still groan superfluously every day, I know not why; uselessly sighing with the Prophet, and saying, Thy face O Lord will I seek (Ps. 27:8). And When shall I come to appear before God (Ps. 42:2). And: Show us Thy Face, and we shall be saved (Ps. 80:3).

3. But what is it we do towards you which we are unwilling to be done towards us? Do you suppose that we are unwilling that any monk departing from our monastery should be received in any other? Would that you might be able to save without us all those committed to us. If any monk of ours should have passed over to you for the sake of greater perfection, or from the desire of a severer life, not only are we not offended if you assist him in so good a wish, but we earnestly entreat you to do so: nor should we complain as persons offended, but confess ourselves to have received a great service. Then you deny what we had heard of you, that Brother B. as long as he was with you, practised the medical art by your consent or even by your order upon secular persons, and you accuse of falsehood him who has said this. Whether he has told the truth I know not; let him see to it; but this I know, that if he practised medicine, whether of his own accord, as you declare, or to obey you, as he testifies, he exposed his soul to great dangers. Who, then, could be so inhuman as not to help a person in such peril if he were able, or to counsel him if he were not able? And if, as you assert, that it was not compelled by obedience but by the desire of gain for himself, or a taste for wandering, that he used to travel about here and there making merchandise of his art; what cause existed for his leaving you? Was it because by the tightening of pastoral discipline, that was no longer permitted to him which had been permitted before? But in that case why did you, when he was with us, wishing to recall him, promise him that he should remain quiet in the convent, for the purpose of persuading him to return; unless that you knew that the man wished for this, and remembered that he had asked for it? but he, having already obtained among strangers what he could not obtain among his own, nor desiring to quit the certain for the uncertain, has held fast what he already enjoyed, despising what was offered to him too late.

4. Cease, then, my brethren, cease, from being careful for a brother for whom it is not at all needful that you should take care: unless, perhaps, which I hope is not the case, you seek your own interests and not those of Jesus Christ, and love more the advantage which you derive from him than his salvation. For since he was always when among you a rolling stone, and, as you write, expending for his own purposes what he acquired by his art, against the obligations of his

condition and the command of his abbot; let those who love him rejoice, because by the pity of God he has, while among us, been entirely cured. For we give our testimony to him that never now does he wander abroad on any pretence, but remains quietly in the monastery; he lives without complaint as a poor man among poor men. Far from regarding, as you say, the first engagements which he made as null and void, he now considers them valid, and accomplishes them all without exception, which, when with you, he failed to do; and this with a regularity and perfect obedience without which he deceives himself who trusts in his stability of place. I entreat you, then, brethren, that your indignation may now be calmed and your inquietude cease. But if otherwise, do what you please, write as you please, persecute me as much as you please; charity endures all things, suffers all things. For I am quite resolved not to abandon on account of this matter the purest affection, the deepest respect, and a brotherly consideration towards you.

LETTER LXIX

TO GUY, ABBOT OF TROIS FONTAINES

He instructs Guy what to do. The latter had consecrated by mistake a Chalice, in which, by oversight of the servers, there was no wine.

1. I know, my dear friend, that you are distressed, and I praise you for being so, if your distress be not excessive; for you are, I believe, distressed, as the Apostle says, according to God (2 Cor. 7:9); nor is it doubtful that sorrow of this kind will be one day changed into joy. Therefore, be angry and sin not, for you will sin not less by too much anger than by no anger at all. For not to be angry when where is cause for anger is to be unwilling to correct what is wrong; but to be more angry than there is cause for being is to add sin to sin; and if it is wrong not to correct what is wrong, how much more would it not be to increase it? If judgment depended on the issue of actions inculpated, your sorrow, however great, could not be blamed, since, unquestionably, it rests on the fact that the fault had been great. For a fault would appear the graver the more sacred is the matter which it is concerned with. But as it is the motive and not the matter, the intention and not the result of actions which distinguishes between praise and blame, according to the word of the Lord, If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light: but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness (S. Matt. 6:22, 23); therefore, in the examination of your act, I consider the dignity of holy things is not so much the point to be regarded as your own

intention. Furthermore, our Prior and I, after thinking over the whole matter privately and consulting together about it, decided that in it there was ignorance on your part, and negligence on the part of the servers; but evidently no ill intention in either. And you know well that no work is good unless it be founded in good will. How then can an act not done with consent of the will be a great sin? Otherwise, if it were the case that without the assent of the will, a good action indeed obtains no approval, but a bad one severe punishment; that would be as much as to say, that for one and the same cause both evil is reckoned and good not credited; and whosoever thinks thus let him assert, if he will, that good does not prevail over evil, but that evil prevails over good.

2. Nevertheless, in order to set at rest your troubled conscience, and lest perhaps this lamentable occurrence should be a warning of some secret sin lurking still in the monastery, I enjoin upon you by way of penance to recite the Seven Penitential Psalms daily until Easter, seven times prostrating yourself, and to receive the discipline seven times. In this manner also let him who ministered to you at that Mass make satisfaction. But as for him who had made the preparations beforehand and had forgotten to put wine into the chalice, his fault I consider greater than that of others, and, if you agree with me, I leave him to your judgment. If a report of this has gone forth among the brethren, I think that they also should severally receive the discipline, that that may be fulfilled which is written, Bear ye one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2). Afterwards, I greatly approve of your having poured some wine into the chalice, upon a particle of the consecrated Host, when the negligence had been found out, though it was found out too late; and I consider that the liquid, though not changed by a proper and solemn consecration into the Body and Blood of Christ, yet became hallowed by the contact with the Sacred Body. It is said, nevertheless, that some other writer, I know not whom, was of another opinion, and thought that the Sacrifice could not be without the three—bread, wine, and water; so that if either of the three should be in any case wanting, the other two were not consecrated. But on this point everyone must be satisfied in his own mind.

3. For myself, if the same thing had happened to me, I should (according to my poor opinion) proceed to repair the omission in one out of two ways: either that which you did, or I would rather have iterated the sacred words from that place where it is said, “Likewise after supper He took the cup” (simili modo postquam cœnatum est), and so have supplied what remained to do of the sacrifice. For I could not possibly doubt that the Body was already consecrated, according to the Rite of the Church, since I have learned from the Church, what

she also has learned from her Lord, to present Bread and Wine together; yet (I have not learned) to be confident that the Mystery is consummated in these together. Since, then, according to the custom of the Church, the Body is perfected from bread, before the Blood from wine: if by forgetfulness, that which is to be consecrated the later, is presented too late, I do not see why that lateness of the latter should annul the preceding consecration. For I think that if it had pleased the Lord, after His Body made from bread, to intermit for a little while the consecration of the wine, or even altogether to omit it, none the less His Body which He had made would have remained, nor would things not yet done affect those done. It is not that I deny that bread and wine mixed with water ought to be presented together, on the contrary, I assert that it ought to be thus done and not otherwise; but it is one thing to blame negligence, and another to deny efficacy (as a result of it); in the one case we assert that all things are not done as they should be, in the other we deny that they are done at all. In the meantime, you have here what I think and feel about this matter, without the least unwillingness to consider either your opinion, if it be wiser than mine, or that of any other better qualified person.

LETTER LXX

TO THE SAME

Bernard reminds him what feelings of mercy a pastor ought to have, and advises him to withdraw a sentence which he had passed upon an offending monk.

To the Lord Abbot GUY, Brother BERNARD, health, with the spirit of wisdom and piety.

Considering the miserable condition of this unhappy man, I feel myself touched with pity, but I fear lest it be in vain. Yet even though he should remain in his unhappy state I do not think that my pity would be altogether wasted, but would be of advantage, at least to me. The pity which I feel is not, however, prompted by any advantage to myself, but a brotherly sympathy is produced in my inmost heart by the misery of a brother. Pity is a feeling which is not governed by the will, nor subjected to the reason, nor is anyone drawn to it by deliberate purpose; but it necessarily imposes itself of its own accord on compassionate hearts at the sight of the suffering of others, so that even if it were a sin to be moved with compassion I could not help pitying, even if I wished. The reason and the will would, indeed, be able to prevent our acting upon the feeling; but could they eradicate the feeling itself? Far from me be those who

would console me by saying that my prayer shall return unto my own bosom, although he for whom it is offered is not yet converted. Nor do I listen to those who flatter me by quoting: The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him (Ezek. 18:20) while the wicked still remains in his impiety. No, I say, I cannot be consoled while I see the desolation of a brother. If, then, my dear son, your pious mind is similarly affected, or rather because it is similarly affected, although that unhappy man seems to have practised shameful and repeated flight from the monastery after having returned, yet because he thinks otherwise, you ought to listen, not only patiently but also willingly to what he humbly urges (however ill-founded), if perchance any reasonable opportunity may be found for saving a man whose safety is despaired of; which (as your experience, equally with my own, teaches) is difficult to find even in congregation, but is much more difficult when he is without in the world. Do not disdain, therefore, having called an assembly of all the brethren, to recall all the censures that you have launched against him, insomuch that his contumacy shall be healed by your humility, and perhaps some means may be found, without violating the Rule, for receiving him once more. Nor need you fear that by this retractation you will displease our just and merciful God, if mercy shall be exalted above justice. Farewell.

LETTER LXXI. (A.D. 1127.)

TO THE MONKS OF THE SAME PLACE

He excuses himself for having hitherto put off making a visit to them, not from negligence on his part, but from waiting for a suitable opportunity; he consoles them for the death of their Abbot, Roger.

Do not impute it to negligence that I have not come to you yet. I care for you indeed as for my own bowels. If a mother is able to neglect the care of her own child, then can I be suspected of neglecting you. I have been waiting, and I am waiting now, only for an opportunity, so that when I come my visit may not be without profit. In the meantime, let not your heart be troubled for the departure of your father. God, we hope, will provide him a worthy successor. Nor, indeed, is he lost to you; the Lord has translated him, not taken him entirely away. Only he, who was your own peculiar property, now belongs to us all as well. Until I come to you, work bravely, let your hearts be comforted, and let all your actions be done in charity. Farewell.

LETTER LXXII

TO RAINALD, ABBOT OF FOIGNY

Bernard declares to him how little he loves praise; that the yoke of Christ is light; that he declines the name of father, and is content with that of brother.

1. In the first place, do not wonder if titles of honour affright me, when I feel myself so unworthy of the honours themselves; and if it is fitting that you should give them to me, it is not expedient for me to accept them. For if you think that you ought to observe that saying, In honour preferring one another (Rom. 12:10), and: Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God (Eph. 5:21), yet the terms one another, one to another, are not used at random, and concern me as well as you. Again, if you think that the declaration of the Rule is to be observed, "Let the younger honour their elders," I remember what the Truth has ruled: The last shall be first, and the first last (S. Matt. 20:16), and, He that is the greater among you, let him be as the younger (S. Luke 22:26), and The greater thou art, the more humble thyself (Ecclus. 3:18), and Not because we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy (2 Cor. 1:24), and, Have they made thee the master? Be then among them as one of them (Ecclus. 32:1), and Be ye not called Rabbi; and Call no man your father upon the earth (S. Matt. 23:8, 9). As much, then, as I am carried away by your compliments, so much am I restrained by the weight of these texts. Wherefore I rightly, I do not say sing, but mourn; While I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted (Ps. 88:15), and Thou hast lifted me up and cast me down (Ps. 102:10). But I should, perhaps, represent more truly what I feel if I say that he who exalts me really humiliates me; and he who humiliates me, exalts. You, therefore, rather depress me in heaping me with terms of honour, and exalt me by humbling. But that you may not humble so as to crush me, these and similar testimonies of the Truth console me, which wonderfully raise up those whom they make humble, instruct while they humiliate. Thus this same Hand that casts me down raises me up again and makes me sing with joy. It was good for me, O Lord, that I was afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes; the law of Thy mouth is good unto me, above thousands of gold and silver (Ps. 119:71, 72). This marvel the word of God, living and efficacious, produces. This, that Word by which all things are done, gently and powerfully brings to pass; this, in short, is the work of the easy yoke and light burden of Christ (S. Matt. 11:30).

2. We cannot but wonder how light is the burden of Truth. Is not that truly light which does not burden, but relieves him who bears it? What lighter than

that weight, which not only does not burden, but even bears everyone upon whom it is laid to bear? This weight was able to render fruitful the Virgin's womb, but not to burden it. This weight sustained the very arms of the aged Simeon, in which He was received. This caught up Paul, though with weighty and corruptible body, into the third heaven. I seek in all things to find if possible something like to this weight which bears them who bear it, and I find nothing but the wings of birds which in any degree resembles it, for these in a certain singular manner render the body of birds at once more weighty and more easily moved. Wonderful work of nature! that at the same time increases the material and lightens the burden, and while the mass is greater the burden is in the same degree less. Thus plainly in the wings is expressed the likeness of the burden of Christ, because they themselves bear that by which they are borne. What shall I say of a chariot? This, too, increases the load of the horse by which it is drawn, but at the same time renders capable of being drawn a load which without it could not be moved. Load is added to load, yet the whole is lighter. See also how the Chariot of the Gospel comes to the weighty load of the Law, and helps to carry it on to perfection, while decreasing the difficulty. His word, it is said, runneth very swiftly (Ps. 147:15). His word, before known only in Judea, and not able, because of its weightiness, to extend beyond, which burdened and weighed down the hands of Moses himself, when lightened by Grace, and placed upon the wheels of the Gospel, ran swiftly over the whole earth, and reached in its rapid flight the confines of the world.

3. Do you, therefore, my very dear friend, cease from overwhelming me rather than raising with undeserved honours; otherwise you range yourself, though with a friendly intention, in the company of my enemies. These are they of whom I am in the habit of thus complaining to God alone in my prayers. Those who praised me were sworn against me (Ps. 102:8, VULG.). To this, my complaint, I hear God soon replying, and bearing witness to the truth of my words: Truly they which bless thee lead thee into error (Is. 9:16, cited from memory). Then I reply, Let them be soon brought to shame who say unto me, There, There! (Ps. 70:3). But I ought to explain in what manner I understand these words, that it may not be thought I launch maledictions or imprecations against any of my adversaries. I pray, then, that whosoever think of me above that which they see in me or hear respecting me may be turned back, that is, return from the excessive praises which they have given me without knowing me. In what way? When they shall know better him whom they praise without measure, and consequently shall blush for their error, and for the ill service that they have

rendered to their friend. And in this way it is that I say, Turn back! and blush! to both kinds of my enemies; those who wish me evil and commend me in order to flatter, and those who innocently, and even kindly, but yet to my injury, praise me to excess. I would wish to appear to them so vile and abject that they would be ashamed to have praised such a person, and should cease to bestow praises so indiscreetly. Therefore, against panegyrists of each kind I am accustomed to strengthen myself with those two verses: against the hostile with the former, Let them be turned back and soon brought to shame who wish me evil, but against the well-meaning, Let them be turned backward and made to blush who say over me, There, There!

4. But as (to return to you) I ought, according to the example of the Apostle, to rejoice with you only, and not to have dominion over your piety, and according to the word of God we have one Father only who is in heaven, and all we are brethren, I find myself obliged to repel from me with a shield of truth the lofty name of Lord and Father with which you have intended, I know well, to honour me, not to burden; and in place of these I think it fitter that you should name me brother and fellow-servant, both because we have the same heritage, and because we are in the same condition, lest perchance if I should usurp to myself a title which belongs to God, I shall hear from Him: If I be a Father where is my honour, and I be a Lord where is my fear? (Mal. 1:6). It is very true, however, that if I do not wish to attribute to myself over you the authority of a father, I have all the feelings of one, nor is the love with which I embrace you less, I think, than that of a father or of a son. Sufficient, then, on the subject of the titles which you give me.

5. I wish to reply now to the rest of your letter. You complain that I do not come to see you. I could complain equally of you for the same reason, unless, indeed (which you yourself do not deny) the will of God must be preferred to our feelings and our needs. If it were otherwise, if it were not the work of Christ that was in question, would I suffer to be so far away from me a companion so dear and necessary to me, so obedient in labour, so persevering in studies, so useful in conference, so prompt in recollection? Blessed are we if we still remain thus until the end always and in everything, seeking not our own interests, but those of Jesus Christ.

LETTER LXXIII

TO THE SAME

He instructs Rainald, who was too anxious and distrustful, respecting the duty of superior which had been conferred upon him; and warns him that he must bestow help and solace upon his brethren rather than require it from them.

To his very dear son RAINALD, Abbot of Foigny, BERNARD, that God may give him the spirit of strength.

1. You complain, my very dear son, of your many tribulations, and by your pious complaints you excite me also to complain, for I am not able to feel that you are sorrowing without sharing your sorrow, nor can I be otherwise than troubled and anxious when I hear of your troubles and anxieties. But since I foresaw these very difficulties which you say have happened to you, and predicted them to you, if you remember—it seems to me that you ought to be better prepared to endure them, and to spare me vexation when you can. For am I not sufficiently tried, and more than sufficiently, to lose you, not to see you, nor to enjoy your society, which was so pleasant to me; so that I have almost regretted that I should have sent you away from me. And although charity obliged me to send you, yet not being able to see you where you have been sent, I mourn you as if lost to me. When then, besides this, you who ought to be the staff of my support, belabour me as it were with the rod of your faint-heartedness, you heap sorrow upon sorrow, and torment upon torment; and if it is a mark of your filial affection towards me that you do not hide any of your difficulties from me, yet it is hard to add fresh trouble to one already burdened. Why is it needful to occupy with fresh anxieties one already more than anxious enough, and to torture with sharper pains the bosom of a father, already wounded by the absence of his son? I have shared with you my weight of cares, as a son, as an intimate friend, as a trusty assistant; but how do you help to bear your father’s burden, if, instead of relieving me, you burden me still more? You, indeed, are loaded, but I am not lightened of my load.

2. For this burden is that of sick and weak souls. Those who are in health do not need to be carried, and are not, therefore, a burden. Whomsoever, then, of your brethren you shall find sad, mean-spirited, discontented, remember well that it is of these and for their sakes, you are father and abbot. In consoling, in exhorting, in reproving, you do your duty, you bear your burden; and those whom you bear in order to cure, you will cure by bearing. But if anyone is in

such spiritual health that he rather helps you than is helped by you, recognize that to him you are not father and abbot, but equal and friend. Do not complain if you find more trials than consolations from those among whom you are. You were sent to sustain and console others, because you are spiritually stronger and better able to bear than they, and because with the grace of God you are able to aid and sustain all without needing yourself to be aided and sustained by any. Finally, if the burden is great, so also is the reward; but, on the other hand, the more assistance you receive, the more your own reward is diminished. Choose, therefore; if you prefer those who are for you a burden, your merit will be the greater; but if, on the contrary, you prefer those who console you, you have no merit at all. The former are the source whence it arises for you; the second as the abyss in which it is swallowed up; for it is not doubtful that those who are partakers of the labour, will be also sharers of the reward. Knowing, then, that you were sent to help, not to be helped, bear in mind that you are the vicar of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. I could have wished to write at greater length, in order to comfort you, but that it was not necessary; for what need is there of filling a dead leaf with superfluous words, while the living voice is speaking? I think that when you have seen our prior, these words will be sufficient for you, and your spirit will revive at his presence, so that you will not require the consolation of written words, in the delight and help which his discourse will give you. Do not doubt that I have communicated to him, as far as was possible, my inmost mind, which you begged in your letters might be sent to you. For you know well that he and I are of one mind and one will.

LETTER LXXIV

TO THE SAME

He had desired Rainald to refrain from querulous complaints; now he directs Rainald to keep him informed of all his affairs.

I had hoped, my dear friend, to find a remedy for my care about you, if I were not informed by you of your little vexations. And I remember that I said to you, amongst other things, in my last letter, “if it is a mark of your filial affection towards me that you do not hide any of your difficulties from me, yet it is hard to add trouble to one already burdened.” But the remedy which I thought would lighten my cares has increased them, and I feel more burdened than before. For then I, indeed, felt vexation and fear, but only on account of the troubles named by you, but now I fear that some evil, I know not what, is happening to you, and

like your favourite Ovid—

When have I not made the perils which I feared

Greater than they really were?

I fear all things because I am uncertain of all things, and feel often real sorrow for imaginary evils. The mind which affection dominates is hardly master of itself. It fears what it knows not; it grieves when there is no need; it is troubled more than it wished, and even when it does not wish; unable to rule its sensibility, it pities or sympathizes against its will. And because you see, my son, that neither my timid industry nor your pious prudence in this respect are of service to me, do not, I pray you, conceal from me henceforth anything that concerns you, that you may not increase my uneasiness by seeking to spare me. The little books of mine which you have, please return to me when you can.

LETTER LXXV. (A.D. 1127.)

TO ARTAUD, ABBOT OF PRULLY

To his very dear friend and colleague, Abbot ARTAUD, Brother BERNARD wishes health.

Whatever affection and heartfelt kindliness absent friends are able to bestow upon one another I feel is due both from me to you and from you to me, not only because we share the same vows and method of life, but also because we have neither of us forgotten our ancient friendship. And we are in no way better able to show to each other or to recognize how acceptable this is to each of us, and how warmly it exists in the heart of each of us, than not to conceal from each other if either should hear of anything unbecoming or unsuitable concerning his friend. Now, I have heard that you have the intention of founding an abbey in Spain to be dependent on your holy convent. The plan occasioned great surprise to me, nor could I conjecture for what end, with what design or hope of usefulness, you should wish to send some of your monks into exile to a place so distant, and which will cost you so much both in trouble and in money to reach and to build upon, when you have quite near you a house already built and well-fitted up, where you may settle any of them. For you cannot, I suppose, excuse yourself by saying that the place I refer to is not yours, when I know quite well that it may easily be yours if you wish. Do you suppose that the Lord Abbot of Pontigny, to whom it belongs, would refuse it to you if you asked him for it? On the contrary, it would be most agreeable to him if you were willing to accept it; not because it is not a good house, but because, as you know, he has no need of

it. We ought both of us to take great care in our conduct, of the advice which the Apostle gives: Let no man despise thy youth (1 Tim. 4:12), because we are remarked the sooner for levity, as we are young men. But I trust that you will act with more consideration, and choose this place, as it is nearer to you and already built; which, while it will perfectly meet your wants, is only a burden to our friend the abbot, who at present holds it. Farewell.

LETTER LXXVI

TO THE ABBOT OF THE REGULAR CANONS OF S. PIERREMONT

He considers what is to be done in the case of a man who, after a long time spent in a monastery and in the habit of a religious, has returned to the world and contracted a second marriage.

To the most Reverend the Father of the Canons of S. Pierre-mont, Brother BERNARD, health and the affection which is due to him.

Since it pleased your worship that this brother should consult my unworthy self, I have let him know my opinion without at all pretending that he ought to follow it, that I may not stand in the way of better advice. Not to weary you by repeating circumstances which you already know, this is the sum of my advice. It is very dangerous, perhaps unlawful, that a man who has so long dwelt in a convent and worn the religious habit, should have returned to the world; also that he who with the consent of his former wife, while she was living, had long observed absolute continence should contract a second marriage is indecent and dishonourable. Yet since the marriage was publicly and solemnly performed as others are, and without protest or opposition, it does not seem to me safe that the man should dismiss his wife against her will, unless he shall have had recourse to episcopal authority or advice, or at all events to an ecclesiastical and canonical judgment. But since, in my opinion, the great danger in which the man now is, is due, in no small degree, to you (in that you deferred too long his taking the vow, though he wished and desired to do so, and thus gave opportunity to the tempter to precipitate him into those unhappy courses), I counsel and advise you in the name of charity to employ all your efforts to rescue the unfortunate man, even at any cost. Address yourself, for instance, to the wife herself, and obtain from her a promise to dismiss her husband and live in continence, or procure that the bishop should summon them both before him and separate them, which I believe may justly be done.

LETTER LXXVII

TO MAGISTER HUGO, OF S. VICTOR

This Letter also, on account of its importance, has been placed among the Treatises.

LETTER LXXVIII. (A.D. 1127.)

TO SUGER, ABBOT OF S. DENIS

He praises Suger, who had unexpectedly renounced the pride and luxury of the world to give himself to the modest habits of the religious life. He blames severely the clerk who devotes himself rather to the service of princes than that of God.

1. A piece of good news has reached our district; it cannot fail to do great good to whomsoever it shall have come. For who that fear God, hearing what great things He has done for your soul, do not rejoice and wonder at the great and sudden change wrought by the Right Hand of the Most High. Everywhere your courage is praised in the Lord; the gentle hear of it and are glad, and even those who do not know you, but have only heard of you, what you were and what you are now, wonder and glorify God in you. But what adds still more to their admiration and joy is that you have been able to make your brethren partake of the counsel of salvation poured upon you from above, and so to fulfil what we read, Let him that heareth say, Come (Rev. 22:17), and that What I tell you in darkness that speak ye in light, and what ye hear in the ear that preach ye upon the house tops (S. Matt. 10:27). So a soldier intrepid in war, or rather a general full of bravery and devotedness, when he sees almost all his soldiers turned to flight and falling everywhere under the hostile blades, although he may see that he would be able to escape alone, yet he prefers to die with those, without whom he would think it shame to live. He holds firm on the field of battle and combats bravely; he ranges, sword in hand, along the ranks, through the bloody blades which seek him; he terrifies his adversaries and reanimates his followers with all his powers of voice and gesture. Wherever the enemy press on more boldly and there is danger of his friends giving ground, there he is present; the enemy who strikes he opposes, the friend who sinks exhausted he succours; and he is the more prepared to die for each one, that he despairs to save them all. But while he makes heroic efforts to hinder and to stop the pursuers who press upon his followers, he raises as best he can those who are fallen and recalls those

who have taken flight. Nor is it rare that his splendid valour procures a safety as welcome as unhoped for, throws into confusion the hostile ranks, forces them to fly from those whom they were pursuing, and overcomes those who bore themselves almost as victors, so that they who a little before were struggling for life are now rejoicing in victory.

2. But why do I compare an event so profoundly religious to things secular, as if examples were wanting to us from religion itself? Was not Moses quite certain of what God had promised him, that if, indeed, the people over whom he ruled should have perished, he himself should not only not perish with them, but should be besides the chief of a great nation? Nevertheless, with what affection, with what zeal, with what bowels of piety did he strive to save his people from the wrath of God? And, finally, interposing himself on behalf of the offenders, he cries: If Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written (Exod. 32:32). What a devoted advocate! who, because he does not seek his own interests, easily obtains everything which he seeks. What a benign chief, who, binding together his people with bonds of charity as the head is united with the members, will either save them with himself or else encounter the same danger as they! Jeremiah, also bound inseparably to his people, but by the bond of compassion, not by sympathy for their revolt, quitted voluntarily his native soil and his own liberty to embrace in preference the common lot of exile and slavery. He was free to remain in his own country had he chosen, while others must remove, but he preferred to be carried away captive with his people, to whom he knew that he could render service even in captivity. Paul, animated beyond doubt by the same spirit, desired that he might be anathema even from Christ Himself for his brethren (Romans 9:3). He experienced in his own heart how true is that saying, Love is as strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave (Cant. 8:6). Do you see of whose great examples you have shown yourself an imitator? But I add one more whom I had almost passed over, that of the holy king David, who, perceiving and lamenting the slaughter of his people, wished to devote himself for them, and desired that the Divine vengeance should be transferred to himself and to his father’s house (2 Sam. 24:17).

3. But who made you aspire to this degree of perfection? I confess that though I earnestly desired to hear such things of you, I never hoped to see it come to pass. Who would have believed that you would reach, so to speak, by one sudden bound, the practice of the highest virtues, and approach the most exalted merit? Thus we learn not to measure by the narrow proportions of our faith and

hope the infinite pity of God, which does what It will and works upon whom It will, lightening the burden which It imposes upon us, and hastening the work of our salvation. What then? the zeal of good people blamed your errors at least, if not those of your brethren: it was against your excesses more than theirs that they were moved with indignation; and if your brothers in religion groaned in secret, it was less against your entire community than against you; it was only against you that they brought their accusation. You corrected your faults, and their criticisms had no longer an object; your conversion at once stilled the tumult of accusation. The one and only thing with which we were scandalized was the luxury, the pride, the pomp, which followed you everywhere. At length you laid down your pride, you put off your splendid dress, and the universal indignation ceased at once. Thus you had at the same time satisfied those who complained of you, and even merited our praises. For what in human doings is deserving of praise, if this is not considered most worthy of admiration and approval? It is true that a change so sudden and so complete is not the work of man, but of God. If in heaven the conversion of one sinner arouses great joy, what gladness will the conversion of an entire community cause, and of such a community as yours?

4. That spot so noble by its antiquity and the royal favour, was made to serve the convenience of worldly business, and to be a meeting-place for the royal troops. They used to render to Cæsar the things which were Cæsar’s promptly and fully; but not with equal fidelity did they render the things of God to God. I speak what I have heard, not what I have seen: the very cloister itself of your monastery was frequently, they say, crowded with soldiers, occupied with the transaction of business, resounding with noise and quarrels, and sometimes accessible even to women. How, in the midst of all that, could place be found for thoughts of heaven, for the service of God, for the interests of the spiritual life? But now there is leisure for God’s service, for practising self-restraint and obedience, for attention to sacred reading. Consider that silence and constant quiet from all stir of secular things disposes the soul to meditation on things above. And the laborious exercise of the religious life and the rigour of abstinence are lightened by the sweetness of psalms and hymns. Penitence for the past renders lighter the austerity of the new manner of life. He who in the present gathers the fruits of a good conscience, feels in himself a desire for future good works, which shall not be frustrated, and a well-founded hope. The fear of the judgment to come gives way to the pious exercise of brotherly charity, for love casteth out fear (1 S. John 4:18). The variety of holy services

drives far away weariness and sourness of temper, and I repeat these things to the praise and glory of God, who is the Author of all; yet not without praise to yourself as being His co-worker in all things. He was able, indeed, to do them without you, but He has preferred to have you for the sharer of His works, that He might have you for the sharer of His glory also. The Saviour once reproached certain persons because they made the house of prayer a den of thieves (S. Matt. 21:13). He will doubtless then have in commendation the man who has accomplished the task of freeing His holy place from the dogs, of rescuing His pearl from the swine; by whose ardour and zeal the workshop of Vulcan is restored to holy studies, or rather the house of God is restored to Him from being a synagogue of Satan to be that which it was before.

5. If I recall the remembrance of past evils it is not in order to cast confusion or reproach on anyone, but from the comparison with the old state of things to make the beauty of the new appear more sharply and strikingly; because there is nothing which makes the present good shine forth more clearly than a comparison with the evils which preceded it. As we recognize similar things from similar, so things which are unlike either please or displease more when compared with their opposites. Place that which is black beside that which is white, and the juxtaposition of the two colours makes each appear more marked. So, if beautiful things are put beside ugly, the former are rendered more beautiful, the ugliness of the latter is more apparent. That there may be no occasion of offence or confusion, I am content to repeat with the Apostle: Such, indeed, ye were, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified (1 Cor. 6:11). Now, the house of God ceases to open to people of the world, there is no access to sacred precincts for the curious; no gossip about trifling things with the idle; the chatter of boys and girls is no longer heard. The holy place is open and accessible only to the children of Christ, of whom it is said: Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me (Isaiah 8:18). It is reserved for the praises of God and the performance of sacred vows with due care and reverence. How gladly do the martyrs, of whom so great a number ennoble that place, listen to the loud songs of these children, to whom they in turn reply no less with a voice of charity: Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord (Ps. 113:1), and again, Sing praises to our God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises (Ps. 47:6).

6. When your breasts are beaten with penitent hands, and your pavements worn with your knees, your altars heaped with vows and devout prayers, your cheeks furrowed with tears; when groans and sighs resound on all sides and the

sacred roofs echo with spiritual songs instead of worldly pleadings, there is nothing which the citizens of heaven more love to look upon, nothing is more agreeable to the eyes of the Heavenly King. For is not this what is said: The sacrifice of praise shall honour me (Ps. 50:23)? O, if anyone had his eyes opened, as were those of the prophet's servant at his prayer! He would doubtless see (2 Kings 6:17) The princes go before, joined with the minstrels in the midst of the players on timbrels (Ps. 67:26, VULG.). We should see, I say, with what care and ardour they assist at the chants, and at the prayers how they unite themselves with those who meditate, they watch over those who repose, they preside over those who order and care for all. The powers of heaven fully recognize their fellow-citizens; they earnestly rejoice, comfort, instruct, protect, and provide for all those who take the heritage of salvation, at all times. How happy I esteem myself while I am still in this world to hear of these things, although I am absent and do not see them! But your felicity, my brethren, to whom it is given to bear part in them, far surpasses mine, and blessed above all is he whom the Author of all good has deigned to make the chief worker of so good a work; it is you, my dear friend, whom with justice I congratulate for this, that you have brought about all which I so greatly admire.

7. You are wearied, perhaps, with my praises, but you ought not to be so; they are far different from the flatteries of those who call evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20), and so please a person to lead him into error. Sweet but perilous is the praise when the wicked is praised in the desire of his heart, and the unjust is blessed (Ps. 9:3, VULG.). The warmth of my praises comes from charity, and does not once pass, as I believe, the limits of truth. He is safely praised, who is praised in the Lord, that is, in the truth. I have not called evil good, but have pointed out as evil what was evil. But if I boldly raise my voice against that which is evil, ought I to be silent in presence of good, and not give my testimony to it? That would be to show myself an envious critic, not a corrector; and to prefer to mangle rather than to mend, if I am silent as to good and raise my voice only about evil. The just reproves in mercy, the wicked flatters in impiety; the one that he may cure, the other in order to hide that which needs to be cured. Do not be afraid that those among us who in the fear of the Lord praise you will pour upon your head that ointment of the sinner with which they were wont to anoint you. I praise you because you are doing right. But I do not flatter you; I only accomplish in your case, by the gift of God, those words of the Psalmist: Those who fear Thee shall see me and shall rejoice, because I have hoped in Thy word (Ps. 119:74); and again: Many shall show forth his wisdom (Ecclus.

39:10). It is, then, your wisdom which more praised than blamed the former folly.

8. I would that you should take pleasure in the praises of such as fear just as much to flatter vice as to depreciate virtue. That is the true praise, which, as it is wont to extol nothing but what is good, so it knows not how to caress what is evil. All other is pretended praise, but really blame, which Scripture refers to: The sons of men are vain; they are deceitful upon the weights, so that they deceive even more than vanity (Ps. 62:10). Such are altogether to be avoided according to the counsel of the wise man: My son, if sinners entice thee consent thou not (Prov. 1:10), since their milk and their oil, though they be sweet, are poisonous and deadly. Their words, he says (that is, those of flatterers), are softer than oil, and yet are they very swords (Ps. 55:21). The righteous has oil, too, but of mercy, of sanctification, of spiritual joy. He has wine, which he pours into the wounds of the haughty soul. But for the soul of him that mourns, and for him of contrite heart, he has the oil of mercy, with which he is wont to soften its sorrow. Where he corrects, he pours in wine; when he soothes, oil; but wine without bitterness, and oil without guile. Thus, not every praise is flattery, nor every blame mixed with rancour. Blessed is he who can say: Let the righteous smite me in mercy, and reprove me: but let not the oil of the sinner break my head (Ps. 141:5), which when you have put far from you, you have shown yourself worthy of the oil and wine of the saints.

9. Let the children of Babylon seek for themselves pleasant mothers, but pitiless, who will feed them with poisoned milk, and soothe them with caresses which will make them fit for everlasting flames; but those of the Church, fed at the breasts of her wisdom, having tasted the sweetness of a better milk, already begin to grow up in it unto salvation, and being fully satiated with it they cry: Thy fulness is better than wine, Thy fragrance than the sweetest ointments (Cant. 1:1, 2). This to their mother. But, then, having tasted and known how sweet the Lord is, how truly the best of fathers, they say to Him: How great is Thy goodness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee (Ps. 31:19). Now my whole desire is accomplished. Formerly when I saw with regret with what avidity you sucked in from the lips of flatterers their mortal poison, the seed of sin, I used, with grief, to desire better things for you, saying: Who shall give thee to me, my brother, who sucked the breasts of my mother (Cant. 8:1)? Far from thee henceforth be those men with caresses and dishonest praises, who bless you before your face and expose you at the same time to the reproach and derision of all men, whose applause in your presence is the world’s by-word, or

rather makes you a by-word to the world. If they murmur even now, say to them: If I yet pleased you, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. 1:10). Those whom we please in evil things we cannot please in good things, unless they are themselves changed, and begin to hate what we were, and so at length to love what we are.

10. In our time two new and detestable abuses have arisen in the Church, of which one (permit me to say it) was no stranger to you when you lived in forgetfulness of the duties of your profession; but this, thanks to God, has been amended to His glory, to your everlasting gain, to our joy and an example to all. God is able to bring about that we may soon be consoled for the second of these evils, the odious novelty of which I do not dare to speak of in public, and yet am afraid to pass over in silence. My grief urges my tongue to speak, but fear restrains the words; fear only lest I may offend someone if I speak openly of what troubles me, since truth sometimes makes enemies. But for enmity of this kind thus incurred I hear the truth consoling me. It is needful, he says, that offences should come. And I do not think that those words which follow, Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh (S. Matt. 18:7) concern me. For when vices are attacked and a scandal results thence, it is not he who makes the accusation who is to answer for the scandal, but he who renders it necessary. In short, I am neither more cautious in word nor circumspect in action than he who says, “It is better that a scandal should arise than the truth be compromised” (S. Greg. Magn. Hom. 7 in Ezech. near the beginning, and S. Aug. de Lib. Arbitr. et de Prædest. sanctor.). Although I know not what advantage it would be were I to hold my tongue about that which all the world proclaims with a loud voice, nor can I alone pretend to overlook the pest whose ill odour is in all nostrils, and not dare to guard my own nose from its ill effect.

11. For whose heart is not indignant, and whose tongue does not murmur either openly or secretly to see a deacon equally serving God and Mammon, against the precept of the Gospel heaping up ecclesiastical dignities, so that he seems not to be inferior to Bishops, yet so mixed up in military offices that he is preferred even to Dukes. What monster is this, that being a clerk, and wishing at the same time to appear a soldier, is neither? It is equally an abuse that a deacon should serve at the table of the King, and that the server of the King should minister at the altar during the holy mysteries. Is it not a wonder, or rather a scandal, to see the same person clothed in armour march at the head of armed soldiery, and vested in alb and stole read the Gospel in the midst of the Church; at one time give the signal for battle with the trumpet, and at another convey the

orders of the Bishop to the people? Unless, perhaps, that man (which would be scandalous) is ashamed of the Gospel of which S. Paul, that Vessel of election, was so proud? Perhaps he is ashamed to appear a cleric, and thinks it more honourable to be supposed a soldier, preferring the Court to the Church, the table of the King to the Altar of Christ, and the cup of demons to the chalice of Christ. This seems the more probable, because he is prouder (they say) to be called by the name of that one post which he has obtained at the palace than by any of those titles of ecclesiastical dignities which, in defiance of the canons, he has heaped upon himself, and instead of delighting to be called Archdeacon, Dean, or Provost to his various Churches, he prefers to be styled Dapifer to H.M. the King. O, unheard of and hateful perversity! thus to prefer the title of servant of a man to that of the servant of God, and to consider the position of an official of an earthly king one of higher dignity than that of an heavenly! He who prefers military warfare to the work of the ministry places the world before the Church, is convicted of preferring human things to Divine, earthly to heavenly. Is it then more honourable to be called the King's Dapifer than Dean or Archdeacon? It may be to a layman, not to a cleric; to a soldier, not to a deacon.

12. It is a strange but blind ambition to delight more in the lowest things than in the highest, and that the man whose lines had fallen to him in pleasant places should recreate himself upon a dunghill with eager desire, and count his precious lands as nothing worth. This man mingles the two orders and cunningly abuses each. Military pomps delight him, but not the risks and labours of warfare; the revenues of religion, but not its duties. Who does not see how great is the disgrace, as much to the State as to the Church? for just as it is no part of clerical duty to bear arms at the pay of the King, so it is no part of the royal duties to administer lay affairs by means of clerics. What king has ever put at the head of his army an unwarlike clerk instead of some brave soldier? What clerk, again, has ever thought it otherwise than unworthy of him to be bound to obey any lay person whatsoever? The very sign which he bears upon his head is rather the mark of royalty than of servitude; on the other hand, the throne finds a better support in the force of arms than in chanting of Psalms. Still, if the abasement, of the one contributes to the greatness of the other, as is sometimes the case; if, for example, the humiliation of the King raised higher the dignity of the priest, or the abasement of the clerk added something to the royal honour; as it happens, for instance, if a woman of noble rank marries a man of the people, she indeed loses in grade by him, but he gains by her; if, then, I say, either the King had advantage from the clerk, or the clerk from the King, it would be an evil only in

part, and perhaps ought to be borne with; but, on the contrary, since there is no gain to either from the humiliation of the other, but there is loss to each; since neither does it become a cleric, as has been said, to be or to be called the server of the King; nor is it for the King's advantage to put the reins of government into any but strong and brave hands. Truly then it is strange that either power endures such a man as this; that the Church does not repulse the deacon-soldier, or the State the prince-ecclesiastic.

13. I had wished to inculcate these principles by still stronger and more detailed arguments, and perhaps ought to do so, did not the necessary limits of a letter oblige me to defer this for the present; and because, most of all, I fear to offend you, I have spared a man for whom, it is said, you had formerly a great regard. I would not that you should have a friend at the expense of the truth. But you have still a friendship for him; show yourself a true friend, and exert yourself to make him, too, a friend of the Truth. Then at length there will be a true friendship between you, if it is bound together by a common love of truth. And if he will not yield to you in this, hold fast what you have; join the tail to the head of the sacrifice. You have received by the grace of God a robe of many colours; take pains to make it reach even to the feet, for what will it profit you to have put your hand to the work if (which, God forbid) you do not attain finally to persevere? I end my letter by warning you to make a good ending of your good work.

LETTER LXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

TO ABBOT LUKE

Bernard warns him that familiarity with women is to be shunned, and indicates what is to be done in regard to a brother who has fallen into sin.

1. My very dear friend, you have singularly edified me, and have shown an example only too rare of goodness, because not only have you not despised the warnings of one of less importance than yourself, but have besides this returned thanks to your adviser, wisely looking not to who or what he might be, but to what was his advice. I thank God for it, and that my presumption in advising has met with gratitude rather than indignation. Encouraged, therefore, by this striking proof of your humility I feel myself bolder in repeating my former advice. I pray you, therefore, by that Blood which was poured out for souls not to regard as a matter of small importance the peril that is incurred by souls of so great value by the meeting of persons of different sexes in familiar intercourse.

This cannot be doubted by those who have long struggled against the temptations of the devil, and have learned by their own experience to say with the Apostle, We are not ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11). And if there is anything that should induce you to take into serious consideration, not my advice indeed, but that of the Apostle himself, or rather his precept about this matter, when he cries aloud Flee from fornication (1 Cor. 6:18), it is the proof of peril given by the shameful fall of the brother, about whom you have deigned to consult me. But, indeed, I wonder that it should have seemed to you expedient to seek me for an adviser, although at such a distance, when you have beside you a wise man of our Order and a special lover of your house, namely, William, Abbot of S. Thierry. And I do not doubt that there are in the Abbey of Prémontré also men of sense, who have prudence and faithfulness to show you the way out of your difficulties.

2. But since it has pleased you rather to have recourse to me, for which, no doubt, you have some good reason, the best advice I can give is at your disposal. If that brother has come of himself to confess his fault, however grave and shameful it may have been, endeavour should be made to bring about his amendment, and he should not be expelled. But as the ill odour of such a crime betrays it to others, it is needful to proceed with care, if it is possible, and in a different way from heretofore. For it is, perhaps, not expedient that he should be allowed to remain longer among you, lest, perhaps, as you have with great reason written, this sick sheep should infect your young and tender flock with his disease. On the other hand, a father ought not to close his heart entirely against his son, though a sinner; I should consider it, therefore, a course kindly in the father and salutary for the son that you should endeavour to remove him into another of the houses of Dom Norbert, but a distant one, where he may do penance under a stricter discipline, changing his abode but not his purpose, until the time when it shall seem good to you to recall him to his own monastery. As for his passing into our Order, that, perhaps, would not be of advantage to you. You wrote to me, it is true, that he had often said that he had my promise to receive him if he should come with your licence; but in my presence he denied having said any such thing. Perhaps you may not be disposed to send him to any of those places to abide which I have mentioned, or he may not be willing to go, or if both are willing, perhaps a place ready to receive him may not be found: then one of two things will be advisable in the necessity of the case; one, to dismiss him with letters of licence to travel whither he will for the good of his soul; the other to keep him among you, by special grace of forgiveness, if, that is

to say, you are able to take away every occasion of his repenting or disseminating his former wickedness. But sufficient on this subject.

3. There is still one point on which with my usual presumption I will make bold to tell you what I think. I speak of that mill at which the lay brothers who are in charge are obliged to permit the resort of women. If you will follow my advice do one of three things; either forbid entirely any entrance of women to the mill; or let the mill be put into the charge of some outside person, and not left to the lay brothers; or let it be altogether given up.

LETTER LXXX. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

TO GUY, ABBOT OF MOLÊSMES

Bernard consoles him under a great injustice which he had suffered, and recommends him to temper his vengeance with mercy.

God who knows the hearts of all men, and is the inspirer of all good dispositions, knows with what sympathy I condole with you in this your adversity, of which I have heard. But, again, when I consider rather the person who has caused you this trial than Him who permits it, just as much as I feel with you in the present misfortune, so much I hope soon to rejoice with you in the prosperity which must speedily come. But only do not let yourself be at all crushed by discouragement; think with me how, by the example of holy Job, you ought to receive with the same cheerfulness troubles from the hand of the Lord as you do blessings. Indeed, you ought, after the example of holy David, not so much to be angry with those people who have caused you such great sufferings, although they are your own servants, as to know that you ought to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, who doubtless has sent them to bring about this misfortune to you. But since it appears that their correction devolves upon you, as they are serfs of the Church committed to your government, it is proper that these unfaithful serfs should be punished for their very wicked presumption, and that the loss of the monastery should be recompensed in some degree out of their goods. But that you may not seem rather to be avenging your own injury in this than punishing their fault, I beg you and also advise you not to think so much of what they deserve as what is fitting for you to do, so that mercy may be exalted above strict justice, and that in your moderation God may be glorified. For the rest, I beg you to press upon that your son, who is dear to me as well for your sake as in a great degree for his own, with your own lips, as with my spirit, not to show in his accusations a bitterness and a violence such as

prove that he forgets that precept of our Lord—Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also (S. Matt. 5:39).

LETTER LXXXI. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

TO GERARD, ABBOT OF POTTIÈRES

He defends himself against a false accusation which had been made against him.

I do not remember that I ever wrote anything to the Count of Nevers, to accuse you personally, nor is it true to say that I have. But if I have written a letter to that prince it is on behalf of your Church, and I consider that in this I have acted not against you, but on your behalf. I had heard that on your advice, and with your consent, he proposed to come to you on a visit of inspection, in order to ascertain whether there was any truth in the many evil reports which were going abroad concerning your house, and, if so, to whom the blame was to be laid, so that he might correct with zeal and care anything that he might find to be wrong. I do not see that you have any right to feel yourself injured or to complain because I took pains to strengthen the prince by my encouragement in a resolution so just and so pious. On the contrary, I think I did rightly and in the interests of the House of God in rousing the zeal of the man who was able to apply a remedy to the evil from which it suffered. You quote the Holy Scripture to convince me that I have done wrong because I did not begin by warning you; but know that I have absolutely no complaint against you personally, and in all that I have done for the sake of charity I have had in view only the restoration of peace in your Church. Finally, you shall be fully convinced of the truth of what I say if, as you announce to me, you come to show me the whole business. You will be sure to find me here on whatever day of the coming week you please.

LETTER LXXXII. (Circa A.D. 1128.)

TO THE ABBOT OF S. JOHN AT CHARTRES

Bernard dissuades him from resigning his charge, and undertaking a Pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

1. As regards the matters about which you were so good as to consult so humble a person as myself, I had at first determined not to reply. Not because I had any doubt what to say, but because it seemed to me unnecessary or even presumptuous to give counsel to a man of sense and wisdom. But considering that it usually happens that the greater number of persons of sense—or I might

say that all such—trust the judgment of another person rather than their own in doubtful cases, and that those who have a clear judgment in the affairs of others, however obscure, frequently hesitate and are undecided about their own, I depart from my first resolution, not, I hope, without reason, and without prejudice to any wiser opinion explain to you simply how the matter appears to me. You have signified to me, if I do not mistake, by the pious Abbot Ursus of S. Denis, that you have it in contemplation to desert your country and the monastery over which, by the Providence of God, you are head, to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to occupy yourself henceforth only with God and the salvation of your own soul. Perhaps, if you aspire unto perfection, it may be expedient for you to leave your country, when God says, Go forth from thy country and from thy kindred (Gen. 12:1). But I do not see at all on what ground you ought to risk, by your departure, the safety of the souls entrusted to you. For is it pleasant to enjoy liberty after having laid down your burden? But charity does not seek her own interests. Perhaps the wish for quiet and rest attracts you? But it is obtained at the price of the peace of others. Freely will I do without the enjoyment of any desire, even a spiritual one, which cannot be obtained except at the price of a scandal. For where there is scandal, there, without doubt, is loss of charity: and where there is loss of charity, surely no spiritual advantage can be hoped for. Finally, if it is permitted to any one to prefer his own quiet to the common good, who is there that can say with truth: For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21)? And where will that principle be which the Apostle declares: No one lives to himself, and no one dies to himself (Rom. 14:7); and, Not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many (1 Cor. 10:33); and, That he who lives should not any longer live unto himself, but unto Him who died for all (2 Cor. 5:15)?

2. But you will say: Whence comes my great desire, if it is not from God? With your permission I will say what I think. Stolen waters are sweet (Prov. 9:17); and for whosoever knows the devices of the devil, it is not doubtful that the angel of darkness is able to change himself into an angel of light, and to pour upon the thirsting soul those waters of which the sweetness is more bitter than wormwood. In truth, what other can be the suggester of scandals, the author of dissension, the troubler of unity and peace, except the devil, the adversary of truth, the envier of charity, the ancient foe of the human race, and the enemy of the Cross of Christ? If death entered into the world through his envy, even so now he is jealous of whatever good he sees you doing; and since he is a liar from the beginning, he falsely promises now better things which he does not see. For

when did the Truth oppose that most faithful saying, Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed (1 Cor. 7:27)? Or when did charity urge to scandal, who at the scandals of all shows herself burning with regret? He, then, the most wicked one, opposed to charity by envy, and to truth by falsehood, mixing falsehood and gall with the true honey, promises doubtful things as certain, and gives out that true things are false, not that he may give you what you vainly hope for, but that he may take away what you are profitably holding now. He prowls around and seeks how he may take away from the flock the care of the pastor, to make a prey of it when there is none to defend it from his attacks; and, besides this, to bring down upon the pastor that terrible rebuke, Woe to him by whom scandal cometh (S. Matt, 18:7). But I have full confidence in the wisdom given to you by God, that by no cunning devices of the wicked one you will be seduced or made to renounce certain good, and for the hope of uncertain advantage to incur certain evil.

LETTER LXXXIII. (Circa A.D. 1129.)

TO SIMON, ABBOT OF S. NICHOLAS

Bernard consoles him under the persecution of which he is the object. The most pious endeavours do not always have the desired success. What line of conduct ought to be followed towards his inferiors by a prelate who is desirous of stricter discipline.

1. I have learned with much pain by your letter the persecution that you are enduring for the sake of righteousness, and although the consolation given you by Christ in the promise of His kingdom may suffice amply for you, none the less is it my duty to render you both all the consolation that is in my power, and sound and faithful advice as far as I am able. For who can see without anxiety Peter stretching his arms in the midst of the billows?—or hear without grief the dove of Christ not singing, but groaning as if she said, How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land? (Ps. 137:4). Who, I say, can without tears look upon the tears of Christ Himself, who from the bottom of the abyss lifts now His eyes unto the hills to see from whence cometh His help? But we to whom in your humility you say that you are looking, are not mountains of help, but are ourselves struggling with laborious endeavours in this vale of tears against the snares of a resisting enemy, and the violence of worldly malice, and with you we cry out, Our help is from the Lord, who made Heaven and earth (Ps. 121:2).

2. All those, indeed, who wish to live piously in Christ suffer persecution (2

Tim. 3:12). The intention to live piously is never wanting to them, but it is not always possible to carry it perfectly out, for just as it is the mark of the wicked constantly to struggle against the pious designs of the good; so it is not a reproach to the piety [of the latter], even although they are frequently unable to perfect their just and holy desires, because they are few against many opposers. Thus Aaron yielded against his will to the impious clamours of the riotous people (Exod. 32). So Samuel unwillingly anointed Saul, constrained by the too eager desires of the same people for a king (1 Sam. 10). So David, when he wished to build a Temple, yet because of the numerous wars which that valorous man had constantly to sustain against enemies who molested him, he was forbidden to do what he piously proposed (2 Sam. 7). Similarly, venerable father, I counsel you, without prejudice to the better advice of wiser persons, so to soften, for the present only, the rigour of your purpose of reform, and that of those who share it with you, that you may not be unmindful of the salvation of the weaker brethren. Those, indeed, over whom you have consented to preside in that Order of Cluny ought to be invited to a stricter life, but they ought not to be obliged to embrace it against their will. I believe that those who do desire to live more strictly ought to be persuaded either to bear with the weaker out of charity as far as they can without sin, or permitted to preserve the customs which they desire in the monastery itself, if that may be done without scandal to either party; or at least that they should be set free from the Order to associate themselves where it may seem good with other brothers who live according to their proposal.

LETTER LXXXIV

TO THE SAME

He sends back an erring monk, but advises that he should be treated more gently and kindly after his return.

In the first place, please to notice that your wandering sheep has been detained by us against our custom, not for ourselves, but for his own sake, and for you; not without a good result, as you see, since we have succeeded by such treatment, and by salutary counsels, in satisfying his desire for a stricter life, and in giving you at the same time full satisfaction, by his return to you with his own assent.

I say this to you not to show you our kindly feeling towards you, which I could never sufficiently show, but to convince you of the truth of what I have

already said to you, if I remember rightly, that the trial of a Rule somewhat more strict often suffices to calm unquiet spirits who are not content with the kind of life that they are living. You have written to say that you wish to have my advice on the subject of this very brother who is now reconciled to you; but I have thought it now unnecessary to give it, now that he has returned to you with the intention not of extorting his own will from you, but of doing yours, as it is right he should. I beg you on his behalf, and with him, kindly to soften the difficulty of his first return, which he greatly fears, and to treat him with greater kindness and condescension than is usual with other fugitives, because, although the circumstances are similar to these, yet the cause of his conduct was different, and should justify different treatment. It is evident that there is a great distinction between one who quits his monastery from fear and dislike of the religious state, and one who quits it to go to another from love of his vocation and desire to practise it better.

TO WILLIAM, ABBOT OF S. THIERRY

Here is inserted in some editions a Letter of S. BERNARD, which we have prefixed as a preface to the Apology of Bernard, addressed to the same WILLIAM.

LETTER LXXXV. (Circa A.D. 1125.)

TO THE SAME WILLIAM

Bernard gently reproaches him for complaining that a sufficient return was not made to him by Bernard in offices of friendship.

To Dom Abbot WILLIAM, Brother BERNARD wishes health and the charity which comes of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned.

1. If no one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him (1 Cor. 2:11), if man sees only the face, while God reads the heart, I wonder, I cannot sufficiently wonder how and by what means you have been able to measure and distinguish between your affection for me and mine for you, so that you can judge, not only of the feelings of your own heart, but also of that of another person. It seems to be the error of the human mind, not only to think good evil and evil good, or true things false and conversely, but also to regard sure things as doubtful and doubtful things as sure. Perhaps it is true what you say, that you are loved less by me than you love me; but I am quite sure of this, that you can have no certainty about it. How, then, do you affirm as certain what

you cannot possibly have any certainty of? Wonderful! Paul did not trust himself to his own judgment, saying, I judge not my own self (1 Cor. 4:3). Peter mourned for the presumption with which he had deceived himself, when he said of himself, Though I should die with Thee I will not deny Thee (S. Matt. 26:35). The disciples, not trusting their own consciences, replied one after the other concerning the denial of the Lord, Is it I, Lord? (S. Matt. 26:22). David confesses his own ignorance of himself in his prayer, Remember not my sins of ignorance (Ps. 25:7, VULG.). But you, with marvellous confidence, declare so positively, not only about your own heart, but mine, "Though I love more, I am loved less."

2. These were, in fact, your words. I could wish they had not been, because I do not know whether they are true. But if you know, how do you know? How, I repeat, have you made proof that I am more loved by you than you by me? Is it from what you have added in your letters, that those who go and come between our houses never bring you a pledge of regard and affection from me? But what pledge, what proof of love do you require from me? Is this the trouble that disturbs you, that to none of your many letters to me have I ever replied? But how could I think that the ripeness of your wisdom could take any pleasure in the scribblings of my inexperience? For I knew who said, My little children, let us not love in word nor by tongue, but in deed and in truth (1 S. John 3:18). When have you ever had need of my help and it has failed you? O, Thou who searchest the hearts and the reins! who alone, as the Sun of Righteousness, lightenest the hearts of Thy servants with the differing rays of Thy grace; Thou knowest I feel that I love him by Thy gift, and because he merits it; but how much I love him Thou knowest and I do not. Thou, O Lord, who hast given the love that we have, I for him or he for me, knowest how much Thou hast given. And by what right does any of us, to whom Thou hast not revealed it, dare to say, "I love more, I am loved less," unless he already sees his light in Thy light; that is, he recognizes in the light of Thy truth how bright the fire of charity may be?

3. In the meantime I am content, O Lord, to see my own darkness in Thy light, until Thou shalt visit me sitting in the darkness and the shadow of death; and by Thee the thoughts of men's hearts shall be revealed and the secret things of darkness made manifest, and the shadows being dissipated, nothing but light shall remain in Thy light. I feel, indeed, that, by Thy gift, I love him; but I do not yet see in Thy light whether I love him sufficiently. Nor do I yet know if I have reached that degree of affection, than which there can be none greater, that one

should lay down his life for his friends. For who will boast that his heart is pure, or that it is perfect? O, Lord, who hast lighted in my soul a lamp by whose light I see and shudder at my own darkness, my God! enlighten also that very darkness, that I may see and rejoice in my affections perfectly regulated within me, that I may know and love what ought to be loved, and to the right degree and for the right reason. May I not desire to be loved except in Thee, and no more than I ought to be loved. Woe to me also if (which I greatly fear) either I was more loved by him than I deserved, or he less loved by me than he was worthy to be. Nevertheless, if those who are the better ought to be loved the more (for those are the better who love the more), what else shall I say than that I do not doubt that I love him more than myself, whom I know to be better than myself; but I confess at the same time that I love him less than I ought to do, because I have less capability of doing so.

4. But, my father, the greater is your love, the less ought you to despise the imperfection of mine, because although you love more, having greater capability, yet you do not love more than your capacity enables you. It is thus with me, although I love you less than I ought, yet I love you as much as my capacity permits, and I can only do what I have received the capacity of doing. Draw me, then, in your train that I may reach unto you, and with you, receiving capacity more fully, may love more abundantly. Why, then, do you endeavour that I should attain and complain that I am not able to do so, since you have succeeded as you see and may dispose of me as you please, but such as I am, not such as you hoped to find me? Indeed, you see in me something, I know not what, which I have not, and pursue as me what is not me. Therefore you do not attain it, because I am insufficient for this, and, as you rightly complain in your letter, it is not I that fail you, but God in me. Now, if all this verbiage pleases you that I have ventured upon here, tell me, and I will repeat it, since in obeying you I shall not fear the reproach of presumption. The little Preface which you have ordered to be sent to you I have not now at hand, nor did I think it necessary as yet to draw it up. I pray that He who has given you to will may in His good pleasure accomplish to you and to your friends whatsoever you will rightly, my pious and most reverend father, who art fully worthy of all my regard.

LETTER LXXXVI. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard sends back to him to be severely reprimanded a fugitive monk. He persuades William, who was meditating a change of state or retiring into private life, to persevere.

To his friend, Brother BERNARD, of Clairvaux, all that a friend can wish for a friend.

1. You have given me this formula of salutation when you wrote, “to his friend all that a friend can wish.” Receive what is thine own, and perceive that the assumption of it is a proof that we are of one mind, for my heart is not distant from him with whom I have language in common. I must now reply briefly to your letter, because of the time: for when it arrived the festival of the Nativity of our Lady had dawned; and being obliged to devote myself entirely to its solemnities, I had no leisure to think of anything else. Your messenger also was anxious to be gone; scarcely would he stay even until to-morrow morning that I might write to you these few words after all the Offices of the festival. I send back to you a fugitive brother after having subjected him to severe reprimand suited to his hard heart. It seemed to me that there was nothing better to do than to send him back to the place whence he had fled, since I ought not, according to our rules, to detain any monk in the house without the consent of his abbot. You ought to reprove him very severely also, and press him to make humble satisfaction and then comfort him a little by a letter from yourself addressed to his abbot on his behalf.

2. Concerning my state of health, I am not able to reply very precisely to your inquiry except that I continue, as in the past, to be weak and ailing, neither much better nor much worse. If I have not sent the person whom I had thought of sending, it is only because I feel much more the scandal to many souls than the danger of one body. Not to pass over any of the matters of which you speak to me, I come to yourself. You wrote that you wished to know what I desired you to do (as if I were aware of all that concerned you). But this plan, if I should say what I think, is one that neither I could counsel nor you carry out. I wish, indeed, for you what, as I have long known, you wish for yourself. But putting on one side, as is right, both your will and mine, I think more of what God wills for you, and, to my mind, it is both safer for me to advise you to that, and much more advantageous for you to do it. My advice is, then, that you continue to hold your present charge, to remain where you are, and study to profit those over whom you are set, nor flee from the cares of office while you are able to be of use, because woe to you if you are over the flock and do not profit them; but deeper woe still if, because you fear the cares of office, you abandon the opportunity of

usefulness.

LETTER LXXXVII. (Circa A.D. 1126.)

TO OGER, REGULAR CANON

Bernard blames him for his resignation of his pastoral charge, although made from the love of a calm and pious life. None the less, he instructs him how, after becoming a private person, he ought to live in community.

To Brother OGER, the Canon, Brother BERNARD, monk but sinner, wishes that he may walk worthily of God even to the end, and embraces him with the fullest affection.

1. If I seem to have been too slow in replying to your letter, ascribe it to my not having had an opportunity to send to you. For what you now read was written long since, but, as I have said, though written without delay, was delayed for want of a bearer. I have read in your letter that you have laid down with regret the burden of your pastoral charge, permission having been obtained with great difficulty, or rather, extorted by your importunity, from your Bishop; and only on the condition that you should remain under his authority, though fixing yourself elsewhere. But this not being satisfactory to you, you appealed to the Archbishop, and, obtaining the relaxation of this condition, you have returned to your former house and put yourself under your original abbot. Now you ask to be advised by me as to how you ought to live henceforth. An able teacher, indeed, and incomparable master am I! And when I shall have begun to teach what I do not know myself, it will soon be discovered that I know nothing. You act, in consulting me, as a sheep who seeks wool from a goat, a mill expecting water from an oven, a wise man expecting sound counsel from a fool. Besides this, you heap upon me, from one end of your letter to the other, complimentary speeches, and attribute to me excellences of which I am not conscious; and as I ascribe them to your kind feelings, so I forgive them to your ignorance. For you look upon the countenance, but God upon the heart; and if I examine myself with attention under His awful gaze, I find that I know myself much better than you know me, since I am much less far from myself than you are. Therefore I give greater credence to that which I see in myself than to what you suppose, without seeing, to be in me. Nevertheless, if you may have heard from me anything that is profitable to you, give thanks to God, in whose hand I am and all my words.

2. You explain to me also for what reason you have not followed my advice,

not only not to allow yourself to be discouraged or overcome by despondency, but to bear patiently the burden laid upon you, which once undertaken you were not at liberty to lay down; and I accept your explanations. I am well aware, indeed, of the infertility of my wisdom, and I always hold myself in suspicion for rashness and inexperience, so that I ought not to take it ill, nor do I, when the course which I approve is not taken; and I wish, on the contrary, that action should be taken on better advice than mine. As often as my opinion is chosen and followed I feel myself weighed down, I confess it, with responsibility, and await with inquietude, never with confidence, the issue of the matter. Yet it is for you to see if you have acted wisely in not following my advice about this thing; it must be decided also by those wiser persons than I, on whose authority you have relied, whether you have done according to reason. They will tell you, I say, whether it is lawful for a Christian man to lay down the burden of obedience before his death, when Christ was made obedient to the Father even unto death. You will reply, “I have acted by license, asked and received from the Bishop.” True, you have, indeed, asked for license, but in a manner you ought not to have done, and, therefore, have rather extorted than asked it. But an extorted or compelled license should rather be called violence. What, therefore, the Bishop did unwillingly, when overcome by your importunity, was not to release you from your obligations, but violently to break them.

3. You may indeed be congratulated, since you are thus exonerated; but I fear lest you have, as much as lieth in you, taken from the glory of God, whose will you, beyond doubt, resist in casting yourself down from the post to which He had advanced you. Perhaps you excuse yourself by pleading the necessity of religious poverty; but it is necessity that brings the crown, in rendering achievements difficult and almost impossible; for all things are possible to him who has faith. But answer to me what is most true, that you have consulted your own quiet, rather than the advantage of others. Nor is this strange. I confess that I, too, am pleased that quiet should delight you, if only it does not delight you too much. For that, even although a great thing, which pleases us to such a degree that we wish to bring it about, even although by wrong means, pleases us too much; and because it cannot be brought about by right means, it ceases to be good. For if you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned (Gen. 4:7, lxx). Either, therefore, you ought not to have accepted the cure of the Lord’s flock, or, having accepted it, ought not to have relinquished it, according to those words: Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed (1 Cor. 7:27).

4. But to what end do I strive in these arguments? To persuade you to take

your charge again? You cannot, since it is no longer vacant. Or to drive you to despair by fixing upon you the blame of a fault which you are no longer able to repair? By no means; I wish only that you should not neglect the fault you have committed, as if it were nothing or nothing much, but that you should rather repent of it with fear and trembling, as it is written: Happy is the man that feareth alway (Prov. 28:14). But the fear which I wish to inspire is not that which falls into the nets of desperation, but which brings to us the hope of blessedness. There is, indeed, a fear, useless, gloomy, and cruel, which does not seek pardon, and, therefore, does not obtain it. There is also a fear, pious, humble, and fruitful, which easily obtains mercy for a sinner, however great be his offence. Such a fear produces, nourishes, and preserves not only humility, but also sweetness, patience, and forbearance. Whom does not so blameless an offspring delight? But of the other fear the miserable progeny is obstinacy, excessive sorrow, rancour, horror, contempt, and desperation. I have wished to recall you to the remembrance of your fault, but only in order to awaken in you, not the fear which produces desperation, but that which produces hope; being afraid lest you should not have any fear at all, or should have too little.

5. There is something, however, which I fear still more for you, namely, that which is written of certain sinners, that they rejoice in having done evil and delight in wicked actions (Prov. 2:14); that you should be deceived, and not only think that what you have done is not wrong, but also (which, God forbid) glory in your heart, thinking that you have done something great, and which is usually done by few, in renouncing voluntarily the power to command others, and, despising rule, have preferred to be subjected again to a ruler. That would be a false humility, causing real pride in the heart of him that should think such thoughts. For what can be more proud than to ascribe to spontaneous and, as it were, free choice that which the force of necessity or faint-hearted weakness obliges us to do? But if you have not been forced by necessity or exhausted by labour, but have done it willingly, there is nothing more proud than this; for you have put your own will before that of God, you have chosen to taste the sweetness of repose rather than serve diligently in the work to which He has set you. If, then, you have not only despised God, but glory in utterly contemning Him, your glorying is not good. Beware of boastfulness and self-satisfaction; more useful for you were it to be always in care, always humbly trembling, not, as I have said, with the fear that provokes wrath, but with that which softens it.

6. If that horrible fear ever knocks at the door of your soul to terrify it, and to suggest that your service to God cannot be accepted, and that your penitence is

unfruitful because that in which God has been offended by you cannot be amended; do not receive it even for a moment, but reply with confidence: I have done wrong indeed, but it is done and cannot be undone. Who knows if God has foreseen that good should come to me out of it, and that He who is good has willed to do me good even from my evil? Let Him then punish the evil which I have done, but let the good which He had provided for remain. The goodness of God knew how to use our ill-governed wills and actions to the beauty of the order which He established, and often, in His goodness, even to our benefit. O indulgent bounty of Divine love towards the sons of Adam! which does not cease to load us with benefits, not only where no merit was found, but often even where entire demerit was seen. But let us return to you. According to the two kinds of fear which are distinguished above, I wish you to fear, and yet not to fear; to presume, and yet not to presume. To feel that you may repent, not to feel that you may have confidence; and again, to have confidence that you may not distrust, and not to be confident that you may not grow inactive.

7. You perceive, brother, how much confidence I have in you, since I permit myself to blame you so sharply, to judge and disapprove so freely what you have done, when perhaps you have had better reasons for doing it than have hitherto been made known to me. For you have not perhaps wished to state those reasons in your letters, by which your action might well be excused, either through your humility or through want of space. Leaving, then, undecided for the present my opinion about any part of the matter with which I may not be fully acquainted, one thing that you have done I unreservedly praise, namely, that when you had laid down the yoke of ruling, yet without a yoke you were not willing to continue, but took up again a discipline to which you were attached, without being ashamed to become a simple disciple when you had borne the title of master. For you were able, when freed from your pastoral charge, to remain under your own authority, since in becoming abbot you were released from the obedience owed to your former abbot. But you did not wish to be under no authority but your own, and as you had declined to rule over others, so you shrunk from rule over yourself; and inasmuch as you thought yourself not fit to be the master of others, so also you did not trust yourself to be your own master, and in your distrust of yourself, even for your own guidance, would not be your own disciple. And rightly. For he who makes himself his own master, subjects himself to a fool as master. I know not what others may think of this; as for me, I have had experience of what I say, that it is far more easy and safe to govern many others than my own single self. It was, therefore, a proof of prudent

humility and of humble prudence that, by no means believing that you were sufficient for your own salvation, you proposed to live henceforth by the judgment of another person.

8. I praise you also that you did not seek out another master nor another place, but returned to the cloister whence you had gone forth, and to the master under whom you had made progress in good. It was very right that the house which had nurtured you, but had sent you forth through brotherly charity, should receive you when freed from your charge, rather than that another house should have in its place the joy of possessing you. As, however, you have not obtained the sanction of the Bishop for what you have done, do not be negligent in seeking it, but either yourself, or through some third person, be prompt to give him satisfaction as far as is in your power. After this, study to lead a simple life among your brethren, devoted to God, submissive to your superior, respectful towards the older monks, and obliging towards the younger. Be profitable in word, humble in heart, pleasing to the Angels, courteous to all. But beware of thinking that you have a right to be honoured more than others because you were once placed in a position of dignity, but show yourself as one among the rest, only more humble than all. For it is not becoming that you should be honoured on account of a post, the labour of which you have shunned.

9. Another danger also may arise from this of which I wish to forewarn you and strengthen you against it. For as we are very changeable, and it frequently happens that what we wished for yesterday to-day we refuse, and what we shrink from to-day to-morrow we desire, so it may happen sometime by the temptation of the devil that, from the remembrance of the honour you have resigned, a selfish desire may knock at the door of your heart, and you may begin weakly to covet what you bravely resigned. The recollection of things which before were bitter to you will then be sweet; the dignity of the position, the care of the house, and the administration of its property, the respectful obedience of domestics, the freedom of your own actions, the power over others; it may be as much a source of regret to you that you have given up these things, as it was before of weariness to bear them. If you yield even for an hour (which may God forbid) to this most injurious temptation you will suffer great loss to your spiritual life.

10. This is the whole of the wisdom of that most accomplished and eloquent Doctor, by whom you have wished to be taught from such a distance. This is the eulogy, desired and waited for, which you have been so eager to hear. This is the sum of all my wisdom. Do not look for any other great thing from me; you have heard all. What can you require more? The fountain is drained, and would you

seek water from the dry sand? I have sent you, according to the example of that widow in the Gospel, out of my poverty all that I had. Why art thou ashamed, and why does thy countenance fall? You have obliged me. You have asked for a discourse; a discourse you have. A discourse, I say, long enough, indeed, but saying nothing; full of words, empty of meaning. Such is the discourse which ought to be received by you with charity, as you have requested it, but which only seems to reveal my lack of knowledge. Perhaps it would not be impossible for me to find excuses for it. Thus I might say that I have dictated it while labouring under a tertian fever, as also while occupied with the cares of my office, while yet it is written, Write at leisure of wisdom (founded on Ecclus. 38:25). I should rightly put these reasons forward if I had adventured upon some great and laborious work. But now, in such a brief treatise that my engagements afford me no excuse, I can allege nothing, as I have often said already, but the insufficiency of my knowledge.

11. But I console myself in my mortification by considering that if I had not done as you requested, if I had not sent what you hoped for, you would not have been quite sure of my good will to-day. I hope that my good intention will content you when you see that the power to do more was wanting to me. And although my Letter be without utility to you, it will profit me in promoting humility. Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise (Prov. 17:28), for that he holds his peace is counted to him as the reserve of humility, not as want of sense. If, then, I had still kept silence, I should have had the benefit of a similar judgment, and have been called wise without being so. But now some will ridicule me as a man of little wisdom, some laugh at me as ignorant, and others indignantly accuse me of presumption. Do not think that all this serves little to the profit of religion, since humility, which humiliation teaches us to practise, is the foundation of the entire spiritual fabric. Thus humiliation is the way to humility, as patience to peace, as reading is to knowledge. If you long for the virtue of humility, you must not flee from the way of humiliation. For if you do not allow yourself to be humiliated, you cannot attain to humility. It is a benefit to me, therefore, that my ignorance should be made known, and that I should be rightly put to confusion by those who are instructed, since I have often been undeservedly praised by those who could not form a correct opinion. The fear of the Apostle makes me fear when he says, I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me (2 Cor. 12:6). How finely he has said I spare [restrain] you. The arrogant, the proud, the desirous of vain glory, the boaster of his own deeds, who either takes merit to

himself for what he has done, or even claims what he has not done, he does not restrain himself. He alone who is truly humble, he restrains his own soul, who is even afraid to let the excellency that is in him be known, that he may not be thought to be what he is not.

12. Great in truth is the danger, that anyone should speak of us above what we feel our desert to be. Who shall give me to be as deservedly humiliated among men for well-founded reasons as I have been undeservedly praised for ill-founded ones? I should, then, be able to take to myself the word of the Prophet: After having been exalted I have been cast down and filled with confusion (Ps. 88:15, VULG.), and this, I will play and will be yet more vile (2 Sam. 6:21, 22). Yes, I will play this foolish game that I may be ridiculed. It is a good folly, at which Michal is angry and God is pleased. A good folly which affords a ridiculous spectacle, indeed, to men, but to angels an admirable one. Yes, I repeat; an excellent folly, by which we are exposed to disgrace from the rich and disdain from the proud. For, in truth, what do we appear to people of the world to do except indulge in folly, since what they seek with eagerness in this world we, on the contrary, shun, and what they avoid we eagerly seek? Upon the eyes of all we produce the effect of jugglers and tumblers, who stand or walk on their hands, contrary to human nature, with their heads downward and feet in the air. But our foolish game has nothing boyish in it, nothing of the spectacle at the theatre, which represents low actions, and with effeminate and corrupt gestures and bendings provoke the passions, but it is cheerful, honourable, grave, decent, and capable of delighting even the celestial beings who gaze upon it. This it was he was engaged in, who said, We are made a spectacle to Angels and to men (1 Cor. 4:9). May it be ours also in this meantime, that we may be ridiculed, confounded, humiliated, until He shall come who puts down the powerful and exalts the humble, to fill us with joy and glory, and to raise us up for ever and ever.

LETTER LXXXVIII. (Circa A.D. 1127.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard, being hindered by many occupations, has not yet been able to find time to satisfy his wishes, and is obliged even to write to him very briefly. He forbids a certain one of his treatises to be made public unless it were read over and corrected.

1. I pass over now my want of experience, my humble profession, or rather

my profession of humility, nor do I shelter myself behind (I do not say my lowness, but, at least) my mediocrity of position or name, since whatever I should allege of that kind you would declare to be rather a pretext for delay than a reasonable excuse. It seems to me that you interpret my shyness and modesty at your will, now as indiscretion, now as false humility, and now as real pride. Of these reasons, therefore, since they would appear doubtful to you, I say nothing. Only I wish that your friendship should be fully convinced of one thing, that since the departure of your messenger (not the one who carries this letter, but the other) left me I have not had a single instant of leisure to do what you asked, so busy are my days and so short my nights. Even now your latest letter has found me so engrossed that it would take me too long to write to you the mere occupations, which would be my excuse with you. I have scarcely been able even to read your letter through, except during my dinner, for at that hour it was delivered to me, and scarcely have I been able to write back to you these few words hastily and, as it were, furtively. You will see that you must not complain of the brevity of my letter.

2. To speak the truth, my dear Oger, I am forced to be angry with all these cares, and that on your account, although in them, as my conscience bears witness, I desire to serve only charity, by the requirements of which, as I am debtor both to the wise and to the unwise, I have been made unable as yet to satisfy your wishes. What, then? Does Charity deny to you what you ask in the name of Charity? You have requested and begged, you have knocked at the door, and Charity has rendered your requests unavailing. Why are you angry with me? It is Charity whom you must be angry with, if you will and dare to be so, since it is she who is the cause that you have not obtained what you expected to have by her means. Already she is displeased at my long discourse, and is angry with you who have imposed it. Not that the ardour with which you do this is displeasing to her, since it is she which has inspired you with it, but she wishes that your zeal should be ruled according to knowledge, and that you should be careful not to hinder greater things for the sake of lesser. You see how unwillingly I am torn away from writing to you at greater length, since the pleasure of conversing with you, and the wish to satisfy you, make me troublesome to my mistress, Charity, who has long since been bidding me to make an end, and I am not yet silent. How wide is the matter for reply in your letter, if it were permissible to do as you would wish, and as I, too, should, perhaps, be well enough pleased to do! But she who requires otherwise of me is mistress, or rather is the Master. For God is charity (1 S. John 4:16), and it is

very evident that such is her authority, that I ought to obey her rather than either myself or you. And since it is incumbent on Charity to obey God rather than men, I unwillingly, and with grief, put off for a time the doing what you ask, not refuse altogether to do it, and I fear in endeavouring humbly to respond to your desires to appear to wish, under the pretext of a pretended humility, which is only pure pride, to revolt here below, I, who am only a miserable worm of the earth, against the strength of that power which, as you truly declare, rules even the Angels in heaven.

3. As for the little treatise which you ask for, I had asked for it back again from the person to whom I had lent it, even before your messenger came to me, but I have not yet received it; but I will take care that at all events when you come here, if you are ever coming, you shall find it here, see and read it, but not transcribe it. For that other treatise which you mention that you have transcribed I had sent to you to be read, indeed, but not to be copied; and I do not know to what good purpose or for whose good you can have done it. In sending it to you I did not intend that the Abbot of S. Thierry should have it, and I had not bidden you to send it; but I am not displeased that you have done so. For why should I be afraid that my little book should pass under his eyes, under whose gaze I would willingly spread my whole soul if I were able? But, alas! why does the mention of so good a man present itself at such a time of hurried discourse, when it is not permitted to me to linger, as would be fitting, and converse with you about that excellent man, when I ought already to have come to the end of my letter? I entreat you to make an opportunity of going to see him, and do not give out my book to be read or copied until you shall have gone over the whole of it with him; read it then together and correct what in it needs correction, that every word in it may have the support of two witnesses. After that, I commit to the judgment of each of you whether it be expedient that it should be shown publicly, or only to a few persons, or to some particular person only, or not at all to anyone. And I make you judge equally if that little preface which you have fitted to the same out of fragments from other letters of mine should stand as it is, or whether another fitter one should be composed.

4. But I had almost forgotten that you complained at the beginning of your letter that I had accused you of falsehood. I do not clearly recollect whether I ever said that; but if I said anything like it (for I should prefer to think that I had forgotten rather than that your messenger had falsely reported) do not doubt that it was spoken in joke, and not seriously. Can I have even thought that you had used levity and were capable of trifling with your word? Far from me be such a

suspicion of you, who have from your youth been happy in bearing the yoke of truth, and when I find in you a gravity of character beyond your years. Nor am I so simple as to see a falsehood in a word artlessly spoken without duplicity of heart; nor so indifferent as to have forgotten either the project which you have long since formed or the obstacle which hinders its realization.

LETTER LXXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1127.)

TO THE SAME

He excuses the brevity of his letter on the ground that Lent is a time of silence; and also that on account of his profession and his ignorance he does not dare to assume the function of teaching.

1. You will, perhaps be angry, or, to speak more gently, will wonder that in place of a longer letter which you had hoped for from me you receive this brief note. But remember what says the wise man, that there is a time for all things under the heaven; both a time to speak and a time to keep silence (Eccles. 3:1–7). But when shall silence have its time, if our chatter shall occupy even these sacred days of Lent? Correspondence is more absorbing than conversation, inasmuch as it is more laborious; since when in each other's presence we may say with little labour what we will, but when absent we require diligently to dictate in turn the words which we mutually seek, or which are sought from us. But while being absent from you I meditate, dictate or write down what you are in time to read, where, I pray you, is the silence and quiet of my retreat? But all these things, you say, you can do in silence; yet, if you think, you will not answer thus. For what a tumult there is in the mind of those who dictate, what a crowd of sentiments, variety of expressions, diversity of senses jostle; how frequently one rejects that word which presents itself and seeks another which still escapes; what close attention one gives to the consecutiveness of the line of thought and the elegance of the expression! How it can be made most plain to the intellect, how it can be made most useful to the conscience, what, in short, shall be put before and what after for a particular reader, and many other things do those who are careful in their style, attend to most closely. And will you say that in this I shall have quiet; will you call this silence, even though the tongue be still?

2. Besides, it is not only the time, but also my profession and my insufficiency which prevent my undertaking what you desire, or being able to fulfil it. For it is not the profession of a monk, which I seem to be, or of a sinner, which I am, to

teach, but to mourn for sin. An unlearned person (as I truly confess myself to be) never acts more unlearnedly than when he presumes to teach what he knows not. Therefore, to teach is the business neither of the unlearned in his rashness, nor of the monk in his boldness, nor of the penitent in his distress. It is for this reason I have fled from the world and abide in solitude, and propose to myself with the prophet, to take heed to my ways that I offend not with my tongue (Ps. 39:2) since, according to the same prophet, A man full of words shall not prosper upon the earth (Ps. 140:11), and to another Scripture, Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21). But silence, says Isaiah, is the work of righteousness (Is. 32:17), and Jeremiah teaches us to wait in silence for the salvation of the Lord (Lam. 3:26). Thus to this pursuit and desire of righteousness, since righteousness is the mother, the nurse, and the guardian of all virtues, I would not seem entirely to deny what you have asked, and I invite and entreat you and all those who, like you, desire to make progress in virtue, if not by the teaching of my words, at least by the example of my silence, to learn from me to be silent, you who press me in your words to teach what I do not know.

3. But what am I doing? It will be wonderful if you do not smile, seeing with what a flood of words I condemn those who are too full of words, and while I desire to commend silence to you, I plead against silence by my loquacity. Our dear Guerric, concerning whose penitence and whose manner of life you wished to be assured, as far as I can judge from his actions, is walking worthy of the grace of God, and bringing forth works worthy of penitence. The little book which you ask of me I have not beside me just now. A certain friend of ours, with the same desire to read it as you, has kept it a long time, but not to frustrate altogether the desire of your piety, I send you another which I have just completed on the Glories of the Virgin Mother, which, as I have no other copy of it, I beg that you will return to me as soon as possible, or bring it with you if you will be coming here soon.

LETTER XC. (Circa A.D. 1127.)

TO THE SAME

A sincere love has no need of lengthy letters, or of many words. Bernard has been in a state of health almost despaired of, but is now recovering.

1. I have sent you a short letter in reply to a short one from you. You have given me an example of brevity, and I willingly follow it. And truly what need have true and lasting friendships, as you truly say, of exchanging empty and

fugitive words? However great be the variety of quotations and verses, and the multiplicity of the phrases by which you have endeavoured to display or to prove your friendship for me, I feel more certain of your affection than I do that you have succeeded in expressing it, and you will not be wrong if you think the same in respect to me. When your letter came into my hands you were present in my heart, and I am quite convinced that it will be the same for me when you receive my letter, and that when you read it I shall not be absent. It is a labour for each of us to scribble to the other, and for our messengers a fatigue to carry our letters from the one to the other, but the heart feels neither labour nor fatigue in loving. Let those things cease, then, which without labour cannot be carried on, and let us practise only that which, the more earnestly it is done, seems to cost the less labour. Let our minds, I say, rest from dictating, our lips from conversing, our fingers from writing, our messengers from running to and fro. But let not our hearts rest from meditating day and night on the law of the Lord, which is the law of love. The more we cease to be occupied in doing this the less quiet shall we enjoy, and the more engrossed we are in it, so much the more calm and repose we shall feel from it. Let us love and be loved, striving to benefit ourselves in the other, and the other in ourselves. For those whom we love, on those do we rely, as those who love us rely in turn on us. Thus to love in God is to love charity, and therefore it is to labour for charity, to strive to be loved for the sake of God.

2. But what am I doing? I promised brevity, and I am sliding into prolixity. If you desire news of Brother Guerric, or rather since you do so, he so runs not as uncertainly, so fights not as one that beateth the air. But since he knows that salvation depends not on him who fights, nor on him who runs, but on God, who shows mercy, he begs that he may have the help of your prayers for him, so that He who has already granted to him both to fight and to run, may grant also to overcome and to attain. Salute for me with my heart and by your mouth your abbot, who is most dear to me, not only on your account, but also because of his high character. It will be most agreeable to me to see him at the time and place which you have promised. I do not wish to leave you ignorant that the hand of God has for a little while been laid heavily upon me. It seemed that I had been stricken to the fall, that the axe had been laid to the root of the barren tree of my body, and I feared that I might be instantly cut down; but lo! by your prayers and those of my other friends, the good Lord has spared me this time also, yet in the hope that I shall bear good fruits in the future.

LETTER XCI. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

TO THE ABBOTS ASSEMBLED AT SOISSONS

Bernard urges the abbots zealously to perform the duty for which they had met. He recommends to them a great desire of spiritual progress, and begs them not to be delayed in their work if lukewarm and lax persons should perhaps murmur.

To the Reverend Abbots met in the name of the Lord in Chapter at Soissons, brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, the servant of their Holiness, health and prayer that they may see, establish, and observe the things which are right.

1. I greatly regret that my occupations prevent me from being present at your meeting—at least, in body. For neither distance nor a crowd of cares are able to banish my spirit, which prays for you, feels with you, and rests among you. No, I repeat, I cannot be wanting in the assembly of the saints, nor can distance of place nor absence of body altogether separate me from the congregation and the counsels of the righteous, in which, not the traditions of men are obstinately upheld or superstitiously observed; but diligent and humble inquiry is made what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2). All my desires carry me where you are; I am with you by devotion, by friendship, by similarity of sentiment, and partaking of your zeal.

2. That those who now applaud you may not hereafter ridicule you as having assembled to no purpose (which God forbid!), strive, I beseech you, to make your conduct holy and your resolutions good, for too good they cannot be. Grant that you may be too just or even too wise, yet it is plain that you cannot be good beyond measure. And indeed I read: Do not carry justice to excess (Eccles. 7:17, VULG.). I read: Be not wiser than is befitting (Rom. 12:3, VULG.). But is it ever said: Do not carry goodness to excess? or, Take care not to be too good? No one can be more good than it behoves him to be. Paul was a good man, and yet he was not at all content with his state; he reached forward gladly to the things that were before, forgetting those that were behind (Phil. 3:13), and striving to become continually better than himself. It is only God who does not desire to become better than He is, because that is not possible.

3. Let those depart both from me and from you who say: We do not desire to be better than our fathers; declaring themselves to be the sons of lukewarm and lax persons, whose memory is in execration, since they have eaten sour grapes, and their children’s teeth are set on edge. Or if they pretend that their fathers were holy men, whose memory is blessed, let them imitate their sanctity, and not defend, as laws instituted by them, the indulgences and dispensations which they

have merely endured. Although holy Elias says, I am not better than my fathers (1 Kings 19:4), yet he has not said that he did not wish to be. Jacob saw upon the ladder Angels ascending and descending (Gen. 28:12); but was any one of them either sitting, or standing still? It was not for angels to stand still on the uncertain rounds of a frail ladder; nor can anything remain fixed in the same condition during the uncertain period of this mortal life. Here have we no continuing city; nor do we yet possess, but always seek for, that which is to come. Of necessity you either ascend or descend, and if you try to stand still you cannot but fall. It may be held as certain that the man is not good at all who does not wish to be better; and where you begin not to care to make advance in goodness there also you leave off being good.

4. Let those depart both from me and from you who call good evil and evil good. If they call the pursuit of righteousness evil, what good thing will be good in their eyes? The Lord once spoke a single word, and the Pharisees were scandalized (S. Matt. 15:12). But now these new Pharisees are scandalized not even at a word, but at silence. You plainly see then that they seek only the occasion to attack you. But leave them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. Take thought for the salvation of the little ones, not of the murmurs of the evil-disposed. Why do you so much fear to give scandal to those who are not to be cured unless you become sick with them? It is not even desirable to wait to see whether your resolutions are pleasing to all of you in all respects, otherwise you will determine upon little or no good. You ought to consult not the views, but the needs of all; and faithfully to draw them towards God, even although they be unwilling, rather than abandon them to the desires of their heart. I commend myself to your holy prayers.

LETTER XCII. (A.D. 1132.)

TO HENRY, KING OF ENGLAND

He asks the King’s favour to the monks sent by him to construct a monastery.

To the illustrious HENRY, King of England, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, that he may faithfully serve and humbly obey the King of Heaven in his earthly kingdom.

There is in your land a property belonging to your Lord and mine, for which He preferred to die rather than it should be lost. This I have formed a plan for recovering, and am sending a party of my brave followers to seek, recover, and hold it with strong hand, if this does not displease you. And these scouts whom

you see before you I have sent beforehand on this business to investigate wisely the state of things, and bring me faithful word again. Be so kind as to assist them as messengers of your Lord, and in their persons fulfil your feudal duty to Him. I pray Him to render you, in return, happy and illustrious, to His honour, and to the salvation of your soul, to the safety and peace of your country, and to continue to you happiness and contentment to the end of your days.

LETTER XCIII. (Circa A.D. 1132.)

TO HENRY, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

Bernard salutes him very respectfully.

To the very illustrious Lord HENRY, by the Grace of God Bishop of Winchester, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health in our Lord.

It is with great joy that I have learned from the report of many persons that so humble a person as myself has found favour with your Highness. I am not worthy of it, but I am not ungrateful for it. I return you, therefore, thanks for your goodness; a very unworthy return, but all that I am able to make. I do not fear but that you will receive the humble return that I make, since you have been so kind as to forestall me by your affection and the honour that you have done to me; but I defer writing more until I shall know by some token from your hand, if you think fit to send one, how you receive these few words. You may easily confide your reply, in writing, or by word of mouth if it shall so please you, to Abbot Oger, who is charged to convey to you this note. I beg your Excellency also to be so good as to honour that Religious with your esteem and confidence, inasmuch as he is a man commendable for his honour, knowledge, and piety.

LETTER XCIV. (A.D. 1132.)

TO THE ABBOT OF A CERTAIN MONASTERY AT YORK, FROM WHICH THE PRIOR HAD DEPARTED, TAKING SEVERAL RELIGIOUS WITH HIM

1. You write to me from beyond the sea to ask of me advice which I should have preferred that you had sought from some other. I am held between two difficulties, for if I do not reply to you, you may take my silence for a sign of contempt; but if I do reply I cannot avoid danger, since whatever I reply I must of necessity either give scandal to some one or give to some other a security which they ought not to have, or at all events more than they ought to have. That your brethren have departed from you was not with the knowledge nor by the

advice or persuasion of me or of my brethren. But I incline to believe that it was of God, since their purpose could not be shaken by all your efforts; and that the brethren themselves thought this also who so earnestly sought my advice about themselves; their conscience troubling them, as I suppose, because they quitted you. Otherwise, if their conscience, like that of the Apostle, did not reproach them, their peace would not have been disturbed (Rom. 14:22). But what can I do that I may be hurtful to no one neither by my silence nor by my reply to the questions asked me? Thus, perhaps, I may relieve myself of the difficulty if I shall send those who question me to a person more learned, and whose authority is more reverend and sacred than mine. Pope S. Gregory says in his book on the Pastoral Rule, “Whosoever has proposed to himself a greater good does an unlawful thing in subordinating it to a lesser good.” And he proves this by a citation from the Gospel, saying, No one putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God (S. Luke 9:62); and he proceeds: “He who renounces a more perfect state which he has embraced, to follow another which is less so, is precisely the man who looks back” (Part iii. c. 28). The same Pope, in his third Homily on Ezekiel, adds: “There are people who taste virtue, set themselves to practise it, and while doing so contemplate undertaking actions still better; but afterwards drawing back, abandon those better things which they had proposed to themselves. They do not, it is true, leave off the good practices they had begun, but they fail to realize those better ones which they had meditated. To human judgment these seem to stand fast in the good work, but to the eyes of Almighty God they have fallen, and failed in what they contemplated.”

2. Here is a mirror. In it let your Religious consider, not the features of their faces, but the fact of their turning back. Here let them determine and distinguish their motives, their thoughts, accusing or excusing them with that sentence which the spiritual man passes who judges all things, and is himself judged by no one. I, indeed, cannot rashly determine whether the state which they have left or that which they have embraced was the greater or less, the higher or lower, the severer or the more lax. Let them judge according to this rule of S. Gregory. But to you, Reverend Father, I declare, with as much positive assurance as plain truth, that it is not at all desirable that you should set yourself to quench the Spirit. Hinder not him, it is said, who is able to do good, but if thou canst, do good also thyself (Prov. 3:27, VULG.). It more befits you to be proud of the good works of your sons, since a wise son is the glory of his father (Prov. 10:1). For the rest, let no one make it a cause of complaint against me that I have not

hidden in my heart the righteousness of God, unless, perhaps, I have spoken less of it than I ought, for the sake of avoiding scandal.

LETTER XCV. (A.D. 1132.)

TO THURSTAN, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Bernard praises his charity and beneficence towards the Religious.

To the very dear father and Reverend Lord THURSTAN, by the Grace of God Archbishop of York, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes the fullest health.

The general good report of men, as I have experienced, has said nothing in your favour which the splendour of your good works does not justify. Your actions, in fact, show that your high reputation, which fame had previously spread everywhere, was neither false nor ill-founded, but manifest and certain. Especially of late how brilliantly has your zeal for righteousness and your sacerdotal energy shone forth in the defence of the poor Religious who had no other helper. Once, indeed, the whole assembly of the saints used to venerate your works of mercy and alms deeds; but in doing so it narrated always what is common to you with very many, since whosoever possesses the goods of this world is bound to share them with the poor. But this is your episcopal task, this the noble proof of your paternal affection, this your truly divine fervour, the zeal which no doubt has inspired and aroused in you who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flaming fire. This, I say, belongs entirely to you. It is the ornament of your dignity, the badge of your office, the adornment of your crown. It is one thing to fill the belly of the hungry, and quite another thing to have a zeal for holy poverty. The one serves nature, the other grace. Thou shalt visit thy kind, He says, and thou shalt not sin (Job. 5:24, VULG.). Therefore he who nourishes the flesh of another sins not in so doing, but he who honours the sanctity of another does good to his own soul; therefore he says again, Keep your alms in your own hand until you shall find a righteous man to whom to give it. For what advantage? Because He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward (S. Matt. 10:41). Let us, then, discharge the debt that nature requires of us, that we may avoid sin; but let us be co-workers with grace, that we may merit to become sharers of it. It is this that I so admire in you, as I acknowledge that it was given to you from above. O, Father, truly reverend and to be regarded with the sincerest affection; the praise for what you have laid out of your temporal means to the relief of our necessities, will be blended with the praises of God for ever.

LETTER XCVI. (A.D. 1132.)

TO RICHARD, ABBOT OF FOUNTAINS, AND HIS COMPANIONS, WHO HAD PASSED OVER TO THE CISTERCIAN ORDER FROM ANOTHER

He praises them for the renewal of holy discipline.

How marvellous are those things which I have heard and learned, and which the two Geoffries have announced to me, that you have become newly fervent with the fire from on high, that from weakness you have become strong, that you have flourished again with new sanctity.

This is the finger of God secretly working, softly renewing, healthfully changing not, indeed, bad men into good, but making good men better. Who will grant unto me to cross over to you and see this great sight? For that progress in holiness is not less wonderful or less delightful than that conversion. It is much more easy, in fact, to find many men of the world converted to good than one Religious who is good becoming better than he is. The rarest bird in the world is the monk who ascends ever so little from the point which he has once reached in the religious life. Thus the spectacle which you present, dearest brethren, is the more rare and salutary, not only to men who desire greatly to be the helper of your sanctity, but it rightly rejoices the whole Church of God as well; since the rarer it is the more glorious it is also. For prudence made it a duty to you to pass beyond that mediocrity so dangerously near to defect, and to escape from that lukewarmness which provokes God to reject you; it was even a duty of conscience for you to do so, since you know that it is not safe for men who have embraced the holy Rule to halt before having attained the goal to which it leads. I am exceedingly grieved that I am obliged by the pressing obligations of the day and the haste of the messenger to express the fulness of my affection with a pen so brief, and to comprise the breadth of my kindness for you within the narrow limits of this billet. But if anything is wanting, brother Geoffrey will supply it by word of mouth.

LETTER XCVII. (A.D. 1132.)

TO DUKE CONRAD

Bernard urges upon him not to make war upon the Count of Geneva, lest he should draw upon himself the vengeance of God.

1. All power comes from Him, to whom the prophet says, Thine is the power, Thine the kingdom, O, Lord; Thou art over all nations (1 Chron. 29:11). Therefore I have thought it fit, O illustrious Prince, to warn your Excellency how

great reverence it behoves you to show to that terrible One, who takes away the life of princes themselves. The Count of Geneva, as I know from his own mouth, offers to do you justice with respect to all the causes of complaint which you declare you have against him. If, after this, you continue to invade the country of another, to destroy churches, to set houses on fire, to plunder the poor, to perpetrate homicides, and to pour out human blood, it is certain that you will arouse against you the stern anger of Him who is the Father of orphans and the judge of widows. And if He is angry with you, neither the number nor the bravery of your soldiers will profit you at all. The Almighty Lord of Sabaoth will give the victory to whom He pleases, whether it be by many or by few. He has made, when He saw fit, one soldier put to flight a thousand, and two ten thousand (Deut. 32:30).

2. The cry of the poor which has come to me has inspired me, a poor man, to use this language to your Greatness, knowing that it is more honourable and worthy of you to yield to the entreaties of the humble than to the threats of your enemies; not that I think your enemies more powerful than you, but that I know Almighty God is far more powerful than either, and that He resists the proud while he gives grace unto the humble. If I had been able I would have come unto your presence, noble Prince, to treat of this matter, but now I have sent to you, in my place, these of my brethren to obtain from your Highness, by their prayers united with mine, either a solid peace, if that be possible, or, at least, a truce while we endeavour to settle the conditions of a definitive peace, according to the will of God, and both to your honour and the safety of your country. Otherwise, if you neither accept the satisfaction offered you, nor deign to regard our entreaties, or rather do not give ear to the salutary advice which God gives you by me, let Him look upon it and judge. For I know, nor can I reflect upon it without trembling, that such great armies can hardly meet in battle without horrible carnage and slaughter of each side.

LETTER XCVIII

CONCERNING THE MACCABEES, BUT TO WHOM WRITTEN IS UNKNOWN

He replies to the question why the Church has decreed a festival to the Maccabees alone of all the righteous under the ancient law.

1. Fulk, Abbot of Epernay, had already written to ask me the same question as your charity has addressed to your humble servant by Brother Hescelin. I have put off replying to him, being desirous to find, if possible, some statement in the

Fathers about this which was asked, which I might send to him, rather than to reply by some new opinion of my own. But as I do not come upon one, in the meantime I reply to each of you with my thoughts upon the matter, on condition that if you discover anything better and more probable in your reading, conversation, or by your meditations, you will not omit to share it with me in turn. You ask, then, why it seemed good to the Fathers to decree that an annual commemoration, with veneration equal to our martyrs, should be solemnly made in the Church, by a certain peculiar privilege, to the Maccabees alone out of all the ancient saints? If I should say that having made proof of the same courage as those, they were worthy now of the same honours, that would, perhaps, answer the question why they were included, but not why they alone were; while it is quite evident that there were others amongst the ancients who suffered with equal zeal for righteousness, but yet have not attained to be reverenced with equal solemnities. If I reply that the latter have not received the same honours as our martyrs because, although their valour deserved it, the time when they lived deprived them of it, why was not the same consideration applied also to the Maccabees, if, indeed, they, too, on account of the era when they lived, did not at once enter into the light of Heaven, but descended into the darkness of Hades? For the Firstbegotten from the dead, He who opened to believers the kingdom of Heaven, the Lamb of the tribe of Judah, who opens and no more shuts, at Whose entrance with complete authority it was sung by the heavenly powers: Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in (Ps. 24:7),—He had not yet appeared. If on that account it appears unsuitable to commemorate with joy the passing away of those which was not a passage of glory and of joy, why was there an exception made for the Maccabees? Or if they obtained favour on account of the courage which they displayed, why was not the same favour extended to those others? Or ought it to be said, in order to explain this difference, that if the martyrs of the ancient law, as well as those of the new law, have suffered for the same cause of religion, yet they did not suffer in the same condition with those who have attained to the glory of martyrdom? It is agreed that all the martyrs, whether of the Old or the New Testament, equally suffered for the sake of religion; but there is a distinction, because the one class suffered because they held it, the other because they censured those who held it not; the one because they would not desert it, the other because they declared that those would perish who deserted it, and to sum up in a word, that in which the two differ, perseverance in the faith has done in our martyrs that which zeal for the faith has done in those of the ancient law.

The Maccabees are alone among the ancient martyrs, because they possessed not only the same cause as the new martyrdom, but also, as I have said, the form of it; and rightly, therefore, they have attained the same glory and fame as the new martyrs of the Church. For like our martyrs, they were urged to pour libations to false gods, to renounce the law of their fathers, and even to transgress the commandments of God, and like them they resisted and died.

2. Not so did Isaiah or Zecharias, or even that great prophet, John the Baptist, die; of whom the first is said to have been sawn asunder, the second slain between the temple and the altar (S. Matt. 23:25), and the third beheaded in prison. If you ask by whom? It was by the wicked and irreligious. For what cause? For justice and religion. In what manner? For confessing and openly upholding these. They openly upheld the truth before those who hated it, and thus drew upon themselves the hatred which caused their death. That which the unrighteous and wicked persecuted was not so much religion in itself as those who brought it before them, nor was their object to attack the righteousness of others, but to remain undisturbed in their own unrighteousness. It is one thing to seize upon the good things of another, and another to defend one's own goods; to persecute the truth, and not to be willing to follow it one's self; to grudge at believers, and to be angry at their reproofs; to stop the mouth of those who confess their faith, and not to be able to bear patiently the taunts of those who contradict. Thus Herod sent and seized John. Wherefore! Because he preached Christ, or because he was a good and just man? On the contrary, he reverenced him the more on this account, and having heard him, did many things. But it was because John reproached Herod because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; on that account he was bound and beheaded; no doubt he suffered for the truth, but because he urged its interests with zeal, not because he was urged to deny it. This is why the suffering of so great a martyr is observed with less solemnity than those even of far less famous men.

3. It is certain that if the Maccabees had suffered in such a matter, and for such a reason as S. John, there would not have been any mention of them at all. But a confession of the truth, not unlike that of the Christian martyrs, made them like those; and rightly, therefore, a similar veneration follows. Let it not be objected that they did not, like our martyrs, suffer for Christ expressly by name; because it does not affect his status as a martyr whether a person suffers under the Law, on behalf of the observances of the Law, or under grace for the commandments of the Gospel. For it is recognized that each of these equally suffers for the truth, and, therefore, for Christ, who said: I am the Truth (S. John 14:6). Therefore the

Maccabees are more deserving of the honours that have been conferred upon them for the kind of their martyrdom than for the valour displayed in it, since we do not see that the Church has decreed such honour to the righteous of a former time, although they have displayed equal courage on behalf of righteousness, for the time in which they lived. I suppose that it was thought unfit to appoint a day of festival for a death, however laudable, before the Death of Christ, especially since before that saving Passion those who died, instead of entering into joy and glory endured the darkness of the prison-house. The Church then, as I said above, considered that an exception should be made in favour of the Maccabees, since the nature of their martyrdom conferred upon them what the time of their suffering denied to others.

4. Nor them only, but those also who preceded in their death, the Death of Him who was the Life manifest in the flesh, either dying during His life, as Simeon and John the Baptist, or for Him, as the Innocents, we venerate with solemn rites, although they, too, descended into Hades; but for another reason. Thus, in the case of the Innocents, it would be unjust to deprive innocence dying on behalf of righteousness of fame even in the present. John also, knowing that from his day the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, therefore proclaimed, Do penitence, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (S. Matt. 3:2, VULG.); and, seeing that the Life would immediately follow him, endured death with joy. He, before his death, was careful to inquire from the Lord Himself respecting this, and had the happiness to be informed of it. For when he sent his disciples to ask of Jesus Art Thou He that should come, or are we to look for another? he received for answer, after the enumeration of very many miracles, And blessed is he who shall not be offended in me (S. Matt. 11:3–6). In which answer the Lord intimated that He was about to die, and by such a death as might be to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. At this word the friend of the Bridegroom went onward rejoicing and with a willing mind, because he could not doubt that the Bridegroom also would speedily come. Therefore he who so joyfully could die merited also to be held in joyful remembrance. And that old man, too, as full of virtues as of days, who when death was already so near said, holding in his arms Him who was the Life, Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation (S. Luke 2:29, 30), as if he had said, I go down without fear into Hades, because I feel that my redemption is so nigh; he, too, who died with such fearless joy and such joyful security rightly deserves to be commemorated with joy in the Church.

5. But on what principle shall a death be accounted joyful which is not

accompanied by the joys of heaven? or from whence should a dying person derive joy who was sure that he was going down into the darkness of the prison-house, and yet did not bear with him any certitude, how soon the consolation of a deliverer thence should come to him? Thus it was that when one of the saints heard Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live, he turned himself to the wall and wept bitterly, and so asked and obtained some deferring of hateful death. Thus also he lamented miserably, saying, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the half of my days (Is. 38:10); and a little after added, I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living: I shall all behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world (Is. 38:11). Hence also another says: Who shall grant me that Thou wouldest protect me in the grave, that Thou wouldest keep me secret until Thy wrath be passed; that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me? (Job 14:13). Israel also said to his sons, Ye will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave (Gen. 42:38). What appearance is there in these deaths, of solemn joy, of rejoicing and festival?

6. But our martyrs desire to be unclothed and be with Christ, knowing well that where the Body is there without delay will the eagles be gathered together. There will the righteous rejoice in the sight of God, and be in joy and felicity. There, there, O most blessed Jesus, shall every saint who is delivered from this wicked world be filled speedily with the joy of Thy countenance. There in the habitations of the just resounds for ever one song of joy and salvation: Our soul is delivered as a bird out of the net of the fowler: the net is broken and we are delivered (Ps. 124:7). How could those sing this song of gladness who in Hades sat in darkness and the shadow of death, while as yet there was no Redeemer for them, no Saviour; while the Sun rising from on high, Christ the first fruits of them that slept, had not yet visited us? Rightly, then, does the Church, who has learnt to rejoice with them that rejoice and to weep with them that weep, distinguish, because of the time at which they lived, between those whom she judges equal in valour: and does not think the descent into Hades proper to be followed with equal honour as is the passage into life.

7. Therefore, though the motive makes martyrdom, yet the time and the nature of it determine the difference between martyrdoms. Thus the time in which they lived separates the Maccabees from the martyrs of the new law and joins them with those of the old; but the nature of their martyrdom associates them with the new and divides them from the old. From these causes come the differences of observance with which they are kept in memory in the Church. But that which is common to the whole company of the Saints before God is what the holy

prophet declares: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Ps. 116:15). And why he calls it precious he explains to us: When He has given sleep to His beloved, behold, children, the heritage of the Lord; His reward, the fruit of the womb (Ps. 127:3). Nor must we think that martyrs alone are beloved, since we remember that it was said of Lazarus, Our friend Lazarus sleeps (S. John 11:11), and elsewhere, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Apoc. 14:13). Not those alone who die for the Lord, like the martyrs, but without doubt those also who die in the Lord as confessors are blessed. There are two things, as it seems to me, which make death precious, the life which precedes it and the cause for which it is endured; but more the cause than the life. But when both the cause and the life concur that is the most precious of all.

LETTER XCIX

TO A CERTAIN MONK

Bernard writes that he had been anxious because of the rumoured departure of this monk from his convent, and that he had been freed from such fear by his letter.

The messenger by whom you say that you have been disturbed was sent by Brother William in your interest, and not in his own. He, indeed, by the grace of God, acts bravely, as he is wont, and does not merit so far that that declaration should be applied to him: A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways (S. James 1:8). He walks simply and faithfully in the ways of the Lord, and does not fear that woe that is spoken: Woe be to the sinner that goeth two ways (Ecclus. 2:12). For we had heard that you, being mixed up in a dispute, had left your convent, to the grave scandal of your abbot and your brethren, and were living alone in, I know not what unsuitable place. Being greatly distressed by this rumour, I ask myself, with anxiety, in what way I could be of service to you, and nothing occurred to me to do better than to beg you to come to see me so as to make me aware of what had passed about yourself, so that I might, without delay, counsel you by word of mouth. But since my letter and your reply have put to flight the fears and suspicions which were in the mind of each of us, let us say nothing more of the matter. It has been shown, at all events, by this false report, how true is the mutual affection between us; and I think that this affection has been not unfruitfully renewed by our mutual anxiety; I should hope that we might taste this fruit far more fully if leave and opportunity were given you to pay me a visit. Otherwise it were better that I should still be content without

seeing you rather than enjoy your presence at a time when it is unsuitable or inconvenient to you.

LETTER C

TO A CERTAIN BISHOP

Bernard praises his liberality and kindness towards poor Religious.

If I were less acquainted with your zeal for undertaking a work of such importance I should urge and entreat you to it. But now, since your piety has anticipated my intention, it only remains to me to give thanks to Him, from whom all good things proceed, for having put into your heart to wish this good, and to pray Him to add to it, that you may bring to perfection that which you have piously desired. Yet I cannot hide from you my joy, nor dissimulate the pleasure which your good intentions inspire in me. My soul will be delighted to the full if I could know that you are untiring in edifying and honourable pursuits. For I rejoice, not because I seek a gift, but because I require fruit. I willingly accept a benefit which profits the giver, otherwise I should not walk in that charity which seeketh not her own (1 Cor. 13:5). And, indeed, your gifts are profitable to me, but more to you, according to that declaration: It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). This liberality is befitting a Bishop; it is the glory of your priesthood, it adorns your crown, and ennobles your dignity. If the charge he holds forbids a person to be poor let his conduct show that he is a lover of the poor. For it is not poverty, but the love of poverty, which is counted a virtue; and it is said, Blessed are the poor, not in worldly wealth, but in spirit (S. Matt. 5:3).

LETTER CI

TO CERTAIN MONKS

Bernard asks that a monk who had departed without permission should be received with kindness.

I send back to you Brother Lambert, whom I received, in some respects wavering in mind, but to whom your prayers have restored calm, so that he is not, as I think, labouring any more under his former scrupulosity. I have carefully questioned him about the cause of his coming, and also about the reason and manner of his departure. He does not seem to me to have had any bad intention in acting as he has done; but his reason for leaving in such a manner,

that is, without permission, was plainly insufficient. I took occasion from this to blame him as he deserved, to chide him sharply, to remove his hesitations and doubts, and to persuade him to return to you. Now that he is returning, I entreat you, my very dear brethren, to receive him kindly, and to be indulgent to the presumption of a brother in which there is more simplicity than malice, since he turned neither to the right nor left, but came straight to me, whom he knew for certain to be the devoted servant of your Holiness, a very sincere lover and faithful imitator of your piety. Receive him, therefore, you who are spiritual men, in a spirit of gentleness; let your charity be confirmed towards him, and let his good intention excuse his bad action. Therefore, receive him back with joy, whom, when lost, you grieved for; and let gladness at the return of your brother speedily chase away the grief caused by his transgression and departure. I trust that, by the mercy of God, all the bitterness which his irregular departure occasioned will be soon softened by this improvement in his life.

LETTER CII

TO A CERTAIN ABBOT

Bernard advises that all possible means should be tried to correct a refractory monk, but that, if incorrigible, he should be expelled, lest he should infect others by his company.

1. Respecting the brother who is disorderly and disorders others, nor respects the authority of his superior, I give you brief but faithful advice. It is the occupation of the devil to go about in the House of God and seek whom he may devour; on the other hand, it is the task committed to your watchfulness, never as far as you are able, to give place to the devil. The more efforts he makes then to separate from the flock a poor little sheep that he may draw it away the more easily whither there will be none to deliver it from him, the more strenuously, as far as in you lies, ought you to resist, that the enemy may not be able to snatch it from your arms, and say I have prevailed against him. Have recourse, then, in order to save that brother, to every office of charity; spare neither kindnesses, good advice, private reprimands, nor public remonstrances, even the sharp correction of words and, if necessary, blows, but, above all, what is usually more efficacious, the pious intercessions of yourself and your brethren to God for him.

2. But if, when you have done all these things you have no success, you are bound to follow the counsel of the Apostle when he says, Put away from among yourselves that wicked person (1 Cor. 5:13). Let the wicked man be taken away,

that he may not make others wicked, for an evil tree can bear only evil fruit. I say that he should be taken away, but not in the manner that he himself wishes; nor should he suppose that he can be permitted to live with your license away from the community, against his profession avoiding obedience, under his own authority, and that according to the law and with conscience wrongly at ease; but he should be cut off, as a diseased sheep is parted from the flock, as a gangrened limb from the body; and in going forth he should be made to know for certain that he will be held by you as a heathen man and a publican. And do not fear that you will act against charity if you provide for the peace of many by the expulsion of one—of one whose malice may easily destroy the peace of many brethren who dwell together. Let that declaration of Solomon console you, No one can correct that person whom God leaves alone (Eccles. 7:13), and that of the Saviour, Every plantation which My Father hath not planted shall be rooted up (S. Matt. 15:13), and that of S. John the Evangelist concerning schismatics, They went out from us, because they were not of us (1 S. John 2:19), and that from the Apostle, If the unbelieving depart, let him depart (1 Cor. 7:15). Otherwise the rod of the wicked ought not to be left over the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hand unto wickedness. For it is better that one member should perish than the whole community.

LETTER CIII

TO THE BROTHER OF WILLIAM, A MONK OF CLAIRVAUX

Bernard, after having made a striking commendation of religious poverty, reproaches in him an affection too great for worldly things, to the detriment of the poor and of his own soul, so that he preferred to yield them up only to death, rather than for the love of Christ.

1. Although you are unknown to me by face, and although distant from me in body, yet you are my friend, and this friendship between us makes you to be present and familiar to me. It is not flesh and blood, but the Spirit of God which has prepared for you, though without your knowledge, this friendship, which has united your brother William and me with a lasting bond of spiritual affection, which includes you, too, through him, if you think it worth acceptance. And if you are wise you will not despise the friendship of those whom the Truth declares blessed, and calls kings of heaven; which blessedness we would not envy to you, nor if communicated to you would it be diminished to us, nor would our boundaries be at all narrowed if you should reign over them too. For

what cause can there be for envy where the multitude of those who share a blessing takes nothing from the greatness of the share which each enjoys? I wish you to be the friend of the poor, but especially their imitator. The one is the grade of beginner, the other of the perfect, for the friendship of the poor makes us the friend of kings, but the love of poverty makes us kings ourselves The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of the poor, and one of the marks of royal power is to do good to friends according to our will. Make to yourselves friends, it is said, of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations (S. Luke 16:9). You see what a high dignity sacred poverty is, so that not only does it not seek protection for itself, but extends it to those who need. What a power is this, to approach by one's self to the Throne of God without the intervention of any, whether angels or men, with simple confidence in the Divine favour, thus reaching the summit of existence, the height of all glory!

2. But would that you, without pretence, would consider how you hinder your own attainment of these advantages. Alas! that a vapour which appears but for a moment should block up the entrance to eternal glory, hide from you the clearness of the unbounded and everlasting light, prevent you from recognizing the true nature of things, and deprive you of the highest degree of glory! How long will you prefer to such glory the grass of the field, which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven? I mean carnal and worldly glory. For all flesh is grass, and its glory as the flower of the field (Is. 40:6). If you are wise, if you have a heart to feel and eyes to see, cease to pursue those things which it is misery to attain. Happy is he who does not toil at all after those things, which when possessed are a burden, when loved a defilement, and when lost a torment. Will it not be better to have the honour to renounce them than the vexation to lose them? Or will it be more prudent to yield them up for the love of Christ than to have them taken away by death?—death, which is a robber lying in wait for you, into whose hands you cannot help falling, with all that belongs to you. When he shall do so you cannot foresee, because he will come as a thief in the night. You brought nothing into this world, and it is certain you can carry nothing out (1 Tim. 6:7). You shall sleep your sleep, and find nothing in your hands. But these things you know well, and it would be superfluous laboriously to teach them to you. Rather I will pray God that you may have the grace to fulfil in practice what it has been given you already to know.

He exhorts him to flee from the world, advising him to prefer the cause and the interests of his soul to those of parents.

MY DEAR WALTER,

I often grieve my heart about you whenever the most pleasant remembrance of you comes back to me, seeing how you consume in vain occupations the flower of your youth, the sharpness of your intellect, the store of your learning and skill, and also, what is more excellent in a Christian than all of these gifts, the pure and innocent character which distinguishes you; since you use so great endowments to serve not Christ their giver, but things transitory. What if (which God forbid!) a sudden death should seize and shatter at a stroke all those gifts of yours, as it were with the rush of a burning and raging wind, just like the winds whirl about and dry grass or as the leaves of herbs quickly fall. What, then, will you carry with you of all your labour which you have wrought upon the earth? What return will you render unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto you? What gain will you bring unto your creditor for those many talents committed to you? If He shall find your hand empty, who, though a liberal best ower of His gifts, exacts a strict account of their use! “For he that shall come will come and will not tarry, and will require that which is His own with usury.” For He claims all as His own, which seems to ennoble you in your land, with favours full at once of dignity and of danger. Noble parentage, sound health, elegance of person, quick apprehension, useful knowledge, uprightness of life, are glorious things, indeed, but they are His from whom they are. If you use them for yourself “there is One who seeketh and judgeth.”

2. But be it so; suppose that you may for a while call these things yours, and boast in the praise they bring you, and be called of men Rabbi and make for yourself a great name, though only upon the earth; what shall be left to you after death of all these things? Scarcely a remembrance alone—and that, too, only upon earth. For it is written, They have slept their sleep, and all the men whose hands were mighty have found nothing. (Ps. 76:5). If this be the end of all your labours—allow me to say so—what have you more than a beast of burden? Indeed, it will be said even of your palfrey when he is dead that he was good. Look to it, then, how you must answer it before that terrible judgment throne if you have received your soul in vain, and such a soul! if you are found to have done nothing more with your immortal and reasonable soul than some beast with his. For the soul of a brute lives no longer than the body which it animates, and

at one and the same moment it both ceases to give life and to live. Of what will you deem yourself worthy, who, being made in the image of your Creator, do not guard the dignity of so great a majesty? And being a man, but not understanding your honour, art compared unto the foolish beasts and made like unto them, seeing that forsooth, you labour at nothing of a spiritual or eternal nature, but, like the spirit of a beast which as soon as it is loosed from the body is dissolved with the body, have been content to think of nothing but material and temporal goods, turning a deaf ear to the Gospel precept: Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life (S. John 6:27). But you know well that it is written that only he ascends into the hill of the Lord who hath not Lift up his mind unto vanity (Ps. 24:3). And not even he except he hath clean hands and a pure heart. I leave you to decide if you dare to claim this of your deeds and thoughts at the present. But if you are not able to do so, judge what is the reward of iniquity, if mere unfruitfulness is enough for damnation. And, indeed, the thorn or thistle will not be safe when the axe shall be seen laid to the root of the fruit tree, nor will He spare the thorn which stings, who threatens even the barren plant. Woe, then; aye! double woe to him of whom it shall be said, I looked that he should bring forth grapes, and he hath brought forth wild grapes (Is. 5:4).

3. But I know how freely and fully you can nourish these thoughts, though I be silent, but yet I know that, constrained by love of your mother, you are not as yet able to abandon what you have long known how to despise. What answer shall I make to you in this matter? That you should leave your mother? That seems inhuman. That you should remain with her? But what a misery for her to be a cause of ruin to her son! That you should fight at once for the world and for Christ? But no man can serve two masters. Your mother’s wish being contrary to your salvation is equally so to her own. Choose, therefore, of these two alternatives which you will; either, that is, to secure the wish of one or the salvation of both. But if you love her much, have the courage to leave her for her sake, lest if you leave Christ to remain with her she also perish on your account. Else you have ill-served her who bare you if she perish on your account. For how doth she escape destruction who hath ruined him whom she bare? And I have spoken this in order in some way to stoop to assist your somewhat worldly affection. Moreover, it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, although it is impious to despise a mother, yet to despise her for Christ’s sake is most pious. For He who said, Honour thy father and mother (S. Matt. 15:4), Himself also said, He who loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy

of Me (S. Matt. 10:37).

LETTER CV

TO ROMANUS, SUB-DEACON OF THE ROMAN CURIA

He urges upon him the proposal of the religious life, recalling the thought of death.

BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, to his dear ROMANUS, as to his friend.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

How good you are to me in renewing by a letter the sweet recollection of yourself and in excusing my tiresome delay. It is not possible that any forgetfulness of your affection could ever invade the hearts of those who love you; but, I confess, I thought you had almost forgotten yourself until I saw your letter. So now no more delays; fulfil quickly the promise that you have written; and if your pen truly expresses your purpose, let your acts correspond to it. Why do you delay to give birth to that spirit of salvation which you have so long conceived? Nothing is more certain to mortals than death, nothing more uncertain than the hour of death, since it is to come upon us as a thief in the night. Woe unto them who are still with child [of that good intention] in that day! If it shall anticipate and prevent this birth of salvation, alas! It will pierce through the house and destroy the holy seed: For when they shall say Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape (1 Thess. 5:3). I wish you not to flee from death, but only to fear it. For the just, though he avoids it not, because he knows that it is inevitable, yet does not fear it. Moreover, he awaits it as a rest (Wisdom 4:7) and receives it in perfect security; for as it is the exit from the present life, so it is the entrance into a better. Death is good if by it thou die to sin, that thou mayest live unto righteousness. It is necessary that this death should go before, in order that the other which follows after may be safe. In this life, so long as it lasts, prepare for yourself that life which lasts for ever. While you live in the flesh, die unto the world, that after the death of the flesh you may begin to live unto God. For what if death rend asunder the coarse envelope of your body so long as from that moment it clothes you with a garment of joy? O, how blessed are the dead which die in the Lord (Apoc. 14:13), for they hear from the Spirit, that “they may rest from their labours.” And not only so, but also from new life comes pleasure, and from eternity safety. Happy, therefore, is the death of the just because of its rest; better because of its new life, best because of its safety

(Ps. 34:21). On the other hand, worst of all is the death of sinners. And hear why worse. It is bad, indeed, through loss of the world; it is worse through separation from the flesh; worst of all through double pain of worm and fire. Up, then, hasten; go forth out of the world, and renounce it entirely; let your soul die the death of the righteous, that your last end also may be like His: Oh, how dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Ps. 116:13). Flee, I pray you, lest you stand in the way of sinners. How canst thou live where thou durst not die?

LETTER CVI

TO MAGISTER HENRY MURDACH

He urges him to embrace the religious life, briefly describing its delights.

To his beloved HENRY MURDACH, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes eternal life.

1. What wonder if you are tossed to and fro by the waves of prosperity and adversity, since you have not yet set your feet upon the rock? But if you are quite resolved to keep the righteous judgments of the Lord, can anything sever you from the love of Christ? O, if you only knew, and if I were able to convey to you! but Eye hath not seen, without Thee, O God, the things that Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee (Is. 64:4). But you, my brother, who, as I hear, read the prophets, and no doubt suppose that you understand the sense of their writings, is it not clear to you if you understand that the meaning of the prophetic declaration refers to Christ? And if you desire to lay hold on Him, I assure you that you can attain to Him sooner by following Him than by reading, merely reading of Him. Why do you seek in the Word written, the Word who is already here before your eyes, the Word made flesh? He has long quitted his hiding-place among the prophets to come forth before the eyes of Fishermen; already He has left the deep, shady hills of the ancient Law, as a bridegroom leaves his chamber, and has leapt forth to the plain of the Gospel. Now let him who hath ears to hear, hear Him crying in the Temple, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink (S. John 7:37), and Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will refresh you (S. Matt. 11:28). Do you, then, fear to fail where Truth promises to sustain you? Surely if the storm-rain from the clouds of heaven so delights you, how much sweeter will be the draught that you may draw from the pure fountains of the Saviour?

2. If you could once for a moment taste of that bread with which Jerusalem is satisfied, how gladly you would leave your dry crusts for Jewish scholars to

gnaw! How happy should I be to have you for my companion in the school of piety under the Master, Jesus! Would that it were mine first to purge the vessel of your heart that it might be filled with the unction that makes wise about all things! How willingly would I break with you those loaves, still warm and steaming, and, as it were, freshly drawn from the oven, which Christ of His heavenly bounty often breaks unto His poor! Would that, if God deigned of His sweetness to shed at any time on my poor soul some drop of the free rain which He keeps for His inheritance, ah! would that then I could pour it out upon you, and again receive from you in turn that which you had felt! Believe one who has tried: you shall find a fuller satisfaction in the woods than in books. The trees and the rocks will teach you that which you cannot hear from masters. Do you think that you cannot draw honey from the rock and oil from the hardest flint? Do not our mountains drop sweetness? the hills flow with milk and honey? and the valleys stand thick with corn? When so much occurs to me to say to you I scarce restrain myself. But inasmuch as you ask not for a lecture, but for prayers, may God open your heart in His law and in His statutes. Farewell.

3. Let William and Ivo, too, have share in this my prayer. What more shall I say to you? You know that I long to see you, and why; but how much I long neither l can tell nor you can know. So I pray God that He may grant you even to follow whither you ought to have preceded me, since in this matter I hold you to be master of so great humility as not to disdain, though a master, to follow your disciples.

LETTER CVII

TO THOMAS, PRIOR OF BEVERLEY

This Thomas had taken the vows of the Cistercian Order at Clairvaux. As he showed hesitation, Bernard urges his tardy spirit to fulfil them. But the following letter will prove that it was a warning to deaf ears, where it relates the unhappy end of Thomas. In this letter Bernard sketches with a master’s hand the whole scheme of salvation.

BERNARD to his beloved son THOMAS, as being his son.

1. What is the good of words? An ardent spirit and a strong desire cannot express themselves simply by the tongue. We want your sympathy and your bodily presence to speak to us; for if you come you will know us better, and we shall better appreciate each other. We have long been held in a mutual bond as debtors one to another; for I owe you faithful care and you owe me submissive

obedience. Let our actions and not our pens, if you please, prove each of us. I wish you would apply to yourself henceforth and carry out towards me those words of the Only Begotten: The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works bear witness of Me (S. John 5:36). For, indeed, only thus does the spirit of the Only Son bear witness with our spirit that we also are the sons of God, when, quickening us from dead works, He causes us to bring forth the works of life. A good or bad tree is distinguished, not by its leaves or flowers, but by its fruit. So By their fruits, He saith, ye shall know them (S. Matt. 7:16). Works, then, and not words, make the difference between sons of God and sons of unbelief. By works, accordingly, do you display your sincere desire and make proof of mine.

2. I long for your presence; my heart has long wished for you, and expected the fulfilment of your promises. Why am I so pressing? Certainly not from any personal or earthly feeling. I desire either to be profited by you or to be of service to you. Noble birth, bodily strength and beauty, the glow of youth, estates, palaces, and sumptuous furniture, external badges of dignity, and, I may also add, the world's wisdom—all these are of the world, and the world loves its own. But for how long will they endure? For ever? Assuredly not; for the world itself will not last for ever; but these will not last even for long. In fact, the world will not be able long to keep these gifts for you, nor will you dwell long in the world to enjoy them, for the days of man are short. The world passes away with its lusts, but it dismisses you before it quite passes away itself. How can you take unlimited pleasure in a love that soon must end? But I ever love you, not your possessions; let them go whence they were derived. I only require of you one thing: that you would be mindful of your promise, and not deny us any longer the satisfaction of your presence among us, who love you sincerely, and will love you for ever. In fact, if we love purely in our life, we shall also not be divided in death. For those gifts which I wish for in your case, or rather for you, belong not to the body or to time only; and so they fail not with the body, nor pass away with time; nay, when the body is laid aside they delight still more, and last when time is gone. They have nothing in common with the gifts above-mentioned, or such as they with which, I imagine, not the Father, but the world has endowed you. For which of these does not vanish before death, or at last fall a victim to it?

3. But, indeed, that is the best part, which shall not be taken away for ever. What is that? Eye hath not seen it, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man (1 Cor. 2:9). He who is a man and walks simply according to man's

nature only, he who, to speak more plainly, is still content with flesh and blood, is wholly ignorant what that is, because flesh and blood will not reveal the things which God alone reveals through His Spirit. So the natural man is in no way admitted to the secret; in fact, he receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). Blessed are they who hear His words. I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known to you (S. John 15:15). O, wicked world, which wilt not bless thy friends except thou make them enemies of God, and consequently unworthy of the council of the blessed. For clearly he who is willing to be thy friend makes himself the enemy of God. And if the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, how much less the enemy? Moreover, the friend of the Bridegroom standeth, and rejoiceth with joy because of the Bridegroom's voice; whence also it says, My soul failed when [my beloved] spake (Cant. 5:6). And so the friend of the world is shut out from the council of the friends of God, who have received not the spirit of this world but the spirit which is of God, that they may know the things which are given to them of God. I thank Thee, O Father, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight (S. Matt. 11:25, 26), not because they of themselves deserved it. For all have sinned, and come short of Thy glory, that Thou mayest freely send the Spirit of Thy Son, crying in the hearts of the sons of adoption: Abba, Father. For those who are led by this Spirit, they are sons, and cannot be kept from their Father's council. Indeed, they have the Spirit dwelling within them, who searches even the deep things of God. In short, of what can they be ignorant whom grace teaches everything?

4. Woe unto you, ye sons of this world, because of your wisdom, which is foolishness! Ye know not the spirit of salvation, nor have share in the counsel, which the Father alone discloses alone to the Son, and to him to whom the Son will reveal Him. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? (Rom. 11:34). Not, indeed, no one; but only a few, only those who can truly say: The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. Woe to the world for its clamour! That same Only Begotten, like as the Angel of a great revelation, proclaims among the people: He who hath ears to hear let him hear. And since he finds not ears worthy to receive His words, and to whom He may commit the secret of the Father, he weaves parables for the crowd, that hearing they might not hear, and seeing they might not understand. But for His friends how different! With them He speaks apart: To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God (S. Luke

8:8–10); to whom also He says: Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (S. Luke 12:32). Who are these? These are they whom He foreknew and foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren. The Lord knows who are His. Here is His great secret and the counsel which He has made known unto men. But He judges no others worthy of a share in so great mystery, except those whom He has foreknown and foreordained as His own. For those whom He foreordained, them also He called. Who, except he be called, may approach God's counsel? Those whom he called, them also He justified. Over them a Sun arises, though not that sun which may daily be seen arising over good and bad alike, but He of whom the Prophet speaks when addressing himself to those alone who have been called to the counsel, he says: Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise (Malachi 4:2). So while the sons of unbelief remain in darkness, the child of light leaves the power of darkness and comes into this new light, if once he can with faith say to God: I am a companion of all them that fear Thee (Ps. 119:63). Do you see how faith precedes, in order that justification may follow? Perchance, then, we are called through fear, and justified by love. Finally, the just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:17), that faith, doubtless, which works by love (Gal. 5:6).

5. So at his call let the sinner hear what he has to fear; and thus coming to the Sun of Righteousness, let him, now enlightened, see what he must love. For what is that saying: The merciful goodness of the Lord endureth from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him (Ps. 103:17). From everlasting, because of predestination, to everlasting, because of glorification. The one process is without beginning, the other knows no ending. Indeed, those whom He predestines from everlasting, He glorifies to everlasting, with an interval, at least, in the case of adults, of calling and justification between. So at the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, the mystery, hidden from eternity, concerning souls that have been predestinated and are to be glorified, begins in some degree to emerge from the depths of eternity, as each soul, called by fear and justified by love, becomes assured that it, too, is of the number of the blessed, knowing well that whom He justified, them also He glorified (Rom. 8:30). What then? The soul hears that it is called when it is stricken with fear. It feels also that it is justified when it is surrounded with love. Can it do otherwise than be confident that it will be glorified? There is a beginning; there is continuation. Can it despair only of the consummation? Indeed, if the fear of the Lord, in which our calling is said to consist, is the beginning of wisdom, surely the love of God—

that love, I mean, which springs from faith, and is the source of our justification —is progress in wisdom. And so what but the consummation of wisdom is that glorification which we hope for at the last from the vision of God that will make us like Him? And so one deep calleth another because of the noise of the water-pipes (Ps. 42:9), when, with terrible judgments, that unmeasured Eternity and Eternal Immensity, whose wisdom cannot be told, leads the corrupt and inscrutable heart of man by Its own power and goodness forth into Its own marvelous light.

6. For instance, let us suppose a man in the world, held fast as yet in the love of this world and of his flesh; and, inasmuch as he bears the image of the earthly man, occupied with earthly things, without a thought of things heavenly, can anyone fail to see that this man is surrounded with horrible darkness, unless he also is sitting in the same fatal gloom? For no sign of his salvation has yet shone upon him; no inner inspiration bears its witness in his heart as to whether an eternal predestination destines him to good. But, then, suppose the heavenly compassion vouchsafes sometime to have regard to him, and to shed upon him a spirit of compunction to make him bemoan himself and learn wisdom, change his life, subdue his flesh, love his neighbour, cry to God, and resolve hereafter to live to God and not to the world; and suppose that thenceforward, by the gracious visitation of heavenly light and the sudden change accomplished by the Right Hand of the Most High, he sees clearly that he is no longer a child of wrath, but of grace, for he is now experiencing the fatherly love and divine goodness towards him—a love which hitherto had been concealed from him so completely as not only to leave him in ignorance whether he deserved love or hate, but also as to make his own life indicate hatred rather than love, for darkness was still on the face of the deep—would it not seem to you that such an one is lifted directly out of the profoundest and darkest deep of horrible ignorance into the pleasant and serene deep of eternal brightness?

7. And then at length God, as it were, divides the light from the darkness, when a sinner, enlightened by the first rays of the Sun of Righteousness, casts off the works of darkness and puts on the armour of light. His own conscience and the sins of his former life alike doom him as a true child of Hell to eternal fires; but under the looks with which the Dayspring from on high deigns to visit him, he breathes again, and even begins to hope beyond hope that he shall enjoy the glory of the sons of God. For rejoicing at the near prospect with unveiled face, he sees it in the new light, and says: Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us; Thou hast put gladness in my heart (Ps. 4:7); Lord, what is

man that Thou hast such respect unto him, or the son of man that Thou so regardest him? (Ps. 144:3). Now, O good Father, vile worm and worthy of eternal hatred as he is, he yet trusts that he is loved, because he feels that he loves; nay, because he has a foretaste of Thy love he does not blush to make return of love. Now in Thy brightness it becomes clear, Oh! Light that no man can approach unto, what good things Thou hast in store for so poor a thing as man, even though he be evil! He loves not undeservedly, because he was loved without his deserving it; and his love is for everlasting, because he knows that he has been loved from everlasting. He brings to light for the comfort of the sorrowful the great design which from eternity had lain in the bosom of eternity, namely, that God wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. As a witness of this secret, Oh! man, thou hast the justifying Spirit bearing witness herein with thy spirit that thou thyself also art the son of God. Acknowledge the counsel of God in thy justification; confess it and say, Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors (Ps. 119:24). For thy present justification is the revelation of the Divine counsel, and a preparation for future glory. Or rather, perhaps, predestination itself is the preparation for it, and justification is more the gradual drawing near unto it. Indeed, it is said, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (S. Matt. 3:2). And hear also of predestination that it is the preparation: Come, inherit, He says, the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (S. Matt. 25:34).

8. Let none, therefore, doubt that he is loved who already loves. The love of God freely follows our love which it preceded. For how can He grow weary of returning their love to those whom He loved even while they yet loved Him not? He loved them, I say; yes, He loved. For as a pledge of His love thou hast the Spirit; thou hast also Jesus, the faithful witness, and Him crucified. Oh! double proof, and that most sure, of God’s love towards us. Christ dies, and deserves to be loved by us. The Spirit works, and makes Him to be loved. The One shows the reason why He is loved: the Other how He is to be loved. The One commends His own great love to us; the Other makes it ours. In the One we see the object of love; from the Other we draw the power to love. With the One, therefore, is the cause; with the Other the gift of charity. What shame to watch, with thankless eyes, the Son of God dying—and yet this may easily happen, if the Spirit be not with us. But now, since The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us (Rom. 5:5), having been loved we love; and as we love, we deserve to be loved yet more. For if, says the Apostle, while we were yet enemies, we have been reconciled to God through

the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved through His life (Rom. 8:32). For He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

9. Since, then, the token of our salvation is twofold, namely, a twofold outpouring, of the Blood and of the Spirit, neither can profit without the other. For the Spirit is not given except to such as believe in the Crucified; and faith avails not unless it works by love. But love is the gift of the Spirit. If the second Adam (I speak of Christ) not only became a living soul, but also a quickening spirit, dying as being the one, and raising the dead as being the other, how can that which dies in Him profit me, apart from that which quickens? Indeed, He Himself says: It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing (S. John 6:63). Now, what does "quickeneth" mean except "justifieth?" For as sin is the death of the soul (The soul that sinneth it shall die, Ezek. 18:4), without doubt righteousness is its life; for The just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:17). Who, then, is righteous, except he who returns to God, who loves him, His meed of love? And this never happens unless the Spirit by faith reveal to the man the eternal purpose of God concerning his future salvation. Such a revelation is simply the infusion of spiritual grace, by which, with the mortification of the deeds of the flesh, man is made ready for the kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit. And he receives by one and the same Spirit both the reason for thinking that he is loved and the power of returning love, lest the love of God for us should be left without return.

10. This, then, is that holy and secret counsel which the Son has received from the Father by the Holy Spirit. This by the same Spirit He imparts to His own whom He knows, in their justification, and by the imparting He justifies. Thus in his justification each of the faithful receives the power to begin to know himself even as he is known: when, for instance, there is given to him some foretaste of his own future happiness, as he sees how it lay hid from eternity in God, who foreordains it, but will appear more fully in God, who is effecting it. But concerning the knowledge that he has now, for his part, attained, let a man glory at present in the hope, not in the secure possession of it. How must we pity those who possess as yet no token of their own calling to this glad assembly of the righteous. Lord, who hath believed our report? (Is. 53:1). Oh! that they would be wise and understand. But except they believe they shall not understand.

11. But you, too, ye unhappy and heedless lovers of the world, have your purpose far from that of the just. Scale sticks close to scale, and there is no airhole between you. You, too, oh! sons of impiety, have your purpose

communicated one to another, but openly against the Lord and against His Christ (Ps. 2:2). For if, as the Scripture says, The fear of God, that is piety (Job 28:28), of course anyone who loves the world more than God is convicted of impiety and idolatry, of worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator. But if, as has been said, the holy and impious have each their purpose kept for themselves, doubtless there is a great gulf fixed between the two. For as the just keeps himself aloof from the purpose and council of evil men (cf. Ps. 1:6), so the impious never rise in the judgment, nor sinners in the purpose for the just. For there is a purpose for the just, a gracious rain which God hath set apart for His heritage. There is a purpose really secret, descending like rain into a fleece of wool—a sealed fount whereof no stranger may partake—a Sun of Righteousness rising only for such as fear God.

12. Moreover, the prophet, noting that the rest remain in their own dryness and darkness, being ignorant of the rain and of the light of the just, mocks and brands their unfruitful gloom and confused perversity. This is a nation, he says, that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God (Jer. 7:28). You are not ready, oh! miserable men, to say with David, I will hearken what the Lord God will say with regard to me (Ps. 85:8), for being exhausted abroad upon [the quest of] vanity and false folly, you seek not for the deepest and best hearing of the truth. Oh! ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme mine honour, and have such pleasure in vanity and seek after leasing (Ps. 4:2). You are deaf to the voice of truth, and you know not the purpose of Him who thinks thoughts of peace, who also speaks peace to His people, and to His saints, and to such as are converted in heart. Now, he says, ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you (S. John 15:3). Therefore, they who hear not this word are unclean.

13. But do you, dearly beloved, if you are making ready your inward ear for this Voice of God that is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb, flee from outward cares, that with your inmost heart clear and free you also may say with Samuel, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth (1 Sam. 3:9). This Voice sounds not in the market-place, and is not heard in public. It is a secret purpose, and seeks to be heard in secret. It will of a surety give you joy and gladness in hearing it, if you listen with attentive ear. Once it ordered Abraham (Gen. 12:1) to get him out of his country and from his kindred, that he might see and possess the land of the living. Jacob (Gen. 32:10) left his brother and his home, and passed over Jordan with his staff, and was received in Rachel’s embrace (Gen. 29:11). Joseph was lord in Egypt (Gen. 37 and 41), having been torn by a fraudful purchase from his father and his home. Thus the Church is bidden, in

order that the King may have pleasure in her beauty, to forget her own people and her father's house (Ps. 45:11, 12). The boy Jesus was sought by His parents among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and was not found (S. Luke 2:44, 45). Do you also flee from your brethren, if you wish to find the way of salvation. Flee, I say, from the midst of Babylon, flee from before the sword of the north-wind. A bare sustenance I am ready to offer for the help of everyone that flees. You call me your abbot; I refuse not the title for obedience' sake—obedience, I say, not that I demand it, but that I render it in service to others, even as The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (S. Matt. 20:28). But if you deem me worthy, receive as your fellow-disciple him whom you choose for your master. For we both have one Master, Christ. And so let Him be the end of this Letter, who is The end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10:4).

LETTER CVIII

TO THOMAS OF ST. OMER, AFTER HE HAD BROKEN HIS PROMISE OF ADOPTING A CHANGE OF LIFE

He urges him to leave his studies and enter religion, and sets before him the miserable end of Thomas of Beverley.

To his dearly beloved son, THOMAS, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, that he may walk in the fear of the Lord.

1. You do well in acknowledging the debt of your promise, and in not denying your guilt in deferring its performance. But I beg you not to think simply of what you promised, but to whom you promised it. For I do not claim for myself any part of that promise which you made, in my presence, indeed, but not to me. Do not fear that I am going to reprove you on account of that deceptive delay: for I was summoned as the witness, not as the lord of your vow. I saw it and rejoiced; and my prayer is that my joy may be full—which it will not be until your promise is fulfilled. You have fixed a time which you ought not to have transgressed. You have transgressed it. What is that to me? To your own lord you shall stand or fall. I have determined, because the danger is so imminent, to deal with you neither by reproofs nor threats, but only by advice—and that only so far as you take it kindly. If you shall hear me, well. If not, I judge no man; there is One who seeketh and judgeth; for He who judgeth us is the Lord (1 Cor. 4:4). And I think for this cause you ought to fear and grieve the more, inasmuch as you have not lied unto men, but unto God. And though, as you wish, I spare

your shame before men, is that shamelessness to go unpunished before God? For what reason, pray, is there in feeling shame before the judgment of man and not fearing the face of God? For the face of the Lord is against them that do evil (Ps. 34:16). Do you, then, fear reproaches more than torments; and do you, who tremble at the tongue of flesh, despise the sword which devours the flesh? Are these the fine moral principles with which, as you write, you are being stored in the acquisition of knowledge, the ardour and love for which so heats and excites you that you do not fear to slight your sacred vow?

2. But, I pray you, what proof of virtue is it, what instance of self-control, what advance in knowledge, or artistic skill, to tremble with fear where no fear is needful, and to lay aside even the fear of the Lord. How much more wholesome the knowledge of Jesus and Him crucified—a knowledge, of course, not easy to acquire except for Him who is crucified to the world. You are mistaken, my son, quite mistaken, if you think that you can learn in the school of the teachers of this world that knowledge which only the disciples of Christ, that is, such as despise the world, attain; and that by the gift of God. This knowledge is taught, not by the reading of books, but by grace; not by the letter, but by the spirit; not by learning, but by the practice of the commandments of God: Sow, says the Prophet, to yourselves in righteousness, reap the hope of life, kindle for yourselves the light of knowledge (cf. Hos. 10:12). You see that the light of knowledge cannot be duly attained, except the seed of righteousness [first] enter the soul, so that from it may grow the grain of life, and not the mere husk of vain glory. What then? You have not yet sown to yourself in righteousness, and therefore you have not yet reaped the sheaves of hope; and do you pretend that you are acquiring the true knowledge? Perchance for the true there is being substituted that which puffeth up. You err foolishly, Spending thy money for that which is not bread, and thy labour for that which satisfieth not (Is. 55:2). I entreat you, return to the former wish of your heart, and realize that this year of delay which you have allowed to yourself has been a wrong to God; is not a year pleasing to the Lord, but a seedplot of discord, an incentive to wrath, a food of apostasy, such as must quench the Spirit, shut off grace, and produce that lukewarmness which is wont to provoke God to spue men out of His mouth (cf. Rev. 3:16).

3. Alas! I think that, as you are called by the same name, so you walk in the same spirit as that other Thomas, once, I mean, Provost of Beverley. For after devoting himself, like you, to our Order and House with all his heart, he began to beg for delay, and then by degrees to grow cold, until he openly ended by being

a Secular, an apostate, and, twofold more, a child of hell, and was cut off prematurely by a sudden and terrible death (S. Matt, 23:15)—a fate which, if it may be, let the pitiful and clement Lord avert. The letter which I wrote to him in vain still survives. I simply freed my own mind, by warning him, so far as I could, how it must soon end. How happy would he have been if he had taken my advice! He cloked his sin. I am clean from his blood. But that is not enough for me. For though in so acting I am quite at ease on my own account, yet that charity which seeketh not her own (1 Cor. 13:5) urges me to mourn for him who died not in safety, because he lived so carelessly. Oh! the great depth of the judgments of God! Oh! my God, terrible in Thy counsels over the sons of men! He bestowed the Spirit, whom he was soon again to withdraw, so that a man sinned a sin beyond measure, and grace found entrance that sin might abound; though this was the fault, not of the Giver, but of him who added the transgression. For it was the act of the man's own freewill (whereby, using badly his freedom, he had the power to grieve the free Spirit) to despise the grace instead of bringing to good effect the inspiration of God, so as to be able to say: His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain (1 Cor. 15:10).

4. If you are wise, you will let his folly profit you as a warning; you will wash your hands in the blood of the sinner, and take care to release yourself at once from the snare of perdition, and me from horrible fear on your account. For, I confess, I feel your erring steps as the rending of my heart, because you have become very dear to me, and I feel a father's affection for you. Therefore, at every remembrance of you that sword of fear pierces through my heart the more sharply, as I consider that you have too little fear and uneasiness. I know where I have read of such: For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape (1 Thess. 5:3). Yea, I foresee that many fearful consequences threaten you if you still delay to be wise. For I have had much experience; and Oh! that you would share and profit by it. So believe one who has had experience; believe one who loves you. For if you know for the one reason that I am not deceived, for the other you know also that I am not capable of deceiving you.

LETTER CIX

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS YOUTH, GEOFFREY DE PERRONE, AND HIS COMRADES

He pronounces the youths noble because they purpose to lead the religious life, and exhorts them to perseverance.

To his beloved sons, GEOFFREY and his companions, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes the spirit of counsel and strength.

1. The news of your conversion that has got abroad is edifying many, nay, is making glad the whole Church of God, so that The heavens rejoice and the earth is glad (Ps. 96:2), and every tongue glorifies God. The earth shook and the heavens dropped at the presence of the God of Sinai (cf. Ps. 68:8, 9), raining on those days more abundantly than usual a gracious rain which God keeps for His inheritance (Ps. 67:9, 10, VULG.). Never more will the cross of Christ appear void of effect in you, as in many sons of disobedience, who, delaying from day to day to turn to God, are seized by sudden death, and go down straightway to hell. We see flourish again under our eyes the wood whereon the Lord of Glory hung, who died not for His own nation only, “But also that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad (S. John 11:52).” He, yes, He Himself draws you, who loves you as His own flesh, as the most precious fruit of His cross, as the most worthy recompense of the blood He shed. If, then, the Angels Rejoice over one sinner that repenteth (S. Luke 15:10), how great must be their joy over so many, and those, too, sinners. The more illustrious they seemed for rank, for learning, for birth, for youth, the wider was their influence as examples of perdition. I had read, Not many noble, not many wise, not many mighty hath God chosen (1 Cor. 1:26, 27). But to-day, through a miracle of Divine power, a multitude of such is converted. They hold present glory cheap, they spurn the charm of youth, they take no account of high birth, they regard the wisdom of the world as foolishness, they rest not in flesh and blood, they renounce the love of parents and friends, they reckon favours and honours and dignities as dung that they may gain Christ. I should praise you if I knew that this, your lot, were your own doing. But it is the finger of God, clearly a change due to the right hand of the Most High (cf. Ps. 77:10 VULG., 76:11). Your conversion is a good gift and a perfect gift, without doubt descending from the Father of lights (S. James 1:17). And so to Him we rightly bring every voice of praise who only doeth marvellous things, who hath caused that plenteous redemption that is in Him to be no longer without effect in you.

2. What, then, dearly beloved, remains for you to do, except to make sure that your praiseworthy purpose attain the end it deserves? Strive, therefore, for perseverance, the only virtue that receives the crown. Let there not be found among you Yea and Nay (2 Cor. 1:18, sq.), that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in Heaven, with whom, you know, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (S. James 1:17). You also, brethren, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). Take heed with all watchfulness not to be yourselves found light, inconstant, or wavering. For it is written, A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways (S. James 1:8), and again, Woe be … to the sinner that goeth two ways (Ecclus. 2:12). And for myself, dearly beloved, I congratulate you, and myself not less, for, as I hear, I have been reckoned worthy of being chosen to have a part in this, your good purpose. I both give you my counsel and promise my help. If I am thought necessary, or, rather, if I be deemed worthy, I do not decline the task, and so far as in me lies will not fail you. With eager devotion I submit my shoulders to this burden, old though they be, since it is laid on me from heaven. With a glad heart and open arms, as they say, I welcome the fellow-citizens of the saints and servants of God. How gladly, according to the prophet's command, do I assist with my bread those that flee from the face of the sword, and bring water to the thirsty (cf. Is. 21:14). The rest I have left to the lips of my, or rather your, Geoffrey. Whatsoever he shall say to you in my stead, that, doubt not, is my counsel.

LETTER CX

A CONSOLATORY LETTER TO THE PARENTS OF GEOFFREY

There is no reason to mourn a son as lost who is a religious, still less to fear for his delicacy of constitution.

1. If God makes your son His son also, what do you lose or what does he himself lose? Being rich he becomes richer; being already high born, of still nobler lineage; being illustrious, he gains greater renown; and—what is more than all—once a sinner he is now a saint. He must be prepared for the Kingdom that has been prepared for him from the beginning of the world; and for this end, the short time that he has to live he must spend with us; until he has scraped off the filth of the worldly life, and wiped away the earthly dust, and at last is fit for the heavenly mansion. If you love your son, of course you will rejoice, because he goes to His Father and to such a Father as He. Yea, he goes to God. But you lose him not: nay, rather through him you gain many sons. For all of us who are in or

of Clairvaux, acknowledge him as a brother and you as parents.

2. But perchance you fear the effect of a severe life upon his body, which you know to be frail and delicate. But of such fear it is said, “There were they brought in great fear where no fear was” (Ps. 53:5). Reassure yourselves, and be comforted. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son, until the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation (cf. Rom. 15:5) receive him from my hands. So do not mourn; do not weep. For your Geoffrey is hastening to joy and not to grief. I will be to him father, mother, brother, and sister. I will make the crooked straight for him and the rough ways smooth (cf. S. Luke 3:5). I will so order and arrange everything for him that his soul shall profit and his body not suffer loss. Moreover, he shall serve the Lord in joy and gladness, and shall sing in the ways of the Lord that great is the glory of the Lord (Ps. 138:5).

LETTER CXI

IN THE PERSON OF ELIAS, A MONK, TO HIS PARENTS

He exhorts them not to try to hinder him in or draw him back from his wish to serve God. Such attempt would be unworthy and useless.

ELIAS, a monk, but a sinner withal, to his dear parents INGORRAN and IVETTE, with his daily prayers.

1. There is only one circumstance in which it would be wrong to obey parents, and that is when God forbids it. For He Himself says: “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (S. Matt. 10:37). If you love me in truth like good and affectionate parents: if you have a true and faithful affection towards your son, why are you restless at my hastening to please God, the Father of all? and why do you try to withdraw me from His service, whom to serve is to reign? Truly now I see how a man’s enemies are the men of his own house (Micah 7:6). Herein I must not obey you; herein I own you not as parents, but as foes. If you loved me, surely you would rejoice because I go to my Father and your Father, nay, to the Father of all. Besides, what is there common between me and you? What have I from you but sin and misery? It is only this corruptible body which I wear that I confess and own to have from you. Is it not enough for you unhappy ones, to have brought me unhappy into the unhappiness of this world; for you sinners, to have given birth in your sin to me a sinner; to have reared in sin a son born in sin; but you must, by grudging me the compassion which I have gained from Him who willeth not the death of a sinner, make me besides all this, a child of Hell?

2. O, stern father! O, harsh mother! O, parents cruel and void of affection—nay, not parents at all, but murderers, whose only grief is the salvation of their offspring, whose only comfort the death of their son, who would rather I should perish with them than reign without them! They are trying to call me back again to the wreck from which I at last escaped, naked; back to the fire from which with much difficulty I have emerged, half-burnt; back to the robbers by whom I was left half-dead, but from whom, through the compassion of the Good Samaritan, I have now a little recovered. Aye, and in the moment of triumph, when the soldier of Christ has almost carried the citadel of heaven—I boast not in myself but in Him who has conquered the world—they strive to bring him back to the world from the very threshold of glory, as it were a dog to his vomit, a sow to her wallowing in the mire. What monstrous treatment! The house is in flames, the fire presses on from behind. He who would flee is prevented from going out; he who would escape is persuaded to return! And that by those who are set in the midst of the conflagration, and who, out of sheer obstinate infatuation and infatuated obstinacy, will not flee from the danger! What madness! If you think nothing of your own death, why do you also wish for mine? If, I say, you neglect your own salvation, what pleasure is it to put hindrance in the way of mine? Why not rather follow me in my flight, that you may escape the flames? But, perhaps, it lightens your torment if you drag me also into your ruin; and your only fear is to perish by yourselves? What solace will the burning of one man be able to afford to others in like case? What comfort, I ask, is it to the damned to have partners in their damnation? What remedy is it to the dying to see others dying? That is not the belief that I learn from the rich man of Scripture, who, being in torments (cf. S. Luke 16:28) and despairing of freedom for himself, asked that a message might be sent to his brethren, lest they also should come to the same place of torment. Doubtless he feared that his own suffering would be increased by that of his kindred.

3. What then? Shall I go and console my sorrowing mother by a short visit in time, simply that in eternity I may sorrow both for myself and her without consolation? Shall I go, I say, and make amends to my angry father for my absence in time, and myself find comfort for a time in his presence, that afterwards each for himself and either for other we may be abandoned to an inconsolable grief? Were it not better to follow the example of the Apostle, and, Conferring not with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:16), to listen to the voice of the Lord, who commands, Let the dead bury their dead? (S. Matt. 8:22). Shall I not sing with David, My soul refused comfort (Ps. 77:2), and with Jeremiah, Neither

have I desired the woeful day, thou knowest? (Jer. 17:16). For why? The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground; yea, I have a goodly heritage (Ps. 16:7). Am I, then, tricked by an earthly promise, or charmed by some fleshly comfort? When men have tasted of spiritual dainties, needs must that those of the flesh seem tasteless. Set your affections on things above, and things below are insipid; yearn after things eternal, and you scorn things transient. Cease, then, my dear parents, cease to trouble yourselves with vain laments and to disturb me to no purpose by calling me back; lest, if you keep on sending messengers about me, you compel me to withdraw still more. But if you abandon [me], I shall never abandon Clairvaux: This shall be my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein (Ps. 132:15). Here will I pray instantly for your sins and mine; here with constant prayers will I obtain, if I can, what you also desire, that we, who for love of Him are separated from each other for this short life, may in the happy and indissoluble fellowship of another world live in His love for ever and ever. Amen.

LETTER CXII

TO GEOFFREY, OF LISIEUX

He grieves at his having abandoned his purpose to enter the religious life and returned to the world. He exhorts him to be wise again.

1. I am grieved for you, my son Geoffrey, I am grieved for you. And not without reason. For who would not grieve that the flower of your youth, which, amid the joy of angels, you offered unimpaired to God for the odour of a sweet smell (Phil. 4:18), should now be trampled under the feet of devils, stained by the filthiness of vice and the uncleanness of the world? How can you, who once wast called by God, follow the devil who calls you back? How is it that you, whom Christ began to draw after Himself, have suddenly withdrawn your foot from the very threshold of glory? In you I now have proof of the truth of the Lord’s word, when He said: A man’s foes shall be they of his own household (S. Matt. 10:36). Your friends and kinsfolk have approached and stood against you. They have called you back into the jaws of the lion, and have placed you once more in the gates of death. They have placed you in dark places, like the dead of this world; and now it is a matter for little surprise that you are descending into the belly of hell, which is hasting to swallow you up, and to give you over as a prey to be devoured by those who roar in their hunger.

2. Return, I pray you; return before the deep swallow thee up and the pit shut

her mouth upon thee (Ps. 69:16); before you sink whence you shall never more rise; before you be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (S. Matt. 22:13); before you be thrust down to the place of darkness and covered with the gloom of death. Perhaps you blush to return, because you gave way for an hour. Blush, indeed, for your flight, but do not blush to return to the battle after your flight, and to fight again. The fight is not over yet. Not yet have the opposing lines drawn off from each other. Victory is still in your power. If you will, we are unwilling to conquer without you, and we do not grudge to you your share of glory. I will even gladly come to meet you and gladly welcome you with open arms, saying: It is meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found (S. Luke 15:32).

LETTER CXIII

TO THE VIRGIN SOPHIA

He praises her for having despised the glory of the world: and, setting forth the praises, privileges, and rewards of Religious Virgins, exhorts her to persevere.

BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, to the Virgin SOPHIA, that she may keep the title of virginity and attain its reward.

1. Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised (Prov. 31:31). I rejoice with you, my daughter, in the glory of your virtue, whereby, as I hear, you have been enabled to reject the deceitful glory of the world. That, indeed, deserves rejection and disdain. But whereas many who in other respects are wise, are in their estimation of worldly glory become foolish, you deserve to be praised for not being deceived. It is as the flower of the grass—(James 1:10)—a vapour that appeareth for a little time (S. James 4:14). And every degree of that glory is without doubt more full of care than joy. At one time you have claims to advance, at another, yourself to defend; you envy others, or are suspicious of them; you are continually aiming to acquire what you do not possess, and the passion for acquiring is not satisfied even by success; and as long as this is the case, what rest is there in your glory? But if any there be, its enjoyment quickly passes, never to return; while care remains, never to leave. Besides, see how many fail to attain that enjoyment, and yet how few despise it. Why so? Just because though many of necessity endure it [i.e., the deprivation of pleasure], yet but few make of doing so a virtue. Few, I say, very few, and particularly of the nobly-born. Indeed, not many noble are called;

but God hath chosen the base things of the world (1 Cor. 1:26–28). You are, then, blessed and privileged among women of your rank in that, while others strive in rivalry for worldly glory, you by your contempt of this glory are raised to a greater height of glory, and are elevated by glory of a higher kind. Certainly you are the more renowned and illustrious for having made yourself voluntarily humble than for your birth in a high rank. For the one is your own achievement by the grace of God, the other is the doing of your ancestors. And that which is your own is the more precious, as it is the most rare. For if among men virtue is rare—a "rare bird on the earth"—how much rarer is it in the case of a weak woman of high birth? Who can find a virtuous woman? (Prov. 31:10). Much more "a virtuous woman" of high birth as well. Although God is not by any moans an accepter of persons, yet, I know not how, virtue is more pleasing in those of noble birth. Perhaps that may be because it is more conspicuous. For if a man is of mean birth and is devoid of glory, it is not easily clear whether he lacks virtue because he does not wish for it or because he cannot attain it. I honour virtue won under stress of necessity. But I honour more the virtue which a free choice adopts than that which necessity imposes.

2. Let other women, then, who have not any other hope, contend for the cheap, fleeting, and paltry glory of things that vanish and deceive. Do you cling to the hope that confounds not. Do you keep yourself, I say, for that far more exceeding weight of glory, which our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh (2 Cor. 4:17) for you on high. And if the daughters of Belial reproach you, those who walk with stretched forth necks mincing as they go (Isaiah 3:16), decked out and adorned like the Temple, answer them: My kingdom is not of this world (S. John 18:36); answer them: My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready (S. John 7:6); answer them: My glory is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3); When Christ, who is my life, shall appear, then shall I also appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). And yet if one needs must glory, you also may glory freely and fearlessly, only in the Lord. I omit the crown which the Lord hath prepared for you for ever. I say nothing of the promises which await you hereafter, that as a happy bride you are to be admitted to behold with open face the glory of your Bridegroom; that He will present you to Himself a glorious bride, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:27); that He will receive you in an everlasting embrace, will place His left hand under your head and His right hand shall embrace you (Cant. 2:6). I pass over the appointed place, which being set apart by the prerogative of virginity, you shall without doubt gain among sons and daughters in the kingdom. I say nothing of that new

song which you, a virgin among virgins, shall likewise sing in tones of unrivalled sweetness, rejoicing therein and making glad the city of God, singing and running and following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. In fact, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which He hath prepared (1 Cor. 2:9) for you, and for which it behoves you to be prepared.

3. All this I omit, that is laid up for you hereafter. I speak only of the present, of those things which you already have, of the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:23), the gifts of the Bridegroom, the earnest money of the espousals, the blessings of goodness (Ps. 21:3), wherewith he hath prevented you, whom you may expect to follow after you, and complete what still is lacking. Let Him, yea let Him, come forth to be beheld in His great beauty, so adorned as to be admired of the very angels, and if the daughters of Babylon, whose glory is in their shame (Phil. 3:19), have aught like Him, let them bring it forth, Though they be clothed in purple and fine linen (S. Luke 16:19). Yet their souls are in rags; they have sparkling necklaces, but tarnished minds. You, on the other hand, though ragged without, are all glorious within (Ps. 45:14), though to Divine and not human gaze. Within you have that which delights you, for He is within whom it delights; for certainly you do not doubt that you have Christ dwelling in your heart by faith (Eph. 3:17). In truth, The King's daughter is all glorious within (Ps. 45:14). Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, because the King hath desired thy beauty; if thou art clothed with confession and honour (Ps. 104:1, VULG.), and deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment—For confession and worship are before Him (Ps. 96:6, VULG.). Before whom? Him who is fairer than the sons of men (Ps. 45:3), even Him whom the angels desire to look upon.

4. You hear, then, to whom you are pleasing. Love that which enables you to please, love "confession," if you desire "honour." "Confession" is the handmaid of "honour," the handmaid of "worship." Both are for you. "Thou art clothed with confession and honour," and "Confession and worship are before Him." In truth, where confession is, there is worship, and there is honour. If there are sins, they are washed away in confession; if there are good works, they are commended by confession. When you confess your faults, it is a sacrifice to God of a troubled spirit; when you confess the benefits of God, you offer to God the sacrifice of praise. Confession is a fair ornament of the soul, which both cleanses a sinner and makes the righteous more thoroughly cleansed. Without confession the righteous is deemed ungrateful, and the sinner accounted dead. Confession

perisheth from the dead as from one that is not (Ecclus. 18:28). Confession, therefore, is the life of the sinner, the glory of the righteous. It is necessary to the sinner, it is equally proper to the righteous. For it becometh well the just to be thankful (Ps. 33:1). Silk and purple and rouge and paint have beauty, but impart it not. Every such thing that you apply to the body exhibits its own loveliness, but leaves it not behind. It takes the beauty with it, when the thing itself is taken away. For the beauty that is put on with a garment and is put off with the garment, belongs without doubt to the garment, and not to the wearer of it.

5. Do not you, therefore, emulate those evil disposed persons who, as mendicants, seek an extraneous beauty when they have lost their own. They only betray how destitute they are of any proper and native beauty, when at such great labour and cost they study to furnish themselves outside with the many and various graces of the fashion of the world which passeth away, just that they may appear graceful in the eyes of fools. Deem it a thing unworthy of you to borrow your attractiveness from the furs of animals and the toils of worms; let your own suffice you. For that is the true and proper beauty of anything, which it has in itself without the aid of any substance besides. Oh! how lovely the flush with which the jewel of inborn modesty colours a virgin’s cheeks! Can the earrings of queens be compared to this? And self-discipline confers a mark of equal beauty. How self-discipline calms the whole aspect of a maiden’s bearing, her whole temper of mind. It bows the neck, smooths the proud brows, composes the countenance, restrains the eyes, represses laughter, checks the tongue, tempers the appetite, assuages wrath, and guides the deportment. With such pearls of modesty should your robe be decked. When virginity is girt with divers colours such as these, is there any glory to which it is not rightly preferred? The Angelic? An angel has virginity, indeed, but not flesh; and in that respect his happiness exceeds his virtue. Surely that adornment is best and most desirable which even an angel might envy.

6. There remains still one more remark to be made about the adornment of the Christian virgin. The more peculiarly your own it is, the more secure it remains to you. You see women of the world burdened, rather than adorned, with gold, silver, precious stones; in short, with all the raiment of a palace. You see how they draw long trains behind them, and those of the most costly materials, and raise thick clouds of dust into the air. Let not such things disturb you. They must lay them aside when they come to die; but the holiness which is your possession will not forsake you. The things which they wear are really not their own. When they die they can take nothing with them, nor will this their glory go down with

them. The world, whose such things are, will keep them and dismiss the wearers naked; and will beguile with them others equally vain. But that adornment of yours is not of such sort. As I said, you may be quite sure that it will not leave you, because it is your own. You cannot be deprived of it by the violence, nor defrauded of it by the deceit of any man. Against such possessions the cunning of the thief and the cruelty of the tyrant avail nothing. It is not eaten of moths, nor corrupted by age, nor spent by use. It lives on even in death. Indeed, it belongs to the soul and not to the body; and for this reason it leaves the body together with the soul, and does not perish with the body. And even those who kill the body have absolutely nothing that they can do to the soul.

LETTER CXIV

TO ANOTHER HOLY VIRGIN

Under a religious habit she had continued to have a spirit given up to the world, and Bernard praises her for coming to a sense of her duty; he exhorts her not to neglect the grace given to her.

1. It is the source of great joy to me to hear that you are willing to strive after that true and perfect joy, which belongs not to earth but to heaven; that is, not to this vale of tears, but to that city of God which the rivers of the flood thereof make glad (Ps. 46:4). And in very truth that is the true and only joy which is won, not from the creature, but from the Creator; which, if once you possess it, no man shall take from you. For, compared with it, all joy from other sources is sorrow, all pleasure is pain, all sweetness is bitter, all beauty is mean, everything else, in fine, whatever may have power to please, is irksome. Indeed, you are my witness in this matter. Ask yourself, for you will believe yourself more readily. Does not the Holy Spirit proclaim this very truth in your heart? Have you not been persuaded of the truth hereof by Him long before I spoke? For how would you, being a woman, or rather a young girl so fair and ingenuous, have thus overcome the weakness of your sex and years; how could you thus hold cheap your extreme beauty and noble birth, unless all such things as are subject to the bodily senses were already vile in your eyes, in comparison with those which inwardly strengthen you to overcome the earthly, and charm you to prefer things heavenly?

2. And this is right. Poor and transient and earthly are the things which you despise, but the things you wish for are grand, heavenly, and everlasting. I will say still more, and still speak the truth. You leave the darkness to approach the

light; you come forth from the depth of the sea and gain the harbour; you breathe again in happy freedom after a wretched slavery; in a word, you pass from death to life; though up till now, living according to your own will and not God's, to your own law and not that of God, while living you were dead—living to the world, but dead to God; or rather, to speak more truly, living neither to the world nor to God. For when you wished while wearing the habit and name of religion to live like one in the world, you alone had rejected God from you by your own wish. But when you could not effect your foolish wish, then it was not you that rejected the world, but the world you. And so, rejecting God and rejected by the world, you had fallen between two stools, as they say. You were not living unto God, because you would not, nor to the world, because you could not: you were anxious for one, unwelcome to the other, and yet dead to both. So it must happen to those who promise and do not perform, who make one show to the world, and in their hearts desire something else. But now, by the mercy of God, you are beginning to live again, not to sin, but to righteousness, not to the world, but to Christ, knowing that to live to the world is death, and even to die in Christ is life. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13).

3. So from this time I shall not mention again your unfulfilled vow, nor your disregard of your profession. From henceforth your purity of body will not be impaired by a corrupt mind, nor your name of virgin disgraced by disorderly conduct; from henceforth the name you bear will not be a deception, nor the veil you wear meaningless. For why hitherto have you been addressed as "nun" and "holy virgin" when, professing holiness, you did not live holily? Why did you let the veil on your head give a false impression of the reverence due to you, while your eye launched burning and passionate glances? Your head was clothed, indeed, with a veil, but it was lifted up with pride, and though you were under the symbol of modesty, your speech sounded far from modest. Your immoderate laughter, unreserved demeanour, and showy dress would have accorded better with the wimple than the veil. But behold now, at the bidding of Christ, the old things have passed away, and all things begin to be made new, since you are changing the care of the body for that of the soul, and are desirous of a beautiful life more than beautiful raiment. You are doing what you ought to do, or rather what you ought to have done long ago, for long ago you had vowed to do it. But the Spirit, who breathes not only where He will but when He will, had not then breathed on you, and so, perhaps, you are to be excused for what you have done hitherto. But if you suffer the ardent zeal wherewith, beyond a doubt, your heart is now hot again, and the divine flame that burns in your thoughts, to be

quenched, what remains for you but the certain knowledge that you must be destined for that flame which cannot be quenched. Nay, let the same Spirit rather quench in you all carnal affections, lest haply (which God forbid!) the holy desires of your soul, solate conceived, should be stifled by them, and you yourself be cast into hell fire.

LETTER CXV

TO ANOTHER HOLY VIRGIN OF THE CONVENT OF S. MARY OF TROYES

He dissuades her from the rash and imprudent design which she had in her mind of retiring into some solitude.

1. I am told that you are wishing to leave your convent, impelled by a longing for a more ascetic life, and that after spending all their efforts to dissuade and prevent you, seeing that you paid no heed to them, your spiritual mother or your sisters, determined at length to seek my advice on the matter, so that whatever course I approved, that you might feel it your duty to adopt. You ought, of course, to have chosen some more learned man as an adviser; yet since it is my advice you desire to have, I do not conceal from you what I think the better course. Ever since I learnt your wish, though I have been turning the matter over in my mind, I cannot easily venture to decide what temper of mind suggested it. For you may in this thing have a zeal towards God, so that your purpose maybe excusable. But how such a wish as yours can be fulfilled consistently with prudence I entirely fail to see. “Why so?” you ask. “Is it not wise for me to flee from wealth and the throng of cities, and from the good cheer and pleasure of life? Shall I not keep my purity more safely in the desert, where I can live in peace with just a few, or even alone, and please Him alone to whom I have pledged myself?” By no means. If one would live in an evil manner, the desert brings abundant opportunity: the wood a protecting shade, and solitude silence. The evil that no one sees, no one reproves. Where no critic is feared, there the tempter gains easier access, there wickedness is more readily committed. It is otherwise in a convent. If you do anything good no one prevents you, but if you would do evil you are hindered by many obstacles. If you yield to temptation, it is at once known to many, and is reproved and corrected. So, on the other hand, when you are seen to do anything good, all admire, revere, and copy it. You see, then, my daughter, that in a convent a larger renown awaits your good deeds, and a more speedy rebuke your faults, because there are others there to whom you may set an example by good deeds and whom you will offend by evil.

2. But I will take away from you every excuse for your error, by that alternative in the parable we read in the Gospel. Either you are one of the foolish virgins, if, indeed, you are a virgin, or one of the wise (S. Matt. 25:1–12). If you are one of the foolish, the convent is necessary to you; if of the wise, you are necessary to the convent. For if you are wise and well-approved, without doubt the reform which, though newly introduced into that place, has already won universal praise, will be greatly discredited, and, I fear, be weakened by your departure. It will not fail to be said that, being good yourself, you would not desert a house where the Rule was well carried out. If you have been known to be foolish, and you go away, we shall say that since you are not suffered to live an evil life among good companions, you could not endure longer the society of holy women, and are seeking a dwelling where you may live in your own way. And we shall be quite right. For before the reform of the Rule you never, I am told, were wont to talk of this plan; but no sooner did observances become stricter, than you, too, became suddenly holier, and in hot haste to think of the desert. I see, my daughter, I see in this, and I would you also saw as I do, the serpent's venom, the guile of the crafty one, and the trickery of his changing skin. The wolf dwells in the wood. If a poor little sheep like you should enter the shades of the wood alone you would be simply seeking to be his prey. But listen to me, my daughter; listen to my faithful warning. Whether sinner or saint, do not separate yourself from the flock, lest the enemy seize upon you, and there be none to deliver you. Are you a saint? Strive by your example to gain associates in sanctity. A sinner? Do not add sin to sin, but do penance where you are, lest by departing, not without danger, as I have shown, to yourself, you bring scandal upon your sisters, and provoke the tongues of many scoffers against you.

LETTER CXVI

TO ERMENGARDE, FORMERLY COUNTESS OF BRITTANY

He gently and tenderly assures her that he has for her all the sentiments of pure and religious affection.

To his beloved daughter in Christ, ERMENGARDE, once the most noble Countess, now the humble handmaid of Christ, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, offers the pious affection of holy love.

Would that, as I now open this page before me, so I could open my mind to you! Oh! that you could read in my heart what God has deigned to write there with His own finger concerning my affection for you! Then, indeed, you might

understand, how no tongue or pen can suffice to express, what the spirit of God hath been able to impress on my inmost heart! And even now I am present with you in the spirit, though absent in the body. It is neither in your power nor mine to be in the presence of the other. Yet you have with you the means whereby you may not yet know, but at any rate guess what I mean. Within your own heart behold mine; and ascribe to me as great affection toward you as you know to be in yourself towards me. Yet do not think that you have more for me than I for you; nor have a better opinion of your own heart than of mine, in respect of affection. Besides, you are too humble and modest not to believe that He who has brought you so to love me and to follow my counsel for your salvation has inspired me also with feelings of affectionate concern for you. So you are thinking how you may keep me with you; and I, to confess the truth, am nowhere without you or away from you. I was anxious to write this short note to you about my journey while on the way, hoping to send you a longer one when I have more leisure, if God will.

LETTER CXVII

TO THE SAME

He commends her readiness in God’s service, and expresses his desire to see her.

I have received the joy of my heart, good news from you. I am happy to hear of your happiness; and your ready service, now so well known, makes me quite easy in mind. This great happiness comes in no way from flesh and blood, for you are living in lowliness instead of state, in mean, not high place, in poverty instead of wealth. You are deprived of the consolation of living in your own country, and of the society of your brother and your son. Without doubt, then, the willing devotion that hath been born in you is the work of the Holy Spirit. You have long since conceived by the fear of God the design of labouring for your salvation, and have at last brought your design to execution, the spirit of love casting out fear in your soul. How much more gladly would I be present to say this to you, than be absent and write! Believe me, I am annoyed at my business, which constantly seems to hinder me from the sight of you; and I hail with joy the chances, which I seldom seem to get, of seeing you. Such opportunities are rare; but, I confess, their very rarity makes them sweet. For, indeed, it is better to see you just sometimes than never at all. I hope to come unto you shortly; and I already offer you a foretaste of the joy that shall shortly come in full.

LETTER CXVIII

TO BEATRICE, A NOBLE AND RELIGIOUS LADY

He commends her love and anxious care.

I wonder at your zealous devotion and loving affection towards me. I ask, excellent lady, what can possibly inspire in you such great interest and solicitude for us? If we had been sons or grandsons, if we had been united to you by the most distant tie of relationship, your constant kindnesses, frequent visits, in a word, the numberless proofs of your affection that we experience daily, would seem to deserve, not so much our wonder, as our acceptance as a matter of obligation. But as, in common with the rest of mankind, we recognize in you only a great lady, and not a mother, the wonder is not that we should wonder at your goodness, but that we can wonder sufficiently. For who of our kinsfolk and acquaintance takes care of us? Who ever asks of our health? Who, I ask, is, I will not say anxious, but even mindful of us in the world? We are become, as it were, a broken vessel to friends, relatives, and neighbours. You alone cannot forget us. You ask of the state and condition of my health, of the journey I have just accomplished, of the monks whom I have transferred to another place. Of them I may briefly reply, that out of a desert land, from a place of grim and vast solitude, they have been brought into a place where nothing is wanting to them, neither possessions, nor buildings, nor friends; into a rich land and a lovely dwelling-place. I left them happy and peaceful; in happiness and peace, too, I returned; except that for a few days I was troubled with so severe a return of fever that I was in fear of death. But by God’s mercy I soon got well again, so that now I think I am stronger and better after my journey is over than before it began.

LETTER CXIX

TO THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF LORRAINE

He thanks them for having hitherto remitted customs [or tolls], but asks that they will see that their princely liberality is not interfered with by the efforts of their servants.

To the Duke and Duchess of LORRAINE, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting, and prays that they may so lovingly and purely rejoice in each other’s affection that the love of Christ alone may be supreme in them both.

Ever since the needs of our Order obliged me to send for necessaries into your

land I have found great favour and kindness in the eyes of your Grace. You freely displayed the blessings of your bounty on our people when they needed it. You freely remitted to them when travelling their toll, the dues on their purchases, and any other legal due of yours. For all these things your reward is surely great in heaven, if, indeed, we believe that to be true which the Lord promises in His Gospel: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me (S. Matt. 25:40). But why is it that you allow your servants to take away again what you bestow? It seems to me that it is worthy of you and for your honour, that when you have been pleased to bestow anything for the safety of your souls no one should venture to demand it back again. If, then (which God forbid), you do not repent of your good deed, and your general intention in respect to us is still the same, be pleased to order it to be a firm and unshaken rule; that henceforward our brethren may never fear to be disturbed in this matter by any of your servants. But otherwise we do not refuse to follow our Lord's example, who did not disdain to pay the dues. We also are ready willingly to render to Cæsar the tilings that are Cæsar's (S. Matt. 17:26), custom to whom custom, and tribute to whom tribute is due (Rom. 13:7), especially because, according to the Apostle, we ought not to seek our gift so much as your gain (Phil. 4:17).

LETTER CXX

TO THE DUCHESS OF LORRAINE

He thanks her for kindnesses shown, and deters her from an unjust war.

I thank God for your pious goodwill which I know that you have towards Him and His servants. For whenever the tiniest little spark of heavenly love is kindled in a worldly heart ennobled with earthly honours, that, without doubt, is God's gift, not man's virtue. For our part we are very glad to avail ourselves of the kind offers made to us of your bounty in your letter. But having heard of the sudden and serious stress of business, which, of course, must be delaying you at this time, we think it meet to await your opportunity as it shall please you. For, as far as in me lies, I would not be a burden to anyone, particularly in things pertaining to God, where we ought to seek not so much the profit of the gift as advantage abounding to the giver. And so, if you please, name a day and place in your answer by this messenger, when, by God's help, having brought to an end the business which now occupies, you will be able to approach these regions, where our brother Wido will meet you, so that if he finds anything in your country

profitable for our Order you may fulfil your promise with greater ease and speed. For God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7). Otherwise, if perchance the delay please you not, let me know this also: for in this matter I am ready, as reason allows, to obey your wishes. I salute the Duke, your husband, through your mouth, and I venture to urge him and you both, if you know that the castle for which you are going to war does not belong to your rightful domain, for the love of God to let it alone. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? (S. Matt. 16:26).

LETTER CXXI

TO THE DUCHESS OF BURGUNDY

He tries to appease her anger against Hugo, and asks her assent to a certain marriage.

The special friendship with which your Grace is pleased, as it is supposed, to honour me, a poor monk, is so widely known that whenever anyone thinks your Grace has him in displeasure, he applies to me as the best medium for being restored to your favour. Hence it is that some time ago, when I was at Dijon, Hugo de Bèse urged me with many entreaties to appease your displeasure, which he had deserved, and to obtain, for the love of God, and by your kindness towards me, your assent to the marriage of his son, which, though it did not meet with your approval, he had irrevocably determined to make, since it was, as he thinks, an advantage to himself. And for this reason he has been besieging my ears, not as before, by his own prayers, but by the lips of his friends. Now, I do not much care about worldly advantages, but since the matter, as he himself says, seems to have reached such a narrow pass that he cannot prevent the marriage except by perjuring himself, I have thought it meet to tell you this, since that must be a serious object which should be preferred to the good faith of a Christian man and your servant. For he cannot be perjured and yet at the same time keep faith with his Prince. Aye, and I see not only no gain to you, but also much danger arising, if those whom perhaps God has determined to join together should be put asunder by you. May the Lord grant His grace to you, most noble lady, so dear to me in Christ, and to your children. Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Spend your corn on Christ’s poor, that in eternity you may receive it with usury.

LETTER CXXII. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

HILDEBERT, ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS, TO THE ABBOT BERNARD

The reputation of Bernard for sanctity induces Hildebert to write to him and ask for his friendship.

1. Few, I believe, are ignorant that balsam is known by its scent, and the tree by its fruit. So, dearly beloved brother, there has reached even to me the report of you—how you are steadfast in holiness, and sound in doctrine. For though I am far separated from you by distance of place, yet the report has come even to me. What pleasant nights you spend with your Rachel; how abundant an offspring is born to you of Leah; how you show yourself wholly a follower of virtue, and an enemy of the flesh. Whoever speaks to me of you has this one tale to tell. Such is the perfume of your name, like that of balm, poured out; such are already the rewards of your merit. These are the ears that you are gathering from your field before the last great harvest. For in this life some reward of virtue is to be found in the notable and undying tribute paid to it. This it wins unaided, and keeps unaided. Its renown is not diminished by envy, nor increased by the favour of men. As the esteem of good men cannot be taken away by false accusations, so it cannot be won by the attentions of flattery. It rests with the individual himself either to advance that esteem by fruitfulness in virtue, or to detract from it by deficiency. The whole Church, I am quite sure, hopes that your renown will be for ever sustained, since it is believed to be founded upon a strong rock.

2. As for me, having heard this report of you everywhere, with desire I have desired to be received into the inmost shrine of your friendship, and to be held in remembrance in your prayers when stealing yourself from converse with mortals you speak on behalf of mortals to the King of Angels. Now, this my desire was much increased by Gébuin, Archdeacon of Troyes, a man eminent as well for his piety as for his learning. I should have thought it my duty to commend him to you, if I were not sure that those whom you deem worthy of your favour need no further commendation. I wish, however, that you should know that it was through his information I learnt that you are in the Church, one who art fit to be a teacher of virtue, both by precept and example. But not to burden you with too long a letter, I bring my writing to an end, though end the above petition I will not until I have the happiness to obtain what I have asked. I beg you to tell me by a letter in reply how you are disposed with regard to it.

LETTER CXXIII. (Circa A.D. 1130.)

REPLY OF THE ABBOT BERNARD TO HILDEBERT, ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS

He repays his praises with praises.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things. Your letter so redounded to your honour, as well as to mine, that I gladly welcomed it, Most Reverend Sir, as giving me an occasion of addressing to you the praises of which you are so well worthy, and as affording me just satisfaction that you have done me so much honour as that your Highness should deign to stoop to me, and to show so much esteem for my humble person. Indeed, for one in high place not to be studious of high things, but to condescend to those of low estate, is a thing than which there is nothing more pleasing to God or more rare among men. Who is the wise man, except he who listens to the counsel of Wisdom, which says: The greater thou art, the more humble thyself (Ecclus. 3:18) before all. This humility you have shown towards me, the greater towards the less, an elder to a younger. I, too, could extol your proved wisdom in due praises, perhaps more just than those of which your wisdom deemed me worthy. It is of great importance in order to gain assured knowledge of things, to rely on exact acquaintance with facts, rather than on the uncertain testimony of public rumour; and then what we have proved for certain we may proclaim without hesitation. What you were pleased to write to me about myself, it is for you to ascertain. I find an undoubted proof of your own merit in your letter, though it be so full of my praises. For though another, perhaps, might be pleased with the marks of learning therein, with its sweet and graceful language, its clear style, its easy and commendable art, I place before all this the wonderful humility, whereby your Greatness has cared to approach one so humble as I, to overwhelm me with praises, and to seek for my friendship. As for what refers to me in your letter I read it not as describing what I am, but what I would wish to be, and what I am ashamed of not being. Yet whatever I am, I am yours; and if, by the grace of God, I ever become anything better, be sure, Most Reverend and dear Father, that I shall still remain yours.

LETTER CXXIV. (Circa A.D. 1131.)

TO THE SAME HILDEBERT, WHO HAD NOT YET ACKNOWLEDGED THE LORD INNOCENT AS POPE

He exhorts him to recognize Innocent, now an exile in France, owing to the schism of Peter Leonis, as the rightful Pontiff.

To the great prelate, most exalted in renown, HILDEBERT, by the grace of God Archbishop of Tours, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends

greeting, and prays that he may walk in the Spirit, and spiritually discern all things.

1. To address you in the words of the prophet, Consolation is hid from their eyes, because death divideth between brethren (Hosea 13:14, VULG.). For it seems as if according to the language of Isaiah they have made a covenant with death, and are at agreement with hell (Is. 28:15). For behold, Innocent, that anointed of the Lord, is set for the fall and rising again of many (cf. S. Luke 2:34). Those who are of God, gladly join themselves to him; but he who is of the opposite part, is either of Antichrist, or Antichrist himself. The abomination is seen standing in the holy place; and that he may seize it, like a flame he is burning the sanctuary of God. He persecutes Innocent, and in him all innocence. Innocent, in sooth, flees from the face of Leo, as saith the prophet: The lion hath roared; who will not fear (Amos 3:8). He flees according to the bidding of the Lord, which says, When they persecute you in one city flee ye into another (S. Matt, 10:23). He flees, and thereby proves himself an apostolic man, by ennobling himself with the apostle's example. For Paul blushed not to be let down in a basket over a wall (Acts 9:25), and so to escape the hands of those who were seeking his life. He escaped not to spare his life, but to give place unto wrath; not to avoid death, but to attain life. Rightly does the Church yield his place to Innocent, whom she sees walking in the same steps.

2. However, Innocent's flight is not without fruit. He suffers, no doubt, but is honoured in the midst of his sufferings. Driven from the city, he is welcomed by the world. From the ends of the earth, men meet the fugitive with sustenance; although the rage of that Shimei, Gerard of Angoulême, has not yet entirely ceased to curse David. Whether it pleases or does not please that sinner who sees it with discontent, he cannot prevent Innocent being honoured in the presence of kings, and bearing a crown of glory. Have not all princes acknowledged that he is in truth the elect of God? The Kings of France, England, and Spain, and finally the King of the Romans, receive Innocent as Pope, and recognize him alone as bishop of their souls (2 Sam. 17). Only Ahitophel is now unaware that his counsels have been exposed and brought to nought. In vain the wretch labours to devise evil counsel against the people of God, and to plot against the saints who stoutly adhere to their saintly Pontiff, scorning to bow the knee to Baal. By no guile shall he avail to procure for his parricide the kingdom over Israel and the holy city, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. A threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12). The threefold cord of the choice of the better sort, the assent of the majority, and,

what is more effective yet in these matters, the witness of a pure life, commend Innocent to all, and establish him as chief Pontiff.

3. And so, very Reverend Father, we await your vote, late though it be, as rain upon a fleece of wool. We do not disapprove of a certain slowness, for it savours of gravity, and banishes all sign of levity. For Mary did not at once answer the angel's salutation, but first considered in her mind what manner of salutation this should be (S. Luke 1:29); and Timothy was commanded to lay hands suddenly on no man (1 Tim. 5:22). Yet I, who am known to the Prelate I am addressing, venture to say "nought in excess;" I, his acquaintance and friend, say, Let not a man think more highly of himself than he ought to think (Rom. 12:3). It is a shame, I must confess, that the old serpent, letting silly women alone, has, with a new boldness, even assayed the valour of your heart, and dared to shake to its base so mighty a pillar of the Church. I trust, however, that though shaken it is not tottering to its fall. For the friend of the bridegroom standeth and rejoiceth at the bridegroom's voice (S. John 3:29); the voice of joy and health, the voice of unity and peace.

LETTER CXXV. (Circa A.D. 1131.)

TO MAGISTER GEOFFREY, OF LORETTO

He asks his assistance in maintaining the Pontificate of Innocent against the schism of Peter Leonis.

1. We look for scent in flowers and for savour in fruits; and so, most dearly beloved brother, attracted by the scent of your name which is as perfume poured forth, I long to know you also in the fruit of your work. For it is not I alone, but even God Himself, who has need of no man, yet who, at this crisis, needs your co-operation, if you do not act falsely towards us. It is a glorious thing to be able to be a fellow-worker with God; but perilous to be able and not to be so. Moreover, you have favour with God and man; you have knowledge, a spirit of freedom, a speech both lively and effectual, seasoned with salt; and it is not right that with all these great gifts you should fail the bride of Christ in such danger, for you are the friend of the Bridegroom. A friend is best tried in times of need. What then? Can you continue at rest while your Mother the Church is grievously distressed? Rest has had its proper time, and holy peace has till now freely and duly done its own work. It is now the time for action, because they have destroyed the law. That beast of the Apocalypse (Apoc. 13:5–7), to whom is given a mouth speaking blasphemies, and to make war with the saints, is sitting

on the throne of Peter, like a lion ready for his prey. Another beast also stands hissing at your side, like a whelp lurking in secret places. The fiercer here and the craftier there are met together in one against the Lord and his anointed. Let us, then, make haste to burst their bonds and cast away their cords from us.

2. I, for my part, together with other servants of God who are set on fire with the Divine flame, have laboured, with the help of God, to unite the nations and kings in one, in order to break down the conspiracy of evil men, and to destroy every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Nor have I laboured in vain. The Kings of Germany, France, England, Scotland, Spain, and Jerusalem, with all the clergy and people, side with and adhere to the Lord Innocent, like sons to a father, like the members to their head, being anxious to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And the Church is right in acknowledging him, whose reputation is discovered to be the more honourable and whose election is found to be the more sound and regular, having the advantage as well by the merit as by the number of the electors. And now, brother, why do you hold back? How long will the serpent by your side lull your careless energies to repose? I know that you are a son of peace, and can by no reason be led to desert unity. But, of course, that alone is not enough, unless you study both to maintain it and to make war with all your might upon the disturbers thereof. And do not fear the loss of peace, for you shall be rewarded by no small increase of glory if your efforts succeed in quieting, or even silencing, that wild beast near you; and if the goodness of God, through your means, rescue from the mouth of the lion so great a prize for the Church as William, Count of Poitiers.

LETTER CXXVI. (A.D. 1131.)

TO THE BISHOPS OF AQUITAINE, AGAINST GERARD OF ANGOULÊME

He nobly defends the cause of Innocent as the rightful Pope, against Gerard of Angoulême, who was taking part with the Schismatic. He gives a picture of his character, and exposes his subterfuges.

To his Lords and Reverend Fathers, the holy Bishops, by Divine permission, of Limoges, of Poitiers, of Périgueux, and of Saintes, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting, and prays that they may be steadfast in adversity.

1. It is during peace that bravery is acquired, in the struggle that it is displayed, in the victory that it triumphs. The time has come, most Reverend and

honoured Fathers, to show your courage, not to hide it, nor to let it rest inactive. The hostile sword, which seems to threaten the whole Church with death, hangs most of all over your necks; and it is you whom it threatens most eagerly and most closely, so that you are obliged by the daily attacks of which you are the objects, either to resist bravely or (which may God forbid!) disgracefully to retreat. The new Diotrephes, who loves to bear the first place among you, rejects you from his communion; he refuses to recognize with you him whom the whole Church receives as coming in the name of the Lord. Not him, I say, does he receive, but the man who comes in his own name. I am not surprised at this, for he himself, even in his old age, strives and pants unweariedly to attain a great name. I am not led astray by an uncertain or false rumour in forming this opinion of the man; I judge of him from his own words. In a letter which he lately sent to the Chancellor of Rome, does he not supplicate, in terms as humble as they are unworthy of him, to be entrusted with the charge and honourable title of Legate of the Holy See? Would that he had obtained it. Perhaps if his ambition had been gratified according to his prayers it would have been less hurtful than it is, being frustrated. Then, indeed, it would be hurtful to himself alone, or, at all events, to few; but now it breathes discord over the whole world. See what the love of vain glory does! The title of Legate is a heavy burden, especially for the shoulders of the old; who is ignorant of that? And yet it is a severe punishment to this extremely aged man to live without this title for the few days that remain to him.

2. But perhaps he will accuse me of rash judgment with respect to him; perhaps he will say that I venture to judge the secret feelings of his soul on a mere suspicion which nothing authorizes me to do. It is true I am very suspicious on this matter; but I would ask, what man would be so simple as to think otherwise than I have done in a case so clear? To refer briefly to an action that was unmistakable. He is one of the first, if not the first of all, to write to Pope Innocent; he applies for the title of Legate. He does not obtain it. He is indignant, he falls away from him; he passes over to the party of the other, of whom he boasts that he is the Legate. If he had not in the first place made suit for this title, or had not afterwards accepted it from the other, one might have been able to attribute his double dealing to some other motive than ambition; but, as things stand, he has no plausible excuse to make. Let him lay down this mere empty name of Legate, for it has no functions; and I, for my part, will lay aside, if I can, this opinion of him; if not, I will at least acknowledge my reluctant suspicion as being rash. But he will, I know, be with difficulty persuaded to do it. He is not a man to strip himself voluntarily of a title which has long rendered him great

among his neighbours, and without which he would appear degraded. We see in him what Scripture calls the false shame which leads to sin (Ecc. 4:25). Can there be, in fact, any worse thing, any greater offence than extreme pride in mere dust and ashes, so that it is reluctant, I do not say to be subjected to others, but not to rule over others?

3. Because of this he quitted the party of Innocent, whom he called his holy Father, and the Holy Catholic Church his mother, and attached himself to his schismatiarch, with whose vain glory he has much in common. They have made mutual alliance, and have conceived an evil design against the people of God: Scale is joined to scale, so that no air can come between them (Job 41:16). The one gives to the other the name of Pope, and the other in return styles him his Legate; and so they flatter each other's vain glory. They console, support, and commend each other in turn; but each of them does this for his own sake, and not for that of the other, for they are men who love only themselves. With equal zeal they combine against the Lord and against His Christ; but their motives are not the same. Each one seeks to derive from the other some personal advantage, and (which is abominable) at the expense of Christ's heritage. Are they not attempting under your eyes to ruin His realm, if you will permit it? That Legate fabricates new Bishops among you for the party of his Pope, that he may not be alone; nor does he wait until the Sees are vacant by death, but by the aid of the secular power tyrannically intrudes men into the places of Bishops yet living, taking occasion from the ill-will and relentless hatred of secular princes towards the Bishops of their cities. He sets in secret snares with the rich, that he may slay the innocent. By such a door he enters into the sheepfold.

4. Do you suppose that this Legate busies himself with such activity for the sake of his Pope only, and without any personal interest? He has added, in order that he may boast himself the more, France and Burgundy to the ancient limits of his legation; and he may add still further, if he pleases, the Medes, the Persians, and the people of the Decapolis. Wherefore should he not arrogate to himself besides the empty name of jurisdiction over the Sarmatians, and, in fact, over every place that his foot has pressed? O, man no less without modesty than without sense; mindful neither of the fear of God nor of his own honour! He thinks that he is not found out, while he is the laughingstock and amusement of all his neighbours. And rightly so. For he uses the sanctuary as if it were a market; and like a merchant seeking his gain goes here and there to the sellers, seeking to obtain at the lowest price what he wants to buy: so he seeks on all sides an ecclesiastical dignity, and decides at length in favour of that Pope who

has consented to make him his Legate. And so Rome could not have had a Pope, unless he had found one to make him Legate? Whence came this privilege to you in the Church of Christ? Who has given you this prerogative over Christ's heritage? Is the sanctuary of God become your patrimonial estate? As long as there was any hope of obtaining from the lord Innocent what you had the shameless impudence to demand of him, he was to you holy Father and Pope in your letters. Why, then, do you now accuse him as a schismatic? Was it the case that his holiness, and his legitimate tenure of the Papacy, vanished with your hopes? It was wonderful in how short a time bitter water and sweet proceeded from the same fount. Yesterday Innocent was catholic, holy, Supreme Pontiff; to-day he is schismatic, wicked, and a troubler of the peace; yesterday Innocent and Pope; to-day Gregory, simple Deacon of S. Angelo. It is from the same mouth, indeed, but from a double heart, that these contrary sentiments proceed. Deceitful thoughts are in the heart, and from the heart they have been spoken. But what can you think of the reserve or self-respect of the man whose double heart renders uncertain the voice of his conscience, and with first Yes and then No makes his tongue forked? He ill-understands how to provide, according to the saying of the Apostle, things honest both before God and before men (2 Cor. 8:21), who being an unjust judge neither respects nor fears God or men.

5. It is quite certain that ambition, when it extends into impudence, defeats its own success; and the unscrupulous man, when he makes his object apparent, renders it unlikely to be attained. Ambition is the mother of hypocrisy; it needs obscurity and shadow, and is unable to bear the light. Ambition, the lowest placed of the vices, has always an eye towards advancement; but all its fear is to be perceived. Nor is that wonderful; for it may fail in obtaining its end, unless it escape observation; and the more it pursues glory the less it can be obtained, if it is suspected of the pursuit. What is more inglorious, especially for a Bishop, than to be known for a man greedy of titles and honours, when a Christian ought not to glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? The ambitious will be esteemed by others only as long as he shall walk in darkness; and the hypocrite will be able to seem righteous and holy to the eyes which see only the outward appearance just as long as his meddling with filthy lucre be kept concealed. But when by impudence, or some imprudence, he happens to show what is lurking in his mind, does not the unmeasured love of greatness which is shown to all eyes turn to his shame and confusion rather than to his glory, and so, in truth, verify those words of the Scripture: Whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things (Phil. 3:19); and this: If I seek my own glory, my glory is nothing (S. John

8:54); and that imprecation of the Prophet directed, as I believe, against hypocrites: Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth before it is plucked up (Ps. 128:6, VULG.). The sentiment of shame has not yet perished in men, so that naked and shameless ambition should be honoured even by them, especially when they meet with it in an old man and a priest, in whom that puerile vanity is the more unbecoming, as increased gravity and holiness are befitting to him; and if he is flattered to his face, he is turned into ridicule behind his back by all. There is an ambition more delicate and more enlightened, which proceeds at least with caution, if not with pure intention; if it succeeds in advancing its object, it takes good care to keep its measures secret; but if not, it still lies close, and does not break the reserve which it imposes upon itself. And such an ambition, if it does not fear God unto salvation, yet for innate modesty retains honourable feeling, because it stands in fear of men, and blushes at public disgrace.

6. But must not the ambition be headlong and the desire to dominate imperious which causes a man not to spare the repose of his old age nor the honour of his priesthood to obtain the precarious title of Legate, which he would not be certain of for more than a year, which makes him tear open again the side of the Saviour, whence issued forth once blood and water for the salvation of men, for joining them together in the unity of faith? But whosoever tries to divide those whom Christ has joined together for their salvation proves himself to be, not a Christian, but an Antichrist, and guilty of the Cross and death of Christ. What impatient, what unbridled desire! what unrestrained eagerness! what blind and shameful ambition! He is obliged to confess that (as I have said) he began by making a petition unworthy of him to the legitimate Pope; and, smarting at the refusal he received, he took refuge immediately with the schismatic, and accepted from his sacrilegious hand the longed-for dignity, thus cruelly and shamelessly piercing the side of the Lord of Glory. For he divides the Church, for which that Side was divided upon the Cross. But one day he shall see Him whom he has pierced, and the Lord shall pronounce judgments, who now endures injuries patiently. When the day shall come that He shall do justice to those who are oppressed, and interfere in equity on behalf of the meek of the earth, will He, think you, turn away His ear from His beloved spouse when she invokes His aid against those who have oppressed her? No! He cannot be deaf to her complaint: My neighbours and my friends approached and stood against me; and those who were beside me stood afar off. Those who sought my life used violence against me (Ps. 37:12, 13, VULG.). Why should He not

recognize the bone of His bone, the flesh of His flesh, yea, rather, the spirit of His spirit? Is she not for Him that well-loved Spouse, whose beauty has drawn Him here below, whose form He has put on, whom with marvellous condescension He has embraced with tender love, so that they two should be one flesh, as hereafter they shall be one spirit? For although she had known Christ according to the flesh, yet then shall she know Him no more: because before her face shall be a spirit, Christ Jesus the Lord; and being closely united to Him, she shall be one spirit with Him; when death shall be swallowed up in victory; and that which is weak in the flesh shall overcome by the power of the Spirit; when the glorious Spouse of the Church shall have her in his sight in her glory, as His dove perfect and beautiful, not having a spot of sin, a wrinkle of corruption, or any such thing.

7. While I linger willingly upon these consoling thoughts I have become almost unmindful of my subject, so strong is my desire to redeem the time because the days are evil. The thought of more happy days transports me, but my purpose calls me back, reminds me of the facts, and plunges me into sorrow. The enemy of the cross of Christ (I relate it even weeping) carries his audacity so far as to drive from their (Episcopal) seats the holy men who entirely refuse to bend the knee before the beast of the Apocalypse, whose mouth opens wide with impious blasphemies against God and against His sanctuary (Apoc. 13:6). He endeavours to raise altar against altar, and is not ashamed to confound good and evil. He endeavours to intrude abbots into the places of abbots, Bishops into the places of Bishops, to thrust out the Catholics, to advance the schismatics. Poor creatures, and to be pitied, who consent to accept such promotion from the hands of such a man. He traverses sea and land to make one Bishop; and when he has made him, he makes of him doubly the child of hell that he is himself. What do you suppose is the cause of such furious activity? It is because that precept announced by the angels to mortals, in which glory is given to God and peace to men, is to him displeasing; and while he and his party usurp the glory they trouble the peace. He alone merits glory who alone doeth wonders, as the Apostle says, to God alone be honour and glory (1 Tim. 1:13). As for man, he ought to think himself happy, he ought to regard himself as being mercifully favoured if it is permitted him to enjoy the peace of God and peace with God; but how can it be thus if men themselves wish to usurp the glory of God? Oh, foolish sons of Adam, who, while you despise peace and desire glory, lose them both! It is because of this that the God of vengeance has now moved the land and divided it: He has shewed His people heavy things, He has given them a drink of

deadly wine.

8. Whether we will or no, the truth of the Holy Ghost will necessarily one day be fulfilled, and that falling away foretold by the spirit of prophecy, as we read in the Scriptures (2 Thess. 2:3), will take place; but woe to the man by whom it comes. It would be better for that man he had not been born. But who is that man except the man of sin, who, notwithstanding that a Catholic had been elected by Catholics to the holy place, and according to canonical rules, invaded it for himself, although he desired it not because it was holy, but because it was the highest place? He invaded it, I say, by the sword, by fire, by money, not by the merit of his life or by his virtues; he has attained to that in which he remains, but he remains only by the same means that he attained it. That election of which he boasts so much was nothing but the note of a faction, a mere pretence, the occasion and the screen of his evil plan; it is impudent and false to call it an election. If there is in the Church a principle authentic and incontestable, it is that after the first election there is no second. Suppose that there has been one, after which a second is made; yet it is not a second, it is simply null and void. But even although that which preceded was conducted with too little solemnity, and not sufficiently according to ordinary formalities, as the enemies of unity contend, yet ought a second election to have been resolved upon before the manner of the former had been discussed, and it had been quashed by a deliberate judgment? It is that which obliges me to say that the factious persons are those who have hastened to lay their hands rashly upon a rash usurper, notwithstanding the prohibition of the Apostle: Lay hands suddenly upon no man (1 Tim. 5:22). They have, without doubt, the greater fault; they are the true authors of the schism, and the chiefs of this great mischief which has been done to the Church.

9. But now they demand judgment, which they ought to have waited for before acting. When that proposition was made to them in fit time they rejected it; they only do this now in order to appear to have the right on their side if you refuse it in your turn; and if you accept it they hope that during the process time may be gained by delays, and in the meantime something may happen in their favour. Or do they despair of their cause, and are they convinced that it can be made no worse than it is, whatever be the issue of the process? Whatever (they say) has been done hitherto, now we seek a hearing; we are prepared to submit to what may be decided. This is a trap. What else is left to you in your wicked undertaking, what other resource have you for seducing the simple, for arming the ill-disposed, and for hiding your own guilt? If you did not say this what

could you say? But now God has already judged what man seeks too late to reopen; but He has judged by the evidence of the facts, and not by the wording of a decree. Is it possible that human rashness would dare to interpose an appeal from the judgment of God? What if God should accuse and cry by the prophet, men have taken away from me the right of judgment? No purpose can stand against the purpose of the Lord; His word runneth very quickly, and draws together the peoples and the kings into one mind, so that they serve and obey the lord Innocent as Pope. Who will appeal from this? It has been recognized and proclaimed by Walter of Ravenna, Hildegar of Tarragona, Norbert of Magdeburg, Conrad of Salzbourg, Archbishops; it has been accepted by Equipert of Munster, Hildebrand of Pistoja, Bernard of Pavia, Landulf of Asti, Hugo of Grenoble, and Bernard of Parma, Bishops. The singular merit of these prelates, their manifest sanctity, and their authority respected even by their enemies, have easily determined me, who hold a lower rank in merit as in office, to follow their leading whether it be right or wrong. I do not speak of the multitude of others, both Archbishops and Bishops of Tuscany, Campania, Lombardy, Germany, and Aquitaine, of France, also, and all the Spains, as well as of the whole Church of the East, whose names are in the Book of Life, but which the brevity of a letter cannot find space for.

10. All these with one accord, not induced by money, not led away by fallacious reasoning, not allured by considerations of worldly relationship, nor compelled by fear of the secular power, but submitting themselves to the will of God which they cannot doubt has been made plain, have frankly rejected Peter Leonis, and recognized Gregory for Pope, under the name of Innocent. Of the prelates of our province, not one, indeed, is mentioned by name in this letter; because I could not name them all, and the special mention of some of them would appear to be a kind of adulation. But I ought not to pass over those holy men, who, though dead to the world, live a better life in God; their life is hid with Christ in glory, is consecrated entirely to the knowledge of the will of God, and to the endeavour to please Him. Of these, then, the Camaldulian Religious, those of Vallombrosa, those of the Chartreuse, the Cluniacs, those of Marmoutiers, my own brethren in religion the Cistercians, those of S. Stephen of Caen, of Tiron, of Savigny, in one word, the unanimous consent of the brethren, as well secular clergy as monks, of strict life and approved conduct, following their Bishops as flocks follow their pastors, firmly adhere to Innocent, zealously defend him, humbly obey him, and recognize him faithfully as a true successor of the Apostles.

11. What of the kings and princes of the earth? Do they not receive Innocent in the same disposition, with the peoples who are subject to them, and confess him to be Pope, and the Bishop of their souls? What man is there of good family or of distinguished rank who does not think the same thing? And yet those people still protest with quarrelsome importunity and importunate argument. They make their accusation against the whole world, and, notwithstanding their small number, endeavour to dictate to the whole of Christendom, and to oblige it to confirm by a second judgment an election which has been already judged and condemned; they began by improper precipitation, and now wish to reopen the whole question. But, after all, what means have they of assembling the chiefs of each order [secular and ecclesiastical], I do not say of the faithful simply, so as to submit the controversy to their judgment? Who would be mighty enough to persuade so many thousands of holy men to pull down again what they had before built up, and to lend themselves to a deception? Then where could a place be found safe and spacious enough for all? For this is a business which belongs to the whole Church, not the private cause of one person. You see, then, that you [i.e., the opponents] are demanding a thing which is impracticable, only to bring a false accusation against your Mother Church; or rather you are digging a pit for yourselves into which you shall be thrown; you are weaving a snare in which you shall be taken and held, nor shall you return into the bosom of your Mother. A pretext will never be wanting to him who wishes to break faith with his friend.

12. But let it be so. Suppose that God should change His mind (I speak after the manner of men), should recall His decree, should assemble a Council from the ends of the earth, should allow the matter which He has judged to be submitted for a second judgment, which is not the way in which God acts, whom, I ask, will they give to Him for judges? All have taken their side in this matter, and it will be very difficult to agree upon a judgment; so that so great an assemblage of men will have the weariness to assemble for disagreement rather than for peace. And, finally, I would be glad to know into whose hands that schismatic would consent to trust the city of Rome, which he desired so eagerly and for so long a time, which he gained with so much trouble and at so great a cost, which he possesses with such pride, and which he fears to lose with so great shame, lest the whole world should be seen to have come together to no purpose, if when he loses his cause he does not at the same time lose Rome; otherwise why should he who has been despoiled enter upon the cause? Neither the civil law nor the Canons oblige him to do so. And this I say, not that I have any doubt of the justice of our cause, but because I distrust the cunning of our

adversaries. God has already manifested His justice as clearly as the light and His judgment as the noon-day, although to him who is blind neither does the light appear, nor does the blaze of noon-day enlighten; to him light and darkness are the same.

13. The question is, then, of ascertaining whether of these two claimants is the rightful Pope. As for that which relates to them personally, that I may not seem either to flatter or to detract from either one or the other, I will say nothing except that which is spoken everywhere, and which, I suppose, everyone believes, namely, that the life and character of our Pope Innocent are above any attack even of his rival; while that of the other is not safe even from his friends. In the second place, if you compare the two elections, that of our candidate at once has the advantage over the other as being both purer in motive, more regular in form, and earlier in time. The last point is out of all doubt; the other two are proved by the merit and the dignity of the electors. You will find, if I do not mistake, that this election was made by the more discreet part of those to whom the election of the supreme Pontiff belongs. There were Cardinals, Bishops, Deacons, or Presbyters, and these in sufficient number, according to the decrees of the Fathers, to make a valid election. Then, as to the Consecration of the person elected, was it not performed by the Bishop of Ostia, to whom that function specially belongs? Since, then, both the person elected is maintained to be the more worthy and the election more discreetly conducted, and the formalities more regularly complied with in performing it; upon what pretext, or rather by what spirit of contention, do they try against right and justice and the voices of all good men to depose him, and to set another Pope over the reluctant and protesting Church?

14. You see, most reverend and illustrious Fathers, under what obligation you are to oppose with all your powers this attempt so malicious, so unworthy, and so rash. It is becoming to the whole Church, but most of all to you and yours, that zeal for the House of God should consume your souls. It is your duty, I say, and that of your flocks to watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation. The more boldly the adversary presses on, and the greater is the stress of battle, in that place is there surely the greater need for bravery and caution. How cruel and how cunning is the foe who has risen against you, you know, I am sure, by your own experience. Alas! what ravages has he not already committed in your neighbourhood, having recourse in turn to force and to cunning, the constant arms of his malignity! But shall his malice prevail over your wisdom? No doubt this is his hour, and the power of darkness; but the hour is his last, and his power

soon passes away. Be not afraid, nor permit yourselves to be drawn away. Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, is with you; it is His own cause. Trust in Him; He has overcome the world; He is faithful, and will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able. Though the deluded man appears solidly established, without doubt you will soon see his fair show of prosperity overcast by general rejection; nor will the Lord leave the rod of sinners long over the lot of the righteous. But, in the meantime, it is committed to your vigilance to provide with the care and solicitude that becomes your office, that the good people of your dioceses should not stretch out their hands towards this wickedness.

Prayer for Catholics:

Do good, O Lord, unto those that are good and true of heart (Ps. 125:4); and for the schismatics: Make their faces ashamed, O Lord, that they may seek Thy name (Ps. 83:17).

LETTER CXXVII. (Circa A.D. 1132.)

TO WILLIAM, COUNT OF POITOU AND DUKE OF AQUITAINE, IN THE NAME OF HUGH, DUKE OF BURGUNDY

William was of the party of the Antipope Anacletus; Bernard urges him to abandon it, and to range himself on the side of Innocent.

To WILLIAM, by the grace of God, the illustrious Count of Poitou and Duke of Aquitaine, HUGH, by the same grace, Duke of Burgundy, sends greeting, bidding him fear Him who is terrible, and who takes away the spirit of princes.

1. I can no longer hold my peace about your mistaken line of action, though you are my near kinsman and dear friend. If any of the people perishes he perishes alone; but the error of a prince involves many, and ruins as many souls as he rules over. Nor are we raised on high, as you know, to destroy our subjects, but to govern them. He by whom kings reign, has put us over our subjects to protect them, not to overthrow them; we are the Church’s keepers, not her masters. But since you are known to have discharged that function laudably, and in a way befitting the greatness of your power, on other occasions, I can but wonder by what craft you have been induced to desert your mother and mistress in the time of her dire need, unless, indeed, those counsellors of yours have succeeded in persuading you that the whole Church has been led to recognize Peter Leonis. They are lying men whom, with Antichrist their head, the Truth shall destroy with the breath of His mouth. By the mouth of David He tells us

that His Church is spread abroad to all the ends of the earth, and to all the nations of the Gentiles.

2. They have, it is true, the Duke of Apulia on their side; but they have no other supporter of any power, and him they secured by the ridiculous bribe of a usurper's crown. I ask you, what goodness, or virtue, or honour do they bring forward on the part of their Pope that we should favour him? If what is commonly said of him be true, he is not fit to have the government of a single hamlet; if it is not true, it none the less is fitting that the head of the Church should be of good repute as well as of blameless life. Therefore, it is safer for you, my dear kinsman, when you acknowledge any one as universal Pope, not to depart from the common mind and agreement of the universal Church, and to receive him that the whole monastic order and all the kings have acknowledged; it is also more to your honour and more expedient to your salvation to receive Innocent as Pope. He appeals to his blameless life, his unblemished character, and his canonical election. His enemies have not a word to say against the two first of these; the third was indeed found fault with, but the unprincipled men who did so have been lately caught in their falsehood by the most Christian Emperor Lothaire.

LETTER CXXVIII. (A.D. 1132.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard exhorts him gravely to restore to their Churches the Clerks whom he had deprived.

I recollect, most excellent Prince, that I not long ago left you, wishing well with all my heart to you and yours, and ready to lend, whenever I might have an opportunity, all the help that I could to promote your honour and your salvation. These friendly feelings were inspired by my not having returned deprived of the object of my visit to you; by my return, contrary to the expectation of many, bearing a message of peace to the Church, with the rejoicing of the whole earth. But now I cannot imagine with what intent, or by whose advice, that happy disposition in you which the right hand of the Most High had so suddenly worked for the better, has now so suddenly altered for the worse. Why should you expel again from your territories, to the great injury of the Church, the clergy of S. Hilary? Why should you call down upon yourself the wrath of God more heavily than before? Who has bewitched you to depart so soon from the way of truth and safety? Surely he will bear his judgment whoever he may be. I

would that they were even cut off that trouble you (Gal. 5:12). Return, I implore you, return to a better disposition, lest you, too, be cut off, which God forbid. Retrace your steps; recall the love of your friends, suffer the clergy to return, before you irrecoverably bring upon yourself a terrible foe, Him who takes away the spirit of princes, and is terrible among the kings of the earth.

LETTER CXXIX. (A.D. 1133.)

TO THE CITIZENS OF GENOA

He exhorts them to preserve with all possible care the peace that he had re-established among them.

To the consuls, magistrates, and people of Genoa, health, peace, and eternal life.

1. That my visit to you last year was not fruitless, the Church who sent me soon afterwards experienced in her time of need. You received me honourably, and even thought my stay with you was all too short; this was, indeed, conduct worthy on your part, but quite beyond my humble deserving. At all events, I am neither forgetful of it, nor ungrateful to you. May God, who has the power, and whose cause it was, repay to you your goodness! But how can I recompense you for the honour you showed me, except by an affectionate service full of love and gratitude? Not that I take pleasure in favour shown to me, but I rejoice to see your devotion. What joyous days were those; but alas! only too few. Never will I forget thee, devoted people, honourable nation, illustrious state. At evening, and at morning, and at noon-day did I relate my news and announce my tidings, and I found that the hearers had as much charity as eagerness to hear. We took back the word of peace, and when we had found the sons of peace our peace rested upon them. I had gone out to sow seed, not mine, but God’s; and it fell on good ground and brought forth fruit a hundredfold and immediately. Wonderful was the rapidity, for great was the necessity. I met with no delay or difficulty; in one day I sowed and reaped and brought back rejoicing sheaves of peace. This was the harvest that I gathered in. To those in exile, in captivity, in chains, and in prison, I took a joyous hope of freedom and return to their native land, to the enemy I brought fear, to schismatics confusion, to the Church glory, to the world gladness.

2. And now what remains for me, dearly beloved, but to exhort you to perseverance, which alone wins for man glory, and for his virtues the crown of victory? Without perseverance the soldier does not obtain victory, nor the victor

his crown. It lends vigour to the will and perfects all virtues, it is the nurse to merit and the mediator between the battle and the prize. Perseverance is sister to patience, the daughter of constancy, the bosom-friend of peace, the cementer of friendships, the bond of harmony, the bulwark of holiness. Take away perseverance, and obedience loses its reward, well-doing its grace, and fortitude its praise. It is not he who has begun, but he that has persevered unto the end that shall be saved (S. Matt. 24:13). Saul when he was little in his own sight was made King over Israel, but not persevering in humility he lost both his kingdom and his life. If the caution of Samson and the devotion of Solomon had been persevered in, the one would not have been deprived of his strength, nor the other of his wisdom. I exhort and beseech you to hold fast firmly to this gift of perseverance, the highest mark of honour, the one trusty guardian of integrity. Keep carefully what you have heard joyfully. Remember the words that are written of Herod: that he feared John and heard him gladly (S. Mark 6:20). Well would it have been for him if he had been as ready to act as to listen. It is not they that hear merely who are called blessed, but they that hear the Word of God and keep it (S. Luke 11:28).

3. Keep, therefore, peace between yourselves and your brethren at Pisa; keep your fidelity to the Pope, your loyalty to the King; guard your own honour. This is expedient, this is befitting, and this is demanded by justice. I have heard that some messengers of King Roger have come to you; I know not their object, nor their success. But I must confess with the poet that I fear the Greeks, even when they bring gifts (VERG., *Æn.* ii. 49). If anyone among you is caught (which God forbid) in the disgraceful act of stretching out his hand for filthy lucre, note him straightway, judge him to be an enemy to your name, a betrayer of his fellow-citizens, and a traitor to the common good and honour. If, again, you find any whisperer among the people assuming the devil's occupation of sowing discords, and trying to disturb the existing peace, as he is ever the author and lover of division, then visit such a dangerous fellow the more quickly with severe judgment; such a disease is the most deadly, because the most inward. A hostile army lays waste the fields and burns your houses, but evil communications corrupt good manners, and a little leaven permeates the whole lump. Sow, plant, and exert yourselves not only not to commit your former misdoings again, but even by works of righteousness to atone for them and blot them out. It is written, as you know: The redemption of a man's soul is his riches (Prov. 15:6), and again, Give alms and all things are clean to you (S. Luke 11:41). But if you determine to go to war, and, again, bravely and strenuously to try your strength,

to make test of your arms, I, for my part, think that you ought not to proceed against your neighbours and friends; it would be more fitting for you to subdue the enemies of the Church and defend your crown that has been assailed by the Sicilians. From them, at all events, it will be more honourable for you to take possessions, and more just to keep them when taken. May the God of love and peace remain with you all always. Amen.

LETTER CXXX. (A.D. 1133.)

TO THE CITIZENS OF PISA

He praises their zeal for, and devotedness to, Pope Innocent, whom the Antipope Anacletus had forced to leave Rome, and who had taken refuge at Pisa.

To his friends, the consuls, councillors, and citizens of Pisa, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes salvation, peace, and everlasting life.

May God bless you, and remember the faithful service and pious compassion and consolation and reverence which you have shown, and still do show, towards the Bride of His Son in her evil time and in the days of her affliction. And, indeed, all this is partly fulfilled, and already there is some answer to this prayer. Conduct that deserves a reward has already met with rapid recompense. Now, God is dealing with you according to your merits, O people, whom He has chosen to Him to be His inheritance, a people wholly acceptable, given to good works. Pisa is put in the place of Rome, and out of all the cities in the world is chosen to be the home of the Apostolic See. Nor has this happened by chance or by man’s counsel, but by Divine providence and the good favour of God, who loves them that love Him, and who has said to Innocent His anointed: “Live at Pisa, and in blessing I will bless thee. Here will I dwell, for I have chosen this city.” It is because of My support that the constancy of Pisa does not yield to the malice of the Sicilian tyrant; that she is not moved by bribes, nor terrified by threats, nor deceived by stratagems. O, men of Pisa, men of Pisa, God has done to you great things, and made us to rejoice. What state is there that does not envy you? Guard well, O, faithful city, the treasure entrusted to you, acknowledge the grace of God, study to be found not ungrateful for the honour bestowed on you. Show all the honour you can to your Father, and the Father of all, and to the princes of this world, and the judges of the earth who are with you; their presence makes you illustrious, glorious, famous. But if you know not the day of your visitation, city renowned above all others, then shall you be the last of all cities. I have said enough to wise men. I commend to you the Marquis Engelbert,

who has been sent to help the Pope and his friends. He is a brave and energetic young man, and, if I mistake not, faithful. Let my request win him your favour, especially as I have specially commended you to him, and advised him to pay great deference to your wishes.

LETTER CXXXI. (A.D. 1135.)

TO THE INHABITANTS OF MILAN

The inhabitants of Milan, who had been reconciled to Pope Innocent, seemed to be wavering in fidelity to him. Bernard exhorts them to remain faithful, and reminds them of the recent benefits conferred upon them by the Roman See.

To his friends, all the clergy and laity of Milan, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting in the Lord.

1. God is dealing well with you; the Roman Church is treating you well. One acts as a Father, the other as a mother. And, as a matter of fact, what has not been done that should have been done? You asked that honourable persons should be sent you from the Curia, to God's glory and your own honour, and it has been done. You asked that your unanimous decision about the election of your venerable father should be confirmed, and that has been done. You wished for what is forbidden by the sacred canons to be done, except under great necessity, to be made lawful in your case, viz., for a bishopric to be raised to an archbishopric, and that, too, has been granted you. You asked that your fellow-citizens should be rescued from the hands of the men of Placentia, a thing which I neither can nor will pass by, and this has been done. I ask you, lastly, what reasonable request that the daughter has made has the loving mother refused or even postponed for a time? To sum up all, you will shortly have the pallium, the fulness of honour. But now listen to me, illustrious people, noble race, famous state. Listen, I say (and I speak the truth; I lie not), to one who loves you, who is zealous for your good. The Roman Church is very mild, but she is none the less powerful. Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptation, that he who does not wish to be crushed by her power must not abuse her kindness.

2. But someone will say, "Yes, I will pay her the reverence that is her due, but not a whit more." By all means do so, for if you give her the reverence she deserves, you give her all, for fulness of power over all the churches of the world has been given to the Apostolic See as her special prerogative. He, therefore, who resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. She can, if she see fit, appoint bishops where before there were none. Where they exist she can degrade

some, exalt others, as reason bids her, so that she can make bishops into archbishops and vice versâ, where she sees necessity. From the ends of the earth she can summon the most exalted ecclesiastics and compel them to appear before her, not merely once or twice, but as often as she sees fit. Moreover, it is in her power to punish all disobedience, if by chance anyone should endeavour to resist her. This, too, you yourselves have found to your cost. What good did your last rebellion do you, and the disobedience which your false prophets wickedly enticed you into? What fruit had you in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? See what loss of power, glory, and honour you suffered in the persons of your suffragans. Who was able to stand up for you and withstand the just severity of the Apostolic authority, when, provoked by your audacity, it determined to cut off your members, and strip you of your old and illustrious honours? And you would at this moment be a hideous and headless mass if mercy rather than power had not been directed towards you. Who will have power to forbid greater disasters still if, which God forbid, you again provoke them? See, then, that you do not again fall away, for know for a certainty that you will not so easily find a remedy a second time. If anyone should say to you that in part you should obey and in part refuse to obey, although you have felt the full weight of the Apostolic power and the completeness of its authority, then I ask whether such a man has not either been deceived or wishes to deceive. But do what I bid you, for I am not leading you astray. Give yourselves rather to humility and to meekness, knowing that God giveth grace to the lowly, and that the meek shall inherit the earth. Be careful to keep the good will of your mistress and mother now that you have regained it. Study so to please her for the future, that she may be pleased, not only to keep safely for you what she has restored, but also to add what she has not yet given.

LETTER CXXXII. (A.D. 1132.)

TO THE CLERGY OF MILAN

He congratulates the Milanese clergy, by whose endeavours the State had abandoned the Antipope Anacletus and returned to the unity of the Church.

Blessed be ye of the Lord, for by your zeal and diligence your state has been set free from error, has abjured its schism, and returned to Catholic unity. The news of it has spread amongst Catholics; Sion has heard of it and rejoiced, and you are glorified before God and the people. How joyfully does your Mother, the Church, welcome back such a number of worthy sons, whom she was grieving

for as lost! With how joyous and serene countenance does God, the Father, receive this sacrifice at your hands! Do now, as sons of peace, what you propose to do for the peace of the earth. And I, brethren, longing to become a sharer and companion of your joy, am coming, according to your request, with our beloved brethren, your messengers. Concerning the things you wrote to me of, I will more fully satisfy you according to reason if it be the good pleasure of God. But since I shall soon be setting out to the Council, I hope it will be no burden to you to postpone them till my return.

LETTER CXXXIII. (A.D. 1134.)

TO ALL THE CITIZENS OF MILAN

Bernard had been invited to negotiate for peace on their behalf, and gladly accepts the invitation.

I gather from your letter that you have some slight amount of regard for me. And since I cannot find that I deserve it, I believe it to be by the gift of God. I am far from declining the goodwill of a powerful and famous people. I welcome your kindness towards me, and with open arms receive devotedly the devotedness of your renowned State; especially now that you have abjured the error of the schismatics, and returned to the bosom of your Mother Church with the rejoicing of the whole world. Nevertheless, I think that not only to me is it a cause of rejoicing that I am invited to strive to make peace, and that I, a poor and unknown personage, am chosen by a most illustrious city to be its mediator and minister; but I think that it is also an honour to you to be desirous of peace and agreement with your neighbours, when the hostile attack of many States, as is well known to the world, has been powerless to force you to yield for a moment. And so being now hastening to the Council I shall hope to return by way of you, and make trial of your alleged goodwill. May He who giveth the goodwill cause that it be not in vain to me.

LETTER CXXXIV. (A.D. 1134.)

TO SOME NOVICES RECENTLY CONVERTED AT MILAN

Bernard congratulates these Milanese novices on their conversion, and promises to visit them on his return from the Council.

To his beloved brethren at Milan lately converted to God, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting, and prays that they may worthily carry out

in the spirit of counsel and strength what they have well begun.

Blessed be God who hath made the world's glory to be of none account in your eyes that He might bestow upon you His own. How full of vanity are the children of men, how deceitful are they upon the weights, for, according to the saying of the Gospel, they receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God alone (S. John 5:44); surely in this they all are alike deceitful from vanity. But with you it is not so. From this reproach God's mercy has set you free, to make you a sweet odour to God in every place, to be to His glory, to be a cause of rejoicing to the angels, and an example to men. If, indeed, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, how much more over so many and over such men as you, and especially over those who belong to such a city as yours. And I, brethren, induced by my great joy, and also invited by you, sent you word by my dear brothers, Otto and Ambrose, whom you sent to me with your invitation, of my decision to come with them. But on second thoughts, thinking it better not to see you for a few brief moments, nor merely in passing, I postponed my visit till my return. I am now going to the Council, but by God's help I will return by your way, and afford your holy purpose such counsel and help as reason shall enable me.

LETTER CXXXV. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO PETER, BISHOP OF PAVIA

Bernard attributes to God the praises lavished upon himself, but congratulates the Bishop on his works of mercy.

If good seed, sown in good soil, seems to have brought forth fruit, His is the glory who gave the seed to the sower, fertility to the soil, increase to the seed. What have we to do with these? I certainly will not give Christ's glory to another, much less will I claim it for myself. Surely it is the law of the Lord that converteth the soul (Ps. 19:7) and not I; it is the testimony of the Lord that is sure and giveth wisdom unto the simple, and not I. It is the hand and not the pen that is praised for the fair shape of the letters, and if I am to claim for myself what belongs to me in anything I have done, I confess that my tongue is the pen of a ready writer (Ps. 45:1). But, you say, why then are the feet of them that preach good tidings called beautiful? (Is. 52:7). What are their advantages? much every way. First, because they are the children of their Father which is in Heaven, they think that the glory which they offer to Him as tribute is none other's, but His, and being children they are His heirs. Then also they reckon

that the salvation of their neighbours is also their own, for they love them as themselves. Thirdly, the labour of their lips shall not utterly perish. For every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour (1 Cor. 3:8). I have not prevented my lips; thou hast opened thy heart also, and therefore wilt doubtless receive more, inasmuch as thou hast laboured more. I am certain that thy reward awaits thee, for thou hast given drink to the thirsty, and met with bread those that were flying. Nor will thy kindly offices, nor the exhortations to salvation with which thou hast refreshed the bowels of Christ in His poor go unrewarded. We are both fellow-labourers, fellow-helpers of God: let us both hope for our reward in the sight of the souls of the saints saved through us. May God grant that I never forget you, nor you cease to remember me.

LETTER CXXXVI. (A.D. 1134.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

He asks that Dalfinus, who was prepared to give satisfaction for the injuries that he had inflicted, may receive gentler treatment.

If we were always meeting with calamities, who would be able to bear them? If with prosperity, who is there that would not despise it? But Wisdom, who sweetly orders all things, so tempers with moderation and alternates for His elect the necessary vicissitudes that attend upon the course of their temporal life, that they are neither shattered by adversity nor beguiled by prosperity. The former is made more tolerable by the latter, and the latter receives a keener enjoyment from the former. Blessed be God in all things: our sorrow has been turned into joy, our wounds have been soothed first by wine, then with oil. The robbers and plunderers have been smitten with compunction and brought low. They send back with honour the priest of the Lord, on whom they dared to lay hands; the spoils which they had carried off they energetically collect again, and wholly restore. If any part of them cannot be found Dalfinus will give satisfaction for it according to your good pleasure; he has pledged me his honour to this. If he comes to the feet of your majesty, as he proposes to do, in order to fulfil his promise, I ask that the young man may be dealt with more gently than he deserves. Not that I wish so great a crime to go unpunished, but that the Church, if possible, may be honoured by due satisfaction being given; so that he who gives the satisfaction may not be exasperated beyond the limits of his patience, and may not repent him of having listened to my advice.

LETTER CXXXVII. (A.D. 1134.)

TO THE EMPRESS OF THE ROMANS

As Pope Innocent did not wish to restore the Milanese to his favour until they had made submission to the Emperor Lothaire, Bernard commends them to the clemency of the Empress.

In bringing over the citizens of Milan I did not forget the instructions given me beforehand by your excellency. Even if I had not received them I should none the less have aimed to secure your honour and the welfare of your kingdom, as I do always and everywhere as far as I can. As a matter of fact, the Milanese were not received into favour with thy lord the Pope, nor into the unity of the Church until they had publicly abjured Conrad, and acknowledged my lord Lothaire as their king and lord, and received him, as the whole of the world does, as the august Emperor of the Romans: nor until they had taken an oath on the Holy Gospel, by the direction and command of my lord the Pope, that they would give you fitting satisfaction for the injury that they had done you. I give, therefore, hearty thanks to the divine goodness which has thus laid your enemies at your feet without the horrors of war, or the shedding of man’s blood; and I ask that, when the Milanese seek through the Pope as their mediator for your favour, we may find you as kindly disposed and merciful as we have often before experienced you to be; and so they will not repent of having listened to sound advice, and you will receive at their hands the service and honour that are your due. For it is not seemly that your faithful servants who labour for your honour should be put to shame by you, as they certainly will be if, after they have held out to others the hope of indulgence at the hands of your gracious majesty, they find you inexorable when they intervene on their own behalf.

LETTER CXXXVIII. (A.D. 1133.)

TO HENRY, KING OF THE ENGLISH

He asks for assistance to Pope Innocent from the King.

To the most illustrious HENRY, King of England, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, prosperity, and peace.

To wish to teach you, and especially about what concerns your honour, would be the part either of a fool, or of one who knows nothing at all of you. It is enough for me, therefore, to state the case simply and in as few words as possible; when a hint is enough many words are superfluous. We are on the

threshold of the city, salvation is at the doors, righteousness is our companion, but the Roman military want other food than that. And so by righteousness we appease God, by our arms we terrify the foe, but we have not the bare necessaries of life. You know better than I what should be done to finish the good work that you have begun in your magnificent and honourable reception of my lord, Pope Innocent.

LETTER CXXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO THE EMPEROR LOTHAIRE

Bernard exhorts the Emperor to repress the schismatics. He recommends to him the cause of a certain Church at Toul.

To LOTHAIRE, by the grace of God Roman Emperor and AUGUSTUS, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting and prayer, if the prayer of a sinner be of any avail.

1. Blessed be God who has chosen you, and set you up as the horn of our salvation, to the praise and glory of His name, to the reparation of the Imperial honour, to the support of the Church in her evil hour, and lastly to work salvation in the midst of the earth. It is His work that the glory of your crown is being daily added to and raised on high, is wonderfully increasing and advancing in all honour and magnificence before God and men. Of His doing surely it was, and of His power that you lately accomplished so successfully such a laborious and dangerous journey, undertaken on behalf of the peace of the kingdom and the liberation of the Church. Indeed, you have most gloriously attained the full height of the Imperial dignity, and, what is still greater, you did so not by a mighty hand, that so the greatness of your mind and of your faith might the more clearly shine forth. But if the earth trembled and was still before so tiny an army, what dread may we suppose will seize upon the hearts of the enemy when the King shall proceed to show the power of his arm? Moreover, the goodness of his cause will animate him, nay, a double necessity will urge him forward. It becomes not me to exhort to battle; nevertheless, I say unhesitatingly that it is the duty of the Church’s advocate to protect the Church from being attacked by the madness of schismatics, it is the prerogative of Cæsar to uphold his own crown against the Sicilian usurper. For as a Jew by descent has seized upon the See of Peter to the injury of Christ, so without doubt everyone who makes himself a king in Sicily speaketh against Cæsar.

2. But if it is incumbent upon Cæsar both to render the things that are Cæsar’s

to Cæsar, and to God the things that are God's, why are the possessions of God at Toul diminished without Cæsar getting any gain from them? It is to be feared that neglect of trifles may become a barrier to great matters. What I refer to is this. The church of S. Gengulphus in that city is being grievously oppressed, and unjustly, too, it is said; and they say that in some way or other your prudence has been beguiled into opposing my lord the Pope, when he was about to see justice done, by a request from you not to interfere. I implore and advise you to act more prudently, to recall the injurious request, to permit justice to be done before that Church is destroyed to the foundation. I am but a poor Religious, yet I am your devoted servant, and if I seem importunate, it is, perhaps, just because I am thus devoted. I salute the Lady Empress in the love of Christ.

LETTER CXL. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO THE SAME

He commends to the Emperor the Pisans, who were entirely devoted to Pope Innocent.

I wonder at whose instigation, or by whose advice, it is that your vigilance has been so eluded, that men who were certainly worthy of double honour at your hands have met with quite opposite treatment. I mean the citizens of Pisa, who were the first, and, at one time, the only people to lift up their banner against your rival. How much more just would it have been had the royal indignation flamed out against those who on some pretext or other have had the audacity to attack a brave and loyal city, at a moment, too, above all things, when many thousands of its people had gone out to fight against the tyrant, to avenge the wrongs of its Lord, and to defend the imperial crown. For, that I may most fittingly apply to this city what was of old said of holy David (1 Sam. 22:14), I ask, among all States what one is so faithful as Pisa, going out and coming in, and obeying the King's command? Is not this the people which lately raised the siege of Naples, and put to flight the one powerful enemy that the kingdom has? Is not this the people, too, which, wonderful to say, in one campaign stormed the wealthy and strongly fortified cities of Amalfi, Ravello, Scala, and Atturnia, cities which up to that time had been found impregnable by all who had attempted their capture? How meet and right, how consistent with all reason and justice, would it have been that a faithful city should have been protected against every foe, at all events while engaged in such exploits as I have mentioned; to say nothing of the presence of the Supreme Pontiff, who had lately been driven

into exile, and received by the men of Pisa with the utmost honour, which they still continue to show; nor yet of the good service that they have done the Emperor, for which at that very time they themselves were under sentence of banishment. But things have gone by contraries; those who were hostile have met with favour, and those who have done their duty have incurred wrath. But perhaps you knew nothing of all this before. Now, however, that you do, it behoves you, nay, decency and good policy call upon you, to change your orders and your mind, that so men who deserve especially to be honoured by the King's countenance and bounty may hear and receive from you for the future such things as they have merited. How great is the reward that the men of Pisa can claim; how great a reward may they still earn! I have said enough for a wise man.

LETTER CXLI. (A.D. 1138.)

TO HUMBERT, ABBOT OF IGNY

Bernard blames him severely for having suddenly and rashly abandoned his abbey and his charge.

May Almighty God forgive you. What has made you act thus? Who would have believed that a man endowed with such good gifts would have so stumbled and fallen into evil? How could a good tree have brought forth such bad fruit? How terrible is God in His judgments among the children of men! I am not surprised at this token of the power of the devil, but I am surprised that God should have allowed one whom I believe to have served Him so faithfully for so many years to fall so grievously. What will He do with me, an idle and careless servant, if He hands over His faithful follower for a time unto the will of his enemies? What reason, I ask you, have you for deserting your charge? It is rather to be called an act of impiety, at which your children grieve and your adversaries rejoice. I wonder that you were not deterred by the example of Abbot Arnold, whose similar presumption was shortly afterwards punished with a well-deserved but dreadful end, as you well recollect. And he, indeed, as I know well, had some excuse, but you have none. Is it that your monks were disobedient to your commands, or the converts neglectful of their tasks, or your neighbours by any chance hostile to you and your house, or were your worldly possessions too small and insufficient, inasmuch that you were forced to leave those whom you were not able to govern or to feed?

Take care, lest the words of God come to apply to you, They have hated me

without a cause (S. John 15:25). For what ought He to have done more for you, that He did not do? He planted for you a choice and beautiful vineyard; He surrounded it with the hedge of vowed continency; He dug in it a winepress of the strictest discipline; and He built a tower of holy poverty, the top of which reached unto heaven. He appointed you to till it and to take care of it. He honoured you in your labours, and, if you permit Him, He will crown those labours. But you, alas! are pulling down the wall that He has built, and exposing His vine, laden with fruitful branches, to all that pass by that way. Who is to prevent the wild boar out of the wood from rooting it up, and the wild beast of the field from devouring it? You write to me that you are not afraid to die under such scandal and the anathema of our lord the Pope, but I can only wonder how you can think this a good preparation for your death. Moreover, even if you had no other course open to you, might not some other time have been chosen but that when I am kept away by the necessities of the universal Church, and so am prevented from lending any aid to that unhappy community which you are rendering easy of attack? I beseech you, by Him who was crucified for you, that you cease from tormenting those who have already enough affliction, and desist from adding sorrow to sorrow. To tell you the truth, I am so affected by this grievous rent made in the Church at large that my soul is aweary of life, even if you and yours could manage to live in peace.

LETTER CXLII. (A.D. 1138.)

TO THE MONKS OF THE ABBEY IN THE ALPS

These monks of the Abbey in the Alps had associated themselves with Clairvaux under the Cistercian Order. Bernard praises and consoles them for the loss of their Abbot, who has been called to a higher rank, and instructs them respecting the election of another.

1. Your good father and mine, by the will of God, has been promoted to a higher place. Let us, therefore, dearly beloved, do what the prophet speaks of when he says, The sun was raised up, and the moon stood still in her order (Habak. 3:11, VULG.). He is the sun by which your congregation in the Alps is made everywhere illustrious, just as the moon receives her light from the sun. And as He has been raised up let us stand still in our order, we who have chosen to be doorkeepers in the house of our God, rather than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness. Our Order is lowliness, humility, voluntary poverty, obedience, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Our Order is to be under a teacher, under an

Abbot, under rule and discipline. Our Order is to seek to be silent, to train ourselves by fastings, watchings, and prayers, and manual labours, and above all things to hold the more excellent way of charity; nay, more, to be progressing from day to day, and persevering in these things until our life's end. And this I trust that you are carefully doing.

2. But you have done one work, and all men marvel. Although you were holy, you thought your holiness to be nothing; you sought to share in that of others, that you might be the more holy. Fulfilled is that which is written in the Gospel, When ye shall have done all those tilings which are commanded you say, We are unprofitable servants (S. Luke 17:10). You count yourselves unprofitable, and you have been found to be humble. To do what is right, and to think one's self unprofitable, is found amongst very few, and therefore many wonder at it when found. This, I repeat, is what makes you more famous than those who are famed, more saintly than the saints. And wherever this rumour of you has spread, it has filled all places with the sweetness of its odour. This grace, in my judgment, is to be preferred to protracted facts and anticipated vigils, and to every kind of bodily discipline; but godliness is profitable unto all things. How joyfully has the whole Cistercian Order opened its arms to you! with what smiling faces have the angel hosts looked down upon you! They know well that, above all things, Almighty God is pleased with brotherly fellowship and union, for He says by the Prophet, It is a good thing to be joined together (Is. 41:6, VULG.); and by another, Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity (Ps. 133:1); and again, If brother helpeth brother both shall be comforted (Prov. 18:19, VULG.).

3. Moreover, this that you have done tends to foster humility. And how acceptable this is to the Divine Majesty is taught us by him who says: God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble (S. James 4:6). It is shown, too, by the Master of humility, who says: Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart (S. Luke 11:29), What need I say, of the special welcome of love given you by our little flock of Clairvaux, to which you have more specially affiliated yourselves? No words can express the mutual charity that exists between us, and which works in a marvellous way by the pouring forth of the Spirit. It only remains, brethren, that, after invoking the Holy Spirit, you hasten to elect an abbot. For if you were to wait for me, I am afraid that my arrival may be long postponed, and that delay would be fraught with danger. But call to your side my dear brother, Godfrey, Prior of Clairvaux, to fill my place in this and any other matters; and then, according to his advice, or the advice of those he may send, in

case he cannot come to you himself, as well as of your father Guerin, choose such an abbot as may be able to labour for the honour of God and for your salvation. Forget me not, brethren.

LETTER CXLIII. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO HIS MONKS OF CLAIRVAUX

He excuses his long absence, from which he suffers more than they; and briefly reminds them of their duty.

To his dearly-loved brethren the Monks of Clairvaux, the converts, and the novices, their brother BERNARD sends greeting, bidding them rejoice in the Lord always.

1. Judge by yourselves what I am suffering. If my absence is painful to you, let no one doubt that it is far more painful to me. The loss is not equal, the burden is not the same, for you are deprived of but one individual, while I am bereft of all of you. It cannot but be that I am weighed down by as many anxieties as you are in number; I grieve for the absence of each one of you, and fear the dangers which may attack you. This double grief will not leave me until I am restored to my children. I doubt not that you feel the same for me; but then I am but one. You have but a single ground for sadness; I have many, for I am sad on account of you all. Nor is it my only trouble that I am forced to live for a time apart from you, when without you I should regard even to reign as miserable slavery, but there is added to this that I am forced to live among things which altogether disturb the tranquillity of my soul, and perhaps are little in harmony with the end of the monastic life.

2. And since you know these things, you must not be angry at my long absence, which is not according to my will, but is due to the necessities of the Church; rather pity me. I hope that it will not be a long absence now; do you pray that it may not be unfruitful. Let any losses which may in the meantime happen to befall you be regarded as gains, for the cause is God’s. And since He is gracious and all-powerful, He will easily make any losses good, and even add greater riches. Therefore, let us be of good courage, since we have God with us, in whom I am present with you, though we may seem to be separated by a long distance. Let no one among you who shows himself attentive to his duties, humble, reverent, devoted to reading, watchful unto prayer, anxious for brotherly love, think that I am absent from him. For can I be anything but present with him in spirit when we are of one heart and one mind? But if, which God forbid, there

be among you any whisperer, or any that is double-tongued, a murmurer, or rebellious, or impatient of discipline, or restless or truant, and who is not ashamed to eat the bread of idleness, from such I should be far absent in soul even though present in body, just because he would have already set himself far from God by a distance of character and not of space.

3. In the meanwhile, brethren, until I come, serve the Lord in fear, that in Him being delivered from the hand of your enemies you may serve Him without fear. Serve Him in hope, for He is faithful that promised; serve Him by good works, for He is bountiful to reward. To say nothing else, He rightly claims this life of ours as His own, because He laid down His own to obtain it. Let none, therefore, live to himself, but to Him who died for him. For whom can I more justly live than for Him whose death was my life? for whom with more profit to myself than for Him who promises eternal life? for whom under a greater necessity than for Him who threatens me with everlasting flames? But I serve Him willingly, because love gives liberty. To this I exhort my children. Serve Him in that love which casteth out fear, which feels no labours, seeks for no reward, thinks of no merit, and yet is more urgent than all. No terror is so powerful, no rewards so inviting, no righteousness so exacting. May it join me to you never to be divided, may it also bring me before you, especially at your hours of prayer, my brethren, dearly beloved and greatly longed for.

LETTER CXLIV. (A.D. 1137.)

TO THE SAME

He expresses his regret at his very long absence from his beloved Clairvaux, and his desire to return to his dear sons. He tells them of the consolations that he feels nevertheless in his great labours for the Church.

1. My soul is sorrowful until I return, and it refuses to be comforted till it see you. For what is my consolation in the hour of evil, and in the place of my pilgrimage? Are not you in the Lord? Wherever I go, the sweet memory of you never leaves me; but the sweeter the memory the more I feel the absence. Ah, me! that the time of my sojourning here is not only prolonged, but its burden increased, and truly, as the Prophet says, they who for a time separate me from you have added to the pain of my wounds (Ps. 69:26). Life is an exile, and one that is dreary enough, for while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord. To this is added the special grief which almost makes me impatient, that I am forced to live without you. It is a protracted sickness, a wearisome waiting, to be

so long subject to the vanity which possesses everything here, to be imprisoned within the horrid dungeon of a noisome body, to be still bound with the chains of death, and the ropes of sin, and all this time to be away from Christ. But against all these things one solace was given me from above, instead of His glorious countenance which has not yet been revealed, and that is the sight of the holy temple of God, which is you. From this temple it used to seem to me an easy passage to that glorious temple, after which the Prophet sighed when he said: One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to visit His temple (Ps. 27:4).

2. What shall I say? how often has that solace been taken from me? Lo, this is now the third time, if I mistake not, that my children have been taken from me. The babes have been too early weaned, and I am not allowed to bring up those whom I begot through the Gospel. In short, I am forced to abandon my own children and look after those of others, and I hardly know which is the more distressing, to be taken from the former, or to have to do with the latter. O, good Jesu! is my whole life thus to waste away in grief, and my years in mourning? It is good for me, O Lord, rather to die than to live, only let it be amongst my brethren, those of my own household, those who are dearest to my heart. That, as all know, is sweeter and safer, and more natural. Nay, it would be a loving act to grant to me that I might be refreshed before I go away, and be no more seen. If it please my Lord that the eyes of a father, who is not worthy to be called a father, should be closed by the hands of his sons, that they may witness his last moments, soothe his end, and raise his spirit by their loving prayers to the blissful fellowship, if you think him worthy to have his body buried with the bodies of those who are blessed because poor, if I have found favour in Thy sight, this I most earnestly ask that I may obtain by the prayers and merits of these my brethren. Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done. Not for my own sake do I wish for either life or death.

3. But it is only right, that as you have heard of my grief, you should also know what consolation I have. The first solace for all the trouble and misfortune that I undergo is the thought that the cause I strive for is that of Him to whom all things live. Whether I will or no, I must live for Him who bought my life at the price of His own, and who is able, as a merciful and righteous Judge, to recompense us in that day whatever we may suffer for Him. But if I have served as His soldier against my will, it will be only that a dispensation has been entrusted unto me, and I shall be an unprofitable servant; but if I serve willingly

I shall have glory. In this consideration, then, I breathe again for a little. My second consolation is that often, without any merit of mine, grace from above has crowned me in my labours, and that grace in me was not in vain, as I have many times found, and as you have seen to some extent. But how necessary just now the presence of my feebleness is to the Church of God, I would say for your consolation were it not that it would sound like boasting. But as it is, it is better that you should learn it from others.

4. Moved by the pressing request of the Emperor, by the Apostolic command, as well as by the prayers of the Church and the princes, whether with my will or against my will, weak and ill, and, to say truth, carrying about with me the pallid image of the King of terrors, I am borne away into Apulia. Pray for the things which make for the Church's peace and our salvation, that I may again see you, live with you, and die with you, and so live that ye may obtain. In my weakness and time of distress, with tears and groanings, I have dictated these words, as our dear brother Baldwin can testify, who has taken them down from my mouth, and who has been called by the Church to another office and elevated to a new dignity. Pray, too, for him, as my one comfort now, and in whom my spirit is greatly refreshed. Pray, too, for our lord the Pope, who regards me and all of you equally with the tenderest affection. Pray, too, for my lord the Chancellor, who is to me as a mother; and for those who are with him—my lord Luke, my lord Chrysogonus, and Master Ivo—who show themselves as brothers. They who are with me—Brother Bruno and Brother Gerard—salute you and ask for your prayers.

LETTER CXLV. (Circa A.D. 1137.)

TO THE ABBOTS ASSEMBLED AT CÎTEAUX

Bernard begs them to have compassion upon his labours and sufferings, and to excuse his absence on that account. He earnestly desires to die among his brethren, and not in a foreign land.

In much weakness of body and anxiety of mind, as God knows, have I dictated these words to you—a man miserable and born to suffering, yet your brother. Would that I might merit to have now the Holy Spirit, in whom ye have met together, as my advocate to your whole body, that He might impress upon your hearts the trouble that I am suffering, and bring before your brotherly affections my sad and suppliant countenance just as it now is. I do not pray Him to create new pity in you, for I know how familiar to you all is that virtue, but I do ask

Him to give you a keen sense of how much loving pity I now stand in need. For I am certain that if that were given you, tears would unceasingly flow forth from the fount of your love, that groans and sobs and sighs would knock at heaven's gate, so that God would hear and be gracious unto me, and say, "I have restored thee to thy brethren, thou shalt not die amid strangers, but amongst thine own people." I am so worn, indeed, by my great labours and griefs that I am often awearied of life. But I speak as a man, because of my infirmity; I desire my life to be prolonged till I return to you, that I may not die away from you. For the rest, brethren, make good your ways, determining and holding to what is true, honest, and useful. Before all things endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and the God of peace shall be with you.

LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT BERNARD: VOLUME 2

NOTE

The following list of editions carries on the bibliography given by Dom. J. Mabillon in his second edition, and adds some particulars not therein contained.

1. Editions by J. M. Horst were published in 1642 (Parisiis, 5 Tom.); in 9 vols. (1667–1668); and Coloniæ Agrippinæ (Cologne) 1641, 1672. (The first and last volumes of this edition are differently dated from the others.) The Editor was J. C. Schluter; and this was the last edition founded on Horst.

2. The second edition of Dom. J. Mabillon, which has ever since been the standard, was issued in 2 vols. folio (Parisiis, 1690).

A third, tertiis curis J. Mabillon, also in 2 vols. folio (Parisiis, 1719): and again in 3 vols. with additions by Dom. J. Martene (Venetiis, 1726).

Lastly, in 1839, was issued in Paris in 6 vols. 4to, by Gaume Frères, a fourth edition, emendata et aucta, of which precise details are given in Vol. i., pp. 74, 75; and the text of which has been used in this translation.

It is printed with remarkable correctness, a verification of the references having thus far shown but very few errors.

Volume ii. contains the great bulk of S. Bernard’s Letters. The remainder, which are short and comparatively unimportant, will follow at the beginning of Vol. iii.

S. J. E.

NOTE ON THE SEAL OF S. BERNARD

WE owe it to the kindness of M. Deville, Director of the Museum of Antiquities at Rouen, that we are able to reproduce the following note, with the exact design of S. Bernard's seal spoken of in this note.

NOTE ON THE SEAL OF S. BERNARD.

Copy of a letter addressed to the Permanent Secretary of the Academy of Inscriptions.

Rouen, Aug. 16, 1837.

SIR,—

A happy circumstance has just put into my hands the original seal of S. Bernard. The Academy will doubtless be interested at hearing that the seal of this celebrated man, who played so important a part in the religious and political events of his day, still exists; and I may, perhaps, be allowed to send it some account of this little memorial of the twelfth century—one of the most precious that it has left us. It is of yellow copper, and of oval form, about 40 millimètres long (about 1 ½ inch), 30 millimètres broad in its widest part (nearly 1 ¼ inch); its thickness is about ⅕ inch, and its weight about an ounce. The figure of S. Bernard is hollowed out, in monastic costume; his head is tonsured and bare, his chin shaven, and he is sitting on a folding chair, the arms of which terminate in a serpent's head. The Saint holds in his right hand, which becomes the left in the impression, a very simple staff, with a crook after the style of the ancient lituus; and in his left hand, which is stretched out like the right, an object which the roughness and minuteness of the work make it difficult to recognize. I think it to be a church-door divided into two parts by a column, surmounted by a capital. [Mabillon has taken this for a book; the owner of the seal took it for a sand-glass.] The following inscription is traced on the margin of the seal round the figure (a cross patée is placed just above the head of the Saint): X Sigillum: Bernardi: Abbatis Claræval.

With the exception of the g of the word Sigillum, of the d of Bernardi, and of the e of Claræval, which are of the Gothic character, the letters resemble the Roman uncials, and do not depart otherwise from the characters in use in the twelfth century.

The absence of the word Saint before Bernard is enough to prove, if necessary, that this seal is contemporary with him whose name it bears, and that it really belonged to him, because we know that S. Bernard, who died in 1153, was canonized not many years after his death, viz., in 1174, by Pope Alexander III. If this seal—the use of which in that case would be inexplicable—was posterior to the canonization, they would not have failed to add the significant word Sanctus; it could scarcely have been without it.

The only objection, perhaps, to a skilled eye that could be raised against the authenticity of the seal is that the style of the design, the costumes and the details, as well as the shape of the seal, seem to assign it to the latter half, or almost to the middle of the twelfth century. But S. Bernard having taken the pastoral staff A.D. 1115, the question arose why his official seal, which must have been executed at that time, had not the marks of that time; for the difference, after the long study that I had devoted to these monuments, was most apparent to my eyes. Such was the question that I had to consider.

On reading again the Letters of S. Bernard I found its solution. S. Bernard, writing to Pope Eugenius III., A.D. 1151, tells him that he has been forced to change his seal because of an abuse of confidence, and that he had had a second engraved, on which were traced his figure and name (ep. 284). It is this second seal which is in my possession. The effigy and name of S. Bernard are engraved on it: its shape and execution correspond exactly with the style of the time when S. Bernard informs us that he had had it made; it has in every way all the marks of genuineness that can be wished for.

It only remains for me now to inform the Academy of the way in which I became possessed of this inestimable piece of antiquity. I owe it to the generosity of a retired officer, M. Pays, of Issoudun, who wrote to me a few days ago, on sending it: “This seal was bought of a second-hand salesman, who became possessed in 1790 of the old copper articles of the Collegiate Church of S. Cyr, of Issoudun, which was affiliated to Clairvaux. How it came there I do not know.” Subjoined is an impression of the seal, which I beg you to bring under the notice of the Academy. I forgot to say that the reverse is flat and of one piece, and with no mark of handle or hook. It is evident that the seal was pressed on the wax by the finger only.

Receive, etc.,

DEVILLE.

COPY OF AN IMPRESSION OF S. BERNARD’S SEAL.

DESCRIPTION OF THE POSITION AND SITE OF THE ABBEY OF CLAIRVAUX

If you wish to know the site of Clairvaux, these lines will describe it for you as if in a mirror. The abbey is built at the foot of two mountains, which are separated from each other by a narrow valley, and leave between them a distance which widens as they descend from the side of the abbey. One of these mountains has its side occupied by one half of the abbey, and the other half is on the corresponding side of the other. The one mountain is fertile with vineyards, the other with corn; and each of them offers to the eye a beautiful sight, and supplies a needful support for the inmates. So that whilst on one of the ridges rises the corn upon which the brethren live, on the other is grown the wine which they drink. The top of the mountain is the scene of numerous labours of the monks; works as pleasant as they are peaceable—to collect dry branches, and gather them in bundles to burn them; to grub up the brushwood which disfigures the ground, and to prepare it for the fire, for which alone it is fit; to uproot the brambles and destroy them; to dig the soil; to scatter (as I may say after Solomon) the “bastard slips” which choke the roots or entangle the boughs of the rising trees, so that there may be no impediment to the sturdy oak which salutes the heavens with its lofty top, to the graceful lime-tree which spreads its arms, to the ash-tree whose wood is so elastic and easily split, or to the leafy beech, as the one shoots upwards and the other spreads its lateral shade.

Behind the house extends a broad plain, of which a wall shuts in no small part, and encloses the abbey with an extended boundary. Within this enclosure the trees are numerous and varied, fertile in fruit of various kinds, and form an orchard like a forest. Beside it rise the cells of the sick, and the neighbourhood of the trees is no slight alleviation of the infirmities of the brethren, to whom the orchard offers a vast space for walking, and gives a pleasant shade against the heat of the sun. The sick are wont to sit upon the green turf, and when the excessive heats of the dog-days burn the earth and dry up the rivers they sit sheltered under the trees, and defended from the heat of their shadow. Under their leafy screen the sun’s rays are softened, and their sufferings are soothed as

they breathe the air fragrant with the scent of hay. The pleasant green of the trees and of the turf rests their eyes, and the fruit which hangs before them promises them delight when ripened. They might say with reason: I have sat under the shade of the tree which I desired, and its fruit was sweet to my taste (Cant. 2:3). Their ears are agreeably occupied by the sweet and harmonious concerts of birds of varied plumage. See how, in order to cure one sickness, the goodness of God multiplies remedies, causes the clear air to shine in serenity, the earth to breathe forth fruitfulness, and the sick man himself to inhale through eyes, and ears, and nostrils the delights of colours, of songs, and of odours. Where the orchard ceases begins the garden, through which run little channels of water, or rather little streams separate and divide it into squares. For although the water appears to be still, yet it has a steady current, though slow. Here, too, is a pleasing sight afforded to the eyes of the sick brethren when they go to sit on the verdant bank of a pool filled with pure and running water, where they can watch the sports of the little fish in water clear as crystal, which swim to and fro in shoals like marching armies. The water of these pools serves at the same time for nourishing the fish and for watering the vegetables in the garden; it is introduced by a constant current derived from the Aube, a river well known. This stream passes and repasses the many workshops of the abbey, and everywhere leaves a blessing behind it for its faithful service. The river climbs to this height by works laboriously constructed, and passes nowhere without rendering some service, or leaving some of its water behind. It divides the valley into two by a sinuous bed, which the labour of the brethren, and not Nature, has made, and goes on to throw half of its waters into the abbey, as if to salute the brethren, and seems to excuse itself for not coming in its whole force, the canal which receives it being too small for it. If sometimes the stream, swollen by an inundation, rushes on with violent current, it is stopped by a wall, under which it is obliged to pass, and so turned back upon itself, meets and checks the descending stream. As much, however, as the wall, like a faithful porter, allows to enter passes on at once to drive the wheels of a mill; there, lashed into foam by their motion, it grinds the meal under the weight of the mill-stones, and separates the fine from the coarse by a sieve of fine tissue.

A little farther on, in the next building, it fills a boiler, and is heated for brewing, that drink may be prepared for the brethren, if it should happen that the vintage should not respond kindly to the labour of the vine-dresser; so that, in default of the juice of the vine, the want may be supplied by the extract of grain. But not even yet is its usefulness completed, for the fullers call it to their aid

who labour beside the mill; sound reason requiring that, as in the mill, care is taken for the food of the brethren, so by these their clothing should be prepared. But the river does not hesitate nor refuse any who require its aid; and you may see it causing to rise and fall alternately the heavy pestles, that is to say, hammers, or wooden foot-shaped blocks (for that name seems to agree better with the treading-work, as it were, of the fullers), and so relieves them of the heaviest part of their labour. And if it is permitted to them to mix jokes with serious work, it relieves the sadness of their sins. O God, how many consolations Thou givest to Thy poor, so that they may not be entirely weighed down by the extreme stress of their labour! What alleviations of punishment to the penitent, that they may not be altogether absorbed by excessive sorrow! How many horses would this labour tire! of how many men would it weary the arms! And the kindly stream relieves us from it altogether, although without it we should have neither food to eat, nor raiment prepared to put on. It shares with us our fatigues, and for all the labour which it undertakes the whole day long it expects no other recompense than that when it has completed diligently all its tasks it may be permitted to go free upon its way. Thus, after having made to revolve in its quick movement so many wheels, rapid as itself, it emerges foaming, you would say that it is, so to speak, mealy, and that it has been made softer.

From thence it passes into the workshop of the curriers, where it contributes its laborious assistance to the preparation of the sandals which are needful for the use of the Brothers. Coming from there, it is divided into numerous threads of water, and thus distributed; it penetrates all the workshops, and lends itself to everyone’s need, everywhere looking for assistance that it may be able to render. Thus it helps to cook the food, to sift the grain, to drive wheels and pestles, to damp, wash, and soak, and so to soften, objects; everywhere it stands ready to offer its help. Lastly, in order that I may not omit any thanks due to it, nor leave the catalogue of its services in any way imperfect, it carries away all dirt and uncleanness, and leaves all things clean behind it. Then, after having accomplished industriously the purpose for which it came, it returns with rapid current to the stream, and renders to it in the name of Clairvaux, thanks for all the services which it has performed, and replies to its salutation with worthy response. Immediately it receives into its bosom the waters that it had lent to us, and the two streams become only one; they are so perfectly mixed that you can find no trace of their union; only on re-entering into its bed, it hastens the course of the stream, which had been delayed, diminished, and rendered less active in its course, by the withdrawal of part of its waters.

But since we have restored it to its place, let us return to the little streams which we have left behind us. They are drawn from the river, and wander in careless curves through the meadows, to penetrate into the earth and refresh it, so that it may bring forth seed for fear that at the return of spring, when the fruitful earth opens to let the new growth appear, the infant plants should be dried up for want of water; nor have they any need of the drops from the clouds because sufficiently fed by the bounty of the neighbouring river. These little streams, or rather watercourses, after they have fulfilled their office, are absorbed in the stream which had given them out, and the Aube having regained all its waters, resumes its rapid course down the valley. But as we have accompanied it so far, and it, following the word of Solomon, returns to its place, (Eccles. 1:7), let us too return to the point from whence we started, and traverse with rapid description the vast plain of meadows.

That spot has much charm, it greatly soothes weary minds, relieves anxieties and cares, helps souls who seek the Lord greatly to devotion, and recalls to them the thought of the heavenly sweetness towards which they aspire. The smiling countenance of the earth is painted with varying colours, the blooming verdure of spring satisfies the eyes, and its sweet odour salutes the nostrils. But while I view the flowers, while I breathe their sweet scent, the meadows recall to me the histories of ancient times; for while I drink in the sweetness of the flowers, the thought occurs to my mind of the fragrance of the clothing of the Patriarch Jacob, which the Scripture compares to the odour which mounts from a fruitful field. When I delight my eyes with the bright colours of the flowers, I am reminded that this beauty is far above that of the purple robe of Solomon, who in all his glory, could not equal the beauty of the lilies of the field, although to him there was wanting neither richness of material, nor wisdom and taste in arrangement. In this way, while I am charmed without by the sweet influence of the beauty of the country, I have not less delight within in reflecting on the mysteries which are hidden beneath it. This, meadow, then is irrigated by the little stream which flows through it, and sends its moisture to the roots of its vegetation, so that they will not fear the heats of summer when it shall come. It is extended so far that at the time when the covering of the greensward falls under the scythe, and is dried to make hay, the gathering-in of it is a heavy task for the whole force of the Abbey during twice ten days. Yet that labour is not left wholly to the monks, but with them an unnumbered multitude of lay brothers, brothers lent from other Houses, and a crowd of hired labourers, collect the hay when dried, and clear the shorn soil with rakes.

This meadow is shared between two farms, which the Aube divides equally and fairly, in order to avoid dispute, assigning to each its domain, of which it forms the boundary on either side, so that the one may not cross to encroach upon the land of the other. You would not suppose that these farm-houses only serve for the dwelling-place of lay-brothers; you would take them for cloisters of monks, if the yokes of oxen, ploughs, and other instruments fitted for the labours of countrymen did not make manifest the kind of inhabitants whom the houses shelter, and if you did not remark that no books are lying open among them. For as relates to the buildings, you would say that it was suitable for a great convent of monks, both by sight, size, and beauty.

In the part of the meadow which is near to the wall, a pool of water has been made out of the solid plain; there, where previously the labourer, pouring with sweat, was cutting the hay with his sharp scythe, there the brother fisherman, borne in a light skiff, as it were upon a wooden horse, scours the watery plain; for spurs he has a light oar with which he urges his boat to speed and turns its course where he will. He unfolds his net under the waves, in which the fishy tribe are entangled, to prepare for him a prey which he loves to see placed upon the table; or he uses the secret hook, with which the imprudent fish is taken. By the example of which we may be taught to despise pleasures, because pleasure is bought with pain, and is injurious, nor can anyone be ignorant of the sad fate of those who yield to it, except those who either have not sinned, or, having sinned, have not the benefit of repentance. May God keep far from us the pleasure, at the entrance to which Death is placed; according to the description of a wise man, “like bees in their flight, who seek a drop of honey, and are pierced through with a dart” (Boethius). The banks of the lake are strengthened by a high palisade woven of flexible osiers, so that the earth may not crumble away by the percolation of the water. This lake is fed by the river which flows by, at a distance of scarcely thirty-six feet, from which the water is let through narrow passages into the lake which it feeds. Overflow pipes lead back from it, and keep the water always at the same level.

But while I am carried on in this description of the meadows, while I breathlessly mount the steep slopes, or traverse the brightly-coloured surface of the meadow, painted by the hand of Wisdom, or describe the ridges of the mountains clothed with trees, I am accused of ingratitude by that sweet fountain of whose waters I have so often drunk, which has merited so well of me, and which I have repaid so ill. It reminds me in a tone of reproach that it has often quenched my thirst, that it has given me water to wash my hands and even my

feet, that it has rendered to me many such offices of kindness and benevolence. It says to me that all these good offices I have repaid with ingratitude; that it has been the last mentioned of all the places I have described, and indeed that it scarcely found a place at all; whereas for the respect I owe to it, it should have been placed first. And, indeed, I am unable to deny that I remembered it too late; and that I should have thought of it earlier. But does it not roll its waters silently through subterranean channels, so that not even the lightest murmur marks its passage, like the waters of Siloah which roll in silence, as if fearing to be betrayed, and hide themselves from all eyes? Why should I not have supposed that it wished for secrecy, when I see that it does not wish to be beheld except under a roof? This fountain, then (which is said to be an indication of a good fountain), has its source opposite to the rising sun, so that at the time of the spring solstice it salutes the ruddy face of the scintillating aurora. A hut of turf, or, to speak more respectfully of it, a pavilion small and pretty, covers and protects it, that nothing unclean may fall into it on any side. But the place where the mountain permits it to issue forth is also the place where the valley engulfs it; where it is born, it also as it were dies, and is buried. But do not expect a sign like that of Jonas the prophet, that it should lie hidden three days and three nights in the soil; it seems to be raised up almost immediately from the heart of the earth, and reappears at a thousand feet distance, within the enclosure of the monastery. It might be said that it returns to life where it appears, offering itself to charm the sight and supply the wants of the brethren, as if it were not willing to have communication with any others than saints.

LETTERS

LETTER CXLVI

TO BURCHARD, ABBOT OF BALERNE

Bernard rejoices that his efforts to train Burchard to the Religious life have not been in vain; the happy issue is to be attributed to God alone.

1. Your style has been filled with fire and power, and with that fire, too, which the Lord has sent on the earth. I read your letter, and my heart burned within me; I blessed that furnace from whence such sparks had flown forth. Did not your heart burn within you as you dictated such words? A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things. If I laboured for you, as you humbly say, I rejoice at it. I ploughed, in hope, no doubt, of receiving fruit, and my hope has not deceived me. Lo, with the fruit of my works my heart is satisfied in a strange land; and I see by experience that my seed has not fallen by the wayside, nor on stony ground, nor amongst thorns, but into a good and fertile soil. And if I had sorrow when I brought them forth, yet now I remember no more the travail, for joy that a child has been born into the world. A child, I mean, in malice, not in understanding; one whom the Saviour could set forward for an example to the old, saying, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (S. Matt. 18:3); such a child as can say, I am wiser than the aged, because I have sought Thy commandments (Ps. 119:100); and, I am small and despised, yet do I not forget Thy precepts (Ps. 119:141).

2. I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. By Thy will, not by their merits are they what they are. For Thou dost not come to find, but goest before to give merit. We all have sinned, and need to be prevented by grace. Do thou, then, my brother, acknowledge that thou hast been prevented, and prevented with the blessings of goodness, not by me, who am nothing, but by Him who, by His holy inspiration, prevented me, and so caused me to warn thee to save thyself. For, to attribute a great deal to myself, I planted, I watered; but without Him who giveth

the increase, what am I? To Him in all humility submit thyself, to Him with utmost devotion cling. Use me as His servant, thy fellow servant, thy companion in the way, thy future co-heir in our country, that is to say, if I shall have faithfully fulfilled the ministry to which I was sent on your behalf, and if I shall have done what I could to enable you to lay hold of the inheritance of salvation. This is my answer to your complaint. I will occupy myself with your necessities as my own when I come.

LETTER CXLVII. (A.D. 1138.)

TO PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY

Peter had consoled Bernard, who was engaged abroad in several difficult labours for the Church, by sending him Gebuin, Archdeacon of Troyes. He gratefully acknowledges this kindness, and predicts a happier state for the Church by the extinction of the then existing schism.

To dom PETER, the very Reverend Father, Abbot of Cluny, his friend BERNARD wishes health, and all that he could desire for his friend.

1. May the Dayspring from on high visit you, my excellent friend, for you have visited me in a strange land, and consoled me in the place of my pilgrimage. You have done well to think upon the poor and needy. I was absent, and absent too for a long time, and you, a great man, full of important matters, yet forgot not my name. Blessed be thy holy angel, who put loving thought for me into thy heart: blessed be our God who moved thee. Lo, I hold in my hand your letter, of which I may make my boast among strangers, and in which you have poured out your full heart to me. I rejoice that you hold me in favour as well as in memory. I rejoice in the privilege of your love, I am refreshed out of the abundant sweetness of your heart. And not only so, but I glory in tribulations also, if I have been counted worthy to endure any for the sake of the Church. This, truly, is my glory and the lifting up of my head—the Church’s triumph. For if we have been sharers of her trouble, we shall be also of her consolation. We must work and suffer with our mother, lest she complain of us, saying, My kinsmen stand afar off: they also that seek after my life lay snares for me (Ps. 38:11, 12).

2. But thanks be to God who hath given her the victory, has crowned her labours, and glorified her in them. Our sadness has been turned into rejoicing, our mourning into gladness. The winter is passed, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning is here, the useless branch, the

rotten member has been cut off. The wicked man who made Israel to sin, he has been swallowed up by death, and given over to the pit of hell. In the words of the Prophet, he had entered into a covenant with death, and made an agreement with hell (Is. 28:18), and therefore, as Ezekiel says, Destruction has come to him and he shall be no more for ever (Ezek. 28:19). Another enemy, too, the greatest of all and the worst of all, has none the less been cut off. And he was one of the friends of the Church, of whom she is wont to complain, saying: My lovers and my neighbours did stand looking upon my trouble, and my kinsmen stood afar off (Ps. 38:11). If any remain I hope for speedy judgment against them. I shall soon be returning to my brethren, if God preserves my life, and I shall hope to pay you a visit in passing. Meanwhile I commend myself to your holy prayers. I salute brother Hugh, the Chamberlain, and all who are with you, with the rest of your sacred congregation.

LETTER CXLVIII. (A.D. 1138.)

TO THE SAME

He replies to Peter only in a few words, proposing to write at greater length later.

To dom PETER, Abbot of Cluny, BERNARD sends humble and respectful salutations.

When I had read your letter I was made joyful that one so great as you should trouble to prevent one so Insignificant as I with the blessings of goodness. But when shall we have an opportunity of seeing each other, and of conversing with each other? When will there be convenient place, or fitting occasion? Meanwhile I send a few words in reply to your short letter, and will gladly send more, when I know that they will not be burdensome to you. Else how could my littleness dare to write at all, were it not that you in your humility stoop to give me access to your exalted dignity?

LETTER CXLIX. (A.D. 1138.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard advises him not to press on so eagerly the affair of the Abbey of Saint Bertin.

I think that you are well aware how unwilling I am ever to do anything which may be hostile to your Reverence. And having this confidence I do not hesitate to make suggestions to you when necessary. With respect to the monastery of S.

Bertin I could wish you to act less eagerly than you have done. For even if you could bring it to submit to you in peace and without any contention, I do not see how you would gain even then. For I should not suppose that you would find any pleasure in honour accompanied by such responsibilities. But now that you cannot obtain the submission of this monastery without great labour, nor hold it, they say, peacefully, you have a good excuse afforded you for retiring gracefully from the attempt, in the fear of causing trouble and strife.

LETTER CL. (A.D. 1133.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

He praises the Pope for various acts of authority; and then urges him to oppose strongly the ambition of Philip, who was endeavouring to obtain the Archbishopric of Tours by illegitimate means.

1. May the members share in the health of the head! May the anointing oil which descended to the beard from the head also run down to the utmost skirts of the clothing! If when the shepherd is smitten the sheep are scattered, may they return to their pasture without fear when he is strong and well! What I mean is this: Many a report of your frequent glorious successes is making glad the city of God. It is, therefore, but fitting that your prosperity should be the strengthening of the Church; and that, when God exalts him that He has chosen out of His people, she also may see herself exalted, and feel the stronger by an increase of vigour. For if she have suffered with him, she ought also to reign with him. That is at once worthy of you and necessary for us. What is it then? If in times of fear and distress the arm of justice was not shortened, nor the zeal for equity cooled, are we to give way now that we are nearing the goal? Shall the virtue which shone brightly in weakness succumb in power?

2. To come to the point, with how strong a hand has the famous monastery of Vezelay been set in order? The Apostolic majesty thought that it ought not to give way, no, not for a moment, either to the insane outbreaks of an armed populace, or to the unbridled madness of mutinous and wrathful monks, or to what was more powerful than all—the forces of mammon. What shall I say of S. Benedict? Was the indignation of a king able to repress the spirit of liberty kindled and girded to battle against flesh and blood? So in a wonderful way were the churches of S. Memmius and S. Satyrus transformed, from being synagogues of Satan to become again sanctuaries of God, whether the workers of wickedness would or no. Nor at Liege was the threatening and savage sword of a passionate

and angry king able to enforce acquiescence in his urgent and wicked demands. Who can sufficiently praise the bolt that was hurled, even though it was from a distance, against the disturbers of the church of Orleans, by the same powerful hand in the last few days? Truly the bow of Jonathan turned not back, nor his sword returned empty. Nevertheless, by this word the king indeed was disturbed, but not all Jerusalem with him. He himself at last allowed his anger to cool. He was, indeed, fearful and scrupulous of taking up arms against the Lord, and against His Anointed Your majesty has been exalted above the heavens, but only in order that so good a beginning may be adorned with a fitting ending. This, indeed, is what all who love you are eagerly looking for, and they are demanding its speedy arrival.

3. With equal zeal, and with as powerful an arm, it is necessary for help to be immediately lent to the Church of Tours. Otherwise she is even now on the point to perish, unless you speedily help her. The spirit of Gislebert lives again, they say, in Philip, who is at once his nephew according to the flesh, and the heir of his ambition. With what a lust for power this youth burns is shown by the protracted and cruel tortures inflicted on his mother church, by which the unhappy man has almost disembowelled her, in order that he may be brought forth to honour. However, by the will of God an end has at last been put to his misdoings, that is to say, if only what has been done against him, as justice dictated, and his wickedness compelled, and peace called for, be ratified by Apostolic authority. But God forbid that the benign majesty of the Holy See should confound its faithful servants, to whom the settling of this matter was graciously entrusted. God forbid it that cruel ambition should find a supporter in the defender of innocence. This is what his audacity is bidding him try for, this is what he madly hopes to find. Once and again has the despiser of the Apostolic decree eluded the stroke of justice; and does he now again, with still more impudent rashness, venture none the less to present himself before the face of your equity? Is there any one who cannot see the impiety of the attempt of this man, who places no confidence whatever in righteousness, to attack the tower of strength with the forces of mammon? But we are safe; it is Innocent who is to be tempted, and the son of iniquity shall not come nigh to hurt him.

4. As to the rest, most sweet Father, while we sigh for your presence, we talk to each other of the memory of your abundant kindness; the one consoles us for the want of the other. This is never absent from our hearts; it is often in our mouths, it is salt to every speech, it soothes the ear, sweetens the mouth, refreshes and enkindles our hearts. It is foremost at the meetings of the saints, it

is their chief topic of conversation; it lends wings to their petitions, and nerves them to prayer. And now I pray earnestly for you and yours that the Eternal One, for Whom and on behalf of Whom you labour in time, may count you worthy of eternal memory. Amen.

LETTER CLI. (A.D. 1133.)

TO PHILIP, THE INTRUDED ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS

He expresses the great grief he felt that Philip should attempt to gain the Archbishopric of Tours by illegitimate means.

I am grieved for you, my dear Philip, but I beseech you mock not at my grief. For if by any chance you think that there is no cause for grief, then you are the more to be grieved for. Whatever you may think about yourself, for my part I think that a fount of tears is insufficient to lament for you. My grief is not one that calls for ridicule, but for compassion; for it is not a grief for flesh and blood, not for the loss of things that perish, but for you yourself, Philip. I cannot better describe the greatness of my grief than by saying that Philip is the cause of it. And when I say this, I declare the great lamentation of the Church, who once cherished you in her bosom, as a lily springing up, adorned with every celestial gift. Who, then, was there that did not loudly proclaim you to be a youth of good hope, a young man of good disposition? But, alas! the fair promise has disappeared. From what hope has France, who bore and nourished you, fallen! O, did you but know! But if you would apply your heart unto wisdom, you would also learn to grieve, and your grief would prevent mine from being sterile. I should go on if I were to give way to my feelings, but I do not wish to say much while in uncertainty, or to fight as one that beats the air. But I have written this that you may know my affection for you, and may learn that I am near you, if perchance God should inspire you with a desire for a conference, and if you should be willing to grant me what I greatly long for, an interview. I am at Viterbo, and I hear that you are staying at Rome. Vouchsafe to write back to me to say how you receive this letter of mine, that I may know what I ought to do, whether I am to grieve more or less. But if you despise everything, and will in no way listen to me, I for my part shall not lose the fruit of my letter, for it proceeds from charity; but you will have to give an answer for your contempt before the dread tribunal.

LETTER CLII. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO POPE INNOCENT, ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP OF TROYES

The indiscipline of the clergy increases with the slothful indulgence of the Bishops. The Bishop of Troyes is hated by a part of his clergy because he has corrected them.

The evil living of the clergy, the mother of which is Episcopal negligence, is everywhere disturbing and weakening the Church. The Bishops give what is holy to dogs, and cast pearls before swine, who turn again and rend them. But it is only right that they should have to suffer from those that they foster. They do not correct those whom they enrich with the goods of the Church, and therefore they are grieved and wearied with their misconduct. The clergy are made wealthy from other men's labours; they eat the fruit of the earth and give no money for it, and their iniquity cometh from their own fat (Ps. 73:7, VULG.). The old saying of the Scripture exactly applies to them of the present day, The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play (1 Cor. 10:7). A mind that has accustomed itself to delights, and that has not trained itself with the disciplinary rod, contracts many a stain. And what is more, if you attempt to rub off its long-standing rust, they will not suffer you to touch it with even the tips of your fingers; but as it is written, Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked (Deut. 32:15). False witnesses have risen up, men whose delight is ever to carp at the lives of others and neglect their own. Your son supplicates for the Bishop, whose sole fault in this quarrel, unless I am mistaken, has been that he has rebuked the clergy for their evil lives. Thus much for the Bishop; now let me offer excuses for myself. My father knows that I did not receive before the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin his gracious letter, in which he preferred to courteously entreat me to come to him, when he might have ordered me. And so I do not say, I have bought five yoke of oxen, or I have bought a piece of ground, or I have married a wife; but I confess simply, what, indeed, you are not ignorant of, that I am feeding my children with milk, and therefore I do not see how I can leave them without running the risk of causing scandal, or leaving them exposed to danger.

LETTER CLIII. (A.D. 1135.)

TO BERNARD DESPORTES, OF THE CARTHUSIAN ORDER

His correspondent had asked for an Exposition of the Canticles. He replies by pleading his inability to perform so great a task, and to satisfy the expectation of others.

1. You ask importunately, but I refuse as constantly, not as despising you, but as sparing myself. I wish that I could produce something that was worthy of your eager wish, and of your intelligence. I would, if I could, give for you the light of my eyes; yea, my soul itself, my dearest friend, my brother, to be embraced in the bowels of Christ by me most of all with the fulness of spiritual love. But where is the ability, or when shall I have leisure enough to undertake what you ask for? Nor do you seem to ask for anything trifling or worthless, such as lies in my power. You would not be thus pressing for what was of little moment. For your numerous letters, and the eagerness that animates them, sufficiently show your wish. Therefore, the more ardent I see your feelings to be, the more do I shrink from gratifying them. Why is this? I am afraid of bringing forth a ridiculously insignificant mouse, while you expect great things. I am afraid of this, and this is the cause of my hesitation. And what wonder is it that I am afraid of giving what I should be ashamed to publish? I am unwilling, I confess, to give you anything, because I think I should be rather issuing some contemptible work than publishing something that would be useful. Who can wish to give what would only cause shame to the giver, without benefiting the receiver? Willingly do I give what I have, but unwillingly do I throw it away. I know that when great things are expected lesser things are generally displeasing. But what is not gratefully received is thrown away, not given.

2. It is your aim, since you have leisure and freedom, to seek from all quarters for fuel for the fire with which you burn, that you may burn the more, and fulfil the will of the Lord, who says, And what do I wish, except that it burn brightly? (S. Luke 12:49, VULG.). I praise your aim, but not if you seek to obtain it in a quarter where you are likely to complain afterwards of having been disappointed. You err if you seek it with me. I ought rather to beg for such fuel from you. I know, indeed, how much more blessed it is to give than to receive; but that is true only when what is given is honourable to the giver, expedient for the receiver, and such a gift you will in vain seek from me. But such as I have, I am afraid that if I brought it forward, you would be ashamed of having wished for it, and would repent of having asked for it. But still, will it not after all be better for you to make my excuses to yourself? Let your own eyes judge for themselves. I yield to your importunity, to take away suspicion. I am dealing with a friend. I no longer spare my modesty, and henceforth while your desire is gratified, I will not make mention of my folly. I am having transcribed for you some sermons lately delivered on the beginning of the Canticles, and I send them to you before they are made public. When I have time, according as Christ

assigns me my tasks, I will endeavour to proceed with this work. Ask this for me in your prayers. I warmly salute through you my lord and father your Prior, with the rest of your brethren, and I humbly entreat them to remember me before God.

LETTER CLIV. (Circa A.D. 1136.)

TO THE SAME

He excuses himself for having been unable, on account of business, to visit the Chartreuse, as he had promised. He sends some of his Sermons on the Canticles.

I can no longer conceal the sorrow of my heart, nor hide my distress, from you, my very dear Bernard. I recollect my long-standing promise; it has been my purpose and strong desire to pass by your way, to visit again those whom my soul loveth, to ask for rest on my journey, some strength to bear my labours, some remedy for my sins; and in punishment of my sinfulness it has come to pass that though I have the will, yet I have not the power to visit you. Be assured, O man of God, that this is by no means due to the disinclination, or idleness, or negligence of your friend, but that a cause has intervened which might not be neglected, and that was the cause of God. None the less I am devoured by vexation as by a gnawing worm, and my heaviness is ever in my sight. And, indeed, I have more than enough of other troubles, but none so great as this. It is more than the toils of travelling, the unpleasantness of the heat, the anxieties of my affairs. Lo! I have opened my wound to a friend; it is yours now to sympathize with me, to bear with me what I suffer, that I may be relieved. I earnestly ask for your prayers, and for those of the saints who are with you. I am sending on to you the promised sermons on the beginning of the Canticles, which you asked for. And when you have read them, I beg you to give me your advice as soon as possible whether I ought to give them up or proceed with them.

LETTER CLV. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO POPE INNOCENT, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME BERNARD WHEN ELECTED BISHOP

Bernard Desportes, who is destined for a Bishopric in Lombardy, though well worthy of that honour, is not altogether fit for such a place, and would be better reserved for a fitter place.

I have heard, reverend Father, that Bernard Desportes, a man beloved of God

and men, is by your irresistible call to undertake the office and work of a Bishop. It is probably true, for it well becomes your Apostleship to bring into the light a light that was hidden; lest he who is capable of drawing others to the Life should live for himself alone. For how long is one that can give light to others to lie concealed and only burn? Let it be placed, if you see good, on a candlestick, that it may be a burning and a shining light; but at the same time let it not be in a place where the force of the storms is great, lest it be perchance extinguished. Who is there that does not know of the evil-living and turbulence of the Lombards? Who knows them better than yourself? You know better than I how weakened is the episcopal power there, how rebellious a house it is. What am I to think is likely to be done by a man whose health is shattered, and who has been accustomed to a hermit's quiet, in the midst of a barbarous, riotous, and passionate populace? When are such holiness and such iniquity likely to agree? or when will such simplicity and such hypocrisy live in concord? Let him be reserved, if you see good, for a more congenial sphere, and for another flock, that he may profit that over which he presides; and let not hasty action destroy the fruit which in due time he will be able to bring forth.

LETTER CLVI. (Circa A.D. 1135 OR 1136.)

TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE CLERGY OF ORLEANS

For how long is the unhappy Church of Orleans to knock at the heart of the Father of the fatherless and the Judge of widows? How long now has the noble virgin of Israel been lying in the dust, bereft not only of her husband, but also of the dear pledges of his affection! Alas! there is none to lift her up. How long will it be before you send away the children crying after you with their unhappy mother? I mean those who having lost their houses and their goods have only saved their lives by flight. Why hangs back the powerful hand, which never yet has shrunk from avenging the oppressed, or from smiting the haughty? Why delays it, I ask, to rescue the afflicted from the hand of the strong, and to mete out punishment to the proud? Even if it delays, let it not rest idle for ever. Help that has been withheld should, when it is given, come in greater force, and render more thorough service. Let this be the reward, if you see good, for painful waiting, that both those who in their arrogance have abused the patience of the Apostolic See, should in the end gain nothing by it; and also that those who have patiently endured, trusting in your word, should never have any cause to repent them of their patience.

LETTER CLVII. (A.D. 1135.)

TO HAIMERIC, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

To his special friend HAIMERIC, by the grace of God Cardinal-deacon, and Chancellor of the Apostolic See, his Brother BERNARD, of Clairvaux, sends greeting, and his wish that he may shine ever more and more with the light of wisdom and virtue.

If I did not know your sympathy with the afflicted, and your indignation against wrong-doers, I would at every opportunity importunately beseech you on behalf of Master William, of Meun, and his companions; I would stir you up against their oppressors and calumniators. But as it is, it is enough to have mentioned them to you; it is yours swiftly to act as necessity requires.

LETTER CLVIII. (A.D. 1135.)

TO POPE INNOCENT, ON THE MURDER OF MASTER THOMAS, PRIOR OF S. VICTOR, OF PARIS

To his most loving Father and Lord, INNOCENT, Supreme Pontiff, BERNARD, unworthy Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting, with the assurance of his prayers and his feeble services.

1. The wild beast which has laid waste Joseph, unable to meet the eager attack of our dogs, is said to have fled to you for shelter. What madness has seized the wretched creature, a wanderer, and stranger, and fugitive on earth, to cause it to fly thither of all places where it should have most to fear! Most accursed one! thinkest thou that the seat of strictest justice is a cave of robbers or a lurking-place of lions? Do you dare, with jaws still foaming, and mouth yet marked with the blood of the son you have but just now slain, to flee to the breast of the mother and appear before the eyes of the father? Yet if it is penance that he seeks, let it not be denied him. If it is a hearing, let him, if you please, obtain such an one as Moses gave the people worshipping their molten image, or such as Phinehas gave the fornicating Israelite, or such as Mattathias gave to him who offered sacrifice to devils, or, to take an example from your own house, such as Ananias and Sapphira gained from blessed Peter, such an audience, lastly, as the Saviour gave those who bought and sold in the temple. Do we not know that the sins of certain men go before them to judgment? Does not the voice of your brother’s blood cry out against you from the ground? I believe that the spirit of our martyr, whom but a few days since you cruelly delivered to death, joins with the souls of the others who have been slain, in crying with a loud voice from

under the altar, and in demanding vengeance, and that the more urgently as his blood has been more newly poured forth on the earth.

2. But he will reply, Was it I who actually slew him? No, not directly, but it was your friends who did, and for your sake. Whether at your instigation, may God see and judge. If you are to be excused, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongue is a sharp sword, then the Jews ought not to be held guilty of the death of Christ, inasmuch as they were wary enough to withhold their hands from it. This man had been wont to abuse his office of Archdeacon, to grind the presbyters with unlawful exactions, and when this was put an end to by the zeal and diligence of the blessed Thomas, a lover and upholder of righteousness, this man held him in hatred, and was often in the habit of threatening him with death. Many, whose testimony is not to be rejected, declare that they have heard him so threaten. Lastly, let him say, if he can, what other complaint his nephews had against Thomas, that they should lay their impious hands on the saint of the Lord. If, then, the man who, as nearly all suspect, is the occasion, the instigator, and the plotter of this wickedness is to go, as he impudently presumes, unpunished by the Apostolic authority, what provocation will be given to sin in the Church without fear of punishment? One of two things must inevitably follow: either that none of the noble or powerful of this world will hereafter be admitted to ecclesiastical honours, or that the clergy will everywhere have free permission to abuse their sacred office for every unworthy end; lest, perchance, anyone kindled with zeal for God should attempt to prevent them, and for so acting be slain as a champion of righteousness by the soldier’s sword. And then what is left for the spiritual sword, for ecclesiastical censure, for the law and discipline of Christ, for the reverence due to the priesthood, and for the fear of God, if no one dares to whisper a protest against the evil lives of the clergy from dread of the secular power? For what can be more monstrous or more disgraceful to the Church than that each one should maintain his own ecclesiastical dignity by armed violence instead of by moral integrity? Wherefore, my lord and father, I pray you to give such a decision, according to your wisdom, concerning this man as shall be to the Church’s profit, so that the salvation given now may flow down to our children, and that another generation may hear not only how audacious was the crime, but also how terrible was the vengeance. Otherwise, if the poison be allowed to have full play, if no antidote is given, it will destroy many—which God forbid.

LETTER CLIX. (A.D. 1133.)

TO THE SAME, IN THE NAME OF STEPHEN, BISHOP OF PARIS, AND ON THE SAME SUBJECT

To his most godly father, INNOCENT, Supreme Pontiff, STEPHEN, unhappy Bishop of the Church that is at Paris, sends greeting, praying for mercy and judgment.

1. A religious man, Master Thomas, Prior of S. Victor, while engaged in an office of charity, on a journey that piety had bidden him to undertake, in a holy work, in the midst of a company of saints, on the Lord's Day, has been cruelly murdered on my bosom, so to speak, and almost in my arms, for his righteousness, by the ungodly, and has been made obedient even unto death. There is no need for a lengthy petition, when tears flowing silently are better able to stir sympathy, and when love finds expression in sobs which interrupt my prayer. These surely, if they do not demand, at all events deserve compassion, inasmuch as they indicate and show a grief that is unfeigned, and banish all suspicion of simulation. I think, therefore, that, to touch the heart of my father with grief for the disaster that has befallen us, it will be enough for me to simply mention the circumstances. A sad and pitiful story speaks for itself, especially before you, and needs no glossing appeals for sympathy. O, my eyes! run ye down with floods of tears, for my strength and the light of my eyes has failed me, and he is no more with me. For I do not mourn for him, but for myself. How should I weep for him, who, by a quick and glorious death, has passed into life?

2.Who would not pursue with praises rather than with lamentations him to whom to live was Christ, and to die is gain? I used to bear the name of Bishop; he performed the labours. Casting aside all thought of honour, he bore the burden with all his strength. And therefore he truly, though dead, is enjoying life, while I, though living, am in the midst of death. He did not fall into the snares of death, but escaped them; and lo! the sorrows of death compass me about, and the overflowings of ungodliness make me afraid. It is I, therefore, it is I that am to be pitied, now that you are dead, my sweetest brother Thomas. I am like a weaned child, without the sweet refreshment that you gave me, bereft of your wise counsel, and left desolate by the loss of your sure protection. Better would it have been for me to die than to live without you. Therefore, my life is wasted away in grief, and my years in mourning. The Church grieves with me, but she grieves also for herself. Common is the loss, common the lamentation; the whole of the religious world deplores with me his loss, and all alike implore that they may receive consolation from their father. If Theobald Notier come before you let him feel to his cost that the Lord hath heard the voice of my

weeping. His nephews were the perpetrators of the crime; he was its cause; whether he instigated it is a matter to be ascertained. Do not listen to anything that he may say, till our messenger arrive, who will put you more fully in possession of the truth, and preserve you from lying lips and a deceitful tongue.

LETTER CLX. (A.D. 1133.)

TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, IN THE NAME OF THE SAME BISHOP

To his dearest lord, HAIMERIC, venerable Cardinal-deacon and Chancellor of the holy Roman Church, his servant STEPHEN, of Paris, sends loving and friendly greeting.

A friend is proved in time of necessity. I say this, not that I have any doubt of your holy friendship for me, but to prevent any doubt from arising. But arise it undoubtedly will if I shall now find no sign of friendly zeal in you. Further, know that it will be to me an inexcusable proof of your want of zeal if Theobald Notier does not meet with what he deserves whenever a fitting opportunity arises; for through his heartless ambition he has cut away by the hands of his nephews the half of my soul, leaving the remaining half for nothing but cruel suffering.

LETTER CLXI. (A.D. 1133.)

TO THE LORD POPE INNOCENT

Against the murderers of Archembald, Subdean of Orleans.

The voice of the blood of Archembald, subdean of Orleans, cries with a loud voice for vengeance. For, alas! that I should have to say it, according to the Prophet, blood toucheth blood (Hos. 4:2), and when once they are joined they call to you still more loudly from France. The blood of both calls and shouts with so loud a shout that it might even strike the palace of heaven itself, so piteously that it might soften hearts of stone. What are you doing, O friend of the bridegroom, O guardian of the Bride of Christ, O shepherd of the sheep of Christ? Do you think that it will be sufficient to ponder upon a remedy to meet this infamous and unheard of evil? Certainly one must be [not only thought of, but] found which may bring relief for the present to the wound lately inflicted on the Church, and may act as a caution for the future. Therefore gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty. If Phinehas does not stand forth even now and make atonement the terror will not cease. If the Church’s vigour spare

those men, John, and Theobald Notier, by whose assent, and perhaps at whose instigation, if not by whose hand, innocent blood has been poured forth on the earth, then who is there that sees not what is to follow? How many in the ranks of the clergy will the impunity of these men cause to be promoted from fear of their friends rather than from what their holy living deserves! New diseases must be met with new remedies. It seems to many that the Apostolic sword would act with most expedience and justice in cutting off these men from every ecclesiastical dignity, so that they may be both deprived of what they have, and be prevented from ever rising to any others.

LETTER CLXII. (A.D. 1133.)

TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

I have often testified to my Lord the Bishop of Paris of your frequent and kindly mention of him. Lo! now the demand is made upon you to show not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth, both that I was not speaking, and that you have not written, anything but the truth. So this concerns you, not only for the Bishop’s sake, but also for the sake of your other friends, who would certainly be greatly concerned about you, if by any chance this cause should happen to go contrary to their expectation.

LETTER CLXIII. (A.D. 1133.)

TO JOHN OF CREMA, CARDINAL-PRIEST, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

I shall never forget the love and consideration which you have condescended to show me, a man of no influence and no rank; and I wish continually and frequently pray that worthy fruits may follow from your repentance and conversion, which have been a source of joy and delight to me as well as to the Angels. Especially now does this Gallican Church of ours join me in looking for them, and I think not unseasonably. It concerns your reputation as well as mine that I do not count on you to my own confusion. Let it be then so clear to all that your zeal for truth and righteousness burns against the murderers of clerks, and against their instigators, that I may not be sorry for having made my boast of you.

LETTER CLXIV. (A.D. 1138.)

TO POPE INNOCENT IN THE MATTER OF THE CHURCH OF LANGRES

1. When I was at Rome there happened to come there the Lord Archbishop of Lyons. With him came also Robert, Dean of the Church of Langres, and Odalric, Canon of the same church, seeking for themselves and the Chapter of Langres permission to elect a fresh Bishop. They had received, indeed, a command from my lord the Pope to abstain by all means from acting till they had the advice of religious men. And when they wished and asked to obtain this permission through me, I altogether refused until I knew for a certainty that they intended to elect a good and fitting person. They replied that they would subordinate their purpose and intention to my opinion, and that they would do nothing but what I advised them. And this they promised me. But as their promise did not give me sufficient confidence, the Archbishop joined his entreaties to theirs, and promised faithfully the same thing. He added, moreover, that if the clergy should attempt to act otherwise he would not confirm or give his sanction to anything that they might do. My lord the Chancellor also gave a similar pledge. Not content with this, I went also before my lord the Pope to have what we had agreed upon confirmed by his sanction and authority. Nevertheless, a conference was held daily between us on the election to be held, and, out of the many names of which mention was made, two at last were chosen, and it was agreed that we would none of us dissent from the election of either of the two. And so my lord the Pope decreed that our decision should be binding without any change, and both Archbishop and clerks promised faithfully to abide by it. When they had left I made a stay of several days longer in Rome, and when I was able to obtain permission from my lord to return I took my journey to my brethren.

2. And as I was crossing the Alps I found that the day was at hand on which the consecration to the See of Langres was to take place, of a person concerning whom I would that I had heard better reports and more honourable to him. But I am unwilling to repeat what it gave me pain to hear. I was persuaded by not a few religious who had come to salute me to turn aside to Lyons in order, if possible, to prevent the execution of the infamous act that was contemplated. For I, out of regard for my health and the weariness of my body, had determined to go home by a shorter way, especially because I had not given much credence to the rumours that had reached me. For who would have thought that so great a man would have been so fickle as to set aside his own promise so lately given, to say nothing of the command of his lord, and lay his hands without any fear on the head of one whose ill reputation was known? And so I listened to the advice of these religious, and turned my steps towards Lyons, and when I arrived I found that things were just as I had heard. The joyful (or rather unfortunate)

festival had been prepared for. The Dean, however, and, unless I am mistaken, the greater part of the Canons of Lyons were in constant and open opposition. The shameful and grievous report had filled the city, too, and was hourly spreading and gaining strength.

3. What was I to do? I called on the Archbishop. With due reverence I reminded him of the agreement that he had entered into, and of the instructions that he had received. He admitted all that I said. But he said that the cause of his going from his promise was the refusal of the Duke's son to accept what we had determined, and he said that to pacify him he had been guilty of this change of purpose, and had done as he did for the sake of peace. He went on to say that whatever he might have done before, he would do as I bade for the future. Then I said, in thanking him, "God forbid that it should be my will; nay, rather God's will be done. And what this will is, will doubtless be known, if the matter is brought before the Council of Bishops and other religious persons who have assembled at your summons, or will soon be here. But if, after invoking the Holy Spirit, the consent of all bids you proceed in the work that you have begun, then proceed in it; but if not, then listen to the Apostle who bids you Lay hands suddenly on no man" (1 Tim. 5:22). My advice seemed to please him. Meanwhile, that man is said to have arrived; but he went to an hostel, not to the palace. He came on Friday night; he left on Saturday morning. It is not for me to say why he was loath to put in an appearance at the Court, when that was the very object of his long journey. It might have been thought to be a monk's modesty, and a contempt for honour, were it not that what followed showed that it was otherwise. For what were we to conclude when the Archbishop returned from him, and declared before all that he could in no way induce him to acquiesce, but that he rejected wholly what had been done in the matter?

4. In short, the Archbishop soon after bade the election to take place. This is testified by some of the Canons of Langres, who were then present, as well as by a letter which can be produced. When it was brought forward and read before the Chapter of Langres, immediately another was read contrary to the first in every point, asserting that the consecration was postponed, not set aside, appointing a day and place to decide a cause which the first letter declared to have been decided already. You would think that in these letters it was not merely diverse, but adverse persons that were speaking and contradicting each other, if it were not that one and the same image was impressed on the wax, one and the same name signed at the bottom; and so it was manifestly declared, to the amazement of all that were present, that from one fountain there flowed both sweet and

bitter. These contradictory letters are in our hands; whichever you determine to obey, you must be held disobedient. If you obey the first that you open, you will be condemned by the last, or if you elect to follow the latter, the former one will complain. And would that the second letter could as well protect itself against a third as it overturned the first. But lo! we have letter upon letter, so that it is not with us as with the Prophet, Line upon line (Is. 28:10), but rather line against line.

5. In the meantime the man who had shrunk from consecration, and rejected the election, hastened to the King. He obtained formal possession of the Regalia, but by what title, he must say for himself. Presently letters were sent out, changing the place which had been appointed, and anticipating the day, in order that through the inconvenience of time and place opposers might be deprived of all chance of acting, and a march might be stolen on all who might wish to appeal. But no counsel can stand against that of God, by whose providence it came to pass that neither opposers nor appellants were wanting. An appeal was lodged by Falco, Dean of Lyons; by Ponce, Archdeacon of Langres; by Bonami, priest and Canon of Langres, and also by my brethren, Bruno and Geoffrey, who knew nothing of what these men had intended in their hearts, but who happened to arrive by chance, and no doubt by the will of God, who foresees all things. So little time, indeed, was left, that when I learnt the day scarcely four days were left for our messenger to go with letters to prevent what was more a sacrilege than a sacrament from being performed. He, too, nevertheless, opposed it, and summoned the consecrators and the man they proposed to consecrate to the Apostolic See. He whom I had sent was a Canon of Langres. I say the truth; I lie not. The Truth Himself is my witness that I have said nothing out of personal hatred, but that I have truthfully set down everything out of love of the truth alone.

LETTER CLXV. (A.D. 1138.)

TO FALCO, DEAN, AND GUY, TREASURER, OF THE CHURCH OF LYONS

Great as you see, dearly beloved, is the plague that is threatening our Church, and great is the care needed; and not only is the plague great, but close at hand, so that we must with tears press on the heavenly Physician and say: “Lord, come down it is die.” There is one thing which makes our grief the more acute, and almost causes us to despair of a cure, and that is that the source of our tribulation is where we ought to have looked for its relief. For who is it, O, unhappy

Church, that has brought this evil, of which you complain, upon you? It is no enemy, not one who hates you, but your bosom friend, your leader and metropolitan himself. Why comes this evil from the south and not from the north? Surely there is no grief like unto my grief, since it is from those, and none others, on whom I most relied, that I have suffered these things. O, Lyons! my holy Mother Church, what a monster have you now chosen for a bridegroom for your daughter! No mother do we find you in this, but a step-mother. How far has this son-in-law of yours now degenerated from the honour, weight, and integrity for which you were once so renowned? Am I to say that is an honourable marriage and an undefiled bed which has been brought about in such a way and with such a man? In defiance of all law, and order, and reason all things have been so confounded, nay, as all know, all things have been so fraudulently and rashly ordered and ventured on, that it would be most unseemly for a bailiff even, or receiver of tolls, to say nothing of a Bishop, to be appointed in this way. How can I sufficiently sing your praises, dearly beloved, who have alone mourned with your afflicted Church, and have once and again stood up in her defence when oppressed, rising on the other side, and opposing yourselves as a wall for the house of Israel? In that whole congregation not one has been found like you, to keep the law of the Most High, to obey the sacred canons, to put on the zeal of Phinehas and smite the fornicators with the sword of the tongue. And since these things redound more and more on all sides to the glory of God and your fame, it only remains for you to give a worthy ending to so good and praiseworthy a beginning, and do all you can to join the tail to the head of the victim.

LETTER CLXVI. (Circa A.D. 1138.)

TO POPE INNOCENT, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

1. Again I call, again I knock, if not with clamorous cry, yet with tears and groanings. I am compelled to reiterate my crying by the reiterated injury inflicted on us by the wicked, and by those who prolong their iniquity. They have made themselves strong and added treachery to their evil-doing. They add sin to sin, and their pride is ever going up higher. Their phrensy has strengthened itself, while shame and the fear of God are no more. The man whom they did not hesitate to elect, my father, contrary to your wise and just arrangement, they have even dared to consecrate, or rather execrate, after an appeal had been made to you. This has been done presumptuously by the Archbishop of Lyons and the

Bishops of Autun and Macon; all friends of Cluny. What a vast multitude of saints will be confounded by these men's fraud and audacity, if they are forced to bear such a yoke imposed on them in such a way. Wicked and shameful thing! If they are to accept it, it will be as if they were being forced to bow the knees to Baal, or, as the Prophet says, to make a covenant with death and to be at agreement with hell (Is. 28:15). I ask, Where are equity, law, the authority of the sacred canons, and reverence for your majesty? That appeal which is denied to none that is oppressed was of no profit to me alone. When gold sways the throne, and silver sits at the seat of judgment, laws and canons are silent, and right and equity have no place. With the same weapons, which is still more intolerable, they threaten to storm the heights of the Apostolic citadel itself. That, however, is but vain, for it is founded upon a Rock.

2. But what am I doing? I have gone too far, I confess; it is not for me to accuse or blame any one; it is enough for me to bewail my grief. After long delay, and many toils, which I undertook in the service of the Roman Church, when at last it seemed good to your Serenity to let me return to my brethren, I rejoiced, though I was but an unprofitable servant with shattered health, because of the sheaves of peace which I was taking back with me, and I arrived safely at my monastery. I thought that I had escaped from labour to rest, that it was allowed me to repair the losses of my spiritual studies, and the ruffling of the spirit's tranquillity which had met me outside my walls, and behold! tribulation and anguish have come upon me. As I lie upon my bed I am tortured more by the pangs of grief than by the body's pains. I do not complain of any temporal inconvenience. It is my soul that is in my hands, and its salvation that is at stake. Would you advise me to commit the keeping of my soul to a man who has lost his own? I know that you would not. Wherefore I have said to my soul that it is better for her to take flight from hence than to consume the remainder of my days with grief, and none the less to risk my salvation. But may God guide you to the course which is best; may He bring back to your recollection, if you think me worthy, in what manner I have dealt with you, and make you cast an eye of love upon your son, and free him from the anguish with which he is afflicted. Moreover, forget not what great things God hath done for you, and as some little return for it all, annul and undo what has here been done so much amiss.

LETTER CLXVII. (A.D. 1138.)

TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Most gracious Father, did you not strictly enjoin that in the Church of Langres some suitable and religious person should be elected, with the advice of your son? Did not my lord of Lyons receive in person this same command from your Apostolic mouth, which he was to carry out as faithfully as it had been irrevocably given and frequently impressed on him? Did he not, moreover, promise to obey? What, then, has made him endeavour to set aside what had been most wisely and prudently determined, and to presumptuously take another course which was not convenient, to make your majesty contemptible, and my littleness a laughing-stock? How is it that this good man was not ashamed to have “yea and nay” found in his mouth, and to attempt to put so base a yoke on the necks of such a large number of religious men who are your servants, contrary to your command and his own promise? Ask, my Father, ask diligently, what kind of repute this man, on whom he is eager to lay his hands, bears, both with those that are near and those that are far off. Very shame prevents me from saying what common rumour says of him, nay, what his well-known evil reputation has made known to the world. What can I say? My soul is sorrowful even unto death. Perhaps even now I should have fled away had I not been kept back by the hope of the consolation that I look for from your kindness. I had it in my mind to write to you in order the distressing story of my misery; but my hand fails for very sadness, my mind clouds over, my tongue shrinks from speaking of the iniquitous treachery, the underhand dealing, the dishonesty, the audacity, the perfidy. What is it, then? Your son, Ponce the Archdeacon, who has shown himself in this matter constant and faithful, will tell you everything, my Father, both what we grieve for as already done, and what we implore may not be done. Trust him as myself. But this one thing I must say from the midst of my pangs, that unless these men are made to desist from their wicked and audacious undertaking, I feel that, as I am now, my life will fail in grief and my years in mourning.

LETTER CLXVIII. (A.D. 1138.)

TO THE BISHOPS AND CARDINALS OF THE ROMAN COURT ON THE SAME SUBJECT

1. You know, if you will deign to call it to your recollection, what manner of life mine was with you in the time of adversity, going out and coming in, and going forth at the King’s bidding, perseveringly remaining with you in your temptations, so much so that my bodily strength was almost exhausted, and it was with difficulty that I was able to return home after God had given peace to

the Church. I recall all this not boastfully or reproachfully, but to urge and implore you, to remind you, and to demand from you the debt of pity that you owe me. My necessity now forces me to appeal to all my debtors. But for myself, even if I have done all that I ought, yet, according to the word of the Lord, I reckon myself to be nothing else on that account, than an unprofitable servant. Nevertheless, if I did what was necessary or fit to be done, did I deserve to be beaten for it? And lo! when I went from you, I found trouble and anguish, and I called on the name of the Lord, but it was to no purpose; I called, too, on your name, but it availed me nothing; in truth, they that are as mighty gods on the earth have highly exalted themselves; I mean the Archbishop of Lyons and the Abbot of Cluny. They, trusting in their strength, and boasting themselves in the multitude of their riches, have come near me, and stood against me; and not merely against me, but against a great host of the servants of God, against you also, against themselves, against all equity and honesty, against God.

2. In one word, they have placed a man over our heads, whom, shameful to say, both the good abhor and the bad laugh at. By what order, or, I should better say, how extraordinarily, they have acted, let God see and judge; let the Roman Court see; let it see and grieve, let it have compassion, and gird itself to punish the evil and show honour to the good. Is it thy pleasure, O mistress of the world, thou that hast been placed over all to execute vengeance on the proud and to judge the oppressed, is it thy pleasure that the poor should be consumed when the wicked is lifted up, and the poor man too, who, when he had no wealth to expend in thy service, spared not his blood? Do you think it right that you should enjoy your peace, and care nothing for mine, or that you should not receive the partners of your toil to some share in the reward? If I have found grace in your sight, deliver the helpless from the hand of them that are stronger than he, the poor and needy from those that are robbing him. Otherwise I for my part will labour as I can amidst my grief, and my tears shall be my meat day and night; while to you I will say that verse, He that ceases to have pity on his friend forsakes the fear of the Lord (Job 6:14), and again, All my kinsmen stood afar off: and another also, My lovers and my neighbours did stand looking upon my trouble, and they also that sought after my life laid snares for me (Ps. 38:11, 12).

LETTER CLXIX. (A.D. 1138.)

TO POPE INNOCENT, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Bernard explains why he has detained the clergy of Langres who had been

summoned to Rome; and indicates the persons to whom the election should be confided.

Your condescension has admitted me to intimacy, and that intimacy has made me to presume. Let your wonted kindness rule in your heart, lest haply my presumption breed indignation. Yet hear patiently not only what I have done, but why I did it; perhaps the cause may in some way excuse the deed. I ventured to keep back the clergy of Langres who had been summoned to appear before you, since peace had been made between them, and they had been persuaded to act for the future in holding the election according to your will and the counsel of good men, even as it is written in their letters. Moreover there was great necessity for their not leaving just now, because of the lands and possessions of the Church, which are given over to be plundered and stolen, while there is none to guard or defend them. And so, if it please you, let an order be given to these men, since they are no longer under suspicion, and since they seek not the things that are their own, but those of Christ Jesus, that they elect one who may be pleasing to God, that so this long-standing and unhappy trouble of the Church may find at length its ending. What else remains to be said I have committed to Herbert, Abbot of S. Stephen's of Dijon, and to the Archdeacon of Langres, and their companions. I add, moreover, a prayer that you would receive under your protection the Archdeacon of Langres and Bonami, presbyter of the same Church, since they have shown themselves faithful in God's cause. For the workman is worthy of his hire (S. Luke 10:7).

LETTER CLXX. (A.D. 1138.)

TO LOUIS THE YOUNGER, KING OF THE FRENCH

He endeavours to defend the election of Geoffrey, Prior of Clairvaux, to the See of Langres; to which the King had appeared adverse.

1. If the whole world were to conjure me to join it in some enterprise against your royal Majesty, I should still through fear of God not dare lightly to offend a King ordained by Him. Nor am I ignorant who it is that has said, Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God (Rom. 13:2). Nor yet do I forget how contrary is lying to the Christian calling and still more so to my profession. I say the truth, I lie not; what was done at Langres in the matter of our Prior was contrary to my expectation and my intention and that of the Bishops. But there is One who knows how to gain the assent of the unwilling, and who compels, as He wills, the adverse wills of man to subserve His counsel.

Why should I not fear for him whom I love as my own soul, that danger which I have ever feared for myself? Why should I not shrink from the companionship of those who bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers? Still, what has been done, has been done; nothing against you, very much against me. The staff of my weakness has been taken from me, the light of mine eyes removed from me, my right arm cut off. All these waves and storms have gone over me. Wrath has swallowed me up, and on no side do I see any way to escape. When I fly from burdens, then I have them placed upon me to my great discomfort. I feel that it is hard for me to kick against the pricks. It would perhaps have been more tolerable for a willing horse than for one that is restive and obstinate. For if there were any strength in me, would it not be easier for me to bear these burdens on my own shoulders than on those of others?

2. But I yield to Him that disposeth otherwise, to contend with whom in wisdom or strength is neither prudent nor possible for either me or the King. He is, indeed, terrible among the kings of the earth. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, even for you, O King. How grieved have I been to hear things of you so contrary to the fair promise of your early days! How much more bitter will be the grief of the Church, after having tasted first of such great joys, if, which God forbid, she shall chance to be deprived of her pleasant hope of protection under the shield of your good disposition, which up to the present has been held over her. Alas! the Virgin, the Church of Rheims, has fallen, and there is none to lift her up. Langres, too, has fallen, and there is none to stretch out the hand to help. May the goodness of God divert your heart and mind from adding yet more to our grief, and from heaping sorrow upon sorrow. Would that I may die before seeing a king of whom good things were thought, and still better hoped for, endeavouring to go against the counsel of God, stirring up against himself the anger of the supreme Judge, bedewing the feet of the Father of the fatherless with the tears of the afflicted, knocking at heaven's door with the cries of the poor, the prayers of the saints, and with the just complaints of Christ's beloved Bride, the Church of the living God. May all this never happen. I hope for better things, and expect things more joyful. God will not forget to be gracious, nor shut up his loving kindness in displeasure. He will not make His Church sad through him, and because of him, by whom He has already made her so much to rejoice. By His long-suffering He will preserve him whom He freely gave us, and if you think anything otherwise, this also He will reveal to you, and will teach your heart in wisdom. This is my wish, this is my prayer night and

day. Think this of me, think it of my brethren. The truth shall not be sinned against by us, nor the King's honour and the good of his kingdom diminished.

3. We give thanks to your clemency for the kindly answer which you deigned to send us. But still we are terrified to delay, as we see the land given over to plunder and robbery. The land is yours; and we plainly see and mourn the disgrace brought on your kingdom by your orders that we should abstain from our rights, inasmuch as there is no one to defend them. For in what else that has been done can the king's majesty be truly said to have been diminished? The election was duly held; the person elected is faithful, which he would not be if he wished to hold your lands otherwise than through you. He has not yet stretched out his hand to your lands, he has not yet entered your city, he has not yet put himself forward in any affair, though most earnestly pressed to do so by the united voice of clergy and people, by the oppression of the afflicted, and by the prayers of all good men. And since this is the state of affairs there is, you see, need for counsel to be quickly taken, not less for the sake of your honour than our necessity. And unless your Serenity give answer according to their petition, by the messengers who bring this, to your faithful people who look to you, the hearts of many religious men who are now devoted to you will be turned against you (which would not be expedient), and I fear that no little loss will accrue to the regalia belonging to the Church, which yet are yours.

LETTER CLXXI. (A.D. 1139.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

On behalf of Falco, Archbishop elect of Lyons.

I think that I, who have so many times been listened to in the affairs of others, shall not be confounded in my own. I, my lord, hold the cause of my Archbishop to be my own, being a member of him, and knowing that there is nothing that affects the head but what touches me, which, nevertheless, I would not say if the man had taken this honour to himself, and had not been called by God, as was Moses. Nor can I think that it was the work of any but Him that the votes of so many men were so readily given him, that there was not even any hesitation, still less opposition. And deservedly so. He is distinguished not only for his high birth, but also for the nobility of his mind, for his knowledge, and his irreproachable life. In short, the integrity of his name fears not the tooth even of a foe. What, therefore, has been so done for so good a man is surely worthy to obtain the favour of the Apostolic See, the fulness of honour, which is the only

thing now lacking, to increase the joy of its people that has grown accustomed to its kindness, or, I may say, to the liberality which he has fully deserved. This is what the whole Church, with most earnest supplication, implores; this is what your son, with his usual presumption, entreats of you.

LETTER CLXXII. (A.D. 1139.)

TO THE SAME, IN THE NAME OF GODFREY, BISHOP OF LANGRES

He expresses the same thought as in the preceding Letter.

Amidst the numerous evils which nowadays are seen in the churches on the occasion of elections the Lord hath looked down from heaven upon our Mother Church of Lyons, and has without strife given it a worthy successor to Peter of pious memory, its Archbishop, in the person of Falco, its Dean. I ask, my lord, that he who has been unanimously elected by his fellows, promoted for the good of all, and duly consecrated, may receive at your hands the fulness of honour that belongs to his office. And what makes me seek this is not so much consciousness of his merits, but of my duty—duty laid upon me not only by the metropolitan dignity of that Church, but because I am placed in this position in order that I may bear my testimony to the truth.

LETTER CLXXIII. (A.D. 1139.)

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED FALCO

Bernard recommends to him the interests of certain Religious.

The Lord Bishop and I have written, as we thought we ought to do, to my lord the Pope on your behalf, and you have a copy of your letters. It is our determination to stand by you with all our might, because of the good which we hope for from you for the Church. It concerns you so to act that we may not be disappointed of our hope. For the rest, if I have found favour in your sight I pray you think of those poor and needy ones at the house of Benissons Dieu. Whatsoever you do to one of them you will do to me, nay, to Christ. For they are both poor, and they live amongst the poor. I especially implore you to prevent the monks of Savigny from molesting them, for they are calumniating them unjustly, as I consider. Or if they think that they have justice on their side, judge between them. I ask also that my son, Abbot Alberic, though well deserving of your favour through his own merits, may still be in even greater regard through my recommendation. For I love him tenderly, as a mother loves her only child,

and he that loveth me will love him. In fact, I shall find out whether you care for me by the way you treat him. For the farther he is away from me the more necessary is it that he should have consolation from your fatherly care.

LETTER CLXXIV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE CANONS OF LYONS, ON THE CONCEPTION OF S. MARY

Bernard states that the Festival of the Conception was new; that it rested on no legitimate foundation; and that it should not have been instituted without consulting the Apostolic See, to whose opinion he submits.

1. It is well known that among all the Churches of France that of Lyons is first in importance, whether we regard the dignity of its See, its praiseworthy regulations, or its honourable zeal for learning. Where was there ever the vigour of discipline more flourishing, a more grave and religious life, more consummate wisdom, a greater weight of authority, a more imposing antiquity? Especially in the Offices of the Church, that of Lyons has always shown itself opposed to attempts at sudden innovation, and it is a proof of her fulness of judgment that she has never suffered herself to be stained with the mark of rash and hasty levity. Wherefore I cannot but wonder that there should have been among you at this time some who wished to sully this splendid fame of your Church by introducing a new Festival, a rite which the Church knows nothing of, and which reason does not prove, nor ancient tradition hand down to us. Have we the pretension to be more learned or more devoted than the Fathers? It is a dangerous presumption to establish in such a matter what their prudence left unestablished. And the matter in question is of such a nature that it could not possibly have escaped the diligence of the Fathers if they had not thought that they ought not to occupy themselves with it.

2. The Mother of the Lord, you say, ought greatly to be honoured. You say well, but the honour of a queen loves justice. The royal Virgin does not need false honour, since she is amply supplied with true titles to honour and badges of her dignity. Honour indeed the purity of her flesh, the sanctity of her life, wonder at her motherhood as a virgin, adore her Divine offspring. Extol the prodigy by which she brought into the world without pain the Son, whom she had conceived without concupiscence. Proclaim her to be reverenced by the angels, to have been desired by the nations, to have been known beforehand by Patriarchs and Prophets, chosen by God out of all women and raised above them all. Magnify her as the medium by whom grace was displayed, the instrument of

salvation, the restorer of the ages; and finally extol her as having been exalted above the choirs of angels to the celestial realms. These things the Church sings concerning her, and has taught me to repeat the same things in her praise, and what I have learnt from the Church I both hold securely myself and teach to others; what I have not received from the Church I confess I should with great difficulty admit. I have received then from the Church that day to be reverenced with the highest veneration, when being taken up from this sinful earth, she made entry into the heavens; a festival of most honoured joy. With no less clearness have I learned in the Church to celebrate the birth of the Virgin, and from the Church undoubtedly to hold it to have been holy and joyful; holding most firmly with the Church, that she received in the womb that she should come into the world holy. And indeed I read concerning Jeremiah, that before he came forth from the womb [ventre: otherwise de vulva] he was sanctified, and I think no otherwise of John the Baptist, who, himself in the womb of his mother, felt the presence of his Lord in the womb (S. Luke 1:41). It is matter for consideration whether the same opinion may not be held of holy David, on account of what he said in addressing God: In Thee I have been strengthened from the womb: Thou art He who took me out of my mother's bowels (Ps. 71:6); and again: I was cast upon Thee from the womb: Thou art my God from my mother's belly (Ps. 22:10). And Jeremiah is thus addressed: Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee (Jer. 1:5). How beautifully the Divine oracle has distinguished between conception in the womb and birth from the womb! and showed that if the one was foreseen only, the other was blessed beforehand with the gift of holiness: that no one might think that the glory of Jeremiah consisted only in being the object of the foreknowledge of God, but also of His predestination.

3. Let us, however, grant this in the case of Jeremiah. What shall be said of John the Baptist, of whom an angel announced beforehand that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb? I cannot suppose that this is to be referred to predestination or to foreknowledge. For the words of the angel were without doubt fulfilled in their time, as he foretold; and the man (as cannot be doubted) filled with the Holy Ghost at the time and place appointed, as he predicted. But most certainly the Holy Ghost sanctified the man whom He filled. But how far this sanctification availed against original sin, whether for him, or for that prophet, or for any other who was thus prevented by grace, I would not rashly determine. But of these holy persons whom God has sanctified, and brought forth from the womb with the same sanctification which they have

received in the womb, I do not hesitate to say that the taint of original sin which they contracted in conception, could not in any manner take away or fetter by the mere act of birth, the benediction already bestowed. Would any one dare to say that a child filled with the Holy Ghost, would remain notwithstanding a child of wrath; and if he had died in his mother's womb, where he had received this fulness of the Spirit, would endure the pains of damnation? That opinion is very severe; I, however, do not dare to decide anything respecting the question by my own judgment. However that may be, the Church, which regards and declares, not the nativity, but only the death of other saints as precious, makes a singular exception for him of whom an angel singularly said, and many shall rejoice in his birth (S. Luke 1:14, 15), and with rejoicing honours his nativity. For why should not the birth be holy, and even glad and joyful, of one who leaped with joy even in the womb of his mother?

4. The gift, therefore, which has certainly been conferred upon some, though few, mortals, cannot for a moment be supposed to have been denied to that so highly favoured Virgin, through whom the whole human race came forth into life. Beyond doubt the mother of the Lord also was holy before birth; nor is holy Church at all in error in accounting the day of her nativity holy, and celebrating it each year with solemn and thankful joy. I consider that the blessing of a fuller sanctification descended upon her, so as not only to sanctify her birth, but also to keep her life pure from all sin; which gift is believed to have been bestowed upon none other borne of women. This singular privilege of sanctity, to lead her life without any sin, entirely befitted the queen of virgins, who should bear the Destroyer of sin and death, who should obtain the gift of life and righteousness for all. Therefore, her birth was holy, since the abundant sanctity bestowed upon it made it holy even from the womb.

5. What addition can possibly be made to these honours? That her conception, also, they say, which preceded her honourable birth, should be honoured, since if the one had not first taken place, neither would the other, which is honoured. But what if some one else, following a similar train of reasoning, should assert that the honours of a festival ought to be given to each of her parents, then to her grandparents, and then to their parents, and so on ad infinitum? Thus we should have festivals without number. Such a frequency of joys befits Heaven, not this state of exile. It is the happy lot of those who dwell there, not of strangers and pilgrims. But a writing is brought forward, given, as they say, by revelation from on high, as if anyone would not be able to bring forward another writing in which the Virgin should seem to demand the same honours to her parents also,

saying, according to the commandment of the Lord, Honour thy father and thy mother (Exod. 20:12). I easily persuade myself not to be influenced by such writings, which are supported neither by reason nor by any certain authority. For how does the consequence follow that since the conception has preceded the birth, and the birth is holy, the conception should be considered holy also? Did it make the birth holy because it preceded it? Although the one came first that the other might be, yet not that it might be holy. From whence came that holiness to the conception which was to be transmitted to the birth which followed? Was it not rather because the conception preceded without holiness that it was needful for the being conceived to be sanctified, that a holy birth might then follow? Or shall we say that the birth which was later than the conception shared with it its holiness? It might be, indeed, that the sanctification which was worked in her when conceived passed over to the birth which followed; but it could not be possible that it should have a retrospective effect upon the conception which had preceded it.

6. Whence, then, was the holiness of that conception? Shall it be said that Mary was so prevented by grace that, being holy before being conceived, she was therefore conceived without sin; or that, being holy before being born, she has therefore communicated holiness to her birth? But in order to be holy it is necessary to exist, and a person does not exist before being conceived. Or perhaps, when her parents were united, holiness was mingled with the conception itself, so that she was at once conceived and sanctified. But this is not tenable in reason. For how can there be sanctity without the sanctifying Spirit, or the co-operation of the Holy Spirit with sin? Or how could there not be sin where concupiscence was not wanting? Unless, perhaps, some one will say that she was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and not by man, which would be a thing hitherto unheard of. I say, then, that the Holy Spirit came upon her, not within her, as the Angel declared: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (S. Luke 1:35). And if it is permitted to say what the Church thinks, and the Church thinks that which is true, I say that she conceived by the Holy Spirit, but not that she was conceived by Him; that she was at once Mother and Virgin, but not that she was born of a virgin. Otherwise, where will be the prerogative of the Mother of the Lord, to have united in her person the glory of maternity and that of virginity, if you give the same glory to her mother also? This is not to honour the Virgin, but to detract from her honour. If, therefore, before her conception she could not possibly be sanctified, since she did not exist, nor in the conception itself, because of the sin which inhered in it, it remains to be believed that she received

sanctification when existing in the womb after conception, which, by excluding sin, made her birth holy, but not her conception.

7. Wherefore, although it has been given to some, though few, of the sons of men to be born with the gift of sanctity, yet to none has it been given to be conceived with it. So that to One alone should be reserved this privilege, to Him who should make all holy, and coming into the world, He alone, without sin should make an atonement for sinners. The Lord Jesus, then, alone was conceived by the Holy Ghost, because He alone was holy before He was conceived. He being excepted, all the children of Adam are in the same case as he who confessed of himself with great humility and truth, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me (Ps. 51:6).

8. And as this is so, what ground can there be for a Festival of the Conception of the Virgin? On what principle, I say, is either a conception asserted to be holy which is not by the Holy Ghost, not to say that it is by sin, or a festival be established which is in no wise holy? Willingly the glorious Virgin will be without this honour, by which either a sin seems to be honoured or a sanctity supposed which is not a fact. And, besides, she will by no means be pleased by a presumptuous novelty against the custom of the Church, a novelty which is the mother of rashness, the sister of superstition, the daughter of levity. For if such a festival seemed advisable, the authority of the Apostolic See ought first to have been consulted, and the simplicity of inexperienced persons ought not to have been followed so thoughtlessly and precipitately. And, indeed, I had before noted that error in some persons; but I appeared not to take notice of it, dealing gently with a devotion which sprang from simplicity of heart and love of the Virgin. But now that the superstition has taken hold upon wise men, and upon a famous and noble Church, of which I am specially the son, I know not whether I could longer pass it over without gravely offending you all. But what I have said is in submission to the judgment of whosoever is wiser than myself; and especially I refer the whole of it, as of all matters of a similar kind, to the authority and decision of the See of Rome, and I am prepared to modify my opinion if in anything I think otherwise than that See.

LETTER CLXXV. (A.D. 1135.)

TO THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

Having received many letters from him, Bernard replies in a friendly manner, and praises the soldiers of the Temple.

I shall seem ungrateful if I do not reply to the many patriarchal letters which you have vouchsafed me. But what more can I do than salute him who has saluted me? For you have prevented me with the blessings of goodness, you have graciously set me the example of sending letters across the sea, you have deprived me of the first share of humility and charity. What fitting return can I now make? In truth, you have left me nothing which in my turn I can give back; for even of your worldly treasures you have been careful to make me a sharer in giving me part of the Cross of the Lord. What then? Ought I to omit what I can do because I cannot do what I ought? I show you my affection at least and my goodwill by merely replying and returning your salutation, which is all that I can do at present, separated as we are by so great a tract of sea and land. I will show, if ever I have the opportunity, that I love not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Give a thought, I pray you, to the soldiers of the Temple, and of your great piety take care of these zealous defenders of the Church. If you cherish those who have devoted their lives for their brethren's sake you will do a thing acceptable to God and well-pleasing to man. Concerning the place to which you invite me, my brother Andrew will tell you my mind.

LETTER CLXXVI. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO POPE INNOCENT, IN THE PERSON OF ALBERO, ARCHBISHOP OF TRÈVES

Bernard declares in the name of the Archbishop his own respect and obedience and that of the citramontane Churches towards Innocent.

It has long been the wish of my heart, and my eager desire, to pay you a visit, and see the welcome face of your Blessedness, and to know, moreover, more certainly how things are with you, and in turn to acquaint you more closely with my own affairs; and this motive has been long pressing and ceaselessly urging me to make a journey to you. But having been hindered by the wickedness of the world and of the times, and also, besides my daily troubles, by some matter important to you, I have not yet been able, nor am I even yet able to carry out my wish. But must a purpose that is sound and righteous be altogether given up because it cannot be wholly carried out? I have determined, therefore, to satisfy in some degree in the meantime the desire I have so long felt, and to make known to you my anxiety, by means of this venerable man, Hugh, Archdeacon of the Church of Toul. Nor could anyone be more faithful, more devoted, or more cautious than he in matters of importance, whether in bringing to you what I charge him with, or in bringing back to me whatever matters you may have

been pleased to entrust to him. I desire, then, and implore you to inform me more fully in your goodness, of the state of the Court, of the safety of your person, and if by the Divine goodness any more favourable breeze has perchance blown upon the Church in her struggles against the wanton but ineffectual madness of the schismatics. For the rest you know that the Church on this side of the Alps, both here and in the realm of France, is strong in the faith, peaceful in unity, devoted in its obedience to you, ready for your service. The loss of Beneventum, of Capua, nay, if God so will it, of Rome herself cannot terrify me; knowing that the position of the Church is not to be estimated by arms but by merits. Of her and of no other we recognize those words in the Psalm: Though an host should encamp against me my heart shall not fear, and though there rose up war against me yet will I put my trust in Him (Ps. 27:3). Therefore we, because we are of the Church, will not fear while the earth is troubled and the mountains removed into the midst of the sea. The Sicilian tyrant may boast himself as much as he pleases, he may boast in wickedness because he is powerful in iniquity, but our strength is made perfect in weakness. Paul has learned that the weaker the Church is the more powerful she is (2 Cor. 12:10). He has learnt directly and from Solomon that the prosperity of fools slays them (Prov. 1:32). He has learned when he sees a fool flourishing, to curse his beauty immediately (Job 5:3). Therefore with holy David he consoles himself in both ways, viz., in the fall of his enemies and in his own liberation. He says, indeed, They put their trust in chariots and in horses, but we will call on the Name of the Lord our God. They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen and stand upright (Ps. 20:7, 8). These few words on matters about which I am quite sure, I thought ought to be addressed to you by faithful testimony in the way of comfort; to relieve in some degree that anxiety which the care of all the churches incessantly brings upon you. I add this also, that the king, God strengthening him, is zealous, and is making ready for the liberation of the Church, and is collecting an exceedingly great army; and that I also am labouring for this end with all my strength, and am exhorting and stirring up every one that I can. When the time comes I will spare neither expense nor my own person.

LETTER CLXXVII. (Circa A.D. 1139.)

TO THE SAME, IN THE PERSON OF THE SAME

He complains of the pastoral charge laid upon him. He is hindered in its discharge by the envy of certain persons, not without fault in the Pope himself.

Did I ever seek the episcopate from you, my lord? And if ever I aspired to a bishopric it was certainly not that of Trèves. For I knew it to be an exasperating house, a stiff-necked people. I hated them because they had always wallowed in discord, and always resisted the Church. For her if I have ever undergone any labours I grieve not, but I never hoped or wished for any such fruit as this. I have laboured arduously, but willingly, and not with any hope of reward. I have been assigned for my sins a difficult province. Amongst my other troubles there is this, that my suffragans are young and nobly born. They ought to be assistants, and would that they were not opponents. But I pass this by. I prefer that their characters and pursuits be made known to you by another, if you are ignorant of them. Still, I say that law, right, integrity, and religion have perished out of our episcopates. The evil, which the duty I owe to my office will not allow me to conceal, I have briefly pointed out, that what it does not please your providence should be corrected by me may, at all events, be made known to you who can correct it, lest I seem altogether to bear in vain the name of archbishop. And, indeed, it would have been better for me not to have ascended my throne than thus shamefully to descend. But what does it matter about myself? Let me suffer what I deserve, inasmuch as I do amiss. Let me be, as I am, a scorn to my friends, who have been frustrated of the hope which they had conceived about me in wishing me to preside over them, whilst they see that the dignity of the Church is by me rather diminished, instead of its old losses being repaired, as they had expected they would be. All these things I bear patiently, if not willingly, that I may not seem to kick against the obedience I owe you, for which I confess I am willing, if need be, to lay down my life. But I wish that you would carefully consider this, that injury done to the thing created reflects on the creator. The strength which you withdraw from me you rob yourself of, and my scorn and helplessness casts disgrace on you. I have many things to complain of to you about yourself, but I leave them to be explained by the messenger, whom I know to be diligent and faithful for this purpose. I tell you also that we are in danger amongst false brethren. The ambassadors of the schismatics come and go to some of our supporters more freely than they used to, and the messages of the Sicilian tyrant are admitted frequently.

LETTER CLXXVIII. (A.D. 1139.)

TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

He complains that some evil-disposed persons abuse their powers to the injury

of the Church, while zealous prelates are powerless.

To his most loving Father and Lord, INNOCENT, Supreme Pontiff, his BERNARD writes in entire devotedness.

1. I write confidently because I love faithfully. For that is no sincere love which cherishes doubt, and retains the dregs of suspicion. The complaint of my Lord of Trèves is not his alone, but of many, and of those especially who love you with a more sincere affection. The one cry of all who faithfully preside over the flock among us is that justice in the Church is perishing, that the keys of the Church are mere ornaments, that the Episcopal authority is altogether become vile, since no one of the Bishops is able to avenge the wrongs done to God, nor is allowed to punish for misdeeds, however glaring, no, not even in his own diocese. They refer the cause to you and to the Roman Curia. You annul, they say, what they have rightly established, and establish what they have justly annulled. All the evil and quarrelsome men, whether from the clergy or the monasteries, hasten to you when they are expelled, and then return and boast, and rejoice that they have obtained as protectors those whom they ought to have felt as their chastisers. Was not the sword of Phinees most promptly and righteously unsheathed to punish the incestuous alliance of Drogo and Milis? But it returned to its sheath dulled and blunted, being met by the shield of an Apostolic defence. Alas! what ridicule has this caused, and is still causing, among the enemies of the Church, and especially among those very men who have made us wander out of the right way through fear or favour. Our friends are confounded, the faithful are insulted, the Bishops everywhere come into shame and contempt. And when their just judgments are contemned your authority is also diminished.

2. It is these very men who are zealous for your honour, who labour faithfully, if fruitlessly, for your peace and exaltation. Why do you lessen their influence? —why do you weaken their power? For how long will you blunt the weapons of those who are faithfully fighting for you, and lower the standards raised in defence of your power and safety? The Church of S. Gengulph at Toul grievously bewails her desolation, and there is none to comfort her. For who can oppose himself to the stroke of a powerful arm, to the force of a torrent, to the decision of the Supreme Power? The Church of S. Paul at Verdun complains that it suffers the same violence, as the Archbishop has now no power to defend it against the violence of the monks; and as though they were not outrageous enough, they are further supported by the Apostolic See. What fresh reason, I ask, has been found why that should again come into court and be brought under

discussion which has been once granted, wisely and without question, to canons of good fame and life, then confirmed and, as they say, again renewed? Indeed, the establishment of both those places above mentioned is said to have been first sanctioned by you, and yet is now revoked. With such sacrifices God is not well-pleased. Alas! His anger is not turned away, His grace is not won, His mercy is not called forth. For these and such things the wrath of the Lord is not yet averted; but His arm is stretched out still, and the rod mentioned by Jeremiah is ever ready for our sins.

3. In truth, God is wroth with the schismatics; but He is by no means well-pleased with the Catholics. The Church of Metz is, as you have found, in danger, through a grievous quarrel between the Bishop and the clergy. You know what it may be your pleasure to decide about it; but there is there no peace yet, nor is it hoped for in the near future. I (not to conceal what seems best to my unworthiness) think that this and the troubles of the Churches of Toul and Verdun can be most safely and conveniently settled by the Metropolitan, who knows all the facts, has had great experience, and by the testimony of the Church has been found faithful. Moreover, think what evil you are inflicting on those two dioceses of Toul and Metz; for, to speak truth, they seem to be without Bishops, and I would that they were without tyrants. When such men are protected, supported, honoured, cherished, many are greatly amazed and scandalized; since they most surely know of that in their characters and lives, which in any of the laity, to say nothing of a Bishop, should be severely censured and execrated. What it is I should be ashamed to write, and it would not befit you to read. Be it so, that without an accuser they cannot be deposed, yet why should those whom common rumour accuses be honoured, and yet further exalted, with the special favour of the Apostolic See?

4. For by what merit of his own, whether of his sanctity as priest, or honour as bishop, has the Bishop of Metz obtained leave to quash, together with the liberty of the Church, at his mere bidding, an election duly made by the Canons, and to have the Primicerius elected on his recommendation against the privileges of the Church? Would it not be more just and honest, if it should seem good to your discretion, that a man worthy of greater honour should not be deprived of that which is deservedly his own? I mean the Archbishop of Trèves, whom, to the great indignation of many who fear God, you have excluded from ending these and other matters in his diocese, as though he were under suspicion, or were inexperienced. Believe your faithful servant that, as far as I have found, this is wholly injurious to that province.

5. In writing these things I should fear the charge of presumption if I knew not to whom I am writing, and who I am that write. But I know your natural gentleness, and I feel assured that you know both me and the disposition with which I venture on these matters with you, my most sweet and loving father. One word more with regard to the Archbishop; in order that you may know how his messenger ought to be regarded, I may mention to you that he holds a high position in that realm, that he is a man faithful and constant to you and the Church of God, and gives no countenance to our ill-wishers, and to those who would overturn you, by whom he is frequently and sorely tempted; and that we shall be derided if by any chance he should not be listened to by you. I wished lastly to commend the messenger to you, but the merit of his honesty sufficiently commends him, and especially his exceeding love and faithful devotion to you. Indeed, if I thought he had not this, I would by no means send by his hand such private letters.

LETTER CLXXIX. (A.D. 1139.)

TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

He maintains the cause of Albero, Archbishop of Trèves, against the Abbot of S. Maximin and his rebellious monks.

Is it possible that wickedness can thus overcome wisdom? You know, holy Father, you know the Archbishop of Trèves. I am sure that you know him. But do you know also that unholy Abbot of the holy Maximin? I suspect that you do not. Who is worthier of honour than the first? Who more deserving of shame than the second? Yet the latter has been honoured, the former given to reproach. How has the Archbishop sinned? He has recovered the goods plundered from his Church, he has freed his captive Church from lay-hands. Why is evil returned him for his good, and hatred for his goodwill? Let your loving eye, I pray you, rest on this; lay aside for a moment your other occupations, and consider what he has been robbed of; that such a man as the one—I am ashamed to say what he is—should hold up to scorn to his neighbours and enemies such a man as yourself know the Archbishop to be. Holy Father, it is filial affection which speaks. So far I have sympathized with the unhappy and much-to-be-pitied Archbishop. But if after this, this injustice is not rectified, the grief of my heart, and my deep compassion will wholly pass over to him by whom it could have been rectified. There are other wrongs done to the same man, and in alleviating them you will undoubtedly be labouring for yourself. Whatever stains the name of my most

sweet Lord pierces my heart.

LETTER CLXXX. (Circa A.D. 1136.)

TO THE SAME ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

He commends to the Pontiff the cause of the Archbishop of Trèves.

Again supplication and prayers, though ten times repeated, shall not cease. I desist not because I distrust not. I have a good cause and a just judge, who will not hesitate to annul whatever has been stealthily gained, when the truth is evident, so that he who wished to scoff will not be able to find cause for his malicious humour, but as it is written, His iniquity deceived himself (Ps. 26:12, VULG.). The Apostolic See is wont to have this virtue especially, that it is not ashamed to recall a grant when it has discovered it to have been extracted by fraud, and not to be truly deserved. It is most just and praiseworthy that no one should benefit by a lie, especially at the hand of the supreme and holy See. Knowing this, your son supplicates without fear on behalf of the Archbishop of Trèves, and is thus urgent, not as uncertainly. I certainly know his merits, his cause, his mind. For which of these do his monks wish to stone him? Because he has deserved ill of them? But he faithfully helped them, and served them greatly. For the injustice of his cause? But no one but an unjust man will speak of him as unjust. Because he freed them from a lay-hand? Nay, he recovered their monastery for the episcopal See, as though wringing his club out of the hand of Hercules with a stronger hand. Is it because of the wickedness of his intention? But it is a pious deed to do as he intended, viz., to reform religion in a monastery. The Lord help the heart of my lord, that it may not again be stolen away by monks, who are not so much, as they pretend, seeking liberty, but really flying from discipline.

LETTER CLXXXI. (Circa A.D. 1136.)

TO THE CHANCELLOR HAIMERIC

He protests his gratitude for the benefits he has received.

If I wished to repay you in words for the good deeds with which you overwhelm me it would be as if one, attacked with arrows, should defend himself with straws; except that this last would seem a mere game, the other deceit. Deeds ought to be repaid by deeds. But such return is difficult for me who am poor and in low station. Poor I am in goods and strength, but not in

good wishes. Your kindnesses, then, which I cannot repay with good deeds I will with prayers. I am rich in good wishes, I abound in affection. And surely a true benefactor asks no more. For in what way is a man beneficent if he is not also benevolent? Besides, the benevolent man thinks nothing dearer to himself than the very benevolence from which he is called benevolent and is beneficent. Again, the fruit of beneficence is benevolence, unless perchance anyone think that to be a benefit bestowed which he has sown in hope or lost through fear. But who does not see that this last is abandoned, the other sold, neither given? A benefit, therefore, to be real must be gratuitous. And so, to be repaid anything by the receiver, cannot be so pleasing to the giver as to have gratitude felt for what he has gratuitously given. And this benevolence in the mind of the receiver springs from the benevolence in that of the giver, a beneficent act intervening. In this benevolence I confess myself rich; this I offer to my benefactor from a full heart as a worthy return; this I devoutly send up to the Creator of all as a sacrifice of praise for the salvation of my benefactor.

LETTER CLXXXII. (Circa A.D. 1136.)

TO HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS

He blames him for harshness in deposing his Archdeacon against rule.

Often, I confess, I have been going to write to you on behalf of many, and I had determined not to do so because of your hateful harshness, but charity shall prevail. I wish to retain for you your friends, and you disdain it; I wish to reconcile your enemies, and you suffer it not. You wish not for peace, but for shame and deposition; you are hastening on your confusion with hands and feet. You are multiplying your accusers, alienating your supporters. You are stirring up against yourself quarrels long laid to rest, provoking your adversaries, offending your protectors. You do all from caprice and not from reason, all for power, nothing from the fear of God. Who is there of your enemies that does not laugh at you, who of your friends that does not complain? Why do you degrade a man who is not only not convicted after trial, but not even heard? What scandal will this cause! how many mouths will it stir to derision, how many hearts to indignation! And do you suppose that justice has perished out of the earth as it has out of your heart, that a man should lose his archdeaconry taken from him in this way? But you perhaps are better pleased to give it back after seizing it, rather than to deserve his gratitude by suffering him to retain it: but this you have lost by your way of acting. Do not, I beseech you, do not do this thing; all

who hear of it will be amazed, no one will praise you. These words that I have written are more biting and more bold than you may like, but if you are willing to correct your ways, you will see that they are not unwise, nor to your disadvantage.

LETTER CLXXXIII. (A.D. 1139.)

TO CONRAD, KING OF THE ROMANS

He urges upon him reverence for the Apostolic See.

Your letters and salutations I receive as gladly as I am unworthy of them; unworthy I mean in dignity, not in devotion. The complaints of the King are also mine, and especially those which you rightly make about the invasion of the Empire. I have never wished for the disgrace of the King, or the diminution of his kingdom; the violent my soul abhorreth. I have read indeed: Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; he who resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God (Rom. 13:1, 2). Which sentence I ask and warn you to observe in every way, by showing reverence to the supreme Apostolic See, and to the Vicar of Blessed Peter, just as you wish it shown to you by the whole empire. There are some matters which I have thought it best not to write of, but which I could more suitably perhaps speak of in person.

LETTER CLXXXIV. (A.D. 1140.)

TO THE LORD POPE INNOCENT

He excuses himself for not being well able to send the monks asked of him.

We have received again my brother Andrew safe and in good spirits, and bringing good news of your safety and glory, of the peace and prosperity of the Church, of the flourishing and powerful state of the Roman Curia, and lastly of the favour and good-will which you still have for me. God in His mercy has dealt well with me: He has made me joyful. But your wish that we should send brothers to you will be with difficulty complied with, chiefly because we have not the number of members we once had. Indeed, besides those who have been destined in twos or threes to different cells, three new monasteries have been wholly founded out of them since I left you, and others are about to be founded. Still I will take care to summon from all our houses some whom I may send you, as I desire in all things to obey your commands.

LETTER CLXXXV. (A.D. 1138.)

TO EUSTACE, INTRUSIVE OCCUPIER OF THE SEE OF VALENCE

Bernard exhorts him to think of his age and his approaching death, and not to give ear to the perfidious counsels of flatterers.

To the illustrious EUSTACE, Brother BERNARD sends greeting.

1. I often wish your salvation, my illustrious brother, though I do not often write. Who shall forbid the wish? Neither laws govern, nor princes hold sway over the affections. They are free, especially if led by the Spirit, for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17). Thence it is that I am now venturing to write to your greatness as though I were some great one, though, I confess, I have neither been bidden, nor asked, nor invited by you to do so. But what if charity bid me? Another may, perhaps, take it differently; I have determined by this letter, so far as in me lies, and with true charity, to remind an illustrious man of his salvation, to arouse him from sleep, to recall him to himself, to summon him to grace. Who knows whether God will turn, and pardon, and leave a blessing behind Him? Nay, who knows not what and how great are the riches of His goodness, and long suffering, which a merciful and compassionate God has treasured up for him? In short, He is merciful, He spares, waits, and hides Himself even till now, having made Himself as a man who heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs, delaying to strike, ready to pardon. But thou, my Lord, how long? Thou, I say, O good man, how long wilt thou hide thyself from Him? how long wilt thou despise Him? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (Acts 9:5). Knowest thou not that the goodness of God is leading thee to repentance? How long wilt thou, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, heap up for thyself wrath against the day of wrath? (Rom. 2:4, 5).

2. Or is it not according to thy hardness indeed, but according to thy shame? What matters it according to what you are perishing? O, shame, void of reason, enemy of salvation, ignorant of all honour and honesty! This truly is that of which the Wise Man says, that there is a shame which bringeth sin (Ecclus. 4:21). Is it, then, a shame for a man to be overcome by God, and is it to be held a disgrace to humble one’s self under the mighty hand of the Most High? That glorious King David says thus: Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings and mightest overcome when Thou art judged (Ps. 51:4). The highest kind of victory is to yield to the Divine Majesty; and not to strive against our mother, the Church, is

the highest honour and glory. O, perversity! You are not ashamed to be polluted, and yet you are ashamed to be cleansed. There is a shame, according to the Wise Man, which brings glory (Ecclus. 4:21), viz., that which keeps from sin. But even if you are not ashamed to sin, there remains a glory, though it comes late, viz., when shame brings back that which guilt had banished. They, whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sin is covered (Ps. 32:1), hold the second place of blessedness. An honourable covering is that of which it is said, Confession and beauty are in his sight (Ps. 96:6, VULG.). Who will grant me to see you in golden apparel, so that I can say to you also: Thou hast put on confession and honour, thou hast clad thyself with light, as with a garment (Ps. 104:1, 2); Return, O Shunamite, that we may see thee (Cant. 6:13); Awake, awake, put on thy strength, put on the garment of salvation (Isa. 52:1); Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light (Eph. 5:14); Confession perisheth from the dead as from one who is not (Ecclus. 17:28).

3. How long will you forget yourself, for ever? How long will you sleep in death, O ornament of the noble, but grief of the faithful? How long will you be stubbornly opposed to your spiritual good, an exile from your honour, a rebel against your salvation? Why do you proceed to consummate your previous excellent character and actions with so different an ending? How can such an old age, which ought to be spent quietly in fruitful deeds of mercy, wipe out the punishment due to all your past days, or blot out their guilt? Why, alas! should your hoary head alone, which should be reverenced, be robbed of its accustomed veneration; why should it alone sink unhonoured into the grave, when it should have been especially respected? Have pity on thy soul by pleasing God (Ibid. 30:23); For they who please men have been put to confusion, for God hath despised them (Ps. 53:5). The time of man is short; to the old man death is at the door. You have a short, a very short time with those who say to you, Well! well! Let it be also a light thing to you to be judged by them, or by man’s little day, since you are even now ready to be brought before the scrutiny of angels; and, unhappy man that you are, are being hastened by the very failure of nature before the dread tribunal of Christ. You ought to be preparing yourself for that judgment, to be conforming yourself to that world, to be seeking the favour of that Court, and dreading rejection from it. Why are you disturbed by the opinion of those whose praise at that day will be found not to render you approved, nor their abuse to condemn you? In short, the children of men are vanity, the children of men are a lie in the scales, that they may alike deceive in their vanity (Ps. 62:9).

4. Besides, those who call you blessed lead you into error; they give you words and take back gifts. Vain both, but especially the words. And you deceive from vanity like them; but you are more deceived, they less. For you give what at all events is worth something, and you give it to the ungrateful and undeserving. Indeed, they love your goods, not you; nay, rather they love neither you nor yours, but they seek their own. Your goods, as far as they can, they will hunt after with their empty and lying flatteries. Their words are smoother than oil, and yet they are very darts (Ps. 55:21). And therefore David said: The oil of the sinner shall not anoint my head (Ps. 141:5). By them the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul and the wicked is blessed (Ps. 10:3). It is not I, then, but the Wise Man who bids you beware of them. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not (Prov. 1:10). Attend rather to Him who judges in equity for the meek of the earth; the meek whom your pastoral care does not feed, but whom your secular power oppresses, over whom you would have no power at all except it were given you from above. But this is your hour and the power of darkness. But listen to this: Judgment is severe for those who govern, and mighty men shall be mightily tormented (Wisd. 6:6, 7). If you fear this you will take care; if you disregard it you will fall into it, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31). May the one true God avert this, who wishes not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live (Ezek. 18:23, 32). My mind bids me say more, but you perchance would not listen. Rough words please not, although true and wholesome, because they are bitter and disagreeable to the taste. Therefore I will put my finger on my lip till I know how this is received; but you may believe that I will be agreeable to you if I can, yet not with pen or with tongue, but in deed and in truth.

LETTER CLXXXVI. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO SIMON, SON OF THE CASTELLAN OF CAMBRAY

Bernard recommends to his protection the monks of Vaucelles, and begs him to ratify the donation of his father.

I have heard, dearly beloved, from Ralph, Abbot of Vaucelles, that you greatly long to see and speak to me, and I was greatly pleased with your so great devotion to me, nor am I ungrateful for your goodwill. You know it is my wish to satisfy your desire; but I am hindered from carrying out my wish not only by bodily illness, but also by very many, and very important, matters of business. But though absent in the body I am present in spirit, until such a time as I may

be, if God will, present with you in body and in spirit. If, however, we love not in mouth and tongue only, but in deed and in truth, the truth of our love will best appear in action. And so this is what I ask, that you will love, cherish, and whenever necessary protect the brothers of Vaucelles and their Church, so that in this you may afford a signal mark of your liberality, and that there may be a clear proof of that affection which you promise me. That affection I wish now first to make trial of in this one point: Will you ratify to me the lands of Ligecourt, which your father conferred on me in person for the support of that monastery, so as not to make void the grant of your father? I, for my part, giving thanks for past kindnesses, and hoping for the like in the future, offer up my prayers for you and yours to Him who performs the wish of those who fear him, and hears their prayer (Ps. 145:19). We pray for the welfare of you and your wife, and all who belong to you.

LETTER CLXXXVII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO CALL TOGETHER THE BISHOPS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SENS AGAINST PETER ABAELARD

He urges the Bishops to energetic action in the cause of religion against Abaelard.

The news has gone abroad amongst many, and I suppose has reached you, why we are convoked at Sens, within the Octave of Pentecost, and provoked to a contest in defence of the Faith, although the servant of the Lord must not strive, but rather be patient to all. If it were my own cause, the son of your Holiness might not undeservedly, perhaps, boast himself in your protection. But now since it is also yours, nay, more yours than mine, I bid you the more confidently, and ask you the more importunately, to show yourselves friends in need. I mean, friends not to me, but to Christ, whose Bride calls to you that she is well-nigh choked in the midst of a forest of heresies, and a crop of errors which are springing up under your care and protection. The friend of the Bridegroom will not desert Her in Her time of trouble. Nor wonder that I invite you so suddenly and within so short a time; it is because the opposite side in its wiliness and craft is preparing to attack the unprepared, and to force the unarmed to join battle.

LETTER CLXXXVIII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO THE BISHOPS AND CARDINALS OF THE CURIA ON THE SAME SUBJECT

He warns them to vigilance against the errors of Peter Abaelard.

To the Lords and reverend Fathers, the Bishops and Cardinals who are of the Curia, the son of their holiness sends greeting.

No one doubts that to you it specially belongs to remove scandals from the kingdom of God, to cut down thorns as they arise, and to allay quarrels. For so Moses enjoined when he ascended the Mount, saying, You have Aaron and Hur with you, if any question arise you shall refer it to them (Ex. 24:14). I speak of that Moses who went through water, and not through water only, but through water and blood. And He is therefore more than Moses, because He went through blood. And since in place of Aaron and Hur the zeal and authority of the Roman Church presides over the people of God, to it we rightly refer not only doubtful questions, but attacks on the faith, injuries done to Christ, scorn and contempt cast on the Fathers, the scandals of the living, the dangers to posterity. The faith of simple folk is scoffed at, the hidden things of God are exposed, questions about the most exalted truths are rashly ventilated, the Fathers are derided because they held that such things are rather to be tasted than solved. Thence it comes to pass that the Paschal Lamb, contrary to the command of God (Ex. 12:9), is either cooked with water, or is eaten of raw in a rude and bestial fashion. What is left is not burnt with fire but is trodden under foot; so human reason usurps for itself everything, and leaves nothing for faith. It tries things above it, tests things too strong for it, rushes into Divine things; holy subjects it rather forces open than unlocks, what is closed and sealed it rather plunders than opens; and whatever it finds out of its reach it holds to be of no account and disdains to believe. Read if you please the book of Peter Abaelard, which he calls a book of Theology, for it is in your hands (since, as he boasts, it is read by many at the Curia), and see what things are said about the Holy Trinity, about the generation of the Son, about the procession of the Holy Spirit, and many other things he says repugnant to Catholic ears and minds. Read too that other book which they call a book of his Sentences, and that one which is entitled Know Thyself, and notice what a crop of blasphemies and errors is there flourishing. See what he thinks about the Soul of Christ, about the Person of Christ, about the descent of Christ into Hades, about the sacrament of the altar, about the power of binding and loosing, about original sin, about concupiscence, about the sin of delight, about the sin of infirmity, about the sin of ignorance, about the work of sin, about the will to commit sin. And if you think that I have rightly stirred, bestir also yourselves; and bestir not yourselves in vain; act for the place you hold, the dignity of your office, the authority you have received, in

such a way that he who has exalted himself to heaven may be cast down to hell, so that the works of darkness which have had the audacity to come forward into the light may be reproved by the light; so that while he who sins publicly is publicly reproved, others may learn to restrain themselves, putting, as they do, darkness for light, disputing at the cross roads about Divine things, speaking evil in their writings, and writing it in their books; and that so the mouth of them who speak wickedness may be stopped.

LETTER CLXXXIX. (A.D. 1140.)

TO POPE INNOCENT, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

He expresses his grief at the errors of Abaelard, which he warns the Pope to oppose.

To his most loving Father and Lord INNOCENT, by the grace of God, Supreme Pontiff, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, writes as his humble servant.

1. It is necessary that offences come. It is necessary but not pleasant. And therefore the Prophet says, O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest (Ps. 55:6). And the Apostle wishes to be dissolved and to be with Christ. And so another of the Saints: It is enough, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers (1 Kings 19:4). I have now something in common with the Saints, at least in wish if not in desert. For I could wish myself now taken from the midst of this world, overcome, I confess, by the fearfulness of my spirit and by the troubles of the time. I fear lest I be found better disposed than prepared. I am weary of life, and whether it is expedient to die I know not; and so perhaps even in my prayers I differ from the Saints, because they are provoked by the desire of better things, while I am compelled to depart by scandals and anxieties. He says in fact, To be dissolved and to be with Christ is far better (Phil. 1:23). Therefore in the Saint desire prevails, and in me sense; and in this unhappy life neither is he able to have the good he desires, nor I not to have the trouble which I suffer. And for this reason we both desire indeed to depart, with the same wish, but not from the same cause.

2. I was but just now foolishly promising myself some rest, when the schism of Leo was healed and peace restored to the Church. But lo! that is at rest, but I am not. I knew not that I was in a vale of tears, or I had forgotten that I dwell in a land of forgetfulness. I paid no attention to the fact that the earth in which I dwell brings forth for me thorns and thistles, that when they are cut down others

succeed, and when these are destroyed others grow ceaselessly, and spring up without intermission. I had heard these things indeed, but, as I now find out, vexation itself gives better understanding to the hearing. My grief has been renewed, not destroyed, my tears have overwhelmed me, because evil has strengthened, and when they had endured the frost, the snow fell upon them. Who hath power to resist this frost? By it charity freezes, that iniquity may abound. We have escaped the lion, Leo, to fall on the dragon (i.e., Peter Abaelard), who perhaps may do us not less injury by lurking in ambush than the former by raging on high. Although I would that his poisonous pages were still lying hid in bookcases, and not read at the cross-roads. His books fly abroad; and they who hate the light because they are evil have dashed themselves against the light, thinking light darkness. Over cities and castles is darkness cast instead of light; instead of honey, or rather in honey, his poison is on all sides eagerly drunk in. His books have passed from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people. A new gospel is being fashioned for peoples and nations, a new faith propounded, another foundation laid than that which is laid. Virtues and vices are discussed immorally, the Sacraments of the Church unfaithfully, the mystery of the Holy Trinity craftily and extravagantly; but everything is given in a perverse spirit, in an unprecedented manner, and beyond what we have received.

3. Goliath advances, tall in stature, clad in his armour of war, preceded by his armour-bearer, Arnold of Brescia. Scale overlaps scale, and there is no point left unguarded. Indeed, the bee which was in France has sent his murmuring to the Italian bee, and they have come together against the Lord and against His anointed. They have bent their bow, they have made ready their arrows within the quiver, that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart. In their life and habits they have the form of godliness, but they deny its power, and they thereby deceive many, for they transform themselves into angels of light, when they are Satan’s. Goliath standing with his armour-bearer between the two lines, shouts against the armies of Israel, and curses the ranks of the Saints, and that the more boldly because he knows that no David is present. In short, he puts forward philosophers with great praise and so affronts the teachers of the Church, and prefers their imaginations and novelties to the doctrine and faith of the Catholic Fathers; and when all fly from his face he challenges me, the weakest of all, to single combat.

4. The Archbishop of Sens, at his solicitation, writes to me fixing a day for the encounter, on which he in person, and with his brother bishops, should

determine, if possible, on his false opinions, against which I had ventured to lift my voice. I refused, not only because I am but a youth and he a man of war from his youth, but also because I thought it unfitting that the grounds of the faith should be handed over to human reasonings for discussion, when, as is agreed, it rests on such a sure and firm foundation. I said that his writings were enough for his condemnation, and that it was not my business, but that of the Bishops, whose office it is to decide on matters of faith. He none the less, nay, rather the more on this account, lifted his voice, called upon many, assembled his accomplices. What he wrote about me to his disciples I do not care to say. He spread everywhere the report that on a fixed day he would answer me at Sens. The report reached everyone, and I could not but hear of it. At first I held back, nor was I much moved by the popular rumour. At length I yielded to the advice of my friends (although much against my will, and with tears), who saw how all were getting ready as if for a show, and they feared lest from my absence cause of offence should be given to the people, and the horn of the adversary be exalted; and, since the error was likely to be strengthened if there were no one to answer or contradict it, I betook myself to the place appointed and at the time, unprepared, indeed, and unarmed, except that I revolved in my mind those words, Take no thought how ye shall answer, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall say (S. Matt. 10:19); and, again, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man may do unto me (Ps. 118:6). There had assembled, besides bishops and abbots, very many religious men, masters of the schools from different states, and many learned clergy; and the King, too, was present. And so in the presence of all, my adversary standing opposite, I produced certain articles taken from his books. And when I began to read them he departed, unwilling to listen, and appealed from the judges that he had himself chosen, a course I do not think allowable. Further, the articles having been examined, were found, in the judgment of all, opposed to the faith, contrary to the truth. I have written this on my own behalf, lest I should be thought to have shown levity, or at all events rashness, in so important a matter.

5. But thou, O successor of Peter, wilt determine whether he, who assails the faith of Peter, ought to have shelter at the See of Peter. Thou, I say, the friend of the bridegroom, wilt provide measures to free His Bride from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue. But that I may speak a little more boldly with my Lord, do thou, most loving Father, take heed to thyself, and to the grace of God which is in thee. Did He not, when thou wast small in thine own eyes, place thee over nations and kingdoms? For what, but that thou shouldst pull down, and destroy,

and build, and plant? See what great things He, who took thee from thy father's house, and anointed thee with the oil of His mercy, has since done for thy soul: what great things for His Church, by your means, in His vineyard, Heaven and Earth being witnesses, have been, as powerfully as wholesomely, uprooted and destroyed; what great things, again, have been well built, planted, and sown. God raised up the madness of schismatics in your time, that by your efforts they might be crushed. I have seen the fool in great prosperity, and immediately his beauty was cursed; I saw, I say, I saw the impious highly exalted and lifted up above the cedars of Lebanon, and I passed by, and lo he was gone. It is necessary, S. Paul says, that there be heresies and schisms, that they that are approved may be made manifest (1 Cor. 11:19). And, indeed, in schism, as I have just said, the Lord has proved and known you. But that nothing be wanting to your crown, lo! heresies have sprung up. And so, for the perfection of your virtues, and that you may be found to have done nothing less than the great Bishops, your predecessors, take away from us, most loving Father, the foxes which are laying waste the vineyard of the Lord while they are little ones; lest if they increase and multiply, our children despair of destroying what was not exterminated by you. Although they are not even now small or few, but imposing and numerous, and will not be exterminated save by you, and by a strong hand. Iacinctus has threatened me with many evils; but he has not done, nor could he do, what he wished. But I thought that I ought to bear patiently concerning myself what he has spared neither to your person nor to the Curia; but this my friend Nicholas, as he is also yours, will better tell in person.

NOTE TO THE FOLLOWING TREATISE

1. The following Letter, which is the 190th of S. Bernard, was ranked by Horst among the Treatises, on account of its length and importance. It was written on the occasion of the condemnation of the errors of Abaelard by the Council of Sens, in 1140, in the presence of a great number of French Bishops, and of King Louis the Younger, as has been described in the notes to Letter 187. In the Synodical Epistle, which is No. 191 of S. Bernard, and in another, which is No. 337, the Fathers of the Council announced to Pope Innocent that they had condemned the errors of Abaelard, but had pronounced no sentence against him personally out of respect for the appeal which he had made to the Holy See; and they add that "the chief heads of his errors are more fully detailed in the Letter of the Bishop of Sens." I think that the Letter of which mention is thus made can be no other than that given here, and in which we find, in fact, the chief heads of Abaelard's errors, with a summary refutation of each. They are also the same as those which William, who had become a simple monk at Igny, after having been Abbot of Saint Thierry, had addressed to Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, and to Bernard, in a Letter which is inserted among those of Bernard.

2. As regards the different errors imputed to Abaelard, there are some which he complained were wrongly attributed to him. Others, on the contrary, he recognized as his, and corrected them in his Apology, in which he represents Bernard as being his only opponent, his malignant and hasty denouncer. Two former partizans of Abaelard himself, but who had long recoiled from his errors, Geoffrey, who afterwards was the Secretary of Bernard, and "a certain Abbot of the Black Monks," whose name is unknown, attempted to justify Bernard against these calumnies. Duchesne had spoken of these two writers in his notes to Abaelard, but the Treatises of both of them were lately printed in Vol. iv. of the "Bibliotheca Cisterciensis," whose learned Editor, Bertrand Tissier, remarks that this unknown Abbot is some other person than William of Saint Thierry.

3. Of the heads of errors attributed to Abaelard, some are wanting in his printed works, which has given occasion to some writers for accusing Bernard, as if he had attributed errors to Abaelard without foundation, and so had himself been fighting against shadows and phantoms. But it is certain that most of these

errors are to be found even in his printed writings, as we shall show each in its place. As for those which are no longer discoverable, William of Saint Thierry, Geoffrey, and this unknown Abbot, who had been once a disciple of Abaelard, and was perfectly acquainted with his doctrine, quote word for word statements both from his Apology and from his Theology, which do not appear in the printed editions; and certainly Abaelard himself, in Book ii. of his "Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans," p. 554, reserves certain points to be treated in his Theology of which there is no mention in the printed copies, which close thus: "The rest is wanting," so that it appears that the printed copies of the Theology have been mutilated.

4. Those writers have, therefore, done a very ill service to Religion, to say nothing of the injury to Bernard, who, in order to justify Abaelard, accuse Bernard of having been hurried on by the impulse of a blind zeal. They ought at least to acknowledge, as Abaelard himself did, and also Berengarius, his defender, that he had erred in various matters. And, indeed, Abaelard himself, in his Apology, acknowledges, though perhaps not quite sincerely, that in some respects he was wrong. "It is possible," he says, "that I have fallen into some errors which I ought to have avoided, but I call God as a witness and judge upon my soul that in these points upon which I have been accused, I have presumed to say nothing through malice or through pride." It may well be that he might be able to clear himself of the reproach of malice, and even of that of heresy; but, at least, he could not deny that he had fallen into various errors—a liking for new words and phrases, levity, and perhaps even pride and an excessive desire for disputation. However this may be, Pope Innocent bade the Bishops by a rescript that the man was to be imprisoned and his books burned, and Godfrey declares that the Pope himself had them thrown into the flames at Rome. But Peter Abaelard at length returned to better views. He desisted from his Appeal by the advice and request of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, who has described his last days in pleasing terms in a Letter which he wrote to Heloïse.

5. Bernard did not attack Abaelard in his discourses and writings with impunity. Not only was Abaelard impatient of his censure, but also Berengarius, his disciple and defender, dared to accuse Bernard of having spread certain errors in his books. "You have certainly erred," says Berengarius, addressing Bernard, "in asserting the origin of souls from Heaven" (p. 310). And on p. 315: "The origin of souls from Heaven is a fabulous thing, and this I remember that you taught in these words (Serm. in Cantica, No. 17): 'The Apostle has rightly said, our conversation is in heaven.' These words which you have expounded

with great subtilty, savour much to the palate of a Christian mind of heresy." But enough of this foolish and impudent slanderer. The unknown Abbot reports another calumny of Abaelard against Bernard at the end of his second book: "It is very astonishing to me that for such a long time no reply should have been made by so many great men whose teaching enlightens the Church, as the light of the sun is reflected upon the moon, to our Abaelard, who accused the Abbot of saying that God, and Man assumed by God, are one Person in the Trinity. Whereas Man is a material body composed of various limbs and dissoluble, while God is neither a material body, nor has any limbs, nor can be dissolved. Wherefore, neither ought God to be called Man, nor Man to be called God," etc. Thus Abaelard shows himself a Nestorian, while petulantly accusing Bernard of error. Rightly does William of Saint Thierry reply in his 8th chapter to Abaelard with regard to this passage: "Thus we say similarly that Christ is the Son of Man in the nature of His Humanity, but not from that according to which He has union with God, and is One of the Three Persons in the Trinity; because, as God Incarnate was made the Son of Man on account of the human nature which He assumed, so the man united to the Son of God has become the Son of God on account of the Divine Nature which has united him to itself."

6. Besides the heads of errors which Bernard refutes in these books, he groups together some others in No. 10, contenting himself with exposing them; these have been refuted by other authors, viz., by William, and by the unknown Abbot. As to the Eucharistic species or the accidents, which, according to Abaelard, remain in the air after consecration, this was the view of William: "It appears to me, if you agree with me," he says, writing to Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, and to Bernard, "that those accidents, i.e., the form of the earlier substance, which, I believe, is nothing else than a harmonious combination of accidents into one, if they still exist, do so in the Body of the Lord, not forming it, but by the power and wisdom of God working upon them, shaping and modifying it, that it may become capable, according to the purpose of the mystery and the manner of a Sacrament, of being touched and tasted in a form different from that proper to it, which it could not do in its own." He says again in his book to Rupertus, De Corpore et Sanguine Domini, c. 3: "In opposition to every conception and mode of reasoning in secular philosophy, the substance of bread is changed into another substance, and has carried with it certain accidents into the Eucharistic mystery, but without altering them from what they were, and in such a manner that the Body of the Lord is not either white or round, though whiteness and roundness are associated with it. And it so retains these accidents that although

they are truly present with His Human Body, yet they are not in It, do not touch it, or affect it," etc.

7. It was not only with respect to the Incarnation of Our Lord that Abaelard thought, or at least expressed himself, in an erroneous manner. He was equally in error on the subject of the grace of Christ, which he reduced simply to the reason granted to man by God, to the admonitions of the Holy Scriptures, and to good examples, and thus made it common to all men. "We may say, then," he taught, "that man, by the reason which he has received from God, is able to embrace the grace which is offered him; nor does God do any more for a person who is saved before he has embraced the offered grace, than for one who is not saved. But just as a man who exposes precious jewels for sale, in order to excite in those who see them the wish to purchase; thus God makes His grace known before all, exhorts us by the Scriptures, and reminds us by examples, so that men, in the power of that liberty of will which they have, may decide to embrace the offer of grace." And a little farther on he continues: "That vivification is attributed to grace: because Reason, by which man discerns between good and evil, and understands that he ought to abstain from the one and to do the other, comes from God. And therefore it is said that he does this under the inspiration of God: because God enables him by the gift of Reason which He has bestowed to recognize what is sinful." Such were the errors William has extracted, among many others, from the writings of Abaelard, and without doubt from his Theology, which, perhaps because of these and other similar passages, was mutilated by his scholars. Nor can we refuse to credit the good faith of William, who was a learned and pious man: especially as Abaelard in his Book iv., on the Epistle to the Romans, teaches the same hurtful doctrine (p. 653 and following). We learn from all these expressions of Abaelard that he thought, or at least certainly wrote, with the same impiety concerning the grace of Christ as he did on the Incarnation, and that Bernard was perfectly correct in saying (Letter 192): "He speaks of the Trinity like Arius, of grace like Pelagius, and of the Person of Christ like Nestorius." Proof of the truth of these words of Bernard as concerns the two last charges will be found in reading the letter given here; and as to the third, it will be sufficient to show that Bernard has in nowise exaggerated, to read the end of Book iii. of the Theology of Abaelard; there it will be found in his own words, "that those who abhor our words respecting the faith may be easily convinced when they hear that God the Father and God the Son are joined with us according to the sense of the words." In what manner? "Let us ask, then," he continues, "if they believe in the wisdom of God of which it is written:

Thou hast made all things with wisdom, O Lord, and they will reply without hesitation that they do so believe. But this is to believe in the Son; as for believing in the Holy Ghost, it, is nothing else than believing in the goodness of God." These words seem clearly to be not only Arian, but even Sabellian, although, as I must frankly confess, Abaelard formally rejects that error in its logical consequences in another passage on p. 1069. But especially in matters of faith, it is a matter of importance, not only to think rightly, but also to speak and write with exactness. Thus it is with reason that William of Saint Thierry says in citing the very words of Abaelard with respect to the brass and the seal, and with respect to power in general and a certain power: "As for the Divine Persons, he destroys them like Sabellius, and when he speaks of their unlikeness and their inequality, he goes straight to the feet of Arius in his opinion." I only cite these passages to make those persons ashamed who, although they detest these errors, yet take up the defence of Abaelard against Bernard, and do not hesitate to accuse the latter of precipitation and of excess of zeal against him. William de Conches expresses himself in almost the same manner as Abaelard with respect to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and Abbot William of S. Thierry confutes his errors also in his letter to Bernard. Nor is there anything worse that can happen to religion than that philosophers should attempt to explain the mysteries of our faith by the power of Reason alone.

8. Geoffrey, secretary of S. Bernard, gives an account of the whole business of Abaelard in a letter to Henry, Cardinal and Bishop of Albano: "I have heard also that your Diligence desires to know the entire truth respecting the condemnation of Peter Abaelard, whose books Pope Innocent II., of pious memory, condemned to be burned solemnly at Rome in the Church of S. Peter, and declared him by Apostolical authority to be a heretic. Some years before a certain venerable Cardinal, Legate of the Roman Church, by name Conon, once a Canon of the Church of S. Nicholas of Artois, had already condemned his Theology in the same way to be burned, during a council at Soissons in which he presided, the said Abaelard having been present and having been condemned of heretical pravity. If you desire it he will satisfy you by the book of The Life of S. Bernard, and by his letters sent to Rome on that subject. I have found also at Clairvaux a little book of a certain Abbot of Black Monks, in which the errors of the same Peter Abaelard are noted, and I remember to have seen it on a previous occasion; but for many years, as the keepers of the books assert, the first four sheets of this little book, although diligently sought for, could not be found. Because of this I have had the intention to send some one into France to the Abbey of the writer of

that little book, so as, if I should be able to recover it, to have it copied, and send it to you. I believe that your curiosity will be completely satisfied in learning in what respects, how, and wherefore he was condemned."

It is thus that Geoffrey expresses himself. (Notes of Duchesne to Abaelard.) I pass over the vision related by Henry, Canon of Tours, to the Fathers of the Synod of Sens and to Bernard (Spicileg., Vol. xii. p. 478 et seqq.).

9. After I had written what precedes, our brother, John Durand, who was then occupied at Rome, sent me the Capitula Hæresum Petri Abaelardi, which were placed at the head of the following letter, taken from the very faulty MS. in the Vatican, No. 663. These were, without doubt, those which Bernard, at the end of this letter, states that he had collected, and transmitted to the Pontiff. It seems well to place them here for the illustration of the letter.

HEADS OF HERESIES OF PETER ABAELARD

I.—The shocking analogy made between a brazen seal, and between genus and species, and the Holy Trinity

“The Wisdom of God being a certain power, as a seal of brass is a certain [portion of] brass; it follows clearly that the Wisdom of God has its being from His Power, similarly as the brazen is said to be what it is from its material: or the species derives what it is from its genus, which is, as it were, the material of the species, as the animal is of man. For just as, in order that there may be a brazen seal, there must be brass, and in order that there may be man, there must be the genus Animal, but not reciprocally: so, in order that there may be the Divine Wisdom, which is the power of discernment, there must be the Divine Power; but the reciprocal does not follow.” And a little further on we read: “The Beneficence, the name under which the Holy Spirit is designated, is not in God Wisdom or Power.”

II.—That the Holy Spirit is not of the Substance of the Father

“The Son and the Holy Spirit are of the Father, the One by the way of generation, the Other by that of procession. Generation differs from procession in that He who is generated is of the very Substance of the Father, whilst the essence of Wisdom itself is, as was said, to be a certain Power.” And a little further on we read: “As for the Holy Spirit, although He be of the same Substance with the Father and the Son, whence even the Trinity itself is called consubstantial (homoousion), yet He is not at all of the Substance of the Father or of the Son, as He would be if generated of the Father or the Son; but rather He has of them the Procession, which is that God, through love, extends Himself to another than Himself. For like as anyone proceeds through love from his own self to another, since, as we have said above, no one can be properly said to have love towards himself, or to be beneficent towards himself, but towards another. But this is especially true of God, who having need of nothing, cannot be moved by the feeling of beneficence towards His own self, to bestow something on Himself out of beneficence, but only towards creatures.”

III.—That God is able to do what He does, or to refrain from doing it, only in the manner or at the time in which He does so act or refrain, and in no other

“By the reasoning by which it is shown that God the Father has generated the Son of as great goodness as He was able, since otherwise He would have yielded to envy; it is also clear that all which He does or makes, He does or makes as excellent as He is able to do; nor does He will to withhold a single good that He is capable of bestowing.” And a little farther on we read: “In everything that God does, He so proposes to Himself that which is good, that it may be said of Him that He is made willing to do that which He does rather by the price (as it were) of good, than by the free determination of His own Will.” Also: “From this it therefore appears, and that both by reason and by the Scriptures, that God is able to do that only which He does.” And a little farther: “Who, if He were able to interfere with the evil things which are done, would yet only do so at the proper time, since He can do nothing out of the proper time; consequently I do not see, in what way He would not be consenting to sinful actions. For who can be said to consent to evil, except he by whom it may be interfered with at the proper time?” Also: “The reason which I have given above and the answers to objections seem to me to make clear that God is able to do what He does, or to refrain from doing it, only in the manner or at the time, in which He does so act or refrain, and in no other.”

IV.—That Christ did not assume our flesh in order to free us from the yoke of the devil

“It should be known that all our Doctors who were after the Apostles agree in this, that the devil had dominion and power over man, and held him in bondage of right.” And a little farther on: “It seems to me that the devil has never had any right over man, but rightly held him in bondage as a jailer, God permitting; nor did the Son of God assume our flesh in order to free us from the yoke of the devil.” And again: “How does the Apostle say that we are justified or reconciled to God by the death of His Son, when on the contrary, He ought to have been more angry still against man, who had committed in putting His Son to death, a fault much more great than in transgressing His first precept by eating one apple; and would it not have been more just? For if that first sin of Adam was so great, that it could not be expiated except by the death of Christ; what is there which can be capable of expiating the Death of Christ itself, and all the great cruelties committed upon Him and His Saints? (See Letter V. 21.) Did the death of His innocent Son please God so much, that for the sake of it He has become reconciled to us, who have caused it by our sins, on account of which the

innocent Lord was slain? And could He forgive us a fault much less great, only on condition that we committed a sin so enormous? Were multiplied sins needful in order to the doing of so great a good, as to deliver us from our sins and to render us, by the death of the Son of God, more righteous than we were before?" Again: "To whom will it not seem cruel and unjust that one should have required the innocent blood, or any price whatever, or that the slaughter of the innocent, under any name or title, should be pleasing to him? Still less that God held the death of His Son so acceptable that He would, for its sake, be reconciled to the world. These and similar considerations raise questions of great importance, not only concerning redemption, but also concerning our justification by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. But it seems to me that we were nevertheless justified by the Blood of Christ, and reconciled with God by the special grace shown to us when His Son took upon Him our nature, and in it gave us an example both by word and deed, until His Death. He has united us so closely with Him by His love for us, that we are fired by so great benefit of Divine grace, and will hesitate at no suffering, provided it be for Him. Which benefit indeed we do not doubt aroused the ancient Fathers, who looked forward to this by faith, to an ardent love of God, as well as those of more recent time." And below: "I think then that the cause and design of the Incarnation was to enlighten the world with the wisdom of God, and arouse it to love of Him."

V.—Neither God-and-Man, nor the Man who is Christ, is one of the three Persons in the Trinity

"When I say that Christ is one of the Three Persons in the Trinity I mean this: that the Word, who was from eternity one of the Three Persons in the Trinity, is so: and I think that this expression is figurative. For if we should regard it as literal, since the name of Christ means He who is God-and-Man, then the sense would be, that God-and-Man is one of the Three Persons of the Trinity. Which is entirely false." And a little farther on: "It should be stated that although we allow that Christ is one of the Three Persons in the Trinity, yet we do not allow that the Person who is Christ is one of the Three Persons in the Trinity."

VI.—That God does no more for a person who is saved, before he has accepted grace offered, than for one who is not saved

"It is frequently asked whether it is true, as is said by some persons, that all men need to be saved by the mercy of God, and that their need is such that no one is able to have the will to do good unless by the preventing grace of God, which

influences his heart and inspires in him the will to do good, and multiplies it when produced, and preserves it after having been multiplied. If it is true that man is not able to do anything good by himself, and that he is incapable of raising himself up in any way whatever by his free will for the reception of Divine grace, without the help of that grace, as is asserted, it does not appear on what ground, if he sins, he can be punished. For if he is not able to do anything good of himself, and if he is so constituted that he is more inclined to evil than to good, is he not free from blame if he sins, and is God who has given to him a nature so weak and subvertible deserving of praise for having created such a being? Or, on the contrary, does it not rather seem that He merits to be reproached?" And a little farther on: "If it were true that man is unable to raise himself up without the grace of another, in order to receive the Divine grace, there does not seem to be any reason wherefore man should be held culpable; and it would seem that if he has not the grace of God the blame should be rather reflected upon his Creator. But this is not so, but very far otherwise, according to the truth of the case, for we must lay down that man is able to embrace that grace which is offered to him by the reason which has, indeed, been bestowed upon him by God; nor does God do anything more for a person, who is saved before he has accepted the grace offered to him, than for another who is not saved. In fact, God behaves with regard to men in like manner as a merchant who has precious stones to sell, who exhibits them in the market, and offers them equally to all, so that he may excite in those who view them a desire to purchase. He who is prudent, and who knows that he has need of them, labours to obtain the means, gains money and purchases them; on the contrary, he who is slow and indolent, although he desires to have the jewels, and although he may be also more robust in body than the other, because he is indolent does not labour, and, therefore, does not purchase them, so that the blame for being without them belongs to himself. Similarly, God puts His grace before the eyes of all, and advises them in the Scriptures and by eminent doctors to avail themselves of their freedom of will to embrace this offered grace; certainly he who is prudent and provident for his future, acts according to his free will, in which he can embrace this grace. But the slothful, on the contrary, is entangled with carnal desires, and although he desires to attain blessedness, yet he is never willing to endure labour in restraining himself from evil, but neglects to do what he ought, although he would be able by his free will to embrace the grace offered him, and so he finds himself passed over by the Almighty."

VII.—That God ought not to hinder evil actions

“In the first place, we must determine what it is to consent to evil, and what not to do so. He, then, is said to consent to evil who, when he can and ought to prevent it, does not do so; but if he ought to prevent it, but has not the power, or if, on the contrary, though he has the power, he ought not to do so, he is blameless. Much less if he neither has the power, nor ought, if he had, to prevent it, is he to be blamed. And, therefore, God is far from giving consent to evil actions, since He neither ought, nor has the power, to interfere with them. He ought not, since if an action develops by His goodness in a particular manner, than which none can be better, in no wise ought He to wish to interfere with it. He is, furthermore, not able, because His goodness, though it has chosen a minor good, cannot put an obstacle to that which is greater.”

VIII.—That we have not contracted from Adam guilt, but penalty

“It should be known that when it is said, Original sin is in infants, this is spoken of the penalty, temporal and eternal, which is incurred by them through the fault of their first parent.” And a little farther on: “Similarly it is said, In whom all have sinned (Rom. 5:12), in the sense that when he (our first parent) sinned we were all in him in germ. But it does not, therefore, follow that all have sinned, since they did not then exist; for whoever does not exist does not sin.”

IX.—That the Body of the Lord did not fall to the ground

“On the subject of this species of Bread and Wine which is turned into the Body of Christ it is asked whether they continue to exist in the Body of Christ, in the substance of bread and wine as they were before, or whether they are in the air. It is probable that they exist in the air, since the Body of Christ had its form and features, as other human bodies. As for the Eucharistic species of bread and wine, they serve only to cover and conceal the Body of Christ in the mouth.” And a little farther on: “It is asked again concerning this, that it seems to be multiple … wherefore it is ordered to be preserved from one Saturday to the next, as we read was done with the shew bread. It seems also to be gnawed by mice, and to fall to the ground from the hands of a priest or deacon. And, therefore, it is asked, wherefore God permits such things to happen to His Body; or whether, perhaps, these things do not really happen to the Body, but are only so done in appearance, and to the species? To which I reply, that these things do not really affect the Body, but that God allows them to happen to the species in

order to reprove the negligence of the ministers. As for His Body, He replaces and preserves it as it pleases Him to do."

X.—That man is made neither better nor worse by works

"It is frequently asked what it is that is recompensed by the Lord: the work or the intention, or both. For authority seems to decide that what God rewards eternally are works, for the Apostle says God will render to every man according to his works (Romans 2:6). And Athanasius says: 'They will have to give account of their own works.' And a little farther on he says: And those who have done good shall go into life eternal, but those who have done evil into eternal fire (S. Matt. 25:46, and S. John 5:29). But I say that they were eternally recompensed by God either for good or for evil; nor is man made either better or worse because of works, at least only so far as that while he is doing them his will towards either good or evil gathers force. Nor is this contrary to the Apostle, or to other authors, because when the Apostle says God will render to each, etc., he puts the effect for the cause, that is to say, the action for the will or intention".

XI.—That those who crucified Christ ignorantly committed no sin; and that whatsoever is done through ignorance ought not to be counted as a fault

"There is objected to us the action of the Jews who have crucified Christ; that of the men who in persecuting the Martyrs thought that they were doing God service; and finally that of Eve, who did not act against her conscience since she was tempted, and yet it is certain that she committed sin. To which I say that in truth those Jews in their simplicity were not acting at all against their conscience, but rather persecuted Christ from zeal for their law; nor did they think that they were acting wickedly, and, therefore, they did not sin; nor were any of them eternally condemned on account of this, but because of their previous sins, because of which they rightly fell into that state of darkness. And among them were even some of the elect, for whom Christ prayed, saying: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (S. Luke 23:34). He did not ask in this prayer that this particular sin might be forgiven to them, since it was not really a sin, but rather their previous sins."

XII.—Of the power of binding and loosing

"That which is said in S. Matthew, whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, etc. (16:19) is thus to be understood: Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, i.e., in the

present life, shall be bound also in heaven, i.e., in the present Church." And a little farther on: "The Gospel seems to contradict us when we say that God alone is able to forgive sins, for Christ says to His disciples receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever's sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them (S. John 20:22, 23). But I say that this was spoken to the Apostles alone, not to their successors." And immediately he adds: "If, however, anyone shall say that this applies also to their successors, it will be needful in that case to explain this passage also in the same manner in which I have explained the preceding."

XIII.—Concerning suggestion, delectation, and consent

"It should be known also that suggestion is not a sin for him to whom the suggestion is made, nor the delectation which follows the suggestion, which delectation is produced in the soul because of our weakness, and by the remembrance of the pleasure which is bound in the accomplishment of the thing which the tempter suggests to our mind. It is only consent, which is also called a contempt of God, in which sin consists." And a little farther on: "I do not say that the will of doing this or that, nor even the action itself is sin, but rather, as has been said above, that the contempt itself of God in some act of the will that constitutes sin."

XIV.—That Omnipotence belongs properly and specially to the Father

"If we refer power as well to the idea of Being as to efficacy of working, we find Omnipotence to attach properly and specially to the proprium of the Person of the Father: since not only is He Almighty with the Two other Persons, but also He alone possesses His Being from Himself and not from another. And as He exists from Himself, so He is equally Almighty by Himself."

LETTER CXC. (A.D. 1140.)

TO THE SAME, AGAINST CERTAIN HEADS OF ABAELARD'S HERESIES

To his most loving Father and Lord, INNOCENT, Supreme Pontiff, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends humble greeting.

The dangers and scandals which are coming to the surface in the Kingdom of God, especially those which touch the faith, ought to be referred to your Apostolic authority. For I judge it fitting that there most of all, the losses suffered by the faith should be repaired, where faith cannot suffer defect. This, truly, is the prerogative of your see. For to what other person [than Peter] has it ever been said, I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not? (S. Luke 22:32). Therefore that which follows is required from the successor of Peter: And when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren. That, indeed, is necessary now. The time is come, most loving Father, for you to recognize your primacy, to prove your zeal, to do honour to your ministry. In this plainly you fulfil the office of Peter, whose seat you occupy, if by your admonition you strengthen the hearts that are wavering in the faith, if by your authority you crush the corrupters of the faith.

CHAPTER I

He explains and refutes the dogmas of Abaelard respecting the Trinity.

1. We have in France an old teacher turned into a new theologian, who in his early days amused himself with dialectics, and now gives utterance to wild imaginations upon the Holy Scriptures. He is endeavouring again to quicken false opinions, long ago condemned and put to rest, not only his own, but those of others; and is adding fresh ones as well. I know not what there is in heaven above and in the earth beneath which he deigns to confess ignorance of: he raises his eyes to Heaven, and searches the deep things of God, and then returning to us, he brings back unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, while he is presumptuously prepared to give a reason for everything, even of those things which are above reason; he presumes against reason and against faith. For what is more against reason than by reason to attempt to transcend reason? And what is more against faith than to be unwilling to believe what reason cannot attain? For instance, wishing to explain that saying of the wise man: He who is hasty to believe is light in mind (Ecclus. 19:4). He says that a hasty faith is one that believes before reason; when Solomon says this not of faith towards God, but of mutual belief amongst ourselves. For the blessed Pope Gregory denies plainly that faith towards God has any merit whatever if human reason furnishes it with proof. But he praises the Apostles, because they followed their Saviour when called but once (Hom, in Evang. 26). He knows doubtless that this word was spoken as praise: At the hearing of the ear he obeyed me (Ps. 18:44), that the Apostles were directly rebuked because they had been slow in believing (S. Mark 16:14). Again, Mary is praised because she anticipated reason by faith, and Zacharias punished because he tempted faith by reason (S. Luke 1:20, 45), and Abraham is commended in that against hope he believed in hope (Rom. 4:18).

2. But on the other hand our theologian says: “What is the use of speaking of doctrine unless what we wish to teach can be explained so as to be intelligible?”

And so he promises understanding to his hearers, even on those most sublime and sacred truths which are hidden in the very bosom of our holy faith; and he places degrees in the Trinity, modes in the Majesty, numbers in the Eternity. He has laid down, for example, that God the Father is full power, the Son a certain kind of power, the Holy Spirit no power. And that the Son is related to the Father as force in particular to force in general, as species to genus, as a thing formed of material, to matter, as man to animal, as a brazen seal to brass. Did Arius ever go further? Who can endure this? Who would not shut his ears to such sacrilegious words? Who does not shudder at such novel profanities of words and ideas? He says also that "the Holy Spirit proceeds indeed from the Father and the Son, but not from the substance of the Father or of the Son." Whence then? Perhaps from nothing, like everything created. But the Apostle does not deny that they are of God, nor is he afraid to say: Of whom are all things (Rom. 11:36). Shall we say then that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in no other way than all things do, that is, that He exists not essentially but by way of creation, and is therefore a creature like all other things. Or will this man, who is always seeking after new things, who invents what he does not find, affirms those things which are not, as though they are, will he find for himself some third way, in which he may produce Him from the Father and the Son? But, he says, "if He were of the substance of the Father, He would surely have been begotten, and so the Father would have two Sons." As though everything which is from any substance has always as its father that from which it is. For lice and phlegm and such things, are they sons of the flesh, and not rather of the substance of the flesh? Or worms produced by rotten wood, whence derive they their substance but from the wood? yet are they not sons of the wood. Again, moths have their substance from the substance of garments, but not their generation. And there are many instances of this kind.

3. Since he admits that the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son, I wonder how an acute and learned man (as at least he thinks himself) can yet deny that He proceeds in substance from the Father and the Son, unless perchance he thinks that the two first persons proceed from the substance of the third. But this is an impious and unheard of opinion. But if neither He proceeds from their substance, nor They from His, where, I pray, is the consubstantiality? Let him then either confess with the Church that the Holy Spirit is of their substance, from whom He does not deny that He proceeds, or let him with Arius deny His consubstantiality, and openly preach His creation. Again he says, if the Son is of the substance of the Father, the Holy Spirit is not; they must differ

from each other, not only because the Holy Spirit is not begotten, as the Son is, but also because the Son is of the substance of the Father, which the Holy Spirit is not. Of this last distinction the Catholic Church has hitherto known nothing. If we admit it, where is the Trinity? where is the Unity? If the Holy Spirit and the Son are really separated by this new enumeration of differences, and if the Unity is split up, then especially let it be made plain that distinction which he is endeavouring to make is a difference of substance. Moreover, if the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the substance of the Father and the Son, no Trinity remains, but a duality. For no Person is worthy to be admitted into the Trinity whose substance is not the same as that of the others. Let him, therefore, cease to separate the procession of the Holy Spirit from the substance of the Father and the Son, lest by a double impiety he both take away number from the Trinity and attribute it to the Unity, each of which the Christian faith abhors. And, lest I seem in so great a matter to depend on human reasonings only, let him read the letter of Jerome to Avitus, and he will plainly see, that amongst the other blasphemies of Origen which he confutes, he also rejects this one, that, as he said, the Holy Spirit is not of the substance of the Father. The blessed Athanasius thus speaks in his book on the Undivided Trinity: “When I spoke of God alone I meant not the Person only of the Father, because I denied not that the Son and the Holy Spirit are of this same Substance of the Father.”

CHAPTER II

In the Trinity it is not possible to admit any disparity: but equality is every way to be predicated.

4. Your holiness sees how in this man’s scheme, which is not reasoning but raving, the Trinity does not hold together and the Unity is rendered doubtful, and that this cannot be without injury to the Majesty. For whatever That is which is God, it is without doubt That than which nothing greater can be conceived. If, then, in this One and Supreme Majesty we have found anything that is insufficient or imperfect in our consideration of the Persons, or if we have found that what is assigned to one is taken from another, the whole is surely less than That, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For indubitably the greatest which is a whole is greater than that which consists of parts. That man thinks worthily, as far as man can, of the Divine Majesty who thinks of no inequality in It where the whole is supremely great; of no separation where the whole is one; of no chasm where the whole is undivided; in short, of no imperfection or deficiency where the whole is a whole. For the Father is a whole, as are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Son is a whole, as are He Himself and the Father and the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is a whole, as are He Himself and the Father and the Son. And the whole Unity is a whole neither superabounding in the Three, nor diminished in Each Person. For they do not individually divide between Them that real and highest Good which they are, since they do not possess It in the way of participation, but are essentially the very Good. For those phrases which we most rightly use, as One from Another, or One to Another, are designations of the Persons, not division of the Unity. For although in this ineffable and incomprehensible essence of the Deity we can, by the requirements of the properties of the Persons, say One and Another in a sober and Catholic sense, yet there is not in the essence One and Another, but simple Unity; nor in the confession of the Trinity any derogation to the Unity, nor is the true assertion of the Unity any exclusion of the propria of the Persons. May that execrable similitude of genus and species be accordingly as far from our minds

as it is from the rule of truth. It is not a similitude, but a dissimilitude, as is also that of brass and the brazen seal; for since genus and species are to each other as higher and lower, while God is One, there can never be any resemblance between equality so perfect and disparity so great. And again, with regard to his illustration of brass, and the brass which is made into a seal, since it is used for the same kind of similitude, it is to be similarly condemned. For since, as I have said, species is less than and inferior to genus, far be it from us to think of such diversity between the Father and the Son. Far be it from us to agree with him who says that the Son is related to the Father as species to genus, as man to animal, as a brazen seal to brass, as force to force absolutely. For all these several things by the bond of their common nature are to each other as superiors and inferiors, and therefore no comparison is to be drawn from these things with That in which there is no inequality, no dissimilarity. You see from what unskilfulness or impiety the use of these similitudes descends.

CHAPTER III

The absurd doctrine of Abaelard, who attributes properly and specifically the absolute and essential names to one Person, is opposed.

5. Now notice more clearly what he thinks, teaches, and writes. He says that Power properly and specially belongs to the Father, Wisdom to the Son, which, indeed, is false. For the Father both is, and is most truly called, Wisdom, and the Son Power, and what is common to Both is not the proprium of Each singly. There are certainly some other names which do not belong to Both, but to One or the Other alone, and therefore His own Name is peculiar to Each, and not common to the Other. For the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, for He is designated by the name of Father, not because He is the Father with regard to Himself, but with regard to His Son, and in like manner by the name of Son is expressed not that He is Son with regard to Himself, but to the Father. It is not so with power and many other attributes which are assigned to the Father and the Son in common, and not singly to Each taken by Himself. But he says, “No; we find that omnipotence belongs especially to the proprium of the Person of the Father, because He not only can do all things in union with the other two Persons, but also because He alone has His existence from Himself, and not from Another, and as He has His existence from Himself, so has He His power.” O, second Aristotle! By parity of reasoning, if such were reasoning, would not Wisdom and Kindness belong properly to the Father, since equally the Father has His Wisdom and Kindness from Himself, and not from another, just as He has His Being and His Power? And if he does not deny this, as he cannot reasonably do, what, I ask, will he do with that famous partition of his in which, as he has assigned Power to the Father and Wisdom to the Son, so he has assigned Loving Kindness to the Holy Spirit properly and specially? For one and the same thing cannot well be the proprium of two, that is, to be the exclusive property of each. Let him choose which alternative he will: either let him give

Wisdom to the Son and take It from the Father, or assign It to the Father and deny It to the Son; and again, let him assign Loving Kindness to the Spirit without the Father, or to the Father without the Spirit; or let him cease to call attributes which are common, propria; and though the Father has his Power from Himself, yet let him not dare to concede It to Him as being a proprium, lest on his own reasoning he be obliged to assign Him Wisdom and Loving Kindness which He has in precisely the same way, as His propria also.

6. But let us now wait and see in how theoretic a manner our theologian regards the invisible things of God. He says, as I have pointed out, that omnipotence properly belongs to the Father, and He makes it to consist in the fulness and perfection of Rule and discernment. Again, to the Son he assigns Wisdom, and that he defines to be not Power simply, but a certain kind of Power in God, namely, the Power of discernment only. Perhaps he is afraid of doing an injury to the Father if he gives as much to the Son as to Him, and since he dares not give Him complete power, he grants Him half. And this that he lays down he illustrates by common examples, asserting that the Power of discernment which the Son is, is a particular kind of Power, just as a man is a kind of animal, and a brazen seal a particular form of brass, which means that the power of discernment is to the power of Rule and discernment, i.e., the Son is to the Father, as a man to an animal, or as a brazen seal to brass. For, as he says, “a brazen seal must first be brass, and a man to be a man must first be an animal, but not conversely. So Divine Wisdom, which is the power of discernment, must be first Divine Power, but not conversely” (Abael. Theol. B. ii. p. 1083). Do you, then, mean that, like the preceding similitudes, your similitude demands that the Son to be the Son must first be the Father, i.e., that He who is the Son is the Father, though not conversely? If you say this you are a heretic. If you do not your comparison is meaningless.

7. For why do you fashion for yourself the comparison, and with such beating about the bush, apply it to questions long ago settled and ill-fitted for debate? Why do you bring it forward with such waste of energy, impress it on us with such a useless multiplicity of words, produce it with such a flourish, if it does not effect the purpose for which it was adduced, viz., that the members be harmonized with each other in fitting proportions? Is not this a labour and a toil, to teach us by means of it, the relation which exists between the Father and the Son? We hold according to you, that a man being given an animal is given, but not conversely, at least by the rule of your logic; for by it is not that when the genus is given we know the species, but the species being given we know the

genus. Since, then, you compare the Father to the genus, the Son to the species, does not the condition of your comparison postulate, that in like manner, when the Son is known you declare the Father to be known and not conversely; that, as he who is a man is necessarily an animal, but not conversely, so also, He who is the Son is necessarily the Father, but not conversely? But the Catholic faith contradicts you on this point, for it plainly denies both, viz., that the Father is the Son, and that the Son is the Father. For indubitably the Father is one Person, the Son another; although the Father is not of a different substance from the Son. For by this distinction the godliness of the Faith knows how to distinguish cautiously between the propria of the Persons, and the undivided unity of the Essence; and holding a middle course, to go along the royal road, turning neither to the right by confounding the Persons, nor looking to the left by dividing the Substance. But if you say that it rightly follows as a necessary truth that He who is the Son is also the Father, this helps you nothing; for an identical proposition is necessarily capable of being converted in such a way that what was true of the original proposition is true of the converse; and your comparison of genus and species, or of brass and the brazen seal does not admit of this. For as it does not follow as a necessary consequence that the Son is the Father, and the Father the Son, so neither can we rightly produce a convertible consequence between man and animal, and between a brazen seal and brass. For though it be true to say, "If he is a man he is an animal," still the converse is not true, "If he is an animal he is a man." And again, if we have a brazen seal it necessarily follows that it is brass; but if we have brass it does not necessarily follow that it is a brazen seal. But now let us proceed to his other points.

8. Lo! according to him we have omnipotence in the Father, a certain power in the Son. Let him tell us also what he thinks of the Holy Spirit. That loving-kindness, he says, which is denoted by the name of the Holy Spirit is not in God power or wisdom (Theol. ii. 1085). I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven (S. Luke 10:18). So ought he to fall who exercises himself in great matters, and in things that are too high for him. You see, Holy Father, what ladders, nay what dizzy heights, he has set up for his own downfall. All power, half power, no power. I shudder at the very words, and I think that very horror enough for his confutation. Still, I will bring forward a testimony which occurs to my troubled mind, so as to remove the injury done to the Holy Spirit. We read in Isaiah: The Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of ghostly strength (Is. 11:2). By this his audacity is plainly and sufficiently answered, even if it is not crushed. Be it that blasphemy against the Father or the Son may be forgiven, will blasphemy against the Spirit?

The Angel of the Lord is waiting to cut you asunder; for you have said “The Holy Spirit in God is not power or wisdom.” So the foot of pride stumbles when it intrudes [where it ought not].

CHAPTER IV

Abaelard had defined faith as an opinion or estimate: Bernard refutes this.

9. It is no wonder if a man who is careless of what he says should, when rushing into the mysteries of the Faith, so irreverently assail and tear asunder the hidden treasures of godliness, since he has neither piety nor faith in his notions about the piety of faith. For instance, on the very threshold of his theology (I should rather say his stultology) he defines faith as private judgment; as though in these mysteries it is to be allowed to each person to think and speak as he pleases, or as though the mysteries of our faith are to hang in uncertainty amongst shifting and varying opinions, when on the contrary they rest on the solid and unshakable foundation of truth. Is not our hope baseless if our faith is subject to change? Fools then were our martyrs for bearing so cruel tortures for an uncertainty, and for entering, without hesitation, on an everlasting exile, through a bitter death, when there was a doubt as to the recompense of their reward. But far be it from us to think that in our faith or hope anything, as he supposes, depends on the fluctuating judgment of the individual, and that the whole of it does not rest on sure and solid truth, having been commended by miracles and revelations from above, founded and consecrated by the Son of the Virgin, by the Blood of the Redeemer, by the glory of the risen Christ. These infallible proofs have been given us in superabundance. But if not, the Spirit itself, lastly, bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. How, then, can any one dare to call faith opinion, unless it be that he has not yet received that Spirit, or unless he either knows not the Gospel or thinks it to be a fable? I know in whom I have believed, and I am confident (2 Tim. 1:12), cries the Apostle, and you mutter in my ears that faith is only an opinion. Do you prate to me that is ambiguous than which there is nothing more certain? But Augustine says otherwise: “Faith is not held by any one in whose heart it is, by conjectures or opinions, but it is sure knowledge and has the assent of the conscience.” Far be it from us, then, to suppose that the Christian faith has as its boundaries those opinions of the

Academicians, whose boast it is that they doubt of everything, and know nothing. But I for my part walk securely, according to the saying of the teacher of the Gentiles, and I know that I shall not be confounded. I am satisfied, I confess, with his definition of faith, even though this man stealthily accuses it. Faith, he says, is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). The substance, he says, of things hoped for, not a phantasy of empty conjectures. You hear, that it is a substance; and therefore it is not allowed you in our faith, to suppose or oppose at your pleasure, nor to wander hither and thither amongst empty opinions, through devious errors. Under the name of substance something certain and fixed is put before you. You are enclosed in known bounds, shut in within fixed limits. For faith is not an opinion, but a certitude.

10. But now notice other points. I pass over his saying that the spirit of the fear of the Lord was not in the Lord; that there will be no holy fear of the Lord in the world to come; that after the consecration of the bread and of the cup, the former accidents which remain are suspended in the air; that the suggestions of devils come to us, as their sagacious wickedness knows how, by the contact of stones and herbs; and that they are able to discern in such natural objects strength suited to excite various passions; that the Holy Spirit is the anima mundi; that the world, as Plato says, is so much a more excellent animal, as it has a better soul in the Holy Spirit. Here while he exhausts his strength to make Plato a Christian, he proves himself a heathen. All these things and his other numerous silly stories of the same kind I pass by, I come to graver matters. To answer them all would require volumes. I speak only of those on which I cannot keep silence.

CHAPTER V

He accuses Abaelard for preferring his own opinions and even fancies to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, especially where he declares that Christ did not become incarnate in order to save man from the power of the devil.

11. I find in a book of his sentences, and also in an exposition of his of the Epistle to the Romans, that this rash inquirer into the Divine Majesty attacks the mystery of our Redemption. He admits in the very beginning of his disputation that there has never been but one conclusion in our ecclesiastical doctors on this point, and this he states only to spurn it, and boasts that he has a better; not fearing, against the precept of the Wise Man, To cross the ancient boundaries which our fathers have marked out (Prov. 22:28). It is needful to know, he says, that all our doctors since the Apostles agree in this, that the devil had power and dominion over man, and that he rightly possessed it, because man, by an act of the free will which he had, voluntarily consented to the devil. For they say that if any one conquers another, the conquered rightly becomes the slave of his conqueror. Therefore, he says, as the doctors teach, the Son of God became incarnate under this necessity, that since man could not otherwise be freed, he might, by the death of an innocent man, be set free from the yoke of the devil. But as it seems to us, he says, neither had the devil ever any power over man, except by the permission of God, as a jailer might, nor was it to free man that the Son of God assumed flesh. Which am I to think the more intolerable in these words, the blasphemy or the arrogance? Which is the more to be condemned, his rashness or his impiety? Would not the mouth of him who speaks such things be more justly beaten with rods than confuted with reasons? Does not he whose hand is against every man, rightly provoke every man’s hand to be raised against him? All, he says, say so, but so do not I. What, then, do you say? What better

statement have you? What more subtle reason have you discovered? What more secret revelation do you boast of which has passed by the Saints and escaped from the wise? He, I suppose, will give us secret waters and hidden bread.

12. Tell us, nevertheless, that truth which has shown itself to you and to none else. Is it that it was not to free man that the Son of God became man? No one, you excepted, thinks this; you stand alone. For not from a wise man, nor prophet, nor apostle, nor even from the Lord Himself have you received this. The teacher of the Gentiles received from the Lord what he has handed down to us (1 Cor. 11:23). The Teacher of all confesses that His doctrine is not His own, for I do not, He says, speak of Myself (S. John 7:16 and 14:10), while you give us of your own, and what you have received from no one. He who speaketh a lie speaketh of his own (Ibid. 8:44). Keep for yourself what is your own. I listen to Prophets and Apostles, I obey the Gospel, but not the Gospel according to Peter. Do you found for us a new Gospel? The Church does not receive a fifth Evangelist. What other Gospel do the Law, the Prophets, apostles, and apostolic men preach to us than that which you alone deny, viz., that God became man to free man? And if an angel from heaven should preach to us any other Gospel, let him be anathema.

13. But you do not accept the Doctors since the Apostles, because you perceive yourself to be a man above all teachers. For example, you do not blush to say that all are against you, when they all agree together. To no purpose, therefore, should I place before you the faith and doctrine of those teachers whom you have just proscribed. I will take you to the Prophets. Under the type of Jerusalem the prophet speaks, or rather the Lord in the prophet speaks to His chosen people: I will save you and deliver you, fear not (Wisd. 3:16). You ask, from what power? For you do not admit that the devil has or ever has had power over man. Neither, I confess, do I. It is not, however, that he has it not because you and I wish it not. If you do not confess it, you know it not; they whom the Lord has redeemed out of the hand of the enemy, they know it and confess it. And you would by no means deny it, if you were not under the hand of the enemy. You cannot give thanks with the redeemed, because you have not been redeemed. For if you had been redeemed you would recognize your Redeemer, and would not deny your redemption. Nor does the man, who knows not himself to be a captive, seek to be redeemed. Those who knew it called unto the Lord, and the Lord heard them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And that you may understand who this enemy is, He says: Those whom He redeemed from the hand of the enemy He gathered out of all lands (Ps. 107:2, 3). But first,

indeed, recognize Him Who gathered them, of Whom Caiaphas in the Gospel prophesied, saying that Jesus should die for the people, and the Evangelist proceeds thus: And not for that nation only, but that He might gather together into one all the children of God which were scattered abroad (S. John 11:51, 52). Whither had they been scattered? Into all lands. Therefore those whom He redeemed he gathered together from all lands. He first redeemed, then gathered them. For they were not only scattered, but also taken captive. He redeemed and gathered them; but redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. He does not say of the enemies, but of the enemy. The enemy was one, the lands many. Indeed, he gathered them not from one land, but from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. What Lord was there so powerful, who governed not one land but all lands? No other, I suppose, than He who by another prophet is said to drink up a river, that is, the human race, and not to wonder; and to trust that he can also draw up into his mouth Jordan, i.e., the elect (Job 40:18). Blessed are they who so flow in that they can flow out, who so enter that they can go out.

14. But now perhaps you do not believe the Prophets, thus speaking with one accord of the power of the devil over man. Come with me then to the Apostles. You said, did you not? that you do not agree with those who have come since the Apostles; may you agree then with the Apostles; and perhaps that may happen to you which one of them describes, speaking of certain persons: If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim. 2:25, 26). It is Paul who thus asserts that men are taken captive by the devil at his will. Do you hear? “at his will;” and do you deny his power? But if you do not believe Paul, come now to the Lord Himself, if perchance you may listen to Him and be put to silence. By Him the devil is called the prince of this world (S. John 14:30), and the strong man armed (S. Luke 11:21), and the possessor of goods (S. Matt. 12:29), and yet you say that he has no power over men. Perhaps you think the house in this place is not to be understood of the world, nor the goods of men. But if the world is the house of the devil and men his goods, how can it be said he has no power over men? Moreover, the Lord said to those who took Him: This is your hour and the power of darkness (S. Luke 22:53). That power did not escape him who said: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). The Lord then neither denied the power of the devil even over Him, nor that of Pilate, who was a member of the devil. He said: Thou

couldst have no power against me at all except it were given thee from above (S. John 19:11). But if that power given from above so violently raged against the green tree, how is it that it did not dare to touch the dry? Nor I suppose will he say, that it was an unjust power which was given from above. Let him, therefore, learn that not only had the devil power over man, but also a just power, and in consequence let him see this, that the Son of God came in the flesh to set man free. But though we say that the power of the devil was a just one we do not say that his will was. Whence it is not the devil who usurped the power, who is just, nor man who deservedly was subjected to it; but the Lord is just, who permitted the subjection. For anyone is called just and unjust, not from his power but from his will. This power of the devil over man though not rightly acquired, but wickedly usurped, was yet justly permitted. And in this way man was justly taken captive, viz., that the justice was neither in the devil, nor in man, but in God.

CHAPTER VI

In the work of the Redemption of man, not only the mercy, but also the justice, of God is displayed.

15. Man therefore was lawfully delivered up, but mercifully set free. Yet mercy was shown in such a way that a kind of justice was not lacking even in his liberation, since, as was most fitting for man's recovery, it was part of the mercy of the liberator to employ justice rather than power against man's enemy. For what could man, the slave of sin, fast bound by the devil, do of himself to recover that righteousness which he had formerly lost? Therefore he who lacked righteousness had another's imputed to him, and in this way: The prince of this world came and found nothing in the Saviour, and because he notwithstanding laid hands on the Innocent he lost most justly those whom he held captive; since He who owed nothing to death, lawfully freed him who was subject to it, both from the debt of death, and the dominion of the devil, by accepting the injustice of death; for with what justice could that be exacted from man a second time? It was man who owed the debt, it was man who paid it. For if one, says S. Paul, died for all, then were all dead (2 Cor. 5:14), so that, as One bore the sins of all, the satisfaction of One is imputed to all. It is not that one forfeited, another satisfied; the Head and body is one, viz., Christ. The Head, therefore, satisfied for the members, Christ for His children, since, according to the Gospel of Paul, by which Peter's falsehood is refuted, He who died for us, quickened us together with Himself, forgiving us all our trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross, having spoiled principalities and powers (Col. 2:13, 14).

16. May I be found amongst those spoils of which the opposing powers were deprived, and be handed over into the possession of my Lord. If Laban pursue me and reproach me for having left him by stealth, he shall be told that I came to him by stealth, and therefore so left him. The secret power of sin subjected me, the hidden plan of righteousness freed me from him; or I will reply, that if I was sold for nothing shall I not be freely redeemed? If Asshur has reproached me

without cause, he has no right to demand the cause of my escape. But if he says, “Your father sold you into captivity,” I will reply, “But my Brother redeemed me.” Why should not righteousness come to me from another when guilt came upon me from another? One made me a sinner, the other justifies me from sin; the one by generation, the other by His blood. Shall there be sin in the seed of the sinner and not righteousness in the blood of Christ? But he will say, “Let righteousness be whose it may, it is none of yours.” Be it so. But let guilt also be whose it may, it is none of mine. Shall the righteousness of the righteous be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked not be upon him? It is not fitting for the son to bear the iniquity of the father, and yet to have no share in the righteousness of his brother. But now by man came death, by Man also came life. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:21, 22). I attain to one and to the other in the same way: to the one by the flesh, to the other by faith. And if from the one I was infected with concupiscence from my birth, by Christ spiritual grace was infused into me. What more does this hired advocate bring against me? If he urges generation, I oppose regeneration; and add that the former is but carnal, while the latter is spiritual. Nor does equity suffer that they fight as equals, but the higher nature is the more efficacious cause, and therefore the spirit must necessarily overcome the flesh. In other words, the second birth is so much the more beneficial as the first was baneful. The offence, indeed, came to me, but so did grace; and not as the offence so also is the free gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification (Rom. 5:16). From the first man flowed down the offence, from the highest heaven came down the free gift: both from our father, one from our first father, the other from the Supreme Father. My earthly birth destroys me, and does not my heavenly much more save me? And I am not afraid of being rejected by the Father of lights when I have been rescued in this way from the power of darkness, and justified through His grace by the blood of His Son: It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? He who had mercy on the sinner will not condemn the righteous; I mean that I am righteous, but it is in His righteousness, for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10:4). In short, He was made our righteousness by God the Father (1 Cor. 1:30). Is not that righteousness mine which was made for me? If my guilt was inherited, why should not my righteousness be accorded to me? And, truly, what is given me is safer than what was born in me. For this, indeed, has whereof to glory, but not before God; but that, since it is effectual to my salvation, has nothing whereof to

glory save in the Lord. For if I be righteous, says Job, yet will I not lift up my head (Job 10:15), lest I receive the answer: What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? (1 Cor. 4:7).

CHAPTER VII

He severely reproves Abaelard for scrutinizing rashly and impiously, and extenuating the power of, the secret things of God.

17. This is the righteousness of man in the blood of the Redeemer: which this son of perdition, by his scoffs and insinuations, is attempting to render vain; so much so, that he thinks and argues that the whole fact that the Lord of Glory emptied Himself, that He was made lower than the angels, that He was born of a woman, that He lived in the world, that He made trial of our infirmities, that He suffered indignities, that at last He returned to His own place by the way of the Cross, that all this is to be reduced to one reason alone, viz., that it was done merely that He might give man by His life and teaching a rule of life, and by His suffering and death might set before him a goal of charity. Did He, then, teach righteousness and not bestow it? Did He show charity and not infuse it, and did He so return to His heaven? Is this, then, the whole of the great mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (1 Tim. 3:16). O, incomparable doctor! he lays bare to himself the deep things of God, he makes them clear and easy to every one, and by his false teaching he so renders plain and evident the most lofty sacrament of grace, the mystery hidden from the ages, that any uncircumcised and unclean person can lightly penetrate to the heart of it: as though the wisdom of God knew not how to guard or neglected to guard against what Itself forbade, but had Itself given what is holy to the dogs and cast its pearls before swine. But it is not so. For though it was manifested in the flesh, yet it was justified in the Spirit: so that spiritual things are bestowed upon spiritual men, and the natural man does not perceive the things which are of the Spirit of God. Nor does our faith consist in wisdom of words but in the power of God. And, therefore, the Saviour says: I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things

from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes (S. Matt. 11:25). And the Apostle says: If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost (2 Cor. 4:3).

18. But see this man scoffing at the things which are of the Spirit of God, because they seem to him folly, and insulting the Apostle who speaks the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery, inveighing against the Gospel and even blaspheming the Lord. How much more prudent would he be if he would deign to believe what he has no power to comprehend, and would not dare to despise or tread under foot this sacred and holy mystery! It is a long task to reply to all the follies and calumnies which he charges against the Divine counsel. Yet I take a few, from which the rest may be estimated. “Since,” he says, “Christ set free the elect only, how were they more than now, whether in this world or the next, under the power of the devil?” I answer: It was just because they were under the power of the devil, by whom, says the Apostle, they were taken captive at his will (2 Tim. 2:26), that there was need of a liberator in order that the purpose of God concerning them might be fulfilled. But it behoved Him to set them free in this world, that He might have them as freeborn sons in the next. Then he rejoins: “Well, did the devil also torture the poor man who was in the bosom of Abraham as he did the rich man who was condemned, or had he power over Abraham himself and the rest of the elect?” No, but he would have had if they had not been set free by their faith in a future Deliverer, as of Abraham it is written: Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6). Again: Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad (S. John 8:56). Therefore even then the Blood of Christ was bedewing Lazarus, that he might not feel the flames, because he had believed on Him who should suffer. So are we to think of all the saints of that time, that they were born just as ourselves under the power of darkness, because of original sin, but rescued before they died, and that by nothing else but the blood of Christ. For it is written: The multitudes that went before and that followed, cried saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord (S. Matt. 21:9). Therefore blessing was given to Christ coming in the flesh, both before he came and afterwards, by multitudes of those who had been blessed by Him, although those who went before did not obtain a full blessing, this, of course, having been kept as the prerogative of the time of grace.

CHAPTER VIII

Wherefore Christ undertook a method of setting us free so painful and laborious, when a word from Him, or an act of His will, would alone have sufficed.

19. Then he labours to teach and persuade us that the devil could not and ought not to have claimed for himself any right over man, except by the permission of God, and that, without doing any injustice to the devil, God could have called back his deserter, if He wished to show him mercy, and have rescued him by a word only, as though anyone denies this; then after much more he proceeds: “And so what necessity, or what reason, or what need was there, when the Divine compassion by a simple command could have freed man from sin, for the Son of God to take flesh for our redemption, to suffer so many and such great privations, scorn, scourgings, and spittings on, in short, the pain and ignominy of the cross itself, and that with evil doers?” I reply: The necessity was ours, the hard necessity of those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. The need, equally ours, and God’s, and the Holy Angels! Ours, that He might remove the yoke of our captivity; His own, that He might fulfil the purpose of His will; the Angels’, that their number might be filled up. Further, the reason of this deed was the good pleasure of the Doer. Who denies that there were ready for the Almighty other and yet other ways to redeem us, to justify us, to set us free? But this takes nothing from the efficacy of the one which He chose out of many. And, perhaps, the greatest excellence of the way chosen is that in a land of forgetfulness, of slowness of spirit, and of constant offending, we are more forcibly and more vividly warned by so many and such great sufferings of our Restorer. Beyond that no man knows, nor can know to the full, what treasures of grace, what harmony with wisdom, what increase of glory, what advantages for salvation the inscrutable depth of this holy mystery contains within itself, that mystery which the Prophet when considering trembled at, but did not penetrate (Habak. 3:2 in LXX.), and which the forerunner of the Lord thought himself

unworthy to unloose (S. John 1:27).

20. But though it is not allowed us to scrutinize the mystery of the Divine Will, yet we may feel the effect of its work and perceive the fruit of its usefulness. And what we may know we may not keep to ourselves, for to conceal their word is to give glory to kings, but God is glorified by our investigating His sayings. [Prov. 25:2. But the sense of the text is the reverse of this.] Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptation, that while we were yet sinners we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. 5:10). "Where there is reconciliation there is also remission of sins. For if, as the Scripture says, our sins separate between us and God" (Is. 59:2), there is no reconciliation while sin remains. In what, then, is remission of sins? This cup, He says, is the new testament in My Blood which shall be shed for you for the remission of sins (S. Matt. 26:28). Therefore where there is reconciliation there is remission of sins. And what is that but justification? Whether, therefore, we call it reconciliation, or remission of sins, or justification, or, again, redemption, or liberation from the chains of the devil, by whom we were taken captive at his will, at all events by the death of the Only Begotten, we obtain that we have been justified freely by His blood, in whom, as S. Paul says again, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7). You say, Why by His blood when He could have wrought it by His Word? Ask Himself. It is only allowed me to know that it is so, not why it is so. Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, "Why hast Thou made me thus?"

21. But these things seem to him foolishness, he cannot restrain his laughter; listen to his jeering. "Why does the Apostle say," he asks, "that we are justified, or reconciled to God by the death of His Son, when He ought to have been the more angry with man, as he sinned more deeply in crucifying His Son, than in transgressing His first command by tasting of the apple?" As if the iniquity of the malignant were not able to displease, and the godliness of the sufferer to please God, and that in one and the same act. "But," he replies, "if that sin of Adam was so heinous that it could not be expiated but by the death of Christ, what expiation shall suffice for that homicide which was perpetrated upon Christ?" I answer in two words, That very Blood which they shed, and the prayer of Him whom they slew. He asks again: "Did the death of His innocent Son so please God the Father that by it He was reconciled to us, who had committed such a sin in Adam, that because of it our innocent Lord was slain? Would He not have been able to forgive us much more easily if so heinous a sin had not been committed?" It was not His death alone that pleased the Father, but His

voluntary surrender to death; and by that death destroying death, working salvation, restoring innocence, triumphing over principalities and powers, spoiling hell, enriching heaven, making peace between things in heaven and things on earth, and renewing all things. And since this so precious death to be voluntarily submitted to against sin could not take place except through sin, He did not indeed delight in, but He made good use of, the malice of the wrongdoers, and found the means to condemn death and sin by the death of His Son, and the sin [of those who condemned Him]. And the greater their iniquity, the more holy His will, and the more powerful to salvation; because, by the interposition of so great a power, that ancient sin, however great, would necessarily give way to that committed against Christ, as the less to the greater. Nor is this victory to be ascribed to the sin or to the sinners, but to Him who extracted good from their sin, and who bore bravely with the sinners, and turned to a godly purpose whatever the cruelty of the impious ventured on against Himself.

22. Thus the Blood which was shed was so powerful for pardoning that it blotted out that greatest sin of all, by which it came to pass that it was shed; and, therefore, left no doubt whatever about the blotting out of that ancient and lighter sin. Thus he rejoins: “Is there anyone to whom it does not seem cruel and unjust, that anyone should require the blood of an innocent man as the price of something, or that the death of an innocent man should in any way give him pleasure, not to say that God should hold so acceptable the death of His Son as by it to be reconciled to the whole world?” God the Father did not require the Blood of His Son, but, nevertheless, He accepted it when offered; it was not blood He thirsted for, but salvation, for salvation was in the blood. He died, in short, for our salvation, and not for the mere exhibition of charity, as this man thinks and writes. For he so concludes the numerous calumnies and reproaches, which he as impiously as ignorantly belches out against God, as to say that “the whole reason why God appeared in the flesh was for our education by His word and example, or, as he afterwards says, for our instruction; that the whole reason why He suffered and died was to exhibit or commend to us charity.”

CHAPTER IX

That Christ came into the world, not only to instruct us, but also to free us from sin.

23. But what profits it that He should instruct us if He did not first restore us by His grace? Or are we not in vain instructed if the body of sin is not first destroyed in us, that we should no more serve sin? If all the benefit that we derive from Christ consists in the exhibition of His virtues, it follows that Adam must be said to harm us only by the exhibition of sin. But in truth the medicine given was proportioned to the disease. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:22). As is the one, so is the other. If the life which Christ gives is nothing else but His instruction, the death which Adam gave is in like manner only his instruction; so that the one by his example leads men to sin, the other by His example and His Word leads them to a holy life and to love Him. But if we rest in the Christian faith, and not in the heresy of Pelagius, and confess that by generation and not by example was the sin of Adam imparted to us, and by sin death, let us also confess that it is necessary for righteousness to be restored to us by Christ, not by instruction, but by regeneration, and by righteousness life (Rom. 5:18). And if this be so, how can Peter say that the only purpose and cause of the Incarnation was that He might enlighten the world by the light of His wisdom and inflame it with love of Him? Where, then, is redemption? There come from Christ, as he deigns to confess, merely illumination and enkindling to love. Whence come redemption and liberation?

24. Grant that the coming of Christ profits only those who are able to conform their lives to His, and to repay to Him the debt of love, what about babes? What light of wisdom will he give to those who have barely seen the light of life? Whence will they gain power to ascend to God who have not even learned to love their mothers? Will the coming of Christ profit them nothing? Is it of no avail to them that they have been planted together with Him by baptism in the likeness of His death, since through the weakness of their age they are not able

to know of, or to love, Christ? Our redemption, he says, consists in that supreme love which is inspired in us by the passion of Christ. Therefore, infants have no redemption because they have not that supreme love. Perhaps he holds that as they have no power to love, so neither have they necessity to perish, that they have no need to be regenerated in Christ because they have received no damage from their generation from Adam. If he thinks this, he thinks foolishness with Pelagius. Whichever of these two opinions he holds, his ill-will to the sacrament of our salvation is evident; and in attributing the whole of our salvation to devotion, and nothing of it to regeneration, it is evident too that, as far as he can, he would empty of meaning the dispensation of this deep mystery; for he places the glory of our redemption and the great work of salvation, not in the virtue of the Cross, not in the blood paid as its price, but in our advances in a holy life. But God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:14), in which are our salvation, life, and resurrection.

25. And, indeed, I see three chief virtues in this work of our salvation: the form of humility in which God emptied Himself; the measure of charity which He stretched out even to death, and that the death of the Cross; the mystery of redemption, by which He bore that death which He underwent. The former two of these without the last are as if you were to paint on the air. A very great and most necessary example of humility, a great example of charity, and one worthy of all acceptation, has He set us; but they have no foundation, and, therefore, no stability, if redemption be wanting. I wish to follow with all my strength the lowly Jesus; I wish Him, who loved me and gave Himself for me, to embrace me with the arms of His love, which suffered in my stead; but I must also feed on the Paschal Lamb, for unless I eat His Flesh and drink His Blood I have no life in me. It is one thing to follow Jesus, another to hold Him, another to feed on Him. To follow Him is a life-giving purpose; to hold and embrace Him a solemn joy; to feed on Him a blissful life. For His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. The bread of God is He who cometh down from Heaven and giveth life to the world (S. John 6:56, 33). What stability is there for joy, what constancy of purpose, without life? Surely no more than for a picture without a solid basis. Similarly neither the examples of humility nor the proofs of charity are anything without the sacrament of our redemption.

26. These results of the labour of the hands of your son, my lord and father, you now hold, such as they are, against a few heads of this new heresy; in which if you see nothing besides my zeal, yet I have meanwhile satisfied my own conscience. For since there was nothing that I could do against the injury to the

faith, which I deplored, I thought it worth while to warn him, whose arms are the power of God, for the destruction of contrary imaginations, to destroy every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. There are other points in his other writings, not few nor less evil; but the limits of my time and of a letter do not allow me to reply to them. Moreover, I do not think it necessary, since they are so manifest, that they may be easily refuted even by ordinary faith. Still, I have collected some and sent them to you.

LETTERS

LETTER CXCI. (A.D. 1140.)

TO THE SAME, IN THE PERSON OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS

That the Pope should use his authority to repress the arrogance of Abaelard.

To their most revered Lord and dear Father, INNOCENT, by the grace of God Supreme Pontiff, SAMSON, Archbishop of Rheims, JOSCELIN, Bishop of Soissons, GEOFFREY, Bishop of Chalons, and ALVISUS, Bishop of Arras, send their willing testimony of the obedience they owe.

1. As your time is occupied with many things we send a short account of a lengthy matter, and the more especially as a longer and fuller account is contained in the letters of the Bishop of Sens. Peter Abaelard is endeavouring to destroy the virtue of the Christian faith, inasmuch as he thinks that he is able to comprehend the whole that God is by his unaided human reason, he is ascending to the skies, he is descending to the depths. There is nothing which can escape him, either in the heights above or in the depths beneath. He is a man great in his own eyes, a disputer of the faith against the faith, a man who busies himself about great and wonderful matters which are out of his reach, a prier into the Majesty of God, a manufacturer of heresies. He had not long since put forth a treatise on the Trinity, which was tried by the fire under the command of the Legate of the Roman Church, because iniquity was found in it. Cursed was he who rebuilt the ruins of Jericho. That book has risen from the dead, and with it the heresies of many which had slept have arisen, and appeared unto many. Now, his heresy is spreading out its boughs unto the sea, and its branches even to Rome. It is his boast that his book has where to lay its head even in the Roman Curia. Hence his phrensy is strengthened and confirmed. Therefore, when the Abbot of Clairvaux, armed with zeal for the faith and for righteousness, was arguing about his heresies in the presence of the Bishops, he neither confessed nor denied, but in order to prolong his wickedness, though he had received neither injury nor wrong, he appealed from the place and judge which he had himself chosen to the Apostolic See. Then the Bishops who had assembled for the purpose of deciding did nothing against his person, in

deference to your authority, but only censured, as a medicinal necessity, to prevent the disease spreading, the articles from his books which had already been condemned by the holy Fathers. Because, then, the man is drawing a multitude after him, and has a whole people as believers in him, it is necessary for you to meet this contagion with a swiftly-working remedy, for

When ills through long delays grow strong.

Too late is medicine prepared.

We have advanced in this matter as far as we dared. For the rest it is your part, Blessed Father, to take care that in your days no spot of heretical depravity stains the fair beauty of the Church. To thee, O friend of the bridegroom, has the bride of Christ been entrusted; it is thine to present her, a chaste virgin, to one husband, even to Christ.

LETTER CXCII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO MAGISTER GUIDO DU CHATEL, WHO HAD BEEN A DISCIPLE OF PETER, ON WHICH PETER PRESUMED TOO MUCH, AND WHO WAS AFTERWARDS POPE CELESTINE

He warns him not to cherish the errors of Abaelard in his love for the man himself.

To his venerable Lord and dear Father, GUIDO, by the grace of God Cardinal-priest of the holy Roman Church, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, desires that he decline neither to the right hand nor to the left.

I should do you an injury if I were to suppose that when you love anyone you are in love also with his errors. Whoever so loves another knows not yet how to love as he ought. For such love is earthly, sensual, devilish, injuring alike the lover and the loved. Others may think of others as they please; I cannot yet think of you anything that is contrary to reason, or to the strict rule of equity. Some decide first and try afterwards; I will not decide whether a drink is sweet or bitter before I have tasted it. Master Peter puts forth in his books many blasphemous novelties, both of terms and senses; he disputes about the faith against the faith, and attacks the law with the words of the law. He sees nothing through a glass darkly, but beholds all things face to face, and busies himself in great and wonderful matters above him. Better would it be if (according to the title of his book) he did know himself, and did not go beyond his measure, but thought soberly. I do not accuse him before the Father; there is one who accuses him, even his book, in which he has such ill-founded pleasure. When he discourses of the Trinity he savours of Arius; when of grace, of Pelagius; when of the Person

of Christ, of Nestorius. I do not question your goodness, in asking you earnestly to prefer no one to Christ in Christ's own cause. But know this, that it is expedient for you, to whom power has been given by the Lord, it is expedient for the Church of Christ, it is expedient also for the man himself, that he be silenced, for his mouth is full of cursing, and bitterness, and guile.

LETTER CXCIII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO CARDINAL IVO, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

That it is an unworthy thing that Abaelard should find partizans even in the Court of Rome.

To his beloved Ivo, by the grace of God Cardinal-priest of the holy Roman Church, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, desires that he love righteousness and hate iniquity.

Master Peter Abaelard, a monk without a rule, a prelate without a cure, neither keeps his order, nor is kept in order by it. He is a man inconsistent with himself, within a Herod, without a John; a thorough hypocrite, having nothing of a monk but the name and habit. But this is nothing to me. Each one will bear his own burden. There is something else, which I cannot keep silence about, which belongs to all who love the name of Christ. He loudly utters iniquity, he is corrupting the integrity of the faith, and the chastity of the Church. He crosses over the boundaries which our fathers have marked out in his discussions and writings about the faith, about the Sacraments, about the Holy Trinity; at his pleasure he alters, adds to or diminishes them. In his books and works he shows himself a manufacturer of falsehood, and a worshipper of false dogmas; proving his heresy, not so much by his error as by his obstinate adherence to his error. He is a man who goes beyond his measure, and who, by his skill in words, lessens or destroys the power of the Cross of Christ. He is ignorant of nothing in heaven or in earth, except himself. He was condemned at Soissons, with his work, in the presence of the Legate of the Roman Church. But as though that condemnation were not enough for him, he is again acting so as to be again condemned, and his last error now is worse than the first. Still he feels secure, since, as he boasts, he has the Cardinals and clergy of the Curia as his disciples; and he assumes that those, whose judgment and condemnation he ought to fear, are defenders of his past and present error. If anyone has the Spirit of God, let him call to mind that verse. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee (Ps. 139:21)? May God, by you and His other

sons, free His Church from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue!

LETTER CXCIV. (A.D. 1140.)

RESCRIPT OF POPE INNOCENT AGAINST THE HERESIES OF PETER ABAELARD

INNOCENT, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his venerable brothers, HENRY, Archbishop of Sens, SAMSON, Archbishop of Rheims, and their suffragans, and to his beloved brother in Christ, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and Apostolic benediction.

1. On the testimony of the Apostle, as one Lord, so one faith is to be known (Eph. 4:5), on which the inviolate firmness of the Catholic Church is built, as on an immovable foundation, beside which no man can lay another. Thence it was that Blessed Peter, the chief of the Apostles, merited, through his noble confession of faith, to hear from our Lord and Saviour the words, Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church (S. Matt. 16:18), manifestly meaning by the rock the firmness of his faith and the solidity of Catholic unity. This is the seamless robe of our Redeemer for which the soldiers cast lots, but which they could not divide. Against it in the beginning the heathen raged, and the nations imagined vain things. The kings of the earth stood up and their rulers were gathered together (Ps. 2:1, 2). But the Apostles, as leaders of the Lord’s flock, and the Apostolic men, their successors, inflamed with the ardour of charity and zeal for righteousness, did not hesitate to defend the faith, and to implant it in the hearts of others by shedding their own blood. At length the Lord gave commands to the winds; the violence of the persecutors ceased, and there was a great calm in the Church.

2. But since the enemy of the human race is ever going about seeking whom he may devour, he now stealthily uses the deceitful fallacies of heretics in order to undermine the sincerity of the faith. Against these heretics the pastors of the churches have boldly risen and condemned their evil teachings, with their authors. For in the great Council of Nicaea Arius was condemned as a heretic; the Synod at Constantinople condemned Manes as a heretic by a fitting sentence; at the Ephesine Synod Nestorius received the condemnation of his error, which he deserved. The Council of Chalcedon also justly condemned the Nestorian heresy, and the Eutychian, with Dioscorus and his accomplices. Moreover, Marcian, though a layman, yet a Christian emperor, being inflamed with love of the Catholic faith, says, among other things, when writing to our predecessor, Pope John, against those who were endeavouring to profane the sacred

mysteries: “Let none of the clerical order, or of the military, or of any other rank, endeavour for the future to discourse publicly about the Christian faith. For, for anyone to take on himself to explain and again dispute of matters once determined on and rightly settled, is an injury to the decision of the most holy Council;” and he adds, as a penalty to any who should break this law, that if any clerk should dare to treat of religion in public, he should be removed from the fellowship of clerks as if guilty of sacrilege.

3. We lament, therefore, that, as we gather from your letters, and from the heads of the errors sent us by your Fraternity, in these last days when perilous times are approaching, the heresies of the aforenamed, and other perverse doctrines contrary to the Catholic faith, have begun to show their heads in the pernicious teaching of Peter Abaelard. But by one thing we are specially consoled, and we give thanks to Almighty God for it, viz., that He has raised up in your parts such worthy successors of the Fathers, and in the time of our Apostolate has granted to us such noble pastors, who study to meet the calumnies of the new heretic, and to present His spotless Bride as a chaste virgin to one Husband, even Christ. And, therefore, we who sit in the seat of Blessed Peter (to whom it was said by the Lord: And when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren) (S. Luke 22:32), however unworthily we seem to occupy it, have, by the common advice of our brethren, the Bishops and Cardinals, condemned, with their author, all the articles sent us in the exercise of your discretion, and all the perverse doctrines of Peter himself, by the authority of the sacred canons, and we have imposed perpetual silence on him as a heretic. We decree, also, that all the followers and supporters of his error be cut off from the fellowship of the faithful, and be bound with the chain of excommunication.

Given at the Lateran xvii. a.d. Kal., August.

LETTER CXCV. (A.D. 1140.)

TO THE BISHOP OF CONSTANCE ABOUT ARNOLD OF BRESCIA

Bernard advises him to expel Arnold of Brescia from his Diocese.

1. If the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up (S. Matt. 24:43). Do you know that a thief has broken into your house by night, yet not your house, but the Lord’s entrusted to your care? But there can be no doubt that you know what is taking place at your door, when news of it has penetrated even to us who are so far distant. It is no wonder that you could not

foresee the hour, or perceive the night attack of the thief, but it will be a wonder if you do not recognize that he has been caught, if you do not hold him fast and prevent him from carrying off your goods, nay, rather the most precious spoils won by Christ, souls which He has stamped with His own image and redeemed with His own blood. Perhaps you are yet in the dark and wonder who it is I mean. I speak of Arnold of Brescia, and I wish he were of as sound doctrine as he is of strict life. And if you wish to know more, he is a man who comes neither eating nor drinking, but with the devil alone he is hungering and thirsting for the blood of souls. He is one of the number of those whom the watchfulness of the Apostle takes note of when he says, Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5). And the Lord Himself says: They shall come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves (S. Matt. 7:15). Up to the present time, in whatever place he has lived, he has left such foul and destructive tracks that he dares not return to any place wherever he has imprinted his footmark. For example, he grievously stirred up and troubled the land in which he was born, and he was, therefore, accused before the Pope of grievous schism, and was banished from his native soil, and also compelled to swear that he would not return except by the Pope's permission. For a like reason this notable schismatic has been driven out from the kingdom of France. When anathematized by Peter the Apostle he joined himself to Peter Abaelard, and with him, and for him, he endeavoured to defend vigorously and stubbornly all his errors, which had been already exposed and condemned by the Church.

2. And in all these incidents his phrensy was not abated, but his hand was stretched out still. For though he is a fugitive and wanderer on the earth, he does not cease to do amongst men of other countries what he is not allowed to do amongst his own countrymen, and goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. And I hear that he is now working mischief amongst you, and is eating up your people as it were bread. His mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, his feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and unhappiness are in his ways, and the way of peace has he not known. He is an enemy of the cross of Christ, a sower of discord, a manufacturer of schisms, a disturber of peace, a divider of unity; his teeth are spears and arrows, and his tongue a sharp sword, his words are smoother than oil, and yet they are very darts. Thence it is that he is wont to entice to himself by flattering words and the pretences of virtues the rich and the powerful, according to the verse: He sitteth lurking in thievish corners with the rich that he may slay the innocent (Ps. 10:8). Depend upon it, when he feels that he has securely gained their goodwill and affection, you will

see the man openly rise against the clergy; and, relying on military tyranny, he will rise against the Bishops themselves, and run a tilt against all ecclesiastical order. Knowing this, I do not know what better or more wholesome thing you can do at such a crisis than, according to the admonition of the Apostle, to remove the evil man from among you (1 Cor. 5:13), though the friend of the bridegroom will see that he is bound rather than put to flight, lest he be able to travel about again, and so do more harm. Our Lord the Pope, when he was here, gave in writing the same directions, because of the evils which he heard were being done; but there was no one to do the good action. To end, if the Scripture soundly warns us to take the little foxes which spoil the vine (Cant. 2:15), should not a powerful and fierce wolf much rather be bound fast, lest he break into the sheep-folds of Christ, and slay and destroy His sheep?

LETTER CXCVI. (A.D. 1140.)

TO GUIDO, THE LEGATE, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Bernard warns him against familiarity with Arnold of Brescia.

1. Arnold of Brescia is said to be with you, a man whose discourse is as sweet as honey, whose doctrine is poison; whose head is that of a dove, his tail a scorpion’s; whom Brescia cast forth, Rome was horrified at, France rejected, Germany abominates, Italy is unwilling to take in. See, I beseech you, that your authority lend no protection to his further mischief; for he has both the art and the wish to do injury, and if he gain your favour he will be likely, like a threefold cord which is not easily broken, to be, I am afraid, above measure mischievous. And if it is true that you have the man with you, I suppose one of two things—either that you do not know him, or, which is more likely, that you are hoping for his repentance. Would it were not a vain hope! Who can from this stone raise up a child to Abraham? How welcome a gift would it be to our mother the Church to receive him as a vessel for honour, whom she had so long borne with as a vessel to dishonour! It is lawful to make the attempt, but a wise man will be careful not to go beyond the number laid down by the Apostle, when he says, A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Tit. 3:10, 11). Otherwise, to be on intimate terms with him, and to admit him frequently to private conversation, not to say to your house, is suspiciously like showing him favour, and is a powerful weapon in the hands of the enemy. A member of the household, and a private friend of the Legate of the Apostolic See, will preach

with impunity and persuade whom he will. For who can suspect any wrong to come from the side of our Lord the Pope? But although he manifestly speak perverse things, who will dare lightly to oppose himself against one who is at your side?

2. And do you know what kind of footprints he has left in every place he has dwelt in? It is not without cause that Apostolic energy has forced him to cross the Alps from Italy which gave him birth, and does not suffer him to return to his native country. What man is there amongst the foreigners to whom he was driven who does not heartily wish that they had sent him back to his home? And certainly the fact that his bearing towards all is such that he incurs the hatred of all is an approbation of the condemnation under which he labours, so that no one can say that it was obtained from our Lord the Pope by surprise. With what excuse, then, can he flout the sentence of the Supreme Pontiff when, though his tongue disclaims it, his life loudly proclaims its justice? And so to show him favour is to go against our Lord the Pope, to oppose our Lord God. For by whomsoever a righteous sentence may have been given, it is certain that it proceeds from Him who says by the mouth of the Prophet, I who speak righteousness (Is. 63:1). But I have confidence in your wisdom and honesty, and that when you have read this letter, and know the truth, you will not be led away to give your consent in this matter to anything, save what is becoming to you and expedient to the Church of God, on behalf of which you are discharging the office of legate. You have my heart, and may reckon on my obedience.

LETTER CXCVII. (A.D. 1141.)

TO PETER, DEAN OF BESANÇON

Bernard blames his injurious conduct towards the Abbot of Charlieu.

I hear such an account of the pilgrimage of the Abbot of Charlieu that I look upon him as already dead. Whatever danger threatens him, whatever suffering he has to undergo, is (to my great grief) imputed to you most of all. I neither expected this, nor deserved it at your hands. I thought you one thing, I find you another. Those who were present at the affair bear their testimony against you that you have not behaved in it straightforwardly or justly. And I partly believe it. For the Venerable Abbot of Beauvais is by no means pleased with you. Do not, I implore you, do not persecute the servants of God, to whom you read that He said: He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye (Zach. 2:8). Do not pluck up by the roots whatever good feeling I formerly had towards you. And I

write this, not because I love you not, but to take away whatever may cause me not to love you. For I tell you, as your friend, that it is not expedient for you nor for your Church that the Pope should hear how you have acted.

LETTER CXCVIII. (A.D. 1141.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

Bernard requests that he will avenge the violence and unjust aggression which Abbot Guy has suffered.

1. In the cause which is brought before you by our dear brother Guy, Abbot of Charlieu, I have no doubt that you see plainly enough the injury of the assailant, the innocence of the sufferer, and the carelessness of the judge. The poor man, disregarding the toil of the journey, the expense and the dangers of the time, has been forced to appeal to you in person by the violence of the accuser, and by the denial of justice. He, a lover of quiet, has joined hands with death that he should not live in turmoil. I beseech you look favourably on his need and poverty, and listen to his complaint with a father's sympathy, so that his toil and sorrow may not be productive of but small results. Before this I have testified to you by my letter once and again that the man who is now attacking the Abbot is both untrue to his monastic vows and a squanderer of the means of the monastery. But now I tell you, even weeping, that he is an enemy of the cross of Christ, a most violent oppressor of the saints who are in his neighbourhood, and a defrauder of the poor. Since he has hardly anything of his own to waste, he seizes violently, after the fashion of a tyrant, on his neighbours goods on every side. A monk in habit, though a false one, a robber in fact, he shows, himself altogether heedless of the Rules of his Order, he despises the laws and canons. He has a brazen forehead, knows no scruples, is void of godliness, is easily provoked, ready to dare any crime, and to inflict any injustice. And I wonder how the Abbot of Chaise-Dieu, a man full of religion, can either be ignorant of or conceal such vices, and such glaring vices, in his own monk.

2. But what is this to me? Let him see to it. To his own master he standeth or falleth. It is enough for me to be set free from his hands. I most earnestly implore this from you, which has been in vain attempted in other ways. I looked round and there was none to help. We now have recourse to the refuge of all, we fly to him by whom we hope to be set free. You have the power, may you have the will. And, indeed, it is one of the privileges of the apostolic see that men should in the last resource look most for help to your supreme authority and plenary

power. But among the other ornaments of your sole primacy, this one thing more specially and more gloriously ennobles and makes your Apostolate famous, viz., the rescue of the poor man from the hands of those who are stronger than he. In my judgment, there is no more precious jewel in your crown than the zealous care with which you are wont to strive for the oppressed, and to prevent the rod of the sinners from coming upon the lot of the righteous. Doubtless because of that which follows—that the righteous stretch not out their hands to iniquity (Ps. 125:3); or else because of that which is said elsewhere: When the ungodly is exalted the poor man is put to rebuke (Ps. 9:23, VULG.). And what tortures the body of the one destroys the soul of the other more grievously.

3. There is also a monastery of our Order near this place, which, in a similar way, is grievously harassed by the attacks of evil men, and there is no one to redeem it, or save it. And for this also your son does not shrink from stirring your fatherly compassion with his tears and prayers. Who the men are, and the occasion of their oppression, the Abbot who brings this letter will tell you by word of mouth, and truly. May Almighty God preserve you to us for a long time, to protect us all, who are passing a life in poverty, and in the habit and purpose of repentance, in order that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear (S. Luke 1:74.)

LETTER CXCIX. (A.D. 1141.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard begs that the decision already given in favour of certain Religious unjustly oppressed may be ratified.

How long is the ungodly to be exalted and the poor put to rebuke? How long is so great innocence to be vexed by such shamelessness, and this while Innocent lives? It is our sins doubtless which cause that my lord is so late in discovering the characters of those who lie to him, so slow in listening to those who call to him in this cause. For in other cases I know it is customary to my lord both to come to an understanding quickly and to show mercy readily For the sake of Him who chose you and placed you as a refuge of the oppressed, put now at length an end to the malice of the oppressor, and to the sufferings of the afflicted, because both have been by this time brought into the light and manifested. In short, at the command and good pleasure of my lord the cause has been discussed and ended, and it only remains that the sentence pronounced by his authority be confirmed. If, then, the man come to you with his lies shall he be

heard against the testimony of such men as the Bishops of Valence and Grenoble? Again, I implore you, and I fall at the feet of my lord with the most anxious mind possible, do not suffer a religious house to be destroyed by this wicked and deceitful man. For he who has nearly destroyed his own will not spare ours. And, therefore, I add, with my wonted presumption if you believe your son, then send back to his own cell this man who abuses your loving kindness, and give orders to the Abbot of Chaise-Dieu that he promote a man full of religion to the place in the monastery which this man occupies uselessly, and that he order the convent according to the Rule. This is what is worthy of your Apostolate, this will be well-pleasing to God, this will be an honour to the Abbot of Chaise-Dieu, and to his monastery. And so, too, you may set free the soul of the aforesaid man, and the monastery itself, on which he is a burden.

LETTER CC. (A.D. 1140.)

TO MAGISTER ULGER, BISHOP OF ANGERS, CONCERNING THE GRIEVOUS QUARREL EXISTING BETWEEN HIM AND THE ABBESS OF FONTEVRAULT

1. I am more inclined to shed tears than write a letter. But since charity is not unable to do either the one or the other, it is my duty to give the latter and not omit the former. The one is due to you, the other to me, and to the many weak ones like me who are made to stumble. You say, perhaps, that the scandal is not caused by you. Will you deny that it exists because of you? I would bear the rest easily enough if only you were not in the cause. For I do not dare to say you are in the wrong. It is not my place to discuss this; there is One who seeketh and judgcth. Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. Whosoever is the guilty, whether it be he or she, shall surely bear the punishment. But my discourse is now with you. Bear a little with my folly. What I have once begun I will say to my Lord. I will satisfy in some degree, though imperfectly, the zeal and affection which prompt me to speak. I will not fear the age, I will not be terrified by the dignity, I will not pause at the great name of Magister Ulger. For the greater the name the greater the scandal. Therefore I will go beyond myself, and will be a fool. I will chide my senior, I will reprove a Bishop. I will endeavour to teach a teacher, to give counsel to the wise. The love and the emulation which I formerly conceived for your sanctity and the glory of your name may well excuse any kind of presumption. To me it is no light matter, nor is it to the Church of God, which used everywhere to rejoice with great joy in this noon-day sun, that the spiritual odour of this glory which was poured out everywhere should be

interrupted even in a small degree by the envy of the devil.

2. But it is plain enough how utterly you despise your own glory. I praise you in this, but not if it is to the injury of God. I praise, too, the constancy with which you yield nothing of what you think your rights even to the highest powers, but I praise you not if you should seem to do this with more obstinacy than constancy. How much more to your glory, and certainly to your holiness, would it be if you were to bear bravely an injustice done to you, and so keep your good name for the glory of God. And yet I cannot think how you keep even your conscience in safety under this scandal. For it is no excuse even if you can rightly throw the blame on another. Be it that another has caused the scandal, surely it is in your power to end it. Will you be guiltless if you are unwilling to end it? or will the wish to end it be without glory? If the ill which you repress is your own it will redound to your righteousness; if another's, to your glory. Whoever may be the author of the scandal, on all grounds it is your duty to end it; and I can only say that on one condition only are you free from blame, viz., if it is out of your power to end it. And, finally, is it not the work of angels to remove scandals from the kingdom of God (S. Matt. 13:41)? If you say, What is that to the point? the verse will answer you, The priest's lips keep knowledge, and they ask for the law at his mouth, for he is a messenger of the Lord (Matt. 2:7). If, then, you do not, when you can, end this scandal, you simply do not fulfil your ministry. And you shall judge for yourself whether that be no fault. But I do not mean to say this alone is enough; you must show it honour by acting on it.

3. There is another thing also I would add if I were not, I confess, more timid than I professed myself. But I bring forward with more safety as a teacher a Bishop who is not afraid to speak the plain truth to a Bishop. There is utterly a fault among you, he says, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather suffer wrong (1 Cor. 6:7)? He has set up the mirror, the Sun of righteousness has shone forth, truth has shone, the spot has been made apparent. Of what importance is that little, trivial possession that it should have power any longer to cast a shade over such manifest truth, or hinder so longed-for an ending of strife? May God inspire you so as to yield to this counsel, which is not so much mine, as the counsel of all who are jealous for you with a godly jealousy, reverend father, who art worthy to attain all honour.

LETTER CCI

TO BALDWIN, ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF RIÉTI

Bernard begs him to apply himself strenuously to the duties of his charge.

1. The letter which you have sent me is full of your affection; it stirs mine. And I am grieved that I cannot reply as I feel. Nor will I waste time in making excuses, knowing that I speak to one who knows me. You are aware under what a load I groan, and my groaning is not hid from you. But do not judge my affection by the shortness of my letter, for no speech would be able to express it by its length. And the trouble of my many occupations, indeed, is able to bring it about that I write in few words, but not to diminish my love. It may exclude action, or impede it, but never affection. As a mother loves her son, so did I love you when you were with me, and delighted my heart. Let me love you when absent, lest I seem to have loved you for the pleasure I received from you, and not for yourself. You were very necessary to me; and from this it may most clearly be seen how sincere is my love. I mean that I should not be this day feeling your loss if in you I had sought merely my own good. But now you see that, disregarding my own advantage, I envied not your gain when I placed you in a position from whence at some time you may be placed over all the goods of your Lord.

2. But do you see that you are found a faithful and prudent servant. See that you give their heavenly bread to your fellow servant without grudging, and that you pray without ceasing; and do not make any empty excuse about your being new to the office, and inexperienced, for this, perhaps, you feel or put on. For a barren modesty is unpleasing, and humility beyond the bounds of truth is not praiseworthy. Attend then to your office. Drive away false shame by considering the dignity of your office. Act as a teacher. You are a novice, but you are a debtor; and recognize that you became a debtor from the time you bound yourself. Will inexperience be any excuse to the creditor for the loss of his gains? Does the usurer suffer the first part of the time to go unreckoned? But I am not, you will say, sufficient for these things. As though your devotion were not accepted from what you have, and not from what you have not! Prepare to give an answer about the one talent entrusted to you, and be easy about the rest. If you have received much, give much, but if little, then give that little. For he that is not faithful in the least will not be faithful in the greatest. Give all, because all will be asked for again from you, even to the last farthing, but only what you have, not what you have not.

3. Remember also to give to your voice the utterance of power. What is that, do you say? That your works harmonize with your words; nay, rather your words with your works; that is to say, that you take care to do first, and then to teach. It

is a most beautiful and most wholesome order of things that you should first bear yourself what you impose as a burden on another, and so learn from yourself how you ought to rule others. Otherwise the Wise Man will address you as the sluggard, to whom it is a labour to lift up his hand to his mouth (Prov. 26:15). The Apostle, too, will reprove you: Thou that teachest others, dost thou not teach thyself? (Rom. 2:21). Moreover, you will be stamped with the fault of the Pharisees, who bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers (S. Matt. 23:4). The example set by actual work is indeed a speech that is living and efficacious, easily making that which is said persuasive, by showing that which is ordered can be done. On these two kinds of commands, viz., of word and example, understand that there hang the whole of your duty, and the safety of your conscience. Yet if you are wise you will add a third, viz., devotion to prayer, as a kind of complement of that threefold repetition in the Gospel concerning feeding the sheep (S. John 21:15–17). In this way you will find that the Sacrament of this Trinity is in nothing made void by you if you feed by word, by example, and by the fruit of holy prayers. And now abideth these three —word, example, prayer; but the greatest of these is prayer. For although, as I said, work is the life of the word spoken, yet prayer gives both to work and word grace and efficacy. Alas! I am called away; I must go; I cannot write more. Let me, however, briefly implore you to take care to free me as soon as you can from one heavy care, and forget not to say more plainly what you mean when you complain, among other things, that you have received a wound from one from whom you did not expect it. For that gives me much anxiety.

LETTER CCII. (A.D. 1144.)

TO THE CLERGY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SENS

He warns them that the election of a new Prelate should not be entered upon rashly or precipitately.

Now that you have been deprived of your blessed pastor it is your duty, dearly beloved, to take great care in the selection of a successor to him. It must not be taken in hand hastily, confusedly, or inconsiderately, lest perchance what is done presumptuously against reason and due order be annulled, and so you begin to enter on the same weary round as some of your neighbours have done. Take an example, if you please, from the neighbouring churches, and let their troubles be a warning to you in the present case. It is a great matter that you are engaged on,

this of supplying a pastor to the renowned Church of Sens. It is truly a great matter, and not one to be lightly undertaken. Wait for the advice of the suffragan bishops, wait for the assenting voice of all the faithful in the diocese, and transact in common this matter which is of importance to all in common. Otherwise, dearly beloved, believe me, we shall to our grief behold your Church under tribulation. To our grief we shall have to look upon your confusion. Both of which will readily take place if such action take place as will have to be recalled. Therefore, let a fast be proclaimed, let the Bishops be assembled, let the Religious be invited to be present, so that the election of so exalted a priest may be duly celebrated, and may not be deprived of its proper solemnity, which God forbid. We believe that so the Holy Spirit will assist your prayers; that honour will be added to you if you honour your ministry, provided you diligently seek, with prayer and common counsel, alike what is most for the glory of God, and the good of the people.

LETTER CCIII. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE BISHOP AND CLERGY OF TROYES

Bernard presses them to forbid marriage and a military career to a clerk named Anselle.

We read: If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins (S. James 5:19, 20). Our friend Anselle is erring, is erring. Who doubts it? If we dismiss him thus, he will not err alone. How many will the illustrious youth not draw after him by his example? And we judge to be involved in the same error not only those who follow him, but also all who may be able to call him back and do not. I am clean from his blood. I have both told him before by letter, and I now tell you that he is presumptuously undertaking what is forbidden. It is not the part of a clerk to fight in worldly warfare, nor of a subdeacon to marry. Tell the sinner his duty, lest he die in his sins, and He who redeemed him with His own precious blood require his blood at your hands. Lo He cries from Heaven: The Virgin of Israel is fallen; there is none to raise her up (Amos 5:2). How long is gold to lie in the mire? Remove this pearl, remove, take up this most splendid and precious jewel from the dunghill. Take it up before it be trodden under foot by swine, that is by unclean spirits, and be no more a vessel for honour but for dishonour.

LETTER CCIV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE ABBOT OF S. AUBIN

Bernard declares his affection for him and his wish to see him.

Though you are unknown to me by face, yet you are not by renown; and it is very precious to me to know you thus. For such an image of you has stolen into my heart through this report, that though I am occupied with many things, yet, my dear brother, that pleasing thought of you often calls me from them all, so that I dwell on it willingly and with pleasure. But the more I cherish the thought of you, the more eagerly do I long to see you. But when will that be? or will it ever be? Certainly if not before, at all events we shall meet in the city of our God, if here we have no abiding city, but seek one above. There, there shall I see you, and my heart shall rejoice. In the meanwhile I shall be delighted and pleased none the less with what I hear from you, hoping and expecting to see you face to face in the day of the Lord, that my joy may be full. Add, I pray you, to those good things which are always coming to me from you and about you, my dear and longed-for brother, your own prayers and those of your brethren for me.

LETTER CCV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

Bernard complains of the severity of his letter, which he has done nothing to deserve.

You write severely to one who does not deserve it. What have I done wrong? If I advised Master Robert Pullen to spend some time at Paris, because of the sound learning which is known to be gained there, it was because I thought it necessary for him, and I still think so. If I asked your Highness to permit it, I would again make the same request, if I were not aware that you had rejected my former petition. If I said that the man is supported by the kindness of his friends, whose influence at the Curia is by no means small, I said it because I had fears for you, and I still have. For in that after appeal was made, you, as I hear, stretched out your hand to the property of the appellant; I neither praised you in this, nor do I now. But certainly I never advised him, nor do I now, to go against your wish in any way. For the rest I am your servant, ready always to hold and honour your crown in due and worthy veneration. I venture again on the strength of this consciousness to pray and advise you that Master Robert with your full

goodwill may be allowed to spend some time at Paris. May the Lord repay you in eternal life the good you have done to my offspring, I mean my sons whom I have sent into Ireland.

LETTER CCVI

TO THE QUEEN OF JERUSALEM

Bernard recommends to her one of his relatives; and exhorts the Queen so to live that she may reign for ever.

Men tell me that I have some influence with you, and many who are about to set out for Jerusalem ask for a recommendation from me to your Excellency. Amongst whom is this young relation of mine, a youth, they say, bold in arms, and of polished manners. And I rejoice that at his age he has chosen to fight for God rather than for the world. And so do according to your custom, and let it be well with him for my sake, as it has always been with all my other relations who have been able by my means to make themselves known to you. As to the rest, see that the pleasure of the flesh and worldly glory do not block up your road to the heavenly kingdom. For what advantage is it to reign for a few days over the earth and to lose the eternal kingdom in the Heavens? But I trust in the Lord that you will do better; and if the testimony is true which my dear uncle Andrew bears concerning you, and I place great reliance on him, you will, by the mercy of God, reign both here and in eternity. Bestow care on pilgrims, the needy, and prisoners, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Write to me more often for it will not hurt you, and will help me if I know more fully and more certainly of your state and of your good dispositions.

LETTER CCVII. (A.D. 1139.)

TO ROGER, KING OF SICILY

Bernard begs him to be kind and liberal towards poor Religious.

Far and wide the renown of your magnificence has spread over the earth. For what lands are there to which the glory of your name has not reached? But listen to the advice of me who loves you. Endeavour as much as in you lies to refer this same glory to Him from whom it comes, if you do not wish to destroy it, or to be destroyed by it. This certainly will happen if you open the eye of discretion upon those whom the well-known report of your magnificence calls to you from afar, and if you stretch out your hand not so much to the greedy as to the poor. Truly,

Blessed is he that considereth not the greedy, but the poor and needy (Ps. 41:1). The poor, I repeat, who asks unwillingly, receives modestly, and when he receives glorifies his Father which is in Heaven. Since, then, His own glory will be so faithfully given to God from the mouth of the needy because of your gift, that fount of glory must flow for you with more fruitful stream, for He loves those who love Him, and glorifies those who glorify Him; just as he who sows blessings shall reap blessings (2 Cor. 9:6). For this reason I beseech you cast your eyes on the bearer of this letter, for most certainly it is not greed that has drawn him to your presence, but necessity that has forced him to come. Necessity, I say, not his own, but of his brethren, viz., the many faithful servants of God by whom he has been sent. Hear patiently what they have to be patient under; hear and suffer with them; for if you suffer with them you shall reign with them. To reign with such is not to be scorned, even by a king. For the kingdom of heaven is theirs who have despised the life of the world. Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail out of your earthly kingdom they may receive you into their heavenly kingdom (S. Luke 16:9).

LETTER CCVIII. (A.D. 1139.)

TO THE SAME

The King had desired to see him; he sends some of his brethren in his place.

If you ask for me, here am I, and my children which God has given to me. For my humility is said to have found favour with the King’s majesty, so that he seeks to see me. And who am I that I should go against the good pleasure of the King? I hasten and say to him who sought me: Lo! here I am, not in the weak bodily presence which Herod mocked in the Lord (S. Luke 23:11), but in my children. For who shall separate me from them? I will follow them wherever they go; even if they dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, they shall not be without me. You have, O King, the light of my eyes, you have my heart and my soul. What if my meanest part is absent? I mean my worthless body, that vile possession, which necessity retains, though the will would gladly give it up. It is not able to follow the will, since it is weak, and almost the only thing awaiting it is the tomb. But why need this be a care? My soul shall dwell among the good, when my seed shall inherit the earth. My seed, my good seed shall spring up, that is if it falls into good soil. My soul shall rejoice and delight herself in fatness, because, I trust, there shall be given to her of the fruit of her hands. This

hope of mine is laid up in my heart, so that I can patiently bear to be separated from them in body. Do not wonder, O King. I would rather have been absent from the body, than to send them away, if the cause had not been God's alone. Receive them as strangers and pilgrims, as fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; nay, not citizens, they are kings. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven by the right and merit of poverty. It is not fitting that they should have been summoned from afar to no purpose, and wander as exiles from their home in a useless pilgrimage. Do you suppose they will be able to sing the Lord's song in a strange land? But perhaps I am wrong in calling it a strange land, for it has opened its heart of its own accord to receive the good seed, and has taken in the precious deposit to be piously fostered in its kindly bosom. It has fallen, I see, the good seed has fallen into a good, nay, an excellent, soil; I hope in the Lord that it will take root, spring up, multiply, and bring forth fruit with patience (S. Luke 8:15). Then will I share this with the King, and each one shall receive according to his labour (1 Cor. 3:8).

LETTER CCIX

TO THE SAME

Bernard praises the King's munificence in receiving and maintaining the Religious sent to him.

You have what you asked for, you have done what you promised. Those whom, according to your word, we selected and sent abroad to you have been received with princely generosity. You have met them with bread, you have brought them into a pleasant place, you have placed them on a lofty spot, that they may eat the fruits of the fields, suck honey out of the rock, and oil from the hard stone; may have butter and milk from the herd, and from the sheep, and honey with the flour of wheat, and may drink the choicest blood of the grape. These, indeed, are earthly blessings, but they purchase heavenly. Such is the way to heaven; with such sacrifices God is well pleased. For the kingdom of heaven is theirs who in the land of the living will have power to render to the earthly king for these earthly benefits life and everlasting glory, I have sent you Master Bruno, formerly for a long time the companion of my solitude, but now the father of many souls who rejoice in Christ indeed, but are poor in this world's goods. Let him, too, experience the generous hand of the King that the number of those may be increased who may receive him into everlasting habitations. What you do for him, you do for me; for what he lacks has to be supplied by me.

But, as my purse is not very full, I have directed Christ's poor monk to look to yours, which, as everyone knows, is somewhat more full than mine.

LETTER CCX. (Circa A.D. 1139.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

He recommends to the Pontiff the Archbishop of Rheims.

I recommend the Lord Bishop of Rheims to your Holiness, not merely as one of many, but as one above the rest. And I do so the more confidently as I am confident of his faithful devotion to you, his sincere love, his submissive and obedient disposition. Let him be honoured, since he is a vessel made to honour. Let him be made to feel, as much as in you lies, that he does not honour his ministry in vain, that it is not in vain that he excels in those virtues by which God is honoured and the Church adorned, which, in short, become the priest of the Lord.

LETTER CCXI. (Circa A.D. 1139.)

TO THE SAME

He recommends the cause of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of the Bishop of London.

My Lord of Canterbury, a good man, and one who has the testimony of good men, is unjustly dragged into a dispute, and violently held back from acting. He was preparing to start (for in your presence the dispute was to be settled), when he was stopped by a hurricane and tempest of wars. Please excuse him, for the necessity of excusing himself is a trouble to him, not only because he is sure of getting justice at your hands, but also because he greatly desired to see your face. Your son adds also this, that if the venerable priest should make any other request of you, please grant it the more quickly, as he who makes it is the more worthy. As I have begun, I venture to say one thing more to my lord. Your old friend, faithful servant, and devoted son, Robert, Bishop of London, appeals to you, because he who preceded him in the See to which God has called him has appropriated the goods and lands of his Church, and refuses to make restitution. And how injurious this is, and how it is to be corrected it ill would become my humility to dictate to so great wisdom.

LETTER CCXII. (A.D. 1139.)

He pleads pathetically with the Pontiff the cause of the Bishop of Salamanca, praising his remarkable humility.

That illustrious man who was formerly Bishop of Salamanca, when returning from Rome, did not think it too much trouble to turn aside to your son, nor thought it beneath him to ask help from one so feeble as I am. And when I had heard him I called to mind the words of the prophet: Every mountain and hill shall be made low before God, and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain (Is. 40:4). Even so you know how to make sport of and repress the lofty, to abase the proud, and to reduce to their measure those who go beyond their rule. But when the man had told me in detail the history of his troubles, I commended the judge, I approved the verdict, but, I confess to you, I also felt compassion for the man, though condemned. And so, as it was, indeed, through the whole of that tearful account, he finished as one who would say with the prophet: Having been exalted, I was humbled and put to confusion (Ps. 87:16, VULG.); and, Thou hast raised me up only to cast me down (Ps. 102:10). And when I thought of your justice, and the nobility of mind which I know you to have, I began to think at the same time of the riches of your mercy, which in many cases I have made trial of, and I said, Who knows whether the Lord will turn and pardon, and leave a blessing behind Him? Certainly, I repeat, he has been taught, in all things, and in all ways, both to be jealous, and to pardon, both to tame the haughty, and by no means to spare the conquered; except that, following his Master, he is also accustomed to let mercy triumph over justice. And I, who am dust and ashes, consented to write with that wonted presumption of mine to my lord. And I found ground for hope, confidence for my request, reason for my doing him this kindness, in the fact that the man is not, as is usual, departing in indignation, filled with anger, and going back to his native land to cause scandals, to excite seditions; but he has given place to wrath, and has put on the spirit of meekness; he has turned aside to your monks of Cluny, and prostrated himself before the knees of the humble, and has joined them in their prayers as arms that are powerful from God. He has resolved to contend with you with these weapons, and he will endeavour to undermine with these engines of devotion, as he boasts, the wall of your severity which now stands in his way. He trusts also that you will regard the prayer of the humble, and not despise their petition, and that piety will overcome him before whom the powers of the world tremble. I, too, with confidence stretch out my hands with them, bend my knees, supplicate for the suppliant, boldly declare that his

humility ought to help the unhappy man, since his pride has so injured him, and say that it is unbecoming for virtue to be surpassed by vice in receiving recompense.

LETTER CCXIII. (A.D. 1139.)

TO THE SAME

He expostulates that the reconciliation of Peter of Pisa, made by him with the Pope's own authority, has been held invalid.

Who will do me justice against you? If I had a judge before whom I could take you I would quickly show you what you deserve—I speak as one in travail. There is, indeed, the tribunal of Christ; but far be it from me to summon you there, for if it were necessary for you and possible to me, I would far rather stand there and answer for you with all my strength. And so I appeal to him to whom, for the present, power has been given to judge all things, i.e., to you yourself. I summon you before yourself, to judge between us. In what, I ask, has your son deserved so ill from his father, that it has seemed good to you to brand and stamp him with the mark and the name of traitor? Did you not think it good to constitute me your Vicar in the matter of reconciling Peter of Pisa, if perchance God should vouchsafe to recall him by my means from the mire of schism? If you deny it I will prove it by the many witnesses that were in your Curia at the time. Was he not after this, according to the instructions of my lord, restored to his rank and honour? Who is it, then, who by his advice, or rather his craft, has stealthily undone what your indulgence granted, and made void the words which proceeded out of your lips? And I say this, not to blame your apostolic severity, and your zeal kindled from the fire of God against schismatics, which with a mighty wind breaks the ships of Tarshish, and like Phinehas slays the fornicators, according to the verse, Do not I hate them, O Lord, which hate Thee, and am not I grieved with them that rise up against Thee (Ps. 139:21)? But where the guilt is not equal, the punishment clearly should not be equal; nor ought he who has forsaken his sin to be under the same sentence as he whose sin has forsaken him. For the sake of Him who to spare sinners spared not Himself, take away my reproach; and, by re-establishing what you first established, consult the credit of your first sound and perfect opinion. I wrote to you before on this matter; but as I have received no reply, I presume that the letter did not reach you.

LETTER CCXIV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE SAME

He recommends Nicholas, Bishop of Cambray, and Abbot Gottschalk.

If any regard for me, any recollection, however slight, of me, still remains in the heart of my lord, and if his child finds any small portion of the grace he once found in his sight, let him now experience it on behalf of that illustrious and humble man, Nicholas, Bishop of Cambray. I confess that I am under obligation to him, and that I am in debt for all that I can do, not only because he honours me and mine, whenever he can, but also for his uprightness, meekness, and justice, virtues which can recommend him also to you. And, if I mistake not, those who trouble him are false men, and truth is not in their mouth. In short, you are sure to approve of him, and there is no need for me to multiply words about him. He has, too, with him a religious and holy man, Abbot Gottschalk,' on behalf of whom, in like manner, I earnestly ask a hearing for his requests, if my intervention can lend any power to his merits. For I believe that he will make no petition which is unworthy of being granted.

LETTER CCXV. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE SAME

He intercedes on behalf of the Bishop of Auxerre.

I write to you very often, I, a worthless little worm; and I am impelled to this boldness by the entreaties of my friends. I confess I am bold, but not false. Let not my lord suspect that falsehood will be found in the words of his child in any letter he sends him. I wish to comply with the wishes of my friends, but not to my death. For I do not forget what I have read: A mouth that belieth slayeth the soul (Wisd. 1:11). I deny, then, falsehood, I confess importunity; this will find pardon, the rest I fear not. The Bishop of Auxerre is a special friend of mine. Who does not know him? He is able to communicate anxiety to his friend, but not falsehood. We bring before you a trustworthy defence of his dean, and we ask for absolution for him. I speak with my wonted presumption when I say that we are sons of the same father, viz., of yourself. I hope that my father will not reject his sons, but will do the will of them that fear him, and will hear their cry, and will make them joyful (Ps. 145:19).

LETTER CCXVI. (A.D. 1142.)

TO THE SAME

He complains that Count Ralph, who had repudiated his wife and taken another, finds supporters in the Curia.

It is written: Whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder (S. Matt. 19:6). Audacious men have arisen, and have not shrunk from disjoining those whom God has joined together. Nor is that all; they have gone farther, and joined together persons whom it is forbidden to unite, thus adding sin to sin. The sacred rites of the Church are violated, and alas! the robe of Christ is rent, and that, to crown the sorrow, by the hands of those who ought to have kept it whole. Thy friends and thy neighbours, O God, have come near and stood against Thee (Ps. 37:12, VULG.). For they who are transgressing Thy command are not foreigners, not strangers to Thy sanctuary, but they hold the place of those to whom was said: If ye love me keep My commandments (S. John 14:15). Count Ralph and his wife had been joined together by God through the ministers of the Church, and by the Church through God who had given such power unto men. Why did the Court disjoin those whom God had joined? And in so doing provision was made as was fitting for one thing only, viz., that the works of darkness should be done in darkness. For he who does wrong hates the light, and does not come into the light, that his works may be reproved by the light. What has Count Theobald deserved, what wrong has he done? If to love righteousness and hate iniquity be a sin, he cannot be excused. If it be a sin to render to the King the things which are the King’s, and to God the things which are God’s, he cannot be excused. If at your command he received the Archbishop of Bourges, this is his first and greatest sin. Lo! this is the crime which is laid at his door. They who render evil for good calumniate him because he follows the thing that good is. Many are calling to you from the depths of their hearts to visit with fitting punishment the wrong done to your son, and the oppression the Church is subjected to, and to restrain the workers of this wickedness with their leader, with whatever Apostolic force you wish and are able to put forth, that so their wickedness may descend upon their own head.

LETTER CCXVII. (A.D. 1142.)

TO THE SAME

He complains that Count Theobald is suffering for the cause of justice, and for his fidelity to the Apostolic See.

Tribulation and anguish have found us out. The earth trembles and quakes at

the deaths of men, at the banishment of the poor, at the arrest and imprisonment of the rich. Even religion itself has come into shame and contempt. Only to make mention of peace is counted a disgrace amongst us. Nowhere are faith and innocence safe. Count Theobald, a lover of innocence, and a seeker after holiness, has been almost delivered over to the will of his enemies. He was struck at that he might fall, but the Lord sustained him; and it is a consolation to him that justice and obedience to you are at stake, because of the Apostle's words: If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye (1 S. Peter 3:14). And again it is written in the Gospel: Blessed are they who endure persecution for righteousness (S. Matt. 5:10). Woe to us! we have been able to foresee, but not to take precautions against these evils. What more can I say? In order that the land might not be wholly laid desolate, and the whole kingdom, divided against itself, fall, that most devoted son of yours, and defender of the Church's liberty, has been compelled to promise under an oath that he would do what he could to induce you to remove the sentence of excommunication pronounced against the land and person of the adulterous tyrant, who has been the head and originator of all these evils and sorrows, by your legate Ivo of good memory, as also against the adulteress herself, which the aforesaid prince did at the entreaty and advice of some faithful and wise men. For they said that without any injury to the Church it would be easy to obtain from you a renewal of the decree, and an irrevocable confirmation of the same sentence which had been justly pronounced; so would artifice be eluded by artifice and peace obtained; and he who boasts himself in wickedness and is powerful in iniquity would gain no advantage. I have many things to say to you, but there is no need to write about everything, when there is one present who knows all, and can acquaint you with them more plainly and completely by word of mouth.

LETTER CCXVIII. (A.D. 1143.)

HIS LAST LETTER TO INNOCENT II.; IN SELF DEFENCE

Bernard having remarked that he had lost the favour of Pope Innocent, on account of the will of Cardinal Ivo, humbly justifies himself.

To his lord and most reverend Father INNOCENT, BERNARD, a thing of nought, wishes health.

1. I used to think at one time that I was of some account, though of small; but now I feel I have simply been reduced to nothing while I knew it not. For I would never have said that I was nothing at all while the eyes of my lord were

over his child, and his ears open to my prayers, whilst all that I wrote he received with open hands, read with smiling face, and while he answered most graciously and fully all my demands. But now I do not say that I am of small account, I am of none; because since yesterday and the day before his face has been turned away from me. Why is this? what wrong have I done? Much, I admit, if the money of Cardinal Ivo, of good memory, was distributed according to my will, and not according to his directions, for I am told that this has been brought before the notice of my lord. But I trust that by this time you know the truth of this matter, and the truth shall make me free. I am not so dull as not to know that whatever he left no directions about becomes the property of the Church.

2. But now hear the simple truth. If falsehood is found in my mouth, my own mouth shall condemn me. When the man put off his mortal frame I was absent, nay, at a long distance. But I heard from those who were present that he made his will, and had what he wanted written down; and of his property he divided what he would to whom he would, and whatever was over he entrusted to the two Abbots who were assisting him, and to me who was absent, with a view to its distribution; because the poorer places of the saints were known to us. Then the Abbots returned home, and not finding me (for I was kept at that time in accordance with your orders by the negotiations for peace), they nevertheless divided the money as seemed good to them, I not only not conniving, but not even knowing what they had done. Let now, if you please, your indignation give place to this manifest truth, and henceforward look upon me not frowningly or in displeasure; but let your wonted serenity return to your kind and gracious countenance, and let your face once more assume its brightness and joy.

3. As to your complaint that you have found much in my letters to displease you, I shall not have to fear it any longer, for it is a fault which I will soon cure. I know it, I know it, I have presumed more than I ought to have done; not thinking sufficiently who I was and to whom I was presuming to scribble; but you will not deny that your kindness had armed me with that boldness. And then the love of my friends urged me to it; for I wrote very little on my own account, if I recollect aright. But enough of this. I will for the future put a rein on my zeal, be more wise, and put my finger to my lips. For it will be more tolerable to offend some of my friends than to weary with many prayers the Lord’s anointed. And at this time too I have not ventured to write to you about the dangers overhanging the Church, and about the grievous schism which I fear, and the many evils we are suffering from. But I have written to the holy Bishops around your person; you can, if you wish it, hear from them what I have written.

LETTER CCXIX. (A.D. 1143.)

TO THREE BISHOPS OF THE CURIA; ALBERIC OF OSTIA, STEPHEN OF PRÆNESTE, IGMARUS OF TUSCULUM, AND TO THE CHANCELLOR GERARD

Respecting the interdict laid on the realm of France on account of the Archbishop of Bourges.

1. How great an evil is schism in the Church, and how it is to be detested and in every way avoided, is plainly shown by the well known dreadful death of those men whom the earth swallowed up and sent down alive into hell because of this very pest. It has been shown too by the persecution of Guibert, and the rashness of Bourdin, whom our times have seen separating between the kingdom and the priesthood, and so inflicting on them both an almost incurable wound and a cruel chastisement. It has been shown too by the mad schism of Leo, which after grievous and manifold trouble and loss to the Church has lately by the mercy of God received its death blow. Well then does the Saviour say in the Gospel: Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh (S. Matt. 18:7). Woe to us who live bewailing what we have endured, grieving for what we feel, and fearing what we expect. And what is worse, human affairs are come to such an evil pass that the guilty are not willing to be humbled, nor the judges to show mercy. We say to the wicked: Deal not so wickedly; and to the sinners: Lift not up your horn (Ps. 75:5), and they will not listen to us, for it is a rebellious house (Ezek. 2:5). We beseech those whose office it is to rebuke the sin to save the sinner, not to break the bruised reed, and not quench the smoking flax, and they all the more break the ships of Tarshish with a violent wind.

2. When, with the Apostle, we bid sons obey their parents in all things, we may as well beat the air. When we tell parents not to provoke their children to anger, we only call down their anger on our own heads. Sinners no longer will consent to give satisfaction, nor those who bear the rule or the rod in any wise to condescend. All follow their own pride and passion; and, pulling a rope with all their might in different directions, they break it. Alas! the scar of the wound so recently given to the Church has hardly healed over, when they are again doing all they can to tear it open, to nail the Body of Christ to the cross, to pierce again His unoffending side, to divide His garments, and, though in vain, as far as in them lies, to rend asunder His robe which is woven without seam. If you have any feelings of piety, set yourselves against such evils, lest a schism take place on that soil where, as you well know, other schisms are wont to be healed. For if the author of a scandal is stricken specially by a tremendous curse from the

mouth of his Judge, of what blessings may we suppose that they are worthy who conquer and put to flight this wickedness?

3. Of two wrongs I cannot acquit the King. For he both took an unlawful oath and perseveres in it contrary to justice. But he does so not so much from his own will as from a sense of honour ill-directed. For it is reckoned disgraceful, as you know, among the French, to break an oath, however much the oath may be against the public good, although no wise man doubts that unlawful oaths ought not to be kept. But not even so can I admit that he is to be excused. For I have not undertaken to excuse him, but to ask pardon. See whether passion, his age, or his high rank can in any degree be his excuse. It will avail him, no doubt, if you decide that mercy is to be exalted above judgment, viz., in so far as such excuse is to be taken into consideration in the case of a king, who is but a lad; so that for this time perhaps he may be spared, but on this understanding, that he does not count on similar leniency for the future. I mean that he may be dealt lightly with, if it can be done without endangering the liberty of the Church in any way; and if at the same time the honour that is due to an Archbishop consecrated by Apostolic hands is preserved. The King himself humbly asks this, this the whole Church on this side of the Alps suppliantly implores after her too long affliction. Otherwise we join hands with death, we pine and wither away for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the whole world. Indeed this has been my prayer since last year; and since my sins called for it, I received not a favourable answer but anger, and desolation over nearly the whole earth followed on the anger. If my zeal has caused anything to escape me which ought not to have been said, or ought to have been said otherwise than it was, let it be, I beg you, as if unsaid. But let not that be in vain which I have said as I ought, and when I ought.

LETTER CCXX

TO LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

He repulses the unjust demand of the King on behalf of Count Ralph, and warns him not to oppress the innocent, and arouse against himself the anger of the King Supreme.

1. I ever readily strive and will strive to the utmost of my little power for the things which make for your honour and the good of your kingdom; and this you deign to admit, and your own conscience bears me witness. But with regard to your complaint to your humble servant about the anathema to be shortly renewed

against Count Ralph, and your wish that I should in every possible way endeavour to prevent it, because of the many evils which you think will ensue, to be plain with you I do not see how I can do this, and go against the Apostolic decree. Even if I had the power I do not see how I could do so reasonably. I shall be sorry certainly if evils ensue, but still we ought not therefore to do evil that good may come. It is better and safer to leave all this to the will and providence of Almighty God, who is able to bring to pass and confirm the good that He wishes, and either to prevent the evils which evil men contrive, or else bring on themselves the evils which they desire and seek for.

2. But I am very distressed by one thing which is contained in your Majesty's letter, viz., that this anathema must militate against the peace made between you and Count Theobald. Do you not know that it was a grievous offence that Count Theobald was obliged by the violence of your inroad to take an oath against God and against righteousness, not only because it sought, but also because it brought about the absolution of the aforesaid Count Ralph and his land, an absolution as little deserved as lawful. Do you wish again to add sin to sin, and to heap up the wrath of God against you?—which may He forbid. How has Count Theobald done wrong, that he deserves to incur your anger again, when with so much toil and trouble he obtained the absolution of Count Ralph, though an unjust one, as you know, and has neither striven, nor is now striving for the renewal of the excommunication, though it is returning most justly, inasmuch as from fear of you he has even protested against it. Do not, my lord King, do not, I pray you, dare to resist so plainly your King, nay, the Creator of all, in His kingdom and territory, and with frequent and rash audacity to lift your hand against that terrible Being who takes away the breath of princes, and is terrible among the kings of the earth. I speak sharply, because I fear sharp things for you; and I should not fear for you so much if my affection for you were not so great.

LETTER CCXXI. (A.D. 1142.)

TO THE SAME

He gravely reproves King Louis, because he listens to bad advice and rejects counsels of peace.

1. God knows how great has been my affection for you from the time I first knew you, and how ardently I have wished for your honour; you too know with what toil and anxiety I throughout the past year strove together with your other faithful servants to obtain peace for you. But I am afraid that our labour in your

cause has been fruitless. For you evidently are kicking with too much haste and fickleness against the good and wholesome advice you had received; and I hear that you are hurrying, under I know now what counsel of the devil, to those former evils, which you were but now bewailing, and properly bewailing, that you had been guilty of committing, and this while those wounds are still fresh. For from whom except from the devil can I say that this counsel proceeds which makes us add fires to fires and slaughter to slaughter? which causes the cry of the poor, the groanings of the captives, and the blood of the slain, to strike a second time the ears of the Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of widows? (Ps. 68:5.) Doubtless that old victimiser (hostis, enemy) of our race, is pleased with these victims (hostiis), for he is a murderer from the beginning (S. John 8:44). And do not take occasion from Count Theobald to pile up excuses for your sins; it is useless; for he says he is prepared, and in every way he begs, to come to the terms arranged between you when peace was made, and he is willing to make satisfaction in all points, according to the decision of all who love your name, i.e., those who acted as mediators between you; so that if he can be convicted of any wrong, and he is confident he cannot, he will not hesitate to make immediate amends to your honour.

2. But you neither entertain proposals for peace, nor keep to your agreements, nor listen to good advice; but by some judgment of God you so turn everything round that you consider disgrace honour and honour disgrace. You fear for what is safe, and neglect what should be feared, and you incur the rebuke which Joab is recorded to have given to the holy and glorious King David, Thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends (2 Sam. 19:6). For it is not your honour but their own advantage which they seek, who are instigating you to renew your former evil-doing against an innocent person. Nay, it is not so much their own advantage as the will of the devil, in order that they may have (which God forbid) the power of the king as an effectual worker of their hot-headed purpose, which they know that they cannot accomplish by their own strength. They are enemies to your crown, and manifest disturbers of the kingdom.

3. But whatever it may please you to do in a matter which concerns your crown, your soul, and your kingdom, we sons of the Church cannot wholly keep silence about the injuries done to our mother, and the way in which she is despised and trodden under foot; for we perceive that these evils, besides those which we lament piteously have already fallen upon her, are again partly inflicted afresh and partly threatened. We will certainly make a stand, and fight even to death, if need be, for our mother with the weapons allowed us, not with

shield and sword, but with prayers and lamentations to God. And I for my part recollect that, besides the daily prayers, which I call my Lord to witness, I humbly poured forth for your peace and salvation and for your kindgom, I also pleaded your cause by messengers and letters to the Apostolic See (I confess it), even to the damage of my own conscience, and (which I ought not to deny) to the anger of the supreme Pontiff himself against me. Now, I tell you, that provoked by your constant outrages, which you do not cease to renew daily, I begin to repent of my former folly, which made me more indulgent to your youth than I ought to have been. For the future, to the best of my little power, I will not hold back the truth.

4. I will not conceal the fact that you are doing all you can to again enter into alliance and fellowship with the excommunicated, that you are keeping company (so I am told) with robbers and freebooters for the murder of men, the burning of houses, the destruction of churches, and the dispersion of the poor, according to the saying of the Psalmist, When thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with adulterers (Ps. 50:18), as though you had not enough power of your own to work mischief. I will not hold back the fact that unlawful and accursed oath foolishly taken by you against the Church of Bourges (through which so many and so great misfortunes have already deservedly followed) is still, notwithstanding all this, uncorrected by you; that you do not allow a pastor to be set over the sheep of Christ at Chalons; and moreover that you have the audacity to throw open Episcopal houses for the use of your brother and his archers and cross-bowmen, against law and justice, and so expose the property of the Church to be squandered in nefarious uses of this kind. I tell you plainly that if you proceed in this way the wrong will not be unavenged, and, therefore, my lord king, I warn you as a friend and advise you as a faithful servant to desist quickly from this wickedness, so that if [God] is now preparing His hand to strike, you may, like the King of Nineveh, prevent Him with penitence and humility. I speak severely, because I fear severe things for you; but remember that the Wise Man says, Better are the wounds of a friend than the fraudulent kisses of an enemy (Prov. 27:6.)

LETTER CCXXII. (A.D. 1142.)

TO JOSCELYN, BISHOP OF SOISSONS, AND SUGER, ABBOT OF S. DENYS

He complains to them, as the King’s counsellors, of his unjust attacks upon Count Theobald.

1. I had written to the King, rebuking him for the wrongs done in his kingdom, which are said to be done by his consent, and I have thought it fit to bring his reply before you who are of his council. For I wonder if he believes what he says, and if he does not, I wonder how he expects to make me believe it, when, as you know, I am aware of everything which took place with a view to making peace. For he says, as you can see in his letters, when he was trying to prove that the agreement had not been well kept by the Count, “Our Bishops still remain suspended, our land is still under an interdict,” as though it belonged to Count Theobald to put an end to any ecclesiastical interdict whatever, or as if he ever promised that he would. He says, “Count Ralph was mocked and his excommunication renewed.” And what has this to do with Count Theobald? Did he not faithfully carry out and effectually perform whatever promise he made about this matter? Rather, was not the King caught in his own craftiness, and did he not fall into the pit which he made? Was this the sole reason why the King made void the agreement which he had made and which your lips pronounced? Was it right for this that the anger of the King should be kindled against God and against His Church, against himself and his kingdom? Because of this ought he to have so forgotten his honour as to send his brother to overcome his vassal, whom he had not even declared war against, much less warned privately or reasoned with, and that, too, through Chalons, and you know the agreement come to between the King and Count about this state especially.

2. But the King makes it a further complaint that the Count, contrary to the allegiance due to him, is endeavouring to ally himself by marriage with the Count of Flanders and Soissons. Well, a suspicion about his fidelity is not a certitude; moreover, you can see the morality of setting aside fixed agreements because of empty suspicions. Nor ought suspicion of such a man as the Count to be entertained at all. Are, then, those to whom the Count allies himself necessarily the King’s enemies, and not his vassals or his friends? Is not the Count of Flanders a relation of the King by blood, and, as he says himself, the staff of his kingdom? In what way, then, does his vassal and faithful servant act against the allegiance that he owes the King, if he allies himself by the marriage of those of his own house, to the King’s friends? If any one were to consider the matter with an unprejudiced eye, would he not rather see that it greatly adds to the peace, strength, and security of the kingdom?

3. But I do wonder how the King can dare to say that he had ascertained that I knew that Count Theobald had endeavoured to draw over Count Ralph to his side against the King. For he said more to my messenger than he wrote; that I

had very often told Count Ralph that I would take on myself the greatest part of his sins if he would join himself to Count Theobald. If the man exists by whom I sent such messages, let him come forward and accuse me openly. If I wrote it in letters, let them be produced. Let the King see whom he has believed. I am certain that I have never known anything of what he alleges. I think the same, too, about Count Theobald, for he denies it in every way. May God look upon and judge the King for accusing Count Theobald on suspicion, when he himself, against his agreements, against the precepts of God, and the sentence of the Supreme Pontiff, is keeping Count Ralph close by him, and is communicating with one that is an adulterer and excommunicate.

4. The King also says: “I have almost had upon my hands two bitter assailants.” And the prophet answers in scorn: They feared where no fear was (Ps. 14:5). Lo! he says, I am assailed, I, who did not assail any one; I, who persecuted not, suffer persecution. Who, I ask, who is assailing him? Or who is persecuting him? Is not the Count entreating him, and that humbly? Is he not ready to honour the King, to serve and obey him as his liege-lord? Is he not earnestly praying for peace, and doing all he can to win the King’s good will? Suppose that it is not so, but that it is the Count rather who is doing all this wrong to the King; should he not have had recourse to that which you know was determined on? For they agreed between them that, if any controversy or difference should arise about any of the articles agreed upon they would neither do nor seek any injury to each other until the matter had been ventilated and discussed between us three and the Bishop of Auxerre, for we were then the mediators; and if any quarrel arose we ought to have been called on to settle it. And that the Count in every way asks for, but the King refuses.

5. In short, even if the Count has deserved punishment, why has the Church of God deserved it? I mean not only the Church of Bourges, but also that of Châlons, and even of Rheims, and of Paris. Suppose that the King has right on his side against the Count, by what right, I ask, by what right does he presume to lay waste the possessions and lands of the Church, to prevent pastors being set over the sheep of Christ, to forbid those elected to be promoted to their head? By what right does he bring about the postponement of an election (a thing hitherto unheard of) until he has swallowed up all the revenues, carried off the goods of the poor, and until the land is wholly made desolate? Do you advise him to this? It is wonderful, indeed, if it is done against your advice; still more wonderful and mischievous if it is by your advice. For to advise to this is manifestly to create a schism, to resist God, to make a tool of the Church, and to reduce to slavery our

ecclesiastical liberty. If any one is a faithful servant of God and His Church, he will certainly stand up and oppose himself as a wall as far as he can in defence of the house of God. For how can you yourselves, if you desire the peace of the Church, as behoves children of peace, I do not say give such evil counsel, but even have any part in it? For whatever evil is done is rightly imputed, not to the King, but to his aged advisers.

LETTER CCXXIII. (A.D. 1143.)

TO THE BISHOP OF SOISSONS

Bernard excuses himself courteously to the Bishop, who had replied to his former letter in such a way that this was the salutation, “Health in the Lord and not the spirit of calumny.”

1. I do not think that I have in me anything of the spirit of calumny, but I know certainly that I have never wished nor wish now to curse anyone, especially a prince of my people. But whatever that may be by which your dignity thinks itself wronged, for it I ask pardon, for I know who said, Being defamed we entreat (1 Cor. 4:13). I say, then, with blessed Job, Would that I had not said what I have, and I will say no more (Job 40:5). When I lately wrote to my lord the Abbot of S. Denys about your common complaint I answered both of you, and I thought that I had done enough, and since I see that your anger is not yet appeased, which more justly, perhaps, would have been kindled against the oppressors of the Church, I also say to you that I never said, wrote, or believed that you were schismatics or promoters of scandal, and I say so with an easy mind, for I am not afraid that my letter will convict me of falsehood. Examine it, if you please, and if you find that I said so I will confess that I have been guilty of great profanity, and that what you say is true, that I wrote the letter impelled by a spirit of calumny.

2. But lest my humble explanation seem to exclude the spirit of liberty, let me say that I grieved, and I do still, to find that you do not yet avenge the wrongs of Christ or defend the liberty of the Church with the liberty that is fitting. That grief compelled me to write severe things, but they were not of the spirit that you complained of. I thought certainly, and I would still think if I were not afraid that this would offend you, that it is by no means enough for you not to be the authors of the schism. You should, with all your strength, freely restrain those who are the authors, whatever their rank may be, and condemn their counsel and society. I should think it an honour to you if you too could say, I have hated the

congregation of the wicked, and will not sit among the ungodly (Ps. 26:5). Was it that prophet alone that zeal befitted, and is it not as much required now from a priest of the Lord to say with him, Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? (Ps. 139:21). I much wish (and with no wish to anger your Serenity I will say it) that you had exercised this zeal against the young King, who, more like a cruel tyrant than a boy, has gone against your advice and his own promises, who, without cause, is disturbing his kingdom, stirring up all round him wars in heaven and earth, laying waste the churches, laying an impious hand on sacred things, exalting the wicked, persecuting the good, and destroying the innocent. I repeat that I wish you were sorry for these things, that you would withstand and resist them to the best of your power. But it is not my place to teach such an one as Magister Joscelyn, much less to rebuke a Bishop, who should rather punish me and other sinners and correct those who err. You see how much I fear you. Since you thought ill of my last letter being open I send you this one sealed, for certainly I meant nothing else by it than to follow the usual practice of not sealing with wax a letter sent to different people. I now ask your pardon for so doing also.

LETTER CCXXIV. (A.D. 1143.)

TO STEPHEN, BISHOP OF PRAENESTE

Bernard details the ill-doings of King Louis, and his injuries to the Church.

1. Jeremiah when addressing God for his enemies speaks in this way: Remember that I stood before Thee to speak good for them, and to turn away Thy wrath from them; and he goes on to say, therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and give them into the power of the sword (Jer. 18:20, 21). And he calls down on them other imprecations of this sort, and quite as grievous. I thought that I might now remind your Reverence of this passage, because I find that I am in a condition like that of the Prophet. For you know how I too stood up for the King in the sight of my Lord, being, indeed, absent in body, but present in spirit, that I might speak good for him. He, indeed, promised well. But now that he returns evil for good I am compelled to write differently. I am ashamed of my mistake, and of the groundless hope which I entertained of him; and I am thankful that the prayer which I put up in my simplicity was not answered. I thought that I was serving a peaceful king, and I find that I was helping a bitter enemy to the Church. Our holy things are trodden under his feet, and the Church is shamefully enslaved. For not only is it forbidden to hold

elections of Bishops, but if the clergy anywhere have ventured to do so, the prelate of their choice is not allowed to exercise his episcopal functions. In short, the Church of Paris is sitting in sadness, deprived of her own pastor, and no one dares so much as to whisper about finding another.

2. It is not enough for him that the episcopal residences are spoiled of the goods now in them; his sacrilegious hand is raging against men and lands everywhere, for he claims from each for himself the revenues of the whole year as well. The Church of Châlons has, indeed, held an election, but he who was elected has been now for a long time deprived of his honour, and you know that this cannot take place without grievous loss to the Lord's flock. The King has charged his brother Robert to administer the Bishopric, and he, exercising his power over all the lands and goods of the Church, and being not slothful in the execution of his office, is offering daily sacrifices to heaven, not, indeed, sacrifices of peace, but the cries of the poor, the tears of widows, the wailing of orphans, the groans of captives, and the blood of the slain. But that episcopate is too narrow for his wickedness, so he is now attacking Rheims, and carrying on his ill-deeds in the land of the saints, sparing neither clerks, nor monks nor nuns. In short, he has laid waste with the edge of the sword the fruitful fields and populous villages of S. Mary, S. Remigius, S. Nicasius, S. Thierry in such a way that he has reduced them all to almost a wilderness. The cry is frequently heard by all, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession (Ps. 88:12). So does the King improve upon the wrong he has done to the Church of Bourges under an oath like Herod's.

3. Moreover, when, after we had expended no little labour on the matter, he had made peace with Count Theobald, and as we thought, had entered on a treaty of firm friendship: but now he seeks occasion to withdraw from his friend. This is brought as a heinous charge against the Count, that he is making matrimonial alliances for his children with the King's barons. A loosening of friendship is suspected by the King in this, and he does not think himself a king if his chieftains love each other. Your wisdom may conjecture what kind of disposition he bears towards his subjects when he thinks himself the stronger, if there is hatred and discord between them. You may see and determine whether this man is of God, who trusts more in the mutual rivalry of his barons than their mutual love, when God is love (1 S. John 4:8). He would hold this if he had the wisdom of him who said, Love is strong as death, Jealousy is cruel as the grave (Cant. 8:6). Besides, he openly breaks his conventions and terms of peace agreed on, and does not hold himself to the promises which his own lips have uttered.

Lastly, he has recalled to his palace and to his Council an adulterous and excommunicate man [Ralph] whom he had agreed to banish, and in order to work greater wickedness, the King, and official guardian of the Church, is a second time leagued with many other like worthless characters, excommunicated and perjured men, incendiaries, murderers, and this against one of whose love for the Church and willingness to defend her there is no doubt, according to the saying of the Prophet, When thou sawest a thief thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with the adulterers (Ps. 50:18).

4. In addition to all this, he compels bishops, after his custom, to curse those who should be blessed, and to bless those who should be cursed. And since he sets no bounds to what it may please him to do, he compasses sea and land to find perjurers by whose means those whom God has joined together may be by man put asunder. With what face, I ask, can he endeavour so hard to lay down laws to others about consanguinity when, as is well known, he is living with his cousins within the third degree? I do not know (for I have never to my knowledge praised, nor do I now, any forbidden marriages) whether there is any consanguinity between the son of Count Theobald and the daughter of the Count of Flanders, and also between the Count of Soissons and the daughter of Count Theobald: but you know, and my lord knows, that their nuptials are forbidden. If it is lawful for them to be united, then their being forbidden is the disarming of the Church, and the withdrawal of strength from her. Nor do I suppose that the object of those who oppose him is anything else but to prevent those who venture to withstand the schism which is threatened, from finding refuge in the territories of the aforenamed princes. So far my zeal carries me. For I have no power to redress the faults which I have been able to point out. I have, however, been able to warn him who can. The zeal of my lord will do this. I thought it necessary that he should be informed of the great suffering and danger of the Church, and no one can do it so well as you, who share his counsels and spirit. And I pray you have me excused with him for writing with altered pen now that the King has altered, for you know that the Prophet of God said to God, With the innocent thou shall be innocent, and with the perverse man Thou shalt show Thyself perverse (Ps. 18:26).

LETTER CCXXV. (A.D. 1143.)

TO THE BISHOP OF SOISSONS

Bernard urges him to promote peace.

We have worked hard, but it is a question whether we have made much progress. We have sown much, but reaped little. We want, I must tell you, your help and presence. You will hear from our common friend, the Abbot of S. Denys, why we did not seek your help before in our great strait. But now I appeal to your holy watchfulness to dissemble no more, but to labour for the things which make for peace according to the wisdom given you by God. For you ought not to need entreaty to take such action, since it is evident that by it your ministry is not only greatly honoured, but also that if you neglect it, it is greatly disgraced. I hope to see you at the festival announced to be held at S. Denys.

LETTER CCXXVI. (A.D. 1143.)

TO LOUIS, KING OF THE FRENCH

Bernard and Hugo complain of the King's persistence in ill-doing.

To Louis, by the grace of God illustrious King of the French, and Duke of Aquitaine, HUGH, Bishop of Auxerre, his humble servant, and BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wish health, and desire that he should love righteousness, and judge his land in wisdom.

1. It is a long time since we left our homes and set aside our private interests in order to labour, as God is our witness, for your peace, and the peace of your realm. We lament that so far we have reaped no fruit, or very little, in return for all our labour. Still the poor are crying after us, still the land is daily going to ruin. Do you ask what land? Yours, none other. For it is within your realm, and against your realm that all these evils are being perpetrated. For whether it be your friends or your enemies who are being impoverished, taken prisoners, and crushed by that war, they are from nowhere else than your kingdom. In it the saying of the Saviour seems to be daily coming true, that every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation (S. Luke 11:17). To this there is added the fact that these dividers and desolators themselves have made you the head and leader of this wickedness, when they ought to have feared you especially as their opponent, and felt you most of all as their punisher. Still, we hoped that you, touched and illuminated by God, had perceived their great wickedness, had recognized your error, and were desirous under wiser counsels to withdraw your foot from this snare.

2. But the conference lately held between us at Corbeil, has dispelled any such hope. For you know how, and how unreasonably (by your leave be it said) you

then left us. Whence it happened that your displeasure with us did not allow us to give you any clear explanation of that passage in our discourse which displeased you. But if you had deigned to await it with undisturbed mind you might, perhaps, have learnt that nothing was said by us that was an insult to your majesty, or unendurable in the present position of your affairs. But, as it is, since you have been provoked without any cause, you have disturbed and confused us, and you also keep us, being men who desire and seek your good, in doubt and anxiety as to what we are to do. What has disturbed you is nothing but the fraud of the wicked, and the idle talk of men who know little, who call evil good and good evil. But though we have been troubled, yet we do not altogether despair of the help of the Spirit, who, we see, has wholesomely smitten your mind for your past evil deeds, and we still stand and wait till your better nature return, and you effectually accomplish what you have wisely begun. For this reason we have sent to you our dear brother Andrew of Baudiment, who will tell you of these things more fully, and will faithfully bring back word to us of whatever reply you may have been pleased to give. But if (which God forbid) you persist in withstanding good advice, we are clean from your blood; God will not any longer suffer His Church to be trodden down either by you or yours.

LETTER CCXXVII. (A.D. 1143.)

TO THE BISHOP OF SOISSONS

Bernard earnestly implores the help of the Bishop.

I have always stood in need of my friends' good offices, for I am a man greatly to be pitied in mind and body; but now especially is the need and time for pity when my conscience is troubling me, when the hand of the Lord is heavy upon me, when I have sold myself into a hard prison, and am a severe judge against myself. If you are still my father (for I confess you have been hitherto) let your son feel it, that son whose filial affection has not grown cool to this day. I know, I know how difficult it is to wrest his club from the hand of Hercules, and I am on that account the more urgent, because I seek a difficult thing. But the more difficult it is the more earnestly do I entreat the bestowal of it. If I obtain it I shall confess myself a debtor for a great, a very great kindness. And I am not ignorant that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35); but I yield to necessity, I go to meet dangers, I take counsel in my difficulties, and for the time being I either put aside or forget my selfishness. And so yielding to you, as is fitting, the more honourable place I take for myself the more modest; I

show my modesty not only in being indecorously ready to receive, but also more importunate in asking. I ask, then, suppliantly, instantly, opportunely, importunately. For I do not ask anything which it does not become you to grant, or which will bring me shame afterwards for having accepted, even if it does not become me now to seek it in this way. For if you set free the poor man from the hand of the powerful in this you will benefit me very much, but most of all yourself. I have made known my wish, you know the affair, the afflicted now await the result to them.

LETTER CCXXVIII. (A.D. 1143.)

TO PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY

Bernard complains that he did not reply to him.

To the Reverend father and lord PETER, by the grace of God Abbot of the Cluniacs, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends his humble greetings.

1. I should wish to think that you are pleased to joke in your letter; if such is the fact, and if I ought not to see anything unkind in what you say, then I allow that you are treating me well and like a friend. Do not wonder at this. For your sudden and unexpected condescension makes me doubtful about this. For it is not long ago, when writing to you, I saluted your Greatness with due reverence, and you answered me not a word. Not long before that I again wrote to you from Rome, and not even then did I get a single word in reply. Do you now wonder that when you lately returned from Spain I did not presume again to trouble you with my chatter? For if it is a fault not to have written for some cause or other, to have had no mind to write, nay, more, to have despised writing, you will surely not be altogether without blame. You see what I might urge with justice (since you require it of me); but I prefer to go and meet goodwill when returning than to delay its return while I try needlessly to excuse myself or to accuse another. I have merely said this so that I might not keep anything in my mind without giving it utterance, for this true friendship forbids. For the future, let all suspicion be now removed, for charity believeth all things (1 Cor. 13:7). I rejoice that you have been stirred to a recollection of our former friendship, and to recall the friend that you had wronged. Now that I am recalled I gladly return. I am happy to be recalled. Henceforward I remember no wrongs. Here am I, now as then, the devoted servant of your Holiness. I give thanks that the lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, inasmuch as I am again admitted to your intimacy, as you kindly write that I am. If by any chance I had grown lukewarm, as you

complain, no doubt I should quickly become hot again when nourished by the warmth of your charity.

2. And now I must say that what you have been pleased to write I have received with outstretched hands. I have read it eagerly; I read it again with pleasure, and the oftener I read it the more pleasure it gives me. I must say that I like your pleasantry. For it is at once agreeable from its gaiety, and serious from its gravity. I do not know how it is that you manage to mingle grave and gay in such a way that your pleasantry does not savour of lightness, and, while you preserve your dignity, the pleasantness of your mirth is not lessened. Further, you so preserve your dignity that the saying of holy Job can be applied to you: If I laughed on them they believed it not (Job 29:24). Well, you see that I have replied, and I think that now I may rightly demand more than you promised. It is right that you should know how things are here. I have determined not to leave the monastery again except for the annual meeting of Abbots at Cîteaux. Here, supported by your prayers and good offices, I will wait for the few remaining days of my warfare, till my change comes. May God be gracious to me, and not withdraw from me your prayers or His mercy. I am broken in strength, and I have a valid excuse for not travelling about as I used to do. I will sit still and be silent, to see if perchance I may experience what from the fulness of his sweetness the holy Prophet says, It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord (Lam. 3:26). And, that you may not seem the only one to joke, I suppose that you will not again venture to chide me for my silence, and, after your manner, to call that sloth, which I think the Prophet Isaiah more fittingly and more properly calls the cultivation of righteousness (Isaiah 32:17), about which you read in his Prophecy, where he says from the Lord: In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength (Isaiah 30:15). Commend me to the prayers of your sacred Convent of Cluny; salute it first from me, the servant of all, if you think fit.

LETTER CCXXIX. (A.D. 1143.)

PETER THE VENERABLE, TO ABBOT BERNARD

He courteously answers Bernard’s letter, and at the same time explains the causes of the strife between the Cluniacs and Cistercians.

To him who is to be honoured with special veneration, to be embraced closely with the arms of entire affection, the inseparable guest of my heart, my Lord BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, his brother PETER, humble Abbot of the

Cluniacs, wishes the eternal salvation which he longs for.

1. Since I am found to be long in replying to the sweet and pleasant letter of my friend, to which I ought to have sent an answer directly with equal good will, your Holiness will perhaps wonder why I have not done so, and will, I am afraid, put it down to indolence or contempt. But do not think that it is either, for both are absent; for I have hardly ever been so glad to receive anything in the way of a letter, or so careful in reading it. The cause of my long silence was partly the bearer of it, who, when he came to Cluny, and did not find me there, though I was not very far away, being at Marigny, neither brought it nor sent it on to me but left it at Cluny. But I do not wish to accuse the good man; I believe that he was hindered from going to me by some business which he had to do, or by the severity of the winter, which was then upon us. I, too, was kept in that place for a month, partly by the snow, partly by business, and returned home with difficulty at the beginning of Lent. Then at length I received your letter from the Sub-Prior, to whom it had been given. My heart was drawn to you immediately; and though my affection for you was great before, it was kindled into a flame by the loving breath that came through your letter, and no room was then left for coldness or lukewarmness. I was drawn, I say, and so drawn to you, that I did what I cannot recollect that I have before done, except to the Sacred Books, I kissed affectionately your letter as soon as I had read it. And then I read again to some of the brethren what I had before read to myself, and I exhorted them with all my heart to greater love for you. I would stir up those whom I can influence, and I wish I could influence all to imitate your charity; I always endeavour to do this. Then I laid it by, and placed it among the gold and silver which, after the custom handed down to me by my fathers, I am in the habit of carrying with me to distribute in alms. Nor was it unfitting. For your favour to me, your charity is precious to me above all gold and silver.

2. I wished to write to you on the next day all that was in my mind; but I was prevented by business which made other claims on me daily, nay, continuously, and I kept silence. My hard taskmaster, whom I had no power to resist, imposed silence on me, and the care of an infinite number of matters forced me to hold my peace not for one day, but for many. And so a fortnight passed by, then a whole month, then several months in succession, during which I was always making attempts to write but was not allowed by the said taskmaster. At length I broke the galling chain, and though with difficulty, I threw aside the yoke of my burden, and the sceptre of my tyrant, by writing stealthily. And lest I seem to labour too much in making excuse for my tardiness in replying I must say that

you yourself have forced me to make my excuse when you said, “It is not long since I wrote to you, and saluted your Crown with fitting veneration, and you answered me not a word; and not long before I wrote to you from Rome, and not even then did I get a syllable. Do you now wonder that when you lately returned from Spain I did not presume to trouble you again with my chatter? But if it is a fault to have not written for some reason or other, to have been unwilling to write, not to say to have disdained to write, you will surely not be altogether without blame.”

3. But what shall I say? Simply this: I would never make any excuse for the fault which you charge me with, if it had been from contempt that I had not answered your letter. For I admit that, if you had written first, I ought to have answered you; but as far as I can recollect, while you were at Rome I wrote first and you answered. It was not then my turn to write in answer, inasmuch I had been the first to write, but yours. Certainly I might have written in reply to your answer, but your answer was so full and completely satisfactory that it freed me from any necessity to write further. And if this is the state of the case, the fault that you speak of seems to be deserting me and looking towards you; for you have been endeavouring to lay blame on one that is blameless, and to lay on the shoulders of an unoffending brother other people’s burdens, not to say your own. But to what you say about my having done the same thing on another occasion I have no answer, for I have no recollection of it. If by some chance it did happen I have no doubt that there was a reasonable cause, or if not I will make you my humble apologies. But you went on to say, “You see what I might urge with justice.” I answer: At present, according to the reasons given above, justice rather makes for me, because no fault at all is found in me. Now, if I were not inclined to spare you, and if I were to apply to myself the name of an injured friend which you say you can claim, I should have good cause to exact a penalty for the wrong or injury that you have done me. But after my custom I spare you, and even though not asked, I freely forgive you everything. “I keep in mind,” as you said, “no injuries.” For this is but a fitting introduction to what I am going to say: I am about to endeavour to banish from the hearts of many their well-known feelings of resentment against each other, and I am going to do this not in jest, but in sober earnestness; and I intend to induce you to banish all such feelings. Let me be the first to extend forgiveness to everyone, and set the example of doing what I endeavour to press on others.

4. But perhaps you will say again, “I should wish to believe that you are pleased to joke?” Yes, I do please; but only with you. I do not jest like this with

others. For with some, to pass the limits of dignified gravity is to run the risk of being thought frivolous; but I am not afraid of this from you; I seek after charity, lest haply I lose her. And, therefore, it is always pleasant for me to talk with you, and by friendly words to preserve the sweet honey of charity. I do my best to prevent myself being in the number of those brethren who hated Joseph in their hearts, and could speak no peaceful word to him (Gen. 37:4). Would that all your brethren and mine would do so (I do not speak boastfully), and would not deviate from the line of charity, by which alone after faith and the Sacrament of Baptism, they are entitled to the name of brethren, and by which they are united to each other in a close relationship; and that they would fear what the Apostle speaks of when he says, Peril amongst false brethren (2 Cor. 11:26). Would that they would all do this, and would keep their heart from the deceitful thought, and their tongue from the bitter word, according to the Psalm which is so often in their mouth. What I have said seems to make large promises, and as if it were a preparation for great achievements. But lest the well-known verse, “What will this man, lavish in promises, produce worthy of so pretentious an opening?” (Horace, Ars Poetica v. 138) be applied to me, I must confess that I not only have no urgent cause for writing, but not even an important or moderately good one; still I am speaking of those things which worldly men think great and even most important, and from which the children of this world hope to become great and powerful. Yet my cause is a great one, and so far surpassing all others, that by the Apostle it is called more excellent than all. If you ask its name he calls it charity (1 Cor. 12:31 and 13.).

5. This is my whole and sole cause of writing; I fully trust that I have it entirely as far as you are concerned, and I do not despair of seeing your brethren and mine preserve it towards each other, better than they have been wont to do, especially if you give your assistance to effect this. For as far as that charity goes which for many a year I have had stored up for you in the secret recesses of my heart, it seems to me that, as it is written, many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods drown it (Cant. 8:7). This I think has often been proved in different cases. For when will my sincere love for you be ever quenched, or the warm affection of my heart be drowned by any rivulets of evil report, when neither the many waters of the tithe question could quench it, nor the floods of the troubles at Langres drown it. You know what I mean, and I only say this in order that your wisdom may be sure, when it recollects the proofs of my constant love for you in the past, that I am likely to be equally constant in the future. I feel sure of the same in you, and I trust that no power will ever banish me from the innermost

depths of your heart. But since each of us is called a pastor; since our folds are filled with no small number of Christ's sheep; since to both the precept applies, Be thou diligent to know well the countenance of the flock (Prov. 27:23), we have to see if our flock is known to us, if it is well, if it languishes, if it is feeble, if it is robust, if it is living or dead. For since the beloved disciple says, He that loveth not abideth in death (1 S. John 3:14), why am I anxious about the weakness of my flock, when I see that it is already dead? For if he who loveth not abideth in death, in what death does he abide who hates? if he who loveth not abideth in death, in what death is he who is given to detraction? For what purpose do I say this?

6. I see that certain persons, as well from my folds as yours, have engaged in deadly warfare against each other; and that those who ought to live in the house of the Lord as friends, have fallen from mutual charity. I see that they are of the family of the same Lord, soldiers of the same King, that they bear the same name of Christians, and are alike called monks. I perceive that they are bound to till their Master's field, not only by the yoke of a common faith, but beyond that by the yoke of the same monastic rule, and this under many different forms of toil. Yet, though, as I said, they are joined by a common name, united by the monastic profession, some hidden and accursed difference separates them, and splits up that sincere unity of hearts, to which they seem to have been called. And, O lamentable event! not to be worthily atoned for by any founts of tears, the haughty archangel, who was once cast down from heaven, has again seized heavenly places, and he, who could not establish his seat in the north, has strengthened it in the south, that is, in the more splendid part of the sky. Truly it is so, he may boast that he has done so, when, after driving out Him who dwells in the heavens, whose abiding place was made, not for mutual hatred, but for brotherly concord, he lords it, after the fashion of a tyrant, over the minds of men whose profession is heavenly, whose example is conspicuous. And since the Stronger Man has come and overcome the strong man who had been long guarding his palace in peace; since the prince of this world was cast out; since his throne, who is the King of the children of pride, has been overturned even amongst Christian laymen; with what lamentations must we mourn, I pray you, if Satan, after having the throne of his wickedness overturned in others, should again erect it in the hearts of monks? God forbid that he, who is said to have been rendered so helpless by the Saviour as to suffer himself to be bound by His handmaidens, and to be a laughing stock to His servants, should mock at His servants and handmaidens, and bring them once more under vile bondage to him.

7. But why do they oppose each other? why do they rail at each other? why are they consumed the one by the other? Let them bring forward the ground of their strife, and if they can bring any just cause of complaint against each other let it be ended by being entrusted to the decision of just arbitrators. What do you demand, I ask, my brother, from your brother? and to comprehend in two words all who are at variance, What do you demand, O Cluniac brother, from your Cistercian brother, and vice versâ? If it is cities, camps, farmhouses, farms, if the possession of any land whether small or great; if, in short, it is gold, silver, or any quantity or quality of money that the quarrel is about, come, I say, bring forward the claim. There are judges not of iniquity, but of equity ready to put an end at once to all strifes of this kind. Peace will easily be restored, and the wounds of charity healed, as soon as we know that such a separation of hearts has been brought about by these things or others like them. But I recollect that both of you have cast off all such things, that you have kept for yourselves no earthly goods, that, enriched with a blessed poverty, you have determined to follow the poverty of Christ. This, then, cannot be the ground of your quarrel. But I will not give over, I will not weary, I will not rest until I come to the bottom of the truth that I am in search of.

8. Perhaps the cause of your strife is the difference in your customs, in the observance of the monastic rule. But if this, dearly beloved, is the cause of so great an evil, it is, let me say it with the permission of both of you, very unreasonable, very childish and foolish. For does not that which is destitute of all reason, and whose soundness every wise man denies, seem to you unreasonable, childish, and foolish? For if a difference in customs, if manifold variety in an infinite number of things ought to rob the servants of Christ of mutual charity, what peace, or concord, or unity, or how much of the law of Christ will be left, not only to monks, but to any Christians, about which a great Apostle says, Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ? If, I say, the law of Christ, that is charity, is to be abandoned by all who follow different uses, it will simply be found nowhere any more. For when it shall have been rejected by all who follow a different custom it will be nowhere to be found. Has not, dearly beloved, the whole earth long since been filled with the Churches of Christ? And since the Churches which serve God in the same faith and the same charity are almost numberless, almost as great a variety of uses is found amongst them as there are churches. You will find this in the canticles, in the lections, in all the Church offices, in the different vestments; you will find it, too, in different fasts which are observed in addition to the authorized ones

which cannot be changed; you will find it in all similar things, which according to differences of times, places, nations, and countries, have been instituted by the prelates of the Church, to whom, according to the Apostle, it belongs to give orders in such things as they may see fit (Rom. 14:5). Have all those churches abandoned charity because they have changed their custom? Will they cease to be Christians because they seem to differ in their uses? Will the great gift of peace be lost by all because each one works what is good in a way different from the rest? Not so thought Ambrose, a Doctor of the Church, in word and in life, who, speaking of the Saturday fast which he had seen kept at Rome, and which he had found was not observed at Milan when he was made Bishop, says: "When I am at Rome I observe the fast kept by the Church at Rome; when at Milan I follow the custom of its Church and do not fast" (Apud Aug. cp. 54). Hence, also, our father Augustine, in describing the devotion of his good mother, relates that she, according to the custom which she had seen observed in the African Churches, wished to offer her oblations at Milan contrary to the custom of the Churches of Italy, but was forbidden by Ambrose (S. Aug. Confess, lib. vi. c. 2).

9. But why labour this point? To no purpose is it to surround what is so evident with manifold testimonies and examples, especially since neither in ancient times a difference in the time of observing Easter, nor in modern a well-known variation between Greek and Latin in the way of offering the Christian sacrifice, had any power to wound charity, or to produce any breach of unity. The Holy Fathers are witnesses to this, and their received writings which they left to the Church, that the East in former times kept Easter at one time, the West at another, the Angles in Britain at another, and the Scots at another. We, too, witness the same thing in our own time, for we see the Roman Church and the whole Latin race offer to God the life-giving sacrifice with unleavened bread; while the Greek Church and the greatest part of the East and barbarian nations who are Christians are said to sacrifice with leavened bread. But in spite of this neither ancients nor moderns have departed from mutual charity because of these well-known varieties of customs, for they found nothing in all this to wound faith or charity. But why do I say this? In order that, if your minds, brethren, have been alienated because of the variety in your uses, if they have grown weak in their love of peace and unity because of this or that custom handed down by the founders of the Churches, that by so venerable examples of such holy Fathers they may become one again, and after the way of the saints, who out of weakness were made strong, and became brave in the battle, may become too

strong for any disease by shrinking from all weakening of charity.

10. But you will say: “Variety of uses must be understood in a different sense in the case of different Churches than in men of the same Order. If the customs of many Churches vary without any damage to faith or charity, it is nothing wonderful; but it is wonderful if men of the same purpose and profession do not preserve the same kind of rules.” Is this all, dearly beloved, that divides you from each other? Is this the only blow to charity amongst yourselves? Is this the only thing which prevents the children of peace from being at peace with each other? If even a layman made for peace with those who hated peace (Ps. 120:7), shall monk strive with monk in an accursed war? The child of the light loves the children of darkness to prevent the gift of peace being disturbed, and shall the child of the light fight against the child of the light? I refer this to the purpose, not to the monk. If, indeed, it is only this that is troubling your minds, if this is the sole cause of the wound of charity, it will be soon healed, if only there be no obstinacy. See, then, that love of your own opinion do not darken the light of your understanding, for no one deserves to attain to unity who does not seek her for herself, but rather seeks to have his own way. I therefore ask you to consider whether the cause of your disunion is a just one, without any desire to defend your own side or your own opinions, and when you find it to be an unjust one I ask you to become once more of one heart and of one soul. For each of you is fighting under the same rule, and under that particular rule each hopes to be able to attain to everlasting salvation. But if neither is to be disappointed of his hope I know not what place can now be left for discord, division, or reproaches.

11. For you said that it is a wonderful thing if men of the same purpose and profession do not observe the same kind of rules. My answer is: What does it matter if men of the same purpose and profession do not observe the same rules, if by their different observances they alike attain to the same salvation and everlasting life? What does it matter, what is the objection, if they come to the same Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all, by a different path, if a different road leads to the same land, if the same life is attained by manifold ways? For if thou, O Cluniac, knewest that the Cistercian, or thou, O Cistercian, knewest that the Cluniac was making a mistake in the object that he had put before him, or if, according to the Scripture, you saw that he was proceeding to his ruin along a road which seemed to men to be right, you would be justified, I admit, in correcting or calling back your brother, and even, if he refused to listen to you, in reproaching him and invoking God against him. Then, indeed, if you were to reproach him, to withstand him, to hate him, I would

admit that you were judging justly, that you were acting rightly, especially when I hear a great prophet saying of such even to God, Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? Yea, I hate them right sore, even as though they were mine enemies (Ps. 139:21, 22.) I should do more, I should rejoice that you were not a deaf hearer of the Scripture, which says: Go, hasten thyself, rouse thy friend, give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids (Prov. 6:3, 4.) And of another: Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood (Jer. 48:10). Then I would readily admit that you had just causes for hatred, and I myself, girt with the sword of zeal, would accompany you in your outgoings to subdue the enemies of God, and those who, according to the Apostle, work a lie in hypocrisy (1 Tim. 4:2). But, as it is, I see that both of you are striving to rise from earth to heaven under the same rule, under different but yet holy observances, and so running by different courses for the same prize in order that you may obtain it; and so, it seems to me, you have no cause of anger, hatred, or reproach left you.

12. But you further ask me to prove what I have said, and to show how, under the same Rule, or profession of the same Rule, a monk can safely travel by diverse paths. I have an answer ready enough for this, and there is not wanting either authority or reason. Thou, O Cluniac, in thy way, thou, O Cistercian, in thine, canst alike travel happily along the road of God’s commandments, and still more happily attain to the due end of thy course. And because I have already appealed to the authority which in such things is to be first consulted, in what follows I will show that reason is not absent, though she follow at a moderate distance.

13. But what is your objection, my brother? “I say that those who have professed the same rule do not observe alike the commands of that rule.” What you say is true, that in some chapters the commands of the same Rule are differently observed by the professed. But do not suppose that, therefore, monks of this class are to be blamed; do not for this dare to accuse them of unfaithfulness. Listen to a heavenly authority, that of the King of the heavens: If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light (S. Luke 11:34.) Hear, too, the Apostle: Let all your things be done with charity (1 Cor. 16:14.) Hear, too, S. Augustine: “Have charity and do what you will.” Hear, too, him who drew up your rule, or rather the Holy Spirit who inspired it: “Let the Abbot order and arrange everything so that souls may be saved; and whatever the brethren do, let them do it without murmuring” (Reg. S. Bened. c. 41.) What can be more clear, more open, more lucid? Does not the very flow of the words themselves

show that they are altogether without cloud, and show to mortals the clear light of truth, without any intervening veil of clouds? Behold, the Heavenly Teacher says that all your body, my brother, depends for its light on the singleness of your eye; that is, that all your works must have purity of intention. After Him, the greatest doctor of the Church bids all your works to be done in charity; lo, the greatest instructor of the Church, after the Apostles, says that you may do what you will so long as charity remains; lo, your father Benedict himself, on whom you rely, orders the Abbot to direct all things so that souls may be saved, and that there may be no murmuring; and are you afraid for the salvation of those who follow different paths under the same Rule? Do you not see that those are safest from every danger whose precepts find their defence, according to the Rule itself, against every shade of variety or blame because of difference, in the intention of saving souls?

14. But now, that you may see that reason also is entirely on the side of the authorities above given, and clings to them inseparably, I must mention some points bearing on the question before us, in which some things are shown to have been changed because of the single eye, through love unfeigned, and from the intention of saving souls. For when I have shown these I shall leave nothing, I think, for you to ask further, so far as this matter goes. For you use a single eye in not opening the gate of the cloister to a novice till after a year's probation; because, according to the words of the Apostle (1 S. John 4:1) and of the Rule (Reg. S. Ben. c. 58), you test for the space of a year the spirit of the new-comer, whether it be of God. You use, too, the single eye when you admit a novice within the year from the fear that through so long delay he may return to his mire again, and to the detestable evil of his former life. You use, too, the single eye when you content yourself with two tunics, or two cowls, or with the addition of one or two garments of this sort, because you prefer to follow, if not the precept (Reg. S. Ben. 100:55), at all events the mind and intention of the founder of the Rule, than to add or assume other garments. You use, too, the single eye when you allow the use of a few skins, because you make provision for the sickly, the infirm, the delicate, for all who live in colder climates, so as to prevent their murmuring, or growing remiss, or having reasonable cause to retire from their purpose. You use, too, the single eye when you receive back all fugitives who have not fled three times, because you wish both to obey the words of the Rule (Reg. S. Ben. 100:29), and to deter foolish or unstable monks from repeated desertion, by fixing a limit beyond which there is no return. You use, too, the single eye when you receive back a monk who returns after deserting more than

three times, from a fear lest by refusing forgiveness he be exposed to the enemy and perish, and so the wolf kill the wandering sheep, just as he is wont to carry off and scatter those within the fold.

15. You use, too, the single eye when you observe, without making any exception, all the usual fasts both in the summer and winter, from your wish to observe the rules imposed, and to bring forth more fruit from a longer abstinence. But, and I say it out of pure charity, I do not altogether recommend that fasts should be observed by everyone during the octaves of Christmas, Epiphany, and the Purification, which in all respects are Lord's Days. You use, too, the single eye when you except from the ordinary observance of fasting days the days which I have just named, and every authorized feast day of twelve lections, from a desire to imitate the custom of nearly all Religious who so observe them, and thus you endeavour to honour the Lord Himself, the Apostles, and other saints. You use, too, the single eye in engaging in manual labour, according to the precept of the Rule (Reg. S. Ben. c. 48), from your wish both to obey the Rule and, by such holy exercises enjoined by monastic and apostolic commands, to avoid sloth, the enemy of the soul, as the same Rule says; and moreover, as far as you have opportunity, it is your wish to provide yourself with the necessaries of life, after the manner of the fathers of old. You use, too, the single eye in partly giving up this manual labour, for you may be placed, not in woods or in desert places, but in the midst of cities and camps, and be surrounded by people, and be unable, without more or less danger, to go backwards and forwards so often to your work through a promiscuous crowd of both sexes, and besides you often have not suitable places where you can engage in such works. But lest leisure, the foe of religious, find opportunity to harm you when you have nothing to do, either you do manual work when and where you can, or when you cannot, you make up for it by giving up the extra time to the Divine Offices, and so the evil spirit can claim for himself no empty corner in your heart, seeing that you fill up all your time with what holy pursuits are in your power.

16. You use, too, the single eye in reverencing Christ in every guest who comes or goes, with bowed head or with body prostrate on the ground, and in washing the feet of all, and so you do, as is fitting, all that you can to carry out carefully the good precept of hospitality, enjoined alike by the Gospel and the decrees of the Rule (Reg. S. Ben. c. 53), and you strive to win for yourself the reward due to such a proof of holy brotherly love. You use, too, the single eye in not prostrating yourself before all guests, in not washing the feet of all, because

it would be simply impossible for you to be always prostrating yourself before so great crowds of guests as are constantly coming and going, or to be always washing their feet, so much so that, even if you wished to be always engaged in such duties and were to leave out all the other offices of your Order, you would not have enough time. And because you see it is out of your power to do it, you omit it. What is necessary for the reception of guests you give them to the best of your power, and you show them all the honour in your power, but you excuse yourself from the above duties, which it is physically impossible for you to fulfil; but yet you do this in all singleness of eye. You use, too, the single eye in your wish that the Abbot's table should be always filled with guests and pilgrims, because you at once obey the Rule (Reg. S. Ben. c. 56) and show yourself hospitable to guests. You use, too, the single eye when you determine that the Abbot's table should not be always with the guests, but that he should have his meals always with the brethren, and by recalling him to the common table you thus apply a remedy to the profusion (to use a mild term) of many an Abbot who, when he has guests, is generous to himself but heedless of his brethren.

17. You use the single eye when, like Ezra, who restored the Law, or like the Maccabees, who raised up the temple of God which was in ruins, you labour to make good the great losses of the Monastic Order, and to repair the many rents in many monasteries and in their customs, and, while rejecting what is more of luxury than of necessity, you endeavour, after the manner of the old and original fervour, to banish the lukewarmness of our times. And you use the single eye when you so modify the commands both of the Order and of the Rule, that, according to the words of the same Rule (Reg. S. Ben. c. 64), what the strong want is not distasteful to the weak, as, e.g., when he who cannot live on bread is allowed to have at least milk, so as to preserve life, and when he who has not breath enough to obtain the prize set before him by running at great speed, is taught to win it at least by the slower walking pace, because he who returns to his country after a year is called as much an inhabitant of it as he who returns after a month. And I say this without meaning to prejudice the different kinds of toil of the wayfarers, because, according to the Apostle, Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour (1 Cor. 3:8). You have S. Benedict himself as your authority in this, although, as he himself says, you are not bound to follow his written precepts when charity bids otherwise. Still you find pleasure in showing your devotion to so great a man by following his directions merely because they are his. You have him, too, as the authority for your bye-

laws, inasmuch as he directs all his precepts to be carried out according to the rule of charity, and to be made subservient in some way or other to the salvation of souls. You have S. Maur also, his principal disciple, who was sent by him into Gaul, and is said to have altered many points in his rule, following the single eye of which I have said so much. You have, besides, very many fathers of monasteries after him, whose holy life and numerous miracles worked by them through the power of God show more clearly than daylight that they have been moved by the Spirit of God to modify the written words of the above-named Rule to suit times, places, and persons.

18. And what can I say more? If you go in a similar way through all the points on which there seems to be difference, you will find everywhere the single eye, which one will call charity, another the desire of saving souls; and you will see that in this way there is no difference, no discord, because all those points which seem to be differently treated become one through charity. To this I add what is yet evident to all, that there is no precept about such matters in the Rule, which has not conditions attached, and which is not left to the discretion of the Abbot. But even if it had been given imperatively, it could not in any way prejudice the single eye, i.e., evangelical charity. For such precepts, as you know, belong to the class of things changeable, and when charity bids, they are to be changed without any fear of transgressing. Nor in this respect ought those who profess the rule to be suspected of unfaithfulness to it; because this rule of the holy father depends on that sublime and general rule, from which and on which according to the words of the Truth, hang all the Law and the Prophets (S. Matt. 22:40). But if the whole Law so hangs, then so does the monastic Rule. Therefore, a monk professing the rule of S. Benedict keeps it aright when he everywhere observes the law of charity, whether in obeying or in changing any of its articles.

19. Well, then, if this was the sole cause of your strife, brethren, does it not seem to you entirely excluded? Ought not the hearts of monks to be united again in brotherly concord when a single-eyed charity harmonizes all those differences which caused your discord? Does it not make many to be one, since it brings to their promised end, viz., their chief good, which is everlasting life, all who follow what good is under the one purpose of the Monastic Order, or of the same Rule, even though it be by different paths. Let there be then, O Jerusalem, peace in thy strength, that there may also follow abundance in thy towers. But lest, perchance, I be found of the number of those who say, Peace, peace, when there is no peace (Jer. 6:14), let us see if there is still remaining any cause for quarrelling, lest a snake dart suddenly from its hiding place while we are asleep

and off our guard, and sting some one of our brethren or yours while we are resting too carelessly.

20. For perhaps the different colours of your habits furnish an incentive to discord, and a manifold variety of garments produces a like difference in your minds. For, as I see too clearly, and as anyone can easily perceive, a black monk looks askance at a white monk when he happens to meet one; and a white monk cannot look a black one straight in the face. I have seen very many black monks, I will not say how often, who, when a white monk meets them, laugh at him as if he were a chimæra or a centaur, or some monster from a foreign country, and signify their amazement in words or by some gesture of the body. On the other hand, I have seen white monks, who before had been talking loudly, and discussing with each other current events, suddenly become dumb on the advent of some black monk, and lay on themselves the necessity of silence, lest they should disclose their secrets to their enemies. I have seen, too, the tongues of both orders silent, but their eyes, hands, and feet eloquent, and I have seen them proclaiming very clearly by their gestures what they were unwilling to make known by words. I have seen the voice silent, the members talkative, and, by a perversion of the order of nature, men, who were taciturn before their fellow men, communicative to stones. On seeing such things I have often been reminded of the words of Solomon, who says of such men: He winketh with his eye, he he striketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually, he soweth discord (Prov. 6:13, 14). O wicked and stubborn device of the evil angel cast out by God! who, unwilling to lose eternal peace alone, gathers to him from wheresoever he can companions of his fall, and, that he may rejoice in a more glorious triumph, he endeavours by the violence of his wickedness to uproot the cedars and firs of the Paradise of God, where he once lived a happy citizen. He is grieved that the crown of heresies has fallen from his head, under which he was wont in early times to divide the Church of God; and seeing no way left to him to damage the faith, now that the Holy Spirit fills the whole earth with belief in it, he turns all his efforts to inflict a wound on mutual charity. For since he cannot now persuade Christians to become infidels, he tries with all his might to prevent them from loving each other. The sect of Arius, of Sabellius, of Novatian, of Donatus, of Pelagius, of the accursed Manes, older than them all, has now perished. Now the clouds of innumerable heresies which darkened the light of the faith have disappeared under the breath of the Spirit of God, and, every mist having been dispersed, have left us the clear light of day. But a hurricane from the south has

succeeded these, and is suddenly endeavouring to throw everything into confusion; and, because the enemy knows that the faith has prevailed, he is trying to make good his earlier losses by injuring charity.

21. But, putting aside lamentation, I will bring back my pen to the matters that I began on. Why, O white monk, does the black colour of your brother's habit, not of his soul, seem hateful to you? Why, O black monk, does the white colour of your brother's habit, not of his soul, seem marvellous to you? Are not you both sheep of the Shepherd who says, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand (S. John 10:27, 28)? And what shepherd, to say nothing of God, but what man ever quarrelled about the different colours of his sheep's wool? Who ever thought about it? Who ever thought that the black were more his sheep than the white, or the white than the black? Who ever cares whether they are black or white, so long as they are of the same flock? But see the wickedness of men, the innocence of the sheep. See the constancy of the brute creation to the nature first given them. See the perversity of nature in the rational creature? Did ever any white ram scorn a black one? Did ever any black ewe loathe a white one? Do they not fill the shepherd's folds in common, peacefully, without any disturbance, without any quarrel about the difference of their colour, without giving him any anxiety? Sometimes, indeed, one ram butts another with his horns, one ewe will thrust at another, but it is not any difference of colour that provokes them to fight, but the kindling of the hasty resentment which is natural to all animals. But now I see that man, being in honour, hath no understanding, but is more foolish than the beast; and, what is more pitiful still, a monk cuts himself off from the unity of charity because of some variation of colour. Do not, my brother, do not, if you wish to be a sheep of Christ, quarrel about a difference of clothing, for the Good Shepherd casts out of His fold none except him whom, not difference of colour, but a rupture of faith or charity separates from the Hock of His sheep. He does not, I say, cut off anyone from His flock because of his colour. From widely-separated countries, from diverse religions, He has gathered together Jew and Gentile alike in the one fold of the Christian faith.

22. This, perhaps, has been taught you by the patience of the holy patriarch Jacob, who, without repining, allowed Laban to change his wages ten times. He has shown us how to make no difference between black and white or different kinds of cattle by showing the good disposition and care which a good shepherd shows for all parts of his many-coloured flock (Gen. 30.). And the Apostle says,

In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (Gal. 6:15). And in another place, Where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11). Who, then, can have so childish a mind as to think that it matters anything to salvation what the colour of different dresses is, or what diversity of customs there may be, as long as there is a new creature in Christ? But if it matters nothing to salvation, why does a difference of habit divide monks? Why does it breed schisms? Why separate their hearts? Why wound charity? There is no cause or reason for taking notice of it, much less for dividing, and still less for complaining of such things. You have, O white monk, a powerful defender enough of your habit in the single eye of your conscience. It has caused you to don a white cowl and tunic, to prevent the black monk supposing, through a long-existing custom, that no one can be a monk who is not dressed in black. Moreover, you have noticed, too, that an innumerable number of monks of this Order have become lukewarm, and, therefore, with praiseworthy intention you have endeavoured to stir them up to a fresh and greater fervour of monastic life by adopting an unusual colour for your habit. You too, [O black monk], in the same way have good authority for the black colour of your habit in the long-standing custom handed down by your fathers. You feel yourselves more safe in following the old than in introducing what is new. Both of you can appeal to the words of the Rule (Reg. S. Ben. c. 55) as an unimpeachable authority for both colours. It enjoins monks not to quarrel about the colour or the thickness of their habits, but to use garments of that colour and quality which are most easily obtainable in the country where they are living. Let, then, the reason I have given be sufficient defence for your white garments, or perhaps some still stronger reason than I have found. Let, on the other hand, the authority of your fathers be the defender of your black habit. That authority is of equal force with any reason, and should not be reckoned as inferior by anyone who thinks aright.

23. And what farther shall I be able to adduce as setting an example in this matter? Can I bring anyone greater than S. Martin? The great Martin, monk and bishop, chose black as the colour of his garments, as we read in his life. “And when the beasts close to his side saw him enveloped in a black and flowing cloak, they retired terror-stricken to another place.” That he was a monk is shown by his founding a monastery not far from Poictiers, another at Milan, and another for himself at Tours. You see that Martin was a monk, and that he wore black. But what does S. Jerome say about this in the letter that he wrote to

Nepotian? He says, “Avoid alike black and white garments.” This was meant to warn him to beware of pride and ostentation, not only in white garments, which men of the world then wore, but also in black, which professors of religion at that time were accustomed to use. About this, too, Paulinus, the famous Bishop of Nola, contemporary and intimate friend of the same Martin before mentioned, of Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and often named with praise by them and by Pope Gregory, in describing the journey of a noble lady who had lately been converted to the monastic life, speaks as follows in a letter addressed to Sulpicius Severus:—“We saw the glory of the Lord in that journey of the mother and her sons; the same journey, indeed, but of very different degree of luxury. We saw her sitting upon a miserable hackney, beside which an ass would be thought valuable, with senators all around her, and following her, with all the pomp of this world that men of position and wealth could display, with horses in rich trappings, nodding plumes, gilded cars, and with many chariots filling and making resplendent the Appian Way. But the grace of Christian humility outshone these empty splendours. The rich were filled with wonder at our holy poverty, but our poverty laughed them to scorn. We saw the confusion worthy of the deity of this world, its purple, its silk, and golden furniture doing obeisance to worn-out and black garments. We blessed the Lord, Who exalteth the humble, filleth the hungry with good things, and sendeth the rich empty away.” You see from this that not only in old times did men, but also women, in taking upon them the religious life wear black garments.

24. For if I may say what I think, it seems to me that those great fathers thought that black was more suitable to humility, repentance, and mourning, and since the whole monastic life ought especially to be given up to these things, they determined that the outward and inward should be united as closely as possible, the colour to the character, the dress to the virtues, for white garments have from of old represented glory rather than shame, joy more than sorrow. And this was shown more clearly to the Church, as is well known to all, by the Angel of the Resurrection, and by the Angels who acted as heralds of the ascending Lord, and by the Saviour Himself in the glory of His Transfiguration, when He showed Himself bright in white garments. Thence it was that good and learned man Sidonius, Bishop of Clermont Ferrand, when ridiculing in bitter condemnation the faults of certain men, said, “They go in white to funerals, in black to weddings,” declaring them to be so confused in their ideas as to pervert the usual order of things, and to go in wedding garb to funerals, and in funeral to weddings. For those who observed the common custom of that age did not go in

white to funerals, in black to weddings, but in white to weddings, in black to funerals, that white garments might agree with nuptial joy, black with funeral grief. When I was lately in Spain I saw and wondered at this old custom being still observed by all the Spaniards. For when a wife, husband, children, parent, any relation, or a friend dies, then the husband, wife, parents, children, relations, or friends at once lay aside their arms, their silk garments, their furs, their many-coloured and costly dresses, and wear nothing but sordid and black clothes. They also cut off their own hair and the tails of their horses, and stain themselves and their animals with black. With such marks of mourning and grief they bewail the dead that they have lost, and spend a year, at least, by the rule of society, in such public mourning.

25. By such authority and reason as this I defend you and your colour, black monk, but still I do not condemn the white monk for his colour. I praise you for not wishing to depart from the holy custom of your fathers; I praise him, too, for stirring up by this uncommon colour in dress his mind to more and more fervour of devotion. He to some degree separates himself, not from charity, which would be impious, but from the well-known lukewarmness of many of this Order. Since, then, you are under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, since you dwell in one sheepfold of the Church, since you live by the same faith and hope in eternity, you, white monk, as well as you, black monk, why, to speak a little more severely, O foolish sheep, do you quarrel about the difference in your wool? Why do you proceed against each other for no reason, or for so foolish a one? Why for so childish a thing do you rend that first robe of charity? Why do you separate between your very dwellings? Why do you devour one another with the teeth of wolves rather than of sheep? Why do you rob each other and tear each other? See, take care, that this name of innocence by which you get your name of sheep do not prevent you from being of those whom the great Shepherd will place on His right hand, and of whom He says Himself, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish (S. John 10:27, 28). But beware, lest it place you amongst those of whom it is said and sung, Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them (Ps. 49:4). Do you now see how foolish it is to dispute about a colour? How damnable to hate a brother for a colour? How wicked to calumniate a brother for a colour? If this were the sole cause of your discord, if this the sole ground for such a division, if, I say, this was the whole and sole cause of the monastic schism, now that its folly has been shown, shall not this old severance of hearts be repaired?—shall not the wounds of love be healed?—

shall not evangelic peace return to the children of peace? Make agreement with peace, therefore, ye sons of peace, and enter into a perpetual covenant with her; if not, perchance at some time there may be directed against you that saying of the Prophet, There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isa. 48:22). And now, thanks to God, I think that I have penetrated into the ancient causes and lurking-places of the hatreds of some men of our Order, and I do not suppose that I need now seek any farther for any remaining cause. And if I am right, you, O white monk, will no longer attack the black, nor you, black monk, the white, if you wish to obey the precepts of your Order, nor will you be moved from the state of a most exalted charity, in hostility to your brother, because of some difference in your customs or some variation in the colour of your habit.

26. But what have I said? How have I lost myself? Where is my understanding? How has the keenness of my sight become clouded over? I thought that I had found the whole ground of offence. I supposed that I had disclosed all the lurking-places of hatred. I was under the impression, as I said, that diversity of customs alone, that only variety of colours, the quality or quantity of clothes or of food had wounded charity among monks, and that this alone was the cause of so great an evil. I saw the mote in my brother’s eye, but I could not see the huge beam, a very oak, in my own eye. But now my eye has been purged, the sky is clear, and the sun in the meridian suffers nothing to lie hid, and I see what it is given me to say, with the leave of everyone, at all events of every good man. For whoever shall feel aggrieved will thereby confess that it has been said of him, as Jerome says. The sound part of the body does not shrink from the physician’s hand, but that which quivers and withdraws itself from the finger that would touch it shows, without doubt, that disease is lurking within. What is it, then, that had escaped me?

27. Come, tell me (I will first address the man of my own Order), tell me, black monk; give glory to God, and lay bare whatever lies hid in the depths of your heart against your brother. Who, you say, can endure to have new men preferred to old, to have their intentions set before our actions, to have them regarded as more dear our brethren as inferior? Who can see unmoved the world for the most part turn away from our older Order, and run after this new foundation, and look upon the well-trodden paths now abandoned, and crowds hurrying on the paths which till now were unknown? Who can bear to see the new preferred to the old, the younger to the older, white monks to black? This, black monk, is what you say. But you, white monk, what do you put forward? We, you say, are happy, because we are recommended by a system far more

approved, because the world declares that we are more blessed than other monks, because our fame overshadows the reputation of others, our daylight their lantern, our sun their star. We are they who have restored religion which was lost, the Order which was dead; we are most justly they who condemn all half-hearted, lukewarm, and worldly monks; we prove the fresh fervour of our members to excel all others by our characters, our actions, our customs, our habit, all of which are different to others; and we have exposed to the world the tepidity of the older Orders. Now—now, we have the real secret cause, one far more hostile to charity than the rest, which has destroyed the unity of your hearts, separated your houses from each other, and often, as the Prophet says, sharpened your tongues like a sword (Ps. 140:3) to calumnious or cursing words.

28. But let this deadly sword be met by the sword of the Divine Word, and if you are wise you will do all that you can to prevent the fruits that have been stored up with so much labour from being scattered by an empty breath of vain glory. O, loss accursed, and never to be lamented enough! If one hiss of the wicked serpent is to undo the pure continence of your long life, your unconquerable obedience, your unbroken fasts, your constant vigils, your heavy yoke of discipline, so many palms won by your patience, and, to sum up all, your great and numerous toils, both of the earthly and the heavenly life, stored up for so long against your reward in eternity, performed through the grace of God in you; if he is to empty you of everything at one breath, if the old dragon is to cause you to go empty before the sight of the Great Judge, then where is that which the Saviour said to his disciples when labouring under this disease, I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven? (S. Luke 10:18). Where is that which he said in another place when a contention like this rose among them which of them should be the greater, But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve? (S. Luke 22:26). Where does that verse lie hidden from the eyes of our memory which the High and Lofty One, of whose greatness, the Psalmist says, there is no end (Ps. 145:3), and Who, according to the Apostle, is above all, God blessed for ever (Rom. 9:5), and Who, not preferring Himself to, or even equalizing Himself with, but submitting Himself to His servants, uttered, when He said, But I am among you as he that serveth? (S. Luke 22:27). The Apostle is rebuked for putting himself before his brother Apostle, and shall not the monk for preferring himself to his brother monk? Christ, the Master, puts the greater under the lesser disciple, the superior under the inferior, and shall I, a Cluniac, endeavour to elevate myself above the Cistercian? Christ submits Himself to His disciples,

and shall a Christian and a monk raise his neck, swollen with pride, above his brother, who is, perhaps, far better than he? Is majesty to abase itself, and infirmity to exalt itself? Is loftiness to humble itself, and the worm to be raised aloft? Is God to serve, and earth try to rule? And, my brother, how have you fallen from the height of your Rule, from whence you used to boast that you stooped! It bids "that the monk not only say in word that he is lower and viler than all, but that he believe it also inwardly in his heart" (Reg. S. Ben. c. 7). But why labour further? There is no need to say more to pious, wise, and learned men, and, as the proverb goes, to teach Minerva, or to bring trees to the wood, water to the rivers or the sea. The wisdom of you both sees and knows that it is impossible to please God without faith, and also without charity, and that no one, if he throw away humility, can by any efforts keep that charity. For pride of necessity steps into any place vacated by humility; where pride comes there immediately comes envy; where envy arises charity at once dies. For the envious man cannot love him whom he envies, nor can charity in any way remain in one who does not love.

29. Therefore, where there is no charity there is no humility, and where there is no humility there is no charity. This the Apostle declares most plainly when he says, Charity envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. And because she is not greedy of other's goods he goes on to say: Seeketh not her own (1 Cor. 13:5). Therefore, charity excludes all vain-glory, all ambition, all greediness, all avarice, nay, by charity, according to the Apostle, all iniquity is at once driven out. Now, if you wish to preserve this charity, which the Apostle says is the same as the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), my brother of Cluny, my brother of Cîteaux, if you wish to lay up for yourself by it great treasures in heaven, and to keep them when you have laid them up, do your utmost to drive from you all the causes, not only of the departure of charity, not only of her destruction, but even of any injury, no matter how small. If they wish to return after you have driven them out, close the door of your heart against them, and hold fast charity and keep her as an ever present guest. Charity, if she be firmly held, will lift you to the Kingdom in the heavens, for by her sweetly irresistible force she brought down to earth the King of Heaven. The Apostle is a faithful witness of this when he says that because of His great love God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3). You will rejoice evermore in charity before God, and your joy, as He Himself has promised, no one shall take from you, when God shall be all in all, when your long thirst shall be satisfied, when His glory shall be made manifest; when He shall appear and you will be like Him, and being united to

Him for ever by this charity, you will see Him as He is.

30. Now at length let my pen come back to you, my dearest friend, to whom I send this letter. It began with you, and with you let it at last end. I call to witness my conscience that, as I said before, the sole cause of my writing is charity. My endeavour has been to fan it into a flame by the breath of our conference, and to force it to burst out into its wonted flames, if not into greater ones. It now remains for you, whom Divine Providence has given us to be the milk-white and strong column on which the edifice of the Monastic Order is supported, and to be, as it were a bright star, not only to the monks, but also to the whole Latin Church of our day, it now remains for you to throw your whole strength into this Divine work, and to prevent such great companies of one Name and one Order from quarrelling any further. I have always been zealous to commend to my brethren the holy monks of your congregation, and I would, if I could, unite them to each other in the bond of a perfect charity. I have never neglected to do this in public, in private, and in the great assemblies of our Order; and I have laboured to rub off the rust of passion and of quarrelsome zeal which is wont secretly to gnaw at our vitals.

31. Do you, too, labour hard, in proportion to the grace given you by God, in our common field; for no one since you in our time, it has been shown, has planted so usefully; and so with praiseworthy zeal and industry everything that is opposed to what is useful will be rooted up. Banish from their hearts by that eloquence which is from above, and which is set on fire by the Spirit of God, that childish rivalry, that back-biting, and instead of them, whether the brethren like it or not, sow the seeds of brotherly love. Let no diversity of custom, no difference of colours, any longer divide your flocks from ours; but let universal charity unite what is derived from the Divine Unity, repair what is decayed, join again what has been sundered, give life to what has been cut off. So is it fitting that there should be one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32) in those who have one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, who are contained in one Church, and who look for the same everlasting life of bliss. I have sent a morsel of crystallized salt to my friend who has no need of jewels, but to whom, as I have heard, its material use was once advantageous, and I thought that a special understanding of it was necessary as an introduction to what I have said above. For whatever the number and the value of the array of virtues on the table of the Eternal King, if they lack the salt of brotherly love they will be rejected as tasteless. But if they are seasoned with this salt the dainties are now acceptable, and will be received with them that offer them. For He Who in His law accepts no sacrifice without salt,

shows that He is pleased with no gift of virtue which lacks this condiment.

LETTER CCXXX

TO THE BISHOPS OF OSTIA, TUSCULUM, AND PRÆNESTE

Bernard warns them to do their duty in driving the wolves from the flock in the Diocese of Metz.

God has raised you to an exalted position, in order that the more eminent the dignity you possess, the more you may use it for the good of His Church. Otherwise the great Father will put clown from their seat the mighty whose usefulness has not been equal to the power that they have received. I do not think that you can be ignorant of how great loss the Spouse of Christ is suffering in the Diocese of Metz, though we here are the more horrified because we are nearer. See how great a wolf is daily endeavouring, not only by craft, but also by open assaults, to break through into the fold of Christ, and to scatter the sheep which have been brought together by the blood of Christ. And it is not of yesterday or the day before yesterday, but ever since the time that he was a little wolf he has not ceased with all his might to assail and to harass that flock of the Lord with robberies, fires, and murders. Therefore I, so far as in me lies, point out the wolf, urge on the dogs. What your duty is you will see. It is not my place to teach my teachers.

LETTER CCXXXI

TO THE SAME THREE BISHOPS ON BEHALF OF THE ABBOT OF LAGNY

He asserts the innocence of tin’s Abbot.

1. I dare to say to you whatever comes uppermost. For if it behoved you to bear a little with my folly, your good-will will, no doubt, bear with my manner, for you are debtor both to the wise and to the foolish. And I say this not because I am thinking of thoughtlessly saying a word not pertinent to the matter, or of using levity, or taking pleasure in trifles, especially before you, who are seen to be pillars of the Church; but out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and, when grief is urgent within, truth is impatient of repression, and bursts out into speech. For my feet, I tell you, had almost gone, my treadings had wellnigh slipped, because by what appears an accursed inversion of things wickedness so often overcomes wisdom. The ungodly are lifting their horn higher, the zeal of righteousness is being disarmed, and there is no one who will

or can do good. The proud do wickedly on every side, and no one dares whisper against them. And I would that innocence were safe, and that righteousness were enough for its own defence. What sin has the Abbot of Lagny committed? Is it that he is both good as a monk, and better as an abbot—that he is of good report and of better life? Or is it that he has adorned by his pity, and enriched with worldly goods, and increased in numbers of good brothers, the monastery over which he presides? Behold, this crime is laid to his charge. If it is a crime to have been approved by God and men, let him be lifted up and crucified. For heaven and earth are witnesses that it cannot be denied that he has been. If it is a crime to be hospitable, kind, sober, chaste, humble, let him deservedly come empty out of the hands of his enemies. For he is really all these, and in these he cannot be accused; the sanctity of his life and the glory of his renown prove him to be these.

2. But it is alleged against him that he refused to receive the messenger of my lord. That would certainly be a grave offence if it were so. The Abbot does not deny that the man who was sent into England, after being honourably entertained by him, asked to speak with him, but Humbert, the Provost, interposed, since the Abbot was getting ready to go out, and said that he, in the Abbot’s place, would see the man. I leave you to determine if any want of respect was shown to the man, and whose fault it was. He is also accused of having taken a letter of my lord the Pope from Humbert by force and of having opened it; but the letter exists, still unopened and sealed; he did not lay hands on it, but Humbert, by the advice of Count Theobald and myself, handed it to him of his own accord. The charge, therefore, is false. He is said also to have imprisoned some monks. That, too, is false. But if he did divide into different cells some who were mutinous and conspirators, lest they should do more harm by being thrown together, who that can judge rightly can possibly blame this? Then as to the charge that he has squandered and alienated the lands and goods of the Church and given them to his relations, sufficient reply was given before in the presence of the venerable Bishops of Soissons and Auxerre, and of Count Theobald, who acted as advocate of the monastery; and I give it again, that he gave to his own as to others, i.e., according to the same scale and custom.

3. Moreover, since the beginning of the world, it was never heard that a mutinous, haughty, and ambitious monk merited from the apostolic See the privilege of his liberty. From the time of Judas Iscariot none has been found like him, to rise in this way against his master, and betray innocent blood. Happy is the master to whom the words of the prophet are common with the Master of all,

Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who did also eat of my bread, hath laid great wait for me (Ps. 41:9). Before, indeed, you were lording it over the clergy against Peter the Apostle (1 S. Pet. 5:3), nay, against his co-apostle Paul, you were lording it over the faith of the whole earth (2 Cor. 1:23). But now you have added a new sin in taking upon you too much against religion itself. What remains but that you should proceed to lord it over the holy angels themselves? Except that in this, the last Judas seems to have surpassed the first in craftiness and cunning, inasmuch as while all his fellow-disciples shuddered at the infamous deed of the one, the other has had the craft to entrap, not any undistinguished person, but the very leaders of the Apostles, to connive at, nay, even to favour his wickedness. I do not impute sin to my lord, from whom, being but man, [a decision] could be snatched by fraud, and I pray that God will not impute it. But God forbid that, when he knows the truth, the accursed and sacrilegious attempts of this evil man should prevail. And I would have written about this to my lord himself (Innocent) with my usual venturesomeness, if I had not perceived that he receives with less than his wonted favour whatever I write to him. Do you, I beseech you, who are monks, mourn the fortune of your master of S. Benedict, who, as you see, is in danger of being opposed on all sides; so will all the vigour of monastic discipline perish, if monks are to use the strong hand, and to lift up their horns against their abbots.

LETTER CCXXXII

TO THE SAME BISHOPS

Against the Abbot of S. Theofred.

If those things which you hear about the Abbot of S. Theofred are true, you cannot pass them over without danger to yourselves, both because of your office and your conscience. Conscience, I say, not only your own, but also of others. The things are likely, I believe them also to be true. For the bearer of this who also bears his testimony about these matters is trustworthy. You ask how I know all this? I hold a bundle of letters sent by holy men, whom I know to be both holy and truthful, and they all alike contain as loud-tongued praises of the bearer as they do dreadful accusations of the abbot.

LETTER CCXXXIII

TO JOHN, ABBOT OF BUZAY, WHO HAD LEFT HIS ABBEY AND BETAKEN HIMSELF TO SOLITUDE

Bernard kindly recalls hint from his retirement.

To his beloved son JOHN, Brother BERNARD entreats that he walk in the Spirit, and not lay aside fear of the Lord.

1. I cannot say with what bitterness of soul, and sorrow of heart I write to you, dear John, now that I see that I gain nothing by all that I have written, and that my words have no effect upon you. I have written once and again, if I mistake not; and because of my sins my labour has brought me no answer. Now a third time I sow my seed, with prayer to Almighty God, that it may not return to me empty, but may prosper, do that for which I send it forth, and rejoice me at some time or other with the fruit of your obedience and salvation. If you listen to me, nay, rather, if God listen to me, I shall have gained my son. If not I will turn me again to my wonted arms, viz., prayers and tears, not against you, but for you. I have mourned, I still mourn, and draw deep sighs from the bottom of my heart for my offspring. Who will grant to me that you as my brother shall again suck the breasts of my mother? Who will recall you for me into that quietness of mind, that community of life, that fellowship of spirit, and tranquillity of conscience which once kept you fast bound to us?

2. And, if anything on my side is causing you loss or keeping you back, I ask you not to doubt that report is false, which I hear you have been made to believe by some false tongues or other; viz., that I, without any reason or trial, was thinking of removing you from the care of the souls of your brethren that I had entrusted to you. This is not true; but in a word or two hear what is. Even if I had wished to do this, it would not have been lawful; and if it had been lawful (I speak on my conscience) I should never have wished it. This is the truth. If, then, this was the only reason why your heart has been turned, now that the truth has been made known, what remains but that you regain your wisdom, return to yourself, return to me, and moreover condemn yourself for your hastiness and thoughtless cruelty? For if one accursed suspicion had such power to alienate you, and cast you down headlong, how much more power now ought absolute certainty to have to set you up again, and bring you back to us! It would be disgraceful to you if you could be seduced by falsehood, and could not be brought back by truth. You may perhaps be forgiven for having yielded for a time to a disguised falsehood, but now that it has been found out and laid bare, it would be to your shame if you are not greatly angry at it, to say nothing of still giving it credence. Therefore, be angry and sin not, unless you wish me, or rather God, to be angry. For as to that which you have lost, it deserves our pity rather than our indignation. Of course you are a man, making your own way, like the

whole human race, across this great and wide sea wherein are things creeping innumerable. Who can boast that while on it he is never driven by winds, nor tossed by the waves? You know that you have been shipwrecked by them, that you have fallen amongst false brethren. I repeat it, this is the truth. You have been deceived, and a lying spirit in the mouth of false prophets has beguiled you.

3. But now falsehood has been dispersed by the bright beams of the risen truth. If, which God forbid, you still persist in your obstinacy, I will not in the meanwhile judge you; there is One that seeketh and judgeth. But I spare you, hiding my indignation, and delaying to come to you with a rod. Further, I will endeavour, if I can, to draw you by compassion and a spirit of meekness; for I feel that I am more familiar with that, and I do not doubt that it will more easily gain you. I will not indeed delay to unsheath against you that sword which lies hidden in my well-nigh motherly breast, viz., a continuous sorrow in my heart, and frequent lamentations to God for you until you come back. But if, according to your hardness and impenitent heart, you turn aside all the blows of this sword so lovingly striking you, yet it cannot be but that at some time or other your soul will say, “I am wounded with love.” For now it is not only truth, but also charity, which shall set me free. But what am I saying? How, unhappy that I am, how shall I be free when my heart is bleeding from the loss of my son? My affection shall not rest though no effect follow; my grief shall not be appeased; my tears shall not cease. I will show myself to you while I live like another Samuel; be not to me another Saul. I will pray you, I will pray for you, that you return. Come to me, come before I die, that I, who loved you in life, in death may not be separated from you.

LETTER CCXXXIV

TO HERBERT, ABBOT OF S. STEPHEN OF DIJON

Bernard begs his forgiveness for a religious named John, who had attacked him in writing.

If brother John has said or written anything unbecoming against me, or in an unbecoming way, it is not so much I whom he has injured as himself; for by writing in that way he rather betrays his own hastiness than proves me guilty of wrong; though even if he had in any point injured me it was not my intention to repay him with evil. And so looking to what becomes me rather than what he deserves, I ask and supplicate that you will also forgive the young man this fault, which seems to savour more of boastfulness than malice; on condition, however,

that for the future he keep himself from writing or treating of matters which clearly are above him. For as plainly enough appears, in this little thing that he has been presumptuous enough to put forth, there was need of a maturer style and spirit. For you must see, even in this brief pamphlet, that the man either did not write what he thought, or did not think what he ought.

LETTER CCXXXV. (A.D. 1143.)

TO POPE CELESTINE IN THE CASE OF THE DISPUTED ELECTION AT YORK

Bernard begs the intervention of the Pope against the odious and Simoniacal intrusion at York.

1. It behoves you according to the righteousness which is of the law to raise up seed to your dead brother. This you will worthily fulfil if you maintain the good actions and perfect the incomplete works of Pope Innocent, to whose place in the heritage of the Lord you have succeeded. You have a case before you in which you may do this. Is there anyone who knows not that the cause of the Church of York was settled by him? I wish that no one knew how the order which went from his lips has been executed. Who can prevent it from being told in Gath, from being published in the streets of Askelon? (2 Sam. 1:20). But to make a short story for one who is much occupied, let my Lord hear briefly what was said and what has so far been done. When the man who impiously sought his election to the primacy of the Church of York was accused of many faults the whole controversy was at length ordered to cease according to the testimony of the illustrious William, Dean of the same Church, so that his ambition might fail of all its attempts unless the Dean should remove by his oath the charge of intrusion which, amongst other charges, was made against him. But this was done, not by way of sentence, but from mercy, for he himself had asked for it. Surely a most mild sentence, when he was charged with very many grievous faults, which he utterly refused to rebut. But it were well if matters had remained there, for even if justice was not satisfied, at all events the Church was set free from scandal. I do not speak of the remission of the sentence; that did no harm. But this indulgence, though too great, yet availed the adversary nothing, inasmuch as he was unable to carry out what he had himself come forward to promise, for the Dean, on whose support he seemed to reckon, failed him and refused to perjure himself. For when would a good man act as sponsor for a man whom common rumour and his well-known actions alike held up to detestation? What then happened? The one refused to swear, and the other is Bishop.

2. Oh! it is a matter to be kept from the knowledge of everyone, and, if it were possible, it should be condemned to perpetual silence. But that is too late. The triumph of the devil, alas! has become known to the world. The shouts of the uncircumcised mingle on all sides with the lamentations of good men, because wickedness seems to have overcome wisdom. The shame of our mother Church is pointed at by the finger. Our father Innocent still lives in you, though a worthless servant thinks him dead, and exposes and scoffs at that in him which decency would cover. If this was to be the end of it all, why was this most detestable cause dragged from so far to Rome, when it was more worthy of darkness and a corner? Why was so toilsome a journey over sea and land undertaken by many? Why were the religious summoned from the ends of the earth to accuse him, and why were the purses of Christ's poor drained by the expenses of the long journey? Could not so base and infamous a man have been made Bishop (with unwillingness and grief I say it) without Rome having to know the things at which England was horrified, and for which France abominated him? How much better would it have been if his case had never been brought before the Roman Curia, and if this horrible polluter of everything had never reached even its sacred threshold. How much more tolerable it would have been if the Apostolic see had never heard of this intolerable evil, which now, that it has been manifested, it tolerates. With what rashness was it brought about! The man was publicly spoken against, accused before the judge, not cleared—nay, convicted: and yet consecrated. Let him who after all this laid hands on him see whether I should not say, execrated, rather than consecrated. For he will not deny that these things are so; he will not deny that he found them so stated in the Apostolic letters directed to him on the very subject. Some one, perhaps, may say that since sentence was not given he was not convicted. But I say that he confessed. For to escape judgment he of his own accord elected to have recourse to the testimony of William the Dean, and then since he failed him, what is this but giving judgment against himself, and being condemned by his own mouth?

3. Since these things are so, see, my lord and father, that your heart lean not to any work of wickedness, for, as the Prophet says, As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them with the workers of iniquity (Ps. 125:5). Otherwise do you advise those unhappy Abbots whom the Apostolic command dragged to Rome for the purpose of accusing him, as well as the very numerous Religious in that diocese, that they are to obey him and receive the sacraments from a man twice intruded on them—first, by the King, secondly, by the legate? When he could not enter by the door he forced his way in with a

silver axe, as they say, and so was impudently intruded by the legate into the sanctuary of God, against right and justice, against the command of the Supreme Pontiff, to the injury of the highest See and of the whole Roman Curia. If I mistake not, they will resign their posts rather than pay homage to this idol, unless your authority forcibly intervene. But with how much more holy zeal and how much more worthy of your apostleship would it be for you to draw the sword of Phinehas against the two who are so disgracefully committing fornication rather than to allow so many holy men to leave their posts, or to force them to remain against their consciences?

LETTER CCXXXVI. (A.D. 1143.)

TO THE WHOLE ROMAN CURIA, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

To my lords and reverend fathers, the Bishops and Cardinals of the Curia, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health, and the assurance of his poor prayers.

1. What concerns all must be written to all. Nor am I afraid of being charged with presumption because, though I am least of all, I do not think that any injury done to the Roman Curia is no affair of mine. I am, I assure you, continually being consumed, so much so that I am even weary of life. In the House of God I see dreadful things. And since I have no power to correct them, I, at all events, bring them before those whose business it is to correct them. If they amend them, well. If not, I have liberated my soul: you have no excuse for your sin. You are not unaware that a sentence was pronounced by our lord, Pope Innocent of good memory, with the general consent of the Roman Curia and of yourselves, making void the election, or rather the intrusion, of William of York, unless the other William, who was at that time Dean, should deny on oath what was charged against his namesake. And it did not escape you that this was not a judicial sentence but one of mercy, and undoubtedly so, because William had himself asked for this. Would that may be adhered to, and that what has been done against it may not stand. For the one did not swear, and the other sits in the chair, which I now call a chair of pestilence. Who is there to send against this fornication the sword of Phinehas, or to make Peter exercise his power, and with the breath of his lips slay the wicked? Many are calling on me with all their heart to urge you to punish this sacrilege as it deserves. Otherwise I am bound to tell you that there will be an exceeding great scandal in the Church of God, and I am afraid that the authority of the Roman See will receive heavy loss and great

damage, if punishment is not inflicted on the man who has perverted its general sentence, and in such a way, too, that others may fear to do the like.

2. What am I to say of his boast that he has secret letters, truly letters of darkness? I would that they were from the princes of darkness, and not from the princes of the Apostles. Behold the children of the uncircumcised have heard; they whisper it about that the Roman Curia, after having given so outspoken a sentence, now sends contrary letters privately. What am I to say to you? If this grievous scandal which is scandalizing not only babes, but also the mighty and the perfect, does not rouse you; if you have no compassion for the poor abbots whom the Apostolic summons has dragged from the ends of the earth, if you feel no pity for the great and godly monasteries, which are threatened with destruction under the burden of this man, if (which I ought to have said first) zeal for the House of God is not eating you up, is the craft of so deadly a foe to be allowed so to prevail that the princes of the Church bear with equanimity her infamy and their own shame? What matters it though the man did obtain sacrilegious consecration? Surely it will be far more glorious to overthrow Simon when he has been elevated than to frustrate his efforts to rise. Moreover, what will you do for the religious men who do not see how with a safe conscience they can receive even the ordinary sacraments from the leprous hand? If I am not mistaken they will rather flee than join hands with death. They will prefer exile to eating things offered to idols. But if the Roman Curia compels them against their consciences to bend the knee to Baal, God will see it and judge. So, too, will that heavenly court in which no ambition can subvert judgment. Lastly, your son beseeches you by the bowels of mercy of our God that, if you have any zeal for God, you, as friends of God, will have pity on His Holy Church, and, as far as you can, prevent any countenance being given to so detestable an affair.

LETTER CCXXXVII. (A.D. 1145.)

TO THE WHOLE ROMAN CURIA, WHEN THEY CHOSE THE ABBOT OF S. ANASTASIUS FOR POPE (EUGENIUS)

Bernard expresses his surprise and apprehension at this election. He begs the attendance and faithful help of the Cardinals for the Pope Elect.

To the lords and reverend fathers, all the Cardinals and Bishops of the Curia, the son of their holiness wishes health.

1. May God forgive you what you have done! You have recalled to the world

a man who was buried; you have again involved in cares and thrown amongst crowds a man who had fled from both. You have made the last first, and lo! his last state is more dangerous than the first. He was crucified to the world; through you he now lives again to the world, and you have chosen him to be lord of all, who had chosen to be a door-keeper in the house of his God. Why have you confounded the counsel of the poor? Why have you destroyed the resolve of one who was poor and needy and stricken in heart? He was running well. What made you block up his roads, turn aside his paths, and entangle his footsteps? He will fall among robbers just as though he were going down from Jerusalem, instead of ascending from Jericho. And so he who had powerfully shaken off from himself the hands of the devil, however violent the lusts of the flesh, and the glory of the world, could not yet escape from your hands. Did he leave Pisa only that he should be taken to Rome? Did he, who shrank from being the second in command in one church, require the supreme command over the whole Church?

2. What reason or counsel made you, when the supreme Pontiff was dead, rush upon a mere rustic, lay hands on him in his concealment, wrest from his hands the axe, pickaxe, or hoe, drag him to the palace, lift him to a throne, clothe him with purple and fine linen, gird him with a sword to execute vengeance on nations, to rebuke peoples, to bind their kings in chains and their nobles with links of iron? Was there no wise and experienced man amongst you more fitted for such things? It certainly seems absurd that a man humble and ragged should be taken to preside over Kings, to rule Bishops, to dispose of kingdoms and empires. Is it ridiculous or miraculous? Certainly one of these. I do not deny, I do not doubt, that even this may have been the work of God, who alone worketh great marvels, especially when I hear constantly from the mouths of many that this has been done by the Lord. Nor do I forget either the judgments of God in olden time or the Scripture which tells us that by the will of God very many have been at different times called from a private, or even a rustic life, to rule His people. For example, to mention but one out of many, did He not choose His servant David in this way, and take him from the sheepfolds, from following the ewes great with young? So I say it may have happened by the good pleasure of God with our Eugenius.

3. Yet I am not sure; but I fear for my son, who is of delicate nature, and whose tender modesty is accustomed rather to leisure and quiet than to managing those things which are without: and it is to be feared that he will not execute the offices of his Apostleship with the dignity that is fitting. What sort of disposition do you think a man is likely to have who sees himself dragged into the midst

from the depths of spiritual contemplation, and from the pleasing solitude of the heart, and led like a sheep appointed to be slain to such strange and unwelcome duties. Unless the Lord support him with his hand he must, alas! be cast down and crushed under the unusual and excessive burden, which seems a heavy load for the shoulders of a giant, so to speak, or even of an angel. But it has now been done, and, as many say, from the Lord; it is your duty, therefore, dearly beloved, to anxiously help forward by your earnest efforts and faithful services what we see has been the work of your own hands. If there be any consolation in you, if any power of love in the Lord, if any godly pity, if any bowels of compassion, assist and co-operate with him in the work to which he has been called through you by God. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, suggest them to him, urge him to them, do them with him; do this, and the God of peace shall be with you.

LETTER CCXXXVIII. (A.D. 1145.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS: HIS FIRST LETTER

Bernard at once congratulates and condoles with the newly-elevated Pope.

To his loving father and Lord, EUGENIUS, by the grace of God, supreme Pontiff, his humble servant BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting.

1. We have heard in this our country, and it is on the tongues of all, what the Lord has done with respect to you. Till now I have forborne to write, I considered the matter in silence. For I expected to hear from you, and to be prevented with the blessings of sweetness. I was waiting for some faithful man to come from your side to tell me everything in order, what was done, by what means, and in what manner. I was waiting to see if by any chance one of my sons should return to soothe the grief of his father, and to say: Joseph, thy son, is alive, and is ruler over all the land of Egypt (Gen. 45:26). Hence it is that this letter is not of free will, but of necessity, and is extorted by the requests of my friends, to whom I cannot deny the short remaining portion of my life. But as I have once begun, I will speak to my lord. For I dare not call you any longer my son, because the son has been changed into father and the father into son. He who came after me is preferred before me; but I feel no envy, because I am confident that what was lacking to me he will supply, who came not only after me, but also through me; for if you will let me say so, I begot you in one sense through the Gospel. What, then, is my hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing? Is it not you before God? A wise son is the glory of his father (Prov. 10:1). But henceforward you will not be called a son, but a new name will be given you which the mouth of the Lord has spoken (Is. 62:2). This change is of the right hand of the Most High, and many shall rejoice in this change. For as formerly Abram was changed to Abraham (Gen. 17:5), Jacob to Israel (Gen. 32:28), and, to mention your predecessors, Simon was changed to Cephas (S. John 1:42), Saul to Paul (Acts 13:9), so my son Bernard, by what I hope is a joyous and beneficial translation, has been promoted to my Father Eugenius. This is the finger of God raising up the poor out of the dust, and lifting up the beggar from the dunghill, that he may sit with princes and may inherit the throne of glory.

2. It now remains that, since this change has taken place in you, the bride of your Lord who has been entrusted to your care may be changed for the better, and that no longer Sarai but Sarah shall she be called (Gen. 17:15). Understand

what I say; for God shall give you understanding. If you are the friend of the Bridegroom, do not say, “His beloved is my princess,” but “His beloved is a princess.” Claim nothing of hers as your own, except that for her, if need be, you ought to lay down your life. If Christ has sent you, you will feel that you have come not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to minister not only of your substance, but, as I said before, your life itself. A true successor of Paul will say with Paul, Not because we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy (2 Cor. 1:23). The heir of Peter will listen to Peter, who says: Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock (1 S. Peter 5:3). For by so doing it will no longer be as a handmaiden but as a freewoman, full of beauty, that the Bride will be admitted into the welcome embrace of her most glorious Bridegroom. By whom else if not by you is this freedom that is her due to be hoped for? By none, if you too (which God forbid), seek in the heritage of God the things which are your own, after having long ago learnt not to call anything your own which belongs to you, no, not even yourself.

3. Therefore, having such confidence in you as she seems to have had for a long time in none of your predecessors, the whole assembly of the saints everywhere rightly rejoices, and boasts herself in the Lord; and specially she whose womb bore you, and whose breasts you sucked. May I not, too, rejoice with them that do rejoice? Shall I not be one of the number of those who are glad? I rejoiced, but it was, I confess, with trembling. I rejoiced, but in the very moment of my rejoicing fear and trembling came upon me. For though I have laid aside the name of father, I have not laid aside a father’s fear, or anxiety, least of all the affection and heart of a father. I look at the height and I fear a fall. I look at the height of your dignity, and I see the mouth of the abyss that lies beneath you. I notice the loftiness of your honour, and I shudder at the danger close at hand, because of that which is written: Man being in honour hath no understanding (Ps. 49:12). Which saying, I think, is to be referred rather to the cause than the time, so that we are to understand it to mean that when he is in honour he has no understanding, because the consciousness of his honour has swallowed up his understanding.

4. And, indeed, you had chosen to be a doorkeeper in the house of God, and to sit in the lowest room at his banquet, but it has pleased Him Who invited you to say: Friend, come up higher (S. Luke 14:10). And as you have ascended on high, be not high-minded, but fear, lest perchance it happen to you to utter at last that piteous cry, From the face of Thy indignation and wrath Thou hast lifted me up and cast me down (Ps. 102:10). You have obtained, it is true, a higher place, but

not a safer; a loftier, not a more secure. Terrible, indeed, a terrible position is it. The place, I mean, where you are standing is holy ground, it is the place of Peter, it is the place of the Prince of the Apostles, where his feet have stood. It is the place of him whom the Lord made lord of His house, and chief of all His possession. And if you should turn aside from the way of the Lord, recollect that he was buried in the same place that he may be for a testimony against you. Deservedly was the Church entrusted to such a shepherd, to such a foster-father; for while she was still tender, still in her swaddling clothes, she was taught by his precept and educated by his example to tread under foot all earthly things, for he had kept his hands clean from every gift, and could say with pure heart and good conscience: Silver and gold have I none (Acts 3:6). But enough of this.

5. The reason why I am writing to you before the time is this. The Bishop of Winchester and the Archbishop of York do not walk with the same mind as the Archbishop of Canterbury; but they go contrary to him, and this is an old quarrel about the office of legate. But who is he, and who are they? Is not York the same man who, while you were one of us, your brothers withstood to his face in your presence because he was to be blamed. But he has trusted to the multitude of his riches, and has obtained his way in his vanity. Yet it is certain that he has not entered into the sheepfold by the door, but climbed in some other way. If he had been a shepherd he was one to love; if a hireling to be borne with; but, as it is, he is to be avoided and rejected as a thief and a robber. What shall I say about my lord of Winchester? The works which he does himself they bear testimony to him. Moreover, the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom they are opposing, is a man of true piety and of mild character. On his behalf, I ask that his righteousness may answer for him, and that their iniquity may be upon them, as it is written: The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him (Ezek. 18:20). When you have an opportunity, recompense them after the works of their hands that they may know that there is a prophet in Israel.

6. Who will grant me to see before I die, the Church of God as in the days of old when the Apostles let down their nets for a draught, not of silver and gold, but of souls? How do I long that you may inherit the voice of him whose seat you have obtained! Thy money perish with thee (Acts 8:20), he said. O voice of thunder! O voice of magnificence and power! at whose terror all who hate Sion are driven back and put to confusion. This voice your mother anxiously expects and demands from you; the children of your mother, both old and young, ask for it, sigh for it, in order that every plant which our heavenly Father has not planted

may be uprooted by you. For you have been set over nations and kingdoms to uproot and destroy, to build and to plant. When they heard of your election many said: Now is the axe laid to the root of the trees (S. Matt. 3:10). Many are still saying to themselves, “The flowers have appeared in our land, the time for purging is come, when the dead branches shall be cut away, so that those which remain may bring forth more fruit.”

7. Be strong, then, and of a good courage; your hand is on the neck of your enemies. By constancy of mind and vigour of spirit show your right to the portion which the Almighty Father has given you above your brethren, which, too, he took from the Amorite with His sword and with His bow. Still, in all that you do, recollect that you are a man, and keep before your eyes the fear of Him who takes away the spirit of princes. How many Roman Pontiffs have you seen with your own eyes carried off in a short time by death! Let your predecessors ever put you in mind of your own most sure and speedy death, and inform you of the short space you have to rule in, of the fewness of the days that you have to live. Amongst all the seductions of this transitory glory meditate constantly on your latter end, for, as you have succeeded others in the Apostolic See, so will you certainly follow them in death.

LETTER CCXXXIX. (A.D. 1145.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard urges upon him the deposition of William, Archbishop of York.

I am troublesome, I know, but I have a good excuse, viz., the Apostleship of Eugenius. They say that it is I, who am pope, not you, and all who have business come to me from every side. And amongst so great a number of friends there are some whom I cannot refuse to help without causing scandal, or even committing sin. And now I have another excuse no less pertinent in the goodness of my cause. My pen is now directed against that idol at York, impelled by the very fact that though I have often aimed at him with this weapon, yet I have never stricken him through. And why is this? Perhaps because none of my darts was wielded like the sword of Jonathan, which never returned empty; but that was not the fault of the javelin but of him who hurls it. For it is evident that it has not been hurled with the necessary strength. And no wonder; for who save a son of the archers can shoot the arrows with a powerful hand? He who holds the place of Peter can at one blow destroy Ananias, at one blow Simon Magus. And to make what I say more plain, it is known to be the prerogative of the Roman

Pontiff alone to peremptorily order the deposition of a Bishop, no doubt because, though many others have been called to a share of responsibility, yet he alone has the fulness of power. So, if I may be so bold as to say it, he alone is in fault, whenever a fault which deserves correction is not corrected, or is corrected with insufficient force. With what force the fault of the above-named intruder at York ought to be corrected, nay, destroyed as by a lightning stroke, I leave to your conscience. But I believe that what has not been done has been reserved for you, that in settling this scandal the Church of God, over which He has called you to preside, may see the fervour of your zeal, the power of your arm, and the wisdom of your mind; so that all people may fear the priest of the Lord, when they hear that the wisdom of God is in him to execute judgment.

LETTER CCXL. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE SAME, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

1. How much do I always desire to hear of you that by which God may be glorified, your ministry honoured, and my soul made joyful. This is why I rejoiced so greatly when I heard of your answer in the case of some who seemed to be filled with an extravagant ambition for the office of legate, and to hope for it with impudence, even more than I can say. And not only I but all who love your name rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Moreover, when I read your letter written in the cause of the Church of Rodez, then was my mouth filled with laughter and my tongue with joy. Such things as these are worthy of your Apostleship, they honour the highest See, they are just what is becoming to the Bishop of the world. Whence, also, I bow my knees to the Author of your unique Primacy, that he will give you so to think and so to act in pulling up and planting, in destroying and building. In truth, you have been raised to this chair for the fall and rising again of many. Let those fall who stand to others' harm, let them fall; but let the worthy be raised. The axe is being laid to the root of the barren trees, the fruitful are being purged that they may bring forth more fruit. With the humble Eugenius at the head of all may the mighty be put down from their seat, and the humble exalted; let the hungry be filled with good things, and the rich sent empty away. Lately, for example, this was exemplified in the case of a certain poor bishop, to the delight of the whole earth.

2. Come, then, let your holy zeal for religion cross over to that unhappy church on the other side of the sea, for it is time to have pity on her. This vineyard of the Lord of hosts, this choice, this most beautiful vineyard is, alas!

almost reduced to a wilderness, for a ravening wild beast is devouring it. Why do they say among the heathen “where is its God?” Where is he whom they have placed as guardian over the vineyards? Where is the hand that prunes, where is the knife of the gardener? How long is the ground to be cumbered with a useless tree, and the fruit choked? And certainly the time for purging it has come. Indeed, the man who was to make his peace, by whose means he hoped to clear himself, testifies that there is more need of cutting off than of purging. Letters written by him to the legate of the Apostolic See are in existence, in which he openly asserts that there was an open intrusion, and denies the validity of the election. So therefore he finds that the witness that he had himself brought forward is his accuser. And these charges which are in the mouth of everyone would be enough to rightly deprive a knight of his military belt.

3. How, then, shall he be able to stand when you have many reasons for casting him down, and have moreover the will? I have read in your letters of your zeal for the Church, and I now ask you to show it. It is not my place to dictate to you as a wise man how you should proceed to overthrow him; there seems to be more than one way. Nor do I much care on which side the unfruitful tree falls, as long as it does fall. Still, I say that he who claims to be allowed to take possession on the ground that private letters have passed between him and the Pope, is he not a thief and a robber? Again, when he asserts that he had private letters authorizing his “execration,” he says what is either true or false. If it is true, he is guilty of theft, and is an accuser of the Supreme Pontiff. If it is false, he ought to listen to the words, Hast thou killed and also taken possession? For the mouth that lies slays the soul (Wisd. 1:11). But God forbid that we should believe so great a man guilty of such duplicity, as by this man is alleged against him. If Innocent were here to answer for himself he would no doubt say to him, “I gave sentence against you openly, and in secret have I said nothing.”

LETTER CCXLI. (A.D. 1147.)

TO HILDEFONSUS, COUNT OF S. ELOY, ABOUT THE HERETIC HENRY

He describes the impious teachings of the heretic Henry, successor of Peter de Bruys, and blames the Count for permitting such a man to teach undisturbed in his dominions.

1. How great are the evils which I have heard and known that the heretic Henry has done and is daily doing in the Churches of God! A ravening wolf in sheep’s clothing is busy in your land, but by our Lord’s direction I know him by

his fruits (S. Matt. 7:15, 16). The churches are without congregations, congregations without priests, priests without their due reverence, and, worst of all, Christians without Christ. Churches are regarded as synagogues, the sanctuary of God is said to have no sanctity, the sacraments are not thought to be sacred, feast days are deprived of their wonted solemnities. Men are dying in their sins, souls being dragged everywhere before the dread Tribunal, neither reconciled by repentance nor fortified by Holy Communion. The way of Christ is shut to the children of Christians, and they are not allowed to enter the way of salvation, although the Saviour lovingly calls on their behalf, Suffer little children to come unto me (S. Matt. 19:14). Does God, then, who, as He has multiplied His mercy, has saved both man and beast, debar innocent little children alone from this His so great mercy? Why, I ask, why does he begrudge to little ones their Infant Saviour, who was born for them? This envy is of the devil. By this envy death entered into the whole world. Or does he suppose that little children have no need of a Saviour, because they are children? If so the great Lord was made small for no reason, to say nothing of His being scourged, spitted on, nailed to the cross, and put to death.

2. This man, who says and does things contrary to God, is not from God. Yet, O sad to say, he is listened to by many, and he has a following which believes in him. O, most unhappy people! The voice of one heretic has put to silence all the Prophets and Apostles, who in one spirit of truth have joined in calling together in the faith of Christ the Church out of all nations. Therefore the divine oracles have been deceived; the eyes and minds of all are deceived when they see fulfilled what they read was predicted. How certain is it rather that this man alone with a dull and altogether Jewish blindness, either does not see the truth which is manifest to everybody else, or envies its fulfilment, and so by some devilish art or other he has persuaded a stupid and foolish populace not to trust their own eyes in a plain matter of fact, and to believe that our ancestors were deceived, that their descendants are in error, that the whole world, even after Christ’s blood has been shed, is going to perdition, and that the full riches of the mercy of God and His grace which saves the world have come to those only whom he is leading astray. And now, because of this, though in much weakness of body, I have set out on a journey to those parts which this ravening wild beast is most laying waste, since there is none to resist him or to save them. Since he has been expelled from the whole of France for similar wickedness, he finds those parts alone opened to him where, under your protection, he is with all his might raging against the flock of Christ. How this is consistent with your good

name I must leave you, as an illustrious prince, to judge. Still it is no wonder if that crafty serpent has deceived you, since he has the form of godliness, though within he has denied its power.

3. But now hear who he is. He is an apostate; he was once a monk, but has abandoned the religious habit, and has returned, like a dog to its vomit, to the abominations of the flesh and of the world. Being unable to live a life of shame among his kindred and those who knew him, or, rather, not being allowed to do so because of the greatness of his crime, he has girded up his loins, and has entered on a road of which he is ignorant, and has become a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth. When he began to go about begging he put a price on the Gospel (for he was well-educated), divided the word of God for sale, and preached the Gospel that he might earn his bread. If he was able to extract more than enough to live on from the more simple of the populace or from any of the matrons he would basely squander it at dice, or even on baser objects. Often, indeed, after being applauded by the people in the day, has this famous preacher been found at night with prostitutes, and sometimes even with married women. Ask, if you please, noble sir, why he left Lausanne, why Le Mans, why Poictiers, why Bordeaux, and there is no way of return to any of them open to him, because he has in all left foul traces behind him. Did you, pray, expect good fruit from such a tree? He makes the land in which he is to stink in the nostrils of the whole earth, because, according to the saying of the Lord, an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit (S. Matt. 7:18).

4. This, then, as I said, is the cause of my coming. Nor do I come of myself, but I am drawn thither alike by the summons and evil condition of the Church, to see if those thorns and their little seeds while they are little, can be rooted up from the land of my Lord, not by my hand, for I have no power, but by the hand of the holy Bishops with whom I am, and with the assistance of your strong right-hand. Amongst whom the chief is the venerable Bishop of Ostia, sent for this very purpose by the Apostolical See, a man who has done great things in Israel, and by whom the Almighty Lord has often given victory to His Church. It is your duty, illustrious Prince, to receive him honourably, as well as those with him; and also to take care according to the power given you from above that the great labour of these great men undertaken most of all for the salvation of you and yours be not rendered inefficacious and to no purpose.

LETTER CCXLII. (A.D. 1147.)

TO THE PEOPLE OF TOULOUSE AFTER HIS RETURN

Bernard exhorts them not only to avoid heretics, but also to drive them away; also to exercise hospitality and not to listen to unknown preachers.

1. On the arrival of our dear brother and fellow-abbot Bernard of Grandselve, I was glad and rejoiced greatly to hear what he told me of the constancy and sincerity of your faith in God, of the perseverance of your love, and of your devotion to me, of your zeal and hatred of heretics, so that every one of you is well able to say, “Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? (Ps. 139:21). I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies.” I thank God that my coming to you was not useless; and that my stay with you, though short, was not unfruitful. When I had made plain the truth not only by word, but also in power, they were seen to be wolves who had come to you in sheep’s clothing, and were eating up your people as though they were bread or as sheep appointed to be slain; the foxes which were spoiling your state, that most precious vineyard of the Lord, were seen; they were seen but not seized. Therefore, beloved, follow after them and seize them, and stop not till they utterly perish, and flee from all your territories, for it is not safe to sleep close to serpents. They sit lurking with the rich in secret places that they may slay the innocent. They are thieves and robbers (S. John 10:8), such as our Lord points out in the Gospel. They have themselves been subverted, and they are ready to subvert others, they utterly blemish your good name, and are corrupters of your faith. Evil communications corrupt good manners (1 Cor. 15:33). The word of such, as the blessed Apostle says, eats like a canker (2 Tim. 2:17).

2. Will anyone give me an opportunity to come to you once more? For my desire is, if in any way by the will of God I may be able, to see you again; though I am feeble and sick in body, I should think nothing of the labour since it would be for your exhortation and salvation. But in the meanwhile, beloved, so stand in the Lord as ye have begun, and as ye have heard of me. Obey your Bishops and the other rulers of the Church placed over you. Give diligence to show hospitality, for by this many have pleased God. Your father Abraham, through the holy care that he was wont to take in entertaining strangers, merited to receive Angels as his guests (Gen. 18.). In the same way his nephew Lot, for similar devotion and pious custom in receiving them, was made to rejoice (Gen. 19.). And so do you, in like manner, receive not Angels, but the Lord of Angels, in the person of strangers, feed Him in the poor, clothe Him in the naked, visit Him in the sick, redeem Him in the captives. With such sacrifices God is well pleased. Who, at the judgment, will say: “What you have done to one of the least

of these My brethren, you have done to Me" (S. Matt. 25:40).

3. I give you also the same advice which I gave you when I was with you, that you receive no strange or unknown preacher, unless he be sent to preach by the Pope, or have permission from your Bishop. How, he says, shall they preach unless they be sent? (Rom. 10:15). These are they who put on the form of godliness, but within deny its power, who intermingle, like poison with honey, their profane novelties of terms and ideas with words from Heaven. Beware of them henceforward as pestilential, and know them to be ravening wolves in sheep's clothing. Let the bearer of this letter, the venerable Abbot of Grandselve, be kindly received by you, as also his house, which is also ours, having been lately handed over to us and our order by him, and specially affiliated to the church of Clairvaux. Show to us in the person of him and the saints with him how far you have profited by our admonitions in works of mercy, and give by your treatment of them a proof of your charity, and of the love which you have for me. Whatever you do for them, think it done for me. The grace of God and His peace be with you. Amen.

LETTER CCXLIII. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE ROMANS WHEN THEY REVOLTED AGAINST POPE EUGENIUS

At the instigation of Arnold of Brescia, the Romans tried to establish the ancient Republican liberty in place of the Pope's authority, leaving him only tithes and freewill offerings. Bernard reproves them sharply for ingratitude.

To the nobles and chief men, and to all the people of Rome, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, writes, desiring that they may eschew evil and do good.

1. My speech is to you, O great and famous people, though I am mean and of no reputation, of small stature, and smaller influence. And, indeed, when I consider who I am that write, to whom I am writing, and, at the same time, how differently another may judge my action, I am held back by very shame. But it is a smaller thing to endure shame before men than to be condemned before God for silence, withholding of the truth, and concealment of righteousness. For He Himself says: Tell my people their sins (Is. 58:1). It will be, moreover, for a testimony to me before God if I shall be able to speak. I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation (Ps. 40:10). Therefore I am not afraid, though my modesty recoils from it, to write from afar to a glorious people, and by these letters from over the Alps

from an obscure person, to warn the Romans of their danger and sin, if perchance they will listen to me and cease from their evil ways. Who knows whether they will be converted at the prayer of a poor man, though they will not give up their power for threats, nor for the whole armed force of the strong? Did not once in Babylon a whole people at the words of one person, and he a youth, return to a just judgment, after they had been seduced by old men, but unjust judges, and so innocent blood was saved on that day (Susannah i.)? So also now, though I am but a youth, and of no reputation, a youth, I mean, not by the small number of my years, but of my merits, yet God is able to give such power to my words that it may come to pass that a people which has been confessedly led astray may return to a better judgment. This, then, is my answer to those who may think that they ought to be angry with me or indignant at my interference.

2. If this is not enough, I add another consideration, The cause is common to all, and there is no distinction of small or great. There is pain in the head, and therefore it is not a matter of no concern to the smallest or the most extreme members of the body. Nor does it pass one by. This great pain, because it is so great, has reached even to me, though I am the least of all, and because it is of the head it cannot but affect also the body, of which I am a member. When the head suffers, does not the tongue exclaim for all the members of the body that it, too, suffers with the head, and do they not all confess by it that the head is theirs, and its pain is theirs too? Suffer, me then, a little to bewail before you my grief, which is not only mine, but that of the whole Church. Is it not her voice which to-day is heard crying throughout the world: “My head suffers, my head is ill?” Is there any one Christian in the whole world, even though he be the last, who is not proud of this head, which has been exalted by the triumph, adorned by the blood of those two princes of the earth who bent their heads, the one to the axe, the other to the Cross? And, therefore, any wrong done to the Apostles affects every Christian, and as their sound went out into all lands (Ps. 19:4) so their wrong is felt by all everywhere, everywhere it is bewailed and wept.

3. What has made you, O Romans, offend the princes of the world, who are, too, your own special patrons? Why do you provoke against yourselves, by a madness which is as unbearable as irrational, the King of the Earth and the Lord of Heaven, by audaciously and sacrilegiously attacking the holy Apostolic See, which has been raised on high above all others by its sacred and regal privileges, and why are you striving to lessen its honour when, if need were, you should defend it alone against the world? Are you, O Romans, so foolish as not to judge and discern what is good, and, instead, to defile as much as you can the head of

all as well as of yourselves, for which you should not shrink from laying down your own lives if necessity demanded it? your fathers brought the world under the rule of your City; you are hastening to make your City the derision of the world. See, the heir of Peter has been driven by you from the seat and city of Peter. See, by your hands the Cardinals and Bishops, ministers of the Lord, have been robbed of their goods and houses. O dull and foolish people! O silly dove without heart! Was not he your head, and were not his eyes yours? What, then, is Rome now but a body deprived of its head, a face without eyes, a darkened countenance? Open, unhappy nation, open your eyes, and see your desolation even now close at hand. How in a short time has her beauteous colour been changed (Lam. 4:1); how is she become as a widow, she that was great among the nations and princess among the provinces (Lam. 1:1).

4. But these are but the beginnings of evils, I fear worse. If you persist, are you not on the point of perishing? Return, return, O Shunamite! return to a better disposition; recognize now, though it be late, the ills, the great ills, which you have suffered, or are still suffering. Bethink you for what cause and reason, by what agents, and to what uses you have, not long ago, squandered all the ornaments and revenues of all the churches belonging to you; think how, by impious hands, all the gold and silver which could be found on the altars or in the [form of] altar vessels, or in the sacred images themselves, has been stolen and carried off. Of all this how much do you now find in your purses? Further, the beauty of the house of God has irrecoverably perished. And what has made you now repeat this evil-doing, to call down on you again those evil days? What ampler gain or more sure hope is there now to rouse you? There is only this, that your latest doings are seen to be more heedless than the former, because then not only many of the common people, but also some of the clergy and princes in different parts of the world took your part in that schism. But now your hand is against all, and the hand of all against you. The whole world is wholly clear from your blood, except you yourself alone, and your children within you. Woe then to you now, O wretched people, and double woe, and this not now as before from foreign nations, not from the ferocity of barbarians, not from thousands of armed soldiers. Woe to you only from the face of your own people! Woe to you from your servants and friends, from civil war, from cruel searchings of heart, from the sufferings of your children.

5. Do you now recognize that all are not peaceably disposed who are of your own house, nor all friendly who seem to be so? And even if we had known it before, we are now taught more plainly by your example the full truth of that

saying of the Lord which He spake—that a man's enemies, shall be those of his own household (S. Matt. 10:36). Woe to brother from the brother in his midst, and to children from their parents. Woe to them, not from the sword, but from lying lips and a deceitful tongue. How long will you so evilly encourage each other in your evil-doing? How long will you lay one another low with the swords of your lips, ruin one another, be consumed one by another? Assemble yourselves, ye scattered sheep, return to your pastures, and to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. Return, ye wanderers, to your first love. I say this not as an enemy to revile you, but as a friend to rebuke you. True friendship brings sometimes rebuke, never flattery.

6. But I add to it entreaty. For Christ's sake, I beseech you, be reconciled to God, be reconciled to your princes (I mean Peter and Paul), and to him their vicar and successor, Eugenius, whom you have driven from his house and home. Be reconciled to the princes of the world, lest haply the world begin to take up arms on their behalf against your folly. Know you not that when they are offended you can do nothing, that when they are favourable you have nothing whatever to fear? Under their protection you need not fear, O renowned city, home of the brave, for thousands of the people that set themselves round about you. Be reconciled, then, to them, and at the same time to the thousands of martyrs, who, indeed, are with you, but yet against you, because of the grievous sin which you have committed, and to which you obstinately cling. Be reconciled to the whole Church of the Saints, who are everywhere scandalized when they hear of your evil doings. Else will this very page be a witness against you. And the Apostles and Martyrs themselves will make a firm stand against those who have dishonoured them and deprived them of the glory of their labours. But let us all now alike hear an end of talking. I have pointed out what is right, pointed out beforehand to you your danger, not concealed the truth, exhorted you to better things. There now remains, either that I be delighted by your speedy amendment, or grieve inconsolably at the sure knowledge of the righteous punishment ready to fall on you, that I wither and pine away for fear and looking after those things which shall come on the whole city.

LETTER CCXLIV. (A.D. 1146.)

TO CONRAD, KING OF THE ROMANS

He urges the King to defend the Papal authority against the rebellious Romans.

1. Never more sweetly, more harmoniously, or more closely could kingship

and priesthood have been united or planted together than when they both alike met in the person of the Lord, since He was made for us out of both tribes according to the flesh, at once High Priest and King. And not only so, but he also mingled them and united them in His Body, which is the whole Christian people, Himself being their Head; so that the Apostle calls this race of men, A chosen generation, a royal priesthood (1 S. Pet. 2:9). In another Scripture are not all as many as were predestinated to life called kings and priests? (Rev. 1:6 and 5:10). Therefore, what God hath joined together let not man put asunder. What Divine authority has sanctioned let man's will be the more diligent to fulfil, and let those whom precepts have united be united in their minds. Let them help each other, defend each other, bear each other's burdens. The Wise Man says, If a brother help his brother, both shall receive consolation (Prov 18:19). But shall they not both receive desolation if, which God forbid, they bite and devour each other? May my soul never come into the counsel of those who say that either the peace and liberty of the Churches is injurious to the Empire, or that the prosperity and exaltation of the Empire are harmful to the Churches. For God, the Founder of both, has not joined them for destruction, but for edification.

2. If you know this, how long do you continue to pass over their common reproach, their common wrongs? Is not Rome at once the Apostolic See and the capital of the Empire? To say nothing, then, of the Church, is it to the King's honour to hold in his hands a broken sceptre? I know not, indeed, what advice your wise men and the heads of your kingdom may give you on this matter, but I; speaking in my folly, will not keep back what I think. The Church of God has from the beginning down to the present time many times suffered tribulations, and many times been set free. Listen to what she says about herself in the Psalm, Many a time have they fought against me from my youth up, but they have not prevailed against me. The sinners built upon my back, and made long their iniquity (Ps. 129:2, 3). The Lord, certainly, O King, will not now let the rod of sinners come into the lot of the righteous. The Lord's hand is not shortened or weakened that it cannot save. He will at this time again without doubt set free His Spouse, whom He redeemed with His own Blood, endowed with His Spirit, adorned with Heavenly gifts, and enriched none the less with earthly bounties. He will set her free, I repeat. He will set her free, but if by the hand of another, even the princes of the realm can see whether that would be to the King's honour or to the benefit of the kingdom. It would not be to either.

3. Therefore gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh. O, most mighty, and let Cæsar restore to himself the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things

which are God’s. It is well known that both are in the charge of Cæsar, viz., to guard his own crown and to defend the Church. One befits the King; the other the defender of the Church. The victory, I trust in God, is in your hands. The haughtiness and arrogance of the Romans are greater than their courage. How is it? Would any Emperor or King, no matter how great and powerful, presume to offer such an insult at once to the Empire and the priesthood? But this accursed and turbulent people, which knows not how to measure its strength, to think of its object, to consider the issue, has in its folly had the audacity to attempt this great sacrilege. God forbid that popular violence and the rashness of the vulgar should for a moment be able to stand before the face of the King. I have become as a fool, in that, though a mean and unknown person, I have thrust myself like some great one into the counsels of such greatness and such wisdom, and in a matter, too, of such importance. But the more unknown and humble I am, the freer I am to say what charity suggests. And therefore I add also this in my folly: I do not suppose that anyone will, but if anyone should attempt to persuade you to anything else but what I have urged upon you, it is certain that either he does not love the King or has but little perception of what befits the royal majesty, or else he seeks his own advantage, and does not thoroughly care either for what is God’s or for what is the King’s.

LETTER CCXLV. (A.D. 1146.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS, ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP OF ORLEANS

He praises the zeal of the Pope in this matter.

Thus act always, I pray you. Always look at the petition, not at the petitioner. The King’s intercession for the Bishop of Orleans was not listened to, yet he was not offended, because his heart is in the hand of God. But even if he had been, you would have had to bear it, lest God should be offended, Who will be the more propitiated, and more quickly give us deliverance from the evils that we suffer and from our grief, if righteousness be held fast and truth not given up. It is not easy to say how much my heart is gladdened by such actions as these of yours, which are daily being noised abroad, to the great joy of all. So much for this. For the future, if anyone suggests to you that more might be put upon me, know that my strength is unequal to what I now bear. Inasmuch as you spare me you will also spare yourself. I think that you know that it is my determination not to leave my monastery again. In the matter of brother Balditius, though he is beloved by and is useful to me, I have obeyed you without delay. With regard to

sending an Abbot to S. Anastasius, if it has not been done it shall be directly I know that it has not. Further, as to sending someone else, as in your last letter you said nothing about it, I did not presume to do it. But this shall be done as quickly as you see fit to hasten it. My lord of Auxerre and brother Balditius will give you an answer about everything more at length and more plainly. What Baldwin, Archbishop of Pisa, did in Sardinia in the matter of the excommunication of the judge of Arvora, I ask that you will uphold, ratified and unshaken by your authority, because I believe that so good a man would not have done this except justly. Lastly, let the judge of Torre, since he is said to be a good prince, find favour with you and receive a welcoming hand.

LETTER CCXLVI. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME BISHOP OF ORLEANS, AFTER HIS DEPOSITION

He commends to the Pope the Bishop of Orleans, who had voluntarily resigned his See.

1. It is now time for me to write, not as before, on behalf of a Bishop, but for a poor and lowly monk, which is a more distressing task than if it were for one who is rich and in good position. Hence there is no room now for flattery, but only for mercy. Many wrote on his behalf to ask that he might remain Bishop, but this was too much to ask. I could not be induced to venture on that. But now if the affair is looked at more gently, humanity demands now, what before I avoided asking. The man had hope until now, and the reason of his hope was of this kind. He said: “The state of affairs has been greatly changed since the sentence that I should purge myself was pronounced against me. And, indeed, the sentence that I received was severe enough, and one that could hardly be fulfilled by the most innocent. But how can it now when everything has made it impossible?” There is no Bishop at Nevers, nor yet even at Troyes. The Bishop of Auxerre has crossed the Alps. These three form a great part of the number of comprovincials by whom I was to purge myself. Those who can purge me are certainly not lacking, but the Bishops are either non-existent or absent. Can, then, that be rightly exacted from me which cannot be found? If the judge finds the case thus, is it wonderful if he relieve me from an impossible sentence? Or if it is not wholly impossible, he will, of his own accord, pass lightly over or not scrutinize too severely acts which are of small importance. Surely he wishes for mercy and not sacrifice. For what advantage is there in my blood that he should search out my iniquity and examine into my sin? But because he is kind and

merciful, something he will forgive, something he will pass over, and will add somewhat of his own. He is the lord; is it not lawful for him to do what he will? Even if the Pope, as a man of apostolic gentleness and authority, does not care to supply me with an excuse, as, indeed, he need not, why should he not use the liberty he enjoys, and promptly let mercy triumph over justice?

2. When, then, this hope was allowed him in the midst of his fear, and not in vain, as it seemed to him and his friends, yet he gave way, and trusted himself entirely to my judgment. And in order that he might not trouble the Church too long with his case, on my advice he anticipated the end, and the descent of the axe, and resigned his bishopric. There is one source of consolation, most merciful father, which this noble and repentant man has in the midst of his sad fortune. Do you ask what that is? Certainly he does not exercise himself in great matters, nor in things too high for him. It is enough for him if by your indulgence he, who was once a bishop, may remain a priest; if only the shield of your favour may be held before him to save him from the mark of infamy, and from being branded for ever with disgrace. A prayer, surely, that is worthy of being listened to. He does not ask this from pride, but lest he who was once so high should sink lower than the lowest. He will be contented with any position mid-way. Let him as he falls from on high stay himself on whatever honourable step he can lay hold of in his fall, and not descend to the lowest step of shame. He is young, of noble birth, has been placed in a high position, and yet he does not shrink from a lowly place, but from one of shame. Shall not even his humility gain him somewhat? The impious Ahab humbled himself and was profited by it (1 Kings 21:27–29); and shall not humility bring its reward to one who is faithful and noble? Far be it from the highest See, and far from your holy mind, to despise a humble and contrite heart.

3. If I should say, “He has humbled himself, let him be lifted up,” this would not be too rash or presumptuous for me to say for him; I should only be invoking a rule that you know (S. Matt. 23:12). But as it is, I do not ask that he be lifted up, but that he be not trodden under foot, and that I be not disappointed of my hope. Nay indeed, if we have received evil at the hand of the Lord, shall we not also receive good? For have you not the power to put down the mighty from their seat, and to exalt the humble and meek? Further, when we have received power, to prefer to use it against evil rather than for good, is to abuse it. Besides, he is worried by many debts, since he is now poor and needy. Let your authority order them to be paid from the episcopal revenues. It is hard to be at once deprived of honour, and to be burdened with a load of debts.

LETTER CCXLVII. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE SAME, FOR THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS

Bernard is displeased at the severity shown towards the Archbishop of Rheims, in withdrawing from him the use of the pallium.

To his loving father and lord EUGENIUS, by the grace of God Supreme Pontiff, his humble servant BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, sends humble greeting.

1. May God forgive you! What have you done? You have shamed the face of one of the most conscientious of men, and humiliated in the face of the Church one whose praise is in the Church. You have made all his adversaries to rejoice, but how many do you suppose you have grieved? There is no measure to the sympathy that he receives, because his friends are numberless. A man beloved by God and men is suffering the punishment due to a great crime, though it has not been brought home to him, nor confessed. We hold, we feel, the zeal of Phinehas; the Israelite is thrust through, but not with the Midianitish woman. It is charged against him that he crowned the King, but he does not think that in so doing he has exceeded the tenor of his privileges. It is objected against him that he knowingly presumed to celebrate in a church lying under an interdict. He denies it. In good time that will be brought to the test, and he be cleared. But be it so, let us suppose that all that his adversary has been allowed, or has cared, to say against him in his absence is true. Is it right that one whose other actions have been so praiseworthy should for this single excess be so hardly dealt with, so severely punished? To have exceeded this once only, might have been thought even a virtue, if the judgment on his action had proceeded from you and not from his enemies. What ought he to have done in such difficult circumstances? The day had been fixed, the court was solemnly assembled, the young King was there, and, above all, the business for which they had assembled was God’s business, viz., the expedition to Jerusalem. All these things plainly forbade that the solemn crowning of the King should be put off, or that it should be deprived of the wonted masses, and of its due honour. Neither was it expedient for the Archbishop of Bourges to prevent this honour being shown to the King.

2. And since this is how the case stands, I think that it is not one without an opportunity for mercy, since great necessity can excuse any appearance of contumacy. Have you power to strike only, and not to heal? You know who said, I will wound and I will heal (Deut. 32:39). Far be it from you not to use the

words of Him Whose place you hold, especially His words of fatherly love. Therefore, for this time only let the arrow of Jonathan speed quickly back, and if need be let it be shot at me instead. I should think it more tolerable, I confess, for me to be forbidden to celebrate mass than for the Archbishop to be deprived of his pall. There is also another reason of no small weight which stands in the way of your godly severity here, and that is, that it may give great occasion of offence and irritation to your son, King Louis, since he will seem the whole cause of all this trouble; and this plainly is unadvisable just now, for the good work which under your exhortation he has set about zealously and earnestly may fail of a worthy ending if he does it while angry and offended. As to the rest, you have ordered, I have obeyed; and your authority has caused a ready obedience to be paid to the injunctions. I have declared and spoken, they are more than I can number. Cities and castles are made empty; and now they find with difficulty one man that seven women can lay hold of, so many widows are there everywhere, and their husbands still living.

LETTER CCXLVIII. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard forewarns the Pontiff not to lend an ear to the Bishop of Seéz, who is endeavouring to be reinstated in his diocese.

1. It is not my custom, as it is with many, to use any preface, any roundabout phrases with you. I begin at once with the matter itself. A deceitful man is on his way to you, to deceive you, I believe, but I hope that he will not succeed. For this could not happen except with very great danger to many. It is always an evil to deceive anyone; it is commonly also an evil to be deceived by anyone. But it makes a difference who it is that is deceived, and in what he is deceived. The greater your power and dignity is, the more dangerous and more disgraceful is it to take any advantage of you, especially in ecclesiastical matters. For example, this deceitful fox of Seéz is craftily laying his snares for you, hoping by his craft to catch you, and you can imagine with what malignity he will rage against the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, no small part of which he has in a short time laid waste, if he is allowed to return to it fortified by your authority. Alas! what is left he will speedily devour. He who came a fox will return a lion, and he will no longer use cunning but cruelty against some of the clergy, as well as some of the laity. You must, then, be on your guard against his cunning, so that his violence may not break out a second time.

2. Be not moved by the piteous face of the man, his mean dress, his suppliant look, his downcast eyes, the humility of his words, nor yet by his crocodile's tears, running, they say, at will, and practised to further his lies. All these are but the appearance, and you know Who said, Judge not according to the appearance (S. John 7:24). In such things as these consists the form of godliness, but not always its power. These are sheep's clothing, often put on, as the Lord warned us, by wolves for the greatest destruction of the sheep. The sheep do not hide themselves, for the wolves come to them disguised (S. Matt. 7:15). Thence it is that some of my friends, taken in by his falsehoods, have written on his behalf, not paying attention to what was wisely and truly said by the Wise Man, There is one who wickedly humbles himself, and his inward parts are full of deceit (Ecclus. 19:23). Pay no attention, then, to his words, or to the gestures of his body; examine his deeds. By his fruits you will know him. Many grievous things are said of him; they will also be said against him if there is one that seeketh and judgeth. I am unwilling to tell you all that I have heard. For everything is not to be believed; but neither is everything to be disbelieved. I briefly mention one conjecture of mine; you will judge if there is any thing in it. Why did he refuse the judges given him? If he objects to them personally, they were under no suspicion. If he objects to the place, it was in his own land, amongst his own kindred, where the whole matter could be investigated easily, and without trouble, at small expense, and without a long journey. We can clearly only conclude that he appealed to you as an expedient to escape from the great number of his accusers who would be unable to pursue him outside his native land because of the expense. We must thank the Bishop of Lisieux, whose zeal for the House of God has made him spare neither his purse nor his individual trouble. He is a good brother, whose desire it is to raise up seed to his dead brother. Do you, too, thank him, because this diligent care of his will shed no small lustre on your name, for by it the wicked is made manifest, and so overthrown, which is your glory.

LETTER CCXLIX. (A.D. 1145.)

TO THE SAME

He commends as worthy the Prior of Chaise Dieu, elected to the See of Valence.

If rarity gives value to things, nothing in the Church is more precious, nothing more to be wished for, than a good and useful pastor. Truly such is a rare bird. Accordingly, whenever such is found, and an occasion is given, immediately

men’s hands are laid upon him, and they strive with all their might, using every possible violence and act of wickedness to prevent his promotion and the good fruit that it promises. I have heard that in the Church of Valence the Prior of Chaise Dieu has been elected by the vote of both clergy and laity. I should be greatly surprised if he were not a good and useful man in the work to which he has been called. Do you wish to know why I think so? Good men wish it, and one who pleases good men cannot but be good. And it is, it seems to me, no less a real proof of his goodness if he is displeasing to the bad in the neighbourhood. It becomes your holiness to confirm the election of these good men, lest if their choice be rejected you receive, by the efforts and conspiracy of the wicked, some other whom you would not wish.

LETTER CCL

TO BERNARD, PRIOR OF PORTES

Bernard thinks that the refusal of the Pope to raise Brother Noel on account of his youth to the Episcopate ought not to be resented by the brethren.

To the most reverend fathers and loving lords, BERNARD, Prior of Portes, and the saints with him, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting in the Lord.

1. From a passage in the reply of your Beatitude I find that I wrote something which made you think that I was troubled, and that you fear that not a little. But if so it is without cause. For there is no reason why you, most reverend fathers, should fear anything from your child who loves you in truth as friends and holds you as saints. Unless, perchance, you feared not me, but for me, with a fatherly love, because I seemed to you to be troubled without reason, or if with reason, more, perhaps, than I ought. I was troubled, I admit, not against you, but for you, and that but little. If this, too, was hastiness, then without hastiness I confess against myself my unrighteousness, and you will forgive the hastiness of my sin. Pardon me, such is my nature; the zeal of your house eats me up. I will not allow, so far as in me lies, such an example of sanctity to lose its lustre, for God forbid that I should be afraid of its being corrupted. In exactly the same way in a beautiful body not only disease, but even a mole is distressing. Evidently the colour is not good if any one of the saints seems to be vexed at his lowly position; he is far from perfect if he does not rejoice and even glory in it. Moreover, for any imperfection to appear in one who purposes to aim at perfection is as a mole. This colour, then, in our Brother Noel displeased me. For

even if he is pure in the sight of God; what then? We must also provide things honest in the sight of all men.

2. But you say, “It is we who were vexed, not he.” We come back to the same question. Again, I say what I think. I do not see why you should be vexed, unless you yourselves think that the matter is serious enough to be vexed about. Judge for yourselves whether this feeling was becoming to him, especially in newness of life. For before he took the vows, let me by his leave say it, this blot was seen in him, whether rightly must be left to his own conscience. And, perhaps, the Pope thought the same about him, since you say he has refused to confirm his election. I suppose that he was afraid of the tongues of traducers, and, therefore, withheld a too speedy promotion from a novice, lest slanderous tongues should say that this was the reward he aimed at when he took the cowl. But whatever the mind of the Pope may have been, whether this or something else, I must tell you that I knew nothing of his intention, lest anyone should say that it was done at my instigation. For, as far as I am concerned, it was my resolution that whenever I had an opportunity I would not only not hinder, but even with all my might, and, as they say, with both hands, help him whenever he should by the grace which is in him be in a position to bring forth fruit to God. Who will give me the happiness of seeing learned and holy men set over the Church of God as pastors, if not in all places, yet in many, or at all events in some? For what matters it if a youth declares that once he behaved in a youthful way? Old things are passed away, all things are become new. Shall I a second time rake up his buried vices when he has a second time been buried with Christ by the baptism of the wilderness [i.e., monasticism]?

3. I was very much displeased when I heard of the hard things which the Abbot of Chézy, or he of Troyes, is said to have written to you, and when I have an opportunity I will tell him so, as far as I may consistently with charity and with the brotherly intimacy that exists between us. I thank God, who has enabled you not to be overcome with evil, but to overcome evil with good, inasmuch as you have not returned him evil for evil, or cursing for cursing. Further, you must know that the letters which you had before written to me against the above-named Abbots did not come to their knowledge by any efforts or wish of mine. But enough of these matters.

4. I must now forget not myself. My burdened conscience, and my life, which resembles some fabled monster, cry aloud to you. For I am a kind of chimæra of the age, acting neither as a clerk nor as a layman, for I have long since put off the life of a monk, but not the habit. I do not like to write to you what I daresay

you have heard from others, what I am so busy about, what I am striving for, through what pitfalls my walk lies, down what precipices, I should rather say, I am hurled. If you have not heard, then I pray you to make inquiries, and according to what you hear, give me your counsel and the benefit of your prayers.

LETTER CCLI. (A.D. 1147.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS

Bernard prays him to pardon the monks of Baume, whom he had rightly punished, and to reconcile them with those of Autun.

To his loving father and lord, EUGENIUS, by the grace of God Supreme Pontiff, his humble servant BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends his humble greeting.

The monks of Baume have sinned grievously, but not with impunity. To you, therefore, there are praise and thanksgiving due from the whole Church, because you have not kept silence, not passed it over, not been inactive. You rightly roused yourself; you struck, but it was to heal. But if my lord forgets to have mercy, and shuts up his pity in wrath, where will the healing come from? Therefore, I confidently wait for mercy after judgment, that I may sing to the Lord of mercy and judgment. I know well that you will not depart from the footsteps of Him whose vicar you are, especially because he says: If any man will serve Me let him follow Me (S. John 12:26). But the Prophet says of Him: Who knoweth if God will turn, and pardon, and leave a blessing behind Him? (Joel 2:14). And this blessing I boldly ask from you who have come after Him. Besides, it is not right to destroy the innocent with the guilty. For those who did the evil have been removed. What remains but that those who remain may be saved? Why should not they who obeyed both you and your predecessor be saved? I speak with Paul, who said: Put away from among yourselves that wicked person (1 Cor. 5:13). Therefore, have pity on them; and let not the iniquity of the wicked prejudice the righteousness of the innocent. I say this because their cause comes before the presence of your majesty together with that of the monks of Autun, and they are afraid that the iniquity of these others may injure them. I beseech you most of all to strive for their harmony and peace; indeed, I wish well to both, and so I think it is expedient for both.

LETTER CCLII. (A.D. 1147.)

TO THE SAME, ABOUT THE DISPUTED ELECTION AT YORK

Bernard begs him to cause the sentence of Pope Innocent against the Archbishop to be executed.

Ambition frustrated is furious, nay, it is desperate, even to madness. The man of perdition is running his head into the noose, and accelerating the sentence of condemnation that he has so long deserved. Truly, his sins are now manifest going before unto judgment. The accursed and thorn bearing tree is anticipating the hand which is to cut it down, and calling down on itself the axe which was delaying to strike. Alas! how much more just would it have been if it had long ago fallen, rather than those saints whom, against right and justice, he has by his attacks cast down. For if he had not been standing he would never have overthrown those who were standing fast. And they who were standing to much more good than he have perished in their innocence, and for their innocence; but their innocent blood will be required at the hands of those who, by giving this mischievous tree their secret support, have prevented its immediate downfall. The blood of the saints cries from the earth against them; the saints whose souls are in the hand of the Lord, and whom no torment of wickedness can touch. Still they were my children; they have been scattered abroad, and I get no consolation from words. And even if these could afford me any solace or remedy, yet they fail me because of my grief; sorrow shuts them in, sighs interrupt them. Yet, listen, or rather read, one last word which I can better write than speak. If he is still standing, alas! that I should say it, there is great fear that his standing is your fall; and his continued ill-doing, like an evil tree which cannot but bring forth evil fruit, will be deservedly imputed not to him, but to you.

LETTER CCLIII. (A.D. 1150.)

TO THE ABBOT OF PRÉMONTRÉ

Bernard replies with gentleness to their bitter complaints against him, and reminds them of the benefits they have received from him.

1. I have read what you have heard of me, and I fear. For you write against me bitter things, but I hope with more severity than truth. What wrong have I done? Is it that I have ever loved your person, been kindly disposed to your Order, and helped it whenever I could? If you believe not my words, let my deeds be my witness. Indeed, my conscience tells me that I ought to have been commended by you. But since you have seen fit to speak and write against me, I will lend

power to my words from the testimony of my actions. It goes, indeed, against the grain. I may seem to be boasting of my good deeds, and this is not seemly. But you compel me to act as a fool. Whenever have you or yours wanted my help and failed to receive it? In the very first place, the land of Prémontré, in which you are living, was formerly mine, and you had it as a gift from me. For our brother Wido (so the first inhabitants of the place called him) had given it to me through the Bishop. Next, it was principally through my efforts that the monks of Beaulieu affiliated themselves to you. When King Baldwin was alive he gave me the place of the holy Samuel at Jerusalem. and at the same time a thousand crowns with which to build; I gave you both the site and the money. Many know how hard I laboured that you might have the church of S. Paul at Verdun; and you enjoy the fruit of my labour. If you do not admit this fact against you, my letters to Pope Innocent of blessed memory are in existence, as true judges and living witnesses to the truth of what I say. Your brothers of Sept-Fontaines hold from me the place which they occupy, which the first inhabitants called Francs-Vals.

2. For which of these acts do you wish to leave your friends? Are you not rewarding evil for good? For you threaten to break your compact, to dismiss the peace that there is between us, to give up fellowship, to break our unity. But suppose that it is not for a good work that you stone me, but for injury done you, in that I received brother Robert, who was once of your Order, and gave him the monk’s habit. I do not deny it; he is with us. But I thought that I sufficiently satisfied you about this when I truly told you by word of mouth, and not once only, the reason, method, and necessity of receiving him. But since you are not yet contented I shall not be displeased to repeat my former reply, as you do not hesitate to repeat the charge to which I had given my defence.

3. I never at any time urged brother Robert to leave you; nay, rather, for many years—not once, but often—I checked his desire to do so. Again, how can I be suspected of having enticed him from you when you have Magister Otho as the adviser and encourager of his withdrawal? If you do not know this, ask him. If I know the man well he will not deny it. I could also, perhaps, give you the names of others; many others, too, who had either turned to you or returned to you, whom you would not have now if I had not either persuaded or even compelled them to remain with you. But I spare you, not because I am short of matter, but because I am rich in modesty. I have known men within your walls who had been touched and converted by my preaching and disposed to join us, but who afterwards, on the solicitations of your members, altered their minds, and were

received and kept in your order and habit. Then, again, their consciences began to prick them, and they wished to leave you, and would have done so, unless I make a mistake, if they had not been held back, not only by my refusal to receive them, but by my exhortations to remain where they were.

4. But since you wish it again, listen how it was that I received brother Robert. The Pope, on his own soliciation and that of his friends, enjoined it. He said that his request had been granted by you and also by his Abbot, so that no one might say that he extracted it from you by the Papal injunction. If you deny this, what is that to me? Let him see to it. If you think fit to charge the supreme and holy Pontiff with falsehood you must pardon me for thinking it impious not to believe so great holiness and not to obey so great majesty. Moreover, the venerable Abbot Gottschalk, who is one of your confraternity and had been specially named to you by the Pope to see to this matter, has clearly not denied that he had brought back from you both a free emancipation of the brother and your spontaneous avowal of it.

5. Again, in the matter of brother Fromund you have no ground for attacking me, since I did not receive him without the voluntary permission of his Abbot. And that you were not ignorant of this is shown by that bitter letter in which you bring a calumnious charge against me on the single point of the unexpected connivance of the Chapter, as if, indeed, that had been forbidden by our mutual agreement, or as though the emancipation of a monk was the privilege of the Chapter and not of the Abbot alone.

6. You add as another complaint that I removed a house of your brethren at Basse-Font, although you omit to say that it was built outside the boundaries assigned you. I wish that before you condemned me you would ask the brothers themselves not only who removed it, but also the cause of its being removed. I do not think that they would have concealed the truth from you. But hear it now from me, and then, if you like, ask them. They had begun to build a place, where they placed some of their sisters, a long way from their Abbey, but close to two farmhouses of our house, and near the pastures where we feed our sheep. We asked them as friends, and as those who might be useful to them, not to sow the seeds of a scandal, and prepare a ground of quarrels to be left as a legacy both to their posterity and ours. But they, nevertheless, went on with the building. This was all the violence that I used, this was the way that I removed them. If to make a request is to use violence, then I am inexcusable.

7. As a matter of fact, which cannot be denied, the Bishop, who was indignant that they had ventured, without consulting him, to erect an oratory in his diocese,

and a monastery on the land of the Church, and on the estate of his vassal, tried to put a stop, though in vain, to the work that they had begun. For they did not give it up even when forbidden to proceed. Afterwards, as I was passing through that district, I met the then Abbot of Basse-Font, who told me that they had stopped building. But I gathered from what he said that they had done this not so much on my account, but because of the Knight who seems to have given them the land, and who in many ways was harassing them so much that they complained bitterly of his treatment of them. But even if they had abandoned the work of their own accord, and from love of us, it would but have been becoming to their religion, and would have seemed perhaps a kindness to those who had some small claims on them. I can only wonder where this complaint originated, for, if I mistake not, the Abbot ended this present life with devoted goodwill towards us, and his successor, who often consults me intimately about his needs, has never made any mention of this complaint, and, besides, I have since been very hospitably received in the same monastery, but I have never heard there from the Abbot or anyone else anything about it. Moreover, the Abbot was with us afterwards at Clairvaux, and also very recently when a chapter of your Order was held at Bar, whence came those letters of yours, which are rather calumnies than complaints; and yet I cannot recollect that either at the one place or the other, either by him or by you, was the slightest mention made of this matter.

8. You say, besides, that the monastery at Igny has burnt a little house of your brethren at Braine. Do you call it a house? It was nothing but a hut of boughs which gave shelter to the brother whose duty it was to keep watch over the standing corn. Nor was it burnt by malice, as I am told on good authority, but because it was placed in a field of the brethren of Igny, and occupied land which had to be cultivated. In short, the house, as you call it, was hardly worth a penny; and I believe that such satisfaction has already been given to the Abbot of Braine that he makes no complaint, and has no ground for it either. But if not, I am ready to give every satisfaction as soon as you let me know. And so with regard to the Abbot of Long-Pont; as soon as I heard of your complaint that he wished to build a cell within your lands I prohibited him, and, what is more, I believe that he desisted even from laying the foundations. But if not, it shall be done as soon as I know that it has not been done. You complain especially that our Abbot of Villars has been the means of an interdict being placed on the Church of S. Foillan, which belongs to your Order. But it would be more just if you were to complain of the incredible obstinacy of your brother and co-Abbot of the aforesaid house, rather than find fault with the punishment inflicted by the

supreme Pontiff. I know for a certainty that the quarrelsomeness of the Abbot is strongly condemned by many of your brethren, so it is a great wonder that you do not also condemn it. And, therefore, I say to you that this is the cause of your indignation. Indeed, it is this man's covetousness or stubbornness which has brought the interdict on your brethren. It is a tedious business, and it would be difficult to set down all his subterfuges within the compass of a letter. Still, I will state in as few words as I can the cause of the interdict. After two or more agreements of peace, after a definite sentence issued by your abbots and ours, according to the determination of your Chapter, the Bishop of Cambray, in whose diocese the house of S. Foillan is well-known to be, was at length called in, and when he saw that the Abbot was obstinately bent on breaking through all agreements, he meant, as he said, to proceed against him by an ecclesiastical sentence. Then the Abbot, to gain time, appealed to the supreme Pontiff. The case came before him. And when he knew for a certainty, on the testimony of your own abbots, as well as of other religious, that the Abbot of S. Foillan not only refused to stand by any engagements, but that he also was withstanding a judicial sentence, he ordered the Church to be laid under an interdict until he should give satisfaction. At length, in the presence of the Bishop, who had received an order to pronounce the interdict, the lord (Abbot) of Cîteaux was asked by you, by the Abbot himself, and by us, to see that some form of peace was provided, and this was gained by the entreaties both of your members and of yourselves. In the absence of the Abbot of Villars an agreement was drawn up, and the Bishop said that if the Abbot of S. Foillan would keep it he would refrain from publishing the interdict. However, when he left the meeting he did not keep it, and what is more, that house which a judicial sentence and all the agreements drawn up had commanded to be pulled down, so much so that once even it had been destroyed, was again in the meanwhile, contrary to his promise and the judicial sentence, rebuilt; and this, I say, he held and still holds, he has besides built another. Why should not the Bishop execute the order to issue the sentence of interdict which he had received from the Apostolic See, especially when the Abbot has been guilty of double-dealing? I, however, was still hoping to overcome evil with good, and I caused the sentence to be postponed till the Octave of Epiphany, in order to see in the meanwhile if the man would either determine to obey the sentence or observe some mode of compromise. And I hope that this may still happen; may the God of peace grant that our peace may rest upon him.

9. And since this is the true state of things you have no cause to complain of

me; it rather seems that I might more justly complain of you. It only remains that you love those who love you, and especially endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. That is the bond between us and you, which has strengthened the cause of peace and charity, and no less beneficially for you, perhaps, than for us. You must decide if it is to be broken, it is certainly not expedient for you that it should be. And I do not think that it is in any way right for you break it. For since the cause is common to us both it ought but not to be prejudiced by the fault of an individual, even if those things were true which you say against me. But whatever you may do, brethren, I have made up my mind to love you always, even though my love is not returned. Let him who wishes to abandon his friend seek occasion for it; my desire is, and always will be, not to give any of my friends a just cause to leave me, nor to look for it in another; for the one is the mark of a feigned, the other of an injured friendship. And since the prophet says that it is a good thing to be joined together (Is. 41:7) you will be able to loosen, or even to cut off, yourselves, but not me. I will cling to you, even if you wish it not; I will cling to you, even if I do not wish it myself. Formerly I bound myself by the strong bond of charity unfeigned, which never faileth. When you quarrel I will be peaceful; and lest I give place to the devil, I will give place to the wrath of those who quarrel with me. I will be overcome by revilings, I will be overcome by kindnesses; I will help those who wish not for it, I will heap benefits on the ungrateful, and I will honour those who despise me. And now is my soul sorrowful because in some way I have offended you, and it will be sorrowful until your kindness relieve it. If you delay I will go and make excuses, I will keep knocking at your doors, I will be urgent opportunely, importunately, until I either merit or extort a blessing. The winter is more than half over, and I am still, to no purpose, it seems, waiting for my tunic.

LETTER CCLIV. (A.D. 1136.)

TO WARREN, ABBOT OF S. MARY OF THE ALPS

Bernard praises in this aged Abbot the zeal with which he undertakes the reformation of his house.

To his reverend father, worthy of all veneration, WARREN, Abbot of the Alps, and to all his brethren in the same place, Brother BERNARD, the servant of their holiness, desires that they may ever advance from good to better.

1. I find that to be true of you, my father, which I recollect that I have read in Holy Scripture: When a man has been perfected, then only he begins (Ecclus.

18:6). Rest is due to you in your old age, you have won your crown, and, lo! like some new soldier in Christ you are stirring up opposition to yourself afresh, you are provoking the adversary, and though a weary old man you are taking on you the part of the strong by compelling your old enemy to renew the conflict, and that in some degree against his will. For in relinquishing churches and ecclesiastical benefices under an inspiration from heaven, contrary to your usual custom and the traditions of your predecessors, you are destroying synagogues of Satan, i.e., cells under no parent house, in which three or four brothers are wont to live with no rule and no discipline, and in banishing women from the monastery, and in being more than ever vigilant in other good deeds of piety and sound learning, you are making the first and greatest sinner fulfil the verse: He shall see it, and be wrath, he shall gnash with his teeth and consume away. But what matters it? You, on the other hand, amid his confusion are solaced, and can sing to your God, They that fear Thee shall see me, and rejoice because I have put my trust in Thy word (Ps. 119:74). And there is no fear that the enemy will overcome one who has not yielded to old age. The mind is stronger than time, and even while the body is growing cold in death a holy zeal glows in the heart, and while the limbs grow helpless the vigour of the will remains unimpaired, and the ardent spirit feels not the weakness of the wrinkled flesh. And this is no wonder. For why should it fear the destruction of its old home when it sees a spiritual building daily rising on high and growing for eternity? For we know that if this earthly house is dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 5:1).

2. But someone will say, “What if a man is cut off by death before the spiritual building is finished?” I answer, that the perfect can advance no further. And he who is advancing shows by the very fact that he is advancing that he is not yet perfect. We can with all confidence give an unhesitating reply to that question. We will say, He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time (Wisd. 4:13). He who embraces eternity may well be said to embrace a long time. For has not he who passes into eternity fulfilled a long time? And, therefore, he rightly claims for himself a reward proportioned to the time he has spent here, if it be measured not by length of years, but by greatness of mind, that is, not by the flight of time, or number of days, but by devotion of the soul to God, or by its inextinguishable desire of ever advancing further. For he retains by virtue what he loses by time. Moreover, real virtue knows no end, is not bounded by time. Thence it is that the verse says, Charity never faileth (1 Cor. 13:8). And, again, The patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever (Ps. 9:18); and,

The fear of the Lord is clean and abideth for ever (Ps. 19:9). The righteous never thinks that he has attained (Phil. 3:13), he never says, It is enough; but he is always hungering and thirsting after righteousness, always striving as much as he can to be more righteous, always endeavouring with all his might to advance from good to better. For he gives himself up to the service of God, not, like a mercenary, for a year or for a fixed time, but for ever. Hear again the voice of the righteous as he says, I will never forget Thy precepts, for with them Thou hast quickened me (Ps. 119:93). It is not, then, for a time only. Therefore his righteousness remains, not for some little space, but for ever (Ps. 112:3). And so the everlasting hunger of the righteous deserves an everlasting satisfaction. And though he is made perfect in a short time, yet he is reckoned to have fulfilled a long time because of the endlessness of his virtue.

3. How, again, can shortness of time be a hindrance to the devotion of the good if it is not enough to excuse the obstinate wickedness of the lost? For, undoubtedly, the evil of an impenitent and obstinate mind, even though worked out in a short time, is visited with eternal punishment, because what was short in time, or in deed, was made up for by obstinacy of will; so much so, that if he were never to die he would never cease to wish to sin; nay, he would wish to live always that he might sin always. Therefore the same thing in another way can be said of him Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled a long time, inasmuch as he deserved to receive the reward of many ages, nay, of all ages, who never wished to change his mind. And so an unwearied desire for progress, and a ceaseless striving for perfection is reckoned to be perfection.

4. But if to be anxious to be perfect is to be perfect, evidently not to wish to go forward is to fall back. Where, then, are they who are wont to say, “It is enough for us, we do not wish to be better than our fathers?” O, monk! do you not wish to go forward? “No.” Do you wish then to go back? “Certainly not.” What do you wish, then? “I wish so to live, and to remain in what I have attained to, as never to suffer myself to become worse, nor wish myself to become better.” Then you wish for what is impossible. For what is there that stands still in this world? And certainly of man it has been specially said, He fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in one stay (Job 14:2). Again, did the Maker Himself of man and of the world stand still as long as He was seen on the earth and dwelt with men? On the testimony of Scripture, He went about doing good and healing all (Acts 10:38). He went about, then, not unfruitfully, not carelessly, not idly, not with slow foot, but as it was written of Him, He rejoiced as a giant to run His course (Ps. 19:5). Moreover, no one catches a runner if he does not run himself.

What avails it to follow Christ with the feet if we do not succeed in laying hold of Him with the hand? Therefore Paul said, So run that ye may obtain (1 Cor. 9:24). Do you, O Christian, place the goal of your course and of your race where Christ placed His. For however far you may have run, if you do not persevere even unto death (Phil 2:8) you do not obtain the prize. The prize is Christ. But if while He runs you stop still, you do not make Christ yours, but you rather put Him at a distance, and you will have to fear what David speaks of when he says, Lo! they that are far from Thee, O Lord, shall perish (Ps. 73:27). And so, if to advance is to run, when you cease to advance you cease to run. And when you begin to leave off running, then you begin to go back. Hence, we plainly see that not to wish to advance is nothing but to go back.

5. Jacob saw a ladder, and on it angels, where none was seen sitting down or standing still, but all seemed either to ascend or descend (Gen. 28:12); whence we are plainly given to understand that in the state of this mortal life no half way between going forward and going back can be found; but in the same way as our body is always either increasing or decreasing, so also must our spirit be either advancing or retreating. We must notice, however, that the spirit does not receive its increase or suffer its loss from the changes of the body. For in a robust and active body there always dwells a more effeminate and lukewarm soul; and, again, in a weak and infirm body a stronger and more vigorous soul flourishes. And this the Apostle testifies that he found true in his own case: When I am weak, he says, then am I strong. And he also gladly glories in his infirmities, in order, he says, that the power of Christ may dwell in me (2 Cor. 12:9, 10).

6. And what I thus show by example I can also prove by sight, whilst in you, my father, is manifested to us the truth of the saying, Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). For whence springs your zeal to renew your Order if it is not from a renewed mind? So does a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bring forth good things (S. Matt. 12:35). So does a tree bring forth good fruit (S. Matt. 7:17). Your fruit is the first and purest. But what tree but purity of heart bore it? Did ever an impure mind seek after and choose purity with such zeal for the monastic rule? Pure water does not flow from a muddy spring, nor does a pure thought from an unclean mind. It is undoubtedly from within that this delightful fount arises; and from that inward fulness there bursts forth that plenteous supply; so that which is beautiful in the mind is also pleasing in action.

7. Follow your father, my sons; be imitators of him, as he is of Christ. Say:

We will run in the savour of thy ointments (Cant. 1:3). In truth, he is a good savour of Christ in every place (2 Cor. 2:14). For to say nothing of you, who, being with him, perceive his fragrance around you, there has come to us, who are so far away, such a plenteous and pleasant odour from his zealous efforts, that it is to us most certainly an odour of life unto life. I think that in heavenly places also they have perceived this pleasant odour, and that they sing with more festive joy than usual: Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like a pillar of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? (Cant. 3:6). And again another: Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits (Cant. 4:13). If any of you does not hear this joyous strain in heaven he is envious. If any one does not perceive this odour, let him (by your leave I say it), let him imagine that it exists.

LETTER CCLV. (A.D. 1134.)

TO LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

Bernard advises the King not to hinder the assembling of a Council, which was become needful both for the Church and for the Realm.

To the most illustrious LOUIS, by the grace of God King of France, and to his beloved wife and children, his faithful servant, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health from the King of kings and Lord of lords.

1. The kingdoms of the earth, and the rights of kingdoms remain, surely, sure and unharmed in obedience to their lords when they do not resist the ordinances and commandments of God. Why is my lord’s anger kindled against the chosen of God whom his Highness also welcomed and chose for himself as father, for his son as Samuel? The royal indignation is in arms, not against foreigners, but against himself and his own house. It is no wonder if the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God (S. Jas. 1:20), when it makes you neither see the danger nor feel the loss to your own advantage, to your own honour and safety, although all can plainly see it. A council is called together. How does this derogate from the honour of the King, or the good of the kingdom? There a ready and special devotion will be both felt and shown by the whole Church to your exalted position; especially because you were the first king, or among the first, to go to the defence of your mother Church in a most energetic and Christian spirit against the violence of those who were persecuting her. There well-deserved thanks will be given to you in glorious fashion by that large multitude, there will prayers be offered for you and yours by thousands of saints.

2. Beyond this, every one knows how necessary at the present juncture is an assembly of Bishops, except any one who is hard-hearted enough to pay no attention to the troubles of his mother Church. But, they say, heat is excessive, and our bodies are not of ice. It is true, but our hearts are frozen certainly, and that there is no one, as the Prophet says, who is grieved for the affliction of Joseph (Amos 6:6). But of this at another time. Now I, who am the least in your kingdom in dignity, though not in loyalty, tell you that it is inexpedient for you to wish to hinder so great and so necessary a good. And there are not wanting either reasons by which I could make that plain to you, which are ready to my hand to bring before you if I did not think that what I have said is enough for a wise man. Still, if anything has come from the severity of the apostolic power to make your Highness think that you have reason to be angry, your faithful servants, who support you, will strive with all their might to have it in some way recalled, or moderated, as may be suitable to your honour. In the meanwhile, if I can do anything I will not omit it.

LETTER CCLVI. (A.D. 1146.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS

Bernard urges upon the Pope to come to the succour of the Eastern Church, and not to be discouraged at the loss of Edessa.

1. It is no light news which we have heard; it is very sad and grievous. And to whom is it sad? To whom is it not? The children of wrath alone do not see God’s wrath, they do not mourn with those that mourn, but they rejoice and exult in the worst evils. Besides, the sorrow is common, because the cause is common to all. You have done well in praising the most righteous zeal of our Gallican Church, and in strengthening it by the authority of your letter. I must say that we must not in such a general and grievous matter act without zeal, much less timidly. I have read in some wise man or other: “He is not a brave man whose courage does not rise in the midst of difficulties” (Seneca, ep. 22 to Lucillus). But I say that one who is faithful may be trusted even more in disaster. The waters have come in even unto the soul of Christ, the apple of His eye has been touched. In this, the second Passion of Christ both the swords must be drawn which He allowed on the first occasion. And who should draw them but you? Both swords of Peter must be unsheathed as often as necessary, the one at his command, the other by his hand. And, indeed, of the one of which it seemed that he ought not to make use it was said: Put up thy sword into its sheath. Therefore that, too, was

his, but not to be drawn by his own hand.

2. I think that now is the time, when necessity bids both be drawn in defence of the Eastern Church. You must not fall below the zeal of him whose place you occupy. What shall we say of one who holds the primacy and shrinks from its ministry? There is the voice of One crying, “I go to Jerusalem to be again crucified” (Hegesippus de Excid. lib. iii. c. 2). Though some be lukewarm, some deaf to those words, yet the successor of Peter may not neglect them. He himself will say, Though all shall be offended yet will not I (S. Matt. 26:33). Nor will he be deterred by the losses of the former army, but will do his best to repair them. Is not man bound to do his duty, because God does what He pleases? I, for my part, as a faithful Christian, will hope for better things in place of such misfortunes, and will think it all joy that we are falling into divers temptations (S. Jas. 1:2). Truly we have eaten the bread of affliction, and have drunk of the wine of sorrow. Why, O friend of the Bridegroom, are you cast down, as though it were not that the kind and wise Bridegroom has, according to His custom, kept the good wine until now? Who knows if God will return and forgive, and leave a blessing behind Him? (Joel 2:14). And certainly the Wisdom that is above is wont so to work, so to determine; I speak to a wise man. When has great good ever come to men which has not been preceded by great evil? For, to speak of nothing else, did not the death of the Saviour precede the supreme and unparalleled gift of our salvation?

3. Do thou, then, O friend of the Bridegroom, prove thyself a friend in His need. If thou lovest, as thou oughtest, Christ with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, with that triple love of which thy predecessor was asked (S. John 21:15–17), then thou wilt withhold nothing, thou wilt leave nothing undone in this danger of His bride; but thou wilt devote to Her whatever strength thou hast, whatever zeal, whatever watchfulness, whatever authority, whatever power. A great danger demands a great effort. The foundation is shaken, and we must put forth all our strength as though the building were now ready to fall. And these things I have said to you with full trust in you, as well as loyalty.

4. I suppose you have heard the news that at the assembly at Chartres, by some strange caprice, I was chosen as general and leader of the expedition. Be assured that this was not of my seeking, and was and is against my will; and that, as I gauge my strength, it is altogether beyond my powers. Who am I that I should have charge of a camp and go out before the faces of armed men? Is there anything more inconsistent with my profession, even if I had the necessary

strength and skill? But it is not my place to teach you wisdom; you know all these things. Only I implore you, by that love which you specially owe me, give me not over to the will of man, but, as is peculiarly incumbent on you, seek for counsel from God, and endeavour that His will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

LETTER CCLVII. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE SAME, FOR BROTHER PHILIP

1. There is a matter which I do not mingle with other things, because it affects others and troubles me, and needs more than usually urgent prayers on my part. Our brother Philip, when he exalted himself was humbled, when he humbled himself he was not exalted, as though the Lord had not spoken equally of both (S. Matt. 23:12). There is rigour, but no relaxation. There is judgment, but without mercy. It cannot be denied that many have given this measure, but no one has ever wished this measure to be given to himself. But if with what measure we mete it shall be measured to us again (S. Matt. 7:2), certainly he who shows no mercy will have judgment without mercy. Your Apostolic authority is capable of showing both righteous zeal and mercy. The honour of majesty, it is true, loves judgment; but God forbid that this should banish gentleness. That steward, too, whose praise is in the Gospel, chose to inflict loss on his Lord rather than not show mercy to his neighbour. For a hundred in one case he took eighty, in another fifty. And justly was he praised for preferring that his master should rather lose his goods than his men. And because he who so works is worthy of his reward, by one such deed he both kept them as his master’s servants and made them his own friends (S. Luke 16:1–8).

2. But what am I doing? I seem to be arguing the case rather than offering my prayer. This is not good. If I go on saying such things I shall provoke judgment, not mercy. I have no more confidence in such arguments than in spiders’ webs. In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird (Prov. 1:17). I know how much more convincing arguments can be brought in reply, and especially by such ability as yours. Wherefore my weapons are the prayers of the poor, and in them I am rich. To these engines that tower of strength, no matter how impregnable else, must needs yield. The father of the poor, the lover of poverty, will not reject the prayers of the poor. Who are they? I am not alone, and even if I were I might presume still to make my petition. All your sons who are with me, and those who are not with me too, join me in this supplication. Who can number

them? Of course brother Philip is excepted, who neither asks nor seeks that others should ask, and I do not know if he even wishes it; for, as far as he is concerned, he would rather be a door-keeper in the house of his God. But not even I ask only for the man, but on behalf of our Order, believing that a dispensation in this case will be highly beneficial to it.

LETTER CCLVIII. (A.D. 1145.)

TO THE SAME, FOR BROTHER RUALENE

Bernard begs that Brother Rualene, who had become Abbot of S. Anastasius, might be allowed to resign his post.

In truth, I find that our Brother Rualene has not yet learnt to acquiesce in his position, and I cannot hope that he ever will. Therefore, both for him and for me, there is need of a speedy remedy. I tell you that I am even consumed so long as he is made to offend. Do not be surprised at this; we are of one soul, except that I am the mother, he the son; for the name and authority of father I have yielded to you. That alone which could not be transferred, the affection which is torturing me, that remains to me still. A mother cannot forget the child that she bore (Is. 49:15). The sadness of my breast, and the grief of my heart for him, proclaim me his mother. You ask what I complain of? About myself I complain to you, about you I complain to myself. I, a cruel yet loving mother, spared not my own child, that I might purify my heart by loving obedience. I have offered a dear pledge of my bosom as a sacrifice, not of constraint, I admit, but willingly did I obey that will which constrains whom it will. But he thought not so. When constrained by me as well as by you he struggled, though in vain. Had I, then, any reason to fear that he would always resist so obstinately? It is the mark of a loving heart to yield to stubbornness which will not allow itself to be placed in its proper position. Besides, to hold one against his will to a position in which he was placed against his will is hard for him, beneficial to no one. Again, to occupy the ground and not to bring forth fruit is not good for the ground, and is not becoming to you or to me. No one, as blessed Ambrose says, does good under compulsion, even if what he does is good, because the spirit of fear avails nothing when the spirit of charity is absent (S. Ambr. in Ps. 1.). And so I beseech you by the bowels of mercies of our God to show the love of a father and send back to his mother’s breasts the child, while he lives, whose whole weakness is, perhaps, caused by his having been weaned too soon. It is better to suffer him to live than to divide him. What profit is there in his blood? One thing I know, and

that is that it is not a lather’s or a mother’s voice which says, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but let it be divided (1 Kings 3:26). Perhaps you are not afraid of this, because you do not believe that it is likely to happen. But his letters and murmurings which frequently come to me fill me with fear of such an issue, for he is threatening to fly and to divide himself, or rather to tear himself asunder both from you and me.

LETTER CCLIX. (A.D. 1145.)

TO THE SAME, FOR THE SAME

Although I at one time wished what you wished me not to, your condescending gentleness provokes me now not only to wish, but to wish eagerly for what you do. It is your pleasure that Brother Rualene should be Abbot of S. Anastasius, and this had been my wish before, but because he was much opposed to it I gave way. Again, since your will does not concur with mine I again, as is right, give way and return to my first mind. We can make the experiment. What you ordered has been done, not because you ordered it, but because you wished it. The speedy execution of your command, of free will, and not grudgingly or of necessity, proves our obedience, and let my pen be examined as to my good-will. If I had not been content to execute your command should I not, according to the word of the Lord, have been an unprofitable servant in doing what I was bound to do? (S. Luke 17:10). But now, since I have acted with willingness also, I am no longer a servant but a son.

LETTER CCLX. (A.D. 1145.)

TO ABBOT RUALENE

Bernard sympathizes with Rualene in his unhappiness, but declares that he must remain at his post.

Your absence, my dear Rualene, has affected me enough, and more than enough, but I am far more troubled to hear of your sadness. For I seem to myself to lament more properly for you than for our losing or being deprived of you, although that loss is by no means small, and causes no small discomfort, since it is for so dear a son, so useful a brother, so necessary a fellow-helper. But the more vividly I call to mind your love ableness, the more deeply do I sympathize with your grief, holding your discomfort of more importance than my loss, and being more distressed at it. But I have not been negligent, not been idle, not held

my peace, and have tempted God in this matter, almost even to the point of angering the supreme and holy Pontiff, that in some way or other, even though it were to my own danger, I might be allowed to recall you. But since I have so far failed in all my plans and efforts for you, I have at last, from very weariness, given way to higher judgment, and yielding to power, am forced to be content with what I can get, since I cannot have what I would. Do you, too, my dear brother, greatly longed for, be strong in the Lord, and do not kick against the pricks, lest when you are hurt, very many, who greatly love you in the Lord, be equally hurt. Spare yourself, spare me, who from love of you have not spared myself. But the rather put on strength, trusting and knowing that your strength is the joy of your Lord. Put on the joy of salvation that I, too, rejoice in your joy, and may give thanks and praise to God, who loves a cheerful giver, for your peace of mind, and for my own comfort in you.

LETTER CCLXI

TO POPE EUGENIUS

Bernard prays the Pope to absolve the Abbot of S. Urbain, who had been subjected to censure.

One of the Knights of the Temple wished to become a monk of our Order, and found amongst us some to join him in his wish. But since they dared not, contrary to Rules, receive him within their walls, they took him secretly to a certain Abbey which is called Vaux, telling and suggesting to the Abbot to cause to be given to the man a black habit of some other Order of monks, and then they would receive him and give him ours. And so it was done. The matter became known to me, and was brought by me before the Chapter, and by the decision of the Chapter that brother was expelled. But the Templars, not content with this, brought letters from your Majesty to the Bishop of Châlons by which he was to suspend the Abbot of S. Urbain, who had given the soldier the habit, from entering the Church till he should have presented himself before you. Thence it is that the Abbot of Vaux, at whose request he did this without suspecting anything wrong, was forced in great trouble of mind to send to implore your mercy the brother who bears this letter, in order that he who was entangled by him might by him be set free, if that is to say he as well as we, your children, may win this boon from your Paternity.

LETTER CCLXII

TO THE SAME, FOR THE MONKS OF S. MARIE-SUR-MEUSE

I cannot but again support the Bishop of Rheims in his petition, especially since it is one which deserves to be listened to. I pray, therefore, and earnestly supplicate on behalf of the poor monks of S. Marie-sur-Meuse, that they may be quickly set free from the oppression under which they suffer, and that by your powerful hand the injuries and accusations of the malignant may be warded off from them; of these the bearer of this letter will inform you. It is for this that these poor men have sent messengers from afar to cry to you. And what answer you should send back by them you may learn from the righteousness and poverty of these men who love you, and from the honour due to the above Bishop, who has intervened on their behalf, and who loves you not a little.

LETTER CCLXIII

TO THE BISHOP OF SOISSONS, FOR THE ABBOT OF CHÉZY

I besought you, when I might, perhaps, have enjoined you, and I thought that my prayer had been granted. But since I find that it has not, it seems that I shall not have now to ask simply and in common with others, but to cry aloud. For I cannot bear a refusal, lightly or with equanimity, and hitherto I have not met with one. Do, then, what you ought; do what you are wont to do; for custom has made you my debtor; do it, I repeat, if not because you are asked, yet because you are enjoined. Return, therefore, to judgment, for it does not seem just that the Abbot of Chézy, who is a pious man, a friend of mine, and your son, should lose the rights of his monastery because of a word spoken by him incautiously and inconsiderately, and without the assent of his church. And although his accuser sticks obstinately to that word, being one who has no confidence in the righteousness of his cause, it ought not, I think, to prevent the Abbot from receiving a just decision; especially when those by whose dissimulation the matter has been brought before you know very well that he did not mean what he said, nay, rather was opposed to it. I hope that you will not be put out with me because of this, nor be vexed. May God so rejoice your soul, and may He so preserve you free from all troubled feelings, O father, greatly to be loved and honoured, as by all the servants of Christ, so in particular by me.

LETTER CCLXIV. (A.D. 1149.)

PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY, TO BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX

He expresses his friendship towards Bernard, and asks that a monk named Nicholas may be sent to him.

To BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, the strong and splendid pillar of the monastic order, nay, of the whole Church of God, PETER, the humble Abbot of Cluny, wishes the salvation which God has promised to those that love Him.

If it were allowed me, if the Providence of God did not forbid it, if man's path through life were in his own power, I should have preferred to be united by an indissoluble bond to your dear and blessed self, rather than reign anywhere, or be a prince amongst men. Ought not your dwelling, which is pleasing not only to men, but to the angels themselves, to be preferred by me before all earthly kingdoms? If I were to say that you were a fellow-citizen with them, though hope has not yet passed into possession, by the mercy of God I shall not be found a liar. If it had been given me to be here with you, even to my last breath, it would, perhaps, be given me after death to be for ever where you might be. Whither should I run save after you, drawn by the savour of your ointments? But since this is not given always I wish that it could be, at all events, given often. And since even this cannot be, I wish at least that I could often see those sent by you. And since this also happens but seldom, I wish next that your Holiness in the person of your messenger, Nicholas, who loves you, would come and stay with me till the Octave of the Lord; and in this request I think your heart partly joins my heart wholly. I shall see you, holy brother, in him, I shall hear of you through him, and I will entrust to him whatever I wish to make known secretly to your wisdom. To your holy soul, and to all the Saints who serve Almighty God under your rule, I commend myself and mine with all possible prayer, with all possible devotion.

LETTER CCLXV. (A.D. 1149.)

TO PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY (REPLY TO THE ABOVE)

He disclaims praises as being unworthy.

What are you doing, my dear friend? You are praising a sinner, you are beatifying a wretched man. You must now pray that I may not be led into error. I shall certainly be led into it, if I begin to be ignorant of myself from the delight I might take in your praises. That did well-nigh happen to me when I saw the letters of your Beatitude which beatified me. How happy should I now be if words could effect it! Still let me call myself happy, not, however, because of my own merit, but your good-will. I am happy in being loved by you, and in

loving you. However, I do not think that this sweet morsel which you offer me ought to be swallowed whole, nor, as they say, even admitted even into the mouth. You wonder why, perhaps. Because I cannot see anything in myself which makes me worthy of love, especially such as yours. I know, too, that a righteous man will never wish to be loved more than is right. Would that I could as easily imitate as admire so great an example of humility! Would that I might enjoy what I so greatly long for, your holy conversation—I do not say always, I do not say often, but even once in a year! I think that I should never return from it empty. It would not be in vain that I beheld a model of virtue, a perfection of discipline, a mirror of sanctity. Nor would it be fruitless for one to see with the eye of faith how well you have learnt from Christ what I have not yet learnt—his meekness and lowliness of heart. But if I go on to do to you what I complain that you have done to me, though I speak the truth, yet I shall not agree with the law of truth, which says, What you do not wish done to yourself do not to another (Tob. 4:15). And in answer to the little request with which you ended your letter I have to say that the brother whom you asked me to send you is not just now with me, but with the Bishop of Auxerre, and he is so ill that I am told that he cannot yet come to us without the greatest risk.

LETTER CCLXVI. (A.D. 1151.)

TO SUGER, ABBOT OF S. DENYS, TO COMFORT HIM ON HIS DEATH-BED

Bernard encourages him to meet death bravely, and expresses a great desire to see him before he dies.

To his dear and intimate friend SUGER, by the grace of God Abbot of S. Denys, Brother BERNARD wishes the glory which is within and the grace which cometh down from above.

1. Fear not, O man of God, to put off that man which is of the earth, which weighs you down to the earth and tries to sink you to hell. He it is that vexes, burdens, attacks you. What have you to do with earthly coverings, who art about to go to heaven to be clad with the robe of glory? It is near, but it will not be given to one that is clothed. It is able to clothe you, but not if you are already clothed upon. Be not distressed, then—nay, rejoice to be found naked and unclothed. God Himself wishes man to be clothed, but only when He is naked and unclothed. The man of God, then, will not return to God unless that which is of the earth first return to the earth, for these two are at enmity with each other, and there will be no peace till they are separated. And if peace do come it will

not be the peace of the Lord nor with the Lord. You are not one of those who say, Peace, when there is no peace (Ezek. 13:10). The peace which passeth all understanding awaits you, the righteous wait for this peace to be given you, the joy of your Lord awaits you.

2. And I, my dearest friend, greatly long to see you once more that I may receive a dying man's blessing. But since it is not in man's power to choose his path I dare not, since I cannot be certain, promise certainly to come, but though I do not at present see how I can, I shall do all that I can to come. Perhaps I may come, perhaps I may not; but whichever it is I have loved you from the first, I will love you without end. I say with all confidence that I cannot lose one so loved to the end. He is not lost to me, but he goes before, for my soul clings to his with a force which nothing can destroy, and is united by a bond which can never be broken. Only forget not me when you arrive where I hope to follow you, so that it may be granted me to come quickly to you. In the meanwhile never think that the sweetness of the thought of you can ever leave me, though the loss of your presence leave us grieving. Yet we must not doubt the power of God to give you even now to our prayers and to preserve you to us who have such need of you.

LETTER CCLXVII

TO THE ABBOT OF CLUNY

Your son, Brother Gaucher, has also become ours according to the rule, All mine are thine, and thine are mine (S. John 17:10). Let him be not less loved because he is common to us both, but, if possible, let him be more loved and held in greater favour; as he is mine because yours, so let him be yours because mine.

LETTER CCLXVIII

TO POPE EUGENIUS

Bernard warns him of the promotion of a certain unworthy person which had been surreptitiously made.

Let others fear your majesty and scarce come with trembling lips and fingers, by long windings and many turnings, to the business in hand. I, however, only look to your good and your honour, and, therefore, plainly and openly state my case, and am not afraid to say, as though to one of ourselves, without any hesitation or circumlocution, what it is necessary for the Apostolic See to do. I

say without any hesitation that you have been grievously imposed upon. Who has induced you to thrust into an ecclesiastical dignity a man stamped with ambition, convicted of it, and condemned because of it? As though it were not enough by itself that the man should have wished to heap honours on himself! Is he not the same man that Bishop Lambert, of holy memory, caught in detestable wickednesses which his ambition had urged him to, and whom he, therefore, solemnly degraded, not only from the rank that he then held, but also, as was fitting, from hope of all future promotion? You are simply revoking his sentence. And because of the anxiety of the holy brethren of "The Crown," who call to you for this, because of the respect due to the holy and learned Bishop, who was the prime mover in this matter, and also for conscience sake (conscience, I say, your own, not another's), there only remains that to satisfy my own conscience, I remind you of the saying, Be angry and sin not (Ps. 4:5). For you sin if you are not angry with the man that suggested such a fraud and stole from you such an unworthy sentence.

LETTER CCLXIX

TO THE SAME

Bernard begs the Pope to regard as null and of no value a letter obtained from him by surprise.

The serpent beguiled me. The crafty, chameleon-coloured man, destitute of righteousness, afraid of an interview, the enemy of his own conscience, guilty of a wrong done to his brother, got from me unawares letters in his own favour through the Bishop of Beauvais. For what is there that I would not do for him? If you do not wish to burden my conscience beyond measure let this cunning man gain nothing by his imposition, and let him not by any letters oppress the innocent. And not even this will satisfy me, if this most malignant pilferer and most greedy extortioner is not made to suffer the punishment that he deserves.

LETTER CCLXX. (A.D. 1151.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard writes on behalf of the Prior of Chartreux against certain malcontents. He reports the death of the Abbot of Citeaux and recommends his successor.

1. Our tempters neither slumber nor sleep. They have laid their snares in the desert, even as they but lately persecuted openly in the mountains. The

Carthusians have been put to confusion. They have been put to confusion and made to stagger like a drunken man, and all their wisdom has been well-nigh swallowed up. Know, my lord, that an enemy hath done this, and is still doing it. He still has confidence that the fruits of their holiness will fall into his mouth. He has chosen them as his food, as you know well. He has raised up traitors against those whom he could not drive out himself, and by their means he attacks them with domestic and civil war. From the first founding of the place and of the Order it has never been heard that anyone who went away was to be taken back without giving satisfaction. Those who did wrong in leaving have done worse in their return, inasmuch as they have added treachery to their misdoing. What do you think, Holy Father, that they are likely to do, who went out with transgression, and came back in pride? And now their pride is ever going higher (Ps. 74:23). They exult in their evil doing, they insult those who suffer wrong. They have conquered, they are triumphing. The Prior is now no longer Prior. "When the wicked is lifted up the poor is consumed." He even wishes to leave the Order, for he cannot bear to see its destruction. And he would have left ere now if he could have left alone. And the Prior must be a good man, for I hear from good men that those on whose advice he leans are good.

2. Do you see, most gracious father, how you have been imposed on? Shall not the author of this deception receive what he deserves? If I know you well, he will bear his judgment, whoever he is. They came to you in sheep's clothing, and their sacred habit deceived you, for you are but a man. But now that the fraud has been discovered, let your zeal show itself, and boldly do its duty against the wicked. Let not your soul come into their council, let the counsel of Ahithophel be confounded. Watch over yourself. To be imposed on through ignorance, and to let zeal sleep are not alike in their guilt. Ignorance is the excuse for the one, negligence makes the other inexcusable. He will, perhaps, take another ground, and try to persuade you of something else. Let his iniquity lie against himself and not against my lord, for the truth of the case is as I have stated it. Nothing is pleasanter, nothing more just in your judgments, than when an occasion of this sort presents itself, when a man is endeavouring to injure others, that he should fall into the pit that he himself made, and that his mischief should come upon his own head, and his wickedness fall on his own pate (Ps. 7:16, 17). The zeal of the Lord will do this. And the Prior will again be made Prior, I hope, so that iniquity may not altogether boast itself; else (and this is no empty fear) the Order will not long remain safe if the Prior be not restored to his office. May God give you the grace to receive this as a father, and to give a good answer for our comfort, for

we have been greatly harassed and afflicted beyond our strength.

3. My Lord Abbot of Citeaux has gone from us, to the great loss of the Order. And now we have as head in his place, Goswin, Abbot of Bonneval. Let it be your pleasure to strengthen him with letters from the Apostolic See, and by your favour to confirm his election. You know him, and there is no need to commend him to you, for his life and the wisdom given him by God are a sufficient recommendation. My lord of Valence is better, and when he is able he performs good works. Besides, all lovers of good love him, and he them. From this his goodness is plain. It is yours to love and cherish such men. Your son is more feeble than usual, his life is ebbing drop by drop, perhaps because he is not worthy of being killed at a blow, and so coming quickly to life.

LETTER CCLXXI. (A.D. 1151.)

TO THEOBALD, COUNT OF CHAMPAGNE

Bernard warns him that he ought not to advance his young son to dignities in the Church.

You know how much I love you, but how much God knows better than you. I do not doubt also that for the sake of God I am beloved by you. And if I should offend Him you ought no longer to love me, for God would not be on my side. For who am I that so great a prince as you should care for one so small as I, unless it is that you believe God to be in me? Therefore to offend Him will not be good for you. And this I shall certainly do, if I do what you ask. For I am not unaware that honours and ecclesiastical dignities are the due of those who have both the will and the power to administer them worthily, and for God. Moreover, you must know that it is neither right for you, nor safe for me, that those should be acquired for your little boy by my prayers, or by yours. And, moreover, in most churches it is unlawful even for an adult to hold pluralities, except under dispensation given, either because of some great necessity of the Church, or great individual benefit. Wherefore, if this reply seem to you ungracious, and you are determined to carry out what you have in your mind, spare me in this matter, for, unless I mistake, you can easily obtain what you want by yourself and by your other friends. And so you will none the less gain what you wish, and I shall not have sinned. Assuredly, I wish well in all things to our little William, but, above all, that he may have the favour of God. Thence it is that I am unwilling that he should have anything against the law of God, lest he lose God’s favour. And if another wish differently, I am unwilling that he should gain

it through me, lest I, too, lose God. But when he wants anything which he can have according to God’s will, I will prove myself a friend, and, if need be, will not withhold my efforts. I need not labour much to excuse my righteous dealing before a lover of righteousness. Please excuse me to your Countess, in accordance with this reply of mine.

LETTER CCLXXII. (A.D. 1152.)

TO THE BISHOP OF LAON

Bernard presses him to show pious liberality.

I am yours. If you know this, nay, because you know it, the bearer of this can be effectually and surely reconciled by me to you, and through you to everyone else that he may have offended. Otherwise you offend one whom you admit to be your friend, and this, surely, you dare not do. Since you first became a Bishop till now, I have received no blessing from you, neither purse, nor scrip, nor sandals for the feet.

A LETTER OF POPE EUGENIUS TO THE CISTERCIAN CHAPTER

(TO WHICH EP. CCLXXIII. WAS AN ANSWER).

EUGENTIUS, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his beloved children G., and all the Abbots assembled at Cîteaux, in the Name of the Lord, health and Apostolic benediction.

1. We should much like, dearly beloved, to be present in person at the meeting of your holy brotherhood, because, as we walk with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, so would we discuss together His life-giving power, and His advances in the soul. But since we have been, by the Divine will, placed in the midst of the ocean to guide the ark of the Church, and as we are tossed about by a succession of raging storms, so that we have to do, not what we would wish, but what we wish not; and as we are tied by the duties of the government entrusted to us, and cannot, therefore, turn our steps wheresoever we will, we come to you in spirit and by letter, and, so far as is possible, are present in your assembly in charity and earnest desire for you; we desire, indeed, and pray you with our whole heart to be of one mind with us, and to implore by your common prayers a greater gift of God’s grace for us. Though stationed on the top of a mountain, and beaten by the winds that blow from every quarter, yet we hope by God’s help to be able to withstand the tempest, if we merit to obtain God’s help through your prayers.

But that we may be able to have confidence that your prayers for us are heard, and that we may obtain by your intercessions what we cannot obtain by our merits, we wish you of your charity, in those things which belong to God, such as the obedience due to the Order, and the maintenance of discipline, to be anxiously looking forward to those things which are before, neglecting what is behind, so that no cloud may show itself in your works, to prevent your prayers at any time from rising to the throne of God.

2. And, therefore, as you come together, dearly beloved, take common counsel to correct whatever amongst some of you needs correction, and to enact whatever may need enactment for the salvation of souls and the good of your Order, because he who despises little things, by little and little decays (Ecclus. 19:1), and do not leave uncorrected any lesser faults you may find among yourselves. For to no purpose are the gates of the city guarded if a single opening is left to the enemy, as the Scripture says, A leak neglected is as bad as a violent wind, and You have escaped great perils; see that you do not perish on the beach. Look, I beseech you, to the ancient fathers who founded our sacred Order, and notice how they left the world, despised all earthly things, let the dead bury their dead, fled into solitude, and sat with Mary at the feet of Jesus (S. Luke 10:39), while others were busying themselves in their various ministries; and so the further they had fled from Egypt the more copious showers of heavenly manna did they receive. They truly went forth from their land and from their kindred; they forgat their own people and their father’s house; and since their King greatly desired their beauty He made them to increase into a great nation, and He sent out their shoots to the ends of the earth, so that the brightness of their charity filled the whole body of the Church, and the woman of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:10–16) at their words filled numberless vessels with the little oil which she had in a cruse. Truly they received the first fruits of the Spirit, and their pleasant ointment has run down even to us.

3. See, then, in thought and deed that you do not fall below their virtues, but that you be in the bough what you were in the seed, and bring forth the same seed and fruit as did they from whom you received your life. Take notice how they whose lamps are extinguished desire to receive oil from you, and how many, who have become filthy by wallowing, like sows, in their own mire, ask to be placed under your rule and to be commended to your prayers, that they may receive grace from above. And since the children of this world are always endeavouring to drag you against your will into obedience to them, and sometimes wish to call you from the quiet of contemplation and the silence of

the desert to take part in their affairs, recall to your memory the institutions of your fathers, and, looking upon them as examples for all time, prefer to be doorkeepers in the house of God than to dwell In the tents of ungodliness (Ps. 84:11). And because you have nothing which you did not receive, think of the goodness of the Lord, of your own unworthiness, so as to follow in the footsteps of Him who said, When ye have done all that is commanded you, say we are unprofitable servants (S. Luke 17:10). If you have received diversities of tongues, grace for working healings, knowledge of prophesying, if your words are more fragrant than the most costly ointments, if the world honours you and takes pleasure in running in the odour of your ointments, it is all nothing but the work of Him who says, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work (S. John 5:17).

LETTER CCLXXIII. (A.D. 1150.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS

Bernard thanks the Pope for the affectionate letter he had sent to the Chapter of Cîteaux.

To his loving father and lord, EUGENIUS, by the grace of God Supreme Pontiff, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends humble greeting.

1. The voice of the turtle has been heard in our Chapter; we have exulted and rejoiced. Your words are pure, burning with zeal, prudent and discerning. The spirit of life breathes in your letters, a spirit mighty, thundering, chiding, and provoking us with a godly jealousy. I cannot say which pleased me most, your graciousness or our benefit; the condescension of your majesty, or the exaltation of our humility; the sharpness of your severity, or the soothing sweetness of your fatherly love. Those amongst us who in any small degree were hungering after righteousness were refreshed; those who cared little for it were moved; those who cared nothing were confounded. I beseech you to act in this way always. That care which you are bound to take for all, is not to be withdrawn, nay, rather it is the more anxiously to be given to those whose special due it is. Charity is kind and can spread itself abroad, but not diminish aught. Let her call together others, then, but let it be in our company. It specially becomes your Apostleship to cherish all who can say with the Apostles, Lo! we have left all and followed Thee (S. Matt. 19:27). They ought not to be left who have left themselves. They are the Lord’s little ones, and put their trust in Him; they will not be abandoned by a faithful and wise servant, least of all by Him to whom the whole has been entrusted. This little flock is a part of the whole, little, indeed, but, unless I am

mistaken, they have merited to have God for their Father, and they will receive a crown of glory from the hand of their Lord, and a diadem from Him in the Kingdom of their God. For they do not think it robbery to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. They have heard the words: Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (S. Luke. 12:32). Enough of this.

2. The Abbot of Trois-Fontaines had been planted well beside the streams of waters. But I am afraid that a good tree bringing forth good fruit may, when taken up, bring forth none. I have sometimes seen a vine fruitful when first planted, then barren. I have seen a tree when well planted flourish, and when transplanted wither away. And, therefore, if you do not send him back to me you will wound my feelings grievously, for we are one heart and one soul. As long as that heart is divided, each part must necessarily be stained with its own blood. How shall I, having lost the prop of my old age, be able to bear alone the burden which we found it heavy to bear together? If my trouble is of little account let the no small loss of the whole Order touch you, and do not wish, from the hope of some uncertain good, to bring about in the meanwhile evils that are certain. But if, finally, you determine to keep him, I beseech you, hold him in great esteem, and lift up your hands to God that He would vouchsafe to provide that house with a suitable man in his place. As to the rest, I earnestly ask for a speedy answer from your Benignity, and one of deed, not word, to those matters concerning the whole Order, and the other businesses which I thought it good to entrust to the above-named Abbot to convey to you.

LETTER CCLXXIV. (A.D. 1151.)

TO HUGH, ABBOT OF TROIS-FONTAINES, WHEN HE WAS AT ROME

Bernard regrets to have recommended the nephew of the Bishop of Auxerre.

I am sorry that I wrote on behalf of that youth, and I wish, if possible, my prayer to be recalled, for by it I seem to have approved the decision of my friend about the office of provost conferred by him, and badly assigned, too. And this I do not approve, nor have ever done so. But I was induced, I admit, by the great affection with which I was bound to the youth's uncle, an affection very great indeed, but in this case not spiritual enough. I was urged on, too, by my sorrow for his recent death. I may seem to have acted carelessly, but I would rather be thought by my lord to have written too hastily than be suspected before God of having been guilty of falsehood. Although indeed, it would be no excuse even if

I had written with caution and foresight, for I knew for a certainty that his two predecessors had ordered it otherwise, and had confirmed it otherwise by their authority. But if you have any influence with him you will do a good work if you can restore her privileges to the Church, and give force to those privileges. Would that we could purge the holy Bishop from this blot on his line, and provide for the youth in other ways.

LETTER CCLXXV. (A.D. 1151.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS, ABOUT THE ELECTION OF A BISHOP AT AUXERRE

He makes the Pope aware of the bad faith which had been shown in this election.

When I first wrote to you about the church at Auxerre I had heard of the first election, but not of the second. And lo! just as if I were a prophet, the scandal which I suspected has followed, and the fear which I feared has come. Recollect what took place at Nevers, and see if it is not in like manner, by a very similar artifice, by double-dealing, and, as they say, with the very same person as promoter, that a second election has now been ventured on: when, after one candidate was nominated, both were rejected, and finally a third, whom they wished to elect, craftily brought forward. They sent to me to ask me to write to you on their behalf, and I thought it good to send a brother from my side, to learn something more certain about both actions, and to acquaint me with the facts. When he had entered the church, and made diligent inquiries about everything, he found on the testimony of all who had come together that there were on that side none of the presbyters except one, viz., Hugh, the brother of Brother Geoffrey, and none of the deacons except Stephen only; I must except, of course, those officials of the church who had been the chief agents in the matter, the precentor, the archdeacon, and, as it seemed, the treasurer, for he was not himself present at the time. Further, he found that there were on the other side, besides others of the lower order, nine deacons and eleven presbyters. The twelfth, who is also arch-priest, declared that he had not subscribed, and would not subscribe, for either side, although he was in favour of the first. The above-named Hugh held the seal of the church, a man not of peace, but of discord, and one who in giving his account paid more attention to his own wishes than to the truth. So the matter stands. And with my usual presumption I say one thing: wickedness ought not to be allowed to boast itself, it is unseemly for wisdom to be deceived, inexpedient for a church to have its functions longer suspended.

LETTER CCLXXVI. (A.D. 1151.)

TO THE SAME, AFTER THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF AUXERRE

He informs the Pope of a strange will made by the Bishop.

1. I have a point to mention, which I would have brought before you earlier, if I had known what I now know. There is a man who has made Israel to sin. He, I mean, who, when the holy Bishop was somewhat dull and confused in the presence of death, made him die almost intestate. For on the suggestion and entreaty of Stephen he left to his nephew according to the flesh, a young man, and a secular, incapable of being of service to the Church, almost all that he had got together for the episcopal table, and left little or nothing for the poor and the churches. They say that he has left him seven churches, tithes, and the meadows in the Bishop's own forest, besides, which is a blot on all religion, of his moveables, all his vessels of gold, and his own equipages, and since these would not be enough to enable him to complete a journey to you to get these bequests confirmed, they say that he has left orders for the equipages of a monastery to be handed over to him. There are some, indeed, who think that the Bishop knew nothing of these bequests, but that Stephen did all and set his seal to what he liked, and it is very likely; for only last year, when the Bishop was, as was thought, at the point of death, they made him give a church to this same nephew; but when he afterwards recovered he declared, as I have found out, that he knew nothing of having made the donation. Again, who can believe that a holy and spiritual man, if he had his understanding, and was in his right mind, would have made a will like this? What man of the world is there who would say that this was the will of a priest? Is this the disposition of that sober and spiritual man who adjudges all things and is himself judged by none? Who in heaven or in earth would not sit in judgment on him if this is to remain so?

2. Do thou, then, O servant of God who holdest the sword of Peter, cut off this shameful confusion from religion, this scandal from the Church, this crime from the Bishop, and from all spiritually-minded men who loved him in the spirit and not according to the flesh, and take bitterness and grief from your own heart. Arise, Phinehas, stand and make propitiation that the plague may cease. Stand, I say, inflexible against flesh and blood, the battering ram by which undoubtedly the children of this world attempt to shake the wall of your constancy. You will show true affection for the uncle if in a matter of this kind you oppose the nephew.

3. Know this also, that the holy men, the Dean of S. Peter at Auxerre and the

Prior of S. Eusebius, acting for himself as well as for the Abbot of S. Laurence, when ready to set out to you to lay before you the first election of the Church of Auxerre, were prevented by the opposite party through the Count of Nevers, and deterred from coming. Indeed, the Count himself summoned them to him, and commanded them not to think of it, and prohibited them with grievous and open threatenings, and this the Prior made known to me and complained of by the above-named abbot, and his brother according to the flesh, and by the Dean sent to us about this same matter, and he asks me by them to bring it before you. I said before, and I repeat it, recollect what took place at Nevers. The law is sometimes best observed when something is done contrary to law. Those who discourse wisely about your Keys, place the one in discretion, but the other in power.

LETTER CCLXXVII. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE ABBOT OF CLUNY

He asks that the Abbot of Cluny may be received honourably and kindly.

It seems a foolish thing to write to you on behalf of the Abbot of Cluny, and to seem to wish to act as patron for a man whom all wish to have as their patron. But I write, not because it is necessary for him, but to satisfy my own affection for him; my own, I say, not another’s, for as I cannot be with him in person I follow my friend on his journey by letter. Who shall separate us? Neither the height of the Alps, nor the cold of the snows, nor the length of the journey. And now I am present with him to help him by my letters. He shall never be without me. I am a debtor to his worth, by which I have been counted worthy to be admitted to such a degree of grace. But grace itself has freed me from the debt, for necessity has passed into will. Honour the man as one who is truly an honourable member of Christ; unless I am mistaken he is a vessel for honour, full of grace and truth, filled with all good works. Send him back with joy, that he may rejoice very many by his return. Hold him worthy of more grace, as indeed he is, so that when he returns we may all receive of his fulness. If he asks anything of you in the name of the Lord Jesus he ought not to meet with any difficulty. For if you do not know it, let me say that he it is who is always stretching out a helping hand to the poor of our Order; he cheerfully and frequently distributes for food the goods of his church, as far as he can by the consent of his brethren. Notice why I say “in the Name of Jesus.” For if, as I suspect and fear, he seeks to be set free from the government of his Order, who

that knows him can think that he asks in the name of Jesus? I am mistaken if he is not oppressed by fear more than usual, if he has not become better than himself since you saw him. Moreover, almost from the time that he entered on his office he is known to have improved the Order in many ways, e.g., in the observance of fasting and of silence, and in the care he takes for precious and curious vestments.

LETTER CCLXXVIII. (A.D. 1150.)

TO THE SAME, FOR THE BISHOP OF BEAUVAIS

There is no need that one should teach you how worthy is the Bishop of Beauvais, your son, to obtain his petitions, He himself will easily enough persuade your fatherly affection what it is meet and right to do. Still I plead for him. He is a devoted young man, fit to be honoured by his father's favour, and the righteous zeal which he displays for his church should be not only approved, but also assisted. So will he daily become more devoted, more fervent, and more strong, as he feels that the vexations and tribulations which are always harassing his church from evil men are directly lessened by the unfailing help of your right hand. I ask, too, that the petition of Arnulph of Maïole be granted. Master G.—, this is the messenger's name, will tell you what it is. As to the petition of the Abbess of the Paraclete, you can ascertain for yourself if it is a fitting one, and if it is fitting to grant it.

LETTER CCLXXIX. (A.D. 1152.)

TO COUNT HENRY

He entreats the Count to enforce restitution for an injury.

The Abbot of Châtillon, a man of piety, when setting out for Rome, committed all his goods to the custody of me under God. And lo! the servants of Simon de Belfort have stolen his pigs. I would rather that they had taken mine. I require them at your hands. The Prince of the Kings of the earth has made you a prince on the earth, in order that under Him, and for Him, you may cherish the good, restrain the evil, defend the poor, help them to right that suffer wrong. If you do these things you do the work of a prince, and my hope is that God will extend and establish your power. If you do them not, it is to be feared that He will take from you the honour and power which you seem to have.

LETTER CCLXXX. (Circa A.D. 1152.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS ABOUT THE TROUBLE AT AUXERRE

Bernard complains that the Pope’s decision in this matter has been disregarded.

1. You do well in strengthening one who is weak-hearted, and comforting one who is weary of the time that he has yet to spend here, by so often listening to him graciously. I, indeed, do not deserve it, but it becomes you. Do not suppose that I take any pleasure in abusing your kindness so as to use it merely to get my own way; my conscience is my witness that I am ready to accept as gladly what you think it right to refuse as what you grant. I like to have my wishes gratified, as every man does, but not if they are opposed to righteousness, prejudicial to the truth, or displeasing to you. I say this lest you should think either that I do not notice a kindness, or that I have no gratitude for it. Now let your Holiness hear what the case demands. As far as I am concerned the loss is very small, and such as can be easily repaired. I think that there is no medicine better suited to allay the stings of my conscience than insults and revilings. It is certainly not for myself that I am moved, being as I am a man of no worth, deserving shame and contempt. But if ever the injuries of the wicked touch the anointed of the Lord my patience, I confess, gives way, and almost all my meekness disappears. Have I ever sought from my lord the ordering of Churches, the disposing of Bishoprics, the making of Bishops? A fitting instrument truly should I be, an ant dragging a waggon. You wished the promotion of a man against whom not even those who wished otherwise could find a word to say.

2. The decision of your good pleasure was made known to all whom it concerned. It was publicly announced, but so far we are deprived of any fruit or benefit from it. You ask who is the cause of this? It is the man of your peace in whom you trusted. He is a man to whom religion is hateful, to whom wisdom is burdensome, righteousness terrible, who has no scruples to prevent him from disclosing his master’s secret, and nullifying his decree. It is no wonder, then, that he was not ashamed to show himself in his true colours. He has yielded to his own envy and malice, and, therefore, he is not likely to show much consideration for you. I have been put to shame, but what matters that? I do not shrink from the shame which zeal has allied to obedience. The cup, indeed, has not passed from me, but through me it has passed on to you. When the decision that you have given is affronted, not to say perverted, it must be evident to everyone that it is the author rather than the promulgator that is affected. Ought the promotion to have been rendered uncertain of a man against whom no ill

could be said? One of two things is certain: either the word which I have testified has gone out of your lips will stand fast, or I shall be thought a liar, as, indeed, I am now. But it will be better and more worthy of your Apostleship that he who has been powerful in iniquity should not boast himself in his wickedness.

3. Your command has been in part obeyed, and by the greater part. It was entrusted to three; one scorns it, two uphold it. What remains, then, but that your voice should supply what is wanting? And you may do this safely. You have nothing to fear from the offence of those of whom the Lord says, Let them alone, they are blind leaders of the blind (S. Matt. 15:14). For the rest, the people, the better part of the clergy, the King himself, and the whole Church of the Saints will rejoice. You have shown this age many good works of the grace which has been given you. But nothing will redound more to your glory than this action. I bear my testimony against them, that they have nominated many to offices in the Church, not because they love religion, but because they wish to see it weak, so that there may be none to restrain their wickedness, or have strength to repel force by force, and so that they need not fear the power of those whose holiness they hate. The Count of Nevers does not walk in the steps of his father; he is opposed to this man, as well as to every good man. He is a foe to the lands and goods of the Churches, like a lion ravening for his prey. He is ready to receive even a Saracen or a Jew, if he may be free from this man, who is the only one who seems to have the ability and power to withstand his wickedness and cunning. Hence it is that he has silenced many of the clergy by threats and open charges, to prevent the opposite side from glorying in their numbers.

4. And to say briefly what I think, if you think it worth while for the monasteries in that diocese to be impoverished, the Churches to be down-trodden, religion to be held up to scorn, the episcopal See itself, whose goods and possessions he particularly covets, to be reduced to slavery, then let not the man of Regny by any means rule as bishop. Where is now the spirit which you showed in the York affair? Shall not he who has attempted a like crime feel the same spirit? I hear that he is coming to you in the spirit of him who stirred up the Curia against me to see if he can accomplish the same object. Let me remind you again of the business of the Bishop of Lund. The charge of bribery has now been removed, and nothing remains to be done but what was to have been done. And let me add this: To have a chancellor who is good, just, and of good repute is no small part of the Apostolic dignity, no mean support to the Apostolic administration, no despicable guardian of the Apostolic conscience. An evil appointment is always pernicious, and after long deliberation even disgraceful.

LETTER CCLXXXI

TO ABBOT BRUNO OF CHIARRAVALLE

He reproves Bruno for writing passionately and imprudently.

Doest thou well to be thus angry? I think not. Your own words condemn you, for they have not been calmly considered, but uttered in haste and anger. For a calm judgment reasons thus, Better are the wounds of a friend than the kisses of an enemy (Prov. 27:6). “But,” you say, “I am beaten for nothing.” Well, suppose that you are. Still, none the less, if my words wound you they show my loving anxiety for you. The little that I said breathes of the solicitude of a father. And so, if you have done no wrong, I have not injured you. Your own conscience acquits you. If you have, then it is against you rather than against me that anger should arise. You complain that I did not believe you, just as if you had ever said a single word to me on the matter. But suppose that I did believe him who complained of you. How was I to believe or disbelieve you when you said nothing? Do what you said you would. Pay what you owe as soon as you can, lest perhaps scandal arise amongst us, if not amongst others about us. But think well of me, and of all who think well of you, and who do not disbelieve you, as you say passionately, not knowing what you say. These words are my own; they express my affection for you.

LETTER CCLXXXII. (A.D. 1152.)

TO LOUIS, KING OF THE FRENCH, ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP-ELECT OF AUXERRE

He begs the King not to oppose the Bishop-Elect.

1. Have I ever wished for the honour of the King and the good of his kingdom to be in any way lessened? God knows, and your own conscience, I trust, will reply. Take care lest those who are disturbing the election do not rather do you harm, lest we have in the churches men who seem to serve the King, but who rather serve themselves out of the Church’s revenues. I intervened in the election at Auxerre. All was harmony, because the clergy, who before this had taken opposite sides, now at length, by the mercy of God, had come to an unanimous agreement. I know the Bishop-Elect well; I bear testimony to him that he is a good man. Moreover, I believe that no one was present in that assembly who had any doubt about your assent, for your assent was contained in the letter that you had written. Who could have imagined that your first assent was not enough and that another must be asked for, especially when no second election had taken

place since you wrote? Is it necessary to seek the approbation of the King as many times as the clergy happen to disagree? This is neither according to reason nor custom. For example, you will perhaps recollect that in the Church of Soissons the clergy disagreed as often as they met together to elect a Bishop, and separated without finishing the business, and yet I do not suppose that, having once obtained your assent, they sought it every time that they assembled.

2. So, my lord King, you have no ground for disannulling the elections that have taken place, when it is evident that you had given your assent to their being held. But there are some who are troubling you and are striving to trouble the Churches, seeking their own profit, and, what is more serious, endeavouring with diabolical zeal to break the mutual goodwill and affection which exist between the Supreme Pontiff and the King's Excellency. May God forbid it. They will bear their judgment, whoever they are, and the King will always act like a good King, as he has hitherto done. And so see that more welcome instructions are issued, so that the Church, which has been so long harassed and afflicted, may no longer sit in sadness. Let the King entertain no suspicion about the person elected, for either I am much mistaken or he will be faithful, and the King will be well pleased with him. I trust in the Lord that you will not sadden the hearts of the multitude of saints in that diocese and of me, your servant, who, to speak the truth, have never borne anything at your hands so distressing as this will be if you persist in your present intention, which may God avert.

LETTER CCLXXXIII. (A.D. 1150.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS, ON BEHALF OF THE MONKS OF MOIREMONT

He begs the Pope to intervene to settle a dispute which had arisen.

At Cluny I met the monks of Gigny in the hope of peace, for which we have worked hard, but without success, for the only result of our four days' labour was the destruction of our hopes. According to the instructions contained in your letters, the reparation of the losses and the restitution of the goods removed were demanded, but in vain. It seemed a great demand to them, because they had done great injury, inasmuch as the worth of the losses was reckoned at more than 30,000 solidi. Indeed, not to go into details, our abbey was totally destroyed. Since the loss had been so heavy I was prepared to forego much of it, but they offered so little that the venerable Abbot of Cluny, who was labouring with more zeal than success for the purpose of peace, did not think it worthy of acceptance. And so no agreement was come to, because so ridiculously small an amount was

offered in reparation. What they said was this: “Some evil-disposed persons amongst us have done this evil. What is that to us? Let them see to it.” But this is absurd. It was well known in the whole neighbourhood that this great misdeed had been perpetrated by men belonging to the Church, that some monks also had been present, and that all had consented to it. For up to the present I have not heard of even one who has opposed the evil-doers. Lastly, the Abbot of the Order himself openly rebuked and condemned shufflers of this sort by declaring that what was known to have been lost through the Church was with justice demanded at the Church’s hand. Your decision is now awaited in this matter, which, as it has been sufficiently proved, cannot be set right except by a strong hand.

LETTER CCLXXXIV. (Circa A.D. 1151.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS, ON BEHALF OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS AND OTHER PERSONS

My lord, Samson, Archbishop of Rheims, lives in the house of the great Father as a vessel made to honour. If you know this, preserve his honour, and the honour of his church. If I know the man well, the more you honour him, the more by him and in him will God be honoured. The Bishop of Arras is a simple and upright man, and one who up to the present has refused promotion, so that there is no need for him to be humbled by another, lest he lose his authority, and so his usefulness. If you think him worthy, give him this authority, because he will never have it of his own seeking, being one who is, as far as he is concerned, content with his lowly position. There is one who opposes himself, and is puffed up, and there is need of a Bishop to humble him, and it will be not less beneficial to the man himself. To resist the proud and to give grace to the humble is what your Lord delights to do, and you have heard Him saying: If any man serve Me, let him follow Me (S. John 12:26). The Abbot of Ancourt is a good man, let him be rewarded according to his goodness. Let him be listened to when speaking of his necessities, and let not an apostate be heard against him. The Dean of Bethune, by the wish of his Bishop, and the assent of the advocate for his church, has determined to set on foot a good work in the same church, and it is well that it should be confirmed by your authority. In the same way I plead for the Deans of Soissons and Cambray, that they may obtain their requests. I have been in perils amongst false brethren, and many letters have been forged, and fraudulently sealed with my seal, and have gone forth into many different hands, and my chief fear is that this treachery may have reached

even to you. This is why I am forced to discontinue the use of my former seal, and to use this new one, which you notice is fresh, containing both my device and my name. Do not accept the other seal as mine for the future, except in the case of the Bishop of Claremont, to whom I gave a letter sealed with that seal before I had this one made.

LETTER CCLXXXV. (Circa A.D. 1153.)

TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF ODO, ABBOT OF S. DENYS

He recommends this Abbot to the Pope, and declares him innocent of the accusations brought against him.

1. I should not hesitate to write on behalf of the church of S. Denys, and for Odo, its Abbot, even if no one else would. The cause is a good one, and doubtful on neither account; the church is a famous one, and the Abbot is of good report. The one is known to the world, the other to us, his neighbours. Add to this, that both he and the church have a special claim on you. And because of all this, as I have said, if need were I should not be ashamed to write for them, even though I were alone. But as it is, others are writing as well as I, who would not be disbelieved even if I did not write. They are men who have often treated of this matter. They know what the Abbot has done, and what they know they say. My prayers for him may go forth with confidence when supported by such indubitable testimonies. With confidence I solicit and entreat you to take some thought for the property of yours which he holds, which has been wickedly attacked, and grievously harassed. I ask you, I beseech you, lift your hand, stretch out your arm, and cover him with your shield. Let the sword of Peter defend the patrimony of Peter.

2. In vain have men risen against him; his reputation is his sufficient excuse, nay, the universal esteem in which he is held is his commendation. They are good sons, forsooth, who, prying too curiously into the secrets of their father, have dreamt of some crimes or other which no one else has discovered. Those who hear of this sudden and unexpected change stand amazed. They are ashamed, because nothing of this sort had ever before been said of Odo. The Abbot of S. Denys cannot be said to be hid under a bushel. He stands on a candlestick, and however much he may wish it, he cannot hide what he is. His light, and so his smoke, must be seen by all. Why have these men turned on him their lynx eves, seeing what no one else has ever yet been able to see? Their charge, I confess, seems to me suspicious. What makes me more incredible is the fact that one of their number is a man named Raymond, who, they say, is the head of this wickedness that they have attempted: whom I have found loquacious enough face to face, but secretly a back-biter, ambitious to excess, currying favour by his flatteries, wholly set on deceit, and no less on causing confusion. I have marked the wolf under the sheep’s clothing, or by certain signs I have

pointed him out, so that now he may either be afraid to bite, or be powerless to do harm.

LETTER CCLXXXVI. (A.D. 1153.)

TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

If secret calumnies and craft have prevailed against the Abbot of S. Denys, I am clean from his blood, for I wrote before against his bitter foes. But what accusation do they bring against the man? Is it not a fact that they cannot find whereof to accuse him? And if they have good grounds for accusing, how is it that he is acquitted by all his neighbours who are of a right conversation? He is accused of having incurred many debts, of having mortgaged his lands, and wasted his goods, as though all this could not have happened from necessary and good causes. An assembly of that Church gave me an account of all these things, and testified through a trustworthy person that things are not as they have been reported to you. Nevertheless, let an inquiry be held, for in matters of this kind we place more confidence in what we see than in any oath; and if things are found to be as his accusers maliciously state, no matter how it came about, then let not the Abbot be excused. If they are not so, then let not these informers gain anything by their falsehood. They charge him with the death of a certain man; if he cannot clear himself let him die. And yet anyone can see how unlikely it is that he should have handed over to death a man whom but a little before he had rescued from it. How can these men have the audacity to insinuate such charges into your mind, when they have seen and known the zeal of the Abbot in freeing those who before had committed homicide, and in punishing those who had avenged the blood of a relation? Lastly, if you had known them well, it would be enough to make you disbelieve any unsupported statement of theirs. May God help your Holiness, that the deceitful tongue may not avail anything against the Abbot’s innocence.

LETTER CCLXXXVII. (A.D. 1153.)

TO THE BISHOP OF OSTIA, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME ABBOT

My lord, the Abbot of S. Denys is being accused by the wicked, but by all the good men in his Church and neighbourhood he is excused. I ask your Christian love for him the more earnestly because my esteem for him has been and still is very great. Befriend him with your kindness, if not because he is a friend of

mine, yet, at all events, because the charges brought against him are neither true, nor likely. If he is burdened with debts, then the necessity of the time is evidently the cause of it, although his debts are nothing like the amount stated. As to the alienation of his lands, the charge is easily proved to be false. For I suppose that not even his enemies themselves can possibly suspect him of the death of G—; inasmuch as he kept this same G—and all his companions in shelter from their enemies, and with much labour snatched them from the very jaws of death. For all this, and because especially I know of the underhand dealing of Raymond, I earnestly beg you to vindicate with all care the innocence of the Abbot.

LETTER CCLXXXVIII. (A.D. 1153.)

TO HIS UNCLE ANDREW, A KNIGHT OF THE TEMPLE

Bernard deplores the unhappy issue of the Crusade.

1. The letter which you lately sent me found me lying in bed. I received it with open hands, joyfully, read and re-read it, but should have been more joyful could I have seen you yourself. I read in it of your desire to see me, and of your fear beeause of the danger threatening the land which the Lord honoured by His presence, the State which He consecrated by His own blood. Woe to our princes! In the Lord’s land they did no good, in their own, to which they returned with all speed, they practise incredible mischief, and they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. They are mighty to do evil, but good they cannot do. But I trust that the Lord will not reject His people, and will not cast away His inheritance. Moreover, the right hand of the Lord will yet execute power, and His arm will help Him, that all may know that it is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes. You do well to compare yourself to an ant. For what else are we children of men, who are born of the earth, always labouring after useless and empty things? What profit is there to a man for all his labour wherewith he labours under the sun? Let us, therefore, climb up above the sun, and let our conversation be in heaven; let us in mind go before thither whether we shall one day follow in body. There, my dear Andrew, is the fruit of your labour, there is your reward. You are warring under the sun, but it is for One who sits above the sun. Let us who fight here expect from Him our largesse. The reward of our warfare is not of the earth, is not from beneath; its prize is from afar, and from the utmost land. Under the sun is want, above the sun abundance. Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall men

give into our bosom (S. Luke 6:38).

2. You wish to see me; and you say that the gratification of your wish depends on me. For you hint that you wait for an order from me to come. What shall I say to you? I both wish for you to come, and yet fear your coming. So placed between wishing and not wishing, I am in a strait between two, and which to choose I know not. On one side is the wish to satisfy what is at once your own desire and mine; on the other, the doubt whether I ought not to believe rather the common report of you, which says that you are so necessary to the land that no small disaster is likely to happen if you leave it. And so what I dare not command I yet wish for, viz., that I may see you before I die. You can see and know better than I if you can anyhow come without loss and reproach to the country. And it might be that your coming would not be altogether unprofitable. Perhaps, with God's blessing, some would be induced to accompany you on your return to support the Church of God, since you are known and beloved by all. God can bring it to pass that you, too, can say with holy Jacob, With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and, lo! I return with three bands (Gen. 32:10). One thing, I say, if you do come, do not delay, lest, perchance, you come and find me not. For I am now ready to be offered, and I do not think that I have much more time to spend on earth. Who will give me the happiness of being somewhat refreshed before I depart hence, with your sweet and gladsome presence? I have written to the Queen as you wished, and I rejoice in the good report which you give of her. Salute in the Lord your Master and brethren of the Temple, likewise those of the Hospital. Salute also all who are shut up, and all the Saints to whom you have an opportunity of speaking, and commend me to their prayers. Be instead of me to them. I hear that our Gerard, who spent some time in our house, has now been made Bishop; him, too, I salute most warmly with great affection.

LETTER CCLXXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1153.)

TO THE QUEEN OF JERUSALEM

Bernard instructs her how she should behave if she would be an honourable widow before God and queen before men.

To his beloved daughter in Christ, MILISENDIS, Queen of Jerusalem, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes mercy from God our Saviour.

1. I wonder why I have not seen any letter from you for so long a time, and have not had your usual salutations. I cannot forget your old affection for me, which I have ofttimes put to the proof. I have heard, I confess, some evil reports

of you; and although I do not altogether believe them, yet I am grieved that, whether they are true or false, your good fame should be so compromised. But my dear Uncle Andrew has written, and I cannot disbelieve him in anything; he gives me a better account of you; he says how peaceably and meekly you bear yourself, how wisely you rule yourself and yours by the advice of wise men, how you love the brethren of the Temple, and cherish them, with what foresight and wisdom, according to the measure given you by God, you meet with sound counsels and aids the dangers threatening the Holy Land. These are the actions that become a brave woman, a lowly widow, an exalted queen. For though you are a queen, it is no disgrace to be a widow, and if you had wished it you would not be one. I think that it is your glory, especially among Christians, to live no less as a widow than a queen. One is of succession, the other of virtue; one of birth, the other of the gift of God; that came by good fortune, this by a brave spirit. The honour is twofold, one according to the world, the other according to God, but each from God. Nor let the honour of widowhood seem to you small, about which the Apostle says, Honour widows which are widows indeed (1 Tim. 5:3).

2. You certainly have before you a second familiar piece of advice in the wholesome words of the Apostle, who teaches you to “provide things honest not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men” (2 Cor. 8:21). In the sight of God, as a widow; in the sight of men, as a queen. Recollect that you are a queen, and that your good deeds cannot lie in obscurity under a bushel. They are on a candlestick that they may be seen of all. Recollect that you are a widow, and that you have not now to please your husband, but to please God alone. Happy are you if you place your Saviour as a wall before you for a guard to your conscience, and a bulwark to repel infamy. Happy, I say, it like one desolate and a widow you entrust yourself wholly to God, for Him to rule you. Else, if you are not well ruled you do not rule well. The Queen of the South came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, that she might learn to be ruled, and so to rule. And behold! a Greater than Solomon is here (S. Matt. 12:42). I speak of Jesus, and Him crucified. Commit yourself to Him to rule you, to be taught by Him how you ought to rule. Learn as a widow, for He is meek and lowly of heart (S. Matt. 11:29); learn as a queen, because he judges the poor with righteousness, and reproves with equity for the meek of the earth (Is. 11:4). Therefore, when you think of your dignity, forget not your widowhood, because (to say to you plainly what I think) you cannot be a good queen if you are not a good widow. You ask how a good widow is to be known. From the words of the Apostle: If she have

brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the Saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work (1 Tim. 5:10). If thou doest these things, happy art thou, and well will it be with thee. May the Lord bless you out of Sion, my daughter renowned in the Lord, worthy of all veneration. My admonition has been sent first; I shall now expect a reply to follow. I have given you the occasion, and will admit of no excuse, if our friendship is not renewed by your sending me frequently for the future words and letters of friendship.

LETTER CCXC. (A.D. 1152.)

TO THE BISHOP OF OSTIA ABOUT CARDINAL JORDAN

Bernard describes the Legate of the Holy See, and what disgraceful traces he had everywhere left behind him.

Your legate has passed from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another people, leaving with us foul and horrid traces everywhere. From the foot of the Alps and the Kingdom of the Teutons this Apostolic man has gone about in every direction through nearly all the churches of France and Normandy, as far as Rouen, and he has filled them not with the Gospel, but with sacrilege. He is said to have done disgraceful things, to have carried off spoils from churches, to have promoted, when he could, boys to ecclesiastical honours with no other qualifications than their beautiful faces, and, where he could not, to have wished to do it. Many bribed him not to come to them. He exacted and extorted money by his messengers from those to whom he could not go. In the schools, the courts, the very streets, he has made himself a proverb. Seculars, religious, all speak ill of him. The poor, and the monks, and the clergy all complain of him. It is the men, too, of his own profession who are loudest in expressing their abhorrence of his reputation and his life. He has this report, too, both from those within and those without. Not so did John Papcron, not so he whose praise is in the Churches, as of one who honours his ministry everywhere. Read this letter to my lord. Let him see what is to be done with such a man; I have freed my soul. Yet I say, with my usual rashness, that it will be good for him to purge his court, and so free his conscience. I had determined to say nothing about this, but the venerable Prior of Mont Dieu impelled me to this, and inspired me to write. Know, too, that I have said less than is openly talked of in public.

LETTER CCXCI

TO POPE EUGENIUS FOR THE CHURCH OF S. EUGENDUS IN THE JURA

If what is said is true, and it is not wholly to be rejected, the famous monastery of S. Eugendus, formerly renowned for its wealth and piety, is ready to perish. I grieve to see houses belonging to it, which are near us and known to you, partly destroyed already, and partly being destroyed daily. What we see in the members we have heard by report is worse even in the head. But why should I give you an account now of these evils which are numberless? The bearer of this, a monk of the same monastery, and the Prior Archegaud, a man long known to me for his worth, and beloved for his piety, will be able to tell you what they know more fully than I do, although not everything. For who could do this? The evils are so many and so great that it is a wonder if they do not compel the apostolic axe to lift itself and strike, even though it be hiding itself and sleeping. I have liberated my soul, but it is not enough, unless the monastery be also liberated. Its life and death are in your hands.

LETTER CCXCII

TO A CERTAIN SECULAR

Bernard reproves him for dissuading a novice named Peter, his relative, from taking the vows.

1. Though unknown to me by face, yet you are not by fame, for I have gathered that you are a wise man, and one held in honour by the world. My beloved son Peter, to whom you seem to be well known and to be in some degree related, has wished me to write to you, or rather reply to you. For you wrote to him, and I wish that you had written what was honourable to yourself and expedient for him. You did not so. You ventured to dissuade a new soldier of Christ from the service of his Lord. I tell you that there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Were not your own sins enough for you that you must involve yourself in those of others, and, again, as far as you could, recall to his sins a youth who was penitent, and so, according to your hardness and impenitent heart, keep up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath? Was it not enough that the devil himself tempts him, but you must help that tempter, you, a Christian, his leader, and his familiar friend? You, indeed, have played the part to him of another serpent, but he has not acted as a second Eve. He was moved by what you said, but not overturned. He was founded on a Firm rock.

2. Nevertheless, I do not pay you back in your own coin, but I overcome evil

with good. I pray for you, I wish for you better things, and I write better things. In the first place, as you are said to be a wise man, I send you to a wise man in order that what is said of you may be more true. He says, Do not prevent him who can do good, and, if you can, do good yourself (Prov. 3:27). You have now time in which to do good. But how long will you have it? Consider how little time you have to live, especially now that you are old. Life is a vapour that cometh forth for a brief space and is quickly dispersed. If you are wise you will know whether that curse is coming on you. I have seen the foolish firmly rooted, and straightway I cursed his beauty (Job 5:3). Well did he who was truly wise call the fool falsely-wise, knowing that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (1 Cor. 3:19). O that thou wert wise, and didst understand and provide for thy latter end (Deut. 32:29). That thou wert wise in the things of God, understood what the things of this world are, and provided for the things beneath the earth! Surely you would fly from the things beneath, you would yearn for the things above, you would spurn the things which make for evil. My mind, or rather my spirit, prompts me to say many things to you about the salvation of your soul, but until I see by your answer how you take this, I will add nothing further, lest I become burdensome to one to whom I wish for the future to be a friend, and, if he will let me, a helper in the way of salvation. I salute your wife, beloved by me in Christ, although she has done nothing to merit this affection.

LETTER CCXCIII. (Circa A.D. 1150.)

TO PETER, ABBOT OF MOUSTIER LA CELLE, ON BEHALF OF A MONK OF CHÉZY, WHO HAD CHANGED OVER TO CLAIRVAUX

To the cause of your writing I thus reply. I think that the annoyance of my lord of Chézy is not more annoying to anyone than to myself. But I suppose that you know that a long time ago, by his own wish and precept, that monk was made mine, and that he promised obedience to me, and that I undertook the charge of him. It is not easy to recollect how often since then I have opposed his desire to come to me, and sent him back when he came. Only now at last has he come and remained, but against my will, and I can in no way persuade him to return. He said, indeed, that if I sent him away he would go away altogether and never return. But not even so had he my consent; nay, he entered even against my advice. But having entered so, my conscience would not let me reject him, nor can I now do so, inasmuch as he was before put under my care, as I said, and I shall have to give account of him. For a long time, I confess, had I passed over

this danger to my conscience, lest I should annoy the good abbot; and I would have still have passed it over, if the monk would have in any way listened to my advice. But since this is the state of things, it is yours to console the abbot, to blot out his sadness, to make my excuse to him for this reasonable cause. Lastly, he himself, as you know, is in a state of uncertainty, and has often thought of leaving his house. But if he wished now to carry out what he has meditated I would not stand in his way, because I know that he remains in the house not without great anxiety.

LETTER CCXCIV. (Circa A.D. 1150.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS, ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP OF LE MANS

He recommends the Bishop and others to the Pope.

The Bishop of Le Mans is here. If you do not know him let me say that he is a man of whose truth and honesty no one has any doubt, except those who do not know him well. From his youth up he has been known and beloved by me for his well-known virtues, as well as for the other good points in his character. If any slander against him has been brought before you, holy Father, either I am deceived, or the slanderer has lied to his own harm. Hear the Bishop, and dismiss him in the fulness of your favour. I have been deceived if he has not been well placed. I ask that the Abbot of Vendôme, who is specially devoted to you, may find special favour with you, and that his reasonable request may be obtained without difficulty. The Bishop of Angers is sending a messenger, seeking something at your hands, both by himself and through one, and I ask that he may be heard for his righteousness, and that a lying slanderer may not be heard against him. It is fitting that you who live for all should have power for all according to their merits.

LETTER CCXCV. (Circa A.D. 1150.)

TO CARDINAL HENRY, FOR THE SAME BISHOP

I write to you as if to myself, and this every time that I write to you. For where you are, there I hope to be, for I love you as myself. If you love me as much, or, I should say, because you love me, see that my lord of Le Mans, as far as you can, does not have to return disappointed in any way. Otherwise I shall be disappointed too, for I love him for his uprightness, and I wish him to be loved by you.

LETTER CCXCVI. (Circa A.D. 1150.)

TO THE BISHOP OF OSTIA, FOR THE SAME

A certain cleric is said to have gained the ear of my lord, and to have brought a charge against his own Bishop, who is a friend of mine, to satisfy his own greed. If you have any regard for me, or rather for the righteousness of God take care that this malignant slanderer gain nothing by his falsehood, and let not the innocent Bishop, my faithful friend, take any harm.

LETTER CCXCVII

TO THE ABBOT OF MONTIER RAMEY, ON BEHALF OF A FUGITIVE MONK

The bearer of this was lately, at my request, admitted into your society, but prompted by folly and carelessness he threw off the sacred habit, and left you. But he is now, it seems, penitent, and wishes to return, and humbly begs to be received again; and I, too, beg the same thing for him, that for the love of God and of me you will not refuse admission and the habit to one who is now penitent.

LETTER CCXCVIII. (A.D. 1151.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS, ABOUT NICHOLAS

Nicholas has gone out from us because he was not of us but he has left behind him foul footprints. I long ago knew what he was, but I had been waiting either for God to convert him or for him to show himself a Judas. This he has done. Besides books, silver, and much gold, there were found on him when he left three seals, one his own, one the prior’s, the third mine, and that not a very old one, but the new one which I had been forced to use because of his treachery and secret frauds. This is why I wrote to you, I recollect, without giving my name, because I was in perils among false brethren. Who can say to how many people he wrote what he chose under my name, and without my knowledge? Who will give me the satisfaction of seeing your Curia thoroughly purged of the dregs of his lies, and of seeing that the innocence of those with me is sufficient to excuse us to those who have been circumvented and prevented by his lies? It was partly proved, and partly he confessed, that he had written to you more than once in this underhand way. The earth is stained by his disgraceful deeds, and they have become proverbial amongst all; I refrain from polluting with them my lips and

your ears. He boasts that he will come to you, and that he has friends in the Curia. If he does come, remember Arnold of Brescia; he is a greater sinner than Arnold. No one better deserves life-long imprisonment, no fitter sentence could be pronounced against him than one of perpetual silence.

LETTER CCXCIX. (Circa A.D. 1150.)

TO THE COUNT OF ANGOULÊME, ON BEHALF OF THE MONKS OF S. AMAND DE BOISSE

He complains of the heavy exactions from his brethren by the Count.

Do not think it strange of me if I regard as excessive the rent-charge which you demand of our brethren for the domain of Boisse, since we are not accustomed to pay anything like that amount. We have founded many Abbeys, and none of them has been rendered liable to such heavy dues. But as this is your absolute will, and as God more willingly accepts a voluntary offering than a forced one, I will ratify the agreement which my brethren have made with you, until God shall inspire you with a more indulgent spirit towards us, as I do not despair that He will do. In the meantime honour them with your affection and favour, give them your protection and support; there is no better means of enabling you to appear with confidence before the tribunal of Christ than to have the poor for your friends and intercessors.

LETTER CCC

TO THE COUNTESS OF BLOIS

He consoles the Countess for the excesses of her son, which he imputes to his age, and encourages her to hope for a better future for him; he advises her to treat him with kindness and indulgence, rather than with harshness.

If your son has ever fallen into any unsuitable conduct towards you I greatly regret it; and deplore the excess of the son as well as the injury to the mother; but after all his conduct is excusable in a young man. For the faults of youth find both their cause and their excuse in the heedlessness of that age. Do you not know that the thoughts and imaginations of man’s heart are given to evil from his youth? (Gen. 7:21). Console yourself in the hope that there will be a change in him for the better by the merits and alms of his father.

Because of this you must be more and more earnest in your prayers and vows to God for him; for although he may not show all the filial affection and respect at all times that he should, yet a mother ought never to forget her motherly

affection, nor, indeed, is she able to do so. Can a woman forget the son of her womb? And if she. He says, should forget, yet I will not for get thee (Isaiah 49:15). Let us entreat and lament before God; as for me, I have good hope that He will in His mercy cause a young man of such excellent qualities to endeavour to imitate his father's noble character. Treat with him, then, in a spirit of gentleness and with affectionate intentions: because he will thus be better induced to good actions than if he is exasperated with reproaches and reprimands. In this way I feel sure that both your heart and mine will equally be gladdened in a short time by the happy change which will take place in him. You will not doubt that I desire as fervently as you to see him return to a better mind. Would that I may find him always towards everyone such as I have always found him towards myself; for I do not think that he has ever refused to yield to any wish of mine; may the Lord recompense it to him! But you may believe that, as you have frequently requested, I have remonstrated with him, and I will continue to do so whenever the occasion shall offer.

LETTER CCCI. (Circa A.D. 1149.)

TO SANCHIA, SISTER OF THE EMPEROR OF SPAIN

He begs her to use her influence to close a controversy which had arisen with some other monks about the reception of a certain monastery among them.

1. As relates to the reception of the monastery of Tholdanos, you know that what has been done was not done by me, since I was absent and knew nothing of what was going on. That it was done by my brethren I do not deny, but they took care to surround it in every respect with precautions, taking the advice of many persons of piety, assuring themselves of the consent and assistance of the Bishop of the Diocese, and having acted only on the request of a noble lady who had founded that house upon her own lands; and in no respect was it done secretly. They supposed that they were able to accept freely what the foundress offered to them spontaneously, declaring it free and independent of any other religious house, and it was even said that she had the written proofs of his in her hands. But as you inform me that the monks of Caracetta complain that in this matter their rights have been injured, and as, instead of following the advice of Solomon, who says to them, Do not hinder him who desires to do well, and do well thyself if thou art able (Prov. 3:27), they opposed themselves under these circumstances to us in this good work, and since it does not become the servants of God to strive (2 Tim. 2:24), my conclusion is to put back the whole matter

into your hands, that you may set at rest, by your action and authority, a calumny altogether, as they say, unfounded and unjust, and that for the glory of God and the health of your own soul you may restore calm and peace to an Order established in the Church.

2. For my brother Nivard, who praises your bounty much, advises me to put entire confidence in you on this occasion, as well, because of your especial goodwill for our Order, as because of the promise which you have had the goodness to make to him. I cannot suppose that our opponents will refuse to submit themselves to your salutary warnings or advice. If, however, they should do so it will be necessary to commit the judgment in this matter to the two Bishops in whose dioceses the places in question are situated, so that the whole controversy between them may be terminated. Whatsoever they shall have determined or agreed upon by mutual consent it will be your part to ratify and see executed. If you fear God, do not suffer that so good a, work should be hindered, nor that the wish of that pious lady should be frustrated, nor that those religious should be deprived of the fruit of their devotion, nor, finally, that God should be defrauded of an offering so acceptable to Him as that of an Order reformed.

I entreat you also to show your maternal affection for your new foundation. I mean the house of Espîna. Let those brethren, sustained by your generosity, continue in the service of God according to the Rule of their Order.

LETTER CCCII. (A.D. 1153.)

TO THE LEGATES OF THE HOLY SEE, ON BEHALF OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE

He commends to them the cause of the Archbishop, who was oppressed by his adversaries.

To my Lords and reverend Fathers, Legates of the Holy See, the son and servant of their Holiness, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and that through all things they may please God and bring forth worthy fruits of their mission.

Although far removed in body, I am closely united with you by affection and goodwill; and I desire and pray that your acts and intentions may be directed in everything to justice and right. Having then learned that the unfortunate Archbishop of Mayence has been cited to appear before you in order to reply to the accusations of his adversaries, I have taken upon me to make an appeal to your goodness on his behalf. I believe that you will honour your ministry if, as

far as justice allows, you support this feeble and tottering wall by the shoulders of your authority; and that you will not permit the bruised reed to be broken nor the smoking flax to be quenched, as far as in you lies. Let him feel, I entreat you, that my intercession has been of service to him; and let him not be utterly lost by that simplicity of soul, because of which he is said to have been entrapped by false brethren, rather than discovered in any action rendering him worthy of deposition.

LETTER CCCIII

TO LOUIS THE YOUNGER, KING OF FRANCE

Bernard advises the King how he ought to act in the cause of a cen tain Breton seigneur, who was adulterous and excommunicated.

If by the promise to absolve him from the excommunication which he has incurred, it would be possible to determine that seigneur from Brittany to send away the adulteress, permitting her to enjoy the lands which her father has left her according to the division which she has made with her brother; although she is unworthy of any such concession, perhaps it ought not to be refused, so that you may by this means obtain the support and aid of a powerful seigneur. Otherwise it is not the advice of your humble and faithful servant that either land should be granted to a stranger, or your favour accorded to a man excommunicated and incestuous: lest (which may God avert) you may one day hear the words applied to you: When thou sawest a thief thou conscntedst unto him, and hast been partaker with the adulterers (Ps. 50:18). Yet I would not advise precipitate action, or a sudden breach with the man. Action should be taken through some faithful and prudent agent, by whom, if possible, he may be led on, and time gained. If he will not listen to any proposal and remains obstinate, you may have confidence in the Lord that he will not prevail; since justice will be on your side and will be a powerful aid. I know not whether the Bishop of that district would be a fit and suitable person for this purpose: not that he is not faithful to you, for he is, on the contrary, most loyal; but on account of his position towards that seigneur, who detests him, and would not, I fear, have any confidence in him. He is, however, prepared to do everything in your service, which, with the will of God, might be in his power. If he should make any more private suggestion to you as from me you will know that it comes from me, and please to receive it as from my mouth. For he is a man whom I love much and in whom I have considerable confidence; you also may, I

believe, safely confide to him whatever you think proper.

LETTER CCCIV. (A.D. 1153.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard thanks the King for the interest that he takes in his health, and says some words in favour of the King’s brother Robert.

The letter which your Highness has deigned to send to me has rejoiced my soul: may God, who has inspired you with this good thought, recompense you also with a similar joy. What am I, or what is my father’s house, that your royal Majesty should trouble about my life or my death? But since you do me the honour to inquire respecting my health I may reply that I am somewhat better, and, I believe, out of danger, though I am still very weak. I take this opportunity to inform you that Lord Robert, your brother, has done me the honour and kindness to visit me during my sickness; he has spoken to me in a manner that has filled me with joy and better hope on his behalf. Remember to show him some affection; I promise you that he will give you satisfaction, if his actions answer to his words. Have the kindness to express to him your satisfaction at knowing that he is willing henceforth to rule his conduct according to the advice which I have given him, and that of good men. I have not my seal at hand, but I hope that he who reads this will recognize my style, because I have myself dictated this.

LETTER CCCV. (A.D. 1153.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS

Bernard recommends to the Pope the cause of the Bishop of Beauvais, who is detained by just causes from travelling to Rome.

The Bishop of Beauvais, your son (whom I might also call mine if it were not presumption on my part thus to speak), having been summoned to your presence, would have come willingly, being strong in the justice of his cause, and confiding in your fatherly favour. But I have detained him, and have had much difficulty in so doing, so desirous was he to see your face. What made me wish to keep him back was chiefly (among other good reasons) that I was doubtful what was your wish in respect of him. Besides, without speaking of many other considerations which opposed themselves to his departure, he and his brother, the King, do not walk together in one mind, and it would not be altogether safe

for him to be long absent from his diocese. Do not ask me on which side is the wrong: it is not for me to bring a charge against anyone; it is sufficient for me to excuse the Bishop. I have seen him in the King’s presence, showing to him every mark of submission and respect, and that to no purpose. However, you may be sure that whatever he may have to fear and whatever may happen in his absence, he will come to you without delay whenever he shall have learned that you desire him to do so. His person and his interests are in your hands. Nor has he so acted in the post committed to him that he should not be able to count on your goodwill. Therefore he has sent this person in his place, well knowing that he might act towards you as towards a father. Would it please you to know what orders have been given to him? To do nothing without your direction, and to follow in all respects your wishes, to which he wholly commits himself. And he is confident that you will do better for him than act merely as his judge, but that you will be his support, his strength, and his protector. If it should please you to commit the cause to the judgment of the Lord Archbishop of Rheims, I believe it would be speedily terminated with the help of God, especially if the right of Appeal was taken away from each party.

LETTER CCCVI. (A.D. 1151.)

TO THE BISHOP OF OSTIA, FOR THE ELECTION OF THOROLD, ABBOT OF TROIS-FONTAINES

He justifies himself from the reproach which Hugo had thrown upon him of having named Thorold as Abbot of Trois-Fontaines, in preference to a certain monk named Nicholas, whom Hugo had intended for that post. He also explains the election of Robert as Abbot of a newly-founded monastery.

1. Woe to the world because of offences (S. Matt. 18:7). Do I offend you? am I an offence unto you? Who could believe that such a thing could happen except those to whom the unity of feeling, and mutual affection, in which we have walked in the house of God together, is altogether unknown? What a sudden and lamentable change for me! He who used to support me now prepares to oppress me; and the very person who used to defend me now frightens me with threats, and accuses me of prevarication and even of blasphemy! Our first parents were not punished for their only fault, although a grave one, until they had been questioned and convicted: the Ninevites had time given them for penitence (Jonah 3:10), and the people of Sodom were punished not merely after hearing, but also after sight of their sins (Gen. 19:16). But how differently my judge acts with me, no doubt because I am so much more contemptible than these! I am not

thought worthy of being placed on my defence, of being invited to justify myself, to render a reason, of having opportunity given me for reply. I am judged without being summoned, and condemned without being convicted.

2. But now listen, if you will be so good, to my excuse, and if it does not seem sufficient to you, it is at all events a true one. You had wished that Brother Nicholas should be substituted for yourself in your post, and I remember well that I did not disagree with you. You and I were thus completely agreed, and because we were so, I thought and said that there could be no difficulty in thus settling the matter. That it was not so settled was owing to necessity and not to any duplicity on my part. The matter was variously taken by others, and caused discord. Do I say discord? It was rather concord; for all the electors were found to be so completely agreed in disagreeing to the plan which we had determined upon, that not even one monk or lay-brother, except two or three who were your countrymen, was willing to give consent to our plan. Nevertheless, I tried by many arguments, now entreating, now threatening, to bring about the resolution we desired, but they withstood me with as much agreement as obstinacy. I might have been able to use force, but this I omitted to do, and I pray God to spare me, as I spared that monk for whom we were interested, in not casting into the midst of such a storm and of so many rebellious spirits a man humble, timid, and inclined to avoid the weight of the charge attempted to be laid upon him. For without speaking of all those outside duties in which you yourself have had experience of him, all the other duties of this charge seem to be beyond his strength. Therefore, permitting him to go forth from his monastery with those who were of like mind with himself, I have put him at the head of a house which will be so much more easy for him to govern, as he will be seconded by my own monks in the performance of the work. For it is a place newly founded by my own brethren, and very near to me, so that I can frequently visit it. Of all the Abbots who were in a condition to occupy your post, I did not venture to propose any, since I had not your approval; and Brother Robert, in default of a better person, seemed to me more fitted than anyone else for it. I proposed him, then: when the reply came from you, and by your judgment he was shut out from it. Why should I prolong the story? They accepted the man, who, as I learn, displeases your Holiness.

3. Nor is the cause unknown, as I am told you declare loudly that he is a man of bad character, and that because of his crimes he was expelled from the monastery over which he had before presided. It may have been the case; but as far as I am competent to be a witness, I declare before God and his Angels that I

have never, up to this time, heard anything of that kind respecting him. Not even his Archbishop, when he was making every effort to obtain his removal, ever signified to me by letter or messenger, anything to that effect. Can you possibly believe, that if it had been otherwise, I should be a supporter of disorder or turpitude? If your Excellence thought thus of me I do not know how the long friendship with which you have honoured me up to this day, and the great kindness which you have never ceased to show me could at all be justified. And what could you say or think of the Archbishop, who had put at the head of a house of which he had himself been superior, a man of such a character of which, if it were a matter of long and public notoriety, he could not have been ignorant? As for me, God forbid that I should in the least suspect of such conduct a man of such high character and office. It is true that he who had promoted the man to be Abbot, himself removed him. I do not deny it. For what reason he did so is a matter that only concerns himself. But he is known to have displeased many by so doing, and has been accused of not observing either reason, rule, or custom in that removal. The Archbishop acted simply according to his own pleasure, and in order not to cause him annoyance, this Abbot at my entreaty gave place to wrath, and retired from his place in peace.

4. One thing I must say. From the time that he entered into this house no one has remarked in him (and this is the testimony of all) anything which would render him unworthy of the post to which he was elevated. He lived without disagreement with anyone; besides this, he is versed in literature and theology, he is of pleasant demeanour and appearance, and affable in speech. It is true that he was too short a time with us to make these testimonies quite irrefutable. This I confess. He will perhaps do well, and perhaps badly. I distrust all that I do, and am unable to foresee what will come of any step I take. Since then I am not fully assured, I am unable to express positive certainty to you. It is done, and what is done cannot be undone. If I had been a prophet it is certain that I should have avoided to give to a friend cause of offence, to trouble the mind of a saint, to give scandal to a Bishop. What do you wish that I should do, since I was obliged by necessity to act, and to act according to regular order?

5. This is my excuse. If it is sufficient, let the ill-feeling be taken away from between us; if not, I will endure your judgment, of whatever character it may be. It would be painful to me to destroy so quickly with my own hand what I have built up, unless some convenient opportunity should offer, which, perhaps, in course of time, may be the case. But if you wish to depose him the power is in your hands; you will find in me no resistance. Why should I oppose myself to a

torrent? Unjustly I have not acted. If I seem to have acted foolishly it is in your power at once to correct my folly, or, if you think the case requires, even to punish it. Yet I add that if I am dealt with piously and christianly, a righteous man will correct me in mercy, and if he shall reprimand me will not in anger disgrace me before others. Here you have my position, unless I have given you some fresh offence, even in this letter. For, although your indignation against me has become known to me by others and not by yourself, yet I have guarded myself from replying in a similar manner, but have preferred to complain to you of yourself in these lines. For the rest I bless God, who has Himself deprived me before my death of this consolation which He had bestowed, and which, perhaps, I enjoyed with too great pleasure, namely, the favour of my lord and now yours, so that I might learn, even by my own experience, not to rest my hope upon man.

LETTER CCCVII. (A.D. 1153.)

TO THE SAME

He defends the Bishop of Beauvais against unfavourable reports. He relates in what extremely poor health he is; and what had happened to the Archbishop of Lyons.

1. I write to you in great haste, and consequently with less care, because the traveller who is to convey this is hastening his departure. It is a wonderful coincidence, but a very convenient one. Brother G. Fulcher has just arrived with your letter and that of my lord almost at the same moment as the stranger who bears this; by the providential care, no doubt, of God that I might have a means for replying to you at once; which otherwise I might not have been able to do, however much I wished, with sufficient quickness. As you placed first what concerned the Bishop of Beauvais, so I begin with this in my reply. You know that he is a free agent, his life and character are not in my power, but in that of the State. If he acts sometimes otherwise than he ought, or is becoming to him, I am able to lament it, but however much I may wish to correct it, that is not in my power. But yet I ought to say to you that up to the present I have had no occasion to remark that he absents himself frequently from his diocese; nor have I ever heard that this is the case. His brother Robert has come to him, and now is staying with him. I have not yet heard that he has committed, or led the Bishop to commit, any action disgraceful or criminal, and it would be very wonderful if any such had reached you white it was unknown to me. I will do all in my power to persuade him as you wish, to resign his See, if ever I have a fitting and

reasonable opportunity. I should already have done so if I had been able without offending the Bishop, and if I had not feared to see him replaced by some one still more useless in the Diocese. He came himself to see me in Lent, prepared to go to Rome on account of a certain appeal; and he would have done so if I had not dissuaded him. The motive of my dissuasion was this, that it did not seem to me that the purpose which called him to Rome, or the people by whom he was accompanied, were such as were becoming to the person of a young man who was a Bishop. Yet he still proposes to set out at a convenient season. He is your brother; you ought to have consideration for him, so that his adversaries may not prevail against him. I could wish that you had written to him rather than to me, and given him a brotherly warning respecting the reports which have reached you about his conduct.

2. I have felt that you were anxious about the state of my health. It is true what you have heard. I have been sick even to death, but for the present I am in a measure restored. But I feel that it is not for long, for the state of weakness in which I am passes all belief. This I say, however, without pretending to set bounds to the Providence of God, which is able to recall even the dead to life. Kindly let my reply in this matter be not only to yourself, but also to my lord, for whom I earnestly pray. Be so good also as to associate with yourself the Bishop of Frascati, to express to him in my name, and with the fullest devotedness in your power, my best thanks for his extreme condescension and anxiety about my health.

3. As to what has happened to the Archbishop of Lyons, this is the truth. He had set out on a journey, with an honourable suite, as became an Archbishop, and much money; but when he was scarcely beyond his own limits, lo! he fell into an ambuscade of his enemies. What would a man of his impetuosity of character do? To pass on was impossible; to retreat and give up his journey seemed to him less tolerable than any captivity. Part of his people he sent back, part he caused to scatter; he disembarrassed himself of most of the money he had brought with him, retaining only sufficient to meet the cost of his journey with the few followers which he kept with him. What more? He went forward with only three or four attendants, he himself, nevertheless, being dressed as a servant; mixed up his troop with the promiscuous crowd of travellers, as one of them, and so reached Saint-Eloi. There finding himself ill, he was conducted to Montpellier; where he remained a considerable time, and spent on physicians all the money he had, and more.

LETTER CCCVIII. (A.D. 1153.)

TO ALFONSO, KING OF PORTUGAL

Bernard replies that he has done his best to comply with the King’s request, and he predicts that in a short time his brother, who was then engaged in the warfare of earth, would pass over into that of Heaven.

To ALFONSO, the illustrious King of Portugal, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, desires all that the prayer of a sinner can obtain for him.

I have received with extreme joy the letter and greeting of your Highness, and am glad in Him who sendeth health unto Jacob. What I have done in this matter will be shown by the event, and you yourself will be able to appreciate it by that means; you will see with what zeal and ardour I have wished to respond to your commands, and to the exigency of the case. Peter, the brother of your Highness, a meritorious and accomplished Prince, has made me acquainted with your wishes. After having crossed France with his men-at-arms, he is now carrying on war in Lorraine, but he will not be long before he is a combatant in the armies of the Lord. My son, Brother Roland, brings to you a letter bearing the liberality of the Holy See. I commend him to you, also the Brothers of my Order dwelling in your realm, and, lastly, myself.

LETTER CCCIX. (A.D. 1153.)

TO POPE EUGENIUS

He praises Abbot Suger and recommends his deputies to the Pope.

To his very dear father and lord EUGENIUS, by the grace of God supreme Pontiff, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and offers his humble homage.

If in our Gallican Church there is any vessel capable of doing honour to the palace of the Great King; if the Lord counts among us a second David, coming in and going out at His command (1 Sam. 22:14); in my judgment it is no other than the venerable Abbot of S. Denys. I know that great man perfectly; if he is faithful and prudent in temporal things he is not less fervent and humble in spiritual things; and is equally without blame (which is a very difficult thing indeed) in the management of both. Before the King he behaves as one of the Court of Rome, and when in the church before God as one of the Court of Heaven. I request and entreat you to receive kindly the messages of so good a man, and to reply to him as becomes you, and as he is worthy of receiving, in

good and friendly words, full of familiarity and affection, of goodness and favour; for you may be quite sure that to show special love and honour to his person is a sure means of doing honour to your own office and ministry.

LETTER CCCX. (A.D. 1153.)

TO ARNOLD OF CHARTRES, ABBOT OF BONNEVAL

Bernard was almost at the point of death, when he addressed to his friend this letter, which was the last he ever wrote.

I have received the marks of your affection with gratitude, I cannot say in pleasure, my sufferings are too great for that; still, what I endure seems to me tolerable in comparison with what I feel when obliged to take food. Sleep has departed from me, so that I suffer without intermission through the exhaustion of nature. All my ailments resolve themselves into a great weakness of stomach, which has to be supported frequently day and night with very small quantities of liquid food; for I am entirely unable to bear anything solid. It is not without excessive suffering that it endures the little that is given to me, but still worse is feared, if it should be entirely without any at all. A drop more than is absolutely needful, however, causes me extreme pain. My feet and ankles are swollen as if I were dropsical. In the midst of all this, for I ought not to hide anything from you of the state of a friend for whom you are anxious, as to the inward man I may declare (but I speak as a fool) that the spirit is vigorous, though the flesh is weak. Pray our Saviour, who willeth not the death of a sinner, that He will not put off my departure, which is fully seasonable, and that He will guard me when I pass away. Give diligence to strengthen by your prayers a poor, humble soul, bare and devoid of all merit, that the crafty enemy may not find place, to seize me and inflict a mortal wound. I wished, notwithstanding the state in which I am, to write these few words, that you may recognize, on seeing the handwriting you know so well, how much I love you. But I should have preferred to reply to a letter from you than to write the first.

LETTER CCCXI. (Circa A.D. 1125.)

TO HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR

He sharply chides those envious persons who are opposing the efforts of the good, and takes occasion to urge Haimeric to a sedulous care for the good of the Church.

To the illustrious lord HAIMERIC, Chancellor of the Holy Roman See, HUGO, Abbot of Pontigny, and BERNARD of Clairvaux send greeting, in the hope that their conduct in the house of God may ever be such as it ought to be.

1. The good which Bishops seek to gain is, as we believe, the gain of Christ, since their business is properly the cause of God. Let those, therefore, who see for God make commom cause with them. If anyone hangs back let him hear what the Lord says: He that is not with Me is against Me (S. Matt. 12:30). There is no middle course. Either they will follow the advice of the Apostle, who says to them, Quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19), or they will certainly hear, as the Jews did, Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51), and, as the Prophet said, Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that rejoice when they commit sin and exalt over wickedness (Isaiah 5:20, and Prov. 2:14). They will not be able to rejoice also in good, nor can the righteous man, for his righteousness, and the sinner in his evil desires be praised together by the same lips. And yet what is there strange in it if the good thing, which is an odour of life to the good, should be an odour of death to the wicked? Do we not know that He who is the source and origin of all good was born for the ruin of many as for the resurrection of many, and for a sign that is everywhere spoken against? (S. Luke 2:34, and Isaiah 8:14). Even to-day to how many is the Saviour found a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (Isaiah 8:14). And yet those are not wanting who say with willing heart, He is our peace, who hath made both one (Ephes. 2:14). He to whom the Peace Himself is a stumbling-block, what peace can there be for him? Or he for whom the Saviour Himself is the cause of condemnation, in whom can he hope to be saved? It is written, In his house (without doubt that of the righteous man) shall be wealth and riches (Ps. 112:3), and he explains what he means by wealth and riches, for he adds, And his righteousness endureth for ever, and in truth there is no glory, no riches to be compared with the righteousness of the conscience of the just. But what is it that the unrighteous loses? If Paul boasts of the riches in his heart, saying, Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience (2 Cor. 1:12), who is injured thereby? Yet the Prophet assures us that the sinner shall see it and be grieved (Ps. 112:10). What perversity! These riches are in nowise like those of the earth, which cannot be acquired without others being deprived of them. Why, then, art thou angry, who hast lost nothing? or why dost thou envy good things to good men, and those good things, which thou dost not care to acquire for thyself? Is it not like the dog in the fable, who forbad to others the hay which he was not able to eat? But although thou mayest gnash with thy teeth and consume away, yet

the work of God cannot be undone. Whether you will or no, the righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all the wicked shall keep silence.

2. But all this only concerns those who can be suspected. But to you we say this: use well the talent committed to you, and you shall receive the recompense. What profit is it, wrapped in a napkin, when one day it will be required again with usury? While we have time, why do we neglect to make use of it? It is true that in your office it is always the time to seek diligently the interests of piety; but especially is the present moment favourable for indulging a holy avarice; you have only to be diligent in using the treasure of the Lord which He has put into your hands to this end. Otherwise, if wisdom be unused, or a treasure unknown, what usefulness is there in either? (Ecclus. 20:32). It is said that you are disposed, as well by your own desire, as by the duty of your office, to do good unto all men; as you are specially bound to do to those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). That command of the Apostle is general, yet we may venture to be so bold as to remind you that it is a special privilege of your office and ministry. Unless perhaps (which we do not in the least think) you hold more to the position itself than to the honour of fulfilling its duties. Indeed, since there is scarcely any good work or supposed good work in the whole world which does not pass at some time or other through the hands of the Chancellor of Rome, which is not submitted to his judgment, shaped by his advice, strengthened by his good will, and assisted by his help; and what can be more fitting than that it should devolve upon him to take action when anything in these various projects is either incomplete or wrongly directed, especially as the glory of all holy and praiseworthy enterprises is sure to redound upon him? Thus, as we have said, the man who fills that post is either the most happy of men, or the most miserable; as he is, by his position, either always a sharer in every good work, or its enemy: and justly, therefore, the entire praise or blame, according to the issue of each, and his zeal in regard to it, will fall upon him. Blessed, then, is he who shall be able to say unto the Lord: I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and keep Thy precepts (Ps. 119:63).

3. But what are we doing? While we have taken in hand to speak to you of your obligations we have almost forgotten that we are pouring these observations into ears most fully occupied. We trust, however, that we shall not seem needlessly intrusive: not that we claim the least right to speak to you as we have done, but that we have present to our mind that you have deigned to be the first to solicit by your gifts the friendship of such humble persons as ourselves. We hold this as a remarkable sign of your condescension and piety that your

Excellency, being so great a person and busied with such important affairs, should have thought it worth while to salute such obscure and humble persons as ourselves, and even to honour us with presents. May God Himself recompense you, and give you the spiritual gold, which is wisdom, in exchange for the material gold, which you have bestowed upon us, so that not only we may rejoice in your gift, but you also in the reward which shall be returned to you. Adieu.

LETTER CCCXII. (A.D. 1130.)

TO RAYNALD, ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS

Bernard thanks him for a letter which he had received from him.

To the most reverend father and lord R., by the grace of God Archbishop of Rheims, Brother BERNARD, of Clair vaux, wishes health and whatever the prayers of a sinner can effect on his behalf.

I thank the Lord who has inspired you with the thought of consoling me with a letter from your hand. I am, indeed, well enough able to return letter for letter, but when shall I ever be able to acquit myself to you of the debt of gratitude which you have placed me under by the goodness that you have shown towards me, in encouraging me by the sweetness of your blessing, in rousing me by your exhortations, and honouring me with your salutation? Assuredly there never was anyone less worthy than I of the names that you bestow upon me, or less worthy to be known to you; but the less I am worthy the more I am grateful to you. It is true, though, that when you act thus you act as becomes you, and as recognizing that you are debtor to the unwise as well as to the wise. You say to me that the reputation of which the report has come to your Excellency has moved you to this condescension towards so humble a person as myself; but this is, indeed, not only too flattering, but also dangerous to me. It is, however, a very happy and agreeable thing for me that a breath of reputation, though it be only like an empty puff of wind, should have moved a priest of the Most High of such high rank to have such kind feeling toward me, before even I had merited to come to his personal knowledge. The monk who is the bearer of this letter will tell your Holiness with respect to my coming to you why I have not come at the present time, and at what time I should be able to come. He will reply also with faithfulness to any other questions that it may please you to put to him with respect to me; it is for that purpose that I have sent him, while waiting until I shall be able to come to you myself.

LETTER CCCXIII. (A.D. 1132.)

TO GEOFFREY, ABBOT OF S. MARY AT YORK

Bernard recommends him not to hinder those who wished to enter a religious Order more austere; and declares that those should be regarded as apostates, who, after having thus removed, fall back to their former manner of life.

To the venerable Dom GEOFFREY, Abbot of the Church of S. Mary at York, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, sends salutation in our Lord.

1. It has pleased your Reverence to write and consult so humble a person as myself on some doubtful questions. But I am afraid to give any decisive answer; and hesitate the more to do so, inasmuch as if men with the purest intentions are unable to discern the minds of their nearest companions, they are still less able to discern the secret designs of the Divine Will. Again, I am afraid in so speaking to wound those who do not share my opinion; and this is certain to happen with those unsatisfied souls who only seek to justify their conclusion in their own eyes by a cloud of incoherent and obscure reasonings. But yet their conscience itself is the avenger of this voluntary darkness: because at the same time that they strive to delude themselves with regard to that they have done, the truth of the matter comes back to them in the shape of remorse which wounds and preys upon them. Of such a character was the gnawing remorse from which the Psalmist prays of God to be delivered, saying: Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy name (Ps. 142:7). If, then, I do not reply to your questions in a manner as satisfactory as you would wish, or if I do not dare to express myself as fully as I might, do not, Reverend sir, suppose that it is from a studied artfulness. Your letter begins by complaints upon the painful position in which the departure of a certain number of your monks has placed your old age, since they have quitted you only to embrace a manner of life stricter and more secure. It seems to me that in this case you ought rather to be afraid that your sorrow is the sorrow of this world which worketh death.

2. For if there is any reason at all in the opinion of men, it is a thing not to be lamented if a man ever endeavours to devote himself with greater strictness to the practice of the law of his Creator. And we indeed should be acting not merely not holily, but even without ordinary fatherly care and interest, if we should envy the advances made by our sons. If, then, you wish, as I suppose, chiefly to make your profit of one good counsel out of a thousand, not only should you strive to prevent those who still remain with you under a mitigated rule, from falling into a lower state through their relaxations; but also you should

be, as says the prophet, the first to bring bread (Is. 21:14), the first to favour the design of those, who, fearing that the health of their souls would suffer if they remained longer in a house of less severity, aspire to observe their profession in all its purity. On the first you ought to lavish the greatest care lest they grow careless to their spiritual loss; but to the second you ought to show every kind of goodwill, that they may attain to the crown. For those who meditate continually in their heart on the means of rising higher are those who go from strength to strength; they merit to behold the Lord of Lords in Sion, and that the more surely because they are consumed with a fervent zeal to adhere to Him by a more holy and perfect life (Ps. 84:5, 7).

3. As for the monks Gervase and Ralph, whose withdrawal Archbishop Thurstan, like a true father and a worthy Bishop, had sanctioned, and to which you, as you yourself declare, had consented, I am sure that, far from erring, they would have done well to have remained firm in that more perfect path of purity to which they had ascended, and to have persevered in it laudably. It is evident to me, nevertheless, that if they wished to regain the path of purity from which they have rashly descended, they would be deserving of very great praise for that proof of Christian valour, as soldiers who return to the fight contend the more bravely for the victory, that they had for a moment shamefully fled from the battle field. You, indeed, are quite able, I believe, to recall the permission you had given, but the judgment of the Almighty cannot be thus rendered of no effect. You allow that their life would afterwards be a more holy one; but you say that they would not be able to support its rigour, on account of the delicacy of their constitution, or of ties of relationship impossible to break. To this you add, that their presence is necessary to you; and therefore you urge me to say, whether they may not without fault remain in a house which they have not been able to quit without offence.

4. To this I reply, that there are different kinds of offences; that carnal affections ought to be entirely cut off for the sake of Christ, that the Gospel loudly declares, and one passage in the Scripture repeats after another, that temporal advantages and enjoyments are to be abandoned for the salvation of the soul; and that to be ignorant of this is a fault so gross as to be almost heretical. But I am not certain whether such a return as you speak of could be made without fault needing punishment. Certainly, it would expose them to evident peril, and a fall almost certain, because it is presuming on the mercy of God against His justice, and to set up the one against the other. The Scripture says: Be not without fear to add sin to sin and say not, His mercy is great (Ecclus. 5:5,

6). For it is a bad kind of discretion that makes the less important consideration preponderate over the more important, and tries to put the worse in the same line with the better.

5. Lastly, you protest vehemently against the name of apostates being applied to these men if they should return to their own monastery, and endeavour to discharge the sacred rules of their profession. As for me, I reply, it is not my business to condemn them. The Lord knoweth them that are His (2 Tim. 2:19). Everyone shall bear his own burden (Gal. 6:5). He whom the darkness does not comprehend shall manifest Himself as the Lord in the day of judgment, and the sinner shall be taken in the work of his own hands (Ps. 9:16). Each person may judge himself as leniently as he will; as for me I will say what I think about myself. I, Bernard, if after I had passed over by my own free will from a good state to a better, from a dangerous condition to one more secure, I had, by a culpable change of will, presumed to go back again to what I had left, should have feared not only that I was an apostate, but that I was also unfit for the kingdom of God. This also S. Gregory says: ‘Whosoever has proposed to himself a higher good is no longer free to follow one which is lower. For it is written: No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God (S. Luke 9:62). And such is the man who, having embraced a higher life, falls back again on one who is lower (Pastor. iii. 28.) As to a certain excommunication on which you desire to open a discussion in your letter, it appears to me that it would profit you nothing to discuss that question, and that it is not my business to decide it. You know that the law refuses to judge anyone until he has been first heard: and it is always rash to deliver judgment on an absent person.

LETTER CCCXIV. (A.D. 1134.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

Bernard, having reconciled the Milanese to the Church, had set out at the command of Innocent to endeavour to restore peace among the other cities of Lombardy, first proceeding to Pavia and Cremona. But not succeeding with the Cremonese, he acquaints the Pope with their obstinacy, and he advises that the very severe sentence which was being prepared against the Archbishop of Milan should be for a while suspended.

To his very dear father and lord, Supreme Pontiff, INNOCENT, Brother BERNARD sends his humble homage.

1. The Cremonese are hardened, their worldly prosperity is their ruin. On the other hand, the Milanese think lightly of others, their self-confidence deceives them. These, who put their hope in their war chariots and their horses, have frustrated my endeavours, and rendered my labour useless. I was sadly departing when behold the great consolation with which you favoured me: so that although my tribulations for Christ abound, yet my consolations, through him, abound also. I have received your wished-for letter, which brings sweetness to my soul in the news of your safety, of the successes of our friends, and the reverses of our enemies. Unfortunately the end of the letter tempered the joy which I had felt on reading the first part. For whom would not your indignation cause to tremble? I confess that it is just, and therefore fear it the more. Yet I would say that which has not yet been done should indeed be done, but at the fit time which God will point out. You will then be equally free to do what you propose, and it will perhaps not be equally dangerous. To act at the present time is alas! to destroy utterly all that God by an extraordinary stroke of His grace has accomplished in this city, and which has cost so much care and labour to you and your assistants. It will be strange if such a proceeding is pleasing to Him who, as we read, exalts mercy over justice (James 2:13.) But oh! that unhappy Bishop who, having been translated from a kind of earthly paradise to Ur of the Chaldees, finds himself become a brother to dragons, and a friend of ostriches. What can he do? He wishes to obey, and behold the beasts of Ephesus gnash their teeth upon him. He wishes to dissimulate prudently for the moment, and incurs all the harshness of your far more formidable indignation. There are difficulties for him everywhere, unless he should find it his better course to be without a see, than without a lord: and should hold, as it becomes him to do, the favour of the Pope, as of greater value than the See of Milan. Have you any doubt of his attachment? If any one has been so malicious as to persuade you to suspect him, he shows himself really less loyal than the suspected person, since in his envy he has blackened with his faithless tongue, the good name of a prelate of such high reputation. Have consideration, good Father, for your faithful servant, have consideration for work which is so new, for a plant which has not had time to take root; have consideration for people who are attaching themselves to you, and do not efface the memory of those very benefits, which, as you yourself most truly declare, you have bestowed upon them. Remember, pious Pontiff, those words of your Lord: Behold these three years I come seeking fruit upon this fig tree, and find none (S. Luke 13:7). But you have waited for scarcely three months, and yet you are preparing the axe. If you had waited three

years, you would have followed even in the fourth, as a faithful servant should, the example of your Master. Let us then say: Let it alone this year also; perhaps during that time the ground may be trenched with the spade of penitence, and enriched with tears, and it may be that He who has given you this sterile ground of the hearts of the Milanese to cultivate, will enable it to bring forth the fruit which you desire.

LETTER CCCXV. (Circa A.D. 1134.)

TO MATILDA, QUEEN OF ENGLAND

Bernard begs her to receive favourably a request already presented to her on behalf of the monks of La Chapelle.

To the illustrious lady and beloved daughter in Christ (which I say in affection, not of presumption), MATILDA, by the grace of God Queen of England, BERNARD wishes health.

It is not, I trust, a matter of surprise to you if I presume somewhat in addressing your Highness. I am not alone in thinking, what indeed all are aware of, that you have some kindness towards me, and that I have in some degree your favour. Because of which I have a request to make on behalf of a certain friend of mine, the venerable Abbot of La Chapelle, who has asked me to remind you of a certain tithe which I have already asked from you at Boulogne, if you are kind enough to remember, and which request you then, with your accustomed kindness, favourably entertained. But because what I then asked has not yet been carried out, I write to pray you that it may at length be effectually done. Let me beg that you will take good care for me of the son whom you have borne: because I also, if it will not displease the King, claim some portion in him. Adieu.

LETTER CCCXVI. (Circa A.D. 1135.)

TO HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS, AND HAIMERIC, THE CHANCELLOR

He begs them not to oppose a certain nobleman in possession of Church property who proposed to restore this to certain religious.

It is a good work for a layman to be willing to give up abbeys or ecclesiastical benefices which he possesses contrary to the canons, but when he is willing to transfer them for the use of servants of God the good is doubled. But as these resignations cannot be carried out except by the consent of the Bishop of the

Diocese, it follows that a Bishop would commit a double evil by refusing this assent or a double good by giving it. What a certain knight asks of you in this matter, this you ought to have asked of him. For you, surely, cannot believe that a sanctuary of God is better as the family possession of a man of war than in that of the saints of God. If such be your view, it will be strange if all who hear do not wonder at you. Avoid this, I pray you, lest the sons of the uncircumcised should hear and rejoice. Suppose that you are able to take the captive Abbey from the hands of the powerful, and to re-establish it in its rights, which I do not at all suppose. What heir and successor, I ask, would you prefer to choose? A soldier who would do service for it in the armies of the King, or a monk who would intercede for their sins? Do, therefore, what is just, what is worthy of you, what is agreeable to God, and to all good men; what, finally, if there were no other reason, I should confidently demand of you for the sake of your affection for me.

LETTER CCCXVII. (A.D. 1138.)

TO HIS PRIOR, GODFREY

The schism being extinct and peace concluded, Bernard announces to him his return with the least possible delay.

To Brother GODFREY, Brother BERNARD health.

On the very day of the octave of Pentecost, God has filled up the cup of my desire in giving unity to the Church and peace to Rome. On that day all the supporters of Peter Leonis came to prostrate themselves together at the feet of the Pope, and to take an oath of fidelity to him, and become his liege men. The schismatic clergy also, together with the idol whom they had set up, knelt at the feet of the lord Pope to promise him obedience with all the formalities, and there was great joy among the people. For some time past I felt certain that events would not long delay to take this turn; it is that which has kept me so long here, and if it had been otherwise I should long since have returned to you. At present there is nothing to detain me here. I am doing what you have earnestly urged upon me; I am turning “I will come,” into “I come.” For behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, the victory of Christ and the peace of the Church. The messenger whom I sent to you left Rome on the Friday after that day. Therefore, when I return I shall come with gladness bearing sheaves of peace. These are, indeed, pleasant words, but the facts are still pleasanter. So pleasant are they and glorious that whosoever does not rejoice in them must be either foolish or

wicked. Farewell.

LETTER CCCXVIII. (Circa A.D. 1138.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

He represents to the Pope the distress of the Church of Rheims, and desires speedy help from him.

To his very dear father and lord, INNOCENT, supreme Pontiff, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, health and his humble homage.

The Church of Rheims is on the point of ruin. That glorious city is overwhelmed with disgrace: she cries to the passers-by that there is no sorrow like unto her sorrow. For without are fightings, within fears. And, indeed, there are fightings within also, for her own sons fight against her, nor has she a spouse to set her free: her only hope is in you; it is only Innocent who can wipe the tears from her cheeks. But how long, my lord, must she wait before she is covered with the shield of your protection? How long shall she be trodden under foot, and you not arrive to her assistance? Behold, the King has yielded, and his anger has already sunk into silence. What then remains but that the afflicted Church should be sustained by your apostolic arm, and her wounds tended and healed? The first thing to be done, in my opinion, is to hasten the election of a Bishop, lest the presumption of the people of Rheims should scatter what still remains, if the popular disorder be not checked with a high hand. If this election be made according to the prescribed forms, I trust that God will give a good issue by His grace in other matters also.

LETTER CCCXIX. (Circa A.D. 1138.)

TO THURSTAN, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

He advises and begs him not to resign his See: but if there are good reasons for his doing so, and the Pope sanctions it, he should seek a religions house of strict observance for his place of retreat.

To the Reverend father and lord THURSTAN, by the grace of God Archbishop of York, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health in the present life and in the future life eternal.

1. I praise you for desiring quiet, and that you long to rest in peace in the Lord. But those reasons which you allege for laying down your pastoral charge seem to me insufficient: unless (which I do not believe, and may God forbid) you have

some mortal sin to reproach yourself with, or permission has been given you by the supreme Pontiff to resign. You have not forgotten, I am sure, that rule of the Apostle: Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed (1 Cor. 7:27). By an engagement, such as you say you have taken, a Bishop is not bound any farther than that he should persevere in the ministry to which he has been called.

2. It seems, then, to me, without attempting to impose my advice upon you to the prejudice of any that is wiser, that you should continue to hold the office that you have now, and should exhibit in a Bishop the humble dress and the holiness of life of a monk. However, if some secret motive makes it a duty for you to lay down your charge, or if the Pope indulges your wish for quiet, I advise you, according to my humble lights, not to let any degree of hardship in food or clothing, nor any extremity of poverty deter you from entering some religious house where you may hope to find the most strict observance. Although you must remember in houses of this kind, though everything is sacrificed to the soul, yet this must be so done that due account is taken of age or of weakness. As I am entirely devoted to you, I pray God most earnestly to inspire you to whatever course of action may be for the best; and to enable you so to carry the burden and heat of the day that you may receive in the evening the denarius of the parable impressed with the image of the King.

LETTER CCCXX. (A.D. 1138.)

TO ALEXANDER, PRIOR OF FOUNTAINS, AND TO HIS BRETHREN AT THE SAME PLACE

Bernard urges upon him that the election of a new Abbot should be made with unanimous accord.

To his most dear brethren in Christ, ALEXANDER, the Prior, and the whole community of Fountains, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, health and his humble prayers.

1. Your venerable Father has perfected his course in a blessed end, and has fallen asleep in the Lord. But I, as at all times I think of you with the anxious care and tenderness of a father, so am specially careful on your account at the present time, when this great necessity lies upon you. Wherefore, also, I should have sent to you long since if I had not been waiting to do so with more fitness and advantage when the venerable Abbot Henry had terminated certain affairs which had hindered him from coming sooner. It is upon him that I had reckoned from the beginning as being most worthy of this mission, and most suited to acquit himself of it well. Him, therefore, dearly beloved brethren, receive with

that honour and affection of which he is worthy, and listen to him in all things as to myself; and, indeed, much more, as he excels me both in prudence and merit. I have given to him full powers, whether for the election of your Abbot, or for making ordinances, or for introducing reforms which he may think good to do into your house, and into those which depend upon it. I have given him for travelling companion Brother William, who is my very dear son.

2. And now I entreat you, as my beloved sons, to be all of one mind in the election of your new Abbot; that there may be no divisions among you, but that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God. For He is not a God of dissension, but of peace. Wherefore, also, it is in peace that His abode is placed, and He says, He who gathereth not with me scattereth (S. Luke 11:23). Let this be far from those who dwell in the school of Christ, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, nor let them give opportunity to the enemy to rejoice in glory over their dissension. For by this they both put their own souls in peril, lose the entire fruit of their penitence, endanger the good repute of our Order, and cause the name of Christ to be blasphemed on account of those by whom it should be most glorified. On the contrary, choose with one voice for yourselves, as becomes saints and servants of Christ, and as I fully trust that you will do, a fit pastor over your souls, in company with the venerable Abbots of Rievaulx and of Vauclair, whose advice I wish you to follow in all things as my own.

LETTER CCCXXI. (A.D. 1138.)

TO HENRY MURDACH, FIRST ABBOT OF VAUCLAIR, THEN OF FOUNTAINS, AND FINALLY ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

He orders Henry not to refuse his election to the Abbacy of Fountains.

To his dearest brother and co-Abbot HENRY, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting and the assurance of his prayers.

I enjoin you, my brother Henry, not to refuse the election of our brethren at Fountains, with the advice of the venerable Abbot of Rievaulx, if it shall have fallen upon you; but to yield to it in charity. I give this precept, I assure you, unwillingly, knowing that by your absence I shall be deprived of a great consolation. But I do not dare to oppose myself to a unanimous choice, for I believe that God speaks by the conclusions which a number of Religious come to with one consent; as I have read in the Gospel, Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them (S. Matt. 18:20). Take courage, therefore, my dear brother; receive their promises of obedience,

and watch over them, as the shepherd of their souls. Do not fear on account of the house which you have already undertaken to rule. For I, please God, will provide for it a faithful administrator; for it is very near to me. Nor do you make any difficulty on account of the Bishop; depend upon me to arrange the matter with him.

LETTER CCCXXII. (Circa A.D. 1138.)

TO HUGO, A NOVICE, WHO AFTERWARDS BECAME ABBOT OF BONNEVAL

Bernard praises his design of becoming a Religious; he forewarns him against temptations, and exhorts him to perseverance.

To his very dear son in Christ, HUGO, who has become a new creature in Christ, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting, and desires that he may be made strong in the Lord.

1. The news of your conversion has given me joy and gladness. Why should not that be a cause of rejoicing to men, when it is so even to angels? Already the day is observed as a festival, it resounds with songs of praise and giving of thanks. A young man of high birth, delicately brought up, has overcome the enemy, despised the world, sacrificed his body, renounced the affections of his relatives, and burst the confining nets, which riches had spread around his wings. From when did you obtain this wisdom, O my son? For I do not find so great wisdom in the aged men of the world, who, according to, or rather in spite of the word of the Apostle (1 Tim. 6:9), have only one desire to be rich in this world, though they fall into temptation and into the snare of the devil. No, the wisdom of our dear Hugo is not from this world but from heaven. I confess, O Father, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise, and hast revealed it to a child. As for you, my son, be not ungrateful for the goodness of the Saviour to you. Lay aside the disposition of a child; or rather, be a child in malice, but not in wisdom (1 Cor. 14:20). Let not the austerity of our Order affright your tender age Remember that the rougher thistle makes the softer web; a severe life makes a good conscience. The sweetness of Christ shall make itself known to you, and the meal of the prophet shall render palatable the bitter and nauseous pottage (2 Kings 4:39). If you feel the piercings of temptations, look up to the brazen serpent raised upon the pole, and draw life from the wounds, or rather from the bosom of the Crucified. He shall be to you kind as a mother, and you shall be to Him clear as a son; the nails which fasten Him to the Cross shall, as it were, pierce your hands and feet as they have pierced His.

2. But a man’s enemies shall be those of his own household (Micah 7:6, and S. Matt. 10:36). They are those who really love, not you, but the enjoyment which they have from you, otherwise they would have joy to hear you say, If ye loved Me ye would rejoice, because I go to My Father (S. John 14:28). “If your father,” says S. Jerome, “lay across the threshold to prevent your passing; if your mother, dishevelled, should appeal to you by the bosom whence you were nourished; if your young nephew should hang upon your neck to stop you, trample under foot father and mother, and hasten without a tear to the banner of the Cross. The highest stretch of filial duty it is to be cruel for the sake of Christ” (epis. i. ad Heliodor.). Do not be influenced by the tears of demented relatives, who mourn to see that you, from having been a child of hell, have become a child of God. Alas! why do these unhappy people cherish an affection so violent, so cruel, and so unjust? Evil communications corrupt good manners (1 Cor. 15:33). Wherefore avoid as much as possible, my son, conversatation with guests, because these leave the mind empty and the ears full. Learn to pray to God; to lift up to Him your heart as well as your hands. Learn in all your needs to lift suppliant eyes towards heaven, and to bring upon you the pitying look of the Father of mercies. It would be an impiety to believe that God will shut up His bowels of compassion from you, and remain deaf to your groans and cries. For the rest remember that you ought to be docile to the directions of your spiritual fathers as if they were precepts from the Divine majesty. Follow that rule of conduct, and you shall have life. Follow it, and the blessing of God shall come upon you, and for every single thing which you have given up you shall receive a hundredfold, even in the present life. Distrust also the spirit that persuades you not to do this too hastily, and that this matter should be deferred to a more mature age. Rather trust Him who said, It is good for man that he should have borne the yoke from his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence because he has borne it upon him (Lam. 3:27, 28). Farewell, and study perseverance, to which virtue alone the crown is due.

LETTER CCCXXIII. (A.D. 1139.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

Bernard defends the Archbishop of Trèves against the Abbot of S. Maximin.

1. How often have I experienced, my lord, your kindly feeling and affection towards me! And now I am in hopes of having a new proof of it under the present circumstances. By no means would I dare to request anything which I

thought was contrary to the will of God and to your honour. But as I am persuaded that this petition which I am about to present to you is both reasonable and honourable, I have considerable confidence that my prayers will not return to me void, especially as my petition is to a father for his son, and to Innocent on behalf of an innocent person. It is not necessary that I should remind you in detail how faithfully the Archbishop of Trèves has loved and upheld the honour of the Apostolic See and the peace of the Roman Church from his youth; how carefully and immoveably he has adhered to it in time of tribulation, and for it has borne the burden and heat of the day while others were sitting in the shade; and how steadily and courageously he has maintained before kings and princes the defence of his brethren; for all these things are certainly present to your mind. But furthermore, to speak of what I know, and testify what I have seen, how prudently and wisely has he extricated the goods and revenues of the Church out of the hands of strangers, how kindly and liberally has he imparted from his own means for the public good, and especially for that of the servants of God; with what diligence and circumspection has he guarded his own reputation from lying lips and from the deceitful tongue!

2. What then, in him, has displeased your Paternity? Was it that he freed the Abbey of S. Maximin from the royal power and subjected it to that of the Church? or was it that he did not accept for Abbot that man who, as it is said, desired to be a general before he was a soldier; that is, to be an Abbot before he was a monk? But if it was this, or some other matter, that displeased you in him, it would have been not unworthy of a kindly Father to bear in mind the Archbishop’s affection of long standing towards him, to excuse with kindness a fault, and to let the memory of many good services win indulgence for a man who is praiseworthy in many respects, if to be blamed in a few. But now, my lord, you have lifted up the right hand of those who oppress him, and made all his enemies to rejoice. It is a subject of wonder in the eyes of many on what reputation for virtue or goodness of life a man is placed in the position to rule over souls, who has given so little heed to his own. For how can he rule others who has not known how to be ruled himself? How can he venture to be in the position of a superior, who has not himself learned to submit, or to require the obedience from others, which he himself has not rendered to those above him? If any man has not known how to rule over his own house, says the Teacher of the Gentiles, how shall he be capable of taking care of the Church of God? (1 Tim. 3:5). More than this: such as is the father, such are also the sons; have they not had the cruelty, in fact, to lacerate their mother by their favouring of dissensions

and schisms? and concerning their character and manner of life it is more decent to be silent than to say anything. But I do not make these statements as taking upon me to judge the servants of another, who stand or fall to their own loss; but because I know that if the wretched designs of those men should succeed, that young men averse to obedience will break off the yoke of discipline from their necks, so as to become wanderers and vagabonds upon the earth, according to the example given to them by these. And if their design does not wholly succeed they will be able, at least, to boast themselves that they have been able to maintain resistance to their prelates. Alas! how many persons, and those of consideration, who suppose that they have some ground to count on your protection, will find their hope and confidence altogether uprooted, if the first blast of the tempest which threatens a son once so beloved shall drive him from your heart, and from the consolation of your sympathy.

3. If, then, blessed father, there is any hearing for my entreaties with your Excellence, I respectfully beg of you, I whose affection is for yourself rather than for your favours, that you would not abandon, now when it is your day of prosperity, a man who has remained firm to you in your day of trial; and that you would not suffer his authority to be weakened in any respect; for he may reasonably hope that from you it will receive enlargement, not suffer decrease. Otherwise, if contrary to the general hope, and in spite of the merits of the man, it shall prove that strangers are allowed to rob him of the fruits of his labours, that his good deeds are repaid with evil, and his good will with hatred; he, indeed, alone, will receive a wound from a hand at which he did not expect it, but many will resent his persecution. May the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, teach you to separate the light from the darkness in all your actions, so that you may know how to reject the evil and to choose the good.

LETTER CCCXXIV. (A.D. 1139.)

TO ROBERT, ABBOT OF DUNES

Bernard suggests the thought of the future union of their souls, and also bodies, in the Resurrection, as the solace of their absence from each other.

To his brother and very dear friend, Abbot ROBERT, Brother BERNARD, of Clairvaux, sends assurance of devoted friendship.

You were late made known to me, my dear Robert, and speedily taken away. But I am consoled by this fact, that it is only in the body that we are separated, and that in soul you are always with me. Yet how could I bear even this with

resignation, if it were not in the cause of God Himself? But a time shall, shall come, when we shall be restored to each other, and when we shall each of us rejoice in the other as in himself; we shall be in each other's presence with each part of our being, nor fear to be thereafter in any way divided. He who is now the cause of our temporary separation shall be then the bond of our close union. He shall be present without ceasing to each of us, and shall render us constantly present to each other. I salute all your sons, whom I regard as mine also, and entreat that they will pray for me.

LETTER CCCXXV. (Circa A.D. 1139.)

TO THE SAME, RESPECTING THE NOVICE IDIER

Bernard advises, in answer to his inquiry, what course should be taken with a novice of difficult character, named Idier.

To his very dear brother and co-Abbot, ROBERT, of Dunes, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health.

On the subject of the religious whom you have mentioned to me, and whom you believe will be not only useless, but also a burden to the community, without speaking of secret defects, such as you suspect, I will give you such counsel as I should act on myself were I in your place. After what you have told me, it seems to me that during his probation he has shown himself neither worthy nor capable of being rendered so, and that, therefore, you are able with a good conscience to put away an evil person from among you. If, however, it pleases your charity to exalt mercy above judgment, you are able to allow him to remain in your house as long as you shall see fit, but without permitting him to take the vows. But I dissuade you most strongly from receiving him to profession whilst he is in this condition; and let him be subjected to a new probation if perchance he should show any sign of becoming that which he ought to be. If not, use resolutely your power of expulsion, so that one diseased sheep may not infect the entire flock.

LETTER CCCXXVI. (Circa A.D. 1139.)

FROM ABBOT WILLIAM TO GEOFFREY, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, AND TO BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX

Abbot William begs them to defend the cause of God and of the Church against Peter Abaelard, and cites several of his erroneous propositions.

To the Reverend Lords and Fathers in Christ, GEOFFREY, Bishop of

Chartres, and BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and prosperity.

1. I am filled with confusion before you, my lords and fathers, as God knows, by finding myself constrained to draw your attention to a subject of grave necessity, and relating to the common interest of the Church. But as you and others to whom it belongs to speak keep silence, I, though a very humble person, venture to address you. For I see the faith on which rests our common hope gravely and dangerously compromised, no one resisting or objecting; and yet Christ consecrated it for us with His Blood, and the Apostles and martyrs strove for it even until death, the holy doctors defended it with the greatest labour and industry, and handed it down even to our depraved times whole and incorrupt. I reflect on this with great regret, and am obliged by my inward distress and sorrow to speak at least a few words on behalf of that for which, if it were needful, I should wish even to lay clown my life. Nor are these attacks made on doctrines of small importance, but on the faith of the Holy Trinity, on the Person of the Mediator, the Holy Spirit, the grace of God, on the sacrament of our common redemption. For Peter Abaelard is again teaching and publishing novelties; his books cross the seas, pass the Alps; new speculations concerning the doctrines of the faith, and new dogmas are spread throughout provinces and realms, are openly preached and freely defended; it is even said that they have partisans in the Curia of Rome. I say to you that your silence is dangerous, as well for yourselves as for the Church of God. We are regarding it as a matter of no account that the Faith is being corrupted, although it is for the Faith that we have renounced our own selves, and in order that we may not be attacked we do not fear to offend God. I say to you that this evil is as yet only in process of birth; unless it be dealt with beforehand, it will burst out into a basilisk, nor will it be easy to find an enchanter who can prevail against it. Give your attention, therefore, to what I have to relate.

2. A little while ago I read by accident a certain treatise of that man, entitled, Tleologia of Peter Abaelard. I confess that the title made me curious to read it. I have two copies containing almost the same, except that the one may be a little more lengthy than the other. In it I found certain statements by which I was greatly shocked; I have taken notes of them, and subjoined my reasons for objection. These I have sent you, with the books themselves, so that you may judge whether I was right in my disapproval. And since my disapproval was founded on the unheard-of novelties of phrase which he applies to matters of faith, as well as to the novel senses which he puts upon received terms, and since I had no one to whom I might pour out my suspicions, I have found no one but

yourselves to whom I might turn, and upon whom I might call in the cause of God and of the whole Latin Church. For you even that man fears and pays respect to. If you shut your eyes, whom will he have any fear of? And since he says what he does even now, what will he not say when he has no critic to fear? Almost all of the great masters of theology have been taken from the Church by death. An enemy belonging to our own house, as it were, burst in upon the empty territory of the Church, and arrogated to himself the sole right of teaching within it. He proceeds in treating of the Holy Scripture, as he is accustomed to do in dialectics; he brings in his own devices, his recurring novelties; he makes himself a critic of the Faith, and not a disciple; an improver of it, instead of a follower.

3. These, then, are the propositions collected from his works which I have thought it advisable to submit to you:—

1. He defines Faith as an opinion about things that are not seen.

2. That the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are improper in God, but only serve for a description of the fulness of the Supreme Good.

3. That the Father is all Power; the Son, a certain Power; but the Holy Ghost, not a Power.

4. That the Holy Spirit is not of the substance of the Father and the Son, as the Son is of the substance of the Father.

5. That the Holy Spirit is the soul of the world (anima mundi).

6. That we are able both to will and to act rightly by the power of our free will alone, without the help of Divine grace.

7. That it was not in order to free us from the yoke of the devil that Christ assumed flesh and suffered death.

8. That Jesus Christ, who is God and Man, is not one of the Three Persons in the Trinity.

9. That in the Sacrament of the Altar the form of the earlier substance remains in the air.

10. That the devil inspires his suggestions into men by physical means.

11. That what we derive from Adam is not the fault of original sin, but the punishment of it.

12. That there is no sin, except in consenting to sin, and in

contempt of God.

13. That no sin is committed in concupiscence, or by delectation, or by ignorance; there is no sin in these, but only a fact of nature.

4. These are the propositions, collected out of the books of Abaelard, which I considered I ought in the first place to put under your eyes; both to arouse your zeal, and to convince you that I have not been disturbed without reason. These, and others which depend upon them, I shall attempt, with the help of Him in whose hands are both we and our discourses, to remark upon at greater length; and I shall regard it as of small account to displease you by my style, provided that I satisfy you in the statement of my faith. I hope, too, if I can by any means show that I have rightly formed an unfavourable opinion of these propositions, to carry you also with me in so doing; so that you will not shrink from sacrificing, in order to save the head, if need be, the foot (as we may call that man), the hand, or even the eye. For I have both loved him, and would wish still to love him, God is my witness; but in this cause no one shall ever [gain partiality from me as being] neighbour or friend. Now that the evil has become so patent, and presses itself upon public notice, it is no longer a question of private warning or correction. For there are, as I hear, some other treatises of his besides, of which the names are Sic et Non, Scito te ipsum, and some others, about which I fear that their doctrines may be as monstrous as their titles are strange; but, as I am told, they hate the light, and cannot be found even when sought for.

But to return to our subject … etc.

LETTER CCCXXVII. (Circa A.D. 1139.)

REPLY OF BERNARD TO ABBOT WILLIAM

Bernard praises the treatise written against Peter Abaelard, and promises to confer with him after Easter.

To his very dear WILLIAM, Brother BERNARD.

In my judgment, your indignation was both just and necessary. And your treatise, which refutes and belabours the mouth of them who speak unrighteousness, shows that it is not an empty indignation either. I have not yet had the time to read it with the attention that you require, but have only run through it in haste; nevertheless, I like it much, and think it a powerful instrument for the destruction of that unhappy teaching. But as you well know, I do not rely entirely on my own judgment, especially in such weighty matters;

and I think it will be worth while, when a time of meeting can be arranged, for you and me to meet at some convenient place and discuss all these matters. I think this cannot be done before Easter, if we are to give ourselves without distraction to earnest prayer, as this holy time requires. For the present, then, suffer me to keep silence still for a while upon all these questions, of which the greater number, not to say all, are entirely new to me. But God is able in His great power to bestow upon me the wisdom and the light which you shall ask for me in your prayers. Farewell.

LETTER CCCXXVIII. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE ROMAN PONTIFF

Against the person elected Bishop of Rodez.

Hitherto I have not hesitated to write to you in season and out of season, at the request of my friends: but now, the interests of the Christian religion would forbid me to be silent, even if I wished to be so. Cursed be he, says the Prophet, who keepeth back his sword from blood (Jer. 48:10) [when he ought to strike]. To-day malice is profiting, the desires of evil men prosper, and there is no one to oppose them, no one who rises up to defend the rampart of the house of Israel. Even in your days most corrupt men have made violent efforts to climb up into the most holy places: they have stricken hands with death, and made a covenant with hell. Why then this patience? The clergy of Rodez have elected a man for Bishop who is consentient with their vices; and have not been ashamed, it is said, to conceal the truth even from your eyes, both as to the business of the election and as to the person elected. That man, chosen not by God, but by men, has many witnesses of the infamous life he has led, none at all of his repentance and change of life; and in plain fact, it is more decent to be silent concerning him than to speak. God forbid that such wicked men should, under your pontificate, be promoted, and that one should be set for a shepherd of souls, who values at nought the shedding of the blood of Christ, and the price of his own soul’s redemption. What to them is a cunning insinuation of injury and suppression of their appeal, if they can thus ingratiate themselves with the Curia, and interest them in their cause? Do not believe the word of falsehood: for, according to the statement of people of veracity, as there was no appeal, so no suppression of it could have followed. It is important that you should sanction with the weight of your authority what the Bishop has done at the advice of the Religious. I wish at the same time to commend more and more the same Archbishop to you: and I

should neither wish to ask this, nor to be heard by you, if he was not one who respects and discharges diligently his function.

LETTER CCCXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE BISHOP OF LIMOGES

Against the same person, who had been elected to the See of Rodez.

The words which I shall speak to you, I speak not in my own behalf, nor in them do I seek any advantage of my own. The life of man is very short: as long as you are Bishop of Limoges, strive to do honour to your office, by letting us see your good works. I have the consolation of knowing that you have been entrusted by his lordship, the Pope, with the matter of the election of the Bishop of Cahors with full power to decide it canonically without appeal. See, then, what an opportunity you have in this to manifest to the Church how wise a course has been taken by the Pontiff; an opportunity that will be realized if only there is in you the fear of God, a love of justice, and a strict adherence to the canons. As to the Church of Rodez, there is a question debated—whether that church shall receive a true pastor, a Bishop of souls, a successor to Christ, one, I say, who shall raise up offspring to his brother deceased. Who shall be regarded as lit for this? Shall it be one whom his life has defiled, whom his own conscience accuses, whose reputation is a scandal?—a man who has sunk from abbey to abbey, or rather from one depth to another, and who has not scrupled to violate the virgins to whom he had himself given the veil? Would that be taking heed of the precept of the Apostle, A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God (Tit. 1:7). Do not, then, act in contradiction with yourself, saying one thing and doing another, but let your actions respond constantly to your words, so that the words may not be applied to you, Their own tongues shall be turned against them (Ps. 64:8). See, the matter is in your hand. But keep your own soul free from stains, nor make yourself liable for the offences of another. With you it will rest to uphold or to annul his election; but in taking the latter course you will make your hands holy to the Lord.

LETTER CCCXXX. (A.D. 1140.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

Against Peter Abaelard.

To his very dear father and lord INNOCENT, BERNARD, called Abbot of

Clairvaux, sends humble homage.

The Spouse of Christ weeps bitterly in the night. Her cheeks are bedewed with tears, and there is not one to console her of those to whom she is dear. That Shunammite, my lord, is committed to your care during the days of her pilgrimage, and while her Spouse delays His coming. To no one will she confide her injuries and her troubles so unreservedly as to the friend of her Spouse. Because you love Him you are always prepared to listen to her complaints in time of trouble. And among all the various kinds of enemies with whom the Church is surrounded, as a city among thorns, there are none whose attacks are more persistent and more dangerous than those whom she has borne in her bosom and nourished at her breast. It is they, and such as they, who have drawn forth the exceeding bitter cry, My lovers and my friends draw near and stand against me to take away my life (Ps. 39:11, 12). There is none more powerful to injure than an enemy of our own household. We may judge of this from the treacherous attachment of Absalom, and from the kiss of Judas. Other foundation for our faith can no man lay than that which is laid (1 Cor. 3:11). Now in France there is being fabricated a new faith which does not look at virtues and vices from the point of view of morals, at Sacraments with the eye of faith, which reasons about the Holy Trinity itself in a way far from simple or reverent, and arrives at conclusions other than the truth we have received. Magister Peter and Arnold, of whose evil influence you have cleared Italy, have Stood up and taken counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed. Scale is joined to scale, so that not a breath can come between them. They are corrupt, and become abominable in their pursuits. With the leaven of their corruption they corrupt the faith of the simple, pervert the rules of morals, and soil the whiteness of the Church’s robe. Like him who changes himself into the similitude of an angel of light, they have a form of piety, but without its power. They are adorned like a decorated sanctuary that they may privily shoot at them that are of a right disposition. Scarcely have we ceased to hear the roaring of Peter Leonis occupying the seat of Simon Peter than we are threatened by Peter the dragon assailing the faith of Simon Peter. The one persecuted the Church of God openly, as a ravening lion, but the other, as a dragon, lurks in hiding places that he may murder the innocent. But Thou, Lord God, will bring down the high looks of the proud; Thou wilt tread under Thy feet both lion and dragon. The one did evil as long as he lived, but death put an end to his malice; but the other, committing his new dogmas to writing, provides for the transmission of his poison to future generations. In short, to describe this theologian in few words,

he distinguishes with Arius degrees and inequalities in the Trinity; with Pelagius he prefers free will to grace; with Nestorius he divides Christ in excluding His humanity from union with the Trinity. But in all these things he boasts that he has opened the fountains of knowledge to the cardinals and ecclesiastics of the Curia; that his books are in the hands of the Romans, his maxims in their hearts, so that he takes those by whom he ought to be judged and condemned to be the protectors of his error. With what intention, with what effrontery can you [I ask him], who art the persecutor of the faith, appeal to the protection of its defender, and with what unabashed boldness can you, the insulter of the Church, dare to look in the face the friend of the Church's Bridegroom? If the care of my brethren and the weak state of my health did not keep me here, how greatly should I wish to behold the friend of the Bridegroom exerting himself zealously in defence of the Church, in the absence of her Spouse! Can I possibly endure the wounds of the Church when I could not bear in silence the injuries done to my lord [the Pope]? Do thou, then, most dear father, cease to withhold thy help from her. Rise up in her defence; gird thee with thy sword. For already, through the overflowing of iniquity, the love of many waxes cold, and unless you put to your hand I foresee the day when the Spouse of Christ will go forth and follow strange paths, and be led astray by false pastors.

LETTER CCCXXXI. (A.D. 1140.)

TO CARDINAL STEPHEN, BISHOP OF PALESTRINA

On the Same Subject.

To the venerable lord and very dear father S …, by the grace of God Bishop of Palestrina, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and that he may be strengthened to act firmly in the Lord.

I impart to you the distresses and complaints of the Spouse of Christ with the more confidence, because I am well aware that you are the friend of the Bridegroom, and rejoice greatly because of his voice. If I have rightly known your inward disposition, I am confident that the Lord may count on you, since you seek not your own interests, but those of Jesus Christ.

The life, the character, and the books already published of Peter Abaelard show him to be a persecutor of the Catholic faith and the enemy of the cross of Christ. He is a monk in outward appearance, but within he is a heretic, having nothing of the monk beyond the name and the habit. He opens the old cisterns and the dried-up pools of the heretics that the ox and the ass may fall therein. He

had been long silent, but while he kept silence in Brittany he conceived sorrow, and now in France he has brought forth iniquity. The serpent of many coils has come forth from his cavern, and, like the Hydra, produces seven heads for one that has been struck off. A single one was lopped off, a single heresy of that man, at Soissons, but in its place seven, or it may be more, heresies have appeared, of which I have and send you a copy. Scarcely has he separated his young and unskilled scholars from the rudiments of dialectic than he introduces them, who are as yet barely able to comprehend the first elements of the faith, to the mystery of the holy Trinity, the holy of holies, the very chamber of the King, and even to Him who makes darkness His dwelling-place. In short, our new theologian distinguishes with Arius degrees and inequalities in the Trinity, with Pelagius prefers free will to grace, with Nestorius he divides Christ in excluding His Humanity from union with the Trinity. Proceeding thus through almost all the Sacraments and sacred doctrines, he touches on each with the utmost boldness, and treats each in a most blameable manner. Besides this, he boasts that he has imbued the Curia at Rome with the infection of his novelties; that his books and his opinions have made their way into the hands and the minds of Romans, and that those by whom he ought to be judged and condemned are the protectors of his erroneous teaching. May God keep guard over His Church, for which He gave His life, so as to present her to Himself without spot or wrinkle; and may He so order that perpetual silence may be imposed upon that man, whose mouth is filled only with cursing, and bitterness, and woe.

LETTER CCCXXXII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO CARDINAL G …

Also against Peter Abaelard.

To the venerable lord and most dear father G …, Cardinal of the holy Roman Church, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, desires the spirit of counsel and might.

I cannot hold my peace respecting the injuries done to Christ, the difficulties and troubles of the Church, the misery and complaints of the poor. We are fallen upon perilous times. We have doctors prone to flattery, and scholars who close their ears to the truth and turn aside unto fables. We have in France Peter Abaelard, a monk, who lives without rule; a prelate, who has no spiritual charge; an abbot without an abbey, who disputes with boys and converses with women. In his books he provides for his followers secret waters and bread eaten in secret, while in his oral discourses he leads them to profane novelties of phrase and of

meaning. He approaches to the thick darkness in which God is, not alone, as did Moses, but with the numerous crowd of his disciples. Along the streets and in the open spaces people dispute about the Catholic Faith, about the childbearing of the Virgin, about the Sacrament of the Altar, about the incomprehensible mystery of the holy Trinity. We have ceased to hear the roaring of Peter Leonis only to hear the hissing of Peter Draconis. But thou, O Lord Jesu, shalt bring down the high looks of the proud, Thou shalt tread under foot both lion and dragon. The one did harm but as long as he lived, and when his life ended, so did his mischief, but the other is making provision for preserving his poison to the harm of generations yet to come. He has put upon record with pen and ink his poisonous novelties; I have procured his books, and send them to you that you may judge of the author from his works. You will see that this theologian distinguishes with Arias grades and inequalities in the Trinity, that with Pelagius he prefers free will to grace, that with Nestorius he divides Christ in excluding His Humanity from the Trinity. These are but a few things out of many. Will there be no one among you who laments this attack upon Christ, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity? If the mouth that speaks perverse things be not stopped, let Him see to it and judge, who alone considers our distress and trouble.

LETTER CCCXXXIII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO CARDINAL G …

To his venerable friend G …, Cardinal-deacon under the title of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and joy.

It used to be your custom to rise before me as often as I entered the Curia, and I trust that you will do so now. Do not think that I am merely in joke, for there is a serious matter to be decided. At this very moment I present myself before the Curia, if not in person, at least in the cause which is referred thither. As you were accustomed to rise to greet me, so rise to greet my cause, or rather, that of Christ; for it is His, and it is His truth which is in question. Rise, or rather start up in wrath, against the man who disputes about the faith in order to destroy the faith, and contradicts the law in words of the law; whose hand is against every man, and the hands of all against him. This is Peter Abaelard, who writes, dogmatizes, and disputes, deciding exactly as he pleases, upon morals, upon the Sacraments, yea, concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. After having disturbed and troubled the Church, he presents himself before the Curia, not to offer excuses for his errors, but to defend them. If you are a true son of the Church, defend her now who has borne you and nourished.

LETTER CCCXXXIV. (A.D. 1140.)

TO GUY, OF PISA

Against the same Abaelard.

To GUY, Abbot of Pisa, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes a sound mind in a sound body.

I know that you have so much affection for me (as I for you) that I should with great confidence entrust to you my dearest interests; but it is with more confidence still that I entrust to you those of Jesus Christ, who is to be loved far more than 1. The cause is Christ’s, since Christ Himself is in question, and the truth is in peril. The garments of Christ are being divided, when the Sacraments of the Church are rent in pieces; but His seamless robe is entire, which is woven from the top throughout. For this tunic is the unity of the Church, which does not admit of cutting or division. Man is not capable of dividing that which has been compacted from above, and made firm by the Holy Spirit. Though heretics sharpen their tongues like serpents, though they arm themselves with the

sharpest weapons of the intellect, in order that they may disturb the peace of the Church; yet though they are the gates of hell, they shall not prevail against her. If you are truly her son, if you recognize the bosom which bore you, do not desert your mother in her peril, do not withdraw your support in the time of tribulation. Magister Peter has recourse to the Curia, that the authority of the Apostolic See may serve him as a wall and a rampart to protect the errors which he has taught and written, and in which he has impugned the Catholic Faith.

LETTER CCCXXXV. (A.D. 1140)

TO A CERTAIN CARDINAL PRESBYTER

Also against Peter Abelard.

To the CARDINAL PRESBYTER, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and happiness in the Lord.

Let no one despise your youth. It is not white hairs nor weight of years that is required by the Lord, but maturity of mind and a blameless life. Neither Jeremiah nor Daniel feared nor trembled, though both of them were young men, before old men disgraced by vice, though heavy with the weight of ill-spent days. And I might rightly, perhaps, treat as disgraced that man, who tried to corrupt the beauty of the Church, and to stain the purity of the Faith. That is Peter Abaelard, who disputes and defines as he chooses, and differently from accepted tradition, upon matters of faith, upon the Sacraments, and the mystery of the holy Trinity. Now, after having disturbed the Church and thrown it into confusion, he presents himself to the Curia, not that he may make amends for the mischief he has done, but because he relies upon the crafty subterfuges that he has at his command to conceal his errors. It is now that those who know themselves to be the Church’s sons will stand firmly in her defence.

LETTER CCCXXXVI. (A.D. 1140.)

TO A CERTAIN ABBOT

On the Same Subject.

To his very dear brother and co-Abbot, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes a zeal for the Lord according to knowledge.

It must needs be that offences come, so that those who are approved may be made manifest. If any one is the Lord’s servant, let him take the Lord’s side, for His cause is now in question. The truth is attacked; the vestments of Christ are

torn in pieces, the Sacraments of the Church divided. From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, the well-being of the Church is compromised, and the simple faith of believers ridiculed; the lion is on the point of arising from his lair against the Church that he may make a prey of the nations. Already Peter Abaelard goes before Antichrist to prepare his ways, speaking differently from tradition with respect to matters of faith, of the Sacraments, and of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He writes, teaches, and disputes; and his words tend to the subversion of the hearers. With Arius he distinguishes degrees and inequalities in the Trinity; with Pelagius he prefers free will to grace; with Nestorius he divides Christ, by excluding His Humanity from the fellowship of the Trinity. But in all these things he boasts that he has won over the Roman Church to his side; that the Romans have received his books and his opinions into their hands and hearts; and that those by whom he ought to be judged and condemned have taken upon them his defence. May the Lord look upon it, and judge, if the mouth of that man who speaketh unrighteousness be not speedily closed. The bearer of this will explain to you the details at greater length.

LETTER CCCXXXVII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO POPE INNOCENT, IN THE NAME OF THE BISHOPS OF FRANCE

The Bishops of Gaul explain to the Pontiff what had been done in the case of Peter Abaelard, who had challenged Bernard to a discussion in Synod; but being unwilling to make answer to the specific charges of heresy made against him, had appealed to the Apostolic See.

To the most reverend father and lord INNOCENT, by the grace of God supreme Pontiff, HENRY, Archbishop of Sens, GEOFFREY, Bishop of Chartres, and servant of the holy apostolic See, ELIAS, Bishop of Orleans, HUGO, Bishop of Auxerre, ATTO, Bishop of Troyes, MANASSES, Bishop of Meaux, send the assurance of their earnest prayers and due obedience.

1. As it is certain that those things which are established by the Apostolic authority are considered settled, so that they cannot be interfered with or altered by the objections or bad motives of any one, we have thought it proper, most holy Father, to make you aware of all that took place at our meeting lately, in order that your Serenity may deign to approve and permanently confirm by your judgment and authority what we, with the help of many pious and learned persons, have thought fit to do. Therefore, since throughout almost the whole of France, in towns, villages, and castles, by scholars not only within the schools,

but in the roads and public places, disputes are carried on about the holy Trinity and the Nature of God; and that not only among learned or passably instructed persons, but among children even and simple and ignorant persons; and besides all this, many propositions are put forth by these disputants, not less contrary to reason than to the Catholic Faith, and to the doctrine of the holy Fathers; and since, though frequently warned by those who thought more justly on these matters that they should lay aside those foolish fancies (ineptias), those persons showed themselves more ardent still; and, relying on the authority of their master, Peter Abaelard, and especially upon his book entitled Theologia, as also of other treatises of his of a similar kind, persisted more and more in sustaining and defending these dangerous novelties, to the detriment of many souls; we, though distressed and alarmed, as were many others, at this state of things, were fearful to meddle with these [difficult] questions.

2. But the lord Abbot of Clairvaux, who had frequently heard from various persons of these matters, happened also to meet with a copy of the previously mentioned book of Magister Peter, called his Theologia, and of other books of his, and having read them attentively, thought it incumbent on him to meet the author, and to admonish him, at first in private, and then, according to the precept of the Gospel taking with him two or three witnesses, invited him in a kind and friendly manner both to restrain his hearers from occupying themselves with such questions, and also that he should correct his books. Many of his scholars, also, the Abbot exhorted to cease from reading, and to reject those writings full of poison; also to refrain from, and be on their guard, against doctrine which injured the Catholic faith. Magister Peter was enraged at this, and scarcely able to restrain his anger; nor did he desist from frequent demands until we had written to the Abbot of Clairvaux upon the matter, and fixed a day, viz., that of the octave of Pentecost, on which he should appear before us at Sens. Thither Magister Peter professed himself willing to come prepared to defend and prove the propositions which the Abbot had as aforesaid blamed as partaking of heresy. But the Abbot on his side would neither promise to appear on the appointed day, nor to accept the argument before us against Peter. But as in the interval the latter had begun nevertheless to call together his followers from all sides, and to entreat them to be present at the disputation which was about to take place between himself and the Abbot of Clairvaux, so as by their presence to support his opinions and his system; the Abbot, to whom this became known, fearing that his absence might be made an occasion for unthinking persons as well as for the partisans of error, to regard all the opinions, or rather all the

fancies of their master as being more certain than they really were; and touched with the fervour of a holy zeal, or rather kindled by the fire of the Holy Spirit, presented himself before us on the very day which had been named to him, although he had not at all engaged to do so On that day, in fact, being the octave of Pentecost, all our brethren the Suffragan Bishops of our province had assembled to us in the town of Sens to contribute by their presence to the honour and reverence paid to the holy relics, of which we proposed to make an exposition to the people in our cathedral church.

3. In the presence, then, of the glorious King of France, Louis, of the pious William, Count of Nevers, of the lord Archbishop of Rheims with certain of his suffragans, of us also and all our suffragans, except those of Paris and Nevers, of a great number of Abbots as pious as wise, and of clergy well instructed, the lord Abbot of Clairvaux and Magister Peter, with his supporters, respectively appeared. To speak briefly, the lord Abbot brought before us the book Theologia, written by Magister Peter, and pointed out from this book various propositions, which he stigmatized as absurd, or even as plainly heretical, in order that Magister Peter might either deny that he had written them, or, if he accepted the authorship, might either justify or correct them. But Magister Peter appeared to be at a loss what to do; and, in order to make a way of escape, refused to reply, although he had a free hearing given to him, a safe place, and impartial judges; but appealing to your hearing in person, most holy Father, he left the assembly with all his supporters.

4. But we, although that appeal seemed to us not canonical, yet out of respect to the Apostolic See, we abstained from pronouncing any judgment against him personally. But as to his errors in doctrine, which had infected many, and had penetrated into the deepest recesses of not a few hearts, we had condemned them the day before Abaelard made his appeal, after having read and reread them in public audience, and having heard them plainly and undoubtedly proved to be heretical, both by convincing reasonings and by authorities cited from S. Augustine and other Fathers by the Abbot of Clairvaux. And because they draw many to most hurtful and evidently destructive error, we beg, most just Father, unanimously and with the utmost earnestness, that you would condemn with a perpetual judgment, by your authority, both them and all persons who obstinately and contentiously maintain them. And as for the before-mentioned Peter, if your Reverence would impose silence upon him, would suspend altogether his powers of lecturing and writing, and would condemn his books as being without doubt filled with erroneous teaching, you would thus root up the

thorns and briars from the field of the Church, and would enable a joyful harvest to increase in flower and fruit for Christ. We transmit to you, Reverend Father, the list of certain propositions which we have condemned, that by these extracts you may the more easily form an idea of the remainder of the work.

LETTER CCCXXXVIII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO HAIMERIC, CARDINAL AND CHANCELLOR

He urges that Peter Abaelard, having been convicted of heresy, ought not to find the abodes of the Cardinals and the Roman Curia open to him as a refuge.

To his illustrious and very intimate friend HAIMERIC, Cardinal-deacon and Chancellor of the holy Roman Church, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, desires that he may act wisely before God and before men.

1. I have both heard of the opinions of Magister Peter Abaelard, and I have seen his books. I have remarked his words, I have taken note of the hidden senses (mysteria) of them, and found them to be mysteries of iniquity. This divine contradicts the Law in the very words of the Law. He casts that which is holy to the dogs, and pearls before swine; he corrupts the faith of the simple, defiles the purity of the Church. It is said that “the vase will long preserve the odour with which it has once been imbued.” His book had passed through the fire, and was brought into a place of refreshment. The enemy of the Church reposes in the bosom of the Church, the persecutor of the faith finds in it an asylum. He was utterly conquered. Let him not rise again (it is said) who has invaded the couch of his father and defiled it! Now that man has dishonoured the Church, and infected with his vices the minds of the simple. He endeavours to scrutinize by the light of his reason alone, the mysteries which are apprehended by the pious mind only by the intuition of faith: the faith of the pious, which believes and does not discuss. But that man holds even God in suspicion, nor is willing to believe anything unless he shall have first considered it by reason. Though the Prophet says, If you will not believe, ye shall not understand (Is. 7:9, lxx. version), that man blames spontaneous faith as mere credulity, making an ill use of that saying of Solomon: He that is hasty to give credit is light-minded (Ecclus. 19:4). He blames, then, the B.V. Mary for believing without hesitation the word of the angel which announced to her: Behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a Son (S. Luke 1:31). Let him blame also him who at the last hour, almost the last moment, of life, believed the words spoken to him by One who was dying likewise: To-day thou shall be with Me in Paradise (S. Luke 23:43); and

let him reserve his praise for those, the hardness of whose hearts merited the reproach spoken of them: O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken (S. Luke 24:25), and commend also the slowness of belief in him, to whom it was said: Because thou hast not believed My words, thou shall be dumb and not able to speak (S. Luke 1:20).

2. Finally, in order to abbreviate a multitude of observations into the strait limits of a letter, I will say shortly, that this admirable Doctor with Arius distinguishes degrees and inequalities in the Trinity; with Pelagius prefers free will to grace; with Nestorius divides Christ by excluding His Humanity from the fellowship of the Trinity. But in all these matters he boasts that he has opened the fountains of knowledge to the Cardinals and ecclesiastics of the. Curia; that his books are in the hands, and his opinions in the minds, of the Romans; and he relies on those persons, by whom he ought to be judged and condemned, being a protection to him. Hyacinth has shown me much ill-will, but has done me no harm; simply because he was unable. This I endure with equanimity, since he spares not Rome, nor the Curia, nor even the person of the Pope. What else I have seen and heard, my dear Nicholas, who is equally devoted to you as to me, will tell you better by word of mouth.

LETTER CCCXXXIX. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO POPE INNOCENT

Bernard maintains the innocence of Alvisus, Bishop of Arras, against his calumniators.

To his very dear father and lord, INNOCENT, by the grace of God supreme Pontiff, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, offers respectful homage.

It is a thing neither new nor wonderful that the mind of man should be able to be both deceived and deceiving. But as this is a double evil, and each part of it has to be guarded against, the Angel of great wisdom has suggested to you a safeguard against either danger, when he says, Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (S. Matt. 10:16). Prudence will prevent your being deceived, and simplicity will prevent your deceiving others. The monks of Marchiennes have come to present themselves before you, in a spirit of falseness and error, against the Lord, and against His anointed. They have made a false accusation against the Bishop of Arras, whose life and conversation is in good report in every place. Who are they, to bite reputations as dogs, who call good evil, and give light the name of darkness? Who are they, who against the law curse the

deaf and put a stumbling block before the blind? (Lev. 19:14). Wherefore, my lord, are you angry with your son and do you give joy and gladness to his enemies? Have you forgotten that warning of the Apostle, Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God (1 S. John 4:1). I trust in the Lord, that He will confound their projects: and by making the truth appear, put falsehood to flight, and turn their deception against themselves. I have heard with my own ears how faithfully and firmly he spoke in defence of the Roman Church in the presence of the King and his nobles. He proposes, in the innocence of his heart, to go on the day when he is summoned, to present himself before you: but in the meantime, he has sent before him his Archdeacon, who is the bearer of this letter, and whose person and character I commend to your kindness.

I learn also that the Abbot of S. Vedast is coming to have an interview with you: he is one who is an enemy to himself, and no less to his Religious and to his Abbey: he has undertaken only the bare name of Abbot, since he seeks his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. As for the Religious G—, who accompanies him, all that can be said is that he is a worthy son of such a father: he spares neither his reputation nor his conscience; so that he is become the derision of his entire neighbourhood. May the Spirit of truth grant you to divide the light from the darkness, to advance the good and to repress the evil.

LETTER CCCXL. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO THE SAME POPE INNOCENT

On behalf of the Bishop of Angers.

To his very dear father and lord, INNOCENT, by the grace of God supreme Pontiff, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, sends his respectful homage.

The Bishop of Angers is worn out by his age as also by the labours and perils he has endured: who can look upon him with an indifferent eye, that is not destitute of sensibility, and even of any human feeling? As for me, I am not able, without feeling myself deeply moved, to look at this aged man, to whom but a single reproach could be addressed, whose life and whose learning render him venerable. I am ignorant of what has passed between him and the Abbey with which he is at variance, and I do not presume to write anything respecting a matter I am not acquainted with. But if it shall appear that he has fulfilled his engagements, I suppose that there is no other course to be taken than to restore him to your favour and to the exercise of his functions.

LETTER CCCXLI. (Circa A.D. 1140.)

TO MALACHI, ARCHBISHOP OF IRELAND

Bernard receives with thanks the letter and the staff, and welcomes the monks sent by him. He recommends Malachi to have an abode prepared ft for Religious: and commends himself to his prayers.

To the venerable lord and most blessed father MALACHI, by the grace of God Archbishop of the Irish and Legate of the Apostolic See, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, desires that he may find grace in the Lord.

1. Among the multitude of my anxieties and heartfelt cares, which distract my mind by their multitude, the brethren which have come to me from a distant land, in order that they may [learn to] serve the Lord, your letter, and the staff which you have sent me, have consoled me much: the letter as a pledge of your kindly feeling towards me; the staff to sustain my body, which is bowed down by infirmity; the brethren to serve God in the spirit of humility. All I have accepted with pleasure; all equally work together for good. As to your desire that I should send you two Religious to assist you in choosing a fit place of settlement, I have thought it expedient not to send you these before the others, but to wait until Christ be more fully formed in them, until they shall be entirely equipped for the wars of the Lord. When then they shall have become instructed in the school of the Holy Ghost and endued with virtue from on high, then at length your sons shall return to their father, that they may sing the Lord’s song in their own land, and not any longer in a foreign country.

2. In the meantime do you, according to the wisdom which has been bestowed upon you by the Lord, make choice of a place of settlement for them, separated from the tumults of the world, according to the principles of choice which you have seen acted upon with us. For the time is at hand when, with the grace of God helping, I shall be able to send you back new men, instead of those clothed with the old man whom you entrusted to me. May the Lord be blessed for ever, of whose gift it comes that your sons have become also mine; and that from the trees planted by your preaching and watered by my exhortation, God has given increase. I pray your Holiness to apply yourself to the preaching of the Word of God, that you may give to your flock the knowledge of salvation. You lie under a twofold obligation to do this; from your quality as Bishop, and your delegation from the Holy See. For the rest, since in many things we offend all (S. James 3:2), and being placed among men of this world, we frequently contract much of

the dust of the world; I commend myself to your prayers and those of your brethren, that Jesus Christ, who is Himself the fountain of holiness, who once said to Peter, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me (S. John 13:8), would deign to wash me, and to cleanse me in the waters of His mercy. And, indeed, I not only earnestly entreat this of you, but require it as in some sense the payment of a debt, since I do not cease to call upon the Lord for you, if the prayer of a sinner is of any avail. Farewell in the Lord.

LETTER CCCXLII. (A.D. 1140.)

TO JOSCELYN, BISHOP OF SOISSONS

Bernard begs him to appease the King, who was displeased with the Archbishop of Bordeaux.

To the venerable lord and very dear father, JOSCELYN, by the grace of God Bishop of Soissons, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting, and desires that he may find grace with the Lord.

1. It is an injury to the Realm and the nobles of it if the plans of the King are proclaimed of his own hasty motion, and made public without mature consideration. But it pleases me much to see that the King trusts you, and confides in you; for I know that you are zealous for the Sovereign and the realm with a godly zeal, and I know also that you have the qualities of a good adviser for him. Both order and reason require, in fact, that in a Royal counsellor should be united in a similar degree devotedness and prudence. Everything depends upon this for him; with these two qualities he cannot fail to be a sound adviser and to direct with wisdom the enterprises of the King. But if either his devotedness makes default in prudence, or his prudence in devotedness, when he performs his duty as counsellor, then woe to the land whose King shall be a child! May my soul never come into the counsel of those who, either though they love me, are not prudent; or being prudent, love me not. For so Adam, that unhappy one, fell from his rights of immortality, for having yielded to the counsel of the sinful; of Eve who, though she loved him, was not prudent; and of the serpent, who was prudent, but loved him not.

2. Why is it that my lord the King endeavours to draw the Archbishop of Bordeaux into a dispute without any reason? Is that done by your advice? May God keep you from doing such a thing, and me from thinking it possible. For what harm has that man done? Is it that he consecrated, according as he was free to do, by the Canons, a Bishop elected by those of Poictiers with a unanimous

voice, without opposition? or that he did not snatch from the poor and from the Churches of Poictiers, from the mouths of the hungry, so to speak, the money which a dying man had left them? Lo, their blood is required at his hand. If it is a fault to have given a pastor to wandering sheep, to have refrained from despoiling the widow and the orphan, to have maintained intact the privileges of the Apostolic See, then he cannot be accused. O, ill-judged judgment, in which righteousness is taken for wrong and innocence is counted as guilt! Look to yourselves, you who are Bishops.

Your interests are in question when your neighbour's wall takes fire (Horace, Epist. i. 18, 84).

3. However this may be, since you, my lord, approach the King more nearly than others, and you count for much in the transaction of his business, it is your duty to use all your influence with the King on behalf of your brethren, so that his anger should not be altogether inflamed. I declare to you that you have to do with a resolute man, powerful in speech and action, who will not readily be driven from his right. He enjoys great influence in that district. If there should be any dispute, many would side with him in his grievances. See, then, to it, that no one throws oil on the fire. Let the flame be extinguished before it has had time to light up a conflagration:

For it is too late to use a remedy when by long delays the disease has grown strong (Ovid, de Remed. Amor. 91, 92).

LETTER CCCXLIII. (A.D. 1140.)

FROM ABBOT BERNARD, OF ITALY, TO POPE INNOCENT

He complains that in the Abbey of S. Saviour all things are not as the Pope had promised.

To the dearly-beloved and longed-for father, INNOCENT, by the grace of God supreme Pontiff, his servant BERNARD sends greeting and the prayers of the poor.

I am in deep perplexity; for on the one side modesty requires me to be silent, and on the other necessity obliges me to speak. I shall speak, therefore, to my lord, I who am but dust and ashes; but I shall speak in the bitterness of my soul. I complain, my lord, of you, but it is to yourself; my complaint is made in strict secrecy, but the cause of my complaint is only too manifest. I did as you commanded; I came to the monastery of S. Saviour, as you bade in your letter to your servant, our father. What has become now of your promises and of my

hopes? I have passed through fire and through water; and unless the Lord had helped me, the water would perhaps have swallowed me up. I have been afflicted by dangers of waters and of robbers, in cities, in solitude, on the land and in the sea; nor was there any to help me. All these things came upon me: nor was even then the end. By your letter, my lord, I was drawn from the bosom of my father, and, at your mere bidding, leaving my father and my brethren, I hastened to obey your will. By your letter I was torn from the bosom of my mother, and deprived of her consolations: driven forth from an abode of happiness; and that I might not return thither, you, my lord, have opposed to me a flaming sword, which turns every way. My crown has fallen from my head, and my songs of gladness have turned to lamentation. How could I, my lord, sing the Lord's song in a strange land? How much more sweetly and safely did my soul rejoice herself in the abode and bosom of my mother? Now, I so run as one in uncertainty; I so fight as one that beateth the air: but for this, my lord, your promise is to blame, which I believe to be full of grace and truth. But now, since the winter has departed and the bad season is over, if it shall please my lord, allow me to leave this place, and to seek where I may find rest for my feet: since hitherto snow and hail, ice and storms have prevented my so doing. It seems most cruel and most inhuman to deprive of his wish him who loved me before he knew me, who has shown himself to me a father so tender that he would have torn out his own eyes and given them to me had it been possible. My King and my God, whose kingdom was not of this world, had not where to lay His head: would that the world would drive us out also and oblige us to wander in deserts, in mountains, in caves, and dens of the earth!

LETTER CCCXLIV. (A.D. 1140.)

FROM THE SAME BERNARD TO SAINT BERNARD

He complains of the Prelature which had been forced upon him.

To the venerable lord and dearly-loved P—,Abbot of Clairvaux, his son B— sends greeting, and prays that he may have the unction which teaches all things.

As often as I recall that day of misery and calamity, on which I was torn from your consoling bosom, I am more inclined to weep than to write anything. If the eloquence of my prayers equalled the abundance of my tears, I should easily be able to make you realize how miserable and deserted I am. When I apply my mind to reflecting upon it, and my hand to the pen, my grief is renewed. The extreme bitterness of my soul returns to me as I write; and I am troubled by the

remembrance of that unhappy day, on which my foolish and unworthy self was placed in a position of eminence. I do not, my lord, blame your action, nor the motive of your action, which is believed to have been pointed out by the finger of God; but I lament a little the unhappiness of my lot. For, behold, after I was driven away from the sight of thine eyes, my life was worn away in grief, and my days in mourning. Woe is me! I have lost sight of the pattern on which I tried to fashion myself, the mirror of what I ought to be, the light of my eyes! No longer does that sweet voice sound in my ears, nor that kindly and pleasant face, which used to blush at my faults, appear before my eyes. Wherefore, my lord, has my hope been frustrated, and the desire of my heart denied me? My life has been cut off as the thread of an unfinished web, and broken off short as a plant yet shooting up. That unhappy sentiment is fulfilled in me which you quoted upon the Song of Songs, and which I now read in the book of experience, Man, being in honour, hath no understanding (Ps. 49:12). For I did not sufficiently understand when I was in Clairvaux that I was in a place of happiness among the trees of Paradise, and therefore I held that Delectable Land as of no account. I ask of you, my lord, why you thought fit to determine this lot for me, why you set me as a leader and a teacher of others, and a chief over your people? Was it my career in the world? But that was foul. Was it my life in the cloister? But that was lukewarm and backward. Why, then, when I was little in mine own eyes, have I been made the head of a tribe in Israel? Wherefore, when I was not myself clean from secret sins, have you not spared to make your servant responsible for those of others? What can a man do whom sorrow for the past renders unhappy, the responsibilities of the present weigh down, and the thought of the future renders fearful? Overburdened with grief and affliction, I presume, my lord regretted and longed for, to say this to you alone, because my wound was received from a hand the least expected. But, my lord, to speak of this place to which you have sent me, I have run as if uncertainly, I have fought as if beating the air. For the lord Pope, on whose letter I was sent forth, has not yet fulfilled his promise to confirm the donation of this place, and what is taking place at this moment is a proof of this. The Lord Abbot of Farfa welcomed me at my coming with great joy, and received your sons with the utmost gladness, so that, if it were possible, he would have plucked out his own eyes, and have given them to me. In this one respect alone is he to be blamed and corrected by you, that he goes only too far, exceeding not only his own promises, but even our wishes. As this letter is already so long, I am able to say nothing shorter, nothing truer about my inner life, than that I am wasting my time.

LETTER CCCXLV. (A.D. 1140.)

TO THE BRETHREN OF S. ANASTASIUS

He commends their zeal in, and strict observance of, the Religions life. And yet he disapproves of their too great readiness to have recourse to the art of medicine in their maladies.

To my very dear sons in Christ, the monks of S. Anastasius, I, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wish health, and give the assurance of my earnest prayers.

1. God in heaven is my witness how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ; insomuch that I should have greatly desired to see you, if the thing had been possible, not only on your account, but also on my own. What a joy and solace it would be for me to embrace you, who are my own flesh and blood, my joy and my crown. But since that is not yet permitted to me (for I firmly trust that in the mercy of God it will be permitted, and that the day will come when I shall behold you, and my heart shall rejoice, and my joy no one shall take from me), in the meantime it is a great joy and consolation to me to receive the good report concerning you, which has come to me from my very clear brother and co-abbot, the venerable Bernard, your abbot. I congratulate you much on the satisfaction which is given to him by your love for the discipline and Rule of the Order, by your obedience and voluntary poverty, for which, without doubt, a rich reward is laid up for you in heaven. Wherefore I bid you, and earnestly entreat you, my dearly beloved brethren, so to persevere, and so to stand fast in the Lord, carefully keeping the observance of the Order, that the Order may keep you, carefully preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), and having one for the other, and especially for your superiors, that humble charity which is the bond of perfection (Coloss. 3:14). Follow humility before all things, and peace above all things, because of the Spirit of God who dwells in you, and who rests only upon him who is of a peaceful and humble spirit (Is. 66:2).

2. But there is one thing, indeed, which your venerable father asks me about, which I can in no wise approve. And I believe also that I am right, and have the Spirit of God in the matter. I know, indeed, that the district in which you live is unhealthy, and that many of you labour under infirmities; but remember him who said: I will even glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me; and, When I am weak, then am I strong (2 Cor. 12:9, 10). I sympathize, therefore, really and truly with your infirmities of body; but what is much more

to be feared and avoided is infirmities of soul. And it is not only not in agreement with your vow as religious to have recourse to medicines for the body, but it is not even really conducive to health. It is certainly permitted to poor religious to make use sometimes of simples of little value; and this is frequently done. But to purchase drugs, to call in mediciners, and to take their potions and remedies, this is neither becoming to the rigour of our vow nor befits the honour and purity of our Order. For we know that those who live in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:8). Spiritual things are to be compared with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13), that our potion may be that of humility, and that we may cry with our whole heart: Heal my soul, O Lord, for I have sinned against Thee (Ps. 41:4). This health, dearest brethren, do ye strive for; follow this, preserve this, for vain is the health given by men.

LETTER CCCXLVI. (Circa A.D. 1141.)

TO THE LORD POPE INNOCENT

He urges the Pope not to favour the cause of the Arch bishop of York, as it was unjust.

To his very dear lord and father, INNOCENT, by the grace of God supreme Pontiff, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends his humble duty.

Since there are many called, but few chosen (S. Matt. 20:16), it is no great reason for putting faith in a doubtful matter, or thinking it praiseworthy, that it is praised by many people. The Archbishop of York, concerning whom I have often written to your Holiness, has come to you. He is a man who has not taken God for his helper, but has put his hope in the multitude of his riches. His cause is a weak and even a bad one, and, as I learn from persons worthy of belief, from the sole of its foot even to its head there is no soundness in it. What then? What does a man who is without a just cause expect to gain from him who watches over justice and protects equity? Does he suppose that he will be able to swallow up justice in the Curia, as he has done in England? He has swallowed up an ordinary stream and made nothing of it; and now flatters himself that he can take the river of Jordan also into his mouth. He has come accompanied by many, whom he has gained over by money or by entreaties. One alone has escaped to bring you word; one alone, at the peril of his life, stood fast as a wall for the house of Israel, nor did he worship the idol at the command of the King. He is alone, except that his righteousness bears him company; which escaped, as an honoured mother, with her son (Ecclus. 15:2). What, then, will the Vicar of Peter

do in this matter? Surely what Peter did with the man who thought that the gifts of God might be purchased with money (Acts 8:20). If the Church has been founded upon a rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against her (S. Matt. 16:18). I do not speak thus on my own account alone, but on the testimony of those who are moved by the Spirit of God.

LETTER CCCXLVII. (Circa A.D. 1141.)

TO THE SAME

He recommends to the Pope the deputies of the Diocese of York, who are going to Rome on account of the matter of the Archbishop.

To his very dear lord and father, INNOCENT, supreme Pontiff, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends his humble duty.

These men whom you see before you are simple, honest, and God-fearing; it is the Spirit of God that sends them to the sight of your glory, and they have no other aim than to obtain justice. Cast your eyes, I pray you, upon these poor and wearied men, who, not without cause, have come to you from far, not regarding the great distance by land, nor the peril of the sea, nor the snows of the Alps, nor the great cost of the journey, though they are poor. Let my lord then kindly see to it that neither the intrigue nor ambition of any one render such great fatigues useless; especially since they do not seek their own advantage, but those things which are of Jesus Christ. For not even an enemy, I suppose, can suspect them of being influenced in this matter by any private interest or by personal hatred, but only by the fear of God. Let, then, any one who is a servant of God, put himself on their side. If the barren tree shall encumber the ground any longer, to whom can I attach blame, except to him who holds the axe?

LETTER CCCXLVIII. (A.D. 1141.)

TO THE SAME

On behalf of Arnulf, Bishop-elect of Lisieux.

To his very dear father and lord, INNOCENT, by the grace of God supreme Pontiff, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends his humble duty.

1. Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has in our day preserved His Church, the spotless Spouse of His dear Son, free, and delivered her from grief and from the oppressions of the wicked. The schisms are extinct, the heresies have sunk into silence, the necks of the proud and haughty are

trodden under your feet. And, indeed, I have seen during the schism the head of the wicked lifted up, and lofty as the cedars of Libanus; yet, I passed by, and behold, he was not. During the heresy I saw a multitude of errors shooting up again, as it were, and flourishing, but the mouth of those speaking perverse things was stopped. The tyrant of Sicily had lifted up his heart on high, and now is humbled under the mighty Hand of God; in short, there is none of any rank whatever over whom the Church of God by His mighty Hand and stretched-out Arm has not obtained the victory by your means.

2. Yet there remains still one adversary, the Count of Anjou, the Hammer of good men, and the enemy of peace, and of the liberty of the Church. He is persecuting the Church of Lisieux, in order that the Bishop of that Church shall not enter into the sheep-fold by the legitimate door, but in some other way. But what has been done cannot be undone. And furthermore, if the whole matter should be closely and carefully examined, it will be found that all has been done for the best, and that what has been done ought to be confirmed. All things concur to show this: the person chosen, the circumstances, he who has conducted it, and even the adversary who opposes it. For if you look to the person chosen, he is your dear son, in whom you are well pleased. If to the order of the proceedings, they have been carried out freely and canonically, and in proper order. If to the manager of them, he is a pious and God-fearing man. If to the adversary, behold he is a man who has not taken God for his help, but is hostile to the Church, and an enemy of the cross of Christ. Besides, in any affair in which it is doubtful which course to take, it is a most powerful reason for regarding a particular course as the better that it pleases the good and displeases the evil. But it is objected that the Count of Anjou has appealed to the Apostolic See. Wherefore, I pray you; what injury or loss has he to complain of? Far from being oppressed, it is he who is the oppressor; and it is not to relieve himself of an injustice that he has recourse to an appeal, but in order that by this means he may put an obstacle in the way of the consecration of the Bishop.

3. Since then in this matter not only the piety of him who has conducted it, but your affection for the person chosen, and the justice of his cause, combine to lead to the same conclusion, it seems superfluous and useless to make request on behalf of one whose humility has already had recourse to your authority. I will, however, who am but dust and ashes, speak unto my Lord. Yes, I who am the humble servant of the Bride will speak unto the friends of the Bridegroom; let my discourse be welcome to Him. The Church, my lord, from the rising of the sun unto its setting, has been committed to your care. You ought, then, to be a

wall and a rampart to her from the face of her enemy and persecutor. You ought to nourish her sons under the shadow of your wings. Sustain, therefore, the Bishop of Lisieux as a true son of the Roman Church, and send him back with the blessings of sweetness, so that his enemy may never say: I have prevailed against him. Gird on your sword, O Father, to raise up your son, to lay low the enemy, and to preserve the freedom of the Church. For we are not sons of the bond-woman, but of the free, and are sharers of the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

LETTER CCCXLIX. (Circa A.D. 1141.)

TO THE SAME

He recommends a friend to the Pontiff.

To his very dear father and lord, INNOCENT, by the grace of God supreme Pontiff, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends his humble duty.

I am unwilling to enjoy alone the favour I have found in your eyes. I desire to share it with my friends. For I do not fear that there will not be enough both for me and for them. For it is so great that I am able to make a crowd of friends the sharers of it without fearing to find it empty when I shall come myself. What, therefore, I have freely received I will freely bestow, and your liberality makes me liberal with the gifts which you have given me. I recommend, then, to you the bearer of this letter, an estimable person. He is a friend, my lord, of the poor of Christ, and a servant of your servants. I entreat, my lord, that if he has any business with you, you will listen to him favourably, with your accustomed kindness, for my sake, or rather for his own, since he is so good a man as to deserve that he should obtain his petition because of his own merit.

LETTER CCCL. (Circa A.D. 1141.)

TO THE SAME

He asks for the Pope’s blessing for one of his relatives.

The young man who will bring you this letter is reputed to be a brave and active soldier, and in order that he may perfect himself in actual warfare he is proceeding to Jerusalem. I, your son, entreat you at his request that in this good work which he is beginning he may have the benefit and the honour of your benediction and prayers. He is my relative, and, as the Prophet has said, I ought to take interest in those who are of my own flesh (Is. 58:7).

LETTER CCCLI.

TO THE SAME

He recommends certain poor persons.

I frequently write to you, and you receive letters and requests from me almost every day. I am placed under the dilemma of being either ungrateful to my friends or importunate towards you. My affection towards them incites me to write, but shamefacedness restrains me and modesty almost forbids me to discharge this duty of charity. But the Spouse of Christ has no asylum where she may lay her head or take refuge in the time of tribulation, except it be with the friend of her Bridegroom. These persons whom you see before you are poor, and sent as representatives of the poor. Through many dangers of land and sea they take refuge under the shadow of your wings, they resort to the rock of the Catholic faith and to the bosom of your apostolic piety since they are troubled in many things, and are free but in few from the tribulation and pain inflicted by the wicked. If you retain your ancient manner of acting and the office of your apostolate, you cannot bring yourself to desert the cause of the poor, nor to honour the countenance of the rich. I entreat you then, for these persons, for those by whom they are sent are my brethren and of our Order, so that you may incline the ear of your Piety to their prayers, in respect of their justice and for the love of Him who does not despise the prayers of the poor.

LETTER CCCLII. (A.D. 1131.)

PRIVILEGE OR GRANT MADE BY POPE INNOCENT II. TO SAINT BERNARD

Innocent concedes very full privileges to Bernard and to the Cistercian Order on account of their great services to the Apostolic See.

INNOCENT, Bishop, and servant of the servants of God, to his beloved son BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, and to their successors regularly appointed for ever, etc.

To you, Abbot Bernard, my beloved son in the Lord, to your firm and indefatigable constancy, to the fervour of your piety, and the discretion which you displayed in defending the cause of S. Peter, and of the holy Roman Church your mother, when the schism of Peter Leonis was beginning; and to the zeal with which you opposed yourself as an impregnable bulwark before the house of God, and laboured to incline the minds of Kings and Princes, and of other persons both ecclesiastical and lay, by pressing arguments, made strong by

reason, to the unity of the Catholic Church, and the obedience of S. Peter, and of us; in great measure are due the happy condition in which the Church of God, and ourselves, are found.

Wherefore, in order to give assent to your just wishes, we have fortified with the protection of the apostolical See the monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, over which, in the providence of God, you preside, with all the houses depending upon it. We ordain that all the possessions or goods whatsoever which it actually possesses justly and canonically at the present time, or in the future by the help of God shall possess, whether by the grant of Popes, or by the liberality of Kings or Princes, by the offerings of the faithful, or by any other just manner, shall remain firm and unimpaired to you and your successors. We forbid any Archbishop or Bishop to cite either you, or your successors, or any Abbot of the Cistercian Order, to any Council or Synod except for causes that concern the faith. And as the monastery of Cîteaux is the source and origin of this religious Order, let it deservedly enjoy this prerogative by our grant; that, whenever it shall be deprived of its own pastor, it may freely choose for itself any Abbot whatever, or monk, out of all the Abbeys of your Order, to preside over it, and may obtain the person chosen without any opposition. We grant to the other Abbeys of your Order which have one or more Abbeys dependent upon, or founded by them, the free power at the death of their own Abbot of choosing whomsoever they shall prefer from all the Abbeys under their obedience, or any monk whatever from all the Cistercian congregations. But those Abbeys which have no dependent houses may freely choose and have as their Abbot any monk out of all the congregations of the before-named Order. Further, let no Archbishop, Bishop, or Abbot presume to receive, or to retain, if received, any of your lay brothers (conversos) who are not monks, but who shall have made profession in any of your Houses, without your free consent. We ordain that no one presume to demand or receive of you tithes, either on the lands which you and the brothers of your whole congregation cultivate with your own hands or at your own cost, or of the animals upon them. Let no one, therefore, etc.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon those who preserve to the same place the things which belong to it; let them receive here below the recompense of that good action, and let them find before the tribunal of the Judge the rewards of eternal peace. Amen.

I, INNOCENT, Bishop of the Catholic Church.

I, MATTHEW, Bishop of Albano.

I, ROMANUS, Cardinal Deacon of S. Mary in Porticu.

I, JOHN, Cardinal Presbyter of S. Chrysogonus.

I, GREGORY, Cardinal Deacon of SS. Sergius and Bacchus.

Given at Lyons by the hand of HAIMERIC Cardinal Deacon and Chancellor of the holy Roman Church, the seventeenth February, indiction x., in the year of the Lord's Incarnation 1131, in the third year of the Pontificate of Pope Innocent II.

LETTER CCCLIII. (Circa A.D. 1141.)

TO WILLIAM, ABBOT OF RIEVAULX

He warns William to bear with equanimity the unjust consecration of the Archbishop of York.

To his dear brother and co-Abbot, WILLIAM, Abbot of Rievaulx, Brother BERNARD of Clairvaux wishes the Spirit of counsel and strength.

I have heard what has been done about that Archbishop, and with the greatest regret. Knowing, therefore, your zeal, and fearing lest it might blaze up more than was proper, and not admit of wise moderation, which would be to the detriment of our Order, and to the harm of your house, I have thought it proper to address to you some words of consolation; since when our own conscience does not accuse us of wrong, other evils may be borne with equanimity. I say it deliberately; neither the blame nor the sin belongs to you. You have resisted them as long as you were able; now, according to the judgment of S. Augustine, the wrong-doing of another cannot defile you, provided that you have not given assent to it in your heart, still less if you have protested against it with your mouth. For, he says; "Under two circumstances the wrong-doing of another does not defile you; if you do not consent, and if you protest." Be therefore of good heart and do not be troubled. Respecting Ordination and other Sacraments, bear well in mind that He Who baptizes and He Who ordains is Christ the Lord, the Chief Bishop of our souls. But if any one is reluctant to receive Ordination from his hand, no one obliges you to [cause him to] be ordained. Yet I hold it to be quite certain that there is nothing to fear when the sacraments received are administered according to the rules of the Church. Otherwise, if we wished to avoid all evil men, though the Church bears with them, it would be needful to go out of the world. In conclusion, there will be no long delay in bringing the matter under the notice of the Pope, and what he orders or directs you will be able with a good conscience to hold and follow. In the meantime wait calmly and

patiently.

LETTER CCCLIV. (A.D. 1142.)

TO MILISENDIS, QUEEN OF JERUSALEM, DAUGHTER OF KING BALDWIN AND WIFE OF FULK

He advises the Queen how she ought to conduct herself now that her husband Fulk was dead.

To the most illustrious Queen of Jerusalem, M., BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and that she may find grace in the sight of the Lord.

If I looked only at your title of Queen, your power and your illustrious birth, it would seem to me that there was a certain unfitness in my writing to you, among the multiplied cares and business which trouble you in the midst of your Court. All these things are before the eyes of men, and those who are without them envy those who possess them, and think the man happy to whom they belong. But what blessedness is there in the possession of those things which are all destroyed, as it were, in a moment like the grass of the field, and fall in a moment like flowers? They are indeed pleasant, but their pleasantness alters; it is changeable, perishable, and temporary, because it is the pleasantness only of the flesh; and it is of the flesh and its good things that it is said, All flesh is grass and the glory of it as the flower of grass (Isaiah 40:6). I ought not, therefore, to be withheld from writing to you by such things as those, since their favour is deceitful and their beauty vain. Receive, therefore, what I have in a few words to say: for although I might say much to you, yet I shall make my letter short, because of your many cares as well as mine. My counsels shall be short but salutary: deign to receive them from the distant land from whence they come, like a little seed which shall one day produce an abundant harvest. Receive, I say, advice from the hand of a friend, who seeks in offering it your honour only, and not any advantage of his own. You know that no one can be a more faithful counsellor than he who loves you alone, not the favours which he may receive from you. The King, your husband, is dead; the young King, your son, being still unable by his youth to bear the burden of the cares of State and to discharge the Royal office, the eyes of all are turned towards you, and upon you alone all the weight of government rests. You need, therefore, to put your hand to brave actions, and, though a woman, to show the spirit of a man; and to do those things which have to be done in the spirit of counsel and strength. It is of great consequence that you should take order for all things with such prudence and

discretion that all who behold you may think you from your actions rather a King than a Queen. Let them not say among the nations: Where is the King of Jerusalem? But you will say: I am not sufficient for these things. For these are great matters, above my strength and my knowledge. These are the duties of a man, and I am but a woman, weak in body, changeable in heart, neither provident in counsel, nor accustomed to business. I know, my daughter, I know that these things are great, but I also know this, that although the waves of the sea are mighty, the Lord, who dwelleth on High, is also mighty. These things are indeed great, but great is our Lord, and great is His power.

LETTER CCCLV. (Circa A.D. 1142.)

TO THE SAME QUEEN

He recommends to her some Religious of Prémontré, who were making pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

You see how greatly I presume on your goodness, since I venture to recommend others also to you. However, it would be as unnecessary as presumptuous perhaps for me to say much in commendation of these brethren of Prémontré, for they so commend themselves by their own merit that they have no need to be commended by another person. They will be found, if I mistake not, men of wisdom, fervent in spirit, patient in tribulation, powerful in word and work. They have put on the whole armour of God, and have girded themselves with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, not against flesh and blood, but against Spiritual wickedness in high places. Receive them as warlike, and yet peaceful: gentle towards men, warlike only towards evil spirits. Rather, I should say, receive in them Christ Himself, who is the cause of their pilgrimage.

LETTER CCCLVI. (A.D. 1141.)

TO MALACHI, ARCHBISHOP OF IRELAND

He sends back to Malachi the Religions confided to him for training, and expresses regret that they are not as perfectly instructed and practised in the religious life as he could wish, on account of his many occupations.

To MALACHI, by the grace of God Bishop, and Legate of the apostolic See, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and all the blessing that the prayer of a sinner (if it be of any avail) can venture to ask.

I have done what your Holiness directed, if not as well as I could have wished,

yet as perfectly as was possible at this time. I am overwhelmed with affairs so numerous and difficult that I scarce know how I have been able to succeed in doing the little I have done. I send you only a few grains of seed, as you see, which may avail to sow a very small part of that field in which the true Isaac once went forth to meditate, when first Rebecca was led to him by the servant of Abraham his father, to be happily joined to him in an endless union (Gen. 24.), nor is that seed to be despised respecting which what was spoken in the time of our fathers is found to be fulfilled at this time in the midst of you. If the Lord of Sabaoth had not left us a seed we should have been as Sodom and have been made like unto Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:9). I then have sowed, let it be your duty to water, and God will give the increase. I salute through you all the saints which are among you, humbly commending myself to your prayers and to theirs. Farewell.

LETTER CCCLVII. (A.D. 1142.)

TO THE SAME

He begs Malachi not only to continue his friendship for him, but to increase it; and he asks Malachi to give him proof of this by caring for and favouring the brethren he has sent.

To his very dear father and most reverend lord MALACHI, by the grace of God Bishop, Legate of the holy and apostolic See, the son of his Holiness Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and sends the assurance of his humble prayers.

1. How sweet to me, lord and father, are your words! how pleasant the remembrance of your holiness! If I am capable of any feeling of affection, of devotedness, and of gratitude, it is due to the kindness of your feeling towards me. But there is no need of many words, where the feelings are strong; for I trust that the Spirit of God which is in you will bear witness with your spirit, that I am entirely devoted to you. You also, dear and longed for father, will not have forgotten the poor Religious, who is bound to you by bonds of charity, and whose soul bears you in everlasting remembrance. For I do not commend myself to you as if for the first time, since I now for a long time glory in the Lord, that my humble self has been favoured to find grace in the eyes of your Holiness; but I pray that your friendship, though not new, may increase daily. I commend to you my sons, or rather yours, the more earnestly as they are so far removed from me. You know how entire is my confidence in you, after God, since I sent them

to you, as it seemed to me that it would be wrong not to yield to the request of your Holiness. Do that which seems good to you, only open to them the bowels of your kindness, and have a care of them. Let not your diligent solicitude grow cold on their behalf, nor the plantation perish which is the work of your right hand.

2. I have already learned both from your letter, and from the report of my brethren, that your house is in a prosperous state, and is multiplied both in temporal and spiritual things. I greatly congratulate you upon this, and render thanks with my whole heart both to God, and to your paternal solicitude. But as there is still need of much vigilance, especially in a new country and among a population unaccustomed to a monastic form of religion, I entreat you in the Lord not to withdraw your hand, but to perfect happily what you have well begun. Concerning my brethren who have returned from that place, I should have been well pleased if they had remained; but it may be the case that those of your country whose characters are less disciplined, and who have shown a great repugnance for our observances, which were new to them, have been in great measure the reason for their return.

3. I have sent back to you Christian, my very dear son and yours, having instructed him as well as I could in all that concerns our Order, and I hope that he will be still more exact in observing them. Do not wonder that I have not sent any other brethren with him, since it is not easy to find fit persons who will willingly consent to go, nor was it my plan to oblige any to go against their will. My dear brother Robert has acquiesced in my request for this time, like an obedient son. It will, therefore, be your part to render him all the assistance in your power, as well in buildings as in other things necessary, that the interests of your house may be promoted. I suggest to your Paternity, also, that you should persuade those religious, upon whom you are counting for the house you are about to found, to unite others with themselves by coming to their Order. That will be of the greatest advantage to the house, and you will be the better obeyed. May your Holiness continue in health, and be mindful of me before the Lord Christ.

LETTER CCCLVIII. (A.D. 1142.)

TO POPE CELESTINE

He implores the assistance and influence of the Pope to obtain peace for Theobald, Count of Champagne.

That which Count Theobald asks of you I ask also; he is a son of peace, and we entreat you that it may be brought about by your assistance. Your Apostolate is one of peace; the position which you hold is a debtor to peace. All love peace, but few merit it. But it cannot be denied that your son is one of those who love peace; whether he merits it likewise it is for you to judge. And if neither he nor I merit it, the necessity of the Spouse of Christ, that is, the Church, requires it; and the friend of the Bridegroom will not distress her. ft belongs to the Apostolic See alone to extend its solicitude over all the Churches, that all may be united under it and in it; it is its duty, then, to be careful for all, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Give us, then, this peace, send peace to us: if not to acquit yourself of an obligation towards us, at least because you ought to obey [the duty imposed upon you]. Enough for a command.

LETTER CCCLIX. (A.D. 1143.)

THE COMMUNITY OF CLAIRVAUX TO THE SAME CELESTINE

They ask that the Abbot of Morimond may be forbidden to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

To the sovereign Pontiff C, the little flock of Clairvaux offer the homage of a most devoted and humble obedience, and the assurance of their humble prayers.

Since we are happy to see you filling the place of Him who said that His daily charge was the care of all the Churches (2 Cor. 11:28), notwithstanding that the ears of your piety are occupied with more important matters, our necessity obliges us to ask for a moment of your attention. Nor do we, though humble, fear that we shall be repulsed; He, too, will recompense you for listening to His poor, whom you will one day hear say respecting them, That which ye have done unto one of the least of the brethren ye have done unto Me (S. Matthew 25:40). For this is the cause, not of our community only, but of our entire Order. Certainly if your son, our superior and father, had been at home at the time when this supplication is being addressed to you, he would either have come in person to your Majesty, or at least he would have written in his own name this deplorable complaint. But not to hold your charity longer in suspense, one of our brother Abbots, who is called of Morimond, has had the levity to quit the monastery over which he presided under pretext of making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and it is said that it is his intention before he goes farther, to try to take your prudence by surprise, and to extort in some way from you the permission to do so. If you should give him any such license (which we trust will not happen)

consider what disastrous consequences would follow to our Order: for by this example any Abbot who shall feel himself burdened by his pastoral charge will throw it off, since he will suppose that he may not unlawfully do so, especially among us, with whom the post of Superior is a great burden, but has not a great amount of honour. Furthermore, in order to complete the destruction of the house committed to his charge, he has taken with him the best and most exemplary of the brethren who were under him, among: whom is one youth of good family, whom he had already (not without scandal) carried off from Cologne, as we believe you are aware, which scandal will be much increased by his carrying him off a second time. He will declare, perhaps, as we have heard, that he intends to observe in those countries all the rules of our Order, and that it is with this intention he has taken with him a certain number of Religious, but who does not perceive that in that land is more need of soldiers to fight than of monks to sing or pray? But our Order will receive the greatest detriment from this action of his: since it will be made easy for any Religious who takes it into his head to wander over the world, and he will have no scruple in pretending to undertake a pilgrimage to some country where he will be able to observe his Rule. We shall not be so presumptuous as to suggest what you will be pleased to do, or what order you will give in this matter, which we commit to your judgment.

LETTER CCCLX. (A.D. 1143.)

TO WILLIAM, ABBOT OF RIEVAULX

He again exhorts William to resignation and patience.

To his very dear brother and co-Abbot, WILLIAM of Rievaulx, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and the spirit of wisdom.

I have striven to the utmost of my power against the common evil, and if I have not succeeded in obtaining what I wished, yet the fruit of my labour remains with Him who suffers no good work to remain without recompense. This, then, is the true consolation of us and of all who strive for the truth, that there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall bestow upon us in that day. Furthermore, I beg you now to bear in mind [what He has said], that if we suffer for righteousness sake happy are we, and that the wrong-doing of another person to which we have not consented, but have, on the contrary, protested against, cannot defile us. This, then, is our consolation, so that in our patience we must now possess our souls; and since we are unable to

obtain help from men, let us hope for it from God, who will not despise those who hope in Him. For I trust in the mercy of our Heavenly Father, that every plant which He has not planted shall be plucked up, and that He will wither up with His malediction the barren fig tree, so that it shall not occupy the ground any longer. I beg and entreat, therefore, of you, my brother, to calm yourself, and not to trouble the flock which has been committed by God to your charge, but rather console yourself and strive bravely to serve the Lord in holiness, and He will deliver us from our enemies. I, however, have striven as far as I could to influence the Lord Bishop of Frascati, who is charged with the functions of Legate in those parts, and he has faithfully promised me that if nothing better can be done for us, this, at least, he will observe, that under no circumstances will he deliver the pallium which he bears to the Archbishop if the Dean (who is now become Bishop) shall not have made the statement on oath upon which the whole case depends; but that he will refer the cause to the Pope for decision.

LETTER CCCLXI. (Circa A.D. 1144.)

TO ARCHBISHOP THEOBALD, ON BEHALF OF JOHN OF SALISBURY

Bernard, confiding in the friendship of Theobald, recommends John to him.

Nothing does me more honour or makes me more grateful to you than to see that my friends find favour in your eyes for my sake. Yet I seek not glory from man, but the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Thus it is that I send to your Highness the bearer of this letter, John, who is my friend and the friend of my friends, and I venture to ask for him the goodness and kindness which I feel assured you have for me, since I have always experienced it from you. For he has the testimony of all good men that he is very meritorious as well for his virtue as his knowledge. Nor have I learned this from those who use words rashly, but from my own sons, whose witness is for me as certain as if I had seen it with my own eyes. I had already recommended him to you in person, but now being absent from you, I recommend him so much the more earnestly and confidently, because I have learned from trustworthy witnesses how blameless are the life and character of the man. If, then, I have any interest with you, or rather because I believe that I have much, make for him some provision upon which he may sufficiently and honourably live, and deign to do this without delay, because he knows not whither to turn. In the meantime be so kind as to provide for his needs, and let me thus experience, my very dear father, the affection which you retain in your heart for me.

LETTER CCCLXII. (A.D. 1145.)

TO ROBERT PULLEN, CARDINAL AND CHANCELLOR

Bernard entreats him to show himself an efficient helper to Pope Eugenius, then recently elected, in the government of the Church.

To his lord and very dear friend ROBERT, by the grace of God Cardinal-Presbyter and Chancellor of the holy Roman Church, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, health and the assurance of his prayers.

1. I have received your letter with so much the greater pleasure that I hold you always in kindly remembrance. I can assure you that you have no need of letters of introduction to me, or of the praises of anyone, since it is a thing without doubt, in my mind, that the Spirit of truth testifies how sincerely I love you, and that I am loved by you; that Spirit, I say, by whom charity is spread abroad in our hearts. Blessed be God who according to His mercy has prevented our, or rather His, Eugenius with the blessings of sweetness, preparing a lantern for His Anointed; and has also sent before him a faithful man to be his helper, which is to me also a very great consolation. For when the vocation of my friend and his separation from his friend in whom he delighted in the Lord was a trouble to him, then the Lord, as I perceive plainly at this time, had thoughts of peace, and not of affliction, towards him, and was saying, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter (S. John 13:7). Wherefore be thou careful, my dear friend, for him to whom God has ordered that you should be a consoler and a counsellor; and watch carefully, according to the wisdom given to you, that he may not, through the multiplicity of affairs fall into the snares of unworthy people, and be led into some decision unworthy of the apostolate of Eugenius.

2. Show yourself, therefore, my dear friend, what you ought to be in the post which you occupy, and in the high rank to which you have attained; employ bravely and prudently the zeal which is in you for God, to His glory, to your own salvation, and to the great good of the Church, so that you too may be able to say, the grace of God which was in me was not in vain (1 Cor. 15:10). Up to this day you have lavished your learning faithfully and with great use upon a number of objects, as heaven and earth bear witness; but now the time is come to labour for God, and to employ all your powers to hinder the setting aside of His law by the wicked. Study, therefore, O Father, dearly-beloved and longed for, to be found a faithful and prudent servant of the Lord, even in this post which is committed to you; as far as regards yourself, show the simplicity of the dove, and for the Church, the spouse of the Lord, which is now entrusted to your care

and faithfulness, show the wisdom of the serpent, so as to preserve her from the envenomed snares of the old malignant serpent, that thus in each of your virtues God may be glorified. I should have many things still to say to you; but there is no need of a long letter where the living voice is at hand. Wherefore, sparing your many occupations, as well as my own, I have put my words in the mouth of the brethren which are present before you; listen to them as to myself. Farewell.

LETTER CCCLXIII. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF EASTERN FRANCE

Bernard exhorts them to take arms against the Infidels in defence of the Church in the East. In opposition to the incendiary appeals of a certain Religious, he tells them that the Jews are not to be persecuted, much less put to death.

To the lords and very dear fathers, the Archbishops and Bishops, with the whole Clergy and the faithful people of Eastern France and Bavaria, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, desires that they may abound in the Spirit of strength.

1. I write to you with respect to a matter which concerns the service of Christ, in whom is our salvation. This I say in order that the Lord’s authority may excuse the unworthiness of the person who speaks; let the consideration of its usefulness to yourselves also excuse the faults of my address. I am, indeed, of small account; but I have no small love for you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. This, now, is my reason for writing to you, that I may thus approach you as a whole. I would rather do so by word of mouth, if as well as the will the opportunity were afforded me. Behold, brethren, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. The earth also is moved and has trembled, because the God of heaven has begun to destroy the land which is His. His, I say, in which the Word of the Father evidently taught, and for more than thirty years dwelt a man among men. His, for He enlightened it with miracles, He consecrated it with His own blood; in it appeared the first fruits of His Resurrection. And now, for our sins, the enemies of the Cross have raised blaspheming: heads: ravaging with the edge of the sword the land of promise. For they are almost on the point, if there be not One to withstand them, of bursting into the very city of the living God, of overturning the sanctuaries of our redemption, of polluting the holy places of the spotless Lamb with purple blood. Alas! they rage against the very shrine of the Christian Faith with blasphemous mouths, and would enter and trample down the very couch on

which for us our Life lay down to sleep in death.

2. What are you doing then, O brave men? What are you doing, O servants of the Cross? Will you give what is holy to the dogs, and cast your pearls to swine? How many sinners there, confessing their sins with tears, have obtained pardon, after the defilement of the heathen has been purged by the swords of your fathers! The wicked man sees and is grieved, he gnashes with his teeth, and consumes away. He prepares the instruments of sin, and will leave no sign or trace of so great piety, if ever (which God forbid) he gain possession of this holiest of holy places. Verily that would be an irremediable grief to all time—because an irrecoverable loss, a vast disgrace to this most graceless generation, and an everlasting shame.

3. What are we then to think, brethren? Is the Lord's arm shortened so that it cannot save, because He calls His weak creatures to guard and restore His heritage? Can He not send more than twelve legions of angels, or just speak the word, and the land shall be set free? It is altogether in His power to effect, when he wishes; but I tell you, the Lord your God is trying you. He looks upon the sons of men, to see if there be any to understand, and seek, and bewail His error. For the Lord hath pity upon His people, and provides a sure remedy for those that are afflicted.

4. Think what care He uses for your salvation, and wonder; behold the abyss of His love, and trust Him, O ye sinners. He wills not your death, but that you may turn and live; for now he seeks occasion, not against you, but for your benefit. What opportunity of salvation has God not tried and sought out, when the Almighty deigns to summon to His service murderers, robbers, adulterers, perjurers, and those guilty of other crimes, as if they were a people that dealt righteously? Doubt Him not, O sinners; God is kind. If He willed to punish you, He not only would not seek your service, but would not accept it when offered. Again I say, weigh the riches of the goodness of the Highest God, hear his plan of mercy. He makes or feigns a need for Himself, while He desires to help your necessity. He wills to be held a debtor, that He may give pay to those that fight for Him, pardon of sins, and everlasting glory. Therefore I may call it a highly-favoured generation, which has happened upon a time so full of indulgence, upon which has come that acceptable year of the Lord, a very jubilee. For this blessing is spread over the whole world, and all fly eagerly to the sign of life.

5. Since, therefore, your land is fruitful in brave men, and is known to be full of robust youth, your praise is in the whole world, and the fame of your valour has filled the entire earth; gird up your loins, therefore, manfully, and take up

arms prevailingly in zeal for the Christian name. Let not your former warlike skill cease, but that spirit of hatred, in which you are accustomed to strike down and kill one another, and in turn be overcome yourselves. How dire a madness goads those wretched men, when kinsmen strike each other's bodies with the sword, perchance causing the soul also to perish? But he does not escape who triumphs; the sword shall go through his own soul also, when he rejoices at having slain his enemy only. To enter such a combat is madness, not valour: not to be ascribed to bravery, but rather to foolishness. Now, O brave Knight, now, O warlike hero, you have a battle you may fight without danger: where it is glory to conquer, and gain to die. If you are a prudent merchant, if you are a desirer of this world: I show you some great bargains, see you lose them not. Take the sign of the Cross, and you shall gain pardon for every sin that you confess with contrite heart. The material itself being bought is worth little: if it be placed on a devout shoulder, it is without doubt worth no less than the kingdom of God. Therefore they have done well who have already taken the heavenly sign: well and wisely also will do the rest, if they hasten to lay upon their shoulders, like the first, the sign of salvation.

6. Besides, brethren, I warn you, and not only I, but God's Apostle, Believe not every spirit (1 S. John 4:1). We have heard and rejoice that the zeal of God abounds in you, but it behoves no mind to be wanting in wisdom. The Jews must not be persecuted, slaughtered, nor even driven out. Inquire of the pages of Holy Writ. I know what is written in the Psalms as prophecy about the Jews, God hath shown me, says the Church, thou shalt not slay my enemies, neither shall my people be ever forgotten. They are living signs to us, representing the Lord's Passion. For this reason they are dispersed into all regions, that now they may pay the just penalty of so great a crime, that they may be witnesses of our redemption. Wherefore the Church, speaking in the same Psalm, says, Scatter them in thy strength, and cast them down, O Lord my Protector (Ps. 59:11). So has it been. They have been dispersed, cast down. They undergo a hard captivity under Christian princes. Yet they shall be converted at evening-time, and remembrance of them shall be made in due season. Finally, when the multitude of the Gentiles shall have entered in, then all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:25), saith the Apostle. Meanwhile, he who dies remains in death.

7. I do not enlarge on the lamentable fact that where there are no Jews, there Christian men judaize even worse than they in extorting usury, if, indeed, we may call them Christians, and not rather baptized Jews. If the Jews be utterly trampled down, how shall the promised salvation or conversion profit them in

the end? Evidently if their salvation is to be waited for equally with that of the Gentiles the latter also should rather be preserved than attacked with the sword. But now when they begin to be violent against us, it behoves them to repel force with force who bear not the sword in vain. It is the part of Christian piety as much to overthrow the proud as to spare the conquered, those especially whose kingdom is yet promised, of whom came the patriarchs, and of whom was Christ after the flesh, who is blessed for ever. Yet we must require of them according to the apostolic command, that they should set free from the bond of usury all who have taken the sign of the cross.

8. This also we must warn you, dearest brethren, that if any love to bear rule among you, and wish by hastening to anticipate the army of his country, that he by no means attempt to do it. If he pretend to have been sent by us, it is not true; or if he show letters as if given by us they are altogether false, I warn you, or obtained by fraud. It is the part of such to choose warlike and skilful leaders, and for the army of the Lord to set out together, that it may have strength everywhere, and not be able to sustain injury from any. There was in a former expedition, before Jerusalem was taken, a certain man, Peter by name, of whom you (unless I mistake) have often heard mention. He went alone at the head of a mass of people who had entrusted themselves to his care, and led them into so great dangers that none, or at least very few, escaped dying by hunger or the sword. So there is fear lest, if you do likewise, the same fate should overtake you also, which may God, who is blessed for ever, avert from you. Amen.

LETTER CCCLXIV. (A.D. 1146.)

TO PETER, ABBOT OF CLUNY

He invites Peter to attend a meeting at Chartres in order to consult as to rendering help to the Church in the East.

To his very dear father PETER, by the grace of God the venerable Abbot of Cluny, Brother BERNARD, of Clairvaux, wishes health, and sends the assurance of his humble prayers.

1. I imagine that the sad and lamentable groanings of the Church in the East have not failed to come to your ears, yes, even to the bottom of your heart. It becomes you, in the high post which you occupy, to show a sincere feeling of compassion for that Church, the common mother of all, in the sad state to which it is reduced, and in the great difficulties by which it is surrounded. The more elevated, I repeat, is the position which you hold, the more you ought to be

consumed with an earnest zeal for the House of God. Otherwise, if we harden our hearts and affections at the sight of such misfortunes; where is our love towards God, or our charity towards our neighbours? If, then, we do not exert ourselves with all the earnestness in our power to find and supply a remedy to such great evils and dangers, how ungrateful should we not be shown to be to God, who shelters us in His tabernacle in the day of evil? and should we not merit to be punished the more severely, that we had shown ourselves neglectful both of God's glory, and of the salvation of our brethren? These considerations I have been led to suggest thus confidently and plainly, on account of the kindness with which your Excellence has deigned to honour my unworthiness.

2. Our fathers, then, the Bishops of France, with our lord the King and his nobles, have determined to meet on the third Sunday after Easter at the city of Chartres in order to take counsel together about this great affair: and I trust that we may be favoured with your presence there also. For the advice of all the more eminent men is needed: and you will render a service not unacceptable to God, if you do not hold back from this business, but approve your zeal in a season so opportune, in a time of tribulation. For you know, dear father, that a friend is proved in time of adversity. I am convinced that your presence will be of great advantage to this expedition, as well because of the influence belonging to the holy Abbey of Cluny, over which, in God's Providence, you preside, as because of the wisdom and popularity which has been bestowed upon you for the honour of God and the good of your neighbours. May He deign to influence your mind, not to hesitate to come, and to give the advantage of your presence to His servants gathered in His name, and for zeal in His service.

LETTER CCCLXV. (A.D. 1146.)

TO HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE

He blames a monk named Ralph, who was instigating the faithful to the massacre of the Jews.

To the venerable lord and very dear father HENRY, Archbishop of Mayence, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and that he may find favour with God.

1. I have received your esteemed letter with the deep respect due to it; but my reply must be brief, on account of the multiplicity of business with which I am burdened. The confiding of your complaint to me is a sign and pledge of your affection, and a proof of your extreme humility. For who am I, and what is my

father’s house, that an Archbishop should refer to me a contempt of his authority and an injury to his metropolitan See? For am I not as a young child, not knowing how to come in and go out? But yet I am not ignorant of those words full of truth which proceed from the mouth of the Highest: It is impossible but that offences come, but woe to him from whom they come (S. Matt. 18:7). He of whom you speak in your letter has received a mission neither from men, nor through men, and certainly not from God. If he boasts that he is a monk and a hermit, and that therefore he has full power even to take the office of a preacher, let him learn what he ought to know, that the office of a Religious is that of penitence, not of preaching, and that for a true Religious, towns are prisons and solitude a Paradise. It is not so with the man in question, for him it is solitude which is a prison and a town a Paradise. O man without feeling or modesty! whose foolishness has been placed, as it were, on a candlestick so that it may plainly appear to all in the house.

2. There are three things in him most worthy of blame: his usurpation of the right to preach, his contempt of the authority of the Bishop, and finally his inciting to murder. What new power is this? Do you suppose yourself greater than our father Abraham (Gen. 22.), who laid down his sword at the bidding of him at whose command he had taken it up? Are you greater than the Prince of the Apostles who inquired of the Lord, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? (S. Luke 22:49). If you were instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, that is the wisdom of this world which is foolishness towards God (1 Cor. 3:19), and you reply to the question of Peter in a different manner than He did who said to Peter: Put up again thy sword into its sheath, for he who takes the sword shall perish by the sword (S. Matt. 26:52). Does not the Church triumph a hundred times better over the Jews in convincing them every day of their error and in converting them to the faith, than if it were to exterminate them once for all by the edge of the sword? Does the Church universal from the rising of the sun even to its setting put up to God to no purpose that universal petition on behalf of the unbelieving Jews that our Lord God would take away the veil from their hearts and enable them to pass out of darkness into the light of truth? It would seem useless and vain to pray for them if she had not hope that though now without faith they will one day believe. But she understands with a pious insight that the Lord who renders good for evil and love for hatred has a purpose of grace towards them. Where is then that which is spoken, See that thou slay them not (Ps. 49:11). Or this: When the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in then shall all Israel be saved (Rom. 11:25, 26). Or this: The Lord doth build up

Jerusalem and will gather together the outcasts of Israel? (Ps. 147:2). Are you not the man who will make the Prophets liars and will render empty and useless all the treasures of the piety and mercy of Jesus Christ? Your doctrine is not yours, but that of your father who sent you. It is not surprising if you are as your master: for he was a murderer from the beginning, a liar and the father of falsehood (S. John 8:44). O frightful knowledge; O infernal wisdom contrary to the Prophets, hostile to the Apostles, a subversion of piety and grace! O unclean heresy, sacrilegious deceiver, filled with the spirit of falsehood, which hath conceived sorrow and brought forth ungodliness (Ps. 7:15). I would wish, but fear, to say more. In conclusion, to sum up briefly all that I think upon these matters: the man is great in his own eyes, full of the spirit of arrogance. His words and his actions reveal that he is striving to make a name for himself among the great of the earth, but he has not the means to succeed in his object. Farewell.

LETTER CCCLXVI. (A.D. 1146.)

TO THE ABBESS HILDEGARDE

He modestly rejects her praises: he warns her to recognise what she owes to the Grace of God: and begs her prayers for him and for his brethren.

To his beloved daughter in Christ, HLLDEGARDE, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and all that the prayer of a sinner can obtain.

It seems to me that certain persons think very differently of so humble a person as myself, from that which my own conscience knows to be true: and that it is to be attributed not to my merits, but to the simplicity of mankind. Yet I hasten to reply to the sweet and charitable letter which you have had the goodness to write to me, although the number of my occupations obliges me to do so more briefly than I could wish. I congratulate you on the Grace of God which is in you, and kindly warn you to be careful to respond to it in a disposition of entire humility and devotion in order that you may retain this grace, knowing that God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble (S. James 4:6). That is the advice which I give to you, as far as in me lies, and the prayer that I make for you. But what am I to be able either to teach, or to give warning, to one in whom is the secret intuition and the anointing which teaches all things. For you are said to be so favoured as that the hidden things of Heaven are revealed to you, and that the Holy Spirit makes known to you those things

which pass man’s understanding. Wherefore I rather entreat and humbly pray that you would make remembrance of me before God, and of those who are joined with me in spiritual society. For I trust that when you are united to God in the Spirit, you will be able to help and profit us much. For the fervent prayer of a righteous person availeth much (S. James 5:16). As for me, I pray for you continually, that you may be strengthened in good, that your soul may be perfected, and you may be enabled to attain unto eternal joys: so that those who have put their hope in God may not be led to despair by seeing your failure: but may be, on the contrary, strengthened in good, and may progress from one degree of good to another, by beholding the blessings and graces which you have received from God.

LETTER CCCLXVII. (Circa A.D. 1147.)

TO THE CHANCELLOR G

Bernard recommends to him the Bishop of Metz.

Your predecessor, the Chancellor Haimeric of good memory, held the Lord Bishop of Metz in special affection; and as often as he sent messengers to Rome received them with great kindness and assisted them as much as he could. Wherefore I beg you to be so kind as to walk in his footsteps, and to assist with the arms of the Church that noble Bishop, who is placed in a position of great difficulty.

LETTER CCCLXVIII. (Circa A.D. 1147.)

TO THE CARDINAL-DEACON G

Bernard gratefully thanks him for his affectionate letter, and the presents sent to him, and dissuades him from the love of riches and of earthly things.

To his lord and very dear friend G., by the grace of God Cardinal-Deacon in the holy Roman Church, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, health and the assurance of his devoted prayers.

1. I thank you in the Lord for having prevented me so liberally with the blessings of sweetness, and if there be any bowels of mercy, any affection or charity in me, the kindly humility and unaffected kindness of the mind of one so illustrious fully deserves it from me. For I knew already, and rejoiced over the earnest zeal in you, of which I had heard from my brethren; but now I feel myself so much more indebted to you for the affection so humble and devoted

with which you have commended yourself to so humble a person as I. I would wish, indeed, to be sufficiently powerful with God to acquit myself of my obligation to you. Wherefore I was anxious also to read to my brethren the letter in which your heart is fully displayed—a letter filled with devoted affection, with piety and grace; to show them also the blessing which you had given to us, and to direct as you had ordered, that the Holy Mysteries of the Mass, should be celebrated in those very vessels, for the memory of you and yours. May God make of you a vessel to honour in His great house [which is His Church], so that it may be our happiness to hear one day He is for me a vessel of election (Acts 9:15). This is our most earnest prayer. For the Spirit of Truth is our witness, by whom also the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5), how greatly we long for you in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

2. As it is in God alone that I feel for you the affection with which my heart is full, not only is my intercession on your behalf directed to this, but I wish you to pray for yourself that you may perceive carefully how you ought to behave yourself in the House of God, and to discharge the functions of your ministry. For I say this, not of presumption, God knows, but of charity, since the judgment is severe upon those who bear rule if they do not labour to rule profitably (Wisdom 6:5); and, on the contrary, he who has ministered well shall gain a good degree (1 Tim. 3:13). Do you, then, my lord, dearly-beloved and longed for, study, I beseech you, to avoid evil and to do good more and more; let no one see you seeking your own advantage in the heritage of Christ, but be always mindful of the words of the Apostle, We have brought nothing into the world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out (1 Tim. 6:7). Wherefore guard well your soul, since that is your immortal part. Let it not be able by any temptation to be torn away from, or uprooted from that disposition of which the Lord speaks in the Gospel: What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (S. Matt. 16:26). Unhappy, unspeakably unhappy, are they who spend all their lives in the enjoyment of their good things, so as to fall in an instant into the depths of hell! (Job 21:13). They will carry away nothing of all that they possess when they perish, neither shall their glory descend with them (Ps. 49:17); it is but a vapour, appearing for a moment (S. James 4:15). Think of these things, my dear friend; meditate seriously upon them; grave them upon your heart, nor let them ever depart from your memory. Farewell.

LETTER CCCLXIX. (Circa A.D. 1147.)

TO ABBOT SUGER

He congratulates Suger on the reformation of the Abbey of Ste. Geneviève, happily set on foot, and urges him to persevere in his undertaking.

To his very dear father and lord SUGER, by the grace of God the venerable Abbot of S. Denys, Brother BERNARD, of Clairvaux, health and the assurance of his prayers.

Blessed be God who by your hands has re-established the salutary reign of rule and discipline in the Abbey of Ste. Geneviève. The Apostolic authority itself thanks you because you have set about a great work faithfully and effectually. I, too, with all those who love the Lord in truth, render to you such thanks as we can. I beg and earnestly entreat your Greatness that, according to the tenor of the Pope's letter, you would cause the work to proceed with all speed, that what has been grandly begun may go on from day to day and be happily accomplished. I regard it as unnecessary to ask your kind help for the Abbey of S. Victor, because I am aware that the charge of all the religious houses has been committed to you. But it is needful to be particularly watchful over those in which the state of religion leaves much to be desired.

LETTER CCCLXX. (Circa A.D. 1147.)

TO THE SAME

He recommends to Suger the Abbey of Ste. Geneviève.

To his very dear father and lord SUGER, Abbot of S. Denys, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, health and the assurance of his friendship.

It behoves you to fulfil the duties of him who has left you in his stead, or rather to do the work of the Lord your God, who has chosen you for the functions which you have to discharge. It is plainly the work of God to have restored religion and order in the Abbey of Ste. Geneviève-du-Mont; that new plantation finds in you its great guardian and helper. I entreat you that what you have well begun you will finish still better, and that you will oppose yourself as a wall for the defence of the house of Israel that man may not prevail against it. Be so kind, I entreat of you, as to raise up again the courage of the Abbot of that place, who is easily cast down: that will be especially conducive to the honour of your person as well as to the saving of your soul, particularly at this time.

LETTER CCCLXXI. (Circa A.D. 1147.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard opposes the marriage projected between the son of the Count of Anjou and the daughter of the King of France, on account of the impediment of consanguinity.

To the lord Abbot of S. Denys, Brother BERNARD, of Clairvaux, health and the assurance of his prayers.

I have written thus to the lord King:—

"You have undertaken an enterprise important and weighty, which no one is able to carry through except by the assistance of Divine strength." The business in which you are engaged is above the powers of man, but that is easy to God which to men is impossible (S. Luke 18:27).

"Knowing this you ought to take the greatest care not in any way to repulse the help so necessary to you, nor by any project of yours to offend God and to deprive yourself of the furtherance of His grace. You ought, I repeat, now to take the greatest care never to provoke God so that He should be angry with you, should turn away His face, and withdraw His assistance from you. For this danger affects not the King alone, but the whole Church of God, since the cause which you have undertaken is also that of the whole world. Listen, and you will learn the cause which induces me to remind you of these facts. I am hastening indeed to your presence, as this letter shows, but I have formed the project of keeping the vigil of S. Mary Magdalene at Laon. Nevertheless, I have taken care to forewarn you by another letter of the danger which I am anxious that you should avoid. For I have heard that the Count of Anjou is pressing you to engage under oath your daughter to his son in marriage. Now this union is not only inexpedient, but it is not lawful; as well for other reasons as because of the impediment of consanguinity; since I know upon trustworthy information that the mother of the Queen, and of that young man, the son of the Count of Anjou, are related in the third degree. On this account permit me to urge you by no means to enter into this engagement, but to fear God and depart from evil. You have promised me that you would on no account do this without consulting me: and I should have done wrong if I had hidden from you my view. My advice then is by no means to go on with the affair. If you do, you will have acted both against my advice and that of many others who are your well-wishers; and also against the will of God. Do not think that after that God will accept your sacrifice, since it is made only in part: so that while you are combating on behalf

of another kingdom, you do not leave your own in safety, while you order it against the will and the law of God, as also against what is honourable and advisable. I have now freed my own soul of responsibility: may God free yours also from lying lips and the deceitful tongue."

LETTER CCCLXXII. (Circa A.D. 1147.)

TO P., BISHOP OF PALENCIA, IN SPAIN

Bernard praises him for his humility, and particularly for his love of reading.

To his venerable lord and very dear father P., by the grace of God Bishop of Palencia, BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and prays that the Lord may prevent him with the blessings of sweetness.

Who will give me the wings of a dove that I may take my flight to repose within the odour of your sanctity? Your saintly life and the purity of your character have filled me with the odour of your sweetness, which seems to me, as it were, the odour of a fertile field which the Lord hath blessed. In it my soul is truly filled with marrow and fatness, and in such is the life of my spirit. For how can it be otherwise, when I hear of a man of lofty character and yet humble, full of cares and business, and yet peaceful, and trembling at the Word of the Lord. O rare bird upon the earth, humility conjoined with high station, and a tranquil mind in the midst of the hurry of business! You have made to rejoice, my lord, the soul of your servant; may the merciful Lord make yours also rejoice with the joy of His people. I have rejoiced with great joy on hearing such things as I had not expected reported of you. For my brethren, the bearers of your letter, reported to me your zeal in mortifying the flesh and reducing it to subjection, your habit of meditation, your love of reading, the gentleness of your manners, your kindness to all, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. But do not think, my clear lather, that in speaking these words I intend to celebrate your praises. The word of blame spoken by the Prophet is before my mind: Those who praise thee, my people, they deceive thee. I am unwilling, though a sinner, to pour upon your head the oil of sinful praise: but rather the oil of joy which proceeds from a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. Nor am I a trafficker in this oil; I have only too little with which to anoint myself for the arena of this world; but I cannot pass over in silence the virtues which are to the praise of Christ. Let not the creature, but the Creator be praised. Let Him who gives, not he who has received, be exalted: not he who plants nor he who waters are to be praised, for they are nothing, but He who

gives the increase, that is God. I, then, will praise the hand which is stretched out to give, not that stretched out to receive: the praise of the Lord, and not of His servant shall come out of my mouth. Do thou, then, my dear father, recognize, if you are wise, or rather because you are wise, that the grace which is in you does not come from yourself, but descends from the Father of Lights, since every good gift and every perfect gift is from above (S. James 1:17). I know that there are certain persons who have, as it were, a wise unwillingness to know the gifts which they have received from the Lord, so that they be not puffed up with pride nor fall into the snare of the devil. But it seems to me that I ought to know what I have received, in order that I may know what is wanting to me, and that I ought to know with the Apostle the things which have been bestowed upon me by God, in order that I may not be ignorant what I ought still to desire and pray for. For he who has received something and knows it not, is exposed to the double danger of being ungrateful for what he has received, and careless in preserving it. For how can any one render gratitude to a benefactor if he does not know that he has received anything from him? Or how will he be careful to guard that which he is not aware that he has received? Take away from me, O Lord, the blame of that ungrateful people of whom it is said: They forgat what He had done and the wonderful works that He had showed for them (Psalm 78:12). A benefit received, therefore, even according to the wise of this world, is to be graven deep in the tablets of the memory. It behoves us, then, that we should know how to take care of the gifts which we have received, and so that the grace of God in us may not be in vain: and that it may remain in us always, let us always render thanks to the Lord our God. I think it may be added, not unusefully, that you should proceed by three steps to the obtaining of grace and salvation: humility, faith, and fear. For humility is that quality to which grace is given, faith that in which it is received, fear that in which it is preserved. If we should wish to ascend to the throne of grace without the use of these three, I fear that it would be said to us, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep (S. John 4:11). Let us, then, in order to drink of the water of wisdom, have the rope of humility: and let this humility be in mouth, in heart, and in action: which threefold cord is not easily broken. Let us have faith, as it were, for a water jar, and let it be great, so that much grace may be received in it: and let fear be, as it were, its cover, lest the water of wisdom be defiled with the impurities of vainglory: for it is written, Every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it shall be unclean (Num. 19:15). Your devotion to reading also, in which you embrace not only the writings of great men, but also, the trifles which I have

penned, calls for some mention from me: so that you may perceive what joy your kindly feeling has given to my heart.

LETTER CCCLXXIII. (Circa A.D. 1147)

FROM THE ABBOT OF SP. TO S. BERNARD

He complains of the weight of the charge laid upon him.

To his wished-for lord and very dear father BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, his son, the unprofitable servant of the Abbey at Sp., wishes health and the blessing of all nations.

I have greatly desired that this letter should find you, if it were possible, free and disengaged from other business. For I have feared continually while writing, and think now with fear, of that man who desired to see Jesus, but was unable for the crowd because he was little of stature (S. Luke 19:3). And it is not only your leisure that I desire, but also that I should find grace in your eyes. For what solace would your leisure alone be to me? May God pardon you, what have you done? Where have you placed me, being such an one as I am, whose powers are so little in proportion to the burden that I have to bear? It seems to me to be heavier than the sands of the sea. For what am I, and what is my father's house? Am I not a child who knows not how to come in or go out? What am I that I should be able with my own powers only to sustain, or rather raise up again the Abbey with which I am charged? It resembles an enclosure which is crumbling, or a wall in ruins. Such a business is above my powers, and I am consumed with useless labour. Still I strive even amidst my groans, but of what use are my labours and my groans? The diseases are of long standing, the plague an acute one, the mischief incurable except by a strong hand. Vices have been turned into habitudes, habitudes into custom, custom has become, as it were, a second nature, and is now a necessity. O how necessary it is that this necessity should be drawn out by the roots! But, I say it with tears, it has pushed such strong roots into the soil that they are too strong for me. So you see that I am absolutely wanting in the needful powers to give help. Even that brother who is the bearer of this letter, who was highly necessary to me, is leaving us. His charge was to teach the novices; they profited under his direction. I rejoiced in it, and hoped by the mercy of God a day might come when death might be swallowed up by life. I render this testimony in his favour, that as far as one man is permitted to judge of another, his conversation among us has been acceptable to God and pleasing to men. Therefore his departure cannot be without grief to me. You are able, my

lord, to turn my sorrow into joy if I have found favour in your eyes. So far about these matters, other things the bearer will explain at greater length.

LETTER CCCLXXIV. (A.D. 1148.)

TO THE BRETHREN IN IRELAND, ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE BLESSED BILSHOP MALACHI

That the death of the Saints is a subject rather for joy than grief. That Clairvaux is honoured by the death and burial there of so great a man.

To the Religious in Ireland, and particularly to the congregations founded by Bishop Malachi of blessed memory, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and the consolations of the Holy Spirit.

1. If we had here a continuing city, we should not have to shed abundant tears for the loss of so noble a fellow citizen. But if we are, as we ought, seeking one to come, it is a reason for no slight grief that we are deprived of so valuable a guide; but yet, as we ought to temper zeal with knowledge, so grief ought to be moderated with the confidence of hope. No one ought to wonder that distress forces a groan from us, that the loss of a friend causes us to weep; yet we must set bounds to our affliction in presence of the great consolation we have, when we consider not the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen: for those which are seen are temporal, but those not seen are eternal. In the first place, that holy soul is to be congratulated on his safe attainment of Paradise, so that we may not be open to the charge of want of charity, and that be said to us which the Lord said to the Apostles: If ye loved Me ye would rejoice because I go to the Father (S. John 14:28). The spirit of our father has only preceded us into the presence of the Father of spirits. We should be wanting not only in charity, but be guilty of the highest ingratitude, if we did not rejoice that he through whom we have received so many benefits has passed from labour to rest, from danger to safety, from the world to the Father. If, then, it is a mark of pious affection to weep for Malachi dead, it is still more a mark of this to rejoice with Malachi living. Who doubts that he is living? Undoubtedly he lives, and that in a state of happiness. To the eyes of the ungodly he seemed to die, but he has entered into peace.

2. Furthermore, if we consider this death as it affects ourselves, it suggests to us another motive for joy and gladness, because so faithful an advocate, so powerful a patron has preceded us to the court of Heaven, whose fervent charity cannot possibly forget his sons, and whose well-proved sanctity will find grace

in the sight of God. For who is so bold as to suppose the holy Malachi either loves his sons less or is less able to be of service to them than before? For if he was loved by God before he quitted the earth, he receives now more certain proofs of that love; and since he had loved those that were his he loved them to the end. Far be it from us to suppose, O holy soul, that thy prayer is to be considered less efficacious when it is thine to offer it with increased ardour in the presence of the Divine Majesty; when thou no longer walkest in faith but reignest in the sight of God! Far be it from us to suppose that thy charity so unwearied is enfeebled when thou art at the very source of the Eternal charity, and art drinking long draughts of that Love for which thou didst thirst on earth whilst receiving only drops of it. Charity which is strong as death, yea, stronger than death itself, was not able to yield to death. Even when dying he was not unmindful of his sons, commending you most affectionately to God, and though I am so unworthy, entreating me also with his accustomed kindness and humility not to forget them even to the end. That is why I have thought myself bound to write to you, that you may know that I am entirely yours both in spiritual things, if there is anything in my poor powers that can ever through the merits of him our holy father be of service to you, and in temporal affairs, if opportunity should ever be given to me, I am ready to be of service to you with the greatest willingness.

3. And now, also, my dearly beloved, I deplore with my whole heart the heavy loss which the Church of Ireland has sustained; and I sympathize with you the more, as I am sensible that it imposes upon me greater duties on your behalf. God has indeed honoured us greatly in permitting that our house should be edified by the spectacle of his blessed death, and enriched by the precious treasure of his body. Let it not be a source of regret to you that he should have his resting-place among us; for God has so ordered it according to the multitude of His mercy that as you possessed him while living, it should be given to us to possess him after his death. He was indeed, and is, a common father both to us and to you, for at the very time of his death his will in this respect was confirmed to us. Wherefore let us all be embraced as friends and brethren in the bonds of mutual charity, and as we were dear to so holy a father, let this spiritual relationship make us dear to each other.

4. I conclude by exhorting you, brethren, to follow diligently the steps of our blessed father, and that so much more earnestly as his holy life has become quite well known to you by the sight of it daily, for in this you will approve yourselves his true sons, if you follow bravely the directions which he gave; and as you saw

in him and heard from him how you ought to walk, study thus to walk and to abound more and more, for the wisdom of the sons is the glory of their father (Prov. 10:1). As for me, the example before me of such great perfection had a great influence in dispersing my sloth and increasing my reverence. Would that he may draw us after him, and that the remembrance of his virtues may make us run the race that is set before us, more willingly and earnestly. Pray for us, and may Christ have us all in His holy keeping.

LETTER CCCLXXV. (A.D. 1148.)

TO IDA, COUNTESS OF NEVERS

He complains to the Countess that some of her vassals had done injury to the monks at Vezelay.

To his beloved daughter in Christ, the Countess of NEVERS, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and assures her of his prayers.

The venerable Abbot of Vezelay complains that your vassals, and you yourself, prevent merchants and other persons from coming to Vezelay as they desire to do. Now since Count William of happy memory freely acknowledged before the Bishop of Auxerre, and in my presence, that to act thus was unjust and wrong; let me advise and entreat that you should not act in this way any more. For I fear if you should continue such acts that you may do much injury both to yourself in this world, and to your husband where he is, which I should greatly regret. Follow, then, my advice, and cause all these acts of injustice to cease.

LETTER CCCLXXVI. (A.D. 1149.)

TO ABBOT SUGER

He advises and requests that Suger should prevent certain noblemen from fighting a duel.

To his venerable father and lord SUGER, by the grace of God Abbot of St. Denys, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and sends assurance of his prayers.

It is time, and there is urgent need, that you should now take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, against a diabolical custom which is endeavouring to grow up a second time. Men who have just returned from the

Crusade, Lord Henry, son of the Count, and Lord Robert, brother of the King, being enraged one against the other, have fixed one of those abominable meetings to attack and slay each other, after the festival of Easter, being bent on violating all laws. Judge in what disposition of mind they have made the journey to Jerusalem, since they have returned in such a mood. How fitly can this be said of them:—We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; they are stricken, but they have not grieved; they are consumed, but they have refused to receive correction (Jer. 51:9, and v. 13). After so many hardships and perils; after the sufferings and the misfortunes which they have had to endure; when the realm is in peace, these two return to it only to disturb and throw it into confusion, and that in the absence of the King. I advise and entreat your Highness, since you are the chief person in the kingdom, to oppose this breach of the peace resolutely, and, either by persuasion or by force, prevent its taking place; your honour, the happiness of the kingdom, and the interest of the Church all require this of you. If I appeal to force, it is to that which belongs to ecclesiastical discipline. I am writing in this sense to the Archbishops of Rheims and of Sens, to the Bishops of Soissons and of Auxerre, to Count Theobald and Count Rodolph. Oppose yourself to these great evils both on account of the King and on account of the Pope, to whom the peace of the realm is a matter of concern.

LETTER CCCLXXVII. (A.D. 1149.)

TO THE SAME

Bernard praises his zeal and care for the good of the kingdom, and approves of his having called together the Estates of the Realm to remedy certain dangers. He encourages him to continue his efforts for the benefit of all.

To his very dear father and lord SUGER, by the grace of God Abbot of S. Denys, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes the spirit of wisdom and consolation.

1. I have seen with extreme joy and pleasure the letter which your Highness has written to the Lord Archbishop of Tours. May the Most High bless you for the zeal and care with which you fulfil your charge of the realm of our most glorious King, so that he is freed in a measure from the troubles which threaten him at the present, and would speedily be upon him if they were not warded off with all your strength. It was, indeed, a counsel from God that you should call together the chief men, both of the State and of the Church, for deliberation; so

that all who dwell on earth may see that he in whose hands the realm has been left is a devoted friend, a prudent counsellor, a strong and brave supporter to his Sovereign. And that Sovereign is one who is now in the service of the King whose kingdom is for ever and ever, who puts nations and kingdoms in movement so that the earthly land which belongs to the King of heaven, the land upon which His feet once stood, should not be lost. It was that King, I say, who when he was unrivalled in glory, abounding in riches, enjoying a secure peace, victorious in war, and in the prime of his youth, chose to exile himself from his own country, to serve in foreign lands, yet to serve Him whose service is royal. Who would dare to trouble his kingdom? who would venture upon such an impiety against the Lord and against His anointed? O, my lord King, I would that they were cut off who trouble thee! who seek harm to thee and thine whilst thou art remaining alone among foreign nations, so that the place might not be left desolate which the Lord hath chosen out of all lands to place His Name there.

2. Wherefore act bravely, and let your heart be strengthened, because the Lord God is with you, and protects the King who is in voluntary exile on His account. He who commands the winds and the sea will easily smooth the billows when they swell. The whole body of the Church of God will be with you, so that no one may rise up and make Israel to sin; and will thus support on the shoulders of all, the burden which is so heavy for yours. For now is the time when there is need for you to act as becomes the place which you hold, the dignity with which you are invested, the power which you have received: so that your memory may be recalled, not only with blessing, but also with praise and admiration by every generation which shall succeed. You have to provide with care that so important a branch of the Church of God should not have the labour of assembling without good result, and that measures should be taken either to prevent or crush all blameable projects for breaking the peace. I have in mind, though myself humble and obscure, to address you all when you are assembled in the Name of the Lord, in a letter which, if it is of no service, will at least show the warmth of my feeling towards you. May He who has inspired you with this good purpose enable you also to carry it out with success; may He bruise Satan under your feet, so that in that assembly the Lord may be glorified, His Church honoured, the realm strengthened and steadied, and those who speak and do evil reduced to silence.

LETTER CCCLXXVIII. (A.D. 1149.)

TO THE SAME

He asks assistance in grain for the Religions of the Diocese of Bourges.

To my very dear lord SUGER, by the grace of God the venerable Abbot of S. Denys, Brother BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and sends the assurance of his prayers.

We have in the Archdiocese of Bourges some brethren who are in want of bread; they are those from Maison Dieu, and I hear that the crops of corn of the lord King are very abundant, and, because abundant, they are not of great value. Therefore, I entreat you that out of those crops you would order such a supply to be bestowed upon those brethren as you shall see fit. For the King, whenever he was in that district, was accustomed to make some gift to them.

LETTER CCCLXXIX. (A.D. 1149.)

TO THE SAME

He entreats Suger to come to the help of a certain Abbot who is in want.

To his lord and very dear father SUGER, by the grace of God the Reverend Abbot of S. Denys, Brother BERNARD, called Abbot of Clairvaux, health and his devoted prayers in Christ.

I send a poor Abbot to a rich one, that the need of the one may be relieved out of the abundance of the other. In so doing I yield to you the better part, according to that saying of the Truth that it is better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Nor do I doubt that you would extend your bounty willingly and liberally to this one of the poor of Christ if you knew, as I do, his piety and probity, and the extreme necessity in which he is. He is burdened with debts, and he has not bread to eat, because his fields have produced only noxious herbs instead of grain. As your districts have not been stricken with the same sterility, I beg and entreat you of your charity to assist him, and you may be assured that whatever you shall be pleased to bestow upon him could not be devoted to a better object.

LETTER CCCLXXX. (A.D. 1149.)

TO THE SAME

On the unhappy state of the Church in the East.

To his very dear father and lord SUGER, by the grace of God Abbot of S. Denys, BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and the assurance of his humble

prayers.

The news which the Grand Master of the Temple and Brother John have brought I have received as joyfully as if I thought it came from God Himself. For the Church in the East utters such cries of distress now that whosoever does not sympathize with his whole heart is shown not to be a son of the Church. But though rejoiced at the news, I am distressed at the short notice you give me, which renders me unable to come to you at the time you named. I had promised the Bishop of Langres to meet him on that day for a conference on grave and important matters, which he had accepted in reliance upon me. I have, however, mentioned a time when, if convenient to you, I will gladly come to you with the same Bishop, who will be perhaps of great service in the conference which we are to hold.

LIFE OF SAINT MALACHY OF ARMAGH

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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CONTENTS

LIFE OF SAINT MALACHY OF ARMAGH

INTRODUCTION

I
THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MOVEMENT

II
THE FIRST STAGE

III
THE SYNOD OF RATHBREASAIL

IV
ST. MALACHY'S PART IN THE REFORMATION

THE LIFE OF ST. MALACHY

PREFACE

CHAPTER I
The early life of Malachy. Having been admitted to Holy Orders he associates with Malchus

CHAPTER II
Malachy's pity for his deceased sister. He restores the Monastery of Bangor. His first Miracles

CHAPTER III
St. Malachy becomes Bishop of Connor; he builds the Monastery of Iveragh

CHAPTER IV
Being made Archbishop of Armagh, he suffers many troubles. Peace being made, from being Archbishop of Armagh he becomes Bishop of Down

CHAPTER V
The Roman Pilgrimage: the Miracles which were wrought in it

CHAPTER VI
St. Malachy's Apostolic Labours, Praises and Miracles

CHAPTER VII
He does battle for the faith; he restores peace among those who were at variance; he takes in hand to build a stone church

CHAPTER VIII
Departure from Ireland. Death and Burial at Clairvaux

LETTERS OF ST. BERNARD

I
TO MALACHY. 1141

II
TO MALACHY. 1141 or 1142

III
TO MALACHY. 1143 or 1144

IV
TO THE BROTHERS IN IRELAND. NOVEMBER 1148

SERMONS OF ST. BERNARD ON THE PASSING OF MALACHY

SERMON I

SERMON II

ADDITIONAL NOTES

A
ST. BERNARD’S DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE OF THE IRISH CHURCH

B
THE HEREDITARY SUCCESSION OF THE COARBS OF PATRICK

C
MALACHY’S CONTEST WITH NIALL

APPENDIX

THE PORTION OF § 41 OF THE LIFE OMITTED IN TRANSLATION

PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES REFERRED TO

NAMES OF IRISH PERSONS AND PLACES

LIFE OF SAINT MALACHY OF ARMAGH

INTRODUCTION

THE main purpose of this Introduction is to give an account of a movement which changed the whole face of the Irish Church, and to the advancement of which St. Malachy devoted his life. In default of a better word we may call the movement a Reformation, though it might perhaps be more accurately described as an ecclesiastical revolution. Without some knowledge of its aims and progress it is impossible to assign to Malachy his true place in the history of his native country.

That such a movement actually took place in the twelfth century is beyond doubt. From about the year 1200 on it is certain that the organization of the Church of Ireland was similar to that of the other Churches of western Christendom. The country was divided into dioceses; and each diocese had a bishop as its ruler, and a Cathedral Church in which the bishop's stool was placed. The Cathedral Church, moreover, had a chapter of clergy, regular or secular, who performed important functions in the diocese. But up to the end of the eleventh century all these things were unknown among the Irish. The constitution of the Church was then of an entirely different type, one that had no exact parallel elsewhere. The passage from the older to the newer organization must have taken place in the twelfth century. During that century, therefore, there was a Reformation in the Irish Church, however little we may know of its causes or its process. But this Reformation was no mere re-modelling of the hierarchy. It can be shown that it imposed on the members of the Church a new standard of sexual morality; if we believe contemporary writers, it restored to their proper place such rites as Confession, Confirmation and Matrimony; it substituted for the offices of divine service previously in use those of the Roman Church; it introduced the custom of paying tithes; it established in Ireland the monastic orders of Latin Christendom; and it may have produced changes in other directions. But I propose to confine myself to the change in the constitution of the Church, which was its most striking feature. The subject, even thus narrowed, will give us more than can be satisfactorily treated in a few pages.

First, I must emphasize the assertion made a moment ago that the constitution of the Irish Church in the eleventh century was sui generis. Let us begin by

reminding ourselves what it was from the sixth to the eighth century. It was then essentially monastic in character. The rulers of the Church were the abbots of the monasteries, commonly known as the coarbs or successors of their founders. These abbots were sometimes bishops; but whether they were bishops or of lower rank in the ministry, their authority was inherent in their office of coarb. At this period bishops were numerous—more numerous than in later medieval or modern times; and certain functions were reserved for bishops, for example, ordination. No ecclesiastic, of whatever status, could perform such functions, unless he was of the episcopal order. But no bishop, as such, had jurisdiction. The bishops were often subordinate officers in monasteries, reverenced because of their office, but executing their special functions at the command of the abbots. Sometimes a bishop was attached to a single tribe. Sometimes a group of bishops—often seven in number—dwelt together in one place. But in no case, I repeat, had they jurisdiction. Thus ecclesiastical authority was vested in the abbots. The episcopate was bestowed on certain individuals as a personal distinction. Thus the bishops, if they were not also abbots, had only such influence on the affairs of the Church as their sanctity, or their learning, might give them.

It may surprise some that so anomalous a system of government should have persisted as late as the eleventh century, in other words for a period of over 500 years. But we must take account of the Danish—or as we should rather call it, the Norse—invasion of Ireland. Danish ships first appeared off the Irish coasts about the year 800. From that time for two centuries Ireland was to a large extent cut off from intercourse with the rest of Europe. The aim of the northern hordes, as it seems, was not mere pillage, but the extinction of Christianity. Ecclesiastical institutions were everywhere attacked, and often destroyed. And these institutions were centres of scholarship. Heretofore Ireland had been the special home of learning, and had attracted to itself large numbers of foreign students. But in those disastrous centuries its culture was reduced to the lowest point. In such circumstances it was not possible that the organization of the Church should be developed or strengthened. The Danish domination of the country must have tended to stereotype the old hierarchical system. It might, indeed, suffer from deterioration: it probably did. But it could not be assimilated to the system which then prevailed on the Continent. We should expect that the constitution of the Church in the eleventh century, whatever abuses may have crept into its administration, would in principle be identical with that of the pre-Danish period.

There can in fact be no doubt that it was. We have in our hands writings of Lanfranc, Anselm, St. Bernard and Giraldus Cambrensis which picture the state of the Irish Church at that time. They speak of it in terms which are by no means complimentary. But when they come to details we discover that the irregularities in its hierarchical arrangement which shocked them most went back to the days of St. Columba. Quotations cannot be given here. But the reader will probably find in the Life printed below, and the authorities referred to in the notes, sufficient proof that the constitution of the Irish Church in 1100 was in the main a following, though perhaps a corrupt following, of that of the sixth century.

There was indeed one abuse in the Irish Church of the tenth and eleventh centuries of which few traces are found before the Danish invasion. We learn from St. Bernard that the abbots of Armagh were the representatives of a single family, and held office, as of right, by hereditary succession. There is reason to believe that this evil custom was not peculiar to Armagh. According to St. Bernard, it was the gravest departure from Catholic tradition of which the Irish Church was guilty, and the parent of many evils. We shall hear more of it in the sequel. For the moment it is sufficient to note that it existed.

I

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MOVEMENT

But before the eleventh century ended forces were at work in Ireland which prepared the way for the introduction of a new order. They were set free by the conversion of the Norsemen to Christianity, and by their final defeat at the battle of Clontarf. The date of the conversion cannot be fixed: it was probably a gradual process. And we do not know from what source the Danes derived their Christianity. The victory of Clontarf was won on Good Friday, 1014.

Now a study of the Annals reveals the fact that in the seventh and eighth centuries there was a goodly, and on the whole an increasing, body of scholars in Ireland. Under the Norse domination, as we might, expect, the number was greatly diminished. But already in the tenth century there was a notable increase: in the eleventh century the number was doubled. In the tenth century, moreover, and still more in the eleventh, scholars began to congregate at special centres, which became permanent homes of learning, the most prominent of these schools being at Armagh and Clonmacnoise. And during the same period we find frequent mention of an official, unknown before the arrival of the Norsemen, who is styled fer légind or professor. Between 925 and 1000 the obits

of twenty-three professors are recorded; in the eleventh century of more than fifty. In the greater number of cases the fer légind is associated with one of those seats of learning which is known to have been most prolific of scholars.

Thus it appears that gradually, as the onslaughts of the Danes became less frequent, Irish men of learning tended more and more to become teachers rather than mere students, and to gravitate towards a few great centres of study. The climax of this movement towards organization and the eminence of special places was reached about the middle of the eleventh century (1030–1063), when mention is made of thirty-three persons who held the office of fer légind, and when the principal schools seem to have been those of Clonmacnoise, Armagh, Kildare and Kells.

The Reformation of the twelfth century, like that of the sixteenth, was prepared for by a revival of learning.

But further, the defeat of the Danes removed the barrier which had hindered communication between Ireland and the rest of Europe. Students once more came to Ireland from other lands to pursue their studies. The most remarkable of these was perhaps Sulien, the future bishop of St. David's. Sulien the Wise was born shortly before the date of the battle of Clontarf in the district of Cardigan. In early youth he displayed much aptitude for learning, and in middle life, about 1058, "stirred by the example of the fathers," he paid a visit to the Irish schools in order to perfect his studies. He spent thirteen years in that country, and then established a famous school at Llanbadarn Fawr in Wales. In the library of Trinity College, Dublin, there is a precious relic of the work of this school. It is a beautiful manuscript of St. Jerome's Latin version of the Psalter according to the Hebrew, once the property of Bishop Bedell. The manuscript was written by a member of the school, a Welshman named Ithael. It is adorned with excellent illuminations by John, one of Sulien's sons, and was presented to Ricemarch, another son of Sulien. A valuable copy of the Hieronymian Martyrology prefixed to it gives sundry indications that it was transcribed from an Irish exemplar. At the end of the volume are some verses composed by Ricemarch, and perhaps written there by his own hand. They display considerable Biblical and patristic learning. Another relic of the school is a copy of St. Augustine's De Trinitate in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. It was written and illuminated by John, and contains excellent Latin verses from his pen. In the British Museum there is also a poem of Ricemarch describing the horrors of the Norman invasion of Wales. And finally we have a Life of St. David, by the same author. It relates many incidents culled from the lives of Irish saints who had in one way or

another been brought into contact with David; all of them reminiscent of Sulien's studies in the Irish Schools.

I have dwelt on these things because they illustrate in a striking way the revival of Irish learning in the eleventh century. But just at the time when Sulien, and doubtless many other foreigners, were coming to Ireland to study, Irish scholars were beginning to renew their ancient habit of travelling to other countries. By way of example I may mention two, both of whom were known by the same name, Marianus Scotus. One of these, a native of the north of Ireland, whose real name was Muiredach Mac Robartaich, founded the monastery of St. Peter at Ratisbon about 1070; and he was succeeded there by six abbots of north Irish birth. He wrote a commentary on the Pauline Epistles, which is still preserved in the Imperial Library at Vienna. The other, Mael Brigte by name, left Ireland in 1056, and after some wanderings established himself at Mainz in 1069. He compiled a chronicle, which is of considerable value. Hereafter I shall have to mention other Irish men of travel; and it will be seen that from some of them, who returned home, came the main impulse to the reform of the Irish Church.

The battle of Clontarf broke the power of the Danes in Ireland; but it did not secure their departure from the country. Those that remained were mainly settled in the four cities of Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and Limerick. In due time these four Danish colonies adopted the Christian Faith, and before long they became organized churches, each presided over by a bishop. In Dublin this took place a quarter of a century after the battle of Clontarf, the first bishop being Dunan, in whose episcopate the Danish king, Sitric, founded the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity about 1040. Of the early ecclesiastical history of Wexford practically nothing is known; but the first bishop of Waterford was consecrated in 1096, and the first bishop of Limerick eight or ten years later. These were the first churches in Ireland ruled by bishops who were not abbots; and it seems that each of the bishops had a defined diocese. The dioceses of Dublin, Waterford, and perhaps Wexford, were very small, extending only a little way, if at all, beyond the walls of the Cathedral city. The diocese of Limerick, on the other hand, was extensive; rather larger than the present diocese of the same name. But whether large or small each of these dioceses presented to the eyes of the Irish a model of Church government similar to that in vogue on the Continent, and utterly different from that to which they were accustomed.

This might prove a potent factor in the Reformation, once a tendency developed among the Irish to bring their ecclesiastical machinery into

conformity with that of the rest of the world. But it is manifest that by itself it would not induce them to re-model their hierarchy. It was not to be expected that they would cast aside the tradition of centuries, moved merely by a desire to imitate their late enemies. If, as is commonly held, the Danish dioceses, without exception, held themselves aloof from, or were hostile to, Irish Christianity, such a result could hardly have been attained, at any rate until the coming of the Anglo-Normans. These later invaders would doubtless have forced diocesan episcopacy on the Irish Church. But that it was established in Ireland before the country came, even in part, under English rule, is certain. So we must ask the question: What was the connecting link which bound the Church of the Danish colonists to that of Celtic Ireland? By way of answer I point to the remarkable fact, often overlooked, that all the earliest bishops of the Danish dioceses were of Irish birth. Why Danish Christians should have elected Irishmen as their bishops I do not attempt to explain. But the evidence for the fact is clear.

The first two bishops of Dublin, Dunan and Patrick (Gilla Pátraic), had unmistakably Irish names. So too had their immediate successors Donough O'Hanley and his nephew Samuel O'Hanley; and of these two the latter is stated by the English chronicler Eadmer to have been "natione Hibernensis." The next bishop, Gregory—the first archbishop of Dublin—was likewise "natione Hibernensis" according to the continuator of Florence of Worcester. He was followed by St. Laurence O'Toole, of whose nationality it is unnecessary to give proof.

Malchus, the earliest bishop of Waterford, was an Irishman; so also was Gilbert, the first bishop of Limerick. And when Gilbert resigned his see, after an episcopate of thirty-five years, he was succeeded by Patrick, whose name tells its own tale.

Most of the Irish rulers of Danish dioceses whom I have mentioned were men of travel. Patrick of Dublin, to whose learning Lanfranc bears testimony, "was nourished in monastic institutions from his boyhood," and certainly not in an Irish religious house. Donough O'Hanley, before his consecration, was a monk of Canterbury; Samuel O'Hanley was a monk of St. Albans; Malchus was called to Waterford from Walkelin's monastery at Winchester; Gilbert of Limerick had visited Normandy, and at a later date we find him assisting at the consecration of a bishop in Westminster Abbey. Such men had had training which familiarized them with Roman methods of Church Government. They were well fitted to organize and rule their dioceses. And if they desired to imbue the Celtic Church with the principles which they had learnt, and on which they acted, their

nationality gave them a ground of appeal which no Dane could have had. It is of course not to be assumed that all of them were so disposed. The Danish Christians of Dublin not only stood aside from the Celtic Church; for reasons which will appear later they were inimical to it, and it to them. Their bishops, with the possible exception of the first, made profession of canonical obedience to the English Primates. Not only so: they gloried in their subjection to Canterbury. “We have always been willing subjects of your predecessors,” wrote the burgesses and clergy of Dublin to Ralph, archbishop of Canterbury, when the see was vacant in 1121. And then, after a reference to the great jealousy of Cellach of Armagh against them, they proceed to declare, “We will not obey his command, but desire to be always under your rule. Therefore we beseech you to promote Gregory to the episcopate if you wish to retain any longer the parish which we have kept for you so long.” It was clearly impossible that this diocese could directly influence the Irish in the direction of reform. But no such obstacle barred the path of the first bishops of Limerick and Waterford. Gilbert owed no allegiance to Canterbury; Malchus was consecrated at Canterbury, but he soon escaped his profession of obedience to Anselm. Both became leaders of the romanizing movement in Ireland.

But the influence of the Danish dioceses on the Irish Church was not limited to the personal action of their bishops. Indirectly all of them, including Dublin, had a share in promoting the Reformation. Archbishop Lanfranc, as early as 1072, claimed that his primacy included Ireland as well as England. The claim, curiously enough, was based on Bede’s History, in which there is not a single word which supports it. But the arrival two years later of Patrick, elect of Dublin, seeking consecration at his hands, gave him his opportunity to enforce it. When Patrick returned to take possession of his see he carried with him two letters from Lanfranc. One was addressed to Gothric, the Manx prince who for the moment was king of Dublin. Lanfranc, with tactful exaggeration, dubs him “glorious king of Ireland,” and tells him that in consecrating Patrick he had followed the custom of his predecessors in the chair of St. Augustine. The other letter was more important. It was directed to Turlough O’Brien, grandson of Brian Boroimhe, who is also styled, inconsistently, and not altogether truly, “magnificent king of Ireland”: he was doubtless king of Ireland in hope, but in fact he never extended his sway beyond the southern half of the island. Turlough’s attention is called to the irregularities of the Irish Church. He is urged to call a council of bishops and religious men for the extirpation of those evil customs, and to be present at it in person. This letter evidently produced an

impression, and not only on Turlough O'Brien. For a few years later Lanfranc wrote another letter, this time to a bishop named Donnell and others, who had sought his advice on a difficult question concerning the sacrament of baptism.

Anselm followed in the footsteps of Lanfranc. Not long after his consecration (1093) he wrote to Donnell, Donough O'Hanley and the rest of the bishops of Ireland, begging the aid of their prayers, and urging them to consult him in all cases of difficulty. Almost immediately afterwards came the election of Malchus, bishop of Waterford, in 1096. Among those who signed the petition for his consecration were Bishop Donnell, Samuel O'Hanley, whom Anselm had consecrated for Dublin earlier in the same year, and O'Dunan, bishop of Meath (Idunan episcopus Midiae), whose name we shall do well to remember. But most notable of all were Murtough O'Brien, son of Turlough, then the strongest of Irish kings, soon to be ardrí, and his brother Dermot O'Brien. It is clear that Lanfranc had won the O'Briens to the Romanizing side; and Anselm was determined to hold them fast. Within the next few years there was a fairly regular correspondence between him and Murtough, of which some letters have been preserved. The relation between the two men was evidently most friendly. And the archbishop fully exploited his opportunity. Again and again he reminded the king of his duty to repress abuses, the most important of which in his eyes were lax sexual morality, and the consecration of bishops by single bishops, without fixed sees or defined dioceses.

So Lanfranc and Anselm schooled the O'Briens in the principles of Rome. And from one point of view their efforts were completely successful. The O'Briens became staunch friends of the Reform movement in Ireland. But from another point of view they failed. We must remember that their aim was not only to purify the Irish Church, but to bring it into subjection to Canterbury. That they did not succeed in doing. The Reformation, which they taught the O'Briens to support, meant, in the end, a repudiation of the pretensions of the English primates.

I have mentioned among those who were concerned in the election of Malchus of Waterford, O'Dunan, bishop of Meath. He is unquestionably Máel Muire Ua Dunáin, whom the annalists describe as "learned bishop of the Goidhil, and head of the clergy of Ireland, and steward of the almsdeeds of the world," and who died on Christmas Eve, 1117, at the age of seventy-six. He is mentioned in a charter in the Book of Kells, the date of which is apparently about 1100, as Senior of Leath Chuinn (i.e. the north of Ireland). He was fifty-five when Malchus was elected, and had probably already attained the eminence

throughout Ireland which is attested by the high-flown phrases of the Annals. That he was then bishop of Meath in the modern sense is impossible; the title at that period would mean no more than that he was a bishop who lived within the borders of the Kingdom of Meath. But the Annals of Tigernach tell us that he died at Clonard, from which it may perhaps be inferred that his see was at that place. His importance for us just now is that he is the only adherent of the Reform movement whom we have yet discovered in the north of Ireland.

II

THE FIRST STAGE

Before proceeding further in our investigation of the origin and course of the Reformation, it may be well to recall how far we have already advanced. We started from the fact that a Reformation of the Irish Church was actually accomplished in the twelfth century, and we proceeded to look for the causes which may have brought it about. We have found that the first of these was the revival of learning consequent on the cessation of the ravages of the Norsemen. We have noted also the restoration at the same period of communication between Ireland and the rest of Europe—the coming of students to the Irish schools, and the wanderings of Irish scholars in other lands. We have seen that the establishment of the Danish dioceses gave to the Irish a model of diocesan episcopacy, and that among the Irish-born bishops of those dioceses there were men capable of leading a Reform movement. And we have learned that Lanfranc and Anselm, through their relation with the Danish dioceses, found means to induce the more conspicuous civil and religious leaders of the Celtic population to undertake the work of reconstituting the Church. Finally, we have been able to name some persons who might be expected to take a prominent place in the early stages of the Reformation. They are Gilbert of Limerick, Malchus of Waterford, O'Dunan of Meath, and the princes of the O'Brien family. The best proof that we have rightly conceived the origin of the movement will come before us when we study the share which these persons severally had in promoting it.

We must now trace, as far as it can be done, the first steps in the process by which, under the influences which I have indicated, the Church of Ireland passed from its older to its later hierarchical system.

The earliest attempt to give concrete form to the principles of the Reformers seems to have been made in the Kingdom of Meath, about the year 1100. But the primary evidence for the fact is of much later date. There are extant some

constitutions of Simon Rochfort, bishop of Meath, put forth at a synod of his diocese held at the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul at Newtown, near Trim, in 1216. The first of them recites an ordinance of the papal legate, Cardinal John Paparo, at the Council of Kells in 1152, which is of great importance.

Paparo ordered that as the bishops of the weaker sees died off, arch-priests, or, as we call them, rural deans, should succeed to their place, and take charge of the clergy and people within their borders.

The inference which this enactment suggests is that the weaker sees to which it refers were the centres of small dioceses, which Paparo desired to be converted into rural deaneries. In accordance with the ordinance of Paparo, Rochfort's synod enjoined that rural deans should be placed in the five sees of Trim, Kells, Slane, Skreen and Dunshaughlin, each of whom should supervise the churches in his own deanery. These, with Clonard, which had long been the see of Rochfort's diocese, are six of the twelve rural deaneries into which the present diocese of Meath is divided. I conclude that they, and probably the remaining six, coincided more or less closely with dioceses ruled by bishops in the first half of the twelfth century.

Let us now call to our aid a much earlier witness. The annalists inform us that in the year 1111 there was an assembly at Usnagh in Meath. It decreed that "the parishes of Meath" should be equally divided between the bishops of Clonmacnoise and Clonard. We may infer that Clonmacnoise and Clonard, two of the present rural deaneries, were then dioceses. It is not likely that the dioceses of Meath would have been formed into two groups, each to constitute the diocese of a bishop who had already no diocese of his own. But however that may be, we have here proof that before 1111 Meath had been parted into a number of small dioceses ruled by bishops.

If the question be asked, By whose authority or influence this division of Meath into dioceses was made? I can suggest no one more likely than Máel Muire Ua Dunáin, the "bishop of Meath" to whom reference has already been made. He was a Meath man, and probably bishop of Clonard: he was an ecclesiastic of great repute, especially in the north; and he was a devoted adherent of the Reform movement. His action, if indeed it was his, was premature and ill-advised. As we shall see, his work had to be slowly undone. But it is remarkable, as the first attempt known to us to establish diocesan episcopacy among the Irish. I shall have more to say about it hereafter; but now I must follow the main stream of events.

Gilbert, the first bishop of Limerick, as has already been noted, was an

Irishman. Indeed, we may venture to describe him as one of the most remarkable Irishmen of his time, in spite of the fact that the Annals pass him by in almost complete silence. He was at any rate a staunch supporter, or, as we should rather say, the leader of the Reformation movement in its earliest course. In a letter written in 1107 Anselm exhorted him, in virtue of their mutual friendship, to make good use of his episcopal office by correcting that which was amiss, and planting and sowing good customs, calling to aid him in the work his king (Murtough O'Brien), the other Irish bishops, and all whom he could persuade. That, assuredly, Gilbert was forward to do.

No sooner had he taken possession of his see than he began to organize a diocese. Its boundaries seem to have been fixed with care. It was exactly co-extensive with the modern diocese of Limerick, except on the north, where it stretched across the Shannon and included part of the present diocese of Killaloe. Moreover he made the Church of St. Mary his Cathedral Church; indeed it is not unlikely that he built it to serve that purpose.

A few years later he was appointed Legate of the Holy See. It is manifest that his new office gave him a unique opportunity of moulding the fortunes of the Irish Church. In Ireland Gilbert was now virtually the chief prelate and head of the Church. He was the representative and embodiment of the authority of the Holy See. The whole Romanizing party would naturally circle round him as their leader, and many waverers would be attracted to the new movement in the Irish Church, by the claim which he could make to speak in the name of the head of the Church Catholic.

It was after he became legate, and no doubt in virtue of his legatine commission, that he issued a treatise which may be regarded as the programme of the Reformation. It is entitled De Statu Ecclesiae. Of this a fragment, including its earlier chapters, is still in our hands.

Before giving a slight summary of its contents I must mention that it is addressed "to the bishops and presbyters of the whole of Ireland," and that Gilbert declares that he wrote it at the urgent request of many of them. In this statement there may lurk an element of exaggeration. But behind it there lies at least so much truth as this. A considerable body of the clergy had approached the newly made legate, and requested his instruction regarding the proper constitution of the Church—for such is the subject of his tract; and that implies that the Romanizing movement was no longer in its infancy. There were many bishops and presbyters who had become dissatisfied with the old Irish method of Church government. They desired to bring it into conformity with that of the

Roman Church. But they were in some uncertainty as to the nature of the changes that should be made, and so they asked Gilbert to give them authoritative counsel.

In reply to their petition, with the aid of an elaborate diagram, he sketched as follows the organization of a properly ordered Church.

The bishops, he tells us, and others of higher rank in the ministry belong to the general Church, as distinct from particular churches. The priest is the highest officer in a particular church. It is the primary duty of every priest to serve and obey his bishop with all humility. For by the bishops particular churches are ruled. To each bishop are subject all the churches within his jurisdiction. And this applies as well to monastic establishments as to parishes. The head of each parish is a priest, the head of each monastery is an abbot, who is himself a priest. The bishop has a pontifical church, in which is his see (sedes), and of which he is the head. From it he governs the inferior churches. A bishop can perform all the offices of a priest, but he has seven functions peculiar to himself; to confirm, to bless, to absolve, to hold synods, to dedicate churches and altars, to consecrate the ornaments of churches, to ordain abbots and abbesses and the secular clergy. Gilbert's diagram represented the bishop as ruling two churches; but he explains that this is to be interpreted figuratively. A bishop may have as many as a thousand churches within his jurisdiction: he must have at least ten.

A bishop is himself subject to authority. His immediate superior is the archbishop. An archbishop has a sphere of immediate jurisdiction, like any other bishop, but he also rules a number of subject bishops. Of these there must be at least three; but an archbishop is not permitted to have more than twenty subject bishops—an important point, as we shall see. Above the archbishop is the primate. It is the special privilege of the primate to ordain and crown the king. He too has his sphere of immediate jurisdiction, and he must have at least one subject archbishop, but not more than six.

Primates and archbishops must be consecrated at Rome by the Pope, or at least must receive the pall from him. Without the pall they are not raised above their fellow-bishops.

Finally, the primates are subject to the Pope, and the Pope to Christ.

The higher members of the hierarchy have their analogues in the civil order. The Pope corresponds to the emperor, the primate to the king, an archbishop to a duke, a bishop to an earl, a priest to a knight. But all these are merely grades of the order of priests. There are but seven orders of the ministry—priests, deacons, sub-deacons, acolytes, exorcists, readers and door-keepers. Of the laity Gilbert

says little. They are of two classes: husbandmen and soldiers. Their duties are to attend church, to pay first-fruits, tithes and oblations, to avoid evil and do good, and to obey their pastors.

There is nothing original in all this; and some parts of it must have been very puzzling to stay-at-home Irishmen. For example, what were they to make of Gilbert's comparison of primates, archbishops, bishops and priests to kings, dukes, earls and knights? They knew as little of dukes and earls in the civil order as they did of primates and archbishops in the ecclesiastical; and they had far more kings than suited Gilbert's scheme. But the tract is important, both as a summary of the teaching which Gilbert had no doubt been inculcating far and wide for years, and as a permanent record, for future use, of the aims of the Reformers.

However unintelligible the treatise may have been in parts, it brought out with startling clearness one or two essential points. First the Church must be ruled by bishops. Even the monasteries are subject to them. How amazing such a statement must have sounded to men who had inherited the tradition, many centuries old, that the abbots of monasteries were the true ecclesiastical rulers, bishops their subordinate officials.

Moreover, bishoprics and dioceses could not be set up at random. The number of bishops and by consequence the size of dioceses must be carefully considered. The puny bishoprics of Meath, for example, could form no part of a scheme such as Gilbert adumbrated.

It was manifest that if his guidance were to be followed, no mere modification of existing arrangements would suffice. The old hierarchy must be torn up by the roots, and a new hierarchy planted in its place.

We shall meet Gilbert again in the course of our story. But we may now turn aside from him to make the acquaintance of a new actor in the drama of the Reformation. Like O'Dunan he was a Northern.

Cellach was born in 1080. He was an Armagh man, sprung from the family which for centuries past had provided abbots for the monastery of that city, the grandson of a former abbot. He first appears on the scene in 1105, when on the death of Abbot Donnell he became coarb of Patrick and abbot of Armagh. He was elected, we may assume, in the customary way. He was then under twenty-six years of age, and was apparently still a layman. But his subsequent action shows that he was already a convinced disciple of the new movement. Doubtless he had fallen under the spell of Gilbert of Limerick. Six weeks after his election he abandoned the tradition of a century and a half, and received holy orders. But

in other respects he trod in the footsteps of his predecessors. In the following year he went on a circuit of the Cenél Eoghain, and “took away his full demand: namely, a cow for every six, or an in-calf heifer for every three, or a half ounce of silver for every four, besides many donations also.” Next he proceeded to Munster, with similar results. But his circuit of Munster is important for other reasons. There he had opportunities of intercourse with his Munster friends, Gilbert of Limerick and Malchus of Waterford. And with that circuit we may connect two incidents of of the highest significance. In 1106, apparently in the latter part of the year, Caincomrac Ua Baigill, bishop of Armagh, died. The news of his death probably reached Cellach while he was in the south. Certainly in Munster Cellach was consecrated bishop. It is impossible not to connect the latter event with the former. He was consecrated to fill the vacancy created by the death of O’Boyle. Thus he was now bishop of Armagh as well as coarb of Patrick. In his own person he united the two lines of coarbial and episcopal succession, which had parted asunder in 957, when the first of a series of lay coarbs had been elected, and the first of the six contemporary bishops had been consecrated. This was a great gain for the Reformers. The old anomaly of a ruler of the Church who was not a bishop had, so far as Armagh was concerned, disappeared for the time. And Armagh was the principal ecclesiastical centre in Ireland. Cellach might now call himself archbishop of Armagh, though he had not fulfilled the condition laid down by Gilbert, that an archbishop must receive the pall at the hands of the Pope. The title was actually accorded to him by so rigid a papalist as St. Bernard.

But there was more to come. In the year 1101 there had been held at Cashel a great assembly of the clergy and people of Ireland. Bishop O’Dunan, whom we already know, was at their head. To it came also Murtough O’Brien, who earlier in the year, after an expedition in force through Connaught and Ulster, had entered Tara as ardrí of Ireland. In the presence of the assembly he surrendered Cashel, the royal city of the kings of Munster, to the Church, as an offering to God and St. Patrick. When we consider the persons who were concerned in this transaction we find good ground for the suspicion that the gift was intended in some way to benefit the movement for reform. Now St. Bernard informs us that Cellach created a second archiepiscopal see in Ireland in subordination to Armagh. After his manner he does not tell us where it was situated. It is certain, however, that it was at Cashel, which was the seat of an archbishop in 1110. It was probably surrendered for this very purpose by O’Brien. And if it be asked when Cellach erected it into an archbishopric the answer is scarcely doubtful.

Only once, so far as we know, did Cellach enter Munster before 1110. It was on the occasion of his circuit. In the year of the circuit, therefore, 1106, the archbishopric of Cashel was founded. In that same year, or shortly afterwards, Malchus of Waterford was translated to the new see, and became its first archbishop. There is no evidence that a new bishop was consecrated for Waterford in succession to Malchus: this indeed is unlikely. But it should be noted that by his acceptance of an archbishopric subject to Armagh, Malchus was released from the profession of obedience which he had made to Anselm ten years earlier. He was now a bishop of the Church of Ireland, with undivided allegiance.

The reason for the creation of a second archbishopric is not difficult to guess. By this time the plans of the Reformers must have been in some degree matured: before long, as we shall see, they were set forth in minute detail. Already Cellach was archbishop of Armagh. His suffragan sees, indeed, apart from those formed by O'Dunan, if their bishops acknowledged themselves as his suffragans, were in nubibus. But suffragan sees he must have, according to the theory of Gilbert, each with a diocese attached to it. They must be at least three in number, but not more than twenty. Now it was a foregone conclusion that if the Reformers had their way there would be more than twenty dioceses in Ireland. Hence, by Gilbert's rule, there must be a second archbishop. Moreover, by making the archbishopric of Cashel subject to Armagh, Cellach secured for himself and his successors a title yet more imposing than that of archbishop. He was now Primate of Ireland; for it sufficed, if Gilbert spoke truly, that a primate should have one subject archbishop. As coarb of Patrick Cellach's authority ranged over the whole country; as primate his sway would be no less extensive. He actually claimed the title, if not then, at least a few years later.

We may now for a while leave Gilbert and Cellach and Malchus and O'Dunan. With Gilbert as legate, and Cellach and Malchus as archbishops; with dioceses already formed at Limerick and Waterford and in Meath, probably also at Armagh and Cashel and Wexford; with the great extension of the movement, and its spread from Munster to Meath and Ulster, all was ready for the meeting of the Synod whose ordinances should give definite shape to the policy to be pursued in the future.

III

THE SYNOD OF RATHBREASAIL

Geoffrey Keating quotes from the lost Annals of Clonenagh an account of a national Synod or Council held at Rathbreasail in the year 1110. The existing Annals record that a national Council met at Fiadh meic Oengusa in 1111. With the exception of the Annals of Inisfallen, none of them mention Rathbreasail; but the Inisfallen annalist tells us that it is another name for Fiadh meic Oengusa. I shall assume therefore that there were not two national Synods in successive years, but one; and, following the Annals of Clonenagh, I shall call it the Synod of Rathbreasail, and date it in 1110.

The Synod of Rathbreasail marks the beginning of the second stage of the Reformation movement. It was convened by the papal legate; its purpose was the Romanizing of the Irish Church, and, in particular, the establishment in it of diocesan episcopacy. Fortunately Keating's excerpts from its Acts give us ample information concerning the canons which dealt with this matter.

The annalists, as I have said, describe the council as a national assembly. But we can hardly claim so much for it. It is much more probable that it was in reality a meeting of the Reforming party. The first signature appended to its canons was that of Gilbert, who presided as legate of the Holy See. He was followed by Cellach, "coarb of Patrick and Primate of Ireland," and Malchus, "archbishop of Cashel," whom we have known as bishop of Waterford. The signatures of many bishops followed, but they have not been preserved. We know, however, that Bishop O'Dunan was present, as was also Murtough O'Brien, king of Ireland. These were all leaders of the Reforming party; and it is evident that they guided the deliberations of the Council. Moreover there were no representatives of the provinces of Connaught and Leinster, in which as yet, it appears, the Reform movement had not established itself. That is made clear by notes appended to canons which specially concerned those provinces. One of them begins thus: "If the Connaught clergy agree to this … we desire it, and if they do not"—in that case they may do as they please, with certain limitaions. The clergy of Leinster are accorded a similar liberty. It is obvious that if among the members of the Council there had been men who could speak with authority for the provinces mentioned such notes need not, and therefore could not, have been written. The Council represented Munster, Ulster and Meath. It was national, not because it could speak for all Ireland, but because it made laws for all Ireland.

I must now give an account of those laws, so far as they relate to the organization of the Church. I follow the Annals of Clonenagh, as reported by Keating: but in two or three places I have been obliged to amend his text.

The fathers began by appealing to English precedent. “Just as twelve bishops were fixed under Canterbury in the south of England, and twelve bishops in the north under the city of York,” so it was ordained that there should be twelve bishops in the south of Ireland, and twelve in the north. The constitution of the Irish Church was henceforth, it would seem, to be a copy of that of the English Church. But, as it happens, neither in 1110 nor in any other year of its history, had the Church of England twelve sees under Canterbury and twelve under York. How then can we explain the statement of the Synod? The answer is simple. Bede preserves a letter of Pope Gregory the Great, written in 601, in which St. Augustine of Canterbury was directed to consecrate twelve bishops as his own suffragans. He was also ordered to consecrate a bishop for York, who, if his mission proved successful, was likewise to consecrate twelve suffragans, and to be promoted to the dignity of a metropolitan. It is clear that the Synod found its precedent in this letter, not observing that Pope Gregory’s ordinance was never carried into effect. But they made another mistake. For Gregory intended that there should be twelve bishops in the north of England, and twelve in the south, exclusive of the archbishops, twenty-six in all; while it is evident that the Council of Rathbreasail intended that there should be twelve bishops in the north of Ireland, and twelve in the south, including the archbishops, twenty-four in all. Some one whose lead the Synod followed—probably the papal legate—had read his Bede with little care. But that is not surprising. Lanfranc had misread Bede, when on his authority he claimed to be Primate of Ireland; why should not Gilbert have gone astray in like fashion? The point to be noticed and emphasized is that the first act of the Synod was to fix the number of the Irish sees, on the curious principle that what the wisdom of Pope Gregory held to be good for England would suit Ireland also.

Apparently the next step in the procedure was to determine the distribution of the dioceses among the provinces, and to fix the see of each prospective diocese. Ireland was divided into two portions by a line running, approximately, from Dublin to Galway. The part to the north of that line was known as Leath Chuinn, the part to the south as Leath Mogha. In Leath Chuinn were the provinces of Ulster and Connaught and the kingdom of Meath; in Leath Mogha were the provinces of Munster and Leinster. The Synod decreed that there should be five sees in Ulster, five in Connaught, and two in Meath, making twelve bishoprics for Leath Chuinn; there were to be seven in Munster and five in Leinster—twelve bishoprics for Leath Mogha. The names of all these sees were given in the Acts of the Synod.

Finally the Synod defined the boundaries of the dioceses to which the sees severally belonged. It is not my purpose to give a minute description of these boundaries. That would involve an excursus on Irish topography, which would be, to say the least, out of place. It will suffice to indicate roughly those of the five dioceses of Ulster. To the west was what was called the “parish” (fairche) of Derry or Raphoe. It was nearly identical with our diocese of Raphoe. The only important difference is that it included Inishowen, the district between Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle, which now belongs to the diocese of Derry. Next to the parish of Derry or Raphoe the Synod placed the parish of Ardstraw. Ardstraw never became the see, and the diocese was subsequently known as “of Derry.” It extended eastward to the Carntougher Mountains, and coincides pretty closely with the present diocese. It subsequently gained Inishowen from its western neighbour, and the strip between the Carntougher Mountains and the Bann from its eastern neighbour. But otherwise it remains much as the Synod of Rathbreasail determined. Next to it was to be the parish of Connor or Down. When the portion of it to the west of the Bann was transferred to Derry, it coincided almost exactly with the modern Down, Connor and Dromore. On the other hand the parish of Armagh seems originally to have included the modern county of Monaghan: it has shrunk to little more than half its size. The parish of Clogher, at first very small, has extended east and west, and is three times as large as it was intended to be. On the whole the work of the Synod has stood well the test of many centuries of history.

It is indeed wonderful that it should have done so. For the method of the Synod—fixing the number of the dioceses before their boundaries were discussed—was unstatesmanlike. Always, and necessarily, ecclesiastical divisions have coincided with civil divisions. We may find the germ of the rule in the Acts of the Apostles. If this was inevitable in other lands it was even more inevitable in Ireland in pre-Norman days. The Irish people was a collection of clans, having, it is true, certain common institutions, but bound together by no sort of national constitution, and often at war with each other.’ If ecclesiastical divisions were to be permanent in Ireland, they must take account of the tribal divisions of the country. The primary ecclesiastical unit must be the territory of a tribe, just as it was the primary civil unit. But to base the limits of dioceses, consistently and in every case, on tribal boundaries was impossible when the number of dioceses was arbitrarily fixed beforehand. It could not be that exactly the same number of dioceses would suit Ulster as suited Leinster and Connaught. In one province the tribes would be more or less numerous, and

more or less mutually antagonistic, than in another. By reason of its method, therefore, the Synod was doomed to fall short of complete success in its work.

We have instances in Ulster of the soundness of the principle that I have stated. Take the diocese of Raphoe. It was designed to include Inishowen. But from a tribal point of view Inishowen (Inis Eoghain) belonged to the next diocese, which included the tribeland of Tír Eoghain. Its inhabitants were of the same stock as the Cenél Eoghain, and were known as the Cenél Eoghain of the Island. So the natural result followed. Inishowen broke off from the diocese of Raphoe and became part of the diocese of Derry. When this happened the diocese of Raphoe was stabilized. It consisted of the land of a single tribe, the Cenél Conaill; and so henceforth its limits were never altered.

We can easily understand, therefore, that the disregard of tribal boundaries, forced on it in many cases by its method, was an element of weakness in the Rathbreasail scheme. And yet it was natural that special stress should be laid on the arbitrary limitation of sees which was its main cause. Ireland was overrun with bishops. It is said that over fifty of them attended the Synod of Rathbreasail; and they represented only part of the country. But Gilbert had laid down the rule that an archbishop could not have more than twenty suffragans. On this principle, if all the existing bishops had been provided with dioceses, or all the larger tribes had been given bishops, Ireland would have had not two, but six or seven archbishops: and this would have been a travesty of Catholic Church order, as it was then understood. It was essential that the number should be ruthlessly cut down.

But the legislators of Rathbreasail did not entirely ignore tribal boundaries. On the contrary, so far as the numerical basis of their scheme permitted, they took them into account. And here we find that the Synod was confronted with another difficulty. The territories of tribes were fluctuating quantities. Hence, even if a diocese was the district of a single tribe, with very definite boundaries, no one could be sure that in the course of years its limits would not change. Again I take an example from Ulster. The Synod selected the Carntougher Mountains as the boundary between the dioceses of Deny and Connor. And wisely. For between those mountains and the Bann there dwelt a sept—the Fir Li—whose affinities were altogether with the people to the east of the river. But only a few years after the Synod that territory was overrun by the O'Kanes of the Roe Valley, and the Fir Li retreated across the Bann, never to return. The result followed which might have been expected. Their territory was transferred from Connor to Derry, and the Bann to this day is the boundary of the two dioceses.

It may be well, before I pass to another subject, to call attention to some special features of the Rathbreasail canons.

First, let us note the prominence which is given to Limerick, the diocese of Gilbert, the president of the Synod. Usually a diocese is somewhat vaguely defined by four places on its borders. But here no less than thirteen are named. So full are the indications that a fairly exact map of the diocese could be drawn. Further, in this diocese alone mention is made of a Cathedral Church: "The Church of Mary in Limerick is its principal church." Note the present tense: "The Church of Mary is"—not shall be—"its principal church." We remember that Gilbert insisted in the De Statu Ecclesiae that a diocese should have a "pontifical church." Again, the boundaries of this one diocese are protected by a clause which has no parallel elsewhere: "Whosoever shall go against these boundaries goes against the Lord, and against Peter the Apostle, and St. Patrick and his coarb and the Christian Church." Who but the legate of the Pope would have thus invoked St. Peter?

Surely this portion of the ordinances of the Synod must have been penned by Gilbert himself. And the whole passage—by the minuteness of its description of the diocese, by the strength of the terms in which it is expressed, by the reference to the Cathedral Church as already existing—suggests that the diocese was formed and organized before the Synod met, as I have already assumed. We may even suspect that an attempt had been made to invade it, which Gilbert stoutly resisted, relying on his legatine authority.

In the list of dioceses there is an omission which demands explanation. No mention whatever is made of Dublin, the oldest diocese in Ireland. Not only so; the northern limit of the diocese of Glendalough is marked by Lambay Island and Greenogue, which lies due west of it in the County Meath. Thus the diocese of Glendalough, as contemplated by the Synod—and, it may be added, as it was in fact forty years later—included the whole of the actually existing diocese of Dublin. The Danish Christians of Dublin and their Irish bishop are treated as interlopers; they are absolutely ignored. It may be said that this was due to the mutual hostility which divided the diocese of Dublin from the native Church, and to the fact that the bishops of Dublin had always been subject to Canterbury. But it is not enough to say this; for the estrangement of Dublin from the Irish is the very thing that has to be accounted for.

It had its root in the growing prosperity of the Danish city. The Irish had no towns. Town life was introduced among them by the Norsemen. And of their towns Dublin was always the chief. By this time it had become so important that

it had good right to be called the metropolis of the country. And its citizens were thoroughly aware of this. As early as 1074 the burgesses of Dublin and their bishop, Patrick, claimed for it that title. Now in all reason a metropolis should have a metropolitan as its bishop; and no doubt the bishops of Dublin thought themselves de facto, if not de jure, superior to the other bishops of Ireland. In fact we find one of them playing the archbishop. We have two interesting letters of Anselm, written apparently about 1100. One of them is addressed to Malchus, bishop of Waterford, directing him to rebuke Samuel O'Hanley, bishop of Dublin, for various irregularities, in particular for having his cross carried before him like an archbishop; the other is addressed to Samuel himself, and complains of the same actions. These proceedings are not likely to have been brought to an end by Anselm's letters; and we may assume that they were continued as long as Samuel held the see of Dublin. It was but natural that Cellach should strongly resent them, for they were disrespectful both to himself and to the archbishop of Cashel. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that on the death of Samuel in 1121, eleven years after Rathbreasail, Cellach tried to get possession of the Church of Dublin, most probably with the intention of bringing it under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Glendalough. Nor are we surprised that the men of Dublin at once replied by electing another bishop and bidding Ralph of Canterbury to consecrate him if he desired to retain the suffragan see which they had so long preserved for him. We shall see hereafter how the bishops of Dublin were at length induced to look with favour on the Irish Church. Meanwhile we learn that they were not very obedient suffragans of Canterbury; and we cease to wonder that they were ignored in the Rathbreasail decrees.

Another feature of the canons of the Synod is worth noting. In several instances the see of a diocese was not absolutely fixed. Two places were named, and it was apparently left to the bishop of the future to select that one of the two which he preferred to be his city. Thus we have a diocese of Derry or Raphoe, a diocese of Connor or Down, another of Wexford or Ferns, and so forth. The meaning of this is best seen by taking a single example. To one of the dioceses of Munster was assigned the area now occupied by the two dioceses of Waterford and Lismore. It consisted of the original Danish diocese of Waterford, together with a much more extensive non-Danish area. Alternative sees were named; it was described as the parish of Lismore or Waterford. Now Lismore was the most sacred spot in the enlarged diocese. It was the site of a monastery founded by St. Mochuta. It was an ideal place for a bishop's see. But it was doubtless ruled at the moment by an abbot, the coarb of Mochuta. Unless he was

prevailed on to accept episcopal orders, or was deprived of his authority, a diocesan bishop could not be established there. On the other hand, Waterford had no sacred traditions; but it was already the see of a diocese. In default of Lismore it would be a convenient place for the see. Between Lismore and Waterford the circumstances of the future must decide. Ultimately, it appears, Malchus retired from the archbishopric of Cashel, and became bishop of his older diocese, now so much greater than it had been. He placed his stool, however, not at Waterford but at Lismore. A similar, but not always identical course was followed in other such cases.

What the Synod of Rathbreasail actually accomplished was this. It gave to Ireland a paper constitution of the approved Roman and Catholic type. But by doing this it had not achieved the purpose of its existence. In the years that followed, its enactments had to be carried into effect. And here was the real crux. Before the Church came to be ruled by diocesan bishops, the existing rulers—the coarbs of church founders—must be dispossessed of their authority; the numerous bishops of the old Irish type must be got rid of; the jurisdiction of the new bishops must be fixed by common consent, or enforced without it; and revenues must be provided for them. A mere synodal decree could not accomplish all this. The diocesan system could become a fact throughout the whole Church, and the last vestiges of the ancient constitution be made to disappear, only after determined effort, and probably bitter contention. And when all was done it would certainly be found that the scheme of dioceses arranged at Rathbreasail had been largely departed from.

I can best illustrate the nature of the difficulties which had to be encountered, and the length of time which might be required to overcome them, by giving a short outline of the history of the forming of the dioceses of the kingdom of Meath.

In Meath, as we have seen, there were dioceses ruled by bishops before Rathbreasail. But these dioceses were of small size. It may be doubted whether most of them fulfilled the condition laid down by Gilbert, that a bishop should have not less than ten churches within his jurisdiction. They had therefore to be grouped under a smaller number of prelates. What had to be accomplished in this case was not so much the clipping of the wings of the abbots, as the extirpation of the more recently appointed diocesan bishops. The Synod determined that the kingdom should be divided into two dioceses, one in the west, the other in the cast. The western see was to be at Clonard, at the moment, as it seems, the see of O’Dunan, and famed as the site of the great monastery of St. Finnian, founded in

the sixth century; the eastern see was to be at Duleek, near Drogheda. Now a few months after the Synod of Rathbreasail there was held at Usnagh a local synod of the men of Meath, at which the king and many notable persons were present. This synod ordained that the parishes of Meath should be equally divided between the bishops of Clonmacnoise and Clonard. It will be observed that the principle of the Rathbreasail decree was accepted, that there should be two, and only two, dioceses in Meath. But the change made in the sees is significant. The Synod of Rathbreasail intended that Clonard should be the see of the western diocese, which would include Clonmacnoise. The Synod of Usnagh demanded that Clonmacnoise, founded by one of the most noted of Irish saints, St. Ciaran, should be one of the surviving sees, and that Clonard should be the see, not of the western, but of the eastern half of the kingdom. Thus the Synod of Rathbreasail was at once met with strenuous and, as it proved, successful opposition in Meath.

And here I may mention another fact. A few years after the Synod we have proof of the existence of a diocese in the north of the kingdom, which has not hitherto been mentioned, and which is not named in the Rathbreasail canons. We know it as the diocese of Kilmore. It may have been one of O'Dunan's dioceses, or it may have been founded later. One thing is certain. The diocese formed the territory of a strong tribe. Consequently it had in it the element of stability. It was never suppressed: it exists to this day. So far as it was concerned the canons of Rathbreasail were a dead letter from the beginning.

But let us return to Clonard. It was the business of its successive bishops, in accordance with the decrees of Usnagh, to annex the small neighbouring bishoprics of east Meath. They had considerable success. We possess a list of churches granted by Eugenius, the last Irish bishop of Clonard, to the monastery of St. Thomas the Martyr, Dublin. They are scattered over the three deaneries of Dunshaughlin, Skreen and Trim. Thus Eugenius had absorbed into his diocese the bishoprics of those three places. Another document tells us that this same Eugenius consecrated the church of Duleek; which implies that the diocese of Duleek was also suppressed. Thus by 1191, the year of Eugenius's death—within eighty years of the Synod of Rathbreasail, and before the Anglo-Normans had captured the ecclesiastical domination of Meath—the diocese of Clonard had expanded to four times its original size. Its bishop ruled the whole area of the modern county of Meath which lies south of the Boyne and Blackwater.

Simon Rochfort, the first English bishop, stretched his arm further. We have a charter of his, which may be dated before 1202, confirming to St. Thomas's

Abbey a number of churches in his diocese. It includes most, if not all, of the churches granted by his predecessor, but adds others. Among these are some in the deanery of Slane. The bishopric of Slane had been absorbed.

The rapid extension of his diocese towards the north suggested to Roehfort the desirability of having for his headquarters a more central place than Clonard. So in 1202 he translated the see to Newtown, near Trim, and began to call himself Bishop of Meath. Ten years later, as we know, this “impudent bishop” captured the diocese of Kells. The bishop of Meath (no longer of Clonard) from his see at Newtown had the oversight of nearly the whole of the modern county. Within the confines of his diocese were the seven older dioceses of Clonard, Dunshaughlin, Skreen, Trim, Duleek, Slane and Kells. This was probably the whole of the eastern diocese as designed by the Synod of Usnagh.

But the policy of annexation still went forward apace. Another document enables us to measure the progress of half a century. It is a concordat concerning metropolitical visitations, between the archbishop of Armagh and Rochfort’s third successor, Hugh de Taehmon. It is dated 9th April, 1265. The tenor of the concordat does not concern us: it is important for our purpose because it proves that in 1265 there were eleven rural deaneries in the diocese of Meath. Four more petty dioceses had been suppressed, Mullingar, Loxewdy, Ardnureher and Fore. The diocese was co-extensive with that of the present day, except that the diocese of Clonmacnoise—as small in 1265 as it had been in 1100—was not yet brought in.

Clonmacnoise preserved its independence three centuries longer. It was incorporated with Meath in 1569. Thus at length the dream of the fathers of Rathbreasail was fulfilled. There were two dioceses in the ancient kingdom of Meath—Meath and Kilmore. But neither Duleek nor Clonard nor Clonmacnoise was a see. From that day to this, in fact, the diocese of Meath has had no see. And the boundary which parts Meath from Kilmore is very different from the line which the fathers of Rathbreasail drew between the dioceses of Clonard and Duleek, or that which the assembly of Usnagh drew between Clonmacnoise and Clonard.

IV

ST. MALACHY’S PART IN THE REFORMATION

It is not possible, within the limits of this Introduction, to follow the later stages of the Reformation movement in detail. In the present section I confine myself to

the part which St. Malachy played in its development.

Malachy was born at Armagh in 1095. He was therefore a mere boy when the Synod of Rathbreasail met. At the dawn of his manhood he became the disciple of the recluse Imar O'Hagan. Imar was in sympathy with the aims of the reformers, and it was probably through his influence that Malachy became imbued with their principles. He soon attracted the notice of Cellach, and was by him ordained deacon. He was advanced to the priesthood about 1119. Shortly afterwards Cellach made the young priest his vicar. For the next year or two it was Malachy's duty to administer the diocese of Armagh; and he did so in the most effective—indeed revolutionary—fashion. He evidently let no man despise his youth. His purpose, as his biographer tells us, was "to root out barbarous rites, to plant the rites of the Church." "He established in all the churches the apostolic sanctions and the decrees of the holy fathers, and especially the customs of the Holy Roman Church." He introduced the Roman method of chanting the services of the canonical hours. "He instituted anew Confession, Confirmation, the Marriage contract, of all of which those over whom he was placed were either ignorant or negligent." In a word, Malachy showed himself an ardent reformer.

One wonders how, even with the assistance of Cellach and Imar, a young man who had never left Armagh could have already become sufficiently acquainted with the usages of other churches to carry out these sweeping measures. Perhaps his zeal was not always according to knowledge. But he soon became aware of his limitations, and determined to seek instruction. With the consent of Cellach and Imar he betook himself to Malchus, who had by this time retired from the archbishopric of Cashel and was settled at Lismore. There Malachy spent three years. During that period he doubtless increased his knowledge of Roman customs and principles. But he did more. Cormac MacCarthy, son of the king of Desmond, was then a refugee in the monastery of Malchus. Between Cormac and Malachy there grew up a friendship, which proved in later years of much advantage to the reforming cause.'

But at length Malachy's presence was urgently needed in the north, and he was recalled by Cellach and Imar. What had happened was this. The coarb of St. Comgall at Bangor, the principal religious site in the north-east of Ireland, had lately died. Since he ended his days at Lismore, it may be assumed that he was a friend of Malchus, and of the movement with which he was identified. At any rate his successor, who was Malachy's uncle, expressed his willingness to surrender his office and the site of the monastery to his nephew. Here was an

opportunity to carry into effect one of the canons of Rathbreasail, which had hitherto been a dead letter, by establishing the diocese of Connor. Cellach, duly elected coarb of Patrick, and consecrated bishop, had no doubt been able to organize the diocese of Armagh in accordance with the Rathbreasail scheme. In like manner such a man as Malachy, enjoying the prestige which belonged to the coarb of Comgall, if consecrated bishop, would probably succeed in organizing the diocese of Connor. So in 1124 Malachy journeyed to Bangor, was installed as abbot, and was made bishop by Cellach. He administered his diocese with the same vigour which had already characterized his work at Armagh. But it is interesting to observe how closely he conformed to the old Irish type of bishop, in spite of his Roman proclivities. At heart he was far less bishop of Connor than coarb of Comgall, abbot of Bangor. Indeed, in strictness, he had no right to the title "bishop of Connor"; for Connor was not his see. He made Bangor his headquarters. Doubtless Malachy preferred Bangor to the nominal see, because it was consecrated by centuries of sacred memories, and because as yet he could not place the office of bishop above that of abbot. He ruled his great newly formed diocese, or as much of it as he succeeded in ruling, from its remotest corner on the sea shore, as Aidan ruled Northumbria from Holy Island. There he lived among his brethren, of whom he gathered a great company. There was no provision for his mensa, for he was "a lover of poverty." He practised austere asceticism. Yet he was an active missionary. He travelled incessantly through the diocese, but always on foot, visiting the towns, and roaming about the country parts, surrounded by his disciples. He preached to the people whom he met on his way. Nothing could be more unlike a medieval bishop of the ordinary kind. At every point we are reminded of the labours of Aidan and Ceadd and Cedd as they are described by Bede. But we may be sure that it was precisely because Malachy was coarb of Bangor, because he lived according to the ancient Irish ideal of sainthood, that he secured the obedience of the people of his diocese.

In such work as I have mentioned Malachy was engaged from 1124 to 1127. In the latter year he was driven out of Bangor by Conor O'Loughlin, king of the north of Ireland, and a second time betook himself to Lismore. There he again met Cormac MacCarthy, for that unfortunate prince was once more taking sanctuary with Malchus. He had succeeded a little while before to the throne of Desmond, but had been driven out by Turlough O'Conor, who made his brother king in his stead. But after a few months, persuaded by the entreaties of Malchus and Malachy, and aided by the arms of Conor O'Brien, king of Thomond, a

nephew of Murtough, Anselm's correspondent, he made a successful attempt to regain his kingdom. Then Malachy moved on to Iveragh in the County Kerry, and there, under Cormac's patronage, he founded a new monastery for his community. Once again Cormac has friendly intercourse with Malachy, and another O'Brien is on good terms with the reformers.

It was at Iveragh, two years later, that Malachy received news of the death of Archbishop Cellach. It was an announcement which must have caused great anxiety to him and his friends. Who was to succeed to the primacy?

The importance of the question will become manifest if we recall the progress which had already been made at Armagh, and what still remained to be done. When Cellach was elected abbot in 1105, and in the following year was consecrated bishop, a great point had been gained. For the first time for 150 years the church of Armagh had a bishop as its ruler. We may suppose that Cellach soon organized the diocese, the limits of which were fixed at Rathbreasail. But whatever Gilbert or Malchus might hold as to the source of his authority, we cannot imagine that the members of the Church in the diocese based their allegiance to him on any other ground than the fact that he was their abbot and the coarb of Patrick. That he was a bishop added nothing, in their view, to his claims. Moreover Cellach belonged to the family which had long supplied Armagh with abbots. The abuse of hereditary succession had not disappeared with his appointment. If his successor was chosen in the time-honoured way, a member of the coarbial family would certainly be selected, and in all probability he would be a layman, who would not accept episcopal orders. In a word, all that had been achieved by the reformers at the most important ecclesiastical centre in Ireland would be undone.

Cellach had foreseen this, and accordingly he determined to nominate Malachy as his successor. "With the authority of Patrick" he laid upon the nobles, and especially upon "the two kings of Munster," the obligation of securing that his wish should be carried into effect. The two kings who were thus charged with a difficult duty were Conor O'Brien, king of Thomond, the principal representative of the O'Briens, and Cormac MacCarthy, king of Desmond, Malachy's friend.

From Cellach's point of view the choice of a successor which he had made was a wise one. Malachy was as zealous a reformer as himself. He was a man of unusual ability and force of character. Besides, he was possessed of a personal charm which might in time disarm opposition. He was already a bishop; therefore, if he were once seated in the chair of Patrick, the question whether the

new coarb should be consecrated would not arise. More important still, he was not of the coarbial stock; with his entry into the see the scandal of hereditary succession would come to an end.

But it was not to be expected that the appointment would be accepted without strong protest; and at the moment there seemed little prospect that the scheme of Cellach would attain fruition. There is no need to enter into the details of the fierce struggle that ensued. It is dealt with elsewhere. Suffice it to say that by 1137, with the aid of O'Brien and MacCarthy, and apparently with assistance also from Donough O'Carroll, king of Oriel, he was undisputed coarb of Patrick and archbishop of Armagh. The victory was won, and an immense stride had been made in the Reformation movement.

But Malachy had no mind to spend the rest of his life at Armagh. Five years before, as the condition of his entry into the fray, he had stipulated that as soon as he had been accepted as archbishop he should resign the see and return to his beloved Bangor. So in 1137 he nominated and consecrated Gelasius as his successor in the primacy, and "returned to his former parish, but not to Connor." Let me explain this enigmatical statement. Malachy had had some years' experience of the people of the diocese of Connor, whom St. Bernard gently describes as "not men but beasts." He had doubtless discovered that the district which it included could not be ruled by a single bishop, In fact it consisted of two tribal territories, Dál Araide in the north, and Ulaid in the south; and the two tribes which inhabited them were usually engaged in mutual war. He decided that it should be divided into two dioceses. He consecrated a bishop for Dál Araide, with his see at Connor, and himself resumed the oversight of Ulaid, with his see at Bangor. Thus originated the present dioceses of Down and Connor. In Malachy's time the boundary between them seems to have run west from Larne. In the course of centuries it has shifted further south.

This division was a direct violation of the letter of the ordinance of Rathbreasail; but it did not contravene its spirit. In the letter, which ignored the civil divisions of the country, the ordinance could not be obeyed. Malachy adopted a scheme which secured the permanent rule of diocesan bishops in the district.

Malachy was now, and continued to be till his death, bishop of Down, or more strictly of Bangor; in the current Irish phrase bishop of Ulaid. But his activities already extended beyond his diocese. Within the next two years he succeeded in establishing in actual fact another diocese which till now had existed only on paper. It was that which the Synod of Rathbreasail had called the diocese of

Clogher, and which we know by the same name; but which for sixty years or more bore the name of the diocese of Oriel.

That we may understand his action let us return for a moment to the five Ulster dioceses as planned at Rathbreasail. In four of them regard was paid to tribal boundaries. The diocese of Raphoe corresponded to Tír Conaill, Derry to Tír Eoghain, Armagh to Oriel, while Connor comprehended the two territories of Dál Araide and Ulaid. The diocese of Clogher was of necessity the remainder of the province. If it coincided with a tribal district, that could only happen by chance. In fact it did not. It was much smaller than the other dioceses. It embraced only the present barony of Clogher in the county of Tyrone, and the portion of Fermanagh lying between it and the Erne waterway. It had within it no element of cohesion. It was most unlikely that it could ever constitute an ecclesiastical unit, governed by a bishop.

Nevertheless an attempt seems to have been made to consolidate it as a diocese a few years after Rathbreasail; as might have been expected, without success. A bishop of Clogher, who apparently had no diocese, died in 1135. He was succeeded by Christian O'Morgair, brother of Malachy. He was probably nominated and consecrated by his brother, who was then titular archbishop of Armagh. Now about this time Donough O'Carroll, king of Oriel, joined the ranks of the reformers, as we may suppose under the influence of Malachy. His kingdom included the little diocese of Clogher; but the main part of it consisted of the present counties of Monaghan and Louth. Accordingly a bold stroke of policy was conceived and carried out. The diocese of Clogher was enlarged so as to cover the greater part of O'Carroll's kingdom. For this purpose the archbishop of Armagh surrendered a large part of his diocese—the whole of Monaghan and Louth. Then Christian moved his see from Clogher to the spot now occupied by the village of Louth. Thus there was constituted a new diocese, which included the Rathbreasail diocese of Clogher, but was four times its size, and had its see at Louth. It was known as the diocese of Oriel. In all this we see plainly the hand of Malachy. Not long after the removal of the see Christian died, and Malachy selected and consecrated his successor, one Edan O'Kelly. O'Kelly had a long episcopate, from 1139 to 1182; and with the help of O'Carroll he organized his diocese, and gave it a cathedral at Louth with a chapter of Augustinian canons. Once again Malachy was the maker of a diocese; and once again, in the interest of stability, he transgressed the letter of the Rathbreasail canons, while fulfilling their spirit. It was not till after the coming of the Anglo-Normans that the see was brought back to Clogher. Subsequently the county of Louth reverted to

Armagh, and the diocese extended to the west. About the year 1250 its boundaries came to be what they now are.

In 1139, after settling the affairs of the diocese of Oriel, Malachy left Ireland on an important mission. It will be remembered that Gilbert had declared that no archbishop could exercise his functions till the Pope had sent him the pall. That was the current doctrine of the age. Now neither Cellach, nor Malachy, nor Gelasius, nor Malchus, nor his successor at Cashel, had received that ornament. They had therefore, in the strict sense, no right to the title of archbishop. Malachy resolved to make request to the Pope in person for palls for the two Irish metropolitans. So he set out from Bangor for Rome. Of his journey it is unnecessary to say anything here.

At Rome Malachy was received by Pope Innocent II. with great honour. He confirmed the erection of the metropolitan see of Cashel. But he politely declined to grant the palls. They must be demanded, he said, by a council of the bishops, clergy and magnates; and then they would be given.

But if the Pope refused Malachy's request, he bestowed on him an office, the securing of which we may conjecture to have been one of the purposes of his visit to Rome, though St. Bernard does not say so. Gilbert, now old and infirm, had resigned the see of Limerick, and with it his legatine commission. Innocent made Malachy papal legate in his stead.

Thus Malachy returned to Ireland, still bishop of Down indeed, but virtually chief prelate of the Irish Church. For the following eight years he laboured with zeal and vigour. St. Bernard unfortunately gives little information concerning the details of his administrative work as legate. But he relates one incident which suggests that in this period Malachy was instrumental in founding another diocese. He nominated and consecrated the first known bishop of Cork, not improbably with the intention that he should unite in his own person the two offices of coarb of Barre, founder of Cork, and diocesan bishop.

And in this connexion it is worth noticing that he was evidently on friendly terms with Nehemiah, the first known bishop of the neighbouring diocese of Cloyne. If that diocese was also founded by him he once again violated the letter of the Rathbreasail canons, for by them Cloyne was included in the diocese of Emly.

In 1148 Malachy convened a synod at Inispatrick, an island opposite Skerries, Co. Dublin. This synod demanded the palls in due form, and sent Malachy to obtain them. But he got no further on his journey than Clairvaux. There, after celebrating Mass on St. Luke's Day, he was taken ill of a fever; and there a

fortnight later he died in the arms of St. Bernard, on All Souls' Day, 2nd November, 1148.

Nevertheless the palls came. They were brought to Ireland by a legate specially commissioned by Pope Eugenius III., John Paparo, cardinal priest of St. Laurence. A synod was held at Kells to receive them in March 1152, of which the joint presidents were Paparo, as legatus a latere, and Christian, first abbot of Mellifont, and now bishop of Lismore, who had lately succeeded Malachy as legatus natus.

Of this synod Keating gives a short account, abridged from the Annals of Clonenagh, from which he had also derived his knowledge of the proceedings at Rathbreasail. He preserves a list of the bishops who attended. It includes twenty-two names, if we count two vicars who represented absent bishops. There were besides, as Keating informs us, five bishops-elect. And there was certainly one bishop of a diocese who was neither present nor represented, Edan O'Kelly, bishop of Oriel. So it appears that in 1152 there were at least twenty-eight dioceses in Ireland—a number considerably larger than was contemplated at Rathbreasail. The increase in number is partly accounted for by the presence of the bishop of the recently formed diocese of Kilmore, the division of the diocese of Connor into Connor and Down, and, a most striking addition, the inclusion of Gregory, bishop of Dublin, among the assembled prelates. It is remarkable that the bishop of Kells is not mentioned, though the synod was held in his own city. How was the bishop of Dublin induced to throw in his lot with the Irish Church? We shall see in a moment.

Much business was transacted at this Synod. But that which concerns us most nearly is the giving of the palls. Cardinal Paparo brought the Irish bishops more than they had asked for; more indeed than they desired. He presented, not two palls but four, Dublin and Tuam, as well as Armagh and Cashel, being recognized as archiepiscopal sees. This excessive generosity caused much displeasure among the Irish bishops. "For Ireland," says Keating, apparently paraphrasing the Annals of Clonenagh, "thought it enough to have a pall in the church of Armagh and a pall in Cashel; and particularly it was in spite of the church of Armagh and the church of Down that the other palls were given." The cause of this discontent is not far to seek. The chief gravamen no doubt was that Dublin was included among the four. The constant friction which had subsisted for many years between the diocese of Dublin and the Irish Church sufficiently explains the indignation of the archbishop of Armagh, aggravated by the fact that the creation of new archbishops imposed a limit upon his authority. It also

enables us to understand why his displeasure was shared by the Irish generally. That a see whose bishops had behaved so haughtily in the past should, at the very moment of its entrance into the Irish Church, receive so signal an honour, long denied to Armagh and Cashel, and that in the person of its bishop it should be given jurisdiction over bishops whom till now it had treated with contempt, could not but be regarded as unreasonable, or even insulting. But on the other hand, recalling the early history of the Church in Dublin, we can comprehend why, in spite of all this, special favour was bestowed upon it. Dublin, as we have seen, was a not too submissive suffragan of Canterbury. Its ambition was that its bishop should have the status of a metropolitan. The opportunity had come for gratifying its desire, and at the same time bringing it under the Irish ecclesiastical régime. The pall at once separated it from Canterbury and united it with Ireland. It was the price paid for its submission to the Primacy of Armagh. Gregory therefore became archbishop of Dublin, and had the right—which his predecessor had long before illegally assumed—to have the cross carried before him. With the gift of the pall Paparo bestowed upon him "the principal part of the bishopric of Glendalough as his diocese," promising him the remainder on the death of the bishop who then ruled it. All this was done, we are told, because it was fitting that the place "in which from ancient time had been the royal seat and head of Ireland," should be made a metropolitan see.

There was at last one Church in Ireland, which embraced within it not only the Celtic parts of the island, but all the Danish dioceses as well. And the whole Church was ruled by the bishops. The Reformation may not have been complete in every detail—there was indeed much left for the Anglo-Normans to do—but the Synod of Kells had set the crown on the work of the Irish reformers. And this consummation was mainly due to the wisdom and the untiring zeal of St. Malachy of Armagh.

A few words more will suffice to complete this too lengthy introduction. The Life of Malachy was certainly written before the Synod of Kells met in March 1152; for Christian, who attended the Synod as bishop of Lismore, is spoken of in the Life as abbot of Mellifont. Its earliest possible date is a couple of months after Malachy's death. The ignorance displayed in § 69 of the movements of the Pope in 1148 is so inexplicable on the assumption of a later date that it may be assigned to January 1149. In the following translation the text printed by de Backer is used, with the exception of a few sentences which have been emended. It does not differ to any great extent from that of Mabillon. Following de Backer I have divided the text into chapters, in accordance with the MSS.; but

Mabillon's sections have been retained, as more convenient for reference, the numbers of de Backer's sections being added within brackets.

By way of illustration four letters of St. Bernard and his two sermons on St. Malachy have been added. They are translated from Mabillon's edition, with some corrections. The dates of these documents are discussed below.

St. Bernard's numerous quotations from the Bible and other sources are printed in italics, so far as I have recognized them. The scriptural allusions are given as nearly as possible in the words of the Authorized (in the Apocryphal books the Revised) Version, though at times they do not agree with the Vulgate Latin. Where it has been found necessary to depart from their renderings, the symbol "vg." follows the references in the footnotes.

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St. Patrick's Day, 1920.

THE LIFE OF ST. MALACHY

PREFACE

1. IT is indeed always worth while to portray the illustrious lives of the saints, that they may serve as a mirror and an example, and give, as it were, a relish to the life of men on earth. For by this means in some sort they live among us, even after death, and many of those who are dead while they live are challenged and recalled by them to true life. But now especially is there need for it because holiness is rare, and it is plain that our age is lacking in men. So greatly, in truth, do we perceive that lack to have increased in our day that none can doubt that we are smitten by that saying, Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold; and, as I suppose, he has come or is at hand of whom it is written, Want shall go before his face. If I mistake not, Antichrist is he whom famine and sterility of all good both precedes and accompanies. Whether therefore it is the herald of one now present or the harbinger of one who shall come immediately, the want is evident. I speak not of the crowd, I speak not of the vile multitude of the children of this world: I would have you lift up your eyes upon the very pillars of the Church. Whom can you show me, even of the number of those who seem to be given for a light to the Gentiles, that in his lofty station is not rather a smoking wick than a blazing lamp? And, says One, if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! Unless perchance, which I do not believe, you will say that they shine who suppose that gain is godliness; who in the Lord’s inheritance seek not the things which are the Lord’s, but rather their own. Why do I say their own? He would be perfect and holy, even while he seeks his own and retains his own, who should restrain his heart and hands from the things of others. But let him remember, who seems to himself to have advanced perhaps thus far, that the same degree of holiness is demanded even of a gentile. Are not soldiers bidden to be content with their wages that they may be saved? But it is a great thing for a doctor of the Church if he be as one of the soldiers; or, if in truth (as the prophet speaks to their reproach), it be as with the people so with the priest. Hideous! Is it so indeed? Is he rightly to be esteemed highest who, falling from the highest rank can scarce cleave to the lowest, that he be not engulfed in the abyss? Yet how rare is even such a man among the clergy! Whom, likewise, do you give me who is content with necessaries, who despises

superfluities? Yet the law has been enjoined beforehand by the Apostles on the successors of the Apostles, Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. Where is this rule? We see it in books, but not in men. But you have [the saying] about the righteous man, that the law of his God is in his heart, not in a codex. Nor is that the standard of perfection. The perfect man is ready to forgo even necessaries. But that is beside the mark. Would that some limit were set on superfluous things! Would that our desires were not infinite! But what? Perhaps you might find one who can achieve this. It would indeed be difficult; but [if we find him] see what we have done. We were seeking for a very good man, a deliverer of many; and lo, we have labour to discover one who can save himself. The very good man to-day is one who is not utterly bad.

2. Wherefore, since the godly man has ceased from the earth, it seems to me that I do not employ myself to no purpose when I recall to our midst, from among those who were redeemed from the earth, Bishop Malachy, a man truly holy, and a man, too, of our own time, of singular wisdom and virtue. He was a burning and a shining light; and it has not been quenched, but only removed. Who would with good right be angry with me if I move it back again? Yes indeed, neither the men of my own age, nor any succeeding generation should be wanting in gratitude to me if by my pen I recall one whom the course of nature has borne away; if I restore to the world one of whom the world was not worthy; if I preserve for the memory of men one whose memory may be blessed to all who shall deign to read; if while I rouse my sleeping friend, the voice of the turtle be heard in our land saying, Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Then again, he was buried among us; this duty is eminently ours. Nay, is it not mine, inasmuch as that holy man included me among his special friends, and in such regard that I may believe that I was second to none in that respect of glory? Nor do I find that intercourse with holiness so eminent misses its reward; I have already received the first-fruits. He was near the end; nay, rather, near the beginning, according to the saying, when a man hath finished then is he but at the beginning I ran to him that the blessing of him that was ready to die might come upon me. Already he could not move his other limbs; but, mighty to give blessing, he raised his hands upon my head and blessed me. I have inherited the blessing; how then can I be silent about him? Finally, you enjoin me to undertake this task, Abbot Congan, my reverend brother and sweet friend, and with you also (as you write from Ireland) all that Church of the saints to which you belong. I obey with a will, the more so because you ask not panegyric but narrative. I shall endeavour that it may be chaste and clear, informing the devout,

and not wearying the fastidious. At any rate the truth of my narrative is assured, since it has been communicated by you; and beyond doubt you assert nothing but things of which you have most certain information.

Here ends the Prologue.

CHAPTER I

The early life of Malachy. Having been admitted to Holy Orders he associates with Malchus

1095 I. OUR Malachy, born in Ireland, of a barbarous people, was brought up there, and there received his education. But from the barbarism of his birth he contracted no taint, any more than the fishes of the sea from their native salt, But how delightful to reflect, that uncultured barbarism should have pro duced for us so worthy a fellow-citizen with the saints and member of the household of God. He who brings honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock Himself did this. His parents, however, were great both by descent and in power, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover his mother, more noble in mind than in blood, took pains, in the very beginning of his ways, to show to her child the ways of life, esteeming this knowledge of more value to him than the empty knowledge of the learning of this world. For both, however, he had aptitude in proportion to his age. In the schools he was taught learning, at home the fear of the Lord, and by daily progress he duly responded to both teacher and mother. For indeed he was endowed from the first with a good spirit, in virtue of which he was a docile boy and very lovable, wonderfully gracious to all in all things. But he was [now] drinking, instead of milk from the breast of a mother, the waters of saving wisdom, and day by day he was increasing in discretion. In discretion, shall I say, or in holiness? If I say both, I shall not regret it, for I should say the truth. He behaved as an old man, a boy in years without a boy’s playfulness. And when because of this he was regarded with reverence and astonishment by all, he was not found on that account, as commonly happens, more arrogant, but rather quiet and subdued in all meekness. Not impatient of rule, not shunning discipline, not averse from reading, not, therefore, eager for games—so especially dear to the heart of boys of that age. And he advanced beyond all of his own age in that learning, at least, which suited his years. For in discipline of morals and advance in virtues in a short time he even outshone all his instructors. His unction, however, rather than his mother, was his teacher.

Urged by it he exercised himself not slothfully also in divine things, to seek solitude, to anticipate vigils, to meditate in the law, to eat sparingly, to pray frequently, and (because on account of his studies he had not leisure to frequent the church, and from modesty would not) to lift up holy hands everywhere to heaven; but only where it could be done secretly—for already he was careful to avoid vainglory, that poison of virtues.

2. There is a hamlet near the city in which the boy studied, whither his teacher was wont to go often, accompanied by him alone. When they were going there both together, as he related afterwards, he would step back, stop a moment,1 and standing behind his teacher, when he was not aware of it, spread forth his hands toward heaven,1 and quickly send forth a prayer, as if it were a dart; and, thus dissembling, once more would follow the teacher. By such a pious trick the boy often deceived him who was his companion as well as teacher. It is not possible to mention all the qualities which adorned his earlier years with the hue of a good natural disposition; we must hasten to greater and more useful matters. One further incident, however, I relate because, in my judgement, it yielded a sign, not only of good, but also of great hope in the boy. Roused once on a time by the reputation of a certain teacher, famous in the studies which are called liberal, he went to him desiring to learn. For indeed he was now grasping after the last opportunities of boyhood, and was longing eagerly for such learning. But when he went into the house he saw the man playing with an awl, and with rapid strokes making furrows in the wall in some strange fashion. And shocked at the bare sight, because it smacked of levity, the serious boy dashed away from him, and did not care even to see him from that time forward. Thus, though an avid student of letters, as a lover of virtue he esteemed them lightly in comparison with that which was becoming. By such preliminary exercises the boy was being prepared for the conflict which awaited him in more advanced age; and already in his own person he was challenging the adversary. Such, then, was the boyhood of Malachy. Moreover he passed through his adolescence with like simplicity and purity; except that as years increased, there increased also for him wisdom and favour with God and man.

3. From this time, that is, from his early adolescence, what was in the man began to appear more plainly, and it came to be seen that the grace of God which was in him was not in vain. For the industrious young man, seeing how the world lieth in wickedness, and considering what sort of spirit he had received, said within himself, “It is not the spirit of this world. What have the two in common? One has no communion with the other any more than light with

darkness. But my spirit is of God, and I know the things that are freely given me in it. From it I have innocence of life till now, from it the ornament of continence, from it hunger for righteousness, from it also that glory of mine, by so much more secure because it is more secret, the testimony of my conscience. None of these is safe for me under the prince of this world. Then, I have this treasure in an earthen vessel. I must take heed lest it should strike against something and be broken, and the oil of gladness which I carry be poured out. And in truth it is most difficult not to strike against something amid the stones and rocks of this crooked and winding way and life. Must I thus in a moment lose together all the blessings of goodness with which I have been prevented from the beginning? Rather do I resign them, and myself with them, to Him from whom they come. Yea, and I am His. I lose my very soul for a time that I may not lose it for ever. And what I am and all that I have, where can they be as safe as in the hand of their Author? Who so concerned to preserve, so powerful to hold, so faithful to restore? He will preserve in safety. He will restore in good time. Without hesitation I give myself to serve Him by His gifts. I cannot lose aught of all that I spend on my labour of piety. Perchance I may even hope for some greater boon. He who gives freely is wont to repay with usury. So it is. He will even heap up and increase virtue in my soul."1

So he thought—and did; knowing that apart from deeds the thoughts of man are vanity.1

c. 1112. 4. (3) There was a man in the city of Armagh, where Malachy was brought up—a holy man and of great austerity of life, a pitiless castigator of his body, who had a cell near the church. In it he abode, serving God with fastings and prayers day and night. To this man Malachy betook himself to receive a rule of life from him, who had condemned himself while alive to such sepulture. And note his humility. From his earliest age he had had God as his teacher—there is no doubt of it—in the art of holiness; and behold, he became once more the disciple of a man, himself a man meek and lowly in heart. If we did not know it, by this one deed he himself gave us proof of it. Let them read this who attempt to teach what they have not learned, heaping to themselves disciples, though they have never been disciples, blind leaders of the blind. Malachy, taught of God, none the less sought a man to be his teacher, and that carefully and wisely. By what better method, I ask, could he both give and receive a proof of his progress? If the example of Malachy is for them a very small thing, let them consider the action of Paul. Did not he judge that his Gospel, though he had not received it of man but from Christ, should be discussed with men, lest by any

means he was running or had run in vain? Where he was not confident, neither am I. If any one be thus confident let him take heed lest it be not so much confidence as rashness. But these matters belong to another time.

5. Now, however, the rumour of what had happened went through the city, and it was universally stirred by this new and unexpected event. All were amazed, and wondered at his virtue, all the more because it was unusual in a rude people. You would see that then thoughts were being revealed out of the hearts of many. The majority, considering the act from a human standpoint, were lamenting and grieving that a youth who was an object of love and delight to all had given himself up to such severe labours. Others, suspecting lightness on account of his age, doubted whether he would persevere, and feared a fall. Some, accusing him of rashness, were in fact highly indignant with him because he had undertaken a difficult task, beyond his age and strength, without consulting them. But without counsel he did nothing; for he had counsel from the prophet who says, It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth, and adds, He sitteth alone and keepeth silence because he hath borne it upon him. The youth sat at the feet of Imar (for that was the man's name) and either learned obedience or showed that he had learnt it. He sat as one that was at rest, as meek, as humble. He sat and kept silence, knowing, as the prophet says, that silence is the ornament of righteousness. He sat as one that perseveres, he was silent as one that is modest, except that by that silence of his he was speaking, with holy David, in the ears of God: I am a youth and despised, yet do not I forget thy precepts. And for a time he sat alone, because he had neither companion nor example; for who before Malachy even thought of attempting the most severe discipline inculcated by the man? It was held by all indeed to be wonderful, but not imitable. Malachy showed that it was imitable by the mere act of sitting and keeping silence. In a few days he had imitators not a few, stirred by his example. So he who at first sat alone and the only son of his father, became now one of many, from being the only-begotten became the firstborn among many brethren. And as he was before them in conversion, so was he more sublime than they in conversation; and he who came before all, in the judgement of all was eminent above all in virtue. And he seemed both to his bishop and to his teacher, worthy to be promoted to the degree of deacon. And they constrained him.

1119 (?) 1120 6. (4) From this time onwards the Levite of the Lord publicly girded himself to every work of piety, but more especially to those things in which there seemed some indignity. In fact it was his greatest care to attend to the burial of the dead poor, because that savoured not less of humility than of

humanity. Nor did temptation fail to test our modern Tobit, and, as in the old story, it came from a woman, or rather from the serpent through a woman. His sister, abhorring the indignity (as it seemed to her) of his office, said: “What are you doing, madman? Let the dead bury their dead.” And she attacked him daily with this reproach. But he answered the foolish woman according to her folly, “Wretched woman, you preserve the sound of the pure word, but you are ignorant of its force.” So he maintained with devotion, and exercised unweariedly the ministry which he had undertaken under compulsion. For that reason also they deemed that the office of the priesthood should be conferred upon him. And this was done. But when he was ordained priest he was about twenty-five years old.1 And if in both his ordinations the rule of the Canons seems to have been somewhat disregarded—as indeed does seem to have been the case, for he received the Levitical ministry before his twenty-fifth, and the dignity of the priesthood before his thirtieth year1—it may well be ascribed to the zeal of the ordainer and the merits of him who was ordained. But for my part, I consider that such irregularity should neither be condemned in the case of a saint, nor deliberately claimed by him who is not a saint. Not content with this the bishop also committed to him his own authority to sow the holy seed in a nation which was not holy, and to give to a people rude and living without law, the law of life and of discipline. He received the command with all alacrity, even as he was fervent in spirit, not hoarding up his talents, but eager for profit from them. And behold he began to root out with the hoe of the tongue, to destroy, to scatter, day by day making the crooked straight and the rough places plain. He rejoiced as a giant to run everywhere. You might call him a consuming fire burning the briers of crimes. You might call him an axe or a mattock casting down evil plantings. He extirpated barbaric rites, he planted those of the Church. All out-worn superstitions (for not a few of them were discovered) he abolished, and, wheresoever he found it, every sort of malign influence sent by evil angels.

7. In fine whatsoever came to his notice which was irregular or unbecoming or perverse his eye did not spare; but as the hail scatters the untimely figs from the figtrees,1 and as the wind the dust from the face of the earth,1 so did he strive with all his might to drive out before his face and destroy entirely such things from his people. And in place of all these the most excellent legislator delivered the heavenly laws. He made regulations full of righteousness, full of moderation and integrity. Moreover in all churches he ordained the apostolic sanctions and the decrees of the holy fathers, and especially the customs of the holy Roman Church.1 Hence it is that to this day there is chanting and psalmody in them at

the canonical hours after the fashion of the whole world. For there was no such thing before, not even in the city. He, however, had learnt singing in his youth, and soon he introduced song into his monastery, while as yet none in the city, nor in the whole bishopric, could or would sing. Then Malachy instituted anew the most wholesome usage of Confession, the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Marriage contract—of all of which they were either ignorant or negligent. And let these serve as an example of the rest, for [here] and through the whole course of the history we omit much for the sake of brevity.

8 (5). Since he had a desire and a very great zeal for the honouring of the divine offices and the veneration of the sacraments, lest by chance he might ordain or teach anything concerning these matters otherwise than that which was in accordance with the rite of the universal Church, it came into his mind to visit Bishop Malchus, that he might give him fuller information on all points. He was an old man, full of days and virtues, and the wisdom of God was in him. He was of Irish nationality, but had lived in England in the habit and rule of a monk in the monastery of Winchester, from which he was promoted to be bishop in Lismore, a city of Munster, and one of the noblest of the cities of that kingdom. There so great grace was bestowed upon him from above that he was illustrious, not only for life and doctrine, but also for signs. Of these I set down two as examples, that it may be known to all what sort of preceptor Malachy had in the knowledge of holy things. He healed a boy, who was troubled with a mental disorder, one of those who are called lunatics, in the act of confirming him with the holy unction. This was so well known and certain that he soon made him porter of his house, and the boy lived in good health in that office till he reached manhood. He restored hearing to one who was deaf; in which miracle the deaf person acknowledged a wonderful fact, that when the saint put his fingers into his ears on either side he perceived that two things like little pigs came out of them. For these and other such deeds, his fame increased and he won a great name; so that Scots and Irish flowed together to him and he was reverenced by all as the one father of all.

1121 When therefore Malachy, having received the blessing of Father Imar, and having been sent by the bishop, came to him, after a prosperous journey, he was kindly received by the old man; and he remained with him for some years, in order that by staying so long he might draw fuller draughts from his aged breast, knowing that which is written, With the ancient is wisdom. But I suppose that another cause of his long sojourn was that the great Foreseer of all things would have His servant Malachy become known to all in a place to which so

many resorted, since he was to be useful to all. For he could not but be dear to those who knew him. In fact one thing happened in that period, by which in some measure he made manifest to men what had been known to God as being in him.

1127 9. A conflict having taken place between the king of South Munster—which is the southern part of Ireland—and his brother, and the brother being victorious, the king, driven from his kingdom, sought refuge with Bishop Malchus. It was not, however, in order that with his help he should recover the kingdom; but rather the devout prince gave place unto wrath and made a virtue of necessity, choosing to lead a private life. And when the bishop was preparing to receive the king with due honour, he declined it, saying that he preferred to be as one of those poor brothers who consorted with him, to lay aside his royal state, and to be content with the common poverty, rather to await the will of God than to get back his kingdom by force; and that he would not for his earthly honour. shed man's blood, since it would cry unto God against him from the ground. When he heard this the bishop rejoiced greatly, and with admiration for his devotion satisfied his desire. Why more? The king is given a poor house for his dwelling, Malachy for his teacher, bread with salt and water for his food. Moreover for dainties, the presence of Malachy, his life and doctrine, were sufficient for the king; so that he might say to him, How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Besides, every night he watered his couch with his tears, and also with a daily bath of cold water he quenched the burning lust for evil in his flesh. And the king prayed in the words of another king, Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. And God did not turn away his prayer nor His mercy from him. And his supplication was heard, although otherwise than he had desired. For he was troubled about his soul; but God, the avenger of innocence, willing to show men that there is a remainder for the man of peace, was preparing mean while to execute a judgement for the oppressed, which was utterly beyond his hope. And God stirred up the spirit of a neighbouring king: for Ireland is not one kingdom, but is divided into many. This king therefore seeing what had been done, was filled with wrath; and indignant, on the one hand, at the freedom of the raiders and the insolence of the proud, and on the other, pitying the desolation of the kingdom and the downfall of the king, he went down to the cell of the poor man; urged him to return, but did not succeed in persuading him. He was instant, nevertheless, pledged himself to help him, assured him that he need not doubt the result, promised that God would be with him, whom all his adversaries

would not be able to resist. He laid before him also the oppression of the poor and the devastation of his country; yet he prevailed not.

10. But when to these arguments were added the command of the bishop and the advice of Malachy—the two men on whom he wholly depended—at length, with difficulty, he consented. A king followed a king, and according to the word of the king, as was the will in heaven, the marauders were driven out with absolute ease, and the man was led back to his own, with great rejoicing of his people, and was restored to his kingdom. From that time the king loved and always reverenced Malachy; so much the more because he had learned more fully in the holy man the things that were worthy of reverence and affection. For he could not be ignorant of the holiness of him with whom he had enjoyed so much intimacy in his adversity. Therefore he honoured him the more in his prosperity with constant acts of friendship, and faithful services, and he heard him gladly, and when he heard him did many things But enough of this. Nevertheless I suppose it was not without purpose that the Lord so magnified him then before kings, but he was a chosen vessel unto Him, about to bear His name before kings and princes.

CHAPTER II

Malachy’s pity for his deceased sister. He restores the Monastery of Bangor. His first Miracles

11 (6). MEANWHILE Malachy’s sister, whom we mentioned before, died: and we must not pass over the visions which he saw about her. For the saint indeed abhorred her carnal life, and with such intensity that he vowed he would never see her alive in the flesh. But now that her flesh was destroyed his vow was also destroyed, and he began to see in spirit her whom in the body he would not see. One night he heard in a dream the voice of one saying to him that his sister was standing outside in the court, and that for thirty entire days she had tasted nothing; and when he awoke he soon understood the sort of food for want of which she was pining away. And when he had diligently considered the number of days which he had heard, he discovered that it went back to the time when he had ceased to offer the living bread from heaven for her. Then, since he hated not the soul of his sister but her sin, he began again the good practice which he had abandoned. And not in vain. Not long after she was seen by him to have come to the threshold of the church, but to be not yet able to enter; she appeared also in dark raiment. And when he persevered, taking care that on no single day she should be disappointed of the accustomed gift, he saw her a second time in whitish raiment, admitted indeed within the church, but not allowed to approach the altar. At last she was seen, a third time, gathered in the company of the white-robed, and in bright clothing. You see, reader, how much the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth. Truly the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. Does not the prayer of Malachy seem to you to have played the part as it were of a housebreaker to the heavenly gates, when a sinful woman obtained by the weapons of a brother what was denied to her own merits? This violence, good Jesus, Thou who sufferest dost exercise, strong and merciful to save, showing mercy and strength with thine arm, and preserving it in thy sacrament for the saints which are in the earth, unto the end of the world. Truly this sacrament is strong to consume sins, to

defeat opposing powers, to bring into heaven those who are returning from the earth.

12 (7). The Lord, indeed, was so preparing His beloved Malachy in the district of Lismore for the glory of His name. But those who had sent him, tolerating his absence no longer, recalled him by letters. When he was restored to his people,1 now better instructed in all that was necessary, behold a work prepared and kept by God1 for Malachy. A rich and powerful man, who held the place of Bangor and its possessions, by inspiration of God immediately placed in his hand all that he had and himself as well. And he was his mother's brother. But kinship of spirit was of more value to Malachy than kinship of the flesh. The actual place also of Bangor, from which he received his name, the prince made over to him, that there he might build, or rather rebuild, a monastery. For indeed there had been formerly a very celebrated one under the first father, Comgall, which produced many thousands of monks, and was the head of many monasteries. A truly holy place it was and prolific of saints, bringing forth most abundant fruit to God, so that one of the sons of that holy community, Lugaid by name, is said to have been the founder—himself alone—of a hundred monasteries. I mention this in order that the reader may infer from this one instance what an immense number of others there were. In fine, to such an extent did its shoots fill Ireland and Scotland that those verses of David seem to have sung beforehand especially of these times, Thou visitest the earth and blessest it; thou makest it very plenteous. The river of God is full of water: thou preparest their corn, for so thou providest for the earth, blessing its rivers, multiplying its shoots. With its drops of rain shall it rejoice while it germinates; and in like manner the verses that follow. Nor was it only into the regions just mentioned, but also into foreign lands that those swarms of saints poured forth as though a flood had risen; of whom one, St. Columbanus, came up to our Gallican parts, and built the monastery of Luxovium, and was made there a great people. So great a people was it, they say, that the choirs succeeding one another in turn, the solemnities of the divine offices went on continuously, so that not a moment day or night was empty of praises.

13. (8) Enough has been said about the ancient glory of the monastery of Bangor. This long ago destroyed by pirates, Malachy eagerly cherished on account of its remarkable and long-standing prestige, as though he were about to replant a paradise, and because many bodies of the saints slept there. For, not to speak of those which were buried in peace, it is said that nine hundred persons were slain together in one day by pirates. Vast, indeed, were the possessions of

that place; but Malachy, content with the holy place alone, resigned all the possessions and lands to another. For indeed from the time when the monastery was destroyed there was always some one to hold it with its possessions. For they were both appointed by election and were even called abbots, preserving in name but not in fact what had once been. And though many urged him not to alienate the possessions, but to retain the whole together for himself, this lover of poverty did not consent, but caused one to be elected, according to custom, to hold them; the place, as we have said, being retained for Malachy and his followers. And perhaps, as afterwards appeared, he would have been wiser to have kept it all; only he looked more to humility than to peace.

14. So, then, by the command of Father Imar, taking with him about ten brethren, he came to the place and began to build. And there, one day, when he himself was cutting with an axe, by chance one of the workmen, while he was brandishing the axe in the air, carelessly got into the place at which the blow was aimed, and it fell on his spine with as much force as Malachy could strike. He fell, and all ran to him supposing that he had received a death-wound or was dead. And indeed his tunic was rent from the top to the bottom, but the man himself was found unhurt, the skin so very slightly grazed that scarcely a trace appeared on the surface. The man whom the axe had laid low, stood unharmed while the bystanders beheld him with amazement. Hence they became more eager, and were found readier for the work. And this was the beginning of the miracles of Malachy. Moreover the oratory was finished in a few days, made of smoothed planks indeed, but closely and strongly fastened together—a Scotic work, not devoid of beauty. And thenceforward God was served in it as in the ancient days; that is, with similar devotion, though not with like numbers. Malachy presided over that place for some time, by the ordinance of Father Imar, being at once the ruler and the rule of the brethren. They read in his life how they should behave themselves, and he was their leader in righteousness and holiness before God; save that besides the things appointed for the whole community he did many things of an exceptional kind, in which he still more was the leader of all, and none of the others was able to follow him to such difficult practices.

At that time and place a certain man was sick, and the devil stood by him and suggested in plain speech that he should never heed the admonitions of Malachy, but if he should enter his house, he should attack and kill him with a knife. And when this became known, those who ministered to him, the sick man himself informing them, brought word to Malachy and warned him. But he, seizing his

accustomed weapons of prayer, boldly attacked his enemy, and put to flight both disease and demon. But the man's name was Malchus. He is brother according to the flesh of our Christian, abbot of Mellifont. For both are still alive, now brothers yet more, in spirit. For when he was delivered, immediately he was not ungrateful, but in the same place, having turned to the Lord, he changed both his habit and his mind. And the brethren knew that the evil one was envious of their prosperity; and they were edified and made more careful henceforth.

15 (9). At the same place he healed a cleric, named Michael, who was suffering from dysentery and despaired of, by sending him something from his table. A second time, when the same person was smitten with a very grave disorder, he cured him both in body and mind. And from that moment he clave to God and to Malachy His servant, fearing lest a worse thing should come unto him, if once more he should be found ungrateful for so great a benefit and miracle. And at present, as we have heard, he presides over a monastery in the parts of Scotland; and this was the latest of all Malachy's foundations. Through such deeds of Malachy both his reputation and his community increased daily, and his name became great both within and without the monastery, though not greater than the fact. For indeed he dwelt there even after he was made bishop, for the place was near the city.

CHAPTER III

St. Malachy becomes Bishop of Connor; he builds the Monastery of Iveragh

1124 16 (10). AT that time an episcopal see was vacant, and had long been vacant, because Malachy would not assent: for they had elected him to it. But they persisted, and at length he yielded when their entreaties were enforced by the command of his teacher, together with that of the metropolitan. It was when he was just entering the thirtieth year of his age, that he was consecrated bishop and brought to Connor; for that was the name of the city. But when he began to administer his office, the man of God understood that he had been sent not to men but to beasts. Never before had he known the like, in whatever depth of barbarism; never had he found men so shameless in regard of morals, so dead in regard of rites, so impious in regard of faith, so barbarous in regard of laws, so stubborn in regard of discipline, so unclean in regard of life. They were Christians in name, in fact pagans. There was no giving of tithes or firstfruits; no entry into lawful marriages, no making of confessions: nowhere could be found any who would either seek penance or impose it. Ministers of the altar were exceeding few. But indeed what need was there of more when even the few were almost in idleness and ease among the laity? There was no fruit which they could bring forth from their offices among a people so vile. For in the churches there was not heard the voice either of preacher or singer. What was the athlete of the Lord to do? He must either yield with shame or with danger fight. But he who recognized that he was a shepherd and not a hireling, elected to stand rather than to flee, prepared to give his life for the sheep if need be. And although all were wolves and there were no sheep, the intrepid shepherd stood in the midst of the wolves, rich in all means by which he might make sheep out of wolves—admonishing in public, arguing in secret, weeping with one and another; accosting men now roughly, now gently, according as he saw it to be expedient for each. And in cases where these expedients failed he offered for them a broken and a contrite heart. How often did he spend entire nights in vigil,

holding out his hands in prayer! And when they would not come to the church he went to meet the unwilling ones in the streets and in the broad ways, and going round about the city, he eagerly sought whom he might gain for Christ.

17 (11). But further afield also, none the less, he very frequently traversed country parts and towns with that holy band of disciples, who never left his side. He went and bestowed even on the unthankful their portion of the heavenly meat. Nor did he ride on a horse, but went afoot, in this also proving himself an apostolic man. Good Jesus, how great things thy warrior suffered for Thy name's sake from crime-stained children. How great things he endured for Thee from those very men to whom, and on whose behalf, he spoke good things. Who can worthily express with how great vexations he was harassed, with what insults he was assailed, with what unrighteous acts provoked, how often he was faint with hunger, how often afflicted with cold and nakedness? Yet with them that hated peace he was a peacemaker, instant, nevertheless, in season, out of season. Being defamed he intreated; when he was dealt with unrighteously he defended himself with the shield of patience and overcame evil with good. Why should he not overcome? He continued knocking, and according to the promise, at length, sometimes, to him that knocked it was opened. How could that not follow which the Truth had declared beforehand should follow? The right hand of the Lord brought mighty things to pass,1 because the mouth of the Lord spoke1 the truth. Hardness vanished, barbarity ceased; the rebellious house1 began gradually to be appeased, gradually to admit reproof, to receive discipline.1 Barbarous laws disappear, Roman laws are introduced; everywhere the ecclesiastical customs are received, their opposites are rejected; churches1 are rebuilt, a clergy is appointed in them; the solemnities of the sacraments are duly celebrated; confessions are made; congregations1 come to the church; the celebration of marriage graces those who live together.1 In fine, all things are so changed for the better that to-day the word which the Lord speaks by the prophet is applicable to that nation; those who before were not my people are now my people.1

1127 18 (12). It happened after some years that the city was destroyed by the king of the northern part of Ireland; for out of the north all evil breaks forth. And perhaps that evil was good for those who used it well. For who knows that God did not wish to destroy by such a scourge the ancient evils of His people? By a necessity so dire Malachy was compelled, and he retired with a crowd of his disciples. Nor was his retirement spent in idleness. It gave opportunity for building the monastery of Iveragh, Malachy going there with his brothers, in number one hundred and twenty. There King Cormac met him. He it was who at

a former time driven out of his kingdom, under the care of Malachy by the mercy of God received consolation; and that place was in his kingdom. The king rejoiced to see Malachy, placing at the disposal of him and those who were with him himself and all that he had—as one who was neither ungrateful nor unmindful of a benefit. Many beasts were immediately brought for the use of the brothers; much gold and silver was also supplied, with regal munificence, for the expense of the buildings. He himself also was coming in and going out with them, busy and ready to server in attire a king, but in mind a disciple of Malachy. And the Lord blessed that place for Malachy's sake, and in a short time he was made great in goods, possessions and persons. And there, as it were beginning anew, the burden of law and discipline which he laid on others he bore with greater zeal himself, their bishop and teacher. Himself, in the order of his course did duty as cook, himself served the brothers while they sat at meat. Among the brothers who succeeded one another in singing or reading in church he did not suffer himself to be passed over, but strenuously fulfilled the office in his place as one of them. He not only shared but took the lead in [the life] of holy poverty, being especially zealous for it more abundantly than they all.

CHAPTER IV

Being made Archbishop of Armagh, he suffers many troubles. Peace being made, from being Archbishop of Armagh he becomes Bishop of Down

1129 19 (12). MEANWHILE it happened that Archbishop Cellach fell sick: he it was who ordained Malachy deacon, presbyter and bishop: and knowing that he was dying he made a sort of testament to the effect that Malachy ought to succeed him, because none seemed worthier to be bishop of the first see. This he gave in charge to those who were present, this he commanded to the absent, this to the two kings of Munster and to the magnates of the land he specially enjoined by the authority of St. Patrick. For from reverence and honour for him, as the apostle of that nation, who had converted the whole country to the faith, that see where he presided in life and rests in death has been held in so great veneration by all from the beginning, that not merely bishops and priests, and those who are of the clergy, but also all kings and princes are subject to the metropolitan in all obedience, and he himself alone presides over all. But a very evil custom had developed, by the devilish ambition of certain powerful persons, that the holy see should be held by hereditary succession. For they suffered none to be bishops but those who were of their own tribe and family. And for no short time had the execrable succession lasted, for fifteen generations (as I may call them) had already passed in this wickedness. And to such a point had an evil and adulterous generation established for itself this distorted right, rather this unrighteousness worthy of punishment by any sort of death, that although at times clerics failed of that blood, yet bishops never. In a word there had been already eight before Cellach, married men, and without orders, albeit men of letters. Hence, throughout the whole of Ireland, all that subversion of ecclesiastical discipline, that weakening of censure, that abandonment of religion of which we have spoken already; hence everywhere that substitution of raging barbarism for Christian meekness—yea, a sort of paganism brought in under the

name of Christianity. For—a thing unheard of from the very beginning of the Christian faith—bishops were transferred and multiplied, without order or reason, at the will of the metropolitan, so that one bishopric was not content with one bishop, but nearly every single church had its bishop. No wonder; for how could the members of so diseased a head be sound?

1132 20. Cellach, greatly grieving for these and other like evils of his people—for he was a good and devout man—took all care to have Malachy as his successor, because he believed that by him this evilly rooted succession might be torn up, since he was dear to all, and one whom all were zealous to imitate, and the Lord was with him. Nor was he deceived of his hope; for when he died Malachy was put into occupation in his room. But not soon nor easily. For behold there is one of the evil seed to seize the place—Murtough by name. For five years, relying on the secular power, this man fastened himself upon the church, not a bishop but a tyrant. For the wishes of the devout had rather supported the claim of Malachy. At last they urged him to undertake the burden according to the ordinance of Cellach. But he, who shunned every high office as nothing else than his downfall, thought that he had found good ground of excuse, because at that time it was impossible that he should have a peaceful entry. All were eager for so holy a work and pressed him; especially the two bishops, Malchus and Gilbert, of whom the former was the elder of Lismore mentioned above, the second he who is said to have been the first to exercise the office of legate of the Apostolic See throughout the whole of Ireland. These, when three years had now passed in this presumption of Murtough and dissimulation of Malachy, tolerating no longer the adultery of the church and the dishonour of Christ, called together the bishops and princes of the land, and came, in one spirit, to Malachy, prepared to use force. But he refused at first; pleading the difficulty of the project, the numbers, strength and ambition of that noble stock, urging that it was a great venture for him, a poor man and of no account, to oppose himself to men so many, so great, of such sort, so deeply rooted, who now for well-nigh two hundred years had held as by hereditary right the sanctuary of God and now also had taken possession of it before him; that they could not be rooted out, not even at the cost of human life; that it was not to his advantage that man’s blood should be shed on his account; and lastly, that he was joined to another spouse whom it was not lawful for him to put away.

21 (14). But when they persisted eagerly in the contrary opinion, and cried out that the word had come forth from the Lord, and moreover ordered him with all authority to undertake the burden, and threatened him with an anathema, he said,

“You are leading me to death, but I obey in the hope of martyrdom; yet on this condition, that if, as you expect, the enterprise has good success, and God frees his heritage from those that are destroying it, all being then at length completed, and the church at peace, it may be lawful for me to return to my former spouse and friend, poverty, from which I am carried off, and to put in my place there another, if then one is found fit for it.” Note, reader, the courage of the man and the purity of his purpose who, for Christ’s name, neither sought honour nor dreaded death. What could be purer or what braver than this purpose, that after exposing himself to peril and labour he should yield to another the fruit—peace and security itself in the place of authority? And this he does, retaining for himself according to agreement a free return to poverty when peace and freedom are restored to the church. When they gave the pledge, at length he assented to their will; or rather to the will of God, who, he remembered, had long foreshown to him this occurrence, at the fulfilment of which he was now grieved. For indeed when Cellach was already ailing there appeared to Malachy—far away and ignorant [of Cellach’s condition]—a woman of great stature and reverend mien. When he inquired who she was, the answer was given that she was the wife of Cellach. And she gave him a pastoral staff which she held in her hand, and then disappeared. A few days later, Cellach, when he was dying, sent his staff to Malachy, indicating that he should succeed him: and when he saw it he recognized that it was the same which he had seen [in vision]. It was the remembrance of this vision which specially put Malachy in fear, lest if he still refused he might seem to resist the Divine will, which he had ignored long enough. But he did not enter the city as long as that intruder lived, lest by such act it should happen that any one of those should die to whom he came rather to minister life. Thus for two years (for so long the other survived), living outside the town, he strenuously performed the episcopal office throughout the whole province.

1134, Sept. 17 22 (15). When that person, then, had been removed by sudden death, again one Niall [Nigellus] (in truth nigerrimus, very black) quickly took possession of the see. And in appointing him as his successor, Murtough, while he was still alive, made provision for his life: he was going forth to be damned, but in the person of Niall he would go on adding to the works of damnation. For he also was of the damned race, a relative of Murtough. But the king and the bishops and faithful of the land nevertheless came together that they might bring in Malachy. And to, there was an assembly of the wicked to oppose them. A certain man of the sons of Belial, ready for mischief, mighty in iniquity, who

knew the place where they had decided to come together, gathered many with him and secretly seized a neighbouring high hill opposite to it, intending, when they were engaged with other things, suddenly to rush upon them unawares and murder the innocent. For they had agreed to butcher the king also with the bishop, that there might be none to avenge the righteous blood. The plan became known to Malachy, and he entered the church, which was close by, and lifted up his hands in prayer to the Lord. Lo, there came clouds and darkness, yea also dark waters and thick clouds of the skies changed the day into night, lightnings and thunderings and an horrible spirit of tempests presaged the last day, and all the elements threatened speedy death.

23. But that you may know, reader, that it was the prayer of Malachy that roused the elements, the tempest fell upon those who sought his life, the dark whirlwind enveloped only those who had made ready the works of darkness. Finally, he who was the leader of so great wickedness was struck by a thunderbolt and perished with three others, companions in death as they had been partners in crime; and the next day their bodies were found half-burnt and putrid, clinging to the branches of trees, each where the wind1 had lifted him up and cast him down.1 Three others also were found half dead; the rest were all scattered in every direction. But, as for those who were with Malachy, though they were close to the place, the storm touched them not at all, neither troubled them.1 In that fact we find fresh proof of the truth of that saying, The prayer of the righteous pierceth the heavens.1 It is also a new example of the ancient miracle, by which in former times, when all Egypt was in darkness, Israel alone remained in light, as the Scripture says, Wheresoever Israel was there was light.1 In this connexion occurs to me also what holy Elijah did, at one time bringing clouds and rain from the ends of the earth, at another, calling down fire from heaven on the revilers. And now in like manner God is glorified in His servant Malachy.

24 (16). In the thirty-eighth year of his age, the usurper having been driven out, the poor man, Malachy, entered Armagh, pontiff and metropolitan of all Ireland. But when the king and the others who had brought him in returned home, he remained in the hand of God; and there remained for him without fightings, within fears. For, lo, the viperous brood, raging and crying out that it was disinherited, aroused itself in full strength, within and without, against the Lord and against His Anointed. Moreover, Niall, seeing that flight was inevitable, took with him certain insignia of that see, to wit, the copy of the Gospels, which had belonged to blessed Patrick,1 and the staff covered with gold

and adorned with most costly gems, which they call “the staff of Jesus,” because the Lord himself (as report affirms) held it in His hands and fashioned it; which are deemed of the highest honour and sanctity in that nation. They are, in fact, very well known and celebrated among the tribes, and so revered by all, that he who is once seen to have them is held by the foolish and unwise people to be their bishop. That man—a vagabond and another Satan—went to and fro in the land and walked up and down in it, bearing round the holy insignia; and, displaying them everywhere, he was for their sake everywhere received, by them winning the minds of all to himself, and withdrawing as many as he could from Malachy. These things did he.

25. But there was a certain prince, of the more powerful of the unrighteous race, whom the king before he left the city, had compelled to swear that he would maintain peace with the bishop, taking from him, moreover, many hostages. Notwithstanding this, when the king left he entered the city, and took counsel with his kinsmen and friends how they might take the holy man by subtlety and kill him; but they feared the people; and having conspired to slay Malachy they fixed a place and day, and a traitor gave them a sign. On that very day, when the prelate was now celebrating the solemnity of Vespers in the church with the whole of the clergy and a multitude of the people, that worthless man sent him a message in words of peace with subtlety, asking him that he would deign to come down to him, so that he might make peace. The bystanders answered that he should rather come to the bishop, and that the church was a more suitable place for establishing peace; for they foresaw guile. The messengers replied that this was not safe for the prince; that he feared for his head, and that he did not trust himself to the crowds who, some days before, had nearly killed him for the bishop’s sake. As they were contending in this way, these saying that he should go, those that he should not go, the bishop, desiring peace and not afraid to die, said, “Brethren, let me imitate my Master. I am a Christian to no purpose if I do not follow Christ. Perhaps by humility I shall bend the tyrant; if not, yet I shall conquer by rendering, a shepherd to a sheep, a priest to a layman, that duty which he owed to me. You also, as far as in me lies, I shall edify not a little by such an example. For what if I should chance to be killed? I refuse not to die, in order that from me you may have an example of life. It behoves a bishop, as the prince of bishops says, not to be lord over the clergy, but to become an example to the flock—no other example truly than that which we have received from Him who humbled himself and became obedient unto death. Who will give me [the opportunity] to leave this [example] to [my]

sons, sealed with my blood? Try, at any rate, whether your priest has worthily learnt from Christ not to fear death for Christ." And he arose and went his way, all weeping, and praying that he would not so greatly desire to die for Christ that he should leave desolate so great a flock of Christ.

26 (17). But as for him, setting his whole hope in the Lord, he went with all speed accompanied only by three disciples who were ready to die with him. When he crossed the threshold of the house and suddenly came into the midst of the armed men—himself protected by the shield of faith—the countenances of them all fell, for dread fell upon them, so that the bishop could say, Mine enemies which trouble me became weak and fell. This word is true. You might see the victim standing, the slaughterers surrounding him on all sides, with weapons in their hands; and there was none to sacrifice him. You might suppose their arms were benumbed; for there was none to stretch out a hand. For even that one also, who seemed to be the head of the evil, rose up, not to assail him but to show him reverence. Where is the sign, O man, which you had given for the death of the pontiff? This is a sign rather of honour than death; this postpones, it does not hasten death. Wonderful result! They offer peace who had prepared slaughter. He cannot refuse it who had sought it at the risk of life. Therefore peace was made—a peace so firm that from that day the priest found his foe not merely appeased, but obedient, devoted. When they heard this, all the faithful rejoiced, not only because the innocent blood was saved in that day, but because by the merits of Malachy the souls of many wrongdoers escaped to salvation. And fear took hold on all that were round about when they heard how God had laid low, with sudden power, those two of His enemies who seemed most ferocious and powerful in their generation: I refer to him with whom we are now concerned, and the other of whom I spoke above. For in a wonderful manner He took them both—one terribly punished in the body, the other mercifully changed in heart—in the devices that they had imagined.

1135, July (?) 27. These matters so accomplished, the bishop now began to dispose and order in the city all things pertaining to his ministry with entire freedom, but not without constant risk of his life. For though there was no one now who would harm him openly, yet the bishop had no place that was safe from plotters, and no time when he could be at ease; and armed men were appointed to guard him day and night, though he rather trusted in the Lord. But his purpose was to take action against the schismatic already mentioned, forasmuch as he was seducing many by means of the insignia which he carried about, persuading all that he ought to be bishop, and so stirring up the

congregations against Malachy and the unity of the church. And thus he did; and without difficulty in a short time he so hedged up all his ways through the grace given unto him by the Lord, and which he had toward all, that that evil one was compelled to surrender, to return the insignia, and henceforth to be quiet in all subjection.1 Thus Malachy, albeit through many perils and labours, prospered day by day and was strengthened, abounding more and more in hope and the power of the Holy Ghost.1

28 (18). And God swept away, not only those who did evil to Malachy, but also those who disparaged him. A certain man, for example, who was in favour with the princes and magnates, and even with the king himself, because he was a flatterer and garrulous and mighty in tongue, befriended Malachy's opponents in all things, and impudently maintained their contention. On the other hand, when the saint was present, he withstood him to the face, and when he was absent he disparaged him. Moreover he accosted him rudely everywhere, and especially when he knew that he was engaged in the more frequented assemblies. But he was soon visited with a suitable reward of his impudent tongue. The evil-speaking tongue swelled, and became putrid and worms swarmed from it and filled the whole blasphemous mouth. He vomited them forth incessantly for well-nigh seven days, and at length with them spued out his wretched soul.

29. Once when Malachy was speaking before the people and exhorting them, a certain unhappy woman dared to interrupt his discourse with evil cries, showing no respect to the priest and the Spirit which spake. Now she was of the impious race; and having breath in her nostrils she vomited out blasphemies and insults against the saint, saying that he was a hypocrite, and an invader of the inheritance of another, and even reproaching him for his baldness. But he, modest and gentle as he was, answered her nothing; but the Lord answered for him. The woman became insane by the judgement of the Lord, and crying out many times that she was being suffocated by Malachy, at length by a horrible death she expiated the sin of blasphemy. So this wretched woman, taking up against Malachy the reproach that had been made against Elisha, found to her cost that he was indeed another Elisha.

30. Further, because on account of a certain pestilence which arose in the city, he had solemnly led out a multitude of the clergy and people with the memorial of the saints, neither is this to be passed over, that when Malachy prayed the pestilence immediately ceased. Thenceforward there was none to murmur against him, for those who were of the seed of Canaan said, Let us flee from the face of Malachy, for the Lord fighteth for him. But it was too late, for the wrath

of the Lord, coming everywhere upon them, pursued them even unto destruction. How, in a few days, is their memorial perished with resounding noise; how are they brought into desolation, they are consumed in a moment, they are punished for their iniquity, A great miracle to-day is the extinction of that generation, so quickly wrought, especially for those who knew their pride and power. And many other signs truly were there by which God glorified His name and strengthened His servant amidst labours and dangers. Who can worthily recount them? Yet we do not omit them all, though we have not ability to describe all. But that the sequence of the narrative may not be interrupted we reserve to the end some that we propose to mention.

1137 31 (19). So then Malachy, when within three years a reward was rendered to the proud and liberty restored to the church, barbarism driven out and the customs of the Christian religion everywhere instituted anew, seeing that all things were at peace, began to think also of his own peace. And mindful of his design he appointed in his own place Gelasius, a good man, and worthy of so great an honour, the clergy and people tacitly assenting, or rather supporting him because of the agreement. For apart from that it seemed altogether cruel. And when he had been consecrated and earnestly commended to the kings and princes, Malachy himself, renowned for miracles and triumphs, returned to his parish; but not to Connor. Hear the cause, which is worth relating. It is said that that diocese in ancient times had two episcopal sees, and that there were two bishoprics; an arrangement which seemed to Malachy preferable to the existing one. Hence those bishoprics which ambition had welded into one, Malachy divided again into two, yielding one part to another bishop and retaining the other for himself. And for this reason he did not come to Connor, because he had already ordained a bishop in it; but he betook himself to Down, separating the parishes as in the days of old. O pure heart! O dove-like eye! He handed over to the new bishop the place which seemed better organized, which was held to be more important, the place in which he himself had sat. Where are they that fight about boundaries, carrying on perpetual hostilities against one another for a single village? I know not if there is any class of men whom that ancient prophecy touches more than those: They have ripped up the women with child of Gilead that they might enlarge their border. But this at another place.

32. When Malachy was made bishop of Down, immediately according to his custom he was at pains to take to himself from his sons, for his comfort, a convent of regular clerics. And lo, again he girds himself, as though a new recruit of Christ, for the spiritual conflict; again he puts on the weapons that are

mighty through God, the humility of holy poverty, the rigour of monastic discipline, the quietness of contemplation, continuance in prayer. But all these things for a long time he was able to maintain rather in will than in deed. For all men came to him; not only obscure persons, but also nobles and magnates, hastened to commit themselves to his wisdom and holiness for instruction and correction. And he himself meanwhile went about; he went out to sow his seed, disposing and decreeing with all authority concerning ecclesiastical affairs, like one of the Apostles. And none said unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? inasmuch as all saw the miracles and wonders which he did, and because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

CHAPTER V

The Roman Pilgrimage: the Miracles which were wrought in it

1139 33 (20). IT seemed to him, however, that one could not go on doing these things with sufficient security without the authority of the Apostolic See; and for that reason he determined to set out for Rome, and most of all because the metropolitan see still lacked, and from the beginning had lacked, the use of the pall, which is the fullness of honour. And it seemed good in his eyes that the church for which he had laboured so much should acquire, by his zeal and labour, that privilege which hitherto it had not had. There was also another metropolitan see, which Cellach had constituted anew, though subject to the first see and to its archbishop as primate. For it also Malachy no less desired the pall, and that the prerogative which it had attained by the gift of Cellach should be confirmed by the authority of the Apostolic See. When his purpose became known it displeased both the brothers and the magnates and people of the country; because all judged that they could not endure so long an absence of the loving father of them all, and because they feared he might die.

1139, June 12. 1140, January 34. It happened meanwhile that his brother, Christian by name, died, a good man, full of grace and power. He was a bishop second to Malachy in reputation, but in holiness of life and zeal for righteousness perhaps his equal. His departure made all the more afraid, and rendered a parting from Malachy more grievous. They said, in fact, that they would in no wise assent to the pilgrimage of their only protector, since the whole land would be made desolate if in one moment it was bereaved of two such pillars. Therefore all, with one voice, opposed him, and would have used force but that he threatened them with divine vengeance. They refused to desist, however, till the will of God on this matter should be asked by the casting of a lot. He forbade it: nevertheless they cast the lot, but thrice it was found to give an answer in favour of Malachy. For they were not content with one trial, so eager were they to retain him. Yielding at length they let him go, but not without

lamentation and weeping and great mourning. But that he should leave nothing imperfect he began to take measures by which he might raise up the seed of his dead brother. And three of his disciples having been summoned to him he deliberated anxiously which should seem more worthy, or, in other words, more useful, for this work. And when he had scrutinized them one by one, he said, “Do you, Edan” (that was the name of one of them), “undertake the burden.” And when he hesitated and wept, he proceeded, “Do not fear; for you have been designated to me by the Lord; for just now I saw in anticipation the gold ring with which you are to be espoused on your finger.” He assented, and when he had been consecrated Malachy set out on his journey.

35. And when he had left Scotland and reached York, a priest, named Sycarus, steadfastly beholding him recognized him. For though he had not seen his face before, because he had the spirit of prophecy he had received a revelation concerning him long ago. And now without hesitation he pointed him out with his finger to those who stood round him, saying, “This is he of whom I had said that from Ireland there shall come a holy bishop who knoweth the thoughts of man.” So the lamp could not be hid under a bushel, for the Holy Spirit who lighted it brought it forth by the mouth of Sycarus. For also many secret things concerning the affairs of him and his companions were told him by Sycarus, all of which he acknowledged to be or to have been. But when the companions of Malachy went on to inquire about their return, Sycarus immediately replied—and the event afterwards proved the truth of the saying—that evidently very few of their number would return with the bishop. When they heard that they imagined that he apprehended death: but God fulfilled it in another way; for on his way back from the City he left some with us, and some in other places, to learn the rule of life; and so, according to the word of Sycarus, he returned to his own country with very few companions. So much concerning Sycarus.

36. In the same city of York he was visited by a man of noble rank according to the standard of the world, Waltheof by name, then prior of the regular brothers at Kirkham, but now a monk, and father of the monks at Melrose, a monastery of our Order, who devoutly commended himself with humility to Malachy’s prayers. And when he noticed that the bishop had many companions and few horses—for besides ministers and other clerks he had with him five presbyters, and only three horses—he offered him his own, on which he rode, saying that he regretted only one thing, that it was a pack-horse and a rough animal to ride. And he added, “I would have given it more willingly if it had been better; but, if you think it worth while, take it with you, such as it is.” “And I,” replied the

bishop, “accept it the more willingly the more valueless you proclaim it, because nothing can be of no value to me which so precious a will offers;” and, turning to his companions, “Saddle this horse for me, for it is suitable for me, and will suffice for a long time.” This done, he mounts. And at first he considered it rough, as it was, but afterwards, by a wonderful change, he found that it suited him well and ambled pleasantly. And that there might not fall on the ground any part of the word which he had spoken, till the ninth year, the year in which he died, it did not fail him, and became an excellent and very valuable palfrey. And —that which made the miracle more evident to those that saw—from being nearly black it began to grow white, and after no long time there was scarcely a whiter horse to be found than it.

1140, March 37 (21). To me also it was granted to see the man on that journey, and by the sight of him and by his word I was refreshed, and I rejoiced as in all riches; and I, in turn, though a sinner, found grace in his sight then, and from that time up to his death, as I said in the Preface. He also, deigning to turn aside to Clairvaux, when he saw the brothers was deeply moved; and they were not a little edified by his presence and his speech. So accepting the place and us, and gathering us into his inmost heart, he bade us farewell and departed. And crossing the Alps he came to Ivrea, a city of Italy, where he immediately healed the little son of his host who was sick and ready to die.

1140, May 38. Pope Innocent II., of happy memory, was then in the Apostolic See. He received him courteously, and displayed kindly pity for him on account of his long pilgrimage. And Malachy in the first place asked with many tears for that which he had fixed most deeply in his heart, that he might be allowed to live and die at Clairvaux, with the permission and blessing of the chief Pontiff. He sought this, not forgetful of the purpose for which he had come, but influenced by the longing for Clairvaux which he had brought with him. But he did not obtain his request, because the apostolic man decided that he should be employed to more profitable advantage. He was not, however, wholly disappointed of his heart’s desire, since it was granted him if not to live, at least to die there. He spent a whole month in the City, visiting the holy places and resorting to them for prayer. During that time the chief Pontiff made frequent and careful inquiry of him and those who were with him concerning the affairs of their country, the morals of the people, the state of the churches, and the great things that God had wrought by him in the land. And when he was already preparing to return home the Pope committed his own authority to him, appointing him legate throughout the whole of Ireland. For Bishop Gilbert, who,

as we have mentioned above, was then legate, had intimated to him that by reason of age and infirmity of body he could no longer discharge the duties of the office. After this Malachy prayed that the constitution of the new metropolis should be confirmed, and that palls should be given him for both sees. The privilege of confirmation he soon received; “but regarding the palls,” said the chief Pontiff, “more formal action must be taken. You must call together the bishops and clerks and the magnates of the land and hold a general council; and so with the assent and common desire of all ye shall demand the pall by persons of honest repute, and it shall be given you.” Then he took his mitre from his own head, and placed it on Malachy’s head, and more, he gave him the stole and maniple which he was accustomed to use in the offering; and saluting him with the kiss of peace he dismissed him, strengthened with the apostolic blessing and authority.

1140, July–August. 1142 39. And returning by Clairvaux he bestowed on us a second benediction. And sighing deeply that it was not allowed him to remain as he longed to do, he said, “Meanwhile I pray you to keep these men for me, that they may learn from you what they may afterwards teach us.” And he added, “They will be to us for a seed, and in this seed shall the nations be blessed, even those nations which from ancient days have heard the name of monk, but have not seen a monk.” And leaving four of his most intimate companions he departed: and they, when they were proved and found worthy, were made monks. After a time, when the saint was now in his own country, he sent others, and they were dealt with in like manner. And when they had been instructed for some time and had applied their hearts unto wisdom, the holy brother Christian, who was one of themselves, was given to them to be their father, and we sent them out, adding from our own a sufficient number for an abbey. And this abbey conceived and bare five daughters, and the seed being thus multiplied the number of monks increases from day to day according to the desire and prophecy of Malachy. Now let us return to the order of the narrative.

40 (22). Malachy having set out from us had a prosperous journey through Scotland. And he found King David, who is still alive to-day, in one of his castles; and his son was sick nigh unto death. And when Malachy entered the king’s house he was honourably received by him and prevailed upon by humble entreaty that he would heal his son. He sprinkled the youth with water which he had blessed, and fastening his eyes upon him said, “Trust me, my son; you shall not die this time.” He said this, and on the next day, according to his word, there followed the cure, and after the cure the joy of the father and the shouting and

noise of the whole exulting family. The rumour went forth to all, for what happened in the royal house and to the king's son could not be hid. And lo, everywhere there resounded thanksgiving and the voice of praise, both for the salvation of their lord, and for the novelty of the miracle. This is Henry; for he still lives, the only son of his father, a brave and prudent knight, taking after his father as they say, in following after righteousness and love of the truth. And both loved Malachy, as long as he lived, because he had recalled him from death. They asked him to remain some days; but he, shunning renown, was impatient of delay, and in the morning went on his way.

As he passed, therefore, through the village called Cruggleton, a dumb girl met him. While he prayed the string of her tongue was loosed and she spake plain.

Then he entered the village which they call St. Michael's Church, and before all the people cured a woman who was brought to him, mad and bound with cords; and when he had sent her away restored he went on.

But when he came to Portus Lapasperi, he waited there for a passage some days; but the time of delay did not pass idly. In the interval an oratory is constructed of twigs woven into a hedge, he both giving directions and himself working. When it was finished he surrounded it with a wall, and blessed the enclosed space for a cemetery. The merits of him who blessed, the miracles, which are said to be wrought there frequently to this day, sufficiently declare.

41. Hence it came that they were in the habit of carrying thither from the neighbouring places those that were infirm and diseased, and many were healed. A woman paralysed in all her limbs, brought thither on a waggon, returned home on foot, having waited only one night in the holy place, not in vain, for the mercy of the Lord.

Let these incidents—a few out of many—suffice with reference to that place; for now we must proceed with what remains.

CHAPTER VI

St. Malachy’s Apostolic Labours, Praises and Miracles

1140, October 42 (23). MALACHY embarked in a ship, and after a prosperous voyage landed at his monastery of Bangor, so that his first sons might receive the first benefit. In what state of mind do you suppose they were when they received their father—and such a father—in good health from so long a journey? No wonder if their whole heart gave itself over to joy at his return, when swift rumour soon brought incredible gladness even to the tribes outside round about them. In fine, from the cities and castles and hamlets they ran to meet him, and wherever he turned he was received with the joy of the whole land. But honour is not to his taste. He exercises his office as legate; many assemblies are held in many places, so that no region, or part of a region, may be defrauded of the fruit and advantage of his legation. He sows beside all waters; there is not one who can escape from his sedulous care. Neither sex, nor age, nor condition, nor [religious] profession is held in account. Everywhere the saving seed is scattered, everywhere the heavenly trumpet sounds. He scours every place, everywhere he breaks in, with the sword of his tongue unsheathed to execute vengeance upon the nations and punishments upon the peoples. The terror of him is on them that do evil. He cries unto the unrighteous, deal not unrighteously, and to the wicked, lift not up the horn. Religion is planted everywhere, is propagated, is tended. His eyes are upon them, his care is for their necessities. In councils, which are everywhere held, the ancient traditions are revived, which, though their excellence was undisputed, had fallen into disuse by the negligence of the priests. And not only are the old restored, new customs are also devised; and whatsoever things he promulgated are accepted as though issued from heaven, are held fast, are committed to writing for a memorial to posterity. Why should we not believe those things were sent from heaven which so many heavenly miracles confirm? And that I may make what has been said credible, let me touch on some of these miracles in a few words. For who can enumerate all? Though I confess I had rather dwell on those things which can be

imitated than on those which can only excite wonder.

43 (24). And in my judgement the first and greatest miracle that he exhibited was himself. For to say nothing of his inner man, the beauty and strength and purity of which his habits and life sufficiently attested, he so bore himself even outwardly in a uniform and consistent manner, and that the most modest and becoming, that absolutely nothing appeared in him which could offend the beholders. And, indeed, he who offends not in word, the same is a perfect man. But yet in Malachy, who, though he observed with unusual care, ever detected, I will not say an idle word, but an idle nod? Who ever knew his hand or his foot to move without purpose? Yea, what was there that was not edifying in his gait, his mien, his bearing, his countenance? In fine, neither did sadness darken nor laughter turn to levity the joyousness of his countenance. Everything in him was under discipline, everything a mark of virtue, a rule of perfection. Always he was grave, but not austere. Relaxing at times, but never careless; neglecting nothing, though for a time ignoring many things. Quiet often, but by no means at any time idle. From the first day of his conversion to the last of his life, he lived without personal possessions. He had neither menservants nor maidservants, nor villages nor hamlets, nor in fact any revenues, ecclesiastical or secular, even when he was a bishop. There was nothing whatever ordained or assigned for his episcopal mensa, by which the bishop might live; for he had not even a house of his own. But he was almost always going about all the parishes serving the Gospel, and living of the Gospel, as the Lord appointed for him when he said, The labourer is worthy of his hire.1 Except that more frequently, making the Gospel itself without charge,1 as a result of the labours of himself and his companions, he brought with him that by which he might sustain himself and those who laboured with him in the work of the ministry. Further, if at times he had to rest he did so in the holy places which he himself had scattered through the whole of Ireland; but he conformed to the customs and observances of those with whom it pleased him to tarry, content with the common life and the common table. There was nought in his food, nought in his clothing, by which Malachy could be distinguished from the rest of the brethren; to such a degree, though he was greatest, did he humble himself in all things.

44. Then, when he went out to preach, he was accompanied by others on foot, and on foot went he himself, the bishop and legate. That was the apostolic rule; and it is the more to be admired in Malachy because it is too rare in others. The true successor of the Apostles assuredly is he who does such things. But it is to be observed how he divides the inheritance with his brothers, equally

descendants of the Apostles. They lord it among the clergy; he, though he was free from all men, made himself the servant of all. They either do not preach the Gospel and yet eat, or preach the Gospel in order that they may eat; Malachy, imitating Paul, eats that he may preach the Gospel. They suppose that arrogance and gain are godliness; Malachy claims for himself by inheritance labour and a load. They believe themselves happy if they enlarge their borders; Malachy glories in enlarging charity.1 They gather into barns and fill the wine-jars, that they may load their tables; Malachy collects [men] into deserts and solitudes that he may fill the heavens. They, though they receive tithes and first-fruits and oblations, besides customs and tributes by the gift of Cæsar and countless other revenues, nevertheless take thought what they shall eat or what they shall drink; Malachy having nothing of such things, yet makes many rich out of the storehouse of faith. Of their desire and anxiety there is no end; Malachy, desiring nothing, knows not how to think about the morrow. They exact from the poor that which they may give to the rich; Malachy implores the rich to provide for the poor. They empty the purses of their subjects; he for their sins heaps altars with vows and peace-offerings. They build lofty palaces, raise up towers and ramparts to the heavens. Malachy, not having where to lay his head, does the work of an evangelist. They ride on horses1 with a crowd of men, who eat bread for nought, and that not their own;1 Malachy, hedged round with a college of holy brothers, goes about on foot, bearing the bread of angels,1 with which to satisfy the hungry souls.1 They do not even know the congregations;1 he instructs them. They honour powerful men and tyrants; he punishes them. O, apostolic man, whom so many and so striking signs of his apostleship1 ennoble! What wonder, then, if he has wrought wondrous things when he himself is so wonderful? Yet truly not he but God in him. Moreover, it is said, Thou art the God that doest wonders.

45 (25). There was a woman in the city of Coleraine who had a demon. Malachy was called; he prayed for the possessed; he commanded the invader and he went out. But his iniquity was not yet fully satisfied, and he entered into an unhappy woman who happened to be standing by. And Malachy said, “I did not release that woman from your grasp in order that you might enter this one; go out of her also.” He obeyed, but went back to the former woman; and driven forth from her once more, he again went into the second. So for some time he vexed them alternately, fleeing to and fro. Then the saint, indignant that he was mocked by a demon, summoned up his spirit, and shouted; and when he had made an attack on the adversary with all the forces of faith, he drove the demon

away from both, no less vexed than those whom he had vexed. But do not suppose, reader, that the delay which he caused the saint was due to his own strength: it was permitted by the divine dispensation, evidently in order that by this as well the power of the evil one as the victory of Malachy might be made more manifest.

Hear now what he did elsewhere, but not by reason of his presence. Assuredly what he had power to accomplish when absent, he could do also when present.

46. In a district of the northern part of Ireland a sick man lay in his house. His sickness was beyond doubt due to the evil influence of demons. For one night he heard them talking; and one said to another, “See that this wretched man does not touch the bed or bedding of that hypocrite, and so escape from our hands.” The man perceived that they were speaking of Malachy, who, as he remembered, had not long before passed a night in that house. And the bedding was still in its place; and taking courage, with his utmost effort he began to crawl, weak in body but strong in faith. And lo, in the air there was clamour and shouting: “Stop him, stop him, hold him, hold him; we are losing our prey.” But, carried on by faith and the desire to escape, the more they shouted the more he hastened to the remedy, straining with knees and hands. And when he reached the couch, and went up on it, he rolled himself in the bed-clothes, and heard the wailing of them that lamented, “Alas, alas, we have betrayed ourselves, we have been deceived, he has escaped.” And quicker than a word, there left him the terror of the demons and the horror which he suffered, and with them all his sickness.

In the city of Lismore a man vexed by a demon was delivered by Malachy.

Also once, when he was passing through Leinster, an infant was brought to him who had a demon, and he was brought back whole.

In the same region he ordered a mad woman, bound with cords, to be loosed and to be bathed in water which he blessed. She washed and was healed.

Another woman also in Saul, a region of Ulaid, who was tearing her own limbs with her teeth, he cured by praying and touching her.

There was a madman, who predicted many things to come. His friends and neighbours brought him to the man of God, bound strongly with cords, because his very madness had made him strong to do hurt and exceeding terrible. Malachy prayed, and immediately the sick man was healed and released. This was done in a certain place, the name of which we omit because it has a very barbarous sound, as also have many others.

At another time in the above-mentioned city of Lismore, the parents of a dumb girl brought her to him in the midst of the street as he passed, asking him with

much entreaty that he would deign to help her. Malachy stood and prayed; and he touched her tongue with his finger and spat upon her mouth, and sent her away speaking.

47 (26). Going out of a certain church he met a man with his wife, and she could not speak. And when he was asked to have mercy on her, he stood in the gate, the people surrounding him; and he gave a blessing upon her, and bade her say the Lord’s Prayer. She said it, and the people blessed the Lord.

In a city called Antrim a certain man lying on a bed, now deprived for twelve days of the use of his tongue, at the bidding of the saint, who visited him, recovered his speech and received the Eucharist; and so fortified he breathed his last breath in a good confession. O, fruitful olive tree in the house of God! O, oil of gladness, giving both anointing and light! By the splendour of the miracle he gave light to those who were whole, by the graciousness of the favour he anointed the sick man, and obtained for him, soon about to die, the saving power of confession and communion.

One of the nobles came in to him, having somewhat to say to him; and while they were speaking, full of faith piously stole three rushes from the couch on which Malachy sat, and took them with him: and God wrought many things as a result of the pious theft, by that man’s faith and the sanctity of the prelate.

By chance he had come to a city called Cloyne. And when he was sitting at table a nobleman of that city came in and humbly prayed him for his wife, who was pregnant, and had passed the appointed time of parturition, so that all wondered, and there was none who did not believe that her life was in danger. With him also Nehemiah, the bishop of that city, who was sitting next to him, made request to Malachy, and others also as many as were present reclining together. Then he said, “I pity her, for she is a good and modest woman.” And offering the man a cup which he had blessed, he said, “Go, give her to drink, and know that when she has taken the draught of blessing she will bring forth without delay, and without danger.” It was done as he commanded, and that very night there followed that which he promised.

He was sitting in a plain with the count of Ulaid, dealing with certain matters, and a great multitude was about them. There came a woman who had long been with child. She declared that contrary to all the laws of nature she had already been pregnant for fifteen months and twenty days. Malachy having pity for this new and unheard-of trouble, prayed, and the woman was delivered. Those who were present rejoiced and wondered. For all saw with what ease and rapidity she brought forth in the same place, and the sad portent of birth denied was changed

to a happier marvel.

48 (27). There happened in the same place an event with a similar miracle but a different issue. He saw a man who was reported to be consorting publicly with his brother's concubine; and he was a knight, a servant of the count. And publicly accosting the incestuous man he displayed himself to him as another John, saying, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's concubine. But he, nevertheless, in his turn displaying himself to Malachy as another Herod, not only did not hearken to him, but even answered him haughtily, and before them all swore that he would never put her away. Then Malachy, much agitated, for he was vehemently zealous for righteousness, said, "Then God shall separate you from her against your will." Paying little heed the man went away at once in a rage. And meeting the woman not far from the crowd which was in the place, he treated her evilly and with violence, as though he wholly belonged to Satan to whom he had a little before been delivered. Nor was the crime hidden. The damsel who accompanied the lady ran back to the house (for it was not far from the place), and, breathless, announced the wickedness that had taken place. At the word her brothers, who were at home, enraged at the dishonour done to their sister, rushed thither with all haste and slew the enemy of virtue, taken in the very place and act of crime, piercing him with many wounds. The assembly was not yet dismissed when, lo! his armour-bearer proclaimed what had happened. And all wondered that the sentence of Malachy had taken such speedy effect. When this word was heard all evildoers (for there were many in the land) feared and, being terrified, purified themselves, washing their hands in the blood of the ungodly.

49 (28). Dermot the count, who had now for a long time lain on his bed, he sprinkled with blessed water, and caused him to rise up without delay, and so strong that he mounted his horse on the spot, surpassing assuredly the hope of himself and of his friends—rebuking him severely at the same time because he was a bad man serving his belly and his appetite immoderately.

In the town of Cashel a man came before him with his paralysed son, asking that he should be healed. And Malachy, praying briefly, said, "Go thy way; thy son shall be made whole." He went, and on the morrow he returned with his son, who was nevertheless by no means whole. Then Malachy rose and standing over him prayed at greater length, and he was made whole. And turning to the father he said, "Offer him to God." The man assented, but did not keep his promise; and after some years his son, now a young man, relapsed into the same state, no doubt because of his father's disobedience and his violation of the pledge.

Another man came from a long distance, when Malachy was in the borders of Munster, bringing to him his son, who was entirely deprived of the use of his feet. When he inquired how this had happened to him, he said, “As I suspect, by the malignity of demons”; adding, “It was they, if I mistake not, who, when he was playing in a field, caused a sleep to fall upon him, and when the child awoke he found himself so.” Saying this, he poured forth his petition with tears, and earnestly sought help. Malachy pitying him prayed, bidding the sick boy in the meantime to sleep there upon the ground. He slept, and he arose whole. Because he had come from far he kept him some time in his company, and he used to walk with him.

50. In the monastery of Bangor a certain poor man was maintained by the alms of the brothers; and he received a small sum every day, for performing some office in the mill. He had been lame for twelve years, creeping on the ground with his hands, and dragging his dead feet after him. Him Malachy found one day before his cell, sad and sorrowful, and asked him the cause. And he said, “You see how for a long time I am miserably troubled and the hand of the Lord is upon me; and lo, to increase my distress, men who ought to have had pity, rather laugh at me and cast my wretchedness in my teeth.” And when he heard him, moved with compassion, he looked up to heaven, at the same time raising his hands. Having said a short prayer he entered his cell, and the other rose up. And standing upon his feet he wondered if it was true, suspecting that he was in a dream. But he began to move with slow steps, for he did not altogether believe that he could walk. At length, as it were waking out of a deep sleep, he recognized the mercy of the Lord upon him; he walked firmly, and returned to the mill leaping and exulting and praising God. When those saw him who had before seen and known him they were filled with wonder and amazement, supposing it to be a spirit.

Malachy likewise healed a dropsical man by praying, who remained there in the monastery and was appointed shepherd.

51. A city of Ireland called Cork was without a bishop. They proceeded to an election; but the various parties did not agree, each, as is usual, wishing to appoint their own bishop, not God’s. Malachy came to the place when he heard of the disagreement. Calling together the clergy and people he took pains to unite the hearts and desires of the opposing parties. And when they had been persuaded that the whole business ought to be entrusted to him, on whom in a very special manner lay the care of that as also of the other churches throughout Ireland, immediately he named to them, not any of the nobles of the land, but

rather a certain poor man whom he knew to be holy and learned; and he was a stranger. He was sought; and it was announced that he was lying in bed, and so weak that he could in no wise go out unless carried in the hands of those who ministered to him. “Let him rise,” said Malachy; “in the name of the Lord I command it; obedience will save him.” What was he to do? He wished to obey, but he thought himself unfitted; for though it should be possible for him to go, he dreaded to be a bishop. So with the will to be obedient twin enemies were contending, the load of weakness and the fear of the burden. But the first conquered, the hope of salvation being given him as an aid. Therefore he made the attempt, he moved, tested his power, discovered that he was stronger than usual. Faith increased along with power, and again faith made stronger gave in its turn increase of power. Now he was able to rise unassisted, now to walk somewhat better, now not even to perceive weariness in walking; at length, to come to Malachy without difficulty and quickly, unaided by man. He promoted him, and put him into the chair, with the applause of clergy and people. This was done without question, because neither did they dare to oppose the will of Malachy in any way, seeing the sign which he had wrought; nor did he hesitate to obey, being made surer, by so evident a proof, of the will of God.

52 (29). A certain woman was diseased with an issue of blood; and she was of noble birth and very dear to Malachy, though by reason of the nobility rather of her character than of her descent. When she was entirely failing, her strength no doubt being exhausted with her blood, and was now near the end, she sent to the man of God, in order that—the only thing that remained to be done—he might help her soul who should see her no more in the body. When Malachy heard it he was troubled, because she was a woman of virtue, and her life fruitful in work and example. And perceiving that he could not reach her in time he called Malchus, for he was young and active (he is that brother of Abbot Christian whom we mentioned above), and said, “Haste, take her these three apples on which I have invoked the name of the Lord; I am assured of this, that when she tastes these she shall not taste of death before she sees us, though we shall follow somewhat more slowly.” Malchus hastened as he was commanded, and when he came he went in to the dying woman, showing himself another servant of Elisha, except that his work was more efficacious. He bade her take that which Malachy had blessed and sent to her, and to taste it if by any means she could. But she was so refreshed when she heard Malachy’s name, that she was able to obey, and indicated by a nod (for she could not speak) that she wished to be raised up for a little while. She was raised up, she tasted; she was strengthened by what she

tasted, she spoke, and gave thanks. And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon her, and she rested most sweetly in it, having long ceased to enjoy the benefit of sleep, or to partake of food. Meanwhile her blood was staunched and awaking after a while she found herself whole, but she was still weak from long fasting and loss of blood. If in any degree the cure was not complete, on the following day the wished for presence and appearance of Malachy made it perfect.

53 (30). A nobleman lived in the neighbourhood of the monastery of Bangor, whose wife was sick nigh unto death. Malachy, being asked to come down ere she died, to anoint the sick woman with oil, came down and went in to her; and when she saw him she rejoiced greatly, animated by the hope of salvation. And when he was preparing to anoint her, it seemed to all that it ought rather to be postponed to the morning; for it was evening. Malachy assented, and when he had given a blessing over the sick woman, he went out with those who were with him. But shortly afterwards, suddenly there was a cry made, lamentation and great wailing through the whole house, for it was reported that she had died. Malachy ran up when he heard the tumult, and his disciples followed him. And coming to the bed, when he had assured himself that she had breathed her last, he was greatly troubled in mind, blaming himself that she had died without the grace of the sacrament. And lifting up his hands to heaven he said, “I beseech thee, Lord, I have done very foolishly. I, even I, have sinned, who postponed, not she who desired it.” Saying this he protested in the hearing of all that he would not be comforted, that he would give no rest to his spirit, unless he should be allowed to restore the grace which he had taken away. And standing over her, all night he laboured in his groaning; and, instead of the holy oil, flooding the dead woman with a great rain of tears, he bestowed on her such a substitute for the unction as he could. Thus did he; but to his companions he said, “Watch and pray.” So they in psalms, he in tears, passed a night of vigil. And when the morning came the Lord heard His saint, for the Spirit of the Lord was making intercession for him, who maketh intercession for the saints with groanings that cannot be uttered. Why more? She who had been dead opened her eyes, and, as those do who wake from a deep sleep, rubbing her forehead and temples with her hands, she rose upon the bed, and recognizing Malachy, devoutly saluted him with bowed head. And mourning being turned into joy, amazement took hold of all, both those who saw and those who heard. And Malachy also gave thanks and blessed the Lord. And he anointed her, nevertheless, knowing that in that sacrament sins are forgiven, and that the prayer of faith saves the sick. After

this he went away, and she recovered, and after living for some time in good health, that the glory of God should be made manifest in her, she accomplished the penance which Malachy had enjoined upon her, and again fell asleep in a good confession, and passed to the Lord.

54 (3). There was also a woman whom a spirit of anger and fury. dominated to such an extent that not only her neighbours and relatives fled from her society, but even her own sons could scarcely endure to live with her. Shouting, rancour and a mighty tempest wherever she was. Violent, fiery, hasty, terrible with tongue and hand, intolerable to all, and hated. Her sons, grieving both for her and for themselves, dragged her into the presence of Malachy, setting forth their lamentable complaint with tears. But the holy man, pitying both the sickness of the mother and the trouble of her sons, called her aside, and made urgent inquiry whether she had ever confessed her sins. She replied, “Never.” “Confess,” said he. She obeyed; and he enjoined penance on her when she made confession, and prayed over her that Almighty God might give her the spirit of meekness, and in the name of the Lord Jesus bade her to be angry no more. Such meekness followed that it was plain to all that it was nothing else than a marvellous change effected by the right hand of the Most High. It is said that she is still living to-day, and is so patient and gentle that, though she used to exasperate all, now she cannot be exasperated by any injuries or insults or afflictions. If it be allowed me, as the Apostle says, to be fully persuaded in my own mind, let each accept it as he will; for me, I give it as my opinion that this miracle should be regarded as superior to that of raising the dead woman, mentioned above, inasmuch as there the outward, but here the inner man was restored to life. And now let us hasten to what remains.

55. A man who as regards the world was honourable, as regards God devout, came to Malachy and complained to him concerning the barrenness of his soul, praying that he would obtain for him from Almighty God the grace of tears. And Malachy, smiling because he was pleased that there should be spiritual desire from a man of the world, laid his cheek on the cheek of the other as though caressing him, and said, “Be it done unto you as you have asked.” From that time rivers of waters ran down his eyes so great and so nearly incessant that the phrase of Scripture might seem applicable to him: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters.”

There is an island of the sea in Ireland, from of old fruitful of fishes; and the sea there abounds in fish. By the sins of the inhabitants, as it is believed, the wonted supply was taken away, and she that had many children was waxed

feeble, and her own great usefulness utterly dwindled away. While the natives were grieving, and the peoples taking ill the great loss, it was revealed to a certain woman that a remedy might be effected by the prayers of Malachy; and that became known to all, for she herself proclaimed it. By the will of God it happened that Malachy arrived. For while he was going round and filling the region with the Gospel, he turned aside thither that to them also he might impart the same grace. But the barbarous people, who cared more for the fishes, demanded with all vehemence that he would deign to regard rather the sterility of their island. And when he answered that it was not for that he had come, but that he desired to catch men rather than fish, yet seeing their faith he kneeled down on the shore and prayed to the Lord that, though they were unworthy of it, he would not deny them the benefit granted long before, since they sought it again with so great faith. The prayer went up, there came up also a multitude of fishes,1 and perhaps more fruitful than in ancient days; and the people of the land continue to enjoy that abundance to this day. What wonder if the prayer of a righteous man which penetrates the heavens,1 penetrated the abysses,1 and called forth from the depth of the sea so great supplies of fish?

56. There came, on one occasion, three bishops into the village of Faughart, which they say was the birthplace of Brigit the virgin; and Malachy was a fourth. And the presbyter who had received them with hospitality, said to him, “What shall I do, for I have no fish?” And when he answered that he should seek them from the fishermen, he said, “For the last two years no fish have been found in the river; and for that reason the fishermen also are all scattered and have even abandoned their art.” And Malachy replied “Command them to let down the nets in the name of the Lord.” It was done, and twelve salmon were caught. They lowered them a second time, and catching as many more they brought to the tables both an unlooked-for dish and an unlooked-for miracle. And that it might be clear that this was granted to the merits of Malachy, the same sterility nevertheless continued also for the following two years.

CHAPTER VII

He does battle for the faith; he restores peace among those who were at variance; he takes in hand to build a stone church

57 (32). THERE was a certain clerk in Lismore whose life, as it is said, was good, but his faith not so. He was a man of some knowledge in his own eyes, and dared to say that in the Eucharist there is only a sacrament and not the fact of the sacrament, that is, mere sanctification and not the truth of the Body. On this subject he was often addressed by Malachy in secret, but in vain; and finally he was called before a public assembly, the laity however being excluded, in order that if it were possible, he should be healed and not put to confusion. So in a gathering of clerics the man was given opportunity to answer for his opinion. And when with all his powers of ingenuity, in which he had no slight skill, he attempted to assert and defend his error, Malachy disputing against him and convicting him, in the judgement of all, he was worsted; and he retired, put to confusion by the unanimity though not sentenced to punishment. But he said that he was not overcome by reason, but crushed by the authority of the bishop. “And you, Malachy,” said he, “have put me to confusion this day without good reason, speaking assuredly against the truth and contrary to your own conscience.” Malachy, sad for a man so hardened, but grieving more for the injury that was done to the faith, and fearing dangerous developments, called the church together, publicly censured the erring one, publicly admonished him to repent, the bishops and the whole clergy urging him to the same effect. When he did not submit, they pronounced an anathema upon him as contumacious and proclaimed him a heretic. But not aroused from sleep by this he said, “You all favour the man, not the truth; I do not accept persons so that I should forsake the truth.” To this word the saint made answer with some heat, “The Lord make you confess the truth even of necessity;” and when he replied “Amen” the assembly was dissolved. Burnt with such a branding-iron he meditated flight, for he could

not bear to be of ill repute and dishonoured. And forthwith he departed, carrying his belongings; when lo, seized with sudden weakness, he stood still, and his strength failing he threw himself on the ground in the same spot, panting and weary. A vagabond madman, arriving by chance at that place, came upon the man and asked him what he did there. He replied that he was suffering from great weakness and unable either to advance or to go back. And the other said, “This weakness is nothing else than death itself.” But this he spake not of himself, but God fitly rebuked by means of a madman him who would not submit to the sane counsels of men of understanding. And he said, “Return home, I will help you.” Finally with his guidance he went back into the city: he returned to his right mind and to the mercy of the Lord. In the same hour the bishop was summoned, the truth was acknowledged, error was renounced. He confessed his guilt and was absolved. He asked for the viaticum, and reconciliation was granted; and almost in the same moment his perfidy was renounced by his mouth and dissolved by his death. So, to the wonder of all, with all speed was fulfilled the word of Malachy, and with it that of the Scripture which says, “Trouble gives understanding to the hearing.”

58 (33). Between the peoples of certain regions there once arose grievous discord. Malachy was importuned to make peace between them, and because he was hindered by other business he committed this matter to one of the bishops. He made excuse and refused, saying that Malachy, not he, had been sought for, that he would be despised, that he was unwilling to take trouble to no purpose. “Go,” said Malachy, “and the Lord be with you.” He replied, “I assent, but if they will not hear me, know that I will appeal to your Fatherhood.” Smiling, Malachy said, “Be it so.” Then the bishop, having called the parties together, dictated terms of peace; they assented and were reconciled to one another, security was given on both sides, and peace was established; and so he dismissed them. But one party, seeing that their enemies had become careless and were unprepared, because peace having been made they suspected no harm, said among themselves, each man to his neighbour, “What are we minded to do? Victory and vengeance on our foes is in our grasp”; and they began to attack them. What was happening became known to the bishop, and hastening up he charged their chief with wickedness and guile, but he treated him with contempt. He invoked the name of Malachy against him, and he paid no attention to it. Laughing at the bishop he said, “Do you suppose that for you we ought to let those go who did evil to us, whom God hath delivered into our hands?” And the bishop, remembering the conversation which he had had with Malachy, weeping

and wailing, turned his face towards Malachy's monastery and said, "Where art thou, man of God, where art thou? Is not this, my father, what I told thee of? Alas, alas, I came here that I might do good and not evil; and behold, through me all are perishing, these in the body, those in the soul." Many things in this manner said he as he mourned and lamented, and he urged and addressed Malachy, as though he were present, against the wicked. But meanwhile the impious men did not cease to attack those with whom they had made peace, so as to destroy them; and behold there was a lying spirit in the mouth of certain men to deceive them. And these men met them in the way announcing that a raid had been made into their lands by their adversaries, that all things were being consumed with the edge of the sword, and that their goods were being laid waste, and their wives and children taken and led away. When they heard this they returned in haste. The hindmost followed the first, not knowing whither they went or what had happened; for they had not all heard the men who spoke. And when they came and found none of those things which had been told them they were confounded, taken in their own wickedness; and they knew that they had been given up to the spirit of error, on account of the messenger of Malachy whom they deceived and his name which they despised. Further, the bishop, when he heard that the traitors were foiled in the iniquity which they had devised, returned with joy to Malachy and told him all things in order which had happened to him.

59. Malachy, knowing that by such an event the peace was disturbed, taking suitable opportunity was at pains in his own person to restore peace once more between them, and to confirm it when restored by the giving and receiving of security and an oath on both sides. But those who before had suffered from the violation of peace, mindful of the injury, and ignoring the agreement and the command of Malachy, took in hand to make reprisals. And all coming together, they set out to take their enemies unprepared and to return upon their own head the evil which they had thought to do to them. And when they had very easily forded a great river which lay between them, they were stopped by a rivulet to which they came, not far from it. For indeed now it was not a rivulet, but appeared clearly to be a huge river, denying passage in every part of it to those who desired to cross it. All wondered that it was now so great, knowing how small it had been before, and they said among themselves, "What has caused this inundation? The air is clear, there are no rains, and we do not remember that there have been any lately; and even if there had been much rain, which of us remembers that, to however great a flood it swelled, it ever before covered the

land, spreading over sown ground and meadow? This is the finger of God, and the Lord is hedging up our ways, on account of Malachy, His saint, whose covenant we have transgressed and disobeyed his commandment." So these also, without accomplishing their purpose, returned to their own territory, likewise confounded. The report was spread throughout all the region; and they blessed God, who took the wise in their own craftiness, and cutting off the horns of the wicked, exalted the horn of His anointed.

60. One of the nobles hostile to the king was reconciled by means of Malachy. For he did not trust the king sufficiently to make peace with him except by the mediation of Malachy, or of one for whom the king had equal reverence. His distrust was not unfounded, as afterwards appeared. For when he had become careless, and was no longer taking precautions, the king captured him and put him in bonds, more truly himself captured by ancient hate. His own friends demanded him by the hand of the mediator;1 for neither did they expect anything but his death. What should Malachy do? There was nothing to be done except to recur to that one accustomed refuge of his. Gathering an exceeding mighty army, a great crowd of his own disciples, he went to the king, and demanded him who was bound; he was refused. But Malachy said, "You act unrighteously against the Lord, and against me, and against yourself, transgressing the covenant; if you disregard it, yet shall not I. A man has entrusted himself to my guarantee; if he should die, I have betrayed him. I am guilty of his blood. Why has it seemed good to you to make me a traitor, yourself a transgressor? Know that I will eat nothing until he is liberated; no, nor these either." Having said this he entered the church. He called upon Almighty God with anxious groanings, his own and those of his disciples, that He would deign to deliver out of the hand of the transgressor and cruel man him who was unjustly sentenced. And that day and the following night they persisted in fasting and prayer. Word was brought to the king of that which was being done; and his heart was the more hardened by that by which it ought to have been softened. The carnal man took to flight, fearing lest if he remained near at hand he might not be able to withstand the power of prayer; as though, forsooth, if he was hidden it could not find him, nor would penetrate to a remote place. Do you put bounds, wretched man, to the prayers of saints? Is prayer an arrow that has been shot, that you may flee from the face of the bow? Whither wilt thou go from the Spirit of God, who carries it, or whither wilt thou flee from His presence? At last Malachy pursues the fugitive, he finds him who lies hidden. "You shall be blind and not seeing, that you may see better, and may understand that it is hard for

you to kick against the pricks. Nay, perceive even now that sharp arrows of the mighty have come to you, which, although they have rebounded from your heart, because it is of stone, have not rebounded from your eyes. Would that even through the windows of the eyes they might reach to the heart, and trouble give understanding to blindness." It could be seen that Saul again was led by the hand and brought to Ananias, a wolf to a sheep, that he might disgorge his prey. He disgorged it and received sight, for to such a degree was Malachy like a sheep, if, for example, it were to take pity even on the wolf. Note carefully from this, reader, with whom Malachy had his dwelling, what sort of princes they were, what sort of peoples. How is it that he also was not a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls? And therefore the Lord gave him power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron.1 Hear now what follows.

61 (34). He to whom Malachy had yielded the possessions of the monastery of Bangor,1 ungrateful for the benefit, from that time forward behaved himself always most arrogantly against him and his followers, hostile to them in all things, plotting everywhere, and disparaging his deeds. But not without punishment. He had an only son, who, imitating his father and daring himself to act in opposition to Malachy, died the same year. And thus he died. It seemed good to Malachy that a stone oratory should be erected at Bangor like those which he had seen constructed in other regions. And when he began to lay the foundations the natives wondered, because in that land no such buildings were yet to be found. But that worthless fellow, presumptuous and arrogant as he was, not only wondered but was indignant. And from that indignation he conceived grief and brought forth iniquity. And he became a talebearer among the peoples, now disparaging secretly, now speaking evil openly; drawing attention to Malachy's frivolity, shuddering at the novelty, exaggerating the expense. With such poisonous words as these he was urging and inducing many to put a stop to it: "Follow me, and what ought not to be done by any but ourselves let us not permit to be done against our will." Then with many whom he was able to persuade—himself the first leader in speech as well as the origin of the evil—he went down to the place, and finding the man of God accosted him: "Good sir, why have you thought good to introduce this novelty into our regions? We are Scots, not Gauls. What is this frivolity? What need was there for a work so superfluous, so proud? Where will you, a poor and needy man, find the means to finish it? Who will see it finished? What sort of presumption is this, to begin, I say not what you cannot finish, but what you cannot even see finished? Though

indeed it is the act of a maniac rather than of a presumptuous man to attempt what is beyond his measure, what exceeds his strength, what baffles his abilities. Cease, cease, desist from this madness. If not, we shall not permit it, we shall not tolerate it." This he said, proclaiming what he would do, but not considering what it was within his power to do. For some of those on whom he counted and whom he had brought with him, when they saw the man changed their minds and went no more with him.

62. And to him the holy man spoke quite freely: "Wretched man, the work which you see begun, and on which you look askance, shall undoubtedly be finished: many shall see it finished. But you, because you do not wish it, will not see it; and that which you wish not shall be yours—to die: take heed that you do not die in your sins." So it happened: he died, and the work was finished; but he saw it not, for, as we have said already, he died the same year. Meanwhile the father, who soon heard what the holy man had foretold concerning his son, and knew that his word was quick and powerful, said, "He has slain my son." And by the instigation of the devil he burned with such rage against him that he was not afraid, before the duke and magnates of Ulaid, to accuse of falsehood and lying him who was most truthful and a disciple and lover of the Truth; and he used violent language against him, calling him an ape. And Malachy, who had been taught not to render railing for railing, was dumb, and opened not his montht while the wicked was before him. But the Lord was not forgetful of His word which He had spoken, Vengeance is mine, I will repay. The same day when the man returned home he expiated the rashness of his unbridled tongue, the avenger being the very one at whose instigation he had let it loose. The demon seized him and cast him into the fire, but he was soon pulled out by those that stood by; yet with his body partly burnt, and deprived of reason. And while he was raving Malachy was called, and when he came he found the accursed man, his foaming mouth contorted, terrifying all things with horrible sounds and movements, his whole body writhing, and scarcely to be kept in restraint by many men. And when he prayed for his enemy the man of all perfection was heard, but only in part. For in a moment, while the saint was praying, he opened his eyes, and recovered his understanding. But an evil spirit of the Lord was left to him to buffet him, that he might learn not to blaspheme. We believe that he still lives, and up to this time is expiating the great sin which he sinned against the saint; but they say that at certain times he is a lunatic. Further, the aforesaid possessions since he could no longer hold them by reason of his helplessness and uselessness, returned in peace to the place to which they had belonged. Nor did

Malachy refuse them, when the prospect of peace was held out at length after so much trouble.

63. But now our narrative must return to the work of the building which Malachy had undertaken. And though Malachy had not the means, I do not say to finish it, but to do any part of it, yet his heart trusted in the Lord. The Lord, in fact, provided that, though he set not his hope on treasures of money, money should not be lacking. For who else caused a treasure to be stored in that place, and being stored, not to be found till the time and work of Malachy? The servant of God found in God's purse what was not in his own. Deservedly, indeed. For what more just than that he who for God's sake possessed nothing should enter into partnership with God, and that they should both have one purse. For the man who believes, the whole world is a treasury of riches; and what is it but a kind of purse of God? Indeed He says, The world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Hence it was that when many pieces of silver were found Malachy did not put them back in their place, but took them out of their place; for he bade the whole gift of God to be spent on the work of God. He considered not his own necessities nor those of his companions, but cast his thought upon the Lord, to whom he did not doubt that he ought to resort as often as need required. And there is no doubt that that was the work of God, because Malachy had foreseen it by God's revelation. He had first consulted with the brothers concerning that work; and many on account of their lack of means were unwilling to assent to it. Anxious therefore and doubtful what he should do, he began to inquire earnestly in prayer what was the will of God. And one day coming back from a journey, when he drew near to the place he viewed it some way off; and lo, there appeared a great oratory, of stone and very beautiful. And paying careful attention to its position, form and construction, he took up the work with confidence, having first however related the vision to a few of the elder brothers. Indeed so carefully did he adhere to all his attentive observations regarding place and manner and quality that when the work was finished that which was made appeared closely similar to that which he had seen, as if he also as well as Moses had heard the saying, Look that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. By the same kind of vision there was shown to him before it was built, not only the oratory, but also the whole monastery, which is situated at Saul.

64 (35). As he was passing through a certain city and a great multitude was running together to him, by chance he saw a young man among the rest eager to see him. He had climbed up on a stone, and standing on tiptoes, with

outstretched neck, contemplating him with eyes and mind, showed himself to him as a kind of new Zacchaeas. And it was not hid from Malachy (for the Holy Spirit revealed it) that he had truly come in the spirit and power of Zacchaeus. He took no notice, however, at the time, and passed on in silence. But in the hospice that night he told the brothers how he had seen him and what he had foreseen concerning him. But on the third day behold he came with a certain nobleman, his lord, who disclosed the wish and desire of the young man, and asked that he would deign to receive him on his commendation, and have him henceforth among his companions. And Malachy recognizing him said, “There is no need that man should commend him whom already God has commended. And taking him by the hand he delivered him over to our abbot Congan and he to the brothers. But that young man—still living if I mistake not—the first lay conversus of the monastery of the Suir, has testimony from all that he lives a holy life among the brothers, according to the Cistercian Order. And the disciples recognized also in this incident that Malachy had the spirit of prophecy, and not in this only, but in that which we shall add.

65. When he was offering the sacraments, and the deacon had approached him to do something belonging to his office, the priest beholding him groaned because he had perceived that something was hidden in him that was not meet. When the sacrifice was over, having been probed privately concerning his conscience he confessed and denied not that he had been mocked in a dream that night. And Malachy enjoined penance upon him and said, “It was your duty not to have ministered to-day, but reverently to withdraw from sacred things and to show respect to so great and divine mysteries, that purified by this humiliation you might in future minister more worthily.”

Likewise on another occasion, when he was sacrificing and praying at the hour of sacrifice with his accustomed sanctity and purity of heart, the deacon standing by him, a dove was seen to enter through the window in great glory. And with that glory the priest was completely flooded, and the whole of the gloomy basilica became suffused with light. But the dove, after flitting about for a while, at length settled down on the cross before the face of the priest. The deacon was amazed; and trembling on account of the novelty both of the light and of the bird, for that is a rare bird in the land, fell upon his face, and palpitating, scarcely dared to rise even when the necessity of his office required it. After Mass Malachy spoke to him privately and bade him, as he valued his life, on no account to divulge the mystery which he had seen, as long as he himself was alive.

Once, when he was at Armagh with one of his fellow-bishops, he rose in the night and began to go round the memorials of the saints, of which there are many in the cemetery of St. Patrick, with prayer. And lo, they saw one of the altars suddenly take fire. For both saw this great vision, and both wondered. And Malachy, understanding that it was a sign of the great merit of him, or those, whose bodies rested under that altar, ran and plunged into the midst of the flames with outstretched arms and embraced the sacred altar. What he did there, or what he perceived, none knows; but that from that fire he went forth ablaze more than his wont with heavenly fire, I suppose there is none of the brothers who were with him then that does not know.

66. These things have been mentioned, a few out of many, but many for this time. For these are not times of signs, as it is written, We see not signs; there is no more any prophet. Whence it appears sufficiently how great in merits was my Malachy, who was so rich in signs, rare as they now are. For in what kind of ancient miracles was not Malachy conspicuous? If we consider well those few that have been mentioned, he lacked not prophecy, nor revelation, nor vengeance upon the impious, nor the grace of heatings, nor transformation of minds, nor lastly raising the dead. By all these things God was blessed who so loved and adorned him, who also magnified him before kings, and gave him the crown of glory.1 That he was loved is proved in his merits, that he was adorned, in his signs, that he was magnified, in his vengeance on enemies, that he had glory, in recompense of rewards. You have in Malachy, diligent reader, something to wonder at, you have also something to imitate. Now carefully note what you may hope for as the result of these things. For the end of these things is a precious death.1

CHAPTER VIII

Departure from Ireland. Death and Burial at Clairvaux

1148, May (?) 67 (30). BEING asked once, in what place, if a choice were given him, he would prefer to spend his last day—for on this subject the brothers used to ask one another what place each would select for himself—he hesitated, and made no reply. But when they insisted, he said, “If I take my departure hence I shall do so nowhere more gladly than whence I may rise together with our Apostle”—he referred to St. Patrick; “but if it behoves me to make a pilgrimage, and if God so permits, I have selected Clairvaux.” When asked also about the time, [he named in reply] the festival of all the dead. If it is regarded as a mere wish, it was fulfilled, if as a prophecy, not a jot passed from it. As we have heard so have we seen alike concerning place and day. Let us relate briefly in what order and by what occasion it came to pass. Malachy took it amiss that Ireland was still without a pall; for he was zealous for the sacraments, and would not that his nation should be wholly deprived of any one of them. And remembering that it had been promised to him by Pope Innocent, he was the more sad that while he was still alive it had not been sent for. And taking advantage of the fact that Pope Eugenius held the chief rule and was reported to have gone at that time to France, he rejoiced that he had found opportunity for claiming it. He took for granted that, the Pope being such a man as he was, and having been promoted from such a religious profession—and the more because he had been a special son of his own Clairvaux—he need not fear that he should have any difficulty with him. Therefore the bishops were summoned; a council assembled. Matters which were of immediate importance at the time were discussed for three days, and on the fourth the scheme of obtaining the pall was broached. Assent was given, but on condition that it should be obtained by another. However, since the journey was a comparatively short one, and on that account the pilgrimage seemed more easy to be endured, none presumed to oppose his counsel and will. And when the council was dissolved Malachy started on his way. Such brothers as had come together followed him to the shore; but not many, for he doubtless

restrained them. One of them, Catholicus by name, with tearful voice and face, said to him, “Alas! you are going away; and in how great, almost daily, trouble you leave me you are not ignorant, and yet you do not, of your pity, give me help. If I deserve to suffer, what sin have the brothers committed that they are scarcely allowed to have any day or night free from the labour of caring for and guarding me?” By these words and tears of his son (for he wept) the father’s heart was troubled, and he embraced him with caresses, and making the sign of the cross on his breast said, “Be assured that you will have no such suffering till I return.” Now he was an epileptic, and fell often; insomuch that at times he suffered not once but many times a day. He had been a victim to this horrible disease for six years; but at the word of Malachy he made a perfect recovery. From that hour he has suffered no such thing; no such thing, as we believe, will he suffer henceforth, for henceforth Malachy will not return.

68. When he was just about to embark there came unto him two of those who clave unto him more closely, boldly desiring a certain thing of him. And he said to them, “What would ye?” And they answered, “We will not say, except you promise that you will give it.” He pledged himself. And they said, “We would have you certainly promise of your condescension, that you will return in good health to Ireland.” All the others also insisted upon it. Then he deliberated for a while, repenting at first that he had bound himself, and not finding any way of escape. He was straitened on every side, while no way of safety presented itself from both dangers—of forfeiting his wish and of breaking his promise. It seemed at length thai he should rather choose that which influenced him more strongly at the moment, and leave the rest to higher guidance. He assented, sadly it is true; but he was more unwilling that they should be made sad; and pledging himself as they wished, he went on board the ship. And when they had completed nearly half the voyage suddenly a contrary wind drove the ship back and brought it to the land of Ireland again. Leaving the ship he passed the night in the port itself in one of his churches. And he joyfully gave thanks for the resourcefulness of the divine providence, by which it came about that he had now satisfied his promise. But in the morning he went on board, and the same day, after a prosperous crossing, came into Scotland. On the third day he reached a place which is called Viride Stagnum; which he had caused to be prepared that he might found an abbey there. And leaving there some of his sons, our brothers, as a convent of monks and abbot (for he had brought them with him for that purpose) he bade them farewell and set out.

69. And as he passed on, King David met him, by whom he was received with

joy and was detained as his guest for some days. And having done many things pleasing to God he resumed the journey that he had begun. And passing through Scotland, at the very border of England he went aside to the Church of Gisburn, where there dwell religious men leading a canonical life, familiar to him of old for their religious conversation and honourable character. At that place a woman was brought to him, suffering from a disease horrible to see, which is commonly called cancer; and he healed her. For when water which he blessed was sprinkled on the sores she ceased to feel pain. On the next day scarcely a sore was to be seen.

Departing thence he came to the sea, but was refused passage. The reason, if I am not mistaken, was that some difference had arisen between the chief pontiff and the king of England: for the king suspected in that good man I know not what evil, if he should cross the sea; for neither did he allow other bishops to cross. That obstacle, though contrary to the will of Malachy, was not contrary to the object of his wish. He grieved that the attainment of his desire should be postponed, not knowing that by this it would be the rather fulfilled. For if he had immediately passed over the sea he would have been obliged to pass by Clairvaux in order to follow the chief Pontiff. For by that time he had left it and was at or near Rome. But now through this delay it was brought about that he crossed later, and so, as was fitting, he came to the place of his most holy death, and at the hour of its approach.

1148, Oct. 13 or 14. 1148, Oct. 18 70 (37). And he was received by us, though he came from the west, as the true day-spring from on high visiting us. O, how greatly did that radiant sun fill our Clairvaux with added glory! How pleasant was the festal day that dawned upon us at his coming! This was the day which the Lord had made, we rejoiced and were glad in it. As for me, with what rapid and bounding step, though trembling and weak, did I soon run to meet him! With what joy I kissed him! With what joyful arms I embraced this grace sent to me from heaven! With what eager face and mind, my father, I brought thee into my mother’s house and into the chamber of her that conceived me! What festive days I spent with thee then, though few! But how did he in his turn greet us? In truth our pilgrim showed himself cheerful and kindly to all, to all incredibly gracious. How good and how pleasant a part he played among us as our guest, whom, forsooth, he had come from the uttermost parts of the earth to see, not that he should hear, but that he should show us, a Solomon! In fact we heard his wisdom, we had his presence, and we have it still. Already four or five days of this our festival had passed, when lo, on the feast day of Blessed Luke the

Evangelist, when he had celebrated Mass in the convent with that holy devotion of his, he was taken with a fever and lay down in his bed: and all of us were [sick] with him. The end of our mirth is sorrow, but moderate sorrow, because for a time the fever seemed to be slight. You should see the brothers running about, eager to give, or to receive. To whom was it not sweet to see him? To whom was it not sweeter to minister to him? Both were pleasant and both salutary. It was an act of kindness to do him service, and it was repaid also to each one of them, by the gift of grace. All assisted, all were busied with much serving, searching for medicines, applying poultices, urging him often to eat. But he said to them, “These things are without avail, yet for love of you I do what ever you bid me.” For he knew that the time of his departure was at hand.

71. And when the brothers who had come with him urged him more boldly, saying that it behoved him not to despair of life, for that no signs of death appeared in him, he said, “It behoves Malachy to leave the body this year.” And he added, “See, the day is drawing near which, as you very well know, I have always desired to be the day of my dissolution. I know whom I hove believed and am persuaded; I shall not be disappointed of the rest of my desire, since I already have part of it. He who by his mercy has led me to the place which I sought, will not deny me the time for which I wished no less. As regards this mean body, here is my rest, as regards my soul, the Lord will provide, who saveth them that put their trust in Him. And there is no small hope laid up for me at that day in which so great benefits are bestowed by the living on the dead.1 Not far away was that day when he spoke thus. Meanwhile he ordered that he should be anointed with the sacred oil. When the convent of brothers was going out that it might be done solemnly,1 he would not permit them to come up to him; he went down to them. For he was lying in the balcony1 of the upper house. He was anointed; and when he had received the viaticum, he commended himself to the prayers of the brothers, and the brothers to God,1 and went back to bed. He went down from the high balcony on his feet, and again, as if that were not enough, he went up on his feet; yet he said that death was at the doors. Who should believe that this man was dying? Himself alone and God could know it. His face did not seem to have become pallid or wasted. His brow was not wrinkled, his eyes were not sunken, his nostrils were not thin, his lips were not contracted, his teeth were not brown, his neck was not gaunt and lean, his shoulders were not bowed, the flesh on the rest of his body had not failed. Such was the grace of his body, and such the glory of his countenance which was not to be done away, even in death. As he appeared in life so was he also in death,

more like to one alive.

72 (38). Hitherto our story has run a rapid course; but now it stays because Malachy has finished his course. He is still, and with him we are still. Moreover, who would willingly hasten to [tell of] death? Especially thy death, holy father, who could describe it? Who would wish to hear the story? Yet we loved in life, in death we shall not be divided. Brothers, let us not forsake in death him with whom we companied in life. From further Scotland he ran hither to death; let us also go and die with him. I must, I must tell that which of necessity I saw. The celebration, everywhere renowned, of All Saints comes, and according to the ancient saying, Music in mourning is an unseasonable discourse. We come, we sing, even against our will. We weep while we sing and we sing while we weep. Malachy, though he sings not, yet does not lament. For why should he lament, who is drawing near to joy? For us who remain, mourning remains. Malachy alone keeps festival. For what he cannot do with his body he does with his mind, as it is written, The thought of man shall confess to thee, and the residue of thought shall keep the day of festival to thee. When the instrument of the body fails him, and the organ of the mouth is silent, and the office of the voice ceases, it remains that with songs in his heart he keeps festival. Why should not the saint keep festival, who is being brought to the festival of the saints? He presents to them what will soon be due to himself. Yet a little while and he will be one of them.

73. Towards the dusk of night, when now somehow the celebration of the day had been finished by us, Malachy had drawn near, not to dusk but to dawn. Was it not dawn to him for whom the night is far spent and the day is at hand? So, the fever increasing, a burning sweat from within him began to break out over his whole body, that, as it were going through fire and through water, he might be brought into a wealthy place. Now his life was despaired of, now each one condemned his own judgement, now none doubted that Malachy’s word was prevailing. We were called; we came. And lifting up his eyes on those who stood round him, he said, “With desire I have desired to cat this passover with you; I give thanks to the divine compassion, I have not been disappointed of my desire.” Do you see the man free from care in death, and, not yet dead, already certain of life? No wonder. Seeing that the night was come to which he had looked forward, and that in it the day was dawning for him, so to speak triumphing over the night, he seemed to scoff at the darkness and as it were to cry, “I shall not say, surety the darkness shall cover me, because this night shall be light about me in my pleasure.” And tenderly consoling us he said, “Take care

of me; if it be allowed me I shall not forget you. And it shall be allowed. I have believed in God, and all things are possible to him that believeth. I have loved God; I have loved you, and charity never faileth." And looking up to heaven he said, "O God, keep them in Thy name; and not these only but all them also who through my word and ministry have given themselves to thy service." Then, laying his hands on each one severally and blessing all, he bade them go to rest, because his hour was not yet come.1

1148, November 2 74. We went. We returned about midnight, for at that hour it was announced that the light shineth in darkness.1 The house filled, the whole community was present, many abbots also who had assembled. With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs1 we followed our friend as he returned to his own country.1 In the fifty-fourth year of his age, at the place and time which he had chosen beforehand and predicted, Malachy, the bishop and legate of the holy Apostolic See, taken up by the angels, as it were from our hands, happily fell asleep in the Lord. And indeed he slept. His placid face was the sign of a placid departure. And verily the eyes of all were fixed upon him; but none could perceive when he departed. When dead he was thought to be alive, when alive, dead; so true was it that there was no difference which might distinguish death from life. The same vivacity of face, the same serenity, as commonly appears in one who sleeps. You might say that death robbed him of none of these things, but rather very greatly increased them. He was not changed; but he changed us all. In wondrous fashion the sorrow and groaning of all suddenly sank to rest, sadness was changed into joy, singing banished lamentation. He is borne forth, voices are borne to heaven, he is borne into the oratory on the shoulders of the abbots. Faith has conquered, affection triumphs, things assume their normal course. All things are carried out in order, all proceed in the way of reason.

75. And in truth what reason is there to lament Malachy immoderately, as though his death was not precious, as though it was not rather sleep than death, as though it was not the port of death and the portal of life? Our friend Malachy sleepeth; and I, must I mourn? such mourning is based on custom, not on reason. If the Lord hath given His beloved one sleep, and such sleep, in which there is an heritage of the Lord, even children, and the reward, the fruit of the womb, which of these things seems to call for weeping? Must I weep for him who has escaped from weeping? He rejoices, he triumphs, he has been brought into the joy of his Lord, and I, must I lament for him? I desire these things for myself, I do not grudge them to him. Meanwhile the obsequies are prepared, the sacrifice is offered for him, all is performed according to custom with the greatest devotion.

There stood some way off a boy whose arm hung by his side dead, rather burdensome to him than useful. When I discovered him I signed to him to come near, and taking his withered hand I laid it on the hand of the bishop, and it restored it to life. For in truth the grace of healings lived in the dead; and his hand was to the dead hand what Elisha was to the dead man. The boy had come from far and the hand which he brought hanging down, he carried back whole to his own country. Now, all things having been duly accomplished in the very oratory of Saint Mary, Mother of God, in which he was well pleased,1 Malachy is carried to his burial in the eleven hundred and forty-eighth year from the Incarnation of the Lord, on the fourth of the Nones of November. Thine, good Jesus, is the deposit which has been committed to us, Thine is the treasure which is laid up with us. We keep it to be given back at the time when Thou shalt see fit to recall it; only that he may not go forth without his comrades, but that him whom we have had as our guest we may have also as our leader, when we shall reign with Thee, and with him also, for ever and ever. AMEN.

LETTERS OF ST. BERNARD

I

TO MALACHY. 1141

(Epistle 341)

To the venerable lord and most blessed father, Malachy, by the grace of God archbishop of the Irish, legate of the Apostolic See, Brother Bernard called to be abbot of Clairvaux, [desiring] to find grace with the Lord.

1. Amid the manifold anxieties and cares of my heart, by the multitude of which my soul is sore vexed, the brothers coming from a far country that they may serve the Lord, thy letter, and thy staff, they comfort me: the letter, as a proof of good will; the staff, to support my weak body; the brothers, because they serve the Lord in a humble spirit We have received them all, we are pleased with all, all alike work together for good. But as to the wish that you have expressed that two of the brothers should be sent to look out a place for you beforehand, having taken counsel with the brothers, we have not thought it meet that they should be separated one from another until Christ be more fully formed in them, until they are wholly instructed in the battles of the Lord. When therefore they have been taught in the school of the Holy Spirit, when they have been endued with power from on high, then at length the sons shall return to their father that they may sing the Lord’s song, not now in a strange land, but in their own.

2. But do you yourselves in the mean time, according to the wisdom given you by the Lord, look out beforehand and prepare beforehand a place for them, like the places which you have seen here, apart from the commotions of the world. For the time is at hand when, by the operation of the grace of God, we shall bring forth for you new men out of the old.1 Blessed be the Name of the Lord for ever,1 of whose only gift it cometh that1 I have sons in common with you, whom your preaching planted and our exhortation watered, but God gave the increase.1 We beseech your holiness to preach the word of the Lord1 so that you may give knowledge of salvation unto His people.1 For a double necessity is laid upon you,1 both from your office as legate and your duty as bishop. Finally,

since in many things we offend all,1 and, being often thrown among the men of this age, we are much besmirched with the dust of the world, I commend myself to your prayers and to those of your companions, that in His fountain of mercy Jesus Christ, himself the fountain of pity, may deign to wash and cleanse us, who said to Peter, If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me. And, indeed, I not only earnestly entreat this of you, but also require it as in some sense the payment of a debt, since I cry to the Lord for you, if the prayer of a sinner can do anything. Farewell in the Lord.

II

TO MALACHY. 1141 or 1142

(Epistle 356)

To Malachy, by the grace of God bishop, legate of the Apostolic See, Brother Bernard, called to be abbot of Clairvaux, if the prayer of a sinner can do anything, and if the devotion of a poor man is of any advantage.

We have done what your holiness commanded, not perhaps as it was worthy to be done, yet as well as was possible considering the time in which we live. So great evil everywhere struts about among us that it was scarcely possible to do the little that has been done. We have sent only a few grains of seed, as you see, to sow at least a small part of that field into which the true Isaac once went out to meditate, when Rebekah was first brought to him by Abraham's servant, to be happily joined to him in everlasting marriage. And the seed is not to be despised concerning which we find that word fulfilled at this time in your regions, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. I, therefore, have sown, do you water, and God shall give the increase. All the saints who are with you we salute through you, humbly commending ourselves to their holy prayers and yours. Farewell.

III

TO MALACHY. 1143 or 1144

(Epistle 357)

To our most loving father and most revered lord, Malachy, by the grace of God bishop, legate of the Holy and Apostolic See, the servant of his holiness, Brother Bernard, called to be abbot of Clairvaux, health and our prayers, of whatever value they may be.

1. How sweet are thy words unto my taste, my lord and father. How pleasant is the remembrance of thy holiness. If there is any love, any devotedness, any good will in us, without doubt the charity of your belovedness claims it all as its due. There is no need for a multitude of words where affection blossoms abundantly. For I am confident that the Spirit which you have from God bears witness with your spirit that what we are, however small it be, is yours. You also, most loving and most longed-for father, deliver not to forgetfulness the soul of the poor man, which cleaves to thee with the bonds of charity, and forget not the soul of thy poor man for ever. For neither, as it were anew, do we commend ourselves unto you when now for a long time we glory in the Lord that our littleness has been worthy to find grace in the sight of your holiness; but we pray that our affection, no longer new, may advance with new accessions day by day. We commend to you our sons, yea also yours, and the more earnestly because they are so far removed from us. You know that, after God, all our trust was in you, in sending them, because it seemed to us wrong not to fulfil the prayers of your holiness. See, as becomes you, that with your whole heart of love you embrace them and cherish them. In no wise for any cause let your earnest care for them grow cold, nor let that perish which thy right hand hath planted.

2. We have now indeed learned both from your letter and from the report of our brothers1 that the house is making good progress, [and] is being enriched both in temporal and spiritual possessions.1 Wherefore we rejoice greatly with you and give thanks with our whole heart to God and to your fatherly care. And because there is still need of great watchfulness, because the place is new, and the land unaccustomed to the monastic life, yea, without any experience of it, we beseech you in the Lord, that you slack not your hand, but perfectly accomplish that which you have well begun. Concerning our brothers who have returned from that place, it had pleased us well if they had remained. But perhaps the brothers of your country, whose characters are less disciplined and who have lent a less ready ear to advice in those observances, which were new to them, have been in some measure the reason for their return.

3. We have sent back to you Christian, our very dear son, and yours. We have instructed him more fully, as far as we could, in the things which belong to the [Cistercian] Order, and henceforth, as we hope, he will be more careful concerning its obligations. Do not be surprised that we have not sent any other brothers with him; for we did not find competent brothers who were ready to assent to our wishes, and it was not our plan to compel the unwilling. Our much-loved brother, Robert, assented on this occasion also to our prayers, as an

obedient son. It will be your part to assist him that your house may now be set forward, both in buildings and in other necessaries. This also we suggest to your fatherhood, that you persuade religious men and those who, you hope, will be useful to the monastery, to come into their Order, for this will be of the greatest advantage to the house, and to you they will pay the greater heed. May your holiness have good health, being always mindful of us in Christ.

IV

TO THE BROTHERS IN IRELAND. NOVEMBER 1148

(Epistle 374)

To the religious brothers who are in Ireland, and especially to those communities which Malachy the bishop, of blessed memory, founded, Brother Bernard, called to be abbot of Clairvaux, [wishing them] the consolation of the Comforter.

1. If here we had a continuing city we should rightly mourn with most abundant tears that we had lost such a fellow-citizen. But if we rather seek one to come, as befits us, it is nevertheless no small cause of grief that we are bereaved of a guide so indispensable. We ought, however, to regulate passion with knowledge and to mitigate grief with the confidence of hope. Nor does it become any one to wonder if love compels groaning, if desolation draws forth tears: yet we must set a limit to these things, nay in no small measure be consoled while we gaze not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. First, indeed, we ought to rejoice with the holy soul, lest he accuse us of want of charity, saying also himself what the Lord said to the apostles, “If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I go unto the Father.” The spirit of our father has gone before us to the Father of spirits, and we are convicted, not only as wanting in charity, but even as guilty of ingratitude for all the benefits which came to us through him, if we do not rejoice with him who has departed from labour to rest, from danger to safety, from the world unto the Father. Therefore, if it is an act of filial piety to weep for Malachy who is dead, yet more is it an act of piety to rejoice with Malachy who is alive. Is he not alive? Assuredly he is, and in bliss. In the eyes of the foolish he seemed to have died; but he is in peace.

2. Hence even the thought of our own advantage provides us with another motive for great joy and gladness, because so powerful a patron, so faithful an advocate has gone before us to the heavenly court. For his most fervent charity

cannot forget his sons, and his approved holiness must secure favour with God. For who would dare to suppose that this holy Malachy can now be less profitable [than before] or less loving to his own? Assuredly, if he was loved aforetime, now he receives from God surer proofs of His love, and having loved his own, he loved them unto the end. Far be it from us, holy soul, to esteem thy prayer now less effectual, for now thou canst make supplication with more vigour in the presence of the Majesty, and thou no longer walkest in faith, but reignest in the sight of Him. Far be it from us to count that laborious charity of thine as diminished, not to say made void, now that thou prostratest thyself at the very fountain of eternal charity, quaffing full draughts of that for the very drops of which thou didst thirst before. Charity, strong as death, yea even stronger than death itself, could not yield to death. For even at the moment of his departure he was not unmindful of you, with exceptional affection commending you to God, and with his accustomed meekness and lowliness praying our insignificance also that we should not forget you for ever. Wherefore also we thought good to write to you that you may know that we are ready to bestow upon you all consolation with entire devotion, whether in spiritual things, if in them our insignificance can ever do anything by the merits of this our blessed father, or in temporal, if ever perchance opportunity should be given us.

3. And now also, dearly beloved, we are filled with heartfelt pity for this grievous bereavement of the Irish Church. And we unite ourselves the more with you in suffering because we know that by this very thing we have become the more your debtors. For the Lord did great things for us when He deigned to honour this place of ours by making it the scene of his blessed death, and to enrich it with the most costly treasure of his body. But do not take it ill that he is buried among us; for God so ordered, according to the multitude of His mercies, that you should possess him in life, and that it might be allowed to us to possess him, if only in death. And to us, indeed, in common with you, he was, and still is, father. For even in his death this testament was confirmed to us. Wherefore as, for the sake of so great a father, we embrace you all as our true brothers, with the unstinted yearning of charity, so also concerning yourselves, spiritual kinship persuades us that you are like-minded.

4. But we exhort you, brothers, that you be always careful to walk in the steps of this our blessed father, by so much the more zealously as by daily proofs his holy conversation was more certainly known to you. For in this you shall prove yourselves to be his true sons, if you manfully maintain the father’s ordinances, and if, as you have seen in him, and heard from him how you ought to walk, you

so walk that you may abound more and more: for the glory of a father is the wisdom of his sons. For even for us the example of so great perfection in our midst has begun in no slight degree both to expel our sloth and impel us to reverence. And would that he may in such wise draw us after him that he may draw us to the goal, running more eagerly and more quickly in the fragrance which his virtues have left so fresh behind them. May Christ guard all of you while you pray for us.

SERMONS OF ST. BERNARD ON THE PASSING OF MALACHY

SERMON I

(November 2, 1148)

1. A CERTAIN abundant blessing, dearly beloved, has been sent by the counsel of heaven to you this day; and if it were not faithfully divided, you would suffer loss, and I, to whom of a surety this office seems to have been committed, would incur danger. I fear therefore your loss, I fear my own damnation, if perchance it be said, The young children ask bread, and no man offereth it unto them. For I know how necessary for you is the consolation which comes from heaven, since it is certain that you have manfully renounced carnal delights and worldly pleasures. None can reasonably doubt that it was by the good gift of heaven, and determined by divine purpose, that Bishop Malachy should fall asleep among you to-day, and among you have his place of burial, as he desired. For if not even a leaf of a free falls to the ground without the will of God, who is so dull as not to see plainly in the coming of this blessed man, and his passing, a truly great purpose of the divine compassion? From the uttermost parts of the earth he came to leave his earth here. He was hastening, it is true, on another errand; but we know that by reason of his special love for us he desired that most of all. He suffered many hindrances in the journey itself, and he was refused permission to cross the sea till the time of his consummation was drawing near, and the goal which could not be passed. And when, with many labours, he came to us we received him as an angel of God out of reverence for his holiness; but he, out of his very deeply rooted meekness and lowliness, far beyond our merits, received us with devoted love. Then he spent a few days with us in his usual health: for he was waiting for his companions, who had been scattered in England, when the baseless distrust of the king was hindering the man of God. And when they had all assembled to him, he was preparing to set out to the Roman Court, on his way to which he had come hither; when suddenly he was overtaken by sickness, and he immediately perceived that he was being summoned rather to the heavenly palace, God having provided some better thing

for us, lest going out from us he should be made perfect elsewhere.

2. There appeared to the physicians no sign in him, I say not of death, but even of serious illness; but he, gladdened in spirit, said that in every way it was befitting that this year Malachy should depart from this life. We laboured to prevent it, both by earnest prayers to God, and by whatever other means we could; but his merits prevailed, that his heart's desire should be given him and that the request of his tips should not be withholden. For so all things happened to him in accordance with his wishes; that by the inspiration of the divine goodness he had chosen this place above all others, and that he had long desired that he should have as the day of his burial this day on which the general memory of all the faithful is celebrated. Moreover, these joys of ours were worthily increased by the circumstance that we had selected that same day, by God's will, for bringing hither from the former cemetery for their second burial the bones of our brothers. And when we were bringing them, and singing psalms in the accustomed manner, the same holy man said that he was very greatly delighted with that chanting. And not long after, he himself also followed, having sunk into a most sweet and blessed sleep. Therefore we render thanks to God for all the things that He has disposed, because He willed to honour us, unworthy as we are, by his blessed death among us, to enrich His poor with the most costly treasure of his body, and to strengthen us, who are weak, by so great a pillar of His church. For one or other of two signs proves that it was wrought for us for good, either that this place is pleasing to God, or that it is His will to make it pleasing to Him, since He led to it from the uttermost parts of the earth so holy a man to die and to be buried there.

3. But our very love for this blessed father compels us to sorrow with that people from our heart, and to shudder exceedingly at the cruelty of him, even Death, who has not spared to inflict this terrible wound on the Church, now so much to be pitied. Terrible and unpitying surely is death, which has punished so great a multitude of men by smiting one; blind and without foresight, which has tied the tongue of Malachy, arrested his steps, relaxed his hands, closed his eyes. Those devout eyes, I say, which were wont to restore divine grace to sinners, by most tender tears; those most holy hands, which had always loved to be occupied in laborious and humble deeds, which so often offered for sinners the saving sacrifice of the Lord's body, and were lifted up to heaven in prayer without wrath and doubting, which are known to have bestowed many benefits on the sick and to have been resplendent with manifold signs; those beautiful steps also of him that preached the Gospel of peace and brought glad tidings of good

things; those feet, which were so often wearied with eagerness to show pity; those footprints which were always worthy to merit devout kisses; finally, those holy lips of the priest, which kept knowledge, the mouth of the righteous, which spoke wisdom, and his tongue which, talking of judgement, yea and of mercy, was wont to heal so great wounds of souls. And it is no wonder, brothers, that death is iniquitous, since iniquity brought it forth, that it is heedless, since it is known to have been born of seduction. It is nothing wonderful, I say, if it strikes without distinction, since it came from the transgression; if it is cruel and mad, since it was produced by the subtlety of the old serpent and the folly of the woman. But why do we charge against it that it dared to assail Malachy, a faithful member, it is true, of Christ, when it also rushed madly upon the very head of Malachy and of all the elect as well? It rushed, assuredly, upon One whom it could not hurt; but it did not rush away unhurt. Death hurled itself against life, and life shut up death within itself, and death was swallowed up of life. Gulping down the hook to its hurt, it began to be held by Him whom it seemed to have held.1

4. But perhaps some one may say, How does it appear that death has been overcome by the Head, if it still rages with so great liberty against the members? If death is dead, how did it kill Malachy? If it is conquered how has it still power over all, and there is no man that liveth and shall not see death? Death is clearly conquered—the work of the devil and the penalty of sin: sin is conquered, the cause of death; and the wicked one himself is conquered, the author both of sin and death. And not only are these things conquered, they are, moreover, already judged and condemned. The sentence is determined, but not yet published. In fact, the fire is prepared for the devil, though he is not yet cast into the fire, though still for a short time he is allowed to work wickedness. He is become, as it were, the hammer of the Heavenly Workman, the hammer of the whole earth. He crushes the elect for their profit, he crushes to powder the reprobate for their damnation. As is the master of the house, so are they of his household, that is, sin and death. For sin, though it is not to be doubted that it was nailed with Christ to His cross, was yet allowed still for a time, not indeed to reign,1 but to dwell even in the Apostle himself while he lived. I lie if he does not himself say, It is no more I that do it, but sin dwelleth in me.1 So also death itself is by no means, indeed, yet compelled not to be present, but it is compelled not to be present to men’s hurt. But there will come a time when it is said, O death, where is thy victory?1 For death also is the last enemy that shall be destroyed. But now, since He rules who has the power of life and death and confines the very sea

within the fixed limits of its shores, death itself to the beloved of the Lord is a sleep of refreshment. The prophet bears witness who says, When he giveth his beloved sleep, behold the heritage of the Lord. The death of the wicked is indeed most evil, since their birth is evil and their life more evil; but precious is the death of the saints. Precious clearly, for it is the end of labours, the consummation of victory, the gate of life, and the entrance to perfect safety.

5. Let us rejoice therefore, brothers, let us rejoice as is meet, with our father, for if it is an act of filial piety to mourn for Malachy who is dead, yet more is it an act of piety to rejoice with Malachy who is alive. Is he not alive? He is, and in bliss. Certainly, in the eyes of the foolish he seemed to have died; but he is in peace. In fine, now a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God, he at once sings and gives thanks, saying, We went through fire and water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. He went, clearly, in manly fashion, and he went through happily. The true Hebrew celebrated the Passover in spirit, and as he went, he said to us, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you.”1 He went through fire and water,1 whom neither experiences of sadness could crush, nor pleasures hold back. For there is below us a place which fire wholly claims as its own, so that the wretched Dives could not have there even the least drop of water from the finger of Lazarus. There is also above the city of God which the streams of the river make glad, a torrent of pleasure, a cup which inebriates, how goodly! Here, in the midst, truly is found the knowledge of good and evil, and in this place we may receive the trial of pleasure and of affliction. Unhappy Eve brought us into these alternations. Here clearly is day and night; for in the lower world there is only night, and in heaven only day. Blessed is the soul which passes through both, neither ensnared by pleasure nor fainting at tribulation.

6. I think it right to relate to you, briefly, a specimen of the many splendid deeds of this man, in which he is known to have gone, with no little vigour, through fire and water. A tyrannous race laid claim to the metropolitan see of Patrick, the great apostle of the Irish, creating archbishops in regular succession, and possessing the sanctuary of God by hereditary right.1 Our Malachy was therefore asked by the faithful to combat such great evils; and putting his life in his hand1 he advanced to the attack with vigour, he undertook the archbishopric, exposing himself to evident danger, that he might put an end to so great a crime. Surrounded by perils he ruled the church; when the perils were passed, immediately he canonically ordained another as his successor. For he had undertaken the office on this, condition, that when the fury of persecution had

ceased and it thus became possible that another should safely be appointed, he should be allowed to return to his own see. And there, without ecclesiastical or secular revenues he lived in the religious communities which he himself had formed, dwelling among them up to this time as one of themselves, and abjuring all personal property. So the fire of affliction tried the man of God, but did not consume him; for he was gold. So neither did pleasure hold him captive or destroy him, nor did he stand a curious spectator on the way, forgetful of his own pilgrimage.

7. Which of you, brothers, would not earnestly desire to imitate his holiness, if he dared even to hope for such an attainment? I believe, therefore, you will gladly hear, if I perchance can tell it, what made Malachy holy. But lest our testimony should seem not easy to be received, hear what the Scripture says: He made him holy in his faith and meekness. By faith he trampled on the world, as John bears witness when he says, This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. For in the spirit of meekness he endured all things whatsoever that were hard and contrary with good cheer. On the one hand, indeed, after the example of Christ, by faith he trampled on the seas, lest he should be entangled in pleasures; on the other, in his patience he possessed his soul,1 lest he should be crushed by troubles. For concerning these two things you have the saying in the Psalm, A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand;1 for many more are cast down by the deceitfulness of prosperity than by the lashes of adversity. Therefore, dearly beloved, let none of us, allured by the level surface of the easier way, suppose that road of the sea to be more convenient for himself. This plain has great mountains, invisible indeed, but for that very reason more dangerous. That way perhaps seems more laborious which passes through the steeps of the hills and the ruggedness of rocks; but to them that have tried it, it is found far safer and more to be desired. But on both sides there is labour, on both sides danger, as he knew who said, By the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; so that we may rightly rejoice with those that went through fire and water and have been brought into a wealthy place. Do you wish to hear something about the wealthy place? Would that another might speak to you of it. For as for me, that which I have not tasted I cannot indite.

8. But I seem to hear Malachy saying to me to-day about this wealthy place, Return unto thy rest, O my soul: for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee: for he hath delivered my soul from death, [mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling]. And what I understand to be expressed in those words hear in a few sentences; for the day is far spent, and I have spoken at greater length than I

intended, because I am unwilling to tear myself away from the sweetness of the father's name, and my tongue, dreading to be silent about Malachy, fears to cease. The death of the soul, my brothers, is sin; unless you have overlooked that which you have read in the prophet: The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Threefold, then, is the rejoicing of the man, since he is delivered from all sin, and from labour, and from danger. For from this time neither is sin said to dwell in him, nor is the sorrow of penitence enjoined, nor from henceforth is he warned to guard himself from any falling. Elijah has laid aside his mantle; it was not that he feared, it was not that he was afraid that it should be touched, still less retained, by an adulteress. He went up into the chariot; he is not now in terror of falling; he mounts delightfully; he labours not to fly by his own power, but sits in a swift vehicle. To this wealthy place, dearly beloved, let us run with all eagerness of spirit, in the fragrance of the ointments of this our blessed father, who this day has been seen to have stirred up our torpor to most fervent desire. Let us run after him, I say, crying to him again and again, "Draw us after thee"; and, with earnest heart and advancing holiness of life, returning devout thanks to the Almighty Pity, that He has willed that His unworthy servants, who are without merits of their own, should at least not be without the prayers of another.

SERMON II

(November 2, 1149)

1. IT is clear, dearly beloved, that whilst we are detained in the body we are absent from the Lord. And throughout this wretched time of detention banishment and conscience of faults enjoins upon us sorrow rather than joy. But because by the mouth of the apostle we are exhorted to rejoice with them that do rejoice, the time and the occasion require that we should be stirred up to all gladness. For if it is true, as the prophet perceived, that the righteous rejoice before God, without doubt Malachy rejoices, who in his days pleased God and was found righteous. Malachy ministered in holiness and righteousness before Him: the ministry pleased Him; the minister also pleased Him. Why should he not please Him? He made the Gospel without charge, he filled the country with the Gospel, he tamed the deathly barbarism of his Irishmen, with the sword of the spirit1 he subdued foreign nations to the light yoke of Christ,1 restoring His inheritance to Him1 even unto the ends of the earth.1 O, fruitful ministry! O, faithful minister! Is not the promise of the Father to the Son fulfilled through him? Did not the Father behold him long ago when He said to the Son, I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth

for thy possession. How willingly the Saviour received what He had bought, and had bought with the price of His own blood, with the shame of the Cross, with the horror of the Passion. How willingly from the hands of Malachy, because he ministered freely. So in the minister the freely executed office was acceptable, and in the ministry the conversion of sinners was pleasing. Acceptable and pleasing, I say, in the minister was the singleness of eye, but in the ministry the salvation of the people.

2. However, even though a less effective result of the ministry followed, He would nevertheless justly have had regard to Malachy and his works, He to whom purity is a friend and single-mindedness one of his household, to whose righteousness it belongs to weigh the work in accordance with its purpose, from the character of the eye to measure the state of the whole body. But now the works of the Lord are great, sought out according to all the desires1 and efforts of Malachy; they are great and many and very good,1 though better in proportion to the good origin of the pure purpose. What work of piety escaped the attention of Malachy? He was poor as regards himself, but rich to the poor. He was a father of the fatherless, a husband of the widows,1 a protector of the oppressed. A cheerful giver,1 seldom making petitions, modest in receiving gifts. He was specially solicitous, and had much success, in restoring peace between those who were at variance. Who was as tender as he in sharing the sufferings of others? who as ready to help? who as free in rebuke? For he was zealous, and yet not wanting in knowledge, the restrainer of zeal. And, indeed, to the weak he was weak, but none the less strong to the strong: he resisted the proud, he lashed the tyrants, a teacher of kings and princes. It was he who by prayer deprived a king of sight when he worked wickedness, and restored it when he was humbled. It was he, when certain men broke a peace which he had made, who gave them up to the spirit of error, and foiled them in the evil which they devised to do; and who compelled them to accept peace a second time, confounded and stunned by that which had happened to them. It was he to whom a river most opportunely lent its aid against the others, who were equally transgressors of a covenant. In wonderful fashion, by throwing itself before them, it made void the efforts of the ungodly. There had been no rains, no floods of waters, no gathering of clouds, no melting of snows, when suddenly the mere rivulet was converted into a great river; and it rushed along and swelling up overflowed the banks, and utterly denied passage to those who wished to do wickedly.

3. What things we have heard and known of the wrath of the man and his vengeance on his enemies, while yet he was sweet and gentle and plenteous in

mercy unto all that suffered need! For he lived for all as though he were the one parent of all. As a hen her chickens, so he cherished all and protected them under the covert of his wings. He made no distinction of sex or age, of condition or person; he failed none, his loving heart embraced all. In whatsoever affliction men cried to him he counted it his own: even more than that, for in regard to his own afflictions he was patient, in regard to those of others he was compassionate, very often even passionate. For indeed sometimes, filled with wrath, he was stirred to take the part of one against another, that by delivering the poor and restraining the strong he might take thought in equal measure for the salvation of all. Therefore he was angry; but it was in order that he might not sin by not being angry, according to the words of the Psalm, Be ye angry and sin not. Anger did not rule him, but he himself ruled his spirit. He had power over himself. Assuredly he who had the victory over himself could not be mastered by anger. His anger was kept in hand. When it was summoned it came, going forth, not bursting forth; it was brought into action by his will, not by impulse. He was not set on fire by it, but used it.1 As well in this as in ruling and restraining all the motions both of his inner and his outer man1 his judgement was careful, his caution great. For he did not give so much attention to all, as to leave himself alone out of account, as, in his universal solicitude, to disregard only himself. He was careful of himself also. He guarded himself. In fact, he was so wholly his own, so wholly also belonged to all, that his love seemed in no degree to hinder or delay him from his guardianship of himself, nor his concern for his own person from the common good. If you saw the man busied in the midst of crowds, involved in cares, you would say he was born for his country, not for himself. If you saw the man alone and dwelling by himself, you would suppose that he lived for God alone and for himself.

4. Without tumult he went about among tumults; without ease he spent the time which he gave to ease. How could he be taking his ease when he was occupied in the statutes of the Lord? For though he had time free from the necessities of the peoples, yet had he none unoccupied by holy meditations, by the work of prayer, by the ease itself of contemplation. In the time of ease he spoke gravely or not at all. His mien was either courteous, or humble and self-restrained. Assuredly—a trait which is counted worthy of much praise among the wise—his eye was in his head, never flying forth except when it was obedient to power. His laughter displayed love, or provoked it: but even so it was rare. Sometimes indeed, it came forth, but it was never forced, intimating the gladness of his heart in such a way that his mouth did not lose but gained in

grace. So modest was it that it could not be suspected of levity; so gentle, however, that it sufficed to free his joyous countenance from every trace and shadow of sadness. O perfect gift! O rich burnt sacrifice! O pleasing service in mind and hand! How sweet unto God is the savour of him who employs his leisure in prayers, how sweet unto men of him who is occupied in fatiguing labours.

5. Because he was such an one, then, beloved of God and men, not undeservedly was Malachy received this day into the company of angels, having attained in fact what his name denoted. And indeed, already he was an angel not less in purity than in name. But now more happily is the significance of his glorious name fulfilled in him, since he is glad with a glory and happiness equal to that of the angels. Let us also, dearly beloved, be glad because our angel ascended to his fellow-citizens, acting as an ambassador for the children of the captivity,1 winning for us the favour of the blessed ones, declaring to them the desires of the wretched. Let us be glad, I say, and rejoice,1 because in that heavenly court1 there is one who went forth from us to take care of us,1 to protect us by his merits,1 whom he instructed by his example and strengthened by his miracles.

6. The holy pontiff, who in a humble spirit often brought peace-offerings to the heavens, to-day in his own person has gone unto the altar of God, himself the victim and the priest. With the departure of the priest the rite of sacrifice is changed into a better thing. The fountain of tears is dried up, every burnt sacrifice is made with gladness and rejoicing. Blessed be the Lord God of Malachy, who by the ministry of so great a pontiff hath visited his people, and now, taking him up into the holy city, ceaseth not, by the remembrance of so great sweetness to comfort our captivity. Let the spirit of Malachy rejoice in the Lord,1 because he is freed from the heavy load of the body, and is no longer hindered, by the weight of impure and earthly matter, from passing with all eagerness and fullness of life, through the whole creation, corporeal and incorporeal, that he may enter entirely into God, and joined to Him may with Him be one spirit1 for ever.1

7. Holiness becometh that house1 in which the remembrance of so great holiness1 is celebrated. Holy Malachy, preserve it in holiness and righteousness,1 pitying us who in the midst of so many and great miseries utter the memory of thine abundant goodness. Great is the dispensation of the mercy of God upon thee, who made thee little in thine oum sight, great in His; who did great things by thee, in saving thy country, great things to thee, in bringing thee

into His glory. May thy festival, which is deservedly devoted to thy virtues, have a saving efficacy for us by thy merits and prayers. May the glory of thy holiness, which is celebrated by us, be continued by angels: so shall it meetly be pleasant for us, if it be also fruitful. While thou departest be it allowed to us, who are met together to-day in thy so delicious feast, to preserve some remnants of the fruits of the Spirit, loaded with which thou ascendest.

8. Be to us, we beseech thee, holy Malachy, another Moses, or another Elijah, like them imparting of thy spirit to us, for thou hast come in their spirit and power. Thy life was a law of life and knowledge, thy death the port of death and the portal of life, thy memory the delight of sweetness and grace, thy presence a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord thy God. O fruitful olive tree in the house of God!1 O oil of gladness,1 giving both anointing and light, cherishing with favours, resplendent with miracles,1 make us partakers of that light and graciousness which thou enjoyest.1 O sweet-smelling lily, blossoming and budding evermore before the Lord, and spreading everywhere a sweet and life-giving savour,1 whose memorial is blessed1 with us, whose presence is in honour with those who are above, grant to those who sing of thee that they may not be deprived of their share in so great an assembly. O great luminary and light that shinest in darkness, illuminating the prison, making glad the city by the rays of thy signs and merits, by the lustre of virtues put to flight from our hearts the darkness of vices. O morning star, more brilliant than the rest because thou art nearer the day, more like to the sun, deign to go before us, that we also may walk in the light as children of light, and not children of darkness. O thou who art the dawn breaking into day upon the earth, but the noon light illumining the higher regions of heaven, receive us in the fellowship of light, by which illuminated thou sheddest light far without, and sweetly burnest within, by the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit reigneth One God, world without end.—AMEN.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

A

ST. BERNARD'S DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE OF THE IRISH CHURCH

Life, §§ 7, 16, 17

IN two passages of the Life serious charges are made against the Irish Church of the early years of the twelfth century. These charges refer primarily to the dioceses of Armagh and Connor; but it is probable that those dioceses were typical of many other districts throughout the country. If St. Bernard's statements are true of them, they may be applied with little reserve to the greater part of Ireland. Indeed he himself gives us more than a hint that the abuses which he condemns were by no means confined to eastern Ulster (§ 19). It may be well, therefore, to bring them together and to discuss them.

1. There was no such thing as chanting at the canonical hours. In the whole bishopric of Armagh "there was none who could or would sing" (§ 7). "In the churches [of Connor] there was not heard the voice either of preacher or singer" (§ 16). We may suspect that there is some exaggeration here; for if church song was absolutely unknown, how could Malachy have "learnt singing in his youth" (§ 7)? But that St. Bernard's remarks are substantially correct need not be questioned. He is not speaking of the Irish Church as it was in its earlier period, but of its state at the time when it had probably fallen to its lowest depth. His assertion, therefore, is not disposed of by references to the chanting at the funerals of Brian Boroimhe in 1014 and Maelsechlainn in 1022 (O'Hanlon, p. 34). Indeed in the notices of those events in A.F.M. there is no express mention of ecclesiastical song.

2. At Armagh Confession was not practised (§ 7); in the diocese of Connor "nowhere could be found any who would either seek penance or impose it" (§ 16). It may be true that Confession had been much neglected among some classes of the people: Malachy on one occasion met a woman who had never confessed (§ 54), and the very fact that he put the question to her "whether she had ever confessed her sins" suggests that she was not singular in this respect. But it is remarkable that the anmchara (soul-friend), or Confessor, is frequently

mentioned in Irish literature. The obits of several persons to whom that title is given are recorded in the Annals in the twelfth century. And penance is often alluded to in the obituary notices of distinguished persons, clerical and lay. In his sweeping statement St. Bernard may have had in mind some differences of method in penitential discipline between the Roman and Irish Churches.

3. The sacrament of Confirmation was not celebrated, at any rate in Armagh (§ 7). This rite has always been used in the Irish Church, though possibly neglected locally at some periods. St. Patrick tells us that he "confirmed in Christ" those whom he had "begotten to God" (Epistle, 2; cp. Confession, 38, 51)—thus giving us one of the earliest instances in literature of the application to the rite of its present familiar name. But in his practice (Epistle, § 3), as in the Stowe Missal, about A.D. 800 (ed. Sir G. F. Warner, vol. ii. p. 31), it seems to have consisted of an anointing with chrism without laying on, or raising, of hand, or a direct prayer for the Holy Spirit. According to the Stowe Missal it was administered by a presbyter. It is improbable that St. Bernard or his romanizing friends would recognize the rite so performed as true Confirmation.

4. One of the things which was neglected at Armagh was "the marriage contract" (§ 7). In the diocese of Connor there was "no entry into lawful marriages" (§ 16). By the labours of Malachy this abuse disappeared. In Armagh he "instituted anew" the marriage contract; in Connor it came to pass that "the celebration of marriage" was revived (§ 17). Putting these statements together we may conclude that St. Bernard's meaning is that marriages had ceased to be celebrated in the face of the Church, and that in consequence the vow of a life-long union was often evaded. Now contemporary writers charge the Irish of this period with loose sexual morality, especially in regard of arbitrary divorce, matrimony within the prohibited degrees, exchange of wives, and other breaches of the law of marriage. Such accusations are made, for example, by Pope Gregory VII. (Haddan and Stubbs, Eccl. Docs. ii. 160), Lanfranc (Ussher, 490; P.L. cl. 535, 536), Anselm (Ussher 521, 523; P.L. clix. 173, 178) and Giraldus Cambrensis (Gest. ii. 14; Top. iii. 19). Their evidence is the more worthy of credence because the usages to which they refer were characteristic of the Irish at an earlier period (Encycl. of Religion and Ethics, v. 456, 460), and might be expected to recur in an age of spiritual decline. But both Lanfranc and Anselm testify to the existence of marriage as an institution among the Irish. The former speaks of the divorce of a wife "lawfully joined to her husband," and the latter uses terms of similar import. So also does St. Bernard himself. His praise of Malachy's mother (Life, § 1) is inconceivable if she did not live in wedlock; and

he expressly states that eight “metropolitans” of Armagh were “married men” (§ 19). But if there was nevertheless a revival among large sections of the people of pagan ideas of marriage, which tolerated polygamy, concubinage, incest and easy termination of unions, it can be understood that marriage in the face of the Church, which included a vow absolutely prohibitive of all these things, would be commonly avoided. Malachy’s anxiety to restore the marriage ceremony was no doubt due to a desire to purge the nation of immoral customs of which St. Bernard makes no express mention. But, however that may be, we have contemporary native evidence that the rite of marriage had fallen into desuetude, and that Malachy was successful in his effort to restore it. For in the document quoted on p. 170, we are told that in a district which was part of the diocese of Armagh when he was Cellach’s vicar (L.A.J. vi. 37), and under the rule of his patron, Donough O’Carroll, “marriage was assented to.”

5. “There was no giving of tithes or firstfruits,” writes St. Bernard (§ 16). He is speaking of the diocese of Connor. But there is no doubt that the remark might have been made of other districts. There was no such custom as the payment of tithes in Ireland before the twelfth century. They are first mentioned by Gilbert of Limerick, about 1108, in his De Statu Ecclesiae (Ussher, 507); and they were enjoined at the Synods of Kells in 1152 (Keating, iii. 315) and Cashel in 1172 (Can. 3, Giraldus, Expug., i. 35). From the document quoted above we learn that in Oriel, under Donough O’Carroll, “tithes were received“—evidently a new impost.

6. “Ministers of the altar were exceeding few” in the diocese of Connor (§ 16); and accordingly it is observed that Malachy provided his new churches with clergy (§ 17). This is not proved, nor is it in any great degree corroborated by the statement of A.F.M. (1148) that Malachy “ordained bishops and priests and men of every order”; but the parallel is perhaps worth noting.

7. The voice of the preacher was not heard in the churches (§ 16). This statement cannot, so far as I know, be checked.

8. The same remark must be made about the statements that the people would not come to church (§ 16), and that Malachy’s exertions at length induced them to do so (§ 17), though they are sufficiently probable.

9. That “churches were rebuilt” (§ 17) cannot be questioned. No doubt the monasteries of Bangor and Saul would be counted among the number. We have explicit and independent evidence of the fact. The foundation of churches and re-edifying of monasteries were a conspicuous feature of the reign of Donough O’Carroll (see p. 170). And A.F.M. (1148) lay great stress on Malachy’s

activities in this direction. He “consecrated many churches and cemeteries,” and “founded churches and monasteries, for by him was repaired every church in Ireland which had been consigned to decay and neglect, and they had been neglected from time remote.”

On the whole it appears that St. Bernard’s strictures are at least not without foundation in fact, in so far as they can be tested. But he can scarcely be acquitted of some measure of exaggeration in the rhetorical passages in which they occur.

B

THE HEREDITARY SUCCESSION OF THE COARBS OF PATRICK

Life, §§ 19, 20, 30

The assertions of St. Bernard in Life, § 19, concerning the coarbs of Patrick are controlled by A.U. The ninth predecessor of Cellach, Cathasach II. (†957) is described in them (s.a. 956) as “coarb of Patrick, learned bishop of the Goidhil.” None of the following eight is said to have been a bishop, though all are called coarbs of Patrick. Moreover Cellach himself was appointed abbot before he “received holy orders,” and the record of his ordination on St. Adamnan’s Day (September 23) 1105, several weeks after his “institution,” seems to indicate that it was unusual for the abbots to be ordained. All this corroborates the statement that his eight predecessors were “without orders.” It is true, indeed, that according to A.F.M. Amalgaid, one of the eight, anointed Maelsechlainn king of Ireland, on his deathbed in 1022. But it does not follow from this that he was a priest. In early times, as is well known, unction was administered to the sick by laymen; and there appears to be no evidence that this office was confined to the priesthood till well on in the ninth century (Dict. of Christ. Antiquities, ii. 2004). It is at least possible that the older usage lingered on in Ireland to a much later date than on the Continent. But the statement of A.F.M. as to the anointing of Maelsechlainn is not confirmed by the more reliable authority of A.U.

That at least five of the eight were, as St. Bernard says, “married men” is shown by the following table, compiled from A.U. and MacFirbis (R.I.A., MS. 23 P. 1, p. 308). The persons whose names are printed in italics were coarbs of Patrick.

Cellach
Eochaid

Dubdalethe II †998
Mael Muire †1020
Amalgaid †1049

Dubdalethe III †1064
Aed †1042
Aed †1108
Mael Isa †1091
Domnall †1105
Dubesa †1078
Eochaid (?) †1038
Muirchertach (§20) †1134
Aed †1095
Flannacan †1113
Cellach †1129
Niall (§22) †1139

This table also confirms the statement that the abbots all belonged to the same family, and so obtained office by a sort of hereditary right. St. Bernard gives no hint which would enable us to identify this family. But the genealogy given by MacFirbis enumerates the ancestors of Cellach in a direct line up to Fiachrach, son of Colla fo Crich, and is headed "Genealogy of Ui Sinaich, i.e. the coarbs of Patrick." The Bodleian MS., Rawl. B. 502,1 has the same genealogy, and entitles it "Genealogy of Clann Sinaich." The family then from which the abbots of Armagh were taken was the principal branch of that sept. From the genealogy it appears that the sept was derived from Sinach, from whom the fifth in descent was the Cellach whose name appears at the head of foregoing table.

St. Bernard represents Malachy to have said in 1132, when he was induced to oppose Murtough, that the system of hereditary succession had already lasted nearly two centuries (§ 20). This statement is in accord with known facts. The genealogical table gives sufficient evidence that it began not earlier than the accession of Dubdalethe II. (965), and continued to the accession of Murtough. If there is no evidence that the three predecessors of Dubdalethe were of the Clann Sinaich, neither is there anything to disprove it. But their immediate predecessor, Joseph, was certainly not of that sept; for A.U. (MS. A, 935) tells us that he was of the Clann Gairb-gaela, and the list of coarbs in the Book of Leinster notes in addition that he came from Dalriada (R.I.A. xxxv. 327, 359).

Thus the succession cannot have been established before the death of Joseph (936). Hence it lasted for a period of between 167 and 196 years. A period of 167 years, or a period of 196 years, might be described as “well-nigh two hundred years” (annos ferme ducentos), though the latter suits St. Bernard’s language better than the former.

But how can this be harmonized with the statement that “fifteen quasi-generations had passed in this wickedness” (§ 19)? Obviously a “quasi-generation” is not a generation of human life: apart from the facts just mentioned, the very word quasi forbids the supposition. Colgan (Trias, p. 301) suggested that the word indicates the period of office of a coarb; and this is very probable. The figure of generations, so applied, is in line with St. Bernard’s conception of a bishop as “the seed” of his predecessor (§ 34). But the first of a series of coarbs, of which Murtough was the fifteenth, was Maelcoba, the second predecessor of Joseph. So that, even on Colgan’s hypothesis, St. Bernard’s two statements are irreconcilable. Yet it is difficult to believe that an error so manifest was in his source. I suggest that he wrote “fifteen” in error for “twelve”: in other words his document had xii, and he misread it xu. The confusion of u with ii is very common in manuscripts. If this explanation is accepted, St. Bernard’s authority implied that the hereditary succession was upheld without interruption from the death of Joseph to the accession of Murtough, which is “well-nigh two hundred years.”

This investigation may convince us that St. Bernard depended on an excellent document for his knowledge of the history of Armagh. But he certainly went astray in the interpretation of the document when he styled the predecessors of Cellach metropolitans (see p. 45, n. 1). And he goes further when he asserts that none were allowed to be bishops who were not of their family (§ 19); thus leaving the impression that under the rule of the eight lay abbots—that is, for a century and a half—Armagh was deprived of episcopal ministrations. But this is wholly unhistorical. The Ulster Annals mention six bishops of Armagh, contemporary with the lay abbots. They seem to have followed one another in regular succession, and there is no indication that any one of them belonged to the Clann Sinaich. They were no doubt monastic bishops, such as are found in the Irish Church from the sixth century onwards, who exercised the functions of their order at the bidding of the abbots. They were probably not referred to in St. Bernard’s document; and if they were, one who had been trained in an entirely different ecclesiastical system would have been at a loss to understand their position.

Thus we conclude that St. Bernard, in the passage which we are considering, used good material with conscientious care, but that he was misled by lack of knowledge of Irish ecclesiastical methods. This result is important because it may apparently be applied to the whole of his memoir of St. Malachy. His statements, as a rule, stand well the test of comparison with the native records; and when he is at fault we can usually explain his errors as misunderstandings, due to ignorance of conditions of which he had no experience.

St. Bernard has been charged with gross exaggeration in another passage. “A great miracle to-day,” he writes (§ 30), “is the extinction of that generation, so quickly wrought, especially for those who knew their pride and power.” It is an extravagant hyperbole to say that either the O’Neills, or the great tribe of the Oirgialla, represented to this day by the Maguires, the O’Hanlons and the MacMahons, was blotted out when the Life of St. Malachy was written. So argued some in the time of Colgan (Trias, p. 302). But they misrepresented St. Bernard. The word “generation” obviously means in the sentence before us what it meant in § 19 (“adulterous generation”)—not an extensive tribe, nor even the Clann Sinaich as a whole, but the branch of that sept which provided abbots for Armagh. The speedy extinction of a single family is not a thing incredible. And it is worthy of remark that neither the Clann Sinaich, nor any person described as ua Sinaich or mac Sinaich is mentioned in the Annals after 1135 (see p. 58, n. 9).

For a more detailed treatment of the subjects discussed in this note reference may be made to R.I.A. xxxv. 232–238, 340–353.

C

MALACHY’S CONTEST WITH NIALL

Life, §§ 22–31

The narrative of the series of events between the death of Murtough and the consecration of Gelasius, both in St. Bernard’s Life and in A.F.M., is obscure, and our two main authorities contradict each other in some particulars. In this note I propose to attempt a reconstruction of the story.

1. Among the native authorities A.F.M. stand alone in giving what approximates to a full account of the struggle between the rival abbots. A.T. record only three incidents; the Chronicon Scotorum also records three incidents belonging to the year 1134, and then breaks off, to be resumed in 1142; in A.U. and A.I there are hiatus which cover the whole period; the other Annals ignore the events with which we are concerned. The information supplied by A.F.M.

runs as follows:

1134. (1) Malachy O'Morgair made a visitation of Munster and obtained his tribute.

(2) A chapel, which was erected by Cormac Mac Carthy, king of Cashel, was consecrated by a synod of clergy assembled at that place.

(3) Murtough died 17 September.

(4) Niall was installed in the coarbate of Patrick.

(5) A change of abbots at Armagh, i.e. Malachy O'Morgair in place of Niall.

(6) Malachy afterwards made a visitation of Munster and received his tribute.

1135. (7) Flann Ua Sinaich, keeper of the Staff of Jesus, died after good penance.

(8) Malachy O'Morgair purchased the Staff of Jesus, and took it from its cave 7 July.

1136. (9) A visitation of Munster was made by Malachy O'Morgair, coarb of Patrick.

(10) A change of abbots at Armagh, i.e. Niall in place of Malachy.

(11) Malachy O'Morgair resigned the coarbate of Patrick for the sake of God.

1137. (12) A change of abbots at Armagh, i.e. the erenach (recte abbot) of Derry in place of Niall.

1138. (13) Christian O'Morgair died.

A.T. record the second and fifth of the above events, and subjoin to the latter notice the passage quoted p. 51, n. 4. The Chronicon Scotorum records the second, third and fifth.

There is obvious confusion in the narrative of the Masters. They put the death of Christian O'Morgair under 1138, which is a year too early (see p. 66, n. 1), and they credit Malachy with having made three visitations of Munster within three years, which he is very unlikely to have done. But it is to be observed that the notices of the visitations are not mere repetitions, for they differ from each other verbally. Thus we may suspect that the Masters copied those entries from three different sources, and that they refer to the same visitation, which, in at least one of the sources, appeared under the wrong year. Now the consecutive sentences 9, 10 are probably connected with each other: the absence of Malachy in Munster would give his opponents opportunity to reinstate his rival. In like

manner entries 1, 2 (not consecutive) may be connected. It would not be surprising if Malachy, even at some risk to the security of his tenure of the abbacy at Armagh, took part in the consecration of his patron's church at Cashel. And it may be added that he would not improbably make this visit to the south the occasion of a circuit in Munster. The visitation, on that hypothesis, must have taken place in 1134 or early in 1135, Again, the note of time in entry 6 implies that it was made not very long after the appointment of Malachy, recorded in the immediately preceding entry 5. Finally, entry 8 mentions an event which must have greatly strengthened his hands. Having possessed himself of the more important and revered of the abbatial insignia he was at length more than a match for his antagonist. Probably, therefore, the restoration of Niall (10) should be placed rather before than after it. For these reasons we seem to be justified in placing the recorded incidents in the following order. When Malachy secured possession of the see (5) he remained long enough in Armagh to establish himself in the abbacy. During this time may have occurred the abortive conspiracy against him related in A.T., but not alluded to in A.F.M. He then went to Cashel for the consecration of the Chapel (2), and held his visitation of Munster (1, 6, 9). When he returned he found that Niall had once more entered Armagh (10). By July 1135 the power of his rival had considerably decreased, and Malachy got possession of the Staff of Jesus (8). Finally he resigned his office (11) and Gelasius was appointed to it (12). If this is a true account of the course of events, one statement of the Annals needs correction. They tell us that Gelasius succeeded Niall; on our hypothesis he succeeded Malachy. But that the Masters should have substituted the former for the latter was to be expected; for according to their previous (as I believe misplaced) statement Niall, not Malachy, was in possession in the latter part of 1136.

2. We now turn to St. Bernard's narrative of these transactions. Sections 22 and 23 present no difficulty. They are simply an amplification, with differences in detail, of what we learn from A.T. In the early part of § 24 it is stated that Malachy remained in Armagh after the king, with whose aid he had "ascended the chair of Patrick," had returned home; and in the succeeding narrative it is implied that he never left it till he went to Down. That is to say, the visitation of Munster is ignored. This need cause no surprise. It is quite possible that St. Bernard had never heard of it. Again, there is no explicit mention of the reinstatement of Niall. But it seems to be implied in § 24 (see p. 53, n. 9). The whole story becomes more intelligible if we assume that Niall was in possession for a short time, and then fled, but continued to exercise his functions outside the

city, as Malnchy himself had done in a previous period (§ 21). If we suppose that the visit to Munster took place shortly after the episode of § 23 we can explain the only difficulty in the narrative, the return of Niall after he had been driven out. The latter part of § 24 seems to intimate a lessening of opposition to Malachy's rule. The whole passage, §§ 24–27, with the exception of the last two sentences, of § 27, must relate to the period before July 1135, inasmuch as Niall is represented as carrying about with him the Staff of Jesus as well as the Book of Armagh.

Up to this point St. Bernard's narrative harmonizes admirably with the story as it has been reconstructed above from the Annals. But we must carry our comparison of the two accounts a little further. They agree in giving 1137 as the date of the appointment of Gelasius as coarb of Patrick; but while St. Bernard puts the resignation of Malachy in the same year the Masters record it under 1136 (p. 61, n. 7). Now their phrase (11), that he "resigned for the sake of God," in its present context (10) can have only one meaning. Malachy, seeing that his contest with Niall was hopeless, determined to retire rather than continue the strife, and left Niall in possession. But apart from entry 10, which seems to have been misplaced, the words have no such implication, and are in harmony with the reason given by St. Bernard for Malachy's return to his former diocese (§§ 20, 21). Since the dates of the Masters for this period are already suspect we need not hesitate to follow St. Bernard's guidance here. But we may go further. The annalists were compelled, if they would be consistent, to suppose that there was a considerable interval between the retirement of Malachy and the accession of Gelasius. How was it possible that when Niall had finally routed his formidable rival, who was in possession of the Staff of Jesus, another should at once step in and, apparently without any difficulty, deprive him of the fruits of his victory? The difficulty is increased if we accept the statement of St. Bernard —not contradicted by the Annals, and not easy to dispute—that Gelasius was nominated by Malachy himself, and was therefore presumably favourable to his cause. Thus we perceive that there was good reason that the annalists should separate the two events as far as possible, by antedating Malachy's resignation, and by connecting it rather with Niall's restoration than with the appointment of Gelasius.

3. In weighing the respective claims of St. Bernard and the annalists to credence in this part of Malachy's life it is well to remember that of it St. Bernard may be assumed to have had full and firsthand information. The main facts were probably communicated to him by Malachy himself, though some

particulars were no doubt added by other Irish informants. It is true, we must also allow for bias on St. Bernard's part in favour of his friend. Such bias in fact displays itself in §§ 25, 26. But bias, apart from sheer dishonesty, could not distort the whole narrative, as it certainly must have been distorted in the Life, if the narrative of A.F.M. is to be accepted as it stands.

4. It is important to observe that in the earlier stages of Malachy's conflict with Niall the lord of Oriel was Conor O'Loughlin, who was apparently not friendly to the reformers of the Irish Church (cp. §§ 18, 20, p. 40, n. 2, and p. 46, n. 5). No doubt his defeat by O'Brien and Mac Carthy in 1134 (p. 43, n. 5) made him a less ardent supporter of Niall than he had been of Murtough; but it is not likely that he entirely discouraged his attempts to seize the abbacy. The ultimate success of Malachy was in fact probably due to O'Loughlin's murder at the end of May 1136 and the rise to power of Donough O'Carroll (see p. 58, n. 11), his successor in the kingdom of Oriel. St. Bernard never mentions O'Carroll by name, though he possibly alludes to him in one passage (§ 28: see note there). But we may infer from other sources that he was a zealous friend and helper of Malachy. The most important of these is a contemporary document, part of which has been copied on a blank page of a fourteenth-century Antiphonary of Armagh (T.C.D. MS. B. 1. 1.) opposite the first page of the Calendar. Unfortunately the scribe laid down his pen at the end of a line and in the middle of a sentence. The document was first published by Petrie (p. 389) with a translation. As it is referred to several times in the notes to t he Life it may be well to print here, with a few slight alterations, Dr. Whitley Stokes' revised rendering (Gorman, p. xx.).

"Kalend. Januar. v feria, lun. x. Anno Domini melxx. A prayer for Donnchad Ua Cerbhaill, supreme King of Oirgialla, by whom were made the book of Cnoc na nApstal at Louth and the chief books of the order of the year, and the chief books of the Mass. It is this illustrious king who founded the entire monastery both [as to] stone and wood, and gave territory and land to it for the prosperity of his soul in honour of Paul and Peter. By him the church throughout the land of Oirgialla was reformed, and a regular bishopric was made, and the church was placed under the jurisdiction of the bishop. In his time tithes were received and marriage was assented to, and churches were founded and temples and bell-houses [round towers] were made, and monasteries of monks and canons and nuns were re-edified, and nemheds were made. These are especially the works which he performed for the prosperity [of his soul] and reign in the land of Oirgialla, namely, the monastery of monks on the banks of the Boyne [as to]

stone and wood, implements and books, and territory and land, in which there are one hundred monks and three hundred conventuals, and the monastery of canons of Termann Feichin, and the monastery of nuns, and the great church of Termann Feichin, and the church of Lepadh Feichin, and the church of …"

O'Carroll, then, was an ardent supporter of Malachy. Is it likely that after his long struggle to secure the Chair of Patrick, and when he was in actual possession of it, Malachy should voluntarily surrender his claim to Niall at the very moment when the new king of Oriel had come to his aid? Yet, unless we are prepared to place his resignation before June 1136, that is the assumption we must make if we adhere to the statements of A.F.M.

5. There are other documents of high authority which must be taken into account: the contemporary record of the succession of coarbs of Patrick in the Book of Leinster, and the copy of a similar record in the Yellow Book of Lecan. The former of these seems to have been written by a partizan of Malachy, since it ignores Murtough. The latter assigns to that abbot a rule of three years, in agreement with St. Bernard (§§ 20, 21). But neither of them so much as mentions Niall; and both make Gelasius the successor of Malachy. Thus they contradict A.F.M. and corroborate the narrative of St. Bernard. See R.I.A. xxxv. 355 f.

APPENDIX

THE PORTION OF § 41 OF THE LIFE OMITTED IN TRANSLATION

ALIA quaedam ibidem pernoctabat in oratione,1 quam forte reperiens solam homo barbarus, accensus libidine et sui minime compos, irruit rabiosus in eam. Conuersa illa et tremefacta, suspiciens aduertit hominem plenum diabolico spiritu. “Heu,” inquit, “miser, quid agis? Considera ubi es, reuerere haec sancta, defer Deo, defer seruo eius Malachiæ, parce et tibi ipsi.” Non destitit ille, furiisagitatus iniquis.2 Et ecce (quod horribile dictu est) uenenatum et tumidum animal quod bufonem uocant uisum est reptans exire de inter femora mulieris. Quid plura? Terrefactus resiliit homo, et datis saltibus festinus oratorio exsilit. Ille confusus abscessit, et illa intacta remansit, magno quidem et Dei miraculo et merito Malachiae. Et pulchre operi foedo et abominando foedum interuenit et abominabile monstrum. Non prorsus aliter decuit bestialem extingui libidinem quam per frigidissimum uermem, nec aliter temerarium frenari ausum frustrari conatum quam per uilem inutilemque bestiolam.

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NAMES OF IRISH PERSONS AND PLACES

Form used in this volume.
Form used by St. Bernard.
Irish Form.

Antrim
Oenthreb
Oentreb

Armagh
Ardmacha
Ard Macha

Bangor
Benchor
Bennchor

Cashel
Caselensis
Caisel

Catholicus
Catholicus
Catlac

Cellach
Celsus
Cellach

Christian
Christianus
Gilla Crist

Coleraine
- Culratim
- Cúl Rathin

Columbanus
- Columbanus
- Columbán

Comgall
- Congellus
- Comgall

Connor
- Connereth
- Coindire

Conor
- Conchobar

Cork
- Corcagia
- Corcach

Dermot
- Diarmicius
- Diarmait

Derry
- Daire

Desmond
- Mumonia australis
- Desmuma

Donnell

Domnall

Donough

Donnchad

Donngus

Down

Dunum

Dún dá Lethglas

Edan

Edanus

Aedh

Faughart

Fochart

Fochart

Gelasius

Gelasius

Gilla meic Liag

Gilbert

Gillebertus

Gilla espuig

Imar

Imaru

Imar

Inispatrick

Inis Pátraic

Iveragh
Ibracensis
Ui Ráthach

Leinster
Laginia
Laigin

Limerick

Luimneach

Lismore
Lesmore
Lis Mór

Lugadh
Luanus
Lugaid

Molua

MacCarthy

Mac (meic) Carthaig

Maelisa
Malchus
Mael Ísa

Malchus

Malachy
Malachias
Máel Máedóc

Moriarty

Ua Muirchertaig

Munster

Mumonia
Muma

Murrough

Murchadh

Murtough

Mauricius
Muirchertach

Nehemiah

Nehemias
Gill na Naem

Niall

Nigellus
Niall

O’Boyle

Ua Baigill

O’Brien

Ua Briain

O’Carroll

Ua Cerbaill

O’Conor

Ua Conchobair

O’Hagan

Ua hAedacain

O’Hanratty

Ua hIndrechtaig

O’Hanley

Ua hAingli

O’Kelly

Ua Cellaig

O’Loughlin

Ua Lochlainn

Oriel

Oirgialla

O’Rorke

Ua Ruarc

Patrick

Patricias
Pátraic

Rory

Ruaidhri

Saul
Saballum
Sabal Phátraic

Saballinum

Shalvey

Ua Selbaig

Teague

Tadhg

Thomond

Tuathmuma

Turlough

Toirdelbach

Ulaid
Ulydia
Ulaid

Usnagh

Uisnech

Waterford

Port Láirge

ON CONSIDERATION

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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CONTENTS

ON CONSIDERATION

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

CHRONOLOGY

PROLOGUE

BOOK I

CHAPTER I
St. Bernard sympathizes with the Pope in his many cares

CHAPTER II
The strength of evil custom

CHAPTER III
The rulers of the Church, ought not to be for ever bearing and deciding lawsuits

CHAPTER IV
What service is worthy, what unworthy, of the servants of God

CHAPTER V
The Pope should not be so absorbed in other men’s affairs as to neglect himself

CHAPTER VI
The administration of justice concerns temporal governors rather than bishops

CHAPTER VII
Nothing more deserving of consideration than piety and things eternal

CHAPTER VIII
The four primary virtues

CHAPTER IX
The recent practice of the Pope to be gradually corrected, the old imitated

CHAPTER X
The shameless trickery of advocates, judges, and procurators

CHAPTER XI
Such iniquitous greed to be sternly rebuked

BOOK II

CHAPTER I
St. Bernard apologizes for the failure of the Second Crusade

CHAPTER II
Consideration distinguished from Contemplation

CHAPTER III
Consideration fourfold—(1) The Pope himself, (2) things below him, (3) things around him, (4) things above him

CHAPTER IV
The threefold Consideration leading to self-knowledge. Firstly, What the Pope is

CHAPTER V
Secondly, Who the Pope is, and whence he comes

CHAPTER VI
The zeal befitting ecclesiastical rulers

CHAPTER VII
Who the Pope is—(continued)

CHAPTER VIII
The dignity and power of the Pope

CHAPTER IX
St. Bernard invites the Pope to consider what he is by nature

CHAPTER X
What manner of man the Pope is

CHAPTER XI
The necessity for self-examination

CHAPTER XII
The spiritual effects of prosperity and adversity

CHAPTER XIII
Idleness, trifling, and profitless conversation to be shunned

CHAPTER XIV
The Pope warned against accepting the person of any

BOOK III

CHAPTER I
The Pope should aim not at subjecting all men to himself, but at bringing them into the bosom of the Church

CHAPTER II
The limits of appeals to the Apostolic See

CHAPTER III
Church rulers are for the profit of their people

CHAPTER IV
Ecclesiastical rank and dignity to be respected. The abuse of privileges and exemptions

CHAPTER V
The Sovereign Pontiff should uphold the Apostolic decrees and ancient ordinances throughout the world

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I
The things ‘around’ the Pope

CHAPTER II
The clergy and people of Rome. The care and watchfulness of shepherds in olden time

CHAPTER III
The necessity of curtailing extravagance in dress, &c.

CHAPTER IV
The Pope’s colleagues and coadjutors at the Lateran

CHAPTER V
The Pope should refuse bribes. Martin and Gaufrid. The arrogance of the Pope’s attendants

CHAPTER VI
It is not becoming in the Pope to be absorbed in the management of his household to the neglect of weightier matters. He should have a steward

CHAPTER VII
The ideal Pope

BOOK V

CHAPTER I
The things ‘above’ us namely, God and things Divine, to which we rise by means of the Creatures

CHAPTER II
The Steps of Consideration

CHAPTER III
Opinion, Faith, and Understanding

CHAPTER IV
The Angels

CHAPTER V
God is the Source of Angelic Gifts and Graces

CHAPTER VI
The Eternal Self-existence of God

CHAPTER VII
The Divine Trinity in Unity

CHAPTER VIII
The plurality of Persons in the Godhead, and their several ‘properties’. The unity and simplicity of the Essence

CHAPTER IX
As in God there are three Persons and one Nature: so in Christ there are two Natures and one Person

CHAPTER X
The Parable of the three Measures of Meal

CHAPTER XI
The consideration of God continued

CHAPTER XII
God the rewarder of the good, and the righteous judge of the wicked

CHAPTER XIII
The mystical interpretation of the length and breadth, and height, and depth

CHAPTER XIV
What it is to ‘comprehend’ God

ADDITIONAL NOTES

ON CONSIDERATION

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

ONLY some six years had passed since the death of Gregory VII when St. Bernard was born (A. D. 1091), just two years before Anselm was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. The echoes of the thunders of the great reforming Pope had scarce died away, and the memory of the uncompromising struggle between him and the Emperor Henry IV was still fresh in the minds of men. Under his direction the Church of Rome had taken enormous strides towards that absolutism and universal supremacy, both in things temporal and spiritual, which was to reach its climax under Innocent III (A. D. 1198–1216), when papal power was perhaps greater than ever before or ever since. It was the, age of the Crusades, and of the rise of the Military Religious Orders. The intellect of Europe was beginning to awaken. The popular story of the discovery of the original manuscript of Justinian's famous Pandects, or digest of Roman law, in the ruins of Amalfi is discredited, but the study of civil law was vigorously pursued, and the profession was one of great honour. Canon law received no less attention. The vast materials, after twenty-four years' labour, were formed into a 'body' by Gratian, and published at Rome about 1140. 'The study of this code became of course obligatory upon ecclesiastical judges. It produced a new class of legal practitioners, or canonists; of whom a great number added, like their brethren the civilians, their illustrations and commentaries, for which the obscurity and discordance of many passages, more especially in Gratian's collection of canons, papal epistles, and sentences of fathers, gave ample scope. From the general analogy of the canon law to that of Justinian, the two systems became in a remarkable manner collateral and mutually intertwined, the tribunals governed by either of them borrowing their rules of decision from the other in cases where their peculiar jurisprudence is silent or of dubious interpretation.' Pope Engenius III was 'extremely satisfied' with Gratian's work, and is said to have instituted the earliest academical degrees for distinction in that branch of learning. St. Bernard's feelings are clearly expressed in the De Consideratione.

It was a time, too, of political movement. Arnold of Brescia, a disciple of Abelard, but more famous for his political heresy, not only preached reform in

the Church, but threw Rome into convulsions by proclaiming (A. D. 1143) a Republic. ‘He presumed to quote the declaration of Christ, that His kingdom is not of this world; he boldly maintained that the sword and the sceptre were intrusted to the civil magistrate; that temporal honours and possessions were lawfully vested in secular persons; that the abbots, the bishops, and the Pope himself must renounce either their state or their salvation; and that after the loss of their revenues, the voluntary tithes and oblations of the faithful would suffice, not indeed for luxury and avarice, but for a frugal life in the exercise of spiritual labours.’ The terror of successive popes, he was hanged, burnt, and his ashes cast into the Tiber (A. D. 1155) only two years after Bernard’s death. The saint’s advice to the Pope more than once recalls the teaching, tone, and temper of Arnold.

The Waldenses and the allied Albigenses, claiming the right to preach without commission, when, and where they pleased, and infected with Manichean errors, were already sowing the seeds of the Reformation, and the popes, by the traffic in indulgences, were contributing to the resources of the revolt.

But it is Abelard in whom centres so much of the intellectual interest of the period, and for whom it is claimed that ‘he planted the standard of impartial philosophy’. He was ‘almost the first who awakened mankind in the ages of darkness to a sympathy with intellectual excellence. His bold theories, not the less attractive perhaps for treading upon the bounds of heresy, his imprudent vanity, that scorned the regularly acquired reputation of older men, allured a multitude of disciples who would never have listened to an ordinary teacher. It is said that twenty cardinals and fifty bishops had been among his hearers.’ The schools of Paris through his stimulus acquired something of the character of a University, and though his life may have been ‘the shipwreck of genius, there are few lives of literary men more interesting, or more diversified by success and adversity, by glory and humiliation, by the admiration of mankind and the persecution of enemies’. Such a man could hardly escape the fiery wrath of St. Bernard, who described him as ‘with Arius disposing of the Trinity by degrees and measures, with Pelagius preferring free will to grace, and with Nestorius dividing Christ’. One of the most illustrious of Abelard’s disciples was Peter Lombard (died 1164), whose Book of Sentences, a collection of propositions from the fathers, with no attempt at reconciling them, placed him at the head of the scholastic divines. Scholastic theology and scholastic philosophy were rapidly developing; men were busy discussing the provinces of faith and reason, or venturing to attempt the solution, with the aid of Aristotle, of the insoluble in

the realms of metaphysics and Christian dogma.

Amid all this manifold stir and activity St. Bernard was the most commanding personality. He could ‘create popes, and command kings, and lead councils by the nose. His advice was asked by the greatest persons in Church and State; and he was even adored by the common people, who fancied that he was an inspired man, and endowed with the gifts of healing.’ So says a writer by no means disposed to exaggerate his influence, or gild the merit of his private character. ‘We must accept him as quite the eminent and governing man in the Europe of his time—whose word carried with it a sovereign stress surpassing that of any other, whose hand most effectively moulded history.’

And there appears to be a general consensus that the treatise on ‘Consideration’, brief though it be, is the greatest of St. Bernard’s literary efforts. Calvin declared that in it the author spoke so sublimely as if he were the very truth speaking. Neander regarded it as a mirror of humiliation to all subsequent popes. Mr. Cotter Morison describes it as his ‘great work’; his American admirer, Dr. Storrs, more in detail, as follows:—‘The book has remained from that day to this the mirror of St. Bernard’s thoughts concerning a true pastor of Christendom. There is no single work of Bernard in which his spirit is more clearly or more tranquilly revealed; none which is a better memorial of him. And it was written in what he himself styled the season of his misfortunes—when the nations which had been recently thrilled with his eloquence, astounded by his amazing works, and pushed by his energy to magnificent enterprise, were stirred by griefs too deep for tears, and hot with a rage that made the air like a fiery furnace. I know of no one who could better have taken to himself the ancient words of Ps. 27:5 and 57:1: In the day of trouble he shall keep me secretly in his pavilion, in the covert of his tabernacle shall be hide me. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul taketh refuge in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I take refuge, until these calamities be overpast.’

As I learn on inquiry at the Bodleian Library and at the British Museum, no translation in English of St. Bernard’s little masterpiece has hitherto been published. For the suggestion that one might with advantage be offered to the public I am indebted to my esteemed diocesan, Dr. Gibson, Lord Bishop of Gloucester. Dr. Sanday’s unfailing kindness on this and other occasions I beg most gratefully to acknowledge. I must also express my gratitude to the Rev. P. H. Kempthorne (late Fellow of St. John’s, Cambridge), Rector of Wyck Risington, for favouring me with his opinion on some obscure passages. The text

adopted is that of I. G. Krabinger, Custodian of the Royal Library, Munich, 1844. Readers interested in the career of St. Bernard may be referred to Cotter Morison's Life and Times (Macmillan, 1901), the Rev. I. W. Sparrow's Lectures (1895), and to the excellent little volume of the late Dr. Eales (S.P.C.K.). Dr. Storrs' book, quoted above, is on a much larger scale. A valued correspondent tells me that the Abbey of Clairvaux, once the home of 700 'Religious,' is now a penal establishment, where more than 1,000 convicts manufacture sheets, tissues, &c. How are the mighty fallen!

GEORGE LEWIS.

ICOMB RECTORY,

February 8, 1908.

CHRONOLOGY

A. D.

1091. Birth of St. Bernard.
1113. Bernard enters Citeaux.
1115. Foundation of Clairvaux.
1130. Election of Pope Innocent II.
1140. Council of Sens. First encounter with Abelard.
1145. Pope Eugenius III.
1147. Second Crusade.
1148. Council of Rheims. Errors of Gilbert of Poitiers condemned.
1149. Failure of the Crusade.
First Book of the De Consideratione.
1150. Second Book.
1152. Third Book.
‘The two last some small time after’ (Du Pin).
1153. Death of St. Bernard.

PROLOGUE

I AM thinking, Most Holy Father, Eugenius, of writing something which may edify, delight, or console you. But when I would fain begin I experience a strange hesitation, and my words falter, for your Majesty and the love I have for you, like rival commanders, issue conflicting orders. The one bids me advance, the other holds me in check. Your condescension reconciles their differences, inasmuch as though you might more fitly enjoin a task, you beg of me a favour. If then your Majesty unbends, my modesty should surely also yield. True, you sit on Peter's seat. What of that? Though you walk on the wings of the wind, you will never outstrip my affection. Love knows no lord; it recognizes a son even in the robes of office. Love, by its very nature, is lowly enough; it needs no prompting to kindness, seeks no reward for obedience, sets no bounds to its respect. It is not so with some, not so: but they are moved with fear or avarice. These are they who seem to bless, but there is evil in their hearts; they flatter to one's face, but in the time of need they desert us. But charity never faileth. To confess the truth, though I no longer act as a mother to you, I have not lost a mother's affection for you. In days gone by you were rooted in my very heart; you are not so easily to be plucked out. Ascend into heaven, or descend into the abyss, you shall not leave me: I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. I loved you when you were poor, I will love you now that you are the father of both rich and poor. For if I know you well, you have not in becoming the father of the poor lost your poverty of spirit. I am sure that the change in your circumstances has come to you: it has not been sought by you; and I am no less certain that your promotion has left you what you were before, though something be added thereto. I will, accordingly, admonish you, not as a schoolmaster, but as a mother, at all events as one who loves you. Perhaps the fonder I am, the more foolish I may seem. If so, it will be in the eyes of him who loves not, and does not feel the power of love.

BOOK I

[ST. BERNARD shows how unhappy a Pope must be if he neglects himself and spends all his time in hearing and deciding other men's differences. He complains of the great number of causes brought into the ecclesiastical courts, and of the many abuses prevailing there. The conduct of such cases, he maintains, is more consistent with the secular than the ecclesiastical power. He would not have Eugenius follow the example of some of his predecessors, who were so immersed in business that they found no time for contemplation. He would rather that the Pope imitated Gregory the Great (b. about A. D. 550, d. A. D. 604), who, when Rome was besieged, went on quietly working at his Homilies on the Prophet Ezekiel. Things divine claim the first consideration. The nature and connexion of the four primary virtues are discussed, and the book concludes with a severe censure of the unbecoming bickerings at the ecclesiastical bar, and an earnest exhortation to Eugenius to endeavour to bring about a reformation.]

CHAPTER I

St. Bernard sympathizes with the Pope in his many cares

1. Well, then, where shall I begin? I prefer to begin with your occupations, because it is in these that I most chiefly share your sorrow. Share, I say, for I take it for granted that you have sorrow; otherwise I ought rather to have said 'I sorrow', since where there is no sorrow one cannot share it. Accordingly, if you grieve, I grieve with you; if you do not, still I grieve, and deeply, because I know that the member which is past feeling is all the farther from health, and that the sick man who is unconscious of his sickness is in the more dangerous condition. But God forbid that I should have any such suspicion about you. I know how keenly, not long ago, you used to enjoy the luxury of a quiet life. You cannot so soon have changed your habits; you cannot all at once extinguish your regret for the pleasures so recently taken from you. The fresh wound must be painful. The wound has not already hardened, or in so short a time become past feeling. However this may be, unless you dissemble, your daily losses are sufficient

reason for continual grief. If I am not mistaken, you are reluctantly torn from the embraces of your Rachel, and as often as that befalls you your sorrow must be renewed. But when does that not happen? How often do you wish, and in vain? How often do you move, but not move forward? How often do you attempt, and without result? strive, and do not obtain? How often are you in labour, and do not bring forth? venture out to sea, but drift away? where you begin, there make an end? Just as you are beginning to grow, do they not cut you down? ‘The children have come to the birth,’ saith the prophet, ‘and there is not strength to bring forth.’ Do you know this? No one better. You are a man of shameless face, and like the heifer, Ephraim, have learnt to love treading out the corn, if, with your consent, things go thus with you. God forbid! This is the portion of him who is given over to a reprobate sense. I certainly long for you to have peace away from these, not in their company. There is nothing I dread more for you than that peace. Do you wonder if such peace could ever be yours? Yes, I tell you, if, as mostly happens, habit passes into heedlessness.

CHAPTER II

The strength of evil custom

2. Do not trust your present feelings too much. There is nothing so rooted in the heart but it may by neglect in process of time lose its force and vigour. If you neglect the old wound it grows callous, and in proportion as it loses feeling it becomes incurable. In fact, severe unceasing pain cannot last long; if it is not got rid of some other way, it must of necessity be conquered by itself. Beyond a doubt it will either be relieved by some remedy, or it will end in stupefaction. Custom turns everything upside down. Give it time, and what can resist its hardening effect? What does not yield to use? How many find that the bitterness they had formerly dreaded has unfortunately through use alone turned to sweetness? Hear how the just man laments over this: ‘What things my soul refused to touch are now through want become my food.’ At first something will seem to you unbearable; as time goes on, and you get used to it, you will judge it of no such great importance; a little later you will think it even unimportant; a little later you will not think it even that; a little later it will delight you. Thus little by little our hearts are hardened, and then we loathe goodness. Just so, severe unceasing pain must, as I have said, have a speedy ending; it will either be cured, or insensibility will ensue.

3. This is precisely why I have always feared, and still fear, that if you delay

to apply the remedy, you will not endure the pain, and that you may thus incur the risk of being irrevocably and hopelessly overwhelmed. I am afraid, I say, lest, surrounded by occupations so numerous that you distrust your power of getting through them, you may harden your forehead, and thus gradually in a measure strip yourself of the feeling of a just and profitable sorrow. It would be far more prudent for you to even leave them for a time, than suffer yourself to be carried away by them, and certainly by degrees led whither you would not. Do you ask whither? I reply, to a hard heart. Do not further ask what that means; if you have not greatly feared it, it is yours already. That heart alone is hard which does not shudder at itself for not feeling its hardness. Why ask me? Ask Pharaoh. No one ever got his hard heart cured unless God haply took pity on him, and, according to the prophet, removed his heart of stone and gave him a heart of flesh. What then is a hard heart? It is a heart which is not torn by remorse, nor softened by affection, nor moved by entreaties; which does not yield to threats, but is hardened by scourges. It is ungrateful for kindnesses, faithless in counsel, cruel in judgement, shameless in disgrace, without sense of fear in the midst of danger, inhuman in things human, heedless, in things divine; it forgets the past, neglects the present, does not look on to the future. It is a heart emptied of all the past except the wrongs it has suffered, which lets slip all the present, which has no forecast of the future, no preparation to meet it, unless perchance it be with a view to gratifying its malice. And, that I may briefly sum up the mischief of this dreadful plague, it is a heart which neither fears God nor respects man. See whither these accursed occupations can drag you at their heels, if, as you have begun, you continue to give yourself wholly to them, and leave nothing of yourself for yourself. You are wasting time; and, if I may present myself to you in the character of another Jethro, you, like Moses, are spending yourself in this foolish labour over these things which are nothing else but torture of spirit, the enfeebling of the mind, the voiding of grace. For the fruit of these things, what is it but spiders’ webs?

CHAPTER III

The rulers of the Church, ought not to be for ever bearing and deciding lawsuits

4. Tell me, pray, what is the good of litigating from morning till evening, or of listening to litigants? And would that sufficient unto the day were the evil thereof! The nights are not free. There is hardly enough time left to give the poor body a little rest and satisfy the needs of nature; once again up! and to the strife.

Day vomits forth lawsuits unto day, and night declares evil unto night, until it is not possible to take breath in goodness, nor snatch a little rest by way of change, nor find even a few scattered intervals of leisure. I have no doubt that you as well as I deplore these things; but what is the good of that if you do not strive to amend them? Still, until you do amend them, I exhort you to go on ever deploring them, and not allow yourself to grow hardened in them through any familiarity with them or unremitting application to them. ‘I have smitten them,’ saith God, ‘and they have not grieved.’ Have nothing in common with such persons. Rather make it your care to appropriate both the feeling and the words of the righteous man who says, ‘What is my strength that I should endure? or what is mine end, that I should be patient? My strength is not the strength of stones, nor is my flesh of brass.’ Great is the virtue of patience; but I could not wish for you patience in these things. It is sometimes more laudable to be impatient. You surely do not approve of the patience of those people to whom Paul was wont to say, ‘Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.’ Unless I am deceived, the Apostle spoke ironically, not by way of praise; he is flouting the tameness of certain individuals, who, as it were, put out their hands to the false apostles by whom they had been seduced, and allowed themselves most patiently to be carried away by their teachers into, all sorts of strange and corrupt doctrines. And so he adds, ‘For ye endure if a man bring you into bondage.’ Patience is not good, if, when you may be free, you allow yourself to become a slave. I would not have you disguise the slavery into which, though you know it not, you are daily brought. It is a sign of a heart waxed gross, that it does not feel its own continual vexation. ‘Vexation causes a report to be understood,’ saith one. True; but only if it be not excessive. For if it be, it clearly does not cause the mischief to be understood, but to be despised. In fact, when the wicked man reaches the depths of wickedness, he despiseth it. Rouse yourself, therefore, and not only guard against, but dread, the yoke of the worst of all slaveries at this very moment threatening you, nay rather already pressing with no light weight upon you. Are you therefore not a slave because you are the slave not of one but of all? There is no more disgraceful slavery, none worse, than that of the Jews; whithersoever they go they drag the chain, and everywhere displease their masters. Tell me, pray, when you are ever free, ever safe, ever your own. Everywhere is bustle, noise, and confusion; everywhere the yoke of your slavery galls you.

CHAPTER IV

5. And you must not confront me with the Apostle's saying, 'Though I were free from all I made myself the bondservant of all.' That is far from being your case. Did he by this service make himself the slave of men in their acquisition of filthy lucre? Did men full of ambition, avaricious, simoniacal, sacrilegious, keepers of concubines, incestuous, all sorts of human monsters such as these, come streaming to him from all over the world, so that by means of his apostolic authority they might obtain, or retain, ecclesiastical distinctions? The reason why the man to whom to live was Christ, and to die was gain—the reason why he made himself a bondservant was that he might gain the more for Christ, not that he might increase the gains of avarice. You must not, therefore, make Paul's great shrewdness, zeal, and love so free, a plea for the life of a slave which you lead. How much more worthy of your apostleship, how much more wholesome for your conscience, how much more fruitful for the Church of God, if you would rather attend to his words elsewhere, 'Ye are bought with a price, refuse to be made the servants of men.' What is more servile and unworthy, specially of the chief pontiff, than, I do not say every day, but almost every hour, to toil at such things, and for such people? When, then, are we to pray? when to teach our people? when to build up the Church? when to meditate in the law? I know, of course, that the palace every day re-echoes with the sound of the laws, but they are the laws of Justinian, not those of the Lord. Is that as it ought to be? See for yourself. Surely, the law of the Lord is undefiled, converting souls. But these are not so much laws as lawsuits and sophistical arguments subverting judgement. How is it then, pray tell me, that you the shepherd and bishop of souls can endure to have the law of the Lord stand dumb before you, while these laws never cease to chatter? I am mistaken if this perversity does not cause you some anxiety. I suppose that sometimes it even makes you cry to the Lord with the prophet, 'The wicked have told me tales, but not according to Thy law.' Go then, and dare to profess yourself a free man while you have this heavy load of inconsistency upon your shoulders, from which you cannot escape. For if you have the power and not the will, so much the more are you the slave of this very perverse will of yours. Is he not a slave who is ruled by iniquity? He is the worst of all slaves. Unless, perchance, in your judgement there is less dishonour in being governed by a vice than by a man. What difference does it make whether you serve willingly or against your will? For though compulsory slavery be more pitiable, slavery deliberately sought is more lamentable. 'And what,' say you,

‘do you wish me to do?’ I would have you give yourself some respite from these occupations. ‘Impossible,’ you will perhaps reply; ‘I could more easily bid farewell to the chair.’ A good reply if I were urging you to break them off altogether, and not rather to have some break in them.

CHAPTER V

The Pope should not be so absorbed in other men’s affairs as to neglect himself

6. Let me then put before you my rejoinder, and offer you my advice. If you give all your life and all your wisdom to action, and nothing to consideration, do I praise you? in this I praise you not. I suppose no one would who has heard Solomon’s words, ‘He that hath little business shall become wise,’ Action itself certainly does not fare well unless preceded by consideration. If you wish to belong altogether to other people, like him who was made all things to all men, I praise your humanity, but only on condition that it be complete. But how can it be complete if you yourself are left out? You, too, are a man. So then, in order that your humanity may be entire and complete, let your bosom, which receives all, find room for yourself also. Otherwise, according to the word of the Lord, what does it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your own self? Wherefore, though all possess you, take care that you are one among them. Why are you alone defrauded of your reward? How long will you be ‘a wind that passeth away and cometh not again’? Will the time never come when you will in turn receive yourself among the rest? You are a debtor both to the wise and to the foolish; and are you the only one to whom you deny yourself? Wise and foolish, bond and free, rich and poor, male and female, old and young, cleric and layman, righteous and wicked, all alike share in you, all drink at the public fountain of your heart; and will you stand apart and thirst? If he is cursed who impairs his inheritance, what are we to say of him who strips himself of it altogether? By all means let your waters stream down into the streets; let men and flocks and herds drink thereof, nay let the servants of Abraham give drink even to the camels; but among the rest do you yourself drink of the water of your own well. ‘Let not a stranger’, saith the Scripture, ‘drink thereat.’ Are you a stranger? To whom are you not a stranger, if you are one to yourself? In short, if a man is bad to himself, to whom is be good? So remember, I do not say always, I do not say often, but at least sometimes, to restore yourself to yourself. Among the many, or at all events after the many, do you also make use of yourself. Can I make a more liberal concession to you? For what I say, I say to spare you, not

according to my strict judgement. I suppose that in this respect I am more indulgent even than the Apostle himself. ‘More, then,’ you reply, ‘than I ought to be.’ I do not deny it. But suppose the Apostle’s standard be the right one, it matters not, for I am confident you will not be satisfied with my timid outline of your duty, but will more abound. It is certainly more fitting that you should abound than that I should be too bold. I also think it safer for myself in dealing with your Majesty to err on the side of timidity than of rashness. And perhaps this is the way a wise man should be admonished if the Scripture is to be fulfilled—‘Give a wise man an opportunity and he will be still wiser’.

CHAPTER VI

The administration of justice concerns temporal governors rather than bishops

7. Still I would have you hear what the Apostle thinks about this. ‘Is it so that there is not a wise man among you,’ he says, ‘who may judge between brother and brother?’ And he adds, ‘I say this to move you to shame; those who are of less account in the church, set them to judge.’ So, according to the Apostle, apostolic man though you are, you usurp a mean office unworthy of you, and descend to the level of those who are of less account. Hence it is that as bishop, instructing a bishop, the Apostle said, ‘No soldier of God entangleth himself in the affairs of this life.’ But I spare you. For my aim is not to speak strongly, but to point out what is possible. Do you think the times would endure it, if, when men are wrangling over an earthly inheritance, and are clamouring for your judgement, you were to answer them in the words of your Lord, ‘Men, who made Me a judge over you?’ What sort of a judgement would be pronounced on you? Something like this—‘What says this ignorant boor, disregarding his primacy, dishonouring the sovereign see, disparaging the apostolic dignity?’ And yet, I suppose, the critics could not point to a single instance of an apostle sitting as a judge of men, a fixer of land-marks, or a distributor of lands. In fact I read that the apostles stood to be judged, not that they sat to judge. The time for judging will come; it is not yet. Does the servant really degrade himself if he does not wish to be greater than his lord, or the disciple if he does not wish to be greater than he who sent him, or a son if he does not overpass the bounds which his fathers set? ‘Who made Me a judge?’ said our great Lord and Master. And shall any wrong be done to the servant and disciple if he does not judge all mankind? In my opinion the man who thinks it unworthy of apostles or apostolic men, to whom judgement over greater matters has been committed, to refrain

from judging in these smaller ones, does not understand the relative value of things. Why should they not scorn to give judgement concerning men's poor earthly possessions, seeing that they shall judge heavenly things, and angels too? Your jurisdiction, therefore, is over criminal cases, not over property; if indeed it is for the former purpose, not for the latter, that you have received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which will, I presume, shut out men because they are transgressors, not because they are owners of property. 'That ye may know,' our Lord says, 'that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.' Which seems to you the greater dignity and power, that of forgiving sins, or that of dividing estates? The truth is that there is no comparison between them. These lower earthly things have their own judges, the kings and princes of the earth. Why trespass on another man's province? Why put your sickle into another man's harvest? Not that men in your position are unworthy, but because to devote yourselves to such matters when you have enough to do with better is unworthy of you. Finally, where necessity requires, this is what the Apostle thinks—'If the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?'

CHAPTER VII

Nothing more deserving of consideration than piety and things eternal

8. But it is one thing now and then for some urgent reason to turn aside to these matters; it is another of your own accord to apply yourself to them as if they were of such importance as to deserve the earnest attention of your exalted rank. Accordingly, if I wished to speak strongly, or with perfect sincerity say all that is right, I should say all that I have said and a vast deal besides. But as things are, for the days are evil, it is enough now that you have been admonished not to give yourself up altogether, nor at all times, to the active life, but to set apart some portion of your heart and of your time for consideration. But in saying this I have regard to the necessity laid upon you, not to the claims of righteousness: albeit there is no unrighteousness in yielding to necessity. For if the fitting were possible, reason unanswerably shows that piety, which is profitable for all things, should under all conceivable circumstances be distinctly preferred, and that it ought, either alone or above all else, to be studiously cultivated. Do you ask what piety is? It is leaving time for consideration. You may perhaps tell me that herein I differ from him who defines piety as 'the worship of God'. I do not really differ from him. If you well consider the point you will find that I have

expressed his meaning in my own words, only partly, however, I admit. What is so essential to the worship of God as the practice to which He exhorts in the psalm, ‘Be still and see that I am God’? This certainly is the chief object of consideration. Is anything, in all respects, so influential as consideration? Does it not by a kindly anticipation create the divisions of the active life itself, in a manner rehearsing and arranging beforehand what has to be done? There must be consideration lest haply affairs which foreseen and premeditated might turn out well, may, if precipitated, be fraught with peril. I have no doubt, if you will recall the incidents, you will find that in law cases, important business of various kinds, or in weighty deliberations, you have yourself frequently had this sorrowful experience. First of all, consideration purifies the very fountain, that is the mind, from which it springs. Then it governs the affections, directs our actions, corrects excesses, softens the manners, adorns and regulates the life, and, lastly, bestows the knowledge of things divine and human alike. It is consideration that brings order out of disorder, puts in the links, pulls things together, investigates mysteries, traces the truth, weighs probabilities, exposes shams and counterfeits. It is consideration which arranges beforehand what is to be done, and ponders what is accomplished, so that nothing faulty, or needing correction, may settle in the mind. It is consideration which in prosperity feels the sting of adversity, in adversity is as though it felt not; the one is fortitude, the other is prudence.

CHAPTER VIII

The four primary virtues

9. And herein you may observe a delightfully harmonious connexion between the virtues, and their dependence one upon another. In the present instance, for example, Prudence is the mother of Fortitude, nor ought any deed of daring to be called fortitude, but rather rashness, if it be not the child of prudence. It is consideration, too, which sits as it were umpire of the strife between our pleasures and our necessities, settles the boundaries on either side, allotting and allowing to the latter what is sufficient, taking from the former what is excessive, and then from both fashioning a third virtue known as Temperance. For consideration deems the man who denies himself what is necessary no less intemperate than the man who indulges to excess. Temperance, therefore, consists not only in cutting down superfluities, but in allowing necessaries. The Apostle appears to be not merely the supporter of this view, but its author, for he

teaches us that the care of our flesh is not perfected in the gratification of its desires. When he says that the ‘care of the flesh is not perfected’, he checks all excess; when he adds ‘in the gratification of its desires’, he does not exclude what is necessary. I therefore think there is good sense in the definition of Temperance given by the writer who tells us that it neither cuts what is necessary, nor goes beyond it. This agrees with the philosopher’s maxim, ‘Moderation in all things.’

10. Now as regards Justice, which is one of the four, is it not certain that there must be previous consideration in order that Justice may be a mental habit? The mind must first reflect upon itself in order that it may frame a rule of Justice, and not be inclined to do to another what it would not have done to itself, nor refuse to another what it desires for itself. These two assuredly comprise the whole sphere of Justice. But Justice does not abide alone. Permit me to point out to you the beautifully close and harmonious connexion which exists between it and Temperance, and between both these and the two former virtues, Prudence and Fortitude. For if it be a part of Justice to refrain from doing to another man what we would not have done to ourselves, and if perfect Justice, as our Lord says, consists in doing to other men whatsoever we would they should do to us, neither of these will be possible unless the will itself, which entirely determines the nature of an action, be so ordered that it neither desires anything superfluous, nor superstitiously refuses anything necessary; and this is the work of Temperance. In a word, if Justice itself is to be just, it must be regulated by Temperance. ‘Be not righteous over much’ saith the wise man, showing us hereby that Justice without the curb and restraint of Temperance is by no means to be approved. It is noteworthy that Wisdom itself does not refuse the bridle of Temperance, for Paul, according to the wisdom given to him by God, bids us not to be wiser than we ought, but to be soberly wise. But, on the other hand, that Temperance cannot dispense with Justice, our Lord shows us in the Gospel, when He rebukes the temperance of those who abstained that they might seem to men to fast. There was temperance in respect of food, but there was not justice in the heart, because their aim was not to please God but to please men. Again, how can you have either one or the other unless you have Fortitude, since Fortitude, and no slight Fortitude, is required, if what you desire, and what you decline, are to be confined to the narrow channel which lies between too little on the one side, and too much on the other, so that the will may be content with that bare, unmixed, unalloyed, consistent, nicely balanced, as it were neatly trimmed, moderation, which alone, we are agreed, partakes of the quality of virtue.

11. Tell me, pray, if you can, to which particularly of these three virtues you think this middle place should be given, which so borders upon all that it seems to belong to each. Are virtue and the mean identical? If so, virtue would not be manifold, but all the virtues would be included in one. Is it not better to maintain that unless the mean be kept there can be no virtue? and that this middle region of which we speak is in a sense the very pith and marrow of all virtues, wherein they are so united that they must all seem to be one, all the more because by sharing in it they do not divide it, but it is as an unbroken whole the property of each? For example, what is so characteristic of Justice as Moderation? This is so certain, that if Justice be tainted with excess, it clearly does not give to every man his due; yet this giving to every man his due is the very object of Justice. Again, what is more characteristic of Temperance, which is surely what it is for no other reason than that it allows nothing immoderate? But you will, I suppose, admit that the observance of the mean is no less a mark of Fortitude. Is not Fortitude above all things necessary to put forth its power and rescue Moderation from the assaults of vices which on every side try to strangle it? And once it is free, is it not Fortitude that makes it a solid foundation of goodness, and the abode of virtue? Therefore, to keep the mean is Justice, Temperance, Fortitude. Perhaps the difference between them may be thus stated—Justice is concerned with the affections; Fortitude makes Justice efficacious; possession as well as use are the domain of Temperance. It remains for us to show that Prudence is not excluded from this communion of the virtues. Is it not Prudence which first discovers and gives attention to Moderation when it has been too long neglected and despised, imprisoned as it were through the jealousy of the vices, and hidden out of sight in the darkness of inveterate habit? Why do I tell you this? Few pay attention to Prudence because few possess it. So Justice seeks, Prudence finds, Fortitude frees, Temperance possesses. I do not propose to now discuss these virtues, but this much I would say because I am urging you to find some time for consideration, through whose kindly service these and such like truths receive the attention they deserve. To bestow no labour in life on securing leisure so pious and so profitable, is not this to lose life itself?

CHAPTER IX

The recent practice of the Pope to be gradually corrected, the old imitated

12. But suppose you were unexpectedly to devote yourself entirely to this philosophy. Your predecessors were not wont so to do; you will be a nuisance to

all the world, inasmuch as you are not walking in the footsteps of your fathers; and, what is more, it will seem as though your conduct were designed to flout them. Besides this, you will be a target for the familiar proverb—'the man who does what nobody else does is a marvel to everybody'; it will be hinted that you have a passion for admiration. And you cannot all at once, or altogether, either correct the faults of your critics or moderate their excesses. After a time you will be able, according to the wisdom given to you by God, little by little and as occasion offers, to take the business in hand. Meanwhile, by all means turn another man's badness to good account; this you can do. Still, if we are to follow that which is good, not that which is new, there have not been wanting Roman pontiffs who found leisure in the midst of the weightiest affairs. When the city was besieged, and the sword of the barbarians was over the necks of the citizens, was Pope Gregory thereby deterred from writing words of wisdom at his leisure? At that very time, forsooth, as appears from his preface, he expounded with no less diligence than elegance the concluding and most obscure portion of Ezekiel.

CHAPTER X

The shameless trickery of advocates, judges, and procurators

13. 'Very good', you say, 'but different customs now prevail, we live in other days, and men's manners have changed; dangerous times are not only coming but have come. Deceit, and guile, and violence have grown strong upon the earth. Pettifoggers abound, a defender of the right is rare, everywhere the strong oppress the poor; we dare not fail to succour the oppressed, we cannot refuse justice to the sufferers. Unless causes are pleaded, and both sides heard, how can judgement be given between the parties.' My reply is this—Let the causes be pleaded, but in the proper way. For the prevalent practice is most execrable, and such as does not become even the forum, let alone the Church. It is a marvel to me how your religious ears can bear to listen to the disputes of advocates of this class, and to their battles of words, which avail more to the subversion of the truth than to its discovery. Correct the corrupt custom, cut off the tongues that speak vanity, close the deceitful lips. These are they who have taught their tongue to utter lies; they are clever in withstanding justice, learned in defending falsehood. They are wise to do evil, eloquent to assail the truth. These are they who venture to instruct their teachers, who invent their facts, blackmail the innocent, destroy the simplicity of truth, obstruct the ways of judgement. Nothing so easily brings virtue to light as a brief and simple narrative. So then,

when cases must come before you—they need not by any means all come—I should like you to decide them with care, but summarily, and so cut short these dilatory adjournments which mean nothing but the hunting of the prey. Let the cause of the widow come unto you, the cause of the poor, and of him who hath nothing to give. You will be able to hand over many other causes to various persons to dispose of; the vast majority you will not deem even worthy of a hearing. For what need is there to admit to your presence men whose sins clearly go before to judgement? So gigantic is the impudence of some men, that though their causes bear on their very face the swarming scabs of ambition, they do not blush to demand a hearing, thus revealing themselves to the consciences of the multitude, a tribunal before which they would, as in the judgement of even their own conscience, be confounded. There was no one to check their effrontery; so the numbers grew, and they lost all sense of shame. But, oddly enough, a vicious man does not shun the consciences of other vicious men, and where all are filthy, the stench of one is hardly noticed. For instance, when did an avaricious man ever blush for another avaricious man, the unclean for the unclean, the luxurious for the luxurious? The Church is full of ambitious men; the time has gone by for being shocked at the enterprising efforts of ambition; we think no more of it than a robber's cave thinks of the spoils of the wayfarers.

CHAPTER XI

Such iniquitous greed to be sternly rebuked

14. If you are a disciple of Christ, let your zeal kindle, let your authority arise against this impudence and widespread pestilence. Look to your Master, see what He does, listen as He says 'Let my servant follow me.' He does not prepare ears to hear, but a scourge wherewith to smite. He neither utters words nor attends to them. For he is not sitting to judge, but pursuing to punish. Nevertheless, he plainly indicts the offenders—they had made the house of prayer a place of merchandise. Do you follow His example. Let traffickers of this description blush before your countenance, if possible; if that may not be, let them be afraid. You have the scourge in your hand. Let the money-changers fear; let them not trust in their money, but distrust its power; let them hide their money from you because they know you are more ready to pour it out than to accept it. By earnestly and constantly acting thus you will gain many, because you will win over to more honourable pursuits those who follow after filthy lucre, and you will preserve many from even daring to attempt anything of the

kind. And there is something else. There will be a substantial increase in the leisure time which I am urging you to secure, for you will thus redeem not a few brief intervals to devote to leisurely consideration, sometimes by not hearing the business at all, on other occasions by entrusting it to some one else. When you deem the matter worthy to be heard by yourself, by judging the case on its merits you will save both time and expense. I am thinking of adding a few remarks on this topic, but I prefer to do so at the beginning of another book. Here let me end. I am afraid you may not only find my matter unpleasant, but think me tedious.

BOOK II

[Eugenius had delegated to St. Bernard the office of preaching the Second Crusade (A. D. 1147), which ended in ‘utter and hopeless failure’. ‘Soon’, says Mr. Cotter Morison (Life and Times of St. Bernard, p. 417), ‘from the broad population of Europe, a murmur of wrath and reproach was heard, which, rising in every swelling volume, at last broke into articulate utterance, and thundered out the name “Bernard” with every mark of anger and resentment.… Bernard was accused and reviled as the author of the calamities which had overtaken the Crusade. Why did he preach it? Why did he prophesy success? Why did he work miracles to make men join it, if this was to be the result?’ In the opening portion of this book the Saint answers these questions and attempts to justify himself.

He next points out the four subjects worthy of consideration—yourself, things beneath you, things around you, things above you, and admonishes Eugenius to consider who he is, and, as to the dignity of his profession, what he is. First, he is to reflect whence he is descended, which may serve to abate his pride. His authority over all churches is for Service, not for arbitrary dominion. If he grasps at civil and ecclesiastical supremacy, he deserves to lose both. Secondly, Eugenius is not only ‘supreme pastor over all the flocks, but likewise over all the shepherds’. Nevertheless, he must remember that the dignity which has been superadded to him has not been able to divest him of his nature. Born a man, he is still a man, and ought to consider himself as a man. ‘Draw the veil which covers you, disperse the clouds that environ you, and you will find yourself a poor, naked, wretched creature—in a word, born in sin, with a short life abounding in miseries, and full of fears and complaints.’ Thirdly, Eugenius is to consider his manners and conduct, and, in conclusion, is exhorted to the pursuit of various virtues.—Du Pin, &c.]

CHAPTER I

St. Bernard apologizes for the failure of the Second Crusade

1. I remember, dear Eugenius, Father in God and best of men, the promise which I made, alas! too long ago. Now, late though it be, I propose to redeem my

pledge. I should be ashamed of the delay if I were conscious of carelessness or contempt. This is not the case; but, as you yourself know, we have fallen on evil times; it seemed as though our social life, not to speak of our studies, was doomed to come to a standstill; it was as though the Lord, provoked by our sins, were almost judging the world before the time, with equity indeed, but forgetful of his mercy. He has not spared the people, nor His own Name. Do they not say among the peoples, 'Where is their God'? And no wonder. The sons of the Church, and they who bear the Christian name, lie prostrate in the desert, slain with the sword, or perished with hunger. Floods of strife have overwhelmed our rulers, and the Lord has made them to wander in the waste, where there is no way. Tribulation and misfortune are in their ways, terror, sorrow, and confusion in the chambers of kings themselves. Confusion dogs the footsteps of those that bring tidings of peace, that announce good things! We said 'peace', and there is no peace; we promised good things, and lo! perplexity. It might be supposed we had therein been light or rash. We certainly ran therein not as uncertainly, but at your command, nay, rather at God's command given through you. Why then have we fasted, and He hath not beheld? humbled our souls, and He knew not? For in all these things His fury is not turned from us, but His hand is stretched out still. How patiently, meanwhile, doth He listen to the impious words of the blasphemous Egyptians, 'He craftily led them out that He might slay them in the desert.' We all know that the judgements of the Lord are true. But this judgement is such a great deep that I could almost justify myself for calling him blessed who is not offended thereat.

2. Still, how strange it is that men are so rash as to dare to reprehend what they cannot possibly comprehend! Let us call to mind the judgements of former times, which have been since the world began, if haply we may find consolation in them. For one spoke on this wise, 'I have remembered thy judgements of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself.' I speak of what everybody knew, and now nobody knows. Forsooth this is the way with the wit of man. Knowledge is sometimes superfluous: when we need it, we have it not. Moses, when about to lead the people out of the land of Egypt, promised them a better land. Otherwise, had they known that land only, were they ever likely to follow him? He led them out, but when they were led out he did not lead them into the land which he had promised. Nor can the sad and unlooked-for issue be attributed to the rashness of the leader. He did everything as the Lord commanded, the Lord working with him, and confirming his work by signs following. But that people, you say, was stiff-necked, always stubbornly opposing the Lord and his servant Moses. Well!

they were faithless and rebellious; but what are these? Ask them. What need for me to say what they themselves confess? One thing I do say. How could they reach their Journey's end who were always turning back on the road? Was there ever a time in their whole journey when they were not in their heart turning back into Egypt? But if they fell and perished on account of their iniquity, can we wonder that our contemporaries with the same conduct have the same experience? But was their fall contrary to the promises of God? No, nor has the fall of these latter been. For the promises of God never prejudice the righteousness of God. And something else I wish to say.

3. Benjamin hath sinned: the other tribes gird themselves for vengeance, and not without God's approval. In fact He himself appointed the leader of the army. So they fight, relying both on the stronger force and on the better cause, and, what is more, on the divine favour. But how terrible is God in His purposes towards the children of men! The avengers of wickedness gave their backs to the accursed, and the many led before the few. But they return to the Lord, and the Lord bids them go up. They go up afresh, and again they are scattered and confounded. So at first with God's favour, and then at God's command, the righteous engage in a righteous contest, and nevertheless are overcome. But they were found as superior in faith as they were inferior in the fight. What do you suppose our forces would make of me if at my exhortation they were again to go up, and again be overcome? Are they likely to listen to me if I were to advise them for the third time to march, and resume the work in which once and again they have been frustrated? And yet the Israelites, taking no account of their double disappointment, obeyed for the third time, and were then victorious. But we shall perhaps be asked, 'How are to know that the word has gone forth from the Lord? What signs do you work, that we may believe you?' It is not for me to answer these questions; I must spare my modesty. Do you answer for me, and for yourself, according as you have heard and seen, or, at all events, according as God has given you inspiration.

4. But you are, perhaps, wondering why I take this line, so different from what I purposed. I do so, not because I have forgotten my purpose, but because I do not consider it foreign to my purpose. If I remember, the subject of my discourse to your Excellency was to be Consideration. And certainly the matter to which I have referred is important and requires much consideration. But if great matters ought to be considered by great men, who is so well qualified for the work as yourself, who have no equal upon earth? You will, I am sure, according to the wisdom and power given to you from above, deal with this matter. It is not

consistent with my humility to tell you that such and such things should be done. It is enough for me to have intimated that something ought to be done for the consolation of the Church, and to stop the mouth of them that speak wickedly. Let these few remarks stand for my apology, so that whatever your conscience may tell you about me you may from my own lips know enough to excuse me, and yourself also. I cannot hope for this from those who judge by results, but with you I am safe. The testimony of a man's conscience is his only perfect and complete excuse. To me it is a very small matter that I should be judged by those who call good evil and evil good, who put light for darkness and darkness for light. And if one of the two things must happen, I had rather that men murmured against us than against God. It is good for me if He condescends to use me as a shield. I gladly welcome the tongues that speak against me, and the poisoned darts of blasphemers, if only they may not reach Him. I do not refuse to be dishonoured if only violence be not done to the glory of God. Who can give me the privilege of glorying thus, 'For thy sake have I suffered reproach, shame hath covered my face'? My glory is to become a partner with Christ, who says, 'the reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me,' Now at last my pen shall return to its proper work, and my discourse go on its way to the goal we set before us.

CHAPTER II

Consideration distinguished from Contemplation

5. And first of all consider the word. I do not wish it to be regarded as exactly synonymous with contemplation, because the latter is concerned with the certainty of things, the former more fitly with their investigation. Accordingly, contemplation may be defined as the soul's true unerring intuition, or as the unhesitating apprehension of truth. But consideration is thought earnestly directed to research, or the application of the mind to the search for truth; though in practice the two terms are indifferently used for one another.

CHAPTER III

Consideration fourfold—(1) The Pope himself, (2) things below him, (3) things around him, (4) things above him

6. Now as regards the fruit of consideration. I think there are, as they occur to me, four subjects worthy of your consideration—yourself, things below you,

things around you, and things above you. Let your consideration begin with yourself, lest, while you neglect yourself, you waste your energies on other things. What does it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your single self? Though you be wise, you lack wisdom to yourself, if you do not belong to yourself. But how far do you lack wisdom? In my opinion, altogether. Though you know all mysteries, though you know the breadth of the earth, the height of the heavens, the depth of the sea, if you know not yourself, you will be like a man building without a foundation, and will succeed not in rearing an edifice, but in making a ruin. Whatever structure you raise outside yourself will be like a heap of dust before the wind. He, therefore, is not wise who is not wise to himself. The wise man will be wise to himself, and will first of all drink of his own well. Let, then, your consideration begin at yourself; and not only so, let it end there. Whithersoever it may roam, recall it to yourself, and it will bring with it the fruit of salvation. To yourself be first, to yourself be last. Copy the example of the Great Father of all, who both sends forth His word and keeps it with Him. Consideration is your ‘word’; if it goes forth, let it not go away; let it so go on that it go not out; let it so go outside that it be not gone altogether. In winning salvation let no one be nearer and dearer to you than the only one of your mother. Think of nothing contrary to your own salvation. In saying ‘contrary’, I have said too little; I ought to have said besides your salvation. Whatever offers itself to consideration, if it has not some bearing on your own salvation, ought to be rejected.

CHAPTER IV

The threefold Consideration leading to self-knowledge. Firstly, What the Pope is

7. And this consideration of yourself falls into three divisions, if you consider what, who, and what manner of man, you are. The first refers to your nature, the second to your person, and the third to your character. If, for example, it be asked, what? a man; who? pope or chief pontiff; what manner of man? kind, gentle, and so on. The investigation of the first of these may be more the work of a philosopher than of an apostolic man; still, in the definition of a man as a rational mortal animal, there is something which you may, if you choose, carefully ponder. There is nothing in it contrary either to your profession or your rank, but there is something which may contribute to your salvation. For if you consider these two attributes together, rationality and mortality, you gather good fruit—the fact of your mortality humbles your reason, while your reason

supports you under the thought of your mortality, and a prudent man will not neglect either side. If the point before us requires further consideration, it shall be dealt with later on, perhaps more profitably, when we pass the whole of our work under review.

CHAPTER V

Secondly, Who the Pope is, and whence he comes

8. We must next notice who you are, and what your origin was. I have used the word ‘origin’, but I think I had better pass that over and leave it to your perception. This I do say, that it would be an unworthy thing for you, knowing the perfection you have left, to stop short of the perfection which lies before you. Should you not blush to be a minnow among the whales when you remember that you were a whale among the minnows? You have not forgotten your first profession; it is taken out of your hands, but you still have some thought for it, and even affection. To keep it in view will not be unprofitable in the framing of your several commands, judgements, ordinances. This consideration makes you a despiser of honour even in the midst of honour. And that is a great thing. Lay it to heart; it is your shield to protect you from the arrow—‘Man being in honour is without understanding.’ Say, therefore, to yourself, I was of low estate in the house of the Lord. What means this, that, poor and lowly though I was, I am raised to rule over peoples and kingdoms? Who am I, or what is my father’s house, that I should sit above dignitaries? He who said to me, ‘Friend, go up higher’ surely trusts that I shall be a friend. If I am found less, it is not indeed well with me. He who has raised me up can also cast me down. Too late should I complain, ‘Thou hast taken me up and dashed me to the ground.’ There must be no flattery of your exalted rank, when there is more cause for anxiety. The rank magnifies the danger, the anxiety manifests be friend! Let us give good heed to this, unless we wish at length with shame to take the lowest place.

CHAPTER VI

The zeal befitting ecclesiastical rulers

9. We cannot disguise the fact that we must most carefully observe why it is that you have been set above other men. I certainly do not think it is that you may exercise lordship over them. For even the prophet, when he was in like manner exalted, was told ‘to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow; to

build, and to plant'. Which of these has the ring of pride in it? Is it not more correct to say that the labourer's task typifies spiritual toil? And if we are to think highly of ourselves, we should perceive that a burden of service is laid upon us, not the privilege of lordship bestowed. 'I am not greater than the prophet; and if haply I am his equal in authority, still there is no comparison between our deserts.' Speak thus to yourself, and do you who teach others teach yourself. Suppose you are as one of the prophets. Is not that enough for you? Yes, and more than enough. But by the grace of God you are what you are. What is that? Suppose you are a prophet, are you more than a prophet? If you are wise you will be content with the measure wherewith God hath measured to you. For what is more is of evil. Learn by the prophet's example to govern, not so much for the purpose of commanding as of doing what the time requires. Learn the lesson that, if you are to do the work of a prophet, what you want is not a sceptre, but a hoc. The prophet does not rise to reign, but to root out the weeds. Do you not think that you, too, may find something to be done in your Master's field? Yes, and plenty of it. The prophets have surely not been able to clean all the ground; they left something for their sons, the apostles, to do; and your progenitors have left something for you. Nor will you prove equal to the whole task. You will assuredly leave something for your successor, and he for others, and so on to the end. Accordingly, we find that about the eleventh hour the labourers were rebuked for idleness, and sent into the vineyard. Your predecessors, the apostles, were told that 'the harvest was indeed plenteous, but the labourers were few'. Claim for yourself the inheritance of your fathers. For if you are son, then you are also the heir. That you may prove yourself to be the heir, diligently watch, and forgo sluggish ease, lest to you also it be said, Why standest thou here all the day idle?

10. Much less ought you to be found dissolved in luxury, or proudly exhibiting yourself. The will of the testator bequeaths to you nothing like this. Need I say that if you are content with its provisions you will inherit care and toil rather than glory and riches. Does Peter's chair flatter you? It is a watch-tower whence, in a word, you exercise supervision; the very name of 'bishop' reminds you not of lordship, but of duty. How fitting it is that you are set on high where you can view all things, inasmuch as you are appointed watchman over all. In very truth the legitimate issue of that prospect is not ease, but readiness for battle. Where ease is unlawful, what occasion is there for glorying? And ease is out of the question when you are burdened with the constant care of all the churches. It must be so; for what else did the holy apostle transmit to you? 'Such

as I have,' he says, 'give I thee.' What is that? One thing I know—it is not gold, nor silver, for he himself says, 'Silver and gold I have not.' If you happen to have them, use them not for your own gratification, but to meet the necessities of the time. You will then be using them as though you used them not. In themselves, as regards man's spiritual welfare, they are neither good nor bad; yet the use of them is good, the abuse is bad; anxiety about them is worse; the greed of gain still more disgraceful. Suppose that on the strength of some other plea you may claim them, you cannot do so by apostolic right. For the apostle could not give what he did not himself possess. What he had, that he gave—the care, as I have said, of the churches. Did he bequeath to you lordship over them? Hear what he says, 'Not lording it over charge allotted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock.' And do not suppose that the words were prompted by humility only, and are not based on truth. In the Gospel there is the Lord's warning, 'The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them, and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors.' And then He adds, 'But ye shall not be so.' It is quite clear; the apostles are forbidden to exercise lordship.

11. Go then, if you dare, and either, as a lord over God's heritage, assume the office of an apostle, or as an apostolic man exercise lordship. It is clear that you are debarred both. If you wish to have both together, you will lose both. You must otherwise think yourself excepted from the number of those of whom God thus complains, 'They have reigned, but not by me; they have been princes, and I knew it not.' Now if you like to reign without God, you have whereof to glory, but not before God. But if we uphold the prohibition, let us give heed to the commandment, 'He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.' Here is the apostolic pattern; lordship is forbidden, service is enjoined; and this latter is also commended by the example of the Lawgiver Himself, who immediately adds, 'but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.' Who, then, would think he has nothing whereof to glory when he bears the title by which the Lord of Glory distinguished Himself? Rightly doth Paul glory therein when he says, 'Are they servants of Christ? so am I.' And then he adds, 'I speak as one beside himself, I more. In labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft.' Oh! splendid service. What sovereignty does it not excel in glory? If you must glory, the pattern of the saints is set before you, the glory of the apostles is your model. Does that seem to you insignificant? Oh! that some one would give me the power of becoming like the saints in glory! The prophet cries aloud, 'Thy friends, O God, are too honourable for me, their sovereignty hath

grown too strong.' The apostle exclaims, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

12. I would have you always glory in this the best sort of glory, that which apostles and prophets chose for themselves, and handed on to you. In your abundant labours, in the cross of Christ, recognize your inheritance. Happy was the man who could say, 'I laboured more than all.' Here is glorying, but there is in it no vanity, no softness, no pride. If the work alarms, the reward invites. For every man shall receive according to his work. And if he laboured more than all, still he did not do all that was to be done, and there is yet room. Go into your Lord's field, and diligently consider the dense thicket of thorns and thistles which, according to the ancient curse, covers the ground even to this day. Go out, I say, into the world; for the field is the world, and it is given into your charge. Go into it, not as a lordly owner, but as a steward, that you may see and attend to that whereof you must give account. Go, I would say; traverse it with steps of zealous care, and careful zeal. For even they who were bidden go into all the world did not compass it with bodily presence, but with their forethought. And do you lift up as it were the eyes of your consideration, add see the lands, if they are not rather dry for burning than white for harvest. How often will what you took for the fruits of the earth, if you examine them carefully, prove to be briars; nay rather, not even briars; they are old and rotten trees, but certainly not fruit trees; their only fruit is swine's food, acorns and husks. How long are they to cumber the ground? If you go out, and clearly see them, will you not be ashamed that your axe is idle? Will you not be ashamed to have had the apostolic sickle put into your hand for nothing?

13. Once upon a time the patriarch Isaac had gone into this field; it was when Rebecca first met him; and, in the words of Scripture, 'he had gone out to meditate.' He went to meditate, you must go to extirpate. In your case meditation should already have led the way: the time for acting is at hand. If you now begin to hesitate, it will be too late. According to the Saviour's counsel, you should have first sat down, and estimated the work, gauged your strength, weighed your wisdom, ascertained the relative value of things, and calculated the cost of virtue. Come then, reckon that there is still time for casting up the account, although the time for meditation on the plan has gone by. If you have given your heart to the work, you must now give your tongue and hand as well. Gird on your sword, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Glorify your right hand and arm by taking vengeance upon nations, by rebuking peoples, by binding their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron. If you do

these things, you honour both your ministry and yourself the minister. That is no ordinary sovereignty. In virtue of it you drive out evil beasts from your borders, so that your flocks may be safely led into their pastures. You will vanquish the wolves, but not lord it over the sheep, the care of which you of course undertook that you might feed them, not oppress them. If you have well considered who you are, you are not ignorant that this is your duty. Moreover, if you know and do not, it is sin to you. You have not forgotten the passage, ‘the servant who knew his master’s will, and did unworthy things, shall be beaten with many stripes.’ The prophets and apostles were wont to do as I suggest. They were brave in war, not voluptuaries robed in silk. If you are a son of apostles and prophets, do as they did. Prove the nobility of your descent by conduct such as theirs; the only source of their nobility was the ingenuousness of their character, and the fortitude of their faith. Through this they conquered kingdoms, wrought righteousness, gained promises in return. Here is the conveyance of the inheritance of your fathers: I have put it before you, and in it you may see the portion which falls to you. Be clad with fortitude, and the inheritance is yours. Have faith, have wisdom, but the wisdom of the saints, which is the fear of the Lord, and you have what belongs to you. The whole ancestral estate is yours by clear right. Virtue is the richest estate. Humility is a good estate; founded thereon the whole spiritual edifice grows into a holy temple in the Lord. Through humility some have even possessed the gates of their enemies. For which of the virtues is so mighty to subdue the pride of demons and the tyranny of men? But though it be to every person alike a tower of strength from the face of the enemy, somehow or other, the greater the man the greater its acknowledged influence; the more distinguished its possessor, the more distinction it confers. It is eminently so in the case of the chief pontiff. No gem in all his gorgeous attire shines with a clearer and a purer light. For the higher he is above his fellows, the more through his humility he conspicuously surpasses not only other men, but himself also.

CHAPTER VII

Who the Pope is—(continued)

14. I shall perhaps be blamed for leaving the first part of my subject inadequately treated, and going off into the second; it will be said that my pen is beginning to tell what manner of man you ought to be, though it has not fully stated who you are. I suppose it blushed to see a man standing naked on the

pinnacle of power, and hastened to clothe him in the robes of office. Without these the more clearly you are seen the more unseemly you appear. Can the desolation of a city that is set on a hill be hid? or the smoke of a lamp extinguished on the stand escape detection? We remember ‘An ape upon the house-top: a silly king upon the throne’. Now lend me your ears as I sing my song; it may not be altogether pleasant, but it will do you good. The union of exalted rank with a base spirit is a monstrosity; so is the joining together of the chief seat and the lowest life; or of a tongue that speaketh great things, and an idle hand; or of much talk, and no fruit; or of a severe look, and light conduct; or of great authority, and no steadfastness. There is the mirror: let the foul countenance recognize itself, but you may rejoice that no resemblance to it is found in yours. Still I would have you look into the mirror lest haply, although you may have good grounds for self-satisfaction, there may not be wanting reasons for dissatisfaction. I would have you glory in the testimony of your conscience, but none the less I would have you humbled by that same testimony. It is seldom a man can say ‘I know nothing by myself’. You walk more warily in the ways of goodness if you take care that evil does not lurk there. Wherefore, as I have said, you should know yourself, so that in the difficulties of your position, and such difficulties do exist, you may not only enjoy a good conscience, but, what is more, may also learn your defects. For who is free from defects? He lacks everything who thinks he lacks nothing. What if you are sovereign pontiff? Does it follow that because you are sovereign pontiff you are supremely perfect? Let me tell you that you are at the bottom if you think you are at the top. Who is at the top? He to whom nothing can be added. You greatly err if you think you are the man. God forbid! You are not of those who make dignities identical with virtues. You knew what virtue was before you were acquainted with rank. Let emperors and others who have not been afraid to be worshipped as divine enjoy that opinion: Nebuchadnezzar for example, Alexander, Antiochus, Herod. As for yourself, consider that you bear the title of ‘supreme’ not absolutely, but relatively. And when I say this, do not suppose that I am comparing your merits with other men’s. I refer to functions of the ministry. Let a man so account of you as of a minister of Christ, and, without prejudice to the holiness of any one, beyond dispute the chief of ministers. I would you strove to be supreme in other respects, and did not think yourself supreme, or wish to be so regarded, before you are. For how can you be proficient if you are already self-sufficient? It follows that there must be no reluctance to find out what is lacking, or you will have to confess that you lack modesty. Say with your predecessor, ‘Not as

though I had received, or were already perfect.' And again, 'I count not myself to have apprehended.' This is the knowledge of the saints; it is far from that which puffeth up. He who adds this knowledge adds sorrow, but it is a sorrow which no wise man ever seeks to escape. It is, forsooth, a healing sorrow, by means of which the deadly stupor of a hard and impenitent heart is excluded. This is why we deem him a wise man who could say 'My sorrow is ever in my sight'. I must now gather up the fragments, if any remain, of the topic from which not long ago we turned aside.

CHAPTER VIII

The dignity and power of the Pope

15. Come, let us still more closely investigate what you are, that is to say, the character you represent for a time in the Church of God. Who are you? the chief priest, the sovereign pontiff. You are the prince of bishops, the head of the apostles; in priority you are Abel, in government Noah, as a patriarch you are Abraham, in order Melchisedech, in rank Aaron, in authority Moses, as a judge you are Samuel, in power Peter, in virtue of your anointing you are Christ. You are he to whom the keys have been committed, and the sheep entrusted. There are, indeed, other door-keepers of heaven, and other shepherds of flocks, but as you have received both names in a manner different from the rest, so for you they bear a more glorious meaning. Other pastors have each their several flocks assigned to them; to you all the flocks have been entrusted, one flock under one shepherd. Do you ask for proof of that? It is the Lord's word. For to which, I will not say of the bishops, but of the apostles, have all the sheep been committed so absolutely and unreservedly? 'If you love me, Peter, feed my sheep.' What sheep? Are we to say the people of such and such a city, or region, or, at all events, kingdom? 'My sheep', He says. Is it not clear that He has not specified some, but committed to him all? There is no exception where there is no distinction. And perhaps the fellow disciples of Peter were present when our Lord by charging him, and no one else, with the care of all the flocks, commended to them all the unity of one flock and one shepherd, according as it is written, 'My dove, my beautiful, my perfect, is but one.' Where there is unity there is perfection. The other numbers are not perfect, but admit of division, falling short of unity. Hence it is that other bishops, understanding the mystery, have shared the various nations between them. In fact, James, who seemed to be a pillar of the Church, was content with Jerusalem, and gave up universal

dominion to Peter. Admirably was James placed there to raise up seed to his dear Brother in the place where his Brother was slain, for he was the Lord's brother. Now if the Lord's brother yielded to Peter, what other man can dare to trespass on Peter's prerogative?

16. So then, according to your own authorities, other bishops are called to a share in responsibility, you are called to the exercise of plenary power. The power of other men is confined within fixed limits; yours extends to those who have power over their fellows. Have you not power, for sufficient reason, to shut heaven against a bishop, and even deliver him to Satan? Your prerogative, therefore, whether the power of the keys or the pastorate of the flocks, is unassailable. Let me point out something else no less confirmatory of your prerogative. The disciples were in a boat when our Lord appeared, and, which was more delightful still, appeared in His risen body. Peter, knowing that it was the Lord, cast himself into the sea, and thus reached his Master, while the rest came in the boat. What does that mean? It was surely a sign of the unique pontificate of Peter, intended to show that while the others had charge, each of his own ship, he was entrusted with not one ship, but the government of the whole world. For the sea is the world, and ships are churches. Hence it is that on another occasion, like his Lord, he walked upon the water, and thus proved himself the one and only Vicar of Christ, destined to rule over not one people, but all, that is if the 'many waters' are 'many peoples'. So then while each of the other bishops has his own ship, you are in command of the greatest, the Universal Church throughout the world, the sum of all the other churches put together.

CHAPTER IX

St. Bernard invites the Pope to consider what he is by nature

17. Now we see who you are; but do not forget what you are. I, at all events, have not forgotten my promise to return to that point on a fitting occasion. And is it not most fitting to combine the consideration of who you are with the consideration of what you previously were? Why do I say were? You are still what you were. Why cease to regard what you have not ceased to be? What you have been, and what you are, is one and the same consideration; your new official character is a different matter. In the scrutiny of yourself the one should not exclude the other. For you are, as I have said, still what you were, and no less what you were than what you have since become, perhaps even more. In fact

you were that by nature; this you have borrowed; you have been changed into it. The former is not thrown away, the latter is thrown in. Let us treat them both together; for, as I remember saying before, when they are compared one with the other they will both become more useful. When, father back, you were considering what you are, I told you to consider your nature as a man: for you were born a man. Moreover, if a person inquire who you personally are, the answer will be the name of the character you sustain, viz, a bishop, and this you have become: that you were not by birth. Now which of these seems to you to be absolutely your own, and above all else to belong to you? That which you have become, or that which you were born? Must we not say that which you were born? I therefore counsel you to mainly consider what you mainly are, that is to say, a man; such you were by birth.

18. Nor should you only observe what you were born, viz., a man, but also what manner of man, if you do not wish to be defrauded of the fruit and profit of your consideration. Away then with these hereditary girdles which have been accursed from the beginning. Tear to pieces the covering of leaves that conceal the shame but do not cure the wound. Strip off the disguise of this fleeting honour, and the tinsel of this sham glory, so that you may consider yourself in your bare nakedness, for naked you came out of your mother's womb. Did you then wear the sacred fillet? Had you then the glittering gems about your person? Were you robed in flowery silks? Did the plumes then wave upon your head? Were you decked with gold and silver? If you scatter all this like morning clouds quickly passing by and soon to altogether pass away, if you blow them from before the face of your consideration, you will behold a man naked, poor, wretched, pitiable; a man grieving that he is a man, blushing at his nakedness, weeping that he is born, complaining that he is a man born to toil, not to honour, born of a woman and thereby a guilty creature, living but a little while and therefore in constant fear, full of misery and therefore ever bathed in tears. And, truly, miseries abound, for they are those of body and soul together. How can he escape calamity who is born in sin, with a frail body and a barren mind? Of a truth he must be full of misery, who through transmitted corruption, the sentence of death, bears the double load of weakness of body and foolishness of heart. It will do you good to unite these two considerations. While you think of yourself as supreme pontiff, bear in mind as well that you not only were, but are, worthless ashes. In your thinking, imitate nature; and, which is worthier of you, imitate the Author of nature, by associating the highest and the lowest things. Has not nature in the person of man bound together poor clay and the breath of

life? Has not the Author of nature in His own Person tempered together the Word and clay? Take then for your pattern both our original constitution and the mystery of our redemption, in order that, though you sit on high, you may not be high-minded, but may think lowly of yourself, and condescend to men of low degree.

CHAPTER X

What manner of man the Pope is

19. Accordingly, if you consider how great you are, think also, and above all, what manner of man you are. This consideration keeps you well within yourself; it suffers you not to fly from yourself, nor to walk in great matters, or in things too wonderful for you. Take your stand within yourself; you will not then sink beneath your level, nor rise above it, you will not go too far, nor spread out too wide. Keep to the middle if you wish to keep moderation. The mid way is the safe way. Moderation abides in the mean, and moderation is virtue. Every abiding place outside the bounds of moderation is only exile to the wise man. Wherefore, he will not dwell in the length, that is, beyond moderation; nor even in the breadth, that is, outside it; nor, again, in the height, or in the depth, one of which is above moderation, the other beneath it. In fact ‘length’ mostly implies going beyond bounds; ‘breadth’ may mean a rent, ‘height’ a fall, and ‘depth’ an abyss. I say these things the more plainly that you may not think I am repeating the apostle’s exhortation to comprehend with all saints the length, and breadth, and height, and depth. This belongs to another sort of discussion, and a different occasion. Just now by ‘length’ I mean a man’s promising himself a long life; by ‘breadth’, his being racked with superfluous cares; by ‘height’, his trusting too much in himself; by ‘depth’, his being unduly depressed. Well then, if a man measures out for himself distant times, is he not really starting to go too far? Is he not in his far-reaching anxiety passing the bounds of life? Thus it is that men, exiled from themselves in this present life through forgetfulness, are led by useless anxiety to migrate to distant ages, which will not profit, nay rather, may never be. Likewise, the heart which is spread over many things must of necessity be torn by many cares, and once it is too thin there comes a rent. Further, if a man have overweening confidence in himself, what is there for him but a headlong fall? For you have read what is written, ‘Before a fall the heart is lifted up.’ And on the side of excessive timidity, what is depression but in a sense the loss of oneself in despair? A brave man will not be so far depressed. A prudent

man will not be misled by the uncertainty of a long life. A modest man will moderate his cares; he will refrain from superfluities, and will not deny himself what is necessary. A righteous man, moreover, will not venture on what is above him, but will say with righteous Job, ‘If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head.’

CHAPTER XI

The necessity for self-examination

20. Let me beg you, then, in this consideration of yourself to walk with caution. Let perfect equity be your companion, so that you may not allow yourself more than is due, nor deprive yourself of more than is right. Now you fall into the first of these errors not only by claiming goodness which you have not, but also by taking credit for goodness which you have. Carefully distinguish how far you are what you are through your own efforts, and how far through the gift of God, and let there be no deceit in your spirit. Deceit there will be unless you faithfully separate what belongs to yourself, and honestly surrender to God the things which are God’s. I do not doubt that you are fully convinced that what is evil in you comes from yourself, your goodness from the Lord. Certainly while we consider what manner of man you are, we must also recall to memory the sort of man you were; we must compare the end with the beginning. We must see whether you have advanced in virtue, in wisdom, in understanding, in sweetness of character, or whether, which God forbid! you have fallen away. We must note whether you are more patient or more impatient than you were wont to be; more prone to wrath, or more gentle; more insolent, or more humble; more affable, or more austere; more easily entreated, or more obstinate; more pusillanimous, or more magnanimous; more earnest, or somewhat more careless; more filled with the fear of God, or, it may be, more confident than you ought to be. What a wide field lies before you in this kind of consideration! I therefore mention a few points, indicating, as it were, some seed plots, though I am not myself the sower, but only the given of seed to the sower. You should have a clear idea of your zeal, your clemency, and also your discretion, which is the regulator of both those virtues; you should see what you are like in forgiving injuries and in avenging them; how far on both sides you prudently regard degree, place, and time. In the practice of these three virtues these three things must be thoroughly considered, lest if the conditions be not satisfied the ‘virtues’ cease to be virtues; for there is nothing in their nature to make them virtues; they are such only by

the right practice of them. They themselves tell us that they are ‘indifferent’. It is possible for you, either by abusing them, or by confounding them with one another, to turn them into vices; on the other hand you may by the good and methodical use of them make them virtues. When the eye of discretion is darkened, they are wont to jump to conclusions and occupy their own standpoints. Now there are two causes of this dim sight—anger and excessive tenderness. The rebuke of judgement is enfeebled by the latter, precipitated by the former. Must not a pious clemency be endangered on the one side, or a righteous zeal on the other? The eye that is disordered through anger views nothing in the light of clemency; the eye bedewed with tears of womanly tenderness does not see straight. You will not be innocent if you either punish him to whom, it may be, mercy should be shown, or spare him who ought to have been punished.

CHAPTER XII

The spiritual effects of prosperity and adversity

21. And I would not have you disguise the manner of man you have found yourself in tribulations. If you have found yourself steadfast in your own, sympathetic in other men’s, rejoice. Here you have evidence of an upright heart. On the contrary, if perchance you are found to be impatient in your own trials, and are nevertheless seen to be by no means compassionate in other men’s, this is a mark of a heart full of perversity. How has it been with you in prosperity? Is there nothing to call for consideration? Of course there is, if you carefully observe how seldom you find a man who does not, at least to some extent, in time of prosperity relax his vigilance and self-discipline. As regards discipline, when was not prosperity to the unwary what fire is to wax, or the rays of the sun to snow and ice? David was wise, Solomon wiser; but, flattered by unlooked-for success, the one in part and the other altogether acted foolishly. He is a great man, who, when he falls into adversity, does not fall away at least a little from his wisdom; and he is as great who has been favoured with the smiles of Fortune without becoming the butt of her ridicule. And yet it is easier to find men who have kept their wisdom when fortune was against them, than it is to find men who have not lost it when fortune was on their side. He deserves our choice, and he is a great man, who in the days of prosperity has at all events withstood the stealthy approaches of unbecoming laughter, or rudeness of speech; who has not bestowed too much attention upon dress, or pampered the body.

CHAPTER XIII

Idleness, trifling, and profitless conversation to be shunned

22. The wise man rightly admonishes us that if we are to write words of wisdom we must have leisure; still we must be on our guard even against leisure itself. We must accordingly shun idleness, the mother of trifles, the step-mother of virtues. With men of the world trifles are trifles; in the mouth of a priest they are blasphemies. Yet, if sometimes they occur in conversation, we must perhaps put up with them; reply to them in the same strain we never ought. Rather we ought cautiously and prudently to put a stop to trifling. We should do our best to break out into something serious to which the company would listen not only with profit, but with pleasure, and refrain from idle talk. You have consecrated your mouth to the Gospel; to open it for such things is unlawful, to accustom it to them is sacrilege. ‘The lips of the priest,’ says one, ‘keep knowledge, and men look for the law from his mouth’; certainly not trifles, or idle tales. It is not enough that buffoonery, which they glorify as wit and polish, be removed far from your mouth; it ought also to be banished far from your car. It is an abomination that you are moved to laughter, it is more abominable for you to move others. But whether it is more damnable to disparage a man, or listen to a disparager, I could not easily tell.

CHAPTER XIV

The Pope warned against accepting the person of any

23. I need not trouble you to look at avarice, for you are said to value money no more than chaff. There is, assuredly, no reason to dread your judgements on that account. But there is a lurking danger which no less frequently, and no less banefully, besets the judgement seat; and as regards this, I should be very sorry if any mischief were latent in your conscience, and you were unaware of it. Do you ask to what I refer? The acceptance of men’s persons. Consider yourself guilty of no small sin if you welcome sinners, and do not rather decide the causes of the deserving. There is also another vice; if you feel yourself to be free from it you will in my opinion sit in solitary state among all those whom I have known to occupy the chair, because you have really, in a singular measure, raised yourself above yourself as the prophet says. I mean an easy credulity, a very crafty little fox, against whose tricks, so far as I have ascertained, not one of our great men has taken adequate precaution. That was why they were so often

angry, all for nothing; that was why they frequently abandoned the innocent, and delivered premature judgements against men who were not in court. But I congratulate you (and I am not afraid that you will brand me as a flatterer), I congratulate you, I say, on having hitherto presided without much complaint about any of these things; whether you are also free from fault, see for yourself. Now your consideration must be directed to those things which are below you. But here we start afresh; for, bearing in mind your many occupations, the shorter the discourse the better.

BOOK III

[‘In the third Book St. Bernard treats of the consideration the Pope ought to have towards those that are under him, and they are the faithful throughout the world. There is no poison or arms that be ought to dread more than the spirit of tyranny. He next deals with the Pope’s duty towards those not in the Church. He then protests against the abuse of Appeals to Rome, afterwards condemns the like abuse of Exemptions, discusses Dispensations, and concludes by urging Engenius to see that strict discipline is maintained, and that ecclesiastical institutions are respected. He recommends him more particularly to enforce the reforms enjoined at the Council of Rheims relating to the dress and manners of the clergy, as also those respecting the age and qualifications of such as were to be admitted to benefices’ (Du Pin).

Appeals. The Sardican Canon (A. D. 347) gave the Pope power to receive appeals. Pope Nicholas (A. D. 867) asserted that no question in the Church could be decided without the consent of the Roman Pontiff. Gregory VII went further in holding that Councils and Canons derive their force from the authority of Rome. Thither, accordingly, every ecclesiastical cause was to be carried for final determination. All Europe, and England especially, cried out against the grievous burden for centuries (Hussey, Rise of the Papal Power). The system, as St. Bernard knew it, was ‘an elaborate fabric built up by the Canon Law of times subsequent to Charlemagne upon the basis of the False Decretals. It was a grand innovation whereby in the West the entire system of purely ecclesiastical appeals (and indeed of justice) was in effect perverted and frustrated, viz. the right gradually allowed of appealing immediately from any ecclesiastical tribunal, high or low, upon any subject, great or small, to the Pope at once’ (Dict. of Christ. Antiq.). St. Bernard’s Letters, 178, 179, 180, refer to a case in point. Exemptions. ‘In the earlier stages of their existence, monasteries generally availed themselves gladly of the patronage of the bishop of the diocese. But as they increased in wealth and power, they struggled to emancipate themselves from his control.… Instances might easily be multiplied of the almost continual collision in Western Christendom between the bishops and the monasteries in their dioceses; in which the monasteries, almost invariably, had the support of

the pope, and, frequently, of the royal authority' (Dict. of Christ. Antiq.). Sometimes a bishop, unless by invitation of the abbot or abbess, could not consecrate an altar, or even by invitation enter the more private parts of a convent. Nor could be hinder an appeal to Rome. On the other hand, it must in justice be stated that the oppressive conduct of the bishops necessitated some refuge from their arbitrary jurisdiction. 'The grossness of the tyranny practised by some bishops may be inferred from the fact that the monastic bodies often appealed against it in synods, and that these, although composed of bishops, felt themselves obliged to condemn it in strong terms and to forbid its continuance' (Robertson, Ch. Hist., Second Period, Bk. I, ch. ix, p. 202).

Monastic life. Church's Life of Anselm, ch. iii, on 'The Discipline of a Norman Monastery', may be profitably consulted; also Morison's St. Bernard, pp. 16 sq., 126–33. The Cistercian order, to which St. Bernard belonged, was founded A. D. 1098 by Robert, son of a nobleman in Champagne. 'His successor at Citeaux, Alberic, laid down the rule for the new order, and it was afterwards carried out with greater rigour by the third abbot, Stephen Harding, an Englishman, and one of Robert's original companions, whose code, entitled the "Charter of Love", was sanctioned by Pope Calixtus in A. D. 1119. The Cistercians were to observe the rule of St. Benedict, without any glosses or relaxations. Their dress was to be white, agreeably to a pattern which the Blessed Virgin had shown to Alberic in a vision. They were to accept no gifts of churches, altars, or tithes. From the ides of September to Easter they were to cat but one meal daily. Their monasteries were to be planted in lonely places; they were to eschew all pomp, pride, and superfluity; their services were to be simple and plain; some of the ecclesiastical vestments were discarded, and those which were retained were to be of fustian or linen, without any golden ornaments. They were to have only one iron chandelier; their censers were to be of brass or iron; no plate was allowed, except one chalice and a tube for the eucharistic wine, and these were, if possible, to be of silver gilt, but not of gold. The monks were to give themselves wholly to spiritual employments, while the secular affairs of the community were to be managed by the 'bearded' or lay brethren. No serfs were allowed, but hired servants were employed to assist in labour. In the simplicity of their church services and furniture, the Cistercians differed from the Cluniacs, whose ritual was distinguished for its splendour; the elder order regarded the principles of the younger as a reproach to itself, and a rivalry soon sprang up between them. The white dress, which, although already adopted at Catualdoli, was a novelty in France, gave offence to the other monastic societies, who had

worn black habits as a symbol of humility, and regarded the new colour as a pretension to superior righteousness; but the Cistercians defended it as an expression of the joy which became the angelic life of the cloister' (Robertson, p. 706; Fleury, Hist. Ecc., Bk. LXVII, c. 48). St. Bernard is said to have founded some 160 monasteries; at the general chapter in A. D. 1151 there were 500; in the following century the number had increased to 1,800, and eventually became much greater. The order grew rich, and reforms were necessary, but until the rise of the Mendicants they were the most popular of all the monastic societies.

Council of Rheims (1148). The chief canons related to non-residence; chaplains accepting posts without permission of the bishop, and taking the oath of canonical obedience; the arrest, &c., of the clergy; the avoidance by the bishops and clergy of coloured garments, divided skirts, and superfluous ornaments; marriages of 'religious'; appropriation of tithes by the laity; putting benefices into 'commission', and the appointment of a particular priest to each benefice with adequate maintenance; penance for incendiaries; the treatment of Manichean heretics (Fleury, Hist. Ecc., Bk. LXIX, c. 31.)]

CHAPTER I

The Pope should aim not at subjecting all men to himself, but at bringing them into the bosom of the Church

1. The end of the previous book suggests the beginning of this. And so, according to my promise, we must consider the things that are under you. You cannot think it necessary to ask me what they are, Eugenius, best of priests; it were better perhaps to ask what they are not. If a man wishes to discover what does belong to your charge, he must go out of the world. Your progenitors were destined to vanquish the whole world, not certain portions of it. 'Go ye into all the world' was the command given to them. They indeed sold their garments and bought swords, fiery eloquence, and an ardent spirit, weapons powerful in the sight of God. Whither did not those illustrious conquerors come, those sons of the mighty? Whither did they not send their sharp arrows with hot scorching coals? Indeed their sound went forth into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world, Those words of flaming fire which the Lord sent into the earth made men's hearts glow in their inmost depths. Those indefatigable warriors fell on the field of battle, but they fell unconquered: even, in death they triumphed. Their sovereignty was established beyond measure: they were made princes in all lands. You have succeeded to their inheritance. So you are their heir, and the

world is your inheritance. But the exact nature of your interest and theirs in this heritage is a matter for sober and careful consideration. For I do not think you have inherited the world absolutely, but with certain limitations; as it seems to me you have been entrusted with a stewardship over it, not put in possession of it. If you go on to usurp possession, He withstands you who says ‘Mine is the world and the fulness thereof’. You are not the King of whom the prophet speaks —‘And all the earth shall be His possession’. He means Christ, who claims possession both by right of creation, and by the merits of redemption, and by the gift of the Father. For to whom else has it been said, ‘Ask of me and I will give thee the Gentiles for thine inheritance, and the utmost bounds of the earth for thy possession’? Surrender possession and dominion to Him; keep for yourself the care thereof. This is your share: put not forth your hand beyond it.

2. ‘What?’ you say, ‘You grant me precedence: do you prohibit sovereignty?’ Most certainly. You speak as if pre-eminence in watchful care were not good pre-eminence. Is not the farm in the care of the steward, and the child, though he be master, subject to the tutor? Nevertheless, the steward does not own the farm, nor is the tutor master of his master. I would have you also so take precedence that you may provide, counsel, administer, serve. Let your precedence be profitable to others; take precedence like a faithful and wise servant ‘whom his Lord hath set over his household’. For what purpose? That you may ‘give them food in due season’; in other words, may manage, not command. Do this; and inasmuch as you too are a man, do not aim at lording it over other men, lest all unrighteousness gain dominion over you. But I have already pressed this upon you more than enough in discussing who you are. Yet I add this much; for I dread no poison for you, no sword more than the lust of dominion. If you are not greatly deceived, you surely think you have received no more from the great apostle than I have said; to claim this is to take much upon yourself. Recall the words of him who said ‘I am a debtor both to the wise and to the foolish’. And if your judgement tells you that the admonition is superfluous, please remember also that the offensive name of ‘debtor’ suits a servant better than a master. The servant in the Gospel was asked ‘How much owest thou unto my Lord?’ So then, if you acknowledge that you are not lord over the wise and the foolish, but a debtor to them, you must be exceedingly careful, and must with unceasing vigilance consider how those who lack wisdom may become wise, how the wise may be prevented from turning to folly, how those who have turned to folly may recover their senses. But no sort of folly, so to speak, is more foolish than unbelief. So then you are a debtor also to the unbelieving, both Jews and

Gentiles.

3. We perceive then that you must strive to the utmost that they who have not faith may be turned to faith, that they who have turned may not turn aside, that they who have thus turned may turn back; moreover, you must see that the perverse ones be set in the paths of uprightness, and the subverted recalled to truth; that the subverters of men's souls may be convinced by invincible reason, so that they themselves, if possible, may either be cured of their errors, or, if that may not be, they may lose their authority, and the power of subverting other men. You must certainly not allow yourself to be imposed upon by the worst sort of foolish men, I mean heretics and schismatics; for these are they who are subverted, and subvert; they are dogs to tear, foxes to deceive. Men, I say, of this sort must be corrected with special care lest they perish, or must be restrained that they may not do damage. As regards the Jews, I grant time may be your excuse; they have their fixed limit, which cannot be anticipated. The fullness of the Gentiles must first come in. But as regards the Gentiles themselves, what answer do you make? Nay rather, what is the verdict of your consideration on this long delay? Why did the fathers resolve to set bounds to the Gospel, and to check the word of faith, while men's hearts are hardening in unbelief? Why, do we suppose, the word running very swiftly suddenly stopped? Who was the first to forbid its life-giving progress? Some unknown cause perhaps hindered them; perhaps necessity compelled them.

4. Our pretences will not bear examination. Can we with confidence and a good conscience refrain from even offering Christ to those who have Him not? Do we hold back the truth of God in unrighteousness? The fullness of the Gentiles must certainly come some day. Are we waiting for the faith to fall from heaven upon them? Who ever believed by accident? How shall they believe without a preacher? Peter was sent to Cornelius, Philip to the Eunuch; and if we seek a more modern instance, Augustine was appointed by Gregory of blessed memory to deliver the mould of faith to the English. Look at things from this point of view. A word more about the obstinacy of the Greeks who are with us, and yet are not with us; united by the bond of faith, and yet not on terms of peace. Though, to speak accurately, they have in the matter of faith itself halted and wandered from the right paths. So also respecting heresy, which is quietly creeping in almost everywhere; in some cases is openly raging. For on all sides, and in public too, it is eager to swallow the Church's little ones. Do you ask where? Your own officials who often visit the South know where these heretics are, and can tell you. They go to and fro in their midst, or right through them, but

what good they have so far done we have yet to learn. We might perhaps have heard of some good if the salvation of the people of Spain had not been as nought in comparison with gold. It is your duty to provide a remedy for this scourge also.

5. But there is a species of folly which has already nearly stultified the wisdom of faith itself. It is incredible to what an extent this venom has infected almost the whole Catholic Church. For while we are all of us seeking our own therein, it happens that envying one another, provoking one another, we are harassed till we hate one another, and are moved to do wrong; we arm ourselves for legal strife, quibble and sophisticate, rush into slanderous accusations, burst into maledictions, are oppressed by those who are stronger than ourselves, and in our turn oppress those who are weaker. How worthy and laudable an occupation for the meditation of your heart to discover some antidote for this deadly sort of folly, which you contemplate in possession of the very body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people! O ambition! the cross of the ambitious, how is it that though you torture all, you please all? Nothing causes more excruciating torment, or more vexing disquietude; and yet nothing creates more bustle and stir among mortal men than its affairs. Is it not true that the thresholds of the apostles are worn more by the footsteps of ambition than by those of devotion? Does not your palace all day long re-echo the tones of its voice? Is not the enriching of ambition the object of the whole toiling practice of the laws and canons? Is not all Italy a yawning gulf of insatiable avarice and rapacity for the spoils it offers? What is it, or rather what else is it, that, I will not even say cuts into, but cuts off your own spiritual pursuits? How often has this restless and disquieting mischief caused your holy and faithful leisure to miscarry! It is one thing for the oppressed to appeal to you; it is quite another for ecclesiastical ambition to make a tool of you by seating itself on the throne. You should not fail the former, nor in the least give way to the latter. Yet how iniquitously ambition is fostered, while the oppressed are scorned! Nevertheless you are a debtor to both, to the oppressed that you may lift them up, to the ambitious that you may put them down.

CHAPTER II

The limits of appeals to the Apostolic See

6. And as we have come upon the question of appeals, it will not be irrelevant to pursue the subject somewhat farther. For the conduct of them a deeply religious

insight is required, so that what was intended to meet a great need may not be rendered useless through abuse. It seems to me that they may even be productive of much mischief if they are not employed with the utmost moderation. Men appeal to you from all over the world. It is a proof of your singular primacy. But if you are wise you will rejoice not in your primacy, but in its fruitfulness. The apostles were told not to rejoice in the spirits being subject to them. Men appeal to you, as I have said, and I would the resulting benefit were equal to the necessity. Would that when the oppressed cries the oppressor might have reason to know it! Would that the wicked in his pride did not consume the poor! What so fitting as for the oppressed to call upon your name and find a refuge, but that the crafty should not escape? What on the other hand is so perverse, so unfair, as that the wrongdoer should rejoice, and he who has suffered wrong should be harassed for nothing? You sadly lack humanity if you are not drawn towards a man whose heart is full of grief through the wrong which has been done him, the toilsome journey, and the expenses which he has incurred. But there is a no less sad lack of spirit if you are not roused against him who is partly the direct, partly the indirect, cause of so many calamities. Rouse thee, man of God, when these things happen; let both your pity and your indignation be stirred. The one you owe to the injured, the other to him who inflicts the injury. Let the former be consoled for his losses, by satisfaction for his wrongs, by putting a stop to the malicious charges; let the latter be so handled that he may be sorry for having done what he was not afraid to do, and may not laugh at the punishment of the innocent.

7. I think he ought no less to suffer who has appealed without cause. You have the rule of justice based on the fixed principles of divine equity, and, unless I am mistaken, also enjoined by the very law regulating appeals. This provides that an unlawful appeal must not benefit the appellant, nor prejudice the defendant. Why should a man be harassed for nothing? It is perfectly just that he who wished to injure his neighbour should instead injure himself. To unjustly appeal is to do injustice; to unjustly appeal and escape scot-free only lights the fire of unjust appeals. Now every appeal is unjust which is not necessitated by the failure of justice. An appeal is lawful only when you are wronged; it is not a means of wronging some one else. The appeal must be from a judicial sentence. To anticipate the sentence by an appeal unless some wrong was clearly going to be done, admits of no justification. He therefore who appeals when no such wrong threatens, obviously purposes wrong to another man, or to gain time. An appeal is not a subterfuge, but a refuge. How many have we known to appeal after

defeat only that while the appeal was pending they might without let of law indulge in what is never lawful! The permission to appeal has in some cases, we know, left men unmolested for the whole of their lives in the commission of execrable crimes, incest, for example, or adultery. How comes this about, that what ought to be the terror of villains is found protecting villainy? How long will you pretend not to notice, or will really not heed, the murmurs of the whole earth? How long do you mean to sleep? How long will it be before your consideration awakes to this gigantic confusing and abusing of appeals? They are contrary to laws human and divine, contrary to custom and established order. There is no distinction of place, degree, time, cause, or person. These frivolous, and, in most cases, useless anticipatory appeals come from all sides. Was not the Court of Appeal wont to be the special terror of malicious offenders? At the present time with its assistance they are themselves a terror, and that to good men. The antidote is turned to poison. The change is not the work of the right hand of the Most High.

8. Good men have appeals brought against them by the bad to prevent their doing good, and in terror at the voice of your thunder they forbear. Even bishops are appealed against that they may not dare to dissolve unlawful marriages, or prohibit then. They are appealed against that they may not presume to punish in the least degree, or check rapine, theft, sacrilege, and crime of that description. They are appealed against that they may be powerless to close the sacred offices against unworthy or infamous persons, or deprive them when admitted. What remedy are you seeking to discover for this disease, so that what was devised as a remedy be not found unto death? The Lord was zealous for the house of prayer when it was made a den of robbers; do you, his minister, disguise the fact that the refuge of the wretched has been made an arsenal of iniquity? On all sides you may see the oppressed forestalled, and those who are eager to appeal are not the wronged, but those who wish to do wrong. Here is a mystery. What is the explanation? It is for you to consider, not for me to study the matter. And do you ask why the victims of these appeals do not come to prove their innocence, and show the malice of their opponents? I will tell you what the usual answer is —‘We don’t care to be troubled for nothing. In the court there are men too ready to favour the appellants and foster appeals. If we are to give way at Rome, it is better to give way at home.’

9. I confess that I partly believe this. In this vast number of appeals, which are of daily occurrence, can you show me an appellant who has even repaid the travelling expenses of the defendant? It would be passing strange if all the

appellants were, as this implies, after your investigation, found to be in the right, and those appealed against is the wrong. ‘Love righteousness’, saith the Scripture, ‘ye that be judges of the earth,’ It is a small thing to keep righteousness, unless you love it as well. They who keep it do no more; they who love it are zealous for it. A lover of righteousness inquires for righteousness, and follows after it; he, moreover, follows up all unrighteousness. You have nothing in common with those men who think appeals good sport. I am ashamed to quote the saying which among the heathen has become a proverb —‘We have roused two fat stags.’ To speak more gently, there is more wit than justice in this. Do you, if you love righteousness, not encourage appeals, but tolerate them. Still, it is but little that the Churches of God gain through the righteousness of a single individual when the prevalent views are those of men differently disposed. That, however, will be discussed elsewhere, when we begin to deal with the things around you.

10. Now do not think it a waste of time to find leisure for considering how you may restore appeals, if possible, to their lawful use. If you hereupon inquire, or rather care to know, what I think, I say that as appeals are not to be despised, so neither are they to be at all unlawfully used. And I should find it hard to say which of these, in my opinion, indicates the greater insolence, were it not that it seems as though the unlawful use must of necessity induce some measure of contempt, and for this reason, because it is more injurious, it ought perhaps to be more vigorously followed up. Is it not really more injurious, bad in itself, bad in its offspring? Is it not this unlawful use which either weakens the authority of the very law of nature, or nullifies it altogether? Can a man receive anything better than the sacraments? If, however, they are wrongfully used by the unworthy, or are unworthily handled, they are by no means received. They bring the greater damnation, because they are not duly reverenced. I allow that appeals are a great blessing to the world at large, as necessary as the sun itself to mortal men. In fact they are as it were a sun of righteousness, bringing to light and convicting the works of darkness. They are by all means to be cherished and upheld, but only those which are demanded of necessity, not those devised by craft and cunning. All unlawful appeals are of this description; they do not help in time of need, they only minister to iniquity. They could not fail to become contemptible. How many defendants have in answer to such appeals even abandoned their rights that they might not be worn out by a long and fruitless journey? Yet there have been more who, unable to endure the loss of their own, have shown but scant respect for these unsuitable appeals and for personages bearing great names.

11. Let me tell of a case in point. A certain man had publicly betrothed his future wife. The solemn day of marriage had arrived. All things were ready; many guests were invited; when lo! a man who coveted his neighbour's wife all at once announced his intention of appealing, on the ground that the lady had been first given to him and ought to belong to him. The bridegroom was thunderstruck; there was a dead-lock; the priest did not dare to proceed; all the preparations were thrown away; everybody went off to eat his supper at home; the bride was barred from bed and board until after the return journey from Rome. This befell a resident in Paris, a noble city of Gaul and the home of royalty. On another occasion, in the same city, a certain man became engaged and fixed the day for the wedding. Mean-while a false report got abroad that the parties ought not to be united. The case was referred to the judgement of the Church, but without the least expectation of a decision on the appeal. There was no case, no allegation. The only object in view was to delay and frustrate the marriage. But the bridegroom, whether it was that he did not choose to make his preparations for nothing, or that he would not brook the disappointment and be so long kept from the woman he loved, either created the appeal with contempt, or feigned ignorance of it, and went through with what he had purposed. To take a recent case, what are we to say of the extraordinary presumption of a certain young man belonging to the church at Auxerre? The holy bishop having died, the clergy, according to custom, wished to elect another; but the young man in question intervened with an appeal, and forbade anything to be done until after his return from Rome; and yet to that very appeal he laid no information. For when he saw that he was treated with contempt for appealing unreasonably, he called together such friends as he could three days after the others had made their choice, and got himself elected.

12. It is clear from these and countless other instances that the unlawful use of appeals does not arise from the contempt for them, but that the contempt of them springs from the unlawful use. See, therefore, why it is that your zeal and energy almost constantly vindicate the contempt, and throw a veil over the unlawful use. Do you wish to more completely bridle contempt? Take care that the infant growth is strangled in the very womb of its abandoned mother. And this will be done if the unlawful use meets with suitable punishment. Stop the unlawful use, and there will be no excuse for contempt. Further, when there is no excuse, audacity will be hissed off the stage. Let there be, then, no usurper of the privilege, and there will be no despiser, or very seldom. You do well in refusing to sanction such appeals, or countenance the trickery, and in leaving much of the

business to those who are familiar with the details, or can quickly become so. For the easier investigation is made, and the more certain its results, the sooner will the decision be given, and the sounder will it be. What gracious condescension it is in you to thus spare so many men enormous trouble and expense! But you must take particular care in selecting those whom you trust so much. I might add many useful hints on the same subject; but I am mindful of my purpose, and, content with giving you an opportunity of making the addition, I pass to other things.

CHAPTER III

Church rulers are for the profit of their people

13. And I suppose I must certainly not pass over the first thing that occurs to me. You are at the head of affairs, without a rival. Why are you thus placed? The question, I tell you, requires consideration. Is it that you may become great through those beneath you? By no means, but that you may make them great. They have chosen you chief, but for their own sake, not for yours. If it is not so, can you reckon yourself above the very persons for whose favours you are a candidate? Listen to the Lord's words, 'They who have authority over them are called benefactors.' That, however, relates to them that are without. What has it to do with us? You are falsely so called if you aim not so much at being a benefactor as at ruling your benefactor. A man shows a poor spirit when he seeks not the welfare of those beneath him, but to make his own profit out of them. Such conduct is specially discreditable in a commander-in-chief. How beautifully did the Master of the Gentiles express his opinion that parents ought to lay up for the children, not children for the parents. He several times says, and it is a glorious saying, 'Not that I seek a gift, but fruit.' But now let us pass on, lest some one find my lingering here an indication of avarice in you; though how far you are removed from that vice I testified in a former book. For I know what tempting offers you have refused, and how deep your poverty was when you refused them If, then, I write such things to you, it is not that you require the admonition. Surely what is written for your profit ought not to profit you only. I am here censuring avarice, a vice from which your character is safe enough; whether the censure is necessary is for you to decide. I will say, however, not to mention the offerings of the poor, which you cannot bear to touch, that we have seen the German money-bags dwindling down; the bags were not smaller, but the price paid was less. Silver was counted as hay. The Sagmarii reluctantly

went home with their bundles as heavy as when they came. A new thing! Was Rome ever known to refuse gold? Even now we do not believe such practice commends itself to the Romans. Two men came to Rome, both wealthy, both culprits. One belonged to Mayence, the other to Cologne. Favour was freely shown to one; the other, unworthy, I suppose, of any favour, was told, ‘The same robe you wore when you came in you will wear when you go out.’ What a glorious saying! The very words of apostolic freedom. Was it one whit inferior to Peter’s, ‘Thy money perish with thee’? The only difference is that the latter has more zeal, the former more modesty. What did the man get by coming from over sea, almost from the ends of the earth, crossing sea and land to purchase a bishopric twice over, once with his own money, once with other men’s? For he had already bought it once. He brought much with him, but he took it back; not all, however. The poor wretch fell into other hands than yours, more mighty to receive than to give. You did well to keep your hands clean both ways; you would not lay them on the head of an ambitious man, nor lay them under the unrighteous mammon. You did not thus hold aloof from a poor bishop, whom I could name, but you gave him something to give, so that he mighty not be called stingy; he secretly received from you what he openly gave. You thus with your own purse shielded the man from exposure; and at the same time by humouring the court, he (thanks to your kindness) escaped the dislike of those who love gifts. You cannot hide the deed; we know both the facts and the person. Does the story displease you? The more averse you are to hearing it, the greater pleasure I have in telling it. If it is good for you one way, it is good for me another. Where the glory of Christ is concerned I am under no such obligation to silence, as you are to refrain from seeking your own glory. And if you go on complaining. I will answer you out of the Gospel, ‘The more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it, saying, he hath done all things well.’

CHAPTER IV

Ecclesiastical rank and dignity to be respected. The abuse of privileges and exemptions

14. There is something else—if it be something else, for it might perhaps be said to be part of the same subject—and let your consideration give good heed to it. He does not appear to be far from the truth who thought that what I am about to speak of should be classed as a variety of avarice. For myself, I would not deny either that it is a kind of avarice, or that it looks like avarice. At all events if you aim at perfection you should shun not only things bad in themselves, but things

that have the appearance of evil. In the one case you have regard to your conscience, in the other to your reputation. A particular line of conduct under different circumstances may be lawful; nevertheless, if it does not look well, deem it unlawful. In a word, ask your ancestors, and they will answer, ‘Abstain from every appearance of evil.’ Let the Lord’s servant by all means imitate his Lord, for He Himself says, ‘If any man serve me, let him follow me.’ And concerning Him you know it is said, ‘The Lord hath reigned, he hath put on beauteous apparel, he hath clothed himself with strength.’ Be you also strong in faith, beauteous in glory, and you have shown yourself an imitator of God. Your strength is the confidence of a faithful conscience, your beauty is the splendour of a good character. So then, I beseech you, be clothed with strength, for your strength is the joy of the Lord. Moreover, He delights in your fair beauty no less, as it were, than in His own likeness. Put on your glorious vestments; be clothed with the two robes wherewith the virtuous woman was wont to clothe her household. Let there not be in your conscience a trace of a weak and feeble faith: let there not be in your reputation the blemish of a bad appearance. You will then wear the two robes, and the Bridegroom will rejoice over your soul which He has betrothed to Himself; your God will joy over you. Are you wondering what my drift is, and do you not yet perceive my meaning? I will not keep you in suspense any longer. I refer to the murmuring and complaining of the Churches. They cry aloud that they are being mutilated and dismembered. There are none, or very few, which are not either already smarting under the scourge, or dreading its approach. Do you ask how that is? Abbots are exempted from their bishops, bishops from archbishops, archbishops from patriarchs or primates. Does this look well? I should be surprised if any justification could be found for such doings. The constant practice shows that you have authority, but possibly not so keen a sense of justice. You do this because you have the power, but whether you have the right is open to question. You are where you are that you may uphold the gradations of honour and dignity, secure to every one his proper rank, and not grudge any one his due; as one of your predecessors says, ‘Honour to whom honour.’

15. The spiritual man of whom we read, who judges all things that he may be judged by no man, will preface all his work with a sort of threefold consideration. First, he will ask whether the thing is lawful; then, is it becoming; lastly, whether it is also expedient. For although Christian philosophy undoubtedly inculcates that nothing is becoming unless it be lawful, and nothing expedient unless it be both becoming and lawful, it will not of necessity follow

that everything lawful is either becoming or expedient. Well then, let us, if we can, apply these three tests to the business before us. Must it not be unbecoming in you to make your will the law? And, because there is no appeal against you, to resort to force while you ignore reason? Are you greater than your Lord, who says, ‘I came not to do mine own will’? Whatever may be argued to the contrary, I maintain that it is a mark of baseness, no less than of pride, for a man, as though he had not the gift of reason, to make his pleasure, and not reason, the rule of action; to be swayed not by judgement but by appetite. Is anything more characteristic of the beasts? And if it is unworthy of a reasonable being to live the life of cattle, who can endure that you, the supreme ruler, should so outrage nature and insult your rank? If you do so degenerate, which God forbid! you will share in the general reproach, ‘Man being in honour did not understand; he is compared to the foolish beasts of burden, and is made like unto them.’ How very unworthy it is of you, when you possess all, not to be content with all, but you must needs make a strange to-do over the minute and inappreciable trifles of the universal dominion entrusted to you, as if they were not yours already! And here I should like you to remember Nathan’s parable of the man who, having a hundred sheep, coveted the one belonging to the poor man. Let us also recall the deed, or rather the crime, of Ahab, who was master of all, and yet was eager to get a single vineyard, God grant you may never have it said to you as it was to him, ‘Thou hast slain and taken possession.’

16. And please do not make the profit from these exemptions a pretext for them. There is no profit, unless it be that the bishops are thereby more insolent, the monks even more dissolute. How is it that they are also poorer? If you examine the balance sheet of these freedmen with anything like care, and look into their lives, no matter where, you will find the monks shamefully poor, and the bishops disgracefully worldly. These are the twin offspring of a baneful freedom. What is there to prevent the loose and disorderly rabble from boldly sinning, when there is no one to rebuke it? What can we expect but the impudent plundering and pillaging of defenceless religion, when there is no one to defend it? For where can men find a refuge? Shall they go to the bishops complaining of injustice? The bishops must have a merry twinkle in their eyes whether they look at the wrongs done, or the wrongs suffered. What profit is there in that blood? The only gain, I fear, is that which God threatened in the prophet, ‘He shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand.’ For if a man is not only exempted but puffed up, and be from whose jurisdiction he is exempted is inflamed with anger, how can the exemptor be innocent? I have said too little;

we are smothering the fire; let me speak more plainly. If he who complains is spiritually dead, how can he be alive who is the cause of his complaining? Must be not, therefore, be guilty of the death of both these persons, and give sentence of death against his own soul as well, for it was he who supplied the sword which caused the death of both? This is what I meant when I said, ‘Thou hast slain and taken possession.’ And further, people who hear of these things are scandalized; they are indignant, disparage, and blaspheme, that is to say, they are wounded even unto death. The tree is not good that bears such fruit as acts of arrogance, the breaking up of houses, rivalries, the squandering of resources, so many scandals, so much hatred; and, what is more lamentable, bitter enmities and perpetual discord between the churches. You see how true are the words, ‘All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient.’ But suppose the thing is not even lawful. Pardon me; I shall not readily allow that the source of so much lawlessness can be lawful.

17. Would you, in fact, deem it lawful to cut off the limbs of churches, turn order into confusion, and remove the landmarks which your fathers placed? Well then, it is the work of justice to secure to everybody what belongs to him; how can it be consistent with justice to rob any man of what belongs to him? You err if you reckon that your apostolic power is not only supreme, but the only power ordained of God. If this is your opinion, you differ from the apostle. He says, ‘There is no power except from God.’ So then, if that which follows, ‘He that resists the power withstandeth the ordinance of God,’ even if this mainly makes for you, it does not apply to you exclusively. In short, the same writer says, ‘Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.’ He does not say ‘to the higher power’, as if all power belonged to one man, but ‘to the higher powers’, since it resides in many. Your power, therefore, is not the only power from the Lord; there are middle and lower powers. And as those whom God hath conjoined are not to be put asunder, so those whom God hath subjoined are not to be put on a footing of equality. If you cut off a finger, attach it to your head, and let it hang side by side with your arm, as a hand for the upper parts of the body, you create a monstrosity. Something like this happens if you place the members in the body of Christ otherwise than He Himself arranged them. Unless you suppose it was not He, but another, who ‘set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly evangelists, then teachers and pastors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ’. And yet it is this body which Paul sets before you with his own true apostolic eloquence, most admirably uniting it to the Head, and representing it as ‘from

Him fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, making the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love'. And do not despise the mould on which you are to fashion yourself because it is the Church on earth; the pattern is derived from heaven. For not even the Son can do anything except what He hath seen the Father do, as is obvious from what was said to Him under the name of Moses, 'See thou make everything after the pattern which was showed thee on the mount.'

18. He understood this who said, 'I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem descending from heaven, prepared by God.' I suppose a parallel was intended, viz. that as in heaven above Seraphim and Cherubim, and all other celestial beings, even to angels and archangels, are of varying rank under one Head, viz. God; so in the Church on earth, also, primates or patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, presbyters, or abbots, and all others, are similarly ranked under one supreme pontiff. That which has God for its author, and originates in heaven, must not be lightly esteemed. But if a bishop say 'I do not desire to be under an archbishop', or an abbot 'I do not care to obey a bishop', this is not from heaven. Unless, perhaps, you have heard one of the angels crying 'I do not desire to be under the archangels ', or one of the lower angelic orders declare that he could not bear to be subject to any one but God. What! you say, do you forbid me to exercise my stewardship? What I wish to prevent is the squandering of the estate. I am not so ignorant as not to know that you have been made stewards; but if so, it is for building up, not for casting down. In a word, it is required among stewards that a man be found faithful. When necessity requires you may be excused for exercising your dispensing power; if there is some manifest advantage, such exercise may deserve commendation. 'Advantage', I say, of the community, not your own. For when no good is done either to the community or to yourself, we certainly have not a faithful stewardship, but a cruel waste. Still, as everybody knows, there are some monasteries in different dioceses, which from their very foundation have been more closely associated with the apostolic see in accordance with the will of the founders. But the free gift of devotion is one thing; the efforts of ambition intolerant of subjection are quite another. So much for this.

CHAPTER V

The Sovereign Pontiff should uphold the Apostolic decrees and ancient ordinances throughout the world

19. It remains for your consideration to survey the condition of the Church generally, and to ascertain whether the people are subject to the clerks, the clerks to the priests, the priests to God, in all due humility; if in monasteries and places of religion order is preserved, and discipline is watchful; if ecclesiastical censures are enforced against corrupt practice and perverse doctrine; if the vineyards show the goodly bloom of priestly integrity and holiness; if the blossoms bear fruit in the obedience of faithful peoples; if, now at length, your own apostolic commands and ordinances are observed with fitting care, lest any portion of your Master's field be found uncultivated through neglect, or filched through fraud. You may be sure that such defects may be found. To omit countless other details, I could easily point to parts of the vineyards on all sides which are lying waste; I could show you that even of those which your own right hand has planted some are rooted up. At Rheims was it not your own mouth that published the canons submitted to the Council? Who observes them? Who has observed them? You are deceived if you think they are observed. If you do not think so, you have yourself erred, either in decreeing what was not to be observed, or pretending that it is observed. 'We enjoin', you said, 'that bishops as well as clergy see that they do not, either by superfluous apparel, or an unbecoming medley of colours, or by divided garments, or by the tonsure, offend the eye of the beholders, to whom they ought to be a pattern and example; but rather by their own conduct so condemn these things, and by their mode of life evidence their love of innocence, as the dignity of the clerical order requires. But if after warning from their own bishops any do not submit within forty days, let them by authority of the same be deprived of their ecclesiastical benefices. If, however, the bishops neglect to enforce the aforesaid penalty, inasmuch as the faults of inferiors are to be attributed to none more than to indolent and negligent rulers, let them abstain from their pontifical office until such time as they do inflict the punishment appointed by us on the clergy subject to them. With this we have thought well to couple the order that no one be ordained archdeacon or dean, unless he be deacon and priest. Morever, if archdeacons, deans, and priors, below the afore-named orders, contemptuously refuse to be ordained, let them be deprived of the honour they have taken upon themselves. We further forbid the bestowal of the aforesaid honours on youths not even as yet admitted to holy orders, but distinguished for their capacity and meritorious lives.'

20. These are your words; you authorized them. What effect was given to them? To this day youths, although not admitted to holy orders, are promoted in the Church. As regards the first canon, luxurious dress was forbidden, but it is

not checked; the punishment was declared, but it has by no means followed the offence. It is now the fourth year since we heard the command given, and we have not as yet lamented a single cleric deprived of his benefice, or a single bishop suspended from his office. But the sequel is intensely sad. What is the sequel? Impunity, the child of carelessness, the mother of insolence, the root of impudence, the nurse of transgressions. And blessed will you be if you make it your earnest care to guard against carelessness, the first parent of all evils. But you will do your best in this respect. Now lift up your eyes and see if the spotted fur does not disgrace the clergy just as much as ever; if the immoderate division in the robe does not as much as ever almost show their nakedness. ‘Does God care what a man wears? Does He not rather regard his character?’ This is how men talk. But the clothing I refer to indicates deformity of mind and morals. How is it that the clergy wish to be one thing and seem another? The truth is that they are not so innocent and upright as they ought to be. Forsooth, in dress they are soldiers, in profession clergy, in conduct neither. For they neither fight like soldiers, nor preach the Gospel like clergymen. To which order do they belong? In their eagerness to belong to both, they forsake both, confound both. ‘Every one’, says the Apostle, ‘shall rise in his own order.’ What is their order? Having sinned without order, shall they perish without order? I rather think that if the all-wise God is truly believed to leave nothing unordered, from the height above to the depth beneath, there is reason to fear their ‘order’ can be only where there is no ‘order’, but where everlasting horror dwells. O unhappy bride entrusted to the care of bridesmen such as these, who are not afraid to appropriate to themselves what was intended for her adorning! They are surely not the friends of the bridegroom, but his rivals. And now I have said enough about the things beneath you; not enough, it is true, for the adequate treatment of the subject, which is far too great for me to handle, but enough for my purpose. We must now view the things around you; but the fourth book will open the door and admit us to them.

BOOK IV

[In the fourth book St. Bernard proposes for the Pope's consideration what is around him, viz. (a) the Clergy, (b) the people of Rome, (c) the Cardinals, and other officers of the Court, and concludes by drawing a remarkable portrait of an ideal Head of the Church.

The People of Rome. 'The root of mischief was deep and perennial; and a momentary calm was preceded and followed by such tempests as had almost sunk the bark of St. Peter. Rome continually presented the aspect of war and discord; the churches and palaces were fortified and assaulted by the factions and families; and, after giving peace to Europe, Calixtus the Second alone had resolution and power to prohibit the use of private arms in the metropolis.' Gibbon (Decline and Fall, ch. lxix. A. D. 1118–1224), who, after quoting St. Bernard, adds, 'Surely this dark portrait is not coloured by the pencil of Christian charity; yet the features, however harsh and ugly, express a lively resemblance of the Romans of the twelfth century.'

Legates. 'In addition to their vicars, the popes appointed legates to exercise some of their functions, such as that of holding councils for the investigation of cases which had been referred to Rome, or in which the popes took it on themselves to interfere. These legates were sometimes ecclesiastics sent from Italy; but as foreign ecclesiastics were regarded with suspicion by princes, it was more usual to give the legatine commission to some bishop of the country in which the inquiry was to take place. Even kings were sometimes invested with the authority of papal legates.' Gregory VII (circ. A. D. 1070) applied to his legates the text, 'he that heareth you, heareth me.' Wherever they appeared they were the highest ecclesiastical authorities; and bishops trembled before the deacons and subdeacons who were invested with the pope's commission to control, to judge, and to depose them. Up to the time of Anselm (circ. A. D. 1100) they had come but seldom to England and only on special business. When a 'legate of All England' was appointed it was stoutly contended that no one but the Archbishop of Canterbury could be recognized as a representative of the pope, Robertson, Ch. Hist., &c.; Cotter Morison, Saint Bernard, p. 423.

Election of Pope. The great innovation in the method of election dates from A.

D. 1059, when Nicolas II, in a Council held at Rome, published a decree ‘that the cardinal bishops should first treat of the election, that they should then call in the cardinals of inferior rank, and that afterwards the rest of the clergy and people should approve the choice.’ The choice of pope was thus substantially vested in the cardinals. The election was to be made ‘saving the due honour and reverence of our beloved son Henry, who at present is accounted king, and hereafter will, it is hoped, if God permit, be emperor, as we have already granted to him; and of his successors who shall personally have obtained this privilege from the apostolic see.’ There was no emperor at the time, and ‘our beloved son Henry’ was a child under female guardianship. Nicolas, it will be seen, so short a time before St. Bernard’s day, assumed the right to dispose of temporal sovereignties. His successor did so also when he sanctioned William the Conqueror’s invasion of England. See Robertson, Book III, &c.]

CHAPTER I

The things ‘around’ the Pope

1. If I knew better, most loving Eugenius, how you received what I have already sent, I should proceed to the rest of my work with corresponding confidence or caution; or I might, of course, stop altogether. But since the distance which separates us renders such knowledge impossible, you must not be surprised if, as I approach (with some misgiving, I confess) the middle of my subject, my discourse flows less freely in its divided channel. Having fully treated the first part of consideration in the former books, I now take in hand the task of adding my views on the things around you. They, too, are really under you, but the nearer they are the greater is their importunity. For being before your very eyes they allow no pretence of carelessness or forgetfulness. They more furiously drive you; they more tumultuously mob you; there is reason to fear they may carry you away altogether. I do not doubt that you have learnt from your own experience what watchful and earnest consideration is required when things are so. Moreover, if careful and timely consideration does not step in, your vexation will be boundless, and your anxiety unceasing. You will not have a moment to spare, nor a free place in your heart; the labour will be greater, the profit less. I have in mind those things which come upon you daily from the city, from the court, from your own church. These things, I say, are around you; your clergy and your people, whose own bishop you are, and to whom you therefore owe a debt of special care. So are they, too, who day by day assist you, the elders of the

people, the judges of the world; they, too, who belong to your household and sit at your table, your chaplains, gentlemen of the bedchamber, and inferior clergy appointed in their different offices to do you service. These are your more intimate acquaintance; they more frequently knock, disturb, and vex you. These are they who are not afraid to wake the beloved before she wishes to be awaked.

CHAPTER II

The clergy and people of Rome. The care and watchfulness of shepherds in olden time

2. Now, in the first place, your clergy, who set the pattern for the clergy throughout the Church, ought to be in the best of order. Secondly, whatever is amiss in your presence reflects the more discredit upon you. It concerns the glory of your Holiness that the men you have before your eyes be so ordered, so fashioned, that they may be the mirror and the very pink of a virtuous and well-regulated life. Above all other men they should be found ready for their duties, fit for the sacraments, eager to instruct the people, circumspect in keeping themselves free from all pollution. What am I to say about the people? It is the people of Rome. I could not more briefly, or more definitely, describe them. Yet I ought to let you know what I think of your parishioners. Is there anything in history more notorious than the wantonness and pride of the Romans? A race unaccustomed to peace, familiar with tumult; a race to this very day fierce and intractable; who will never submit except when they have no power to resist. Here is the mischief; this is the care that lies heavy upon you, and you must not disguise the fact. You perhaps smile as you read this, for you are convinced that they will never be cured. Do not despair: what is required of you is the care, not the cure. You have surely heard the words, ‘Take care of him’; our Lord did not say ‘cure’ or ‘heal’ him. It was a true saying, ‘The doctor cannot always cure his patient.’ But set a better ideal before you in your work. Paul says, ‘I laboured more than they all.’ He does not say, ‘I did more good than all,’ or ‘I bore more fruit than all,’ for he most scrupulously avoided any word of pride. The man whom God taught that every one shall receive according to his work, not according to the results of the work, knew better than that. Hence it was that he thought he ought to glory more in labours than in successes, as you have him saying elsewhere, ‘In labours more abundant.’ So, pray, do your own work; for God will take good care of His without your solicitude and anxiety. Plant, water, bestow care: you have done your part. God, when He so wills, will certainly give the increase; it will not be you. If perchance He does not will to give it, you lose

nothing, for the scripture says, ‘God will render to the righteous the reward of their labours.’ That labour is safe which no failure can render void. And I would say this without prejudice to the divine power and goodness. I know the heart of this people is hardened; but God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. Who knows if He will return and pardon, convert and heal them? But I do not propose to dictate to God what He ought to do; would that I could persuade you to do what you ought, and as you ought.

3. I know I am treading on dangerous ground, and have to deal with some very nice points. How shall I approach the perilous task of saying what I think? I see clearly what is hanging over my head. The cry of ‘innovation’ will be raised; for no one can deny the justice of my complaint. But I would not allow even the plea of novelty. For I am quite sure that what I urge was once the custom, and, like all other customs, it might fall into disuse; but nothing can disturb the fact that the custom once prevailed. Can any one with truth deny that to be a custom which was not only done once upon a time, but beyond a doubt was the practice for a considerable time? I will tell you what I refer to, though it will do no good. Why? Because it will not please the rulers of the Church, who have more regard for the splendour of their office than for the claims of truth. Before your day there were men who would devote themselves entirely to feeding the sheep; they gloried in the shepherd’s work and name; they counted nothing humiliating except what they thought hindered the welfare of the sheep, for they did not seek their own interests, but spent upon the sheep. They spent care, they spent their substance, they spent even themselves. Wherefore One of them says, ‘I will be spent out for your souls.’ It is as though they said, ‘We came not to be ministered unto, but to minister’; and so, as often as it became them, they made the Gospel free of cost. The only gain they sought from those in their keeping, the only pomp, the only pleasure, was, if possible, to make them a perfect people for the Lord. That was their constant concern, even in much sorrow of heart, and pain of body, in labour and care, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness.

4. Let me now ask what has become of this practice? A very different one has crept in: men’s ambitions have undergone a great change, and I would that the change were not for the worse! We have still among us, I admit, anxious care, wholesome emulation, and a sense of responsibility. These have been passed on to you without diminution. In support of what I say, there is the fact that you do not spare your substance any more than your predecessors did. But it is the change in the investment that makes the difference. It is a great abuse. Few look to the mouth of the lawgiver: all have regard to his hands. And not without good

reason. The hands do all the Pope's business. Show me a man in the whole city of Rome who welcomed you as Pope without having his price, or hoping to get it. Even when they profess to be your very humble servants, they aim at being your masters. They pledge their fidelity only that they may more conveniently injure the confiding. Hence it is that there can be no deliberation from which they think they ought to be excluded; there will be no secret into which they do not worm their way. If the doorkeeper keeps one of them waiting a minute or two, I should not like to be in his shoes. Now for a few illustrations, so that you may know whether I understand this people's ways, and how far. First of all, they are wise to do evil, but they know not how to do good. Hateful to heaven and earth, they have laid hands on both; they are impious towards God, heedless in holy things; turbulent among themselves, jealous of their neighbours, barbarous to foreigners, they love no man and are loved of none; and when they aim at being feared by all, all must fear. These are they who cannot bear to be beneath, though they are not qualified to be at the head, faithless to superiors, insufferable to inferiors. They have no modesty in asking, and no shame in refusing. They worry you to get what they want; they cannot rest till they get it; they have no gratitude once they have got it. They have taught their tongue to speak great things, when there is but little doing. They are lavish promisers, niggardly performers; the smoothest of flatterers, and the worst of backbiters; artless dissemblers, and malignant traitors. I allow myself to digress thus far because I think you ought to be fully and precisely admonished of these things which are around you.

5. Let us now return to our subject. How is it that churches are robbed to provide the purchase-money of the flatterers who cry 'Well done! Well done!'? The sustenance of the poor is scattered broadcast in the streets of the rich. The money glitters in the mud; men rush from all sides to get it; the poor man does not pick it up, but the stronger, or, it may be, the swiftest runner. Still, I must in fairness say this custom, or rather this deadly disease, did not begin with you; would that it might end with you. But let us proceed. Amid these surroundings you, the shepherd, parade in cloth of gold, with every luxury at your command. The sheep, what do they receive? If I might speak the truth, these are the pastures of demons rather than of sheep. Did Peter, forsooth, do such things, or Paul thus sport himself? You see that the one object of the Church's zeal is the preservation of your dignity. Honour claims all, holiness nothing, or but little. If for good reason you attempt to waive ceremony, and show a little friendliness, 'No,' say they: 'it is not becoming': 'it does not suit the time': 'it is not

accordant with your rank': 'bear in mind the important part you play.' The last thing mentioned is the will of God; there is no hesitation because men's salvation is at stake; let us call nothing salutary but what is high and mighty; and whatever gives the scent of glory, let that be righteousness. Thus all humility is reckoned a disgrace among the inmates of the palace, so that you may more easily find a man who really is humble than you will one who is willing to appear so. The fear of the Lord is counted simplicity, not to say folly. They revile a prudent man, who is on good terms with his own conscience, as a hypocrite. A lover of quiet, moreover, who sometimes finds leisure to think about himself, they call a useless drone.

CHAPTER III

The necessity of curtailing extravagance in dress, &c.

6. How is it then with you? Are you not yet awake, and on your guard against those who have surrounded you with the snares of death? Pray bear with me yet a little while. Nay, rather, pardon me when I say these things with less temerity than timidity. I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, and I would it were as profitable as it is strong. I know where you dwell; unbelievers and subverters are with you. They are wolves, not sheep; but you are the shepherd of these as well as of the rest. The consideration will be profitable if it leads you to the discovery of some means of converting them lest they subvert you. They were sheep and turned into wolves; why despair of their turning back again into sheep? Here, here, I do not spare you, so that God may spare you. At least either deny that you are shepherd over this people, or show that you are. You will not deny it, lest he, whose chair you fill, deny that you are his heir. I mean, of course, Peter, who never, so far as can be ascertained, paraded himself decked with gems, or robed in silks; he was not covered with gold, he did not ride on a white steed, he was not surrounded by soldiers, nor fenced off from his flock by noisy attendants. He thought that without all this he could amply fulfil the salutary command, 'If you love me, feed my sheep,' In all this painted pomp you are not Peter's successor, but Constantine's. What I insist on is that while you may tolerate such pomp and glory to suit the time, you must not claim it as a debt due to you. I rather urge you to consider those things which are a debt due from you. If on state occasions you are robed in purple and decked with gold, I am sure this does not mean that you, the shepherd's heir, shrink from the shepherd's toil, or the shepherd's care; it does not imply that you are ashamed of the Gospel. Albeit, if you willingly

preach the Gospel, you, too, have a glorious place among the apostles. To preach the Gospel is to feed the sheep. Do the work of an evangelist, and you have done the work of a shepherd.

7. ‘You are advising me’, you say, ‘to feed dragons and scorpions, not sheep.’ For that very reason, I reply, set about them; but with the word, not with the sword. Why should you again try to use the sword, which you were once for all bidden to put into its sheath? Yet if any one should deny that you have the sword, he does not seem to me to have paid sufficient attention to his Lord’s words, ‘Put back thy sword into the sheath.’ To you, then, the sword belongs, and it should be unsheathed, it may be with your consent, though not by your hand. Otherwise, if it no way belonged to you, when the apostles said, ‘Lo, here are two swords,’ the Lord would not have replied, ‘It is enough’; He would have said, ‘They are too many.’ Both swords belong to the Church, the spiritual and the material; the one is to be used to defend the Church, but the other must even be banished from the Church; the one is wielded by the priest, the other by the soldier, but of course with your consent, and at the command of the Emperor. More of this elsewhere. Now, however, seize the sword which was entrusted to you that you might strike; wound, for the saving of their souls, if not all, if not many even, at all events as many as you can.

8. You say, ‘I am not better than my fathers.’ I will not, ask to which of your fathers this exasperating house ever hearkened, which of them it did not mock. Therefore do you the more firmly take your stand if haply they may hear, and be still; insist even when they resist. When I speak thus, I shall, perhaps, be said to use extravagant language. Was it I who said, ‘Be instant in season, out of season’? Call the apostle ‘extravagant’ if you dare. The prophet ¡s commanded to ‘cry aloud and cease not’. To whom was be to cry unless it was to the wicked and to sinners? ‘Declare unto my people their wickedness, and to the house of Jacob their sins.’ Carefully observe that the same people are called ‘wicked’, and ‘the people of the Lord’. Take the same view of those with whom you have to do. Although they are wicked, although they are unrighteous, see that you are not told, ‘Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of my brethren, ye did it not to me.’ I admit that this people has ever been of a hard forehead and of a wild heart; but I fail to see how you can know that their heart cannot be tamed. What has never been may yet be. You may despair, but with God no word shall be impossible. If they are of a hard forehead, do you also harden yours. Nothing is so hard that it does not yield to that which is harder. The Lord said to the prophet, ‘I have made thy forehead harder than their foreheads,’ If you have so

dealt with that people that you can say, ‘My people, what ought I to have done for thee that I have not done,’ this is your only sound defence. If you have thus done, and yet have done no good, there is still something that you can do, something that you can say. Go forth from Ur of the Chaldees, and say, ‘I must preach the Gospel also to other cities.’ I think you will not regret your exile if you exchange Rome for the world.

CHAPTER IV

The Pope’s colleagues and coadjutors at the Lateran

9. Let us come to your colleagues and coadjutors at the Lateran. They are busy on your behalf: they are the inner circle of your friends. It follows that if they are good, you more than any one else reap the benefit; if they are bad, you more than any one else bear the loss. Do not say you are well if you have a pain in your side; what I mean is, do not say you are good if you rely on bad men. To put it differently, suppose you are good, what fruit (as I remember saying in a former book) can your goodness, the goodness of an individual man, bear? What profit does your individual righteousness bring to the churches of God, when the prevalent views are those of men otherwise disposed? The truth is that not even your own goodness beset by had men is safer than bodily health would be with a serpent hard by. There is no escaping from this internal mischief. And on the other hand, if you have good men about you, the oftener they assist you the better. But whether your colleagues relieve or aggravate your cares, who deserves the credit of it more than yourself for either choosing or admitting such men? I do not speak of all; for there are some whom you have not chosen; they have chosen you. But they have no power except what you have either given or allowed them. So we come back to the same point. Blame yourself for whatever you have to suffer at the hands of him who has no more power than what you have given him. As to the rest, with these exceptions, the men for the work of this ministry, as you perceive, are not to be elected or collected without due consideration. It is your duty, like Moses, to summon, whencesoever, and admit to their office, old men, not young men; old, I mean, not so much in years as character; men whom you have got to know because they are the elders of the people. Surely they who are to judge the world ought to be chosen out of the whole world. By no means let a man meddle with this business because he begs the office. Deliberation, not entreaty, must be your guide to action. Some things we must yield to importunate request, or grant to deserving need. But in so doing

we are disposing of our own. When, however, it is not lawful for me to do as I wish myself, the petitioner has no standing-place, unless, perchance, his petition is that his wish may lawfully be mine, and not simply that it may be mine. One man intercedes for another; another perhaps even asks for himself. Suspect the man on whose behalf you are entreated: the man who asks for himself is already judged. It does not matter whether a man himself asks, or does so through another man. If a cleric who does not belong to the court is always about the court, you may be sure he is the sort of person who is on the look out for favours. A flatterer, and a man who smooths his tongue to suit everybody, regard as a petitioner, even if he asks for nothing. There is nothing in the scorpion's face to cause alarm; the sting is in the tail.

10. If, as mostly happens, you find your heart softening under the blandishments of such men, remember what is written, 'Every man setteth on first the good wine, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse.' You should set the same value on the humility of the man who fears and of the man who hopes. The crafty and deceitful man has a peculiar knack of putting on the garb of humility when he wishes to get something; he is like those of whom the Scripture says, 'There is a wicked man who hangeth down his head sadly, but inwardly he is full of deceit.' To see how true this is, take a clear and familiar illustration from among yourselves. How many of suppliant mien have you admitted whom you have afterwards had to put up with in their moroseness, insolence, stubbornness, rebellion? The secret mischief, hidden at first, is at last revealed. The stripling full of words, aiming at eloquence, when he is void of wisdom, you should look upon as every way the enemy of righteousness. To guard you against false brethren of this sort your Master says, 'Lay hands hastily on no man.'

11. So, then, having shut out the whole race of these pestilent men, make it your chief care to bring in those whose admission you will not afterwards regret. The frequent revision of your own acts is discreditable, and it is not fitting that your judgement should be frequently called in question. Accordingly, diligently examine for yourself, and with the assistance of the men who love you, whatever is to be done. Examine beforehand, because, once the thing is done, correction is too late. The wise man's counsel is, 'Do nothing without counsel, and when thou hast once done thou shalt not repent.' And be assured of this, that men fit to be admitted can hardly find favour with the court; if possible, therefore, your choice should be of men approved, not to be proved. We, in our monasteries, welcome all sorts of men in the hope of doing them good, but the court has been

accustomed to more readily welcome good men than make men good. If, however, as we have shown, there have been at the court more good men who have failed than bad men who have improved, we must certainly look for men whose failure we need not fear, and whose progress we need not desire, inasmuch as they are already perfect.

12. So then, in choosing men, select not him that willeth, nor him that runneth, but such as hesitate or refuse; even put pressure on these, and compel them to come in. Your spirit may rest in such, I think, as are not of a shameless forehead, but are modest, and have the fear of God; who fear nothing but God, and hope for nothing but from God; who observe not the hands of those who approach them, but their necessities; who stand up manfully for the afflicted, and judge in equity for the meek upon earth; men who are of orderly life, proved holiness, ready to obey, meek in suffering, submissive under discipline, stern in censuring, who hold the Catholic faith, are faithful in their stewardship, lovers of peace and concord, consistent in maintaining unity; men upright in judgement, prudent in counsel, discreet in commanding, careful in planning, strenuous in action, modest in speech; tranquil in adversity, devout in prosperity; as regards zeal, sober-minded; prone to pity; in leisure time not idle; given to hospitality, but not too convivial; careful in business affairs, but not anxious; not covetous of another man’s goods, nor lavish of their own; everywhere, and under all circumstances, circumspect; men who when bidden, and necessity requires, would not decline to serve as ambassadors for Christ, nor unbidden would aspire to the office, nor make their modest excuses a plea for obstinate refusal; who when sent do not go after gold, but follow Christ; who do not regard their commission as so much gain, nor look for reward, but seek fruit; who in the eyes of kings are as John, to the Egyptians are as Moses, to fornicators as Phinees, to idolaters as Elijah, to the covetous as Elisha, to liars as Peter, to blasphemers as Paul, to traffickers as Christ; who do not despise the common people, but teach them; do not flatter the rich, but frighten them; do not oppress the poor, but cherish them; do not dread the threats of rulers, but despise them; do not make a great to-do when they enter on their work, nor show signs of anger when they leave it; who do not rob the churches, but improve them; do not empty men’s pockets, but refresh their hearts, and correct their offences; who take care of their own reputation, and do not envy another man his; who zealously cultivate prayerful habits, and in everything rely more on prayer than on their own industry and labour; whose coming bringeth peace, whose departure we regret; whose speech is edifying, their life righteous, their presence a pleasure, their

memory blessed; who to the individual are amiable not in word, but in deed, while they command the respect of the world at large, not by their arrogance, but by the discharge of their duties; who are humble with the humble, and innocent with the innocent; who sternly rebuke the hardened, restrain the wicked, duly recompense the proud; who are not swift to enrich themselves or their relations with the portion of the widow, and the patrimony of the Crucified; who freely give what they have freely received, judgement to those who suffer wrong, vengeance on nations, rebuking peoples; who, in short, like the seventy whom Moses chose, are perceived to have taken of your spirit, and by it, whether absent or present, strive to please you, and to please God; who return to you, weary indeed, but not laden with gifts; while they even glory, not because they have brought with them all the curiosities and treasures of the lands, but because they have left behind them peace to kingdoms, the law for barbarians, quiet for monasteries, order for the churches, discipline for the clergy, a people acceptable to God, zealous of good works.

CHAPTER V

The Pope should refuse bribes. Martin and Gaufrid. The arrogance of the Pope's attendants

13. I think it worth while to here plunge into the story of our dear brother Martin, whose memory is sweet to me. You have heard the story, but may not perhaps remember it. He was a Cardinal Presbyter, and for some time was Legate in Dacia, but returned so poor that with his money almost gone, and the horses nearly worn out, he could scarcely reach Florence. There the bishop of the place gave him a horse, on which he rode as far as Pisa, where we happened to be at the time. The next day, I think it was, the bishop, who had a lawsuit pending, with the day of hearing rapidly approaching, followed Martin, and began to solicit the votes of his friends. One by one their support had been solicited, and then came Martin's turn. The bishop relied more upon him, because he could not be unmindful of the recent act of kindness. Martin thus replied: 'You have deceived me. I did not know that this business was so close. Take your horse: there it is in the stable.' And that very hour he gave it up to him. What say you to that, my dear Eugenius? To think of a legate returning from a land of gold without gold! Does it not sound like news from another world? To think of his passing through a land of silver, and not know silver! Above all, to have at once rejected a gift which might not have been free from suspicion!

14. But oh! how glad I am here to have an opportunity of reviving the memory of a man who bears a name of sweetest fragrance. I mean Gaufrid, Bishop of Carnotes, who for many years, at his own expense, vigorously conducted an embassy in Aquitania. What I speak of, I saw myself. I was with him in that country when a certain priest presented him with a fish generally called a sturgeon. The legate inquired how much it would fetch. ‘I cannot’, said he, ‘accept it unless you receive the value’; and he paid the would-be donor, reluctant and blushing to take the money, five gold pieces. On another occasion, when we were in a certain town, a lady of the place devoutly offered him, together with a towel, two or three dessert-dishes, of beautiful workmanship, but made of wood. The man of tender conscience gazed at them for some time, and praised them, but he would not accept them. Was he likely ever to receive silver dishes after refusing wooden ones? Nobody could say to the legate, ‘We have made Abraham rich.’ But he, like Samuel, was thus speaking freely to all: ‘Witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a bribe? and I will this day despise it, and I will restore it to you.’ Oh! that there were given to us plenty of men such as these we have glanced at. You would be the happiest man in the world, and the age the most delightful. Would not the blessedness of those times seem to you only next to the joys of eternity, when, wherever you turned, you saw yourself surrounded on all sides with so glorious a band of the blessed?

15. If I know you, you are perplexed; you sigh deeply and say to yourself, ‘Do you suppose that is ever likely to come to pass?’ Your thoughts run thus—‘Our present position is plain enough. How far is what you tell me possible? May I live and have the good fortune of seeing it accomplished! Oh! that I might be spared to behold the Church of God supported by such pillars! Oh! if I might see my Lord’s spouse in the keeping of such fidelity, entrusted to such purity! How blessed would be my lot! how safe! if I might behold about me men of that class both guarding and bearing witness to my life, to whom I might safely impart my secrets, and communicate my plans; to whom I might pour out my heart as to a second self; who, if I wished to turn aside, would not allow me, would check me in my headlong course; would wake me out of my slumber; whose respectful freedom would check my pride and correct my error; whose constancy and courage would steady me when wavering, cheer me when desponding; whose faith and holiness would urge me on to whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are modest, whatsoever things are

lovely and of good report.’ Now, my dear Eugenius, look once more at the present condition of the Court or Church, and the pursuits of the prelates, particularly of those who are about your person.

16. So far, so good. But I have only gently touched the wall, I have not dug into it. You may dig and see, like the son of the prophet. I must not go farther. One obvious remark I will make. Your attendants ridiculously endeavour to take precedence of their fellow presbyters. This is contrary to reason, to antiquity, and to the general consent of authority. And if trickery works, as is commonly the case, its own downfall, surely better this than that the highest order be despised. However that may be, their chief plea in defence of their ambitious efforts is very absurd. ‘We’, say they, ‘are those who at every function are more closely associated with our master, the Holy Father; when he sits, we sit nearest to him; when he goes in procession, we follow next to him.’ All this is not a privilege accorded to rank, but a debt due from assiduous service; through the very formalities of service the work gives meaning to the name of ‘deacon’. In short, while the presbyters in ordered session surround the throne, ye deacons stand at the foot. Ye stand near that your master may have you in greater readiness. In the Gospels we read that ‘there arose a strife among the disciples as to which of them might seem to be the greatest’. You would be happy, Eugenius, if the rest of the things around you could be controlled after the same pattern.

CHAPTER VI

It is not becoming in the Pope to be absorbed in the management of his household to the neglect of weightier matters. He should have a steward

17. We are now tired of the Court; let us leave the palace; they are waiting for us at home. The inmates are not only around you, but in a way they are inside you. It is not superfluous to consider how you propose to order your household, to provide for those who are in your lap and in your bosom. I say that the consideration is not only not superfluous, but that it is necessary. Listen to Paul’s words, ‘If a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?’ And again, ‘If any man provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.’ When I say this, I am not admonishing you, occupied as you are with matters of the highest importance, to devote yourself to the lowest; in a way, to grow less, and spend on trifles what you owe to weighty affairs. Why entangle yourself in those things from which God has rescued you? ‘All these

things', He says, 'shall be added unto you.' Still, you ought to do these things, and not leave the others undone. But while you personally attend to the great things, you should also personally provide representatives to see to your little things. For if a single servant cannot at the same time look after the cattle, and take charge of the tables, how can you without assistance attend both to your own house and to the house of the Lord? Of this latter we read, 'O Israel, how great is the house of the Lord!' Your mind, intent on matters of so great and so varied importance, ought, in fact, to be relieved of all anxiety for more trifling and baser things. It should be free from all prepossessing and engrossing occupations. It should be of such nobility that no unworthy affection can drag it down. It should be so straightforward that no evil purpose can turn it aside. It should be cautious without harbouring stealthy suspicion. It should be watchful lest it be distracted by impertinent and inquisitive thoughts. It should be so rooted and grounded that it be not shaken by any sudden blast. It should be invincible, so that it sink not under even lasting tribulation. It should be so large that it can find ample room for any temporal loss.

18. Be quite sure that you must be stripped of these blessings, and smitten with these curses, if you divide your attention and wish to share yourself between the things of God and your own trivial affairs. You must get some one for the work, some one to do the grinding for you. For you, I say, not with you. There are some things you will do yourself, some with the assistance of other men, and some entirely through the agency of others. Who is a wise man, and he will understand these things? You must not let your consideration go to sleep over them. Now, in my opinion, the details of your household management belong to the class last mentioned. As I have intimated, you will do them by means of someone else. But your representative, if he be not faithful, will cheat; if he be not prudent, men will cheat him. So then, you must look out for a man both faithful and prudent to set over your household. Still, he will be useless if a third quality be lacking. Do you ask what this is? It is authority. For what is the good of his wishing to manage, and knowing how, as necessity arises, if he cannot act according to his wishes and his knowledge? You must therefore give him a free hand. If you think this is unreasonable, bear in mind that he is a faithful servant, who, nevertheless, desires to follow reason; and he is a prudent servant, who, nevertheless, knows how to follow reason. But a faithful and sagacious will can only avail when it is so adequately supported that it can act with perfect case and freedom, and command the unhesitating obedience of all. All the rest must therefore be under him. Let him brook no opposition. Let there

be no one to say, ‘Why have you done so?’ Let him have power to shut out and let in whom he chooses, to change the servants, to transfer the service to whom he likes and when he likes. Let all so fear him that all may benefit by him. Let him be before all that he may be a boon to all, and in all respects. Do not lend an ear when he is secretly disparaged by whisperers and backbiters; rather rebuke such slanderers. And I would like you to make a general rule of regarding with suspicion any man who is afraid to say openly what he has told you privately. But if in your judgement it ought to be told face to face, and he refuse, pronounce him an informer, not an accuser.

19. So then let one person assign their several duties to all the rest, and let the rest be responsible to the one person. You should trust him, and so gain time for yourself and the Church of God. If the choice lies between a trustworthy servant and a prudent one, it is better to appoint the former. Of the two this is certainly the safer course. However, if you cannot find a suitable person, even if a man be not so faithful as he ought, I advise you to put up with it rather than lose your way in this labyrinth of domestic care. Remember that Judas was our Lord’s steward. What is more disgraceful for a bishop than that he should spend his energy on his furniture, and his bit of property? He should not be always prying into things, asking about every thing, eaten up with suspicion, and disturbed at every little loss or symptom of neglect. I say this to shame some of that sort, who never let a day pass without taking an inventory of all their belongings, reckoning up every item, and demanding an account of mites and farthings. Not so the Egyptian who gave up all to Joseph, and knew not what he had in his house. The Christian should blush who cannot trust a Christian with his property. He was not a believer, but he had faith in his servant, and set him over all his goods—and the servant was a foreigner.

20. Herein is a marvellous thing. The bishops can command men enough and to spare for the trust of souls, and yet cannot find a single person in whose hands they may place their small estates. They must be excellent judges of the relative values of things to take such great care of the smallest matters, and so little of the greatest. But, as we are given to clearly understand, we do more patiently suffer Christ’s loss than our own. We meet our daily expenditure with a daily scrutiny, and know nothing of the constant damage which the Lord’s flock sustains. There is a daily discussion with our servants about the price of food and the number of loaves: a conference with our presbyters to consider the sins of our people is a very rare occurrence. The ass falls, and there is some one to lift him up: the soul perishes, and no one takes account thereof. And no wonder,

when we do not perceive our own unceasing defects! Are we not angry, do we not burn with indignation, are we not tormented with anxiety, whenever we cast up the figures? How much more patiently should we bear material than mental loss! ‘Wherefore’, says the Apostle, ‘do ye not rather suffer to be defrauded?’ You who teach others, pray teach yourself, if you have not already done so, to set a higher price upon yourself than upon your belongings. Those transitory things which cannot abide with you, make them pass away from you, not through you. The flowing stream hollows out a channel for itself; similarly temporal things coursing through the mind eat away the conscience. If the torrent can sweep across the fields without injuring the crops, you may confidently expect to handle such matters without mental hurt. I counsel you by all means to endeavour to divert the onset of these things. Many of them should be unknown to you, the greater number be unnoticed, some forgotten.

21. There are, however, some things as to which I would not have you ignorant: I refer to the character and pursuits of your various servants. You ought not to be the last to know the faults of your household, which, as we are aware, is the experience of very many. Wherefore, as I have said, let another manage the rest, but do you yourself see to the discipline. Trust that to nobody. If in your presence there is any tendency to arrogant conversation, or showy dress, stretch out your hand against such offences; be yourself the avenger of the wrong done to you. Impunity is the mother of audacity, audacity brings forth excess. Holiness becomes the house of a bishop, modesty becomes it, good repute becomes it; the guardian of all these is discipline. The priests of the household are either more highly esteemed than others, or they are the common talk. In the look, dress, gait of the priests about your person you should allow no trace of immodesty or indecency. Let your fellow bishops learn from you not to have about them boys with their hair curled, or effeminate youths. It is surely unbecoming for a bishop to go hither and thither surrounded by fops who wear the turban and use the curling iron. And remember the admonition of the wise man, ‘They are thy daughters: make not thy face cheerful toward them.’

22. And yet what I am commending to you is not austerity, but gravity. The former puts to flight the weaklings; the latter checks the frivolous. If a man be austere, he is odious: if he be not grave, he becomes contemptible; yet in everything there is a happy medium. I would not have you act with too great severity, nor with too great laxity. What is more pleasing than that moderation which prevents your severity making you oppressive, and your familiarity making you contemptible? In the palace be the Holy Father, at home the father

of the family. Let your household love you; if they do not, make them fear you. It is always well to so keep the door of the lips as not to shut out the grace of affability. The hasty tongue must therefore always be bridled, but specially at the feast. Your deportment will be most fitting if in action you are strict, in look cheerful, in speech serious. Let not the chaplains, and those who are associated with you in the divine offices, be without honour. It is for you to provide yourself with such men as are worthy. Let all pay attention to them, as it is to yourself. Let them receive at your hand what is necessary for their support. Let them be content with the provision you make for them, and do you see that they want not. If you catch one of them begging more from your visitors, judge him as you would Gehazi; and you must have the same rule for the doorkeepers, and the other officials. But all this is superfluous, for I remember that you long ago planned it all. What is more worthy of your apostleship? What more wholesome for your conscience, more conducive to good report, more profitable by way of example? It is an excellent rule to banish greed beyond the reach of scandal, and not only to be innocent of it.

CHAPTER VII

The ideal Pope

23. I will now bring this book to a close, but in ending I should like by way of epilogue to either recapitulate some things already said, or add some which I passed over. Before all, consider that the holy Roman Church of which God has made you head, is the mother of churches, not their mistress; but that you are not sovereign lord of the bishops, but one of them, the brother, too, of those who love God, and a partaker with them that fear Him. As for the rest, consider that you ought to be a model of righteousness, a mirror of holiness, a pattern of piety, the asserter of truth, the defender of the faith, the teacher of nations, the guide of Christians, the friend of the bridegroom, the leader of the bride to her spouse, the ordainer of the clergy, the shepherd of the people, the instructor of the foolish, the refuge of the oppressed, the advocate of the poor, the hope of the wretched, the protector of the fatherless, the judge of the widow, the eye of the blind, the tongue of the dumb, the staff of the aged, the avenger of wickedness, the fear of bad men, the glory of the good, a rod for the powerful, a hammer for tyrants, the father of kings, the mitigater of laws, the dispenser from canons, the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the priest of the Most High, the vicar of Christ, the Lord’s anointed, and lastly the God of Pharaoh. Understand what I say: the Lord

will give thee understanding. When power and wickedness go hand in hand, we must claim something for you more than human. Let your countenance be upon them that do evil. Let him who fears not man, nor dreads the sword, fear the breath of your anger. Let him fear your prayer who has despised your admonition. Let him think that he who incurs your wrath incurs the wrath not of man but of God. He who has not heard you, let him quake at the thought that God will hear you, and will be against him. We now turn to the discussion of what remains, namely, the things above you. I shall hope, with God's help, to pay this debt in one book, and so be quit of my promise.

BOOK V

[IN this book St. Bernard considers the things above us (ch. i), first discussing the respective provinces of Opinion, Faith, and Understanding (ch. ii, iii), then proceeding to the Holy Angels (ch. iv, v), the Being of God (ch. vi, vii, viii, xi), the Person of Christ (ch. ix, x). In ch. xii we have God the Judge, and a conception of Hell in striking accord with much of the exposition of modern times. The book concludes (ch. xiv) with an impressive illustration of the mystical interpretation of Holy Scripture (Eph. 3:18)—God regarded as 'length, breadth, height, depth', and our 'comprehension' of Him as such.

The Schoolmen. The term scholastic originally denoted a teacher in the schools founded throughout his empire by Charlemagne under the direction of our countryman, Alcuin of York. Used as an adjective, the word described the subjects taught—'scholastic history,' 'scholastic philosophy,' 'scholastic theology,' during the thousand years of the Transition Period, from the sixth to the sixteenth century.

In a movement so extended there were, of course, many developments. Of the schoolmen by whom St. Bernard may have been influenced, directly or indirectly, we need only mention John Scotus Erigena, John the Irishman (b. between A. D. 800 and A. D. 810, d. about A. D. 877); Berengarius of Tours (A. D. 999–1088); Lanfranc, his opponent (b. A. D. 1005, d. A. D. 1089, Abbot of Bec, and from A. D. 1070 Abp. of Canterbury); Roscelin, the reputed founder of Nominalism (condemned at the Council of Soissons, A. D. 1092); William of Champeaux (b. A. D. 1070, d. A. D. 1121); Abelard, pupil of the two preceding (b. A. D. 1079, d. A. D. 1142); Anselm (b. A. D. 1033, d. A. D. 1109, also Abbot; of Bec and Abp. of Canterbury); and Gilbert of Poitiers, whose views were discussed at Rheims (A. D. 1148).

Whatever may be said of after times when Dialectics became a branch of professorial study in the Universities of the Middle Ages, it would be doing great injustice to represent these men as mere triflers, hair-splitters, verbal quibblers, syllogistic conjurers, and so forth. They 'often described wearisome circles, rushed vehemently into culs-de-sac, wandered about a labyrinth, vainly demanding an outlet'. Many of their folios may be fossils, but 'we may surely

believe that their way was foreseen, that they had a Guide, that there was a method which all these bewilderments were to help them in finding out'. There were deep fires burning in their bosoms, and both the intellect and the affections were in training for the better future.

Nor would it be right to represent them as in revolt against authority. The human reason was awaking after its long slumber, and the giant was not easily controlled. The revolt was not so much against authority, as against logic. John the Irishman rightly felt that Aristotle's 'Categories' belonged to the regions of sensible and intelligible things, but that when we ascend to the consideration of Him who transcends sense and intelligence, logical categories are out of place—God is neither Genus, Species, nor Accident. There was an earnest desire, not to uproot the Faith, but to find an intellectual basis for it, not to discard either reason or faith, but to reconcile their claims. 'Realism', 'Nominalism,' 'Conceptualism,' to vast numbers are only names, but to those who have eyes to see they stand for the profoundest controversy which has ever engaged the thought of man, and are expressions of man's determination to get, if possible, to the bottom of things, and ascertain if reality anywhere exists, or life is but a dream. Even Abelard—all grudges between him and Bernard were set at rest; let us, too, think tenderly, and speak gently of him—is entitled to our gratitude and respect. There were doubtless faults in his intellectual temper, he may or may not have been the first 'champion of free inquiry', but he strove for the emancipation of reason, without which magna est veritas et praevalebit will never be a maxim of the possible.

From the time when Boethius (about A. D. 520) wrote his treatise on The Unity of God against the Arians, Nestorians, and Eutychians, the name into which we are baptized was all through the Middle Ages the subject of ceaseless speculation and discussion. We may deplore the fact that so sacred a theme should be the shuttlecock of logic, but once reason began to move, it would infallibly set itself problems, ontological, psychological, metaphysical, in trying to solve the mystery of God—the highest and greatest object of thought, the answer of both Anselm and Bernard to the question, 'What is God?' And it is not difficult to see the working of the principle of compensation: 'wisdom is justified of her children.' If theology 'received from logic a portion of its dryness and formality', it is no less true that 'logic received from theology its personality and vehemence'. Some powerful stimulus to thought was needed in the days of barbaric indifference. What likely to be so potent as the dogmas of predestination, Christ's presence in the Eucharist, and, underlying these, the

being and nature of God, ‘the root of all things and all thought’?

St. Bernard was neither by taste nor training qualified to take a distinguished part in the dialectics of his time. He could not speculate like Anselm, nor argue like Abelard. He hated heresies ‘as foes to practical life, as disturbers of the devotion of monasteries, as hinderers of the common action of the Christian nations against the Infidels’: he was no less a determined opponent of the logic of the schools; he was, however, a saint, not a doctor; and if he overcame the objects of his fiery wrath, if Abelard and Gilbert both submitted, it was not because of the fine temper of his sword or the skill with which he used it, but because he bore them down by his earnestness, his impetuosity, his reputation for holiness, and the sheer weight of his unrivalled authority.

Once more there is perhaps reason for gratitude. If St. Bernard had been differently constituted, our libraries might have been encumbered with more ‘fossil folios’, to the loss of his inspiring exhortations and such helpful meditations on the Godhead as he communicated to Eugenius. St. Anselm thus poured out his soul—‘I do not attempt, O Lord, to penetrate Thy profundity, because in no sense can I compare it with my intellect: but I do desire to comprehend Thy truth, even though imperfectly, that truth which my heart believes and cherishes. For I seek not to comprehend in order to believe, but I believe in order to comprehend. I believe, because if I did not believe, I should never comprehend.’ St. Bernard’s attitude was somewhat different. It cannot be better expressed than in the words of Frederick Denison Maurice—‘Bernard did not dislike Abelard mainly as a rebel against authority, but as outraging what he conceived to be the divine charity or love. Righteousness was not so much the foundation of his mind as it was of Anselm’s. He was not nearly so just a man. But no writer of any age has dwelt more upon love as constituting the very being and nature of God, and as the perfection of man because he is made in the image of God. This is the characteristic feature of his mind; in it, we believe, lay the secret of his power. The idea of the Trinity was in him the idea of the absolute, all-embracing love. Any other basis of divinity he abhorred. The intellectual conceptions of Abelard were indifferent to him when they were applied to any other subject, were utterly offensive when applied to theology. The explanations which were welcomed with so much enthusiasm by Abelard’s youthful hearers, were to him the dry, hard substitutes for a living truth. That which appeared to quicken and inspire them, smelt in his nostrils of the grave and the charnel-house.’ Hence St. Bernard’s portrait of Abelard laid before the Pope—Ponit in coclum os suum et scrutatur alta Dei.

Mysticism. ‘The name given to a school of thought which arose in the way of recoil from the cold and exact logic of Scholasticism in the twelfth century. Its leading idea is that perfect holiness and spiritual knowledge are to be attained by devout contemplation rather than by outward means of grace and theological study. The three stages of such perfection are defined as Purification, Illumination, and Perfect Union with God’ (Dict. of Doctrinal and Historical Theology, p. 501). It was no novelty in St. Bernard’s century; contemplative natures must have been at all times disposed towards it; the older monastic systems are said to have been characterized by it in a high degree; and the writings of the fifth century, falsely attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite (Acts 17:34) had great influence on the religious thought of the Middle Ages. John the Irishman was the first to combine Mysticism with Scholasticism. In his leading work, the De Divisione Naturae, he puts the following prayer into the mouth of the student—‘God, our salvation and redemption, who hast given us nature, grant to us also grace. Manifest Thy light to us, feeling after Thee, and seeking Thee, in the shades of ignorance. Recall us from our errors. Stretch out Thy right hand to us weak ones who cannot, without Thee, come to Thee. Show Thyself to those who seek nothing besides Thee. Break the clouds of vain phantasies which suffer not the eye of the mind to behold Thee in that way in which Thou permittest those that long to behold that face of Thine, though it is invisible, which is their rest, the end beyond which they crave for nothing, seeing that there cannot be any good beyond it that is higher than itself.’ The orthodox mystics of the twelfth century had a common aim, viz. to reconcile the claims of contemplative piety with those of scientific theology, but expressed themselves very differently. Bernard held that not argument but holiness comprehends the things of God; Hugo of St. Victor (A. D. 1097–1141) laid down the principle that ‘the uncorrupted truth of things cannot be discovered by reasoning’; Richard of St. Victor, disciple of this last (d. A. D. 1173) treated the faculty of mystical contemplation as superior to the imagination and the reason. Another Victorian, Walter (about A. D. 1180) gave to Abelard, Peter Lombard, Gilbert, and Peter of Poitiers the name of the four labyrinths of France. In the following century Bonaventura (d. A. D. 1274) rose to the full height of sublimity, or extravagance, by subordinating all human wisdom to divine illumination. He did not see—how could he, when the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Source of all life, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, was so little understood?—that true human wisdom is ‘divine illumination’. It is related that Thomas Aquinas, the ‘angelical’ doctor, on a visit to Bonaventura, whose ‘Itinerary of the mind to God’ had won for him

the title of the ‘seraphic’ doctor, asked to be permitted to see the latter’s library. Bonaventura pointed to the crucifix, and said it was there that he had learnt all he knew. This is the ‘spirit’ of the Mystics, and a beautiful spirit it is. With the Mysticism of later periods we are not concerned.]

CHAPTER I

The things ‘above’ us namely, God and things Divine, to which we rise by means of the Creatures

1. The former books, although they bear the title ‘On Consideration’, have very much in them relating to action, inasmuch as they teach or admonish that some things should be not only considered, but also done. But the present book will treat of Consideration only. For the things which are above you—and that is our topic—do not call for action, but for contemplation. It is impossible to take a part in those things which in one sense ever are, and ever will be: some of which, moreover, ever have been. And I would have you, my dear Eugenius, wisest of men, shrewdly observe what I am going to say, namely, that your consideration goes from home as often as it turns from the things above to the visible things below, whether these have to be studied with a view to knowledge, or sought for use, or administered and performed in the discharge of duty. Still, if your consideration so engages in the things below as to seek the things above, it is not banished far. Consideration thus employed is a returning home. That is a higher and worthier use of things present, when, according to the wisdom of Paul, ‘the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made,’ The citizens, doubtless, have no need of the ladder; exiles have, as the author of the words I have quoted himself observed; for, although he said that things invisible are clearly seen through things visible, he significantly added, ‘from the created world.’ And, indeed, what need of steps for him who is already on the throne? Consideration is one of the ‘creatures’ of heaven, and is equipped for deeper insight into the things of heaven. It sees the Word, and in the Word the things made through the Word. It has no need to beg the knowledge of the Maker from the things which have been made. For even to gain a knowledge of these things, it does not descend to them: it sees them where they are far better seen than in themselves. Hence it is that to reach them Consideration does not seek the medium of the senses: it perceives them immediately, and is self percipient. That is the best sort of vision when you lack nothing, when you have your heart’s desire, and find contentment in yourself. Otherwise, you run some risk of seeking satisfaction elsewhere, and this is to fall beneath the standard of

perfection, and enjoy less freedom.

2. And why should you want the lower things? Is it not absurd and unworthy of you? Clearly, by longing for the things below, you do some wrong to the things above: though I admit that mortal man will never be guiltless of such wrongdoing until the time come when he will have escaped into the freedom of the sons of God. For they will all then be taught of God, and without the medium of any creature will be blessed in God alone. This will be a returning home, when we leave the country of our bodies and reach the realm of spirits—I mean our God, the Mighty Spirit, the great abiding place of the spirits of the blessed. There is no place here for the intrusion of sense or imagination; this realm is truth, it is wisdom, virtue, eternity, the highest good. For a while we are absent from it; our present abode is a valley, the vale of tears, where the senses have dominion, and Consideration is an exile: where the bodily sense freely and powerfully manifests itself, but the eye of the spirit is veiled in darkness. What wonder, then, if Consideration, being a foreigner, needs a native's help? And in passing through time to eternity the traveller is to be congratulated who has been able to win for himself the indispensable services of the citizens; using them, not delighting in them; compelling them, though not master of them; demanding them, not begging for them.

CHAPTER II

The Steps of Consideration

3. He is a great man who makes it his concern to utilize the senses, spending, as it were, the wealth of the citizens in thus providing for his own salvation and the salvation of many. And he is no less a man who has made philosophy a steppingstone to the things invisible. The only difference is that there is more pleasure in the latter, more profit in the former: the one has more happiness, the other indicates more strength. But he is the greatest of all who, scorning the use of sensible things, so far as human frailty permits, has accustomed himself, not by gradual steps, but by sudden ecstatic flights to soar aloft to the glorious things on high. I suppose Paul's ecstasies were of this last description: they were departures [from the senses], not the ascent [of the senses]; for he himself relates that he did not ascend into Paradise, but was rather caught up thither. This is what he means by saying 'If we mentally depart, it is to the glory of God'. Moreover, when Consideration, even in the place of its sojourning, through the pursuit of virtue, and with the help of grace, has gained the upper hand, these

three results follow:—it either checks the senses, lest they assert themselves too Strongly: or draws them in, lest they go too far afield: or shuns them, lest they defile. In the first case the mark of Consideration is strength, in the second freedom, in the third parity. For such a flight of the spirit is only made with the wing of purity on the one side, and of rapture on the other.

4. You would like to know the distinguishing names of these various kinds of Consideration. Let us say, if you please, that the first is economical, the second estimative, the third speculative. The meaning will appear from the definitions. Consideration is ‘economical’—that of the steward—when it makes systematic use of the senses and of sensible things in daily life so as to win the favour of God. It is ‘estimative’—that of the valuer—when it wisely and diligently searches everything, and weighs everything, to find God. It is ‘speculative’ when it retires within itself, and so far as Divine help is given, detaches itself from human affairs in order to contemplate God. I suppose you carefully observe that the last is the fruit of the others, and that the others, if they stand unrelated to it, may seem to be what they are called, but are not really so. And unless the first keeps the last in view, it sows much and reaps nothing; moreover, unless the second makes the last its goal, it walks, but does not walk forth. So then, what the first desires, the second scents, the third tastes. To this taste, however, the others also bring us, though more slowly; and there is a further difference—the first is the more toilsome road, the second the more peaceful.

CHAPTER III

Opinion, Faith, and Understanding

5. Enough about the way up, you say; I have still to tell you whither you must ascend. You deceive yourself if you expect me to do that; it transcends the power of speech. Do you think that I can utter what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and has not entered into the heart of man? ‘God’, the apostle says, ‘has revealed them to us by His Spirit.’ So then the things which are above are not taught by words, they are revealed by the Spirit. But what speech does not explain let Consideration seek, prayer desire, the life merit, purity attain. At all events, when I admonish you to consider the things which are above you, do not think that I am sending you to gaze at the sun, moon, and stars; no, not the firmament itself, nor the waters which are above the heavens. For all these things, though locally ‘above’, are in point of value ‘beneath’ you, even in dignity of nature, as they are material existences. Your portion is the spirit,

whereby you in vain look for anything above you which is not spirit. Moreover, God is a Spirit, and so are the holy angels, and they are above you. But God is a Spirit in virtue of His nature, the angels are your superiors through grace. The special excellence both of yourself and of angelic beings is reason; but in God there is no peculiar excellence; He is altogether excellent. He, and the blessed spirits who are with Him, must in three ways, as it were along their several paths, be by our Consideration sought after—the paths of opinion, faith, and understanding. Of these, understanding depends on reason, faith on authority, while opinion safeguards itself by probability only. Two of them attain to the certainty of truth, but faith possesses truth out of sight and implied, understanding has it naked and manifest; opinion, having no certainty, does not so much apprehend troth as seek it through probabilities.

6. The utmost caution must be exercised so as to avoid confusion, lest the uncertainties of opinion crystallize into articles of faith, or the foundation verities of faith become the questionable matter of opinion. And we should bear this in mind—that opinion venturing on assertion is rash; faith, if it hesitate, is weak; and understanding, if it try to break into the scaled mysteries of faith, is deemed a burglar, and a spy upon the secrets of the throne. Many have taken their own opinion for understanding, and have thus erred. And in truth opinion may be taken for understanding; understanding cannot be taken for opinion. How so? Surely because opinion may be deceived, understanding cannot be; if it could, it would not be understanding, but opinion. For true understanding has not only certain truth, but the knowledge of truth. We may thus define each of them. Faith is, by the exercise of the will, a sure foretaste of truth not yet manifested. Understanding is the sure and clear knowledge of some invisible thing. Opinion is the holding something provisionally true which you do not know to be false. So then, as I have said, faith is free from doubts; if it have doubts it is not faith, but opinion. How, then, does it differ from understanding? Inasmuch as, although there be no more uncertainty in it than there is in understanding, still it has a veil before its eyes, which is not the case with understanding. In short, if you understand a thing, further inquiry is needless; if further inquiry be necessary, you do not understand. But there is nothing we would rather know than what we already know by faith. When the veil shall have been utterly removed from the things of which we are now assured by faith, the cup of bliss will be full.

CHAPTER IV

7. Well now, having thus cleared the way, let us turn our consideration to our mother, Jerusalem above, and with caution and close attention, by all three ways enumerated, search out the things unsearchable, so far, I mean, as may be lawful, or rather, so far as shall be given to us. And first let us remember that the citizens of that country are spirits, mighty, glorious, blessed, separate personalities, of graduated rank, from the beginning standing in their own order, perfect of their kind, having ethereal bodies, endowed with immortality, passionless; not so created, but so made—that is, through grace, not by nature; beings of pure mind, benignant affections, religious and devout; of unblemished morality; inseparably one in heart and mind, blessed with unbroken peace, God's building, dedicated to the divine praises and service. All this we ascertain by reading, and hold by faith. But as regards their bodies, some authorities hesitate to say not only whence they are derived, but whether in any real sense they exist at all. If any one is inclined to think the derivation of these bodies a matter of opinion, I do not dispute the point. Further, if we hold that the angelic beings are endowed with understanding, this is not of faith, nor is it mere opinion; it is a conclusion of our understanding; for if they had not understanding, they could not be partakers of the Divine nature. There are likewise certain names, known to us by the hearing of the ear, by means of which the duties, merits, ranks, orders, of these blessed ones, things only faintly heard by mortal ear, in one way or another may be conjectured and distinguished. But, in truth, what does not come by hearing is not of faith, for faith cometh by hearing. And so we may speak conjecturally of these topics. For what is the good of our knowing the names of the celestial beings if we may not, without prejudice to faith, form some opinion as to the things the names denote? Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim—these are the names. What do they signify? Is there no difference between those spirits who are simply called Angels and those who are called Archangels?

8. What, then, is the meaning of this difference in degree? Let us suppose (unless your consideration has showed you something better) that they are called Angels who are believed to have been given as guardians of individual men, sent to minister, as Paul teaches, on behalf of those who are the heirs of salvation; it was of these the Saviour said, 'Their angels do always behold the face of your Father.' Let us suppose that over these are the Archangels, who, admitted to a knowledge of the Divine secrets, are not sent except for particular and very

weighty reasons. From among these the great Archangel Gabriel was, as we read, sent to Mary, and for the greatest of all reasons. Let us suppose that above these are the Virtues, by whose command or operation signs and wonders wrought in the elements, or through the elements, appear for the warning of mortal men. Perhaps this explains why it is that after reading in the Gospels, ‘There shall be signs in the sun, and the moon, and the stars,’ a little farther on you have, ‘for the Virtues of the heavens shall be moved’: the spirits, no doubt, through whom the signs are wrought. Let us suppose that the Powers are their superiors, and that by their vigour the power of darkness is checked, and the malignant spirits of this lower air are restrained, that they may not do harm to their full intent: that they may not he able to show their malignity, except for beneficial ends. Let us suppose that the Principalities are also preferred to these last, and that by their regulating wisdom all sovereignty upon earth is established, ruled, limited, transferred, curtailed, changed. Let us suppose that the Dominions tower above the aforesaid orders to such a height that in comparison of these all the rest appear to be administrative spirits, and that to the Dominions, as it were to their masters, the Principalities account for their commands, the Powers for their defences, the Virtues for their operations, the Archangels for their revelations, the Angels for their care and foresight. Let us suppose that the Thrones have winged their flight far away beyond even the Dominions, that they are called Thrones because they sit on thrones, and that they therefore sit because God is seated in them. For He could not be seated in those who were not themselves seated. Do you ask what I mean by that sitting? The deepest tranquillity, the utmost calmness and serenity, the peace which passes all understanding. Such is the Lord of Hosts, who sitteth in the Thrones, tranquilly judging all things, perfectly calm, serene, peaceful. And such He made the Thrones, most like Himself. Let us suppose the Cherubim to drink at the very fount of wisdom, the mouth of the Most High, and in turn to pour forth the streams of knowledge for all their fellow citizens. May not this be the ‘rushing river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God,’ of which the prophet spake? Let us suppose the Seraphim to be spirits inflamed with the Divine fire, kindling all things, so that the citizens may be each a burning and a shining lamp, burning with charity, shining with knowledge.

9. How good it is, Eugenius, for us to be here! But how much better will it be if we ever altogether follow on whither we have in part gone before! Our hearts lead the way, but not our whole hearts; only a part, and too often a small part. While our affections are weighed down by the bodily tabernacle, and our desires

cleave to the mire, contemplation, thin and spiritless, is left to wing its flight all alone. And yet out of the depths of its poverty it will cry, ‘O Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thine house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.’ But suppose the soul were to collect itself, and the affections were brought back from all places wheresoever they are kept captive, through fearing what they ought not, loving what they should not, sorrowing in vain, rejoicing still more in vain. Suppose the soul, I say, accompanied by these affections and possessed of full freedom, were to wing its vigorous unimpeded flight, satisfied, as it were, with the marrow and fatness of grace; once it begins to travel round the abodes of light, and more intently gaze upon Abraham’s dear bosom, and see ‘beneath the altar’, whatever that may mean, the souls of the martyrs with utmost patience waiting in their first robe to be clothed with the second, will it not then much more earnestly say with the prophet, ‘One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple’? What prevents the heart of God being there revealed? Why should it not there be proved what is ‘the will of God, the good, acceptable, and perfect will’?—good in itself, pleasing in its effects, acceptable to those who have fruition of it, perfect to the perfect who seek nothing beyond it. Bowels of mercy are disclosed, thoughts of peace, the riches of salvation, the mysteries of the good will, secrets of loving-kindness, which, shut out from mortal ken, are only guessed at even by the elect. But even in this there is something salutary: men might otherwise cease to fear before they are found fit to worthily love.

10. In the heavenly beings who are called Seraphim we may discern how He loves who has no cause to love, and who also hates nothing that He has made; how He cherishes those whom He has made for salvation, teaches them to go, embraces them, how the fire of His love consumes the sins of His elect youth, and the chaff of their ignorances, throughly purifying them for Himself, and making them most worthy of His love. In the Cherubim, who have a name for fullness of knowledge, we may perceive that the Lord is a God of knowledge, who only knoweth all things, and in Him is no ignorance at all; who is altogether light, and in Him is no darkness at all; who is all eye, and who cannot possibly be deceived, because that eye is never closed; who seeks not outside Himself for light which He may approach that He may see, for He sees in the light of His own Being. In the Thrones we may behold how the Judge, trusted by all that is innocent, sits in them; He who will not deceive, and cannot be deceived, inasmuch as He loves, as has been said, and sees, as has been said. Nor is this

His ‘sitting’ without significance; it indicates tranquillity. May my sentence go forth from such a presence where love is found, but no error, no confusion! In the Dominions we may see how majestic is the Lord, who at His pleasure establishes His empire, that empire which is as wide as the universe and shall endure for ever. In the Principalities we may perceive the fount of all things; as a door turns on its hinge, so the universe depends on the King Himself. In the Powers we may see how powerfully the First Cause protects those over whom He rules, keeping off and driving back the hostile powers. In the Virtues we may see everywhere equally present that one Virtue through which are all things, life-giving, active, invisible, unmovable, yet moving all things for beneficial ends, and holding them in its grasp. When this Virtue breaks forth into effects less familiar amongst men, we hear of miracles or prodigies. Lastly, as we contemplate the Angels and Archangels, we may see, and marvel, how true it is in our experience that ‘He careth for us’; He who never ceases to delight us with the visits of such glorious beings, to instruct us with their revelations, admonish us through their suggestions, solace us by their zealous attention.

CHAPTER V

God is the Source of Angelic Gifts and Graces

11. All these gifts and graces were bestowed on these spirits by their Creator, one and the self-same Spirit dividing to them severally as He willed. It is He who worketh them in His creatures, it is He who has given to His creatures the power of working them, but in different ways. The Seraphim burn, but with the fire of God, or rather with fire for God. Their chief characteristic is their love, but they love not as much, nor in the same way, as God. The Cherubim shine, and excel in knowledge, but by participation in the truth; and accordingly they know not as the Truth knows, nor as much. The Thrones sit, but by the favour of Him who sitteth in them. They also tranquilly judge, but not so fully, nor in the same way, as the Peace that giveth peace, the Peace which passes all understanding. The Dominions rule, but they rule in subjection to a ruler, and serve Him as well. What is this in comparison with the supreme, everlasting, unparalleled dominion? The Principalities lead and govern; but they themselves are governed: so that they would no longer know how to govern, if they ceased to be governed. In the Powers there is surpassing strength; but He to whom they owe their strength has more strength, and of a different kind: He is not so much strong, as strength itself. The Virtues, in accordance with their ministry and their

might, are busy rousing the sluggish hearts of men by the novelty of signs; but it is Virtue itself, immanent in them, that does the works. They also do them, but in comparison with that doing they do them not. In short, so great is the difference that the prophet says to Him, as standing apart from all others, ‘Thou art God who doest wondrous things,’ and also concerning Him, ‘Who alone doeth great and marvellous things.’ Angels and Archangels are with us, but He is more our own who is not only with us but in us.

12. But if you say that an Angel may also be in us, I do not deny it. I remember that it is written, ‘The Angel who spake in me.’ And yet there is a difference even here. The Angel is in us suggesting what is good, not bestowing it: stimulating us to goodness, not creating goodness. God is so in us as to give the grace, and infuse it into us; or rather, so in us that He Himself is infused and partaken of, so that one need not fear to say that He is one with our spirit, although He be not one with our person, nor one with our substance. For you know, ‘He that is joined unto God is one spirit.’ The Angel, therefore, is with the soul, God is in the soul. The Angel is in the soul as a comrade, God as life. It follows that as the soul sees in the eyes, hears in the ears, smells in the nostrils, tastes in the palate, has the sense of touch in all the rest of the body, so God worketh different effects in different spirits: for instance, in some He manifests Himself as love, in others as perception, in others as action of various kinds, according as the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. What are we to think of Him who is so common a topic of our speech, but who is so far removed from us in reality? How is it that He whom we describe with mortal words hides Himself in the depths of His own Majesty, and altogether shuns our human forms and affections? Hear what He says to men, ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ We are said to love, so is God: we are said to know, so is God: and much to the same purpose. But God loves like Charity, knows like Truth, sits in judgement like Equity, rules like Majesty, governs like Authority, guards like Safety, works like Virtue, reveals like Light, stands by us like Affection. All these things the Angels also do, and so do we, but in a far inferior way, not, of course, by our native goodness, but by the goodness whereof we partake.

CHAPTER VI

The Eternal Self-existence of God

12. Now, then, let us pass from these spirits, if haply you too may be able to say with the spouse, ‘It was but a little I passed from them when I found him whom my soul loveth.’ Do you ask, ‘What is His name?’ That is surely not a better question than ‘What is His character?’ The answer which God wished to be given respecting Himself, the answer which He Himself taught Moses, and which Moses at God’s command told the people was—‘I am what I am; He who is hath sent me unto you’. Fitly was this answer given. Nothing could better describe eternity, and God is eternal. If you say that God is good, great, blessed, wise, or any such thing, the starting-point is this—God is. Of course, the very meaning of God’s existing is that all these attributes constitute existence. If you add a hundred others you have not got away from the fact of His existence. By naming them you have not added anything; if you do not name them, you have not diminished aught. If you now perceive the nature of this unparalleled, unique, supreme existence, will you not agree that in comparison thereof whatever is not included therein may more accurately be said not to exist than to exist? Do we ask further, ‘What is God?’ We reply, ‘That without which nothing is.’ We say nothing can exist without Him, just as He Himself cannot exist without Himself. He is self-existent. He is existence to all else. And so, in a certain sense, He is alone, who is the source of His own existence, and of the existence of all beside. What is God? The Beginning, as He Himself replied concerning Himself. In the world of sense many things are called beginnings, but in respect of things that come after. If, instead of looking forwards you look backwards, you will allow Him to be the beginning of all. Wherefore, if you wish to find the true, unconditioned ‘beginning’, you must discover that which has no beginning. That from which all began could not possibly have had a beginning. For if it had, there must of necessity have been some source from which it sprang, since nothing is self-originating. If it be imagined that the non-existent could give itself a beginning, or that something may be before it is, I reply that both these alternatives are contrary to reason, and it clearly follows that nothing was its own beginning. Moreover, whatever had not its beginning from itself was not the first beginning. The true beginning, therefore, by no means began, but was altogether the fount of its own being.

14. What is God? He for whom the ages have neither come nor gone, and yet with whom they are not co-eternal. What is God? He ‘from whom are all things, through whom are all things, in whom are all things’. ‘From whom’, by creation, not by propagation. ‘Through whom’, lest you should suppose there is some other author and some other maker. ‘In whom’, not locally, but potentially.

‘From whom’, as the one beginning, the one author of all. ‘Through whom’, lest some other beginning be brought in as the originator. ‘In whom’, lest a third term, place, be introduced. ‘From whom’, not as though God were the matter of which things are made; He is the efficient, not the material cause. In vain do philosophers look to matter to solve the difficulty; God has no need of matter. For He did not seek a workshop, nor an artificer. He, through Himself, in Himself, made all things. Whence? Out of nothing; for if He made them out of anything, He did not make that, and therefore did not make all things. God forbid that out of His own incorrupt and incorruptible substance He should be thought to have made so many things that are doubtless good, but are nevertheless corruptible. You ask, ‘If all things are in God, where is God Himself?’ Still, I find no place which can contain Him. You ask where He is not? I cannot tell this either. What place is without God? God is incomprehensible; but you have apprehended not a little if you have ascertained this much about Him, that He is nowhere who is not enclosed by space, and that He is everywhere who is not shut out by space. In His own sublime and incomprehensible way, as all things are in Him, so He is in all things. In a word, as the Evangelist says, ‘He was in the world,’ But in a different way He is there, where He was before the world was made. You must not ask where He was; except Himself there was nothing. Therefore He was in Himself.

CHAPTER VII

The Divine Trinity in Unity

15. What is God? The best object of thought. If you approve, you ought not to countenance the belief that there is something which is the essence of Godhead, and yet is not God. If there were, it would doubtless be better than God. Must it not of necessity be better than God if it is not God, but constitutes His being? But it is wiser for us to confess that the divinity which men say is the essence of God is the same as God. Unless it be God it cannot be in God. ‘What’, say our opponents, ‘do you deny that God has divinity?’ No, but what God has, that He is. ‘Do you deny that God exists in virtue of His divinity?’ No; but we say that He exists in virtue of no other divinity than that which He Himself is. If you have discovered some other divinity, I fall back upon the doctrine of the Tri-une God, and stiffen my back against your new-found ‘divinity’. You may divide the world into four quarters if you please: you must not so map out the Godhead. God is a Trinity: God is each of the three Persons. If you like to add a fourth

divinity, I have already fully convinced myself that no divinity which is not God ought to be worshipped. I suppose you think so too: for ‘thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve’. That is truly a glorious divinity which dare not claim for itself divine honours. But we do better in rejecting the fourth term altogether than in receiving it without due honour. We say that there are many things in God—it is sound Catholic doctrine—but the many are but one. Otherwise, if we regard them as individually distinct, we have God not only fourfold, but a hundredfold. For example, we speak of His greatness, goodness, justice, and innumerable other attributes; but unless you consider them all as one in God, and with God, you will have a manifold God.

16. It is not difficult for me to frame a better idea of God than this of yours. ‘What is your view?’ you say. I regard God as absolute simplicity. A sound judgement prefers simplicity of nature to that which is manifold. I know the usual answer to this. ‘We maintain’, say they, ‘that the many attributes do not constitute the being of God, but only one divinity composed of them all.’ You assert, then, that although God is not manifold, He is twofold, and you have not reached the highest conception of God as absolute simplicity. That is as far from being simple which involves even one form, as she is no longer a virgin who is known to even one man. I speak freely; even a twofold God shall not be my God: I have a better one. Suppose I do prefer a twofold Divine Being to a God multitudinous and manifold; I nevertheless utterly despise such a God in comparison with a God of a ‘simple’ nature. My God is none other than what He is in the catholic sense. We must not institute a comparison between what He includes and excludes. He is what He is. We are not told all that He is. He is pure spirit, simple, complete in Himself, self-consistent, adding nothing to Himself from time, place, material things, losing nothing of Himself in them; incapable of numerical division, and not composed of several parts to make a collective whole. For He is a unit, not a union. He has no corporeal parts like our bodies; no different affections, like our souls; He is not susceptible of many ‘forms’, like all creation; nor does He assume even one form, as our opponents conceive of ‘form’. Surely God is greatly to be praised for that He is content with one ‘form’, so that He may exempt Himself from all deformity. This is equivalent to saying that the nature of all else is conditioned in many ways, but that God’s nature is absolute. What? Will He, through whose goodness all things exist, stoop for His being to the goodness of another? That praise, to use a common expression, means blasphemy. Is it not higher excellence to need nothing than to need one thing? Have reverence for God, so that you may give

Him the best. If your heart has been able to rise to this level, how will you place your God lower down? He is His own ‘form’, His own essence. For a while I look up to Him at this elevation; if a higher rank were revealed to me, I would rather give it to Him. We surely need not fear that thought will soar above Him. However high it may attain, He is still beyond. To look for the Most High beneath the summit of man’s thought is absurd; to place Him there is impious. He must be sought beyond it, not on this side of it.

17. Ascend thus far if you can; lift up your heart, and God will be exalted. God is not dependent on form. He is pure form. God is not a feeling, He is a state of feeling; He is not compound, but absolute simplicity; and you know full well what I mean by ‘simplicity’: the word is synonymous with unity. In proportion as God is one, He is simple. Now He is one in such a sense as nothing else is. If the phrase be permissible, He is most of all one. There is one sun as no other can be; one moon also, as no other can be. So it is with God, but more so. How ‘more so’? He is one even to Himself. Would you like a little light upon this? He is always the same, and never changes. It is not so with the one sun, or the one moon. Both proclaim that they are not one to themselves, the sun because of its movements, the moon on account of her phases. But God is not only one to Himself, He is also one in Himself. He has nothing in Himself but Himself. He knows no change through time, no difference in His substance. Hence the saying of Boethius concerning Him—‘This is the true unity which is indivisible, and admits nothing foreign to itself. Nor can this unity be reduced to “forms “, for it is pure form.’ Compare with this unity all that can be called unity; God’s unity will not be found there. Yet God is Three in One. What follows? Do we upset what has been said about the Unity by bringing in the thought of the Trinity? No; but we establish the Unity. We speak of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; still we maintain there are not three Gods, but one God. What, if I may so speak, is the meaning of this number which is not a number?

If there are three particulars, must there not be numerical distinction? If there is but one, what becomes of the enumeration? But I have, you say, something that can be numbered, and yet not numbered. There is one substance, there are three Persons. Is there anything strange or obscure in this? Nothing, if the persons are conceived of separately from the Substance. The truth is that, inasmuch as the three Persons are one Substance, and the one Substance is the three Persons, there is no denying that we do number them, for they are really three; yet on the other hand we do not number them, for they are really one. If, again, you think an easy explanation is found by calling them three, tell me what

it is you have numbered. Natures? There is one nature. Essences? There is one essence. Substances? There is one substance. Godheads? There is one Godhead. ‘I do not number these’, you say, ‘but the Persons, and they are not that one nature, that one essence, that one substance, that one divinity.’ You are a Catholic; you are not in the least likely to make such a concession.

CHAPTER VIII

The plurality of Persons in the Godhead, and their several ‘properties’. The unity and simplicity of the Essence

18. The Catholic Faith confesses that the ‘properties’ of the Persons are identical with the Persons themselves; and that the Persons themselves are nothing else than one God, one Divine Substance, one Divine Nature, one Divine and Supreme Majesty. Number, therefore, if you can, either the Persons without the Substance, which they themselves are, or the characteristics without the Persons with whom they are identical. Or, if any one endeavour to separate the Persons from the Substance, or the characteristic attributes from the Persons, I am at a loss to understand how he can profess to be a worshipper of the Trinity after dividing the Godhead into such a vast multitude of particulars. Let us therefore maintain that there are three Persons, but not to the prejudice of the Unity: let us hold that there is one God, but not so as to confound the Trinity; for these are not mere names, nor idle words void of meaning. If any one asks how this can be, let him be content to hold that it is so, though I must add that if the doctrine be not clear to reason, it is no halting opinion, but the firm conviction of faith. This is a great mystery, worthy of all veneration, not to be keenly scrutinized. How can plurality consist with unity, or unity with plurality? To closely examine the fact is rashness, to believe it is piety, to know it is life, and eternal life. Wherefore, Eugenius, if you think it worth while, let me have your undivided consideration as I run through the many arguments which tend to show the greatness of this unique unity. There is a unity which we may call ‘collective’, as, for example, when many stones make one heap. There is a ‘constitutive’ unity, as when many members make one body, or many parts constitute one whole. There is a unity such as that of man and wife, whereby two are no longer two, but one flesh. And there is a ‘natural’ unity, whereby soul and body are one man. There is a ‘potential’ unity, the realization of which is the constant endeavour of a virtuous man, so that he may not be unstable, nor unlike himself. There is the unity of agreement, when the lone of many men leads to their being of one heart and one

soul. There is also the unity of devotion, when the soul, clearing to God with complete surrender, is one spirit. And there is the unity of condescension, whereby our poor nature was taken by the Word of God to make one person in Himself.

19. But what are all these compared with that supreme, and, so to speak, unique unity which results from the consubstantiality of the three Persons? If you find a likeness between any one of the foregoing and this unity, the resemblance is but partial; if you compare them with it, there will be no true resemblance. Therefore, among all things which are rightly called ‘One’, the unity of the Trinity, whereby three Persons are one Substance, is the highest. Next comes that surpassing unity, whereby, conversely, three substances are in Christ, one Person. Moreover, real sober consideration proves that the foregoing, and whatsoever else can be called ‘One’, have the title in virtue of their resemblance to that supreme Unity, not because they allow of comparison therewith. Nor do we forsake this profession of the Unity by our upholding of the doctrine of the three Persons, since, when we speak of the Trinity, we do not mean a multiplicity of gods any more than in speaking of unity we imply loneliness. Wherefore, when I speak of One I am not disturbed by the consideration of number, which does not multiply the essence, nor change it, nor divide it. Again, when I speak of three things, if I view them as one, whatever the three things may be, I am not proved wrong. Nor, if I speak of the three Persons of the Godhead, am I obliged to confound the Persons, or reduce the three to the One.

CHAPTER IX

As in God there are three Persons and one Nature: so in Christ there are two Natures and one Person

20. My views, I confess, are similar respecting the unity which I have ranked next in honour to that which is unique. I say that in Christ the Word, the human soul and body, are without confusion of the essences one Person, and I further maintain that the human and divine remain numerically distinct without prejudice to the unity of person. Nor would I deny that this unity is of the same class as that unity whereby soul and body are one man. It was fitting that a mystery devised for man’s welfare should have a more intimate relation to man’s nature and more closely resemble it. It was fitting, too, that it should harmonize with that highest unity which is in God and is God, so that as three Persons in the Trinity are one Essence, so in the Incarnation, by a most appropriate contrast, the

three Essences are one Person. Do you not see how beautifully the unity of Christ is set between the unity of God and the unity of man? I mean, of course, the unity of the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Most beautiful, most appropriate, I say, that the mystery of salvation should so fitly correspond to both, to God our Saviour on the one side, to saved humanity on the other. Thus this unity of the two natures, standing between the other two unities, must be pronounced inferior to the one and superior to the other, being as much above the lower as it is below the higher.

21. In a word, so closely and so clearly are the natures united in the Person of the one Christ, who is God and Man, that you can without error in speaking of them use either mode of expression, and with the true Catholic Faith declare both that God was man and man was God. But you cannot, without sheer absurdity, similarly assert either that the soul is the body, or the body the soul, although in like manner soul and body is one man. And it is not surprising if the soul, with all its vital energy, considerable though it is, and notwithstanding its affections, cannot so closely bind the body to itself as the Divinity united to itself that man who was predestined to be the Son of God with power. The divine predestination is a long and strong chain for binding close: for it reaches from the Eternal. What is longer than eternity? What more mighty than Deity? Hence it is that this unity could not possibly be severed by death, although soul and body were separated from one another. And perhaps John felt this when he professed himself unworthy to undo the latchet of His shoe.

CHAPTER X

The Parable of the three Measures of Meal

22. We remember the three measures in the Gospel, which were mixed and leavened to make one loaf. If any one were to apply the parable to the mystery of the Incarnation I should think he was not far wrong in so doing. How well the woman leavened them! And so, in the parallel, without dividing the body and soul, the Word was distinct from the body and soul, yet so that in the separation the inseparable union was maintained. For the partial separation is no objection against the unity which remained between all three. Whether two of the three were conjoined or dissevered, the personal unity none the less continued in all three. The one Christ and one Person, the Word, soul and body, remained just the same even after the death of the man Christ Jesus. In my opinion this mingling and leavening took place in the Virgin’s womb; she was the woman

who mixed and leavened the three measures. For I should not, perhaps, err greatly in saying that the leaven was Mary's faith. She was clearly blessed in believing, since the things which were told her by the Lord were accomplished in her. But they would not have been accomplished if anything had hindered the whole from being leavened, and continually leavened, according to the word of the Lord, so as to preserve for us, as well in His death as in His life, the one perfect Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus in union with His own Godhead.

23. In this admirable mystery, corresponding to the number of the measures, we may observe, most beautifully distinguished, the three steps of the new, the old, and the eternal. By the 'new' I mean the soul, which is believed to be created out of nothing when it is infused into the body; by the 'old', the flesh, which we know to have been transmitted even from Adam, the first of human kind; by the 'eternal', I mean the Word, whom, as a certain truth, we assert to be co-eternal with the Father, and to be begotten of Him. And in the foregoing, if you carefully notice, there is a triple exhibition of Divine power, inasmuch as there was something made out of nothing, the new out of the old, the eternally blessed out of that which was sentenced to death. How does this concern our salvation? Much every way. Firstly, because, reduced to nothing through sin, we are through the mystery as it were created anew, that we may he a sort of first fruits of His creatures. Secondly, because, translated from our old slavery into the liberty of the children of God, we walk in newness of the spirit. Lastly, because we have been called from the power of darkness to the kingdom of the eternal glory, wherein He has already made us to sit with Him in Christ. May they be no friends of ours who endeavour to estrange from us the flesh of Christ, impiously asserting that it was newly created in the Virgin, not taken from the Virgin. Well did the Spirit of Prophecy long before meet this opinion, or rather blasphemy of wicked men, when He said, 'A shoot shall spring from the root of Jesse, and a flower out of his root.' He might have said that the flower should come from the shoot, but He preferred to say 'from the root', that He might show the flower and the shoot to have the same origin. So we see that the flesh was taken thence whence the Virgin sprang; it was not newly created in the Virgin but came from the root.

CHAPTER XI

The consideration of God continued

24. I suspect you are a little vexed at my again asking. What is God? The question has already been asked so often, and you are doubtful whether the answer will ever be found. Dear Eugenius, Father in God, what I say is this—He alone is God who never can be sought in vain, not even when He cannot be found. Your experience may teach you this; or, if not, believe one who has had the experience; I do not mean myself, but the saint who says, ‘Thou art good, O Lord, to them that hope in Thee, to the soul that seeketh Thee.’ What, then, is God? As regards the universe, He is the final end; in respect of election, He is salvation; as regards Himself, He is self-knowledge. What is God? He is almighty will moved by loving-kindness, virtue, eternal light, incommunicable reason, highest blessedness; He is the creator of minds to enjoy Himself; He endows them with life to perceive Him, disposes them to long for Him, enlarges them to receive Him, justifies them to be worthy of Him, fires them with zeal, fertilizes them that they may bear fruit, guides them into sweet reasonableness, moulds them to loving-kindness, regulates them for wisdom, strengthens them for virtue, visits them for consolation, illuminates them for knowledge, preserves them for immortality, fills them for happiness, is about their path for safety.

CHAPTER XII

God the rewarder of the good, and the righteous judge of the wicked

25. What is God? No less the punishment of the perverse than the glory of the humble. We may say He is reason and sweet reasonableness directing itself with fixed unchanging aim, and everywhere operative. Any perversity in collision with that must of necessity be confounded. Of course, all swelling pride and unseemliness which dashes itself against that must be broken to shivers. Woe to all creation if it chance to get in the way of unbending righteousness! for that righteousness is strength. There is no more deadly foe of wills wickedly disposed than to be for ever attempting, ever in conflict, and all in vain.

Woe to wills opposed! Surely they only bring upon themselves the penalty of their own reluctance. What penalty is so severe as to be ever choosing what shall never be, ever refusing what shall never cease to be? Is there any hell like a will under this necessity of choosing and refusing, so that whichever way it moves misery must be as constant an attendant as perversity? As long as eternity shall last it will not get its choice; and what it refuses it shall no less through eternity endure. And such a will meets with its due deserts; he who is never disposed for what becomes him, should never attain to what delights him. Who doth this? The

righteous Lord our God, who with the perverse also shows Himself perverse. Straight and crooked can never agree, for these are contrary one to the other, though they do not injure one another. One of the two is injured; it cannot be God. ‘It is hard for thee’, He says, ‘to kick against the goad’: that is, not hard for the goad, but hard for him who kicks. God is also the punishment of the base, for He is light; and what is so hateful to filthy and degraded minds? Surely, ‘Every one that doeth evil hateth the light’. But I say, will they not be able to shun the light? Not in the least. It shines everywhere, though not to all. In a word, it shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not. The light sees the darkness, for with it seeing and shining are the same thing; but it is not in turn seen by the darkness, because the darkness comprehends it not. They then, are seen that they may be confounded; and they do not see that they may not be consoled. Nor are they seen only by the light; they are also seen in the light. By what person or persons? By every one who sees, so that the greater the number of beholders the greater may be their confusion. But out of the whole multitude of the spectators there is no eye more troublesome to a man than his own. There is no glance, whether in heaven or on earth, which a benighted conscience would rather escape, or is less capable of escaping. The darkness is not hidden even from itself; though it sees naught else, it sees itself. The works of darkness follow it, and there is no hiding-place from it, not even in the darkness. This is ‘the worm that dieth not’—the memory of the past. Once it gets within, or rather is born within through sin, there it stays, and never by any means can be plucked out. It never ceases to gnaw the conscience; feeding on it as on food that never can be consumed it prolongs the life of misery. I shudder as I contemplate this biting worm, this never-dying death. I shudder at the thought of being the victim of this living death, this dying life.

26. This is the second death, which never kills, but is always killing. Will no one grant them to die once for all that they may not evermore be dying? They who say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us, and to the hills, cover us,’ what do they desire but to put an end to death by the kindness of death, or to escape from it? In short, they will call upon death, and death will not come. I would have you see this clearly. It is certain that the soul is immortal, and so long as it has life it must have memory; for otherwise it might some day cease to be the soul. So then, while the soul lasts, memory also lasts. But what is memory like? It is burdened with foul disgrace, horrid crimes, swelling vanity; through scorning (the better part) it is like a field rough and neglected. These former things have passed away, and have not passed away. They are out of hand, but not out of

mind. What has been done cannot be undone; the doing was in time, but the effect of the doing will be eternal. That does not pass with time which passes all times. The wrong doing that you remember for ever must therefore for ever be a torment. This will be to realize the truth of the words, ‘I will reprove thee and set before thine eyes what thou hast done.’ It is the Lord who thus spoke; all that opposes Him must of necessity oppose itself; so that at last there will be the complaint, ‘O thou watcher of men, why hast thou set me as a mark for thee, so that I am a burden to myself?’ These are the facts, Eugenius Nothing can contradict God and be consistent with itself; on the contrary, whosoever shall be reproved by God shall be reproved also by himself. When the soul is torn from the body, and stands self-centred, it will be no longer possible for reason to disguise the truth, or for the soul to shun the searching insight of reason. How can it do so when the senses, by means of which, as we know, it was wont to sally forth to gratify its curiosity, and, leaving itself, would find a home in that fashion of the world which passeth away, are sealed up in the slumber of death? Do you see that nothing is wanting to complete the confusion of the filthy when they shall be brought forth as a spectacle to God, to angels, to men, to themselves? How lamentable is the lot of all bad men, who must undoubtedly face this torrent of simple equity, and stand exposed to the light of unveiled truth Is not this to be for ever beaten, and to be for ever con

founded? ‘Break them with a double breach, O Lord our Gad’, saith the prophet.

CHAPTER XIII

The mystical interpretation of the length and breadth, and height, and depth

27. What is God? Length, breadth, height, and depth. ‘What?’ you say. ‘You do, after all, profess to believe in the fourfold Godhead which was an abomination to you.’

Not in the least. I abominated, and still abominate it. I may have seemed to express a number of things: I really indicated one. God is designated One to suit our comprehension, not to describe His character; His character is capable of division, He Himself is not. The words are different, the paths are many, but one thing is signified; the paths lead to one Person. No divisions of the Substance are expressed in that fourfold enumeration; no dimensions, such as we contemplate in bodily structures; no distinction of Persons, such as we adore in the Trinity; there is no enumeration of ‘properties’ such as we confess to be inherent in the

Persons, though they are no way distinguishable from the Persons. Moreover, in God each of these is what the four are all together; and the four are just what each one is. We cannot attain to the full conception of the simplicity of God; hence it is that while we strive to apprehend the Unity, it presents itself to us as fourfold. This is the result of our seeing darkly as in a mirror, the only way for the present of seeing God at all. But when we shall see face to face, we shall see Him as He is. When that blessed time shall come, the poor, weak blade of our intellect, however hard it may strike, will not recoil, or be broken to shivers. It will rather concentrate itself, and will conform itself to His unity, or rather to that Unity, so that we shall have one face corresponding to His one face. For ‘we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is’. Blessed Vision! well might he sigh for it who said, ‘My face hath sought thee: thy face, O Lord, will I seek,’ And as our business is still to seek Him, let us for the present, inasmuch as we are weak and faint, and sorely need such a conveyance, let us mount this four-horse chariot, if haply we may thus lay hold of that for which we have been laid hold of, that is to say, the plan and working of the vehicle itself. For this admonition have we from the charioteer himself, who was the first to show us the chariot—that we strive to ‘comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and height, and depth’ ‘Comprehend’, he says, not ‘know’: so that, not content with the curiosity of knowledge we may with all eagerness look for the fruit. The fruit is not to be found in knowledge, but in comprehension. Besides, ‘to him who knoweth to do good, and doeth it not,’ as a certain one tells us, ‘it is sin’; Paul also elsewhere says, ‘So run that ye may comprehend.’ I will point out lower down the meaning of comprehending.

28. What then is God? He is length, I say; and what is length? It is eternity. This is so long that it has no end either in place or time. He is also breadth. And what is breadth? It is love. What bounds shall we set to the love of God, who hateth none of those things which He hath made? In fact, ‘He maketh his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust.’ So then there is room in the Divine bosom for God’s enemies also. And not satisfied with this, God’s love compasses the infinite. It exceeds not only affection, but knowledge as well, for the Apostle goes on to speak of ‘knowing the love of Christ which passeth knowledge’. What more shall I say? It is eternal; or, to go a step further, I may perhaps say that it is eternity, You see that the breadth is as great as the length. Would that you saw not only that they are equal, but that they are identical; that they are one and the same thing; no less one than two, no more two than one! God is eternity, God is love; He is length without extension,

breadth without distension. In both cases alike He exceeds the narrow limits of space and time, but in virtue of His unfettered nature, not through the vastness of His substance. In such wise He is immeasurable who hath made all things by measure; and although He be immeasurable, His very immensity must be thus ‘measured’.

29. Once more, what is God? He is height and depth. In the one He is above all things, in the other He is below all things. It is clear that in the Godhead there is no halting inequality; the Godhead stands firmly fixed, immovably self-consistent. Consider ‘height’ as corresponding to the Divine power, ‘depth’ to the Divine wisdom. There is a correspondence no less between these two than between the former two, if we perceive that this ‘height’ is unapproachable, this ‘depth’ unsearchable, Paul marvelled as he cried aloud, ‘O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!’ We too, as we contemplate both these attributes in God, and their perfect unity with God, may with Paul exclaim, ‘O powerful wisdom, reaching from one end of the world to the other with full strength! O wise power, ordering all things sweetly!’ The thing is one, the effect is manifold, the operations are diverse. And that one thing is ‘length.’ because it is eternity; ‘breadth’ because it is love; ‘height’ because it is majesty; ‘depth’ because it is wisdom.

CHAPTER XIV

What it is to ‘comprehend’ God

30. We know these things. We surely do not suppose that we have therefore comprehended them. It is not argument that comprehends them, but holiness, if at least that can any way be comprehended which is incomprehensible. But unless its comprehension were possible, the Apostle would not have said, ‘That we may comprehend with all Saints.’ The Saints, therefore, comprehend. Do you ask how? If you are holy you have comprehended, and know; if you are not, be holy and you shall know by your own experience. Holy affection makes a man holy, and that a twofold affection: the holy fear of the Lord, and holy love. When the soul is perfectly possessed by these, it ‘comprehends’ as it were with its two arms, embraces, draws close, holds tight, and says, ‘I have held Him fast, and will not let Him go;’ Fear corresponds to ‘height’ and ‘depth’, love to ‘breadth’ and ‘length’. What is so much to be feared as irresistible power? as wisdom from which there is no hiding? God might have been feared less had He lacked either.

But as things are, you must perfectly fear Him who neither wants an all-seeing eye, nor an all-powerful hand. Again, what is so lovable as love itself, whereby you love and are beloved? Yet eternity conjoined with love makes love more lovable; eternal love never fails, and it banishes the suspicion that it ever will. Love, therefore, with perseverance and long-suffering, and the ‘length’ is yours; extend your love even to your enemies, the ‘breadth’ is yours. Fear God with utmost care, and you have laid hold upon the ‘height’ and ‘depth’.

31. If, moreover, you prefer to respond to the four Divine attributes with four affections of your own, you may do so with wonder, fear, zeal, endurance. Most wonderful is the ‘height’ of His Majesty, most worthy to be feared the abyss of His judgements. Divine love demands your zeal, the eternity of God portrays your constant endurance. Who wonders, but he who contemplates the glory of God? Who fears, but he who searches the depth of His wisdom? Who glows with zeal, but he who meditates on the love of God? Who endures and perseveres in love, but he who aspires to copy eternal love? In truth, perseverance is a sort of likeness here to eternity hereafter. In fact it is perseverance alone on which eternity is bestowed; or rather, it is perseverance which bestows man on eternity; as the Lord says, ‘He that shall persevere unto the end, the same shall be saved.’

32. And now observe how these four represent four kinds of contemplation. The first and highest form of contemplation is the admiration of the Divine Majesty. If the heart be cleansed, free from vice, and relieved of the burden of its sins, it may hereby be easily raised to things above; the admiring soul may sometimes also for brief intervals be even kept entranced with wonder and amazement. The second must attend the first, for it beholds the judgements of God. It may violently shock the beholder with the fearful vision, but it puts vice to flight, firmly bases virtue, initiates in wisdom, preserves humility. For humility is a good sound foundation of the virtues. If humility, forsooth, be insecure, the whole structure of the virtues is nothing but a ruin. The third kind of contemplation is busy with, or rather leisurely surveys, past benefits; it would not send a man away with ingratitude in his heart, and therefore asks for such an one as is mindful of the love of the benefactor. Concerning such the prophet says to the Lord, ‘They shall utter the memory of thy great goodness.’ The fourth kind, forgetting the things that are behind, rests in the expectation of the promises alone; inasmuch as it is meditation on eternity, for the things promised are eternal, it fosters a spirit of long-suffering, and gives strength to perseverance. It is now easy, I suppose, to adapt these four to the four in the

Apostle’s list; meditation on the promises coincides with the ‘length’, the remembrance of benefits with the ‘breadth’, the contemplation of God’s Majesty with the ‘height’, the consideration of His judgements with the ‘depth’. He should have been further sought who is not yet found to the satisfying of our souls, nor can be sought enough. But perhaps He is more worthily sought through prayer than through dialectics, and more easily found. With this let us end the book—but not our search for Him.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

ADDITION TO NOTE
PAGE 104

This passage of St. Bernard respecting the two swords was incorporated, almost literally, by Pope Boniface VIII in his famous Bull, Unam Sanctam, A. D. 1302. But the Pope advances considerably on the Saint when he says, ‘One sword ought to be inferior to the other sword, and the temporal authority to be subject to the spiritual power’ (Oportet autem gladium esse sub gladio, et temporalem spirituali subici potestati). Bellarmin (De Romano Pontifice, Bk. v, c. 5) finds no reference in St. Luke’s words to the Pope’s having the two swords by the appointment of Christ. He adds: ‘The Blessed Bernard and Pope Boniface mystically interpreted the passage; they did not mean to say that the Pope had both swords in the same way, but in different ways, as we shall afterwards explain.’

ADDITION TO NOTE
PAGE 107

St. Bernard’s protest was sadly needed. ‘A child of five years old was made Archbishop of Rheims. The see of Narbonne was purchased for another at the age of ten. It was almost universal to have bishops under twenty years old.’ In the Eastern Church Theophylact, at the age of sixteen, became Patriarch of Constantinople, being installed in his office by legates of Pope John XI (A. D. 933).

ON THE LOVE OF GOD

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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PREFATORY NOTE MY WIFE WAS OCCUPIED ON THIS TRANSLATION AT THE TIME OF HER DEATH. PP. 1–98 INCLUDE HER WORK; THE REST IS MINE. COVENTRY PATMORE.
HASTINGS, FEBRUARY 10, 1881.

CONTENTS

ON THE LOVE OF GOD

A LITTLE WORK BY ST. BERNARD ON THE LOVE OF GOD

CHAPTER I
WHY WE OUGHT TO LOVE GOD, AND HOW WE OUGHT TO LOVE HIM

CHAPTER II
THAT GOD HAS A RIGHT TO THE LOVE OF MAN BECAUSE OF HIS GIFTS TO SOUL AND BODY. HOW THESE SHOULD BE CONFESSED, AND NOT TURNED AGAINST HIM WHO GAVE THEM

CHAPTER III
WHAT MOTIVES CHRISTIANS HAVE, MORE THAN INFIDELS, TO LOVE GOD

CHAPTER IV
FOR WHOM THERE IS COMFORT IN THE THOUGHT OF GOD; AND WHO ARE FITTEST TO FEEL LOVE FOR HIM

CHAPTER V
OF THE OBLIGATION TO LOVE GOD, ESPECIALLY FOR CHRISTIANS

CHAPTER VI
A SUMMARY OF WHAT HAS HITHERTO BEEN SAID

CHAPTER VII
THE REWARDS AND ADVANTAGE OF THE LOVE OF GOD. THE HEART OF MAN IS NOT TO BE SATISFIED BY EARTHLY THINGS

CHAPTER VIII
WE BEGIN BY THE LOVE OF SELF, THIS BEING FOR US THE FIRST DEGREE OF LOVE

CHAPTER IX
OF THE SECOND AND THIRD DEGREES OF LOVE

CHAPTER X
THE FOURTH DEGREE OF LOVE IS TO LOVE SELF ONLY FOR GOD

CHAPTER XI
THE SAINTS WILL HAVE PERFECT LOVE ONLY AFTER THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

FRAGMENTS FROM A FRAGMENT BY ST. BERNARD HIS LAST WORK FRAGMENTS

THREE ROSARIES OF OUR LADY BY MARIANNE CAROLINE PATMORE
A ROSARY IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY AS CO-REDEMPTRIX

FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Annunciation of our Lady

SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Visitation of our Lady

THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Birth of our Saviour Christ in Bethlehem

FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Presentation of our Blessed Saviour in the Temple

FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Finding of our Blessed Saviour in the Temple

FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Agony and Bloody Sweat of our Blessed Saviour in the Garden

SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Scourging of our Blessed Lord

THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Crowning of our Blessed Lord with Thorns

FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY
Jesus carrying His Cross

FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Crucifixion of our Blessed Lord

FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord from the Dead

SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Ascension of our Blessed Lord into Heaven

THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Descent of the Holy Ghost

FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Assumption of our Blessed Lady into Heaven

FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Coronation of our Blessed Lady in Heaven

A ROSARY OF THE SACRED HEART

FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Annunciation of our Lady

SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Visitation of our Lady

THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Birth of our Saviour Christ in Bethlehem

FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Presentation of our Blessed Saviour in the Temple

FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Finding of our Blessed Lord in the Temple

FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Agony and Bloody Sweat of our Blessed Saviour in the Garden

SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Scourging of our Blessed Lord

THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Crowning of our Blessed Lord with Thorns

FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY
Jesus carrying His Cross

FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ

FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord from the Dead

SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Ascension of our Blessed Lord into Heaven

THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Descent of God the Holy Ghost

FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Assumption of our Blessed Lady into Heaven

FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Coronation of our Blessed Lady in Heaven

A ROSARY IN IMITATION OF OUR LADY

FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Annunciation of our Lady

SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Visitation of our Lady

THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Birth of our Blessed Lord

FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Presentation of our Blessed Saviour in the Temple

FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Finding in the Temple

FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Agony in the Garden

SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Scourging of our Blessed Lord

THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Crowning of our Blessed Lord with Thorns

FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY
Jesus carrying His Cross

FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ

FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord

SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Ascension of our Blessed Lord

THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Descent of the Holy Ghost

FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Assumption of our Lady

FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Coronation of our Blessed Virgin Mary

ON THE LOVE OF GOD

A LITTLE WORK BY ST. BERNARD ON THE LOVE OF GOD

CHAPTER I

WHY WE OUGHT TO LOVE GOD, AND HOW WE OUGHT TO LOVE HIM

YOU wish me to explain for what reason and in what measure we should love God.

I should say that God Himself is the motive of our love to Him, and that the measure of due love is to be without measure. Is this clear enough? Perhaps it may be for a person of intelligence, but I desire to answer for both the learned and unlearned; and, though I may have said enough for the former, I must remember others also. For them I will unfold my meaning, and perhaps add somewhat to it.

Two things there are that move us to love God for Himself: nothing is more reasonable; nothing is more profitable.

The question, What binds us to love God? may either mean—What is His title to our love? or, How will it profit us to love God? To both these forms of the question there is but one answer: The motive for loving God, is God. No title can be stronger than this: God gave Himself to us in spite of our unworthiness, and, being God, what could He give us of greater worth than Himself? If, then, by asking, why we are bound to love God, we mean, what is His claim, the answer is: Especially this, that He first loved us. This gives Him a right to our love in return; above all, considering who He is that loves, what His loved ones are, and in what way He loves them. For who is He that loves us, but He of whom every spirit bears witness: “Thou art my God, Thou hast no need of my goods”? and His love is it not that charity that seeks not its own interests? But on whom is fastened this unselfish love? The Apostle answers: “When we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God.” God has loved us disinterestedly, and while yet we were His enemies. But how has He loved us? St. John says to this extreme: “God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.” St. Paul adds: “He hath not spared His only begotten Son, but hath delivered Him up for us;” and the Son

says of Himself, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” These are the claims which God, the Holy, the sovereignly great and Almighty, has upon the love of infinitely little, weak, and sinful man. It may be said: Yes, this is true of mankind, but it is not so of angels. I know it; for angels the same was not needful. Moreover, He who has helped man in his misery preserved the angels from falling into the like; and if God’s love for men has found them a way of escape, it is by the self-same that He kept the angels from a fall like ours.

CHAPTER II

THAT GOD HAS A RIGHT TO THE LOVE OF MAN BECAUSE OF HIS GIFTS TO SOUL AND BODY. HOW THESE SHOULD BE CONFESSED, AND NOT TURNED AGAINST HIM WHO GAVE THEM

THOSE who have acknowledged what I have said must surely own our obligation to love God. But if there be infidels who will not do so much, God has wherewith to confound their ingratitude in the goods beyond number with which He enriches soul and body. Is it not from Him that man receives the bread which sustains, the light which enlightens him, the air which he breathes? If I mention these first, it is not that I account them chief, for they only concern the body, but they are the most necessary. For our chief goods we must look into the soul, the superior part of our being. Those goods are—excellence, intelligence, and virtue. When I speak of excellence in man, I mean the free will which is in him, it being this which lifts him above all other living beings and places them under his dominion. Intelligence proves to him his excellence, and at the same time proves that he owes it not to himself; and, lastly, virtue makes him seek ardently, and when he has found, embrace vehemently, Him whose work he is.

These three goods present each of them two aspects. Excellence is seen as the prerogative proper to human nature, and also as causing that fear which man has always produced in every other living being. Intelligence perceives the dignity of man, but at the same time owns that though in him, yet it is not of him; and, lastly, virtue in its double action provokes to an eager seeking for Him to whom we owe existence, and, when found, as eager a clinging to Him. Moreover, excellence without intelligence is worthless; and intelligence without virtue can only harm; as the following reasoning proves. No intelligence can take pride in its existence without knowing that it exists; but if, knowing that it exists, it ignores that it does so, not by itself, but by some other, and glorifies itself in itself, not in God, it should consider the words of the Apostle: “What hast thou

that thou hast not received? Why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?". He says not merely, "why dost thou glory?" but he adds, "as if thou hadst not received it," showing that it is not blameworthy to glory in having it, but to glory as not having received it. With good reason is such glorying termed vainglory, because it fails to rest upon the solid rock of truth. The Apostle distinguishes this from just glory by saying: "He that glorieth may glory in the Lord, that is in the truth, for God is truth."

We see then that there are two things to know: First, what we are; then, that we are not such of ourselves. If we miss either of these two, we either shall not glory at all, or the glory that we take to ourselves will be "vain." Finally, "if thou know not thyself, go forth and wander after the flocks of thy companions." This is in truth what happens; for when a man in honour knows not his own dignity, he is justly compared, by reason of such ignorance, to the animals that share with him in the corruption and perishing life of this world. Not knowing itself, the creature which reason distinguishes from the beasts confounds itself with them; because, not knowing its own glory, which is all within, it gives way to vain curiosity and occupies itself with external and sensible beauty. It sinks into the likeness of lower creatures by not knowing that it has received a greater thing than they. And this is an ignorance we must sedulously guard against. We must by no means esteem ourselves to be less than God has made us. But with still greater care we must avoid that other ignorance which makes us attribute more to ourselves than we possess; which we do when we mistakenly impute to ourselves the gifts we may be conscious of. Besides these two kinds of ignorance, there remains, to be still more detested and fled from, the presumption which would lead us knowingly to take pride in the good of which we may be conscious, without fear of robbing another of the glory due to Him for things which we well know do not come from ourselves. In the first case, we glory not at all. In the second, we glory, but not in God. In the third, we sin no longer ignorantly but deliberately by usurping that which belongs to God alone. This audacity, compared with the second fault, is greater in this: that it despises God, whereas the other did not know Him. Compared with the first, it assimilates us to devils; whereas the other made us like the beasts. Pride alone, the greatest of all evils, can make us guilty of using the gifts we have received as if they were ours by nature, and of robbing our Benefactor, for our own benefit, of the glory which is His by right. Therefore to excellence and intelligence we must add virtue, their proper fruit. It is by virtue that we seek and attain to the generous Author of all things, Him to whom we ought in all things to render the

glory which belongs to Him; otherwise we shall suffer for having known that which was right, and neglected to do it. He that does so has not used His intelligence for good, but “hath devised iniquity on his bed;” he has tried, like a wicked servant, to turn aside and appropriate the glory his good Master should have received, knowing well by the gift of intelligence that he himself had no claim to it. It is clear that excellence without intelligence is useless, and that intelligence without virtue leads to ruin. But, to the man that possesses virtue, neither intelligence nor excellence can be hurtful; he lifts up his voice and praises God eagerly, saying: “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name be the glory;” which is to say: “Lord, we lay no claim to intelligence, or excellence; we refer all to Thee, for from Thee we have all that we have.”

But we are somewhat wandering, in our desire to prove that they who know not Christ, even they, are sufficiently taught by the natural law, and by the gifts they possess of body and soul, to love God for God’s own sake. To repeat in few words what was said above: Where is the infidel who does not know that from Him alone who makes His sun to shine upon the just and unjust, and the rain to fall upon saints and sinners, from Him alone he has received all that is necessary for life; light, air, and food? What man, be he never so impious, refers the excellence peculiar to the human race to any other but to Him who says in Genesis, “Let us make man to Our Own image and likeness”? Who sees the author of intelligence in any but in Him who teacheth all men? From what other hand will any think to receive virtue, but from the God of virtue? God then has good title to be loved for Himself, even on the knowledge of the infidel who is ignorant of Christ; and he that loves not the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and strength is without excuse; for his innate justice and reason cry out from the depth of his soul that he is bound to love Him wholly from whom he holds all things. But it is very difficult, nay, it is impossible by natural strength or the might of free will to refer all to God, instead of keeping back some to our own praise: it is written: “All seek their own;” and elsewhere: “The imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone to evil from his youth.”

CHAPTER III

WHAT MOTIVES CHRISTIANS HAVE, MORE THAN INFIDELS, TO LOVE GOD

BELIEVERS know well the need they have of Jesus crucified; but, whilst they confess and admire His love, they feel no confusion at having so little, nothing but themselves, to return for charity so condescending and so great. Their love is

excited by the sense of being so much and so gratuitously loved; for he to whom little love is given, loveth little. Neither Jews nor Pagans feel the pang of love as the Church does, who says: “Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with fruits: because I languish with love.” She sees Solomon wearing the diadem with which his mother crowned him. She sees the Only-begotten of the Father staggering under the weight of the cross; the God of all majesty discoloured by blows, covered with spittings; the Author of life and of glory hung upon nails, pierced with a lance and reviled, giving His dear soul for His friends. Gazing on this she feels the sword of love pierce through her heart, and cries out: “Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with fruits, for I languish with love.” The pomegranates which the Bride, led into the garden of her Beloved, delights to gather on the tree of life have the taste of the Bread of Heaven and the colour of the Blood of Christ. She sees the deathblow given to death, and its Author swelling the triumph of his Conqueror. She sees the Victor rising gloriously from hell to earth, from earth to heaven, attended by the host of the redeemed; that at “the name of Jesus every knee may bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.” Under the ancient curse, the earth was doomed to bring forth thorns and thistles; but the Spouse calls upon it now, restored by divine benediction, to cover her with flowers; and, remembering those words, “My flesh hath flourished again, and with my will I will praise Him,” she renews her strength by the fruit of the tree of the cross, and with the flowers of the Resurrection, whose divine perfume attracts the visits of the Beloved. Then he exclaims: “Behold thou art fair, my Beloved, and comely.” She shows her desire for His coming, and upon what her hopes are founded; not on her own perfections, but on the sweetness of the flowers gathered in a field that the Lord hath blessed; for they are dear to the Christ who chose to be born and brought up at Nazareth. The heavenly Bridegroom, drawn by the odour, delights to come into the chamber of the heart, when He finds it decked with fruits and perfumed with flowers. He comes with eagerness, and delights to dwell in souls that He sees are devoted to meditation, carefully set on gathering in the fruit of His Passion, and the glorious flowers of His Resurrection. That precious crop which was ripening through the ages of crime and death, and in these last days is fit to be garnered, is the harvest of the fruits of His Passion; but it is in the splendour of the Resurrection that the flowers bloom of the new Springtide which grace has brought upon the earth. In the end of time, at the general resurrection, the abundance of fruit shall be without measure, “for winter is now past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared in our land.” By these words the Bride

would say: The summer is come back, with Him who broke up the ice of the old world to restore universal spring, saying: “Behold I make all things new.” His body, sown in death, has blossomed in the resurrection, and after His likeness, our plains and valleys, which were dry and bare, or frozen, are new born to life and heat.

The freshness of these flowers, the perfection of the fruits, and the beauty of this garden exhaling such exquisite perfume, are pleasing also to the Father of Him who has made all things new; and, blessing Him, He says: “Behold the smell of my Son is as the smell of a field full of flowers, which the Lord hath blessed;” full of flowers, indeed, for it is of His fulness that we have all received. But the Bride, when she will, may come familiarly and gather flowers and fruit, to dress with them the chamber of her conscience, that the Bridegroom at His coming may find the little bed of her heart giving out the sweetest odours. And in like manner we, if we desire that Christ should come to us and abide in us, must fill our hearts full of the thoughts of His death and resurrection and of faithful recollection of the mercy and the power of which by them He has given us proof. This David meant by the words: “These two things have I heard: that power belongeth to God, and mercy to Thee, O Lord.” And Christ has superabundantly proved it; for, having died to expiate our sins, He rose from the dead for our justification, and sent the Holy Spirit for our consolation. Hereafter He will return to consummate our salvation. In His death we have the proof of His mercy, in His resurrection of His power, and of the two united in the rest.

When the Bride entreats to be sustained with aromatic flowers and strengthened with sweet-smelling fruits, it is that she fears lest her love should chill or languish; but she seeks such stimulants only till received into the chamber of her Beloved. She will then feel Him covering her with the kisses she has longed for, and will exclaim: “His left hand is under my head, and His right doth embrace me.” She will then feel how far the embrace of the right hand surpasses all sweetness, and that that of the left cannot be compared to it, with which He had caressed her in the first days of His coming. She will understand that “the flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that quickeneth.” She will enter into the sense of His words: “My spirit is above honey, and my inheritance above honey and the honeycomb.” If it be also written, “My memory is unto everlasting generations,” it is to show that the elect who are not yet satisfied by the presence of the Bridegroom have at least His image for their comfort now whilst time runs on. If it be written, “They shall publish the memory of thine inexhaustible sweetness,” it clearly refers to those of whom the Psalmist had

before spoken: “Generation and generation shall praise Thy works.” On earth there is but the memory of the Bridegroom; in heaven, His perpetual Presence. This is the glory of those who have already arrived in port; and that the consolation of those still buffeting with the waves

CHAPTER IV

FOR WHOM THERE IS COMFORT IN THE THOUGHT OF GOD; AND WHO ARE FITTEST TO FEEL LOVE FOR HIM

IT is well to consider who they are that feel comforted by the thought of God. Not those, degraded, who continually vex God, and to whom it is said: “Woe, ye rich, unto you, for you have received your consolation;” but such as can say with truth: “My soul hath refused to be comforted.” Well may those who have not yet the joy of the Beloved’s presence fix their gaze upon the future; and they who disdain to accept of anything from the stream of passing pleasure, enjoy abundantly, in hope, those joys which shall last for ever. Such are they who seek the face of the Lord, the God of Jacob, and not themselves. The thought of God is sweet to those who sigh after Him, and with every breath recall His presence; but, far from appeasing their hunger for Him, it increases it. This He foretold in the words: “They that eat Me shall yet hunger,” and, as if he spake that hungers: “I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.” Yet happy are they even now who hunger and thirst after justice, for only they shall be filled. Woe to you, O perverse, wicked race; woe to you, senseless and besotted people, who do not love the thought of Him, but dread His appearing. Good right ye have to fear, because ye will not now escape from the net of the fowler; for they that will “become rich fall into the snares of the devil.” In that day ye shall not fail to fall under the awful, aye and hopeless sentence: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” But how sweet, how tender is that promise which we hear the Church make every day in remembrance of the Passion: “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life;” which implies, he that honours My death, and after My example mortifies his flesh upon earth, shall have eternal life; or, if you suffer with Me, you shall also reign with Me. Nevertheless, even to this day, many hearing those words turn and go away sorrowful, saying by their deeds, if not with their lips: “This is a hard saying, who can bear it?” They who, in place of keeping their hearts pure and being faithful to God, love better to set their affections upon uncertain treasures, cannot abide the mention of the Cross; the mere thought of the Passion seems intolerable to them. How will such

endure the sentence of the Judge: “Go, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels”? These words will crush, like a vast rock, those upon whom they fall. But the Saints shall be blest. Like the Apostle, they have no ambition but to “please God while absent from Him, and still to please Him when they shall be present.” They also shall hear their sentence: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you.” In that day those who have not kept their hearts aright will, too late, feel how sweet and light is the yoke and burden of Christ, which they proudly refused to bear, through the hardness of their heart, as if it were a vile and crushing weight. It is impossible, poor slaves, to toil for this world’s riches, and also to glory in the Cross of our Saviour Jesus Christ; at the same time to desire and labour for earthly things and to taste the sweetness of our Lord. Very fearful you will certainly find Him one day, the thought of whom has never been your joy.

But the believing soul sighs with all her heart after God, and dwells upon the thought of Him; she glories in the disgrace of the Cross, so long as she cannot see her Saviour face to face. She is as the dove of Christ, and she enjoys sleep and rest in the midst of the goods that He has bestowed on her. Her wings are white as silver through the purity and innocence which belong, O Lord Jesus, to the desire of Thine ineffable sweetness; and moreover her hope is that, in the glory reflected from Thy face, her “feathers will shine like gold,” and she will overflow with joy and be inundated with light from Thy countenance in the rapture of the Saints. Good reason has she, therefore, to say now with delight: “His left hand is under my head, and His right shall embrace me.” His left hand is the memory of that love whose greatness none can ever equal, by which He laid down His life for those whom He loved. His right hand is the beatific vision He has promised to His own, and the content with which He will fill and crown them when they shall enjoy His divine presence. It is written in the Psalms: “At Thy right hand there are delights even to the end.” His right hand is therefore justly made the figure of that divine and deifying, that inconceivable felicity which belongs to the vision of God. In like manner the left hand is as the seat of that amazing charity of which I have spoken, of which we can never think too much, for it is upon this hand that the Bride lays her head and rests until this iniquity shall pass away. We may understand her head to mean the intention of her soul, which she leans upon the arm of her Spouse, lest through weakness she might fall away to mere earthly attractions; for the earthly and corruptible burden of the body weighs heavily upon the soul, and drags it down from thoughts to which she cannot fail to rise if she rests upon the contemplation of

mercy, to which she had so little claim, love so lavish and so amply proved, gentleness and sweetness so persevering and so exquisite, such unimagined honour. Is it possible that these should not exalt the mind that meditates upon them, detaching it from all unworthy affection, sinking deeper and deeper into it, and making it scorn all which cannot be relished without renouncing these higher enjoyments? Their sweetness, like rare scents, attracts her; she quickens her step blithely, and her heart is all aflame with love. The sense of being loved so tenderly makes her fancy herself cold, though love be her very life. What return is it for a love that comes down from so high, and is so marvellous, if a poor grain of dust be all consumed with gratitude and love? Was not the Majesty of heaven the first to love? Has it not revealed itself as wholly devoted to the work of saving her? For "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." This is clearly written of God the Father. And again: "He hath delivered His soul to death;" this is said of the Son. And of the Holy Spirit we read: "The Paraclete whom My Father will give you in My name, He will teach you all things, and will bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." Hereby we see that God loves us, and loves us with His whole being; for the Blessed Trinity altogether loves us, if we dare so to speak of the infinite incomprehensible Being who is one and indivisible.

CHAPTER V

OF THE OBLIGATION TO LOVE GOD, ESPECIALLY FOR CHRISTIANS

ALL that has been said proves most clearly the duty of loving God, and His claim upon our love. How is it with the infidel? As he knows not God the Son, so is he also ignorant of the Father and the Holy Spirit; and as he gives no glory to the Son, neither does he glorify the Father who sent Him, nor the Holy Spirit, the gift of both. He knows less of God than we do, therefore it is no wonder he should love Him less. One thing, however, he does know; that to Him who created him, he owes himself entirely. But how will it be with me? for I can plead no ignorance. I know that God made me without any desert of mine, that He satisfies all my wants, comforts me with pity, and governs me with anxious care; and not only so, but I know, besides, that He is my Redeemer, the Author of my eternal salvation, my treasure and my glory. As it is written: "With Him is plentiful redemption;" "By His own blood He entered once into the Holy of Holies, having obtained eternal redemption." He keeps us safe, as it is written: "The Lord knoweth the days of the undefiled, and their inheritance shall be for

ever." He enriches us, as He has said: "Good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom;" and elsewhere: "The eye hath not seen, O God, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee." He fulfils us with glory, as saith the Apostle: "We wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our body, now vile and abject, and make it like unto His own, which is full of glory." And again: "The sufferings of this present time are not to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us;" and this present time of this world's affliction (so short, so fugitive) produces to us (if only despising the visible we fix our eyes upon things invisible) "an eternal and incomparable weight of glory."

For all of this, what shall I render to the Lord? Both reason and the law of Nature bind me fast to give myself undividedly to Him from whom I hold all that I have, and to devote my entire being to the love of Him. And faith reveals to me that I am constrained to love Him more than myself, the more I understand how I owe to His munificence not only all I am, but moreover the gift of Himself. But let us consider that, ere yet the day of Christian faith had come, before God had put on our flesh and died upon a cross, gone down into hell and ascended to the Father, that is, before the fulness of His love for us had shone forth, long before, man had been commanded to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, that is, with his whole being, with all the love of which he is capable, as a creature endowed with intelligence and will. Could it be unjust of God to claim for Himself His own work and His gifts? Why should not the work love God who made it, having also received the power to love; and why not love Him with all its powers, if it be only by God that it possesses any? Consider, too, that man has not only been called into being out of nothing, without any anterior claim, but also that he has been so called to be raised to high dignity. We shall thus see more clearly our obligation to love Him wholly, and His right to our love. Moreover, when man had sunk to the level of the beasts that perish, did God not intervene to reinstate and save him? Is not this the marvel of His goodness and His mercy? For by sin we had fallen from the dignity of our creation, to become imbruted like the ox that eateth grass and hath not the light of reason. If I owe my whole self to my Creator, what do I not owe to my Redeemer, and to such a Redeemer! It was a far less work to create, than to redeem; for God had but to speak the word and all things were made; but to repair the fall of that, which one word had created, what wonders had He not to perform, what cruelties, nay, what humiliations, had He not to suffer!

What, therefore, shall I render to the Lord for all that He hath done for me! By creating, He gave me to myself; but He restored me to myself when He gave Himself to me: first given and then restored, I doubly owe myself to Him. But, what do I owe to God for the gift of Himself? If I gave Him my whole being a thousand times over, what would that be in comparison of God?

CHAPTER VI

A SUMMARY OF WHAT HAS HITHERTO BEEN SAID

CONFESS that God deserves to be greatly loved, or rather that He should be loved beyond measure. He was the first to love; He so great, we so little; He loves us to excess, just as we are, and without any claim whatsoever on our side. This is why the rightful measure of our love to God is to exceed all measure; for God, the object of our love, being infinite, how can we weigh or measure what we owe to Him in love? Moreover, our love is not a free offering; it is the payment of a debt. And, besides, as it is the I Am, eternal and immense, the Divine Love, God, whose greatness has no limits nor His wisdom bounds, who is the "Peace which passeth all understanding;" as, I say, it is such a God who loves us, is it possible for us to say we will love Him so much and no more? "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength and my defence, my refuge and my salvation," who art to me all that my soul needs, and all that my heart desires. My God and my Help, I will love Thee with all my strength; not according to what Thou deservest, but according to my little capacity. I will love Thee more when Thou hast given me more power of loving; but never, never as Thou shouldst be loved. Thine eyes see my foolishness, my inability; but I know that Thou writest in Thy book those who do what they can, even when they cannot do what they ought. Have I not said enough to prove how God should be loved, and by what gifts He has merited our love? I merely name His gifts, because the excellence of them who can express, who can understand, who can feel?

CHAPTER VII

THE REWARDS AND ADVANTAGE OF THE LOVE OF GOD. THE HEART OF MAN IS NOT TO BE SATISFIED BY EARTHLY THINGS

LET us see what benefit accrues to us from loving God. Though we may see this ever so imperfectly, that is better than to be blind to it. We have spoken (though in a manner unworthy of God, yet to the best of our power) of God's right to our

love; we will now speak of the recompense He has attached to our loving Him; for whilst we must love God, independently of all reward, we shall none the less be rewarded for having loved Him. True charity cannot be left without salary, although she is not mercenary and seeketh not her own. Love is a going forth of the soul, not a contract; it is not the result of a convention, and is not to be acquired by agreement; it is spontaneous in its impulses, and likens us to itself; also true love is its own satisfaction. Its recompense lies in the object of its love; for whatever be that which we seem to love, if our real object be something else, it is really that something which we love, and not that by which our heart strives to attain it. St. Paul preached not the gospel for his daily bread, but the bread which kept him alive enabled him to preach the gospel. What he loved was the gospel, not the bread. True love seeks no reward, but it merits one; it is very certain that no one proposes to pay for love, although it not only deserves its recompense, but shall surely have it. In a lower class of things, who are they that are excited by the offer of rewards? Those that are slack and unloving. Does it ever occur to any one to persuade with pay those that are burning to be allowed to serve? One does not give money to a starving man to engage him to eat, no more than to a tender mother to induce her to give suck to her child, to get a vinedresser to protect his vines, or a householder to rebuild his fallen house. Far less does he who loves God need to be urged by the promise of a recompense which is other than God Himself; otherwise it would be the reward he loved, not God.

It is natural to a reasonable being to desire that which appears to him, according to his particular mode of thinking, better than what he possesses; and never to be satisfied if a good thing wants the particular quality which he prefers. If he loves beauty he will desire what seems to him most beautiful. If he plumes himself on the possession of a very precious jewel, he will desire to possess a still more splendid one; and whatever riches he may have, his nature is to want more. Is it not a thing we see every day, the owner of immense property and wealth buying up more land, and never content but in extending his estates? Those who dwell in vast palaces, are they not for ever building new ones, always altering, making round the cornered, and the cornered round? Are not men in high position constantly aspiring to higher, constantly striving to rise, out of an ambition more and more difficult to appease? There is no limit to such restlessness, because, in all such things, it is impossible to reach a point absolutely good and high. But it is not astonishing that so long as a man can see beyond him something greater and more perfect, he should be dissatisfied with

his own possession of what is less and worse. What does seem foolish beyond all expression is, always to be longing for things which cannot even lull to sleep our desires, far less satisfy them. What follows? this—that the heart, tempted by many deceitful charms, wearies itself to no purpose, is always craving, and counts for nothing what it has enjoyed, compared to what it fain would have; and is tormented, by desire of what it has not, out of all delight with what it possesses. All one cannot have; for the little it is possible to get, the price of labour must be paid; and it must be enjoyed with trembling; nay, with the miserable certainty that one day it must be lost, though the date of that day be not known.

I have described the conduct of a perverted will blindly seeking the sovereign good. It makes haste in vain, the plaything of its own vanity, deceived by iniquity. Why wear out the day in fruitless struggle this way and that, and be caught by death unsatisfied? In such toils do the profane entangle themselves who seek about, like fools, to obtain their souls' desires. They consume their life in useless efforts and arrive at no perfect happiness; for they are in love with created things, not with the Creator, and they try them, one and then another, before they dream of trying the Lord that made them all. Yet, if they could have their hearts' desire and achieve the possession of the world, less Him who is its author, they would feel at last, by the same law which has ruled their life, that Him they must have, or never rest. They have gone from one ambition to another, coveting always some better thing; and now, masters of all in heaven and earth, they would soon find all insufficient, and discover that they were forced to seek Him who is wanting still, they must seek God Himself. Once discover that, once attain unto Him, there is peace; it is impossible to go beyond. The soul must cry out: "It is good for me to adhere to my God;" or, "What besides Thee have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?" and again: "Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever." Even this way would a soul necessarily end in God if it could try in sequence all lesser things than He.

But life is too short, and strength would fail for any such attempt; also the number of competitors is too great. It would be impossible to try all creatures and find them wanting. It were more easy and more advantageous to do the work in imagination than in reality. Our minds have been endowed with more activity and perspicacity than our hearts precisely for this end—that they may go first and prevent the heart from attaching itself to what the mind has not first found desirable. "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good." The first should

prepare the ground for the second, so that the heart should follow the judgment of the mind. Otherwise there is no hope of “ascending into the mountain of the Lord, and dwelling in His holy place;” and it is in vain that we possess a reasoning mind, if we do as the beasts do, and only obey our senses, the reason not interfering. They who are not guided by reason, run indeed in the race, but they run without chance of winning. How should they win, seeing they care not first for the prize, but put that last of all? How should they do other than entangle themselves in a maze without beginning or end? Not so with the just. Warned by the blame addressed to those who thus err (for the way is wide and well trodden that leads to death), they choose the royal road which turns to neither right nor left, for “the path of the just is straight.” They take the shortest road, guided by a word as simple as simplifying, commanding them not to heed what their eyes may see, but to sell all and give to the poor; for blessed indeed are such poor, and the kingdom of heaven is theirs. The Lord knoweth the way of the just, and commendeth it. He knoweth also the way of the sinner, in which he cannot but perish. The just are happy in their poverty, and the rich unsatisfied in their abundance; for the wise man saith: “He that loveth riches shall reap no fruit from them.” But they who “hunger and thirst after justice shall be filled.” Justice is their needful food. As to the things of this world, the soul is no more nourished by them than the body is by air. If we were to see a starving man inhaling with wide open mouth, drinking long draughts of wind to quench his thirst, we should say, Poor fool! So is it with those who seek to satisfy the soul with worldly goods, which do but puff it out as with wind, and no more feed it than things spiritual feed our bodies. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, who satisfieth thy desire with good things.” He filleth thee out of His fulness; at once giving thee thy desire, and exciting thee to wish for more. He prevents, He sustains, He fills thee; He kindles desire in thy heart, and He Himself is the Object of all desire.

I have said that the motive of our love to God is God Himself, and it is well said, for He is both the efficient cause and the final end of our love. He is such that it is impossible to know and not to love Him; not also to hope in Him; for, if we did not hope to love Him perfectly hereafter, our present love for Him would be nothing. Our love is prepared and recompensed by His. He first loves us out of His exceeding goodness; then He claims the due return of love, and permits us in the future the most glorious hopes. He is generous to those who call upon Him, but He can give nothing better than Himself. He Himself is the end of our merits, and our reward. He is the food of holy souls, the ransom of those that are yet in captivity. If the Lord be good to the soul that seeketh Him, what is He to

that soul which hath found Him? But this may seem strange, that no one can seek the Lord who hath not already found Him; for His will is to be found that He may be yet more sought; and sought, that He may be more entirely found. But, though He may be sought and found, He can never be forestalled. He is always first; and if we say: “In the morning my prayer shall prevent Thee,” it is nevertheless quite certain that that prayer would be very chilly if, O God, thine inspiration did not precede it.

We have spoken of the consummation of the love of God, let us now see what are its beginnings.

CHAPTER VIII

WE BEGIN BY THE LOVE OF SELF, THIS BEING FOR US THE FIRST DEGREE OF LOVE

LOVE is one of the four natural affections that all the world knows, and which need not be enumerated. Now, it is but natural and right first of all to love the Author of nature; and the first commandment, which is the greatest, is: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.” But nature is too soft and weak for such a precept; she must begin by loving herself; this is the love which is called carnal, with which man loves himself first and above all; as it is written: “That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural.” We love first by nature, not by precept—“No man ever hated his own flesh.” But if this love should increase too much; if like a river between banks it overflow and flood the lands about, it then becomes voluptuousness, and this dyke is opposed to it: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Justly may he that shares our nature share our love. Wherefore, if any one cannot so love his brethren as to think of their wants, or let us even say of their pleasures, let him deny himself in those very things, in order that he may learn. Let a man think of himself as much as ever he will, if only he take care to think equally of his neighbour. Such, O man, is the curb and just limit imposed upon thee by the law of thy being and by thy conscience, that thou be not carried away by thy selfishness to thy destruction, leaving thy nature at the mercy of the enemies of thy soul; that is, of thy passions. It is far better that thou go shares with thy neighbours than with thy enemies; and if, as the wise man advises, man renounces his passions, contents himself with food and raiment, and is willing to moderate his love for those things of the flesh which war against the spirit, he will, I think, find small difficulty in giving to his neighbour what he refuses to the enemy of his soul. His love will be contained within the bounds of justice and moderation, from the moment that he

consecrates to his brethren that which he refuses to himself. Selfishness becomes benevolence by taking a wider range.

But if through imparting to our neighbour we bring ourselves to want? What is our remedy? Prayer. We have only to pray with confidence to Him who giveth all things liberally and upbraideth not; who “openeth His hand and filleth with blessing every living creature;” for we cannot doubt that He who giveth to most men more than they need, will willingly give to him who prays for what is indispensable; for it is written: “Seek first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.” God hereby binds Himself to provide what is essential for him that denies himself and loves his neighbour; for to put on the yoke of purity and sobriety rather than be the slave of our passions, this is to seek first the kingdom of God and to implore His help against the tyranny of sin; and it is justice to share our natural blessings with those that share our nature.

But in order that love for our neighbour be entirely right, God must have His part in it; it is not possible to love our neighbour as we ought to do, except in God. Now he that loves not God can love nothing in Him. We must therefore begin by loving God, and so love our neighbour in Him. God is the author, as of all other things, so of our love for Him—and more—as He created nature, so He sustains it; for she could neither exist nor subsist without Him. That we might thoroughly know this, and not attribute anything to ourselves, God, in the depths of His wisdom and love, made us subject to tribulation. Being feeble and needy, we are forced to turn to God, and being saved by Him we render glory to His name. These are His own words: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” In this way man, by nature animal and carnal, with no love but for himself, is brought through self-love to love God, realising that all his ability, at any rate for good, he has from God, and without Him is able to do nothing.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE SECOND AND THIRD DEGREES OF LOVE

FIRST, then, man has some love for God for his own sake, not for God’s. It is already something to feel the limits of his own capacity, to know what he cannot do without the help of God, and to keep right with Him who sustains his life and strength. But, let a train of disasters befall and oblige him perpetually to have recourse to God, if he still get the aid he wants, his heart must be of brass or

marble not at last to be touched by the goodness of his helper, not to begin at length to love Him for Himself. Let the frequency of trials bring us often to the feet of God, surely it is impossible, but we must begin to know Him, and, knowing Him, must come to discern His sweetness. It soon follows that we are brought to love Him rightly, far more for the sweetness and beauty that we find in Him than for our own self-interest. In the words of the Samaritans to the woman: “We now believe, not for thy saying; for we ourselves have heard Him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.” In like manner, we come to say to our natural self: It is not because of thee that we love the Lord, but we have tasted ourselves, and found how sweet He is. The necessities of this life are a kind of language proclaiming in transports of joy and thanksgiving the blessings of which they have taught us the value. When this has once been learnt, it is easy enough to obey the precept and love our neighbour as ourself; for, if we love God truly, we love all that is His, and it is henceforth easy to submit to the precept: “Purify your hearts in the obedience of charity, with a brotherly love.” We are bound to fulfil willingly so just a command, a command, moreover, so full of profit because it is disinterested. It is a love most pure, for it is shown simply in holy deeds and truth; most just, for it returns that which it receives. Whoso loves with this love, loves as he is loved, and seeks no more his own, but the things of Jesus Christ, even as Jesus Christ has sought us. Herein we see such love as that which said, “Give praise to the Lord, for He is good.” He that loves God because He is good, not to him, but in Himself, loves God indeed for God, and not as he does of whom the Scripture saith: “He will praise Thee when Thou shalt do well to him.”

CHAPTER X

THE FOURTH DEGREE OF LOVE IS TO LOVE SELF ONLY FOR GOD

HAPPY is he who can rise to the fourth degree of love, and loves himself only for God’s sake. “Thy justice, O Lord, is as the high mountains.” It is even so of this fourth degree of love, “a great mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell.” “Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?” “Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly thither and be at rest?” “His place is in peace, and his abode in Zion.” “Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged.” When shall this flesh and blood, this dust and mire of which I am made, be able to go up there? When shall this soul of mine, entranced with love for God, look on herself as broken sherds, yearn after God, and lose herself in Him, for “He who

is joined to the Lord is one spirit”? When shall she cry out: “My flesh and my heart have fainted away; Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever”? Holy and happy is he who but once, for but one moment, has felt something like this in his mortal life; for this is no human happiness, it is life eternal so to lose oneself, as if one were empty of self, as if one were not. If some poor mortal attains to this, for one moment and as it were unawares, this evil time seems begrudgingly to delay and embitter his joy. This body of death drags him down, the cares and anxieties of life pull him back, the corruption of the flesh refuses its support, and his duty to his neighbour calls on him loudly to come down, and cry out: “Lord, I suffer violence, answer Thou for me;” or thus: “Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

We read in Holy Scripture that God hath made all things for Himself. His creatures are therefore bound to conform themselves, at least in some measure, to the mind of their Maker. We ought to offer ourselves entirely to Him, studying only His good pleasure, not our own. We shall find happiness, much less in seeking our own advantage, than in the accomplishment of His will in us, according as we daily pray: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” O pure and holy love! most sweet and blessed affection! O complete submission of a disinterested soul; most perfect in that there is no thought of self; most sweet and tender in that the soul’s whole feeling is divine! To attain to this, is for the soul to be deified; as a small drop of water appears lost if mixed with wine, taking its taste and colour; and as, when plunged into a furnace, a bar of iron seems to lose its nature and assume that of fire; or as the air filled with the sun’s beams seems rather to become light than to be illuminated. So it is with the natural life of the Saints; they seem to melt and pass away into the will of God. For if anything merely human remained in man, how then should God be all in all? It is not that human nature will be destroyed, but that it will attain another beauty, a higher power and glory. When shall that be? To whom shall it be given to see and know it? When shall I come and appear before the face of God? O God, my Lord, my heart hath said to Thee: “My face hath sought Thee; Thy face, O Lord, will I seek.” Will it be given to such as I to see Thy holy temple?

In this life, the heart is obliged to take some thought of the body, the mind to see that its health and powers are kept unimpaired; and I think that it is impossible, so long as our energies are thus divided, to rest wholly in God and in the contemplation of Him, impossible perfectly to obey the precept, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.” We may not hope to possess the fourth degree of love, or rather to be

possessed by it, until we have put on a body spiritual and immortal, pure and calm, obedient and subject in all to the spirit, which cannot be our doing, but only the work of the power of God in favour of such as please Him. Our soul will easily attain to this perfect love when neither the burden nor the temptations of this body oppress her; then she will spring untrammelled to her joy in the Lord. But are we to doubt that the souls of the holy martyrs before quitting their triumphant bodies tasted, at least in some small measure, of this happiness? This we know for certain, that immense love filled and enraptured their souls, to give them strength to lay down their lives and to endure the torments which they suffered. Still the joy of their triumph must have been thereby abated.

CHAPTER XI

THE SAINTS WILL HAVE PERFECT LOVE ONLY AFTER THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

WHAT may we then believe of souls already freed from the burden of the flesh? I believe them to be altogether immersed in the fathomless depths of eternal light, and of a luminous eternity. But if, as we may not deny, they still desire and hope to rejoin the bodies they formerly inhabited, it is clear that they are not altogether changed, but that still their bodies claim some part in them, although it may be very small. And, until death be wholly swallowed up in victory, until the glory of eternity shall have pervaded every corner of the domain of night, and the clarity of celestial light shine even in our bodies, until then our souls can never cast themselves into God, and wholly give themselves to Him. Until then the chains of the body still impede them, be it only by a natural affection which they have neither the will nor the power to forsake; and, till the restitution of our bodies, our souls can never be swallowed up in God, which is their absolute perfection. If the union with Him could be consummated by the soul alone, she would no more desire the body; but when the soul leaves the body, it is gain, and greater gain when it rejoins it. Finally, “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” If death can be so praised, how shall it be with life? that life! The soul may well think to obtain increase of glory from its body, because, though infirm and mortal, it has contributed greatly to its merits. To “them that love God all things work together unto good;” and the soul which loves God profits by its poor, weak body, whether living, dead, or risen—living, by bringing forth with her fruits of penance; dead, by resting from its labour; risen, the two together attain the consummation of all joy. It is clear then that without the body the soul is not perfected; as in every state it is essential to her good.

The body then is for the soul a faithful companion; if it be a burden, it is also a help; when it ceases to aid, it also ceases to hinder; when again it helps, it is no more a burden. The first state is laborious, but profitable; the second inactive, but in no sense tedious; and the third is glorious. Hear how the Bridegroom in the Canticles invites the soul to these three conditions: “Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved.” The souls whom He invites to eat are those still toiling in their bodies; those that are at rest in death, He presses to drink; those who are once more clothed upon to be inebriated; and, calling these His dearly beloved, He implies that they are filled with charity: for to the first He saith only “friends;” for they who still toil under the weight of the body are dear to Him according to the love they bear. Those who are delivered from the burden of the flesh are dearer yet, because of the freedom and fulness their love has acquired. But, compared with all these, most dearly beloved are they who, clothed again in the robe of the glorious body, are transported with the love of God in joyful liberty from everything which might draw them down or hinder their upward flight. Not till thus perfected are they so delivered, for in the first case the body wearies the spirit and keeps it back; in the second, the body is an object of hope and of personal desire, which has in it the taint of self. The faithful soul begins by eating bread, but, alas, “in the sweat of her face;” for so long as she is in the body she does but walk by faith, which should work by love, for faith without works is dead. Now these are the works which are her bread, according to the word of the Lord: “My bread is to do the will of my Father.” When she has put off the body of death she ceases to eat the bread of sorrow, and, as at the close of a meal, she drinks long draughts of the wine of love; but this wine is not yet unmixed, for, as saith the Bridegroom in the Canticles, “I have drunk my wine with my milk,” for with the wine of God’s love the soul mixes milk; namely the desire of re-union with her body which she loves with the softness of natural affection. Already she feels the strength of the divine love which she drinks, but it does not yet transport her; the mingling of milk still tempers it. Inebriation troubles the spirit so that it forgets itself; but that is not the state of the soul still yearning for its body, which is yet to rise. She does not wholly lose the sense of self. But when she has regained this only thing that lacks, what hinders that she should altogether cast herself into God, losing even her own likeness, in being made like unto Him? No obstacle remaining, she can lift to her lips the cup of wisdom of which it is written: “My chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it;” and who can wonder that she is transported with the abundance that fills the house of God; free from all care, she drinks, in

the Kingdom of the Father, long, tranquil draughts of the wine of the Son, pure and new.

It is wisdom that gives this threefold banquet, where all the food is charity. She gives bread to those who have still to labour, wine for those to drink who already enjoy rest; and inebriates those who are gone into the kingdom of heaven. When her guests have eaten, she serves to them wine. So long as we toil in this life, bearing on us a mortal body, we must eat of the bread our labour has found us, we must eat laboriously and swallow it; but, scarce have we breathed our last sigh, when we begin to drink in our spiritual life, receiving the cup, and drinking in happy restfulness. When all is accomplished, and the body is risen to life and restored to the soul, they drink to inebriation of the chalice that never fails. This is the meaning of those words: “Eat, O my friends, and drink; and be inebriated, my dearly beloved.” In this life, eat; after death you shall drink; in the kingdom of the resurrection you shall be inebriated; you whom I well may call my dearly beloved. Are they not truly so who are admitted to the marriage feast of the Lamb, who sit at His table, eating and drinking in His kingdom, when “He presents to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing”? It is then He will inebriate His dearly beloved, pouring out to them a “torrent of delights;” for when the Bridegroom shall clasp the Bride in His loving and chaste embrace, a torrent of delight shall rejoice the City of God, which I hold to mean no other than the Son of God, who, “passing, will minister unto them that sit at meat.” So He hath promised that the just may feast, and rejoice before God, and be delighted with gladness. From thence comes satiety which is never satisfied; ardour which is insatiable, yet most calm and peaceful; the eternal and incomparable desire to possess, which arises from no want; that inebriation without excess, which comes from the enjoyment, not of wine, but of God and His Truth. The soul hath reached for ever the fourth degree of love, when she loves only God, and loves Him supremely; when she loves for no gain, for Himself alone; so that He is her reward, the eternal recompense of those who love Him, and shall love Him for ever.

FRAGMENTS FROM A FRAGMENT BY ST. BERNARD HIS LAST WORK FRAGMENTS

THERE are in Holy Scripture many songs of praise; but only one is styled the Canticle of canticles. Moses, Israel, Deborah, Judith, and many others, sang a song to the Lord to glorify Him for wonders received at His hands; but only Solomon, the wise and pacific king (crowned with glory and goods and blessings, living in perfect peace, in no need of the gifts and deliverances for which others gave thanks), only he sang, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the glory of Jesus Christ and of the Church, in their mystical, eternal espousals; an Epithalamium celebrating the aspirations of a holy soul, and the transports of a purely spiritual joy, to the glory of Him who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; for whose sake, as He is above all, and His praise most excellent, the Song of Solomon is called the Canticle of canticles.

It is the perfection of all other praises, and only the grace of God can teach its meaning, for it can only be learned by experience. Let those who have it not burn with desire to obtain it. It is not a hymn of the lips, but an outburst of the heart. It is not a harmony of voices, but a concord of wills. It is only to be understood within, not heard without. And only they two have to do with it, the Bridegroom and the Bride; for it is a nuptial hymn expressing the purity and closeness of spiritual embraces, perfect union of will, perfect mutual oneness of affection and inclination.

When I think of the eager yearning with which the patriarchs and ancient servants of God sighed for the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, I grieve and weep for my own insensibility, and for the indifference of the age we live in. Who of us feels a joy that He has come equal to the longing which they felt for the fulfilment of His promise?

The opening words of the Canticle: “Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth,” express the holy impatience of those men; as if they said, “What is to me Moses? he hath stammering lips; Isaiah’s are impure; Jeremiah is but a child; let him speak to me no more through them; they are but a cloud; let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth; let His presence, His teaching, be to me as a spring

of water welling up into eternal light. Not that I presume to ask Him to kiss me with His mouth; that privilege is not for me; that happiness, all singular and sacred, belongs to the Word of God alone; to that humanity which He assumed in His incarnation." When the Godhead of the Word was united to a body, that union was the kiss once only given by God and once received by man; for Jesus is the mediator between God and man. In Him the union of two natures brings together things divine and human. It marries heaven and earth in perfect peace. No Saint has ever dared to say: Let Him kiss me with His mouth; for that kiss is Jesus Christ, our peace, who of two hath made but one; the Man, who, being God, reigns for ever with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

I would fain know if any one of you has received grace to say: Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth. It belongs not to many so to speak, but he who once has been so honoured is perpetually excited to desire it again, and passionately pressed to ask for it. None can imagine who has not felt it; it is a hidden manna for which he that hath eaten shall still hunger; it is a fountain sealed, of which whoso drinks shall still thirst. Hear him speak who had tasted: "Give me again the joy of the Saviour." But a soul borne down by sin, subject to the frailties of the flesh, which has never tasted the sweetness of the Holy Spirit, such an one aspires to no such grace. I will tell you where such may well abide: behind the feet of the Divine Saviour, his eyes on the ground, like the Publican not daring to look up to heaven, lest venturing to gaze upon glory he be blinded by excess of light. Think it not beneath you to stand where the woman stood who "was a sinner." After the example of that most blessed penitent, kneel at His feet, prostrate yourself like her, you that are miserable, that you may cease to be so. Kiss His feet, so to appease His wrath; wash them with tears, not for their cleansing, but for your own; and venture not to lift your eyes until you also hear those words: "Your sins are forgiven."—"Arise, arise, daughter of Sion; arise, you that are captive, and lie no more in the dust." But not yet must you presume to think of the kiss of His mouth. If you obtain His hand to kiss, be more than satisfied; for if Jesus Himself said to me: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," what would that avail if I could not thenceforth keep from sin? What profits it to wash my feet if I soil them again? I have long been sunk in the mire: if I fall back again now, my last state will be worse than my first. He who healed me said: "Now go and sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee." My safety is in His hands. He who gave me heart to repent, He also must bestow on me strength to abstain from sin. Woe to me if, even while I do penance, He were to withdraw His hand, for without Him I can do nothing, absolutely nothing. I can neither

repent, nor keep myself from sin. I hear the counsel of the Wise Man: “Ask not twice the same grace,” and I shudder when I think of the sentence of the Judge cursing the tree that brought not forth fruit. I need another grace by which, having repented of my sins, I may have heart to bring forth worthy fruits of penance, that I may not fall back into my first misery. This I must obtain before I presume to look up and sue for a royal favour. The presumption of a sinner is hateful unto God, but the shame of a penitent is very dear to Him. What! defiled with the filth of sin, could I so much as think of touching His sacred lips? No; but ask that He may reach out His hand to you to kiss; that that hand may lift you up and wash away your impurities. Lift you up! and how? By enabling you to aspire to higher favours, encouraging you to bring forth worthy fruits of heartfelt penitence which are the works of piety. By these graces He will lift you up from the dunghill, giving you the hope of yet better things; and, when He gives His gifts, kiss His hand; give to Him all the glory; offer Him a double sacrifice in that He hath first forgiven your sins, and then bestowed His graces on you. It may be then that you will have courage to go on to something holier still, for as you grow in grace you will grow in trust, your love will intensify, you will ask the more fervently as you will more keenly feel your need, and to him that asks God gives liberally. I think He will not even refuse you that kiss, the most excellent and sacred of all, containing in itself the sweetness of ineffable consolation. By that most holy kiss we are united with Him, and through His infinite goodness we become one spirit with Him.

“Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth.” Who speaks? The Bride. And who is she? She is the soul that is athirst for God.

Let us consider the dispositions of various classes. Slaves dread the face of their masters. Mercenaries care only for their pay. Disciples wait upon the words of their teacher. Sons honour their fathers. But one who asks only for a kiss is aflame with love. There is nothing in all Nature that surpasses such love, above all when it is fixed upon its fountain, God. The love of God and of the soul can be expressed in no way so perfectly as by the mutual love of Bride and Bridegroom, all being in common between them, and neither having any separate possessions. For his wife, the man must leave father and mother, for that he and she are one flesh; and the woman must forget her people and her father’s house, that her husband may delight in her beauty. Since this relation is the ideal one of love, it is well that the name of Bride should be given to the soul that loves. The loving soul asks a kiss; not freedom, rest, reward; not knowledge; nor yet riches; only this, a kiss. She asks it as a modest bride, warm with a holy

love, and needing not to disguise her affection. Having a great favour to ask as from a king, she makes no excuse, or preface; she goes straight to her point, and, speaking confidently out of the abundance of her heart, she simply says: “Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth;” as if she said: “What is there in heaven or earth that I desire in comparison with Thee?” She is chaste, for she cares for nothing else but Him; she is pure, for all her desire is spiritual. She is eager in her love, for she forgets even the majesty of Him to whom she speaks; for of whom does she ask this favour? Of Him who, with one look, makes all the earth to tremble. But it is written: “Perfect love casteth out fear.”

To return to what I said before. In these words, “No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him,” a kiss is spoken of, a kiss ineffable, which no creature had ever yet received. The Father loves the Son, and embraces Him with a love like to none other. The Most High embraces His Equal; the Eternal, His Co-Eternal; the only God, His only Son.

Hear also of another kiss: He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Ghost.” Was it material breath He breathed? Oh, no. It was the invisible Spirit which was given by this breath of the Lord, that all might know that He proceedeth equally from the Son and the Father; a kiss equally His who gives and who receives. The kiss of His mouth also suffices to the Bride, because that kiss is the infusion of the Holy Spirit, the unalterable Peace, the indissoluble Link, the invisible Love and Unity of the Father and the Son. The Bride, inspired by the Holy Ghost, is bold to ask to receive Him. She is bold, because the words of our Lord encourage her: “None knoweth the Son but the Father, and none knoweth the Father but the Son, or him to whom it pleaseth the Son to reveal Him.” Now, to know the Father and the Son, their goodness must needs be known, and that goodness is the Holy Ghost.

When then the Bride asks a kiss, she asks for this: the triple knowledge of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and this revelation is by the Holy Ghost who enlightens the understanding to know, and also kindles the will to love; or, in the words of St. Paul: “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost whom He hath given us.” O holy soul, recollect thyself in deepest reverence, for He is the Lord thy God!

It requires indeed discretion to give honour acceptably to a king; but strong love overleaps discretion. The Bride breathes forth the heaviness of her heart. It is not presumption, nor that she lacks humility. She is sunk in sadness, she is like earth without water, she is heavy-hearted, and her spirit is oppressed within her; she has struggled on in the sweat of her brow, languid and weary. Are there not

many souls that complain of such dulness and dreariness? And is not the very thing they want what the Bride sighs for here: “Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth”? They languish for the spirit of wisdom and knowledge; for knowledge to understand, for wisdom to taste what they know.

She spoke of the Bridegroom and He appeared. He grants her prayer, and gives her the boon she besought, as it is written: “Thou hast given the desire of the heart, and hast not denied the request of the lips.” Of those who wait upon the Lord in prayer, very many will bear witness how often this is so. Cold and dry, they persevere; and, of a sudden, grace is vouchsafed them; they are conscious of an inundation as it were of piety; love and sweetness and delight overflow; they are full and able to give forth abundantly to those in need of the sweetness of God’s consolations. Forthwith the soul breaks forth in praise of Him who hath done such great things for her, and accounts for her boldness by extolling the perfections of her Spouse on which her trust was founded. These are His patience with sinners and His clemency to penitents; a double sweetness. So David says: “The Lord is long suffering, and plenteous in mercy;” and St. Paul: “Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and patience and long-suffering? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?” And of His facility for pardoning it is written: “Let the wicked forsake his sins and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy, and to our God and He will abundantly pardon.” “For these perfections of which I have long since tasted, for no worthiness in myself, I had confidence to ask Thee what my soul desired.” So speaks the Spouse, and what is true of the Lord is also true of His servants, and especially of those that have to teach. If they suffer not with the suffering, and rejoice not in their relief and benediction, they are useless to others and worse than useless to themselves. Consider how it is with a holy Pastor. Like a mother among her little ones, he dispenses to each of his children according to their need: to the weak the milk of babes; to the tempted, most sweet sympathy and counsel; is any timid and faint-hearted; how he will encourage, and praise, and find ingenious points of consolation! Or if any be gay, and lively, making rapid progress, how he will in his delight give him wise counsels, animate him to further efforts, and assist him to persevere, and every day to go forward, on and on. Such a Pastor is all to all, conforming himself to each, feeling in his own heart the feelings and disposition of each one, no less devoted to those that falter, than to those who steadily advance. Alas, for such as seek their own! If this be true of any who have undertaken the charge of souls, their evil heart is as a foundry in which are made

the scourges, nails and lance, the cross and death of Jesus Christ.

There are other qualities of the Bride, the Church, and of every holy soul, which we may call perfumes. They too have their beginning and perfection in our Lord. We will treat of three: the perfume of contrition; the perfume of devotion; and the perfume of piety. The first gives pain and pierces; the second soothes and cheers; the third drives away and cures all evil. Let us discourse of each minutely.

First, then, the perfume which the soul composes, when it begins to examine its conduct, heaps together all its sins of whatever kind, and putting them into the cauldron of conscience distils them, as it were, over the fire of grief and repentance. This is the first perfume of the sinful soul; and while she has no better to present, this, though composed of such vile materials, she should faithfully persevere in offering; for God will never scorn a humble and contrite heart. The more conscious a soul is of her misery, the less will God reproach her. Dare we call it so vile however? Is it not that with which the sinful woman anointed the feet of Jesus, and the Gospel says, “The whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment”? The open, thorough repentance of a sinner perfumes the whole Church; it is “a savour of life unto life,” so sweet and penetrating that it reaches even to the abode of the blessed; and “the Truth” Himself hath said: “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Be full of gladness then, poor penitent, and in preparing this acceptable ointment, begrudge not the myrrh and its bitterness; God will be gracious to the remorse of a penitent heart.

The second perfume is more precious in that it is made of things more valuable. We have no need to go forth for the materials of the first, they exist abundantly within us; but we must seek throughout the world for the treasures of which the second is composed. They are the blessings which God’s goodness has bestowed on man. Like aromatic gums, having been sought with loving diligence, they must be pounded in the mortar of the heart with the pestle of meditation, brought to a great heat by the fire of holy desire, and mixed with the oil of gladness. Such a perfume will infinitely excel the former. This it is of which God says in the Psalm: “The sacrifice of praise shall honour Me;” for of the other it is only said that God will not despise it. This must be far better which He says shall honour Him. The first is poured upon the feet, the second upon the head. Now the head of Christ is God, and to give thanks is to perfume the Head, for, although God and man are one Christ, all blessing comes from God, even that which comes through man. For this, the Scripture condemns whoso puts his

trust in man; for, though all our hope be in Christ, it is not because He is man, but because He is God.

The penitent who knows that his former sins are still alive within him, who can only think of rooting out these thorns, who is weary with sighs and tears, he cannot take his flight and rise to the contemplation of God's gifts and blessings. He has read that praise is hateful in the mouth of a sinner, he knows that in his heart, full of sorrow, it would be discordant, like "music in mourning." Moreover, thanksgiving follows, not precedes a gift, and such a heart is gasping for a favour, the gift of forgiveness; it sees only darkness, and no light; it feels only bitterness; and the sad remembrance of sins excludes all thoughts of joy.

This second perfume is clearly not for such hearts. We may learn from the example of the Apostles who they are that may offer it in abundance. "They went out from the Council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus;" their sweetness had been unmoved either by words or blows, they had ample store of this spiritual unction. Their hearts indeed gave forth a delicious odour when, "going forth, they published the glory of God in various tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." But for us all this perfume is most desirable because it alleviates the weariness of life; the celebration of God's praises brings an imitation on earth of the joys of the blessed. I therefore counsel you, you that I love, frequently to lay aside the bitter saddening consideration of your sins, and to fill your hearts with happy thoughts of God's goodness. We are bound indeed to have grief, but not continually; and it ought to be mingled with the grateful remembrance of God's clemency, lest too great sadness should stiffen the heart, and despair take hold of it to its ruin. If Cain had so recollected God's goodness, he would not have said: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon." God forbid we should ever so imagine, for His goodness is greater far than any crime. The more lowly your thoughts are of yourselves, the more trustful may be your reliance on God's sovereign goodness. If we shut out from our hearts thoughts of gratitude and praise, how shall we obey the Apostle: "In all things give thanks"? We shall rather come under the shameful condemnation: "They forgot His benefits and the wonders that He had shown them." At the least let us never forget the very greatest of all His works, our redemption—let that never be absent from our minds. There are two chief points in it for our recollection. First, how (to use the Apostle's words) "God emptied Himself;" and then, how we are thereby filled with Him. To think on that awakens us to holy hope. To dwell on this kindles our hearts to ardent love. Both are indispensable; lest our hope, not being mingled with love, be

mercenary, or our love cold, unmixed with hope. What do we hope for from our love? It is that which He who is the object of our love has promised in these words: “Good measure, pressed down, heaped up and running over, shall be given to you.” But what shall be thus measured? “Eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee.” What things? Corn, wine, and oil, gold, silver, precious stones? These all we have seen; we see them now, and scorn them. We seek what it “hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive.” Behold that is our hope; that, whatever it be, is our desire. That is none else than God Himself, who shall be our “all in all.” The fulness we desire is God, and all God. Who can tell the ineffable sweetness that lies in these words: “God shall be all in all”!

In the soul there are three powers—reason, memory, and will. Every thinking person knows that he is wanting and imperfect. Why, but because God is not yet all in all; because the reason is often deceived, the will torn and troubled by passion, the memory confused? How mournful for a being so noble to be subject to this triple weakness, although it have a hope of deliverance. He that shall fulfil the desires of the soul with every good shall be Himself, to the reason, Light never failing; Peace beyond understanding to the will; to the memory, its eternal, ever-present Object. O Truth, O Love, O Eternity! O Trinity most blessed and source of benediction! The miserable trinity within me sighs because, to her exceeding loss, she is separated from thee! And yet, why this sadness and dejection? “Put thy trust in God, for I will yet give Him thanks.” Error shall be cleared from my intelligence, suffering from my will, and fear from my memory, when the marvellous serenity, the perfect sweetness, and the eternal safety that we hope for, shall have taken their place. The Truth, which is God, shall do the first; the Love, which is God, the second; and the Almighty Power, which is God, the third; so shall God be all in all. The reason shall be flooded with inextinguishable light; the will shall enjoy a peace no turmoil can ever ruffle; the memory shall draw for ever from an inexhaustible spring of happiness.

Let us now consider the mode of our redemption, and in the effacement of the divinity of God chiefly three points. It was no small thing. He was made flesh. He died. It was upon the Cross. How can we realise in any measure the excess of humility, of sweetness, of ineffable goodness, which caused the Sovereign Majesty to take flesh, to suffer death, to die dishonoured on the tree? It may be asked: Was not the Creator able to repair His work without such humbling of Himself? He was able; but He loved best to do it by suffering, that man might never more have an excuse for ingratitude. He endured such torments for us that

we might owe Him endless love, and that the labour of our redemption might constrain those to gratitude whom creation (done with but a word) had failed to touch. For though we owe God unbounded gratitude for the free gift of existence, that indeed cost Him nothing. But, O miserable man, who can question the price He paid for our redemption? He disdained not to be as a slave, though Himself supreme Master; to be poor, though possessed of all; to be flesh, though Himself the Word of God; to be the Son of man, although He was the Son of God. In six days He made all creation; but He gave thirty years to the work of our salvation. He bore the infirmity of the flesh, and the temptations of the enemy. He perfected all by the horror of death, and the ignominy of the Cross.

Ponder these things in your mind. Cease not to think of them. Pour out such perfumes in your heart that they may overcome the vile stench of your sins which has so long been an offence to Him.

But there remains another perfume far surpassing either of these two. I call it piety. It is made up of the wants of the poor, the woes of the oppressed, the affliction of the sorrowful, and all the troubles of the unhappy, be they who they may, even our enemies. These seem but humble ingredients; yet their union is most sweet to the heavenly Bridegroom. Happy the soul which can offer the ointment they compose. “Acceptable is the man who showeth mercy and lendeth;” he who is moved by the wants of others and eager to relieve them; whose delight is to bestow; who forgives readily, and is not easily provoked; who never revenges a wrong, and feels the woes of others as if they were his own. Happy one, the dew of mercy lies upon your soul; you are filled full of charity; you make yourself all to all, that you may help all in every time and place; you are dead to self and live for others. That is indeed the rarest and most acceptable offering which shall distil from your hands and delight your God. No smallest sacrifice will He forget, but will receive your holocaust and perfect it.

Was not St. Paul rich in this costly perfume; who was everywhere the sweet savour of Christ; who generously cared for all the churches; who died daily for the glory of God; who, as a mother, fed the babes of Christ with the sincere milk of the Word; who “travailed in birth-pangs” again and again until the Saviour was formed in them, until some likeness could be seen in them to their Head? Or look at Job, who could say of himself, “I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame; I was a father to the poor; they waited for me as for rain.” Each one of his actions was a perfume. Joseph, again, who, after having fed all Egypt, would also give to the brethren who had sold him; and, though he looked at them with a

severe countenance, his tears showed the love which filled his heart. Samuel wept for Saul, who desired to kill him, out of the piety that overflowed his heart, so that all Israel knew him for the faithful prophet of the Lord. And what of Moses, of whom the Holy Spirit has borne witness that he was “exceeding meek above all the men that dwelt in the earth”? “With men that hated peace he was peaceable,” and interceded for them, when God was angry, so vehemently as to say: “Forgive them this trespass; or, if Thou do not, strike me out of the book which Thou hast written.” He would not enter into the joy of the Lord, leaving the people without, whom, though they were ungrateful, he cherished with the tenderness of a mother.

The perfumes of these holy souls smell sweetly to this day in the Church. It shall be so with all who in this life have been merciful and loving, have not sought their own, but have made all free to all they had; esteeming this their duty, as well to enemies as friends, to the foolish as to the wise; humble beyond all, helpful to all, beloved above all, both of God and men. All such sent forth an odour of sweetness in their own day which still perfumes the world in ours. Of such an one it shall be said: “This is a lover of his brethren, and of the people of Israel; this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for the holy city.” Furthermore, we read in the Gospel of the holy woman who bought sweet spices to embalm the body of the Lord; not to anoint the feet, nor yet the head alone, but the whole body—to embalm Jesus. In like manner I would have you all, not merely fulfil the duties of charity to your kindred and your friends, to those that have done good to you, or from whom you have any hope of benefit (for the heathen do as much as this), but to all, even to your enemies. Be sure that this will make you to abound in exquisite perfumes, and to anoint, so far as in you lies, Christ’s whole Sacred Body, which is the Church. The Lord Jesus waited not in the grave for the spices prepared for His dead body. Was it to save them for His living one, for the Church? This is the body dearest to Him it is plain; for we know that He gave up the other to death, but the Church He keeps alive by the Bread which came down from heaven.

To speak for a moment of myself. It has happened to me at times to be reproached. Either I have been sitting at the feet of Jesus, for my own soul’s good, weeping over the bitter remembrance of my sins; or, a rarer case with me, I have been standing at His Head, rejoicing in His praise; and I have heard it said: Wherefore is this waste? I have been accused of living for myself alone, and upbraided because it was thought that I ought to be doing more for others. Now the truth is this: How would it profit me to gain the world, if I lose my own

soul? I have remembered the words of God in Scripture: “My people, they who call thee happy deceive thee;” and I liken such speakers to the flies that corrupt the ointment and perish in it. Let those who find fault with my quietness hear the Lord answer for me: “Why torment ye this woman?” That is: You can only see the outside arid judge thereby; this is not such a man as you imagine, but rather a woman; why lay upon him a yoke he is not able to bear? He is doing a good work to Me. He is doing what he can, not being able for more. When he has come to man’s perfect strength, he will do a man’s full work. For like reason none should ever criticise or reproach a bishop. Great is his dignity, very great his burden. It is inhuman to censure the conduct of those whose work we could not do. How could a woman knitting at home criticise the actions of a soldier on service? Remember that to go forth to fight is itself a manly, admirable thing. If a soldier has his imperfections, remember that charity covers a multitude of sins; his self-devotion stands him in good stead and pleads for him.

But to return from this digression to the perfumes of the Bride. You perceive how that of piety is the most beloved of all; so loved that not one particle of it shall perish; even a cup of cold water shall not be without its reward. By this most blessed piety is the body of the Lord anointed, and I say not that body which He gave up to be crucified, but that which, by His sufferings, He redeemed.

But who is he that shall claim to contain these precious things in his soul? Who even will dare to say that he has so much as the first one in perfection? But the Church possesses all. Who dares to claim fully for his own soul the name of Bride of Christ? Not any one would so presume. But the Church is the Bride of our Lord, and we who are her members, and glory in so being, we surely have some right to participate in her high calling and her name. Thanks be to Thee, O Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hast deigned to make us members of that body so beloved, I mean not only Christians, but, in virtue of that union, Brides of God, with the hope of nuptials spiritual and eternal hereafter, when with open face we shall behold Thee in Thy glory, wherein Thou art co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever.

The heavenly Spouse is called by many names in Holy Scripture; but all are in one or other of two classes. Either they express the riches of His goodness, or the greatness of His majesty. The Holy Spirit declares by David: “Two things have I heard; that power belongeth unto God, and mercy unto Thee, O Lord.” Some relate to His supreme powers, some to His sovereign mercy, of which may it not be said it is “as oil poured forth”? It is in those of our Saviour Jesus Christ. If we

study we shall see that in every one the name of majesty is made to melt into a name of tenderness. The name of God, does it not sweetly pass into “Emmanuel, God with us,” and the like? The voice of thunder and the word “I am the Lord thy God” has been softened into Father, the first of all words for us Christians. Of slaves we are made friends; and the news of the resurrection is sent, not only to the disciples, but to “My brethren.” It is by the sufferings of Jesus and His resurrection that this has come to pass, and by the preaching in His name of repentance and the remission of sins that, at the name of Christ, the multitude of the faithful should become Christians. This is the name of which Isaiah said: “The Lord God shall call His servants by another name in which he that is blest upon the earth shall be blessed in God. Amen.” As oil it has flowed from heaven to earth and over all the earth, and even into hell; for it is written again that “In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth;” and that every tongue should confess that “Thy name is as oil poured forth.” I have my part in this name, for I am a Christian and the brother of Jesus Christ. I am “heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ.” Not only His name is poured forth, but Himself; for He saith: “I am poured out like water.” The fulness of the divinity was poured forth on earth when the word of God took a mortal body, that we in our bodies of death might partake of His fulness and cry out: “Thy name is as oil poured forth.” His pouring forth is as oil, because oil enlightens, nourishes, and heals. From whence was that great, sudden light that illuminated the world, but from the preaching of the name of Jesus? It is in “Thy light that we see light.” Oil also is food and nourishment. Herein is it like the name of Jesus! How dry and worthless is everything without it. A book has no interest for me if I find not there the word Jesus. Conversation has no charm if Jesus form no part of it. That name is as honey to the mouth, as melody to the ears, a song of gladness to the heart.

It is also a remedy. Is any sad? Let the name of Jesus come into his mind and pass upon his lips. No sooner is that name of power pronounced than a light appears, so glorious that it drives away all clouds, and gives back tranquil peace. Does the remorse of a crime pursue a soul? Is such an one ready to rush to death for deliverance from torment? Let him call upon the name of Jesus, and the breath of life returns to him. With this adorable name in his heart, who ever persisted in revenge, sloth, languor, hardness? Who has not felt the rush of salutary tears bless him once more when he has cried to Jesus? Who ever has invoked that strong and generous name, when his heart was beating in the midst of fear and danger, and not felt quietness come down upon him? Who, when

wavering in miserable perplexity and doubt, has called upon the name of Jesus without receiving calming light into his soul? Who, borne down and discouraged by long adversity, has not found new courage come to him by use of that all-helpful name? These are the infirmities of the soul, and this their fitting remedy. It is written: “Call upon Me in the time of trouble. I will deliver you and you shall honour Me.” No other thing can, like that holy name, quell the madness of anger, bring down the swelling of pride, heal the sores of envy, allay the torment of impurity, destroy the lust of greed, appease the thirst of avarice, and arrest unruly or shameful thoughts; for when I name the name of Jesus it is not only that I recall the image of a man meek and humble of heart, kind, gentle, chaste, and merciful, full of all sorts of goodness, but I remember Him as God the Almighty. All this is in the name of Jesus; and whoso will not love it deserves death and is dead. Whoso lives not for Jesus lives for nought, and is nothing; for man is merest nothingness unless he know God. God has proved His love for us to be tender, wise, and strong; tender, for He truly became man; wise, for He only made as if He were a sinner; strong, in that He has confounded the wiles of the evil one. And after the same manner we must love our Lord; tenderly, that sinful love may be thereby expelled; wisely, for His love must be not only in our hearts but in our minds, lest we be seduced by the spirit of deceit, or our lives be indiscreet and immoderate; and mighty, that our lives may be steadfast and generous, fearless and persevering.

There is a merely human love for God: the love of the heart for the humanity of Jesus Christ. We may believe it was to attract this love that God, who is invisible, became man, and, as man, dwelt on earth, to enable carnal men to love Him carnally, and so to draw them on. To love our Lord Jesus Christ with all the heart, is to love His sacred Body, His humanity, better than our own, than all the world, than anything we love in it. But, though such affection be a gift and a great gift of the Holy Ghost, there is a higher love than this by far; for Jesus Christ has been made to us wisdom, justice, sanctification, and redemption, and to love Him as such is better than to love the earthly life of Jesus, and to weep with sympathy over His sufferings, though this be well; for thereby the life of the flesh is overcome and the world despised and vanquished. The human love for Jesus is as the overshadowing of Mary when the glory of the Holy Ghost came down upon her. It is impossible to love the manhood of our Lord without the Holy Ghost; yet it is rather for those who are still imperfect, as the Apostle says: “We have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we know Him so no longer;” for that is a carnal affection compared with the love of the Word,

Wisdom; the Word, Justice; the Word, Truth; the Word, Holiness, Piety, Virtue, and all His other perfections. No speciousness of the devil or of heresy can make such love falter from the smallest teaching of the Church. This is the love of God with all the soul. And if to this be joined such strength, such power from the Holy Ghost, that neither torments, nor the fear of death, nor death itself, can make us fail in justice, then we love God with all our strength, and this is spiritual love, the entire being loving without measure, filled with the Holy Ghost.

When the Church, the Bride, beheld her Beloved ascend up into heaven, did she not passionately long to go with Him and be received into His glory? It is the cry of every holy soul clogged with the imperfections of this evil time, and hindered from her joy: “Draw me;” for “the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind.” “Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” “Bring my soul out of prison.” But not only so; the Bride asks still more than this: the grace to imitate her Spouse, to follow in His steps, to love by the same rule as He, to be made perfect like Him. She longs to forget herself, and to bear her cross, and she knows His words: “Without Me ye can do nothing.” Many, nay all, desire to die the death of the just, and enjoy after this life the eternal joys that are with Jesus. All desire this end, but many abhor the way to it. Only the loving and beloved desire to follow Him whithersoever He goeth. The Bride is strong, and brave, and beautiful, ready for all. She shrinks from nothing. She would say: “O Beloved, what Thou wilt—temptation, suffering, chastisement, what Thou wilt, till I may see Thy face. It is in thine own strength that Thou goest, O Lord, the strength as of a mighty man of war, for God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows; but we never run but in the odour of Thy perfumes; the strength and the running is all from Thee.” There are seasons when the soul runs easily, and an eager zeal to be with Christ makes sacrifice delightful and all exertion sweet. In such times let no one say: “I shall never be moved;” lest he soon have to lament, “Thou turnedst Thy face from me and I became troubled.” And when weariness shall have fallen upon the spirit, and in darkness and dreariness life is a burden, be not cast down; feel for His hand who can lift you up, call upon Him like the Bride, say to Him: “Draw me, we will run;” so shall hope support you in the days of heaviness, and foresight prepare you against trouble, and your soul shall be like eternity; as in the days of old it shall be the image of God in whom there is no change, neither shadow of turning; through Him you shall recover man’s ancient glory, and you shall

neither grovel in adversity nor shall prosperity elate you, but all shall work together for your good. Need we wonder that the Bride cries, “Draw me,” when He whom she has to follow is as a giant rejoicing to run His course, leaping over the mountains? But, drawn by Him, she will run; and, not only so; the soul that is so beautiful and happy as to know His love, will not only run herself, but will draw others after her; we will run. For charity desires always that others should share her gifts; and they who are with the Bride, see her example and hear her words, are fired with like desire and run with her.

God only knows the delights the Holy Ghost reveals to His beloved, by what inspiration He awakens and recruits the senses of the soul, and with what odours He refreshes it. This is “a garden closed, a fountain sealed,” but the waste water runs through public places, and at these I may quench my thirst, and then give drink to others. The water runs in four great streams; or, to return to the former figure, the Church is refreshed by four rare perfumes whose ingredients are all heavenly, and they fill the whole house, attracting the beloved from the four quarters of the world, as the Queen of Sheba came from afar to hear the wisdom of Solomon, drawn by the odour of his reputation. Let us search into the mystery of these four perfumes, and try to know somewhat of the abundant ineffable fragrance of Him whom the Father hath anointed with the oil of gladness.

The world sat in darkness and the shadow of death when He arrived to deliver it. He dispersed the shades of night by the illumination of His wisdom. By the justice which comes of faith He broke the chains of the captives, giving them free pardon. Among a sinful people He lived holily, and thus marked out a way for their return to the lost home. He gave Himself up to death, appeased the Father by the satisfaction He offered, and by the five wounds of the cross poured forth the abundant redemption He had won for us. By wisdom, justice, sanctification, and redemption, He has filled the whole world with His fragrance, and having gone up on high, He has by them drawn all men after Him. By these four—Remember them. By constant meditation draw out their deep, mysterious sweetness, as God may please to reveal it to you, for to analyse these perfumes is beyond the power of man. The fulness of Jesus Christ is past all finding out. The wisdom of God is infinite, His justice like the great mountains, His sanctification incomparable, and His redemption perfect.

We have seen that they are the souls urged by love that run. The Bride runs, her companions also; but she, for that she loves much, runs fastest, reaches first, and is first admitted—but her charity, her solicitude and tender anxiety forbid her ever to forget her children in the Gospel; she encourages them, tells them of

her happiness, and they too run and enter, after her, the “store-rooms of the King.” What may be the meaning of these words? We read of His garden, His store-rooms, His chamber. By the help of the Holy Spirit let us explain the difference between them. Let the garden stand for the simple words of Holy Scripture; the store-rooms, their moral sense; and the chamber, the secrets of God which are attained by sublime contemplation.

I do not claim to have experience of these, or to glory in a prerogative reserved for the Bride alone; but each soul of the beloved of the King has its own secret with Him; some little I have learnt; and for the rest, may God, with whom is all knowledge, teach it you. The penitent woman had her place at the feet of our Lord; another, if it be another, at His head. St. Thomas was admitted to the wound of the side of Jesus; St. John to lie upon His breast; St. Peter to the bosom of the Father; St. Paul to the third heaven. Who shall say where lies the cause of these diversities? It may be the first penitent was there through her humility; the second, through the vehemence of hope; St. Thomas in the strength of faith; St. John by the trustfulness of his love; St. Paul in the depth of his wisdom; St. Peter in the illumination of truth. There are many mansions; and each is placed according to his secret, to abide till he shall enter further into the joy of his Lord, into the ineffable mysteries of the Spouse. How little have I ever entered into that rest, and for how little time have I stayed! In that chamber is the sense of God’s eternal mercies towards those that fear Him. Happy indeed, and truly happy he whose sins God will not lay to his charge. To be justified it needs but to have His favour whom we have offended. Not to sin belongs to God alone. The indulgence of God is man’s justice. It is written: “Whosoever is born of God committeth not sin, because He is born of God;” that is, in the eternal predestination and favour of God, their sins are as not existing. In time, they may have been, in eternity they do not appear; the infinite charity of God covering their multitude. O blessed chamber of God’s perfect love! If ever it should be your happy lot, any one of you, to be admitted for a little season into this divine mysterious sanctuary, give praise and say: “The King hath brought me into His chamber.” I do not say it need be the most secret, intimate, of all. Still it is a chamber, the chamber of the King; less wonderful than restful, sweet, serene and tranquil.

But though the saints thus contemplate with open face God’s glory, and are changed into His image as St. Paul was rapt into the third heaven, having in his admirable purity passed through the first and second, their outward seeming still remains, like his, vile and abject. This I think is meant when the Bride says: “I

am black, but comely;" black in the judgment of man, comely in the sight of God and holy angels. Within the soul of the saints is the brightness of eternal light, and they care not to delight man; knowing that they please God whose favour only they desire. They even "glory in their infirmities," and in being reproached, like Him of whom it was said that He had "no beauty in Him nor comeliness," yet was He beautiful above the sons of men. So the Church is reviled and despised, and not without just cause; for in her exile she cannot fail to be stained with many spots, and wrinkled, wounded and wearied, tanned and discoloured, black externally like the tents of Cedar, which word means darkness; but, within, "The king's daughter is all glorious," like the "tabernacle the true Solomon hath set in the sun," like the "heaven He hath stretched out as a pavilion." The heavens are not too high to be compared to her, for is not her spiritual being heavenly? And what more heavenly proof of a celestial origin can there be than, in an animal, ignoble body, to live the life of angels, adoring God and loving Jesus Christ supremely? Is a soul that can do this of earth? The heavens which are like her beauty are not resplendent only with gorgeous tints, but glorious with all beatitudes. Some of the blessed shall be "as the brightness of the firmament," and others shall shine as the stars for all eternity;" and each such soul in which God has set up His tabernacle is a heaven, to which the material heavens cannot be compared, for its perfection is all spiritual, and what thing is there that can equal the excellence of a soul which has put on its heavenly beauty, is decked with virtues like costly pearls, is more ethereal than the air, more splendid than the dazzling sun? The beauty of such a soul is charity, justice, patience, poverty, faith, humility and the like, whose reward is an eternal kingdom and a glory that shall have no end.

This which I have said of the Saints is true also of our Lord. "His look was hidden and despised, and we esteemed him not;" but within was the glory of His divinity and the brightness of His innocence. Did not some hidden splendour pierce through the veil of misery and apparent sin when the centurion cried out: "Indeed this man was the Son of God"? The soldier heard him "cry with a loud voice;" and, though he saw Him die upon the cross, he declared this man was the Son of God; for faith comes by hearing. The centurion heeded not the lying testimony of the eyes. He heard and believed, and confessed. By the hearing, sin first entered into man, and now by the hearing of faith life is restored. By faith is the truth received and confessed. By faith is the eye purified, and the reward of faith is the Beatific Vision. The natural eye sees but the blackness of the "curtains of Solomon," the disgrace of the flesh which He assumed for us; faith

apprehends His divine, surpassing beauty, which even when allowed to transpierce His mortal body, so transfigured it that the eyes of the Apostles could not bear the glory. Faith discerns God in the flesh, life in death, the fulness of adorable majesty in the midst of shame, the purity of innocence and the splendour of holiness within the cloud of apparent sin. By this revelation of faith the Bride, the Church, is humbled to bitter repentance for the sins which have spoilt her fairness; compared to her Beloved, she feels herself dark indeed. She yearns for Him and to be like Him, and her tears and the weariness of penance take all her brightness from her. She thinks she has done nothing for Him. “My own vine have I not kept”. She gazes upon His perfections, till all in herself seems neglect and fault. She gazes upon Him, and the more fixed her gaze, the more she desires the presence of “Him whom her soul loveth.” “Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day.” I would fain explain to you how the words of the Bride are good for every one of us, according to the state and aspirations of our heart; but this is extremely difficult, for we possess no expressions but those which concern material things, and in those which are only and wholly spiritual how unworthy they are and open to misconstruction!

“No man hath seen God at any time.” To neither Saint nor Prophet has it ever been possible in this mortal body to see God as He is. Only hereafter, when we shall have put on immortality and our nature is become spiritual, shall we be able to see God; for He is the “I Am,” the sole existence; to whom there is neither past nor future, but eternity, the perpetual present. Still there are many ways in which God is pleased to manifest Himself in this mortal life, as by the beautiful and marvellous works of creation, and, as to the patriarchs, under various forms. Above all, God has another way by which He reveals Himself, more rare by far, because wholly interior and spiritual. This vision is never given but to souls that seek God and desire His coming, with burning desire that burns up all impurity of sin: “a fire shall go before Him and shall burn up His enemies round about;” thus is a place prepared for the Lord. There are seasons at which God vouchsafes to visit such souls, and they know that the Lord is near when they feel such a kindling within them, for, “from above He hath sent fire into my bones.” This is the visit of God and His union with the soul meant by the Apostle when he says: “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” We express as best we can how a pure soul is ravished in God, the blessed descent of God into it. God is spirit, and it is in spirit that He comes, for He is spiritual love for the spiritual beauty of that blessed soul which He sees to be walking in the way of holiness and to be loving Him wholly and alone. The supreme desire of a soul

so beloved by God is that God should come to her, not to her bodily sight, as He has sometimes deigned to appear to His servants under one form or another, but that He should penetrate and fill her; for the word of God speaks not to the ears, but pierces the heart; He is not eloquent, but efficacious. There is no similitude which may be seen, but He transfigures the soul and fills the heart with the joy which springs from love. Yet even so I do not say that a soul can see Him as He is. Each soul differs from each, and the savour of the divine presence differs also in each recipient. To some He is a friend walking with them by the way, making their hearts burn within them by His talk; to some as their Father, in a home of plenty, providing every need; to some as a Bridegroom, caressing and embracing His Bride; to some as a Physician restoring with oil and wine, refreshing with aromatic perfumes; to some as a sovereign Prince comforting his wife who is poor and timid, showing her all his precious things, admitting her even to His secret cabinet, caring not to hide anything from her whose lowlihead He has not despised, whose fidelity He has proved, whose beauty is to Him so dear that he covers her with kisses.

Under every seeming He is full of charm, of sweetness and of mercy; clement, gay, affable and gracious; liberal and royal. In these among many ways our Lord reveals Himself to hearts that seek Him, as He promised: “I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” And yet it is not now as it shall be hereafter. This life is but the shadow of the life to come; “we see as in a glass darkly, but then face to face; we know in part and we divine in part;” “under Thy shadow we live,” for faith is the shadow of good things to come. The just live by faith, and the blessed see God. It is good to apprehend these great things; let us therefore try with prayer and the assistance of the Holy Spirit to enter into that which, as He deigns to do it for mortals by His indwelling, He may give us to understand by His illumination.

If then some soul should come to know that it is well to be closely united to God, or (to speak more clearly) if any should feel like the Apostle a desire to be rid of this mortal flesh and to be with Jesus, with a living, vehement desire, a burning thirst in his heart for God, the living God, we believe that our Lord will surely come to such an one as a Bridegroom, will take such a soul into His arms and shed abroad in her heart the sweetness of divine love; the heart’s longing shall be satisfied, its thirst shall be quenched, even though it possess its joy but for a moment and imperfectly; for if He be sought with sighs, tears, prayers and watchings, and at last do come to the soul, suddenly, while He seems to be present, He is gone; yet again if His loss be lamented with desolate seeking up

and down, if the devout soul persevere in prayer, He will not let her ask in vain, He will suffer Himself once more to be found, yet not to be detained. His coming is for a moment, and, though it entrance the soul with delight, His departure brings back sadness; and so in alternate joy and sorrow shall the Bride ever be, until that all-glorious time when, having laid down this heavy, terrestrial body, she goes (flying as it were on the wings of desire) to the perpetual freedom of the contemplation of the Beloved, following Him in spirit whithersoever He goeth, free from all let and hindrance.

But remember that only to few souls, those that have great devotion, vehement aspiration, and a love for God as trustful as it is tender, to only such does the Lord vouchsafe to appear as to a living and beloved Bride. He has other manifestations for other characters. To one who, pierced with compunction by the thought of his sins, prays to God in the bitterness of his soul not to condemn him, or to one still battling with fierce temptations, the Lord will appear as a Physician full of healing. Can we not bear witness to this from our own experience? Have we never wept, thinking it was beyond hope that such as we could be saved? and, of a sudden, the hope of pardon, the joy of forgiveness, have slid into our soul. Yet, if we should not remember, let us trust to His testimony, for He says: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, the Lord hath anointed me to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives.” Again there are others who, weary of their spiritual exercises, fall into laxity and indifference, walking wearily in the way of the Lord with a dry, dull heart, feeling that the days and nights are long. If the Lord, moved with compassion, draws near to such an one, and He who is from heaven begins to tell of heavenly things, to sing some delicious song of Sion, to speak of the city of peace, the eternity of its delights, the happiness of attaining to them, such inspirations soothe and rouse the soul, dispel all lassitude and sloth, and awaken both body and spirit to begin afresh. When you are conscious of such things within you, think not that the change is from yourself; remember who it is that saith: “It is I that speak justice and am a defender to save.” For He also teacheth us in the Gospel: “From the heart come forth evil thoughts;” and again by the Apostle: “We are not sufficient to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;” and the Psalmist saith: “I will hear what the Lord God shall say in my heart.”

All good thought is the visit of the Word of God: “without me ye can do nothing.” Be therefore careful that His grace in you be not void. There are again hearts to whom the Lord appears as a Father or as a Sovereign; hearts I think

magnanimous and brave, which have acquired through special purity of conscience a free, courageous, enterprising spirit. These are capable of bold undertakings, and are not satisfied until, by a praiseworthy curiosity, they have penetrated and understood the most secret and sublime things, and attained to the most perfect virtue. For the greatness of their faith makes them worthy of the plenitude of all good, and there is nothing in the treasure of wisdom from which the God of wisdom holds it fitting to exclude them. These are heroic souls, on fire with love of truth, and exempt from all vanity. Such was Moses, who dared to say to God: “If I have found favour in thy sight, show me thy face;” and such David, who said: “Thy face will I seek.” Such souls dare to aspire to great things because they themselves are great. To such, God says that He will give all the ground that they tread upon; for their great faith merits great reward, and they take possession of whatever realms they cover with the feet of hope. The heavenly Spouse shows Himself indeed to these souls: He entertains them magnificently with His light and His truth, and so leads them into His holy mountain and His tabernacle, that they may truly say, with the Blessed Virgin: “He that is mighty has done great things to me.”

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“Show me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest Thy flock, where Thou reposest in the noonday.” How shall I attain to see thee and myself with thee; thou feeding in the mountains those ninety-nine sheep which the shepherd leaves there when he goes to seek the one which has wandered? It is with good reason that the Spouse sighs and aspires after the place which is at once a pasture and a place of rest and security, of joy, wonder, and astonishment. Hapless am I that I can only salute it from afar. On the shores of the rivers of Babylon we weep, remembering thee, O Sion. Who but must fervently desire to feed in this pasture, that he may taste peace, and feed to satiety on the fine flour of wheat? This secure abode is Paradise, this delicious nourishment is our Lord Himself, and this great abundance is eternity. Let us hasten, then, my children, towards that sure dwelling, those delightful fields. For here, Lord, Thou pasturest, indeed, Thy sheep, but Thou dost not satisfy them. It is not here permitted to rest; we must stand upright, and watch because of the terrors of the night. Alas, this light is not pure, this food is not sufficient nor all-sweet, this abode is not safe. Show me, then, where Thou pasturest Thy flock, reposing in the noontide. Thou callest me blessed, because I hunger and thirst after justice; but what is that compared with the felicity of those upon whom are heaped the

treasures of Thy house, who are always seated at Thy banquet, and rejoice for ever in Thy presence? If I suffer anything for justice' sake, Thou sayest again that I am happy; but to pasture and to suffer at the same time, is not that a poor felicity? I possess here everything except perfection; many things happen beyond my hopes, but nothing is sure. Teach me where Thou reposest at noontide. I know well enough where Thou pasturest without reposing.

There are, O Lord, other shepherds besides Thee who call themselves Thy companions, and are not so; who have flocks of their own, and meadows full of poisonous herbs, in which they feed their charge, but without Thee and without Thy orders. These are they who say: "Christ is here," and "Christ is there." They promise fertile fields of wisdom and knowledge; men believe them, and run in crowds to them; but these shepherds make those who follow them to be children of the devil even more than they themselves are. And why? Because here is no noonday, nor pure light, in which the truth can be known clearly. Here falsehood is often mistaken for truth, because in the obscurity the difference is not easily detected. For my part, I think that we should sigh after the noontide, not only for these causes, but also, and above all, on account of the artifices of invisible powers, of seducing spirits who ever lie in ambush with their arrows made ready to pierce those who are of an upright heart. For, in this obscurity, Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and we can only be safe from the noonday fiend by dwelling in the noonday. Great is the temptation when the evil to which we are tempted is made to appear a great good. This is the temptation of the perfect, of those brave and generous souls who have surmounted all—pleasures, vainglory, and honours. It would be useless to tempt such persons openly; so the demon comes concealed under the semblance of some good. The more perfect the soul, the greater her need of caution against such danger. Hence the Blessed Virgin was troubled at the salutation of the angel. She fancied at first that it might be some deceit of the enemy. Hence, also, Joshua would not receive the angel as friendly to him until he had interrogated him; and our Lord's disciples feared to see Him walking to them on the sea, until He cried: "It is I, do not fear." In reward of our caution, the true Noonday thus speaks, lest, in such temptations, we take darkness for light or light for darkness.

"If thou know not thyself, O fairest among women, go forth, and follow after the steps of the flocks, and feed thy kids beside the tents of the shepherds." Moses, presuming too much on the grace and familiarity of God, asked for a great vision. But, instead of this, a lesser was given him, by which, nevertheless, he should by and by be able to attain his desire. The sons of Zebedee were in like

manner rebuked. And so the Spouse, having asked a great thing, finds herself reproved and humbled by a reply full of severity and love. For, in proportion as one aspires to great things, one must think little of one's self. Extraordinary graces are given only to extraordinary humility; and he who is destined to receive them will always be prepared by sharp abasement. When, therefore, you are greatly humbled, take it for a sign that the grace of God is nigh at hand. But, remember that it is humility, not humiliation, which profits. How many are humiliated without becoming humble! Some are soured by humiliations, some bear them patiently, others receive them with joy. The first are guilty, the second innocent, but the third sort alone are just, and receive the reward of humiliation.

There is no attaining to God without self-knowledge; for from such knowledge alone come humility and the fear of God, which is the beginning of salvation as well as of wisdom. But you must also know God; for how shall we love Him if we do not know Him, possess Him if we do not love Him? To know yourself is to fear God; to know Him is to love Him. The one is the beginning of wisdom, the other of perfection. Ignorance on these points is fatal. All other knowledge is indifferent. We are not saved by having it, nor lost for want of it.

If any one could know clearly himself as God knows him, the duty of each would be to esteem himself neither too lowly nor too highly, but in this, as in all things, to acquiesce in the truth. But since it has pleased God to conceal from us our own condition, insomuch that it is written that no one can tell whether he is worthy of love or of hate, it is wiser and safer always to choose the lowest place; for it is better to be called up higher than to be obliged to take with shame an inferior seat. There is no harm in thinking too little, even much too little, of yourself; but there is a horrible danger in raising yourself in the least degree above that which you in truth are. In passing through a low door, however lowly you carry your head, you have nothing to fear; but, bear it only an inch too high, and you will be painfully informed of your own stature.

So much for ignorance of ourselves. What now is the consequence of the ignorance of God? To know ourselves and not to know God, is to despair. A man returning to himself, and feeling a disgust for all the ill he has committed, thinks to depart from his evil way and from all the disorders of a life according to the senses. But, if he does not know how good God is, how kind and favourable and willing to pardon, his carnal thoughts will check him, saying: What are you doing? Do you want to lose this life as well as the next? Your sins are too great and numerous. If you were to tear your body to pieces, it would not be sufficient expiation. Your nature is delicate, you have always lived softly;

how can you expect to oppose with success the customs of your life? Cast into despondency by these and the like thoughts, he returns to his disorders, not knowing with how great ease the Almighty can remove all such obstacles. Thus the ignorance of God produces that consummation of all wickedness, despair.

All who will not be converted must be ignorant of God. For, if they refuse, it can only be because they fancy Him severe and rigorous when He is kind, inexorable whereas He is full of pity, cruel and terrible while He is all-amiable. Souls of little faith, what do you fear? You fancy that, being angered by the enormity and multitude of your crimes, He would delay to stretch out to you His helping hand. But know that grace commonly superabounds where sin has abounded, God's love being, in consideration of their necessities, more obviously manifested to penitents who have sinned greatly than to those who have sinned less.

God forbid, however, that we should think it is this kind of ignorance against which He warns His Spouse, she who not only has a great knowledge of her husband and her God, but who also enjoys His intimate friendship and familiarity, and merits to be often honoured by His embraces, and who even now inquires with such loving boldness where He reposes in the noonday, pasturing His happy flock. In this she desires, not to know Him whom she already knows, but to behold Him in His glory. And He thinks fit to reprove her on account of her presumption, and ignorance of herself, in imagining that she is capable of so great a vision, the excess of her love having caused her to forget that she is in a mortal body. She is convinced of her ignorance; she is rebuked for her temerity: "If you do not know yourself, go forth from my presence." The Lord thunders against his Beloved, not as Spouse but as Lord; not that He is in anger, but because He desires to purify her by fear, and to make her thus capable of the vision for which she sighs; this vision being the recompense of the pure in heart. Let her cease, then, so long as she is upon earth, to seek with too much curiosity that which is in heaven, lest, in searching for the secret of God, she should be overwhelmed with His glory. This vision, He says to her, is far above your powers. You are not yet strong enough to sustain the splendour of the noonday in which I dwell. This felicity is reserved for you in the end of time, when I shall present you to me clothed with glory, without stain or wrinkle, exempt from any fault. How can you, who are not yet all-beautiful, behold Him who is the source of all beauty?

The Song continues: "Your cheeks are beautiful as those of a dove." The Spouse is tenderly modest, and I believe that the reproof of her Lover has

brought the colour into her face, and made her more lovely. In order to perceive the aptness of this comparison, remember that the intention is, as it were, the face of the soul; for the intention constitutes its rectitude, as the face is the beauty of the body. In the intention there are two things to be considered: the object and the cause; that is, what you propose, and why you propose it. When both are just and pure, the soul deserves that it should be said of her that her cheeks are beautiful. The cheeks of the Spouse are capable of different degrees of beauty, but then only are they perfectly beautiful when God is at once object and cause, and He is loved for Himself alone.

Why, however, is it said, “like those of a dove”? Because this bird is very chaste, spends her life with only one partner, and, losing that one, lives solitary. You, then, who, moved by the Holy Spirit, burn with desire to make your soul the Spouse of Jesus Christ, take care that both your cheeks are thus beautified. Forget your own people and the house of your father, and the King shall greatly desire your beauty. Holy Soul, remain in solitude, and keep yourself for Him who has chosen you from the others. You have a Lover who will not honour you with His presence when any other company is with you. This solitude should be all interior and of the soul, though solitude of the body likewise is often useful. You are interiorly alone if you are attached to nothing present, if you despise what many esteem, if you refuse what all desire, if you avoid contentions, if you do not feel losses, nor remember injuries. Otherwise you are not alone, even when you are alone. Thus, you see, you may be alone when you are with many, and with many when you are alone. In however numerous a company you find yourself, you are alone with God, if you do not listen curiously to anything that is said, and if you do not judge rashly. If you hear evil of any one, do not hasten to judge your neighbour, but excuse him if you can. Excuse the intention if you cannot the action. Think that he did it in ignorance, or by misfortune, or was surprised into doing it, or, at most, that perhaps the temptation was exceedingly strong; and say to yourself, What should I have done under like pressure?

“Your neck is like pearls.” As by the cheeks the intention seems to be signified, so we may take the neck to mean the understanding. The understanding is, as it were, the neck by which the nourishment of the spirit, which is truth, passes into the soul, and diffuses itself into all her affections and activities. When the understanding is pure and simple, it shines like a pearl with the truth itself, and has no need of the external ornaments with which philosophers and unbelievers endeavour to hide the deformities of their intelligence.

“We will make you earrings of gold inlaid with silver.” Here the companions of the Bride address her, promising her that, until she attains to that vision of her Lord the desire of which consumes her soul, they will comfort her with the precious informations of faith, “which comes by hearing,” and purifies the eye, and prepares it for the vision of God. Gold inlaid with silver, means the celestial and ineffable good of heaven illustrated and made faintly intelligible by silver, which is the symbol of truth. These earrings, therefore, stand for the spiritual images and figures by which the soul assists herself in her contemplation of God, and in which she sees Him as in a glass darkly. These things are altogether Divine, and can be understood only by those who have had experience of them. These alone know how, in a mortal body and in the state of faith, it sometimes happens that the contemplation of pure truth begins already to outline its work in us, so that one who is so happy as to have received this gift from on high, can say with the Apostle: “I know in part;” and again: “We know in part, and we guess in part.” When the soul, going as it were forth from itself, catches a momentary glimpse of that which is purely Divine, like a flash of lightning, it happens immediately—I know not whether in order to temper its splendour or to make us able to communicate it to others—that this apprehension accommodates itself to corporeal images and figures. These images I believe to be the work of our good Angels, as others which are evil are most certainly the doing of the ministers of evil.

We see that the Spouse has received quite another thing than she desired. She longed for the repose of contemplation; she receives instead wisdom with eloquence, which involves the obligation of laboriously propagating her knowledge. It was so with Jacob. He sought for the embraces of the beautiful but sterile Rachel, and received, in spite of himself, the fertile but weak-eyed Leah. Thus must God’s Spouse often leave the kisses which are sweet, in order to give her breasts to His little ones. Woe to those who have received the grace of thoughts and words worthy of the greatness of God, if they make piety serve their own avarice, and turn into secret vainglory what they have received in order that they might win souls to God.

“My spikenard sent forth its odour.” Spikenard is the humility with which the Spouse received her Lord’s rebuke. Spikenard is a low-growing herb, which those who have studied the nature of simples say is of a warm nature. Such is the nature of that humility which glows with the ardour of divine love. There is one kind of humility which is produced by knowledge of the truth, but this is cold; there is another which is formed and inflamed by charity. One consists in

knowledge, the other in the movements of the heart. If you look upon yourself in the light of truth and without dissimulation, I doubt not but that you will be humbled in your own eyes, though you may not have virtue enough to bear being humbled in those of others. This is to be humbled by means of truth, and not by the infusion of love. Those who love would wish—were it consistent with the good of others—to be thought of, by the whole world, as meanly as they think of themselves. They do not love the truth perfectly who do not desire that it should be known to all. Thus you see it is not by any means the same thing, to think of yourself without presumption and to be humble in heart. The first kind of humility is compulsory, the second voluntary. But our Lord says: “Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.” Therefore, if you are become humble in your own eyes by the knowledge of the truth concerning yourself, take care that you add to this humility humility of heart. God abhors, as it is written, a double weight. Will you make yourself little in your own eyes, at the same time that you desire to be of much account in the eyes of others? This is to resist the truth and to fight against God.

But it is not much to have submitted one’s self to God unless one is submitted to every creature for the love of God. If you will be perfect, make the first advance towards him who is less than you; defer to your inferior; respect him who is younger than you are. So will you be able to say with the Spouse: “My spikenard has sent forth its odour.” This odour is love; the good impression which all persons will have of you; the good odour of Jesus Christ, admired by all, beloved by all. He whom truth alone humbles, cannot attain to this degree of perfection; his humility is for himself; it sends forth no odour, because it has none. The humility of the Spouse is voluntary, perpetual, and fertile; its odour is not diminished by reprimands nor by praises. The more she is exalted, the more she abases herself. She says: “God has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden;” for what mean these words: “My spikenard has sent forth its odour,” if not “My lowliness has been pleasing to God”?

“A little bunch of myrrh is my Beloved to me; He shall abide between my breasts.” Just now she spoke of Him as the King, seated on high on His royal bed. But her humility has brought Him into her bosom. Myrrh, which is bitter, means tribulations. Seeing herself about to suffer for her Lover, she exults. “They went forth,” says the Scripture, “rejoicing because they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.” She calls the bunch of myrrh “little,” because all that she can endure for His sake seems little. Little indeed; for the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory which awaits her.

That which is now a little bunch of myrrh shall one day be changed into a crown of glory and bliss. Observe that she does not say simply that “a little bunch of myrrh is my Beloved;” she adds, “to me,” that is to me who love Him; for love makes great sacrifices little.

The bunch of myrrh between the breasts is also the memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ The breasts of the Spouse are congratulation and compassion, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, who bids us to rejoice with those that rejoice and to weep with them that weep; but in rejoicing and weeping there is danger of extremes, against which the bunch of myrrh, thus understood, will be the best safeguard. Say to yourself, O my soul, How many kings and prophets have desired to see what I see, and have not seen it! They have laboured, and I enjoy the fruits of their labours. I have gathered the myrrh which they planted. It shall remain for ever between my breasts. In meditating upon it lies the perfection of wisdom and goodness, the fulness of knowledge, the riches of salvation, the abundance of merit. It raises me in adversity, and controls me in prosperity; it enables me to walk in the royal road between the goods and evils of this life, and scatters the perils which threaten me from either side. In my mouth and in my heart is Jesus, and Jesus crucified. I will not inquire with the Spouse where He reposes at noonday whom I embrace with joy as he lies between my breasts. What she seeks is more exalted, but my satisfaction is more sweet and easy.

Dear children, prize this bunch of myrrh, and carry it always between your breasts. Always carry it where you can see it, for if you bear it without considering it, its weight will oppress you and its odour will not refresh you.

“Behold, thou art fair, my Love, behold thou art fair.” This repetition is not without meaning. The soul has a double beauty. Her beauty is humility. “Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be pure.” This hyssop, which restores the soul’s purity or beauty, is humility. But, although the humility of such as have fallen into great sin is lovely, it scarcely deserves a wondering praise. If, however, the soul which has preserved her innocence adds thereto humility, is she not doubly beautiful? The Blessed Virgin never lost her sanctity and never wanted humility; and, if the King greatly desired her beauty, it was because she joined lowliness to innocence. “He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.” Happy those who have kept their robes pure, that is to say, their simplicity and innocence, if, at the same time, they have been careful to clothe themselves with humility. To such it shall be said: “You are beautiful, my Love, you are beautiful.” Dear Lord Jesus! may you be able to say to my soul, even

once, that she is beautiful. I have ill kept my robe of baptism, but do Thou at least preserve in me humility!

"Our bed is covered with flowers. The beams of our house are of cedar, our rafters of cypress trees." You that hear these words of the Holy Spirit, do you recognise nothing in yourselves of the felicity of the Bride which is chanted in this canticle of love by that Spirit; or do you hear His voice, not knowing whence it cometh or whither it goeth? Perhaps you also desire the repose of contemplation which is herein spoken of. This desire is praiseworthy, if you do not forget the flowers of good works with which the Bride decks her bed. The exercise of virtues precedes this holy repose as flowers precede fruit. Think not to obtain this sweet rest of contemplation until you have earned it. Those who will not labour, as the Apostle says, shall not eat. "The keeping of Thy commandments has given me understanding," writes the Prophet, in order to teach us that the taste of contemplation only comes from the practice of obedience. In vain will you expect the visit of the Bridegroom if you have not prepared for Him a couch covered with the flowers of good works. How can you expect Him to give Himself to a rebel, who was Himself obedient unto death? Will He not rather say to you, in a voice of thunder: "I cannot abide your Sabbaths and your solemn feast days"?

I am astonished at the impudence of some among us, who, after troubling us with their singularity, impatience, obstinacy, and rebellion, dare to invite the Lord of all purity into souls thus stained. The Centurion, the perfume of whose sanctity is spread throughout Israel, besought Him not to enter into his house because of his unworthiness; the Prince of the Apostles cried: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." But you say: "Come unto me, O Lord, for I am holy."

The beams of the house—which house you are, if you walk not after the flesh but the Spirit—must be of cedar, an incorruptible wood; lest, when you have begun to build, it should fall again to ruins. Let these beams be patience, for "the patience of the poor shall never perish;" longanimity, "for he who shall persevere to the end shall be saved;" but principally love, which "never fails" and "is stronger than death."

"The King brought me into the cellar of wine, he ordered love in me." The Spouse declares that she is inebriated with the King's love; for love is a strong wine. When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit the people said that they were drunk. They were so indeed, but it was with the Holy Ghost and not with wine. Was not the house in which they were assembled a great cellar of

wine, and might not each of them say, as he went forth, inebriated with the affluence of the goods of that house, and satiated with the torrent of immortal delights: “The King brought me into the cellar of wine”?

If, in prayer, any one obtains the grace to be, as it were, ravished out of himself in the secret of the Divinity, and issues from that state on fire with the love of God, and inflamed with zeal for goodness and with a great fervour for all spiritual exercises, so that he can say, “My heart was hot within me, and while I was musing the fire kindled,” manifestly he has been in the cellar of wine. In contemplation, there are two kinds of ecstasy, one of the spirit and the other of the heart. One consists in the enlightening of the understanding, the other in the ardour of the will; the one is knowledge, the other love; and every one who goes forth from his prayer filled with the abundance of these graces, is entitled to rejoice in the foregoing words of the Bride.

She adds: “He ordered love in me.” It is very needful that it should be so; for what is there more insufferable than zeal without knowledge? The greater the zeal, the more is discretion necessary, that love may be ordered to its proper ends. Discretion orders all the virtues, and order produces grace, beauty, and stability. The prophet David says: “By Thine order the day goeth on;” the day means virtue, in which only the discreet persevere. Discretion, then, is not so much a special virtue, as the guide and moderator of all the virtues, regulating the affections and ordering the conduct of life. Without discretion nature degenerates into vice, and even natural love changes into passions which destroy nature.

Here it is fit that we should remember that there are two kinds of love. One consists in action, the other in affection. Active love is the proper subject of God’s law; for who could love affectively in that degree of perfection which the First Commandment prescribes? Affective love is the recompense of active charity. There may be a commencement and some progress of affective love in this life, but the fulness of it constitutes the felicity to come. Or you may maintain, if it pleases you better, that God has commanded what is impossible, but that, in doing so, it is not to load us with inevitable sin, but to make us humble, and to show us that we cannot be saved by our righteousness but by His mere mercy. That the commandment, however, is directed to active rather than affective charity is manifest from our Lord’s interpreting His own words, “Love your enemies,” by His immediately adding: “Do good to those that hate you;” and, as concerning the love which is directly due to Himself: “If you love me, keep My commandments.”

I do not say that it can be well with us without affection, or that, with a cold and arid heart, it is sufficient only to bestir the hands of action. Among the catalogue of the greatest evils, enumerated by the Apostle, the want of affection is one. But there is an affection of the merely natural man, another of the rational mind, and a third which is the wisdom of love. The first, as the Apostle declares, is hostile to God, and cannot be made subject to Him in this life; the second is that which makes us consent to the will of God, because it is good; the third is a very different thing. It tastes with delight how sweet the Lord is; it excludes the first, and rewards the second. The first is pleasant, but sinful; the second dry, but strong; the third full of unction and blessedness. It is, then, the second which produces works, and it is real charity, loving not only “in deed” but “in truth,” though not yet with the perceptible felicity of the highest kind of love. When the Bride says, “He ordered love in me,” does she mean the active or affective charity? Both. But the order in the one is the reverse of the order in the other. Affective love always prefers God to man, and those among men who are most perfect to those who are less so. On the contrary, active love generally inverts this method. In helping our brethren we should be most assiduous with regard to those who have most need and are fullest of infirmities; we have to consider temporal before eternal things, though in ultimate view of them; it is often our duty to consider our bodily necessities before those of our soul; and altogether in this order the way is that “the last things shall be first, and the first last,” and that we shall not consider the preciousness of things but the need of men.

But Wisdom, which is the embrace of Truth and Love, gives to all things their real value, delighting in God’s supremacy, and in all others only in so far as they love Him and are like Him. One, so loving, recognises as his neighbour only him who loves God, and in proportion as he loves God. And, since he loves himself only as he loves God, he loves his neighbour as himself, no more nor less. As to his enemy, who if he does not love God is a mere nothing, it is impossible that he should love him as himself; but he loves him in order that he may come to love God, the possibility that he may do so rendering even him an object of some degree of affective charity.

“Sustain me with flowers, cover me with fruits; for I languish with love.” The love of the Bride, we see, has been increased by the intimacies of her converse with her Lord, and she rejoices in His praises of her. “My soul,” says the prophet, “shall be praised in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.” She has come from drinking of their delights, but “they who drink me,” as Wisdom declares, “shall still thirst.” After all this happiness, the Bridegroom

having absented Himself again, according to His custom, the Spouse cries that she languishes with love. The more delightful He makes His presence to her, so much the more grievous becomes His absence, and nothing augments desire for a beloved object so much as its loss. Therefore she asks to be refreshed by flowers and fruits until it shall please Him to return. Flowers mean faith, and fruits works. These are all that is left to the Soul, when, for a time, she loses the light of contemplation, which loss is continually happening to her, in order that she may desire her Lord more and more. At such times she can only console herself with good works proceeding from an unfeigned faith. Whenever she falls from contemplation, she retires into activity, as being the best means of recovering her repose. For action and contemplation are near relatives, and love to remain together. Martha is the sister of Mary, and when the Bride goes forth from the light of contemplation, it is not to fall into the darkness of sin or the negligence of sloth, but to sustain herself in the lesser light of good actions. Our Saviour's words, "Let your light shine before men," manifestly mean the light of deeds which men can see. "Sustain me with flowers, cover me with fruits; for I languish with love." When the beloved person is present, love is in its vigour; when absent, it languishes. This languor is a weariness and grief caused by the impatience of desire, which is necessarily very violent, in one that loves much, when the object of love is withdrawn. Therefore the Spouse earnestly asks that she may be able to refresh and repair her powers, while her Lord delays, with the fruits of good works and the cheering ardours of faith. I have experienced this myself. When I have seen that any of you, my children, have profited by my discourses, I do not repent of having preferred the trouble of teaching you to my spirit's repose. I do not regret to have interrupted the delightful exercise of contemplation, because I am surrounded by the flowers and fruits of piety. For it is long since that charity, "which seeks not its own," has persuaded me to care more for your advancement than for all else that is dearest to me. Praying, reading, writing, meditating, and all other spiritual exercises, I have counted but as loss for the love of you.

I remember to have given, in my book on the Love of God, a different sense to those words of the Bride which I have last explained. You who have read both will judge which is best. No discreet reader will blame me for having given two explanations of the same passage, so long as both are founded upon truth, and so long as charity, which is the rule for the interpretation of Scripture, edifies as many more persons as there are more who can be benefited by the two interpretations than by either one of them. Why should any person find it amiss

that in the use of Scripture we should do otherwise than we do daily in many things? To how many uses do we put water, for example? Thus we are not to be blamed who find divers senses in one and the same Word of God, provided that they serve divers needs of the soul.

The Song continues: “His left hand is under my head, and with His right hand he will embrace me.” It seems that the Bridegroom is returned, to recreate with His presence His Spouse, who languished with love. For He can never delay long when He is called with such ardent desires. And, as He finds that, during His absence, she has been faithfully labouring to amass riches of good works, He returns to her with more abundant graces than before. Happy the soul which reposes on the bosom of the Lord, and rests between His arms. “His left hand is under my head, and with His right He will embrace me.” She does not say: “He embraces me,” but, “He will embrace me,” in order to show that she is so thankful for the first favour that she anticipates even the second with acts of grace. Learn from this not to be slothful and a laggard in giving thanks. The wise man bids us to consider with care every gift of God, that we may let none, great or small, pass without answering gratitude. Our Lord bids us gather the least remains, so that nothing may be lost; that is to say, that we must not forget His least benefits. For is not everything lost which is given where there is no gratitude? Ingratitude is the enemy of the soul, the annihilation of merit, the dissipation of virtue, and the loss of all the favours which God does us. It is a burning wind which dries up the source of goodness, the dews of pity, the rivers of grace. As I have elsewhere explained, at large, the meaning of the left hand and the right, I will go on to the next words.

“I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye wake not my Beloved till she pleases.” These daughters of Jerusalem are the actions and affections which, though good in themselves, are disturbers of the higher good, the sleep of the soul in contemplation. This sleep is dear to God, and He Himself watches over it. There are some among us who are so happy as to have experienced this mystery, so full of joy; this watching of God over the blissful repose of His Spouse, in which He protects that repose, which no words can describe, from all interruptions, until she herself shall please to recur to her ordinary activities. This sleep is a kind of death which is the life of the Soul. “You are dead, and your life is hidden with Jesus Christ in God.” The Soul, thus gone forth from herself, glides safely among the snares and pitfalls of this life, without as much as being aware of them. How shall she fear the delusions of the senses, whose senses are killed by the sense of God? Happy death, the death of the just, which

destroys not life, but betters it; which does not smite down the body, yet exalts the spirit. But this death, which is death to temptation, is, thus far, only the death of the righteous. May I die the death of the angels, for this is indeed contemplation, the God-guarded sleep of the Beloved! May I be sometimes able, not only to lose the love of things present, but the very apprehension of them, commercing only with those whose purity I would imitate! In this life, to live untouched by the love of the things of this life is after all no more than human virtue; but not to be turned from contemplation by the images of the senses is a truly angelic purity. In the first case, indeed, you go forth from yourself, but only to remain near to yourself; but, in the latter, you go far as well as forth from yourself. Until you are able to raise yourself, by the purity of your spirit, above all the phantoms of corporeal things, do not expect to attain to this repose. The secret of solitude, the serenity of light, the abode of peace, is not below you, that is to say, is not in anything which imagination can represent to you.

The daughters of Jerusalem are entreated by the Bridegroom not to awake the Beloved from her sleep “till she pleases.” This implies a permission to the soul to be her own director in the division of her time between the different duties of Martha and Mary. If she loves so much as to be capable of true contemplation, there is no fear that she will neglect the many services of charity, though she will always avoid being busied in them. The Spouse, delighted with the assurance that she cannot do better than indulge as she will in the delightful leisure, or rather say, the ardent exercise of contemplation, exclaims with rapture: “It is the voice of my Beloved!” This happy assurance is especially necessary to quiet the scruples of the contemplative who has the welfare of others in charge. He is often fearful lest he should be caring more for his own good than theirs, and it is no small consolation when he is able to read God’s approval of his ways in the strength and sweetness with which he finds by experience that his external activity is invested by them.

“Behold, He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.” The wall is the flesh, and the approach of the Divine Lover, the Incarnation. The lattices and the windows are the senses and passions of humanity which He assumed, in order that, looking upon us through them, He might have compassion on us.

“Behold, my Beloved speaketh to me.” Remark how carefully the Spouse observes everything that her Beloved does with regard to her. “He is come,” “He hastens,” “He approaches,” “He arrives,” “He looks,” “He speaks.” He comes in the Angels, He hastens in the Patriarchs, He approaches in the Prophets, He is

present in the flesh, He looks on us in miracles, He speaks in the Apostles. Or, otherwise, He comes by prevenient grace, He hastens by the zeal of His love for us, He approaches by humbling Himself, He is present to those who present themselves to Him, He looks on the predestined, He speaks in teaching or inspiring the doctrines of the Kingdom of God. I would that the task of teaching you all this was not mine. Good men love to keep silence concerning that which they have learned in silence; they find it best to hide the secret of the King in their own bosoms. But, since these will not speak, I must, for my office bids me preach. If, then, I am warned, either from without by man, or from within by the Holy Spirit, to keep justice and equity, I regard this as a messenger of the coming of the Spouse, bidding me make ready to receive Him. For it is written: "Justice shall go before Him;" "By justice and equity is Thy throne prepared;" "Sanctity becomes well the house of the Lord;" "His place is in peace;" "The pure in heart shall see God." The reprimands and exhortations of the just are words yet more pressing. If these take effect in you, and, being received without repugnance, nay, with pleasure and ardour, then the Lover of your soul not only comes, but hastens; for, if you hasten to receive His words, it is because He first hastens to enter into you; for "in this is love, not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us." If you are heated by His word, if it burns you with compunction for your sins, remember that "a fire shall go before Him," and be sure that He is then very near. "He is nigh to those that are of a contrite heart." But if it converts you wholly to Him, if it causes you to come to an effectual determination to keep all His commandments; above all, if you feel yourselves on fire with His love, then be sure that He, who is a consuming fire, is Himself present in you, burning up the evil in you, and changing your substance into His own. But, consuming fire as He is, He burns sweetly and destroys happily, and is at once blasting and unction. When this fire in you has consumed the filth of sin and the stains of your vices, and purified and calmed your conscience, you experience a sudden and extraordinary expansion of the heart and an infusion of light, and you are able to understand the Scriptures and to penetrate the mysteries of faith. This is the effect of a look of the Bridegroom, who thus makes your righteousness to shine as the noonday. But, so long as the ruinous walls of the body are standing, this light is only seen through cracks and crevices. As the great Contemplative writes: "We see now as in a glass darkly, but hereafter face to face." After the splendour of this glance of the Divine Lover, so full of goodness and compassion, comes His voice, which softly and sweetly insinuates His holy will. This voice is love itself; it cannot be idle; it is

incessantly solicitous of good. It says: “Arise, make haste,” and bids the Spouse endeavour to win others to seek a like happiness. For it is the property of true contemplation to inflame the soul with so great a desire for the same blessedness in others, that she often willingly abandons contemplation for the labour of teaching. She then returns to her own joy with double ardour, the fruit of her good works; but only to go forth again with increased vigour to similar labours. These recurrent alternations are not without distress. She is fearful of attaching herself too much to either state, trembling lest she fail in the least in aught that God requires of her. She complains, with holy Job: “When I lie down to sleep, I say, When shall I arise, and when I am risen, I wait impatiently for night.” That is, when I am in my repose I accuse myself of having neglected work, and when I am at work I blame myself for having troubled my repose.

The Bridegroom accompanies this injunction to arise and make haste with renewed praises of the beauty of the Spouse; and every soul may rejoice in being thus reputed perfect by her Lord, if, like this Spouse, she sighs over her own shortcomings, rejoices in God, and does good to her neighbour.

You remember that the Bridegroom just now bade the daughters of Jerusalem, the activities of external life, not to awake the Spouse “till she please;” and now He Himself bids her to “arise and make haste, and come.” It is a different thing for the daughters of Jerusalem to disturb her, and for the Lord she loves, and on whose bosom she is resting, to bid her arise and come, that is, come with Him. For this His bidding is also the injunction of her own heart, which is one with His. To be bidden by Him is to be drawn by Him, and nothing is difficult or unpleasant in His company. “Be Thou with me,” says Job, “and let who will be against me;” and David: “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear nothing; for Thou art with me.”

“Winter is now past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come.” Winter is that fear which is indeed the beginning of wisdom, but which is as yet unaccompanied by love. Love, the state of perfection, is the summer of the soul. It dries up the wintry rains, that is, the bitter tears caused by former sins and by the dread of the judgment of God. The summer has also rains, but they are soft and fertilising. What is more sweet than the tears of love? Love weeps for desire; it weeps for sympathy; but not for grief. The time is come for pruning the vine. That is the great work which remains to be done. Let us examine then our ways, and let every one reckon that he is advanced, not in so far as he finds nothing in himself to correct, but as love makes him quick to discover and diligent to amend all that is amiss. For who is

so perfect that he can find no branch of his vine that wants pruning? The evil which is cut off, buds and grows again, the vice which has been chased away returns, the fire which has been subdued revives. It is not enough to have pruned once; we must prune often, nay, always. As long as you are in this mortal body, the Jebusite will always inhabit your land. He may be subjugated, but never exterminated.

"The voice of the turtle is heard in our land." It is the Bridegroom that speaks, and He says "our land." Think how sweet it is to hear the God of Heaven say "in our land," that is, in our earth. O children of men, inhabitants of earth, the Lord has indeed done great things for you! Wonderful is His commerce with earth, wonderful His relations to the Spouse, whom He has been pleased to create from earth in order to unite Himself with her most intimately. This word is not a word of sovereignty, but of familiar alliance. It is the word, not of a Lord, but a Husband. "Thy Maker is thy Husband;" "He that created me has rested in my tabernacle." He is our Creator, and He makes Himself our most intimate companion. It is not wonderful, for it is love that speaks, and love knows no inequality. He is not only one among us but one of us, and our earth is not only His possession but His own country. And well it may be so, for from earth comes His Spouse, and He has made Himself one flesh with her. If they have but one flesh, why should they not have one country?

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines." The vines are the souls of those who have become spiritual. Foxes are temptations. There must needs be temptations; for who shall be crowned unless he has lawfully combated? And how shall he combat if he is never attacked? When, therefore, you enter on the service of God, hold yourselves firmly in His fear, and prepare your souls for temptation, assured that all who will live holily in Jesus Christ must suffer persecution. Now, the nature of temptation varies greatly according to the advance which has been made. For beginners, who are as the tender flowers of early spring, it is the violence of frost that is most to be feared. But those who are more advanced have not to fear open enemies, but artful foxes; secret evils which have the semblance of virtues. How many have I known, who, having gone on to a fair degree of perfection, have at last found themselves shamefully and miserably ruined by the wiles of these foxes! How many, for example, have fallen from their duty to God and to themselves in their anxiety to teach or otherwise benefit others, before they were called upon to do so, forgetting that the function of a penitent is not to preach, but to weep. How many have fallen through indiscreet austerities, and other religious irregularities.

“My Beloved to me, and I to Him.” This word seems simple, for it is sweet, but it is full of mysteries which none but the holy can savour. It is love that speaks, and not the understanding. It is rather breathing than speaking, and it is breathing one breath with her Beloved, with whom, indeed, she has become one spirit. We do not require clearness in such language. It is like a precious prefume. Such perfumes are the effusions of St. John, the odours of the eternity, the generation and the divinity of the Word. What a good odour of Jesus Christ have not the sayings of St. Paul diffused throughout the world! He does not utter, indeed, the ineffable words which it was given to him to hear; but with what ardour of desire does he make me feel what I am not yet allowed to understand! I know not how it is, but the more the realities of heaven are clothed with obscurity, the more they delight and attract, and nothing so much heightens longing as such tender refusal. “My Beloved to me, and I to Him.” We can see, at least, in these words an ardent and reciprocal love of two persons, one for the other. They reveal the felicity of the one and the marvellous bounty of the other. But who will dare to flatter himself that he understands what is received and given in this interchange of exceeding love, unless, by a singular purity of body and soul, he has merited to experience something of this sort in himself? For all this is a movement of the heart, and the understanding knows nothing of it. How few are they who can boast that, “Beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, they are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.” And yet no others can read aright these words of the Spouse.

There are, however, in these words, certain meanings of which our gross and common apprehensions are capable. They include an assertion of grace prevenient as the source and condition of the subsequent and co-operating grace in the soul. “I to Him” because He is “first to me.” I am able to look upon Him because He has looked upon me. The soul, which is truly the Spouse of God, perceives that she has received both graces. They include, also, the assertion of an especial regard or attention of either person towards the other. Notwithstanding the immense distance between God and the Soul, He regards her, and the Church, which is nothing else but her multiplied perfection, as necessary to His own perfection. “All things are for the Elect;” hence nothing is complete without the Elect. The Spouse speaks so boldly concerning her Lord’s regard, because she knows that He has need of her. All His works remain unfinished until her perfection is fulfilled. “All creation groans together, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God.” The glory of the angels is defective, and the city of God wants its integrity, wanting the perfection of her who was made a

little lower than the angels in order that she might be its crowning glory and honour. The joy of those who have once suffered is a joy which Heaven can only know in the persons of, and by sympathy with, the children of the Church. Those who have always rejoiced can have no such joy as this. It is truly joy when joy succeeds to sorrow, rest to labour, and the harbour to the storm. To have passed from death to life is life indeed. This, in the celestial banquet, shall be my peculiar dainty; and I will venture to say that the angels themselves would not be wholly happy unless, by charity, they could enjoy this blessedness in me, and for my sake. We can see well, therefore, why there should be more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety and nine just that need no repentance. And, if my tears make the delight of angels, what shall be my own delight! All their occupation is to praise God, but His praise is imperfect if there are none to cry: “We have passed through fire and water, and Thou hast brought us into a place of refreshment.”

From this we may understand that we need not trouble ourselves concerning the disproportion of our merits and God’s promises. We see that He has made us and our felicity, not for us, but for Himself, and we merit enough in this matter if we confess that our merits have nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, though our merits do not obtain for us this felicity, without merits none shall possess it. Pray, therefore, equally against indigence of merit and presumption of desert, as the Wise Man meant to do when he said: “Give me neither riches nor poverty.”

It is clear that all the words and praises of the Spouse in this Song are true of the Church, but it is not so clear how far each soul in grace may apply such things to herself. There are spiritual persons who serve God, not only with fidelity, but with confidence, and who have a right to address Him as a friend, their conscience bearing witness in them that He is well pleased that they should do so. Who are these persons? God only knows. But hear how it must be with you, if you would be of their number. And now I do not speak from experience, but from a desire to experience. Give me a soul who loves nothing but God, or whatever she ought to love for His sake; who not only lives in Jesus Christ, but has long done so; who has no other study or pleasure than to have God always before her eyes, and who will not and cannot occupy herself with any other than her Lord. I will not deny that such a soul is worthy of such regards and attentions from her Master, and, if it pleases her to boast of them, I see no reason why she should not do so, so long as she makes her boast of herself in the Lord. “My soul shall be praised in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.”

The holy soul may derive a great confidence in the individual love of the

Bridegroom from a consideration of the great simplicity of His nature, which enables Him to regard many as one and one as many, without being Himself multiplied by multitude nor diminished by singularity, nor divided by diversity of objects, nor constrained by their likeness; so that He can belong utterly to one without being absorbed or prevented from belonging equally to many; and belong to many in such manner that He gives His whole heart to one.

The bounty of the Word and the good will of the Father are so great towards a well-natured and well-ordered soul, that her, whom they have thus by grace prevented and prepared (which is the gift of the Father and the work of the Son), they deign so to honour with their presence, that they not only visit her, but establish themselves in her as their abode (John 14:23). They are not satisfied with manifesting themselves to her; they give themselves to her. The coming of the Son into the Soul is the entry of the truth; the coming of the Father is when the Soul is so touched with the love of the truth that she is able to say: “I am in love with His beauty.”

When I find that my spirit is open to the intelligence of Holy Writ, when the words of wisdom flow abundantly from my heart, when mysteries are revealed to me by an infusion of light from on high, when heaven opens above me, and diffuses in my soul the fertile rains of meditation, I cannot doubt that the Husband of my soul is present. For these riches come from the Word, of whose fulness we receive. If, in addition, I feel myself penetrated with the dews and unction of a humble and devout zeal, so that the love of the known truth engenders in me hatred and contempt of all vanity, and prevents knowledge from puffing me up and the visits of God from elating me; then I recognise with certainty the effect of the paternal tenderness, and I know that my Father is with me. But if I persevere in corresponding, as far as I am able, with so great a goodness, by movements and acts in some degree proportioned thereto, and if I find that the grace of God is not in vain in me, then I am assured that the Father and the Son have taken up their abode in me, the one nourishing and the other instructing. I think that such a Soul may say, without fear, “My Beloved to me;” since, perceiving that she loves God, and that she loves Him with ardour, she cannot doubt that she is passionately loved by Him; and by the fixed intention, diligence, care, watchfulness, and zeal, with which she incessantly seeks the means of pleasing Him, she knows certainly that the movements of love are from and in Him, and she remembers this promise: “With the measure with which thou metest it shall be measured again to thee.” She knows, indeed, that she loves Him only because He first loved her, but having been thus capacitated for

looking upon Him she applies herself to regard Him continually, and becomes changed from glory to glory, and transformed into His image by beholding Him. He says: “I love them that love me, and they who seek me early in the morning shall find me.” If you watch, He watches; rise before dawn to meet Him, you will find Him, but you will not be there before Him. He still prevents you with His grace. He loves you more than you love Him, and He loved you before you loved Him. I will add, for the understanding of spiritual persons, this seemingly astonishing yet most real thing, that, to the Soul who sees God, He makes as if He saw nothing but her, He applies Himself to her as if there existed nothing else, and she to Him, for she also can see nothing else. And what is this but for the Soul really and actually to be the wife and to be treated as the wife of God?

“My Beloved to me, and I to Him, who feedeth among the lilies.” The lilies are the Soul’s beauties, her virtues. Of these, truth, meekness, and justice are the principal. Truth is an excellent lily, odorous and having the splendour of the eternal light. Meekness has the whiteness of innocence and the perfume of hope, and shines with the duties of charity. Justice is also a choice lily, and its odour reaches even to the unjust, for it is “to one indeed the odour of death unto death; but to the other the odour of life unto life.” Innocence and continence, or the power of controlling all concupiscences, are two lilies which are always found wherever the Beloved feeds, and, if to these two only, we add patience in temptations, His presence will be certainly secured.

Immediately after the last words, the Bride cries: “Return!” How shall I explain the mysterious reasons of these changes, these goings and returnings of the Divine Bridegroom? When the Soul is sensible of grace, she knows that the Beloved is present with her; when it is withdrawn, she complains that He is absent; and this invitation to return is the inevitable cry of the heart which has once known His pleasantness. Show me now a soul whom the Divine Word is accustomed to visit often, a soul to whom familiarity has given boldness, the taste of His sweetness, hunger, and a contempt for all else, peace, and I will show you the Spouse who speaks thus. She is bold with knowledge that she merits His presence, for otherwise she would call, not recall, Him. He comes and goes in this Soul at His good pleasure. He alone knows the season and the reason. We may be sure, indeed, that His purpose is to increase the love of His Spouse for Him, but the immediate cause of each visit or withdrawal is hidden.

“His footsteps are not known.” “A little while, and you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me.” A little while! Ah, dear Lord, how long that little while is! The time of Thine absence is short, indeed, if we

consider our deservings, but very long to our desires. But the soul that loves is carried away by the ardour of the latter; she forgets her little merits and the majesty of her Lord. She thinks of nothing but her delights in His health-giving grace, and behaves familiarly with Him, recalling Him without fear or shyness, and demanding with confidence the restoration of her former pleasures. She does not call Him, “Lord” but “Beloved,” “Return, my Beloved.”

His coming and going are known only by their effects. His ways are past finding out, but His presence is living and efficacious. He awakens the Soul from her sleep; He agitates, softens, and pierces the heart, which before was sick, and as hard as stone. He roots up, destroys, edifies, and plants, waters what was dry, illuminates what was dark, expands what was narrow, inflames what was cold, makes straight what was crooked, and easy what was rough; so that we “bless the Lord, and all that is within us glorifies His holy name.”

The visits of the Divine Lover are full of grace and truth. His presence is imperfect when either is lacking. The severity of the truth is painful without the gladness of grace, and the gladness of grace seems somewhat too free without the gravity of truth. Truth is bitter when unseasoned with the grace of devotion, and the fervour of devotion is apt to be too light, immoderate and uncontrolled, if not held back by the curb of truth. How many have received grace in vain, because they have not at the same time received the tempering of truth! They have indulged too much in the complacency of devotion; they have not attended enough to the warning regards of truth. Thus they have lost the grace to which they have addicted themselves with too partial an attachment, forgetting to “serve God with fear, and to rejoice in Him with trembling.” One suffices not without the other; nay, one is not even good without the other. The Apostle charges them with a double guilt who know the truth, but have not grace to do it. On the other hand, it is written that “when Judas had swallowed the morsel which Jesus gave him, Satan entered into him.” Many have been fed with the fine flower of wheat and with honey out of the stony rock, who have been all the more the enemies of God. Having but one foot to walk on, they have halted in their ways. The punishment of those who walk only by grace will be that of him who was a liar from the beginning, and of whom it is said: “Thou hast lost thy wisdom through thy beauty.” Do you ask me, What is this dangerous and harmful beauty? It is your own. It is not said that Lucifer lost wisdom through beauty, but through his beauty. Now the beauty of the soul as well as that of the angel is wisdom, for, without it, what are they but unformed substances? But the angel lost it when he appropriated it to himself, and, with it, he lost his beauty.

He did not give the glory to God; he did not render grace for grace; and so did not possess it according to the truth. The foolish virgins are those who believe their wisdom to be theirs, and they shall hear the terrible words: “I do not know you.” And those who glorify themselves on account of extraordinary grace shall bear the same condemnation. Therefore let those tremble more than others who receive greater favours.

“In my little bed by night I have sought Him whom my soul loveth.” Why has she recalled Him in vain? In order that her desire might be augmented, her affections proved, and her love inflamed. His absence is in dissimulation, not in anger. She seeks Him first in her little bed, that is, in the repose of contemplation, in her own bosom. Not finding Him, she goes forth into the streets and public places; but she finds Him neither in repose nor action. He will be found in His own time. “Seek and ye shall find;” but not in the night, in which it is said that the Spouse seeks Him. He is Himself the day, and at His coming she shall find Him.

“Have you not seen Him whom my soul loveth?” O violent, burning, impetuous love, which considers nothing but itself, despises all else, and finds itself all-sufficient! It confounds order, cares nought for custom, ignores measure, triumphing in itself over all rules of fitness, reason, decorum, prudence, and judgment. The words of the Bride are nothing else but this love: “Have you not seen Him whom my soul loveth?” As if they knew her thoughts, as if they knew His name! “What are you, and who is He?” In this singular negligence of words, this part of Scripture differs from all others. But, in this Epithalamium, as I said before, we must not consider words, but affections. Love speaks all through it, and, if you wish to understand it, you must love. To such as do not love it is a strange and barbarous tongue.

Having found Him again, the Spouse says: “I will hold Him; I will not let Him go.” Perhaps He desires as much to be held fast by her as she desires to hold Him so; for does He not say: “My delights are to be with the children of men”? And has He not promised: “I will be always with you to the consummation of the ages”? What can be stronger than this mutual bond, which is sealed by the will and the reciprocal desire of both? She holds Him, but He holds her. “Thou hast held me by my right hand.” She holds Him by the firmness of her faith and the ardour of her zeal. But she could not hold Him long unless He also held her.

Here I will pause to consider upon what grounds the Soul lays claim to all this astonishing familiarity and as it were equality in love. It is that she has been made after the image and in the likeness of God. The greatness of this character

she has not lost by sin, though she has lost its rectitude. She is still a capacity for the Infinite. Filled as she is with vices, bound round with sin as with nets, seduced by pleasure, in banishment, shut up in her body as in a prison, sunk in the mud of her impurities, borne down with cares, absorbed by earthly thoughts, smitten with fears, oppressed by sorrows, misled by error, gnawed by weariness, full of suspicion, a stranger in the land of her enemies, she is still, I say, though so desperate and so damned, able to find in herself, not only the hope of pardon and pity, but that which justifies her in daring to aspire to the celestial nuptials of the Word, to the contraction of a most intimate alliance with God, and to the bearing of the blessed yoke of love with the King of angels. What may she not dare to undertake in confidence with regard to Him of whom she is still the image, and whose likeness she still bears? How should she fear His majesty when she considers the nobility of her own origin? All she has to do is to preserve the renewed purity of her nature in the decorum of her life, and to adorn and embellish, by virtues and good works, that illustrious image which is indelibly stamped in her creation.

Why does she remain idle and unserviceable? She is capable of labour and industry. They are gifts of nature; but if she does not use them, all her good inclinations will be lost in sleep and lethargy. They are the means by which she can rise, if she will; for God always keeps alive in her some spark of virtue and generosity, in order that she may be incessantly warned, by this her likeness to Him, either to remain with Him, or to return if she has quitted Him. She quits Him, not by removing from one place to another, but, after the manner of spiritual substances, by her corrupt affections, and the disorder of her life and conduct, causing her to degenerate from her native dignity, and to become unlike herself. This unlikeness, however, is not extinction, but a vice of her nature, and she returns when she turns herself towards the Word, in order to be reformed by and conformed with Him.

It is this conformity which makes a marriage between the Soul and the Word, when, being like Him by nature, she endeavours to resemble Him in will, loving Him as He loves her. If she loves perfectly, she becomes His Spouse. What can there be more delightful than this conformity, what more desirable than this love, which, not content with the instructions which she receives from men, boldly approaches the Word in her own person, attaches herself firmly to Him, interrogates and consults Him familiarly about all things, the capacity of her understanding being the only measure of the hardihood of her desires? This is a true marriage-contract; nay, more, it is a real embrace; for the complete

conjunction of their wills makes one spirit of them. Nor need it be apprehended that the inequality of persons can render this union defective. Love knows nothing about respectful fear. Love consists in loving, not honouring. Astonishment, fear, wonder, are good for those to whom they are seasonable. The lover knows nothing of them. Love is full of itself. When love is born in the soul it absorbs all other passions. She that loves, loves, and ignores everything; and He who deserves to be honoured, feared, and admired, loves still better to be loved. Behold here a husband and a wife! For what is the essential of wedlock but to love and be loved?

Consider, further, that, in this case, the Bridegroom is not only a Lover, He is Love. Is He not also Honour? Let who will maintain it; I have never read it; but I have read that "God is Love." Not that God does not desire to be honoured, for He says: "If I am a Father, where is my honour?" But, so speaking, He speaks as a Father. As Husband of the soul, He says: "If I am a Husband, where is the love due to Me?" As Lord, also, He requires fear. Fear as Lord, honour as Father, love as Husband. But of these three which is best? Surely it is love. Lacking love, fear is painful, honour without reward. Fear is servile if unenfranchised by love, and honour which does not spring from love is flattery. Honour and fear are indeed God's due, but He will accept neither one nor the other unless they are seasoned with the honey of love. Whereas love is all-sufficient by itself. Love is its own merit and its own recompense. It seeks no reason nor gain out of itself. I love because I love; I love for the sake of loving. Love is a great thing, when, making its source its object, it renews there its streams in ever-increasing bounty. Of all the movements of the Soul, love is the only one which gives her Creator like for like. If He is angry with me, I do not reply with anger, but with self-abasement; if He rebukes me, I do not rebuke Him, but I confess His justice; if He commands, I answer with obedience; if He loves, on the contrary, it is that I may reciprocate His love, and that, and that only, is what He requires of me.

Love, as I have said, is a great thing; but it has degrees. That of the Spouse is the highest. Children love, but they think of the inheritance, and, fearing to lose it, they feel more respect than love. The whole good and only hope of the Spouse is love: and, if she loves abundantly, her Lover is content. She can give Him nothing more. This singleness of love is peculiar to marriage, and is found in no other relationship. He is Love, she is the Spouse of Love, and she is the only one who loves for love's sake only.

And with good reason it is that, renouncing every other thought, she gives herself wholly to love, since, by a reciprocal love, she is able to discern Him

who is Love itself. For, should she wholly dissolve into love, what would she be in comparison with that inexhaustible fountain-head of love? The waters of the Lover and the Beloved, of the Soul and the Word, of the Bride and the Bridegroom, of the Creator and the creature, of her who thirsts and of Him who assuages thirst, do not flow with the same abundance. But what then? Shall the prayers of the Spouse, her desires, her ardour, her trust,—shall they be lost because she cannot run with a giant, dispute sweetness with honey, mildness with the lamb, whiteness with the lily, splendour with the sun, love with Him who is Love? Assuredly not; for, though the creature loves less than He by whom she is loved, yet, if she loves with all her power, her love is without defect. All for all is an equal bargain. It is therefore that I said that to love thus is to contract marriage with God; for it is impossible to love thus and to be little loved in return. Verily she is prevented and surpassed in love. Happy she who has deserved to be prevented with the benediction of so great a sweetness! Happy she who enjoys those chaste and sacred embraces of a love holy and pure, delightful and pleasant, calm and sincere, mutual, intimate, and violent, which joins two persons in one! For “They who love God are one Spirit with Him.”

THREE ROSARIES OF OUR LADY BY MARIANNE CAROLINE PATMORE

A ROSARY IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY AS CO-REDEMPTRIX

A ROSARY in honour of OUR LADY as Co-Redemptrix—dwelling on the self-sacrifice, the union of the heart with God, the sharing of her Son's humiliation, the conquest of self-love and maternal love, out of conformity with the will of God, Godlike desire for the salvation of souls, and zeal for God's glory, in Mary as the perfect creature.

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FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Annunciation of our Lady

MARY was alone; pure, simple, happy, in God, when the Archangel came to offer her the desire of every maiden of her race.

In that supreme hour she might have been perturbed by a delight too ecstatic for a mortal heart; but she was stilled by the high necessity of embracing with it a like lot to her Son's, a suffering as transcendent as her joy. She knew why God would put on flesh; she knew that He, our Life (who as God hath life in Himself), came to take from His mother a mortal life, the power to die. Could her heart endure to crucify itself by giving up her child to insult, suffering, and death? Mary alone of all creatures could have done it, because she alone had been created and fitted for this end. She said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word;" and in lowly love and perfect stillness she received the coming of God.

Son of Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost, have mercy and hear our prayer. …

Mary, overshadowed by the power of the Most High, pray for us.

SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Visitation of our Lady

MARY arose with haste. She hurried to her cousin's house. She yearned to carry the miracle within her, where the divine power was already miraculously at work. Did she know that the forerunner would adore his Lord? Did she only guess that where God was so present in blessing and in chastisement, her Babe and she would be acknowledged? or did she crave a refuge for a little in the hills to ponder on what now she knew, before she should begin her martyrdom by facing silently the alarm of tender, holy Joseph? Her heart, even her heart, was full to bursting. No word of hers was to tell her husband of her high calling and his own. As yet she was even to go through the piteous agony of his suspicion. And yet her heart was full of ecstasy.

In the house of the speechless Zachary, the unborn, speechless infant leapt for joy at the sound of her voice, and his aged mother proclaimed the dignity of Mary, and abased herself before the mother of her Lord.

Well had our Lady come here by Holy Ghost, for here she freely may break forth, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Once only in all her life (for us), this once, the Alleluia of her heart must ring out. The first Christian hymn is this of Mary; the expression of the divinest joy mortal can ever know; good for every Christian when, in Holy Communion, God comes to enter into him. We are not only unworthy (that was Mary), we are degraded and defiled; yet that divine indwelling is vouchsafed also to us, and though no other mortal love, or sacrifice, can ever equal hers, each heart can try to make his own our Lady's song of joy.

Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal, inhabiting the Immaculate, of Thy mercy grant our prayer.…

Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for us.

THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Birth of our Saviour Christ in Bethlehem

FROM the coming of the Holy Ghost, Mary had been rapturously conscious that she was God's living temple; that hidden in her body, taking form from her substance, was He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, whom she had adored and served; but whom now she worshipped with a passionate love of union and possession. In her, the Infinite was small. In her, God had assumed not

only the features of humanity but her own, the likeness of His mother. As her expectation neared its term, Mary longed for the hour when He should manifest Himself. Surrounded by the heavenly court (unseen, unheard, adoring), she waited God's mysterious pleasure. Yet she would fain have never let Him go. It was the beginning of their parting. And when the Desire of all nations, the well-beloved, co-equal Son, lay in her arms, so small and weak and helpless, how Mary longed that her sole worship by its wholeness and its ardour might make up to Him for the ignorance, indifference, and hatred of the world. She heard the angels' song; she saw the shepherds' adoration and the wise men's worship; she knew the love and reverence of Joseph, but she, the humblest of all creatures, knew that no created adoration could approach her own; for He that is mighty had done for her great things. He had kept her immaculate, He had taken her to be His Bride, and that flesh in which the Word of God was clothed, He had accepted of her substance.

O Babe in swaddling clothes, Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the Saviour, have mercy on us, grant our prayer.…

Mother, sweetest, pray for us.

FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Presentation of our Blessed Saviour in the Temple

IN this mystery we have Mary's ceremonial profession of self-sacrifice. She went to the temple humbly imitating her Son. Though He was equal with the Father, He "emptied Himself" for our salvation, and through Mary He became "obedient unto death." Though she was the immaculate Bride of the Father, and Mother of God the Son, she consented to hide her blessedness, and carried her divine Babe to the temple with the typical price of redemption. She was humble not only for herself, but for Him. She made as if He were the child of Joseph; and she (Virgin of virgins) a woman needing the sacrifice of purification. But her humility was met by God's love. Her Infant was hailed and adored as our Salvation, the Light and Glory of the world; and she was associated in the very temple with Jesus in the anguish He had come to suffer, and the work He had come to do: "thine own soul a sword shall pierce." And Mary did not flinch. She stood fast in faith and love and lowliness; the cost well counted. She had been counting it ever since that day when she was made doubly unlike all women, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, that she might conceive the Redeemer. She offered Jesus unto God. She offered her own heart as well; she pledged herself to

refuse God nothing; to be content to see the Son of her womb despised, insulted, tortured, forsaken, crucified; to hold Him all through life as only hers that she might renounce (not the eternal, inconceivable delight of being His mother, but) the womanly craving for his ease, for His being well esteemed and loved. She would never drag upon Him, she would never afflict Him by pity or self-pity. She would love those who hated Him, because He loved them. She would even love His torments, because they were His will; He had come to suffer.

Victim of our salvation, presented by Mary unto God, vouchsafe to grant our prayer.…

Mary, the Immaculate Conception, pray for us.

FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Finding of our Blessed Saviour in the Temple

THE loss of Jesus would fill Mary with distress. Her husband and she for three days sought Him sorrowing. Mary would accuse herself of incredibly forgetting Him; of its being her own fault that He was gone away; but when they found Him, He reminded them that He was man to do God's business; He appealed to their knowledge that it must be so. And then, after this bitter grief, after shaking her soul with terror, after giving this one chance to the teachers of the law of confessing Him their Master, He gave His mother eighteen years of joy: the joy of such a home as earth never before contained, and never will again except in imitation. He gave us the example of a perfect Son, subject to His mother, in youth, through manhood, into middle life; subject not only to His mother, but to His mother's husband, Joseph. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give my heart to you.

Jesus, Uncreated Wisdom, have mercy, grant our prayer.…

Mary, frightened, sorrowful, and happier than happy, pray for us.

FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Agony and Bloody Sweat of our Blessed Saviour in the Garden

BESIDES the revealed knowledge Mary possessed, and the light upon it she had gained by pondering all things in her heart, Mary had lived with Jesus thirty years, and doubtless to such as she He would plainly tell His mind. She knew that "His hour was come and the power of darkness;" and when He went out into the moonlight, she knew that what He went forth to suffer was the vision of sin. God would bring before His agonised Humanity the crimes of every kind that

cried to heaven for vengeance, the outraged love of the Creator, the horror of all rebellion, misbelief, ingratitude, uncleanness, and brutality. God would discover to the Son of man the boundless expiation needed, and would lay the weight of all the world's iniquity on Him, wringing Him with anguish. And on the other hand, Satan would be mocking Him with the inefficacy of His propitiation; that in spite of it such millions would be lost, for whom He would suffer in vain.

Jesus, for love of us consenting to that dread agony, vouchsafe to hear our prayer.…

Mary, alone in thy heroic sorrow, bearing the woe of thy Beloved, pray for us.

SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Scourging of our Blessed Lord

AFTER receiving at the hand of God the weight He came to bear, never to be lifted off His heart till all was consummated, our Lord gave Himself up to His blinded creatures that they might wreak their malice on Him, not knowing, as He pityingly said, what they did, yet knowing that no harm was found in Him, that He had walked among them blameless and merciful, the wonder-worker. Mary knew that the divine wrath was to be satisfied upon her Son in part by the hands of men, to whom "power had been given from on high." Who but the perfect creature, "the woman," the bruiser of the serpent's head, could have conquered herself as Mary did! Along with her shuddering horror at the shame and torment of her Child, there was in Mary a supernatural submission, a godlike patience, a miraculous love for the misdoers, even a certain glory in the mortal agony which a greater tenderness than hers had laid upon her Son and over which His love would triumph; a rapture in the never-sleeping sense that Jesus, her own, the Son of her womb, flesh of her flesh, blood of her blood, whilst the mock of wicked men, and through them suffering the wrath of God, was still, as when He made the worlds, Himself the Beatific Vision.

Jesus, submitting to endure the wrath of God at the hands of creatures, have mercy on us, hear our prayer.

O Mary, by your adoration of Him in His Passion, pray for us.

THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Crowning of our Blessed Lord with Thorns

BESIDES the mortal weight of agony laid on Him by His Father in the garden,

Jesus had taken at the hands of men in His scourging the chastisement of all their sensuality. When they took the reed and smote Him on the head, piercing it deep with the great acacia thorns, He, their Creator, gave them power to exact for God the atonement for all sins of pride, self-love, ambition, vanity, conceit, and infidelity. For these the King of Glory wore a crown of thorns.

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, our Atonement, grant our prayer….

Mary, most lowly, pray for us.

FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

Jesus carrying His Cross

MARY knew by the shouts of the mob that her Son was on His way to Calvary. She waited for His passing; not to weep over Him, but to gladden Him. An ordinary woman could have so overcome herself as to be full of the same purpose, but only Mary could have cheered the Redeemer at that moment. He came along, faint, weary, goaded, stumbling; spittle and blood upon His face; bleeding, wounded, staggering under the burden He had come to bear; His heart all crushed and wrung with the weight of the wrath of God, with the horror of sin, and of the damnation of the souls that would not be redeemed. But His eyes fell on Mary; and His heart beat high remembering how spotless He had made and kept her by His present suffering; and that she was not only the perfect work of His redemption, but that now, with all this woe before her, she, by the entire conformity of her will with God's, was pressing to His lips the cup of agony, urging Him to drink it to the dregs; inspiring Him for the joy set before Him in the reconciling of the elect, in the justifying of God's love, to endure the Cross, despising the shame, that having loved His own "unto the end" He might sit down satisfied at the right hand of God.

By Thy weariness and faintness, Almighty Lord, have pity, grant our prayer. …

Mary, Queen of martyrs, pray for us.

FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Crucifixion of our Blessed Lord

THE crowd closed round Him, yet for her support God had let Mary see in the gleam on the face of her Son how she had solaced Him. Did she not need that thrill of joy? for she knew the horrors that would go on out of sight before her

eyes should again rest on her Beloved, as the awful tree was lifted bearing the Son of God.

Except the Cross, there is no such record of heroic love as the words, “There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother.” For Mary was not divine; and, besides all her agony of sympathy and the unutterable strain upon her woman’s heart of willing all His torments because they were God’s will, all the while she had to take her own farewell. “In peace was her bitterness most bitter.” She knew that the humanity He had from her, that “body of death” so ineffably one with hers, was dying now; that in His resurrection and His glory He would indeed for ever be the Son of man, and she His glorious Mother, but that, for ever, that dear, suffering life in which she had fed and clothed, caressed and waited on Him, would be ended, and that in self-sacrifice and faith, and Godlike love of souls, she must annihilate her heart. She must hear His voice give her up to be the devoted, willing mother of her fellow-creatures, His Beloved. “Woman, behold thy Son.” Be thou the channel of life and strength to the heroic; the nurse, the tender helper of the weak, the sick, the poor, the sorrowful. To be made thus for ever to the Church what she had been to Jesus, was indeed a glory, but it came with the heart-break that He Himself would no more need her. Her motherhood had been, throughout, a rapture and an agony. She had accepted it knowingly, at the offer of the Archangel. She had accepted it again when she offered her Son in the temple. She had accepted it when He appealed to her knowledge among the doctors. She had accepted it when He left the unimaginable home at Nazareth and “began to preach.” She had accepted it when she knew that the hour of His passion was at hand; and now, beneath His Cross, she “stood,” herself all swallowed up in Him.

Son of man, forsaken by God, of Thy great mercy, hear us.

Mary, most desolate, pray for us.

FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord from the Dead

MARY was now to live by faith. Her Son was no longer mortal, but the Conqueror of sin, death, and the grave. He would no longer need her care, her sympathy, or service. She was no more, on earth, to receive from Him the daily caresses and solicitude which had made Nazareth like heaven. Her maternal offices He had made over to the “beloved” for whom He died. Mary had consented to take for her child every soul which Jesus loved and longed for.

Godlike still in her conformity of heart, she had been able to promise this because He wished it. Because He loved each soul that should be born into this world with a tender, craving, devouring love, so that to captivate its love He would be fain to die again, she would give herself to every one; her mother's sympathy, her tenderness, her never-failing, sweetest patience, her omnipotence with God. Her life had been a miracle of joy as exquisite as her suffering. Henceforth it would be grayer, more supernatural. To-day she could see Him, the Heart of her heart, and for forty days again; and in the ecstasy of those meetings she would get strength for the mission He bequeathed to her.

Life of all life, vouchsafe to hear our prayer.

Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Ascension of our Blessed Lord into Heaven

MARY might say to-day, "It is finished." Whilst He came and went, and now and again she could gaze on the divine, beloved face, kiss His dear feet and hands, and see the proof of His humanity in the wounds that had been His death —though all was over she might deceive herself. When the cloud received Him out of her sight, then truly all was finished. Yet Mary did not go back sorrowful. She had not accepted the motherhood of God, and so fulfilled her part, to falter now. Who had the infant Church to look to else? Who but she could tell it of the marvel of the Birth of Christ? Who could so teach it to love Jesus as His mother could? Who else could feed it with His words and deeds? with stories of His Childhood and His Life? Who else could kindle the faint, frightened hearts with love like hers for Him that so loved them, with zeal like His for souls? Who like Mary could persuade them of that love "passing knowledge," "desiring with desire" to be united to them, which had brought God down to take a body from her own? Mary had embraced, with rapturous devotion, the sacrifice of fifteen years of separation, in which she would indeed receive Him sacramentally, and by faith be never parted from Him, but through which her hand should not touch, nor her eye see, Him whom her soul loved. Anything for Him! What were a few years! hardly enough to satisfy her love.

Jesus, gone to the Father, our Way and our Life, vouchsafe to grant our prayer. …

Mary, radiant with the joy of sacrifice, pray for us.

THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Descent of the Holy Ghost

ONCE more did Mary wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost. Once more is Mary overshadowed by the power of the Most High. She, with the infant Church, waited for the promise of the Father; and, in fire, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, came down. It was thirty-four years since Mary had received Him that she might conceive the Word of God. Now He came again, and He would consecrate her for all time the Mother of His Bride, the Church. For the work of this day her Son had come. “I came to send fire on the earth, and what will I but that it should be kindled?” If He had not come, and suffered and ascended, the Holy Ghost had not been sent. But now, the personal Love of the Father and the Son had descended. He was to bring to each soul of man the knowledge of the intense, devouring love of God for it. He was to teach all hearts that what God asks is a return of love; and to enable them to give to Him a love like fire, consuming “wood, hay, stubble,” and purifying self and creature love. O Mary, Bride of God, the fire of love was the very life of all your life. All it could possibly do now was to burn away any mere naturalness in your heart, that from henceforth you should live by faith alone; and that living, as God had done on earth, for souls, you should grow daily dearer to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, till once more “it is finished.”

O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy on us, grant our prayer.

Mary, Queen of the Apostles, pray for us.

FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Assumption of our Blessed Lady into Heaven

IT is almost past belief that the least shadow of regret should fall on Mary’s heart when she knew that she was passing to her God; the days of her separation fulfilled; her sacrifice completed; her Delight about to call her home. Who can imagine the delicious peace, the exquisite contentment, of her whole being! For fifteen years she had lavished her sweetest sympathy on those she would leave behind. And when she saw them weeping that they should see her face no more, there was regret in her dear heart that they would need and long for her in vain.

All else was rapture of exceeding bliss, and no heart could have wished to delay her. The light of heaven was on her loveliness, more than angelic

sweetness in her beauty; and as the apostles gazed their last on Mary, in the hush of her completed happiness the awe of an unseen Presence fell upon them, which was taking her away. Her espousals were fulfilled in heaven. She was gone, leaving with them, as they fondly thought, that almost worshipped body from which it had pleased God to prepare His own. They would cherish it as what the world contained most precious. But "My thoughts are not as your thoughts," saith the Lord. He would not let the Immaculate see corruption. His "love," His "dove," His "undefiled," should in her body be with Him in heaven.

While they poured out their tenderest, reverential care on what was left of Mary, her soul had been taken up through the ranks of the blessed and glorious, and was again in the arms of her Son; and while they thought that her body still consecrated the earth they had laid it in, that too had been raised on high, and Mary was all perfect with God.

Jesus, our Life, and Lover of our souls, vouchsafe to grant our prayer.

By the joy of your assumption, Mary, pray for us.

FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Coronation of our Blessed Lady in Heaven

THE angels are present at the joy of God. When had the like been seen in heaven! Mary was come. Not only blameless, innocent, immaculate, the Bride of God and His mother, but she who, above all, had heard the word of God and kept it; the "valiant woman;" the Queen of martyrs; Mary all love. She had begrudged God nothing, and in His lavish gratitude He would for ever and for ever enlarge her capacity and increase His reward. Out of union with His love for souls, Mary had sacrificed her heart for them; and her recompense should be that He would never refuse her prayer. She had given Him all her heart, and He would always hear her. The Almighty would deny His Bride and Mother nothing. She should be the benediction of her people. And for herself, she was with Him; her Own, her Child, her Beloved, her Darling. She was with Him now in bliss for ever; beloved, approved, and welcomed by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As once she was full of grace, so now she was full of glory, full of peace, of rapture and of joy. Her happiness, her beauty, the delight of God. He looked on Mary, and saw that she was very good. How could a creature hold the consciousness of being the delight of the most Holy Trinity! of knowing that never for one moment had the faintest shadow of fault darkened the sunshine of their approbation. The angels worship her who (created a little lower) has

become their Queen. The Blessed thank and praise her. Adam and Eve and all their generations extol “the woman,” through whom God was made one with man. Joseph, her husband, glories in her love; and on her ecstasy is set the crown of life, the crown of life eternal.

O God the Father,

God the Son, and

God the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, have mercy, grant our prayer.

Mary, love-crowned mother, pray for us.

A ROSARY OF THE SACRED HEART

WHEN our adorable Redeemer was passing to His Father, in the hour of His Passion when, with strong crying and tears, He asked for us God's highest gift, it was that "They all may be one," "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

Man's perfection, by union with his Maker, had been the very object of his creation; and though sin (through the depravity of man's will) had seemed to cause a hopeless separation, God's love and desire were still, as from eternity, set upon the work of His hands. His tender purpose should not be frustrated or fail. And yet, how could the ever-blessed, impassible Godhead be allied to sin and its attendant sorrow? To sin it could not be. Sin is the contradiction of God's essential holiness. But for the saving of all creation, and the redemption of mankind, no other miracle should be impossible. What God would do, neither angel nor man could have imagined. God only could have found the way to satisfy His love. He would secure for us that eternal happiness which, apart from Him, we could never enjoy, at a cost to Himself well nigh incredible; and He would secure it with a perfection God alone could have devised. The Word of God, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the eternal Trinity, should assume human nature in addition to His own Divine; He should take no human personality, but in His own Divine Person, as God the Son, He should become human, mortal, passible; that, being God, He might, in mortal flesh, expiate the sin of all. When the fulness of time was come He would save a chosen woman from all touch of sin, and of her substance would accept the flesh and blood whose sufferings (as being His) should be an infinite atonement. That flesh and blood He would raise to the throne of God, for ever to personate us there, "the Firstborn of many brethren," "the Way" to God the Father. That Way was closed, but God-made man would open it.

This is the gospel of our salvation. In this way God has redeemed us. Human nature is now for ever admitted into union with God, and the curse of separation being reversed, it is at each soul's choice to be in Christ supremely blest, or to "reject so great salvation." Our manhood being in God, gives to us all the power to be in Him ourselves, if only we but will. No power of hell can put asunder

man and God, for God has joined the two together, and the divine love is for ever drawing souls (as “with the cords of a man”) to give way to the love of God. In God there is now a human heart loving Him as we ought to love Him, loving all creatures as we ought to love them. That heart is our example, and (as it were) ourselves in heaven already, the object of God’s tenderest love, the hope, the strength of all of us, our power to become the sons of God.

Let us say to that Adorable Heart, “I beseech Thee let Thy love, which is as fire in its strength, and for sweetness as the honeycomb, draw away my heart from all things of earth, that for the love of Thy love I may die to the world, who for the love of my love didst die upon the Cross.”

“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I will require: not health, nor wealth, nor rank, nor worldly home; nor worldly happiness, nor any worldly thing; but one drop of that holy fire, one drop of that heavenly flame, to kindle me and set me all on fire with the love of Thee. O may that love consume and burn away every soil and stain both of the flesh and spirit, and consecrate me for a dwelling for Thyself in love, and consume me for a burnt offering acceptable to Thee. I should fear lest I were asking of Thee some great thing, but Thou hast commanded me to love Thee with my whole heart, with my whole mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; blessed be Thy name for this command, for it is a command to be eternally blessed. Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.”

FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Annunciation of our Lady

THE Archangel was sent to say to Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of His Son, and to ask her consent. By her faith and her humility, she was already full of grace and full of God. Humility, the sense of utter nothingness, is fulness of God. Because of these was Mary chosen to be the blessed one of all generations.

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word,” was Mary’s answer; and the divine espousals between God and man were accomplished in her person.

O love of God, preparing for Thyself a human heart, vouchsafe to hear our prayer.…

Mary, the woman of all prophecy, the Bride of God, pray for us.

SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Visitation of our Lady

GOD'S love had achieved its amazing purpose. "I have loved thee with an eternal love, therefore have I visited thee." God the Son, in His own Divine Person, was taking a created nature from the substance of the Virgin Mary. Think of the joy of the ever-blessed Trinity in a new glory; for now, God as man was adoring God. Think of our Lady's heart, its glad, gay joy, as she hastened across the mountains; its gratitude, its worship, its ecstasy of believing happiness, its oblation of her whole self to God's ends, sure that, moment by moment, she was giving of her own substance for the forming of the Redeemer's body; sure that God loved her; sure that she was pleasing Him; receiving with calm delight the worship of the unborn Prophet and His mother, knowing that indeed she carried God the Son within her.

O love of God, delighting in the lowly, undoubting, joyous love of Mary, and longing for the same in all men, hear us and grant our prayer.…

Mary, in whose person all creation is summed up, pray for us.

THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Birth of our Saviour Christ in Bethlehem

WHO can figure to himself the satisfaction of the Divine Heart when, all things being now ready, Christ our Lord appeared among His creatures, as He had planned eternally; needing Mary's arms to nurse Him, Mary's breast to feed Him, her sweet words and looks and kisses to caress Him; God—small, and soft, and weak, and tender, and appealing. The heart of our Lady's Baby was the very centre of the love which was drawing all things to itself. It seemed to be all Mary's; but Mary, perfect and beloved as she was in herself, was dearer still to God as the mother of all living, as the one in whom He united all creation to Himself.

O Heart of God new-born, love that hast made Thyself so lovely for the winning of all hearts to Thee, receive and grant our prayer.…

Mary, bright mirror of the tenderest love, pray for us.

FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Presentation of our Blessed Saviour in the Temple

“THEY carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.” Jesus allowed Himself to be carried to His temple, and the price of redemption to be paid for Him. Afar off, in the arms of the aged Simeon, He presented Himself, the Divine Redeemer, to His co-equal Father; and, burning with desire to avenge God’s outraged love, and open the way to the Father, offered Himself with all the intensity of His sacred Heart. Think of its passion of divine adoration. Think how it loved all creatures; how it loved Mary, who was making, with the offering of her Child, a holocaust of her own feelings unto God.

O beloved and tender Heart of Jesus, we adore Thee. Hear our prayer.…

Mary, offering your Child and your whole self to God’s love, pray for us.

FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Finding of our Blessed Lord in the Temple

“I MUST be about my Father’s business.” Tenderly did our Saviour feel the trial to His Mother’s heart when He left her, and she sought Him sorrowing three days, but for such scourges she was prepared. “Whom He loveth He chastiseth,” and His Mother was indeed His Beloved. Loved above all, she must suffer more than all. But think of Mary’s rapturous thanksgiving when, after all her tears, and weary, self-reproaching anguish, she regained her Boy, and found Him safe, divine and sweet, sitting in the midst of the doctors, “giving testimony to the truth.” Think of her fulness of delight when He came up to her the same as ever, her meek, obedient, caressing, tender Child, her Son, her very own, yet intent upon the business of His heavenly Father. Think of the Heart of Jesus, in this His first public work for God. Think of its divine humility, going back to Mary, giving her no reproof, though she called Him the Son of Joseph, only reminding her that they knew who He was, and should have guessed His occupation.

Heart of Jesus, Example of all virtue, hear and grant our prayer.…

Mary, most happy Mother of God, pray for us.

FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Agony and Bloody Sweat of our Blessed Saviour in the Garden

WITH eternal foresight, and with lifelong, fond intention, our glorious Saviour entered on His Passion. “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God.” That will was that He, Jesus, the Son of man, God of God, the Holy One, should pass through and feel, as if it were His own, the torment and the horror of all sin, in expiation

of the crimes of the whole world. “And He began to be exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” O Jesus, we bow down our hearts before Thy Sacred Heart, which, in the garden, alone, cried out to heaven with the agony God laid upon it. “See if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.” We adore that dear, submissive Heart, burning with love for God and man, but wrung with anguish, sweating drops of blood.

By Thine “Hour,” and Thine Agony, O Heart of Jesus, hear and grant our prayer.…

Mary, consenting to the Agony of your Divine Son, pray for us.

SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Scourging of our Blessed Lord

THE sharp, keen pain brings to the sacred, lonely heart of Jesus (heavy with the sorrow God had laid upon it) a crushing aggravation to its woe in the sense of man’s self-pleasing recklessness whilst He suffers, and the cruel ingratitude with which, in every age, mankind repays His love. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I have sinned. I have had my own disgraceful part in the cruel stripes they gave Thee. For my self-love, and gluttony, and sloth, and luxury, Thou, O my God, hast suffered. And I say so, and still indulge myself! How revolting to Thy patient, gracious Heart am I! how hateful my ingratitude! But God forbid that I should persevere in hardness. Awake my wretched heart to make amends to Thine.

Heart of Jesus, meek and humble, our Atonement, grant our prayer.…

Mary, striving against nature to be willing, pray for us.

THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Crowning of our Blessed Lord with Thorns

“BEHOLD the Man.” Who is that Person clothed with purple in derision, crowned with thorns in cruel mockery, and blasphemously saluted “Hail, King of the Jews”? Who is He?

It is no human person. It is God. God, in His highest act of love. God, in our nature. God, who, to content His love, and to achieve the re-union of creation with Himself, has put on our humanity. “Ecce Homo.” Heart of Jesus! Heart of God! was it with gibes, and sport, and spitting that they brought Thee forth? And we have all beheld Thee, and have all passed by, wagging our heads! we, who “to nothingness have added only sin.” Forgive us, Lord, hide our shame in Thy

greatness; Thy Heart still loves us, for it is the Heart of God. We love Thee, we bow down to Thee, we lay our faces in the dust, we prostrate our whole being at Thy feet.

Jesus, despised, insulted, mocked and spit upon; by Thy silence and the sweetness of Thy patient Heart, hear us and grant our prayer.…

Mary, in prayer and bitter tears, pray for us.

FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

Jesus carrying His Cross

THE cross upon the Heart of Jesus was His Father's wrath and all the weight of all the woe of man; the grief, the pain, the degradation, false-hood, and despair of all humanity. He carried all the sorrows of that human nature which He had condescended to assume. He carried them to expiate them, and to sanctify them for all who in all time should "look to Him in their plagues." Henceforth the way of suffering is the way of God, the way of salvation. Suffering is the way for all: but it is the bait and attraction for loving hearts. "I will show him what great things he shall suffer for my name's sake."

O divine and adorable Heart of Jesus, adorably, divinely loving Lover of our souls, hear us and grant our prayer.…

Heart of Mary, pierced with the sword of love, pray for us.

FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ

THINK for a moment of the joy of heaven, and then, what heaven must have been the day the Son of God was crucified. Think of the amazement of the blessed angels. They knew no sacrificial ecstasy. In God alone such love existed. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" but the divine love did far more. God took to Him a mortal life for this one end, that He might lay it down again for His beloved, "not as though we had first loved God," or were loveable; for no worthiness, or beauty, or gratitude in the creature, "thankless and sinful utterly;" but for the sake of His own love, incomprehensible as God is incomprehensible.

There was "silence in heaven," and God was all in all while the mystery of His love was consummated. But the intensity of even human love overmasters pain, and had the heart of Jesus allowed itself to feel the rapture of its love's divine

satisfaction, it could have known no suffering. No temporary pain, no human sorrow, could have coexisted with that supreme delight. Therefore it was that the manhood of our Lord was “forsaken by God;” and that, as it were alone, the Son of man endured His Passion and the Cross; and, having “loved us to the end,” gave up the ghost.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, “past all finding out,” we can but kneel, and worship, and adore; believing what appears impossible.

By Thy Cross and Passion, hear us.…

Mother of Jesus crucified, pray for us.

FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord from the Dead

“I LAY down my life that I may take it again.” “I am risen, and am still with you. Alleluia.”

Jesus, returning from the dead to men “slow of belief and foolish,” triumphant over sin and hell, but not over “hard hearts and incredulity”! O Heart of Jesus, for whom hast Thou died and risen? In this “day of Thy power,” what wounds didst Thou not receive in the house of Thy friends! Thou didst come to Thine own, and they did not even know Thee. Heart of Jesus, was it only at the first that frightened souls misdoubted Thee? Art Thou glorified now by those on whom Thou didst lavish love stronger than death, high as heaven and deep as the grave?

Shame on us! we ourselves are of those who will not believe “though one rose from the dead.” And yet “Christ is risen indeed;” and our faith is not vain; we are not “in our sins,” if only we hold fast to Thee, our Resurrection from sin, from self and from the grave, our Resurrection to joy and to God. “Lord save us, we perish.” “Lord, we believe; help Thou our unbelief.”

O Heart of God incarnate, our hope, and strength, and life eternal, may Thy miraculous love for us kindle our stupid hearts. Have mercy on us, grant our prayer.…

Mary, perfect hearer and keeper of the Word of God, pray for us.

SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Ascension of our Blessed Lord into Heaven

“I GO to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God;” and, “I am the

Way," "no man cometh to the Father but by Me." "Lord, we will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." "Thou art set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," draw us after Thee. "God, for His exceeding love wherewith He loved us, has quickened us and raised us up, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." By Him, our Way, we "have access to the Father." Shame on us if we press not forward, "going from strength to strength," after "the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus."

Heart of God, in our humanity gone up into the inaccessible light of the eternal glory, draw our hearts up to Thee. We adore Thee, hear our prayer.…

Mary, whose heart was all in heaven with your treasure, pray for us.

THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Descent of God the Holy Ghost

HEART of Jesus, we adore Thee, mindful still of us. "I will send the Comforter." O God the Holy Ghost, we adore Thee. Thou art the Power and the Love of God. By Thee we can do all things. We can rise above ourselves; we can live unto God; we can conquer and sanctify ourselves by Him who loves us; we can be faithful to Him come what may; we can give Him love for love. O God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, one God, we adore Thee.

Heart of Jesus, glad in the knowledge of the new life Thou hast won for Thy creatures, we adore Thee, hear our prayer.…

Mary, Bride of God, pray for us.

FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Assumption of our Blessed Lady into Heaven

O HEART of Jesus, cutting short the sacrifice of Mary, and opening to her (the first, and type, and sum of Thy beloved) the gate of heaven, we adore Thee in the rapture of that day. She came up from her exile, all fair and beautiful within and without, most lovely with love, her heart the perfect copy of the Heart of God; and looking upon her He loved her, and she knew it and was joyful, and her joy was the joy of God.

Heart of Jesus, receiving Thy Mother into Thy bliss and glory, vouchsafe to grant our prayer.

Mary, admitted to the Beatific Vision, pray for us.

FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Coronation of our Blessed Lady in Heaven

“A THRONE was set for the King’s Mother, and she sat on His right hand; and the King said to her, ‘My Mother, ask; for I must not turn away my face.’ She was clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;” and “beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, she is transformed into the same image, from glory to glory.” What is the glory of all glory? Love; for “love is of God,” and “God is Love.” He loved us unto death, and He loves us in glory, and He desires this for His beloved: that, like Mary, and through Mary, we may each one be united to Himself in one Spirit, and be with Him, seeing Him as He is and for ever, in joy.

O love of God the Father, we adore Thee.
Love of God incarnate, we adore Thee.
Love of God the Paraclete, we adore Thee.
Mary, the Beloved of God, pray for us.

A ROSARY IN IMITATION OF OUR LADY

HOW may we best please God in our poor thoughts on the mysteries of our salvation?

There has lived one to whose heart and mind they are more living and more dear than to all else together, be they men or angels. That blessed one is Mary.

God is the giver of all grace. He has made some to be prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, some martyrs; by the various grace bestowed on them. To Mary He gave the united grace of all; and its abundant fruitfulness made her the mother of God.

Lowliness, and faith, and love, were all perfect in Mary; and as "the pure in heart shall see God," so, pondering on divine things, she, the Immaculate, saw them in the unclouded light of God's grace. To do our best to feel as she felt and think as she thought, must be pleasing to God. Let us therefore go through our Lady's Rosary, (the epitome of the Gospel), trying to echo her. We shall fail, by the stupidity and sin of our hearts; but it will be something to have tried.

FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Annunciation of our Lady

WE may imagine that, at the end of a day of homely work and happiness, Mary, the young wife of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, Virgin of virgins, was alone in prayer; and she might say: "O my Lord, who alone art our King, Thou knowest that Thy handmaid hath never rejoiced but in Thee, O Lord, the God of Abraham" (Esther 14:3, 18). "My heart is ready, my heart is ready," "I will sing to the Lord God of Israel." "My heart hath uttered a good word, I speak my works to the king." And Gabriel appeared and saluted her, being sent to offer to her the motherhood of God: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and the Holy that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His Father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." And that blessed Virgin did but say again: "My heart is ready;" for joy and also for sorrow; "be it done to me

according to Thy word." But who shall intermeddle with her joy! joy that the hour was come for which all creation groaned; joy that now, for the glory and delight of God and man, the inseparable union of Godhead and manhood should be accomplished; and joy that the marvel, the bridal of heaven and earth, should begin in her!

SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Visitation of our Lady

MARY arose in haste, and, as she went across the hills, the humble, happy bride of God, that hymn was "singing in her heart," which her lips poured forth when Elizabeth saluted her, "Mother of my Lord."

Thank God that He has preserved to the world for all time the perfect creature's picture of her soul. We see her irrepressible delight in the choice that God had made of her. We see her joy in her own nothingness. We see her inspired sense that God in that conscious nothingness had found place for the fulness of His love. We see the confident, confiding assertion of her own love and blessedness and glory.

Was the "Magnificat" the expression of a passing rapture? No; it was Mary's life-long temper, its spirit ran through her life. In her most piercing agonies this joy and triumph were underlying all. Mary, like all of us, was an embodied will. That will she offered utterly to God. Her will was to love God wholly; without reserve, without distraction, without admixture, without a thought of self; for she was full of grace, and the Lord was with her, and she knew it, and was glad. At a far distance we can copy this; we can say to our Lord: "My will is to love Thee utterly." Pardoned, and in the grace of God, we can, by His help, fill all the common actions of our daily life with this purpose, and God, with immeasurable love, will fill the hearts from which self is thus cast out. He will set up His palace of delights in the kingdom offered to Him thus, and the humble soul shall extol God's gifts to her, and His work in her, and its life shall be a song of "Glory be to God."

THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Birth of our Blessed Lord

O MARY, who may rightly honour thee whose heart could say: "My Son, and the Son of the Most High, the Son of God? My little Child is my Redeemer. His

Flesh was mine. His Blood was mine. This is the Holy that inhabiteth eternity, my very own sweet Babe and God!" The high prerogative of motherhood is Mary's grace alone. The Incarnation of the Word is the end for which she was created, and no other has been created that could have been Mother of God. But, thanks be to Him, not for her alone did He become her Son. For me, for every soul as if there were no other, He took flesh. There is none but may and ought to claim Him. "A Child is born to us, unto us a Son is given," that thereby God, the Mighty, might win our hearts. He came for each, one by one; loving each with a complete, perfect love, and each, as if no other soul existed, should kneel before God's manger-cradle with the cry: "My very own sweet Babe and God. I have nothing. I am nothing; but I lay my heart and my will at Thy feet. Be Thou my All in All."

FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Presentation of our Blessed Saviour in the Temple

WHAT may have been the thoughts of Mary on that fortieth day when Jesus had to be redeemed in the Temple? In simple obedience to the custom of the law, she had prepared the doves, or pigeons, that poor wives were to offer for their purification, and the sum appointed to buy back the first-born of the poor; and then she and Joseph took up Jesus to the temple, but only to the outer court, for they could not enter farther though Mary was the living house of God, and Jesus, God Himself. Might not the blessed Virgin have doubted thus:—"Being the Bride and Mother of God, shall I not dishonour Him by acting as if Joseph were His real father? Being a spotless Virgin, Mother only by the overshadowing power of the Most High, will it not be a false (and even perhaps blasphemous) humility to act as if unclean? Is not my Jesus the Sanctifier of the sanctuary? Am I not, by God's grace, more pure than the new-fallen snow?" But there is one safe answer in all questions—Obedience. Mary knew the law her Son confirmed: "Whatsoever they say unto you do." She never questioned; she submitted. She was not bidden to proclaim her prerogatives. She was silent. She left God's glory to his own good care. She obeyed. Can we not copy her in this. We have no sanctity to hide; still we are often tempted to show off such gifts or goodness as we may possess, and we say that it is for God's glory. We thereby fall into a thousand snares of conceit, and vanity, and scruples. The safety from all such is obedience. Or we are tempted to look solemn and behave peculiarly, to make it known that we are spiritual or pious persons. If we would wish to be like Mary,

let us unite our hearts to hers when she appeared in the house of God as unclean, though she, the Immaculate, bore in her arms the well-beloved Son of God.

FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Finding in the Temple

IF our poor hearts can realise the anguish of our Lady's tearful cry, "Jesus, my Son, my Son!" as she went about, and lay down, and rose up, for three days seeking Him and sorrowing, they will rejoice in her delight when her sorrow was turned into joy and she found her Treasure in the temple. If our Lord withdrew Himself from His Mother, and hid Himself from her, every one of us must expect the like. If He make His presence sensible within us and let us taste the wonder of His love, the delight is not safe for earth. Now is our only time for sacrifice, for works of love, for patience, courage, faith. He hides Himself, He makes as though we had lost Him quite; that, fearing, longing, trusting, loving, we may call upon the Name of the Lord, we may "search diligently until we find," and seek Him at His altar in His holy house; for it is written, "When thou shalt seek there the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him; yet so if thou seek Him with all thy heart, and all the affliction of thy soul;" yet not forget to seek for Him within us, for "the kingdom of God is within you."

Jesus came back to His Mother. So will He do to us. He went home with her; obeyed, caressed, and cherished her. So will He do to every one of us, according to the measure of our love and humility. He will return and bring His reward with Him; and the trial of His former disappearance will enhance sevenfold the rapture of His conscious presence.

FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Agony in the Garden

THE years of Mary's happy home were over. Her joys had been beyond all measure sweeter than any joy this earth had ever known. Now she must bare her soul to the sword which was to pierce it through her Beloved. Jesus went to enter on His Passion, and Mary must not "cry or strive" to have it lightened. That which, as God, He willed, though she may know the shrinking of His human nature, she must will; though it be to the rending asunder of soul and body. She must know that her own, her Jesus, is taking upon Him a torment which is wringing the very blood through His pores, and she must acquiesce in the depth

of her heart. When His nature as man cries out, “Father, let this chalice pass from Me,” her spirit must reply to God, “Not what I will, but what Thou wilt.” Alone He wrestled with His agony, and she with the bitterness of her heart; and alone we must fight our battle, and die alone. Yet not alone, for the “valley of the shadow of death” He has sanctified by His agony, by the horror of sin (the sting of death) which He then endured in our stead. God may, for the trying of faith, seem to leave a soul helpless, desolate, and frightened; but Jesus Christ alone could endure to die “forsaken.”

O believe it, souls which God created. At no time is He more near, more tender, than when He ordains this desperate test, and feigns to desert a soul. He watches, yearning, lest it falter and He lose it. He longs, as a lover does, that the beloved may prove her love by trusting His. If she bears up bravely, waits in faith, calls upon His dear Name, who shall tell the divine delight of the divine, unfathomable Heart! Who shall guess its beating, in the joy of receiving love for love!

SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Scourging of our Blessed Lord

O MARY, how didst thou endure this day and live! to know the sacrilege it saw; to bear it, and not die! and they who did those deeds were men; not fiends, but men redeemable, for whom Christ pleased to suffer. Mother, thine eyes could not see, thine ears could not hear the outrage, but what must be thou knewedst in every tortured nerve; loving the Victim adoringly as God; tenderly and passionately as thine own flesh and blood. Amid thy shuddering sobs, Mary, what didst thou implore of God? “Father, save Him from this hour? But for this He came unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.” Surely God was glorified indeed that day when, besides the obedience of His co-equal Son, He was so loved by a mere creature. Mary, how couldst thou be so Godlike! thy heart is with His heart in deadly agony, but yet thy love is as His love. In Him love fought with agony, and He rejoiced in torments which wrought out so great salvation. Unto “the end” He must love on. God must be glorified and man redeemed. But who shall name the awful price? “By His stripes we are saved.” Like Mary we must adore this awful mystery, worshipping the inconceivable love which could only thus be satisfied, heart-broken for our share in the agony He took, hating and renouncing wholly every sin our conscience knows, and those we are too bad to see, for all of which our gracious Saviour suffered on

that day.

THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Crowning of our Blessed Lord with Thorns

DIDST thou hear those mocking shouts, mother of sorrows, “Hail! King of the Jews”? Had He told thee with what a crown they should insult Him “in the power of darkness”? “Behold the man,” manhood itself, God and man in one. The second Person of the most Holy Trinity stood in that crowded court, and not one soul revered Him. They bent the knee in mockery; they wound the thorns of sin around His head with laughter, and they spat on Him. But He was there for love of them, and His love faltered not. But “the woman,” she from whom He had received that body of death, knew Him, and waited without in her anguish. Was it not a miracle that thy life could bear the struggle in thy heart and soul, Mary? Each moment of His passion cutting through thy mother-heart, and all the while an ecstasy of adoration, for that He, thy Jesus, is so peerless, so beautiful in His sweetness, so adorable in His meekness and divine in His love. O mother, thou art wonderful, that thou canst endure the cold, indifferent objects of such love. Mother, we know our worthlessness, help us while yet we have the time, to pour our hearts out before Him in worship of the unspeakable perfection of His wondrous love, to break our hearts for having failed to know and care for Him supremely. Help us now to choose Him only for our one good thing, the object of our lives, the desire of our eyes, the love of our love.

FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

Jesus carrying His Cross

THE yells of the multitude cannot fail to reach thee, Mary;—“Crucify Him, crucify Him;” and thou knowest that so they will. Mother, thou must forth to meet Him, to satisfy thy love and His. Thou shalt meet Him in the highway of the Cross, that way of holiness which He is consecrating in His blood, by His weariness, His faintness. From henceforth and for all, the way of the Cross is the way of Jesus and the way to God. It is the contradiction of our will, and whether it be in much or little, of one sort or another, it is the token of our Lord and the way of salvation. There is no sort of sorrow in which Jesus will not meet us if, like Mary, we go forth to look for Him. If love inspires us to seek Him, He is already on His way to us, longing that we should come. She sought Him for one

mutual, yearning look of love and faith and grace unspeakable; and, in exchanging it, her Lord, her Life, was recompensed. But she was Mary, the perfection of creation. What of us, the miserable failures? Glory be to God and His incomprehensible love, He will even feel Himself repaid if we, the stupid and unfaithful, can find it in our hearts to seek Him in the way of sorrows. O my God, who would not wish to repay Thee!

FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ

THE procession of death passed on, and Mary after it. “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.” In the strength of their mutual love she followed on to Calvary, and waited till the end, crucified with her Beloved, lost to all sense of self and of the horror round her; her life “hid with Christ in God;” her soul absorbed in His death-agony, in His heavenly love and triumph; for here, upon the shameful tree, He triumphed over hell and all its power, and over human sin and weakness; and restored us, every one, to the love of our Creator. The love of God was centred on humanity as Jesus Christ our Saviour hung between the earth and heaven. In Him, man gave to God a perfect glory, and God saw that, in Christ Jesus, man, His crowning work was “very good.”

And Mary “stood beside the Cross.” It is the central vision of all time—God, giving His only begotten Son to the death of the Cross; and (in the person of our Lady) all creation gasping “Fiat!” in its misery, although its very heart be pierced with the remorse of love. It remains that we, like Mary, be crucified in heart with our Lord; dead indeed unto sin, dead to the world and all its empty pleasures and distractions; dead to self and all its paltry wills; for faith, for gratitude, for love, and through the grace of Him who died for us.

FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord

IT would be hard for dust and ashes to imagine the heart of the Mother of God as she waited for the first day of the week. She prepared no spices, for she knew that her Son would raise Himself from the grave, and that the women would not find Him there. Virgin of virgins! she knew that as His Birth had left her inviolate so the sealed rock could be no hindrance to His Will. No mistrust could she know; only desire, only love, only longing, for His visible triumph; only

delight, and gratitude, and love, when it was accomplished.

Only to think upon her joy is joy. She must have looked so beautiful. And now—how her loveliness must brighten if we remind her of the morning when her Joy returned, and He kissed her with the kiss of His mouth; kissed the traces of the tears of her sympathy, and called her His own Mother still.

He was her resurrection and her life as He is ours; but she was sinless, and we have to rise from the deep pit and slough of sin.

In the strength of the grace of Him, our Resurrection, we have to live henceforth like Mary. "We are able." The Feast of the Resurrection, Easter, to the Christian implies communion; and communion, the Lord in us, is strength for everything; strength to live henceforth like Mary, strength for the aim set before us all: "Be ye perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect;" and as "we can," by His indwelling, rise to this new life, so we are bound to do; no excuse, no delay. "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."

SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Ascension of our Blessed Lord

AND what is the secret by which we, like Mary, can lead a risen life? Simply this: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." Our treasure is there, in God. Let our heart be there also. But "above" need not mean above the firmament, nor "the right hand of God" such heaven as we may attain to hereafter—"the kingdom of heaven is within you." Jesus, our treasure, has His chosen home in our hearts. To live our common drudgery of every day—bearing its daily weariness, its petty, unguessed sacrifices, its apparent unsanctity, its unlikeness to what we may think ourselves fit for, its want of sympathy and help—trusting that He is near, seeing the unseen, feeling the unfelt, making His presence (known by faith) our sanctuary from sinful nature, our contemplation, our judge, and our delight: this is to have our life "hid with Christ in God," to be in harmony with Mary, and in union with Jesus Christ. This may be in the busiest or the gayest life of duty. O Mary, pray for us that the rest of our lives we "may so discern God's presence with us and in us, that we may do this and all to His honour and glory."

THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Descent of the Holy Ghost

IT is not uncommon for Christians so to live as if the old reply were true, “We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.” How different was it with our Lady! With what adoration she must ever have remembered the work the Holy Ghost had done in her! With what longing she must have waited for His promised advent after the Ascension! With what meekness of assured, confiding love she must have received the token of the fiery tongue!

Have we received the Holy Ghost? Do we rely upon His help? In our baptism he reversed the curse, and took possession of our hearts. In confirmation He renewed and added to His gifts. We might have gone on daily, like the Blessed Virgin, adding strength to strength by His aid, but we have forgotten and despised Him. We have made our vows to Him, and broken them. Shall we not ask His pardon, and never more forget Him? He is that very Love of God without whom we are cold and selfish. He is the strength of our weakness, by Whom we can conquer sin and Satan. From Him is Grace and Unction, the very breath of our life. He is (in union with the Father and the Son) our Lover, tender, pitiful, and patient. Let us promise reparation of the past for all the days we have to live; and when we say the Gloria Patri let us remember to salute adoringly the Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier, Co-eternal and Co-equal with the Father and the Son in the one all-loving Godhead.

FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Assumption of our Lady

MARY’S last hour in this world arrived; and how did her heart feel? Ask your own. The moment of death is that of the particular judgment. At that moment, as the soul leaves the body, it is before its Judge: Jesus, the Son of man. The soul stands bare before Him; and every thought and word and deed in the flesh is recalled, and judged by the man Christ Jesus. How did Mary feel? can we venture to remotely guess? When her spiritual eyes were opened to “behold the Man,” whom did she see? The adoration of her life. The One to whom as God her whole existence had been consecrated, the One whom, as her child, her Saviour, she had loved tenderly, absorbingly, devouringly, with all the delight, self-devotion, and admiration, of which a creature could be capable. She had vowed herself to Him, had lived for Him, had suffered with Him, longed for Him. Now He had come for her; and her life, as it was unrolled before Him, was one unbroken benediction, one changeless interchange of perfect love. In everything she had pleased Him, and she pleases Him for evermore. In body and

soul she is now and for ever in the joy of His presence; the hope of the elect in peril, and of the holy dead.

Most happy Mary, pray for us, that we who have loved ourselves, and known Him late, and loved Him poorly, may, thinking of the joy of thy death, "begin now to serve God a little," so that we too may "love His coming," and the hour of death be our desire, our safety, and our joy.

FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Coronation of our Blessed Virgin Mary

O SWEETEST Lady, we can only give thee joy of happiness, of rapturous delight such as we but feebly dream of. On earth thou didst receive such ecstasy as we have never even distantly approached; and there lives no soul amongst us who can conceive thy heaven. We can dimly follow thee on earth, believing, if we cannot realise, the sweetness of the sanctity of that life which was so simple. We can a little make our own the sympathy, the sorrow, the pathetic resignation, the silent unutterable woe of all thy suffering with thy Son; but this is past, sweet mother. Thy dolours were but short; eternal are thy joys. We are sad, we suffer often in body and in mind; we can more naturally dwell upon thy martyrdom and realise thy weariness, and faintness, the deadly aching pain of head and limbs and heart, which the torment of love over-mastered. But these are swallowed up, thanks be to God, in victory, in the triumph of thy Son and thine in His. And lovest thou not more, my sweetest mother, that we should give thee joy of thy joy? of that which is the everlasting fruit of all the bitterness of earth? does not that contemplation lift our hearts above our present trials, and give us hope and courage, and the foretaste of the brightness of a salvation we expect through thee by Jesus Christ? Happy we, if we can only keep thee in our minds, and live in the remembrance that, with God in His eternal bliss, thou art "our sweetness:" for in thy person we, poor human creatures, are already in the joy of God. Our human nature sits upon His throne in the Person of the Son of God; but in thee is our human personality received into His everlasting bliss. Thou art the Bride of God. But, beyond words inferior as we are, worse far than nothing by our sins, He also calls us, calls us still, to that unspeakable felicity. In thinking of thy bliss we recollect our own; "the joy that is set before us;" we are roused to cleanse our souls and make them ready for the marriage feast; to bathe them in the blood that maketh virgins; to put on the raiment clean and white; to sanctify ourselves by sacraments, and by a pure intention; that when the cry is heard: "Behold the

Bridegroom cometh," we may be glad and ready, and may be admitted to the joys "eye hath not seen nor ear heard," which are awaiting all that accept His salvation, in the heavens where Mary is Queen in her joy.

The day we see God in His glory, well pleased with us at last, we shall see her too, our lovely mother; and she will smile and welcome us; and fear will vanish in delight. If such a day be really possible for us, "what manner of people ought we to be now in holy conversation and godliness?"

SERMONS OF SAINT BERNARD ON ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

INCLUDING THE FAMOUS TREATISE ON THE INCARNATION CALLED "MISSUS EST"

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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CONTENTS

SERMONS OF SAINT BERNARD ON ADVENT & CHRISTMAS: INCLUDING THE FAMOUS TREATISE ON THE INCARNATION CALLED "MISSUS EST"

INTRODUCTION

I
ADVENT

SERMON I
ON THE ADVENT OF OUR LORD AND ITS SIX CIRCUMSTANCES

SERMON II
ON THE WORDS TO ACHAZ, “ASK THEE A SIGN,” ETC.

II
ON THE “MISSUS EST”

HOMILY I
THE PRAISES OF THE VIRGIN-MOTHER

HOMILY II
THE MISSION OF THE ANGEL

HOMILY III
COLLOQUY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE ANGEL

HOMILY IV
THE ANNUNCIATION AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN’S CONSENT

III
ON THE VIGIL OF OUR LORD’S NATIVITY

I
ON THE JOY HIS BIRTH SHOULD INSPIRE

II
ON THE MIRACULOUS NATURE OF THE NATIVITY

III
ON THE DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED IN THOSE WHO CELEBRATE THE FEAST

IV
ON OUR LORD’S NATIVITY

I

THE FOUNTAINS OF THE SAVIOUR

II
THE THREE COMMINGLINGS

III
ON THE PLACE, THE TIME, AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

IV
ON THE SHEPHERDS FINDING OUR LORD

V
ON THE WORDS “BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST”

V
ON THE CIRCUMCISION

VI
ON THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS AND OTHER SCRIPTURAL TITLES OF OUR LORD

VII
ON THE EPIPHANY

I
“THE GOODNESS AND KINDNESS OF OUR SAVIOUR HATH APPEARED”

II
GO FORTH YE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

III
ON THE GIFTS OF THE WISE MEN

SERMONS OF SAINT BERNARD ON ADVENT & CHRISTMAS: INCLUDING THE FAMOUS TREATISE ON THE INCARNATION CALLED "MISSUS EST"

INTRODUCTION

IT is a pleasure to write a few words of introduction to an admirable translation of some interesting “Sermons of St. Bernard” made by one of the Community of St. Mary’s, York. The sermons are nineteen in number, and are all of them related to the mysteries of Advent and Christmas. Of the seven sermons, De Adventu Domini, printed in Dom Mabillon’s edition of the saint’s works, we have here the first two. Then follow the four homilies on the text Missus est, etc. This is the title that is generally given to these famous sermons, but the holy preacher himself intended them to be called De laudibus Virginis Matris, as we read in his letter to Peter the Deacon. Of the six discourses for the Vigil of Christmas, the translator has selected the first, the fourth, and the sixth. All the five sermons on Christmas Day are given. The volume ends with two on the Circumcision and three on the Epiphany.

These sermons are fully and conscientiously translated. A few omissions have been made—chiefly, it would seem, through sheer inability to present in an acceptable modern version all the devout and fanciful dealings of the holy Doctor with the text of the Scripture. St. Bernard knew St. Augustine well, and he had learnt this fashion of using Holy Scripture from him. St. Bernard’s mind and heart were steeped in the Scriptures, and it comes natural to one to whom the text is so living and real to treat it as holding a lesson in every word and syllable. I have used the word “fanciful,” but rather in the sense of imaginative fertility than of childish or mere poetic dreaminess. The Holy Spirit, as all Catholics believe, has a message for man in the Bible beneath and besides the letter. In general, it is the prerogative of the saints and doctors to discourse and reveal this mystical sense. This is the reason why the commentaries of holy men are so precious. For the exposition of a St. Augustine, a St. Gregory, or a St. Bernard is the expression of the interior illumination of a favoured soul, and it would be rash to doubt that such comments are, in a general sense, guided and “inspired” by the Author of the Scripture Himself. If, then, the translator of these sermons has found some passages too “quaint” to be reproduced, still, there is a sufficient number left to make it useful to remind the reader that he is here listening to one of the princes of the contemplative life, and that he should rather try to follow

the idea than to criticize. No one can read St. Bernard with any profit or satisfaction who does not heartily accept him as a mystical expert in Holy Scripture. In one or two places considerable liberty has been taken with the text of the sermons. We are informed, in regard to the sermon on the Circumcision (p. 135), that this sermon has been combined with one on the same subject in the saint's commentary on the Canticle of Canticles. As the earlier discourse touches on the Holy Name, and as it is not, perhaps, one of St. Bernard's most striking utterances, it was a temptation not to be resisted to have recourse to the well-known Fifteenth Sermon on the Canticles, and to attach to the first the famous passages in which the Holy Name is compared to Lux, Cibus, et Medicina. This truly Bernardine outburst presents great difficulties to the translator, if the spirit and rhythm of the original are to be reproduced. It will be seen that the present translation is not unworthy of the original. I may, however, be permitted to say that, in the thrilling passage where the miracle wrought by the Holy Name on the cripple at the Gate of the Temple is described, I miss the tanquam fulgur egrediens—the comparison of Peter's utterance of that Name to a flash of lightning. The fine oratorical point which ends that passage—the healing of one cripple contrasted with the illumination of multitudes of blind—is left out. This kind of shortcoming rarely occurs in these pages, and is only an example of the excessive difficulty of rendering the exact rhetorical turn of a very vivid Latin into corresponding English.

St. Bernard's sermons were all delivered in the Chapter-house at Clairvaux. There can be no doubt that they were spoken in Latin, as we have them now. If the lay-brothers were present, they had to be content at the moment with picking up what they could, but we learn that at other times these discourses were repeated to the lay-brethren in French, or in the Romance tongue which was the precursor of modern French. We have a specimen of translation which must be almost contemporary, and possibly by St. Bernard himself, in a Paris manuscript quoted by Mabillon. The version shows that even an illiterate may have caught much of the sense of the spoken Latin. For example, in the sermon for Advent, the passage beginning, "Fugite superbiam, fratres mei, quæso, multum fugite," begins in Romance, "Por Deu, chier Friere, fuyez orgoil, et forment lo fuyez." St. Bernard's Latin style was much admired by the Humanists, such as Henry of Valois and Erasmus. The latter very acute critic says he was a born preacher, spirited, pleasing, and moving. We must remember that up to his twentieth year he had an excellent training in scholarship and divinity at Chatillon. His reading in both sacred and profane literature must have been very wide. He is well

acquainted with theology, as one can see, for example, in his sermons on the Canticles, especially in Sermons 80 and 81, where he discourses on the image of God in the Word and in the soul of man, and on the simplicity of God, with a penetration not unworthy of St. Anselm. His knowledge of the Canon Law is shown in his most able treatise, addressed to Eugenius III., the fine book De Consideratione. It is true he never considered himself a student. He said that he learnt more from the "oaks and beeches" of the Cistercian solitude than from books or masters. What he thus learnt was the most precious part of what he has left us. But still, great Popes, like Alexander III. and Innocent III., have given him the title of Doctor, a title conferred upon him in a more liturgical way by Pope Pius IX. At what date he was first called the "Mellifluous" Doctor is a little uncertain. Theophilus Raynauld, who wrote in the fifteenth century, seems to be the first who records that name, but it carried too happy a description of his spirit not to be promptly taken up. It was Nicholas Faber, the tutor of Louis XIII., who called him the "Last of the Fathers."

Those who cannot read the "Sermons of St. Bernard" in the original may be strongly recommended to study them in this excellent translation. They will find the style, and even the matter, a little difficult. In a writer of the twelfth century there must be an idiom that is unfamiliar, and his subjects and his points will not be those of the books and preachers of our own times. But the reader will find in St. Bernard, as in all the Fathers, that steady, large, and almost unconscious exposition of Catholic faith in its widest sense, which the multiplication of religious books must always need as a corrective to limited views and one-sided enthusiasms. He will also, I do not doubt, appreciate the fire and piety of that great saint. The ardent devotion which marks every page of his sermons may not now be a novelty to Catholics, for a leader like St. Bernard makes his own spirit in this regard an inheritance of the whole Church, and we are all to a great extent thinking the devout thoughts and practising the elevations of the heart of which he gave the example. But it is always inspiring and stimulating to go to the fountain-head, and to study the very turns and expressions of such a master; and his touching piety, whenever he treats of the Word made flesh, or the Virgin-Mother, will always be more real to us and more edifying when we feel ourselves actually in his presence—the presence of one who was at once so heroic in his sanctity, and so great an historical figure in the twelfth century.

† J. C. H.

November 5, 1909.

I

ADVENT

SERMON I

ON THE ADVENT OF OUR LORD AND ITS SIX CIRCUMSTANCES

TO-DAY we celebrate the beginning of Advent.

The name of this great annual commemoration is sufficiently familiar to us; its meaning may not be so well known.

When the unhappy children of Eve had abandoned the pursuit of things true and salutary, they gave themselves up to the search for those that are fleeting and perishable. To whom shall we liken the men of this generation, or to what shall we compare them, seeing they are unable to tear themselves from earthly and carnal consolations, or disentangle their minds from such trammels? They resemble the shipwrecked who are in danger of being overwhelmed by the waters, and who may be seen catching eagerly at whatever they first grasp, how frail soever it may be. And if anyone strive to rescue them, they are wont to seize and drag him down with them, so that not infrequently the rescuer is involved with them in one common destruction. Thus the children of the world perish miserably while following after transitory things and neglecting those which are solid and enduring, cleaving to which, they might save their souls. Of truth, not of vanity, it is said: “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Do you, therefore, to whom as to little ones God has revealed things hidden from the wise and prudent, turn your thoughts with earnestness to those that are truly desirable, and diligently meditate on this coming of our Lord. Consider Who He is that comes, whence He comes, to whom He comes, for what end He comes, when He comes, and in what manner He comes. This is undoubtedly a most useful and praiseworthy curiosity, for the Church would not so devoutly celebrate the season of Advent if there were not some great mystery hidden therein.

Wherefore, in the first place, let us with the Apostle consider in astonishment and admiration how great He is Who comes. According to the testimony of Gabriel, He is the Son of the Most High, and consequently a coequal with Him. Nor is it lawful to think that the Son of God is other than coequal with His Father. He is coequal in majesty; He is coequal in dignity. Who will deny that the sons of princes are princes, and the sons of kings kings?

But how is it that of the Three Persons Whom we believe, and confess, and adore in the Most High Trinity, it was not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, but the Son that became Man? I imagine this was not without cause. But "who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?" Not without some most deep counsel of the Blessed Trinity was it decreed that the Son should become Incarnate. If we consider the cause of our exile, we may perchance be able to comprehend in some degree how fitting it was that our deliverance should be chiefly accomplished by the Son.

Lucifer, who rose brightly as the morning star, because he attempted to usurp a similitude with the Most High, and "it was thought robbery in him to equal himself with God," an equality which was the Son's by right, was cast down from heaven and ruined; for the Father was zealous for the glory of the Son, and seemed by this act to say: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And instantly "I saw Satan as lightning falling from heaven."

Dust and ashes, why art thou proud? If God spared not pride in His angels, how much less will He tolerate it in thee, innate corruption? Satan had committed no overt act, he had but consented to a thought of pride, yet in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he was irreparably rejected because, as the Evangelist says, "he stood not in the truth."

Fly pride, my brethren, I most earnestly beseech you. "Pride is the beginning of all sin," and how quickly did it darken and overshadow with eternal obscurity Lucifer, the most bright and beautiful of the heavenly spirits, and, from not only an angel, but the first of angels, transform him into a hideous devil! Wherefore, envying man's happiness, he brought forth in him the evil which he had conceived in himself by persuading man that if he should eat of the forbidden tree he would become as God, having a knowledge of good and evil. Wretch! what dost thou promise, when thou knowest that the Son of God has the key of knowledge—yea, and is Himself the "key of David, that shutteth and no man openeth"; that "in him are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God"? Wouldst thou, then, wickedly steal them away to give them to men?

You see, my brethren, how true is the sentence of our Lord, "The devil is a liar

and the father of lies." He was a liar in saying, "I will be like unto the Most High," and he was the father of lies when he breathed his spirit of falsity into man. "You will be as gods." And wilt thou, O man, "seeing the thief, run with him"? You have heard, my brethren, what has been read this night from Isaiah. The Prophet says to the Lord, "Thy princes are faithless, companions of thieves," or, as another version has it, "disobedient companions of thieves." In truth, Adam and Eve were disobedient companions of thieves, for, by the counsel of the serpent, or, rather, of the devil in the serpent, they tried to seize upon what belonged by birthright to the Son of God. Nor did the Father overlook the injury, for the Father loveth the Son. He immediately took revenge on that same man, and let His hand fall heavily on us all, "for in Adam all have sinned," and in his sentence of condemnation we have shared.

What, then, did the Son do, seeing His Father so zealous for His glory, and for His sake sparing none of His creatures? "Behold," He says, "on My account My Father has ruined His creatures: the first of the angels aspired to My throne of sovereignty, and had followers who believed in him; and instantly My Father's zeal was heavily revenged on him, striking him and all his adherents with an incurable plague, with a dire chastisement. Man, too, attempted to steal from Me the knowledge which belongs to Me alone, and neither doth My Father show him mercy, nor doth His eye spare him. He had made two noble orders sharing His reason, capable of participating in His beatitude, angels and men; but behold, on My account He hath ruined a multitude of His angels and the entire race of men. Therefore, that they may know that I love My Father, He shall receive back through Me what in a certain way He seems to have lost through Me. 'It is on my account this storm has arisen; take me and cast me into the sea.' All are envious of Me; behold I come, and will exhibit Myself to them in such a guise as that whosoever shall wish may become like to Me; whatsoever I shall do they may imitate, so that their envy shall be made good and profitable to them."

The angels, we know, sinned through malice, not through ignorance and frailty; wherefore, as they were unwilling to repent, they must of necessity perish, for the love of the Father and the honour of the King demand judgment. For this cause He created men from the beginning, that they might fill those lost places, and repair the ruins of the heavenly Jerusalem. For He knew "the pride of Moab, that he is exceedingly proud," and that his pride would never seek the remedy of repentance, nor, consequently, of pardon. After man's fall, however, He created no other creature in his place, thus intimating that man should yet be

redeemed, and that he who had been supplanted by another's malice might still by another's charity be redeemed.

Be it so, dear Lord, I beseech Thee. Be pleased to deliver me, for I am weak. Like Joseph of old, I was stolen away from my country, and here without any fault was cast into a dungeon. Yet I am not wholly innocent, but innocent compared with him who seduced me. He deceived me with a lie: let the truth come, that falsehood may be discovered, and that I may know the truth, and that the truth may make me free. But to gain the freedom I must renounce the falsehood when discovered, and adhere to the known truth; otherwise the temptation would not be human, nor the sin a human sin, but diabolical obstinacy. To persevere in evil is the act of the devil, and those who persevere in evil after his example deservedly perish with him.

Behold, you have heard Who He is that comes; consider now whence and to whom He comes. He comes from the heart of God the Father to the womb of a virgin mother; He comes from the highest heaven to this low earth, that we whose conversation is now on earth may have Him for our most desirable companion. For where can it be well with us without Him, and where ill if He be present? "What have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion for ever"; and "though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," if only "thou art with me."

But here I see that our Lord descends not only to earth, but even to hell; not as one bound, but as free among the dead; as light that shines in the darkness, "and the darkness did not comprehend it." Wherefore His soul was not left in hell, nor did His holy body on earth see corruption. For Christ "that descended is the same also that ascended … that he might fill all things"; "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil." And elsewhere we read, He "hath exalted as a giant to run his way … His going forth is from the highest heavens, and his circuit even to the end thereof." Well might St. Paul cry out: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." In vain would the Apostle labour to raise our hearts upwards if he did not teach us that the Author of our salvation is sitting in heaven.

But what follows? The matter here is indeed abundant in the extreme; but our limited time does not admit of a lengthened development. By considering Who He is that comes, we see His supreme and ineffable majesty, and by contemplating whence He comes, we behold the great highway clearly laid out to us. The Prophet Isaias says: "Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from afar."

By reflecting whither He comes, we see His inestimable and inconceivable condescension in His descending from highest heavens to abide with us in this miserable prison-house. Who can doubt that there was some grand cause powerful enough to move so sovereign a Majesty to come “from afar,” and condescend to enter a place so unworthy of Him as this world of ours. The cause was in truth great. It was His immense mercy, His multiplied compassion, His abundant charity.

For what end must we believe that He came? This question is the next in order to be examined; nor will the search demand much labour, for the end and purpose of His coming is proclaimed by His words and His works. To seek after the one sheep of the hundred that had strayed He hastened from the mountains. For our sake He came down from heaven, that His mercies and His wonders might be openly proclaimed to the children of men. O wonderful condescension of God in this search! O wonderful dignity of man who is thus sought! If he should wish to glory in this dignity, it would not be imputed to him as folly. Not that he need think anything of himself, but let him rejoice that He Who made him should set so high a value on him. For all the riches and glory of the world, all that is desirable therein, is far below this glory—nay, can bear no comparison with it. “Lord, what is man that thou should magnify him? and why settest thou thy heart upon him?”

I still further desire to know why He should come to us, and not we rather go to Him, for the need was on our side, and it is not usual for the rich to go to the poor, though otherwise willing to assist them. It was indeed our place to go forward to Him, but there stood a twofold impediment in the way; for our eyes were heavy, and He “dwelt in light inaccessible.” We lay as paralytics on our beds, and could not raise ourselves to the Divine elevation. Wherefore this most benign Saviour and Physician of souls descended to us from His lofty throne, and tempered His brightness to the weakness of our sight. He clothed Himself with His most glorious and spotless body as with the shade of a lantern, thus attempering to us His splendour. This is that bright and shining cloud upon which the Lord was to descend upon Egypt, as the Prophet Isaiah foretold.

It is now fitting that we should consider the time of our Lord’s coming.

He came, as you know, not in the beginning, nor in the midst of time, but in the end of it. This was no unsuitable choice, but a truly wise dispensation of His infinite wisdom, that He might afford help when He saw it was most needed. Truly, “it was evening, and the day was far spent”; the sun of justice had wellnigh set, and but a faint ray of his light and heat remained on earth. The light

of Divine knowledge was very small, and as iniquity abounded, the fervour of charity had grown cold. No angel appeared, no prophet spoke. The angelic vision and the prophetic spirit alike had passed away, both hopelessly baffled by the exceeding obduracy and obstinacy of mankind. Then it was that the Son of God said: “Behold, I come.” And “while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, the almighty word leaped down from heaven from thy royal throne.” Of this coming the Apostle speaks: “When the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son.” The plenitude and affluence of things temporal had brought on the oblivion and penury of things eternal. Fitly, therefore, did the Eternal God come when things of time were reigning supreme. To pass over other points, such was the temporal peace at the birth of Christ that by the edict of one man the whole world was enrolled.

You have now heard Who He is that comes, whence, whither, and to whom He comes; the cause, likewise, and the time of His coming are known to you. One point is yet to be considered—namely, the way by which He came. This must be diligently examined, that we may, as is fitting, go forth to meet Him. As He once came visibly in the body to work our salvation in the midst of the earth, so does He come daily invisibly and in spirit to work the salvation of each individual soul; as it is written: “The Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord.” And that we might know this spiritual advent to be hidden, it is said: “Under his shadow we shall live among the Gentiles.” Wherefore, if the infirm cannot go far to meet this great Physician, it is at least becoming they should endeavour to raise their heads and lift themselves a little to greet their Saviour. For this, O man, you are not required to cross the sea, to penetrate the clouds, to scale the mountain-tops. No lofty way is set before you. Turn within thyself to meet thy God, for the Word is nigh in thy mouth and in thy heart. Meet Him by compunction of heart and by confession of mouth, or, at least, go forth from the corruption of a sinful conscience, for it is not becoming that the Author of purity should enter there.

It is delightful to contemplate the manner of His visible coming, for His “ways are beautiful, and all his paths are peace.” “Behold,” says the Spouse of the Canticles, “he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” You see Him coming, O beautiful one, but His previous lying down you could not see, for you said: “Shew me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou liest.” He lay feeding His angels in His endless eternity with the vision of His glorious, unchanging beauty. But know, O beautiful one, that that vision is become wonderful to thee; it is high, and thou canst not reach it.

Nevertheless, behold He hath gone forth from His holy place, and He that had lain feeding His angels hath undertaken to heal us. We shall see Him coming as our food, Whom we were not able to behold while He was feeding His angels in His repose. “Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” The mountains and hills we may consider to be the Patriarchs and the Prophets, and we may see His leaping and skipping in the book of His genealogy. “Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob,” etc. From the mountains came forth the root of Jesse, as you will find from the Prophet Isaias: “There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.” The same prophet speaks yet more plainly: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which is interpreted, ‘God with us.’ ” He Who is first styled a flower is afterwards called Emmanuel, and in the rod is named the virgin. But we must reserve for another day further consideration of this sublime mystery, as there is ample material for another sermon, especially as to-day’s has been rather long.

SERMON II

ON THE WORDS TO ACHAZ, “ASK THEE A SIGN,” ETC.

“And the Lord spoke again to Achaz, saying: Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, either unto the depth of hell, or unto the height above. And Achaz said: I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord.”

WE have heard Isaiah persuading King Achaz to ask for a sign from the Lord, either in the depth of hell, or in the height above. We have heard the King’s answer, having the semblance of piety, but not its reality. On this account he deserved to be rejected by Him Who sees the heart, and to Whom the thoughts of men confess. “I will not ask,” he says, “and I will not tempt the Lord.” Achaz was puffed up with the pomp of the regal throne, and skilled in the cunning words of human wisdom. Isaias has therefore heard the words: “Go, tell that fox to ask for himself a sign from the Lord unto the depths of hell.” For the fox had a hole, but it was in hell, where, if he descended, he would find One Who would catch the wise in his cunning. Again: “Go,” says the Lord, “to that bird, and let him ask for a sign in the heights above,” for the bird hath his high nest; but though he ascend to heaven, he will there find Him Who “resisteth the proud,” and trampleth with might on the necks of the lofty and high-minded. Achaz refused to ask a sign of that sovereign power, or that incomprehensible depth.

Wherefore the Lord Himself promised to the house of David a sign of goodness and charity, that those whom the exhibition of His power could not terrify, nor the manifestations of His wisdom subdue, might be allured by His exceeding love. In the words “depth of hell” may be not unfitly portrayed the charity “greater than which no man hath,” that Christ should at death descend even unto hell “for His friends.” And in this God would teach Achaz either to dread the majesty of Him Who reigns in the highest, or to embrace the charity of Him Who descends to the lowest. Grievous, therefore, alike to God and man is he who will neither think on majesty with fear nor meditate on charity with love. “Wherefore,” the Prophet says, “the Lord himself shall give you a sign.”—a sign resplendent alike with majesty and love. “Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which is interpreted, ‘God with us.’ ” O Adam! flee not away, for God is with us! Fear not, O man, nor be afraid to hear His name; it is “God with us.” With us in the likeness of our nature; with us for our service and for our profit. For us He is come as one of us, passible like unto us.

It is said, “He will eat butter and honey”; as if to say, He shall be a little one, fed with infant’s food. “That he may know how to reject evil and choose good.” As in the case of the forbidden tree, the tree of transgression, so now we hear of an option between good and evil. But the choice of the second Adam is better than that of the first. Choosing the good, He refused the evil; not as He Who loved cursing, and it came upon Him; and He would not have blessing, and it was far from Him. In the prophecy that He would eat butter and honey you may notice the choice of this little one. But may His grace support us, that what He grants us the power to understand He may likewise enable us to explain!

From milk we obtain two substances, butter and cheese. Butter is oily and moist; cheese, on the contrary, is hard. Our little one knew well how to choose when, eating the butter, He did not taste the cheese. Behold, therefore, how He chose the best; He assumed our nature free from all corruption of sin. Of sinners we read that their heart is curdled as milk; the purity of their nature is corrupted by the fermentation of malice and iniquity.

And now let us turn to the honey. Our bee feeds among lilies, and dwells in the flowery country of the angels. This bee flew to the city of Nazareth, which is, interpreted, a flower; He came to the sweet-smelling flower of perpetual virginity; He settled upon it, He clove to it. But bees, besides their sweet honey, have likewise their sharp sting. The Prophet that sang of the mercy and judgment of the Lord, knew that this bee had a sting as well as honey. Nevertheless, when

He descended to us He brought honey only—that is, mercy, not judgment—so that to the disciples who wished to call down fire from heaven on the cities that would not receive Him, He answered: “The Son of Man is not come to judge the world, but to save it.” Our bee had no sting in His mortal life; amid the extremity of insult He showed mercy, not judgment. Christ, then, may be symbolized both as a bee and as the flower springing from the rod. And, as we know, the rod is the Virgin Mother of God.

This flower, the Son of the Virgin, is “white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.” It is the flower on which the angels desire to look, the flower whose perfume shall revive the dead, the flower, as He Himself declares, of the field, not of the garden. This flower grew and flourished in the field independent of all human culture; unsown by the hand of man, unfilled by the spade, or fattened by moisture. So did the womb of Mary blossom. As a rich pasture it brought forth the flower of eternal beauty, whose freshness shall never fade nor see corruption, whose glory is to everlasting. O sublime virgin rod, that raisest thy holy head aloft, even to Him Who sitteth on the throne, even to the Lord of Majesty! And this is not wonderful, for thou hast planted thy roots deeply in the soil of humility. O truly celestial plant, than which none more precious, none more holy! O true tree of life, alone deemed worthy to bear the fruit of salvation! Thou art caught, O wicked serpent, caught in thy own cunning; thy falsity is laid bare. Two evils thou hadst imputed to thy Creator; thou hadst defamed Him by envy and by lying, but in both imputations thou art convicted a liar. He to whom thou hadst promised that he should not die did die, “and the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.” And now answer, if thou canst, what tree God could forbid man, seeing He denied him not this chosen rod, this sublime fruit? For “he that spared not his own Son, how hath he not with him given us all things?”

It is now surely clear how the Virgin is the royal way by which the Saviour has drawn near to us, coming forth from her womb as a Bridegroom from His bridal chamber. Holding on, therefore, to this way, let us endeavour to ascend to Him by her, through Whom He descended to us; let us seek His grace through her by whom He came to succour our need.

O blessed finder of grace! Mother of life! Mother of salvation! may we through thee have access to thy Son, that through thee we may be received by Him Who through thee was given to us. May thy integrity and purity excuse before Him the stain of our corruption; may thy humility, so pleasing to God, obtain from Him the pardon of our vanity. May thy abundant charity cover the multitude of our iniquity, and thy glorious fruitfulness supply our indigence of

merits. Our Lady, our Mediatrix, our Advocate, reconcile us to thy Son, commend us to thy Son, present us to thy Son. By the grace thou hast found, by the prerogative thou didst merit, by the mercy thou didst bring forth, obtain, O blessed one, that He Who vouchsafed to become partaker of our infirmity and misery, may, through thy intercession, make us partakers of His blessedness and glory, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, Who is God blessed above all for evermore. Amen.

II

ON THE “MISSUS EST”

The holy Abbot St. Bernard’s Preface to His “Praises of the Virgin Mother.”—I am in straits. My devotion bids me write; my occupations hinder me. Nevertheless, as sickness prevents me at present from following the community exercises with my brethren, I will not spend uselessly that little leisure which I contrive to find by shortening my night’s rest. Besides, it is a pleasure to me to attempt what has been for so long in my mind—namely, to speak or write something to the praise of the Virgin Mother, upon that portion of St. Luke’s Gospel which contains the history of the Annunciation of our Lord’s birth.

“And while I devote myself to this work, so long as the brethren over whom I am placed, and whom it is my happy duty to serve, do not find me less ready to minister either to their pressing needs, or even to their reasonable demands upon my time, I think none ought to object to my thus satisfying my devotion.

HOMILY I

THE PRAISES OF THE VIRGIN-MOTHER

“The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.”

WHAT can be the Evangelist’s intention in mentioning in this text so many proper names? I think it is that he would not have us listen carelessly to what he has been at such pains to relate. He names the messenger sent, the Lord by Whom, the Virgin to whom he is sent, the spouse of the Virgin, with the race of each; their city, too, and country are pointed out by name. And why all this explanation? Can the Evangelist have said anything superfluous? By no means. If not a leaf from a tree, nor a single sparrow falls to the ground without a cause and the knowledge of our heavenly Father, can I suppose that one superfluous word would fall from the lips of the holy Evangelist, especially when he is

giving the history of the Word Incarnate? Certainly I cannot. Full is every word of divinest mystery, redolent of sweetest heavenly perfume; to him, that is, who searches it diligently and knows how to draw “honey from the rock and oil from the flinty stone.” For in that day “the mountains dropped down with sweetness, and the hills flowed with milk” and honey. When the heavens dropped down dew and the clouds rained the Just One, then the joyous earth was opened and budded forth a Saviour, then the Lord gave goodness and our earth yielded forth her fruit. On that mountain of mountains heaped up and fat “mercy and truth met each other, justice and peace kissed.” In that day, too, one mountain was especially blessed among mountains—namely, the Evangelist himself, when, with mellifluous eloquence, he made known to us the beginning of our long-desired salvation, like some delightful south wind bringing delicious spiritual perfumes caught from the rising Sun of justice. Would that God would now also “send forth his words” and “let them flow to us”; may “his Spirit breathe,” may the Evangelist’s words be intelligible to us; may they become to our hearts “more desirable than gold and precious stones”; may they be sweeter to us than honey and the honeycomb.

“The angel Gabriel was sent from God.” I do not think that this was one of the lower angels who for one cause or another are often sent to earth; and I gather it from his name, which is interpreted “Strength of God”; because, also, he was not sent as is usual from a superior spirit, but from God Himself. For this reason it is said “sent from God,” or appointed by God, lest we should suppose that God had revealed His design to anyone before the Blessed Virgin. Among the blessed spirits themselves Gabriel alone was excepted, for he alone was found worthy of his name and embassy. The name befits the messenger, for could Christ, the Power of God, be more fittingly announced than by him who bore a similar name? Nor is it unbecoming or unsuitable that the Lord and His nuncio should bear the same title, for though the name is alike, the cause for which it is given differs. Christ is called the Strength or Power of God in quite another sense than the angel. In the angel it is merely an appellation; in Christ it expresses a substantial quality. Christ is called, and is, the Power of God. Stronger than the strong-armed, the Prince of this world, who kept his goods in peace, He came down upon him, waged war against him, and with His own arm bore away the spoils. The angel is called the Strength of God either because he had merited the prerogative of officially announcing the Advent of the Power of God, or in order that he might strengthen and support the Virgin, by nature timid and bashful, whom the novelty of the miracle might terrify and overpower. This he did when

he said: “Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace with God.” It is not unreasonable to suppose, though the Evangelist does not mention the angel’s name, that this was the same archangel who strengthened and comforted Mary’s spouse, a humble and timorous man. “Fear not, Joseph,” he says, “son of David, to take unto thee Mary thy wife.” Gabriel, therefore, was most fitly chosen for this work, or rather the name was imposed because of the embassy.

The angel, therefore, is sent from God. Whither? “To a city of Galilee called Nazareth.” Let us see if, as Nathaniel says, anything good can come from Nazareth. Nazareth is interpreted flower. The seed of this flower seems to me to have been cast from heaven upon the earth by the heavenly words spoken and the promises made to our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Of this seed it is written, “Except the Lord of Hosts had left us seed, we had been as Sodom, and we should have been as Gomorrha.” This seed flowered in the wonders displayed in the going forth from Egypt; it flowered in the signs and figures that marked the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness to the Promised Land; it flowered in the vision sand prophetical declarations of the Prophets, in the establishment and order of the kingdom and priesthood before the coming of Christ. But Christ is rightly understood to be the fruit of this seed and flower. For David says, “The Lord will give goodness, the earth shall yield her fruit.” And again: “Of the fruit of thy womb, I will set one upon thy throne.” In Nazareth, therefore, Christ’s future birth is announced, because when the flower has budded we have hope that fruit will follow. But, as in the formation of the fruit the flower decays and drops off, so with the appearance of the Truth in the flesh, the figures passed away.

As the Apostle says, “These things happened to them in figure.” Hence Nazareth is called a city of Galilee—that is, change, or passage. We who have the fruit see that these flowers have passed away, and that even while they seemed to flourish their future decay was foretold. For David says: “In the morning he shall grow up like grass: in the morning he shall flourish and pass away, in the evening he shall fall, grow dry and wither.” In the evening—that is, in the fullness of time, when “God sent his only Son made of a woman, made under the law.” “Behold,” He says, “I make all things new.” Hence it is again written, “The grass is withered and the flower is fallen: but the word of the Lord remaineth for ever.” I think there is no doubt that the Word is Christ, and Christ is the good fruit that remaineth for ever. But where is the grass that withered? where the flower that fell off? Let the Prophet answer: “All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field.” If all flesh is grass, the carnal Jews

were grass; and did not the grass wither when that people, devoid of spiritual unction, adhered to the dry letter? And did not the flower fall off when they no longer gloried in the law? If the flower did not fall, where is their kingdom, their priesthood, their prophets, their temple? Where are those wonders in which they were wont to glory and to say: “How great things have we heard and known, and our fathers have told us”? And again: “How great things he commanded our fathers, that they should make known to their children.”

“To Nazareth, a city of Galilee.” To this city the angel Gabriel was sent from God. To whom? To a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph.” Who is this Virgin so reverently saluted by the angel? and so lowly as to be espoused to a carpenter? Beautiful commingling of virginity with humility! That soul is in no small degree pleasing to God, in Whom humility commends virginity, and virginity adorns humility. But how much more worthy of veneration is she, in whom fecundity exalts humility, and child-bearing consecrates virginity. Virginity is a commendable virtue, but humility an indispensable one. The first is of counsel, the latter of precept. Of the one it is said, “He that can take, let him take it.” Of the other, “Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” To the one reward is offered; the other is exacted under a threat. Again, we can be saved without virginity, not without humility. A soul that has to deplore the loss of virginity may still be acceptable to God by humility: without humility, I will venture to say that even the virginity of Mary would not have been pleasing to Him, the Divine Majesty. Upon whom shall my spirit rest, if not on him that is humble and peaceable? He says not on the virgin, but on the humble. If, therefore, Mary had not been humble the Spirit would not have rested on her. If the Holy Spirit had not rested on her, she would never have become fruitful; for how without Him could she have conceived of Him? Therefore, as she herself testifies, in order that she might conceive of the Holy Ghost, God the Father “regarded the humility of his handmaid,” rather than her virginity. And if by her virginity she was acceptable to Him, nevertheless, it was by her humility that she conceived Him. Hence it is evident that it was her humility that rendered even her virginity pleasing to God.

A proud virgin, what can you say? Mary forgets herself and her virginity, and glories only in her humility, and you, neglecting humility, presume to pride yourself on your virginity. She says: “He hath had regard to the humility of his handmaid.” And who is this handmaid? A holy virgin, a prudent virgin, a devout virgin. Are you more chaste than she? Are you more devout? Is your purity more pleasing than the chastity of Mary, that without humility, you deem it sufficient

for you, when without humility her virginity could not find favour? The more honourable the gift of chastity, the greater the injury you do it in tarnishing its beauty within you by any admixture of pride. It would have been better for you not to be a virgin than to be puffed up and grow insolent by virginity. Virginity is not for all; it is for the few; and there are few among the few that unite humility with virginity. Wherefore, if you can only admire the virginity of Mary without being able to imitate it, study to copy her humility, and it will be sufficient for you. But if with virginity you possess humility, then you are great indeed.

But in Mary there is something more wonderful still: it is the union of fecundity with virginity. Since the beginning of the world it had not been heard that a woman was at once a virgin and a mother. And if you consider of whom she is the mother, how great will be your admiration of her exalted dignity! Do you feel as if you can never sufficiently praise it? Do you not judge, and rightly, that she who has the God-man for her Son is exalted in greatness above all the choirs of angels? Did not Mary confidently call the God and Lord of Angels her Son, saying: “Son, why hast thou done so to us?” Which of the angels would have presumed thus to speak? It is sufficient for them and something great, that while by nature they are spirits by grace they are made and called angels, as David says: “Who maketh his angels spirits.” In confidently calling God her Son, Mary acknowledges herself mother of that Majesty Whom those angels serve with reverential awe. Neither does God disdain to be called what He vouchsafed to be. For the Evangelist adds shortly after, “And he was subject to them.” Who was subject? God, to man. God to Whom the angels are subject. God, Whom the powers and principalities obey, was subject to Mary. And not only to Mary, but to Joseph also for Mary’s sake. Consider, then, and choose which you will most admire, the gracious condescension of the Son, or the surpassing dignity of the mother. Both are amazing; both are miraculous. That a God should obey a woman is humility without example; that a woman should command the Son of God is a dignity without parallel. In the praise of virgins we hear that wonderful verse: “They shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” But what praise, think you, is worthy of her who leads the way before Him? Learn, O man, to obey; learn, O earth, to be subject; learn, O dust, to be submissive. The Evangelist, speaking of your Creator, says: “He was subject to them”—that is, of course, to Mary and Joseph.

Blush, O dust and ashes, and be ashamed to be proud. God humbles Himself, and do you exalt yourself? God submits to man, and do you desire to domineer

over your fellow-man? In so doing you prefer yourself to your Creator. Would that when such thoughts assail me, God would vouchsafe to make me the same reproach as to His Apostle: “Get behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that are of God.” As often as I seek distinction among men, so often do I dispute the pre-eminence with my God, and then assuredly I savour not the things that are of God, since of Him it is said: “He was subject to them.” If, O man, you disdain to imitate the example of your fellow-man, you cannot find it degrading to follow that of your Maker. If you cannot follow Him “whithersoever he goeth,” at least follow Him in the most safe road of humility, for, from this straight path should even virgins deviate they will not “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” The Lamb is followed by the innocent soul and by the once sin stained but now humble and repentant soul; by the proud virgin, likewise, He is followed, but assuredly not “whithersoever he goeth.” The penitent cannot rise to the purity of the Lamb without spot, the proud soul cannot descend to the meekness of Him Who, not before His shearers only, but even before His executioners, was dumb and opened not his mouth. It is safer for the sinner to follow in humility than to be proud in virginity, because the sinner by his humility makes satisfaction for, and purges away his impurity, whereas, the purity of the other is polluted by pride.

Happy was Mary in whom neither humility nor virginity was wanting. O glorious virginity! which fecundity honoured, but did not contaminate. O singular humility! that a fruitful virginity elevated but did not destroy. O incomparable fecundity! in which virginity was associated with humility. Which of them is not wonderful, incomparable, unique? In pondering them, we are at a loss to decide which is the more worthy of admiration: the Virgin’s fecundity, the Mother’s integrity, or the adorable dignity of her offspring; or, again, that in such sublime elevation she still preserves her humility. Can we be surprised that God, Who is wonderful in His saints, should also show Himself wonderful in His Mother? Admire, ye married, and reverence her integrity in corruptible flesh! Ye sacred virgins, behold with astonishment this fruitful virgin! Let all Christians imitate the humility of the Mother of God! O holy angels, honour the Mother of your King! He is at once our King and yours, the Redeemer of our race, the replenisher of your city. To Him Who with you is so glorious, with us so humble, be rendered for ages without end, both by us and by you, the reverence due to His dignity and the honour and glory worthy of His infinite condescension. Amen. Amen.

HOMILY II

THE MISSION OF THE ANGEL

NO one, surely, will doubt that in the kingdom of God the Queen of virgins will join—nay, rather, will take the lead—in the canticle which only virgins sing. Further than this, I think she will gladden the City of God with a yet sweeter and more thrilling melody, whose enrapturing strains not one among the virgins will be worthy to utter. This song will be reserved to her who alone could glory in her child-bearing—a Divine child-bearing. In thus glorying, she glories not in herself, but in Him Whom she brought forth; for God would certainly enrich with singular glory in heaven that Mother whom He prevented with the surpassing grace of bringing Him into the world without prejudice to her virginity. Such a birth was becoming a God Who alone could be born of a virgin. Such a child-bearing was befitting one who had a God for her Child. Therefore, it was needful that the Creator of man, in order to unite Himself to the human race, should choose—nay, create—a Mother whom He knew to be worthy of, and acceptable to, Himself. He willed her to be an immaculate virgin, that she might merit to have for her Son the Spotless One, Who was about to take away the sins of the world. He willed her, too, to be humble, from whom He Who was meek and humble should come into the world, He Who was to show to all men a salutary example of these two virtues. He gave fruitfulness to the Virgin whom He had previously inspired with the desire of vowing her virginity to God, and whom He had also enriched with the grace of humility. Otherwise, how could the angel have proclaimed her “full of grace” if she had possessed any of the least good that was not the effect of Divine grace? In order, therefore, that she who was to conceive and bring forth the Holy of Holies might be holy in body, she received the gift of virginity, and that she might be holy in mind, she received the gift of humility. With these gems of virtue the royal Virgin was adorned, and, radiant with the double splendour of holiness in body and mind, she was no sooner revealed to the heavenly citizens than they fixed upon her their admiring gaze. The King Himself stooped to desire her beauty, and sent her His heavenly ambassador. And this is what the Evangelist makes known when he says that the angel was sent from God to the Virgin. From God to the Virgin —that is, from the highest to the lowliest; from the Lord to His handmaid; from the Creator to His creature. How great the condescension of God! How pre-eminent the excellence of the Virgin!

Hasten, O ye mothers! Press forward, ye daughters of Eve! Come quickly, all

you who, on account of Eve's fall, bring forth in sorrow! Approach the Virgin's chamber; enter, if you can, the modest room of your Sister; for, behold! God sends a message to the Virgin. An angel addresses Mary. Place your ear close to the wall; listen to what he announces; perchance you may receive a word of consolation. Rejoice, O father Adam, and exult yet more, O mother Eve—you who, though the parents of all, were their destroyers even before you became their parents. Be consoled now in your daughter, and in such a daughter! you especially, O Eve, from whom the evil first originated, and whose reproach passed as a disgraceful legacy to womanhood. The time is at hand when that reproach shall be taken away. Wherefore, O Eve, hasten to Mary; hasten, O Mother, to your daughter. Let the daughter answer for the mother; let her take away her mother's reproach; let her satisfy also for her father Adam, for if he fell by a woman, behold, he is now raised up by a woman. God gave a woman in exchange for a woman; a prudent woman for one that was foolish; a humble woman for one who was proud; one who, instead of the fruit of death, shall give you to eat of the tree of life, and who, in place of the poisoned food of bitterness, will bring forth the fruit of everlasting sweetness. Change now, O Adam, your wicked words of excuse to the song of endless thanksgiving, and say: "O Lord, the woman whom thou hast given me, gave me of the tree of life; and I have eaten, and its fruit has been sweeter than honey to my mouth, and by it thou hast given me life." This is why the angel was sent to the Virgin. O wondrous and most honourable Virgin! O woman singularly venerable! admirable among all women! thou who hast satisfied for thy parents, and restored life to their posterity.

"The Angel was sent to a virgin." A virgin in body, a virgin in mind, a virgin by profession, a virgin such as the Apostle describes "holy in body and in mind." She is no recent and chance discovery, but the object of God's eternal predilection; foreknown by the Most High, prepared for Himself, guarded by angels, pointed out by the Patriarchs, promised by the Prophets. Search the Scriptures, and prove the truth of my words. To give a few testimonies out of many, of what other woman could God have spoken when He said to the serpent, "I will place enmities between thee and the woman?" And if you still doubt whether Mary were that woman, listen to what follows: "She shall crush thy head." To whom but to Mary was such a victory reserved? Undoubtedly the empoisoned head of the serpent was crushed by Mary, who brought to naught every suggestion of the Evil One, as well as regards carnal allurements as intellectual pride. Again, what other woman did Solomon seek? The Wise Man

knew the frailty of that sex, the weakness of their bodies, the inconstancy of their minds. But he had read God's promise, and saw that it was fitting that the enemy who had been victorious over the human race by means of a woman should by another woman be himself overcome. Wondering exceedingly, he exclaimed: "Who shall find a valiant woman?" As if to say, if upon a woman depends alike the salvation of our race, its restoration to innocence, and its victory over our common enemy, she must indeed be valiant to be fitted for so sublime an undertaking. But "who shall find a valiant woman?" And lest he should be accused of asking in despondency, he adds in prophecy, "The price of her is as of things brought from afar off, and from the remotest coasts." Such a price is not small, nor mean, nor of light account, nor is it from earth, but from heaven. And not even from the heaven nearest the earth, but from the highest heavens —"His going forth is from the height of heaven." And what, again, was that bush shown to Moses, burning and yet unburnt, but Mary who brought forth without sorrow? In Aaron's rod, which flowered without moisture, she is also typified, for she conceived without knowing man.

The mystery of this stupendous miracle Isaias more clearly points out when he says: "There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root." The rod is the Virgin, the flower the Virgin's Child. There is nothing unfitting in Christ being represented under different figures for different causes. So we may speak of Him as the rod, an emblem of power, or as the flower, emblem of fragrance, or as the fruit, that of sweetness; whilst by the leaves we may understand His ceaseless protection—that protection which He continually extends over the little ones who take refuge under His shadow from the heat of earthly desires, and from the face of them that afflict them. O good and desirable shade, under the protection of Jesus, where he that is pursued finds refuge, and where the weary obtain rest and refreshment! Have mercy on me, O Jesus, for my soul confides in Thee, and under the shadow of Thy wings I will hope till iniquity pass by.

Other references might be quoted equally suitable to the Virgin Mother and to the Son of God—Gideon's fleece, for instance, cut from the flesh without wounding it, and placed on the dry ground, where the dry fleeces are in turn moistened by the dew. This similitude represents the flesh assumed from the flesh of Mary without injury to her virginity. Upon it Heaven dropped down dew, filling it with the plenitude of the Divinity, and from that fullness we have all received—we who, but for it, were as parched and arid soil. The Psalmist seems to refer very beautifully to this fact in Gideon's history. In Ps. 71 we read:

“He shall descend like rain upon the fleece, and as showers falling gently upon the earth.” Gently at first, and without noise of human operation, He fell softly into the Virgin’s womb; afterwards, when the Apostles announced Him, it was with the noise of words and the display of miracles. For they were mindful of the words spoken to them when they were sent: “What I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light, and what you hear in the ear, preach ye on the housetops.” This injunction they carried out, for “their sound has gone forth to the whole earth, and their words to the uttermost ends of the world.”

Let us now give ear to Jeremias, who foretells a new and unheard-of wonder, while he ardently desires, and confidently promises, the coming of Him Whose presence he might not behold. “God has created a new thing on the earth, a woman shall encompass a man.” Who is this woman, and who is this man? And if a man, how is He encompassed by a woman? “Can a man,” said Nicodemus, “return to his mother’s womb, and be born again?” I turn for my answer to the Virgin’s conception and child-bearing, yet even there, among the many new and wonderful mysteries that meet the consideration of the diligent inquirer, this which the Prophet here proposes will excite admiration. There is seen length abbreviated, width straightened, height, lowered, depth filled up. There we behold light withholding its rays, the Word an infant, the Living Water athirst, Him Who is the Bread of Heaven suffering hunger. Attend and see how Omnipotence is ruled, Wisdom instructed, Power sustained; the God Who rejoices the angels is become a Babe at the breast; He Who consoles the afflicted lies weeping in a manger. Attend and see how joy is made sorrowful, strength becomes weakness, life death; but—what is equally wonderful—that sorrow gives joy, that weakness imparts strength, that death restores life.

Who does not now see that I have found what I sought, and that we behold “a woman encompassing a man” when we see Mary enclosing in her womb Jesus, the Man-God? For I may call Jesus a man not only when He was proclaimed “a prophet mighty in work and word,” but also when His tender infant limbs lay in the womb of His Mother, or gently nestled on her bosom. Jesus, then, was a man even before His birth; not in age, but in wisdom; not in strength of body, but in vigour of mind; not by the development of His members, but by the perfection of His intelligence: for the wisdom of Jesus was as great at His conception as at His birth, when He was a child as when He was a perfect man. Whether hidden in the womb or weeping in the manger, whether a boy among the doctors or teaching the people in perfect manhood, He was ever equally full of the Holy Ghost. There was no moment of His human life when that plenitude of the Holy

Spirit which He received at His conception suffered either diminution or augmentation. From the first He was perfect, from the first He was full of "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of the spirit of counsel and fortitude, of the spirit of knowledge and piety, and of the spirit of the fear of the Lord." Yet be not surprised if you read elsewhere: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace before God and men." What is here said of wisdom and grace must be understood not of their essence, but of their outward appearance. That is to say, that our Lord never acquired what He did not before possess; but that He seemed to acquire it when He willed it to appear.

You, O Christian soul, advance not when and as you would; you find your progress apparently checked, your life at the disposal of another. But the Child Jesus Who guides your life regulated also His own. When He would, and on what occasions He would, He appeared wise; when and as He willed, more wise; and as He willed, most wise; though all the while He never was aught but sublimest wisdom. In like manner, though He was ever full of all the grace which it was fitting He should have before God and men, according as He judged proper, He showed now more, now less, according to the merits of the observers, or as He knew their spiritual needs required it. It is evident, therefore, that if in bodily development Jesus did not always appear a man, His mind was ever fully developed.

But let us see if Isaias, who above explained the new flowers on Aaron's rod, has not also brought light to bear on this "new thing" of Jeremias. He says: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son." Here for the "woman" we have "virgin." What does He say of the "man"? "And his name shall be called Emmanuel, that is, 'God with us.' " Therefore the woman encompassing a man is the Virgin conceiving the Son of God. How stupendous this very miracle wrought in a virgin and from a virgin's nature—a miracle which so many other miracles had foreshadowed, so many oracles proclaimed. The spirit of the Prophets was ever the same. Though at different times and in different ways, it was not in a different spirit that they foresaw and predicted the same truth. What is shown by Moses' burning bush, by Aaron's flowering rod, by Gideon's dew and fleece, is clearly spoken of by Solomon in the valiant woman and her price; more clearly by Jeremias in the woman and the man; most plainly by Isaias in the Virgin and Emmanuel. To Gabriel it was reserved to point her out by his salutation. For of her the Evangelist says: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin espoused to Joseph."

"To a virgin espoused." Why espoused? In order that Joseph, by carefully

studying her life and conversation, might be a most faithful witness to her purity, for it was intolerable that any slur should be cast on the Mother of God. But could not God have given some sign which would have preserved His own birth from infamy, and His Mother's honour from suspicion? Undoubtedly He could, but not without discovering to the devil what He had revealed to men; and it was necessary that this secret of God's counsel should for a time be concealed from the prince of this world. Not that God had any obstacle to fear from the devil, had He chosen to make His operation manifest, but because He acts not only powerfully, but wisely, in all that He does, and preserves an exquisite order in all His works, observing the fitting times and circumstances for their performance. Therefore, in this glorious work of our redemption. He likewise wished to show forth His wisdom as well as His power. He could have accomplished it by other means, but He willed to reconcile man to Himself by the same means and in the same order as He knew man had fallen. As the devil had first deceived the woman, then overcome the man by the woman, so he was to be deceived by a woman, a virgin, and afterwards be openly attacked and conquered by the Man (Christ). Thus, by a device of infinite compassion, God laid bare the fraud of malice. The power of Christ broke the strength of the Evil One, and the might and wisdom of God confounded the devil's malice and craft.

It was necessary, then, that Mary should be espoused to Joseph, in order that what was holy might be concealed from the unholy, that the virginity of Mary might be proved to her spouse, and that the Virgin might be preserved from suspicion and her reputation protected. What more wise? What more worthy of Divine Providence?

But it is written: "Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, had a mind to put her away privately." Truly, because he was just, he would not expose her publicly; for as he would not have been just had he countenanced one that was guilty, neither would he have been just if he had condemned one whose innocence he had proved. Since, then, he was just and unwilling to expose her, why had he a mind to put her away? I give you on this point not my own opinion, but that of the Fathers. Joseph's reason was the same as Peter's when he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," and that of the centurion when he exclaimed, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." Joseph looked on himself as a sinner and as unworthy to entertain one in whom he beheld a superhuman dignity. He beheld with awe in the Virgin-Mother a certain sign of the Divine Presence, and as he could not penetrate the mystery, he wished to put her away. Peter was struck with awe at

the greatness of Christ's power; the centurion by the majesty of His presence; and Joseph was naturally afraid at the novelty and splendour of the miracle and the depth of the mystery. We need not wonder that he thought himself unworthy of the society of such a virgin when we hear the holy Elizabeth exclaim with fear and trembling: "Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" But if, on the other hand, any believe that Joseph suspected Mary, this very doubt of his was necessary, and merited to be dispelled by Divine intervention; for it is written: "But while he thought on these things" (that is, the putting her away privately), "behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." For the above reasons, therefore, Mary was espoused to Joseph.

What are we to think of the dignity of Joseph, who deserved to be called and to be regarded as the father of our Saviour? We may draw a parallel between him and the great Patriarch. As the first Joseph was by the envy of his brothers sold and sent into Egypt, the second Joseph fled into Egypt with Christ to escape the envy of Herod. The chaste Patriarch remained faithful to his master, despite the evil suggestions of his mistress. St. Joseph, recognizing in his wife the Virgin Mother of his Lord, guarded her with the utmost fidelity and chastity. To the Joseph of old was given interpretation of dreams, to the new Joseph a share in heavenly secrets. His predecessor kept a store of corn, not for himself, but for the whole nation; our Joseph received the Living Bread from heaven, that he might preserve it for his own salvation and that of all the world. A good and faithful servant was the Joseph to whom Mary, the Mother of the Saviour, was espoused; a faithful and prudent servant whom our Lord chose for the comfort of His Mother and the nurse of His own childhood, as well as the only and most trustworthy co-operator in the Divine design.

We read in this place that he was of the house of David. Yea, truly was this our Joseph descended from royal stock, a man of noble race and yet nobler mind, the son of David, in nothing degenerating from the nobility of David, his father. He was son of David less by kinship of blood than by inheritance of faith, of devotion, and of holiness of life—a man whom, like another David, God found according to His own heart, and to whom He entrusted His most precious secret; to whom, as to David, He made manifest the uncertain and hidden things of his wisdom, and to whom He revealed a mystery hidden from the great ones of the world. To Joseph it was given to behold Him Whom many kings and prophets had desired to see and had not seen, to hear and had not heard. And not only was

he allowed to behold Him and listen to His words, but he might bear Jesus in his arms, guide His steps, embrace and caress Him, feed and protect Him.

It is also supposed that Mary was of the same house of David, otherwise she would not have been espoused to a man of that house. Both, then, were of the royal race; but in Mary was fulfilled the truth which the Lord swore unto David; in Joseph we have the witness of its fulfilment. The verse concludes with the words: “And the virgin’s name was Mary.”

We will dwell a while on this name, which is, rightly interpreted, “Star of the Sea,” and is therefore admirably appropriate to the Virgin Mother. Fitly is she compared to a star, which, in giving forth its light, suffers no waning, since she brought forth her Son without stain to her virginity. As the ray of the star lessens not its brightness, so the Son of Mary detracted in no way from her integrity. She is therefore that glorious star which arose from Jacob, and which cast its radiance over the whole world—the star whose splendour rejoices heaven, terrifies hell, and sheds its mild and beneficent influence on the poor exiles of earth. She is truly the Star which, being placed over this world’s tempestuous sea, shines forth by the lustre of her merits and example.

O you who find yourself tossed about by the storms of life, turn not your eyes from the brightness of this Star, if you would not be overwhelmed by its boisterous waves. If the winds of temptations rise, if you fall among the rocks of tribulations, look up at the Star, call on Mary. If anger, covetousness, or other passions beat on the vessel of your soul, look up to Mary. If you begin to sink in the gulf of melancholy and despair, think on Mary. In dangers, in distress, in perplexities, think on Mary, call on Mary. Let her not depart from your lips, let her not depart from your heart, and, that you may win the suffrage of her prayers, never depart from the example of her life. Following her, you will never go astray; when you implore her aid, you will never yield to despair; thinking on her, you will not err; under her patronage you will never wander; beneath her protection you will not fear; she being your guide, you will not weary; if she be your propitious Star, you will arrive safely in the port, and experience for yourself the truth of the words, “And the virgin’s name was Mary.”

And let us not turn too rapidly from the brightness of this transcendant luminary, for, in the words of the Apostle, “It is good for us to be here.” Let us, then, gaze in silent contemplation on that which words are powerless to explain. Thus shall we repair our spiritual powers, and be enabled to consider more fervently the points that follow.

HOMILY III

COLLOQUY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE ANGEL

“WOE is me,” says the Prophet, “because I have held my peace, because I am a man of unclean lips.” I, too, will say “Woe is me,” not because I have held my peace, but because I have spoken, for I, too, “am a man of unclean lips.” How many vain, erroneous, and unbecoming words hath not this my vile mouth uttered, which now presumes to speak of the things of heaven! Would that there were brought to me from the altar above, not one “live coal” only, but a great ball of fire to touch and cleanse my unworthy lips, and make me fit to repeat the chaste and beautiful colloquies between the angel and the Virgin. The Evangelist says:

“And the angel being come in to her” (that is, to Mary), “said, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” Where did he come in to her? I think into the secrecy of her virginal chamber, where perchance, having closed the door upon her, Mary was praying to her Father in secret. And it was not difficult for the angel to penetrate through the closed door into the inner chamber of the Virgin. Neither bolts nor bars could oppose the subtlety of his nature, to which all solid substances yield, and which bears him whither the impetus of his spirit leads him. We cannot suppose that he found her door unclosed, who so studiously avoided the company and conversation of men, lest her recollection should be disturbed or her virtue threatened. Closed, therefore, at that hour was the dwelling of that most prudent Virgin, but to men, not to angels. For the angels are wont to be near those who pray; they delight in beholding them raise their pure hands to heaven; and with glad service they present to God the sacrifices of devotion which they offer in the odour of sweetness. How pleasing to the Most High were the prayers of Mary is well shown by the reverence with which the angel saluted her.

Being come in to her, he said: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” In the Acts of the Apostles we read that Stephen was full of grace, and that the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, but their measure of grace was far other than Mary’s. In her dwelt the fullness of the Godhead corporally. “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” What wonder that she was full of grace when the Lord was with her? Rather, is it not wonderful that He Who had sent the angel was already found by him with the Virgin? Had, then, God been swifter than the angel, and reached the earth before His messenger? Oh yes; for while the King was on His couch the spikenard of the Virgin gave forth its sweet

perfume, and ascending into His glorious presence, found favour in His sight, while His ministers around exclaimed: “Who is she that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense.” And straightway the King, going forth from His holy place, “rejoiced as a giant to run his way”; and though His going out is from the height of heaven, yet through exceeding desire He hastened on His way, and anticipated His messenger with the Virgin, whom He had loved, whom He had chosen for Himself, whose beauty He had desired. Beholding Him from afar, the Church exclaims exultingly: “Behold, He cometh leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills.” Rightly had the King been desirous of the Virgin’s beauty, for she had long before attended to the words of her father David: “Hear, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear, and forget thy people and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.” She heard and saw, but not as those who, hearing, hear not, and seeing, do not understand. She heard and believed, she saw and understood. She inclined her ear to obedience and her heart to discipline, and forgot her people and her father’s house. She cared not to multiply her people by offspring. The honour that might have been hers among her people, and the wealth that might have accrued to her from her family, she counted as dross that she might gain Christ. Not even the wish to call Christ her Son could lead her to violate her promised virginity. Truly, then, is she full of grace who clung to the grace of virginity, and also obtained the glory of fecundity.

“Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” He says not in thee, but with thee. God, Who is equally present everywhere, remains whole and entire by His simple substance and essence. He is present with rational creatures in many different ways. With the good alone He is present by love as well as by knowledge, so that He is with them by agreement of wills. While their wills are subject to justice and right reason, God does not disdain to will what they will, for their wills being conformed to His, they in a manner unite God to themselves. If God is thus present with all the saints, He is especially so with Mary, with whom He was so closely united as to have not only one will, but one flesh, for from His own Divine nature and from her virginal substance one Christ was made, Who, sharing both natures, was at once the Son of God and Son of the Virgin Mary. The angel therefore says: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” Not only is there with thee God the Son, Whom thou dost clothe with thy flesh, but also God the Holy Ghost, of Whom thou dost conceive, and God the Father, Who begot Him, Who is to be thy Son. The Father is with thee who makes His Son to be thine; the Son is with thee who institutes with thee a

wondrous Sacrament, and yet preserves the seal of thy virginity. The Holy Spirit is with thee, and with the Father and the Son He sanctifies thy pure womb. “The Lord,” therefore, “is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women.”

I love to add what Elizabeth soon after pronounced, and “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.” Not that, because thou art blessed, the fruit of thy womb is also blessed, but because He prevented thee with the blessings of sweetness, therefore art thou blessed. Truly blessed is the fruit of thy womb, in whom all nations are blest, of whose fullness thou hast received as others have, but in a fuller measure. For this reason, therefore, thou art blessed best “amongst women.” He is called blessed not amongst men, nor amongst angels, but, as the Apostle says, “God blessed above all for ever.”

“Blessed, therefore, is the fruit of thy womb”—blessed in sweet odour, blessed in sweet savour, blessed in beauty and comeliness of form.

The fragrance of this odoriferous fruit was perceived by him who said: “The smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field, which the Lord hath blessed”; and is not he truly blessed who is blest by the Lord?

Of the sweet relish of this fruit one who had tasted of it exclaimed, “O taste and see how sweet is the Lord”; and elsewhere, “O how great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee.” And Christ says of Himself while inviting us all to Him: “He that eateth me shall yet hunger, and he that drinketh me shall yet thirst.” He said this because the sweet savour of this fruit, when once tasted, excites a greater appetite. Blessed fruit! which is the food and drink of those who hunger and thirst after justice.

You have heard of its fragrance and of its savour; hear now of its beauty. For if the fruit which brought death into the world was not only sweet to the taste, but beautiful to the eye, as the Scripture testifies, much more ought we to seek for beauty in this fruit of life, “upon which,” as another passage in Holy Scripture remarks, “the angels desire to look.” Its beauty was seen in spirit, and desired to be seen in the flesh by him who said: “Out of Sion the loveliness of his beauty.” And, lest you should think lightly of the beauty here commended, remember what is said in another Psalm: “Beautiful above the sons of men, grace is poured abroad on thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” “Blessed, then, is the fruit of thy womb,” whom God hath blest for ever, and by whom thou thyself, O Mary, art blessed amongst women, because an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

Blessed art thou amongst women, who didst escape that universal curse, “In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children”; and that other, “Cursed is the barren in

Israel." Thou hast obtained the singular blessing of neither remaining sterile, nor bringing forth in sorrow. But who has taught thee, O prudent Virgin, O devout Virgin, that virginity is pleasing to God? What page of the Old Testament exhorted thee, what ordinance counselled thee, what law commanded thee to live in the flesh, yet not according to the flesh, and lead on earth the life of the angels? Where didst thou read that the "wisdom of the flesh is death," and that we are not to "make provision for the flesh in its concupiscences"? Where didst thou read of virgins that they sing a new song no other can sing, and that they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth? Where didst thou read that they are praised who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven? Where didst thou find that "though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh"; and that "he that giveth his virgin in marriage doth well; but he that giveth her not, doth better"? Where didst thou hear, "I would that all men were as myself"; and "it is good for a man, if he so remain according to my counsel"? The unction of the Holy Spirit, O Virgin, has taught thee all these things.

Before becoming thy Son God has been thy Master. Thou dost vow thyself as a chaste virgin to Christ, and thou knowest not thou shalt be His Mother. Thou wilt conceive, but without sin; thou wilt bring forth, but without sorrow; thou knowest not man, but thou wilt bear a Son. What Son? Thou wilt be Mother of Him whose Father is God. The Son of the Father's love will be the crown of thy chastity; the wisdom of the Father's mind will be the fruit of thy virginal womb. Of God, therefore, thou wilt conceive, and thou wilt bring forth a God. Take courage, then, fruitful Virgin, chaste Mother, spotless Mother; thou wilt no longer be accursed in Israel, nor reckoned among the barren. Thou wilt be blessed on earth by the angel, and all generations of the earth shall call thee blessed. "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

"And when she had heard, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this might be." Virgins who deserve the name are ever timid; they never think themselves secure; and while avoiding what ought to be feared, they fear where there is no danger. They know that they bear a precious treasure in fragile vessels; that it is difficult to live among men an angelic life, to converse on earth after the manner of the celestial spirits, to lead on earth a holy life in mortal flesh. In every unforeseen occurrence they suspect some snare for their virtue, and therefore Mary was troubled at the words of the angel. She was troubled, but not disturbed. "I was troubled," says the Psalmist, "and I spoke not. I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the

eternal years." Mary was troubled, and spoke not; she thought what manner of salutation this might be. That she was troubled proves her virginal modesty; that she was not disturbed, her fortitude; her thoughtful silence shows her prudence.

"She thought what manner of salutation this might be." This prudent Virgin knew how often Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and because she was singularly simple and humble, she did not expect to hear such words addressed to her by the angel, so she thought with herself what manner of salutation this might be. Then the angel, looking on the Virgin, and easily reading the conflicting thoughts that were passing through her mind, encouraged her in her timidity and in her doubt. Calling her by her name, he gently persuaded her not to fear.

" 'Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace with God.' There is here no deception, no falsehood. Thou needest fear no fraud, no snare, no delusion. I am not a man, but a spirit; I am an angel of God, not a minister of Satan. 'Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace with God.' Oh, if thou didst know how pleasing thy humility is to the Most High, what a sublime exaltation awaits thee in His sight, thou wouldst not judge thyself unworthy of the conversation, nor even of the homage, of angels! Why think thyself undeserving the favour of angels when thou hast found favour with God? Thou hast found what thou hadst sought, what none before thee had been able to find—thou hast found grace before God. What grace? The grace of peace and reconciliation between God and man, the destruction of death the reparation of life. This is the grace thou hast found with God. And let this be a sign to thee. 'Thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.' Understand from the name of the promised Son, O prudent Virgin, how great and what a special grace thou hast found with God."

"And thou shalt call his name Jesus." Another Evangelist gives the reason of this name: "Because he shall save his people from their sins." I have read of two men who bore the name of this our Jesus; both went before Him and prefigured Him, and both were serviceable to their people. One conducted his brethren into the Land of Promise; the other led forth his people from the captivity of Babylon. Both did, indeed, defend those they governed from their enemies, but they did not save them from their sins. But this our Jesus saves His people, and washes away their sins, and likewise introduces them into the land of the living. "For he shall save his people from their sins."

Who is this that forgiveth sins also? Would that the Lord Jesus would deign to number me, a sinner, among His people, and save me from my sins. Truly,

blessed are the people that have our Lord Jesus for their God, for He will save His people from their sins. But I fear there are many who profess to be of His people, but whom He does not recognize as such. I fear that to many who are counted among the more religious-minded of His people He will say: “This people honoureth me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” For the Lord Jesus knoweth who are His, and whom He hath chosen from the beginning. “Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I command you?”

Would you know if you belong to His people, or, rather, do you wish to be one of His disciples? Do what Jesus commands, and He will number you among His followers. Fulfil what He enjoins in the Gospel, what He prescribes in the Law and the Prophets, what He ordains through His ministers in the Church. Obey His representatives; obey your superiors, not only the good and gentle, but even the froward; and learn of Jesus Himself to be meek and humble of heart. You will then belong to the blessed people whom He has chosen for His inheritance, and of whom He bears witness, saying: “A people, which I knew not, hath served me: at the hearing of the ear they have obeyed me.”

But let us consider what the angel thinks of Him, Whom he would willingly himself have called by the name of Jesus. He says: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High.” Great indeed is He Who deserves to be called the Son of the Most High. Is not He great whose immensity knows no limitation? Who is great as the Lord our God? It is He Who is as great as He is high—yea, Who is Most High. As “Son of the Most High,” He thought it not robbery to equal Himself to the Most High. Satan, indeed, meditated robbery. Though made out of nothing in angelic form, he compared himself with his Maker, and arrogated to himself what belonged of right to the Son of the Most High, the Son not made by God, but begotten of Him. For the Most High God the Father, though Omnipotent, could not make a creature equal to Himself, nor beget a Son who was not His equal. He made the angel great, but not as Himself, therefore not Most High. In one alone did He think it no robbery that He should equal Himself with Him in all things; the only-begotten Son, Who was not made, but begotten, by the Omnipotent, Omnipotent; by the Most High, Most High; by the Eternal, Co-eternal. Rightly, then, shall He be great Who shall be called the Son of the Most High.

But why is it said “He shall be,” and not, rather, “He is,” great, since He is always equally great, and can have no increase? He will not be more exalted after His conception than He was before. Perhaps the angel would have us understand that He Who was great as God will be great as man. Elsewhere in the

Gospel we read, “A great Prophet hath risen up amongst us.”

O Virgin, thou wilt indeed give birth to a Little One, thou wilt nourish a Little One; but while thou lookest on Him as little, think upon Him as great. He will be great, because God will magnify Him in the sight of kings; wherefore let all the kings adore Him and all nations serve Him. Let thy soul magnify the Lord, for “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High.”

He shall be great; and “He that is mighty shall do great things for thee, and Holy is his name.” What nameholier than “Son of the Most High”? This great Lord shall be magnified also by us little ones; for He became a Little One that He might make us great. “A Child is born to us, a Son is given to us.” “To us,” not to Himself; for He Who before all ages was much more nobly born of His Father needed not in time to be born of a Mother. Nor was He born and given to the angels. They Who possessed Him in His greatness did not require Him in His lowliness. To us, then, He is born, to us He is given, because by us He is so greatly needed. And since He is born of our race and given to us, let us accomplish that for which He was born and given. Let us make use of Our Own for our profit; let us work out our salvation by means of our Saviour. Behold, “a Child is set in the midst.” O Little One, desired by little ones! O true Child, but a guileless Child full of wisdom! Let us study to become as this Little One. Let us learn to be meek and humble of heart, lest the great God should without fruit have become Man and a Child; lest He should have died in vain and been crucified in vain. Let us learn His humility; let us imitate His meekness; let us embrace His love; let us share His sufferings; let us be washed in His blood; let us offer Him as a propitiation for our sins. To this end He was born and given to us. Let us offer Him to His Father, for the Father spared not His own Son, but delivered Him for us all; and the Son emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and delivered “His soul to death,” and was reputed with the wicked; He bore the sins of many, and prayed for the transgressors, that they might not perish. But they cannot perish for whom the Son prays, and for whom the Father delivers His own Son to procure them life. From both, therefore, equally may we hope for pardon, because in both are equal mercy and compassion, equal power, one will, one substance in Godhead, wherein with them the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY IV

THE ANNUNCIATION AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN’S CONSENT

WHO doubts that the praises we give to the Mother of God redound to the honour of the Son of God; and, in like manner, that in honouring the Son we are also honouring the Mother? For if, according to Solomon, “A wise son is the glory of the father,” how much more glorious is it to become the Mother of Wisdom Himself!

But how shall I dare to commend her whose praises are announced by Prophets, spoken by an angel, recorded by the Evangelist? I will not praise, because I do not dare; I will but repeat with all devotion what the Holy Spirit Himself has spoken by the Evangelist, for the words of the text are: “And the Lord will give him the throne of David his father.” These are the words of the angel to the Virgin declaring that her promised Son should possess the kingdom of David. We all know that our Lord Jesus sprang from the race of David; but how, I ask, did God give Him the throne of His father David, since He never reigned in Jerusalem? On the contrary, when the multitude desired it, He would not consent to be their King, and before Pilate He protested that His kingdom was not of this world. Besides, what great gain was it for Him Who sits upon the Cherubim, and Whom the Prophet saw “upon a throne high and elevated,” to be promised the throne of His father David? But we know that another Jerusalem is signified by the Jerualem that now is, one far nobler and richer than that in which David reigned. And I believe it to be here understood, because we often find in Scripture the figure put for that which is typified. Evidently God gave our Lord the throne of His father David when He “constituted Him King upon Sion, His holy mount.” And the Prophet seems to show more plainly of what kingdom he spoke when he said not in Sion, but upon Sion. David reigned in Sion. Upon Sion points out the kingdom of Him of Whom it is said to David, “Of the fruit of thy womb I will put to sit upon thy throne,” and of whom another Prophet speaks, “He shall sit upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom.” In each text we find upon. “The Lord God, therefore, will give him the throne of David his father”—not a typical but a true throne, not temporal but eternal, not earthly but celestial. And what has been said above shows that David so regarded it, for the throne in which he reigned as temporal sovereign bore the image of the eternal one.

“And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and his kingdom shall have no end.” Here also, if we understand the temporal house of Jacob, how can we say that Christ will reign eternally, since that house is not eternal? We have therefore yet to find the eternal house of Jacob in which He shall reign eternally, whose kingdom shall have no end. Question the Apostle, and he will point out to

you the difference between him who is a Jew inwardly and him who is only outwardly a Jew; between the circumcision of the spirit and the circumcision which is only of the flesh—that is, between the spiritual and the carnal Jew, the children of the faith of Abraham and the children according to the flesh. “For all are not Israelites that are of Israel. Neither are all they that are of the seed of Abraham, children.” In like manner we may look upon those alone who are found perfect in the faith of Jacob, or Israel, as constituting the spiritual and eternal house of Jacob in which the Lord Jesus shall reign eternally.

Who is there amongst us who, according to the interpretation of the name Jacob, makes Jesus Christ supplant the devil in his heart? Who is there that struggles with his vices and concupiscences that sin may not reign in his mortal body, but that in him Jesus may reign, now, indeed, by grace, afterwards eternally by glory? Blessed are they in whom Jesus shall reign eternally, for they also shall reign with Him, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Oh, how glorious is that kingdom in which Kings have assembled, and have agreed together to praise and glorify Him Who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords; in the glorious contemplation of Whom the just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father! Oh, may our Lord Jesus deign to be mindful of me, a sinner, when He cometh in His kingdom. In that day when He shall give up His kingdom into the hands of God and the Father, may He graciously visit me in His saving mercy, may He look on me in goodness as one of His elect, may He rejoice me with the joy of His chosen people, and be praised even by me with all His inheritance! Come, Lord Jesus, take away scandals from Thy kingdom, which is my soul, and reign therein, Thou Who alone hast the right. For avarice comes to claim a throne within me; haughtiness and self-assertion would rule over me; pride would be my king; luxury says, “I will reign”; ambition, detraction, envy, and anger struggle within me for the mastery. I resist as far as I am able; I struggle according as help is given me; I call on my Lord Jesus; for His sake I defend myself, since I acknowledge myself as wholly His possession. He is my God; Him alone I cling to, Him I proclaim my Lord; I have no other King than my Lord Jesus Christ. Come, then, O Lord, and disperse these enemies in Thy power, and Thou shalt reign in me, for Thou Thyself art my King and my God, Who givest salvation to Thy chosen ones.

“But Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man?” At first she kept a prudent silence, for she was in doubt what this salutation might be, and she preferred in humility to give no answer rather than risk speaking of what she did not understand. Now, however, she was

strengthened and prepared, for while the angel spoke externally God disposed her heart, for the Lord was present with her when the angel said, “The Lord is with thee.”

Thus animated to cast out fear by a spirit of faith, she said to the angel: “How shall this be done, for I know not man?” She doubts not the fact, but only inquires about the manner of its accomplishment. She says not “Will it be done?” but “How will this be done?” As if she would say: “Since my Lord knows, and my conscience bears me witness, that His handmaid has made a vow to know no man, by what law shall it please Him to work this wonder? If I must break my vow that I may bring forth such a Son, I rejoice on account of the Son, but I grieve because of my vow. Nevertheless, His will be done. If, however, as a Virgin I may bring forth this Son—and it is not impossible if He so will it—then I shall know that He hath had regard to the humility of His handmaid. How, then, shall this be done, for I know not man?”

“And the angel, answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.” It had been said before that she was full of grace; how is it now said: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee”? Could she be filled with grace and not possess the Holy Spirit, the giver of all grace? And if He is already in her, how is it promised that He shall come upon her in some new way? Was it not to explain this to us that the angel said not merely “in thee,” but also “upon thee”? For the Holy Spirit was in her before His coming by an abundant grace; now it is declared that He will come upon her by the fullness of the more abundant grace which He will pour out upon her.

But how will she be able to receive a fresh infusion of Divine grace when she is already full of grace? And if she can receive more, how are we to understand that she is already full of grace? Was it that hitherto grace had only filled her mind and soul, and that the new infusion of it was to penetrate her body, so that the plenitude of the Divinity which had hitherto dwelt in her spiritually—as He dwells in many of the saints—might begin to abide in her corporally as He has never dwelt in any other saint? Yes, this is what the angel reveals to us. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.”

“And therefore also the Holy One which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” That is to say, “Since it is not of man, but of the Holy Ghost, that you conceive, and since you conceive by the Power of the Most High, therefore what is born of thee is holy, and shall be called the Son of God.” In

like manner, “He Who was born of the Father before all ages will also be called your Son. What was born of the Father shall be thine; what shall be born of thee shall be His; yet there will not be two Sons, but one Son,” and “therefore the Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

“And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age.” Why was it necessary to make known this event to the Blessed Virgin? Had she been doubtful or incredulous of the angel’s words? Far from it. We read that the hesitation of Zachary was punished by this same angel, but we do not read that Mary received the least blame; on the contrary, we know that her faith was praised by Elizabeth: “Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.” Her cousin’s happiness was announced to Mary that, miracle being added to miracle, joy might be heaped upon joy. For it was needful that no ordinary prevenient joy and burning love should take possession of her who, with the joy of the Holy Ghost, was soon to conceive the Son of the Father’s love. A most glad and most generous heart was alone capable of containing so exuberant an influx of sweetness and delight.

Again, the announcement may have been made to Mary, in order that she might be cognizant, not only of the Saviour’s coming, but also of His precursors, and that, by preserving a faithful remembrance of the order and circumstances of the events, she might later be better able to unfold the truth of the Gospel to those who were to write and preach it. This was the rightful office of her who from the first had been fully instructed by Heaven in all its secret mysteries. Or we may believe that Mary was told of Elizabeth’s happiness to give her, the younger of the two, the opportunity of tendering her loving service to her cousin, and that the little unborn Prophet might offer to his younger Lord the first-fruits of his ministry, while the joy and devotion of both infants being excited by the meeting and mutual joy of the mothers, wonder might be added to wonder, miracle to miracle.

Lest, however, it should be supposed that the accomplishment of these magnificent promises was brought about by the angel who declares them, he adds: “For no word shall be impossible to God.” As if he would say: “In all that I faithfully promise I rest not on my own power, but on the power of Him Who sent me, for no word shall be impossible with Him.” How could any word be impossible to Him Who made all things by the Word? And this is striking—that the angel expressly says no word shall be impossible, not no act. He says word because, as men can easily speak what they wish, even though they cannot

afterwards carry it into effect, with the same or, rather, with incomparably greater facility can God accomplish in act what they are able to express in words; therefore with good reason “no word is impossible with God.” For instance, the Prophets by God’s power could foresee and predict that a virgin and a barren woman would have sons; but God alone, Who enabled the Prophets to foresee these events, could by His own power fulfil what He had promised. Because, too, He is Infinite Power and Infinite Wisdom, “no word shall be impossible with” Him.

You have heard, O Virgin, the announcement of the great mystery; the means designed for its fulfilment have been unfolded to you, each wondrous, each replete with joy. “Rejoice, O daughter of Sion, and exult exceedingly, O virgin daughter of Jerusalem.” And because to you has been given joy and gladness, allow us to hear from your lips the answer and the good tidings which we desire, that the bones that have been humbled may rejoice. You have heard the fact, and have believed; believe also in the means which have been explained to you. You have heard that you are to conceive and bring forth a Son, and that it will not be through the power of man, but by the virtue of the Holy Ghost.

The angel awaits your reply, for it is time that he should return to God, Who sent him. We, too, are waiting, O Lady, for a word of mercy—we, who are groaning under the sentence of condemnation. See, the price of our salvation is offered to you; if you consent, we shall at once be delivered. By the Eternal Word of God we were all created, and behold we die. By your short answer we shall be refreshed and recalled to life. Adam, with all his race—Adam, a weeping exile from Paradise, implores it of you. Abraham entreats you, David beseeches you. This is the object of the burning desires of the holy fathers, of your fathers, who are still dwelling in the region of the shades of death. Behold the entire human race prostrate at your feet in expectation.

And rightly, for on your word depend the consolation of the wretched, the redemption of the captive, the freedom of the condemned, the salvation of your entire race, of all the children of Adam. Hasten, then, O Lady, to give your answer; hasten to speak the word so longed for by all on earth, in limbo, and in heaven. Yea, the King and Lord of all things, Who has greatly desired your beauty, desires as eagerly your word of consent, by which He has purposed to save the world. He whom you have pleased by your silence will now be more gratified by your reply.

Hark! He calls to you from heaven: “O most beautiful among women, give me to hear your voice.” If you let Him hear your voice, He will enable you to see

our salvation. And is not this what you have sought for, what you have prayed for night and day with sighs and tears? Why, then, delay? Are you the happy one to whom it has been promised, or "look we for another"? Yes, you indeed are that most fortunate one. You are the promised virgin, the expected virgin, the much-longed-for virgin, through whom your holy father Jacob, when about to die, rested his hope of eternal life, saying: "I will look for thy salvation, O Lord."

You, O Mary, are that virgin in whom and by whom God Himself, our King before all ages, determined to operate our salvation in the midst of the earth. Why do you humbly expect from another what is offered to you, and will soon be manifested through yourself if you will but yield your consent and speak the word? Answer, then, quickly to the angel—yes, through the angel give your consent to your God. Answer the word, receive the Word. Utter yours, conceive the Divine. Speak the word that is transitory, and embrace the Word that is everlasting.

Why do you delay? Why are you fearful? Believe—confess—receive. Let humility put on courage, and timidity confidence. It is certainly by no means fitting that virginal simplicity should forget prudence. Yet in this one case only the prudent virgin need not fear presumption, because, though modesty shone forth in her silence, it is now more necessary that her devotion and obedience should be revealed by her speech.

Open, O Blessed Virgin, your heart to faith, your lips to compliance, your bosom to your Creator. Behold, the desired of all nations stands at the gate and knocks. Oh, suppose He were to pass by while you delay! How would you begin again with sorrow to seek Him whom your soul loveth! Arise—run—open! Arise by faith, run by devotion, open by acceptance. Mary speaks. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done unto me according to thy word."

Humility is ever the close companion of Divine grace, for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." She answers humbly, therefore, that the throne of grace may be prepared. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." She is the chosen Mother of God, and she calls herself His handmaid. Truly, it is no small sign of humility to preserve even the remembrance of the virtue in presence of so great glory. It is no great perfection to be humble when we are despised; but it is a great and rare virtue to preserve humility in the midst of honours. If, deceived by my apparent virtue, the Church has raised me, an insignificant man, to some small dignity, God permitting it, either because of my own sins, or those of my subjects, do I not immediately, forgetting my past deficiencies, imagine myself

to be that which men, who see not the heart, have reputed me to be? I hearken to fame, and attend not to conscience. I forget that honour is rendered to virtue, and take the virtue for granted because of the honour, and so esteem myself the more holy when I find myself in an exalted position. Let us listen to the words of her who, though chosen to be the Mother of God, yet laid not aside her humility. "Behold," she says, "the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done unto me according to thy word."

Fiat mihi (Be it done to me). Fiat is a mark of desire, not of doubt. In saying, "Be it done unto me according to thy word," she expresses the disposition of one who longs to see the effect, not of one who doubts its possibility. Fiat may also be understood as a word of petition, for no one prays unless he believes, and hopes to obtain. God wishes to be asked for what He has promised, and perhaps promises many things which He had predetermined to bestow, in order that the promise may arouse our devotion, and that what He intends to give gratis we may merit by devout prayer. Thus, our gracious God, Who desires the salvation of all, as it were, extorts meritorious works from us, and while He strengthens our will by His grace, He wishes that what He gives freely we shall labour to obtain.

This the prudent Virgin understood when to the prevenient grace of a gratuitous promise she joined the merit of her own prayer, saying: "Be it done unto me according to thy word."

Be it done unto me concerning the Divine Word according to Thy word. May the Word which was in the beginning with God be made flesh of my flesh according to Thy word. May He, I entreat, be made to me, not a spoken word, to pass unheeded, but a word conceived—that is, clothed in flesh—which may remain. May He be to me not only audible to my ears, but visible to my eyes, felt by my hands, borne in my arms. Let Him be to me not a mute and written word traced with dumb signs on lifeless parchments, but an Incarnate, living Word vividly impressed in human form in my chaste womb by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Be it done unto me as it has never hitherto been done to mortal, and never shall be done to any after my time. "God diversely and in many ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets"—to some in the hearing of the ears, while to others the word of the Lord was made known in signs and figures. Now in this solemn hour I pray that in my own being it may be done unto me according to Thy word.

Be it done unto me—not preached to me in the feeble strains of human

eloquence, not shown forth to me in the figures of earthly rhetoric, not painted in the poetic dreams of a fervid imagination, but breathed upon me in silence, in person Incarnate, in a human form veritably reposing within me. In His own nature the Word needed not change, was incapable of change. Yet now graciously in me “may it be done according to thy word.” Be it done universally for all mankind, but most especially for me—” Be it done unto me according to thy word.”

III

ON THE VIGIL OF OUR LORD'S NATIVITY

I

ON THE JOY HIS BIRTH SHOULD INSPIRE

"The voice of gladness hath resounded in our land, the voice of exultation and salvation in the tents of sinners. A good word has been heard, a consoling word, a speech full of joyfulness, a rumour worthy of all acceptance. Sing praise, O ye mountains, and all ye trees of the woods. Clap your hands before the face of the Lord, because He cometh. Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth! Be amazed, and let every creature give praise; but thou beyond others, O man I"

JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.

What heart so stony as not to be softened at these words? What soul is not melted at this voice of her Beloved? What announcement could be sweeter? what intelligence more enrapturing? Was its like ever heard before? or when did the world ever receive such tidings?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.

O short word, telling of the Eternal Word abbreviated for us! O word full of heavenly delights! The heart is oppressed by its mellifluous sweetness, and longs to pour forth its redundant riches, but words refuse their service. So overpowering is the music of this short speech that it loses melody if one iota is changed.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.

O Nativity of spotless sanctity! O birth honourable for the world, birth pleasing and welcome to men, because of the magnificence of the benefit it bestows; birth incomprehensible to the angels, by reason of the depth and sacredness of the mystery! In all its circumstances it is wonderful because of its singular excellence and novelty. Its precedent has not been known, nor has its like ever followed. O birth alone without sorrow, alone without shame, free from corruption, not unlocking, but consecrating the temple of the Virgin's womb! O

Nativity above nature, yet for the sake of nature! Surpassing it by the excellence of the miracle, repairing it by the virtue of the mystery! Who shall declare this generation? The angel announces it. Almighty Power overshadows it. The Spirit of the Most High comes upon it. The Virgin believes. By faith she conceives. The Virgin brings forth. The Virgin remains a virgin. Who is not filled with astonishment? The Son of the Most High is born. The Son, begotten of God before all ages, is Incarnate! The Word is become an Infant! Who can sufficiently admire?

And it is not a needless Nativity, a superfluous condescension of Infinite Majesty.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.

Awake, you who lie in the dust—awake and give praise. Behold, the Lord cometh with salvation. He comes with salvation, He comes with unction, He comes with glory. Jesus cannot come without salvation, Christ cannot come without unction, nor the Son of God without glory. For He Himself is salvation, He is unction, He is glory, as it is written, “A wise son is the glory of his father.”

Happy the soul who has tasted this fruit of salvation, and is drawn to “run in the odour of his ointments,” that she may “see his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.” Take courage, you who were lost: Jesus comes to seek and save that which was lost. Ye sick, return to health: Christ comes to heal the contrite of heart with the unction of His mercy. Rejoice, all you who desire great things: the Son of God comes down to you that He may make you the co-heirs of His kingdom. I beseech you, then, O Lord, heal me, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; glorify me, and I shall be glorious. Then indeed shall my soul bless the Lord, and all that is within me praise His Holy Name, when He shall have been merciful to my iniquities, have healed my infirmities, and have filled my desire with good things.

On account of these three precious gifts of salvation, unction, and glory, it is consoling to hear that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born. For why is He called Jesus, but because He shall save His people from their sins? Why has He willed to be named Christ, but because He will soften the yoke of His law by the unction of His grace? Why was the Son of God made man, but to make men the sons of God? Who shall resist His will? If Jesus justifies, who can condemn? If Christ heals, who can wound? If the Son of God exalts, who shall cast us down?

Since Jesus is born, let everyone rejoice whom the consciousness of sin has condemned as deserving of eternal punishment. For the compassion of Jesus exceeds all crimes, however great their number and enormity. Since Christ is

born, let him rejoice who wages war with the vices inherent in our nature. No disorder of the soul, how inveterate soever, can withstand the unction which Christ brings. Since the Son of God is born, let him rejoice who desires great things, for a great rewarder comes. “This is the heir”; let us receive Him devoutly, “and the inheritance shall be ours.” For He Who has given us His own Son, how has He not with Him given us all things? Let no one disbelieve, let no one doubt; we have a most trustworthy testimony. “The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.”

The only-begotten Son of God desired to have brethren, that He might be the first among many brethren. Even human frailty has no cause to hesitate. He has become the brother of men; He has become the Son of man; He has become man. “Et Homo factus est.” And, if man thinks this incredible, sense enforces belief.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.

Behold what condescension! It is not in the royal city of Jerusalem, but in Bethlehem, which is the least of the thousands of Juda. O Bethlehem! O little Bethlehem! once little, now magnified by the Lord! He has magnified thee Who, though great, became little in thee.

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, and make holiday in thy streets with songs of Alleluia! What city on hearing of thy good fortune will not envy thee that most precious stable and the glory of its manger? In all the wide world thy name is now celebrated, and all generations call thee blessed. Everywhere glorious things are said of thee, O little city of God. Everywhere is sung, “A man is born in her, and the Most High himself hath founded her.” Everywhere it is proclaimed, everywhere it is made known that

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.

Nor is it idly added “of Juda.” This word reminds us of God’s promise to our fathers. “The sceptre shall not be taken from Juda, nor the leader from his thigh, until he come who is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations.” “For salvation is of the Jews;” “salvation to the ends of the earth.” To Juda Jacob says: “Thee shall thy brethren praise: thy hands shall be on the necks of thy enemies.” All these words we see fulfilled in Christ, Who, ascending on high, led captivity captive, yet derived no earthly advantage therefrom, but rather gave gifts to men. These and similar prophecies are recalled to the mind by the words “Bethlehem of Juda.”

And we have no need to inquire whether anything good can come from Bethlehem; it is sufficient for us to know that our Lord willed to be born there.

For doubtless there were in the world noble palaces which He might have judged worthy of His choice—palaces where the King of Glory might have been received more honourably; but it was not to purchase them that He came from His royal throne. In his left hand were riches and glory; in His right hand length of days. There was an endless supply of these treasures in heaven, but poverty could not be found there. Earth abounded and superabounded in this kind of merchandise, and men knew not its value. The Son of God was desirous of it. He came down from heaven to make it His own, and so render it precious to us by His choice. Adorn thy bridal-chamber, O Sion, O devout soul, but with humility, but with poverty. These are the swathing-bands that please our Infant Jesus; these are the rich robes in which Mary tells us He loves to be clothed. Sacrifice to thy God the abominations of the Egyptians.

Remember, too, that it is in Bethlehem of Juda that Jesus is born; and be very careful lest you fail to be found there, lest He fail to be received by you. Bethlehem is the house of bread; Juda signifies confession or praise. If, then, you replenish your soul with the food of the Divine Word, the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and devoutly receive the Bread which came down from heaven, and which giveth life to the world; if the vessel of your body is made strong and able to hold the new wine by being refreshed and strengthened with His new and glorified flesh; if, moreover, you live by faith, and have no need to weep because you have forgotten to eat your bread, then, indeed, you are become a Bethlehem fitted to receive our Lord.

But see that praise be not wanting. Put on praise and beauty; these are the garments Christ approves of in those who serve Him. The Apostle commends them to you in a few words: “In the heart we believe unto justice; by the mouth is made confession unto salvation.” Let, then, justice be in the heart, the justice which is of faith. This alone has glory before God. Let confession also be in the mouth unto salvation, and you are sure to receive Him Who was born in Bethlehem of Juda, Jesus Christ the Son of God.

II

ON THE MIRACULOUS NATURE OF THE NATIVITY

THE custom of our Order does not demand a sermon to-day; but as to-morrow we shall be engaged longer than usual in the celebration of the Masses, and the short remaining time will not allow of a long sermon, I thought it would not be out of place to prepare your hearts to-day for so great a festival. It is the more

permissible as the mystery of this day is so profound and so incomprehensible. It is a fountain of life whose waters can never be exhausted—waters that flow the more plentifully the more freely they are drawn. I know, too, how great are your sufferings and tribulations for Christ's sake, and glad should I be that your comfort might also abound through Him. Worldly consolation is what I am neither willing nor permitted to offer. Such a consolation is both useless and valueless—yea, it is a thing to be dreaded, for it is a true hindrance to the consolation which is from heaven. For this reason He Who is the delight and glory of the angels is become the salvation and the consolation of all who suffer. He Who is glorious and transcendent in His own city, and beatifies its citizens by His presence, became little and humble, when in exile, that He might rejoice the exiles. He Who in the highest heavens is the glory of the Father became, as a Child on earth, "peace to men of good will."

A Little One is given to little ones, that the Great One may be given to the great, and that those whom the Little One justifies, the Great and Mighty One may afterwards magnify and render glorious. Hence, without doubt, St. Paul, the vessel of election, pours out to us the treasures which he had received from the fullness of this Child. For Christ, though a Child, is full of grace and truth. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally." Hence, I repeat, St. Paul utters that good word which you have heard so often during these past days: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, Rejoice." Of the showing forth of the mystery, he says "Rejoice"; of the promise of it he adds: "Again I say, Rejoice." For both the mystery and its promise are causes of great joy. Rejoice that you have received the gifts of the left hand; rejoice in the expectation of the rewards of the right. "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me." For the left hand raises, the right receives. The left hand heals and justifies; the right embraces and blesses. In the left hand are contained His merits, in the right His rewards. In the right are delights, in the left are remedies.

But see how gentle the Physician is! behold how wise! Consider diligently the novelty of these remedies that He brings. See how they are not merely precious, but beautiful as well. They are fruits beneficial for our healing, and at the same time they are charming to the spiritual eye, sweet to the spiritual taste.

Notice, I beg of you, that His first remedy is in His left hand; this is His conception without human co-operation. How new, how wonderful, how attractive is this gift! For what is fairer than the chaste generation; what more glorious than a holy and pure conception in which there is no shame, no stain, no corruption?

“Behold,” He says, “I make all things new.” Who is it that so speaks? It is no other than the Lamb Who sitteth upon the throne—the Lamb all sweetness, the Lamb all happiness, the Lamb all unction; for His name is Christ. O miraculous novelty! The curse of Eve is reversed in our Virgin, for she brought forth her Son without pain or sorrow. The curse has been changed into a blessing, as the Angel Gabriel foretold: “Blessed art thou amongst women.” O only blessed one amongst women! Blest, not cursed! Alone free from the universal malediction! And no wonder that Jesus gave no sorrow to His Mother, since He Himself bore all the sorrows of the world, as Isaias says: “Truly he hath carried our sorrows.”

There are two things from which our weak human nature shrinks—pain and shame. Christ came to take both from us, and this He did by accepting both in His own person—when, for instance, not to mention other occasions, He was condemned to death, and to a most shameful death, by wicked men. And, to give us fullest confidence of this deliverance, He first freed His Mother from both. This is an unheard-of wonder, yet we see here still greater miracles and still fuller glory. The Mother loses not her virginity, the Son is without stain of sin. The curse of Eve falls not on the Mother, nor is the Son subject to the universal calamity of which the Prophet speaks: “No one is clean, not even the babe whose life upon earth is but one day.” Behold here an Infant without stain! Behold the Lamb without spot, the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of the world! Who could better take them away than He Who knew no sin? He, indeed, can cleanse me, who has never Himself been defiled. His touch can remove the clay from my eyes, for His hand is free from the lightest dust. He can take the mote from out my eye Who has no beam in His own; or, rather, He Who has no smallest grain of dust in His own eye can take the beam from mine.

We have now certainly seen the riches of salvation and of life. We have seen His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father. What Father? “And he shall be called the Son of the Most High.” “That which shall be born of thee shall be holy, and shall be called the Son of God.”

Oh, truly the Holy One! Here miracles increase in number, riches are multiplied, a treasure is opened out. Our treasure was hidden. The incorruption of the Mother was hidden in the legal purification, and the innocence of the Child in the customary circumcision. Hide, O Mary, hide the brightness of the new Sun; place Him in the manger, wrap your Infant in swaddling-clothes, for His swathing-bands are our riches. The rags of our Saviour are more precious than purple, and His poor manger is more glorious than the gilded thrones of kings. The poverty of Christ is greater riches than all this world’s wealth, for

what is richer or more precious than the humility by which heaven is bought and Divine grace is obtained? “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” And St. James says: “God resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble.”

We see humility commended in our Lord’s Nativity, for in it “he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and in habit was found as man.” If you desire to find yet greater riches, yet higher glory, behold His charity in His passion; for “greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friends.” These riches of salvation are the precious blood in which we were redeemed. This glory is the cross of our Lord, so that with the Apostle we exclaim, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ”; and elsewhere: “I have not judged myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified.” This is the “left hand,” Jesus Christ and Him crucified; the “right hand” is Jesus Christ and Him glorified. Show us, O Lord, Thy right hand, and it is sufficient for us, for “at thy right hand are delights even to the end.” “Glory and wealth shall be in the house of him that feareth the Lord.”

What, then, shall be found in Thy house? Oh, it will be thanksgiving and the voice of praise. “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever.” “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.” They are light inaccessible, peace which surpasseth all understanding, a stream of delights ceaselessly flowing. Eye hath not seen light inaccessible, ear hath not heard what is peace incomprehensible. “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace.” But though their sound “hath gone forth into all the earth,” it hath surpassed all their understanding to comprehend how deep is this peace; they could not, therefore, transmit it to other ears. “Ear hath not heard it.” St. Paul himself says: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.” But faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God—yes, faith, not vision; the promise of peace, not its manifestation. It is true even now there is peace upon earth to men of good-will. But what is this peace compared to that plenitude and abundance of peace to be enjoyed in God’s house? Whence our Lord says, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you.” My peace—that is, the peace which surpasseth all understanding, and is peace upon peace. You are not able to receive it yet, therefore I promise you the country of peace, and “leave” you in the meantime the way of peace.

“Neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared

for them that love him." Why cannot the thought of the good things God has prepared for us enter into our hearts? Is it that pride lifts up the heart and grace cannot flow in? It would seem so, for every proud spirit, like Satan, exalts itself above God. God wishes His will to be done; the proud man prefers to do his own. What folly! God desires His will to be carried out only in those things which reason approves; the proud man will have his will accomplished without reason, and even contrary to reason. This is a height to which the streams of grace cannot rise. "Unless you be converted, and become as this little child," says our Lord, "you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." He is Himself the little and humble Child whom He sets for our Model. He is the Fountain of life, in whom dwelleth and from whom floweth the fullness of all grace. Prepare, then, the way for the waters of grace. Cast down the heights of earthly and proud thoughts. Be conformed to the Son of man, not to the first and fallen man, for the streams of grace cannot "enter into" the heart of the proud and carnal—that is, of the earthly-minded man. Cleanse your "eye," that you may be capable of beholding the most pure light of faith. Incline your "ear" to the call of obedience, that you may one day attain to perpetual rest and peace upon peace. That future life is called "light" because of its serenity, peace because of its tranquillity, a fountain because of its abundance and its eternity.

We may attribute the "fountain "to the Father, of Whom the Son is born, and from Whom the Holy Ghost proceeds; "light" to the Son, Who is the brightness of eternal life, and the true light enlightening every man who cometh into this world; "peace," to the Holy Ghost, Who rests upon the humble and peaceable. I do not mean to say that these names are proper to any of the three Divine Persons, for the Father is Light, since the Son is Light of Light; and the Son is Peace, as the Apostle says, "he is our peace who hath made both one"; and the Holy Ghost is the "Fountain of Water springing up into life everlasting."

But when shall we attain to these wonderful truths? When, O Lord, wilt Thou fill us with joy by the sight of Thy countenance? We rejoice in Thee that Thou, the Orient from on high, hast visited us. We rejoice, too, "in the blessed hope" of Thy second coming.

But when shall come that fullness of joy not in the memory of past blessings, but in actual possession of the eternal—joy, not in the expectation of good things, but in their present manifestation? "Behold," He says, "I am with you all days, even to the end of the world." "The Lord is nigh, be nothing solicitous." He is at hand, and will soon appear. Faint not; be not weary. "Seek him while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." He is near to them who are of a

contrite heart; He is near to those who wait for Him, who expect Him in truth.

Would you likewise know how near He is? Listen to the song of the Spouse to her Divine Bridegroom: “Behold, he standeth behind our wall.” This wall is our mortal body, which hinders our seeing Him Who is so near, and it is the reason why St. Paul himself desires “to be dissolved and to be with Christ”; and, crying out yet more piteously, he says: “Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?” The Prophet also speaks in the Psalm: “Lead my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.”

III

ON THE DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED IN THOSE WHO CELEBRATE THE FEAST

“We have heard a rumour from the Lord, and he hath sent an ambassador to the nations.”

WE have heard a rumour full of grace, worthy of all acceptance. “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.” My soul is melted at this word, and my spirit burns within me through eager desire to proclaim it to you. Jesus is, interpreted, Saviour. What so necessary to the lost? What so desirable to the wretched? What so welcome to the hopeless? Without this gracious promise, whence should we have obtained redemption? Unless some new and unexpected help had arisen for us, how could we have had the faintest hope of salvation, subject as we were and are to a law of sin, living in a body of death, surrounded by the wickedness of this present life, which is only a place of affliction? Perhaps you will tell me that you do desire salvation, you do desire a cure, but that, knowing your own weakness, you shrink from the sharpness of the remedy. Fear not. Christ is all sweetness and gentleness. He is full of mercy, for He is “anointed with the oil of gladness beyond his fellows”—that is, beyond those who enjoy at least a share of that unction, though they do not receive it in its plenitude.

When, however, you hear that Jesus is sweet and gentle, do not suppose Him a weak and inefficient Saviour, for He is the “Son of God.” Such as the Father is, such is the Son. He has the power to do whatever He wills. Had your Saviour been an angel, or an archangel, or anyone from the higher orders of blessed spirits, you would have had no cause for discontent. Since, however, He is one Who has inherited a much more excellent name than they—Jesus Christ, the Son of God—He ought to be received with all devotion.

And notice that Gabriel commended these His titles clearly when he

announced “a great joy” to the shepherds, for he said: “This day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord.” Let us, then, exult and repeatedly rejoice in this birth, because it so convincingly persuades us of the usefulness of salvation, of the sweetness of the anointing, and of the majesty of the Son of God that nothing is wanted to its glory.

Let us rejoice as we ponder upon this sweet message. Let us repeat to one another this delightful speech: “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.” Let no one be so indevout, so ungrateful, so irreligious, as to say: This is nothing new; it was heard long ago; Christ was born long ago. I answer: Yes, long ago and before long ago. No one will be surprised at my words if he remembers that expression of the Prophet, In æternum et ultra, “for ever and ever,” or, “for ever and beyond it.” Christ, then, is born not only before our times, but before all time. That Nativity made “darkness its hiding-place,” or, more truly, “it abides in light inaccessible”; it hides in the bosom of the Father as in the “thick and shady mountain.” Therefore, that this mysterious Nativity might to some extent be made known, Jesus Christ was born in time, born of flesh, born in flesh, “the Word was made flesh.”

What wonder, then, if to-day the Church says, “Christ, the Son of God, is born,” when so long before it had been said of Him, “A Child is born to us”! This word began to be heard in the ancient days, and none of the saints of the old law ever grew weary of its repetition. So that we may say, “Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever.”

God revealed this His secret counsel to the man “according to his own heart”—the man to whom “he swore truth, and he will not make it void: Of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon thy throne.” For this reason it is that He is born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the city of David—that is, for the sake of God’s truth and to confirm the promises made to the Fathers. This birth was “at sundry times and in divers manners spoken of in times past to the fathers by the prophets.”

Hearing of this birth of our Saviour, is there one amongst us who does not say in his heart, “It is good for me to adhere to my God,” or those other words of the same Prophet, “Shall not my soul be subject to God?” In this day’s most joyful announcement it is not said “has been born,” but “is born”; it is not treated as a past event, but as one actually taking place. “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born in Bethlehem of Juda.” For, as He continues still to be in a manner immolated daily whilst we announce His death, so He seems to be born again while we devoutly commemorate His Nativity.

To-morrow, therefore, we shall see the majesty of God, but with us, amongst

us, not in Himself. We shall see Majesty in humility, Power in weakness, the God-man. For He is Emmanuel—"God with us"—and "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." Finally, from that time and ever since "we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father"—a glory, therefore, "full of grace and truth."

He is born, then—but where? In Bethlehem of Juda. It would ill become us to leave Bethlehem unnoticed. "Let us go over to Bethlehem," say the shepherds. They do not say, "Let us pass by Bethlehem." What though it be a little town? What if it does seem to be the least in Judea? Is not such a town becoming for Him Who, "being rich, became poor for our sake," and Who, though He was the "Lord great and exceedingly to be praised," was born for us a Little One, and said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"? Therefore He chose a stable and a manger—yea, a despicable hut, a shed fit only for beasts, that we may know that He it is "Who raiseth up the poor one from the dunghill," and "saveth men and beasts"—He Who said, "Unless, you be converted and become as this little child, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Would that we also might be found to be a Bethlehem of Juda, so that in us also He might deign to be born, and that we might deserve to hear: "To you who fear my name the sun of justice shall arise." Perhaps this refers to what we said above, that we are to see Majesty amongst us, and that there is need of sanctification and preparation, for, according to the Psalmist, "Judea is become his sanctification"—that is, we are all cleansed and sanctified by confession. Bethlehem—as "House of bread"—seems to relate still more to the preparation for the feast. For how could he be ready to receive so great a guest who said, "In my house there is no bread"? The man in the Gospel was likewise unprepared when he was obliged to rouse his friend in the middle of the night, and say: "My friend has come to me on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him."

The Prophet tells us that the just man's heart "is ready to hope in the Lord," and that "it is strengthened, and shall not be moved." The heart, then, that is not strengthened is not ready. But we know from the same Prophet that "bread strengthens the heart of man." He, therefore, who forgot to eat his bread had not his heart ready, but had left it dry and lifeless. The just man, on the contrary, keeps his heart ready and unmoved, prepared to keep the Commandments of God. Like the Apostle, he forgets the things which are behind, and stretches forth himself to those that are before. Thus you see there are some things which we must fly from, and about which a certain forgetfulness is desirable. There are

others which should never be lost sight of. It is said of one man that he was unmindful of the Lord his Creator, of another that he kept Him ever before his eyes, having forgotten his people and his father's house. This last forgot the things that are seen and are upon the earth; the other those that are not seen and are heavenly. The good Christian forgets the things that are his own to remember those of Jesus Christ. Such a one is ready to see the majesty of God within him, while the negligent and forgetful Christian is very unprepared. He is not the house of bread in which our Saviour dwells. He is not the Manasses to whom Christ, Who rules Israel, appears, and Who as God "sits upon the cherubim," and to Whom the Psalmist exclaims, "Shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses."

I think that these three men represent all that are saved, and to whom another Prophet alludes as Noe, Daniel, and Job; and that they also prefigure the three shepherds, to whom the angel announced "a great joy" at the birth of the "angel of the great council." Perhaps they represent also the three Magi. In this sense, it may not seem unfitting to attribute to Ephraim, which name means "Fruitfulness," the offering of theincense, since to offer worthy incense in the odour of sweetness is the office of those whom God has appointed to go and bring forth fruit—that is, the prelates of the Church. And, as Benjamin means "Son of the right hand," he must give the gold—that is, the substance of this world—in order that the faithful people may be placed on the right hand at the Last Day, and deserve to hear from the Judge, "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat," and the rest. As for Manasses, if he would be one of whom "the Lord appears," let him offer the myirh of mortification, and this, I think, is especially required in our sacred profession of the religious life.

We have digressed. Let us now return "to Bethlehem, and see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us." It is the house of bread, and we have already said that "it is good for us to be there." For where the word of God is there will be no lack of the bread which strengthens the heart, as the Prophet says, "Strengthen thou me in thy words." We also read, "Man liveth by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God"; then he liveth in Christ, and Christ liveth in him. In his heart Christ is born, to him Christ appears—Christ, Who loves not the faltering, wavering heart, but the strong and steadfast heart. One who murmurs, who hesitates, who wavers in his purpose, who thinks of returning to what he has left, of relinquishing his vow, of changing his state of life, is no Bethlehem, no house of bread. Christ is not born in such a heart as this, where the fortitude of faith and the bread of life are wanting, for the

Scripture says, “The just man liveth by faith,” and Christ, the true life of the soul, dwells in our heart by faith. Besides, how could Christ be born in that heart, how could such a one attain salvation, when the sentence is so utterly true that “he only that perseveres to the end shall be saved”? How could the proud and vacillating heart belong to a follower of the Son of God whose spirit rests only “on him that is poor, and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at his words”? For there can be no connection between eternity and such fickleness, between him who is and him who never remaineth in the same state.

But if we are strong, if we are constant in faith, if we are ready to receive our Lord, if we abound in bread, we owe it entirely to His bounty to whom we say daily, “Give us this day our daily bread,” though we have need also to add, “forgive us our trespasses,” for “if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” He is Truth itself Who is born not merely in Bethlehem, but in Bethlehem of Juda, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Let us, then, come in before His presence with praise, that we may be found both sanctified and prepared, and so may deserve to see Christ born in ourselves, His Bethlehem of Juda.

IV

ON OUR LORD’S NATIVITY

I

THE FOUNTAINS OF THE SAVIOUR

THE solemnity of our Lord’s Nativity is indeed a great and glorious day, but a short one, and a short day calls for a short sermon.

No wonder if we make a short speech, since God the Father has made an abbreviated Word—Verbum abbreviatum. Would you know how long and how short is the Word He has made? This Word says, “I fill heaven and earth,” yet, now that “the Word is made flesh,” He is placed in a narrow manger. The Psalmist exclaimed, “From eternity and to eternity thou art God,” yet, behold! He is a Child of a day. And why this? What necessity was there that the Lord of Majesty should so annihilate Himself, should thus humble Himself, thus abbreviate Himself, except to show that we should do in like manner? He now proclaims by example what He will one day preach in words—“Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart”—and He does so that the Evangelist might be proved truthful when he said of this Word, “Jesus began to do and to teach.”

I therefore earnestly beseech you not to allow so precious an example to be set before you in vain. Conform yourselves to it, and be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind. Aim at humility; it is the foundation and the guardian of all virtues. Follow after it, for it alone can save your souls. What is more deplorable, what more hateful, what more grievously punishable than that, after seeing the God of heaven become a Little One, man should any longer endeavour to glorify himself upon earth? It is an intolerable insolence that when Majesty has annihilated itself, a worm of earth should inflate and puff itself up. It was to make reparation for this pride that He Who, in the form of God, was equal to the Father, “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.” He emptied Himself—yes, of His majesty and His power, not of His mercy and His goodness, for the Apostle tells us “the goodness and kindness of our Saviour hath appeared.” His

power had appeared in the creation of the world, His wisdom has ever been manifested in its government, but now in His humanity His goodness and mercy are more specially made known. He had shown His power to the Jews in signs and prodigies; therefore you will often find in the writings of the Old Law such expressions as “I am the Lord,” “I am God.” To the ancient philosophers, abounding in their own sense, he likewise made His majesty known, according to those words of the Apostle, “That which is known of God is manifest in them, for God hath manifested it to them.” The Jews were subdued by this same power; the philosophers, searchers into majesty, were overwhelmed by His glory. Power exacts subjection, majesty inspires awe, but neither oblige to imitation. Let thy goodness, O Lord, now appear, that man, who is created in Thy likeness, may be conformed to it; for power, majesty, and wisdom are not what we can imitate, or what it is expedient that we should copy. In the case of the angels Thy mercy was withheld from a portion only of them; afterwards the whole human race was overwhelmed by Thy judgment.

Let mercy extend her dominion, let her reach from end to end mightily, and dispose all things sweetly. In the past, O Lord, Thou didst limit Thy mercy by judgment; come, we beseech Thee, now, flowing with compassion and overflowing with charity. What dost thou fear, O man? Why dost thou tremble before the face of the Lord “because He cometh”? It is not to judge the earth that He comes, but to save it. Fly not, O man, fear not; Jesus comes not in anger, He comes not to punish: He comes to seek thy salvation. And lest thou shouldst say even now, “I heard thy voice, and I hid myself,” behold, He comes as an Infant, and without speech, for the voice of the wailing infant arouses compassion, not terror. If He is terrible to any, yet not to thee. He is become a Little One, His Virgin Mother swathes His tender limbs with bands, and dost thou still tremble with fear? By this weakness thou mayest know that He comes not to destroy, but to save; not to bind, but to unbind. If He shall take up the sword, it will be against thine enemies, and, as the Power and the Wisdom of God, He will trample on the necks of the proud and the mighty.

We have two enemies, sin and death—that is, the death of the soul and the death of the body. Jesus comes to conquer both, and to save us from both. Already He has vanquished sin in His own person by assuming a human nature free from the corruption of sin. For great violence was offered to sin, and it knew itself to be indeed subdued, when that nature which it gloried to have wholly infected and possessed was found in Christ perfectly free from its dominion. Henceforth Christ will pursue our enemies, and will seize them, and will not

desist until they are overcome in us. His whole mortal life was a war against sin. He fought against it by word and example. But it was in His passion that He came upon the strong man armed, and bound him, and bore away his spoils.

Jesus Christ also conquers our second enemy, death. He overcomes it first in Himself, when He rises from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep, and the first-born from the dead. Afterwards He will, in like manner, vanquish death in all of us when He shall raise our mortal bodies from the dust, and destroy this our last enemy. Thus, when He rose from the dead, Jesus was clothed in beauty, not wrapped in swaddling-clothes as at His birth. He that previously overflowed with mercy, "judging no man," girded Himself in His resurrection with the girdle of justice, and in so doing seemed in some degree to restrain His superabundant mercy in order to be thenceforth prepared for the judgment which is to follow our future resurrection.

But Christ comes now, in His Nativity, as a Little One, with the prerogative of mercy, that His mercy, going before, may temper the justice of our future judgment. Although He comes as a Little One, the gifts He brings are not little, the treasures He bestows are not little. In the first place, He brings mercy, for the Apostle testifies: "According to his mercy he hath saved us." Neither was it only to those among whom He lived that He brought these benefits. Christ our Lord is a fountain that can never be exhausted. He is a fountain for us, too, wherein we may be washed from sin; as it is written, "who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins." But water not only washes away our stains, it likewise quenches our thirst. This is the second use of the fountain, and the Wise Man says: "Justice shall give him the wholesome water of wisdom to drink."

The water of wisdom is rightly called wholesome, for the wisdom of the flesh is death, and the wisdom of the world is the enemy of God. The only wholesome wisdom is the wisdom that is from God, and which, according to St. James's definition, "is first chaste, then peaceable." The wisdom of the flesh is sensual, not chaste. The wisdom of the world is turbulent, not peaceable. But the wisdom that is of God is first chaste, not seeking the things that are her own, but those that are Jesus Christ's; for, let no one do his own will, but consider what is the will of God. It is, then, peaceable, not abounding in her own sense, but rather yielding to the counsel or judgment of another.

The third use of water is for irrigation. This is specially needed by young plantations and seeds newly sown, lest they be either stunted in growth, or wither away through want of moisture. Let, then, everyone who wishes to sow the seed of good works seek the water of devotion, that, being fertilized by the

fountain of grace, the source of a good life, he may not wither away, but make progress in continual freshness of spirit.

Let us now see if we can find a fourth fountain, and win back our paradise, to be beautified, like that of old, by the water from four fountains or springs. Because if we do not desire to have the earthly paradise restored to us, how shall we hope for the kingdom of heaven? “If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you believe not, how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things?” In order, therefore, that by the manifestation of things present the expectation of the future may be made sure, we have a paradise far better and more delightful than that of our first parents. Our paradise is Christ our Lord. In this paradise we have already found three fountains; the fourth is yet to be sought. We have the fountain of mercy for washing away the stains of our sins; we have the fountain of wisdom, giving the waters of discretion for allaying our spiritual thirst; and we have the fountain of grace and devotion for irrigating the plants of our good works. The fourth fountain seems to be the fervid waters of charity. Hence the Prophet exclaims: “My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire broke forth.” And elsewhere: “The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.” So that the just man loves justice from the sweetness of devotion, and hates iniquity from the fervour of zeal. Was it not of these four fountains that Isaias spoke: “You shall draw waters with joy from the Saviour’s fountains”? And that we may know this promise to be spoken of the present life, not of that to come, mark what follows: “In that day, praise ye the Lord, and call upon his name.” Invocation belongs to the present time, as it is written: “Thou didst call upon me in the day of tribulation, and I heard thee.”

Of these four fountains, three seem to apply specially to each of the three chief needs of the faithful. The first—remission—is common to all, for we all “offend in many things,” and we have need of the fountain of mercy for washing away the stains of our sins. “We have all sinned, and do need the glory of God,” whether prelates, virgins, or married people.

All Christians likewise, both the penitent and the devout, must have recourse to the second fountain, that of wisdom, for all walk in the midst of snares, and require its guidance to enable them to decline from evil and do good.

All, again, must hasten to the fountain of grace and devotion, that they may receive the unction necessary for fructifying their works and labours of penance and abstinence, and to enable them to act always in a spirit of cheerfulness, for “God loveth the cheerful giver.” This grace we ask in the Lord’s Prayer under the name of our daily bread.

In all these points nothing else seems to be meant but that our good works are to be seasoned with the fervour of devotion and the spiritual sweetness of grace.

The fourth fountain of zeal seems more specially suited to those in authority.

These four fountains our Blessed Lord offers to us in His own person while we still live on earth. A fifth, which is the fountain of life, He promises to give us in the world to come. This is the water for which the holy Prophet thirsted: “My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God.”

Was it to signify the first four fountains that Christ was wounded in four places while still living on the Cross? while the fifth wound in His side was not inflicted till after He had expired. Jesus Christ offers us the first four fountains during our life. He opens the fifth fountain to us after our death, when He leads us into the possession of eternal life.

But see how, after treating of the mysteries of our Lord’s Nativity, we have suddenly turned to the mystery of His Passion. Yet it is no wonder that we should seek in the Passion for the treasures that Christ brought us in His Nativity, since it was in His Passion that He poured out for us the price of our redemption.

II

THE THREE COMMINGLINGS

“GREAT are the works of the Lord,” says the Psalmist. Great indeed are all God’s works, but the mysteries which chiefly excite our wonder and admiration are naturally those which concern our eternal salvation. Hence the same Prophet sings: “The Lord hath done great things for us.” His munificent dealings with us are shown forth chiefly in our Creation, our present redemption, and our future glorification. O Lord, how greatly art Thou exalted in all Thy works! Do Thou proclaim their excellence to Thy people, and let us not be silent concerning them.

There is a threefold commingling to be considered in these three mysteries, most manifestly heavenly, most evidently the effect of the omnipotence of God. In the first of these mysteries, that of our creation, “God made man from the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life.” What a wonderful Creator, Who unites and commingles things so opposite! At His beck the slime of the earth and the spirit, or breath of life, are united, and make one being. The earth of which He made man had been previously created when “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” But the origin of the spirit

was special, not common. It was not infused into the mass of matter, but is specially breathed into each individual of the human race.

O man, acknowledge your dignity! Recognize the glory of human nature! You have a body taken from this earth, for it was fitting that one who is the appointed lord of all visible creatures should bear a similarity to them. But you are at the same time more noble and more exalted than they; nor are they in any way to be compared to you. In you body and soul are closely united; the first is moulded and fashioned, the second is inspired. On which side lies the advantage? Which of the two is the gainer in this union? According to the wisdom of this world, where what is low and mean is associated with what is excellent, those who are in power lord it over their inferiors, and bend them to their will. The strong man tramples on him who is the weaker; the learned man ridicules one who is unlearned; the crafty one deceives the simple; the powerful man despises the weak. It is not thus, O God, in Thy work, not thus in Thy commingling. It was not for such a purpose that Thou didst unite spirit with matter; what is exalted with what is lowly; a noble and excellent creature with the abject, worthless clay. Thou didst will the soul to rule; at the same time who does not see what dignity and advantage it thus confers on the body? Would not the body without the soul be senseless matter? From the soul it derives its beauty, from the soul its growth, from the soul the brightness of the eye and the sound of the voice. All the senses are animated by the soul. By this union charity is commended to me. I read of charity in the very history of my own creation. Not only is charity proclaimed in its first page; it is imprinted within me by the gracious hand of my Maker.

Great indeed is this union of body and soul; would that it had remained firm and unbroken! But, alas! though it had been secured by the Divine seal—for God made man to His own image and likeness—the union was marred, for the seal was broken and the likeness defaced. The worst of thieves approached, stealthily damaged the yet fresh seal, and so sadly changed the Divine likeness that man is now compared to senseless beasts, and is become like unto them.

God made man just, and of this his likeness to God it is written: “The Lord our God is righteous, and there is no iniquity in him.” He made man just and truthful, as He Himself is justice and truth; nor could this union be broken while the integrity of the seal was preserved. But that forger came, and, while promising a better seal, broke, alas! that which had been stamped by the hand of God. “You shall be as gods,” he said, “knowing good and evil.” O malicious one! O crafty spirit! Of what use to that man and woman could the likeness of

this knowledge be? Let them “be as gods “by all means, but let them be upright, truthful, like God, in Whom there is no sin. While this seal remained whole the union remained uninjured. Now we have a woeful experience of what we were persuaded to attempt by the devil’s craft. The seal once broken, a bitter parting followed, a sad divorce. O wicked wretch! where is your promise, “You shall not die”? Behold, we all die. There is no man living that shall not taste death. What, then, will become of us, O Lord our God? Will no one repair Thy work? Will no one help to raise the fallen? None can remake but He Who first made. Therefore, “by reason of the misery of the needy, and the groans of the poor, now I will arise, saith the Lord. I will set him in safety: I will deal confidently in his regard.” The enemy shall not prevail over him, nor the son of iniquity have any power to hurt him. Behold, I now make a new mixture, upon which I set a deeper and stronger seal. I will give to fallen man Him Who was not made to My likeness, but Who is the very image and splendour of My glory and the figure of My substance; not made, but begotten before all ages.

The first mixture was compounded of two things, earth and spirit. The second is made up of three, that from this fact we may learn to contemplate the mystery of the Blessed Trinity—the Word Who was in the beginning with God, and was God; the soul, which was created out of nothing, and had no previous existence; and the flesh, taken from corrupted nature without any corruption, separated and singled out by a Divine plan, as if it had not been a portion of mortal flesh; and these three are united together in one Person, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We have in these three a threefold exhibition of power. What was not was created; what had perished was recreated; and what was higher than all was made a little lower than the angels. Here are the three Gospel measures of meal which are, as it were, fermented, that they may become the bread of angels, in order that man may eat the bread which strengthens his heart. Happy Mary! blessed amongst women, in whose chaste womb that bread was prepared by the Holy Ghost Who came down upon thee! Yea, happy woman! who hid in these measures the leaven of thy own glorious faith; so that by faith thou didst conceive Him, by faith thou didst bring Him forth, and by thy faith those things were accomplished in thee which were spoken to thee by the Lord, and for believing which Elizabeth declared thee blessed.

And who need wonder when I say that the Word was united to human flesh through the faith of Mary, seeing that He received that same flesh from hers? There is nothing in the foregoing explanation opposed to our regarding the faith of Mary as a type of the kingdom of heaven; nor does it seem unfitting to

compare her faith with the kingdom of heaven, since by that same faith its losses are repaired. This bond of union, this Trinity in Christ, no human power could wholly sever. The “prince of this world” had nothing in Him, the latchet of whose shoe the Baptist himself was unworthy to loose. Yet it was necessary that this triad should in a certain way be dissolved; otherwise, what is not dissolved cannot be reconstructed. Of what use are bread unbroken, a treasure hidden, wisdom concealed? Well might St. John weep when no one was found to open the book and break its seals. Whilst it remained closed, no man amongst us could attain to its Divine wisdom. O Lamb of God! O truly meek Lamb! do Thou open the book. Open out Thy pierced hands and feet, that the treasure of salvation and the plentiful redemption hidden in them may come forth. Break Thy bread to the hungry. Thou alone canst break it to them, Who alone couldst stand firm and unshaken when the union between Thy Divine and human natures appeared broken in Thy passion. In this breaking Thou still hadst power to lay down Thy life and to take it up again. In Thy mercy Thou didst to a certain degree destroy this temple, but didst not wholly dissolve it. Let the soul be separated from the body, the Word will preserve that flesh from corruption and bestow a full liberty on the soul, that it alone of all human souls may be free among the dead, and lead forth from the prison-house those who were bound, those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Let this holy and Divine soul lay down its immaculate flesh, that by dying it may conquer death; but let it resume that flesh on the third day, that by rising again it may raise us all from death to life. This has been done, and let us rejoice in the accomplishment of the mystery. By that death, death is destroyed, and by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we are regenerated in the hope of life.

But who shall say what is to take place in the third and future union? “Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love Him.” The consummation of the union will be when Christ shall have restored and given back the kingdom to God and the Father.

To sum up, in the first mixture, where man is made and composed of body and soul, we saw charity recommended. In the second mixture or union, the Incarnation, humility shines pre-eminent in the infinite condescension of God in assuming our human nature, whereby He teaches us that it is by humility alone we can repair the wounds of charity.

In the first union it is no result of humility that the rational soul is united to an earthly body, for it is not by any deliberate act of its own. The soul is

immediately breathed into it by God.

It is otherwise in the second union, where the Uncreated Spirit, Himself the Sovereign Good, humbly drew nigh to our nature, and of His own will and choice assumed an unsullied body.

From both we learn that charity and humility are deservedly followed by glorification, for without charity nothing can profit us, and without humility none shall be exalted. In humility, then, is laid up for us the perfection of the beatitude which we expect and long for. May we be so blest as to attain it!

III

ON THE PLACE, THE TIME, AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

IN the Nativity of our Blessed Lord there are two things to be considered, both exceedingly different, exceedingly wonderful. The Child Who is born is God, the Mother of whom He is born is a Virgin, and her child-bearing is without pain. To celebrate these new wonders a new light from heaven shines forth in the darkness of midnight. The angel announces tidings of great joy. A multitude of the heavenly army praise God and sing, “Glory to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good-will.” The shepherds hasten to find the Word that has been announced to them. They proclaim it to others, and all that hear are filled with admiration. Mysteries such as these are signs of Divine power, not of human weakness. They are as the gold and silver vessels, from which, on account of the solemnity, even the poor are served at our Lord’s Sacred Table.

The wise man says, “Consider diligently the things set before thee.” I may truly claim to myself the time and place of this Nativity, the weakness of His infantine body, the tears and cries of this sweet Little One, as well as the poverty and vigils of the shepherds to whom our Saviour’s Nativity was first announced. These circumstances are truly mine; for me they were planned, before me they have been placed, and they are offered to me for my spiritual food, for my contemplation.

Christ was born in winter. He was born in the night. And are we to believe that His coming into the world in such an inclement season and in the darkness of night are mere casual events, matters simply fortuitous? From Whom come winter and summer, day and night? Other children that as yet have hardly begun to live do not choose the time of their birth; they have not the use of reason, nor liberty of choice, nor faculty of deliberation. But Christ, though man, was nevertheless God. He was in the beginning with God. He was God, the same of

Whom He is the Power and the Wisdom, for He is “the Power and the Wisdom of God.” Therefore, the Son of God, in Whose power it remained to do whatever He willed, when about to be born, chose His own time, and chose, too, what was most specially burdensome to a little child and to the son of a poor mother who had hardly sufficient linen wherewith to swathe Him and no cradle wherein to place Him. And though so great was His necessity, and He God, we hear no mention of a rich and warm coverlet for His Divine and royal members. The first Adam was clothed in a tunic of skins; the second Adam was swathed in rags. Such things are not according to the judgment of this world. Either Christ is deceived, or the world errs. But that the Divine Wisdom could be deceived is impossible. Justly, therefore, is the prudence of the flesh an enemy of God; for the prudence of the flesh is death, and the prudence of the world is folly. What follows? Christ, Who could not be deceived, chose what was painful and troublesome; therefore it is the best, the most profitable choice, that which is to be preferred to all others, and whoever teaches or persuades to the contrary is to be avoided as a tempter and deceiver.

Our Blessed Lord willed to be born in the obscurity of night. Where are they who so shamelessly and studiously display themselves and their actions in the blaze of day? Christ chose what He judged to be most salutary; they choose what He rejected. Which of the two is the more prudent choice? Whose judgment the more just? Whose sentence the more reasonable?

Christ is born in a stable, and lies in a manger. Yet is He not the same that said, “The earth is mine and the fullness thereof”? Why, then, need He choose a stable? Plainly that He might reprove the glory of the world, that He might condemn its empty pride. The Infant Jesus is silent. He does not extol Himself; He does not proclaim His own power and greatness, and behold, an angel announces His birth, a multitude of the heavenly host praise and glorify the new-born King. You that would follow Christ do in like manner imitate His example. Hide the gifts and graces you have received. Love to be unknown. Let the mouths of others praise you, but keep your own lips closed.

His tongue has not spoken, and, behold, everywhere He is proclaimed, preached, made known. These infantine members will not be silent; they have another kind of language: in all of them the judgment of the world is reproved, subverted, and set at naught. What man with intelligence, being free to choose, would not prefer a full-grown, robust body rather than that of an infant? O Divine Wisdom! Thou art manifested by Thy preference for what was hidden and abject. O truly Incarnate Wisdom, veiled in the flesh! This is nevertheless

what was long ago prophesied by Isaias: “The child will know how to refuse evil and choose good.” The pleasures of the body are the evil which He refuses; affliction is the good He selects. And assuredly, He that makes His choice is a wise Child, a wise Infant. He is the eternal Word of God, for the Word was made flesh—infirm flesh, tender flesh, the feeble, helpless flesh of an Infant, incapable of its own nature of any good work, feeling a repugnance to labour and hardships. Truly the Word was made flesh, and in flesh dwelt amongst us.

When in the beginning the Word was with God, He dwelt in light inaccessible, and there was none that could bear that light. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor? The carnal man of His own nature perceives not those things which are of the Spirit of God; but now he can perceive them though still carnal, for the Word was made flesh. Since man, on account of the flesh, could understand nothing but what was of the flesh, behold, the Word was made flesh that man might be able even by the flesh to hear and understand the things of the Spirit. O man, behold that wisdom which was heretofore hidden is shown forth to you! It is now drawn forth from its hiding-place, and is laid open to you, and it penetrates into the very perceptions of your nature.

I have already said that He preaches to you even in His Infancy, and says: “Fly from pleasure, for death follows swiftly when sensual pleasure enters. Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand.” The Stable preaches this penance to us, the Manger proclaims it to us; this is the language which His Infant members speak; this is the Gospel He announces by His cries and tears. Christ weeps, but not as the rest of children—that is, not for the same cause. In other children it is from the suffering inflicted on their senses, in Christ the affections were the source of His sufferings. They suffer but do not act, for they have no power as yet to use their will. They weep from passion, Christ from compassion. They weep under the heavy yoke laid upon every child of Adam; Christ deplores the sins of the children of Adam, and that for which He now sheds streams of tears He will afterwards pour out torrents of blood.

O hardness of my stony heart! Would that as our Lord has been made flesh, so He would make my heart a heart of flesh. It is what He promised by His prophet Ezechiel. “I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh.” The tears of Christ fill me with shame and sorrow. I was taking my pastime without in the streets, and in the secrecy of the King’s chamber the sentence of death was passed upon me. His only-begotten Son heard this judgment, and, laying aside His royal diadem, He went forth, sprinkled ashes

upon His head, clothed Himself in sackcloth, bared His feet, and mourned and wept over the condemnation of His poor slave. I see Him suddenly go forth. I am amazed at the strangeness of the spectacle. I demand, and am told, the cause. What course am I to take? Shall I still indulge myself and deride His tears? Yea, if I am mad, if I am wanting in mind, I shall fail to follow Him, I shall not weep with Him that weeps. Behold, whence comes my shame, whence is my sorrow, whence my fear? From the consideration of the remedy I may estimate the gravity of the danger. I knew it not. I thought my self in health, and lo! the Son of the Virgin is sent, the Son of the Most High God is sent, and it is even ordained that He shall be put to death in order that by the balsam of His precious Blood my wounds may be healed.

Understand, O man, the grievousness of those wounds for the healing of which it was necessary that Christ our Lord should be wounded. Had they not been wounds unto death, and to eternal death, the Son of God would never have died for their remedy. We have indeed reason to blush and be confounded at our negligence in respect to the Passion of Christ, beholding as we do so much compassion shown to us by such infinite Majesty. The Son of God compassionates man, and weeps over him; man allows Him to do it, and keeps up incessant laughter.

Thus, by considering the remedy, my sorrow and my fear are increased. If I carefully observe the injunctions of my Physician, they will afford me consolation. For, though I recognize the grievousness of the disease for the cure of which such severe remedies were needed, from the very fact of their existence I conjecture that my disease is not incurable. The wise Physician would not apply such costly remedies in a hopeless case, for the very reason that He is a wise Physician—yea, Wisdom itself. Neither would He apply such remedies to a case easily curable without them, still less in one where cure was impossible. This hope in our Divine Physician’s power and goodness excites us to penance, and enkindles in us the most ardent desire of virtue. This is the same consolation that the visit and discourse of the angels gave to the shepherds in their midnight vigils. Woe to you rich, for you have your consolation here; you do not deserve to have that which is heavenly. How many men noble according to family rank; how many of the powerful and wise of this world, were at that hour stretched restfully on their soft beds, not one of them being found worthy to behold the new and glorious light, to share in the “great joy,” to hear the angels sing, “Glory to God on high”!

This teaches us that those who are not engaged in some useful labour or

employment are not worthy to be visited by angels, and that labour undertaken with a pure intention is pleasing to the citizens of heaven. Indeed, they have been known to hold converse, and such happy converse, with the poor and laborious. Is it not, moreover, God's own law that man should earn his support by his own labour and exertions?

Let me, then, earnestly beseech you to consider attentively how much God has done for your instruction and salvation, that a "word so living and efficacious" may not be found fruitless in you. It is a word "faithful and worthy of all acceptance"; it is an efficacious word, no mere verbal expression.

I, who have been speaking to you, am but a miserable man, yet do you suppose it would be a small affliction for me if I were to find that my words had failed to produce any good results in your hearts? With how much more justice, then, will the Lord of all Majesty be indignant if our negligence, our slowness, our hardness of heart, were to make void and vain His great and precious labour.

May He Who for our salvation vouchsafed to clothe Himself in the form of a servant avert this evil from us His servants—He Who is the only-begotten Son of God the Father, God blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

IV

ON THE SHEPHERDS FINDING OUR LORD

OBSERVE how great is this day's solemnity, for which the day itself is too short and the breadth of the whole earth is too circumscribed. This day encroaches on the night, it anticipates the natural dawn. It fills heaven and earth with its brightness. It fills heaven before it fills the earth. For the night was made light as the day, when in the bitter midnight a new light from heaven shone around the shepherds. And that we might know in what place the joys of this solemnity began to be celebrated, and that it had already been a feast for the angels, immediately there was present a multitude of the heavenly host, sounding forth the Divine praises; and they proclaimed that it should be a day of joy for the people also.

For this reason this night is considered solemn beyond all others, and is spent in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles. And while we thus keep vigil, we may undoubtedly believe that the heavenly princes unite still in our canticles, and even anticipate our psalmody.

See how many altars glitter to-day with gold and jewels! Behold how the walls of churches are adorned with costly hangings! Think you, then, that the

angels will turn in preference towards these things and depart from men in poverty? If so, why did they choose to appear to the shepherds rather than to the kings of the earth and the priests of the Temple? Why did this same Saviour, to Whom belong the gold and the silver, consecrate holy poverty in His own person? It cannot be without some special mysterious reason that the Saviour of the world is wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger. Thy swaddling-clothes, O Lord Jesus, are given as a sign of Thee; but they are a sign that shall be contradicted by many even to this day, “for many are called, but few are chosen”; therefore few are signed with the sign of salvation.

Here I recognize and acknowledge in all truth the “great High Priest Jesus, covered with filthy garments” in His Passion, while He contended with the devil. I speak here to those who are versed in the Scriptures, and to whom the prophetical vision of Zachary is not unknown. There we find our Head exalted above our enemies from the very fact that His vesture is changed. Yes, He has put on the stole of beauty, and clothed Himself with light as with a garment. He has given us an example that we also should do as He has done. When the members, following their Head on High, shall form but one body, then they will sing in one spirit: “Thou hast cut my sackcloth and hast compassed me with gladness.”

The angel said: “You will find the Infant wrapped in’swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger.” And a little later the Evangelist goes on to say: “They came in haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger.”

How is it that the angel mentions only the Infant, since that was not all that the shepherds were to find? Is he recommending humility in the Person of the Sacred Infant? If so, why humility specially? Perhaps because his fellow-angels fell by pride, while by humility he stood firm. Or it may be that humility is thus proclaimed to be a heavenly virtue, because it is that most fittingly exercised towards the Divine Majesty. Humility, however, can never be found alone. It cannot exist as a single virtue, for God gives His grace to the humble. Wherefore the shepherds found Mary and Joseph with the Infant laid in the manger. As humility is the virtue specially exemplified in the infancy of our Saviour, so chastity appears in the Blessed Virgin, and justice is suitably pointed out by the just man Joseph, so named in the Gospel.

We all know that continence and purity are to be observed in regard to the flesh. Justice is the virtue by which we render to everyone what is his due, and it is necessary in our dealings with others. Humility reconciles us with God, makes us subject to Him, and renders us well pleasing in His sight, as the Blessed

Virgin testifies. “He has had regard to the humility of his handmaid.” So that by impurity we sin against ourselves; by injustice against our neighbour; by pride and self-exaltation against God. The unchaste man dishonours himself; the unjust man is burdensome to his neighbour; the proud man, as far as in him lies, dishonours God. God has said: “I will not give my glory to another.” The proud soul says: “As you will not give it to me, I will usurp it.” Consequently such a one cannot relish the distribution by the angel, of giving “glory to God, and on earth peace to men of good-will.” The proud man does not worship God, but impiously and faithlessly lifts himself up against Him. What is piety but the worship of God? And who pays true homage to God but the man that is willingly subject to Him? As the eyes of the servant are on the hands of his master, so are the eyes of the just man ever directed towards the Lord his God.

Therefore, let Mary and Joseph and the Infant be always found in us, that we may live soberly and justly and piously in this world. For it is for this purpose that the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared instructing us; and it is by the exercise of the virtues we have mentioned that His glory will appear. The Apostle says: “The grace of God hath appeared to all men, instructing us that, denying impiety and worldly desires, we may live soberly and justly and piously in this world, expecting the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God.

In the Little One there hath appeared grace for our instruction, because He will yet be great, as the angel Gabriel foretold. And they whom He, as a Little One, shall have instructed in humility and meekness of heart, He will afterwards exalt and glorify, when He shall come as great and glorious, Jesus Christ our Lord for ever. Amen.

V

ON THE WORDS “BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all consolations, who comforts us in all our tribulations.”

BLESSED be He Who, in the exceeding charity wherewith He has loved us, has sent His beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased; by Whom, being reconciled, we have peace with God; and Who is at once our Mediator and the pledge of our reconciliation. Under so powerful a Mediator there is no ground for doubt; under so merciful a Protector we have no cause for fear. But, you will say, what sort of a Mediator is He Who is born in a stable, laid in a manger, and

wrapped in swaddling-clothes as other children, Who weeps as other children, and lies before us subject to all the needs of infancy? I answer, He is a Mediator great in all things that appertain to our peace. He seeks that peace not perfunctorily or carelessly, but sincerely and efficaciously.

An Infant He truly is, but the Word—an Infant whose very childhood speaks more powerfully than the most eloquent discourse. “Be comforted, be comforted, my people, saith the Lord your God,” saith our Emmanuel, our God with us. The stable proclaims it, the manger proclaims it, His tears and His swathing-bands proclaim it. The stable declares that He is preparing to cure the man that fell among robbers; His manger tells us that He will minister food to him that was compared to beasts, and made like unto them. His tears and His swaddling-clothes cry out that He will wash and cleanse man’s wounds. Christ needed not any of these things for Himself. All were for His elect. “They will reverence My Son,” says the Father of mercies. Yes, they will indeed reverence Him; but who are they who will render this homage? Not the Jews, to whom He was sent, but the elect, for whose sake He was sent. We will reverence Him in His manger, we will reverence Him on His cross, we will reverence Him in His sepulchre. We will receive devoutly Him Who is a feeble Infant for our sakes, Who was pallid in death for us, and Who was buried for us. With the Magi we will devoutly adore Him, with holy Simeon we will embrace the Infant Saviour, and so we shall “receive thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple.” Because this is He of Whom we read, “The mercy of the Lord is from eternity,” for who is co-eternal with the Father unless the Son and the Holy Ghost? And these Divine Persons are not so much merciful as mercy itself. The Father is mercy, and the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but one mercy, as they are one Essence, one Wisdom, one Deity, one Majesty.

But as God the Father is called the Father of Mercies, who does not see that He thus points out His Son by an appropriate name? Justly is He called the Father of Mercies, whose property it is to have mercy and to spare.

But some may object: How can it be His property to have mercy, since “his judgments are a great deep”? It is not said that His ways are mercy only, but that they are mercy and truth. He is not less just than merciful, and He is praised for mercy and judgment. It is true He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He wills He will harden. Yet since His property is to have mercy, He draws from Himself the matter and cause for mercy; the cause for judgment He finds in us, for mercy seems far nearer to His heart than condemnation. “Is it my will,” he says, “that a sinner should die, and not rather

that he should be converted and live?" Justly, therefore, He is called the Father, not of judgment, but of mercy. And this not only because a father is readier to have mercy than to show indignation, but also because as a Father He has compassion on the children that fear Him, and because to have compassion is a property inherent in Him, for He is the cause and source of mercy.

But if on this account God is the Father of mercy, why is He called the Father of mercies? God once said: "These two things have I heard, that power belongeth to God, and mercy to thee, O Lord." Moreover, the Apostle commends to us this same mercy as manifold, calling God the Father not of one mercy, but of "mercies"; not of one consolation, but of "all consolation"; Who comforts us not in this tribulation or that, but in all our tribulations. The mercies of the Lord are many, says the Prophet. They are many; for many are the tribulations of the just, and out of them all the Lord will deliver them. The Son of God is One, the Word of God is one; but our misery is manifold, and demands not only great mercy, but a multitude of mercies.

Perhaps, on account of the two substances, spirit and matter, which make up our human nature, and each of which is subject to many troubles, man's misery may be said to be multiplied, as well in body as in soul. In truth, our tribulations, both of body and soul, are multiplied, but from the necessities of both we are delivered by Him Who saves the whole man. Since, then, the One and Only Son of God is now come for the salvation of our souls—that is, to take away the sins of the world—and His second coming will be to raise up our bodies and make them conformable to the body of His glory, it is not surprising if we confess in Him this twofold mercy and bless Him as Father of mercies.

When the Son of God assumed our nature, and took both a body and a soul, He said not once only, "Be comforted," but, as you saw above, the consolation is repeated: "Be comforted, be comforted, O my people, saith the Lord your God." This repetition is to assure us that He Who disdained not to receive both a body and a soul will work out the salvation of both in us. But as He will not save all indiscriminately, in whom will He effect this salvation? In "his people" certainly, for it is said, "he will save his people from their sins." Likewise, hereafter, He will not make all bodies like to the "body of his glory," but only the bodies of the humble. He will comfort His people. He will save a humble people; but the proud He will bring low.

Would you know who are His people? "To thee," says the man according to God's own heart—"to thee the poor man is left." Jesus Himself says in the Gospel, "Woe to you rich, for you have now your consolation." God grant,

dearly beloved, that we may always be found among God's people, to whom He does not say "Woe"—the people whose comforter is the Lord their God.

Who will care to offer consolation to those who already abound in worldly comforts? The silent Infancy of Christ will not console the talkative; the tears of Christ will be no comfort to one given up to worldly enjoyments; the swaddling-clothes of Christ will offer no attraction to those who are clad in soft garments; the stable and the crib will only repel the lovers of the first places in the synagogues.

This universal consolation of Christ will, perchance, be found to descend preferably upon those who await their Lord in peaceful silence; on those who are in affliction; on those who are poor and detached from the world. Let such as these hear how the very angels console them. It is to these, not to others, that the holy angels whisper consolation. It is to the shepherds, watching and keeping the night watches over their flocks, that the joy of the new light is announced. To them it is revealed that the Saviour is born. Yes, to the poor, to the hard-working, not to the rich, who have their consolation here below. It is to the poor that the light of a glorious day has shone forth amid their vigils, and the night shall be light as the day—yea, it is converted into day. "This day," says the angel, not this night, "is born to you a Saviour." The night is truly past, the day is at hand—a day of days, the day of the salvation of our God, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who is God blessed above all for evermore. Amen.

V

ON THE CIRCUMCISION

“After eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus.”

IN these few words we have heard the great sacrament of piety set forth. We have heard the abbreviated Word which the Lord has revealed upon the earth. For He was “abbreviated” in taking flesh, and is still further “abbreviated” in receiving the circumcision of the flesh. In clothing Himself with human nature, the Son of God was made a little lower than the angels; but now that He does not disdain to submit to the remedy of human corruption, He is clearly made much lower than they. Here is a great teaching of faith, a manifest example of humility.

To what end could circumcision serve Him, Who had neither contracted sin nor committed it? That He had not committed sin His age is a proof; that He had not contracted it is manifest from the Divinity of His Father and the integrity of His Mother. He is the High Priest Who “neither for father nor mother shall be defiled”; and these words of Scripture are rather a prophecy of Him than a command of the law. His Father is from eternity, and He Himself is God, upon Whom no sin can fall. His Mother is of time, but she is a Virgin; and incorruption could not yield corruption.

Notwithstanding all this, the Child, the Lamb without spot, is circumcised. Though He stood in no need of circumcision, He willed to submit to that humiliating ceremony. Though He was without wounds, He shrank not from binding up our wounds. This is not the way the impious act; it is not thus with the perversity of human pride. We glory in our wounds, and blush to have them bound up and healed; while He Whom no man can convince of sin is the remedy of sin, and, without any necessity on His own part, receives both its shame and its punishment, and submits to the sacrificial knife. We, on the contrary, though shameless in sins, blush to do penance for them, and this is the excess of folly. It is a misery to be prone to sins; it is a greater one to be ashamed of their remedy.

He that “did no sin” disdained not to be reputed a sinner; we are willing to be sinners, but not to be reputed as such.

In this mystery we see Him Who is in health taking the medicine intended for the sick, submitting to the remedy which they refuse.

“And after eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus.”

O great and wonderful sacrament! The Child was circumcised and called Jesus. What connection does the Evangelist wish to show between these two facts? Circumcision would seem to belong more properly to the saved than to the Saviour. It was more befitting Him Who was the great High Priest to perform the rite to others than to submit to it Himself. He allowed it to be administered to Him in order to teach us that He is the Mediator between God and man, Who by His Nativity united His Divinity to our human nature—what is highest to what is lowliest.

He was born of a woman, but of a woman in whom the flower of virginity flourished together with the fruit of fecundity. He was wrapped in swaddling-clothes, but He was honoured with the praises of the angelic host. He lay in an obscure manger, but a radiant star from heaven pointed Him out. In like manner, by undergoing the rite of circumcision, He gave further proof of His human nature, but the adorable name of Jesus which He then received is above every other name, and declares the glory of His majesty. He was circumcised as a true son of Abraham; as Son of God He is called Jesus. This my Jesus bears not, as others do, an empty name; it is not in Him a shadow of greatness, but the reality. Heaven assigned it to Him, for the Evangelist testifies that the angel gave it to Him. And mark the depth of the mystery. It was after His birth that He was called by men Jesus, the name which had been given Him by the angel before His birth. For He is truly the Saviour of both angels and men; of men by His Incarnation, of angels from the beginning of creation. Before His birth the angels, who possessed the secrets of God, were allowed to know and utter the sacred name of salvation, but till this day of the Circumcision we knew it not. On this day it was first given me to pronounce confidently the blessed name of my Jesus, the name of my eternal salvation. Can we now doubt or hesitate to proclaim that He Who has condescended to dwell amongst us will work out the salvation of all those who are His own?

Circumcision is necessary for us also, in order that we may receive this name of salvation—a circumcision not according to the letter, but one in spirit and in truth. After the fall of our first parents human nature was wholly infected with

the venom of sin. While the human race was yet, as it were, in infancy as to faith and love, man received a commandment suited to his imperfect condition. When he had grown to the age of the more perfect man he received the command of baptism, by which the entire man is circumcised. In like manner our Saviour was circumcised in His infancy, and, in His perfect manhood, was pleased to be crucified and to endure a penalty which caused every member of His body and every power of His soul to suffer. What, then, is our moral circumcision, if not what the Apostle recommends, “Having food and raiment, with these we are content”? The circumcision of the religious life is voluntary poverty, the labours of penance, and the observance of regular discipline.

We should, therefore, admit nothing into the soul which we fear would not be acceptable to Him Whose Name is a name of salvation.

VI

ON THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS AND OTHER SCRIPTURAL TITLES OF OUR LORD

“After eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus.”

THE eighth day is always the crowning day of the Church’s greater festivals, and completes the celebration of the principal solemnities of the year. It is, as it were, linked with the first or opening day of the octave, just as our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount connected the eighth beatitude with the first by the promise of the kingdom of heaven.

When the Child that is born to us was circumcised He was called the Saviour, for it was then that He began the work of our salvation by shedding His precious blood for us. No Christian can now ask why Christ willed to be circumcised. For us He was born, for us He was circumcised, for us He suffered and died. Nothing of all this was for Himself, but all for His elect. He was not circumcised for His own sins, but for ours. The name He was called by the angel before His birth was His name from all eternity. This name of Saviour was His natural right; it was born with Him, not imposed by either angel or man. The illustrious Prophet Isaias, predicting the birth of this Divine Child, calls Him by many great titles, but he seems to have been silent on this one name which the angel foretold, and to which the Evangelist bears testimony. Isaias, like Abraham, exulted that he might see Christ’s day; he, too, saw it and was glad. Rejoicing and praising God, he says: “A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.” These are indeed great names, but where is the name which is above all names, the name of Jesus at which every knee should bow? Perhaps we may find that one name expressed, or poured out in all, for it is the same that was spoken of by the Spouse in the canticle of love, “Thy name is as oil poured out.” Therefore, from and in all these names and titles we have but the one name of Jesus. His office of Saviour

includes all. If one had been wanting, He could neither have been called nor have been the Saviour.

Has not each one of us found by experience that He has been Wonderful in the conversion and change of our wills? For is it not the beginning of salvation when we loathe what we formerly loved, grieve over what we once delighted in, embrace what we had feared, follow after that which we had fled from, desire what we had contemned? He that has wrought such wonders in us is assuredly Wonderful.

Jesus shows Himself to be the Counsellor by directing us in the choice of penance and of a well-ordered life, lest our zeal be without knowledge and our goodwill without prudence.

It was likewise necessary that we should experience Him to be God the Mighty. God in the remission of our past sins, for none but God can forgive sin, and Mighty when enabling us to fight victoriously those sinful passions which are ever warring in us, and which are liable to render our last state worse than the first.

Does anything still seem wanting to the office of Saviour? Yea, truly, the chief thing would be lacking were He not also the Father of the world to come, so that we who are engendered in this world unto death may by Him be raised up to a glorious immortality.

A further title and quality is required—that of the Prince of Peace Who has reconciled us to His Father, to Whom He is to give back the kingdom. Otherwise, as children of perdition, we might have risen again to punishment instead of reward.

The government, which is upon His shoulder, shall be magnified by the number of the saved, that He may be truly called the Saviour; that there may be no end of peace; and that we may know our salvation to be a true salvation which leaves no fear of failure.

O blessed Name! O sacred Oil! how widely hast thou been spread, how profusely poured out! Whence did this oil come? It came from heaven to Judea, and thence was diffused over the whole earth, to its uttermost bounds. The Church cries out, “Thy name is oil poured out.” Poured out, indeed, to overflowing, since it is spread abroad, not only over the heavens and earth, but its influence reaches even to hell; so that “in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and every tongue shall confess” and say, “Thy name is as oil poured out.” Behold the name of Christ and the name of Jesus were both communicated to the angels and poured

out upon men. I am, then, made a participator in this salutary and life-giving name. I am a shareholder in His inheritance. I am a Christian. I am a brother of Christ. If a brother, then an heir also of God and co-heir with Christ.

And what wonder that the name of the Divine Spouse is poured out? In His passion He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. By this pouring out the plenitude of His divinity is diffused or spread abroad upon the earth, and of His plenitude all shall receive; and when refreshed with the life-giving perfume of this mystic oil they will exclaim, “Thy name is as oil poured out.”

But why is this name compared to oil? There is undoubtedly a similitude between the name of the Spouse and oil, and not without reason has the Holy Ghost drawn a comparison between them. Oil gives light, nourishes and strengthens the body, and alleviates pain. Hence it is light, food, and medicine. All these qualities may be recognized in the holy name of Jesus. It shines and gives light when preached, it feeds and strengthens by its remembrance, it alleviates sorrow and anoints the wounds of the soul by its invocation. Let us consider these three qualities singly.

How was it that the light of faith shone forth so suddenly over the whole earth, if not by the preaching of the blessed name of Jesus? Is it not by the light of this name that God has called us “into his marvellous light,” so that, being enlightened by it, we shall see light as the Apostle declares, “For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord.” The Apostle was commanded to carry this name before kings and nations, and the children of Israel. He carried it as a brilliant torch, and by it enlightened the nations sitting in darkness, so that he could exclaim: “The night is past, and the day, is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day.” He lifted the light on high, and announced everywhere the name of Jesus and Him crucified. How brilliantly, too, did this light shine forth and attract the gaze of all when from the mouth of Peter the sacred name gave strength to the feet of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple! Was he not diffusing this light when he said to this man, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk”? And to how many did he not restore sight, and health, and faith, by the power of this same name.

But the name of Jesus is not only light, it is likewise food. Are you not strengthened and consoled as often as you call it to mind? There is no thought that so replenishes and fills the soul with sweetness and spiritual joy; no exercise so efficaciously recruits and refreshes the wearied spirit, and even the senses; so repairs the inward strength, gives vigour to virtue, and cherishes pure affections,

as the frequent invocation of the name of Jesus. All food of the soul is unsavoury to me if this oil be not poured upon it; it is insipid to me if not seasoned with this name. If you write, it does not relish if I read not there the name of Jesus. If you dispute or instruct, it does not satisfy me if I hear not the sweet sound of the name of Jesus. Jesus is honey to the mouth, music to the ear, jubilee to the heart.

The name of Jesus is, moreover, a sovereign medicine. If there be anyone overwhelmed with sorrow, let Jesus come into his heart, and thence to his lips, and behold, at the rising light of this sacred name all darkness and clouds will be dispersed, peace and joy will return, and the serenity of his mind will be restored. If there be anyone stained with crime, and driven headlong by despair to the pit of destruction, let him call upon this life-giving name, and he will speedily be restored to hope and salvation. Is there anyone amongst you in hardness of heart, in sloth, or tepidity, in bitterness of mind, if he will but invoke the name of Jesus his heart will be softened, and tears of contrition will flow gently and abundantly. In dangers and distress, in fears and anxieties, let him call on this name of power, and his confidence will return, his peace of mind will be restored. Doubts and embarrassments will be dispelled and give, place to certainty. There is no ill of life, no adversity or misfortune, in which this adorable name will not bring help and fortitude. It is a remedy whose virtue our dear Saviour invites us to test. “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”

Nothing so efficaciously bridles anger and subdues the fire of all unruly passions as this holy name. When I pronounce the name of Jesus, I represent to myself a man meek and humble of heart, benevolent, chaste, merciful, a man endowed with all sanctity, all graces, all virtues, and I call to mind that this man is Divine, is the Almighty God, Who heals me by His example and strengthens me by His power. All manner of good things come to my mind when the sacred name of Jesus sounds in my ear. I will, therefore, make to myself a sweet and sovereign ointment from the virtues of His humanity and the Omnipotence of His Divinity. It shall be to me a healing balsam, the like to which no physician was ever able to compound. And this electuary, my soul, thou hast laid up in the little vessel of the name of Jesus.

Let, then, this name of power be ever in my heart, that all my thoughts, desires, and actions may be directed by Jesus and unto Jesus. To this He Himself urges me: “Place me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.”

VII

ON THE EPIPHANY

I

“THE GOODNESS AND KINDNESS OF OUR SAVIOUR HATH APPEARED”

“The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour hath “appeared.”

THANKS be to God, through Whose mercy in this our pilgrimage, in this our banishment, in this our state of misery, unto us consolation also has greatly abounded. For this reason we have taken care often to admonish you that this our distance from our true country should not be long absent from our mind, and that we should be found ever hastening onwards to our heavenly inheritance. He that knows not desolation cannot appreciate consolation, and whosoever is ignorant that consolation is necessary shows plainly that he is not in God’s favour.

Hence it is that men engrossed in the turmoil of worldly pursuits are unconscious of their misery, and neglect to hope for mercy. But to you it may be fitly said, “Taste and see that the Lord is sweet”; to you the same Prophet says, “He will show forth to his people the power of his works.”

Therefore He willed to descend upon the earth, not only to be better known thereon, not merely to be born for us, but also to be acknowledged as our Saviour. This recognition is celebrated and proclaimed in to-day’s solemnity, the Epiphany or day of manifestation.

To-day the Magi came from the East, seeking the risen Sun of justice, Him of Whom we read, “Behold a man, the Orient is his name.” To-day the Magi adored the new-born Child of the Virgin, following the guidance of the newly risen star. And have we not here a great cause for consolation? God spoke. They answered, not by their words, but by their works.

What are you doing, O Magi? Do you adore a little Babe, in a wretched hovel, wrapped in miserable rags? Can this Child be truly God? God is in His holy Temple. God’s seat is in the highest heaven, and do you seek Him in a poor stable, in the lap of a maiden-Mother? What are you doing? Do you offer Him

gold? Is He, then, a King? If so, where is His palace? where His throne? where the retainers of His regal court? Is a stable His palace? a manger His throne? Are Mary and Joseph the sole occupants of His audience-chamber? Are you become foolish, O Wise Men, that you can adore a Child, despicable alike for His age and for the poverty of His surroundings? Yes, these Wise Men have become fools that they may be wise. They are foretaught by the Holy Spirit, who afterwards breathed on the Apostle, when he said: "If any man among you seem to be wise, … let him become a fool that he may be wise." Because, since the world could not through wisdom know God in His wisdom, it pleases God through the foolishness of preaching, as St. Paul calls it, to save those who believe.

Was it not to be feared that these men, beholding such signs of poverty, would be scandalized and believe themselves deluded? They expect to find the King in the royal city, but they are directed to little Bethlehem, "the least among the thousands of Juda." They enter the stable, they find the Babe in swaddling-clothes. The repulsiveness of the place deters them not, the swathing-bands offend them not, the Child at His Mother's breast shocks not their faith; they fall down and worship Him as their King, they adore Him as their God. And immediately, we may believe, He Who had led them thither Himself instructs them. He Who had spoken outwardly by the star now teaches them secretly in their hearts. This day is therefore made doubly glorious and sacred by the new manifestation of our Lord and by the devout adoration of the Magi.

But this is not the only manifestation celebrated on this day; there is a second, which, as we have learnt from our fathers in the faith, occurred on this same day, though after an interval of several years.

When our Blessed Lord, Who according to His Divinity "is always the selfsame and his years cannot fail," had completed the thirtieth year of His mortal life, He came amongst the crowds of the people to be baptized by John. He came as one of them, as a sinner, though He was without sin. Who would then have believed Him to be the Son of God? Who would have thought Him the Lord of Majesty? Thou art indeed exceedingly humbled, O Lord. Thou art hidden amongst the lowest of the people, but Thou canst not hide Thyself from John, from him who, yet unborn, recognized Thee in Thy Mother's womb. Then his prophetic eye pierced through the double concealment; but as he was unable to cry out to the people, he made known his great joy to his mother. What will he now do? The Evangelist tells us. "John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world."

The true Lamb, the truly humble One, the truly meek One. Behold! this is He Who is to be the purification of our crimes.

Notwithstanding this noble testimony, Jesus wishes to be baptized by John. John trembles, and what wonder? What marvel that he, a mere man, shudders and dares not touch the sacred head of his Lord and God, that head adorable to the angels, venerable to the powers, terrible to the principalities?

O Lord Jesus, wouldst Thou be baptized? But why? What need hast Thou of baptism? Do the healthy need medicine, or do those that are clean require to be purified? What has sin to do with Thee, that baptism should be necessary for Thee? Is it for the sin of Thy Father? But Thy Father is God, and who does not know that God cannot have sin? and Thou art equal to Him, God of God and Light of Light. Is it for Thy Mother's sin? But she is a Virgin conceived without sin, and in Thy birth she preserved her virginal integrity. What blemish, then, can be found in the Lamb without spot?

"I ought to be baptized by thee," says John, "and comest thou to me?" The humility of each is great, but may not be compared. How could man fail to humble himself before a humble God? "Suffer it to be so now," Jesus says, "for so it behoveth us to fulfil all justice." John therefore consented and obeyed. He baptized the Lamb of God, and by their contact with our Lord the waters were cleansed. We were purified, not He; and the necessity of our being cleansed was prefigured in the purifying of the waters.

Lest, however, we should discredit the testimony of John—for he is a man, and liable to error, a relative, too, of Him to Whom he bears witness—a greater testimony is added to that of John—the Dove descends upon Christ. The dove is a fitting symbol to point out the Lamb of God. The lamb and the dove are equally the chosen emblems of perfect innocence, perfect gentleness, perfect simplicity; both are incapable of inflicting injury or practising deception.

That no one may suppose the appearance of the Dove to have been fortuitous, the testimony of God the Father is also added. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This is He Who later said of Himself, "I always do the things that please him."

O Lord Jesus, now at length speak to us, we entreat Thee. Too long—yea, greatly too long—Thou hast been silent and remained in obscurity. Now Thy Eternal Father's public recognition leaves Thee free to speak. How long shall the Power of God and the Wisdom of God remain hidden and unknown among the crowd? How long, O noble King, O King of Heaven, wilt Thou suffer Thyself to be called and be reputed the son of a carpenter?

O humility! O virtue of Christ! how terribly dost Thou confound our pride and vanity! I have, or, rather, I seem to myself to possess, some trifling knowledge, yet I cannot hold my tongue, but must shamelessly and recklessly thrust myself into notice only to make a display of what is rather my ignorance. I am ever prompt to speak, ready to impart my supposed knowledge, yet slow to accept information. Did, then, Christ fear vainglory even after His long silence and concealment? Why should He fear the glory of men Who is the true glory of the Father? He feared it not Himself, but for us, for whom it was very much to be feared, and thus He already warned and instructed us by His example what He would afterwards inculcate in word: “Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.”

Concerning the infancy of our Blessed Lord the Gospel gives us some information, but of the years intervening between it and His public life it tells us absolutely nothing. Now, however, that His Heavenly Father has openly pointed Him out, He can no longer remain concealed.

The third mystery celebrated on this day is the marriage feast of Cana. As in His first manifestation He willed to appear in the company of His Blessed Mother, so now at the third we also find her present. Our Lord had been “invited and his disciples to the marriage.” The wine failed. He had compassion on the confusion of the newly-married couple, and at the prayer of His Mother He vouch safed to change water into wine. “This beginning of says St. John miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee,”

In His first manifestation He was made known as truly man in the arms of His Mother; in the second as truly Son of God, from the testimony of His Eternal Father; in the third He is proved to be truly God, at Whose command Nature’s laws are reversed. These three mysteries commemorated on this day are so many proofs to confirm our faith, so many promises to strengthen our hope, so many incentives to inflame our love.

II

GO FORTH YE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

“Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him.”

OF the three manifestations of our Lord, which all took place on this day, though not all at one time, the first is the most wonderful, though the second and third also greatly deserve our study and contemplation. The change of water into

wine is an amazing miracle; the testimony of John, the descent of the Dove, the declaration of the Eternal Father, fill us with admiration; but the faith of the Magi in recognizing Christ under His disguise is indeed surpassingly wonderful.

By their adoration and their offering of incense they confess Jesus to be God. By their gold they show Him to be King as well as God. By their myrrh they acknowledge that His death, the sacrament of piety, had been revealed to them.

The Magi adore and offer gifts to an Infant in His Mother's arms. But where, O Magi, is the purple of royalty? Do you not see the poor rags in which He is wrapped? If He is a King, where is His diadem? But you do see Him in the diadem with which His Mother crowned Him—His sacred body, of which He will say at His Resurrection: "Thou hast cut my sackcloth, and hast compassed me with gladness."

"Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him." Go forth, ye angelic hosts, ye citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. Behold your King, but in our crown, in the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him; in the sacred humanity He has taken from us. Until now you have been deprived of these delights; up to this time you have not enjoyed this attractive sight. You have possessed Him in His Majesty, but not till this day have you seen Him in His humiliation. "Go forth, then, and see King Solomon."

Yet the angels need not our exhortation. This is He on Whom they ever desire to look. The more fully they know His greatness, the more precious and lovable do they find His lowliness. And though His abasement is for us a greater source of joy, because it is for us He was born and to us He was given, nevertheless they have been beforehand with us, and have encouraged us to rejoice. The angel Gabriel proved this when he announced "a great joy" to the shepherds. "And there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army."

Therefore it is to you, worldly souls, that we must direct these words "daughters of Sion"; to you, weak, delicate souls, daughters, not sons, in whom there is no fortitude, no manly courage. "Go forth, daughters of Sion." Go forth from the carnal mind to the understanding mind, from the servitude of the flesh to the liberty of the spirit. Go forth from your country, your kindred, your father's house, "and see King Solomon"; if you refuse, you may not safely meet Him in judgment. He is Solomon—that is, peaceful—in His dealings with us during our exile; He will be terrible in judgment; in His kingdom, as our reward, He will be our Beloved. In exile He is meek and amiable; in judgment just and terrible; in His kingdom glorious and wonderful. "Go forth," then, that you may

see Him, for everywhere He is King. Although His kingdom is not of this world, He is nevertheless King in this world. When asked by Pilate, “Art thou a King?” He replied: “For this was I born, and for this came I into this world.” Here, then, He is the regulator of morals; in judgment He will be the discriminator of merits, in His kingdom the dispenser of rewards.

“Go forth, daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother hath crowned him,” a crown of poverty, a crown of misery. Because, as He has been crowned on earth by His false mother—the Jewish Synagogu—with a crown of thorns, a crown of suffering, therefore should He be crowned by His children and servants with a crown of justice. For when He shall come to judge with the ancients of the people, the angels will go forth and gather all scandals out of His kingdom. Then all the earth shall fight for Him against the wicked and unwise. But the Father is now crowning Him with glory, as we read in the psalm, “Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour.”

Till then, behold Him, ye daughters of Sion, wearing the crown wherewith His mother hath crowned Him. Take up the humble crown of your King, become a Little One for your sake. Adore His humility, like the Magi whose faith and devotion are this day proposed for your imitation. To whom shall we compare these men? To whom shall we liken them? If we consider the faith of the penitent thief and the confession of the Centurion, the faith of the Magi seems to surpass theirs; inasmuch as the thief and Centurion had had the testimony of many miracles, our Lord’s fame had been spread far and wide, He had been acknowledged and adored by many.

The good thief cried out from his cross, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” His faith taught him that it was by His torments Christ was to enter into His kingdom. The Centurion’s faith revealed to him the divinity of our Lord. When he heard Him cry out with a loud voice in the very act of expiring, he exclaimed, “Truly this man was the Son of God.”

Oh, how wonderfully keen is the eye of faith! It knows the Son of God hanging on the cross, pierced with nails; it recognizes Him even in death, and here, in Bethlehem, with the Magi, it believes and confesses Him to be God, though a helpless Infant in the manger. What the others confessed by their words the Magi declared by their gifts. The thief believes Him a King; the Centurion, both man and the Son of God; the Magi acknowledge all three titles by their gold, their frankincense, and their myrrh.

I beseech you, therefore, dearly beloved, to draw profit from the immense charity which the God of Majesty has shown you; from the humility which He

accepted; and from the loving kindness which has been made apparent to you through Christ's humility. Let us give thanks to our merciful Mediator and Redeemer, by Whom the good-will of God the Father has been made known to us. For we have now so known His mind that we may truly say: "We so run not as at an uncertainty." For in truth the Father has given outward expression to His love for us by sending into this world His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

III

ON THE GIFTS OF THE WISE MEN

"Behold, there came wise men from the East … and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts."

WE seem to expect that, as on other feasts, so also on this day's solemnity, we should have some explanation of the mystery we commemorate. There are other days when we may very usefully speak on sin and vice; but on festival days, and especially on the greater festivals, it is preferable to dwell on what relates to the solemnity, that the mind may be enlightened and the affections also may be aroused. For how are we to solemnize what we are ignorant of, and how shall we know what preachers have not declared? Therefore let not the learned think it irksome if we comply with the demands of charity, and say a few words to those less instructed.

This day's festival, then, takes its name from the apparition of the star: Epiphany means appearance. To-day we celebrate still more definitely the appearance or manifestation of our Lord; and not one only, but three manifestations, as our fathers have transmitted to us. To-day our little King, a few days after His birth, appeared by means of a star to the Magi, the first-fruits of the Gentile world. On this day also He went to the Jordan to be baptized, and was there revealed to men by the testimony of God the Father. To-day, likewise, having been invited with His disciples to a marriage feast where the wine failed, He changed water into wine as a sign of His miraculous power. But the manifestation which took place in His infancy is the most attractive one, and we will consider it more attentively; both because it is a sweeter mystery and the one which is specially taken notice of in this day's liturgy.

To-day we have heard read in the Gospel of the feast that Wise Men came from the East to Jerusalem. With good reason did they come from the East who announced to us the new rising of the Sun of Justice, they who illuminated the

whole world with their joyful tidings. Unhappy Judea alone, on the contrary, by hating the light, was plunged into a deeper darkness by the effulgent brightness of the new light; her eyes, already clouded, were more incurably blinded by the flashing radiance of the Eternal Sun.

Let us listen to the words of these Wise Men coming from the East: “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” What unwavering faith! They have no hesitation. They do not question the fact of His birth, but only inquire where it had taken place. At the mention of the word “King” Herod “was troubled,” greatly fearing one who would supplant him in his kingdom. That he should fear is not surprising, but that Jerusalem—the City of God, the Vision of Peace—should be troubled with him is indeed a matter for wonder. Behold, how hurtful a wicked government is whose head seeks to bring subjects to conform to its own evil views! Woe to that State where a Herod reigns! It will without doubt share his impiety, and, like him, be troubled at the tidings of salvation. I trust in God that such a spirit will never reign among us, if, indeed, it has begun to get a footing, which may God forbid. It is the malice of a Herod to oppose and seek to stifle in their birth any rising efforts in the cause of religion, and to take part in what destroys the souls of God’s little ones. To do so is to join with Herod in seeking to murder the new-born Saviour.

But let us return to the history of this day’s mystery; it will lead us to avoid more carefully the spirit of Herod.

The Magi, pursuing their inquiries concerning the King of the Jews, learnt from the Scribes, whom Herod had assembled, the name of the place marked out by the Prophet Micheas for the birth of Christ, the Saviour of the world. Then, leaving the Jews, “behold, the star which they had seen in the east went before them.” This plainly shows that when they eagerly sought for human directions they lost the Divine leading; when they turned to earthly teaching the heavenly portent was withdrawn. But once they had left Herod and his court they were immediately “rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” For “the star went before them until it came and stood over where the child was.” “And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down, they adored him.”

Whence is this to you, O holy strangers? We have not found so great faith even in Israel. Is it possible that the mean dwelling of a stable and the poverty of the manger-crib do not shock you? That the sight of the poor Mother and her Infant offers you no stumbling-block? No, the Evangelist says: “Opening their treasures, they offered him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” If they had offered only gold, the poverty of the Mother, and how to provide her with the means of

bringing up her Child, might have appeared to be their one consideration. But the myrrh and frankincense, along with the gold, intimate the spiritual nature of their oblation.

Amongst worldly riches gold is looked upon as most precious, and this, by God's grace, we religious offered to our Saviour when, for His name, we heartily left all the substance of this world. Only, having left and utterly despised it, it behoves us to seek and eagerly desire the wealth that is heavenly. In like manner we continue to offer the sweet fragrance of incense, which St. John tells us signifies the prayers of the saints. The Prophet also, in Ps. 140., says: "Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight." And in Ecclesiasticus we read: "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart until the Most High behold."

That our prayer may thus rise to God it must have the two wings of contempt of the world and mortification of the flesh. Our offering will be a pleasing and acceptable sacrifice when, with gold and incense, we bring also our myrrh. Myrrh is bitter, but it is very useful, and preserves the body from returning to the corruption of sin.

We have so far said a few words which may lead us to imitate the offerings of the Magi; we will now show that each of the manifestations of our Lord is a proof of His Divinity.

"And entering into the house" the Wise Men "found the child with Mary his mother."

First, in His infant form which His Mother was fostering in her virginal bosom is manifested the reality of the flesh which He had assumed; and from the fact that the Holy Child was found with His Mother may it not be inferred that He is true Man and truly the Son of man?

In the second manifestation the voice of the Eternal Father—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—openly acknowledges our Blessed Lord to be the Son of God—God and Man; as does also the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him in the visible form of a dove.

In the third manifestation He evidently shows Himself to be God and the Author of nature, whose laws He can change at will.

Let us, then, with our whole hearts, love our Lord Jesus Christ as true Man and our Brother. Let us honour Him as Son of God, and adore Him as truly God. Let us firmly believe in Him, let us surrender ourselves utterly into His keeping, for He is neither wanting in power to save us, since He is true God and the true Son of God, nor in the will to save us, for He is, as it were, one of ourselves, true

Man and truly the Son of man. And how could He be inexorable to us Who became a sufferer for love of us?

SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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ST. BERNARD, O.CIST. Doctor of the church

TO THE MOST REVEREND BERNARD HACKETT, D.D. LORD BISHOP OF WATERFORD AND LISMORE, THIS TRANSLATION OF THE SERMONS OF

ST. BERNARD ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES IS HUMBLY AND RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

CONTENTS

SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES: VOLUME 1

- TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE
- CATHOLIC TESTIMONIES
- NON-CATHOLIC TESTIMONIES
- ST. BERNARD'S SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES
- SERMON I
  ON THE MEANING OF THE TITLE: "SOLOMON'S CANTICLE OF CANTICLES"
- SERMON II
  ON THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST, ANNOUNCED BY PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS
- SERMON III
  ON THE MYSTICAL KISS OF THE LORD'S FEET, HAND, AND MOUTH
- SERMON IV
  ON THE THREE STAGES OF THE SOUL'S PROGRESS, SYMBOLISED BY THE KISS OF CHRIST'S FEET, HAND, AND MOUTH
- SERMON V
  ON THE FOUR ORDERS OF SPIRITS
- SERMON VI
  ON THE KISS OF THE LORD'S FEET
- SERMON VII
  ON THE LOVE OF THE SPOUSE, AND ON THE ATTENTION DUE TO THE WORD OF GOD
- SERMON VIII
  ON THE KISS OF THE MOUTH INTERPRETED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
- SERMON IX
  ON THE BREASTS OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND OF THE SPOUSE
- SERMON X
  ON THE SPIRITUAL OINTMENTS
- SERMON XI
  ON THE MODE AND THE FRUIT OF REDEMPTION

SERMON XII
ON THE OINTMENT OF PIETY

SERMON XIII
GLORY BELONGS TO GOD ALONE

SERMON XIV
THE CHURCH AND THE SYNAGOGUE

SERMON XV
ON THE NAMES OF GOD, AND THE NAME OF JESUS

SERMON XVI
ON THE MYSTICAL SENSE OF THE NUMBER SEVEN

SERMON XVII
ON THE COMING AND GOING OF THE SPIRIT AND ON SATAN'S ENVY OF THE HUMAN RACE

SERMON XVIII
ON THE TWO OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST

SERMON XIX
ON THE DIFFERENT MOTIVES ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH CHRIST THE LORD IS LOVED BY THE VARIOUS CHOIRS OF ANGELS

SERMON XX
ON THE VARIOUS DEGREES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

SERMON XXI
IN WHAT MANNER THE SPOUSE, THAT IS THE CHURCH, DESIRES TO BE DRAWN TO HER BELOVED

SERMON XXII
ON THE FOUR OINTMENTS OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

SERMON XXIII
ON THE MYSTICAL MEANING OF THE GARDEN, THE STOREROOM, AND THE BEDCHAMBER

SERMON XXIV
ON DETRACTION AND THE NECESSITY OF UNITING FAITH WITH GOOD WORKS

SERMON XXV
ON THE BLACKNESS AND THE BEAUTY OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE

SERMON XXVI
IN WHAT SENSE THE BLACKNESS OF THE SPOUSE IS COMPARED TO THE TENTS OF CEDAR—THE SAINT'S LAMENT OVER HIS BROTHER

SERMON XXVII
IN WHAT SENSE THE BEAUTY OF THE SPOUSE MAY BE COMPARED TO THE CURTAINS OF SOLOMON

SERMON XXVIII
THE CURTAINS OF SOLOMON ARE EXPLAINED IN REFERENCE TO THE BLACKNESS OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE

SERMON XXIX
ON DOMESTIC DISCORD AND FRATERNAL CORRECTION

SERMON XXX
ON THE MYSTICAL VINEYARDS, AND CONCERNING THE PRUDENCE OF THE FLESH

SERMON XXXI
ON THE VARIOUS VISIONS OF GOD

SERMON XXXII
ON THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH THE WORD PRESENTS HIMSELF TO DIFFERENT SOULS, AND ON THE SOURCES OF GOOD AND EVIL THOUGHTS

SERMON XXXIII
ON THE THREE OBJECTS OF THE DEVOUT SOUL'S QUEST, ON THE MYSTICAL MERIDIAN, AND THE FOUR KINDS OF TEMPTATION

SERMON XXXIV
ON HUMILITY AND PATIENCE

SERMON XXXV
ON THE TWO KINDS OF IGNORANCE WHICH WE OUGHT TO FEAR AND TO AVOID

SERMON XXXVI
ON THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED IN THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

SERMON XXXVII
ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE IGNORANCE OF GOD AND OF SELF

SERMON XXXVIII
ON THE MANNER IN WHICH IGNORANCE OF GOD LEADS TO DESPAIR, AND ON THE BEAUTY OF THE SPOUSE

SERMON XXXIX
ON THE CHARIOTS OF PHARAO AND THE CAPTAINS OF HIS HOST

SERMON XL
ON THE CHEEKS OF THE SPOUSE AND WHAT CONSTITUTES THEIR BEAUTY

SERMON XLI
ON WHAT IS MEANT BY THE NECK OF THE SPOUSE AND BY THE CHAINS OF GOLD PROMISED HER

SERMON XLII
ON SUBMISSION TO CORRECTION, AND THE TWO KINDS OF HUMILITY

SERMON XLIII
ON THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES: VOLUME 2

ST. BERNARD'S SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

SERMON XLIV
ON THE MYSTICAL OIL AND WINE

SERMON XLV
ON THE TWOFOLD BEAUTY OF THE SOUL AND THE LANGUAGE EMPLOYED BETWEEN HERSELF AND HER BELOVED

SERMON XLVI
ON THE VIRTUES WHICH BELONG TO SUPERIORS AND INFERIORS

SERMON XLVII
ON THE FLOWER OF THE FIELD, THE FLOWER OF THE GARDEN, AND THE FLOWER OF THE BED-CHAMBER

SERMON XLVIII
ON THE EXCELLENCE AND DIGNITY OF CHRIST'S SACRED HUMANITY, AND ON WHAT IT IS TO BE, TO LIVE, AND TO SIT UNDER HIS SHADOW

SERMON XLIX
ON DISCRETION AS NECESSARY FOR WELL-ORDERED CHARITY

SERMON L
ON AFFECTIVE AND EFFECTIVE CHARITY, AND THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED IN BOTH

SERMON LI
ON THE MYSTICAL FLOWERS AND FRUITS, AND THE BRIDEGROOM'S RIGHT AND LEFT HAND

SERMON LII
ON THE MYSTICAL SLEEP OF THE SPOUSE, AND THE TWO KINDS OF ECSTASY

SERMON LIII
ON THE SPIRITUAL HILLS AND MOUNTAINS, AND THE LEAPINGS OF THE BRIDEGROOM

SERMON LIV
ON THE MANNER OF THE BRIDEGROOM'S SKIPPING, AND ON THE THREE KINDS OF FEAR

SERMON LV
ON THE DIVINE MERCY AND JUSTICE AS SIGNIFIED BY THE HART AND THE ROE, RESPECTIVELY

SERMON LVI
ON THE MYSTICAL SENSE OF THE WALL, THE WINDOWS, AND THE LATTICES

SERMON LVII
ON WATCHING FOR THE DIVINE VISITATION AND THE SIGNS BY WHICH IT IS KNOWN

SERMON LVIII
ON THE SPIRITUAL SEASONS AND THE NEED OF CONSTANT MORTIFICATION

SERMON LIX

ON HOLY DESIRES AND CONTINENCE AS SYMBOLISED BY THE TURTLE

SERMON LX
ON THE TWO KINDS OF FIGS, AND ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VINE AND THE FIG-TREE

SERMON LXI
ON THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST TYPIFIED BY THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK

SERMON LXII
ON THE TWO KINDS OF CONTEMPLATION CORRESPONDING TO THE HOLLOWS OF THE WALL AND THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK

SERMON LXIII
ON THE MYSTICAL VINEYARD AND THE FOXES THAT INVADE IT

SERMON LXIV
ON THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE MORE ADVANCED, AND ON THE MANNER OF CATCHING HERETICS, REPRESENTED BY FOXES

PREFACE TO SERMONS LXV AND LXVI
LETTER OF EBERWIN, PROVOST OF STEINFELD, TO ST. BERNARD, IN WHICH HE EXPLAINS THE FALSE DOCTRINES OF THE COLOGNE HERETICS AND BEGS THE HOLY ABBOT TO COMBAT THEM

SERMON LXV
ON THE DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF CONTEMPORARY HERETICS

SERMON LXVI
ON THE HERETICAL DOCTRINES CONCERNING MARRIAGE, HOLY ORDERS, AND PURGATORY

SERMON LXVII
ON MYSTICAL ERUCTATION AND ON GRACE, ANTECEDENT AND CONSEQUENT

SERMON LXVIII
ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM ATTENDS TO HIS SPOUSE AND SHE TO HIM

SERMON LXIX
ON LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL PRESUMPTION, ON THE ZEAL OF JUSTICE AND THE ZEAL OF CHARITY, AND ON THE LOVING FAMILIARITY BETWEEN GOD AND THE FAITHFUL SOUL

SERMON LXX
ON THE MYSTICAL LILIES AMONG WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM LOVES TO FEED

SERMON LXXI
ON THE COLOUR AND ODOUR OF THE SPIRITUAL LILIES, AND ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE UNITY OF NATURE IN THE FATHER AND THE SON, AND THE UNITY OF WILL IN CREATOR AND CREATURE

SERMON LXXII

ON THE SPIRITUAL LIGHTS AND SHADOWS, DAYS AND NIGHTS

SERMON LXXIII
ON THE FORM IN WHICH CHRIST WILL COME TO THE JUDGMENT, AND ACCORDING TO WHICH, ALTHOUGH MADE “A LITTLE LESS,” HE IS STILL SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS

SERMON LXXIV
ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM COMES AND GOES, AND ON THE NECESSITY OF UNITING GRACE AND TRUTH

SERMON LXXV
ON THE TIME, PLACE, AND MANNER IN WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM SHOULD BE SOUGHT

SERMON LXXVI
ON THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN, AND ON THE QUALITIES REQUISITE IN A FAITHFUL PASTOR OF SOULS

SERMON LXXVII
ON UNWORTHY PASTORS, AND ON THE WATCHMEN BY WHOM THE SPOUSE IS FOUND AND GUARDED

SERMON LXXVIII
ON THE ETERNAL PREDESTINATION OF THE SPOUSE, AND ON THE MANNER IN WHICH SHE HAS BEEN PREPARED AND PREVENTED BY GRACE AND FOUND BY THE PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL

SERMON LXXIX
ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SPOUSE PASSED BEYOND THE WATCHMEN, AND ON THE FINAL RECONCILIATION OF CHRIST WITH THE SYNAGOGUE

SERMON LXXX
ON THE IMAGE OF GOD, AND THE SOUL WHICH IS MADE ACCORDING TO THE IMAGE; AND ON THE ERRORS OF GILBERT DE LA PORREE

SERMON LXXXI
ON THE SOUL’S LIKENESS TO THE WORD IN THE THREE ATTRIBUTES OF SIMPLICITY, IMMORTALITY AND LIBERTY

SERMON LXXXII
ON THE MANNER IN WHICH SIN SPOILS THE LIKENESS OF THE SOUL TO GOD BY COMBINING THE CONTRARY QUALITIES WITH HER SIMPLICITY, IMMORTALITY AND LIBERTY

SERMON LXXXIII
ON THE RIGHT OF EVERY SOUL TO ASPIRE TO THE NUPTIALS OF THE WORD, AND IN WHAT THIS SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE CONSISTS

SERMON LXXXIV
ON SEEKING GOD

SERMON LXXXV
ON THE SEVEN REASONS ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH THE SOUL SEEKS THE WORD

SERMON LXXXVI
ON THE VIRTUE OF MODESTY

APPENDIX A

ON THE SACRED HEART

“SUMMI REGIS COR AVETO”

APPENDIX B

GLORIES OF SAINTS BERNARD AND AUGUSTINE

SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES: VOLUME 1

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

So far as I am aware, this is the first attempt on the part of a Catholic to render St. Bernard's famous Discourses on the Canticle of Canticles available for English readers. It is passing strange that it should be so; passing strange that the most important work, perhaps, of him who has been called by excellence the Doctor of Love and the Prince of Mystics, should be so neglected. But the Sermons on the Canticle are not singular in this respect. The same neglect has been extended to practically all the writings of the Melliduous Doctor, with great loss to spirituality. The cause of this is not easy to determine. Want of appreciation it can hardly be. Surely no one could read those grandest of prose-poems, those sweetest of love-songs, which have been for ages the delight of religious souls and have nourished the piety of saints unnumbered, without feeling his heart touched and his mind illumined. But, whatever the explanation, the fact remains, and it does not speak well for Catholic scholarship. For it is only by those of the household that St. Bernard has been so forgotten. Non-Catholic writers have shown themselves, if not more appreciative, at any rate, more jealous and enterprising. One cannot help feeling a sense of shame at beholding the elegant translations of some of the Saint's more celebrated treatises, published even in our own times, by such Protestant scholars as Drs. Eales and Gardner. It looks as if, by a strange irony of fate, heresy had obtained a monopoly of the very man who, in his day, was its most formidable opponent.

It would not be easy to exaggerate the influence, direct and indirect, of St. Bernard's writings on the religious history of the last eight centuries. According to Horstius, who wrote about 1679, they were more universally read, and republished more frequently, than the works of any other of the Fathers. Not alone have they served the Church as a powerful means of edification, but even many of the most beautiful devotions which adorn her liturgy and strengthen her hold on the hearts of her children, owe to them their inspiration or their popularity—such as the devotion to the Sacred Heart, to the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, to St. Joseph, to the Holy Angels, and the Guardian Angels in particular. Mystical and ascetical writers of every age, since their first publication, have found in them an inexhaustible mine of spiritual treasures,

wherewith they have not hesitated to enrich their own compositions. Thus many of the brilliant epigrams and beautiful images which adorn the pages of popular authors are but borrowed plumes, derived from the works of St. Bernard. Sir Francis Cruise has shown how enormously the author of the Imitation is indebted to our Saint. His influence is also clearly discernible in the two other works which, in their various ways, had perhaps the largest share in moulding medieval thought, viz., St. Thomas's Summa Theologica and Dante's Divina Commedia. The same is true of the works of St. John of the Cross and St. Francis of Sales, the two great masters of the spiritual life most in favour with modern mystics. The highest honour which can be rendered to any writer is the adoption of his words into the dogmatic system of Christ's infallible Church, which are thus, in some sense, put on a level with the inspired oracles of Holy Writ. According to the Abbé Ratisbon, such honour was paid to the writings of St. Bernard by the great Council of Trent, for in its authentic exposition of the doctrine of justification it "reproduces his teaching almost word for word."

As to the intrinsic excellence of those writings, it would, of course, be the height of presumption on my part to venture an opinion. But I think the reader will thank me if I present him with a few appreciations from the pens of competent judges. They have been selected with a view to the greatest variety as regards age, nationality, and religious persuasion.

CATHOLIC TESTIMONIES

I call to mind his holy and wonderful life, how he was endowed with a singular prerogative of grace, and not only did he possess in himself in an extraordinary degree the gifts of devotion and sanctity, but he also illustrated the universal Church of God with the light of his faith and his learning.—POPE ALEXANDER III.

By the acuteness of his genius, the sanctity of his life, and his knowledge of Sacred Scripture, he rendered most important service to the Universal Church.… With voice and pen he attacked and confounded the heretics of his time, and by his learning defended the Roman See against its assailants.—POPE PIUS VIII.

The works of St. Bernard have a flavour of admirable sweetness so that he is always read with a holy delight.—CARDINAL VALERIUS.

He was gifted with a sublime eloquence, and so rich in saintly wisdom and eminent in holiness, that while we garner his teaching we should make his life our model. Bernard, the great contemplative (altissimus contemplator), tasted all the sweetness of prayer; if you, too, would find a relish in prayer, ruminate his words. Not only are they spiritual and heart-penetrating, but they are also exquisite in style and calculated to impel you to the service of God.—ST. BONAVENTURE.

In him we see gleaming the nine precious stones of which the Prophet Ezechiel speaks, by which are signified the nine choirs of angels, for Bernard possessed the virtues and exercised the offices of all the angelic orders. His mouth was a chalice of purest gold, all studded with jewels, making the whole world drunk with the wine of its sweetness.—ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

Blessed art thou, O honey-tongued Bernard, amongst all the Doctors of the Church, whose soul was marvellously enlightened by the eternal splendours of the Word, who from the abundance of thy heart spoke so sweetly and so touchingly of the Saviour's Passion.… No wonder thy tongue should distil such sweetness, since thy heart was filled with the honey that flows from meditation on the sufferings of Christ.—B. HENRY SUSO.

He lived most holily and taught most excellently.… As the face of Moses shone so brightly from the divine communications vouchsafed him that it dazzled the eyes of the people, so did Bernard radiate throughout the Church the light of heavenly knowledge with which his soul was flooded.—WILLIAM OF PARIS.

St. Bernard was truly an apostolic man. Rather he was a true apostle sent by God, mighty in word and work, everywhere confirming his mission by his miracles, so that in no respect does he come short of the great apostles.—CARDINAL BARONIUS.

St. Bernard was truly an apostle, not less illustrious for his miracles than for the splendour of his wisdom. He has more miracles to his credit than any other saint whose life has been written.—CARDINAL BELLARMIN.

Bernard is sweet, pious, penetrating, elegant, eloquent, inflaming.—RIBERA.

His discourse is every way sweet and ardent. It so delights and fervently inflames, that, from his most sweet tongue, honey and milk seem to flow in his words, and out of his most ardent breast a fire of burning affections breaks out.—SIXTUS SINENSIS.

Where can any one find for himself a more excellent teacher of divine love than this Saint, whose words are but so many sparks shot forth from the furnace of charity?—GERSON.

Of all the Greek Fathers I am most pleased with Chrysostom, who excels in fluency, variety, and every kind of ornament. Amongst the Latins I prefer Bernard, whose ardour and piquancy arouse the emotions, whilst his acuteness and wisdom inform the mind.—LIPSIUS.

No monk ever either wrote better or lived more holily.… Bernard's language is unusually limpid and prudent. Hence he is often highly praised, even by the enemies of the Church, not only for his great learning, but also for his skill and moderation as a teacher.—B. PETER CANISIUS.

Bernard enkindles in the hearts of his readers the same sweet flame of love which consumes his own. His lips distil milk and honey, especially when he speaks of the Incarnate Word or His Virgin Mother.—CORNELIUS A LAPIDE.

Bernard is Christianly learned, holily eloquent, devoutly cheerful and pleasant, powerful in moving the passions.—ERASMUS.

Read that most beautiful book De Consideratione, and from its most noble style you will understand that the author was more eloquent than Demosthenes, more subtle than Aristotle, wiser than Plato, more prudent than Socrates.—HELINANDUS.

His works are the most useful for piety amongst all the writings of the Fathers.—VALOIS.

The elect of God amongst the elect, the most excellent teacher of religious, the light and glory of monks, the model and example of the devout, who was presented from on high with such graces, adorned with such qualities, distinguished by such privileges, that no mind is powerful enough to conceive his greatness, no tongue eloquent enough to speak his praises.—DENIS THE CARTHUSIAN.

Next to the Sacred Scriptures, no works should be more prized by the religious-minded, for none are more profitable, than those of St. Bernard. In them are found united all the perfections dispersed through the works of others: solidity of doctrine, grace of style, variety of matter, elegance of diction, conciseness, fervour, force of expression.—MABILLON.

It is impossible to find a more sublime personification of the Catholic Church, combating against the heretics of his time, than the illustrious Abbot of Clairvaux, who speaks, as it were, in the name of the Christian faith. No one could more worthily represent the ideas and sentiments which the Church endeavoured to diffuse amongst mankind, or more faithfully delineate the course through which Catholicism would have led the human intellect. Let us pause in the presence of this gigantic mind, which attained to an eminence far beyond any of its contemporaries. This extraordinary man fills the world with his name, upheaves it with his word, sways it by his influence. In the midst of darkness he is its light.… His exposition of a point of doctrine is remarkable for ease and lucidity; his demonstrations are vigorous and conclusive; his reasoning is conducted with a force of logic that presses hard upon his adversary and leaves him no means of escape; in defence his quickness and address are surprising. In his answers he is clear and precise; in repartee ready and penetrating; and without dealing in the subtleties of the schools, he displays wonderful tact in disengaging truth from error, sound reason from artifice and

fraud. Here is a man formed entirely and exclusively under the influence of Catholicism, a man who never dreamed of setting his intellect free from the yoke of authority; and yet he rises like a mighty pyramid above all the men of his time.—BALMEZ

St. Bernard in his writings is equally tender, sweet, and vigorous. His style is lively, sublime, and pleasant.… He treats theological subjects after the manner of the ancients, on which account, and because of the great excellence of his writings he is reckoned amongst the Fathers. And though the youngest of them in time, he is one of the most useful to those who desire to study and to improve their hearts in sincere piety.—ALBAN BUTLER.

There seems to have been in this one mind an inexhaustible abundance, variety, and versatility of gifts. Without ever ceasing to be the holy and mortified religious, St. Bernard appears to be the ruling will of his time. He stands forth as pastor, preacher, mystical writer, controversialist, reformer, pacificator, mediator, arbiter, diplomatist, and statesman. Of all the writers of the first thousand years of the Church, none is more full of fervent, adoring, tender love for our Divine Lord, and none is more conspicuous for ardent affection and veneration for the Mother of God.—CARDINAL MANNING.

Nature's favourite, grace enriched him with her choicest gifts.… A prodigy of eloquence, speaking to all the stern language of duty and yet ever winning the enthusiastic love of all, he was a living miracle of the power of religion and of the heavenly charm of grace. As an orator and a writer he stands foremost in his day.… His style is spirited and flowery, his thoughts ingenious; his imagination brilliant and rich in allegories; his assiduous meditation on and study of the Sacred Text had so interwoven it with his thoughts that their every utterance naturally reproduced its ideas and expression.—DARRAS.

We know a man who, though living in solitude, could sway the world and direct the Church by the charm of his words and the power of his genius. Though the mildest of men, he was at the same time the most resolute.… We speak of St. Bernard, whose mental and moral greatness his contemporaries in the twelfth century knew so well how to prize.—ROHRBACHER.

Thou art he, O mellifluous Bernard, who dost continue still, as heretofore, to irrigate the world with the dew of thy heavenly doctrine and most sweetly to refresh it with thy writings, flowing with milk and honey. Whilst perusing these, we seem to enjoy the pleasures of the promised land, even in this place of horror and desolation, and the bitter waters of the desert appear to be sweetened with a foretaste of our future bliss.—HORST.

What can so enliven our devotion, excite our contrition, or inflame our love as the life and teaching of the blessed Father St. Bernard? Where shall we find one more efficacious in exhorting to virtue, in dissuading from vice, in lifting our affections from earth to heaven?—DE HASSIA.

NON-CATHOLIC TESTIMONIES

Bernard surpasses all the other Doctors of the Church.—LUTHER.

The Abbot Bernard, in his books De Consideratione, speaks in the language of truth itself.—CALVIN.

Who can write more sweetly than Bernard? His meditations I call a river of Paradise, spiritual nectar, the food of angels, the very soul of piety.—HEIN.

A few of Bernard's pages contain more spirit and life and doctrine and faith than all the writings of Jerome.—NEANDER.

In speech, in writing, in action, Bernard stood high above his rivals and contemporaries.… He became the oracle of Europe.—GIBBON.

Never has there been a religious better able to reconcile engrossment in the tumult of affairs with the austerity of his state of life. He, beyond all others, acquired an influence springing from purely personal merits and surpassing in efficacy official authority.—VOLTAIRE.

St. Bernard was the most eloquent, the most influential, the most piously disinterested of the Christians of his age.—GUIZOT.

We are used to speak of St. John as the Apostle of Love. The title "Doctor of Love" will sufficiently define St. Bernard's place among the theologians of the Church.—GARDNER.

One would hardly know where to find a brighter example of the power which is imparted to the preacher by this always noble, if sometimes dangerous and misleading, faculty (of imagination). It is perpetually apparent in Bernard. Whatever else he is or is not, he is never commonplace. His mind is fruitful in large suggestions, and the text is often hardly more than a nest from which, like the eagle, he lifts himself on eager wing, to touch, if he may, the stars of light.—STORRS.

With respect to the Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles in particular, I cannot refrain from quoting a few additional witnesses, even at the risk of wearying the reader:—

They contain whatever the holy Doctor has said in his other works appertaining to morals and piety; in fact, all that he ever wrote on the virtues and vices and the spiritual life. All this he repeats in these Discourses, but with greater solidity and elevation of style, whilst he removes the veils and obscurities from the mystical and allegorical senses of the Sacred Text, and brings forth to the light all the secrets of perfection, in a manner no less delightful than sublime.—MABILLON.

He spoke to men in the language of angels and they were scarcely able to understand it.—FLEURY.

The questions so beautifully treated here are precisely those which appear in St. Thomas's Summa.—DALGAIRNS.

In this immortal code of divine love, he celebrates the nuptials of the soul with God, and depicts in lines

> of light that Bride who loves only for the sake of loving and being loved.… Human tenderness, no matter how eloquent, has never inspired accents more passionate or more profound.—MONTALEMBERT.
>
> The Sermons are tremulous with the incessant immer of allegories.… so rich in their spiritual suggestiveness that they strike upon the mind like rays straight from heaven, and belonging to that "light that never was on sea or shore."—EALES.

The Sermons were begun in the Advent of 1135, after the Saint's return from his second mission to Aquitaine, which had resulted happily in the conversion of Duke William. The first suggestion of them came from the Carthusian, Bernard de Portis. So much is clear from two extant letters on the subject, addressed by the holy Abbot to this religious. In the earlier of these, he gently remonstrates with his friend, who, as he says, was imposing on him a task for which he had neither time nor talent. "The more insistent you have been in asking," he writes, "the more resolute have I been in refusing, not out of disregard for you but through compassion for myself.… My reluctance has been proportionate to your eagerness. Do you ask why? I will tell you. It is because of my fears lest such great expectations should be disappointed by the birth of nothing better than the 'ridiculous mouse.' " However, he yields to his friend's importunity and promises to send on immediately a few of the Sermons on the Canticle, already composed, in order to cure him of the desire for any more. Still, should these meet with his correspondent's approval, he engages to go forward with the work according to his opportunities. In the second letter, after apologising for not having kept an appointment to visit the Carthusian community, he says: "The Sermons on the Canticles which you asked and which I promised you, I am forwarding herewith. When you have gone through them, write and tell me whether I am to proceed or to desist." Some have supposed that this Bernard de Portis is the Friend to whom the Saint refers in his first Discourse.

During the eighteen years that intervened between this commencement and his death, in 1153, St. Bernard continued his lectures, preaching sometimes every day, as we learn from Sermon XXII; sometimes only on festivals, according as his health and preoccupations permitted. But interruptions were frequent and long, for the Preacher was often called away to bring to an end a dangerous schism, or to make peace between princes, or to put a stop to scandals, or to marshal the forces of Europe for another mighty effort against the powers of the Saracen. Although many passages occur, which were evidently spoken extempore, the Saint, as a rule, took pains with the preparation of his Discourses. One of his biographers gives us a pleasing picture of him reposing from his

external labours in the seclusion of a garden bower, formed of a trellis covered over with sweet-pea; it was there, whilst absorbed in divine contemplation, that his soul was filled with these songs of love, these spiritual epithalamiums. There is evidence in the Sermons themselves that, sometimes at any rate, they were only written down after being delivered to the brethren in the monastic auditorium. On such occasions, only the choir religious, including the novices, attended, the lay-brothers not being supposed to understand Latin. Mabillon, however, states that the Saint himself, for their benefit, preached the same Discourses in the French language, and that he had himself examined some of these translations in manuscript. Such charity would not surprise us in St. Bernard. The hour for these love-feasts varied. Sometimes it was in the morning, as we gather from Sermons I and XLVII; sometimes in the evening, as is implied in Sermon LXXI.

The reader may feel disappointed if he fails to bear in mind that the holy Abbot is here not commenting, but preaching, on the “Song of Solomon,” and is, therefore, entitled to the liberties of a preacher. As a matter of fact, the text serves him but as a frame whereon to weave the wondrously beautiful fabrics of an extraordinarily fertile fancy, as a point of departure whence to wing his luminous way around the wide-extended realms of thought, or as a watch-tower, from which to contemplate all things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Thus these Sermons, instead of being dry-as-dust homilies, are as varied and many-coloured as is the spiritual life, every aspect of which they discuss with equal solidity and elegance. They exhibit the same independence of thought and treatment which characterise all the other works of their Author. Saints Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory the Great are almost the only human authorities whom St. Bernard ever makes use of, and even on these his dependence is very slight. On the other hand, no other writer is so full of Holy Scripture, from which he borrows something in nearly every sentence. Even when he is not actually quoting from it, his speech is unconsciously attuned to the music of its cadences.

The saintly Preacher had purposed to go over the whole of the Canticle. But death overtook him whilst engaged on the first verse of the third chapter, that is, when he had completed a fourth of his task, in eighty-six Sermons. In some editions we find the number eighty-seven, but this is because the two readings of XXIV are given as distinct Sermons, or because one of the longer Discourses has been divided. Only eighty-six Sermons in eighteen years! Yes, but if you consider the multitudinous cares, the “solicitudes for all the Churches,” and for

all the States as well, that pressed upon the Saint, you will rather wonder how he found time to accomplish so much. Nevertheless, supremely important as were his services to religion and society in his capacities as churchman and statesman, canonist, propagandist, and peace-maker, we cannot but lament, as he himself lamented, the necessities that called him away from this more congenial occupation. One Gilbert of Hoiland took up the work where St. Bernard left off, and advanced as far as verse 10 of chapter v. in forty-eight Sermons, which, in the judgment of Mabillon, are almost worthy of the Saint himself. According to the same eminent authority, this Gilbert was an Irishman, and Abbot of St. Mary's, Dublin. Horst supposed him to have been Abbot of another Cistercian house of the same name in Lincoln. But as the evidence in favour of this view was fully known to Mabillon yet failed to influence him, we are justified in regarding it as negligible.

The only merit claimed for this Translation is that of fidelity to the original. I have endeavoured to represent the author's thought simply and clearly without any effort after ornament or eloquence. The undertaking has been far from easy. An eminent prelate, now no more, used to declare that St. Bernard was untranslatable. That is certainly an exaggeration. But so much at least is true, that hardly is there another writer whose thought is so difficult to detach from his language, because there is hardly another whose language is so closely wedded to his thought. Logicians tell us that words are only conventional signs of ideas, but one feels inclined to make an exception in the case of St. Bernard. With him the ideas seemed to have blossomed into expression naturally and spontaneously, so wonderful is the felicitousness and aptness of the latter. All this, of course, as well as the unnumbered inimitable graces of style and diction which make the Latin so delightful to read, has been lost in the translation. Hence it appears how inadequately these pages represent the original. But it is enough for me if I have succeeded, as I hope I have, in rendering accessible to those for whom the Latin is a sealed fountain the authoritative teaching of so great a Master of the interior life. The dissemination of such doctrines can hardly fail to be fruitful of good, especially in these days of spiritual renaissance, when so many souls are looking for light, when so many questions are being asked concerning the relation between modern mysticism and the medieval, when mysticism itself is attracting so much attention, both within and without the Church, and so many religious "specialists" are loudly advertising their own misty varieties of the thing, or their nebulous theories thereon.

It has been thought advisable to publish the present Translation of the

Sermons on the Canticle in two volumes, each containing forty-three Discourses. A third volume, uniform with these, shall include, with selected treatises, the Saint's twenty-seven Homilies on Psalm 90. These have never before appeared in English, and are in quite the same style and of equal merit with those on the Song of Solomon.

Feast of St. Bernard, 1919.

ST. BERNARD'S SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

SERMON I

ON THE MEANING OF THE TITLE: “SOLOMON’S CANTICLE OF CANTICLES”

You, my brethren, require instruction different from that which would suit people living in the world, and if not in matter, in manner, at least. For a teacher who would follow the example of St. Paul, should give them “milk to drink, not meat.” But more solid food must be set before spiritual persons, as the same Apostle teaches us by his practice. “We speak,” he says, “not in the learned words of human wisdom, but in the doctrine of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” Again, “We speak wisdom amongst the perfect”—such, my brethren, as I believe you to be, unless, indeed, it is to no purpose that you have been so long engaged in the study of spiritual things, in mortifying your senses, and in meditating day and night on the law of God. So now open your mouths to receive not milk, but bread. It is the bread of Solomon, and is exceedingly good and palatable. For the Book entitled the Canticle of Canticles is the bread I speak of, which may now, if you please, be brought forth to be broken.

By the words of Ecclesiastes, you have been, I think, through the grace of God, already sufficiently enlightened to understand and despise the vanity of this world. What need to mention the Book of Proverbs? Is not your whole life and conduct regulated and reformed in perfect accordance with the doctrines contained therein? Having, therefore, tasted first both these loaves of bread, borrowed, however, from the cupboard of the Friend, you are now invited to try this third loaf, which, mayhap, you will find stronger. As there are two evils which, solely or especially, wage war against the soul, we are given the two Books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs to oppose to them. Of these the former, using the hoe of discipline, grubs out whatever is corrupt in our morals, and whatever is superfluous in the indulgence of the flesh; whilst the latter, by the light of reason, prudently discovers the smoke of vanity in all worldly glory, and distinguishes it faithfully from the solidity of truth, putting the fear of God and

the observance of His commandments before all human interests and earthly desires. This is well. Such fear is the beginning of true wisdom, as such observance is its consummation—assuming you agree with me that the only true and perfect wisdom consists in avoiding evil and doing good. For without the fear of God it is impossible to avoid evil perfectly, and there is no good work possible without the observance of the commandments.

Now, then, after ridding ourselves of these two evils by the study of those two books, we may confidently take in hand this third discourse on holy contemplation, which, being the fruit of the preceding, should only be entrusted to sober minds and chastened ears. For it would be criminal presumption on the part of imperfect souls to occupy themselves with such a sacred subject before the flesh has been tamed by discipline and subdued to the spirit, and the vanity and cares of the world despised and abjured. Just as the eye that is blind or closed cannot profit by the light poured upon it, "so the animal man perceiveth not those things which are of the Spirit of God." The reason is, because the "Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful," that is, from a man of ill-regulated life, neither will He ever have part with the vanity of the world, inasmuch as He is the Spirit of truth. For what society hath the wisdom which is from above with that of the world, which is foolishness in the sight of God, or with that of the flesh, which is the enemy of God?

Anyhow, I suppose the "friend, who cometh to us off his journey," will have no reason to complain of us when he has helped himself to this third loaf of bread. But who shall break it to us? Lo! we have here the Father of the family Himself, as it is written, you shall "know the Lord in the breaking of the bread." Who else but He is capable? As for me, I am not rash enough to undertake such a task. You must, therefore, my brethren, so look upon me as to look for nothing from me. For I also am one of those who hope, a beggar, like yourselves, for the food of my soul, for a spiritual alms. Poor and needy, I appeal to Him "Who openeth and no man shutteth," begging Him to reveal to us the deep mysteries contained in this Book. "The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord." "The little ones have asked for bread and there is no one to break it unto them." For this we look to Thy gracious mercy. Therefore, O most Loving-kind! break Thy bread to the hungry, by my hands, if it so please Thee, but by Thine own power.

And, first of all, tell us, I beseech Thee, by whom, of whom, and to whom is it said, "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth"? And what means this abruptness, this sudden beginning in the middle of the discourse? For the words are so uttered as if there had been a previous speaker to whom this other is

represented as if replying, whoever she is that solicits the kiss. Again, if she requests or demands to be kissed by someone, why ask expressly and explicitly that this be done with the mouth and with his own mouth, as if it were customary to give such an embrace otherwise, or by proxy? Yet she is not content with saying, “let him kiss me with his mouth,” but uses the still more unusual expression, “with the kiss of his mouth.” A pleasant discourse this, surely, which begins with a kiss. In truth, the smiling face, so to speak, of this part of Scripture entices and allures us to read, so that it is a delight to investigate, even with labour, its hidden meanings; for the difficulty of inquiry never wearies when we are charmed by the sweetness of the discourse. Yet who can help having his attention aroused by this beginning without a beginning, and this novelty of language in an ancient book? Here we have proof that this work is no product of human genius, but composed by the art of the Holy Spirit, in the fact that despite its being so difficult to understand, it is at the same time such a pleasure to study.

But are we to pass over the title? No, my brethren, we must not omit a single iota, since we are commanded to gather up the smallest fragments, lest they be lost. The title runs, “The Beginning of Solomon’s Canticle of Canticles.” Observe, in the first place, how fitly the name Solomon, which, in the Hebrew, signifies the “Peaceful One,” stands at the head of a book which takes its beginning from the token of peace, that is, from a kiss. Notice, also, that such a beginning invites to the understanding of this Canticle only peaceful souls, those, namely, who have succeeded in freeing themselves from the tumult of the passions and the distractions of temporal cares. Nor should the fact that the Book is not called a canticle, but the Canticle of Canticles, be regarded as insignificant. I have, indeed, read many canticles in Sacred Scripture, but none other, as far as I can remember, bearing such a title. Israel sang a hymn to the Lord, after escaping the sword and the yoke of Pharaoh, what time the sea rendered them the double service of delivering them from danger and wreaking vengeance on their enemies. Yet that hymn was not called the Canticle of Canticles. Holy Scripture simply says, if my memory serves me aright, that “Israel sang this song to the Lord.” Debbora, too, sang a canticle, as did also Judith, and the mother of Samuel, and several of the prophets. But we do not read that any of these canticles were called the Canticle of Canticles. You will find, I think, that all those persons sang their songs on account of some benefit bestowed upon themselves or their nation, as for a victory gained, or a danger avoided, or the acquisition of some coveted object. Such singers, therefore, had special motives for their canticles, and sang to show their gratitude for the divine

favours, as it is written, “He will confess to Thee when Thou shalt benefit him.” But King Solomon, excelling in wisdom, exalted in glory, and secure in peace, is known to have stood in need of no earthly object the acquisition of which would stimulate him to sing this canticle of his. Nor do his own writings anywhere give occasion for such a surmise. We must therefore suppose that, under divine inspiration, he celebrates the praises of Christ and His Church, the grace of heavenly love, and the mysteries of the eternal marriage. He also gives expression to the desires of the holy soul, and exulting in spirit, composed this nuptial song in sweet but figurative language. For, like Moses, he veils his countenance, here, perhaps, not less dazzlingly bright than the Lawgiver’s on Mount Sinai, because at that time very few, if any, could endure to gaze upon the glory of his naked face. In my opinion, therefore, this marriage hymn owes its title to its excellence, and with good reason is singularly called the Canticle of Canticles in the same way as He to Whom it is sung is singularly named “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

And you, my brethren, if you look back upon your own experience, have not you also sung a new canticle to the Lord, “because He worked wonders,” in the victory wherewith your faith “hath vanquished the world,” and in your deliverance out of “the pit of misery and the mire of dregs”? Again, when He added the further grace of setting your feet upon the rock and directing your steps, I am sure that for this indulgence of a new life, your mouths were filled with another “new canticle, a hymn to our God.” And when your penitence obtained from Him not only the pardon of your sins but even the promise of reward—did you not with still greater fervour, rejoicing in the hope of future goods, sing your songs “in the ways of the Lord, because great is the glory of the Lord”? And if for any amongst you a mysterious or obscure text of Scripture has sometimes become, on a sudden, luminous with meaning, surely it was a duty to charm the ears of God “with the voice of joy and peace, the sound of one feasting,” in return for the alms of heavenly bread bestowed. But even in these daily trials and combats, in which all who live piously in Christ are kept constantly engaged by the world, the flesh, and the devil—thus constantly experiencing in themselves that the life of man upon earth is a warfare—in these also, I say, we find the obligation of daily singing new canticles for victories achieved. As often as a temptation is overcome, or a vice eradicated, or an imminent danger avoided, or a hidden snare discovered, or any deeply rooted and inveterate passion finally and completely vanquished, or some virtue, long and eagerly desired and often asked for, is at last obtained through the grace of

God, so often, according to the Prophet, should we sound forth our thanks and praise and bless “God in His gifts” for each benefit received. For, when the Judgment comes, he shall be considered an ingrate who cannot say to God, “Thy justifications were the subject of my song in the place of my pilgrimage.”

I think, my brethren, you already recognise in your own experience those canticles, which in the Psalter are not called the Canticle of Canticles, but the “Canticles of the Steps.” For at every advance you make towards perfection, according to the “ascents” which each has “disposed in his heart,” a particular canticle has to be sung to the praise and glory of Him Who advances you. I do not see how otherwise can be fulfilled the verse, “A voice of exultation and salvation in the tabernacle of the just.” Still less that most beautiful and salutary exhortation of the Apostle, “In psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.” But there is one canticle which, by reason of its singular excellence and sweetness, surpasses all those I have mentioned and all others whatsoever. This I would name the Canticle of Canticles, because it is the fruit of all the rest. Grace alone can teach it, nor can it be learned save by experience. It is for the experienced, therefore, to recognise it, and for others to burn with the desire, not so much of knowing, as of feeling it; since this canticle is not a noise made by the mouth but a jubilee of the heart, not a sound of the lips but a tumult of internal joys, not a symphony of voices but a harmony of wills. It is not heard outside, for it sounds not externally. The singer alone can hear it, and He to Whom it is sung, namely, the Bridegroom and the Bride. For it is a nuptial song, celebrating the chaste and joyous embraces of loving hearts, the concord of minds, and the union resulting from reciprocal affection.

Yet this canticle can neither be heard nor sung by souls that are weak and imperfect, and but recently converted from the world, but only by such as are advanced and sufficiently enlightened. For these, by their progress under the grace of God, have so increased, that they have now come to maturity and to the marriageable age, so to speak, measuring time by merits rather than by years. They are ripe for the mystical nuptials of the Heavenly Bridegroom, as will be more fully explained in its proper place. Now, it is the hour at which both our poverty and our Rule require us to go forth to manual labour. To-morrow I will resume, in the name of the Lord, my discourse on the mystical kiss, having in to-day’s sermon sufficiently expounded the meaning of the title.

SERMON II

ON THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST, ANNOUNCED BY PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth."

Whenever I reflect, as I very often do, on the yearning and ardent desires of the fathers for the presence of Christ in the flesh, I am filled with grief and confusion. Even now scarcely can I restrain my tears, so great is the shame I feel at the thought of the tepidity and sloth of these miserable times. For is there one amongst us, my brethren, who derives a satisfaction from the actual fruition of this grace, proportionate to the longing excited in the holy men of old by its mere promise? What multitudes, for instance, will rejoice on the anniversary of the Saviour's Birth, which we shall soon be celebrating? But would to God the cause of their joy were the Divine Nativity, and not rather worldly vanity! It is something of the fathers' yearning and holy expectation I now find enkindled in my soul by those words, "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth." Such few spiritual persons as could be found in those pre-Christian times, well knew in spirit what grace would be "poured abroad on His Lips." This is the reason why they exclaimed, speaking in the desire of their souls, "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth." They longed, namely, with an eager longing, for admission to some share in such overflowing sweetness. In truth, every perfect soul under the old dispensation may be supposed to have complained to God somewhat as follows: "Wherefore dost Thou offer me these 'babbling' lips of the prophets? Rather let Him Who is 'beautiful above the sons of men'—'let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.' 'I will not now hear Moses,' for he is become to me 'of a more stammering tongue.' Isaias is a 'man of unclean lips.' Jeremias 'knoweth not how to speak, for he is a child.' All the other prophets, too, lack the power of utterance. Him, Him of Whom they prophesied—let Him speak, 'let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.' No longer in them, or through them, let Him speak to me, since 'dark are the waters in the clouds of

air,’ but ‘let Him,’ in His own Person, ‘kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth,’ whose grace-giving contact and streams of heavenly doctrine may become in me ‘a fountain of living water, springing up into eternal life.’ Surely I may expect a more abundant outpouring of graces from Him Whom the Father ‘hath anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows’—if only He will condescend to ‘kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.’ For His word, ‘living and efficacious,’ is to me as a kiss, not indeed a contact of lips, which sometimes deceives in falsely signifying a union of hearts, but an infusion of joy, a revelation of secrets, a marvellous, and, in a sense, indistinguishable intermingling of the Light Supernal with the enlightened soul.”

Hence, my brethren, that expression of the Apostle, “He that adhereth to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” With good reason, therefore, do I refuse visions and dreams; with reason do I decline figures and parables. Even the loveliness of the angelic spirits fails to content me, as falling infinitely short of the comeliness and beauty of my Jesus. It is He, then, Himself, and none other, whether angel or man, that I ask to kiss “me with the kiss of His Mouth.” But I am not so presumptuous as to want to be kissed with His Mouth—for that is the incommunicable happiness and the singular prerogative of His assumed Human Nature. My request is more humble: to be kissed with the kiss of His Mouth. This is the privilege of many who can consequently say, “And we all have received of His plenitude.”

Now, my brethren, I want your best attention. Let us consider the Word assuming to be the Mouth that kisses; let the Nature assumed be the Mouth that is kissed; and let the Divine Person, subsisting in two Natures, the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, be the Kiss in which both Mouths co-operate. In this sense, none of the saints would ever presume to say, “Let Him kiss me with His Mouth,” but only “with the kiss of His Mouth,” for they reserved the higher privilege to Him to Whom, solely and once and for all, the Mouth of the Word then impressed a kiss when the whole plenitude of the Divinity poured Itself into Him “corporally.” O happy Kiss, marvel of infinite condescension, whereby there is not mere pressure of mouth upon mouth, but God is united to man! The contact of lips signifies the embrace of loving hearts; but this union of natures brings together the divine and human, “making peace as to the things on earth and the things that are in heaven”—“For He is our peace Who hath made both one.” It is for this Kiss, therefore, that is, for Christ, that every saint of the Old Testament yearned, because they foreknew that His was the inheritance of joy and exultation, that in Him “all the treasures of wisdom

and knowledge were hidden," and they desired for themselves a participation in His fulness.

I believe this interpretation commends itself to you, dear brethren. Now, listen to another. Even the saints who lived before the coming of Our Saviour were not unaware that God entertained thoughts of peace towards the race of mortal men, for He would not accomplish any of His designs on earth without revealing it to His servants the prophets, as He Himself declared. Yet this Word was hidden from many; faith was then not easy to find in the world, and even in the case of most of those who were still "looking for the Redemption of Israel," hope had grown exceedingly weak. Now, the prophets, who foresaw that Christ was to come in the flesh bringing with Him peace, began to proclaim these things. Thus one of them said, "And there shall be peace in our land when He comes." What is more, under divine inspiration, they predicted with all confidence that through Him men were destined to recover the grace of God. John, the Precursor, acknowledged that this prophecy was fulfilled in his own day, saying, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And now every Christian beholds its fulfilment in his own experience.

But whilst the prophets were thus predicting peace, and the Author of peace still deferred His coming, the people's faith began to waver, "because there was none to redeem or to save." And so they began to complain of the delay. They complained that the Prince of Peace, so often announced, had not yet arrived amongst them, "as He spoke by the mouths of His holy prophets who are from the beginning." Hence they came to doubt the consoling predictions, and demanded the sign or pledge of the promised reconciliation, that is, a kiss. It was as if one of the people should thus address the messengers of peace: " 'How long do you hold our souls in suspense?' You have now been predicting peace for a great length of time, and lo! it has not yet appeared. You have promised good things and still there is only confusion. Behold this very grace, 'at sundry times and in divers manners,' was announced to the fathers by angels and to us by the fathers, who cried 'Peace, peace,' and there was no peace. If God would reassure us as to the sincerity of His good will, so often proclaimed by His legates, but not yet proved by the event, 'let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth,' and thus, by the token of peace, confirm me in my hope of peace. For how can I any longer have faith in mere words? The verbal promise requires confirmation by deeds. Let God prove His envoys truthful—if His envoys they are indeed—by following them Himself, as they promised He would do, because without Him they can do nothing. He has sent His servant, He has sent His staff, but as yet

there is no return of either voice or feeling. I will not arise, I will not awake, I will not shake off the dust, I will not admit hope until the Prophet Himself come down and ‘kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.’ Besides, He Who proclaims Himself to be our Mediator with God, is God’s own Son, and Himself true God. And ‘what is man that He should be made known to him? Or the son of man that He should make account of him?’ On the other hand, what is my confidence that I should dare to entrust myself to so awful a Majesty? How, I ask, can I, who am but dust and ashes, presume to think that God hath care of me? Moreover, He loves His Father, but of me or of ‘my goods He hath no need.’ How, then, can I be sure that He, my Mediator, will not take part against me? Yet if, indeed, as you prophets say, God has resolved to show mercy and is ‘thinking of becoming more favourable again,’ let him establish a testament of peace, let Him make an everlasting covenant with me by the ‘kiss of His Mouth.’ In order that He may not ‘make void the words that proceed from His Lips,’ let Him ‘empty Himself,’ let Him humble Himself, let Him stoop down and ‘kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.’ If, as Mediator, He would be equally trusted by both parties (God and the sinner) and an object of suspicion to neither, let Him, the Son of God, become man, let Him become the Son of man, and by this kiss establish my confidence. Securely shall I accept the mediation of the Son of God, in Whom I recognise a Brother. As my Brother and my flesh I can no longer regard Him with suspicion. Nor shall He any longer have it in His power to despise me, being bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.”

Thus, therefore, the saints of the old time querulously demanded this holy kiss, that is, the Incarnation of the Word, whilst with the long and weary waiting, faith got tired and was ready to faint, and the fickle people, yielding to impatience, were murmuring against the promises of God. This interpretation, my brethren, I will confess to be but a baseless fancy of my own, if you also do not find it suggested to your minds by the words of Scripture. But surely it was this disappointment, due to the Messias’s delay in coming, that called forth cries like the following, expressive of impatience and discontent, “Command, command again! Expect, expect again! A little here, a little there!” And prayers like these, anxious, indeed, but full of fervour: “Give, O Lord, a reward to those who hope in Thee, that Thy prophets may be found faithful.” Also, “Stir up, O Lord, the prophecies which the former prophets have spoken in Thy name.” To the same delay must be attributed the joyous and consoling promises: “Behold” the Lord “will appear and will not lie; if He should delay, expect Him, because He shall surely come and shall not be slack”; “Her time (viz., Israel’s time of

deliverance) is near and her days shall not be lengthened." The next is spoken in the person of the Messias Himself: "Behold, I will bring upon her as it were a river of peace, and as an overflowing torrent the glory of the gentiles." Such expressions reveal clearly to us both the insistence of the preachers and the distrust of the people. Thus, then, the Israelites murmured and their faith was staggered, and, in the words of Isaias, "the angels of peace were weeping bitterly." Hence, as Christ still delayed His advent, lest the whole human race should perish in despair, suspecting that the infirmity of its mortal condition was despised, and lest it should abandon all hope of receiving the promised grace of reconciliation with the Lord, the saints, who had assurance from God in the Spirit, demanded a further assurance from Him present in the flesh; and for the sake of the weak and incredulous, they solicited a kiss with all importunity as the sign of a peace re-established.

O "Root of Jesse, Who standest for an Ensign of the people!" How many kings and prophets have desired to see Thee and have not seen! Happier than all was Simeon whose "old age was crowned with abundant mercy." He exulted in the hope of seeing the Pledge of his desire: "he saw It and rejoiced," and having received the kiss of peace, departed in peace, first proclaiming, however, that Jesus was born as "a Sign which should be contradicted." And his prophecy was justified in the event. Scarcely had the Sign of peace appeared when It met with contradiction from those, namely, who hate peace. To men of good will It brought true peace, but to the wicked It became "a rock of scandal and a stone of stumbling." So we read, "Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him," because "Jesus came unto His own and His own received Him not." Happy the shepherds, in their nightly watch, who were accounted worthy to behold this Sign! Already was He beginning to hide Himself from the wise and prudent and to reveal Himself to the little ones. Herod also desired to see Him, but not being a man of good will, he did not deserve to have his desire gratified; for the Sign of peace, that is, Jesus, was given only to men of good will. No sign shall be offered to men like Herod "but the sign of Jonas the Prophet." "And this," said the angel to the shepherds, "shall be a Sign to you"—to you who are humble, to you who are obedient, who are not high-minded, who are vigilant, who "meditate day and night on the law of God." "This," he said, "shall be a Sign to you." What? That which angels have promised, which peoples have asked for, which prophets have foretold—that the Lord hath now brought to pass and showeth to you. It is the Sign which will bring faith to the incredulous, hope to the despairing, perseverance to the perfect. "This, therefore, shall be a Sign to

you.” But a Sign of what? A Sign of pardon, a Sign of grace, a Sign of peace that shall have no end. “This,” then, “shall be a Sign to you, you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes.” Yes, indeed, but in this Infant you shall find the Great Almighty reconciling the world to Himself. “He is to die for your sins and to rise again for your justification, that justified through faith, you may have peace towards God.” This is the Sign of peace which the prophet of old desired King Achaz to ask of the Lord his God, “whether in heaven above or in hell beneath.” But the impious monarch refused, miserably disbelieving that in this Sign the lowest depths and the highest heights were to be united in peace. This will be accomplished when Christ, descending into hell, salutes the dwellers there, and to them also gives the pledge of peace in a holy kiss; and returning thence to heaven, admits the blessed spirits above to the same embrace in everlasting sweetness.

Here I must bring my discourse to an end. But permit me to close with a brief recapitulation. It is evident, then, that this holy Kiss is a necessary condescension to the world, for two reasons: firstly, in order to fortify the faith of the weak; secondly, in order to gratify the desires of the perfect. It is also plain, I hope, that this mystical Kiss is nothing else than the Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON III

ON THE MYSTICAL KISS OF THE LORD'S FEET, HAND, AND MOUTH

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth."

Our lesson for to-day, my brethren, shall be read from the book of experience. Turn your eyes, therefore, upon yourselves and let each examine his conscience on what I shall have to say. First of all, I should like to know if to any of you it has ever been given to say with sincerity, "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth." For it is not every man that can speak thus from his heart. But he who has even once received this spiritual kiss from the Lips of Christ, such a one will surely solicit again what he has learned by experience to relish, and will ask that the favour be repeated. In my opinion, no one can even know what it is except him who has experienced it. It is a "hidden manna," for which only he who has eaten still hungers. It is a "sealed fountain," in which "the stranger hath no part" and for which none will thirst save him who has drunk thereof. Listen to one who had enjoyed the experience, soliciting a repetition of the favour. "Render to me," he cries, "the joy of Thy salvation." Far, then, be it from a wretch like me, laden as I am with sins, still the sport of carnal passions, who has never yet tasted the sweetness of the spirit, altogether ignorant of and a stranger to internal delights—far be it from such a one to make any pretensions to a grace so sublime!

However, I will point out to a soul so favoured the position which it becomes her to occupy with regard to her Beloved. Let her not rashly try to reach at once the Lips of her most serene Bridegroom, but rather, like me, let her throw herself in fear at the Feet of her most dread Lord, trembling, and with downcast looks, and not daring, like the Publican, to lift her gaze to heaven. Otherwise, her eyes, accustomed only to darkness, will be in danger of being dazzled by the lights of the spiritual firmament and overwhelmed by the excess of its glory. Or, blinded by the unparalleled splendours of the Divine Majesty, they may be overcast with

a cloud of denser darkness than belonged to their former state. O whosoever thou be that art such a soul, do not, I implore thee, do not regard as mean or contemptible that place where the holy Penitent laid aside her sins and clothed herself in the garment of sanctity! There the Ethiopian woman changed her colour, being restored to the whiteness of her long-lost innocence. Then, indeed, she was able to answer those who addressed her in words of reproach, “I am black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem.” Do you wonder, my brethren, by what art she effected such a change, or by what merits she obtained it? I will tell you in a few words. She “wept bitterly,” she heaved deep sighs from her inmost heart, she was agitated interiorly with salutary sobbings, and thus she spat out the venomous humour. The heavenly Physician came speedily to her aid, because His “word runneth quickly.” Is not the word of God a spiritual medicine? Yes, truly, and a medicine that is “strong and active, searching the heart and the reins.” As the Apostle says, “the word of God is living and efficacious and more penetrating than any two-edged sword, reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts.” After the example of this blessed Penitent, do thou also, O miserable one, cast thyself down there that thou mayst cease to be miserable. Do thou also prostrate thyself upon the earth, embrace those Feet, appease Them with kisses, bathe Them with thy tears, although thereby not Them but thyself wilt thou be cleansing. So shalt thou be made as one of the “shorn sheep that cometh forth from the washing.” Consequently, thou wilt not dare to lift up thy face, overwhelmed with shame and grief, until thou also hearest the consoling words, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”—until thou hearest these others, too, “Arise, arise, O captive daughter of Sion! arise, and shake from thee the dust.”

Even after thus impressing the first kiss on the Foot, do not raise thyself immediately to the “kiss of the Mouth.” There is another step to be taken before thou canst attain to this, an intervening kiss, which ought to be imprinted on the Hand. The necessity for such a gradual approach may be explained as follows. If Jesus should say to thee, “thy sins are forgiven thee,” what would this avail, unless I henceforth abstained from sin? I have put off my tunic; if I again put it on, wherein have I profited? If after washing my feet, I soil them again, what have I gained by the Washing? Polluted with sins of every description, I lay prostrate long in the “mire of the dregs.” Yet, it is a worse thing to relapse after purification than never to have been purified at all. For I remember that He Who made me whole said to me, “Behold, thou art made whole; go, now, sin no more

lest something worse should happen thee." But He Who gave me the will to repent must also give me the grace of perseverance. Otherwise I shall repeat the crimes I now repent of, and make my "last state worse than the first." Woe to me, even after my conversion, if He withdraws His Hand, without Whom I can do nothing—absolutely nothing, either towards the recovery or towards the preservation of grace. Hence I hear the Wise Man counselling, "Repeat not a word in prayer." Another cause of fear to me is the threat pronounced by the Judge against the "tree that bringeth not forth good fruit." On account of such considerations, I confess that the first grace, that is, the grace of repentance, does not quite content me. I still require a second grace, which shall enable me to "bring forth fruits worthy of penance," and prevent me from "returning to the vomit."

It behoves me, then, to impetrate the grace of conversion and perseverance before I aspire to things higher and holier. I do not want to reach all at once the summit of sanctity. I prefer to mount thither step by step. God is pleased with the modesty of the penitent in the same degree in which the sinner's boldness offends Him. Thou wilt more easily gain His favour by keeping within due bounds, and by not ambitioning what is too high for thee. From the Feet to the Mouth is a high and difficult leap, and a way of approach not quite becoming. What! Still bestrewn with the ashes of penitence, wilt thou dare to touch those sacred Lips? Only yesterday drawn out of the mire of thy sins, dost thou want to be admitted to-day to the contemplation of the glory of His Countenance? No! thou canst not attain to that sublimity without using the step of His Hand. Let It first cleanse thee, let It lift thee up. How shall It do this? By supplying thee with the merits whereon thou mayst presume. Dost thou ask what these merits are? I will tell thee. They are the works of piety, viz., the beauty of continence and the worthy fruits of penance. By them thou shalt be raised up from the dunghill unto the hope of hearing greater things. Surely in receiving the gifts, thou wilt not forget to kiss the Hand of the Giver. That is, thou must give glory, not to thyself, but to His name. And thou must give Him this glory, not alone for His mercy in pardoning thy sins, but also for His generosity in adorning thee with virtues. Otherwise thou wilt have to see how thou canst harden thy forehead against this sharp-pointed reproach of St. Paul: "What hast thou which thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"

Having thus obtained in these two kisses experimental proof of the divine benevolence, perhaps thou mayst now aspire with security to the third and holier

kiss. Confidence increases proportionately with our grace. Hence it is that whilst thou now lovest more ardently, thou dost also ask more confidently for that which thou perceivest to be still wanting to thy fulness. Now, “everyone that asketh, receiveth.” Therefore, I believe that, to one so disposed, this kiss of infinite condescension and indescribable sweetness, whatever it may be, will not be denied. This is the way and this is the order. First, we cast ourselves at the Feet of Christ, and before the Lord Who made us we lament the evils which we ourselves have made. Secondly, we ask the help of His Hand to lift us up and to “strengthen the feeble knees.” Thirdly, when we have obtained these favours by many prayers and tears, then, at last—with fear and trembling I say it—perhaps, then, we may venture to raise ourselves to that divinely glorious Mouth, not merely to contemplate Its beauty, but even to enjoy Its kiss. For “Christ is a Spirit before our face,” with Whom We shall be made one Spirit, through His gracious mercy, by uniting ourselves to Him in this holy kiss.

To Thee, Lord Jesus, rightly “to Thee hath my heart said: my face hath sought Thee; Thy Face, O Lord, will I still seek, because Thou didst make me hear Thy mercy in the morning.” That is to say, Thou didst pardon my sinful life, when at first I lay prostrate in the dust, kissing Thy venerable Feet. Afterwards, in the course of the day, “Thou didst rejoice the soul of Thy servant,” by granting me the grace of well-doing in the kiss of Thy Hand. And now sweet Lord, what remains except graciously to admit me even to the kiss of Thy Mouth in the plenitude of light and in fervour of spirit, and so to “fill me with the joy of Thy Countenance”? Show me, O Most Sweet, O Most Amiable, “where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day”! My brethren, “it is good for us to be here,” but, behold! the malice of the day summons us elsewhere. These guests, whose arrival has just been announced, compel me to interrupt rather than conclude so pleasant a discourse. I go to discharge the duties of hospitality, lest anything should be wanting in the exercise of that charity of which I have been speaking, and lest of us also it should be said, “for they say and do not.” Do you meantime pray that God may “make pleasing the voluntary offerings of my mouth” for your edification and unto the praise and glory of His Name. Amen.

SERMON IV

ON THE THREE STAGES OF THE SOUL'S PROGRESS, SYMBOLISED BY THE KISS OF CHRIST'S FEET, HAND, AND MOUTH

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth."

Yesterday, my brethren, if you recollect, I treated of the three stages, so to speak, of the soul's journey towards perfection, under the figure of three kisses. The same subject shall occupy me in to-day's discourse, according as God, in His sweetness, shall deign to provide for my poverty. I observed, as you will remember, that those three kisses are given in due order—to the Feet, to the Hand, and to the Mouth of the Bridegroom. By the first we consecrate the beginnings of our conversion, the second is the privilege of proficients, whilst only the few who attain perfection can experience the third. It is from this, which is last in order, that the inspired Book, which I have undertaken to expound, takes its commencement. The two other kisses I have merely introduced on its account, viz., to make its meaning and dignity more clearly intelligible. Whether their introduction is really necessary to this end, it will be for you, my brethren, to judge. To me it seems that the very language of the text invites us to the consideration of these prerequisite embraces. And I shall be surprised if you also do not see that there must be some other kiss or kisses from which that of the mouth is meant to be distinguished by her who said, "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth." Otherwise, when it would have sufficed to say, "let Him kiss me," why did she add distinctly and explicitly and against the common custom and usage in speech, "with the kiss of His Mouth"? The only explanation is that thereby she intended to signify that the kiss she asked for, though supreme, was not solitary. In human society the expressions, "kiss me," or "give me a kiss," are familiar enough. But no one ever thinks of adding "with your mouth," or "with the kiss of your mouth." Why? Because when persons embrace in this manner they present their lips to each other, as a matter of course, and without

its being expressly asked. For instance, the Evangelist, in narrating how the Traitor was permitted to salute the Lord, simply says, “And he kissed Him,” and does not add, “with his mouth” or “with the kiss of his mouth.” And such is the custom of all writers and speakers. The threefold distinction of kisses, therefore, corresponds to three states of the soul, or three stages of her progress, fully known and understood only by those who have learned them by experience. And this experience is had when our sins are pardoned, or grace given for practising virtue, or when our merciful and benevolent God unveils His Face to our contemplation, so far as, in this mortal life, our weakness can endure that vision of glory.

I will explain more clearly why I call the first and second of those favours by the name of kisses. We all know that a kiss is a sign of peace. Now, as Holy Scripture says, “our sins separate us from God.” If, then, We break down this wall of separation there shall be peace. Hence, when we remove, by penance, the obstruction of sin and arc reconciled, how can I more suitably describe the forgiveness we obtain than by naming it the kiss of peace? Yet it is only the Feet we should now presume to kiss. That is to say, our penance ought to be humble and shy, as making reparation for the pride of our former transgressions. But when, later on, we have been admitted to a certain sweet familiarity by a more abundant infusion of grace, whereby We are enabled to live more purely and to converse more worthily with God, then we may lift up our heads with greater confidence, in order to kiss the Hand of our Benefactor, as is the custom amongst men. Yet we do this then only when we seek in the grace bestowed, not our own glory, but the glory of the Giver, ascribing to His bounty, rather than to any merit of our own, all that we receive. For if you glory not in Him but in yourselves, what is that but kissing your own hand rather than the Hand of the Lord? And this, according to holy Job, is “a very great iniquity and a denial against the Most High God.” Now, if, as Holy Scripture testifies, to seek one’s own glory is to kiss one’s own hand, it follows that he who seeks the glory of God may rightly be said to kiss His Hand. What I have said is paralleled even in human customs. Thus, servants, when begging pardon of their offended masters, are wont to kiss their feet, whereas the poor kiss the hand of the rich whenever they receive an alms.

However, as God is a Spirit, a simple Substance with no distinction of corporeal members, there may be some who will raise objections to what I have been saying. I may be challenged to show that the Deity has and Feet which can be kissed in the way I have described. But what if I, in my turn, ask such critics

to explain to me how the words of Scripture concerning this kiss of the Mouth are to be understood of God? For in whatever sense He may be said to possess a Mouth, in the same I may speak of Him as having Hands and Feet. And, contrariwise, in so far as He lacks the latter members, He lacks the former, too. But, in truth, God has a Mouth by which He "teaches men knowledge," and He has Hands by which He gives "food to all flesh," and He has Feet whereof the "earth is the footstool"—which signifies that sinners of the earth turn to these Feet, and prostrating themselves there, make due satisfaction. All such members and faculties, I say, God possesses, not formally or materially, but spiritually and virtually. Assuredly, no one will deny that humble contrition finds in Him something answering to feet, before which it may cast itself down; that fervent devotion finds something answering to hands, which strengthens it by renewing its vigour; that joyous contemplation, too, finds something corresponding to a mouth, which, as by a kiss, gives content and rest to its rapturous love. He is all things to all Who governs all, and yet is not properly any of all. For, as He is in Himself, "He dwelleth in light inaccessible," and His "peace surpasseth all understanding," and "of His wisdom there is no number," and "of His greatness there is no end." Neither can any "man see Him and live." Not, indeed, that He is far from any of His creatures, for He is, in a sense, the Being of all, without Whom all are nothing; but because—and this will increase your astonishment—just as there is nothing more intimate to us than He, so is there nothing more incomprehensible. What, I ask, is more intimate to each than his being? Yet what more incomprehensible than the Being of all things? Of course, I am speaking of God as the Being of all His creatures, not in the sense that they are what He is, but because "from Him, and by Him, and in Him are all." The Creator, then, is the Being of all that He has made, but efficiently, not formally. It is thus that the Divine Majesty condescends to be to His creatures, the Being of all that are, the Life of all that live, the Light of all that think, the Virtue of all who use that Light well, and the Crown of all who conquer. And in creating, governing, administering, moving, predetermining, renewing, establishing these various orders of things, He has need of no corporeal instruments, Who, with a single word, created all things, material and immaterial. Human souls require bodies and bodily senses in order to know and to act upon each other. Not so the Almighty. From His own Will exclusively He derives the energy required for producing creatures and ordering them as He pleases. His power reaches to whatsoever He wills, and as He wills, without need or use for corporeal members. Or do you suppose that He depends on the service of a bodily sense to

contemplate the things which His Hands have made? No! He is the Light omnipresent which nothing can ever escape, yet He needs not the ministry of sensitive faculties to put Him in possession of knowledge. And not alone does He know all things without a bodily medium, but also, without a bodily medium He reveals Himself to the clean of heart. I will enlarge upon this in order to make it plainer. But as the time that remains is too short to allow me to say all I have to say, it will be wiser to reserve the rest until to-morrow.

SERMON V

ON THE FOUR ORDERS OF SPIRITS

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth."

There are, as you know, my brethren, four distinct kinds of spirits, the irrational, the human, the angelic, and the Divine, the last being the Creator of all the others. Of these various orders, there is none but requires a body, natural or assumed, either for its own use, or for the needs of others, or for the sake both of itself and others—none, save the fourth, to Whom all creatures, whether corporeal or incorporeal, truly confess and say, "Thou art my God, because Thou dost not need my goods." In the first place, it is evident that the irrational spirit is so dependent on its body that without its support it cannot exist at all. When the brute dies its spirit ceases to be at the same moment at which it ceases to vivify. Our spirits, on the other hand, survive our bodies; yet to those things which make life really happy, we have no means of attaining except through the bodies. This truth was not unknown to him who said, "The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." For "the things that are made," that is, those corporeal and visible things, cannot enter into our knowledge except through the avenues of our bodily senses. The human soul, therefore, spiritual creature though she be, has need of a body, as without the help of this she could never acquire that science which, like a ladder, enables her to mount up to those higher realities, in the contemplation of which she finds her happiness. Here the case of infants who die soon after baptism may be urged against me as an objection. Our faith teaches us that the souls of such, departing the present life without the knowledge of sensible things are, nevertheless, admitted to the bliss of heaven. I answer briefly that they have this, not as a right from nature, but as a privilege from grace. Hence, as I am speaking now only of what happens in the ordinary course and by natural law, no argument against me can be derived from such extraordinary interpositions.

That bodies are necessary, even to angelic spirits, is sufficiently evident from that true and truly inspired utterance of the Apostle: "Are they not ministering

spirits, sent to minister for those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" How, therefore, could they exercise their ministry without bodies, especially with regard to those who dwell in bodies? Moreover, it is only bodily substances that can traverse space, and pass from one point to another. Yet we have it on authority, as indubitable as well known, that the angels frequently do this. Hence it is that they appeared to the fathers, entered their dwellings, eat with them, and had their feet washed. Thus, both the angelic and the brute spirit have need of bodies, but rather as instruments to be employed for the good of others than as sources of benefit to themselves. The brute, as under a natural law of slavery, subserves human interests by ministering to our temporal and corporeal necessities. Consequently, its spirit passes with time and is extinguished with the body; for "the slave abideth not in the house for ever." Yet if we use the slave as we ought, we shall turn the benefit of its temporal service into merit for ourselves of an eternal reward. But the angels, in the spirit of liberty, are anxiously solicitous to exercise towards us the offices of piety, and show themselves to mortals as willing and eager ministers "of future goods," recognising in us their predestined companions for eternity and the co-heirs of their own immortal felicity. The irrational spirits, therefore, serve us from necessity, the angelic out of love; and, doubtless, it is as a means of benefiting us that both have need of bodies. What advantage they themselves derive therefrom, I am unable to see—at any rate with regard to eternity. The brute, indeed, by means of the body, is able to perceive corporeal objects. But surely it has not the power, by the help of such material and concrete impressions as bodily senses supply, to raise itself to the perception of spiritual and intellectual realities. Nevertheless, whilst unable itself to attain to such knowledge, it helps thereto, as we know, by its corporeal and temporal service, those amongst men who strive to draw eternal profit from the use of all transitory things, "using the world as though they used it not."

But the blessed angels above, without the aid of a body and without the intuition of objects perceptible to bodily senses, by the mere spirituality and subtlety of their natures, are capable alike of comprehending what is most exalted and of penetrating what is most profound. The Apostle evidently realised this, because after saying that "the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," he immediately added, "by the creature of the world," that is, of the earth. He thus indicates that the same is not true of the creatures of heaven. For those objects of contemplation to which the human spirit, imprisoned in the flesh and dwelling here below, endeavours to rise, little

by little and step by step, from the consideration of material things, the same are reached swiftly and easily by the angelic citizens of heaven, owing to their native sublimity and penetration, without any dependence on corporeal sense, without any assistance from bodily members, without any intuition of material things. Why should they seek in bodies for those spiritual communications which they can read in the Book of Life without any contradiction, and understand without any difficulty? Why should they labour in the sweat of their brow to winnow the grain from the chaff, to press out the wine from the grapes, or the oil from the olives, when they have an abundance and a superabundance of such things ready to hand? Who, having plenty at home, would beg his bread from door to door? Who Would dig a well and laboriously search for water in the bowels of the earth, whilst a living, natural fountain poured its limpid treasures with unfailing generosity at his feet? Therefore, neither the angelic nor irrational spirits derive any assistance from their bodies as regards the acquisition of that knowledge which can make the intelligent creature happy. The latter, as being naturally stupid, lack the capacity for such enlightenment; the former, as enjoying the prerogative of a more excellent glory, have no need of it. But the spirit of man, occupying the middle place between the angelic and the brute, has need of a body for its own advancement in knowledge and for rendering service to others. Thus, to say nothing of the other bodily members or their functions, how, I ask, could instruction be imparted without a corporeal tongue, or attended to without corporeal ears?

As, therefore, without the help of a body the servile spirit of the brute cannot discharge the duty of its condition, nor the heavenly and angelic exercise the offices of piety, nor the rational spirit of man suffice to consult for its own or its neighbour’s salvation, it follows that every created spirit requires the agency of bodily members, either solely on account of others or for the sake both of itself and others. But what if there be found some irrational creatures of which we can discover no use and which minister to no human necessity? I answer that, although not otherwise useful, they render us more important service by furnishing objects of contemplation to our minds, than they could possibly do by supplying the needs of our body. Even allowing that some are dangerous and detrimental to man’s material well-being, still their bodies do not lack wherewith to “co-operate unto good to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints.” And if they do not serve us by becoming our food, or by otherwise accomplishing our purposes, they do so, at least, by exercising our intelligence, according to that measure and method of instruction, common to all who enjoy

the use of reason, whereby the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." The devil and his satellites are, indeed, always intent on evil and always desire our hurt. But God forbid that they should have the power to harm those who are "zealous of good," to whom it is said, "and who is he that can hurt you if you be zealous of good?" Rather they benefit them, even in spite of themselves, and "co-operate unto good" for those who are themselves good.

As to whether the angelic bodies, like the human, are naturally united to their indwelling spirits, so that the angel, just as man, is an animal, only differing from us in being immortal, which we are not as yet; whether these celestial creatures can change their bodies at their pleasure, and appear, when they wish to appear, in whatever shape and form they like, condensing and solidifying as they please the material envelopes which, nevertheless, in their own real nature by reason of the subtlety of their essence are entirely impalpable and imperceptible to our senses; or whether, finally, they subsist as simple spiritual substances, which, when they have need, assume to themselves a body, and lay it down again, when no longer necessary, to be dissolved into the elements whence it was formed—to these questions, my brethren, do not look to me for an answer. The fathers seem to have held different views on the matter. And for myself, I confess I do not see my way clear to teach one thing or the other. However, I do not suppose that knowledge of this kind would contribute much towards our advancement in virtue.

Yet be assured of this, that no created spirit can directly act upon our souls. I mean to say, that without the medium of a bodily instrument, whether its own or ours, no creature has the power of so communicating and infusing itself into our minds as thereby to render us learned or more learned, virtuous or more virtuous. No angelic, no human spirit is capable of affecting me in this way, any more than I am capable of so affecting them. The blessed angels have not even this power with regard to each other. It is, therefore, the incommunicable prerogative of that supreme and all-pervading Spirit, Who alone "teacheth knowledge" to angels and men, without requiring on the creature's side the medium of a bodily ear, or on His own the instrumentality of a material tongue. This Divine Spirit communicates Himself directly, He reveals Himself directly, and pure Himself, is readily perceived by pure minds. He alone has need of nothing, being alone sufficient for Himself, and, in virtue of His omnipotent Will, for all besides. Nevertheless, He exercises great and innumerable operations by means of His subject creatures, material and immaterial. But He does so rather as commanding

than as soliciting. See, for example, how He makes use now of my corporeal tongue to do His work in instructing you, although He could, doubtless, instruct you Himself directly with infinitely greater facility and sweetness. His employment of my agency is, therefore, not a dependence on, but a condescension to me. So in promoting your spiritual interests by my means what He seeks is not assistance for Himself but merit for me.

Such, my brethren, must be the conviction of every man engaged in doing good, lest perchance he should begin to glory in himself on account of the gifts of God, instead of glorying in the Lord. Yet there are some who do good against their will, namely, wicked men and fallen angels. In this case, it is clear the good that is done by their means is not done for their sakes, since no goodness can benefit a free agent without his consent. Hence such unwilling instruments have but the dispensation of whatever good they perform. Yet somehow or other, we experience greater satisfaction and pleasure in the benefits conferred upon us by these wicked dispensers than in any others. And perhaps this is the reason why God makes use of the wicked to benefit the just, rather than any need He has of their co-operation in well-doing.

If the Almighty stands in no need of angels or men, much less, doubtless, does He depend on creatures which lack either reason alone or both sense and reason. Consequently, their concurrence in good makes it apparent how “all things serve Him,” Who can truly say, “The earth is Mine.” Or at any rate, it may be said that He employs such agencies, not because He needs their help, but only for reasons of fitness, as knowing from what particular causes particular effects might most fittingly proceed. Whilst, then, the ministry of bodies is often and suitably exercised in accomplishing the divine purposes, as, for instance, in quickening seed, in multiplying crops, and in ripening fruit, what need has He of a body of His own, Whose will is manifestly obeyed by all bodies, celestial and terrestrial, without distinction as without delay? Such a body, surely, would be superfluous in Him Who finds no body not His own. But to say all that occurs to be said on this subject would prolong this discourse beyond all reasonable limits, and perhaps overtax the powers of some of you. Let us, therefore, reserve what remains for another sermon.

SERMON VI

ON THE KISS OF THE LORD'S FEET

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth."

In order to connect the present with my last discourse, I wish you, my brethren, to recall what I said yesterday, namely, that only the supreme and all-pervading Spirit is independent of bodily service and agency in all that He wills to do or to be done. Let us, then, confidently vindicate for God alone a perfect immateriality, just as in Him alone we recognise a perfect immortality. Let us be convinced that He alone amongst all spirits transcends corporeal nature to such an extent, that for no operation whatsoever is He in any sense dependent on material instruments. His mere spiritual fiat is adequate to the accomplishment of all He wills to effect and when He wills. Therefore, that Divine Majesty alone stands in need of no co-operation of bodily members either for His own sake or for the sake of His creatures. To His almighty Will accomplishment always answers promptly and immediately, everything exalted bends, everything contrary yields, everything created renders obedience, without His requiring thereto the assistance of any intermediate agency, spiritual or corporeal. Without a tongue He teaches and admonishes, without hands He gives and holds, without feet He runs to the help of those who are perishing. So He acted even with the generations of the olden time. Men were constantly enjoying His benefits, but of their Benefactor Himself, they had no knowledge. Even then was He "reaching from end to end mightily"; yet they did not observe Him, because He was at the same time "disposing all things sweetly." And so they rejoiced in the gifts of God, whilst the Lord of the Sabbath, as judging all with tranquillity, remained entirely unknown and unnoticed. From Him they were, but they were not with Him. By Him they lived, but they lived not to Him. From Him they had understanding, but not of Him, apostates, ingrates, fools that they were! Hence it came to pass that they attributed their being, their life, and their intelligence, not to the Creator, but some to nature, others more stupidly, to chance. Many also ascribed to their own industry and virtue what were but multiplied gifts from

above. The evil spirits, too, by their own craft, were credited with the authorship of innumerable divine benefactions, as well as the sun and moon, the earth and the water, and even the works of human hands! Plants, trees, the most minute and contemptible seeds were worshipped as gods!

Alas, my brethren, it was thus that men lost and "changed their glory into the likeness of a calf that eateth grass"! But God, compassionating their ignorance, deigned to issue forth from His hill of clouds and shadows and "hath set His tabernacle in the sun." He presented Himself in flesh to those who relished only things of the flesh, in order thereby to lead them to relish the things of the spirit. For whilst in the flesh He did not the works of the flesh, but the works of God, commanding nature, over-ruling her laws, stultifying the wisdom of men, and beating down the tyranny of demons; and in this way He clearly showed that it was by His power such miracles had ever been performed, even in the times previous to His coming. Thus, I say, by publicly and powerfully working wonders, in the flesh and by the flesh, by announcing the truths of salvation, and by enduring the indignities of His Passion, He made it plainly manifest that it was He Who powerfully, if invisibly, created the world, Who wisely governs it and lovingly protects it. And when He preached the Gospel to the ungrateful, and offered signs to unbelievers, and prayed for His executioners, did He not thus evidently indicate that He is the same Who, with the Father, makes His sun to rise daily "on the good and the wicked and rains upon the just and the unjust"? This is what He said Himself: "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not."

Behold, my brethren, He Who without words teaches the angels in heaven, now opens His Mouth of flesh to teach the disciples on the mount! Behold, at the touch of His corporeal Hand, lepers are cleansed, sight is given to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and the sinking Apostle is raised to security; and thus He stands revealed as the Benefactor to Whom the Prophet David had said long before, "Thou openest Thy Hand and fillest with blessing every living creature," and, "When Thou openest Thy Hand they shall all be filled with good." Behold, the Magdalen, now penitent and prostrate at His Feet of flesh, hears the sentence of pardon, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." And by this she recognises Him of Whom she had read what was written centuries earlier, "The devil shall go out before His Feet." For where her sins were pardoned, there doubtless the devil was expelled from her heart. Hence, the Saviour said, speaking generally of all penitents, "Now is the judgment of the world, now the prince of this world shall be cast out." That is to say, God will forgive sins when

humbly confessed, and so Satan shall lose the dominion which he had usurped over the sinner's heart.

Again, He walks on the waves with His bodily Feet, as the Prophet sang of Him before He had as yet revealed Himself in the flesh, "Thy way is in the sea and Thy paths in many waters." As if he should say, "Thou shalt trample down the swelling ambitions of the proud, and bridle the fluctuating passions of the flesh," which, indeed, He does by justifying the wicked and humbling the high-minded. Yet, because this is done invisibly, the carnal man cannot perceive by Whom it is accomplished. Hence the Psalmist adds, "and Thy footsteps shall not be known." Hence, also, the Father said to the Son, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool," that is, "until I make all who despise Thee submit to Thy will, either unwillingly and to their destruction, or voluntarily and to their bliss." But this work of the Spirit was not perceptible to flesh, for "the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God." Therefore it was necessary that the contrite Magdalen should prostrate herself bodily at His bodily Feet, and, kissing these same Feet with her bodily lips, so obtain the pardon of her sins. And thus can "this change of the Right Hand of the Most High," whereby He marvellously, though invisibly, justifies the impious, be made manifest even to carnal minds.

I must not, however, pass over those spiritual Feet of the Lord, which it is necessary that the penitent should, in the first place, kiss spiritually. For well I know, my brethren, how piously curious you are with regard to such matters, and how you would like to let nothing go unscrutinised. Nor does it seem to me that we should gain nothing by knowing what are those Feet, wherewith Holy Scripture represents God at one time as standing, as in the verse, "We shall adore in the place where His Feet have stood"; at another as walking: "I will dwell with them and will walk amongst them"; and at still another as running: "He exulted as a giant to run His course." If, then, the Apostle considered it right to refer the Head of Christ to His Divinity, it ought not to appear unreasonable in me if I understand His Feet as signifying His Humanity. These Feet I consider to be mercy and justice. The two words are familiar enough to you. They occur together, if you remember, in numerous passages of Scripture. Now, that the Lord assumed the Foot of mercy together with the Flesh to which He is united, is evident from the Epistle to the Hebrews. Therein we read that Christ "was tempted in all things like as we are, without sin," "that He might become merciful." As regards the second Foot, which I take to mean justice, does not the Incarnate Word Himself plainly imply that it also was assumed with and belongs

to the Humanity, where He declares that the Father has given Him “power to do judgment because He is the Son of Man”?

Moving evenly, therefore, on these two spiritual Feet, under the guidance of the Divinity as Head, the invisible Emmanuel, “born of a woman, made under the law,” revealed Himself on earth and conversed amongst men. With these same Feet He is still, though spiritually now and invisibly, “going about doing good and healing all that are oppressed by the devil.” With these, I say, He walks through living souls, constantly illuminating them, and searching the “hearts and reins” of the faithful. But, see, lest perchance these should be the Legs of the Bridegroom, which, in a following verse, the Bride praises so magnificently, comparing them, if I remember aright, to “pillars of marble, set upon bases of gold.” This description is extremely beautiful, because “mercy and truth,” that is to say, justice, signified by the Legs, “have met” in the Incarnate Wisdom of God, and gold is the symbol of wisdom. Furthermore, “All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth.”

Happy the man, my brethren, in whose soul the Lord Jesus sets both these Feet of His! By two signs you may recognise him, for one so privileged must of necessity bear upon him the impress of the divine footsteps. These footprints are hope and fear; the latter impressed by justice, the former by mercy. Truly “the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, and in them that hope in His mercy,” because “fear is the beginning of wisdom,” as hope is its development. As for the consummation of wisdom, We must pronounce that to be charity. Such being the case, you will understand that there is no small advantage in this first kiss, which is given to the Feet. Only you have to make sure of kissing both, omitting neither. When you feel a sincere sorrow for your sins, and a fear of the divine judgment, you have pressed your lips to the Foot of truth and justice. And if you moderate your terror and grief by the consideration of the divine goodness and by the hope of obtaining pardon, be assured that you have also kissed the Foot of mercy. But to kiss one without the other is not expedient. The thought of justice alone will cast you into the gulf of despair, whilst a deceptive reliance on mercy will engender a most dangerous sense of security.

Even to me, miserable as I am, it has sometimes been given to sit at the Feet of the Lord Jesus, and to embrace, with all devotion, now one, now the other, in so far as His gracious mercy deigned to permit. But whenever, under the sting of my conscience, I lost sight of the divine mercy, and clung a little too long to the Foot of justice, immediately I became oppressed with an indescribable terror and a miserable confusion, and, enveloped in a most horrible darkness, I could only

cry tremblingly “from out of the depths,” “Who knoweth the power of Thy anger, and for Thy fear can number Thy wrath?” Yet if, leaving the Foot of justice, I should chance to lay hold on that of mercy, such carelessness and negligence took instant possession of me, that I straightway grew more tepid at prayer, more slothful at work, more ready for laughter, more imprudent in speech—in short, my whole being, body and soul, showed evidence of greater inconstancy. Therefore, taught by experience, no longer judgment alone or mercy alone, but both “mercy and judgment I will sing to Thee, O Lord.” “Thy justifications I will never forget.” Both these, Thy mercy and Thy justice, shall be “the subjects of my song in the place of my pilgrimage,” until, mercy having been exalted over justice, misery “shall shut her mouth,” so that thenceforward only “my glory may sing to Thee and I shall not regret.”

SERMON VII

ON THE LOVE OF THE SPOUSE, AND ON THE ATTENTION DUE TO THE WORD OF GOD

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth."

I have brought trouble upon myself, my brethren, by needlessly exciting your pious curiosity. Because, in connexion with the first kiss, I was at pains to explain, and at unnecessary length, the spiritual Feet of the Lord, with their special names and significations, you are now anxious for an explanation of the Hand which, as I have said, must be kissed in the second place. Well, I am not unwilling to gratify your wishes. Nay, I will speak not of one Hand, but of two, and will give to each its proper name. Let the one be called Liberality, the other Fortitude. With the former God gives abundantly, with the latter He protects what He has bestowed. If we are not to be reputed ingrates, we shall kiss both, by acknowledging and proclaiming Him, not only as the Author of all good, but as the Preserver of the same. Let this suffice for the first and the second kiss. We must now proceed to the consideration of the third.

"Let Him kiss me," she says, "with the kiss of His Mouth." Who is she that makes the request? It is the Spouse. But who is this Spouse? The Spouse here, my brethren, is the soul that thirsts after God. I will now run over the various species and manifestations of human affection or disposition, in order that you may the more clearly perceive which one appertains to the Spouse. If thou be a slave, thou dost fear the face of thy lord; if thou be a mercenary, thou dost hope to receive thine hire at his hands; if thou be a disciple, thou dost attend to the instructions of thy master; if thou be a son, thou dost honour him who is thy father; but if thou be a lover, thou wilt ask thy beloved for a kiss. Amongst the natural emotions of the human soul, this affection of love holds the first place, especially when it reverts to its first Principle, which is God. No words can be found sweet enough to convey an idea of the tenderness of the mutual affection of the Divine Word and the soul, except the names Bridegroom and Bride. For

persons so related have all things in common. Nothing can be either appropriated to the one or sequestered from the other. They must have one and the same inheritance, one and the same hearth and home, one and the same table, in a word, they are one and the same flesh. So it is written, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, for they shall be two in one flesh.” And the Bride, on her side, is commanded to “forget her people and her father’s house,” in order that the Bridegroom may “desire her beauty.” Since, therefore, love belongs especially and chiefly to persons espoused, the name of Spouse or Bride may justly be given to the soul that loves God. Now, the soul that asks a kiss is the soul that loves. She petitions not for liberty, not for a reward, not for an inheritance, not even for knowledge, but only for a kiss. And this request she makes after the manner of a most chaste spouse, burning with a most holy love, and altogether powerless to conceal the flame which consumes her. See with what impatient abruptness she begins her speech. Although she is about to solicit a great privilege from a great Personage, she does not, as others are wont to do in similar circumstances, make use of the arts of blandishments; she does not approach her object by any winding ways or circumlocutions. There is no preface, no attempt to conciliate favour. From the abundance of her heart, without shame or shyness, she breaks out with the eager request, “Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.” Does she not seem to you to say clearly, “What have I in heaven and besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth?” Assuredly, she loves with a pure love, who seeks nothing of Him Whom she loves, but only Himself. She loves with a holy love, because her love springs not from the passions of the flesh, but from the purity of the Spirit. She loves with an ardent love who is so inebriated with love as to lose sight of the Majesty of her Beloved. What! “He looketh upon the earth and maketh it tremble,” and she dares to ask that He should kiss her! Is she not manifestly intoxicated? No doubt of it. And perchance when she cried out thus impetuously she had just come forth from the “wine-cellar,” into which, namely, she afterwards boasts of having been introduced. So David, speaking of certain souls, said to God, “They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure.” Oh, how mighty is the power of Love! How great confidence in liberty of spirit! What can be plainer than that perfect love “casteth out fear”?

Yet from modesty she addresses her request, not to the Spouse Himself, but to others, as it were, in His absence. “Let Him kiss me,” she exclaims, “with the kiss of His Mouth.” An extraordinary petition, to be sure, and one needing the

companionship of modesty to commend the petitioner. Consequently she seeks through domestics and familiars for admission to the sanctuary, and access to the Object of her love. But who, my brethren, are these domestics and familiars? We believe that the holy angels stand near us when we pray and offer to God our petitions and desires. But only when they see us lifting up pure hands to heaven, without any feelings of anger or dissension in our hearts. This is evident from the words of the Angel to Tobias: “When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord.” The same, as I think, can be also sufficiently established by other passages from Scripture. Thus, that the angels, by condescension, are even wont to associate themselves with us when we are singing psalms to the Lord, is clearly indicated by the Prophet, where he says, “Princes went before joined with singers, in the midst of young damsels playing on timbrels.” Hence also his words, “In the sight of the angels I will sing to Thee.” It is, therefore, a cause of grief to me that some of you allow yourselves to be oppressed with a heavy drowsiness during the holy vigils, and so fail in reverence for these citizens of heaven, appearing as dead men in the presence of the princes. Whenever they are attracted by your fervent alacrity, they take great pleasure in assisting at our solemnities. But I fear, lest, disgusted at your sloth, they may sometimes retire in anger, and then, all too late, each of you should begin to say to God with tears, “Thou hast put away my acquaintance far from me: they have set me an abomination to themselves.” Also, “Friend and neighbour Thou hast put far from me, and my acquaintance, because of my misery.” Likewise, “My friends and my neighbours have drawn near and stood against me, and they that were near me stood afar off, and they that sought my soul used violence.” For if the good angels withdraw from us, who will be able to resist the assaults of the malignant? I say, therefore, to him who thus yields to sloth, “cursed be he that doth the work of God negligently.” And it is not I but the Lord Who says, “I would thou wert cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of My Mouth.” Be attentive, then, my brethren, to these angelic princes, when you are engaged in prayer or psalmody; comport yourselves with reverence and modesty, and glory in the knowledge that your angels daily “see the Face of your Father.” Being “sent to minister for them that shall receive the inheritance of salvation,” they ascend to God to offer Him our devotions, and return to us laden with His graces. Let us profit by the ministrations of those celestial spirits who honour us with their company, so that praise may be “perfected out of the

mouths of infants and sucklings." Let us say to them, "Sing praises to our God, sing ye," and let us hear them, in turn, answering, "Sing praises to our King, sing ye."

Since, therefore, it is your privilege to sing the praises of God in common with the heavenly choristers, as being "fellow-citizens with the saints and domestics of God," "sing ye wisely." As sweet food is pleasing to the palate, so is a psalm to the heart. Only let the devout and prudent soul be careful to grind it with the teeth of her intelligence, if I may use the expression, and not gulp it down whole and unmasticated, for otherwise the spiritual palate cannot enjoy the taste, pleasant and "sweet above honey and the honey-comb." Let us offer Christ a honey-comb, like the Apostles, at the celestial banquet and the table of the Lord. Just as the honey is found in the comb, so should devotion be felt in the words, for "the letter killeth" if swallowed down without this seasoning of the Spirit. But if, like St. Paul, you "sing in the spirit, and sing also with the understanding," you, too, shall recognise the truth of what Jesus said, "The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life." You shall likewise understand the saying of Wisdom, "My Spirit is sweet above honey." So "shall your soul be delighted in fatness," and "your whole burnt-offering be made fat." So shall you appease the King, and gain the favour of His princes, and secure to yourselves the good will of all the heavenly court. The blessed above, "smelling a sweet savour" in heaven, shall say of you also, "Who is she that goeth up by the desert as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?" As David sings, "The princes of Juda are their leaders, the princes of Zabulon, the princes of Nephthali." That is to say, the angels act as leaders for those who sing the praises of God, who observe continence, and are given to divine contemplation. For well do these our princes know how pleasing to their King are the laudation of our psalmody, the constancy of our temperance, and the purity of our contemplation. Hence they are careful to demand from us such first-fruits of the Spirit, which are really nothing else than the first and fairest fruits of wisdom. You are aware, of course, that Juda signifies in the Hebrew "one praising or confessing," Zabulon "the dwelling of strength," and Nephthali "the stag set free." The stag, indeed, by reason of his agility and powers of leaping, is a figure which admirably expresses the spiritual ecstasies of the contemplative. Also, just as that animal is wont to penetrate the shadows of the forest, so is the contemplative accustomed to pierce through the obscurity of mystical meanings.

We know, too, my brethren, Who it was that said, "The sacrifice of praise

shall honour Me." But as "praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner," is it not of absolute necessity that it should be accompanied by the virtue of continence, which will secure that "sin shall not reign in your mortal body"? Yet that continence which seeks human glory, has no merit in the eyes of God. Indispensably necessary, therefore, is purity of intention, whereby the soul has the wish to please Him alone and the power to unite herself to Him closely. Now, to be united to God is simply to see God, and this is granted only to the clean of heart, as their special prerogative. A clean heart had the Prophet David, who said to the Lord, "My soul hath stuck close to Thee," and, "But it is good for me to cleave to God." By seeing he cleaved, and he saw by cleaving. To the soul, then, that is well exercised in the virtues just mentioned, the messengers of heaven manifest themselves familiarly and frequently, particularly if they observe her to be assiduous at prayer. Who will grant me that my "petitions may be made known to the household of God" through your mediation, O benevolent princes! Not merely to God, for to Him even "the thought of man confesseth," but to the household of God, so as to include also those who dwell with Him, both blessed angels and beatified souls of men. I am "needy"—who will "raise" me "up from the earth"? I am "poor"—who will "lift" me "up out of the dung-hill," that so "I may sit with princes and hold the throne of glory"? Yet I doubt not they will gladly introduce into the palace one whom they condescend to visit even on the "dung-hill." And if they rejoice at our conversion, can they despise us when we have been exalted in glory?

In my opinion, therefore, it is these ministering spirits to whom the Spouse, in her prayer, addresses herself and opens her heart, as being the domestics and friends of the Bridegroom, when she says, "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth." And notice the familiar and friendly conversation of a soul still imprisoned in the flesh, with these celestial powers. She is eager to be kissed; she asks what she desires; yet she does not name Him Whom she loves. The reason is that she feels sure they do not require to be told, since He is the ordinary subject of conversation between herself and them. Hence she does not say, "Let this or that one kiss me," but only "Let Him kiss me." So, Mary Magdalen did not mention by name Him Whom she was seeking, but merely said to the Stranger Whom she believed to be the gardener, "Sir, if thou hast taken Him away." Taken whom? She does not specify, because she thought that what her own heart could not for a moment forget, must be equally present to the thoughts of every one. In the same manner the Spouse, speaking to the companions of the Bridegroom, to whom, as she was aware, her secret was

known, suppressed her Beloved’s name, and broke out abruptly with the request, “Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.” About this kiss, my brethren, I will say no more to-day. But in to-morrow’s discourse you shall hear whatever thereon, in answer to your prayer, the grace of the Holy Spirit, Who teacheth all things, shall further inspire me with. For it is not by flesh and blood that this secret is revealed, but by the Holy Ghost, “Who searcheth the deep things of God,” Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and liveth and reigneth with Them for evermore. Amen.

SERMON VIII

ON THE KISS OF THE MOUTH INTERPRETED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth."

To-day, my brethren, in fulfilment of the promise made in my last sermon, I purpose to speak more particularly of the supreme kiss, that is to say, of the kiss of the Mouth. And as this kiss is sweeter than the other two, viz., those of the Feet and of the Hand, more rarely enjoyed, and more difficult to comprehend, the present discourse demands from you a more than ordinary attention. To begin on a level more lofty than usual, it appears to me that He Who said, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither doth anyone know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him," by these words designated a kind of kiss which is altogether ineffable and incommunicable to any creature. "For the Father loveth the Son" and embraces Him with an infinite affection, as the Supreme His Co-equal, the Eternal His Co-Eternal, the One His Only-Begotten. But not less for Him is the love of the Son, Who even died for the love of the Father, as He Himself testifies when He says, "That all may know that I love the Father, arise, let us go." He spoke evidently of going to His Passion. Now, What is that mutual love and knowledge between Father and Son but a most sweet and incomprehensible kiss?

I, at any rate, hold it as certain that no creature, not excepting even the angels, is admitted to a comprehension of this secret of love, so great and so holy St. Paul was of the same mind when he affirmed that this "peace surpasseth all understanding," the angelic understanding included. Hence not even the Spouse, although otherwise daring enough, would yet venture to say, "let Him kiss me with His Mouth," for she reserved that to the Father. But she asks for something less in the request, "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth." Do you wish to behold this new Spouse receiving the new kiss, not from the Mouth, but from "the Kiss of His mouth"? "He breathed on them," says the Evangelist, namely,

Jesus on the apostles, that is, on the primitive Church, “and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Assuredly that was a kiss. What? The corporeal exhalation? No, my brethren, but the invisible Spirit. And the reason why He was communicated by the Lord’s breathing was this, in order that we should understand that He proceeds from the Son in like manner as from the Father, being truly a Divine Kiss, common to the Mouth That kisses and the Mouth That is kissed. Consequently, it is enough for the Spouse to be kissed “with the Kiss” of the Bridegroom, without being kissed with His Mouth. For it is no small thing, nor a matter deserving of but slight esteem, to be kissed with that Kiss, namely, to receive an infusion of the Holy Spirit. This should not seem fanciful; because if I am right in regarding the Father as the Mouth That kisses, and the Son as the Mouth That is kissed, I cannot be very far wrong in understanding by the Kiss Itself the Divine Spirit, Who is the imperturbable Peace of the Father and Son, the everlasting Bond, the undivided Love, the indivisible Unity.

It is, therefore, with regard to Him that the Spouse is so venturesome, and she confidently asks, using the image of a kiss, that He Would deign to infuse Himself into her heart. If she is so daring, it is because she has heard something which appears to encourage her presumption. For has she not heard the Son saying, “No one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither doth any one know the Father but the Son,” and adding, “and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him”? But she has no doubt that the Bridegroom would be pleased to make this revelation to His Bride before all others. Hence she boldly asks a kiss, that is, the Holy Spirit, in Whom are revealed both the Father and the Son. One, indeed, cannot be known Without the Other. Hence the Lord said, “He who seeth Me seeth My Father also.” And St. John, “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; he that confesseth the Son, hath also the Father.” From this it is evident that neither the Father can be known without the Son, nor the Son without the Father. Rightly, then, is supreme felicity made to consist, not in the knowledge of One or Other, but of Both, by Him Who says, “This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.” Finally, those who follow the Lamb are said to have His name and the name of the Father written on their foreheads, which means that they rejoice in the knowledge of Both.

But some one may here object and say, “Therefore the knowledge of the Holy Ghost is not essential to our happiness, because when Christ declared that eternal life consisted in knowing the Father and the Son, He said nothing of the Third Person.” Nothing explicitly, I grant you. But when the Father and the Son are

perfectly known, known also must assuredly be the Holy Spirit, Who is the common Goodness of the Two. Even one human being cannot be fully known to another so long as it is uncertain whether his disposition is good or evil. Yet even when the Saviour said, “This is eternal life that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent,” if this mission demonstrates the good-will both of the Father, Who so lovingly sent His Son, and of the Son, Who so freely obeyed His Father, even then, I say, He was not silent respecting the Spirit, for He made mention of that infinite Loving-kindness common of Both. And is not the Holy Ghost the Love and the kindness of Father and Son?

Consequently, the Spouse, in requesting a kiss, prays for the grace of this threefold knowledge, so much, at least, as is possible for her to receive whilst still in the flesh. And she asks this of the Son to Whom it belongs to reveal the Father “to whomsoever it shall please Him.” The Son, therefore, reveals both Himself and His Father to such as He pleases. But the revelation is made by a Kiss, that is, by the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle witnesses, when he says, “But to us God hath revealed Them by His Spirit.” Now in giving the Spirit by Whom He reveals the Father and Son, He also reveals the Spirit Himself. He reveals by giving, and by revealing He gives. Besides, the revelation which is made by the Holy Spirit not only communicates the light of knowledge, but also enkindles the flames of love. Hence the words of St. Paul, “The charity of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us.” And perhaps this is the reason why, with regard to those, who “knowing God, did not glorify Him as God,” we do not read that they got their knowledge by revelation of the Holy Ghost. Because, namely, their knowledge was not accompanied by love. The Apostle simply says, “for God had manifested it unto them,” and does not add “by His Spirit.” Otherwise, the kiss, which is the privilege of the Spouse, would be usurped by impious souls, who, content with the knowledge that “puffeth up,” are unconcerned for the charity that “edifieth.” But St. Paul himself shall tell us whence they derived their knowledge of God. They “perceived” Him, he says, “by the things that are made, being understood.” Hence it is manifest that they could not have known Him perfectly Whom they loved not at all. For had they possessed such perfect knowledge, they surely would not have been ignorant of that infinite goodness wherewith He willed to be born in the flesh and to die for their redemption. Hear now what attributes of God were revealed to them: “His eternal power also and Divinity.” You see how, in the presumption of a spirit not divine but human, they investigated His attributes of sublimity and majesty, but

failed to understand that He was “meek and humble of Heart.” This should not surprise us, since Behemoth, their chief, “sees everything high,” as is written of him, but nothing that is lowly. David, on the contrary, would not “walk in great matters nor in wonderful things above” him, lest, as a “searcher into majesty,” he should “be overwhelmed by glory.”

Do you, also, my brethren, if you would pick your steps cautiously amidst such mysteries of truth, ever bear in mind the counsel of the Wise Man, “Seek not the things that are too high for thee, and search not into things above thy ability.” In matters of this nature, walk in the Spirit, not by the light of your own intelligence. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit does not excite curiosity, but rather enkindles charity. Justly, therefore, does the Spouse, in seeking Him “Whom her soul loveth,” refuse to put her trust in the senses of the flesh, or to be satisfied with the vain reasonings of human curiosity. But she solicits a kiss, that is, she invokes the Holy Spirit from Whom she shall obtain both the food of knowledge and the seasoning of grace. That is true knowledge which is imparted by means of a kiss, and is accepted with love, because a kiss the token of love, Consequently, the “knowledge” which “puffeth up,” which is unaccompanied by charity, does not proceed from a kiss. But neither can this kiss of love be claimed by those who indeed “have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” For the grace of the kiss communicates at once both the light of knowledge and the warmth of love. It is in truth “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,” Who, like the bee bearing wax and honey, has wherewith to light the lamp of knowledge and to infuse the sweetness of devotion. Wherefore, let not him who has understanding of truth without love, nor him who has love without understanding, ever imagine he has received this kiss. With it error and coldness are alike incompatible. So, for the reception of the twofold grace of this all-holy kiss, let the Spouse on her part get ready her two lips, namely, her intelligence for “understanding,” and her will for “wisdom.” Thus, glorying in a perfect kiss, she will deserve to hear these words of consolation, “Grace is poured abroad on thy lips, therefore hath God blessed thee for ever.” Accordingly, the Father, when kissing His Son, “uttereth” most fully to Him the secrets of His Divinity. This Holy Scripture indicates to us by the words, “Day to Day uttereth speech.” But this eternal and divinely-sweet embrace it is given to no creature whatsoever to behold, as I have already remarked, the Holy Spirit, common to Father and Son, being the sole Witness and confidant of Their mutual knowledge and love. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath Him his counsellor?”

But perchance some one will say to me: “How then hast thou come to know what thou confessest has been revealed to no creature?” I have an obvious answer. “The Only-Begotten, Who is in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him,” not indeed to me, miserable and unworthy as I am, but to the holy Baptist, the “friend of the Bridegroom,” whose words these are. And not only to him, but also to St. John the Evangelist, as being “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” For his soul, too, was pleasing to God, truly worthy both of the name and of the dowry of a spouse, worthy of the embrace of the Bridegroom, even worthy of the privilege of reclining on the Bosom of the Lord. St. John derived from the Heart of the Only-Begotten, what He derived from His Father’s, but not the Evangelist alone. The same is true of all to whom “the Angel of the Great Counsel” addressed the words, “I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father I have made known to you.” From the same Heart was derived the knowledge of St. Paul who received his Gospel “not from man, nor through man, but by revelation from Jesus Christ.” Most certainly, all these could say with as much joy as veracity, “The Only-Begotten, Who is in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” And what, my brethren, was this “declaration” but a kiss bestowed on them? Yet it was the kiss of the Kiss, not the Kiss of the Mouth. Listen: “I and the Father are One”—there you have the Kiss of the truth. Also here, “I am in the Father and the Father in Me.” This is the Kiss from Mouth to Mouth. But let no creature presume to claim It. It is a Kiss of love and of peace. But that love “surpasseth all knowledge,” as that peace “surpasseth all understanding.” Nevertheless, what “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man,” that God revealed to St. Paul by His Spirit, that is, by “the Kiss of His Mouth.” Therefore, the mutual Indwelling of the Son in the Father and of the Father in the Son is the Kiss of the Mouth. The kiss of the Kiss is that of which we read, “For we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit That is of God that we may know the things that are given us from God.”

In order to make the distinction clearer, I say that He, Who receives the plenitude, receives the Kiss of the Mouth; and he, who receives of the plenitude, receives the kiss of the Kiss. A great saint indeed is Paul. Yet however high he can raise his mouth, although he can reach up to the third heaven, he can never attain to the Lips of the Most High. Let him be content with his own measure, and as he cannot mount to that “Face of glory,” let him humbly pray that It would stoop to his level and send down a kiss from above. But He, Who “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” so that He could say, “I and the

Father are One," as He is associated with the Father as an Equal, embraces Him also as an Equal, and, instead of soliciting a kiss from a lower level, at an equal elevation presses Mouth to Mouth, thus, by a singular prerogative, receiving the Kiss of the Mouth. Christ's Kiss, consequently, is the plenitude, Paul's but a participation. The Master can boast of having obtained the Kiss of the Mouth; the disciple the kiss of the Kiss.

Yet happy is that kiss of participation whereby we not only know God, but also love the Father, Who, without doubt, is not fully known until He is perfectly loved. My brethren, is there amongst you one who sometimes, in the depths of his heart, hears the Spirit of the Son "crying Abba, Father"? If such there be, let him feel assured of the love of the Father, for he has the testimony of his own conscience that he is led by the same Spirit as the Son. O soul who art such, whosoever thou be, have courage, have confidence, and fear nothing. In the Spirit of Christ thou canst recognise thyself as the daughter of the Father and as the spouse and sister of the Son. Spouse and sister, both these titles may be found applied in Sacred Scripture to the soul that is such. This I can show without much labour. Thus, the Bridegroom says to His Bride, "I am come into My garden, O My Sister, My Spouse." She is a Sister as having the same Father, a Spouse as having the same Spirit. If carnal matrimony unites two in one flesh, why should not spiritual nuptials have greater efficacy to conjoin two in one Spirit? Moreover, we have the testimony of St. Paul that "He that cleaveth to God is one Spirit." But hear also from the Father how lovingly and how condescendingly He calls the faithful soul His daughter, and yet invites her as the bride of His Son to the embraces of that Son: "Hear, O daughter! and see, and incline thine ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house, and the King shall desire thy beauty." Behold from Whom this spouse demands a kiss. O happy soul! take care and be reverent, because He is the Lord Thy God, perhaps not so much to be kissed as to be adored with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON IX

ON THE BREASTS OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND OF THE SPOUSE

"Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth, for Thy Breasts are better than wine."

Let us now, my brethren, return to our text and explain the words of the Spouse and what follows. These words, spoken abruptly without the least introduction, hang unsteadily so to speak, and loosely swing in air, for want of a beginning or context. It is, therefore, necessary that something be premised to which they may intelligibly cohere. Let us accordingly suppose that those, whom I have called the friends of the Bridegroom, as yesterday and the day before, so also to-day have come on a visit to salute the Spouse. Finding her discontented, and complaining, and out of humour, they wonder what the cause can be, and address her in this manner: "What has happened? How is it we see thee more sad than usual? Wherefore these unexpected complaints and murmurs? Certainly, after returning at length to thy lawful Husband, and only when compelled to do so by the ill-treatment of the other lovers after whom thou hadst gone so disloyally and unfaithfully, certainly, thou didst importune Him with prayers and tears to allow thee even to kiss His Feet. Is it not so?" "Yes," she answers. "What then? Having obtained thy request, and the pardon of thy infidelities at the same time in the kiss of His Foot, didst thou not again grow discontented? Not satisfied with so much condescension, but desiring greater familiarity, with the same insistence as before thou didst now implore and obtain the second grace, and with the kiss of the Hand wast adorned with virtues neither few in number nor little in importance. Thou dost admit all this?" "I do," she replies. "Art not thou the one who used to protest and promise that, if ever she was admitted to the kiss of the Hand, this would be enough for her, and thereafter she would ask for nothing more?" "The same," she confesses. "What then? Perhaps thou wilt complain that some of the graces already bestowed have been taken back?" "No, indeed." "Or, it may be that thou art afraid thou shalt be called upon

to answer for the sins of thy past life, which, it was thy hope, had been forgiven?" "Not even that." "Well then, tell us what is wrong and how we can help thee." "I cannot rest," she exclaims, "until He kisses me with the kiss of His Mouth. I am thankful for being allowed to kiss His Feet. I am grateful for the privilege of kissing His Hand. But if He has any care for me, 'let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.' I am not, I repeat, ungrateful, but—I love. What I have already obtained is, I acknowledge, too much for my desert, yet altogether too little for my desire. I am governed more by desire than by reason. Do not, I beg of you, blame my presumption, since affection urges me on. Modesty remonstrates, but love is supreme. I am not ignorant that 'the honour of the King loveth judgment.' But headlong love will not wait for judgment, will not suffer the restraints of counsel, will not be held in check by modesty, will not follow the guidance reason. I beg, I entreat, I implore, 'let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.' Lo! these many years, for His sake, I have been careful to lead a chaste and sober life; I have applied myself with diligence to spiritual reading; I have resisted my evil passions; I have watched against temptation; I have been constant in prayer; I have 'recounted my years in the bitterness of my soul!' As far as was possible to me, I have, I think, lived without reproach amongst my brethren. I have been obedient to my superiors, going out and coming in according to the command of authority. So far from coveting my neighbour's goods, I have rather given him my own and myself with them. In the sweat of my brow have I eaten my bread. Yet in all these painful exercises I have felt nothing save the monotonous drudgery of routine, unseasoned with sweetness. What am I but, according to the Prophet, as 'the heifer of Ephraim taught to love to tread out the corn'? In the Gospel, he is reputed a useless servant who only does what he is obliged to do. I am, perhaps, in some way faithfully observing the commandments, yet, even in that observance 'my soul is as earth without water.' In order, therefore, that my whole burnt-offering may be made fat,' 'let Him, I implore, 'kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.' "

Many of you, as I remember, in the manifestations of conscience which you make to me privately, are wont to complain of this aridity and languor of soul, this heaviness and dulness of mind, whereby you are rendered incapable of penetrating the profound and hidden things of God, and can experience little or none of the sweetness of the Spirit. What is that, my brethren, but a longing to be kissed? Plainly, such persons are sighing and yearning after the Spirit of Not wisdom and understanding. They want understanding to direct them to the goal. They want wisdom to relish what understanding reveals. It was, I think, with

such sentiments the Prophet prayed when he said, “Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips” That is to say, he wanted a kiss, and such a kiss as would by the contact, suffuse his lips with the oil of special grace, and thus bring about the fulfilment of the wish he gives expression to elsewhere: “Let my mouth be filled With praise, that I may sing Thy glory, Thy greatness all the day long.” Then, after tasting, he cries out, “How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!” But, perhaps, I have delayed long enough over this kiss, although, candidly, I doubt as to whether I have as yet spoken anything worthy of the subject. However, since, after all, it is better learned when impressed in act than when expressed in words, we may now pass on.

The text continues: “For Thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments.” Whose words these are, we are not informed. Hence it is left for the commentator to determine the person to whom they most properly belong. As for me, I think I can see reasons for assigning them either to the Spouse, or to the Bridegroom, or to the friends of the Bridegroom. And, in the first place, I will point out how fitly they may be regarded as coming from the Spouse. Whilst she is conversing with the familiars of her Beloved, lo! He of Whom they speak approaches. For He willingly draws nigh to those who are talking about Him. Such has ever been His custom. Thus, to the disciples journeying to Emmaus and conversing about Jesus, He joined Himself as a pleasant and sociable companion. This is what He promises in the Gospel: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”; and also by His Prophet: “Before they shall call, I will hear, and whilst yet they are speaking I will hear.” So now He comes uninvited to the Spouse and her companions, and, delighted with their words, anticipates their prayers. I believe, indeed, that sometimes He does not even wait for words, but is drawn to us by our very thoughts. Hence, he who was found “a man according to the heart” of God, tells us that “The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor, Thine Ear hath heard the preparation of their heart.” Do you, therefore, my brethren, watch over yourselves in every place, as knowing yourselves to be ever under the Eye of that God Who “searcheth the hearts and the reins,” “Who hath made the hearts of everyone of” you, Who “understandeth all your works.” The Spouse, accordingly, observing the presence of her Beloved, breaks off abruptly in her speech. She feels ashamed of her presumption in which, as she perceives, she has been discovered by Him. It had seemed to her that the way to compass her design least at variance with the rules of modesty, would be to engage the

services of the friends of the Bridegroom and use them as intermediaries. She presently turns to the Bridegroom Himself, and she tries to excuse her presumption as well as she can, saying, “For Thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments.” As if she should say, “If I appear to Thee ambitious, the fault lies with Thyself, O my Bridegroom, Who suckled me so condescendingly on the sweetness of Thy Breasts. Thus, all fear being banished rather by Thy love rather than by my temerity, I have been more daring, perhaps, than is expedient. So my imprudence results from mindfulness of Thy love to me and forgetfulness of Thy Majesty.” Let these remarks be understood as merely supplying a context for the words of the Canticle. We have now to see what means this strange commendation of the Bridegroom’s Breasts.

These two Breasts of the Beloved are simply the two proofs He offers us of the benignity of His Nature, in patiently waiting for the sinner’s return to Him, and affectionately receiving the penitent. A twofold sweetness of most delicious savour, I say, exudes from the Breast of the Lord Jesus, namely, long-suffering in expectation and readiness in forgiving. Lest you should consider this but a fancy of my own, I will give you scriptural testimony of it. Concerning long-suffering we read, “Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and patience and long-suffering?” Again, “Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance.” Hence, if He delays long before pronouncing the sentence of punishment against the sinner, the reason is, because He desires rather to bestow the grace of pardon upon the penitent. “For He willeth not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.” Let me now give you testimonies regarding the second Breast which I have interpreted to mean facility in pardoning. Concerning it we read, “In whatever hour the sinner shall repent, his sin shall be forgiven him.” Also, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He is bountiful to forgive.” David beautifully comprehends in a few words both these Divine Breasts, where he says that the Lord is “long-suffering and plenteous in mercy.” The Spouse, therefore, acknowledges that, by the experience of this twofold mercy, her confidence has increased to such an extent as to embolden her to ask for a kiss. “What wonder, O my Beloved!” we may fancy her saying, “if I make so bold with Thee after being allowed to draw from Thy Breasts such an abundance of sweetness? So it is no reliance on my own merits, but the sweetness of Thy Breasts that makes me so daring.” Hence, the meaning of the expression, “Thy Breasts are better than wine,” may be understood to be this: “The oil of divine grace that flows from

Thy Breasts is more useful to me for my spiritual progress than are the reproofs, wine-like in their pungency, of my human superiors. And not alone are ‘Thy Breasts better than wine,’ but they also ‘smell sweet of the best ointments.’ That is to say, not only dost Thou nourish those who are present with the milk of spiritual sweetness, but Thou dost also shed around them that are absent the sweet odour of a worthy esteem of Thyself, thus ‘having good testimony both from those who are without and from those who are within.’ Thou hast, I say, milk within and ointments without, because unless Thou didst first attract us by the odour of Thy ointments, there would be none to refresh with the sweetness of Thy milk.” As to these ointments, and whether they suggest aught that is deserving of consideration, we shall see afterwards when we come to the verse, “We will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments.” Now, according to my promise, let us examine if the same words, which I have just explained as spoken by the Spouse, may not also be ascribed to the Bridegroom.

As she is speaking of her Beloved, suddenly, as I have said, He Himself appears. He complies with her request, and bestows the kiss, thus fulfilling in her regard the word which is written, “Thou hast given” her her “heart’s desire, and hast not withholden from” her “the will of her lips.” The filling of her breasts bears witness to this. So great, my brethren, is the efficacy of this holy kiss, that, directly it is received, it causes the breasts to swell out with an abundance of spiritual milk. Those amongst you who are most given to prayer understand what I am saying from their own experience. How often do we not draw near to the altar with dry and tepid hearts! But whilst we persevere in prayer, suddenly there is an infusion of grace, our hearts swell, our whole interior is deluged with an inundation of piety, and, were there but someone to press, the milk of sweetness engendered would be neither slow nor scanty in coming. Thus, then, the Bridegroom may say to the espoused soul, “Now, My Spouse, thou hast received what thou didst ask for, and the proof of it is this, that thy breasts are become better than wine. From the fulness of thy breasts thou mayst infer that the kiss solicited has been bestowed upon thee. Behold, they are now distended and, in the abundance of milk, made better than the wine of worldly knowledge, which inebriates indeed, but with curiosity, not with charity, filling rather than nourishing, inflating rather than edifying, producing satiety rather than strength.”

Let us next consider the same words as if spoken by the friends of the Bridegroom. “Unreasonably,” they protest, “dost thou, O Spouse, complain of thy Beloved, because what He has already granted thee is of more value than that which thou now requirest. The object of thy present desire will no doubt

give thee pleasure. Yet the breasts, from which thou feedest the children of thy womb, are better, that is, are more necessary, than the wine of contemplation for which thou prayest. The latter is the wine that ‘rejoiceth the heart of (the individual) man,’ but the former is the charity that edifies the multitude. If Rachel, that is, the exercises of the contemplative life, be the more fair, Lia, to wit, the active ministry, is the more fruitful. Do not, then, devote too much time to the kisses of contemplation, for better are the breasts of preaching.”

There is, besides, another possible interpretation, which indeed I had not intended to propose to you, but which, as it seems to me now, ought not to be passed over. For why should we not suppose that these words of the Canticle belong most properly to the “little ones,” of whom the Spouse, as mother or nurse, has solicitous charge? Such “little ones,” that is to say, immature and tender souls, cannot endure with patience that she should give herself to repose, by whose doctrine and example they desire to be more fully instructed and edified. And in a subsequent verse we read of their being severely checked in their troublesome restiveness and forbidden to awaken the Spouse until she herself wishes. These children, therefore, when they notice her eager for kisses, seeking seclusion, avoiding publicity, keeping aloof from the multitude, and preferring her own ease to the care of themselves, raise their voices in protest against such conduct. “Act not so,” they cry, “act not so. Better is the milk of thy breasts than the wine of such kisses. By means of that milk thou canst deliver us from ‘the carnal desires that war against the soul,’ thou canst rescue us from the world and win us to God.” Or perhaps, when they say, “Because thy breasts are better than wine,” they intend to signify this: “Those spiritual delights distilled to us from thy breasts are far superior to the earthly pleasures wherewith, as with wine, we were formerly intoxicated and held captive.”

This comparison of bodily pleasures with wine is very apt. Just as the grape, when drained by pressure has no longer any juice to yield, so the body in the wine-press of death is sterilised completely as a source of delight, and can never again wax wanton under the impulse of passion. Hence, the Prophet declares, “All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered and the flower is fallen.” And the Apostle, “He that soweth in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption.” Also, “Meat for the stomach and the stomach for the meat, but God shall destroy both it and them.” But consider, if perhaps this comparison may be extended not only to the flesh, but to the world as well. It also “passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof,” and all things therein shall come to an end of which there is no end. But not so the

spiritual breasts. These, when exhausted, shall be again replenished, from the fountain in the maternal heart, with the milk that can satisfy the sucklings' thirst. Better, therefore, than the love of the flesh and the world are those breasts of the Spouse rightly said to be, which no number of little ones can ever drain, but which are always refilled to overflowing from the heart of charity. For rivers flow forth ceaselessly from that heart, and there is made within it a "fountain of living water springing up into eternal life." The crowning commendation of the Spouses' breasts is that which is said of the fragrance of their ointments. By this We are given to understand that they not only feed us with the sweetness of sound doctrine, but also exhale the pleasant odour of a good name. As to what these breasts are, what the milk that fills them, and what the ointments whereof they are redolent, all these questions I purpose to discuss more in detail in another sermon, with the help of Christ, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON X

ON THE SPIRITUAL OINTMENTS

"Smelling sweet of the best ointments."

My brethren, I cannot pretend to such profundity of understanding or to such perspicacity of genius as would enable me to discover anything new for myself. But in the mouth of St. Paul, which is always open to us, I find a full and ever-flowing fountain. As very often on other occasions, so now also in explaining the breasts of the Spouse, I shall draw on its resources. "Rejoice with those who rejoice," says the great Apostle, "weep with those who weep." In these few words he expresses all the affections of a mother's heart. For little children know not how to be ill or well without their sickness or health being, through sympathy, shared in by her who brought them into the world. She cannot help being conformed in all things to her own flesh and blood. Wherefore, agreeably to the mind of St. Paul, I will take the two breasts of the Spouse to signify these two maternal affections, naming one Compassion and the other Congratulation or Sympathy with joy. For if the Spouse does not as yet possess such feelings, does not as yet exhibit these breasts, is not as yet conscious of a readiness to "rejoice with those that rejoice" and to "weep with those that weep," she is still but "a little one" and immature. Should a soul so defective be appointed to the government of others, or to the office of preaching, she will do no good to her neighbour, but infinite evil to herself. But how recklessly bold and lost to shame should one of this kind be to thrust herself uncalled into such functions!

But let us return to the breasts of the Spouse, and to each let us assign its own peculiar kind of milk. I say, then, that Congratulation yields the milk of encouragement, Compassion that of consolation. Both species the spiritual mother feels flowing abundantly into her loving heart from the heavenly source whenever she obtains the kiss of divine contemplation. You may see her immediately afterwards with full breasts giving suck to her children, distilling from the one breast a wealth of consolation, and from the other a plenteous stream of salutary exhortation, according as the various needs of the little ones

may appear to demand. For example, should she notice that one of those whom she has begotten in Christ, is agitated by some violent temptation, and reduced thereby to such a state of perturbation, sadness, and pusillanimity as to be no longer capable of withstanding the enemy's onslaught, how she sympathises with him! how she soothes him! how she weeps over him! how she consoles him! how many arguments of piety does she not presently discover with which to lift him up out of his depression! But if, on the contrary, she observes him to be full of zeal and alacrity, and making good progress towards perfection, oh, then she is jubilant! she approaches him with salutary admonitions; she fans his zeal to brighter flame; she provides him as well as she can with the means of perseverance; she exhorts him to be ever striving towards higher sanctity. In this way does she accommodate herself to all. She transfers to herself the dispositions of all. And she shows herself to be the mother of the Weak no less than of the fervent.

How many do we behold to-day actuated by feelings and dispositions very far from motherly!—I speak of those who have undertaken the government of souls. Rather it must be confessed, although with groans of misery, that they melt down in the furnace of their avarice, and fashion into things of traffic, and barter away for filthy lucre the reproaches of Christ, the spittings, the scourges, the nails, the lance, His cross, and His death,—all. And the price of this all, the world's ransom, they hasten to place in their purses! The only difference between prelates of this character and the Iscariot is that, whereas he equated the value of all this merchandise with thirty (silver) pieces, they, on the contrary, influenced by a more griping greed of gain, endeavour to drive a better bargain by demanding an immeasurably higher price. After these profits they hunger with an insatiable appetite. When possessed, they are in fear lest they lose them, and they grieve for them when lost. In the love of them they rest, in so far, at least, as their anxiety to preserve and increase them is consistent with any rest. But for the loss or the salvation of souls, they have no concern. Most certainly, these are not true mothers, who, though they are "grown fat and thick and gross" out of the patrimony of the Crucified, yet feel no compassion for "the affliction of Joseph." The real mother makes herself known by her conduct. She has breasts and she keeps them full. She knows well how to "rejoice with those that rejoice and to weep with those that weep." Nor does she cease to extract the milk of exhortation from the breast of Congratulation, or the milk of consolation from the breast of Compassion. Concerning this milk and these breasts of the Spouse, I have now said enough.

I shall next endeavour to explain what these ointments are of which the breasts smell so sweetly, but only on condition that you, my brethren, by your prayers, shall obtain for me the double grace of conceiving worthy sentiments and of clothing them in suitable language, for the benefit of my hearers, that is, of yourselves. Of these ointments, some belong to the Bridegroom, others to the Bride, just as there are breasts also proper to each. I indicated, in the preceding discourse, the place where an exposition of the Bridegroom's ointments will be most properly given. Let us here, consider those of the Bride, and that the more attentively on account of the high eulogium which Holy Scripture passes upon them, declaring them to be, not merely good, but the very best. And, first of all, I will set forth the various species of ointments, that out of all we may select those which most especially belong to the breasts of the Spouse. There is, then, the ointment of Contrition, there is the ointment of Devotion, and the ointment of Piety. The first is pungent, causing pain. The second is soothing, and tempers pain. The third is remedial, and banishes pain. I now proceed to discuss these separately.

There is, therefore, an ointment which the soul, burthened with sins, makes up for herself. This she does when, beginning to consider her ways, she collects, heaps up, and crushes in the mortar of conscience the many and various species of her sins; and in the crucible of a fervid heart, melts down and fuses all together, repentance and sorrow supplying the necessary heat. Hence she can now say with the Psalmist, "My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out." Behold, this is the first ointment wherewith the sinful soul ought to anoint the beginnings of her conversion and soothe her bleeding wounds. For the first "sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit." Hence as long as the poor and needy soul finds not wherewith to compound for herself a better and more precious ointment, let her not neglect to prepare this, even though it be from the vilest materials, because "a contrite and humble heart God will not despise." Besides, the more contemptible she appears in her own eyes, from the consideration of her past sins, the less so does she appear in the Eyes of God. And, after all, if that visible ointment, with which, as we read in the Gospel, the Lord's corporeal Feet were anointed by Magdalen, was but a figure of the invisible and spiritual kind of which there is question here, we certainly cannot consider this vile. For what is it we read of the former? "The house," writes the Evangelist, "was filled with the perfume of the ointment." It was poured by the hand of a sinner, and poured on the lowest members of the sacred Body, that is, on the Feet. Yet it was not so mean and contemptible but that it could fill the

whole house with the scent of its spices and the sweetness of its perfumes. My brethren, if we could but realise what a fragrance of delight is exhaled throughout the Church by the conversion of a single sinner, and what an odour of life unto life the public and perfect penitent becomes, of him also we should proclaim with equal confidence that “the house was filled with the perfume of the ointment.” Nay, the perfume of penitence reaches even to the supernal mansions of the blessed above, so that as Truth Itself testifies, “There shall be joy amongst the angels of God over one sinner doing penance.” Rejoice, therefore, ye penitents! Be comforted, ye that are fearful! I refer to you, who, recently converted from a worldly life and withdrawn from the ways of sin, have experienced the bitterness and confusion of a contrite heart, with an exceeding pain and torment, as it were of recent wounds. Let your hands distil with confidence the bitterness of myrrh in this saving unction, because “a contrite and humble heart God will not despise.” Certainly, we are not to despise or to consider as vile such an anointing, the odour of which is a source of edification to men, and of joy to the angels.

But there is another ointment more precious than this in proportion as it is made from more excellent materials. We have not far to seek for the elements out of which we extract the ointment of Contrition. They are always within reach and found without difficulty. In the little gardens of our own consciences we can easily gather as much and as often as our necessities require. For, if we wish to be sincere, which of us has not always of his own enough of sins and iniquities ready to hand? And, as you know, these are the stuffs whence we obtain the first ointment, described above. But this earth of ours can never produce the spices that yield the second. “From afar and from the uttermost coasts” must we seek them, “for every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, descending from the Father of lights.” This ointment, in fact, is extracted from the divine benefits bestowed on the human race. Happy the man who gathers them carefully, and, with worthy thanks, tries to keep them constantly before the eyes of his soul! When these sweet spices have been placed in the mortar of the breast, and crushed and pounded under the pestle of frequent meditation, and all fused together by the heat of holy desires, and finally mingled with the “oil of gladness,” the result shall be, without any doubt, an ointment far more precious and excellent than the first. In proof of this, I need only quote the testimony of Him Who said, “The sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me.” Now, this sacrifice will assuredly be offered by him who keeps in mind the benefits of God.

Moreover, since Holy Scripture merely affirms of the first ointment that it is

not despised, whereas the second is said to give glory, the latter is manifestly the more highly commended. Again, this is applied to the Head, whilst the other is poured upon the Feet. Now, as in Christ the Head must be referred to the Divinity, according to the words of St. Paul, “The Head of Christ is God,” doubtless he, who gives thanks, anoints the Head, seeing that thanks are offered not to man but to God. Not that He, Who is God, has not become Man, since “God and Man are one Christ,” but because all good gifts, even such as are communicated through man, have their ultimate source, not in man, but in God. As we know, “it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.” Therefore is it written “cursed be the man that trusteth in man.” For although it is true that we place our whole hope in the Man-God, nevertheless we do so not because He is Man, but because He is God. Therefore, the ointment of Contrition is poured on the Feet, since the lowliness of a contrite heart accords well with the humility of Christ’s Human Nature; and that of Devotion is given to the Head, because honour belongs to Majesty. Behold, my brethren, what manner of ointment is this second I have proposed to you, with which, namely, that royal Head, Which makes the principalities tremble, does not disdain to be anointed,—nay even deems Itself honoured by the unction, according to the words, “The sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me.”

Wherefore, it is not in the power of a poor and needy, that is, of a pusillanimous soul, to confect for herself this spiritual ointment. The spices or elements from which it is produced are only possessed by confidence, which is itself the offspring of liberty of spirit and purity of heart. For he that is diffident and weak in faith is restricted by the scantiness of his resources, and by reason of this poverty cannot spare time to devote himself to the praises of God, or to the consideration of the divine benefits which evokes these praises. And if ever such a one has the courage to endeavour to raise himself to this sublimity, domestic necessities and clamorous cares drag him down again directly, and he has perforce to confine himself once more within the narrow limits of his straitened circumstances. If you ask me the cause of such misery, I shall answer by pointing to what, if I do not mistake, you will recognise as existing, or, at least, as having existed in your own selves. This feebleness and diffidence of soul usually springs, as it seems to me, from one or other of two causes, namely, from newness of conversion, or, in the case of those who have been long in religion, from tepidity of life. Both the beginner and the lukewarm monk feel their souls oppressed, dejected, and disquieted, the former because of the sudden change of life involved in conversion, the latter because he perceives his old passions

revived by his laxity, and the consequent necessity of devoting his energies again to the task of rooting out the briers and nettles that have sprung up anew in his interior garden, a work which will require his continual presence at home. For surely he who staggers under the burden of such penitential labours cannot at the same time delight himself in the praises of God. How can the mouth that is filled with groans and lamentations give forth with Isaias “thanksgiving and the voice of praise”? We are told by the Wise Man that “Music in mourning is as a tale out of time.” Besides, thanksgiving does not anticipate, but follows upon the bestowal of favours. Now, the soul that is in sadness, far from rejoicing in divine favours, is rather sorely in need of them. She has, therefore, more incentives to prayer than motives for thanksgiving. One cannot surely recall a benefit which one has not yet received. Rightly, then, have I said that the indigent soul is unable to produce for herself the second species of ointment, which can be extracted only from the recollection of heavenly favours. She cannot see the light so long as she contemplates the shadows. Plunged in bitterness, she occupies herself with melancholy memories of her sins, to the exclusion of every brighter thought. It is to such souls the Prophet addresses the words, “It is vain for you to rise before the light.” As if he should say, “vainly do you attempt to rise to the contemplation of those benefits which excite feelings of pleasure, before the remorse which disquiets you has been soothed by the light of consolation.” The ointment of Devotion, therefore, is beyond the reach of the spiritually indigent.

But consider who they are that can sincerely lay claim to an abundance of it. The two apostles “went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.” Assuredly, they had anointed themselves well with the oil of the Spirit, whose sweetness could be soured neither by words nor stripes. For they were rich in charity, which no expenditure can exhaust, and from it they were always able to offer “holocausts full of marrow.” Their brimming hearts were constantly distilling this sacred unguent, with which they were then more abundantly supplied, when “they began to speak in divers tongues the wonderful works of God, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.” Those also, no doubt, were richly provided with the same precious liquor, to whom the Apostle bears witness where he says, “I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all things you are made rich in Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.” My brethren, would to God

that I may be able to return similar thanks for you, as beholding you rich in virtue, full of fervour in the divine praises, and more plenteously abounding in all spiritual graces, through Christ Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.

SERMON XI

ON THE MODE AND THE FRUIT OF REDEMPTION

"Smelling sweet of the best ointments."

I want to repeat, to-day, my brethren, what I said at the end of my last discourse, namely, that I wish to see you all participating in that heavenly unction, whereby servent devotion recalls with joy and gratitude the benefits bestowed by God. A very desirable grace is this, and for two reasons. Firstly, it lightens the labours of this present life, which become more supportable for us whilst our souls are exulting in the praises of God. And, secondly, because there is nothing on earth which so nearly approximates to the life of the blessed in heaven as a fervent choir singing to the glory of the Lord. So Holy Scripture says, "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; O Lord, for ever, and ever they shall praise Thee." It is, as I think, to this same ointment of Devotion in particular that the Psalmist refers when he sings, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! like the precious ointment on the head." Such a commendation cannot, it seems to me, be applied to the ointment of Contrition. That, although it is indeed "good," can hardly be described as "pleasant," because the remembrance of past sin begets rather pain than pleasure. Besides, they who are engaged in producing that unguent do not "dwell together." Each for himself mourns and laments over his own transgressions. But when returning thanks, we direct all our thoughts and attention to God alone, and for this reason we may be truly said to "dwell together." Thanksgiving is "good," as rendering to God the glory that is most justly due to Him. And it is also "pleasant," inasmuch as it is a source of delight.

Wherefore, my brethren, I exhort you to withdraw your minds occasionally from the sad and disquieting memory of your sins, and to pass out of the confined limits of your consciences into the smoother ways of thoughts upon the benefits of God. Thus, after experiencing confusion within yourselves, you will feel your courage revive at the view of the divine goodness. I wish you would resolve to put to the test of experience that which the Prophet recommends to us

in the words, “Delight in the Lord and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.” True, sorrow for sin is a necessity, yet it should not be continuous. It must sometimes give place to the more cheering thoughts of the divine clemency, lest otherwise the heart, frozen hard by excessive sadness, should fall a victim to despair. Let us, then, mingle a little honey with our wormwood, in order that we may be able to swallow the bitters thus tempered with sweets, and so derive advantage to our spiritual health. Listen to God Himself, how He moderates the bitterness of a contrite heart, how He recalls the pusillanimous from the abyss of despair, how with the honey of sweet and faithful promises He consoles the afflicted and raises up the dejected. By the mouth of His Prophet He says, “For My praise I will bridle thee, lest thou shouldst perish.” That is to say, “lest at the view of thy sins, thou shouldst yield to excessive sadness, and, like a runaway horse, plunge headlong over the precipice to thy destruction, I will bridle thee, I will hold thee back to receive My pardon, I will lift thee up to sing My praises, and thou that art confounded at the memory of thy sins, shalt have thy courage reanimated by the experience of My bounty, discovering My mercy to be greater than thine own guiltiness.” Had Cain been held in check with this bridle, never would he have cried out in despair,” My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon.” God forbid! my brethren, God forbid! The divine loving-kindness is greater than any iniquity whatever. Therefore “the just is his own accuser in the beginning of his words,” but only in the beginning, not throughout. Rather it is his custom to conclude his words with the praises of God. Take an example of a just man proceeding in this way. “I have thought on my ways,” sings David, “and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.” For in his own ways he had endured pain and misery, but had found delight in the way of God’s testimonies, “as in all riches.” And do you, therefore, my brethren, after the example of the just man, “think of the Lord in goodness,” whilst you think of yourselves in humility. So we read in Wisdom, “Think of the Lord in goodness, and seek Him in simplicity of heart.” This lesson must be impressed upon your minds by a frequent, or rather by an uninterrupted remembrance of the divine bounty. Otherwise how can that of the Apostle be fulfilled in you, “In all things giving thanks,” if you allow the benefits, for which thanks should be rendered, to escape from your memory? I should not like to see you deserving the reproach formerly addressed to the Jews, of whom the Scripture testifies that they were unmindful of God’s benefits and of the wonders He had worked in their behalf.

But it is impossible, I will admit, for any man to recall and keep in mind all the benefits which our “compassionate and merciful Lord” ceases not to bestow

upon mortals. “Who shall declare the powers of the Lord? Who shall set forth all His praises?” Yet, at least, that which is the chief and greatest, I mean the benefit of Redemption, ought surely never to depart from the memory of the redeemed. In this there are two things which I now wish to recommend, in a special way, to your consideration. I shall be as brief as possible, remembering what is said in Proverbs, “Give an occasion to a wise man, and wisdom shall be added to him.” The two things of which I speak are the mode of our Redemption, and its fruit. The mode is God’s emptying of Himself. The fruit is His filling of us from Himself. “Meditate on these things.” The latter is the seed of holy hope; the former an incentive to the most ardent love. But both are necessary to our progress, lest our hope, unaccompanied by love, should become mercenary, or our love grow lukewarm if considered productive of no fruit.

Furthermore, the fruit which we expect from our love is that which has been promised by Him Who is the Object of our love, “good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom.” That measure, as I am told, will be without measure. But my desire is to know what that thing is which is to be measured to us according to the measure, or rather according to the immensity promised us. “The eye hath not seen, O God! besides Thee what things Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee.” Do Thou, Who hast made the preparation, vouchsafe Thyself to tell us what Thou hast prepared. It is our belief, it is our confident hope that, as Thou hast promised, so shall it be, and that “we shall be filled with the good things of Thy house.” But what are these “good things” and of what kind? Perhaps “corn and oil and wine”? Gold, and silver and precious stones? But we can “conceive” what these are, and our eyes have “seen” them. We see them and feel only disdain and disgust for prizes so poor. What I seek is that which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.” That is pleasant, that is sweet, that is delightful to inquire about, whatever it may be. “They shall be all taught of God,” says St. John, “and God shall be all in all.” I am informed, then, that the plenitude which we expect from God, is nothing less than a plenitude of God.

But, my brethren, who can comprehend “how great is the multitude of sweetness” which is hidden in this short word, “and God shall be all in all”! Not to speak of the body, I discern in the soul three faculties, to wit, reason, will, and memory. And these, I say, are not so much powers of the soul, as the soul herself. How much is wanting to the integrity and perfection of each of the three in this present life is well known to every man that walks according to the spirit.

Why should this be so, unless because of the fact that God is not yet “all in all”? Hence it is that the reason is so very often deceived in its judgments, that the will is agitated by a fourfold perturbation, that the memory is overclouded by a manifold oblivion. To these three kinds of “vanity” the noble “creature is made subject, not willingly, but in hope.” For He “Who satisfieth” the soul’s “desire with good things,” will Himself become to the reason a Plenitude of Light, to the will an Immensity of Peace, and to the memory an ever abiding Eternity. O Truth! O Love! O Eternity! O Blessed and Beatifying Trinity! After Thee this miserable trinity of mine (viz., the soul herself, as endowed with her three faculties) miserably yearns, because it can nowhere find content so long as it remains an exile from Thee. By departing from Thee in what errors has it not involved itself! in what sorrows! in what terrors! Woe, woe is me! For what kind of trinity have I exchanged Thee, O Blessed and Divine Trinity! “My heart is troubled,” and hence my sorrows. “My strength hath left me,” and hence my terrors. “And the light of my eyes itself is not with me,” and hence my errors. Behold, O trinity of my soul, how different a trinity from the Divine thou hast fallen upon in thy exile!

Yet, “why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him,” that is, when errors shall have been banished from my reason, sorrows from my will, and terrors from my memory, and when, according to my hope, there shall succeed to them admirable tranquillity, perfect sweetness, and eternal security. The first of these I shall find in God as He is Truth, the second in God as He is Love, the third in God as He is Almighty Power. Thus shall God be all in all, communicating Himself to my reason as everlasting Light, to my will as imperturbable Peace, and to my memory as an unfailing, eternally flowing Fountain of Truth. I leave it to you, my brethren, to decide whether I should be right if I attributed the first grace to the Son, the second to the Holy Spirit, and the last to the Father. Yet this must not be understood in such a way as really to exclude either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost from any one of the three communications. For we should be on our guard lest we admit in the Three Divine Persons any such distinction as would detract from the plenitude of perfection common to All, or, on the other hand, any such plenitude of perfection as would be incompatible with the Personal Distinctions. At the same time, take notice that in the same way as the just derive tranquillity, sweetness, and security from the Divine Trinity, the earthly-minded experience a corresponding threefold influence from the trinity of evil, viz., the allurements of the flesh, the empty pageants of the

world, and the pomps of the devil; and it is by this noxious influence alone that the present life succeeds in deluding its wretched lovers. Hence, St. John tells us "all that is in the world is concupiscence of the flesh, and concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." So much for the fruit of Redemption.

In the mode of Redemption, which, if you remember, I described as an emptying of Himself on the part of God, there are also three things to which I would particularly invite your attention. For that emptying was not imperfect or partial. "He emptied Himself" even to the extent of taking flesh, of enduring death, even the death of the cross. Who can conceive the humility, the loving-kindness, the condescension manifested by the Lord of Majesty in assuming our nature, in bearing the pains of death, in submitting to the shame of crucifixion? But it may be asked, "Could not the Creator have repaired the work of His hands without all this trouble?" Most certainly He could. Yet He preferred to do so at such cost to Himself in order to take from man every shadow of excuse for that most detestable and hateful vice of ingratitude. If, then, He endured so much hardship it was with the view to make man His debtor for so much love, and that at least the difficulty of Redemption might remind us of the obligation of thanksgiving, in whom creation, because of its easiness, had failed to awaken any feeling of devotion or gratitude. For how does this ungrateful human creature look upon the benefit of Creation? "I have been created, indeed," he says, "without merit of my own, yet also without inconvenience or trouble on the part of my Maker. He simply spoke and I was made, in common with everything else. What great thing is it whatever thou bestowest, when the gift costs thyself nothing more than a word?" Thus, the impiety of man, depreciating the benefit of Creation, found an occasion for ingratitude there precisely where it should have discovered only motives for love, and that "to make excuses for sins." But now "the mouth is stopped of them that speak wicked things." Now, O man, it is as clear as daylight what sacrifice of Himself the Creator made for thee. From Lord He became a servant; from rich He became poor; from the Word Divine He was made flesh; and from the Son of God He did not disdain to become the Son of man. Remember, then, that, if created from nothing, thou hast not been redeemed for nothing. In six days God created all things, thyself included. But for the space of thirty-three whole years "He wrought salvation in the midst of the earth." Oh, what labours He endured! Did He not, by the ignominy of His cross, add bitterness for Himself to the necessities of the flesh and the temptations of the enemy, and crown them all with the horror of His death? And indeed it was needful for us that He should do so. Thus, O Lord! thus "men and

beasts Thou hast saved. Oh, how Thou hast multiplied Thy mercy, O God!”

“Meditate on these things,” my brethren; live in them. With their perfume refresh your hearts, long dried up within you by the pungent odours of your sins. So shall you abound in those unguents which are both sweet and salutary. Nevertheless, do not imagine you possess, as yet, the “best ointments,” so highly commended in the breasts of the Spouse. But my limits will not permit that I should speak of these now. What I have said about the other two, keep fresh in your memory and prove its truth by the test of experience. And with respect to the third and most excellent ointment, assist me by your prayers that my discourse thereon may be worthy, both in matter and manner, of that delightful supplement to the attractions of the Bride, and may animate your souls to the love of the Bridegroom, Who is Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SERMON XII

ON THE OINTMENT OF PIETY

"Smelling sweet of the best ointments."

I have already explained to you, my brethren, two of the precious ointments which perfume the breasts of the Spouse, that of Contrition, which "covereth a multitude of sins," and that of Devotion, which embraces a multitude of benefits. Both are salutary, although not both sweet. The first exhales a pungent odour, because the bitter remembrance of sin excites to compunction and sorrow. The second is more soothing, since the contemplation of the divine goodness is a source of consolation and moderates grief. But there remains a third ointment, which far excels both of these. I have called this the unguent of Piety, because it is extracted from the necessities of the poor, the anxieties of the oppressed, the sorrows of the sad, the sins of the guilty, in a word, from all the miseries of all the miserable, even of those who are our enemies. These elements appear to be contemptible. Yet the ointment produced from them surpasses in value all aromatic spices. It is a healing ointment, since "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." Therefore, the materials, from which are produced those "best ointments," worthy of the breasts of the Spouse, and sweet to the smell of her Beloved, are nothing else than many miseries collected together, and contemplated with the eye of piety. Happy the soul that is careful to enrich and strengthen herself with a goodly store of such aromatic elements, moistening them with the oil of mercy and compounding them into an ointment by means of the fire of charity! Who, think you, is the "acceptable man, that sheweth mercy and lendeth," that is easily moved to compassion, prompt to succour, "judging it more blessed to give than to receive," that is quick to forgive and slow to anger, never harbouring resentment, and in everything looking as much to his neighbour's necessities as to his own? O whosoever thou art that art such, so saturated with the dew of mercy, so abounding in the bowels of piety, so making thyself all things to all, so become to thyself as "a broken vessel" in order to be ready always and everywhere to run to the help and relief of others, in short, so

dead to thyself that thou mayst live to all beside—thou assuredly art the happy possessor of this third and most precious ointment! Thy hands have distilled this liquor containing all manner of sweetness! It shall not be dried up in the evil time; neither shall the heat of persecution exhaust it. But God shall be always "mindful of all thy sacrifices and thy whole burnt-offering" shall "be made fat."

There are men of spiritual wealth in the city of the Lord of virtues. I wish to know if any amongst them are possessed of this ointment. And here, as everywhere else, the first name that occurs to me is the name of St. Paul, the "Vessel of election," truly a vessel of fragrant spices, a vessel of perfumes, a vessel filled with odoriferous substances of all kinds. He was, indeed, "the good odour of Christ unto God," in every place. Far and wide did that great heart of his, oppressed as it was by "solicitude for all the churches," scatter the fragrance of delicious sweetness. See what manner of spices and aromatic elements he gathered together for himself: "I die daily, I protest by your glory," he says. Again, "Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is scandalised and I am not on fire?" Vast stores of such precious material, exhibited in places known to you all, my brethren, did this wealthy man possess, to be used in confecting the "best ointments." For it was fitting that those breasts should be redolent of the purest and most excellent unguents; those breasts, I say, which suckled the mystical members of Christ, to whom St. Paul was certainly a mother, being in travail once and a second time, until Christ had been formed in them, and the members brought into conformity with the Head.

I will tell you also of another spiritually rich man, and how he kept a supply of select spices from which to produce these "best ointments." "The stranger," says holy Job, "did not stay without, my door was open to the traveller." And again, "I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame. I was the father of the poor. I broke the jaws of the wicked man, and out of his teeth I took away the prey. If I have denied to the poor what they desired, and have made the eyes of the widow wait; if I have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have despised him that was perishing for want of clothing, and the poor man that had no covering; if his sides have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep." With what a sweet perfume this man by his works must have filled the earth! His every act was an aromatic spice. He heaped up his soul with such odoriferous elements in order that the fragrant exhalations of internal sweetness might temper the stench of his rotting flesh.

When Joseph had caused the whole of Egypt to run after him to the odour of his ointments, he also permitted their fragrance to reach even to those who had

sold him into slavery. He did, indeed, use words of reproof, and he looked with an angry countenance. Yet the tears which burst forth from the softness of his heart were indicative, not of wrath, but of mercy. Samuel mourned for Saul who was seeking to kill him. His heart, melted within by the fire of that charity which warmed his breast, flowed out in tears of piety through the channels of his eyes. Regarding the pleasant odour of good fame which he scattered on every side, Holy Scripture bears this testimony: “And all Israel, from Dan to Bersabee, knew that Samuel was a faithful prophet of the Lord.” What shall I say of Moses? With what fatness and richness did not he also replenish his soul! Not even that “exasperating house,” in which he lived for a time, with all its murmuring, with all its madness, was able to rub off the oil wherewith his spirit had been anointed once and for all. Hence, amidst constant disputes and daily wranglings, he persevered unmoved in his meekness. Justly, therefore, does the inspired author testify of him that he “was exceeding meek above all men that dwelt upon earth,” for even “with them that hated peace he was peaceful.” So meek, in fact, was he, that not only did he not get angry with an ungrateful and rebellious people, but he even, by his intervention, appeased the anger of God enkindled against them. So it is written: “And He said He would destroy them, had not Moses, His chosen, stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy them.” Again, we read of him saying to God, “Either forgive them this trespass, or, if Thou do not, strike me out of the Book of Life which Thou hast written.” Behold a man truly anointed with the unction of mercy! He speaks verily with the affection of a mother who can be contented with no happiness which her children do not share. Suppose, for instance, that a person of wealth said to a poor woman, “Come to my house and have dinner with me, but leave behind that infant which thou bearest in thy arms, lest it should begin to cry and cause us annoyance.” Think you, my brethren, she would accept such an invitation? Would she not rather choose to suffer hunger than, abandoning her beloved child, to dine alone with her rich benefactor? So, neither would Moses be satisfied to “enter into the joy of his Lord,” whilst the people remained without; for, inconstant though they were and ungrateful, yet he clung to them as would a mother to the child of her womb, and with a truly maternal affection. His heart, which they bitterly grieved, was more willing to endure this suffering than to bear the sorrow of seeing them torn from it.

Where shall we find a better model of meekness than David, who lamented the death of Saul, of the man, I say, who had always thirsted for his? What greater charity than thus to mourn for one whose removal brought himself to the throne?

He was almost inconsolable at the loss of a parricidal son. What an abundance of the "best ointment" is revealed in such an affection! No wonder, then, he could pray with confidence, saying, "O Lord, remember David and all his meekness." Therefore, all these possessed those "best ointments," of which they are redolent even to-day throughout the universal Church. And not only they, but also every one who in this life shows himself so benevolent and beneficent, who tries to converse with such kindness amongst men, that instead of keeping for himself the graces he receives, he devotes them all, without exception, to the common use, considering himself, as St. Paul, a debtor alike to friends and enemies, "to the wise and the unwise." Because persons of this description are useful to all, and humble in all, therefore are they loved above all both by God and man, and the fragrance of their virtues "shall be in benediction." Those, I repeat, whose lives have been such, have perfumed with their precious ointments, not only the times in which they lived, but even all subsequent ages. Thou also, my brother, if thou willingly sharest with us, thy companions, the gifts thou hast received from above; if thou showest thyself everywhere amongst us obliging, affectionate, grateful, obedient, and humble: thou, also, shalt receive testimony of all that thou art redolent of the "best ointments." Yes, every individual amongst you, brethren, who not only supports with patience the corporal and spiritual infirmities of his brother, but, so far as he is permitted and has the power, assists him by kind offices, comforts him by his words, and directs him by his counsels, or, if the Rule will not allow of this, consoles the weakling, at least by his fervent and incessant prayer—every such person, I say, exhales a good odour in his community, and "smells sweet of the best ointments." As balsam in the mouth, so is such a religious in a monastery. His brothers point him out and say of him, "This is a lover of his brethren and of the people of Israel. This is he that prayeth much for the people and for all the holy city."

But let us now turn to the New Testament, and see if we can find there any reference to these "best ointments." We read in St. Mark that "Mary Magdalen, and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought sweet spices that coming they might anoint Jesus." What were those ointments, so precious that they were purchased and prepared especially for the Body of Christ, and so abundant that they were sufficient for the anointing of every part of It! We nowhere find in the Gospel that any of the other two kinds of ointments were either procured or compounded for the special purpose of anointing the Lord, or that they were poured out over the whole of His Body. But a woman is suddenly introduced, in one place kissing His Feet and dropping unguent upon Them; in another,

whether the same person or a different, emptying out upon His sacred Head an alabaster box of precious oil. Yet here it is said, “they bought sweet spices that coming they might anoint Jesus.” They did not buy the ointment, but the sweet spices. The perfume for the holy Body was not obtained ready made; it was freshly extracted by themselves from the aromatic elements. Neither was it applied to some particular part only, for instance, to the Head or the Feet. But, as it is written, “that coming they might anoint Jesus.” What embraces the whole must not be restricted to a part.

Do you, also, my brethren, put on the bowels of mercy; show yourselves generous and kind, not alone to parents and relatives, not alone to those from whom you have received or hope to receive benefits, for even the heathens do this, but, according to the counsel of the Apostle, study to do good to all, so that, for God’s sake, you will not refuse or withhold, even in the case of an enemy, any service you can render to body or soul. So shall it be manifest that you too abound with the “best ointments,” and have purposed to perfume, as far as depends on you, not merely the Lord’s Head or Feet, but His entire mystical Body, which is the Church. Perhaps the reason why the Lord Jesus would not have the ointment which had been prepared for Him, to be poured upon His dead Body, was that it might be reserved for His living Body. For the Church is living and eats of “the living Bread That came down from heaven.” It is the Body which Christ loves best, which He will not suffer to taste death, whereas His natural Body was delivered up to death, as every Christian knows. It is His mystical Body that He wants us to anoint and to cherish; and He desires us to apply the more special and efficacious medicaments to its weak members. For this, therefore, He would keep the precious ointment, when, anticipating the hour and hastening the glory of His Resurrection, He thus enlightened rather than refused the devotion of the holy women. If He was unwilling to be anointed, it was as sparing the unction, not as spurning it. He did not decline the service, but postponed it to a time when it would be a greater benefit. I am not now referring to any benefit from the material and corporal unction, but to the spiritual benefit symbolised by that. For this reason, therefore, He, the Master of piety, refused for Himself the best ointments of piety, because He wished they should be reserved for relieving the necessities, both corporal and spiritual, of His own indigent members. When, a little earlier, ointment was poured on His Head and even on His Feet, and precious ointment too, did He forbid it? On the contrary, He reprimanded those that were presuming to do so. To Simon, who was angry that He should allow Himself to be touched by a sinner, He administered a

reproof in the form of a lengthy parable. And when the disciples complained of the waste of ointment, He said to them, “Why are you troublesome to this woman?”

Sometimes (if I may here digress a little) when prostrate and in tears at the Feet of my Jesus, offering Him, at the thought of my sins, the “sacrifice of an afflicted spirit,” or when standing at His Head (a grace more rare with me) and exulting in the memory of His benefits, I also have heard people complain and ask, “To what purpose is this waste?” They complained, I mean, that I was living for myself alone, when I might, as they supposed, be assisting many. “For this,” they said, “could have been sold for much and given to the poor.” But it would be an unprofitable traffic for me, if I gained the whole world and lost myself and my own soul. Hence, understanding such expressions of discontent to be the “dead flies,” mentioned in Scripture, which destroy the fragrance of the ointment, I remembered the words of God: “O My people! they that bless thee, the same deceive thee.” But let those who accuse me of taking my ease hear the Lord excusing me and answering for me. “Why,” He asks, “are you troublesome to this woman?” That is to say, “You look on the face, and, therefore, you judge according to the face. He is not a man, as you suppose, who is able to stretch forth his hand to hard things, but only a weak woman. Why would you lay a burden on him to which I see he is unequal? He is doing ‘a good work upon Me.’ Let him continue in this good, until he gets strength to do better. If ever he changes from a woman to a man, and to a perfect man, then he may also be employed in a manly and perfect work.”

My brethren, let us look upon bishops with honour, and upon their labours with fear. We should never aspire to the episcopal dignity, if we considered the toil it involves. Let us, then, acknowledge the inadequacy of our powers, and let us not imagine that the soft and feeble shoulders of women such as we are, can support with ease the burdens of strong men. It is our duty to honour these men, and not to scrutinise their conduct with a critical eye. It would be intolerable that you should censure the work of those whose responsibilities you refuse to undertake, just as it would be impertinence in a woman spinning at home to rebuke her warrior husband returning from battle. So, if a religious in his cloister should occasionally observe a secular cleric, who toils amongst the people, carrying himself with too much freedom or too little circumspection, for instance, sinning by excess in eating, in speaking, in sleeping, in hilarity, in anger, or in censure, let him not at once hasten to condemn, but let him remember what is written, “Better is the iniquity of a man, than a woman doing a

good turn.” For the monk, indeed, does well in keeping a watchful guard over himself. But he who labours for the good of the people performs a more excellent and more manly work. And if this cannot be done without some degree of “iniquity,” that is, without slight departures from strict regularity of life and conversation, we must bear in mind that “charity covereth a multitude of sins.” So much with regard to those two temptations by which the devil incites religious persons either to ambition the dignity of bishops, or rashly to condemn them for their failings.

But we must now return to the ointments of the Spouse. Do you not perceive how much the ointment of Piety is to be preferred to those of Contrition and Devotion, from the fact that it alone is not allowed to be wasted? Indeed, so little is waste tolerated in the case of this “best ointment,” that even the gift of a cup of cold water is not permitted to go unrequited. Precious, nevertheless, is the unguent of Contrition, which is extracted from the recollection of sin, and is poured upon the Lord’s Feet, because “a contrite and humble heart God will not despise.” Far more precious still is what I have named the ointment of Devotion, which is produced from the thought of the divine benefits, and is deemed worthy to be applied to the Saviour’s Head. Hence God Himself says of it, “The sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me.” But, as I have just remarked, superior to both is the unction of Piety, which is confected out of a sympathetic regard for the miserable, and which spreads its fragrance over the whole Body of Christ. I speak not of that Body Which hung upon the Cross, but of that mystical Body which He acquired by His Passion. This third ointment is indeed so excellent, that in comparison with it God declares the others to be unworthy of His notice, where He says, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” In my judgment, therefore, the perfume of this virtue of mercy or piety is exhaled in a degree beyond all others from the breasts of the Spouse, who is doubtless anxious to conform herself in all things to the will of her Beloved. Did not Tabitha, even in death, give forth the sweet fragrance of mercy? And therefore it was that she so quickly revived, because the odour of life in her prevailed over death.

Now, listen to an “abbreviated word,” that is, a recapitulation of this subject. Whoever inebriates his neighbour with his words and perfumes him with his benefits, the same may consider as addressed to himself the eulogium, “For thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments.” But who is sufficient for this? Which of us can spend even a single hour so justly and perfectly as not sometimes to grow unfruitful in speech or remiss in action? Yet there is one who can make such a boast with all truth and justice. I mean the

Church, to which, in her universality, the means are never lacking both for inebriating and for perfuming. For what she wants in one of her members she possesses in another, according to the measure of the gift of Christ and the distribution of the Holy Spirit, “dividing to everyone as He willeth.” In those who make unto themselves “friends of the mammon of iniquity,” the Church exhales an odour of sweetness. She inebriates in the persons of her preachers, who pour out the wine of spiritual joy over the whole earth, intoxicate the nations therewith, and “bring forth fruit in patience.” Thus she may confidently and securely call herself the Spouse, inasmuch as she possesses the “breasts better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments.” But although none of us, my brethren, will be so presumptuous as to dare to call his soul the spouse of Christ, nevertheless, as we are members of the Church which rightly glories in this title, and in the reality corresponding to the title, we at least may each justly claim a participation in that high prerogative. What we possess all collectively in a complete and perfect manner, without doubt we also possess individually by participation. Thanks to Thee, Lord Jesus, Who hast vouchsafed to number us amongst the members of Thy Church, not alone that we might be Thy faithful servants, but also that, as spouses of Thine, we might be united to Thee in the sweet and chaste and everlasting embrace of love, and admitted to contemplate the glory of Thy unveiled Countenance, which glory is common to Thee with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XIII

GLORY BELONGS TO GOD ALONE

"Thy name is as oil poured out."

As the ocean, my brethren, is the source of all rivers and fountains, so is our Lord Jesus Christ the Well-Spring of all virtue and knowledge. For who but the "King of Glory" can be the "Lord of Virtues"? And, according to the Canticle of Anna, the same Lord is "the God of knowledge." Purity of body, diligent use of the affections (industria cordis), rectitude of will—all flow from this Divine Fountain. Yet not such graces only. Every intellectual endowment, every gift of eloquence, every pleasing disposition, must also be ascribed to the same Source. Thence is derived every word of wisdom and all knowledge, from Him, namely, "in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden." What, I ask, are chaste thoughts, just judgments, holy desires, but so many rivulets from that Divine Spring? Now, if the currents of natural water are ceaselessly pouring themselves back again into the sea through secret and subterranean channels, in order to return once more to us with unwearied service, for the satisfaction of our sight and supply of our necessities; why should not the spiritual streams, also, revert to their Source without interruption or diminution, so that they may revisit and irrigate anew the plains of our souls? Therefore, let the rivers of grace flow back to the Fountain-Head, that they may again descend upon us. Let the heavenly tide re-seek its Origin that the earth may be watered with a more generous inundation. Do you ask how this is to be done? The Apostle tells you when he says, "In all things giving thanks." Whatever wisdom, whatever virtue you believe yourselves to possess, attribute it all to Christ, Who is the Wisdom and the Knowledge of God.

"But," you will say, "who would be so foolish as to presume to do otherwise?" No one, indeed. Even the Pharisee gives thanks. Nevertheless, his thanksgiving "hath no praise from God." If I remember aright what is said in the Gospel, his expression of gratitude did not make him more pleasing. Why? Because whatever devotion sounded from his lips, it was not sufficient to excuse the

swelling of his heart in the eyes of Him Who “knoweth the high afar off.” O Pharisee, remember that “God is not mocked.” Thinkest thou that thou hast anything “which thou hast not received”? “Nothing,” thou confessest, “and therefore I give thanks to the Giver.” But, if so, then it is in view of no antecedent merit on thy part that thou hast received those graces of which thou art boasting. Assuming that thou dost admit this also, it is consequently, in the first place, the height of senseless arrogance in thee to despise the Publican, who for this reason alone has not so much as thou, because he has not gratuitously received so much. Secondly, consider well lest thou be not returning His gifts to God, whole and entire, but by fraudulently appropriating something to thyself of His honour and glory, mayst justly lay thyself open to the charge of theft, and theft against God. Wert thou openly to attribute to thyself some credit for those things whereof thou art boasting, as if they were not only in thee, but from thee, I should rather believe thee to be in error than to have the will to commit an act of injustice, and consequently I should attempt to correct thy mistake. Now, however, by returning thanks, thou dost show that thou art ascribing nothing to thyself, but dost prudently acknowledge all thy merits to be the gifts of God. Hence, in contemning others, thou betrayest thyself and showest thyself “to have spoken with a double heart,” with one heart lending thy lips to a lie, and with the other usurping the glory of truth. For thou couldst not have judged the Publican to be worthy of contempt in comparison with thyself, without esteeming thyself to be worthy of honour in comparison with him. But what wilt thou reply to the Apostle, who prescribes and enjoins that “to God alone be honour and glory”? How canst thou answer the angels who distinguished and explained what God is pleased to reserve to Himself and what He condescends to share with mortals? “Glory to God in the highest,” sang they, “and on earth peace to men of good will.” You see, my brethren, how the Pharisee gives thanks, honouring God indeed, but only with his lips, whilst he honours himself by the sentiments of his heart. Thus you may hear words of thanks from the mouths of many, but more out of custom or convention than from affection or conviction; so much so, that the most abandoned criminals are wont to give thanks to God for having succeeded well and prosperously, as they imagine, in the accomplishment of their perverse purposes. Listen, for instance, to the thief, when he has brought his wicked machinations to a successful issue, and possessed himself at last of some long-coveted booty. In his heart he exults with joy and exclaims, “Thanks be to God! I have not watched in vain; I have not lost my nocturnal labour.” Does not the murderer similarly rejoice and return thanks that he has prevailed

over a rival or avenged himself on an enemy? And the profligate, also, joyously gives praise to God for that he has at last attained the means of gratifying his evil passion.

It follows, my brethren, that not all thanksgiving is acceptable with God, but only that which proceeds from a chaste, sincere, and simple heart. I say a “chaste heart,” to exclude those who glory in their evil deeds and for them return thanks. As if God, like themselves, could take pleasure in their wicked doings, and could exult in their abominations! He that is such a one shall hear addressed to him these words of reproach, “Thou thoughtest unjustly that I shall be like to thee, but I will reprove thee and set before thy face.” I have said “from a sincere heart,” on account of hypocrites, who appear indeed to attribute to God the merit of whatever good they possess, but glorify Him only with their lips, the heart withholding what the tongue concedes. And because “in His sight they do deceitfully,” their “iniquity is found unto hatred.” The one class impiously attribute to God their own crimes; the other fraudulently ascribe to themselves the gifts of God. So stupid, so ungodly, so brutish even is the former vice that there is no need for me to put you on your guard against it. The latter, however, is wont to beset the path of religious and spiritual persons, in particular. Of a surety, it is high virtue, and as rare as high, to be able to do great works without esteeming oneself great, and to conceal one’s sanctity from oneself alone whilst manifesting it to all others. To my thinking, there is no virtue so admirable as that a man should appear wonderful in the eyes of others and contemptible in his own. Thou art truly a faithful servant, if thou sufferest not to cling to thine own hands any part of whatever glory may redound from thy works to thy Lord, which glory, although it does not proceed from thee, yet passes through thee. Then, according to the Prophet, thou wilt “cast away avarice by oppression, and shake thy hands free from all bribes.” Then, as the Lord commands, thy light will “shine before men,” unto the glory, not of thyself, but of thy “Father, Who is in heaven.” And thou wilt be an imitator of St. Paul and of other faithful preachers who preach not themselves, but Jesus Christ, just as thou seekest “not the things that are thine but the things which are of Jesus Christ.” Wherefore, thou, also, shalt be greeted with the consoling words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant! because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things.”

Joseph knew that his Egyptian master had entrusted to his care both his house and all his goods. But he also was well aware that there was one exception, namely, his mistress; and so he would not consent to her solicitations. “Behold,”

he said to the temptress, “my master hath delivered all things to me, neither is there anything which is not given into my power, or that he hath not delivered to me, but thee who art his wife.” For he was not ignorant that “the glory of the man is the woman,” and he considered that he would be making a return of basest ingratitude should he tarnish the glory of one who had rendered himself so glorious. Being wise with the wisdom of God, he reflected that husbands are extremely jealous of their wives, as of their own honour, and are never willing to entrust them to the care of any other than themselves. Hence, he would not presume to stretch forth his hand to what was not permitted him. What then? Shall men be so sensitively jealous of their own glory, and shall they yet dare to defraud God of His, as if He were not also jealous? But hear what He Himself says, “I will not give My glory to another.” What, then, O Lord, what wilt Thou give us? “Peace,” He answers, “I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” It is enough for me. Thankfully do I receive what Thou, O Lord, leavest to me, and I leave to Thee what Thou reservest to Thyself. This division is pleasing to me. It is also, I doubt not, for my best interests. Glory I renounce altogether, lest, perchance, whilst I usurp what is not conceded, I justly forfeit even that which has been bestowed. Peace I want, peace I desire, and nothing more. He that is not satisfied with peace, is not satisfied with Thee. For Thou art “our Peace Who hath made both one.” This is necessary for me, this is sufficient for me, to be reconciled to Thee and to be reconciled to myself. For since “Thou hast made me opposite to Thee, I am become burdensome to myself.” I will be cautious henceforth neither to appear ungrateful for the gift of peace bestowed, nor a sacrilegious usurper of Thy divine glory. To Thee, O Lord, to Thee, let Thy glory remain inviolate. As for me, I shall be well content, if I can but preserve that peace which Thou hast given me.

When peace was restored to Israel by the overthrow of Goliath, the people all participated in the joy, but David alone was glorified. Josue, Jephte, Gedeon, Samson, even Judith, though a woman, all in their day gloriously triumphed over their enemies. But, whereas the whole nation joyfully participated in the peace which they won, none was associated with them in glory. Judas Machabeus, also, distinguished himself by his numerous victories. Yet, when, by fighting bravely, he repeatedly brought peace to his exulting people, did he ever share his glory with anyone? “And then,” we read, “there was great—not glory but—joy amongst the people.” Wherein has the Creator of all fallen short of these, that He also should not enjoy a singular, incommunicable glory? Alone He created all things, alone He triumphed over His enemies, alone He redeemed the captives,

and shall He be otherwise than alone in His glory? “And My own arm,” He says, “hath saved for Me.” Again, “I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the gentiles there is not a man with Me.” What share, then, can I have in the victory, since I have had none in the combat? It is, therefore, the height of impudence in me to arrogate to myself either glory without victory, or victory without a fight. But, ye mountains, “receive peace for the people,” receive for yourselves also peace, not glory: this you must reserve to Him Who alone has both sustained the conflict and achieved the victory. So, I pray, so let it be. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.” But he is evidently not a man of good, but of evil will, who, not content with peace, “with a haughty eye and an insatiable heart,” is impatiently covetous of the glory of God, and so loses peace without compensating for its loss by the acquisition of glory. Who would believe the wall should it boast of having begotten the sunbeam which it receives through the window? Who would credit the clouds did they claim the rain as their offspring? To me it is clear enough that, although imperceptible to bodily sense, there must be some source other than the aqueducts for the currents of water, some other source for the words of wisdom besides the lips and teeth.

Whatever I behold in persons of sanctity, deserving of commendation or admiration, on examining it by the clear light of truth, I discover that there is One Who is really praiseworthy and wonderful, and another who appears so; and I “praise God in His saints,” whether in Eliseus or in the great Elias, both resuscitators of the dead. They indeed exhibit to our view things strange and marvellous, yet not by their own power, but as ministers of Another. It is God, dwelling in them, “Who doth the works.” Invisible and inaccessible in Himself, He is manifest and “wonderful in His saints.” He is alone wonderful “Who alone doth wonderful things.” The beautiful writing or drawing is no merit of the pen’s, neither can the tongue nor the lips glory in the good word that proceeds from them. But it is time that a prophet also should speak. “Shall the axe boast itself,” asks Isaias, “against him that cutteth with it? or shall the saw exalt itself against him by whom it is drawn? As if a rod should lift itself up against him that lifteth it up, and a staff exalt itself which is but wood, so against the Lord is everyone that glorieth, if he glory not in the Lord.” “If I must glory,” St. Paul teaches me whereof I must glory and wherein. “This,” he says, “is our glory, the testimony of our conscience.” Securely shall I glory if, conscience being my witness, I arrogate to myself none of the Creator’s glory. Securely indeed, because thus I shall glory not against, but in the Lord. Such glorying is not only not forbidden us, but it is even strongly commended in the words, “You receive

glory one from another, and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek." And truly the grace to glory in God alone can come from God alone. Nor is this an insignificant glory, being as true as it is from Truth, and so rare, in truth, that only the small number of the perfect perfectly glory in it. Therefore, let the "vain sons of men," "let the lying sons of men" go and "by vanity deceive together." As for him who wisely glories, he will prove his work and examine it diligently by the light of truth. So shall he have glory in himself, not in the mouth of another. I should be a fool to lock up my glory in the coffer of men's lips so that I should have to beg it of them whenever I wanted it. For as it depends on their will whether to approve or to censure me, so my glory or disgrace would be equally in their power. But I keep my glory under my own care. I myself with more fidelity shall guard it for myself. Nay, not even to myself do I entrust it. I rather deposit it with Him, Who "is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day," careful to preserve, faithful to restore. "Then shall every man have (secure) praise from God," every man, that is, who has despised human praise. For changed to confusion shall be the glory of those who relish only the things of earth, according to the testimony of David, "God hath scattered the bones of them that please men: they have been confounded because God hath despised them."

My brethren, knowing this, none of you should desire to be praised in this life, for you steal from God whatever of glory you appropriate to yourselves, without referring it to Him. What title, O filthy dust, what title canst thou pretend to glory? Is it sanctity of life? "But it is the Spirit That sanctifieth," not surely thine, but the Spirit of God. And even wert thou renowned for signs and wonders, still it is by the divine power these are wrought, although by thy agency. Or, perhaps, thou groundest thy claim on thy possession of popular favour, because, perhaps, thou utterest the "good word," and, perhaps, to some advantage? But it is Christ Who has given thee "a mouth and wisdom." For thy tongue—what is it but "the pen of a scrivener"? And such as it is, thou but holdest it on loan. It is a talent entrusted to thee and shall be demanded back with interest. If thou be found zealous in the discharge of duty, and faithful in handing over the profits, thou shalt receive the reward of thy labours. Otherwise, thy talent shall be taken from thee, and, nevertheless, the interest still exacted, and thou shalt be accounted "a wicked and slothful servant." Consequently, my brethren, let all the glory arising from the gifts of the manifold grace appearing in you, be referred to Him Who is the Author and Giver of all things praiseworthy. But let this be done not merely with the lips, as by hypocrites, nor

solely from custom, as by worldlings, nor yet out of necessity, as beasts are compelled to carry their burdens, but as becomes saints, with trustful simplicity, with fervent devotion, with a happy, yet modest and reserved cheerfulness. Accordingly, whilst offering up “the sacrifice of praise,” and “paying our vows” from day to day, let us be careful with all vigilance to unite attention with usage, affection with attention, joy with affection, reverence with joy, humility with reverence, and with humility liberty of spirit. So shall we sometimes find ourselves moving forward towards the goal with the easy steps of a purified mind, making excursions out of ourselves through the extraordinary intensity of our affections and spiritual raptures, experienced in transports of joy, in the light of God, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost; and thus shall we prove ourselves to be included in the number of those whom the Prophet David addressed when he said, “They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy Countenance, and in Thy name they shall rejoice all the day, and in Thy justice they shall be exalted.”

Perchance it may here be said to me, “Thou dost well to admonish us, yet thy words should not be irrelevant to thy theme.” But have patience a little. I have not lost sight of my subject. Have I not taken upon myself to expound the text, “Thy name is as oil poured out”? This is the task I have set myself, this the work I have undertaken. And it is for you to judge whether my remarks have been altogether beside the purpose or not. For my part, I will try to show you in a few words that I have not wandered far from my way. Do you not recollect that the last thing commended in connexion with the breasts of the Spouse was the delicious odour of their ointments? What, then, more seasonable than to remind the Spouse that she owes this fragrance to the bounty of her Beloved, lest she should be tempted to ascribe it to herself? And this, as you can see, has been the drift of all my apparently wandering remarks. “The sweet odour and the delights of my breasts,” we may fancy the Spouse saying, “I attribute neither to my own efforts nor merits, but to Thy munificence, O my Beloved; all is due to the perfume of Thy name which is as oil poured out upon me.” Thus is apparent the connexion of my present text with that of my last discourse, as also the relevancy of what I have been saying.

But the full exposition of this text, whence I took occasion to speak at such great length on the most detestable vice of ingratitude, must be reserved for another time and another sermon. For the present let it suffice to have reminded you that, if even the Spouse dares not appropriate to herself anything whatever of her virtues and graces, how much less should we presume to do so, who are but the “handmaidens”? Let us, therefore, my brethren, let us also exclaim,

following the example of the Spouse, “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory.” And let us say this, not merely in words and with our tongues, “but in deed and in truth.” Otherwise, of us, too, it shall be said, what I fear exceedingly, “And they loved Him with their mouth, and with their tongue they lied unto Him. But their heart was not right with Him, nor were they counted faithful in His covenant.” Let us, then, cry aloud, but as well in the depths of our hearts as with the lips of our mouths, let us cry, I repeat, “Save us, O Lord, our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to Thy holy name—not to our own names—and may glory—not in our but—in Thy praise,” for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XIV

THE CHURCH AND THE SYNAGOGUE

"Thy name is as oil poured out."

"In Judæa God is known: His name is great in Israel." "The (Gentile) people that walked in darkness have seen a great Light." That is, they saw the Light which shone in Judæa and in Israel, and they desired to "draw near and to be illuminated," so that they who "in times past were not a people might now be a people of God," and that for the future, "their place might be in peace," the one Corner-Stone uniting in Itself the two walls approaching from different directions. They derived confidence from the words of invitation which had already been spoken by the Holy Ghost through the Psalmist, "Rejoice, ye nations, with His people." Therefore, they wished to draw near; but the Synagogue forbade it, declaring that the Church of the Gentiles was unclean and unworthy, reproaching it with the filth of idolatry and with the blindness of ignorance. "On what merit dost thou presume?" asks the Jew; "Touch me not!" "But why?" replies the Gentile. "Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? And if I am wanting in merit, He is not wanting in compassion. Is justice His only attribute? Nay, He is also merciful. O Lord, 'let Thy tender mercies come unto me and I shall live.' 'Many, O Lord, are Thy mercies! Quicken me according to Thy judgment,' which is tempered with mercy." What will He do, the just and merciful Lord, whilst the Jew thus glories in the Law, applauds his own justice, disclaims any need of mercy, and despises such as confess this need; and the Gentile, on the contrary, acknowledging his sin, avows his unworthiness, deprecates justice, and appeals to mercy? What, I ask, will He do, the Judge, and such a Judge, in Whom judgment and compassion are both so inherent that the one is as inseparable from Him as the other? What can be more natural and reasonable for Him to do than to give to each of them that which he prayed for—judgment to the Jew and mercy to the Gentile? The Jew asks for judgment, well, then, let him have it. But let the Gentile, according to his prayer, glorify the mercy of God. And the judgment

granted to the Jew is this, that he who contemns the compassionate justice of God, and wishes to establish his own—which, in truth, rather accuses than justifies—shall be abandoned to the oppression, not to the justification, of his own righteousness.

This Jewish justice comes from the Law, which has never conducted anyone to perfection. It is a yoke which neither the Jews "nor their fathers have ever been able to bear." But the Synagogue is strong. She has no liking for burdens that are light or for yokes that are sweet. The Jew is well, and has no need of the Physician, no need of the unction of the Spirit. "He trusted in" the Law: "let it now deliver him," if it can. But the Law which was given him has not the power to vivify. It rather kills, according to the Apostle, who says, "the letter killeth." The same is implied in the words of Christ, "Therefore I say unto you, you shall die in your sins." This, then, O Synagogue, is the judgment thou hast challenged on thy error. Blinded shalt thou be left, blinded and pertinacious, "until the fulness of the Gentiles—whom thou dost arrogantly contemn and enviously repel—shall come in," and shall acknowledge the "God Who is known in Judæa" and the name that is "great in Israel." It was for this judgment Jesus "came into this world, that they who see not may see, and that they who see may become blind." Yet this "blindness hath happened in Israel in part" only, "for the Lord will not cast off His people" entirely. He will "reserve unto Himself as a seed" the apostles and the "multitude of believers who had but one heart and one soul." Neither "will He cast them off for ever," but will "save a remnant." Once more will He "receive Israel, His servant," and He will be "mindful of His mercy." So that not even in regard to them, in whom she now finds no room for herself, shall mercy desert her companion, justice. Did God treat the Jew as he deserved, assuredly there would be "judgment without mercy to him who doth not mercy." For Judæa, possessing much of the oil of the knowledge of God, like a miser, keeps it shut up in the vase. I, the Gentile, beg for some, and she neither "hath mercy nor lendeth." She alone must have worship, she alone must have knowledge, she alone must know "His great name." Nor is this desire for monopoly due to any zeal for her own glory, but rather to jealousy of me.

Therefore, do Thou, O Lord, "judge my judgment," and let Thy great name be magnified still more, and let the oil, which is already plentiful, be more abundantly multiplied. Let it increase, let it brim over, let it be poured abroad, let it overflow to the Gentiles, and let "all flesh" experience "the salvation of God." How can it be, as the ungrateful Jew would have it, that all the saving unction should remain in "the beard of Aaron"? It belongs not to the beard, but to the

Head. And the Head is head, not only of the beard, but of the whole body as well. Let the beard receive the descending ointment first by all means, but not solely. Let it transmit to the inferior members what it derives from the Head. Let the heavenly oil descend, let it descend even to the breasts of the Church, which, with a hungry eagerness, does not disdain to squeeze it from the beard, until, saturated with the dew of grace, she joyously exclaims, to prove herself not ungrateful, “Thy name is as oil poured out.” But let it, I pray, descend even lower, let it trickle down as far as “the skirt of his garment,” that is, even unto me, who, though the lowest and the most unworthy of all, still am of “the garment.” For even I, as “a little one in Christ,” demand for myself, on the title of piety, a share of that oil from the breasts of mother Church, And should any man murmur, whose “eye is evil because the Lord is good,” do Thou, O Lord, answer for me. “Let my judgment come forth from Thy Countenance,” and not from Israel’s haughty lips. Rather I should say, “answer for Thyself,” and say to Thy calumniator—for he calumniates Thee because Thou dost benefit one so undeserving—say to him, therefore, “I will also give to this last even as to thee.” The Pharisee is displeased. Yet why should he grumble? My title is the Judge’s good will. Surely there can be no juster standard of merit, as certainly there can be no more generous measure of reward. “Or is it not lawful for Him to do what He willeth,” in regard to that which is His own? It is a mercy to me, but no wrong to thee. “Take what is thine, and go thy way.” If it is His good pleasure to save even me, what dost thou lose thereby?

Magnify thy merits as much as thou pleasest, and make much of thy labours. But “the mercy of the Lord is better than lives.” I confess, I have not “borne the burden of the day and the heat.” I am only bearing, according to the will of the Father of the family, at “sweet yoke” and a “light burden.” I have been at work scarcely an hour; or, if longer, I have not felt it through excess of love. Let the Jew prove his own strength. As for me, I prefer to “prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.” From it I make good all that has been lost to me in work and time. The Jew relies on the articles of a formal agreement, I on the good pleasure of the Divine Will. “I believe and it shall not be reputed unto folly to me,” for there is “life in His good will.” It will reconcile to me the Father, it will restore to me the inheritance I have lost, and even with a more plentiful grace; for it will admit me to a participation in the ineffable delights and the delicious music, and the sweet singing and the high feasting of God’s exulting family. If my “elder brother,” that is, the Jew, be indignant with me, and would rather eat a “kid” with his friends outside than the “fatted calf”

with me in his Father's house, he shall receive this answer to his complaints: "It is fit, that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again he was lost and is found." Still does the Synagogue feast outside with her friends, the demons, who are well pleased to see her in her folly voraciously gorging herself with the kid of sin, and, in a manner, concealing and stowing it away in the stomach of her ignorance and stupidity. Meantime, despising the justice of God and anxious to establish her own, she proclaims that she has no sin, nor any need that the Fatted Calf, that is, Christ, should be slain for her sake; since, as she fancies, she has been cleansed and justified by the works of the Law. But now when the veil of the "letter that killeth" has been rent by the death of the crucified Word, the Church, under the impulse of the Spirit of liberty, rushes boldly into the sanctuary, into the holy of holies, obtains recognition from the Bridegroom, finds favour in His eyes, is given the place of her rival, becomes a Spouse, and supplants the Synagogue in the affection and embraces of the Beloved. Then, in fervour of spirit, clinging and closely united to Christ the Lord, Who distils and pours all over her "the oil of His gladness," in a measure greater than is given to "her fellows," she exclaims, "Thy name is as oil poured out." What wonder if she is anointed who clasps the "Anointed of the Lord"?

The Church, then, reposes inside, but as yet only the Church of the perfect. However, even for us there is hope. Therefore, "rejoicing in hope," let us, who are still imperfect, keep watch before the doors. Let none as yet lodge within, save the Bridegroom and His Bride, that they may enjoy their secret and mutual embraces, undisturbed by any clamour of carnal passions, by any tumult of sensible images. But let the throng of "young damsels" who cannot yet be free from such interior perturbations, abide without. Let them keep an eye on the door. Let them watch in confidence, knowing that to themselves is addressed what they read, "After her shall virgins be brought to the King, her neighbours shall be brought to Thee." And that each may know "of what spirit he is," by virgins I mean those souls which, betrothed to Christ before they could be defiled by contact with the world, have persevered in fidelity to Him Whose spouses they became all the more happily the more early. The "neighbours" or "damsels" are they who were once "conformed to this world," who abandoned themselves to "the princes of this world," viz., to the foul demons, unto every kind of uncleanness, but who now, ashamed of the past, and putting on the likeness of the new man, are striving, with only the more diligence because so late, to purify themselves from the stains of their former sinfulness. Let both

virgins and damsels go forward. Let them yield neither to faintness nor to fatigue, although they do not yet experience in themselves that feeling which would cause them also to exclaim with the Spouse, “Thy name is as oil poured out.” For such young persons have not the courage to speak directly to the Bridegroom. Yet if they are only faithful in following the footsteps of their mistress, the Bride, they shall be permitted to enjoy at least the odour of the oil, and thus shall be stimulated to desire and to solicit still more precious favours.

I am not ashamed, my brethren, to acknowledge that I myself very often, and particularly in the beginning of my conversion, used to seek with a hard and frozen heart Him Whom my soul wished to love. For I could not yet love Him Who as yet had not been found. Or, at any rate, I could not love Him as much as I desired; and for this reason I sought Him, in order to love Him more, Whom certainly I should not have sought at all unless I already loved Him in some degree. Whilst, then, I sought Him in Whom my cold and languid spirit might find warmth and repose, nowhere did I meet anyone who could help me by dissolving the stiffening frost which held my interior faculties in bondage, and by restoring the pleasant spring of spiritual joy. Thus my soul grew daily more languid, and weary, and inert. Filled with disgust, I became sad almost to despair, and muttered within myself, “Who shall stand before the face of His cold?” Until on a sudden, perhaps at the word, perhaps at the sight of some spiritual and perfect man, occasionally even at the thought of one dead or absent, “the winds blew and the waters ran,” and “my tears were my bread day and night.” What is this but the odour exhaling from the unguent wherewith such a one was anointed? It could not be the ointment itself, inasmuch as it reached me only through a human medium. Hence, whilst rejoicing in the favour, I felt at the same time confounded and humiliated, because it was only a slight breath of the perfume, and not a bountiful unction that was vouchsafed me. My sense of smell was gratified, but not my sense of touch. I therefore knew that I was too unworthy for God to manifest His sweetness to me immediately. And if the same thing should happen again, I would indeed eagerly accept the favour bestowed and feel duly grateful. But grieving I should grieve that I had not deserved to receive it from God directly and, as the saying is, from hand to hand, though this I earnestly implored. I feel ashamed to be more affected at the thought of a man than at the thought of God. And then I cry out with tears, “When shall I come and appear before the face of God?” I suppose some of yourselves have had the same experience, and have it sometimes still. Herein what are we to understand except that either our pride is being humbled, or our humility protected, or

fraternal charity fostered, or holy desires enkindled? One and the same thing is medicine for the sick and food for the convalescent; it gives strength to the weak and pleasure to the strong. One and the same food cures our distempers and preserves our health. It nourishes the body whilst pleasing the palate.

We must now go back to the words of the Spouse. But let us so hasten to hear what she says that we may also endeavour to understand her wisdom. This Spouse, as I have remarked already, is the Church. She it is to whom "much hath been forgiven because she loveth much." The reproaches addressed to her by her rival, even these she has turned to her advantage. Thus she has become more docile under correction, more patient in labour, more ardent in love, more prudent in self-restraint, more humble for the consciousness of her failings, more acceptable for her modesty, more prompt in obedience, more devout and fervent in returning thanks. And whilst the Synagogue, as has been said, murmurs and talks of her merits, and her labours, and "the burden of the day and the heat," the Church is only mindful of the divine munificence, saying, "His name is as oil poured out."

This surely "is the testimony of Israel to praise the name of the Lord." Not, indeed, of Israel "according to the flesh," but of Israel "according to the spirit." For how could the carnal Israel speak in that way? Not that he lacks oil, but he has not his "oil poured out." Oil he has, but he keeps it concealed; he keeps it in his law-books rather than in his heart. He clings to the rind of the letter. He holds in his clutch a full vase. But it is sealed and he refuses to open it, even to anoint himself. O Israel, the spiritual unction is within, it is in the interior. Open and anoint thyself, and be no longer "a provoking house." Where is the use of having oil in thy vessels unless thou feelest it also on thy members? What avails it to read and re-read the sweet name of the Saviour in thy books if the sweetness of His love and service has no place in thy life? His name is oil. Only pour it out and thou shalt experience its virtue, which is threefold. But since the Jew despises my appeal, do you, my brethren, attend. I want to tell you what I have not yet explained, viz., why the name of the Beloved is compared to oil. There are, as far as I can see, three reasons. And forasmuch as He is called by many names, because none that is adequate can be found (He being ineffable) we have first to invoke the Holy Spirit that He would deign to reveal to us that one name out of the many, which He wishes to be understood in this place; for it has not been His good pleasure to consign it to writing. But this must await another discourse. For even if I had now the necessary knowledge, and neither you were burdened nor I fatigued, the lateness of the hour would still compel me to finish.

Hold fast what I have to-day invited your attention to, so that to-morrow there may be no necessity to repeat. This is my purpose, this the task I am undertaking, namely, to show you why the Beloved's name is compared to oil, and which one of His names. And seeing that I cannot say anything of myself, I exhort you to pray that "a mouth and wisdom" may be given me, through His Spirit, by the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, to Whom be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON XV

ON THE NAMES OF GOD, AND THE NAME OF JESUS

"Thy name is as oil poured out."

"The Spirit of wisdom is benevolent." He is not accustomed to make Himself difficult of access to those who invoke Him. Often even before we call upon Him, He says, "Behold, I am here." Listen, then, to the inspirations which, at your prayer and for your sakes, He has been pleased to favour me with, concerning those questions postponed from yesterday until the present; and reap the seasonable fruits of your own intercession. Behold, I am going to tell you the name which is rightly compared to oil, and to explain for what reason. We find many names of the Bridegroom scattered through the inspired pages. I will reduce them all to two. You will discover none, as I think, which does not signify either the riches of His mercy, or the power of His majesty. So speaks the Holy Ghost through one of His most familiar organs, that is, through David, "These two things have I heard, that power belongeth to God and mercy to Thee, O Lord." We find it written with regard to His majesty, "Holy and terrible is His name," and with respect to His mercy, "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Further testimonies will confirm what I say. "And this," says Jeremias, "is the name that they shall call Him, the Lord, our Just One"—which is a name of power or majesty. According to Isaias, "His name shall be called Emmanuel"—a name of mercy. Again Christ says of Himself, "You call me Master and Lord." The former is a name of mercy, the latter of majesty. I say Master is a name of mercy, for it is as much an exercise of mercy to impart knowledge to the mind as to supply food to the body. Again Isaias tells us, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace." Of these titles the first, third, and fourth are expressive of majesty, the others of mercy. Which then, is the name "as oil poured out"? Evidently, the name of majesty and power

is transfused in a manner into that of mercy and grace, and the result, which is, so to speak, an amalgam of all, abundantly poured out in Jesus Christ Our Saviour. Is not the name “God,” for instance, merged and transfused into that of “God-with-us,” that is, into “Emmanuel”? So is “Admirable” into “Counsellor.” So is “God the Mighty” into the titles “Father of the world to come,” and “Prince of Peace.” So is “The Lord our Just One” into “Compassionate and merciful Lord.” In this I am speaking of nothing new. In olden times the names Abram and Sarai were similarly merged and transfused into Abraham and Sara, respectively; and so we recognise that even then the mystery of this salutary effusion was celebrated and foreshadowed.

Where now is that awful “I am the Lord! I am the Lord!” which, spoken with a voice of thunder, used to resound with equal terror and frequency in the ears of the ancients? I have a prayer, dictated to me by Christ, the beginning of which, sweetened with the name of Father, guarantees a favourable hearing for the petitions which follow. Servants are called friends. And it is not to disciples, but to His “brethren” the Saviour’s Resurrection is announced. No wonder that, “when the fulness of time was come,” a pouring out of the holy name took place, God fulfilling what He promised by the mouth of Joel, and pouring out of His Spirit upon all flesh. No wonder, I say, since I read of something similar having occurred even amongst the Hebrews of old. I suppose your thoughts anticipate my words, and that you already guess what I am about to say. What, I ask, was the meaning of the name “I am Who am,” and “He Who is hath sent me to you,” first given in answer to the question of Moses? It is doubtful if even Moses himself could have understood that name had it not been poured out. But it was fused and poured and so comprehended. And not only poured, but even poured out, for already it had been poured in or infused already it was possessed by the inhabitants of heaven; already it had become familiar to the angels. But now it was dispersed abroad. It had been communicated by infusion to the celestial spirits in such a manner that they held it as an intimate possession. It was now poured out even upon men, so that, if the hateful wilfulness of an ungrateful people did not hinder it, the thankful cry, “Thy name is as oil poured out,” would have gone up to God from the universal earth. For he says Himself, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

Run, ye nations! Salvation is at hand. That name has been poured out, which whosoever shall invoke shall be saved. The God of angels calls Himself the God of men, also! He hath poured oil upon Jacob, and caused it to fall upon Israel. Say to your brothers, “Give us of your oil.” Should they refuse, then pray the

Lord of the oil Himself to pour it out upon you. Say to Him, “O Lord, ‘Take away our reproach.’ Do not, we implore Thee, permit the malevolent one, viz., Satan, to insult Thy beloved one, whom Thou hast been pleased to call to Thee from the ends of the earth, by a condescension proportionate to her unworthiness. Is it fitting, I ask, that a wicked servant should exclude those whom the gracious Father of the family hath invited? ‘I am,’ Thou sayest, ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ But is it of these only? Pour out, oh, pour out Thy name still wider! Still more generously ‘open Thy hand and fill every animal with blessing.’ Let them ‘come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.’ ‘Let them come, let them come, the tribes, the tribes of the Lord; the testimony of Israel to praise the name of the Lord.’ Let them come, and sit down, and feast, and be filled with gladness. Let but this one song re-echo everywhere, ‘Thy name is as oil poured out,’ ‘with the voice of joy and praise, the noise of one feasting.’ ” One thing, my brethren, I feel sure of, namely, that, if Philip and Andrew be the porters, we shall never meet with a repulse when we go begging for oil, when we want to see Jesus. As of old, Philip will immediately speak to Andrew, and both Philip and Andrew will speak to Jesus. But what will Jesus answer? Doubtless the same which He spoke once before, “Unless the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, dieth, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Therefore, let the Divine Grain die that the crop of the gentiles may spring up. For “thus it behoveth Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name,” not alone in Judæa, but throughout all nations; so that from the one name of Christ, countless millions of believers should be called Christians, and should exclaim in chorus, “Thy name is as oil poured out.”

In this, that is, in the name of Christ, I recognise the name which we read of in the Prophet Isaias, “He shall call His servants by another name, in which he, that is blest upon the earth, shall be blessed in God, amen.” O name of benediction! O oil everywhere poured out! Do you ask how widely it has been poured out? From heaven it overflowed to Judæa, and from Judæa through the world at large, so that from the whole earth the Church sends up the wondering cry, “Thy name is as oil poured out.” “Poured out” in truth, since not only has it overrun heaven and earth but even the dwellers beneath the earth have been sprinkled therewith, “that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth and that every tongue should confess” and should say, “Thy name is as oil poured out.” Behold the name of Christ! Behold the name of

Jesus! Both were infused into the angels. Both were effused upon men, upon those men, who like beasts, “had rotted in their filth,” and they, these holy names, “saved men and beasts, as God hath multiplied His mercy.” How precious this name, this oil! Yet how cheap, too. How cheap, and yet how salutary! Were it not cheap, it would not be poured out for one like me. Were it not salutary, it could not have saved me. I participate in the name; I participate also in the inheritance. I am a Christian; I am, therefore, the brother of Christ. If I am really what I am called, I am “the heir of God and a co-heir with Christ.” And what wonder is it that the name of the Bridegroom is thus poured out, since He has poured out even Himself? For, “He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.” And the Psalmist says, speaking in His name, “I am poured out as water.” The fulness of the Divinity, whilst dwelling corporally on earth, was poured out, so that all of us, who live in the flesh, might receive of that fulness, and, recreated with its life-giving odour, might exclaim, “Thy name is as oil poured out.” You now understand what name has been poured out, and how, and to what extent.

But wherefore is it compared to oil? This I have not yet explained. I was beginning to do so in the preceding discourse, when something suddenly occurred to me which I thought necessary to premise. The digression has been more lengthy than I anticipated, for no other reason, as I think, than because Wisdom, “the valiant woman, hath put out her hand” to the distaff, “and her fingers have taken hold of the spindle.” Well she knew how to draw out into a long thread my scanty stock of wool or flax, and to stretch it to the breadth of the loom, so that “all her domestics might be clothed with double garments.” There is, doubtless, a striking analogy between oil and the name of the Beloved, nor is the comparison made by the Holy Spirit quite an arbitrary one. Unless you can suggest something better, I will say that the name of Jesus bears resemblance to oil in the threefold use to which the latter lends itself, namely, for lighting, for food, and for healing. It feeds the flame, it nourishes the flesh, it soothes pain. It is light, and food, and medicine. Consider now how the same properties belong to the Bridegroom’s name. When preached, it gives light; when meditated, it nourishes; when invoked, it soothes and softens. But let us examine each point in detail.

Whence, think you, that great light of faith, and as sudden as great, throughout the whole world, except from the preaching of the name of Jesus? Was it not by the refulgence of this name that God called us “into His marvellous light,” to whom thus illuminated, and contemplating the Light by this light, St. Paul truly

says, “You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord”? This is the name which the same Apostle was charged to “carry before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.” He bore this name about as a lamp. With it he illuminated his native land, crying out everywhere, “The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day.” And he directed the gaze of all to the Candle on the Candlestick, by everywhere preaching “Jesus and Him crucified.” Oh, with what splendour this light shone forth and dazzled the eyes of all beholders, when, flashing like the lightning flame from Peter’s mouth, it strengthened the corporeal “feet and soles” of one person physically lame, and enlightened the eyes of many others, who were spiritually blind! Surely it glittered with fiery scintillations when the same Peter pronounced the words, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk.”

But the name of Jesus is not merely light. It is food as well. Do you not, my brethren, experience an increase of strength as often as you recall it? What can so enrich the soul that reflects upon it? What can so reinvigorate the weary mind, fortify the virtues, engender good and honourable dispositions, foster holy affections? Dry is every kind of spiritual food, which this oil does not moisten. Insipid, whatever this salt does not season. If thou writest, thy composition has no charms for me, unless I read there the name of Jesus. If thou disputest or conversest, I find no pleasure in thy words, unless I hear there the name of Jesus. Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, jubilation in the heart.

Yet not alone is that name light and food. It is also medicine. Is any amongst you sad? Let the name of Jesus enter his heart; let it leap thence to his mouth; and lo! the light that radiates from that name shall scatter every cloud and restore tranquillity. Has some one perpetrated a crime, and, moreover, abandoning hope, is rushing in desperation towards “the snare of death”? Let him but invoke this vivifying name, and straightway he shall experience a renewal of courage, and a revival of confidence. What hardness of heart, common as it is with some, what torpidity of sloth, what rancour of spirit, what weariness of disgust has ever been able to resist the potent influence of this all-saving name? What exhausted fountain of devotional tears has not, at the invocation of the name of Jesus, sent forth a fuller and a sweeter flood? Who ever, when trembling with terror in the presence of danger, has not immediately felt his spirits revive and his fears departing as soon as he called upon this name of power? Who ever, agitated and buffeted by the billows of doubt, has not perceived his mind to be suddenly illuminated with the clear light of certitude, the moment he invoked this

illustrious name? Who ever, overwhelmed by misfortune, and already on the point of succumbing, has not been strengthened in mind by an infusion of fortitude when he pronounced this helpful name? For this name is the sovereign remedy for all those various maladies and languors of the soul. By using it thus we may test the truth of the promise, “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me.” There is nothing so efficacious as the name of Jesus for restraining the violence of anger, depressing the swellings of pride, healing the smarting wound of envy, curbing the passions of the flesh, extinguishing the fire of concupiscence, tempering the thirst of avarice, and banishing every unlawful desire. For when I name the name Jesus, I call to mind a Man Who is “meek and humble of Heart,” Who is kind, sober, chaste, and merciful, and perfect in all goodness and sanctity, and Who is, at the same time, the great Almighty God, Who restores me to health by His example, and strengthens me by His help. All this sounds in my ear whenever I hear the name of Jesus. I find models for my imitation in His Humanity, and assistance to copy them in His Omnipotence. The examples of His mortal life I use as medicinal herbs which I prepare with the assistance of His divine power, and so make for myself an efficacious restorative such as no human physician can compound.

Such an electuary, O my soul, thou canst find stored up in the little vessel of the name Jesus. So salutary is it, that it shall never prove ineffectual against any spiritual ailment whatsoever. Keep it always in thy bosom, keep it ever in thy hand, so that every thought and act of thine may be directed to Jesus. He Himself invites thee to this in the words, “Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.” But of this later. Now I merely indicate where thou canst discover a medicine for thy arm and a medicine for thy heart. Thou hast, I say, in the name of Jesus, the means of correcting thy evil actions and of making perfect such as are deficient in goodness. Therein, also, shalt thou find the means of preserving thy affections incorrupt, or of purifying them from defilement already contracted.

Amongst the children of Judæa there have been several others called Jesus, and she glories in the empty name. For, as belonging to these, that name is empty, since it yields neither light, nor food, nor medicine. Therefore does the Synagogue abide in darkness, even till now, oppressed with hunger and infirmity. And so must she remain without healing or satiety, until she shall acknowledge that it is this my Jesus “Who ruleth Jacob and all the ends of the earth,” and until her sons “shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs, and shall go round about the city.” Those other Jews who bore the name of

Jesus were sent on before, as of old the staff preceded the Prophet Eliseus to the corpse of the child of the Sunamitess. Hence, in their case, the name was nothing more than a shadow, for it was not interpreted by their lives. The staff was laid on the body, but produced neither life nor feeling, because it was only a staff. Then He came down Who had sent the staff, and immediately saved His people from their sins, thus deserving that it should be said of Him, “Who is this that also forgiveth sins?” For He is the Same Who said, “I am the salvation of the people.” Now there is life, now there is feeling. So it is manifest that this Jesus of ours does not bear an empty name as did His types. There is a feeling of health infused, and the favour is not concealed in silence. Within is the awakening of life, without the voice of acknowledgment. I feel contrition, I confess my sins, and confession is evidence of life in me, since “Confession perisheth from the dead as nothing.” Behold life and feeling! I am completely resuscitated, my resurrection is perfect. What is the death of the body but the privation of life and feeling? Sin, which is the death of the soul, had left me neither the feeling of compunction nor the voice of confession, and hence I was dead. Then came He Who forgives sins, restoring both life and feeling, and saying to my soul, “I am thy salvation.” What wonder that death should yield place where Life enters? Now “with the heart we believe unto justice, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Already the “child gapes,” and he “gapes seven times,” and he says, “Seven times a day I have given praise to Thee,” O Lord. Mark well this number seven, for it is a sacred number, and here is not without its significance. But it is better to postpone this to another day when, not fastidious, but with keen appetites, we shall take our places at a good table, at the invitation of the Bridegroom of the Church, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is over all things, God, blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XVI

ON THE MYSTICAL SENSE OF THE NUMBER SEVEN

"Thy name is as oil poured out."

What, my brethren, is the mystical significance of the number seven occurring in the account of the resuscitation of the child by Eliseus? I do not believe that any of you is so simple as to suppose it to be without some special design and due, as it were, to chance, that the gaping was sevenfold. Nor do I consider that it was without meaning that the Prophet, lying upon the corpse, contracted himself to the dimensions of the child's body, "and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands." It is the Holy Ghost Who caused all these things to be so done and recorded, for the enlightenment, no doubt, of those human spirits of ours, which are led astray by the treacherous companionship of a corruptible body, and instructed in folly by the foolish wisdom of this world. "For the corruptible body," so we read in Wisdom, "is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things." Consequently, no one ought to be surprised or impatient if I appear to examine curiously these storehouses of the Holy Spirit, so to call such mysterious narratives, since I know that "man's life is such, and the life of my spirit in such things as these." Yet I want to tell those who are gifted with a quick intelligence, and who are longing for the end of every sermon almost before they have heard the beginning, that I am a debtor to the dull, also, and indeed to them especially. My purpose is not so much to comment on words as to move and enkindle hearts. I have to draw the spiritual water from the well and to give it to you to drink, which cannot be done by gliding quickly through my subject, but by careful discussion and frequent exhortation. However, the inquiry into the mystical meanings of my present text has detained us longer than even I had anticipated. I was under the impression, I confess, that one discourse would suffice for this, that we could pass quickly through this dark and

pathless forest of allegories, and perhaps in one day's journey reach the open plain of moral instructions. But it has happened quite otherwise. Two days have we been wandering in the wood and the exit is still a long way off. The eye, contemplating a landscape from afar, takes in at a glance the tops of the trees and the peaks of the mountains. But the wide extent of the low-lying valleys and the dense tangles of brushwood thickets baffle its penetration. How, for example, could I have foreseen the miracle of Eliseus, until, whilst treating of the vocation of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, it suddenly and unexpectedly crossed my vision? And now that we have stumbled upon it, let us be content to dwell a little on the thoughts it suggests, which will lead us back again to the considerations we are intermitting. For in these thoughts, also, we shall find food for our souls. In the same manner, huntsmen and their hounds desist occasionally from the pursuit of the quarry they had first started, in order to chase another that springs up in their path.

My brethren, I find solid ground for confidence in the thought that this great Prophet, namely, Christ, "a Man mighty in word and work," descending from the high mountain of heaven, deigned to visit me, "whereas I am but dust and ashes," to compassionate me as I lay in death, to bend over my prostrate form, to contract and reduce Himself to my diminutive stature, to illumine my blindness with the very light of His Eyes, to cure my dumbness with the kiss of His Mouth, and to strengthen my feeble hands by the touch of His own. I find a sweet consolation in pondering upon these things. They replenish my soul with delight; they enrich my spirit with an abundance of grace; and cause all my bones to break out into praise of my Divine Benefactor. Such a restoration Christ wrought once for all in favour of the whole human race. But each one of us experiences daily in himself a rehearsal of it, when, namely, the light of understanding is imparted to the heart, the word of edification to the mouth, and to the hand the work of justice. For it is He who gives us to think what is true, to speak it to advantage, and to reduce it to practice in our lives. Herein we have a cord of triple strand, difficult to break, for delivering souls out of the devil's prison, and drawing them after us up into heaven. And the cord I speak of consists in this, that we conceive right sentiments, express them worthily, and prove the sincerity of our faith by conforming our lives to its teaching. With His own Eyes He has touched mine, adorning with the brilliant luminaries of faith and understanding the forehead, so to speak, of the interior man. He has joined His Mouth to mine, impressing the kiss of peace on the lips of the dead; for when we were still sinners, dead to justice, He reconciled us to God. He applied His Mouth to mine,

again breathing into my face the breath of life, but of a more holy life than the first. By the first He formed me “into a living soul,” by the second He reformed me into a quickening spirit. He laid His Hands on mine, by giving me the example of good works, the pattern of obedience. Or certainly in that He “put forth His Hands to strong things,” in order to “teach my hands to fight and my fingers to war.”

“And the child gaped seven times.” For the manifestation of the glory of the miracle, it was enough that he should gape once. The multiplicity therefore, and the reiteration until the mystical number seven was reached, point to a mystery. If you now contemplate the huge body of the whole human race, at first, indeed, you behold it altogether devoid of animation, like the corpse of the child. But when the universal Church has been restored to life by contact with the Prophet Who lay upon her, you will see her opening wide her mouth, gaping, as it were, seven times. That is to say, “seven times a day” she is accustomed to give praise to God. If you consider yourselves you may know by this that you are living a spiritual life and fulfilling the mystical number, if you subject the fivefold source of sensation to the two-fold law of charity, and, according to the Apostle, “yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification,” as before you yielded them “to serve iniquity unto iniquity.” Or, otherwise, if you dedicate the same five senses to the work of advancing the salvation of your neighbour, and complete the number seven by adding two exercises relating to God, viz., the praise of His justice and the praise of His mercy.

I have also to speak of seven other “gapings.” I mean seven experimental tests, which are absolutely necessary, if we desire to be assured that our souls have recovered true life and health. Four of these tests regard the sense of compunction; the rest are concerned with the voice of confession. If you have life, and voice, and feeling, you have also in yourselves an experience of the seven. You may be certain that your sensibility has been perfectly restored, if you notice that your conscience is pained with a fourfold compunction, comprising a twofold shame and a two-fold fear. Added to these four, the three modes of confession, of which I intend to speak later on, make up the mystical sevenfold and give us an assurance of our restoration to life. Does not holy Jeremias, in his Lamentations, observe this number four which, as I have said, belongs to compunction? Do you, then, in your own lamentations, follow the example set by the Prophet. Think of God as your Creator, think of Him as your Benefactor, think of Him as your Father, think of Him as your Lord. In all these relations, you stand guilty before Him. Lament your offences against Him in

regard to each. Let fear be awakened at the thought of the Creator and the Lord; shame when you call to mind the offended Benefactor and Father. A father surely, for the reason that he is a father, cannot inspire fear. It is peculiar to a father "to compassionate always and to spare." And if he strikes, it is not with the staff of punishment but with the rod of correction. Moreover, he soothes the pain his stroke has produced. Listen to a father's voice, "I will strike and I will heal." In a father, therefore, there is nothing to be afraid of, who, although sometimes administering chastisement as a remedy, can never inflict pain in vengeance. Yet, if the thought of having sinned against my Father in heaven does not inspire me with terror, it ought certainly to fill me with confusion. Freely did He beget me by the word of truth, and not under necessitating impulse, very differently from the father of my flesh. And for one so begotten He spared not even His only Necessarily-Begotten. Thus has He indeed shown Himself a Father to me, but, alas! I, in my turn, have not behaved as a son towards Him. A son so evil of a Father so good, how shall I dare to lift up my eyes to His Face? I am ashamed of having by my deeds dishonoured my ancestry. The thought that I have proved myself a degenerate son of a Father so noble overwhelms me with confusion. Let my eyes become as fountains of water! Let confusion cover my countenance! Let the blush of shame mantle my face and as a cloud overcast it! Let "my life be wasted with grief, and my years with sighs!" Alas! alas! what have I gained by those actions of which I am now so much ashamed? If I have "sown in the flesh of the flesh also shall I reap," but only "corruption." If I have sown in the world "the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof." What! Have I been so lost to shame, so unhappy, so insane, as to prefer things transient, vain, and next to nothing, "the end whereof is death," to the love and honour of my Eternal Father? I am confounded, I am overwhelmed at hearing the reproach, "If I be a Father where is My honour?"

But quite apart from the claims He has on me as my Father, He has also loaded me with His benefits. He multiplies His witnesses against me in the food He provides for my body, in the prolongation of my days, and, above all, in the Blood of His Beloved Son, Which "crieth from the earth" in my behalf, to say nothing of innumerable other favours. I blush for my ingratitude. And lest anything should be wanting to my confusion, I stand convicted of rendering evil for good, and hatred for love. Yet I have as little to fear from my Benefactor as from my Father. He is the true Benefactor, "Who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not." He does not upbraid me on account of His gifts, for the reason that they are really gifts. The benefits of God are given gratis, not sold at

a price, and, as the Apostle tells us, His “gifts are without repentance.” But in proportion to my admiration for the divine generosity is the shame I am forced to feel for my own unworthiness. Be confounded, O my soul, be confounded and saddened! For, although it belongs not to a Benefactor to reproach or upbraid, it ill beseems us to be unmindful or ungrateful. Yet, woe is me! even now, “what shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?”

But should shame be slothful and perform its work imperfectly, let fear be called to its assistance. Let fear be aroused in order to arouse the conscience. Turn away your attention a little, my brethren, from the tender names of Father and Benefactor, and direct it to other titles more severe. For of the Same Who is called “the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation,” we also read, “The Lord is the God to Whom revenge belongeth,” “God is a just Judge,” “Who is terrible in His counsels over the sons of men,” and “I am the Lord thy God, mighty and jealous.” For you He is a Father and a Benefactor; He is Lord and Creator for Himself. Hence the Scripture says, “He hath made all things for Himself.” Do you, then, imagine that He Who defends and preserves to us what is ours, will not, sooner or later, show a like zeal for His own? Do you suppose He will not require the honour of His principality? And it is for this reason that “the wicked hath provoked God. For he hath said in his heart, He will not require it.” And what is it to say in one’s heart, “He will not require,” except not to fear His requisition? But He will require, even to the “last farthing.” He will require, “and repay them abundantly that act proudly.” He will require service from those whom He has redeemed, honour and glory from the creatures of His Hand.

True, the Father overlooks, the Benefactor pardons; but not so the Lord and the Creator. He Who as Father spares His child, will not as Creator spare His creature, will not as Lord have compassion on a wicked servant. Think, my brethren, what a dreadful, what a horrible thing it is to have despised your Maker and the Creator of all, to have offended the Lord of Majesty! Fear is inspired by majesty, and fear is inspired by lordship, but especially by the Divine Majesty and the Divine Lordship. And if the penalty of death is imposed by human laws upon those who offend against human majesty, what shall be the fate of such as despise the Divine Omnipotence? “He toucheth the mountains and they smoke,” and does a little sack of vile dust, which may be scattered in a moment by a single breath beyond the possibility of recall, does such a thing dare to provoke so tremendous a Majesty? He, my brethren, He indeed ought to fill us with dread, “Who, after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell.” Ah, it is hell that makes me afraid. I fear the wrathful Countenance of the Judge, which strikes

terror even into the angelic spirits. I tremble when I call to mind the anger of the Omnipotent, and the face of His fury, and the crashing of a universe tottering to destruction, and the conflagration of the elements, and the mighty tempest, and the voice of the Archangel, and "the sharp word" of final reprobation. Horror overpowers me at the thought of the fangs of the infernal beast, of the bottomless abyss below, of the "lions roaring, ready for their prey." I shudder with affright whenever I think of the gnawing worm that "dieth not," of the cataracts of fire, of the smoke, of the black enveloping vapours, of the sulphur, of the "storm of winds," and of the "exterior darkness." "Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes," that by weeping over my sins now I may prevent eternal weeping in the future, and escape the gnashing of teeth and the cruel fetters for hands and feet, and the oppressive weight of chains, galling, cramping, burning, but not consuming? Woe, woe is me, O my mother! Oh, why didst thou bring me forth, to be a child of sorrow and bitterness, of eternal wrath, of everlasting lamentation? Oh, why didst thou take upon thy knees and suckle at thy breast one that is but born to be fuel for the fire, destined for the burning?

He that is thus affected, my brethren, has without doubt recovered his sense of feeling; and in this twofold fear, viz., of God as Creator and as Lord, added to the previously mentioned twofold shame of Him as Father and as Benefactor, he has four of the seven "gapings." The three which remain, he will find in the voice of confession, so that it shall no longer be said of him that "there is neither voice nor feeling." If yet that voice of confession proceeds from a simple, humble, and trustful heart. Therefore, let him confess humbly, sincerely, and trustfully whatever troubles his conscience, and so he will have done what is required of him in this matter. There are some "who are glad when they have done evil, and rejoice in most wicked things." It is of such Isaias speaks where he says, "They have proclaimed abroad their sin as Sodom." But these, as being worldlings, I exclude from further consideration in my present discourse, for what have we to do with those "who are without"?

Yet even amongst persons who wear the religious habit and have made the monastic vows, I have occasionally heard some recounting and shamelessly boasting of the sins of their past. They proudly talk, for instance, of the great courage they gave evidence of in the duels which they fought whilst living in the world; or of their skill in verbal disputations, or of other such exploits, honourable according to the vanity of the world, but hurtful, pernicious, ruinous to the interests of the soul. Such language betrays a worldly spirit. The humble habit of religion worn by these people, instead of being a sign that they have put

on the new man of sanctity, is nothing but a cloak for the old man of sin. Others make mention of the same things as if in sorrow and penitence. But since they aim at self-glorification in their intention, they only deceive themselves, whilst their guilt remains. For “God is not mocked.” They have not put off the old man, but they hide him under the new. The old leaven is neither given up nor cast forth by such a confession as this, but rather strengthened, according to the words: “Because I was silent, my bones grew old, whilst I cried out all the day long.” I am ashamed to speak of the impudence of some who are brazen enough to boast exultantly of what ought to be expiated with tears of compunctiom, how, even after they were clothed in the sacred livery, they cleverly overreached such a brother; how they outwitted another; how they retaliated on such as injured them by word or deed. That is to say, they make it matter for boasting to have requited evil with evil, reproach with reproach!

There is still another kind of confession which is all the more dangerous in proportion as the vanity concealed in it is the more subtle and difficult to detect. I allude to that in which we have the boldness to reveal our crimes and abominations, not because we are humble, but because we desire to appear so. But to seek the praise of humility is not the virtue, but rather the subversion of humility. The really humble man is anxious not to be acclaimed for his humility, but to be reputed as vile. He rejoices in contempt, and glories in nothing but in his contempt of praise. What, my brethren, can be more perverse, what more unworthy than that confession of sin, the very guardian of humility, should be pressed into the service of pride, and that you should wish to be reputed saints on account of that precisely which makes you to appear sinners? This is surely a most extraordinary manner of boasting, as if one could not otherwise acquire a reputation for sanctity than by exhibiting himself as a criminal! But as it has only the appearance, not the reality of humility, far from obtaining pardon, it even provokes the divine anger. Did it avail Saul anything to acknowledge his sin, when reproved by Samuel? Doubtless, that confession must have been itself sinful, seeing that it did not merit the forgiveness of sin. For when did the Master of humility, Whose nature inclines Him to grant His grace to the humble, ever reject an humble confession? No, He could not but be appeased, if only the humble sentiments which sounded on the lips were found also to be entertained in the heart. This is the reason why I have said confession must be humble.

But it must also be simple. If evil has been really committed do not be at pains to justify the intention as you may feel tempted to do, inasmuch as this is not visible to the human eye. Do not try to palliate your fault, if you know it to be

serious. Neither should you attempt to excuse it on the plea of persuasion by others, since no one can be compelled to do wrong against his will. To justify the intention is rather self-defence than self-accusation, and calls down, instead of appeasing, the anger of heaven. To extenuate one's guilt shows a want of gratitude, because by striving to lessen your culpability, you detract from the glory of the divine mercy which pardons you. Besides, favours are conferred the less willingly, accordingly as they are observed to be the less thankfully received, as being considered by the recipient the less necessary to him. Consequently, he who depreciates the divine bounty, by endeavouring with words to extenuate his guilt, forfeits thereby the divine forgiveness. Let the example of the first man deter you from transferring to others the responsibility of your transgression. Adam did not deny his fault, yet he did not obtain pardon, and the reason doubtless was because he made mention also of the sin of his wife. That is a familiar way of excusing oneself, namely, when accused yourselves to accuse another. But let holy David tell you how not merely unprofitable, but even pernicious it is to wish to excuse oneself by accusing one's neighbour. "Evil words" he calls "excuses in sins." And he begs and entreats the Lord not to "incline his heart" to them. Nor without reason. For he who excuses his guilt sins against his own soul, rejects the medicine of pardon, and thus with his own mouth deprives himself of spiritual life. What can be more malicious than to take up arms in this way against one's own salvation, and to pierce oneself, so to speak, with one's own sword? "He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?"

It is also required that confession should be trustful. This is necessary in order that it may be made in hope, with full confidence of forgiveness, lest otherwise, instead of being justified, you condemn yourselves with your own lips. Judas, who betrayed Our Lord, and Cain, who slew his brother, both confessed, but both without confidence. "I have sinned," said the former, "in betraying innocent blood." "My iniquity," exclaimed the latter, "is greater than that I may deserve pardon." Truthful confessions both, but unavailing, because untrustful. These three qualities of a good confession, added to the four properties of acceptable compunction, considered just now, will make up the mystical seven.

Now, when you feel such compunction and have so confessed, and consequently are assured of the possession of life, you will also, as I think, admit as certain that the name Jesus is no empty title in Him Who has both the will and the power to work such wonders in you; and that it has not been in vain He Himself followed the staff which He sent on before. His coming has not been in

vain, because He came not empty. How, indeed, could He be empty in Whom dwelt the fulness of the Divinity? For to Him the Spirit has not been given in measure. Moreover, it is written that He came in the "fulness of time" to indicate to us that He came not empty. Assuredly He was full Whom the Father "hath anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows." And He was anointed that He might Himself anoint us. All who have deserved to receive of His fulness, have been anointed by Him. Therefore He says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me. He hath sent Me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." He came, as you have just heard, to anoint our sores and to soothe our sorrows. Therefore did He come anointed. Therefore did He come "sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Him." He knew He was descending to an afflicted race and assumed the character most necessary for their relief. And as there were many infirmities, like a physician of wisdom and foresight, He came provided with many remedies. He brought with Him the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

You see, my brethren, what a number of phials full of precious ointments this heavenly Physician prepared for healing the wounds of that poor man "who fell amongst robbers." They are seven in number, designed perhaps for the excitation of the above-mentioned seven "gapings." For the Spirit of life dwelt in these phials. Out of them, certainly, He poured oil upon my wounds. He also poured wine, but less wine than oil. That is to say, He so accommodated His treatment to my infirmities, that mercy should be exalted over justice, just as the oil floats above wine when poured into the same vessel. He brought five vessels of oil as against only two of wine. For it is only fear and fortitude that wine can be understood to symbolise. The other five virtues, namely, wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, and piety, suggest the idea of oil by the sweetness of their flavour. In the Spirit of fortitude, "like a mighty man that hath been surfeited with wine," He descended into hell, "broke in pieces the gates of brass, and burst the bars of iron." In the same Spirit He bound "the strong man," and delivered human souls from the yoke of Satan. But He descended also in the Spirit of fear, not of fear felt by Himself, but of fear to be struck into others.

O Wisdom, powerfully sweet and sweetly powerful! With what healing art in wine and oil dost thou restore the health of my soul! Surely thou "reachest from end to end mightly and disposest all things sweetly," driving far off the enemy

and taking care of the weak! “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed.” I will sing and praise Thy name, and will say, “Thy name is as oil poured out.” Not as wine poured out, for wine signifies power and fear, and O Lord, “enter not into judgment with Thy servant”; but as oil, since Thou dost “crown me with mercy and compassion.” Yes, as oil, which, floating above all liquids, into which it is poured, by this property beautifully typifies the name “which is above all names.” O name, exceeding sweet, exceeding savoury! O name, glorious beyond all, chosen out of all, sublime and exalted above all for ever! This is truly the oil that makes “the face of man cheerful,” that “fattens the head” of him who fasts, so that he does not feel the oil of the sinner. This is the “new name which the Mouth of the Lord hath named,” which was even “called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.” Not alone the Jew, but “whosoever shall call upon this name shall be saved,” for to this purpose has it been poured out. This the Father gave to His Son, the Bridegroom of the Church, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XVII

ON THE COMING AND GOING OF THE SPIRIT AND ON SATAN'S ENVY OF THE HUMAN RACE

"Thy name is as oil poured out."

Do you think, my brethren, that we have now, in our efforts to fathom the admirable mysteries concealed in our text, "Thy name is as oil poured out," penetrated far enough into the sanctuary of God? Or do you wish that we continue our scrutiny, if aught still remains unexamined, and venture to follow the Spirit even into the Holy of Holies? For this Spirit "searcheth" not alone "the hearts and reins" of men, but also "the deep things of God." Securely may we follow Him, "whithersoever He goeth," in things divine or in things human. Only let us pray Him to guard our hearts and our minds, lest haply we should think Him to be with us when He is away, and mistaking our own spirit for Him, so wander from our course. He comes and goes as He wills, and none can easily know "whence He cometh or whither He goeth." Such ignorance does not, perhaps, involve any risk to our salvation. But inability to recognise His coming and His going would manifestly be attended with the gravest peril. For when we do not observe most carefully these vicissitudes of grace, these advents and withdrawals of the Holy Ghost, designed in His providence for our good, the result is that He is neither desired when absent, nor glorified when present. He retires from the soul in order to excite us to seek Him the more eagerly. But how can this be, if we are unaware of His departure? Again, He graciously returns to console us. But how is it possible to Welcome Him with the honour due to His Majesty, unless His arrival attracts our attention? He, therefore, that is insensible to His going, lies open to the seduction of the enemy. He that observes not His coming can feel no gratitude for the gracious visitation.

Eliseus of old asked a favour of his master, the Prophet Elias, when he perceived that his (Elias's) departure was at hand. But, as you know, he did not obtain his request except on condition that he should see the man of God when

the latter was being taken up from him to heaven. This happened to them in figure, and has been recorded for our instruction. The example of Eliseus teaches and admonishes us to watch with solicitude over the work of our salvation, which the Holy Spirit operates within us unceasingly, with the marvellous skill and sweetness of His own divine art. My brethren, let us so attend to this gracious Spirit, Who is our Heavenly Mentor and "teacheth (us) all things necessary, that He can never be taken away from us, without our knowledge, if we do not wish to be deprived of His double gift. Let Him never, therefore, at His coming, find us unprepared, but always on the watch, with faces uplifted and hands stretched forth to receive a rich benediction from the Lord. What kind of souls does He condescend to visit? Such, we are told, as are "like to men who wait for their Lord, when He shall return from the wedding." And surely this Lord never returns empty-handed from that heavenly table which is laden with such an abundance of good things. We must watch, then, we must be on the alert at all times, because we know not at what hour the Spirit will come, nor at what hour He will again take His departure. He goes and He returns; and the soul that kept her feet whilst supported by Him, must of necessity fall, when He withdraws His Hand. But, though falling, she "shall not be bruised, for the Lord putteth His Hand under "her again. Such alternations of fervour and abandonment never cease in those who are spiritual, or rather the Holy Ghost never ceases from "visiting early in the morning, and suddenly proving" those whom He designs to advance in spirituality. "The just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again." Yet so, if he falls in the day, that is to say, if he sees himself falling and knows that he has fallen, and thus, desiring to rise, may seek the Hand of his Supporter, and say, "O Lord, in Thy favour, Thou gavest strength to my beauty; Thou turnedst away Thy Face from me and I became troubled."

It is one thing, my brethren, to doubt the truth indeliberately, which is inevitable with us when the Spirit ceases to illuminate our souls by His inspirations; but it is quite another thing to embrace voluntarily what is false. This latter misfortune we may avoid by not remaining in ignorance of our own ignorance, so that we also may say, "And if I have been ignorant of anything, my ignorance is with me," viz., "is known to me." These, my brethren, are the words of holy Job. Do you not recognise them? Error and doubt are the two evil daughters of an evil mother, ignorance. Error is of the two the more wretched, doubt the more deserving of compassion. The former state is the more pernicious, the latter the more painful. But at the word of the Spirit both

disappear, and there succeeds to them not simply truth, but the certain assurance of truth. For the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, to which error is contrary. He is also the Spirit of wisdom, being the "Brightness of eternal life," "reaching everywhere by reason of His purity and admitting nothing of the obscurity that belongs to error and ignorance. When He ceases to speak to us, we must be on our guard, if not against distressing doubt, which we cannot avoid, at all events against detestable error. In a state of uncertainty, there is a very wide difference between holding as probable this or that opinion, and rashly asserting what one has no real knowledge of. Therefore, either let the Holy Spirit never cease to commune with us, which, of course, depends entirely on His own good pleasure; or if He is pleased sometimes to remain silent, let Him at least give us warning of this, and so speak to us still by His silence. Otherwise, mistakenly supposing that He continues to lead us, we shall, with fatal security, follow, instead of Him, our own deluding spirit. If, then, it is His good pleasure to leave us sometimes in the perplexity of doubt, let Him not, at any rate, ever abandon us to the deception of error. There are some, my brethren, who say what is false, but sincerely and in good faith, and these, consequently, are not guilty of falsehood. And some there are who affirm the truth which they know not, and these are really liars. The former do not assert that to be a fact which is not, but simply that they believe what they really do believe, and so they speak the truth; although what they believe is not objectively true. Whereas, the latter, by pretending to be certain when they are not certain, speak falsely even when that which they say happens to be true.

Having premised this much for the instruction of such as are inexperienced in these matters, I will now follow the Spirit, Who, as I trust, precedes to guide me. Yet I will myself, as far as I can, observe the same precautions which I have recommended to you. I will endeavour to practise what I preach. Otherwise to me also it may be said, "Thou that teachest others, teachest not thyself." Doubtless, it is necessary to distinguish between what is evident and what is uncertain, so that the former may not be called in question, nor the latter boldly maintained. But even for this, we must depend upon the assistance of the Holy Ghost, for our own efforts are insufficient. What man knows, for instance, whether the judgment passed by God upon the case of the Jew and the Gentile, as set forth in an earlier discourse (the third, I think, before this) was not preceded by similar judgment, pronounced even in heaven?

My meaning is this. Do you not suppose that Lucifer, who arose in the morning, and with impatient ambition mounted on high—do you not think that

he also, before he was cast down into eternal darkness, envied the human race the oil poured out upon it, and in anger began to murmur, saying within himself, “To what purpose is this waste?” I do not claim that this is from the Spirit. But I do assert that it is not contradicted by the Spirit. Hence, as to its truth or falsity, I am simply ignorant. However, what I say is not impossible, and there is no reason why it should seem incredible, namely, that a spiritual creature, full of wisdom, and of surpassing beauty, might have foreknown that men were to be created and advanced to equal glory with himself. But if he did foreknow this, it was doubtless because he read it in the Word of God. Then, in his malice, he waxed envious, and designed to have as his subjects those whom he scorned to recognise as his equals. “They are weaker than I,” he said to himself; “they are of an inferior nature. It is not fitting, therefore, that they should be my fellow-citizens, my compeers in glory.” Perchance, that proud ascent of his, and that sitting down in the manner of a master, manifested his wicked design. “I will ascend into heaven,” he said, “I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north.” Thus he hoped to become like to the Most High; so that, just as the Lord God, seated above the Cherubim, governed the whole angelic creation, he himself, in the same way, throned on high, would rule the race of man. But God forbid that he should have his wish! “He hath devised iniquity on his bed.” But let his “iniquity lie to itself.” As for us, we will recognise no judge but our Maker. Not the devil, but the Lord “shall judge the world,” and “He is our God for ever and ever, He shall rule us for evermore.”

Therefore, my brethren, that proud spirit “conceived sorrow,” that is, envious rancour, in heaven, and in paradise, where he seduced our first parents, he “brought forth iniquity,” the daughter of malice, the mother of death and of misery. And pride is the mother of all. For, although it was “by the envy of the devil that death came into the world,” nevertheless it is written that “pride is the beginning of all sin.” But “what hath pride profiteth” Lucifer? Nothing at all, for in spite of his malicious designs, “Thou, O Lord, art among us, and Thy name is called upon us.” Hence Thy “purchased people,” hence “the Church of the redeemed” exclaims, “ ‘Thy name is as oil poured out.’ Even when, by sin, I deserve to be cast forth, Thou dost pour this oil of mercy and pardon after me and over me, because ‘when Thou art angry Thou wilt remember mercy.’ ” Nevertheless, Satan has obtained an empire over the sons of pride, being made prince of “this darkness,” to the end that even pride itself should subserve the interests of the kingdom of humility. And thus, whilst his one temporal principality of darkness remains to him, such as it is, he is constantly helping to

establish multitudes of the humble on exalted and eternal thrones. Surely a happy dispensation, that the proud oppressor of the humble should be thus unwittingly fashioning everlasting crowns for them, attacking all and conquered by all. For always and everywhere the Lord shall judge His people, “He shall save the children of the poor, and He shall humble the oppressor.” Yes, in all places and at all times, He will defend His own, repel their enemies, “and will not leave the rod of sinners upon the lot of the just, that the just may not stretch forth their hands to iniquity.” And the time will come when He shall at last, and completely, “destroy the bow and break the arms, and the shield He shall burn with fire.” Thou, O most miserable one! hast fixed thy seat in the north, in the region of clouds and cold; and, lo! “the needy” are lifted up “from the dust,” and “the poor from the dung-hill,” “that they may sit with princes and hold the throne of glory,” and that thou mayst grieve the more at beholding the fulfilment of the prophecy, “the poor and the needy shall praise Thy name.”

Thanks to Thee, Father of the fatherless, and Defender of the orphans, “a curdled mountain, a fat mountain” has imparted to us its heat. “The heavens dropped (dew) at the presence of the God of Sinai.” Oil has been poured out. Thy name has been spread abroad—the name which the enemy enviously begrudged to us, as he did us to it. That name, I say, has been spread abroad, extending even to the hearts and lips of little ones. For “out of the mouth of infants and sucklings “it has “perfected praise.” Then, “the sinner shall see and shall be angry.” But as his anger is implacable, so shall the fire be inextinguishable “which is prepared for the devil and his angels.” “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” How Thou lovest me, O my God, my Love! how Thou lovest me! Everywhere Thou art mindful of me! Everywhere Thou are zealous for my salvation, not alone against the pride of men, but even against the pride of exalted angelic spirits! Both in heaven and on earth “Thou, O Lord, dost judge them that wrong me, dost overthrow them that fight against me.” Everywhere Thou art my defence! Everywhere Thou art my support! Everywhere Thou dost appear at my right hand! For these things “in my life I will praise the Lord; I will sing to my God as long as I shall be.” These are His works of power, these are “His wonders which He hath wrought.” That is the first and the greatest of His judgments, which the Virgin Mary, the confidante of His secrets, revealed to me, when she said, “He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble; He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.” “The second” of His judgments “is like unto this,” and you have already heard it, viz., “that they who see not

may see, and that they who see may become blind." In these two judgments let the poor man console himself, and let him sing, "I remembered, O Lord, Thy judgments of old, and I was comforted."

But we must now return to ourselves and examine our ways. And that we may do this sincerely, let us invoke the Spirit of truth. Let us recall Him out of the deep into which He has led us, that He may deign to guide us back again to ourselves, because without Him we can do nothing. Nor ought we to fear lest He should refuse to condescend to us. Rather we shall provoke His indignation by attempting anything whatever without His concurrence. For He is not "a spirit that goeth and returneth not," but He leads us forth and back again "from glory to glory" as being "the Spirit of the Lord," sometimes ravishing us unto His own divine light, sometimes tempering His influence upon us, and only "illuminating our darkness," so that, whether raised above ourselves, or left with ourselves, we may always be in light, always walk as "the sons of light." We have now, at length, come forth from the dim forest of allegories. It remains to seek out the moral meanings of our text. Our faith has been confirmed, let our conduct exhibit a corresponding improvement. Our minds have been instructed, let our morals show the result. "Understanding is good for all that do it," for those, namely, who direct their actions and their thoughts to the glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XVIII

ON THE TWO OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST

"Thy name is as oil poured out."

"Thy name is as oil poured out." What, my brethren, is that fact concerning ourselves, which the Holy Ghost desires to make us certain of by the words of this text? Surely (and it is only since my last discourse it has occurred to me He intends thereby to confirm what we know from experience, namely, that His operation in us is twofold. For He not only fortifies us interiorly with virtues, unto our own salvation, but He also adorns us exteriorly with His gifts, unto the salvation of others. The former are bestowed upon us for our own sakes, the latter with a view to our neighbour's advantage. For instance, we obtain faith, hope, and charity for ourselves, as without them salvation is impossible. On the other hand, the word of wisdom and knowledge, the grace of healing, the gift of prophecy, and the like, which are in no sense necessary to the saving of our own souls, are communicated, doubtless, to be employed in promoting the spiritual interests of others. These operations or graces of the Holy Spirit, experienced in ourselves or in others, I will, if you allow me, call Infusion and Effusion, respectively, deriving the names from the ends for which they are bestowed. But of which is it said, "Thy name is as oil poured out"? Manifestly, of Effusion. For if the reference were to Infusion, it would be more proper to say, "Thy name is as oil poured in," than "Thy name is as oil poured out." Besides, it is because of the good odour of the breasts, exteriorly perfumed, that the Spouse exclaims, "Thy name is as oil poured out," attributing the aroma to the name of her Beloved, as to a sweet perfume on her breasts. In the same way, everyone who knows himself to be favoured with the gift of exterior grace, capable of being communicated to others, every such person, I say, may exclaim in wonder and gratitude, "Thy name is as oil poured out."

Yet, with regard to these graces, both interior and exterior, we must be on our guard against two temptations. These are, on the one hand, to give away what we have received for ourselves, and, on the other, to retain for ourselves what has

been entrusted to us for the benefit of our neighbours. Certainly, you incur the guilt of keeping what belongs to another, if, whilst full of virtues, and adorned exteriorly with the endowments of wisdom and eloquence, through fear or sloth, or influenced by indiscreet humility, you seal under a useless, I should rather say, criminal silence, the “good word,” which might have subserved the progress of many. Of such we read in Proverbs, “He that hideth up corn shall be cursed among the people.” On the contrary, you waste and squander what you should keep for yourselves, when, without waiting for a complete infusion of the Spirit, you are impatient, although not more than half full, to empty yourselves out upon others. Thus you transgress the law which forbids us to plough with the first-born of the cow, or to shear the first-born of the sheep. I mean to say, you deprive yourselves of the life and health which you are communicating to others; because, whilst trying to serve your neighbours without purity of intention, you are but inflating yourselves with the wine of vainglory or inoculating yourselves with the poison of cupidity, or exposing to loss your own lives by fostering the swelling of the deadly aposteme of pride.

Wherefore, my brethren, if you be wise, you will make yourselves to be reservoirs rather than conduits. The difference between a conduit and a reservoir is this, that whereas the former discharges all its waters almost as soon as received, the latter waits until it is full to the brim, and only communicates what is superfluous, what it can give away without loss to itself. Remember that a curse has been pronounced against him who deteriorates the lot which has been transmitted to him. And lest you should despise my counsel, attend to one who is wiser than I. “A fool,” says Solomon, “uttereth all his mind; a wise man deferreth and keepeth it till afterwards.” Yet we have in the Church to-day many conduits and but very few reservoirs. So great is the charity of those through whom the celestial streams of knowledge are communicated to us, that they want to give away before they have received. They are more willing to speak than to listen. They are forward to teach what they have not learned. Although unable to govern themselves, they gladly undertake to rule others. For my part, I think that, with regard to one’s own salvation, no degree of charity is so necessary as that which Solomon proposes to us, where he says, “Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God.” If I have but a very small stock of oil for my own use, do you consider I ought to give that little away, and keep nothing for myself? But I want all I have for my own anointing, nor will I share it with others, except at the bidding of a prophet, like the widow of Sarepta at the word of Elias. And should some of those “who think of me above that which they see in me, or hear

anything of me," persist in demanding a share of my oil, they shall get this answer: "Lest, perhaps, there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." But you may tell me, "Charity seeketh not her own." No, indeed, but do you know why? She "seeketh not her own" because, no doubt, nothing of her own is wanting to her, and so needing to be sought. Who seeks for that which he already possesses? Charity is never without "her own," that is, without what is necessary for her own salvation. Not only has she what is requisite in this respect, but she has it in superabundance. She wishes to abound first unto herself, that she may also abound unto others. She keeps a sufficiency for herself, so that she may be wanting to none. For charity that is not full is not perfect.

But, O my brother, thy salvation has yet to be secured. Thy charity is either non-existent, or so delicate and reed-like that it bends to every blast, gives credit to every spirit, "is carried about with every wind of doctrine." And yet so great is it that, not content with what is of precept, it inclines thee to go beyond and to love thy neighbour even more than thyself; whilst, at the same time, it is so little, that contrary to what is commanded, it dissolves in consolation, faints under fear, loses its peace in sadness, is contracted by greed, distracted by ambition, disquieted by suspicion, disturbed by reproof, tormented with care, inflated with honour, consumed with envy. Then, by what strange madness, I ask, dost thou, perceiving thyself to be such, desire or consent to be the director of others? But hear the counsel given by a cautious and vigilant charity: "Not that others should be eased," writes St. Paul, "and you burthened, but by an equality." "Be not over just." It suffices that thou lovest thy neighbour as thyself, and "by an equality." David prayed, "Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips." That is, he wished to receive before communicating. And not only to receive, but even to be replenished, so that his giving might resemble in its easiness rather the eructation of satiety than the yawning which proceeds from an empty stomach. In this manner he observes caution, lest "others should be eased" and he himself "burthened." He also preserved a right intention in imparting his gifts in imitation of Him "of Whose fulness we have all received." Do thou, likewise, my brother, learn to belch forth of thy fulness, and do not desire to be more generous than God. Let the reservoir imitate its fountain. The fountain sends out no current, and forms no lake until it has first filled itself with its waters. It ought to be no shame to the reservoir that it does not surpass its source in prodigality. Was not the very Well-Spring of life full in Himself and of Himself ere He would, like a brimming fountain, overflow

and pour out His divine treasures first into those secluded heavenly regions that lay nearest, viz., the angelic creation, and there “fill all things with good”? Then, having replenished all the loftier and more secret parts, He streamed down upon the earth, and out of His superabundance, “saved men and beasts, according as He hath multiplied His mercy.” First, He filled the higher and more interior spaces. Afterwards, overleaping the bounds of heaven, “He hath visited the earth in many mercies,” inebriated it with gladness, “and many ways enriched it.” Therefore, “go and do thou in like manner.” Fill thyself in the first place, and then endeavour to fill others. The charity which combines prudence with generosity is wont to flow in before flowing out. “My son,” says Solomon, “do not let slip.” And the Apostle, “Therefore ought we more diligently to observe the things which we have heard, lest perhaps we should let them slip.” What! Art thou holier than St. Paul, or wiser than Solomon? Otherwise, I do not want to be made rich by thy self-spoliation. And if thou art evil to thyself, to whom wilt thou be good? Help me, if thou canst, out of thy abundance. But if thou hast nothing to spare, then spare thy little for thyself.

But hear now, my brethren, what and how much is necessary to one’s own salvation, what and how much ought to be poured into us before we can safely presume to pour anything out. At present, I must compress this part of my instruction within very narrow limits, for the time has slipped and I shall soon have to finish. The Divine Physician has come to the wounded man, the Holy Spirit to the soul. For where is the soul which has not been transpierced with the devil’s sword, even after the remedial virtue of Baptism has healed the wound of original sin? When, therefore, the Holy Spirit approaches the soul which has invoked Him, and which says, “My sores are putrified and corrupted because of my foolishness,” what is the first thing to be done? Surely, to cut away any ulcerous growth which may have appeared in the wound, and which would prevent or retard its healing. Hence, let the keen knife of compunction remove the tumour of sinful habit. The pain shall indeed be very sharp. But let it be soothed with the sweet ointment of devotion, which is nothing else than the joy conceived from the hope of pardon. This hope is itself begotten of the experience of the power to control our passions, and of the victory we have gained over sin. Then the soul gives thanks and cries, “Thou hast broken my bonds; I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise.” Next is applied the medicament of penance, a healing poultice of watchings, fastings, and prayers, and of all other kinds of penitential exercises. But whilst engaged in the labours of penance we must not forget to nourish ourselves with the meat of good works, lest otherwise

we faint. And what this meat is the Divine Master tells us in the words, “My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me.” So, let the works of piety, which are a source of strength, accompany our practices of penance. “Alms,” says Tobias, “shall be a great confidence before the Most High God.” But meat excites thirst, which has to be slaked. Therefore, we must add to the solid food of good works the drink of prayer, which by moistening this meat of virtuous action shall make it more easy to digest for the stomach of the conscience, and render it more pleasing to the Lord. It is in prayer that we drink the “wine which rejoiceth the heart of man,” the wine of the Spirit, which intoxicates the soul with holy love, and banishes from her the memory of sensual delights. This wine irrigates the parched interior of the conscience, facilitates, as already remarked, the digestion of the meat of good works, and distributes the nutriment amongst the members of the soul (if you allow me the expression), confirming faith, fortifying hope, enlivening and regulating charity, and anointing all our actions with the rich unction of grace.

Having thus satisfied her hunger and thirst, what now remains for the sick soul, except to rest and to give herself up to the quiet of contemplation after the painful fatigues of action? But whilst she thus slumbers in the peace of prayer, she sees God, as in a dream. That is to say, she sees Him “through a glass, in a dark manner,” and not yet “face to face.” Nevertheless, although He is not so much perceived as He is in Himself and immediately, as vaguely felt and apprehended, and that but in a passing way, and by the light of a sudden and momentary blaze of glory, so great a flame of love is enkindled in her by this obscure and transient vision that she exclaims, “My soul hath desired Thee in the night, yea, and my spirit within me.” Such a love is full of zeal. Such a love is becoming in the friend of the Bridegroom. Such a love must be possessed by “the faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath appointed over His family.” Such a love fills up the soul’s capacity; it waxes hot and boils over. Then may it securely pour itself out, overflowing and overleaping its bounds and crying aloud, “Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is scandalised and I am not on fire?” Let him that is such preach the word and make it fructify; let him multiply signs and wonders; because there is no room for vanity in the soul where all is charity. For charity is the fulfilling of the heart no less than of the law, if yet it be full in itself. “God is charity,” and there is nothing in the world capable of filling a creature made to God’s image excepting that alone which is greater than the creature, viz., the charity which is God. Until this has been acquired, no man can be appointed to responsible office without the gravest peril to himself, whatever

other virtues he may seem to possess. If one should have all knowledge, if he should distribute all his goods to feed the poor, even should he deliver his body to be burned, still, without charity he is empty. Behold now how much has to be poured into us in order that we may venture to pour out, giving of our plenitude, not of our poverty. Firstly, compunction; secondly, devotion; thirdly, the endurance of penance; fourthly, the exercise of piety; fifthly, the fervour of prayer; sixthly, the quiet of contemplation; seventhly, the fulness of love. “All these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according” to the operation which I have named Infusion. And He does so in order that the other operation, called Effusion, may be exercised purely (and therefore securely) for the praise and glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth for ever. Amen.

SERMON XIX

ON THE DIFFERENT MOTIVES ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH CHRIST THE LORD IS LOVED BY THE VARIOUS CHOIRS OF ANGELS

"Therefore young maidens have loved Thee."

The loving Spouse continues still to speak; still she continues to proclaim the praises of her Beloved. And she appeals for further grace, pointing out that that which she has already received "hath not been void" in her. For listen to her now. "Therefore," she proceeds to say, "young maidens have loved Thee." As if she should affirm, "not in vain, not without fruit has Thy name been poured out, O my Beloved, not in vain has it been poured out and spread abroad on my breast. Therefore young maidens have loved thee exceedingly." Wherefore? On account of Thy name poured out, on account of the breasts perfumed therewith. This it is which excites them to the love of the Bridegroom. This is the cause of their affection for Him. The Spouse receives an infusion of ointment, and immediately the "young maidens," who can never be found far from their mother, inhale the pleasant odour; and, filled with its sweetness, they exclaim, "The charity of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us." Consequently the Spouse, commending their devotion, says, "This, O my Beloved, this is the fruit of the pouring out of Thy name, that therefore young maidens have loved Thee. They experience the sweetness of Thy name only when poured out, not having capacity to contain it entire, and hence have they loved Thee. For the pouring out makes Thy name capable of being contained, and irresistibly amiable; yet only for "young maidens." They who are endowed with a greater capacity do not need this pouring out, inasmuch as they can relish Thy name undissolved and entire. Such are the choirs of angels.

The simple Angel, the lowest celestial creature, contemplates with undazzled eye the profound abyss of the divine judgments. Their sovereign equity ravishes him with delight. It is his glory, besides, that they are executed and promulgated

by his own ministry. And therefore he has reason to love Christ the Lord. “Are they not all ministering spirits,” writes St. Paul, “sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation”? As we must attribute to the Archangels something more excellent than what belongs to the inferior angelic order, I believe that they enjoy the high prerogative of being admitted more familiarly to the counsels of Eternal Wisdom, and that they are commissioned to superintend, with full authority, the execution of the same, each in its proper place and time, which privileges are to them a source of joy ineffable. This is their motive for loving Christ the Lord. Then, there are those blessed spirits named Virtues, so called, perhaps, for the reason that they have been divinely ordained to examine with blissful curiosity and to admire the constant and hidden causes of signs and wonders, and to employ with power all the elements in displaying on earth what prodigies they please and when they please. These, too, discover in their proper function a special reason for loving the “God of Virtues,” and for loving Christ Who is the “Virtue of God.” For they find the fulness of delight and felicity in contemplating the “uncertain and hidden things of Wisdom” in Wisdom Itself. They also find the fulness of honour and glory in the consciousness that the operations and effects of the causes, concealed in the Divine Word, are exhibited by their own agency to the contemplation and admiration of the inhabitants of the earth.

Next in order come the celestial creatures, known under the name of Powers. These take particular delight in viewing and magnifying the divine omnipotence of the Crucified, which “reacheth from end to end mightily.” They are invested with power to beat off and vanquish all opposing powers, whether human or diabolical, in defence of those who have received “the inheritance of salvation.” And have they not herein most ample cause for loving the Lord Jesus? Immediately above the Powers are the Principalities, who, contemplating the Word from a loftier level, recognise clearly that He is the First Principle of all being, and the “First Begotten of every creature,” and they are endowed with such dignity and principality, that from the apex, so to speak, of the world where they sit enthroned, they exercise authority throughout the universe, with power to change and regulate kingdoms, principalities, and dignities of every kind, at their sole will and pleasure. They are also empowered to make the first last and the last first, according to the merits of each, to put down the mighty from their seat, and to exalt the humble. And this is the motive of their love for Christ. The Dominations also love the Lord Jesus. Why? Because a praiseworthy kind of presumption leads them to the discovery of certain inconceivably subtle and

sublime truths relating to His interminable and irresistible dominion. They marvel to see Him everywhere throughout the universe, not only by His power, but also by His presence, and compelling everything, high and low, the revolution of the seasons, the motions of bodies, the thoughts and emotions of created minds, in the most beautiful order, to submit to the ruling of His most holy Will. And all this He does with so much vigilance that no creature in the whole universe can subtract the least jot or tittle, as the saying is, from its bounden service; and yet, with such ease, that His universal government never causes Him the slightest disquiet or agitation. When, therefore, they, the Dominations, behold the Lord of Sabbath judging all things with such tranquillity, they are transported out of themselves by an extraordinary but fully conscious stupor of contemplation, infinitely intense and unspeakably blissful, into the limitless ocean of Light Divine. There they seem to withdraw to a most secret recess of imperturbable peace, where they enjoy such calm and quiet, that, whilst they are in repose, all the other celestial creatures appear to unite in their service and in defence of their leisure, out of reverence for their prerogative, and as for true holders of dominion.

God Himself sits upon the Thrones. In my opinion, this choir has greater reason and more numerous motives for loving Christ the Lord than any of those already mentioned. If you enter the palace of an earthly king, amongst the various seats to be seen there, accommodated to various dignities, you will notice the royal throne occupying the place of preeminence. You do not need to inquire where the monarch is accustomed to sit, for his will be the first seat that attracts your attention, being more elevated and ornate than any of the others. Understand from this that the choir of Thrones surpass all the rest in every kind of spiritual adornment, because it is on them that, by a special favour of amazing condescension, the Divine Majesty has elected to sit. But this sitting may be taken to signify the office of teacher. In that case, I should suppose that Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, Who is our only Master in heaven and on earth, although reaching everywhere by reason of His purity, yet specially and principally illuminates by His presence this hierarchical order, and thence, as from a solemn lecture-hall, He “teacheth men knowledge,” and not only men, but the inferior choirs of angels also. For it is thence He communicates to the lowest angelic choir the knowledge of His judgments, and to the Archangels the understanding of His counsels. It is there the Virtues learn what wonders they are to work, at what time, and in what place. There, in a word, all the other choirs referred to, Powers, Principalities, and Dominations, are told their duties

and what honours and privileges they may claim, as belonging to their rank, but above all, they are cautioned, every one of them, that the powers, which have been entrusted to them for advancing the glory of God, must not be employed for the satisfaction of their own wills, or the procuring of their own glory.

But those heavenly spirits called the Cherubim, if they really enjoy the privileges indicated by their name, cannot, as I think receive anything either from or through the inferior choir of Thrones. For to them it is given to drink their fill at the very fountain. The Lord Jesus Himself vouchsafes to introduce them directly into the plenitude of truth, and communicates to them most generously the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” concealed in Himself. Neither do the Thrones impart any illumination to the Seraphim. These are so completely drawn into and absorbed in the furnace of God’s love, so inflamed with the fire of divine charity, that they seem to be but one spirit with God; just as ignited gas (aer) receives from the flames which kindle it not only their intense heat, but even their colour, and appears to be not so much on fire, as to be fire itself. Therefore, of the two last-mentioned choirs, the former find their chief delight in admiration of the knowledge of God, “of which there is no number,” the latter in contemplating His charity which “never falleth away.” Hence, they derive their respective names from that particular grace which seems to be in each order the characteristic and distinguishing endowment. For Cherub signifies “fulness of knowledge,” whereas Seraph means “enkindling” or “inflamed.” Therefore, the Angels love God on account of the perfect equity of His judgments; the Archangels, on account of the supreme wisdom of His counsels; the Virtues, by reason of His infinite graciousness, which is exhibited in the display of wonders, calculated to bring unbelievers to the faith; the Powers, because of that exercise of His divinely-just omnipotence, whereby He defends and protects the good from the cruelty of the malignant; the Principalities, on account of that eternal and primeval efficacy by which He communicates being and the principle of being to every creature, superior or inferior, spiritual or corporeal, “reaching from end to end mightily”; the Dominations, because of the imperturbable tranquillity of His will, wherewith He rules the universe in the might of His arm, and the more mightily in proportion to that native gentleness and unruffled calm by which He “disposeth all things sweetly”; the Thrones, for the benevolence of His illuminating wisdom, extending itself to all without envy, and for the unction of His grace which “teacheth of all things”; the Cherubim, because “The Lord is a God of all knowledge,” Who, knowing what is necessary for the salvation of each,

distributes His gifts as He judges expedient, and with prudence and providence, amongst those who rightly pray for them; finally, the Seraphim love Him, because He is charity and “hateth none of the things that He hath made,” willing “all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth.”

Thus all the angelic choirs love according to their several capacities. But the “young maidens,” with less understanding, have also less capacity, and are altogether unable to attain to things so high, for they are but “little ones in Christ,” requiring to be fed with milk and oil. Hence it is on the breasts of the Spouse that they must find the motives of their love. The Spouse possesses the oil poured out, the perfume of which arouses in the hearts of the “young maidens” a desire to “taste and see how sweet the Lord is.” And seeing them inflamed with love, she turns to her Beloved, and says, “Thy name is as oil poured out, therefore, young maidens have loved Thee exceedingly What is it, my brethren, to love exceedingly? It is to love greatly, passionately, ardently. On perhaps in the spiritual sense of the words, the Holy Ghost conveys an indirect reproof to some amongst you who are beginners in the religious life, censuring that indiscreet zeal, or rather that “exceedingly” obstinate imprudence of theirs, which I have so often in vain endeavoured to repress. To such I say, you are unwilling to be content with the common life. You are not satisfied with the regular fasts, with the solemn vigils, with the ordinary observance of discipline, with the clothes and food I provide for you. You prefer what is private to what is common. Why do you thus resume charge of yourselves after having once and for all committed that responsibility to me? For, lo! you have again taken as your superior, in place of me, that self-will, which, as your consciences bear witness, has betrayed you into so many offences against God. By it you are taught not to spare nature, not to listen to reason, not to follow the counsel or the example of the seniors, not to submit to my authority. Are you not aware that “obedience is better than sacrifice”? Have you not read in your Rule that whatever is done without the sanction and consent of the spiritual father shall be attributed to vainglory and shall merit no reward? Have you not read in the Gospel the example of obedience set by the Boy Jesus for the imitation of all other youths who aspire after holiness? For when He had remained behind in Jerusalem, and declared that it was necessary for Him to be about His Father’s business, yet, as His parents would not consent to His staying longer, He did not disdain to follow them to Nazareth, the Master obeying His disciples, God obeying man, the Word, the Wisdom of the Father obeying a poor artisan and his consort! Nor is this all. The inspired narrative goes on to say, “And He was subject to them.”

How long will you be wise in your own conceits? God commits and subjects Himself to mortals, and will you still walk in your own ways? You did indeed receive a good spirit, but you have made an ill use of the gift. I am now afraid lest that good spirit should depart from you and one that is wicked succeed, who will strive to deceive you with the outward appearance of virtue, so that having begun in the Spirit you may end in the flesh. Do you not know that the angel of darkness frequently “transformeth himself into an angel of light”? God is Wisdom and wills us to love Him, not alone sweetly, but wisely as well. Hence the Apostle speaks of “your reasonable service.” Believe me, if you neglect the knowledge of truth, the spirit of error will have no trouble in misdirecting your zeal. For that cunning enemy can find no more efficacious means of expelling the love of God from your hearts than by causing you to walk in it without caution or reason. Wherefore, I am thinking of proposing to you certain canons of conduct which those who love God may find it worth their while to put in practice. But as to-day’s sermon has reached its limits, on the morrow, if God continues to give me life and leisure for preaching, I will attempt to set them forth for your consideration. Then, when our bodies are refreshed by the repose of the night, and (what is more important) our minds duly reinvigorated by the tonic of prayer, we shall come again together for the discourse on divine love, through the favour of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom everlasting honour and glory. Amen.

SERMON XX

ON THE VARIOUS DEGREES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

"Therefore young maidens have loved Thee exceedingly."

I will begin, my brethren, with the words of our master, St. Paul: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." Surely, He is most deserving of my love, from Whom I have existence, life, and understanding. If I be ungrateful for these benefits, I thereby prove myself unworthy of them. Evidently, he is unworthy to live at all, whoever, O Lord Jesus, refuses to live for Thee. Yea, he is already dead! And whoso has no understanding of Thee, is only a fool. And he that desires to exist save only for Thee, is to be esteemed as nothing, for nothing he is indeed. But "what is man" apart from the fact "that Thou art made known to him"? Thou, O God, hast made all things for Thyself. Hence he must be nothing, as outside this universality of being, who wants to exist for himself and not for Thee. "Fear God and keep His commandments," says Solomon, "for this is all man." But if this is all man, it clearly follows that, without it, all man is nothing. Bend to Thyself, O my God, the insignificant little thing which Thou hast condescended to will I should be. Accept, I beseech Thee, the years that remain of my miserable life; and for those which I have squandered away by evil living, "a contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." "My days have declined like a shadow," and have passed without fruit. But as it is impossible now to recall them, let it content Thee, in Thy gracious mercy, that I recount them to Thee "in the bitterness of my soul." Then, as regards understanding, "before Thee is all my desire," and the intention of my heart. Thou seest that if I possessed any wisdom I would consecrate it to Thee. But, O God, "Thou knowest my foolishness." Still, perhaps it is some wisdom even to acknowledge my foolishness, as I do in truth by Thy grace. Multiply, O Lord, that grace in me, since I am not ungrateful for the little I already possess, but only anxious for that which is still wanting to me. Therefore, in return for the

benefits of existence, life, and understanding, I offer Thee all the love I am capable of.

But there is another incentive to love which has still greater power to move, and to arouse, and to inflame me. What makes Thee, O good Jesus, amiable to me above all things is the chalice Thou didst drain for us, the work of our Redemption. This easily attracts to Thee all the love of our hearts. This it is, I say, which most sweetly allures our affectionate devotion, most justly exacts it, most forcibly constrains it, and most powerfully binds it to Thine own Divine Self. For therein the Saviour had to undergo immense labour. As Creator, the making of the whole universe did not cost Him the slightest effort. Of that mighty work we read "He spoke and they were made; He commanded and they were created." But in order to redeem us, it was necessary for Him to endure contradiction to His words, criticism of His actions, mockery in His sufferings, reproaches at His death. Behold, my brethren, how He loved us! Remember, too, that in this He was not making any return, but only a further advance of love. For "who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made to him?" Rather as St. John Evangelist says, "Not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us." Finally, He loved us even before we existed, and, what is more, loved us when we resisted His love. Such is the testimony of St. Paul, where he says, "when we were as yet enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." For otherwise, unless He loved us when we were His enemies, He never could have loved us as His friends; just as we should not have existed at all to be the objects of His love had His love not embraced us when as yet we were non-existent.

His love for us is sweetly tender, and wise, and strong. It showed itself tender, I say, in that it induced Him to assume our flesh. Its wisdom appeared in His refusing to resemble us in sin. It manifested its strength by leading Him to die for us. Although visiting us in the flesh, He did not love us according to the flesh, but in the prudence of the Spirit. For "Christ the Lord is a Spirit before our face," jealous of us "with the jealousy of God," not, mind you, with the jealousy of man, but "with the jealousy of God," a jealousy, therefore, wiser than that which the first Adam entertained with regard to the first Eve. Consequently, those whom He sought in the flesh, He loved in the Spirit, and redeemed in His power. It is assuredly a privilege full of divine sweetness, of inexpressible delight, that man should be permitted to see his Maker in the flesh. But whilst, with divine prudence, He chose for Himself a nature immune from guilt; He also with power equally divine, expelled death from that nature. In assuming flesh He

condescended to my infirmity; in avoiding sin He looked to the interests of His own glory; in submitting to death, He made satisfaction to His Father's justice, thus exhibiting Himself as a sweet Friend, a prudent Counsellor, a powerful Helper. Securely may I entrust myself to Him, Who has the good will to save me, and the knowledge of the means to be employed, and the power to put them into execution. After seeking me out, after calling me to Him, think you He will cast me forth now when I am answering His summons? Neither do I fear that any force or fraud whatever shall be able to snatch me out of His hand, for He is the Conqueror of death which had conquered all beside, and, by a holier craft than Satan used, the Circumventor of that old serpent who circumvented the whole world, surpassing the former in power and the latter in wisdom. He took on Him indeed the reality of our flesh, but only the similitude of our sin, thus, at the same time, sweetly bringing consolation to the weak, and prudently laying the snare of deception for the demon.

Moreover, in order to reconcile us to the Father, He underwent and vanquished death by the might of His fortitude, shedding His Blood as the price of our Redemption. Hence, to sum up, had He not loved me with tender affection, that Divine Majesty would never have sought me in my prison. But to tenderness of love He united wisdom, whereby He deceived the serpent, and to both He added patience, by which He appeased the anger of His offended Father. Such, my brethren, are the characteristics of divine love, which I am under promise to explain, viz., to love with tenderness, with prudence, and with strength. And the better to commend them to your observance, I have begun by drawing your attention to them as they are exhibited in the charity of Christ.

O Christians, learn from Christ how you ought to love Christ. Learn to love Him with a love that is tender, and prudent, and strong. Unless your love of the Lord is tender, you may renounce it under the seductive influence of counter-attractions; unless prudent, you may be misled, and lose it through fraud; unless strong, it will yield to violence. If you wish to avoid being seduced and alienated from Christ, by the glory of this world and the delights of the flesh, you must find in Him Who is the Wisdom of the Father, a relish more alluringly sweet than either of these. If you would not be led astray by the spirit of deceit and error, Christ, Who is truth, must enlighten your minds. And lest you sink and faint under adversity, the same Christ, Who is the Power of God, must strengthen and support you. Let your zeal borrow fervour from charity, light from knowledge, strength from constancy. Let it be ardent, let it be prudent, let it be unconquerable. Let it be equally free from sloth, from temerity, and from

timidity. And consider now, if these qualities of love, namely, tenderness, prudence and constancy, be not prescribed in the Law, where God gives the command, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength.” It appears to me (although perhaps some of you can discover a more reasonable explanation of this threefold distinction) that love of the heart refers to ardour or tenderness in our affection, and love of the soul to the activity or judgment of our reason; whilst love of our strength may possibly relate to constancy or vigour of mind. Therefore, love the Lord with the full and entire affection of your hearts, that is to say, tenderly; love Him with all the vigilance and circumspection of your understanding, and so prudently; love Him with your whole strength, so that you may be ready even to give your lives for His love. Thus we read in a subsequent verse of this Canticle, “for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell.” My brethren, let the Lord Jesus be sweet and agreeable to your affections, in order that He may serve you as a countercharm against the dangerously attractive delights of the flesh. Let sweetness be overcome by sweetness, as one nail drives out another. But Jesus must also be the guiding Light of your intellects and the Director of your minds, not only that you may avoid the contemptible frauds of heretical deception, and preserve the purity of your faith from its cunning impostures, but also to enable you to walk with caution, guarding yourselves against indiscreet and excessive zeal in your conversation. And your love of Him ought, moreover, to possess strength and constancy, neither yielding to fears nor fainting under labours. Let us, therefore, love Jesus tenderly, wisely, and strongly, as knowing that the love of the heart, which I describe as tender, is sweet indeed, but liable to seduction if unaccompanied by what I call the love of the soul; just as this, without the love of strength, is prudent certainly, but lacking in vigour.

I will prove to you by evident examples the truth of what I have been saying. When the disciples were grieving at the thought of losing their Master, Who had been speaking to them of His Ascension, He said, “If you love Me you would rejoice because I go to the Father.” What! Is it meant that they had no love for Him Whose departure they so bemoaned? No, my brethren, but they loved Him in one way, and in another they did not love Him. I mean, they loved Him tenderly, but not prudently. They loved Him according to the flesh, not according to reason. They loved Him with their whole hearts, yet not with their whole souls. Such love was an obstacle to their perfection. Hence He told them, “It is expedient for you that I go,” whereby He censured, not the tenderness, but the imprudence of their affection. On another occasion, when He was speaking

of His approaching death, and Peter, out of love, attempted to hold Him back and was making opposition to His purpose, in the reproof, wherewith, as you remember, He checked the Apostle, what else did He condemn but his imprudence? For what means the expression, “Thou savourest not the things that are of God,” except this, “thou lovest not wisely, following human affection to the disregard of the divine counsel”? And He called Peter Satan, because like an adversary, albeit unwittingly, he was placing obstacles in the way of his own and our salvation, by trying to hinder the Saviour’s death. Hence, after this correction, when Christ was again making allusion to the same sad subject of His Passion, the disciple no longer raised any objection, but rather promised to die with Him. But the promise was not fulfilled, because he had not yet attained to that third degree of charity in which we love with our whole strength. He had been taught to love with his whole soul, but his love was still weak. He had received light enough to know his duty but not, as yet, enough spiritual strength to act up to his knowledge. He was not so much in ignorance of the mystery of Redemption as in terror of the pains of martyrdom. Manifestly, that love was not “strong as death,” which yielded to the fear of death. But it became so afterwards, when Peter, fortified with virtue from above, according to the promise of Jesus Christ, began to love with so much strength, that, when forbidden by the Jewish Council to preach the holy name, he boldly replied, “we ought to obey God rather than men.” Then in truth he loved with all his strength, when he was willing to sacrifice even his life for his love, since “greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” For although he did not then actually lay down his life, he at least exposed it to imminent danger. Therefore, to love with one’s whole heart, with one’s whole soul, and with all one’s strength, is to love with a love that can neither be seduced by pleasure, nor deceived by error, nor overpowered by the violence of any persecution.

And take notice that the love of the heart is, in some sense, carnal, because it tends to turn the hearts of men towards the Flesh of Christ, and towards His example and precepts, given in the flesh. One that is filled with this love is easily affected by every discourse on such subjects. There is nothing he more willingly hears, more attentively reads, more frequently calls to mind, more affectionately ponders. With this love, as with the fat of the “fatted calf,” he enriches his holocausts of prayer. He has before his mind, as he prays, the sacred image of the God-Man, in the manger, or on His mother’s breast, or teaching, or dying, or, rising from the tomb, or ascending into heaven. Every such representation must

necessarily urge his soul to the love of virtue, or help to repress the carnal passions, put temptations to flight, and extinguish evil desires. To my thinking, this appears to have been one of the main reasons why the invisible God willed to appear in visible flesh, and as Man to converse amongst men, that, namely. He might draw all the affections of carnal men, who knew how to love only in a carnal manner, first to a salutary love of His own Flesh, and thence lead them gradually to a more spiritual love of His Divinity. Was not the former the degree of charity in which they still stood, who said, “Behold we have left all things and followed Thee”? Surely we must admit that it was the love of Christ’s sensible presence alone that had led them to leave all things, since they could not listen patiently to a single word about His saving Passion and death before the events, nor afterwards witness even the glory of His Ascension without oppressive sorrow. This is what He Himself meant when He said, “Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart.” Thus, it was as yet only by the power and the grace of His own presence in the flesh that He had withdrawn them from all other love according to the flesh.

Afterwards, however, He pointed out to them a more excellent degree of charity in the words: “It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.” That degree, as I think, had already been reached by St. Paul, when he wrote, “And if we have known Christ according to the flesh; but now we know Him so no longer.” Perhaps the Prophet Jeremias also stood in the same degree, who said, “A Spirit before our face is Christ the Lord.” For the words added, “under Thy shadow we shall live amongst the Gentiles,” he seems to me to have spoken in the person of beginners, signifying that they who did not yet feel strong enough to bear the heat of the sun, should at least find rest in the shadow. In other words, that they should nourish themselves with the sweetness of the Flesh who are not able as yet to perceive “the things that are of the Spirit of God.” The shadow of Christ, I take it, is that Flesh of His which overshadowed even His mother, and by its opacity, as by a veil interposed, tempered for her the burning heat and dazzling splendour of the Spirit. Therefore, in this love of the Flesh let him find, meantime, his consolation who has not yet received the vivifying Spirit, at least in that way in which He was possessed by those who said, “A Spirit before our face is Christ the Lord,” and “if we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we know Him so no longer.” For it is quite certain that only in the Holy Ghost can Christ be loved at all, even according to the flesh, and even with a love less full than the love of the whole heart. Nevertheless, the whole capacity of our hearts ought to be the only measure of

this carnal love, whose sweetness should fill them to overflowing, and so wean them away from the love of all other flesh and of the delights of the flesh. For it is thus only that we love with our whole hearts. Otherwise, by preferring any connexions or gratifications of my own flesh to the Flesh of my Lord, and thus failing in the perfect observance of those things which He, whilst still in the flesh, taught me by word and example, I make it clearly manifest that I do not love Him with my whole heart. For my heart being divided, I appear to be giving one part of it to the love of His Flesh, and appropriating the other to the love of my own. Yet He has said, “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” In short, therefore, to love Him with our whole hearts is to prefer to all carnal satisfactions, whatever and whencesoever they may be, the love of His most holy Flesh. And with carnal gratifications I include also worldly glory, both because the glory of the world is the glory of the flesh, and because those who take delight in such glory are, without any doubt, carnally minded.

This devotion to Christ’s sacred Flesh is, consequently, a gift, and a great gift, of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, I have called it carnal in comparison with that love which has for object not so much the Flesh of the Word as the Word under the aspect of Wisdom, of Justice, of Truth, of Sanctity, of Piety, of Power, and of the various other Divine Attributes. For Christ rather is than has all these Perfections, “Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Justice, and Sanctification, and Redemption.” Now, do you think, my brethren, that these two persons are equally and similarly affected towards Him—he who lovingly compassionates the sufferings of Christ, who is easily moved to compunction and other such emotions at the thought of all He endured for us, who feeds his soul with the sweetness of this devotion, and thence derives energy for every salutary, good, and pious exercise; and he who is always inflamed with the zeal for justice, who is everywhere jealous of the interests of truth, who is eager in the pursuit of wisdom, loves sanctity of life and probity of morals, who proclaims by his conduct his dislike of boasting, his horror of detraction, his ignorance of envy, his detestation of pride, his, not only aversion, but even scorn and contempt for vainglory, his utter hatred and intolerance of all manner of uncleanness in himself, and, in a word, his almost natural and instinctive abhorrence of all that is evil and delight in all that is good? Comparing together these kinds of love, does it not appear evident to you that, in relation to the latter, the former is at least in some sense carnal?

A good thing, however, is this carnal love of Christ, enabling us, as it does, to

live, not a carnal, but a spiritual life, and to conquer and contemn the world. As it progresses it will become rational, and will have reached its perfection when it changes to spiritual. Love is then rational when, as regards all points of Christian doctrine, it clings with such tenacity to the orthodox faith, that by no counterfeits of truth, by no heretical or rather diabolical circumvention can it be seduced in the least from the purity of Catholic teaching; and when, in private life, it is so observant of caution as never to transgress the limits of moderation by any extravagance, levity, or the impetuosity of an excessively ardent spirit. This is, as I have already said, loving God with one's whole soul. Should there be added to our love such vigour from the supporting Spirit that no difficulties, no torments, no terrors of death shall avail to turn us aside from the paths of justice, then we shall love with all our "strength," and our love will be spiritual. For the epithet spiritual belongs especially to this love, on account of the fulness of the Spirit which is its prerogative and its distinguishing excellence.

So much must suffice on the words of the Spouse, "Therefore, young maidens have loved Thee exceedingly." With regard to what follows, may the treasures of divine mercy be graciously opened to us, by Him Who is their Custodian, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God for endless ages. Amen.

SERMON XXI

IN WHAT MANNER THE SPOUSE, THAT IS THE CHURCH, DESIRES TO BE DRAWN TO HER BELOVED

"Draw me; we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments."

"Draw me; we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments." What? Has the Spouse need to be drawn?—need to be drawn after her Beloved? As if, forsooth, she followed Him reluctantly, and not rather most eagerly! But not everyone that is drawn, is drawn unwillingly. The weak and the ailing, unable of themselves to go to the bath or the banquet, are not displeased at being drawn thither; although, on the other hand, it is doubtless against their will that malefactors are drawn to judgment and punishment. Further, it is evident the Spouse desires to be drawn, since she prays for this. But she would not make such a petition, if, of herself, she were able to follow her Beloved as she wished. But why has she not this power? Are we to say that even the Spouse is infirm? Had one of the "young maidens" confessed herself weak and begged to be drawn, we should not have felt any surprise. But who does not find it hard to believe that the Spouse herself, as if sick and feeble, has really need of being drawn, whereas she seemed to be strong and perfect enough to be able to draw others? What certainty can we have now of the health and strength of any soul, if we admit infirmity even in her, who, by reason of her singular perfection and more excellent virtue, is honoured with the name of Spouse of Christ? But, perhaps, the Church spoke thus when she beheld her Beloved ascending into heaven, expressing in those words her ardent desire to follow and to be assumed with Him to glory? And yet every soul, without exception, to whatever perfection she may have attained, so long as she groans in the "body of this death," and is kept confined in the prison of this wicked world, burthened with infirmities, tortured with the memory of her sins—every soul, I say, has to submit to the necessity of mounting to the contemplation of things divine by

ascents too slow and gradual for the eagerness of her desires. For she does not as yet enjoy the liberty of following the Bridegroom “whithersoever He goeth.” Hence that tearful cry of lamentation, “Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?” Hence, too, that suppliant prayer, “Bring my soul out of prison.” Therefore, let the Spouse also say with tears, “Draw me after Thee,” because “the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things.” Or, it may be, these are the words in which the Church gives expression to her desire “to be dissolved and to be with Christ.” Especially, as she observes, that they, for whose sake it seemed necessary that she should still abide in the flesh, are now progressing favourably in the love of the Bridegroom, and are firmly rooted and grounded in charity. It was to call attention to this, that she premised the words, “Therefore, young maidens have loved Thee.” In this sense, then, she seems to say, “Behold the young maidens have loved Thee, and in love are securely united to Thee, and hence, have no longer any need of me. And as there is now no reason for prolonging my sojourn on earth, draw me after Thee.”

This latter I should take to be her meaning, had her prayer been, “Draw me to Thee.” But because she says “after Thee,” I am more inclined to think her request is that she may be given the strength to follow the footprints of His, the Bridegroom’s, example, and the grace which would enable her to be emulous of His virtues, to direct herself by the rule of His life, and to conform her own to His divine character and disposition. For in this she is especially in want of assistance, in order that she may be able to deny herself, and to take up her cross and so follow Christ. Herein the Spouse has certainly need to be drawn, and to be drawn by none else than by Him Who said, “Without Me you can do nothing.” “I know,” she seems to avow, “I know that I can by no means attain to Thee, except by walking in Thy footsteps. But even this I am unable to do without Thy help. Therefore, I beg that Thou wouldst draw me after Thee. For ‘blessed is the man whose help is from Thee; in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps in the vale of tears,’ and is destined, sooner or later, to come to Thee on the mountains of unending bliss.” How few are they, O Lord Jesus, who desire to follow Thee! And yet there is none without the wish to attain to Thy presence, since everyone knows that “at Thy Right Hand are delights, even unto the end.” Hence it is that all yearn to enjoy Thee, though not all are willing to imitate Thy example. All long for a share in Thy kingdom, but all are not desirous to participate in Thy cross. Such, for instance, was Balaam, who prayed, “Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them.”

He wished to resemble the just in their end, but not in their beginnings. So, too, carnal men, who abhor the spiritual life, still would like to die like spiritual persons, knowing how “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” For “when He shall give sleep to His beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord!” And again, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” On the other hand, according to the Psalmist, “The death of the wicked is very evil.” They are at no pains to seek Him Whom they would be glad enough to find. They would wish to overtake without the labour of pursuing. Not so those to whom the Lord said, “And you are they who have continued with Me in My temptations.” O sweetest Jesus, happy are they who are accounted worthy of such testimony from Thy divine Lips! They in truth followed after Thee, both with their feet and with their affections. Thou didst make known to them the ways of life, calling them after Thee Who art the Way and the Life. And Thou didst say, “Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men.” Also, “If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there also shall My minister be.” Therefore they could say, as it were, glorying, “Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee.”

In the same way, then, Thy beloved Spouse, having left all things for Thee, desires to be ever led by Thee, to be ever walking in Thy footsteps, and to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. For she knows well that “Thy ways are beautiful ways, and all Thy paths peaceful,” and that whoso follows Thee “walketh not in darkness.” But she asks to be drawn, because “Thy justice is like the mountains of God,” for climbing which her own strength is not sufficient. She prays to be drawn, as being aware that “no one cometh” to Thee unless Thy “Father shall d raw him.” But whomsoever Thy Father draweth, these Thou Thyself dost also draw; “For the works which the Father doth, these the Son also doth in like manner.” And she more boldly begs to be drawn by the Son, as by her own Bridegroom, sent by the Father to meet her on the road, as a Guide and Director, Who should walk before her in the way of moral discipline, should smooth for her the path of virtue, “instruct her as Himself,” and give her “a law of life and instruction,” and all to the end that “the King might desire her beauty.”

“Draw me after Thee; we will run to the odour of Thy ointments.” Therefore do I require to be drawn, because the fire of Thy love has grown cold within us, and “before the face of cold” like this we cannot run now, as we did yesterday and the day before. But we shall run again hereafter, when Thou shalt restore to us “the joy of Thy salvation”; when the happy season of grace shall return, when

the Sun of Justice shall again grow warm and drive away the clouds of temptation which, for the time being, seem to overcast and to hide from us His Face; when at every gentlest stirring of the more balmy summer air the ointments shall begin to liquify, and the aromatic spices to flow and to give out their fragrant odour. Then shall we run, we shall run to that odour. We shall run, I say, to the perfume of the ointments, because our present torpor shall have vanished, giving place to devotion, so that we shall no longer require to be drawn; for under the attraction of the odour, we shall run forward of ourselves. But meantime "draw me after Thee; we will run to the odour of Thy ointments." Do you not see, my brethren, that he who walks in the Spirit cannot possibly remain always in the same state, nor always advance with the same facility, and that the way of man is not in his own power, but according as the Spirit, Who remains Master of His graces, is pleased to dispense them with varying degrees of generosity, the soul, at one time more sluggishly, at another with greater alacrity, "forgetting the things that are behind stretcheth (herself) forth to those that are before"? I believe that what you now hear me speaking of exteriorly, you may learn interiorly from the testimony of your conscience.

Therefore, when you perceive yourselves to be affected with languor, sloth, or disgust, do not on that account lose confidence or desist from your application to spiritual things. Rather seek for the supporting hand of the Spirit (after the example of the Spouse) begging Him to draw you, until, aroused by grace from the state of torpor, and rendered more alert and active, you will commence to run again, and to say, "I have run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart." Yet, when grace is present, enjoy it in such a way as not to fancy you possess it by hereditary right. I mean to say, do not be so secure of it as if it could never be taken from you. Otherwise, when God withdraws His hand and deprives you of His gift, you will suddenly lose heart and become unduly depressed and discouraged. Do not say in thy "abundance, I shall never be moved," lest you be compelled with tears to say also what follows, "Thou didst turn away Thy Face and I became troubled." Rather be careful, according to the advice of the Wise Man, "In the day of good things to be not unmindful of evils, and in the day of evils, to be not unmindful of good things."

Be not, consequently, too secure in the day of thy strength, but, with the Prophet, cry out to God, "When my strength shall fail me, do not forsake me." And similarly take comfort in the time of temptation, saying with the Spouse, "Draw me after Thee; we will run to the odour of Thy ointments." Thus you shall not lose hope in the evil day, nor foresight in the good. Amidst the

prosperities and adversities of this changeful existence, you will exhibit in yourselves an image, so to speak, of the changeless eternity, by this unalterable and imperturbable equanimity of a constant soul, “blessing the Lord at all times,” and despite the uncertain events and the certain failures of this mutable life, gradually bringing yourselves to a condition of what I may call fixed and stable immutability; whilst you are, at the same time, beginning to renew and restore in yourselves that primordial and glorious likeness to the Eternal God, “in Whom there is no change, nor shadow of vicissitude.” For as He is in His eternity so will you be even in this world, invincibly equable, neither cast down in adversity nor elated in prosperity. Herein, I say, the noble rational creature, made to the image and likeness of his Creator, shows that he is retrieving and recovering the dignity of his ancient honour, in that he judges it unworthy of him to be conformed to the fashions of this fleeting world, and rather strives, according to the injunction of St. Paul, to be reformed in the newness of his mind, unto that image, in which, as he knows, he was created. And thus, as is proper, he will force the world, which was made for his sake, by a marvellous reversal of relations, to accommodate itself to him. For having put off the form of corruption and reassumed that which is proper and natural to him, “all things shall now begin to co-operate unto good for him” in whom they shall recognise, as it were, their lord for whose service and enjoyment they were created.

Hence, I believe that what the Only-Begotten said of Himself, viz., that if He were “lifted up from the earth,” He would “draw all things” to Himself, can be applied equally well to all His brethren, to those, namely, whom the Father “foreknew and predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son that He might be the First-Begotten amongst many brethren.” Therefore, even I shall make bold to say, that “I, if I be lifted from the earth, will draw all things to myself.” Do not suppose, my brethren, that I act rashly in appropriating to myself the words of One Whose likeness I have put on. And since this is so, let not the rich of this world imagine that the brethren of Christ possess only the goods of heaven, because they hear the Master saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Let it not be thought, I repeat, that heavenly treasures alone are held by these poor, because only such are mentioned in the promise. Earthly things, too, are possessed by them, who, “as having nothing, possess all things.” They do not beg for such, as the involuntarily poor, but they own them as lords, and the more truly lords of them the less they desire them. In fact, the whole world, is the treasure of the faithful soul. The whole world I say, because both its goods and its evils are equally her

servants and co-operate for her unto good.

The avaricious man, like the beggar, hungers for the riches of earth; but the spiritual man, as their lord, despises them. The former has to beg for them whilst possessing them; the latter by despising them, preserves them. Ask one of those who, “with insatiable heart,” yearn after temporal lucre, what he thinks of such as sell what they have, and give to the poor, bartering earthly possessions for the kingdom of heaven. Ask him whether or not they do wisely. “Wisely, indeed,” he will doubtless answer. But ask why he does not himself do that which he approves: “I cannot,” will be his answer. Why? Because his mistress, avarice, will not suffer him. Because he is not free. Because those things which he appears to possess are not really his own. Because he is not even his own master. Then say to him: If it be thine own, put thy money out at interest, and transform earthly into heavenly treasures. If thou canst not do this, then acknowledge that thou art less the master than the slave of thy riches, less the owner than the custodian. Thou art even conformed to thy purse as a slave to his mistress; because, just as the slave must rejoice or grieve with his rejoicing or grieving mistress, so dost thou in thy soul swell with elation or shrink under depression, in harmony with the varying bulk of thy money-bags. For thou dost contract with grief according as these contract with expenditure; and art filled with joy or, at any rate, inflated with pride, in proportion as they are replenished with profits. Such is the life of him who makes himself a slave to avarice. But let us, for our part, endeavour rather to emulate the freedom and constancy of the Spouse, who, instructed in all things, “and learned in heart in wisdom,” knows how to abound and how to suffer want. When she asks to be drawn, she shows that what is wanting to her is not money but virtue. Again, in consoling herself with the hope of a return of grace, she proves that, though fainting, she has not lost confidence.

She says, therefore, “Draw me after Thee; we will run to the odour of Thy ointments.” And what wonder that she requires to be drawn, whilst she runs after a Giant, whilst she is trying to overtake Him Who “leaps in the mountains, Who leaps over the hills”? “His Word,” says the Psalmist, “runneth swiftly.” She is not able to keep up with Him; she cannot keep pace with One Who “exulteth as a giant to run His course.” That is to say, she cannot do this of her own strength, and hence she request? to be drawn. “I am tired, she seems to say, “I am fainting from fatigue. Do not abandon me, but draw me after Thee, lest I begin to ‘wander after other lovers’ and ‘run as at an uncertainty.’ Draw me after Thee, since it is better for me that Thou shouldst draw me, even forcibly, either by terrifying me with threats or chastising me with scourges, than, by sparing me,

permit me to enjoy a dangerous security in my sloth. Draw me, even against my will, that I may be made willing. Draw me, even in my sluggishness, that I may learn how to run of myself. The time will come when I shall no longer need to be drawn, for we shall run willingly and with all alacrity. I shall not run alone, although alone I ask Thee to draw me. With me shall run the young maidens. We shall run side by side. We shall run together; I to the odour of Thy ointments, they as being stimulated by my example and encouraged by my exhortation. And so we shall all run to the odour of Thy ointments." The Spouse has imitators of herself, just as she is an imitator of Christ. Hence she does not say, "I shall run," but "we shall run."

But the question here arises, when she prays to be drawn, why does she not likewise include the "young maidens" in her petition, and say, "draw us," instead of "draw me"? Or are we to suppose that, whereas the Spouse has need to be drawn, the "young maidens" labour under no such necessity? O Bride of Christ, beautiful, blessed, and blissful, explain to us the meaning of this distinction. "Draw me," thou implorest. But why "me" rather than "us"? Is it that thou dost envy us, the "young maidens," so great a grace? God forbid! For hadst thou desired to follow thy Beloved alone, thou wouldst not have immediately added that the "young maidens" would run with thee. Why, then, dost thou ask to be drawn in the singular, and straightway, speaking in the plural, say "we will run"? "Charity," she answers, "so requires. Learn from me by these words that in your spiritual exercises you must hope for a twofold heavenly grace, viz., correction and consolation. The former is exteriorly administered, the latter visits you interiorly. The one restrains your boldness, the other props up your hope. Correction engenders humility, consolation supports pusillanimity. By the first you are made cautious, by the second devout. The one teaches you the fear of the Lord, the other tempers that fear by an infusion of spiritual delight, as it is written, 'Let my heart rejoice that it may fear Thy name.' Also 'Serve ye the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling.' "

We are drawn, my brethren, when we are exercised by temptations and tribulations. We run, when visited by interior consolations and inspirations, thus inhaling, as it were, the delicious odour of the Bridegroom's ointments. "Therefore," says the Spouse, "whatever seems hard and austere, I keep for myself, as being strong, and whole, and perfect; and so I say in the singular, 'draw me.' But all that is pleasant and sweet, I share with you who are weak, and hence I add 'we shall run.' Well do I know how tender and delicate these 'young maidens' are, and how unfitted to endure the force of temptations. And therefore

it is that I want them to run with me, but not to be drawn with me. I wish to have them as partakers of my consolation, but not of my labour. Wherefore? Because they are weak, and I fear lest they should faint, lest they should succumb. Let me, O my Beloved!" she exclaims, "let me be corrected, let me be tried, let me be tempted—'draw me after Thee,' 'for I am ready for scourges,' and able to bear them. But we shall run together. Let only me be drawn, but we shall run together. We shall run, yes, we shall run, but 'to the odour of Thy ointments,' not through confidence in our own merits. It is not in the magnitude of our strength that we hope to run, but in the 'multitude of Thy tender mercies.' For whenever, even in the past, we have run or possessed a good will, it was 'not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God That sheweth mercy.' Only let the same mercy again visit us and we shall run again. Thou as a Giant, and as a Mighty One, runnest in Thy strength. But we shall not run at all unless drawn by the perfume of Thy ointments. Thou dost run in the virtue of that 'oil of gladness' with which the Father 'hath anointed Thee above Thy fellows.' We can only run to the odour of that ointment, for Thou hast the fulness and we but the odour." Now would be the time, my brethren, to discharge the obligation which I remember to have undertaken long since with regard to the ointments of the Bridegroom, but to-day's sermon has already transgressed its limits. Therefore I will postpone to another time the promised exposition, for it would be doing an injury to the dignity and importance of the subject to attempt to compress it within a space of inadequate extent. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the ointments that He would deign "to make pleasing the voluntary offerings of my mouth," in order that I may be able to engrave deeply upon your minds the memory of that abounding sweetness of His, which is treasured up in the Bridegroom of the Church, Christ Jesus Our Lord. Amen.

SERMON XXII

ON THE FOUR OINTMENTS OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

"Draw me; we will run to the odour of Thy ointments."

If, my brethren, the ointments of the Bride are so exceedingly precious and magnificent, as you learned was the case when I was treating of them, what are the Bridegroom's likely to be! And although I am quite unequal to the task of describing and explaining these in a manner worthy of their intrinsic nobility, nevertheless, the greater excellence of their virtue and the superior efficacy of their grace may be clearly inferred from this single fact, that the sweetness of the odour they exhale causes to run, not alone the "young maidens," but even the Spouse herself. For, as you may have noticed, she does not promise any such effect in the case of her own ointments. She does indeed glory in and boast of their excellence, but she does not pretend that she has been excited to run by them, or that she would be so at a future time. It is only with regard to her Beloved's ointments that that she makes such a claim or promise. And if she can thus be induced to run by the exhilarating influence of so slight a perfume, wafted to her senses from the unction, what would she not do were she to feel the ointment itself poured out upon her? It would surely be strange if she did not fly. But perhaps some of you may feel tempted to say to me, "Have done with commendations. When thou proceedest to explain to us in what the essence and nature of these ointments consist, it shall then be sufficiently evident what kind their properties are." No, my friends. I can by no means undertake to give you any such explanation. And I must ask you to believe me when I confess that I am not even sure as to whether those things, which I feel suggested to my mind and am going to speak of, are really the ointments of the Bridegroom, or merely the creations of my own fancy. In my opinion, then, the Bridegroom possesses numerous spices and unguents of various kinds. Of these there are some whose

fragrance it is given only to the Spouse to enjoy, because of her singular intimacy and familiarity with Him. The perfumes of others reach the “young maidens.” Others again diffuse their sweet odours even to those who are far remote and extern, so that “there is none who can hide himself from His heat.” But although “the Lord is sweet to all,” He is so “especially to those of the household”; and, as I think, the nearer the soul approaches Him by the merit of her life and the purity of her conscience, the fresher are the spices and the sweeter the ointments whose perfume she is permitted to inhale. Furthermore, in such matters the understanding is altogether unable to transcend the bounds of experience. And I am not so rash as to arrogate to myself that which is the prerogative of the Spouse. None but the Bridegroom Himself can tell with what infusions of spiritual delight He ravishes the soul of His best-beloved, with what aromas of sweetness He intoxicates her senses, with what inspirations He wondrously illuminates and refreshes her mind. Let Him have for her as for His own Bride a private fountain of graces, in which the stranger shall have no share, nor shall the unworthy drink thereof. For it is a “Sealed Fountain,” a “Garden Enclosed.” Still, the waters flow forth therefrom into all the public ways. These waters, I confess, are always within my reach and at my service, provided no man shows discontent or ingratitude when I draw from the common source for the use of myself and others. Now, with your good leave, I will, after the example of St. Paul, commend “my ministry in this part a little.” To me, then, it is certainly something of a weariness and a labour to go forth day by day to draw from the common streams of Holy Scripture, in order to minister to the wants of all of you, so that each may have at hand a supply of spiritual water for his every need, viz., for cleansing, for drinking, or for preparing his food. For the word of God is the salutary water of wisdom, useful not only for drinking, but also for purifying. Hence the Lord said, “And you are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” But the same divine word may be employed to cook the crude thoughts and feelings of the carnal mind, using the fire of love kindled by the Holy Spirit, and transforming them in the process into spiritual reflections such as may serve as nourishment for the soul, so that she may exclaim with the Psalmist, “My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall break out.”

Those amongst you, my brethren, who by reason of the great purity of their conscience, are able of themselves alone to attain to loftier things than I am engaged in treating of, shall certainly encounter no opposition from me. On the contrary, I offer them my sincere congratulations. But I expect that they, on their

side, will suffer me to provide simpler fare for souls more simple. Oh, who will grant me that you may all so abound with the light of the Holy Spirit as to be qualified to discharge even the functions of the prophetic office! Would to God the case were so! Then there would be no necessity for me to occupy myself with these instructions. Would to God that this duty had devolved on some other! Or, at any rate—which, indeed, I should much prefer—that none of you stood in need of such instruction, but were "all taught of God," so that I might "be still and see" that the Bridegroom of my soul is none other than my Maker. But now, in the meantime—although I am unable to say it without tears—it is not permitted me to seek after, much less to contemplate "the King in His beauty," "seated upon the Cherubim," "sitting on a throne high and elevated," in that Divine Form in which He was begotten, equal to the Father "before the day-star, in the brightness of the saints," in which the angels desire to behold Him, God with God. Yet, a man myself, I will speak to men of Him as Man, according to the human form wherein, of His exceeding condescension and charity, in order to reveal Himself to us, He made Himself a "little less than the angels," and "hath set His tabernacle in the sun, and He as a Bridegroom coming out of His bridal-chamber." I will speak of Him rather as sweet than as sublime, rather as anointed than elevated. I will speak of Him as anointed by the Spirit and "sent to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Leaving, then, to each whatever more sublime and delicate perfumes, so to speak, of grace and sanctity it may have been given him to feel and to enjoy from the Bridegroom's ointments, I shall expend for the common use what I have received from the common source. For the very "Fountain of life," the "Sealed Fountain" issuing forth from the interior of the "Garden Enclosed," through the orifice of St. Paul's mouth, as being truly that wisdom, which, according to the words of holy Job, "is drawn out of secret places"—this Fountain, I say, divides its waters into four streams and through these pours itself out upon the common ways. There it represents to us Him, Who for us has been "made of God Wisdom, and Justice, and Sanctification, and Redemption." These four streams are also four most precious ointments. For there is nothing to prevent the same thing being conceived as both water and ointment, water in so far as it cleanses, ointment inasmuch as it perfumes. From these streams, therefore, which are at the same time odoriferous ointments, produced from celestial elements on the aromatic hills, such an odour of sweetness filled the

nostrils of the Church, that, attracted in her members by the sweetness of the fragrance from the four corners of the world, she hastened to her Beloved, as being indeed that “queen of the south” who hurried from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, drawn by the pleasant odour of his fame.

It is clear that the Church was not able to run to the odour of her Solomon, until He, Who from eternity was the Wisdom of the Father, was made by the Father Wisdom also in time, for her sake, in order that she might enjoy His divine fragrance. So, too, was He made Justice, and Sanctification, and Redemption, all for her, that she might also run to the odours of such ointments, though in Himself the Bridegroom was all these equally from all eternity. For even “in the beginning (He) was the Word.” Yet it was only after the announcement of His having been made Flesh that the shepherds came in haste to see Him. They said to each other, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see this Word that is come to pass which the Lord hath made and hath shewed to us.” And the Evangelist adds that “they came in haste.” Previously, whilst the Word was only with God, they could not move at all. But when the Word, Which was in the beginning, was made Flesh in time, was made Flesh and shown to them by the Lord, then “they came in haste,” then they ran. And just as He was the Word in the beginning, but was the Word with God only, and was made Flesh that He might be also the Word with men; in the same way, He was in the beginning Wisdom, and Justice, and Sanctification, and Redemption, yet to the angels only. But that He might be so to men as well He was made all these by the Father, forasmuch as He is a Father. “Who was made,” says the Apostle, “for us Wisdom of God.” He does not say simply “Who was made Wisdom,” but “Who was made for us Wisdom.” For what He was to the angels already, that He now was made for us.

But some of you may say, “I fail to see how He was Redemption to the angels. For there is nothing anywhere in the Holy Scriptures to show that they were ever captives to sin or subject to death, so as to be in need of redemption, except indeed those who, by committing the irremediable sin of pride, placed themselves beyond all hope of redemption. Thus, therefore, the angels have never been redeemed, some not needing it, others undeserving of it; some because they never fell, others because their fall was irrevocable. How, then, canst thou assert that the Lord Jesus has been to them Redemption?” My answer shall be short. He who lifted up man after his fall, gave to the angel who stood that he should not fall, preserving the latter from the same captivity from which He delivered the former. In this way, then, He was equally Redemption to both,

by preventing sin in the one case, and remitting it in the other. Hence it is evident that Christ the Lord was Redemption to the angels, as He was Justice, and Wisdom, and Sanctification. And, nevertheless, these four things He was visibly made for the sake of men who can clearly see the invisible things of God only as "understood by the things that are made." Thus He was made for us all that He was for the angels. What is that? It is Wisdom, and Justice, and Sanctification, and Redemption. Wisdom in His preaching, Justice in the remission of sin, Sanctification in His familiar intercourse with sinners, Redemption in His Passion endured for sinners. When, therefore, He was made all these "of God." then the Church perceived His odour, then she began to run.

Contemplate, now, my brethren, this fourfold unction. Consider the abounding and inexpressible sweetness of Him Whom the Father "hath anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows." Thou wert sitting, O man, in darkness and in the shadow of death by reason of thy ignorance of the truth. Thou wert seated in fetters, bound with the chains of thy sins, and He descended to thee into the prison, not to torture thee, but to rescue thee from the power of darkness. First of all, as the Doctor of truth, He dispelled the clouds of thy ignorance by the light of His own wisdom. Next, by the "justice which is of faith," He loosed the bonds of sin, "justifying the sinner freely." By these two benefits was fulfilled the word of David, "The Lord looseth them that are fettered; the Lord enlighteneth the blind." To these He added the example of His holy life, lived amongst sinners, thus exhibiting to them a model for their imitation, and, as it were, marking out the way whereby they might return to their fatherland. Lastly, to crown the largesses of His piety, He delivered up His Soul to death for them, and from His own Heart produced the price of their redemption and of their reconciliation with the Father. In this way, He plainly appropriated to Himself the verse, "With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him plentiful redemption." Plentiful surely, for not in drops, but in streams, the Precious Blood issued through the Five Wounds of His Sacred Body.

My brethren, what ought He to have done for us, and has not done it? He has enlightened our blindness, He has loosed our bonds, He has brought us back from our wanderings, He has made satisfaction for our sins. Can anyone be unwilling to run gladly and eagerly after Him who delivers us from present errors and overlooks all those of the past, Who by His life wins for us merits and by His death obtains rewards? What excuse can he have who does not run to the odour of these ointments, unless perchance he be one whom the odour has not reached? But that odour of life has gone out over the whole earth, because "the

earth is full of the mercy of the Lord," "and His tender mercies are over all His works." He, therefore, who is not sensible of this vivifying fragrance everywhere diffused, and hence does not run to it, is either corrupt or a corpse. This odour is the good fame of Christ, which spreads itself abroad like a sweet perfume, exciting us to run, leading us to the experience of His unction here, and to the vision of Him as our reward hereafter. All who enjoy that bliss, all who have attained to that crowning vision, cry out exultingly, with one acclaim, "As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts." Yes, O Lord Jesus, we will run after Thee, on account of the sweetness which is proclaimed to be characteristic of Thee, for we are told that Thou dost not spurn the needy nor abhor the guilty. Thou certainly didst not show any abhorrence of the confessing Thief, nor of the weeping Magdalen, nor of the supliant Canaanite, nor of the woman taken in sin, nor of him that sat in the Publican's office, nor of that other Publican who prayed in the temple, nor of the Apostle who denied Thee, nor of Paul, the persecutor of Thy followers, nor even of those who nailed Thee to the cross. Yes, we will run to the odour of such examples, of such ointments! We also inhale the sweet perfume of Thy wisdom from what we have heard, namely, that if any one wants wisdom, he has only to ask it of Thee, and Thou wilt give it to him. For we are told that Thou givest to all abundantly and upbraidest not. But so great and all-pervading is the odour exhaling from Thy justice that Thou art called, not just, but Justice Itself, and Justifying Justice. And as able as Thou art to justify Thou art equally "bountiful to forgive." Wherefore, whoever feels compunction for his sins, and hungers and thirsts after justice, let him believe in Thee Who justifiest the impious, and thus, justified by faith alone, he shall have peace with God.

Not alone Thy life, but even Thy conception is most sweetly and abundantly redolent of the fragrance of Thy sanctity. For Thou wert as free from inherited as Thou art from personal guilt. Let those, therefore, who, justified from their sins, desire and determine to pursue after holiness, without which no one shall see God, let such, I say, listen to Thee commanding, "Be ye holy, because I am holy." Let them consider Thy ways and learn of Thee, because Thou art just in all Thy ways and holy in all Thy works. Oh, how many have been induced to run by the most sweet odour of Thy redemption! Ever since Thou wert lifted up from the earth, Thou surely hast been drawing all things to Thyself. Thy sacred Passion is our last refuge, our sole remedy. When wisdom is wanting to us, when justice falls short, when the merits of sanctity fail to secure us, even then we find support and deliverance in Thy Passion. For who can presume on his own

wisdom, or justice, or sanctity as sufficient to save him? Hence the Apostle, “not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” Therefore, “when my virtue fails,” I shall not lose peace, I shall not lose confidence. “I know what I will do”: “I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.” O Lord, enlighten my eyes, “that I may know what is acceptable with Thee at all times.” So shall I be wise. “The sins of my youth and my ignorances do not remember.” So shall I be just. “Conduct me, O Lord, in Thy way,” and so I shall be holy. Yet, after all, unless Thy Blood makes intercession for me, I shall not be saved. It is because of all these odours that we run after Thee. Grant our petitions and so send us away, because, like the Canaanite woman, “we cry after Thee.”

But, my brethren, we do not all run equally to the odour of all the ointments. You may observe some more ardent in the pursuit of wisdom, others more incited to penance by the hope of pardon, others again more drawn to the practice of virtue by the example of the Saviour’s life and conversation, still others more inflamed with love by the memory of His Passion. I think I can present you with instances of persons specially attracted in these several ways. They ran to the odour of His Wisdom, who, sent to Him by the Pharisees, reported on their return that “never man spoke as this Man.” For, being filled with admiration of His doctrine, they acknowledged the greatness of His Wisdom. To the same odour ran holy Nicodemus who, though he “came to Jesus by night,” indeed, yet walked in the resplendent illumination of Divine Wisdom, and returned instructed and enlightened about many things. Mary Magdalen, to whom “many sins were forgiven, because she hath loved much,” ran to the odour of His Justice. Just and holy she was in truth, and no longer a sinner, so as to deserve the reproach of the Pharisee, who knew not that justification and sanctity are the gifts of God, not the works of man; and that he to whom the Lord imputes not sin, is not only just, but blessed as well. Or had this Simon forgotten how Christ, by His touch, had healed instead of contracting the corporeal leprosy of himself or of some other Simon? For the Just One, when touched by the sinner, did not lose, but communicated, His justice; nor did He soil Himself with the filth of sin from which He cleansed the penitent woman. To this odour also ran the Publican, who, after humbly imploring pardon for his sins, “went down to his house justified,” as Justice Himself bears witness. To the same ran St. Peter. For after his fall “he wept bitterly,” in order to wash away his sin, and recover grace. David, too, ran to this odour, when, by acknowledging and confessing his fault, he deserved to hear from Nathan, “the Lord also hath taken

away thy sin." St. Paul testifies of himself that he ran to the odour of Sanctification, when he boasts that he is "an imitator of Christ," saying to his disciples, "Be ye imitators of me, as I also am of Christ." To the same ran all the Apostles, who said, by the mouth of Peter, "Behold we have left all things, and have followed Thee." The desire, that is to say, of following Christ, led them to abandon all else. All men in general are invited to run to this odour by the words of St. John, "He who saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk, even as He walked."

Now, if you wish to know who they are that ran to the odour of Redemption, I tell you, my brethren, that these are all the martyrs. Thus I have set forth for you the four precious ointments of Wisdom, Justice, Sanctification, and Redemption. Remember their names, and enjoy their odours. But do not ask me about the manner of their composition, nor about the number of spices from which they are produced. For, as regards the ointments of the Bridegroom and the elements thereof, such questions are not so easy to answer as in the case of the unguents and spices of the Spouse, of which I have treated in an earlier sermon. The reason is that in Christ these ointments are without either number or measure; since "of His Wisdom there is no number"; and "His Justice is as the mountains of God," as the eternal hills; and His Sanctity is infinite, and His Redemption ineffable.

This also I must say: Vainly have the wise of this world disputed so much concerning the four cardinal virtues, which they were quite incapable of understanding, since they knew not Him "Who for us was made Wisdom of God" to teach us prudence, and Justice to satisfy for our sins, and Sanctification to give us in His mortified life an example of temperance, and Redemption to exhibit to us in His patiently-suffered death a model of fortitude. But perhaps some one will say to me, "Thy other remarks are well enough, but it hardly seems proper to refer sanctification to the virtue of temperance." To this I reply, first, that temperance and continence are one and the same thing; secondly, that it is usual in Scripture to put sanctification for continence or purity. Then, what else are those numerous sanctifications prescribed by Moses except so many purifications, or exercises of temperance in food, and drink, and such like? But above all, hear how familiar it is with the Apostle to use or to intend the word sanctification in this sense. "This," he says, "is the will of God, your sanctification, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lust." Again, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto sanctification." Evidently, in these passages

sanctification is put for temperance.

Having now, as I hope, placed in light what appeared to be somewhat obscure, I return to the point whence I digressed. To the worldly-wise pagans, therefore, I say, what have you to do with the virtues, who know not Christ, the “Virtue of God”? Where, I ask, will you find real prudence, except in the doctrine of Christ? Where true justice, save from the mercy of Christ? Where true temperance, except in the life of Christ? And where true fortitude, but in the Passion of Christ? Consequently, only they deserve to be called prudent, who are instructed in His doctrine. Only they just, who, of His mercy, have obtained forgiveness of their sins. Only those temperate, who study to imitate the example of His life. And those alone possessed of fortitude who, in adversity, conform with constancy to the model of His patience. It is vain, therefore, for anyone to labour for the acquisition of virtues, if he expects to obtain them otherwise than from Him Who is named the “Lord of Virtues,” and Whose doctrine is the seed of prudence; Whose mercy, the source of works of justice; Whose life, the mirror of temperance, and Whose death is the glory and the model of fortitude.

To Him be honour and glory for endless ages. Amen.

SERMON XXIII

ON THE MYSTICAL MEANING OF THE GARDEN, THE STOREROOM, AND THE BEDCHAMBER

> “The King hath brought me into His storerooms; we will be glad and rejoice in thee, remembering thy breasts more than wine.”

“The King hath brought me into His storerooms.” Behold, my brethren, the source of the odour! Behold the goal of the running! The Spouse has already told us that we are to run, and after what odours we are to run; but not till now has she mentioned whither we are to direct our running. Therefore, she now explains that we are to run to the King’s storerooms, and under the influence of the odours proceeding thence; for she, with her wonted sagacity, has been the first to detect the fragrance and is eager for admission to its source, so that she may enjoy the fulness thereof. But what are we to understand by these storerooms? For the present let us consider them as the Bridegroom’s sweet-smelling promptuaries, so to speak, filled with odoriferous fruits of the soil, replenished with all manner of delights. It is in storehouses of this kind that all the more precious produce of the field and the garden are hoarded up and preserved. Here, then, is the goal of the running. But who are they that run? They are souls that are fervent in spirit. The Spouse runs, and so do the “young maidens.” But the former runs more swiftly because she loves more ardently, and so reaches her destination more speedily. On her arrival, far from meeting with a repulse, she is not even kept waiting. The door is opened to her without delay, as to one of the household, as to one most tenderly and especially beloved, and most warmly welcomed. But what about the “young maidens”? They are following indeed, but far behind. For, being as yet weak, they cannot keep pace with the devotion of the Spouse, nor emulate her desire and her fervour. Therefore, they arrive later and remain outside. But the charity of the Spouse is not at rest nor, as commonly happens, is she so elated with her good fortune as to forget them. Rather she consoles them and encourages them to bear with patience and equanimity both

their disappointment and their separation from herself. She also tells them of the happiness she enjoys, for no other reason than that they may rejoice with her, because they feel firmly persuaded that, whatever graces and favours are bestowed upon their mother, they have a right to regard as in some sense their own. For she is not so intent upon her own advancement as to neglect the care of them, nor does she wish to procure any advantage to herself or to her private interests at their expense. Therefore, no matter how high above them the superiority of her merits raises her, she will most certainly feel obliged, through her charity and tender solicitude, to remain always with them. For it behoves her to emulate the example of her Beloved. And as He, whilst ascending to heaven, promised nevertheless to abide on earth with His disciples, even to the consummation of the world, so should she also combine a care for others with zeal for her own spiritual progress. Hence, whatever her distance from them, however far advanced beyond them, she can never lay aside her care, and her solicitude, and her affection for those whom she has brought forth in the Gospel; she can never forget her own flesh and blood.

She says to them, therefore, “Rejoice and have confidence. The King hath brought me into His storerooms. Consider yourselves introduced likewise. I, indeed, appear to be the only one brought in, but I am not the only one deriving benefit therefrom. For every advantage to me belongs equally to all of you. It is for you I advance, and amongst you I will share whatever beyond you I may chance to merit.” Do you wish, my brethren, to know for certain that she spoke to them in this sense and with such loving affection? Then, listen to their reply: “We will be glad and rejoice in thee.” “In thee,” they say, “we will be glad and rejoice, since we have not yet deserved to experience such emotions in ourselves.” And they immediately add, “remembering thy breasts.” As if they should say, “Yes, we will patiently await thy coming, knowing that thou wilt return to us with full breasts. Then we hope to be glad and to rejoice; meanwhile we console ourselves with the memory of thy breasts.” The words added, “more than wine,” indicate that, by reason of their imperfection, they still relish the memory of carnal delights, yet acknowledge that the desire of these has been overcome by the abundant sweetness, which, as they know by experience, issues forth from the breasts of the Spouse. I should now discourse at length on these breasts, only that I recollect having treated of them sufficiently in a previous sermon. But see now how the young maidens presume with their mother, and how they reckon as their own her joys and her gains, and generously console themselves for their disappointment in not obtaining admittance by the thought

of her success. Certainly, they could not be so bold with her, did they not recognise in her a mother. Attend to this, ye prelates, who are always ready to inspire your flocks with fear, but seldom to do them a service. “Receive instruction, ye that judge the earth.” Learn how you ought to be the mothers rather than the masters of these committed to your care. Study, therefore, to make yourselves more loved than feared; and if, sometimes, there is need of severity, let it be the severity of a parent, not that of a tyrant. Show yourselves to be mothers in love and fathers in correction. Cultivate meekness, restrain your anger, put away the scourge of discipline and offer instead the breasts of affection. And let these breasts be enlarged with an abundance of milk, not dilated by the force of passion. Why do you lay your heavy yoke upon the people whose burdens it is rather your duty to bear? Why is it that the little one, bitten by the infernal serpent, avoids manifesting his condition to the priest, to whom he ought to run with more eagerness than to his mother’s breast? If you be spiritual persons, instruct such in the spirit of mildness, each looking to himself, “lest he also be tempted.” Otherwise, he “shall die in his iniquity,” says the Lord, “but I will require his blood at thy hand.” But of this later.

Now we have to try and discover what is the spiritual signification of these storerooms, as the literal sense of the text is manifest enough from the foregoing observations. In the following verses, there is mention of a garden and of a bedchamber. I intend to treat of both of these in my present discourse, in connexion with the storerooms. For, by considering them together, we shall be able to make each of the three throw light on the others. And first, if you please, we shall seek in the Holy Scriptures for these three things, viz., a garden, a storeroom, and a bedchamber. For the soul that thirsts after God gladly rests and lingers in His inspired word, knowing that therein, without any doubt, she shall find Him for Whose company she yearns. Let the garden, then, symbolise the simple plain, historic sense. Let the storeroom represent the moral signification, and let the bedchamber typify the secret meaning only revealed to divine contemplation.

Not without reason, as I think, is the historic sense compared to a garden, because in it we find men of virtue, like to fruit-trees in the garden of the Bridegroom, in the paradise of God, from whose virtuous actions and holy lives we may gather the fruits of good examples. Does any one doubt that the good man is a tree planted by the hand of God? If so, let him listen to David, “And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season, and his leaf shall not fall off.” Hear Jeremias singing

in concert, in the same Spirit, and almost in the same words, “And he shall be as a tree that is planted by the waters, that spreadeth out its roots towards the moisture, and it shall not fear when the heat cometh.” Again the Psalmist, “The just shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow up like the cedar of Libanus.” And again of himself, “But I (am) as a fruitful olive-tree in the house of God.” The Scripture history, then, is a garden, and contains three divisions. In it are comprised the Creation of heaven and earth, the Reconciliation, and the Restoration. Creation may be considered as the sowing, or the planting of the garden, and Reconciliation as the growth of what has been sown or planted. For in the fulness of time, when the heavens dropped down dew from above and the clouds rained down the Just, the earth opened and budded forth the Saviour, by Whom was effected the Reconciliation of heaven and earth. “For He is our peace, Who hath made both one,” “making peace through the Blood of His cross, both as to the things on earth, and the things that are in heaven.” The Restoration is reserved until the end of the world. For then there shall be a “new heaven and a new earth,” and the good shall be collected from out the midst of the wicked, as fruit from the garden, to be laid up in the divine storehouses. “In that day,” so Isaias, “the bud of the Lord shall be in magnificence and glory, and the fruit of the earth shall be high.” You have, consequently, three distinct departments in this garden of the historic sense.

In the moral signification, likewise, three things have to be noticed, as it were three cellars in the same storehouse. And perhaps this is the reason why we have “storerooms” in the plural, rather than “storeroom,” to indicate, namely, the number of cellars. Hence, later on, we shall hear the Spouse boasting of the fact that she has been brought into the wine-cellar. We are told in Proverbs, “Give occasion to a wise man, and wisdom shall be added to him.” Therefore, as the Holy Spirit has given the occasion in the name which it has pleased Him to impose on this cellar, let us not hesitate to give names to the other two also, calling one the cellar of spices and the other the cellar of unguents. The reason of such appellations I will explain afterwards. Observe, meantime, how everything about the Bridegroom is sweet and health-giving: wine, and ointments, and spices. “Wine,” as the Scriptures bear witness, “rejoiceth the heart of man.” We read also that he “maketh his face cheerful with oil,” which oil has been mixed, no doubt, with odoriferous elements, so as to make of it an ointment. The aromatic spices are not only prized for the sweetness of their fragrance, but also for their medicinal properties. Good reason, therefore, had the Spouse for boasting of her admission into those cellars which are filled with such abounding

treasures of grace.

But I have other names besides for these three cellars, which, it seems to me, are even more evidently applicable than those I have just explained. To proceed in due order, I call the first cellar Discipline, the second Nature, and the third Grace. In the first we learn, according to the rules of sound morality, how to be subject to others; in the second, how to be equal, in the third, how to be superior. In plainer words, we learn how to live under others, how to live on terms of equality with others, and how to rule over others. Or again, we are taught in the first the duties of subjection; in the second, the duties of equality; and in the third, the duties of superiority. Therefore, Discipline teaches us how to be disciples, nature how to be equals, and Grace how to be superiors. By nature, indeed, all men were made equal. But their natural perfection having been corrupted by pride, they grew impatient of this original equality, endeavoured to rise each above the other, and desired to surpass each other, led on by the love of vainglory to mutual envy and jealousy. In the first place, therefore, and in the first cellar, the wantonness of our manners and characters must be kept in restraint by the yoke of discipline, until the will, its obstinacy having been worn away, as it were, by the friction of the hard and long-pressing precepts of our superiors, shall thus be humbled and healed, and recover that natural integrity which it lost through pride. Then, when we have learned to live peaceably and sociably, as far as it depends upon us, with all who share our common nature, namely, with all men, and that not through fear of correction, but solely from a sentiment of natural affection—then, I say, we shall pass from the cellar called Discipline into that of Nature. Here we shall experience the truth of what is written, “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, like precious ointment on the head!” For to disciplined morals, as to sweet spices pounded together, there is added now the oil of gladness, that is to say, the perfection of our nature is restored, and the result is an ointment exceedingly “good and pleasant.”

This unguent renders a man sweet and mild, makes him such that he never complains, never overreaches, never strikes or otherwise injures anybody, never boasts or prefers himself to anyone and, moreover, he enters gladly into the kindly intercourse of friendship which consists in the interchange of all good offices.

If you have well understood the properties of these two cellars, I think you must admit that not altogether fanciful are the names I have given them, calling the first the cellar of spices, and the second the cellar of unguents. For, just as

the violent pounding of the pestle presses and squeezes out the essence and fragrance of the aromatic elements, so does the force of authority and the pressure of discipline in the cellar of spices beat out and extract, so to speak, the natural excellence of good morals. In the cellar of unguents flows that pleasing and spontaneously obliging sweetness of a free and, as it were, instinctive affection, like the ointment on the head, which, at the slightest touch of heat, trickles down and spreads itself over the whole body. Hence, the aromatic elements are contained in the cellar of Discipline, but as yet dry and uncompounded; and this is my reason for naming it the cellar of spices. In the second cellar, which I have called Nature, the confected ointments are stored up and preserved; to this fact it owes its name of the cellar of unguents. And I think the third has been called the wine-cellar, for no other reason than because it contains the wine of zeal, fervescent with charity. He who has not yet deserved to be introduced into this, ought not by any means to undertake the government of others. For every ruler should be aglow with this wine, as was the Doctor of Nations when he exclaimed, “Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is scandalised and I am not on fire?” Otherwise, you act very wickedly in seeking to govern those whom you feel no desire to benefit; and by insisting too ambitiously on the submission to your authority of men for whose salvation you have no concern. To this cellar I have given the second name of the cellar of Grace, not indeed as if even the other two can be attained without grace, but because of the plenitude of all graces, which is received in this alone. For “Charity is the fulfilling of the law.” And it is also written that “he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law.”

You now understand, my brethren, the signification of the names. Let us consider next the difference between the cellars. For it is a truth of experience that we do not possess the same ease and capacity for living at peace with our companions, united in the bonds of spontaneous affection, and for repressing with the fear of the master, and restraining with the sharp curb of discipline, the petulance and inconstancy of the senses, and the inordinate desires of the flesh. It is one thing to live a well-ordered life under the government of a watchful superior, and quite another to exercise charity habitually in our dealings with our brethren, solely in obedience to the promptings of our own wills. And surely no one would say that it is a matter of equal merit and of equal virtue to live in peace and harmony with our equals, and to govern wisely and with advantage to the governed. How many there are who lead a quiet life under the eye of a superior, yet whom, if released from the yoke of subjection, you would find

incapable of repose, incapable even of keeping themselves from doing harm to their brethren! How many also do you behold conversing with their equals sincerely and without offence, who, if raised to the rank of superior, would show themselves to be not only useless, but devoid of good sense, and even wanting in probity! Persons of this description have in their own place all that they require, and so should find contentment in that mediocrity of goodness which God has bestowed upon them as their measure of grace. They do not indeed any longer need the watchful supervision of a master, but neither are they qualified to act as the masters of others. Hence, they surpass in moral excellence those who belong to the first class or cellar, and are still subject to discipline, but they are themselves surpassed by those of the third class, by those, that is, who possess the qualities requisite in a superior. Such as these, who know how to govern well and wisely, have received the promise that they shall be set over all the goods of their Lord. It is indeed a fact that there are but few who can govern with advantage to their subjects, and fewer still who can govern with humility. Nevertheless, that superior shall easily fulfil these two conditions of good government, ruling with profit to his inferiors without spiritual loss to himself, that superior, I say, who, after perfectly acquiring the virtue which is mother of all the others, that is, the virtue of discretion, is furthermore inebriated with the wine of charity, to the extent of despising his own glory, and forgetting himself and his personal interests.

It is only in the wine-cellar this wine can be obtained, and only under the admirable direction of the Holy Ghost. Without the fervour of charity, discretion is unfruitful and sluggish; whilst, unless tempered with discretion, the impetuosity of fervour easily induces precipitation. Worthy of admiration, therefore, is he to whom neither of these virtues is wanting, so that discretion is enlivened by fervour, and fervour held in check by discretion. Such, my brethren, is the character which superiors ought to possess. In my opinion, he has completely attained to the perfection both of morals and of discipline, to whomsoever it has been granted to pass through and around all these cellars without hindrance. I mean, he who in no particular either resists his superiors, or envies his equals; who governs without pride and without neglect of his subjects; who is obedient to those over him, condescending and useful to those under him, and agreeable to his equals. The glory of such perfection I have not the slightest hesitation in attributing to the Spouse. Nay, she even implicitly claims it for herself, when she boasts that “The King hath brought me into His storerooms.” For here she does not assert that she has been introduced into this or that

particular storeroom; but simply says, speaking in the plural, “into His storerooms,” which must be taken to mean all.

Let us come now to the bedchamber. What does it symbolise? And am I so presumptuous as to imagine I can comprehend its meaning? Far be it from me to make pretensions to so sublime an experience, or to boast of a prerogative which belongs exclusively to the happy Spouse. According to the counsel of the Greek philosopher, I take care to know myself, that, with the Prophet, “I may also know what is wanting to me.” And yet if I knew nothing about the bedchamber, I surely could say nothing. What knowledge I have, I will not begrudge nor withhold from you. And as to that whereof I am ignorant, may He instruct you “Who teacheth knowledge to man.” I have observed, if you recollect, that it is in the privacy of loving contemplation we must look for the King’s bedchamber. And in speaking of the ointments, I remember to have said that the Bridegroom possesses many and various unguents, and that all these are not equally accessible to all, but his own to each, according to the diversity of merits. In the same way, I think that the King has not one but several bedchambers. For certainly there are more than one queen, there are many wives (concubinœ) and an innumerable throng of young maidens. Each of these has her own place for private intercourse with the Bridegroom, and says, “my secret to myself, my secret to myself.” Not all are permitted to enjoy in the same chamber the delightful and secret presence of the Beloved, but each in that only which has been prepared for her by the Father. For it is not we that have chosen Him, but He hath first chosen us and appointed us our several places. And wheresoever each has been put by Him, there he ought to remain. Thus, to one contrite woman was given a place at the Feet of the Lord Jesus. Another, if indeed another and not the same, enjoyed the fruit of her devotion at His Head. St. Thomas obtained the grace of this secret in the Saviour’s Side, St. John on His Breast, St. Peter in the Father’s Bosom, St. Paul in the third heaven.

Which of us, my brethren, is competent to distinguish accurately these varieties of merits, or rather of rewards? Lest, however, we should seem to have passed over that which we do know, I say that the first woman sought her repose in the security of humility, the second in the seat of hope, St. Thomas in the solidity of faith, St. John in the breadth of charity, St. Paul in the profundity of wisdom, St. Peter in the light of truth. Thus, therefore, has the Bridegroom many mansions, and every soul, whether a queen, or a wife, or one of the young maidens, obtains there the place and the limit proportionate to her merits, until it be permitted her to ascend higher by contemplation, to enter into the joy of her

Lord, and to search out all the delightful secrets of her Beloved. This I will endeavour to explain more clearly in its proper place, according as the Spirit shall condescend to inspire me. Meantime, let it suffice us to know that none of the young maidens, none of the wives, none even of the queens, can have any access to that secret bedchamber, which, alone of its kind, the Bridegroom has reserved to His "beautiful dove," His "perfect one." Hence, I have no reason to complain of not being admitted thither, especially since I know that the Spouse herself cannot, as yet, attain to every secret she would wish to discover. For she demands to be informed "where He feedeth, where He lieth in the mid-day."

But let me tell you what I have attained to, or rather what I believe myself to have attained to. And you must not regard as a boast this communication, which I make only for your good. There is in the home of the Bridegroom a certain place where, as Governor of the universe, He frames His decrees, and disposes His counsels, appointing to all creatures their laws, their weight, measure, and number. It is a lofty place and a secret, but very far from quiet. For although, as far as depends on Him, He "disposeth all things sweetly," still He does really dispose. And He will not suffer the contemplative soul which, perchance, has found her way to this place, to rest there peacefully, but by causing her to scrutinise everything with admiration, He wearies and disquiets her in ways no less pleasant than marvellous. In a following verse, the Spouse beautifully expresses these two characteristics of such contemplation, viz., delight and restlessness, where she confesses that whilst she sleeps her heart watches. For she thus signifies that, although she enjoys rest in this sleep of a most blissful transport and tranquil admiration, she nevertheless endures fatigue in the watching of her unquiet curiosity and in her painful activity. Hence blessed Job said: "If I be down to sleep, I shall say, when shall I rise? And again I shall look for the evening."

Do you not perceive, my brethren, from these words, that sometimes the holy soul wishes to decline such bitter-sweets, if I may use the expression, and again experiences a revival of appetite for the same sweet-bitters? For had that slumber of contemplation completely satisfied her, she never would have asked, "When shall I rise?" And, on the contrary, she never would have looked forward to the hour of restful prayer, viz., to the evening, were it entirely distasteful. No bedchamber of the King, therefore, can this place be, since the soul therein is not permitted to enjoy perfect repose.

There is another place, whence is kept an immutable watch over the reprobate rational creatures, by the just vengeance, as severe as it is secret, of the most

righteous Judge, “terrible in His counsels over the sons of men.” Here the trembling soul beholds the Almighty, by a just but hidden judgment, refusing both to pardon the evil and to accept the good works of the wicked, and, moreover, hardening their hearts, lest perchance they should become contrite, enter into themselves, be converted, and He should heal them. And this not without a determinate and eternal decree, which is manifestly all the more frightening on account of its being unchangeably fixed from everlasting. Very terrifying, indeed, is that which we read in the Prophet Isaias, where God says, speaking to His angels, “Let us have pity on the wicked.” And then, to their trembling question, “Will he not therefore learn justice?” He answers, “No,” and He gives the reason: “In the land of the saints, he hath done wicked things, and he shall not see the glory of the Lord.” Be afraid, ye clerics, tremble, ye ministers of the Church, who in the lands of the saints, which you have gotten into your possession, are doing such “wicked things,” that, far from being content with the stipend which ought to satisfy you, you impiously and sacrilegiously keep for yourselves the superfluities that should go to the support of the indigent, shamelessly squandering the patrimony of the poor on the gratification of your own pride and luxury. Thus, you contract the guilt of a twofold iniquity, by robbing others of their property, and by abusing sacred things, which you make to subserve your vanity and wickedness.

Since, therefore, He Whose “judgments are a great deep” is here beheld showing mercy and compassion in time to such transgressors, but only to the end that He may not spare them in eternity, who would seek rest in this place? The vision is better calculated to inspire one with the terror of judgment than to suggest the security of a bedchamber. Terrible in truth is this place, and entirely incompatible with the quiet of repose. I shudder all over, whenever I enter it, repeating with trembling those terrifying words, “Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred.” And what wonder that I, who am but a leaf blown about by the wind, a dry straw, should there shake with fear, where even that greatest of contemplatives, the royal Psalmist, acknowledges that his “feet were almost moved, his steps had well-nigh slipt”? And he adds, “Because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners.” Wherefore? Because “they are not in the labour of men; neither shall they be scourged like other men. Therefore, pride hath held them fast,” that they may not humble themselves unto penance, but be condemned for their pride with the proud demon and his angels. For they who “are not in the labour of men,” shall certainly be in the labour of demons. This the Judge declares in His sentence,

“Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” Nevertheless, even this is a place of God, surely “no other but the house of God and the gate of heaven.” For here the Lord is said to be feared, here “His name is holy and terrible,” and here assuredly “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” as it were, the vestibule of His glory.

Do not be surprised, my brethren, that I have ascribed the beginning of wisdom to this second place rather than to the first. For there do we indeed hear wisdom teaching of all things, as it were, in a lecture-hall; but here we actually receive wisdom. There our minds are instructed, here our wills are affected. By being so instructed we become learned; by being so affected we are made wise. As not all who are illumined by the light of the sun are also warmed by his heat, so wisdom enlightens many as to what they ought to do, without giving them at the same time the good will and disposition to do it. It is one thing to have knowledge of great riches, but quite another to have possession of the same; for it is the possession of wealth and not the knowledge thereof that makes a man wealthy. In like manner, there is the greatest difference between knowing God and fearing Him; nor are we made wise by the former, but only by the latter, which alone can influence our will. Surely, my brethren, you would not call him wise who is inflated with his science. And none but the most foolish would attribute wisdom to those who “when they knew God, have not glorified Him as God, nor given thanks.” I, for my part, agree with the Apostle where he manifestly pronounces “their heart” to be “foolish.” Justly is it said that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” because it is only then the soul begins to relish God, when she is inspired with the fear of Him, not when she is instructed in the knowledge of Him. You fear the divine justice, you fear the divine power, and hence, inasmuch as fear gives savour, you will relish God as wise and just. Furthermore, relish makes a man wise, as knowledge makes him learned, and riches wealthy.

What, then, of the first place I have mentioned? It only disposes to wisdom. There you are prepared for that wisdom of which you here obtain possession. This preparation consists in acquiring a knowledge of truth. But such knowledge most readily excites the swelling of vanity, unless it is repressed by fear, of which, therefore, it is truly said that “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,” for it is the first to oppose itself to the pest of folly. In the first place, then, we are put on the road to wisdom, in the second we are introduced to it. Yet in neither does the contemplative find perfect repose, because in the one God appears as if distracted with cares, and in the other as if enraged against

sinners. Seek not, therefore, the King's bedchamber in either place, not in the former, which is rather the Teacher's lecture-hall, nor in the latter, which bears a closer resemblance to the Judge's tribunal. But there is a third place, where the Lord appears truly tranquil and at rest. It is the place neither of the Judge nor of the Teacher, but of the Bridegroom, and which becomes for me, at least (whether for others, also, I know not), a real bedchamber, whenever it is granted me to enter there. But all too rare that privilege, alas! and all too short-lived. There we can plainly see that "the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear Him." And happy he who can say, "I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee, and that keep Thy commandments." The purpose of God stands fixed, as well as His decree of mercy "upon them that fear Him," overlooking what is evil in them and rewarding what is good, and with admirable wisdom bringing it about that not alone what is good, but even what is evil shall "co-operate unto good for them." Oh, truly and alone "blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin." For there is no one without sin, "because all have sinned and do need the glory of God." Yet "who shall accuse against the elect of God?" It suffices me unto all justice, that He alone be propitious to me against Whom alone I have sinned. Whatever He wills not to impute to me, is as if it never had been. God's righteousness is freedom from sin, but the righteousness of man is the forgiveness of God. Such things I saw in this third place, and I then understood the truth of the words, "Whosoever is born of God committeth not sin; for His seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." That is to say, his heavenly generation preserves him. This heavenly generation is nothing else but eternal predestination, whereby God has loved His elect and made them pleasing in His sight in His own Beloved Son, before the foundation of the world, and so "they in the sanctuary have appeared before Him, to see His power and His glory," in order that they might be made participators in the inheritance of Him, to Whose image they have shown themselves conformed. I have therefore observed that these are as if they had never sinned, because whatever faults they may seem to have committed in time, none at all shall appear in eternity, for the Father's "charity covereth a multitude of sins." David called those blessed also "whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered." At the thought of this, I, even I, have suddenly experienced such an infusion of confidence and joy as altogether exceeded the earlier emotion of fear, felt in the place of horrors, that is, in the place of the second vision. For it seemed to me that I was of the number of these blessed ones. Would to God that my happiness had been lasting! Again, O Lord, again,

“visit me with Thy salvation, that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the joy of Thy nation.”

O place of true rest, and, in my opinion, well deserving to be called a bedchamber! For we do not here behold God either, as it were, excited with anger, or as if distracted with care; but His will is proved to be “good and acceptable and perfect.” This vision soothes instead of terrifying. It lulls to rest, instead of arousing, our unquiet curiosity. It calms the mind instead of fatiguing it. Here is found perfect repose. The tranquillity of God tranquillises all about Him, and the contemplation of His rest is rest to the soul. Here we behold Him as a King, Who, after spending the day in hearing and judging causes in His tribunal, now, in the evening quiet, dismisses the multitudes, and laying aside all disturbing cares, retires to His royal residence for the night, and enters His bedchamber with a few friends, whom He condescends to honour with this privilege of special familiarity. Here we may see Him taking His rest with equal security and privacy. Here we behold Him looking all the more serene because He perceives around Him only the faces of those whom He loves. If, my brethren, it should ever be the lot of any of you to be so transported for a time into this secret sanctuary of God, and there so rapt and absorbed as to be distracted or disturbed by no necessity of the body, no importunity of care, no stinging of conscience, or, what is more difficult to avoid, no inrush of corporeal images from the senses or the imagination, such a one can truly say, “The King hath brought me into His bedchamber.” But I would not rashly affirm that this is the bedchamber whereof the Spouse boasts. Still it is a bedchamber, and a bedchamber of the King, because of the three places, to which I have assigned the three visions, only this “place is in peace.” For, as I have shown, very little rest is enjoyed in the first, where the Lord, by showing Himself admirable, exercises our curiosity in the labour of inquiry; and none at all in the second, because He here appears so terrible as to overpower with fear our mortal infirmity. But in this third place, He deigns to reveal Himself not so terrible, not so admirable, as amiable, as serene, as tranquil, as “sweet and mild and plenteous in mercy to all that” gaze upon Him.

Now, to facilitate the retention of all that I have said in this lengthy discourse, I will repeat it in brief summary. Remember, then, the three times, the three merits, and the three rewards. Observe the times in connexion with the garden, the merits in the storeroom, and the rewards in the threefold contemplation of him who seeks the King’s bedchamber. I have already said quite enough about the storeroom. As concerning the garden and the bedchamber, if anything occurs

to me that ought to be added or to be presented in a different way, you shall have it in its proper place. Otherwise you must be satisfied with what you have heard now, for I will not make any repetition, lest, which God forbid, that should engender weariness, which is spoken solely to the praise and glory of the Bridegroom of the Church, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXIV

ON DETRACTION AND THE NECESSITY OF UNITING FAITH WITH GOOD WORKS

"The righteous love thee."

At length, my brethren, and for the third time, I have come back to you from Rome. And this my last return has been attended with more auspicious omens, and more manifest indications of heaven's good-will. For the Lion has ceased to rage, the power of evil has passed away, and peace has been restored to the Church. "In her sight is brought to nothing the malignant," who, for nearly eight years, kept her in a state of turmoil and confusion with his fearful schism. But shall it be to no purpose that I am brought back to you from such great dangers? No, my brethren, since I have been restored to your desires, I am willing and ready to help you along in your spiritual advancement. As I owe my life to the merit of your prayers, so I wish to live only for your interests and your salvation. Since, therefore, it is your desire that I should resume my lectures on the Canticle, begun so long ago, I willingly consent. But I judge it better to repeat and complete the last sermon, which I was forced to break off, than to enter upon something altogether new. Yet I am afraid that my mind, so long distracted and preoccupied with cares, as unworthy as they were various, is not in a condition to handle this subject in a manner befitting its dignity. "But what I have I give you." And to my faithful service God will be able to add that which I have not, in order that I may transmit it to you. In case He should not, then, let my intelligence be censured, not my good-will.

We have to begin, I think, with the words, "The righteous love thee." But before proceeding to explain what they mean I must consider to whom they belong, that is, who is the speaker. For the commentator is expected to supply what the inspired author has passed over in silence. Perhaps, then, I had better assign these words to the "young maidens," and regard them as a continuation of the foregoing. For after saying, no doubt, to their mother, the Spouse, "We will

be glad and rejoice in thee, remembering thy breasts more than wine," they went on and added this also, "The righteous love thee." As I suppose, they did so on account of some of their own number, who, whilst seeming to run with the others, yet entertained far different sentiments, seeking the things that were their own, not walking with simplicity or sincerity, but envying their mother's incommunicable glory, and taking occasion to murmur against her from the fact that she alone had been brought into the storehouses. What is this but the same which the Apostle refers to as "perils from false brethren"? These are the persons whose reproaches presently oblige the Spouse to justify herself, when she answers them thus, "I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem." It is, therefore, because of those who censure and calumniate her, that the good, the simple, the humble, and the meek "young maidens say to their mother, in order to console her, "The righteous love thee." "Pay no heed," they tell her, "to the wicked reprehensions of these censorious ones, because the righteous love thee." There is certainly a sweet consolation in the consciousness that we possess the love of the virtuous, when, whilst doing good, we are maligned by the wicked. The esteem of the good, combined with the testimony of our own conscience, is sufficient to "stop the mouth of them that speak wicked things." "In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the meek hear and rejoice." "Let the meek rejoice," says the Spouse. "Let me but please the meek, and patiently will I endure whatever reproaches the envy of the reprobate may hurl against me."

It is in this sense, as it seems to me, that the "young maidens" spoke the words, "the righteous love thee." Such an interpretation, at least in my judgment, has the merit of being very reasonable and natural. For almost in every company of "young maidens some individuals are to be found who curiously examine the conduct of the Spouse, but rather to discover matter for criticism than models for imitation. The virtues of their seniors are a source of bitter grief to such, whereas they are eager to feed their minds on their failings. You may notice them going apart, meeting and sitting together, and then relaxing their insolent tongues to indulge in the detestable sin of murmuring. They are closely conjoined one with another, and they all but forget to breathe, in the ardour of their desire to hear and to speak detraction. They contract a friendship with a view to calumny; they live in harmony for the propagation of discord; they form an alliance to wage war against fraternal charity; and with an equal affection of concordant malignity they celebrate together the symposium of hate. It was thus Pilate and Herod acted of old, concerning whom the Evangelist narrates that they "were made friends on that same day," namely, on the day of the Lord's Passion.

“When (they) come together, therefore, into one place, it is not now to eat the Lord’s Supper,” but rather to drink themselves and to give others to drink of the “chalice of devils.” And whilst the tongues of some communicate the poison which brings souls to a state of perdition, the minds of others welcome the spiritual death that enters through their ears. Thus, according to Jeremias, “death is come up through our windows,” whilst with itching ears and restless tongues, we are busy in ministering to each other the deadly cup of detraction. Oh, let not my soul have part in the council of slanderers, since they are objects of hatred to God, as the Apostle bears witness, saying that detractors are “hateful to God.” And hear how the Lord Himself, speaking in the Psalms, confirms this: “The man,” He says, “that in private detracted his neighbour, him did I persecute.”

This, my brethren, should not surprise us, since detraction is recognised to be more particularly and more directly opposed and irreconcilably antagonistic to charity, which is God, than any of the other vices, as you yourselves may take notice. For whoever commits a sin of detraction proves in the first place that he is himself void of charity. What other motive can such an offender have except to bring him whom he slanders into hatred and contempt with his hearers? The detracting tongue, moreover, wounds charity in all who listen to it, and, as far as depends on it, utterly destroys and extinguishes that virtue. And not alone on those present has it this effect, but on the absent also, as many as the flying word may happen to reach through the agency of the listeners, who repeat what they have heard. Behold how easily and how speedily a countless number of souls can be infected with the deadly virus of this moral plague by the slanderous word that “runneth swiftly.” Therefore, the Prophet says of detractors, “Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood,” as swift, that is to say, as the “word” that “runneth swiftly.” There is, perhaps, but one speaker, and he speaks but one word. And yet, that word, insinuating the poison through the ears, murders in a single moment the souls of a multitude of hearers. For the heart that is filled with the bitter venom of envy, can only send forth the bitterness of malice through the instrument of the tongue, according to the testimony of Christ, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

There are different species of detractors. Some without shame or concealment spit forth the poison of this pestilence, according as it rises from the heart to the mouth. Others attempt to cover the malignity conceived in their minds and which they cannot keep in, under the mask of a pretended embarrassment. You may observe them beginning by heaving deep sighs. Then, slowly and solemnly, with melancholy countenance, with downcast looks and whining voice, they give

free rein to their detracting tongues, and their slanders are received by the listener only the more unsuspectingly, the more evidently they appear to be spoken with reluctance and to proceed from compassion rather than from malice. “It grieves me much,” says one, “because of my great love for him, that I have never been able to persuade so-and-so to give up such and such a fault.” “One thing,” says another, “is absolutely certain, namely, that nothing could ever have induced me to be the first to open my lips about this matter. But now that it has been made known by another, I cannot deny the fact. I am very sorry to have to admit that the report is true.” And he adds, “It is a great pity. For in other respects he is an excellent man, but herein, I candidly confess, there is no excuse for him.”

Having said so much against this most malignant vice, I will now return to the order of my exposition, and I will try to explain whom, in this place, we are to understand by the “righteous.” I do not suppose any sensible person will here understand this word in its original meaning, as signifying straightness in material things, as if they who love the Spouse were the upright in body. Hence I have to understand and explain it of spiritual righteousness, that is, of the uprightness or rectitude of the heart and the mind. For it is the Spirit Who speaks, “comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” It was, therefore, according to the soul, not according to the body, composed of the slime of earthy matter, that God made man upright, when “He created him to His own image and likeness.” For “the Lord our God is righteous, and there is no iniquity in Him.” Therefore, the righteous God made man righteous, like unto Himself. That is to say, He made man without iniquity, just as “there is no iniquity in Him.” Moreover, iniquity is a vice, not of the flesh, but of the spirit. By this you may know that it is in your spiritual nature, not in your gross and material part, that the image of God has to be preserved or restored. For “God is a Spirit,” and they who wish to retain or to recover their likeness to Him, must enter into their own hearts and apply themselves in spirit to that spiritual work. There “beholding the glory of the Lord with open face,” they shall “be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Yet God also has given man the uprightness that characterises his bodily frame. And perhaps the reason of this was in order that such physical erectness of our exterior and baser element, might admonish our interior, spiritual man, who is made to God’s image, of the necessity of preserving spiritual uprightness, and that the beauty of the body might stand in reproachful contrast with the deformity of the soul. For what can be so incongruous as to bear about a crooked

mind in a straight body? It is surely a shame and a monstrosity that, whilst this "earthy vessel," this material envelope, keeps its eyes lifted up from the earth, directs its looks to the heavens, and contemplates with delight the luminaries of the firmament, the rational soul, on the contrary, that spiritual and celestial creature, should bend her gaze to the ground, that is, should lower her internal faculties and affections to the level of material things, and, whereas she ought to be "brought up in purple," should attach herself to unworthy objects and "embrace the dung" as the filth-loving swine. Be ashamed, O my soul, of having thus exchanged the divine image for the brutish. Be ashamed of wallowing in filth, thou who art of heavenly origin. "O my soul," exclaims the body, "compare thyself with me and be confounded! Created righteous, like to thy Creator, thou hast obtained in me also a helper like to thyself, according to the analogy of corporeal uprightness. Whithersoever thou mayest turn thy gaze, whether to God above thee or to me below, 'for no man ever hated his own flesh,' on all sides thou dost behold various reflections of thine own beauty, everywhere in accordance with the dignity of thy position, thou art receiving friendly admonitions from the Spirit of wisdom. But whilst I have retained and preserved the prerogative of uprightness bestowed upon me on thy account, what confusion ought to overwhelm thee for having lost thine? Why must the Creator behold His own divine image effaced from thee, the while He contemplates thine preserved and constantly reproduced and exhibited in me? Now thou hast turned to thine own confusion whatever help was due to thee from me. Changed from a rational to a brutal and bestial spirit, thou art unworthy any longer to inhabit a human body, and dost but abuse my service."

Such deformed souls cannot love the Spouse, since, being of the world, they are not friends of the Bridegroom. "Whosoever," says St. James, "will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God." Therefore, it is deformity or curvature of soul to seek after and to relish "the things that are upon earth"; whilst, on the contrary, spiritual uprightness consists in meditating and desiring "the things that are above." But, in order that this uprightness be perfect, it must be found not alone in the thoughts and the feelings of the mind, but also in external conduct harmonising therewith. So, I would call him perfectly upright whose mind is imbued with sound doctrine, and whose practice is in keeping with his principles. Let faith and conduct reveal to you the condition of the invisible soul. That soul you may consider as righteous which professes the Catholic faith and performs the works of justice. But if either faith or works be lacking, you need have no hesitation in pronouncing her to be deformed. For

thus we read, “If thou rightly offerest and dost not rightly divide, thou hast sinned.” We indeed “rightly offer” each of these two, faith and good works; but we do not “rightly divide” one from the other. Do not, my brethren, be righteous offerers and unrighteous dividers. Why would you separate works from faith? Such a separation is sinful and destroys the life of your faith, since “faith without good works is dead.” And would you offer to the Lord a victim that is already dead? For if charity be, so to speak, the soul of faith, what is that faith which “worketh” not “by charity” but a lifeless corpse? Are you, then, doing well in honouring God with such a putrescent victim? Are you doing well in trying to propitiate Him by offering Him the faith you have murdered? How can that be a peace-offering which is immolated with so much dreadful discord? It is not surprising that Cain, after murdering his faith, should rise up also against his brother. Why, O Cain, dost thou wonder that the Lord Who despises thyself has not regard to thy offerings? Nor is it anything strange if He refuses to look upon thee, who art so divided in thyself. Why dost thou deliver up thy soul to envy, whilst thy hand is employed in the work of piety? Thou canst not make peace with God so long as thou remainest at variance with thyself. Thou dost but further provoke instead of appeasing His anger, and if not yet indeed by impiously striking, at least by not rightly dividing. For thou art already a fideicide, viz., a slayer of thy faith, although not as yet a fratricide. Not even now canst thou be righteous when thy hand is extended to God, whilst at the same time envy and hatred of thy brother keep thy heart bent down to the earth. How can righteousness have place in thee, whose faith is dead, whose work is death, whose devotion is extinguished, whose bitterness is exceeding great? The offerer, I allow, has faith, but his faith contains no vivifying love. The oblation is right, but cruel the division.

The death of faith, my brethren, is its separation from charity. You believe in Christ. Then do the works of Christ, that your faith may live. Let your faith be animated by love, and its sincerity proved by virtuous actions. Do not stoop to the earth by worldly conduct, you whom a heavenly faith holds erect. You say that you abide in Christ. Therefore you “also ought to walk even as He walked.” But if you seek your own glory, if you are jealous of the prosperity of others, if you speak evil of the absent, or retaliate injuries, in this you are not imitating Christ. To such false Christians I say: You proclaim by your words that you know God, and yet you deny Him by your deeds. Surely you have not acted well but wickedly in giving your tongues to Christ, and your hearts to the devil. Hear, therefore, what the Almighty says of such: “With their lips they glorify Me, but

their heart is far from Me." No, you cannot be righteous, since you make so unrighteous a division. You are unable to lift up your heads, pressed down as they are by the yoke of Satan. Neither have you the power to draw yourselves erect, being "dominated by iniquity." For your "iniquities are gone over" your "head, and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon" you. For "Wickedness is seated upon the talent of lead," according to the Prophet Zachary. You now understand that even right faith cannot make a man righteous unless it "worketh by charity." And he who is without charity has not wherewith to love the Spouse. But neither are works, however right, sufficient to render the heart righteous, without right faith. For who would call him righteous that is not pleasing to God? But "without faith it is impossible to please God." He who is not pleasing to God cannot be pleased with God, since no one that is pleased with God can be displeasing to Him. Moreover, whoever is displeased with God, shall also be displeased with His Spouse. In what way, then, can he be righteous, who loves neither God nor the Church of God? For it is to the Church the "young maidens" say, "The righteous love thee." Since, therefore, neither faith without works, nor works without faith are sufficient for righteousness of soul, let us, my brethren, who have right faith in Christ, endeavour to make our ways and our wills also right. Let us lift up both our hearts and our hands to God that we may be found completely righteous, proving the rectitude of our faith by the righteousness of our actions. So shall we be lovers of the Bride, and the friends of the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXV

ON THE BLACKNESS AND THE BEAUTY OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE

"I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem."

You recollect, my brethren, what I said in my last discourse, that the Spouse is compelled to reply to the attacks of certain envious critics, who, in outward seeming, appear to belong to the company of "young maidens," but in disposition and sentiment are far removed from them. She answers them with the words, "I am black, but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem." Evidently they had been maligning her, reproaching her with her blackness. But observe the patience and benignity of the Spouse. Not only does she not return insult for insult, but she even meets malediction with benediction, calling them "daughters of Jerusalem," who, for their malice, deserved to be called daughters of Babylon, or daughters of Baal, or any other opprobrious name that might have occurred to her. Clearly, she has learned from the Prophet, or rather from the unction of grace which teaches mildness, that the "bruised reed" must not be broken, nor the "smoking flax" extinguished. She considered, therefore, that they who of themselves were sufficiently excited, should not be subjected to further provocation, nor have other irritants added to the torturing stings of envy. Rather she endeavoured to be "peaceful with them that hateth peace," knowing that she is a "debtor" even "to the unwise." Hence, she preferred to soothe them with words of gentleness, because she was more concerned to secure the salvation of these weaklings, than to avenge the wrong to herself.

Such perfection, my brethren, should be the ambition of all. But it is especially the ideal after which all prelates are bound to strive. For good and faithful superiors are well aware that it is not dignity and pomp that have been committed to their charge, but the eternal salvation of weak and languishing souls. Hence, whenever they discover, by the symptom of a querulous voice, the internal discontent of any of these, although it be manifested by outbursts of

reproachful and contumelious language against themselves, they realise that they are physicians rather than masters, and so instead of taking revenge, they immediately provide a remedy for this spiritual paroxysm. Here, then, is the reason why the Spouse calls her censurers “daughters of Jerusalem,” after enduring their malevolence and malignity, in order, namely, with words of kindness, to appease their disaffection, to calm their agitation, and to cure their envy. For it is written, “A mild answer breaketh wrath.” Nevertheless, in certain respects, such souls are really “daughters of Jerusalem,” and the Spouse speaks truth in calling them so. For, on account of the sacraments of the Church, common to them with the good, on account of the common profession of Catholic faith, and the (at least, visible) communion with all the faithful, and the hope of heaven, with regard to which we must not despair of any, so long as they live, no matter how sinful their lives may be—for these reasons, I say, the Spouse is right in giving the title “daughters of Jerusalem” even to the malcontents.

Let us examine what she means by saying “I am black (in colour) but beautiful” (of form—formosa). Is there a contradiction in these words, my brethren? God forbid! But I speak on account of the simple-minded, who are unable to distinguish between colour and form. Form has reference and relation to the composition of bodies, whereas colour, such as blackness, belongs only to the superficies. Not everything, therefore, which happens to be black is on this account alone to be considered as deformed. In the eye, for instance, black colour is not displeasing. Black stones have an agreeable effect in ornamentation. Black hair also enhances the beauty and charm of a clear complexion. And your own experience will furnish you with innumerable examples of the same. Countless are the things which, looking to their colour alone, you would pronounce unprepossessing, but which appear really beautiful in form. In this way, perhaps, the Spouse may combine with the loveliness of her form an unsightly defect of colour; yet this can only be the case in the place of her pilgrimage. For the time shall come when, in the fatherland, her glorious Bridegroom will “present her to Himself a glorious Bride, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” But if she said now that she has not blackness, she would deceive herself, and the truth would not be in her. Wherefore, my brethren, wonder not that she confesses her imperfection, saying, “I am black.” Yet, at the same time, she boasts that she is beautiful. How, indeed, could she be otherwise, to whom the Bridegroom said, “Come, My beautiful one”? But she who is invited to come, evidently has not yet arrived at her destination. So,

perhaps, this word “come” is used lest we should think the epithet “beautiful” applies, not to the discoloured Spouse, who is still advancing laboriously on her way, but to that blessed one that reigns immaculate in heaven.

But hear why she calls herself black, and why beautiful. Does she mean that she is black because of the benighted life she previously led under the power of the prince of darkness, whilst she still bore the image of the earthly man; and that she is beautiful by reason of the heavenly similitude, into which she was afterwards transformed, when she began to walk in newness of life? But if so, why does she not say in the past tense, “I was black,” rather than in the present, “I am black”? If, nevertheless, any one of you be satisfied with this interpretation, with regard to what follows “as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon,” it will be necessary to suppose that the Spouse compares herself to the “tents of Cedar” on account of her former evil life, and to the “curtains of Solomon” on account of her present sanctity. Tents and curtains sometimes mean the same in the Scriptures, as in that passage of Jeremias where he says, “My tents are destroyed on a sudden, and my curtains in a moment.” According to this sense, therefore, she was black, at first, like the hideous tents of Cedar, but later on she became beautiful as the splendid curtains of the King.

Let us now see whether both her blackness and her beauty cannot be explained with reference to her later and reformed life. If we consider the exterior of the saints, that aspect of them which strikes our senses, how lowly and abject they appear, how wretched and contemptible! And yet they are all the while most admirable in their interior, and “beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Does it not seem to you, my brethren, that every such soul can truly reply to those who taunt her with her blackness, “I am black but beautiful”? Would you like me to show you one of these souls, at once black and beautiful? “His epistles indeed, they say, are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible.” This was St. Paul. “O ye daughters of Jerusalem,” do you thus judge St. Paul by his “bodily presence,” and despise him as discoloured and deformed, because you perceive him to be a man of diminutive stature, and afflicted “in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in many more labours, in stripes above measure, in deaths often”? For these are the things that make him black. It is because of these that the Doctor of Nations is reputed inglorious, ignoble, discoloured, obscure, as the “offscouring of all.” Yet is not he the one that was rapt up to paradise, who, passing through the first and the second, penetrated, “by reason of his purity,” even to the third heaven?

O truly most beautiful soul, which, although dwelling in a weak little body, is yet so honoured as to be admitted to the vision of the celestial loveliness, neither rejected by angelic magnificence, nor repelled by the Divine Glory! And do you call such a soul black? She is “black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.” She is black in your judgment, but beautiful in the estimation of God and of His angels. And, although black, she is so only in her exterior. But to St. Paul “it is a very small thing to be judged by you,” or by those who judge “according to the face.” For man “looketh on the face, but God regardeth the heart.” Therefore, even if his exterior is black, he is yet beautiful interiorly; so that he is pleasing to Him to Whom he has striven to approve himself, although not to you, for if he still pleased you he would not be a servant of Christ. O blessed blackness, which begets in us whiteness of soul, luminousness of knowledge, and purity of conscience!

Hear what God promises, through His Prophet, to persons “black” with this kind of blackness, who appear to be discoloured by the humility of penance, or by the fervour of charity, as if by the scorching heat of the sun. “If your sins be as scarlet they shall be made as white as snow; if they be as red as crimson, they shall be white as wool.” Surely, then, we ought not to despise in the saints this outward blackness which becomes the source of interior brightness, and so prepares in the soul the seat of wisdom. For, according to the Wise Man, wisdom “is the brightness of eternal life.” Hence, truly bright must that soul be which she chooses for her seat. But since we know that “the soul of the just man is the seat of wisdom,” I am safe in concluding that the soul of the just man must be also bright and luminous. Indeed, it is likely enough that justice and spiritual brightness mean the same thing. Now, St. Paul was just, since for him was “laid up a crown of justice.” Therefore there can be no doubt that his soul was bright, and therein was seated wisdom, so that he could “speak wisdom amongst the perfect,” “wisdom hidden in a mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew.” Moreover, this brightness of wisdom and justice in him, was either produced or merited by the external blackness of his “bodily presence,” and his “much watchings” and his “fastings often.” Consequently, even the very blackness of St. Paul is far more precious and attractive than any degree of external beauty, than all the pomp and glory of earthly kings. Not to be compared with it is any comeliness of mortal flesh, any fairness of a skin destined as fuel for the flames, any loveliness of a delicately-tinted complexion, soon to be the spoil of death and putrefaction, any magnificence of dress liable to the corrupting influence of age, any splendour of gold and precious stones, or

of anything else that passes away with time.

Good reason have the saints, therefore, for devoting and giving themselves up with all diligence to the business of caring for and embellishing the inward man, who is made to the image of God and "renewed day by day"; whilst they contemptuously refuse any adornment or superfluous attention to their outward man "who is corrupted." For they feel convinced that nothing can be so acceptable to God as His own image, provided it has been restored to its original beauty. Therefore, "all" their "glory is within," not outside, that is to say, not in the flower of the field, or in the mouths of the multitude, but in the Lord. Hence do they say, "This is our glory, the testimony of our conscience," because the only witness of their conscience is God, Whom alone they desire to please, and in pleasing Whom the only true and sovereign glory consists. Certainly, no small glory is that which is within, in which even the Lord of glory disdains not to glory, as David tells us when he says, "All the glory of the King's daughter is within." Besides, each one's glory is all the more secure, the more he possesses it within himself, and not in another. However, it is not alone in the interior brightness, but also in the exterior blackness that there is found occasion for glorying, lest anything in the saints should go for loss, but that all things might "co-operate unto good" for them. Hence we see them glorying in tribulations as as well as in hope. "Gladly," says the Apostle, "will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." O infirmity worthy to be desired with all ardour, which is compensated for by the power of Christ! Who will grant me not only to be infirm, but to be utterly forsaken and abandoned by my own strength and my own power, in order that I may be propped up by the power and strength of the "Lord of virtues"! For "power is made perfect in infirmity," as Christ bears witness. Hence St. Paul could affirm, "When I am weak, then am I powerful."

This being so, the Spouse most skilfully turns to her own glory what her censurers taunted her with as a reproach, boasting not only of her beauty, but also of her blackness. For she is not ashamed of this blackness, knowing that the same kind of blackness appeared even in her Bridegroom. And what matter for glorying it is to be assimilated to Him! Therefore, in her eyes there can be nothing so glorious as to "bear the reproach of Christ." Hence that "voice of exultation and of salvation," "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord, Jesus Christ." The ignominy of the cross is gratifying to him who is not ungrateful to the Crucified. It is blackness indeed, but it is also the image and likeness of the Lord. Go to the Prophet Isaias, and he will describe for you how

he beheld Him in spirit. For whom but Christ does he call the “Man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity,” adding that “there is no beauty in Him nor comeliness”? And he goes on, “And we have reputed Him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins, and by His bruises we are healed.” Behold what makes Him black! Add to this the testimony of holy David, “Beautiful in form above the sons of men,” and you will have verified in the Bridegroom all that the Spouse witnesses of herself when she says, “I am black but beautiful.”

Does it not, then, seem to you, my brethren, that according to what has been said, He also could have replied to the Jews who reproached Him, “I am black but beautiful, O ye” sons “of Jerusalem.” Black assuredly was He in Whom there was “no beauty nor comeliness.” Black also as being “a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.” Again, why should I be afraid to call Him black Who even made Himself “sin,” as the Apostle declares? Lastly, contemplate Him, clad in a ragged and dirty mantle, livid with wounds, defiled with spittle, pale with the pallor of death, and surely now at least you will acknowledge Him to be black. Then question the apostles as to the appearance He presented on the mountain; or ask the angels what is it that makes them desire to gaze upon Him, and you will doubtless marvel at what they shall tell you of His beauty. Therefore, He is beautiful in Himself, but black for our sakes. Yet even in Thy Human Form, according to which Thou art my Brother, how beautiful Thou art to me, O Lord Jesus! Not because of the mighty miracles of Thy divine power, which render Thee so illustrious, but “on account of Thy truth, and Thy meekness, and Thy justice.” Blessed is the man who diligently studies Thee conversing as a Man amongst men, and endeavours to imitate Thee in the practice of these virtues, to the utmost of his power! Already has Thy “beautiful one” obtained this part of her beatitude, the first fruits, as it were, of her dowry, being neither slow to copy what is beautiful in Thee, nor ashamed to participate in the sufferings which make Thee black. For this reason also she said, “I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.” And she added the comparisons, “as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon.” But these latter expressions are obscure, and we are too weary now to enter upon their exposition. You shall therefore have an opportunity for “knocking” by prayer at the door of Wisdom. If you knock sincerely, there is One Who will come to open for you these mysteries. Nor will He delay to open, since it is He Himself Who invites you to knock. For He it is that “openeth and no man shutteth,” the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is blessed for evermore.

Amen.

SERMON XXVI

IN WHAT SENSE THE BLACKNESS OF THE SPOUSE IS COMPARED TO THE TENTS OF CEDAR —THE SAINT'S LAMENT OVER HIS BROTHER

"As the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon."

"As the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon." Here, my brethren, I have to begin to-day, where yesterday's sermon ended. And you expect me now to explain these words of the Spouse, as well as the manner of their connexion with the text of my last discourse, "I am black but beautiful," with which they express a double comparison. As for the connexion, it may be considered in either of two ways. Both comparisons may be referred to the first clause of the foregoing, viz., "I am black." Or we may take the first and second comparisons, namely, that of the tents of Cedar, and that of the curtains of Solomon, as relating, respectively, to the first and second parts of the sentence, "I am black, but beautiful." The former interpretation possesses the advantage of greater simplicity and clearness. However, I mean to try both. And I will begin with the latter, which appears to be the more difficult. As a matter of fact, the only difficulty is to see what the "pavilions of Solomon" have in common with beauty; for the connexion between Cedars and blackness will be sufficiently patent to all, when it is remembered that the word "Cedar," in the Hebrew, signifies darkness. It is also evident that "tent" or "tabernacle" can here be taken in a consonant sense. For what are these tents but the bodies in which we sojourn? "For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek for one that is to come." We also carry on war in them, as in tents, using "violence" in order "to bear away the kingdom." Hence Job tells us that "the life of man upon earth is a warfare." And "whilst we" fight "in this body, we are absent from the Lord," that is, from the Light. For "the Lord is the Light." Therefore, the more we are absent from Him, waging war in the tents of our bodies, the more are we in darkness, that is to say, in Cedar. Consequently, every such exile ought to make his own that tearful cry, "Woe is

me that my sojourning is prolonged! I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar; my soul hath been long a sojourner." Hence, this dwelling of our body is not to be regarded as the residence of a citizen, nor as the home of a native, but either as the tent of a soldier, or the inn of a traveller. Yes, I repeat it: this body is but a tent, which by its opaqueness, so to speak, shuts out from the soul, during her sojourn on earth, the gladdening influence of the circumambient Light, permitting it to see that Light only "through a glass" and "in a dark manner," but not yet "face to face."

Would you like to know, my brethren, the cause of the Church's blackness and the reason why a certain amount of rust still adheres even to the most beautiful souls? I will tell you. It is all due, beyond question, to these tents of Cedar, to the prosecution of a laborious war, to the prolongation of their miserable sojourning, to the bitterness of their painful exile, to the weakness and yet oppressiveness of the body; "for the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things." Wherefore, they even "desire to be dissolved," that, being delivered from the body, they may fly to the embraces of Christ. Hence the cry of one such afflicted soul, "Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" Souls like this know very well that so long as they abide in the tents of Cedar, their purity cannot be altogether free from every spot and stain, from every shade of blackness. And so they long for dissolution, in order to be delivered perfectly from such defilements. This is the reason why the Spouse declared herself to be as black as the "tents of Cedar."

But in what sense is she "beautiful as the curtains of Solomon"? It seems to me, my brethren, that there is wrapt up in these curtains something I know not what, of such sublimity and sanctity that most certainly I would not presume to expose it at all, except at the bidding of Him Who hid it there and sealed it. For I have read that "he that is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed by glory." I will wait, therefore, and procrastinate. Do you, meantime, as usual, impetrate by your prayers the light and grace of the Holy Spirit, that with desires intensified in proportion to our confidence, we may return to this subject, which demands more than ordinary attention. And perhaps the devout suppliant will discover what would be missed by the rash inquirer. In any case, grief at the calamity which has befallen us will not allow me to continue.

How long shall I dissemble? How long shall I endeavour to conceal within myself the fire which consumes my broken heart and devours my very vitals? A secret flame creeps forward more freely, and more cruelly rages. What have I to

do with this Canticle of love, submerged as I am in an ocean of bitterness? The vehemence of my grief draws away my attention, and the anger of the Lord has drunk up my soul. For “my heart hath forsaken me,” since he is gone who used to leave me, in some sense, free for divine contemplation. But I have done violence to my feelings. I have striven to conceal my sorrow until now, afraid lest perhaps it should seem that faith had succumbed to natural affection. Therefore, whilst all others wept, I alone, with tearless eyes, followed the cruel bier, as you can yourselves bear witness. With tearless eyes I stood at the graveside until the last sad rites were all accomplished. Vested in my priestly robes, I pronounced with my own lips the usual prayers over the remains. With my own hands I sprinkled clay, according to custom, over my beloved Gerard’s body, soon to be changed itself to clay. They that watched me were weeping, and they wondered why I did not weep myself, although he was less the object of universal compassion than was I, who had been bereaved of him. For surely harder than iron must the heart have been that would not melt to see me surviving Gerard. His death was a common calamity, but this was reckoned as nothing in comparison with the personal loss to me. I tried to resist my sorrow with all the force I could gather from faith, striving to suppress even those vain involuntary emotions, occasioned by what is, after all, but our natural destiny, the debt of our mortality, the necessity of our condition, the ordinance of the Mighty One, the judgment of the Just One, the scourge of the Terrible One. Such reflections led me to restrain myself constantly, then and to the present, from overmuch weeping, whilst all the time I felt exceedingly sad and afflicted. For although I could control my tears, I had not the same power over my sorrow; but as it is written, “I was troubled and I spoke not.” But pent-up grief strikes its roots the more deeply within, becoming the more bitter, as I believe, from the fact that it is refused an outlet. My brethren, I have to acknowledge myself vanquished. I must now give vent to my interior anguish. I must exhibit my distress to the eyes of my children, that, realising its magnitude, they may think more kindly thoughts of my affliction and more sweetly console me.

You know, O my children, you know how reasonable is my sorrow, how worthy of tears is the loss I have sustained. For you understand how faithful a companion has been taken from my side “in the way in which I was walking.” You know what was his attentiveness to duty, his diligence at work, his sweetness and amiability of character. Who was so indispensable to me? By whom was I so much beloved? He was my brother by blood, but more my brother by religious profession. Oh, pity my lot, you to whom these things are

known! I was weak in body, and he supported me. I was pusillanimous, and he encouraged me. I was slothful and negligent, and he spurred me on. I was improvident and forgetful, and he acted as my monitor. Oh, whither hast thou been taken from me? Why hast thou been torn from my arms, “a man of one mind,” “a man according to my heart”? We have loved each other in life, how then is it that we are separated in death? O most cruel divorce, which only death could have power to cause! For when in life wouldst thou have so deserted me? Yes, it is unmistakably the work of death, this most woeful separation. For what but death, that enemy of all things sweet, would not have spared the sweet bond of our mutual love? With good reason is that called death and a double death, which in its rage has slain two in carrying off one. Has not that separation been death to me also? Yea, and especially to me, for whom is preserved a life more bitter than any death. For I live indeed, but only to endure a living death. And shall I call such an existence life? O unfeeling death, how much kinder it had been to deprive me of the possession of life than of its fruit! For life without fruit is worse than death, since we are told that two evils, the axe and the fire, await the tree that bears no fruit. Therefore, through envy of my labours, “thou hast removed far from me my friend and my neighbour,” to whose zeal was mainly due whatever fruit those labours yielded. Hence it were far better for me to have lost my life than thy company, O my brother, who wert the earnest stimulator of my studies in the Lord, my faithful helper, and my prudent counsellor. Why, I ask, have we been so united in brotherly love? Or, so united, why so parted? O most mournful lot! But it is my fate that is pitiable, not his. For thou, sweet brother, if separated from thy dear ones, art now united to others still more dear. But what consolation remains now to wretched me, after losing thee, my only comfort? Our bodily companionship was a source of enjoyment to both of us, on account of the conformity of our wills and sentiments, but I alone have suffered from our separation. The enjoyment was common, but I am left the monopoly of the sadness and the sorrow. “Wrath hath come upon me”; “wrath is strong over me.” Sweet was the presence of each to other, sweet our companionship, sweet our conversation. But whilst I have lost the happiness of us both, thou hast only exchanged it for better. For in this exchange “there is a great reward.”

With what usuary of delights, with what wealth of benedictions, art thou compensated for our absence to-day, O my dearest brother! In return for my company, thou art now enjoying the presence of Christ. Nor canst thou deem it a loss to be separated from us, associated, as thou surely art, to the angelic choirs above. Thou, therefore, hast no cause to complain of thy separation from us,

since the Lord of Majesty has so generously admitted thee to the society and fellowship of Himself and of His angels. But what have I obtained in place of thee? How I should like to know what sentiments thou dost now entertain towards me, that "only one" of thine, distraught and overwhelmed as I am with sufferings and solicitudes, and bereft of thee, the staff of my weakness!—if indeed it be permitted to one who has been plunged into the abyss of Light Divine, and submerged in the ocean of everlasting felicity, to concern himself still with his miserable friends on earth. For, although thou didst formerly know us according to the flesh, perhaps now thou dost no longer know us. Perhaps, having "entered into the powers of the Lord," thou wilt henceforth "be mindful of justice alone," and forgetful of us. "But he who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," and is completely transformed into a sort of divine affection, so that, being filled with God, he can no longer take interest or pleasure in anything but God and in the things in which God takes interest and pleasure. Yet "God is charity," and the more closely the creature is united to Him, the more full he is of charity. Again, although God is not passible, He is yet compassionate, for to Him "it is proper to have mercy and to spare." Therefore, must thou, too, dearest brother, be merciful, since thou cleavest to One so merciful, even though misery has now no access to thee. Thou must still feel compassion, though suffer thou canst not. Hence, thy affection, far from failing, has but been transformed. In putting on God, thou has not put off thy care for us, because even "He hath care for us," as we learn from St. Peter. Thou hast laid aside only thy infirmity, not also thy piety. And as "charity never falleth away," thou wilt not "forget me unto the end."

It seems to me that I hear my brother answering and saying, "Can a mother forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." It surely is not expedient that I should be forgotten by thee. Thou knowest how I am situated, where I lie prostrate, in what a plight thou hast left me. And now there is none to reach me a helping hand. In every emergency I still, as was my wont, look around for Gerard, but he is nowhere to be seen. Then, alas! I groan with misery, as "a man without help." Whom shall I henceforth consult in my doubts? On whom shall I lean when misfortune overtakes me? Who will bear my burdens? Who will deliver me from dangers? Were not my steps in every undertaking directed by the eyes of Gerard? Was not my own breast, O Gerard, less intimately acquainted with my cares than was thine, less frequently invaded, less sharply tormented? With that persuasive and eloquent tongue of thine, how often hast thou saved me from the

distraction of worldly discourses, and restored me to my dearly loved silence! For the Lord had given him “a learned tongue,” that he might know when he ought to utter speech. So, by the prudence of his answers, and by the grace given him from above, he gave such satisfaction both to his brethren and to strangers, that I might almost say nobody had ever any need to speak to me when Gerard had first been consulted. He would go to meet visitors, opposing himself as a rampart against their incursions, to prevent them from breaking in upon my leisure. If any there were whom he himself could not satisfy, these he conducted to me, sending the others away contented. What shall I say of his wonderful industry? Or what of his loyalty to his friends? Well he knew both how to gratify his brother, and how to fulfil the duties of charity. Whom did he ever send away empty? For the rich he had counsel, and for the poor relief. Surely he did not seek what was his own, who, in order to deliver me from care, was willing that himself should be overwhelmed with cares. For in his profound humility, he hoped to derive more abundant fruit from my leisure than from any studies of his own. Yet he sometimes begged to be removed from his office of procurator, and to be replaced by some other more worthy to fill it. But where was such a one to be found? Nor was he attached to that office (as so often happens) by any inordinate affection, since he discharged its functions from the sole motive of charity; and whereas he laboured more than any other, he received less than any other, so that often, whilst providing others with what they needed, he himself was wanting in many things necessary, such as food and clothing. Hence, when he perceived the approach of death, “O God,” he protested, “Thou knowest that, so far as depended on me, I have always desired solitude, to be at leisure to attend to Thee and to myself. But I have been forced to remain in distracting occupations by the fear of Thee, by the will of my brethren, by the duty of obedience, and especially by my sincere affection for him who is at once my abbot and my brother.” Such indeed was the case. Thanks to thee, O my brother, for all the fruit (if there has been any) of my studies in the Lord. Whatever progress I have made myself, and whatever help I may have given to others, all is due to thee. Thou wert overburdened with temporal affairs whilst I, at thy expense, was enjoying repose, or at least occupied with the more sacred duties of the divine service, or with the more profitable employment of instructing my spiritual children. For how could I be otherwise than perfectly at ease within, when I knew that thou wert busying thyself without, as my own right hand, the light of my eyes, my heart and my tongue? And indeed thou wert to me an unwearied hand, and a “simple eye,” and a heart full of prudence, and a tongue

speaking judgment, as it is written, “The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak judgment.”

But why have I spoken of his exterior employments, as if Gerard were inexperienced in the interior life, as if he were a stranger to spiritual gifts? Those spiritual persons who knew him, knew also how redolent of the Spirit his words were. His brethren knew how his thoughts and his actions savoured not of the flesh, but were animated all with spiritual fervour. Who was more strict than he in the observance of the Rule? Who more austere in bodily mortification, more rapt and exalted in divine contemplation, or more subtle and profound in discourse than was Gerard? How often in discussion with him have I not learned truths which had hitherto escaped me! And I, who had come as the teacher, went away as the one taught. Do not be surprised that this has been my experience, since even great and wise men testify that the same thing has happened to themselves in conversation with Gerard. He did not indeed possess book-learning, but he possessed the intelligence which is its source and author, and he also possessed the light of the Holy Spirit. Both in the greatest things and in the least he showed himself equally wise and resourceful. For instance, with regard to building operations, to agriculture, to horticulture, to waterworks, indeed to all the different arts and trades which belong to country life—in all this variety of business was there anything, I ask, to which Gerard’s skill and resource were not equal? His universal knowledge of practical affairs enabled him easily to superintend the quarrymen, the workers in wood and iron, the farm-labourers, the gardeners, the shoemakers, and the weavers. Wisest of all in the estimation of each of his brethren, he still looked upon himself as altogether devoid of wisdom. Would to God that many, although less wise than he, were not more deserving of the malediction, “Woe to you that are wise in your own eyes”! I am speaking to persons who are aware of all this. But I might say still more of him, and greater things than what is generally known. However, I will refrain, for he is my flesh and my brother. Yet this I confidently affirm, that to me he was useful in all things and in a degree beyond all others. He made himself useful in little things as in great, in private as in public, both at home and abroad. On him I depended wholly, not without reason, since he was my all. He left to me hardly anything more than the name and the honour of superior, for he did all the work himself. I bore the title of abbot, but he had the largest share of the solicitudes of government. Deservedly, therefore, did “my spirit rest upon him,” to whom it was owing that I could “delight in the Lord,” preach the word with freedom, and give myself up to prayer with an easy mind. Yes, to thee, O my brother, to thee I

owe a more tranquil peace of mind than my office would permit without thee, sweeter delights in repose, richer results from my preaching, greater devotion at my prayers, more frequent opportunities for reading, a stronger affection of divine love.

Alas! thou hast been taken from me, and with thee all these graces. All my consolations and all my joys have vanished together with thee. Now cares rush in upon me. Now troubles assail me on all sides. Afflictions have surrounded me, finding me abandoned and all alone. For only such companions remained with me after thy departure, and, unassisted, I groan beneath the burden. That burden I must now either sink under or lay aside, since thou has withdrawn the support of thy shoulders. Oh, who will grant me soon to die and follow thee? To die instead of thee I should not ask, as that would be to wrong thee, by delaying thy entrance into glory. But to survive thee, what is it but "labour and sorrow"? So long as I live, I shall live in bitterness, I shall live in sadness. This shall be my sole consolation, that, without respite I shall always be a prey to sorrow and anguish. I will not spare myself. I will myself co-operate in my own chastisement with the hand of the Lord, for it is "the hand of the Lord" that "has touched me." Me, I say, it has touched and smitten, not him, whom it has but beckoned to rest. It has slain me in the act of cutting short his exile. I say "cutting short his exile," rather than "slaying him," for surely it would not be true to call that a slaying which is rather a transplanting, an exchanging of a mortal for an immortal existence. But that which to him was the portal of life was the stroke of death to me. Indeed, I may truly say it was I who died by his death, not Gerard, who "fell asleep in the Lord." Gush forth, gush forth now, my tears, for he is gone, whose presence heretofore prevented your flowing, by excluding the cause. Open, ye fountains of my unhappy head, and pour yourselves out in rivers of water, if perchance, you may thus suffice to wash away the soil of my sins, whereby I have called down upon me the just anger of heaven. When my tears shall have appeased and consoled the Lord, then, perhaps, I may deserve that He also should grant me a little consolation. But He will do this only on condition that I cease not from weeping, for it is only those who mourn that He has promised shall be comforted. Wherefore, be indulgent towards me, all you that are holy, and let every spiritual person bear with me in my lamentation in the spirit of mildness. Let natural affection rather than custom be considered in judging my sorrow. For we daily see the dead mourning their dead, much lamentation and little fruit. We do not find fault with the grief itself, unless it be immoderate, but with the cause of it. The former is a part of our

nature, and the disturbance it produces is the penalty of transgression. But the cause of this grief is often vanity and sin. For, if I mistake not, the world laments only the loss of the glory of the flesh, and of temporal advantages. And they who weep for such things, are worthy themselves to be wept for. But is this my own case? The emotion of sorrow is the same, indeed; but far different are the motives, far different the intention. For certainly I am not complaining of the loss of any worldly object. I mourn over the removal of a faithful helper over the loss of a trusty counsellor in the things that appertain to God. I lament and grieve for Gerard. The cause of my tears is Gerard, my brother according to the flesh, but more closely related according to the spirit, and the confidant and partner of all my designs.

My soul cleaved to his. We two were made one, less by the ties of flesh and blood than by sameness of sentiment. Connected by the bond of consanguinity, we were still more closely united by our spiritual relationship, by the conformity of our minds, and the harmony of our wills. As we were thus but “one heart and one soul,” the sword of death pierced this common soul of him and me, and dividing it in two, placed one part in heaven, and left the other lying prostrate in the mire of the earth. I, dearest brethren, I am that wretched part, cast prone upon the ground, despoiled of half of myself, and that the more excellent. And will you say to me “weep not”? My very vitals have been torn out, and shall it be said to me, “do not feel”? But I do feel; oh, yes, I feel, because “my strength is not the strength of stones, nor is my flesh of brass.” I feel, most assuredly, and I am in pain, “and my sorrow is continually before me.” Certainly, He Who uses the scourge cannot reproach me with hardness and insensibility, as He did them of whom the Prophet complained, saying, “Thou hast struck them and they have not grieved.” I have confessed my sorrow and I have not denied it. You may call it carnal. I do not deny that it is human, any more than I deny that I am a man. If this does not content you, I will even allow it to be carnal, for “I am carnal, sold under sin,” devoted to death, liable to sufferings and sorrows. I am not, I acknowledge, insensible to pain. The thought of death coming to me or to mine, makes me shudder with horror. And Gerard was mine, surely mine. How could he be other than mine, who was my brother in blood, my son in religion, my father in solicitude, my consort in spirit, my bosom friend in love? He has abandoned me now, and I feel as if I were wounded, aye, wounded unto death,

Forgive me, my children. Rather, because you are my children, compassionate your father’s distress. “Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends,” who know how heavily the hand of the Lord has been laid upon me for

my faults. With the rod of His indignation He has stricken me, justly indeed, according to my deserts, but severely, considering my weakness. Surely no one who understands what Gerard was to me, will say it is a light punishment for me to be condemned to live without him. Yet, “I will not contradict the words of the Holy One.” I do not find fault with the judgment, by which each of us has received what we severally deserved, he the crown, and I the cross. Or shall it be said that I resist the judgment because I feel the pain? But to smart under the lash is not the same thing as to rebel against authority, for the former is but human, whilst the latter is an act of impiety. It is human, I say, and necessary to feel pleasure in the society of our friends, and sorrow in their absence. Familiar intercourse, especially between persons very dear to each other, has the effect of binding their hearts together. And this result, produced by mutual love in the friends whilst enjoying each other’s company, is revealed by their fear of parting, and by the sorrow they experience when actually separated. I grieve for thee, my best-beloved Gerard, not as if thy lot were pitiable, but only because thou art with me no more. And perhaps for this reason, I ought to grieve not for thee, but only for myself, who am still drinking of the chalice of bitterness. And the grief should be for me alone, because I drink alone, since thou hast no part with me in this cup. I alone have to suffer all the anguish which is accustomed to be shared equally by friends who, loving each other tenderly, are compelled to part.

Would to God I were certain that thou art not lost to me for ever, but only gone on before! Would to God I had assurance that, even though late, yet at length I shall follow thee, whithersoever thou hast gone! I have no doubt at all but that thou art now with those whom, about the middle of thy last night on earth, thou didst invite to praise the Lord, when, with beaming face and exulting voice, to the astonishment of all present, thou didst suddenly cry out in the words of David, “Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise ye Him in the high places.” For on thee, brother mine, though it was still midnight, the dawn had then already broken, and thy “night was illuminated as the day.” And assuredly that “night was thy light in thy pleasures.” I was summoned to witness this miracle, the miracle of a man triumphantly awaiting the approach of death and mocking at its terrors. “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” No, it had not any sting of fear or pain for him, but only an impulse to jubilant song. For he sang as he died and he died as he sang. O death, the mother of sorrows, thou art now become a source of joy! Thou, the enemy of glory, art now forced to subserve the interests of glory! The gate of hell, thou art changed

to the portal of heaven! The very pit of perdition, thou art made the means of salvation! And all that accomplished by a sinful mortal! Justly indeed, since thou in thy rashness didst impiously usurp dominion over the just and innocent Man. Thou art dead, O death! Thou hast been caught in that Divine Hook Which thou didst so incautiously swallow, and Whose words we read in the Prophet, “O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite.” Pierced, I say, with that Divine Hook, thou dost now afford to the faithful who pass through the midst of thee, a broad and pleasant passage into life. It was through thy open jaws that Gerard entered the fatherland, not alone with confidence, but even with joy and with songs of praise. When, therefore, I had reached his bedside, and had heard him completing the psalm with a clear voice, raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” Then, repeating the same words, with frequent cries of “Father, Father,” he turned to me, his countenance radiant, and said, “Oh, what a condescension on the part of God to become the Father of men! And what glory to men to be the sons and heirs of God! ‘For if sons, heirs also.’ ” So sang he, my brethren, whom we now lament. And I confess that the remembrance of this almost changes my mourning into joy, for when I think of his glory, I all but forget my own misery.

But bitter grief recalls me to myself. Anxious solicitude quickly turns away my attention from that consoling vision, as if awakening me from a light slumber. I will weep, therefore, but only for myself, since reason forbids me to weep for him. I believe, if he were now permitted to hold communication with us, that he would say, “Weep not over me, but weep for yourselves.” King David had reason to mourn for his parricidal son, because he knew that for him the exit from the womb of death was for ever blocked by the obstruction of his crime. Good cause had he also to sorrow over Saul and Jonathan, who were both swallowed up together in a common destruction, without any hope of a future deliverance. They shall rise, indeed, but not to life. Or rather, they shall even rise to life, but only in order that, living in everlasting death, they may die the more miserably. Yet I feel some hesitation, and not without cause, about including Jonathan in this sentence of doom. But although I have not the same reasons for my lamentation as King David had for his, I am not in want of others. In the first place I grieve over my own loss and over the loss sustained by the community. I grieve, in the second place, on account of the necessities of the poor, to whom Gerard was as a father. I grieve, thirdly, for the sake of our whole Order and of the religious state in general, which derived no little support and edification from the influence of thy zeal, the counsels of thy wisdom, and the example of thy

life, O my brother. I grieve, lastly, although not over thee, dearest Gerard, yet on account of thee. This, this is the cause of my greatest affliction, my passionate love of thee. And let no man be troublesome to me, telling me that I should not allow myself to be so overcome by natural feelings. For the kind-hearted Samuel was permitted to indulge his sorrow over the reprobate King Saul, and the pious David over the treacherous Absalom, and that, without the least prejudice to their faith, or the least opposition to heaven's appointment. "Absalom, my son!" wailed holy David; "my son, Absalom!" "And behold, a greater than" Absalom "is here." The Saviour Himself, looking upon Jerusalem, and foreseeing the fate that was soon to befall it, "wept over it." And shall not I be suffered to feel my own desolation, which is not future but actually present? Must I remain insensible and irresponsive to the smarting of my fresh and grievous wound? Surely I may weep from pain since Jesus wept from compassion. For at the grave of Lazarus He certainly did not reprove the mourners, nor command them to desist; but, on the contrary, He united His own tears with theirs. "And Jesus wept," says the Evangelist. Those tears of His, most assuredly, betrayed no want of confidence, but only testified to the reality of His Human Nature. For He immediately called upon the dead man, in order to show us that faith suffers no loss from the affection of sorrow.

So neither is my weeping a sign of a weak faith, but only an indication of my condition. From the fact that I cry out with pain on being smitten, it must not be supposed that I blame Him Who smites me. I only appeal to His compassion, and endeavour as best I can to soften His severity. Hence, though my words are full of grief, they are yet free from murmuring. Have I not acknowledged the perfection of His justice Who, by one compendious sentence, assigned to Gerard the reward, and to me the chastisement due to our respective merits? And still I say, the "sweet and righteous Lord" has done well by us both. "Mercy and judgment I will sing to Thee, O Lord." Let the mercy, which Thou hast shown to Thy servant Gerard, sing to Thee. And let the judgment, under which I groan, sing to Thee also. In the one Thou shalt be praised for Thy goodness, in the other for Thy justice. Or is there praise for goodness only? Yea, and for justice as well. "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment right." Gerard Thou gavest, Gerard Thou hast taken away; and if we lament his removal, we do not forget that he was but a loan. So we feel thankful that we were accounted worthy to have him even for a while. And our unwillingness to lose him is proportionate to the need which we had of him.

But I remember, O Lord, my compact and Thy condescension, "that Thou

mayst be justified in Thy words, and mayst overcome when Thou art judged." Last year when we were in Viterbo, in the cause of the Church, Gerard fell ill. His sickness grew more and more serious, until it seemed now that death was at hand. I could by no means reconcile myself to the thought of leaving in a foreign land the companion of my journey, and such a companion; nor would anything content me except to restore him to the community who had entrusted him to my care, for I knew how much all loved him, who in truth was exceedingly lovable. So I betook myself to prayer, with tears and sighs. And I said to Thee, "Wait, O Lord, wait until we have returned home. When he is restored to his brethren, take him then, if it pleases Thee, and I shall not complain." Thou didst grant my petition. Gerard recovered. We performed the task which Thou gavest us to do, and came back "with exultations, bearing the sheaves" of peace. Then I forgot our agreement, but Thou didst not forget. I am ashamed of these sobbings, which convict me of unfaithfulness. Why should I say more? Thou hast but claimed back what Thou didst lend us. Thou hast but taken what is Thine. But I am now compelled to put an end to my words by the flow of my tears. Do Thou, O Lord, I implore Thee, put an end and a limit to them.

SERMON XXVII

IN WHAT SENSE THE BEAUTY OF THE SPOUSE MAY BE COMPARED TO THE CURTAINS OF SOLOMON

"As the curtains of Solomon."

Now that we have discharged the duty, imposed by charity and natural affection, of escorting, so to speak, our friend Gerard on his way home from this land of exile, I purpose to take up again to-day the interrupted work of your edification. For it is an unseemly thing, in my opinion, to prolong our lamentations over one who rejoices, and an unmannerly thing to obtrude our tears on one who is seated at a banquet. And if we mourn for our own misery, we ought to take care that this be not excessive, lest otherwise we should seem to have loved Gerard not so much for his own sake as for the advantages which we derived from his presence. Then, let the thought of our dear one's joy temper the sorrow of the desolate. Let the belief that he is present and united with God render more endurable his absence from ourselves. Relying, therefore, on your prayers, I shall endeavour and do my best to throw light upon that mystery, whatever it is, which I perceive to be wrapped up in those curtains, referred to in illustration of the beauty of the Spouse. It has been touched upon already, if you remember, but left undiscussed. How the Spouse is "black as the tents of Cedar," I have sufficiently examined and explained. But how are we to understand the comparison "beautiful as the curtains of Solomon"? As if, forsooth, Solomon "in all his glory" possessed anything worthy to be compared to the beauty of the Spouse, or to the magnificence of her ornamentation. Were we to say that these mysterious curtains, just as the "tents of Cedar," are likened not to the Spouse's beauty, but to her blackness, the similitude would perhaps be intelligible, and I should not be at a loss for reasons to explain its congruity, as indeed I intend to prove to you later on. But if we suppose that the splendour and glory of some kind of curtains is to be considered as bearing an analogy and a resemblance to

the beauty of the Spouse, I certainly have particular need here of the assistance of Him Whose light you have implored, in order that I may be able to fathom this mystery and to unfold it in a manner befitting its dignity. For which of those things, which shine exteriorly, does not appear vile and hideous to a man of sound judgment, when compared with the interior grandeur of even any holy soul? What, I ask, can be found in this world, whose "fashion passeth away," possessing a beauty at all comparable to that of the soul, which, having put off the oldness of the earthly man, has put on the glory of the heavenly, and adorned, not with the vanity of material decorations, but with the magnificent jewels of noble virtues, appears higher and purer than the heavens, more resplendent than the sun? Do not, therefore, look to the earthly Solomon, when you desire to ascertain what those curtains are, of her resemblance to which in loveliness the Spouse is here represented as boasting.

What, then, does she mean by saying, "I am beautiful as the curtains of Solomon"? These words, my brethren, appear to me to contain a deep and marvellous meaning, if we are allowed to suppose that the reference is not to the historical Solomon, who reigned in Jerusalem, but to Him Who said of Himself, "Behold, a Greater than Solomon is here." For so truly a Solomon is this Solomon of mine, that not only is He called the Peaceful, which is the signification of the word Solomon, but he is even named Peace, since St. Paul tells us that "He is our Peace." With this Solomon, no doubt, something can be found which I need have no hesitation in comparing to the beauty of the Spouse. And with regard to the curtains in particular, observe what we read in the psalm, "Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain Surely it was not the earthly and merely human Solomon, wise though he was, and very powerful, that so "stretched out the heavens like a curtain," but rather He, Who, being not so much wise as Wisdom Itself, not only stretched out but even created the heavens. For it is to Him, and not to the other, these words belong, "when He"—namely, God the Father—"prepared the heavens, I was present." Unquestionably the Father had present to Him His Power and His Wisdom, that is to say, His Word, "when He prepared the heavens." And do not imagine that the Word stood by doing nothing, and merely as a spectator, because He says, "I was present" and does not add "I was preparing with Him." Read on a little further, and you will find that addition explicitly made, where He declares, "I was with Him forming all things." He has also told us that "what things soever He (the Father) doth, these the Son also doth in like manner." Consequently, the Word as well as the Father "stretched out the heavens like a curtain." Most beautiful

curtain, which with its wide expanse, covers the whole face of the earth as with a canopy, and delights the gaze of mortals with its wonderfully varied ornaments of sun, and moon, and stars! What can be grander than this curtain? What more magnificent than the heavens? Nevertheless, not even these are in any sense comparable to the glory and loveliness of the Spouse. For “the fashion” of such things “passeth away,” as being corporeal and perceptible to sense, “for the things which are seen, are temporal, but the things which are not seen, eternal.”

The beauty of the Spouse, on the contrary, is something spiritual, and hence only to be discerned by reason. It is also eternal, inasmuch as it is an image of eternity. Her beauty, for instance, comprises charity, and, as you have read, “charity never falleth off.” It also comprises justice, and her “justice continueth for ever and ever.” Patience, too, because, as it is written, “The patience of the poor shall not perish for ever.” What shall I say of her humility, of her voluntary poverty, which also appertains to her beauty? Does not the one merit an eternal kingdom and the other everlasting exaltation? In that beauty is also found “the fear of the Lord, holy, enduring for ever and ever.” And what are prudence, and temperance, and fortitude, and all other virtues whatever but pearls, as it were, in the adornment of the Spouse, gleaming with an immortal brightness? I say with an immortal brightness, because that brightness of the virtues is really the seat and support of immortal life. For there is no place at all in the soul for such a never-fading and blissful life except on the foundation and basis of the virtues. Hence the Prophet says to God, Who is the true blessed Life, “Justice and judgment are the preparation of Thy seat.” And the Apostle prays “that Christ may dwell,” not in every or any manner, but particularly “by faith in your hearts.” So also when the Lord was about to sit upon the ass’s colt, the disciples laid their garments thereon, signifying that the Saviour or salvation will not rest upon the soul unless her nakedness be covered with the apostolic doctrine and virtues. The Church, therefore, having the promise of future felicity, takes care, meantime, to prepare and adorn herself with “gilded clothing, surrounded with variety,” the variety, that is, of graces and virtues, in order that she may be found worthy and capable of the very fulness of grace.

But even to this variety of spiritual beauty, which the Spouse has received in the present life with the first robe, as it were, of the garments of her sanctification, I would by no means compare the splendours of this visible and corporeal firmament, most magnificent though it be amongst material things, by reason of the splendour and diversity of its luminaries. Yet there is a “heaven of heavens,” of which the Psalmist says, “Sing ye to God, Who mounteth above the

heaven of heavens to the east." This is the intellectual and spiritual heaven. He "Who made the heavens in understanding," created and established it for ever, and dwells therein Himself. But do not suppose that the love of the Spouse remain outside this heaven, in which her Beloved abides. For where her treasure is there is her heart also. She therefore feels jealous of those who are privileged to contemplate that Divine Countenance Which she longs to see; and as she cannot as yet share the vision with them, she tries to conform her life to theirs, crying out more by her virtues than by her voice, "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth."

She certainly will not disdain to compare herself to this heaven of heavens. It also, like the other, is stretched out like a curtain, not indeed over extents of corporeal spaces, but in the spiritual affections of pure intelligences. And it is diversified with the works of the great Artificer, as wonderful as they are various. Again, there are in this heaven of heavens distinctions, not of colours but of glories. For "God indeed hath set some" Angels, others Archangels, others Virtues, others Dominations, others Principalities, others Powers, others still Thrones, still others Cherubim, and others again Seraphim. These are the stars that adorn the heaven of heavens. These constitute the embroidery of this curtain, which is one of those belonging to my Solomon, and indeed is distinguished above all the others by the endless variety of decorations which make up its multiform glory. But this immense curtain contains within itself innumerable others, all equally curtains of Solomon, since every one of its blissful and holy inmates may be truly called in itself a curtain of Solomon. For they are all kind and "stretched out" in charity, extending even to us. Nor do they begrudge us a share in the glory which they enjoy themselves, but rather desire it for us, and for this reason some of their number are content to associate with us, busying themselves about our interests and taking us under their care. "For are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" Wherefore, just as all these blessed spirits, considered as a collective unity, are called the "heaven of heaven" (coelum coeli) in the singular, so, regarded as a multitude of distinct and independent beings, they are named the "heavens of heavens" (coeli coelorum) since each angel is a heaven in and by himself, and to each may be applied the words "stretching out the heavens like a curtain." You now understand, I think, what these curtains are which the Spouse is proud to resemble, and to what Solomon they belong.

Let us next consider the glory of her who compares herself to the heavens, and

to that heaven which is the more glorious in proportion as it represents the Divine Perfections in a more excellent way. Not unreasonably does she derive a similitude thence whence she has derived her existence. For if she likens herself to the tents of Cedar on account of the body which is drawn from the earth, why should she not boast of an equal resemblance to heaven, by reason of the spirit which is heavenly in its origin? Especially, when her life bears witness to that celestial parentage, as well as to the dignity of her nature and the nobility of her fatherland. She adores and honours one God, like the angels. She loves Christ above all, as do the angels. Like the angels, she is chaste; but her chastity, unlike the chastity of the angels, is preserved in the flesh of sin and in a frail body. Lastly, she seeks and relishes only the things that are above where the angels abide, and not the things which are upon the earth. What could be a more evident mark of celestial origin than so to retain the inborn resemblance to the spiritual creation in a world where everything is material? to exhibit the glory of a heavenly life on earth and in exile? to live as an angel in a body that is almost bestial? Effects of this character have for their cause not an earthly, but a divine principle, and clearly indicate the supernal birth of the soul wherein they are manifested. But listen to St. John declaring the same more explicitly: “I, John, saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” And he adds, “And I heard a great voice from the throne saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them.” Why, do you ask? As I believe, in order that He may take to Himself a Bride from amongst men. Strange! He came for a Spouse yet came not without a Spouse. He sought a Spouse, whilst having a Spouse with Him. Shall we say that there are two Spouses? God forbid! One “is My Spouse,” He has told us, “My Dove is but one.” But just as He desired to form His different flocks of sheep into one “that there may be one fold and one Shepherd”; so, likewise, in order that there may be one Bridegroom and one Bride, it has pleased Him to unite the Church of men which He has established on earth, to that other Church in heaven, composed of the multitude of angels, which, as a Spouse, has cleaved to Him from the beginning. Therefore, by this her union with the earthly Spouse, the heavenly has not been duplicated but only made perfect. And so she understands what the Bridegroom says of her, “My perfect one is but one.” Besides conformity with the will of the same Beloved makes one of the two Spouses here, by similarity of devotion, as it will make them more one hereafter by equality of glory.

So you see, my brethren, that both come from heaven, Jesus, the Bridegroom,

and His Bride the New Jerusalem. He, in order to make Himself visible, “emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man.” But in what form or beauty, or clothed with what splendour are we to suppose that John, the Seer of Patmos, beheld the Spouse descending? Perhaps he recognised her in the multitude of angels, whom he observed “ascending and descending upon the Son of Man”? But it is better to say that he then saw the Spouse, when he saw the Word made flesh, acknowledging the “Two in the one flesh.” For when our Most Holy Emmanuel established on earth a school of heavenly doctrine; when the visible image of that supernal Jerusalem, “which is our mother,” and the “loveliness of her beauty,” were revealed to us, as reflected through and in the human life of the Bridegroom, what else did we contemplate but the Spouse in her Beloved, admiring in one and the same Lord of Glory both the “Bridegroom decked with a crown” and the “Bride adorned with her jewels”? Therefore, He Who descended is the Same Who also ascended, that “no man may ascend into heaven, but He That descended from heaven,” one and the same Lord being a Bridegroom in His Head, viz., in His Divinity, and as a Bride in His Body, viz., in His Human Nature. And not in vain did this heavenly Man appear here below, because from earthly men He has made multitudes heavenly like unto Himself, as it is written, “And such as is the heavenly, so also are they that are heavenly.” From that time, the life of men on earth has approximated to the life of the angels. Like the celestial and blissful Spouse above, she also, that has been called “from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon,” cleaves with chaste affection to her heavenly Bridegroom, to Whom, although not yet, like that other, united by vision, she is nevertheless espoused through faith. This is what God promised by the mouth of His Prophet, Osee, saying, “And I will espouse thee to Me in justice, and judgment, and in mercy, and in commiserations; and I will espouse thee to Me in faith.” Hence, she endeavours to conform herself more and more perfectly to her heavenly Model, learning from Him to be modest and sober, to be chaste and holy, to be patient and compassionate, to be “meek and humble of heart.” By the practice of these virtues she tries, even during her exile here below, to please Him “on Whom the angels desire to look”; so that, whilst she burns with the same ardent desire as these, she may thus prove herself a “fellow-citizen with the saints” and a “domestic of God,” a “beloved one,” and a Spouse.

Indeed, my brethren, it seems to me that every soul which is animated by such sentiments, is not only heavenly by reason of her origin, but may even herself be justly called a heaven, on account of her imitation of the life above. For it is then

she clearly shows herself to be heaven-sprung, when her “conversation is in heaven.” Consequently, each holy soul may be considered as a heaven in herself, wherein the intellect is as the sun, faith as the moon, and the different virtues as the stars. Or perhaps I might call zeal for justice, or fervent charity the sun, and continence the moon. For just as we are told that all the glory of the moon is borrowed from the sun, so continence has no merit, independent of justice and charity. Hence, the Wise Man exclaims, “Oh how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory!” That is to say, with charity. Nor do I think I have erred in calling the virtues the stars of the soul. A little reflection makes manifest the aptness of the image. For as the stars glitter in the night and fade by day, in the same manner, true virtue often lies concealed in the day of prosperity, but shines out resplendent in the night of adversity. This occultation of virtue is due to prudence, as its manifestation is enforced by necessity. Therefore, since virtues are stars, the virtuous man may rightly be called a heaven. For surely we are not to suppose that when as we read, God said through His Prophet, “Heaven is My seat,” He meant this visible and changeable heaven above us, and not rather that of which the Scriptures more clearly speak elsewhere, telling us that “The soul of the just man is the seat of wisdom.” Now, he who understands from the teaching of Christ that God is a Spirit requiring to be adored in spirit, will certainly not hesitate to assign to Him also a spiritual seat. And I would confidently maintain that such a seat is to be assigned Him, not less in the soul of the just man than in the angelic spirit. I am especially confirmed in this view by the Saviour’s faithful promise, “We,” viz., the Father and Himself, “will come to him,” that is, to the holy soul, “and will make Our abode with him.” It is, as I think, of the same heaven that the Prophet also spoke when he said, “But thou dwellest in the holy place, the Praise of Israel.” And St. Paul evidently refers to it when he prays that “Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts.”

Nor should it surprise us, my brethren, that the Lord Jesus delights to dwell in the heaven of the just human soul, which He not only called into being by His omnipotence, as the other spirits, but He fought to acquire it, and He died to redeem it. Hence, after His labour, when He had now attained the object of His desire, He exclaimed, “This is My rest for ever and ever, here will I dwell because I have chosen it.” And blessed is that soul to which it is said, “Come My chosen one, and I will place My throne in thee.” But now, “Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?” Dost thou not think that even thou canst find in thyself a seat for the Lord? But what seat have we in ourselves befitting such glory, suitable to such Majesty? Would to God I were worthy even

to “adore in the place where His Feet have stood”! Who will grant me at least to follow faithfully in the footsteps of some holy soul which “He hath chosen for His dwelling”? Yet, oh, that He would deign to anoint my soul, too, with the unction of His mercy, and so to “stretch it out like a curtain,” which, when oiled, is easily extended! Then should I also be able to sing, “I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart.” And perchance, I might be able to show Him in myself, if not “a large dining-room furnished” where He might recline with His disciples, at least a place “where to rest His Head.” At any rate, I shall lift up my eyes from my lowly station to those blessed ones of whom it is said, “I will dwell in them and walk in them.”

Oh, how great is the amplitude, how great the merit and the prerogative of that soul which is found worthy to receive and sufficient to contain in herself the presence of the Divinity! What must be her dimensions, since she is required to include spacious recreation-grounds for the Divine Majesty to walk in! Certainly, such a soul does not entangle herself in litigation, or in worldly solicitudes. Neither does she give herself up to the delights of the flesh or the pleasures of the table. There is found no place in her for the ambition to rule, no pride of domination. For the soul that would become a heaven, a dwelling of God, must, in the first place, be entirely free from all these passions. Otherwise, how could she obey His command, “be still and see that I am God”? But it is also necessary to renounce hatred, and envy, and rancour, “for wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul.” It is further requisite that the soul should grow and expand in order to make room in herself for the Divine Immensity. Now, love is the enlargement of the soul, as the Apostle says, “Be enlarged in charity.” For although, as a spirit, she does not admit of corporeal expansion, yet, what nature denies her in the material sense, she acquires spiritually through grace. She therefore both increases and expands, but in a manner consonant with her spiritual nature. She increases not in substance but in virtue. She increases also in glory, “and groweth up into an holy temple in the Lord.” She increases, lastly, and develops “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.” Consequently, the magnitude of every soul is to be estimated in accordance with the degree of charity which she possesses, so that, the soul, for instance, which has great charity should be regarded as great, and the soul with little charity as little, and the soul possessing no charity, as nothing. Hence the Apostle declares, “If I have not charity, I am nothing.” But if a soul begins to have charity, albeit in some very low degree, but so much at any rate as gives the good will to salute her brethren, and those who salute her, I should call that soul

not nothing, but next to nothing, because she retains at least this social affection, exhibited and consisting in such an interchange of courtesies. Yet I might ask in the words of the Lord, what more does she do? Neither ample nor great, but narrow and little, should I therefore esteem a soul of this kind, which I recognised to be so little in charity.

But if she grows and progresses, so that, overstepping the limits of a straitened and ungenerous love, she attains, in perfect liberty of spirit, to the broad plains of spontaneous kindness, and endeavours to stretch out the curtains of her good will, so as to cover all her neighbours, loving each as she loves herself, surely, then, we can no longer justly say to her, “what more dost thou do?” For has she not done much more in making herself so much more ample? Charity, I say, bears such an ample heart that it embraces all within itself, even those whom it recognises as connected with it by no ties of relationship, those to whom it is bound by no hope of future favour, and those to whom it is under no debt of gratitude for benefits already received; for it is subject to no obligations except that of love, whereof the Apostle says, “Owe no man anything, but to love one another.” But the soul may proceed still further. She may even do violence to the kingdom of charity, and, as a pious invader, prevail so far as to occupy its territories to their uttermost bounds. This she will have accomplished when she understands that not even to her enemies must the bowels of her piety be closed, when she does good to those who hate her, prays for those who persecute and calumniate her, and tries to live in peace even with those who hate peace. Then, without doubt, the breadth of that soul shall be as the breadth of heaven; her height shall be as the height of heaven, and her beauty as the beauty of heaven. And thus shall be fulfilled in her that which is written, “stretching out the heavens like a curtain.” In this heaven of wonderful breadth, height, and beauty, not only will the sovereign, immense and all-glorious Deity condescend to dwell, but He will even walk at large in its wide expanses.

Do you perceive, my brethren, what varieties of heavens the Church contains within her, whilst, in her universality, she is herself an immense heaven, “stretched out from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth”? Then see also, by consequence, to what she is to be compared in this particular, unless perchance you have forgotten the examples I gave you a while ago, of the “heaven of heaven,” and the “heavens of heavens.” Therefore, after the pattern of that Jerusalem, which is above, and is our mother, this of earth, which is still in exile, has its heavens, viz., its spiritual men, illustrious in their lives and reputations, sound in faith, firm in hope, “stretched out like curtains” in charity,

sublime in contemplation. They distil rain, too, these spiritual heavens, but it is the saving rain of the word, just as they thunder in their reproofs and lighten in their miracles. Also, they “shew forth the glory of God”; because “stretched out like curtains” over the whole earth, they exhibit a “law of life and discipline” inscribed in themselves by the finger of God, in order “to give a knowledge of salvation to His people.” They publish, moreover, the Gospel of peace, as being the curtains of Solomon, the “Peaceful.”

In these spiritual, yet earthly, curtains of holy men, my brethren, you now recognise the image of the supernal, which were described quite recently, in connexion with the adornments of the Bridegroom. You also recognise the queen standing at His right Hand, decorated with similar, yet inferior ornaments. For she, even “in the place of her sojourn,” as well as “in the day of her power,” possesses not a little of glory and beauty “in the splendours of the saints.” But not like her Beloved is she crowned with the complete and consummated glory of the saints. Still, I might describe the Spouse, too, as perfect and blissful, although only in part. For in part she is yet as the “tents of Cedar.” Nevertheless, she is beautiful, both in that part of her which already reigns in bliss, and also in the illustrious men by whose virtues and wisdom she is adorned on earth, as the firmament with its stars. Hence the Prophet Daniel says, “But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.”

O humility! O sublimity! A “tent of Cedar,” and a sanctuary of God! An earthly habitation, and a heavenly mansion! A house of clay, and a royal palace! A “body of death” and a temple of light! The scorn of the proud and the Bride of Christ! She is “black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.” For although the labour and the pain of a long exile have darkened her complexion, all the same, she is clothed with the beauty of heaven, and adorned with the “curtains of Solomon.” If you are displeased with her blackness, at least admire her loveliness. If you despise her humility, you must respect her sublimity. How prudently and wisely, how discreetly and befittingly has it been arranged that, in the Spouse, abjection and elevation should so counterbalance and compensate each other, “according to the time,” that, amidst the vicissitudes of this world, sublimity lifts her up when cast down by misfortune, lest she should faint in adversity, and humility depresses her elation, lest she should grow vain in prosperity! And thus, both the one and the other, opposed as they are in themselves, are wondrously made to co-operate into good for her, and to subserve her eternal salvation.

So much for the simile by which the Spouse seems to compare her beauty to the curtains of Solomon. It remains now to put before you that other interpretation of the same text, which I mentioned and promised at the beginning of this discourse, namely, to consider both comparisons, as well that of Solomon's curtains as that of the tents of Cedar, as referring to the blackness of the Spouse. I certainly purpose to be faithful to my engagement. But this exposition requires a special sermon to itself, both because the present is already too long, and also in order to give you time for prayer, that you may, as usual, call down a blessing upon what I shall have to say unto the praise and glory of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXVIII

THE CURTAINS OF SOLOMON ARE EXPLAINED IN REFERENCE TO THE BLACKNESS OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE

"As the curtains of Solomon."

You remember, I suppose, what, in my opinion, those curtains are to which the Spouse compares her beauty, and to what Solomon they belong, that is, if we wish to refer the simile drawn from them to the illustration and commendation of that beauty. But if we prefer to understand this, as well as the comparison with the tents of Cedar, of the Spouse's blackness, I can think of no other curtains of Solomon, but those which the King used himself whenever it pleased him to dwell in tents. The exterior of such curtains, if indeed there were any, must doubtless have been discoloured and blackened from daily exposure to the sun and from the injurious effects of the frequent rains. Nor were they so exposed without reason, but in order that he who reposed within, decked with his royal ornaments, might be preserved from any stain of defilement. By this similitude, therefore, the Spouse does not deny her blackness, but excuses it. Never shall she disdain any robe which charity forms and the judgment of truth does not condemn. For "who is weak and" she "is not weak? Who is scandalised and" she "is not on fire?" She assumes the swarthiness of compassion in order to cure or to soothe the maladies of evil passion in others. She grows dark through zeal for brightness, she becomes black in the quest after beauty.

Thus, the blackness of One makes many white, not the blackness caused by sin, but that which results from solicitude. As we read, "It is expedient for you that one Man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." It is expedient that One should be discoloured for the sake of all, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," lest the whole nation should be condemned on account of the blackness of sin; that the Splendour and the Figure of the Substance of the Divinity be shrouded in the form of a servant to save the life of a servant; that

the Brightness of Eternal Life should grow dim in the flesh for the purification of the flesh; that He Who is “beautiful above the sons of men” should, in order to enlighten the sons of men, suffer the eclipse of His Passion, the disgrace of the cross, the discoloration of death; and that He should be divested completely of all beauty and comeliness, that so He might win for Himself in the Church a comely and beautiful Spouse, without spot or wrinkle. I recognise King Solomon’s curtain. Rather, I embrace Solomon Himself under His black curtain. For even Solomon has blackness, but only in His curtain, that is, in His skin. He is dark exteriorly, dark in His skin, not in His interior, because “all the glory of the King’s daughter is within.” Within is the White Light of the Divinity, the loveliness of the virtues, the splendour of glory, the purity of innocence. But all this beauty is concealed under the ignoble hue of infirmity. For “His look is, as it were, hidden and despised,” whilst He is being “tempted in all things like as we are, without sin.” I recognise the symbol and type of our sin-blackened nature. I recognise those curtains, those garments of skins wherewith our guilty first parents covered their nakedness. For He made Himself black, “taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man.” I recognise under the skin of the kid, which signifies sin, the Hand of Him “Who hath done no sin,” and the Neck through which the thought of evil never passed, and therefore “neither was there deceit in His Mouth.” I know that thou art of a gentle nature, “meek and humble of heart,” of gracious aspect and amiable disposition, for Thou art “anointed with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.” How, then, dost Thou now appear rough and hairy like Esau? What means this blackness? And these wrinkles on Thy Brow that should be white and smooth? Whence this hairy covering on Thy Hands? Ah, yes, I understand. They are mine. These hairy Hands signify that Thou hast taken upon Thee the likeness of my sinful flesh. This shagginess I recognise as my own, and as holy Job predicted, in my own skin “I see God, my Saviour.”

But it was not Rebecca, but Mary, that clothed this my Jacob, Who was the more deserving to receive a paternal blessing than His type, in proportion as He was born of a holier Mother. And rightly does He appear in my garments, since it is for me that the blessing is obtained, for me the inheritance is solicited. For He has heard His Father promising “Ask of Me and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” “Thy inheritance,” the Father says, and “Thy possession I will give to Thee.” But how canst Thou give Him what is His already? And why dost thou bid Him to ask? Or how is that His which it is necessary He should ask for? It is, therefore, not

for Himself He is to ask, but for me. And it is for this that He has assumed my nature, in order to plead my cause. For, as the Prophet declares, “the chastisement of our peace is upon Him, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “Wherefore,” concludes the Apostle, “it behoved Him in all things to be made like to His brethren, that He might become merciful.” Hence, “the voice indeed is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” What is heard from Him is His own, but that which is seen in Him is ours. What He speaks is “spirit and life,” what He exhibits to our sight is mortality and death. We see one thing and we believe another. Sense reports Him black, but faith discovers Him to be white and beautiful. Black in truth He is, but only to the eyes of the foolish. For to the minds of the faithful He appears wondrously fair and lovely. He is “black but beautiful,” black in the estimation of Herod, beautiful in the confession of the Thief and in the faith of the Centurion.

Certainly, His exceeding beauty did not escape the observation of him who exclaimed, “Indeed, this Man was the Son of God.” But wherein he discovered that beauty, we have now, my brethren, to ascertain. For if he attended to external appearances, in what respect did the Saviour show Himself beautiful, in what the Son of God? What did He exhibit to the eyes of the spectators except unsightliness and blackness, whilst, hanging between two criminals, with His arms extended on the cross, He became an Object of ridicule to the malignant, and of compassion to the faithful? He alone excited laughter, Who alone could have excited fear, and Who alone could have demanded honour. How, then, did the Centurion discover the beauty of the Crucified, and the Divine Sonship of Him Who “was reputed with the wicked”? It is neither right nor necessary for me to reply to this question, since the vigilance of the Evangelist has not allowed it to pass unanswered. For thus we read, “And the Centurion, who stood over against Him, seeing that crying out in this manner, He had given up the ghost, said: Indeed, this Man was the Son of God.” It was, therefore, at the sound of His voice that he believed. It was the voice, not the Face, that revealed to him the Son of God. For perhaps he was one of those sheep of His, whereof He said, “My sheep hear My voice.”

Hearing discovered that which escaped the sense of sight. The eye was imposed upon by the colour, but the truth entered the mind through the avenue of the ear. For the eye pronounced Christ to be weak, unsightly, miserable, a Man condemned to a most ignominious death. But the ear recognised that He was beautiful, that He was the Son of God, not, however, the ear of the Jews, because they were “uncircumcised in ears.” With good reason, therefore, did St.

Peter cut of the external ear of the servant, in order to open a way for truth, that the truth might emancipate him, that is, might make him free. The Centurion also was uncircumcised, but not in ear, since from one cry of the dying Saviour, he recognised in Him the Lord of Majesty amidst so many evidences of weakness. And as he believed what he did not see, he did not contemn that which met his eye. It was not what he beheld that made him believe, but what he heard, because “faith cometh by hearing.” It were more fitting, indeed, that truth should enter the soul by the upper windows of the eyes. But this, O my soul, is reserved for the next life, when we shall see “face to face.” Meantime, let the remedy find its way into our minds through the same aperture as the malady of old; let life follow in the tracks of death; let light travel in the path of darkness; and let the antidote of truth enter by the same door as the poison of the old serpent, and heal the eye, which is “troubled,” in order that it may serenely contemplate Him Who is inaccessible to trouble. So let the ear, which was the first gate open to death, be also the first open to life. Let the hearing, which was the means of destroying the sight, be made the means of its restoration; because unless we believe we shall not be able to understand. Consequently, merit belongs to hearing, and reward to sight. Hence the Psalmist sings, “To my hearing Thou shalt give joy and gladness.” For the Beatific Vision is the reward of faithful hearing, because it is by faithful hearing that we merit the Beatific Vision. Again, the Lord says, “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.” Now, the eye that is to behold God must first be purified by the faith that “cometh by hearing,” as we read, “purifying their hearts by faith.”

In the meantime, then, until the sense of sight is fully prepared for its most perfect functions, let the hearing be aroused and exercised in receiving truth. Happy the man of whom Truth Itself bears witness, saying, “At the hearing of the ear he hath obeyed Me!” For I shall then only be worthy to see, if before seeing I shall have been found obedient. Securely shall I gaze upon my Lord, if He has already received the service of my obedience. How blessed was he who said, “The Lord hath opened my car, and I do not resist, I have not gone back!” Here you have a pattern of voluntary obedience, and also an example of perseverance. For he who docs not contradict is prompt to obey; and he has perseverance who turns not back. Both virtues are necessary, since “God loveth a cheerful giver,” and “he that shall persevere unto the end he shall be saved.” Would that the Lord would open my ear, that the word of truth might enter my heart, and purify my eye, and prepare it for the blissful Vision! Then I, too, might say to God, “Thine Ear hath heard the preparation of my heart.” Then

might I, too, with His other obedient servants, hear from Him, “And you are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” For not all who hear are cleansed, but only those that obey. “Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.” Such a heedful hearing is required by Him Who commands, saying, “Hear, O Israel.” And it is this hearing of obedience that he offered who said, “Speak, Lord, because Thy servant heareth.” The same is promised by the Psalmist, when he says, “I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me.”

“Hearken, O daughter, and see.” So speaks the Holy Ghost, my brethren, wishing thus to make us understand the order He observes in leading souls to perfection, first instructing the ear and afterwards delighting the vision. Why, then, do you strain your eyes for the sight of the divine beauty, when you ought rather to be preparing your ears to receive the divine truth? Are you yearning to see Christ? But it is necessary to hear Him first, and to hear of Him, so that when you do see Him, you may be able to say, “As we have heard, so have we seen.” Through so narrow and so small an opening as the aperture of the eye you cannot surely hope to take in a glory so immense. But you may do by hearing what is impossible to sight. Being then a sinner, I could not see God when He called, saying, “Adam, where art thou?” Yet I heard Him. But if the hearing be found pious, vigilant and faithful, it will restore the lost vision. Faith will certainly purge the eye “troubled” by impiety; and the eye that has been closed by the sin of insubordination will be opened by the merit of obedience. This the Psalmist acknowledges as having occurred in his own case, when he sings, “By Thy commandments I have had understanding.” For the observance of the divine precepts gives back the understanding which had been lost through transgression. And notice in the case of holy Isaac, how in his old age his hearing, as we read, was more perfect than any of the other senses. Dim were the eyes of the Patriarch, unreliable his faculties of taste and touch. Only his hearing continued unimpaired. And what wonder if the ear is percipient of truth, since “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ”? For the word of Christ is truth. “The voice, indeed,” said Isaac, “is the voice of Jacob.” Nothing more true. “But the hands are the hands of Esau.” Nothing more false. Thou art here in error, holy Patriarch. The resemblance of the hands deceives thee. Nor is there discernment of truth in thy taste, although it is true in its estimate of savour. For how can that faculty be said to pronounce truly, since it judges the food eaten to be venison, which, in reality, is only the flesh of the domestic kids? Much less oughtest thou to look for truth in the testimony of thine eye which perceives nothing at all. There is neither truth in the eye, nor true wisdom. “Woe

to you," says the Prophet, "who are wise in your own eyes." Surely that cannot be true wisdom which is thus accursed. It is the "wisdom of this world," which is "foolishness with God."

But good and true wisdom "is drawn out of secret places," as blessed Job believed. Why then seek it outside, in your bodily senses? Wisdom resides in the heart as taste in the palate. Seek not wisdom in the material eye, since flesh and blood do not reveal it, but only the Spirit of God. Neither should you look for it in the taste of the mouth, because "it is not found in the land of them that live in delights," as Job tells us. Nor in the touch of the hand, for the same holy man declares, "If I have kissed my hand with my mouth, which is very great iniquity, and a denial against the Most High God." As I understand it, the hand is thus kissed when wisdom, which is God's gift, is ascribed, not to Him, but to our own merits. Isaac was a wise man, yet he was led astray by his senses. Hearing alone takes hold of the truth, because it alone has perception of the word. Justly, therefore, is the still carnally-minded woman, Magdalen, forbidden to touch the reanimated Flesh of the Word, because she gave more credit to the eye than to the oracle, that is to say, to the sense of the body, than to the word of God. For she did not believe Him risen, though He had promised to rise, whereas she believed Him dead on the testimony of her senses. Nor did her eye rest until her sight had been satisfied, because she had no consolation from faith, no confidence in the promise of God. But is it not so, that heaven and earth and everything visible to this eye of flesh must pass away and perish, ere one jot or one tittle of all that God has spoken shall be suffered to fall to the ground? And yet she, who found no consolation in the word of the Lord, ceased from her weeping at the vision of her eye, placing greater reliance on experience than on faith. Nevertheless, experience is often deceptive.

She is, therefore, invited to give the preference to the more certain knowledge of faith, which attains to things beyond the reach of the senses, beyond the range of experience. "Do not touch Me," said the risen Saviour. That is to say, "Cease to confide in thy fallacious senses. Rely upon my word. Accustom thyself to being led by the influence of faith. Faith is infallible, it apprehends the invisible, it is a stranger to the poverty of sense. Nay, it even transcends the limits of human reason, the capacity of nature, the bounds of experience. Why ask the eye about objects beyond its possibilities of vision? And why should the hand endeavour to touch that which is altogether above its reach. The knowledge given by either of these faculties is of comparatively little worth. But faith will certainly speak to thee of Me, without detracting aught from My Majesty. Learn

to receive with more certainty and to follow with fuller confidence what it shall teach thee. ‘Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father.’ ” As if to say that when He is ascended, she shall have the permission or the power to touch Him. And indeed that power she shall have, but with her affection, not with her hand; with her will, not with her eye; with faith, not with the senses. “Why,” He asks, “dost thou seek to touch Me now, whilst with the bodily sense thou dost estimate the glory of My Resurrection? Knowest thou not that even in the days of My passible life, the eyes of My disciples were unable to bear the glory of My mortal Body, momentarily transfigured. I still condescend, indeed, to the weakness of thy senses, by presenting to thee the form of a servant which thou canst recognise from thy past experience. But My glory ‘is become wonderful to’ thee; ‘it is high’ and thou canst ‘not reach to it.’ Defer, therefore, thy judgment; postpone thy verdict; do not entrust thy senses with so important a decision, but reserve it to faith, which, as comprehending more fully, will pronounce sentence more worthily and with more truth and confidence. For faith, in that deep and mystical breast of hers, comprehends ‘what is the breadth and length, and height, and depth’ of this glory. What ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man,’ that faith bears within herself, wrapped round with mystery and preserved under seal.

“She, therefore, may worthily touch Me, who shall behold Me enthroned with the Father, no longer in an humble, but in a heavenly form, in the same Flesh indeed as to substance, but different as to degree of glory. Why Wouldst thou touch what as yet is uncomely? Wait that thou mayst touch Me when I am revealed in My perfect beauty. For I, Who am now unprepossessing by comparison, shall be truly beautiful then. Now I appear imperfect to the faculties of touch and of sight. I appear imperfect to thee, who art thyself imperfect, in that thou dost follow sense in preference to faith. Make thyself beautiful, and then mayst thou touch Me. Thou shalt make thyself beautiful by rendering thyself faithful. Thus beautiful thyself, thou shalt more worthily and more blissfully touch Me in My beauty. Thou shalt touch Me with the hand of faith, with the finger of desire, with the embrace of devotion, with the eye of the intellect. But shall I still be black? God forbid! Thy Beloved shall be beautiful beyond question and beyond compare, for He shall be ‘white and ruddy’ as being surrounded with roses and lilies of the valley, that is, by the choirs of martyrs and virgins. Nor shall I in the midst of both companies appear alien to either, since I am Myself both a Martyr and a Virgin. For how could I be alien to the white choirs of virgins, being not only a Virgin, but the Son of a virgin, and

the Bridegroom of a virgin? Or to the roseate army of martyrs, I, Who am the Motive, the Virtue, the Reward, and the Model of martyrs? When thou art such thyself, then mayst thou touch Me Who am such, and touch Me in such a way. Then canst thou say, ‘My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.’ ‘Thousands of thousands’ are with thy Beloved, ‘and ten thousand times a hundred thousand’ surround Him, yet nigh Him is there none. Perhaps thou hast need to fear, lest, in seeking Him Whom thou lovest, thou shouldst mistake for Him one of the multitude of His attendants? But no, thou shalt have no hesitation in singling Him out. He shall easily draw thy attention, being ‘chosen out of thousands,’ and of peerless glory; and thou shalt say, ‘This is My Beloved, this Beautiful One, in His robe, walking in the greatness of His strength.’ No longer, therefore, shall He walk in the black skin, which up to this had to be presented to the eyes of His enemies, that they might despise Him Whom they were to slay, and now even to the eyes of His friends, that they might recognise Him after His Resurrection. No longer, I say, shall He appear under a black curtain, but in white robes, beautiful not only above the sons of men, but above even the angelic spirits. Why, then, dost thou wish to touch Me, whilst still in this humble habit, this servile form, this contemptible appearance? Touch Me when I manifest Myself all radiant with heavenly beauty, ‘crowned with honour and glory,’ terrible in the Majesty of My Godhead, yet sweet and mild in My native serenity.”

Here, my brethren, we must admire the prudence of the Spouse and the profound wisdom of her words. Under the shade of Solomon’s curtains, that is, in the flesh, she seeks the Glory of the Divinity, she seeks Life in death, the summit of honour and majesty in disgrace, and under the black mantle of the Crucified, the whiteness of innocence and the splendour of virtue. For it was thus that those royal curtains, black though they were, and contemptible, preserved under their awning the bright and precious ornaments of an exceedingly wealthy monarch. Wisely does she refrain from despising the blackness of the curtains, perceiving the beauty concealed underneath. But that blackness was despised by some who knew nothing of the treasure it covered. “For if they had known it,” says St. Paul, “they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory.” King Herod knew it not, and hence his contempt for Christ. Neither did the Synagogue know it, since she reproached the Saviour with His suffering and His weakness, saying, “He saved others, Himself He cannot save; if He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him.” But the Thief, from the cross whereon he was hanging,

recognised that hidden beauty of Him Who was also suspended on His cross, and he acknowledged and proclaimed the purity of His innocence. “This Man,” said he, “hath done no evil.” He also, at the same time, confessed the Glory of His royal Majesty by the prayer, “Remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom.” This beauty under blackness was likewise detected by the Centurion, who declared the Crucified to be the Son of God, as it is now by the Church, which emulates the blackness in order to participate in the beauty. She is not ashamed either to appear or to be called black, so that she may be able to say to her Beloved, “The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me.” Yet surely she is but “black as the curtains of Solomon,” that is to say, only in her exterior, and not also within. For there is nothing black in the interior of this Solomon of mine. Observe that she does not say, “I am black as Solomon,” but only “as the curtains,” that is, as the skin “of Solomon,” because the blackness of the true Peaceful One is all on the surface. The blackness of guilt shows itself within. Sin discolours the interior before it appears exteriorly to the eye. So it is written, “From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies, these are the things that defile a man.” God forbid that blackness of this kind should be found in Solomon! No, such defilement you shall never discover in Him Who is truly called the Peaceful. For He, “Who taketh away the sins of the world,” ought Himself to be without sin, in order that He may be found worthy to win peace for sinners, and so may be justly entitled to the name of Solomon.

But there is, besides, the blackness of afflicted penitence, which appears when we conceive a heart-felt sorrow for our sins. I do not think that Solomon will contemn me for this kind of blackness, if voluntarily assumed on account of my transgressions, because “a contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” There is also the blackness of tender compassion, which we exhibit whenever we sympathise with our suffering brethren, as if we were discoloured by our neighbour’s misfortune. Neither do I think that this blackness will be displeasing to our Peaceful One, since He Himself condescended to assume it for our sakes, “Who bore our sins in His Body upon the tree.” Another kind of blackness is that of persecution. This should be valued as a most beautiful ornament, when borne for the sake of justice and truth. Hence we read that the apostles “went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.” And the Lord says: “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake.” It is in this blackness, most of all, as I think, that the Church glories. It is this she endeavours to copy

more eagerly than any other of the black curtains of Solomon. She has even been promised a participation in it, in the words of Christ, “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

Therefore the Spouse goes on to say, “Do not consider that I am brown, because the sun hath altered my colour.” That is to say, “Do not find fault with me as uncomely because Thou dost not find me fair and blooming under the stress of affliction, nor beautifully tinted, according to human standards of beauty. Why wouldst Thou reproach me with a blackness due to the violence of persecution rather than to the defilement of transgression? Or perhaps by the sun she means the zeal for justice by which she is inflamed and aroused against the malignant, saying with the Psalmist, “The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up”; and “My zeal hath made me pine away, because my enemies forgot Thy words”; also, “A fainting hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law”; likewise, “Have I not hated them, O Lord, that hated Thee, and pined away because of Thy enemies?” She also carefully follows the advice of the Wise Man, “Hast thou daughters? Shew not thy countenance gay towards them.” For herein she is counselled to exhibit not the brightness of serenity, but the darkness of severity to such as are lax and effeminate and haters of discipline. Or again, to be discoloured by the sun may mean to burn with the flame of fraternal charity, like St. Paul, to “weep with them that weep,” to be weak with the weak, to be on fire when any is scandalised. Still another interpretation: we may understand the Spouse as saying, “Christ, the Sun of Justice, has discoloured me, because I languish with the love of Him.” Such languor destroys in a manner the natural hue, and causes a swooning of the spirit, so to speak, through the intense ardour of the soul’s desires. Hence the Prophet testifies, “I remembered God and was delighted, and was exercised, and my spirit swooned away.” Therefore, the ardour of desire, like a burning sun, darkens the complexion of the pilgrim longing for the Vision of Glory, whilst impatience is begotten of disappointment and eagerness of love is tormented by delay. Which of us, my brethren, is so on fire with holy love, that in his yearning to behold Christ, he loathes and leaves aside all the brightness and joy of earthly glory and gratification, protesting to Him in the words of the Prophet Jeremias, “And I have not desired the day of man, Thou knowest,” and saying with holy David, “My soul refused to be comforted,” that is, she disdained to be brightened with the empty joys of worldly honours. Or, finally, she may have meant this: “The Sun hath darkened my colour by the contrast with His own Divine Splendour. For as I draw nigh to Him I am made more sensible of my own duskiness. I obtain a clearer

knowledge of my own blackness, and I despise my ugliness. Yet in other respects I am truly beautiful. Why do you call me black, since I yield only to the Sun in loveliness?" But what follows seems to me to accord better with the interpretation of the blackness as the effect of violence. For the Spouse clearly indicates that she suffered persecution, by adding "The sons of my mother have fought against me." But I shall take this as my text in the morrow's discourse. To-day you must be satisfied with what you have already heard concerning the glory and by the grace of the Bridegroom of the Church, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is God, blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXIX

ON DOMESTIC DISCORD AND FRATERNAL CORRECTION

"The sons of my mother have fought against me."

"The sons of my mother have fought against me." Annas, and Caiaphas, and Judas Iscariot were sons of the Synagogue; and these fought most fiercely against the daughter of the Synagogue, that is to say, against the Church, in her very infancy, hanging Jesus, her Founder, on the tree of the cross. For God then fulfilled by their means what He had long before predicted through His Prophet, saying, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." And perhaps that is the voice of the infant Church which we hear in the canticle of Ezechias, "My life is cut off as by a weaver; whilst I was yet but beginning He cut me off." It is, therefore, of those mentioned just now, and of others of the same nation, who are known to have been enemies of the Christian name, that the Spouse here complains, saying, "The sons of my mother have fought against me." And rightly does she call them the sons of her mother, not the sons of her Father, since they had not God for their father, as the Saviour testifies, but were from their father the devil. For they were murderers, just as he was a murderer from the beginning. Hence, she does not say "my brothers" or "the sons of my Father," but "The sons of my mother have fought against me." Otherwise, without this distinction, the Apostle St. Paul might seem to be included amongst those of whom she makes this complaint, since he also once persecuted the Church. Yet he obtained mercy, because he "did it in ignorance," whilst living in infidelity. And he proved afterwards that he had God for his Father, and thus that he was a brother to the Church, as having the same Father in heaven and the same mother on earth.

But observe, my brethren, how she accuses by name the sons of her mother, and them alone, as if only they are in fault. Yet how much has she not also suffered from aliens! As she says herself by the Prophet David, "Often have they

fought against me from my youth"; also, "The wicked have wrought upon my back." Wherefore, then, dost thou complain of none but the sons of thy mother, knowing, as thou dost, that men of different nations have often persecuted thee? It is written, "When thou art invited to the table of a rich man, consider diligently the things that are laid before thee." We, my brethren, are seated at the table of Solomon. Who is more wealthy than Solomon? I speak not of earthly riches, although Solomon has an abundance even of these. But I wish you to consider the mystical table now before us, how richly furnished it is with celestial delicacies. Spiritual and divine is the food placed upon it for our use. Hence we read, "consider diligently the things that are laid before thee, knowing that it behoveth thee also to prepare the like." And so, with all the diligence of which I am capable, I consider what is laid before me and what is meant for my own instruction and admiration in those words of the Spouse. And that which especially arrests my attention is the fact that she mentions expressly and solely the persecutions suffered from those of the household, passing over in silence the others, so numerous and cruel, which, as we know, she has endured from men of every nation under heaven, from infidels, heretics, and schismatics. I am too well acquainted with the prudence of the Spouse to imagine that such an omission is due to chance or forgetfulness. But, evidently, she laments more particularly what affects her more sensibly, and what she desires to put us more on our guard against. What is that, my brethren? It is the plague of internal and domestic dissension. You have this clearly expressed in the Gospel, by the mouth of the Saviour Himself, where He says, "And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household." You may read the same in the Psalmist, "The man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who eat my bread, hath greatly supplanted me." Also, "For if my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it; and if he that hated me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hidden myself from him. But thou, a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with me." That is to say, "The wrong done me by thee, my friend and companion, causes me more pain and distress than all that I suffer from others." You know who it is that makes this complaint, and of whom.

Acknowledge, then, that the Spouse is complaining of the sons of her mother, with the same sorrow, because in the same Spirit, as David of Achitophel, when she says, "The sons of my mother have fought against me." Hence, she elsewhere makes a similar complaint: "My friends and my neighbours have drawn near and stood against me." Remove far from you, my brethren, this

abominable and detestable evil of domestic discord, you who have experienced and do daily experience “how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,” if yet the union of bodies is accompanied by concord of will, and not by the scandal of dissension. Otherwise, the dwelling together shall neither be “pleasant” nor “good,” but most bitter and evil. But woe to the man by whom the pleasant bond of unity is broken! Assuredly he shall bear the judgment, be he who he may. Rather let me die than hear any of you truthfully exclaiming, “The sons of my mother have fought against me”! Are you not all sons of this congregation, as if of the same mother, and brothers of each other? What, therefore, can disturb you from outside or sadden you, if all be well within, and you enjoy fraternal concord? For “who is it that can hurt you if you be zealous of good?” Wherefore, “be zealous for the better gifts,” that you may prove yourselves zealous of the good.

But charity is of all gifts the most excellent. Surely that gift must be quite incomparable which the Heavenly Bridegroom was so often at pains to recommend to His newly-wed Bride, at one time saying, “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another”; at another “This is My commandment, that you love one another,” and, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.” He also prayed that they might be one, as He and the Father are one. And see if St. Paul, who invites you to “be zealous for the better gifts,” does not give charity the first place amongst all, both when he declares it superior to faith and hope and surpassing knowledge, and when, after enumerating the manifold and wonderful gifts of supernal grace, he directs us to a still more excellent way, which he affirms to be none other than charity. But what can be conceived comparable to that which is to be preferred to martyrdom itself, and to a faith strong enough to move mountains? Therefore, I say to you: have peace amongst yourselves, and then whatever may seem to threaten from outside, it shall have no power to frighten you, because it shall have no power to hurt you. On the other hand, no matter how the world may appear to smile upon us, we shall certainly find in that no consolation, if, at the same time, the seed of discord (from which may God preserve us!) is sprouting in our midst. Therefore, my dearly beloved, be at peace with each other. Let no one injure his brother by word or deed, or by any sign. Let no one, exasperated perhaps and surprised by “pusillanimity of spirit and the storm,” be compelled to appeal to God against those who have offended and saddened him, and to give utterance to that serious accusation, “The sons of my mother have fought against me.”

For by thus sinning against your brother, you sin against Christ, Who has declared that, “As long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me.” And we do not fulfil our duty in this matter by being on our guard against the more serious violations of fraternal charity such as open contumely or bitter reproaches, such also as secret and slanderous whispering. It is not, I say, sufficient to preserve ourselves from the graver faults, viz., those I have just mentioned, and others of a similar nature. We must avoid light transgressions as well. If, indeed, anything can be called light which you presume to do with the will of hurting your brother, since you shall be held guilty of the divine judgment merely for being angry with him. And justly so. For that which we consider light, and therefore lightly commit, will generally appear different to the offended party, because “man looketh on the face and judgeth according to the face,” ready to regard a straw as a beam, and to magnify a spark to a furnace. Not all possess that charity which “believeth all things.” “The imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone” to suspect evil rather than to believe good. This is especially the case, where the rule of silence neither allows him who is the cause to offer an explanation, nor the other to lay bare the sore of suspicion from which he suffers, in order that it may be healed. So that the latter is inflamed and his soul succumbs to a secret and deadly wound amidst deep groans of internal anguish. For, completely given up to the disquiet and agitation of anger, he can do nothing else but revolve silently in his mind the injury he fancies has been done him. Prayer is no longer possible to one in this condition. He can neither apply his mind to reading, nor meditate on anything holy and spiritual. And whilst the vital respiration is thus suspended, so to speak, and the soul, deprived of her proper nourishment, is rapidly approaching death, that soul for which Christ died, what, I ask thee, who art the offender, what is the state, what are the feelings of thine own soul? What relish canst thou find in prayer or in labour, or in any other exercise, whilst Christ is sadly complaining of thee from the breast of the brother whom thou hast aggrieved, saying, “The son of My mother hath fought against Me,” and “he ‘who took sweet meats together with Me’ hath filled Me with bitterness”?

But if thou shouldst say that he ought not to be so perturbed on account of so slight an offence, I answer that the slighter it was the more easily might it have been avoided by thee. And yet, as I have already remarked, I know not how thou canst call slight anything that goes beyond the mere feeling of anger, since even this is matter for judgment, as the Judge Himself declares. What! Surely thou wilt not regard as trivial that which offends Christ and for which thou shalt be

brought before the divine tribunal. “It is a fearful thing,” says St. Paul, “to fall into the hands of the living God.” Therefore, whenever anyone happens to hurt thy feelings, and it is almost impossible that this should not occasionally occur in such communities as ours whose members are thrown so much together, do not immediately hasten, after the manner of worldlings, to retaliate upon the offending brother by an abusive answer. Neither oughtest thou to be, under any pretence of administering correction, so viciously daring, as to transfix with a sharp and blistering word the soul for which Christ refused not to be fixed on the cross. Nor shouldst thou vent thy anger by inarticulate expressions of resentment, by suppressed mutterings and murmurings, by turning up the nose in disdain, by the laughter of contempt and mockery, or by the frown of reproach or menace. No, but rather let the agitation expire in thine own heart, where it was brought to birth. Let not that passion which carries death be permitted to go abroad lest it should work havoc to some brother’s soul. So shalt thou be able to say with the Prophet, “I was troubled and I spoke not.”

I am aware, my brethren, that some find a more profound signification in these words, as if they were spoken of “the devil and his angels.” For these also were sons of “that Jerusalem which is above, which is our mother.” But they fell, and since their fall have not ceased to fight against their sister, the Church. Nor shall I contradict him who may prefer a more benign interpretation, according to which the meaning would be that the spiritual sons of the Church fight against their carnal brothers with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, inflicting on them wounds, not unto death but unto their salvation, and by such onslaughts compelling them to attend to their spiritual interests. Would that the “just man” might “correct me in mercy and reprove me,” “striking and healing, killing and making alive,” so that, with St. Paul, I, too, might dare to say, “I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me”! “Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes,” said the Lord, “whilst thou art on the way with him, lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer.” A good adversary he, with whom, if I am in agreement, neither the judge nor the officer shall have a word to say against me. Certainly, my brethren, if I have ever saddened any of you for the sake of your amendment, I do not regret it, because that sadness is unto salvation. And I cannot recall that I have ever done so without feeling great sadness myself, as it is written, “A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow.” But God forbid that I should any longer think of my anguish, now that I possess the fruit of my pains and see Christ formed in my children! I know not how it is, but it is true nevertheless, that I feel a more tender

affection for those whom I have at length restored to spiritual health after and by means of many reprehensions, than for others who have always been strong and able to dispense with such bitter medicine.

Therefore, my brethren, the Church, or the soul that loves God, can say in this sense that the Sun has discoloured her, namely, by sending some of the sons of her mother to fight against her in this salutary way, and to lead her captive to His faith and love, pierced, no doubt, with many of those arrows whereof we read, “Sharp are the arrows of the Mighty,” and, “Thy arrows are fastened in me.” Hence she goes on to say, “There is no health in my flesh”; so that, being made healthier in spirit, and consequently stronger, through the infirmity of the flesh, she is able to affirm, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak,” or with the Apostle, “When I am weak, then am I powerful.” Do you observe how the weakness of the flesh increases the strength of the spirit and supplies it with new energies? Then be assured of the converse also, that the strength of the flesh produces weakness of the spirit. And what wonder if you increase in power in proportion as your enemy increases in weakness? That is, unless you are mad enough to regard as your friend that flesh which ceases not to lust against the spirit. See, therefore, if the holy Psalmist did not act prudently in praying to be savingly pierced with these arrows and to be “fought against,” where he says, “Pierce my flesh with Thy fear.” An excellent arrow is fear, which transfixes and slays the desires of the flesh, “that the spirit may be saved.” And does it not seem to you that he who chastises his own body, and brings it into subjection, is himself assisting the hand that fights against him?

Another spiritual arrow is the word of God, “living and efficacious, and more piercing than any two-edged sword.” Of this the Saviour said, “I came not to send peace but the sword.” A most penetrating arrow also is the love of Christ, which not only pierced, but even transpierced Mary’s soul, in such a way as to leave no single fibre of that virginal breast unclaimed by charity, causing her to love with her whole heart, with her whole soul, and with all her strength, so that she might be full of grace. Or it may be said to have transpierced her in the sense that it passed through her and so came to us, in order that of her fulness we might all receive, and that she might become the mother of charity (of which the Father is God, Who is substantial Charity) bringing forth and setting its Tabernacle in the sun. Thus was fulfilled the words of Isaias, “I have given Thee to be the Light of the Gentiles, that Thou mayst be My Salvation, even to the farthest part of the earth.” And it was fulfilled through Mary, who brought forth in visible flesh Him Whom she received invisibly, neither from flesh nor with

flesh. She, in truth, suffered in her whole being a great and most delicious wound of love. Happy should I esteem myself, did I but occasionally feel my soul pricked at least with the point of that sword, so that, having received a little wound of charity, I might exclaim, “I am wounded with love.” Who will grant me not only to be wounded in this manner, but even to be “fought against,” until I have utterly lost both the colour and the concupiscence of that flesh which “lusteth against the spirit”!

If the daughters of this world revile such a soul, taunting it with its pallor and poverty of colour, does it not seem to you, my brethren, that they may be suitably answered in the words, “Do not consider that I am brown, because the sun hath altered my colour”? And if that soul remembers that she has been brought to this happy condition by means of the exhortations and reprehensions of certain servants of Christ, who were “jealous of her with the jealousy of God,” will she not be able to add with all sincerity that “The sons of my mother have fought against me”? The sense, therefore, will be, according to what has been said, that the Church, or indeed any soul studious of virtue, utters these words, not in lamentation or complaint, but with joy and thanksgiving, nay, glorying in that, for the name and the love of Christ, she has been accounted worthy to be and to be called discoloured. And this she ascribes, not to any merit of her own, but to the grace and mercy of Him Who prevented her with His inspirations and sent His preachers to instruct and encourage her. For how could she believe “without a preacher”? And “how could they preach unless they were sent?” Without indignation, but not without gratitude, she declares that the sons of her mother have fought against her. Hence she adds, “They have made me keeper in the vineyards.” If these words be “spiritually examined,” I believe it will appear that they express no discontent or ill-feeling, but savour of something more excellent. But before presuming to address ourselves to this investigation, since “the place is holy,” we must, with the customary prayers, conciliate and so consult that Holy Spirit Who “searcheth the deep things of God”; or certainly the “Only-Begotten, Who is in the bosom of the Father,” the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXX

ON THE MYSTICAL VINEYARDS, AND CONCERNING THE PRUDENCE OF THE FLESH

"They have made me keeper in the vineyards; my vineyard I have not kept."

"They have made me keeper in the vineyards." Who? Is it they of whom thou hast just been saying that they fought against thee? Attend, my brethren, and see if she does not now confess that the authors of her suffering have been also the cause of her advancement. Nor should this surprise us, whenever it happens that the motive of their fighting against her is the desire of her amendment. For who does not know that many are often fought against from motives of love and to their own advantage? How many do we daily see going forward to better things, elevated to higher things, on account of the charitable onslaughts of their superiors! This being evident enough, let me now show, if I can, how even when the sons of her mother have fought against the Church, and that, not with a view to her advantage, but from a spirit of enmity, yet their opposition, far from being hurtful, on the contrary has been profitable to her. For we experience a peculiar pleasure, whenever they, who intend our hurt, subserve our interests against their will. The interpretation just given embraces both these senses, because there have not been wanting to the Church either ill-disposed or well-disposed opponents, fighting against her from opposite motives. But she has derived benefit from all. She boasts of having profited so much from the sufferings caused her by her antagonists, that instead of the one vineyard which they seemed to have taken from her, she now has the joy of being set over many. "Those who fought against me and my vineyard," she seems to say, "and who cried 'Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof,' have done me the service of enabling me to exchange one vineyard for many." This is the meaning of the words added, "My vineyard I have not kept." As if she wanted to explain how it happened that she is now appointed keeper, not of one, but of many vineyards. Such, I take it, is the literal sense of the text.

But if we take these words of the Spouse in their obvious signification, content with the meaning which appears to lie upon the surface, we shall imagine ourselves reading in the Holy Scriptures of those material and earthly vineyards, which, as we see, daily receive of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth wherewith to produce the wine that ministers to luxury. And thus we shall seem to have extracted from the inspired utterance, so holy and so divine, nothing, I do not say worthy of the immaculate Bride of Christ, but even befitting any ordinary bride of any ordinary bridegroom. For what is there in common between spouses and the keepers of vineyards? And even granting that there are some points of agreement, how shall we show that the Church has ever been appointed to the guardianship of vineyards? “Doth God take care for” vineyards? But if we adopt a spiritual interpretation, and understand the vineyards to mean the different churches, that is, the different faithful peoples, according to the words of Isaias, “The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel,” then perhaps we shall begin to see clearly how it is no dishonour to the Spouse to be appointed “keeper in the vineyards.”

This even appears to me to contain no unimportant prerogative. And you, my brethren, will be of the same opinion if you take the trouble to consider carefully how the Church extended her territory into such spacious vineyards throughout the whole world, from that day on which the sons of her mother fought against her at Jerusalem, and thrust her out, together with her new plantation. I speak of the “multitude of believers,” who, as we read, “had but one heart and one soul.” And that primitive plantation is the vineyard which the Spouse acknowledges she has not kept; but “it shall not be reputed as folly unto her.” For it was not so rooted out of Jerusalem as not to be planted elsewhere, and “let to other husbandmen that should render the fruit in due season.” Manifestly, then, it perished not, but peregrinated. It even increased and extended, as having a blessing from the Lord. Then, lift up your eyes, and see whether or not “the shadow of it covered the hills, and the branches thereof the cedars of God”; whether or not “it stretched forth its branches unto the sea, and its boughs unto the river.” And no wonder. For it is “God’s husbandry, God’s building.” It is He Who fertilises it, propagates it, prunes and purges it, “that it may bring forth more fruit.” When shall that, which His Right Hand has planted, be deprived of care and cultivation? Certainly, the vineyard where the Lord is the Vine, His apostles the branches, and His Father the Husbandman, shall never be allowed to suffer from neglect. Planted in faith, rooted in charity, purged with the hoe of discipline, fertilised with the tears of penitence, watered with the word of

preaching, it shall thus abound with the wine, not of luxury, but of gladness, the wine which produces all manner of spiritual pleasure, without any uprisings of carnal passion. This assuredly is the wine which “rejoiceth the heart of man,” of which, no doubt, even the angels drink with delight. For such is their thirst for the salvation of men that the conversion and the penance of sinners are to them a new source of joy. The wine they love best are the tears of contrition, because in these tears they discover the very odour of life, the relish of grace, the flavour of forgiveness, the joy of reconciliation, the health of reviving innocence, and the sweetness and peace of a tranquillised conscience.

Therefore, from that one vineyard, which appeared to have been destroyed by the tempest of savage persecution, how many others have been propagated and have flourished throughout the world! And in all these the Spouse has been made the keeper, so that she may not grieve for not having kept her first. Be comforted, O daughter of Sion! If “blindness in part hath happened in Israel,” what dost thou lose thereby? Admire the mystery; but do not be discouraged at the loss. Widen thy bosom, and gather in the “fulness of the gentiles.” Say to the cities of Juda, “To you it behoved us first to preach the word of God; but because you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the gentiles.” God indeed proposed to Moses that if he would consent to dismiss the prevaricating people and to leave them exposed to the divine vengeance, he would himself become the father of a great nation. But the holy Lawgiver refused. Why? On account of the exceeding love which held him strongly bound to that people, and because he sought not the things that were his own, but the honour of God, and the profit of many. So great was the charity of this man of God.

It seems to me, however, that, by a secret dispensation, this destiny, on account of its greatness, was providentially reserved to the Spouse, so that she, and not Moses, might grow into a mighty people. For it would not be right for the friend of the Bridegroom to snatch away the blessing that belonged to the Bride. Therefore, not to Moses, but to the newly-wed Bride, was it said, “Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” She, I say, was certainly sent to grow into a great nation. Could she, indeed, have been destined to expand into a greater than the whole? And as she came bearing peace and offering grace, the whole world readily yielded to her sway. But not as grace, so also the law. With how great a difference of aspect the sweetness of the former and the austerity of the latter present themselves to the conscience of each! Surely no one can regard with the same sentiments that which condemns and

that which consoles, that which holds to account and that which pardons, that which punishes with severity and that which embraces with love. We have not an equal welcome for the shadow and for the light, for wrath and for peace, for judgment and for mercy, for the figure and for the substance, for the rod and for the inheritance, for the curb and for the kiss. Heavy are the hands of Moses, as Aaron and Hur can bear witness." Heavy, too, is the yoke of the law, according to the testimony of the apostles, who declared that neither themselves nor their fathers could bear it. A heavy burden and a light reward, since it is the earth that is promised! Therefore Moses was not destined to grow into a great people. But thou, O mother Church, "having the promise of the life which now is and of that which is to come," dost easily win acceptance from all, by reason of thy twofold offer of a sweet yoke here and a supernal kingdom hereafter. Driven forth from Jerusalem, thou art received by the world, because thy promises are more attractive than thy laws are repelling. Why dost thou still lament the loss of a single vineyard, for which thou hast been so superabundantly compensated? "Because thou wast forsaken, and hated, and there was none that passed through thee," saith the Lord, by His Prophet Isaias, "I will make thee to be an everlasting glory, a joy unto generation and generation; and thou shalt suck the milk of the gentiles, and thou shalt be nursed with the milk of kings; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." It is in this sense, therefore, the Spouse declares that she has been made keeper in the vineyards, and that she has not kept her vineyard.

Whenever I read these words, my brethren, I am wont to reprove myself for undertaking the charge of other souls, who am not able to take care of my own. For I take vineyards as signifying souls. If this interpretation approves itself to you, consider whether I may not also and consequentially regard faith as the vine, the virtues as the branches, good works as the grapes, and devotion as the wine. For as the branches cannot be without the vine, so neither can the virtues exist without faith. "Without faith," says St. Paul, "it is impossible to please God," and perhaps impossible to avoid displeasing Him; "for all that is not of faith is sin," as St. Paul teaches. Therefore, those who "made me keeper in the vineyards" should have considered this, viz., how I had kept my own. But, alas! how long a time it lay neglected, forsaken, and reduced to a wilderness! Certainly, no wine was produced in it, the branches of virtue having withered on the barren stock of faith. For faith was still there, but dead. How could it be otherwise without works? Such was I when living in the world. After my conversion to the Lord, I confess that I began to keep my vineyard somewhat

better, yet still not as I ought. For who is sufficient for this? Not even the holy Psalmist, since he declares that “Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.” To what snares I remember to have even then exposed myself, snares set by him, whose practice it is “to shoot in secret the undefiled”! How much of the produce was carried off from the vineyard of my soul by various cunning artifices, at that very time when I began to apply myself with greater vigilance to the keeping and the caring of it! How many clusters of the excellent grapes of good works were either blighted by anger, lost by boasting, or begrimed with the smoke of vainglory! How many temptations I endured from gluttony, from the spirit of sloth, “from pusillanimity of spirit and the storm”! Such was I then. And, nevertheless, they “made me keeper in the vineyards,” not considering what I was doing or had done with my own, nor attending to the master, St. Paul, who censured their conduct with the words, “But if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?”

I am amazed, my brethren, at the audacity of some, who, as we see, can gather nothing in their own vineyards but “thorns and briers,” and who yet have the daring to intrude themselves into the vineyards of the Lord. No keepers, no husbandmen they, but “thieves and robbers.” Let us say no more about them. But alas for me even now, because of the danger to my vineyard! Nay, the danger is now greater than ever before, because, having to watch over many, I am compelled to be less diligent and less solicitous with regard to my own. I am not permitted to “make a hedge round about it” nor to “dig in it a press.” Alas! “the hedge thereof” is “broken down, so that all who pass by the way do pluck it”! It lies exposed to sadness; it is open to anger and to impatience. The busy “little foxes” of “present necessities” lay it waste. Anxieties, suspicions, and solicitudes rush in upon it from every side. Rarely has it an hour’s respite from wrangling crowds and vexatious disputes. I have no power to prevent, no means of avoiding such invasions I have not so much as time to pray. With what rair of tears shall I be able to irrigate “the sterility of my soul”? I meant to say “the sterility of my vineyard,” but the familiar words of the psalm slipped from my tongue. However, the sense is the same. Nor do I regret a mistake which reminds me that the language I am using is figurative, and that there is question here, not of a material vineyard, but of a spiritual soul. Therefore understand “soul” when you hear “vineyard.” For the sterility of the former is bewailed under the image and name of the latter. Therefore, with what tears, I ask, shall I irrigate the sterility of my vineyard? All its branches are withered “through poverty.” They

hang without fruit, because of the lack of moisture. O good Jesus! Thou knowest what faggots of dry twigs I make of them and burn in daily sacrifice to Thee with the fire of a contrite heart. Let “an afflicted spirit” be a sacrifice to Thee, I implore. “A contrite and humbled heart, O God,” do “not despise.”

Thus have I, my brethren, according to my imperfection, applied my present text to myself. But perfect will the man have to be who can say in a different sense, “My vineyard I have not kept.” I mean, in that sense in which the Saviour says in the Gospel, “He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it.” He is truly qualified and worthy to be made “keeper in the vineyards,” who is not turned aside or prevented by the care of his own vineyard from diligence and solicitude with regard to those of his brethren which may be committed to his charge; because he seeks not the things that are his own, nor what is profitable to himself, “but to many.” For this reason, doubtless, St. Peter was made keeper in the many vineyards which were of the Circumcision, because he was a man prepared “to go to prison and to death.” Thus he showed how little he was held captive by the love of his own vineyard, viz., of his own interests, in such a way as not to be able to look after those others entrusted to his care. With good reason was St. Paul also made keeper of such a forest of vineyards amongst the gentiles. For neither was he found over-anxious in the care of his own. So far from it, indeed, that he was “ready not only to be bound, but to die also in Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.” For, as he said elsewhere, “I fear none of these things, neither do I count my life more precious than myself.” Excellent valuator, who judges nothing of all that belongs to him to be preferable to himself!

Yet how many have rated of more worth than their own salvation a little of that vile thing we call money! St. Paul would not give such a preference even to his life. “Neither,” says he, “do I count my life more precious than myself.” Dost thou, therefore, O Paul, make a distinction between thy life and thyself? Justly couldst thou declare thyself to be of more value than anything that is thine. But how is thy life not rather thyself than thine? I take it, my brethren, that when he said this, the Apostle was “walking in the spirit” and mentally “consenting to the law of God, that it is good.” Therefore, he deemed it right to designate his mind, as his principal and noblest part, by the name of “self” rather than by any other title. The remaining (sensitive) part of his soul, which is evidently of an inferior nature and is wedded to the lower and baser essence, that is, to the body, not only by the office of imparting to it life and feeling, but also by the instinct to foster and nourish it—this sensual and carnal element, I say, St. Paul, as a

spiritual man, considered unworthy to be called “self.” He judged it better to reckon it amongst the things that belonged to him, than to speak of it as if it adequately represented his personality. “When I speak of myself,” he seems to say, “think of that which is most excellent in me, and in which I stand by the grace of God, namely, my mind and reason. But when I talk of my life, I mean the inferior part of my soul which is employed in animating the body, and constitutes with it the principle of concupiscence. That, I confess, I once made myself to be, but now I do so no longer. For I do not now walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit. ‘I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.’ It is not I that live according to the law of my members, but it is I that live according to the law of my mind. And what if, even still, the inferior part of my soul lusts after the things of the flesh? ‘It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.’ And hence, not me, but mine, should I call that in me which still savours of the flesh, and which is nothing else than my sensitive life or soul.” For in truth, her carnal affection is a part of the soul, as is also the life which she communicates to the body. This life of his sensitive soul, then, is the life or soul which St. Paul despises in comparison with himself, being “ready not only to be bound, but to die also in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus,” and so to lose his life, according to the counsel of Christ.

Do you also, my brethren, give up your own wills, completely renounce all that gratifies the body, crucify your “flesh with the vices and concupiscences” thereof, and “mortify your members which are upon the earth.” So shall you prove yourselves imitators of the Apostle because, like him, you will not have counted your lives more precious than yourselves. So shall you prove yourselves to be disciples of Christ, by losing your lives in this salutary way, as He recommends. And truly it is a more prudent course to lose it in order to save than to save it in order to lose it. “For, whosoever will save his life shall lose it.” What have you to say to this, you who are so fastidious with regard to your meals, so careless about your morals? Hippocrates and his disciples teach us to save our lives in this world. Christ and His apostles command us to lose them. Which of the two do you select for your master? But he makes it plain what leader he follows who brings forward such objections as these to the food provided for him by his superiors: “That is bad for the eyes, that causes headache, this injures the breast, that disorders the stomach.” We may presume that each person speaks according to what he has learned from his master. Now, I ask, have you found such distinctions of meats in the writings of the prophets or apostles? Assuredly, it was flesh and blood, and not the Spirit of the Father,

that revealed to you this wisdom. For it is the wisdom of the flesh, and hear what our spiritual physicians think of it. “The wisdom of the flesh,” they tell us, “is death.” Also, “the wisdom of the flesh is the enemy of God.” Ought I to have proposed to you the doctrine of Hippocrates, or of Galenus, or that of the school of Epicurus, instead of the Gospel truth? But I am a disciple of Christ, and I am addressing Christians. Therefore, I should have sinned if I introduced any teaching foreign to the Gospel. Epicurus makes sensual enjoyment the supreme good. Hippocrates prefers a good condition of bodily health. But my Master preaches the contempt of both the one and the other of these things. Those philosophers seek with all diligence, and exhort us to seek, for the means of sustaining or of making pleasant the soul’s life in the body, the very thing which, according to the teaching of the Saviour, we ought to be prepared to lose.

What else, my brethren, sounded in our ears from the school of Christ when it was just now proclaimed that “He who loveth his life shall lose it”? He shall lose it, the Lord says, either by laying it down, as a martyr, or by afflicting it, as a penitent. Although it is a kind of martyrdom to “mortify by the spirit the deeds of the flesh,” a martyrdom less cruel indeed in its terrors than that which dismembers the body with violence, yet more painful by reason of its duration. Do you not perceive that these words of my Divine Master condemn the wisdom of the flesh, whereby we are relaxed in the luxury of sensual pleasure, or we devote excessive attention even to the preservation of our bodily health? That it is not true wisdom which leads to luxury you surely must have learned from holy Job, where he tells us that such wisdom “is not found in the land of them that live in delights.” But he who discovers it cries out, “I loved her above health and beauty.” And if wisdom is to be preferred to health and beauty, how much more to sensuality and turpitude? But what will it avail us to abstain from the pleasures of the flesh, if we make it our daily engrossing care to study the diversities of constitutions and the distinctive properties of the various kinds of food? “Pulse,” thou complainest, “produces flatulency, cheese causes indigestion, milk gives me headache, my chest will not suffer me to drink cold water, cabbage makes me melancholy, I always feel choleric after onions, fish from the lake or from muddy water does not agree with my constitution.” What! In all rivers, fields, gardens, cellars, thou canst find scarcely anything fit to be thy food!

Remember, I pray thee, that thou dost belong, not to the medical, but to the monastic profession; and that thou shalt be judged by thy fidelity to thy religious engagements, not in accordance with the state of thy bodily health. Have mercy,

I beg of thee, first, on thy own peace of mind, then on those who have the laborious office of ministering to thy taste. Be kind to the oppressed community. Be kind to conscience. I say “to conscience,” not meaning thine, but thy brother’s, the conscience of him, namely, who, sitting beside thee, partakes of what is set before him, and feels inclined to murmur at thy singular mode of fasting. For he is scandalised either at thy detestable superstition, or at the hardness which he may be tempted to impute to him who has the duty of providing for thee. Thy singularity, I repeat, is a cause of scandal to thy brother, who will either judge thee to be fastidious, when he sees thee abstaining from the common food, and seeking for superfluities, or certainly he will accuse me of cruelty, because I do not make the necessary provision for thy sustenance. Vainly do some seek to flatter their delicacy with the example of St. Paul, who tells his disciple not to drink water, but to use a little wine for his “stomach’s sake” and his “frequent infirmities.” For, in the first place, they ought to take notice that the Apostle is not here recommending such a drink for himself, and that the disciple has not asked it for himself. In the second place, it should be observed that the prescription is not for a monk but for a bishop, and a bishop whose life was very necessary to the Church, then so young and tender. This was St. Timothy. Give me another St. Timothy, and I will offer him gold to eat and balsam to drink. But it is thou that dispensest thyself, and treatest thyself with such tenderness. It makes me suspicious, I confess, to see thee thus indulgent to thyself. And I feel apprehensive lest thou shouldst be deceived by the wisdom of the flesh, masquerading under the name and colour of discretion. At any rate, as thou art so pleased to have the Apostle’s authority for drinking wine, I would remind thee, lest thou shouldst forget, that St. Paul uses the adjective “little.” But enough of this. Let us now return to the Spouse. And let us learn from her not to keep our own vineyards but to lose them for the profit of others. This is especially necessary for superiors, who manifestly have been made “keepers in the vineyards” of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXI

ON THE VARIOUS VISIONS OF GOD

"O Thou, Whom my soul loveth, show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day."

"Show me, O Thou, Whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day." The Divine Word, the Bridegroom of our souls, often reveals Himself, my brethren, to fervent spirits, but not always under the same form. Why so? No doubt because they do not yet see Him "as He is." For this vision is fixed and immutable, as fixed and immutable as the Form of the Divinity Which is its Object. It simply is, suffering no change from the future to the present, nor from the present to the past. Take away "was" and "shall be" and where now is there any room for "change or shadow of alteration"? But whatever exists in such a way that it ceases not to pass from that which it has been, and to tend to that which it shall be, by an uninterrupted process of mutation, has indeed a passage through an indivisible nunc of actual being, but certainly never is. For how can we say that that is which "never continueth in the same state"? Therefore that alone truly is which can neither be separated from itself as it has been by alteration, nor effaced by itself as in the future it shall be, but alone invincibly, unchangeably is, and remains ever that which it is. Its present has co-existed with the whole of the unbeginning past, and shall co-exist with the whole of the unending future. In this way does it vindicate for itself true being, that is to say, uncreated, interminable, immutable being. When, therefore, He Who is such, rather I should say, Who being infinite, cannot be described as such or such at all—when He is seen as He is, the vision must of necessity be abiding, as subject to no vicissitude. And thus to all who enjoy that sight, the one penny of the Gospel shall have been paid in the one same vision, which is offered to all. For as the Object seen is immutable in Itself, It must appear without variation to all those who behold It. And they who contemplate It can wish to behold nothing more desirable or beautiful, nothing more capable of ravishing their hearts. When, therefore, shall that eager appetite give place to satiety, or that sweetness lose its savour, or that truth be found deceptive, or that

eternity fall short and fail? But if both the vision itself and the soul's delight in it shall endure for evermore, surely that is the very consummation of beatitude. For since, on the one hand, the contemplation of the Divine Beauty is all-sufficing and eternal, nothing can ever be wanting to those who enjoy it; and on the other, as their love also is everlasting they can never grow weary of what they behold.

But, my brethren, this vision is not for the present life. It is reserved for the next, and for them only who can say, "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is." Now, indeed, He appears to whom He pleases and as He pleases, but not as He is. No sage, no saint, no prophet can see Him as He is, or, at least, could see Him so, whilst clothed in this mortal flesh. But they who are accounted worthy shall enjoy that vision of Him in the immortal body of the future. In the meantime, therefore, He is seen, not as He is, but in the way He wills. So it is, indeed, even with that great luminary, I mean the material sun, which daily rises upon us. For it is never seen as it is in itself, but only by the light which it communicates to the air, for instance, or to the mountain, or to the wall. And we could not see it at all, if the light of our bodies, viz., the eye, did not bear a certain resemblance in its natural purity and clearness to the solar radiance. For no other bodily member is sensitive to light, which is doubtless due to their lack of any such affinity. But even the eye itself, when "troubled," is unable to perceive the light, because, namely, it has lost the similitude necessary thereto. Therefore, the same faculty which when "troubled," or clouded, cannot see the bright sun as having no likeness to it, may yet behold it, when rendered bright itself, on account of this resemblance. And it is evident that, were the eye possessed of a purity equal to the purity of the sun, it would be able, by reason of such perfect resemblance, to contemplate with undazzled gaze that luminous body as it is in its meridian splendour. In the same way, the Divine Sun of Justice, "Who enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," can be seen by the soul that is enlightened, according to the degree in which He enlightens her, because of the partial resemblance between them. Nevertheless, He cannot yet be seen as He is in Himself, for the reason that the similarity is not yet perfect. Hence, the Psalmist exhorts us, saying, "Come ye to Him and be enlightened and your faces shall not be confounded." Thus shall it be, no doubt, if only we are enlightened as much as is needful, so that "beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, we are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Consequently, we must "come to Him," not, mark you, intrude ourselves

boldly upon Him, lest the irreverent “searcher of majesty” should be “overwhelmed by glory.” Not from place to place must we advance towards Him, but by a progress “from glory to glory,” and this not the glory of the flesh, but of the Spirit: “as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Manifestly, I say, it is not by our own spirit that this advance is to be made, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Although it must indeed be accomplished in our own spirit. Therefore, each of us draws nearer to God in proportion as he increases in this spiritual glory or purity. But he who has attained to perfect purity has arrived at the very presence of God. Furthermore, for those who have already reached that divine presence, to see Him as He is is the same thing as to be as He is, and no longer to be confounded because of any dissimilitude. But such happiness belongs, as I have said, to the life to come. In the meantime, this marvellous variety of forms, this infinitude of beautiful kinds in creation, what are they but so many rays, so to speak, from the Sun of the Divinity, showing indeed that He Who is their source, truly is, but not fully declaring what He is? Hence we only see what proceeds from Him, not His own Divine Self. But beholding all the works of His hands, although Himself we cannot see, we still feel assured that He truly exists, and that we have a duty to seek Him out. And grace shall not be wanting to the honest inquirer, nor shall ignorance excuse the slothful and negligent. This mode of vision is common to all. It is within the competence of every one who has attained the use of reason, as St. Paul testifies, “to see clearly the invisible things of God, being understood by the things that are made.”

Another way of vision is that whereby the fathers were often graciously admitted to delightful familiarity with God as present, although not even they were privileged to see Him as He is in Himself, but only as He condescended to appear. Neither did He show Himself in the same form to all, but, as the Apostle speaks, “at sundry times and in divers manners,” although one in Himself. For “the Lord thy God is one God,” as He Himself said to Israel. This revelation was not indeed common, yet it was made exteriorly, that is to say, through sensible images or spoken words. There is still another mode of contemplating the Divinity, differing from those mentioned, in that it is more interior. In this manifestation, God vouchsafes to visit in person the soul that seeks Him, provided, however, that she devotes herself with all desire and love to this holy quest. And a sign of His coming to us in this manner shall be, as we learn from one who has had the experience, that “A fire shall go before Him and shall burn His enemies round about.” For it is necessary that the ardour of holy desire should go before His Face unto every soul which He intends to visit, in order to

burn out the rust of vice and sin and prepare a place for the Lord. And then shall the soul know that “the Lord is nigh,” when she feels herself inflamed with that fire; and she shall exclaim with the Prophet Jeremias, “From above He hath sent fire into my bones and hath chastened me,” or with the Psalmist, “My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out.”

When, as sometimes happens, the Object of her desires, so ardently sought after, compassionately reveals Himself to the soul that sighs often, prays unceasingly and afflicts herself in the impatient eagerness of her longing; then, as I think, she will be able, from her own experience, to cry with the Prophet, “Thou art good, O Lord, to them that hope in Thee, to the soul that seeketh Thee.” And the angel guardian of that soul, who is one of the friends of the Bridegroom and by Him deputed to be the minister and witness of this secret and mutual intercourse—Oh! how he exults! How he shares in the joy and the bliss of his protégé! Turning to the Bridegroom, he exclaims, “Thanks to Thee, O Lord of Majesty, because ‘Thou hast given her her heart’s desire, and hast not withholden from her the will of her lips.’ ” He it is, who, as the solicitous companion of the soul in every place, does not cease to urge her forward and to admonish her with constant suggestions, saying, “Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the petitions of thy heart”; or, “Expect the Lord and keep His way”; or, “If He make any delay, wait for Him, for He shall surely come and He shall not be slack.” But to the Lord he says, “ ‘As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so’ does this soul ‘pant after Thee, O God.’ She ‘hath desired Thee in the night,’ and Thy Spirit within her in the morning early hath watched for Thee.” And again, “All the day long has she spread out her hands to Thee. ‘Send her away because she crieth after Thee.’ ‘Return a little’ and ‘be entreated’ in favour of this soul. ‘Look down from heaven, and see, and visit, this desolate one.’ ” So does this faithful paranymph, who is the confidant, without envy, of the mutual love of the Bridegroom and His Bride, seek not his own but his Master’s interests. He acts as an intermediary between the Spouse and her Beloved, presenting to Him her prayers, and bearing back to her His favours. His exhortations reanimate the Bride, and His intercessions appease the Bridegroom. Sometimes also, although rarely, he actually brings them together into each other’s presence, either snatching her up to Him, or leading Him down to her dwelling. For he is a domestic, a familiar in the palace, having no fear of meeting with a repulse, and daily seeing the “Face of the Father.”

But take care, my brethren, that you do not understand me as conceiving the union between the Word and the faithful soul to be something corporal and

perceptible to the sense. I am only speaking the language of St. Paul, who has said that “He who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.” The ecstatic elevation of the pure soul to God and God’s loving descent to the soul I am trying to describe as well as I can with human words “comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” The union whereof I speak, therefore, is a spiritual union, because “God is a Spirit,” and He desires the beauty of the soul which He observes to be walking in the Spirit, and not “making provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.” More especially if He beholds her inflamed with His love. Such a Spouse, then, so disposed and so beloved, can by no means be content either with that manifestation of her Bridegroom which is given to the many by the things that are made, nor yet with that which is vouchsafed the few in visions and dreams. She will not be satisfied, unless, by a special privilege of grace, He descends into her from the height of heaven so that she may embrace Him with her tenderest and strongest affections, and in the very centre of her heart, and may have thus intimately united to her the Divine Object of her heart’s desire, not in bodily form, but by a spiritual indwelling; not as beheld in vision, but as clasped and clasping in a close embrace of mutual love. Nor does it admit of any doubt that this mode of the divine presence is only all the more delectable for being so interior. For the Word of God is not a sounding but a “piercing” Word, not pronounceable by the tongue, but “efficacious in the mind,” not sensible to the ear, but fascinating to the affections. His Face is not an object possessing beauty of form, but rather is the Source of all beauty and all form. It is not visible to the bodily eye, but rejoices the eye of the heart. And It is pleasing, not because of the harmony of Its colour, but by reason of the ardent love It excites.

Yet even here I would not venture to say that He shows Himself as He is, although at the same time He does not appear in this kind of vision altogether different from Himself as He is. For He does not constantly manifest Himself thus, even to the most fervent souls, nor yet in the same way to all. It is necessary that grace and the savour of the divine presence should vary in accordance with the varying desires of the soul, and that the infused relish of heavenly sweetness should please the spiritual palate in different ways and degrees. You must have noticed in this love-song how often He changes His Countenance, and with “how great a multitude of sweetness” He condescends to transform Himself in the presence of His beloved one. Thus, at one time, He appears as a bashful Bridegroom, soliciting the secret embraces of the holy soul, and finding His pleasure in kisses; at another, He reveals Himself in the rôle of a Physician, with oils and unguents, and that for the sake of such tender and weak

souls as still have need of lotions and lenitives, and hence are designated by the name of “young maidens,” a name expressive of delicacy. Should anyone murmur at His acting thus, he shall be told that “They that are in health need not a Physician, but they that are ill.” Occasionally also, as a Wayfarer, He associates Himself with the wayfaring Spouse and young maidens, who are journeying forward together, and He relieves the labour and weariness of the way with His delightful conversation. Hence they say to each other, after their parting from Him, “Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke to us on the way?” Most pleasant of companions, Who makes all to run after Him, to the sweetness of His voice and the attractions of virtues, as to the delicious odour of spiritual ointments! Hence they, the Spouse and the young maidens, also say, “We will run to the odour of Thy ointments.” Sometimes, again, He presents Himself as a wealthy Father of a family, whose house abounds with bread; or rather as a magnificent and powerful Monarch, Who appears in order to support the pusillanimity of His poor Spouse, and to excite her pious cupidity by showing her all the riches of His glory, the treasures of His wine-presses and His storehouses, the abundance of His gardens and His fields, and lastly, leading her even into the privacy of His bedchamber. For “the heart of her Husband trusteth in her”; and amongst all His possessions there is nothing which He thinks ought to be concealed from her whom He redeemed from poverty, whom He has found faithful under trial, and whom He now embraces as worthy of His love. And so He ceases not to manifest Himself in one or other of these interior ways to the eye of the soul that seeks Him, in order that the word may be fulfilled which He spoke, saying, “Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”

In all these various kinds of vision, the Beloved appears “sweet and mild and plenteous in mercy.” For as the bashful Bridegroom, intent on kisses, He shows Himself pleasant and affectionate; as the Physician with His oils, His medicines, and His unguents, clement and rich in the bowels of piety and compassion; as a Wayfarer, cheerful and affable and full of charm and consolation; as a Monarch, exhibiting His treasures and possessions, munificent and liberal to reward, with a royal liberality. And so, in every verse of this Canticle you will see the Word obscurely represented under such images. Hence, in my opinion, this must have been the Prophet’s meaning, where he says, “A Spirit before our face is Christ the Lord; under thy shadow we shall live among the gentiles”; because, as St. Paul tells us, “we see now through a glass, in a dark manner,” and not yet “face to face.” But this is to be the case only whilst we “live amongst the gentiles.” For

when we are amongst the angels, it shall be otherwise. Then, enjoying quite the same happiness as these blessed spirits, we also shall see Him as He is, that is to say, in the “Form of God,” and no longer under symbol or figure. For just as we say that the Old Dispensation possessed but the shadow and the image, whereas under the Gospel we have the very truth shining upon us, through the grace of Christ present in the flesh; so may we, too, whilst here below, be said to live in the shadow, in comparison with that light of truth wherewith we shall be illumined in the world to come. No one will deny this, except one who does not agree with the Apostle, when he says, “We know in part and we prophesy in part,” and, “I do not count myself to have apprehended.” For surely there must be a difference between walking by faith and walking by vision. And therefore, whilst the holy soul lives here in the shadow of Christ, the holy angel rejoices in the splendour of His unclouded glory.

Yet a good thing is this shadow of the faith, which tempers the light to the weak eye, and at the same time strengthens the eye to bear the light. For, as it is written, Christians should be constantly employed in “purifying their hearts by faith.” Faith, therefore, instead of extinguishing, guards the light. Whatever that Object is which the angels are already contemplating, the same, no doubt, faith preserves for me, keeping it hidden away in its faithful bosom, to be revealed at the proper time. Is it not well, my brethren, to hold, even thus wrapped up, a treasure which we could not hold uncovered? Even the Lord’s Mother herself lived in the shadow of faith, for to her was it said “And blessed art thou that hast believed.” She had also a shadow from the Body of Christ, as the Angel implied when he told her “And the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.” For that is no slight shadow which is thrown by the power of the Most High. And truly there was power in the Flesh of Christ, which overshadowed the Virgin, so that, by means of the intervening screen of this vivifying Body, she might be enabled to endure the presence of the Divine Majesty and bear the splendours of the Light inaccessible, a thing otherwise quite impossible to a mortal woman. That is power indeed, by which every opposing power is vanquished. It is at once a power and a shadow, by which the demons are put to flight and men sheltered and defended. Or certainly an invigorating power and a cooling shadow.

We live then, my brethren, in the shadow of Christ, whilst we walk by faith and feed on His Flesh as the source of our life. For Christ’s Flesh “is Meat indeed.” And consider, whether it may not be for this reason He is even now represented as appearing in pastoral guise, if I may so speak, in this place, where

the Spouse seems to address Him as if He were one of the shepherds. “Show me,” she says, “where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day.” A “Good Shepherd,” in truth, “Who giveth His life for His sheep!” He gives His life for them, and His Flesh to them. His life is their ransom, His Flesh their food. Strange thing! He is at once their Pastor, their Pasture, and their Price!

But the conclusion of this discourse is still a long way off. The subject is a large one, and comprehends numerous grandeurs and sublimities, so that it cannot be compressed within narrow limits. Hence it seems best to make here an interruption rather than an end. But memory must watch in the interval, and not let slip what has been said. For in the next sermon, I shall resume this subject, and begin at the point where I now leave off, according as I may be inspired by Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXII

ON THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH THE WORD PRESENTS HIMSELF TO DIFFERENT SOULS, AND ON THE SOURCES OF GOOD AND EVIL THOUGHTS

"Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day."

"Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day." Hither, my brethren, have we come, and here we begin. But before proceeding with the explanation of this vision and this loving entreaty, I think it would be well if I briefly recapitulated what has been said of the other visions already dealt with, showing how they may be spiritually accommodated to ourselves, according to the desires and the merits of each. For in this way, the understanding of those, if yet it be granted us, will facilitate the comprehension of this which I purpose to discuss in the present sermon. The undertaking is far from being an easy one. Although the language in which the visions or figures are described seems to refer directly to bodies and things of the body, yet what is meant to be conveyed to us is something spiritual, and hence the causes and significations have to be spiritually investigated. But who is capable of examining and comprehending the so various affections and advances of the soul to which is dispensed the multiform grace of the presence of the Bridegroom? Yet, if we enter into ourselves, and if the Holy Spirit deigns to reveal to us by His light the work which He condescends to busy Himself constantly about in our interior, I think we shall not remain altogether without understanding of these matters. For I trust that "we have received, not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit That is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God."

Therefore, if to any amongst us, as to the holy Psalmist, it has been given to feel intensely that it is "good to adhere to God," or, to speak more plainly, if there be amongst us such a "man of desires" that he "desires to be dissolved and

to be with Christ," and desires this ardently, thirsts for it eagerly, and meditates on it night and day, he certainly shall receive the Word not otherwise than in the character of a Bridegroom, at the time of his visitation. That is to say, at the hour when he feels himself closely embraced in his interior, with the arms, so to speak, of divine wisdom, and experiences in consequence a sweet infusion of holy love. For "his heart's desire" has been given him, whilst still sojourning in the body. Yet only in part, and that but for a time, and a short time. For the Beloved, after having been sought and found with so many watchings, so many supplications, so much labour, such floods of tears, suddenly slips away, when we are supposing that we still hold Him fast. Then, again, He unexpectedly confronts us as, weeping, we pursue Him, and allows Himself to be taken hold of, but not to be detained, for He once more flies suddenly away from our grasp. However, if the favoured soul be instant in prayer with tears, He will come back soon to her, and "will not withhold from her the will of her lips." But very soon He again disappears, and is no longer seen, unless He be followed with the fulness of the heart's desire. In this way, therefore, even in our exile here below, we may often experience the joy of the Bridegroom's presence, yet not unto satiety. For although the visitation brings us gladness the withdrawal causes pain in proportion. And so long must the beloved Spouse endure this vicissitude of consolation and abandonment until, having once laid aside the burden of corporeal flesh, she, too, learns how to fly, lifted up on the wings of holy desires, and to make her way unimpeded through the far-spreading aerial plains of divine contemplation, with liberty of spirit following her Beloved "whithersoever He goeth." Yet not to every soul does He communicate Himself in this manner, even momentarily, but only to that which, by the fervour of her devotion, and the eagerness of her desires and the surpassing tenderness of her love, proves herself to be a true spouse, and worthy that the Beloved, in coming to pay her a visit, should "put on His beauty," assuming the form of a Bridegroom. For she that is not yet found so disposed, but rather afflicted at the recollection of her sins, ought to say to God, speaking in the bitterness of her soul, "Condemn me not." And she who has still to struggle against violent temptation from her "own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured," it is not a Bridegroom such a one needs, but a Physician. Therefore, she receives, instead of kisses and caresses, only oils and unguents as remedies for her wounds. Have we not often felt this in ourselves? Has not this been our own experience in prayer, still daily afflicted as we are by our present excesses, and tortured by the memory of the past? O good Jesus, from how great a bitterness of soul Thy advent has

frequently delivered me! How often, after anxious tears, after “unspeakable groanings” and sobbings hast Thou not anointed my wounded conscience with the unction of Thy mercy, and soothed it with an infusion of the “oil of gladness”! How often has it not happened that the prayer, which found me almost abandoned by hope, restored to me peace and joy with the assurance of pardon! They who have had the same experience, “behold they know” how truly the Lord Jesus is called a Physician, “Who healeth the broken of heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” And such as cannot claim experimental knowledge of this, must believe Him when He says of Himself, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore He hath anointed Me; He hath sent Me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart.” But if they still doubt, let them draw nigh to Him and put the matter to trial. So, from what happens in themselves, they shall come to an understanding of His words, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” But let us now pass on to consider the remaining points of our subject.

There are some, my brethren, who, tired of spiritual things, lapse into tepidity, and in a certain faintness of the spirit, walk sadly on in the ways of the Lord, approaching every duty with a dry and heavy heart, and often giving way to discontent and murmuring. Weary and desolate, they are heard to complain of the length of the days and of the length of the nights. With holy Job they say, “If I lie down to sleep I shall say, when shall I rise? and again I shall look for the evening.” Therefore, whenever we happen to suffer anything like this, if only the Lord out of pity should meet us “in the way in which we are walking,” and, being Himself from heaven, should begin to talk to us of the things of heaven, or to sing us a sweet and soothing song of the canticles of Sion, or to entertain us with an account of the city of God, of the peace of that city, the eternity of that peace, and the immutability of that eternity, I assure you, my brethren, such delightful conversation would be as a soft litter to the drowsy and weary wayfarers, relieving at once the languor of the mind and the fatigue of the body. Does it not seem to you that such was the experience of him and such the object of his prayer, who said, “My soul hath slumbered through heaviness; strengthen Thou me in Thy words”? And when his request was granted, did he not exclaim, “Oh, how I have loved Thy law, O Lord!”? Our meditations on our Bridegroom, the Word, on His Glory, His Beauty, His Power, His Majesty, may be considered as His conversations with us. And not only that, but even when with fervent hearts we ponder His testimonies and the “judgments of His Mouth,” and “meditate on His law, day and night,” let us be firmly convinced that the Beloved is there present and speaking to us, so that, charmed with His words, we

may not grow weary of the labour.

Whenever, therefore, my brethren, you are conscious of entertaining such thoughts in your souls, do not mistake them for your own reflections, but acknowledge them to be the interior speech of Him Who declares by the mouth of His Prophet, “I (am He) That speak justice.” For there is, in some respects, the closest resemblance between the thoughts of our mind and the words of Truth speaking within us. Hence, it is no easy matter for a man to distinguish the words which his heart utters from those which it simply hears, unless he prudently attends to the teaching of Christ, where He tells us in the Gospel that “from the heart come forth evil thoughts,” and where He says, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” and, “When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own.” And the Apostle similarly asserts “not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” It is, of course, only the sufficiency to think anything good that he refuses to admit in us. The evil, therefore, that we revolve in our minds is our own thought; the good is the secret word of God. Our hearts speak the former, they only listen to the latter. “I will hear,” says the Psalmist, “what the Lord God will speak in me, for He will speak peace unto His people.” Consequently, it is God Who speaks peace, piety, and justice in us. Of ourselves we cannot think of such things, we do but hear them. On the other hand, murders, uncleannesses, thefts, blasphemies, and such like come forth from the heart. These are not heard by it, but spoken. For “the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.” And therefore “hath the wicked provoked God, for he hath said in his heart, He will not require it.” But there is something besides, which is indeed felt by the heart, and yet is not a word uttered by the heart. For it does not come forth from the heart as our own thought. Neither is it the same as that other word, which, as I said, is spoken by Truth to the heart, viz., the word of the Word, since this word is evil. But it is inspired by the opposing powers, as one of the things sent “by evil angels” (Immissiones per angelos malos—Ps. 127:4). So we read that the demon put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, as an evil word, to betray the Lord.

But who is there that watches so vigilantly and constantly over his interior feelings, whether only in him, or also from him, that in every illicit emotion of the heart he clearly distinguishes between the natural corruption of his own mind and the bite of the serpent? In my opinion, no mortal man is capable of this, unless he who, enlightened by the Paraclete, has received that special grace which the Apostle mentions amongst the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and names the

discernment of spirits. One may guard his heart with all possible vigilance, according to Solomon; and with most watchful attention observe all its interior motions; one may be long practised and have frequent experience in these matters, yet never shall he be able to discriminate with certitude between the home-sprung evil and the hell-inspired. For “who can understand sins?” But it concerns us very little to know whence the evil is, as long as we perceive that it is really within us. Rather, whatsoever its source, we should make it our business to watch and pray assiduously, lest we should give it our consent. The Psalmist prays against both evils, viz., that originating from our own hearts, and that inspired by the demon, when he says, “From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare Thy servant.” I cannot deliver unto you, my brethren, that which I have not myself received. But I have not received, I must candidly confess, any means of distinguishing infallibly between the evil that is begotten of the heart and that which is injected by the enemy. Both are truly evils, and proceed from an evil source; both are in the heart, yet not both of the heart. Of that much I am certain, although I am not able to determine what is to be attributed to the domestic, and what to the foreign enemy. However, as I have already remarked, such ignorance is attended with no great danger.

But there is another matter wherein error would unquestionably be perilous, nay, even pernicious, viz., in assigning to their respective sources the good and the evil which we discover within us. And here we have duly prescribed for us a certain and definite rule lest we should credit ourselves with what belongs to God, mistaking the divine visitation for fruit of our own hearts, or, on the other hand, attribute to grace what is but the product of nature. For between these two there is the same distinction as between good and evil. Our rule, therefore, is this, that nothing of evil must be ascribed to God, nor anything of good to ourselves, except perhaps that which the heart may have previously conceived through the grace of the Word. For “a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit.” But I think enough has now been said to show how much of the contents of our minds is due to God, and how much to ourselves, or the evil spirit; enough, I say, yet nothing superfluous, since I want the enemies of grace to understand clearly that, without grace, the human heart is incapable of even a good thought, but its “sufficiency is from God”; and that the good which is conceived is rather the voice of the Lord than the offspring of the mind. If, then, you hear that voice, you will no longer be ignorant “whence it cometh, or whither it goeth,” knowing that it “cometh from God and goeth” to the heart. But see to it that the word which comes forth from

the Mouth of God does not return to Him empty, “but that it shall do and prosper in all the things for which He sent it.” Thus shall you also be able to say, “His grace in me hath not been void.”

Happy the soul to which the Bridegroom, as her inseparable Companion, everywhere shows Himself affable, and gives to experience uninterruptedly the sweetness of His divine eloquence! She certainly will have it in her power at all times to deliver herself from the troubles and temptations that have their source in the flesh, whilst she occupies herself in “redeeming the time because the days are evil.” Weariness and distress can have no access to such a soul, for, as it is written, “Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.”

Now, it seems to me, my brethren, that the Word also manifests Himself as a great Father of a family, or rather under the form of Royal Majesty, to those who, as the Psalmist says, have “come to a deep heart,” viz., have their hearts filled with noble courage, and are rendered more magnanimous by great liberty of spirit and purity of conscience. I mean such as are wont to dare the difficult things, to penetrate the deep things with a kind of restless yet commendable curiosity, to lay hold of the high things and to undertake the perfect things, and that, not so much in the physical, as in the spiritual order. For these are found worthy, by reason of the greatness of their faith, to be admitted to the fulness of every grace. And amongst all the storerooms of wisdom, I do not think there is a single one from which “the Lord, the God of all knowledge” judges that they should be excluded who show themselves as desirous of truth as they are strangers to vanity. Such a one was Moses, who dared to say to God, “If I have found favour in Thy sight, show me Thy Face.” Such was St. Philip, who asked that the Father should be shown to himself and to his fellow-apostles. Such, too, was St. Thomas, who refused to believe unless with his own fingers he touched the Saviour’s Wounds, and put his hand into His pierced Side. His faith, indeed, was weak, but was founded, in a sense, in his greatness of soul, as is clear from his boldness in demanding such a proof. Another such was King David, for he also desired to see the Lord, and said to Him, “My heart hath said to Thee: my face hath sought Thee, Thy Face, O Lord, will I still seek.” These men, accordingly, had the courage to ask for great things, because they were themselves great men. And they obtained that which they had the daring to solicit, according to the promise made to them, namely, “Every place that your foot shall tread upon shall be yours.” For great faith merits a great reward. And as far as you extend the foot of your confidence in the goods of the Lord, so far shall be yours.

Thus we find that Moses spoke to God face to face. The holy Legislator deserved to see the Lord openly and not “in a dark manner” and under symbols and figures, whilst the Lord Himself declared that He revealed Himself to other prophets only in visions and spoke to them only in dreams. St. Philip, likewise, according to the petition of his heart, was shown the Father in the Son, no doubt, in the words immediately addressed to him, “Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also,” and, “I am in the Father and the Father in Me.” To St. Thomas, also, his request was granted, for the Word gave Himself to him to be handled according to his heart’s desire, and did not “defraud him of the will of his lips.” What shall I say of David? Does not he, too, give us to understand that he was not defrauded of the object of his desire, when he declares that he will not “give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, nor rest to his temples, until he found a place for the Lord”? Thus the Bridegroom will appear in His greatness to such great souls, and will “do great things for them.” He will “send forth His light and His truth, and conduct them and bring them unto His holy hill and into His tabernacles,” so that each of them shall be able to say with Mary, “He that is mighty hath done great things for me.” Their eyes shall behold the “King in his beauty” guiding their steps towards the “beautiful places of the desert,” to the home of the roses and the lilies of the valleys, and to the pleasant gardens, and to the refreshing fountains, and to the storehouses replenished with delights, and to the fragrant spices, and lastly, even to the privacy of the royal bedchamber.

Such, my brethren, are the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” concealed in the abode of the Bridegroom. Such are the pastures of life, prepared for the nourishment of holy souls. “Blessed is the man that hath fulfilled his desire with them.” Only let me exhort him not to wish to keep to himself alone that which would suffice for many. It is, perhaps, for this reason that after the mention of all these treasures the Bridegroom is described as appealing in the form of a Shepherd, viz., to remind him who has received so much grace, of his obligation to feed the flock of the simple. By the simple I mean those who have neither the power to attain to such things of themselves, nor yet the courage to go out into the pastures without their shepherd. The prudent Spouse, conscious of this, begs to be shown where He feeds and reposes in the mid-day heat, yearning, as her words indicate, to be fed and to feed with Him, and under His protection. For she does not think it safe to drive her flock far from the Supreme Pastor, on account of the hostile incursions of the wolves, particularly of the wolves that come to us in sheep’s clothing. Hence, she is anxious to feed in the same pastures with Him and to repose in the same shade. And she explains the reason of her request

when she adds, “Lest I begin to wander after the flocks of Thy companions.” These are they who wish to appear the friends of the Bridegroom, but are not. And although they are more concerned to feed their own flocks than His, yet they keep crying out deceitfully from time to time, “Lo, here is Christ, lo, there is Christ,” in order to seduce the many, to lead them away from the flock of the Lord, and unite them to their own. Thus far I have been occupied with the obvious sense of my text. The underlying spiritual signification shall engage me in my next discourse, in which I hope to communicate to you whatever lights may, meantime, be vouchsafed me in answer to your prayers, through the gracious mercy of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXIII

ON THE THREE OBJECTS OF THE DEVOUT SOUL'S QUEST, ON THE MYSTICAL MERIDIAN, AND THE FOUR KINDS OF TEMPTATION

> "Show me, O Thou Whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day, lest I begin to wander after the flocks of Thy companions."

"Show me, O Thou Whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day." "Show me why Thou judgest me so," exclaims another voice, that, namely, of holy Job, wherein, however, he does not find fault with the sentence pronounced against him, but merely inquires the cause, desiring instruction in the truth rather than deliverance from his afflictions. The Psalmist likewise makes a similar prayer in these words, "Show, O Lord, Thy ways to me and teach me Thy paths." And what he means by "ways" and "paths" he explains in another place, where he says, "He hath led me on the paths of justice." These three things, therefore, the soul that is devoted to God's service will constantly seek, viz., justice, and judgment, and the place where her Bridegroom's glory dwelleth, as the way in which she should walk, the landmarks wherewith she should guide her progress, and the home whither she should direct her steps. Of this home we read in the Psalms, "One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." Also, "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house; and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." Of the other two, namely, justice and judgment, the same inspired author says, "Justice and judgment are the preparation of Thy throne." Rightly then, does the devout soul seek these three things, since they are nothing else than the throne of God and the "preparation" of His throne. And it is the glorious prerogative of the Spouse that all alike concur to the consummation of her virtue, so that she is rendered beautiful by the form of justice, cautious by the knowledge of judgment, and chaste by the desire of the Bridegroom's presence or glory. Such assuredly the Spouse of the Lord

ought to be, beautiful, enlightened, and chaste. Therefore, this petition, which I have put last, has for object a knowledge of the Bridegroom's dwelling. For the Spouse requests of Him Whom her soul loveth, that He would show her where He feedeth, where He lieth in the mid-day.

And notice, in the first place, how beautifully she distinguishes the love of the spirit from the love of the flesh; for, whilst desirous to designate her Beloved by affection rather than by name, she nevertheless does not simply say, "Thou Whom I love," but, "O Thou Whom my soul loveth"; and thus she gives us to understand that her love is spiritual. In the next place, consider diligently what is that which pleases her so much is the place of His pasturage. Nor should you pass over without examination what she says of the meridian hour, and the fact that she inquires particularly about the place where He at one and the same time feeds and reposes, which is a sign of great security. For, as I think, the words "where Thou liest" are added in order to signify that in this place there is no need to stand and to keep watch and ward over the flock, since even whilst the shepherd lies down to repose in the shade, the sheep in safety may wander at will over the pastures. Happy land where the sheep go in and out as they please with nothing to make them afraid! Who will grant me that I may behold you, O most blissful flock, that I may feed on the celestial mountains with the ninety-nine, which, as we read, the Divine Pastor left there whilst He graciously descended to seek the one that had strayed from Him! Securely, no doubt, does He recline close to that flock, since He did not hesitate even to withdraw to a distance from it, knowing that He left it in safety. With good reason, then, does the Spouse sigh after those heavenly hills. With good reason does she yearn for that place of pasture and peace, of tranquillity and security, of exultation, of wonder, and ecstatic bliss. For even I who, miserable man that I am, still sojourn here at so great a distance from that "land of delights," and salute it only from afar—behold, even I am moved to tears at the thought of it, and feel excited to make my own the sentiments and words of those who said, "Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept when we remembered Sion." I, too, feel prompted to cry with the Spouse and with the Psalmist, "Praise thy God, O Sion, because He hath strengthened the bolts of thy gates, He hath blessed thy children within thee; Who hath placed peace in thy borders, and filled thee with the fat of corn." Who would not desire to feed there where he finds peace, fatness, and fulness? That place can surely know neither fear, nor want, nor weariness. For there is a safe abode in paradise, sweet food in the Word Divine, abounding wealth in eternity.

We also have the Word in this place of our sojourning, but the Word made flesh. And truth is set before us, but under a sacramental veil. The angels feed on the fatness of the corn and eat their fill of the pure grain. But we, whilst here below, have to be satisfied with the husk of a Sacrament, with the bran of the Flesh, with the chaff of the letter, with the dark shroud of faith. And these are the things whose taste brings death if they be not seasoned in some degree with the first fruits of the Spirit. Assuredly I shall find "death in the pot" unless its contents are sweetened with the meal of the Prophet. For without the Spirit the Sacrament is received unto judgment, the Flesh profiteth nothing, the letter killeth, and faith is dead. But "it is the Spirit that quickeneth" these elements so that I may live by them. Yet, however abundantly enriched with spiritual grace, the husk of the Sacrament can never surely taste as sweet as the fatness of the pure grain, nor faith as vision, nor the memorial as the unveiled presence, nor time as eternity, nor the reflection as the Face, nor the form of a servant as the Figure of God. For in all matters of this nature, I am rich indeed in faith, but poor in understanding. And unquestionably faith and understanding have not an equally pleasant flavour, since the former stands for merit and the latter for reward. You perceive, therefore, my brethren, that there is as great as difference between the spiritual food of the blessed above and that of sojourners here below, as there is between the places of their habitation; and that, as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are the blessings poured out upon dwellers in paradise superior to those bestowed upon mortal men.

Let us hasten, then, my children, let us hasten to that safer place, to that sweeter pasture, to those richer and more fertile fields. Let us hasten thither where we may dwell without fear, abound beyond the possibility of want, feast without satiety. For Thou, O Lord of Sabbath, Who judgest all with tranquillity, dost likewise feed all with security in that happy land. Thou art there both Lord of Hosts and Pastor of the sheep. Therefore, Thou reclinest whilst Thou feedest Thy blessed ones. But not so with us. Thou wert standing when, looking down from heaven, Thou didst behold one of Thy little sheep—I speak of the Proto-martyr Stephen—surrounded by wolves upon earth. And hence I pray, "Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day," that is, during the whole day; for there the whole day is as the meridian, and knows no decline. Therefore, "Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands," because that one day has never a sunset. But perchance it had a sunrise when the "sanctified day dawned upon us," "through the bowels of the mercy of our God in which the Orient from on high hath visited us." Then, truly "we received Thy mercy, O

God, in the midst of Thy temple," when "in the midst of the shadow of death," the light of the dayspring suddenly broke upon us, and "in the morning we beheld the glory of the Lord." How "many kings and prophets have desired to see" this light "and have not seen"? Wherefore? For no other reason than because it was still night, and that longed-for morning to which mercy was promised had not yet dawned. Hence also King David made this prayer, "Cause me to hear Thy mercy in the morning; for in Thee have I hoped."

The aurora, so to speak, of this spiritual day began with the announcement of the Sun of Justice by the Archangel Gabriel, when by the operation of the Holy Ghost a virgin conceived God in her womb, and, still a virgin, brought Him forth; and it continued as long as He was seen on earth and conversed amongst men. For during all that time the light appeared so weak and as if in truth the light of the aurora, that scarcely anyone realised that the day had dawned upon men. And indeed "if they had known they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." Hence, to the little company of disciples it was said, "So far there is little light in you," because, namely, it was yet only the aurora or beginning, or rather but the first evidence of dawn, whilst the Sun still hid His beams instead of radiating them around the world. In the same sense St. Paul exclaimed, "the night is passed and the day is at hand," thus indicating that there was as yet so little light that he considered it more correct to say "the day is at hand" than "the day has dawned." Now, my brethren, when did he speak thus? It was certainly after the Divine Sun had returned from beneath the earth and had already mounted to the height of heaven. With how much greater truth might the same words have been spoken whilst the aurora was overcast, as it were, by the dense cloud, of the "likeness of sinful flesh," that is, by a Body resembling our own in Its liability to all manner of suffering and infirmity, so that neither the bitterness of death nor the shame of the cross was wanting to It? With how much greater truth, I say, could the light have been then described as excessively faint and feeble, and proceeding apparently rather from the aurora than from the actual presence of the Sun?

Therefore, the whole life of Christ upon earth was an aurora of twilight and obscurity, that is, until the brighter effulgence of the Sun's presence in the sky, after His setting and glorious rising, caused the dimness of dawn to disappear before the clearness of morning, and night was "swallowed up in victory." So we read in St. Mark, "And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen." Surely it was morning since the Sun of Justice had risen. But He derived a new loveliness from His Resurrection,

and a more placid radiance than He had manifested before, for “if we have known Christ according to the flesh; but now we know Him so no longer.” It is written in the psalms, “He is clothed with beauty: the Lord is clothed with strength and hath girded Himself,” because He has stripped Himself of the clouds, so to speak, of our mortal infirmities and put on the garments of His glory. Having ascended above the horizon, the Sun began to diffuse His influence gradually over the earth, and little by little to make His light and His heat everywhere more sensibly felt. But however much He increases His warmth and strength, however much He multiplies and scatters His rays over the whole course of this our mortal existence—for He shall abide with us unto “the consummation of the world”—yet He shall never attain here to His meridian splendour, nor be seen in that fulness and perfection of His glory, in which He is to be contemplated hereafter, by those, that is to say, whom He shall deem worthy of this vision. O true meridian, plenitude of light and heat, when the Sun stands still at His zenith, banishing the shadows, drying up the marshes, extinguishing all noxious odours! O solstice everlasting, when the day no more declines! O light of the noontide! O happy season, representing at once the genial softness of spring, the loveliness of summer, the richness of autumn, and lest I should seem to omit anything, the peace and rest of winter! Or certainly, if you are better pleased with this, winter alone is then “over and gone.” “Show me,” says the Spouse, “this place of such brightness, peace, and plenitude, in order that, just as Jacob still abiding in the flesh beheld the Lord ‘face to face and his soul was saved alive’; or as Moses saw Him, not like the other prophets, in symbols, signs and dreams, but in a far more excellent way, unknown to all save God and himself; or as Isaias, when the eyes of his heart had been opened, contemplated Him on His ‘high and elevated throne’; or even as St. Paul gazed with mortal eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ, what time he was rapt up to the third heaven and heard things unutterable—that so I, too, in spiritual rapture may deserve to see Thee in Thy light and in Thy beauty, and contemplate Thee where Thou feedest Thy flock on richer pastures than here on earth, and reposest with greater security.

“Here on earth also Thou dost feed Thy sheep, yet not unto fulness. Neither mayst Thou lie down here, but must rather stand and watch because of the ‘terrors of the night.’ Alas! we have in our present pasture neither clear light, nor full feeding, nor a safe dwelling. And hence I pray, ‘Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day.’ Thou sayest I am blessed when I hunger and thirst after justice. But what is such blessedness to the happiness of

those who are ‘filled with the good things of Thy house,’ who ‘feast and rejoice before the Lord and are delighted with gladness’? Nevertheless, Thou dost pronounce me blessed if I suffer anything for justice sake. And certainly there is pleasure, though not security, in being fed where one has to fear suffering. But is it not a painful pleasure to be fed and afflicted at one and the same time? Everything here below falls short of perfection; many things are contrary to my will; and nothing is safe. When wilt Thou ‘fill me with joy with Thy Countenance’? ‘Thy Face, O Lord, will I seek.’ For Thy Face is the noontide. O ‘Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day’! I know well enough where Thou feedest standing. But show me where Thou feedest and reclinest. Neither am I ignorant where Thou are wont to feed Thy flock at other times. But I desire to know ‘where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day.’ For during the whole period of my mortal career, I have been accustomed, under Thy care, to feed myself and others upon Thee as Thou art to be found in the law and in the prophets and in the psalms. I have likewise found refreshment in the evangelical pastures and in the writings of the apostles. Often, too, have I, like a beggar, borrowed what nourishment I could for myself and my children from the examples, the speeches, and the writings of Thy saints. But more frequently—this kind of food being more within reach—I have eaten the bread of affliction and drunk the wine of compunction; and ‘my tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: where is thy God?’ Yet sometimes from Thy table—for ‘Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me’—sometimes, I say, from Thy table, as a gift of Thy compassion, I receive the meat that restores my vigour, when my soul is sad and troubling me. These pastures are known to me, and thither I have often followed Thee as my Shepherd. But show me, I beseech Thee, those I have not yet enjoyed.

“There are indeed other Shepherds besides Thee, who say they are Thy companions, but are not. These have their own flocks and their own pastures, filled with the food of death, wherein they feed their sheep not with Thee nor under Thy direction. But their bounds I have not entered, nor even so much as approached. They are those who say ‘Lo, here is Christ; lo, He is there,’ promising more abundant fields of wisdom and knowledge. And they impose on the people and draw to them multitudes whom they make ‘children of hell twofold more than themselves.’ Wherefore this? It is because we have here neither the meridian nor the clear light of day, wherein the truth might be readily recognised, for which now falsity, because of its resemblance to it, is easily

mistaken; for it is difficult to distinguish them in the twilight, especially since ‘stolen waters are sweeter and hidden bread more pleasant.’ And, therefore, I entreat Thee to ‘show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day,’ that is, in the broad daylight, lest I be seduced and ‘begin to wander after the flocks of Thy companions,’ who are themselves but strays and wanderers, having no certain truth to direct them, ‘ever learning and never attaining to a knowledge of the truth.’ ” So far the Spouse, speaking of the doctrines, as various as vain, of heretics and philosophers.

It seems to me, however, that not alone on account of such human seducers, but also because of the wiles of the invisible powers, the lying spirits who sit in ambush with their “arrows prepared in the quiver, to shoot in the dark the upright of heart”—it seems to me, I say, that because of these especially, we also ought to desire the mid-day, in order to detect by the clear light the cunning snares of the demon, and to distinguish easily from our good angel that angel of Satan who transforms himself into an angel of light. For it is only in the light of noon-day that we can defend ourselves from “the invasion and from the noon-day devil.” And the reason why that demon is called the noon-day devil is, I believe, this. There are some amongst the malignant spirits, who although by reason of their darkened and obstinate will, they may justly be named night and night everlasting, yet know how to simulate the day, and even the noon-day, in order to deceive us. So their leader, not content with making himself the equal of God, goes so far as to “oppose and to be lifted up against all that is called God, or that is worshipped.” Whenever, therefore, such a noon-day devil takes hold of anyone to tempt him, it is quite impossible that he should be thwarted and fail of his object, but he will most certainly seduce and supplant his victim by the false appearance of virtue, moving the incautious and unguarded soul to take evil for good, unless the true Noon-day, the Orient from on high, shall enlighten her, and unmask and expose the deceiver. And it is when he comes to us with the suggestion of a greater good, as it were, that the tempter appears as the noon-day, that is, in more than his usual brightness.

How often, for example, has he not urged one or other of you, my brethren, to anticipate the hour of rising, so that afterwards he might have the satisfaction of seeing him nodding whilst all the rest were employed in praising God! How often has he not induced another to prolong his fast until loss of strength rendered him useless for the divine service! How many, through envy of the rapid progress they were making in community life, has he not persuaded, under the pretext of higher perfection, to seek the desert! And at length, when it was all

too late, his poor dupes came to realise the truth of the oracle, “Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up!” How many also has he not tempted to apply themselves with excessive zeal to manual labour, with the view that they might injure their health and so require to be dispensed from all the regular exercises! What numbers has he not led to undertake “bodily exercise,” which, (according to the Apostle, is “profitable to little,” not in a little but in too great a degree, and so defrauded them of the merit of piety! Finally, you yourselves, my brethren, know by experience how some—and I speak it to their shame—who once could not be restrained within the limits of moderation, being carried on in everything by the spirit of intemperate zeal, have afterwards relapsed into such a depth of sloth that we may apply to them the words of St. Paul: they began in the spirit and are now ending in the flesh. For they seem now to have made a most dishonourable peace with those bodies against which they had previously declared merciless war. You may see such religious—shame on them, I say!—who before used to refuse even necessaries with the utmost obstinacy, now begging importunately for superfluities. And even though there be some who still continue inflexibly stubborn, by their indiscreet abstinence and notable singularity still disturbing the consciences of their brethren with whom they should “dwell together in unity,” I know not whether they suppose themselves to have preserved their piety, but to me they seem to have renounced it even more completely than those others above-mentioned. For religious persons who, being wise in their own conceit, have determined with themselves to be guided neither by the commands nor the counsels of their superiors, ought to consider what answer they shall make, not to me, but to Him Who says, “It is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel; and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey.” And He declared just before that “Obedience is better than sacrifices, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams”—where the fat of rams may be taken to signify the abstinence of the obstinate. Hence the Lord asks by the mouth of His Prophet, “Shall I eat the flesh of bullocks? or shall I drink the blood of goats?” By which He means to tell us that He will reject utterly the fastings of the proud and the sensual.

But I now feel apprehensive lest, whilst condemning the superstitiously austere, I should seem to encourage the lax, and that the latter should hear to their hurt what has been offered as a remedy to the former. Wherefore, let both the one class and the other remember that there are four kinds of temptation. They are thus described for us in the words of the Psalmist, “His truth shall compass thee with a shield; thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night; of

the arrow that flieth in the day; of the business that walketh about in the dark; of invasion, or of the noon-day devil." Let all, even you who are neither over-lax nor over-austere, be now attentive to what I think will be profitable to all. Every one of us, my brethren, after his conversion to the Lord, has experienced and does still experience in himself that which Holy Scripture says, "Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation." Consequently, according to the rule of ordinary providence, during the first stage of our conversion we were agitated with fear, which is excited in the minds of beginners by the terrifying prospect of a stricter life, and the austerity of regular discipline. Now, this fear is called the "terror of the night," either because the word "night" is used in Holy Scripture to designate adversity; or because we are kept still in the dark about the reward for the sake of which we go forward to suffer what is painful. For if that day had fully brightened, in the light of which we could behold with equal clearness both our labours and the immortal crowns which shall compensate them, no toils, however great, would inspire us with alarm, on account of the eagerness with which we should long for the fruits of them, thus distinctly perceived. This is clear from the words of the Apostle, "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." But now, because they—the rewards—are hidden from our eyes, there is night meantime and in so far. For we are tempted by the "terror of the night," being afraid to endure our present labours for the crowns which we do not see. Beginners, therefore, have to watch and pray against this first temptation particularly, lest, suddenly overtaken by "pusillanimity of spirit and the storm," they should—which God forbid!—abandon their holy enterprise.

Having overcome this temptation to despair, we have next to arm ourselves against human praise, which is evoked especially by holiness of life. Otherwise we shall run the risk of being wounded by the "arrow that flieth in the day," that is to say, by vainglory. For, in a sense, good fame may truly be said to fly. And it flies in the day, because it springs from the works of light. But if this temptation also is blown aside like an idle vapour, it remains for the seducer to offer us something more substantial, namely, the riches and honours of the world, in the hope that he who refuses praise may still be willing to accept wealth and dignity. Consider here, my brethren, if this be not the order in which the temptations were presented to Our Lord in the desert. After the suggestion to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, which was intended to excite vainglory, He was shown and offered all the kingdoms of the world. Do you, then, imitate your

Master in resisting this third temptation also. If not, you must inevitably be overcome by the "business that walketh about in the dark," which is hypocrisy. For this vice is born of ambition and makes its abode in obscurity, since it dissembles what it is and simulates what it is not. Busily intriguing at all times, it retains the appearance of piety as a disguise, laying claim to the merit of virtue and buying the honours thereof.

The last temptation is from the "noon-day devil," who is wont to lie in wait particularly for the perfect. These, as being men of virtue, have escaped all other dangers, viz., from pleasures, applause, and honours. The tempter has now no other weapon wherewith to attack them openly. He comes therefore masked, since he no longer dares to show himself in his real character. And those whom he knows from experience will turn away in horror from manifest evil, he endeavours to seduce by a deceptive appearance of good. Even such as can say with the Apostle, "We are not ignorant of his devices," have to be anxiously on their guard against this snare, and that the more, the further advanced they are in virtue. Hence it is that Mary was troubled at the angelic salutation, suspecting, as I think, some hidden deceit. Josue also refused to receive the friendly angel until he had satisfied himself that he was really a friend. For he inquired whether he was on his own side or was in league with his adversaries, as one who had experience of the cunning tricks of this "noon-day devil." On a certain occasion, again, when the apostles were labouring at the oars, the wind being contrary and blowing the ship about, they saw the Lord walking on the sea; and supposing Him to be a spirit, they cried out for fear. Is it not plain that they then showed their dread and suspicion of the noon-day devil? And you remember the words of Holy Scripture that "in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking upon the sea." It is therefore in the fourth watch, that is to say, in the final stage of our progress towards perfection, that we have to look out for this temptation. And we are given to understand that the higher a soul finds herself to be exalted, the more careful should she be in watching against the "invasion and the noon-day devil." Furthermore, when the true Meridian manifested Himself to the disciples with the words, "It is I, fear not," immediately they were enabled to put aside their suspicion of the counterfeit. Would to God that to us also, whenever specious falsity attempts to impose on us, the true Meridian, "the Orient from on high," would "send forth His light and His truth" to expose the fraud and again, as in the beginning, to divide the light from the darkness, so that we may no longer deserve to be reproached by the Prophet as "putting darkness for light and light for darkness"!

I will next attempt to point out how these four temptations have attacked in their order even the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church, that is, unless so long a sermon would weary you. Well, I will make the exposition as brief as I can. Consider, then, the primitive Church, and see if it was not pervaded and most fiercely assailed by the “terror of the night.” For then surely it was night, when everyone who slew the saints thought he was doing a service to God. But when this temptation had been overcome and the tempest had passed over, the Church appeared in glory, and, according to the promise made to it, soon occupied the place of pre-eminence in the world. Then the enemy, enraged by his previous disappointment, cunningly exchanged the “terror of the night” for the “arrow that flieth in the day,” and with it, as St. Paul speaks, wounded “some of the Church.” For there arose vain men, who hungered after earthly glory and sought to make a name for themselves. Going forth from the Christian body, they began to afflict their holy mother by teaching diverse and perverse doctrines. But this second plague found a remedy in the wisdom of the doctors, as did the first in the patience of the martyrs.

The present generation, my brethren, is, through the mercy of God, free from both these dangers. But it is manifestly corrupted by the “business that walketh about in the dark.” Woe to this generation by reason of the leaven of the Pharisees! I mean, because of its hypocrisy, if indeed that ought to be called hypocrisy which is now too prevalent to lie concealed and too impudent to seek concealment. To-day the foul disease has spread itself throughout the whole body of Christ’s mystical Bride, the more incurable in proportion as it is widely extended, and the more deadly the more deeply it penetrates. Were one to rise up against holy mother Church, teaching open heresy, he would be cut off like an infected member, and cast forth to rot. Were a persecuting enemy to appear against her, she might perhaps hide herself from his violence. But now whom shall she cast forth, and from whom shall she hide herself? All are her friends and nevertheless all are her enemies. All are her children and, at the same time, all are her adversaries. All are her domestics, yet none give her peace. All are her neighbours, whilst all seek the things that are their own. They are Christ’s ministers, but they serve Antichrist. Honoured with the goods of the Lord, they refuse to render due honour to the Lord. Hence that worldly ornamentation which daily meets our eyes, that showy style of dress, more befitting a stage-player than a Christian cleric, that splendour of appointment which even kings might envy. Hence the gold mountings on bridles, saddles, and spurs; for such trappings are more carefully embellished than the altars of God. Hence the

splendid tables, furnished with costly plate and delicate viands. Hence the "drunkenness and revellings." Hence the music of the harp and the lyre and the flute. Hence the brimming winepresses, and the "storehouses full, flowing out of this into that." Hence the phials of sweet perfumes. Hence the well-filled coffers. It is for the sake of such things that they desire to be, and do actually become provosts of churches, deans, archdeacons, bishops, archbishops. For these dignities are not now bestowed upon merit, but are given to that "business that walketh about in the dark," namely, to ambition.

It was said of old, and now we see the fulfilment of the prediction, "Behold in peace is my bitterness most bitter." Bitter was the bitterness of holy mother Church in the early ages whilst the martyrs were being slaughtered; it was more bitter during her struggle with heresy; but it is now become most bitter owing to the corrupt morals of her own children. These she can neither drive away nor flee from, so powerful have they grown, and "they are multiplied beyond number." She is now attacked by an internal and incurable distemper, and therefore "in peace is her bitterness most bitter." But in what peace? There is peace and there is no peace. There is peace from infidels and peace from-heretics, but she has no peace from her children. "I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised me." Such is her plaintive cry in our day. "They have heaped contempt and dishonour on me by their shameful lives, by their shameful love of lucre, by their shameful traffic, by their devotion to the 'business that walketh about in the dark.' " It only remains now for the "noon-day devil" to make his appearance in order to seduce, if he can, the remnant who still abide in Christ, persevering in their simplicity. For he has already swallowed up the "rivers" of the wise and the "torrents" of the powerful, "and he trusteth that the Jordan—that is to say, the simple and humble children of the Church—may run into his mouth." This is Antichrist who simulates the day, yea, and the Meridian, "and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." Him may the Lord Jesus slay "with the Spirit of His Mouth and with the brightness of His coming," as the true and never-fading Meridian, the Bridegroom and Advocate of the Church, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXIV

ON HUMILITY AND PATIENCE

> "If thou know not thyself, O fairest among women, go forth and follow after the steps of the flocks, and feed thy kids beside the tents of the shepherds."

"If thou know not thyself, O fairest among women, go forth and follow after the steps of the flocks and feed thy kids beside the tents of the shepherds." In times long past, my brethren, holy Moses, who could presume much on the familiarity and the friendship to which the Lord had admitted him, made bold to aspire to a certain extraordinary privilege, so that he said to God, "If I have found favour in Thy sight, show me Thy Face." But instead of the vision for which he prayed, he was given another far inferior, yet one whereby he might sometime attain to that he desired. The sons of Zebedee also, walking in the simplicity of their hearts, ventured to ask a great favour. But they likewise had to be satisfied with a lower grace, from which the ascent to the higher should be made. So here the Spouse, as seeming to make a presumptuous request, is reproved with an answer, sharp indeed, yet helpful and true. For it is necessary that he who aspires to things sublime should entertain lowly sentiments of himself. Otherwise, whilst attempting to rise above himself he would run the risk of falling below himself, unless he is solidly grounded in himself by means of true humility. And as without humility there is no possibility of obtaining extraordinary favours of God, he who is to be enriched with special graces, has first to be humbled by correction, in order that by humility he may merit his advancement. Therefore, my brethren, whenever you see yourselves humbled, consider this a certain sign of the approach of grace. For just as "the spirit is lifted up before a fall," so is the soul humbled before being exalted. Both these laws of the spiritual life are found in Holy Scripture, where we read that "God resisteth the proud and giveth His grace to the humble." Finally, we have the case of holy Job. After his magnificent triumph, when his heroic and splendidly proved patience was considered by God to be deserving of a great reward, did He not first cause him to be humbled by many severe trials and so prepared for the coming prosperity?

But it is not enough to receive willingly the humiliations which come to us directly from God, if we do not accept in the same dispositions those which He sends us through the agency of others. Wherefore, listen to a glorious example of such patience from the history of the Prophet David. On one occasion he was reviled with curses, and that by a servant. But the insults heaped upon him awakened in his breast no feelings of resentment, because the influence of grace was there dominant. “What have I,” said he, “to do with you, ye sons of Sarvia.” O truly “a man according to God’s own Heart,” who felt called upon to show indignation rather against the avenger than against the author of his wrongs! Hence he could say with a safe conscience, “If I have rendered to them that repaid me evils, let me deservedly fall empty before my enemies.” He therefore would not allow his followers to prevent the malevolent one from cursing him, esteeming this cursing as so much gain. “The Lord,” he added, “hath bid him curse David.” Surely he must have been “according to God’s own Heart,” seeing that he could thus discover the judgments of the Heart of God. Whilst the tongue of the maligner was pouring out its venom upon him, he kept his attention fixed on God’s secret designs. And his soul was bending down to receive a divine benediction, at the very time when that Semei’s cursing voice was sounding in his ears. Was the Lord, therefore, in the blasphemer’s mouth? God forbid! But He made use of the blasphemer to humble David. Nor was this unknown to the Prophet to whom God had manifested “the uncertain and hidden things of His wisdom.” Therefore he declared “It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications.”

Observe, my brethren, how humility justifies us. Humility, I say, not humiliation. How many there are who suffer humiliation without being humble! Some endure humiliation with bitterness, others with patience, others again with gladness. The first class are culpable, the second are innocent, the last are just. Although innocence may be considered a part of justice, still the perfection of justice belongs to humility. Now, he is truly humble who can say from his heart, “It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me.” But he who submits to humiliation against his will cannot sincerely say this. Much less, he who murmurs against it. To neither of these do I promise grace simply because he is humbled. Yet there is a vast difference between the two, since the one possesses his soul in patience, whereas the other perishes in his discontent. But, although the latter merits indignation, neither merits grace. For it is not to the humbled but to the humble that God gives His grace. The humble man is he who converts humiliation into humility, and it is only such can say to God, “It is good for me

that Thou hast humbled me."

No one, manifestly, esteems that a good to him, but rather an evil, which he endures only with patience. And we know that "God loveth a cheerful giver." Hence, when we fast we are bidden to anoint our heads with oil and to wash our face, in order that our good work may be seasoned, so to speak, with spiritual joy, and that our "holocaust may be made fat." For it is only a joyous and perfect humility that merits the grace of which humiliation is the herald. But the humility which is due to necessity or compulsion, such as that of the man who possesses his soul in patience, such humility, I say, although it obtains life on account of its patience, yet, as accompanied by sadness, gives no title to the grace of the promise. And the reason is, because the words of Scripture, "Let the brother of low condition glory in his exaltation," do not apply to a humility of that description, which is neither spontaneous nor joyful.

Do you wish, my brethren, to behold a man glorying in the right way, and rightly deserving of glory? "Gladly," says the great Apostle, "will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." He does not say he will bear his infirmities with patience, but that he will "glory" and "gladly glory" in them. Thus he proves that it is good for him that he has been humbled, and indicates that it is by no means sufficient to possess his soul by enduring humiliations patiently, unless he also obtains the grace promised to those who rejoice in their humiliations. Hence we may regard as a general rule these words of Christ, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." From them we learn that not every kind of humility is to be exalted, but that alone which is cheerfully embraced by the will, not with sadness, nor by constraint; just as, on the other hand, not every one that is exalted shall be humbled, but only he who exalts himself, he shall he humbled, in punishment, evidently, of his vain and voluntary ambition. In this way, then, not he who is humbled, but he who humbles himself, has the promise of exaltation, as the reward of his good will. But although the objective element, or the matter of humility, comes from outside, for instance, insults, injuries, or chastisement, not on that account would it be true to say that the man who determines for God's sake to bear these trials is humbled by any other than by himself.

But whither am I drifting? However, I think you will easily excuse this long digression on humility and patience. I shall now return to the subject whence I wandered. My remarks on patience and humility were suggested by the Bridegroom's reply, wherewith He thought proper to rebuke the presumption of His Spouse, in asking things too far above her. This He did, not with the

intention of confounding her, but in order to give her an occasion for greater and better tried humility, whereby she would become more deserving of the higher gifts and more qualified to receive the graces she solicited. But as I am still only at the beginning of this verse, I shall leave the exposition of it, if you allow me, for another sermon, lest the words of the heavenly Bridegroom should be either discussed without interest or heard without relish. From which evil may He protect His servants, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXV

ON THE TWO KINDS OF IGNORANCE WHICH WE OUGHT TO FEAR AND TO AVOID

> "If thou know not thyself, O fairest of women, go forth and follow after the steps of the flocks, and feed thy kids beside the tents of the shepherds."

"If thou know not thyself, go forth." The Bridegroom, my brethren, is here administering a sharp and severe reprimand, inasmuch as He uses the expression "go forth." Such a command servants are wont to hear from their masters when under the influence of excessive anger and indignation, and handmaidens from their mistresses whose deep displeasure they have incurred. "Get thee hence," cries the wrathful lord or lady, "depart from my presence, get out of my sight, leave my house." This, then, is the language, harsh and bitter enough, and conveying a stern reproof, in which the Bridegroom addresses His beloved. But He speaks conditionally, "if thou know not thyself." And certainly He could not employ a more powerful or more efficacious means for inspiring her with terror than to threaten her thus with being sent forth. You will agree with me in this, my brethren, if you consider well whence she is bidden to go and whither. For what else is that change whereof she is here warned but the decline from the spirit to the flesh, from the goods of the soul to earthly desires, from interior peace and joy of heart to worldly tumult and the distractions of temporal cares? That is to say, the Spouse is bidden to go forth to things in which she shall find only labour and pain and affliction of spirit. For the soul that has once learned from the Lord and obtained the grace to enter into herself, and in her own interior to yearn for the presence of God and to "seek His Face at all times"—since "God is a Spirit," and they that seek Him ought to "walk in the spirit and not in the flesh, so as to live according to the flesh"—such a soul, I say, would scarcely consider the endurance, for a time, of the pains of hell a more terrible and unbearable chastisement, than, after tasting the sweetness of this interior and spiritual life, to have to return to the pleasures, or rather to the troubles of the

flesh, and to become again the slave of the insatiable appetite of the senses, of which Ecclesiastes says, “The eye is not filled with seeing nor the ear with hearing.” Attend to one who, learned by experience the truth of what I am saying. “The Lord,” exclaimed the Prophet Jeremias, “is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him.” Should anyone endeavour to deprive the holy soul of this good which she enjoys in union with her God, I believe she would suffer quite as much as if she saw herself expelled from paradise and driven away from the very gates of glory. Listen to another Prophet speaking in the same sense. “My heart,” sings the Psalmist, “hath said to Thee: my face hath sought Thee; Thy Face, O Lord, will I still seek.” Hence he also says, “It is good for me to adhere to my God.” And again, addressing his soul, “Turn, O my soul, unto thy rest, for the Lord hath been bountiful to thee.” Hence, I say to you, there is nothing so dreaded by the soul that has once been raised to union with the heavenly Bridegroom as to be abandoned by grace and thus, in a manner, obliged to go forth again to the consolations, rather the desolations, of the flesh, and again to endure the distraction and turbulence of the bodily senses.

Therefore, my brethren, truly awful and terrifying is the threat conveyed in the words, “Go forth and feed thy kids.” As much as to say, “Know thyself to be undeserving of that sweet and familiar contemplation of things celestial, spiritual, and divine, which I have hitherto permitted thee. Wherefore, go forth from My sanctuary, which is thine own heart, where thou hast been accustomed to receive with rapture the hidden and holy impressions of wisdom and truth. And for the future, apply thyself to the task of satisfying and pleasing the senses of the flesh.” For by “kids”—which are symbolic of sin and on the Last Day are to stand on the Judge’s left—the Bridegroom means the wandering and wayward sensitive faculties, by which, as through windows, sin and death found entrance to the soul. With this interpretation the words which follow in our text—“beside the tents of the shepherds”—can be perfectly harmonised. For kids have their pasture not, like lambs, above, but beside the tents of the shepherds. That is to say, shepherds, who are truly such, although living in tabernacles on the earth and of the earth, viz., their mortal bodies, wherein they carry on their spiritual warfare, are nevertheless wont to feed the flocks of Christ, not on earthly but on heavenly pastures, since they direct them not according to their own, but according to their Master’s Will. But the kids, that is, the material senses, do not need such spiritual nourishment. “Beside the tents of the shepherds,” viz., amidst all the sensible goods of this world—in the world of bodies—they find wherewith—I will not say to appease but to provoke their desires.

What an ignominious change of occupation, my brethren! She whose only care heretofore was to nourish her soul, whilst a sojourner and an exile here on earth, with the heavenly food of holy meditations, to study the good pleasure of God and the mysterious dispositions of His sovereign Will, to penetrate the heavens by the fervour of her love, and to visit in fancy the abodes of the blessed, to salute the patriarchs and the prophets and the apostolic company, to admire the bands of triumphant martyrs, and to stand amazed before the magnificent choirs of the angels—she who was accustomed to be thus employed has now to renounce all this happiness and to engage herself to the dishonourable service of the earthly body. Henceforth it shall be her business to obey the flesh, to gratify the stomach and the palate, to beg through the world—through this world, the "fashion" whereof "passeth away"—the means of appeasing to some extent an ever ravenous appetite for pleasure. Send forth, O my eyes, send forth torrents of tears over the fate of such a soul, which, having been brought up in scarlet, now riots in filth! In the words of holy Job, "She hath fed the barren that beareth not, and to the widow she hath done no good." And observe that it is not simply said to her "go forth"; but "go forth and follow after the steps of the flocks, and feed thy kids beside the tents of the shepherds." By these words the Bridegroom, as it seems to me, intends to warn us about a matter of gravest import. Do you wish to know what it is? Alas! my brethren. It is that a creature noble by origin, but long since degraded to the level of the brute, and now going miserably from bad to worse, is not allowed even to keep her place amongst the flock, but is bidden to follow after. Now some one may ask, how can that be? It is only what we read in the psalms, "And man when he was in honour did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts and is become like to them." Behold how the noble creature is reduced to the level of the common brutes. And I suppose if these irrational animals were endowed with the faculty of speech, they would say. "Behold Adam is become as one of us." "Man, when he was in honour." Would you like to be told in what honour? He dwelt in paradise. His days were passed in a place of pleasure. Neither suffering nor want had any access to him. Surrounded with odoriferous apple trees, reclining on banks of flowers, crowned with honour and glory, and set over all the works of his Creator, he enjoyed the bliss and the companionship of the holy angels and of all the powers of the host of heaven. Yet his grandest prerogative was the glory of the divine image impressed upon his soul.

But this glory of God he "changed into the likeness of a calf that eateth grass." Therefore it was that the Bread of angels became Grass, and was laid in the

manger, and placed before us, who were now nothing better than brute animals. For "the Word was made Flesh," and according to the Prophet, "All flesh is grass." Yet this Grass has by no means become withered, neither has Its flower fallen off, since the Spirit of the Lord rested upon It, as Isaias predicted. And the reason why all flesh was once destroyed was because the Spirit of life had withdrawn from it. For it is written, "My Spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh." You must understand that it is the vices of human nature which are here called flesh, not human nature itself; because the Spirit is expelled, not by what is natural in us, but by what is vicious and sinful. It is, therefore, on account of its corruption by sin that the Prophet says, "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered and the flower is fallen." But this does not apply to that Flower Which came forth from and rose up out of the root and the rod of Jesse, because on It rested the Spirit of the Lord. Nor does it apply to that Grass or Flesh Which the Word was made, since the Prophet goes on to say, "But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever." For if the Word is Grass, and the Word endureth for ever, the Grass also must endure for ever. How otherwise, unless It endures for ever, can It communicate eternal life? And yet we read of It, "If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever." What Bread is meant we have clearly explained for us in the words that follow, "And the Bread That I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world." How, then, can That which is the Principle of eternal life to others, be Itself otherwise than eternal?

But recall now with me, my brethren, the words addressed to the Father by His Son, where He speaks in the psalm. "Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One," He says, "to see corruption." Doubtless, He is here speaking of His Body, Which lay lifeless in the tomb. For This was also called holy by the Angel Gabriel, who announced the Incarnation to Mary in the words, "The Holy That shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Surely, then, that holy Grass, Which sprung up in the pastures, verdant with a perennial freshness, of the Virgin's spotless womb, Which the angels contemplate with eager love and ever-new delight—surely, that Divine Grass can never see corruption. If, indeed, Mary, in becoming a mother, had lost her virginal bloom, in that case the Grass also would lose Its greenness. Hence the Food of man converted Itself into the Food of beasts, when man became as a beast. Oh, what a sad and mournful change! That man, the dweller in paradise, the lord of the earth, the citizen of heaven, the domestic of the Lord of Sabaoth, the brother of the blessed spirits, and the co-heir with the celestial powers—that such a one should find himself by a sudden

transformation, lying down in a stable from weakness, needing grass, like the beast whose image he had assumed, and because of his ungovernable ferocity bound to the manger, as it is written, “With bit and bridle bind fast their jaws, who come not nigh to Thee!” Yet, even now, O ox, recognise thy Owner, and thou, O ass, thy Master’s crib, that the prophets of the Lord may be found faithful, who foretold these wonders of God! Know even in thy present bestial condition Him Whom as a man thou didst not know. Adore in the stable the God Whom in paradise thou didst flee from. Honour the manger of Him Whose divine authority thou hast despised. Eat Him now as Grass, Whom as Bread and the Bread of angels thou didst disdain.

But, you will ask, my brethren, what could be the cause of such degeneration? It is unquestionably the fact that “man, when he was in honour, did not understand.” What is it that he did not understand? The Prophet does not explain; but let me attempt to do so. Being placed in honour, and elated in spirit at the greatness of his glory, he failed to understand that he was but the slime of the earth. And immediately he experienced in himself what, long ages afterwards, one of the heirs of his captivity prudently observed and faithfully proclaimed, when he said, “If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” Alas for our miserable first parent, that there was none to say to him, “O earth and ashes, why art thou proud?” Hence it was that the noble rational creature became associated with the dumb beasts; hence the divine image was exchanged for the brutish; hence the society of holy angels gave place to that of irrational animals. Do you perceive now, my brethren, how much to be avoided is this kind of ignorance, which has been the source of such innumerable evils to the whole human race? For the Prophet declares that the reason why man is compared to the mindless brute is that he “did not understand.” Consequently, we must guard against this ignorance by every means in our power, lest, haply, if still found without understanding, even after our chastisement, we should have to endure evils much more numerous and terrible than the former; and lest it be said of us, “We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed.” And very justly so, since not even correction brought “understanding to our hearing.”

And consider, my brethren, if this be not the reason why the Bridegroom, when warning His beloved in so terrifying a manner against ignorance, did not say to her “go forth with the flocks,” or “go forth to the flocks,” but “go forth and follow after the steps of the flocks.” For why should He speak thus, unless to point out that we ought to be more afraid and ashamed of the second ignorance,

i.e., the ignorance after correction, than of the first, since, if the first placed man on a level with the brutes, the second places him after, that is, beneath them. Beneath the brutes I say, because men, ignored and reprobated by God on account of their ignorance of Him, shall stand before His dreadful tribunal and be consigned to everlasting flames, but not so the brutes. No doubt, the condition of those human beings who shall receive such a judgment will be worse than the state of absolute nothingness. “It were better for him,” said Christ, speaking of one destined for this doom, “if that man had not been born.” He did not mean to say “if he had not been born at all,” but “if he had not been born a man,” but a beast, for instance, or some other kind of irrational creature, which, as not possessing the faculty of judgment, would never have been called to judgment, nor, consequently, have been liable to eternal punishment. Therefore, let the reasoning animal, who blushes for his former ignorance, know that although he has the brute beasts as his partners in the enjoyment of the good things of this earth, he shall not likewise have their company in the endurance of the torments of hell—the penalty of the second ignorance; that in the end he shall be expelled with ignominy from the society of the flocks and herds of his fellow-beasts; and that he shall no longer be allowed to go forth even with them, but only after them. For whereas death extinguishes in them all capacity for pain, he shall find himself a prey to every kind of evil, from which he is never to obtain deliverance. And all this because of his having added the second ignorance to the first. Therefore, man goes forth, and goes forth solitary, to “follow after the steps of the flock,” when he is precipitated into the hell of the damned. Does not he, think you, occupy a place lower than the brutes, who, with his hands and feet bound, is “cast into the exterior darkness”? And truly “the last state of that man is made worse than the first,” since from an equality with the beasts he is reduced to inferiority.

Even in the present life, if you consider the matter carefully, you will perceive, as I think, that man follows after the brute. For does it not seem to you that one who, whilst gifted with reason, does not live according to reason, is in some sense more beastly than the beasts themselves? The beasts indeed do not govern themselves by reason. But they have an excuse in the poverty of their nature, to which that faculty has been altogether denied. For man there is no such excuse, of whose nature the power of intelligence is a special prerogative. Justly, then, is man considered to go forth and to take rank after the flocks and herds, inasmuch as he is the only animal that by a degenerate life transgresses the laws of his nature, and, though gifted with reason, in his habits and affections imitates the

unreasoning brutes. Thus I have shown you that he follows “after the footsteps of the flocks,” in this life by the corruption of his nature, and shall do so in the life to come by the extremity of his chastisement.

Behold, my brethren, thus shall the man be cursed who shall be found without knowledge of God. But is it “without knowledge of God” I should say, or rather “without knowledge of himself”? Undoubtedly, I should say both. Both kinds of ignorance are criminal, and either, by itself, suffices for damnation. Do you wish to be assured of the truth of what I say? Well, in the first place, you certainly cannot doubt that ignorance of God leads to eternal death, since, as you know, eternal life is nothing else than the knowledge of the “Father, the only true God,” and of “Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent.” Listen, therefore, to the words of the Bridegroom, wherein He clearly and unmistakably condemns the Spouse’s ignorance even of herself. For what does He say? Not “if thou know not God,” but “if thou know not thyself, go forth and follow after the flocks.” Thus it is evident that, as the Apostle declares, “If any man know not, he shall not be known,” whether his ignorance be of God or of himself. These two species of ignorance shall furnish us with matter for a very useful discussion, if yet the Lord withholds not His assistance. However, I do not intend to open that subject now, lest through weariness and the omission of the customary prayers for light, either I should treat a most important question with insufficient diligence, or you should listen languidly to what ought to be received with eager appetite. For, as the food of the body, when eaten without relish or hunger, rather injures than benefits, so, and much more so, with the food of the soul. If taken with disrelish or disgust, instead of enlightening the mind, it will torment the conscience. From which may the Divine Spouse of the Church protect us, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXVI

ON THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED IN THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

"If thou know not thyself, go forth."

I have come to-day, my brethren, with the purpose of fulfilling my promise, of gratifying your desires, and of discharging a duty which I owe to God. Therefore, as you perceive, three motives move me to speak, fidelity to engagement, fraternal charity, and the fear of the Lord. If I am silent, my own mouth shall condemn me. But what if I speak? Of a truth, I fear the same judgment, that, whilst saying and not doing, I shall be again condemned by my own mouth. Do you, then, assist me by your prayers, that I may be able always both to say what is expedient and to practise what I preach. You are aware that the subject I have selected for the present discourse is ignorance, or rather the varieties of ignorance. For, as you remember, I spoke of two kinds, namely, ignorance of ourselves and ignorance of God, both of which I said were criminal and to be avoided. It remains for me now to explain this subject more clearly and to discuss it more exhaustively. But it appears to me that I ought first to inquire whether every kind of ignorance is blameworthy. I am not inclined to think that such is the case, since we shall not be condemned for not knowing everything, and there are many, yea, innumerable things whereof ignorance is no obstacle to salvation. For instance, in what way would your spiritual interests suffer from lack of acquaintance with the mechanical arts, such as that of the carpenter, or the mason, or any other of those trades which men are wont to ply for temporal uses? Even without any knowledge of those arts which are called liberal, and the study and exercise of which are considered more noble and profitable, countless multitudes of men have saved their souls, pleasing God by their virtues and their works. How many, for example, does the Apostle enumerate in his Epistle to the Hebrews, who became dear to God, less by their knowledge of literature, than by the purity of their conscience and the sincerity of their faith! All pleased the

Lord whilst they lived here below, not by the profundity of their learning, but by the merit of their virtues. Neither St. Peter nor St. Andrew, nor the sons of Zebedee, nor any of their fellow-apostles, was chosen from the schools of philosophy or rhetoric. And yet, by means of them, the Saviour "wrought salvation in the midst of the earth." Not that they could say, like the holy man Ecclesiastes, that they surpassed all others in wisdom; but "in their faith and in their meekness" the Lord saved them, and even sanctified them, even appointed them to be the instructors of others. For they made known to the world His "ways of life," and that "not in loftiness of speech," nor "in the learned words of human wisdom," but as "it pleased God by the foolishness of their preaching to save them that believe," since "the world by wisdom knew not God."

Perhaps you consider me unduly severe and narrow in my views on human knowledge, and suppose that I am censuring the learned and condemning the study of literature. God forbid that I should do so! I am well aware how much her learned members have benefited and do still benefit the Church, whether by refuting her opponents or by instructing the ignorant. And I have read what the Lord says by the mouth of His Prophet Osee, "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, that thou shalt not do the office of priesthood to Me"; and by His Prophet Daniel, "But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity." Nevertheless, I remember also to have read that "knowledge puffeth up," and "He that addeth knowledge, addeth also labour." You perceive, my brethren, that there are distinctions in knowledge, since there is one kind that inflates with vainglory, and another which sobers us. Now, I wish to know which of these two varieties seems to you the more useful or the more necessary for salvation, that which puffs us up with pride, or that which pains and humbles? But I feel sure you prefer the sobering knowledge to the inflating. For whereas our spiritual health is destroyed by the swelling of vanity, the desire of its recovery is excited by the bitterness of humiliation. And he who desires salvation will ask for it and so draw nigh to it, "for every one that asketh receiveth." Finally, He "Who healeth the broken of heart," detests the man that is swollen with pride; since, as we read in Wisdom, "God resisteth the proud and giveth His grace to the humble." And St. Paul thus exhorts the faithful, "I say, by the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety." He does not forbid them to be wise, but only to be "more wise than it behoveth." But what does he mean by the expression "to be wise unto sobriety"? He means, no doubt, to admonish us that

we must examine most carefully what objects of knowledge have the first and strongest claim to our study. For “the time is short.” Now, all knowledge is good in itself, provided, however, that it be founded on truth. But we, my brethren, who are in a hurry to work out our salvation “with fear and trembling,” in the limited time allowed us, we certainly should devote our first and best attention to the acquisition of that knowledge which appears to be most intimately connected with our spiritual welfare. Do not medical doctors assert that it is a part of their remedies to determine what their patients shall take first at meals, what next, and in what quantity they are to use each kind of meat? For although it is manifest that all species of food are good in themselves, as having been created by God for our use, nevertheless we may easily render them bad for us, by failing to observe the due measure and order. Understand, then, of the varieties of knowledge what I have said of the varieties of food.

But I had better send you to St. Paul himself, whom I acknowledge as my master. For the doctrine which I preach is not mine but his. Yet in another sense it is mine, because it is the doctrine of truth. “If any man,” says the Apostle, “think that he knoweth anything, he hath not yet known as he ought to know.” You observe, my brethren, that he does not commend the knowing of many things in one who is ignorant of the right manner of knowing. You observe, I say, how he makes the fruit and utility of knowledge to consist mainly in the right manner of knowing. What, therefore, does he mean by the right manner of knowing? Evidently he wishes to teach us by these words in what order, with what ardour, and with what intention each kind of knowledge should be acquired. In what order, because we ought first to learn those truths which most immediately concern our salvation. With what ardour, because that knowledge should be most eagerly pursued which most powerfully conduces to charity. With what intention, because the motive of our studies must not be vainglory, curiosity, or anything such, but only our own spiritual advancement and the edification of our neighbour. There are some who desire to know simply for the sake of knowing, and this is shameful curiosity. And there are some who desire to know in order that they may become known themselves, and this is shameful vanity. To such persons, certainly, can be applied what the satirist says of the vainglorious man:—

“You rate the worth of knowledge low
Unless your neighbours know you know.”

And some there are who desire to know in order to trade with their knowledge, bartering it for gold or for honours, and this is shameful traffic. But

there are some also who desire to know in order to edify, and this is charity. And some, finally, who desire to know in order to be edified, and this is prudence.

Of the above-mentioned classes, the last two alone are free from the guilt of abusing knowledge, for only these seek understanding as a means of well-doing. And we read in the psalms, “A good understanding to all that do it,” i.e., to all who have the good will to guide themselves by its prescriptions. As for the others, let them attend to the words of St. James, “To him who knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.” To express the same truth metaphorically, to him who takes food and does not digest it, to him it is harmful. For food which is badly prepared or ill-digested generates noxious humours and thus injures instead of promoting bodily health. In just the same way, extensive knowledge stored up in the memory—which is, as it were, the stomach of the soul—unless it has been cooked over the fire of charity and so distributed and disposed amongst our spiritual members—which are our habits and our acts—so that the soul herself derives a goodness, as our lives and morals testify, from the goodness of the things she knows—unless this be the case, our knowledge shall be imputed to us as sin, and shall be likened to the undigested meat which gives rise to bad and unwholesome humours. Or does it not seem to you that sin is an unwholesome humour? Are not loose morals unwholesome humours? Does not such a one, viz., “he who knoweth to do good and doth it not,” suffer in his conscience the torments and inflammations of spiritual indigestion? And does he not hear within himself the doom of death and damnation as often as he calls to mind those words spoken by Christ, “The servant who knew the will of his Lord, and did not according to His will, shall be punished with many stripes.” And see if perhaps it be not in the person of such souls that the Prophet Jeremias exclaims, “My bowels, my bowels are in pain.” But possibly the repetition is intended to signify a twofold sense, so that besides the meaning just mentioned, there is need to look for another. This is what occurs to me. The Prophet may also have spoken thus in his own proper person, to indicate that, though full of knowledge and burning with the fire of charity, and longing to communicate these spiritual treasures to others, he yet was unable to find any willing to hear him; and so what he could not distribute became, as it were, a burden to himself. Accordingly, the holy teacher of the Church weeps both for those who proudly refuse to learn how they should regulate their lives, and also for those who, possessing that knowledge, live nevertheless in disregard of the law. Thus much in explanation of the Prophet’s repetition.

Do you not perceive now, my brethren, with how much truth the Apostle says

that “knowledge puffeth up”? Consequently, I desire that my soul should learn in the first place to know herself, for this is required by reason both of utility and right order. By reason of good order, since the first object and truth for each is that which he is himself. And by reason of utility, because such knowledge does not inflate us with pride, but rather humbles us, and is thus an excellent preparation for the spiritual edifice we intend to raise. For this edifice cannot remain standing unless it be firmly grounded on the foundation of humility. Now, the soul can find nowhere a more fit and efficacious means for humiliating her than in a true knowledge of herself. Only let her not dissimulate; let there be no guile in her spirit; let her place herself as she really is before her own eyes; and let nothing be allowed to distract her attention from herself. Contemplating herself thus in the light of truth, she shall discover how far removed she is from the ideal of perfection. Then, groaning in her wretchedness, for her real wretchedness can no longer remain concealed from her, will she not cry out to the Lord, with the Prophet, “In Thy truth Thou hast humbled me”? For how can she help being truly humbled in this true knowledge of herself, when she beholds herself laden with sins, oppressed with the weight of this corruptible body, entangled in worldly cares, polluted with the filth of carnal desires, blind, earthward stooping, feeble, involved in many errors, exposed to a thousand dangers, agitated by a thousand fears, disquieted by a thousand suspicions, discouraged by a thousand difficulties, burdened with a thousand necessities, prone to vice, indisposed for virtue? What motive for pride can such a one have? How can such a one haughtily lift up her eyes or boldly hold her head erect? Will she not rather, according to the words of the Psalmist, be “converted in her anguish, whilst the thorn is fastened?” Yes, she will be converted to tears; she will be converted to lamentations and groans; she will be converted to the Lord. Then will she cry out in her humility, with the Prophet, “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.” And being now converted, she will receive consolation from the Lord, because He is “the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation.”

As for me, my brethren, so long as I look upon myself, “my eye abideth in bitterness.” But if I lift up my face and turn my gaze to the help of the divine compassion, the depressing vision of my own unworthiness is relieved by the joyous vision of God, and I say to Him, “My soul is troubled within myself, therefore, will I remember Thee.” Nor is that an unimportant vision of the Deity, which gives us the experience of Him as loving and gracious; because in truth, “He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of

the evil," since goodness is His very nature and it is peculiar to Him "to show mercy always and to spare." By this experience, therefore, and in this order, God gives us a saving knowledge of Himself. Man first recognises the helplessness of his condition. He then cries to the Lord. The Lord hears and makes answer to him, "I will deliver thee and thou shalt honour Me." And thus the knowledge of oneself leads on to the knowledge of God. He is perceived by means of His own image, which is renewed in us, whilst we, confidently "beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

But now, lastly, observe that both self-knowledge and the knowledge of God are alike essential for salvation, so that it is impossible to save one's soul in the absence of one or other. For if you do not know yourselves, you cannot have in you either the fear of God or true humility. Now, I leave it to yourselves, my brethren, to decide whether or not you can count upon your salvation without the fear of God and without humility. I am glad to learn from that murmur you have made that you have not the mind, or rather the madness, to take the affirmative view. Consequently, there is no need for me to labour a point already sufficiently clear. But let me call your attention to the other questions. Or, perhaps, I had better break off here for the sake of the drowsy. I expected to complete in one discourse my promised instructions concerning the two kinds of ignorance. And I should do so in fact, only that this sermon has already wearied many of you and is judged to be tedious. For I can see some yawning, and some even fast asleep. However, I am not surprised. The unusual length of last night's vigils accounts for their heaviness and excuses it. But this defence is not possible in the case of all. For what shall I say of those who have succumbed to sleep, both here and during the divine office? But I will not shame them further. It is enough to have made them sensible of their fault. And I am sure they will be more vigilant in future, fearing the penalty of my animadversion. In that expectation I will spare them for this time. And although reason demands that this discourse should be completed without a break, out of charity for them I will now interrupt it, making an end where the end is not, and will resume the discussion on another occasion. But let the offenders, in gratitude for the mercy they have obtained, glorify with us all the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXVII

ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE IGNORANCE OF GOD AND OF SELF

"If thou know not thyself, go forth."

I do not think, my brethren, that there is any necessity to warn you to-day against yielding to sleep, since, doubtless, the words of charitable reproof which I addressed to you so late as yesterday are still fresh in your memory, and have made you determined to keep wide awake. You recollect, then, that I obtained your assent to the proposition that no one is saved without self-knowledge. For it is, in fact, to this knowledge that we owe the virtue of humility—the mother of salvation—and also the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of salvation quite as much as it is the beginning of wisdom. But when I say that there can be no salvation without self-knowledge, I mean, of course, for those who are of the age and have the capacity for acquiring it. This limitation is necessary on account of infants and idiots whose case is completely different. But what if one has no knowledge of God? Can such ignorance consist with the hope of salvation? Surely not. For we can neither love God without the knowledge of Him, nor possess Him without the love of Him. Therefore, let us know ourselves that we may fear God, and let us know God that we may also love Him. The first of these virtues introduces us to wisdom, the second brings us to its perfection, because "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and "love is the fulfilling of the law." Consequently, it is as necessary to avoid ignorance of God and ignorance of self as it is certain that without the fear and the love of God we cannot save our souls. As regards the knowledge of other objects, that is a matter of indifference; we shall not be condemned for the want of it any more than its possession will save us.

I am far from saying, however, that the knowledge of letters is to be despised or neglected. Such learning furnishes and adorns the mind, and enables us to instruct others. But it is expedient and necessary to acquire, first of all, that

twofold knowledge of God and self, in which, as I have already shown, our salvation essentially consists. And see if the Prophet had not this order of knowing in mind, and did not recommend it to us when he said, “Sow for yourselves unto justice, and reap the hope of life,” after which he added, “and light for yourselves the lamp of knowledge.” He put the knowledge of letters in the last place, because, like a picture, it must rest upon something solid; and for this reason he would have it superimposed upon the knowledge of God and self as upon its proper basis and support. Securely may I apply myself to the acquisition of learning, if, through the grace of hope, I have first been rendered secure of the possession of life. Therefore, my brethren, you have sown “for yourselves unto justice,” if by a true knowledge of yourselves you have been awakened to the fear of God, if you have humbled yourselves, poured out tears of contrition, given abundant alms, and devoted yourselves to all the other exercises of piety; if you have afflicted your bodies with fastings and watchings; if you have beaten your breasts with penitential blows and wearied heaven with your cries for mercy. This is what is meant by sowing “for yourselves unto justice.” The seeds to be sown are good works, virtuous pursuits, holy tears. “Going they went and wept,” says the Psalmist, “casting their seeds.” But then shall they always weep? Certainly not. For, as the Prophet goes on to say, “coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves.” Rightly does he represent them as coming “with joyfulness,” since they carry the “sheaves” of immortal glory. But it may be objected that this joy is reserved for the Last Day, and that the wait is too long. Do not let such a thought discourage you; do not lose heart through “pusillanimity of spirit.” You have meantime of the first-fruits of the Holy Ghost that which you may now reap “with joyfulness.” “Sow for yourselves unto justice,” urges the Prophet, “reap the hope of life.” Mind, he does not tell us to wait until the Last Day, when we shall come into actual possession of what we now possess in hope. But he speaks of the present. The entrance into eternal life will assuredly fill us with immense happiness and a joy exceeding great. But is not the very hope of such a joy a joy in itself? “Rejoicing in hope,” says the Apostle. And notice how David does not tell us that he will rejoice, but that he has rejoiced in the hope of entering into the house of the Lord. He was not yet in actual enjoyment of life everlasting, but the hope of it he had already reaped. And he experienced in himself the truth of the words of Holy Scripture, where it is written that not alone the reward itself, but the mere “expectation of the just is joy.” This joy is engendered in the heart of him who sows for himself unto justice, by the assurance of his pardon; provided, however,

that such assurance is confirmed by the efficacy of the grace received in enabling him to live thereafter more holily. Everyone of you, my brethren, who is conscious of these operations in his interior, knows what the Spirit speaks, for His words and His works are ever in harmony. We therefore understand what is said, because what the ear hears exteriorly the heart feels within. For He Who speaks in us also works within us, “the same Spirit dividing to everyone according as He will,” communicating to some the gift of speech, to others the grace of well-doing.

Every one of you, therefore, who, after passing beyond the first stage of his conversion, usually so painful and sorrowful, rejoices in the renewal of hope and in his elevation on the wings of grace to the more tranquil state of heavenly consolation—every such soul, I say, is in truth already reaping, enjoying the temporal fruit of her tears, She has both seen God and heard His voice saying to her, “Give her of the fruit of her hands.” For how can it be doubted that she has seen God, since she has even tasted and seen “that the Lord is sweet”? Oh, how sweet and savoury dost thou taste to him, Lord Jesus, who has obtained from Thee not only the pardon of his sins, but even the grace of sanctity, and not that alone, but, to crown Thy favours, the promise of eternal life as well! Happy he who has reaped so rich a harvest, having here his “fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting”! Justly has he, who wept on discovering himself, rejoiced, like the apostles, on beholding the Lord, at the sight of Whose tender compassion he has already gathered such abundant sheaves, pardon, sanctification, and the hope of heaven. Oh, how true are those words which we read in the Psalmist, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy”! Herein we find included both the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God, the former sowing in tears, and the latter reaping in joy.

Having first acquired this twofold knowledge of God and self, we are now in no danger of being “puffed up” by whatever learning we may add to it. For such learning can offer us nothing in the way of earthly honour or emolument, which is not so worthless in comparison with the hope we have conceived and the gladness of that hope, now deeply rooted in our soul, that it can no longer be a temptation to us. “And hope confoundeth not; because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us.” Thus, the reason why hope “confoundeth not” is because charity infuses certitude. For it is by charity that “the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God.” What advantage, therefore, can any learning of our own, however great, bring within our reach, which is not less than this glory whereby we are

numbered amongst the children of God? But this is saying too little, since, in comparison with such and so great a dignity, the whole earth and the fulness thereof, although all that were offered to each one of us, would not be worthy of even a single thought. But if we are ignorant of God, how can we hope in One Whom we do not know? If we are ignorant of ourselves, how can we have humility, since we shall think ourselves to be something, whereas we are nothing, as the Apostle speaks? And we know that without humility and hope we can have neither lot nor fellowship in the inheritance of the saints.

Let us consider now, my brethren, with what care and solicitude we ought to guard against both these kinds of ignorance, one of which is the source of all sin and the other the consummation thereof; just as, on the other hand, the first of the two kinds of knowledge is the beginning, and the second the perfection, of wisdom. For self-knowledge begets the fear of the Lord, whilst from the knowledge of God we are led to the love of Him, as I have already sufficiently explained. It remains now to show how the twofold ignorance stands in the same relation to sin. As “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” so “pride is the beginning of all sin”; and just as the love of God is the consummation of wisdom, in the same way is despair the consummation of sin. Again, just as the knowledge of self leads to the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of God to the love of Him; so, on the contrary, ignorance of self is the mother of pride, and ignorance of God gives birth to despair. Pride is the daughter of ignorance of self, inasmuch as our thought, deceived itself and deceiving us, makes us believe ourselves to be better than we really are. Now this is pride, this “the beginning of all sin,” to appear greater in one’s own eyes than one is in truth, or in the eyes of God. And therefore it is said of him who first committed this most dreadful sin, the devil, namely, that “he stood not in the truth, but is a liar from the beginning.” And the reason is because he was greater in his own thought than he was in truth. What then would be the consequence if one departed from truth, not by exaggerating his merit, but by esteeming himself less than he really is? Undoubtedly, his ignorance would excuse him, and he would not, at any rate, be reputed proud; and instead of his “iniquity being found unto hatred,” his humility would rather be found unto grace and pardon. Had we a clear knowledge of how we stood, each of us, in the judgment of God, it would be our duty to place ourselves neither above nor below that level, but in all things to be conformed to truth. But now, since this judgment “hath made darkness its hiding-place,” and the divine appraisement is concealed from our view, so that “no man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hatred,” in this uncertainty it

is manifestly better and safer to act according to the counsel of Divine Truth, and to choose for ourselves the last place, whence we may afterwards be promoted with honour, than to usurp too high a position which we shall soon be compelled to resign in confusion.

We run no risk, consequently, however much we humble ourselves, no matter how much meaner we make ourselves than we really are, that is to say, than we are in the estimation of Infinite Wisdom. But it would be an immense evil and a fearful danger to exalt oneself, be it ever so little, above one's proper place, for instance, to prefer myself in thought even to one, since, perchance, in the eyes of God, he may be my equal or superior. Let me give you an example to illustrate my meaning. When I am passing through a very low doorway, it will do me no harm to stoop as much as I please. But if I raise myself too high, even by so much as a finger's breadth, I at once meet with obstruction, and experience the painful sensation of knocking my head against the lintel. It is the same in spiritual things. The soul has nothing to fear from humility, no matter how low she bends. But should she rashly presume to lift herself above her merit, even in the slightest degree, dreadful and exceedingly awful are the evils that threaten her. Wherefore, O man, beware of comparing thyself either with those who are greater than thee or with those who are less than thee, with many, or even with one. For how dost thou know whether he, who appears to thee the vilest and most miserable of all men, whose infamous and utterly abandoned life makes thee shudder with horror, whom thou regardest consequently as deserving of contempt, not only in comparison with thyself—who, in thine own judgment, art living soberly, justly, and piously—but even in comparison with all other criminals, as being the most criminal of all—how, I ask, dost thou know whether such a one may not become hereafter better than both they and thou by the "change of the right hand of the Most High," or whether he is not so even now in the sight of God? Therefore, the Master recommends us to sit down, not in an intermediate place, nor in the place next the last, nor in one of the last, but in the very last of all. "Go," says He, "sit down in the lowest place," so that, placed last and alone, thou mayest not presume, I do not say to prefer, but even to compare thyself to anyone. Behold, my brethren, how great an evil results from lack of self-knowledge, pride, namely, which is the sin of the devil, and the beginning of all sin. As regards the ill-consequences to which the ignorance of God gives rise, I reserve that subject for another occasion. This adjournment is necessitated by the lateness of the hour, for we were not assembled to-day as early as usual. And so let it suffice, meantime, that each of you has been admonished not to remain

in ignorance of himself, not only by me, but also by the grace and inspiration of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXVIII

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH IGNORANCE OF GOD LEADS TO DESPAIR, AND ON THE BEAUTY OF THE SPOUSE

"If thou know not thyself, go forth."

What is the evil that results from ignorance of God? Here, my brethren, I have to resume the discussion which I interrupted yesterday, and which, if you remember, I had conducted to this point. What, then, is this evil? I have already told you. It is despair. But how does the lack of a knowledge of God lead to despair? This I shall now endeavour to make clear. Imagine, then, a person entering into himself, recalling in the bitterness of his soul all the evils he has done, and purposing to amend, and to abandon all his wicked ways and his carnal conversation. Now, if such a one knows not how good the Lord is, that "He is sweet and mild and bounteous to forgive," will not his own natural reason become his accuser and say, "What art thou about? Wouldst thou lose both this life and the life to come? Thy sins are heinous in malice and countless in multitude. Thou shalt never be able to atone for crimes so great and so many, no, not even shouldst thou strip the very skin from thy body. Besides, thou art of a weak constitution, thou hast lived delicately, and it will be impossible for thee to conquer the force of habit." As he does not know how easily all these difficulties would dissolve and vanish before the power of that Omnipotent Goodness, Who desires that none should perish, the poor sinner is driven to despair by such-like arguments, and miserably returns to his former evil courses. The result is final impenitence, which is the greatest of sins, as being, in truth, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which shall be forgiven neither here nor hereafter. For either he is overwhelmed and swallowed up by an excess of sadness, which hurries him onward into the abyss, whence he shall never emerge to seek for consolation, as it is written: "The wicked man, when he is come into the depth, contemneth," that is to say, he makes no effort to deliver himself; or else he

deliberately blinds himself to the danger of his state, calms his conscience by some kind of specious reasoning, and plunges again and irrevocably into the pleasures and satisfactions of a worldly life, determined to enjoy to the utmost, and as long as he can, all the good things of this earth. But “when he shall say peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon him, as the pains upon her that is with child, and he shall not escape.” In this way, then, from ignorance of God comes the consummation of all malice, which is nothing else but despair.

The Apostle tells us, my brethren, that “some have not the knowledge of God.” But I will venture to say that none of those who refuse to be converted have the knowledge of God. For, unquestionably, the only reason of their unwillingness is that they imagine Him to be cold and austere Who is really kind and loving; Him Who is full of mercy and sweetness they represent to themselves as hard and implacable, cruel and terrible. Thus “iniquity lieth to itself,” and fashions for itself an idol of its own, since the god of its fancy is not the Lord. “Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?” Are you afraid He will refuse to pardon your sins? But, as St. Paul declares, together with His own Hands they were fastened to the cross. Or is it the thought of penance that terrifies you, who are so tender and delicate? But “He remembereth that we are dust.” Or is it the vices you have contracted and the binding habits of sin? But “the Lord looseth them that are fettered.” Perhaps you are apprehensive lest, provoked by the magnitude and the multitude of your crimes, He should hesitate to extend to you a helping hand? But, according to St. Paul, where sin has abounded grace is wont to superabound. Or finally, is it that you are solicitous about your clothes and your food and the other necessaries of the body, and are therefore reluctant to renounce what you possess? But “your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.” What more can you desire? What obstacle remains still in the way of your salvation? But the case is as I have said. You have not the knowledge of God, and you refuse to believe what I tell you of Him. If I could only induce you to credit those at least who speak from experience! For “unless you believe you will not understand.” “But not all have the gift of faith.”

God forbid, my brethren, that we should suppose the Spouse to be warned against this danger, that is to say, against ignorance of God. For she is favoured, I shall not say with so much knowledge of Him Who is at once her Bridegroom and her God, but with so much friendship and familiarity, that she deserves to enjoy frequently His conversation and even His kisses; and now she says to Him

with the boldness of an intimate, “Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day.” Here evidently she begs to be shown, not Himself, but the “place where His glory dwelleth”; although He is not really distinct either from His place or from His glory. But she is considered deserving of a reproof on account of her presumption, and of a warning about self-knowledge, in which she shows herself to be in some degree wanting by esteeming herself capable of a vision so great. This presumptuous request is due, either to the fact that in an ecstasy of love she forgot that she is still in the flesh, or else to the vain hope that, whilst abiding still in the body, she may be able to attain to the inaccessible brightness of the Divinity. Therefore, she is recalled to herself; she is convicted of ignorance and rebuked for her boldness. “If thou know not thyself,” the Bridegroom answers, “go forth.” Thus dreadfully does the Bridegroom thunder against His Spouse, exhibiting Himself here not as a Bridegroom but as a Master. Nor is it out of anger that He so threatens her, but to the end that, being frightened, she may take pains to purge herself of every stain, and thus purified, may be made worthy of the vision for which she longs. For it is only the clean of heart that shall see God.

Rightly, too, she is called “beautiful,” not absolutely and in every sense, but “beautiful amongst women,” that is to say, beautiful with qualifications; and this with the intention of repressing her presumption still more, and that she may learn what is yet wanting to her. For it seems to me that by the name of women are here designated those carnal and worldly souls, which have nothing virile in them, which manifest no strength or constancy in their activities, but in their lives and conduct show themselves entirely lax, soft, and effeminate. The spiritual soul, on the contrary, walks not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, and so far is already beautiful. Yet, inasmuch as she still lives in the body, she falls short of the perfection of beauty. Hence, she is described, not as absolutely beautiful, but as beautiful amongst women. That is to say, she is beautiful, in comparison with souls which are earthly, and not, like her, spiritual. But she is not beautiful, as compared with the blessed angels, with the Virtues, Powers, or Dominations. Thus, of old, one of the patriarchs was found and called “just in his generation,” that is, just beyond all the other men of his time and generation. Thamar, also, is proclaimed justified as compared with Juda, that is, more just than Juda. Likewise, in the Gospel, the Publican is said to have gone down to his house justified, but justified in comparison with the Pharisee. And finally, in that magnificent eulogium pronounced upon the great Baptist, it is said of him that he is without a superior, but only amongst the children of

women, not amongst the choirs of blessed heavenly spirits. In the same way the Spouse is now called beautiful, not in relation to the holy angels, but, at least whilst she sojourns here below, only amongst women.

Let the Spouse, therefore, cease, so long as she lives on earth, to inquire curiously into the things of heaven, lest haply the "searcher of majesty be overwhelmed by glory." Let her cease, I repeat, as long as she dwells amongst women, to strain after those objects which are found in the abode of the high celestial princes, which to them alone are visible, to them alone lawful; for, heavenly themselves, they are only suitable for the contemplation of heavenly intelligences. "The vision, O my Spouse," so the Bridegroom seems to speak, "which thou desirest to be shown to thee is entirely above thy capacity. Thou hast not yet the strength to gaze upon that marvellous and meridian brightness wherein I dwell. Thou sayst, 'show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day.' But to be drawn up into the clouds, to penetrate into the plenitude of glory, to plunge into abysses of splendour, and to dwell in light inaccessible—this neither suits an earthly life nor the condition of a mortal body. It is reserved for thee until the last day, when I shall present thee glorious to Myself, 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Or knowest thou not that as long as thou livest upon earth in this body thou art an exile from the light? Whilst thou art not as yet wholly beautiful, how canst thou consider thyself capable of contemplating the Sum and Perfection of all beauty? Or how canst thou ask to see Me in My glory before thou hast learned to know thyself? For hadst thou a thorough knowledge of thyself, thou wouldst surely understand that, being weighed down by a body subject to corruption, thou canst not possibly lift up thine eyes to fix them on that Brightness on which the angels desire to look. But the time will come when I shall appear in My glory, and on that day thou shalt be wholly beautiful, just as I am wholly beautiful; and being thus made like to Me, thou shalt see Me as I am. Then shalt thou hear it said to thee, 'Thou art all fair, O my beloved, and there is not a spot in thee.' Meantime, although thou art like to Me in part, yet, because thou art also in part dissimilar, thou must be content to know in part. Attend to thyself, and 'seek not the things that are too high for thee, and search not into things above thy ability.' For, if thou know not thyself, O beautiful amongst women—I call thee beautiful, but only amongst women, that is, in part, 'but when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away.' If, then, thou know not thyself"—But the words which follow have been sufficiently expounded and there is no need to repeat. I had promised to put some useful considerations before you concerning the two

kinds of ignorance. If you think I have failed to keep that engagement, I beg you to pardon me, as I certainly had the good will. “For to will is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good I find not.” That is to say, unless in so far as it shall be given to me unto your edification through the gracious mercy of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXIX

ON THE CHARIOTS OF PHARAO AND THE CAPTAINS OF HIS HOST

"To My company of horsemen, in Pharao's chariots, have I likened thee, O My love."

"To My company of horsemen, in Pharao's chariots, have I likened thee, O My love." From these words, my brethren, I gladly infer, in the first place, that the patriarchs of old were a type of the Church, and had foreshadowed to them the sacraments of our redemption. Thus, in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, that astounding miracle, whereby the sea rendered the people of the Lord the double service of affording them a passage and wreaking vengeance on their enemies, evidently prefigured the grace of baptism, by which our souls are saved and our sins submerged. "All," says the Apostle, "were under the cloud, and all were baptised in the cloud and in the sea." But in the first place it is necessary, according to my custom, to show the sequence of the words, and the connection between the foregoing and the following. Then I shall proceed, if I can, to draw from them some consoling truths which may be useful for our moral instruction. The Bridegroom, therefore, after checking the presumption of His Spouse with a harsh and cutting reproof, lest she should abandon herself to excessive sadness, now recalls to her mind some of the favours she has already received, and promises others not yet enjoyed. He even calls her "beautiful" and His "love." As if He should say, "Do not think, O My love, that it is from any feeling of dislike or ill-will I have spoken to thee with such severity. For in the gifts with which I have honoured and adorned thee, thou hast received evident proofs of My regard. Nor have I now any intention to take them back, but rather to add other and more precious favours." Or we may fancy Him speaking thus, "Do not take it ill, My cherished Spouse, that thou hast not obtained thy present request, because thou hast already received many favours of Me and shalt receive still greater, provided thou continuest faithful in My love." So much for the verbal sequence.

Now, let us see, my brethren, what are those gifts referred to by the Bridegroom, as having been bestowed by Him upon His Spouse. The first is that He has likened her to His company of horsemen in the chariots of Pharao. This He did by delivering her from the yoke of sin, and destroying in her all "the works of the flesh," just as the chosen people were set free from the servitude of Egypt, all Pharao's chariots being overthrown and submerged. That in truth was the greatest of mercies. And if, like the Apostle, "I should have a mind to glory" in it, "I shall not be foolish; for I will say the truth"—that "unless the Lord had been my Helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell." I am not ungrateful; I am not unmindful. "The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever." So much have I in common with the Spouse. As for the rest, she, by an incommunicable privilege, has been raised, after her deliverance, to the rank and dignity of His only beloved, and, as the Spouse of the Lord, has been adorned with beauty, but for the present only in her cheeks and neck. Moreover, she has been promised necklaces for ornaments, and they are to be of gold to make the gift more precious, and inlaid with silver to enhance their beauty. Who can help admiring the wonderful order in which these favours are bestowed? First, she is mercifully liberated; secondly, she is condescendingly loved; thirdly, she is kindly cleansed and purified; lastly she receives a promise of the most magnificent ornaments.

I have no doubt, my brethren, that some amongst you can already recognise in their own spiritual histories the realities which I am endeavouring to express in words, and, instructed by their own inner experience, anticipate in their thoughts the slowness of my remarks. Nevertheless, remembering what the Psalmist says, "The declaration of Thy words giveth light, and giveth understanding to little ones," I think it worth while, for the sake of these "little ones," to explain what I have been saying somewhat more fully. "For the Spirit of wisdom is benevolent," and is pleased with the benevolent and diligent instructor, who strives his best to satisfy the educated and intelligent, without neglecting to bend to the capacity of others less gifted. Again, as you know, Wisdom Itself, says "They that explain Me shall have life everlasting," and I am unwilling to lose that reward. And besides, even in matters that seem to be plain enough, mysteries may sometimes lie concealed, a more careful discussion of which will not be without profit even to such as are endowed with superior intelligence and quickness of apprehension.

Let us now examine the similitudes of Pharao and his host and of the Lord's "company of horsemen." The comparison is not between the two armies, but only taken from them. For "what fellowship hath light with darkness? Or what

part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?" But there is an evident analogy or ground for comparison between a holy and spiritual soul and the "horsemen" of the Lord, and between Pharao and Lucifer, and between the host of Egypt and the host of hell. Nor will you wonder, my brethren, that one soul is likened to a multitude of horsemen, if you bear in mind how many battalions of the virtues may be marshalled in a single soul, provided she has real sanctity, what orderly disposition she exhibits in her affections, what perfect discipline in her morals, what effective engines of war in her prayers, what energy in her actions, what power to inspire terror in her zeal, what constancy in her combats with the enemy, and, finally, what frequency in the succession of her triumphs. So, in a following verse, the Spouse, or the holy soul, is represented to be "terrible as an army set in array." And again we read, "What shalt thou see in the Sulamitess but the companies of camps?" But if this explanation fails to satisfy you, remember that the holy soul is never without a bodyguard—so to speak—of angels, who are jealous of her "with the jealousy of God," desirous to preserve her for the Bridegroom and to "present her as a chaste virgin to Christ." And let no one say in his heart, "Where are these protecting angels? Who has ever seen them?" For the Prophet Eliseus saw them, and by prayer obtained for his servant Giezi that he, also, should see them. If, then, you do not see them, it is because you are neither prophets nor the servants of a prophet. They were also seen by the Patriarch Jacob, when he exclaimed, "These are the camps of God." And by the Doctor of nations, who said, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"

Protected, therefore, by angelic ministrations, and attended wherever she goes by a troop of heavenly spirits, the holy soul may justly be likened to the horsemen of the Lord, those, namely, who, of old, assisted by a stupendous miracle of divine power, triumphed over the chariots of Pharao. For if you examine the matter carefully, you will find repeated in her conflict with the invisible Pharao all the glorious achievements which rendered the victory of the Red Sea so illustrious and wonderful. The single difference is one which makes the soul's triumph only all the more magnificent, since what the people of God accomplished in type and material figure has been spiritually fulfilled in her. Does it not appear to you a more valiant and glorious feat to vanquish the devil than to overcome King Pharao, to defeat the powers of the air than to overthrow the chariots of Egypt? In the one case the struggle was with flesh and blood, in the other the "wrestling" was "against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high

places.” Let us together draw out and study the comparison in all its details. On the one side is the chosen people delivered from Egypt, on the other a soul rescued from the world; there Pharao is defeated, here it is Lucifer; there the chariots of the tyrant are overthrown, here are extinguished earthly and “carnal desires which war against the soul”; there the fight is carried on amid floods of briny water, here amid floods of bitter tears. And I can fancy the demons, whenever they happen upon a faithful soul, crying out like the Egyptians of old, “Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against us.” Do you wish me now to designate by their proper names some of the captains of Pharao’s host, and to describe some of the chariots, so that by adopting the method which I shall employ, you may be able to find out and identify all the others for yourselves? I tell you, then, that one of the mightiest princes of the spiritual and invisible Pharao is called Malice, another is named Luxury, and a third Avarice. These govern their several provinces with dependence on the king, who defines for each the limits of his jurisdiction. Thus Malice has dominion over the whole territory of injury and outrage. Luxury presides over uncleanness and the sins of the flesh. To Avarice it has been given to rule the wide areas of rapine and fraud.

Attend now whilst I explain what manner of chariots Pharao has furnished his princes with for the pursuit of the people of God. The chariot of Malice moves upon four wheels, which are called Cruelty, Impatience, Audacity, and Impudence. For this chariot is extremely “swift to shed blood,” and is neither stopped by innocence, nor retarded by patience, nor restrained by fear, nor held back by shame. It is drawn by two very mettlesome horses, ever ready to rush forward to all kinds of destruction and slaughter, and their names are Earthly Power and Worldly Pomp. For this four-wheeled car of Malice moves with the greatest velocity when, on the one hand, it is yoked to power adequate to the accomplishment of his malevolent purposes, and, on the other, has the pomp and glory of popular favour to applaud his most criminal deeds. So that we see fulfilled in it the words of the Psalmist, “For the sinner is praised in the desires of his heart, and the unjust man is blessed.” “And again, another Scripture saith,” “This is your hour and the power of darkness.” The horses are in charge of two charioteers, Pride and Envy, the former driving Pomp and the latter Power. For he who has allowed his heart within to swell with self-conceit shall soon be carried away swiftly by the love of satanical pomp. But the man that is firmly established in himself, who is prudently self-restrained, gravely modest, solidly humble, chastely whole, such a man is in no danger of being blown lightly about by the wind of vanity. In the same way, does it not seem to you that Envy rides

upon the horse of Power and urges him onward by pricking his flanks with the two spurs of Jealousy, by which I mean the apprehension of death or decline, and the dread of deposition? For the fear of having soon to yield place to a successor is quite distinct from the fear of an invading usurper. Such then are the goads wherewith the horse of Power is driven forward. And that is all I find to say about the chariot of Malice.

The chariot of Luxury also runs upon four wheels of subservient vices, namely, Gluttony, Carnal Desire, Love of Fine Dress, and the Enervation begotten of languor and sloth. It, too, has its pair of horses to draw it, which are Prosperity in life and Abundance of earthly goods. These are driven by the charioteers, Lazy Languor and False Security; for abundance is the ruin of the lazy, and according to Scripture, “The prosperity of fools shall destroy them,” no doubt because it renders them falsely secure. “For when they shall say, peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon them.” The charioteers of Luxury have neither whips nor spurs, nor anything at all of that kind; but they use a kind of parasol to protect them from the sun, and a kind of fan for exciting a refreshing breeze. This parasol is nothing else than Dissimulation, which, in a metaphorical sense, makes a shade for the mind, and shelters it from the heat of care and worry. Now, it is characteristic of soft and effeminate souls to put aside even necessary and urgent cares, and to conceal themselves in the shadow of Dissimulation, lest they should feel the burning heat of solicitude. The fan bears the name of Profuse Liberality, and the wind that they produce is the balmy breeze of Adulation. For sensual souls affect prodigality, desirous to purchase for gold the light wind produced by the lips of flatterers. So much for the chariot of Lust.

Prince Avarice, similarly, has four wheels to his car. They are the vices of Pusillanimity, Inhumanity, Contempt of God, and Forgetfulness of Death. The horses that draw him are Obstinacy and Rapacity; and the two are managed by one driver, who is called Greed of Gain. For Avarice is singular in this, that he is content with one servant, his niggardliness not suffering him to employ any more. But his single driver displays admirable promptitude and tireless zeal in the execution of every order, using the rousing whips of Passion for Acquiring and Fear of Losing to stimulate the horses that draw him.

Besides those I have mentioned, there are many other princes under the king of Egypt, who have likewise their own chariots for the service of their master. For instance, there is Pride, who is one of his greatest captains, and Impiety, the enemy of the true faith, who holds high rank in Pharao’s palace and kingdom;

whilst of nobles and knights of inferior degree the army of Egypt contains a countless multitude, whose names and offices and arms and equipments I leave you to discover for yourselves by your own meditations, for it will furnish profitable employment for your minds. It is therefore in the strength of these captains and their chariots that the invisible Pharao, like a cruel tyrant, vents his fury on the servants of the Lord, to the utmost of his power, rushing with rage upon them from every direction, and, even in our own day, is still pursuing the Israelites as they try to escape out of Egypt. The chosen people, on the other hand, have neither chariots in which to ride, nor arms wherewith to defend themselves; nevertheless, with no other protection but the Hand of the Lord, they can exclaim with confidence, “Let us sing to the Lord, for He is gloriously magnified, and horse and rider He hath thrown into the sea.” And, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses; but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God.” But perhaps I have now said enough on the comparison drawn from the horsemen of the Lord and the chariots of Pharao.

After using this similitude, the Bridegroom addresses the Spouse as His “love.” He indeed was her Lover, even before her deliverance from the bondage of sin; for had He not loved her He certainly would not have set her free. But it was in consequence of the benefit of emancipation that she became His love, that is to say, filled with His love. Listen to herself bearing testimony to this truth, “not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us.” I now ask you, my brethren, to recall to mind the marriage of Moses to the daughter of the Madianite Raguel, and to recognise in that a foreshadowing of the spiritual union of Christ and the penitent soul. I also ask you to say, if you can, what it is you find most pleasant and consoling in your meditations on that sweetest of mysteries, whether the gracious condescension of the Word, or the inconceivable exaltation of the soul, or finally, the amazing confidence of the sinner. Moses was unable to render fair Sephoia’s swarthy complexion. But what he could not do for the Madianitess, Christ can and does accomplish for the soul He espouses. Hence we read in the following verse, “Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove’s.” But I reserve this for another sermon, so that we may always partake with eager appetites of the good things set before us on the Bridegroom’s table, and then pour out our souls unto the praise and glory of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XL

ON THE CHEEKS OF THE SPOUSE AND WHAT CONSTITUTES THEIR BEAUTY

"Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove's."

The Spouse, my brethren, is extremely bashful and sensitive. Hence, as it appears to me, she must have blushed scarlet at the sharp reproof of her Beloved, and, looking more lovely than ever in her embarrassment, merited to hear from Him, immediately, the eulogium, "Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove's." But you must not take these words in a materialistic sense, as if there were question here of the visible blush on mortal flesh, arising from the even diffusion of a corruptible fluid, ruddy or crimson, close beneath the superficies of a pale and transparent skin; for it is the mixing and combining of these colours in due proportion that produce the red-and-white complexion which adorns the face with physical beauty. The soul is an immaterial and invisible substance, possessing neither distinction of bodily members, nor capacity for the ornamentation of sensible colours. Try, then, as best you can, to conceive a spiritual essence in a spiritual way; and, to preserve the aptness of the similitude proposed, understand the face of the soul to be the intention of the mind. For it is from the intention that we estimate the merit of a work, just as the beauty of the body is judged from the face. Consider, moreover, that the blush which suffuses the soul's face is nothing else than her modesty, which is compared to a blush, because it, in an especial way, enhances her beauty and increases her grace. Therefore is it said to her, "Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove's." It would indeed be more in conformity with usage to speak of the face and to describe it as beautiful; for, according to custom, whenever we wish to praise anyone on account of her beauty, we say, "she has a lovely" or "a beautiful face." But, although I am not sure what it is, I nevertheless feel quite certain that the Bridegroom has something very particular in view in preferring to mention the cheeks. For we must remember that He Who speaks is the Spirit of Wisdom,

and it would be impious to suppose that He could use words without significance, or otherwise than they ought to be used. Therefore, whatever it is, a reason there certainly must be why He chooses to refer to the cheeks in the plural, rather than to the face in the singular. And, if you can suggest nothing more plausible, I will offer for your consideration the explanation which occurs to me.

There are two things, my brethren, necessarily implied in every act of intention (which, as I have said, is the face of the soul) and these are the object and the motive, that is to say, what you intend and the reason that determines you. Now it is according to these two elements that the beauty or deformity of the soul is estimated; so that a soul wherein both are pure and righteous is judged to be beautiful and deserves to have applied to her the words, “Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove’s.” But should she be found defective in one or other, then it would be no longer true to say to her, “Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove’s,” because of the partial deformity which she exhibits. Much less can this eulogium be applied to the soul which has neither a good object nor a good motive in her intentions. All this will appear more evident from examples. If a person, for instance, gives up his mind to the investigation of truth, and that purely from the love of truth, does it not seem to you that in his case both the object and the motive are equally excellent and that he has every right to apply to himself the Words of the Bridegroom, “Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove’s”? For in neither of the cheeks of the soul that is such, does there appear any spot or speck of evil. But were a soul to apply herself to the quest after truth, not for the sake of truth, but from the desire of vainglory, or with a view to some temporal advantage, although one of her cheeks, viz., the object of her intention, appears vested with beauty, yet because the other has been defiled by the baseness of the motive, I have no doubt you would pronounce her at least partially deformed. And if you were to see another soul devoting her energies to no honourable object, but sunk in sensuality, given up completely to the pleasures of the table and the delights of the flesh, as being one of those “whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things,” what would be your verdict on her? Would you not declare her to be repulsive in both cheeks, as having at once a bad motive and a bad object in her intention?

It is, consequently, a mark of a worldly soul, both of whose cheeks are devoid of beauty, to make the world rather than God the object of her intention. The hypocritical soul, on the contrary, is characterised by the fact that she does indeed, at least in some sense, direct her intention towards God, yet not for the

sake of God. And although this divine regard, such as it is, seems to beautify one of her cheeks, the insincerity of her piety destroys all her attractions and spreads the deformity of ugliness over her whole face. Again, to turn to God either solely or principally for the sake of the necessaries of this present life, renders the soul —I will not say defiled with the filth of hypocrisy, but deficient in the brightness of purity—the effect of pusillanimity—and consequently less acceptable. On the other hand, to aim at something other than God, yet on account of God, is not indeed the peaceful repose of Mary, but rather the busy solicitude of Martha. But God forbid that I should assert the existence of any deformity in such a soul. Yet neither would I affirm that she has attained to the perfection of spiritual beauty, because she is still "careful and troubled about many things," and cannot but be sprinkled, however slightly, with the dust of earthly occupations. However, such inconsiderable stains will be easily and quickly removed, at least in the hour of a holy death, by the merit of a pure intention and the testimony of a good conscience towards God. Therefore, she alone, whose intention is directed to God for His own sake, exhibits absolute beauty in both cheeks. And this is proper and special to the Spouse, who by reason of her singular prerogative, deserves to be saluted by her Bridegroom with the words, "Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove's."

But why is she compared to the turtle dove? No doubt, because this bird is remarkable for shyness, does not consort with many, and is said to be content with the company of a single mate; and if she should lose him, she seeks no other, but leads thereafter a solitary life. Do you, therefore, my brethren, who are listening to me, lest you should hear to no purpose what has been written for your good, and is now for your good being examined and discussed—do you, I say, moved by these exhortations of the Holy Spirit, and animated with an ardent desire to discover how you may make your souls the spouses of Christ, study to beautify the two cheeks of your intention, that, after the example of the turtle dove, the most modest of birds, you may sit solitary, as the Prophet Jeremias says, because you have raised yourselves above yourselves. For surely it is to be raised above yourselves to be espoused to the Lord of angels. Are you not raised above yourselves when you cleave to God and are made one Spirit with Him? Sit solitary, then, like the turtle dove. Have nothing to do with the throng, nothing in common with the multitude of men. O holy soul, even "forget thy people and thy father's house, and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty." Remain alone, and amongst all preserve thyself for Him alone, Who has chosen thee from amongst all. Shun the public view; shun even the members of thine own household;

withdraw from the company of friends and familiars, even from him who ministers to thy necessities. Knowest thou not that thy Beloved is of a shy disposition, and will not lend thee His presence in the presence of others? Seek solitude, therefore, not of the body, but of the mind and of the spirit, solitude in intention and in devotion. For “a Spirit before thy face is Christ the Lord,” and what He requires of thee is not a physical but a spiritual isolation. Nevertheless, thou wouldst do well to withdraw thyself in body as well from time to time, according to thy opportunity, and especially at the hour of prayer. Thou hast for this also both the precept and the example of thy Beloved. “But thou,” He says, “when thou shalt pray, enter thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.” And what He preached to others, He practised Himself. He used to pass the night alone in prayer, separating Himself not only from the crowds, but also from every one of His disciples, not even excepting His most familiar friends. When of His own accord He was hastening to meet death, He took with Him the three apostles with whom He was most intimate. But He retired even from their company when He wished to pray. Therefore, do thou act similarly when thou wouldst give thyself to the exercise of prayer.

For the rest, nothing more is enjoined you, my brethren, but the solitude of mind and of spirit. You are alone in this way, when you exclude the thought of common things, and all attachment to present things; when you contemn what the many admire, and count as nothing what they eagerly covet; when you avoid disputes, make light of temporal losses and forget injuries. Otherwise, you will not be really alone, even when you have no visible company. Or do you not understand that one can be alone although surrounded by a multitude and, contrariwise, one can be in the company of many when exteriorly alone? You are alone, my brethren, no matter what number are with you, provided you are careful neither to inquire too curiously into the conduct of your neighbour, nor rashly to sit in judgment upon his doings. And if you happen to discover some fault in him, even so, beware of condemning, but rather excuse. At least excuse the intention, if you cannot excuse the act. Believe that what appears blameworthy is due to ignorance, or to surprise, or to mere accident. But if the guilt is so manifest that you cannot shut your eyes to it, still do your best to extenuate what you are unable to excuse, and say to yourselves, “The temptation no doubt was exceedingly strong. What would have become of me were I subjected to a similar trial?” And remember that it is to the Spouse I have been speaking thus, not to the friend of the Bridegroom. For the latter has the special duty of keeping diligent watch to prevent sin on the part of his charge, of

examining whether sin has been committed, and, if so, of administering due correction. But the Spouse is under no such obligation and lives to herself alone and to Him Whom she loves, her Bridegroom and her Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XLI

ON WHAT IS MEANT BY THE NECK OF THE SPOUSE AND BY THE CHAINS OF GOLD PROMISED HER

"Thy neck (is) as jewels; we will make thee chains of gold inlaid with silver."

"Thy neck (is) as jewels." It is more usual, my brethren, for the neck to be adorned with jewels than to be compared to them. But the reason why people wear necklaces of jewels is because, having no beauty of their own, they are obliged to borrow from outer objects wherewith to simulate what nature denied them. Such is not the case with the Spouse of Christ. Her neck is in itself so beautiful and so perfectly formed by nature that it has no need of artificial embellishments. For why should that be decorated with the mendacious splendour of foreign hues, which possesses in itself a sufficiency of native and intrinsic loveliness, so much, in fact, as to rival the beauty of whatever jewels might be used to adorn it? This is what the Bridegroom gives us to understand when He says, not "Thy neck is encircled with jewels," but "Thy neck is as jewels" Here we must implore the light of the Holy Spirit, that, as He enabled us to discover the spiritual cheeks of the Spouse, He would also deign to show us what is to be understood by her spiritual neck. As for me, who am under obligation to tell you what I think, the most probable and satisfactory explanation I have been so far able to find is to suppose that by the name of neck is here designated the intellect of the soul. And I venture to think you will agree with me in this view, when you examine the reason of the comparison. For do you not perceive that the intellect discharges for the soul functions analogous to those which the neck performs for the body, since it is through the intellect that all spiritual food passes into the soul, and is conveyed to the digestive organs of the will and the affections? The neck of the Spouse, therefore, understood in this sense, that is, the pure intellect, has no need of any borrowed embellishments, being sufficiently adorned with its simple and naked truth. Rather it is itself the

beauty of the soul, as a most precious ornament, and for this reason it is likened to jewels. For truth is a priceless jewel; and so are purity and simplicity; and so is the wisdom that is “unto sobriety.” But the intellect of philosophers and heretics possesses in itself none of the splendours of purity and truth, and hence they are at such pains to deck it out and to set it off with the trumpery of grand words and syllogistic sophistry, lest, by showing itself as it really is, the turpitude of its falsity should be also made manifest.

It is added, “We will make thee chains of gold, inlaid with silver.” If it were said in the singular, “I will make,” and not in the plural, “we will make,” I should pronounce absolutely and unhesitatingly that the Bridegroom is the speaker here also. But consider now whether these words would not be better and more fittingly attributed to His companions, who are, as it were, trying to console the Spouse with a promise that, as she cannot yet attain to the vision of Him for Whose presence she pines, they will make for her beautiful and costly chains, as ornaments for her ears. The reason why she is especially promised ear-pendants is, as I think, because “faith cometh by hearing.” It also reminds us that as long as we walk by faith and not by sight, it is more important and necessary to exercise the ear in listening to instruction than the eye in contemplation. For it is useless to strain the sight if the heart be not purified by faith, since it is only to the clean of heart that the vision of God is promised. Hence it is written “purifying their hearts by faith.” Therefore, inasmuch as “faith cometh by hearing,” and by faith the purification of the sight, rightly do the companions of the Bridegroom apply themselves particularly to the task of adorning the ears of the Spouse. For reason itself teaches us that hearing is a preparation for vision. “Thou, O Spouse of Christ,” we may fancy them saying, “art longing impatiently to contemplate thy Beloved in His glory. But this happiness is reserved for the other life. Meantime we will present thee with ornaments for thine ears, which shall be a consolation to thee whilst thou art waiting, and a preparation for the favour thou hast solicited.” Or they may be supposed to address her in the words of the Psalmist, “ ‘Hearken, O daughter, and see.’ Thou dost desire to see, but first it is necessary to hearken. Hearing is the way to sight. Hearken, then, ‘and incline thine ear,’ for the ornaments which we make for thee, that through the obedience of faith thou may attain to the glory of vision. To thy hearing we will ‘give joy and gladness.’ But to grant thee the satisfaction of sight, wherein consist the perfection of happiness and the fulfilment of thy desires, belongs not to us, but to Him Whom thy soul loveth. He will show Himself to thee that thy joy may be full. He ‘will fill thee with joy

with His Countenance.’But in the meantime, until thou attain to these ‘delights at His Right Hand even to the end,’ receive for thy consolation these ornaments from our hands.”

We must now consider, my brethren, what kind are the chains they offer her. “Chains of gold,” we read, “inlaid with silver.” By gold we are to understand the brightness of the Divinity and also the “wisdom which is from above.” It is therefore of such immaterial gold that the heavenly artificers, who are charged with this ministry, promise to make for the Spouse resplendent seals, as it were, of truth, and to fit them on the internal ears of her soul. This, as I take it, means nothing else than that they purpose to devise certain spiritual representations, by means of which they will present to the view of the soul, whilst she is engaged in contemplation, the purest images of the Divine Wisdom; in order that she may be able to see, at least “through a glass in a dark manner,” Him Whom it is not yet given her to behold face to face. These things, which I speak of, are altogether divine, and absolutely unintelligible except to those who have experienced them. For without the experience it is impossible to understand how it is that, whilst we are still in this body of corruption and walking by faith, with the glory of the Divinity still veiled from our view, the contemplation of pure truth nevertheless presumes to exercise its functions, at least in part and occasionally; so that each of us, on whom God has bestowed this extraordinary favour, may boldly say with the Apostle, “Now I know in part,” and “We know in part and we prophesy in part.” But whenever the soul, transported out of herself, is thus granted a clearer vision of the Divine Majesty, yet only for a moment and with the velocity, so to speak, of the lightning flash, there are suddenly presented to her imagination, from what source I know not, certain images of inferior objects, which admirably help and harmonise with the higher impression of the Divinity. These imaginative representations are intended, no doubt, both to temper the excessive splendour of the Light Uncreated and to facilitate its communication; for they intercept that most pure and dazzling ray of Divine Truth, like clouds before the face of the sun, render it more tolerable to the soul, and more capable of being transmitted to whomsoever we please. In my opinion, they are formed in our minds by the inspirations of holy angels, just as evil imaginations are unquestionably suggested by the wicked spirits.

And perhaps we have here that darksome mirror through which, as you have read, the Apostle gazed, and which is fashioned, so it seems, by angelic hands out of such pure and beautiful images. Thus we may ascribe to God that representation of spiritual truth which in itself is quite distinct from any phantasy

of corporeal properties, whilst we attribute to the ministry of angels all the splendid imagery with which it appears surrounded and clothed. In a different reading of the same text this seems to be more clearly indicated. According to that version the companions of the Bridegroom say, “We, the artificers, will make for thee images of gold, with distinctions or ornaments of silver.” The phrases, “inlaid with silver” and “with ornaments of silver” do not differ in meaning. To my mind this appears to signify that not only do the holy angels form within us, by suggestion, the imaginative representations referred to, but they even supply us with suitable words to express what they have enabled us to conceive; so that our ideas, dressed out in apt and becoming language, may be comprehended by our hearers with greater ease and pleasure. But you may object and say to me, “What is there in common between silver and language?” Well, the Psalmist shall give you the answer: “The words of the Lord,” he says, “are pure words, as silver tried by the fire.” It is in this sense, then, that the ministering spirits of heaven make for the Spouse, whilst she sojourns upon earth, “chains of gold, inlaid with silver.”

But observe, my brethren, how the Spouse asks one thing and obtains another. She longs for the repose of contemplation, only to have enjoined on her the laborious office of preaching. She thirsts for her Bridegroom’s presence, and is charged with the anxious duty of bringing forth and nourishing children for Him. Nor is this the only occasion she has been so treated. Once before, as I recollect, she met with a similar rebuff. She was sighing for the embraces and the kisses of her Beloved, but received the answer, “For thy breasts are better than wine,” by which she was reminded of her motherhood, and of the duty of suckling her little ones and fostering her children. Perhaps you will discover for yourselves further instances in other verses of this Canticle, if you are willing to seek them out. Do we not find the same thing prefigured of old in the history of the holy patriarch Jacob, when he was defrauded of the long expected and eagerly desired embraces of her whom he loved, the fruitful and blear-eyed Lia being substituted, without his knowledge or consent, for the beautiful but barren Rachel? In the same way here, the Spouse, desiring to know and asking where her Beloved pastures and reposes in the noonday, instead of the information solicited, receives “chains of gold, inlaid with silver,” that is, wisdom and eloquence, doubtless for the office of preaching.

We learn from this, my brethren, that the kisses of divine contemplation must be often interrupted for the purpose of giving suck to the little ones, and that no one ought to live for himself alone, but all for all. Woe to those who have

received the capacity for conceiving worthy sentiments of God and fittingly expressing them, if they look upon religion as a source of gain, if they make subservient to vainglory the talents entrusted to them to be employed in the service of their Master, if they are high-minded and unwilling to condescend to the humble! Let them fear lest what the Lord says by the mouth of the Prophet Osee should apply to themselves, “I gave them My gold and My silver; but they have used My gold and My silver in the service of Baal.” Listen now to the answer which the Spouse makes on receiving thus a reproof from her Bridegroom and a promise from His companions. She is neither angered by the one nor elated by the other, but behaves in accordance with what is written, “Rebuke a wise man and he will love thee,” and, with reference to gifts and promises, “The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things.” That she regulated her conduct by these counsels will appear from her reply. But, with your leave, I shall make that the text of another sermon. Meantime, let what has been said excite us to glorify the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XLII

ON SUBMISSION TO CORRECTION, AND THE TWO KINDS OF HUMILITY

"While the King was at His repose, my spikenard sent forth the odours thereof."

"While the King was at His repose, my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof." These, my brethren, are the words of the Spouse, the discussion of which I postponed until to-day. This is the answer she made when rebuked by her Bridegroom. Yet it is addressed, not to Him, but to His companions, as you may clearly see from the words themselves. For she does not say, speaking in the second person, "While Thou, O King, wast at Thy repose"; but, "While the King was at His repose," which makes it evident that she is speaking, not to Him, but only of Him. We may suppose, then, that the Bridegroom, after reprimanding and humbling the Spouse, as we have seen, perceiving her extreme confusion from the blush which mantled her cheeks, withdrew from the company, in order to give her an opportunity of speaking her mind freely in His absence, and, in case she should pass from excessive boldness to excessive timidity and depression of mind, as commonly happens, that she might receive consolation and encouragement from the charity of His companions. Yet He did not neglect to comfort her Himself as far as He judged it necessary at the time. For to make it manifest how pleasing she was to Him, even whilst He corrected her, inasmuch as she bore that correction patiently and in the proper spirit, He could not leave her until He broke forth in praise of her—out of the abundant love, no doubt, with which His Heart was filled—and spoke in admiration of her beautiful cheeks and neck. Therefore, His companions also, who have remained with her, address her in words of gracious kindness and offer her presents, knowing this to be the will of their Lord. Hence, it is to them that she directs her answer. Such, I think, is the literal sense and the sequence of our present text.

But before proceeding to extract the kernel of spiritual truth from this shell of literal meaning, I wish to make one brief remark. Happy the superior whose

reprimands are received in that spirit of humble submission of which we have here so perfect a model! Would to God there was no necessity for reprimands at all! That would be better still. But since “in many things we all offend,” it is not permitted me to keep silence, having an obligation in virtue of my office, and a still more urgent impulse from fraternal charity, to reprove transgressors. But if I administer a reproof and so do my part, and if that reproof, proceeding from me, instead of accomplishing its purpose, and correcting the fault to which it was applied, should return to me empty, like a dart which impinges on a hard substance and rebounds, what think you, my brethren, shall be then my feelings? Shall I not be filled with grief and anguish? And to borrow something from the words of my master, St. Paul, since my own wisdom suffices me not, “I am straitened between two and what I shall choose I know not,” whether to approve of my action in making the correction, as being only what I was bound to do; or to repent of it, because it has not succeeded according to my desires and expectations. It was my design to slay an enemy and to deliver a brother. But so far from accomplishing this, my zeal has produced just the contrary effect. For it has wounded my brother’s soul and increased his guilt by adding contempt of authority to his original fault. “The house of Israel,” says the Lord through His Prophet Ezechiel, “will not hearken to thee because they will not hearken to Me.” See now, my brother, what is the Majesty which thou hast treated with contempt. Do not imagine thou art despising only me. The Lord has spoken it, and what He said to Israel by His Prophet, He repeated with His own Lips to His apostles, in the words, “He that despiseth you despiseth Me.” I am not indeed a prophet, nor am I an apostle. Nevertheless, I dare to say it, I hold the office and discharge the duties of both a prophet and an apostle. I am burdened with the cares and responsibilities of those who are far beyond me by the merit of their lives. Although it be to my own great confusion, although it be to my own awful danger, although I cannot pretend to rival the Lawgiver’s virtue or to equal him in grace, still I sit on the chair of Moses. What then? Is that chair less deserving of respect and submission because it is occupied by one unworthy? Surely not. Even if it were Scribes and Pharisees that sat on it we have still the command of Christ: “What they say, do ye.”

As a rule, in such cases, impatience is added to contempt. Not only does the person reprimanded refuse to correct his fault, but he even manifests anger against the superior who has reproved him, like the frenzied patient who repels the hand of the physician. Strange perversity! He is angry with the friend who comes to heal, but shows no indignation with the enemy who has hurt him! For

there is an enemy who with his arrows “shoots in the dark the upright of heart,” and it is he who has now wounded thee even unto death. Dost thou feel no resentment against him? And art thou enraged against me, whose only desire is to make thee whole? “Be angry,” says the Psalmist, “and sin not.” If thy anger be directed against thy sin, not only dost thou not sin anew, but thy previous sin is blotted out. But now thou refusest the remedy and thy sin remains. Yes, thou addest sin to sin by giving way to unreasonable anger, and that is a sin of exceeding malice.

Sometimes this anger is accompanied with impudence. The person who is reproved, not satisfied with showing resentment against his superior, goes so far as to defend impudently the fault for which he has been corrected. The man who acts thus has evidently become reckless and lost to shame. It is of such that the Lord said by the Prophet Jeremias, “Thou hadst a harlot’s forehead, thou wouldst not blush,” and by Ezechiel, “My jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will cease and be angry no more.” The very sound of these words makes me tremble. Do you not perceive from them, my brethren, how dangerous, how horrible, how dreadful a thing it is to attempt to justify one’s own sin? In another place He says, “Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise.” Therefore, if the jealousy and anger of God have abandoned thee, so has His love. One who is deemed unworthy of His chastisement, will certainly be considered undeserving of His love. “Let us have pity on the wicked,” He says, “but he will not learn to do justice.” Far from me be such pity! Such pity is more to be dreaded than the fiercest anger, since it blocks up against the sinner the path to justification. It were much better, according to the advice of the Psalmist, to “embrace discipline, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and you perish from the just way.” I pray thee, O Father of mercies, to exercise Thy anger against me, only let it be the anger wherewith Thou dost correct the sinner, not that by which Thou shuttest him out eternally from the way of justice. The first kind of anger visits us in love, of which it is the offspring; but the second is fostered and concealed under a dissimulation that should inspire us with terror. It is not, therefore, when I do not feel Thy wrath, but when I groan beneath its weight, that I ought to be most confident of Thy favour; for “when Thou art angry Thou wilt remember mercy.” “Thou wast a merciful God to them,” said the Psalmist, “and taking vengeance on all their inventions.” He is speaking of Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, whose names he had just mentioned. And notice how he calls it a mercy that God did not spare them for their transgressions. And wilt thou, my brother, put away from thee for ever this mercy, by attempting to justify thy sin and resenting correction? Is not

that the same as calling evil good and good evil? Will not this detestable impudence gradually lead to impenitence, the mother of despair? For how can one repent of that which he believes to be good? The Prophet denounces woe against them who thus confound good with evil. And that woe is eternal. There is a great difference between him who is “tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured,” and the man who, of his own will and choice, pursues evil as good, and in a state of fatal security, hastens to death as if he were going to life. In the case of persons of the latter class, I confess that I sometimes could have wished I had dissembled and kept silence about the faults I observed them committing, instead of administering correction which they have made the occasion of such utter ruin.

You will tell me, perhaps, that I have the merit of my good action, even though it has failed to benefit the transgressor; that by discharging my duty I have delivered, at least, my own soul from sin; that “I am innocent of the blood of this man,” whom I have warned and exhorted, that he might turn aside from his evil ways and live. But no matter how you multiply such motives for comfort, I refuse to be consoled whilst I see my child dying before my very eyes. As if forsooth I sought my own deliverance in that reprehension and not rather his! What mother could restrain her tears even though conscious that she had spared no pains or trouble to save her infant, if, nevertheless, she now sees herself defeated, and all her efforts unavailing, and the little one already at the point of death? And if her tears are allowed to flow unchecked for the loss of a temporal life, surely I may give myself up to “lamentation and great mourning” over the eternal death of a son, even though my conscience can reproach me with no negligence in his regard. On the other hand, you see, my brethren, from how much misery that religious saves both himself and his superior, who, when reprimanded, answers with meekness, confesses with humility, submits with patience, and obeys with modest simplicity. To one like this, I acknowledge myself a debtor in everything. I am willing to be the servant and slave of such a soul, as of my Lord’s most worthy Spouse, who can say with all truth, “While the King was at His repose, my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof.”

Humility, my brethren, exhales a good odour, which, ascending up from this valley of tears, spreads itself around in every direction, and even perfumes the royal bedchamber with its sweet fragrance. Now, spikenard is a lowly plant; moreover, they who make it their business to study carefully the virtues and properties of herbs, declare it to be of a warm nature. Therefore it seems to me that it can be taken here very fittingly as symbolising the virtue of humility, but

only that humility which is heated with the fervour of holy love. The reason of this distinction is that there is a humility which truth begets in us, and which is without warmth; and a humility which is produced and inflamed by charity. The former is resident in the intellect; the latter has its seat in the affections of the will. Thus, if a man considers himself interiorly by the light of truth, without any dissimulation, and pronounces upon himself an unbiassed judgment, I have no doubt he will be humbled, even in his own eyes, and lowered in his own estimation, although he may not yet be willing to lose the esteem of others. He will consequently have humility, but so far only as the effect of truth, not from the infusion of charity. For were he not merely enlightened by the splendour of that truth which gives him a real and salutary knowledge of himself, but also possessed with the love of it, he doubtless would desire, as far as is proper, that others should have the same opinion of him which he has himself and which he knows in his heart to be the truth. I say advisedly, as far as is proper, because, generally speaking, it is not expedient that others know as much about us as we know ourselves. Both the love of truth and the truth of love forbid us to desire the publication of facts the knowledge of which would injure our neighbour. On the other hand, he who, from purely selfish motives, keeps locked up in his own mind the verdict of truth upon himself, makes it plain to all how little he loves the truth, since he is thus ready to sacrifice it to personal honour or temporal gain.

You observe then, my brethren, that a man may have a really humble opinion of himself, and yet be unwilling to “consent to the humble,” as the Apostle says. For these two things are quite distinct; the former coming from the light of truth, the latter from the grace of charity. The former results by necessity, the latter is the production of free-will. Of the Saviour we are told that “He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant,” and giving us the form and pattern of humility. “He emptied Himself” as “He humbled Himself,” not by any necessity of truth and judgment, but from charity to us. He had the power to exhibit Himself as vile and contemptible, but He certainly could not so repute Himself, since He knew Himself as He truly was. His humility therefore had its source in His Will, not in His Intellect. He made Himself appear other than He recognised Himself to be, freely choosing to be esteemed the least, whilst fully conscious that He was the greatest. Then He tells us, “Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.” Notice how He says “humble of heart,” that is, “humble in the affection of My Heart and by the choice of My Will.” So He denies the necessity of His humility, by ascribing it to His Will. For in this He was not like you and

me, who find ourselves in very truth deserving of contempt and dishonour, worthy of all abasement and subjection, worthy even of severe chastisement and hard stripes. Yet He submitted to all these things, “because it was His own will,” and because He was “humble of heart.” That is to say, He was humble with that humility which is embraced with the heart’s affection, not with that which results of necessity from the knowledge of the truth.

It is for this reason, my brethren, I said a while ago that this kind of voluntary humility is produced in our souls, not by the constraining evidence of truth, but rather by the infusion of love, because it belongs to the heart, to the will, and to the affections. Whether I am right in assigning it to such a source, I leave it to you to judge. It is also for you to consider and decide whether I have correctly attributed the same kind of humility to the Saviour, Who, as is certain, “emptied Himself” through charity; through charity made Himself “a little less than the angels”; through charity was subject to His parents; through charity stooped to receive baptism at the hands of John; through charity submitted to the infirmities of the flesh; and finally, it was through charity that He became obedient unto death, even unto the shameful death of the cross. Another question awaiting your determination is whether I am right in supposing that this humility, all aglow with the fervour of charity, is here typified by spikenard, an herb whose nature is said to be as warm as its appearance is contemptible. And if you agree with me in all these questions (as indeed you cannot help doing, since you cannot withhold assent from evidence so clear) then if you feel humbled in your own consciences with that constrained humility, which truth, which “searcheth the heart and the reins,” produces in the mind of a reflective soul, exert your wills and make a virtue of necessity; because there can be no virtue without the concurrence of the will. You will do this by not desiring to appear to others different from what you appear interiorly to your own hearts. Otherwise you have good reason to fear lest what you read in the Psalmist should apply to yourselves: “For in His sight he hath done deceitfully, that his iniquity may be found unto hatred,” and in Proverbs, “Diverse weights and diverse measures, both are abominable before God.” For does not he, who wishes to appear better than he knows himself to be, incur the guilt of “doing deceitfully” and using “diverse weights and diverse measures”? He depreciates himself in the secret chamber of his own judgment, having weighed his worth in the scales of truth; yet exteriorly he pretends to be of higher value, and sells himself as possessing greater weight than he finds registered in the balance of conscience. Fear the All-seeing Judge, my brethren, and never be guilty of so wicked a crime as to lift

yourselves up with your wills whilst you feel yourselves being pressed down by truth. For that would be sinning against the light. It would be resisting God. Rather acquiesce in the divine judgment, and subject your wills to reason, and that not only with docility, but even with devotion. Say to yourselves with the Psalmist, “Shall not my soul be subject to God?”

But it is not enough to be subject to God, unless you are willing to “be subject to every human creature for God’s sake, whether it be to” the abbot, “as excelling,” or to the prior, as appointed by him. I will go further and exhort you to be subject to your equals, yea, even to your inferiors; “for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice.” Do thou, then, my brother, if thou desirest to be perfect in justice, “with honour prevent” him that is less, defer to thy inferiors, place thyself beneath thy juniors. By acting thus, thou also wilt deserve to say with the Spouse, “My spikenard sent forth the odour thereof.” For thy devotion is a good odour, a good odour, too, is thy fair fame, which reaches and edifies all, so that in every place thou art “the good odour of Christ,” regarded by all with love and veneration. He who is humble, not in the free affection of his will, but merely as the effect of the compelling power of truth, cannot exercise the same influence. Such a one keeps his humility altogether to himself; he does not suffer it to escape that it may spread itself abroad and perfume his surroundings. In fact, it would be better to say that humility of this kind has no odour, because it has no charity or devotion, as being the product of necessity rather that the result of willing choice. But the humility of the Spouse (which alone is symbolised by spikenard) glowing with charity, enlivened with devotion, redolent of good fame, scatters its fragrance on every side. It has the properties of voluntariness, constancy, and fertility, and its odour can be extinguished by neither praise nor blame. The Spouse has heard from her Bridegroom the eulogy, “Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove’s”; she has also received a promise of ornaments of gold; and nevertheless she answers with humility. And the more she is honoured and praised, the more does she humble herself in all things. She does not glory in her merits; nor does she forget her lowliness whilst she hears herself commended, but rather humbly proclaims it under the symbol of spikenard. It is indeed as if she spoke in the words of the Virgin Mary, “I am conscious to myself of nothing that could deserve so great a condescension, beyond the fact that the Lord ‘hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.’ ” For what else can be the meaning of the words, “my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof,” if not “my humility has been pleasing to God”? As if she should say, “It is not by the merit of wisdom I have won the divine favour, nor by the nobility of blood, nor

yet by beauty of person, for I make no pretension to such advantages; it is simply because my humility, the sole good quality I can claim to possess, ‘sent forth the odour thereof.’ ” That is to say, its usual, characteristic odour. For it is usual with humility to be acceptable to God; as it is usual with Him, and, as it were, His custom, to look down with favour upon the humble from His “high and elevated throne.” And therefore, “while the King was at His repose,” the odour of humility penetrated even to His bedchamber. “Who is as the Lord our God,” cries out the Psalmist, “Who dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth?”

Therefore, “while the King was at His repose,” the spikenard of His Spouse gave forth its odour. The King takes His repose on the Bosom of His Father, because the Son is always in the Father. And doubt not, my brethren, that He will show Himself a gracious Monarch, since He reposes everlastingly on the bed, so to speak, of the Father’s benignity. It is only natural that the cry of the humble should mount up to Him Whose home is in the very Well-Spring of piety, to Whom sweetness is essential, to Whom goodness is substantial, or rather, consubstantial, Whose whole Being is so wholly from the Father, that trembling humility need suspect in His royal Majesty the presence of nothing that is not paternal. Besides, we have the pledge, “By reason of the misery of the needy, and the groans of the poor, now will I arise, saith the Lord.” The Spouse, consequently, well aware of this promise, as being one of His household and especially beloved, has no fears of being excluded from her Bridegroom’s favour on account of her poverty of merit, because she places all her hope in her humility. But as she is still mindful of His sharp reproof, she does not now venture to call Him her Bridegroom or her Beloved, but less familiarly refers to Him as the King. Nevertheless, whilst she thus acknowledges the immensity of His elevation above her, her humility preserves its simple trust.

This text, which I have been discussing, is particularly applicable to the primitive Church. Call to mind those days following upon the Ascension of the Lord to the place which was His from eternity, where He sits in Majesty at the Father’s Right Hand, yet, at the same time, reposes in tranquillity on that ancient, noble, most glorious Couch of His Bosom. Call to mind, I say, those days when the disciples were gathered together in the upper chamber, “persevering with one mind in prayer, with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.” Does it not seem to you, my brethren, that then especially, the spikenard of the young and tremulous Spouse “sent forth the odour thereof”? And when “suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a

mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting," could not the same Spouse, still tender, weak, and needy, say with all confidence, "while the King was at His repose, my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof"? It certainly was made clear to all who were present in that upper chamber, how pleasing and acceptable was the odour sent up by her humility, from the multitude and magnificence of the gifts wherewith it was immediately rewarded. Nor did she prove ungrateful for so great a benefit. For hear how, being instantly filled with holy love, she prepares to suffer all things for the sake of her Divine Benefactor. "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me," she exclaims, "He shall abide between my breasts."

My weakness, brethren, which you well know, will not suffer me to proceed. So I shall conclude with this one remark. The Spouse here declares herself ready, for the love of her Bridegroom, to endure the bitterness of tribulation, signified by the bundle of myrrh. The full exposition of this verse you shall have at another time; on condition, however, that by your prayers you obtain for me the light of the Holy Ghost. For He alone can enable us to understand the words of the Spouse, since it was He Who inspired them, and made them such as He knew would most fittingly express the praises of Him Whose Spirit He is, the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XLIII

ON THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

"A little bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me, He shall abide between my breasts."

"A little bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me, He shall abide between my breasts." Before she called Him "the King," here He is her "Beloved"; then He took His repose on His own royal Couch of the Father's Bosom, now He abides between her breasts. Oh, how great, my brethren, must be this virtue of humility, seeing that it can so easily attract and draw down to itself even the Divine Majesty! How quickly the name expressive of reverence has been exchanged for the name inspired by love! With what celerity has He drawn nigh, Who a while since was so far remote! "A little bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me." Myrrh, because of its bitterness, is used to denote the poignancy and painfulness of tribulation. The Spouse, then, foreseeing that she shall be called upon to suffer for the sake of her Beloved, speaks these words with a feeling of joy; for she hopes to be able, with His help, to endure every trial with fortitude. Hence we read, "They went from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." And she calls her Bridegroom, not a large bundle (fascis) but "a little bundle" (fasciculus) to signify that she esteems as light and little all labours and afflictions undergone for His love. Truly He is but a little bundle, since for our sakes He was born as a little Child. He is also a little bundle pressing but lightly upon us, because "the sufferings of this time," which He requires us to endure, "are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us." And the Apostle adds, "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." Consequently, He Who is to us now as a little bundle of myrrh, on account of the sacrifices demanded by His service, shall one day become for us an immensity of glory. How could He be anything but a little bundle, Whose

“yoke is sweet” and “Whose burden is light”? Not that His burden is light in itself—for no light thing is the smarting sense of suffering, no light thing is the bitterness of death—but it becomes light to him who loves. Hence the Spouse does not say absolutely “a little bundle of myrrh is my Beloved,” but “a little bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me,” because her charity made His burden light. Hence also she calls Him her “Beloved,” in order to indicate that the power of love overcomes the bitterness of all tribulation, and that “love is strong as death.” And to show that she glories not in herself, but in the Lord, and that she looks not to her own virtue, but to the help of God for constancy under trial, she tells us that He will abide between her breasts. Therefore, in another place, she sings to Him with confidence, “Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me.”

In a preceding sermon, as I remember, I interpreted these breasts to mean, the one (which I named Congratulation) a facility for sympathising with joy, the other (called Compassion) a readiness to sympathise with grief, so that the Spouse might appear as fulfilling the injunction of St. Paul, where he says, “Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep.” But inasmuch as she is placed between the extremes of prosperity and adversity, and (as she is well aware) dangers are not wanting on either side, therefore she desires to have Him also abiding between these breasts of her, so that, protected against every enemy by His unceasing help, she may neither be unduly lifted up by consolation, not too much cast down by affliction. You, my brethren, if you be wise, will imitate her prudence, and never allow this precious little bundle of myrrh to be taken from the centre of your hearts, even for the space of a single hour; but you will keep constantly before your minds and ponder in assiduous meditation all that Christ suffered for you, so that, like the Spouse, you also may be able to say, “A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me, He shall abide between my breasts.”

As for me, my brethren, from the very beginning of my conversion to God, to make up for all the merits which I knew myself to lack, I applied myself with diligence to collect together, and to bind into a bundle, and to place between my breasts, all the cares and sorrows which my Lord had to endure; in the first place the sufferings of His childhood years; then the labours He underwent in preaching, the fatigue of His journeyings, His watchings in prayer, His temptations and fastings, His tears of compassion, the traps laid for Him in His speech; and finally, His perils from false brethren, the revilings, the spittings, the blows, the mockeries, the reproaches, the nails, and all the other myrrhic plants,

which, as you know, are plentifully growing for our healing in the evangelical forest. But amongst so many twigs of this odoriferous shrub, I must not omit to mention that other myrrh which He drank on the cross, and that wherewith He was embalmed for burial. The first of these signified His taking upon Himself the bitterness of my sins; the second was meant as a pledge of the future resurrection of my body. As long as I live, I will "publish the memory of the abundance of (this) sweetness." Thy mercies, O Lord, "I will never forget, for by them Thou hast given me life."

These, my brethren, are the tender mercies which holy David in times past implored with tears. "Let Thy tender mercies come unto me," he entreats, "and I shall live" Other saints, also, of the Old Dispensation, sighed for the same, knowing that the "mercies of the Lord are many." How "many kings and prophets have desired to see and have not seen" the graces bestowed upon us! They have laboured and we "have entered into their labours." I have gathered the myrrh which they have planted. For me this little bundle has been reserved. No man shall take it away from me, for it shall abide between my breasts. I have said to myself that wisdom consists in meditating on these sufferings of my Saviour. In them I have placed the perfection of justice, the fulness of knowledge, the riches of salvation, the abundance of merits. From them I sometimes drink a draught of salutary bitterness, and sometimes, again, I extract therefrom the soothing oil of consolation. It is they that support me in adversity and sober me in success; and as I journey along the royal but rugged heavenward way, amid the joys and sorrows of this mortal life, it is they that keep me safe from hurt, defending me against the enemies that lurk on every side. They unite me in the bonds of loving friendship to the Eternal Judge of the universe, by representing to me as meek and humble Him in Whose presence the very powers of heaven quake with fear, by showing not only as placable, but even as imitable, Him Who is inaccessible to the celestial principalities, and "terrible with the kings of the earth." Therefore, as you yourselves can bear witness, I have these mysteries of divine suffering often in my mouth, and God can bear me witness that they never leave my heart. How redolent of the same are all my writings, I have no need to mention. And whilst I live here below my only philosophy shall be "to know Jesus and Him Crucified," for that is the most sublime of all. I ask not, like the Spouse, where He lieth in the mid-day, since I have the happiness of knowing that He allows me to embrace Him, yea, even abides between my breasts. Nor need I inquire where He feedeth at noon, because I behold Him dying on the cross to save me. More sublime is the

privilege solicited by the Spouse, but that bestowed on me has in it more of sweetness. What she requires is the bread of the strong, whilst I, as a mother, have obtained, not bread, but milk, the milk which nourishes the hearts of the little ones, which fills and expands the maternal breasts. Therefore “He shall abide between my breasts.”

I counsel you, also, my dearest brethren, to collect for yourselves so sweet a little bundle, to place it in the very centre of your hearts, and with it to fortify the entrance thereof against every hostile incursion. So shall the Beloved abide between your breasts, as well. Keep this precious bundle, not behind or upon your backs, but ever before your eyes; otherwise, whilst you bear its burden, you cannot enjoy its fragrance; you feel its weight upon you, but derive no support from its perfume. Remember that the bundle is the Beloved Himself, Whom Simeon took into his arms, Whom Mary bore in her womb, nursed on her lap, and placed as a Bridegroom between her breasts; and, I may add, Who came as the Word of the Lord to the Prophet Zachary and others. We may also believe that Joseph, Mary’s husband, often fondled Him upon his knee. Consider now that all these kept Him before them rather than behind. Do you, therefore, follow their example, and do likewise. For, if you hold before your eyes Him Whom you carry as a little bundle of myrrh, you surely will not forget all He suffered for your sakes; and the memory of that will make your own burdens lighter, through the grace of Him, the Bridegroom of the Church, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES: VOLUME 2

ST. BERNARD'S SERMONS ON THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

SERMON XLIV

ON THE MYSTICAL OIL AND WINE

"A cluster of Cyprus is my Love to me in the vineyard of Engaddi."

"A CLUSTER of Cyprus is my Love to me." If the Bride loves her Bridegroom in the bitterness of the myrrh, how much more in the sweetness of the cyprus-cluster? My Lord Jesus Christ, then, is as myrrh to me in His death, and in His resurrection as a cluster of delicious grapes. In this way He has made Himself for me a most salutary draught, and has given me for my drink "tears in measure." He died "for our sins and rose again for our justification," to the end "that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice." Hence, my brethren, if you have wept over your sins, you have thereby drunk the pungent draught of myrrh; but its bitterness has been changed for you into the wine which "cheereth the heart of man," if you are now established in the hope of a more perfect life. And perhaps it was thus, as a symbol of penance, that the Saviour was offered myrrh upon the cross. He refused to drink it, however, to teach us that the cup He now thirsted for was the bliss of a glorious resurrection. You also, as I have said, whilst you enjoy the wine of gladness after the bitter potion of affliction, may confidently exclaim, "A cluster of cyprus is my Love to me in the vineyards of Engaddi." This word "Engaddi" has a manifold signification. But the various senses complete each other, and can be combined in one adequate interpretation. It may mean "the Fountain of the Kid," or "the Baptism of the Gentiles," and thus manifestly has reference to the tears of penitence; another meaning is "the Eye for Temptation." Now, the eye that sheds the tears, the same it is that discovers the temptations, which, in truth, are never wanting to the life of man upon earth. For the gentile peoples, who walked in darkness, were unable to detect the snares of the tempter, and consequently to avoid them, until, through the grace of Him Who giveth sight to the blind, they were endowed with the vision of faith, until they entered the Church which has "the eye for temptation," until they submitted themselves for instruction to persons of virtuous life, who, enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and taught by their own experience, can

truthfully say with St. Paul that they are not ignorant of Satan's deceits and devices.

We are told that Engaddi produces balsam-bearing shrubs, which the natives cultivate and dress after the manner of vines. And perhaps it is to these the Spouse refers when she speaks of the vineyards of Engaddi. For otherwise what would be the meaning of a "cluster of Cyprus in the vineyards of Engaddi"? Who ever thought of carrying clusters of grapes from one vineyard to another? It is only to places, which produce no wine that wine is wont to be brought. Therefore, in the mystical sense, we are to understand by the vineyards of Engaddi the different branches of the Catholic Church, which abounds in the spirit of mildness, as in the sweetness of balsam, wherewith she lovingly fosters the tenderness of such as are still but little ones in Christ, and soothes the sufferings of her penitents. And if any brother should have the misfortune to fall into sin, the priests of the Church, imitating their mother's example, shall take care to "instruct such a one in the (same) spirit of mildness, considering themselves, lest they also be tempted." It is to typify this spiritual balsam that the Church is accustomed to anoint with material oil the bodies of all whom she admits to baptism.

But inasmuch as that poor man who "fell among robbers," and who was carried rather in the arms than on the beast of the Good Samaritan to the inn of the Church, had his wounds healed and his health restored not by means of oil alone, but through oil and wine; therefore the spiritual physician has need to provide himself with the wine of burning zeal as well as with the oil of mercy. For to correct the froward is quite as much a part of his duty as to encourage the pusillanimous. Thus, should he observe that the wounded man, that is, the brother who has committed sin, derives no benefit from the mild and loving exhortations addressed to him, but is rather abusing his patience and clemency and taking occasion therefrom to grow more remiss and to lull his conscience to sleep in greater security; he must desist from using the oil of gentle admonition, which has proved ineffectual, and apply the sharper remedy of the mordant wine. I mean to say, such obstinate transgressors have to be reproved and reprimanded with great severity. Even the rod of ecclesiastical censure ought to be wielded to chastise the contemner of authority, whenever the occasion requires and gentler methods are found unavailing. But whence is this wine to be obtained? For the vineyards of Engaddi yield only oil. We must seek it in Cyprus, in that island which abounds with wine, and wine of the very best quality. Thence must we carry off an immense cluster of grapes, such as that which was brought from the

Promised Land by the spies of Israel, hung upon a pole between two bearers, and thus presenting a most beautiful image of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who came to us preceded by the prophets and followed by the apostles. He, therefore, who obtains such a cluster, can say with all confidence, “A cluster of Cyprus is my Love to me in the vineyards of Engaddi.”

I have now said enough concerning the cluster. Let us next consider how the wine of holy zeal is to be pressed therefrom. When a man, who is himself but a sinner, sees another committing some fault, if he feels his heart overflow with charity as with oil of the sweetest balsam, and, instead of showing indignation, manifests towards the offending brother an affection of tender compassion, we know whence this kindness comes and you have already heard, though perhaps without due attention. I have said in a preceding discourse that it is from a consideration of ourselves we learn to be gentle with others. For in order to “instruct in the spirit of meekness” the brother who has been “overtaken in any fault,” it is necessary, according to the wise prescription of St. Paul, that “thou shouldst consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Indeed, is not this regard to self the very root of that fraternal charity enjoined in the law, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”? For it is quite certain that our love for our fellow-men has its source deep down amongst the most intimate and primordial feelings of the human heart, and that it is from the instinctive, natural affection wherewith each loves himself, as from a vivifying, soil-sprung sap, it draws the nourishment and energy by which, under the influence of heavenly grace, it is enabled to bring forth the fruits of piety, causing us to esteem it a duty not to deny to any of those who participate in our nature, I mean to any man, the good which, by natural necessity, we desire for ourselves; but rather to share it with all, freely and spontaneously, according to our capacity and the wants of our brethren, as if they were entitled to such communication by belonging to the same human family. From human nature, therefore, as it was in its sinlessness, is derived that balsam of sweet and delightful savour. And its presence should be revealed in the disposition, felt and made manifest, rather to pity than reproach the transgressor.

But sin has played havoc with our natural benignity, just as, in the words of the Wise Man, “Dying flies spoil the sweetness of the ointment.” And because we have not in ourselves wherewith to repair the damage done, by a most lamentable change we find ourselves fallen to that condition of which Holy Scripture truly says, “The imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone to evil from his youth.” Nothing good, therefore, but something evil is designated

by the youthfulness of that younger son who demands the sequestration of his own portion of the patrimony, and wants a division of the inheritance which would be more sweetly enjoyed in common, yea, who would have exclusive possession of that which communication does not diminish, but which is lost when divided. For it is written that “he wasted his substance living riotously” with evil companions. Who are these evil companions? It seems to me that by them, as by the “dying flies” which “spoil the ointment” of our innocence, we are to understand our carnal passions, against which Holy Scripture most wisely warns us, where it says, “Go not after thy lusts.” And very properly are the “flies” represented as “dying,” since “the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof.” Thus, by endeavouring to secure to ourselves the private and personal good of sensual gratification, we forfeit the enjoyment of the sweeter good which is social and communal. But how filthy and venomous must these flies of passion be, seeing that they can so destroy the original beauty of our nature, so torment our minds with cares and anxieties, so “spoil the sweetness of the ointment” of social love and good fellowship! Hence, in the Gospel, man is called the “younger son,” because having degraded his nature by following the lusts of his thoughtless youth, he lost all the vital sap of virile sobriety and prudence. As a consequence, his soul has been dried up and abandoned to bitterness, so that he now despises everyone except himself, “being without affection.”

Accordingly, from the very beginning of this his most unholy and most unhappy youth, “the imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone to evil,” and his fallen nature more inclined to anger than to pity. Indeed, it may be said that man has put off his nature completely, inasmuch as he is unwilling that other men should receive in their necessities the assistance which he would not have denied himself in his own. A man himself and a sinner, he nevertheless judges, despises, and scorns other men who are sinners, “not considering himself, lest he also be tempted.” From this deplorable condition, as I have already remarked, human nature will never of itself be able to rise, nor can it recover unaided the ointment of spontaneous benignity, the sweetness whereof has been spoiled by sin. But grace can accomplish what is impossible to nature. Whomsoever, therefore, the Holy Spirit by His unction deigns out of compassion to re-invest in his original and natural kindliness, he shall be restored forthwith to the integrity of his manhood, yea, shall receive from grace a perfection more sublime than ever belonged to his nature. For “He shall sanctify him in faith and meekness,” and shall give him not ointment only, but also balsam “in the

vineyards of Engaddi."

To me it seems evident that the "better gifts" flow from the "fountain of the kid," by being washed in which the kids are transformed into lambs, and sinners transferred from the left hand to the right, in order that "where sin abounded, grace might more abound." And you also, my brethren, do you not suppose that he may be regarded as reinstated in his manhood, who, having laid aside the ferocity of a worldly disposition and recovered, even with the added unguent of grace, the ointment of human gentleness, so utterly spoiled by the "dying flies" of carnal concupiscence, discovers now in the very human nature in which he participates, or rather which he is, the motive and the measure of the meekness to be exercised towards other men, and recoils in horror, as from the open jaws of a wild beast, from the bare thought not only of doing to any man the evil he would not have done to himself, but even of omitting to do to all the good he wishes done to himself? This, as I believe, is the source of the oil. But whence comes the wine? Unquestionably from the "cluster of Cyprus." For if you love the Lord Jesus with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with all your strength, can you possibly restrain your feelings when you behold Him exposed to insult and injury? No, surely not. Rather each one of you, carried away by the spirit of righteousness and the spirit of zeal, "like a mighty man that hath been surfeited with wine," and inflamed with the holy ardour of Phinees, shall say with the Psalmist, "My zeal hath made me pine away, because my enemies forgot Thy words," and with the Saviour, "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up." Fervent zeal, therefore, is this wine, pressed from the cluster of Cyprus; for an inebriating chalice is the love of Christ. "Our God," so we read, "is a consuming fire," and the Prophet Jeremias declares that "from above He hath sent fire into my bones," because he was all inflamed with divine charity. Having, then, the oil of meekness from the love of your neighbour, and the wine of zeal from your love of God, you may securely undertake to heal the wounds of the man who "fell among robbers," being fully qualified to act the part of the Good Samaritan. Securely also can you say with the Spouse, "A cluster of Cyprus is my Love to me in the vineyards of Engaddi." That is to say, "the zeal of justice is the love of my Beloved to me amidst the affections of fraternal piety."

Let so much suffice for the present. As often on other occasions, so now also my weakness obliges me to break off. You know yourselves, my brethren, how frequently I am thus compelled to interrupt my discourses and to reserve their completion for another day. But am I complaining? No, no! "I am ready for

scourges," knowing well that what I suffer is far less than my deserts. Let Him scourge me by all means, let Him scourge me, I repeat, as a wicked servant, provided only my stripes be accounted as merits. Perchance after punishment I may obtain mercy from Him Who can find in me no good to reward, the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XLV

ON THE TWOFOLD BEAUTY OF THE SOUL AND THE LANGUAGE EMPLOYED BETWEEN HERSELF AND HER BELOVED

“Behold thou art fair, O My love, behold thou art fair, thy eyes are as those of doves.

“Behold thou art fair, my Beloved, and comely.”

“Behold thou art fair, O My love, behold thou art fair, thy eyes are as those of doves.” How beautiful, my brethren, how admirable! Love is the cause of the Bride’s presumption, and the cause of the Bridegroom’s severity is also love. This is manifest from the event. For presumption has been followed by correction, correction by amendment, and now amendment obtains its reward. Dignity is put off, reverence is forgotten, the Master is gone, the Monarch has retired, only the Lover is present. Thus, wherever love reigns supreme, there is no room for pomp and ceremony. And just as of old Moses spoke to the Lord “as a man is wont to speak to his friend,” and the Lord replied to him, so here the Word Divine and the holy soul, like two intimates, converse familiarly together. Nor should this surprise us. For the same power of love binds them together in mutual affection and leads them to delight in each other’s company. Sweeter than honey, therefore, are the words that pass between them; the very glances they interchange are full of tenderest feeling and speak the language of holy love. The Bridegroom calls the Bride His love, He pronounces her fair and that with reiteration, whilst she, in her turn, addresses Him in the very same terms. Such repetition is not without meaning. It points to the intensity of their mutual love. Perhaps it also points to some mystical truth which we shall do well to investigate.

Now, it appears to me that the repetition of the epithet “fair” in my present text implies the existence of a twofold loveliness in the soul. Let us therefore inquire what this double beauty may be. Humility is beyond question one principle of spiritual beauty. I am not saying this of myself. The inspired

Psalmist has said the same before me. “Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop,” so he sang, “and I shall be cleansed.” Hyssop, which is a lowly herb valued for its medicinal properties, symbolises humility. It was by this virtue, then, that the Royal Prophet hoped to be purified after his terrible fall, and to recover the snowy whiteness of his former innocence. Even in a sinner, humility has doubtless wherewith to attract our love, but it can hardly excite our wonder: it is amiable without being admirable. But if he who has preserved his innocence should likewise show himself humble, will you not allow that such a one is adorned with two kinds of spiritual beauty? The Blessed Virgin Mary never soiled her first sanctity, yet was never otherwise than humble; and therefore “the King hath desired her beauty,” which resulted from this union of humility with innocence. So she sings in her canticle, “He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.” Therefore, “Blessed is he that keepeth his garments clean,” that is, the robes of innocence and simplicity, if yet he be careful to set them off with the ornament of humility. Certainly, the soul that is such shall hear herself addressed in the words, “Behold thou art fair, my beloved, behold thou art fair.” Lord Jesus, how I wish that Thou couldst say to this soul of mine, even once and without reiteration, “Behold thou art fair!” How I wish that Thou wouldst help me to maintain myself in humility! My first robe of innocence I have soiled by sinning. Therefore, I can only say, “I am Thy servant.” For I dare not presume to call myself Thy friend, unworthy as I am to hear Thee bearing repeated testimony to my beauty, and saying, “Behold thou art fair, O my love, behold thou art fair.” Well content should I feel wert Thou even once to call me fair. But what if this also should be beyond my desert? “I know what I will do.” Being but a slave myself, I will reverence her who is Thy beloved. A miserable wretch, full of deformity, I will occupy myself with admiring her multiplied beauties. I will exult and be glad at the sound of the Bridegroom’s voice, marvelling at its ravishing sweetness. Who knows but I may so find favour in the eyes of the Spouse, and be numbered for her sake amongst the friends of her Beloved? For “the friend of the Bridegroom, who standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth with joy because of the Bridegroom’s voice.” Behold, His voice is now sounding in the ears of His Spouse. Let us listen and be glad. The Bridegroom and the Bride are present to each other. They converse together. Let us stand by. Let no worldly cares, no allurements of the flesh be allowed to distract our attention from this sacred colloquy.

“Behold thou art fair, O my love,” says He, “behold thou art fair.” The first word here, “behold,” is expressive of admiration, the others of praise. And surely

she is well worthy of admiration, in whom not the loss but the preservation of sanctity furnished the motive of humility. Rightly, too, is she pronounced to be fair, as being adorned with the double beauty of humility and innocence. Such a combination is rarely found on earth, for either innocence is lost, or, where it is preserved, humility is excluded. Consequently she is truly blessed in whom both are found coexistent. She is proved to be innocent in that she is conscious to herself of nothing, and humble because she has willingly endured correction. What a contrast, my brethren, between this Spouse and ourselves! We can hardly bear to be reproved, even when we are guilty of grave offences; whereas she, although blameless, submits with humble patience to the bitterness of reproach. For surely there was nothing wrong in the desire she expressed to see her Bridegroom's glory. Rather it was deserving of praise. Nevertheless, on being reprimanded she does penance, and exclaims, "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me, He shall abide between my breasts." As if she should say, "It is enough for me. I wish to know nothing henceforth but 'Jesus and Him crucified.' " O admirable humility! She who never contracted the stain of sin assumes the disposition of a penitent! She who has done nothing needing to be atoned for, yet does not dispense herself from making atonement! You may ask, why she is rebuked if she has done no evil. My answer shall commend the providence and the prudence of the Bridegroom, so be attentive. Just as of old the Lord tried the obedience of Abraham, so now He puts to the test the humility of His Spouse. And as the Patriarch, after proving his obedience, heard addressed to him the words, "Now I know that thou fearest God," so the Bride receives here a similar testimony to her humility, though expressed in different words. For the encomium, "Behold thou art fair," is intended to signify something like this, "Now I know that thou art humble." And the compliment is repeated in order to indicate that the beauty of humility has been added to the glory of innocence. Thus the Bridegroom seems to say, "Now I know that thou art beautiful, not only by reason of My grace and love, but also through the merit of thine own humility. I do not now pronounce thee to be fair among women, or beautiful in thy cheeks or neck only, as I did before. But I proclaim thee beautiful, simply and absolutely, not relatively beautiful, not beautiful with qualification or distinction."

The Bridegroom goes on to say, "Thy eyes are as those of doves." This plainly is another commendation of the Bride's humility. For it is intended to reward the docility she showed when, having been corrected for her presumption in inquiring into things too sublime, she immediately descended to the lowliness

that became her, and said, “A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me.” There is surely a vast difference between the vision of glory which she asked for before and the bundle of myrrh which now contents her. Hence it is a sign of no ordinary humility to be willing to receive the latter grace instead of the former. It is by such acquiescence that she has earned the eulogy, “Thy eyes are as those of doves.” “Now,” we may fancy the Bridegroom saying to her, “now thou art not ‘walking in great matters nor in wonderful things above’ thee. Like the dove, thou art satisfied with what is lowly; and just as that most simple of birds builds her nest in the fissures of the rock, so dost thou abide in My Wounds, contemplating Me with thy dove-like eyes, at least in the mysteries of My Incarnation and Passion.”

But perhaps it is her spirituality rather than her simplicity that the Bridegroom wishes to commend by comparing her eyes to those of a dove, because we read in St. Matthew how the Holy Spirit once revealed Himself under the image of that bird. If anyone prefers to adopt this view, it will be necessary to connect our present text with the words of the Bridegroom’s companions, spoken a little before, wherein they promised to make for the Spouse “chains of gold inlaid with silver.” There is here no question of ornaments for the body, as I have already explained, but only of instruction for the ears of the mind. It is therefore possible that, her heart being more perfectly purified by the faith which comes from hearing, she has now the power to see what before was beyond her capacity. And since the gift of the golden chains appears thus to have improved her faculty of spiritual perception, she has been advanced in the Bridegroom’s favour. For, so far as He is concerned, He always takes special pleasure in the soul which has learned to contemplate Him in the spirit. Hence He is but adding to her other merits this progress in spiritual discernment when He declares to His Spouse, “Thy eyes are as those of doves.” “Regard Me no longer,” He seems to say, “according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, because ‘a Spirit before thy face is Christ the Lord.’ And thou hast now the capacity for such contemplation, inasmuch as ‘thy eyes are as those of doves.’ Before thou wert wanting in this higher faculty, and therefore it was that thou didst meet with repulse. But now since ‘thy eyes are as those of doves,’ that is to say, spiritual, thou art permitted to enjoy the spiritual vision of Me, not indeed in the fulness which thou hast solicited, but in a degree proportionate to thy present capacity. It is necessary that thou shouldst be led on gradually ‘from glory to glory.’ Therefore, exert to the utmost the faculty thou now possessest; when thou hast attained to greater power, a higher vision shall be granted thee.”

I do not suppose, my brethren—I am very far from supposing—that this spiritual vision of Christ is either common to all or of but little importance, although it is inferior to that which is reserved for the life to come. Its dignity can be estimated from the words which follow. The Spouse is now speaking, and she says in reply, “Behold Thou art fair, my Beloved, and comely.” You perceive, my brethren, how wonderfully she has been exalted, and to what lofty heights she has lifted her gaze, since she thus, as by incommunicable right, claims as her Beloved the Lord of the universe. You will take notice how she does not speak of Him simply as the Beloved, but calls Him “my Beloved,” as if wishing to assert her special prerogative. Assuredly that must be a noble vision which has raised the Spouse to such a degree of confidence and dignity that in the Lord of all she no longer recognises a Lord but a Lover. There is here, as I think, no need or use for material, sense-transmitted images of Christ’s Flesh or cross, or any other representations which belong to the weakness of His mortality. For there “is no beauty nor comeliness in Him,” comparatively, when so considered. When, therefore, the Spouse, after contemplating her Beloved in this vision, declares Him to be both beautiful and comely, she gives us to understand that He has manifested Himself to her in some more excellent and spiritual way. For to His Spouse, as of old to Moses, He speaks face to face; and to her, as to the Lawgiver, it is given to see God openly and not in signs and symbols. And just as He has revealed Himself to her contemplation, in a vision as sweet as it was sublime, so do her words describe Him. Her “eyes have seen the King in His beauty,” yet not as a King but as a Lover. Isaias “saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and elevated.” Another prophet also testifies that He even beheld Him face to face. Yet it seems to me that the Spouse has been more highly favoured than either, because to them He showed Himself as the Lord, whereas He appeared to her as a Bridegroom. “I saw the Lord,” writes Isaias, “sitting upon a throne, high and elevated, and His train filled the temple.” And Jacob exclaims, “I have seen God face to face, and my soul hath been saved.” But in the Prophet Malachy we read, “If I be a Master, where is My fear? saith the Lord of Hosts.” Hence the revelations vouchsafed the prophets always inspired them with terror, for where the Lord is there must be the fear of Him. For my part, then, were the choice given me, I would gladly and lovingly choose that vision of Him wherein He appears as a Bridegroom; because as charity is nobler than fear, so is this manifestation more excellent than the others. “Fear hath pain,” as you have read in St. John, “but perfect charity casteth out fear.” Surely, then, there is a very great difference between that vision where the Lord

appears “terrible in His counsels over the sons of men,” and that where He shows Himself “beautiful above the sons of men.” “Behold,” cries the Spouse on beholding Him in His character of Bridegroom, “behold Thou art fair, my Beloved, and comely.” There is nothing here indicative of terror, but every word is redolent of charity.

But perhaps “thoughts are arising in your hearts,” and you are asking yourselves in perplexity, “How is this? In what sense are we to understand that the Word Divine addresses words to the soul, and that she replies with words of her own so that she can hear His voice proclaiming her beautiful, and returns His salute immediately with the self-same eulogy? ‘How can this be done?’ We indeed employ words to speak, but not so He Who is Himself the Word of the Father. Neither can the soul make use of words unless she employs the corporeal mouth to fashion and utter them.” Such, my brethren, are the doubts which you may find suggested to your thoughts and not unreasonably. But remember that it is the Holy Spirit Who speaks, and that the words which He utters must be spiritually interpreted. Whenever, therefore, you either hear or read of the Word and the soul conversing together or holding communication by means of amorous looks, be on your guard against conceiving anything like an interchange of external words or glances, just as you would not suppose the two corporally present to each other. Listen, whilst I try to explain what thoughts such language should suggest to your minds. The Word is a Spirit and the soul is a spirit, and they both have their own spiritual tongues wherewith they converse together and manifest their presence to each other. The tongue of the Word is the grace of His condescension, whilst that of the soul is the fervour of her devotion. Hence, the soul which is indevout, as being tongueless and speechless, has no means of entering into conversation with the Word. Now, it is impossible for the soul not to hear, when the Word, wishing to speak to her, sets this spiritual tongue of His in motion; “for the Word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit.” Much less, on the other hand, can the Word fail to catch what is spoken by the soul, both because He is everywhere present, and also for the reason that the tongue of her devotion can never move at all, except under the impulse of His inspiring grace.

When, therefore, we are told that the Word speaks to the soul, saying to her, “Thou art fair,” and calling her His love, we must take the meaning to be that He gives her the grace to love and the confidence to presume that she is loved in return. And when she, on her side, is represented as addressing Him as her

Beloved and pronouncing Him comely, the sense is that without fraud or deceit she ascribes her love of Him and His love of her to His unmerited bounty, admiring His goodness and marvelling at His beauty. This beauty of the Bridegroom is nothing else than His love of the Bride, a love which is all the greater for that it is prevenient. Realising, therefore, that He was her Lover before He was her Beloved, she cries out from the inmost recesses of her soul, with all the tenderest affections of her heart, that her love for Him must be the more ardent and strong because of its having been anticipated. Thus, the speech of the Word is the infusion of His grace; the reply of the soul, admiration and thanksgiving. She loves Him the more, the more she sees herself outdone in loving. And she marvels the more, the more she sees herself prevented by His grace. Therefore, not content with having once pronounced Him "fair" she also proclaims Him "comely," intending by the addition to signify the perfection of His beauty.

Or perhaps by calling Him "fair and comely" she designs to teach us that the two Natures of Christ are endowed with a loveliness worthy of all admiration. His Divinity being beautiful by essence, His Humanity by grace. How beautiful Thou art to Thy angels, Lord Jesus, "in the Form of God," "in the day of Thy eternity," "begotten before the daystar in the splendours of the Saints," Thyself the "Splendour" and the "Figure" of the Father's Substance, the everlasting and unspotted "Brightness of Eternal Life"! Yet how beautiful dost Thou appear to us in the very laying aside of Thy immortal glory! For when Thou, Who art the Light Unfailing, didst strip Thyself of Thy natural rays, when Thou didst empty Thyself, "taking the form of a servant," then Thy loving-kindness became more clearly manifest, then Thy charity shone forth more brightly, then Thy grace was more lavishly poured out.

How brilliant a Star dost Thou arise for me "out of Jacob"! How bright a Flower comest Thou forth "from the root of Jesse"! How gladdening a Light hast Thou shone upon me out of darkness, the "Orient from on high"! How glorious, how stupendously grand dost Thou appear, even to the contemplation of the powers supernal, in Thy conception by the Holy Ghost, in Thy birth of the Virgin Mary, in the innocence of Thy life, in the purity and abundance of Thy doctrine, in the splendour of Thy miracles, in Thy revelation of heavenly secrets! How resplendent after Thy setting didst Thou rise from the heart of the earth, as the Divine Sun of Justice! How beautiful in the robe of Thy glorified Flesh didst Thou, the King of Glory, return to Thy throne on high! And as I ponder on these sacred mysteries, surely "all my bones shall say, Lord, who is like to Thee?"

You may suppose, then, my brethren, that the Spouse had been admiring those and similar glories in her Bridegroom when she exclaimed, “Behold Thou art fair, my Beloved, and comely.” Nor was her contemplation confined to the grandeurs of His Humanity. There can be no doubt that something of the beauty of the higher Nature, which escapes our vision and transcends our experience, was also revealed to her gaze. Hence by the repetition, “fair and comely,” she desires to commend the loveliness of the two Natures. And hear how she exults at the sight and the salutation of her Beloved, and sings to Him a nuptial song, inspired with the sentiments of most ardent affection. “Our bed is flourishing,” she cries, “the beams of our house are of cedar, our rafters of cypress trees.” But this love-song shall supply matter for the next discourse, so that, when rest has restored our mental vigour, we may be better disposed to “rejoice and be glad in it,” unto the praise and glory of the same Bridegroom, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XLVI

ON THE VIRTUES WHICH BELONG TO SUPERIORS AND INFERIORS

"Our bed is flourishing; the beams of our houses are of cedar, our rafters are of cypress trees."

"Our bed is flourishing; the beams of our houses are of cedar, our rafters are of cypress trees." The Spouse, my brethren, is here singing her epithalamium; and in beautiful language she describes the marriage-bed and the bridal-chamber. She invites the Beloved to repose. For this is the better part, to rest and "to be with Christ." However, the duty of co-operating in the salvation of souls requires her to be constantly employed in external activities. But now, availing of what she considers an opportune time, she announces that the bridal-chamber is ready and pointing to the couch, solicits the Bridegroom to rest Himself thereon, as I have just remarked. Like the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, unable to endure the burning fervour of her heart, she begs Him to accept the hospitality of her love, and constrains Him to pass the night with her, saying with St. Peter, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

Let us now endeavour to ascertain the spiritual sense of these words of the Spouse. I should say, then, that, as regards the Church, her cloisters and monasteries represent the bed, because it is in them alone we can live our life undisturbed by temporal cares or worldly distractions. And this bed is manifestly "flourishing" when the conduct of the brethren, faithfully adhering to the examples and institutions of the fathers, borrows therefrom a glory and a fragrance, like a couch bestrewn with sweet-smelling blossoms. Next, we are to understand by the "houses" the communities of simple Christians, who, as walls by girders, are strongly bound together by the justly imposed laws of those "in high station," I mean, ecclesiastical and civil rulers. For by their authority the subjects are prevented from following their own will and desires, lest, like "leaning walls and tottering fences," they should thus fall asunder and involve in their ruin the whole spiritual edifice, As for the "rafters" which are firmly

fastened to the “beams” or girders and serve as beautiful ornaments to the “houses,” by these, I think, are designated the virtuous and orderly lives of a well-trained clergy, as also their fidelity in the due discharge of their functions. I have said the “rafters” must be attached to the “beams,” for how can there be any stability or regularity in the clerical orders or in their various offices unless they be supported by the beneficence and munificence of their rulers, as rafters on girders, and protected by their power?

But you will notice that the comparison is made with “beams of cedar “and “rafters of cypress trees.” The reason doubtless is because in the nature of such trees we find properties analogous to those which should characterise the two orders aforesaid, viz., the supreme governors in Church and State, and the subordinate clergy. The incorruptibility and fragrance of cedar wood, and the great height to which the tree attains sufficiently indicate the virtues which should adorn whose who are selected to fill the position of girders in the spiritual house of the Church. Therefore firm and resolute ought to be the character of such as are appointed to rule over others. They should be men of invincible hope, men who keep the eye of their soul steadfastly fixed on the things above. In short, the sweet fragrance of their faith and their virtue must be everywhere diffused, so that they can say with the Apostle, “For we are the good odour of Christ unto God in every place.” The cypress also has a pleasant odour and its wood likewise is incorruptible, thus symbolising the inviolable purity of faith and morals which should belong to each of the subordinate clergy, in order that they may serve as “rafters” for the decoration and ornamentation of the Bridegroom’s houses. For it is written, “Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.” Here we have clearly prescribed not only the ornament of sanctity, but also an uninterrupted perseverance in grace. It is therefore necessary that no one should be set up as an ornament or embellishment of the house who is not himself adorned with virtues; and although he, as a “rafter,” must be always inside, yet he ought to have good testimony even from those “who are without.” There are other respects also in which the cypress and the cedar tree may be taken as representative of the same two orders. But for the sake of brevity I pass them over.

It is a matter worthy of observation how beautifully this one short versicle embraces all the properties which characterise the different grades in the Church, the authority of prelates and princes, the sanctity of the clergy, the docility of the people, the peace and quiet of monks. Whenever holy mother Church sees that everything is as it ought to be with regard to each of these orders, she certainly

rejoices at the view, and she also invites her Bridegroom's attention to the pleasing spectacle, since she attributes nothing to herself, but refers all the glory to His bounty as to the source of all good. And if she speaks of our bed and our houses, this is evidence not of usurpation but of love. In the confidence begotten of exceeding charity, she esteems nothing not her own of all that belongs to Him. It has been her custom to seek not her own interests but His, and therefore she believes herself entitled to share with Him both His dwelling and His repose. Hence she associates herself with Him in speaking of the houses, etc., as if all things were common to the Bridegroom and His Bride. "Our bed is flourishing," she says, "our houses are of cedars, our rafters of cypress." Thus she boldly represents herself as united in ownership with One with whom she knows she is united in love. Very different the soul which has not yet fully renounced her self-will. She lives alone and takes her repose by herself. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that she spends her time, not in solitude, but in the evil company of her carnal passions, with which she wastes "her substance, living riotously," and, like the Prodigal, squanders the portion of the inheritance divided unto her at her own demand.

But as for you, my brethren, when you hear or read these words of the Spirit of God, do you think you can apply to yourselves any part of what is said? Does it ever seem to you that you recognise in your own experiences something of the Bride's felicity which the Holy Ghost Himself celebrates in this Canticle of love? If not, then of you also it may be said that you "hear His voice, but you know not whence He cometh and whither He goeth." Perchance you also long for the repose of contemplation. You do well. But do not forget the flowers wherewith, as you read, the bed of the Spouse ought to be decorated. Therefore do you likewise take care to bestrew with the flowers of good works the nuptial couch of your own consciences, making the practise of virtue to precede the holy quiet of contemplation, as the blossom precedes the fruit. For if you seek repose without being well exercised in labour, your rest will be only the lazy lolling of the luxurious: neglecting the fruitfulness of Lia, you will abandon yourselves to the delightful but unprofitable embraces of Rachel. Besides, it is altogether contrary to right order to demand the reward before you have earned it, to desire to eat before you have laboured. "If any man will not work," writes the Apostle, "neither let him eat." And the Psalmist, "By (obedience to) Thy commandments I have had understanding." We are thus given to understand that it is only by observing the commandments we can make ourselves worthy to taste the sweetness of contemplation. Do not imagine, then, that the satisfaction of your

private devotion should be allowed to withdraw you in the very slightest from the practice of holy obedience or from following the traditions of the fathers. Otherwise, the Beloved will certainly refuse to take His repose with you. Especially when He finds the couch you have prepared for Him littered with the hemlock and nettles of self-will, instead of the sweet-smelling flowers of obedience. Consequently, He will not hear your prayers, nor will He come to you when you call upon Him. For such a Lover of obedience as He, Who chose to die rather than to disobey, will undoubtedly give Himself only with reserve to the soul that is unsubmissive. Neither need you expect any blessings on your unprofitable leisure from Him Who has said, through His Prophet, “I have laboured in patience,” alluding to the time when, as an exile from His home in heaven, where alone perfect repose is possible, “He wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.” Rather it is much to be feared that you will bring down upon yourselves those dreadful words of reprobation which sounded of old like a clap of thunder in the ears of the perfidious Jews, “Incense is an abomination to Me. The new moons and the sabbaths and the other festivals I will not abide.” Also, “My soul hateth your new moons and your solemnities; they are become troublesome to Me.” Then the Prophet shall have to lament over you as over Jerusalem, saying, “The enemies have seen her and have mocked at her sabbaths.” For the soul which the Bridegroom rejects becomes the sport of her infernal enemies.

I must here, my brethren, confess my extreme astonishment at the impudence of some amongst us, who, whilst they are throwing the whole house into confusion by their singularities, whilst they are scandalising the community by their impatience, and by their insolence and insubordination showing their contempt for authority, have nevertheless the presumption to invite the Lord of all holiness with importunate solicitation to repose on the polluted bed of their evil consciences. But He has answered them beforehand where He says by His Prophet, “And when you stretch forth your hands I will turn away My eyes from you, and when you multiply your prayers I will not hear.” What? To a bed such as thine, covered not with the flowers of virtue but with the filth of vice, hast thou the temerity to invite the King of Glory? Is it to repose with thee He shall come and not rather to reprove thee? The Centurion, although the sweet perfume of his faith was diffused throughout all Israel, yet, conscious of his unworthiness, begged the Saviour not to enter under his roof. And wouldst thou, polluted as thou art with the filth of every vice, wouldst thou compel Him to enter not thy house, but thy heart? The Prince of the apostles cries out in awe,

“Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man.” And dost thou dare to say, “Come to me, O Lord, for I am holy”? “Be ye all,” writes St. Peter, “of one mind in prayer; love the brotherhood.” And the Vessel of Election, “I will therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands without anger and contention.” You see, my brethren, how perfectly in accord are the Prince of the apostles and the Doctor of the nations, and how by the inspiration of the same Spirit they both speak of the peace and tranquillity of soul which ought to accompany our prayers. Do thou, therefore, who art a constant source of annoyance to thy brethren, who wagest war on concord, and revoltest from unity, do thou, I say, continue all the day long stretching out thy hands towards the Lord. Thou shalt only have thy labour for thy pains. But perchance you will ask, “What wouldst thou have us to do?” In the first place, you must cleanse your consciences from every stain of anger, dissension, discontent, and jealousy; and you must hasten to exclude from the home of your hearts whatever you may find there to be opposed either to domestic peace or to the obedience which you owe your superiors. Next, it is requisite to adorn the spiritual couch with the flowers of all kinds of good works and holy desires, and to perfume it besides with the odours of the various virtues. I mean to say, “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever great, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline,” you must take care to “think on these things” and to exercise yourselves in the same. When the bed is thus adorned, then you may with confidence invite the Bridegroom to repose therein, because like the Spouse, you can now truly say to Him at His entrance, “Our bed is flourishing.” That is, your consciences shall be redolent of piety, peace, gentleness, justice, obedience, joy, and humility. So much for the bed.

My brethren, every man who walks not according to the flesh but according to the spirit should recognise himself to be the spiritual temple of God. Such is the doctrine of St. Paul, for he says distinctly, “The temple of God is holy, which you are.” Be careful, then, of this spiritual edifice which is yourselves, lest haply when it begins to rise towards heaven, it should suddenly totter and fall for want of strong beams to support and secure it. Take care, I say, to furnish it with firmly-fixed and incorruptible girders, such as the “fear of the Lord” which “is holy, enduring for ever and ever”; patience, whereof it is written, “Patience hath a perfect work,” “The patience of the poor shall not perish for ever”; perseverance also, which can continue steadfast under any weight of superstructure, and extends itself unfailingly throughout the endless ages of a

blissful immortality, according to the word of the Saviour, “He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved”; but above all divine charity which “never falleth off,” “for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell.” In the next place, it is necessary to bind and fasten to the girding beams lighter wood-work which may serve for rafters and for the ornamentation of the house. It is a duty to have this also of precious and beautiful material, but only for such as may have timber of that kind within reach. For by these rafters I understand the word of wisdom and knowledge, the gift of prophecy, the grace of healing, the interpretation of tongues, and such-like endowments, which are recognised to be rather useful for embellishing the soul than essential to her salvation. “Now, concerning” matters of this kind “I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give counsel.” Considering that such cypress-wood is sought for with labour, found with difficulty—this earth of ours, especially in the present times, being known to produce but very little of it—and elaborated with danger, my counsel and advice is that you should not be oversolicitous in your search for it. Let your rafters be made from the wood of other trees, which, although less beautiful in outward show, is proved by experience to be equally strong, whilst it is at the same time more easy to obtain and is possessed with more security.

Would to God that I, like so many others, were abundantly supplied with the wood of those trees which grow in such numbers in the Bridegroom’s garden, that is, in the Church! The trees I am speaking of are “peace, goodness, benignity, joy in the Holy Spirit,” to “shew mercy with cheerfulness,” to “give with simplicity,” to “rejoice with them that rejoice,” and to “weep with them that weep.” Would you not, my brethren, deem that house, so far at least as concerned the rafters, sufficiently, even richly adorned, which you observed to be fully and properly raftered with this kind of wood? “I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house.” Give me always, I beseech Thee, of this wood, that I may have wherewith to adorn for Thy repose the bridal-chamber of the conscience. I do not mean my own conscience only, but my brother’s also. So shall I be content. There shall be others no doubt, who will follow my counsel and example herein, contenting themselves with what, as I think, gives contentment to the Bridegroom. As for the more precious material of the cypress-wood, I leave that to the holy apostles and other apostolic men. And you, dearest brethren, although you also may lack this nobler timber, nevertheless, if you possess the other, be of good cheer; approach with all confidence to Him Who is the “chief Corner-Stone, elect, precious”; be you “built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets” as “living stones” unto “spiritual houses, a holy

priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" Our Lord, and the Bridegroom of the Church, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XLVII

ON THE FLOWER OF THE FIELD, THE FLOWER OF THE GARDEN, AND THE FLOWER OF THE BED-CHAMBER

"I am the Flower of the field and the Lily of the valleys."

"I am the Flower of the field and the Lily of the valleys." It appears to me, my brethren, that these words of the Bridegroom are intended as a reply to what the Spouse has just said in commendation of the bed adorned with flowers. Lest she should be tempted to attribute the possession of such flowers to her own industry, the Beloved now proclaims Himself to be "the Flower of the field." He thus reminds her that it is not the bridal-chamber but the field that produces the flowers, and that they owe their beautiful colours and their sweet smell to His bounty and communication. Being an affectionate Mentor as well as a jealous Lover, He kindly and condescendingly explains to His beloved Spouse to Whom she should ascribe the adornment and fragrance of the couch whereof she is boasting, so that no man may be able to address her in the words of reproach, "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" Therefore He tells her, "I am the Flower of the field. That in which thou gloriest is My gift." To us also, my brethren, this is a salutary reminder that "it is not expedient indeed" to glory in anything, but that "he that glorieth" should "glory in the Lord." Thus far the literal sense. Let us now endeavour to ascertain the underlying spiritual meaning, with the help of Him to Whom the words belong.

First of all, I wish you to consider the three places where flowers are wont to be seen, viz., in the field, in the garden, and in the bed-chamber, as this will make it more easy to explain why the Bridegroom is pleased to call Himself the "Flower of the field." Now, although there are flowers in the bed-chamber as well as in the garden and in the field, they are found growing in the two latter places only. Again, they serve to adorn and perfume the chamber no less than the

garden or the field; yet not there as elsewhere do they do this standing erect on their roots, but rather lying prostrate, as not being indigenous but imported. Consequently, the flowers in this place have to be renewed repeatedly, because they lose both their beauty and their fragrance in a very short time. I have said in a preceding discourse that the bed bestrewn with flowers is a figure of the conscience laden with the memory of good works. If that be so, you will certainly allow, as the perfection of the analogy requires, that it is by no means sufficient to perform a good work once or twice, but that one must be constantly adding new merits to the old, for "he who soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings." The flower of a good work soon droops and withers and loses all its beauty and life, if it be not frequently renewed, so to speak, by an unceasing succession of similar acts of piety. All this with reference to the flowers in the bed-chamber.

With the flowers of the garden and the field the case is entirely different. For to these, when once produced, the soil which gives them birth supplies the necessary support and nourishment, so that they can preserve for a considerable time the loveliness of their origin. But even as between the garden and the field there is a difference which concerns the manner of their florescence, in this respect, namely, that whereas the latter blooms of itself and naturally, without the need of any co-operation on the part of man, the former cannot flourish at all unless it be cultivated and tended by human hands. Does it not seem to you, my brethren, that you can now recognise that fertile field, which has never been furrowed by the ploughshare, nor digged with the spade, nor enriched by human culture, nor sown by human hands, and nevertheless is adorned with the magnificent Blossom upon which the Spirit of the Lord, as we know, has been pleased to rest? For it is written, "Behold the smell of my Son is as the smell of a plentiful field which the Lord hath blessed." This Flower of the field had not yet put on Its beauty, although It was already giving forth Its fragrance, when the holy old Patriarch Isaac, in bodily decrepitude, dim-sighted but keen-scented, was given in the Spirit a foretaste of Its sweetness, and expressed his delight in the words I have quoted. It would not therefore have been right for Him Whose bloom is everlasting to proclaim Himself the flower of the bed-chamber; nor could He be called the flower of the garden, lest it should be supposed that He had a human father. But what He says of Himself, "I am the Flower of the field" is most beautiful and most appropriate. For not only has He sprung up from virgin soil without any human co-operation, but He is also from His origin eternally exempted from the power of blight or decadence, so that the word

might be fulfilled, “Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption.”

But listen, please, to another interpretation, which, I think, is well worthy of your attention. The reason why the Wise Man represents the Spirit of God as “manifold” is, so it seems to me, because this Divine Spirit is wont to conceal manifold significations of wisdom profound under the one same rind of the letter. Retaining, then, the above threefold distinction of flowers according to the places where they are found, we have the flower of virginity, the flower of martyrdom, and the flower of good works. Virginity blooms in the garden, martyrdom in the field, good works in the chamber. Rightly have I assigned to the garden the flower of virginity, whose characteristics are modesty, avoidance of publicity, love of retirement, and patience under discipline. For flowers are strewn in the chamber, exposed in the field, but enclosed in the garden. So we read, “My Spouse is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up.” By this enclosure is meant the virgin’s protecting modesty and her watchful care to live a life of unblemished sanctity. That is, if she is one who aims at being “holy both in body and in spirit.” Rightly also is the flower of martyrdom said to flourish in the field, because the holy martyrs are exposed to the insults of all the world, being made “a spectacle to angels and to men.” Is it not their tearful voice which we hear in the psalm, “We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us”? Nor is it with less propriety that the flower of good works which tranquillises and lulls to rest the conscience, has been allotted to the bed-chamber. For the repose of contemplation is enjoyed with greater security after the performance of external good works. And the soul approaches the study and pursuit of divine things with the more confidence in proportion as she is the more conscious of not having neglected the duties of charity through love of her own ease.

All this applies in varying senses to Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Flower of the garden, inasmuch as He is a virgin Blossom produced from a virgin stem. He is the Flower of the field, because He is a martyr, the Crown of martyrs, and the Model of martyrs. For He was led forth from the city, “He suffered without the camp,” He was lifted up on the cross, in the sight of all, for the mockery of all. He is finally the Flower of the chamber, being the Example and Pattern of all well-doing, as He Himself declared to the Jews, when He said, “Many good works have I shown to you from My Father.” And the Scripture bears witness of Him that He “went about doing good, and healing all.” But if the Lord Jesus is thus each of the three flowers, what motive can He have for choosing to call Himself the Flower of the field rather than the flower of the garden or the flower

of the chamber? The reason doubtless is that He desires to animate His Spouse to patient endurance, as knowing that she would have to suffer persecution, since she wished “to live godly in Christ.” Therefore, He presents Himself to her under the type of that in which He particularly wants her to imitate Him. This is only what I have said elsewhere, viz., that the Bride is ever longing for repose, and the Bridegroom as constantly urging her to labour, warning her “that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.” Hence, when He was on the point of returning to the Father after newly espousing to Himself His young Bride on earth, He said to her, “The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God.” Again, “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” You can discover for yourselves in the Gospel many similar predictions of sufferings to be endured by the Spouse.

“I am the Flower of the field, and the Lily of the valleys.” Thus, whilst the Bride invites her Beloved to repose, she is summoned by Him to the field and exhorted to devote herself to labour. And it appears to Him that He can find no surer means of inducing her to enter the conflict than by proposing Himself both as the Pattern of the combatant and as the victor’s Crown. “I am the Flower of the field.” In these few words He is manifestly designated in this twofold character, namely, as the warrior’s Example and the Prize of conquest. Thou art both to me, O Lord Jesus, Thou art my Model in suffering and the Reward of my suffering. And whether Thou showest Thyself as Pattern or as Prize, we are powerfully attracted to Thee and violently inflamed. It is Thou “who teachest my hand to fight” by the example of Thy virtues. It is Thou Who crownest me after victory by the unveiling of Thy Majesty. For I keep constantly before my mind the representation of Thy combat; and I hope not only to receive the recompense from Thy Hands, but to receive even Thyself as that recompense. Yes, as my Model and my Crown Thou dost draw me to Thyself in a wonderful way, as it were with two chains exceedingly strong. Draw me still after Thee; gladly shall I follow Thee and more gladly enjoy Thee. O Lord, if Thou art so good to those who seek Thee, what wilt Thou be to those who find? “I am the Flower of the field,” Thou sayest. “Let him who loves Me enter the field. Let him not refuse to engage in the conflict for My sake and by My side, so that he may be able to say, ‘I have fought the good fight.’ ”

But because it is not the proud and arrogant that are deemed worthy of the grace of martyrdom, but rather the humble and such as know not how to presume on their own strength, therefore the Bridegroom goes on to say, “I am

the Lily of the valleys." That is, He declares that He will be the Crown of the humble, the special exaltation in store for whom is indicated by the tallness of the lily. For the time will come when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." Then, certainly, He Who is the "Brightness of Eternal Life," shall appear as "the Lily" not of the hills but "of the valleys." It is written, "The just shall spring as the lily." Now, who is just but the humble? When the Lord Jesus bowed Himself beneath the hands of His servant John, He saw the Baptist trembling with awe in presence of His Divine Majesty, and "said to him: suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice." Thus He made it clear that the consummation of justice consists in the perfection of humility. The just man, consequently, is the humble man; the just man is he who resembles the lily of the valleys in his love of lowly places. And if we, my brethren, are found to be humble, we also "shall spring as the lily," we "shall flourish forever before the Lord." Do you not agree that the Bridegroom shall then in an especial manner prove Himself "the Lily of the valleys," when He "will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the Body of His glory"? Notice how the Apostle does not say "our body," but the "body of our lowness," thereby insinuating that none save the lowly shall be glorified by a participation in the transcendant and everlasting brightness of this Divine Lily. Let so much suffice concerning the words of the Bridegroom, "I am the Flower of the field, and the Lily of the valleys."

It would be profitable to treat here also the Bridegroom's eulogy of His dearly beloved. But the time will not permit. For our Rule tells us that nothing ought to be preferred to the work of God. By this name of the "work of God" our holy Father St. Benedict willed should be designated the solemn service of praise which we daily discharge in our churches, and his purpose was to impress upon our minds the necessity of devoting ourselves with all earnestness to that great duty. Therefore, I exhort you, dearest brethren, to assist at every hour of the canonical office with zeal and recollection. You must be zealous in order to join fervently, yet reverently, in chanting the praises of God, not lazily, not drowsily, not yawningly, not sparing yourselves, not mutilating the words or omitting any, not with weak and mincing voices effeminately stammering or sounding through the nose; but singing with the manly fulness and sonorousness and the religious affection proper to songs which have been inspired by the Holy Ghost. Recollection is also necessary so that your minds may entertain no other thoughts than such as are suggested by the psalms you sing. Observe, I do not say you are only bound to refrain from thinking of vain and unprofitable things

during the divine office. Even such thoughts as the officials of the monastery are frequently obliged to occupy themselves with for the common good, and which are therefore necessary, must be put away at that time and in that place. Nay, I would strongly recommend you not to let your minds dwell—whilst engaged in the work of God—on what perchance you had been reading in a spiritual book just before, sitting in the cloister, or what might be still fresh in your memories after listening to my lectures in this auditorium of the Spirit of God. Reflections of this kind are doubtless wholesome, but it would not be wholesome for you to admit them during the hour of public prayer. For the Holy Ghost will not take pleasure in any offering whatever which you may make Him at that time to the neglect of the one which He demands of you, and which alone can content Him. May He give us the light and the strength ever to accomplish His will, according to His will, through the grace and mercy of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XLVIII

ON THE EXCELLENCE AND DIGNITY OF CHRIST'S SACRED HUMANITY, AND ON WHAT IT IS TO BE, TO LIVE, AND TO SIT UNDER HIS SHADOW

"As a lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters.

"As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow, Whom I desired, and His fruit was sweet to my palate."

"As a lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters." No dutiful daughters these, if they wound like thorns. But take notice, my brethren, that the daughters mentioned here represent the most pernicious progeny of this earth of ours, which has lain from the beginning under the heavy curse of its own Creator, "When thou shalt till it," thus spoke He to Adam, "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." As long, therefore, as the soul abides in the body, so long shall she be encompassed with thorns. That is to say, she must always inevitably suffer the miseries of temptation, and the bitter pangs of tribulation. Now, if she be really what her Bridegroom calls her, a lily, consider how watchful and anxious a guard she is obliged to keep over herself, hedged in as she is with thorns, whose sharp points threaten her on every side. So tender a flower can in nowise resist even the slightest attack, and the very least pressure from a thorn is enough to pierce it through. Do you not now see the reason and the necessity of the Psalmist's exhortation to us to "serve the Lord in fear"; and of the Apostle's injunction that we should "work out our salvation with fear and trembling"? Both these inspired writers had doubtless learned from their own experience the value of what they recommend to us; for, as friends of the Bridegroom, they could have had no hesitation at all about applying to their own souls what He says here, "As a lily among thorns, so is My love among the

daughters." Thus the same Prophet says of himself in another place, "I am turned in my anguish while the thorn is fastened." Truly that was a wholesome fastening which resulted in turning him to a holier life! It is a good thing to suffer a puncture that leads to compunction. There are many whom the severity of their chastisement induce to renounce their sins. Such as they can say with the Psalmist, "I am turned in my anguish while the thorn is fastened." Spiritual thorns are manifold. Sin is a thorn, and its penalty is a thorn; a false brother is a thorn, and an evil companion a thorn.

"As a lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters" O snow-white lily! O most tender and delicate flower! Thou art surrounded by unbelievers and enemies, ever plotting thy ruin. See, then, with what circumspection it behoves thee to walk amidst so many thorns. The whole world is bristling with them. They menace thee on the earth and in the air. They lie concealed in thy very flesh. It is only by the power of God, not through thine own strength, that thou canst live thus encompassed with thorns and never receive a wound. "But have confidence," the Bridegroom whispers to thee, "I have overcome the world." Therefore, "let not thy heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid," even though thou seest tribulations besetting thy path on all sides, as if they were so many thorns waiting to wound thee. For thou oughtest to know that tribulation "worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not." "Consider the lilies of the field, how they" flourish and bloom in the midst of the thorns. "And if the grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so" protect, "how much more" thee, His own most dear and tenderly loved Spouse? Is it not written that "The Lord keepeth all them that love Him"? "As a lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters." It is a proof of no ordinary degree of virtue to live a good life in the midst of the wicked, and amongst the malignant to preserve sweetness of disposition and the spotlessness of innocence. But it is of greater merit still to be "peaceful with them that hate peace," and to show oneself a friend even towards one's enemies. O Spouse of Christ, if thou hast deserved to be thus compared, by singular and exclusive right, to a lily among thorns, it is surely because of this charity of thine, whereby thou dost not cease to communicate the lustre and the beauty of thy native splendour even to the thorns that wound thee. My brethren, do you not see that one has to make himself such a lily in order to practise perfectly the teaching of the Gospel, which commands us to pray for them that calumniate us and to do good to them that persecute and hate us? Therefore to each of you I say, "Go and do thou in like manner," and thy soul shall be the spouse of the

Lord, and He will commend thee for thy beauty, saying, “As a lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters.”

But the Bride makes answer, “As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons.” So does she return the eulogy addressed to her by the Bridegroom, by Whom to be praised is to be made worthy of praise, and Whom to praise is to have understanding and admiration of His praiseworthiness. Just as He used the symbols of the lily’s tallness and beauty to describe the excellence of His Bride, so she in her turn designates His singular glory and greatness under the figure of a noble tree. Yet concerning the aptness of this image some doubt may arise. For the apple-tree is surpassed in excellence by several other trees; and consequently, so it should seem, is unworthy of being selected to represent the Bridegroom, as incapable of symbolising the supereminence of His glory. “As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons.” It is evident from these very words that the Spouse herself has no great esteem for the apple-tree, since she is careful to prefer it only to the “trees of the wood,” that is, to trees which yield no fruit at all, or none fit for the use of man. Why, then, does she make choice of this mediocre tree from amongst so many others that are better and nobler, and employ it to typify the perfection of her Beloved? Shall we say that He ought to receive glory in measure to Whom is given the Spirit without measure? For the similitude of the apple-tree seems to indicate that the Bridegroom has a superior, whereas He is without even an equal. How shall we solve the difficulty? I grant at once that the praise is little, because it is meant for One Who has made Himself little. In this place the announcement is not: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,” but rather, “Little is the Lord and exceedingly to be loved.” He is regarded here as the Little One Who “is born for us.” Here, consequently, the Spouse is concerned not with the glorification of His majesty, but with the commendation of His humility.

And surely it is right and reasonable that the “foolishness of God” and the “weakness of God” should be preferred to the wisdom and the strength of man. For by the barren forest trees, amongst which the apple-tree stands distinguished, we are to understand the race of men, of whom the Prophet testifies that “they are all gone aside; they are become unprofitable together: there is none that doth good, no, not one.” “As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons.” Of all the trees in the wood, there is only One that yields fruit, I mean the Lord Jesus, Who, in His Human Nature, although exalted over the rest of men, is made “a little less than the angels.” For, by a wonderful

and admirable dispensation, He has made Himself as Man inferior to the angels over whom as God He holds sovereign sway. “You shall see the angels of God,” He said to Nathaniel “ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” That is, in one and the same Person, Jesus Christ, the angels ascend when they worship with awe the Divine Majesty, and descend when they lovingly minister to the weakness of the flesh. Therefore, as the Spouse finds a sweeter consolation in thinking of His voluntary lowliness than in the thought of His infinite greatness, she is more ready to magnify His grace, to extol His mercy, and to stand amazed at His marvellous condescension. She prefers, then, to admire Him as a Man amongst men, rather than as God exalted above the angels; for it is only amongst men He is admirable as a Man, just as the apple-tree is conspicuous, not amongst the garden trees, but only amidst the trees of the wood. Nor does she think His glory will be lessened by the consideration of His infirmity which magnifies His goodness and His loving-kindness. For whatever is subtracted from that glory in one respect is added to it in another; because if she desists from the praise of the loftiness of His Majesty, it is only to render more manifest the graciousness of His condescension. Therefore, just as the Apostle declared the “foolishness of God” and the “weakness of God” to be wiser and stronger than men, not wiser and stronger than the angels; and just as the Prophet proclaimed the Word Incarnate to be “beautiful above the sons of men,” not above the angels, in the same way here, and evidently speaking under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, the Spouse, using the image of the fruitful apple-tree and the unprofitable trees of the forest, asserts the superiority of the God-Man over every merely human greatness, but not in comparison with angelic excellence.

“As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons.” Not without reason does the Spouse say, “among the sons.” For whereas the Bridegroom is the Only-Begotten of the Father, yet He laboured without envy to acquire unto Him many other sons by adoption, and “He is not ashamed to call them brethren,” “that he might be the First-born amongst many brethren.” But it is only right that He Who is the Son by nature should be preferred to all who are sons by the adoption of grace. Hence it is said, “As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons.” And very properly is the Beloved compared to the apple-tree, which He resembles both in the refreshing shade He affords, and also in that He produces excellent fruit. For unquestionably He may be called a fruit-bearing Tree, Whose “flowers are the fruit of honour and riches,” and of Whom, under the form of Wisdom, it is written, “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her.” Amongst all the trees

of the spiritual forest not one is found worthy to be compared to this; because however great and beautiful the others may appear, however capable of assisting us by their prayers, their ministrations, their instructions, and their examples, Christ alone, the Wisdom of God, is the Tree of life, Who alone is “the Living Bread which came down from heaven and giveth life to the world.”

Therefore, since He is the Tree of life, the Spouse goes on to say, “I sat down under His shadow, Whom I desired; and His fruit was sweet to my palate.” No wonder she desired the shadow of Him from Whom she hoped to receive both food and shelter. For the other woodland trees do indeed offer a cooling shade, but they yield no nourishment for the support of life, no fruit of everlasting salvation. There is but one “Author of life,” “and one Mediator of God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.” It is He Who says to His Spouse, “I am thy salvation,” and to the Jews, “Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true Bread from heaven.” This, then, is the reason why the Spouse yearned particularly for the shadow of Christ, because, namely, in Him alone could she hope to be sheltered from the noxious heat of the passions, and at the same time to be fed and filled with the sweet food of the virtues. “I sat down,” she says, “under His shadow, Whom I desired.” The shadow of Christ is the Flesh of Christ. Faith in Him may also be considered His shadow. For Mary the Flesh of her own Son served as a shadow. But my shadow is the faith of which He is Author and Object. And yet is it not true, that to me also, when I eat It in the Sacrament, His Flesh becomes a shadow? Whilst Mary, on the other hand, must have participated with me in the refreshment afforded by the shadow of faith, seeing that it was said to her, “And blessed art thou that hast believed.” “I sat down under His shadow, Whom I desired.” Compare this with the words of the Prophet Jeremias, “A Spirit before our face (is) Christ the Lord, under His shadow we shall live among the gentiles.” That is to say, we live in His shadow whilst we are amongst the gentiles, but when we are with the angels we shall live in His light. We are in the shadow so long as “we walk by faith, and not by sight.” Therefore, the just man who “liveth by faith,” liveth in the shadow. But not only just but blessed is he who liveth by understanding, because he is no longer in shadow, but in the light. David was a just man, and lived by faith, when he said to God, “Give me understanding and I will learn Thy commandments, that I may live.” For he knew that understanding follows upon faith, and that to understanding is to be revealed the Light of life, and the Life of light. We must first enter the shadow and thence pass out into the light beyond the shadow; for, as it is written, “If you will not believe, you shall not

understand."

You observe, my brethren, that faith is at once life and the shadow of life; just as, on the contrary, a life that is lived in pleasures is death and the shadow of death. "She that liveth in pleasures," says the Apostle, "is dead while she is living," for "the wisdom of the flesh is death." But a life of pleasure, whilst a death in itself, is also the shadow of a second death, of that, namely, which shall torment its victims eternally. We ourselves in times past were "seated in darkness and in the shadow of death," when instead of walking by faith, "we all conversed in the desires of the flesh," having already died to justice and on the point of being swallowed up by the second death. For in the degree in which the shadow is nigh to the body by which it is thrown, in the same degree "my life hath drawn nigh to hell." For "unless the Lord had been my Helper," as the Psalmist confesses, "my soul had almost dwelt in hell." Now, however, we have passed from the shadow of death into the shadow of life. Rather "we have passed from death to life" and are living now under the shadow of Christ, if indeed we are truly alive and not still dead in sin. I say this, because, so far as I can see, the fact that a man is in the shadow of Christ does not necessarily imply that he is there as one living, since, as is evident, not everyone who has the faith "liveth by faith." For "faith without good works is dead," and so cannot communicate life, for the reason that it possesses no life in itself. Therefore, when the Prophet had declared that "A Spirit before our face (is) Christ the Lord," he was not satisfied to proceed and say, "under His shadow we shall be," but he added, "under His shadow we shall live among the gentiles." Do you, therefore, my brethren, follow the example of Jeremias, by endeavouring to live here in the shadow of Christ that hereafter you may reign with Him in the light of His glory. For Christ has not shadow only: He is also a source of light. He produces the shadow of faith by the Flesh, but by the Spirit the light of understanding. He is Flesh to us whilst we live in the flesh, but He is "a Spirit before our face." That is, He will manifest Himself to us spiritually in the life to come, provided, however, that "forgetting the things that are behind," we "stretch forth" ourselves "to those that are before." Then, when we have attained our goal, it shall be given us to experience of the Word that which He has said of Himself, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing." I am not unaware that there has been one, at least, who was able to say, even whilst still a sojourner on earth, "And if we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we know Him (so) no longer." But this was the great St. Paul. As for us, who have never yet been admitted to paradise, who have not yet deserved to be rapt up to the third

heaven, we must be satisfied, whilst still in the flesh, to feed on Christ's Flesh, to reverence His mysteries, to imitate His example and to preserve His faith, that so we may live in His shadow.

"I sat down under His shadow Whom I desired." Perhaps the Spouse is here glorying in some more sublime and special favour vouchsafed her, inasmuch as she does not say, like the Prophet, that she lives under His shadow, but that she has seated herself there. For sitting means resting. But it is a greater thing to rest under the shadow than to live in it, just as to live in the shadow is better than simply to be there. Jeremias, therefore, is but claiming for himself a grace common to many when he says, "In His shadow we shall live." But the Spouse, as more highly privileged, proclaims with exultation that to her alone it has been given not merely to live but even to rest under His shadow. For she does not say in the plural number, "we sat down," just as the Prophet had said, "we shall live," but in the singular, "I sat down," in order to signify the incommunicability of her prerogative. Consequently, where labour is the only condition of life for the rest of us, who, conscious of sin, have to serve in fear, there she enjoys the pleasant repose of love and devotion. For "fear hath pain," but love is all sweetness. Hence she adds, "and His fruit was sweet to my palate." By "His fruit" is meant the delight of contemplation which she experienced when blissfully elevated on the wings of holy love. But this was under the shadow, because as yet even she can only see "through a glass, in a dark manner." But the time will come when "the day shall break and the shadows retire," yea, disappear utterly, giving place to the unclouded light. Then she shall enjoy a vision of infinite brightness and eternal duration, and a fruit which shall not only afford pleasure to her palate, but satisfaction without satiety to all her desires. "I sat down under His shadow Whom I desired, and His fruit was sweet to my palate." Let us, my brethren, rest here with the Spouse, and having tasted somewhat of the mystical feast, let us glorify the Father of the family, Who has invited us to so great a supper, the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON XLIX

ON DISCRETION AS NECESSARY FOR WELL-ORDERED CHARITY

"The King brought me into the cellar of wine, He set charity in order in me."

"The King brought me into the cellar of wine, He set charity in order in me." The literal signification of this verse, my brethren, may be presented as follows. On the departure of the Bridegroom, after gratifying the wishes of His Bride, by holding with her a very sweet and familiar colloquy, the latter returns to her companions, the young maidens; but so filled is she and inflamed with charity from the presence and conversation of her Beloved, that she resembles one who is intoxicated with wine. The young maidens, astonished at the change they behold in her, anxiously inquire the cause. Her reply is that it is nothing surprising if she, who has been "brought into the cellar of wine," should show some signs of intoxication. Such appears to be the direct and obvious meaning. If we now consider her words according to their mystical signification, the Spouse acknowledges that she is inebriated, not however with wine, but with holy love, unless indeed love may be regarded as wine. "The King," she says, "brought me into the cellar of wine." Observe that whenever the Bridegroom is present and the Spouse addresses her speech to Him, she calls Him by such names as "my Bridegroom," or "my Beloved," or "Thou Whom my soul loveth"; whereas, when speaking of Him to the young maidens, in His absence, she gives Him the title of "King." What does this signify? It signifies, in my judgment, that, although the Bridegroom and Bride may with perfect propriety address each other by such familiar and affectionate names as love inspires, the young maidens, on the contrary, as still requiring discipline, must have their frowardness restrained by the august titles proper to majesty.

"The King brought me into the cellar of wine." I will not pause now to explain what is meant by the "cellar of wine," for, as I remember, the matter has been sufficiently discussed already. But if we regard these words as spoken by the

Church, at the time when the disciples, filled with the Holy Ghost, were accused by the populace of being drunk from wine, then Peter must be considered the "friend of the Bridegroom," for it was he who, "standing up in the midst," replied in behalf of the Spouse, saying, "These are not drunk as you suppose." And here I would have you notice, my brethren, how he did not absolutely deny that they were drunk, but only that they were drunk in the sense the people supposed. For they were in fact intoxicated, though not with wine, but with the Holy Spirit. So, as if bearing witness that he and his fellow-disciples had been brought "into the cellar of wine," Peter again spoke in the name of all, "But this is that which was spoken of by the Prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams." Nor do I suppose you would think me extravagant were I to regard as a "cellar of wine" the house where the disciples were gathered together when "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting," and verified the prophecy of Joel. And was not each one of the assembly, coming forth from that house, and "inebriated with the plenty" thereof, having "drunk of the torrent of its pleasures"—was not every one of them able to say with truth, "The King brought me into the cellar of wine"?

And thou, my brother, if recollected in spirit and with a mind sober and free from distracting thoughts, thou shouldst enter alone the house of prayer, and standing before God at one of the altars, shouldst touch the very gate of heaven with the hand of holy desire, and lifted up by the ardour of thy devotion to the choirs of glorified saints (for the prayer of the just man shall pierce the clouds) shouldst in their presence bemoan with tears of misery the afflictions and sorrows that oppress thee, and with frequent sighs and "unspeakable groanings" shouldst confess thy necessities and implore compassion—if, I say, thou shouldst act in this wise, I have too much confidence in the word of Him Who said, "Ask and you shall receive," to believe that thou shalt go out empty-handed, provided only that thou dost persevere in knocking. And when thou art restored to us, full of devotion and charity, if in fervour of spirit thou art unable to conceal the grace bestowed on thee, but freely and without envy dost share it with all, if after having been so highly favoured, thou makest thyself not alone pleasing, but even admirable in the eyes of thy brethren, then canst thou truly declare with the Spouse, "The King brought me into the cellar of wine." Nevertheless, thou shouldst be careful to glory not in thyself, but in the Lord. I

would not say that every gift, even though belonging to the spiritual order, is brought forth from the “cellar of wine”; for there are different cellars and storerooms in the palace of the Bridegroom, wherein are hoarded up all His multiform treasures and graces, “according to the riches of His glory,” and of which I remember to have treated at length in an earlier sermon. “Are not these things stored up with Me,” saith the Lord, “and sealed in My treasures?” Therefore, according to the diversity of the storerooms are the distinctions of graces, and the Spirit manifests Himself to each soul in the way most conducive to her profit. But although “to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another prophecy, to another the grace of healing, to another diverse kinds of tongues, to another interpretation of speeches,” and other similar gifts to others; nevertheless, the reception of such favours does not entitle any soul to say that she has been brought into the cellar of wine. For these gifts are taken out of the other cellars or repositories.

But if it were given to any one of us during prayer, in a spiritual ecstasy, to penetrate so far into the secret recesses of the Divinity that, when he comes back by and by, he is found to be all on fire with the love of God, animated with a burning zeal for justice, and full of fervour at every spiritual office or exercise, so that he can say in the words of the Psalmist, “My heart grew hot within me; and in my meditation a fire shall flame out,” such a one might justly claim to have been admitted into the cellar of wine; since he is beginning already to eructate from the abundance of holy love and the good and wholesome repletion of the wine of gladness. There are two kinds of ecstasy experienced in divine contemplation. One of them belongs to the intellect, the other to the will. One results from an excess of light, the other from an excess of love. Knowledge predominates in the one, charity in the other. Now it is evident that the affection of piety, and the love-enkindled heart, and the infusion of fervent devotion, and the spirit all inflamed with ardent zeal, can have no other source save the wine-cellar. Hence every soul to whom it is granted to rise from prayer replenished with graces of this kind, every such soul, I say, can confidently make her own the words of the Spouse, “The King brought me into the cellar of wine.”

But the Spouse goes on, “He set in order charity in me.” A most necessary thing. Zeal without knowledge is a thing insupportable. And the more ardent the zeal, the greater is the necessity that it be accompanied by discretion, to which it belongs to regulate charity. Zeal without knowledge, instead of being efficacious or useful, generally turns out to be extremely pernicious. Consequently, my brethren, according as our zeal grows hotter, our fervour more intense, and our

charity fuller, it is necessary that the light of knowledge also should proportionately increase. For it is the function of knowledge to moderate zeal, to regulate fervour, and to set charity in order. The Spouse, therefore, lest she should be feared as excessive and insufferable, especially by the young maidens, on account of that impetuosity of spirit which she appears to have brought forth from the wine-cellar, makes haste to assure them that she has also received what is the effect of discretion, namely, the setting in order of charity. Indeed, it is discretion that sets all the virtues in order, from which order are derived both their limits and their loveliness, yea, even their stability. For it is written, “By Thy ordinance the day goeth on,” where by “day” the Psalmist means virtue. Discretion, consequently, is not so much a distinct virtue as the governor and guide of every virtue, the regulator of the affections, and the teacher of morals. Take away this, and virtue becomes vice. Take this away, and the very affections implanted in us for the perfection of our nature, turning aside from their destiny, begin at once to work for the disturbance and the ruin of our nature. “He set in order charity in me.” This the Bridegroom did when, in the Church, “He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints.” But all these ought to be bound together by the one same bond of charity, in order that all may be gathered into the unity of the Body of Christ. Now, charity cannot thus give order to other things unless it first be set in order itself. For if each one follows the impulse of his own will, according to the spirit which he has received, and applies himself to everything indifferently, making feeling his guide instead of the judgment of reason, the result must be that none is content with the department assigned him, but all functions are indiscriminately and simultaneously undertaken by all, so that in place of the unity of order, there is now nothing but confusion.

“He set in order charity in me.” Would to God that my own little stock of charity were likewise set in order by Him Who gave it, the Lord Jesus! So should I keep faithful watch over all His interests, but in such a way that what I recognise as belonging most particularly to my duty and office, should have my first attention. Yet although this must engage me before everything else, there are many other matters which, whilst not concerning me personally in any especial way, ought nevertheless to appeal more strongly to my affections. For that which ought to be the first object of our solicitude need not always of necessity have the strongest claim to our love. Indeed, it is often the case that what should get precedence as regards our care and attention, is less conducive

to our advancement, and must, therefore, be less attractive to our love. In other words, our reason must often give second place in esteem to what duty requires us to put first in solicitude. But that which obtains the preference from right reason, rightly ordered charity would have us embrace more affectionately. For example, am I not obliged, in virtue of my position, to have care of you all? Now, were I to devote myself to any other object with so much attention that I could no longer exercise properly the office of superior, by discharging the duties appertaining thereto in as worthy and profitable a manner as my best endeavours can reach, I should most certainly offend against the claims of good order; even though I appeared to be actuated by a motive of charity. On the contrary, if I am faithful in giving my first attention, as I am bound to do, to the duties of my office, yet do not experience a greater joy at the greater progress in divine love which I observe another to be making, it is plain that my charity is in one part rightly ordered, wrongly in the other. But if I make that for which I am most specially responsible the object of my most special solicitude, and at the same time feel myself more strongly attracted to what appears to be possessed of more intrinsic nobility, then, without doubt, my charity shall be found perfectly regulated, and there shall be nothing to prevent me from saying, “He set in order charity in me.”

But perhaps you will tell me that it is difficult to feel more satisfaction at the greater good of one’s neighbour than at the lesser belonging to oneself. I answer that this very fact demonstrates the excellence of the grace given to the Spouse, and also how few are those who can affirm with her, “He set in order charity in me.” “Why is the countenance of” some of you “fallen” at this word? The deep sighs you heave bear witness to the sadness of your souls and the heaviness of your hearts. For when “we measure ourselves by ourselves,” some of us realise, from the experience of our own imperfection, how rare a virtue it is not to envy the virtue of others, to say nothing about rejoicing at their progress in perfection, to say nothing of our delight growing greater according as we see them advancing beyond ourselves. But “a little light is yet among” us, as many of us, I mean, as recognise this disposition to be their own. Let us “walk whilst” we “have the light, that the darkness overtake us not.” To walk is to advance. The Apostle was walking when he said, “I do not count myself to have apprehended. But (there is) one thing: forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark.” What does he mean by the words, “There is one thing”? He desires to inform us that there still remains to him one remedy, one hope, one consolation. What is that? He tells us

himself: “forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark.” Admirable confidence! The great “Vessel of Election,” whilst admitting that he has not yet attained perfection, claims nevertheless to be making progress thereto. As for me, who instead of walking in the light am still sitting down, there is danger that I shall be overtaken by the darkness of death. For who sits down but the man that has no desire to go forward? My brethren, be on your guard against such relaxation. Then to each of you may be applied what is written, “The just man, if he be prevented with death, shall be in rest.” Then can you say to God, “Thy eyes did see my imperfection.” And yet you may add, “And in Thy book all shall be written.” All of whom? All who shall be found possessed with the desire of advancing. For the Psalmist goes on, “Days shall be formed, and no one in them”—supply, “shall perish.” By “days” we are to understand here those persons who are making progress in virtue, and who, “if prevented with death,” shall have made up to them that wherein they may be found wanting. They “shall be formed and no one in them” shall appear imperfect.

Now, some one may say to me, “How can I hope to advance who am envious of my brother’s progress?” But I ask, dost thou suffer this against thy will? If so, there is only feeling, not consent. What troubles thee is a passion which time shall weaken, not an action deserving of reproof. Only be careful not to make friends with it, by “devising iniquity on thy bed.” That is to say, do not consider how thou mayst foster the malady and feed the pestilence by persecuting the innocent, finding fault with his virtuous actions, thwarting, misrepresenting, or otherwise impeding his praiseworthy undertakings. Provided I am endeavouring to go forward, and am “stretching forth myself to the things that are before,” I shall suffer no harm from that whereof I can say, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” “There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that” yield not their “members to serve iniquity”; who preserve their tongues from detraction, and their other members and faculties from hurting or injuring the innocent in any way whatever; who are rather ashamed of the evil disposition they discover in themselves, and by prayer, by tears, and confession are striving to subdue their passions, grown strong by previous indulgence; and who, finally, have learned from their indifferent or ill success in this matter to be more gentle towards their brethren and more humble in themselves. What right-minded judge shall condemn the man who has learned from his Lord to be “meek and humble of heart”? No, it is impossible that he should be out of the way of salvation, who proves himself an imitator of the Saviour, the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus

Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON L

ON AFFECTIVE AND EFFECTIVE CHARITY, AND THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED IN BOTH

"He set charity in order in me."

You are expecting I suppose, that having completed my exposition of the words which formed the text of the last discourse, I shall to-day pass on to the following verse. Yet such is not my intention. I have still the fragments remaining after yesterday's feast, which I took the trouble to gather up "lest they be lost," and which I purpose to set before you now. For lost they must certainly be unless they are distributed. What is more, I should lose myself with them, did I attempt to keep them for my own exclusive enjoyment. I have therefore no desire to defraud that insatiable appetite of yours, which I know so well, of these broken meats, especially since they are from the dish of charity, as sweet as they are delicate, and only the more savoury because so small. Were I to act otherwise, I should offend most grievously against charity by neglecting to communicate it to my brethren. And so we shall occupy ourselves to-day with a further consideration of the words of the Spouse, "He set charity in order in me."

Charity, my brethren, must be exercised in two ways, in action and in affection. Now, in my opinion, the law of charity imposed upon men, and the definite precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, with all thy strength and with all thy mind and thy neighbour as thyself," concerns not affective but effective or active charity. For who could obey the command if it referred to feeling? We may therefore assume that effective charity is enjoined as the principle of merit, and affective rendered in reward. However, I do not deny that even in this present life we can, by the grace of God, make a beginning and some progress in affective charity; my contention is that its perfection and consummation belong exclusively to the happy life to come. How then, it may be asked, could God have laid upon us an obligation which it is absolutely impossible for us to discharge? Nevertheless, if

you still insist that the precept of charity has reference to charity of affection, I shall not quarrel with your conviction, provided you are willing to allow that the commandment has never been and never shall be perfectly fulfilled by any mere mortal. For who would be so presumptuous as to pretend to a perfection which was beyond the reach of St. Paul, as he confesses where he says, “I do not count myself to have apprehended”? The Divine Legislator knew perfectly well that the burden of this law exceeded human strength. But He deemed it profitable for men to be reminded thus of their own insufficiency, and to learn at the same time what is the perfection of justice to which they must strive to approximate by every means in their power. Therefore, in commanding what is impossible He designs to make us humble, not to prove us prevaricators, “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be made subject to God, because by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified before Him.” For, receiving the command, and being conscious of our sinfulness and incapacity, we shall cry aloud to heaven and the Lord God will have mercy on us; and in that day we shall know “that not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”

Thus, my brethren, should I speak were we convinced that the charity enjoined is affective charity. But in truth the object of the law appears to be rather effective charity. This becomes the more evident from the fact that after saying, “Love your enemies,” the Lord added immediately, “Do good to them that hate you,” which refers to good works, or to charity in operation. And elsewhere we read, “If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he be thirsty give him to drink.” Here also, as you perceive, there is question of love not in feeling but in effect. But attend once more to the Lord, where He is laying down the law concerning the love of Himself. “If you love Me,” He says, “keep my commandments.” In this place, again, by enjoining the observance of the commandments, He manifestly directs our attention to the works of charity. But if the love of Him whereof He is speaking, were only a matter of feeling, it would surely be superfluous to make mention of good works. It is in the same way, therefore, we must understand that other precept whereby we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves, even though this is not so clearly expressed. And for yourselves, my brethren, do you not consider yourselves to have sufficiently discharged the duty of fraternal charity, when you have fully observed that precept of the natural law, equally binding on every man, “See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another”; and also this, “All things therefore whatsoever you would that men

should do to you, do you also to them”?

But I do not mean to say that we should be devoid of affection, and that with hearts hard and dry we should exercise nothing but our hands in the works of piety. Amongst the other great and grievous crimes with which the Apostle charges the gentiles, I find this also enumerated, that they were “without affection.” Now, there is an affection which is begotten of the flesh; and there is an affection which is obedient to the rule of reason; and there is an affection which is seasoned with the salt of wisdom. The first is that whereof St. Paul declares, “It is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be.” Of the second the same Apostle bears opposite testimony, for it is the affection which “consents to the law (of God) that it is good.” These two, therefore, must differ from each other, since to one and the same law the latter is subject and the former insubordinate. But far removed from either is the last, which tastes and understands “that the Lord is sweet,” thus extinguishing the first and rewarding the second. For the affection of the flesh is pleasant but vile; the rational affection has strength without savour; whilst the affection of wisdom is both unctuous and sweet. Hence it is by the affection of reason that good works are performed; and it is truly a love of charity, not that emotional charity, which, as has been said, is seasoned and enriched with the salt of wisdom, and which replenishes the mind with a “multitude of (God’s) sweetness,” but the charity which I have called effective and operative. This indeed does not as yet delight and refresh the soul with the delicious love just mentioned, but it inflames our hearts with a vehement love of that love. “Let us not love in word nor in tongue,” says the Evangelist, “but in deed and in truth.”

Observe, my brethren, how carefully the beloved Disciple steers here a middle course between the vicious carnal love and the affective spiritual love, distinguishing from both one and the other the charity which is active and salutary. From this he excludes the falsity of a deceitful tongue, without requiring, however, as an evidence of its possession, that savour of sweetness which belongs to the affection of wisdom.” “Let us love,” he says, “in deed and in truth.” He speaks in this manner because he knows that we are moved to the performance of good works rather by the impulse of vivid truth than by the attraction of affective charity. “He set charity in order in me,” exclaims the Spouse. But is it affective charity or effective? Both surely, yet in opposite ways. For whereas the latter loves best what is low, the former prefers what is high. It cannot be questioned, for example, that in well-ordered affective charity the love of God takes precedence of the love of one’s neighbour, and as amongst men,

the more perfect are preferred to the less perfect, heaven is preferred to earth, eternity to time, the soul to the body. But well-regulated active charity moves in the inverse order, if not always, at least as a rule. For we feel ourselves pressed with greater solicitude and occupy ourselves more frequently in what concerns our neighbour than in the things appertaining to God; we show more care and assiduity in assisting the weak brother than him that is stronger; by the laws of humanity and the very necessity of our condition we pay more attention to the peace of earth than to the glory of heaven; we are so taken up with the worries of temporal affairs that we can scarcely give a thought to the interests of eternity, the wants of the soul receive little consideration, whereas we are all but constantly ministering to the needs of the body; “and such as we think to be the less honourable members of the body about these we put a more abundant honour,” as the Apostle speaks. Thus do we fulfil in a manner the word of the Lord Who said, “So shall the last be first and the first last.” Who can deny that in prayer we converse with God? Yet how often are we not obliged to interrupt and abandon that exercise at the bidding of charity, for the sake of those who need the help of our words or works! How often are we not compelled in the interests of piety to exchange the repose of pious contemplation for the turmoil of worldly affairs! How often without prejudice to conscience do we not put aside our spiritual book in order to devote ourselves to manual labour! Nay, how often do we not find in the necessity of looking after our temporal concerns more than sufficient reason for intermitting even the celebration of the Holy Mysteries! Surely a preposterous order. But necessity recognises no law. Effective charity thus pursues its own course, “beginning from the last,” according to the command of the Father of the family. That it is just and pious we must certainly acknowledge, seeing that it has no respect of persons, and considers not so much the worth of objects as the necessities of men.

The case is very different with affective charity, which begins not from the last, as the other, but from the first. For it is that wisdom by which we value and esteem things in accordance with the worth and merit of each, so that what possesses the highest intrinsic perfection attracts our affection most strongly; what has the less high, less; and what has the lowest, least. Such is the order demanded by the charity of truth; whereas the contrary is observed by the truth of charity. For it is evidently required by the truth of charity that they whose needs are greatest should be the first attended to; whilst, on the other hand, the charity of truth is then made manifest when the affection of the will follows the same order as the judgment of the reason. Therefore, my brother, if thou lovest

“the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength;” and if with a more ardent affection, lifting thyself higher than the mere love of divine love which contents effective charity, thou hast already arrived at the end whereto this is but the means, so that thou art now all inflamed with holy fire from thy proximity to the Godhead, having received the fulness of the Spirit—if thou hast attained to this, certainly God will give thee now an appreciation of Himself, which, if not worthy of His perfection—for no created intellect can form an adequate idea of that—shall at least be proportionate to thy limited capacity. Then thou shalt also esteem thyself at thy proper value. For thou shalt clearly understand that thou hast nothing at all in thyself which could found a title to even thine own love, except that, and in so far as, thou art God’s. I mean to say, thou shalt ascribe to Him exclusively whatever thou mayst find in thyself deserving of love. Thou shalt then, I repeat, value thyself at thy real worth, since by the very experience of the love and regard thou shalt feel for thyself, it will become plain to thee that thou hast absolutely no right to be loved, even by thyself, save only for His sake without Whom thou art nothing.

As for thy neighbour, whom thou art plainly obliged to love as thou lovest thyself, in order to appreciate him as he deserves, thou must estimate his worth not otherwise than as thou hast determined thine own. For he is what thou art, that is, a man. Consequently, since thou lovest thyself only for the reason that thou lovest God, it follows that thou wilt love equally with thyself all who equally love God. But the man who hates thee, by that fact does not love God, and is therefore nothing. Hence thou canst not love him as thyself, who art something, because of thy love for God. Nevertheless, thou mayst love him in order to excite him to love. There is a great difference between loving a man because he loves God, and loving him in order to lead him to the love of God. Therefore, if thou wouldst have an esteem for thine enemy, it will be necessary to appraise him not according to what he actually is, that is, as nothing, but according to what he may become, which, as being still uncertain, we may consider as next to nothing. But if we have certitude with regard to any creature that he is never to be restored to the love of God, such a one must be estimated, not according to what he may become and as next to nothing, but according to what he now is, and as nothing absolutely; since it is his destiny to remain for ever nothing. So far from being obliged to love one thus excluded eternally from the charity of God, we have rather the duty to hate him, conformably to what is written, “Have I not hated them, O Lord, that hated Thee, and pined away because of Thy enemies”? But this is the sole exception to the law of love. For

the rest, charity, which is particularly jealous of its rights herein, allows us to leave no man, even our bitterest enemy, without some little degree of affection. “Who is wise and will understand these things?”

My brethren, give me a man who loves God above all and with his whole being, and proportions his love of himself and his neighbour to his own and his neighbour’s love for God; who loves his enemies in the hope that they will at length recover the grace of divine charity; who loves the parents of his flesh with tenderness, by the instinct of nature, and the directors of his spirit with abundance, at the prompting of grace; and whose well-ordered love for God extends itself in the same manner to all the other creatures of God; who despises the earth, keeps his eyes lifted up to heaven, “uses this world as if he used it not,” and by the interior spiritual sense of taste can so distinguish between what is meant to be employed as a means and what must be embraced as an end, that he passes over things transitory in a transitory way, caring only for such of them as are necessary and in so far only as they are necessary, whilst he longs for the things of eternity with an insatiable desire—give me, I say, a man like this, and I will confidently declare him wise with the wisdom which esteems all things at their proper worth, so that he may glory like the Spouse with all justice and security, and may say, “He set charity in order in me.” But where shall we find such a man? Or when shall it be granted us to attain to such perfection? How long, with tears I ask it, how long must the homeland appear to us in the distance, without our being able to reach it? How long shall we sigh and salute it from afar, enjoying its perfumes, but unable to relish its sweetness? O Truth Divine, the exile’s home, and the end of his exile! Already I behold Thee; but, held back by the flesh, I am not able yet to enter Thee. Besides, I do not deserve to be admitted, all covered, as I am, with the soil of my sins. O Wisdom, Who “reachest from end to end mightly” in creating and embracing the universe, “and orderest all things sweetly” in regulating and beautifying our affections, direct our actions, we beseech Thee, according as our temporal necessities demand, and dispose our wills conformably to the requirements of Thy eternal truth, so that each one of us may at last securely glory in Thee, saying with the Spouse, “He set charity in order in me”! For Thou art the “Virtue of God” and the “Wisdom of God,” the Bridegroom of the Church, Christ Jesus Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LI

ON THE MYSTICAL FLOWERS AND FRUITS, AND THE BRIDEGROOM'S RIGHT AND LEFT HAND

> "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love. His Left Hand is under my head, and His Right shall embrace me."

"Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love." The charity of the Spouse, my brethren, has grown stronger than ever, having gathered new energies from the extraordinary succession of favours just now bestowed. For you have seen how generously she was allowed to enjoy not alone the presence, but even the familiar conversation of her Beloved. Moreover, He appeared to her in this visitation with a more serene countenance than usual, His language was pleasanter, and He gave her more of His company than on former occasions; and not content to delight her with His loving communications, He crowned her happiness by adding words of praise. Nor was this all. She obtained besides the privilege of resting under the shadow of Him Whom she desired, of eating of His fruit, and drinking of His chalice. For it is not to be supposed that she came forth thirsty from the "cellar of wine," into which she was boasting just now of having been introduced. But perhaps it would be better to say that she did come forth thirsty, since we read in Ecclesiastes, "They that drink me shall yet thirst." After granting her all these favours, the Beloved retired, according to His custom. Immediately she proclaims herself languishing with love, that is to say, reduced to a state of weakness by the violence of love. And the bitterness which she suffers at the departure of her Bridegroom is proportionate to the delight which she experienced in His presence. For the deprivation of what one loves, increases one's desire of it, and the pain of separation varies in intensity with the ardour of desire. The Spouse, therefore, begs to be consoled with the pleasant odours of flowers and fruits, until the hour when He shall again come back to her Whose absence she can scarcely endure. So much for the order of discourse.

Let us now endeavour, under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, to extract the mystical meaning which lies underneath the rind of the letter. If we suppose the speaker in this place to be the universal Church of the saints, the flowers and the fruits must be understood as representing ourselves, and not us only, but all others, equally, throughout the whole earth, who have been converted from a worldly life. By the flowers are designated the young and tender virtues of those who are still in their spiritual beginnings, whilst the fruit is meant to symbolise the strength and maturity of the perfect. Stayed up, therefore, with such flowers and compassed about with such apples, holy mother Church, fruitful even in her exile, to whom "to live is Christ and to die gain," supports doubtless with equanimity the bitterness of her banishment; because according to Holy Scripture, there is given to her "o the fruit of her hands," as of the first-fruits of the Spirit, and "her works praise her in the gates." But if we wish, according to the moral sense, to assign both the fruit and the flowers to the same soul, then the flowers must be taken to signify faith, and the fruit good works. Nor, as I think, will you judge this to be fanciful, when you remember that good works must always follow faith, just as the fruit is preceded by the blossom. For we have it on the authority of St. Paul that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Nay, the same Apostle teaches that "all that is not of faith is sin." And so it is quite as impossible to have good works without faith, as it is to have fruit without flowers. Furthermore, just as the flower has no value if the fruit does not follow it, so, "faith without works is dead." "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love." By these words we are given to understand that the soul accustomed to the tranquil repose of prayer, must find her consolation in the good works which spring from the root of a sincere faith, whenever, as frequently happens, the light and grace of contemplation is temporarily withdrawn. For it is a great thing and a rare thing to be favoured even occasionally with such a grace, not to speak of enjoying it uninterruptedly, whilst we are still abiding in the flesh. But, as I have said, whenever the divine light is eclipsed in the soul, she should immediately apply herself to the practice of the virtues, so that she may the more easily return to the happier state, as being still in its neighbourhood, so to speak. For the contemplative and the active life are closely related to each other and live under the same roof. Remember that Martha is Mary's sister. Therefore, when the soul loses the light of holy contemplation for a time, she does not fall into the darkness of sin, or into the lethargy of sloth, but keeps herself bright and active by the performance of good works. And lest you should find it hard to believe

that good works are light, listen to the words of the Lord: “Let your light shine before men,” where by “light” He evidently means virtuous actions, visible to human eyes.

“Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love.” The flame of love burns brightly, my brethren, in the presence of the person beloved, but languishes in his absence. This languishing is nothing else than the weariness begotten of impatient desire, which must inevitably come upon the soul when her love is strong and the loved one absent, whilst in the eagerness of her longing the swiftest haste is reputed tardy. Therefore, the Spouse is here expressing the wish to be surrounded with the fruits of good works, and the sweet odours of faith, wherein she may find consolation whilst “the Bridegroom tarries.” Let me now tell you something of my own experience in this matter. Whenever I discover that any of you is making better progress towards perfection in consequence of my exhortations and admonitions, I confess I feel no regret for having given up my own leisure and repose to the labour of preparing my discourses. For example, if after the sermon the hot-tempered monk is found to be gentle, the proud monk humble, and the pusillanimous trustful; further, if those who were already conspicuously gentle, humble, or trustful are seen to have advanced each in his special virtue, and are now more gentle, more humble, or more trustful; if again, they who perhaps had grown tepid and languid in the service of God, going through every spiritual exercise in a sluggish and drowsy manner, appear to have been aroused and renewed in fervour by the “burning word” of the Lord; and, finally, if they who, forsaking the well of wisdom, had “digged to themselves broken cisterns” of self-will, “that can hold no water,” who consequently with hearts heavy and dry, as containing no moisture of devotion, were wont to murmur against every order of authority: when these, I say, prove themselves to have “flourished again” unto the perfect practice of obedience, and appear now docile and devout in all things, because of the “free rain,” the dew of the word, which God has “set aside for His inheritance”—I assure you, my brethren, that it is impossible for my soul to admit any sadness, or to grieve over the loss of the delights of contemplation, when thus encompassed with these flowers and fruits of piety. Patiently shall I suffer myself to be withdrawn from the embraces of the barren Rachel, provided I can obtain from the fertile Lia an abundant fruit in your advancement. I certainly shall never begrudge the time consumed in the preparation of these discourses, which otherwise I should have spent in the repose of contemplation, so long as I behold the seed of my words germinating in your hearts, and

springing up into a plentiful harvest of the fruits of justice. For charity, which "seeketh not her own," easily persuaded me long ago that my own private satisfaction should never be preferred to the common good. Prayer, reading, writing, meditation, and if there be any other spiritual exercise "that was gain to me, the same I have counted loss for" your sakes.

"Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love." These words, my brethren, may be accordingly understood as addressed to the young maidens by the Spouse in the absence of the Beloved, in order to admonish them of the necessity of advancing in faith and good works "until He come." For she was well aware that by doing so they would be fulfilling the good pleasure of her Bridegroom, securing their own salvation, and bringing consolation to herself. I remember to have explained this verse more fully and in a different sense in my book "On the Love of God"; but whether better or worse than now, I leave him to decide who may wish to compare the two expositions. But surely no person of prudence will find fault with me for giving various interpretations of the same text, provided nothing is said anywhere contrary to truth. For charity, which every part of Holy Scripture is intended to subserve, will be able to accomplish its work of edification all the more efficaciously, in proportion to the number of apt expositions discoverable for each passage. Why should we condemn in scriptural exegesis what we are constantly doing in the use of other things? Take water, for example. How many are the purposes for which it is employed in relation to our bodies! In the same way, there should be no objection to the practice of drawing out from any single text of Scripture a variety of apt significations, suited to the necessity or the use of different souls.

But the Spouse continues, "His Left Hand is under my head, and His Right Hand shall embrace me." These words also, as I recollect, have been discussed at length in the above-mentioned treatise. But let me explain the sequence of the discourse. The Bridegroom has evidently returned. He came back, as it seems to me, in order to console by His presence His languishing Spouse. And surely she must have recovered her spirits in the society of Him Whose absence had filled her with sadness. He, on His side, has been unable to endure the sight of His dear one in sorrow. So He has come back to comfort her. How could He delay, when invoked with such ardent desires? And seeing that during His absence she has been faithful in the performance of good works and diligent in the pursuit of spiritual profit, inasmuch as she has bidden her daughters, the young maidens, to compass her about with the fruits and flowers of virtue, therefore is He now

returned to her with a more generous largess of graces than on any former occasion. For with one of His arms He supports her drooping head, and is preparing to encircle her with the other and to clasp her to His Bosom. Happy the soul that rests on the Bosom of Christ and reposes in the arms of the Word! “His Left Hand is under my head, and His Right Hand embrace me.” Observe how she does not say, “His Right Hand embraces me,” but “His Right Hand shall embrace me.” By this we are given to understand that, far from showing herself ungrateful for the first grace received, she even anticipates the second with her thanksgiving.

Learn from the Spouse, my brethren, to be neither slow nor slack in expressing your gratitude; learn to render thanks for every favour bestowed. “Consider diligently what is set before your face,” so that none of the gifts of God, the ordinary no more than the extraordinary, the least no more than the greatest, may fail to be duly and gratefully acknowledged. Remember that we are ordered to “gather up the fragments, lest they be lost.” That is to say, we are required to return thanks for even the very smallest of God’s favours. For we always lose the benefit of divine graces when we neglect to requite them with thanksgiving. Ingratitude is the enemy of the soul, the extinguisher of merits, the destroyer of virtues, the waster of benefits. Ingratitude is a burning wind that dries up the fountains of piety, and the dews of mercy, and the springs of grace. Therefore it is that the Spouse hastens to give thanks as soon as she experiences the grace of the Left Hand, without waiting for the plenitude which belongs to the Right. For after mentioning that her Bridegroom’s Left Hand is under her head, she does not say, in the present, that she is, but in the future, that she shall be embraced with His Right Hand.

But, my brethren, what are we to understand by the Right Hand and the Left Hand of the heavenly Bridegroom, of the Word of God? Surely even of that which is called the word of man we would not say that it is divided in itself into such a variety of corporeal parts, or that it possesses a plurality of material members distinct from each other and distinguishing the whole into right side and left. Much less, therefore, does the Word of God, Itself very God, admit any diversity of what kind soever; for It is what is, as simple in Its nature to the exclusion of parts, as It is in essence unique to the exclusion of number. For the Word is that Wisdom of God of Which it is written, “And of His Wisdom there is no number.” Now that which excludes from itself all variety and distinction is necessarily incomprehensible, and by consequence ineffable. Where, then, I ask, shall we find words with which we may worthily describe that awful Majesty,

speak of It with propriety, or define It accurately? However, I shall express as well as I can whatever little of that infinite Object I am enabled dimly to apprehend by the light of the Holy Spirit. We are taught by the example of the holy fathers, and by the custom of the inspired authors, that it is permissible to borrow suitable images from the things we know, wherewith to represent to ourselves the perfections of God; and instead of coining new words, to weave from the old a proper and becoming vesture for the ideas thus acquired. Otherwise we should commit the absurdity of attempting to explain the unknown by the unknown.

Therefore, since by right and left are wont to be designated prosperity and adversity, it seems to me that the Left Hand of the Word may be understood here as signifying His threatenings of chastisement, and His Right as representing the promise of the kingdom. There are times, my brethren, when the servile fear of punishment weighs heavy upon the soul. Whilst this is the case, the Left Hand of the Beloved should be described rather as over than as under her head; for so long as she is thus affected she certainly cannot say with truth, “His Left Hand is under my head.” But if she mounts higher, and exchanges the spirit of servitude for the more worthy disposition which makes obedience spontaneous, so that she is now more drawn by the hope of heaven than driven by the terror of hell, or, better still, makes the love of the good for its own sake the motive of her actions, then without doubt she will be able to say, “His Left Hand is under my head.” For she has now lifted her head above the slavish fear of chastisement, which is in the Left Hand, and has attained to a better and nobler disposition of mind. Nay, by the force of her worthy desires, she is even drawing near to the Right Hand, which holds the promises, as the Psalmist says, speaking to the Lord, “At Thy Right Hand are delights even to the end.” Therefore she has conceived an assured hope which she expresses in the confident anticipation, “And His Right Hand shall embrace me.”

Consider now, with me, my brethren, whether a soul in such dispositions, and raised to such a height of blissful love, may not also apply to herself the words of the Psalmist, and sing with security, “In peace in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest”; especially since she has the same reason for her peace as that assigned in the words which follow, “For Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope.” The case is this. So long as the soul is influenced by the spirit of servitude she has but little hope and an excessive amount of fear. For her, as appears sufficiently manifest, there is no possibility of either rest or peace whilst her conscience is thus wavering between security and alarm; and the less so,

inasmuch as terror predominates and tortures her above measure, for “fear hath pain.” Such a soul, consequently, cannot say sincerely, “In peace in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest,” because she is not as yet able to make her own the acknowledgment which succeeds, “For Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope.” But when, little by little fear begins to fail and hope to wax strong under the gradually growing influence of grace; when at length that stage is reached at which charity, rising up in its might, runs to the help of the sister virtue and “casteth out fear,” does it not seem to you, my brethren, that this soul is now “singularly settled in hope,” and may therefore sing with the Psalmist, “In peace in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest”?

“If you sleep among the midst of lots,” says holy David, “you shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver.” By these words, as I think, he designs to teach us that the intervening space between fear and assurance is occupied by hope, wherein the mind or the conscience most sweetly reposes, reclining at ease on the soft couch of charity. And possibly there is another reference to this intermediate place in a subsequent verse of this Canticle of Canticles, where in the description of Solomon’s litter we read, amongst other things, “The midst he covered with charity for the daughters of Jerusalem.” For the soul which feels herself to be “singularly settled in hope,” can no longer serve in fear, but thenceforward reposes in charity. So the Spouse rests and slumbers, since it is said with regard to her, “I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up nor make the beloved to wake till she please.” O marvellous and unspeakable condescension! That the Word of God should make the contemplative soul rest upon His own Bosom, and, not content with this, should deign to defend her against the incursions of care, to protect her from the disquiet of her natural activities, and from the weariness of worldly distractions, and should even take precautions to prevent her being awakened until she herself pleases! But I must not now attempt a discussion of this verse. Instead of treating it in a superficial manner at the end of a sermon already long enough, I will rather hold it over to serve as the text of the morrow’s discourse, in order that words so full of sweetness may not suffer in the exposition from any want of due diligence. Not that even then we shall be “sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves,” especially concerning a subject so noble, so excellent, so transcendently sublime, “but all our sufficiency is from God,” the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LII

ON THE MYSTICAL SLEEP OF THE SPOUSE, AND THE TWO KINDS OF ECSTASY

> "I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up nor make the beloved to wake till she please."

"I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up nor make the beloved to wake till she please." This adjuration, my brethren, is addressed to the young maidens. For they are the "daughters of Jerusalem," so called because although delicate and tender, and still weak and girlish in their actions and affections, nevertheless they cling close to the Spouse, in the hope of advancing towards and ultimately reaching the heavenly Jerusalem. These therefore the Bridegroom charges not to intrude upon His beloved whilst she is taking her repose, and on no account to presume to awaken her until it is her pleasure. For the reason why He places His Hand under her head, like a most affectionate husband (according to what has been said already), is in order that He may make her rest and slumber on His Bosom. And now the Holy Scripture further tells us that He most lovingly and condescendingly watches over her while she sleeps, lest the young maidens, with their frequent little troubles, should disturb her quiet and compel her to interrupt her repose. Such appears to be the literal connexion of our present text with the preceding. Yet as regards that solemn adjuration "by the roes and the harts of the fields," if we take the words literally they seem to bear no relevant sense, so entirely are they appropriated to the spiritual signification. But however this may be, at all events, "it is good for us to be here," and to spend a little time contemplating the goodness, the sweetness, the gracious condescension of the heavenly Bridegroom. What tenderness, O man, hast thou ever found in any human affection to be compared with that which is revealed to us here from the Heart of the Most High? And the revelation is made by the Holy Ghost Who "searcheth the deep things of God," Who cannot be ignorant of anything

contained in the Heart of Him Whose own Spirit He is, and, as being the Spirit of truth, cannot speak anything other than what He finds therein recorded.

Nor is there wanting of our own race one who has been so happy as to merit the joy of being made the object of this divine tenderness, and of experiencing in herself this delightful secrets of heavenly love. To question this would be to doubt the truth of the inspired passage which I am now discussing. For the celestial Bridegroom is clearly represented here as most anxiously concerned for the repose of a human Spouse very dear to Him, whom with affectionate solicitude He holds in His arms whilst she slumbers, fearful lest a sleep so pleasant should be disturbed by any annoyance or agitation. My brethren, I cannot contain myself for joy, when I think of how that infinite Majesty disdains not to stoop so low as to engage thus in sweet and familiar intercourse with our poor nature, when I think of how the Most High God vouchsafes to contract a marriage alliance with the soul even during the time of her exile, and to manifest towards her all the tender affection which the most loving of bridegrooms could show to his bride. I have no doubt that what we read of on earth is perfectly accomplished in the case of every soul in heaven. I believe that we shall fully experience there what we here find described in the holy Book; except that no language can give a true idea of the capacity for love which the soul shall have in the next life, nor even of that with which she is at present endowed. What, think you, is the happiness awaiting her in heaven, when even on earth she is treated so affectionately that she feels herself embraced with the arms of God, fostered on the Bosom of God, guarded by the watchfulness and jealousy of God, lest anything should disturb her slumber and cause her to awake before it is her pleasure?

But now, my brethren, let me explain, if I can, what is this sleep which the Bridegroom wants His Spouse to enjoy, and will not allow her to be awakened out of it except at her own desire. An explanation is necessary, because otherwise, when some one happens to read in the Apostle, “It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep”; or, in the psalms, that verse where David says to God, “Enlighten my eyes that I may never sleep in death,” he may easily be puzzled by the ambiguity of the term sleep, and be quite unable to discover any worthy interpretation for the slumber of the Spouse, of which there is question here. Nor has this sleep anything in common with that whereof Christ spoke in the Gospel, when He said, “Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” For the sleep He meant was the sleep of bodily death, although the disciples understood His words as referring to ordinary slumber. The sleep of the

Spouse has nothing to do with the body. It is as distinct from that gentle sleep which for a time sweetly seals up the material senses, as it is from the more terrible which finally extinguishes the life of the flesh. Still less is it identified with the sleep of spiritual death which paralyses the soul whilst she obstinately perseveres in a state of sin. For instead of bringing darkness and torpor, the sleep of the Spouse is wakeful and life-giving; it illuminates the mind, expels the death of sin, and bestows immortality. Nevertheless, it is a true sleep, which transports rather than stupefies the faculties. It is also a true death. This I affirm without the least hesitation, since the Apostle says, in commendation of some who were still living in the flesh, “You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Therefore I also can be guilty of no absurdity when I describe the ecstasy of the Spouse as a kind of death, not the death which terminates life, but that which delivers her true life from danger, so that she may say with the Psalmist, “Our soul hath been delivered as a sparrow out of the snare of the fowlers.” For in the present life the soul is always surrounded by the snares of temptation, which, however, have no power to frighten her as often as she is transported out of herself by some holy and irresistible attraction, if yet the mental exaltation and ravishment be so great as to lift her above the common and usual modes of thinking and feeling. So we read in Proverbs, “A net is spread in vain before the eyes of them that have wings.” For what has such a soul to fear from sensuality, since she has lost even the faculty of sensation? No longer conscious of material impressions, though remaining still the principle of life to the body, she is necessarily inaccessible to temptations from the senses. “Who will give me the wings of a dove and I will fly and be at rest?” Would to God that I could often endure a death of this kind and thus escape the snares of a more terrible death! So should I be insensible to the fatal allurements of luxury; so should I be unconscious of the stings of the flesh, of the suggestions of avarice, of the swellings of anger and impatience, of the torments of anxiety and the miseries of care. “Let my soul die the death of the just,” so that deception may no longer have power to ensnare me nor sin to seduce! Happy death which destroys not life, but changes it to better! Happy death which lifts the soul to heaven without laying the body low!

Yet this manner of dying is peculiar to men. Therefore, “Let my soul die the death of the angels” also (if I may use the expression), so that escaping from the memory of all present things, she may strip herself, not alone of the desires, but even of the images of inferior and corporeal objects, and may converse spiritually with them whom she resembles in spirituality! The name

contemplation, as it seems to me, belongs either solely or principally to such a mental ecstasy. It is the part of human virtue to live on earth unfettered by earthly desires; but to be able to contemplate truth without the help of material or sensible images is the characteristic of angelic purity. Yet each of these two is the gift of God. Each is a true ecstasy. In each the soul rises above herself, but in the second far higher than in the first. Blessed is the soul which can say in this sense, “Lo, I have gone far off, flying away; and I abode in the wilderness”! It is not enough for her that she is transported out of herself, unless she can fly far away and be at rest. Thou hast obtained such a victory over the temptations of the flesh that thou dost no longer gratify its concupiscence nor yield assent to its enticements. This certainly is progress. Thou hast truly gone forth from thyself. But thou hast not yet flown afar, unless, by the purity of thy mind, thou art able to rise above the images of sensible objects, which are constantly rushing in upon thee from every side. Until thou hast attained to this, do not promise thyself any rest. Thou art in error if thou thinkest that the place of repose, the quiet of solitude, the perfection of light, and the dwelling of peace can be found any nearer. But show me the man who has arrived at this point, and I shall unhesitatingly pronounce him to be at rest and qualified to say, “Turn, O my soul, into thy rest; for the Lord hath been bountiful to thee.” Here truly is a home in solitude, and a dwelling in the light, and, according to the Prophet Isaias, “a tabernacle for a shade in the day-time from the heat, and a security and covert from the whirlwind and from the rain.” It is of the same the Psalmist sings, “For He hath hidden me in His tabernacle; in the day of evils He hath protected me in the secret place of His tabernacle.”

It appears to me, therefore, that it is into this solitude the Spouse has retired, and there, overpowered by the beauty of the place, has sweetly fallen asleep in the arms of her Beloved. In other words, she has been visited by the slumber of spiritual rapture, and this is the sleep out of which the young maidens are forbidden to awaken her, until she herself pleases. But let us examine the mode of the Bridegroom’s prohibition. It is not a mere warning, couched in the usual mild and simple language, but is expressed in the form of an earnest entreaty, accompanied with the very strange and solemn adjuration, “by the roes and the harts of the field.” Now these animals are chiefly remarkable for keenness of sight and powers of leaping, and for that reason have been fittingly selected, as I suppose, to symbolise the holy souls which have parted from the body, and the blissful angels who dwell with God. For both orders of spirits are known to be gifted with analogous endowments, whereby they can either soar to the loftiest

things or penetrate the most profound. Again, the roes and harts are described as living at large in the open fields, because in this they typify the free and unconfined flights of spiritual contemplation. Why, then, are the young maidens adjured by the harts and the roes? Doubtless, to remind them that they should not through wantonness or levity call away the Spouse from the society of blessed spirits, human and angelic, to which she gains admittance as often as she is rapt in ecstasy. Very properly, therefore, are the daughters kept in check by the authority of these heavenly princes, from whose company, as they know, their importunity will recall their mother. Hence, let the young maidens bear in mind against whom they offend whenever they needlessly disturb the Spouse; and let them not so far presume on her maternal love as to have no fear of intruding rashly into this celestial assembly; and finally, let them know that they are guilty of such irreverence and rudeness every time they oblige their mother, without just cause, to interrupt her contemplation. It is for her alone to determine how much of her time ought to be devoted to the care of herself, and how much to the interests of her daughters. This is plain from the fact that they are not allowed to awaken her until she herself pleases. Well does the Bridegroom know with what ardent charity His beloved is inflamed even with respect to her neighbours, and with what motherly affection she keeps anxious watch over her daughters' spiritual progress, so that she is always ready and willing to put herself at their service as often as occasion requires. He therefore considers that this administration may be safely entrusted to her prudence. For she is not like so many other superiors whom we may observe to be incurring the Prophet's malediction, for that they take to themselves the fat and the strong and cast the weak away as nothing worth. Surely it is not the sound whom the physician should seek but rather the ailing. And if sometimes he does visit the hale, it is only as a friend not as a healer. Pray, tell me, good master, whom wilt thou consent to teach, if thou rejectest all that are ignorant? To whom, I ask, wilt thou show thyself a zealous instructor in discipline, if thou avoidest or repellest the wayward? To whom shalt thy patience be proved if, excluding the perverse, thou admittest none but the docile?

Nevertheless, my brethren, "there are some of them that (sit) here," whom I could wish to see more exactly observing what our present text enjoins. They would not then forget the reverence due to their superiors, whose repose they so often disturb without necessity, and thus make themselves displeasing even to the citizens of heaven; and perhaps they would begin at last to give me also a little more peace than usual, and might not as now intrude upon my leisure with

as little good cause as good manners. They are well aware that, even though they treated me with all consideration, the duty of attending to our visitors would seldom leave me an hour to myself. However, I feel somewhat scrupulous about complaining in this manner, lest some pusillanimous soul should overtax her powers of endurance by concealing her necessities, because she is afraid of disturbing me. I shall therefore say no more on the subject. Otherwise, instead of edifying the weak, I should rather appear to be setting them an example of impatience. The “little ones” of the Lord are they who believe in His name. I will not allow them to take scandal from me. I will not make use of my authority to protect myself from their importunity. Let them use me as much as they like. I shall be content, provided only they save their souls. They will spare me most by not sparing me at all; and I shall be never more at ease than when they fearlessly invade my hours of repose for the relief of their necessities. I am determined to accommodate myself to their desires as far as my powers may permit me. So long as I live, I will serve the Lord by serving my brethren “in charity unfeigned.” I will not seek the things that are my own; neither will I judge that to be profitable which advances my personal interests, but rather what is of use to the brotherhood. This only I ask, that my ministry may be made acceptable and fruitful to my brethren. So perhaps, “in the evil day,” I may find mercy, for their sakes, in the eyes of their heavenly Father, and of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LIII

ON THE SPIRITUAL HILLS AND MOUNTAINS, AND THE LEAPINGS OF THE BRIDEGROOM

"The voice of my Beloved: behold He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills."

"The voice of my Beloved." The Spouse, my brethren, already perceives that the young maidens have become unusually shy and reverentially fearful. She perceives it from the fact that they do not now dare as formerly to intrude upon her leisure, nor presume, "as yesterday and the day before," to disturb the quiet of her contemplative repose. She recognises that this is due to her Bridegroom's care and diligence in her behalf. Therefore she rejoices in spirit, whether over the young maidens' amendment, forasmuch as they have now, under obedience, desisted from causing excessive and needless commotion; or because of the security from interruption which she shall henceforth enjoy during prayer; or on account of the condescension and favour of her Beloved, Who so watchfully prevents the disturbance of her slumber and so zealously protects against intruders the delights of her leisure, which is in reality the time of her busiest application. And by the words, "The voice of my Beloved," she acknowledges that the change in the young maidens is the result of the rebuke which He has addressed to them. For one who is burdened with the anxious responsibility of directing others can rarely, if ever, give himself to himself without scruple. He is always afraid that he is neglecting his subjects, and so displeasing God, by preferring his own repose and the sweetness of contemplation to the care of the community. However, it sometimes happens that a certain fear or reverence, infused from heaven into the hearts of his children, not only allows him an hour of leisure, but also gives him to understand that his retirement is acceptable to the Lord—from Whose grace it comes that the little ones are willing to suffer their trials in patience rather than trouble their spiritual father. And whenever this happens, what gladness, what peace inundates his soul! For this proper respect, manifested towards him by the "little ones," plainly shows that they

have heard within them the voice—threatening, as it were, and reproving—of Him Who says through the Prophet, “I (am He) that speaketh justice.” His voice is His inspiration, His voice in the infusion of holy fear.

The Spouse, therefore, on hearing this voice is filled with gladness and exultingly exclaims, “The voice of my Beloved.” For she is “the friend of the Bridegroom, who rejoiceth with joy because of the Bridegroom’s voice.” And she adds, “Behold He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.” She discovered His presence by the sound of His voice. Now, with the commendable curiosity of holy love, she strains her eyes, being anxious to see as well as to hear Him. Thus hearing leads to seeing, since “faith is from hearing.” And it is faith that cleanses our hearts and so enables us to see God, as it is written, “purifying your hearts by faith.” Therefore, Him Whom she has heard speaking, she now sees approaching. For the Holy Spirit observes here the order which the Psalmist indicates, where he says, “Hearken, O daughter, and see.” And the better to convince you that it is not by accident or chance that hearing is put before sight in this place, but rather by deliberate design, and for the purpose I have mentioned, I want you to examine if it is not the same order holy Job is found to follow, when he thus addresses God, “With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but now my eye seeth Thee.” Again, in the passage which describes the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday, is it not expressly mentioned that hearing anticipated sight? We read, “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty, wind coming,” and afterwards “there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were, of fire.” In this place, then, we have it stated explicitly that the advent of the Holy Spirit was revealed first to the hearing, and secondly to the sight. But there is no need to labour the point further. You yourselves, if you care to take the trouble of searching, will doubtless succeed in discovering many similar testimonies in different parts of Scripture.

Let us now turn our thoughts to a question which calls for more careful consideration as presenting greater difficulties to the inquirer. And here I confess that I stand in particular need of the help of the Holy Ghost, whilst I am endeavouring to explain what those mountains and hills are, which the Church, with gladdened eyes, beheld her Bridegroom leaping upon and skipping over. He was then, as I suppose, hastening to effect the redemption of her whose beauty He desired. I am led to take this view and to hold it firmly by the fact that something very like it occurs in the psalms, where the Prophet, evidently foreseeing and heralding the coming of Christ, expresses himself thus, “He hath

set His tabernacle in the sun: and He as a Bridegroom, coming out of His bride-chamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way. His going out is from the end of heaven, and His circuit even to the end thereof." We know perfectly well, my brethren, what that setting forth was, and what that return. We know likewise by Whom and with what intent that course was undertaken and that circuit consummated. For surely when we read of such things, whether in the psalms or in the present Canticle, we are not to represent to ourselves a man of gigantic stature who is captivated by the human love of his absent human spouse, and who in the heat of his hurry to embrace her, comes leaping and skipping over the mountains and hills. Neither should we suppose that the mountains and hills here in question are the huge piles of earthy matter, such as we see around us, which tower high above the level plain, and some of which seem to lift their crests over the clouds of heaven. Indeed it would be altogether unbecoming to entertain such gross material conceptions when explaining the Holy Scriptures, especially when treating of a canticle so spiritual as this. It would even be unlawful, since, as you remember, Christ tells us in the Gospel that, "God is a Spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth."

What, then, my brethren, are these spiritual mountains and hills? When this has been decided, we shall be able to give an accordant account of the Bridegroom's leaping upon and skipping over them. For He is God, and therefore a Spirit. We may suppose the mountains and hills in question to be the same on which, as the Gospel mentions, the ninety-nine sheep were left of old, when their devoted Shepherd descended to earth in quest of the one that had wandered away. But here we encounter a difficulty and the mind sticks fast in doubt. For it is not easy to understand what are those spiritual hills and mountains (and of what kind) said to be occupied by the heavenly and angelic spirits (represented beyond question by the ninety-nine sheep) as a habitation and a place of pasture, so to speak. Yet, unless such things really existed, Truth would not have spoken a parable that implies them. Neither would the Royal Prophet have said of the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, long ages before, that "the foundations thereof are in the holy mountains," if there were no holy mountains in heaven. Finally, we have the testimony of Isaias for the fact that the blessed kingdom above possesses not only spiritual, but even living and rational mountains and hills, where he says, "The mountains and the hills shall sing praise before God."

What therefore can these hills and mountains be but he very spiritual inhabitants of heaven, whom the Lord calls His sheep? Hence mountains and

sheep signify the same. But perhaps some of you may think it absurd that mountains should be represented as pasturing on mountains, or sheep upon sheep. And indeed in the literal signification it does sound rather strange. But if spiritually examined, it will be found to contain a very beautiful meaning. That is to say, if you consider carefully how Christ, the Pastor of both flocks, and the Wisdom of God, ministers one and the same food of truth in one way to the sheep of heaven and in another to those of earth. For we, mortal men, whilst here we sojourn in the place of our banishment, are obliged to eat our spiritual bread in the sweat of our brow, and in labour and pain to beg it outside ourselves, namely, from the learned, from holy books, or at any rate, "clearly seeing the invisible things of God, being understood by the things that are made." The angels, on the contrary, obtain in all plenitude and with equal ease and felicity, if not from themselves, certainly in themselves, the means not only of supporting life, but also of living happily. For they are all "taught of God." We have received an infallible promise that the elect amongst men shall all be admitted sooner or later to participate with them in the same high privilege. But it is not given them to enjoy it here below in a happy security.

The mountains, therefore, feed on the mountains and the sheep on the sheep, when those celestial spiritual essences find abundantly within themselves, from the Word of life, wherewith to sustain a blissful immortality. They are at once mountains and sheep. They are mountains because of their loftiness and fulness. They are sheep on account of their mildness. For although full of God, lofty in merits, eminent in virtues, yet with humble obedience they bow their exalted heads and submit to the authority of the Divine Majesty, at an infinite height above them; like the gentlest of sheep which are directed in all things by the will of their shepherd, and follow him faithfully whithersoever he goes. And, according to the Prophet David, in these truly holy mountains, as in wisdom, the first of creatures, have been firmly laid from the beginning and securely repose the foundations of the city of God; which, although in part triumphant in heaven and in part still sojourning on earth, is nevertheless one city. But from the same mountains, as if from living "high-sounding cymbals," there is constantly resounding, as Isaias informs us, "thanksgiving and the voice of praise." Thus with their sweet and never-ceasing songs they fulfil what the same Prophet promised for them in the words above quoted, "The mountains and the hills shall sing praise before God," or what the Pslamist says, speaking to the Lord, "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they shall praise Thee for ever and ever."

We must now return to the subject whence we have made a short, but, as I think, not unnecessary digression. The angels, therefore, are the mountains and hills on which the Church saw her heavenly Bridegroom leaping with extraordinary agility, and not only leaping on, but skipping over them, what time He was hurrying to enjoy the pleasure of her company. Do you wish me to explain, from the writings of the prophets and apostles, what these leapings and skippings were? Well, you shall be satisfied. But I do not undertake to put before you now all the relevant testimonies which you can collect for yourselves in the Scriptures at your leisure. It would be too tedious a task to attempt in a sermon, besides being unnecessary. I shall, therefore, adduce now only those passages which appear to confirm briefly and clearly what is here said by the Spouse concerning the Bridegroom's leaping and kipping. It is of the Beloved the Psalmist sings, "He lath set His tabernacle in the sun; and He, as a Bridegroom coming out of His bride-chamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way. His going out is from the end of heaven." See what a leap He gave here, from the height of heaven even unto the earth! For certainly I can find no other place, except this earth, where He, "Who dwelleth in light inaccessible," "hath set His tabernacle in the sun," that is to say, has condescended to reveal and manifest His presence to mortal eyes. So it is written, "He was seen upon earth and conversed with men." On earth, I say, "He hath set in the sun," viz., made clearly manifest, the tabernacle of His Body, which He vouchsafed to fashion for Himself from the flesh of the Virgin, in order that He might therein be rendered visible, being invisible in Himself, and that "all flesh might see the Salvation of God," Who had come in the flesh.

He leaped, therefore, upon the mountains, that is to say, upon the superior angelic orders, when He descended to their level, graciously revealing to them the "mystery which hath been hidden from eternity," the "great mystery of godliness." But skipping over these greater and more lofty mountains, the Cherubim, namely, and the Seraphim, and the Dominations, and the Principalities, and the Powers, and the Virtues, He disdained not to come down even to the lowest celestial choirs, which may be regarded as the hills. Yet He skipped over the hills also. For as the Apostle says, "Nowhere doth He take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold," in order that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by holy David, when he said to the Father concerning the Son, "Thou hast made Him a little less than the angels"; for the seed of Abraham is evidently inferior to the angels. However, it is also possible to understand these words of the Prophet as spoken in commendation of our

human dignity, and signifying that man, made to God's image and likeness, and endowed just as the angels with the faculty of understanding, falls short of the perfection of these spiritual essences only by his dependence on an earthly body. But listen to St. Paul speaking unambiguously of the Incarnation of the Son: "Who, being in the Form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man." And again, "When the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law." He, therefore, who was "made of a woman" and "made under the law," undoubtedly, in descending so low, skipped over not alone the mountains, that is, the higher and greater heavenly spirits, but also the inferior angelic choirs, which, in comparison with the others, are properly designated by the name of hills. But he that is lesser in the kingdom of God is greater than" any flesh-burdened spirit on earth, not even excepting the great Baptist. And although we acknowledge that God is made man, and that even as united to man He is exalted incomparably over all Powers and Principalities; nevertheless by reason of His human infirmity, He yields to those whom He excels by His Majesty. In this way, then, did He leap on the mountains and skip over the hills, when He condescended most graciously to make Himself inferior to the lowest as well as to the highest of the heavenly spirits. And it was not the angels only whom He placed Himself beneath. He became subject even to human spirits that dwell in houses of clay, the humility of God skipping over and conquering the humility of man. For when He was twelve years of age, He submitted Himself to Mary and Joseph at Nazareth; and in the Jordan He bowed beneath the hands of John, although He was then in His prime. But behold, the day is declining, and still we may not yet descend from these mystical mountains.

But if I attempted in the present discourse to examine all the beauties of the heavenly heights which we are now contemplating, and to explore all their secret recesses, it would indeed be a pleasing occupation; nevertheless I should have reason to fear lest either the sermon should lose the desirable character of brevity, or else lest such precious and abundant matter should be deprived of due consideration by overhaste in the discussion. Therefore, if it is agreeable to you, let us for to-day rest here on these holy mountains and hills, because "it is good for us to be here," where, placed in the same pasture with the angels by Christ, the Shepherd of the whole flock, we can find more pleasant and more plentiful food. For we no less than the angels are "the sheep of His pasture." We should

consequently, like the “clean animals” of the Good Shepherd, ruminate diligently what we have swallowed down with such avidity from to-day’s discourse. So shall we assemble for the next sermon with even keener appetites to enjoy what remains to be said on our present text, through the bounty of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LIV

ON THE MANNER OF THE BRIDEGROOM'S SKIPPING, AND ON THE THREE KINDS OF FEAR

"Behold He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills."

To-day, my brethren, I intend to propose to you another interpretation of those words of the Spouse which occupied us on the last occasion. I have reserved it purposely for the present. And it shall be for you to compare the two expositions and to select the one which pleases you most. There is no need, I suppose to recall to your minds what was spoken yesterday, a I am sure you cannot have forgotten it in so short space. But even if anything should have escaped you memory, it can easily be recovered, because all I said then has been written down exactly as it was delivered and inscribed with the style, as have been my other sermons also. Wherefore, listen now to something new. "Behold," exclaims the Spouse, "He cometh, leaping on the mountains, skipping over the hills." She is speaking of her Bridegroom, Who then undoubtedly leaped upon the mountains when He was sent by His Father to preach the Gospel to the poor. For whereas He was Lord of all, He disdained not to discharge the angelic office, and made Himself the "Angel of the great Counsel." He Who was wont heretofore to employ created spirits as His messengers, now descended to the earth in person. He Himself "hath revealed His justice in the sight of the gentiles." Of the angels St. Paul says, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" He, therefore, Who was above them, descended to their level and made Himself as one of them, disregarding the interests of His own glory in His desire to accumulate grace for us. But attend to Himself. "The Son of Man is not come," He says, "to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many." Now, none of the other angels can be said to have ever done anything like this, so that in the devotedness and fidelity of His service, He has skipped over every one of them, as many as seemed to minister to the

necessities of man. Faithful Minister, Who gave His Flesh for our food, and His Blood for our drink, and His life for our ransom! Surely faithful, Who, in the fervour of His Spirit, in the ardour of His love, and in the zeal of His piety, not alone leaped upon the mountains, but even skipped over the hills! That is to say, He surpassed and exceeded all others in His devotion to our service. For He is the same Whom "God, His God hath anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows," and therefore with unrivalled alacrity "He hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way." Thus, He skipped over the Archangel Gabriel and reached the Virgin before him, as the same heavenly prince acknowledged when he said, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." What is this thou sayest, O Gabriel? Hast thou found in Mary's womb the Lord Whom but now thou didst leave behind in heaven? Yet how can that be? The explanation is that "He flew upon the wings of the winds" and so was first to arrive. Thou art conquered, O Archangel. Thou hast been skipped over by Him Who sent thee to herald His coming.

Or, at all events, He may be said to have leaped upon or in the mountains when He showed Himself to the patriarchs of old in the persons of His angels. This interpretation appears to be more in harmony with the propriety of the words. For it is not said that He leaped on the mountains (saliens in montes), but in the mountains (saliens in montibus); which seems to imply that He leaped in the angels by giving them the power and the impulse to leap themselves. In the same sense He is said to speak in the prophets and to work in the virtuous, inasmuch as He enables the former to utter good words and the latter to perform good actions. Besides, some of the angels have acted as His vicegerents, so that they spoke, not in their own name as celestial princes, but in the name of the Lord. For instance, the angel who conversed with Moses did not say, "I, the servant of the Lord," but, "I the Lord." And he repeated this several times. The Bridegroom, I therefore, leaped in the mountains, viz., in the angels in whom He spoke and manifested His presence to men. For He leaped to men, but in the angels. He leaped in the subject creature, since He could not leap in Himself, in His own Divine nature. He who leaps must pass from one place to another, which is manifestly impossible to God. He leaped, then, in the mountains, that is, in the angels, being unable, as remarked, to leap in Himself. And He leaped even as far as the hills, namely, to the patriarchs, and the prophets, and the other spiritual persons on earth. But He went yet further, for He skipped over the hills when He deigned to manifest Himself and to speak in the same angelic representatives, not only to great and holy men but even to some ordinary

people, aye, and to many women also.

But perhaps by the name of hills are here designated the “powers of the air,” who are no longer classed with the mountains, as having lost, through their pride, the eminence of virtue. Yet neither have they stooped to the humility of valleys, or should I say, to the valleys of humility? It is to them, I have no doubt, the Psalmist is alluding, where he says, “The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord.” Therefore He, Who leaped in the mountains, skipped over the hills—the swelling but barren hills, which hold an intermediate place, as it were, between he lofty eminences of the perfect and the deep valleys of the penitent—and disregarding and despising them, descended to the low-lying regions, in order that the “vales might abound with corn.” The hills, on the contrary, have been cursed with an everlasting barrenness and sterility. For it is against them that the Prophet pronounced the malediction, “Let neither dew nor rain come upon you.” And lest there should be any doubt that he was addressing the angels who prevaricated, under the figure of the mountains of Gelboe, he added, “Where many fell wounded.” How many of the army of Israel have fallen on those accursed hills from the beginning of the world, and still daily fall! It is of such the same Prophet speaks in another place, where he says to the Lord, “Like the slain, sleeping in the sepulchres, whom Thou rememberest no more; and they are cast off from Thy Hand.”

It is no wonder, therefore, my brethren, that those heights, which are aerial hills rather than heavenly mountains, should be found barren and unfruitful, since they are visited neither by dew nor rain. For the Author of grace and the Bestower of all blessings has skipped over them, on His way down to the valleys, that He might there refresh the humble amongst men with the spiritual waters of holiness, and so enable, them to “bring forth fruit in patience,” some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, and some a hundred-fold. Hence, the Psalmist says, “Thou hast visited the earth, and hast plentifully watered it, and hast many ways enriched it.” He visited, not the air, but the earth, and so “The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord.” For, “He hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth,” not surely in the midst of the air. This I maintain against Origen, who, by his impudent heresy, crucified again the Lord of glory, but now in the air, for the redemption of the demons; whereas, St. Paul, the confidant of God’s mysterious designs, distinctly affirms that “Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over Him.”

But He Who skipped over the air, visited heaven as well as the earth, since we read in Holy Scripture, “O Lord, Thy mercy is in heaven, and Thy truth reacheth

even to the clouds." "Even to the clouds," my brethren, extends the heaven which is peopled by the holy angels, whom the Bridegroom does not skip over, but rather leaps upon, and leaves on them the impress of His two feet, namely, His mercy and His truth. Concerning these feet of the Lord, I remember to have discoursed at length in one of the preceding sermons. From the clouds downwards through this misty lower atmosphere is the dwelling of the demons. On them the Bridegroom disdains to leap. He skips over them and hastens on, so that they retain in themselves no footprints from the passing of the Lord. For how could truth have place in the devil, of whom it is stated in the Gospel that "he stood not in truth, but was a liar from the beginning"? Neither will any one call him merciful whom the same inspired Book pronounces to have been also a "murderer from the beginning." And as is the head of the household, so shall be the members thereof. The Church, therefore, when singing of her Bridegroom, that He "dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low things in heaven and on earth," rightly omits all mention of the proud spirits who inhabit the air, because "God resisteth the proud and giveth His grace to the humble."

The Spouse, consequently, beheld her Beloved leaping upon the mountains and skipping over the hills, when He was fulfilling the imprecation of David, "Let the Lord visit all the mountains which are round about, but Gelboe let Him pass over." For the devil, here designated under the name of Gelboe, occupies a middle place between the mountains visited by the Lord, the angels above, and men below. After falling from glory, he was condemned, as part of his punishment, to make his abode in the air, midway between heaven and earth, that he might thence see the favours bestowed both on angels and men, and seeing be further tormented with jealousy, according to what the Psalmist says, "The wicked shall see and shall be angry, he shall gnash with his teeth and pine away." What misery he must feel whenever he looks up to heaven, and beholds there innumerable mountains glittering in the light of God, resounding with the divine praises, exalted in glory, abounding in grace! But how much greater misery, as often as he turns his gaze down towards the earth, whereon he also observes countless multitudes of mountains belonging to the "purchased people," sound in faith, sublime in hope, spacious in charity, adorned with virtues, and covered with the fruits of good works, deriving a daily blessing from the dew of heaven, as if it were from the Bridegroom's leaping! How great must be the anguish and envy of one so ambitious of glory when, on the one hand, he sees the mountains round about him all resplendent with glory, and himself and his followers, on the other hand, without ornament, without light, without any

capability for good of any kind; so that he who reproaches all is obliged to acknowledge himself the reproach of all, both men and angels, according to the testimony of David, “The sea-dragon which Thou hast formed for the purpose of mocking him”!

Such, my brethren, is the sterility with which these hills have been cursed, because, on account of their pride, they were skipped over by the Bridegroom, when He leaped upon the mountains that are round about; like the fountain which sprang up in the midst of paradise, refreshing the whole world, and “filling every animal with blessing.” Happy they who are accounted worthy to drink of this “torrent of pleasure,” even though it be at rare intervals! If the “water of wisdom” from the well-spring of life does not flow in them continuously, at any rate it leaps from time to time, so that in them also it becomes a “fountain of living water, springing up unto life everlasting.” It is of this fountain the Prophet says, “The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful,” and that eternally and abundantly. God grant that the same river may sometimes overflow its banks, so to speak, and leap down upon our own mountains on earth; and that they, being thus themselves sufficiently watered, may send down a few little drops even to us who are the valleys. Then we shall no longer remain altogether barren and unproductive. But whatsoever regions are irrigated by none of these leapings of the fountain or distillations therefrom, but are entirely skipped over and disregarded, there, beyond question, misery, and poverty, and fearful famine must prevail. Hence we read in the Prophet Baruch, “And because they had not wisdom they perished through their folly.”

“Behold He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.” He leaps upon some in such a manner that He skips over others, since it is not His pleasure to visit all; for not all are pleasing to God. My brethren if, as the Apostle in his wisdom declares, these things “are written for our correction,” let us study the deliberate and prudent conduct of the Bridegroom, and notice how both amongst the angels in heaven, and amongst men on earth He leaps upon the humble and skips over the proud;” “For the Lord is high, and looketh on the low; and the high He knoweth afar off.” Let us, I repeat, consider these matters attentively, so that we may be careful to prepare ourselves for His leapings. Otherwise we may be found unworthy of His visitation and He will skip over us as over the mountains of Gelboe. “Why is earth and ashes proud?” Even the angels the Lord skipped orer, because their pride was an abomination to Him. Then let their reprobation be the cause of our reformation, since it has been recorded only “for our correction.” Let the fall of Satan co-operate unto good,

for me, and in this way let me “wash my hands in the good of the sinner.” Do you wish to know how? Then often. It is evident enough that the awful and terrible malediction, “Let the Lord visit the mountains which the round about, but Gelboe let Him pass over,” was pronounced against the proud demon, whom David, as I have said, speaking in the Spirit, designates here order the symbolic name of Gelboe. Now when I read this, I turn my eyes upon myself; and after a careful scrutiny, I discover my own soul to be infected with the same disease which, when exhibited in Satan, inspired the Lord with such horror that He skipped over him, although all the other mountains round but, whether angels or men, were honoured with His gracious visitation. Then, with fear and trembling say to myself, if such has been the fate of the angel, what will become of me, who am but dust and ashes? He grew proud on a heavenly throne, I on a dunghill. And who does not feel more indulgence for pride in the rich than for pride in the poor? Alas for me! If that mighty spirit has been chastised so terribly, because his heart was lifted up, if the natural affinity which is known to exist between pride and greatness did not avail to excuse his sin, what punishment must I expect who am proud even in my misery!

Indeed, I am already paying the penalty, I am already writhing under a most cruel scourge. Not without reason surely has my soul been invaded since yesterday or the day before by this heavy languor, this dulness of mind, this unusual sluggishness of spirit. I had been running well. But behold! In the way has appeared a “stone of stumbling.” I tripped upon it and have fallen. Pride has been found in me, and the Lord has departed in anger from His servant. Hence the sterility of soul, hence the want of fervour which I experience. How has my heart grown so hard and dry, “congealed like milk,” and become “as earth without water”? No longer am I able to shed tears of contrition, because of my exceeding obduracy. I find no pleasure now in psalmody, no satisfaction in pious reading, no consolation in prayer, no taste for my customary meditations Where now are those spiritual transports which I one enjoyed? Where that serenity of soul, that peace and joy in the Holy Spirit? Therefore am I become slothful in labour, drowsy at vigils, prone to anger, obstinate in antipathies, more indulgent to the tongue and the palate, less vigorous and zealous in preaching. Alas all the mountains round about, the Lord vouchsafes to visit, but me He comes not nigh! Am I not, then, on of the hills which the Bridegroom skips over? For looking around me I behold one brother endowed with an extraordinary gift of abstinence, a second possessed of admirable patience, a third excelling in humility and meekness, a fourth conspicuous for mercy and piety, this one

enjoying frequent raptures in contemplation, that one penetrating the clouds and knocking at the very gate of heaven by the importunity of his prayers, and others equally distinguished for other virtues. I see them all fervent, all devout, all united in Christ, all abounding with heavenly gifts and graces, as so many spiritual mountains which have been visited by the Lord, and often receive the Bridegroom leaping upon them. But as for me, who can discover in my soul none of these evidences of the divine visitation, what else ought I to consider myself but as one of the mountains of Gelboe, which are skipped over by Him Who so graciously leaps upon the others round about?

My little children, it is sentiments like these that remove the "haughtiness of the eyes," draw down upon us the grace of God, and prepare our souls for the leaps of the Bridegroom. All that I have just said, "I have in a figure transferred to myself for your sakes." "Be ye followers of me" in this respect. I do not mean, in the practice of virtue, or in the observance of regular discipline, for I am not so foolish as to pretend to have anything therein worthy of your imitation; but I want you not to spare yourselves, I want you to accuse yourselves in the way I have done, whenever you may happen to notice that your fervour is diminishing, even in the slightest degree, or your virtue growing slack. To act in this manner is the characteristic of the prudent religious, who keeps a zealous watch over himself, diligently examines all his ways and works, and is ever and in everything on the alert to prevent the vice of arrogance from finding entrance to his soul. I have learned this in truth, that there is no more efficacious means of obtaining grace, of preserving it when obtained, or of recovering it when lost, than to appear always in the sight of God "not high-minded but fearful." Hence we read in Proverbs, "Blessed is the man that is always fearful." Be afraid therefore when grace rejoices you with its presence; be afraid when it departs; be afraid when it returns to you. Thus you shall be always fearful. Let these three fears succeed each other in your souls, according as grace condescends to abide with you, or is perceived to have withdrawn in resentment, or to have come back appeased. When present, be afraid of not cooperating with it faithfully. Hence the Apostle's admonition, "Receive not the grace of God in vain"; and again, addressing his disciple Timothy, he says, "Neglect not the grace that is in thee"; finally, he says of himself, "His grace in me hath not been void." This great man, the confidant of the divine counsels, knew well that to neglect the gift of grace, and not to use it for the purpose for which it was given, redounds to the dishonour of the Giver, He judged such conduct to be intolerable pride, and therefore avoided it most studiously himself, and taught his disciples to do the

same. But there is here concealed another pitfall which I desire to put you on your guard against. It is that wherein the spirit of pride himself, as the Psalmist says, “lieth in wait in secret, like a lion in his den,” and the danger is only all the greater because it is so unsuspected. What I wish to say is this: when the devil cannot prevail upon you to omit a good work, he will endeavour to corrupt your intention, and by prompting and persuading will urge you to appropriate to yourselves what is but the fruit of divine grace. Now, there can be no doubt that this species of pride is far more detestable than the other. What indeed can be more hateful than the arrogance which once led men to say, “Our mighty hand, and not the Lord, hath done all these things”!

Therefore, fear is necessary even when grace is with us. But what if it retires? Have we not then more cause to be afraid? Aye, and much more, for when grace fails us, we also shall fail. Hear what the Giver of grace teaches: “Without Me,” He says, “you can do nothing,” Fear, then, when you are abandoned by grace, as knowing yourselves to be on the point of falling. Be afraid and tremble, as aware that you have incurred the displeasure of God. Be frightened at the thought that your defence has left you. And doubt not that pride is the cause of your abandonment, even though it is not apparent, even though you are conscious to yourselves of nothing. For God can see what escapes us, and He is our Judge. And “not he who commendeth himself is approved, but he whom God commendeth.” But surely God commends not him whom He deprives of His grace. Surely He Who “giveth His grace to the humble,” will not recall His gift as long as we continue humble. Therefore, the deprivation of grace is a proof of pride. Nevertheless grace is sometimes withdrawn or subtracted, not on account of any pride that is actually present but because of the pride that would exist, if the grace were allowed to remain. We have an evident example of this in the case of the Apostle, who in spite of himself had to endure the sting of the flesh, not because he was lifted up, but lest he should be. Thus whether already present, or not yet brought forth, pride is always the cause of the subtraction of grace.

But it is when grace comes back appeased that we ought to feel most afraid, lest haply we should suffer a relapse. So we read in the Gospel, “Behold thou art made whole: go and sin no more lest some worse thing happen to thee.” You perceive, my brethren, that a second fall would be more terrible than the first. Therefore should our fear increase in proportion with our danger. Blessed art thou, whosoever thou be, that fillest thy heart with this threefold fear, so that thou art afraid on account of grace received, more afraid on account of its loss,

and still more afraid when it has been recovered! In this way thou dost make thyself as a “water-pot” at the banquet of Christ, “filled up to the brim,” and containing not one or two, but three “measures”; and dost deserve that the Lord should bless thee, and by His blessing change thy waters of fear into the wine of gladness. For “perfect charity casteth out fear.”

My meaning is this. Fear may be compared to water, because of its power to cool the heat of carnal desires. “The fear of God,” says the Psalmist, “is the beginning of wisdom.” And we read in Ecclesiasticus, “And she shall give him the water of wholesome wisdom to drink.” Now, if fear is wisdom, and wisdom water, fear may rightly be called water. Hence it is written in Proverbs, “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.” Furthermore, our minds may be likened to the water-pots which are described as “containing two or three measures apiece.” The three measures are the three fears. “And they filled them,” says the Evangelist, “up to the brim.” It is not one of the fears, nor two, but all three together that can thus fill our minds “up to the brim.” Fear God, my brethren, at all times, and with your whole hearts, and thereby you shall have filled your water-pots up to the brim. God loves integrity in the gift, fulness in the affection, perfection in the sacrifice. See, therefore, that you bring your water-pots full to the celestial espousals, so that of each one of you it may be said, “And he hath been filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.” He who is thus entirely possessed with this fear, neglects nothing. How indeed can negligence find room for itself in a soul which is already full? For that which has capacity for more is not as yet completely filled. In the same way, this fulness of fear excludes high-mindedness. There can be no place for pride in him who is filled with the fear of the Lord. And similarly with the other vices. The fulness of holy fear leaves no room for any of them. But when your fear is thus full and perfect, then, at the blessing of the Lord, charity will mingle its sweetness with your waters, as without charity, “fear hath pain.” For charity is the wine which “cheereth the heart of man.” But “perfect charity casteth out fear,” so that where before was water, there is now wine, unto the praise and glory of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LV

ON THE DIVINE MERCY AND JUSTICE AS SIGNIFIED BY THE HART AND THE ROE, RESPECTIVELY

"My Beloved is like a roe, or a young hart."

"My Beloved is like a roe or a young hart." These words, my brethren, must be understood with reference to what precedes. He Who has been described as running and bounding in His hurry to reach the Spouse is now aptly compared to a roe or a young hart. I say "aptly," because such animals are remarkable for fleetness of foot and agility in leaping. The Spouse of course, is speaking of her Bridegroom, Who is Himself the Word of the Father. And it is of the Father the Prophet says, "His Word runneth swiftly." This agrees very well with the passage now under consideration, where the Bridegroom, the Word of God, is represented as leaping and skipping, and consequently likened to a roe or a young hart. Such, I take it, is the meaning of this comparison. However, lest the similitude should seem, in the very least point, to be lacking in significance, I may mention that the roe is distinguished as much for keenness of vision as for fleetness of foot. And it is the same perfection of sight that is attributed to the Beloved in the foregoing verse, where He is said to appear not only leaping, but skipping over. For were He not possessed of sharp and penetrating sight, He could not possibly, whilst running at full speed, discriminate between what was to be leaped upon and what skipped over. And the roe is introduced as typifying this property; for to designate the Bridegroom's rapidity of approach the similitude of the young hart (which is particularly noted for speed) whould have been sufficient. But although the Bridegroom here shows Himself all on fire with love, and hurrying as fast as He can to the embraces of His Spouse, nevertheless He knows how to direct His steps, or rather His leaps, with prudent consideration, even while He runs, and is careful as to where He plants His Feet. Therefore, the similitude of the roe, which expresses the discrimination of the

divine election, is as necessary as that of the hart, representing the eagerness of God's desire to save us. For Christ is both just and merciful. He is our Saviour and also our Judge. Because He is our Lover, "He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And because He is our Judge, He "knoweth who are His," He "knoweth whom He hath chosen from the beginning."

Let us therefore believe that the Holy Ghost is here bringing before our minds, under the figure of the hart and the roe, the Bridegroom's attributes of mercy and justice, to the end that we may testify to the fulness and perfection of our faith, and say with the Psalmist, "Mercy and judgment I will sing to Thee, O Lord." I have no doubt that those who are curious and well-informed concerning such things, could point to many additional properties of the above-mentioned animals, which might serve to illustrate, usefully and aptly, other of the Bridegroom's perfections. But what has been said is quite enough, I think, to account for the comparison. Yet I would have you notice also how beautifully the Holy Spirit uses the image, not of the hart, but of the young "of the harts" (hinnulo cervorum) in order to make mention of the "fathers, from whom is Christ according to the flesh," and also of the Saviour's childhood. For the Child Who was born for our sakes truly revealed Himself as a young hart. But do you, my brethren, who long for the Saviour's advent, be afraid of the scrutiny of the Judge, dread the Eyes of the Roe, be afraid of Him Who has said by His Prophet, "And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps." I He is very keen-sighted, and His Eye shall leave nothing unexamined. He will search even the "hearts and the reins"; yea, the very "thought of man shall confess to Him." What, then, can be safe in Babylon if even Jerusalem shall be scrutinised? In my opinion, the Prophet by the name of Jerusalem here signifies those who live a religious life in this world, imitating as well as they can, by the practice of virtue and the observance of discipline, the life and conversation of the dwellers in the heavenly Jerusalem, and who have nothing in common with the natives of Babylon, that is to say, with such as waste their souls in the tumult of vices and the disorder of sin. For the offences of these are open and manifest. They precede them to the judgment, and await, not scrutiny, but chastisement. But I seem to be a monk and a Jerosolymite, and my sins are covered with the religious name and habit. It is therefore necessary that they be subjected to a more strict and minute examination and that lamps should be used, so to speak, to dispel the darkness in which they are hiding.

I can also present you with a verse from the psalms which confirms what is

said here concerning the scrutiny of Jerusalem. “When I shall take a time,” sings the Psalmist, speaking in the person of God, “I will judge justices.” Hereby the Lord declares His intention, if I do not mistake, to examine and investigate the ways and the works even of the just. When that time comes, my brethren, we have much reason to fear lest, under so strict a scrutiny, many of our justices—as we suppose them—shall turn out to be sins. However, one hope still remains to us. If only we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged. O blessed judgment, which delivers and hides me from that most searching divine investigation! For me certainly, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.” I desire to be presented before the face of His anger as one already judged, rather than as one awaiting judgment. “The spiritual man,” says the Apostle, “judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man.” Therefore, I will judge whatever is evil in myself; but I will also judge whatever seems to be good. I will endeavour to atone for my sins by the performance of good works, to wash them away with tears, to punish them with fastings and the other painful practices of holy penance. As to what may appear commendable in my conduct, I will entertain humble sentiments; I will repute myself, according to the precept of the Lord, an unprofitable servant, who has but done that which he was bound to do. I will be careful not to offer cockle instead of wheat, nor chaff with the grain. I will consider all my actions and all my affections, so that He Who is to “search Jerusalem with lamps,” may find in me nothing unscrutinised, nothing unexamined. For He will not judge anew that on which judgment has already been pronounced.

Who will enable me to follow up and to chastise all my transgressions with such thoroughness, that there may be no longer anything for which I need dread the Eyes of the Roe, no longer anything for which I should be put to confusion under the light of the lamps! I am seen now, though I do not see. I am under the gaze of that Eye to Which all things are visible, whilst It is invisible Itself. But the time will come when “I shall know even as I am known.” Now indeed I know in part, yet in part I do not know; whereas I am known, not in part, but completely. I fear the glance of that Scrutiniser Who “standeth behind our wall.” For the Spouse goes on to say of Him Whom, on account of His keen-sightedness, she has compared to a roe, “Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.” Of these words I shall treat in their proper place. It is He, therefore, Whom I am afraid of, this secret Observer of my secret thoughts and actions. The Spouse has no fear, because she is conscious to herself of nothing. Why should she be afraid, who is

His love, His dove, His beautiful one? Hence she says further on, “Behold my Beloved speaketh to me.” But to me He does not speak, and therefore I fear, as not having testimony of His voice. O Bride of Christ, what hearest thou of thyself? What sayest thy Beloved to thee? “Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come.” But this also must be left for another sermon, lest what demands full and careful discussion should be confined within limits of inadequate extent, and I should have yet another sin laid to my charge, that, namely, of not having advanced you thereby in the knowledge and the love of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LVI

ON THE MYSTICAL SENSE OF THE WALL, THE WINDOWS, AND THE LATTICES

"Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices."

"Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices." Taking these words, my brethren, in their literal signification, we learn that He Who was observed approaching with leaps and bounds, has now drawn nigh to His loved one's dwelling; but being too bashful to enter, He remains behind the wall, eagerly watching His Spouse through the windows and other apertures. According to the spiritual sense also, we are given to understand that the Beloved has arrived. But the actions mentioned in this place must be so interpreted as that they shall appear not unworthy either of being performed by the Word or of being described by the Holy Ghost. For the true and mystical meaning of this verse can admit of nothing unbecoming the Majesty either of the Bridegroom, Who is revealed here as the Agent, or of the Spirit Who has recorded His doings. Let us therefore say that the Word approached the wall when He united Himself to our nature. The wall signifies the flesh, the drawing near of the Bridegroom the Incarnation of the Word. Furthermore, by the windows and lattices, through which He is represented as looking, we are to understand our bodily senses and human feelings and affections, which He made His own, in order, so it seems to me, that by them He might have personal experience of all our human miseries. For "He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows." Therefore, being now made man, He used as windows and lattices, our corporeal faculties and natural sensibilities, for the purpose of acquiring an experimental knowledge of the evils men endure, that so "He might become merciful." Our wretchedness was known to Him even before He took flesh, but in a different manner. Thus, the "Lord of virtues" could never have been ignorant of the virtue of obedience, and yet we are assured by the Apostle that "He learned obedience by the things that He suffered." In the

same way, He learned mercy, although “the mercy of the Lord is from eternity,” as the Psalmist says. We are informed of this also by the Doctor of nations, where he tells us that Christ was “tempted in all things, like as we are, without sin, that He might become merciful.” Do you not see, my brethren, how He became what He was already, how He learned what He knew before, and how He sought for Himself in our nature windows and lattices, through which He could observe more closely our misery and wretchedness? And He found in the chinky and dilapidated wall of our humanity as many spy-holes as were the evidences of our infirmity and mortality which He experienced in His Body.

It is in this sense, therefore, that the Bridegroom appeared standing behind our wall, and looking through the windows and the lattices. And rightly is He represented as standing, because He alone has ever really stood in the flesh, Who alone knew not the sin of the flesh. We may also piously consider that the same Christ Who lay prostrate through the infirmity of the flesh, was enabled to stand erect by the power of His Divinity, according to what is written “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” It seems to me that this view receives some support and confirmation from what the Psalmist said of the Lord, speaking with reference to the same mystery. For David was a prophet, and it is as a prophet he spoke here. And although he has the name of Moses on his lips, it is not of Moses but of Christ he is thinking. Christ indeed is the true Moses, “Who came by water,” indeed, yet “not by water alone, but by water and blood.” The Psalmist therefore sings, “And He—viz., God the Father—said that He would destroy them, had not Moses, His chosen, stood before Him in the breaking to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy them.” In what way, I ask, could Moses have stood “in the breaking”? If he were broken, how was it possible for him to stand? And if he stood, in what sense could he have been broken? But allow me to tell you, my brethren, who it was that really stood “in the breaking.” None other, I believe, could have done this, except my Lord Jesus, Who certainly lived even in death; Who by His Divinity was standing with His Father, the while His Body hung broken upon the cross; Who on Calvary was making supplication as a Man amongst men and for men, whilst in heaven showing mercy as God with God. And so He was standing behind the wall whilst the weakness whereby He lay prostrate, as it were, was manifested in the flesh, and the strength wherein He stood remained hidden behind the flesh, He being in both one and the same Bridegroom, revealed in His Humanity, concealed in His Divinity.

But in another sense the Bridegroom, as I judge, stands behind the wall for

each one of us who desire His coming, because this body of ours, which the Apostle calls the “body of sin,” hides His Face from us for a time, and shuts out His presence. For “while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord,” as St. Paul declares. He does not mean, while we are in the body simply, but in this body, which is the “body of sin,” and cannot be without sin. And if you would know for certain that it is not our bodies but our sins which stand as a wall between the Bridegroom and ourselves, listen to the Prophet Isaias: “Your iniquities,” he tells us, “have divided between you and your God, and your sins have hid His Face from you.” But would to God the wall of my body were the only one! Would to God the sole obstruction were the sin which exists in my flesh, and that between the Bridegroom and me there were not multiplied fences of vice! For I fear I have added, by my personal guilt, innumerable other walls to the one which my nature inherits, and thus placed a barrier exceedingly wide in the way of the Beloved; so that, if I wished to be sincere, I should acknowledge that in my regard He stands behind, not one wall, but many.

I will try and make this plainer. In virtue of the immensity of His Divine Majesty, and the omnipotence of His power, the Bridegroom is equally and indiscriminately present to all the works of His Hands. But, as regards His rational creatures, whether angels or men, He is said to be near to some and far from others, according as He communicates or withholds His grace. Hence the Psalmist says, “Salvation is far from sinners.” And the same Prophet asks, “Why, O Lord, has Thou retired afar off?” But in the case of His friends, although by a gracious dispensation of His love He occasionally conceals His presence from them, it is only for a time and in part. From sinners, on the other hand, He is always and distantly remote, and that not in mercy but in anger. For of these it is written, “The pride of them that hate Thee ascendeth continually”; also, “Their ways are filthy at all times.” Wherefore holy David prays to God and says, “Decline not in Thy wrath from Thy servant.” He begs Him not to decline in His wrath, because he knew that He might also decline in His mercy. The Lord, therefore, is nigh to His saints and His chosen, even when He appears far removed. Nevertheless, He does not make Himself equally present to all but to some more, to others less, according to the diversity of their merits. For although “the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him in truth,” and also “nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart,” still perhaps He is not so nigh to all as that they can truly say, “Behold He standeth behind our wall.” But to the Spouse He is singularly present, because in her case there is only one dividing wall. Hence she desires to be dissolved, so that, when this wall of separation has

been broken down, she may enjoy the company and vision of Him Who as she trusts is standing behind.

I, however, who am but a sinner, instead of desiring to be dissolved, am rather terrified at the thought of it, as knowing that “the death of the wicked is very evil.” How can death be other than very evil, if He Who is our Life is not at hand to deliver us? I am afraid to die, I am seized with trembling terror under the very portal of death, because I have no assurance that He is standing nigh to receive me at my exit from the body. What? Can I expect to make that exit in safety, if the Lord does not “keep my going out”? Alas! I shall become the sport of the demons, who are waiting to intercept me, unless He be at hand “to redeem and to save.” No such fears could trouble the soul of St. Paul. He was divided from the vision and the embrace of the Beloved by only a single wall, namely, by the “law of sin” which he found in his members. This law of sin is the “concupiscence of the flesh,” which he could not be without so long as he lived in the flesh. But the obstruction of this one wall did not remove the Lord far off from him. Hence that yearning cry, “Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” For he knew that the short passage of death would bring him straight to life. St. Paul therefore confessed that there was but one wall in his way, that is, the law of concupiscence irremovably planted in his flesh, and to which he submitted unwillingly. As for the rest, he could say, “I am conscious to myself of nothing.”

But which of us, my brethren, is like St. Paul, in that he does not sometimes consent to this concupiscence “so as to obey the lusts thereof”? Now he who has consented to sin should know that by this unlawful and wicked act he has enclosed himself within a second wall. Therefore, such a one cannot boast like the Spouse that the Bridegroom is standing behind his wall, since it is no longer one wall that makes the division, but two. Much less can he make this boast, if the internal consent issues in the external act of sin, because the Bridegroom’s approach is now obstructed and prevented by a third wall, namely, the fulfilment of an evil purpose. But what, if by repetition the act of sin hardens into a habit, and the habit of sin induces contempt, as it is written, “The wicked, when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth”? Shouldst thou happen to die in this state, O my brother, what is there to prevent thee from being devoured a thousand times by “the lions roaring, ready for their prey,” before thou canst reach the Bridegroom Who is parted from thee, not by one, but by a numerous succession of walls? The first wall is concupiscence; the second, consent; the third, the external act of sin; the fourth, the habit of sin; the fifth, the callousness

of contempt. Be careful, then, to resist the first of these, namely, concupiscence, with all thy power, lest otherwise it should lead thee to consent. If thou art faithful here, the malignant one can set up no other wall against thee. There shall consequently be nothing but the wall of the flesh between thy Beloved and thee to prevent His access. Thus shalt thou also be able to glory with the Spouse, and to say of the Bridegroom, “Behold He standeth behind our wall.”

But there is another matter which thou shouldst attend to with all possible vigilance. Thou must see to it that the Beloved shall always find wide open the windows and the lattices of thy confessions, if I may so speak, so that through these openings He may regard thee within with a gracious glance. For His regard is thy progress. Lattices (cancelli) are narrow windows, which persons who make a business of writing cause to be opened in the wall, in order to obtain light for their work. Hence, as I believe, the name “chancellors” is given to those who have the office of drawing up charters and other formal instruments. Now there are two species of confession, the one consisting in a sorrowful declaration of our sins, the other in a gladsome acknowledgment of the divine benefits. Whenever, therefore, I make that confession which is always accompanied with anguish (angustia) of heart—I mean the confession of sin—it appears to me that I have opened the lattice, that is to say, the narrow window (angustiorem fenestram). Nor can there be any doubt that He who stands behind the wall as a loving Observer, will gladly avail Himself of this aperture and look in upon me, because “a contrite and humbled heart God will not despise.” He Himself has told me to open my lattice for Him, saying by His Prophet, “Do thou first confess thy iniquities, that thou mayst be justified.” But if occasionally my heart dilates under the influence of charity and, thinking of the divine condescension and compassion, I feel moved to let my soul expand in the confession of praise and thanksgiving, at such times I may be truly said to open, not now the lattice, but the widest of my windows, for the sake of the Bridegroom Who stands behind the wall. And I think He will look in through this ampler opening the more willingly in proportion as the “sacrifice of praise glorifieth” Him more. I could easily discover Scripture testimonies relating to both these confessions. But I am speaking to persons who are too well informed to have any need of such evidence. And it would be very unreasonable in us to burden ourselves with superfluities, considering that we have scarcely time for the investigation of what is necessary, namely, the secrets of this celestial love-song, and the praises of the Church therein celebrated, and of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LVII

ON WATCHING FOR THE DIVINE VISITATION AND THE SIGNS BY WHICH IT IS KNOWN

"Behold my Beloved speaketh to me."

"Behold my Beloved speaketh to me." Observe here, my brethren, the progress of grace. Notice the order of the divine condescension. Mark also the devotion and vigilance of the Spouse, how her watchful eye discovered the Bridegroom's coming, and with what diligence she has studied all His actions. He comes, He hastens, He draweth nigh, He is present, He looks, He speaks, and nothing of all eludes her zeal or escapes her attention. The Bridegroom comes in the angels, He hastens in the patriarchs, He draws nigh in the prophets, He is present in the flesh, He looks in His miracles, He speaks in His apostles. Or thus: He comes in His love and in His purpose to show mercy, He hastens in His zeal to accomplish our redemption, He draws nigh in His voluntary humiliations, He is present to His contemporaries, He looks forward upon the future generations, He speaks in His instructions and exhortations concerning the kingdom of God. Such therefore is the Bridegroom's coming. He brings with Him the blessings and the riches of salvation. All that belongs to Him overflows with delights, abounds with consoling and salutary mysteries. Now because the Spouse loves, therefore she is vigilant and circumspect. And blessed the soul "whom the Lord shall find watching." He will not "skip over" her, nor pass her by. Rather He will stand and speak to her. He will speak to her in the language of love, for He will speak to her as a bridegroom is wont to speak to his bride. Hence, such a soul can say, "Behold my Beloved speaketh to me." Rightly does she call Him her Beloved, since He has come, not to reproach her for her faults, but to assure her of His affection.

The Spouse, my brethren, is not one of those whom the Lord justly reproves for that they "know how to discern the face of the sky, and yet cannot know the signs" of His coming. For she is so sagacious, so prudent, and so faithfully

vigilant, that she observes His approach whilst He is yet afar off, notices that He leaps in His haste, and marks most particularly how He skips over the proud in order to come by humility to her who is humble. And when He stood outside and tried to conceal Himself behind the wall, she discovered His presence. She even became aware that He was looking at her through the windows and lattices. And now as a reward for so much devotion and loving watchfulness, she is permitted to hear His voice. For had He looked at her without speaking, she would have been troubled rather than consoled, not knowing whether the silent regard expressed love or indignation. Thus, He once looked at Peter whilst speaking not word, and the Apostle wept, haply because the Bridegroom had gazed upon him in silence. The Spouse, on the contrary, has not only been allowed to feel the glance of His Eye, but has merited also to hear the sound of His voice; and therefore far from weeping, she exults in an excess of gladness, and joyously exclaims, “Behold my Beloveth speaketh to me.” You see, my brethren, that the look of the Lord, whilst in itself it remains always the same, has not always the same efficacy. Its influence varies in conformity with the varying merits of those upon whom it is bent, inspiring some with fear, imparting to others consolation and peace. Thus, “He looketh upon the earth and maketh it tremble.” On the other hand, He looked on Mary and filled her with His grace. “He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid,” she says, and for this reason “behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.” This is not the language of sorrow or of terror, but the language of joy. It is in the same manner that He has looked upon the Spouse here. Therefore she does not tremble like the earth; neither does she weep as Peter wept, because she does not, as he did, “savour the things that are of men”; but her soul is full of gladness, inasmuch as the words of the Bridegroom declare with what affection He has regarded her.

Only listen, my brethren, to the salutation which He addresses to her, and you will understand how little of anger there is in it and how much of love. “Arise,” so he calls to her, “Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come.” Happy the soul which deserves to hear herself greeted in this way! Do you suppose, my brethren, that we shall find amongst ourselves one who is so vigilant, so observant of the time of his visitation, so diligent in watching for the Bridegroom’s coming, and in noting its every circumstance, that “when He cometh and knocketh he may open to Him immediately”? What is said here is indeed to be understood of the universal Church, yet not in such a sense as that each of the faithful (who, taken collectively, constitute the Church) may not claim a participation in the plenitude bestowed upon her. For in this respect we

are all equally called, without distinction as without exception, “that we may possess the blessings by inheritance.” Hence a certain holy man made bold to say to the Lord, “I have acquired Thy testimonies for ever by inheritance, because they are the joy of my heart.” He is speaking no doubt, of the inheritance which was to him the evidence as it was the consequence of his being the son of the Father Who is in heaven. For “if a son, an heir also, an heir indeed of God, and a joint heir with Christ.” And surely that is a precious possession which he boasts of having acquired by inheritance, namely, the testimonies of the Lord. Would to God that I were found worthy to receive even one testimony from the Lord! But it is not over one, but over many such testimonies that the Psalmist exults. Thus he says again, “I have been delighted in the way of Thy testimonies, as in all riches.” And in truth, what are the riches of salvation, what the infusion of spiritual joy, what that real yet cautious tranquillity which the just enjoy, but so many testimonies of the Lord? “For not he who commendeth himself is approved,” says the Apostle, “but he whom God commendeth.”

How is it, my brethren, that we are strangers even still to these divine attestations and commendations? How is it that we have not yet come in to our spiritual patrimony? We have as little recollection of being ever so commended in anything by the Lord, and of receiving from His Lips any testimony in our favour, as if He never “of His own will hath begotten us by the word of truth.” What do we know of that experience whereof the Apostle says, “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God”? How can we be the sons of God if we do not enjoy the inheritance? But this very poverty of ours convicts us, beyond a doubt, of negligence and sloth. For if any amongst us were perfectly and entirely, according to the counsel of the Wise Man, to “give his heart to resort early to the Lord That made him, and to pray in the sight of the Most High,” and should also endeavour with all diligence to “prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight the paths of our God,” so that he could say with the Psalmist, “My eyes are ever towards the Lord,” and, “I set the Lord always in my sight”—would not such a one, think you, deserve to “receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Saviour”? He that watches so shall in truth have many visitations from the Bridegroom. Nor shall he ever fail to observe the time of his visitation, no matter how secret and stealthy may be the advent of this shy Lover, Who visits us in the Spirit. With a vigilant soul and a sober mind, he shall perceive the Beloved whilst He is yet afar off; and then he shall discover all that the Spouse, as I have explained, so attentively and sagaciously noted in the

approach of her Bridegroom. For He Himself has promised that “they that in the morning early watch for me shall find Me.” Such a one, I say, shall be able to observe when the Beloved is hastening in the eagerness of desire; he shall know at once when He is drawing nigh, and when He is actually present; he shall feel His Eye regarding him, shining in upon him like a sunbeam, through the windows or the lattices of the wall, and the consciousness shall make him glad; and finally, he shall hear Him uttering words of exultation and of tender affection, and saying to his soul, “Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come.”

“Who is wise and will understand these things,” so as to be able to distinguish rightly between them, to define them exactly, and to explain them in a way that others can comprehend? You, my brethren, are perhaps expecting me to do this; but for my part, I should prefer to hear about such matters from one who is acquainted with them by experience and use. Yet a person so privileged would rather through modesty conceal in silence what he has received in silence, and would judge it safer to keep his secret to himself, like the Prophet. Therefore, since I am bound by my office as superior to instruct you, and not to keep back what I know, I will tell you all that I have been able to learn concerning these things both from my own experience and from the experience of others. I will touch upon nothing which many of you are not competent to ascertain for themselves with facility, leaving the loftier truths to such as can reach them. Whenever, then, I am admonished, whether interiorly by the Spirit or exteriorly by a human being, of the necessity of guarding justice and preserving equity, this salutary warning is certainly for me a herald of the Bridegroom’s speedy advent, and a kind of preparation for the worthy reception of the heavenly Visitor. The Prophet assures me of this when he says, “Justice shall walk before Him,” and again, when he says to God, “Justice and judgment are the preparation of Thy seat.” And the same hope gladdens me, whenever I hear a discourse on humility, or on patience, or on fraternal charity, or on the obedience and submission due to superiors; but more especially when I listen to something concerning the pursuit of peace and sanctity, or the acquiring of purity of heart. For it is written, “Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord,” and, “His place is in peace,” and “Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.” As often therefore as anything relating to these, or indeed to any of the other virtues, is suggested to my thoughts, that will be for me, as I have already remarked, an intimation that the Lord of virtues is coming to visit my soul.

But if “the just man shall correct me in mercy, and shall reprove me,” then

also I may look for the divine visitation, because this charitable zeal and benevolence of the good “make a way for Him who ascendeth over the setting.” Happy setting, when at the reproof of a just man a soul is lifted up and her sins sink down, and over their setting the Lord “ascendeth,” trampling them under His Feet to prevent their ever rising again. Not to be despised, therefore, is a good man’s reproof which thus destroys sin, brings healing to the heart, and prepares the way of the Lord to the soul. Nor should we ever hear with indifference any discourse, no matter of what kind, provided it edifies unto piety, or unto virtue, or unto moral perfection. For “there is the way by which is shown the salvation of God.” But if the word of the Lord should sound sweet and consoling, so that instead of producing weariness it is listened to now with delight, I am to infer from this that the Bridegroom not only is coming, but is coming in haste, because coming with ardent desire. For it is His desire of me that awakens my desire of Him; and when I feel an eagerness to hear His words, this is an indication that He is hastening to visit my soul. We have not been beforehand with Him in charity, but He hath “first loved us.” Again, if I should hear an inflamed discourse, and should feel my conscience kindling, whilst I listen, at the thought of my sins, I ought, then, to call to mind Him of Whom the Psalmist says, “A fire shall go before Him,” and be persuaded that He is nigh. For “the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart.”

But shouldst thou not only feel compunction at the word of the Lord, but be converted to Him with thy whole heart, so that thou canst say, “I have sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of Thy justice,” thou mayst now be certain that the Bridegroom is even present to thee, especially if thou perceivest thy heart beginning to glow with the heat of His holy love. For not only is it said of Him in the Holy Scriptures that “A fire shall go before Him,” but also that He is Himself a fire, “a consuming fire,” as Moses called Him. There is a great difference between these two fires. That which precedes the Bridegroom’s coming has heat indeed, but no charity. It warms without melting; it moves without advancing. It is sent on before with only the mission of arousing and preparing thee, and to remind thee at the same time of what thou art when left to thyself; in order that thou mayst afterwards with greater delight understand what thou hast become through the grace of God. But the fire which is God, although it consumes, yet does not afflict, burning sweetly, blissfully devastating. For it is truly a “desolating fire,” which, however, so exercises its destructive energy against sin, that it acts on the soul as a healing unction. Therefore, in the virtue which adorns thee and in the charity which inflames thee, acknowledge the

presence of the Bridegroom. For it is “the Right Hand of the Lord that hath wrought virtue.” But “this change of the Right Hand of the Most High” only takes place in fervour of spirit and sincere charity; so that he who experiences it may say with the Prophet, “My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out.”

Furthermore, when every stain of sin and all the rust of evil habits have been burned out by this fire, and when the conscience is thoroughly cleansed and tranquillised, if thou dost now experience a sudden and unusual expansion of mind, with an infusion of heavenly light, which illumines thine intellect and gives it either an understanding of the Scriptures for the instruction of others, or a knowledge of secrets for thine own consolation, here, beyond doubt, is the Bridegroom’s Eye looking in through thy window, “and bringing forth thy justice as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.” Thus shalt thou have fulfilled in thee the word of Isaias, “Then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness shall be as the noon-day.” But surely it is not by the open door but rather through the smaller apertures of windows and lattices, that this ray of dazzling brightness obtains admission, so long, at least, as the dilapidated wall of the flesh remains standing. Thou errest, my brother, if thou art hoping for anything better, no matter to what purity of heart thou mayst have attained, since the great contemplative, St. Paul himself, has affirmed, “We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face.”

Now, after this glance of wonderful condescension and compassion, thou shalt hear the Bridegroom’s voice sweetly and gently intimating the divine will. This voice is nothing else but the love of God in thy heart, which cannot remain idle, and which is now soliciting and urging thee concerning what relates to the service of the Lord. For the Spouse has heard that voice bidding her to arise and make haste, doubtless to labour for the salvation of souls. It is the characteristic, my brethren, of true and pure contemplation that it not only inflames the soul with the fire of divine charity, but it also occasionally fills her with such zeal and desire to gain others to God who shall love Him as she loves Him herself, that she gladly interrupts her contemplative repose and devotes herself to the labour of preaching Afterwards, having satisfied this longing, at least to a certain extent, she returns to her solitude with all the more eagerness in proportion as she knows that her apostolic efforts have been fruitful. Then, when she has recruited her strength once more with the sweet food of prayer, she again issues forth with renewed zeal and energy to resume her work for souls. But during such alternations of labour and repose, the soul, as a rule, is very uneasy. She is

agitated by fears and anxieties lest, whilst being drawn this way and that by the rival attractions, she should bend more than is right to one side or the other, and so deviate even by a hair's-breadth from the straight way of the divine will. Perhaps holy Job was experiencing something like this when he said, "If I lie down to sleep, I shall say, when shall I rise? And again I shall look for the evening." That is to say, "when enjoying leisure, I accuse myself of neglecting my external work; and when exteriorly occupied, I again accuse myself of having interrupted my prayer." You see the holy man, how anxiously he hesitates between the fruit of zealous action and the quiet of loving contemplation; and although ever occupied in what is good, yet ever also doing penance for imaginary shortcomings, and never ceasing to pray with tears that God would manifest to him His will. For in such perplexities the sole remedy, the sole refuge is prayer and repeated sighs to God, that He may vouchsafe to instruct us unceasingly as to what He would have us do, at what time, and in what measure. It seems to me that we have these three things, viz., preaching, supplication, and contemplation, designated and commended to us in the three titles given to the Spouse. For deservedly does the Bridegroom call her His love, since she labours so loyally and zealously to promote His interests, by preaching, by teaching, and by other ministrations. Deservedly, too, is she called His dove, because sighing, like a dove, and making supplication for her sins, she never ceases to conciliate for herself the divine compassion. And with equal justice she is named His beautiful one, for always glorified with the longing after things supernal, she puts on, besides, the loveliness of heavenly contemplation, whenever she can obtain a vacant and opportune hour.

But consider also, my brethren, if we have not a type of this threefold occupation of the same soul, in the three persons who dwelt under the one roof, and who were all the dear and familiar friends of the Saviour. I am speaking of Martha, who ministered to Him; of Mary, who sat in repose at His Feet; and of Lazarus, who lay groaning, as it were, beneath the sepulchral slab, supplicating the grace of a resurrection. These remarks have been suggested by the admirable sagacity and vigilance which the Spouse is represented as exercising, whilst she watches the ways for the appearance of her Bridegroom, so that she can tell exactly when and with what haste He is approaching; and is so keenly on the alert that by no suddenness of change can she be so surprised and taken unawares as not to know when He is far from her, when near, and when actually present. Thus has she deserved that He should not merely condescend to look upon her with mercy, but should also deign to console her with words of tender

affection, making her to “rejoice with joy because of the Bridegroom’s voice.”

But I have also affirmed—although it is a bold thing to say—that each and every soul amongst us, provided she watches like the Spouse, shall also, like the Spouse, be saluted as His love, consoled as His dove, and embraced as His beautiful one. And perfect shall be reputed every soul wherein the virtues represented by these three titles are found together in due order and degree; so that she knows how to weep for herself, to rejoice in God, and at the same time has the will and the power to assist others in their necessities, pleasing to God, watchful over herself, helpful to her neighbours. Yet where shall we find one so perfect? However, if we have not all the three characters existing together in each of our souls, we seem at least to possess them singly in different sections of the community, and all in the whole. And God grant they may be long preserved amongst us! For have we not Martha, the beloved of the Bridegroom, in those who are employed in the faithful administration of exterior offices? Have we not Lazarus, His mourning dove, in our novices, who, but recently dead to their sins, are yet groaning with the pain of still smarting wounds and the terror of judgment; and who believe themselves to be “like the slain sleeping in the sepulchres, whom (no one) remembereth any more,” until, at the bidding of Christ, the heavy tombstone of their oppressive fear shall at last be taken away, and they shall rise to a new life in the assured hope of pardon? And have we not also the contemplative Mary in the persons of those who, after many years of co-operation with the grace of God, have been able to attain to a higher and more blissful state, wherein, confident of their forgiveness and no longer brooding anxiously over the sad memory of their sins, they experience an unfailing delight in meditating continually upon the law of God, and even sometimes “beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord”? We shall examine in the next sermon why He Who a little before seemed to guard the repose of His Spouse, and forbade her to be disturbed, now exhorts her to arise and even to make haste. May He Himself be with us, to reveal to us the meaning of this mystery also, for He is the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LVIII

ON THE SPIRITUAL SEASONS AND THE NEED OF CONSTANT MORTIFICATION

> "Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come; for winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land; the time of pruning is come."

"Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come." Who is it, my brethren, that speaks thus? Doubtless it is the Bridegroom. But was it not also the Bridegroom who, a short time since, adjured the young maidens so earnestly not to awaken His beloved? Why therefore does He now command her not only to arise, but even to make haste? I have here suggested to my mind the thought of something similar, which is mentioned in the Gospel. On the night when the Lord was betrayed, He said to the disciples who were with Him and were worn out with their long watching, "Sleep ye now, and take your rest," and yet added immediately, "Rise, let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray Me." Here, in the same way, He forbids His Spouse to be awakened, and almost at the same moment awakens her Himself, saying, "Arise and come." What can be the meaning of this sudden change of will or of counsel? Shall we suppose that the Bridegroom is capricious in His purpose, and that what He enjoins at one moment He prohibits at the next? God forbid! But rather see illustrated in this apparent change of mind what, if you recollect, I have commended to your notice before, and indeed more than once, touching the alternation of necessary action and prayerful leisure; and also what I observed about the impossibility of enjoying uninterrupted contemplation and undisturbed rest in the present life, in which external offices and the ministrations of charity have the stronger claim upon us, as yielding more abundant fruit. The Bridegroom, therefore, is acting here in accordance with His wont. When He perceives that His Spouse has enjoyed a little repose on His Bosom, He does not hesitate to invite her forth again to the more fruitful occupations of the active life. Not that she is unwilling to leave her rest. For surely He would not do Himself what He has forbidden to

be done, viz., “to make the beloved wake before she please.” But the Bridegroom invites His Spouse when He gives her an attraction that draws her, an attraction to good works, a desire to bring forth fruit unto Him. For to her to live is her Bridegroom and to die gain.

So strong, my brethren, is this desire that it urges her not only to arise but even to arise in haste. And therefore we read, “Arise, make haste, and come.” It is no small consolation for her to hear the word “come” rather than “go.” For thereby she is given to understand that she is not so much sent to labour as led, and that she is to have the company of her Beloved. And what can she find difficult with such a companion? “Set me beside Thee,” cried holy Job, “and let any man’s hand fight against me.” And the Psalmist, “Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me.” Therefore the Spouse is not awakened against her will, since the will to be awakened has first been excited in her. That is to say, the desire of gaining souls to God has been infused into her heart. Her zeal is also stimulated and her alacrity further enlivened by the Bridegroom’s words concerning the seasonableness of the time. “ ‘It is time to do,’ O My Spouse,” He says to her, “ ‘for winter is now past,’ that spiritual winter when no man could work. ‘The rain’ also, which, by the floods and inundations it caused, covered the earth, impeded cultivation, and either prevented the sowing of crops or ruined what was sown, ‘the rain,’ too, I say, has disappeared, it ‘is over and gone’; and ‘the flowers have appeared in our land,’ signifying that the genial spring-time has come, the time most suitable for field-labour, the seed-time of harvests and fruits.” He then goes on to explain what is the work which should first engage her, reminding her that “the time of pruning is come.” She is therefore called forth to the cultivation of the vineyards, which then only will reward the labour expended on them with more abundant fruit, when all sterile branches have been cut off, and all noxious growths cleared away, and whatever is superfluous pared down with the pruning-knife. Thus much for the literal sense.

Let us now consider, my brethren, what spiritual lessons or truths are intended to be conveyed to us by these words, which apparently are but a part of an ordinary human narrative. As regards the vineyards, “I have already told you and you have heard” that they symbolise souls or churches, and there is no need to explain again what you understand sufficiently well. In this place, therefore, the more perfect soul hears herself invited to the work of watching over and correcting and instructing and saving the more weak, provided, however, she has not, by ambitious intrigues, “taken the honour (of the ministry) to herself, but is

called to it by God, as Aaron was." And what is this invitation but the interior impulse of charity, piously urging us to be zealous for our brother's salvation, to be zealous for the "beauty of God's house," to be zealous for the advancement of the interests of His glory, and for the multiplication of the fruits of His justice, and for the honour and praise of His name? As often, then, as he who is charged with the direction of souls, or with the work of preaching, feels himself moved in his interior man by such devout affections towards God, so often he may be perfectly sure that the Bridegroom is present and calling upon him to come forth to the vineyard. And wherefore is he summoned thither except "to root up, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to build, and to plant"?

But because for this work, as indeed for everything else under heaven, all seasons are not equally opportune and suitable, therefore He Who calls His Spouse forth to the vineyard tells her that "the time of pruning is come." The Apostle was well aware that this season had come when he said, "Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation, giving no offence to any man that our ministry be not blamed." He therefore warned his disciples that they should now prune and cut off whatever was vicious and superfluous, and everything that could be an obstacle or a hindrance to the fruit of salvation, because he knew that the time of pruning had arrived. Therefore also he exhorted the faithful vine-dresser, St. Timothy, to "reprove, entreat, rebuke," for to reprove and to rebuke is to prune and cut away, whilst entreating and planting signify the same. Here the Bridegroom is admonishing us concerning the time for labour by the mouth of St. Paul. But listen to what He says by His own Mouth regarding the observation of the seasons, where, using other words and images, He thus addresses His newly-wed Bride, the Church of the apostles: "Do you not say that there are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the countries. For they are white already to harvest." And again, "The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest." Therefore, just as in the Gospel the Bridegroom points out that the time is at hand for reaping the harvest of souls, so here in the Canticle He reminds His Spouse that the time is come for pruning the spiritual vines, viz., individual souls or particular churches. And perhaps the reason why He varies the simile is to give us to understand that by the harvests is meant the ordinary faithful, and by the vineyards communities of religious persons.

Furthermore, it appears to me that by the winter season, which is said to be past, we are to understand the time when the Lord Jesus would no longer walk

openly among the Jews, because they were conspiring against Him and wished to put Him to death. Hence, to some of them He said, “My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready,” and, “Go you up to this festival day, but I go not up to this festival day.” But afterwards, “He went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.” It was winter from that time until the coming of the Holy Ghost, when the frozen hearts of the faithful began again to grow warm, heated by the fire which the Lord cast down upon the earth. Do you doubt, my brethren, that it was then really winter when “Peter was standing and warming himself at a fire of coals,” as chilled in heart as he was in body? The Evangelist expressly states that “it was cold.” Truly a hard frost had congealed the heart of the faithless Apostle. Nor should we be surprised, since the Divine Fire had been taken from him. A short time before he manifested no little zeal, when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of the servant, because he was then close to the Fire and fought lest he should lose It. But the time of pruning had not yet come. Therefore it was said to him, “Put up thy sword into thy scabbard.” For it was then “the hour of the power of darkness,” during which, if any of the disciples were to wield the sword—whether the material sword or the sword of the word—either he would himself “perish with the sword,” without even the consolation of gaining any heart or producing any fruit; or certainly he would be driven to an act of apostasy and so again “perish with the sword” of fear, according to the word of the Lord which immediately follows, “all that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” Who indeed amongst the other disciples would have fearlessly faced death’s awful image, when Peter himself, their prince and leader, trembled and gave way,—Peter, who had been singularly fortified by the strengthening words of the Saviour, and fortified thus in order that he might confirm his brethren?

But neither Peter nor the others were as yet “endued with power from on high.” Hence it was not safe for them to go out into the vineyards in order to cleanse the soil with the hoes of their tongues, and with the sword of the Spirit to prune the vines and trim the branches, so that they might bring forth fruit in greater abundance. Even the Lord Himself held His peace during His Passion; and although interrogated concerning many things, “He answered never a word.” In the words of the Psalmist, He “became as a man that heareth not, and that hath no reproofs in his mouth.” But “He said to them: If I shall tell you, you will not believe Me, and if I shall also ask you, you will not answer Me, nor let Me go.” For He knew that the time of pruning had not yet come. He knew that His vineyard would not yet make any return for the labour of its cultivation, would

yield no fruits of faith and good works. Why? Because it was still winter in the hearts of unbelievers; because the earth was still flooded by the wintry rains of malice, which were more likely to rot than to nourish any seed that might be sown in it, and to render useless all the care devoted to the culture of the vineyards.

What rain, my brethren, do you suppose me to be speaking of now? Is it the rain which we see pouring down upon the earth in a violent tempest, from the clouds that move across the face of the heavens? Surely not. But I refer to that which is thrown up from earth towards the sky by men of turbulent disposition, who "have set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue hath passed through the earth" like a pestilential rain, rendering it muddy and sterile, and as useless for plants as for seeds. I do not mean those visible plants and seeds, ordained for the satisfaction of our corporal necessities, of which plainly God hath no care, any more than he hath care of oxen, as the Apostle tells us. Which, then? I speak of the spiritual seeds and plants, which have been sown and planted, not by human hands, but by the Hand of God, which can germinate or take root in faith and charity, and bring forth the fruits of salvation, yet only on condition that they are watered with wholesome and seasonable rain. In fact they are the souls for which Christ died. Woe to the clouds that distil upon such plants and seeds the bad rains, more conducive to corruption than to germination! For just as there are good trees and evil trees, both yielding fruit according to their nature, the good tree producing good fruit, and the evil tree evil fruit; so, it seems to me, there are good clouds that distil good rain, and evil clouds distilling evil rain. And see if the Lord Himself does not insinuate to us this distinction of clouds and rains, when He says, speaking through His Prophet, Isaias, "I will command My clouds to rain no rain upon it." Why should He expressly say, "My clouds," if there were not evil clouds also which were not His? "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him"—here my brethren, you have evil clouds distilling the evil rain. O black and turbulent clouds! O tempestuous rain! O torrent of iniquity better qualified to sweep away than to nourish the seeds and plants! Not less bad and bitter, although poured with less violence, was that other shower which followed: "He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." Neither can we regard as good rain the windy words of philosophers, which brought to the earth more barrenness than fertility. And with much less reason can the perverse doctrines of heretical teachers be called good rain, since instead of fruit they produce only "thorns and thistles." Evil rains, too, were the traditions of the

Pharisees which the Lord denounced, just as the Pharisees themselves were evil clouds. And if you do not think me unjust to Moses, I will venture to say that, although he was certainly a good cloud, nevertheless not all the rain which he distilled was good rain. Indeed, were I to speak otherwise, I should be contradicting Him Who has declared, “Therefore I also gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live.” For it is manifest that these judgments and statutes were given through Moses. The Sabbatarian laws, for example, which, when literally observed, allowed no rest on the day of rest; the prescribed sacrificial ceremonial; the prohibition to use for food the flesh of swine and of some other animals reputed unclean by Moses,—what are all these ordinances but so many showers of rain descending from the Mosaic cloud? But God forbid that such rain should ever fall on my field or garden! It was wholesome in its proper season. But I should not consider it good if it came now after its time. For even a gentle and lightly falling rain is rather harmful than helpful, if its coming be inopportune.

Therefore, whilst such pestilential rains were prevailing on the earth and submerging it beneath their waters, the vineyards had not yet their season, nor was the time come for summoning forth the Spouse to the work of pruning. But when these waters cleared away, and the dry land appeared, then appeared also the flowers, indicating that the time of pruning had at last arrived. Do you ask, my brethren, when this was? Surely it could only have been at the time when Christ’s “Flesh flourished again” in His Resurrection. For He is the first and the most beautiful of the flowers which “have appeared in our land.” “Christ, risen from the dead, is the first-fruits of them that sleep,” says the Apostle. “The Flower of the field, and the Lily of the valleys,” is, I say, “Jesus Himself (as it was supposed) the Son of Joseph” of Nazareth. He therefore appeared as the first Flower, yet appeared not alone. For with Him “many bodies of the saints that had slept arose,” and they also as most brilliant “flowers appeared in our land.” Hence the Evangelist says that “they came into the holy city and appeared to many.” Flowers also were those of the people who were first to believe, the early spring-flowers of the saints. Their miracles too were flowers, because, like flowers, they were followed by the fruit of faith in the spectators. For when the rain of unbelief was “over and gone,” altogether or in some degree, the “free rain which God hath set aside for His inheritance,” immediately descended, and “the flowers appeared in our land.” “The Lord gave goodness and our earth yielded her” flowers, in such profusion that in one day three thousand, in another five thousand, of the people professed the faith. So rapid was the increase in the

number of the flowers, that is to say, in the multitude of believers. And the frost of malice could neither blight the flowers as they made their appearance, nor prevent them, as it is wont to do, from bringing forth the fruit which they promised.

All who believed were “endued with power from on high” and there arose amongst them some who, “strong in faith,” despised the threats of the wicked. They had to endure contradictions beyond counting. Still they yielded not, neither did they dissemble, but continued to perform and to proclaim the wonderful works of God. That is to say, they fulfilled in a spiritual manner what is written in the psalm, “They sowed their seeds, and they planted vineyards, and they yielded fruit of birth.” In course of time, the storm of persecution abated and peace was restored to the earth. Then the vineyards grew, and increased, and expanded, and “were multiplied beyond numbers.” And at length the time came for inviting the Spouse forth, not to plant, but to prune what was already planted. Very seasonably was she summoned then, since the time of peace is the time for pruning. How indeed could such a work be done whilst the persecutions were raging against her? For to prune the vines is to “take the two-edged sword in hand, to execute vengeance upon the nations, chastisements among the people, to bind their kings with fetters and their nobles with manacles of iron, to execute upon them the judgment that is written.” Even in times of peace these things can scarcely be done in peace. I have now said enough in connection with this matter.

The sermon also might have ended here, only that I have not yet admonished each one of you, according to my custom, of the careful attention due to his own particular vineyard. Which of us, my brethren, has so completely cut away from himself every superfluity, that he can now discover nothing whereon to use the pruning-knife? Take my word for it: vices, when pruned, will grow again; when driven out, will come back; when extinguished, will revive; when lulled to sleep, will reawaken. It is not enough to have once pruned your vineyards. You must often prune, aye, and be always pruning, if that is possible. For if you be honest with yourselves, you shall always find something which ought to be cut off. Whatever progress you may have made, so long as you abide in the flesh, you are mistaken if you suppose your passions to be dead and not merely dormant. Whether you will or no, they shall dwell within you, as the “Jebusite dwelt in Jerusalem with the sons of Benjamin.” You may conquer, but you cannot exterminate them. “I know,” says the Apostle, “that there dwelleth not in me that which is good.” But it is not enough to disclaim what is good without

acknowledging besides the presence of evil. Therefore he continues, “For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do. Now if I do that which I will not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Thou, therefore, my brother, must either have the daring to prefer thyself to St. Paul, who makes this confession of himself, or else thou must avow that in thee also there are vices dwelling. Virtue itself holds the golden mean between the extremes of vice, and hence thou hast need, not only of constant pruning, but even of circumcision. Otherwise there is reason to fear lest thy virtues, surrounded as they are by contiguous and corrupting vices, should lose their vigour little by little, whilst thou art unaware, and at last be overgrown and suffocated. In such danger, thy only wisdom is to keep a close and constant watch; and as soon as ever the pruned passions begin again to sprout, to use the knife with prompt severity. It is impossible for virtue and vice to increase together. Therefore, if the former is to flourish, the latter must be held in check. Remove what is superfluous, and thou shalt see an increase of what is good and necessary. What thou subtractest from superfluity is added to utility. Let us therefore apply ourselves to the business of pruning. Let us cut away cupidity in order to strengthen virtue.

For us, my brethren, the time of pruning is always present, because there is always something in us which it is necessary to cut away. And I trust that for us the “winter is now past.” Do you understand what I mean by winter? The winter I am speaking of now is that fear which consists not with charity, which is for all “the beginning of wisdom,” but leads none to the consummation thereof, because charity supervenes; and “perfect charity casteth out fear,” as summer excludes winter. For charity is the spiritual summer. If this summer has come,—rather let me say, because it has come (as I have reason to believe) to the souls of many amongst you, it must have dried up in you all the wintry rain, that is to say, all the anxious tears which the bitter memory of your sins and the fear of the judgment were formerly wont to excite. As regards many of you, therefore, if not indeed for all, I have no hesitation in saying that this “rain is over and gone”; since the “flowers have appeared in our land,” as the fruit of a more genial moisture. For summer has its rain also, but a more pleasant and prolific rain. What indeed can be more delightful than the tears of holy love? Charity weeps indeed, but weeps from the sweetness of love rather than from the bitterness of sorrow. It weeps from the desire of the Beloved. It weeps also “with them that weep.” I have no doubt that your acts of obedience are irrigated abundantly with this rain. I am most happy to behold them, not blackened, so to speak, with

murmuring, not discoloured with sadness, but brightened and blooming with spiritual joy.

Therefore if “the winter is now past,” and “the rain over and gone,” if “the flowers have appeared in our land,” and if, finally, the vernal mildness (so to speak) of spiritual grace warns us that “the time of pruning has come,” what remains but to devote all our energies henceforth to this work, so holy and so necessary? “Let us search our ways,” as the Prophet Jeremias counsels. Let us search our affections as well. And let each of us consider that he has made progress, not when he finds nothing to be reprehended, but rather when he reprehends what he finds. Then only you have not examined yourselves in vain, when you have understood the need of yet another scrutiny. For you have not been deceived in your investigation, if it has left you persuaded of the necessity of repeating it. And if you are always willing to prune yourselves whenever you see the need of it, you shall certainly be always pruning. Therefore be ever mindful of your dependence on heaven’s help and on the mercy of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LIX

ON HOLY DESIRES AND CONTINENCE AS SYMBOLISED BY THE TURTLE

"The voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

"The voice of the turtle is heard in our land." My brethren, I cannot dissemble the joy I feel when, now for the second time, I hear Him "who cometh from heaven" speaking of the earth as His home. And He speaks with as much kindliness and familiarity as if He were in truth but one of the children of earth. The Speaker is the Bridegroom, Who after saying that "the flowers have appeared," explicitly added, "in our land"; and here again announces that "the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Shall we suppose such expressions—I shall not say so unworthy of, but—so unusual with God, to be without special significance? Nowhere, as I believe, does He speak in this way of heaven, and nowhere else of the earth. Consider, then, how sweet a condescension it is that the God of heaven should speak of the earth as "our land." "All you that are earth-born, and you sons of men," attend and see how "the Lord hath done great things for us." He hath done great things for the earth, great things for the Spouse whom He has been pleased to take to Himself from the earth. "In our land," He says. This is not the language of lordship or domination, but the language of fellowship and friendship. The Word is speaking here not as the Lord but as the Bridegroom. What? He is our Creator and does He make Himself as one of us? But it is love that speaks, and love knows nothing of lordship. For this is the Canticle of love and ought to contain no other sentiments than the sentiments of love. God also loves, although the love wherewith He loves is nothing really distinct from Himself. Yea, He loves all the more vehemently for that He is rather Himself substantial Love than possesses love as a quality. And those whom He loves He regards not as servants but as friends. Hence from our Master He has become our Friend. For certainly He would not have called the disciples His friends unless they were so in truth.

Do you observe how even Majesty must yield to love? So it is, my brethren. Love can no more look up to, than it can look down upon, any one. It allows of no distinction between lovers who truly love, but ever brings high and low to an equality in itself. Indeed, not alone does it make them equal, but it even makes them one. Perhaps you have imagined that God is to be excepted from this law of love? But the Apostle tells you that "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Why should we be surprised at this, since He has made Himself as one of ourselves? I have not said enough. For He has made Himself not merely as one, but really one of ourselves. He is truly Man. Hence it is that He speaks of "our land," not as a lord but simply as a citizen. And why should He not? It is from the earth He has obtained His Spouse and the very substance of His Body; the Bridegroom Himself is also from the earth, and the "Two in one flesh." If Bridegroom and Bride have but one flesh, why not also one home-land? "The heaven of heaven is the Lord's," says the Psalmist, "but the earth He hath given to the children of men." Therefore, the Word as the Son of man has inherited the earth, as Lord He dominates it, as Creator He governs it, and as Bridegroom He shares it with His Bride. For when He speaks of the earth as "our land," He clearly renounces His exclusive proprietorship, and makes Himself a joint-owner. Thus far I have been giving you the thoughts suggested to my mind by the Bridegroom's gracious condescension in using the familiar expression "our land." Let us now see what further lessons can be gathered from the words of our text.

"The voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Taken according to the literal sense, this also is a sign that "winter is past," and that "the time of pruning is come." The voice of the turtle does not sound so very sweet; but very sweet are the things it signifies in the mystical sense. The bird itself does not cost much to buy; yet priceless in value is that which it typifies. Its voice, which mourns rather than sings, reminds us of our banishment. Gladly, my brethren, will I listen to that preacher who seeks not to gain applause for himself but compunction for me. Thou wilt prove thyself a turtle indeed, if thou teachest sinners to mourn. But if thou wouldst bring others to penance, thou must rely less upon thine eloquence and persuasion and more upon the example of thine own compunction. Example is in many things more efficacious than counsel, but it is so especially in this matter. Thou wilt add to thy voice the "voice of power," if thou art known to have first convinced thyself practically of what thou art endeavouring to bring home to thy hearers. The preaching of thy life is more powerful than the preaching of thy lips. Practise what thou preachest, and thus

not only shalt thou the more easily convert me, but thou shalt also deliver thyself from no light reproach. For then no one can any longer apply to thee what is said in the Gospel, “They bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them.” Nor needest thou then have any fear that it shall ever be said to thee, “Thou that teachest others, teachest not thyself.”

“The voice of the turtle is heard in our land.” So long as men received for their service of God only the temporal and earthly reward of a “land flowing with milk and honey,” they were very far from considering themselves as exiles on earth, very far from mourning like turtles, yearning for their heavenly country. Rather they mistook for their fatherland the place of their banishment, and gave themselves up to eating what was fat and drinking what was pleasant. During all this time, therefore, the voice of the turtle had not yet been heard in our land. But when the promise of the kingdom of heaven was made to them, then men understood that they “have not here a lasting city”; then they began with all eagerness to “seek one that is to come”; and then, for the first time, the voice of the turtle was distinctly heard in our land. For whilst each holy soul was now longing for the presence of Christ, and looking impatiently for the coming of His kingdom, and with sighs and tears saluting from afar her much-desired home in heaven, does it not seem to you, my brethren, that every such soul then on earth was acting the part of a most chaste and mournful turtle? From that time onward the voice of the turtle has been heard in our land. Why should not the absence of Christ excite me to constant tears and daily groanings? “Lord, all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hidden from Thee.” “I have laboured in my groanings,” as Thou knowest. But blessed is he who can add with the Psalmist, “Every night I will wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears.” But such groanings are familiar “not only to me, but to all them also that love His coming.” For this our mourning is the fulfilment of the word of the Lord which He addressed to the disciples of John, “Can the children of the Bridegroom mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall mourn.”—As if He should say, “and then the voice of the turtle shall be heard in our land.”

So it is, sweet Jesus. The days whereof Thou spokest have come. For “the creature itself groaneth and travaileth in pain even till now,” “waiting for the revelation of the sons of God.” And not alone the irrational creature. For “even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body,” “knowing that while we are in the body we

are absent from the Lord." Nor are such groanings fruitless, since they deserved to receive the merciful response from heaven, "By reason of the misery of the needy and the groans of the poor, now will I arise, saith the Lord." Even in the days of the patriarchs these mourning voices were heard. But they were rare; and each holy soul kept her mourning within herself, saying with the Prophet, "My secret to myself, my secret to myself." Even he who said, "My groaning is not hidden from Thee," plainly implied that his groaning was hidden from all others, since to the Lord alone he declared it to be manifest. At that time, therefore, it could not be said, "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land," because the mourning was still confined to a few and had not yet reached the ears of the multitude. But when that loud cry went forth, "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the Right Hand of God," then all began to imitate the mourning turtle, because all had the same motive for mourning. For all then had knowledge of the Lord, according to what is written in the Prophet Jeremias, "All shall know Me, from the least of them even to the greatest, saith the Lord."

But if the mourners be many, why is there but the voice of a single turtle? "The voice of the turtle," so we read. Why not rather "of the turtles"? Perhaps the Apostle gives us the reason where he says that "The Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." So it is, my brethren. The mourning turtle here referred to is the Holy Spirit, Who makes men to mourn. Hence, however many they may be whom we hear mourning, it is always one and the same voice that issues from the lips of all. And why should we not call that the voice of Him Who forms it in the mouths of mortals according as the necessities of each require? "For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit," as the Apostle declares. But hear from Christ Himself in the Gospel that the Holy Ghost has really a voice, "The Spirit breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth." Yet although Nicodemus, as a dead teacher, instructing the dead in the "letter that killeth," was ignorant of this, we, my brethren, should not be ignorant, we who "have passed from death to life" through the grace of the vivifying Spirit, and who, enlightened by the same Spirit, and taught by certain and daily experience, feel assured that our desires and our groanings come from Him and go to Him, and through Him find mercy in the eyes of God. For how could God refuse to hear the voice of His own Spirit? "And He knoweth what the Spirit desireth, because He asketh for the saints according to God."

Nor is it for its mourning alone that the turtle is commended; it is also commended for its chastity. It was indeed by this characteristic that it deserved

to be appointed as the ransom for the Virgin's Child. "They carried Him to Jerusalem to offer for Him a sacrifice, as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." And although the image of the pigeon (columba) is usually employed elsewhere to designate the Holy Spirit; nevertheless, on account of this bird's lustful habits, it would have been unbecoming to offer it as a sacrifice for the Child Jesus, except at an early age, when its instincts were as yet undeveloped. But as the turtle is known to live its whole life chastely, there was no necessity to mention its age at all. Moreover, the turtle is content with a single mate. If it loses the first, it does not seek a second, thereby rebuking even successive polygamy amongst men. The reiteration of marriages may perhaps be excused from serious fault, inasmuch as it is a remedy for the greater evil of incontinence. Yet it is a shameful thing to stand in need of such a remedy.

It is a shameful thing, I say, that reason and virtue cannot accomplish for man, what natural instinct does for the turtle. You may observe this bird, during the time following the death of its partner, fulfilling with constancy and diligence all the duties belonging to a faithful widowhood. You will find it always alone; you will everywhere hear it mourning. Never can you behold it perched upon any green bough—by which it would warn you to avoid the dangerous bloom of corrupting pleasure. Besides, it spends most of its time on the high mountain peaks or on the tops of trees, in order to teach us to despise earthly things and to love the things of heaven, as is especially becoming in persons vowed to the observance of chastity.

From what has been said we may gather that the preaching of continence is also the voice of the turtle. For the counsel of chastity was not known in the beginning, when to the children of Adam it was rather said, "Increase and multiply and fill the earth." Indeed, that turtle's voice would have been heard to no purpose whilst the kingdom of the resurrection had not yet been announced, in which men shall live far more happily than here, though "they shall neither be married nor take wives, for they shall be equal to the angels of God." Or do you suppose, my brethren, that it was then the time for preaching chastity when every barren daughter of Israel lay under a heavy curse? when the patriarchs themselves practised polygamy? when the law obliged a brother to marry his brother's widow? But when from the mouth of the heavenly Turtle there sounded forth that commendation of the "eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven," and when the voice of another most pure turtle was heard throughout the world counselling virginity, then, for the first

time, it could be said with truth, “the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.”

Therefore, my brethren, if “the flowers have appeared” and “the voice of the turtle is heard in our land,” truth has been discovered both by sight and by hearing. The voice is perceived by the ear and the flowers by the eye. Now, as was said in the previous interpretation, the flowers represent miracles, which, when added to the voice of preaching, engender the fruit of faith. For although “faith comes from hearing,” the confirmation thereof comes from sight. The voice has sounded in our ears, the flowers have glittered before our eyes, “and truth is sprung out of the earth” by the confession of believers, whilst words and signs concur in bearing witness to the faith. “Thy testimonies are become exceedingly credible,” since the flowers corroborate the evidence of the voice, and the eye that of the ear. Sights and sounds confirm each other, so that the testimony of two witnesses—I speak of the eye and the ear—may obtain credence, according to the word of the Lord. Therefore Christ said to the Baptist’s disciples, “Go and report to John what you have heard and seen.” He could not have demonstrated to them more briefly and clearly the certainty of the faith. In a short time, the like conviction was spread over the whole earth, and by means of the same compendious mode of persuasion. “Report what you have heard and seen.” O truly “abbreviated word”! Yet how “living and efficacious”! Surely it is not with any dubious misgiving I shall proclaim that which I have witnessed with my eyes and my ears. The world listens to the trumpet of salvation, it is dazzled with the splendour of corroborating miracles, and it believes. Men are easily convinced of a doctrine, when they see it confirmed by wonders. So we read in the Gospel that the apostles “going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.” We read again how Christ was transfigured on the mount and shone with dazzling brightness, and yet received also from heaven the testimony of the Father’s voice. Finally, in the account of His baptism in the Jordan, we have the Spirit, in the form of a dove, manifesting Him to the eye, and the heavenly voice witnessing of Him to the ear. Thus, by the mercy of God, these two, the word and the sign, ever co-operate for the producing of faith, so that truth may find easy admission to the soul through the open windows of sight and hearing.

The Bridegroom continues, “The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs.” Let us not eat of such figs, my brethren, for being yet unripe they are not wholesome. They do indeed resemble good figs, but more in outward appearance than in flavour, herein, perhaps, typifying hypocrisy. Nevertheless, we ought not to throw them away, because we may find them useful at another time. They will

fall from the branches of themselves, and before the season, “as the grass upon the tops of houses, which withereth before it be plucked up,” as the Psalmist says, speaking, I believe, of hypocrites. Nor is it without reason that there is mention made of the green figs in this marriage hymn. Many things besides comestibles have to be provided at a wedding; and if these green figs will not serve as food, they may be useful for some other purpose. And so little to be disregarded or passed lightly over do I judge that purpose, whatever it may be, that I will not attempt to confine the discussion thereof within the time I could now give to it at the close of this sermon. I prefer to postpone it to another day and a freer hour. As to whether this is necessary it will be for you to decide, after you have heard what I shall have to say. And meantime, do not forget to obtain for me by your prayers the power and the opportunity to express what I have in my mind, unto your own edification, and the praise and glory of the Spouse of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LX

ON THE TWO KINDS OF FIGS, AND ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VINE AND THE FIG-TREE

"The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs; the vines in flower yield their sweet smell."

"The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs." The sense of these words, my brethren, depends upon what has preceded. The Bridegroom has declared that "the time of pruning is come," inferring this both from the flowers which have appeared in the land, and also from the sound of the turtle's voice. He offers yet another reason now, namely, the putting forth of green figs by the fig-tree. For the signs of the seasons may be observed in the fig-tree as well as in the flowers and the voice of the turtle. It is when the weather is beginning to get warm that "the fig-tree puts forth her green figs." This tree produces no leaves, and its early figs make their appearance at the same time as the foliage on other trees. But just as the leaves flourish and fade, of no other value except in so far as they serve to herald the advent of the fruit which follows them, so is it also with the first-fruits of the fig. They come forth but never ripen, and hence never become fit for food, falling green from the branches to make room for the second crop, which remains till it is matured. The Bridegroom, therefore, as I have said, takes the appearance of these green figs as a sign of the season, and uses it as an argument to persuade His Spouse to proceed with haste to the vineyards, so that, arriving there in good time, she may not lose her labour. Such appears to be the literal connection.

But what is the mystical signification of our text? For surely there is question here not of material fig-trees, but of peoples. It is of human souls God hath care, not of insentient fruit-trees. And truly there is a close analogy between fig-trees and peoples, who are frail in their flesh, little in their intelligence, depressed in their mind, and to complete the comparison—whose first-fruits are green and earthly. For it is not the custom of the peoples to "seek first the kingdom of God

and His justice," but rather, as the Apostle says, to be "solicitous for the things of the world, how they may please their wives." "Such shall have tribulation of the flesh." However, I do not deny that in the end they will bring forth the fruits of faith, if at the last they shall have made a good confession, particularly if they redeem by alms-giving the works of the flesh. Therefore the first-fruits of the peoples deserve the name of fruit as little as do the first-fruits of the fig-tree. But if they afterwards produce "fruits worthy of penance"—for "not first that which is spiritual, but that which is natural," then it shall be said to them, "What fruit had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed?"

Nevertheless, I do not think that what is said here can be interpreted of every people. It seems to me that only one people is referred to. For it is not said, as of several, "The fig-trees have put forth"; but, as of one, "The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs." And in my opinion the fig-tree mentioned here represents the Jewish people. How many lessons and reproaches did not the Saviour address to this people, parabolically, using the image of the fig-tree, as may be read in the Gospel! For example, "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none." Also, "See the fig-tree and all the trees." And to Nathanael He said, "When thou wert under the fig-tree I saw thee." On another occasion He cursed a fig-tree because He found no fruit on it. And justly is the nation of the Jews compared to a fig-tree, because in spite of the excellence of the patriarchal root from which it sprung, it has never been desirous of attaining to greatness of stature, has never purposed to lift itself from the earth, has never cared to correspond with the nobility of its stock by the loftiness of its branches, the magnificence of its flowers, or the abundance of its fruit. Poorly indeed dost thou answer to thy root, O tree of Israel, little as thou art, and twisted, and gnarled! For thy root is holy. But what of holiness dost thou exhibit in thy branches? "The fig-tree," says the Bridegroom, "hath put forth her green figs." Degenerate fig-tree! It is not from thy noble root thou hast derived these green figs. Whatever is contained in it, is of the Holy Ghost, and so is entirely sweet and spiritual. Whence then hast thou drawn them? And in truth, my brethren, it may well be asked was there anything at all which was not green and gross in that people? Neither their actions, nor their affections, nor their understanding, nor even the rites they observed in the worship of God, were lacking in these characteristics. For their actions were all concerned with war, their affections were absorbed in the quest for the riches of this world, their understanding could not pierce through the grossness of the letter, their worship consisted in offering the blood of sheep and goats and oxen.

But somebody may now object and say to me, “Since the Jewish nation never ceased to put forth such green figs, it seems to follow that for it, at any rate, the time of pruning is always present, for these two seasons are represented as synchronising.” There is a mistake here, my brethren. A mother is not said to have brought forth her child whilst she is yet in travail, but only after the infant has been born into the world. Similarly we say that trees have put forth their leaves, not when they are in the period of florescence, but when that process has been completed. In the same sense it is said here, “The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs,” not to signify that some have been put forth, but that the whole have been put forth, that the time for putting forth has come to an end. Do you ask when this happened in the case of the Jews? It was when they put Christ to death. For it was then that they filled up the measure of their iniquity, as had been predicted of them by the Lord when He said, “Fill ye up the measure of your fathers.” Hence, when hanging on the cross, and about to breathe forth His Soul, He uttered the words, “It is consummated.” Oh, what a consummation was thus given to its green figs by that fig-tree, cursed by Christ, and condemned thereafter to everlasting sterility! Oh, how much worse were its last fruits than its first! Beginning with figs that were worthless, it came at length to produce pernicious and poisonous ones. O most gross and viperish disposition, to hate the Man Who came to heal our bodies and to save our souls! O truly gross and brutish understanding, not to recognise God even in the works of God!

Perhaps the Jew will complain that I am unduly severe in describing his understanding as brutish. But let him read Isaias and he shall find even something less flattering. “The ox,” says that Prophet, speaking in the name of the Lord, “knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood.” Thou perceivest now, O Jew, that I am not so hard on thee as is thine own Prophet. I have compared thee to the brute beasts in understanding, but he has placed thee beneath them; although Isaias speaks here not in his own person but in the person of Him Who proclaims Himself God both by works and words; so that He could say to the Jews, “If I do not the works of My Father believe Me not; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works.” Yet even thus they were not brought to understanding. The expulsion of demons from the possessed, the obedience of the elements, even the resuscitation of the dead could not penetrate that bestial and more than bestial stupidity of theirs. It was from this blindness, as miserable as it was marvellous, that the fig-tree produced the green fig of a most horrible and heinous crime, when the people laid sacrilegious hands on the Lord of

Majesty. Thenceforward it could be said with truth, “The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs.” For the legal rites of the Jewish people began now to give place to others, according to what is written in Leviticus, “The new coming in, you shall cast away the old,” in the same way as the first-fruits of the fig-tree fall off, yielding place to the second and better crop. We may therefore fancy the Bridegroom speaking thus to His Bride, “So long as the fig-tree continued to put forth its green figs, I did not call thee, O My Spouse; for I knew that the good figs could not appear with the bad; but now that it has produced all the evil fruit which had first to be put forth, it is seasonable to summon thee to the vineyards where, as thou knowest, the good and wholesome figs shall come out immediately after the fall of the other kind.”

And He adds, “The vines in flower yield their sweet smell,” which is an indication of the speedy appearance of the fruit. This odour has power to banish serpents. We are told that when the vine begins to flower every venomous reptile vanishes from the vicinity, unable to endure the scent of the opening blossoms. I wish our novices to attend to this, and to act manfully, remembering what spirit they have received, the very first-fruits whereof can put the demons to flight. But if the fervour of a novice be so efficacious, what potency shall we attribute to the sanctity of the perfect? Let the fruit be judged from the flower; let the quality of the taste be estimated from the quality of the odour. “The vines in flower yield their sweet smell.” So indeed it was at the beginning.

The preaching of the new grace was followed by newness of life in them that believed, “having their conversation good among the gentiles.” Like the Apostle, they were “the good odour of Christ in every place.” A good odour is a good testimony. A good testimony proceeds from a good work, just as a good odour from a flower. And because, in the early days of the infant Church, faithful souls, like so many spiritual vines, appeared to be full of such flowers and odours, “having a good testimony even from them that were without,” I think we may reasonably apply to them what is here said, “The vines in flower yield their sweet smell.” To what purpose? In order that such as had not yet believed might be attracted by it, and witnessing their good works whence it proceeded, might thus themselves be led to glorify God; and so the sweet smell of the vines would become an “odour of life unto life.” Justly, therefore, are they described as giving forth their odours, who seek not their own glory in their own fair fame, but rather the salvation of others. For, after the example of many, they might have made “godliness a source of gain,” rendering it subservient to greed or ambition. That, however, would not be giving but selling their odour. But now,

whilst “all their things are done in charity,” as St. Paul recommends, it may be truly said of them that they do not barter but “yield their sweet smell.”

But if the soul be the vine, and good works the flower, and fair fame the odour, what is the fruit? It is martyrdom. The fruit of the vine is the blood of the martyr. As the Psalmist sings, “When He shall give sleep to His beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord are children; the reward, the fruit of the womb.” I was nearly saying, “the fruit of the vine.” And why should I not speak of the blood of the innocent, the blood of the just, as the purest blood of the grape? Why not regard it as wine unmixed, ruddy, rich, precious, extracted from the vintage of Sorech in the wine-press of suffering? Hence it is written, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Such appears to be the meaning of the words of the Bridegroom, “The vines in flower yield their sweet smell.” I mean to say, thus I should interpret them, if they are considered to refer to the seasons of grace.

But if we prefer to understand this passage as applying to the patriarchs and prophets, “for the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel,” the sense will be: The patriarchs and prophets inhaled the sweet odour of Christ, Who was preordained to be born and to die in the flesh; yet they did not then give forth the same odour, because they could not exhibit in the flesh Him of Whom they had a fore-scent in the spirit. They did not yield “their sweet smell,” nor publish their secret, but waited for the revelation to be made in its proper season. For who, at that time, would have received the Wisdom “hidden in a mystery,” and not yet manifested in the body? So the vines did not yet begin to “yield their sweet smell.” But they yielded it later on, when, after a long series of passing generations, Christ, sprung from them according to the flesh, was brought forth into the world by a virginal birth. Then, I say, these spiritual vines “yielded their sweet smell,” “when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared,” and the earth began to have Him present, Whose fragrance when absent only a few could enjoy. Thus, for instance, the holy Patriarch Isaac scented the sweet odour of Christ when, laying hands on his son Jacob, he blessed him with the words, “Behold the smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field which the Lord hath blessed.” Nevertheless, whilst speaking thus, he kept to himself his consolation, nor would he share it with any. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law.” Then, indeed, the odour secretly enjoyed by the Patriarch, diffused itself abroad, so that the Church, from the ends of the earth perceiving the perfume, exclaimed, “Thy name is as oil poured

out," and even the young maidens began to run to the odour of this ointment. Thus, then, the vine I have instanced yielded at last its sweet smell, as did also the other patriarchal vines at the same time; for in them all had pre-existed the same odour of life. How could it have been otherwise, since from them all was Christ according to the flesh? What is said, therefore, "The vines yield their sweet smell," may be interpreted to mean either that faithful souls everywhere diffuse a good esteem of themselves, or that the oracles and revelations of the patriarchs were made manifest to the world at the coming of Christ, and their odour "hath gone forth into all the earth,"—with reference to which the Apostle says, "And evidently great is the Mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit, appeared unto the angels, hath been preached unto the gentiles, is believed in the world, is taken up in glory."

It would be strange, my brethren, if neither from the fig-tree nor from the vine we could obtain for ourselves any fruit of edification. And so it seems to me that this passage is also susceptible of a moral interpretation. I say, then, that, "by the grace of God which is in us," we have here amongst us both vines and fig-trees. By the fig-trees I mean those religious who are distinguished for their sweetness of disposition. The vines are those who excel in fervour of spirit. Every individual who practises faithfully amongst us the social and domestic virtues, who not only lives in the community "without blame," but with unfailing sweetness puts himself at the service of each of his brethren, for all the offices of charity—every such religious, I say, is most certainly worthy of being compared to the fig-tree. Yet he must first have put forth his green figs. That is to say, he ought to have got rid of the fear of judgment, which "charity casteth out"; and of the afflicting recollection of his sins, which must yield to the tranquillising influence of a good confession, to the infusion of grace, and to the frequent outpouring of tears; and of all other such imperfections, which, like the green figs, precede the sweet and perfect fruit, but which I will not specify, leaving you to discover them by your own meditation. However, I will make one further remark which occurs to me, and is connected herewith. Do you not suppose that even the endowments of knowledge, prophecy, the gift of tongues, and the like, may be reckoned amongst the green figs? For, like the green figs, they also are destined to fall off and to give place to things better. The Apostle assures us of this when he says "Prophecies shall be made void, tongues shall cease, (and) knowledge shall be destroyed." Faith, too, shall be excluded by understanding and hope must yield to vision. "For what a man seeth, why doth he hope for?" Only "Charity never falleth away," and that charity only whereby we love God

with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with all our strength. Consequently, I would by no means regard this virtue as one of the green figs. I would not even consider it as belonging to the fig-tree at all, but rather to the vine. Now, they that are vines in the mystical sense exhibit in their conduct more severity than sweetness, borne on by the spirit of ardour, full of zeal for discipline extremely sharp in correcting abuses, and in short, appropriating to themselves the words of the Psalmist, “Have I not hated them, O Lord, that hated Thee, and pined away because of Thy enemies?” And this also, “The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up.” As it seems to me, such religious are particularly given up to the love of God; whereas, it is love of their neighbour that characterises the former class whom I have likened to fig-trees. But let us rest here, my brethren, under this vine and this fig-tree, in the shadow of the love of God and man. Both loves I exercise when I love Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, Who art truly my Neighbour, because Thou art truly man and “hast dealt mercifully with me,” and nevertheless art also over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXI

ON THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST TYPIFIED BY THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK

> "Arise, My love, My Spouse, and come; My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, shew Me thy face, let thy voice sound in My Ears."

"Arise, My love, My Spouse, and come." The Bridegroom, my brethren, reveals the greatness of His love by thus repeating these titles of affection. For such repetition is the language of love. And by again inviting His Spouse forth to the labour of the vineyard, He shows His anxious solicitude for the salvation of souls. I have already explained that souls are here designated by the name of vines. But let us not lose time in examining words which have been sufficiently discussed already. Let us pass on to what follows. However, I will first remark that, so far as I can remember, the Bridegroom has not before, in this Canticle, addressed His beloved one by the title of Spouse, but He does so now because she is about to enter the vineyard, and is approaching to the wine of charity. When she attains to this, and has been made perfect, then shall she celebrate her mystical nuptials with Him, then her Beloved and she shall be two, not indeed in one flesh, but in one spirit, according to the testimony of the Apostle, where he says, "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

The Bridegroom goes on, "My love in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, shew Me thy face, let thy voice sound in My Ears." Because He loves He continues to speak the language of love. For the second time He affectionately calls her a dove, His dove, to signify that she belongs to Him exclusively. And what she has been wont to request so earnestly of Him He now in His turn solicits from her, namely, that she would show Him her face and delight Him with her conversation. He appears here in the character of a shy lover, who, because of his modesty, desires to shun publicity and seeks a sequestered spot for the satisfaction of his affection, such as the "clefts of the rock" or the "hollow places of the wall." We may therefore fancy the

Bridegroom thus addressing His beloved, “Do not be afraid, O My spouse, that the work of looking after the vineyard, to which I am inviting thee, will hinder or interrupt our loving conversation. For that occupation will afford us many opportunities for the intercourse which we both so ardently desire. The vineyard must certainly have an enclosing wall, and the ‘hollow places’ thereof offer welcome trysts to lovers.” Such is the play of the literal sense. Why should I not call it a play, since if we stop at it and go not beyond the surface meaning, it is impossible to discover in these words anything like a serious purpose. Indeed, as they sound on the external ear, they suggest nothing even worthy to be heard, unless the Holy Spirit shall deign to strengthen with His interior light the weakness of our understanding. Therefore lest we should remain outside in the letter, lest, which God forbid! we should seem to be only listening to the arts and blandishments which belong to profane love, let us attend with chaste and sober minds to this discourse on divine charity. And if there should be mention of lovers, think not of male and female, but of the Word and the holy soul, or of Christ and the Church, which is the same thing, except that by the name of the Church is designated not a single soul, but rather the unity, or better still, the unanimity of many souls. Neither should we suppose the “clefts of the rock” and the “hollow places of the wall” to be the coverts of “them that work iniquity,” lest any suspicion should arise in our minds of the works of darkness.

Some one else has expounded this passage in a different sense, interpreting the “clefts of the rock” to mean the Wounds of Christ, which I entirely approve of, since “Christ is the Rock.” O blessed clefts, which fortify our faith in the resurrection and in the Divinity of the Saviour! “My Lord and my God,” exclaimed Thomas the Apostle. But whence did he derive this confession save from the clefts of the Rock? Therein “the sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ones.” In them the dove rests secure, and beholds with fearless eye the hungry hawk’s gyrations. Therefore the Bridegroom here calls His Spouse, “My dove in the clefts of the Rock.” And it is the voice of the dove we hear in the psalm saying, “He hath exalted me upon a Rock,” and, “He hath set my feet upon a Rock.” The wise man builds his house upon the Rock, because on such a foundation he shall have nothing to fear from the violence of floods or tempests. What can be found in the Rock except what is most excellent? It lifts me up from the ground, It renders me secure, It affords me firm footing. On the Rock I am safe from my enemies, I am prevented from falling, and that because, standing on the Rock, I am exalted above the earth. For everything on the earth is unstable and insecure. But if “our

conversation is in heaven," then we need have no fear either of falling or of being thrown down. In heaven is the Rock, wherein alone can be found strength and security. "The Rock is a refuge for the irchins," as the Psalmist says. And in truth where shall the weak find a safe rest or a secure asylum except in the Wounds of the Saviour? There shall I dwell with a confidence proportionate to the greatness of His power to save me. Let the world rage, let the body bear me down, let the devil plot against me: I shall not fall, for I am founded on the Rock. I have sinned most grievously; my conscience is indeed much disquieted, yet is not confounded, because I will call to mind the Wounds of my Saviour. For "He was wounded for our iniquities." What sin can be so much "unto death" as that it cannot be "loosed" by the death of Christ? Therefore no disease, however desperate, shall have power to drive me to despair, if only I keep in mind so potent and efficacious a remedy.

Cain consequently was in error when he said, "My iniquity is greater than I may deserve pardon"; unless it be that he was not one of Christ's members, and had no share in Christ's merits, entitling him to regard them as his own and to call them his own, just as the members can claim as its own what belongs to the head. But as for me, my brethren, whatever I perceive to be wanting, to me I appropriate to myself with all confidence from the Heart of my Lord Jesus. For that Heart overflows with mercy, neither does It want for clefts for the outpouring of Its treasures. They dug His Hands and Feet and opened His Side with a lance. And through these clefts I am permitted to "suck honey out of the Rock, and oil out of the hardest stone." That is to say, I am enabled to "taste and see that the Lord is sweet." He was thinking "thoughts of peace" and I knew it not. For "who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?" But the nail that pierced Him has been for us a key to unlock the mind of the Lord and to expose to our view His secret counsels. Why should I not look through these fissures into the Heart of the Rock? The nails announce to me, the Wounds proclaim to me that "God indeed is in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." "The iron pierced His Soul" and "His Heart hath drawn near" to us in order that He may no longer be as one "who cannot have compassion on our infirmities." The secret of His Heart is revealed to us through the clefts of His Body; the "great mystery of godliness" is revealed to us; and revealed also are "the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us." Surely the Heart of Christ can be seen through the openings of His Wounds. For what can prove to me so clearly as Thy Wounds that Thou, O Lord Jesus, "art sweet and mild and plenteous in mercy"? "Greater (mercy) than this

no man hath, that a man lay down his life," not for his friends, but for his enemies, criminals devoted and doomed to death.

My merit, therefore, is nothing but the mercy of the Lord. Hence I cannot be poor in merit so long as He is rich in compassion. And if "the mercies of the Lord are many," many too must my merits be. I may be "conscious to myself" of a multitude of sins, but what of that? For "where sin abounded, grace did more abound." And if "the mercies of the Lord are from eternity and unto eternity," "the mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever" also. But shall I sing my own justice? "O Lord, I will be mindful of Thy justice alone." For Thy justice is also my justice, because Thou art made unto me "justice of God," as the Apostle declares. But is there any reason to be afraid lest the one justice should not suffice for us both? Surely not, because it is not a "short covering" which, as the Prophet Isaias says, "cannot cover two." In the words of the Psalmist, "Thy justice is justice for ever." And what is longer than eternity? Oh, yes, an eternal justice is wide enough and long enough to cover fully both Thee and me. In me it shall cover "a multitude of sins"; but in Thee, what save the treasures of piety and the riches of goodness? These treasures and riches are laid up for me in the clefts of the Rock. "Oh, how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness which Thou hast" covered therein! But covered only from "them that perish." For why should pearls be cast before swine? Why should that which is holy be given to dogs? "But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit," hath even brought us into the sanctuary through the open clefts of the Rock. And what a "multitude of sweetness" have we discovered there, what a plenitude of grace, what a consummation of all virtue!

As for me, my brethren, I will go to these store-rooms thus replenished with good things. Following the Prophet's advice, I will "leave the cities and dwell in the Rock." I will "be like the dove that maketh her nest in the mouth of the hole in the highest place," so that, like Moses, "set in the hole of the Rock," when the glory of the Lord shall have passed by, I may be able to see at least "His back parts." For who can gaze upon His Face whilst He stands? That is to say, who can behold the Brightness of the Unchangeable, except one that has been already admitted not only into the sanctuary, but even into the holy of holies? Nor ought we to regard as mean or contemptible the vision which shows us the "hinder parts" of God. Let Herod despise Him thus beheld; but the more despicable He shows Himself to Herod the less shall He be despised by me. Even the "hinder parts" of the Lord have wherewith to delight the beholder. And "who knoweth but He will turn around and forgive, and leave a blessing behind Him?" The time

will come when He will “shew us His Face and we shall be saved.” But meanwhile let Him deign to “prevent us with the blessings of sweetness,” with those, namely, which He is wont to leave after Him. Let Him now show us the humility of His “back parts” in condescension, as He will show us hereafter the Majesty of His Face in glory. In heaven He displays His magnificence; on the cross He manifested His sweetness. With the latter vision He prevents me; with the former He will fill me, according to the words of holy David, “Thou shalt fill me with joy with Thy Countenance.” Salutary are both visions, and both are sweet. But in the one the Lord appears in loftiness, in the other, in lowliness. The one is all resplendent, paleness characterises the other.

Hence, my brethren, it is said in the psalm, “And the hinder parts of (His) back in the paleness of gold.” And surely He must have grown pallid in death. But better is pale gold than glittering brass; and “the foolishness of God is wiser than men.” The Word of God is gold, gold too is the Wisdom of God. This Divine Gold discoloured Itself, concealing the Form of God, and exposing to view the form of a servant. It also discoloured the Church, since she says, “Do not consider that I am brown, because the Sun hath altered my colour.” Therefore to the Church likewise can be applied the words, “And the hinder parts of her back in the paleness of gold.” For she has not been ashamed of the ignominy of the cross, she has not been scandalised at the infamy of the Passion, she has not shrunk from the unsightliness of the Wounds. Nay, she even takes her pleasure in these things and desires that her own “last end shall be like to them.” Therefore she hears it said to her, “My dove in the clefts of the Rock”; because she is always devoutly pondering on the Wounds of Christ, and abides therein by her constant meditations. It is from these Wounds she derives the fortitude exhibited by her martyrs; thence also proceeds her invincible trust in the Most High. There is no reason why the martyr should be afraid to lift up his pallid and livid face to Him in Whose bruises he has been healed, to present to Him a glorious image of His own bitter death, “in the paleness of gold.” Why should he fear, since the Lord even asks him to do this, saying, “Shew Me thy face”? But wherefore such a request from the Bridegroom? As it appears to me, my brethren, He is rather expressing here a desire to show Himself. So indeed it is. He wants to be seen, not to see. For what is there which He does not see? He has no need that anyone should show himself, from Whose all-seeing Eye nothing can escape, nothing be concealed. He therefore wills to be seen. The gracious Captain wants the devoted soldier to lift up his face and his eyes in order to contemplate his Leader’s Wounds, and to draw from that contemplation and that

example fresh courage and strength for the conflict. For the servant shall not feel his own wounds whilst gazing on the Wounds of his Master.

See the martyr! See how he stands triumphant and jubilant, although his whole body is mangled and rent! And whilst the cruel iron tears open his sides, he watches with fortitude, yea, even with joy, the sacred blood spurting out from the lacerated flesh. Where, then, I ask, is the martyr's soul? She is in security, my brethren, she is on the Rock, for she is in the Heart of Jesus; and it was to give her admission thither that the Wounds have been opened in the Saviour's Body. Had she remained in her own flesh, she certainly would feel the rending iron; the pain would overpower her; she would succumb; she would deny the faith. But now whilst she abides in the Rock, is it any wonder that she exhibits the unyielding firmness of the Rock? Is it any wonder that, sojourning outside the body, she does not feel the pains of the body? And this is due not to any stupefaction but to the force of affection. Sensibility is not lost but subjected to love. Pain is not wanting, but it is vanquished and despised. Therefore from the firmness of the Rock comes the fortitude of the martyr. Thence is derived the courage to drink the chalice of the Lord. And that "chalice, which inebriateth, how goodly it is!" Goodly indeed, and pleasant too, not only for the Emperor Himself Who is looking on, but also for the soldier who celebrates his triumph. "For the joy of the Lord is our strength," as we read in the Prophet Esdras. Why should He not rejoice as He listens to the martyr's fearless confession? Yea, it is a joy He longs for with eagerness. Hence He says, "Let thy voice sound in My Ears." Nor will He be slow in making a return, according to His promise. As soon as He shall be confessed before men by the martyr, He will also confess him before His Father Who is in heaven. Let me here, my brethren, interrupt the discourse, as I should not have time to finish to-day. For if all that remains to be said in connexion with my present text were to be included in this one sermon, it would be necessary to prolong it beyond all reasonable limits. It is better therefore to keep for another time what further remarks I intend to offer, in order that both our speech and our silence may give joy to the Spouse of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXII

ON THE TWO KINDS OF CONTEMPLATION CORRESPONDING TO THE HOLLOWS OF THE WALL AND THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK

> "My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, shew me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears; for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely."

"My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall." It is not only in the clefts of the Rock, my brethren, that the dove finds a secure refuge. She has also a safe asylum in the hollow places of the wall. Now if we take this wall to mean, not a structure of material stones, but rather the communion of saints, let us consider lest perchance by the hollow places of the wall are designated the places in that blessed society which the angels who fell through their pride left empty, so to speak, and which, like the fissures of a ruin, have now to be built up and repaired with the living stones of human spirits. It is in this sense the Apostle Peter exhorts us, saying, "Unto Whom coming, as to a Living Stone, be you also built up, a spiritual house." Nor do I think we should be far wrong if we conceived the guardianship of the angels to be the enclosing wall, as it were, of the Lord's vineyard, which is the Church of the predestinate. For St. Paul says, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" And the Psalmist witnesses to the same in the words, "The angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear Him." Assuming this to be so, our text may be explained as follows. There are two things which console the Church in the time and the place of her banishment, namely, the recollection of Christ's sufferings in the past, and, as regards the future, the thought and the confidence that she shall be received one day into the society of the holy angels. With her memory and her hope, as with two eyes, one behind and one before, she lovingly and insatiably contemplates both these objects, namely, the Lord's Passion and her own future bliss. Each of the two visions is a source of consolation to her, because in each she finds a

refuge from what the Psalmist calls “the trouble of evils and sorrow.” It is her perfect consolation that she knows not merely what she ought to hope for, but the ground and reason of her hope as well. Joyous and assured must be the hope which has been confirmed by the death of Christ. Why should the magnitude of the reward make her diffident, when she calls to mind the worth of the ransom? How gladly does she visit in spirit those “clefts of the Rock,” those Wounds of the Saviour through which flowed the thrice-holy Blood of her redemption! How gladly does she explore the “hollow places,” the inns and the mansions, many and various, which are in the Father’s house, and in which He is pleased to place His children according to the variety of their merits! At present, indeed, nothing better being as yet in her power, she reposes there only in thought, and mentally visits the heavenly habitations above. But the day will come when she shall “fill up the ruins”; when she shall dwell in the hollow places of the wall in body as well as in mind; when with the multitude of her children she shall occupy and adorn the tabernacles left untenanted by the fall of their original possessors. Then hollow places shall no more be seen in the celestial wall, but it shall rejoice everlastingly in the bliss of its consummation and in the restoration of its integrity.

But perhaps you will be better pleased if I say that these hollow places are not so much found by devout and studious minds as effected and formed. Do you ask, by what means? “By thought and desire.” For the spiritual wall, like a structure of soft material, readily yields to the desires of the soul, readily yields to pure contemplation, readily yields to frequent prayer. We read in Holy Scripture that “the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds.” It is not meant surely that humble prayer can cleave this corporeal atmosphere, diffused around in its wide expanses, as does the flying bird with the oars of its wings. Nor are we to suppose that prayer, like a sharp sword, cuts its way, in a material sense, through the high and solid dome of the visible heaven above us. But there are the heavens of blessed spirits, my brethren, the living, rational heavens, which “show forth the glory of God.” These, on account of the fostering love which they feel for us, gladly incline to our prayers; and whenever with a pure intention we knock at them, their affection yields to the force of our devotion, and through the hollow thus made we obtain admission to their interior. For “to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” Therefore it is in the power of each one of us, even during the present time of our mortality, to form for himself such hollows in the heavenly wall, and in whatever part of it he may choose. For whenever we please we can visit the patriarchs, or salute the

prophets, or associate ourselves to the august council of the apostles, or mingle with the choirs of the martyrs; nay, we may even pass through and examine, with all pious curiosity, the various orders and mansions of the pure celestial spirits, from the lowest of the angels to the Cherubim and the Seraphim, according as each one's devotion shall incline him. And if we stand and knock there whither our attraction draws us, the Holy Ghost, guiding us by His grace as He wills, a hollow shall at once appear in the living wall of happy spirits, who will affectionately curve themselves to enfold us, so that we may enjoy a little repose amongst them. Well pleasing to God are the face and the voice of every soul that thus hollows the heavenly wall. Her face is pleasing because of its beauty, her voice on account of its praise. For, as the Psalmist says, "Praise and beauty are before Him." Hence every soul that is such hears herself addressed in the words, "Shew Me thy face, let thy voice sound in My Ears." Now the voice of the soul is the holy admiration she feels in contemplating the things of God and also her thanksgiving for the divine benefits. And God takes great pleasure in those hollows of the wall whence proceeds the voice of thanksgiving, the voice of admiration and praise.

Blessed is the man that devotes and applies himself fervently and frequently to the work of hollowing this mystical wall. But still more blessed he who makes for himself hollows in the Rock. For we are permitted, if we have the power, to excavate even the Rock. Yet for this the soul has need of a purer keenness of edge, of a more strongly-directed intention, and of greater merits of sanctity. But who can pretend to such qualifications? He, at all events, might do so who said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God." Does it not seem to you, my brethren, as if the Evangelist had plunged into the very Heart of the Word, and brought forth from Its innermost recesses the sacrosanct essence of Wisdom Divine? And shall we not say the same of him who used to "speak wisdom among the perfect, the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew"? Did not that pious explorer, after penetrating with a keen yet devout curiosity, the first and second heaven, bring down to earth from the third this mystery of wisdom? Neither did he keep it to himself, for he has faithfully delivered it to us in the most faithful words he could find. But he also "heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter." That is, it was not granted to him to utter these secrets to his fellow-men, but he was allowed to speak of them to himself and to God. We may therefore imagine the Lord consoling St. Paul's solicitous charity, and saying to him, "Why art thou

troubled because human ears cannot take in what thou hast conceived in thy mind? ‘Let thy voice sound in My Ears.’ Even though thou art not permitted to reveal thy secret to mortals, be not grieved thereat, since thy voice may give pleasure to the Ears of God.” Do you not observe how this holy soul is now “sober” out of charity for us, and now “transported to God” because of her purity? Holy David was another soul qualified to excavate the Rock. And consider if he is not himself the man of whom, as of a different person, he speaks to God and says, “For the thought of man shall give praise to Thee: and the remainders of the thought shall keep holiday to Thee.” Therefore as much of the prophetic thought as could be expressed by the Prophet’s words and example he immediately made manifest to all, in order thereby to “give praise to the Lord among the people.” But the rest, “the remainders of the thought,” he reserved to God and to himself, keeping holiday with the Lord, in “gladness and rejoicing.” This is what the verse I have just quoted is intended to convey to us. Hence we may infer that the Prophet, by zealous preaching, used to expend for the people’s salvation whatever he could of all that his curious and eager mind was able to draw from wisdom’s secret fountain; whilst the incommunicable residue became for himself an additional motive for praising God with festive jubilee. Notice how nothing goes to loss in divine contemplation. For whatever cannot contribute to the edification of the people, with that especially we may render “to our God joyful and comely praise.”

It follows from what I have said that there are two kinds of contemplation. The one considers the stability, the state, the happiness, and the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem, and in what manner of repose or activity the mighty multitude of its citizens occupy themselves. The other has for object the King Himself, His Divinity, His Majesty, His Eternity. By the former we make hollows in the wall, by the latter in the Rock. And if the excavations in the Rock are the more difficult to make, more precious in proportion are the treasures they reveal to us. Nor need you be afraid of that penalty wherewith Holy Scriptures threaten the “searchers of Majesty,” provided you bring a pure and simple eye to this contemplation. You shall not be “overwhelmed by glory,” but rather admitted to glory, unless indeed you seek your own glory instead of the glory of God. For it is not God’s glory but his own that overwhelms a man, because whilst he is bent on the latter and pressed down by the weight of ambition, he cannot lift up his head to contemplate the former. Let us, therefore, my brethren, shake off this yoke from our necks, and then we may securely excavate the Rock, “in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” But if you

are not yet reassured, listen to what the Rock Himself says, “They that work in Me shall not sin.” Oh, “who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest!” For the meek and the simple shall find rest there where the deceitful shall be overwhelmed, as well as the proud and the lovers of vainglory. The Church is a dove, and is therefore at rest. She is a dove because of her innocence and because of her mourning. She is a dove, I say, because she has “with meekness received the ingrafted word,” according to the advice of St. James. And she rests in the Word, that is to say, in the Rock, for the Word is the Rock. The Church, consequently, dwells in the clefts of the Rock, through which she looks into the interior and beholds the glory of her Bridegroom. Neither does that glory overwhelm her, because she does not attempt to arrogate it to herself. She is not “overwhelmed by the glory,” because she is not a “searcher of Majesty,” but a seeker of the divine will. As regards the Divine Majesty, she does indeed venture to look upon it occasionally, not however as a searcher but merely as an admirer. But even if she happens sometimes to be drawn up to that Majesty in a spiritual ecstasy, “this is the finger of God” mercifully exalting the creature, not the creature’s temerity impudently invading the privacy of God. For when even the Apostle thinks it necessary to excuse the boldness of his intrusion, by explaining that he then suffered a rapture, what other mortal shall presume to take upon himself the fearful responsibility of searching out, by his own efforts, the secrets of the Divine Majesty, and of intruding as a rash inquirer into the most awful mysteries of the Godhead? Therefore I believe that by the “searchers of Majesty” are meant such irreverent invaders of Majesty, not they who are ravished but they who encroach. And it is of these we are told that they “shall be overwhelmed by glory.”

It is therefore a very dangerous thing to search into the Majesty of God. But to search out His will is as safe as it is pious. Why should I not persevere in scrutinising the mystery of the glory of that divine will with all diligence, since, as I know, I am bound to render it universal obedience? Sweet is this glory which comes from no other source than the contemplation of Sweetness Itself, which has no other fountain save the prospect of the riches of God’s goodness and the “multitude of His tender mercies.” As the Evangelist says, “We saw His glory, the glory, as it were, of the Only-Begotten of the Father.” For whatever of glory has been manifested in the divine will is entirely paternal, entirely condescending. This glory shall never overwhelm me, even though I contemplate it with all my powers. Rather I shall be impressed with its likeness, agreeably to what is written, “We all beholding the glory of the Lord with open

face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." We are so transformed, my brethren, when we are conformed. But God forbid that any man should have the presumption to expect to be conformed to the Lord in the glory of His Majesty and not rather in the meekness of His will. This shall be my glory, if ever I am deemed worthy to hear Him say of me what He said of David, "I have found a man according to My own Heart." The Heart of the Bridegroom is the Heart of His Father. And what are the dispositions of the Father's Heart? Christ Himself has told us, where He says, "Be ye merciful as your Father also is merciful." This is the image which He desires to see when He says to the Church, "Shew Me thy face," the image, namely, of His own meekness and piety. And when her face exhibits these lineaments, she may raise it with all confidence to the Rock, to Whom she is thus proved to be conformed. "Come ye to Him," cries the Psalmist, "and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be confounded." How indeed could an humble Bride be confounded by an humble Bridegroom, a holy Bride by a loving-kind Bridegroom, a modest Bride by a gentle Bridegroom? No, the pure face of the Spouse can no more be repelled by the purity of the Rock than virtue can be repelled by virtue, or light by light.

But the Church cannot as yet, whilst she is still in exile, draw nigh in all her members to form fissures in the Rock; because not all who belong to the Church have the power to scrutinise the mysteries of the divine will, or to comprehend of themselves "the deep things of God." This appears to be the reason why she is here represented as dwelling not only in the clefts of the Rock, but also in the hollow places of the wall. We may suppose, then, that she abides in the clefts of the Rock in the persons of her perfect members, who, by reason of their purity of conscience, have the courage to scrutinise and penetrate the secrets of divine wisdom, and have the power to do so from the acuteness of their minds. In her other members she occupies the hollow places of the wall. For such as lack either the strength or the daring necessary for piercing the Rock, employ themselves in making hollows in the wall, and are satisfied with contemplating the glory of the saints. But should there be any amongst her children to whom even this is impossible, to them she proposes "Jesus and Him crucified"; so that now, without any effort on their own part, they may abide in the clefts of the Rock, the opening of which has cost them nothing. The Jews have laboured in forming these fissures, and they, that they may remain faithful, enter into the labours of the unfaithful. Nor need they be apprehensive lest they should meet with a repulse, since they are even invited to seek sanctuary in the clefts. "Enter

thou unto the Rock," so we read in Isaias, "and hide thee in the digged earth from the face of the fear of the Lord and from the glory of His Majesty." To the weak and sluggish soul, which can say of herself, like the unjust steward in the Gospel, "To dig I am unable and to beg I am ashamed," to such a soul the Prophet here points out ground that is already excavated. In these pits she may lie concealed until she has acquired sufficient strength and energy to be able of herself to pierce holes in the Rock, through which, by means of purity and vigour of mind, she shall gain admission to the Heart of the Word.

If by the "digged earth" we understand the Saviour's Body, whereof He said, "They have digged My Hands and My Feet," then there can be no doubt that the wounded soul that hides herself therein shall soon be restored to health. For what can be so efficacious for curing the wounds of the conscience and for purifying the eye of the soul as assiduous meditation on the Wounds of the Redeemer? But until she has been perfectly healed and cleansed, I do not see how she can understand as addressed to herself the words of the Bridegroom, "Shew Me thy face, let thy voice sound in My Ears." For how will she dare to show her face or to raise her voice, after receiving a command to hide herself? "Hide thee in the digged earth," says the Prophet. Wherefore? Because her face is not yet entirely pure and worthy of the Bridegroom's regard. And as long as she lacks the power of contemplating Him, so long shall she remain unworthy of being looked upon by Him. But when, by dwelling in the hollow places of the digged earth, she shall have made such progress in the purification of her interior eye, that she also can "with open face behold the glory of the Lord," then, at last, being now able to see, she may speak too with all confidence; for both in voice and face she has become pleasing. Pleasing beyond doubt must that face be which can bear to be turned towards the Brightness of God. For this would be intolerable to it, were it not itself pure and lustrous and transformed into the image of the same glory which it contemplates. It would be repelled by reason of the dissimilitude and would be dazzled and beaten back by the unwonted splendour. Therefore, when the Spouse is herself pure she will be able to contemplate the pure and naked truth. Then she will desire to see the Face of her Bridegroom, and also to hear His voice.

How great pleasure He takes in the preaching of truth when it is accompanied with purity of mind, He gives us clearly to understand by the words which are added, "For thy voice is sweet." Nevertheless, He at the same time insinuates that the voice cannot please Him, unless the face also is pleasing, since He immediately subjoins, "And thy face comely." What can be the comeliness of

the interior face except purity? The comeliness of purity pleases Him in many without the sweet voice of preaching. But He can take no pleasure at all in the latter unaccompanied by the former. Truth will not reveal itself, nor will wisdom entrust itself to minds that are impure. How then shall they preach what they have not seen? For it is written, “We speak what we know and we testify what we have seen.” And wilt thou be so presumptuous as to testify what thou hast not seen, and to speak what thou dost not know? Do you ask me, my brethren, whom I mean by the impure of mind? I mean every preacher who looks for the applause of men, who does not “deliver the Gospel without charge,” who preaches that he may eat, who “supposes gain to be godliness,” who seeks not fruit for his hearers but gifts for himself. Such persons have certainly impure minds. But although they cannot see the truth because of their impurity, nevertheless they have the presumption to proclaim it. Why will you be so premature? why not wait for the light? why would you attempt to do in the dark that which is a work of light? “It is vain for you to rise before the light,” as the Psalmist warns us. Now light is purity, light is that charity which “seeketh not her own.” Only let this light precede to illumine thy way, and the foot of thy tongue shall advance in security. The truth, which is concealed from the “haughty eye,” lies open to the simple. It is impossible that it should not allow itself to be seen by the pure of heart, and thus also proclaimed. “But to the sinner, God saith: Why dost thou declare My justices and take My covenants in thy mouth?” Many neglecting this purity undertake to preach the truth before they have seen it. The consequence is that either they fall into gross errors, talking at random and affirming what they know not; or else they forfeit all respect by giving their hearers occasion to say of them that while undertaking to teach others, they have not first taught themselves. From both these evils may your prayers obtain that we shall be always protected by the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXIII

ON THE MYSTICAL VINEYARD AND THE FOXES THAT INVADE IT

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, for our vineyard hath flourished."

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, for our vineyard hath flourished." Evidently, the visit to the vineyard has not been waste of time, since the foxes have been there discovered destroying the vines. This is the literal sense. But what do these words mystically convey to us? For it is necessary in the first place to reject from our interpretation, as vain and unprofitable and altogether unworthy of so holy and venerable a Canticle, the vulgar and obvious ideas suggested by the letter. Unless indeed there be some so mentally obtuse and stolid as to esteem it a great thing to have learned from Sacred Scripture that they ought to take care of their earthly possessions, like the children of this world, and that they ought to guard and protect their vineyards against the incursions of ravaging beasts; lest otherwise they should lose the fruit thereof, namely, the wine "wherein is luxury," and get no return from the money and labour expended. A terrible loss, no doubt, and well deserving that we should peruse this holy Book with such attention and respect in order to be instructed how to defend ourselves against it! That the Bible, forsooth, should teach us how to preserve our vineyards from the foxes, and warn us that our coffers shall be emptied in vain by the expenses incurred in the cultivation of the vines, unless we are diligent in guarding them! You, at least, my brethren, are not so uninstructed, so devoid of all spiritual grace, as to entertain such crude and carnal sentiments. Let us therefore endeavour to find the mystical signification of our text. There we shall discover, in a sense satisfactory to our reason, and at the same time worthy of Holy Scripture, flourishing vineyards and destroying foxes, in catching and expelling which we shall be more honourably and more profitably employed than in defending our material possessions. For you will surely allow that souls have to be guarded more watchfully than grapes, and that

far more vigilance is necessary to protect the former against the “spirits of wickedness,” than to catch the cunning little foxes that spoil the vines.

I have now to explain to you what are the spiritual vines and the spiritual foxes. And whilst you listen to the remarks I shall have to make, and learn in what respects and against what enemies you ought to be on your guard, let it be your care, my dear children, to look each to his own vineyard. To the wise man his own life is a vineyard, his own mind is a vineyard, and a vineyard also is his own conscience. For he that is truly wise will allow nothing in himself to remain uncultivated, nothing unprofitable. Not so the fool. In him you shall find everything neglected, everything abandoned, everything untilled and uncared for. The fool has no vineyard. How can there be a vineyard there where you look in vain for any sign of a plantation, any sign of cultivation? The whole life of a fool is overgrown with thorns and thistles. And does such a waste deserve to be called a vineyard? A vineyard it may have been once, but now it is so no longer, being reduced by neglect to a wilderness. For where now are the vines of the virtues? Where are the grapes of good works? Where the wine of spiritual gladness? “I passed through the field of the slothful man.” says Solomon, “and by the vineyard of the foolish man, and behold it was all filled with nettles, and thorns had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall was broken down.” Here, my brethren, you have the wise man mocking at the fool for that he has lost not only the goods of nature but also the gifts of grace, which perhaps he had received through the “laver of regeneration,” and by his negligence has reduced that first vineyard, planted not by man but by the hand of God, to something unworthy to be called a vineyard. Besides, how can there be a vineyard where there is no life? But in my judgment the fool’s existence would be more truly described as an enduring death than as a real life. How can life consist with a state of sterility? When a tree becomes withered and barren is it not judged to be dead? “And He killed their vineyards with hail,” sings the Psalmist, insinuating that vines no longer live when they have been cursed with barrenness. In the same way the fool, though apparently alive, is really dead, because he lives unprofitably.

Therefore it is proper to the wise man alone to have, or rather to be, a vineyard, because he alone can be said to live. He is like “a fruitful tree in the house of the Lord,” and consequently a living tree. For wisdom herself, by participation in which men are denominated wise, “is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her.” How then does he not live who has laid hold on the tree of life? He lives indeed, but he lives by faith. For the wise man is a just man and “the

just man liveth by faith." And conversely, if "the soul of the just man is the seat of wisdom," as she certainly is, the just man is a wise man. Such a one, therefore, whether you call him a wise man or a just man, shall never be found without his vineyard, because he shall never be found otherwise than living; and his life is his vineyard. And a good vineyard in truth is this vineyard of the just man. Rather I should have said, a good vineyard is the just man himself, whose virtue is as the vine, whose works as the branches, the testimony of whose conscience as the wine, and whose tongue is as the wine-press. "This is our glory," says the Apostle, "the testimony of our conscience." Do you not see, my brethren, how there is nothing unprofitable about a man of wisdom? His words, his works, his thoughts, and everything else that belongs to him, are they not all "God's husbandry, God's building," and the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth? What in it, therefore, can be lost to Him, Who will not allow so much as a leaf of it to fall to the ground?

Nevertheless, this spiritual vineyard is perpetually exposed to hostile incursions and surprises. For "where there are great riches, there are many also to eat them." The wise man, consequently, will be as careful to guard as to cultivate his vineyard, and will not suffer it to be devoured by the foxes. A most mischievous fox is the secret detractor, and another, just as bad, is the fair-spoken flatterer. Against both of these the wise man will be on his guard. He will endeavour, so far as it depends on him, to catch such rational foxes, but to catch them only by his benefits, by his services, by his salutary admonitions, and by his prayers to God for their conversion. He will never cease to "heap coals of fire on the head" of the slanderer in this way, and also on the head of the flatterer, until, if it is possible, he has expelled from the heart of the one its envy and from the heart of the other its hypocrisy. Thus shall be fulfilled the command of the Bridegroom conveyed in the words, "catch us the little foxes which destroy the vines." Does it not seem to you, my brethren, that that fox has been caught, who, covered with shame and confusion, and blushing for his own evil behaviour, becomes thereby the witness of the embarrassment and sorrow he feels for having hated a man most deserving of his love, or for having loved only "in word and in tongue" one by whom he knew himself to be loved "in deed and in truth"? He has been caught, plainly, and caught for the Lord, according to the injunction which He has given, saying expressly, "Catch us the little foxes." Would to God that I could so catch "all them who are my verersaries without cause," that I might either gain them or restore them to Christ! Thus, "let them be confounded and ashamed that seek after my soul; let them be turned back and

be confounded that devise evil against me," in such a way, namely, that I may be found obedient to the Bridegroom, not alone in catching the foxes, but also in catching them for Him! But let us go back now to the beginning, so that our exposition may proceed with an orderly sequence.

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines." This is a moral passage, my brethren. Now I have already shown that, according to the moral signification, these spiritual vineyards are nothing else but spiritual men, everything within whom is cultivated, everything germinating, everything fructifying, everything bringing forth the fruit of salvation. Hence, as the kingdom of God is said to be within us, in the same sense we may say that the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is within us. For we read in the Gospel that the "kingdom of God shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof." The fruits referred to are the same which St. Paul enumerates where he says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continence, chastity." These fruits give the measure of our progress. These are the fruits which the Bridegroom will accept, "for He hath care of us." "Hath God care of" material vines? No, it is not trees but men that are loved by the Man-God, and He reckons as His fruit our progress in virtue. The season for this fruit He diligently observes; He rejoices when it appears; and after it has come forth, He watches over it anxiously lest we should lose it. I should rather say, lest He should Himself lose it. He identifies Himself with us. Therefore, when He, evidently commands us to catch for Him the wily little foxes, which would otherwise pilfer the budding fruit, He says, "Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines." And as if someone were objecting and saying, "Thy fear is premature, because the time for the fruit has not yet come," He seems to reply, "It is not so, 'for our vineyard hath flourished.' " After the flowers the fruit makes no delay in appearing. Nay, even whilst the flowers are still falling, it immediately bursts out, immediately begins to show itself.

This, my brethren, is a parable of the present time. Behold our novices. They have come hither only lately; only lately have they been converted. Of them we cannot say that "our vineyard hath flourished," because it is still in flower. As yet whatever you may observe manifesting itself in them is but a blossom. Their fruiting season has not arrived yet. That beginning of an improvement in their conduct is only a blossom; a blossom too is that recently adopted form of a more regular life. They have assumed a well-disciplined exterior, and everything about their persons is edifying. Outwardly, I acknowledge, they are in all respects pleasing. So far as can be noticed, they are now less particular about the

garments which cover their bodies, their words are fewer, their faces more cheerful, their looks more modest, their movements more grave. But inasmuch as all these virtuous manifestations have but lately begun to appear, by reason of their newness they must be reputed as blossoms, rather as the promise of fruit than as the fruit itself. So far as you are concerned, my little children, I have no fear of the wiles of the foxes, because it is not after flowers but after fruit that these animals are known to hunger. The danger for you comes from a different source. What I fear for the flowers is the blight, not the pilfering of the foxes but the blighting of the frost. It is the sharp north wind that makes me anxious about you, and the morning cold; for it is they that are wont to kill the early blossoms and prevent the fruit from appearing. Hence for you, my children, the evil to be dreaded comes not from the foxes but from the north wind. “Who shall stand before the face of his cold?” If once this cold is allowed to invade a soul, whilst the spirit of that soul (as so often happens) is slumbering in a state of tepidity, and if further (which God forbid!) meeting with no resistance, it descends into the interior of the heart and the innermost recesses of the mind, and there freezes the affections, obstructs the paths of counsel, unsteadies the light of judgment, and binds fast the liberty of the spirit: immediately there is manifested in the mind a certain rigidity, such as that which usually appears in the bodies of fever patients; the soul’s vigour relaxes, her energies languish, her horror of austerities increases, her fear of poverty grows more disquieting, she becomes contracted in herself in proportion as grace is withdrawn, a life of penance begins to look unbearably long, reason is lulled to sleep, her vital force is ebbing fast away, first fervour gets cooler and cooler, the weariness of torpor gradually prevails, fraternal charity is growing cold, pleasure entices, a false sense of security deceives, old habits of sin resume their sway. What more shall I say of this unhappy soul? She shuts her eyes to the law, she forswears justice, she renounces the right, and abandons the fear of the Lord. Finally she gives herself up to impudence; she takes that desperate, that shameful, that most disgraceful leap, that leap full of all ignominy and confusion, the leap from on high into the abyss, from the solid pavement to the dunghill, from the throne to the sewer, from the summit of heaven to the sink of earth—the leap from the cloister to the world, from paradise to hell. To trace the origin and source of this monstrous evil, to show by what means it may be avoided or by what virtue overcome, the present is not the proper time for such an undertaking. These questions shall be dealt with in their own place. Let us now proceed with what we have on hand.

I must next direct my remarks to those amongst you who are more advanced

and more firmly grounded in virtue, that is, to the vineyard which already “hath flourished,” and which consequently has no longer anything to fear from the cold. Nevertheless, its fruit is not safe from the foxes. It will be necessary to explain more clearly what these spiritual foxes are, why they are called “little,” and why it is expressly enjoined that they be caught, rather than driven away or killed. I shall also be obliged to introduce different pedes of these animals, in order the better to instruct and admonish my hearers; not however in the present germon, lest it should weary you by being unduly prolonged, and that we may preserve the freshness of our levotion in the grace and in the praise of the glory of he great Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXIV

ON THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE MORE ADVANCED, AND ON THE MANNER OF CATCHING HERETICS, REPRESENTED BY FOXES

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, for our vineyard hath flourished."

Here I am, my brethren, to fulfil the promise I made you. "Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, for our vineyard hath flourished." These foxes are temptations. Now it is necessary that temptations come, for who shall be crowned "unless he strive lawfully"? And how shall we strive if there be none to oppose us? Therefore, "when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation." For be assured that "all that will live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Moreover, temptations vary according to the variety of the spiritual seasons. At the beginning of our spiritual life, when whatever of good appears in us is only like the tender blossom on a young vine, we are liable to open assaults from the violence of that pestilential frost which I dwelt upon in the preceding discourse, and warned the novices against. But the "contrary powers" will by no means venture to oppose themselves thus manifestly to such as have attained to a high degree of holiness. For persons of this class they are more accustomed to be concealed in ambush, like crafty little foxes, dressing up vices in the clothes of virtues. How many have I known, for instance, who after entering on the "ways of life," after advancing to better things, after walking and progressing well and securely in the "paths of justice," have at last—oh, the pity of it!—been shamefully overreached by the cunning of these foxes, and compelled to lament when it was all too late the destruction in themselves of the fruits of virtue!

I behold a religious making rapid strides towards perfection. Suddenly he is met with a thought—rather let me say, with a little fox, which arrests his progress. "If only I were at home," he begins to say to himself, "to how many others, brethren and relatives, friends and acquaintances, might I not

communicate the spiritual treasure which I here enjoy alone! They love me, and would readily yield to my exhortations. ‘To what purpose is this waste?’ I will go to them, therefore; I shall be able to save many of them without compromising my own soul. There is nothing to be feared from the change of place. For, after all, what difference can the place make, provided one is occupied in well-doing? Unless, indeed, that I shall doubtless be safer there where I shall spend my time more fruitfully.” What need to say more? The wretched man quits his monastery, not as an exile returning to the home-land, but rather like a dog going back to his vomit. He goes and perishes miserably. He loses himself, without saving any of his friends. Here, my brethren, is one of the little foxes, the delusive hope which this man entertained of bringing his dear ones to God. You also, if you care to take the trouble, will be able to find or to recognise for yourselves and in yourselves, many other little foxes like unto this one.

Nevertheless, if you desire it, I will show you a second. I will even point out a third and a fourth little fox, on condition, however, that you shall prove yourselves diligent in trying to catch those which from my descriptions you may discover in your own vineyards. Sometimes, then, when a monk is progressing favourably, he feels himself bedewed on a sudden with an unusually generous downpour of heavenly grace. The desire of preaching now enters his soul, not, mind you, to his parents and kindred, for he remembers the words of St. Paul, “Immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood”; but he would announce the Gospel more purely, more profitably, and more courageously to strangers and all, without any distinction. It seems to him the part of prudence to follow such an attraction. For he is afraid of incurring the curse of the Prophet, pronounced against him who should hide from the people the corn he has privately become possessed of. Besides, he fears lest he should be disobeying the command given in the Gospel if he does not “preach upon the house-tops what” he has heard “in the ear.” It is a fox, my brother, and a fox more dangerous than the preceding, in proportion as his coming is more sly. But I will catch him for thee. First of all, there are the words of Moses, “Thou shalt not work with the firstling of an ox,” which St. Paul interprets for us when he says, speaking of the apostolic office and those qualified to fill it, “Not a neophyte, lest, being puffed up with pride, he fall into the judgment of the devil.” The same Apostle writes in another place, “Neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was.” And again he asks,

“How shall they preach unless they be sent?” Now we know that it is not the

business of a monk to instruct others but to weep over himself. With these and similar testimonies, gathered from Scripture, I can make for myself a net that shall catch this little fox, and prevent him from destroying my vineyard. For the passages I have just quoted make it plain and indubitable that the office of preaching publicly is neither befitting for a monk, nor expedient for a novice, nor permissible for one who has not been sent. How utterly devastated, then, must the vineyard of his conscience be, who allows himself to act against all three: fittingness, expediency, and authority! Whenever, therefore, anything such is suggested to your minds, whether the suggestion comes from your own thought or is inspired by the spirit of malice, recognise it as a guileful little fox, that is to say, as evil masquerading under the appearance of good.

Fix your eyes now, my brethren, on another of the little foxes. How many in the full glow of spiritual fervour have exchanged their monasteries for the desert solitude, only to be thence vomited forth again in a state of tepidity, or if retained, retained without the discipline of the desert, not alone in laxity but in absolute wickedness! Then, at last, from the ruined condition of the vineyards, that is, from the corruption of the life and conscience of such unfortunates, it became apparent that the fox had been busy. These persons fancied that, as they received so many heavenly favours whilst living the common life in the midst of their brethren, they would reap still more abundant spiritual fruit if they lived alone. The thought seemed good to them. But the event has proved that it was really one of the little foxes that destroy the vineyard. And what else but a spoiling fox shall I call that abuse which so often and so gravely disturbs the peace of this very house? I speak of that singular and superstitious abstinence, practised by some amongst us, whereby they render all as disagreeable to themselves as themselves to all. Is not discord such and so general a devastation of the consciences of the persons responsible, and so far as depends on them, the destruction of the magnificent vineyard, which the Lord’s own Right Hand hath planted here? I mean the unity which has bound you all to each other in the bonds of peace. “Woe to the man by whom scandal cometh.” “Whosoever shall scandalise one of these little ones”—too fearful to recite are the words which follow. But how much more terrible is the sentence he deserves, who scandalises not a single believer, but so numerous and so holy a community as ours! Be he who he may, he shall bear a most heavy judgment. But of this elsewhere.

Let us here examine carefully the words spoken by the Bridegroom concerning those cunning little foxes which destroy the vineyard. They are called little, not because they are little in malice, but on account of their subtlety

and craft. For this species of animal is noted for its natural slyness, and is always very ready to do harm in secret. By reason of such characteristics the fox appears to me to typify admirably certain extremely subtle vices, which conceal themselves under the fair show of virtues. What these vices are I have already been some time explaining, and have presented you with a few examples to illustrate my teaching. It is their peculiarity that they can do us no hurt unless they succeed in imposing on us by a pious exterior and so leading us to mistake them for virtues. But in reality they are always either the vain thoughts of man's mind, or the inspirations of evil angels, those angels of Satan who transform themselves into angels of light, "preparing their arrows in the quiver"—that is, in secret—"to shoot in the dark the upright of heart." Hence it appears to me that the reason why they are described as little is this, that whereas all the other vices betray themselves by their grossness so that they are easily recognised, these because of their subtlety are very difficult to detect and consequently very difficult to guard against, except for such alone as are perfect and experienced and have the eyes of their hearts enlightened for distinguishing between good and evil, and especially for the discerning of spirits. For persons so privileged can say like St. Paul that they are not ignorant of Satan's devices and counsels. And consider if this be not the reason why the Bridegroom commands His Spouse not to exterminate, or to drive away, or to kill the little foxes, but rather to catch them: because, namely, these spiritual and crafty animals require to be observed and examined with all diligence and caution, and so caught in their cunning, according to what is written, "I will catch the wise in their own craftiness." Therefore, whenever a deceit is discovered or a fraud detected, or a lie exposed, we may then say with perfect truth that the little fox, which was destroying the vines, has been caught. It is in the same sense we speak of a man being caught in his words. So you may read in the Gospel that "the Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to catch Him (Jesus) in His speech."

It is in this way, then, that the Bridegroom would have us catch the little foxes that destroy the vines, namely, by detecting them, by exposing them, by confounding them. For it is the characteristic of such subtle vices that they lose their power for harming the moment they are discovered, so that for them to be exposed is to be vanquished. Who but a madman would knowingly and deliberately put his foot in a trap which he has detected? Therefore you have done all that is necessary with regard to these little foxes when you have caught them, that is, when you have unmasked and exposed them, because they are unable to live in the light. The same is not the case with the other vices, which

come upon us without any disguise, openly wound us, make us their witting captives, overpower our resistance, in a word, employ against us not fraud but force. Hence in dealing with them what we need is not so much careful observation, since they attack us openly like savage beasts, but rather a firm defence. It is only in the instance of those little foxes, those mighty dissemblers, whose capacity for mischief depends on concealment, that nothing more remains to be done once they have been caught in their craftiness and dragged forth into the light. For they live in dens. Here, then, is the reason why the Bridegroom commands that they be caught and calls them little foxes. Or perhaps He uses the word “little” to intimate that we ought to keep careful watch and take hold of our passions as soon as they appear and are still young and weak; lest, if permitted to grow, their power for evil should also increase, as well as the difficulty of catching them.

But if we interpret the Bridegroom’s words allegorically, taking the vines to mean churches and the foxes heresies, or rather heretics, then the sense will be that heretics are to be caught, not driven away. They are to be caught, I say, but with no other force than the force of arguments wherewith their errors are refuted. For themselves, let them, if it is possible, be reconciled to the Church, let them be brought back to the true faith. Such is the desire of Him “Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Such also is the wish of the Bridegroom, as He signifies in this place where He does not simply say, “Catch the foxes,” but “catch us the foxes.” Therefore He wants these foxes to be won over to Himself and His Spouse, the Catholic Church, and expresses this desire by saying, “Catch us the foxes.” Consequently, whenever an experienced and learned member of the Church undertakes to dispute with a heretic, he is bound to make it his aim, not merely to convict his opponent of error, but also to convert him to truth. For he should bear in mind the words of St. James, “He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins.” But should the heretic be unwilling to return, and, after being once and a second time admonished, remains still obdurate in his error, then according to the Apostle’s injunction he must be avoided, as one entirely corrupted. Thenceforth it will be better, at least in my opinion, to drive away such a fox, or even to put him under restraint, than to permit him to go on destroying the vines.

It must not, however, be supposed that he has accomplished nothing who has conquered and confounded the heretic, clearly and unmistakably distinguished truth from its counterfeit, exposed by plain and unanswerable arguments the

wickedness of wicked doctrines, and “brought into captivity every understanding” “that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.” For by doing so much he has really caught the fox, although the heretic has not been brought to salvation. And he has even caught the fox for the Bridegroom and the Bride, although not in the sense in which we have been speaking. For even though the heretic refuses to raise himself from the mire, the Church by his defeat has been confirmed in the faith. And surely the Bridegroom takes delight in the prosperity of His Spouse, “for the joy of the Lord is our strength.” Besides, He makes it plain how He reckons our advantage as His own, by so graciously associating Himself with us in the command whereby He orders that the foxes be caught not for Him alone, but for Him and for us. “Catch us the little foxes,” He says. Take notice, my brethren, how He deliberately uses the pronoun “us.” What language could be more sociable and condescending? Does it not seem to you that He is speaking here as a father of a family who has nothing proper to himself, but regards all his possessions as common to his wife, and his children, and his household? Yet He Who speaks is God, although He speaks now not as God but as our Bridegroom.

“Catch us the little foxes.” See how companionably He speaks Who has no companion. He might have said, “for Me,” but He preferred to say, “for us,” delighting to make us His associates. Oh, the sweetness! Oh, the beauty! Oh, the power of love! And is the Highest of all become thus as one amongst all? Who hath wrought this wonder? It is love, my brethren—love, which knows nothing of dignity, abounds in condescension, is mighty in its emotions, resistless in its pleadings. What can be more powerful than love which triumphs over God Himself? Yet at the same time what more gentle since it remains always love? What, I ask, is the nature of that force so violent in the pursuit of victory, and so unresisting under violence? “He (the Son of God) emptied Himself” in order to make us understand that it is through the influence of love alone that the Plenitude has been poured out, the Supreme levelled down, the Singular made an associate. With whom, O admirable Bridegroom, with whom dost Thou associate Thyself so familiarly? “Catch us the foxes,” Thou sayest. For whom with Thyself? Is it for the Church of the gentiles? Yea, for that Church which is a collection of sinful mortals. We know her and what she is. But Thou, Who art Thou, That art so devoted and so zealous a Lover of this Ethiopian Spouse? Not surely another Moses, but a greater than Moses. For art Thou not He Who is declared “beautiful above the sons of men”? But this is saying too little; for Thou art also the Splendour of Eternal Life, and the Brightness and Figure of the

Father’s Substance, and lastly art Thyself over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

PREFACE TO SERMONS LXV AND LXVI

LETTER OF EBERWIN, PROVOST OF STEINFELD, TO ST. BERNARD, IN WHICH HE EXPLAINS THE FALSE DOCTRINES OF THE COLOGNE HERETICS AND BEGS THE HOLY ABBOT TO COMBAT THEM

Eberwin, the humble Provost of Steinfeld, to his reverend Lord and Father, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishing him comfort in the Lord and praying him to comfort the Church of Christ.

"I will rejoice at thy words as one that hath found great spoil." For in all thy words and in all thy writings thou dost "publish the memory of the abundance of God's sweetness," and especially so in thy sermons on the Canticle of the mutual love of the Bridegroom and Bride, that is, of Christ and the Church; so that, like the chief steward, we can truly say to the Bridegroom, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." He has appointed thee His cupbearer to dispense to us this most precious wine. Let it be ministered to us, therefore, without interruption. Do not be sparing of it, because thou canst never empty the water-pots. And let not thy weak state of health, holy Father, be alleged as a reason for discontinuing thy task, since success in the discharge of this duty depends much more upon piety than upon any exercise of bodily strength. Neither oughtest thou to excuse thyself on the plea of thy multiplied occupations. For I know of none so important as to deserve to take precedence of this work which vitally concerns the common good. Thou hast now, most holy Father, to draw for us from the fifth water-pot. Of the first we have drunk as much as we needed, and thereby have been rendered wise and strong against the learning and power of the Scribes and Pharisees. The second fortifies us to meet the arguments and persecutions of pagans. The third is a defence against the subtle deceits of sectaries. The fourth protects us from false Christians. In the fifth we shall find security against the heretics whose appearance has been reserved for the last age of the world, and of whom "the spirit manifestly saith"—speaking by the mouth of St. Paul—"that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed

to spirits of error and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy and having their conscience seared, forbidding to marry, to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving." The sixth shall inebriate and strengthen the faithful against him who shall be revealed in this apostasy from the faith, "the man of sin" and "the son of perdition," "who opposeth and is lifted up above all that is called God or that is worshipped," "whose coming is according to the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and in all seductions of iniquity." After this, a seventh water-pot will not be necessary, when the sons of men "shall be inebriated with the plenty of God's house" and made "to drink of the torrent of His pleasure." O good Father, thou hast already given us in abundance out of the fourth water-pot everything that any of us can need, beginners for their correction, proficients for their edification, the perfect for their consummation; and so long as the world lasts, men shall find in thy teaching a protection against the tepidity and depravity of false brethren. But it is now time to draw from the fifth water-pot, and to dispense the wine it contains as a defence against these modern heretics who are everywhere and in all the churches issuing forth from the bottomless pit as if the day of the Lord was at hand, and their prince and leader on the point of being dissolved. The verse of the epithalamium of Christ and His Church, which, as thou hast signified to me, thou art next to expound, viz., "Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines," applies very well to this mystery of iniquity and brings thee to the fifth water-pot. I beg of thee, then, holy Father, that thou wouldst distinguish the various doctrines of this heresy which have come under thy notice, and opposing to them the arguments and authorities of our faith, wouldst so refute and destroy them.

Here amongst ourselves in Cologne we have lately discovered heretics, some of whom have already done penance and been reconciled to the Church. But two of them, namely, he who is called the Bishop of the sect, with his associate, resisted us in a public assembly of the clergy and laity, the Lord Archbishop being present and many of the great nobles. They defended their heresy from the words of Christ and the Apostle. But seeing that they could not prevail, they asked to have a day appointed them when they would bring learned men of their own party, promising to make their submission in case these doctors should fail in their defence; otherwise they declared that they were ready to die rather than abjure their errors. After this, they received warnings during the space of three days. Then, as they still refused to renounce their heresy, the people in an excess of zeal, dragged them away in spite of us, placed them in the fire and burned

them. Now the most wonderful thing of all was that these heretics submitted to and endured the torment of fire not only with patience, but even with joy. On this point especially I should like, if I were present with thee, to hear what thou hast to say, how thou canst explain in the case of these sons of Satan such fortitude as is hardly to be found in the most perfect members of the Church of Christ.

The following are the heretical beliefs they profess. They claim, in the first place, that they alone constitute the true Church, because they alone walk in the footsteps of Christ, and are the only faithful imitators of the apostles; for they seek not the things of the world (they say) and possess neither houses, nor lands, nor money; nothing of which was owned by Christ, nor permitted His disciples to own. "Whereas you," they say to us, "add houses to houses and fields to fields, and strive after the wealth of this world; so that even they who are accounted the most perfect among you, such as the Canons Regular and the members of monastic orders, possess all these things, if not as individuals, at least in common." Of themselves, they speak in this wise, "We are Christ's poor, having no fixed dwelling-place. Like the apostles and the martyrs, we suffer persecution, fleeing from city to city, and living as lambs in the midst of wolves. And yet our lives are holy and very austere. We practise fasting and abstinence and persevere night and day in working and praying, whilst we seek from our labours no other fruit than the bare necessaries of life. All this we endure because we are not of the world. You, on the contrary, love the world, and have peace with the world, because you are of the world. The pseudo-apostles, who corrupted the word of God, and sought the things that were their own, have caused your fathers and you to wander out of the safe path. We, like our fathers, being true-bred apostles, have ever remained and ever shall remain in the grace of Christ. It was in order to distinguish between us and you that He said, 'By their fruits you shall know them.' Our fruits are our fidelity in following in His footsteps." These sectaries do not allow to be used as food any kind of milk, or anything made from milk, or in general anything connected with procreation. They make such abstinence a matter of boasting against us. Their sacramental rites are performed with great secrecy. Yet they freely acknowledge to us that every day whilst seated at table, conformably to the example of the Lord and His apostles, they consecrate and change their food and drink into the Flesh and Blood of Christ by the words of the Lord's Prayer, that so they may nourish themselves as being His body and members. They say that we have no truth or reality in our sacraments, nothing but a mere shadow and human tradition. It is

openly avowed that amongst them baptism is conferred and received not only with water, but also with the Holy Ghost and with fire. In support of this, appeal is made to the testimony of St. John Baptist, who, whilst baptising with water himself, said of Christ, “He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and fire”; and in another place, “I baptise with water, but there hath stood One in the midst of you Whom you know not”—as if implying that He was to baptise them with a baptism different from his own. This baptism, according to them, ought to be given by the imposition of hands, which they endeavour to prove from the words of St. Luke. For this Evangelist, describing, in the Acts of the Apostles, the baptism of St. Paul, which was administered to him by Ananias at the command of Christ, makes no mention of water, but only of the imposition of hands. Similarly, wherever else they can discover any allusion to imposition of hands, either in the Acts or in the Pauline Epistles, they will have it to be understood of the baptism by the Holy Ghost and fire. They give the name of Elect to every person thus baptised amongst them, and affirm that such a one has power not only to baptise in the same manner others who are found worthy, but also of consecrating at his table the Body and Blood of Christ. The lowest class in the sect are called Hearers, whence they are raised by imposition of hands to the rank of Believers. The Believers are allowed to join in their prayers, and after a sufficient probation are admitted amongst the Elect. Our baptism they regard as nothing worth. They condemn marriage; but for what reason I have never been able to find out from them, either because they are afraid to make it known, or rather because they do not know what it is themselves.

There are other heretics also in this place, differing widely from those I have been speaking of; and it is the mutual wrangling and contention between the two sects that have revealed the doctrines and practices of both. The second class of heretics deny that the Body of Christ is made present on the altar, because the priests of the Church are none of them validly ordained. The apostolic dignity, they say, has been corrupted by mixing in worldly affairs; and Peter’s successor, by not fighting for God as Peter fought, has deprived himself of the powers to ordain, originally conferred upon Peter. Now what the Pope does not himself possess he cannot communicate; and consequently the archbishops and bishops, who live as worldlings in the Church, are also without the power of validly ordaining priests. All such prelates, according to these sectaries, have received nothing more than the power of jurisdiction and preaching. And in this sense they understand the words of Christ where He says, “The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses; all things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say

to you observe and do." Thus they render valueless the priesthood of the Church. They reject all the sacraments, except baptism alone. And even this, in their judgment, should be administered to adults only; because these, as they confess, are really baptised by Christ, whoever the visible minister may be. They admit no efficacy in the baptism given to infants, or to any others without faith, on account of what is said in the Gospel, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." All marriages are by them declared to be sinful, save that which is contracted between two virgins. This doctrine of theirs is grounded on the words wherewith the Lord replied to the Pharisees, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." For they argue that God joined the first human pair as virgins, and wants all other marriages to be modelled upon that. They find further support in the answer given to the same Pharisees when they raised an objection from the bill of divorce. Christ said to them, "From the beginning it was not so," and, "He that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery." They also appeal to the words of St. Paul, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." They have no faith in the intercession of the saints. As for fasting and other mortifications endured to make satisfaction for sin, they teach that the just do not want them, and that they are unnecessary even for sinners, because "in whatsoever day the sinner shall lament his sin, it shall be forgiven him." All other observances in the Church, which have not been established by Christ or His immediate disciples, are condemned as superstitious. The existence of any purgatorial fire to be endured after death is not admitted. They teach, on the contrary, that all souls, as soon as they are separated from their bodies, pass at once either to everlasting pain or to everlasting repose, agreeably to the words of Solomon, "If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there it shall be." And in this way they deny any efficacy to the prayers and sacrifices offered for the dead.

Against all these evils, so manifold and multiform, I beseech thee, holy Father, let thy zeal be aroused to renewed activity. Let the sharp point of thy arrow be aimed against these savage beasts. Do not tell us that the "tower of David," whither we have fled, is sufficiently "built with bulwarks"; that "a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of valiant men." For we are inexperienced and unskilled in the use of these arms; and we therefore desire that thou, holy Father, in thy zeal, wouldst fit them to our hands, so that we may become thereby more quick in discovering and more powerful in resisting so many monsters. I would also have thee know that, as we learn from some of them who have been reconciled to the Church, these heretics are exceedingly numerous,

are to be found in almost every part of the world, and have amongst them many of the clergy and members of religious orders. Those who were burned, declared to us in their defence, that their heresy has existed secretly from the time of the holy martyrs to the present day in Greece and certain other countries. These are the heretics who call themselves apostles, and have a pope of their own. There are others who refuse to recognise our Pope, without, however, setting up another in his place. These apostles of Satan have living with them certain females who—as they say—observe continence, either virgins, or widows, or their own wives, some of them in the class of the Elect, others in that of Believers. Herein also they claim to be following the example of the apostles, who “had power to lead women about.” Farewell in the Lord.

SERMON LXV

ON THE DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF CONTEMPORARY HERETICS

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, for our vineyard hath flourished."

I have already preached two sermons to you, my brethren, on this one verse, and I am now about to begin the third, that is, if you do not think it will weary you too much to listen. For it seems to me that there is need of another discourse on the same text. As regards our own domestic vineyard, which you are, I have, I think, said enough in the preceding discussions to protect it against the cunning wiles of the three species of foxes, by which I mean flatterers, detractors, and certain seducing spirits, well skilled and well practised in the art of counterfeiting good with evil. But I have not been equally zealous for the wider vineyard of the Lord. I refer to that vineyard which has covered the whole earth, and of which we ourselves are a portion, an exceedingly great vineyard, planted by the Hand of Christ, redeemed with His Blood, watered with His teaching, propagated by His grace, fertilised by His Spirit. Being more concerned for my private vineyard, I have been wanting to that which is universal. But I now feel impelled to espouse its cause on account of the multitude of its despoilers, the paucity of its protectors, and the difficulty of its defence. What makes the difficulty is the fact that the despoilers are concealed from us. The Church has had her foxes from the very beginning, but until now they have always been speedily exposed and caught. The heretic of former times waged war against her openly—indeed it was this especially that made him a heretic, his desire to achieve a public triumph—the heretic, I say, formerly attacked the Church in the open and was vanquished. Thus this species of fox was easily taken. What matter if, when the truth had been vindicated, the heretic continued obstinate in the darkness of his proud conceits, and, fettered to powerlessness, was cast out to wither alone? Even so, the fox was judged to be caught, by the fact that the impious doctrine had been condemned and its impious author driven forth to live

thenceforward as an example for others, since he could no longer bear any fruit for himself. For to such are given, to use the expression of the Prophet Osee, “a womb without children and dry breasts.” That is to say, error cannot bud forth anew once it has been publicly confounded, nor can falsity continue to propagate itself after it has been exposed.

But what means shall we employ in order to catch those most malevolent foxes which are better pleased to injure us by secret fraud than to conquer us by open violence, and which will not even show themselves but prefer to creep upon us unawares? Heretofore the common aim of all heretics has been to win human glory by the display of superior knowledge. But the heretic with us now, more malicious and more cunning than any that went before him, is also singular in this, that he can prosper on the ruin of others, without seeking any further advantage for himself. The modern error, warned, as I believe, by the fate of its predecessors (which could not escape when exposed, but were caught immediately), is careful to work out the “mystery of iniquity” with a new kind of craft, and does it all the more freely the less it is suspected. Its propagators are said to have appointed secret meeting-places. “They have confirmed for themselves an evil word,” as is written in the psalm. “Never betray the secret,” they tell their followers, “even though it be necessary to swear and to perjure yourselves in order to preserve it.” But otherwise they will refuse to take any oath under any circumstances, on account of what they read in the Gospel, “I say to you not to swear at all neither by heaven nor by the earth.” “O foolish and slow of heart,” filled plainly with the Pharisaical spirit, thus to “strain at a gnat and swallow a camel”! Are we then allowed to commit perjury, though forbidden to take oaths? Or will you say that the necessity of guarding your secrets and that alone makes it lawful both to swear and to swear falsely? Then show me the passage of Scripture which authorises such an exception, you who vainly make it your boast that you pass over not even one jot or tittle of the law. But it is manifest that whilst you superstitiously abstain from taking lawful oaths you have no scruple at all about the heinous crime of perjury.

O unspeakable perversity! What was intended simply as a caution, viz., “I say to you not to swear at all,” these heretics observe pertinaciously and consider a command; and at the same time, according to their whim and as if it were something quite indifferent, they dispense themselves in that which has the sanction of immutable law, namely the prohibition against perjury. “No,” they will say to me, “it is not so; we only permit perjury when there is no other way to preserve our secret.” As if, forsooth, it were not “the glory of God to reveal

the word." Is it that they envy God His glory? I am more inclined to believe that is shame which seals their lips, shame for a secret which they know to be shameful. For they are accused of privately indulging in unmentionable crimes against morals. So it is said that the tails of foxes emit an evil smell.

However, I will say nothing concerning the practices which they refuse to acknowledge. But let them answer to those charges which they cannot deny. Do they justify their secrecy by the Gospel which warns us in truth not to "give that which is holy to dogs" or "to cast pearls before swine"? But if they admit this, they must consequently esteem as dogs and swine all (except themselves) who claim to belong to the Church, and this would be equivalent to avowing openly that they themselves are not Christians at all. For they think it a duty to withhold that secret of theirs, whatever it is, from everyone without exception who does not adhere to their own sect. Yet although they really entertain such convictions, they will refuse to answer, lest they should be found out. This is what they endeavour to avoid by every possible means, but they shall not succeed. Come, tell me, my good man, who art "more wise than it behoveth to be wise, and art at the same time a greater fool than words can express: Is the mystery which thou guardest of God or is it not? If it is of God, why dost thou not reveal it for His greater glory? For "it is the glory of God to reveal the word." If the mystery is not of God, why dost thou put thy trust in that which has no relation to God, unless because thou art a heretic? Therefore either let them reveal their secret unto the glory of God; or let them acknowledge that it is no mystery of God and thereby acknowledge themselves to be heretics; or finally let them confess that they are the declared enemies of God's glory, inasmuch as they are unwilling to publish what they know would be likely to advance its interests. For the oracle of Scripture stands firm, "It is the glory of kings to conceal the speech, and the glory of God to reveal the word." Wilt thou not "reveal the word"? Then thou refusest to glorify God. But perchance thou dost not recognise the authority of this inspired Book? So indeed it is. These sectarians who claim that they alone have zeal for Scripture, receive no more of it than the Gospel. Let them, therefore, explain how they fulfil what the Gospel enjoins, where it is written, "That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light; and that which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the house tops." Now you may no longer take refuge in silence. How long will you keep concealed that which God commands you to publish? How long will your gospel remain hidden? I am beginning to grow suspicious of it. It cannot certainly be the same as St. Paul's, for he declares that his gospel was not hidden. "And if our gospel is also hid," he adds, "it is hid in

them that are lost." Take care lest in these words the Apostle is alluding to yourselves with whom the Gospel is found to be hid. If this be the case, you are evidently lost. But perhaps you do not receive even St. Paul? I have indeed been told this of some amongst you. For you do not agree amongst yourselves on every point, although you are all at one in dissenting from us.

However, unless I mistake, you all unanimously admit, as of equal authority with the Gospel itself, the words and writings and traditions of those who lived with the Saviour on earth. Now, I ask: did they keep their gospel hidden? Did they conceal in silence the infirmities of God in the flesh, the horrors of His death, the ignominy of His cross? "Verily, their sound hath gone forth unto all the earth." Where is that imitation of the apostolic mode of life which you make your boast? The apostles proclaimed aloud their message; whilst you speak in whispers. They preached in public; you teach "in a corner." They "fly as clouds"; you conceal yourselves in dark and subterranean caverns. What do you exhibit in yourselves which gives you any kind of resemblance to the apostles? They indeed led women about with them, but they did not, as you do, keep women within enclosures. There is a great difference between these two things. And your practice is open to grave suspicion. As for the apostolic custom, who could suspect any evil of men capable by their sanctity of raising the dead? Do thou likewise, and I shall believe thee as safe as if thy companions were men. Otherwise thou actest imprudently in taking apostolic liberties without the safeguard of apostolic holiness. To be always in the occasion of sin and never to fall, is not that a greater miracle than to raise the dead? And if thou canst not do that which is less, who shall believe thee to be capable of the greater? Thou art placed daily and hourly in dangerous occasions, at meals, at rest, at work, in conversation. And are we to suppose that thou continuest always faithful? However, let us grant it to be really so. Still I cannot get rid of my suspicions; so that thou art a scandal to me. Remove from me the cause of the scandal, and thereby thou shalt prove thyself to be sincerely zealous for the Gospel. Does not the Gospel condemn him who scandalises any member of the Church? But thou art scandalising the Church herself. Thou art the fox that destroys the vineyard. Help me, my brethren, to catch him. Or rather do you, ye blessed angels, catch him for us. He is extremely cunning. He is "covered with his iniquity and his impiety." He is so little and so subtle that human eyes are baffled in watching him. But shall he be able to escape your eyes? Therefore it is to you, as being His friends and companions, that the Bridegroom addresses the words, "Catch us the little foxes." Do, then, what is commanded you. Catch for us this many-faced

little fox which we have been so long pursuing in vain. Teach us and admonish us how to detect his frauds. For thus we shall have caught him: as a false Catholic he can do us far more mischief than when he stands revealed as a true heretic. But it is not in the power of one man to read the heart of another unless he is assisted by the light of the Holy Ghost or interiorly instructed by angelic inspirations. What sign will you give us, O benevolent spirits, whereby this most impious of heresies, well-skilled to lie both by word and by deed, may be made manifest to the whole world?

The recent destruction of the vines tells us unmistakably that the fox has been busy there. But the wily beast has so cleverly covered his footprints by I know not what artful device, that human intelligence cannot easily discover at what point he entered or where he made his way out. The mischief done is manifest enough, but the author thereof cannot be detected, so cunningly does he conceal himself and his wickedness under an exterior of affected innocence. Examine one of these heretics concerning his faith and you will find him perfectly orthodox. Listen to his conversation and you will never hear anything in the least worthy of censure. Yea, he even proves by his actions the sincerity of his words. You may see him bearing testimony to his faith by frequenting the churches, showing honour to the priests, offering his gifts, making his confession, and approaching the holy table. What greater proof of fidelity can you require? Then, as regards his life and morals, he overreaches no man, he circumvents no man, he does violence to no man. His face is pale and wan from rigorous fasting, and far from eating his bread idle, he earns his livelihood by the labour of his hands. Where now is the fox? We had him secured just a moment since, and lo! he has slipped from our grasp. How has he disappeared so suddenly? But let us give instant chase. Let us follow his footprints. By his fruits we shall know him. Certainly, the destruction of the vines proves him to be a real fox. For what do we behold? Wives forsaking their husbands and husbands abandoning their wives in order to join themselves to these sectaries! Clerics and priests, old and young, having deserted their churches and people, are often to be seen amongst them side by side with weavers, male and female! Is not this a dreadful destruction of the vines! Have we not here the work of the foxes?

But perhaps not all these people reveal their true character thus plainly by such disorders. And even where they do, it is almost impossible to convict them. How, then, are we to catch them? Let us return to their custom of living with females, because this is a practice which is common to them all. I say therefore to one of them—A word with thee, my good friend. Who is this lady and

wherefore does she live with thee? Is she thy wife? “No,” he answers, “my vow hinders me from marrying.” Is she thy daughter? “She is not.” Who then is she, thy sister, perhaps? or thy niece? or at least some one related to thee by ties of consanguinity or affinity? “No, there is no relationship at all between us.” But if that be the case, art thou not exposing thyself to danger? Besides, thou art certainly acting against obedience. Let me tell thee, if thou knowest it not, that the Church forbids the cohabitation of men and women who have bound themselves by vow to continency. Therefore send away thy companion, unless thou wishest to scandalise the Church. Otherwise, thy manifest guilt herein shall unquestionably render the other charges against thee, even though they cannot be proved, at least very credible.

But perchance he will reply, “Show me the place where the Gospel prohibits such cohabitation?” Hast thou appealed to the Gospel? To the Gospel thou shalt go. If thou wert obedient to the Gospel, thou certainly wouldst not give scandal. For the Gospel plainly forbids scandal-giving. But thou art giving scandal by not dismissing this female as the Church requires of thee. Hitherto thou wert only under suspicion. Henceforth thou shalt be considered an open despiser of the Gospel, and an enemy of the Church. What is your verdict, my brethren? If he is shown to be so obstinate that he will neither obey the Gospel nor submit to the authority of the Church, what further subterfuge remains to him? Does it not appear manifest to you that the fraud has been exposed and the fox caught? If he refuses to put away his associate, he refuses to remove the scandal. If he refuses to remove the scandal which he has it in his power to remove, he stands convicted of offending against the Gospel. And what is left for the Church but to cut him off who refuses to cut off the cause of scandal? Otherwise she would become a participant in his disobedience. For she has been commanded by Christ in the Gospel not to spare her own eyes, her hands or her feet, if ever they should become a source of scandal to her, but to pluck them out or cut them off and cast them from her. “If he will not hear the Church,” says the Lord, speaking of the scandal-giver, “let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.”

Have we been wasting our time in this discussion, my brethren? I do not believe so. For we have caught the fox by discovering his tricks. We have unmasked those false Catholics who lay concealed in the Church and were the real devastators of the vineyard. For whilst thou, the secret heretic, “didst take sweet meats together with me”—I mean the Body and the Blood of Christ—whilst “in the house of God we walked with consent,” thou hadst an opportunity for persuading, yea, an opportunity for seducing me, according, to the words of

Wisdom, “The dissembler with his mouth deceiveth his friend.” But now, obeying the wise injunction of St. Paul, I can easily “avoid a man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, knowing that he that is such a one is subverted”; and therefore I shall be on my guard lest he should become for me a subverter also. Hence it is no small advantage for the just that “the wicked are caught in their own snares,” according to the Wise Man’s expression; particularly when this happens to such wicked ones as rely more on their skill in setting snares than on open violence. For when the snare happens to fail them they are left resourceless, without the means either of attack or of defence. So it is with the heretics I am speaking of. They are a most contemptible class, without polish or education or the least degree of manly courage. For they are only foxes, and little ones at that. Even the false doctrines which they are accused of holding have nothing defensible about them. They are plausible rather than subtle; and even plausible to none but poor ignorant women and rustics, such as are all the members of this sect, so far as I have been able to ascertain. Nor amongst all their heretical tenets, and they are many, do I remember to have found anything unfamiliar, new, or original, anything which was not preached long ago by the ancient heretics, and opposed and thoroughly refuted by the Catholic doctors. However, it is necessary for you to know exactly what these nonsensical errors are, so I intend to recite them. Some they have themselves unguardedly revealed in replying to questions put by Catholics. Others have been published in the accusations and recriminations which have attended their domestic dissensions. Others again have been made known by former members of the sect on their return to the Church. I do not undertake to disprove them all, for that is not necessary, but simply to explain what they are. And this shall occupy me in my next discourse unto the praise and glory of the name of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXVI

ON THE HERETICAL DOCTRINES CONCERNING MARRIAGE, HOLY ORDERS, AND PURGATORY

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines."

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines." Here I am again, my brethren, to resume the chase of these foxes which, as the Psalmist expresses it, turn out of their path to plunder the vineyard. It is not enough for them to abandon the right way unless they can also ruin the vines, adding prevarication to error. It is not enough for them to be heretics unless they are also hypocrites, so that their sin might be exceedingly great. These are they that come in the clothing of sheep in order to strip the ewes and to despoil the rams. And do you not think they have accomplished both these objects where the people are found to have been robbed of their faith and the priests of their people? But who or what are these robbers? They are sheep in their covering, foxes in their cunning, wolves in their conduct and in their cruelty. They are those who desire to appear virtuous without being so, and to be vicious without appearing so. They are wicked and wish to be regarded as good, lest they should remain alone in their wickedness. They are afraid of being reputed evil, lest they should not be evil enough. For manifest evil is always comparatively powerless for mischief. It is only the simulation of virtue that can ever seduce the virtuous. These, therefore, although wicked, endeavour to appear good, for the ruin of those who are really good. They are unwilling to be known as evil lest their power for evil should thereby be restricted. The practice of the virtues is not in favour amongst them, but they employ a semblance of virtue as a varnish for vice. They even call their impious superstition by the honourable name of religion. According to their definition, innocence consists in abstaining from openly injuring anyone. Hence they are satisfied with the outward colour of innocence. They make vows of continency simply as a shelter for their turpitude. Marriage is regarded by them as the only means of offending against good morals, whereas in truth it is only marriage that

could justify their own unlawful practices. As I have already remarked, they are boorish, ignorant clowns, and altogether beneath contempt. But for all that, I assure you, it is necessary to deal with them carefully. “For they grow much towards ungodliness,” as the Apostle says, “and their speech spreadeth like a canker.”

The Holy Spirit has not neglected to warn us against these sectaries. Long ago He gave a clear premonition of their coming, by the mouth of St. Paul, who says, speaking to Timothy, “Now the Spirit manifestly saith, chat in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy and having their conscience seared, forbidding to marry, to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.” Such, my brethren, are our modern heretics, of whom beyond a doubt these words have been spoken. For they certainly “forbid to marry” and enjoin abstinence “from the meats which God hath created,” as we shall see afterwards. But consider now if this burlesque of religion may not be more properly ascribed to devils than to men, as the Holy Spirit foretold of it. For if you ask its upholders who was the founder of their superstition they cannot tell you. Which of the other religious sects has not had for author its own human heresiarch? The Manicheans acknowledge Manes as their founder and lawgiver; the Sabellians recognise Sabellius; the Arians, Arius; the Eunomians, Eunomius; the Nestorians, Nestorius. Similarly, all the rest of these pestiferous heresies are known to have each its own earthly deviser, from whom it derive both its name and its origin. But by what name or eponym are these latter-day sectaries called? By none. For their heresy “is not from man nor did (they) receive it through man.” God forbid that we should say it came to them “by the revelation of Jesus Christ”! No, they received it without any doubt, and, as the Holy Ghost predicted, through the inspiration and deceit of the devils, “speaking lies in hypocrisy and forbidding to marry.”

Surely it is in hypocrisy and in the cunning of foxes that they declare marriage unlawful. For whilst they pretend to be actuated by the love of continence, the real purpose of their innovation is simply to encourage and to multiply sin. This is so manifest that I find it hard to conceive how any Christian could ever have been imposed upon. Either those who represent the sect are so brutishly dull that they cannot perceive how the prohibition of marriage gives free rein to every species of sensuality; or else they are so steeped in iniquity, so plunged in diabolical malevolence, that they connive at the consequences which they fully realise, and take pleasure in the loss of human souls. Banish from Christendom

“marriage honourable in all and the bed undefiled,” and have you not filled it thereby with all manner of uncleanness and corruption? Choose therefore one or other of these alternatives: either affirm that no kind of immorality, be it never so horrible, can be an obstacle to salvation; or limit the number of the predestinate to the few that have strength to remain continent. How rigorous are you in the latter! How liberal in the former! But the Saviour will not sanction either the one or the other. What? Shall moral turpitude be crowned in heaven? Nothing could be less worthy of the Divine Author of purity. Shall the whole human race be condemned save only the few who are continent? But Christ could not then be truly called the Saviour of mankind. Continence is a rare gift amongst men. Nor is it to be supposed that the Word emptied Himself of His plenitude for the sake of so small a harvest on earth. And how can it be said that we have all received of that plenitude, if it has communicated itself to none but the continent? They—the heretics—have nothing to answer to this. But I think they shall find it equally impossible to defend the other alternative. For if heaven is the home of purity, and if virtue can have no fellowship with vice, any more than light with darkness, certainly there can be no room for the unclean in the company of the saved. To deny this would be to contradict the Apostle, who declares in unmistakable terms that “they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.” By what way shall the crafty fox be able to escape now from his den? I think we have at last caught him in his cavern, in which he had made for himself two openings, one for entrance and the other for exit. Such is the custom of foxes. See then how both ways have been blocked to prevent his escape: if he will admit into heaven none cave the continent, the vast majority of men are excluded from salvation; if he opens paradise to the licentious with the pure, then purity perishes. But rather and more justly shall the fox himself perish, since he can get away neither by this way nor by that, being caught and confined for ever in the pit which he himself hath digged.

Some of the sectaries, however, dissenting from the rest, acknowledge the lawfulness of marriage, yet only between two virgins. But I fail to see on what valid grounds such a distinction can be established, except that these heretics seem to emulate each other in tearing to pieces the sacraments of the Church, every one according to his own particular fancy; just as vipers are said to rend with their venemous fangs the vitals of the mother that bears them. For with regard to what they are represented as saying about the first of all marriages, namely, that it was a marriage of virgins, how, I ask, can that be regarded as prejudicing the liberty of the matrimonial contract so as to render it unlawful

unless the parties be virgins? But they throw out obscure hints of having found I know not what in the Gospel, which as they vainly pretend, lends support to their ravings. I suppose it is the words which the Saviour added after quoting this testimony from Genesis, “God created man to His own image and likeness, male and female He created them,” namely, “what therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” “God,” say these heretics, “joined together our first parents because they were both virgins, and thereafter it was not lawful for them to separate. But the marriage which other than virgins presume to contract has no divine sanction.” But, I ask, who told you that the reason why God joined together Adam and Eve was their virginity? For the Scripture does not say so. “But were they not virgins?” Certainly they were. Yet it is not the same thing to assert that they were virgins when married, and that they were married because they were virgins. Nay, you do not even find it expressly mentioned that the two were virgins, although of this there can be no doubt. The text, “male and female He created them” distinctly refers not to the integrity of their bodies but to the diversity of their sex. And that for wise reasons. For it is not the former but the latter that the matrimonial alliance essentially demands. Therefore, the Holy Ghost, when instituting marriage, prudently mentioned the distinction of sex, but made no allusion to virginity, in order to leave the crafty little foxes no opportunity for mere juggling with words. How gladly they would have profited by such an occasion! Although, as a matter of fact, it would not have helped their cause in the least. For even if the Holy Spirit had said, “virgins He created them,” instead of “male and female He created them,” what would you have gained thereby? Could you thence conclude immediately that marriage was permitted to none but virgins? Yet with what triumph you would have seized the purely verbal advantage! How you would have denounced second and third marriages! How you would have insultingly censured the Catholic Church for allowing the licentious to be united in lawful wedlock, which she does all the more unhesitatingly, because she knows well that they will henceforth live in honour who would else have lived in sin. Perchance you would even reprehend the Lord Himself for commanding the Prophet Osee to marry a sinner. But the Spirit of God has not given you this occasion of heresy, and nevertheless, even without it, you have chosen to be heretics. For the very passage of Scripture which you attempted to make the foundation of your error, you have now discovered to be rather in your way. It has turned out to be no help to you at all, but very much of a hindrance.

But hear now another text, which, if it does not correct you entirely, must at

least utterly confound you, for it completely shatters and annihilates your heresy. “A woman,” so we read, “is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband die, she is at liberty; let her marry to whom she will: only in the Lord.” It is St. Paul that here grants the widow permission to marry “whom she will.” And yet you forbid her, laying down the law that none but a virgin shall marry, and she only to a virgin. So that you do not allow even the virgin to marry “to whom she will.” Why would you thus shorten the arm of God? Why would you limit the freedom of marriage which His generosity has left unrestricted? Why would you confine to the virgin a liberty allowed indiscriminately to the sex? Certainly St. Paul would never have made such a concession unless it were lawful. But I am saying too little when I represent him as only conceding marriage to widows. He positively wills that they should marry. “I will therefore,” he says, “thai the younger should marry.” Nor can there be any doubt that he is speaking in this place of widows, since the context puts that beyond question. Therefore what he allows because it is lawful, he wills also because it is expedient. And does the heretic prohibit what is both lawful and expedient? Surely the only result such a prohibition can have will be to expose him for the heretic that he is.

It remains for us now, my brethren, to press the foxes with the remaining part also of the Apostle’s prediction. For, as he foretold of them, they “abstain from the meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.” In this again they prove themselves heretics, not simply because they abstain, but because their abstinence is the avowal of heretical doctrines. I also abstain sometimes; but my abstinence is intended as a satisfaction for sin, not as the profession of an impious superstition. Surely we do not blame St. Paul for chastising his body and reducing it to servitude? Thus I abstain from wine, because in wine there is luxury, as Holy Scripture tells me. However, I use a little when I am weak, according to the Apostle’s advice. I abstain from flesh meat also, lest by unduly fostering the flesh, I should foster at the same time the vices of the flesh. Even dry bread I will study to eat in measure, because when the stomach is filled with food, one finds it hard to be attentive at prayer; and besides I should be afraid of being reproached by the Prophet Ezechiel were I to eat my bread to satiety. Nay, I will accustom myself to be sparing even in the use of cold water, lest bodily repletion should excite the motions of concupiscence. But the heretic has very different motives for his abstinence. Thus milk he holds in horror, as well as all that is made from it, with everything else connected in any way with procreation. If only he denied himself such things, not because

they are the fruit but because they are the stimulants of passion, how commendable would his abstinence be and how worthy of a Christian!

But what can he mean by this general exclusion of every kind of food which has its source in concupiscence? The distinction of meats thus clearly expressed makes me suspicious. Yet if thou wilt explain that thou art only following the doctor's prescription, I shall not blame thee for taking care of thy flesh, "for no one ever hated his own flesh," provided however that thou dost keep within the limits of moderation. If thou sayest that thou art conforming to the rules of asceticism, that is, carrying out the recommendations of the spiritual physicians, I shall even commend the virtue thou dost exercise in subduing the flesh and bridling thy passions. But if, influenced by the Manichean fanaticism, thou proscribest the benefit of God, so that what He created and bestowed upon us "to be received with thanksgiving," thou, not only as an ingrate, but even as an impudent censurer, dost presume to pronounce unclean and to avoid as evil—in that case, far from praising thy abstinence, I shall rather abhor thy blasphemy: I shall rather look upon thee as unclean who dost attribute uncleanness to the creatures of God. "All things are clean to the clean," says St. Paul, that most excellent judge, and there is nothing which is unclean except to him who esteems it so. "To them that are defiled and to unbelievers," continues the Apostle, "nothing is clean; but both their mind and their conscience is defiled." Woe to you that repudiate with scorn the food which God has created, who regard as unclean and unworthy of being assimilated to your bodies the aliments which He has provided! For on account of such blasphemy the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church, has repudiated yourselves as defiled and polluted.

I am not unaware, my brethren, that these people boast that they themselves and they alone constitute the mystical body of Christ. But indeed they ought to have no difficulty in persuading themselves of this, considering that they are also persuaded that they have the power of daily consecrating on their altars the Body and Blood of Christ to be their nourishment and to form them into His mystical body and members. For they proudly proclaim themselves to be the successors of the apostles and call themselves the apostolics, although they are able to show no proof of their apostolate. How long will they keep their light concealed under a bushel? You are the light of the world," said the Lord to His apostles; and therefore He set them upon a candlestick in order that they might illumine the whole earth. It ought to be a subject of shame to the successors of the apostles that they are the light, not of the world, but only of a bushel. For they are rather the darkness of the world. Let us then say to these apostles: You are the darkness

of the world; and with that let us pass on to the consideration of their other doctrines.

They call themselves the Church. But they contradict thereby Him Who has said, “A city seated on a high mountain cannot be hid.” I say to them: do you really believe that the stone which was “cut out of the mountain without hands” and which “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” is enclosed within your little hiding-holes? However, we must not pause even here. They refuse to proclaim openly what they believe, content with their secret whispering. But Christ holds and shall ever hold His inheritance undiminished, and “the utmost parts of the earth for His possession” They only withdraw themselves from that great inheritance, who endeavour to wrest it from Christ.

But look at these slanderers, behold these dogs. They ridicule us because we administer baptism to infants, because we pray for the dead, because we solicit the intercession of the saints. They themselves are full of impatience to proscribe Christ amongst all classes of men, in both sexes, in infants and adults, in the living and in the dead. For He is interdicted to the child on account of his natural incapacity; and to him who has reached the age of discretion, because of the difficulty of observing continence. Moreover, they would rob the dead of the suffrages of the living; and at the same time they try to defraud the living of the assistance of the saints in glory. But God forbid that their designs should prosper. No, the Lord will not abandon His people, which rival in number the sands of the sea; neither shall He Who has redeemed all men be satisfied with saving a handful of heretics. For “with Him is a plentiful—not a scanty—redemption.” But what proportion can the fewness of these sectaries bear to the immensity of the ransom? They rather deprive themselves of the benefit of redemption by their attempt to lessen its fruit. What matters it that the infant cannot speak for himself, since the voice of the Blood of his Brother—and such a Brother—crieth out to God from the earth in his behalf. His mother, the Church, too, stands by and speaks for him. But is the infant altogether silent? Does he not seem to you, my brethren, to sigh for the “fountains of the Saviour,” and to call aloud to God, and by his inarticulate cries to exclaim, “Lord, I suffer violence, answer Thou for me”! He implores the help of grace because he suffers violence from nature. The misery of the innocent one lifts up its voice, and the ignorance of the little one, and the helplessness of the abandoned one. Therefore, all these advocates plead the infant’s cause, his Brother’s Blood, his mother’s faith, the helplessness of his misery, and the misery of his helplessness. And they plead with the Father. Now the Father, being a true father, can never contradict

the name He bears.

Let no man object to me that the infant has not faith. For his mother, the Church, communicates to him her own, wrapping it up for him (so to speak) in the sacrament of regeneration, until he becomes capable of receiving it by the positive and explicit concurrence of his own intellect and will. Do you think that the faith of the Church is like the Prophet's "short covering which cannot cover two"? Nay, it is a most ample cloak. For surely her faith is not less than that of the Canaanite woman, which was sufficient, as we know, to cover both herself and her daughter. Hence she deserved to hear, "O woman, great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt." Or shall it be said that the Church's faith is inferior to the faith of them who let down the paralytic through the roof and obtained for him the health both of soul and body? "And Jesus, seeing their faith," so we read, "said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And a little afterwards He added, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Anyone who believes what is here recorded, can have no difficulty in convincing himself of the reasonableness of the confidence entertained by the Church, not only as regards the salvation of the infants baptised in her faith, but also concerning the martyr's crown for the little ones that were slain for the sake of Christ. This being so, no argument against the salvation of regenerated infants can be drawn from the words of the Apostle, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." For those infants are not without faith, who in testimony of their faith have received the grace of baptism. Neither does their cause suffer any prejudice from the Saviour's pronouncement, "But he that believeth not shall be condemned." For what is it to believe except to have faith? Accordingly, as the Apostle tells us, the woman "shall be saved through child-bearing; if she continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety"; the infant shall be saved by the regeneration of holy baptism; the adult, who cannot observe continence, shall be redeemed with the thirty-fold fruit of conjugal virtue; the dead who may have need and may be found worthy, shall obtain relief, through the ministry of the angels, from the prayers and sacrifices of the living; and the living, finally, shall never lack the assistance and consolation of the saints in bliss, who, out of an affection of tender charity, remain always near them, through and in God, everywhere present. "For to this end," says the Apostle, "Christ died and rose again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." It may also be said, that to this end He was born as a little child, and passed through each of the different stages of human existence between infancy and maturity, in order that His example might be wanting to none.

These heretics further maintain that there is no purgatorial fire to be feared after death, but that every soul, as soon as she has been separated from the body, immediately either ascends to heaven or descends into hell. Let them, therefore, demand of Him Who has declared that there is a certain sin, which "shall not be forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come," let them ask Him, I say, why He spoke thus, since, as they believe, there can be no remission or purgation of sin in the next life. Now it is nothing wonderful that they who refuse to recognise the Church should slander the various orders of the Church, should reject her institutions, should despise her sacraments, should disobey her commands. "The successors of the apostles," they say, "archbishops, bishops, and priests, are all sinners, and are thus incapable of validly either administering or receiving the sacraments." They hold indeed that to be a real prelate and to be a sinner are two things absolutely incompatible. But this is evidently false. Caiphas was a true high-priest, and yet how great a sinner! For it was he who pronounced sentence of death against the Lord. If thou deniest that he was a high-priest thou dost contradict the testimony of St. John Evangelist, who informs us that he (Caiphas) actually prophesied in virtue of his office of high-priest. Judas Iscariot was an apostle, having been chosen by Christ Himself, in spite of his avarice and sinfulness. Surely thou canst entertain no doubt of his apostolate, considering that it was the Lord Who elected him. "Have not I chosen you twelve," said He, "and one of you is a devil?" Here thou art told that one who was a devil has been called to the apostolic office. And dost thou still deny that it is possible for a sinner to be a bishop? "The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses," and all that refused to hearken to them as to their ecclesiastical superiors were accounted guilty of disobedience, even against the Lord, Who gave a command in the words, "Whatsoever they shall say to you, do and observe." It is clear, therefore, that although they were Scribes, although they were Pharisees, although they were the worst of sinners, nevertheless, because they had "sitten on the chair of Moses," to their authority also must be understood as applying these other words of Christ, "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me."

Many other wicked doctrines also have been infused into the minds of "this foolish and senseless people" by the spirits of error "who speak lies in hypocrisy." But it is not possible to examine them all. For, in the first place, who knows them all? Besides, the task would be exceedingly laborious and altogether unnecessary. For, as regards the sectaries themselves, they cannot be convinced by arguments, because they have not the capacity to understand them; they

cannot be corrected by authority, because they recognise none; and they cannot be won over by entreaty, because they are entirely corrupted. Experience has proved that they will rather die than abandon their errors. Of such as these “the end is destruction” and their final doom devouring flames. For what we read of Samson, how he set fire to the tails of the unreasoning foxes, prefigured the fate in store for these rational ones. Often the faithful, laying hands on some of them, have dragged them to the presence of the judges. When questioned concerning their beliefs, they denied, according to their custom, all those errors whereof they were suspected. But when subjected to the ordeal of water they were found to be liars. Then, as they could no longer dissemble the truth, being exposed by the water which refused to receive them, they took the bit between their teeth, as the saying is, and with most miserable daring professed rather than confessed their heresy, openly defending as piety their impious doctrines, and were even prepared to suffer death for the same. Nor were those who stood by less ready to inflict death. The multitude rushed upon them and gave the heretics new martyrs of their perfidy. I quite approve of their zeal, but I cannot commend their action. For misbelievers must not be compelled by force to accept the faith, but won to it by arguments. Yet it is no doubt better that they should be forcibly restrained, namely, by the power of him “who beareth not the sword in vain,” than be allowed to imbue the minds of others with their false doctrines. For the prince is “God’s minister,” and “an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.”

Some of the faithful have been astonished to see these heretics going to their death, not only with patience, but apparently with joy. But their surprise makes it plain that they do not realise sufficiently how great is Satan’s power as well over the minds and hearts as over the bodies of those who have once delivered themselves up to him. Is it not a stranger thing for a man to lay violent hands on himself than that he should willingly submit to the violence of others? And yet the devil can prevail on many men to do this. For we have often heard of persons who drowned or hanged themselves at his suggestion. It was doubtless the devil that persuaded Judas to put an end to his life. Yet to me it seems a greater and more astonishing manifestation of power that he could put it into the heart of the faithless Apostle to betray his Master, than that he was able to induce him afterwards to hang himself. There is consequently no comparison between the constancy of the martyrs and the obstinacy of these heretics. In the case of the former, their contempt of death was an effect of their piety; in the latter, it proceeded from their hardness of heart. Hence it may be that the Psalmist is alluding to this distinction and personating the martyrs when he says, “Their

heart is curdled like milk; but I have meditated on Thy law." For although the suffering was the same for all, there was a wide diversity in the disposition, the heretics hardening their hearts against the Lord, and the martyrs meditating on His love.

Such being the case, there is no necessity, as I have already remarked, to waste many words on these most stupid and most obstinate of men. It is enough to have exposed them in order that they may be avoided. Wherefore, to catch the foxes, we must force them either to put away their female associates, or else to go out of the Church, which they are scandalising by their unbecoming manner of life. Yet it is much to be lamented that not only some civil magistrates, but some of the clergy also, yea, and I am told even some of the bishops, who ought rather to use their power against the heretics, accept their bribes and support them in their superstition for the sake of gain. But they will say to me, "How dost thou expect us to condemn men who can neither be brought to confess themselves heretics nor be convicted of heresy?" This, my brethren, is a frivolous excuse, yet it furnishes them with the occasion they desire. But let me say to them: By this test alone, even though all other means were lacking, you can easily discover the true character of these sectaries. Command the men and women to separate from each other, as I have before recommended. Oblige the latter to enter communities of their own sex and under the same vows as they have themselves taken; and let their companions likewise be compelled to live in monasteries of men, subject to obligations similar to their own. Thus you shall consult as well for the fidelity as for the good fame of all, because in their convents and in their monasteries they shall have trustworthy guardians and witnesses of their virtue. If, however, they refuse to obey these injunctions, they deserve, and deserve richly, to be expelled from the Church, and thus prevented from further scandalising her children by such improper and unlawful cohabitation. Let so much suffice for discovering the wiles of these foxes, and for instructing and admonishing the true children of the beloved and glorious Spouse of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXVII

ON MYSTICAL ERUCTATION AND ON GRACE, ANTECEDENT AND CONSEQUENT

"My Beloved to me, and I to Him."

"My Beloved to me, and I to Him." For some time, my brethren, I have been occupied with the words of the Bridegroom. May He now grant me His help that I may be able to explain in a fitting manner this speech of His Spouse, unto His glory and our salvation. For what she says here is not so plain and easy that I am sufficient of myself to examine and discuss it worthily, without any need of His light to guide me. Her words, indeed, are as pregnant with meaning and as mysteriously profound as they are full of the sweetness of grace. To what shall I liken them? For the present, they may be compared to a certain kind of aliment excelling in three qualities: pleasing to the palate, nourishing as food, efficacious as medicine. Such, such, I say, is every sentence that falls from the lips of the Spouse. For by the sweetness of its sound it conciliates our affections; by its abounding wealth of meaning it nourishes and strengthens our minds; by its dark depth of mystery it bewilders our intellects in proportion as it exercises them, and thus in a wonderful way heals the swelling of the knowledge that "puffeth up." If anyone of those who seem to themselves to know something, should chance to apply himself earnestly to the study of such texts, when he perceived the power of his genius failing and "every understanding being brought into captivity," would he not humble himself, and feel compelled to cry out in the words of the Psalmist, Thy knowledge is become wonderful to me: it is high and I cannot reach to it"? And here, at the very commencement of her words, how much of sweetness is there not expressed! For consider in what manner she begins. "My Beloved to me," she says, "and I to Him." This may appear to you simple enough, because it sounds so sweetly. However, we shall see about that afterwards.

Now, therefore, beginning with love, she proceeds discourse about her

Beloved, thus indicating that, like the Apostle, she knows nothing except Him Whom she loves. It is sufficiently evident of Whom she is speaking, but to whom is not so clear. For it is not possible to suppose that He of Whom she speaks is the same to whom her words are addressed, since He is no longer with her. There can be no doubt about his, because she presently seems to call Him back, and, as it were, to cry after Him, “Return, my Beloved.” Hence we are led to the conjecture that, having completed what He had to say to His Spouse, the Bridegroom, according to His custom, took His departure, whilst she remained behind, yet still speaking of Him Who is never absent from her affection. So indeed it is. She has kept Him on her lips, Who could not withdraw Himself from her heart, even when He withdrew from her His sensible presence. What issues from her lips, proceeds from her heart; “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Therefore she speaks of her Beloved, as one that is herself truly beloved, and truly deserving of love, “because she loveth much.” But I desire to know with whom she is speaking, since I understand well enough of Whom. For my part, I am unable to conceive whom else she could be addressing (if we suppose her to be addressing any at all) except it be the young maidens who can never be absent from their mother’s side when the Bridegroom leaves her. But we may also suppose—and with greater probability, as I think—that she has uttered those words to herself and not to any other. This conjecture is rendered the more likely by the abrupt and disconnected character of her discourse, which is plainly too incoherent to convey her thought to a hearer, the object we have principally in view in conversing together. “My Beloved to me,” she says, “and I to Him.” Nothing more! The sentence is suspended. Or rather it is not suspended, but fails utterly. The hearer also is in a state of suspense. Instead of receiving instruction, he has only his interest excited.

What is this which she says, “My Beloved to me and I to Him”? We know not what she says because we cannot read her thoughts. O holy soul, tell us what thou meanest by the words, “My Beloved to me and I to Him”? What, I ask, is this giving and receiving, this interchange of gifts which is so sweetly and so lovingly taking place between you? He to thee and thou again to Him. But what? Is it the same thing which He bestows on thee that thou renderest back to Him, or is it something different? If it is to us thou art here addressing thyself, if thou speakest for our instruction, express more clearly what thou dost mean. “How long wilt thou hold our souls in suspense?” Or art thou, like the Prophet Isaias, keeping thy secret to thyself? So it is, my brethren. It is her heart that has spoken, not her understanding, and consequently her speech is not for our

understanding. Then wherefore? For no purpose at all, except that, being filled with marvellous delight and inflamed with most ardent love by the longed-for colloquy with her Bridegroom, since He left off speaking she has been unable either to keep silent altogether or to express what she feels within her. For it is not to manifest her emotions that she has spoken, but simply because she cannot remain silent. Out of the abundance of her heart her mouth has spoken, but not according to her heart's abundance. The emotions have their own proper language whereby they express themselves, even against our will. Thus fear, for example, has its peculiar tremulous expression, sorrow prefers a mournful medium, whilst love selects the sweetest words. Will anyone pretend that the groans of those in pain, the sighs and sobbings of those in sorrow, the sudden and involuntary cries of those who are struck or frightened, and the eructations of satiety—will anyone say that these manifestations are made by use and custom, or excited by reason, or ordered by deliberation, or fashioned by premeditation? Is it not certain that instead of obeying the will of the soul they rather burst forth spontaneously? Thus, when love, especially divine love, is so strong and ardent that it cannot any longer be contained within the soul, it pays no attention to the order, or the sequence, or the correctness of the words through which it pours itself out, or whether they are few or many, provided only that they are in nowise opposed to its own interests. Sometimes it dispenses with words altogether; sometimes it makes use of no other means of expression save the mute language of sighs, in which it finds a sufficient vent. Hence it is that the Spouse, burning with an incredible ardour of divine love, in her anxiety to obtain some kind of outlet for the intense heat which consumes her, does not consider what she speaks or how she speaks. Under the constraining influence of charity, she belches forth rather than utters whatever rises to her lips. And is it any wonder that she should eructate who is so full and so inebriated with the wine of holy love?

Examine, my brethren, every verse of this epithalamium, from the very first to that now under discussion, and see if you can discover amongst all the visitations and colloquies which have been recorded, anyone wherein the Bridegroom has given Himself to His Bride so unreservedly as here; anyone wherein she has been allowed to hear from His lips, not alone so many but also such sweet words. She who has thus satisfied her desire with good things, as the Psalmist says, ought we to be surprised that she expresses her feelings rather by eructation than by speech? And if she seems to you to utter words, believe them to be the belchings of satiety, unadorned and unpremeditated. For the Spouse "thinks it

not robbery" to appropriate to herself the language of the Royal Prophet, where he says, "My heart hath eructated a good word," because she is filled with the same Spirit Who inspired him. "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." There is no apparent connection between these words: the sentence is incomplete. But what matter? It is not the expression of thought, but the eructation of love. And why would you seek in such a spontaneous outburst for the grammatical arrangement and sequence of words, or for the rules and ornaments of rhetoric? Do you yourselves lay down laws and regulations for your own eructations? No, for they defy your authority, and reject your control, and consult neither your convenience nor your pleasure. Of themselves they break forth from your interior, anticipating both your will and your knowledge, and are rather forced from you than freely emitted. Nevertheless, eructations possess an odour, pleasant or offensive, according to the various qualities of the vessels whence they proceed. For "a good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things," and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. A good vessel is the Spouse of my Lord, and good also is the odour she exhales.

I give thanks to Thee, Lord Jesus, for that Thou hast, in Thy condescension, permitted me to enjoy even so much as the sweetness of her fragrance; because "the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." To me, I confess, the eructation of Thy beloved Spouse yields a pleasant odour; and glad am I to be admitted to any participation, however small, of her plenitude. She "eructates" for me "the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness"; and in a certain mysterious manner, I seem to scent, as it were, something ineffable of Thy gracious kindness and love in the words, "My Beloved to me and I to Him." Let her, as she deserves, "feast and rejoice in Thy sight and be delighted with gladness." But let her, like the Apostle, be so "transported in mind" that she may be "sober" for us. Let her, I say, "be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house," and "make her drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure." But when she has been filled and satisfied, let her not forget, I implore of Thee, to favour my poor soul with at least a slight scent of her eructation. Moses too has eructated to my advantage, and I can perceive a pleasant odour of the Creator's almighty power in his eructation, namely, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." The Prophet Isaias again has benefited me by his belching, and exhales the most sweet odour of redeeming mercy, where he thus breaks out, "He hath delivered His Soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked; and He hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors," that they might not perish. Where else can you find so rich a perfume of mercy? Equally excellent is the

odour given out by the eructation of Jeremias, and of him who says, “My heart hath eructated a good word.” For every one of these was full of the Holy Ghost, and, belching from satiety, “filled all things with good.” But you desire to hear the eructation of Jeremias? I have not forgotten it. I was about to invite your attention to it. Here it is: It is good to wait with silence for the salvation of God.” These are his words, if I mistake not. Take them and inhale their perfume. Does not the delicious fragrance of remunerating justice which they diffuse surpass the sweetness of balsam? He tells me to be patient for justice sake and to await my reward in the future, not to accept it in the present life; because the reward of justice is not the prosperity of this world but the “salvation of the Lord.” “If it make any delay,” says another Prophet, “wait for it.” And lest I should begin to murmur, I am reminded that “it is good to wait with silence” Therefore, I will follow the Prophet’s advice. With Micheas, “I will wait for God my Saviour.”

But I am only a sinner and have yet a long way to go, because “salvation is far from sinners.” However, I will not complain. I will try meantime to find my consolation in its odour. “The just shall rejoice in the Lord,” enjoying the taste of that good which I am only suffered to smell. That which the just already contemplates, the same is the object of the sinner’s hope, and it is by hope that he inhales the odour thereof. “For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God.” On the other hand, to contemplate is to “taste and see that the Lord is sweet.” But perhaps it would be more true to say that hope belongs to the just man and fruition to the blessed, since it is written that “the expectation of the just is joy.” As for the sinner, he has no expectation. Indeed he is a sinner for no other reason than because he is not only taken up with, but is also content with, the goods of time, and hopes for nothing hereafter, turning a deaf ear to the voice which calls out to him, “Expect Me, saith the Lord, in the day of My resurrection that is to come.” Hence a just man was Simeon, because he had expectation, and already, in the Spirit, caught the fragrance of Christ, before it became his privilege to adore Him in the flesh. And not only just, but blessed also, since by the odour of expectation he was brought to the taste of contemplation. He has told us this himself where he says, “And my eyes have seen Thy Salvation.” Abraham too was a just man, for he also hoped that he might see the day of the Lord; and he was not “confounded in his expectation,” because he “saw it and was glad.” And the apostles were just, since to them it was said, “And you yourselves (be) like to men who wait for their Lord.”

Why should not David’s name be added to this list of just men? For it is he who has declared, “With expectation I have waited for the Lord.” He came

fourth in the preceding catalogue also, my catalogue of “eructators,” and I had almost forgotten him. He it is who hath “opened his mouth and drawn in the Spirit,” and being filled therewith, not only eructated of his fulness but even burst into song. O good Jesus, with what sweetness has he not enchanted my senses of smell and hearing, by his belching and his singing of that “oil of gladness” wherewith “God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee above Thy fellows,” telling me how “myrrh and stacte and cassia perfume Thy garments, from the ivory houses,” and how “the daughters of kings have delighted Thee in Thy glory”! Oh, how I wish that Thou wouldst grant me the privilege of meeting so great a prophet and so intimate a friend of Thine on the “day of solemnity and gladness,” when he comes forth from Thy bridal-chamber, singing his own marriage-song to the music of the psaltery and the harp, “flowing with delights,” sprinkled with and redolent of “all the powders of the perfumer”! On that day, or rather in that hour,—for whenever such a favour is granted it lasts no longer than an hour, and perhaps not even so long, but only for half an hour. agreeably to what is written, “There was silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour”—in that hour, I say, “my mouth shall be filled with gladness and my tongue with joy,” because I shall recognise—I do not say in every psalm—but in every verse of every psalm, an eructation surpassing all aromatic spices in the sweetness of its fragrance. What can be more odoriferous than that eructation of St. John, “In the beginning was the Word,” savouring to me of the eternity, the generation, and the Divinity of the Word? But how shall I speak of the belchings of St. Paul? With what a delicious perfume they embalmed the whole world! For he was “the good odour of Christ in every place.” Even those “secret words” of his, although he does not utter them to my hearing, he yet proposes sufficiently to arouse my desires, in order that I may enjoy at least the fragrance of what I am not permitted to hear. And indeed, it seems to me that the mystery he thus hides from us somehow pleases us the more, in proportion as we are the less able to fathom it; and we lone for it with greater eagerness because it is withheld. You may notice the Spouse acting towards us here in somewhat the same manner as the Apostle. For, like him, in this present verse she neither fully discloses her secret nor does she altogether pass it over in silence. She permits us to inhale its odour, but the taste thereof, either because of our unworthiness or because of our incapacity, she apparently thinks it right to withhold from us for the present.

“My Beloved to me, and I to Him.” There can be no doubt, my brethren, that the mutual love of the Bridegroom and Bride burns as a fire in this passage. And in that reciprocity of affection we behold the supreme felicity of the one and the

amazing condescension of the Other. For not between equals is the loving union or embrace here in question. But what is the gift which the Spouse boasts of having, by the privilege of singular love, received from her Bridegroom and bestowed upon Him in turn? That is a secret which no one can pretend to understand fully, except those who, by the perfect purity of their souls and bodies, have deserved to experience something similar in themselves. For it is a mystery of love. Hence it is not by discourse of reason we are to attain to it, but by conformity of will. But how few there are who can say with the Apostle, “But we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord”!

However, I will try to present what is said in our text in a somewhat more intelligible form; yet without presuming to trench upon that secret which is the prerogative of the Spouse, and access to which is in the meantime unlawful, particularly for sinners such as we are. I have consequently to put before you something which, because of its being familiar, shall be the better adapted to the ordinary capacity, and shall at the same time give coherence to the words of our text and “understanding to little ones” To me, then, it seems to be enough for our gross and unenlightened intelligence, if with the words “My Beloved to me” we understand the verb “attends.” Thus the sentence will run, “My Beloved attends to me, and I to Him.” It must not be supposed, however, that I am the only one or the first to whom this has occurred. Long before me the Psalmist gave expression to the same thought in the words, “With expectation I have waited for the Lord, and He hath attended to me.” Here you have explicitly mentioned the attending of the Lord to His Prophet. And you have also the Prophet’s attending to the Lord, evidently implied in what he says, “With expectation I have waited for the Lord.” For he who expects attends. Indeed to attend is nothing else than to expect. There is no difference in the sense, therefore, between what the Psalmist says here and the utterance of the Spouse, and very little even in the words which they employ, except that the Prophet inverts the order of the Bride, by putting in the second place what she places first and conversely.

Of the two it seems to me that the Spouse has spoken the more correctly. She does not give the prominence to her merit, but begins with an acknowledgment of the divine beneficence, and confesses that she has been prevented by the grace of holy love. This is certainly very proper, because, as the Apostle says, “who hath first given to Him and recompense shall be made him?”

St. John gives us his mind on this subject where he tells us in his Epistle, “In this is charity; not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved

us.” But although the Psalmist makes no mention here of antecedent grace, he does not deny the grace which is consequent, neither is he silent concerning it. Yet, listen to a more manifest testimony of his, relating to the latter and taken from a different place, where he confesses, speaking to the Lord, “And Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life.” I will present you from the same Prophet with an equally clear and certain acknowledgment of prevenient grace: “My God,” he says, “His mercy shall prevent me.” And again he prays to God in the words, “Let Thy mercies speedily prevent us, for we are become exceeding poor.” In a subsequent verse of this Canticle, the Spouse, unless I mistake, very beautifully repeats the words of our present text, but inverting the order of the parts and following the example of the Prophet. For she there says, “I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me.” Why this, my brethren? The reason is that she there wants to prove herself to be more full of grace, since she has now given up everything to grace, assigning to it both the beginning and the end. For how could she be full of grace, if there was anything in her or belonging to her, which was not from grace? There is no room for grace in a soul already occupied by merit. Therefore the confession that all her good is from grace proves that the soul which so confesses has the plenitude of grace. For if there is anything in her of her own, be it much or be it little, grace, of necessity, shall be so far excluded. Whatever room you make in yourselves for merit, you withdraw from grace. As for me, I want none of that merit which is an obstacle to grace. I abhor and disavow whatever of mine I discover in myself, in order that I may be my own, unless perchance that is most truly mine which truly makes me my own. It is grace that justifies me freely and so delivers me from the servitude of sin. For “where the Spirit is there is liberty.”

Oh, the Synagogue, that senseless Spouse, who, contemning the justice of God, that is to say, the grace of the Bridegroom, wished rather to establish her own justice, refusing “to be subject to the law of God”! For this has she been repudiated, and is now a Spouse no longer. Her place has been given to the Church, to whom it has been said, ‘ “I have espoused thee to Me in faith, I have espoused thee to Me in justice and judgment, and in mercy and in commiserations.’ Thou hast not chosen Me, but it is I Who have chosen thee. Nor have I chosen thee because of any merits which I discovered in thee, but My choice anticipated thy merits. Consequently ‘I have espoused thee to Me in faith,’ and not in ‘the works of the law.’ I have espoused thee to Me in justice,’ but in the justice which is from faith, not from the law. It remains then that thou shouldst judge a righteous judgment between Me and thee, the judgment in

which I have espoused thee to Me, and which, as thou knowest, was in nowise due to thy merit, but solely to My good pleasure. Now this is the judgment, that thou shouldst not extol thy merits, that thou shouldst not make a display of the ‘works of the law,’ that thou shouldst not boast of having borne the ‘burden of the day and the heat,’ because, as thou must understand, it is rather in faith and in the justice which is from faith, and in mercy, and in commiseration I have espoused thee to Me.”

She who is the true Spouse will understand aright all these things, and will duly acknowledge both graces, first, the grace which is given first and by which she is prevented, secondly, that which follows and completes. Hence she says here, “My Beloved to me, and I to Him,” attributing to His grace the beginning. In a following passage grace is assigned the consummation, where we find, “I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me.” Let us now try to ascertain what she means by the words, “My Beloved to me.” If we regard this expression as requiring to be completed by the addition of the verb “attend,” as I have before suggested, and thus, as repeating what the Psalmist says, “With expectation I have waited for the Lord, and He hath attended to me,” then it seems to me that the Spouse is here alluding to something ineffable, some exceedingly great prerogative. But a subject which deserves your best and fullest attention must not be proposed to ears and minds already wearied. If, therefore, you have no objection, let us defer to another time this discussion. But the delay shall not be long. To-morrow I purpose to begin where I now leave off. Only do you pray that I may be preserved in the meantime from the inrush of distracting cares through the grace and mercy of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXVIII

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM ATTENDS TO HIS SPOUSE AND SHE TO HIM

"My Beloved to me, and I to Him."

Listen now, my brethren, to what has been held over since yesterday. Be attentive whilst I tell you of the joy which I have found. It is also your joy. Hear me therefore with gladness. I have discovered this joy in a single expression of the Bride's, and after refreshing myself with its fragrance, so to speak, I have kept it concealed until now, when it shall cause you all the more pleasure in proportion as it is the more seasonably proposed. The Spouse, then, has spoken, and she has declared that her Bridegroom attends to her. But who is this Spouse? And who is this Bridegroom? The Bridegroom, my brethren, is none other than our God. And the Spouse—dare I say it?—the Spouse is ourselves, together with the rest of the multitude of captives, all known to Him. Let us therefore rejoice. "This is our glory," the consciousness that we are the Spouse to whom God attends. Yet how infinitely great is the distance between Him and us! What are we, "earth-born and the sons of men," compared to God? In the words of the Prophet Isaias, "All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Him as nothing and vanity." What, then, can such a Spouse mean by putting herself on an equality with One so far above her, when she says, "My Beloved to me, and I to Him"? Either she exalts herself extravagantly, or He loves her excessively. What a wonderful thing it is that she should thus claim His attention for herself, as her own exclusive property, as it were, in the words "My Beloved to me"! Nor is she satisfied with so much. She carries her glorying still further and dares to give herself to Him in return, to exchange herself for Him, so to speak, as a thing of equal value! "And I to Him," she adds. A presumptuous speech, surely, this "and I to Him." And not less presumptuous that other, "My Beloved to me." But both together are clearly more presumptuous than either of the two taken singly.

Oh, how great is the daring of a pure heart, of a good conscience, and of a "faith unfeigned"! "He attends to me," she says. Is it then true that the Divine Majesty, to Whom belongs the government and the administration of the wide world of creatures, gives His whole attention to her? Can it be a fact that the care of the universe is exchanged for the mere intercourse of love, rather say for the repose of love, in order to gratify the desires of the Spouse? Such in truth is the case. For this Spouse is the Church of the elect, whereof the Apostle says, "All things for the sake of the elect." And who can have any doubt "that the grace of God and His mercy is with His saints, and that He hath respect to His chosen"? I do not, however, deny His providence over His other creatures; but I say that the Spouse claims for herself all His special care and attention. "Doth God take care for oxen"? asks the Apostle. It is manifest that we may say the same of horses, of camels, of elephants, and of all the other beasts of the earth; yea, of all the fishes of the sea, and of all the birds of the air, and finally of everything in the world, those creatures only excepted to whom alone it has been said, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you." Does it not seem to you, my brethren, as if you heard the admonition, "Attend to Him because He attends to you"? And take notice how the Apostle Peter, to whom belong the words quoted, observes here the same order as the Spouse. For he does not say, "Casting all your care upon Him that He may have care of you," but, "Casting all your care upon Him because He hath care of you." Thereby he clearly indicates not alone how dearly beloved is the Church of the saints, but also how she has been prevented by love.

It is therefore evident that what St. Paul interrogatively affirms of the oxen applies not to her. For surely the Lord must have care for her, seeing that He hath loved her and delivered Himself for her. Is she not that wandering sheep the care of which the Good Shepherd preferred even to the care of His heavenly flock? Yea, abandoning these, He descended to earth for her sake; He sought for her diligently; and when at last she was found, He did not lead or drive, but He carried her back to the fold. Next, on account of her and in company with her, He made new feasts of joy in heaven, inviting all the choirs of angels to participate therein. What then? After deigning to bear her back on His own shoulders, will He no longer have care for her? Impossible! Hence she does not hesitate to say, "The Lord is careful for me." Neither has she any fear lest she should be over-confident in affirming, "The Lord will repay for me," and using the other similar expressions which seem to signify God's special solicitude for her. Therefore it is that she calls the Lord of Hosts her Beloved, and glories that He Who "judgeth all things with tranquillity" attends to her. And why should she

not glory therein? Has she not heard Him saying to her, “Can a mother forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee”? Besides, it is written, “The eyes of the Lord are upon the just.” But what is the Spouse except the whole assembly of the just? What is she, I ask, but “the generation of them that seek the Lord, of them that seek the face” of the Bridegroom? For it is not the case that He attends to her whilst she does not attend to Him. Therefore she makes explicit reference to the attention on both sides, saying, “My Beloved to me, and I to Him.” As if she should say, “He attends to me, because He is kind and compassionate; and I attend to Him because I am not ungrateful; He renders to me ‘grace for grace,’ and I render back to Him thanks for grace; He attends to my deliverance and I attend to His glory; He attends to my salvation and I attend to His will; He attends to me and to none other, because I am His only dove; and I attend to Him and to none other, because I listen not to the voice of strangers, and I pay no heed to them that say to me, ‘Lo, here is Christ,’ or, ‘Lo, He is there.’ ” So may the Church apply to herself the words, “My Beloved to me, and I to Him.”

But what of each of ourselves, individually, my brethren? Can we suppose that there is anyone amongst us to whom the same words may in some sense apply? But why do I say “anyone amongst us,” since it is my opinion that this question might be asked, and not unreasonably, with regard to every single member of the universal Church? However, the Bridegroom does not attend in the same manner to the individual Christian and to the multitude of believers. It was not for the sake of any particular soul, but on account of many, in order to collect many into one Church, to unite and form many into one single Spouse, that God did so much and suffered so much when He “wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.” This is the Spouse that is most dear to Him, exclusively His as He is exclusively hers, giving her love to no other Bridegroom, yielding her place to no other Bride. What may she not presume with so solicitous a Lover? What may she not hope for from Him Who came down from heaven to seek her and called her to Himself from the ends of the earth? And not alone has He sought her, but He has also bought her; and the price that was paid for her was the Blood of the Purchaser. There is another consideration also which is wont to be made the ground of special confidence. It is that, looking forward into the future, she clearly recognises that the Lord has need of her. Do you ask, for what purpose? “That He may see the good of His chosen, that He may rejoice in the joy of His nation, that He may be praised with His inheritance.” Nor must it be supposed that this is an object of but little moment. For I tell you that unless this

is secured, no work of God shall continue perfect. Can it be denied that the end of all things depends upon the final state and consummation of the Church? Take this away, and then in vain "the expectation of the (inferior) creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God." Take this away, and neither the patriarchs nor any of the prophets shall be consummated, because, as the Apostle assures us, God has so "provided for us that they should not be perfected without us." Take this away, and the glory of even the holy angels shall suffer diminution by reason of the imperfection of their number. Take away this, finally, and the city of God itself shall be defrauded of the joy of its integrity.

How then, I ask, shall God be able to accomplish His design and bring to pass the secret purpose of His will, the "great mystery of godliness"? Or where shall you find for me the "infants and sucklings" out of whose mouths the Lord may perfect His praise? In heaven there are no infants or sucklings. They belong only to the Church, to whose children it was said, "I gave you milk to drink, not meat." And it is these the Psalmist invites to perfect and complete, as it were, the praises of God, where he says, "Praise the Lord, ye children." Do you imagine that God can have the praise of His glory full and entire, before the advent of those who shall sing "in the sight of the angels," "We have rejoiced for the days in which Thou hast humbled us, for the years in which we have seen evils"? Gladness of this kind heaven could not know except through the children of the Church. To rejoice with such a joy is impossible to creatures who have never lived an hour without rejoicing. Especially sweet is the joy which succeeds to sadness, the repose which follows labour, the haven after shipwreck. Security is pleasing to all, but to him more particularly who has long been a prey to alarm. Light gives pleasure to everyone, but to none so much as to those who have escaped from the power of darkness. To have passed out of death into life doubles the joy of living. This is my portion at the celestial banquet, special to myself, and incommunicable to the blissful angels. Yet I dare to affirm it, that even the happiness of these heavenly spirits would be incomplete, as lacking the bliss which is peculiarly human, did they not (as they so graciously condescend to acknowledge) participate through their charity with me and through me in mine. Hence they certainly seem to owe to me something of the perfection of their blessedness, nor is that something a matter of little importance. We know that the angels rejoice over the conversion of a sinner. But if even my contrite tears are a source of delight to these citizens of heaven, how great must be their joy in my happiness! Their only occupation is to praise God. Yet they know how imperfect their praise shall be, if there be none who can sing, "We have passed

through fire and water, and Thou hast brought us out into a refreshment."

Happy, therefore, is the Church in her universality. Inadequate to the motives she possesses is all her glorying, looking not only to the benefits and prerogatives already granted her, but also to the favours which, by the divine promise, she shall hereafter receive. And why should she trouble herself about merits, seeing that she has a more solid and secure ground for glorying in the free purpose of God's good pleasure than any merits of her own could give her? God cannot deny Himself, nor can He undo what He has already done; and, according to the Prophet, He has already accomplished the things that are to be. Yes, He will undoubtedly do as He has said. God will not be unfaithful to His promise. Thus, there is no longer any reason for you to ask me what those merits are whereon we may build our hopes of heaven, especially since you have heard through the Prophet Ezechiel the announcement, "It is not for your sakes that I will do this, but for My holy name's sake, saith the Lord." For our merit it suffices us to know that our own merit suffices us not. But just as it is sufficient for our merit not to presume on our merit, so it is sufficient for our judgment to be found entirely deficient in merit. Even regenerated infants are none of them without merits, for they have the merits of Christ. Yet one renders himself unworthy of a participation in the merits of Christ by not joining thereto merits of his own, if this is due not to incapacity but to negligence; which, however, is a danger rather for adults than for infants. Study, therefore, my brethren, to acquire merits. But when they have been acquired, be sure you regard them as the gifts of God. Let the mercy of the Lord be the fruit you expect from them. And in this way you shall avoid all danger of spiritual poverty, of ingratitude, and of presumption. The worst kind of poverty is poverty of merit, whilst presumption of spirit is but a deceitful show of wealth. Hence the Wise Man prays to the Lord, "Give me neither beggary nor riches." Happy the Church to which are wanting neither merits without presumption, nor presumption without merits! She has indeed grounds whereon to presume, but these grounds are not her own merits. She has merits also, but merits which make her worthy of reward, not such as would lead her to presume. Is not the very fact of her not presuming on anything of her own real merit and a title to reward? Therefore the less she presumes on her own merits the more safely does she presume on the merits of Christ. Nor is it possible that she should be confounded in her glorying, who has so many motives for glorying. For "the mercies of the Lord are many" and "the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever."

Why, my brethren, may not she glory in security since "mercy and truth have

met each other" to testify to her glory? Therefore, whether she says, "My Beloved to me," or whether she says, "With expectation I have waited for the Lord," or, "The Lord is careful for me," or in fine whatever other expressions of this kind she makes use of, which appear to signify in the same way a certain special love and singular favour on the part of God for His Spouse; she believes that there is none of all these utterances which does not truly apply to herself. And well she may, considering that she has such solid reason for presuming in the Lord's free choice of her, particularly as she beholds no other Spouse, no rival Church for whose sake the divine pledges, which cannot fail, are to be fulfilled. Hence it is evident that the Church has no hesitation at all in appropriating to herself the prerogatives and graces of the promise. But even with regard to the individual soul, provided that she is holy and spiritual, the question may be reasonably asked, whether she also has not the right to presume in these matters, at least to a certain extent? It seems evident enough that no single soul, however far advanced in holiness she may be, can lay claim to all the privileges and promises appertaining to the universal Church, for the sake of which all things are done. It will consequently be no easy matter, as I think, if indeed it is not altogether impossible, to discover how such presumption, even within limits, can be lawful for any individual. Hence I judge it necessary to reserve this investigation for another discourse. For I am unwilling to enter upon so difficult a disputation, the issue whereof I cannot tell, until we have first prayed for light on this obscure question to Him "Who openeth and no man shutteth," the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXIX

ON LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL PRESUMPTION, ON THE ZEAL OF JUSTICE AND THE ZEAL OF CHARITY, AND ON THE LOVING FAMILIARITY BETWEEN GOD AND THE FAITHFUL SOUL

"My Beloved to me, and I to Him."

"My Beloved to me, and I to Him." In the preceding discourse, my brethren, I regarded these words as belonging to the universal Church, on account of the promises which God has made to her, both of the life which now is and of that which is to come. To-day we have to examine the question as to whether they may not also be assigned to the particular soul. The reason for doubting is that the individual, as it seems, cannot justly appropriate what it is lawful for the community to lay claim to, and no one member of the Church has apparently the right to represent in any way the whole. If such be the case, then it becomes necessary to refer the words of our text so exclusively to the Church that they shall in no sense be applicable to individuals; and not these words alone, but also all similar expressions which appear to contain great and special privileges, for example, "With expectation I have waited for the Lord, and He hath attended to me," and the other passages which I spoke of in my last sermon. But should anyone maintain that the member is entitled to a participation in the privileges of the body, I shall not contradict him. Yet it will be necessary to make distinctions. For not all the children of the Spouse share in their mother's prerogatives. The Church of God has certainly her spiritual sons, who not only live faithfully but also "deal confidently in her," who converse with the Lord as with a a friend, their own conscience bearing them witness that they are always seeking His glory. Who are these favoured souls? That is God's secret. But hear now from me what kind you yourselves ought to become if you desire to be numbered amongst the special friends of God. And I shall speak not as one who has already

enjoyed, but only as one longing to enjoy, the experience of the things I am discussing. Give me a man who loves nothing except God and whatever is for God's sake deserving of love; a man for whom "to live is Christ" and has been for a long time; who, whether at work or repose, equally endeavours to "set the Lord always in his sight"; whose dominant desire, yea, rather, whose single desire, is to walk ever cautiously with the Lord his God, and whose grace is adequate to the accomplishment of this desire—give me, I say, such a soul, and I, at all events, will not pronounce her to be unworthy of the heavenly Bridegroom's attention, of the regard of the Divine Majesty, of the favour of the Supreme Lord, of the Sovereign Ruler's solicitous care. And should she, like St. Paul, "have a mind to glory" on account of these things, she certainly "shall not be foolish." "But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" only. In this way, therefore, the individual member may appropriate to himself the same privileges which the whole body lays claim to. Nevertheless, there are not the same grounds for the presumption of one as for the presumption of all.

The Church, as a holy society, bases her confidence upon the reasons given above, that of the faithful soul rests on the two following considerations. First, her Bridegroom, in the absolute simplicity of His Divine Nature, has the power to regard many as if they were but one, and one again as if many. His attention is not multiplied according to the multiplicity of its objects, nor confined by solicitude for a few. It is neither divided by diversity, nor engrossed by singularity, nor disquieted by cares, nor perturbed or agitated by solicitude. For it is given to each without being restricted, and given to all without being distracted. The second motive of the soul's confidence is a certain consolation, the experience of which is exceedingly delightful but also exceedingly rare. So great is the condescension of the Word, so great is the benevolence of the Father towards a rightly affected, well-ordered soul—although such dispositions are themselves but the Father's gift and the Word's creation—that after preventing and preparing her with Their graces and blessings, They even deign to honour her with Their presence. Yea, not only do They come to her, but They condescend so far as to make Their abode with her. For it is not enough for Their love that They make Themselves known, unless They also give themselves to be enjoyed unreservedly. But what are we to understand by the Word's coming to the soul? He comes, no doubt, by instructing her in wisdom. And by the Father's coming? The soul may be assured that she has the Father for her Guest when she feels herself excited to such a love of wisdom as shall enable her to say with truth, "I have become a lover of her beauty." Love belongs to the Father; and,

therefore, the infusion of love is a proof of the Father's presence in the soul. What would be the effect of instruction without love? It could only inflate us. And what could love do without instruction? It would simply lead us astray. They certainly had been led astray of whom the Apostle testified, "I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." It is not becoming that the Bride of the Word and of the Wisdom of God should be herself without wisdom; whilst the Father would not endure her if He found her puffed up. For "the Father loveth the Son," "and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of" the Word He is prepared to cast down and destroy immediately, whether by the zeal which He infuses, or by that wherewith He chastises, of which the former proceeds from His mercy and the latter from His justice. Would to God that I were taught to renounce pride, but rather in the school of grace than in that of judgment! "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy fury," as of old Thou didst rebuke the angel who inflated himself in heaven; "nor chastise me in Thy wrath," as Thou didst chastise the first man in paradise. Both alike "meditated iniquity," both alike aimed at supereminence, the former ambitioning supereminence of power, the latter desiring supereminence of knowledge. Eve, in her folly, gave credit to the serpent who came to seduce her with the promise, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Already he had seduced himself, for he had persuaded himself that he should be "like the Most High." Now "if anyone think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

But both of these heights were levelled down. Man however received the more merciful judgment, because his Judge was He Who "ordereth all things in measure, and number, and weight." For whereas the angel was punished and condemned in His fury (furore), man had experience only of His anger (ira), escaping His fury altogether, according to what we read in the Prophet Habacuc, where he says, speaking to the Lord, "When Thou art angry Thou wilt remember mercy." Therefore, even unto this day, the seed of Adam are children, not of fury, but only of wrath. Were I not generated a child of wrath I should not need to be regenerated. But had I been generated a child of fury, regeneration would not have been granted me, or, if granted, would not have profited me. Do you wish, my brethren, to behold a child of fury? If you "saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven," that is to say, cast headlong down by the force of the divine fury, then you would understand something of the fury of the Lord. He was not then "mindful of His mercy." For it is only when He is angry that He will "remember mercy," not when His wrath has been provoked to fury. Woe to

the children of infidelity, even to such as belong to Adam's race, who, born children of wrath, have by their diabolical obstinacy and to their own destruction, converted anger into fury, and the rod of discipline into the bludgeon, into the sledge-hammer of vengeance. As the Apostle says, they art "treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath." Now, wrath which, is treasured up and accumulated, what is it but fury? They have committed the sin of the devil, and shall be struck down by the same doom as the devil. Woe also, yet a milder woe, to certain of the sons of wrath, who, after being born children of wrath, have not lived long enough to be reborn children of grace. For dying soon after their birth, they must now remain for ever children of wrath. I say children of wrath, not children of fury, because as it is most pious to believe, so also does our natural human sympathy tearfully anticipate that their sufferings are very light (mitissimae), as inflicted for no personal offence, but for a fault entirely inherited from others.

The devil therefore, was judged in fury, because his "iniquity was found unto hatred." Man's iniquity, on the contrary, was only found unto wrath, and hence he is chastised only in wrath. Thus every kind of self-exaltation has been brought low, as well the pride that inflates as the ambition which lifts up only in order to hurl down,—brought low by the Father, Who is zealous for the prerogatives of His Son. For both angel and man offered injury to the Son, the former by an usurpation of power against Him Who is the Power of God, the latter by presuming to seek for knowledge elsewhere than from Him Who is the Wisdom of God. "O Lord, who is like to Thee?" Surely none but He Who is the Brightness of Thy Glory and the Figure of Thy Substance: none surely but He Who is Thine own Image. He alone is in the Form of Thy Divinity. He alone "thought it not robbery to be equal to" Thee. How indeed could He be otherwise than equal to Thee, since Thou and He are but One? He is seated, not at Thy Feet, but at Thy Right Hand. And how can any creature have the presumption to usurp the place of Thine Only-Begotten? Let the invader be hurled down! He has set his seat on high: let his "chair of pestilence" be overturned! Again, who is he that "teacheth man knowledge"? Is it not Thou, O "Key of David," Who openest to whom Thou pleasest, and shuttest against whom Thou pleasest? And without the Key, how could anyone dare attempt to enter, rather say, to intrude into the divine treasury of wisdom and knowledge? "He that entereth not by the door, the same is a thief and a robber." Peter therefore shall enter, because Peter has received the keys. Yet not alone shall he enter. For, if he so please, he may introduce me with him, as he may also exclude another, according to his

pleasure, by the wisdom and authority bestowed upon him from above.

And what are these keys, my brethren? They are the power of opening, and the power of shutting, and the power of discriminating between those who are to be admitted and those who are to be excluded. It is not in the serpent that the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are laid up, but in Christ. Therefore the serpent could not communicate the wisdom which he did not himself possess; but it was truly communicated by Him by Whom it was truly possessed. Neither was the serpent possessed of power, since he had not received it; but Peter was a real holder of power, because he had really received it. It was given by Christ and given to Peter. Nor was the Apostle inflated with his knowledge or elated with his power. Why so? Because for neither of these endowments did he "exalt himself against the knowledge of God," since he had sought to obtain neither of them without the knowledge of God, very different from him, who "in His sight hath done deceitfully, that his iniquity might be found unto hatred." How, I ask, could Peter have obtained anything without the knowledge of God, since he distinctly tells us that he is an apostle "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"? Thus much in connexion with that zeal which I have represented God as exercising against the two prevaricators, the angel and man; for in both He found iniquity. And I have endeavoured to show how, in His wrath or in His fury, He has "pulled down every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God."

But I must now return to the zeal of His mercy, that is, the zeal which He infuses into us rather than exercises Himself. For the zeal which He exercises is the zeal of His justice, as I have already explained; and the examples I have cited of those transgressors on whom this zeal has been so terribly exercised, are doubtless sufficient to alarm us. Therefore will I fly from the face of the fury of the Lord whither I may find for myself a place of refuge: I will fly to that zeal of piety which burns so sweetly, yet so powerfully atones. Shall it be said that charity atones not? Nay, but it does atone, and with power. I have even read of it that it "covereth a multitude of sins." I ask further: has it not the power and the sufficiency to bring down and humble every kind of "haughtiness of the eye" and of the heart? Most assuredly it has. For "charity is not puffed up, is not ambitious." If therefore the Lord Jesus would vouchsafe to visit me, or rather to come into my heart, not in the zeal of His fury, nor yet in the zeal of His wrath, but in charity and in the spirit of sweetness, "jealous of me with the jealousy of God"—for what is so much God's as charity? although in truth it is rather God Himself than something that belongs to Him—if, I say, He would condescend to

come into me, thus meek and loving, I should thereby understand that He has come not alone, but that His Father also is with Him. What indeed can be so like the Father as such condescension? Hence, He has been called not only the Father of the Word, but also the "Father of mercies," because, namely, it is His very nature "to have pity always and to spare." If ever, like the disciples journeying to Emmaus, I perceive that my understanding has been "opened" and enabled to comprehend the meaning of Holy Scripture; or if I feel the words of wisdom welling up, so to speak, from the bottom of my heart; or if I am conscious of an infusion of heavenly light, in which mysteries are made manifest; or finally, if the mighty breast of heaven seems to bend upon my soul and to pour down upon my mind a more than usually abundant rain of holy meditations, then, my brethren, I can have no doubt of the Bridegroom's presence within me. For such spiritual treasures all belong to the Word, and it is of His fullness that we receive them. But if at the same time I feel in my inmost soul a plentiful outpouring of the grace of humble devotion, so that I not only know the truth, but love it also, and from this love conceive a kind of spontaneous hatred and contempt for vanity, lest I should be inflated with knowledge or lifted up by the frequency of divine visitations—I then realise that I am being treated with fatherly affection, and I cannot resist the persuasion that the Father Himself is at hand. And if thereafter, so far as it depends upon me, I persevere in corresponding faithfully to this grace of condescension by worthy sentiments and worthy actions, so that I may be able to affirm with St. Paul, "His grace in me hath not been void,"—I may now feel assured that the Father Who fosters me, and the Son Who instructs me, have not only come to me, but have even taken up Their abode with me.

How great a grace of holy familiarity between the Word and the soul must spring out of this divine indwelling! And from such familiarity how great a grace of confidence! There is no longer any reason that I can see why a soul thus privileged should not presume to say, "My Beloved to me." For in her consciousness that she loves the Bridegroom, and loves Him ardently, she has convincing evidence that He loves her also and loves her with similar ardour. In like manner with regard to her devoted attention to Him, her solicitude and carefulness for His glory, her laborious and diligent service, her zeal, which keeps her constantly and eagerly on the alert, ever anxious to know "how she may please God"—she has no doubt at all that He, in His turn, is looking after her interests with the same watchful assiduity; because she remembers His promise, "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." Nevertheless the Spouse in her prudence is careful to claim for her own part only

the return of love, recognising that she has been prevented by the grace of her Bridegroom. Therefore it is that she puts in the first place the giving which belongs to Him, when she says, “My Beloved to me, and I to Him.” Thus we see how from her own dispositions and sentiments towards God she comes to know what His feelings are for her. Such in truth is the case. It is God’s love for the soul that excites the soul’s love for Him; it is His antecedent attention to her that makes her attentive to Him; it is His solicitude for her that is the cause of her solicitude for Him. For once the soul is enabled to “behold the glory of the Lord with open face,” by some, I know not what, affinity of nature, she is immediately and of necessity conformed thereto and “transformed into the same image.” From what has been said, we may gather that, such as we make and present ourselves to God, such also will He exhibit Himself to us. This is what the Psalmist means where he says to the Lord, “With the holy Thou wilt be holy and with the innocent man Thou wilt be innocent.” And why may we not say with equal truth, “With the loving Thou wilt be loving, with the reposeful Thou wilt be reposeful, with the attentive Thou wilt be attentive, and with the solicitous Thou wilt be solicitous.”? Indeed He has Himself declared, “I love them that love Me; and they that in the morning early watch for Me, shall find Me.”

You observe, my brethren, how He gives us here an assurance that we possess His love when we offer Him ours. But not only this. He also tells us that He watches with solicitude over our interests whenever He perceives us to be solicitous for His. Art thou vigilant in His service? Then He also is vigilant in thine. Rise up in the night to begin thy vigils, hasten as much as thou pleasest, even anticipating the matin hour: thou shalt not be beforehand with Him, thou shalt find Him already waiting for thee. In this emulation of charity thou wouldst be acting rashly wert thou to attribute to thyself either precedency or superiority. For He loves thee more than thou lovest Him, and His love for thee is older than thy love for Him. If the Spouse knows all this, yea rather because she knows all this, art thou surprised to hear her glorying that the infinite Majesty of God, neglecting, as it were, every other interest, attends exclusively to her, and that she in her turn disengages herself from all created objects in order to devote herself to Him with her whole heart’s affection? I must now bring my discourse to an end. But before concluding, I want to speak one last word, astonishing indeed, yet strictly true, for the benefit of those amongst you who may be called spiritual persons. What I desire to say is this: The soul that sees God beholds Him so intent upon herself as if she were the sole object of His solicitude. Hence the confidence with which she affirms that her Beloved attends to her and she to

Him; for she also can have regard to nothing except to Him and to herself. How good Thou art, O Lord, to the soul that seeks Thee! Thou runnest to meet her, Thou dost embrace her, Thou revealest Thyself to her as her own Bridegroom, Thou Who art her Lord, yea Who art over all things, God I blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXX

ON THE MYSTICAL LILIES AMONG WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM LOVES TO FEED

"My Beloved to me and I to Him, Who feedeth among the lilies."

"My Beloved to me, and I to Him Who feedeth among the lilies." Surely now, my brethren, none can accuse the Spouse of pride or presumption for that she claims to have formed a love-alliance with One "Who feedeth among the lilies." Even were He represented as feeding among the stars, the very fact of His feeding at all brings Him down so low that I cannot understand how friendship or familiarity with such a One should be esteemed anything great. For in truth the word "feeding" suggests to our minds nothing but what is mean and ignoble. But now, when He is described as feeding "among the lilies," this additional humiliation removes and excludes from the words of the Spouse every suspicion of arrogance. What, I ask, are lilies? According to Christ they are but the "grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven." Can this Bridegroom, then, Who thus feeds on grass as if He belonged to the flocks or to the herds—can He be so very great and exalted? He does indeed belong to the flocks, for He is a Lamb; and to the herds also, because He is a "Fatted Calf." But perhaps you have been observant enough to notice that what is mentioned here is not the food itself, but rather the place of feeding. For the Bridegroom is said to feed, not on, but "among the lilies." Be it so. Therefore He does not eat grass like an ox. Nevertheless, He walks through the grass and reclines upon the grass, just as one of the common throng, and what mark of greatness can there be in that? And what glory is it to the Spouse to have for her Beloved One Who has nothing to distinguish Him from the multitude of men? Even in this, the literal sense, we can see with how much modesty, prudence and circumspection, the Spouse speaks, "ordering her words with judgment," and concealing the glory of divine things under the humble veil of common language.

Notwithstanding what her words seem to imply, she is very far from ignorant

that He Whom she represents as feeding amongst the lilies is the Same Who, as Shepherd, provides food for the flock, and that He Who abides amid the fields, is one with Him Who reigns beyond the stars. But she finds greater pleasure in speaking of what appears lowly in her Bridegroom, no doubt, as I have observed before, on account of her love for humility; but also, and more especially, because it was then He became her Beloved when He began to feed as one of the flock. And His beginning to feed was not only the time, but it was also the cause of His becoming her Beloved. For in His glory and sublimity He is her Lord, but her Beloved in His humility; He rules as King beyond the sky, but loves as a Bridegroom amongst the lilies. Even whilst throned above the firmament, He loved her still, for, being Love Itself, He can never and nowhere cease from loving. Yet until He came down to the lilies, until He was found feeding amongst the lilies, His affection was not reciprocated, He was not a Beloved. What? Was He not loved by the patriarchs and prophets? Certainly He was. But not before they also had found Him in their prescience feeding among the lilies. For evidently they must have seen Him of Whom they had foresight in the spirit, unless we be so stupid as to suppose that they who see in the Spirit see nothing at all. But if they see nothing why are they called seers, a name given to the prophets in Holy Scripture? It was in consequence of this spiritual foresight that they desired to see Him also in the way in which they have not seen Him. For surely they could not have even entertained the desire to see Him in the flesh if they had not already foreseen Him in the Spirit. But I ask with St. Paul, “Were all prophets?” As if forsooth all had the desire to see Christ in the flesh or as if all had the faith. They indeed who foresaw Him in the Spirit were either prophets themselves, or believers in the words of the prophets, and their faith was their foresight. For I do not consider it an error to suppose that they who see by faith see in the Spirit as well as those who see by the prophetic faculty.

In this way, then, it was His coming down to the lilies and the humility which He showed in deigning to feed among the lilies as if He were but one of the flock, whereas He was the Shepherd of all,—it was these acts of condescension, I say, which caused Him to be beloved. For how could He have been loved until He had made Himself known? Very properly, therefore, does the Spouse, in making mention of her Beloved, refer also to that condescension to which she owes both her knowledge and her love of Him. As regards the feeding among the lilies, it is to be “spiritually examined.” To conceive of it in a material sense would be altogether absurd. It is also incumbent on me to explain, as well as I can, what are these spiritual lilies. And furthermore I shall have to show you

what it is which the Beloved feeds on among the lilies, whether it be the lilies themselves, or some other herbs or flowers concealed amongst the lilies. The difficulty I find in grappling with these questions is to understand why He is represented rather as feeding like one of the flocks than as pasturing the flock like the Shepherd. For that He pastures His flock is evident enough, and quite in keeping with His dignity. But to feed like a sheep is a thing so unworthy, so suggestive of weakness, that it seems hardly possible, without irreverence, to ascribe such an action to the Majesty of God, even in a spiritual sense. Nor do I remember to have noticed any other verse of this Canticle, so far as we have gone, where the Beloved is described as feeding with the sheep; although I have a recollection, as doubtless you have also, of a passage wherein He appears as the Shepherd pasturing His flock. I allude to the place in which the Spouse desires to be shown where He feeds His flock and reposes in the noonday. But here, for the first time, she speaks of Him as feeding Himself, and does not ask, as on the former occasion, to have pointed out to her His place of pasturage. Rather she herself gives us this information, telling us that He "feedeth among the lilies." She knows therefore where He reveals Himself as one of the flock, but not where He appears as the Shepherd. For it is not so easy to attain to objects high in themselves and placed on high, as to such as are low and lying on the earth. The knowledge of where the Shepherd abides is something sublime and sublimely situated, to which not even the Spouse has been yet given free access.

Therefore, my brethren, He Who is the Shepherd of the whole flock, emptied Himself even to the extent of feeding like one of His own sheep; He was found among the lilies; He was seen by the Church; by appearing needy Himself, He won the heart of His needy Spouse; and He became her Beloved because He resembled her in poverty. Yet not for this alone, but also on account of His "truth and meekness, and justice." His truth in fulfilling His promises, His meekness in pardoning her sins, His justice in condemning the proud demons together with their chief. Such, therefore, has He revealed Himself in order to win the love of the Spouse, truthful by His nature, meek towards men, and just in behalf of men. O Divine Bridegroom, truly deserving of love, and worthy to be embraced with our whole heart's affection! What reason has the Church now for hesitating to entrust herself entirely and with all devotion to One so faithful to fulfil His engagements, so merciful to forgive, so righteous to defend? Before mentioning His truth, His meekness, and His justice, the Psalmist said to Him, "With Thy comeliness and Thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously." Whence

has He this comeliness and beauty? From the lilies, I have no doubt. What is more beautiful than a lily? Nothing surely. Neither can there be anything more comely than the Bridegroom. What, then, are these lilies to which He is indebted for the “loveliness of His beauty”? “Proceed prosperously and reign,” continues the Psalmist, “because of truth, and meekness, and justice.” Here you behold the spiritual lilies, lilies, I say, which have sprung up out of the earth, which glitter above the earth, which in their fragrance surpass the sweetness of aromatic spices. It is, therefore, among these lilies that the Bridegroom loves to feed, and it is certainly to them is due all His beauty and comeliness. Without the lilies, there was “neither beauty in Him nor comeliness,” as the Prophet speaks, that is to say, considered according to the weakness of the flesh.

Truth, my brethren, is a beautiful lily, resplendent in its brightness, excelling in its odour. For it is the “brightness of eternal life,” the splendour and the image of the Substance of God. Yes, it is indeed a lily, one which the earth produced after receiving the new benediction, and which it “prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to the revelation of the gentiles.” So long as the earth lay under the primeval curse, it yielded only thorns and thistles. But now, at the blessing of the Lord, “truth is sprung out of the earth,” as a most beautiful “flower of the field” and a “lily of the valleys.” You can know this lily from its brightness, which, immediately after the first appearance of the flower, dazzled in the night the eyes of the shepherds, as we read in the Gospel, “And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them.” And justly does the Evangelist say “the brightness of God,” because it was not the glory of the angel that shone through the darkness, but the glory of the lily. The angel was present to the shepherds, whereas the light of the lily was visible from Bethlehem. You may recognise the lily also from its fragrance, whereby it made itself known even to those who lived far remote. The Magi indeed beheld the star, but men of their gravity would never have followed such a guide, had they not been also attracted by the sweet odour of the new-born lily. Oh, truly a lily is truth, thus vivifying faith, with its perfume and with its splendour illuminating the mind! Turn your gaze now, my brethren, to the Person of Christ, Who says in the Gospel, “I am the truth.” And consider how close is the analogy between the truth of God and the lily of the valleys. Perhaps you have not observed it before, but let me now call your attention to the fact that from the centre of this flower there springs a number of little golden rods or filaments, which are surrounded by the petals of dazzling white, beautifully and fittingly arranged in the form of a crown. You have here symbolised the gold of Christ’s Divinity, crowned with

the purity of His Human Nature, that is to say, you have Christ Himself “in the diadem wherewith His mother hath crowned Him.” For in the diadem wherewith His Father hath crowned Him, He inhabiteth light inaccessible, and in that we cannot behold Him so long as we abide in the flesh. But of this later.

Meantime, His truth is for us a lily. But so too is His meekness. Yea, His meekness is an excellent lily, possessing the whiteness of innocence and the good odour of hope, “for there are remains for the peaceable man,” as the Psalmist says. The man of meekness is a man of strong hope, and not less is he, even here below, a luminous model of social life. Why should I not give the name of lily to a virtue which is redolent of hope and shining with charity? Moreover, if “truth is sprung out of the earth,” the same must be said of meekness. Whoso would call this in question must also doubt the earthly origin of “the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth,” the Lamb That was “led to the slaughter” and That “opened not His mouth.” But it is not alone truth and meekness that are sprung out of the earth, for justice has proceeded from the same source, according to the Prophet Isaias, who says, “Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour, and let justice spring up together.” Nor can you doubt that justice is a lily when you recall the words of Holy Scripture, “The just shall spring forth like the lily and shall flourish for ever before the Lord.” Therefore this is not the lily “which to-day is and to-morrow shall be cast into the oven,” since the lily of justice is to flourish for ever. And it “shall flourish before the Lord,” with Whom “the just shall be in everlasting remembrance, he shall not fear the evil hearing,” that evil hearing, namely, whereby the reprobate shall be commanded to go into the oven of eternal fire. Moreover, is there any soul on which the brightness of this lily does not shine, excepting indeed such as dislike it? For it is a sun, yet not that sun which is made “to rise upon the good and the bad.” Its light is certainly never seen by those who shall say, “The light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us.” They, however, have seen it, all to whom it has been said, “But unto you that fear My name, the sun of justice shall rise.” Therefore, the brightness of this lily only shines for the just; its perfume is diffused even to the wicked, but not for their advantage. Thus, we have heard one of the just declaring, “We are the good odour of Christ unto God in every place in them that are saved and in them that perish, to the one indeed an odour of death unto death, but to the others an odour of life unto life.” Who, even though he be the most abandoned of criminals, does not approve the just man’s judgment, however little he may love his way of life? But happy he

who condemns not himself in that which he approves. For he is condemned by his own judgment whosoever does not love the justice which he approves. Hence such a one evidently is miserable rather than happy, as being self-condemned. For can there be anyone more miserable than the man to whom the odour of life is a herald not of life but of death? Nay, not the herald but the bearer of death.

The Beloved, no doubt, has many more lilies besides the three which we have happened upon in the Psalmist, namely, truth, meekness, and justice. But each of you can now, without difficulty, find out others like these for himself in the garden of so luxurious a Bridegroom. He abounds and superabounds with such lilies. Who is capable of enumerating them all? For, in truth, there are as many lilies as there are virtues. But what limit or measure can the virtues have in Him Who is "Lord of virtues"? Now if the plenitude of virtues is in Christ, so too must be the plenitude of lilies. And perhaps this is the very reason why He has called Himself a lily, because, namely, He is entirely surrounded and covered all over with lilies, and everything that belongs to Him is a lily; such as His conception, His birth, His life, His speech, His miracles, His sacraments, His passion, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. Which of these is not lily-white and redolent of the lily's sweet odour? As regards His conception, so great was the brilliancy of the heavenly light which shone forth in this mystery from the abundance of the descending Spirit, that not even the holy virgin herself would have been able to endure it, had she not been overshadowed by the power of the Most High. His birth also borrowed lustre from His mother's unspotted virginity, His life from the whiteness of His innocence, His speech from the truth of His utterances, His miracles from the purity of His Heart, His sacraments from the mystery of piety which they embodied, His passion from the voluntariness of His sufferings, His death from His liberty to die or not to die, His resurrection from the fortitude of the martyrs, His ascension from the fulfilment of His promises. And how good an odour of faith from each of these lilies, perfuming even our own times and hearts, who have not witnessed their brightness! "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed." My portion in the lilies is the odour of life which proceeds from them. Using faith as a suitable instrument, I inhale that sweet perfume through my spiritual nostrils, and the more abundantly the more numerous the lilies; and thus I temper the bitterness of my banishment and at the same time am constantly renewing in my heart the love and the longing for the heavenly home-land.

Some of the companions of the Bridegroom have also their lilies, yet not in abundance. For all of them have received the Spirit in measure, and in measure

His virtues and gifts. He alone has unlimited possession to Whom the Spirit entirely belongs. It is one thing to have lilies, but quite another to have nothing except lilies. Show me, if you can, a single one amongst the sons of captivity who is so holy and innocent that he is able to cover all his land with flowers, and with such flowers. It is certain that “even the infant of one day is not without stain upon the earth.” He is reputed a great man who can grow in his garden even three or four lilies amid the prolific crop of thorns and thistles which has long occupied the ground, as the fruit of the ancient malediction. But as for me, who am so poor, I shall count myself fortunate if ever I succeed in clearing of this most vile growth of sins and passions, and rendering fit for cultivation, even so much of my little plot as may suffice for the production of a single lily. Perhaps then He who feeds among the lilies, will not disdain to feed occasionally even with me.

But I have erred, my brethren, in speaking as if one lily would suffice. Out of the poverty of my heart my mouth has spoken. One is certainly not enough. Two at the very least are required. I mean the lily of continence and the lily of innocence, of which the one without the other shall not avail to save us. It will be useless for me to invite the Bridegroom to either of them alone, because He is said to feed not on the lily but among the lilies. I will therefore strive my best to produce several lilies, lest He should take offence at the poverty of one, since He will feed only among the lilies, and so should “depart in anger from His servant.” Accordingly, I will first of all apply myself to the cultivation of the lily of innocence. If to this I shall be able to add continence of life, I shall regard myself as quite rich in the possession of lilies. But I am a very king, if only to these two I can manage to unite the third lily of patience. Absolutely speaking, innocence and continence would be sufficient. Nevertheless, since they may fail in temptation, for the “life of man upon earth is a warfare,” patience also is clearly necessary, for this is the protector of the other two. I have no doubt that if the Divine Lover of lilies comes and finds us adorned with all three, He will not now refuse to feed amongst us and to eat with us the pasch. For in the two first, namely, continence and innocence, He shall discover an abundance of sweetness, and in the third a great security. But in what sense He, Who is the Feeder of all, may be said to feed among the lilies, I shall endeavour to explain on another occasion. What I have said in the present discourse has made it clear, I hope, not only that the Bridegroom is found among the lilies, but also that He is never found away from the lilies; since everything that appertains to Him is a lily, and He is Himself the “Lily of the Valleys,” the Spouse of the Church, Jesus

Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXI

ON THE COLOUR AND ODOUR OF THE SPIRITUAL LILIES, AND ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE UNITY OF NATURE IN THE FATHER AND THE SON, AND THE UNITY OF WILL IN CREATOR AND CREATURE

"My Beloved to me, and I to Him, Who feedeth among the lilies."

The present discourse begins, my brethren, at the point where we left off in the last. The Bridegroom, as I was saying, is a lily, yet not a "lily among thorns." For He has no thorns "Who did no sin." But He has pronounced His Spouse to be a "lily among thorns"; and if even she should affirm that she has no thorns, "she deceiveth herself, and the truth is not in her." He also declares Himself to be a flower and a lily, but nowhere tells us that He is a "lily among thorns." On the contrary, He says, "I am the Flower of the field, and the Lily of the valleys." There is here no mention of thorns; because of all men He is the only one who is not obliged to exclaim with the Psalmist, "I am turned in my anguish whilst the thorn is fastened." He therefore can never be without lilies Who must ever be without sin; for He is all white and always "beautiful above the sons of men." Do thou, then, who hearest or readest what I am now saying make it thy care to grow lilies in the garden of thy soul if thou dost wish to have Him for thy Guest, Who abides only among the lilies. Let thy actions, thy aims, and thy desires proclaim themselves lilies by their spiritual whiteness and perfume. For morals, like material things, have their own colours and odours. And colour and odour are just as distinct from each other in spiritual as in material objects. Conscience is the faculty which judges of moral colours, moral odours are distinguished by fame. "You have made our savour to stink before Pharao and his servants," said the "officers of the children of Israel" to Moses and Aaron, speaking of public opinion. Actions derive their colours from a twofold source, namely, the

intention of the heart and the judgment of the conscience. Vices are coloured black, virtues white; but in order to determine which is which recourse must be had to the conscience. The word of the Lord concerning the single eye and the evil eye stands firm, because it draws a clear line of demarcation between the morally white and the morally black, and separates the light from the darkness. Therefore, whatever proceeds from a pure heart and a good conscience is to be accounted white and virtuous. If, further, it succeeds in coming into good report, it even deserves now to be called a lily, as lacking neither the colour nor the odour of a lily. For although fair fame can add nothing to the intrinsic value of virtue, it certainly enhances its brightness and beauty.

But if the intention of the mind be blemished, the same blemish shall be found in all that comes forth from it. For the branch cannot be healthy when the root is rotten. And therefore we ought not to regard as a lily whatsoever springs from a root so vitiated and inherits its corruption, whether it be action, or speech, or prayer, no matter how favourably opinion may judge of it. The lily's perfume is there indeed, but not the lily's colour. For how can that be called a lily which is discoloured with the stain of an impure intention? Fame has certainly no power to transform into virtue what is declared to be vice by the verdict of conscience. Virtue indeed can be content with the whiteness of a pure intention, even though the odour of fame should be lacking. But the perfume of good report will never be able to supply for the defect of colour in the intention. Nevertheless, the man of virtue will always make it his study, so far as depends on him, to "provide good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men," so that he may be in truth a lily.

But God's forgiveness is also a whiteness of the soul. Hence He says Himself, by His Prophet Isaias, "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool." There is yet another spiritual whiteness, that, namely, which shines in the soul of the man, who shows mercy with cheerfulness. For if you observe him whom the Psalmist describes as an "acceptable man that sheweth mercy and lendeth," does it not seem to you that the very joyousness of his heart has impressed what I may call the splendour of piety on the features of his face, yea, and on the work of his hands? Just as, on the contrary, when one renders a service with sadness and, as it were, by compulsion, there appears both on his action and on his countenance, not a bright, but a black colour. And therefore the Apostle tells us that "God loveth a cheerful giver." Perhaps He also loves the man who gives with sadness? Certainly not, for the Lord, who "had respect to Abel" on account of the

brightness of his good will, turned away His eyes from Cain, because “his countenance had fallen,” as the effect, no doubt, of gloominess and jealousy. Consider here, my brethren, how repulsive must be the colour of melancholy and sadness, since God is thus obliged to avert from it His Face. How the brightness of a cheerful heart enhances the value of a benefit is thus beautifully and elegantly expressed by the poet:—

“The kindly look in worth outweighs
Whatever gift the hand conveys.”

Nor is it only the “cheerful giver” whom “God loveth,” He also loveth him “that giveth with simplicity.” For simplicity is another species of spiritual whiteness. This can be proved from its contrary, because duplicity is a blemish. Indeed it would be more correct to call it a black stain. For in reality what difference is there between duplicity and deceit? Now of the deceitful man the Psalmist says, “In His sight he hath done deceitfully, that his iniquity may be found unto hatred.” And therefore, as the same Prophet declares, “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” The Lord Himself, in a few words, comprehends very beautifully the two stains of deceit and sadness, when He says, “Be not as the hypocrites, sad.” The Bridegroom, consequently, as being the “Virtue of God” finds His delight in the virtues; and as being the “Lily of the valleys,” loves to feed among the lilies; and as being the “Brightness of eternal life,” seeks His pleasure in bright souls.

Perhaps, therefore, when the Spouse speaks of her Beloved as feeding among the lilies, she only wishes to inform us how greatly He is pleased with the whiteness and the fragrance of the virtues. Of old, it is true, He used to “feed among the lilies,” even corporally, whilst He reclined at table and took corporal food with Mary and Martha (who were undoubtedly lilies) and at the same time refreshed His Spirit with the devotion and the virtues of these saintly women. Had some prophet come into the room at such a time, or an angel, or any spiritually-minded person, provided he could recognise the Majesty of Him Who was being entertained there, would he not be stupefied at the sight of so much condescension on the part of God, and so much familiarity between Him and the two sisters, holy indeed in soul and body, but still of the earth and of the weaker sex? And would he not have reason to testify and to say, “I have seen the Bridegroom, not only dwelling, but actually feeding among the lilies”? In this way, therefore, the Beloved has been found feeding among the lilies in both senses, I mean, according to the flesh and according to the spirit. It seems to me that He also fed the lilies in return, but spiritually. Surely He could not have

been fed by them unless they at the same time were being fed by Him. Oh, how He consoled their timidity! How He rejoiced their humility! How He enriched and enlivened their devotion! This makes it plain to you that for Him to be fed is to feed. But consider now if the converse be not equally true, namely, that for Him to feed is to be fed. “God that feedeth me from my youth until this day,” says the holy Patriarch Jacob. Kind Father of the family, Who has solicitous care for the members of His household, especially in the evil days, feeding them in their hunger, providing them with the “bread of life and understanding,” and so nourishing them unto immortal vigour! But I have no doubt that in feeding them He also feeds Himself. For the food which He most “gladly eateth” is our progress in virtue. Hence the Prophet declares, “The joy of the Lord is our strength.”

It is thus, my brethren, that the Bridegroom feeds Himself by feeding us, and feeds us by feeding Himself; because, namely, whilst He replenishes our souls with spiritual gladness, He at the same time finds pleasure for Himself in our advancement towards perfection. My penitence is His food, my salvation is His food, yea, I myself am His food. In the words of the Psalmist, does He not “eat ashes like bread”? But I am ashes, because I am a sinner, and therefore am I eaten by Him. I am masticated when I am reproved; I am swallowed when I am instructed; I am undergoing decomposition in the stomach when I begin to change my life; I am digested when I am transformed into His image; I am assimilated when I am conformed to His will. “Wonder not at this,” my brethren. The Bridegroom both feeds us and is fed by us in order to unite us the more closely to Himself. Without such reciprocity of relation we should not be perfectly one with Him. For were I to feed on Him whilst He did not feed on me, He, just as now, would appear to be in me, yet I should not truly be in Him. On the other hand, if He were to feed on me without my feeding on Him, I could not be said to have Him in myself, although He would still contain me. Thus in neither of these two cases would there be perfect union between us. Therefore, let Him feed on me, so that I may be in Him; and, conversely, let me feed on Him, so that He may be in me. In this way we shall be fully and firmly united to each other, He abiding in me and I in Him.

Do you wish me, my brethren, to illustrate what I have been saying by an example? Then lift up your eyes to an instance of unity far more sublime, yet similar to this, the unity of the Word with His Father. Now if the Bridegroom were in the Father in such a manner that the Father would not be likewise in Him, or if the Father were in the Bridegroom in such a manner that the

Bridegroom would not be likewise in Him,—I make bold to say it, Their union would come short of perfection, if indeed it deserved to be called union at all. As it is, however, the Word is in the Father, and the Father in the Word. Therefore, the union between Them is in all respects perfect, and the Father and the Word are truly and entirely one. In this way, then, the soul for whom "it is good to adhere to her God," must not consider herself perfectly united to Him, until she has perceived that He abides in her and she in Him. Not that she can say, even then, that she is one with God in the same sense in which the Father and the Word are one; although the Apostle assures us that "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Thus we have Scriptural authority for the union of spirit between God and the soul, but not for any unity of nature. I speak not of myself, who am only a sinner, but no creature whatever, whether of earth or of heaven, unless one who has taken leave of his senses, will dare to usurp the words of the Only-Begotten and presume to say, "I and the Father are one." On the other hand, dust and ashes though I be, nevertheless, relying on the testimony of Scripture, I should feel not the slightest hesitation in claiming to be one spirit with God, if only I were convinced by indubitable evidence that I adhered to Him, like one of those who abide in charity, and consequently abide in God and have God abiding in them; because they feed on God and God feeds on them. It is to this kind of union the Apostle refers, as I think, when he says, "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." What then? The Word says, "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me," also, "I and the Father are one," that is, one Nature. Man's claim is less: "I am in God and God is in me, and we are one spirit."

But surely the Father and the Son have not to feed on Each Other in order to comprehend Each Other and thus coalesce in a unity of nature; just as Creator and creature assimilate each other by a species of mutual "manducation," and are thereby rendered one, not indeed in nature, but one in spirit. Far be such a thought from us, my brethren! For the mutual circuminsession of Father and Son is very different from the mutual indwelling of God and His creature; as also the unity which results in the one case is infinitely more perfect than that realised in the other.

This distinction of unions is indicated to us by the diversity of gender in unus, the masculine, and unum, the neuter. For the Father and the Word are not so one that they can be called unus, nor are God and man so one as that we may speak of them as unum. "Give occasion to a wise man and wisdom shall be added to him"; and so you, if you be wise, will take this occasion to increase in wisdom. For you may prudently observe that in the first comparison the neuter unum

signifies a unity of substance or nature, whilst in the second the masculine form unus, still expresses unity, but only a unity of spirit, entirely different from the other. That is to say, God and man, although “one spirit,” have nevertheless their own distinct natures and essences, whereas the Father and the Son, as you know, are in nature absolutely identified. You see, then, my brethren, that the relation between Creator and creature does not even deserve the name of unity when compared with the unique and sovereign unity between the Divine Persons. For how can you have unity there, where there is plurality of natures, distinction of substances? Nevertheless, the soul that is “joined to the Lord” is called and is truly “one spirit” with Him. Distinction of substances is no obstacle to unity of this kind, which results, not from a confusion of natures, but rather from a conformity of wills. It is in the same sense that many hearts are said to be one heart, and many souls one soul, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, “The multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul.” Therefore we have unity of spirit where we have conformity of wills.

But what shall I say of that substantial or essential unity of one Divine Person with Another, which does not arise from the coalescence of distinct elements, but has subsisted from all eternity? It is evidently not the effect of any kind of mutual manducation, like the spiritual oneness of God with the soul, because it is not an effect at all. It simply is. It is neither a unity of aggregation, nor a unity of composition, nor any other species of unity which cannot be called simply and absolutely one. And not alone have the Father and Son the same Existence, the same Nature, and the same Will, but it is equally true that in Them Existence, Nature, and Will are one and the same thing. For as regards the Divine Persons, there is no distinction whatever between existence and nature, or between will or volition and existence and nature. Therefore we may not say that the unity whereby the Father and the Word are one, results from a confusion of natures, or existences, or wills, because there is no such plurality of elements. Indeed we must not represent it as a product at all, for it simply and eternally is. It is not a result in the Nature of God, but belongs to that Nature essentially. The Father and the Son abide Each in the Other in an ineffable, yea, in an incomprehensible manner, as reciprocally Contained and Container. Nevertheless, They contain without dividing, just as, conversely, They are contained without division. Accordingly the Church sings in her Office,

“The Father holds the Word entire
As whole the Son contains His Sire.”

The Father is in the Son, in Whom He is always well pleased. The Son is in

the Father, from Whom He can never be separated, as He can never cease to be generated. Moreover, it is by charity that God is in man and man in God, according to the testimony of St. John, who says, “He that abideth in charity, abideth in God and God in him.” This union is a union of conformity, uniting God and man in one spirit, or rather making them one spirit. But do you not recognise the distinction between it and the substantial unity of the Divine Persons? Surely unity of essence cannot be the same thing as unity or conformity of wills. I have already called your attention to the manner in which this diversity of unity is signified by the grammatical distinction between unus and unum, how the unity of Father with Son cannot be expressed by the masculine form, unus, nor the unity of God and the soul by the neuter, unum. The Father and the Word are not so one that They can be called unus, because the Father and the Son are not one but two really distinct Persons. Yet They can be called and truly are unum, inasmuch as They have not Each His own but one common Nature or Substance. The case is quite contrary as between God and the soul. For their union is not a unity of nature but of will. Therefore they may not be described as one thing (unum), although they can be said with truth to be one spirit (unus), that is to say, if they are really bound to each other by the bonds of love. But such a unity is produced, as observed before, by conformity of wills, not by any confusion of essences.

From what I have said you understand, I think, not only the distinction but also the inequality of these unities, one of which is the unity of a single simple Essence, the other the aggregative unity of many distinct essences. What indeed can be more unequal than the unity of one and the unity of many? The different forms of the numeral, unus and unum, as I have said more than once, enable us to mark this diversity; because whilst unum expresses the identity of Essence in the Father and the Son, unus designates a unity, not of nature, but of will and affection, between God and His creature. Nevertheless, the Father and the Son may also be called unus consistently with truth, provided the numeral is used with a substantive. For instance, we may say that the Persons are one (unus) God, one Lord, and so with every other attribute which is absolute and common to all Three, not relative and proper to One. The reason of this is, because They have not Each His own Divinity, or Each His own Majesty, any more than They have Each His own Nature or Essence. For all such things are not distinct or divided, but one and the same in Them, I should rather have said one and the same with Them. What is that unity, my brethren, according to which many hearts, as we read, become one heart, and many souls one soul? To my mind it

appears even unworthy of the name of unity, as compared with this, which, instead of combining distinct entities, singularly seals the indistinction of one. Singular therefore and sovereign is the unity of the Divine Persons, since it is not constituted by any combination of distinct elements, but has subsisted from everlasting. It has not been formed by the mutual spiritual feeding on Each Other of Father and Son, because it never had a beginning. It is something self-subsisting. Much less is it to be considered a conjunction of different essences or a harmony of different wills, since there is no such plurality of essences or wills. The Divine Persons, as already remarked, have but one Essence and but one Will. And surely there can be no question of harmony, or conjunction, or composition, or of any other kind of unity presupposing a distinction of parts, where you have only a single object. For conformity of wills at least two wills are required. Similarly, there must be at least two distinct essences for an essential conjunction or coalition. Therefore we must look for neither of these modes of unity in the Father and the Son, because They have one and the same Essence, one and the same Will. Both Essence and Will are one in Them, or rather—to repeat myself—Essence and Will are not only one thing in the Persons, but they are also one thing with the Persons. Consequently the Father and the Son are really and absolutely one, abiding Each in the Other as incomprehensibly as unchangeably. Nevertheless, if anyone thinks proper to maintain that there is a conformity between the Father and the Son, I will not contradict him, provided he means by this conformity, not a union of distinct wills, but the unity of a single Will.

But as regards God and the soul, since they subsist and are distinguished with their own proper wills and essences, we must hold that their mutual indwelling is entirely different from the divine circuminsession, and results not from a commingling of natures but from a concord of wills. The unity between them, therefore, is nothing more than the union of wills, the union of charity. It is a blissful unity to experience in oneself, yet unworthy to be called unity, if compared to the unity of the Divine Persons. The Psalmist knew by experience what this unity was when he exclaimed, “It is good for me to adhere to my God.” Yea, very good, provided I adhere to Him perfectly. But where is the man that perfectly adheres to his God, unless it is he who, abiding in God as being loved by God, at the same time draws God into himself by loving Him in return? When, therefore, God and man are completely united to each other, as they are in truth by being incorporated in each other, so to speak, by a perfect, intimate, and mutual love, then I shall have no hesitation in affirming that God abides in

man and man in God. Man, however, has abode in God from everlasting, because from everlasting he has been loved by God,—if yet he be one of those who can say with the Apostle, “He hath loved and graced us in His beloved Son before the foundation of the world”; whilst God only begins to abide in man at the moment when He begins to be loved by man. If such is the case, it follows necessarily that man may abide in God even when God does not abide in man. But God does not abide in any man who does not abide in Him. For if a man is not loved of God with the love of election, he may indeed love God for a time, but certainly he cannot abide in love. On the other hand, it is possible for one to be loved of God without as yet loving Him in return. Otherwise how can it be true what the Evangelist says, “He hath first loved us”? But when he who has been prevented by love begins at last to reciprocate that love, then, I say, man abides in God and God in man. But as for him who never loves God, it is manifest that he is never loved by God. Consequently, he never abides in God nor God in him. I have spoken all this with the purpose of demonstrating the difference between the unity whereby the Father and the Word are one in Nature, and that which makes God and the soul that is joined to Him one spirit. For if this distinction is not borne in mind, we shall be in danger of regarding the prerogative of the adoptive son as equal to that of the Only-Begotten; because, just as we read of the Word that He is in the Father and the Father in Him, so likewise is it written of the man who abides in charity, that “he abideth in God and God in him.”

Having said all I wanted to say on this subject, I must now return to Him “Who feedeth among the lilies,” because it was this feeding that occasioned the digression which has led me so far out of my course. As to whether or not the digression was necessary, it is for you, my brethren, to decide. I have already proposed for your consideration two expositions of this passage. I have interpreted the feeding among the lilies to mean either that the Beloved, as being the “Virtue of God,” and the “Splendour of His glory,” finds His delight in the virtues of the innocent: or that in His mystical body, which is the Church, He receives sinners to pardon, to incorporate whom in Himself “He was made sin” although “He made no sin”; so “that the body of sin might be destroyed,” in which by their sins they were once “planted together,” and that from sinners they might be rendered righteous, “being justified freely by His grace.”

I shall now submit to your judgment yet another interpretation, which has suggested itself to my mind. It explains the text satisfactorily, I think, and shall also serve to bring this discourse to a conclusion. The Word of God is Truth, He

is also the Bridegroom. You are aware of this. Now attend to what follows. When this Word is heard but not heeded, He remains empty and hungry, as it were, and becomes very sad and querulous, for that He has been uttered to no profit or advantage. On the other hand, let compliance be yielded, and now does He not seem to you to have grown, in a certain sense, large and corpulent, as if He had fed Himself full on the fruits of obedience and the produce of justice, because hearing has been followed by action? Hence we hear Him in the Apocalypse saying to us, “Behold I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear My voice and open to Me the door, I will come unto him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” This interpretation is also supported, as it seems, by the words of the Lord, where He says through His Prophet Isaias, speaking of the Eternal Word, “My Word, Which shall go forth from My Mouth, shall not return to Me void, but It shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent It.” Mark the expression, “It shall not return to Me void.” As if He should say, “My Word shall not return to Me hungry, but, prospering in all things, He shall be filled with the virtuous actions of those who will obey Him from love.” Even in ordinary human speech, our words are then said to be fulfilled (impletus) when they have been united to action. As if it were intended to imply that so long as they remain unwedded to deeds, they are empty and lean, and, in a sense, suffering from hunger.

But listen to the Divine Word Himself telling us with what kind of food He is nourished. “My meat,” He says, “is to do the will of Him That sent Me.” Here, my brethren, you have the word of the Word plainly indicating that good works are His food, if yet He can find them among the lilies, that is to say, among the virtues. For He Who only “feedeth among the lilies” of the virtues, will not so much as touch any food He may discover apart from them, no matter how good it appears. Thus, for instance, He will not accept an alms-deed from the hand of the robber or the usurer, no, nor even from the hand of the hypocrite, who causes the trumpet to sound before him, whenever he gives an alms, “that he may be honoured by men.” Neither will He ever hear the prayer of them “who love to pray in the corners of the streets that they may be seen by men.” For the prayer of the transgressor “shall be an abomination” to Him. Vainly also dost “thou offer thy gift at the altar” if “thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee.” The Lord had no regard for the offerings of Cain. Why? Because he walked not blamelessly with his brother. According to the testimony of the holy Prophet Isaias, He abominates the Sabbath, and the new moons, and the sacrifices of the Jews. He even protests openly that His “soul hateth” them; and

He asks, “When you came before Me, who required these things at your hands?” In my opinion their hands did not smell of the lilies, and therefore He “Who feedeth among the lilies,” and not among the thorns, refused to accept any gifts from them. Why should I not say that their hands were rather bristling with thorns than covered with lilies, the hands of them to whom the same Prophet addressed the reproach, “Your hands are full of blood”? The hands of Esau were hairy (pilosae) as we read, and so hairy that they appeared thorny (spinosae). Hence he was not admitted to minister before the Holy One.

I am afraid that even amongst ourselves, my brethren, there are some whose gifts the Bridegroom does not accept, because they are not redolent of the lilies. For if “in the day of your fast your own will is found,” such a fast cannot be acceptable to the Bridegroom, such a fast can give Him no pleasure, inasmuch as it savours not of the lily of obedience, but rather of the vice of self-love. And I believe that this remark will apply not alone to our fasting, but equally to our silence, to our watching, to our prayer, to our lecture, to our manual labour, in short, to all our monastic observances, if our own will be found in them, instead of obedience to the will of our superior. These exercises although good in themselves, yet, as the fruit of self-will, seem to me altogether unworthy of being reckoned among the lilies, that is to say, among the virtues. And he that performs them thus shall hear from the Prophet, as the Jews of old, “Is this such a service as I have chosen? saith the Lord”; and this also, “In the day of thy good works thine own will was found.” How great an evil, then, must self-will be, seeing that it makes your good works not good for you! It is therefore necessary that these good works should be likewise lilies, because He “Who feedeth among the lilies” will taste nothing that has been defiled with self-will. For He is Wisdom that “reacheth everywhere by reason of her purity, and no defiled thing cometh into her.” Therefore the Bridegroom loves to feed among the lilies, that is, among hearts that are clean and pure. But how long will He feed? “Till the day break and the shadows retire.” We have now come to a dense and shady wood, dark with the depth of its mystery. Let us wait for the clear daylight before we attempt to enter. For whilst I have been discoursing at greater length than usual, lo! the day has declined, and against our will we are compelled to leave the lilies. For myself, I am not conscious of the least fatigue after speaking so long, because the fragrance of the flowers has prevented any feeling of lassitude. Only a little more remains of the verse I am at present treating. Yet this little is pregnant with profundity of meaning, as indeed is the case with every part of this Canticle. But He Who alone can reveal mysteries, will answer

to us, as I hope, when we begin to knock, and will not close the mouths of those that invoke His aid; for to open the mouths which are shut is more the custom of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXII

ON THE SPIRITUAL LIGHTS AND SHADOWS, DAYS AND NIGHTS

> "My Beloved to me, and I to Him Who feedeth among the lilies, till the day break and the shadows retire."

"My Beloved to me, and I to Him Who feedeth among the lilies, till the day break and the shadows retire." Only the two last clauses of this text remain to be discussed. But at the very outset I find myself confronted with a difficulty regarding them. With which of the foregoing are they to be connected? For they can make sense in two different relations. I may either treat the relative clause, "Who feedeth among the lilies," as a parenthesis, and read, "My Beloved to Me, and I to Him, till the day break and the shadows retire"; or I may consider the temporal clauses as depending on the relative, so that the sentence will run, "My Beloved to me, and I to Him, Who feedeth among the lilies till the day break and the shadows retire." Taken in either way, the words yield an intelligible and an appropriate meaning. There is this difference, however: in the first connexion, the word "till" has to be understood in an inclusive sense; in the second, in an exclusive. For even though the Bridegroom should cease to feed among the lilies when the day breaks, surely He will not likewise cease to attend to His Bride nor His Bride to Him. God forbid. Throughout eternity they will continue to regard each other only with greater delight, because with greater intensity and with greater intensity because with greater perfection of liberty. Therefore, according to the first way of construing, the word "till" must here be taken in the same signification in which St. Matthew employs it, where he says that "he (Joseph) knew her (Mary) not, till she brought forth her first-born Son"—which, as is clear, cannot be understood in an exclusive sense. We find the same word used with the same meaning in one of the psalms, "Our eyes are unto the Lord our God, until He have mercy on us." Surely the Psalmist does not intend to imply that we shall turn our eyes away from the Lord as soon as He begins to show

mercy. The Saviour Himself also makes use of a similar expression in the same inclusive sense, when He says to His apostles, “Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.” For He does not mean that He will thereafter be no longer with them. Thus, I say, the word “till” has to be taken if we choose to connect it immediately with the first part of the verse, “My Beloved to me, and I to Him.” But it must be understood exclusively if we would rather refer it to the relative clause, “Who feedeth among the lilies.” Yet even in this case it may well appear no easy task to explain how the Beloved will cease to feed among the lilies when the day breaks. For if the day here in question is the day of the general resurrection, does it not seem as if He would then take all the greater delight in feeding among the lilies, for the reason that He would find them in much greater abundance? These remarks are enough on the subject of the literal sequence.

Observe now, my brethren, that after the resurrection, although His whole kingdom shall then shine with lilies, and although the Bridegroom Himself will dwell and take His delight among them, nevertheless it cannot be said with truth that He will any longer feed among them, as He was wont to do in the aforetime. For where then shall you find the sinners whom Christ may incorporate and assimilate to Himself, grinding and masticating them with the teeth of sharp discipline (if I may be allowed the expression), that is to say, by affliction of the flesh and compunction of heart? Neither will He, Who is the Word of God and the Bridegroom of souls, seek nourishment for Himself there in the acts and the works of obedience, where nothing shall be found but universal repose, uninterrupted love and contemplation. His food indeed is to do the will of His Father. But this is true only of the present life, not also of the future. Wherefore should He do what has already been accomplished? Now it is certain that the will of God shall then have been accomplished and made perfect. For then it shall be the joy of all the saints to “prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.” And surely after perfection has been reached, nothing more can remain to be done. Thenceforward the will of God shall be a source of enjoyment, not a duty to be fulfilled; a delight to be experienced, not a task to be accomplished; a fountain of life, not a rule of conduct. Is not this the will which, taught by Christ Himself, we ask with most earnest entreaty should “be done on earth as it is in heaven,” where even now its fruits give enjoyment and its fulfilment no fatigue? Therefore the Word and Bridegroom can there find no works to feed on, where all work must necessarily cease, and where wisdom is more abundantly communicated to all. For it is written, “He that is less in

action shall receive wisdom."

But now let us see if what I have been saying, namely, that the Bridegroom will no longer feed among the lilies after the general resurrection, can also be maintained consistently with the view of those according to whom to feed among the lilies means to take delight in the beauty of the virtues. I have referred to this interpretation amongst others in the preceding sermon. Are we therefore to suppose that then there shall be no virtues at all? Or that the Bridegroom will take no pleasure in them? It would be the height of absurdity to entertain either belief. But consider whether His future mode of delighting in the virtues may not be different from His present. That He will truly delight in them cannot be doubted; but perhaps it will be in some way more analogous to drinking than to eating. Certainly in this life and in this body, no human virtue can be found so thoroughly defecated, none so sweet and pure, as to be fit for the Bridegroom to drink. But He "Who will have all men to be saved," overlooks many imperfections, and the virtue which He cannot as yet swallow down with ease, so to speak, and as it were by the act of drinking, He grinds and chews with method and labour, if even thus He may obtain from it some little relish. A time will come when that virtue shall be perfectly purified, when it shall not require to be pressed between the teeth and laboriously masticated, when it shall not give Him Who partakes of it the trouble of grinding it, but shall rather delight without wearying Him; because He shall drink it as liquid, not eat it like solid food. Indeed He Himself tells us this in the Gospel, when He says, "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of My Father." Observe how He makes no mention of eating in that kingdom. The Psalmist also refers to His drinking, comparing Him to "a mighty man that hath been surfeited with wine." But neither does he say anything about His eating. The Spouse, therefore, conscious of this mystery, after discovering and proclaiming that her Beloved feeds among the lilies, appoints, or rather acknowledges and announces as already appointed, the limit of the period during which He will vouchsafe so to feed, in the words, "until the day break and the shadows retire." That is to say, she is well aware that thereafter her Beloved will delight in the virtues rather by drinking than by eating them. This is likewise the custom with men who are wont to take drink after solid food. Therefore the Bridegroom, Who feeds on our virtues as on edibles in the present life, will drink of them in the life to come, and with the greater delight, because with greater security. He will then be able to swallow down with facility what He cannot take now without first dissolving it by a

process of diligent and toilsome manducation.

We have next to apply our minds to a consideration of the day and the shadows mentioned by the Spouse. What is that day? What are these shadows? Why is the day said to “aspire”? By what power are the shadows made to incline? For she says, with deliberate explicitness, “Till the day aspire and the shadows be inclined.” And not alone explicitly, but singularly also, because, unless I am deceived, this is the only place where you will find the day represented as aspiring. To aspire is to breathe towards. Now winds are said to breathe, but never days. Man also breathes, and so do all the irrational animals; indeed it is by the uninterrupted alternation of inhaling and exhaling the air that they preserve their lives. And how does this motion of the air in respiration differ from wind? The Holy Spirit likewise breathes; and the very name of spirit is derived from the act of breathing (spiritus, spirans). But in what sense can a day be said to breathe, since it is neither a wind, nor an animal, nor a spirit? And yet the Spouse speaks of it not only as breathing, but—which is more significant—as breathing towards something, that is, aspiring. Not less unusual is the expression, “Till the shadows be inclined.” For at the rise of this corporeal and visible sun above us, the shadows are annihilated rather than inclined. Consequently we have to seek for the objects referred to here outside the material universe. And if we succeed in discovering a spiritual day and spiritual shadows, then perhaps the aspiring of the former and the inclining of the latter shall become more clearly intelligible. Now if there be anyone who regards as something corporeal that day whereof the Psalmist sings, “Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands,” I know not what such a person would call incorporeal. There is also a day of evil import, that, namely, which was cursed by the Prophets, Job and Jeremias. But God forbid that we should believe it to be one of the days “which the Lord hath made”! It must therefore be a spiritual day.

To come now to the shadow, who doubts that it was a spiritual shadow which overshadowed Mary at the moment when she conceived the Saviour? And who doubts that it is of a spiritual shadow the Prophet Jeremias is speaking where he says, “A Spirit before our face (is) Christ the Lord, under His shadow we shall live among the gentiles”? But in my opinion the Spouse in this place designates by the name of shadows the “opposing powers,” who are not only shadows but even darkness, nay, “the princes of this darkness,” as they are called by the Apostle; and with these wicked angels are included those of our own race who adhere to them, the sons, not of the day, nor of the light, but of the night and the darkness. For, as is evident, these shadows shall not entirely vanish away

immediately that the day aspires or breaks, just as we see the corporeal shadows not only departing but utterly annihilated before the face of the rising corporeal sun. But if the spiritual shadows shall not be reduced in the same way to nothingness, they shall certainly be brought to a condition more miserable than nothingness. They shall continue in existence, but as “inclined,” that is to say, as broken and beaten. “He will incline himself and fall, when he shall have power over the poor,” says the Royal Prophet, speaking no doubt of the prince of darkness. Therefore their nature shall not be destroyed, but they shall lose their capacity for evil; their substance shall remain, but their power shall pass away with the power of darkness. They shall be “taken away lest they should see the glory of God.” They shall be preserved from annihilation, but only to burn for ever in the fires of hell. Surely these spiritual shadows shall then be inclined, when the mighty shall be put down from their seats and made a footstool for the just. And these things, my brethren, “must shortly come to pass.” We are now in “the last hour”; “the night is passed and the day is at hand.” And when the day shall “aspire,” the night must expire. That night is the devil; that night is the “angel of Satan” who “transformeth himself into an angel of light”; that night is Antichrist, “whom the Lord Jesus shall kill with the Spirit of His Mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” As for the day, what can that be but the Lord Himself? Yes, He is manifestly the Day, bright and “aspiring,” Who by the Spirit of His Mouth shall put the shadows to flight, and shall destroy the diabolical spectres “with the brightness of His coming.” But some of you may prefer to take the word “incline” more simply, and to suppose that the inclination of the shadows means their annihilation. According to this view, lest it should be thought that we are not taking account of every interpretation—according to this view, I say, the shadows should be considered as designating the figures and mysteries of Holy Scripture, also the specious utterances, and the verbal quibbling, and the involved arguments of the sophists, because by all these things, as by shadows, the light of truth is at present prevented from shining fully upon our souls. For now “we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away.”

I should now have said enough on the verse under discussion, had the Spouse represented the day as “breathing” and not as “breathing towards,” that is, as “aspiring”. But on account of such addition, small though it be, I think it necessary to offer some further remarks, which may help to explain her selection of the word “aspiring.” For I confess that it has long been my conviction, that, in

the text of Sacred Scripture, so holy and precious, not a single jot or tittle is without its special significance. With regard to the expression “aspiring,” we use it whenever we want to signify a particularly ardent desire of someone for something. For example, we say that such a person aspires to such an honour or to such a dignity. In this place, therefore, the word is employed to indicate the marvellous abundance and vehemence of the Spirit reserved for that future day, when not alone our minds but our bodies too, though in a different manner, shall be spiritualised; and when such of us as may be found worthy, “shall be filled with the plenty of God’s house,” and allowed to “drink of the torrent of His pleasure.”

Here is another interpretation. Already the “day of sanctification hath shone” for the holy angels, breathing and wafting to them, by the constant flux of a perpetual motion, the mellifluous secrets of the Eternal Godhead. For, as the Psalmist says, “The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful.” He refers to that city which in another place he thus addresses, “The dwelling in thee is, as it were, of all rejoicing.” But when the same “day of sanctification” shall also breathe upon us who dwell here below and shall expand its bosom, so to speak, in order to admit the children of earth, may it not then be described not only as breathing but even as breathing with labour, that is to say, as gasping or aspiring? Or again, to begin at a higher point and with a wider scope, we may consider that the inspiring day was made for us when, having “formed man of the slime of the earth,” the Creator “breathed (inspiravit) into his face the breath of life.” But alas! the devil, as an envious night, invaded with a simulated brightness that first day of inspiration and innocence; and promising a more resplendent light of knowledge, dimmed on a sudden the light of God with the darkness of evil counsel, and overcast the very dawn of our existence with the black cloud of woful prevarication. Alas for our first parents! “They have not known nor understood; they walked in darkness,” says the Psalmist, “and put darkness for light and light for darkness,” adds the Prophet Isaias. For the woman ate of the fruit, which the serpent offered her but which God hath forbidden her; she also gave it to her husband. Then a new day, as it were, began to dawn upon them, and immediately “the eyes of them both were opened.” Thus was formed the conspiring day, bringing to a close the inspiring day, and introducing in its place the expiring day. For the serpent’s craft and the woman’s persuasiveness and her husband’s weakness met and conspired together “against the Lord and against His Christ.” Hence They, viz., the Father and the Son, said to Each Other, “Behold Adam is become as one of Us,” because to the injury of

Them Both he had consented to the sinners that flattered him. It is in this conspiring day, my brethren, that we have all been born. For we all bear branded upon our souls the impress of that primeval conspiracy. Eve is still living in our flesh; and by means of the concupiscence inherited from her, the serpent, with tireless solicitude, endeavours to make us participants in his own rebellion. It is because of this that holy men have cursed the conspiring day (as I have already mentioned), praying that it would be short and be quickly changed into darkness; because it is a day of contention and contradiction, during which "the flesh lusteth (unceasingly) against the spirit," and the "law of our members" is found "contradicting the law of our minds" with a constant and unwearying opposition. Thus the conspiring day has become an expiring day. From that time forward it could be asked, "Who is the man that shall live and not see death?" Others may think that this universality of death is exclusively an effect of anger. But to me it seems to be also and equally ascribable to mercy, lest otherwise the elect, for whose sake all things are done, should be unable to endure the bitterness of long-continued contradiction. For they also are led captive under the law of sin, which reigns in their members; although they abhor the dishonourable servitude and the depressing strife, and submit to them most unwillingly.

Let us, then, my brethren, make haste to the day of respiration and reanimation, after that ancient and evil day of conspiracy and expiration, because "the days of man are short." Let the resipring day receive us, before the suspiring night swallows us up, and involves us in the eternal gloom of the "exterior darkness." Do you ask me in what this respiration consists? I answer that we begin to respire in a spiritual sense when the spirit in its turn begins to lust against the flesh. To fight against the flesh is to respire. You are respiring when "by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh." You have respired when you "have crucified your flesh with the vices and concupiscences." "I chastise my body," says the Apostle, "and bring it into subjection; lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." These, my brethren, are the words of one who was respiring, rather of one who had respired long before. "Go, and do thou in like manner," I say to each one of you, that you may prove yourselves to have respired, and that you may know that the inspiring day has again begun to shine upon you. Nor shall the night of death be able to conquer this returning day, because it shall shine even amidst the darkness "and the darkness (shall) not comprehend it." And so far am I from thinking that the "light of life" shall be extinguished with life itself, that I believe to none more truly than to the dead who have died in this light, may be applied the words of

the Psalmist, “And night shall be my light in my pleasures.” Why should not the soul be able to see more distinctly when she has put aside the cloud or rather the filth of the flesh which now obstructs her vision? Certainly, once her material bonds are broken, she shall be “free amongst the dead” and seeing amongst the blind. Of old, as we read, when every eye was darkened “in all the land of Egypt,” the people who had by faith the vision of God, that is to say, the people of Israel, were alone able to distinguish objects clearly in the midst of the gloom, for “wheresoever the children of Israel dwelt there was light.” In the same way, amidst the dense shades of death and amongst the sons of darkness, the just shall shine with greater glory and shall see with keener sight, because they shall have passed out of the shadow of the body. On the other hand, they who have not respired before death, who have not sought the light of the inspiring day, on whom the Sun of Justice hath never arisen, they shall pass from darkness into denser darkness. Hence, they who in this life abide in darkness shall abide in deeper darkness in the life to come; and they who live here in light shall hereafter live in greater light.

Of this intensification both of light and darkness in the world to come we may understand, and not unreasonably, the words of the Lord, where He says, “To every one that hath shall be given and he shall abound; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him.” So it is. Those who see shall obtain after death an increase of light, whereas those who do not see shall even lose the little light they may seem to possess. For in proportion as the vision of the former grows more and more clear, the blindness of the latter becomes darker and darker, until those are received into the aspiring day and these swallowed up in the suspiring night. Thus the last end for both shall be either the extreme of brightness or the extreme of darkness. When this consummation has been reached no more light shall remain to be taken from the one class, who shall be altogether empty; nor can any more be added to the other class, who shall be completely full; except indeed that the latter shall still have hope to receive in some way or other even more than a plenitude, according to the promise made to them. For the Lord has said, “Good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom.” Is it not evident to you that a measure which runs over must be more than full? But you will feel no surprise to hear of a measure being more than full, if you remember what is said in Exodus, “The Lord shall reign for ever and beyond” (in aeternum et ultra). Such therefore shall be the superabundance of the aspiring day. It shall add to the measure, full and abounding, of the inspiring day,

“working for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory,” so that the excess of glory superadded shall overflow to our bodies. This appears to be the reason why that day is called not a breathing (spirans) day, but rather an aspiring day, the Holy Ghost wishing to signify by the addition of the prefix ad (ad-spirans=aspirans) what “aspiration” superadds to “spiration” or “inspiration.” For those whom the inspiring day interiorly enlightens, are exteriorly adorned by the aspiring day, and vested with the “robe of glory”

I have now, I hope, said enough to explain what is meant by the expression “till the day aspire.” And if you wish to know, this aspiring day is nothing else but He Whom “we look for, the Saviour, Who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the Body of His glory.” He is also the inspiring day, according to the operation whereby He causes us to respire in the light which He infuses; so that we may become in Him a respiring day, whilst our “inward man is renewed from day to day,” “renewed in the Spirit of his mind” “to the image of Him Who created him,” becoming thus day of His day, and light of His light. Already, my brethren, two of the good days have dawned for us, I mean the day of inspiration, which represents the life infused into us by God at the beginning, and the day of respiration, which signifies the restoration of the spiritual life of the soul by grace and holiness; whilst the third day still remains, namely the aspiring day, which shall break upon us in the glory of the general resurrection. In this way, therefore, we shall most certainly see fulfilled in the body sometime what has been already accomplished in the Head. I speak of that “great mystery of godliness,” and the prediction of the Prophet, “He will revive us after two days; on the third He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. We shall know, and we shall follow on, that we may know the Lord” the same “on Whom the angels desire to look,” the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things God, blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXIII

ON THE FORM IN WHICH CHRIST WILL COME TO THE JUDGMENT, AND ACCORDING TO WHICH, ALTHOUGH MADE “A LITTLE LESS,” HE IS STILL SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS

“Return: be like, my Beloved, to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.”

“Return: be like, my Beloved, to a roe, or to a young hart.” What is this? It is only now He departed and dost thou beg Him to return? What unexpected event can have happened in so short a time? Has the Spouse forgotten something? Aye, she has forgotten everything which is not her Bridegroom, forgotten even herself. For though not devoid of reason, she seems to be acting now like one who has lost the use of reason. Even womanly propriety appears to be forgotten in her words, however modest may be her thoughts and feelings. This is all due to the vehemence of her love. For love is a power that conquers and renders captive to itself every sense of shame, every restriction of modesty, every counsel of reason, and induces a total disregard and neglect of all the rules of fittingness and decorum. Therefore you here behold the Spouse calling on her Beloved to come back almost as soon as He has begun to retire. And she prays Him to make haste, yea, to run like one of the beasts of the forest remarkable for their fleetness of foot, namely, “like a roe or a young hart.” Such, my brethren, is the literal sense, the portion of the Jews.

But as for me, following the counsel of the Lord, I will search for the treasures of spirit and life hidden in the profound depths of these inspired utterances. This is my inheritance, because I am a believer in Christ. Why should I not endeavour to find the wholesome and savoury food of the spirit beneath the unprofitable and unpalatable letter, as the grain amongst the chaff, the meat in the shell, or the marrow in the bone? I will have nothing to do with this letter which when tasted savours of the flesh, and when swallowed brings death. Nevertheless, that which

lies concealed in it is of the Holy Ghost, for “by the Spirit (it) speaketh mysteries,” as the Apostle bears witness. But Israel is content to hold the veil of the mysteries, instead of the mysteries themselves, which are hidden beneath. Wherefore? For no other reason than that the “veil is still upon his own heart.” Hence to him belongs the sound of the word, but the signification thereof is mine. And so whilst the Scripture in the letter ministers death to the Jew, it becomes for me a source of life in the spirit. For “it is the spirit that quickeneth,” that is, by giving understanding. Is not understanding life? “Give me understanding that I may live,” cries out the Psalmist, speaking to the Lord. Understanding does not remain outside in the letter; it does not stick fast in the surface; it is not satisfied to grope its way by the touch of exterior objects, like a blind man. Rather it explores the profound deeps, whence it is accustomed to extract and to bring up with insatiable avidity the most precious spoils of sacred truth. Hence it can say with the Psalmist, “I will rejoice at Thy words, as one that hath found great spoil.” It is thus, my brethren, that the “kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.” But that elder brother who came in from the fields, and who represented the people of the old and earthly dispensation, the people “taught to love the threshing,” groaning in misery—yet with hardened forehead—under the heavy yoke of the law, and bearing “the burden of the day and the heat”—that elder brother, I say, because he has not understanding, still stands outside and refuses to enter the banqueting-chamber even at his Father’s invitation, thereby defrauding himself, to the present hour, of a participation in the music, and the singing, and the fatted calf. Oh, what folly to be unwilling to learn from the experience “how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” These remarks will suffice to point out the difference between the portion of the Church and the portion of the Synagogue; so that the prudence of the one may be rendered more evident by contrast with blindness of the other, and the happiness of the one from the miserable infatuation of the other.

Let us now weigh attentively the words of the Spouse; and let us endeavour also to express the sentiments of holy love in such a manner that nothing in this inspired discourse shall have the least appearance of being either unreasonable, or indecorous, or inexpedient. Call to mind, therefore, that hour when the Lord Jesus was about to “pass out of this world to the Father.” Try to conceive also what were then the feelings of that domestic Church of His, the newly-wed Bride, when she saw herself on the point of being abandoned by her only hope and left as a desolate widow on the earth—I am speaking of the Apostles, who

had left all things to follow Him, and who continued with Him in His temptations. Think of these things, my brethren, and I believe it will no longer appear to you strange or incongruous that a Spouse so devoted and so deserted should show as much solicitude for her Bridegroom's return as grief for His departure. Therefore, in her love and her helplessness she found a twofold motive for urging Him at the least to hasten His return, since He could not be persuaded to remain with her and not to "ascend to where He was before." For by desiring and praying Him to make Himself like to the beasts of the forest, and to those beasts in particular which are most remarkable for agility, by this she manifests the eager longing of her soul which reckons no swiftness swift enough. And does she not daily repeat the same request when she says in the Lord's Prayer. "Thy kingdom come"?

It seems to me, however, that besides fleetness of foot the Spouse also intends to signify weakness, which is expressed by the sex of the roe and by the age of the hart. In my opinion, therefore, although she desires Him to come with power, she yet does not wish that He should appear at the judgment in the form of God, but rather in that form in which He was not only born for us, but was born for us as a little Child, and born of the weaker female sex alone. But wherefore does she ask Him to appear in this form? Because she hopes that His own weakness, and the weakness of the source whence His Human Nature is sprung, shall remind Him to have compassion in the day of His wrath, and even in the judgment itself to exalt mercy over judgment. For if He "will mark iniquities who shall stand it," even of the elect? The very stars are not pure in His sight, and in His angels He found wickedness. Listen to what one of the saints and the elect says to God, "Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin," so speaks the Psalmist, "for this shall every one that is holy pray to Thee in a seasonable time." Hence it is evident that the saints themselves have need to pray for the pardon of their sins and that it is through the divine mercy they are saved, since they place no reliance on their own justice. "For all have sinned and do need the glory—that is to say, the mercy—of God." In order, therefore, that "when He is angry He may remember mercy," the Spouse beseeches Him to appear at the judgment in the habit of mercy, in that habit to which the Apostle is alluding where he says, "And in habit found as a man."

And it is very necessary for us, my brethren, that He should thus appear. For if, even with the mellowing influence of His Humanity, so great shall be the rigour of justice at the judgment, so awful the severity of the Judge, so overwhelming His Majesty, so completely transformed the face of physical

nature, that the Prophet Malachy asks, “Who shall be able to think of the day of His coming?”—if such is to be His advent even in the form of man, what would it be, think you, were that “Consuming Fire”—I mean the Almighty God—to come in the infinite greatness and strength and purity of His Divinity, for the purpose of manifesting His power “against a leaf that is carried away with the wind,” and of “pursuing a dry straw”! He will come now in human form, and yet who shall be able to look upon Him? In the words of the Prophet, “Who shall stand to see Him?” How much less could any man endure the unapproachable splendour of His brightness, the inaccessible loftiness of His Majesty, and the incomprehensible greatness of His glory, if He exhibited to our gaze the Divine Nature unclouded by the Human! As it is, however, “when His wrath shall be kindled in a short time,” how sweet and benign, for the sake of the sons of grace, will He exhibit Himself in His Manhood, giving security to their faith, strength to their hope, and increase to their confidence! For “the grace of God and His mercy is with His saints, and He hath respect to His chosen.” And Christ Himself tells us that God the Father “hath given Him power to do judgment,—not because He is His own Son but—because He is the Son of man.” O “Father of mercies” in deed and in truth! He will have men to be judged by a Man, so that amidst such panic and confusion of evils, their community of nature with the Judge may be for the elect a source of confidence! Holy David announced this of old in prayer and prophecy, saying, “Give to the King Thy judgment, O God, and to the King’s Son Thy justice.” Nor is this contradicted but rather confirmed by the promise made at the Ascension through the angels, who thus addressed the apostles, “This Jesus Who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven,” that is to say, in the same bodily form and substance.

From what has been said it follows clearly that the Spouse is made the confidant of the divine purpose and is perfectly well acquainted with this mystery of heaven’s will. Therefore, using the figure of weak and inoffensive animals, she proclaims in the form of a prayer and in the spirit of prophecy, that her Bridegroom will come to the judgment in His weaker, or rather say in His inferior Nature, because weak It no longer is. For He Who rules the heavens and the earth in the might of His strength and Who will come “girded with power” against the wicked, will show Himself to His elect sweet and mild and, as it were, stripped of His terrors. Here it may be added too, that in order to distinguish the just from the reprobate, the Judge shall have need not only of the hart’s power of leaping, but also of the eyes of the roe. Otherwise He shall not be

able to see and to discriminate on whom He is to leap and whom to skip over in that countless multitude and in the midst of such confusion; and there would be danger that the good should be trampled under foot along with the wicked, when He will "break (the nations) in the day of His wrath." For as regards the impious, it is necessary that the prediction of David, or rather the word of the Lord spoken by David, should be fulfilled, "I shall beat them as small as the dust before the wind; I shall bring them to nought like the dirt in the streets." Another similar prophecy, spoken by the mouth of another prophet, shall likewise be seen in its accomplishment on that day, viz., "I have trampled on them in My indignation, and have trodden them down in My wrath."

However, if anyone thinks that the leaping and skipping should be so understood that our Divine Hart is to skip over the sinners and to leap on the just, I make no objection, so long as it is granted me that the leaping and skipping are designed to distinguish the elect from the reprobate. Nay, if my memory serves me right, I proposed this very interpretation myself in a previous sermon, for we met these words, "like a roe or a young hart," on a former occasion also, where they occur in an earlier verse of this Canticle, and I then discussed them fully. But in that preceding passage the Young Hart was said to leap upon or to skip over souls, according to the dispensation of grace, which in this life is granted to some and denied to others, by the just yet mysterious judgment of God; whereas here there is question of the ultimate and various retribution according to the variety of merits or demerits. And perhaps this exposition may derive some support from the words with which our present text concludes, and which, in truth, I had well-nigh forgotten. For the Spouse tells her Bridegroom, "Be like, my Beloved, to a roe or a young hart, viz., leap like a roe or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bethel." "Bethel" means "the house of God," and surely there can be no evil mountains in the house of God. Wherefore the Young Hart will not trample but rather rejoice these mountains of Bethel by His leaping upon them, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled, wherein we read, "The mountains and the hills shall sing praise before God." The Gospel, indeed, makes mention of mountains which faith, likened to the mustard seed, shall remove. But they are not the mountains of Bethel; because faith cultivates instead of removing all the mountains of Bethel.

But if we choose to regard the mountains of Bethel as designating the powers and principalities, with all the other orders of blessed spirits and heavenly virtues, so that of them may be understood what the Psalmist says, "The foundations thereof, that is, of the city of God, are in the holy mountains": in this

case, not contemptible surely or of little worth is that Young Hart to be considered Who appears to stand above such excellent mountains; “being made so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they”. We read in the psalms, it is true, that He is “made a little less than the angels.” But what of that? He does not cease to be “better” by becoming “a little less.” Nor are we to suppose that the statements of the Prophet and the Apostle are contradictory of each other, since the two spoke by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit. For if He was made “a little less than the angels,” not by necessity but through condescension, that, instead of detracting from, only adds to His perfection. Now the Psalmist does not say that He is less than the angels, but is made less, thus defending His Majesty whilst extolling His grace. For His Divine Nature excludes anything like inferiority, although the cause for which He acted excused the condescension. He was made less “because it was His own will.” Yes, my brethren, it was His own will and our necessity that “made Him a little less than the angels.” To be made less in this manner is but an exercise of mercy. And how can there be any loss or waste here since piety gains whatever may appear to be taken from Majesty? Nor has the Apostle passed over in silence this “great mystery of godliness”; for he says, “But we see Jesus Who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.”

These remarks, my brethren, have been suggested to me by the name and the image of the hart, because I wished to show you how, after the example of the Spouse, we may apply them to the Bridegroom without the least prejudice to His Majesty. But why do I say “without prejudice to His Majesty,” when the comparison has not left even His weakness without honour? He is a Hart; He is a Little One; and He is also declared to resemble the roe, as having been “made of a woman.” Nevertheless He is said to abide “on the mountains of Bethel,” and to be “made higher than the heavens.” Notice how the Apostle does not speak of Him as being or existing higher than the heavens, but says, “made higher than the heavens,” and that deliberately, lest it should be thought that the Bridegroom was proclaimed higher than the heavens only in His Divine Nature, according to Which He said, “I am Who am.” And even where He is preferred to the angels, He is described not as being better or naturally better, but as having been made better than they. Such considerations clearly prove that not only in right of what He is from eternity, but also by reason of what He has been made in time, He claims for Himself all pre-eminence, pre-eminence over every principality and every power, pre-eminence over all creatures, as being “the First-born of every

creature.” Thus “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” These are the words of St. Paul. But it seems to me that he might have said with equal truth that the same divine foolishness and the same divine weakness were wiser than the wisdom and stronger than the strength of the angels. In this way, then, the words of our present text can be considered as belonging to the universal Church.

But now, as regards each particular soul—for the individual soul is also the Spouse of God, provided she loves Him with tenderness, with prudence, and with constancy: every spiritual person can ascertain for himself what has been his own experience in this matter. As for me, my brethren, I shall feel no shame in telling you all openly what it has been given me to enjoy of such graces. For although it may appear of little value and contemptible when described, even so I shall not be concerned; because he who is spiritual will not despise me for that, and he who is not spiritual shall not be able to understand me at all. However, I will reserve the recital for another discourse. And perchance there are some who may be edified by the heavenly inspirations which your prayers shall obtain for me in the interval from Him Who is the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXIV

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM COMES AND GOES, AND ON THE NECESSITY OF UNITING GRACE AND TRUTH

"Return: be like, my Beloved, to a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bethel."

"Return, my Beloved," cries the Spouse. It is evident that He Whom she thus recalls is not now present, yet has been with her, and that but a short time ago. For she is calling Him back, as it seems, whilst He is still in the act of retiring. That He is so soon solicited to return is a proof both of the greatness of her love and of the attraction of His amiability. But who are these fervent votaries of charity? Who are these tireless devotees of love, of whom the one is pursued and the other driven forward by the ungovernable force of affection? For my part, I must fulfil the promise which I made you in my last discourse, and which I have not forgotten, that is, to interpret this passage of the Word and the individual soul. Yet to accomplish such a task in anything like a worthy manner is, I acknowledge, quite beyond my power, unless I am assisted by the Word Himself. In truth an exposition of this verse would come more fittingly from one better versed and more experienced than I can claim to be in the ways of mystical and holy love. Nevertheless, I must discharge my duty and endeavour to satisfy your desires. I see the danger before me, yet I do not turn aside, because you, my brethren, compel me to go forward. You compel me, I say, to walk "in great matters and in wonderful things above me." Alas for me! I tremble lest I should hear myself addressed in the words of reproach, "Why dost thou declare the delights of My love, and take My secrets in thy mouth?" Yet listen to me as to a man who is afraid to speak, but may not keep silence. Perchance my fears may serve as an excuse for the rashness of my undertaking, and still more the fruit of edification to you, if indeed there should be any. And these tears which flow from my eyes—haply to these also God will have regard.

"Return, my Beloved," entreats the Spouse. Very well. He was going away:

He is recalled. Who shall explain to me this mystery of divine mutability? Who shall enable me to comprehend rightly what is meant by the retiring and returning of the Word? Shall we suppose that the Bridegroom is here acting with fickle inconstancy? He Whose immensity fills all space, whence can He be said to come, or whither to go or to return? Besides He is a Spirit, and what manner of locomotion is a pure spirit capable of? Finally, how can He Who is God admit of any kind of motion, since God is absolutely and essentially immutable?

However, "he that can understand, let him understand" these things. But let us, my brethren, proceeding with simplicity and caution in this exposition of a sacred and mystical utterance, accommodate ourselves to the usage of Holy Scripture, which, in our human words, "speaketh wisdom hidden in a mystery"; which, commends the Divinity to our love by investing Him with human affections; and which, from the familiar images of earthly objects, as from chalices of vile material, gives our human minds to drink things rare and precious, even the mysterious and invisible things of God. Let us, I say, follow the precedent of the chaste Scriptural narrative, and let us say that the Word of God, as the Divine Bridegroom of the soul, visits her and departs from her according to His good pleasure. Only we must remember that in all this there is question, not of any change or motion in the Word, but merely in the feelings of the soul herself. For example, whenever she experiences the consolations of grace, she acknowledges the presence of her Bridegroom. When she is deprived of such consolation, she complains of His absence, and begs Him to come back to her, saying with the Psalmist, "My heart hath said to Thee: my face hath sought Thee: Thy Face, O Lord, will I still seek." Why indeed should she not seek Him? Surely, after having been separated from so sweet a Bridegroom, she is incapable—I will not say of desiring, but even—of thinking of anything else. Therefore she cannot but seek Him when He is absent from her, and recall Him when He is going away. The Word, consequently, is recalled; He is recalled by the desire of the soul, yet only of that soul which He has once permitted to taste of His sweetness. Is not her desire a cry of the soul? Yea, and a strong cry. "The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor," as the Psalmist sings. Hence, when the Bridegroom withdraws, the soul, by her continuous desire of Him, keeps up one uninterrupted cry, as it were, one uninterrupted "Return, my Beloved," until He comes back to console her.

And now, my brethren, give me the soul that is wont to be visited often by her Divine Bridegroom, the soul that has daring from familiarity, a relish for spiritual delights from her experience of the same, and a sufficiency of leisure

from her contempt of the world—show me such a soul and I will unhesitatingly assign to her both the voice and the name of the Spouse. Neither should I suppose it impossible to regard the words now under consideration as spoken by her. Indeed, it is a soul of this kind that is introduced here as speaker. For the fact of her recalling the Bridegroom proves beyond a doubt that she has already merited to enjoy His presence, although not to her heart's content. Otherwise, instead of asking Him to return, she would simply have asked Him to come. But the word she makes use of—revertere—signifies to come back or to return. And perhaps the reason of His retiring was in order that He might be more fervently recalled and clasped more strongly. For we read how once of old "He made as if He would go farther," not that He really desired to leave the disciples, but because He wanted to hear them say to Him, "Stay with us, Lord, because it is towards evening." On another occasion also He came walking upon the sea, whilst the apostles were plying the oars and "labouring in rowing"; and He made as if He would pass them by, although He had no such intention, but only wished to try their faith and to excite them to pray. For, as the Evangelist goes on to say, "They thought it was an apparition and they cried out; for they all saw Him and were troubled." Therefore the same kind of pious simulation, or rather call it the same kind of salutary dispensation, which the Word in the flesh then visibly practised, the Word in the Spirit never ceases to exercise with unwearied diligence, yet in a spiritual way, in regard to the soul that is devoted to Him. When passing her by, He desires that she would lay hold of Him; and when going away, He wishes to be called back. For He is by no means an irrevocable Word. He goes away and He comes back according to His pleasure, visiting the soul "in the early morning and suddenly proving" her. His departure is always part of His special providence over her, whilst His return is ever due to the influence of His love. Both His goings and His comings are regulated by divine prudence. But the special motive of each is known only to Himself.

You now understand, my brethren, how these vicissitudes of the Word's retiring and returning are accomplished in the soul, according to what is written, "I go away, and I come unto you," also, "A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me." O little while and little while! Oh, the long, long length of that little while! Sweet Lord, dost Thou call that a little while, the time in which we do not see Thee? Far be it from me to gainsay the word of my Lord, but to my mind it certainly seems a long while, yea a very long while. Nevertheless it may truly be described either as little or as long: it is little for our merits; it is long for our desires. You have all this in the Prophet

Habacuc, where he says, “If (He) make any delay, wait for (Him) for He shall surely come and He shall not be slack.” How shall He not be slack if He makes a delay, unless the meaning intended is that the haste which is sufficient for merit is not enough for desire? Now the loving soul is borne on by her feelings; she is drawn forward by her desires; she has no regard to merit; she closes her eyes to her Bridegroom’s Majesty and opens them wide to the delights of His love, “setting them in her Saviour and dealing confidently in Him.” For without the least fear or embarrassment she recalls the Word, and asks with confidence to be again allowed to enjoy the sweetness of His society; and using her wonted liberty she addresses Him not as her Lord, but as her Beloved. “Return, my Beloved,” she cries. Then she goes on, “Be like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.” But of this hereafter.

Now, my brethren, I will ask you to “bear with some little of my folly.” I want to explain to you, according to promise, what has been my own experience in this matter. “It is not expedient indeed,” but I will expose myself only for the sake of benefiting you. If what I shall have to say proves helpful to your progress, I shall console myself for my folly; if not, I shall freely acknowledge my imprudence. I confess, therefore, that even to me—“I speak as it were in foolishness”—the Bridegroom has condescended to pay a visit, and indeed not once but many times. But although He has often come into my soul, I have never been able to ascertain the exact moment of His entrance. I have been conscious of His presence within me; I could afterwards recall that He had been present; sometimes I have even had a presentiment of His coming; yet I have never perceived Him either in the act of entering or in the act of retiring. Whence He comes to my soul, and whither He withdraws Himself on leaving me, and by what way He comes in, and by what goes out,—as to all these questions, I am still in ignorance, according to what we read in the Gospel, “Thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth.” Nor is this surprising, since He is the Same to Whom the Psalmist says, “And Thy footsteps shall not be known.” Certainly He does not enter through the eyes, for He has no colour; nor through the ears, since He makes no sound; nor through the organ of smell, because His mingling is with the mind, not with the atmosphere—He is the Author of the air, not its odour. Neither does He gain admission through the avenue of the mouth, because He is not anything which can be eaten or drunk. The sense of touch is equally powerless to attain to Him, since He is altogether intangible. By what way then, does He enter? Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that He does not enter at all, inasmuch as He is not any one of those things which exist

outside us? But neither can He be said to come from within me, because He is good, and “I know there dwelleth not in me that which is good.” I have ascended to what is highest in me, and behold! I have found the Word to be higher still. Influenced by a pious curiosity, I have descended to explore the lowest depths of my being, only to find that He was still deeper down. If I looked to my exterior, I perceived Him beyond what is outermost. And if I turned my gaze inward, I saw Him more interior than what is inmost. Then I realised the truth of what I had read, namely, that “in Him we live and move and be.” But blessed is the soul in which He is also, which lives for Him and is moved by Him.

But then you will ask me how can I even tell that He is present, since “His ways are unsearchable”? I answer that “the Word of God is living and effectual”; and as soon as He enters, He arouses my slumbering soul, moves, softens, and wounds my heart, which before was so hard and stony, so wicked and corrupt. He also begins “to root up and to pull down, to build and to plant,” to irrigate what was dry, to illuminate what was dark, to open what was shut, to heat what was cold, to “make the crooked straight and the rough ways plain,” so that “my soul may bless the Lord, and all that is within me may bless His holy name.” Whenever, therefore, the Divine Bridegroom visits my interior, as He often does, He gives no sign to indicate His entrance, whether by voice, by vision, or by the sound of His footsteps. For it is not to any movements on His part, nor to any activity of my own senses that I am indebted for the knowledge that He has come into my soul. I have been made conscious of His presence from the feelings of my heart, as mentioned already. The expulsion of vices and the repression of carnal affections have revealed to me the might of His virtue. His scrutiny and reproof of my secret sins have filled me with admiration for the profundity of His wisdom. I have experienced His goodness and gentleness in whatever little improvement there has appeared in my life. He has shown me to some extent the “loveliness of His beauty” in the “renewal and reformation of the spirit of my mind,” that is to say, of my interior man. And from the contemplation of all these perfections I have been overwhelmed with awe at the “multitude of His greatness.”

Furthermore, the departure of the Bridegroom has the same effect on such pious dispositions as the removal of the fire from beneath the boiling pot. Immediately all my fervour and devotion begins to relax, to languish, and to cool. It is by this change I come to know that He has withdrawn from me. Thereupon, my soul cannot but be a prey to sadness until He returns. And this shall be a sign to me that He has come back, when I feel my heart once more

beginning to burn within me. After having so much experience of the goodness of the Word, is it any wonder, my brethren, if even I appropriated the words of the Spouse, calling on Him to return whenever He retires? For although there is no equality, there is at least some similarity between the desires which animate her and me. So long as I live, it shall be my custom to recall the Word by the word of recalling, which is “Return” (revertere). And as often as He escapes from me, so often will I call Him back. I will not cease to cry after Him, as He goes, with the fervent desire of my heart, calling on him to return and to “restore unto me the joy of His salvation,” to restore unto me Himself. I confess to you, my children, that in the meantime I can take no pleasure in anything else, since I have not Him Who is my only delight. And I beg of Him not to return to me empty, but “full of grace and truth,” according to His custom, and as He has done yesterday and the day before. Herein, as it seems to me, the comparison of the roe and the young hart may be clearly exhibited, because truth has the eyes of the roe, and grace the hart’s vivacity.

Both these things are necessary for me: truth, from which I cannot conceal myself; and grace, from which I am unwilling to hide. No divine visitation can be perfect if it brings either of them without the other. For truth, unaccompanied by grace, is capable of depressing the soul with its severity; whilst grace, dissociated from truth, has a tendency to relax by unduly elating her. The former is bitter unless it be seasoned with the latter, and the latter, if not restrained by the former, grows light and extravagant and not seldom over-bold. For how many has it been of no advantage to have received grace, because they did not receive with it the steadying ballast of truth! The consequence was that they began to take more complacency than was expedient in the grace bestowed upon them, whilst they lost the wholesome fear of the eyes of truth; and, paying no further attention to the roe’s mature gravity, gave themselves up unreservedly to the giddiness and sprightliness of the young hart. Hence it came to pass that they were deprived altogether of the grace in which they wished to rejoice solely. To such as these it may be said, even though it be too late, “Go then and learn what this meaneth, ‘Serve ye the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling.’ ” Thus, a certain holy soul in her “abundance said, ‘I shall never be moved.’ ” But suddenly she perceived that the Word had turned away His Face from her, and then she became not only moved, but even “troubled.” And so she was taught by affliction that the gift of devotion suffices her not, unless it be accompanied by the counterpoise of truth. Therefore, my brethren, the fulness of grace does not consist of grace alone, nor does it consist of truth alone. For what

does it avail us to know what we ought to do, if we are not also given the good will to act according to our knowledge? Or of what advantage is it to have the good will, if the power of accomplishment be lacking? How many have I known whom the knowledge of the truth rendered sadder than ever, and that for the reason that it was no longer in their power to plead ignorance as an excuse for their sins! For they were now as men who knew, yet refused to accomplish what truth demanded of them.

From what I have said it ought to be evident that grace without truth is insufficient, as also truth without grace. But this is saying too little. Not only is it not enough to possess one of these gifts without the other, but it is even inexpedient. What proof have I of this? “To him, therefore, who knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin.” So speaks St. James. And Christ tells us in the Gospel that “the servant who knew the will of his Lord and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes.” These testimonies demonstrate the inexpediency of truth without grace. But what of grace without truth? We read in St. John, “And after the morsel, Satan entered into him.” The Evangelist is speaking of Judas, who although he had received the gift of grace, did not walk in truth with the Master of truth, or rather with the Master Who is Truth, and thus made room in himself for the devil. Listen now to the Psalmist, “He fed them with the fat of wheat, and filled them with honey out of the rock.” Who are these so fed and filled? We are told in the preceding verse, “The enemies of the Lord have lied to Him.” Therefore those whom He fed with fat and with honey, they lied to Him, because the gift of truth was not united in them with the gift of grace. Of the same persons we find in another place, “The children that are strangers have lied to me, strange children have faded away, and have halted from their paths.” How indeed could they have helped halting since they were content to possess the one foot of grace without adding thereto the second of truth? Therefore it is written of the “enemies of the Lord” who “have lied to Him” that “their time (of punishment) shall be for ever”; just as the time of their leader, who “stood not in truth” but was a liar from the beginning, so that he deserved to hear it said to him, “Thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy beauty.” For my part, I want no such beauty as would deprive me of wisdom.

Dost thou ask me, my brother, what is that beauty, so evil and so pernicious? It is thine own. But perchance thou art still without understanding? Then I will speak more plainly. It is the beauty which thou makest private and proper to thyself. I do not find fault with the gift of beauty but with thy abuse of it. Thou mayst perhaps have noticed how the devil is said to have lost his wisdom not

simply in beauty, but in his own beauty. Now, unless I mistake, the beauty of an angel and of a soul is the same. For apart from wisdom, what is one or the other but a thing without shape or form? It was wisdom consequently that gave to Satan form and beauty. But he lost that wisdom when he made it his own. Hence it is the same thing to say “Thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy beauty” and “thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy wisdom.” The cause of the loss was propriety. Because he was wise for himself, because he did not give glory to God, because he did not return thanks for favours bestowed, because he walked not according to truth in the grace he received, but neglecting the purpose for which it was given, used it for the satisfaction of his own will,—here is the reason why he was deprived of his wisdom. I should rather say, here is the cause which directly and of itself brought about the loss of his wisdom. For to possess wisdom in such manner is the same thing as to lose it. “If Abraham were justified by works,” writes St. Paul, “he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.” But I say that I can have nothing whereof to glory outside of God. I have lost whatever I do not possess before God. What can be so lost as that which is separated from Him? What is death but the privation of life? And so the only real loss consists in a separation from God. “Woe to you,” exclaims the Prophet Isaias, “that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own conceits.” Of the same it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; and the prudence of the prudent I will reject.” They have lost true wisdom, because their own wisdom deprived them of it. How could they have retained anything since they themselves were lost? Or shall it be said that they are not lost whom God ignores?

Now those foolish virgins mentioned in the Gospel, whose foolishness, as I think, had no other cause than their boasting of wisdom, by which wisdom is lost —those, I say, shall hear from God the sentence of reprobation, “I know you not.” They also, who use the grace of miracles as a means to their own glorification, they shall have addressed to them the words, “I never knew you.” From this it is clear and manifest that grace profits nothing, but is rather a source of danger, if the purity of truth be not found in the intention. It is from the Bridegroom that both these gifts must be sought. For St. John Baptist declares that “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” If ever, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ (Who is the Word of God and the Bridegroom of souls) shall knock at my door, bringing with Him either truth without grace or grace without truth, I shall know that He comes not as a Bridegroom but as a Judge. God forbid that this should ever happen me! Let Him “enter not into judgment” with His servant. Let Him come in with peace, let Him come in with cheerfulness and gladness; but let

His coming be also attended with gravity and sobriety, to the end that by fixing upon me the severe glance of truth He may repress my forwardness and chasten my joy. Let Him enter my soul as a bounding hart and at the same time as a watchful roe, so that He may, by dissembling, skip over my faults, and out of compassion have regard to the pains which I suffer. Let Him come into me as if descending from “the mountains of Bethel,” all radiant and blissful; or as proceeding from the Father, in sweetness and mildness. For thus He will not disdain to be called and to become the Bridegroom of the soul that seeks Him, although He is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXV

ON THE TIME, PLACE, AND MANNER IN WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM SHOULD BE SOUGHT

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and found Him not.

"I will rise and will go about the city."

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth." The Bridegroom evidently has not returned at the desire and solicitation of her who recalled Him. Wherefore? In order that her desire may increase, that she may give proof of her love, that she may be the longer occupied in the exercise of charity. The delay consequently is no evidence of anger on the part of the Beloved, is in fact nothing more than pious dissimulation. It only remains, therefore, to seek Him, if perchance He may be found when sought, Who when called has deferred to come. For He assures us Himself that "everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth." Now the words employed by the Spouse to recall Him were as follows, "Return; be like, my Beloved, to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel." On account of the reasons just given, He has not come back at her invitation. This only makes her, who loves Him so ardently, the more desirous of His presence, and with all eagerness she begins at once to seek Him out, She seeks for Him first in her bed, but fails to find Him there. Then she "rises," she "goes about the city," she passes along "the streets and the broad ways." But nowhere does He show Himself, nowhere can she find Him. She inquires concerning Him of everyone she happens to meet, without obtaining any certain information. Nor is it only once she has made this search, and suffered this disappointment, nor during a single night, because she says, "During the nights (per noctes) I sought Him." How great must be the longing, how ardent the love under the influence of which she thus rises in the night, goes out fearlessly into the public thoroughfares, runs around the city, openly interrogates all whom she meets concerning her Beloved, and from her purpose of following His footsteps can be dissuaded by no argument, impeded by no

obstacle, held back by no desire for seasonable repose, prevented by no feelings of womanly modesty, restrained by no fear of the “terror of the night”! And nevertheless, in spite of all this she is still defrauded of her hope. Wherefore? What is the meaning of so cruel and so oft-repeated a disappointment, which is the nurse of weariness, the inspirer of suspicion, the torch of impatience, the mother of despair, the step-mother of love (noverca amoris)? If the Bridegroom is still dissembling, His dissimulation has become exceedingly trying.

I allow that up to this, whilst there was only question of calling or recalling Him, dissimulation could be practised with piety and profit. But now, when He is sought and sought with so much trouble, what object can be gained by dissembling longer? If this Canticle were concerned with an earthly bride and bridegroom and with the earthly love which unites them, as indeed seems to be suggested by the mimicry of the literal sense, and if such things as are here described were to happen between them, that would be their own affair, and I should not feel called upon to cast about for an explanation or apology. But if I have the duty to make answer and satisfaction, according to the best of my poor ability, to the minds and affections of those who are seeking the Lord, in that case it will be necessary to extract from the Holy Scripture, in which they “think to have life everlasting,” something spiritual and therefore vivifying, in order that “the poor may eat and be filled, and that their hearts may rejoice.” And what is so much the life of our hearts as my Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom one said who lived by Him, “When Christ shall appear, Who is your Life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory”? Let Him therefore come amongst us, so that to us as to the Jews it may be truly said, “There hath stood One in the midst of you Whom you know not.” And yet I do not understand how the Bridegroom, Who is a Spirit, can fail to be recognised by spiritual persons, provided they have made such progress in the spirit as to be able to say with the Prophet, “A Spirit before our face (is) Christ the Lord”; and with the Apostle, “And if we have known Christ according to the flesh: but now we know Him so no longer.” Is not He the Beloved Whom the Spouse has been seeking? He is indeed the Bridegroom, a loving and amiable Bridegroom. He, I say, is the Bridegroom indeed, just as His “Flesh is meat indeed” and His “Blood is drink indeed.” Everything that appertains to Him is in deed and in truth, since He is Himself the Living Truth.

But what means it, my brethren, that this Bridegroom cannot be found when sought, even when sought with so much zeal and assiduity, now in the bed, now about the city, now “in the streets and the broad ways”? For He Himself has said, “Seek and you shall find,” and, “He that seeketh findeth.” The Prophet

Jeremias also says, “The Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him.” And holy Isaias, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.” “How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?” Nor can it be said that she who is here represented as seeking Him, is one of those to whom He addressed the words, “You shall seek Me and shall not find Me.” But listen. Three causes now occur to me which are wont to render our seeking futile. These are: unsuitableness in the time of seeking, unsuitableness in the manner of seeking, and unsuitableness in the place of seeking. For if every time were equally suitable for seeking, why does the Prophet speak the words already quoted, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.” Most certainly there shall come a time when He can be found no longer. Therefore we are counselled to call upon Him whilst yet He is near, because the hour is approaching when He shall no more be near. Who is there that will not seek Him then? As He says by His Prophet, “Every knee shall be bowed to Me.” Nevertheless, He shall not be found by the impious, because the avenging angels will assuredly drive them away and prevent them from beholding the glory of God. The foolish virgins likewise shall call upon Him in vain; for the door shall then have been shut and He will not go out to them. Let these consequently take as applying to themselves the words, “You shall seek Me and shall not find Me.”

But “behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation.” Now, my brethren, is the time for seeking and for invoking, when, as ordinarily happens, He Whom we seek is felt to be present even before we call upon Him. For this is what He has promised by His Prophet, “Before they call, I will hear; as they are yet speaking, I will say: Lo, here I am.” This kindness and graciousness, which belongs to the present time, was not unknown to him who sings in the psalm, “The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor: Thy ear hath heard the preparation of their heart.” But if it is by good works the Lord is to be sought, “therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men,” the more especially, because the Bridegroom plainly announces that “the night cometh when no man can work.” Or dost thou hope to be given in the life to come another time for seeking God and for doing what is good, besides that which He has appointed for thee wherein to show thee mercy? The present life, therefore, is “the day of salvation,” because in this “God is our King before ages, He hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.”

And thou, my brother, dost thou expect to find in the midst of hell the salvation which has been wrought in the midst of the earth? How canst thou imagine that any time shall be given amidst the “everlasting burnings” for

impetrating pardon, when the season of mercy shall have then gone by? Having died in thy sins, for thee “there is now left no sacrifice for sins.” The Son of God is not to be crucified a second time. “He died once,” He “dieth now no more.” The Blood Which was poured out upon the earth, has not penetrated as far as the infernal regions. “All the sinners of the earth shall drink” thereof; but neither the demons themselves, nor reprobate men condemned to their society, are allowed to use It in any way to extinguish the flames which torment them. The Saviour’s Soul, not his Blood, descended once to hell. That was the portion of those who were confined there, that one visitation, made by the presence of His Soul whilst His Body was hanging lifeless above the earth. By the Blood the dry land was irrigated, by the Blood the earth was overrun and inundated, by the same Blood Which has made “peace both as to the things on earth, and the things that are in heaven.” But It made no peace as to the things that are in hell: excepting that His Soul made one visit to that place, as I have said, and accomplished there a partial redemption. For He was unwilling that the work of charity should be suspended even for that short time. But never more shall He go down thither. Therefore, “now is the acceptable time,” the time proper for seeking Him in which beyond question “He that seeketh findeth”; if yet he seeks in the right manner and in the right place. I have now explained sufficiently one of the reasons on account of which the Bridegroom cannot be found by those who seek Him, because, namely, they do not seek Him at an opportune time. But as the Spouse does call upon and seek Him at a seasonable hour, this cannot be the reason that prevents her from finding Him. Neither does she seek Him with tepidity, with negligence, or with indifference; but evidently as she ought, with ardent affection and indefatigable zeal.

It only remains to enquire concerning the last of my three reasons, lest perchance the Spouse is not seeking in the place where she ought. “In my little bed (lectulo) by night,” she says, “I sought Him Whom my soul loveth.” But perhaps it was not in a little bed but in a large bed she should have looked for Him for Whom, in truth, the universe is not wide enough. I do not, however, object to the little bed, because I remember that He made Himself a Little One. As a Little One He was born for us. Yet listen to Isaias: “Rejoice and praise, O thou habitation of Sion, for great is He That is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel.” The same Lord, Who is great in Sion, is found amongst us to be weak and little, having to lie down because of His weakness, and because of His littleness to lie in a little bed. Was not the sepulchre a little bed? Was not the manger a little bed? And the Virgin’s womb, was not it also a little bed? But no

little bed is the Bosom of the great Father. It is undoubtedly a great bed, whereof the Father says to His Son, “From the womb before the day-star I begot Thee”: although perhaps it is not proper to compare that Bosom to any kind of bed, since it is rather the throne of an Emperor than a couch of repose. For the Son abiding in the Father, governs the universe with the Father. We have it on the infallible authority of our faith that He reclines not, but sits at the Father’s Right Hand. And He tells us Himself by His Prophet that heaven is His throne, not His bed, in order to teach us that in His own home beyond the stars, the supports of infirmity are nowhere in evidence, but only the emblems of power.

Justly, therefore, does the Spouse, in referring to the little bed, speak of it as her own; because, as is manifest, whatever of weakness and littleness is found with God must be attributed not to His Divine but to the Human Nature Which He has in common with us. For the infirmities to which He submitted for our sakes, such as, to be born, to be suckled, to die, to be buried, belong to the Humanity Which He borrowed from us. Mine is the mortality of the Infant, mine the helplessness of the Child, mine also the death upon the cross, and mine the sleep of the tomb. But now “the former things have passed away” and behold all things are made new. “In my little bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth.” What is this? Hast thou been seeking in thine for Him who has already returned to His own bed? Didst thou not “see the Son of man ascend up where He was before”? He has now exchanged for heaven the tomb and the stable, and wilt thou still seek Him in thy little bed? “He is risen, He is not here.” Why dost thou seek in the couch of infirmity for One Who is hale? Or for One so great in a little bed? Or in a stable for One in glory? “He hath entered into the powers of the Lord,” “He is clothed with beauty, the Lord is clothed with strength.” And behold He Who lay beneath the sepulchral slab now “sitteth above the cherubim.” Henceforward He will no more recline, but will sit; and art thou getting ready a couch for Him as for one about to lie down? But perhaps it would be more true to say of Him that He sits to judge us and stands to assist us.

For whom, then, ye holy women, are you thus keeping watch? For whom, I ask, have you bought the sweet spices and confected the ointments? If you did but know how great He is, and how “free amongst the dead” Whom you have come forth to anoint, you perhaps would have asked rather to be anointed by Him. Is not this He of Whom the Psalmist says, “God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows”? Blessed shall you be if on your return you are able to boast and to say, “And of His fulness we (also) have received.” And so has it been in truth. For they who came to anoint Him returned

by Him anointed. How could they help being anointed with the tidings so gladdening of His fresh and fragrant resurrection? “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things!” By commission of the angel they “do the work of an evangelist.” They become the apostles of the apostles themselves (apostolae apostolorum) whilst they hasten “to announce in the morning the mercy of the Lord.” saying, “we will run to the odour of Thy ointments.” From that time and thenceforward it has been in vain for the Spouse to seek the Bridegroom in her little bed. “And if (the Church has) known Christ according to the flesh, but now (she knows) Him so no longer” Thus, St. Peter and St. John came together after the the holy women to seek Him in the sepulchre, but they found Him not. Do you not suppose, my brethren, that each of them could then truly and appropriately say with the Spouse, “In my little bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth”? For the holy Flesh when about to ascend to the Father—although It proceeded not from the Father,—first by the glory of the resurrection put off all that was infirm in It, girded Itself with power, and clothed Itself with light as with a garment. That is to say, It was adorned with such splendours and beauty as would make It worthy to be presented to the Eyes of the heavenly Father.

But instead of saying, “Him Whom I love,” the Spouse says very beautifully, “Him Whom my soul loveth.” For to the soul alone belongs truly and properly the love wherewith one loves any spiritual object, such, for instance, as God, an angel, the human soul. The same remark applies to the love of justice, of truth, of piety, of wisdom, and of the other virtues. On the other hand, when a person loves, or rather desires (appetit) something according to the flesh, for example, food, or clothes, or dominion, or any such earthly and material good, this affection must be held to spring not from the spirit but from the flesh. So much concerning the very unusual yet equally proper expression of the Spouse, “I sought Him Whom my soul loveth,” whereby she insinuates that her Bridegroom is a Spirit and is loved by her according to the spirit, not according to the flesh.

Justly, too, does she say that she sought Him during the nights. For if, as St. Paul tells us, “they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunk, are drunk in the night”; if this be so, it may also be said without absurdity, as I think, that they who are ignorant are ignorant in the night, and consequently that they who seek, seek in the night. For who would seek for what he has plainly before his eyes? Now the day makes manifest what the night conceals, so that what you sought in the night you discover in the day. It is therefore night so long as the Bridegroom is sought; because if it were day He would certainly reveal Himself

and there would be no necessity to seek Him. These remarks would suffice to elucidate this point only for the fact that the Spouse speaks of nights in the plural, which perhaps is significant of something requiring to be further investigated. For her words are, not “during the night,” but “during the nights I sought Him.”

The reason of this, my brethren, appears to be the following, unless some of yourselves can discover a more plausible explanation. The world in which we live has its own nights, and they are many. But why do I say that the world has its nights, since it is rather itself almost completely a night, and is totally and eternally buried in darkness? One night is the perfidy of the Jews, a second is the ignorance of the Gentiles, heretical depravity is a third night, and a fourth the carnal and animal conversation of many Catholics. Surely it must be then night when one “perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God.” As for heretics and schismatics, there are amongst these as many different nights as there are distinct sects. Vainly shall you seek in these nights for the Sun of Justice or the Light of truth, that is to say, for the heavenly Bridegroom; for “what fellowship hath light with darkness?” But some one may tell me that the Spouse is not so stupid and blind as to seek for light amid darkness, as to seek her Bridegroom among those who have neither the knowledge nor the love of Him. As if, foresooth, she had declared that she is still seeking Him by night, and not that she has been seeking. She says not “I seek” but “I sought by night Him Whom my soul loveth.” And the sense is the same as if she had said with the Apostle, “when I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.” She erringly sought the truth where it was not, and so failed to find it, according to what is written in the psalm, “I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost.” And she mentions that at the time of seeking she was still in her little bed, as being still but a little one herself both in strength and understanding.

If it be preferred, however, to construe the text in this manner, “Lying or reposing in my little bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth,” the sense will be, not that she searched her bed to find Him there, but that whilst she herself was reclining in her little bed—that is to say, was but a little one—she sought her Bridegroom. According to this interpretation her words may be paraphrased thus, “when I was still weak and helpless and altogether incapable of following the Bridegroom whithersoever He went, of following Him up the steep and lofty heights to where He sits in glory, I fell in with many, who, knowing my desire, used to say to me, ‘Lo here is Christ, lo He is there,’

whereas He was neither here nor there. I fell in with such, I say, yet ‘not unto folly to me’; because the more nearly I approached and the more carefully I examined, the more speedily and thoroughly was I convinced that the truth was not to be found amongst them. For though I sought I could not find; and thus I perceived that they were only as nights trying to personate the day.

“Then I said. ‘I will rise and will go about the city. In the streets and in the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth.’ ” Observe, my brethren, that she is even still reclining, since she says, “I will rise.” This has a beautiful significance. Why should she not rise now after hearing of the resurrection of her Beloved? But, O happy Bride, “If thou be risen with Christ.” it is necessary that thou shouldst relish “the things that are above,” not the things that are upon the earth; it is necessary that thou shouldst seek Christ above, where He sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father. But thou sayest, “I will go about the city.” Wherefore? “The wicked,” so speaks the Psalmist, “walk round about.” Leave to the Jews this circumambulation, of whom their own Prophet predicted that “they shall suffer hunger like dogs and shall go round about the city.” And if thou shouldst “enter into the city” according to another of their prophets, “behold them that are consumed with famine.” Now this could not have occured if in the city were found the Bread of Life. But He has arisen out of the heart of the earth, and has not even remained on its surface. He has mounted “up where He was before.” For “He That descended,” says the Apostle, “is the Same also That ascended,” “the Living Bread That came down from heaven,” and at the same time the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed forever. Amen.

SERMON LXXVI

ON THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN, AND ON THE QUALITIES REQUISITE IN A FAITHFUL PASTOR OF SOULS

> "In the streets and the broadways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth. I sought Him and I found Him not. The watchmen who kept the city found me."

"In the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth." The Spouse, my brethren, still thinks as a child. As it seems to me, she had anticipated that, after issuing from the tomb, her Bridegroom would immediately appear in public to instruct the people as before, to cure the sick, and to manifest His glory in Israel; if perchance those who said they would receive Him on condition that He descended from the cross, might be willing to receive Him now when He had risen from the sepulchre. But He had already accomplished the work which the Father had given Him to do, as she ought to have inferred from the words spoken whilst He hung upon the cross—I allude to what He said when just about to expire, "It is consummated." There was no longer any reason why He should trust Himself to the crowds, who perhaps would not even thus believe in Him. Besides, He was in haste to go to His Father, Who would say to Him, "Sit Thou at My Right Hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool." For when He was "lifted up from the earth" to the glory of heaven, He would then "draw all things" to Himself more powerfully and more divinely. Yet the Spouse, impatient to enjoy Him, but ignorant of the mystery, supposes that He is to be sought "in the streets and the broad ways." Consequently she is once more disappointed, and compelled to say, "I sought Him and I found Him not." so "that the word might be fulfilled which He said." "A little while and you shall not see Me, because I go to the Father."

We may imagine her saying to herself something like this, "How then shall they believe in Him Whom they have not seen?" As if forsooth faith were from seeing and not from hearing. What great thing is it to believe what one has seen?

“But if we hope for that which we see not, we wait for it with patience.” and patience merits a reward. For it is written: “Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.” Therefore, in order to leave room for the virtue and the merit of faith, the Bridegroom has withdrawn from us His visible presence. Besides the hour had now come when He should return to His own place. Do you ask me, my brethren, what place is that? It is the Right Hand of the Father. For “being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Let this therefore be the place of the Only-Begotten, where He may rest secure, as beyond the reach of all that could injure Him. Let Him sit not below but beside the Father, so “that all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father.” In this shall appear the indistinction of their Majesty if the Son is confessed to be neither inferior nor posterior but in all respects equal to the Father. But the Spouse can at present think of none of these things. Inebriated with an excess of divine love, she runs hither and thither, seeking with her eyes Him Who is no longer perceptible to sight but only to faith. For she believes that Christ ought not to have entered into His glory without first manifesting to the world the glory of His resurrection, so that the impious might be confounded, the faithful filled with joy, the disciples magnified, the people converted, and He Himself finally honoured by all, when the visible fact of His resurrection had demonstrated to every man the truth of His prediction. Thou art mistaken, O Spouse of Christ. These things must indeed come to pass, but in their proper season.

Consider now in the meantime whether it be not more becoming and more consonant with the divine justice not to “give that which is holy to dogs” nor to “cast pearls before swine.” but rather, according to the expression of the Holy Scripture, to take away the impious one that he “may not see the glory of the Lord”; to preserve its merit to faith which, as we know, appears then to best advantage when we believe what we see not; and to treasure up for the good in the same faith that which is concealed from the wicked, so that “he that is filthy may be filthy still and he that is just may be justified still.” and may not “slumber through heaviness.” Yea, let the heavens and the heaven of heavens pine away and be confounded in their expectation rather than that the Father Almighty should be any longer defrauded of the desire of His Heart, rather than that the Only-Begotten Son’s entrance into His glory should be further delayed, even for the space of a moment, which in truth would be something supremely unworthy. Whatever of glory mortals could give Him, surely, O Spouse, thou canst not esteem it so great as to be able to hold Him back, even for a short time, from the glory which His Father has prepared for Him from all eternity?

Moreover it would be quite unbecoming that the fulfilment of the Son's petition should be longer deferred. Dost thou ask me to what petition I allude? To that which is expressed in the words, "Father, glorify Thy Son." Nevertheless, as it seems to me, He uttered this rather as a prophecy than as a prayer. That is freely solicited which it is in power of the petitioner to take. Consequently, in making this petition, the Son is not consulting for any necessity of His own, but for our instruction and utility; since, with respect to whatever He receives from the Father, He is not only the Recipient but the Donor also with the Father.

To this it is necessary to add the observation that not alone does the Father glorify the Son, but the Son also glorifies the Father. It is necessary, I say, lest anyone should suppose the Son to be less than the Father, for the reason that He is glorified by the Father. That He in turn glorifies His Father is manifest from His own words, "Father, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee." However, it may still be supposed that the Son is inferior to the Father in this respect, that He appears to be devoid of glory until He has received of the Father the glory which He gives back to Him again. But listen to the Son Himself where He tells us that the case is not so, "Glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee." The glory of the Son, therefore, being from eternity, is not posterior to the glory of the Father, and hence They, the Father and the Son, equally glorify Each the Other. But if such be the case, in what has the Father the precedence? Glories that are co-eternal must surely be co-equal also. Yea, they must be not only co-equal but one and the same, just as the Father and the Son are in Nature one and the same. Therefore it seems to me that when the Son said in another place, "Father, glorify Thy name." He asked for nothing else than that He should Himself be glorified, in Whom and by Whom the Father's name would be most certainly glorified. And He received the answer, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." This response from the Father was in itself no slight glorification of the Son. But, as we read in the Gospel, He was more abundantly and more singularly glorified on the bank of the Jordan by the testimony of the Baptist, by the descent of the heavenly Dove, and by the voice of the Father, saying, "This is My beloved Son." On the mountain also, in the presence of three of His disciples, He was most magnificently glorified, by the same paternal voice speaking once more from heaven, by the strange and admirable transfiguration of His Body, and by the attestation of the two Prophets who appeared conversing with Him.

It remained for Him, therefore, to be glorified once again, according to the

promise of the Father. That was to be plenitude of glory, to which nothing further could be added. But where was He to receive this final benediction? Not certainly “in the streets and the broad ways,” as the Spouse seems to have expected, unless indeed there is question of those streets whereof the Prophet said “Thy streets, O Jerusalem, shall be paved with pure gold and in all thy streets alleluia shall be sung.” For in these streets, it is true, the Son has received from His Father a glory to which nothing comparable can be found, even amongst the citizens of heaven. For “to which of the angels said He (the Father) at any time: Sit on my Right Hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool?” And not only amongst the choir of angels, but amongst the other and superior orders of blessed spirits also, has there been found none worthy to participate in this superexcellent glory. Not one of all those celestial creatures has ever been privileged to hear addressed to himself the words of incommunicable glory, “Sit on My Right Hand,” not one has been given to experience in himself the efficacy of these words. All, no doubt, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers, desire to gaze upon the glory of the Only-Begotten; but to raise themselves to an equality of glory they do not presume. Therefore to my Lord alone has the Lord given the invitation and the right to sit on the Right Hand of His glory as being co-equal with Himself in glory, consubstantial in Essence, identical in Nature by Sonship, one in Majesty, co-eternal in duration. There, there shall He be found by such as seek Him; and they shall see His glory, not a glory like the glory of creatures, but truly “the glory as it were of the Only Begotten of the Father.”

What then art thou doing, O Spouse of Christ? Dost thou think that thou canst follow Him thither? Hast thou the boldness and hast thou the power to intrude thyself into a sanctuary so secret, into a mystery so sacred, that thou mayst contemplate the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son? Surely no. Where He is thou canst not come now, but thou shalt come hereafter. Meanwhile, however, desist not from following and seeking Him. Do not allow that inaccessible brightness, that unapproachable sublimity, to turn thee from thy quest or to deprive thee of the hope of finding. “If thou canst believe,” says the Saviour “all things are possible to him that believeth.” And the Apostle tells thee, “The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.” Only believe and thou hast already found. For to believe is to have found. The faithful know that Christ dwelleth by faith in their hearts. What can be nearer? Seek Him therefore with security, seek Him with devotion. “The Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him.” Seek Him by thy desires, follow

Him by Thy actions, find Him by thy faith. What is there that faith cannot find? It attains to the inaccessible, it discovers the unknowable, it comprehends the immeasurable, it reaches forward to what is ultimate, it even includes eternity itself within the ample space of its own mystical bosom. I make bold to say it: the Blessed and Everlasting Trinity, though beyond my understanding, is accessible to my faith; and I hold by faith what escapes my intelligence.

But some one may say to me, “How shall the Spouse believe without a preacher, since faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of preaching?” God will provide for this. And behold they are already at hand from whom the newly betrothed Spouse, soon to become the Bride of the heavenly Bridegroom, shall receive information and instruction concerning all things necessary, the knowledge of the faith, and the form and pattern of piety and religion. For listen to what she adds, “The watchmen who kept the city found me.” Who, my brethren, are these watchmen? They are doubtless the same whom the Saviour in the Gospel pronounces blessed if, when He comes, He shall find them watching. And what good watchmen they are who keep guard over us whilst we slumber, as being obliged to render an account of our soul’s welfare! What good keepers, who with vigilant minds spend their nights in prayer, who prudently find out the enemy’s ambuscades, forestall the schemes of the malignant, discover their wiles, expose their snares, break their nets, and foil their cunning machinations! “These are lovers of their brethren and of the people (of Christ); these are they that pray much for the people and for all the holy city.” These are they who, all solicitous for the sheep of the Lord committed to their charge, “give their hearts to resort early to the Lord That made them, and pray in the sight of the Most High.” They continue praying as they watch, for they are conscious of their own insufficiency to guard the city, and that “unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.”

Furthermore, since the Lord Himself has given the command, “Watch ye and pray that you enter not into temptation,” it clearly follows that without this twofold observance on the part of the faithful and this twofold exercise of zeal on the part of their keepers, there can be no security for the city, no security for the Spouse, no security for the flock. Do you wish me to explain the difference between these three, the city, the Spouse, and the flock? In reality they are one and the same. That which is called a city, on account of the multitude of souls which it embraces, is called a Spouse because of the tender love of which it is the object, and a flock by reason of the gentleness which characterises its members. Would you like to have proof that the Spouse and the city signify the

same? Then listen to the Evangelist, “And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” The identity of the Spouse and the flock shall also appear manifest to you if you recollect the first vicarious shepherd—I mean St. Peter—and how earnestly he was charged to watch over lovingly and to feed the flock at the time when the sheep were first entrusted to his care. Now Christ in His wisdom would never have been at such pains in this matter had He not realised from the testimony of His own Heart and conscience that He was truly a Bridegroom no less than a Shepherd. Attend to this, ye friends of the Bridegroom, if yet you be in truth His friends. But it is not enough for the shepherds or keepers of His flock to be only the friends of the Bridegroom: they who are honoured with the privilege of such intimate familiarity with the Bridegroom ought to be inflamed with the most ardent love for Him. Not without special significance did the Lord, when appointing Peter chief pastor of the sheep, say to him three times, “Peter lovest thou Me?” It seems to me that by the repeated question Jesus wished to signify the same as if He had said, “Unless thy conscience bears thee witness that thou lovest Me and that thou lovest Me strongly and perfectly, that is to say, more than thy possessions, more than thy friends, more even than thyself, so as by this threefold preference to satisfy My threefold interrogation—unless such be the case, thou oughtest not by any means to undertake this responsibility or to have anything to do with those sheep of Mine for whose salvation My Blood has been shed.” Awful words these, my brethren, and well calculated to strike terror into the hearts of even the most insensible of tyrants.

Attend to yourselves, therefore, all you who have been called to the labour of the ministry, attend to yourselves, I say, and to the precious charge entrusted to your care. It is a city: be vigilant therefore to defend it from enemies without and to preserve its peace within. It is a Spouse: see to her adornment. It is also a flock: take care to provide it with suitable pasture. And perhaps it would not be entirely fanciful to suppose that this threefold solicitude also corresponds to the Lord’s threefold question. Moreover, the defence of the city, if it is to be adequate, must also be threefold, namely, against the power of tyrants, against the wiles of heretics, and against the temptations of the demons. The adornment of the Spouse likewise embraces three elements, which are good works, good morals and regular institutions. As for the flock, it is commonly fed in the pastures of Holy Scripture, as in the Lord’s inheritance. Yet in these pastures there are distinctions to be observed. For they contain the precepts which are

imposed on stubborn and carnal souls as a law of life and discipline. They also contain the delicate viands (olera) of dispensations which are provided out of compassion for the weak and the pusillanimous. And lastly, they comprise the strong and solid food of the counsels which, produced from the heart of wisdom, is set before healthy souls and such as have their faculties sufficiently disciplined for discriminating between good and evil. As for the little ones, these, like lambkins, require to be fed with the milk of gentle exhortation rather than with the meat of the strong. In addition to all this, faithful and zealous pastors will never cease to improve the condition of their flocks by means of good and encouraging examples, presented rather in their own lives than in the lives of others. For examples of virtue, if taken from the lives of others instead of being exhibited in their own, would only put themselves to shame and would not have the same influence with the people. For instance, were I, who seem to hold the office of pastor in this community, to set before you as a model the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the clemency of Samuel, the sanctity of David, and other such illustrious examples of virtue, whilst at the same time showing myself harsh and impatient and unfeeling and the very opposite of holy, my words, as I fear, would come forth with little unction and would be received by you with but little relish. However, I leave this to the care of the Divine Goodness that He may supply that in which I am wanting to you, and may put right that which I put wrong. But the good pastor will also see to it that, agreeably to the injunction of Christ in the Gospel, he be found to have salt in himself. For he knows well that a sermon seasoned with this mystical salt is as salutary to the soul as it is pleasant to the ear and the mind. I have now said all that is at present necessary regarding the defence of the city, the adornment of the Spouse, and the pasturing of the flock.

Yet I desire to repeat some of the things I have been saying in language still more explicit, for the benefit of those who, whilst gaping after honours and dignities with excessive avidity, thoughtlessly undertake the gravest responsibilities and expose their salvation to danger. I want them to realise their position and to ask each of them, in the words of the Lord, “Friend, whereto art thou come?” As regards the mere defence of the city, that, unless I mistake, shall be sufficiently provided for if the keeper be a man of fortitude, of spirituality, and of fidelity,—of fortitude that he may repel the assaults of the enemy, of spirituality that he may be able to discover their wiles, and of fidelity that he may not seek the things that are his own. But with respect to the amendment and purification of morals, which appertains to the adornment of the Spouse, is it not

manifest to all how absolutely necessary is a censorship of discipline exercised with the most constant diligence? For this reason, everyone appointed to the government of souls ought to be inflamed with the same zeal as that which consumed that most jealous guardian of the Spouse of the Lord, who exclaimed, “I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God. For I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” Again, how shall a shepherd who is without learning lead forth the flock of the Lord safely into the pastures of the divine Scriptures? On the other hand, if the pastor be learned yet not also virtuous, there is reason to fear that the flock shall be less benefited by the abundance of his doctrine than injured by the barrenness of his life. It is consequently a perilous thing to assume the office of pastor of souls without the essential qualifications of knowledge and virtue. But behold, I am warned to break off here, though much against my will, and when the discourse is still far from its conclusion, I am summoned away to a different occupation, which is altogether unworthy to have the preference over this. I am straitened on every side; and I know not which grieves me the more, to be torn from my present employment or to be dragged to that which awaits me—unless that both together are more grievous than either taken singly. O servitude! O slavery! “I do not that which I will, but what I hate that I do.” Note, however, the point where we leave off, so that as soon as I am at liberty to return, I may resume thence, in the name of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXVII

ON UNWORTHY PASTORS, AND ON THE WATCHMEN BY WHOM THE SPOUSE IS FOUND AND GUARDED

"The watchmen who kept the city found me."

We are now, my brethren, at liberty to go on with the interrupted discourse. And first I would remind you that the qualities which I described for you yesterday as belonging to ecclesiastical rulers are not such as we actually see in our spiritual guides, but such as we should like to see. There is indeed a very great difference between the two, the ideal and the actual. For not all those whom you may now behold standing close to the Spouse on her right and left, and who seem, as the saying is, to cleave to her side, are really the friends of the Bridegroom. Very few indeed shall He be able to find "of all them that are dear to Him" who seek not the things that are their own. They love gifts; and having made themselves thus the slaves of mammon, they cannot at the same time love Christ. Observe how they go, all glittering with ornaments and "surrounded with variety," like a bride coming out of her bridal chamber. Were you suddenly to see one of them moving in the distance, would you not take him to be the Spouse herself rather than one of her keepers? Whence, think you, have they obtained that overflowing abundance of wealth, those splendid garments, that luxury which characterises their tables, that accumulation of vessels of silver and gold? Whence, but from the goods of the Spouse? Therefore it is that she has been left poor and needy and naked, the picture of misery, pallid, unregarded, neglected. Hence we may see that the concern of the Spouse's present-day keepers is not to adorn but to despise her, not to guard but to make away with her, not to defend but to betray her, not to instruct but to ruin her, not to feed the flock but to slaughter and devour it. It is of such the Lord says in the psalms that they "devour My people as they eat bread"; and, "They have devoured Jacob and laid waste his place"; and by the Prophet Osee, "They shall eat the sins of my

people”—which may be paraphrased thus: content with exacting a fine for every sin, they are little solicitous for the conversion of the sinner. Can you show me even one amongst all our spiritual rulers who is not more intent on emptying the purses of his people than on purifying their souls of their vices? Where shall you find the prelate who endeavours by his prayers to appease the divine anger, who preaches “the acceptable year of the Lord”? But these I have mentioned are only their lighter faults: the graver are reserved for a more terrible judgment.

However, there is nothing to be gained by dwelling on their shortcomings, whether heavy or light, because my words cannot reach their ears. And even though what I say were committed to writing, they would probably disdain to read it; or if perchance they did peruse my remarks, they would wax indignant with me, whereas they should in reason be rather incensed against themselves. Let us therefore waste no more time on them who are not the finders but the betrayers of the Spouse. Let us rather turn our attention to those by whom the Spouse acknowledges that she has been found, whose office and ministry without whose zeal these others have inherited, those whom all desire to succeed and but few to imitate. Would to God our modern prelates exhibited the same alacrity in the discharge of their functions as they did when canvassing for their episcopal chairs! Then doubtless they would keep anxious watch and would exercise great solicitude in guarding that Spouse who was found by their predecessors and entrusted to their care. Nay, they would exercise vigilance out of regard for their own interests, and would never suffer it to be said of them, “My friends and My neighbours have drawn near and stood against Me.” Good reason, no doubt, had the Bridegroom for making this complaint, and of none of His “friends and neighbours” could it be more justly made than of the pastors of our own time. It is not enough for these watchmen to neglect the care of their flocks, unless they can also succeed in destroying them. Sunk and buried as they are in the profound sleep of forgetfulness of duty, no thunder-clapping herald of divine vengeance is loud enough to awaken them even to a sense of fear for their own safety. And thus it comes to pass that having no mercy on themselves, they show their people no mercy, so that both shepherd and flock perish miserably together in a common ruin.

But who are those watchmen of the city by whom the Spouse has been found, as she herself confesses? They are the apostles, my brethren, and men of apostolic lives. Verily these are the watchmen who keep the city, that is to say, who keep the Church which is the Spouse whom they have found; and they keep it the more vigilantly at this present time when they behold it exposed to more

serious danger from a domestic and internal enemy, as it is written, “A man’s enemies are they of his own household.” For surely they have not abandoned and deprived of their protection her for whose sake they “resisted unto blood,” but rather they continue to defend and guard her by day and by night, that is, in life and after death. And if the death of His saints is precious in the sight of the Lord, as the Psalmist testifies, I make no doubt that their protection of the Church is all the more powerful after death in proportion as “their principality is (more) exceedingly strengthened.”

Perhaps some one will here object and say to me, “Thou speakest of these matters with the same confidence as if thou hadst beheld them with thine own eyes, yet they are altogether beyond the range of mortal vision.” To this I answer, by telling thee that if thou regardest as trustworthy the testimony of thine eyes, “the testimony of God is greater.” Now, here is the testimony of God, “Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen, all the day and all the night they shall never hold their peace.” But thou mayst reply that these words refer to the angels. I will not contradict, since, as we read, “they are all ministering spirits.” But who shall prevent me from supposing that the same words are equally applicable to the beatified souls of men, which are not now inferior in power to the angels themselves, and at the same time perhaps feel more affection and compassion for us in proportion as they are more united to us by community of nature? Add to this the fact that they have endured the same sufferings and miseries to which they behold us still subjected. And how is it possible that the recollection of having passed through similar tribulations does not excite in those holy souls a more special pity and solicitude in our regard? Is not theirs the voice which we hear in the psalm, saying, “We have passed through fire and water and Thou hast brought us out into a refreshment”? What? They have got safely across, and will they abandon us in the midst of the flames and the billows, without so much as deigning to reach out a helping hand to their perishing children? No, my brethren, the case is not so. It is well with thee, O holy mother Church, it is well with thee in the place of thy banishment, since both heaven and earth stand ready to succour thee. They that guard thee “neither slumber nor sleep.” Thy keepers are the holy angels, thy watchmen are the spirits and souls of the just. Nor are they in error who suppose that thou hast been found by both these orders of blessed spirits, angelic and human, and art likewise guarded by both. Each of the two orders has its own special motive for solicitude concerning thee. The saints are solicitous, because without thee they cannot reach their consummation; the angels are solicitous, because it is only

through thee that they shall have restored to them the integrity of their number. For who is not aware that the fall of Satan and his confederates has left a great gap in the ranks of the heavenly host? Consequently both the angels and the saints are dependent on thee for the consummation, the former of their number, the latter of their desire. Recognise thine own voice, therefore, in the psalm, “The just wait for me until Thou reward me.”

And it is a matter worthy of note, my brethren, that it is not the Spouse who is represented as finding the watchmen, but rather the watchmen as finding the Spouse. It appears to me that they were specially charged with this duty. For “how could they preach unless they were sent?” Hence we have the command of the Lord where He says in the Gospel, “Go: Behold I send you,” and, “Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” So indeed it was. The Bride sought her Bridegroom, and the Bridegroom did not conceal Himself from her. For, in fact, it was He Who aroused in her the very desire to seek Him and gave her a heart well disposed to obey His precepts and the law of life and discipline, provided she had some one to instruct her in the faith and to teach her the way of prudence. And He sent to meet her those whose office it was to plant and to water, that is to say, who were to foster her and to confirm her in all certitude of truth, to give her knowledge and assurance concerning her Beloved. For it is truth which she seeks and which her soul sincerely loves. And indeed is there any love of the soul faithful and true except that whereby truth itself is loved? I am endowed with the faculty of reason; I am capable of knowing the truth; but God grant that I may cease to exist if ever I have the misfortune to lose the love of truth! This love is the fruit, whereas the other gifts are the branches and I am myself the root. I have no security from the axe, if I am found to be without this fruit. For there can be no doubt that the love of the truth is the one endowment of human nature which most clearly manifests the glory of that divine image whereby man is distinguished and exalted amongst all the other mortal creatures. It is by reason of this that my soul ventures to raise herself to the sweet and pure embraces of Him Who is the subsisting Truth, and to rest in the love of Him with all delight and confidence: provided only that she has found such favour in the eyes of so great a Bridegroom that He esteems her worthy of being elevated to so glorious a privilege, or rather that He “presents her to Himself not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” Yet, on the other hand, how fearful a thing must we not suppose it to be and deserving of how awful a punishment to hold in one’s possession so great a gift of God without making proper use of it! But of this elsewhere.

Nevertheless the Spouse did not find Him Whom she sought, but was herself found by some whom she was not seeking. Here is a lesson for those who have no fear of entering upon the ways of life without the assistance of a guide to direct them, who in the spiritual art desire to be their own disciples and their own masters. Nor are they satisfied with this. They must also gather together a multitude of followers and make themselves blind leaders of the blind. How many has not such ambition drawn away from the right path and caused to fall into most dangerous errors! For they were ignorant of the deceits and devices of Satan; and so it came to pass that having begun in the spirit they ended in the flesh, and after being shamefully deceived fell into scandalous disorders. Let those therefore, who are inclined to be thus presumptuous, learn how to walk with caution; let them receive a lesson from the example of the Spouse who could by no means attain to Him Whom she desired until she was met by the watchmen and submitted to be instructed by them in the knowledge of her Beloved, and this that she might learn the fear of the Lord. He that refuses to follow his spiritual director commits himself to the guidance of the seducer. And he that sends his flock to pasture unguarded is more a shepherd to the wolves than to the sheep.

Let us turn now, my brethren, to the Spouse and see in what sense she proclaims that she has been found. For to me this seems a very strange expression to use. It suggests the idea that the Church has come from but one single place; whereas she has been drawn, according to the testimony of Christ, from the east and from the west and from all the ends of the earth. But neither has she been at any time assembled in any one place where she might have been found by the apostles or by the angels, and by them led or directed to Him Whom her soul loveth. Perhaps she had been found before she was collected? No, that could not be, because she did not exist at all until she was collected. Wherefore, had she said that she was collected, or assembled, or—to employ an expression still more appropriate to the Church—called together, by the preachers of the Gospel, I should have simply passed on, seeing no reason for delay. For these preachers were the “coadjutors of God,” Whom they had even heard saying to them, “He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth.” Nor should I feel surprised if some one were to speak of the Church as having been founded or built by the preachers, since they in truth co-operated in this work with Him Who declares in the Gospel, “And upon this rock I will build my Church,” and “It fell not because it was founded on a rock.” But the Spouse makes use of none of these very suitable expressions, preferring to say, in language less intelligible,

that she has been found. This causes me to hesitate and excites in my mind the suspicion that there is something here concealed which requires to be more diligently investigated.

It was my intention, I confess, to make no pause at this place, and to save myself the trouble of an enquiry to which I recognise that my powers are inadequate. But now, remembering how often in dealing with other passages, equally obscure and difficult, I have been assisted beyond all hope when you lifted up your hearts to intercede for me with God, I feel ashamed of such diffidence; and condemning my cowardice, I am willing, yet without presumption, to proceed to the task which before I would have timidly avoided. The Holy Spirit, I make no doubt, will not be wanting with His customary help. But in any case, I have an assurance in the good will of my present hearers that whatever I may find to say shall not be unproductive of some fruit. However, the discussion in question must be reserved for another occasion, as this sermon has to be concluded here. May it be granted you not only to retain the memory of what has been said to-day, but also to cherish it with affection and to carry it out in practice—may this, I pray, be granted you by the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXVIII

ON THE ETERNAL PREDESTINATION OF THE SPOUSE, AND ON THE MANNER IN WHICH SHE HAS BEEN PREPARED AND PREVENTED BY GRACE AND FOUND BY THE PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL

"The Watchmen who kept the city found me."

This word of finding, my brethren, if I remember aright, has given us pause; for hearing the Spouse declare that she has been found by the preachers of the Gospel, we have hesitated in doubt as to her meaning. The reason of this hesitation and uncertainty I have already indicated to you in the preceding discourse, when we judged that there was something hidden here which required to be examined into. But we were then approaching the end of the sermon, and the discussion of the matter in question could not be completed in the little time that remained. So it was held over. And what now remains but that I should discharge my debt to you? Well, then. In the working out of the "great mystery,"—I refer to that which the Doctor of nations interpreted to mean the chaste and holy marriage of Christ with His Church, which is indeed the work of our salvation—in this, I say, there are three factors co-operating with each other, namely, God, the angels, and men. As regards God, why should He not busy and concern Himself with the nuptials of His own beloved Son? So indeed He does, and with His whole mind and heart. And He alone would be sufficient for the work, without the assistance of angels or men, whereas they without Him could accomplish nothing at all. Consequently if He has made them His associates in carrying out His design to redeem the human race, it was not because He wanted any support for Himself, but only because He wished to afford us an opportunity of meriting. For He has decreed that man must find his merit in labour, as it is written, "The labourer is worthy of his hire"; and again, "Every man shall

receive his own reward according to his own labour," whether he be one who plants in faith, or one who waters what another has already planted. And further, by employing the ministry of the angels in the work of saving men, He has caused the former to be loved by the latter. But men are in turn objects of love to the angels. This may be inferred from one fact especially, because, namely, it is from the human race, as these celestial spirits well know, that the losses which their city sustained in the primeval rebellion have to be made good. It is surely only becoming that the kingdom of charity should be governed by no other laws than the holy and mutual loves of those who are destined to reign everlastingly together, by their pure affections for each other and for God.

But although the three agents co-operate with each other, each works in a manner consonant with his nature and dignity, and so there is a wide difference in their respective modes of operation. Thus God accomplishes all His designs with no greater effort than it costs Him to will them, without any agitation, without any motion, without any dependence on place or on time, on instruments or on persons. For He is the Lord of the Sabbath who "judgeth all things with tranquillity"; and He is also wisdom that "disposeth all things sweetly." The angels, likewise, work without agitation, yet not without motion both in space and in time. But human activity is always attended with agitation of mind and with bodily and spiritual movements. For man has received a command to work out his salvation "with fear and trembling," and to "eat his bread in the sweat of his brow."

Having discussed these preliminary questions, let us now, my brethren, consider together that in this most magnificent work of our salvation there are three things which have to be attributed exclusively to the divine authorship, and with regard to which God has anticipated all His auxiliaries and co-operators. The three things I speak of are predestination, creation, and inspiration. Of these, predestination did not begin, I do not say with the beginning of the Church, or even with the beginning of the world, but at no point of time at all, because it was before all time. Creation began with time. Inspiration takes place in time, when and where it pleases God. It admits of no doubt that, according to predestination, there never has been a time when the Church of the elect was not with God. Should the unbeliever marvel at this, let him hear something which is still more wonderful, namely, that the same Church of the elect has never been otherwise than pleasing and beloved. What is to prevent me from boldly proclaiming the great secret which has been revealed to me out of the Heart of God by that faithful publisher of heavenly counsels, I mean the Apostle St. Paul?

For it is he who, amongst many other mysteries, has not hesitated to manifest this also of the riches of the divine goodness, where he says, “He hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity.” And he adds, “Who hath predestined us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ, unto Himself; according to the purpose of His will, unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son.” Nor can there be any doubt that these words are spoken in the name of all the elect, by whom the Church is constituted. But which even of the blessed angels could have found this Church in the fathomless depths of eternity and before she was brought forth into the light as a part of this creation, except he to whom I God, Who is the only true Eternity, condescended to reveal her?

But even after she has appeared at the Creator’s bidding amongst the other visible forms and figures of the created universe, she was not immediately discovered by any human person or by any of the angels, because as yet she could not be recognised, being overshadowed by the image of the earthly man and covered with the mist of death. For it is certain that none of the children of Adam has ever entered this life without this shroud of universal confusion, He alone being excepted Who alone “walked without blemish.” I speak of Emmanuel, Who nevertheless for us and from us assumed to Himself the likeness, though not the reality, of our malediction and our sin. For so we read of Him that He appeared “in the likeness of sinful flesh, and of sin hath condemned sin in the flesh.” Of the rest, all have come into the world under the same cloud, the elect as well as the reprobate. There is no distinction in this matter. All have sinned, and all carry about with them the evidence of their shame. For this reason, then, the Church, even after she had been brought into existence and took her place amongst other created things, could not yet be found or recognised by any creature, because she still lay concealed in a wonderful manner both within the bosom of a blessed predestination and amidst the mass of miserable damnation.

But she, who had been concealed from everlasting by predestinating Wisdom, who at the beginning of time had been likewise kept hidden by creating Power, was at last, in due season, made manifest by the visitation of grace, according to the operation to which a while ago I gave the name of inspiration. I have entitled it so, because it is really something infused into the human spirit from the Spirit of the Bridegroom, as a preparation for the Gospel of peace, that is to say, to prepare a way for the Lord and for the Gospel of His glory into the hearts of all

those who have been predestined to eternal life. In vain would the watchmen have laboured in preaching if this grace of inspiration had not gone before. But when they beheld how the “word runneth swiftly,” when they saw the gentile nations being converted to the Lord with the utmost facility, and all tribes and tongues coalescing in the unity of faith, and the ends of the earth brought together by the influence of the same Catholic mother, then, I say, they understood concerning the riches of divine grace which were concealed from the beginning of the world, treasured up in the bosom of eternal predestination; and they rejoiced at having found her whom God before all ages had chosen for His Spouse.

From these observations it appears evident, as I think, that the Spouse had a special reason for saying that she was found by the preachers, because, namely, she desired to acknowledge that by them she has been collected, but not elected; discovered, but not converted. For the conversion of every soul must be attributed to Him alone to Whom alone all men without exception are under the necessity of addressing that petition of the psalm, “Convert us, O God our Saviour.” But it may be doubted whether there would be the same propriety in speaking of souls as having been found by God as in attributing to Him their conversion. Indeed I am certain that there would not. Souls are not found by God but prevented (non invenire.… sed praevenire) and anticipation excludes discovery. For how could anything be discovered by Him to whom nothing is ever unknown? “The Lord knoweth who are His,” as the Apostle tells us. But what are His own words? “I know,” He says, “whom I have chosen from the beginning.” Manifestly, then, there would have been no reason in the Spouse’s proclaiming that she was found by the same Bridegroom Who from eternity had foreknown her, and loved her, and Who had created her at the beginning. But I would say with confidence that she had been prepared by Him in order to be found by others. For “he that saw it hath given testimony” and we know that “his testimony is true.” And this is his testimony, “And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” These are the words of one of the watchmen who keep the city. But attend now to the Bridegroom Himself by whom the Bride was prepared. He says to the watchmen, using another image, and as it were pointing her out to them with His finger, “Lift up your eyes and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest,” that is to say, prepared for the harvest. It is from this time that the Father of the family begins to invite labourers into His fields, when He beholds how everything has now been so well

prepared that without very much effort on their part they may be able to rejoice over their success and to boast with St. Paul, “For we are God’s coadjutors.” For what is it that they shall have to do? Only to seek out the Spouse and, when she has been found, to tell her about her Beloved. For being the friends of the Bridegroom, they will seek not their own glory but His. And they will not need to labour much to obtain for Him the glory of finding her, because she is already at hand, is already seeking Him with all the eagerness of love. So well has her will been prepared by the Lord.

Indeed, before the watchmen have spoken a word to her, she of her own accord questions them concerning her Beloved. Having been herself prevented by divine grace, she now in turn prevents her preachers, interrogating them and asking, “Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth?” Rightly, therefore, does she proclaim that she has been found by the watchmen who keep the city,” because she is well aware that she has been foreknown and anticipated by the Lord of the city, and that it was their part, not to form her, but to find her after she had been already formed by Him. Thus Cornelius was found by St. Peter and St. Paul by Ananias, because both had been prevented and prepared by the Lord. How could anyone have been better prepared than was Saul, who had even already cried out with suppliant heart and voice, “Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?” Nor less prepared was Cornelius, who by his almsgivings and prayers —to which, however, he was moved by the preventing grace of God—merited to receive the gift of faith. St. Nathanael also was found by St. Philip. But the Lord had already seen him when he was under the fig-tree. And what else was this vision of the Lord but a preparation of the heart? Again, St. Andrew is credited with having found his own brother, Simon; nevertheless he also was anticipated by the foresight and the foreknowledge of the Lord, Who immediately changed Simon’s name to Cephas, as if to signify the firmness of his faith.

Moreover, we read of the Virgin Mary that “she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost.” It seems to me, my brethren, that in this respect there is some resemblance between the Mother of the Lord and His Bride. For unless the latter had been found likewise with the fruit of the Holy Ghost, she would by no means have so familiarly questioned the watchmen who found her concerning Him Whose Spirit He is. As it was, however, she did not wait for them to make known the object of their coming. She was the first to speak, and indeed out of the abundance of her heart, saying to them, “Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth?” For she knew how blessed were the eyes that had gazed upon Him, and therefore, looking with wondering eyes on those who had seen Him, she seems

to ask, “Are you they to whom it has been given to see Him Whom so many kings and prophets have desired to see and have not seen? Are you they who have been found worthy to behold Wisdom in the flesh, Truth in the body, God in man? Many say to me, ‘lo! He is here’ and ‘lo! He is there’; but I judge it to be safer to put my trust in you who ‘did eat and drink with Him after He arose again from the dead.’ ” These, my brethren, are the remarks which have occurred to me in connection with the Spouse’s questioning of the watchmen. If anything has been omitted which ought to be said, it shall be supplied in another sermon. But that the Spouse has been prevented by the Holy Ghost, although recognised and found by those who keep the city, is now, I hope, sufficiently clear, especially from this fact, because, namely, it is she who has been chosen by God before the beginning of the world and prepared for His own beloved Son to be His everlasting delight during unending ages, “that she may be holy and unspotted in His sight,” “springing as the lily” and “flourishing for ever before the Lord,” the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXIX

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SPOUSE PASSED BEYOND THE WATCHMEN, AND ON THE FINAL RECONCILIATION OF CHRIST WITH THE SYNAGOGUE

> "Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth? When I had a little passed beyond them I found Him Whom my soul loveth. I held Him and will not let Him go till I bring Him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that bore me."

"Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth?" O love, so precipitate, so violent, so ardent, so impetuous, suffering the mind to entertain no thought but of thyself, spurning everything, despising everything which is not thyself, content with thyself alone! Thou disturbest all order, disregardest all usage, ignorest all measure. Thou dost triumph over in thyself and reduce to captivity whatever appears to belong to fittingness, to reason, to decorum, to prudence or counsel. Thus every thought which this Spouse thinks and every word which she utters savours of thee and sounds of thee and of nothing but thee, so completely hast thou monopolised both her heart and her tongue. She says to the watchmen, "Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth?" As if she expected them to know what she is thinking of. Dost thou enquire concerning Him Whom thy soul loveth? And has He no other name except this? But who art thou thyself and who is He? Such questions, my brethren, I should be inclined to ask on account of the strangeness of language and the remarkable disregard for the proprieties of speech which appear to distinguish this part of Holy Scripture from every other. Therefore it seems to me that in examining this nuptial song we ought to attend more to the affection than to the verbal expression. And the reason is, because holy love, which is manifestly the sole, exclusive theme of the entire composition, can be measured "not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." It is love that is speaking everywhere. And should any of you desire to attain to an understanding of the things which he reads, let him love. For it is

useless for him who loves not to attempt to read or to listen to this Canticle of love, because the “ignited word” can obtain no lodgment in a heart that is cold and frozen. Just as he who knows not Greek cannot understand one speaking Greek, just as one who knows not Latin cannot understand one speaking Latin, and so on with all other tongues: in the same way to him who knows not love the language of love is barbarous and becomes as “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” But these, I mean the watchmen who keep the city, having themselves also received from the Spirit the gift of love, are able to comprehend what the same Spirit speaketh; and as the language of holy love is perfectly familiar to them, they can answer immediately in the same tongue, that is, by loving affections and offices of piety.

Accordingly, she obtains from them in brief so much information concerning Him Whom she loves that she proceeds to tell us, “When I had a little passed beyond them I found Him Whom my soul loveth.” Well does she say “a little,” because they replied to her question with an “abbreviated word,” by delivering to her the symbol of the faith. The words which follow are equally well-chosen. It was necessary indeed that the Spouse should pass (transire) to them from whom she was to learn the truth. But it was no less necessary that she should pass beyond them (pertransire). For had she not passed beyond even these watchmen, she would never have found Him Whom she was seeking. And let it not be supposed that they left her in ignorance of this. For they preached not themselves but the Lord Jesus, Who without doubt is above them and beyond them. Therefore also He says, “Pass over to Me all ye that desire Me.” Neither was it sufficient for her to pass simply, but she is also instructed to pass over or beyond; because He in Whose steps she was walking, had Himself passed beyond. For not only had He passed from death to life, but He had passed beyond to glory. How, then, could it have been otherwise than necessary for her too to pass beyond? For unless she did so, she could not have overtaken her Beloved Whose footprints she had not faithfully followed whithersoever He had gone.

To express my meaning more plainly, if my Lord Jesus had arisen from the dead, but had not ascended to heaven, it could not be said of Him that He had passed beyond, but only that He had passed from death to life; and thus for the Spouse also in seeking Him it would have been necessary merely to pass, without passing beyond. But now that He has not alone passed from death to life by rising from the tomb, but has also passed beyond by ascending into heaven, there was good reason for her to announce that she, on her side, has not been

content to pass to the watchmen, but has passed beyond them, inasmuch as she has followed her Bridegroom to heaven by her faith and devotion. We may say consequently that to believe in the resurrection is to pass, but to believe in the ascension is to pass beyond. And perhaps before she was found by the watchmen, the Spouse had already a knowledge of the resurrection but not of the ascension, as I remember to have remarked on a previous occasion when discussing the former mystery. Therefore, having been instructed by them in that which was still wanting to her, in the truth, namely, that He Who had arisen from the dead had also ascended into heaven, she likewise ascended, that is to say, she passed beyond the watchmen and so found her Beloved. How, indeed, could she have failed to find Him, seeing that, whither He has ascended in body, she has attained in mind? “When I had a little passed beyond them.” Rightly also does she say “beyond them,” that is, the watchmen or the preachers of the Gospel. For these, as well as His other mystical “members which are upon the earth,” our divine Head has passed beyond and transcended by two of His mysteries, namely, by His resurrection, and I have before explained, and also by His ascension. For “Christ is the first-fruits of them that sleep.” But if He has passed beyond, so too has our faith, which follows Him whithersoever He goes. If He ascends into heaven, it is there; if He descends into hell, it is present; if He takes His wings in the morning early and dwells in the uttermost parts of the sea, still our faith can say to Him, in the words of the psalm, “Even there also shall Thy Hand lead me and Thy Right Hand shall hold me.” For has not the infinitely good and powerful Father of the Bridegroom “raised us up together” with Him “and hath made us to sit” with Him at His own Right Hand “in the heavenly places”? Thus far I have been occupied in explaining the words of the Church, “When I had a little passed beyond them,” and showing how she has even passed beyond herself, since she dwells by faith where she has not yet arrived in fact. I have also, as I hope, made plain to you the reason why she chose to say “when I had passed beyond” rather than “when I had passed.” And now let us likewise pass on to the discussion of what remains of our text.

“I held Him and I will not let Him go till I bring Him into my mother’s house, and into the chamber of her that bore me.” So it is, my brethren. From that time and thenceforward there has been no failure of the Christian family, nor of faith from the earth, nor of charity in the Church. “The floods came and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, because it was founded upon a rock,” “and the rock was Christ.” And so neither the verbiage of philosophers, nor the sophistry of heretics, nor the sword of persecutors, has ever been able,

and never shall be able, to separate her (the Church) “from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.” So strongly does she hold on to Him Whom her soul loveth, so good does she find it to adhere to her God. To charity may be applied the words of the Prophet Isaias, “It is good for soldering.” For where shall we find a firmer bond of union than this solder, which can neither be worn away by water nor broken by tempests, nor severed by the sword? “Many waters cannot quench charity,” as we read further on in this Canticle. “I held Him and I will not let Him go,” says the Spouse. And the holy Prophet Jacob said to Him before her, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.” The Spouse accordingly is unwilling to let her Bridegroom go, and perhaps is more unwilling than was the Patriarch, because he consented to let Him go after receiving a blessing, but not so the Spouse. “It is not Thy blessing I want,” she seems to say, “but Thyself. ‘For what have I in heaven? And besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?’ I will not let Thee go, no, not even if Thou shouldst bless me.”

“I held Him and I will not let Him go,” so speaks the Spouse. But perhaps He is as desirous to be held as she is to hold Him, since He has declared, “My delights are to be with the children of men,” and has moreover promised ever to abide with us, where He says, “Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.” What can be stronger than this bond which is constituted by one and the same most ardent desire of two wills? “I held Him,” she says. But at the same time she is herself held in turn by Him Whom she holds, and to Whom she elsewhere addresses the words, “Thou hast held me by my right hand.” How is it possible for her to fall now, whilst she holds Him and is held by Him? She holds Him by the strength of her faith; she also holds Him by the tenderness of her devotion. But not for long would she continue to hold Him, if she ceased to be held by Him. And she is held by the power of the Lord and by His mercy. “I held Him and will not let Him go till I bring Him into my mother’s house and into the chamber of her that bore me.” Boundless, my brethren, is the charity of the Church which begrudges not a participation in her delights even to her jealous rival, the Synagogue. Can anything be kinder than the readiness which she here manifests to communicate Him Whom her soul loveth even to her enemy? However, it should not surprise us, since “salvation is of the Jews.” Thither whence He came let the Saviour return in order that a “remnant” of Israel may be saved: Let not the branches be ungrateful to the root, nor the children to their mother. The branches ought not to begrudge the root a share of the sap they have derived from it; nor should the children envy their mother a participation in the milk they have drawn from her breasts. Let the

Church, therefore, keep a firm hold of the salvation which the Synagogue has lost; let her hold fast to it “until the fulness of the gentiles shall come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.” At the same time, let her be willing that the universal salvation should be universally participated in, since it can be so communicated to all that each shall have thereby nothing the less. But as a matter of fact, she does do this, aye, and more than this. Do you ask me, my brethren, what does she more? I will tell you. She desires for her rival both the name and the grace of a Spouse. That certainly is something more than mere salvation.

Such charity, my brethren, would be incredible did not the words of the Spouse prove it to be a fact. For if you have observed, she expressed her intention to bring Him Whom she holds not only into her mother’s house, but into her mother’s chamber also, which signifies a high prerogative. It would be sufficient for salvation that the Bridegroom should enter the house: “This day is salvation come to this house,” said Jesus to Zacheus. But His entrance into the privacy of the chamber means the communication of special grace. How should there not be salvation for the household when the Saviour comes into the home? But the soul that deserves to receive Him into her chamber has Him all to herself and enjoys Him in secret. Salvation comes to the house, but for the chamber are reserved the delights of holy love. “Till I bring Him into my mother’s house,” she says. Of what house is she speaking except that whereof the Bridegroom Himself declared to the Jews, “Behold your house shall be left to you desolate”? And He did what He threatened to do, as we have it again on His own testimony, spoken by the mouth of His Prophet Jeremias, “I have forsaken My house, I have left My inheritance.” But now the Spouse promises to bring Him back and to restore to the house of her mother the salvation she has lost. And should you consider this a slight favour, attend to the grace which she promises in addition, “And I will bring Him into the chamber of her that bore me.” Now, if He enters this chamber it can only be as a Bridegroom. Oh, how great is the power of love! The Saviour in anger had forsaken His home and His inheritance, and now, appeased by the love of the daughter, He so far relents that He goes back to the mother not alone as a Saviour, but even as a Bridegroom. “Blessed art thou of the Lord, O daughter,” because thou hast appeased His indignation and restored to Him His inheritance. And blessed art thou of thy mother, since it is by thee that the wrath of heaven has been averted from her, grace recovered for her, and the Bridegroom brought back to say to her, “I am thy salvation.” And lest this should not be enough, thou hast even induced Him to add and to say to her, “I will espouse thee to Me in faith, I will espouse thee to Me in judgment and in

justice, and I will espouse thee to Me in mercy and in commiserations.” But remember that she who thus reconciles the Bridegroom to her mother is the Spouse. How then can she consent to yield her Bridegroom, and such a Bridegroom as hers, to another, not to speak of her desiring to do so? Such is not the case, however. She does indeed, like a good daughter, desire Him for her mother, yet only by communication, not as renouncing her own rights. One Bridegroom is sufficient for the two, although it would be more correct to say that they shall now no longer be two, but one Spouse in Him. “For He is our peace Who hath made both one,” so that there might be one Bride and one Bridegroom, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXX

ON THE IMAGE OF GOD, AND THE SOUL WHICH IS MADE ACCORDING TO THE IMAGE; AND ON THE ERRORS OF GILBERT DE LA PORREE

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and found Him not."

I will rise and will go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and I found Him not.

"The watchmen who kept the city found me: Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth?"

"When I had a little passed beyond them, I found Him Whom my soul loveth: I held Him and I will not let Him go, till I bring Him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me."

Some of you, my brethren, as it appears, are feeling disappointed because, for several days past, I have given myself up so exclusively to the delight of studying, with wonder and admiration, the mystical meanings of this speech of the Spouse, that my sermons have been seasoned with few moral applications, if any at all. That certainly is not in accordance with my usual practice. But I want your permission now to go over again what has been treated already. I will not proceed until all has been rehearsed. I pray you, then, to tell me, if you remember, at what verse I began to defraud you of these moral reflections, so that we may commence again from there. It shall be my care to make good whatever loss you may have suffered, or rather I should say that this shall be the care of the Lord to Whom we look for everything. Whence, therefore, am I to begin with the rehearsal? Unless I am mistaken, the starting-point should be the verse, "In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth," because there and thenceforward my sole concern has been to remove the thick veil of allegory, and to place clearly before you the sense of this secret and delightful intercourse between Christ and His Church. Let us therefore go back to seek for moral interpretations; and do not be afraid that the work shall prove wearisome

to me, provided it be profitable to you. The most convenient plan will be to endeavour to apply to the Word and the individual soul what I have already said concerning Christ and the Church.

But here I may be met with the objection, “Why dost thou join these two together? What is there in common between the Word of God and the soul of man?” I answer, “Much in every way.” For, in the first place, there is a close natural affinity between them, since the Word is the Image of God and the soul is made according to this Image. And secondly, their likeness to each other bears witness to that affinity, since the soul has been made not only according to the Image but also to the likeness of the Image. Do you ask in what consists their likeness to each other? But let me speak first about the Image. The Word is Truth, the Word is Wisdom, the Word is Justice. And under each of these respects He is an Image. An Image of what? An Image of Justice, an Image of Wisdom, an Image of Truth. For the Word as an Image is Justice of Justice, and Wisdom of Wisdom, and Truth of Truth; in the same manner as He is the Light of Light and God of God. But the soul is none of these things, because she is not the Image. Nevertheless she is capable of them, and is desirous of them too; and perhaps it is with respect to this capacity and this desire that she is said to be made according to the Image. She is a noble creature whose greatness is revealed in the fact that she possesses in herself such a capacity for participating in the perfections of the Word; and in her yearning for the same, she gives proof of her righteousness. We read in Ecclesiastes that “God made man right”; and that He made him great also is clear, as I have said, from his capacity for greatness. For it is necessary that what has been made according to the Image should bear some resemblance to the Image, and that its participation in the name of the Image should not be in vain; just as the Image Itself has not received the name of Image as a bare and empty title. Consequently of Him Who is the Image, that is, of the Word, we read that being “in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Here we have insinuated to us the righteousness of the Word, in that He is affirmed to be in the form of God, and His Majesty in that He is affirmed to be equal with God; in order to make it appear that, just as the Image is conformed in both these perfections to Him of Whom He is the Image, so is there on the other hand a corresponding conformity between the Image and the soul which is made according to the Image. For it is of the Same of Whom the Word is the Image that we hear David singing in the psalms, at one time, “Great is our Lord and great is His power,” at another, “The Lord our God is righteous and there is no iniquity in Him.” From this great and righteous Lord, the Word,

His Image, has that He also is great and righteous, and from the Image the soul which is made according to the Image.

But I say: since we have assigned greatness and righteousness both to the Image and to the soul which is made according to the Image, does the Image therefore possess nothing more than that which is made according to the Image? Yes, my brethren, and infinitely more. For the soul has received these perfections in measure, but the Image according to equality with the Giver. And is not this something more? But there is a further difference to which I would invite your attention. The soul owes her greatness and her righteousness to creation and condescension, whereas it is by generation they belong to the Word. Now there can be no doubt that it is a more magnificent thing to be great and righteous in the latter way than in the former. Neither shall it be gainsaid that the soul in the following respect too is surpassed by the Word, in that, namely, whilst she possesses the perfections in question merely as gifts bestowed by God, He has them by God and also of God. That is to say, He has them from the very Substance of the Father. For the Image of God is consubstantial with God, and everything which God seems to communicate to this same Image of Himself is essential and substantial, not accidental in Both. There is still another point deserving of your attention, as to which the Image immeasurably transcends that which is made according to the Image. Greatness and righteousness, as everybody knows, differ from each other in their proper natures. Nevertheless, they are one in the Image. What is more, they are one with the Image. For to the Image, not alone is it the same thing to be great as to be righteous, but it is also the same thing to be both great and righteous as simply to be. Such, however, is not the case with the soul. Greatness and righteousness in her are both distinct from her substance, and distinct from each other. For if, as I have already pointed out, the soul is great in that she is capable of things divine and eternal, and is righteous in that she is desirous of things divine and eternal, it follows that a soul which neither seeks nor relishes “the things above but the things that are upon the earth” can no longer be called righteous but rather curved, although she does not cease thereby to be great, since she still retains her natural capacity for eternal glory. Indeed it is not possible that she should at any time be without this capacity, even though it is destined never to be realised. Thus is fulfilled the word of the Prophet David, “Surely man continueth as an image”; yet only in part, so as to make manifest the pre-eminence of the Word Who is the perfect Image. For how could the Word fall from being either great or righteous, since these attributes belong to Him in such a manner that He is rather identified with

them than possessed of them? And it may be said that for this reason also “man continueth as an image” in part, lest if he lost completely the qualities of an image, viz., both greatness and righteousness, he should also lose the hope of salvation. By ceasing to be great, he would cease to be capable of eternal glory, because, as I have said, the soul’s greatness consists in this capacity. But how could anyone hope for what he is incapable of receiving?

Consequently, “man continueth as an image” in the greatness which he retains even after he has lost his righteousness, halting, as it were, in one leg, and become as “children that are strangers.” For it is of such, as I think, that the Psalmist says, “The children that are strangers have lied to me, strange children have faded away, and have halted from their paths.” Very appropriately are they described as “children that are strangers.” For they are still children because of the greatness which they have preserved; and they are strangers inasmuch as they have lost their righteousness. Nor would the Psalmist have said of them that they “have halted,” but rather that they have fallen, or used some other similar expression, if men had put off all resemblance to an image. As the case is, however, “man continueth as an image” according to the greatness which he still possesses; whilst as regards righteousness he halts, so to speak, having been deposed and cast down from the dignity of an image, agreeably to what we read in Holy Scripture, “Surely man continueth as an image: yea and he is disquieted in vain.” In vain, truly, because, as the Psalmist goes on to say, “He storeth up; and he knoweth not for whom he shall gather these things.” Wherefore, my brethren, does he not know for whom he storeth, unless because, by stooping down to vile and earthly things, he treasureth up only earth for himself? Certainly as to those treasures which he lays up to himself on earth, “he knoweth not for whom he shall gather” them, whether for the moth that consumes, or for the thief that breaks through and steals, or for the enemy that plunders, or for the fire that devours. And therefore to the man who thus miserably bends and inclines himself to those things which are upon the earth we may apply the mournful words of the psalm, “I am become miserable and am bowed down even to the end: I walked sorrowful all the day long.” For such a one experiences in himself the truth of that saying of the Wise Man, “God made man right, and he hath entangled himself with an infinity of cares.” And immediately he heard addressed to him the words of mockery, “Bow down that we may go over” thee.

But what has led us hither? It was, I think, my endeavour to show that greatness and righteousness (by which two perfections I affirmed every image of God to be constituted) are neither one and the same in the soul, nor one and the

same with the soul, whilst maintaining on the contrary the equally orthodox position that the same two are identified in the Word and with the Word. And with regard to righteousness, what I have said is sufficient to make it evident that it is something distinct both from the soul and from the greatness of the soul, since the soul continues in existence after she has ceased to be righteous, and continues also to be great. But how am I to establish the distinction between the soul herself and her greatness? For the same argument which I employed to prove the soul distinct from her righteousness is not available here, since the soul cannot lose her greatness as she can lose her righteousness. Nevertheless I maintain that the soul is not her greatness, and my reason is this, because although the soul is never found without her greatness, that greatness may be found apart from the soul. Would you like to know where? In the angels. For the greatness of the angels is derived from the same source as the greatness of the soul, namely, from their capacity for things divine and eternal. But if the fact that the soul can exist without being righteous is sufficient to demonstrate her distinction from righteousness, it must equally follow that she is distinct from her greatness, from the fact that she cannot vindicate this greatness as something proper to herself. Since therefore righteousness does not belong universally to souls, and greatness does not belong exclusively to souls, it is manifestly and equally impossible for one or the other to be identified with the soul. Here is another argument. No form can be identical with that of which it is the form. Now her greatness is a form of the soul. Nor does the fact that it is inseparable from the soul prevent it from being a form of the same. For all essential differences are similarly inseparable, and not only all specific and strictly so-called properties, but also certain qualities common to many species, as well as innumerable other forms. The soul, consequently, is not her greatness any more than is the crow her blackness, or the snow its whiteness, or man his risibility or his rationality. And yet you will never find either a crow without blackness, or snow without whiteness, or a man who is devoid of risibility or rationality. It is just the same with the soul with regard to her greatness. Although inseparable, they are quite distinct from each other. How in truth could they be otherwise than mutually distinct, since the one is a substance and a subject in which the other inheres as a quality or an accident? It is only the supreme and uncreated Nature, Which is one God in three Persons, That vindicates for Itself such a pure and incommunicable simplicity of essence as excludes not alone all kinds of difference of thing from thing, but likewise all distinctions relating to place and time. For, abiding in Itself, that Divine Nature is whatever It has, and is what It

is eternally and unchangeably. Things which are manifold elsewhere are reduced in It to unity, and things in their own natures distinct in It become identical, so that the multitude of Its perfections does not impair Its unity nor their variety prejudice Its simplicity. It contains in Itself all places and in their proper places disposes the whole universe of creatures, yet occupies no place Itself. It is unaffected by the succession of time which pursues its course outside and beneath It. It has no future to look forward to, no past to look back upon, no present to experience.

Let us keep far away, my dearest brethren, let us keep far away from those modern teachers, rather heretics than mere dialecticians, who most impiously maintain that neither the greatness by which God is great, nor the goodness by which He is good, nor the wisdom by which He is wise, nor the justice by which He is just, nor lastly the Divinity by which He is God, is Itself God. God is God, they say, by reason of His Divinity, yet His Divinity is not God. Perchance they think it would be degrading the Divinity to regard It as God, since It is so great that It makes God to be God. But if It be not God, what then is It? Either It is God, or It is something which is distinct from God, or It is nothing at all. Thou, the heretic, dost not concede that It is God. And I suppose thou wilt not assert that It is nothing, since thou confessest It to be so indispensably necessary to God that without It, not only would He not be God, but it is It alone which makes Him to be God. But if thou declarest the Divinity to be something which is distinct from God, this Something must be either greater than God, or less than God, or equal to God. But how can that be less than God which alone makes God to be God? It remains then to say that It is either greater than God or equal to Him. If It be greater than God, then we must admit that not God but the Divinity of God is the Supreme Good. And if It be equal to God, the consequence is that we have two Supreme Goods instead of one. Both these conclusions are equally opposed to Catholic truth. And as regards the greatness of God, His goodness, His justice, and His wisdom, I hold exactly the same as I do concerning His Divinity, namely, that all such perfections are one in God and one with God. For He is good by nothing distinct from that by which He is great, and He is just and wise by nothing distinct from that by which He is great and good, and He is all these at once by nothing distinct from that by which He is God, and He is God by nothing distinct from Himself.

But the heretic will say to me, “What? Dost thou deny that God is God by His Divinity?” Surely not. But I maintain that the same Divinity by Which He is God is Itself God, and I am obliged to do so lest I should be found asserting the

existence of something more excellent than God. I also affirm that God is great by His greatness, but that this greatness is nothing distinct from Himself, because otherwise I should have to admit something greater than God. And I say that he is good by reason of His goodness, which however, I hold to be really identical with Himself, lest by allowing a distinction I should seem to myself to have discovered something better than God. Similarly with regard to the other divine perfections. Willingly, and securely, and without stumbling do I walk in the footsteps of him who has said, “God is great only by that greatness which is what He is, otherwise that greatness shall be greater than God.” These, my brethren, are the words of St. Augustine, that mighty hammer of heretics. If then anything at all can be rightly predicated of God, it will be more correct and more proper to say: God is Greatness, God is Goodness, God is Justice, God is Wisdom, than: God is great, God is good, God is just, God is wise.

With good reason, therefore, did Pope Eugenius and the other bishops, at the council recently held by his Holiness at Rheims, condemn as perverse and open to suspicion of heresy, the explanation which Gilbert, Bishop of Poitiers, gives in his book to the most orthodox and Catholic words of Boethius concerning the Holy Trinity. The commentary runs thus, “The Father is Truth, that is to say, the Father is true; the Son is Truth, that is to say, the Son is true; The Holy Ghost is Truth, that is to say, the Holy Ghost is true; and these three are not three Truths but one Truth, that is to say, They are one True.” O most obscure and perverse exposition! How much better and truer had it been to speak thus contrariwise. “The Father is true, that is to say, the Father is Truth; the Son is true, that is to say, the Son is Truth; the Holy Ghost is true, that is to say, the Holy Ghost is Truth; and these Three are one True, that is to say, They are one Truth.” In this way indeed would Gilbert have spoken had he condescended to imitate St. Fulgentius, who says, “The one Truth of the one God, or rather the one Truth which is the one God, does not suffer the creature to share in the service and worship which belongs to the Creator.” A faithful instructor this, who spoke most truly of Truth, and entertained pious and Catholic sentiments respecting the pure and perfect simplicity of the Divine Substance, in Which nothing can be found that is not Itself, nor is Itself anything distinct from God. But there are several other passages in that same Commentary of Bishop Gilbert’s, wherein he seems to depart even more manifestly from the orthodox faith. I shall just mention one by way of example. Boethius writes, “When we hear the words, ‘God, God, God,’ the reference is to the Divine Substance,” to which our Commentator subjoins, “He means not any substance which itself is God, but the

Substance by which God is." Heaven forbid that the Catholic Church should ever admit such a doctrine, should ever admit either a substance or anything else by which God is and which is not itself God!

However, I am not now speaking against Gilbert himself, because in the aforesaid Council of Rheims he had the humility to submit to the verdict of the bishops, and with his own mouth condemned both these and all other blameworthy opinions found expressed in his writings. But I speak against those who, in defiance of the apostolic interdict, promulgated in the same Council, are said to be still reading and transcribing his book, obstinately persisting in the error which its author has abjured, and more willing to imitate the example of his transgression than that of his repentance. And not only on their account, but for your sakes also, my brethren, I have thought it worth while to make this digression, taking occasion from the distinction which I was pointing out between the Image and the soul made according to the Image; so that if any of you should have ever happened to drink a draught of these stolen waters (to whose sweetness the Book of Proverbs bears testimony) he may now, after receiving the antidote, vomit forth the poison. Then, having purged his mind of everything unwholesome, let him come to hear what, according to my promise, remains still to be said concerning the likeness of the soul to the Word and to "draw (purer) water with joy (not out of mine, but) out of the fountains of the Saviour," the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXXI

ON THE SOUL'S LIKENESS TO THE WORD IN THE THREE ATTRIBUTES OF SIMPLICITY, IMMORTALITY AND LIBERTY

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and found Him not.

"I will rise and will go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and I found Him not.

"The Watchmen who kept the city found me: Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth?

"When I had a little passed beyond them, I found Him Whom my soul loveth: I held Him and I will not let Him go, till I bring Him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that bore me."

In the preceding discourse, my brethren, I enquired into the nature of the affinity between the Word Divine and the soul. And indeed such an enquiry was very necessary. For what can there be in common between such Majesty and such poverty that the loftiness of the One and the lowliness of the other should be represented as mutually embracing, as if they were equals, after the manner and with the affection of a bridegroom and his bride? If we can say this with truth, it is for us a source of joy and confidence exceeding great. On the other hand, to affirm it without truth is to be guilty of presumption deserving of the severest chastisement. For this reason, then, I thought it incumbent on me to examine into the various points of relationship between the Word and the soul. Many of them have now been ascertained, but some others remain still to be investigated. For who is so dull as not to be able to perceive how close must be the relation of conformity between the Image and that which is made according to the Image? In yesterday's sermon, if you remember, I gave the former of these names to the Word and the latter to the soul. And in the same discourse I pointed out to you not only the relationship which comes from the soul's having been made according to the Image, but also that due to her being made to the likeness

of the Image. I have not yet however explained in what this likeness essentially consists. Well, then, let us apply ourselves now to the task; so that the more perfectly the soul understands the nobility of her origin, the more ashamed she may be to lead a degenerate life, and that she may zealously study to reform whatever she may find in herself corrupted by sin. Thus, by the grace of God, regulating her life in a manner worthy of her parentage, she may at last approach with confidence to the embraces of the Word.

Let her take notice, therefore, that it is to this prerogative of her likeness to the Word she owes the essential simplicity of her substance in virtue of which it is the same thing for her to live as to exist, although for her it is not the same to live virtuously or to live happily as to exist. For between her and the Word there is only similitude, not equality. There is a degree of affinity yet it is only a degree. For it is not the same glory nor an equal excellence to possess an existence which is identical with life, and to possess an existence which is not only identical with life, but even with a happy life. If, then, the latter perfection belongs to the Word, because of His sublimity, and the former to the soul because of her resemblance to Him, and without prejudice to His pre-eminence, the affinity of their natures becomes manifest; and manifest too the prerogative of the soul. To make my meaning plainer, I shall put it in this way: For God alone it is the same thing to be and to be happy; and this is the first and purest simplicity. “The second is like unto this,” namely, when for anything it is the same to be and to live; and such is the case with the rational soul. From this, which is a lower degree of perfection, an ascent can be made not alone to a virtuous life, but even to a blissful life. Nevertheless, not even when the soul has attained thither, shall it then be the same thing for her to be and to be happy; so that she may exult in her resemblance to God, yet in such a manner as always to have in her inequality sufficient reason for all her bones to cry out with the Psalmist, “Lord, who is like to Thee?” Still that perfection, viz., identity of life and existence, is a good degree for the soul, from which and from which only she is able to ascend to a blissful life.

There are, my brethren, two classes of living beings, namely, those which are endowed with both life and feeling, and those which possess life alone. Sentient things are more perfect than insentient, but superior to both is that life itself in virtue of which things live and feel. For life and that which lives do not stand on the same grade of perfection, much less life and beings which are inanimate. The soul indeed is a living thing, but she does not receive her life from any form or principle distinct from herself. And thus, to speak properly, she is not so much a

living being as life itself. Hence it is that when infused into the body she animates it, so that, from the presence of life, the body becomes, not indeed life, but living. From this it is evident that not even for a living body is it the same thing to be and to live, inasmuch as it can be without possessing life. For a greater reason still, those things which are devoid of life cannot attain to that perfection. No, nor can it be reached even by everything which is called and is life, and by reason of this fact alone. For there is the soul of the brute, and there is the soul of the plant, the former endowed with feeling, the latter insensate. But for neither of these souls is it the same thing to be as to live, since, as many philosophers maintain, both existed in the elements before they began to animate, the former the body of the brute, the latter the body of the plant. From this it follows that such souls cease to live as soon as they cease to vivify, yet they do not also cease to be. They are disengaged and dissolved, because not only are they compounded with the matter of their bodies, but they are also composite in their own natures. For each of these irrational souls is not one simple entity, but results from the union of different constituents. Consequently, they are not annihilated at the death of the plant or the animal, but are resolved into their elements, and each of the constituent parts returns to its principle, the elements of air, for example, going back to air, the elements of fire going back to fire, and the rest in like manner. For such souls, therefore, it cannot be the same thing to be and to live, since they sometimes are even whilst they live not.

Furthermore, none of those things whose being is not identical with life can ever advance or attain to a virtuous or to a happy life, for the reason that they are even incapable of rising to this lower degree. The human soul only, which is known to stand upon this eminence, has been created thereon, as life from Life, as simple from the Simple, as immortal from the Immortal, so that she is not far below that supreme degree, that, namely, where being is identical with blessedness of life, in which He alone stands “Who is the Blessed and the only Mighty, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.” The rational soul, accordingly, has received at her creation, if not the actuality, at any rate the possibility of happiness; and she therefore approaches as near as is possible to the highest degree, which, however, she can never attain to. For, as I have already remarked, not even then, when she is actually happy, will it be the same thing for her to be and to be happy. I acknowledge her likeness to the Divinity, but I deny her equality. For instance, God is Life, and the soul is life: here we have similarity, yet also disparity. The soul resembles God in that, like Him, she is life, in that, like Him, she lives by her own essence, and in that, like Him, she

not only has life in herself, but communicates it also externally. She differs from Him, on the other hand, by as much as the creature differs from the Creator. She differs from Him in that whereas He is self-sufficing, she would have no life at all unless vivified by Him, just as she would have no being at all unless created by Him. When I say she would have no life unless vivified by God, I am speaking, not of her natural, but of her supernatural life. For all human souls, even such as have no supernatural life, are in their natural life necessarily immortal. But what manner of life is that which it would be better to end by dying than to continue? It is rather death than life, and a death the more awful because it is due not to nature but to sin. “The death of the wicked is very evil,” says the Psalmist. Thus, therefore, the soul that “liveth according to the flesh is dead” even while she lives, because it were better for her not to live at all than so to live. And from this kind of living death there shall be no resurrection for her except through the Word of life, or rather through the Word who is Life Itself, living and vivifying.

But otherwise the rational soul is truly immortal, and in this respect also has affinity, yet not equality, with the Word. For the Creator’s immortality so far transcends the creature’s that the Apostle says of God, “Who only hath immortality.” By these words, as I think, he meant to convey to us that God alone is immutable in His Nature, Who has Himself declared by His Prophet Malachy, “I am the Lord and I change not.” For true and complete immortality excludes as well change as termination of life, since all change is an image of death. Indeed, everything which undergoes change, whilst it passes from one state of being to another, must necessarily die, in a certain sense, with regard to what it is, so that it may begin to be what it is not. But how can you have immortality there where you have as many deaths as changes? And, in the words of the Apostle, “The creature was made subject to (this) vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him That made it subject in hope.” Nevertheless the soul possesses a true if imperfect immortality, because as she is the principle of life to herself, she can as little fall from life as she can fall from herself. At the same time, since it is evident that she changes in her thoughts and affections, let her glory in her resemblance to the divine immortality, in such a way as not to forget that she is wanting in an important part of perfect immortality: let her acknowledge that immortality absolute and adequate belongs to Him alone “with whom there is no change nor shadow of alteration.” Yet what has been said in the present discourse has enabled us to understand how exalted is the dignity of the human soul, which appears to approximate to the Word of God by a twofold affinity of

nature, namely, by simplicity of essence and immortality of life.

Yet another point of relationship now occurs to me which I must by no means pass over; because no less than those already mentioned, and perhaps even in a greater degree, it renders the soul glorious in herself and like to the Word. I refer to the faculty of free-will, which shines in the soul with a beauty all divine, as a gem set in gold. It is through this faculty that the mind possesses the power of judging and the liberty of choosing between good and evil, between life and death, between light and darkness. And if there be any other objects which, in the same manner, appear to stand in mutual opposition as regards the state of the soul, between these also this vigilant arbiter (which may be called the soul's eye) judges and determines, as free in electing as it is peremptory in deciding. Hence it is called the faculty of free choice (liberum arbitrium) because, namely, it freely chooses between opposites according to the pleasure of the will. It is in virtue of the same faculty that man is capable of merit and demerit. For every act you perform, provided it was in your power to omit it, is justly reputed to you as merit or as demerit. And as praise is justly due not only to him "who could have transgressed and hath not transgressed, and could do evil things and hath not done them," but to him also who could have omitted to do good and yet hath done it: similarly, demerit is not wanting either to him who could have omitted to do evil and yet hath done it, or to him who could have done good, yet hath not done it. But where there is no liberty, there can be neither merit nor demerit. Wherefore the brute beasts, which lack the light of reason, are incapable of meriting or demeriting, because being without the power of deliberation, they are likewise without liberty. They are governed by their senses, driven on by their impulses, carried away by their appetites. For they possess neither judgment whereby to direct and rule themselves, nor even the faculty of reason, which is the instrument of judgment. Hence it is that judgment is not exercised upon them, because they do not exercise judgment themselves. With what reason indeed could they be required to give a reason for their action since from them the gift of reason has been withheld?

Man is the only mortal who can resist the coercive power of nature, and consequently he alone is free amongst all earthly creatures. Nevertheless, even he becomes subject to coercion when he becomes guilty of sin. But this coercion is not from nature but from his own will, so that not even thus is he deprived of his native liberty: because whatever is voluntary the same is free. And in truth it is owing to sin that "the corruptible body weigheth down the soul," not by the weight of its mass, but by the force of concupiscence. For the fact that the soul is

incapable now of rising of herself from sin, although she was able to fall of herself, is due to the will, which, weakened and prostrated by the depraved and vicious love of a corrupted body, cannot at the same time admit the love of justice. And so, I know not in what wicked yet wonderful way, the will when deteriorated by sin, imposes a constraint on itself: so that on the one hand, such constraint, since it is voluntary, cannot avail to excuse the will; and, on the other hand, the will, "being drawn away and allured," is unable to resist the constraint. This constraint, I repeat, is in some sense voluntary. It is a pleasant kind of violence which blandishes whilst it coerces and coerces by blandishing. Therefore the human will, when once it has consented to evil, cannot now by its own power either emancipate itself, or in any way excuse itself by reason. Hence that querulous cry of one groaning, as it were, under the burden of this necessity, "Lord, I suffer violence, answer Thou for me." But immediately recognising that he was unjustly complaining of the Lord, inasmuch as the responsibility lay exclusively with his own will, listen to what he adds, "What shall I say or what shall He answer for me, whereas I myself have done it?" He was oppressed by the yoke, but by no other yoke than that of a voluntary servitude. And while this servitude rendered him unhappy, its voluntariness rendered him inexcusable. For just as it was the will which, when it was free, made itself the slave of sin, by consenting to sin: so is it the will also which now by voluntarily serving keeps itself in bondage to sin.

But some of you may reply to this, "Consider what thou art saying. Dost thou call that voluntary which is now at any rate a manifest necessity? It is true, no doubt, that in the beginning the will enslaved itself voluntarily; but it is not by itself that it is now kept in bondage, it is rather held captive against its will." I am glad that thou dost grant me this much at least, that it is held captive. But bear clearly in mind that it is the will which thou acknowledgest to be thus held. Dost thou then speak of the will as acting unwillingly? No, the will cannot be held against its will, since the act of the will is always voluntary, never involuntary. But if it is held voluntarily, it is held by itself. What therefore shall it say or what shall it answer to the Lord, since it itself hath done it? And what has it done? It has made itself a slave. Hence it is said in the Gospel, "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." Consequently, the will made itself a slave when it committed sin, and it committed sin when it resolved to obey sin. But it regains its freedom as soon as it ceases from sinning. However, it continues to sin so long as it continues to hold itself freely in the same servitude to sin. For the will cannot be held captive involuntarily for the simple

reason that it is the will. Therefore, since it voluntarily continues in thraldom, not only has it once made itself a slave, but it is constantly doing this. Justly then may it cry out in the words of Ezechias, “What shall I say or what shall He answer for me whereas I myself have done it?” And it would be well, my brethren, if this were often recalled to mind.

“For all that,” it may be answered to me, “thou shalt never make me give up my belief in a necessity which I suffer, which I experience in myself, against which I constantly struggle.” But where, let me ask, dost thou feel this necessity? Is it not in thy will? Consequently, not only dost thou will, but thou dost will with great energy, what thou wiliest even from necessity. For surely thou must will that strongly which, however much thou strivest, thou art unable not to will. Now, where there is will, there also is liberty. Yet I am speaking only of natural liberty, not of that spiritual liberty “wherewith,” as the Apostle says, “Christ hath made, us free.” For with regard to this latter liberty the same Apostle tells us that “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Thus, my brethren, in a certain evil yet marvellous way, the soul is held captive under this voluntary and sinfully free necessity, at one and the same time bond and free. She is a bond-slave by reason of her servitude; she is free on account of the voluntariness of this servitude. And what is stranger still and still more pitiful, she is guilty because of her freedom, and she is a bond-slave because of her guilt; consequently she is a bond-slave because of her freedom. “Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the” dishonour of this shameful servitude? I am unhappy, yet I am free. I am free because I am a man; I am unhappy because I am a slave. I am free because of my resemblance to God; I am unhappy because of my opposition to God. “O Keeper of men,” exclaims holy Job, “why dost Thou set me opposite to Thee?” For Thou hast set me opposite to Thee in so far as this, that Thou hast not prevented me from setting myself opposite to Thee. Otherwise it is I that have so set myself, and therefore “I am become burdensome to myself.” And this indeed most justly, so that Thy enemy should become my enemy as well, and that he who opposes Thee should oppose me also. But it is I myself who am set opposite both to Thee and to me; and I find in my members that which is equally at variance with my mind and with Thy law. Oh, who will deliver me out of my own hands! For if “I do not that good which I will,” it is by myself alone I am hindered; and if, on the other hand, “the evil which I hate, that I do,” it is by compulsion from none other than myself. And would to God this hindrance and this compulsion were either so violent as to be involuntary, because then perhaps I might have an excuse for yielding; or else

were so voluntary as not to be violent, for thus I certainly should have it in my power to correct myself. Now however there is no escape for me, since the voluntariness of sinning renders me inexcusable, as I have before observed, and its necessity renders me incorrigible. Who will “deliver me out of the hand of the sinner, and out of the the hand of the transgressor of the law and of the unjust?”

But some of you may wish to ask me of whom do I speak. I am speaking of myself. I am that sinner, that outlaw, that impious one. I am a sinner because I have sinned. I am an outlaw because by my will I persist in acting against the law. For my own will is that “law in my members fighting against” the divine law. And since the law of the Lord is the “law of my mind,” according to what is written, “The law of God is in his heart,” by consequence, to myself also my own will is found in opposition, “which is the greatest iniquity.” For to whom shall I not be evil if I am evil to myself? As is said in Ecclesiastes, “He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?” I confess that I am not good, because I have nothing good abiding in me. Nevertheless I will console myself, since St. Paul himself has made the same acknowledgment, saying, “I know that there dwelleth not in me that which is good.” Yet he specifies what he means by the words “in me,” adding, by way of explanation, “that is to say, in my flesh,” to which he denies any good on account of the opposing law therein abiding. For he has another law in his mind, and a better one. Surely the law of God is a good law. Bat if he be evil because of the evil law, how can it be denied that he is good on account of the good law? Perhaps, however, it will be said that the evil law which exists in his flesh is his own, and therefore he is evil by reason of this evil law; but that the good law, being less his own, does not similarly make him good. This is not true. For the law of his God is in his mind, and it is in his mind in such a manner as to be also the law of his mind. I have the testimony of the Apostle for this, who says, “I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind.” Shall it be said that what belongs to his flesh is his own, but that what belongs to his mind is not his own? In my opinion, the latter is even more his own than the former. And why should I not think so, since the same inspired teacher declares so? For whereas with his mind he serves the law of God and with his flesh the law of sin, he clearly insinuates which of these, viz., the law of God or the law of sin, he acknowledges to be the more his own, when he reputes the evil law in his flesh so foreign to him that he can say, “Now then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me.” And perhaps it was for this reason the law which he found in his members was expressely called another law, because, namely, he regarded it as something alien and adventitious.

Therefore I will venture to go even farther and to say, surely without rashness, that St. Paul is no longer evil on account of the evil law which he has in his flesh, but is rather good by reason of the good law which dwelleth in his mind. How can he be otherwise than good himself who "consents to the law of God because it is good"? He also indeed confesses that he serves the "law of sin," yet he does so not with his mind but only with his flesh. Now since he serves the law of God with his mind, and the "law of sin" with his flesh, I leave it for you to decide, my brethren, as to which should be the more particularly imputed to St. Paul. As for myself, I have been easily convinced that that which belonged to his mind was more truly his own than what appertained to his flesh. Nor is this conviction confined to me, since, as I have remarked, it was also entertained by the Apostle himself, who says, "If then I do that which I will not.… it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

So much must suffice on this subject of liberty. In the little book which I composed on Grace and Free Will you will perhaps find the questions concerning the Image and the likeness treated somewhat differently, yet without any real contradiction of what I have been saying now. You have read that work, and you have heard this sermon. I submit both to your judgment: choose that which you find the more pleasing. And it you have found anything else which gives you more satisfaction than either, I rejoice at it, and shall rejoice. But however this may be, remember what I have now said concerning the soul's three characteristics of simplicity, immortality, and liberty, which formed the three principal points of to-day's discourse. And I think that this much at the least is now clearly evident to you, namely, that the soul, by reason of her natural and ennobling likeness to the Word, which shines out so conspicuously in the characteristics referred to, has a very close affinity to Him who is the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXXII

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH SIN SPOILS THE LIKENESS OF THE SOUL TO GOD BY COMBINING THE CONTRARY QUALITIES WITH HER SIMPLICITY, IMMORTALITY AND LIBERTY

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and found Him not.

"I will rise, and will go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and I found Him not.

"The watchmen who kept the city found me: Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth?

"When I had a little passed beyond them, I found Him Whom my soul loveth: I held Him and I will not let Him go, till I bring Him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me."

What think you, my brethren? May we now return to the point whence we digressed and resume the order of our exposition? For the digression was made for the purpose of demonstrating the affinity between the Word and the soul, and this has already been rendered sufficiently plain. We might indeed go back now, as it seems to me, did I not feel conscious that there still remains some little obscurity in regard to what has been said. I desire to defraud you of nothing. I should not like to pass over anything at all which I think might profit you. How then could I dare to withhold from you any part of that which has been given me for you especially? I know a person who once, whilst delivering a discourse, with a diffident although not with a faithless soul, wished to keep back and to reserve for himself some of the thoughts wherewith the Holy Spirit was inspiring him, in order to have matter for another sermon on the same subject: but lo! he heard a voice saying to him, "so long as thou withholdest this thou shalt receive nothing else." What would have been the case had he kept back what was given him, not from any desire to make provision for his own poverty, but through

envy of his brethren's progress in virtue? Would he not be deprived, and justly deprived, like the unprofitable servant, of even that which he seemed to have? May God continue always in the future (as He has always done in the past) to keep such a misfortune far from your servant! So may He, who is the ever-flowing Fountain of salutary wisdom, condescend henceforth to abound unto me without failing, according as I without envy have communicated to you and poured out for your benefit whatever He has so far deigned to impart to me! If I were to keep back what I owe to you, from whom could I any longer hope to receive anything? From no one surely, not even from the bounty of God.

Well, then, as I was saying, there is a difficulty arising out of my last two discourses, which I am afraid will prove a stumbling block to some of you, unless it is explained away. And indeed, if I am not mistaken, there are some here present whose minds are already perplexed concerning this very point whereof I am about to speak. With regard to that threefold likeness to the Word which I have assigned to the soul, or rather to which I have called your attention as naturally implanted in the soul, do you remember my saying also that it inheres inseparably in the soul? Yet this appears to conflict with certain passages of Holy Scripture, for example, with these words of the Psalmist, "man when he was in honour did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them"; and with these also, "They changed their glory into the likeness of a calf that eateth grass"; and with what the same Prophet says, speaking in the person of the Lord, "Thou thoughtest unjustly that I shall be like to thee"; as well as with all those other testimonies which seem to agree in declaring that man's likeness to God has been lost by sin. How are we to solve the difficulty, my brethren? Shall we say that the three attributes, which I have mentioned as constituting the likeness in question, are not found in God at all, and that therefore we have to seek for others to serve as a foundation for that likeness? Or shall we say, that although these attributes are really possessed by God, they do not likewise belong to the soul, and thus again cannot constitute a likeness between them? Or finally that, granting the existence both in God and in the soul of simplicity, immortality and liberty, yet the soul may also be without such characteristics, and therefore they are not inseparable from her? God forbid that we should speak so! Not only do these attributes exist both in the Word and in the soul, but they also exist inseparably in either. And so there is nothing in what I have said which I have reason to repent of, for it is all grounded on absolute and unquestionable truth. With regard to what Holy Scripture says about the soul's having been made unlike to God, I observe that it does not assert

the putting off of the old similitude but only the putting on of a new dissimilitude. The soul, as is evident, has not stripped herself of her original form but simply covered it over with an adventitious. The latter has been added to, not substituted for the former. And although that which is superinduced has been able to obscure the natural form, it has not been able to destroy it completely. Hence St. Paul says, “Their foolish heart was darkened” (obscuratum), and Jeremias, “How is the gold become obscured, and the finest colour changed?” The Prophet laments that the gold has lost its brightness, yet acknowledges that it still preserves the nature of gold; he grieves to see the finest colour dimmed, but does not complain that it has been utterly destroyed. For the soul still retains her attribute of simplicity quite unimpaired in its essentials, although it is no longer visible, being overlaid with the vice of duplicity which exhibits itself in human deceit, simulation, and hypocrisy.

How incongruous, my brethren, is such a combination of simplicity and duplicity! How unbecoming to raise so bad a superstructure upon a foundation so excellent! It was with duplicity of this kind that the serpent covered himself of old, when, in order to deceive our first parents, he offered himself as a counsellor and feigned to be their friend. It was to the same the two dwellers in paradise had recourse when, having been seduced by the tempter, they endeavoured to conceal their now shameful nakedness amidst the shadow of the trees, and with garments of fig-leaves and words of excuse. How universally thenceforth and all down through the centuries has the poison of hypocrisy, inherited from them, infected their posterity! Can you show me one amongst the children of Adam who, I do not say is willing, but can even endure, to be known for what he is? Nevertheless along with this hereditary duplicity, her natural simplicity persists in every soul, so that the union of opposite properties makes the confusion worse confounded. The soul’s immortality likewise endures, but dimmed and darkened by the invading dense cloud of temporal death. For although she is not herself deprived of the gift of perennial life, she yet has not sufficient power to vindicate the same gift for her body. And not only that, but she has not even preserved her own spritual life. “The soul that sinneth the same shall die,” as the Prophet Ezechiel speaks. Does it not seem to you, my brethren, that the immortality, such as it is, which remains with her, is rendered very obscure and miserable by the invasion of this twofold death? Moreover, her desire for the things of earth, which are all only capable of destroying her, increases her darkness to such an extent that in the soul thus living nothing appears visible on any side save the pallid countenance, so to speak, and the

lugubrious image of death. Wherefore, then, does not she that is immortal, seek after those things which are likewise immortal and eternal, so that she may show herself to be what she really is, and may live according as she has been made? But no, she longs for and relishes only what is contrary to her nature; and thus, by her unworthy conversation conforming herself to mortal creatures, she darkens the lustre of her immortality with the pitchy hue, as it were, of death-bearing conduct. For surely it is to be expected that an immortal being, by loving things mortal, should become like unto these and unlike herself. “He that toucheth pitch,” says the Wise Man, “shall be defiled with it.” The soul that takes delight in what is mortal puts on the semblance of mortality. Yet by assuming the likeness of death she does not put off but merely discolours the robe of her immortality.

Consider the case of Eve, how her immortal soul, through an inordinate affection for mortal objects, caused the glory of her immortality to be overlaid and obscured by the duskiness of a supervening liability to death. For since she was immortal, why did she not rather despise all that was mortal and transitory, and content herself with things like herself, things immortal and eternal? But, as we read, “The woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold.” It appertains not to thee, O woman, neither that goodness, nor that fairness, nor that delightfulness. Or if it does appertain to thee according to thy material part, it appertains not to thee alone, but is equally the property of all the beasts of the earth. That which is thine, which properly belongs to thee, comes from another source and has another nature; for it is from eternity and is itself eternal. Wherefore wouldst thou impress upon thy soul another form, especially an alien form, nay, what is more a deformity than a form? For the pleasure which the soul feels in acquiring temporal goods is accompanied with the fear of losing them; and this fear is a kind of colour, because it stains and so disguises the liberty of her will, and makes it look unlike itself. How much more worthy of her origin would it have been to desire nothing which could become a cause of uneasiness to her, that so she might defend her inborn freedom against this servile fear, and preserve it in all its natural strength and beauty! But alas! it has not been so. The finest colour has lost its brilliancy. And so thou, poor Eve, fleest away and concealest thyself; thou hearest the voice of God and dost hide thyself. Why is this unless because thou art now afraid of Him Whom erstwhile Thou didst love, and because the form of the slave has superseded that of the free-born child?

But that voluntary necessity also and that “contradicting law” imposed on the

bodily members (whereof I treated in my last discourse) militate against the same liberty, and by means of his own will reduce to servitude, whilst alluring him, man, a creature naturally free, “filling his face with shame”; so that even in spite of himself he has to serve with his flesh the “law of sin.” Therefore, because he neglected to defend the nobility of his nature by probity of life, it has come to pass by the just judgment of his Creator, not indeed that he is deprived of his native liberty, but that he is “clothed over with his confusion as with a double cloak.” Very appropriate is this image of a double cloak. For man wears now a double mantle, so to speak, because whilst his freedom still remains on account of his will, his slavish manner of life is a proof of his servitude. And such is the case, as you may notice, not alone with the soul’s liberty, but also with her simplicity and with her immortality. In fact, if you examine the matter closely, it will appear to you that there is nothing at all in her which is not similarly covered with this double cloak of likeness and unlikeness to God. Have you not there a double cloak where duplicity exists, not as a natural quality, but as something superadded to a native simplicity, fastened and sewed on to it, as it were, with the needle of sin; and where in the same manner death is combined with immortality, and necessity with freedom? For simplicity of essence is not excluded by duplicity of heart, nor immortality of nature by either the voluntary death of sin or the involuntary death of the body, nor liberty of will by the constraint of a willing servitude. Accordingly, accidental evil supervening on the good of nature is not substituted for, but rather coexists with that good: it does not destroy but dishonours it; it confounds without expelling it. Hence it is that the soul is made unlike to God, aye, and made unlike to herself also; hence she “is compared to senseless beasts and is become like to them”; hence it is said of her that she “hath changed her glory into the likeness of a calf that eateth grass”; hence men, like foxes, have formed for themselves cunning refuges of craft and duplicity, and because they have lowered themselves to the level of foxes, “they shall be the portions of foxes”; hence, according to the words of Solomon, “The death of man and of beast is one.” Why should he not resemble them in his death, if he has resembled them in his mode of life? In the manner of the beast he bends down to the earth, therefore he shall leave the earth also in the manner of the beast. And listen to something more. What wonder is it that man’s end should be found similar to the brute’s, since there has been the same similarity in their beginnings? For that intemperate heat of passion and that excess of violent pain which attend our origin and our entrance into this world, whence come they except from our likeness to the beast? And thus, in his conception and in his

birth, in his life and in his death, man “is compared to senseless beasts and is become like them.”

What shall I say, my brethren, of the fact that man, a free creature, instead of ruling as a lord the inferior appetite which was made subject to him, prefers to obey it and to follow it like a slave? Does he not herein also make himself the equal and the associate of the irrational animals which have not been endowed with liberty, but fashioned for servitude without the power of resisting their appetites and passions? Is it not with reason that God is ashamed to be represented or reputed like a creature so degraded? Therefore He says, “Thou thoughtest, O wicked one, that I shall be like to thee,” and He adds, “But I will reprove thee and set (thee) before thy face.” It is not possible for a soul that sees herself to regard herself as like to God, at least this is not possible for a wicked and sinful soul such as mine. And it is to souls of this kind that the above reproof is addressed. For God does not say, “Thou thoughtest, O soul,” or, “Thou thoughtest O man,” but “Thou thoughtest, O wicked one, that I shall be like to thee.” But if the wicked one be set before his own face, and be shown the dead and corrupted countenance of his interior man, so that he cannot shut his eyes or refuse attention to the impurities of his conscience, but has to gaze upon the soil of his sins even in spite of himself, and to contemplate the foulness of his evil habits, then, I believe, he will no longer be able to think God like himself, but, humbled by the great dissimilarity which he beholds, he will cry out with the Psalmist, “Lord, who is like to Thee?” I have spoken this with reference to the voluntary and superadded dissimilitude of the soul to her Creator. For the natural and original likeness still remains, and by its presence only renders the unlikeness more displeasing. Oh, how great a good is the former! How great an evil the latter! And they are greatly good and greatly evil even when separately considered. But when viewed together, their conjunction has the effect of rendering more apparent both the goodness of the one and the badness of the other.

When, therefore, the soul perceives within her single self qualities so widely differing from each other, placed, as she finds herself, between hope and despair, has she not reason to cry out, “Lord, who is like to Thee?” She is drawn towards despair by the consciousness of so much evil, but encouraged to hope by the possession of so great a good. Hence it is, my brethren, that the more she is disgusted with herself on account of the evil which she discovers within her, by so much the more ardently does she endeavour to conform herself to the good, viz., to the likeness to God, which she also beholds within her, and the more

eagerly does she desire to become again such as she was originally made, “simple and upright, and fearing God, and avoiding evil.” Why should she not be able to abandon the evil which she has been able to embrace? And why should she not be able to embrace the good which she has been able to abandon? Nevertheless it has to be admitted that it is on the grace of God she must depend for the power both to avoid evil and to do good, not on nature or on human industry. For, as we read, it is by wisdom alone, and not by natural force or by our own efforts, that malice can be resisted. However there is not wanting to her a reason for presuming that this grace or wisdom shall be given her, because “her turning is towards” the Word. That noble affinity which connects her with the Divine Word (which I have now been three days discussing) and that likeness which endures as a witness to the relationship between them are not without influence to conciliate His favour. He graciously admits to the society of His Spirit one who so closely resembles Him in nature. Indeed, it is the law of nature that like should seek its like. And hear how He even calls after her, “Return, return, O Sulamitess: return that We may behold thee.” He will look with complacency upon her now when she is made like to Him, whereas when she was unlike He took no notice of her at all. And not only will He look upon her, but He will also allow her to look upon Him. “We know,” says the Evangelist, “that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; because we shall see Him as He is.” In my opinion, therefore, it is a difficulty rather than an impossibility that is implied in the Prophet’s question, “Who is like to God”? Or perhaps you would prefer to hear it ealled a cry of admiration. For admirable and astounding that likeness assuredly is which brings with it the vision of God, yea, which is itself the vision of God. But I am speaking of the likeness and the vision which are one and the same with charity. For that likeness is charity and charity too is that vision. Who does not stand amazed at beholding the charity of God despised and yet recalling the soul that has spurned it? Well, therefore, did that “wicked one,” whom I referred to a while ago, deserve the reproach addressed to him for claiming a likeness to God, although he could not love either himself or God. For so we read: “He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul.” But let him remove from his soul the iniquity which forms in her a partial unlikeness to the Word, and then there shall be unity of spirit, there shall be mutual vision, there shall be mutual love. For as the Apostle says, “When that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away.” The Word and the soul shall love each other with a pure and perfect love, they shall know each other fully, they shall behold each other clearly, they shall be united to each

other firmly, they shall live together inseparably, they shall be like each other absolutely. Then the soul shall know even as she is known; then she shall love even as she is loved; and over His Bride shall rejoice the Bridegroom, knowing and known, loving and beloved, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXXIII

ON THE RIGHT OF EVERY SOUL TO ASPIRE TO THE NUPTIALS OF THE WORD, AND IN WHAT THIS SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE CONSISTS

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and I found Him not.

"I will rise and will go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and I found Him not.

"The Watchmen who kept the city found me: Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth?

"When I had a little passed beyond them, I found Him Whom my soul loveth: I held Him and I will not let Him go, till I bring Him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me."

We have now, my brethren, on three successive days devoted the regular time which we have appointed for these discourses to the task of demonstrating the affinity between the Word and the soul. Now it may be asked, what is the use of all this labour? Let me tell you. We have learned from this discussion that every human soul, no matter how burdened with sins, no matter how entangled in vices, no matter how enslaved to the enticements of pleasure, though she be held captive in exile, imprisoned in the flesh, clinging to the mire, sunk in the slime, yoked to the body, tortured with cares, distraught with solicitudes, terrified with fears, afflicted with sorrows, deceived and seduced by errors, worried with anxieties, disquieted with suspicions; though she be, lastly, a stranger in the land of her enemies, and, in the words of the Prophet Baruch, "defiled with the dead" and "counted with them that go down into hell"; yes, I say, though the soul should be in such a state of despair and damnation, yet we have learned from the preceding discourses how she can still discover in herself something which is not only capable of establishing her in the hope of pardon and in the confidence of mercy, but also of animating her with courage to aspire even to the nuptials of the Word, to enter boldly into an alliance of friendship with God, and to begin

fearlessly to draw the sweet yoke of love with Him Who is Lord of the angels. For what may she not safely presume in the case of One with Whose image she beholds herself adorned, and by Whose likeness she perceives herself ennobled? What, I ask, has she to fear from His Majesty, since she possesses in that relationship to Him in which she was created a sufficient motive for confidence? Only let her strive henceforth to prove and preserve the nobility of her nature by innocence of life: or rather let her study to enhance and decorate with the appropriate colours, so to speak, of worthy actions and affections that heavenly beauty which is her birthright.

What, then, is the reason why she is so little industrious in a matter which concerns her highest interests? Industry, my brethren, is a very important endowment of our nature. But if it fails to perform its functions, are not the rest of our natural gifts and faculties thrown into a state of disorder, and the whole covered over, as it were, with the rust of decadence? Now this redounds to the dishonour of the Creator. For God, the Author of our nature, has willed that the seal of her divine origin should be always preserved in the soul, unto this purpose, namely, in order that she might always have within herself a memorial of the Word, which would constantly be reminding her either to continue faithful to Him, or to return, if she should ever be so unfortunate as to abandon Him. It is not by moving from one place to another, or by moving with visible steps, but by moving in the manner in which motion is possible to a spiritual substance, namely, with her affections, or rather with her vices, that she descends, so to speak, beneath herself, when by the wickedness of her life and conversation she becomes degenerate and makes herself unlike herself. But although this unlikeness vitiates, it does not destroy her nature. And according as it renders her natural nobility more conspicuous by the contrast with itself, in the same measure, by its conjunction, does it dishonour that nobility. Again, the return of the soul is her conversion to the Word by Whom she is to be reformed and to Whom she is to be conformed. In what respect, do you ask? In charity. Hence the Apostle exhorts us, saying, “Be ye therefore followers of God as most dear children; and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us.”

It is by this conformity of charity, my brethren, that the soul is wedded to the Word, when, namely, loving even as she is loved, she exhibits herself in her will conformed to Him to Whom she is already conformed in her nature. Therefore, if she loves Him perfectly she has become His Bride. What can be more sweet than such a conformity? What can be more desirable than this charity by which, O happy soul, not content any longer with human teachers, thou art enabled of

thyself to draw nigh with confidence to the Word, to cleave to Him steadfastly, to interrogate Him familiarly, and to consult Him in all thy doubts, as audacious in thy desires as thou art capacious in thy understanding? This is in truth the alliance of a holy and spiritual marriage. But it is saying too little to call it an alliance: it is rather an embrace. Surely we have then a spiritual embrace when the same likes and the same dislikes make one spirit out of two? Nor is there any occasion to fear lest the inequality of the persons should cause some defect in the harmony of wills, since love knows nothing of reverence. Love means an exercise of affection, not an exhibition of honour. Honour is given by him who is awe-stricken, who is astounded, who is terrified, who is filled with admiration. But none of these emotions has any place in the lover. Love is all-sufficient for itself. Whithersoever love comes, it subjugates and renders captive to itself all the other affections. Consequently the soul that loves, simply loves and knows nothing else except to love. The Word is indeed One Who deserves to be honoured, Who deserves to be admired and wondered at; yet He is better pleased to be loved. For He is the Bridegroom and the soul is His Bride. And between a bridegroom and his bride what other relation or connection would you look for except the bond of a mutual love? Such is the strength of this bond that it overcomes even the most intimate union which nature forms, I mean the union between parent and child. So much is evident from the words of the Saviour, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife.” You perceive, my brethren, how love, as it is found between a bridegroom and bride, is not only more powerful than the other human affections, but it is even more powerful than itself.

It must also be remembered that this Bridegroom is not only loving, but is Love Itself. May it be likewise said of Him that He is Honour? You are at liberty to think so, if you choose, but there is no authority for this to be found in Holy Scripture. I have read therein that “God is Charity,” but never that He is Honour or Dignity. Not that God does not demand honour, for He has said, “If I be a Father, where is My honour?” But it is as a Father that He speaks thus. Were He to speak in His character as Bridegroom, I believe He would use different language and would say, “If I be a Bridegroom where is My love?” For He has asked the same question concerning the reverence due to Him in His capacity as Lord, “If I be a Master, where is My fear?” God therefore requires to be honoured as a Father, and to be feared as a Lord, but to be loved as a Bridegroom. Now in these various affections what is that which appears to excel and to hold the preeminence? Doubtless it is love. For without love “fear hath

pain" and honour finds no favour. Fear is slavish until it has been emancipated by love. And the honour which proceeds not from love better deserves to be called flattery than honour. To God alone are due honour and glory; but God will refuse to accept both the one and the other unless they are sweetened with the honey of love. Love is sufficient of itself, it pleases of itself, and for its own sake. It counts as merit to itself and is its own reward. Besides itself, love requires no motive and seeks no fruit. Its fruit is its enjoyment of itself. I love because I love, and I love for the sake of loving. A great thing, my brethren, is love, if yet it returns to its Principle, if it is restored to its Origin, if it finds its way back again to its Fountain-Head, so that it may be thus enabled to continue flowing with an unfailing current. Amongst all the emotions, sentiments, and feelings of the soul, love stands distinguished in this respect, that in the case of it alone has the creature the power to correspond and to make a return to the Creator in kind, though not in equality. For instance, if God were to manifest anger against me, surely I should not answer Him with a like exhibition of anger. No indeed, but I should rather fear and tremble and supplicate mercy. Similarly, if He were to reprove me, I, instead of reproving Him in turn, should prefer to justify Him. Neither shall I presume to judge Him when I am judged by Him, but I shall rather humble myself and adore His justice. He Who saves me does not require that I should reciprocate the favour by saving Him. Nor does He Who delivers all stand Himself in need of being delivered by any. If He chooses to act as a Master I must conduct myself as a servant; if He commands I am bound to obey, without having any right to exact from Him a return of service or obedience. But consider now how different is the case with love. For when God loves me He desires nothing else than to be loved by me: He loves me in order that I may love Him, because He knows well that all who love Him find in this very love their joy and their happiness.

Truly a great thing is love. But it has degrees of greatness. In the highest of these degrees stands the love of the Spouse. The children also love, but they have an eye to the inheritance, the thought of losing which makes them suspicious of everything, causes them to regard with more fear than affection Him from Whom they hope to receive it. For my part, my brethren, I look with suspicion on that love which appears to be supported by the hope of any other reward than a return of love. Such love is weak, and languishes, or even expires, if its hope happens to be withdrawn from it. It is an impure love, since it covets something foreign to its own nature. The love that is pure is never mercenary. Pure love derives none of its strength from hope, and yet suffers nothing from

diffidence. This is the love proper to the Spouse, and she that is a Spouse is made a Spouse solely by this. Love is the sole dowry and the sole hope of the Spouse. This is all-sufficing for her. With this alone the Bridegroom is content. He requires nothing else, and she possesses nothing else. It is such love as this that makes Him her Bridegroom as it makes her His Bride. It belongs exclusively to the Bridegroom and the Bride, and none else, not even the children, can share in it. To the children the Father says, “Where is My honour?” not, “Where is My love?” For the Bridegroom reserves to the Bride her prerogative. Moreover, children are commanded to honour their father and their mother, but nothing is said to them about love; not because parents are not to be loved by their children, but because many children feel more inclined to treat their parents with respect than with love. True, “the honour of the King loveth judgment,” as the Psalmist says; but the love of the Bridegroom, or rather the Bridegroom Who is Love, requires of His Spouse nothing more than a return of love and loyalty. Let her then who is so beloved by Him, be careful to reciprocate His love. How, indeed, can she help loving since she is a Spouse, and the Spouse of Love? Or how is it possible that Love should not be loved?

Rightly, therefore, does the Spouse, renouncing all other feelings, abandon herself entirely to love alone, since in the interchange of love she has to correspond to a Bridegroom Who is Love Itself. For even when her whole being has been dissolved and poured out in love to Him, what after all is her love compared with the never-failing outflow from Love’s own Fountain? Love surely does not abound in an equal degree in her who loves and in Him Who is Love, in the soul of man and in the Word of God, in the Bride and in the Bridegroom, in the creature and in the Creator, any more than the water equally abounds in him who thirsts for it and in the well which is its source. What then? Shall her hope of the heavenly nuptials, and her yearning desire, and her ardent love, and her confident expectation, be all disappointed and perish wholly, because she cannot in running keep up with a giant, or contend with honey in sweetness, or equal the meekness of a lamb, or rival the purity of a lily, or emulate the brightness of the sun, or compete in love with Him Who is Charity? Certainly not. For although the Spouse, as a creature, is less than her Creator, and hence loves also less, yet if she loves with her whole being, her love is perfect and wanting in nothing. Wherefore, as I have told you already, it is love of this kind that constitutes the spiritual marriage of the soul with the Word. For she cannot love in this perfect way without being perfectly loved in return, so that by the consent of the two parties the marriage is ratified and completed. But

perhaps some may have a doubt as to whether the soul is anticipated and surpassed by the Word in loving. That, however, is quite certain: He loved her long before she began to love Him, and He loves her far more than she loves Him. Happy the Spouse who has deserved to be prevented with the blessing of such exceeding sweetness! Happy the Spouse to whom it has been given to experience an embrace of such surpassing delight! This spiritual embrace is nothing else than a chaste and holy love, a love sweet and pleasant, a love perfectly serene and perfectly pure, a love that is mutual, intimate, and strong, a love that joins two, not in one flesh, but in one spirit, that makes two to be no longer two but one undivided spirit, according to the testimony of St. Paul, where he says, “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” And now, concerning these questions, let us rather listen to her whom the unction of grace and frequent experience have quickly qualified to be our instructress in all the ways of love divine. But perhaps we had better hold over this point and deal with it in a special sermon. For we should only spoil what is excellent matter by attempting to compress it within the few moments now available at the conclusion of to-day’s discourse. And so with your permission I will make an end here where the sequence of thought does not warrant it, so that we may reassemble to-morrow in good time and with eager minds to consider the pure delights which the holy and happy soul deserves to experience with the Word and from the Word, her heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXXIV

ON SEEKING GOD

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth."

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth." It is a great good, my brethren, this will to seek God. In my opinion it deserves to be esteemed second to none of all the goods of the soul. It is the first grace which the soul receives, and it is also the last advance she makes in her progress towards perfection. It follows after no virtue, neither does it yield place to any. What virtue can it be supposed to follow, since it is preceded by none? Or to what virtue can it give place, since it is itself the crown and consummation of all? For how can any virtue be ascribed to the man who has not the will to seek God? And as to him who does seek God, what term shall be appointed for his seeking? "Seek His Face evermore," says the Psalmist, by which he implies, as it seems to me, that even after God has been found He shall not cease to be sought. For it is not by bodily locomotion that we have to seek God, but by fervent desire. Now this desire, so far from being extinguished by the happy attainment of its Object, is on the contrary greatly intensified. How is it possible that the consummation of joy should be the exclusion of desire? It would be more true to say that the former is to the latter as oil to flame, because desire is in truth a flame. So it is, my brethren. The joy is made perfect, yet there is no end to the desire, and by consequence no end to the seeking. But conceive (if you can) of this eager seeking as implying no absence of what is sought, and of this ardent desire as being accompanied by no solicitude. For absence is incompatible with possession and solicitude with security of tenure.

I will now explain the purpose of these preliminary remarks. It is in order that every individual amongst you who is seeking God may understand that he has been anticipated by Him, and that he was sought before he became a seeker. For unless this truth is borne in mind, what is a great good may be changed into a great evil. Great evils are wont in this way to grow out of great blessings when, namely, having been made rich with the goods of the Lord, we use these gifts as

if they were not gifts, and we do not give glory to God. And thus it is that they who appear to us to be the greatest, on account of the favours they have received, are sometimes reputed the least by God, because of their ingratitude. “But I spare you” unduly. The terms I have employed, “greatest” and “least,” are not energetic enough and fail to give adequate expression to my thought. I have confused the distinction I intended to draw. But I will now make it clear by telling you that instead of “greatest” and “least” I ought to have said “most excellent” and “most vile.” For really and without any doubt, the more excellent a man is, the more vile does he become, if he attributes to himself that which makes him excellent; because there can be nothing more vile than such usurpation. But if any one should say in reply, “Far be it from me to be guilty of such ingratitude! I acknowledge that ‘by the grace of God I am what I am’ ”; and if at the same time he is endeavouring to obtain for himself a little glory on account of the grace he has received, what is he, my brethren, but “a thief and a robber”? Let him that is such a one attend to the words of Christ, “Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant.” What indeed can be greater wickedness than that of the servant who appropriates the glory of his Lord?

“In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth.” Thus, my brethren, the soul seeks the Word, yet only because the Word has been beforehand in seeking her. For after she has once wandered away or been cast forth from the presence of the Bridegroom, “her eye shall not return to see good things,” unless she is sought out and recalled by Him. Verily, this human soul of ours is nothing more than a “spirit that goeth and returneth not,” if ever she is abandoned to herself. Listen to a soul that has fled afar and lost her way, hear how she laments and observe what she petitions for: “I have gone astray,” she says, “like a sheep that is lost; seek Thy servant.” Dost thou desire, O soul, to return to God? But if it is in the power of thine own will to accomplish this conversion, wherefore dost thou ask for assistance? Why wouldst thou seek for strength elsewhere, if what thou hast in thyself sufficed for thy necessities? It is plain that she has the good desire yet is wanting in the power to bring it to consummation. She is a “spirit that goeth and returneth not,” although she would be still farther off if the desire also were wanting to her. But I would not pronounce any soul to be altogether abandoned and left to herself, so long as she sincerely desires to return and prays to be sought after. For whence has this desire come to her? Unless I am mistaken, she owes it to the fact that the Word has already been visiting and seeking her. And His seeking has not been in vain, since it has wrought in her the good will without which no return would be possible. But it is not enough to

have been sought once, so great is the languor of the soul and so great the difficulty of the return. For of what avail is it to have the mere desire, which is utterly helpless without the power of accomplishment? This is the teaching of St. Paul, who tells us, “To will is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good I find not.” What, then, does that soul seek which I introduced just now as speaking in the psalm? Nothing else, manifestly, except to be sought. Nor would she be seeking this unless she had been sought already. I will add, she would not be seeking this unless she had been already sufficiently sought. Such is the favour she solicits when she says, “Seek thy servant,” praying that He Who gave her the desire to return would also grant her the strength to bring her good desire to consummation.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that our present text cannot be well understood of a soul of this kind, which has not yet received the second grace; I mean the soul which has the desire yet lacks the moral power to return to Him Whom she loveth. For how is it possible to apply to such a soul the words which follow, and to say of her that she rises and goes about the city, and seeks her Beloved in the streets and the broad ways, considering that she is herself in need of being sought by Him? Let them do this who have the capacity. But let them bear in mind that they also were sought by the Word before they began to seek Him, just as they were loved by the Word before they began to love Him. As for ourselves, my dearest brethren, we have only to pray that these mercies of the Lord may “speedily prevent us, for we are become exceeding poor.” But I say not this of all of you. I am well aware that very many of you are walking in the love wherewith Christ hath loved us, and seeking Him with simplicity of heart. Nevertheless there are some amongst us who, I grieve to say, have as yet given no sign of such salutary prevention, and consequently no sign of their being in the way of salvation. They are men who love themselves instead of the Lord, who “seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ’s.”

“I sought Him Whom my soul loveth.” To this, O Spouse, hast thou been brought by the benignity of Him Who has prevented thee, Who has been beforehand in seeking thee and beforehand in loving thee. Certainly thou wouldst never have sought Him hadst thou not first been sought by Him, just as thou wouldst never have loved Him had He not first loved thee. Therefore thou hast been prevented, not with one blessing only, but with two, prevented in loving and prevented in seeking. Love is the cause of the seeking; the seeking is at once the fruit and the evidence of love. The fact that thou art loved should banish any suspicion that it is for judgment thou art sought; whilst the fact that

thou art sought should prevent thee from complaining that thou hast been loved in vain. Both manifestations of kindness and sweetness combine to animate thy courage, to dispel thy fears, to bring about thy return, and to arouse thy affection. Hence this zeal, hence this ardour in seeking Him Whom thy soul loveth, because there is no doubt that thou wert not able to seek Him at all until He began to seek thee, and now when thou art sought by Him thou art not able not to seek Him.

But do not forget from whence thou hast been brought hither. However, let me now, like St. Paul, transfer to myself what I am going to say. This will be the wiser course. Art thou then, O my soul, that faithless Spouse, who deserting her first Husband, with Whom she had lived so happily, violated her plighted troth and went after other lovers? And now after keeping company with them so long as thou hast found it pleasant, perhaps until they repudiated thee with scorn, art thou now, I ask, so impudent, so brazen, as to wish to return to Him Whom in thy arrogance thou didst despise? What? Dost thou want to come forth into the light, thou for whom it would be more proper to hide thyself in darkness? And dost thou run to be caressed by thy Bridegroom from Whom thou hast deserved nothing but hard stripes? It will be strange if thou findest not that, instead of a Husband, thou hast offended a Judge. Happy the man who hears his soul making answer thus to these reproaches: “I have no fears because I love. And in this I have a proof that I am also loved; for certainly unless I were beloved I should not have the power to love Now she that is beloved has no reason to be afraid. But as for souls that do not love, they indeed have good cause to fear. How can they be otherwise than always uneasy, always on the look-out for danger? I do love, and I find it as impossible to doubt that I am loved in return as to doubt the reality of my own love. Nor can I feel afraid of the presence of Him of Whose love for me I have had experimental proof. Shall I tell you in what? In this, that unworthy as I was He not only sought me, but He even touched my heart with His grace, and thereby gave me an infallible indication that He was seeking me. Why should I not respond to Him in His seeking as I respond to Him in His love? Shall He be angry with me now for seeking Him in return, He Who showed no indignation against me even when I treated him with scorn? No, certainly not. He Who sought me when I despised Him will not despise me now when I seek Him. The Spirit of the Word is kind, and kind is the communication He makes to me, telling me and convincing me of the Word’s desire and affection, which cannot be concealed from Him, ‘for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, and is the confidant of the thoughts which

He thinks ‘of peace and not of affliction.’ Wherefore, then, should I not feel encouraged to seek Him after having experience of His clemency and proof of His pardon?”

My brethren, to have these truths urged upon one is to be sought by the Bridegroom, to be convinced of them is to be found. But “all men receive not this word.” What are we to do with our little ones? I speak of those amongst us who are still but as children in the spiritual life, yet not without sense, because they have attained to the beginning of wisdom, “being subject one to another in the fear of Christ.” By what means, I ask, shall I be able to prove to them that the case is with the Spouse as I have represented it to be, since they have not as yet discovered in their own experience anything like what I have described? But I will refer them to a witness whose testimony they are bound to accept. Let them read in the Holy Book that which, because they cannot see it in the heart of another, they perhaps hesitate to believe. It is written in the Prophet Jeremias, “If a man put away his wife and she go from him and marry another man, shall he return to her any more? Shall not that woman be polluted and defiled? But thou hast gone after many lovers: nevertheless return to Me, saith the Lord, and I will receive Thee.” These my brethren, are the words of God Himself, and it is not lawful for us to doubt them. Believe therefore what it has not yet been given you to experience, so that by the merit of your faith you may attain sooner or later to the fruit of enjoyment. I think I have now explained sufficiently what it is to be sought by the Word, and how such seeking is a necessity, not for the Word, but for the soul, although this knowledge can be acquired more fully and more pleasantly from experience than from any merely verbal instruction. It remains for me, then, to show you in the next discourse how souls athirst for God ought to seek Him by Whom they are sought. Or rather we have to learn this from that Spouse who is represented to us here as seeking Him Whom her soul loveth, the Bridegroom of the soul, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXXV

ON THE SEVEN REASONS ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH THE SOUL SEEKS THE WORD

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth."

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth." Why does she seek Him, my brethren? I have told you already, and there is no necessity to repeat. Yet for the sake of some of you who were not present on the previous occasion when this question was under discussion, I will now again touch upon it briefly. And perchance what I have to say will not be without interest even for those who listened to my last sermon. For the subject could not be exhaustively treated in a single discourse. The soul therefore seeks the Word in order to "be at agreement" with Him by submitting to His correction, in order to be enlightened by His illumination, in order to be advanced to virtue by the assistance of His power, in order to acquire wisdom under His discipline and instruction, in order to be made beautiful by conformity to His perfection, in order to become a mother by being united with Him in spiritual wedlock, in order, lastly, to feel the delight which is found in His caresses. For all and each of these reasons the soul seeks the Word. I have no doubt that there are very many other motives besides, but these are all that at present occur to me. Anyone that cares to take the trouble can easily extend the list by self-examination. For since our infidelities are many, many also, aye, countless are the necessities of our souls, and of our anxieties there is no number. But although our misery is so great, greater still and more unmeasured is the Word's abounding wealth. For He is that Wisdom Which no malice overcometh and Which conquers evil with good. And let me give you the reason of the reasons I have mentioned. To begin with that which is first, consider in what manner the soul seeks the Word to "be at agreement" with Him. In the Gospel we read these words of the Word, "Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer."

What wiser counsel could be offered? And in giving it the Word, if I mistake not, represents Himself as an adversary, for the reason that He stands opposed to our carnal desires, whilst He says of us, “These always err in heart.” Thou, therefore, my brother, who hearest these words, if terrified, thou art beginning to have the wish to “fly from the wrath to come,” I believe thou wilt be anxious to know how thou mayst “be at agreement with thy Adversary,” and so escape that wrath which He here appears to threaten thee with in such awful language. But thou canst not “be at agreement” with Him unless thou art at variance with thyself, unless thou art an adversary to thyself, unless with earnest and vigilant striving thou wagest against thyself an unceasing war, unless, finally, thou renouncest thy inveterate evil habits and thy natural affections. This, no doubt, is a difficult thing to do. To attempt it, relying on thine own strength exclusively, would be the same as to endeavour with one of thy fingers to stop the course of a torrent. It would be like trying to turn back again the waters of Jordan. What then art thou to do? Seek out the Word in order that thou mayst be reconciled to Him by means of the grace wherewith He will supply thee. Have recourse to Him Who is now thy Adversary, in order to be made such by Him that He will no longer be thy Adversary, but will caress instead of menacing, and will demonstrate the infusion of grace to be a more powerful corrective than the threatening of wrath.

Such, I take it, is the first necessity on account of which the soul begins to seek the Word. But if thou art yet ignorant as to the will of Him with Whom art now “at agreement” in thine own will, shall it not be said of thee also that thou hast “a zeal of God but not according to knowledge”? And lest thou shouldst regard this as of little moment, remember the words of the Apostle, “If any man know not, he shall not be known.” Dost thou desire to hear what I would counsel thee to do in the present necessity also? I would recommend thee to act in precisely the same way as in the preceding. If thou wilt follow my advice thou wilt this time also have recourse to the Word that He may instruct thee in His ways. Otherwise, in willing the good without knowing what is good, thou shalt be exposed to the danger of straying from thy course and “wandering where there is no passing and out of the way.” For the Word is Light. Hence the Psalmist sings, “The declaration of Thy words giveth light, and giveth understanding to little ones.” Blessed art thou if it is possible for thee also to say sincerely with the same Prophet, “Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths.” No slight progress has that soul made whose will has been so won to grace and whose intellect so enlightened by heavenly wisdom that she has now

both the knowledge and the desire of the good. With the power to will what is good the soul has received the gift of life, with the power to know what is good, she has obtained the faculty of vision. For she was dead by willing what was evil, and she was blind through not knowing what was good.

She is now living, she has now restored to her the sense of sight, she is now established in good, but all by the power and operation of the Word. She stands upon the two feet, as it were, of knowledge and love, and is held erect by the Hand of the Word. She stands, yes, but let her believe that it is to herself are addressed the words of warning, “He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.” Dost thou imagine that thou art able to stand by thine own strength, whereas thou wert not able to rise by thine own strength? To me this appears impossible. And dost thou ask the reason? “By the Word of the Lord,” says the Psalmist, “the heavens were established.” And shall a thing of earth, thinkest thou, be established without the same Word’s assistance? Why, therefore, if earth has the power to stand of itself, does a man of earth pray thus to the Lord, “Strengthen Thou me in Thy words”? He had even learned by experience how impossible it was for him to stand without the divine help. For it is the same voice that we hear in the psalm saying, “Being pushed I was overturned that I might fall; but the Lord hath supported me.” Dost thou ask who it was that pushed him? There were more than one. Man is pushed by the devil, he is pushed by the world, he is pushed also by man. But who is this man that pushes? Each one of us, my brethren, is pushed by himself. “Wonder not at this.” So powerful a pusher of himself and overthrower of himself is man, that if one would only keep his hands off himself, he should have but very little to fear from the push which others could give him. Hence St. Peter asks, “And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good?” The hand wherewith thou pushest thyself is the consent of thy will. If, therefore, whenever the devil suggests evil to thee, or the world attempts to urge thee to what is unlawful, thou dost withhold thy consent, refusing to “yield thy members to serve iniquity,” not suffering “sin to reign in thy mortal body,” thou hast shown thyself to be “zealous of good,” and malice consequently has no power to harm thee. And see if so far from harming, it does not rather help thee. For it is written, “Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise from the same.” “They have been confounded who sought thy soul,” whilst thou with the Psalmist art able to sing, “If they shall have no dominion over me, then shall I be without spot.” Thou hast certainly given signal proof that thou art “zealous of good” if, in accordance with the Wise Man’s counsel, thou “hast pity on thine own soul,” if “with all

watchfulness thou keepest thy heart," if in obedience to the injunction of St. Paul thou dost "keep thyself chaste." Otherwise, although thou shouldst gain the whole world, whilst yet thou sufferest the loss of thine own soul, I certainly shall not account thee to be zealous of good, since the Saviour Himself does not so account thee.

There are, then, three powers conspiring for the overthrow of him who stands. Of these, the devil pushes by envy and malice, the world by the wind of vain-glory, and man by the dead weight of his own corruption. The devil has only the power to push thee: he cannot cast thee down if thou deniest him thy help by refusing to consent to him. Hence we read in Holy Scripture, "Resist the devil and he will fly from you." It is he who, through envy of their happy state, pushed our first parents when they were standing in paradise. Nevertheless he would not have succeeded in making them fall, had they not consented to his suggestion. It is he again who, by his pride, was cast headlong down from heaven, pushed by none save himself—which should make us understand that we are ourselves in much greater danger of falling in the same way, pressed down as we are by the weight of our own very substance. The world also pushes us, because it is wholly "seated in wickedness." All men are pushed by it, but none are overthrown except its friends, that is to say, those who consent to it. I have no desire for the friendship of the world lest it should occasion my fall, because "whosoever will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God." And there can be no fall more desperate than this. From what has been said it clearly follows that the most dangerous push of all is that which a man receives from himself. For whereas he can be made to fall by his own impulse without being pushed by any other, he cannot be made to fall by the impulse of others unless he also pushes himself. To which of these opposing powers must we offer the greatest resistance? Surely to that which is all the more dangerous in proportion as it is the more interior, which is able to cast us down by itself alone, and without which the rest can do nothing. It is not without good reason that the Wise Man prefers "him that ruleth his spirit" to "him that taketh cities." This, my brethren, contains a very important lesson for us. It teaches us that we have need of virtue, and not of any natural virtue, but only of that wherewith we must be "endued from on high." Such virtue, if it is perfect, gives the soul an easy victory over herself, and arms her with invincible might against all her enemies. For it is an energy of mind which knows not how to yield to any force in defence of the reason. Or, if you prefer, it is a vigour of soul which acts unconquerably with and in behalf of the reason. Or, finally, it is a spiritual power which, so far as

depends upon it, governs and directs all things in accordance with reason.

"Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?" Anyone who makes an endeavour to attain to the summit of this spiritual mountain, that is to say, who strives to reach the perfection of virtue, shall be able to realise how difficult is the ascent thither, and how hopeless to attempt it without the assistance of the Word. Happy the soul that makes herself such an object of wonder and delight to the watching angels that she can hear them saying of her, "Who is she that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?" But in vain would be her efforts to rise if she leaned not on Him. By leaning on Him she is also enabled to vanquish herself; and thus made mistress of herself, she can bring all her feelings and passions under the rule of right reason. Like a skilful charioteer she shall drive the fourfold chariot of the mind, by which I mean the four emotions of anger, fear, desire, and love. And she shall reduce to captivity and render subservient to virtue, under the direction of judgment, every carnal affection and every bodily sense. How should not all things be possible to her since her Beloved on Whom she leans is almighty? What unbounded confidence is expressed in the words of St. Paul, "I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me"! There is nothing which renders more glorious the omnipotence of the Word than the fact that He makes omnipotent all who put their trust in Him. For, so it is written, "all things are possible to him that believeth," and surely he is omnipotent to whom all things are possible. The soul, consequently, if she does not presume on her own strength, and deserves thereby to be strengthened by the Word, shall be able to govern herself, in such a way that "no iniquity shall have dominion" over her. Thus, I say, whilst she leans on her Beloved and is "endued with strength from on high," no force, no fraud, no enticement shall have the power either to cast her down from a standing position or to overthrow her authority.

Dost thou wish, my brother, to be secured against the danger of being pushed by thyself? If so, "let not the foot of pride come near" thee, and the hand of him that pushes shall have no power to move thee. For "there (viz., in pride) the workers of iniquity are fallen." There the devil and his angels were thrown down, who, although they were not pushed from outside, were nevertheless "cast out and could not stand." Lucifer "stood not in the truth," because he leaned not on the Word, but trusted in his own unaided strength. And perhaps the reason why he desired to sit down was that he felt no longer able to stand. For he said, "I will sit in the mountain of the covenant." But God decreed it otherwise, and he neither stood nor sat but fell, according to the testimony of the Lord where He

tells us, “I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven.” Therefore let not him who stands rely upon himself, but rather lean on the Word, unless he wishes to fall. The Word Himself has declared, “Without Me you can do nothing.” And so it is. We can neither rise to what is good nor stand in what is good, without His assistance. Do thou, therefore, who standest, give glory to the Word, and say, “He set my feet upon a rock and directed my steps.” He by Whose Hand thou hast been lifted up, must now hold thee erect by His power. So much in support of the proposition which I laid down, namely, that we have need to lean upon the Word in order to attain to virtue.

We have next to enquire into the truth of another statement of mine, to wit, that it is only by the Word we can be reformed unto wisdom. Now the Word is Virtue, and He is also Wisdom. Let the soul therefore borrow virtue from Virtue and wisdom from Wisdom. But let her attribute both these gifts to the one same Word exclusively. Should she act otherwise, and arrogate to herself either her wisdom or her virtue, or the two together, as if she had not received them from the Word, let her also deny that the stream comes from the fountain, the grape from the vine, and the daylight from the sun. A “faithful saying” is that which we read, “if any of you want wisdom let him ask of God, Who giveth to all men abundantly and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.” St. James speaks here only of wisdom. But I venture to affirm that what he says of wisdom applies equally to virtue. For virtue is closely related to wisdom. Like wisdom it is a gift of God, and like wisdom also it is to be reputed one of the best and perfect gifts which “come down from the Father of lights.” And if anyone were to hold that virtue is in all respects and absolutely identical with wisdom, I should not gainsay him, provided there was question of virtue and wisdom as existing in the Word. For although they are the same in the Word, by reason of the unique and absolute simplicity of the Divine Nature, they are not reflected in the soul in the same manner; but, as if they were distinct one from the other, they give themselves to be participated by her variously, according to her manifold and various necessities. In this way, it is one thing for the soul to be guided by virtue, and quite another to be governed by wisdom; it is one thing to rule herself with power, and another to taste the delights of spiritual sweetness. It is true, no doubt, that power belongs to wisdom as well as to virtue, and that sweetness belongs to virtue as well as to wisdom. Nevertheless, if we would assign its own proper effect to each of these two, namely, virtue and wisdom, we shall say that the presence of the former is indicated by vigour of soul, whilst the latter manifests itself by placidity of mind together with a certain spiritual sweetness. I

believe this is the sweetness to which the Apostle alludes where, after many exhortations appertaining to virtue, he adds what belongs to wisdom, “In sweetness, in the Holy Ghost.” Therefore to stand, to resist, to repel force with force, which are reckoned amongst the functions of virtue, are honourable actions indeed, but very laborious. There is a vast difference between defending one’s honour with labour and possessing it in peace. It is not consequently the same thing to act in accordance with the rules of virtue and to feel a delight in the practice of virtue. Wisdom enjoys that which virtue toilsomely produces; and whatever wisdom ordains, determines, and regulates, virtue executes.

“Write wisdom in the time of leisure,” counsels the Wise Man. Therefore wisdom’s time of leisure is not a time of idleness. Quite the contrary: the more at leisure she is, the more busily is she occupied with her own peculiar interests. Virtue, on the other hand, appears to best advantage when it is seen in exercise, and its splendour is proportioned to its activity. And I do not think I should be far wrong were I to define wisdom as the love of virtue. But where love is, labour cannot be, but only enjoyment. And perhaps the word “sapientia” (wisdom) is derived from the word “sapor” (flavour) because wisdom, as if it were a kind of condiment, lends a pleasing flavour to the virtue to which it is added and which of itself, without such seasoning, would be dry, so to speak, and insipid. Neither would he seem to me deserving of censure who should define wisdom to be a relish for what is good. But we have lost this spiritual relish almost from the very first appearance of our race. At the moment when the carnal appetite prevailed and the old serpent with his poison corrupted the palate of the heart, the soul began to lose her natural love of good and to experience an inclination to evil. Hence it is written, “The imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone to evil from his youth,” namely, on account of the folly of the first woman. And so the folly (insipientia) of the woman deprived us of the relish (sapor) of good, because the foolishness of Eve was overreached by the malice of Satan. But if the serpent seemed to have conquered for a time by means of the woman, by the woman also he now laments that he has been eternally vanquished. For behold I Wisdom again took possession of the woman’s heart and body, in order that we, who had been deformed unto foolishness by the woman, might again by the woman be reformed unto wisdom. And now wisdom is for ever overcoming malice in the minds into which it enters, and, expelling the relish for evil introduced by that, substitutes the relish for virtue. For when wisdom gains admission to the soul, it reveals to her the foolishness of following the senses, it purifies the intellect, and heals and renews

the palate of the heart. With her spiritual taste thus restored, she begins again to have a relish for good, and a relish for wisdom, than which there is no greater good.

How many good works are done by men who yet feel no pleasure in the good they perform! This is due to the fact that such persons are not influenced in their actions by any relish for virtue, but only by motives of reason, by human respect, or by some kind of compulsion. On the other hand, many men find no satisfaction in the evils which they do, and are led to perform them either by the fear of other evil or by the desire of some good rather than by a love of evil for its own sake. But those who "have passed into the affection of the heart," as the Psalmist says, are either truly wise, and so take a delight in the relish of good, or they are truly malicious, and consequently find pleasure in evil, even when it entices them with no hope of anything beyond itself. For what is malice but a relish for evil? Happy the soul which is entirely occupied by the love of good and the hatred of evil! This is what is meant by being reformed unto wisdom, this is to enjoy in oneself the happy experience of wisdom's triumph. For by what is wisdom more evidently shown to have conquered malice than by the fact that, when the love of evil has been driven forth, the soul becomes conscious of a certain most intimate relish for good, which replenishes her whole interior with spiritual delight? Therefore, it is the part of virtue to suffer tribulations with fortitude; but it belongs to wisdom to rejoice in tribulations. It is the office of virtue to strengthen the heart and to "wait in patience for the Lord"; but it is for wisdom to "taste and see that the Lord is sweet." And that both these moral endowments may be more clearly exhibited in their proper and formal effects, I say that modesty of mind reveals the wise man, constancy of mind the virtuous man. Wisdom is rightly placed after virtue, because virtue is the strong and firm foundation, so to speak, whereupon "wisdom hath built herself a house." But it is necessary for both virtue and wisdom to be preceded by the knowledge of good, since the light of wisdom can have no fellowship with the darkness of ignorance. Goodness of will must likewise have preceded, because "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul."

Now since the soul has given proof of her restoration to life by the change in her will, of her recovered health by her enlightenment, of her stability by her virtue, and finally of her maturity by her wisdom, it remains that we discover for her that beauty without which she cannot find favour in the eyes of Him Who is "beautiful above the sons of men." She has herself heard Him say in the psalm, "The King shall greatly desire thy beauty." How precious and how great are the

gifts of the soul which I have enumerated, gifts bestowed upon her by the Word, namely, goodness of will, knowledge, virtue, and wisdom! Nevertheless the Word is nowhere said to desire any of these. The Scripture only says, “The King shall greatly desire thy beauty.” In another place the Psalmist sings, “The Lord hath reigned, He is clothed with beauty.” And why should He not desire a similar robe of beauty for her who is at once His image and His Spouse? For the more closely she resembles Him, the more tenderly shall He cherish her. Now in what exactly does the beauty of the soul consist? Shall we say that it consists in what is called holiness of life? For the present, at any rate, let us adopt this view, until something better occurs to us. To discover whether or not a soul possesses holiness we have to examine her external conduct, because although external conduct does not constitute holiness, it is the medium by which holiness is manifested. In the heart holiness has its origin and its home, for its “glory is the testimony of conscience.” Nothing can be clearer than this light, nothing more glorious than this testimony, when truth shines in the soul and the soul sees herself in truth. But how does she appear to herself? She appears chaste and modest, fearful and circumspect, carefully avoiding everything which could tarnish the glory of the testimony of her conscience, conscious to herself of nothing which could put her to shame in the presence of truth, of nothing which could compel her to turn away her eyes, dazzled and confounded, from the light of the glory of God. This, my brethren, this indeed is that beauty of the soul which beyond all her other gifts and graces delights the eyes of the Word, and to which I would give the name and definition of holiness of life.

But when the brightness of this beauty has filled superabundantly the interior places of the heart and conscience, it must begin to reveal itself externally also, like a lamp hidden under a bushel, or rather as a “light shining in darkness,” which cannot remain concealed. Accordingly, shining forth from its dwelling within, and sending out its luminous rays, so to speak, it acts upon the body, making it the image of the mind, diffuses its influence over all the members and faculties thereof, and communicates a new grace to a man’s every action, word, look and movement, even to his laughter (if he should ever indulge in this), all of which appear now to be stamped with dignity and adorned with innocence. And when these and all other such motions, activities, and exercises of the various bodily powers and members are seen to be grave, simple, and modest, neither insolent nor over-free, equally removed from sloth and giddiness, conformed to the rules of decorum, and conducive to piety, then, my brethren, the beauty of the soul is externally manifested, provided however that “there is no guile in her

spirit." For it is possible that all such manifestations are merely simulated, and do not proceed out of the abundance of the heart. But in order that this spiritual loveliness may be exhibited in greater splendour, I shall here, if it is pleasing to you, define what is meant by that holiness which I have pronounced to be the formal constituent of the soul's beauty. Such holiness, then, is the nobility of a soul solicitous to preserve fair fame with purity of conscience, or, in the words of the Apostle, "to provide good things not only in the sight of God but also in the sight of all men." Blessed is the soul which has clothed herself with this beauty of sanctity, with this whiteness of heavenly innocence, whereby she can lay claim to a conformity, not with the world, but with the Word, of Whom it is written that He is "the Splendour of Eternal Life," "the Brightness of God's Glory and the Figure of His Substance."

Such a soul, my brethren, which has thus attained to the degree of holiness of life, now ventures to aspire to the spiritual nuptials of the Word. And why should she not, since by her resemblance to the Beloved she recognises herself to be qualified and ripe for union with Him? Nor, as His Bride, shall she fear the Majesty of Him with Whom she is in a manner associated by their mutual likeness, to Whose friendship she is admitted by the merit of her love, and to Whom the marriage-vow unites her in wedlock. This is the marriage-vow: "I have sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of Thy justice." It was their fidelity to this engagement the apostles wished to signify when they said by the mouth of St. Peter, "Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee." Similar are the words of St. Paul, which, although spoken with reference to carnal marriage, may be also understood of the spiritual union of Christ with His Church. The Apostle says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." And in the psalm we hear the Bride of the Word singing with exultation, "But it is good for me to adhere to my God, and to put my hope in the Lord God." Therefore, my brethren, whenever you see a soul which, renouncing every other interest, cleaves to the Word with all her desires, lives by the Word, rules herself by the Word, conceives by His grace and inspiration the fruit of good works which she brings forth unto Him, so that she can say with the Apostle, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain"; regard such a soul as a true Bride, united in wedlock to the Word. And "the Heart of her Husband trusteth in her," because she has given Him proof of her fidelity in that she has despised all things else for His sake, and "counts them but as dung that she may gain Christ." Such a soul did the Saviour recognise in him of whom He said, "This man is to Me a vessel of election."

And surely that soul of St. Paul's was as tender a mother to her spiritual offspring as she was a faithful wife to her Husband: which may be inferred from his words, "My little children, of whom I am in labour again until Christ be formed in you."

But consider that in the state of spiritual marriage there are two modes of parturition, and consequently two kinds of offspring, distinct from each other, yet not opposed. For the mystical mothers bring forth souls by preaching, and interior lights by contemplation. In this second mode of parturition, the soul is sometimes rapt in ecstasy, and withdrawn from the bodily senses, and so completely absorbed in admiration of the Word that she loses even consciousness of self. This happens when, under the attraction of the Word's ineffable sweetness, she in a manner steals herself from herself, or rather is ravished away and escapes from herself, in order that she may enjoy the Word. But not in the same manner is the spiritual mother affected when she is occupied in bringing forth the fruit of souls to the Word, as when she is thus enjoying His caresses. It is purely out of solicitude for her neighbour and his necessities that she devotes herself to the former employment; to the latter she is invited by the sweetness of the Word. As a mother she rejoices in her offspring; but greater are the delights she experiences as a Bride in the arms of her Bridegroom. Dear to her heart are her children, the precious pledges of conjugal love; but she finds more pleasure in the embraces of her Husband. It is good for her to be helping many to salvation; but it is something far sweeter to be transported out of herself and united with the Word. But when does this happen? And how long does it last? It is an intercourse of love most delightful to experience, but it is as rare as it is delightful, and as short-lived as rare. This is what was placed last amongst the soul's motives for seeking the Word, in the list which I gave at the beginning of this sermon, where I said that she seeks Him in order to feel the delight which is found in His caresses.

Perhaps there are some of you who would now like an explanation of what it is to enjoy the Word in this way? If so, I can only counsel them to seek out one who has had the experience and to present their request to him. But even though I also had been privileged sometimes to enjoy that favour, do you suppose it would be possible for me to describe the ineffable? Hear how the Apostle speaks of such an experience, "whether we be transported in mind, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for you." As if he should say, "I have one kind of intercourse with God alone and by His sole will, and I have another kind of intercourse in which you may participate. The former may be enjoyed indeed,

but cannot be expressed in human language; in the latter I condescend so far to you as to speak in words which you can comprehend." O whosoever thou art that wouldst learn what it is to enjoy the Word, get ready, not thine ear, but thy heart. For no tongue, but grace alone is capable of teaching thee this. It is "hidden from the wise and the prudent" and "revealed to little ones." Great therefore, my brethren, truly great and sublime is the virtue of humility which can merit what cannot be taught, which is worthy of receiving what cannot be learned, which deserves to conceive of the Word and by the Word what no words can express. And wherefore? Not because these things are really due to the humble soul, but because such is the good pleasure of the Father of the Word, her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is overall things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON LXXXVI

ON THE VIRTUE OF MODESTY

"In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth."

There is no need for us, my brethren, to dwell any longer on the question as to why the soul seeks the Word, since the answer has already been given sufficiently, and in truth at unnecessary length. Come, then, and let us proceed with the exposition of our present text, so far as it appertains to morals. And here, at the very beginning, observe the modesty of the Spouse, than which I know not if anything can be found more beautiful in human virtue. This, first of all, I want to take in my hands, so to speak, and to pluck it from its place, in order that I may present it as a lovely spiritual nosegay to our young religious. Not that modesty ought not to be preserved, and with all diligence, even in our old age, since it is the ornament of every age; but because the loveliness of this delicate virtue appears more conspicuously and to better advantage in youthful souls. What is there more amiable than a modest young man? How beautifully, how brilliantly does modesty shine in the conduct and on the countenance of youth, as a very gem amongst the virtues! How surely and infallibly does it prophesy of holiness to be! How faithfully does it reveal to us the man of noble character! To the young especially it is a rod of discipline which keeps down their evil passions, which restrains that levity of movement and action, and represses that arrogance of manner so characteristic of slippery adolescence. Where shall you find another remedy so efficacious as this against indecent language and all manner of moral turpitude? Modesty is own sister to continence. It is the most evident sign of dove-like simplicity. It is the lamp of a chaste soul, ever shining, so as to reveal instantly anything foul or unbefitting that attempts to invade her. And thus it is the expeller of evil, the defender of inborn purity, the special glory of the conscience, the guardian of fair fame, the seat and the first-fruits of virtue, the ornament of nature, the distinctive beauty of innocence. Even the very blush which modesty produces, what grace and loveliness does it not impart to the countenance!

So truly is modesty an innate ornament of the soul, that even those who have no fear of doing wrong are nevertheless ashamed to be discovered in their sins, according to the words of Christ, “Every one that doth evil hateth the light.” The Apostle also tells us that “they who sleep, sleep in the night; and they who are drunk, are drunk in the night,” because they desire to conceal in darkness their works of darkness, works truly unworthy of the day. There is, however, a vast difference between modesty of this kind and the modesty of the Spouse. For whereas the former feels no shame in the presence of interior defilement, except when it has been discovered, the latter is not content with hiding moral filthiness, but disowns and rejects it. Hence the Wise Man says, “There is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace.” Thus the Spouse seeks the Word with modesty, because she seeks Him in her bed and during the night, and this is the modesty which bringeth not sin but glory. She seeks the Word in order to the purification of her conscience; she seeks Him also that she may have testimony from the same,—that like St. Paul she may be able to say, “My glory is this, the testimony of my conscience.” “In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth.” Here, my brethren, both the place and the time speak to us of modesty. What is so agreeable to a modest soul as privacy? Now privacy may be had in the bed and in the night-time. So, when we wish to pray, we are recommended to go into our chambers, clearly for the sake of privacy. This is manifestly intended for our protection, lest, whilst praying in public, human praise should rob us of the fruit of our prayer and render it inefficacious. But none the less, it teaches us modesty. For what is more a part of modesty than to avoid praise and self-glorification? It is clear, therefore, that He Who is the Child and the Master of modesty was looking to this virtue particularly when He bade us to pray in secret. What is so unbecoming, more especially in young people, as an ostentatious parade of piety? For youth is the age most apt and suitable for laying the foundations of a truly religious life, according to the testimony of the Prophet Jeremias, “It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke of the Lord from his youth.” The prayer which thou art about to offer shall be excellently well commended if thou wilt make modesty its preface, and say with the Psalmist, “I am very young and despised, but I forget not Thy justifications.”

But he who wishes to pray ought to select the proper time no less than the proper place. The hour of leisure is the fittest and the most convenient for this exercise, particularly at night, when all the world lies buried in slumber and deep silence prevails. It is then that our prayers mount up to heaven with the greatest

purity and freedom. Hence the Prophet's invitation, "Arise give praise in the night, in the beginning of the watches: pour out thy heart like water before the Face of the Lord." With how much confidence does prayer ascend in the night, when its only witnesses are God Himself and the holy Angel who receives and presents it at the altar above! How pleasing and beautiful it looks, crimsoned, as it were, with the blush of modesty! How serene and calm it shows itself, disturbed by no clamour, distracted by no tumult! Lastly, how pure and unspotted it appears, defiled with no dust of earthly solicitude, tempted by no praise or flattery from beholders! For these reasons, therefore, the Spouse practised modesty as well as prudence in seeking the privacy of the night and of her bed when she wanted to pray, that is, when she desired to seek the Word. For prayer is nothing else but the seeking of the Word. Consequently I do not pray as I ought, if in my prayer I seek anything outside the Word which I do not seek for the sake of the Word, because in Him I have all. In Him I find the remedy for my wounds, the relief of my necessities, the supply of my wants, the grace of my advancement, in short, whatever it is expedient, whatever it is right, whatever it is necessary for a man to receive and to possess. I have no need, therefore, to ask for anything of the Word besides Himself, since in Him I have all I desire. For even when, in our temporal necessities, we appear to solicit temporal goods, if our object in asking them is, as it ought to be, the glory of the Word, in that case we are really seeking Him rather than them, because these are only sought for the sake of Him. What I say is nothing new to such souls as are wont to make use of all transitory things as a means of meriting the enjoyment of the Word.

Let us have the patience to investigate more closely still the privacy of this bed and this nocturnal hour, lest perchance some spiritual truth, which it would be well to bring to light, remains there as yet undiscovered. Well, then, if you will allow me to suppose that by the bed is designated human weakness, and by the darkness of night human ignorance, what can be more reasonable or more natural than that the Word, Who is the Power and the Wisdom of God, should be most earnestly sought as a divine remedy against both those evils inherent in our nature? For surely it is a most proper thing to oppose Power to weakness and Wisdom to ignorance. But lest any doubt should remain still in the minds of the more simple concerning the truth of this interpretation, let them hear what the Royal Prophet has to say on the same subject, "The Lord (doth) help him on his bed of sorrow: Thou hast turned all his couch in his sickness." This relates only to the bed. With regard to the night of our ignorance, can anything be clearer than the words of the same Prophet, where he says in another psalm, "They have

not known nor understood; they walk on in darkness”? There can be no doubt that he is alluding here to the spiritual ignorance of the whole human race, and in which we have all been born. It is the same ignorance as I think, which the blessed Apostle acknowledges himself to have been born in, and boasts of having been rescued from, when he says, speaking of the Father, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.” Hence in another place he writes, “We are not children of the night nor of darkness.” And to the faithful in general he says, “Walk then as children of the light.”

APPENDIX A

[The following prose translation is from the third chapter of the work entitled The Mystical Vine, commonly regarded as St. Bernard's. My reason for inserting it here is its remarkable resemblance in thought and expression to Sermon LXI. on the Canticle, and because it is too long to be given as a footnote. To this I have added an English version of the hymn "Summi Regis Cor Aveto," one of those found amongst the writings of the Mellifluous Doctor, as an equally eloquent witness to his love for the Sacred Heart.—TRANSLATOR.]

ON THE SACRED HEART

NOT content with digging His Hands and Feet, and opening His sacred Side, they pierced with the lance of furious hate that most holy Heart Which had already been wounded long before with the lance of love. "Thou hast wounded My Heart, My sister, My spouse." says the heavenly Bridegroom in the Canticle of love, "Thou hast wounded My Heart." Yes, Lord Jesus, Thy sister, Thy spouse, Thy beloved has wounded Thy Heart. What need, then, that It should be wounded again by Thine enemies? O enemies of Jesus, what are you about? If the Heart of my sweet Master has been wounded already, rather since It has already been wounded, why would you inflict on It another wound? Are you not aware that the human heart loses life and feeling when pierced by a single wound? The Heart of my Lord Jesus is therefore dead, slain by the wound of love. The Heart of Him Who is at once my Lord and the Bridegroom of my soul is possessed and occupied by the death of love. How then has It room for a second death? "Love is strong as death," aye, stronger than death. Hence the first death, which is charity, the death of all evil deaths, cannot be expelled from the heart which it has made its home by the inviolable right of its own proper wound. When enemies meet who are of equal strength, but one happens to be within the house and the other outside, is it not certain that the victory must go to the former? And see how great is the force of charity which not alone in the Heart of Jesus, but also in the hearts of His servants, has obtained dominion and

most sweetly inflicted death. Let us contemplate the holy martyrs. See how they smile at terrors! How they rejoice under the lash! They are slain, and behold they triumph! How is this? Because having died the death of charity interiorly in their hearts, they have long been dead to sin, dead to the world; and rendered thus insensible, they can no more be affected by menaces or torments or by any violence. What wonder is this since they have ceased to live? “You are dead,” says the Apostle, writing to the Colossians. It is such a death the wisely-foolish Balaam desired for himself, when he prayed, “Let my soul die the death of the Just, and my last end be like to them.” Happy death which makes us indifferent to death! Happy death which leads to everlasting life! Thus was the Heart of Jesus wounded and slain long ago for our sakes, “when all the day long we were counted as sheep for the slaughter.” Corporal death also came upon Him and prevailed awhile, but only to be eternally vanquished. It was vanquished because, “rising from the dead, He dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him.”

But, since we have come to the most sweet Heart of Jesus, and “it is good for us to be here,” let us not suffer ourselves to be easily torn away from so holy a Sanctuary, whereof we read, “They that depart from Thee shall be written in the earth.” But what of those who draw nigh? Thou hast told us Thyself, O Lord Jesus, for it is to such Thou didst say, “Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” What then of those who “are written in the earth”? Doubtless, they shall mourn. But who would not wish to rejoice? Who could refuse an invitation like this? Let us therefore, approach to Thee and “we will be glad and rejoice in Thee, remembering Thy Heart.” Oh, “how good and how pleasant it is to dwell” in the Heart of Jesus! A rich Treasure, a Pearl beyond price, is this Heart of Thine, O good Jesus, which we have found in the digged field of Thy wounded Body. Who would throw away such a Pearl? Nay, rather I will sell my all, I will barter away all the thoughts and affections of my soul in order to acquire It as my possession, Casting all my care on the Heart of my Lord Jesus, and without any doubt, It will have care of me. “I will worship towards this holy Temple,” this Holy of Holies, this Ark of the Covenant, “and I will praise the name of the Lord,” saying with David, “I have found my Heart that I may pray to my God.” Yes, I have found the Heart of my sweet Jesus, my King, my Brother, my Friend. And shall I not pray? Most assuredly I shall. For His Heart is also mine. I affirm it boldly, because Christ is my Head. Therefore, as the eyes of my natural head are my eyes, so is the Heart of my mystical Head my Heart. What happiness for me! I have really one Heart with Jesus! Nor is there anything

surprising in this, since we know that in the early Church, “the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul.” Therefore, having found this Heart of mine and Thine, O sweetest Jesus, I will pray to Thee, my God. Only do Thou admit my supplication into the Sanctuary of Thy gracious mercy, yea, draw me entirely into Thy Heart. For although the labyrinthine maze of my sins stands in my way, yet that Heart has been limitlessly dilated and expanded by the force of charity, and Thou alone canst “make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed”; so that freed from the encumbrance of sin, I may be able to pass through the narrow door. O Jesus, beautiful above all in all manner of beauty, “wash me yet more from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Thus purified by Thee, I shall be able through Thee to approach to Thy most Holy Presence and deserve to dwell in Thy Heart all the days of my life, having ever the light to know Thy will and the grace to accomplish it. For this was Thy sacred Side opened, that we might have free access to Thy Heart. For this was Thy Heart wounded that in It and in Thee we might dwell in tranquility, secure from the perturbation of external things. For this, too, was Thy Heart wounded, that the visible wound of the lance might reveal to us the invisible wound of love. How couldst Thou better manifest the ardour of Thy divine charity than by permitting Thy Heart to be pierced? Therefore, the carnal wound is but the manifestation of the spiritual. And perhaps it is to signify this that in the verse of the Canticle the words “thou hast wounded Me” are repeated. For she who is at once Thy spouse and Thy sister is represented as the author of both wounds; as if the Bridegroom were to say openly, “Because thou hast wounded Me by the vehemence of thy love, therefore have I been wounded also by the soldier’s lance.” Had His Heart not been first pierced by love, never surely would He have allowed the steel to invade It. Hence He says, “Thou hast wounded My Heart, My sister, My spouse, thou hast wounded My Heart.” But why does He call her both sister and spouse? Would not the title of sister alone or spouse alone be sufficient to express the affection of a loving Bridegroom? And why is she called spouse rather than bride? Is it not as a bride that the Church or the faithful soul is expected to bring forth the daily fruit of good works to Christ, her heavenly Bridegroom? My reply shall be brief. Persons united in wedlock are wont to love each other less ardently than during the period of espousals, when love alone was the link between them. The Divine Bridegroom, then, to show that the greatness of His love suffers no diminution from time, calls His beloved by the name of spouse, His affection for her being ever new. But since earthly spouses are loved according to the flesh, and in the love of Christ there is nothing carnal, He also

addresses His spouse under the title of sister, for sisters are loved with a pure affection. He says, therefore, “Thou hast wounded My Heart, My sister, My spouse,” which is equivalent to this: “Because I love thee supremely as My spouse, chastely as My sister, therefore for thy sake has My Heart been wounded.” Oh, who would not love that Heart so cruelly wounded? Who would not return It love for love? Who would not embrace so pure a Heart? Certainly the spouse loves It, for she is herself wounded for Its sake by an excess of charity. “I am wounded with charity,” she exclaims. Is it possible that she who says, “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love”—is it possible, I repeat, that she does not reciprocate her Bridegroom’s affection? And she loves Him with a sisterly love, for she says: “Who shall give Thee to me for my Brother, sucking the breasts of my mother, that I may find Thee without and kiss Thee, and now no man may despise me?” But what does she mean here by “without”? Without the body, very likely. For “while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” Who could suffer in patience such an absence, such an exile, embittered as it is by sorrow for the past, labour in the present, fear of the future? And although the grace of consolation is sometimes experienced, when the Bridegroom reveals Himself for a moment, yet He stands afar off, behind the wall, as it were, this body of sin making a division between Him and us; nor does He readily give Himself to be touched and kissed, except to the soul which has advanced so far in merit as to deserve to be thus addressed by Him, “Arise, My love, My dove, My beautiful one.” It is only such a soul that can say in those rare moments when she seems to herself to “have attained,” at least in some sense, “I have found Him whom my soul loveth, I held Him and will not let Him go.”

But it is not everyone who can attain to this perfection of charity. As for us who are still “within,” that is, who still abide in our mortal bodies, let us love as ardently as we can, let us requite with love, let us tenderly embrace our Wounded Love, Whose Hands and Feet and Side and Heart, those impious husbandmen so cruelly dug; and let us implore of Him that He would vouchsafe to bind to His own with the bonds of love, and pierce with the lance of love, those hearts of ours, still hard and impenitent.

“SUMMI REGIS COR AVETO”

I.

O Heart of Him Who reigns on high,

With gladsome soul I bid Thee hail!

And to Thy love’s embraces fly

Where joys abound that never fail.

Give me courage now to speak,

Thou so great and I so weak.

II.

Oh, what strong love Thy might could bend,

For my poor heart what strong desire,

That Thou shouldst so exhaust and spend

And give Thyself to me entire!

Happy if Thou couldst but save

Even so Thy rebel slave.

III.

Most bitter had that death to be,

Most greedy and insensitive

To violate this Sanctuary

Where dwelt the Life of all that live,

Rending with sharp pangs the shrine

Filled with sweetnesses divine.

IV.

I pray Thee by Thy death of pain,

O Heart beloved! endured for sin

And me, that Thou my heart would deign

To take and hold Thyself within.

This is now my one desire,

This is the grace I most require.

V.

Detach my soul from earthly things,

From joys and cares, my only Love!

Bid love and fear provide the wings

To bear my heart to Thee above,

Where from dark ’twill lightsome grow,

And from cold with fervour glow.

VI.

Although a rebel slave of Thine

To whom but stripes are justly due,

I pray Thee, let Thy love divine

Consume and pierce me through and through.

Happy shall the torments be

Caused by wounds of charity!

VII.

Expand, sweet Heart! Thyself unfold,

As does the rose of fragrant breath,

And mine, encompassed, captive hold

To die in Thee a blissful death!

For what ill can him befall

Who makes Thee his all in all?

VIII.

The soul that feels this flame divine

No longer can herself restrain,

She acts as one o’er-charged with wine,

And modes and measures give her pain:

Subject now to foreign sway

She does not herself obey.

IX.

With all the force which love can lend,

O Heart beloved! I Thee implore

That Thou wouldst to my level bend

And make me Thine for evermore!

So my heart with pulses sweet

Henceforth but for Thee shall beat.

X.

Oh, let me but to love Thee live!

And lest upon me sloth should steal,

A prayerful worship to it give

And for Thy glory fiery zeal.

Granted this, my life shall be

Full of joy since full of Thee.

XI.

Expand, sweet Rose, no limits hold,

Disperse abroad Thy fragrance sweet,

Within Thy amplitude enfold

This heart of mine and make it beat

Henceforth with the one desire

Still to burn in love’s dear fire.

XII.

But let my heart affliction smite

And thus secure this union make,

For heart to heart will well unite

When each is pierced for other’s sake.

Come, then, sorrow, point thy dart,

Pierce with woe this willing heart!

XIII.

As else to live I cannot bear,

Oh, let me ever in Thee dwell,

Whose bitter-sweets I fain would share,

And share Thy glorious shames as well.

Heart divine, my heart unfold,

Since itself it cannot hold.

XIV.

There let me live, there let me die!

For out of Thee I cannot rest,

Oh, quench not, but intensify

The flame that rages in my breast!

Strengthen in my soul Thy sway,

Dearer growing day by day.

APPENDIX B

GLORIES OF SAINTS BERNARD AND AUGUSTINE

“AS St. Gertrude reflected at Mass on the merits of St. Bernard, to whom she had a particular devotion on account of his sweet eloquence, the illustrious Abbot appeared, to her, clothed in ineffable glory and in three different colours, each of which was equally brilliant—white, which indicated the integrity of his innocence and purity; violet, his perfection as a religious; and crimson, the fervour of his love; and these three colours appeared to impart a special pleasure to all the saints. He had also golden bracelets, in which precious stones were interlaced with admirable skill: the gold indicated the inestimable value of his rare and admirable doctrine, and all that he had said or written for the good of souls; the precious stones indicated his burning love of God. Our Lord drew into His Heart all the merits and advantages which had ever been gained by any person, either in heaven or on earth, from his words or writings, causing this to radiate from His Heart into that of St. Bernard, which resounded like a sweet instrument of music—his virtues, and, above all, his innocence and love, producing the sweetest melody imaginable.

“The heart of the Saint was also adorned with a brilliant diadem of many colours, on which appeared the profit which he had desired should be gained from his writings for the greater glory of God. St. Gertrude then repeated the Laudate two hundred and fifty-five times in honour of the Saint, returning thanks to God for all the graces with which He had favoured him. Then all that he said appeared on the vestments of the venerable Father in the form of little shields, on which were engraven the virtues for which he had been specially distinguished when en earth; and they shone also into the soul of Gertrude, who had returned thanks to God for them.

“As the Saint prayed at Mass for all the religious of whom, she had charge, and especially for those who were devout to St. Bernard, although they had not been recommended to her prayers, she beheld this venerable Father again clothed in glory, the splendour of which appeared to pass from him to all those who desired to obtain the same fervent love of God as he had, through his

merits. As Gertrude marvelled at this, she inquired why those persons who had not practised the same virtues as he had done could appear thus enriched with his merits. He replied, ‘A lady of noble birth is not less admired when clothed with the habits of another than when she wears her own, provided she is beautiful and perfectly formed. Thus the virtues of the saints obtain the same advantages for those who praise God for their fervour in acquiring them.’

“St. Gertrude now observed that these who had recommended themselves to her prayers with devotion appeared adorned with a singular brightness, which others did not obtain; to show that the least action done with a right intention profits much, and that the least negligence, even in little things, may be a serious loss.

“On the same day, as the Saint reflected on the glory of St. Augustine, to whom she had always been devout, and thanked God for the favours he had bestowed on him, he appeared to her with St. Bernard, as if equal to him in glory, as he had been equal to him in sanctity and doctrine. This great Bishop stood before the throne of the Divine Majesty, magnificently apparelled, while rays of ardent fire appeared to shoot forth from his heart, as also from the heart of St. Bernard, towards that of Jesus Christ; this indicated the eloquence by which the holy Doctor had enkindled the fire of divine love in the hearts of men. Rays of light, like sunbeams, proceeded from his lips, which filled the whole heavens, and figured the abundant and marvellous doctrines with which he had enlightened the Church. Beneath these rays there appeared arcades of light, of admirable clearness, which attracted the attention of all, and gave abundant pleasure and content to those who gazed upon them. As the Saint beheld this with joy and admiration, she learned from St. Bernard that these arcades represented the light of the doctrine of St. Augustine, and his immense labours in defence of the Catholic faith, that he might be able to close up the way of error to all men, and to open the way of the true faith.

“St. Gertrude then inquired of St. Bernard if he had not had the same end in his writings. He replied: ‘I spoke, wrote, and acted under the impulse of an impetuous love of God; whilst this illustrious Doctor wrote from a principle of divine love, and moved by the miseries which he had himself experienced.’

“Our Lord then drew to Himself from the blessed and from the hearts of the faithful still on earth the faith, consolation, light, and love which the writings of St. Augustine had produced; perfecting this, uniting it to His Heart, and then pouring it forth into the heart of the Saint, whose soul was penetrated by this divine influence, and became like a harp before God, emitting the most perfect

and sweetest melody; and as the virginity and love of God had formed an admirable concert in the heart of St. Bernard, the penitence and fervent love of St. Augustine produced a similar effect, so that it was impossible to decide which was the most melodious. After this, St. Bernard informed St. Gertrude that the melodies which she heard were those which were spoken of in the words, ‘Omnis illa Deo,’ etc.; for the heart of each saint emits a melody which correponds to its virtues, and all are ever employed in the divine praises.”—Cusack’s Life and Revelations of St. Gertrude, Ch. 1., pp. 446–449.

SOME LETTERS OF SAINT BERNARD

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

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FROM THE TRANSLATION OF THE LATE DR. EALES VICAR OF STALISFIELD

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CONTENTS

SOME LETTERS OF SAINT BERNARD

TO THE READER

LETTER I (circa 1120)
To the Canons Regular of Horricourt

LETTER II (A.D. 1126)
To the Monk Adam

LETTER III (A.D. 1131)
To Bruno, Archbishop Elect of Cologne

LETTER IV
To the Prior and Monks of the Grand Chartreuse

LETTER V (circa A.D. 1127)
To Peter, Cardinal Deacon

LETTER VI (circa A. D. 1127)
To the Same

LETTER VII (towards the end of A.D. 1127)
To Matthew, the Legate

LETTER VIII (circa A.D. 1130)
To Gilbert, Bishop of London, Universal Doctor

LETTER IX (circa A.D. 1135)
To Ardutio (or Ardutius, Bishop Elect of Geneva

LETTER X (in the Same Year)
The Same, When Bishop

LETTER XI (circa A.D. 1120)
The Abbot of Saint Nicasius at Rheims

LETTER XII (A.D. 1127)
To Louis, King of France

LETTER XIII (A.D. 1127)
To the Same Pope, in the Name of Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres

LETTER XIV (circa A.D. 1129)
To Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln

LETTER XV (circa A.D. 1129)
To Alvisus, Abbot of Anchin

LETTER XVI
To Rainald, Abbot of Foigny

LETTER XVII
To the Same

LETTER XVIII
To the Same,

LETTER XIX (A.D. 1127)
To Suger, Abbot of S. Denis

LETTER XX (circa A.D. 1130)
To Guy, Abbot of Molesmes

LETTER XXI (circa A.D. 1128)
To the Abbot of S. John at Chartres

LETTER XXII (circa A.D. 1129)
To Simon, Abbot of S. Nicholas

LETTER XXIV (circa A.D. 1126)
To Oger, Regular Canon

LETTER XXV. (circa A.D. 1127)
To the Same

LETTER XXVI. (circa A.D. 1127)
To the Same

LETTER XXVII (circa A.D. 1127)
To the Same

LETTER XXVIII (circa A.D. 1130)
To the Abbots Assembled at Soissons

LETTER XXIX (A.D. 1132)
To Henry, King of England

LETTER XXX (circa A.D. 1132)
To Henry, Bishop of Winchester

LETTER XXXI (A.D. 1132)
To the Abbot of a Certain Monastery at York, from Which the Prior Had Departed, Taking Several Religious with Him

LETTER XXXII (A.D. 1132)
To Thurstan, Archbishop of York

LETTER XXXIII (A.D. 1132)
To Richard, Abbot of Fountains, and His Companions, Who Had Passed, Over to the Cistercian Order

from Another

LETTER XXXIV (circa A.D. 1130)
Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours, to the Abbot Bernard.

LETTER XXXV (circa A.D. 1130)
Reply of the Abbot Bernard to Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours.

LETTER XXXVI (circa A.D. 1131)
To the Same Hildebert, Who Had Not Yet Acknowledged the Lord Innocent as Pope.

LETTER XXXVII (circa A.D. 1131)
To Magister Geoffrey, of Loretto.

LETTER XXXVIII (circa A.D. 1135)
To His Monks of Clairvaux.

LETTER XXXIX (A.D. 1137)
To the Same

LETTER XL
To Thomas, Prior of Beverley

LETTER XLI
To Thomas of St. Omer, After He Had Broken His Promise of Adopting a Change of Life

LETTER XLII
To the Illustrious Youth, Geoffrey de Perrone, and His Comrades

LETTER XLIII
A Consolatory LETTER
to the Parents of Geoffrey

LETTER XLIV
Concerning the Maccabees But to Whom Written is Unknown

LETTER XLV (circa A.D. 1120)
To a Youth Named Fulk, Who Afterwards Was Archdeacon of Langres

LETTER XLVI (circa A.D. 1125)
To Guigues, the Prior, And to the Other Monks of the Grand Chartreuse

LETTER XLVII
To the Brother of William, a Monk of Clairvaux

LETTER XLVIII
To Magister Walter de Chaumont.

LETTER XLIX
To Romanus, Sub-Deacon of the Roman Curia

LETTER L
To Geoffrey, of Lisieux

LETTER LI
To the Virgin Sophia

LETTER LII
To Another Holy Virgin

LETTER LIII
To Another Holy Virgin of the Convent of S. Mary of Troyes

LETTER LIV
To Ermengarde, Formerly Countess of Brittany

LETTER LV
To the Same

LETTER LVI
To Beatrice, a Noble and Religious Lady

LETTER LVII
To the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine

LETTER LVIII
To the Duchess of Lorraine

LETTER LIX
To the Duchess of Burgundy

NOTE TO THE FOLLOWING TREATISE

HEADS OF HERESIES OF PETER ABAELARD

I.-THE SHOCKING ANALOGY MADE BETWEEN A BRAZEN SEAL, AND BETWEEN GENUS AND SPECIES, AND THE HOLY TRINITY

II.—THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE FATHER.

III.—THAT GOD IS ABLE TO DO WHAT HE DOES, OR TO REFRAIN FROM DOING IT, ONLY IN THE MANNER OR AT THE TIME IN WHICH HE DOES SO ACT OR REFRAIN, AND IN NO OTHER.

IV.—THAT CHRIST DID NOT ASSUME OUR FLESH IN ORDER TO FREE US FROM THE YOKE OF THE DEVIL.

V.—NEITHER GOD-AND-MAN, NOR THE MAN WHO IS CHRIST, IS ONE OF THE THREE PERSONS IN THE TRINITY.

VI.—THAT GOD DOES NO MORE FOR A PERSON WHO IS SAVED, BEFORE HE HAS ACCEPTED GRACE OFFERED, THAN FOR ONE WHO IS NOT SAVED.

VII.—THAT GOD OUGHT NOT TO HINDER EVIL ACTIONS.

VIII.—THAT WE HAVE NOT CONTRACTED FROM ADAM GUILT, BUT PENALTY.

IX.—THAT THE BODY OF THE LORD DID NOT FALL TO THE GROUND.

X.—THAT MAN IS MADE NEITHER BETTER NOR WORSE BY WORKS.

XI.—THAT THOSE WHO CRUCIFIED CHRIST IGNORANTLY COMMITTED NO SIN; AND THAT WHATSOEVER IS DONE THROUGH IGNORANCE OUGHT NOT TO BE COUNTED AS A FAULT.

XII.—OF THE POWER OF BINDING AND LOOSING.

XIII.—CONCERNING SUGGESTION, DELECTATION, AND CONSENT.

XIV.—THAT OMNIPOTENCE BELONGS PROPERLY AND SPECIALLY TO THE FATHER.

LETTER LX (A.D. 1140)
To the Same, Against Certain Heads of Abaelard's Heresies

CHAPTER I
HE EXPLAINS AND REFUTES THE DOGMAS OF ABAELARD RESPECTING THE TRINITY.

CHAPTER II
IN THE TRINITY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ADMIT ANY DISPARITY: BUT EQUALITY IN EVERY WAY TO BE PREDICATED.

CHAPTER III
THE ABSURD DOCTRINE OF ABAELARD, WHO ATTRIBUTES PROPERLY AND SPECICALLY THE ABSOLUTE AND ESSENTIAL NAMES TO ONE PERSON, IS OPPOSED.

CHAPTER IV
ABAELARD HAD DEFINED FAITH AS AN OPINION OR ESTIMATE: BERNARD REFUTES THIS.

CHAPTER V
HE ACCUSES ABAELARD FOR PREFERRING HIS OWN OPINIONS AND EVEN FANCIES TO THE UNANIMOUS CONSENT OF THE FATHERS, ESPECIALLY WHERE HE DECLARES THAT CHRIST DID NOT BECOME INCARNATE IN ORDER TO SAVE MAN FROM THE POWER OF THE DEVIL.

CHAPTER VI
IN THE WORK OF THE REDEMPTION OF MAN, NOT ONLY THE MERCY, BUT ALSO THE JUSTICE, OF GOD IS DISPLAYED.

CHAPTER VII
HE SEVERELY REPROVES ABAELARD FOR SCRUTINIZING RASHLY AND IMPIOUSLY, AND EXTENUATING THE POWER OF, THE SECRET THINGS OF GOD.

CHAPTER VIII
WHEREFORE CHRIST UNDERTOOK A METHOD OF SETTING US FREE SO PAINFUL AND LABORIOUS, WHEN A WORD FROM HIM, OR AN ACT OF HIS WILL, WOULD ALONE HAVE SUFFICED.

CHAPTER IX
THAT CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD, NOT ONLY TO INSTRUCT US, BUT ALSO TO FREE US FROM SIN.

LETTER LXI (A.D. 1138)
To Louis the Younger, King of the French

LETTER LXII (A.D. 1139)
To Pope Innocent

LETTER LXIII (A.D. 1139)
To the Same, in the Name of Godfrey, Bishop of Langres

LETTER LXIV (A.D. 1139)
To the Above-Named Falco

LETTER XLV (circa A.D. 1140)
To the Canons of Lyons, on the Conception of S. Mary.

LETTER LXVI (A.D. 1135)
To the Patriarch of Jerusalem

THE END

SOME LETTERS OF SAINT BERNARD

TO THE READER

This selection of S. Bernard's letters has been made in the hope that it may find its way into the hands of many to whom the volumes of the greater collection are unknown, or are for one reason or another inaccessible. The letters of great and good men give us information about them which can be derived from no other source. "As the eyes are to the other bodily senses," says the editor of S. Augustine's correspondence, "so are the letters of illustrious men in numberless ways more wonderful than all their other works. In them, as in the mirror of the human eyes, appear the personal qualities, passions, virtues, and vices of the individual. Just as no one can better show himself to the life than in his letters, so nowhere can he be better known" than in them. This is true of the letters of every saint, as well as of every man of affairs; and the peculiar value and charm of such collections of letters is almost universally acknowledged.

S. Bernard's unique position in the Church in his day, and the widespread authority he possessed, no less than his acknowledged place among the spiritual writers of all ages, tend to make his correspondence peculiarly interesting, as revealing in a more intimate way than any of his more formal writings, the characteristic qualifications and virtues, which won for him the great position he held so long during the middle ages. His learning and judgment no doubt fully appear in his tracts, treatises, and sermons; but in the private letters that were intended only for the eye of the recipient, the reader can get a deeper insight into the man and the saint, and learn more fully, because more naturally, his real qualities. In them appear his prudence and zeal, his love of truth and piety, the warmth of his human affections and his natural eloquence with more genuine truth than, say, in his commentary on The Canticle of Canticles, his Mystical Vine, or his Treatise against Abelard.

"It sometimes happens," says the editor above quoted, "that in writing about themselves, the saints immoderately exaggerate their bad qualities; or disparage their good more than is just. When another, however, writes about them, he is unable properly to penetrate the interior qualities of their soul; or if he can, is unable properly to express his knowledge for the benefit of others. But in their letters writers display themselves spontaneously, and paint themselves in their

natural colours." Nature, locality, occasion, and persons are produced before the mind of the reader even when the writer had no conscious design of doing so, and this in so clear a manner "that any careful reader may, in these letters of our author, look into his face and soul as if he were close at hand."

For the benefit of those readers of this little volume who may not have access to any full account of S. Bernard's career, it may be useful to give here a brief outline of his life. The Saint was born in the year 1091 in the village of Fontaine, in the province of Burgundy. He received a good education in his youth, and from the first displayed the best Christian dispositions. At the age of three-and-twenty he determined to dedicate his life to God in the cloister; and made choice of Citeaux, a monastery then under the fervent direction of S. Stephen Harding and which S. Robert had founded only a few years previously from Molesmes. Bernard took with him to Citeaux thirty companions, and from this refuge he was sent two years later, in 1115, to be Abbot of Clairvaux, the first offshoot of the future great religious congregation of Cistercians which had its centre at Citeaux.

The former solitude of Clairvaux soon became peopled under S. Bernard with men who were attracted by the Saint's great personality and some 700 novices are said to have sat at his feet to learn the science of the saints. He himself lived to see one of his disciples upon the throne of S. Peter, six more become cardinals, and over thirty bishops in various sees of the Christian world. He acquired, in a truly marvellous way, the general esteem and confidence of bishops, nobles, and peoples. For a considerable period there was no ecclesiastical matter of any importance, no difference to be composed, and no religious enterprise upon which he was not consulted. It was with his assistance, or it may be said by the authority of his name, that Innocent II. was recognised in the Church as Pontiff, and that Victor voluntarily abdicated the position of anti-pope. From 1131 to 1138 S. Bernard was constantly at work healing the schism. At the Council of Sens in 1140 he confounded Abelard by his learning and secured his condemnation. In 1148 he preached the Crusade, the partial failure of which he subsequently attributed to the sins of the Crusaders.

During all this time he lived as a true monk in the face of the world, and so many wonders and miracles were worked by him, or through his instrumentality, that he became commonly known as the Thaumaturgus of the West. During his lifetime he founded 160 monasteries in various parts of the western world, and he died at the age of sixty-three on 20th August 1153.

A word may now be allowed about S. Bernard's literary style, of which we

have evidence in the two volumes of his “Letters,” translated and published by Dr. Eales, a selection from which is made in this small volume. He writes always in a lively and pleasant way: his thoughts are exalted and are expressed in a manner, full of unction ; whilst tender, he is by no means wanting in strength, and at times he is vehement in defence of the truth or when it is necessary to carry conviction to the mind of him with whom he is corresponding. His diction is saturated, so to speak, with Holy Scripture; and he constantly makes use of texts taken from the Bible, and still more frequently of Biblical expressions interwoven into his own language. His favourites among the Fathers are S. Ambrose and S. Augustine, and he follows their teachings and opinions as conclusive arguments for the truth.

S. Bernard in the midst of all his labours found time for writing a great many letters. Four hundred and eighty-two of these, some of considerable length, have been preserved, and are to be found printed in the great collections of the Saint’s works. From these, as given to English readers in the faithful and easy translation made by the late Dr. Eales, sixty-six are selected as samples in the present volume. Where all is so excellent and so really fascinating the task of selection was not difficult, and mainly consisted in the unwelcome process of exclusion. The reason why one should be taken and another left was not always obvious, and beyond choosing all the letters which in any way had something to do with England, and one or two characteristic specimens, such as No. II.: “To the monk Adam,” or No. LX. on “the Heresies of Peter Abelard,” with the preceding note, practically no principle has guided the choice. In the notes it has been thought best, when reference is made to other letters not contained in this volume, to retain the numbers given to the letters in the original volumes. It may, in conclusion, be hoped that some at least may be tempted by these sample letters of a man who had to play so great a part in the first half of the twelfth century, to desire to become further acquainted with him in the larger collections of his writings.

FRANCIS AIDAN GASQUET.

Athenaeum Club,

All Saints’ Day, 1903.

LETTER I (circa 1120)

To the Canons Regular of Horricourt

Their praises inspire him with more fear than satisfaction. They ought not to put any obstacle in the way of the religious profession of certain regular canons of S. Augustine, whom he has received at Clairvaux.

To the Superior of the holy body of clerics and servants of God who are in the place which is called Horricourt, and to their disciples: the little flock of the brothers of Clairvaux, and their very humble servant, Brother Bernard, wish health, and power to walk in the Spirit, and to see all things in a spiritual manner.

Your letter, in which you have addressed to us an exhortation so salutary and profitable, brings us convincing proof of your knowledge and charity, which we admire, and for which we thank you. But that which you have so kindly prefixed by way of praise of me is, I fear, not founded on experience, although you have thus given me an excellent occasion to practise humility if I know how to profit by it. Yet it has excited great fear in me, who know myself to be far below what you imagine. For which of us who takes heed to his ways can listen without either great fear or great danger, to praises of himself so great and so undeserved? It is not safe for any one to commit himself to his own judgment or even to the judgment of another; for He who judgeth us is the Lord (1 Corinthians iv. 4.). As to the brothers concerning whose safety we recognize that your charity has been solicitous, that we should return them to you unharmed; know that by the advice and persuasion of many illustrious persons, and chiefly of that very distinguished man William, Bishop of Chalons, they have taken refuge with us, and have begged us with earnest supplication to receive them, which we have done. Though they have quitted the rule of S. Augustine for that of S. Benedict in order to embrace a stricter life, yet they do not depart from the rule of Him, who is the one Master in heaven and in earth; nor do they make void that first faith which they promised among you, and which, indeed, they promised, first of all, in baptism. They being such, therefore, and having been so

received, we are far from thinking that your sense of right will be injured by our having received them, or that you ought to take it ill if we retain them; yet if they desist from their resolution during the year of probation which the Rule requires, and desire to return to you, be assured that we shall not detain them against their will. In any case, most holy brethren, you would be wrong to resist, by an ill-considered and useless anathema, the spirit of liberty which is in them; unless, perchance (which may God avert!), you study more to promote your own interests than those of Jesus Christ.

LETTER II (A.D. 1126)

To the Monk Adam

1. If you remain yet in that spirit of charity which I either knew or believed to be with you formerly, you would certainly feel the condemnation with which charity must regard the scandal which you have given to the weak. For charity would not offend charity, nor scorn when it feels itself offended. For it cannot deny itself, nor be divided against itself. Its function is rather to draw together things divided; and it is far from dividing those that are joined. Now, if that remained in you, as I have said, it would not keep silent, it would not rest unconcerned, nor pretend indifference, but it would without doubt whisper, with groans and uneasiness at the bottom of your pious heart, that saying, Who is offended, and I burn not (2 Cor. xi. 29). If, then, it is kind, it loves peace, and rejoices in unity; it produces them, cements them, strengthens them, and wherever it reigns it makes the bond of peace. As, then, you are in opposition to that true mother of peace and concord, on what ground, I ask you, do you presume that your sacrifice, whatever it may be, will be accepted by God, when without it even martyrdom profiteth nothing (1 Cor. xiii. 3)? Or, on what ground do you trust that you are not the enemy of charity when breaking unity, rending the bond of peace, you lacerate her bowels, treating with such cruelty their dear pledges, which you neither have borne nor do bear? You must lay down, then, the offering, whatever it may be, which you are preparing to lay on the altar, and hasten to go and reconcile yourself not with one of your brethren only, but with the entire body. The whole body of the fraternity, grievously wounded by your withdrawal, as by the stroke of a sword, utters its complaints against you and the few with you, saying: The sons of my mother have fought against me (Cant. i. 5). And rightly; for who is not with her, is against her. Can you think that a mother, as tender as charity, can hear without emotion the complaint, so just, of a community which is to her as a daughter? Therefore, joining her tears with ours, she says, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me (Isa. i. 2). Charity is God Himself. Christ is our peace, who hath

made both one (Eph. ii. 14). Unity is the mystery even of the Holy Trinity. What place, then, in the kingdom of Christ and of God has he who is an enemy of charity, peace, and unity?

2. My abbot, perhaps you will say, has obliged me to follow him—ought I then to have been disobedient? But you cannot have forgotten the conclusion to which we came one day after a long discussion together upon that scandalous project which even then you were meditating. If you had remained in that conclusion, now it might have been not unfitly said of you, Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly (Ps. i. 1). But let it be so. Sons ought, no doubt, to obey a father; scholars a teacher. An abbot may lead his monks where he shall please, and teach them what he thinks proper; but this is only as long as he lives. Now that he is dead, whom you were bound to hear as a teacher and to follow as a guide, why are you still delaying to make amends for the grave scandal that you have occasioned? What hinders you now to give ear, I do not say to me when I recall you, but to our God, when He mercifully does so by the mouth of Jeremiah, Shall they fall and not arise? Shall he turn away and not return? (Jer. viii. 4.) Or has your abbot, when dying, forbidden you ever to rise again after your fall, or ever to speak of your return? Is it necessary for you to obey him even when dead—to obey him against charity and at the peril of your soul? You would allow, I suppose, that the bond between an abbot and his monks is by no means so strong or tenacious as that of married persons, whom God Himself and not man has bound with an inviolable sacrament—as the Saviour says: What God hath joined together let no man but asunder (S. Matt. xix. 6). But the Apostle asserts that when the husband is dead the wife is freed from the law of her husband (Rom. vii. 2), and do you consider yourself bound by the law of your dead abbot, and this against a law which is more binding still, that of charity?

3. These things I say, yet I do not think that you ought to have yielded to him in this even when living, or that thus to have yielded ought to be called obedience. For it is of that kind of obedience that it is said in general: The Lord shall lead forth with the workers of iniquity those who deviate in their obedience (Ps. cxxv. 5, Vulg.). And that no one may contend that obedience to an abbot, even in things evil, is free from that penalty, there are words elsewhere still more precise: The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son (Ezek. xviii. 20). From these, then, it appears clearly that those who command things evil are not to be obeyed, especially when in yielding to wrong commands, in which you appear to obey man, you show

yourself plainly disobedient to God, who has forbidden everything that is evil. For it is altogether unreasonable to profess yourself obedient when you know that you are violating obedience due to the superior on account of the inferior, that is, to the Divine on account of the human. What then! God forbids what man orders; and shall I be deaf to the voice of God and listen to that of man? The Apostles did not understand the matter thus when they said, We must obey God rather than men (Acts v. 29). Does not the Lord in the Gospel blame the Pharisees: Ye transgress the commandment of God on account of your traditions (S. Matt. xv. 3). And by Isaiah: In vain they worship Me, he says, teaching the commands and doctrines of men (Is. xxix. 13). And also to our first father. hast obeyed thy wife rather than Me, the earth shall be rebellious to thy work (Gen. iii. 17). Therefore to do evil, whosoever it be that bids, is shown not to be obedience, but disobedience.

4. To make this principle clear, we must note that some actions are wholly good; others wholly evil: and in these no obedience is to be rendered to men. For the former are not to be omitted by us, even if they are prohibited [by men]: nor the latter done, even though they are commanded. But, besides these, there are actions between the two, and which may be good or evil according to circumstances of place, time, manner, or person, and in these obedience has its place, as it was in the matter of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was in the midst of Paradise. When. these are in question, it is not right to prefer our own judgment to that of our superiors, so as to take no heed of what they order or forbid. Let us see whether it be not such a case that I have condemned in you, and whether you ought not to be condemned. For clearness, I will subjoin examples of the distinction which I have just made. Faith, hope, charity, and others of that class are wholly good; it cannot be wrong to command, or to practice them, nor right to forbid them, or to neglect the practice of them. Theft, sacrilege, adultery, and all other such vices are wholly evil; it can never be right to practice or to order them, nor wrong to forbid or avoid them. The law is not made for things of this kind, for the prohibition of no person has the power to render null the commandments given, nor the command of any to render lawful the things prohibited. There are, finally, things of a middle kind which are not in themselves good or evil; they may be indifferently either prescribed or forbidden, and in these things an inferior never sins in obeying. Such are, for example, fasting, watching, reading, and such like. But some things which are of this middle kind often pass the bounds of indifferency, and become the one or the other. Thus, marriage is neither prescribed nor forbidden, but

when it is made may not be dissolved. That, therefore, which before the nuptials was a thing of the middle kind obtains the force of a thing wholly good in regard to the married pair. Also, it is a thing indifferent for a man in secular life to possess or not to possess property of his own; but to a monk, who is not allowed to possess anything, it is wholly evil.

5. Do you see now, brother, to which branch of my division your action belongs? If it is to be put among things wholly good it is praiseworthy: if among those wholly evil it is greatly to be blamed: but if it is to be placed among those of the middle kind you may, perhaps, find in your obedience an excuse for your first departure, but your delay in returning is not at all excusable, since that was not from obedience. For when your abbot was dead, if he had previously ordered anything which was not fitting, the former discussion has shown you that you were no longer bound to obey him. And although the matter is now sufficiently clear by itself, yet because of some who seek for occasion to object when reason does not support them, I will put the matter clearly again, so that every shade of doubt may disappear, and I will show you that your obedience and your leaving your monastery, were neither wholly good nor partly good, but plainly wholly evil. Concerning him who is dead, I am silent; he has now God alone for his judge, and to his own Lord he either stands or falls; that God may not say with righteous anger, “Men have taken away from me even the right to judge.” However, for the instruction of the living I discuss, not even what he has done, but what he has ordered; whether, that is to say, his order ought to have been obligatory, inasmuch as a widespreading scandal has followed upon it. And I say this first; that if there are any who followed him when he wrongly left his cloister, but who followed in simplicity, and without suspecting any evil, supposing that he had license to go forth from the Bishop of Langres and the Abbot of Citeaux (for to each of these was he responsible); and it is not incredible that some of those who were of his company may so have believed; this, my censure, does not touch them, provided that when they knew the truth, they returned without delay.

6. Therefore my discourse is against those only, or rather for those, who knowingly and purposely put their hands into the fire; who being conscious of his presumption, yet followed him who presumed, without caring for the prohibition of the Apostle, and his precept, to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly (2 Thess. iii. 6). Despising also the voice of the Lord himself, He who gathereth not with me scattereth (S. Matt. xii. 30). To you, brethren, belongs clearly and specially that reproach spoken by Jeremiah, which I recall

with grief: This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God (Jer. vii. 28). For clearly that is the Voice of God pointing out His enemy from the work that he does, and, as it were, showing him with a stretched finger to ward off simple souls from his ungodly example: He who is not with Me, He says, scatters; ought you to have followed a disperser? And when God invites you to unite with Him, ought you rather to follow a man who wishes to disperse you? He scorned his superiors, he exposed his inferiors to danger, he deeply troubled his brethren, and yet ye seeing a thief joined yourself with him! I had determined to be silent concerning him who is dead, but I am obliged, I confess, to proceed still a little further, since I cannot blame your obedience, if his command is not shown to be altogether improper. Since the orders and the actions of the man were similar to each other, it seems impossible to praise or to blame the one without the other. Now it is very clear that orders of that kind ought not to have been obeyed, since they were contrary to the law of God. For who can suppose that the institutions of our Fathers are not to be preferred to those of lesser persons, or that the general rules of the Order must not prevail over the commands of private persons? For we have this in the Rule of S. Benedict.

7. I should be able, indeed, to bring forward the Abbot of Citeaux as a witness, who, as being superior to your abbot as a father to a son, as a master to a disciple, and, in a word, as an abbot to a monk committed to his charge, rightly complains that you have held him in contempt because of the other. I might speak also of the Bishop, whose consent was not waited for, a contempt which was inexcusable, since the Lord says of such and to such: He who despises you despises Me (S. Luke x. 16). But as to both these might be opposed and preferred the authority of the Roman Pontiff as more weighty; by whose license it is said that you have taken care to secure yourselves (the question of that license shall be discussed in its proper place), [see below, No. 9], I rather bring forward such an one as you dare not set yourself against. Most surely He is the Supreme Pontiff, who by His own blood entered in once and alone into the Holy Place to obtain eternal redemption (Heb. ix. 12), and denounces with a terrible voice, in the Gospel, that none should dare to give scandal to even the least of His little ones (S. Matt. xviii. 6). I should say nothing if the evil had not proceeded farther. An easy forgiveness would follow a fault which has no grave consequences. But at present there is no doubt that you have preferred the commands of a man to that of God, and have thus scandalized very many. What man of any sense would say that such an audacious act was good, or could become good, by the direction of any man, whatever his dignity? And if it is not

good, nor can become good, without doubt it is wholly evil. Whence it follows that since your withdrawal was to the scandal of many, and by this contrary to the law of God, since it is neither wholly good nor even of a middle kind, it is, therefore, wholly and altogether evil; because that which is wholly is always such, and that of a middle kind can become so.

8. How then can either the permission of your abbot avail to make that permissible which is (as we have already shown beyond question) wholly evil, since (as we have said above) things of this kind, that is things purely evil, can never be rightly ordered nor permissibly done? Do you see how futile is the excuse you draw from obedience to a man when you are convicted of a transgression against God? I hardly suppose that you would resort to that reply of the Lord respecting the scandal given to the Pharisees, Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind (S. Matt. xv. 14), and that as He attached no value to their objections, so you attach no value to ours; for you know that there is no comparison in this respect between Him and you. But if you make comparison of persons, you find that on one side it is the proud Pharisees who are scandalized, on the other the poor of Jesus Christ; and as to the cause of the scandal, in the one case it is presumption, in the other truth. Again, as I have shown above, you have not only preferred a human to a Divine command, but that of a private person to a public rule, and this alone would suffice for proof; but the custom and Rule, not only of our Order, but of all monasteries, seems to cry out against your unexampled innovation and unparalleled presumption.

9. You had then just reason to fear, and were rightly distrustful of the goodness of your cause when, in order to still the pangs of your consciences, you tried to have recourse to the Holy See. O, vain remedy! which is nothing else than to seek girdles, like our first parents, for your ulcerated consciences, that is, to hide the ill instead of curing it. We have asked and obtained (they say) the permission of the Pope. Would that you had asked not his permission, but his advice; that is to say, not that he would permit you to do it, but whether it was a thing permitted to you to do! Why, then, did you solicit his permission? Was it to render lawful that which was not so? Then you wished to do what was not lawful; but what was not lawful was evil. The intention, therefore, was evil, which tended towards evil. Perhaps, you would say that the wrong thing which you demanded permission to do ceased to be such if it was done by virtue of a permission. But that has been already excluded above by an irrefragable reason. For when God said, Do not despise one of these little ones who believe in Me, He did not add also, Unless with permission; nor when He said, Take care not to

give scandal to one of these little ones (S. Matt. xviii. 6-10), did He limit it by adding, Without licence. It is then certain that except when the necessary interests of the truth require, it is not permitted to any one to give any scandal, neither to order it, nor to consent to it. Yet you think that permission is to be obtained to do so. But to what purpose? Was it that you might sin with more liberty and fewer scruples, and, therefore, with just so much the more danger? Wonderful precaution, marvellous prudence! They had already devised evil in their heart, but they were cautious not to carry it out in action except with permission. They conceived in sorrow, but they did not bring forth iniquity until the Pope had afforded his consent to that unrighteous birth. With what advantage? or, at least, with what lessening of the evil? Is it likely that either an evil will cease to be or even be rendered less because the Pope has consented to it? But who will deny it to be a bad thing to give consent to evil? Which, notwithstanding, I do not in any way believe that the Pope would have done, unless he had been either deceived by falsehood or overcome by importunity. In fact, unless it had been so, would he weakly have given you permission to sow scandal, to raise up schisms, to distress friends, to trouble the peace of brethren, to throw into confusion their unity, and, above all, to despise your own Bishop? And under what necessity he should have acted thus I have no need to say, since the issue of the matter sufficiently shows. For I see with grief that you have gone forth, but I do not see that you have profited in doing so.

10. Thus, in your opinion, to give assent to so great and weighty evils is to show obedience, to render assistance, to behave with moderation and gentleness. Do you, then, endeavour to whitewash the most detestable vices under the name of virtues? Or do you think that you can injure virtues without doing injury to the Lord of virtues? You hide the vainest presumption, the most shameful levity, the cruellest division under the names of obedience, moderation, gentleness, and you soil those sacred names with the vices hidden under them. May I never emulate this obedience: such moderation can never be pleasing to me, or rather seems to resemble molestation; may gentleness of this kind ever be far from me. Such obedience is worse than any revolt: such moderation passes all bounds. Shall I say that it goes beyond them or does not come up to them? Perhaps it would be more adequate to say that it is altogether without measure or bound. Of what kind is that gentleness which irritates the ears of all the hearers? And yet I beg you to show some sign of it now on my behalf. Since you are so patient that you do not contend with anybody, even with one who tries to drag you away to forbidden ground, permit me, too, I beg of you, to treat with you now somewhat

more unrestrainedly. Otherwise I have merited much evil from you if you think that you must resent from me alone what you are accustomed to resent from no one else.

11. Well, then, I call your own conscience to witness. Was it willingly or unwillingly that you went forth? If willingly, then it was not from obedience. If unwillingly, you seem to have had some suspicion of the order which you carried out with reluctance. But when there is suspicion, there consideration is necessary. But you, either to display your patience or to exercise it, obeyed without discussion, and suffered yourself to be taken away, not only without your own volition, but even against your conscience. O, patience worthy of all impatience! I cannot, I confess, help being angry with this most questionable patience. You saw that he was a scatterer and yet you followed him; you heard him directing what was scandalous and yet you obeyed him! True patience consists in doing or in suffering what is displeasing to us, not what is forbidden to us. A strange thing! You listened to that man softly murmuring, but not to God openly protesting in such words as these, like a clap of thunder from heaven, Woe to him through whom scandal cometh (S. Matt. xviii. 7). And to be the better heard, not only does the Lord Himself cry aloud, but His Blood cries with a terrible voice to make even the deaf hear. Its pouring forth is its cry. Since it was poured forth for the children of God who were scattered abroad that it might gather them together into one, it justly murmurs against the scatterers. He whose constant duty it is to collect souls together hates without doubt those who scatter them. Loud is His voice and piercing which calls bodies from their graves and souls from Hades. That trumpet blast calls together heaven and earth and the things that are with them, giving them peace. Its sound has gone out unto the whole world, arid yet it has not been able to burst through your deafness! What a voice of power and magnificence when the words are spoken: Let the Lord arise and let His enemies be scattered (Ps. lxviii. 2). And again: Disperse them by Thy power, O Lord, my protector, and put them down (Ps. lix. 12). It is the blood of Christ, brother Adam, which raises its voice as a sounding trumpet on behalf of pious assemblies against wicked scatterers; it has been poured forth to bring together those who were dispersed, and it threatens to disperse those who scatter. If you do not hear His voice, then listen to that which rolls from His side. For how could He not hear His own blood who heard the blood of Abel?

12. But what is this to me? you say. It concerns one whom it was not right for me to contradict. The disciple is not above his master; and it was to be taught, not to teach, that I attached myself to him. As a hearer, it became me to follow,

not to go before, my preceptor. O, simple one, the Paulus of these times! If only he had shown himself another Antony, so that you had no occasion to discuss the least word that fell from his lips, but only to obey it without hesitation! What exemplary obedience! The least word, an iota, which drops from the lips of his superiors finds him obedient! He does not examine what is enjoined, he is content because it is enjoined! And this is obedience without delay. If this is a right view of duty, then without cause do we read in the Church: Prove all things, hold fast that which is good (2 Thess. v. 21). If this is a right view, let us blot out of the book of the Gospel Be ye wise as serpents, for the words following would suffice, and harmless as doves (S. Matt. x. 26). I do not say that inferiors are to make themselves judges of the orders of those set over them; in which it may be taken for granted that nothing is ordered contrary to the Divine laws, but I assert that prudence also is necessary to notice if anything does so contradict, and freedom firmly to pronounce against these. But you reply, I have nothing to do with examining what he orders; it is his duty to do that before ordering. Tell me, I pray you, if a sword were put into your hand and he bade you turn it against his throat, would you obey? Or if he ordered you to fling yourself headlong into the fire, or into the water, would you do it? If you did not even hinder him from such acts as these to the best of your ability, would not you be held guilty of the crime of homicide? Come, then, see that you have done nothing but co-operate in his crime under the pretext of obedience. Do you not know that it has been said by a certain person (for you would not, perhaps, give credence to me) that it would be better to be sunk in the depths of the sea than to give scandals (S. Matt. xviii. 6). Why has He said this unless that He wished to signify that in comparison to the terrible punishments that are reserved for the scandalous, temporal death would seem scarcely a punishment but an advantage? Why, then, did you help him to make a scandal? For you did so in following and obeying him. Would it not have been better, according to the declaration of the Truth I have quoted, to hang a millstone from his neck and so to plunge him in the depth of the sea? What then? You that were so obedient a disciple, who could not bear that he, your father and master, should be separated from you for a single instant, for a foot breadth (as it is said), you have not hesitated to fall into the ditch behind him with your eyes wide open, like another Balaam? Did you think that you were labouring for his happiness when you showed toward him an obedience more hurtful for him than death? Truly, now, I experience how true is that saying: A man’s foes shall be they of his own household (Micah vii. 6). If you see and feel this do you not groan if you

perceive what you have done? And if you do perceive, do you not tremble? For, indeed, your obedience (it is not my judgment, but that of the Truth Himself) has been worse for him than death.

13. If you are now convinced of this, I do not know how you can help trembling and hastening to repair your fault. Otherwise what conscience of wrong will you carry hence to that terrible tribunal where the judge will not need witness, where the Truth will scan even purposes, and penetrate in search of faults to the hidden places of the heart, where, in short, that Divine look will try the most secret recesses of minds, and at the sudden shining of that Sun of justice all the windings of human souls will be spread open and give to the light whatever, whether good or evil, they were hiding? Then, brother Adam, those who commit a sin, and those who consent to it will be punished with equal chastisement. Then thieves and the associates of thieves will listen to a similar sentence; the seducers and the seduced will undergo an equal judgment. Cease, then, to say again, What is it to me? Let him see to it. Can you touch pitch and say I am not defiled? Can you hide fire in your bosom and not be burned? Can you have your portion with adulterers without resembling them in some respect? Isaiah did not think so, for he reproached himself not only because he was himself unclean, but also because he was the companion of the unclean: Because, he says, I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (Isaiah vi. 5). For he blames himself not because he dwelt among sinners, but because he has not condemned their sins. For, so he says: Woe is me because I have been silent (Isaiah vi. 5, Vulg.). But when did he consent to the doing of evil, that he blames himself not to have condemned it in others? And did not David also feel that he was defiled by the contact of sin when he said: With men that work iniquity, and I will not communicate with their chosen friends (Ps. cxl. 4, Vulg.). Or when he made this prayer: Cleanse me O Lord from my secret sins, and spare Thy servant from the offences of others (Ps. xix. 12-13, Vulg.). Wherefore he strove to avoid the society of sinners in order not to share in their faults. For he says farther: I have not sat in the council of vanity, and I will not enter into the company of those who do unjustly (Ps. xxv. 4-5, Vulg.). And then he adds: I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked (ibid.). Finally, hear the counsel of the wise man: My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not (Prov. i. 10).

14. Have you, then, against these and innumerable other and similar testimonies of the truth, thought that you ought to obey anybody? O, odious perversity! The virtue of obedience which always wars on behalf of truth, is

arrayed against truth. Happy the disobedience of brother Henry, who soon repenting of his error and retracing his steps, has the happiness of not persisting longer in such an obedience. The fruits of disobedience are sweeter and to be preferred [to this]; and now he tastes them with a good conscience in the peaceable and constant practice of the duties of his profession in the midst of his brethren, and in the bosom of the Order to which he has devoted himself; while some of his former companions are breaking the hearts of their ancient brethren by the scandals they are making! Whose disobedience of slackness and omission, if the choice were given me, I would even prefer, with his sense of penitence, than the punctilious obedience of such as these, with scandal. For I consider that he does better for the keeping unity in the bond of peace who obeys charity, though disobedient to his abbot, than those who so defer to a single man as to prefer one to the whole body. I might boldly add even this, that it is preferable to risk disobedience to one person than to endanger the vows of our own profession and all the other advantages of religion.

15. Since, not to speak of other obligations, there are two principal ones to be observed by all dwellers in a monastery, obedience to the abbot and stability or constancy. But one of these ought not to be fulfilled to the prejudice of the other, so that you should thus show yourself constant in your place as not to be above being subject to the superior, and so obey the superior as not to lose constancy. Thus if you would disapprove of a monk, however constant in his cloister, who was too proud to obey the orders of his superior, can you wonder that we blame an obedience which served you as the cause or occasion for deserting your place, especially when in making a religious profession constancy is vowed in such a way as not to be at all subordinated to the will of the abbot under whom a monk may be placed.

16. But perhaps you may turn what I say against me, asking what I have done with the constancy which ought to have kept me at Citeaux, whereas I now dwell elsewhere. To which I reply, I am, indeed, a Cistercian monk professed in that place, and was sent forth by my abbot to where I now dwell, but sent forth in peace without scandal, without disorder, according to our usages and constitutions. As long, therefore, as I persevere in the same peace and concord in which I was sent forth, as long as I stand fast in unity, I do not prefer my private interests to those of the community. I remain peaceful and obedient in the place where I have been posted. I say that my conscience is at peace, because I observe faithfully the stability I have promised. How do I compromise my vow of stability when I do not break the bond of concord, nor desert the firm ground

of peace? If obedience keeps my body far distant from Citeaux, the offering of the same devotions and a manner of life in every way similar hold my spirit always present there. But the day on which I shall begin to live, according to other laws (which may God avert), to practise other customs, to perform different observances, to introduce novelties and customs from without, I shall be a transgressor of my vows, and I shall no longer think that I am observing the constancy that I promised. I say, then, that an abbot ought to be obeyed in all things, but saving the oath of the Order. But you having made profession, according to the Rule of S. Benedict, where you promised obedience, you promised also constancy. And if you have, indeed, obeyed, but have not been constant by offending in one point, you are made an offender in all, and if in all, then in obedience itself.

17. Do you see, then, the proper scope of your obedience? How can it excuse your want of constancy, which is not even of weight to justify itself? Every one knows that a person makes his profession solemnly and regularly in the presence of the abbot. That profession is made, therefore, in his presence only, not at his discretion also. The abbot is employed as the witness, and not the arbiter of the profession; the helper of its fulfilment, not an assistant to the breach of it; to punish and not to authorise bad faith. What, then? Do I place in the hand of the abbot the vows that I have taken, without exception ratified by my mouth and signed by my hand in presence of God and His Saints? Do I not hear out of the Rule (Rule of S. Benedict, C. 58) that if I ever do otherwise I shall be condemned by God, whom I have mocked? If my abbot or even an angel from heaven should order me to do something contrary to my vow, I would boldly refuse an obedience of this kind, which would make me a transgressor of my own oath and make me swear falsely by the name of my God, for I know, according to the truth of Scripture, that out of my own mouth I must either be condemned or justified (S. Luke xix. 22), and because The mouth which lies slays the soul (Wisd. i. 11), and that we chant with truth before God, Thou wilt destroy all those who speak falsehood (Ps. v. 6), and because every one shall bear his own burden (Gal. vi. 5), and every one shall give account of himself to God (Rom. xiv. 12). If it were otherwise with me, with what front could I dare to lie in the presence of God and His angels, when singing that verse from the Psalm: I will render unto Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered (Ps. lvi. 13, 14).

In fact, the abbot himself ought to consider the advice which the Rule gives, addressing itself to him in particular, “that he should maintain the present Rule

in all respects," and also, which is universally directed, and no exception made, "that all should follow the Rule as guide and mistress, nor is it to be rashly deviated from by any" (Rule of S. Bened. capp. lxiv. 3). Thus I have determined to follow him as master always and everywhere, but on the condition never to deviate from the authority of the Rule, which, as he himself is witness, I have sworn and determined to keep.

18. Let me, briefly, treat another objection which may possibly be made to me, and I will bring to a close an epistle which is already too long. It seems that I may be reproached with acting otherwise than I speak. For I may be asked, if I condemn those who have deserted their monastery, not only with the consent of their abbot, but at his command, on what principle do I receive and retain those who from other monasteries, who, breaking their vow of constancy and condemning the authority of their superiors, come to our Order? To which my reply will be brief, but dangerous; for I fear that what I shall say will displease certain persons. But I fear still more lest by concealing the truth I should sing untruly in the Church those words of the Psalmist: I have not hid my righteousness within my heart: my talk hath been of Thy truth and of Thy salvation (Ps. xl. 12). I receive them, then, for this reason, because I do not consider that they are wrong to quit the monastery, in which they were able, indeed, to make vows to God, but by no means to perform them, to enter into another house where they may better serve God, Who is everywhere, and who repair the wrong done by the breach of their vow of constancy by the perfect performance of all other duties of the religious life. If this displeasse any one, and he murmurs against a man thus seeking his own salvation, the Author of salvation Himself shall reply for him: Is thine eye evil because he is good? (S. Matt. xx. 15). Whosoever thou art who enviest the salvation of another, care rather for thine own. Dost thou not know that by the envy of the devil death entered into the world? (Wisd. ii. 24). Take heed, therefore, to thyself. For if there is envy there is death; surely, thou canst not both be envious and live. Why seek a quarrel with thy brother, since he seeks only the best means of fulfilling the vows which he has made? If the man seeks in what place or in what manner he may best discharge what he has promised to God, what wrong has he done to you? Perhaps, if you held him your debtor for a sum of money, however small, you would oblige him to compass sea and dry land until he rendered you the whole debt, even to the last farthing. What, then, has your God deserved from you that you are not willing for Him, too, to receive what is due? But in envying one you render two hostile; since you are trying both to defraud the lord of the

service due from his servant, and to deprive the servant of the favour of his lord. Wherefore do you not imitate him, and yourself discharge what is due from you? Do you think that your debt, too, will not be required of you? Or do you not rather fear to irritate God against you the more by wickedly saying in your heart, He will not require it?

19. What, you say to me, do you then condemn all who do not do likewise? No; but hear what I do think about them, and do not make futile accusations. Why do you wish to make me odious to many thousands of holy men, who, under the same profession as I, though not living in the same manner, either live holily or have died blessed deaths? I do not fail to remember that God has left to Himself seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee before Baal (1 Kings xix. 18). Listen to me, then, man envious and calumnious. I have said that I think men coming to us from other monasteries ought to be received. Have I blamed those who do not come? The one class I excuse, but I do not accuse the other. It is only the envious whom I cannot excuse, nor, indeed, am I willing to do so. These being excepted, I think that if any others wish to pass to a stricter Rule, but fear to do so because of scandal, or are hindered by some bodily weakness, do not sin, provided that they study to live a holy, pious, and regulated life in the place where they are. For if by the custom of their monastery relaxations of the Rule have been introduced, either that very charity, in which they hesitate to remove to a better on account of causing scandal, may, perhaps, be an excuse for this; according to that saying Charity covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter iv. 8), or the humility in which one conscious of his infirmity regards himself as imperfect, for it is said God gives grace unto the humble (S. James iv. 6).

20. Many things I have written, dear brother, and, perhaps, it was not needful to use so many words, for an intelligence such as yours, quick in understanding what is said, and a will well-disposed to follow good counsel. But although I have written specially to you, yet so many words need not have been written on your account, but for those for whom they may be needful. But I warn you, as my own former and intimate friend, in few words and with all confidence, not to keep longer in suspense, at the great peril of your own soul, the souls of those who are desiring and awaiting your return. You hold now in your hands (if I do not mistake) both your own eternal life and death, and theirs who are with you; for I judge that whatever you decide or do they will do also. Otherwise, announce to them the grave judgment which has been rightly passed with respect to them by all the Abbots of our Order. Those who return shall live, those who resist shall die.

LETTER III (A.D. 1131)

To Bruno, Archbishop Elect of Cologne

Bernard having been consulted by Bruno as to whether he ought to accept the See of Cologne, so replies as to hold him in suspense, and render him in awe of the burden of so great a charge. He advises him to seek counsel of God in prayer.

1. You seek counsel from me, most illustrious Bruno, as to whether you ought to accept the Episcopate, to which it is desired to advance you. What mortal can presume to decide this for you? If God calls you, who can dare to dissuade you, but if He does not call you, who may counsel you to draw near? Whether the calling is of God or not who can know, except the Spirit, who searcheth even the deep things of God, or one to whom God Himself has revealed it? That which renders advice still more doubtful is the humble, but still terrible, confession in your letter, in which you accuse your own past life gravely, but, as I fully believe, in sincerity and truth. And it is undeniable that such a life is unworthy of a function so holy and exalted. On the other hand, you are very right to fear (and I fear the same with you) if, because of the unworthiness you feel, you fail to make profitable use of the talent of knowledge committed to you, unless you could, perhaps, find another way, less abundant, perhaps, but also less perilous, of making increase from it. I tremble, I confess it, for I ought to say to you as to myself what I feel: I tremble, I say, at the thought of the state whence, and that whither, you are called, especially since no period of penitence has intervened to prepare you for the perilous transition from the one to the other. And, indeed, the right order requires that you should study to care for your own conscience before charging yourself with the care of those of others. That is the first step of piety, of which it is written, To pity thine own soul is pleasing unto the Lord (Ecclus. xxx. 23). It is from this first step that a well-ordered charity proceeds by a straight path to the love of one’s neighbour, for the precept is to love him as ourselves. But if you are about to love the souls that would be confided to you as you have loved your own hitherto, I would prefer not to be confided rather than be so loved. But if you shall have first learned to love yourself then you will

know, perhaps, how you should love me.

2. But what if God should quicken His grace and multiply His mercy upon you, and His clemency is able more quickly to replace the soul in a state of grace than daily penitence? Blessed, indeed, is he unto whom the Lord will not impute sin (Ps. xxxii. 2), for who shall bring accusation against the elect of God? If God justifies, who is he that condemns? This short road to salvation that holy thief attained, who in one and the same day both confessed his iniquities and entered into glory. He was content to pass by the cross as by a short bridge from the religion of death unto the land of the living, and from this foul mire into the paradise of joy (S. Luke xxiii. 43). This sudden remedy of piety that sinful woman happily obtained, in whose soul grace of a sudden began to abound, where offences had so abounded. Without much labour of penitence her sins were pardoned, because she loved much (S. Luke vii. 37-50), and in a short time she merited to receive that amplitude of charity which, as it is written, covers the multitude of sins (1 S. Peter iv. 8). This double benefit and most rapid goodness also that paralytic in the Gospel experienced, being cured first in the soul, then in the body.

3. But it is one thing to obtain the speedy forgiveness of sins, and another to be borne in a brief space from the sins themselves to the badges (fillets) of high dignities in the Church. Yet I see that Matthew from the receipt of custom was raised to the supreme honour of the Apostolate. But this again troubles me, because he did not hear with the other Apostles the charge, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (S. Mark xvi. 15), until after he had done penitence, accompanying the Lord whithersoever He went, bearing long privation and remaining with Him in His temptations. I am not greatly reassured, though S. Ambrose was taken from the judge’s tribunal to the priesthood, because he had from a boy led a pure and clean life, though in the world, and then he endeavoured to avoid the Episcopate even by flight and by hiding himself and many other means. Again, if Saul also was suddenly changed into Paul, a vessel of election, the Doctor of the Gentiles, and this be adduced as an example, it entirely destroys the similarity of the two cases to observe that he, therefore, obtained mercy because, as he himself says, he sinned ignorantly in unbelief. Besides, if such incidents, done for good and useful purposes, can be cited, it should be, not as examples, but as marvels, and it can be truly said of them, This is the change of the right hand of the Highest (Ps. lxxvii. 10).

4. In the meantime let these provisional replies to your queries suffice. If I do not express a decisive opinion, it is because I do not myself feel assured. This

must needs be the case, for the gift of prophecy and of wisdom only could resolve your doubt. For who could draw clear water out of a muddy pool? Yet there is one thing that I can do for a friend without danger, and with the assurance of a good result; that is to offer to God my petition that He will assist you in this matter. Leaving, therefore, to Him the secret things of His Providence, of which we are ignorant, I will beg Him, with humble prayer and earnest supplication, that He will work in you and with respect to you that which shall be for His glory, and at the same time for your good. And you have also the Lord Norbert, whom you may conveniently consult in person on all such subjects. For that good man is more fitted than I to explain the mysterious acts of Providence, as he is nearer to God by his holiness.

LETTER IV

To the Prior and Monks of the Grand Chartreuse

He commends himself to their prayers.

To the very dear Lord and Reverend father Guigues, Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, and to the holy brethren who are with him, Brother Bernard of Clairvaux offers his humble service.

In the first place, when lately I approached your parts, I was prevented by unfavourable circumstances from coming to see you and to make your acquaintance; and although my excuse may perhaps be satisfactory to you, I am not able, I confess, to pardon myself for missing the opportunity. It is a vexation to me that my occupations brought it about, not that I should neglect to come to see you, but that I was unable to do so. This I frequently have to endure, and therefore my anger is frequently excited. Would that I were worthy to receive the sympathy of all my kind friends. Otherwise I shall be doubly unhappy if my disappointment does not excite your pity. But I give you an opportunity, my brethren, of exercising brotherly compassion towards me, not that I merit it. Pity me not because I am worthy, but because I am poor and needy. Justice inquires into the merit of the suppliant, but mercy only looks to his unhappiness. True mercy does not judge, but feels; does not discuss the occasion which presents itself, but seizes it. When affection calls us, reason is silent. When Samuel wept over Saul it was by a feeling of pity, and not of approval (1 Samuel xv. 13). David shed tears over his parricidal son, and although they were profitless, yet they were pious. Therefore do ye pity me (because I need it, not because I merit it), ye who have obtained from God the grace to serve Him without fear, far from the tumults of the world from which ye are freed. Happy those whom He has hidden in His tabernacle in the day of evil men; they shall trust in the shadow of His wings until the iniquity be overpast. As for me, poor, unhappy, and miserable, labour is my portion. I seem to be as a little unfledged bird almost constantly out of the shelter of its nest, exposed to wind and tempest. I am troubled, and I stagger like a drunken man, and my whole conscience is gnawed

with care. Pity me, then; for although I do not merit pity I need it, as I have said.

LETTER V (circa A.D. 1127)

To Peter, Cardinal Deacon

He excuses himelf that he has not come when summoned, and replies respecting some of his writings which are asked for.

To the venerable lord Peter, Cardinal Deacon of the Roman Church, Brother Bernard wishes health and entire devotedness.

That I have not come to you as you commanded has been caused not by my sloth, but by a graver reason. It is that, if you will permit me to say so with all the respect which is due to you, and all good men, I have taken a resolution not again to go out of my monastery, unless for precise causes; and I see at present nothing of that kind which would permit me to carry out your wish, and gratify my own by coming to you. But you, what are you doing with respect to that promise of coming here which your former letter contained? We are awaiting it still. What the writings were, which you had before ordered to be prepared for you [otherwise, for us] and now ask for, I am absolutely ignorant, and, therefore, I have done nothing. For I do not remember to have written any book on morals which I should think worthy of the attention of your Excellency.

Some of the brethren have drawn up in their own way certain fragments of my instructions as they have heard them. Of whom one is conveniently near to you, viz., Gebuin, Precentor and Archdeacon of Troyes. You can easily, if you wish, obtain of him the notes drawn up by him. Yet if your occupation would leave you the time, and you should think fit to pay to your humble sons the visit which you promised, and which they have been expecting, I would do all in my power to give you satisfaction, if I have in my writings anything which could please you, or if I were able to compose any work which should seem worthy of you; for I greatly esteem your high reputation. I respect that care and zeal about holy things which I have heard of in you, and I should regard myself as very happy if these unpolished writings, which are a part of my duty, should be in any respect agreeable to you.

LETTER VI (circa A. D. 1127)

To the Same

He protests against the reputation for holiness which is attributed to him, and promises to communicate the treatises which he has written.

I. Even if I should give myself to you entirely that would be too little a thing still in my eyes, to have recompensed towards you even the half of the kindly feeling which you express towards my humility. I congratulate myself, indeed, on the honour which you have done me; but my joy, I confess, is tempered by the thought that it is not anything I have accomplished, but only an opinion of my merit which has brought me this favour. I should be greatly ashamed to permit myself in vain complacency when I feel assured that what is loved or respected in me is not, indeed, what I am, but what I am thought to be; for when I am thus loved it is not then I that am loved, but something in me, I know not what, and which is not me, is loved in my stead. I say that I know not, but, to speak more truly, I know very well that it is nothing. For whatever is thought to exist, and does not, is nothing. The love and he who feels it is real enough, but the object of the love does not exist. That such should be capable of inspiring love is wonderful, but still more it is regrettable. It is from that we are able to feel whence and whither we go, what we have lost, what we find. By remaining united to Him, who is the real Being, and who is always happy, we also shall attain a continued and happy existence. By remaining united to Him, I said; that is, not only by knowledge, but by love. For certain of the sons of Adam when they had known God, glorified Him not as God, nor were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations (Rom. i. 21). Rightly, then, were their foolish hearts darkened, because since they recognised the truth and despised it, they were justly punished for their fault by losing the power to recognise it. Alas! in thus adhering to the truth by the mind, but with the heart departing from it, and loving vanity in its place, man became himself a vain thing. And what is more vain than to love vanity, and what is more repugnant to justice than to despise the truth? What is more just than that the power to recognise the truth should be withdrawn

from those who have despised it, and that those who did not glorify the truth when they recognised it should lose the power of boasting of the knowledge? Thus the love of vanity is the contempt of truth, and the contempt of truth the cause of our blindness. And because they did not like, he says, to retain God in their knowledge, He gave them over unto a reprobate mind (Rom. i. 28).

2. From this blindness, then, it follows that we frequently love and approve that which is not for that which is; since while we are in this body we are wandering from Him who is the Fulness of Existence. And what is man, O God, except that Thou hast taken knowledge of Him? If the knowledge of God is the cause that man is anything, the want of this makes him nothing. But He who calls those things which are not as though they were, pitying those reduced in a manner to nothing, and not yet able to contemplate in its reality, and to embrace by love that hidden manna, concerning which the Apostle says: Your life is hidden with Christ in God (Cor. iii. 3). But in the meantime He has given us to taste it by faith and to seek for by strong desire. By these two we are brought for the second time from not being, to begin to be that His (new) creature, which one day shall pass into a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That, without doubt, shall take place, when righteousness shall be turned into judgment, that is, faith into knowledge, the righteousness which is of faith into the righteousness of full knowledge, and also the hope of this state of exile shall be changed into the fulness of love. For if faith and love begin during the exile, knowledge and love render perfect those in the Presence of God. For as faith leads to full knowledge, so hope leads to perfect love, and, as it is said, If ye will not believe ye shall not understand (Is. vii. 9, acc. to lxx.), so it may equally be said with fitness, if you have not hoped, you will not perfectly love. Knowledge then is the fruit of faith, perfect charity of hope. In the meantime the just lives by faith (Hab. ii. 4), but he is not happy except by knowledge; and he aspires towards God as the hart desires the water-brooks; but the blessed drinks with joy from the fountain of the Saviour, that is, he delights in the fulness of love.

3. Thus understanding and love, that is, the knowledge of and delight in the truth, are, perhaps, as it were, the two arms of the soul, with which it embraces and comprehends with all saints the length and breadth, the height and depth, that is the eternity, the love, the goodness, and the wisdom of God. And what are all these but Christ? He is eternity, because “this is life eternal to know Thee the true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (S. John xvii. 3). He is Love, because He is God, and God is Love (1 S. John iv. 16). He is both the Goodness

of God and the Wisdom of God (I Cor. i. 24), but when shall these things be? When shall we see Him as He is? For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was subjected unto vanity, not willingly (Rom. viii. 19, 20). It is that vanity diffused through all which makes us desire to be praised even when we are blameable, and not to be willing to praise those whom we know to be worthy of it. But this too is vain, that we, in our ignorance, frequently praise what is not, and are silent about what is. What shall we say to this, but that the children of men are vain, the children of men are deceitful upon the weights, so that they deceive each other by vanity (Ps. lxi. 9; lxx.). We praise falsely, and are foolishly pleased, so that they are vain who are praised, and they false who praise. Some flatter and are deceptive, others praise what they think deserving, and are deceived; others pride themselves in the commendations which are addressed to them, and are vain. The only wise man is he who says with the Apostle: I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be or that he heareth of me (2 Cor. xii. 6).

4. For the present I have noted down these things too hastily (because of this in not so finished a way), rather than dictated them for you, perhaps also at greater length than I should, but to the best of my poor ability. But that my letter may finish at the point whence it began, I beg you not to be too credulous of uncertain rumour about me, which, as you know well, is accustomed to be wrong both in giving praise and in attaching blame. Be so kind, if you please, as to weigh your praises, and examine with care how far your friendship for me and your favour are well-founded, thus they will be the more acceptable from my friend as they are fitted to my humble merit. Thus when praise shall have proceeded from grave judgment, and not from the error of the vulgar, if it is more moderate it will be at the same time more easy to bear. I assure you that what attaches me (humble person as I am), to you is the zeal, industry, and sincerity with which you employ yourself, as they say, in the accomplishment of your charge in holy things. May it be always thus with you that this may be said of you always with truth. I send you the book which you desire to have in order to copy; as for the other treatises of mine which you wish that I should send, they are but few, and contain nothing which I should think worthy of your attention, yet because I should prefer that my want of intelligence should be blamed rather than my goodwill, and I would rather endanger my inexperience than my obedience in your sight, be so good as to let me know by the present messenger which of my treatises you wish that I should send you, so that I may ask for them again from those persons to whom they have been lent, and send

them wherever you shall direct. That you may know what you wish for, I may say that I have written a little book on Humility, four Homilies on the Praises of the Virgin Mother (for the little book has this title), upon that passage of S. Luke where it is said the Angel Gabriel was sent (S. Luke i. 26). Also an Apology dedicated to a certain friend of mine, in which I have treated of some of our observances, that is to say, those of Citeaux, and those of Cluny. I have also written a few Letters to various persons, and finally, there are some of my discourses which the brethren who heard them have reproduced in their own words and keep them in their hands. Would that any of the simple productions of my humble powers might be of any service to you, but I do not dare to expect it.

LETTER VII (towards the end of A.D. 1127)

To Matthew, the Legate

He excuses himself very skilfully for not having obeyed the summons to take part in settling certain affairs.

1. My heart was, indeed, prepared to obey; not so my body. It was burned up by the heats of an acute and violent fever, and exhausted by sweats, so that it was too weak to carry out the impulse of the spirit. I wished, then, to go, but my good will was hindered by the obstacle which I have mentioned. Whether this was truly so, let my friends themselves judge, who, disregarding every excuse that I can make, avail themselves of the bonds of obedience to my superiors to draw me out of my cloister into cities. I beg them to remark that this reason is not a pretext of my own invention, but a cause of much suffering to me; that they may thus learn that no project can prevail against the will of God. If I should reply to them, I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? (Cant. v. 3), they would at once be indignant. But now let them either object to or acquiesce in the ruling of Providence, for it is that which has brought about, that even if I wish to go forth, I am not in health to do so.

2. But the cause is great, they say, the necessity weighty. They must, then, have recourse to some one suitable to settle great matters. If they think me such an one, I not only think, but know, that I am not. Futhermore, whether the matters are great or small, to which they so earnestly invite me, they are not my concern. Now, I inquire, Are the matters easy or difficult which you are so anxious to lay upon your friend, to the troubling of his peace? If easy, they can be settled without me; if difficult, they cannot be dealt with by me, unless, perhaps, I am so estimated as to be thought capable of doing what no one else can do, and for whom great and impossible affairs are to be reserved. But if it be so, O Lord my God, how are Thy designs so frustrated in me only? Why hast Thou put under a bushel the lamp, which could shine upon a candlestick; or, to speak more plainly, why hast Thou made me a monk and hidden me in Thy

sanctuary during the day of evil, if I were a man necessary to the world, without whom bishops are not able to transact their business? But this, again, is a service that my friends have done me, that now I seem to speak with discomposure to a man whom I am accustomed to think of with serenity, and with the utmost pleasure. But you know (I say it to you, my father) that so far from feeling angry, I am prepared to keep your commands. But it will be a mark of your indulgence to spare me whenever you find it possible to do so.

LETTER VIII (circa A.D. 1130)

To Gilbert, Bishop of London, Universal Doctor

He praises Gilbert, who practised poverty in the station of Bishop.

The report of your conduct has spread far and wide, and has given to those whom it has reached an odour of great sweetness. The love of riches is extinct; what sweetness results! charity reigns; what a delight to all! All recognise you for a truly wise man, who has trodden under foot the great enemy with true wisdom; and this is most worthy of your name and of your priesthood. It was fitting that your special philosophy should shine forth by such a proof, and that you should crown all your distinguished learning by such a completion. That is the true and unquestionable wisdom which contemns filthy lucre and judges it a thing unworthy [that philosophy should] dwell under the same roof as the service of idols. That the Magister Gilbert should become a bishop was not a great thing; but that a Bishop of London should embrace a life of poverty, that is, indeed, grand. For the greatness of the dignity could not add glory to your name; but the humility of poverty has highly exalted it. To bear poverty with an equal mind, that is the virtue of patience; to seek it of one's own accord is the height of wisdom. He is praised and regarded as admirable who does not go out of his way after money; and shall he who renounces it have no higher praise? Unless that clear reason sees nothing to be wondered at in the fact that a wise man acts wisely; and he is wise who having acquired all the science of the learned of this world, and having great enjoyment in acquiring them, has studied all the Scriptures so as to make their meaning new again. What then? You have dispersed, you have given to the poor, but money. But what is money to that righteousness which you have gained for it? His righteousness, it is said, endureth for ever (Ps. cxii. 9). Is it so with money? Then it is a desirable and honourable exchange to give that which passes away for that which endures. May it be granted to you always so to purchase, O, admirable and praiseworthy Magister! It remains that your noble beginning should attain an ending worthy of it; and the tail of the victim be joined to the head. I have gladly received your

benediction, which the perfectness of your virtue renders the more precious to me. The bearer of this letter, though exceedingly respectable for his own sake, I desire to commend for my sake also, to your Greatness. He is exceedingly dear to me for his goodness and piety.

LETTER IX (circa A.D. 1135)

To Ardutio (or Ardutius, Bishop Elect of Geneva

He warns him that he must attribute his election to the grace of God, and strive thenceforth faithfully to co-operate with it.

I am glad to believe that your election, which I have heard was effected with so complete an assent both of the clergy and people, was from God. I congratulate you on His grace, and I do not speak of your merits, since we ought not to render to you excessive praise, but to recognise that, not because of works of righteousness which you have done, but according to His mercy He has done this for you. If you (which may God forbid!) should think otherwise, your exaltation will be to your ruin. But if you acknowledge it to be of grace, see that you receive it not in vain. Make your actions and your desires good, and your ministry holy; and if sanctity of life has not preceded, let it at least follow your elevation. Then I shall acknowledge that you have been prevented with the blessings of grace, and shall hope that after these you will receive still better graces. I shall be in joy and gladness that a good and faithful servant has been set over the family of the Lord, and you shall come to be as a son powerful and happy, meet to be set over all the good things of the Father. Otherwise, if it delights you to be in higher place rather in holier mind, I shall expect to see, not your reward, but your destruction. I hope, and pray God, that it may not be thus with you; and am prepared, if there is need, to render my aid, as far as in me lies, to assist you in whatever you think proper and expedient.

LETTER X (in the Same Year)

The Same, When Bishop

He exhorts him to adorn the dignity which he had obtained without preceding merits, by a holy life.

1. Charity gives me boldness, my very dear friend, to speak to you with great confidence. The episcopal seat which you have lately obtained requires a man of many merits; and I see with grief none of these in you, or at least not sufficient, to have preceded your elevation. For your mode of life and your past occupations seem in nowise to have been befitting the episcopal office. What then? Would you say, Is not God able of this stone to raise up a son of Abraham? Is not God able to bring about that the good works which ought to have gone before my episcopate may follow it? Certainly He is, and I desire nothing better than this, if it should be so. I know not why, but that sudden change wrought by the right hand of the Highest will please me more than if the merits of your former life pleaded for you. Then I could say, This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes (Ps. cxviii. 23). So Paul, from a persecutor, became the Doctor of the Gentiles; so Matthew was called from the toll-booth, so Ambrose was taken from the palace, the one to the Episcopate, the other to the Apostolate. So I have known many others who have been usefully raised to the Episcopate, from the habits and pursuits of secular life. How many times it has been the case that where sin abounded, grace also did much more abound?

2. So then, my dear friend, encouraged by these examples and others like them, gird up your loins, and make your actions and pursuits henceforth good; let your latest actions make the old forgotten, and the correction of your mature life blot out the demerits of your youth. Take care to imitate Paul in honouring your ministry. You will render it honourable by gravity of manners, by wise plans, by honourable actions. It is these which most ennoble and adorn the Episcopal office. Do nothing without taking counsel, yet not of all, nor of the first comer, but of good men. Have good men in your confidence, in your service, dwelling in your house, who may be at once the guardians and the

witnesses of your honourable life. For in this you will approve yourself a good man if you have the testimony of the good. I commend to your piety my poor brethren who are in your diocese, especially those of Bonnemont, in the Alps, and of Hautecombe. By your bounty towards these I shall see what degree of affection you have for me.

LETTER XI (circa A.D. 1120)

The Abbot of Saint Nicasius at Rheims

He consoles this abbot for the departure of the Monk Drogo and his transfer to another monastery, and exhorts him to patience.

1. How much I sympathize with your trouble only He knows who bore the griefs of all in His own body. How willingly would I advise you if I knew what to say, or help you if I were able, as efficaciously as I would wish that He who knows and can do all things should advise and assist me in all my necessities. If brother Drogo had consulted me about leaving your house I should by no means have agreed with him; and now that he has left, if he were to apply to enter into mine I should not receive him. All that I was able to do in those circumstances I have done for you, and have written, as you know, to the abbot who has received him. After this, reverend father, what is there more that I am able to do on your behalf? And as regards yourself, your Holiness knows well with me that men are accustomed to be perfected not only in hope, but also to glory in tribulation. The Scripture consoles them, saying: The furnace proveth the potter’s vessels, and temptation the righteous man (Ecclus. xxvii. 6, Vulg.); The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart (Ps. xxxiv. 18); and We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts xiv. 21); and All who will live godly in Christ suffer persecution (2 Tim. iii. 12). Yet none the less ought we to sympathize with our friends whom we see placed in care and grief; because we do not know what will be the issue of such, and fear lest it may be for ill; since whilst, indeed, to saints and the elect tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed (Rom. v. 3-5), to the condemnable and reprobate, on the contrary, tribulation causes discouragement, and discouragement confusion, and confusion despair, which destroys them.

2. In order, then, that this dreadful tempest may not submerge you, nor the frightful abyss swallow you up, and the unfathomable pit shut her mouth upon you, employ all the efforts of your prudence not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good. You will overcome if you fix solidly your hope in

God, and wait patiently the issue of the affair. If that monk shall return to a sense of his duty, whether for fear of you, or because of his own painful condition, well and good; but if not, it is good for you to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, nor to wish uselessly to resist His supreme ordering; because if it is of God it cannot be undone. You should rather endeavour to repress the sparkles of your indignation, however just, by a reflection which a certain saint is said in a similar case to have uttered. For when some of his monks were mixing demands with bitter reproaches because he did not require back again a fugitive who had fled to another monastery in defiance of his authority, “By no means,” he said, “wheresoever he may be, if he is a good man, he is mine.”

3. I should be wrong to counsel you thus, if I did not oblige myself to act thus. For when one of my brethren, not only a professed religious, but also nearly akin to me, was received and retained at Cluny against my will, I was afflicted, indeed, but endured it in silence, praying both for them that they might be willing to return the fugitive, and for him, that he might be willing of his own accord to return; but if not, leaving the charge of my vengeance to Him who shall render judgment to the patient and contend in equity for the meek of the earth. Please to warn brother Hugo, of Lausanne, with your own mouth, and as from me, not to believe every spirit, and not to be induced rashly to desert the certain for the uncertain. Let him remember that perseverance alone is always attacked by the devil, because it is the only virtue which has the assurance of being crowned. It will be safer for him simply to persevere in the vocation wherein he is called than to renounce it under the pretext of a life more perfect, at the risk of not being found equal to that which he had the presumption to attempt.

LETTER XII (A.D. 1127)

To Louis, King of France

The monks of Citeaux take the liberty to address grave reproaches to King Louis for his hostility to and injuries inflicted upon the Bishop of Paris, and declare that they will bring the cause before the Pope if the King does not desist.

To LOUIS, the glorious King of France, Stephen, Abbot of Citeaux, and the whole assembly of the abbots and brethren of Citeaux, wish health, prosperity, and peace in Christ Jesus.

1. The King of heaven and earth has given you a kingdom on earth, and will bestow upon you one in heaven if you study to govern with justice and wisdom that which you have received. This is what we wish for you, and pray for on your behalf, that you may reign here faithfully, and there in happiness. But why do you of late put so many obstacles in the way of our prayers for you, which, if you recollect, you formerly with such humility requested? With what confidence can we now presume to lift up our hands for you to the Spouse of the Church, while you so inconsiderately, and without the slightest cause (as we think), afflict the Church? Grave indeed is the complaint she lays against you before her Spouse and Lord, that she finds you an opposer whom she accepted as a protector. Have you reflected whom you are thus attacking? Not really the Bishop of Paris, but the Lord of Paradise, a terrible God who cuts off the spirit of Princes (Ps. lxx. 12), and who has said to Bishops, He who despiseth you despiseth me (S. Luke x. 16).

2. That is what we have to say to you. Perhaps we have to say it with boldness, but at the same time in love; and for your sake we pray you heartily, in the name of the friendship with which you have honoured us, and of the brotherhood with which you deigned to associate yourself, but which you have now so grievously wounded, quickly to desist from so great a wrong; otherwise, if you do not deign to listen to us, nor take any account of us whom you called brethren, who are your friends, and who pray daily for you and your children and realm, we are forced to say to you that, humble as we are, there is nothing which we are not

prepared to do within the limits of our weakness for the Church of God, and for her minister, the venerable Bishop of Paris, our father and our friend. He implores the help of poor religious against you, and begs us by the right of brotherhood to write in his favour to the Lord Pope. But we judge that we ought first to commence by this letter to your royal Excellence, especially as the same Bishop pledges himself by the hand of all our Congregation to give every satisfaction provided that his goods, which have been unjustly taken away from him, be restored, which it seems to us justice itself requires; in the meantime, we put off the sending of his petition. And if God inspires you to lend an ear to our prayers, to follow our counsels, and to restore peace with your Bishop, or rather with God which we earnestly desire, we are prepared to come to you wherever you shall pleased to fix for the sake of arranging this affair; but if it be otherwise, we shall be obliged to listen to the voice o-L- our friend, and to render obedience to the priest of God. Farewell.

LETTER XIII (A.D. 1127)

To the Same Pope, in the Name of Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres

He explains to the Pontiff the cause why the Bishop of Paris was unjustly oppressed by King Louis. The interdict of the bishops of France had put pressure upon him, and he had promised to make restitution, when the absolution of Honorius rendered him contumacious, and prevented his fulfilling his promise.

It is superfluous to recall to you, very holy Father, the cause and order of a very afflicting history, and to linger over what you have already heard from the pious Bishop of Paris, and which must have profoundly affected your paternal heart. Yet my testimony also ought not to be wanting to my brother and co-bishop; what I have seen and heard respecting this matter, this I have undertaken to make you acquainted with in few words. When the before-mentioned Bishop had brought forward his complaint, which he did with great moderation, in our provincial assembly, where had gathered with our venerable metropolitan the Archbishop of Sens, all the bishops of the province, and certain religious also whom we had summoned, we determined to represent to the King, with all becoming humility, his unjust proceeding, and to beg that he would restore to the Bishop unjustly maltreated what had been taken from him; but we obtained no satisfaction from him. Understanding, at length, that in order to defend the Church we had decided to have recourse to the weapons of the Church, he was afraid, and promised the restitution demanded. But almost in the same hour arrived your letter, ordering that the interdict over the royal domains should be raised, thus, unfortunately, strengthening the King in his evil doings, so that he did not perform at all what he had promised. Nevertheless, as he had given a fresh promise that he would do what we required, we presented ourselves on the day appointed. We laboured for peace, and it did not come; but instead of it worse confusion. Thus the effect of your letter has been that the goods unjustly seized are more unjustly retained, and those which remain are seized day by day, and that so much more securely, as he is assured of entire impunity in retaining

them. The just (as we consider) interdict of the Bishop has been raised by your order, and as the fear of displeasing you has made us suspend that which we proposed to send forth by our own authority, and by which we hoped to obtain peace, we are made in the meantime the derision of our neighbours. How long is this to be? Let the compassion of your piety be exercised in our behalf.

LETTER XIV (circa A.D. 1129)

To Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln

A certain canon named Philip, on his way to Jerusalem, happening to turn aside to Clairvaux, wished to remain there as a monk. He solicits the consent of Alexander, his bishop, to this, and begs him to sanction arrangements with the creditors of Philip. He finishes by exhorting Alexander not to trust too much in the glory of the world.

To the very honourable lord, Alexander, by the Grace of God, Bishop of Lincoln, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes honour more in Christ than in the world.

1. Your Philip, wishing to go to Jerusalem, has found his journey shortened, and has quickly reached the end that he desired. He has crossed speedily this great and wide sea, and after a prosperous voyage has now reached the desired shore, and anchored at length in the harbour of salvation. His feet stand already in the Courts of Jerusalem, and Him whom he had heard of in Ephrata he has found in the broad woods, and willingly worships in the place where his feet have stayed. He has entered into the Holy City, and has obtained an heritage with those of whom it is rightly said: Now ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God (Ephesians ii. 19). He goes in and out with the saints, and is become as one of them, praising God and saying as they: Our conversation is in heaven (Philip. iii. 20). He is become, therefore, not a curious spectator only, but a devoted inhabitant and an enrolled citizen of Jerusalem; but not the Jerusalem of this world with which is joined Mount Sinai, in Arabia, which is in bondage with her children, but of her who is above, who is free, and the mother of us all (Gal. iv. 25-26).

2. And this, if you are willing to perceive it, is Clairvaux. This is Jerusalem, and is associated by a certain intuition of the spirit, by the entire devotion of the heart, and by conformity of daily life, with her which is in heaven. This shall be, as he promises himself, his rest for ever. He has chosen her for his habitation,

because with her is, although not yet the realisation, at least the expectation, of true peace of which it is said: The peace of God which passes all understanding (Philip. iv. 17). But this is true happiness; although he has received it from above, he desires to embrace it with your good permission, or rather he trusts that he has done this according to your wish, knowing that you are not ignorant of that sentence of the wise man, that a wise son is the glory of his father. He makes request, therefore, of your Paternity, and we also make request with him and for him, to be so kind as to allow the payments which he has assigned to his creditors from his prebend to remain unaltered, so that he may not be found (which God forbid) a defaulter and breaker of his covenant, and so that the offering of a contrite heart, which he makes daily, may not be rejected by God, inasmuch as any brother has a claim against him. And lastly, he entreats that the house which he has built for his mother upon Church land, with the ground which he has assigned there, may be preserved to his mother during her life. Thus much with regard to Philip.

3. I have thought well to add these few words for yourself, of my own accord, or rather at the inspiration of God, and venture to exhort you in all charity, not to look to the glory of the world which passeth away, and to lose that which abides eternally; not to love your riches more than yourself, nor for yourself, lest you lose yourself and them also. Do not, while present prosperity smiles upon you, forget its certain end, lest adversity without end succeed it. Let not the joy of this present life hide from you the sorrow which it brings about, and brings about while it hides. Do not think death far off, so that it come upon you unprepared, and while in expectation of long life it suddenly leaves you when ill-prepared, as it is written: When they say Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape (1 Thess. v. 3). Farewell.

LETTER XV (circa A.D. 1129)

To Alvisus, Abbot of Anchin

He praises the fatherly gentleness of Alvisus towards Godwin. He excuses himself, and asks pardon for having admitted him.

To Alvisus, Abbot of Anchin.

1. May God render to you the same mercy which you have shown towards your holy son Godwin. I know that at the news of his death you showed yourself unmindful of old complaints, and remembering only your friendship for him, behaved with kindness, not resentment, and putting aside the character of judge, showed yourself a father in circumstances that required it. Therefore, you strove to render to him all the duties of charity and piety which a father ought to render to a son. What better, what more praiseworthy, what more worthy of yourself could you have done? But who believed this? Truly no one knows what is in man, except the spirit of man which is in him (1 Cor. ii. 11). Where is now that austerity, that severity, that indignation which tongue, eyes, and countenance were accustomed to display and terribly to pour upon him? Scarcely is the death of your son named to you than your fatherly bosom is moved. Suddenly all these sentiments which were adopted for a purpose, and therefore only for a time, disappeared, and those which were truly yours, but were concealed—charity, piety, benignity—appeared. Therefore, in your pious mind, mercy and truth have met together, and because mercy has certainly prevailed over judgment, righteousness and peace have kissed each other (Ps. lxxxv. 10). For as far as I seem to be able to form an idea, I think I see what passed in your mind then, when truth, fired with zeal for justice, prepared to avenge the injury which it seemed to you had been done. The sentiment of mercy which, after the example of Joseph, prudently dissimulated at first, yet not enduring longer to be concealed, and in this also like to Joseph (Gen. xlv. 1), burst forth from the hidden fount of piety, and making common cause with truth, repressed agitation, calmed wrath, made peace with justice.

2. Then from the pure and peaceful fountain of your heart poured forth like

limpid streams such thoughts as these: What need have I to be angry? Would it not be better to pity him, and not to forget what is written, I will have mercy and not sacrifice (Hos. vi. 6), and to fulfil what is ordered, Study to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. iv. 3), so as to be able to count on what is promised, Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (S. Matt. v. 7)? After all, was not that man my son? And who can rage against his son?—unless, perhaps, he was only then my son when he was with me, and not also when he deserted me. In withdrawing from me in body for a time, has he withdrawn equally from my heart, or can even death take him away from me? Must the necessity of the body and of place so hamper the freedom of souls which love each other? I am quite sure that neither distance of places, nor the absence, or even the death, of our bodies would be able to disjoin those whom one spirit animates, one affection binds together. Finally, if the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God (Wisd. iii. 1), we, both those who are already at rest, having laid down the burden of the flesh, and those who, being still in the flesh, do not war according to the flesh, beyond a doubt are still together. Mine he was when living, mine he will be dead, and I shall recognize him as mine in the common fatherland. If there is any who is able to tear him from the Hands of God, then he may be able to separate him from me also.

3. Thus your affection, father, has enabled you to make excuses for your son. But what has it said of me, or what satisfaction from me will be worthy of you, which you could impose for the great injury inflicted upon you, because when your son left you he was received by me? What can I say? If I should plead I have not received him (would I were able to say so without sin) it would be a falsehood. If I should plead I received him, indeed, but with good reason, I should seem to wish to excuse myself, The safer way will be to answer, I did wrong. But how far did I do wrong? I do not say it by way of defence, but by whom would he not be received? Who, I say, would repel that good man from his door when he knocked, or expel him when once received? But who knows if God did not wish to supply our need out of your abundance, so that He directed to us one of the many holy men who were then in great number in your house, for our consolation, indeed, but none the less for a glory to you? “For a wise son is the glory of his father” (Prov. x. 1). Moreover, I did not make any solicitation to him beforehand. I did not gain him over by promises to desert you or to come to us. Quite on the contrary, God is my witness. I did not consent to receive him until he begged me to do so, until he knocked at my door and entreated to have it opened, until I had tried to send him back to you, but as he would not agree to

that I at length yielded to his importunity. But if it is a fault that I received him, a monk, a stranger, alone, and received him in the way I did, it will not be unworthy of you to pardon such a fault, which was committed once only, for it is not lawful for you to deny forgiveness even to those who sin against you seventy times seven.

4. But yet I wish that you should know that I do not treat this matter lightly or negligently, and, on the contrary, that I cannot pardon myself for ever having offended your Reverence in any manner. I call God to witness that often I have in mind (since I was not able to do it in body) thrown myself at your feet as a suppliant, and I often see myself before you making apology on my knees. Would that the Holy Spirit who perhaps inspired me with these feelings make you also feel with what tears and regrets worthy of pity I humble myself at this moment before your knees as if you were present. How many times with bare shoulders, and bearing the rods in my hands, prepared, as it were, to strike at your bidding; I seek your pardon, and trembling wait for your forgiveness! I earnestly desire, my father, to learn from you, if it is not too painful for you to write to me, that you receive my excuses, so that if they are sufficient I may be consoled by your indulgence, but if, on the contrary, I must be more humiliated (as it is just) that I may endeavour, whatever else I can do, to give you fuller satisfaction. Farewell.

LETTER XVI

To Rainald, Abbot of Foigny

Bernard declares to him how little he loves praise; that the yoke of Christ is light; that he declines the name of father, and is content with that of brother.

1. In the first place, do not wonder if titles of honour affright me, when I feel myself so unworthy of the honours themselves; and if it is fitting that you should give them to me, it is not expedient for me to accept them. For if you think that you ought to observe that saying, In honour preferring one another (Rom. xii. 10), and: Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God (Eph. v. 21), yet the terms one another, one to another, are not used at random, and concern me as well as you. Again, if you think that the declaration of the Rule is to be observed, "Let the younger honour their elders, I remember what the Truth has ruled: The last shall be first, and the first last (S. Matt. xx. 16), and, He that is the greater among you, let him be as the younger (S. Luke xxii. 26), and The greater thou art, the more humble thyself (Ecclus. iii. 18), and Not because we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy (2 Cor. i. 24), and, Have they made thee the master? Be then among them as one of them (Ecclus. xxxii. 1), and Be ye not called Rabbi; and Call no man your father upon the earth (S. Matt. xxiii. 8, 9). As much, then, as I am carried away by your compliments, so much am I restrained by the weight of these texts. Wherefore I rightly, I do not say sing, but mourn; While I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted (Ps. lxxxviii. 15), and Thou hast lifted me up and cast me down (Ps. cii. 10). But I should, perhaps, represent more truly what I feel if I say that he who exalts me really humiliates me; and he who humiliates me, exalts. You, therefore, rather depress me in heaping me with terms of honour, and exalt me by humbling. But that you may not humble so as to crush me, these and similar testimonies of the Truth console me, which wonderfully raise up those whom they make humble, instruct while they humiliate. Thus this same Hand that casts me down raises me up again and makes me sing with joy. It was good for me, O Lord, that I was afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes; the law of Thy mouth is good unto me, above

thousands of gold and silver (Ps. cxix. 71, 72). This marvel the word of God, living and efficacious, produces. This, that Word by which all things are done, gently and powerfully brings to pass; this, in short, is the work of the easy yoke and light burden of Christ (S. Matt. xi. 30).

2. We cannot but wonder how light is the burden of Truth. Is not that truly light which does not burden, but relieves him who bears it? What lighter than that weight, which not only does not burden, but even bears every one upon whom it is laid to bear? This weight was able to render fruitful the Virgin's womb, but not to burden it. This weight sustained the very arms of the aged Simeon, in which He was received. This caught up Paul, though with weighty and corruptible body, into the third heaven. I seek in all things to find if possible something like to this weight which bears them who bear it, and I find nothing but the wings of birds which in any degree resembles it, for these in a certain singular manner render the body of birds at once more weighty and more easily moved. Wonderful work of nature! that at the same time increases the material and lightens the burden, and while the mass is greater the burden is in the same degree less. Thus plainly in the wings is expressed the likeness of the burden of Christ, because they themselves bear that by which they are borne. What shall I say of a chariot? This, too, increases the load of the horse by which it is drawn, but at the same time renders capable of being drawn a load which without it could not be moved. Load is added to load, yet the whole is lighter. See also how the Chariot of the Gospel comes to the weighty load of the Law, and helps to carry it on to perfection, while decreasing the difficulty. His word, it is said, runneth very swiftly (Ps. cxlvii. 15). His word, before known only in Judea, and not able, because of its weightiness, to extend beyond, which burdened and weighed down the hands of Moses himself, when lightened by Grace, and placed upon the wheels of the Gospel, ran swiftly over the whole earth, and reached in its rapid flight the confines of the world.

3. Do you, therefore, my very dear friend, cease from overwhelming me rather than raising with undeserved honours; otherwise you range yourself, though with a friendly intention, in the company of my enemies. These are they of whom I am in the habit of thus complaining to God alone in my prayers. Those who praised me were sworn against me (Ps. cii. 8, Vulg.). To this, my complaint, I hear God soon replying, and bearing witness to the truth of my words: Truly they which bless thee lead thee into error (Is. ix. 16, cited from memory). Then I reply, Let them be soon brought to shame who say unto me, There, There! (Ps. lxx. 3). But I ought to explain in what manner I understand these words, that it

may not be thought I launch maledictions or imprecations against any of my adversaries. I pray, then, that whosoever think of me above that which they see in me or hear respecting me may be turned back, that is, return from the excessive praises which they have given me without knowing me. In what way? When they shall know better him whom they praise without measure, and consequently shall blush for their error, and for the ill service that they have rendered to their friend. And in this way it is that I say, Turn back! and blush! to both kinds of my enemies; those who wish me evil and commend me in order to flatter, and those who innocently, and even kindly, but yet to my injury, praise me to excess. I would wish to appear to them so vile and abject that they would be ashamed to have praised such a person, and should cease to bestow praises so indiscreetly. Therefore, against panegyrists of each kind I am accustomed to strengthen myself with those two verses: against the hostile with the former, Let them be turned back and soon brought to shame who wish me evil, but against the well-meaning, Let them be turned backward and made to blush who say over me, There, There!

4. But as (to return to you) I ought, according to the example of the Apostle, to rejoice with you only, and not to have dominion over your piety, and according to the word of God we have one Father only who is in heaven, and all we are brethren, I find myself obliged to repel from me with a shield of truth the lofty name of Lord and Father with which you have intended, I know well, to honour me, not to burden; and in place of these I think it fitter that you should name me brother and fellow-servant, both because we have the same heritage, and because we are in the same condition, lest perchance if I should usurp to myself a title which belongs to God, I shall hear from Him: If I be a Father: where is my honour, and I be a Lord where is my fear? (Mal. i. 6). It is very true, however, that if I do not wish to attribute to myself over you the authority of a father, I have all the feelings of one, nor is the love with which I embrace you less, I think, than that of a father or of a son. Sufficient, then, on the subject of the titles which you give me.

5. I wish to reply now to the rest of your letter. You complain that I do not come to see you. I could complain equally of you for the same reason, unless, indeed (which you yourself do not deny), the will of God must be preferred to our feelings and our needs. If it were otherwise, if it were not the work of Christ that was in question, would I suffer to be so far away from me a companion so dear and necessary to me, so obedient in labour, so persevering in studies, so useful in conference, so prompt in recollection? Blessed are we if we still remain

thus until the end always and in everything, seeking not our own interests, but those of Jesus Christ.

LETTER XVII

To the Same

He instructs Rainald, who was too anxious and distrustful, respecting the duty of superior which had been conferred upon him; and warns him that he must bestow help and solace upon his brethren rather than require it from them.

To his very dear son, Rainald, Abbot of Foigny, Bernard, that God may give him the spirit of strength.

1. You complain, my very dear son, of your many tribulations, and by your pious complaints you excite me also to complain, for I am not able to feel that you are sorrowing without sharing your sorrow, nor can I be otherwise than troubled and anxious when I hear of your troubles and anxieties. But since I foresaw these very difficulties which you say have happened to you, and predicted them to you, if you remember—it seems to me that you ought to be better prepared to endure them, and to spare me vexation when you can, For am I not sufficiently tried, and more than sufficiently, to lose you, not to see you, nor to enjoy your society, which was so pleasant to me; so that I have almost regretted that I should have sent you away from me. And although charity obliged me to send you, yet not being able to see you where you have been sent, I mourn you as if lost to me. When, then, besides this, you who ought to be the staff of my support, belabour me as it were with the rod of your faintheartedness, you heap sorrow upon sorrow, and torment upon torment; and if it is a mark of your filial affection towards me that you do not hide any of your difficulties from me, yet it is hard to add fresh trouble to one already burdened. Why is it needful to occupy with fresh anxieties one already more than anxious enough, and to torture with sharper pains the bosom of a father, already wounded by the absence of his son? I have shared with you my weight of cares, as a son, as an intimate friend, as a trusty assistant; but how do you help to bear your father’s burden, if, instead of relieving me, you burden me still more? You, indeed, are loaded, but I am not lightened of my load.

2. For this burden is that of sick and weak souls. Those who are in health do

not need to be carried, and are not, therefore, a burden. Whomsoever, then, of your brethren you shall find sad, mean-spirited, discontented, remember well that it is of these and for their sakes, you are father and abbot. In consoling, in exhorting, in reproving, you do your duty, you bear your burden; and those whom you bear in order to cure, you will cure by bearing. But if any one is in such spiritual health that he rather helps you than is helped by you, recognize that to him you are not father and abbot, but equal and friend. Do not complain if you find more trials than consolations from those among whom you are. You were sent to sustain and console others, because you are spiritually stronger and better able to bear than they, and because with the grace of God you are able to aid and sustain all without needing yourself to be aided and sustained by any. Finally, if the burden is great, so also is the reward; but, on the other hand, the more assistance you receive, the more your own reward is diminished. Choose, therefore; if you prefer those who are for you a burden, your merit will be the greater; but if, on the contrary, you prefer those who console you, you have no merit at all. The former are the source whence it arises for you; the second as the abyss in which it is swallowed up; for it is not doubtful that those who are partakers of the labour, will be also sharers of the reward. Knowing, then, that you were sent to help, not to be helped, bear in mind that you are the vicar of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. I could have wished to write at greater length, in order to comfort you, but that it was not necessary; for what need is there of filling a dead leaf with superfluous words, while the living voice is speaking? I think that when you have seen our prior, these words will be sufficient for you, and your spirit will revive at his presence, so that you will not require the consolation of written words, in the delight and help which his discourse will give you. Do not doubt that I have communicated to him, as far as was possible, my inmost mind, which you begged in your letters might be sent to you. For you know well that he and I are of one mind and one will.

LETTER XVIII

To the Same,

He had desired Rainald to refrain from querulous complaints; now he directs Rainald to keep him informed of all his affairs.

I had hoped, my dear friend, to find a remedy for my care about you, if I were not informed by you of your little vexations. And I remember that I said to you, amongst other things, in my last letter, “if it is a mark of your filial affection towards me that you do not hide any of your difficulties from me, yet it is hard to add trouble to one already burdened.” But the remedy which I thought would lighten my cares has increased them, and I feel more burdened than before. For then I, indeed, felt vexation and fear, but only on account of the troubles named by you, but now I fear that some evil, I know not what, is happening to you, and like your favourite Ovid—

“When have I not made the perils which I feared
Greater than they really were?”

I fear all things because I am uncertain of all things, and feel often real sorrow for imaginary evils. The mind which affection dominates is hardly master of itself. It fears what it knows not; it grieves when there is no need; it is troubled more than it wished, and even when it does not wish; unable to rule its sensibility, it pities or sympathizes against its will. And because you see, my son, that neither my timid industry nor your pious prudence in this respect are of service to me, do not, I pray you, conceal from me henceforth anything that concerns you, that you may not increase my uneasiness by seeking to spare me. The little books of mine which you have, please return to me when you can.

LETTER XIX (A.D. 1127)

To Suger, Abbot of S. Denis

He praises Suger, who had unexpectedly renounced the pride and luxury of the world to give himself to the modest habits of the religious life. He blames severely the clerk who devotes himself rather to the service of princes than that of God.

1. A piece of good news has reached our district; it cannot fail to do great good to whomsoever it shall have come. For who that fear God, hearing what great things He has done for your soul, do not rejoice and wonder at the great and sudden change wrought by the Right Hand of the Most High. Everywhere your courage is praised in the Lord; the gentle hear of it and are glad, and even those who do not know you, but have only heard of you, what you were and what you are now, wonder and glorify God in you. But what adds still more to their admiration and joy is that you have been able to make your brethren partake of the counsel of salvation poured upon you from above, and so to fulfil what we read, Let him that heareth say, Come (Rev. xxii. 17), and that What I tell you in darkness that speak ye in light, and what ye hear in the ear that preach ye upon the house tops (S. Matt. x. 27). So a soldier intrepid in war, or rather a general full of bravery and devotedness, when he sees almost all his soldiers turned to flight and falling everywhere under the hostile blades, although he may see that he would be able to escape alone, yet he prefers to die with those, without whom he would think it shame to live. He holds firm on the field of battle and combats bravely; he ranges, sword in hand, along the ranks, through the bloody blades which seek him; he terrifies his adversaries and reanimates his followers with all his powers of voice and gesture. Wherever the enemy press on more boldly and there is danger of his friends giving ground, there he is present; the enemy who strikes he opposes, the friend who sinks exhausted he succours; and he is the more prepared to die for each one, that he despairs to save them all. But while he makes heroic efforts to hinder and to stop the pursuers who press upon his followers, he raises as best he can those who are fallen and recalls those

who have taken flight. Nor is it rare that his splendid valour procures a safety as welcome as unhoped for, throws into confusion the hostile ranks, forces them to fly from those whom they were pursuing, and overcomes those who bore themselves almost as victors, so that they who a little before were struggling for life are now rejoicing in victory.

2. But why do I compare an event so profoundly religious to things secular, as if examples were wanting to us from religion itself? Was not Moses quite certain of what God had promised him, that if, indeed, the people over whom he ruled should have perished, he himself should not only not perish with them, but should be besides the chief of a great nation? Nevertheless, with what affection, with what zeal, with what bowels of piety did he strive to save his people from the wrath of God? And, finally, interposing himself on behalf of the offenders, he cries: If Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written (Exod. xxxii. 32). What a devoted advocate! who, because he does not seek his own interests, easily obtains everything which he seeks. What a benign chief, who, binding together his people with bonds of charity as the head is united with the members, will either save them with himself or else encounter the same danger as they! Jeremiah, also bound inseparably to his people, but by the bond of compassion, not by sympathy for their revolt, quitted voluntarily his native soil and his own liberty to embrace in preference the common lot of exile and slavery. He was free to remain in his own country had he chosen, while others must remove, but he preferred to be carried away captive with his people, to whom he knew that he could render service even in captivity. Paul, animated beyond doubt by the same spirit, desired that he might be anathema even from Christ Himself for his brethren (Romans ix. 3). He experienced in his own heart how true is that saying, Love is as strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave (Cant. viii. 6). Do you see of whose great examples you have shown yourself an imitator? But I add one more whom I had almost passed over, that of the holy king David, who, perceiving and lamenting the slaughter of his people, wished to devote himself for them, and desired that the Divine vengeance should be transferred to himself and to his father’s house (2 Sam. xxiv. 17).

3. But who made you aspire to this degree of perfection? I confess that though I earnestly desired to hear such things of you, I never hoped to see it come to pass. Who would have believed that you would reach, so to speak, by one sudden bound, the practice of the highest virtues, and approach the most exalted merit? Thus we learn not to measure by the narrow proportions of our faith and

hope the infinite pity of God, which does what It will and works upon whom It will, lightening the burden which It imposes upon us, and hastening the work of our salvation. What then? the zeal of good people blamed your errors at least, if not those of your brethren: it was against your excesses more than theirs that they were moved with indignation; and if your brothers in religion groaned in secret, it was less against your entire community than against you; it was only against you that they brought their accusation. You corrected your faults, and their criticisms had no longer an object; your conversion at once stilled the tumult of accusation. The one and only thing with which we were scandalized was the luxury, the pride, the pomp, which followed you everywhere. At length you laid down your pride, you put off your splendid dress, and the universal indignation ceased at once. Thus you had at the same time satisfied those who complained of you, and even merited our praises. For what in human doings is deserving of praise, if this is not considered most worthy of admiration and approval? It is true that a change so sudden and so complete is not the work of man, but of God. If in heaven the conversion of one sinner arouses great joy, what gladness will the conversion of an entire community cause, and of such a community as yours?

4. That spot so noble by its antiquity and the royal favour, was made to serve the convenience of worldly business, and to be a meeting-place for the royal troops. They used to render to Caesar the things which were Caesar’s promptly and fully; but not with equal fidelity did they render the things of God to God. I speak what I have heard, not what I have seen: the very cloister itself of your monastery was frequently, they say, crowded with soldiers, occupied with the transaction of business, resounding with noise and quarrels, and sometimes even accessible even to women. How, in the midst of all that, could place be found for thoughts of heaven, for the service of God, for the interests of the spiritual life? But now there is leisure for God’s service, for practising self-restraint and obedience, for attention to sacred reading. Consider that silence and constant quiet from all stir of secular things disposes the soul to meditation on things above. And the laborious exercise of the religious life and the rigour of abstinence are lightened by the sweetness of psalms and hymns. Penitence for the past renders lighter the austerity of the new manner of life. He who in the present gathers the fruits of a good conscience, feels in himself a desire for future good works, which shall not be frustrated, and a well-founded hope. The fear of the judgment to come gives way to the pious exercise of brotherly charity, for love casteth out fear (1 S. John iv. 18). The variety of holy services

drives far away weariness and sourness of temper, and I repeat these things to the praise and glory of God, who is the Author of all; yet not without praise to yourself as being His co-worker in all things. He was able, indeed, to do them without you, but He has preferred to have you for the sharer of His works, that He might have you for the sharer of His glory also. The Saviour once reproached certain persons because they made the house of prayer a den of thieves (S. Matt. xxi. 13). He will doubtless then have in commendation the man who has accomplished the task of freeing His holy place from the dogs, of rescuing His pearl from the swine; by whose ardour and zeal the workshop of Vulcan is restored to holy studies, or rather the house of God is restored to Him from being a synagogue of Satan to be that which it was before.

5. If I recall the remembrance of past evils it is not in order to cast confusion or reproach on any one, but from the comparison with the old state of things to make the beauty of the new appear more sharply and strikingly; because there is nothing which makes the present good shine forth more clearly than a comparison with the evils which preceded it. As we recognize similar things from similar, so things which are unlike either please or displease more when compared with their opposites. Place that which is black beside that which is white, and the juxtaposition of the two colours makes each appear more marked. So, if beautiful things are put beside ugly, the former are rendered more beautiful, the ugliness of the latter is more apparent. That there may be no occasion of offence or confusion, I am content to repeat with the Apostle: Such, indeed, ye were, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified (1 Cor. vi 11). Now, the house of God ceases to open to people of the world, there is no access to sacred precincts for the curious; no gossip about trifling things with the idle; the chatter of boys and girls is no longer heard. The holy place is open and accessible only to the children of Christ, of whom it is said: Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me (Isaiah viii. 18). It is reserved for the praises of God and the performance of sacred vows with due care and reverence. How gladly do the martyrs, of whom so great a number ennoble that place, listen to the loud songs of these children, to whom they in turn reply no less with a voice of charity: Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord (Ps. cxiii. 1), and again, Sing praises to our God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises (Ps. xlvii. 6).

6. When your breasts are beaten with penitent hands, and your pavements worn with your knees, your altars heaped with vows and devout prayers, your cheeks furrowed with tears; when groans and sighs resound on all sides and the

sacred roofs echo with spiritual songs instead of worldly pleadings, there is nothing which the citizens of heaven more love to look upon, nothing is more agreeable to the eyes of the Heavenly King. For is not this what is said: The sacrifice of praise shall honour me (Ps. l. 23)? O, if any one had his eyes opened, as were those of the prophet's servant at his prayer! He would doubtless see (2 Kings vi. 17) The princes go before, joined with the minstrels in the midst of the players on timbrels (Ps. lxvii. 26, Vulg.). We should see, I say, with what care and ardour they assist at the chants, and at the prayers how they unite themselves with those who meditate, they watch over those who repose, they preside over those who order and care for all. The powers of heaven fully recognise their fellow-citizens; they earnestly rejoice, comfort, instruct, protect, and provide for all those who take the heritage of salvation, at all times. How happy I esteem myself while I am still in this world to hear of these things, although I am absent and do not see them! But your felicity, my brethren, to whom it is given to bear part in them, far surpasses mine, and blessed above all is he whom the Author of all good has deigned to make the chief worker of so good a work; it is you, my dear friend, whom with justice I congratulate for this, that you have brought about all which I so greatly admire.

7. You are wearied, perhaps, with my praises, but you ought not to be so; they are far different from the flatteries of those who call evil good and good evil (Isaiah v. 20), and so please a person to lead him into error. Sweet but perilous is the praise when the wicked is praised in the desire of his heart, and the unjust is blessed (Ps. ix. 3, Vulg.). The warmth of my praises comes from charity, and does not once pass, as I believe, the limits of truth. He is safely praised, who is praised in the Lord, that is, in the truth. I have not called evil good, but have pointed out as evil what was evil. But if I boldly raise my voice against that which is evil, ought I to be silent in presence of good, and not give my testimony to it? That would be to show myself an envious critic, not a corrector; and to prefer to mangle rather than to mend, if I am silent as to good and raise my voice only about evil. The just reproves in mercy, the wicked flatters in impiety; the one that he may cure, the other in order to hide that which needs to be cured. Do not be afraid that those among us who in the fear of the Lord praise you will pour upon your head that ointment of the sinner with which they were wont to anoint you. I praise you because you are doing right. But I do not flatter you; I only accomplish in your case, by the gift of God, those words of the Psalmist: Those who fear Thee shall see me and shall rejoice, because I have hoped in Thy word (Ps. cxix. 74); and again: Many shall show forth his wisdom (Ecclus.

xxxix. 10). It is, then, your wisdom which more praised than blamed the former folly.

8. I would that you should take pleasure in the praises of such as fear just as much to flatter vice as to depreciate virtue. That is the true praise, which, as it is wont to extol nothing but what is good, so it knows not how to caress what is evil. All other is pretended praise, but really blame, which Scripture refers to: The sons of men are vain; they are deceitful upon the weights, so that they deceive even more than vanity (Ps. lxii. 10). Such are altogether to be avoided according to the counsel of the wise man: My son, if sinners entice thee consent thou not (Prov. i. 10), since their milk and their oil, though they be sweet, are poisonous and deadly. Their words, he says (that is, those of flatterers), are softer than oil, and yet are they very swords (Ps. lv. 21). The righteous has oil, too, but of mercy, of sanctification, of spiritual joy. He has wine, which he pours into the wounds of the haughty soul. But for the soul of him that mourns, and for him of contrite heart, he has the oil of mercy, with which he is wont to soften its sorrow. Where he corrects, he pours in wine; when he soothes, oil; but wine without bitterness, and oil without guile. Thus, not every praise is flattery, nor every blame mixed with rancour. Blessed is he who can say: Let the righteous smite me in mercy, and reprove me: but let not the oil of the sinner break my head (Ps. cxli. 5), which when you have put far from you, you have shown yourself worthy of the oil and wine of the saints.

9. Let the children of Babylon seek for themselves pleasant mothers, but pitiless, who will feed them with poisoned milk, and soothe them with caresses which will make them fit for everlasting flames; but those of the Church, fed at the breasts of her wisdom, having tasted the sweetness of a better milk, already begin to grow up in it unto salvation, and being fully satiated with it they cry: Thy fulness is better than wine, Thy fragrance than the sweetest ointments (Cant. i. 1, 2). This to their mother. But, then, having tasted and known how sweet the Lord is, how truly the best of fathers, they say to Him: How great is Thy goodness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee (Ps. xxxi. 19). Now my whole desire is accomplished. Formerly when I saw with regret with what avidity you sucked in from the lips of flatterers their mortal poison, the seed of sin, I used, with grief, to desire better things for you, saying: Who shall give thee to me, my brother, who sucked the breasts of my mother (Cant. viii. 1)? Far from thee henceforth be those men with caresses and dishonest praises, who bless you before your face and expose you at the same time to the reproach and derision of all men, whose applause in your presence is the world’s

by-word, or rather makes you a by-word to the world. If they murmur even now, say to them: If I yet pleased you, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. i. 10). Those whom we please in evil things we cannot please in good things, unless they are themselves changed, and begin to hate what we were, and so at length to love what we are.

10. In our time two new and detestable abuses have arisen in the Church, of which one (permit me to say it) was no stranger to you when you lived in forgetfulness of the duties of your profession; but this, thanks to God, has been amended to His glory, to your everlasting gain, to our joy and an example to all. God is able to bring about that we may soon be consoled for the second of these evils, the odious novelty of which I do not dare to speak of in public, and yet am afraid to pass over in silence. My grief urges my tongue to speak, but fear restrains the words; fear only lest I may offend some one if I speak openly of what troubles me, since truth sometimes makes enemies. But for enmity of this kind thus incurred I hear the truth consoling me. It is needful, he says, that offences should come. And I do not think that those words which follow, Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh (S. Matt. xviii. 7) concern me. For when vices are attacked and a scandal results thence, it is not he who makes the accusation who is to answer for the scandal, but he who renders it necessary. In short, I am neither more cautious in word nor circumspect in action than he who says, “It is better that a scandal should arise than that the truth be compromised” (S. Greg. Magn. Hom. 7 in Ezech. near the beginning, and S. Aug. de Lib. Arbitr. et de Praedest. sanctor.). Although I know not what advantage it would be were I to hold my tongue about that which all the world proclaims with a loud voice, nor can I alone pretend to overlook the pest whose ill odour is in all nostrils, and not dare to guard my own nose from its ill effect.

11. For whose heart is not indignant, and whose tongue does not murmur either openly or secretly to see a deacon equally serving God and Mammon, against the precept of the Gospel heaping up ecclesiastical dignities, so that he seems not to be inferior to Bishops, yet so mixed up in military offices that he is preferred even to Dukes. What monster is this, that being a clerk, and wishing at the same time to appear a soldier, is neither? It is equally an abuse that a deacon should serve at the table of the King, and that the server of the King should minister at the altar during the holy mysteries. Is it not a wonder, or rather a scandal, to see the same person clothed in armour march at the head of armed soldiery, and vested in alb and stole read the Gospel in the midst of the Church; at one time give the signal for battle with the trumpet, and at another convey the

orders of the Bishop to the people? Unless, perhaps, that man (which would be scandalous) is ashamed of the Gospel of which S. Paul, that Vessel of election, was so proud? Perhaps he is ashamed to appear a cleric, and thinks it more honourable to be supposed a soldier, preferring the Court to the Church, the table of the King to the Altar of Christ, and the cup of demons to the chalice of Christ. This seems the more probable, because he is prouder (they say) to be called by the name of that one post which he has obtained at the palace than by any of those titles of ecclesiastical dignities which, in defiance of the canons, he has heaped upon himself, and instead of delighting to be called Archdeacon, Dean, or Provost to his various Churches, he prefers to be styled Dapifer to H.M. the King. O, unheard of and hateful perversity! thus to prefer the title of servant of a man to that of the servant of God, and to consider the position of an official of an earthly king one of higher dignity than that of an heavenly! He who prefers military warfare to the work of the ministry places the world before the Church, is convicted of preferring human things to Divine, earthly to heavenly. Is it then more honourable to be called the King's Dapifer than Dean or Archdeacon? It may be to a layman, not to a cleric; to a soldier, not to a deacon.

12. It is a strange but blind ambition to delight more in the lowest things than in the highest, and that the man whose lines had fallen to him in pleasant places should recreate himself upon a dunghill with eager desire, and count his precious lands as nothing worth. This man mingles the two orders and cunningly abuses each. Military pomps delight him, but not the risks and labours of warfare; the revenues of religion, but not its duties. Who does not see how great is the disgrace, as much to the State as to the Church? for just as it is no part of clerical duty to bear arms at the pay of the King, so it is no part of the royal duties to administer lay affairs by means of clerics. What king has ever put at the head of his army an unwarlike clerk instead of some brave soldier? What clerk, again, has ever thought it otherwise than unworthy of him to be bound to obey any lay person whatsoever? The very sign which he bears upon his head is rather the mark of royalty than of servitude; on the other hand, the throne finds a better support in the force of arms than in chanting of Psalms. Still, if the abasement of the one contributes to the greatness of the other, as is sometimes the case; if, for example, the humiliation of the King raised higher the dignity of the priest, or the abasement of the clerk added something to the royal honour; as it happens, for instance, if a woman of noble rank marries a man of the people, she indeed loses in grade by him, but he gains by her; if, then, I say, either the King had advantage from the clerk, or the clerk from the King, it would be an evil only in

part, and perhaps ought to be borne with; but, on the contrary, since there is no gain to either from the humiliation of the other, but there is loss to each; since neither does it become a cleric, as has been said, to be or to be called the server of the King; nor is it for the King's advantage to put the reins of government into any but strong and brave hands. Truly then it is strange that either power endures such a man as this; that the Church does not repulse the deacon-soldier, or the State the prince-ecclesiastic.

13. I had wished to inculcate these principles by still stronger and more detailed arguments, and perhaps ought to do so, did not the necessary limits of a letter oblige me to defer this for the present; and because, most of all, I fear to offend you, I have spared a man for whom, it is said, you had formerly a great regard. I would not that you should have a friend at the expense of the truth. But you have still a friendship for him; show yourself a true friend, and exert yourself to make him, too, a friend of the Truth. Then at length there will be a true friendship between you, if it is bound together by a common love of truth. And if he will not yield to you in this, hold fast what you have; join the tail to the head of the sacrifice. You have received by the grace of God a robe of many colours; take pains to make it reach even to the feet, for what will it profit you to have put your hand to the work if (which, God forbid) you do not attain finally to presevere? I end my letter by warning you to make a good ending of your good work.

LETTER XX (circa A.D. 1130)

To Guy, Abbot of Molesmes

Bernard consoles him under a great injustice which he had suffered, and recommends him to temper his vengeance with mercy.

God who knows the hearts of all men, and is the inspirer of all good dispositions, knows with what sympathy I condole with you in this your adversity, of which I have heard. But, again, when I consider rather the person who has caused you this trial than Him who permits it, just as much as I feel with you in the present misfortune, so much I hope soon to rejoice with you in the prosperity which must speedily come. But only do not let yourself be at all crushed by discouragement; think with me how, by the example of holy Job, you ought to receive with the same cheerfulness troubles from the hand of the Lord as you do blessings. Indeed, you ought, after the example of holy David, not so much to be angry with those people who have caused you such great sufferings, although they are your own servants, as to know that you ought to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, who doubtless has sent them to bring about this misfortune to you. But since it appears that their correction devolves upon you, as they are serfs of the Church committed to your government, it is proper that these unfaithful serfs should be punished for their very wicked presumption, and that the loss of the monastery should be recompensed in some degree out of their goods. But that you may not seem rather to be avenging your own injury in this than punishing their fault; I beg you and also advise you not to think so much of what they deserve as what is fitting for you to do, so that mercy may be exalted above strict justice, and that in your moderation God may be glorified. For the rest, I beg you to press upon that your son, who is dear to me as well for your sake as in a great degree for his own, with your own lips, as with my spirit, not to show in his accusations a bitterness and a violence such as prove that he forgets that precept of our Lord—Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also (S. Matt. v. 39).

LETTER XXI (circa A.D. 1128)

To the Abbot of S. John at Chartres

Bernard dissuades him from resigning his charge, and undertaking a Pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

1. As regards the matters about which you were so good as to consult so humble a person as myself, I had at first determined not to reply. Not because I had any doubt what to say, but because it seemed to me unnecessary or even presumptuous to give counsel to a man of sense and wisdom. But considering that it usually happens that the greater number of persons of sense—or I might say that all such—trust the judgment of another person rather than their own in doubtful cases, and that those who have a clear judgment in the affairs of others, however obscure, frequently hesitate and are undecided about their own, I depart from my first resolution, not, I hope, without reason, and without prejudice to any wiser opinion explain to you simply how the matter appears to me. You have signified to me, if I do not mistake, by the pious Abbot Ursus of S. Denis, that you have it in contemplation to desert your country and the monastery over which, by the Providence of God, you are head, to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to occupy yourself henceforth only with God and the salvation of your own soul. Perhaps, if you aspire unto perfection, it may be expedient for you to leave your country, when God says, Go forth from thy country and from thy kindred (Gen. xii. 1). But I do not see at all on what ground you ought to risk, by your departure, the safety of the souls entrusted to you. For is it pleasant to enjoy liberty after having laid down your burden? But charity does not seek her own interests. Perhaps the wish for quiet and rest attracts you? But it is obtained at the price of the peace of others. Freely will I do without the enjoyment of any desire, even a spiritual one, which cannot be obtained except at the price of a scandal. For where there is scandal, there, without doubt, is loss of charity: and where there is loss of charity, surely no spiritual advantage can be hoped for. Finally, if it is permitted to any one to prefer his own quiet to the common good, who is there that can say with truth: For me to live is Christ, and

to die is gain (Phil. i. 21)? And where will that principle be which the Apostle declares: No one lives to himself, and no one dies to himself (Rom. xiv. 7); and, Not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many (1 Cor. x. 33); and, That he who lives should not any longer live unto himself, but unto Him who died for all (2 Cor. v. 15)?

2. But you will say: Whence comes my great desire, if it is not from God? With your permission I will say what I think. Stolen waters are sweet (Prov. ix. 17); and for whosoever knows the devices of the devil, it is not doubtful that the angel of darkness is able to change himself into an angel of light, and to pour upon the thirsting soul those waters of which the sweetness is more bitter than wormwood. In truth, what other can be the suggester of scandals, the author of dissension, the troubler of unity and peace, except the devil, the adversary of truth, the envier of charity, the ancient foe of the human race, and the enemy of the Cross of Christ? If death entered into the world through his envy, even so now he is jealous of whatever good he sees you doing; and since he is a liar from the beginning, he falsely promises now better things which he does not see. For when did the Truth oppose that most faithful saying, Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed (1 Cor. vii. 27). Or when did charity urge to scandal, who at the scandals of all shows herself burning with regret? He, then, the most wicked one, opposed to charity by envy, and to truth by falsehood, mixing falsehood and gall with the true honey, promises doubtful things as certain, and gives out that true things are false, not that he may give you what you vainly hope for, but that he may take away what you are profitably holding now. He prowls around and seeks how he may take away from the flock the care of the pastor, to make a prey of it when there is none to defend it from his attacks; and, besides this, to bring down upon the pastor that terrible rebuke, Woe to him by whom scandal cometh (S. Matt. xviii. 7). But I have full confidence in the wisdom given to you by God, that by no cunning devices of the wicked one you will be seduced or made to renounce certain good, and for the hope of uncertain advantage to incur certain evil.

LETTER XXII (circa A.D. 1129)

To Simon, Abbot of S. Nicholas

Bernard consoles him under the persecution of which he is the object. The most pious endeavours do not always have the desired success. What line of conduct ought to be followed towards his inferiors by a prelate who is desirous of stricter discipline.

1. I have learned with much pain by your letter the persecution that you are enduring for the sake of righteousness, and although the consolation given you by Christ in the promise of His kingdom may suffice amply for you, none the less is it my duty to render you both all the consolation that is in my power, and sound and faithful advice as far as I am able. For who can see without anxiety Peter stretching his arms in the midst of the billows?—or hear without grief the dove of Christ not singing, but groaning as if she said, How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? (Ps. cxxxvii. 4). Who, I say, can without tears look upon the tears of Christ Himself, who from the bottom of the abyss lifts now His eyes unto the hills to see from whence cometh His help? But we to whom in your humility you say that you are looking, are not mountains of help, but are ourselves struggling with laborious endeavours in this vale of tears against the snares of a resisting enemy, and the violence of worldly malice, and with you we cry out, Our help is from the Lord, who made Heaven and earth (Ps. cxxi. 2).

2. All those, indeed, who wish to live piously in Christ suffer persecution (2 Tim. iii. 12). The intention to live piously is never wanting to them, but it is not always possible to carry it perfectly out, for just as it is the mark of the wicked constantly to struggle against the pious designs of the good; so it is not a reproach to the piety [of the latter], even although they are frequently unable to perfect their just and holy desires, because they are few against many opposers. Thus Aaron yielded against his will to the impious clamours of the riotous people (Exod. xxxii.). So Samuel unwillingly anointed Saul, constrained by the too eager desires of the same people for a king (1 Sam. x.). So David, when he

wished to build a Temple, yet because of the numerous wars which that valorous man had constantly to sustain against enemies who molested him, he was forbidden to do what he piously proposed (2 Sam. vii.). Similarly, venerable father, I counsel you, without prejudice to the better advice of wiser persons, so to soften, for the present only, the rigour of your purpose of reform, and that of those who share it with you, that you may not be unmindful of the salvation of the weaker brethren. Those, indeed, over whom you have consented to preside in that Order of Cluny ought to be invited to a stricter life, but they ought not to be obliged to embrace it against their will. I believe that those who do desire to live more strictly ought to be persuaded either to bear with the weaker out of charity as far as they can without sin, or permitted to preserve the customs which they desire in the monastery itself, if that may be done without scandal to either party; or at least that they should be set free from the Order to associate themselves where it may seem good with other brothers who live according to their proposal.

Letter XXIII (circa A.D. 1130)

To the Same

Bernard sends back to him to be severely reprimanded a fugitive monk. He persuades William, who was meditating a change of state or retiring into private life, to persevere.

To his friend, Brother Bernard, of Clairvaux, all that a friend can wish for a friend.

1. You have given me this formula of salutation when you wrote, “to his friend all that a friend can wish.” Receive what is thine own, and perceive that the assumption of it is a proof that we are of one mind, for my heart is not distant from him with whom I have language in common. I must now reply briefly to your letter, because of the time: for when it arrived the festival of the Nativity of our Lady had dawned; and being obliged to devote myself entirely to its solemnities, I had no leisure to think of anything else. Your messenger also was anxious to be gone; scarcely would he stay even until to-morrow morning that I might write to you these few words after all the Offices of the festival. I send back to you a fugitive brother after having subjected him to severe reprimand suited to his hard heart. It seemed to me that there was nothing better to do than to send him back to the place whence he had fled, since I ought not, according to our rules, to detain any monk in the house without the consent of his abbot. You ought to reprove him very severely also, and press him to make humble satisfaction and then comfort him a little by a letter from yourself addressed to

his abbot on his behalf.

2. Concerning my state of health, I am not able to reply very precisely to your inquiry except that I continue, as in the past, to be weak and ailing, neither much better nor much worse. If I have not sent the person whom I had thought of sending, it is only because I feel much more the scandal to many souls than the danger of one body. Not to pass over any of the matters of which you speak to me, I come to yourself. You wrote that you wished to know what I desired you to do (as if I were aware of all that concerned you). But this plan, if I should say what I think, is one that neither I could counsel nor you carry out. I wish, indeed, for you what, as I have long known, you wish for yourself. But putting on one side, as is right, both your will and mine, I think more of what God wills for you, and, to my mind, it is both safer for me to advise you to that, and much more advantageous for you to do it. My advice is, then, that you continue to hold your present charge, to remain where you are, and study to profit those over whom you are set, nor flee from the cares of office while you are able to be of use, because woe to you if you are over the flock and do not profit them; but deeper woe still if, because you fear the cares of office, you abandon the opportunity of usefulness.

LETTER XXIV (circa A.D. 1126)

To Oger, Regular Canon

Bernard blames him for his resignation of his pastoral charge, although made from the love of a calm and pious life. None the less, he instructs him how, after becoming a private person, he ought to live in community.

To Brother Oger, the Canon, Brother Bernard, monk but sinner, wishes that he may walk worthily of God even to the end, and embraces him with the fullest affection.

1. If I seem to have been too slow in replying to your letter, ascribe it to my not having had an opportunity to send to you. For what you now read was written long since, but, as I have said, though written without delay, was delayed for want of a bearer. I have read in your letter that you have laid down with regret the burden of your pastoral charge, permission having been obtained with great difficulty, or rather, extorted by your importunity, from your Bishop; and only on the condition that you should remain under his authority, though fixing yourself elsewhere. But this not being satisfactory to you, you appealed to the Archbishop, and, obtaining the relaxation of this condition, you have returned to your former house and put yourself under your original abbot. Now you ask to be advised by me as to how you ought to live henceforth. An able teacher, indeed, and incomparable master am I! And when I shall have begun to teach what I do not know myself, it will soon be discovered that I know nothing. You act, in consulting me, as a sheep who seeks wool from a goat, a mill expecting water from an oven, a wise man expecting sound counsel from a fool. Besides this, you heap upon me, from one end of your letter to the other, complimentary speeches, and attribute to me excellences of which I am not conscious; and as I ascribe them to your kind feelings, so I forgive them to your ignorance. For you look upon the countenance, but God upon the heart; and if I examine myself with attention under His awful gaze, I find that I know myself much better than you know me, since I am much less far from myself than you are. Therefore I give greater credence to that which I see in myself than to what you suppose,

without seeing, to be in me. Nevertheless, if you may have heard from me anything that is profitable to you, give thanks to God, in whose hand I am and all my words.

2. You explain to me also for what reason you have not followed my advice, not only not to allow yourself to be discouraged or overcome by despondency, but to bear patiently the burden laid upon you, which once undertaken you were not at liberty to lay down; and I accept your explanations. I am well aware, indeed, of the infertility of my wisdom, and I always hold myself in suspicion for rashness and inexperience, so that I ought not to take it ill, nor do I, when the course which I approve is not taken; and I wish, on the contrary, that action should be taken on better advice than mine. As often as my opinion is chosen and followed I feel myself weighed down, I confess it, with responsibility, and await with inquietude, never with confidence, the issue of the matter. Yet it is for you to see if you have acted wisely in not following my advice about this thing; it must be decided also by those wiser persons than I, on whose authority you have relied, whether you have done according to reason. They will tell you, I say, whether it is lawful for a Christian man to lay down the burden of obedience before his death, when Christ was made obedient to the Father even unto death. You will reply, “I have acted by license, asked and received from the Bishop.” True, you have, indeed, asked for license, but in a manner you ought not to have done, and, therefore, have rather extorted than asked it. But an extorted or compelled license should rather be called violence. What, therefore, the Bishop did unwillingly, when overcome by your importunity, was not to release you from your obligations, but violently to break them.

3. You may indeed be congratulated, since you are thus exonerated; but I fear lest you have, as much as lieth in you, taken from the glory of God, whose will you, beyond doubt, resist in casting yourself down from the post to which He had advanced you. Perhaps you excuse yourself by pleading the necessity of religious poverty; but it is necessity that brings the crown, in rendering achievements difficult and almost impossible; for all things are possible to him who has faith. But answer to me what is most true, that you have consulted your own quiet, rather than the advantage of others. Nor is this strange. I confess that I, too, am pleased that quiet should delight you, if only it does not delight you too much. For that, even although a great thing, which pleases us to such a degree that we wish to bring it about, even although by wrong means, pleases us too much; and because it cannot be brought about by right means, it ceases to be good. For if you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned (Gen.

iv. 7, lxx.). Either, therefore, you ought not to have accepted the cure of the Lord's flock, or, having accepted it, ought not to have relinquished it, according to those words: Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed (2 Cor. vii. 27).

4. But to what end do I strive in these arguments? To persuade you to take your charge again? You cannot, since it is no longer vacant. Or to drive you to despair by fixing upon you the blame of a fault which you are no longer able to repair? By no means; I wish only that you should not neglect the fault you have committed, as if it were nothing or nothing much, but that you should rather repent of it with fear and trembling, as it is written: Happy is the man that feareth alway (Prov. xxviii. 14). But the fear which I wish to inspire is not that which falls into the nets of desperation, but which brings to us the hope of blessedness. There is, indeed, a fear, useless, gloomy, and cruel, which does not seek pardon, and, therefore, does not obtain it. There is also a fear, pious, humble, and fruitful, which easily obtains mercy for a sinner, however great be his offence. Such a fear produces, nourishes, and preserves not only humility, but also sweetness, patience, and forbearance. Whom does not so blameless an offspring delight? But of the other fear the miserable progeny is obstinacy, excessive sorrow, rancour, horror, contempt, and desperation. I have wished to recall you to the remembrance of your fault, but only in order to awaken in you, not the fear which produces desperation, but that which produces hope; being afraid lest you should not have any fear at all, or should have too little.

5. There is something, however, which I fear still more for you, namely, that which is written of certain sinners, that they rejoice in having done evil and delight in wicked actions (Prov. ii. 14); that you should be deceived, and not only think that what you have done is not wrong, but also (which, God forbid) glory in your heart, thinking that you have done something great, and which is usually done by few, in renouncing voluntarily the power to command others, and, despising rule, have preferred to be subjected again to a ruler. That would be a false humility, causing real pride in the heart of him that should think such thoughts. For what can be more proud than to ascribe to spontaneous and, as it were, free choice that which the force of necessity or fainthearted weakness obliges us to do? But if you have not been forced by necessity or exhausted by labour, but have done it willingly, there is nothing more proud than this; for you have put your own will before that of God, you have chosen to taste the sweetness of repose rather than serve diligently in the work to which He has set you. If, then, you have not only despised God, but glory in utterly contemning

Him, your glorying is not good. Beware of boastfulness and self-satisfaction; more useful for you were it to be always in care, always humbly trembling, not, as I have said, with the fear that provokes wrath, but with that which softens it.

6. If that horrible fear ever knocks at the door of your soul to terrify it, and to suggest that your service to God cannot be accepted, and that your penitence is unfruitful because that in which God has been offended by you cannot be amended; do not receive it even for a moment, but reply with confidence: I have done wrong indeed, but it is done and cannot be undone. Who knows if God has foreseen that good should come to me out of it, and that He who is good has willed to do me good even from my evil? Let Him then punish the evil which I have done, but let the good which He had provided for remain. The goodness of God knew how to use our ill-governed wills and actions to the beauty of the order which He established, and often, in His goodness, even to our benefit. O indulgent bounty of Divine love towards the sons of Adam! which does not cease to load us with benefits, not only where no merit was found, but often even where entire demerit was seen. But let us return to you. According to the two kinds of fear which are distinguished above, I wish you to fear, and yet not to fear; to presume, and yet not to presume. To feel that you may repent, not to feel that you may have confidence; and again, to have confidence that you may not distrust, and not to be confident that you may not grow inactive.

7. You perceive, brother, how much confidence I have in you, since I permit myself to blame you so sharply, to judge and disapprove so freely what you have done, when perhaps you have had better reasons for doing it than have hitherto been made known to me. For you have not perhaps wished to state those reasons in your letters, by which your action might well be excused, either through your humility or through want of space. Leaving, then, undecided for the present my opinion about any part of the matter with which I may not be fully acquainted, one thing that you have done I unreservedly praise, namely, that when you had laid down the yoke of ruling, yet without a yoke you were not willing to continue, but took up again a discipline to which you were attached, without being ashamed to become a simple disciple when you had borne the title of master. For you were able, when freed from your pastoral charge, to remain under your own authority, since in becoming abbot you were released from the obedience owed to your former abbot. But you did not wish to be under no authority but your own, and as you had declined to rule over others, so you shrunk from rule over yourself; and inasmuch as you thought yourself not fit to be the master of others, so also you did not trust yourself to be your own master,

and in your distrust of yourself, even for your own guidance, would not be your own disciple. And rightly. For he who makes himself his own master, subjects himself to a fool as master. I know not what others may think of this; as for me, I have had experience of what I say, that it is far more easy and safe to govern many others than my own single self. It was, therefore, a proof of prudent humility and of humble prudence that, by no means believing that you were sufficient for your own salvation, you proposed to live henceforth by the judgment of another person.

8. I praise you also that you did not seek out another master nor another place, but returned to the cloister whence you had gone forth, and to the master under whom you had made progress in good. It was very right that the house which had nurtured you, but had sent you forth through brotherly charity, should receive you when freed from your charge, rather than that another house should have in its place the joy of possessing you. As, however, you have not obtained the sanction of the Bishop for what you have done, do not be negligent in seeking it, but either yourself, or through some third person, be prompt to give him satisfaction as far as is in your power. After this, study to lead a simple life among your brethren, devoted to God, submissive to your superior, respectful towards the older monks, and obliging towards the younger. Be profitable in word, humble in heart, pleasing to the Angels, courteous to all. But beware of thinking that you have a right to be honoured more than others because you were once placed in a position of dignity, but show yourself as one among the rest, only more humble than all. For it is not becoming that you should be honoured on account of a post, the labour of which you have shunned.

9. Another danger also may arise from this of which I wish to forewarn you and strengthen you against it. For as we are very changeable, and it frequently happens that what we wished for yesterday to-day we refuse, and what we shrink from to-day to-morrow we desire, so it may happen sometime by the temptation of the devil that, from the remembrance of the honour you have resigned, a selfish desire may knock at the door of your heart, and you may begin weakly to covet what you bravely resigned. The recollection of things which before were bitter to you will then be sweet; the dignity of the position, the care of the house, and the administration of its property, the respectful obedience of domestics, the freedom of your own actions, the power over others; it may be as much a source of regret to you that you have given up these things, as it was before of weariness to bear them. If you yield even for an hour (which may God forbid) to this most injurious temptation you will suffer great loss to your spiritual life.

10. This is the whole of the wisdom of that most accomplished and eloqueut Doctor, by whom you have wished to be taught from such a distance. This is the eulogy, desired and waited for, which you have been so eager to hear. This is the sum of all my wisdom. Do not look for any other great thing from me; you have heard all. What can you require more? The fountain is drained, and would you seek water from the dry sand? I have sent you, according to the example of that widow in the Gospel, out of my poverty all that I had. Why art thou ashamed, and why does thy countenance fall? You have obliged me. You have asked for a discourse; a discourse you have. A discourse, I say, long enough, indeed, but saying nothing; full of words, empty of meaning. Such is the discourse which ought to be received by you with charity, as you have requested it, but which only seems to reveal my lack of knowledge. Perhaps it would not be impossible for me to find excuses for it. Thus I might say that I have dictated it while labouring under a tertian fever, as also while occupied with the cares of my office, while yet it is written, Write at leisure of wisdom (founded on Ecclus. xxxviii. 25). I should rightly put these reasons forward if I had adventured upon some great and laborious work. But now, in such a brief treatise that my engagements afford me no excuse, I can allege nothing, as I have often said already, but the insufficiency of my knowledge.

11. But I console myself in my mortification by considering that if I had not done as you requested, if I had not sent what you hoped for, you would not have been quite sure of my goodwill to-day. I hope that my good intention will content you when you see that the power to do more was wanting to me. And although my Letter be without utility to you, it will profit me in promoting humility. Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise (Prov. xvii. 28), for that he holds his peace is counted to him as the reserve of humility, not as want of sense. If, then, I had still kept silence, I should have had the benefit of a similar judgment, and have been called wise without being so. But now some will ridicule me as a man of little wisdom, some laugh at me as ignorant, and others indignantly accuse me of presumption. Do not think that all this serves little to the profit of religion, since humility, which humiliation teaches us to practise, is the foundation of the entire spiritual fabric. Thus humiliation is the way to humility, as patience to peace, as reading is to knowledge. If you long for the virtue of humility, you must not flee from the way of humiliation. For if you do not allow yourself to be humiliated, you cannot attain to humility. It is a benefit to me, therefore, that my ignorance should be made known, and that I should be rightly put to confusion by those who are instructed, since I have often

been undeservedly praised by those who could not form a correct opinion. The fear of the Apostle makes me fear when he says, I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me (2 Cor. xii. 6). How finely he has said I spare [restrain] you. The arrogant, the proud, the desirous of vainglory, the boaster of his own deeds, who either takes merit to himself for what he has done, or even claims what he has not done, he does not restrain himself. He alone who is truly humble, he restrains his own soul, who is even afraid to let the excellency that is in him be known, that he may not be thought to be what he is not.

12. Great in truth is the danger, that any one should speak of us above what we feel our desert to be. Who shall give me to be as deservedly humiliated among men for well-founded reasons as I have been undeservedly praised for ill-founded ones? I should, then, be able to take to myself the word of the Prophet: After having been exalted I have been cast down and filled with confusion (Ps. lxxxviii. 15, Vulg.), and this, I will play and will be yet more vile (2 Sam. vi. 21, 22). Yes, I will play this foolish game that I may be ridiculed. It is a good folly, at which Michal is angry and God is pleased. A good folly which affords a ridiculous spectacle, indeed, to men, but to angels an admirable one. Yes, I repeat; an excellent folly, by which we are exposed to disgrace from the rich and disdain from the proud. For, in truth, what do we appear to people of the world to do except indulge in folly, since what they seek with eagerness in this world we, on the contrary, shun, and what they avoid we eagerly seek? Upon the eyes of all we produce the effect of jugglers and tumblers, who stand or walk on their hands, contrary to human nature, with their heads downwards and feet in the air. But our foolish game has nothing boyish in it, nothing of the spectacle at the theatre, which represents low actions, and with effeminate and corrupt gestures and bendings provoke the passions, but it is cheerful, honourable, grave, decent, and capable of delighting even the celestial beings who gaze upon it. This it was he was engaged in, who said, We are made a spectacle to Angels and to men (1 Cor. iv. 9). May it be ours also in this meantime, that we may be ridiculed, confounded, humiliated, until He shall come who puts down the powerful and exalts the humble, to fill us with joy and glory, and to raise us up for ever and ever.

LETTER XXV. (circa A.D. 1127)

To the Same

Bernard, being hindered by many occupations, has not yet been able to find time to satisfy his wishes, and is obliged even to write to him very briefly. He forbids a certain one of his treatises to be made public unless it were read over and corrected.

1. I pass over now my want of experience, my humble profession, or rather my profession of humility, nor do I shelter myself behind (I do not say my lowness, but, at least) my mediocrity of position or name, since whatever I should allege of that kind you would declare to be rather a pretext for delay than a reasonable excuse. It seems to me that you interpret my shyness and modesty at your will, now as indiscretion, now, as false humility, and now as real pride. Of these reasons, therefore, since they would appear doubtful to you, I say nothing. Only I wish that your friendship should be fully convinced of one thing, that since the departure of your messenger (not the one who carries this letter, but the other) left me I have not had a single instant of leisure to do what you asked, so busy are my days and so short my nights. Even now your latest letter has found me so engrossed that it would take me too long to write to you the mere occupations, which would be my excuse with you. I have scarcely been able even to read your letter through, except during my dinner, for at that hour it was delivered to me, and scarcely have I been able to write back to you these few words hastily and, as it were, furtively. You will see that you must not complain of the brevity of my letter.

2. To speak the truth, my dear Oger, I am forced to be angry with all these cares, and that on your account, although in them, as my conscience bears witness, I desire to serve only charity, by the requirements of which, as I am debtor both to the wise and to the unwise, I have been made unable as yet to satisfy your wishes. What, then? Does Charity deny to you what you ask in the name of Charity? You have requested and begged, you have knocked at the door, and Charity has rendered your requests unavailing. Why are you angry

with me? It is Charity whom you must be angry with, if you will and dare to be so, since it is she who is the cause that you have not obtained what you expected to have by her means. Already she is displeased at my long discourse, and is angry with you who have imposed it. Not that the ardour with which you do this is displeasing to her, since it is she which has inspired you with it, but she wishes that your zeal should be ruled according to knowledge, and that you should be careful not to hinder greater things for the sake of lesser. You see how unwillingly I am torn away from writing to you at greater length, since the pleasure of conversing with you, and the wish to satisfy you, make me troublesome to my mistress, Charity, who has long since been bidding me to make an end, and I am not yet silent. How wide is the matter for reply in your letter, if it were permissible to do as you would wish, and as I, too, should, perhaps, be well enough pleased to do! But she who requires otherwise of me is mistress, or rather is the Master. For God is charity (1 S. John iv. 16), and it is very evident that such is her authority, that I ought to obey her rather than either myself or you. And since it is incumbent on Charity to obey God rather than men, I unwillingly, and with grief, put off for a time the doing what you ask, not refuse altogether to do it, and I fear in endeavouring humbly to respond to your desires to appear to wish, under the pretext of a pretended humility, which is only pure pride, to revolt here below, I, who am only a miserable worm of the earth, against the strength of that power which, as you truly declare, rules even the Angels in heaven.

3. As for the little treatise which you ask for, I had asked for it back again from the person to whom I had lent it, even before your messenger came to me, but I have not yet received it; but I will take care that at all events when you come here, if you are ever coming, you shall find it here, see and read it, but not transcribe it. For that other treatise which you mention that you have transcribed I had sent to you to be read, indeed, but not to be copied; and I do not know to what good purpose or for whose good you can have done it. In sending it to you I did not intend that the Abbot of S. Thierry should have it, and I had not bidden you to send it; but I am not displeased that you have done so. For why should I be afraid that my little book should pass under his eyes, under whose gaze I would willingly spread my whole soul if I were able? But, alas! why does the mention of so good a man present itself at such a time of hurried discourse, when it is not permitted to me to linger, as would be fitting, and converse with you about that excellent man, when I ought already to have come to the end of my letter? I entreat you to make an opportunity of going to see him, and do not give

out my book to be read or copied until you shall have gone over the whole of it with him; read it then together and correct what in it needs correction, that every word in it may have the support of two witnesses. After that, I commit to the judgment of each of you whether it be expedient that it should be shown publicly, or only to a few persons, or to some particular person only, or not at all to any one. And I make you judge equally if that little preface which you have fitted to the same out of fragments from other letters of mine should stand as it is, or whether another fitter one should be composed.

4. But I had almost forgotten that you complained at the beginning of your letter that I had accused you of falsehood. I do not clearly recollect whether I ever said that; but if I said anything like it (for I should prefer to think that I had forgotten rather than that your messenger had falsely reported) do not doubt that it was spoken in joke, and not seriously. Can I have even thought that you had used levity and were capable of trifling with your word? Far from me be such a suspicion of you, who have from your youth been happy in bearing the yoke of truth, and when I find in you a gravity of character beyond your years. Nor am I so simple as to see a falsehood in a word artlessly spoken with out duplicity of heart; nor so indifferent as to have forgotten either the project which you have long since formed or the obstacle which hinders its realization.

LETTER XXVI. (circa A.D. 1127)

To the Same

He excuses the brevity of his letter on the ground that Lent is a time of silence; and also that on account of his profession and his ignorance he does not dare to assume the function of teaching.

1. You will, perhaps, be angry, or, to speak more gently, will wonder that in place of a longer letter which you had hoped for from me you receive this brief note. But remember what says the wise man, that there is a time for all things under the heaven; both a time to speak and a time to keep silence (Eccles. iii. 1-7). But when shall silence have its time, if our chatter shall occupy even these sacred days of Lent? Correspondence is more absorbing than conversation, inasmuch as it is more laborious; since when in each other's presence we may say with little labour what we will, but when absent we require diligently to dictate in turn the words which we mutually seek, or which are sought from us. But while being absent from you I meditate, dictate or write down what you are in time to read, where, I pray you, is the silence and quiet of my retreat? But all these things, you say, you can do in silence; yet, if you think, you will not answer thus. For what a tumult there is in the mind of those who dictate, what a crowd of sentiments, variety of expressions, diversity of senses jostle; how frequently one rejects that word which presents itself and seeks another which, still escapes; what close attention one gives to the consecutiveness of the line of thought and the elegance of the expression! How it can be made most plain to the intellect, how it can be made most useful to the conscience, what, in short, shall be put before and what after for a particular reader, and many other things do those who are careful in their style, attend to most closely. And will you say that in this I shall have quiet; will you call this silence, even though the tongue be still?

2. Besides, it is not only the time, but also my profession and my insufficiency which prevent my undertaking what you desire, or being able to fulfil it. For it is not the profession of a monk, which I seem to be, or of a sinner, which I am, to

teach, but to mourn for sin. An unlearned person (as I truly confess myself to be) never acts more unlearnedly than when he presumes to teach what he knows not. Therefore, to teach is the business neither of the unlearned in his rashness, nor of the monk in his boldness, nor of the penitent in his distress. It is for this reason I have fled from the world and abide in solitude, and propose to myself with the prophet, to take heed to my ways that I offend not with my tongue (Ps. xxxix. 2) since, according to the same prophet, A man full of words shall not prosper upon the earth (Ps. cxl. 11), and to another Scripture, Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. xviii. 21). But silence, says Isaiah, is the work of righteousness (Is. xxxii. 21), and Jeremiah teaches us to wait in silence for the salvation of the Lord (Lam. iii. 26). Thus to this pursuit and desire of righteousness, since righteousness is the mother, the nurse, and the guardian of all virtues, I would not seem entirely to deny what you have asked, and I invite and entreat you and all those who, like you, desire to make progress in virtue, if not by the teaching of my words, at least by the example of my silence, to learn from me to be silent, you who press me in your words to teach what I do not know.

3. But what am I doing? It will be wonderful if you do not smile, seeing with what a flood of words I condemn those who are too full of words, and while I desire to commend silence to you, I plead against silence by my loquacity. Our dear Guerric, concerning whose penitence and whose manner of life you wished to be assured, as far as I can judge from his actions, is walking worthy of the grace of God, and bringing forth works worthy of penitence. The little book which you ask of me I have not beside me just now. A certain friend of ours, with the same desire to read it as you, has kept it a long time, but not to frustrate altogether the desire of your piety, I send you another which I have just completed on the Glories of the Virgin Mother, which, as I have no other copy of it, I beg that you will return to me as soon as possible, or bring it with you if you will be coming here soon.

LETTER XXVII (circa A.D. 1127)

To the Same

A sincere love has no need of lengthy letters, or of many words. Bernard has been in a state of health almost despaired of, but is now recovering.

1. I have sent you a short letter in reply to a short one from you. You have given me an example of brevity, and I willingly follow it. And truly what need have true and lasting friendship, as you truly say, of exchanging empty and fugitive words? However great be the variety of quotations and verses, and the multiplicity of the phrases by which you have endeavoured to display or to prove your friendship for me, I feel more certain of your affection than I do that you have succeeded in expressing it, and you will not be wrong if you think the same in respect to me. When your letter came into my hands you were present in my heart, and I am quite convinced that it will be the same for me when you receive my letter, and that when you read it I shall not be absent. It is a labour for each of us to scribble to the other, and for our messengers a fatigue to carry our letters from the one to the other, but the heart feels neither labour nor fatigue in loving. Let those things cease, then, which without labour cannot be carried on, and let us practise only that which, the more earnestly it is done, seems to cost the less labour. Let our minds, I say, rest from dictating, our lips from conversing, our fingers from writing, our messengers from running to and fro. But let not our hearts rest from meditating day and night on the law of the Lord, which is the law of love. The more we cease to be occupied in doing this the less quiet shall we enjoy, and the more engrossed we are in it, so much the more calm and repose we shall feel from it. Let us love and be loved, striving to benefit ourselves in the other, and the other in ourselves. For those whom we love, on those do we rely, as those who love us rely in turn on us. Thus to love in God is to love charity, and therefore it is to labour for charity, to strive to be loved for the sake of God.

2. But what am I doing? I promised brevity, and I am sliding into prolixity. If you desire news of Brother Guerric, or rather since you do so, he so runs not as

uncertainly, so fights not as one that beateth the air. But since he knows that salvation depends not on him who fights, nor on him who runs, but on God, who shows mercy, he begs that he may have the help of your prayers for him, so that He who has already granted to him both to fight and to run, may grant also to overcome and to attain. Salute for me with my heart and by your mouth your abbot, who is most dear to me, not only on your account, but also because of his high character. It will be most agreeable to me to see him at the time and place which you have promised. I do not wish to leave you ignorant that the hand of God has for a little while been laid heavily upon me. It seemed that I had been stricken to the fall, that the axe had been laid to the root of the barren tree of my body, and I feared that I might be instantly cut down; but lo! by your prayers and those of my other friends, the good Lord has spared me this time also, yet in the hope that I shall bear good fruits in the future.

LETTER XXVIII (circa A.D. 1130)

To the Abbots Assembled at Soissons

Bernard urges the abbots zealously to perform the duty for which they had met. He recommends to them a great desire of spiritual progress, and begs them not to be delayed in their work if lukewarm and lax persons should perhaps murmur.

To the Reverend Abbots met in the name of the Lord in Chapter at Soissons, brother Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, the servant of their Holiness, health and prayer that they may see, establish, and observe the things which are right.

1. I greatly regret that my occupations prevent me from being present at your meeting—at least, in body. For neither distance nor a crowd of cares are able to banish my spirit, which prays for you, feels with you, and rests among you. No, I repeat, I cannot be wanting in the assembly of the saints, nor can distance of place nor absence of body altogether separate me from the congregation and the counsels of the righteous, in which, not the traditions of men are obstinately upheld or superstitiously observed; but diligent and humble inquiry is made what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. xii. 2). All my desires carry me where you are; I am with you by devotion, by friendship, by similarity of sentiment, and partaking of your zeal.

2. That those who now applaud you may not hereafter ridicule you as having assembled to no purpose (which God forbid!), strive, I beseech you, to make your conduct holy and your resolutions good, for too good they cannot be. Grant that you may be too just or even too wise, yet it is plain that you cannot be good beyond measure. And indeed I read: Do not carry justice to excess (Eccles. vii. 17, Vulg.). I read: Be not wiser than is befitting (Rom. xii. 3, Vulg.). But is it ever said: Do not carry goodness to excess? or, Take care not to be too good? No one can be more good than it behoves him to be. Paul was a good man, and yet he was not at all content with his state; he reached forward gladly to the things that were before, forgetting those that were behind (Phil. iii. 23), and striving to become continually better than himself. It is only God who does not desire to become better than He is, because that is not possible.

3. Let those depart both from me and from You who say: We do not desire to he better than our fathers; declaring themselves to be the sons of lukewarm and lax persons, whose memory is in execration, since they have eaten sour grapes, and their children's teeth are set on edge. Or if they pretend that their fathers were holy men, whose memory is blessed, let them imitate their sanctity, and not defend, as laws instituted by them, the indulgences and dispensations which they have merely endured. Although holy Elias says, I am not better than my fathers (2 Kings xix. 4), yet he has not said that he did not wish to be. Jacob saw upon the ladder Angels ascending and descending (Gen. xxviii. 12); but was any one of them either sitting, or standing still? It was not for angels to stand still on the uncertain rounds of a frail ladder; nor can anything remain fixed in the same condition during the uncertain period of this mortal life. Here have we no continuing city; nor do we yet possess, but always seek for, that which is to came. Of necessity you either ascend or descend, and if you try to stand still you cannot but fall. It may be held as certain that the man is not good at all who does not wish to be better; and where you begin not to care to make advance in goodness there also you leave off being good.

4. Let those depart both from me and from you who call good evil and evil good. If they call the pursuit of righteousness evil, what good thing will be good in their eyes? The Lord once spoke a single word, and the Pharisees were scandalized (S. Matt. xv. 12). But now these new Pharisees are scandalized not even at a word, but at silence. You plainly see then that they seek only the occasion to attack you. But leave them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. Take thought for the salvation of the little ones, not of the murmurs of the evil-disposed. Why do you so much fear to give scandal to those who are not to be cured unless you become sick with them? It is not even desirable to wait to see whether your resolutions are pleasing to all of you in all respects, otherwise you will determine upon little or no good. You ought to consult not the views, but the needs of all; and faithfully to draw them towards God, even although they be unwilling, rather than abandon them to the desires of their heart. I commend myself to your holy prayers.

LETTER XXIX (A.D. 1132)

To Henry, King of England

He asks the King’s favour to the monks sent by him to construct a monastery.

To the illustrious Henry, King of England, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, that he may faithfully serve and humbly obey the King of Heaven in his earthly kingdom.

There is in your land a property belonging to your Lord and mine, for which He preferred to die rather than it should be lost. This I have formed a plan for recovering, and am sending a party of my brave followers to seek, recover, and hold it with strong hand, if this does not displease you. And these scouts whom you see before you I have sent beforehand on this business to investigate wisely the state of things, and bring me faithful word again. Be so kind as to assist them as messengers of your Lord, and in their persons fulfil your feudal duty to Him. I pray Him to render you, in return, happy and illustrious, to His honour, and to the salvation of your soul, to the safety and peace of your country, and to continue to you happiness and contentment to the end of your days.

LETTER XXX (circa A.D. 1132)

To Henry, Bishop of Winchester

Bernard salutes him very respectfully.

To the very illustrious Lord Henry, by the Grace of God Bishop of Winchester, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, health in our Lord.

It is with great joy that I have learned from the report of many persons that so humble a person as myself has found favour with your Highness. I am not worthy of it, but I am not ungrateful for it. I return you, therefore, thanks for your goodness; a very unworthy return, but all that I am able to make. I do not fear but that you will receive the humble return that I make, since you have been so kind as to forestall me by your affection and the honour that you have done to me; but I defer writing more until I shall know by some token from your hand, if you think fit to send one, how you receive these few words. You may easily confide your reply, in writing, or by word of mouth if it shall so please you, to Abbot Oger, who is charged to convey to you this note. I beg your Excellency also to be so good as to honour that Religious with your esteem and confidence, inasmuch as he is a man commendable for his honour, knowledge, and piety.

LETTER XXXI (A.D. 1132)

To the Abbot of a Certain Monastery at York, from Which the Prior Had Departed, Taking Several Religious with Him

1. You write to me from beyond the sea to ask of me advice which I should have preferred that you had sought from some other. I am held between two difficulties, for if I do not reply to you, you may take my silence for a sign of contempt; but if I do reply I cannot avoid danger, since whatever I reply I must of necessity either give scandal to some one or give to some other a security which they ought not to have, or at all events more than they ought to have. That your brethren have departed from you was not with the knowledge nor by the advice or persuasion of me or of my brethren. But I incline to believe that it was of God, since their purpose could not be shaken by all your efforts; and that the brethren themselves thought this also who so earnestly sought my advice about themselves; their conscience troubling them, as I suppose, because they quitted you. Otherwise, if their conscience, like that of the Apostle, did not reproach them, their peace would not have been disturbed (Rom. xiv. 22). But what can I do that I may be hurtful to no one neither by my silence nor by my reply to the questions asked me? Thus, perhaps, I may relieve myself of the difficulty if I shall send those who question me to a person more learned, and whose authority is more reverend and sacred than mine. Pope S. Gregory says in his book on the Pastoral Rule, “Whosoever has proposed to himself a greater good does an unlawful thing in subordinating it to a lesser good.” And he proves this by a citation from the Gospel, saying, No one putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God (S. Luke ix. 62); and he proceeds: “He who renounces a more perfect state which he has embraced, to follow another which is less so, is precisely the man who looks back” (Part iii. c. 28). The same Pope in his third Homily on Ezekiel, adds: “There are people who taste virtue, set themselves to practise it, and while doing so contemplate

undertaking actions still better; but afterwards drawing back, abandon those better things which they had proposed to themselves. They do not, it is true, leave off the good practices they had begun, but they fail to realize those better ones which they had meditated. To human judgment these seem to stand fast in the good work, but to the eyes of Almighty God they have fallen, and failed in what they contemplated."

2. Here is a mirror. In it let your Religious consider, not the features of their faces, but the fact of their turning back. Here let them determine and distinguish their motives, their thoughts, accusing or excusing them with that sentence which the spiritual man passes who judges all things, and is himself judged by no one. I, indeed, cannot rashly determine whether the state which they have left or that which they have embraced was the greater or less, the higher or lower, the severer or the more lax. Let them judge according to the rule of S. Gregory. But to you, Reverend Father, I declare, with as much positive assurance as plain truth, that it is not at all desirable that you should set yourself to quench the Spirit. Hinder not him, it is said, who is able to do good, but if thou canst, do good also thyself (Prov. iii. 27, Vulg.). It more befits you to be proud of the good works of your sons, since a wise son is the glory of his father (Prov. x. 1). For the rest, let no one make it a cause of complaint against me that I have not hidden in my heart the righteousness of God, unless, perhaps, I have spoken less of it than I ought, for the sake of avoiding scandal.

LETTER XXXII (A.D. 1132)

To Thurstan, Archbishop of York

Bernard praises his charity and beneficence towards the Religious.

To the very dear father and Reverend Lord Thurstan, by the Grace of God Archbishop of York, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes the fullest health.

The general good report of men, as I have experienced, has said nothing in your favour which the splendour of your good works does not justify. Your actions, in fact, show that your high reputation, which fame had previously spread everywhere, was neither false nor ill-founded, but manifest and certain. Especially of late how brilliantly has your zeal for righteousness and your sacerdotal energy shone forth in the defence of the poor Religious who had no other helper. Once, indeed, the whole assembly of the saints used to venerate your works of mercy and alms deeds; but in doing so it narrated always what is common to you with very many, since whosoever possesses the goods of this world is bound to share them with the poor. But this is your episcopal task, this the noble proof of your paternal affection, this your truly divine fervour, the zeal which no doubt has inspired and aroused in you who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flaming fire. This, I say, belongs entirely to you. It is the ornament of your dignity, the badge of your office, the adornment of your crown. It is one thing to fill the belly of the hungry, and quite another thing to have a zeal for holy poverty. The one serves nature, the other grace. Thou shalt visit thy kind, He says, and thou shalt not sin (Job v. 24, Vulg.). Therefore he who nourishes the flesh of another sins not in so doing, but he who honours the sanctity of another does good to his own soul; therefore he says again, Keep your alms in your own hand until you shall find a righteous man to whom to give it. For what advantage? Because He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward (S. Matt. x. 41). Let us, then, discharge the debt that nature requires of us, that we may avoid sin; but let us be co-workers with grace, that we may merit to become sharers of it. It is this that I so admire in you, as I acknowledge that it was given to you from

above. O, Father, truly reverend and to be regarded with the sincerest affection; the praise for what you have laid out of your temporal means to the relief of our necessities, will be blended with the praises of God for ever.

LETTER XXXIII (A.D. 1132)

To Richard, Abbot of Fountains, and His Companions, Who Had Passed, Over to the Cistercian Order from Another

He praises them for the renewal of holy discipline.

How marvellous are those things which I have heard and learned, and which the two Geoffries have announced to me, that you have become newly fervent with the fire from on high, that from weakness you have become strong, that you have flourished again with new sanctity.

This is the finger of God secretly working, softly renewing, healthfully changing not, indeed, bad men into good, but making good men better. Who will grant unto me to cross over to you and see this great sight? For that progress in holiness is not less wonderful or less delightful than that conversion. It is much more easy, in fact, to find many men of the world converted to good than one Religious who is good becoming better than he is. The rarest bird in the world is the monk who ascends ever so little from the point which he has once reached in the religious life. Thus the spectacle which you present, dearest brethren, is the more rare and salutary, not only to men who desire greatly to be the helper of your sanctity, but it rightly rejoices the whole Church of God as well; since the rarer it is the more glorious it is also. For prudence made it a duty to you to pass beyond that mediocrity so dangerously near to defect, and to escape from that lukewarmness which provokes God to reject you, it was even a duty of conscience for you to do so, since you know that it is not safe for men who have embraced the holy Rule to halt before having attained the goal to which it leads. I am exceedingly grieved that I am obliged by the pressing obligations of the day and the haste of the messenger to express the fulness of my affection with a pen so briefs and to comprise the breadth of my kindness for you within the narrow limits of this billet. But if anything is wanting, brother Geoffrey will supply it by word of mouth.

LETTER XXXIV (circa A.D. 1130)

Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours, to the Abbot Bernard.

The reputation of Bernard for sanctity induces Hildebert to write to him and ask for his friendship.

1. Few, I believe, are ignorant that balsam is known by its scent, and the tree by its fruit. So, dearly beloved brother, there has reached even to me the report of you—how you are steadfast in holiness, and sound in doctrine. For though I am far separated from you by distance of place, yet the report has come even to me. What pleasant nights you spend with your Rachel; how abundant an offspring is born to you of Leah; how you show yourself wholly a follower of virtue, and an enemy of the flesh. Whoever speaks to me of you has this one tale to tell. Such is the perfume of your name, like that of balm, poured out; such are already the rewards of your merit. These are the ears that you are gathering from your field before the last great harvest. For in this life some reward of virtue is to be found in the notable and undying tribute paid to it. This it wins unaided, and keeps unaided. Its renown is not diminished by envy, nor increased by the favour of men. As the esteem of good men cannot be taken away by false accusations, so it cannot be won by the attentions of flattery. It rests with the individual himself either to advance that esteem by fruitfulness in virtue, or to detract from it by deficiency. The whole Church, I am quite sure, hopes that your renown will be for ever sustained, since it is believed to be founded upon a strong rock.

2. As for me, having heard this report of you everywhere, with desire I have desired to be received into the inmost shrine of your friendship, and to be held in remembrance in your prayers when stealing yourself from converse with mortals you speak on behalf of mortals to the King of Angels. Now, this my desire was much increased by Gebuin, Archdeacon of Troyes, a man eminent as well for his piety as for his learning. I should have thought it my duty to commend him to you, if I were not sure that those whom you deem worthy of your favour need no further commendation. I wish, however, that you should know that it was through his information I learnt that you are in the Church, one who art fit to be

a teacher of virtue, both by precept and example. But not to burden you with too long a letter, I bring my writing to an end, though end the above petition I will not until I have the happiness to obtain what I have asked. I beg you to tell me by a letter in reply how you are disposed with regard to it.

LETTER XXXV (circa A.D. 1130)

Reply of the Abbot Bernard to Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours.

He repays his praises with praises.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things. Your letter so redounded to your honour, as well as to mine, that I gladly welcomed it, Most Reverend Sir, as giving me an occasion of addressing to you the praises of which you are so well worthy, and as affording me just satisfaction that you have done me so much honour as that your Highness should deign to stoop to me, and to show so much esteem for my humble person. Indeed, for one in high place not to be studious of high things, but to condescend to those of low estate, is a thing than which there is nothing more pleasing to God or more rare among men. Who is the wise man, except he who listens to the counsel of Wisdom, which says: The greater thou art, the more humble thyself (Ecclus. iii. 18) before all. This humility you have shown towards me, the greater towards the less, an elder to a younger. I, too, could extol your proved wisdom in due praises, perhaps more just than those of which your wisdom deemed me worthy. It is of great importance in order to gain assured knowledge of things, to rely on exact acquaintance with facts, rather than on the uncertain testimony of public rumour; and then what we have proved for certain we may proclaim without hesitation. What you were pleased to write to me about myself, it is for you to ascertain. I find an undoubted proof of your own merit in your letter, though it be so full of my praises. For though another, perhaps, might be pleased with the marks of learning therein, with its sweet and graceful language, its clear style, its easy and commendable art, I place before all this the wonderful humility, whereby your Greatness has cared to approach one so humble as I, to overwhelm me with praises, and to seek for my friendship. As for what refers to me in your letter I read it not as describing what I am, but what I would wish to be, and what I am ashamed of not being. Yet whatever I am, I am yours; and if, by the grace of God, I ever become anything better, be sure, Most Reverend and dear Father,

that I shall still remain yours.

LETTER XXXVI (circa A.D. 1131)

To the Same Hildebert, Who Had Not Yet Acknowledged the Lord Innocent as Pope.

He exhorts him to recognise Innocent, now an exile in France, owing to the schism of Peter Leonis, as the rightful Pontiff.

To the great prelate, most exalted in renown, Hildebert, by the grace of God Archbishop of Tours, Bernard, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting, and prays that he may walk in the Spirit, and spiritually discern all things.

1. To address you in the words of the prophet, Consolation is hid from their eyes, because death divideth between brethren (Hosea xiii. 14, Vulg.). For it seems as if according to the language of Isaiah they have made a covenant with death, and are at agreement with hell (Is. xxviii. 15). For behold, Innocent, that anointed of the Lord, is set for the fall and rising again of many (cf. S. Luke ii. 34). Those who are of God, gladly join themselves to him; but he who is of the opposite part, is either of Antichrist, or Antichrist himself. The abomination is seen standing in the holy place; and that he may seize it, like a flame he is burning the sanctuary of God. He persecutes Innocent, and in him all innocence. Innocent, in sooth, flees from the face of Leo, as saith the prophet: The lion hath roared; who will not fear (Amos iii. 8). He flees according to the bidding of the Lord, which says, When they persecute you in one city flee ye into another (S. Matt. x. 23). He flees, and thereby proves himself an apostolic man, by ennobling himself with the apostle's example. For Paul blushed not to be let down in a basket over a wall (Acts ix. 25), and so to escape the hands of those who were seeking his life. He escaped not to spare his life, but to give place unto wrath; not to avoid death, but to attain life. Rightly does the Church yield his place to Innocent, whom she sees walking in the same steps.

2. However, Innocent's flight is not without fruit. He suffers, no doubt, but is honoured in the midst of his sufferings. Driven from the city, he is welcomed by the world. From the ends of the earth, men meet the fugitive with sustenance; although the rage of that Shimei, Gerard of Angouleme, has not yet entirely

ceased to curse David. Whether it pleases or does not please that sinner who sees it with discontent, he cannot prevent Innocent being honoured in the presence of kings, and bearing a crown of glory. Have not all princes acknowledged that he is in truth the elect of God? The Kings of France, England, and Spain, and finally the King of the Romans, receive Innocent as Pope, and recognise him alone as bishop of their souls (2 Sam. xvii.). Only Ahitophel is now unaware that his counsels have been exposed and brought to nought. In vain the wretch labours to devise evil counsel against the people of God, and to plot against the saints who stoutly adhere to their saintly Pontiff, scorning to bow the knee to Baal. By no guile shall he avail to procure for his parricide the kingdom over Israel and the holy city, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. A threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes iv. 12). The threefold cord of the choice of the better sort, the assent of the majority, arid, what is more effective yet in these matters, the witness of a pure life, commend Innocent to all, and establish him as chief Pontiff.

3. And so, very Reverend Father, we await your vote, late though it be, as rain upon a fleece of wool. We do not disapprove of a certain slowness, for it savours of gravity, and banishes all sign of levity. For Mary did not at once answer the angel’s salutation, but first considered in her mind what manner of salutation this should be (S. Luke i. 29); and Timothy was commanded to lay hands suddenly on no man (1 Tim. v. 22). Yet I, who am known to the Prelate I am addressing, venture to say “nought in excess;” I, his acquaintance and friend, say, Let not a man thank more highly of himself than he ought to think (Rom. xii. 3). It is a shame, I must confess, that the old serpent, letting silly women alone, has, with a new boldness, even assayed the valour of your heart, and dared to shake to its base so mighty a pillar of the Church. I trust, however, that though shaken it is not tottering to its fall. For the friend of the bridegroom standeth and rejoiceth at the bridegroom’s voice (S. John iii. 29); the voice of joy and health, the voice of unity and peace.

LETTER XXXVII (circa A.D. 1131)

To Magister Geoffrey, of Loretto.

He asks his assistance in maintaining the Pontificate of Innocent against the schism of Peter Leonis.

1. We look for scent in flowers and for savour in fruits; and so, most dearly beloved brother, attracted by the scent of your name which is as perfume poured forth, I long to know you also in the fruit of your work. For it is not I alone, but even God Himself, who has need of no man, yet who, at this crisis, needs your co-operation, if you do not act falsely towards us. It is a glorious thing to be able to be a fellow-worker with God; but perilous to be able and not to be so. Moreover, you have favour with God and man; you have knowledge, a spirit of freedom, a speech both lively and effectual, seasoned with salt; and it is not right that with all these great gifts you should fail the bride of Christ in such danger, for you are the friend of the Bridegroom. A friend is best tried in times of need. What then? Can you continue at rest while your Mother the Church is grievously distressed? Rest has had its proper time, and holy peace has till now freely and duly done its own work. It is now the time for action, because they have destroyed the law. That beast of the Apocalypse (Apoc. xiii. 5-7), to whom is given a mouth speaking blasphemies, and to make war with the saints, is sitting on the throne of Peter, like a lion ready for his prey. Another beast also stands hissing at your side, like a whelp lurking in secret places. The fiercer here and the craftier there are met together in one against the Lord and his annointed. Let us, then, make haste to burst their bonds and cast away their cords from us.

2. I, for my part, together with other servants of God who are set on fire with the Divine flame, have laboured, with the help of God, to unite the nations and kings in one, in order to break down the conspiracy of evil men, and to destroy every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Nor have I laboured in vain. The Kings of Germany, France, England, Scotland, Spain, and Jerusalem, with all the clergy and people, side with and adhere to the Lord Innocent, like sons to a father, like the members to their head, being anxious to

preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And the Church is right in acknowledging him, whose reputation is discovered to be the more honourable and whose election is found to be the more sound and regular, having the advantage as well by the merit as well as by the number of the electors. And now, brother, why do you hold back? How long will the serpent by your side lull your careless energies to repose? I know that you are a son of peace, and can by no reason be led to desert unity. But, of course, that alone is not enough, unless you study both to maintain it and to make war with all your might upon the disturbers thereof. And do not fear the loss of peace, for you shall be rewarded by no small increase of glory if your efforts succeed in quieting, or even silencing, that wild beast near you; and if the goodness of God, through your means, rescue from the mouth of the lion so great a prize for the Church as William, Count of Poitiers.

LETTER XXXVIII (circa A.D. 1135)

To His Monks of Clairvaux.

He excuses his long absence, from which he suffers more than they; and briefly reminds them of their duty.

To his dearly-loved brethren the Monks of Clairvaux, the converts, and the novices, their brother Bernard sends greeting, bidding them rejoice in the Lord always.

1. Judge by yourselves what I am suffering. If my absence is painful to you, let no one doubt that it is far more painful to me. The loss is not equal, the burden is not the same, for you are deprived of but one individual, while I am bereft of all of you. It cannot but be that I am weighed down by as many anxieties as you are in number; I grieve for the absence of each one of you, and fear the dangers which may attack you. This double grief will not leave me until I am restored to my children. I doubt not that you feel the same for me; but then I am but one. You have but a single ground for sadness; I have many, for I am sad on account of you all. Nor is it my only trouble that I am forced to live for a time apart from you, when without you I should regard even to reign as miserable slavery, but there is added to this that I am forced to live among things which altogether disturb the tranquillity of my soul, and perhaps are little in harmony with the end of the monastic life.

2. And since you know these things, you must not be angry at my long absence, which is not according to my will, but is due to the necessities of the Church; rather pity me. I hope that it will not be a long absence now; do you pray that it may not be unfruitful. Let any losses which may in the meantime happen to befall you be regarded as gains, for the cause is God’s. And since He is gracious and all-powerful, He will easily make any losses good, and even add greater riches. Therefore, let us be of good courage, since we have God with us, in whom I am present with you, though we may seem to be separated by a long distance. Let no one among you who shows himself attentive to his duties, humble, reverent, devoted to reading, watchful unto prayer, anxious for brotherly

love, think that I am absent from him. For can I be anything but present with him in spirit when we are of one heart and one mind? But if, which God forbid, there be among you any whisperer, or any that is double-tongued, a murmurer, or rebellious, or impatient of discipline, or restless or truant, and who is not ashamed to eat the bread of idleness, from such I should be far absent in soul even though present in body, just because he would have already set himself far from God by a distance of character and not of space.

3. In the meanwhile, brethren, until I come, serve the Lord in fear, that in Him being delivered from the hand of your enemies you may serve Him without fear. Serve Him in hope, for He is faithful that promised; serve Him by good works, for He is bountiful to reward. To say nothing else, He rightly claims this life of ours as His own, because He laid down His own to obtain it. Let none, therefore, live to himself, but to Him who died for him. For whom can I more justly live than for Him whose death was my life? for whom with more profit to myself than for Him who promises eternal life? for whom under a greater necessity than for Him who threatens me with everlasting flames? But I serve Him willingly, because love gives liberty. To this I exhort my children. Serve Him in that love which casteth out fear, which feels no labours, seeks for no reward, thinks of no merit, and yet is more urgent than all. No terror is so powerful, no rewards so inviting, no righteousness so exacting. May it join me to you never to be divided, may it also bring me before you, especially at your hours of prayer, my brethren, dearly beloved and greatly longed for.

LETTER XXXIX (A.D. 1137)

To the Same

He expresses his regret at his very long absence from his beloved Clairvaux, and his desire to return to his dear sons. He tells them of the consolations that he feels nevertheless in his great labours for the Church.

1. My soul is sorrowful until I return, and it refuses to be comforted till it see you. For what is my consolation in the hour of evil, and in the place of my pilgrimage? Are not you in the Lord? Wherever I go, the sweet memory of you never leaves me; but the sweeter the memory the more I feel the absence. Ah, me! that the time of my sojourning here is not only prolonged, but its burden increased, and truly, as the Prophet says, they who for a time separate me from you have added to the pain of my wounds (Ps. lxix. 26). Life is an exile, and one that is dreary enough, for while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord. To this is added the special grief which almost makes me impatient, that I am forced to live without you. It is a protracted sickness, a wearisome waiting, to be so long subject to the vanity which possesses everything here, to be imprisoned within the horrid dungeon of a noisome body, to be still bound with the chains of death, and the ropes of sin, and all this time to be away from Christ. But against all these things one solace was given me from above, instead of His glorious countenance which has not yet been revealed, and that is the sight of the holy temple of God, which is you. From this temple it used to seem to me an easy passage to that glorious temple, after which the Prophet sighed when he said: One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to visit His temple (Ps. xxvi. 4).

2. What shall I say? how often has that solace been taken from me? Lo, this is now the third time, if I mistake not, that my children have been taken from me. The babes have been too early weaned, and I am not allowed to bring up those whom I begot through the Gospel. In short, I am forced to abandon my own children and look after those of others, and I hardly know which is the more

distressing, to be taken from the former, or to have to do with the latter. O, good Jesu! is my whole life thus to waste away in grief, and my years in mourning? It is good for me, O Lord, rather to die than to live, only let it be amongst my brethren, those of my own household, those who are dearest to my heart. That, as all know, is sweeter and safer, and more natural. Nay, it would be a loving act to grant to me that I might be refreshed before I go away, and be no more seen. If it please my Lord that the eyes of a father, who is not worthy to be called a father, should be closed by the hands of his sons, that they may witness his last moments, soothe his end, and raise his spirit by their loving prayers to the blissful fellowship, if you think him worthy to have his body buried with the bodies of those who are blessed because poor, if I have found favour in Thy sight, this I most earnestly ask that I may obtain by the prayers and merits of these my brethren. Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done. Not for my own sake do I wish for either life or death.

3. But it is only right, that as you have heard of my grief, you should also know what consolation I have. The first solace for all the trouble and misfortune that I undergo is the thought that the cause I strive for is that of Him to whom all things live. Whether I will or no, I must live for Him who bought my life at the price of His own, and who is able, as a merciful and righteous judge, to recompense us in that day whatever we may suffer for Him. But if I have served as His soldier against my will, it will be only that a dispensation has been entrusted unto me, and I shall be an unprofitable servant; but if I serve willingly I shall have glory. In this consideration, then, I breathe again for a little. My second consolation is that often, without any merit of mine, grace from above has crowned me in my labours, and that grace in me was not in vain, as I have many times found, and as you have seen to some extent. But how necessary just now the presence of my feebleness is to the Church of God, I would say for your consolation were it not that it would sound like boasting. But as it is, it is better that you should learn it from others.

4. Moved by the pressing request of the Emperor, by the Apostolic command, as well as by the prayers of the Church and the princes, whether with my will or against my will, weak and ill, and, to say truth, carrying about with me the pallid image of the King of terrors, I am borne away into Apulia. Pray for the things which make for the Church’s peace and our salvation, that I may again see you, live with you, and die with you, and so live that ye may obtain. In my weakness and time of distress, with tears and groanings, I have dictated these words, as our dear brother Baldwin can testify, who has taken them down from my mouth, and

who has been called by the Church to another office and elevated to a new dignity. Pray, too, for him, as my one comfort now, and in whom my spirit is greatly refreshed. Pray, too, for our lord the Pope, who regards me and all of you equally with the tenderest affection. Pray, too, for my lord the Chancellor, who is to me as a mother; and for those who are with him—my lord Luke, my lord Chrysogonus, and Master Ivo —who show themselves as brothers. They who are with me—Brother Bruno and Brother Gerard —salute you and ask for your prayers.

LETTER XL

To Thomas, Prior of Beverley

This Thomas had taken the vows of the Cistercian Order at Clairvaux. As he showed hesitation, Bernard urges his tardy spirit to fulfil them. But the following letter will prove that it was a warning to deaf ears, where it relates the unhappy end of Thomas. In this letter Bernard sketches with a master's hand the whole scheme of salvation.

Bernard to his beloved son Thomas, as being his son.

1. What is the good of words? An ardent spirit and a strong desire cannot express themselves simply by the tongue. We want your sympathy and your bodily presence to speak to us; for if you come you will know us better, and we shall better appreciate each other. We have long been held in a mutual bond as debtors one to another; for I owe you faithful care and you owe me submissive obedience. Let our actions and not our pens, if you please, prove each of us. I wish you would apply to yourself henceforth and carry out towards me those words of the Only Begotten: The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works bear witness of Me (S. John v. 36). For, indeed, only thus does the spirit of the Only Son bear witness with our spirit that we also are the sons of God, when, quickening us from dead works, He causes us to bring forth the works of life. A good or bad tree is distinguished, not by its leaves or flowers, but by its fruit. So By their fruits, He saith, ye shall know them (S. Matt. vii. 16). Works, then, and not words, make the difference between sons of God and sons of unbelief. By works, accordingly, do you display your sincere desire and make proof of mine.

2. I long for your presence; my heart has long wished for you, and expected the fulfilment of your promises. Why am I so pressing? Certainly not from any personal or earthly feeling. I desire either to be profited by you or to be of service to you. Noble birth, bodily strength and beauty, the glow of youth, estates, palaces, and sumptuous furniture, external badges of dignity, and, I may also add, the world's wisdom—all these are of the world, and the world loves its

own. But for how long will they endure? For ever? Assuredly not; for the world itself will not last for ever; but these will not last even for long. In fact, the world will not be able long to keep these gifts for you, nor will you dwell long in the world to enjoy them, for the days of man are short. The world passes away with its lusts, but it dismisses you before it quite passes away itself. How can you take unlimited pleasure in a love that soon must end? But I ever love you, not your possessions; let them go whence they were derived. I only require of you one thing: that you would be mindful of your promise, and not deny us any longer the satisfaction of your presence among us, who love you sincerely, and will love you for ever. In fact, if we love purely in our life, we shall also not be divided in death. For those gifts which I wish for in your case, or rather for you, belong not to the body or to time only; and so they fail not with the body, nor pass away with time; nay, when the body is laid aside they delight still more, and last when time is gone. They have nothing in common with the gifts above-mentioned, or such as they with which, I imagine, not the Father, but the world has endowed you. For which of these does not vanish before death, or at last fall a victim to it?

3. But, indeed, that is the best part, which shall not be taken away for ever. What is that? Eye hath not seen it, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man (I Cor. ii. 9). He who is a man and walks simply according to man's nature only, he who, to speak more plainly, is still content with flesh and blood, is wholly ignorant what that is, because flesh and blood will not reveal the things which God alone reveals through His Spirit. So the natural man is in no way admitted to the secret; in fact, he receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God (I Cor. ii. 14). Blessed are they who hear His words. I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known to you (S. John xv. 15). O, wicked world, which wilt not bless thy friends except thou make them enemies of God, and consequently unworthy of the council of the blessed. For clearly he who is willing to be thy friend makes himself the enemy of God. And if the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, how much less the enemy? Moreover, the friend of the Bridegroom standeth, and rejoiceth with joy because of the Bridegroom's voice; whence also it says, My soul failed when [my beloved] spake (Cant. v. 6). And so the friend of the world is shut out from the council of the friends of God; who have received not the spirit of this world but the spirit which is of God, that they may know the things which are given to them of God. I thank Thee, O Father, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so

it seemed good in Thy sight (S. Matt. xi. 25, 26), not because they of themselves deserved it. For all have sinned, and come short of Thy glory, that Thou mayest freely send the Spirit of Thy Son, crying in the hearts of the sons of adoption: Abba, Father. For those who are led by this Spirit, they are sons, and cannot be kept from their Father's council. Indeed, they have the Spirit dwelling within them, who searches even the deep things of God. In short, of what can they be ignorant whom grace teaches everything?

4. Woe unto you, ye sons of this world, because of your wisdom, which is foolishness! Ye know not the spirit of salvation, nor have share in the counsel, which the Father, alone discloses alone to the Son, and to him to whom the Son will reveal Him. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? (Rom. xi. 34). Not, indeed, on one; but only a few, only those who can truly say: The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. Woe to the world for its clamour! That same Only Begotten, like as the Angel of a great revelation, proclaims among the people: He who hath ears to hear let him hear. And since he finds not ears worthy to receive His words, and to whom He may commit the secret of the Father, he weaves parables for the crowd, that hearing they might not hear, and seeing they might not understand. But for His friends how different! With them He speaks apart: To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God (S. Luke viii. 8-10); to whom also He says: Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (S. Luke xii. 32). Who are these? These are they whom He foreknew and foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren. The Lord knows who are His. Here is His great secret and the counsel which He has made known unto men. But He judges no others worthy of a share in so great mystery, except those whom He has foreknown and foreordained as His own. For those whom He foreordained, them also He called. Who, except he be called, may approach God's counsel? Those whom He called, them also He justified. Over them a Sun arises, though not that sun which may daily be seen arising over good and bad alike, but He of whom the Prophet speaks when addressing himself to those alone who have been called to the counsel, he says: Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise (Malachi iv. 2). So while the sons of unbelief remain in darkness, the child of light leaves the power of darkness and comes into this new light, if once he can with faith say to God: I am a companion of all them that fear Thee (Ps. cxix. 63). Do you see how faith precedes, in order that justification may follow? Perchance, then, we are called

through fear, and justified by love. Finally, the just shall live by faith (Rom. i. 17), that faith, doubtless, which works by love (Gal. v. 6).

5. So at his call let the sinner hear what he has to fear; and thus coming to the Sun of Righteousness, let him, now enlightened, see what he must love. For what is that saying: The merciful goodness of the Lord endureth from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him (Ps. ciii. 17). From everlasting, because of predestination, to everlasting, because of glorification. The one process is without beginning, the other knows no ending. Indeed, those whom He predestines from everlasting, He glorifies to everlasting, with an interval, at least, in the case of adults, of calling and justification between. So at the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, the mystery, hidden from eternity, concerning souls that have been predestinated and are to be glorified, begins in some degree to emerge from the depths of eternity, as each soul, called by fear and justified by love, becomes assured that it, too, is of the number of the blessed, knowing well that whom He justified, them also He glorified (Rom. viii. 30). What then? The soul hears that it is called when it is stricken with fear. It feels also that it is justified when it is surrounded with love. Can it do otherwise than be confident that it will be glorified? There is a beginning; there is continuation. Can it despair only of the consummation? Indeed, if the fear of the Lord, in which our calling is said to consist, is the beginning of wisdom, surely the love of God—that love, I mean, which springs from faith, and is the source of our justification—is progress in wisdom. And so what but the consummation of wisdom is that glorification which we hope for at the last from the vision of God that will make us like Him? And so one deep calleth another because of the noise of the water-pipes. (Ps. xlii. 9), when, with terrible judgments, that unmeasured Eternity and Eternal Immensity, whose wisdom cannot be told, leads the corrupt and inscrutable heart of man by Its own power and goodness forth into Its own marvellous light.

6. For instance, let us suppose a man in the world, held fast as yet in the love of this world and of his flesh; and, inasmuch as he bears the image of the earthly man, occupied with earthly things, without a thought of things heavenly, can any one fail to see that this man is surrounded with horrible darkness, unless he also is sitting in the same fatal gloom? For no sign of his salvation has yet shone upon him; no inner inspiration bears its witness in his heart as to whether an eternal predestination destines him to good. But, then, suppose the heavenly compassion vouchsafes sometime to have regard to him, and to shed upon him a spirit of compunction to make him bemoan himself and learn wisdom, change

his life, subdue his flesh, love his neighbour, cry to God, and resolve hereafter to live to God and not to the world; and suppose that thenceforward, by the gracious visitation of heavenly light and the sudden change accomplished by the Right Hand of the Most High he sees clearly that he is no longer a child of wrath, but of grace, for he is now experiencing the fatherly love and divine goodness towards him—a love which hitherto had been concealed from him so completely as not only to leave him in ignorance whether he deserved love or hate, but also as to make his own life indicate hatred rather than love, for darkness was still on the face of the deep—would it not seem to you that such an one is lifted directly out of the profoundest and darkest deep of horrible ignorance into the pleasant and serene deep of eternal brightness?

7. And then at length God, as it were, divides the light from the darkness, when a sinner, enlightened by the first rays of the Sun of Righteousness; casts off the works of darkness and puts on the armour of light. His own conscience and the sins of his former life alike doom him as a true child of Hell to eternal fires; but under the looks with which the Dayspring from on high deigns to visit him, he breathes again, and even begins to hope beyond hope that he shall enjoy the glory of the sons of God. For rejoicing at the near prospect with unveiled face, he sees it in the new light, and says: Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us; Thou hast put gladness in my heart (Ps. iv. 7); Lord, what is man that Thou hast such respect unto him, or the son of man that Thou so regardest him? (Ps. cxliv. 3). Now, O good Father, vile worm and worthy of eternal hatred as he is, he yet trusts that he is loved, because he feels that he loves; nay, because he has a foretaste of Thy love he does not blush to make return of love. Now in Thy brightness it becomes clear, Oh! Light that no man can approach unto, what good things Thou hast in store for so poor a thing as man, even though he be evil! He loves not undeservedly, because he was loved without his deserving it; and his love is for everlasting, because he knows that he has been loved from everlasting. He brings to light for the comfort of the sorrowful the great design which from eternity had lain in the bosom of eternity, namely, that God wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. As a witness of this secret, Oh! man, thou hast the justifying Spirit bearing witness herein with thy spirit that thou thyself also art the son of God. Acknowledge the counsel of God in thy justification; confess it and say, Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors (Ps. cxix. 24). For thy present justification is the revelation of the Divine counsel, and a preparation for future glory. Or rather, perhaps, predestination itself is the preparation for it, and

justification is more the gradual drawing near unto it. Indeed, it is said, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (S. Matt. iii. 2). And hear also of predestination that it is the preparation: Come, inherit, He says, the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (S. Matt. xxv. 34)

8. Let none, therefore, doubt that he is loved who already loves. The love of God freely follows our love which it preceded. For how can He grow weary of returning their love to those whom He loved even while they yet loved Him not? He loved them, I say; yes, He loved. For as a pledge of His love thou hast the Spirit; thou has also Jesus, the faithful witness, and Him crucified. Oh! double proof, and that most sure, of God's love towards us. Christ dies, and deserves to be loved by us. The Spirit works, and makes Him to be loved. The One shows the reason why He is loved: the Other how He is to be loved. The One commends His own great love to us; the Other makes it ours. In the One we see the object of love; from the Other we draw the power to love. With the One, therefore, is the cause; with the Other the gift of charity. What shame to watch, with thankless eyes, the Son of God dying—and yet this may easily happen, if the Spirit be not with us. But now, since The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us (Rom. v. 5), having been loved we love; and as we love, we deserve to be loved yet more. For if, says the Apostle, while we were yet enemies, we have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved through His life (Rom. viii. 32). For He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

9. Since, then, the token of our salvation is twofold, namely, a twofold outpouring, of the Blood and of the Spirit, neither can profit without the other. For the Spirit is not given except to such as believe in the Crucified; and faith avails not unless it works by love. But love is the gift of the Spirit. If the second Adam (I speak of Christ) not only became a living soul, but also a quickening spirit, dying as being the one, and raising the dead as being the other, how can that which dies in Him profit me, apart from that which quickens? Indeed, He Himself says: It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing (S. John vi. 63). Now, what does "quickeneth" mean except "justifieth"? For as sin is the death of the soul (The soul that sinneth it shall die, Ezek. xviii. 4), without doubt righteousness is its life; for The just shall live by faith (Rom. i. 17). Who, then, is righteous, except he who returns to God, who loves him, His meed of love? And this never happens unless the Spirit by faith reveal to the man the eternal purpose of God concerning his future salvation. Such a revelation is simply the

infusion of spiritual grace, by which, with the mortification of the deeds of the flesh, man is made ready for the kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit. And he receives by one and the same Spirit both the reason for thinking that he is loved and the power of returning love, lest the love of God for us should be left without return.

10. This, then, is that holy and secret counsel which the Son has received from the Father by the Holy Spirit. This by the same Spirit He imparts to His own whom He knows, in their justification, and by the imparting He justifies. Thus in his justification each of the faithful receives the power to begin to know himself even as he is known: when, for instance, there is given to him some foretaste of his own future happiness, as he sees how it lay hid from eternity in God, who foreordains it, but will appear more fully in God, who is effecting it. But concerning the knowledge that he has now, for his part, attained, let a man glory at present in the hope, not in the secure possession of it. How must we pity those who possess as yet no token of their own calling to this glad assembly of the righteous. Lord, who hath believed our report? (Is. liii. 1). Oh! that they would be wise and understand. But except they believe they shall not understand.

11. But you, too, ye unhappy and heedless lovers of the world, have your purpose far from that of the just. Scale sticks close to scale, and there is no airhole between you. You, too, oh! sons of impiety, have your purpose communicated one to another, but openly against the Lord and against His Christ (Ps. ii. 2). For if, as the Scripture says, The fear of God, that is piety (Job xxviii. 28), of course anyone who loves the world more than God is convicted of impiety and idolatry, of worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator. But if, as has been said, the holy and impious have each their purpose kept for themselves, doubtless there is a great gulf fixed between the two. For as the just keeps himself aloof from the purpose and council of evil men (cf. Ps. i. 6), so the impious never rise in the judgment, nor sinners in the purpose for the just. For there is a purpose for the just, a gracious rain which God hath set apart for His heritage. There is a purpose really secret, descending like rain into a fleece of wool—a sealed fount whereof no stranger may partake—a Sun of Righteousness rising only for such as fear God.

12. Moreover, the prophet, noting that the rest remain in their own dryness and darkness, being ignorant of the rain and of the light of the just, mocks and brands their unfruitful gloom and confused perversity. This is a nation, he says, that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God (Jer. vii. 28). You are not ready, oh! miserable men, to say with David, I will hearken what the Lord God will say

with regard to me (Ps. lxxxv. 8), for being exhausted abroad upon [the quest of] vanity and false folly, you seek not for the deepest and best hearing of the truth. Oh! ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme mine honour, and have such pleasure in vanity and seek after leasing (Ps. iv. 2). You are deaf to the voice of truth, and you know not the purpose of Him who thinks thoughts of peace, who also speaks peace to His people, and to His saints, and to such as are converted in heart. Now, he says, ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you (S. John xv. 3). Therefore, they who hear not this word are unclean.

13. But do you, dearly beloved, if you are making ready your inward ear for this Voice of God that is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb, flee from outward cares, that with your inmost heart clear and free you also may say with Samuel, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth (1 Sam. iii. 9). This Voice sounds not in the market-place, and is not heard in public. It is a secret purpose, and seeks to be heard in secret. It will of a surety give you joy and gladness in hearing it, if you listen with attentive ear. Once it ordered Abraham (Gen. xii. 1) to get him out of his country and from his kindred, that he might see and possess the land of the living. Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 10) left his brother and his home, and passed over Jordan with his staff, and was received in Rachel's embrace (Gen. xxix. 11). Joseph was lord in Egypt (Gen. xxxvii. and xli.), having been torn by a fraudful purchase from his father and his home. Thus the Church is bidden, in order that the King may have pleasure in her beauty, to forget her own people and her father's house (Ps. xlv. 11, 12). The boy Jesus was sought by His parents among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and was not found (S. Luke ii. 44, 45). Do you also flee from your brethren, if you wish to find the way of salvation. Flee, I say, from the midst of Babylon, flee from before the sword of the northwind. A bare sustenance I am ready to offer for the help of every one that flees. You call me your abbot; I refuse not the title for obedience' sake—obedience, I say, not that I demand it, but that I render it in service to others, even as The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (S. Matt. xx. 28). But if you deem me worthy, receive as your fellow-disciple him whom you choose for your master. For we both have one Master, Christ. And so let Him be the end of this Letter, who is The end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. x. 4).

LETTER XLI

To Thomas of St. Omer, After He Had Broken His Promise of Adopting a Change of Life

He urges him to leave his studies and enter religion, and sets before him the miserable end of Thomas of Beverley.

To his dearly beloved son, Thomas, Brother Bernard, called Abbot of Clairvaux, that he may walk in the fear of the Lord.

1. You do well in acknowledging the debt of your promise, and in not denying your guilt in deferring its performance. But I beg you not to think simply of what you promised, but to whom you promised it. For I do not claim for myself any part of that promise which you made, in my presence, indeed, but not to me. Do not fear that I am going to reprove you on account of that deceptive delay: for I was summoned as the witness, not as the lord of your vow. I saw it and rejoiced; and my prayer is that my joy may be full—which it will not be until your promise is fulfilled. You have fixed a time which you ought not to have transgressed. You have transgressed it. What is that to me? To your own lord you shall stand or fall. I have determined, because the danger is so imminent, to deal with you neither by reproofs nor threats, but only by advice—and that only so far as you take it kindly. If you shall hear me, well. If not, I judge no man; there is One who seeketh and judgeth; for He who judgeth us is the Lord (1 Cor. iv. 4). And I think for this cause you ought to fear and grieve the more, inasmuch as you have not lied unto men, but unto God. And though, as you wish, I spare your shame before men, is that shamelessness to go unpunished before God? For what reason, pray, is there in feeling shame before the judgment of man and not fearing the face of God? For the face of the Lord is against them that do evil (Ps. xxxiv. 16). Do you, then, fear reproaches more than torments; and do you, who tremble at the tongue of flesh, despise the sword which devours the flesh? Are these the fine moral principles with which, as you write, you are being stored in the acquisition of knowledge, the ardour and love for which so heats and excites you that you do not fear to slight your sacred vow?

2. But, I pray you, what proof of virtue is it, what instance of self-control, what advance in knowledge, or artistic skill, to tremble with fear where no fear is needful, and to lay aside even the fear of the Lord. How much more wholesome the knowledge of Jesus and Him crucified—a knowledge, of course, not easy to acquire except for Him who is crucified to the world. You are mistaken, my son, quite mistaken, if you think that you can learn in the school of the teachers of this world that knowledge which only the disciples of Christ, that is, such as despise the world, attain; and that by the gift of God. This knowledge is taught, not by the reading of books, but by grace; not by the letter, but by the spirit; not by learning, but by the practice of the commandments of God: Sow, says the Prophet, to yourselves in righteousness, reap the hope of life, kindle for yourselves the light of knowledge (cf. Hos. x. 12). You see that the light of knowledge cannot be duly attained, except the seed of righteousness [first] enter the soul, so that from it may grow the grain of life, and not the mere husk of vainglory. What then? You have not yet sown to yourself in righteousness, and therefore you have not yet reaped the sheaves of hope; and do you pretend that you are acquiring the true knowledge? Perchance for the true there is being substituted that which puffeth up. You err foolishly, Spending thy money for that which is not bread, and thy labour for that which satisfieth not (Is. lv. 2). I entreat you, return to the former wish of your heart, and realize that this year of delay which you have allowed to yourself has been a wrong to God; is not a year pleasing to the Lord, but a seedplot of discord, an incentive to wrath, a food of apostasy, such as must quench the Spirit, shut off grace, and produce that lukewarmness which is wont to provoke God to spue men out of His mouth (cf. Rev. iii. 16).

3. Alas! I think that, as you are called by the same name, so you walk in the same spirit as that other Thomas, once, I mean, Provost of Beverley. For after devoting himself, like you, to our Order and House with all his heart, he began to beg for delay, and then by degrees to grow cold, until he openly ended by being a Secular, an apostate, and, twofold more, a child of hell, and was cut off prematurely by a sudden and terrible death (S. Matt. xxiii. 15)—a fate which, if it may be, let the pitiful and clement Lord avert. The letter which I wrote to him in vain still survives. I simply freed my own mind, by warning him, so far as I could, how it must soon end. How happy would he have been if he had taken my advice! He cloked his sin. I am clean from his blood. But that is not enough for me. For though in so acting I am quite at ease on my own account, yet that charity which seeketh not her own (1 Cor. xiii. 5) urges me to mourn for him

who died not in safety, because he lived so carelessly. Oh! the great depth of the judgments of God! Oh! my God, terrible in Thy counsels over the sons of men! He bestowed the Spirit, whom he was soon again to withdraw, so that a man sinned a sin beyond measure, and grace found entrance that sin might abound; though this was the fault, not of the Giver, but of him who added the transgression. For it was the act of the man's own freewill (whereby, using badly his freedom, he had the power to grieve the free Spirit) to despise the grace instead of bringing to good effect the inspiration of God, so as to be able to say: His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain (1 Cor. xv. 10).

4. If you are wise, you will let his folly profit you as a warning; you will wash your hands in the blood of the sinner, and take care to release yourself at once from the snare of perdition, and me from horrible fear on your account. For, I confess, I feel your erring steps as the rending of my heart, because you have become very dear to me, and I feel a father's affection for you. Therefore, at every remembrance of you that sword of fear pierces through my heart the more sharply, as I consider that you have too little fear and uneasiness. I know where I have read of such: For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape (1 Thess. v. 3). Yea, I foresee that many fearful consequences threaten you if you still delay to be wise. For I have had much experience; and Oh! that you would share and profit by it. So believe one who has had experience; believe one who loves you. For if you know for the one reason that I am not deceived, for the other you know also that I am not capable of deceiving you.

LETTER XLII

To the Illustrious Youth, Geoffrey de Perrone, and His Comrades

He pronounces the youths noble because they purpose to lead the religious life, and exhorts them to perseverance.

To his beloved sons, Geoffrey and his companions, Bernard, called Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes the spirit of counsel and strength.

1. The news of your conversion that has got abroad is edifying many, nay, is making glad the whole Church of God, so that The heavens rejoice and the earth is glad (Ps. xcvi. 11), and every tongue glorifies God. The earth shook and the heavens dropped at the presence of the God of Sinai (cf. Ps. lxviii. 8, 9), raining on those days more abundantly than usual a gracious rain which God keeps for His inheritance (Ps. lxvii. 9, 10, Vulg.). Never more will the cross of Christ appear void of effect in you, as in many sons of disobedience, who, delaying from day to day to turn to God, are seized by sudden death, and go down straightway to hell. We see flourish again under our eyes the wood whereon the Lord of Glory hung, who died not for His own nation only, But also that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad (S. John xi. 52). He, yes, He Himself draws you, who loves you as His own flesh, as the most precious fruit of His cross, as the most worthy recompense of the blood he shed. If, then, the Angels Rejoice over one sinner that repenteth (S. Luke xv. 10), how great must be their joy over so many, and those, too, sinners. The more illustrious they seemed for rank, for learning, for birth, for youth, the wider was their influence as examples of perdition. I had read, Not many noble, not many wise, not many mighty hath God chosen (1 Cor. i. 26, 27). But to-day, through a miracle of Divine power, a multitude of such is converted. They hold present glory cheap, they spurn the charm of youth, they take no account of high birth, they regard the wisdom of the world as foolishness, they rest not in flesh and blood, they renounce the love of parents and friends, they reckon favours and honours and dignities as dung that they may gain Christ. I should praise you if I

knew that this, your lot, were your own doing. But it is the finger of God, clearly a change due to the right hand of the Most High (cf. Ps. lxxvii. 10, Vulg., lxxvi. 11). Your conversion is a good gift and a perfect gift, without doubt descending from the Father of lights (S. James i. 17). And so to Him we rightly bring every voice of praise who only doeth marvellous things, who hath caused that plenteous redemption that is in Him to be no longer without effect in you.

2. What, then, dearly beloved, remains for you to do, except to make sure that your praiseworthy purpose attain the end it deserves? Strive, therefore, for perseverance, the only virtue that receives the crown. Let there not be found among you Yea and Nay (2 Cor. i. 18, sq.), that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in Heaven, with whom, you know, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (S. James i. 17). You also, brethren, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. iii. 18). Take heed with all watchfulness not to be yourselves found light, inconstant, or wavering. For it is written, A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways (S. James i. 8), and again, Woe be . . . to the sinner that goeth two ways (Ecclus. ii. 12). And for myself, dearly beloved, I congratulate you, and myself not less, for, as I hear, I have been reckoned worthy of being chosen to have a part in this, your good purpose. I both give you my counsel and promise my help. If I am thought necessary, or, rather, if I be deemed worthy, I do not decline the task, and so far as in me lies will not fail you. With eager devotion I submit my shoulders to this burden, old though they be, since it is laid on me from heaven. With a glad heart and open arms, as they say, I welcome the fellow-citizens of the saints and servants of God. How gladly, according to the prophet’s command, do I assist with my bread those that flee from the face of the sword, and bring water to the thirsty (cf. Is. xxi. 14). The rest I have left to the lips of my, or rather your, Geoffrey. Whatsoever he shall say to you in my stead, that, doubt not, is my counsel.

LETTER XLIII

A Consolatory LETTER to the Parents of Geoffrey

There is no reason to mourn a son as lost who is a religious, still less to fear for his delicacy of constitution.

1. If God makes your son His son also, what do you lose or what does he himself lose? Being rich he becomes richer; being already high born, of still nobler lineage; being illustrious, he gains greater renown; and—what is more than all—once a sinner he is now a saint. He must be prepared for the Kingdom that has been prepared for him from the beginning of the world; and for this end, the short time that he has to live he must spend with us; until he has scraped off the filth of the worldly life, and wiped away the earthly dust, and at last is fit for the heavenly mansion. If you love your son, of course you will rejoice, because he goes to His Father and to such a Father as He. Yea, he goes to God. But you lose him not: nay, rather through him you gain many sons. For all of us who are in or of Clairvaux, acknowledge him as a brother and you as parents.

2. But perchance you fear the effect of a severe life upon his body, which you know to be frail and delicate. But of such fear it is said, “There were they brought in great fear where no fear was” (Ps. xiv. 9). Reassure yourselves, and be comforted. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son, until the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation (cf. Rom. xv. 5) receive him from my hands. So do not mourn; do not weep. For your Geoffrey is hastening to joy and not to grief. I will be to him father, mother, brother, and sister. I will make the crooked straight for him and the rough way smooth (cf. S. Luke iii. 5). I will so order and arrange everything for him that his soul shall profit and his body not suffer loss. Moreover, he shall serve the Lord in joy and gladness, and shall sing in the ways of the Lord that great is the glory of the Lord (Ps. cxxxviii. 5).

LETTER XLIV

Concerning the Maccabees But to Whom Written is Unknown

He relies to the question why the Church has decreed a festival to the Maccabees alone of all the righteous under the ancient law.

1. Fulk, Abbot of Epernay, had already written to ask me the same question as your charity has addressed to your humble servant by Brother Hescelin. I have put off replying to him, being desirous to find, if possible, some statement in the Fathers about this which was asked, which I might send to him, rather than to reply by some new opinion of my own. But as I do not come upon one, in the meantime I reply to each of you with my thoughts upon the matter, on condition that if you discover anything better and more probable in your reading, conversation, or by your meditations, you will not omit to share it with me in turn. You ask, then, why it seemed good to the Fathers to decree that an annual commemoration, with veneration equal to our martyrs, should be solemnly made in the Church, by a certain peculiar privilege, to the Maccabees alone out of all the ancient saints? If I should say that having made proof of the same courage as those, they were worthy now of the same honours, that would, perhaps, answer the question why they were included, but not why they alone were; while it is quite evident that there were others amongst the ancients who suffered with equal zeal for righteousness, but yet have not attained to be reverenced with equal solemnities. If I reply that the latter have not received the same honours as our martyrs because, although their valour deserved it, the time when they lived deprived them of it, why was not the same consideration applied also to the Maccabees, if, indeed, they, too, on account of the era when they lived, did not at once enter into the light of Heaven, but descended into the darkness of Hades? For the Firstbegotten from the dead, He who opened to believers the kingdom of Heaven, the Lamb of the tribe of Judah, who opens and no more shuts, at Whose entrance with complete authority it was sung by the heavenly powers: Lift up your heads, O ye gates, avid be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of

Glory shall come in (Ps. xxiv. 7),—He had not yet appeared. If on that account it appears unsuitable to commemorate with joy the passing away of those which was not a passage of glory and of joy, why was there an exception made for the Maccabees? Or if they obtained favour on account of the courage which they displayed, why was not the same favour extended to those others? Or ought it to be said, in order to explain this difference, that if the martyrs of the ancient law, as well as those of the new law, have suffered for the same cause of religion, yet they did not suffer in the same condition with those who have attained to the glory of martyrdom? It is agreed that all the martyrs, whether of the Old or the New Testament, equally suffered for the sake of religion; but there is a distinction, because the one class suffered because they held it, the other because they censured those who held it not; the one because they would not desert it, the other because they declared that those would perish who deserted it, and to sum up in a word, that in which the two differ, perseverance in the faith has done in our martyrs that which zeal for the faith has done in those of the ancient law. The Maccabees are alone among the ancient martyrs, because they possessed not only the same cause as the new martyrdom, but also, as I have said, the form of it; and rightly, therefore, they have attained the same glory and fame as the new martyrs of the Church. For like our martyrs, they were urged to pour libations to false gods, to renounce the law of their fathers, and even to transgress the commandments of God, and like them they resisted and died.

2. Not so did Isaiah or Zecharias, or even that great prophet, John the Baptist, die; of whom the first is said to have been sawn asunder, the second slain between the temple and the altar (S. Matt. xxiii. 25), and the third beheaded in prison. If you ask by whom? It was by the wicked and irreligious. For what cause? For justice and religion. In what manner? For confessing and openly upholding these. They openly upheld the truth before those who hated it, and thus drew upon themselves the hatred which caused their death. That which the unrighteous and wicked persecuted was not so much religion in itself as those who brought it before them, nor was their object to attack the righteousness of others, but to remain undisturbed in their own unrighteousness. It is one thing to seize upon the good things of another, and another to defend one’s own goods; to persecute the truth, and not to be willing to follow it one’s self; to grudge at believers, and to be angry at their reproofs; to stop the mouth of those who confess their faith, and not to be able to bear patiently the taunts of those who contradict. Thus Herod sent and seized John. Wherefore! Because he preached Christ, or because he was a good and just man? On the contrary, he reverenced

him the more on this account, and having heard him, did many things. But it was because John reproached Herod because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; on that account he was bound and beheaded; no doubt he suffered for the truth, but because he urged its interests with zeal, not because he was urged to deny it. This is why the suffering of so great a martyr is observed with less solemnity than those even of far less famous men.

3. It is certain that if the Maccabees had suffered in such a matter, and for such a reason as S. John, there would not have been any mention of them at all. But a confession of the truth, not unlike that of the Christian martyrs, made them like those; and rightly, therefore, a similar veneration follows. Let it not be objected that they did not, like our martyrs, suffer for Christ expressly by name; because it does not affect his status as a martyr whether a person suffers under the Law, on behalf of the observances of the Law, or under grace for the commandments of the Gospel. For it is recognized that each of these equally suffers for the truth, and, therefore, for Christ, who said: I am the Truth (S. John xiv. 6). Therefore the Maccabees are more deserving of the honours that have been conferred upon them for the kind of their martyrdom than for the valour displayed in it, since we do not see that the Church has decreed such honour to the righteous of a former time, although they have displayed equal courage on behalf of righteousness, for the time in which they lived. I suppose that it was thought unfit to appoint a day of festival for a death, however laudable, before the Death of Christ, especially since before that saving Passion those who died, instead of entering into joy and glory endured the darkness of the prison-house. The Church then, as I said above, considered that an exception should be made in favour of the Maccabees, since the nature of their martyrdom conferred upon them what the time of their suffering denied to others.

4. Nor them only, but those also who preceded in their death, the Death of Him who was the Life manifest in the flesh, either dying during His life, as Simeon and John the Baptist, or for Him, as the Innocents, we venerate with solemn rites, although they, too, descended into Hades; but for another reason. Thus, in the case of the Innocents, it would be unjust to deprive innocence dying on behalf of righteousness of fame even in the present. John also, knowing that from his day the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, therefore proclaimed, Do penitence, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (S. Matt. iii. 2, Vulg.); and, seeing that the Life would immediately follow him, endured death with joy. He, before his death, was careful to inquire from the Lord Himself respecting this, and had the happiness to be informed of it. For when he sent his disciples to ask

of Jesus Art Thou He that should come, or are we to look for another? he received for answer, after the enumeration of very many miracles, And blessed is he who shall not be offended in me (S. Matt. xi. 3-6). In which answer the Lord intimated that He was about to die, and by such a death as might be to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. At this word the friend of the Bridegroom went onward rejoicing and with a willing mind, because he could not doubt that the Bridegroom also would speedily come. Therefore he who so joyfully could die merited also to be held in joyful remembrance. And that old man, too, as full of virtues as of days, who when death was already so near said, holding in his arms Him who was the Life, Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation (S. Luke ii. 29, 30), as if he had said, I go down without fear into Hades, because I feel that my redemption is so nigh; he, too, who died with such fearless joy and such joyful security rightly deserves to be commemorated with joy in the Church.

5. But on what principle shall a death be accounted joyful which is not accompanied by the joys of heaven? or from whence should a dying person derive joy who was sure that he was going down into the darkness of the prison-house, and yet did not bear with him any certitude, how soon the consolation of a deliverer thence should come to him? Thus it was that when one of the saints heard Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live, he turned himself to the wall and wept bitterly, and so asked and obtained some deferring of hateful death. Thus also he lamented miserably, saying, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the half of my days (Is. xxxviii. 10); and a little after added, I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world (Is. xxxviii. 11). Hence also another says: Who shall grant me that Thou wouldest protect me in the grave, that Thou wouldest keep me secret until Thy wrath be passed; that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me? (Job xiv. 13). Israel also said to his sons, Ye will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave (Gen. xlii. 38). What appearance is there in these deaths, of solemn joy, of rejoicing and festival?

6. But our martyrs desire to be unclothed and be with Christ, knowing well that where the Body is there without delay will the eagles be gathered together. There will the righteous rejoice in the sight of God, and be in joy and felicity. There, there, O most blessed Jesus, shall every saint who is delivered from this wicked world be filled speedily with the joy of Thy countenance. There in the habitations of the just resounds for ever one song of joy and salvation: Our soul is delivered as a bird out of the net of the fowler: the net is broken and we are

delivered (Ps. cxxiv. 7). How could those sing this song of gladness who in Hades sat in darkness and the shadow of death, while as yet there was no Redeemer for them, no Saviour; while the Sun rising from on high, Christ the first fruits of them that slept, had not yet visited us? Rightly, then, does the Church, who has learnt to rejoice with them that rejoice and to weep with them that weep, distinguish, because of the time at which they lived, between those whom she judges equal in valour: and does not think the descent into Hades proper to be followed with equal honour as is the passage into life.

7. Therefore, though the motive makes martyrdom, yet the time and the nature of it determine the difference between martyrdoms. Thus the time in which they lived separates the Maccabees from the martyrs of the new law and joins them with those of the old; but the nature of their martyrdom associates them with the new and divides them from the old. From these causes come the differences of observance with which they are kept in memory in the Church. But that which is common to the whole company of the Saints before God is what the holy prophet declares: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Ps. cxvi. 15). And why he calls it precious he explains to us: When He has given sleep to His beloved, behold, children, the heritage of the Lord; His reward, the fruit of the womb (Ps. cxxvii. 3). Nor must we think that martyrs alone are beloved, since we remember that it was said of Lazarus, Our friend Lazarus sleeps (S. John xi. 11), and elsewhere, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Apoc. xiv. 13). Not those alone who die for the Lord, like the martyrs, but without doubt those also who die in the Lord as confessors are blessed. There are two things, as it seems to me, which make death precious, the life which precedes it and the cause for which it is endured; but more the cause than the life. But when both the cause and the life concur that is the most precious of all.

LETTER XLV (circa A.D. 1120)

To a Youth Named Fulk, Who Afterwards Was Archdeacon of Langres

He gravely warns Fulk, a Canon Regular, whom an uncle had by persuasions and promises drawn back to the world, to obey God and be faithful to Him rather than to his uncle.

To the honourable young man Fulk, Brother Bernard, a sinner, wishes such joy in youth as in old age he will not regret.

1. I do not wonder at your surprise; I should wonder if you were not suprised [sic] that I should write to you, a countryman to a citizen, a monk to a scholastic, there being no apparent or pressing reason for so doing. But if you recall what is written—I am debtor both to the wise and to the unwise (Rom. i. 14), and that Charity seeketh not her own (1 Cor. xiii. 5)—perhaps you will understand that what it orders is not mere presumption. For it is Charity which compels me to reprove you; to condole with you, though you do not grieve; to pity you, though you do not think yourself pitiable. Nor shall it be unserviceable to you to hear patiently why you are compassionated. In feeling your pain you may get rid of its cause, and knowing your misery begin to cease to be miserable. O, Charity, good mother who both nourishest the weak, employest the vigorous, and blamest the restless, using various expedients with various people, as loving all her sons! She blames with gentleness, and with simplicity praises. It is she who is the mother of men and angels, and makes the peace not only of earth but of heaven. It is she who, rendering God favourable to man, has reconciled man to God; she, my Fulk, makes those brethren, with whom you once shared pleasant bread, to dwell in one manner of life in a house (Ps. lxviii. 6). Such and so honourable a parent complains of being injured, of being wounded by you.

2. But in what have I injured, you reply, or wounded her? In this, without doubt, that you whom she had taken in her maternal bosom and nourished with her milk, have untimely withdrawn yourself, and having known the sweetness of the milk which can train you up for salvation, have rejected and disdained it so

quickly and carelessly. O, most foolish boy! boy more in understanding than in age! who has fascinated you to depart so quickly from a course so well begun? My uncle, you will say. So Adam once threw the blame of sin upon his wife, and his wife upon the serpent, to excuse themselves; yet each received the well-deserved sentence of their own fault. I am unwilling to accuse the dean; I am unwilling that you should excuse yourself by this means, for you are inexcusable. His fault does not excuse yours. But what did he do? Did he use violence? Did he take you by force? Nay, he begged, not insisted; attracted you by flatteries, not dragged you by violence. Who forced you to yield to his flatteries? He had not yet given up what was his own. What wonder that he should reclaim you, who wast his! If he demands a lamb from the flock, a calf from the herd, and no one disputes his right, who can wonder that having lost you, who are of more value in his sight than many lambs or calves, he should reclaim you? Probably he does not aim at that degree of perfection of which it is said, If any one has taken away thy goods, seek them not again (S. Luke vi. 30). But you, who had already rejected the world, what had you to do with following a man of the world? The timid sheep flies when the wolf approaches; the gentle dove when she sees the hawk; the mouse, though hungry, dares not leave his hole when the cat is prowling around; and yet you, when thou sawest a thief thou consentedst with him (Ps. l. 18). For what else than a thief shall I call him who has not hesitated to steal that most precious pearl of Christ, your soul?

3. I should wish, if it were possible, to pass over his fault, lest the truth should obtain for me only hatred and no result. But I am not able, I confess, to pass a man untouched, who up to this very day is found to have resisted the Holy Spirit with all his power. For he who does not hinder evil when he can, even although the evil purpose may be frustrated, is not clear of that purpose. Assuredly he tried to damp my fervour when it was new, but, thanks to God, he did not succeed. Another nephew of his, Guarike, your kinsman, he much opposed, but what harm did he do? On the contrary, he was of service. For the old man at length unwillingly desisted from persecution, and as the youth, his nephew, remained unsubdued, he was the more meritorious for his temptation. But, alas! how was he able to overcome you, who was not able to overcome him? Was he stronger or more prudent than you? Assuredly those who knew both before preferred Fulk to Guarike. But the event of the combat showed that men’s judgment had erred.

4. But what shall I say concerning the malice of an uncle who withdraws his own nephews from the Christian warfare to drag them with himself to perdition?

Is it thus he is accustomed to benefit his friends? Those whom Christ calls to abide with Him for ever this uncle calls back to burn with him for evermore. I wonder if Christ is not reproving him when he says, How often would I have gathered thy nephews as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings and thou wouldest not? Behold thy house is left unto thee desolate (S. Matt. xxiii. 37). Christ says, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven (S. Matt. xix. 14). This uncle says, Suffer my nephews to burn with me. Christ says, They are Mine; they ought to serve Me. But their uncle says, They ought to perish with me. Christ says, They are mine, I have redeemed them. But I, says the uncle, have brought them up. You, indeed, says Christ, have fed them, but with My bread, not thine; while I have redeemed them not with thy blood, but Mine own. Thus the uncle, according to the flesh, struggles against the Father of spirits for his nephews, whom he disinherits of heavenly possessions while he desires to load them with earthly. Yet Christ, not considering it robbery to draw to Himself those whom He has made and redeemed with His own blood, has done when they came to Him, what He had before promised, Him who cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out (S. John vi. 37). He opened gladly to Fulk, the first who knocked, and made him glad also. What more? he put off the old man and put on the new, and showed forth in his character and life the canonical function which had existed in name alone. The report of it flies abroad, to Christ, a sweet savour; and the novelty of the thing diffused on all sides brought it to the ears of his uncle.

5. What then did the carnal guardian, who lost the carnal solace of the flesh which he had brought up and loved after a carnal fashion? Although to others the event was a savour of life unto life (2 Cor. ii. 16), not so to him. Wherefore? Because the carnal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him (1 Cor. ii. 14). For if he had the spirit of Christ he would not so greatly lament on account of the flesh that which he rejoiced over on account of the spirit. But because he relishes earthly things, not those which are above, he is sad and troubled, and reflects thus within himself: What do I hear? Woe is me! from what hope have I fallen! Ought he to do anything without my advice and permission? What right, what law, what justice, what reason is it, that him, whom I have nourished up from infancy, another person should have the good of when grown up? Now that my head is white, alas! I shall spend the remainder of my life in grief, because the staff of my old age has deserted me. Woe is me! if this night my soul is required of me, whose shall those things be which I have prepared? My storehouses are full, disgorging this one into that,

my sheep fruitful, abounding in their goings forth; my oxen fat, and for whom shall these remain? My lands, my meadows, my houses, my vases of gold and of silver, for whom have they been amassed? Certain of the richer and more profitable honours of my Church I had acquired for myself; the rest, although I could not have them, I hoped that Fulk should. What then shall I do? Because of him shall I lose so much? For whatever I possess, without him, I reckon as lost. Rather than that I will both retain them, and recall him if I can. What is done cannot be undone; what is heard cannot be concealed. Fulk is a Canon Regular, and if he returns to the world will be remarked and disgraced. But it is better to hear that about him than to live without him. Let integrity yield to convenience, shame to necessity. I prefer not to spare the ingenuousness of a youth, rather than to undergo miserable melancholy.

6. Adopting then this counsel of the flesh, forgetful of reason and law, as it were a lion prepared for prey; and as a lioness robbed of her whelp, raging and roaring, not respecting holy things, he burst into the dwelling of the saints, in which Christ had hidden his young soldier from the strife of tongues, who was one day to be adjoined to the company of Angels. He demands that his nephew be restored to him; he loudly complains that by him he had been wrongly deserted; while Christ resists, saying, Unhappy man, what are you doing? Why do you rob? Why persecute Me? Is it not enough that you have taken away your own soul from Me, and the souls of many others by your example, but you must tear him also from My hand with impious daring? Do you not fear the coming judgment, or do you despise My terrors? Upon whom do you wage war? Upon the terrible One, who takes away the spirit of princes (Ps. lxxvi. 12). Madman, return to thyself. Remember thy last end and sin not, call to mind with salutary fear what you are. And thou, O youth, He says, if thou dost assent and agree to his wishes thou shaft die the death. Remember that Lot’s wife was, indeed, delivered from Sodom because she believed God, but was transformed in the way because she looked back (Gen. xix. 26). Learn in the Gospel that he who has once put his hand to the plough to him it is not permitted to look back (Luke ix. 62). Your uncle, who has already lost his own soul, seeks yours. The words of his mouth are iniquity and guile. Do not learn, my son, to do evil (Ps. xxxvi. 4). Do not turn aside to vanities and falsehoods (Ps. xl. 4). Behold in the way in which you walk he hides snares—he has stretched nets. His discourses are smooth as butter, and yet they are sharp spears (Ps. lv. 21). See, my son, that you are not taken with lying lips and a deceitful tongue. Let divine fear transfix your flesh, that the desire of the flesh may not deceive you. It flatters, but under its

tongue is suffering and sorrow; it weeps, but betrays; it betrays to catch the poor when it has attracted him (Ps. x. 9). Beware, I say, My son, that you do not confer with flesh and blood (Gal. i. 16), for My sword shall devour flesh (Deut. xxxii. 42). Despise entreaties and promises. He promises great things, but I greater; he offers more, but I most of all. Will you throw away heavenly things for earthly, eternal for temporal? Otherwise it behoves you to dissolve the vows which your lips have pronounced. He is rightly required to dissolve who was not forced to vow, for, although I did not repulse you when you knocked, I did not oblige you to enter. You cannot, therefore, put aside what you promised of your own accord. Behold each of you I warn, and to each give salutary counsel. Do not you, He says to the uncle, draw back a regular to the world, for in so doing you make him to apostatize. Do not you, a regular, follow the secular life, for in so doing you persecute Me. If you seduce a soul for which I died you make yourself an enemy of My cross. He who does not gather with Me scatters (S. Matt. xii. 30). How much more he who scatters what has been gathered? And you, if you consent to him you dissent from Me, for he who is not with Me is against Me (ibid.). How much more is he who was with Me against Me if he deserts? You, if you lead astray a boy who has come to Me, shall be adjudged a seducer and profaner, but you, if you destroy what you had built, shall make yourself a deceiver. Both of you must stand at My tribunal and by Me be judged —the one for his prevarication, the other for the leading astray; and if the one shall die in his iniquity his blood shall be required at the hand of his seducer (Ezek. iii. 18). These and similar warnings Thou, O Christ, didst invisibly thunder to each, I appeal to their conscience as witness. Thou didst knock at the doors of the mind of each with kindly terrors. Who would not fear them and recover wisdom in fearing, unless it were one like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear and refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely (Ps. lviii. 4, 5), who either does not hear, or pretends that he hears not?

7. But how far do I draw out this letter, already too long, before speaking of a thing that is worthy only of silence? In what circuitous paths do I approach the truth, fearing to draw the veil from shame! I say with shame. That what is known to many I cannot conceal if I would. But why with shame? Why should I be ashamed to write what it did not shame them to do? If they are ashamed to hear what they shamelessly did, let them not be ashamed to amend what they were reluctant to hear. Alas! neither fear nor reason could keep back the one from seduction, nor shame or his profession the other from prevarication. What more? A deceitful tongue fits hasty words; it conceiveth sorrow, and brings forth

iniquity. Your Church received its scholar, whom it had better have been without. So formerly Lyons recovered, without credit, by the zeal and pertinacity of its dean, its canon whom it had well lost, the nephew of the same dean. Just as the one snatched Fulk from S. Augustine, so the other Othbert from S. Benedict. How much more beautiful that a religious youth should draw to himself a worldly old man, and so each should be victorious, than that the worldly should draw back to himself the religious, in which each is vanquished! Oh, unhappy old man! Oh, cruel uncle! who, already decrepit and soon about to die, before dying have slain the soul of your nephew, whom you have deprived of the inheritance of Christ in order that you might have an heir of your sins. But he who is evil to himself, to whom is he good? He preferred to have a successor in his riches rather than an intercessor for his iniquities.

8. But what have I to do with Deans, who are our instructors, and have acquired authority in the Churches. They hold the key of knowledge, and take the highest seats in the synagogues. They judge their subjects at their will, they recall fugitives, and when they are recalled scatter them again as they choose. What have I to do with that? I confess that because of you, my Fulk, I have exceeded somewhat the degree proper to my humility in speaking of these, since I wished to be indulgent to your fault, and make your shame little in comparison. I pass over these that they may not have ground to rail, not at the blame, but at him who blames, for they would rather find fault with my presumption than occupy themselves with their own correction. At all events it is not a prince of the Church that I have undertaken to reprimand, but a young student, gentle and obedient. Unless, perhaps, you show yourself to be a child in sense, not in malice, and object to my boldness, saying, What has he to do with me? What do the faults which I commit matter to him? Am I a monk? And to this I confess I have nothing to answer, except that I counted, in addressing myself to you, on the sweetness of character with which you are endowed by nature, and that I was actuated by the love of God, to which I appealed in the first words of my letter. It was in zeal for Him that, pitying your error and your unhappiness, I was moved to interfere beyond my custom in order to save you, although you were not mine. Your serious fall and miserable case has moved me thus to presume. For whom of your contemporaries have you seen me reprimand? To whom have I ever addressed even the briefest letter? Not that I regarded them as saints, nor had nothing to blame in them.

9. Why, then, you will say, do you blame me especially, when in others you see what you might, perhaps, more justly find fault with? To which I reply:

Because of the excessiveness of your error, of the enormity of your fault, for although many others live loosely, without rule and discipline, yet they have not yet professed obedience to these. They are sinners indeed, but not apostates. But you, however honourably and quietly you may live, although you may conduct yourself chastely, soberly, and religiously, yet your piety is not acceptable to God, because it is rendered valueless by the violation of your vow. Therefore, beloved, do not compare yourself with your contemporaries, from whom the profession which you have made separates you, nor flatter yourself so much because of your self-restraint in comparison with men of the world, since the Lord says to you I would thou wert hot or cold (Apoc. iii. 15, 16). Here is plainly shown that you please God less, being lukewarm, than if you were even such as those are, entirely cold towards Him. For them God waits patiently until their cold shall pass into heat, but you He sees with displeasure to have fallen away to lukewarmness, after having been fervent in warmth. And because I have found thee lukewarm, He says, I will vomit thee from My mouth (ibid.) and deservedly, because you have returned to your vomit and rejected His grace!

10. Alas, how have you so soon grown weary of the Saviour, of whom it is written, Honey and milk are under His tongue (Cantic. iv. 11). I wonder that nourishment so sweet should be distasteful to you, if you have tasted how sweet the Lord is. Or perhaps you have not yet tasted and do not know how sweet is Christ, so that you do not desire what you have not tried; or if you have, then your taste is surely depraved. He is the Wisdom of God who says: He who eats of Me shall always hunger, and he who drinks of Me shall never cease to desire to drink again (Ecclus. xxiv. 29). But how can he hunger or thirst for Christ who is full of the husks of wine? You cannot drink of the cup of Christ and of the cup of demons (1 Cor. x. 21). The cup of demons is pride, detraction, envy, debauch, and drunkenness, with which when your mind and body are saturated, Christ will find in you no place. Do not wonder at what I say. In the house of your uncle you are not able you are not able to drink deep of the fulness of the house of God. Why, you say? Because it is a house of [carnal] delights. Now, as fire and water cannot be together, so the delights of the spirit and those of the flesh are incompatible. Christ will not deign to pour His wine, which is more sweet than honey and the honeycomb, into the soul of him whom He finds among his cups breathing forth the fumes of wine. Where there is delicate variety of food, where the richness and splendour of the service of the table delights equally the eyes and the stomach, the food of heaven is wanting to the soul. Rejoice, O, young man, in thy youth! but then, when temporal joy departs in time to come,

everlasting sorrow will possess thee! May God preserve you, His child, from this: May He rather destroy the deceiving and perfidious lips of those who give you such advice, who say to you every day, Good, good! and who seek your soul! They are those with whom you are dwelling, and who corrupt the good manners of a young man by their evil communications (colloquia: otherwise counsels, consilia).

11. But now how long before you will come out from their midst? What do you in the town who had chosen the cloister, or what have you to do with the world which you had renounced? The lines have fallen to you in pleasant places, and do you sigh after earthly riches? If you wish to have both together, it will be said to you soon, Remember, my son, that you have received your good things when you were in life (S. Luke xvi. 25). You have received, He said, not you have seized; so that you may not shelter yourself under the vain excuse, that you are content with what is your own, and do not seize what belongs to another. And, after all, what are those goods which you call yours? The benefices of the Church? Certainly; you do well in rising to keep vigil, in going to Mass, in assisting at the day and night offices, so you do not take the praebend of the Church without return. It is just that he who serves the Altar should live from the Altar. It is granted therefore to you that if you serve well at the Altar you should live from it, but not that you should live in luxury and splendour at its expense, that you should take its revenues to provide yourself with gilded reins, ornamented saddles, silver spurs, furs of all kinds, and purple ornaments to cover your hands and adorn your neck. Whatsoever you take from the Altar, in short, beyond necessary food and simple dress, is not yours, and it is rapine and even sacrilege. The Wise man prayed for necessary sustenance, not for things superfluous (Prov. xxx. 8). The Apostle says, having food and clothing (1 Tim. vi. 8), not food and magnificent dress. And a certain other saint says, if the Lord shall give me bread to eat and raiment to cover me (Gen. xxviii. 20). Take notice, to cover me. So then let us, too, be content with raiment to cover us, not with luxurious and costly clothing which is worn to please women, and wakes the wearers like them. But you say: Those with whom I associate do this; if I do not do as others, I shall be remarked for singularity. Wherefore I say, go forth from the midst of them; that you may not either live with singularity in the eyes of the town or perish by the example of others.

12. What do you do in the town at all, O effeminate soldier? Your fellow soldiers whom you have deserted by flight are fighting and overcoming; they knock and they enter in, they seize heaven and reign while you scour the streets

and squares, sitting upon your ambling courser, and clad in purple and fine linen. These are the ornaments of peace, not the weapons of war. Or do you say, Peace, and there is no peace (Ezekiel xiii. 10). The purple tunic does not put to flight lust, and pride, and avarice, nor does it protect against other fiery darts of the enemy. Lastly, it does not ward off from you the fever which you more fear, nor secure you from death. Where are your warlike weapons, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the breast-plate of patience? Why do you tremble? There are more with us than with our enemies. Take your arms, recover your strength while yet the combat lasts; Angels are spectators and helpers, the Lord himself is your aid and your support, who will teach your hands to war and your fingers to fight (Psalm cxliv. 1). Let us come to the help of our brothers, lest if they fight without us they vanquish without us, and without us enter into heaven; lest, last of all, when the door has been shut it be replied from within to us knocking too late, Verily I say unto you, I know you not (S. Matthew xxv. 12). Make yourself known then and seen beforehand, lest you be unknown for glory and known only for punishment. If Christ recognizes you in the strife, He will recognize you in heaven, and as He has promised, will manifest Himself to you (S. John xiv. 21). If only you by repenting and returning will show yourself such as to be able to say with confidence Then shall I know even as also I am known (1 Corinthians xiii. 12). In the meantime I have by these admonitions knocked sufficiently at the heart of a young man modest and docile; and nothing remains for me now than to knock by my prayers also, for him, at the door of the Divine Mercy, that the Lord may finish my work if my remonstrances have found his heart ever so little softened, so that I may speedily rejoice over him with great joy.

LETTER XLVI (circa A.D. 1125)

To Guigues, the Prior, And to the Other Monks of the Grand Chartreuse

He discourses much and piously of the law of true and sincere charity, of its signs, its degrees, its effects, and of its perfection which is reserved for Heaven (Patria).

Brother Bernard, of Clairvaux, wishes health eternal to the most reverend among fathers, and to the dearest among friends, Guigues, Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, and to the holy Monks who are with him.

1. I have received the letter of your Holiness as joyfully as I had long and eagerly desired it. I have read it, and the letters which I pronounced with my mouth, I felt, as it were, sparks of fire in my heart, which warmed my heart within me; as coming from that fire which the Lord has sent upon the earth (S. Luke xii. 49). How great a fire must glow in those meditations from which such sparks fly forth! This, your inspired and inspiring salutation, was to me, I confess, not as if coming from man, but like words descending surely from Him who sent the salutation to Jacob. It is not for me, in fact, a simple salutation given in passing, according to the custom and usage of men, but it is plainly from the very bowels of charity, as I feel, that this benediction, so sweet and so unhoped for, has come forth. I pray God to bless you, who have had the goodness to prevent me with benedictions of such sweetness, that confidence is granted to me, your humble servant, to reply, since you have first written; for though I had meditated writing, I had hitherto not presumed to do so. For I feared to trouble, by my eager scribbling, the holy quiet which you have in the Lord, and the religious silence which isolates you from the world. I feared, also, to interrupt, even for a moment, those mysterious whispers from God, and to pour my words into ears always occupied with the secret praises of heaven. I feared to become as one who would trouble even Moses on the mountain, Elias in the desert, or Samuel watching in the temple, if I had tried to turn away ever so little, minds occupied with divine communion. Samuel cries out: Speak, Lord,

for Thy servant heareth (1 Sam. iii. 10). And should I presume to make myself heard? I feared, I say, lest presenting myself out of season before you, as it were to David engaged in flight, or abiding in solitude, you might not wish to listen, and might say, “Excuse me, I cannot hear thee now; I prefer rather to give ear to words sweeter than thine.” I will hear what the Lord God will say unto me; for He shall speak peace unto His people, and to His saints, and to those who are converted at heart (Ps. lxxxiv. 9 Vulg.). Or, at least, this: Depart from me, ye evil-disposed, and I will study the commandments of my God (Ps. cxix. 115). For could I be so rash as to dare to arouse the much-loved spouse sweetly resting in the arms of her bridegroom as long as she will? Should I not hear from her on the instant: Do not be troublesome to me; I am for My Beloved, and My Beloved is for Me; He feedeth among the lilies (Cant. ii. 16).

2. But what I do not dare to do, charity dares, and with all confidence knocks at the door of a friend, thinking that she ought by no means to suffer repulse, who knows herself to be the mother of friendships; nor does she fear to interrupt for an instant your rest, though so pleasant, to speak to you of her own task. She, when she will, causes you to withdraw from being alone with God; she, also, when she willed, made you attentive to me; so that you did not regard it as unworthy of you, not merely to benignantly endure my speaking, but more, to urge me to break the silence. I esteem the kindness, I admire the worthiness, I praise and venerate the pure rejoicing with which you glory in the Lord, for the advances in virtue which, as you suppose, I have made. I am proud of so great a testimony, and esteem myself happy in a friendship so grateful to me as that of the servants of God towards me. This is now my glory, this is my joy and the rejoicing of my heart, that not in vain I have lifted up mine eyes unto the mountains whence there has now come to me help of no small value. These mountains have already distilled sweetness for me; and I continue to hope that they will do so until our valleys shall abound with fruit. That day shall be always for me a day of festival and perpetual memorial, in which I had the honour to see and to receive that worthy man, by whom it has come about that I should be received into your hearts. And, indeed, you had received me even before, if I may judge by your letter; but now with a more close and intimate friendship, since, as I find, he brought back to you too favourable reports concerning me which, doubtless, he believed, though without sufficient cause. For, as a faithful and pious man, God forbid that he should speak otherwise than he believed. And truly I experience in myself what the Saviour says: He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward (S.

Matt. x. 41). I have said, the reward of a righteous man, because I am regarded as righteous, only through receiving one who is righteous. If he has reported of me something more than that, he has spoken not so much according to the truth of the case as according to the simplicity and goodness of his heart. You have heard, you have believed, you have rejoiced, and have written, thereby giving me no little joy, not only because I have been honoured with a degree of praise and a high place in the estimation of your Holiness, but also because all the sincerity of your souls has made itself known to me in no small measure. In few words, you have shown to me with what spirit you are animated.

3. I rejoice, therefore, and congratulate you on your sincerity and goodness as I congratulate myself on the edification which you have afforded to me. That is, indeed, true and sincere charity, and must be considered to proceed from a heart altogether pure and a good conscience and faith unfeigned, with which we love our neighbour as ourself. For he who loves only the good that himself has done, or, at least, loves it more than that of others, does not love good for its own sake, but on account of himself, and he who is such cannot do as the prophet says: Give thanks unto the Lord, because He is good (Ps. cxviii. 1). He gives thanks, indeed, perhaps, because the Lord is good to him, not because He is good in Himself. Wherefore let him understand that this reproach from the same prophet is directed against him: They will praise thee when thou doest well unto thy own soul (Ps. xlix. 18). One man praises the Lord because He is mighty; another because He is good unto him; and, again, another simply because He is good. The first is a slave, and fears for himself; the second mercenary, and desires somewhat for himself; but the third is a son, and gives praise to his Father. Therefore both he who fears and he who desires are each working for his own advantage; charity which is in him alone who is a son, seeketh not her own. Wherefore I think that it was of charity that was spoken, The law of the Lord is pure, converting the soul (Ps. xix. 7), because it is that alone which can turn away the mind from the love of itself and of the world and direct it towards God. Neither fear nor selfish love converts the soul. They change sometimes the outward appearance or the actions, but never affect the heart. No doubt even the slave does sometimes the work of God, but because he does it not of his own free will he remains still in his hardness. The mercenary person does it also, but not out of kindness, only as drawn by his own particular advantage. Where there is distinction of persons, there are personal interests, and where there are personal interests there is a limit of willingness, and there, without doubt, a rusting meanness. Let the very fear by which he is constrained be a law to the

slave, let the greedy desire, with which the mercenary is bound, be a law to him, since it is by it that he is drawn away and enticed. But of these neither is without fault or is able to convert the soul. But charity does convert souls when it fills them with disinterested zeal.

4. Now, I should say that this charity is faultless in him who has become accustomed to retain nothing for himself out of that which is his own. He who keeps nothing for himself gives to God quite certainly all that he has, and that which belongs to God cannot be unclean. Thus that pure law of the Lord is no other than charity, which seeks not what is advantageous to herself, but that which profits others. But law is said to be of the Lord, either because He Himself lives by it or because no one possesses it except by His gift. Nor let it seem absurd what I have said, that even God lives by law, since I declared that this law was no other than charity. For what but charity preserves in the supreme and blessed Trinity, that lofty and unspeakable unity which it has? It is law, then, and charity the law of the Lord, which maintains in a wonderful manner the Trinity in Unity and binds It in the bond of peace. Yet let no one think that I here take charity for a quality or a certain accident in God, or otherwise to say that in God (which God forbid) there is something which is not God; but I say that it is the very substance of God. I say nothing new or unheard of, for S. John says God is love (1 S. John iv. 16).

It is then right to say that charity is God, and at the same time the gift of God. Therefore Charity gives charity, the substantial gives the accidental. Where the word signifies the Giver it is a name of the substance, and where the thing given, it is a name of the accident. This is the eternal law, Creator and Ruler of the Universe. Since all things have been made through it in weight and measure and number, and nothing is left without law, not even He who is the Law of all things, yet He is Himself none other than the law which rules Him, a law untreated as He.

5. But the slave and the mercenary have a law, not from God, but which they have made for themselves—the one by not loving God, the other by loving something else more than Him. They have, I say, a law which is their own and not of the Lord, to which, nevertheless, their own is subjected; nor are they able to withdraw themselves from the unchangeable order of the divine law, though each should make a law for himself. I would say, then, that a person makes a law for himself when he prefers his own will to the common and eternal law, perversely wishing to imitate his Creator; so that as He is a law unto Himself, and is under no authority but His Own, so the man also will be his own master,

will make his own will a law to himself. Alas! what a heavy and insupportable yoke upon all the sons of Adam, which weighs upon and bows down our necks, so that our life is drawn near to the grave. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Rom. vii. 24) with which I am so weighed down that unless the Lord had helped me, my soul would almost have dwelt in the grave (Ps. xciv. 17). With this load was he burdened who groaned, saying: Why hast Thou set me as a mark against Thee, so that I am a burden to myself? (Job vii. 20). Where he says, I am made a burden to myself, he showed that he was a law unto himself, and the law no other than he himself had made it. But when, speaking to God, he commenced by saying, Thou hast set me as a mark against Thee, he showed that he had not escaped from the Divine law. For this is the property of that eternal and just law of God, that he who would not be ruled with gentleness by God, should be ruled as a punishment by his own self; and that all those who have willingly thrown off the gentle yoke and light burden of charity should bear unwillingly the insupportable burden of their own will.

6. Thus the everlasting law does in a wonderful manner, to him who is a fugitive from its power, both make him an adversary and retain him as a subject; for while, on the one hand, he has not escaped from the law of justice, by which he is dealt with according to his merits, on the other he does not remain with God in His light, or peace, or glory. He is subjected to power, and excluded from happiness. O Lord, my God, why dost Thou not take away my sin, and pardon my transgression? (Job vii. 21). So that throwing down the heavy weight of my own will, I may breathe easily under the light burden of charity; that I may not be overborne any longer by servile fear, nor allured by selfish cupidity, but may be impelled by Thy spirit, the spirit of liberty, which is that of Thy children. Who is it, who witnesses to my spirit that I, too, am one of Thy children, since Thy law is mine, and as Thou art, so am I also, in this world? For it is quite certain that those who do this which the Apostle says owe no one anything except to love one another (Rom. xiii. 8) are themselves as God is in this world, nor are they slaves or mercenaries, but sons. Therefore neither are sons without law, unless, perhaps, some one should think the contrary because of this which is written, the law is not made for a righteous man (1 Tim. i. 9). But it ought to be remembered that the law promulgated in fear by a spirit of slavery is one thing, and that given sweetly and gently by the spirit of liberty is another. Those who are sons are not obliged to submit to the first, but they are always under the rule of the second. Do you wish to hear why it is said that law is not made for the righteous? You have not received, he says, the spirit of slavery again in fear. Or

why, nevertheless, they are always under the rule of the law of charity? But ye have received the spirit of the adoption of sons (Rom. viii. 15). Listen, now, in what manner the righteous man confesses that at the same time he is and is not under the law. I became, he says, to those which were under the law as being under the law, although I myself was not under the law: but to those who were without law, I was as being without law, since I was not without the law of God but in the law of Christ (1 Cor. ix. 20, 21). Whence it is not accurately said the righteous have no law, or the righteous are without law, but that the law was not made for the righteous; that is, it is not, as it were, imposed upon unwilling subjects, but given freely to willing hearts by Him to whose sweet inspiration it is due. Wherefore the Lord also beautifully says, Take My yoke upon you (S. Matt. xi. 29). As if He would say, I do not impose it upon you against your will, take it if you are willing; otherwise you will find not rest, but labour, for your souls.

7. The law of charity, then, is good and sweet, it is not only light and sweet to bear, but it renders bearable and light the laws even of slaves and mercenaries. But it does not destroy these, but brings about their fulfilment, as the Lord says, I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil (S. Matt. v. 17). The one it moderates, the other it reduces to order, and each it lightens. Charity will never be without fear, but that fear is good; it will never be without any thought of interest, but that a restrained and moderated one. Charity, therefore, perfects the law of the slave when it inspires a generous devotion, and that of the mercenary when it gives a better direction to interested wishes. So, then, devotion mixed with fear does not annul those last, but purifies them, only it takes away the fear of punishment which servile fear is never exempt from; and this fear is clean and filial, enduring for ever (Ps. xix. 9). For that which is written, perfect love takes away fear (1 S. John iv. 18), is to be understood of the fear of punishment, which is never wanting, as we have said, to slavish fear. It is, in fact, a common mode of speech which consists in putting the cause for the effect. As for cupidity, it is then rightly directed by the charity which is joined with it, since ceasing altogether to desire things which are evil, it begins to prefer those which are better, nor does it desire good things except in order to reach those which are better; which when, by the grace of God, it has fully obtained, the body and all the good things which belong to the body will be loved only for the sake of the soul, the soul for the sake of God, and God alone for Himself.

8. However, as we are in fleshly bodies, and are born of the desire of the flesh, it is of necessity that our desire, or affection, should begin from the flesh; but if

it is rightly directed, advancing step by step under the guidance of grace, it will at length be perfected by the Spirit, because that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual; and it is needful that we should first bear the image of the earthly and afterwards that of the heavenly (1 Cor. xv. 46, 49). First, then, a man loves his own self for self's sake, since he is flesh, and he cannot have any taste except for things in relation with him; but when he sees that he is not able to subsist by himself, that God is, as it were, necessary to him, he begins to inquire and to love God by faith. Thus he loves God in the second place, but because of his own interest, and not for the sake of God Himself. But when, on account of his own necessity, he has begun to worship Him and to approach Him by meditation, by reading, by prayer, by obedience, he comes little by little to know God with a certain familiarity, and in consequence to find Him sweet and kind; and thus having tasted how sweet the Lord is, he passes to the third stage, and thus loves God no longer on account of his own interest, but for the sake of God Himself. Once arrived there, he remains stationary, and I know not if in this life man is truly able to rise to the fourth degree, which is, no longer to love himself except for the sake of God. Those who have made trial of this (if there be any) may assert it to be attainable; to me, I confess, it appears impossible. It will be so without doubt when the good and faithful servant shall have been brought into the joy of his Lord, and inebriated with the fulness of the house of God. For being, as it were, exhilarate, he shall in a wonderful way be forgetful of himself, he shall lose the consciousness of what he is, and being absorbed altogether in God, shall attach himself unto Him with all his powers, shall thenceforth be one spirit with Him.

9. I consider that the prophet referred to this when he said: I will enter into the powers of the Lord: O, Lord, I will make mention of Thy righteousness only (Ps. lxxi. 16). He knew well that when he entered into the spiritual powers of God he would be freed from all the infirmities of the flesh, and would have no longer to think of them, but would be occupied only with the perfections of God. Then, for certain, each of the members of Christ would be able to say of himself, what Paul said of their Head: If we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more (2 Cor. v. 16).There no one knows himself according to the flesh, because flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. xv. 50). Not that the substance of flesh will not be there, but that every fleshly necessity will be away; the love of the flesh is to be absorbed into the love of the spirit, and the weak human passions which exist at present will be absorbed into powers divine. Then the net of charity, which is now drawn

through a great and vast sea, and does not cease to bring together from every kind of fish, at length drawn to the shore, shall retain only the good, rejecting the bad. And while in this life charity fills with all kinds of fishes the vast spaces of its net, suiting itself to all according to the time, making, in a sense, its own, and partaking of the good and evil fortunes of all, it is accustomed not only to rejoice with them that rejoice, but to weep with them that weep. But when it shall have reached the shore [of eternity], casting away as evil fish all that it bore with grief before, it will retain those only which are sources of pleasure and gladness. Then Paul will no longer be weak with the weak, or be scandalized with those who are scandalized, since scandal and weakness will be far away. We ought not to think that he will still let fall tears over those who have not repented here below; and as it is certain that there will no longer be sinners, so there will be no one to repent. Far be it from us to think that he will mourn and deplore those whose portion is everlasting fire with the devil and his angels, when in that City of God which the streams of that river make glad (Ps. xlvi. 4), the gates of which the Lord loves more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Ps. lxxxvii. 2), because in those dwellings, although the joy of victory is sometimes tasted, yet the combat always continues, and sometimes the struggle is for life; but in that dear country there is no place for adversity or sorrow, as in that Psalm we sing: The abiding place of all those who rejoice is in Thee (Ps. lxxxvii. 7, Vulg.), and again: Everlasting joy shall be unto them (Is. lxi. 7). How, then, shall any remembrance be of mercy, where the justice of God shall be alone remembered? There can be no feeling of compassion called into exercise where there shall be no place for misery, or occasion for pity.

10. I am impelled to prolong this already lengthy discourse, dearly beloved and much longed-for brethren, by the very strong desire I have of conversing with you; but there are three things which show me that I ought to come to an end. First, that I fear to be burdensome to you; that I am ashamed to show myself so loquacious; third, that I am pressed with domestic cares. In conclusion, I beg you to have compassion for me, and if you have rejoiced for the good things you have heard of me, sympathize with me also, I pray, in my too real temptations and cares. He who related these things to you has, no doubt, seen some few little things, and has valued these little things as great, while your indulgence has easily believed what it willingly heard. I felicitate you, indeed, on that charity which believes all things (1 Cor. xiii. 7). But I am confounded by the truth which knows all things. I beg you to believe me in what I say of myself rather than another who has only seen me from without. No man knoweth the things that are

in a man save the spirit of man which is in him (1 Cor. ii. 11). I assure you that I do not speak of myself by conjecture, but out of full knowledge, and that I am not such as I am believed and said to be. I fell assured of this, and confess it frankly; that so I may obtain your special prayers, and thus may become such as your letter sets forth, than which there is nothing I desire more.

LETTER XLVII

To the Brother of William, a Monk of Clairvaux

Bernard, after having made a striking commendation of religious poverty, reproaches in him an affection too great for worldly things, to the detriment of the poor and of his own soul, so that he preferred to yield them up only to death, rather than for the love of Christ.

1. Although you are unknown to me by face, and although distant from me in body, yet you are my friend, and this friendship between us makes you to be present and familiar to me. It is not flesh and blood, but the Spirit of God which has prepared for you, though without your knowledge, this friendship, which has united your brother William and me with a lasting bond of spiritual affection, which includes you, too, through him, if you think it worth acceptance. And if you are wise you will not despise the friendship of those whom the Truth declares blessed, and calls kings of heaven; which blessedness we would not envy to you, nor if communicated to you would it be diminished to us, nor would our boundaries be at all narrowed if you should reign over them too. For what cause can there be for envy where the multitude of those who share a blessing takes nothing from the greatness of the share which each enjoys? I wish you to be the friend of the poor, but especially their imitator. The one is the grade of beginner, the other of the perfect, for the friendship of the poor makes us the friend of kings, but the love of poverty makes us kings ourselves. The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of the poor, and one of the marks of royal power is to do good to friends according to our will. Make to yourselves friends, it is said, of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations (S. Luke xvi. 9): You see what a high dignity sacred poverty is, so that not only does it not seek protection for itself, but extends it to those who need. What a power is this, to approach by one’s self to the Throne of God without the intervention of any, whether angels or men, with simple confidence in the Divine favour, thus reaching the summit of existence, the height of all glory!

2. But would that you, without pretence, would consider how you hinder your own attainment of these advantages. Alas! that a vapour which appears but for a moment should block up the entrance to eternal glory, hide from you the clearness of the unbounded and everlasting light, prevent you from recognizing the true nature of things, and deprive you of the highest degree of glory! How long will you prefer to such glory the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven? I mean carnal and worldly glory. For all fresh is grass, and its glory as the flower of the field (Is. xl. 6). If you are wise, if you have a heart to feel and eyes to see, cease to pursue those things which it is misery to attain. Happy is he who does not toil at all after those things, which when possessed are a burden, when loved a defilement, and when lost a torment, Will it not be better to have the honour to renounce them than the vexation to lose them? Or will it be more prudent to yield them up for the love of Christ than to have them taken away by death?—death, which is a robber lying in wait for you, into whose hands you cannot help falling, with all that belongs to you. When he shall do so you cannot foresee, because he will come as a thief in the night. You brought nothing into this world, and it is certain you can carry nothing out (1 Tim. vi. 7). You shall sleep your sleep, and find nothing in your hands. But these things you know well, and it would be superfluous laboriously to teach them to you. Rather I will pray God that you may have the grace to fulfil in practice what it has been given you already to know.

LETTER XLVIII

To Magister Walter de Chaumont.

He exhorts him to flee from the world, advising him to prefer the cause and the interests of his soul to those of parents.

MY DEAR WALTER,

I often grieve my heart about you whenever the most pleasant remembrance of you comes back to me, seeing how you consume in vain occupations the flower of your youth, the sharpness of your intellect, the store of your learning and skill, and also, what is more excellent in a Christian than all of these gifts, the pure and innocent character which distinguishes you; since you use so great endowments to serve not Christ their giver, but things transitory. What if (which God forbid!) a sudden death should seize and shatter at a stroke all those gifts of yours, as it were with the rush of a burning and raging wind, just like the winds whirl about and dry grass or as the leaves of herbs quickly fall. What, then, will you carry with you of all your labour which you have wrought upon the earth? What return will you render unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto you? What gain will you bring unto your creditor for those many talents committed to you? If He shall find your hand empty, who, though a liberal bestower of His gifts, exacts a strict account of their use! “For he that shall come will come and will not tarry, and will require that which is His own with usury.” For He claims all as His own, which seems to ennoble you in your land, with favours full at once of dignity and of danger. Noble parentage, sound health, elegance of person, quick apprehension, useful knowledge, uprightness of life, are glorious things, indeed, but they are His from whom they are. If you use them for yourself “there is One who seeketh and judgeth.”

2. But be it so; suppose that you may for a while call these things yours, and boast in the praise they bring you, and be called of men Rabbi and make for yourself a great name, though only upon the earth; what shall be left to you after death of all these things? Scarcely a remembrance alone—and that, too, only upon earth. For it is written, They have slept their sleep, and all the men whose

hands were mighty have found nothing (Ps. lxxvi. 5). If this be the end of all your labours—allow me to say so—what have you more than a beast of burden? Indeed, it will be said even of your palfrey when he is, dead that he was good. Look to it, then, how you must answer it before that terrible judgment throne if you have received your soul in vain, and such a soul! if you are found to have done nothing more with your immortal and reasonable soul than some beast with his. For the soul of a brute lives no longer than the body which it animates, and at one and the same moment it both ceases to give life and to live. Of what will you deem yourself worthy, who, being made in the image of your Creator, do not guard the dignity of so great a majesty? And being a man, but not understanding your honour, art compared unto the foolish beasts and made like unto them, seeing that forsooth, you labour at nothing of a spiritual or eternal nature, but, like the spirit of a beast which as soon as it is loosed from the body is dissolved with the body, have been content to think of nothing but material and temporal goods, turning a deaf ear to the Gospel precept: Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life (S. John vi. 27). But you know well that it is written that only he ascends into the hill of the Lord who hath not Lift up his mind unto vanity (Ps. xxiv. 3). And not even he except he hath clean hands and a pure heart. I leave you to decide if you dare to claim this of your deeds and thoughts at the present. But if you are not able to do so, judge what is the reward of iniquity, if mere unfruitfulness is enough for damnation. And, indeed, the thorn or thistle will not be safe when the axe shall be seen laid to the root of the fruit tree, nor will He spare the thorn which stings, who threatens even the barren plant. Woe, then; aye! double woe to him of whom it shall be said, I looked that he should bring forth grapes, and he hath brought forth wild grapes (Is. v. 4).

3. But I know how freely and fully you can nourish these thoughts, though I be silent, but yet I know that, constrained by love of your mother, you are not as yet able to abandon what you have long known how to despise. What answer shall I make to you in this matter? That you should leave your mother? That seems inhuman. That you should remain with her? But what a misery for her to be a cause of ruin to her son! That you should fight at once for the world and for Christ? But no man can serve two masters. Your mother’s wish being contrary to your salvation is equally so to her own. Choose, therefore, of these two alternatives which you will; either, that is, to secure the wish of one or the salvation of both. But if you love her much, have the courage to leave her for her sake, lest if you leave Christ to remain with her she also perish on your account.

Else you have ill-served her who bare you if she perish on your account. For how doth she escape destruction who hath ruined him whom she bare? And I have spoken this in order in some way to stoop to assist your somewhat worldly affection. Moreover, it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, although it is impious to despise a mother, yet to despise her for Christ's sake is most pious. For He who said, Honour thy father and mother (S. Matt. xv. 4), Himself also said, He who loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me (S. Matt. x. 37).

LETTER XLIX

To Romanus, Sub-Deacon of the Roman Curia

He urges upon him the proposal of the religious life, recalling the thought of death.

Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, to his dear Romanus, as to his friend.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

How good you are to me in renewing by a letter the sweet recollection of yourself and in excusing my tiresome delay. It is not possible that any forgetfulness of your affection could ever invade the hearts of those who love you; but, I confess, I thought you had almost forgotten yourself until I saw your letter. So now no more delays; fulfil quickly the promise that you have written; and if your pen truly expresses your purpose, let your acts correspond to it. Why do you delay to, give birth to that spirit of salvation which you have so long conceived? Nothing is more certain to mortals than death, nothing more uncertain than the hour of death, since it is to come upon us as a thief, in the night. Woe unto them who are still with child [of that good intention] in that day! If it shall anticipate and prevent this birth of salvation, alas! it will pierce through the house and destroy the holy seed: For when they shall say Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape (1 Thess. v. 3). 1 wish you not to flee from death, but only to fear it. For the just, though he avoids it not, because he knows that it is inevitable, yet does not fear it. Moreover, he awaits it as a rest (Wisdom iv. 7) and receives it in perfect security; for as it is the exit from the present life, so it is the entrance into a better. Death is good if by it thou die to sin, that thou mayest live unto righteousness. It is necessary that this death should go before, in order that the other which follows after may be safe. In this life, so long as it lasts, prepare for yourself that life which lasts for ever. While you live in the flesh, die unto the world, that after the death of the flesh you may begin to live unto God. For what if death rend asunder the coarse envelope of your body so long as from that moment it clothes you with a garment of joy? O, how blessed

are the dead which die in the Lord (Apoc. xiv. 13), for they hear from the Spirit, that “they may rest from their labours.” And not only so, but also from new life comes pleasure, and from eternity safety. Happy, therefore, is the death of the just because of its rest; better because of its new life, best because of its safety (Ps. xxxiv. 21). On the other hand, worst of all is the death of sinners. And hear why worse. It is bad, indeed, through loss of the world; it is worse through separation from the flesh; worst of all through double pain of worm and fire. Up, then, hasten; go forth out of the world, and renounce it entirely; let your soul die the death of the righteous, that your last end also may be like His: Oh, how dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Ps. cxvi. 13). Flee, I pray you, lest you stand in the way of sinners. How canst thou live where thou durst not die?

LETTER L

To Geoffrey, of Lisieux

He grieves at his having abandoned his purpose to enter the religious life and returned to the world. He exhorts him to be wise again.

I. I am grieved for you, my son Geoffrey, I am grieved for you. And not without reason. For who would not grieve that the flower of your youth, which, amid the joy of angels, you offered unimpaired to God for the odour of a sweet smell (Phil. iv. 18), should now be trampled under the feet of devils, stained by the filthiness of vice and the uncleanness of the world? How can you, who once wast called by God, follow the devil who calls you back? How is it that you, whom Christ began to draw after Himself, have suddenly withdrawn your foot from the very threshold of glory? In you I now have proof of the truth of the Lord's word, when He said: A man's foes shall be they of his own household (S. Matt. x. 36). Your friends and kinsfolk have approached and stood against you. They have called you back into the jaws of the lion, and have placed you once more in the gates of death. They have placed you in dark places, like the dead of this world; and now it is a matter for little surprise that you are descending into the belly of hell, which is hasting to swallow you up, and to give you over as a prey to be devoured by those who roar in their hunger.

2. Return, I pray you; return before the deep swallow thee up and the pit shut her mouth upon thee (Ps. lxix. 16); before you sink whence you shall never more rise; before you be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (S. Matt. xxii. 13); before you be thrust down to the place of darkness and covered with the gloom of death. Perhaps you blush to return, because you gave way for an hour. Blush, indeed, for your flight, but do not blush to return to the battle after your flight, and to fight again. The fight is not over yet. Not yet have the opposing lines drawn off from each other. Victory is still in your power. If you will, we are unwilling to conquer without you, and we do not grudge to you your share of glory. I will even gladly come to meet you and gladly welcome you with open arms, saying: It is meet that we

should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found (S. Luke xv. 32).

LETTER LI

To the Virgin Sophia

He praises her for having despised the glory of the world: and, setting forth the praises, privileges, and rewards of Religious Virgins, exhorts her to persevere.

Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, to the Virgin Sophia, that she may keep the title of virginity and attain its reward.

I. Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised (Prov. xxxi. 31). I rejoice with you, my daughter, in the glory of your virtue, whereby, as I hear, you have been enabled to reject the deceitful glory of the world. That, indeed, deserves rejection and disdain. But whereas many who in other respects are wise, are in their estimation of worldly glory become foolish, you deserve to be praised for not being deceived. It is as the flower of the grass—(James i. 10)—a vapour that appeareth for a little time (S. James iv. 14). And every degree of that glory is without doubt more full of care than joy. At one time you have claims to advance, at another, yourself to defend; you envy others, or are suspicious of them; you are continually aiming to acquire what you do not possess, and the passion for acquiring is not satisfied even by success; and as long as this is the case, what rest is there in your glory? But if any there be, its enjoyment quickly passes, never to return; while care remains, never to leave. Besides, see how many fail to attain that enjoyment, and yet how few despise it. Why so? Just because though many of necessity endure it [i.e., the deprivation of pleasure], yet but few make of doing so a virtue. Few, I say, very few, and particularly of the nobly-born. Indeed, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the base things of the world (1 Cor. i. 26-28). You are, then, blessed and privileged among women of your rank in that, while others strive in rivalry for worldly glory, you by your contempt of this glory are raised to a greater height of glory, and are elevated by glory of a higher kind. Certainly you are the more renowned and illustrious for having made yourself voluntarily humble than for your birth in a high rank. For the one is your own achievement by the grace of God, the other is the doing of your ancestors. And that which is

your own is the more precious, as it is the most rare. For if among men virtue is rare—a "rare bird on the earth"—how much rarer is it in the case of a weak woman of high birth? Who can find a virtuous woman? (Prov. xxxi. 10). Much more "a virtuous woman" of high birth as well. Although God is not by any means an accepter of persons, yet, I know not how, virtue is more pleasing in those of noble birth. Perhaps that may be because it is more conspicuous. For if a man is of mean birth and is devoid of glory, it is not easily clear whether he lacks virtue because he does not wish for it or because he cannot attain it. I honour virtue won under stress of necessity. But I honour more the virtue which a free choice adopts than that which necessity imposes.

2. Let other women, then, who have not any other hope, contend for the cheap, fleeting, and paltry glory of things that vanish and deceive. Do you cling to the hope that confounds not. Do you keep yourself, I say, for that far more exceeding weight of glory, which our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh (2 Cor. iv. 17) for you on high. And if the daughters of Belial reproach you, those who walk with stretched forth necks mincing as they go (Isaiah iii. 16), decked out and adorned like the Temple, answer them: My kingdom is not of this world (S. John xviii. 36); answer them: My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready (S. John vii. 6); answer them: My glory is hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 3); When Christ, who is my life, shall appear, then shall I also appear with Him in glory (Col. iii, 4). And yet if one needs must glory, you also may glory freely and fearlessly, only in the Lord. I omit the crown which the Lord hath prepared for you for ever. I say nothing of the promises which await you hereafter, that as a happy bride you are to be admitted to behold with open face the glory of your Bridegroom; that He will present you to Himself a glorious bride, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. v. 27); that He will receive you in an everlasting embrace, will place His left hand under your head and His right hand shall embrace you (Cant. ii. 6). I pass over the appointed place, which being set apart by the prerogative of virginity, you shall without doubt gain among sons and daughters in the kingdom. I say nothing of that new song which you, a virgin among virgins, shall likewise sing in tones of unrivalled sweetness, rejoicing therein and making glad the city of God, singing and running and following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. In fact, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which He path prepared (1 Cor. ii. 9) for you, and for which it behoves you to be prepared.

3. All this I omit, that is laid up for you hereafter. I speak only of the present,

of those things which you already have, of the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 23), the gifts of the Bridegroom, the earnest money of the espousals, the blessings of goodness (Ps. xxi. 3), wherewith he hath prevented you, whom you may expect to follow after you, and complete what still is lacking. Let Him, yea let Him, come forth to be beheld in His great beauty, so adorned as to be admired of the very angels, and if the daughters of Babylon, whose glory is in their shame (Phil. iii. 19), have aught like Him, let them bring it forth, Though they be clothed in purple and fine linen (S. Luke xvi. 19). Yet their souls are in rags; they have sparkling necklaces, but tarnished minds. You, on the other hand, though ragged without, are all glorious within (Ps. xlv. 14), though to Divine and not human gaze. Within you have that which delights you, for He is within whom it delights; for certainly you do not doubt that you have Christ dwelling in your heart by faith (Eph. iii. 17). In truth, The King's daughter is all glorious within (Ps. xlv. 4). Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, because the King hath desired thy beauty; if thou art clothed with confession and honour (Ps. civ. i, Vulg.), and deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment-For confession and worship are before Him (Ps. xcvi. 6, Vulg.). Before whom? Him who is fairer than the sons of men (Ps. xlv. 3), even Him whom the angels desire to look upon.

4. You hear, then, to whom you are pleasing. Love that which enables you to please, love "confession," if you desire "honour." "Confession" is the handmaid of "honour," the handmaid of "worship." Both are for you. "Thou art clothed with confession and honour," and "Confession and worship are before Him." In truth, where confession is, there is worship, and there is honour. If there are sins, they are washed away in confession; if there are good works, they are commended by confession. When you confess your faults, it is a sacrifice to God of a troubled spirit; when you confess the benefits of God, you offer to God the sacrifice of praise. Confession is a fair ornament of the soul, which both cleanses a sinner and makes the righteous more thoroughly cleansed. Without confession the righteous is deemed ungrateful, and the sinner accounted dead. Confession perisheth from the dead as from one that is not (Ecclus. xvii. 28). Confession, therefore, is the life of the sinner, the glory of the righteous. It is necessary to the sinner, it is equally proper to the righteous. For it becometh well the just to be thankful (Ps. xxxiii. 1). Silk and purple and rouge and paint have beauty, but impart it not. Every such thing that you apply to the body exhibits its own loveliness, but leaves it not behind. It takes the beauty with it, when the thing itself is taken away. For the beauty that is put on with a garment and is put off

with the garment, belongs without doubt to the garment, and not to the wearer of it.

5. Do not you, therefore, emulate those evil disposed persons who, as mendicants, seek an extraneous beauty when they have lost their own. They only betray how destitute they are of any proper and native beauty, when at such great labour and cost they study to furnish themselves outside with the many and various graces of the fashion of the world which passeth away, just that they may appear graceful in the eyes of fools. Deem it a thing unworthy of you to borrow your attractiveness from the furs of animals and the toils of worms; let your own suffice you. For that is the true and proper beauty of anything, which it has in itself without the aid of any substance besides. Oh! how lovely the flush with which the jewel of inborn modesty colours a virgin's cheeks! Can the earrings of queens be compared to this? And self-discipline confers a mark of equal beauty. How self-discipline calms the whole aspect of a maiden's bearing, her whole temper of mind. It bows the neck, smooths the proud brows, composes the countenance, restrains the eyes, represses laughter, checks, the tongue, tempers the appetite, assuages wrath, and guides the deportment. With such pearls of modesty should your robe be, decked. When virginity is girt with divers colours such as these, is there any glory to which it is not rightly preferred? The Angelic? An angel has virginity, indeed, but not flesh; and in that respect his happiness exceeds his virtue. Surely that adornment is best and most desirable which even an angel might envy.

6. There remains still one more remark to be made about the adornment of the Christian virgin. The more peculiarly your own it is, the more secure it remains to you. You see women of the world burdened, rather than adorned, with gold, silver, precious stones; in short, with all the raiment of a palace. You see how they draw long trains behind them, and those of the most costly materials, and raise thick clouds of dust into the air. Let not such things disturb you. They must lay them aside when they come to die; but the holiness which is your possession will not forsake you. The things which they wear are really not their own. When they die they can take nothing with them, nor will this their glory go down with them. The world, whose such things are, will keep them and dismiss the wearers naked; and will beguile with them others equally vain. But that adornment of yours is not of such sort. As I said, you may be quite sure that it will not leave you, because it is your own. You cannot be deprived of it by the violence, nor defrauded of it by the deceit of any man. Against such possessions the cunning of the thief and the cruelty of the tyrant avail nothing. It is not eaten of moths,

nor corrupted by age, nor spent by use. It lives on even in death. Indeed, it belongs to the soul and not to the body; and for this reason it leaves the body together with the soul, and does not perish with the body. And even those who kill the body have absolutely nothing that they can do to the soul.

LETTER LII

To Another Holy Virgin

Under a religious habit she had continued to have a spirit given up to the world, and Bernard praises her for coming to a sense of her duty; he exhorts her not to neglect the grace given to her.

1. It is the source of great joy to me to hear that you are willing to strive after that true and perfect joy, which belongs not to earth but to heaven; that is, not to this, vale of tears, but to that city of God which the rivers of the flood thereof make glad (Ps. xlvi. 4). And in very truth that is the true and only joy which is won, not from the creature, but from the Creator; which, if once you possess it, no man shall take from you. For, compared with it, all joy from other sources is sorrow, all pleasure is pain, all sweetness is bitter, all beauty is mean, everything else, in fine, whatever may have power to please, is irksome. Indeed, you are my witness in this matter. Ask yourself, for you will believe yourself more readily. Does not the Holy Spirit proclaim this very truth in your heart? Have you not been persuaded of the truth hereof by Him long before I spoke? For how would you, being a woman, or rather a young girl so fair and ingenuous, have thus overcome the weakness of your sex and years; how could you thus hold cheap your extreme beauty and noble birth, unless all such things as are subject to the bodily senses were already vile in your eyes, in comparison with those which inwardly strengthen you to overcome the earthly, and charm you to prefer things heavenly?

2. And this is right. Poor and transient and earthly are the things which you despise, but the things you wish for are grand, heavenly, and everlasting. I will say still more, and still speak the truth. You leave the darkness to approach the light; you come forth from the depth of the sea and gain the harbour; you breathe again in happy freedom after a wretched slavery; in a word, you pass from death to life; though up till now, living according to your own will and not God’s, to your own law and not that of God, while living you were dead—living to the world, but dead to God; or rather, to speak more truly, living neither to the world

nor to God. For when you wished while wearing the habit and name of religion to live like one in the world, you alone had rejected God from you by your own wish. But when you could not effect your foolish wish, then it was not you that rejected the world, but the world you. And so, rejecting God, and rejected by the world, you had fallen between two stools, as they say. You were not living unto God, because you would not, nor to the world, because you could not: you were anxious for one, unwelcome to the other, and yet dead to both. So it must happen to those who promise and do not perform, who make one show to the world, and in their hearts desire something else. But now, by the mercy of God, you are beginning to live again, not to sin, but to righteousness, not to the world, but to Christ, knowing that to live to the world is death, and even to die in Christ is life. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord (Rev. xiv. 13).

3. So from this time I shall not mention again your unfulfilled vow, nor your disregard of your profession. From henceforth your purity of body will not be impaired by a corrupt mind, nor your name of virgin disgraced by disorderly conduct; from henceforth the name you bear will not be a deception, nor the veil you wear meaningless. For why hitherto have you been addressed as “nun” and “holy virgin” when, professing holiness, you did not live holily? Why did you let the veil on your head give a false impression of the reverence due to you, while your eye launched burning and passionate glances? Your head was clothed, indeed, with a veil, but it was lifted up with pride, and though you were under the symbol of modesty, your speech sounded far from modest. Your immoderate laughter, unreserved demeanour, and showy dress would have accorded better with the wimple than the veil. But behold now, at the bidding of Christ, the old things have passed away, and all things begin to be made new, since you are changing the care of the body for that of the soul, and are desirous of a beautiful life more than beautiful raiment. You are doing what you ought to do, or rather what you ought to have done long ago, for long ago you had vowed to do it. But the Spirit, who breathes not only where He will but when He will, had not then breathed on you, and so, perhaps, you are to be excused for what you have done hitherto. But if you suffer the ardent zeal wherewith, beyond a doubt, your heart is now hot again, and the divine flame that burns in your thoughts, to be quenched, what remains for you but the certain knowledge that you must be destined for that flame which cannot be quenched. Nay, let the same Spirit rather quench in you all carnal affections, lest haply (which God forbid!) the holy desires of your soul, so late conceived, should be stifled by them, and you yourself be cast into hell fire.

Moult fut humiliant et simple

Elle eut une voile en lieu de guimple. Which may be rendered—

She was a lowly girl and simple,

And wore a veil in place of wimple. Now, however, the word “wimple” is scarcely heard outside the cloisters of nuns.

LETTER LIII

To Another Holy Virgin of the Convent of S. Mary of Troyes

He dissuades her from the rash and imprudent design which she had in her mind of retiring into some solitude.

1. I am told that you are wishing to leave your convent, impelled by a longing for a more ascetic life, and that after spending all their efforts to dissuade and prevent you, seeing that you paid no heed to them, your spiritual mother or your sisters, determined at length to seek my advice on the matter, so that whatever course I approved, that you might feel it your duty to adopt. You ought, of course, to have chosen some more learned man as an adviser; yet since it is my advice you desire to have, I do not conceal from you what I think the better course. Ever since I learnt your wish, though I have been turning the matter over in my mind, I cannot easily venture to decide what temper of mind suggested it. For you may in this thing have a zeal towards God, so that your purpose may be excusable. But how such a wish as yours can be fulfilled consistently with prudence I entirely fail to see. “Why so?” you ask. “Is it not wise for me to flee from wealth and the throng of cities, and from the good cheer and pleasure of life? Shall I not keep my purity more safely in the desert, where I can live in peace with just a few, or even alone, and please Him alone to whom I have pledged myself?” By no means. If one would live in an evil manner, the desert brings abundant opportunity: the wood a protecting shade, and solitude silence. The evil that no one sees, no one reproves. Where no critic is feared, there the tempter gains easier access, there wickedness is more readily committed. It is otherwise in a convent. If you do anything good no one prevents you, but if you would do evil you are hindered by many obstacles. If you yield to temptation, it is at once known to many, and is reproved and corrected. So, on the other hand, when you are seen to do anything good, all admire, revere, and copy it. You see, then, my daughter, that in a convent a larger renown awaits your good deeds, and a more speedy rebuke your faults, because there are others there to whom

you may set an example by good deeds and whom you will offend by evil.

2. But I will take away from you every excuse for your error, by that alternative in the parable we read in the Gospel. Either you are one of the foolish virgins, if, indeed, you are a virgin, or one of the wise (S. Matt. xxv. 1-12). If you are one of the foolish, the convent is necessary to you; if of the wise, you are necessary to the convent. For if you are wise and well-approved, without doubt the reform which, though newly introduced into that place, has already won universal praise, will be greatly discredited, and, I fear, be weakened by your departure. It will not fail to be said that, being good yourself, you would not desert a house where the Rule was well carried out. If you have been known to be foolish, and you go away, we shall say that since you are not suffered to live an evil life among good companions, you could not endure longer the society of holy women, and are seeking a dwelling where you may live in your own way. And we shall be quite right. For before the reform of the Rule you never, I am told, were wont to talk of this plan; but no sooner did observances become stricter, than you, too, became suddenly holier, and in hot haste to think of the desert. I see, my daughter, I see in this, and I would you also saw as I do, the serpent’s venom, the guile of the crafty one, and the trickery of his changing skin. The wolf dwells in the wood. If a poor little sheep like you should enter the shades of the wood alone you would be simply seeking to be his prey. But listen to me, my daughter; listen to my faithful warning. Whether sinner or saint, do not separate yourself from the flock, lest the enemy seize upon you, and there be none to deliver you. Are you a saint? Strive by your example to gain associates in sanctity. A sinner? Do not add sin to sin, but do penance where you are, lest by departing, not without danger, as I have shown, to yourself, you bring scandal upon your sisters, and provoke the tongues of may scoffers against you.

LETTER LIV

To Ermengarde, Formerly Countess of Brittany

He gently, and tenderly assures her that he has for her all the sentiments of pure and religious affection.

To his beloved daughter in Christ, Ermengarde, once the most noble Countess, now the humble handmaid of Christ, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, offers the pious affection of holy love.

Would that, as I now open this page before me, so I could open my mind to you! Oh! that you could read in my heart what God has deigned to write there with His own finger concerning my affection for you! Then, indeed, you might. understand, how no tongue or pen can suffice to express, what the spirit of God hath been able to impress on my inmost heart! And even now I am, present: with you in the spirit, though absent in the body. It is neither in your power nor mine to be in the presence of the other. Yet you have with you the means whereby you may not yet know, but at any rate guess what I mean. Within your own heart. behold mine; and ascribe to me as great affection toward you as you know to be in yourself towards me. Yet do not think that you have more for me than I for you; nor have a better opinion of your own heart than of mine, in respect of affection. Besides, you are too humble and modest not to believe that He who has brought you so to love me and to follow my counsel for your salvation has inspired me also with feelings of affectionate concern for you. So you are thinking how you may keep me with you; and I; to confess the truth, am nowhere without you or away from you. I was anxious to write this short note to you about my journey while on the way, hoping to send you a longer one when I have more leisure, if God will.

LETTER LV

To the Same

He commends her readiness in God’s service, and expresses his desire to see her.

I have received the joy of my heart, good news from you. I am happy to hear of your happiness; and your ready service, now so well known, makes me quite easy in mind. This great happiness comes in no way from flesh and blood, for you are living in lowliness instead of state, in mean, not high place, in poverty instead of wealth. You are deprived of the consolation of living in your own country, and of the society of your brother and your son. Without doubt, then, the willing devotion that hath been born in you is the work of the Holy Spirit. You have long since conceived by the fear of God the design of labouring for your salvation, and have at last brought your design to execution, the spirit of love casting out fear in your soul. How much more gladly would I be present to say this to you, than be absent and write! Believe me, I am annoyed at my business, which constantly seems to hinder me from the sight of you; and I hail with joy the chances, which I seldom seem to get, of seeing you. Such opportunities are rare; but, I confess, their very rarity makes them sweet. For, indeed, it is better to see you just sometimes than never at all. I hope to come unto you shortly; and I already offer you a foretaste of the joy that shall shortly come in full.

LETTER LVI

To Beatrice, a Noble and Religious Lady

He commends her love and anxious care.

I wonder at your zealous devotion and loving affection towards me. I ask, excellent lady, what can possibly inspire in you such great interest and solicitude for us? If we had been sons or grandsons, if we had been united to you by the most distant tie of relationship, your constant kindnesses, frequent visits, in a word, the numberless proofs of your affection that we experience daily, would seem to deserve, not so much our wonder, as our acceptance as a matter of obligation. But as, in common with the rest of mankind, we recognize in you only a great lady, and not a mother, the wonder is not that we should wonder at your goodness, but that we can wonder sufficiently. For who of our kinsfolk and acquaintances takes care of us? Who ever asks of our health? Who, I ask, is, I will not say anxious, but even mindful of us in the world? We are become, as it were, a broken vessel to friends, relatives, and neighbours. You alone cannot forget us. You ask of the state and condition of my health, of the journey I have just accomplished, of the monks whom I have transferred to another place. Of them I may briefly reply, that out of a desert land, from a place of grim and vast solitude, they have been brought into a place where nothing is wanting to them, neither possessions, nor buildings, nor friends; into a rich land and a lovely dwelling-place. I left them happy and peaceful; in happiness and peace, too, I returned; except that for a few days I was troubled with so severe a return of fever that I was in fear of death. But by God’s mercy I soon got well again, so that now I think I am stronger and better after my journey is over than before it began.

LETTER LVII

To the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine

He thanks them for having hitherto remitted customs [or tolls, but asks that they will see that their princely liberality is not interfered with by the efforts of their servants.

To the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting, and prays that they may so lovingly and purely rejoice in each other's affection that the love of Christ alone maybe supreme in them both.

Ever since the needs of our Order obliged me to send for necessaries into your land I have found great favour and kindness in the eyes of your Grace. You freely displayed the blessings of your bounty on our people when they needed it. You freely remitted to them when travelling their toll, the dues on their purchases, and any other legal due of yours. For all these things your reward is surely great in heaven, if, indeed, we believe that to be true which the Lord promises in His Gospel: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me (S. Matt. xxv. 40). But why is it that you allow your servants to take away again what you bestow? It seems to me that it is worthy of you and for your honour, that when you have been pleased to bestow anything for the safety of your souls no one should venture to demand it back again. If, then (which God forbid), you do not repent of your good deed, and your general intention in respect to us is still the same, be pleased to order it to be a firm and unshaken rule; that henceforward our brethren may never fear to be disturbed in this matter by any of your servants. But otherwise we do not refuse to follow our Lord's example, who did not disdain to pay the dues. We also are ready willingly to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (S. Matt. xvii. 26), custom to whom custom, and tribute to whom tribute is due (Rom. xiii. 7), especially because, according to the Apostle, we ought not to seek our gift so much as your gain (Phil. iv. 17).

LETTER LVIII

To the Duchess of Lorraine

He thanks her for kindnesses shown, and deters her from an unjust war.

I thank God for your pious goodwill which I know that you have towards Him and His servants. For whenever the tiniest little spark of heavenly love is kindled in a worldly heart ennobled with earthly honours, that, without doubt, is God’s gift, not man’s virtue. For our part we are very glad to avail ourselves of the kind offers made to us of your bounty in your letter. But having heard of the sudden and serious stress of business, which, of course, must be delaying you at this time, we think it meet to await your opportunity as it shall please you. For, as far as in me lies, I would riot be a burden to any one, particularly in things pertaining to God, where we ought to seek not so much the profit of the gift as advantage abounding to the giver. And so, if you please, name a day and place in your answer by this messenger, when, by God’s help, having brought to an end the business which now occupies, you will be able to approach these regions, where our brother Wido will meet you, so that if he finds anything in your country profitable for our Order you may fulfil your promise with greater ease and speed. For God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. ix. 7). Otherwise, if perchance the delay please you not, let me know this also: for in this matter I am ready, as reason allows, to obey your wishes. I salute the Duke, your husband, through your mouth, and I venture to urge him and you both, if you know that the castle for which you are going to war does not belong to your rightful domain, for the love of God to let it alone. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? (S. Matt. xvi. 26).

LETTER LIX

To the Duchess of Burgundy

He tries to appease her anger against Hugo, and asks her assent to a certain marriage.

The special friendship with which your Grace is pleased, as it is supposed, to honour me, a poor monk, is so widely known that whenever any one thinks your Grace has him in displeasure, he applies to me as the best medium for being restored to your favour. Hence it is that some time ago, when I was at Dijon, Hugo de Bese urged me with many entreaties to appease your displeasure, which he had deserved, and to obtain, for the love of God, and by your kindness towards me, your assent to the marriage of his son, which, though it did not meet with your approval, he had irrevocably determined to make, since it was, as he thinks, an advantage to himself. And for this reason he has been besieging my ears, not as before, by his own prayers, but by the lips of his friends. Now, I do not much care about worldly advantages, but since the matter, as he himself says, seems to have reached such a narrow pass that he cannot prevent the marriage except by perjuring himself, I have thought it meet to tell you this, since that must be a serious object which should be preferred to the good faith of a Christian man and your servant. For, he cannot be perjured and yet at the same time keep faith with his Prince Aye, and I see not only no gain to you, but also much danger arising, if those whom perhaps God has determined to join together should be put asunder by you. May the Lord grant His grace to you, most noble lady, so dear to me in Christ, and to your children, Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Spend your corn on Christ’s poor, that in eternity you may receive it with usury.

NOTE TO THE FOLLOWING TREATISE

1. The following Letter, which is the 190th of S. Bernard, was ranked by Horst among the Treatises, on account of its length and importance. It was written on the occasion of the condemnation of the errors of Abaelard by the Council of Sens, in 1140, in the presence of a great number of French Bishops, and of King Louis the Younger, as has been described in the notes to Letter 187. In the Synodical Epistle, which is No. 191 of S. Bernard, and in another, which is No. 337, the Fathers of the Council announced to Pope Innocent that they had condemned the errors of Abaelard, but had pronounced no sentence against him personally out of respect for the appeal which he had made to the Holy See; and they add that "the chief heads of his errors are more fully detailed in the Letter of the Bishop of Sens." I think that the Letter of which mention is thus made can be no other than that given here, and in which we find, in fact, the chief heads of Abaelard's errors, with a summary refutation of each. They are also the same as those which William, who had become a simple monk at Igny, after having been Abbot of Saint Thierry, had addressed to Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, and to Bernard, in a Letter which is inserted among those of Bernard

2. As regards the different errors imputed to Abaelard, there are some which he complained were wrongly attributed to him. Others, on the contrary, he recognized as his, and corrected them in his Apology, in which he represents Bernard as being his only opponent, his malignant and hasty denouncer. Two former partizans of Abaelard himself, but who had long recoiled from his errors, Geoffrey, who afterwards was the Secretary of Bernard, and "a certain Abbot of the Black Monks," whose name is unknown, attempted to justify Bernard against these calumnies. Duchesne had spoken of these two writers in his notes to Abaelard, but the Treatises of both of them were lately printed in Vol. iv. of the "Bibliotheca Cisterciensis," whose learned Editor, Bertrand Tissier, remarks that this unknown Abbot is some other person than William of Saint Thierry.

3. Of the heads of errors attributed to Abaelard, some are wanting in his printed works, which has given occasion to some writers for accusing Bernard, as if he had attributed errors to Abaelard without foundation, and so had himself been fighting against shadows and phantoms. But it is certain that most of these

errors are to be found even in his printed writings, as we shall show each in its place. As for those which are no longer discoverable, William of Saint Thierry, Geoffrey, and this unknown Abbot, who had been once a disciple of Abaelard, and was perfectly acquainted with his doctrine, quote word for word statements both from his Apology and from his Theology, which do not appear in the printed editions; and certainly Abaelard himself, in Book ii. of his "Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans," p. 554, reserves certain points to be treated in his Theology of which there is no mention in the printed copies, which close thus: "The rest is wanting," so that it appears that the printed copies of the Theology have been mutilated.

4. Those writers have, therefore, done a very ill service to Religion, to say nothing of the injury to Bernard, who, in order to justify Abaelard, accuse Bernard of having been hurried on by the impulse of a blind zeal. They ought at least to acknowledge, as Abaelard himself did, and also Berengarius, his defender, that he had erred in various matters. And, indeed, Abaelard himself, in his Apology, acknowledges, though perhaps not quite sincerely, that in some respects he was wrong. "It is possible," he says, "that I have fallen into some errors which I ought to have avoided, but I call God as a witness and judge upon my soul that in these points upon which I have been accused, I have presumed to say nothing through malice or through pride." It may well be that he might be able to clear himself of the reproach of malice, and even of that of heresy; but, a least, he could not deny that he had fallen into various errors—a liking for new words and phrases, levity, and perhaps even pride and an excessive desire for disputation. However this maybe, Pope Innocent bade the Bishops by a rescript that the man was to be imprisoned and his books burned, and Godfrey declares that the Pope himself had them thrown into the flames at Rome. But Peter Abaelard at length returned to better views. He desisted from his Appeal by the advice and request of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, who has described his last days in pleasing terms in a Letter which he wrote to Heloise.

5. Bernard did not attack Abaelard in his discourses and writings with impunity. Not only was Abaelard impatient of his censure, but also Berengarius, his disciple and defender, dared to accuse Bernard of having spread certain errors in his books. "You have certainly erred," says Berengarius, addressing Bernard, "in asserting the origin of souls from Heaven" (p. 310). And on p. 315: "The origin of souls from Heaven is a fabulous thing, and this I remember that you taught in these words (Serm. in Cantica, No. 17): The Apostle has rightly said, our conversation is in heaven.' These words which you have expounded

with great subtilty, savour much to the palate of a Christian mind of heresy." But enough of this foolish and impudent slanderer. The unknown Abbot reports another calumny of Abaelard against Bernard at the end of his second book: "It is very astonishing to me that for such a long time no reply should have been made by so many great men whose teaching enlightens the Church, as the light of the sun is reflected upon the moon, to our Abaelard, who accused the Abbot of saying that God, and Man assumed by God, are one Person in the Trinity. Whereas Man is a material body composed of various limbs and dissoluble, while God is neither a material body, nor has any limbs, nor can be dissolved. Wherefore, neither ought God to be called Man, nor Man to, be called God," etc. Thus Abaelard shows himself a Nestorian, while petulantly accusing Bernard of error. Rightly does William of Saint Thierry reply in his 8th chapter to Abaelard with regard to this passage: "Thus we say similarly that Christ is the Son of Man in the nature of His Humanity, but not from that according to which He. has union with God, and is One of the Three Persons in the Trinity; because, as God Incarnate was made the Son of Man on account of the human nature which He assumed, so the man united to the Son of God has become the Son of God on account of the Divine Nature which has united him to itself."

6. Besides the heads of errors which Bernard refutes in these books, he groups together some others in No. 10, contenting himself with exposing them; these have been refuted by other authors, viz., by William, and by the unknown Abbot. As to the Eucharistic species or the accidents, which, according to Abaelard, remain in the air after consecration, this was the view of William: "It appears to me, if you agree with me," he says, writing to Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres, and to Bernard, "that those accidents, i.e., the form of the earlier substance, which, I believe, is nothing else than a harmonious combination of accidents into one, if they still exist, do so in the Body of the Lord, not forming it, but by the power and wisdom of God working upon them, shaping and modifying it, that it may become capable, according to the purpose of the mystery and the manner of a Sacrament, of being touched and tasted in a form different from that proper to it, which it could not do in its own." He says again in his book to Rupertus, De Corpore et Sanguine Domini, c. 3: "In opposition to every conception and mode of reasoning in secular philosophy, the substance of bread is changed into another substance, and has carried with it certain accidents into the Eucharistic mystery, but without altering them from what they were, and in such a manner that the Body of the Lord is not either white or round, though whiteness and roundness are associated with it. Arid it so retains these accidents that although

they are truly present with His Human Body, yet they are not in It, do not touch it, or affect it," etc.

7. It was not only with respect to the Incarnation of Our Lord that Abaelard thought, or at least expressed himself, in an erroneous manner. He was equally in error on the subject of the grace of Christ, which he reduced simply to the reason granted to man by God, to the admonitions of the Holy Scriptures, and to good examples, and thus made it common to all men. "We may say, then," he taught, "that man, by the reason which he has received from God, is able to embrace the grace which is offered him; nor does God do any more for a person who is saved before he has embraced the offered grace, than for one who is not saved. But just as a man who exposes precious jewels for sale, in order to excite in those who see them the wish to purchase; thus God makes His grace known before all, exhorts us by the Scriptures, and reminds us by examples, so that men, in the power of that liberty of will which they have, may decide to embrace the offer of grace." And a little farther on he continues: "That vivification is attributed to grace: because Reason, by which man discerns between good and evil, and understands that he ought to abstain from the one and to do the other, comes from God. And therefore it is said that he does this under the inspiration of God: because God enables him by the gift of Reason which He has bestowed to recognize what is sinful." Such were the errors William has extracted, among many others, from the writings of Abaelard, and without doubt from his Theology, which, perhaps because of these and other similar passages, was mutilated by his scholars. Nor can we refuse to credit the good faith of William, who was a learned and pious man: especially as Abaelard in his Book iv., on the Epistle to the Romans, teaches the same hurtful doctrine (p. 653 and following). We learn from all these expressions of Abaelard that he thought, or at least certainly wrote, with the same impiety concerning the grace of Christ as he did on the Incarnation, and that Bernard was perfectly correct in saying (Letter 192): "He speaks of the Trinity like Arius, of grace like Pelagius, and of the Person of Christ like Nestorius." Proof of the truth of these words of Bernard as concerns the two last charges will be found in reading the letter given here; and as to the third, it will be sufficient to show that Bernard has in nowise exaggerated, to read the end of Book iii. of the Theology of Abaelard; there it will be found in his own words, << that those who abhor our words respecting the faith may be easily convinced when they hear that God the Father and God the Son are joined with us according to the sense of the words." In what manner? "Let us ask, then," he continues, i, if they believe in the wisdom of God of which it is

written: Thou hast made all things with wisdom, O Lord, and they will reply without hesitation that they do so believe. But this is to believe in the Son; as for believing in the Holy Ghost, it is nothing else than believing in the goodness of God." These words seem clearly to be not only Arian, but even Sabellian, although, as I must frankly confess, Abaelard formally rejects that error in its logical consequences in another passage on p, 1069. But especially in matters of faith, it is a matter of importance, not only to think rightly, but also to speak and write with exactness. Thus it is with reason that William of Saint Thierry says in citing the very words of Abaelard with respect to the brass and the seal, and with respect to power in general and a certain power: "As for the Divine Persons, he destroys them like Sabellius, and when he speaks of their unlikeness and their inequality, he goes straight to the feet of Arius in his opinion." I only cite these passages to make those persons ashamed who, although they detest these errors, yet take up the defence of Abaelard against Bernard, and do not hesitate to accuse the latter of precipitation and of excess of zeal against him. William de Conches expresses himself in almost the same manner as Abaelard with respect to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and Abbot William of S. Thierry confutes his errors also in his letter to Bernard. Nor is there anything worse that can happen to religion than that philosophers should attempt to explain the mysteries of our faith by the power of Reason alone.

8. Geoffrey, secretary of S. Bernard, gives an account of the whole business of Abaelard in a letter to Henry, Cardinal and Bishop of Albano: "I have heard also that your Diligence desires to know the entire truth respecting the condemnation of Peter Abaelard, whose books Pope Innocent II., of pious memory, condemned to be burned solemnly at Rome in the Church of S. Peter, and declared him by Apostolical authority to be a heretic. Some years before a certain venerable Cardinal, Legate of the Roman Church, by name Conon, once a Canon of the Church of S. Nicholas of Artois, had already condemned his Theology in the same way to be burned, during a council at Soissons in which he presided, the said Abaelard having been present and having been condemned of heretical pravity. If you desire it he will satisfy you by the book of The Life of S. Bernard, and by his letters sent to Rome on that subject. I have found also at Clairvaux a little book of a certain Abbot of Black Monks, in which the errors of the same Peter Abaelard are noted, and I remember to have seen it on a previous occasion; but for many years, as the keepers of the books assert, the first four sheets of this little book, although diligently sought for, could not be found. Because of this I have had the intention to send some one into France to the Abbey of the writer of

that little book, so as, if I should be able to recover it, to have it copied, and send it to you. I believe that your curiosity will be completely satisfied in, learning in what respects, how, and wherefore he was condemned."

It is thus that Geoffrey expresses himself. (Notes of Duchesne to Abaelard.) I pass over the vision related by Henry, Canon of Tours, to the Fathers of the Synod of Sens and to Bernard (Spicileg., Vol. xii. p. 478 et seqq.).

9. After I had written what precedes, our brother, John Durand, who was then occupied at Rome, sent me the Capitula Haeresum Petri Abaelardi, which were placed at the head of the following letter, taken from the very faulty MS. in the Vatican, No. 663. These were, without doubt, those which Bernard, at the end of this letter, states that he had collected, and transmitted to the Pontiff. It seems well to place them here for the illustration of the letter.

HEADS OF HERESIES OF PETER ABAELARD

I.-THE SHOCKING ANALOGY MADE BETWEEN A BRAZEN SEAL, AND BETWEEN GENUS AND SPECIES, AND THE HOLY TRINITY

The Wisdom of God being a certain power, as a seal of brass is a certain [portion of] brass; it follows clearly that the Wisdom of God has its being from His Power, similarly as the brazen is said to be what it is from its material: or the species derives what it is from its genus, which is, as it were, the material of the species, as the animal is of man. For just as, in order that there may be a brazen seal, there must be brass, and in order that there may be man, there must be the genus Animal, but not reciprocally: so in order that there may be the Divine Wisdom, which is the power of discernment, there must be the Divine Power; but the reciprocal does not follow." And a little further on we read: "The Beneficence, the name under which the Holy Spirit is designated, is not in God Wisdom or Power."

II.—THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE FATHER.

"The Son and the Holy Spirit are of the Father, the One by the way of generation, the Other by that of procession. Generation differs from procession in that He who is generated is of the very Substance of the Father, whilst the essence of Wisdom itself is, as was said, to be a certain Power." And a little further on we read: "As for the Holy Spirit, although He be of the same Substance with the Father and the Son, whence even the Trinity itself is called consubstantial (homoousion), yet He is not at all of the Substance of the Father or of the Son, as He would be if generated of the Father or the Son; but rather He has of them the Procession, which is that God, through love, extends Himself to another than Himself. For like as any one proceeds through love from his own self to another, since, as we have said above, no one can be properly said to have love towards himself, or to be beneficent towards himself, but towards another. But this is especially true of God, who having need of nothing, cannot be moved by the feeling of beneficence towards His own self, to bestow something on Himself out of beneficence, but only towards creatures."

III.—THAT GOD IS ABLE TO DO WHAT HE DOES, OR TO REFRAIN FROM DOING IT, ONLY IN THE MANNER OR AT THE TIME IN WHICH HE DOES SO ACT OR REFRAIN, AND IN NO OTHER.

"By the reasoning by which it is shown that God the Father has generated the Son of as great goodness as He was able, since otherwise He would have yielded to envy; it is also clear that all which He does or makes, He does or makes as excellent as He is able to do; nor does He will to withhold a single good that He is capable of bestowing." And a little farther on we read: "In everything that God does, He so proposes to Himself that which is good, that it may be said of Him that He is made willing to do that which He does rather by the price (as it were) of good, than by the free determination of His own Will." Also: "From this it therefore appears, and that both by reason and by the Scriptures, that God is able to do that only which He does." And a little farther: "Who, if He were able to interfere with the evil things which are done, would yet only do so at the proper time, since He can do nothing out of the proper time; consequently I do not see, in what way He would not be consenting to sinful actions. For who can be said to consent to evil, except he by whom it may be interfered with at the proper time?" Also: "The reason which I have given above and the answers to objections seem to me to make clear that God is able to do what He does, or to refrain from doing it, only in the manner or at the time, in which He does so act or refrain, and in no other."

IV.—THAT CHRIST DID NOT ASSUME OUR FLESH IN ORDER TO FREE US FROM THE YOKE OF THE DEVIL.

"It should be known that all our Doctors who were after the Apostles agree in this, that the devil had dominion and power over man, and held him in bondage of right." And a little farther on: "It seems to me that the devil has never had any right over man, but rightly held him in bondage as a jailer, God permitting; nor did the Son of God assume our flesh in order to free us from the yoke of the devil." And again: "How does the Apostle say that we are justified or reconciled to God by the death of His Son, when on the contrary, He ought to have been more angry still against man, who had committed in putting His Son to death, a fault much more great than in transgressing His first precept by eating one apple; and would it not have been more just? For if that first sin of Adam was so great, that it could not be expiated except by the death of Christ; what is there which can be capable of expiating the Death of Christ itself, and all the great cruelties committed upon Him and His Saints? (See Letter V. 21.) Did the death of His

innocent Son please God so much, that for the sake of it He has become reconciled to us, who have caused it by our sins, on account of which the innocent Lord was slain? And could He forgive us a fault much less great, only on condition that we committed a sin so enormous? Were multiplied sins needful in order to the doing of so great a good, as to deliver us from our sins and to render us, by the death of the Son of God, more righteous than we were before?" Again: "To whom will it not seem cruel and unjust that one should have required the innocent blood, or any price whatever, or that the slaughter of the innocent, under any name or title, should be pleasing to him? Still less that God hell the death of His Son so acceptable that He would, for its sake, be reconciled to the world. These and similar considerations raise questions of great importance, not only concerning redemption, but also concerning our justification by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. But it seems to me that we were nevertheless justified by the Blood of Christ, and reconciled with God by the special grace shown to us when His Son took upon Him our nature, and in it gave us an example both by word and deed, until His Death. He has united us so closely with Him by His love for us, that we are fired by so great benefit of Divine grace, and will hesitate at no suffering, provided it be for Him. Which benefit indeed we do not doubt aroused the ancient Fathers, who looked forward to this by faith, to an ardent love of God, as well as those of more recent time." And below: "I think then that the cause and design of the Incarnation was to enlighten the world with the wisdom of God, and arouse it to love of Him."

V.—NEITHER GOD-AND-MAN, NOR THE MAN WHO IS CHRIST, IS ONE OF THE THREE PERSONS IN THE TRINITY.

"When I say that Christ is one of the Three Persons in the Trinity I mean this: that the Word, who was from eternity one of the Three Persons in the Trinity, is so; and I think that this expression is figurative. For if we should regard it as literal, since the name of Christ means He who is God-and-Man, then the sense would be, that God-and-Man is one of the Three Persons of the Trinity. Which is entirely false." And a little farther on: "It should be stated that although we allow that Christ is one of the Three Persons in the Trinity, yet we do not allow that the Person who is Christ is one of the Three Persons in the Trinity."

VI.—THAT GOD DOES NO MORE FOR A PERSON WHO IS SAVED, BEFORE HE HAS ACCEPTED GRACE OFFERED, THAN FOR ONE WHO IS NOT SAVED.

"It is frequently asked whether it is true, as is said by some persons, that all men

need to be saved by the mercy of God, and that their need is such that no one is able to have the will to do good unless by the preventing grace of God, which influences his heart and inspires in him the will to do good, and multiplies it when produced, and preserves it after having been multiplied. If it is true that man is not able to do anything good by himself, and that he is incapable of raising himself up in any way whatever by his free will for the reception of Divine grace, without the help of that grace, as is asserted, it does not appear on what ground, if he sins, he can be punished. For if he is not able to do anything good of himself, and if he is so constituted that he is more inclined to evil than to good, is he not free from blame if he sins, and is God who has given to him a nature so weak and subvertible deserving of praise for having created such a being? Or, on the contrary, does it not rather seem that He merits to be reproached?" And a little farther on: "If it were true that man is unable to raise himself up without the grace of another, in order to receive the Divine grace, there does not seem to be any reason wherefore man should be held culpable; and it would seem that if he has not the grace of God the blame should be rather reflected upon his Creator. But this is not so, but very far otherwise, according to the truth of the case, for we must lay down that man is able to embrace that grace which is offered to him by the reason which has, indeed, been bestowed upon him by God; nor does God do anything more for a person, who is saved before he has accepted the grace offered to him, than for another who is not saved. In fact, God behaves with regard to men in like manner as a merchant who has precious stones to sell, who exhibits them in the market, and offers them equally to all, so that he may excite in those who view them a desire to purchase. He who is prudent, and who knows that he has need of them, labours to obtain the means, gains money and purchases them; on the contrary, he who is slow and indolent, although he desires to have the jewels, and although her may be also more robust in body than the other, because he is indolent does not labour, and, therefore, does not purchase them, so that the blame for being without them belongs to himself. Similarly, God puts His grace before the eyes of all, and advises them in the Scriptures and by eminent doctors to avail themselves of their freedom of will to embrace this offered grace; certainly he who is prudent and provident for his future, acts according to his free will, in which he can embrace this grace. But the slothful, on the contrary, is entangled with carnal desires, and although he desires to attain blessedness, yet he is never willing to endure labour in restraining himself from evil, but neglects to do what he ought, although he would be able by his free will to embrace the grace offered him, and

so he finds himself passed over by the Almighty."

VII.—THAT GOD OUGHT NOT TO HINDER EVIL ACTIONS.

"In the first place, we must determine what it is to consent to evil, and what not to do so. He, then, is said to consent to evil who, when he can and ought to prevent it, does not do so; but if he ought to prevent it, but has not the power, or if, on the contrary, though he has the power, he ought not to do so, he is blameless. Much less if he neither has the power, nor ought, if he had, to prevent it, is he to be blamed. And, therefore, God is far from giving consent to evil actions, since He neither ought, nor has the power, to interfere with them. He ought not, since if an action develops by His goodness in a particular manner, than which none can be better, in no wise ought He to wish to interfere with it. He is, furthermore, not able, because His goodness, though it has chosen a minor good, cannot put an obstacle to that which is greater."

VIII.—THAT WE HAVE NOT CONTRACTED FROM ADAM GUILT, BUT PENALTY.

"It should be known that when it is said, Original sin is in infants, this is spoken of the penalty, temporal and eternal, which is incurred by them through the fault of their first parent." And a little farther on: "Similarly it is said, In whom all have sinned (Rom. v. 12), in the sense that when he (our first parent) sinned we were all in him in germ. But it does not, therefore, follow that all have sinned, since they did not then exist; for whoever does not exist does not sin."

IX.—THAT THE BODY OF THE LORD DID NOT FALL TO THE GROUND.

"On the subject of this species of Bread and Wine which is turned into the Body of Christ it is asked whether they continue to exist in the Body of Christ, in the substance of bread and wine as they were before, or whether they are in the air. It is probable that they exist in the air, since the Body of Christ had its form and features, as other human bodies. As for the Eucharistic species of bread and wine, they serve only to cover and conceal the Body of Christ in the mouth." And a little farther on: "It is asked again concerning this, that it seems to be multiple . . . wherefore it is ordered to be preserved from one Saturday to the next, as we read was done with the shew bread. It seems also to be gnawed by mice, and to fall to the ground from the hands of a priest or deacon. And, therefore, it is asked, wherefore God permits such things to happen to His Body; or whether, perhaps, these things do not really happen to the Body, but are only

so done in appearance, and to the species? To which I reply, that these things do not really affect the Body, but that God allows them to happen to the species in order to reprove. the negligence of the ministers. As for His Body, He replaces and preserves it as it pleases Him to do."

X.—THAT MAN IS MADE NEITHER BETTER NOR WORSE BY WORKS.

"It is frequently asked what it is that is recompensed by the Lord: the work or the intention, or both. For authority seems to decide that what God rewards eternally are works, for the Apostle says God will render to every man according to his works (Romans ii. 6). And Athanasius says: They will have to give account of their own works.' And a little farther on he says: And those who have done good shall go into life eternal, but those who have done evil into eternal fire (S. Matt. xxv. 46, and S. John v. 29). But I say that they were eternally recompensed by God either for good or for evil; nor is man made either better or worse because of works, at least only so far as, that while he is doing them his will towards either good or evil gathers force. Nor is this contrary to the Apostle, or to other authors, because when the Apostle says God will render to each, etc., he puts the effect for the cause, that is to say, the action for the will or intention.

XI.—THAT THOSE WHO CRUCIFIED CHRIST IGNORANTLY COMMITTED NO SIN; AND THAT WHATSOEVER IS DONE THROUGH IGNORANCE OUGHT NOT TO BE COUNTED AS A FAULT.

"There is objected to us the action of the Jews who have crucified Christ; that of the men who in persecuting the Martyrs thought that they were doing God service; and finally that of Eve, who did not act against her conscience since she was tempted, and yet it is certain that she committed sin. To which I say that in truth those Jews in their simplicity were not acting at all against their conscience, but rather persecuted Christ from zeal for their law; nor did they think that they were acting wickedly, and, therefore, they did not sin; nor were any of them eternally condemned on account of this, but because of their previous sins, because of which they rightly fell into that state of darkness. And among them were even some of the elect, for whom Christ prayed, saying: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (S. Luke xxxiii. 34). He did not ask in this prayer that this particular sin might be forgiven to them, since it was not really a sin, but rather their previous sins."

XII.—OF THE POWER OF BINDING AND LOOSING.

“That which is said in S. Matthew, whatsoever thou shall bind on earth, etc. (xvi. 19) is thus to be understood: Whatsoever thou shah bind on earth, i.e., in the present life, shall be bound also in heaven, i.e., in the present Church.” And a little farther on: “The Gospel seems to contradict us when we say that God alone is able to forgive sins, for Christ says to His disciples receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever’s sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them (S. John xx. 22, 23), But I say that this was spoken to the Apostles alone, not to their successors.” And immediately he adds “If, however, any one shall say that this applies also to their successors, it will be needful in that case to explain this passage also in the same manner in which I have explained the preceding.”

XIII.—CONCERNING SUGGESTION, DELECTATION, AND CONSENT.

“It should be known also that suggestion is not a sin for him to whom the suggestion is made, nor the delectation which follows the suggestion, which delectation is produced in the soul because of our weakness, and by the remembrance of the pleasure which is bound in the accomplishment of the thing which the tempter suggests to our mind. It is only consent, which is also called a contempt of God, in which sin consists.” And a little farther on: “I do not say that the will of doing this or that, nor even the action itself is sin, but rather, as has been said above, that the contempt itself of God in some act of the will that constitutes sin.”

XIV.—THAT OMNIPOTENCE BELONGS PROPERLY AND SPECIALLY TO THE FATHER.

“If we refer power as well t0 the idea of Being as to efficacy of working, we find Omnipotence to attach properly and specially to the proprium of the Person of the Father: since not only is He Almighty with the Two other Persons, but also He alone possesses His Being from Himself and not from another. And as He exists from Himself, so He is equally Almighty by Himself.”

LETTER LX (A.D. 1140)

To the Same, Against Certain Heads of Abaelard’s Heresies

To his most loving Father and Lord, Innocent, Supreme Pontiff, Brother Bernard, called Abbot of Clairvaux, sends humble greeting.

The dangers and scandals which are coming to the surface in the Kingdom of God, especially those which touch the faith, ought to be referred to your Apostolic authority. For I judge it fitting that there most of all, the losses suffered by the faith should be repaired, where faith cannot suffer defect. This, truly, is the prerogative of your see. For to what other person [than Peter] has it ever been said, I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not? (S. Luke xxii. 32). Therefore that which follows is required from the successor of Peter: And when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren. That, indeed, is necessary now. The time is come, most loving Father, for you to recognize your primacy, to prove your zeal, to do honour to your ministry. In this plainly you fulfil the office of Peter, whose seat you occupy, if by your admonition you strengthen the hearts that are wavering in the faith, if by your authority you crush the corrupters of the faith.

CHAPTER I

HE EXPLAINS AND REFUTES THE DOGMAS OF ABAELARD RESPECTING THE TRINITY.

1. We have in France an old teacher turned into a new theologian, who in his early days amused himself with dialectics, and now gives utterance to wild imaginations upon the Holy Scriptures. He is endeavouring again to quicken false opinions, long ago condemned and put to rest, not only his own, but those of others; and is adding fresh ones as well. I know not what there is in heaven above and in the earth beneath which he deigns to confess ignorance of: he raises his eyes to Heaven, and searches the deep things of God, and then returning to us, he brings back unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter,

while he is presumptuously prepared to give a reason for everything, even of those things which are above reason; he presumes against reason and against faith. For what is more against reason than by reason to attempt to transcend reason? And what is more against faith than to be unwilling to believe what reason cannot attain? For instance, wishing to explain that saying of the wise man: He who is hasty to believe is light in mind (Ecclus. xix. 4). He says that a hasty faith is one that believes before reason; when Solomon says this not of faith towards God, but of mutual belief amongst ourselves. For the blessed Pope Gregory denies plainly that faith towards God has any merit whatever if human reason furnishes it with proof. But he praises the Apostles, because they followed their Saviour when called but once (Hom. in Evang. 26). He knows doubtless that this word was spoken as praise: At the hearing of the ear he obeyed me (Ps. xviii. 44), that the Apostles were directly rebuked because they had been slow in believing (S. Mark xvi. 14). Again, Mary is praised because she anticipated reason by faith, and Zacharias punished because he tempted faith by reason (S. Luke i. 20, 45), and Abraham is commended in that against hope he believed in hope (Rom. iv. 18).

2. But on the other hand our theologian says: “What is the use of speaking of doctrine unless what we wish to teach can be explained so as to be intelligible?” And so he promises understanding to his hearers, even on those most sublime and sacred truths which are hidden in the very bosom of our holy faith; and he places degrees in the Trinity, modes in the Majesty, numbers in the Eternity. He has laid down, for example, that God the Father is full power, the Son a certain kind of power, the Holy Spirit no power. And that the Son is related to the Father as force in particular to force in general, as species to genus, as a thing formed of material, to matter, as man to animal, as a brazen seal to brass. Did Arius ever go further? Who can endure this? Who would not shut his ears to such sacrilegious words? Who does not shudder at such novel profanities of words and ideas? He says also that “the Holy Spirit proceeds indeed from the Father and the Son, but not from the substance of the Father or of the Son.” Whence then? Perhaps from nothing, like everything created. But the Apostle does riot deny that they are of God, nor is he afraid to say: Of whom are all things (Rom. xi. 36). Shall we say then that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in no other way than all things do, that is, that He exists not essentially but by way of creation, and is therefore a creature like all other things. Or will this man, who is always seeking after new things, who invents what he does not find, affirms those things which are not, as though they are, will he find for himself some third way, in

which he may produce Him from the Father and the Son? But, he says, “if He were of the substance of the Father, He would surely have been begotten, and so the Father would have two Sons.” As though everything which is from any substance has always as its father that from which it is. For lice and phlegm and such things, are they sons of the flesh, and not rather of the substance of the flesh? Or worms produced by rotten wood, whence derive they their substance but from the wood? yet are they not sons of the wood. Again, moths have their substance from the substance of garments, but not their generation. And there are many instances of this kind.

3. Since he admits that the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son, I wonder how an acute and learned man (as at least he thinks himself) can yet deny that He proceeds in substance from the Father and the Son, unless perchance he thinks that the two first persons proceed from the substance of the third. But this is an impious and unheard of opinion. But if neither He proceeds from their substance, nor They from His, where, I pray, is the consubstantiality? Let him then either confess with the Church that the Holy Spirit is of their substance, from whom He does not deny that He proceeds, or let him with Arius deny His consubstantiality, and openly preach His creation. Again he says, if the Son is of the substance of the Father, the Holy Spirit is not; they must differ from each other, not only because the Holy Spirit is not begotten, as the Son is, but also because the Son is of the substance of the Father, which the Holy Spirit is not. Of this last distinction the Catholic Church has hitherto known nothing. If we admit it, where is the Trinity? where is the Unity? If the Holy Spirit and the Son are really separated by this new enumeration of. differences, and if the Unity is split up, then especially let it be made plain that that distinction which he is endeavouring to make is a difference of substance. Moreover, if the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the substance of the Father and the Son, no Trinity remains, but a duality. For no Person is worthy to be admitted into the Trinity whose. substance is not the same as that of the others. Let him, therefore, cease to separate the procession of the Holy Spirit from the substance of the Father and the Son, lest by a double impiety he both take away number from the Trinity and attribute it to the Unity, each of which the Christian faith abhors. And, lest I seem in so great a matter to depend on human reasonings only, let him read the letter of Jerome to Avitus; and he will plainly see, that amongst the other blasphemies of Origen which he confutes, he also rejects this one, that, as he said, the Holy Spirit is not of the substance of the Father. The blessed Athanasius thus speaks in his book on the Undivided Trinity: “When I spoke of God alone I

meant not the Person only of the Father, because I denied not that the Son and the Holy Spirit are of this same Substance of the Father."

CHAPTER II

IN THE TRINITY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ADMIT ANY DISPARITY: BUT EQUALITY IN EVERY WAY TO BE PREDICATED.

4. Your holiness sees how in this man's scheme, which is not reasoning but raving, the Trinity does not hold together and the Unity is rendered doubtful, and that this cannot be without injury to the Majesty. For whatever That is which is God, it is without doubt That than which nothing greater can be conceived. If, then, in this One and Supreme Majesty we have found anything that is insufficient or imperfect in our consideration of the Persons, or if we have found that what is assigned to one is taken from another, the whole is surely less than That, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For indubitably the greatest which is a whole is greater than that which consists of parts. That man thinks worthily, as far as man can, of the Divine Majesty who thinks of no inequality in It where the whole is supremely great; of no separation where the whole is one; of no chasm where the whole is undivided; in short, of no imperfection or deficiency where the whole is a whole. For the Father is a whole, as are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Son is a whole, as are He Himself and the Father and the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is a whole, as are He Himself and the Father and the Son. And the whole Unity is a whole neither superabounding in the Three, nor diminished in Each Person. For they do not individually divide between Them that real and highest Good which they are, since they do not possess It in the way of participation, but are essentially the very Good. For those phrases which we most rightly use, as One from Another, or One to Another, are designations of the Persons, not division of the Unity. For although in this ineffable and incomprehensible essence of the Deity we can; by the requirements of the properties of the Persons, say One and Another in a sober and Catholic sense, yet there is not in the essence One and Another, but simple Unity; nor in the confession of the Trinity any derogation to the Unity, nor is the true assertion of the Unity any exclusion of the propria of the Persons. May that execrable similitude of genus and species be accordingly as far from our minds as it is from the rule of truth. It is not a similitude, but a dissimilitude, as is also that of brass and the brazen seal; for since genus and species are to each other as higher and lower, while God is One, there can never be any resemblance

between equality so perfect and disparity so great. And again, with regard to his illustration of brass, and the brass which is made into a seal, since it is used for the same kind of similitude, it is to be similarly condemned. For since, as I have said, species is less than and inferior to genus, far be it from us to think of such diversity between the Father and the Son. Far be it from us to agree with him who says that the Son is related to the Father as species to genus, as man to animal, as a brazen seal to brass, as force to force absolutely. For all these several things by the bond of their common nature are to each other as superiors and inferiors, and therefore no comparison is to be drawn from these things with That in which there is no inequality, no dissimilarity. You see from what unskilfulness or impiety the use of these similitudes descends.

CHAPTER III

THE ABSURD DOCTRINE OF ABAELARD, WHO ATTRIBUTES PROPERLY AND SPECICALLY THE ABSOLUTE AND ESSENTIAL NAMES TO ONE PERSON, IS OPPOSED.

5. Now notice more clearly what he thinks, teaches, and writes. He says that Power properly and specially belongs to the Father, Wisdom to the Son, which, indeed, is false. For the Father both, is, and is most truly called, Wisdom, and the Son Power, and what is common to Both is not the proprium , of Each singly. There are certainly some other names which do not belong to Both, but to One or the Other alone, and therefore His own Name is peculiar to Each, and not common to the Other. For the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, for He is designated by the name of Father, not because He is the Father with regard to Himself, but with regard to His Son, and in like manner by the name of Son is expressed not that He is Son with regard to Himself, but to the Father. It is not so with power and many other attributes which are assigned to the Father and the Son in common, and not singly to Each taken by Himself. But he says, “No; we find that omnipotence belongs especially to the proprium of the Person of the Father, because He not only can do all things in union with the other two Persons, but also because He alone has His existence from Himself, and not from Another, and as He has His existence from Himself, so has He His power.” O, second Aristotle! By parity of reasoning, if such were reasoning, would not Wisdom and; Kindness belong properly to the Father, since equally the Father has His Wisdom and Kindness from Himself, and not from another, just as He has His Being and His Power? And if he does not deny this, as he cannot reasonably do, what, I ask, will he do with that famous partition of his in which,

as he has assigned Power to the Father and Wisdom to the Son, so he has assigned Loving Kindness to the Holy Spirit properly and specially? For one and the same thing cannot well be the proprium of two, that is, to be the exclusive property of each. Let him choose which alternative he will: either let him give Wisdom to the Son and take It from the Father, or assign It to the Father and deny It to the Son; and again, let him assign Loving Kindness to the Spirit without the Father, or to the Father without the Spirit; or let him cease to call attributes which are common, propria ; and though the Father has His Power from Himself, yet let him not dare to concede It to Him as being a proprium , lest on his own reasoning he be obliged to assign Him Wisdom and Loving Kindness which He has in precisely the same way, as His propria also.

6. But let us now wait and see in how theoretic a manner our theologian regards the invisible things of God. He says, as I have pointed out, that omnipotence properly belongs to the Father, and He makes it to consist in the fulness and perfection of Rule and discernment. Again, to the Son he assigns Wisdom, and that he defines to be not Power simply, but a certain kind of Power in God, namely, the Power of discernment only. Perhaps he is afraid of doing an injury to the Father if he gives as much to the Son as to Him, and since he dares not give Him complete power, he grants Him half. And this that he lays down he illustrates by common examples, asserting that the Power of discernment which the Son is, is a particular kind of Power, just as a man is a kind of animal, and a brazen seal a particular form of brass, which means that the power of discernment is to the power of Rule and discernment, i.e., the Son is to the Father, as a man to an animal, or as a brazen seal to brass. For, as he says, “a brazen seal must first be brass, and a man to be a man must first be an animal, but not conversely. So Divine Wisdom, which is the power of discernment, must be first Divine Power, but not conversely” (Abael. Theol. B. ii. p. 1083). Do you, then, mean that, like the preceding similitudes, your similitude demands that the Son to be the Son must first be the Father, i.e., that He who is the Son is the Father, though not conversely? If you say this you are a heretic. If you do not your comparison is meaningless.

7. For why do you fashion for yourself the comparison, and with such beating about the bush, apply it to questions long ago settled and ill-fitted for debate? Why do you bring it forward with such waste of energy, impress it on us with such a useless multiplicity of words, produce it with such a flourish, if it does not effect the purpose for which it was adduced, viz., that the members be harmonized with each other in fitting proportions? Is not this a labour and a toil,

to teach us by means of it, the relation which exists between the Father and the Son? We hold according to you, that a man being given an animal is given, but not conversely, at least by the rule of your logic; for by it it is not that when the genus is given we know the species, but the species being given we know the genus. Since, then, you compare the Father to the genus, the Son to the species, does not the condition of your comparison postulate, that in like manner, when the Son is known you declare the Father to be known and not conversely; that, as he who is a man is necessarily an animal, but not conversely, so also, He who is the Son is necessarily the Father, but not conversely? But the Catholic faith contradicts you on this point, for it plainly denies both, viz., that the Father is the Son, and that the Son is the Father. For indubitably the Father is one Person, the Son another; although the Father is not of a different substance from the Son. For by this distinction the godliness of the Faith knows how to distinguish cautiously between the propria of the Persons, and the undivided unity of the Essence; and holding a middle course, to go along the royal road, turning neither to the right by confounding the Persons, nor looking to the left by dividing the Substance. But if you say that it rightly follows as a necessary truth that He who is the Son is also the Father, this helps you nothing; for an identical proposition is necessarily capable of being converted in such a way that what was true of the original proposition is true of the converse; and your comparison of genus and species, or of brass and the brazen seal does not admit of this. For as it does not follow as a necessary consequence that the Son is the Father, and the Father the Son, so neither can we rightly produce a convertible consequence between man and animal, and between a brazen seal and brass. For though it be true to say, “If he is a man he is an animal,” still the converse is not true, “If he is an animal he is a man.” And again, if we have a brazen seal it necessarily follows that it is brass; but if we have brass it does not necessarily follow that it is a brazen seal. But now let us proceed to his other points.

8. Lo! according to him we have omnipotence in the Father, a certain power in the Son. Let him tell us also what he thinks of the Holy Spirit. That loving-kindness, he says, which is denoted by the name of the Holy Spirit is not in God power or wisdom (Theol. ii. 1085). I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven (S. Luke x. 18). So ought he to fall who exercises himself in great matters, and in things that are too high for him. You see, Holy Father, what ladders, nay what dizzy heights, he has set up for his own downfall. All power, half power, no power. I shudder at the very words, and I think that very horror enough for his confutation. Still, I will bring forward a testimony which occurs to my troubled

mind, so as to remove the injury done to the Holy Spirit. We read in Isaiah: The Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of ghostly strength (Is. xi. 2). By this his audacity is plainly and sufficiently answered, even if it is not crushed. Be it that blasphemy against the Father or the Son may be forgiven, will blasphemy against the Spirit? The Angel of the Lord is waiting to cut you asunder; for you have said "The Holy Spirit in God is not power or wisdom." So the foot of pride stumbles where it intrudes [where it ought not].

CHAPTER IV

ABAELARD HAD DEFINED FAITH AS AN OPINION OR ESTIMATE: BERNARD REFUTES THIS.

9. It is no wonder if a man who is careless of what he says should, when rushing into the mysteries of the Faith, so irreverently assail and tear asunder the hidden treasures of godliness, since he has neither piety nor faith in his notions about the piety of faith. For instance, on the very threshold of his theology (I should rather say his stultology) he defines faith as private judgment; as though in these mysteries it is to be allowed to each person to think and speak as he pleases, or as though the mysteries of our faith are to hang in uncertainty amongst shifting and varying opinions, when on the contrary they rest on the solid and unshakable foundation of truth. Is not our hope baseless if our faith is subject to change? Fools then were our martyrs for bearing so cruel tortures for an uncertainty, and for entering, without hesitation, on an everlasting exile, through a bitter death, when there was a doubt as to the recompense of their reward. But far be it from us to think that in our faith or hope anything, as he supposes, depends on the fluctuating judgment of the individual, and that the whole of it does not rest on sure and solid truth, having been commended by miracles and revelations from above, founded and consecrated by the Son of the Virgin, by the Blood of the Redeemer, by the glory of the risen Christ. These infallible proofs have been given us in superabundance. But if not, the Spirit itself, lastly, bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. How, then, can any one dare to call faith opinion, unless it be that he has not yet received that Spirit, or unless he either knows not the Gospel or thinks it to be a fable? I know in whom I have believed, and I am confident (2 Tim. i. 12), cries the Apostle, and you mutter in my ears that faith is only an opinion. Do you prate to me that that is ambiguous than which there is nothing more certain? But Augustine says otherwise: "Faith is not held by any one in whose heart it is, by conjectures or opinions, but it is sure knowledge and has the assent of the conscience." Far be it from us, then, to

suppose that the Christian faith has as its boundaries those opinions of the Academicians, whose boast it is that they doubt of everything, and know nothing. But I for my part walk securely, according to the saying of the teacher of the Gentiles, and I know that I shall not be confounded. I am satisfied, I confess, with his definition of faith, even though this man stealthily accuses it. Faith, he says, is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. xi. 1). The substance, he says, of things hoped for, not a phantasy of empty conjectures. You. hear, that it is a substance; and therefore it is not allowed you in our faith, to suppose or oppose at your pleasure, nor to wander hither and thither amongst empty opinions, through devious errors. Under the name of substance something certain and fixed is put before you. You are enclosed in known bounds, shut in within fixed limits. For faith is not an opinion, but a certitude.

10. But now notice other points. I pass over his saying that the spirit of the fear of the Lord was not in the Lord; that there will be no holy fear of the Lord in the world to come; that after the consecration of the bread and of the cup, the former accidents which remain are suspended in the air; that the suggestions of devils come to us, as their sagacious wickedness knows how, by the contact of stones and herbs; and that they are able to discern in such natural objects strength suited to excite various passions; that the Holy Spirit is the anima mundi; that the world, as Plato says, is so much a more excellent animal, as it has a better soul in the Holy Spirit. Here while he exhausts his strength to make Plato a Christian, he proves himself a heathen. All these things and his other numerous silly stories of the same kind I pass by, I come to graver matters. To answer them all would require volumes. I speak only of those on which I cannot keep silence.

CHAPTER V

HE ACCUSES ABAELARD FOR PREFERRING HIS OWN OPINIONS AND EVEN FANCIES TO THE UNANIMOUS CONSENT OF THE FATHERS, ESPECIALLY WHERE HE DECLARES THAT CHRIST DID NOT BECOME INCARNATE IN ORDER TO SAVE MAN FROM THE POWER OF THE DEVIL.

11. I find in a book of his sentences, and also in an exposition of his of the Epistle to the Romans, that this rash inquirer into the Divine Majesty attacks the mystery of our Redemption. He admits in the very beginning of his disputation that there has never been but one conclusion in our ecclesiastical doctors on this point, and this he states only to spurn it, and boasts that he has a better; not

fearing, against the precept of the Wise Man, To cross the ancient boundaries which our fathers have marked out (Prov. xxii. 28). It is needful to know, he says, that all our doctors since the Apostles agree in this, that the devil had power and dominion over man, and that he rightly possessed it, because man, by an act of the free will which he had, voluntarily consented to the devil. For they say that if any one conquers another, the conquered rightly becomes the slave of his conqueror. Therefore, he says, as the doctors teach, the Son of God became incarnate under this necessity, that since man could not otherwise be freed, he might, by the death of an innocent man, be set free from the yoke of the devil. But as it seems to us, he says, neither had the devil ever any power over man, except by the permission of God, as a jailer might, nor was it to free man that the Son of God assumed flesh. Which am I to think the more intolerable in these words, the blasphemy or the arrogance? Which is the more to be condemned, his rashness or his impiety? Would not the mouth of him who speaks such things be more justly beaten with rods than confuted with reasons? Does not he whose hand is against every man, rightly provoke every man's hand to be raised against him? All, he says, says so, but so do not I. What, then, do you say? What better statement have you? What more subtle reason have you discovered? What more secret revelation do you boast of which has passed by the Saints and escaped from the wise? He, I suppose, will give us secret waters and hidden bread.

12. Tell us, nevertheless, that truth which has shown itself to you and to none else. Is it that it was not to free man that the Son of God became man? No one, you excepted, thinks this; you stand alone. For not from a wise man, nor prophet, nor apostle, nor even from the Lord Himself have you received this. The teacher of the Gentiles received from the Lord what he has handed down to us (1 Cor. xi. 23). The Teacher of all confesses that His doctrine is not His own, for I do not, He says, speak of Myself (S. John vii. 16 and xiv. 10), while you give us of your own, and what you have received from no one. He who speaketh a lie speaketh of his own (ibid. viii. 44). Keep for yourself what is your own. I listen to Prophets and Apostles, I obey the Gospel, but not the Gospel according to Peter. Do you found for us a new Gospel? The Church does not receive a fifth Evangelist. What other Gospel do the Law, the Prophets, apostles, and apostolic men preach to us than that which you alone deny, viz., that God became man to free man? And if an angel from heaven should preach to us any other Gospel, let him be anathema.

13. But you do not accept the Doctors since the Apostles, because you perceive yourself to be a man above all teachers. For example, you do not blush

to say that all are against you, when they all agree together. To no purpose, therefore, should I place before you the faith and doctrine of those teachers whom you have just proscribed. I will take you to the Prophets. Under the type of Jerusalem the prophet speaks, or rather the Lord in the prophet speads to His chosen people: I will save you and deliver you, fear not (Wisd. iii. 16). You ask, from what power? For you do not admit that the devil has or ever has had power over man. Neither; I confess, do I. It is not, however, that he has it riot because you and I wish it not. If you do not confess it, you know it not; they whom the Lord has redeemed out of the hand of the enemy, they know it and confess it. And you would by no means deny it, if you were not under the hand of the enemy. You cannot give thanks with the redeemed, because you have not been redeemed. For if you had been redeemed you would recognize your Redeemer, and would not deny your redemption. Nor does the man, who knows not himself to be a captive, seek to be redeemed. Those who knew it called unto the Lord, and the Lord heard them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And that you may understand who this enemy is, He says: Those whom He redeemed from the hand of the enemy He gathered out of all lands (Ps. cvii. 2, 3). But first, indeed, recognize Him Who gathered them, of Whom Caiaphas in the Gospel prophesied, saying that Jesus should die for the people, and the Evangelist proceeds thus: And not for that nation only, but that He might gather together into one all the children of God which were scattered abroad (S. John xi. 51, 52). Whither had they been scattered? Into all lands. Therefore those whom He redeemed He gathered together from all lands. He first redeemed, then gathered them. For they were not only scattered, but also taken captive. He redeemed and gathered them; but redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. He does not say of the enemies, but of the enemy. The enemy was one, the lands many. Indeed, he gathered them not from one land, but from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. What Lord was there so powerful, who governed not one land but all lands? No other, I suppose, than He who by another prophet is said to drink up a river, that is, the human race, and not to wonder; and to trust that he can also, draw up into his mouth Jordan, i.e., the elect (Job xl. 18). Blessed are they who so flow in that they can flow out, who so enter that they can go out.

14. But now perhaps you do not believe the Prophets, thus speaking with one accord of the power of the devil over man. Come with me then to the Apostles. You said, did you not? that you do not agree with those who have come since the Apostles; may you agree then with the Apostles; and perhaps that may happen to

you which one of them describes, speaking. of certain persons: If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26). It is Paul who thus asserts that men are taken captive by the devil at his will. Do you hear? “at his will;” and do you deny his power? But if you do not believe Paul, come now to the Lord Himself, if perchance you may listen to Him and be put to silence. By Him the devil is called the prince of this world (S. John xiv. 30), and the strong man armed (S. Luke xi. 21), and the possessor of goods (S. Matt. xii. 29), and yet you say that he has no power over men. Perhaps you think the house in this place is not to be understood of the world, nor the goods of men. But if the world is the house of the devil and men his goods, how can it be said he has no power over men? Moreover, the Lord said to those who took Him: This is your hour and the power of darkness (S. Luke xxii. 53). That power did not escape him who said: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. i. 13)The Lord then neither denied the power of the devil even over Him, nor that of Pilate, who was a member of the devil. He said: Thou couldst have no power against me at all except it were given thee from above (S. John xix. 11). But if that power given from above so violently raged against the green tree, how is it that it did not dare to touch the dry? Nor I suppose will he say, that it was an unjust power which was given from above. Let him, therefore, learn that not only had the devil power over man, but also a just power, and in consequence let him see this, that the Son of God came in the flesh to set man free. But though we say that the power of the devil was a just one we do not say that his will was. Whence it is not the devil who usurped the power, who is just, nor man who deservedly was subjected to it; but the Lord is just, who permitted the subjection. For any one is called just and unjust, not from his power but from his will. This power of the devil over man though not rightly acquired, but wickedly usurped, was yet justly permitted. And in this way man was justly taken captive, viz., that the justice was neither in the devil, nor in man, but in God.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE WORK OF THE REDEMPTION OF MAN, NOT ONLY THE MERCY, BUT ALSO THE JUSTICE, OF GOD IS DISPLAYED.

15. Man therefore was lawfully delivered up, but mercifully set free. Yet mercy

was shown in such a way that a kind of justice was not lacking even in his liberation, since, as was most fitting for man's recovery, it was part of the mercy of the liberator to employ justice rather than power against man's enemy. For what could man, the slave of sin, fast bound by the devil, do of himself to recover that righteousness which he had formerly lost? Therefore he who lacked righteousness had another's imputed to him, and in this way: The prince of this world came and found nothing in the Saviour; and because he notwithstanding laid hands on the Innocent he lost most justly those whom he held captive; since He who owed nothing to death, lawfully freed him who was subject to it, both from the debt of death, and the dominion of the devil, by accepting the injustice of death; for with what justice could that be exacted from man a second time? It was man who owed the debt, it was man who paid it. For if one, says S. Paul, died for all, then were all dead (2 Cor. v. 14), so that, as One bore the sins of all, the satisfaction of One is imputed to all. It is not that one forfeited, another satisfied; the Head and body is one, viz., Christ. The Head, therefore, satisfied for the members, Christ for His children, since, according to the Gospel of Paul, by which Peter's falsehood is refuted, He who died for us, quickened us together with Himself, forgiving us all our trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross, having spoiled principalities and powers (Col. ii. 13, 14).

16. May I be found amongst those spoils of which the opposing powers were deprived, and be handed over into the possession of my Lord. If Laban pursue the and reproach me for having left him by stealth, he shall be told that I came to him by stealth, and therefore so left him. The secret power of sin subjected me, the hidden plan of righteousness freed me from him; or I will reply, that if I was sold for nothing shall I not be freely redeemed? If Asshur has reproached me without cause, he has no right to demand the cause of my escape. But if he says, "Your father sold you into captivity," I will reply, "But my Brother redeemed me." Why should not righteousness come to me from another when guilt came upon me from another? One made me a sinner, the other justifies me from sin; the one by generation, the other by His blood. Shall there be sin in the seed of the sinner and not righteousness in the blood of Christ? But he will say, "Let righteousness be whose it may, it is none of yours." Be it so. But let guilt also be whose it may, it is none of mine. Shall the righteousness of the righteous be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked not be upon him? It is not fitting for the son to bear the iniquity of the father, and yet to have no share in the righteousness of his brother. But now by man came death, by Man also came

life. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22). I attain to une and to the other in the same way: to the one by the flesh, to the other by faith. And if from the one I was infected with concupiscence from my birth, by Christ spiritual grace was infused into me. What more does this hired advocate bring against me? If he urges generation, I oppose regeneration; and add that the former is but carnal, while the latter is spiritual. Nor does equity suffer that they fight as equals, but the higher nature is the more efficacious cause, and therefore the spirit must necessarily overcome the flesh. In other words, the second birth is so much the more beneficial as the first was baneful. The offence, indeed, came to me, but so did grace; and not as the offence so also is the free gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification (Rom. v. 16). From the first man flowed down the offence, from the highest heaven came down the free gift: both from our father, one from our first father, the other from the Supreme Father. My earthly birth destroys me, and does not my heavenly much more save me I? And I am not afraid of being rejected by the Father of lights when I have been rescued in this way from the power of darkness, and justified through His grace by the blood of His Son: It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? He who had mercy on the sinner will not condemn the righteous; I mean that I am righteous, but it is in His righteousness, for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. x. 4). In short, He was made our righteousness by God the Father (1 Cor. i. 30). Is not that righteousness mine which was made for me? If my guilt was inherited, why should not my righteousness be accorded to me? And, truly, what is given me is safer than what was born in me. For this, indeed, has whereof to glory, but not before God; but that, since it is effectual to my salvation, has nothing whereof to glory save in the Lord. For if I be righteous, says Job, yet will I not lift up my head (Job x. 15), lest I receive the answer: What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? (1 Cor. iv. 7).

CHAPTER VII

HE SEVERELY REPROVES ABAELARD FOR SCRUTINIZING RASHLY AND IMPIOUSLY, AND EXTENUATING THE POWER OF, THE SECRET THINGS OF GOD.

17. This is the righteousness of man in the blood of the Redeemer: which this son of perdition, by his scoffs and insinuations, is attempting to render vain; so

much so, that he thinks and argues that the whole fact that the Lord of Glory emptied Himself, that He was made lower than the angels, that He was born of a woman, that He lived in the world, that He made trial of our infirmities, that He suffered indignities, that at last He returned to His own place by the way of the Cross, that all this is to be reduced to one reason alone, viz., that it was done merely that He might give man by His life and teaching a rule of life, and by His suffering and death might set before him a goal of charity. Did He, then, teach righteousness and not bestow it? Did He show charity and not infuse it, and did He so return to His heaven? Is this, then, the whole of the great mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (1 Tim. iii. 16). O, incomparable doctor! he lays bare to himself the deep things of God, he makes them clear and easy to every one, and by his false teaching he so renders plain and evident the most lofty sacrament of grace, the mystery hidden from the ages, that any uncircumcised and unclean person can lightly penetrate to the heart of it: as though the wisdom of God knew not how to guard or neglected to guard against what Itself forbade, but had Itself given what is holy to the dogs and cast its pearls before swine. But it is not so. For though it was manifested in the flesh, yet it was justified in the Spirit: so that spiritual things are bestowed upon spiritual men, and the natural man does not perceive the things which are of the Spirit of God. Nor does our faith consist in wisdom of words but in the power of God. And, therefore, the Saviour says: I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes (S. Matt. xi. 25). And the Apostle says: If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost (2 Cor. iv. 3).

18. But see this man scoffing at the things which are of the Spirit of God, because they seem to him folly, and insulting the Apostle who speaks the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery, inveighing against the Gospel and even blaspheming the Lord. How much more prudent would he be if he would deign to believe what he has no power to comprehend, and would not dare to despise or tread under foot this sacred and holy mystery! It is a long task to reply to all the follies and calumnies which he charges against the Divine counsel. Yet I take a few, from which the rest may be estimated. “Since,” he says, “Christ set free the elect only, how were they more than now, whether in this world or the next, under the power of the devil?” I answer: It was just because they were under the power of the devil, by whom, says the Apostle, they were taken captive at his

will (2 Tim. ii. 26), that there was need of a liberator in order that the purpose of God concerning them might be fulfilled. But it behoved Him to set them free in this world, that He might have them as freeborn sons in the next. Then he rejoins: “Well, did the devil also torture the poor man who was in the bosom of Abraham as he did the rich man who was condemned, or had he power over Abraham himself and the rest of the elect?” No, but he would have had if they had not been set free by their faith in a future Deliverer, as of Abraham it is written: Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Gen. xv. 6). Again: Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad (S. John viii. 56). Therefore even then the Blood of Christ was bedewing Lazarus, that he might not feel the flames, because he had believed on Him who should suffer. So are we to think of all the saints of that time, that they were born just as ourselves under the power of darkness, because of original sin, but rescued before they died, and that by nothing else but the blood of Christ. For it is written: The multitudes that went before and that followed, cried saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord (S. Matt. xxi. 9). Therefore blessing was given to Christ coming in the flesh, both before He came and afterwards, by multitudes of those who had been blessed by Him, although those who went before did not obtain a full blessing, this, of course, having been kept as the prerogative of the time of grace.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEREFORE CHRIST UNDERTOOK A METHOD OF SETTING US FREE SO PAINFUL AND LABORIOUS, WHEN A WORD FROM HIM, OR AN ACT OF HIS WILL, WOULD ALONE HAVE SUFFICED.

19. Then he labours to teach and persuade us that the devil could not and ought not to have claimed for himself any right over man, except by the permission of God, and that, without doing any injustice to the devil, God could have called back His deserter, if He wished to show him mercy, and have rescued him by a word only, as though any one denies this; oxen after much more he proceeds: “And so what necessity, or what reason, or what need was there, when the Divine compassion by a simple command could have freed man from sin, for the Son of God to take flesh for our redemption, to suffer so many and such great privations, scorn, scourgings, and spittings on, in short, the pain and ignominy of the cross itself, and that with evil doers?” I reply: The necessity was ours, the hard necessity of those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. The need, equally ours, and God’s, and the Holy Angels! Ours, tat He might remove the

yoke of our captivity; His own, that He might fulfil the purpose of His will; the Angels', that their number might be filled up. Further, the reason of this deed was the good pleasure of the Doer. Who denies that there were ready for the Almighty other and yet other ways to redeem us, to justify us, to set us free? But this takes nothing from the efficacy of the one which He chose out of many. And, perhaps, the greatest excellence of the way chosen is that in a land of forgetfulness, of slowness of spirit, and of constant offending, we are more forcibly and more vividly warned by so many and such great sufferings of our Restorer. Beyond that no man knows, nor can know to the full, what treasures of grace, what harmony with wisdom, what increase of glory, what advantages for salvation the inscrutable depth of this holy mystery contains within itself, that mystery which the Prophet when considering trembled at, but did not penetrate (Habak. iii. 2 in LXX), and which the forerunner of the Lord thought himself unworthy to unloose (S. John i. 27).

20. But though it is not allowed us to scrutinize the mystery of the Divine Will, yet we may feel the effect of its work and perceive the fruit of its usefulness. And what we may know we may not keep to ourselves, for to conceal their word is to give glory to kings, but God is glorified by our investigating His sayings. [Prov. xxv. 2. But the sense of the text is the reverse of this.] Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptation, that while we were yet sinners we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. v. 10). "Where there is reconciliation there is also remission of sins. For if, as the Scripture says, our sins separate between us and God" (Is. lix. 2), there is no reconciliation while sin remains. In what, then, is remission of sins? This cup, He says, is the new testament in My Blood which shall be shed for you for the remission of sins (S. Matt. xxvi. 28). Therefore where there is reconciliation there is remission of sins. And what is that but justification? Whether, therefore, we call it reconciliation, or remission of sins, or justification, or, again, redemption, or liberation from the chains of the devil, by whom we were taken captive at his will, at all events by the death of the Only Begotten, we obtain that we have been justified freely by His blood, in whom, as S. Paul says again, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. i. 7). You say, Why by His blood when He could have wrought it by His Word? Ask Himself. It is only allowed me to know that it is so, not why it is so. Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, "Why hast Thou made me thus?"

21. But these things seem to him foolishness, he, cannot restrain his laughter;

listen to his jeering. “Why does the Apostle say,” he asks, “that we are justified, or reconciled to God by the death of His Son, when He ought to have been the more angry with man, as he sinned more deeply in crucifying Ibis Son, than in transgressing His first command by tasting of the apple?” As if the iniquity of the malignant were not able to displease, and the godliness of the sufferer to please God, and that in one and the same act. “But,” he replies, “if that sin of Adam was so heinous that it could not be expiated but by the death of Christ, what expiation shall suffice for that homicide which was perpetrated upon Christ?” I answer in two words, That very Blood which they shed, and the prayer of Him whom they slew. Ire asks again: “Did the death of His innocent Son so please God the Father that by it He was reconciled to us, who had committed such a sin in Adam, that because of it our innocent Lord was slain? Would He not have been able to forgive us much more easily if so heinous a sin had not been committed?” It was not His death alone that pleased the Father, but His voluntary surrender to death; and by that death destroying death, working salvation, restoring innocence, triumphing over principalities and powers, spoiling hell, enriching heaven, making peace between things in heaven and things on earth, and renewing all things. And since this so precious death to be voluntarily submitted to against sin could not take place except through sin, He did not indeed delight in, but He made good use of, the malice of the wrong-doers, and found the means to condemn death and sin by the death of His Son, and the sin [of those who condemned Him]. And the greater their iniquity, the more holy His will, and the more powerful to salvation; because, by the interposition of so great a power, that ancient sin, however great, would necessarily give way to that committed against Christ, as the less to the greater. Nor is this victory to be ascribed to the sin or to the sinners, but to Him who extracted good from their sin, and who bore bravely with the sinners, and turned to a godly purpose whatever the cruelty of the impious ventured on against Himself.

22. Thus the Blood which was shed was so powerful for pardoning that it blotted out that greatest sin of all, by which it came to pass that it was shed; and, therefore, left no doubt whatever about the blotting out of that ancient and lighter sin. Thus he rejoins: “Is there any one to whom it does not seem cruel and unjust, that any one should require the blood of an innocent man as the price of some thing, or that the death of an innocent man should in any way give him pleasure, not to say that God should hold so acceptable the death of His Son as by it to be reconciled to the whole world?” God the Father did not require the

Blood of His Son, but, nevertheless, He accepted it when offered; it was not blood He thirsted for, but salvation, for salvation was in the blood. He died, in short, for our salvation, and not for the mere exhibition of charity, as this man thinks and writes. For he so concludes the numerous calumnies and reproaches, which he as impiously as ignorantly belches out against God, as to say that "the whole reason why God appeared in the flesh was for our education by His word and example," or, as he afterwards says, for our instruction; that the whole reason why He suffered and died was to exhibit or commend to us charity.

CHAPTER IX

THAT CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD, NOT ONLY TO INSTRUCT US, BUT ALSO TO FREE US FROM SIN.

23. But what profits it that He should instruct us if He did not first restore us by His grace? Or are we not in vain instructed if the body of sin is not first destroyed in us, that we should no more serve sin? If all the benefit that we derive from Christ consists in the exhibition of His virtues, it follows that Adam must be said to harm us only by the exhibition of sin. But in truth the medicine given was proportioned to the disease. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. xv. 22). As is the one, so is the other. If the life which Christ gives is nothing else but His instruction, the death which Adam gave is in like manner only his instruction; so that the one by his example leads men to sin, the other by His example and His Word leads them to a holy life and to love Him. But if we rest in the Christian faith, and not in the heresy of Pelagius, and confess that by generation and not by example was the sin of Adam imparted to us, and by sin death, let us also confess that it is necessary for righteousness to be restored to us by Christ, not by instruction, but by regeneration, and by righteousness life (Rom. v. 18). And if this be so, how can Peter say that the only purpose and cause of the Incarnation was that He might enlighten the world by the light of His wisdom and inflame it with love of Him? Where, then, is redemption? There come from Christ, as he deigns to confess, merely illumination and enkindling to love. Whence come redemption and liberation?

24. Grant that the coming of Christ profits only those who are able to conform their lives to His, and to repay to Him the debt of love, what about babes? What light of wisdom will he give to those who have barely seen the light of life? Whence will they gain power to ascend to God who have not even learned to

love their mothers? Will the coming of Christ profit them nothing? Is it of no avail to them that they have been planted together with Him by baptism in the likeness of His death, since through the weakness of their age they are not able to know of, or to love, Christ? Our redemption, he says, consists in that supreme love which is inspired in us by the passion of Christ. Therefore, infants have no redemption because they have not that supreme love. Perhaps he holds that as they have no power to love, so neither have they necessity to perish, that they have no need to be regenerated in Christ because they have received no damage from their generation from Adam. If he thinks this, he thinks foolishness with Pelagius. Whichever of these two opinions he holds, his ill-will to the sacrament of our salvation is evident; and in attributing the whole of our salvation to devotion, and nothing of it to regeneration, it is evident too that, as far as he can, he would empty of meaning the dispensation of this deep mystery; for he places the glory of our redemption and the great work of salvation, not in the virtue of the Cross, not in the blood paid as its price, but in our advances in a holy life. But God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. vi. 14), in which are our salvation, life, and resurrection.

25. And, indeed, I see three chief virtues in this work of our salvation: the form of humility in which God emptied Himself; the measure of charity which He stretched out even to death, and that the death of the Cross; the mystery of redemption, by which He bore that death which He underwent. The former two of these without the last are as if you were to paint on the air. A very great and most necessary example of humility, a great example of charity, and one worthy of all acceptation, has He set us; but they have no foundation, and, therefore, no stability, if redemption be wanting. I wish to follow with all my strength the lowly Jesus; I wish Him, who loved me and gave Himself for me, to embrace me with the arms of His love, which suffered in my stead; but I must also feed on the Paschal Lamb, for unless I eat His Flesh and drink His Blood I have no life in me. It is one thing to follow Jesus, another to hold Him, another to feed on Him. To follow Him is a life-giving purpose; to hold and embrace Him a solemn joy; to feed on Him a blissful life. For His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. The bread of God is He who cometh down from Heaven and giveth life to the world (S. John vi. 56, 33). What stability is there for joy, what constancy of purpose, without life? Surely no more than for a picture without a solid basis. Similarly neither the examples of humility nor the proofs of charity are anything without the sacrament of our redemption.

26. These results of the labour of the hands of your son, my lord and father,

you now hold, such as they are, against a few heads of this new heresy; in which if you see nothing besides my zeal, yet I have meanwhile satisfied my own conscience. For since there was nothing that I could do against the injury to the faith, which I deplored, I thought it worth while to warn him, whose arms are the power of God, for the destruction of contrary imaginations, to destroy every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. There are other points in his other writings, not few nor less evil; but the limits of my time and of a letter do not allow me to reply to them. Moreover, I do not think it necessary, since they are so manifest, that they may be easily refuted even by ordinary faith. Still, I have collected some and sent them to you.

LETTER LXI (A.D. 1138)

To Louis the Younger, King of the French

He endeavours to defend the election of Geoffrey, Prior of Clairvaux, to the See of Langres; to which the King had appeared adverse.

1. If the whole world were to conjure me to join it in some enterprise against your royal Majesty, I should still through fear of God not dare lightly to offend a King ordained by Him. Nor am I ignorant who it is that has said, Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God (Rom. xiii. 2). Nor yet do I forget how contrary is lying to the Christian calling and still more so to my profession. I say the truth, I lie not; what was done at Langres in the matter of our Prior was contrary to my expectation and my intention and that of the Bishops. But there is One who knows how to gain the assent of the unwilling, and who compels, as He wills, the adverse wills of man to subserve His counsel. Why should I not fear for him whom I love as my own soul, that danger which I have ever feared for myself? Why should I not shrink from the companionship of those who bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers? Still, what has been done, has been done; nothing against you, very much against me. The staff of my weakness has been taken from me, the light of mine eyes removed from me, my right arm cut off. All these waves and storms have gone over me. Wrath has swallowed me up, and on no side do I see any way to escape. When I fly from burdens, then I have them placed upon me to my great discomfort. I feel that it is hard for me to kick against the pricks. It would perhaps have been more tolerable for a willing horse than for one that is restive and obstinate. For if there were any strength in me, would it not be easier for me to bear these burdens on my own shoulders than on those of others?

2. But I yield to Him that disposeth otherwise, to contend with whom in wisdom or strength is neither prudent nor possible for either me or the King. He is, indeed, terrible among the kings of the earth. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, even for you, O King. How grieved have I been to

hear things of you so contrary to the fair promise of your early days! How much more bitter will be the grief of the Church, after having tasted first of such great joys, if, which God forbid, she shall chance to be deprived of her pleasant hope of protection under the shield of your good disposition, which up to the present has been held over her. Alas! the Virgin, the Church of Rheims, has fallen, and there is none to lift her up. Langres, too, has fallen, and there is none to stretch out the hand to help. May the goodness of God divert your heart and mind from adding yet more to our grief, and from heaping sorrow upon sorrow. Would that I may die before seeing a king of whom good things were thought, and still better hoped for, endeavouring to go against the counsel of God, stirring up against himself the anger of the supreme Judge, bedewing the feet of the Father of the fatherless with the tears of the afflicted, knocking at heaven's door with the cries of the poor, the prayers of the saints, and with the just complaints of Christ's beloved Bride, the Church of the living God. May all this never happen. I hope for better things, and expect things more joyful. God will not forget to be gracious, nor shut up His loving kindness in displeasure. He will not make His Church sad through him, and because of him, by whom He has already made her so much to rejoice. By His long-suffering He will preserve him whom He freely gave us, and if you think anything otherwise, this also He will reveal to you, and will teach your heart in wisdom. This is my wish, this is my prayer night and day. Think this of me, think it of my brethren. The truth shall not be sinned against by us, nor the King's honour and the good of his kingdom diminished.

3. We give thanks to your clemency for the kindly answer which you deigned to send us. But still we are terrified to delay, as we see the land given over to plunder and robbery. The land is yours; and we plainly see and mourn the disgrace brought on your kingdom by your orders that we should abstain from our rights, inasmuch as there is no one to defend them. For in what else that has been done can the king's majesty be truly said to have been diminished? The election was duly held; the person elected is faithful, which he would not be if he wished to hold your lands otherwise than through you. He has not yet stretched out his hand to your lands, he has not yet entered your city, he has not yet put himself forward in any affair, though most earnestly pressed to do so by the united voice of clergy and people, by the oppression of the afflicted, and by the prayers of all good men. And since this is the state of affairs there is, you see, need for counsel to be quickly taken, not less for the sake of your honour than our necessity. And unless your Serenity give answer according to their petition, by the messengers who bring this, to your faithful people who look to you, the

hearts of many religious men who are now devoted to you will be turned against you (which would not be expedient), and I fear that no little loss will accrue to the regalia belonging to the Church, which yet are yours.

LETTER LXII (A.D. 1139)

To Pope Innocent

On behalf of Falco, Archbishop elect of Lyons.

I think that I, who have so many times been listened to in the affairs of others, shall not be confounded in my own. I, my lord, hold the cause of my Archbishop to be my own, being a member of him, and knowing that there is nothing that affects the head but what touches me, which, nevertheless, I would not say if the man had taken this honour to himself, and had not been called by God, as was Moses. Nor can I think that it was the work of any but Him that the votes of so many men were so readily given him, that there was not even any hesitation, still less opposition. And deservedly so. He is distinguished not only for his high birth, but also for the nobility of his mind, for his knowledge, and his irreproachable life. In short, the integrity of his name fears not the tooth even of a foe. What, therefore, has been so done for so good a man is surely worthy to obtain the favour of the Apostolic See, the fulness of honour, which is the only thing now lacking, to increase the joy of its people that has grown accustomed to its kindness, or, I may say, to the liberality which he has fully deserved. This is what the whole Church, with most earnest supplication, implores; this is what your son, with his usual presumption, entreats of you.

LETTER LXIII (A.D. 1139)

To the Same, in the Name of Godfrey, Bishop of Langres

He expresses the same thought as in the preceding Letter.

Amidst the numerous evils which. nowadays are seen in the churches on the occasion of elections the Lord hath looked down from heaven upon our Mother Church of Lyons, and has without strife given it a worthy successor to Peter of pious memory, its Archbishop, in the person of Falco, its Dean. I ask, my lord, that he who has been unanimously elected by his fellows, promoted for the good of all, and duly consecrated, may receive at your hands the fulness of honour that belongs to his office. And what makes me seek this is not so much consciousness of his merits, but of my duty-duty laid upon me not only by the metropolitan dignity of that Church, but because I am placed in this position in order that I may bear my testimony to the truth.

LETTER LXIV (A.D. 1139)

To the Above-Named Falco

Bernard recommends to hint the interests of certain Religious.

The Lord Bishop and I have written, as we thought we ought to do, to my lord the Pope on your behalf, and you have a copy of your letters. It is our determination to stand by you with all our might, because of the good which we hope for from you for the Church. It concerns you so to act that we may not be disappointed of our hope. For the rest, if I have found favour in your sight I pray you think of those poor and needy ones at the house of Benissons Dieu. Whatsoever you do to one of them you will do to me, nay, to Christ. For they are both poor, and they live amongst the poor. I especially implore you to prevent the monks of Savigny from molesting them, for they are calumniating them unjustly, as I consider. Or if they think that they have justice on their side, judge between them. I ask also that my son, Abbot Alberic, though well deserving of your favour through his own merits, may still be in even greater regard through my recommendation. For I love him tenderly, as a mother loves her only child, and he that loveth me will love him. In fact, I shall find out whether you care for me by the way you treat him. For the farther he is away from me the more necessary is it that he should have consolation from your fatherly care.

LETTER XLV (circa A.D. 1140)

To the Canons of Lyons, on the Conception of S. Mary.

Bernard states that the Festival of the Conception was new; that it rested on no legitimate foundation; and that it should not have been instituted without consulting the Apostolic See, to whose opinion he submits.

1. It is well known that among all the Churches of France that of Lyons is first in importance, whether we regard the dignity of its See, its praiseworthy regulations, or its honourable zeal for learning. Where was there ever the vigour of discipline more flourishing, a more grave and religious life, more consummate wisdom, a greater weight of authority, a more imposing antiquity? Especially in the Offices of the Church, that of Lyons has always shown itself opposed to attempts at sudden innovation, and it is a proof of her fulness of judgment that she has never suffered herself to be stained with the mark of rash and hasty levity. Wherefore I cannot but wonder that there should have been among you at this time some who wished to sully this splendid fame of your Church by introducing a new Festival, a rite which the Church knows nothing of, and which reason does not prove, nor ancient tradition hand down to us. Have we the pretension to be more learned or more devoted than the Fathers? It is a dangerous presumption to establish in such a matter what their prudence left unestablished. And the matter in question is of such a nature that it could not possibly have escaped the diligence of the Fathers if they had not thought that they ought not to occupy themselves with it.

2. The Mother of the Lord, you say, ought greatly to be honoured. You say well, but the honour of a queen loves justice. The royal Virgin does not need false honour, since she is amply supplied with true titles to honour and badges of her dignity. Honour indeed the purity of her flesh, the sanctity of her life, wonder at her motherhood as a virgin, adore her Divine offspring. Extol the prodigy by which she brought into the world without pain the Son, whom she had conceived without concupiscence. Proclaim her to be reverenced by the angels, to have been desired by the nations, to have been known beforehand by

Patriarchs and Prophets, chosen by God out of all women and raised above them all. Magnify her as the medium by whom grace was displayed, the instrument of salvation, the restorer of the ages; and finally extol her as having been exalted above the choirs of angels to the celestial realms. These things the Church sings concerning her, and has taught me to repeat the same things in her praise, and what I have learnt from the Church I both hold securely myself and teach to others; what I have not received from the Church I confess I should with great difficulty admit. I have received then from the Church that day to be reverenced with the highest veneration, when being taken up from this sinful earth, she made entry into the heavens; a festival of most honoured joy. With no less clearness have I learned in the Church to celebrate the birth of the Virgin, and from the Church undoubtedly to hold it to have been holy and joyful; holding most firmly with the Church, that she received in the womb that she should come into the world holy. And indeed I read concerning Jeremiah, that before he came forth from the womb [ventre : otherwise de vulva] he was sanctified, and I think no otherwise of John the Baptist, who, himself in the womb of his mother, felt the presence of his Lord in the womb (S. Luke i. 41). It is matter for consideration whether the same opinion may not be held of holy David, on account of what he said in addressing God: In Thee I have been strengthened from the womb: Thou art He who took me out of my mother's bowels (Ps. lxxi. 6); and again: I was cast upon Thee from the womb: Thou art my God from my mother's belly (Ps. xxii. 10). And Jeremiah is thus addressed: Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee (Jer. i. 5). How beautifully the Divine oracle has distinguished between conception in the womb and birth from the womb! and showed that if the one was foreseen only, the other was blessed beforehand with the gift of holiness: that no one might think that the glory of Jeremiah consisted only in being the object of the foreknowledge of God, but also of His predestination.

3. Let us, however, grant this in the case of Jeremiah. What shall be said of John the Baptist, of whom an angel announced beforehand that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb? I cannot suppose that this is to be referred to predestination or to foreknowledge. For the words of the angel were without doubt fulfilled in their time, as he foretold; and the man (as cannot be doubted) filled with the Holy Ghost at the time and place appointed, as he predicted. But most certainly the Holy Ghost sanctified the man whom He filled. But how far this sanctification availed against original sin, whether for him, or for that prophet, or for any other who was thus prevented by grace, I

would not rashly determine. But of these holy persons whom God has sanctified, and brought forth from the womb with the same sanctification which they have received in the womb, I do not hesitate to say that the taint of original sin which they contracted in conception, could not in any manner take away or fetter by the mere act of birth, the benediction already bestowed. Would any one dare to say that a child filled with the Holy Ghost, would remain notwithstanding a child of wrath; and if he had died in his mother's womb, where he had received this fulness of the Spirit, would endure the pains of damnation? That opinion is very severe; I, however, do not dare to decide anything respecting the question by my own judgment. However that may be, the Church, which regards and declares, not the nativity, but only the death of other saints as precious, makes a singular exception for him of whom an angel singularly said, and many shall rejoice in his birth (Luke i. 14., 15), and with rejoicing honours his nativity. For why should not the birth be holy, and even glad and joyful, of one who leaped with joy even in the womb of his mother?

4. The gift, therefore, which has certainly been conferred upon some, though few, mortals, cannot for a moment be supposed to have been denied to that so highly favoured Virgin, through whom the whole human race came forth into life. Beyond doubt the mother of the Lord also was holy before birth; nor is holy Church at all in error in accounting the day of her nativity holy, and celebrating it each year with solemn and thankful joy. I consider that the blessing of a fuller sanctification descended upon her, so as not only to sanctify her birth, but also to keep her life pure from all sin; which gift is believed to have been bestowed upon none other born of women. This singular privilege of sanctity, to lead her life without any sin, entirely befitted the queen of virgins, who should bear the Destroyer of sin and death, who should obtain the gift of life and righteousness for all. Therefore, her birth was holy, since the abundant sanctity bestowed upon it made it holy even from the womb.

5. What addition can possibly be made to these honours? That her conception, also, they say, which preceded her honourable birth, should be honoured, since if the one had not first taken place, neither would the other, which is honoured. But what if some one else, following a similar train of reasoning, should assert that the honours of a festival ought to be given to each of her parents, then to her grand-parents, and then to their parents, and so on ad infinitum? Thus we should have festivals without number. Such a frequency of joys befits Heaven, not this state of exile. It is the happy lot of those who dwell there, not of strangers and pilgrims. But a writing is brought forward, given, as they say, by revelation from

on high, as if any one would not be able to bring forward another writing in which the Virgin should seem to demand the same honours to her parents also, saying, according to the commandment of the Lord, Honour thy father and thy mother (Exod. xx. 12). I easily persuade myself not to be influenced by such writings, which are supported neither by reason nor by any certain authority. For how does the consequence follow that since the conception has preceded the birth, and the birth is holy, the conception should be considered holy also? Did it make the birth holy because it preceded it? Although the one came first that the other might be, yet not that it might be holy. From whence came that holiness to the conception which was to be transmitted to the birth which followed? Was it not rather because the conception preceded without holiness that it was needful for the being conceived to be sanctified, that a holy birth might then follow? Or shall we say that the birth which was later than the conception shared with it its holiness? It might be, indeed, that the sanctification which was worked in her when conceived passed over to the birth which followed; but it could not be possible that it should have a retrospective effect upon the conception which had preceded it.

6. Whence, then, was the holiness of that conception? Shall it be said that Mary was so prevented by grace that, being holy before being conceived, she was therefore conceived without sin; or that, being holy before being born, she has therefore communicated holiness to her birth? But in order to be holy it is necessary to exist, and a person does not exist before being conceived. Or perhaps, when her parents were united, holiness was mingled with the conception itself, so that she was at once conceived and sanctified. But this is not tenable in reason. For how can there be sanctity without the sanctifying Spirit, or the co-operation of the Holy Spirit with sin? Or how could there not be sin where concupiscence was not wanting? Unless, perhaps, some one will say that she was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and not by man, which would be a thing hitherto unheard of. I say, then, that the Holy Spirit came upon her, not within her, as the Angel declared: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (S. Luke i. 35). And if it is permitted to say what the Church thinks, and the Church thinks that which is true, I say that she conceived by the Holy Spirit, but not that she was conceived by Him; that she was at once Mother and Virgin, but not that she was born of a virgin. Otherwise, where will be the prerogative of the Mother of the Lord, to have united in her person the glory of maternity and that of virginity, if you give the same glory to her mother also? This is not to honour the Virgin, but to detract from her honour. If, therefore, before her conception she could not

possibly be sanctified, since she did not exist, nor in the conception itself, because of the sin which inhered in it, it remains to be believed that she received sanctification when existing in the womb after conception, which, by excluding sin, made her birth holy, but not her conception.

7. Wherefore, although it has been given to some, though few, of the sons of men to be born with the gift of sanctity, yet to none has it been given to be conceived with it. So that to One alone should be reserved this privilege, to Him who should make all holy, and coming into the world, He alone, without sin should make an atonement for sinners. The Lord Jesus, then, alone was conceived by the Holy Ghost, because He alone was holy before He was conceived. He being excepted, all the children of Adam are in the same case as he who confessed of himself with great humility and truth, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me (Ps. li. 6).

8. And as this is so, what ground can there be for a Festival of the Conception of the Virgin? On what principle, I say, is either a conception asserted to be holy which is not by the Holy Ghost, not to say that it is by sin, or a festival be established which is in no wise holy? Willingly the glorious Virgin will be without this honour, by which either a sin seems to be honoured or a sanctity supposed which is not a fact. And, besides, she will by no means be pleased by a presumptuous novelty against the custom of the Church, a novelty which is the mother of rashness, the sister of superstition, the daughter of levity. For if such a festival seemed advisable, the authority of the Apostolic See ought first to have been consulted, and the simplicity of inexperienced persons ought not to have been followed so thoughtlessly and precipitately. And, indeed, I had before noted that error in some persons; but I appeared not to take notice of it, dealing gently with a devotion which sprang from simplicity of heart and love of the Virgin. But now that the superstition has taken hold upon wise men, and upon a famous and noble Church, of which I am specially the son, I know not whether I could longer pass it over without gravely offending you all. But what I have said is in submission to the judgment of whosoever is wiser than myself; and especially I refer the whole of it, as of all matters of a similar kind, to the authority and decision of the See of Rome, and I am prepared to modify my opinion if in anything I think otherwise than that See.

LETTER LXVI (A.D. 1135)

To the Patriarch of Jerusalem

Having received many letters from him, Bernard replies in a friendly manner, and praises the soldiers of the Temple.

I shall seem ungrateful if I do not reply to the many patriarchal letters which you have vouchsafed me. But what more can I do than salute him who has saluted me? For you have prevented me with the blessings of goodness, you have graciously set me the example of sending letters across the sea, you have deprived me of the first share of humility and charity. What fitting return can I now make? In truth, you have left me nothing which in my turn I can give back; for even of your worldly treasures you have been careful to make me a sharer in giving me part of the Cross of the Lord. What then? Ought I to omit what I can do because I cannot do what I ought? I show you my affection at least and my goodwill by merely replying and returning your salutation, which is all that I can do at present, separated as we are by so great a tract of sea and land. I will show, if ever I have the opportunity, that I love not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Give a thought, I pray you, to the soldiers of the Temple, and of your great piety take care of these zealous defenders of the Church. If you cherish those who have devoted their lives for their brethren’s sake you will do a thing acceptable to God and well-pleasing to man. Concerning the place to which you invite me, my brother Andrew will tell you my mind.

THE END

ILLUSTRATIONS

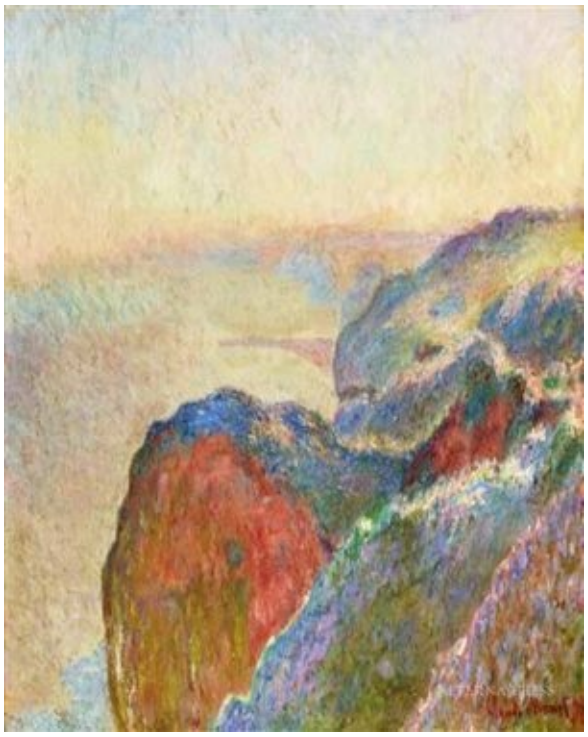


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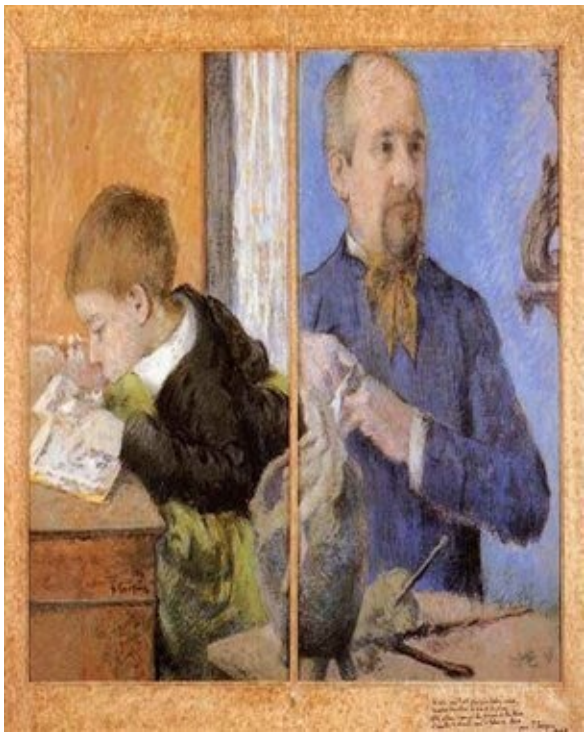


ILLUSTRATION 2



ILLUSTRATION 3



ILLUSTRATION 4



ILLUSTRATION 5



ILLUSTRATION 6



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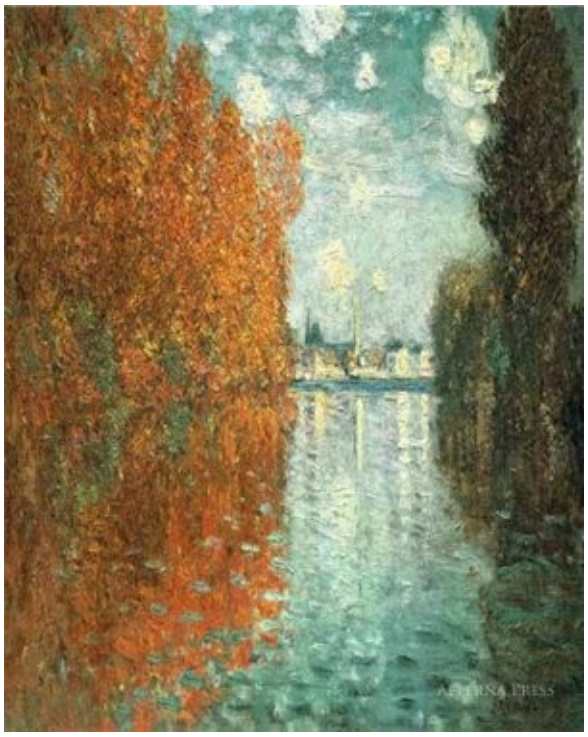


ILLUSTRATION 8



ILLUSTRATION 9



ILLUSTRATION 10