GREAT LETTER WRITERS

S. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

S. BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FROM

THE EDITION OF DOM. JOANNES MABILLON,

OF THE BENEDICTINE CONGREGATION OF S. MAUR (PARIS, 1690),

AND EDITED BY

SAMUEL J. EALES, D.C.L.

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SOME LETTERS OF

SAINT BERNARD

ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX

From the Translation of the late Dr. EALES

Vicar of Stalisfield

SELECTED, WITH A PREFACE, BY

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"THE GREAT PESTILENCE (A.D. 1348–9)"
"THE OLD ENGLISH BIBLE," ETC.

JOHN HODGES

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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.*

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"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.

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Stephen Harding and which S. Robert had founded only a few years previously from Molêsmes. 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.

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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

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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.

Athenæum Club,
All Saints' Day, 1903.

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LETTER I (*circa* 1120)

To the Canons Regular of Horricourt[1]

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 Châlons,[2] 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.

1 The title of this letter follows a MS. at Corbey. It does not appear who these regular canons were.

2 This was William of Champeaux, a friend of S. Bernard, who died in 1121.

LETTER II (A.D. 1126)

To the Monk Adam[3]

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

3 The MS. in the Royal Library is inscribed: *De Discretione Obedientiæ. Of Discernment in Obedience.* This Letter was written after the death of Abbot Arnold, which took place in Belgium in the year 1126.

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?

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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).

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And also to our first father.[4] *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

4 *Protoplastus*, the first formed. Tertullian, *Exhort. ad Castit.*, cap. 2 and *Adv. Jud.*, c. 13, calls Adam and Eve *Protoplasti*.—[E.]

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.

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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.[5]

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5 Reg. Cap. 71.

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 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.

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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.

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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.

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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?

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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,[6] 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![7] 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?

6 Antony, who was called by S. Athanasius "the founder of asceticism," and "a model for monks," is called "Abbas," though he was more properly a hermit, and always refused to take oversight of a monastery. He was born at Coma, in Upper Egypt, about A.D. 250. The Paulus here mentioned was a disciple of Antony. He was remarkable for his childlike docility, on account of which he was surnamed Simplex, and notwithstanding a certain dulness of intellect seems to have shown sometimes remarkable discernment of character.—[E.]

7 This clause is wanting in some MSS.

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.

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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).

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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.

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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

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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,[8] 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.

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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[9] unto the land of the living, and from this foul mire into the

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8 Bruno, son of Englebert, Count of Altena, was consecrated, in 1132.

9 Unlikeness.

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).

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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,[10] 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.

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10 The founder of the Præmonstratensian Order. See respecting him Letter lvi.

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

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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.

34

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.

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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).

38

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 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 VII (*towards the end of* A.D. 1127)

To Matthew, the Legate

40

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.

41

LETTER VIII (*circa* A.D. 1130)

To Gilbert, Bishop of London, Universal Doctor

42

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.

43

LETTER IX (*circa* A.D. 1135)

To Ardutio (or Ardutius, Bishop Elect of Geneva

44

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.

45

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?

46

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

47

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.

48

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,[11] 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.

49

11 This was Robert, to whom Letter I. was addressed.

LETTER XII (A.D. 1127)

To Louis, King of France[12]

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 does 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,[13] 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).

50

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

51

12 Louis VI., "the Fat."

13 Stephen, who was Bishop of Paris from 1124 to 1144. The cause of these persecutions was the withdrawal of Stephen from the Court, and the liberty of the Church which he demanded. Henry, Archbishop of Sens, had a similar difficulty, and for causes not unlike (Letter 49). The mind of the King was not induced to yield by this Letter, and the death of his son Philip, who was already associated with him as King, passed for a punishment from heaven for his obstinacy. It is astonishing that after his death the nobles and bishops should have had thoughts of hindering the succession of Louis the Younger (*Ordericus*, Book xiii. p. 895 sqq.).

the help of poor religious against you, and begs us by the right of brotherhood[14] 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£ our friend, and to render obedience to the priest of God. Farewell.

14 All those who in a Society had the right of suffrage were regarded as brothers. So the monks of Chaise-Dieu call Louis Le Jeune by the name of *brother* (*Duchesne*, Vol. iv. Letter 308).

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,[15] Bishop of Lincoln

54

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).

55

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.[16] 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[17] from his prebend to remain unaltered,

15 This Alexander was Bishop of Lincoln in England from 1123 to 1147

16 Prov. x. 1. Bernard always quotes this passage thus. In the Vulgate it is, *Filius sapiens lætificat patrem.*

17 Letter 18 from the Abbot Philip to Alexander the Third is on a very similar subject, and begs that the property of the Archdeacon of Orleans, who had become a monk, should be given up to his creditors (*Biblioth. Cisterc.* Vol. i. p. 246).

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

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He praises the fatherly gentleness of Alvisus towards Godwin. He excuses himself, and asks pardon for having admitted him.

To Alvisus, Abbot of Anchin.[18]

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.

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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

18 A monastery of the Benedictine Order on the river Scarpe two miles from Douai. It dates from 1029, and was at first named S. Saviour.

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.

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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.

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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,[19] 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

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19 Rule of S. Benedict cap. 63.

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.[20] 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.

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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

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20 *Gravidare; gravare.* —[E.]

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!*

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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.

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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.

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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;

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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?"[21]

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.

21 *Heroid.* Ep. I. v. 11.

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,[22] 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.

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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

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22 Otherwise *viderunt* , have seen.

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[23] 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[24] 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).

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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.[25] 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

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23 *Vinctus* , otherwise *junctus* .

24 Otherwise *voluntatem* .

25 It is, perhaps, of this man that Bernard speaks in his *Apology* c. 10: "I have seen, I do not exaggerate, an abbot going forth escorted by 60 horses and more. . . etc."

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.

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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

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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.

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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

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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.

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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[26] from

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26 *Sugere*. Bernard is playing upon the name of his correspondent Suger.

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 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,[27] 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

27 This deacon was Stephen de Garlande, seneschal or officer of the table to the King of France.

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.[28] 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[29] 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

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28 Bernard here blames equally clerics who bear arms for the King's pay and kings who impose military service upon clerks. Each is wrong: the one because he loses sight of the dignity of his status, the others because they confide without choice or discrimination functions of the Court or of the Army upon clerks instead of giving them to laymen, as they ought.

29 The tonsure, or clerical crown.

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.

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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.

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LETTER XX (*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,[30] 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,[31] 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).

30 Job ii. 10.

31 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

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 ad-

versary 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

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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).

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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."[32] 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[33] 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.

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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

32 *Suus ille quod suus.*

33 It was by the example of the Cistercians, as, I think, all of whose monasteries were dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, that she began to be called Our Lady. Hence, Peter Cellensis says of Bernard: "He was a most devoted child of Our Lady, to whom he dedicated not one church only, but the churches of the whole Cistercian Order" (B. vi. Ep. 23).

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 [34]

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

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34 Some blame and some ridicule such a title as this, as being a vicious pleonasm, since these two words differ only in the language from which each is borrowed, and mean exactly the same thing; as if canons were something different from regulars, or as if there were some canons who were regulars and others who were not. But it may be seen in John Bapt. Signy *Lib. de Ord. Canon*, B. ii., and Navarre, *Com. I. de Regul. ad* c. 12, *Cui portio Deus*, q. 1, where he shows that every pleonasm is not necessarily a battology. For in legal documents certain expressions or clauses are often repeated to give them more force. It is the same in Hebrew (Ps. lxxxvii. 5, Ps. lxviii. 12 Vulg. and lxx.). Oger was the first Dean of the Regular Canons of S. Nicholas des Pres, near Tournay. Picard states this upon the authority of Denis Viller, Canon and Chancellor of Tournay.

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;[35] 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

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35 Bernard had counselled him not to resign his abbacy, and this advice he had not followed. Hence is suggested the serious question: Is it lawful to lay down the pastoral charge, to withdraw one's self from cares and business, for the purpose of serving God in peace and quiet, and caring for one's own soul? The examples of so many holy men whom we know to have done this add to the difficulty of the question. Many might be cited among prelates of lower rank, not a few Bishops, Cardinals, and even some Popes. Bruno III., Count of Altena, and afterwards Bishop of Cologne, quitted his see, in 1119, and retired to the Cistercian monastery of Aldenberg. Eskilus, Archbishop of Lunden, in Denmark, came to live at Clairvaux as a simple monk; Peter Damian, who, from a Benedictine monk, became Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia, after he had rendered signal service to the Church for a number of years, with wonderful constancy, in the high office to which he had been raised, returned into his cell from love of solitude and quiet, and passed the rest of his days in profound peace, in the midst of his brethren; but was blamed by the Pope because he, a useful and able man, postponed public usefulness to his private safety. One remarkable fact is recorded of him, that the Pope imposed upon him a penance of a hundred years for quitting his Bishopric: he was to recite Ps. 1. [li.] and give himself the discipline every day for a hundred years; and this he completed entirely in the space of one year. This I remember to have read somewhere (*Works*, Vol. i. ep. 10, new ed., Vol. iii. opusc. 20). To Pope Alexander and Cardinal Hildebrand, who became Pope later under the name of Gregory VII., he tries to justify his quitting his see, and opposes numerous examples of conduct similar to his, to the blame of the Pope and the cardinals. But it is necessary to hold to what the law prescribes rather than to the examples of other persons. The Angelical Doctor says: "Every pastor is obliged by his function to labour for the salvation of others, and it is not permitted to him to cease to do so, not even to have leisure for peaceful meditation upon spiritual things. For the Apostle regards the obligation to occupy himself with the salvation of others who depend upon him as being of such importance that it must not be postponed even to heavenly meditation: *I know not what to choose,* he says, *for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you* (Phil. i. 22–23).

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.

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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[36] 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

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It may be added that the Episcopate being a state more perfect than that of the monk, it follows that just as it is not permitted to quit the second to re-enter the world, so it is not allowable to renounce the first in order to embrace the second, considering that the latter is less perfect than the former. That would precisely be to look back after having put one's hand to the plough, and to show one's self unfit for the kingdom of God" (S. Luke ix. 62).

36 *Exoneratus; exhonoratus.*

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.

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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.

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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.[37] 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.

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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.

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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

37 Because a monk, when he became an abbot, was freed from the control of his own abbot.

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.

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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,[38] 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

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38 S. Luke xxi. 2–4

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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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,[39] 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[40] 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.

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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

39 He is here, without doubt, speaking of the Apology to the Abbot William. Oger was at Clairvaux while Bernard was writing it, as appears from the last words of that work. But as he left before the final touches were put to it, Bernard afterwards sent it to him for perusal; and he, without direction, communicated it to Abbot William, to whom it was inscribed, and to whom Bernard intended to send it.

40 This little preface is the Letter addressed to the same William, and counted the 85th among the Letters of S. Bernard; it is placed at the head of the Apology.

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

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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?[41] 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

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41 In this Letter the Saint expresses in forcible words how little he felt himself inclined to write to his friends Letters without necessity or usefulness, and to take time and leisure for doing so which belonged to more important and sacred employments. Also, he felt that the labour of literary composition interfered with the silence to which monks were bound, as also with inward quiet and peace. Bernard speaks of the function and calling of a monk like himself. For the monk, as such, is not called to preach and to teach, but to devote himself in solitude to God and to his own salvation, through meditation and the practice of virtues. Wherefore he says, in ep. 42: "Labour and retirement and voluntary poverty, these are the signs of the monk; these render excellent the monastic life." But if there should be anywhere lurking slothful monks who are so imprudent and rash as to abuse the authority of the Saint to the excuse of their own indolence, let such hear him accusing them in plain words: "I may seem, perhaps, to say too much in disparagement of learning, as if I wished to blame the learned and prohibit the study of literature. By no means. I do not overlook how greatly her learned sons have profited and do profit the Church, whether in combating her enemies or in instructing the simple," &c. (Sermon 36 on the Canticles).

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.

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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,[42] 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,[43] 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.

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42 This Guerric was made Abbot of Igny in 1138. He is mentioned again in the following Letter.

43 Or *benignity*.

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.[44] 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.

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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

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44 This kind of correspondence is a hindrance to devotion and the spirit of prayer, as he says in the Letter placed at the head of his Apology addressed to Abbot William, and also in Letter 89.

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 [45]

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.

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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

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45 This was one of the first general Chapters held by the Black Monks (as they are called) in the province of Rheims. It seems that its cause and occasion was the Apology addressed by Bernard to Abbot William, who was the prime mover in calling together this assembly, after the example of the Cluniacs and Cistercians, that they might re-establish the observance of the Rule which was being let slip. It was held without doubt at S. Medard under the Abbot Geoffrey, to whom Letter 66 was addressed. He was Bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne when Peter the Venerable spoke of him thus (B. ii. Ep. 43): "It is he who first spread the divine Order of Cluny through the whole of France, who was its author and propagator; and, far more, it was he who expelled 'the old dragon' from his resting-places in so many monasteries, and who roused monks from their torpor." Innocent II, determined that these general Chapters should be held every year in future.

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.

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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

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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[46] 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[47] 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[48] 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.

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46 The history of the Abbey of Wells, in England, explains to us what is meant by these words of Bernard. "The Abbot of Clairvaux, Bernard, had sent detachments of his army of invasion to take possession of the most distant regions; they won brilliant triumphs over the ancient enemy of salvation, bearing from him his prey and restoring it to its true Sovereign. God had inspired him with the thought of sending some hopeful slips from his noble vine of Clairvaux into the English land that he might have fruit among that nation, as in the rest of the world. The very letter is yet extant which he wrote for these Religious to the King, in which he said that there was a property of the Lord in that land of the King, and that he had sent brave men out of his army to seek it, seize it, and bring it back to its owner. He persuades the King to render assistance to his messengers, and not to fail to fulfil in this his duty to his suzerain; which was done. The Religious from Clairvaux were received with honour by the King and by the realm, and they laid new foundations in the province of York, founding the Abbey of Rievaulx. And this was the first planting of the Cistercian Order in the province of York." (*Monast. Anglican.* Vol. i. p. 733.) Further mention of Henry I. is made in the notes to Letter 138.

47 *Esse.* The word is a common one with Bernard to signify the state of a man or a business. See Letters 118, 304.

48 Since kings and princes are, as it were, vassals to God.

LETTER XXX (*circa* A.D. 1132)

To Henry, [49] 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

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49 He was nephew, by his mother, of Henry I, King of England, brother of King Stephen, and son of Stephen, Count of Blois. "His mother, Adela," says William of Newburgh, "not wishing to appear to have borne children only for the world, had him tonsured." In 1126, *The History of the Abbey of Glastonbury* counts him among the number of the abbots of that monastery, and says, "he was a man extremely versed in letters, and of remarkable regularity of character. By his excellent administration the Abbey of Glastonbury profited so much that his tame will be held in everlasting memory there" (*Monast. Anglican.* Vol. ii. p. 18). Henry was elevated later on to the see of Winchester, and Bernard complains of him in writing to Pope Eugenius. "What shall I say of his Lordship of Winchester? The works which he does show sufficiently what he is." Harpsfield reports that he extorted castles from nobles whom he had invited to a feast, and Roger that he had consecrated the intruder William to the See of York (*Annal.* under year 1140). The latter calls him legate of the Roman See. Brito and Henriquez must, therefore, be wrong in counting him among the Cistercians, and the latter in particular, in speaking of him as a man of eminent sanctity, taking occasion from the testimony of Wion (*Ligno vitæ*), who calls him a man gifted with prophecy, because when on his death-bed, in receiving the visit of his nephew, Henry, he predicted to him that he would be punished by God on account of the death of S. Thomas of Canterbury, whom he had himself consecrated; as if that saying may not have been inspired by fear rather than prophecy, as Manrique rightly says in his *Annals.* Peter the Venerable wrote many letters to him, which are still extant, among others Letters 24 and 25 in Book iv., in which he requests that he may return to Cluny to die and be buried there. Being invited to do so at the request of Louis, the King of France, and of the chief nobles of Burgundy, and also at the letters of Pope Hadrian IV., he sent on his treasures to Peter the Venerable, and, leaving England without the permission of the King, arrived at Cluny in 1155. He discharged from his own means the debts of the abbey, which were then enormous; he expended for the support of the monks who lived at Cluny, more than four hundred in number, 7,000 marks of silver, which are equal to 40,000 livres. He gave forty chalices for celebrating mass, and a silk *pannus* (which may have been an altar vestment, or more probably a hanging—[E.]) of great price; he buried with his own hands Peter the Venerable, who died January 1st, 1157. Having returned at length to his see, he died, to the great grief of the Religious of Cluny, on August the 9th, 1171.

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. [50]

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

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50 Letter 318 clearly shows what monastery these had left, namely, the Benedictine Abbey of S. Mary, at York, and this the *Monasticon Anglicanum* confirms. The Abbey of S. Mary, at York, was founded in 1088 by Count Alan, son of Guy, Count of Brittany, in the Church of S. Olave, near York, to which King William Rufus afterwards gave the name of S. Mary. Hither were brought from the monastery of Whitby the Abbot Stephen and Benedictine monks, under whom monastic discipline was observed; but about the year 1132, under Geoffrey, the third abbot, it began to be relaxed. It was at that time that the Cistercian order was everywhere renowned, and was introduced into England in the year 1128 (its first establishment being at Waverley, in Surrey). Induced by a pious emulation, twelve monks of S. Mary, who were not able to obtain from their abbot permission to transfer themselves to this Cistercian Order, begged the support of Thurstan, Archbishop of York, to put their project into execution. With his support they left their monastery on October 4th, 1132, notwithstanding the opposition of their abbot; to the number of twelve priests and one levite (deacon). Of these one was the Prior Richard, another Richard the sacristan, and others named in the *History* before mentioned, taking nothing from the monastery but their habit. Troubled by their desertion, Abbot Geoffrey complained to the king, to the bishops and abbots of the neighbourhood, as well as to S. Bernard himself, of the injury done by this to the rights of all religious houses, without distinction. Archbishop Thurstan wrote a letter of apology to William, Archbishop of Canterbury, and at the same time Bernard himself wrote to Thurstan and to the thirteen Religious to congratulate them, and another to Abbot Geoffrey to justify their action (Letters 94 to 96 and 313). In the meantime these monks were shut up in the Episcopal house of Thurstan; and as they refused, notwithstanding the censures of their abbot, to return to their former monastery, Thurstan gave them in the neighbourhood of Ripon a spot of ground previously uncultivated, covered with thorn bushes, and situated among rocks and mountains which surrounded it on all sides, that they might build themselves a house there. Their Prior Richard was given to them for abbot by Thurstan, who gave him the Benediction on Christmas Day. Having passed a whole winter in incredible austerity of life, they gave themselves and their dwelling-place, which they had called Fountains, to S. Bernard. He sent to them a Religious, named Geoffrey, of Amayo, from whose hands they received the Cistercian Rule with incredible willingness and piety (*Life of S. Bernard*, B. iv. c. 2).

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."

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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.

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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.[51] 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.

51 What Thurstan did for the protection of these monks, who had taken refuge with him in the desire to embrace a more austere life, may be seen in a Letter from him which we have taken from the *Monasticon Anglicanum* and placed after those of S Bernard.

LETTER XXXIII (A.D. 1132)

To Richard,[52] Abbot of Fountains,[53] 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.

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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[54] will supply it by word of mouth.

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52 He had been Prior of the monastery of S. Mary, at York, which be quitted, followed by twelve other Religious, as we have seen above. He died at Rome, as may be seen in *Mon. Anglic.* p. 744. He had for successor another Richard, formerly sacristan of the same monastery of S. Mary, who died at Clairvaux (*ibid.*, p. 745). He is mentioned in the 320th letter of S. Bernard.

53 The monastery of Fountains, in the Diocese of York, passed over to the Cistercian Rule in 1132. It is astonishing to read of the fervour of these monks in *Monast. Anglican.* Vol. i. p. 733 and onwards. Compare also Letters 313 and 320 for what relates to the death of Abbot Richard, the second of that name and Order.

54 This Geoffrey, "a holy and religious man," who founded or reformed numerous monasteries, had been sent by Bernard to Fountains to train them according to the Rule of the Cistercian Order *(Monast. Anglican.* Vol. i. p. 741). Concerning the same Geoffrey see *The Life of S. Bernard,* B. iv. c. 2.

LETTER XXXIV (*circa* A.D. 1130)

Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours, to the Abbot Bernard. [55]

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.

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55 In not a few MSS. this Letter, with the answer following, is placed after Letter 127, and in some even after Letter 252. Hildebert, the author of this Letter, ruled the Church of Mans (1098-1125), whence, on the death of Gilbert, he was translated to the Metropolitan See of Tours. This is clear, first from Ordericus Vitalis, Bk. x., *sub ann.,* 1198, and next from the Acts of the Bishops of Mans, published in the third volume of *Analecta*, where Guido, his successor in the See of Mans, is said to have been consecrated, after long strife, in 1126. Hildebert only ruled in Tours six years and as many months. So say the Acts just mentioned. With them agrees a dissertation by Duchesne, and John Maan's History of the Metropolitan See of Tours, and so also Ordericus Vitalis on the year 1125 (p. 882), where he assigns to Hildebert an Archiepiscopate of about seven years. Hildebert, then, did not reach the year 1136, as *Gallia Christiana* says, but died in 1132, in which year John Maan places his death. Horst, in the note to this Letter, refers to another Letter of Hildebert (the 24th), which he thinks was also written to Bernard. But this Letter, which in all the editions appears without the name of the person to whom it was addressed, is entitled in two MSS. "To H., Abbot of Cluny," which we have followed. From this Letter we understand that Hildebert had it in mind to retire to Cluny, if the Supreme Pontiff would allow him. Peter of Blois praises his Letters. (Ep. 101)

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 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[56] 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.

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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 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

56 *Christus.*

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. [57]

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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[58] 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.

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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

57 Geoffrey of Loretto, a most renowned doctor, afterwards Archbishop of Bordeaux. He took his name from Loretto, a place in the Diocese of Tours, close to Poitou. It was once famous for a Priory, subject to Marmoutiers. This is why Gerard of Angoulême is spoken of to Geoffrey in this Letter as "the wild beast near you." Another derivation is "L'oratoire," a monastery of the Cistercians in the Diocese of Angers.

58 Gerard of Angoulême.

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,[59] 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.

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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.

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59 "Converts" (*conversi*) was the name formerly given to adults who had been converted to the religious life, and who were distinguished by this name from those who were offered as children. The lay brethren are here meant; *cf.* ep. 141 n. 1. They were present at the election of an abbot (ep. 36 n. 2), just as once the laity were joined with the clergy in the election of a bishop. Here they are named before the novices, but in Sermon 22 (de Diversis n. 2) they come after them; they were not admitted into the choir. Bernard, moreover, distinguishes them from the monks. For at that time they were not among the Cistercians reckoned among the monks, as is proved by the *Exordium Cisterc.* (c. 15); although they made some profession. Hence Innocent II, in some deed of privilege or in ep. 352, here says: "Let no one presume without your leave to receive or to retain any one of your converts who have made their profession, but are not monks, be he archbishop, bishop, or abbot." In the Council of Rheims, held under Eugenius III., the converts are called "the professed" (Can. 7), and although they may have returned to the world, yet they are declared incapable of matrimony, like the monks, from whom, nevertheless, they are distinguished. For the early days of Clairvaux *cf.* notes to ep. 31.

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).

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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

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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.

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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[60] 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[61]—who show

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60 Baldwin, first Cardinal of the Cistercian Order, was created by Innocent, A.D. 1130, at a Council held at Claremont. He was afterwards made Archbishop of Pisa; *cf. Life of S. Bernard* (lib. ii. n. 49): "In Pisa was Baldwin born, the glory of his native land, and a burning light to the Church." So great a man did not think it beneath him to act as Bernard's secretary, and his praises are sung in ep. 245, *cf.* ep. 201.

61 All these were Cardinals. Luke, of the title of SS. John and Paul, was created A.D. 1132; Chrysogonus, of the title of S. Maria de Porticu, A.D. 1134; Ivo, a regular Canon of S. Victor of Paris, A.D. 1130, of the title of S. Laurence in Damascus; to him ep. 193 was written.

themselves as brothers. They who are with me—Brother Bruno and Brother Gerard[62]—salute you and ask for your prayers.

62 Bruno is called (ep. 209) the father of many disciples in Sicily. Gerard seems to be Bernard's brother. For Bruno see also ep. 165 n. 4.

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.

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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

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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?

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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

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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).[63] 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).

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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

63 So all texts, except a few, in which the reading is: "Indeed, that Sun is promised to those who have been called," &c. In the first edition, and many subsequent ones: "For the Sun which arises is not that which is daily to be seen rising over good and bad, but one promised by the prophetic warning to such as fear God, to those only who have been called," &c.

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.

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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?

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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)

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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?*

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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.

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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.

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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),[64] 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[65] 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,

64 The lxx. has Ιδοὺ θεοσέβεια ἐστὶ σοφία. The Vulgate reads "Ecce timor Domini ipsa est sapientia," with which the A. V, coincides, "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." Does Bernard quote from memory?

65 This must be the reading, not "congregation" [*concilio*], as in Ps. i., for the sense demands "purpose" [*consilio*], and the MSS. so read.

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.

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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).

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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.[66] 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

66 Bernard regards as a vow that kind of promise by which a man had determined in his presence to enter the religious state. See Letter 395 and *Sermons on Canticles*, 63, n. 6, in which he mourns the lapse and fall of novices.

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).

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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[67] 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).

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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

67 No. 107.

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.

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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.

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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,[68] 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.

68 Hence it is clear that Bernard was already approaching old age when he wrote this Letter.

LETTER XLIII

A Consolatory Letter to the Parents of Geoffrey.

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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).

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LETTER XLIV

Concerning the Maccabees But to Whom Written is Unknown. [69]

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

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69 Such is the title in almost all the MSS. But in one at Cîteaux the Letter is inscribed *To Bruno of Cologne, as is believed, on the martyrdom of the Maccabees*. In an old edition *It is thought to have been written to Hugo of S. Victor.*

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 172 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 173 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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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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,[70] 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.

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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

70 Either a canon holding a prebend of theology or simply a student—here probably the former. But see n. 7.—[E.]

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?

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.[71] 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,

71 Bernard usually shows himself very doubtful of the salvation of those who, having been tailed by God to the religious state, had not yielded to their vocation, and much more of those who, having entered it, though not made profession, had returned to the world. See Letters 107 and 108. But Fulk had actually made profession.

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?

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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.

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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.[72] 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.

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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!

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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

72 *i.e.*, not owing me obedience as a monk.

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*).

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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 *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. 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.

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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).

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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[73] gives the accidental. Where the word signifies the

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73 Mabillon reads *substantiva,* but another reading is *substantia.*—[E.]

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.

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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 wit-

nesses 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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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LETTER XLVII

To the Brother of William, a Monk of Clairvaux. [74]

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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!

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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

74 Such of the title of the Letter in two Vatican MSS. and in certain others. In those of Citeaux it is inscribed *Letter of exhortation to a friend.* But at the end of Letter 106 I conjecture the reference to be to Ivo, who signs it with William.

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 [75] 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."

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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

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75 S. Bernard usually designates thus Doctors and Professors of Belles Lettres. See Letters 77, 106, and others. It is thus that in the *Spicilegium* iii. pp. 137, 140, Thomas d'Etampes is called sometimes *Magister*, sometimes *Doctor*. In a MS. at the Vatican we read, "To *Magister* Gaucher."

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,[76] 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).[77] 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).

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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).

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76 Some add "in honour" from Ps. xlviii., but it is wanting in the MSS., and certainly is redundant here.

77 *Hath not received it in vain,* Vulg.

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[78] 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 re-

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78 *Saccus.*

nounce 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?[79]

79 A familiar figure of speech with Bernard. See Letter 107, § 13; 124, § 2, &c.

LETTER L

To Geoffrey, of Lisieux [80]

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.

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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).

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80 Some have "Luxeuil." This word Ordericus also generally uses to designate Lisieux, in Neustria, so that there is no uniform distinction of names between Lisieux and Luxeuil, in the County of Burgundy, found among writers of this period.

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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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?

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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,[81] 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

81 Compare in this place Imitation of Christ, Bk. i. c. 25. "A religious person who has become slothful and lukewarm has trouble upon trouble, and suffers anguish on every side, because he lacks consolation from within, and is debarred from seeking it without." Read also Sermons 3 and 5 upon the Ascension.

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).

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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"[82] 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[83] 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

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82 This expression is borrowed from the Rule of S. Benedict, in which it is said that the younger shall call their elders *nonna* (in monasteries for men *nonnus*), Chap. lxiii.

83 *Wimple*. So all the MS. codices that I have seen, viz., at the Royal Library, Colbert Library, Sorbonne, Royal College of Navarre, S. Victor of Paris MS., MS. of Compiègne, and others at other libraries, which have "with the wimple" (wimplatæ), though all editions except two (viz., that of Paris, 1494, and of Lyons, 1530) have "one puffed up" (*uni inflatæ*). They ask what "with the wimple" (wimplatæ) means. Of course it is a word formed from wimple or guimple, owing to the easy change of g to w. In French "guimpe" or "guimple" is a woman's head-dress, once common with women of noble birth (as we learn from the old pictures of noble ladies), but the more simple and modest refrained from wearing it. So we read in the French poet, contained in Borellus' *Glossarium Gallicum*:— 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.

forbid!) the holy desires of your soul, so late conceived, should be stifled by them, and you yourself be cast into hell fire.

LETTER LIII

To Another Holy Virgin of the Convent of S. Mary of Troyes [84]

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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

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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

84 This convent still exists under the rule of S. Benedict. It had lately been, as Bernard testifies, the object of a reform when he wrote.—[Mabillon's note.]

house where the Rule was well carried out.[85] 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.

85 *Cf.* the French equivalent "Le bon ordre," i.e., the strict Rule of Monastic Life.

LETTER LIV

To Ermengarde, Formerly Countess of Brittany [86]

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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

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86 She was the wife of Count Alan, and a great benefactress to Clairvaux. She built the monks a monastery near the town of Nantes (see Ernald, *Life of S. Bernard*, ii. 34, and according to Mabillon's *Chronology*, 1135 A.D.). The name of the monastery is Buzay; it is presided over by the most illustrious Abbot Caumartin, who has communicated to me the first charter founding the convent. In this charter Duke Conan, son of Alan and Ermengarde, asserts that he and his mother had determined to build the Abbey of Buzay, but that, misled by evil counsel of certain persons, they had desisted from their undertaking. At length Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, came into those parts. The House of Buzay was dependent upon his abbey. Bernard, seeing the place almost desolate, was deeply grieved, "and," says Conan, "rebuked me with the most severe reproofs as false and perfidious; and then ordered the abbot and monks who tarried there to abandon the place and return to Clairvaux." Conan interposed, and after restoring the property of the monastery which he had taken away, took steps for the completion of the building. The charter is signed by Bishops Roland, of Vannes; Alan, of Rennes; John, of St. Malo; Iterius, of Nantes; and also by Peter, Abbot of the monastery, and Andrew, a monk. But to return to Ermengarde. Godfrey, Abbot of Vendôme (Bk. v. Letter 23), urges her to resume her purpose of entering the religious life, which she appears to have abandoned. The same Godfrey, in the next Letter, speaks of her as of royal blood.

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 [87]

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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,[88] 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 Cæsar the things that are Cæsar'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).

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87 That is, Simon and Adelaide, not Gertrude, as most write. For the account of the conversion of this Duchess by, S. Bernard see *Life,* Bk. i. c. 14. She took the veil of a Religious in the Nunnery of Tart, in the environs of Dijon, as is clear from the autograph Letters of her son, Duke Matthew, who calls his mother Atheleïde. These Letters P. F. Chifflet refers to at the end of his four Opuscula, ed. Paris, 1679. I do not refer to the pretended Letters of Gertrude to Bernard, and Bernard to Gertrude, translated by Bernard Brito, from French into Portuguese and thence into Latin.

88 *Passagium*, a fixed payment from travellers entering or passing through a country; *droit de passage* or "toll."

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[89] 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).

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89 I think this is Wido [or Guy?], Abbot of Trois Fontaines, who frequently went to Lorraine. Cf. 63, 69.

LETTER LIX

To the Duchess of Burgundy [90]

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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 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[91] 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.

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90 Matilda, wife of Hugo I., Duke of Burgundy, who was cherishing her anger against Hugo de Bèse. This place was situate four leagues from Dijon, and famous for the Monastery of that name (Bèse) of the Benedictine Order. About this Hugo see Perard, pp. 221, 222.

91 *legalitati*, i.e., good faith, which consists in performing promises once made.

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.

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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.

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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 Heloïse.

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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,

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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.

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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

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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.

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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.*). 247

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." 248

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.*

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"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.*

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"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."

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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."

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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."

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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."

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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."

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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."

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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."

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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,[92] 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

92 *Materiatum; materia.*

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.

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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

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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,[93] 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.[94] 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

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93 *Non disputante, sed dementante.*

94 Anselm greatly approves this idea respecting God in his *Monologium* and his *Apologeticus* at the commencement.

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.

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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

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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,[95] 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[96] 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).

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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

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95 *Forefecit, i.e.,* offended or transgressed. *Forisfactura* or *forefactum* denoted the crime or offence: and the former word is also used to signify the *penalty of* a crime. *Forisfactus* is the criminal himself. *Servus forisfactus* is a free man who has been reduced to slavery as a punishment for crime (*Legibus Athelstan. Reg.* c. 3). From this word is the French *forfaire, forfait* ; and the English forfeit, forfeiture. It will be seen that the word is a legal term adopted into the language of theology. The earliest instance of its use is apparently in the *Glossa* of Isidore. See Du Cange's *Glossary s.v. Forisfacere.* Forcellini's ed. of Facciolati does not give the word.—[E.]

96 *i.e.,* Abaelard.

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?*"

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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.

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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?

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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.

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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.

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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[97] 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?

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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,[98] and there is none to lift her up. Langres, too, has fallen, and there is none to stretch out the

97 This refers to Geoffrey, Bernard's kinsman, who after many disagreements had been at length unanimously taken from being third Prior of Clairvaux to be Bishop of Langres, A.D. 1138.

98 This was after the death of Archbishop Reginald, which happened A.D. 1139, on January 13th.

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.

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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.

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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. [99] 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.

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99 Benissons Dieu was a Cistercian Abbey, an offshoot of Clairvaux, in the Diocese of Lyons, and was founded A.D. 1138. Alberic was its first Abbot. Not far from it was the monastery of Savigny, of the order of S. Benedict, in the same diocese. Its Abbot was Iterius, of whom Bernard here complains.

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.

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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

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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?

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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,[100] 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.

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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

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100 A writing of this kind is attributed to an English abbot named Elsin in the works of Anselm, pp. 505, 507 of the new edition.

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.

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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

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upon a famous and noble Church, of which I am specially the son,[101] 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.

101 The Church of Lyons was the Mother Church of Bernard because of its "metropolitan rights," as he himself says in Letter 172, since he was born at Fontaines, near Dijon, and lived at the monastery of Clairvaux, both of which places were in the Diocese of Langres and Province of Lyons.

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.

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THE END

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