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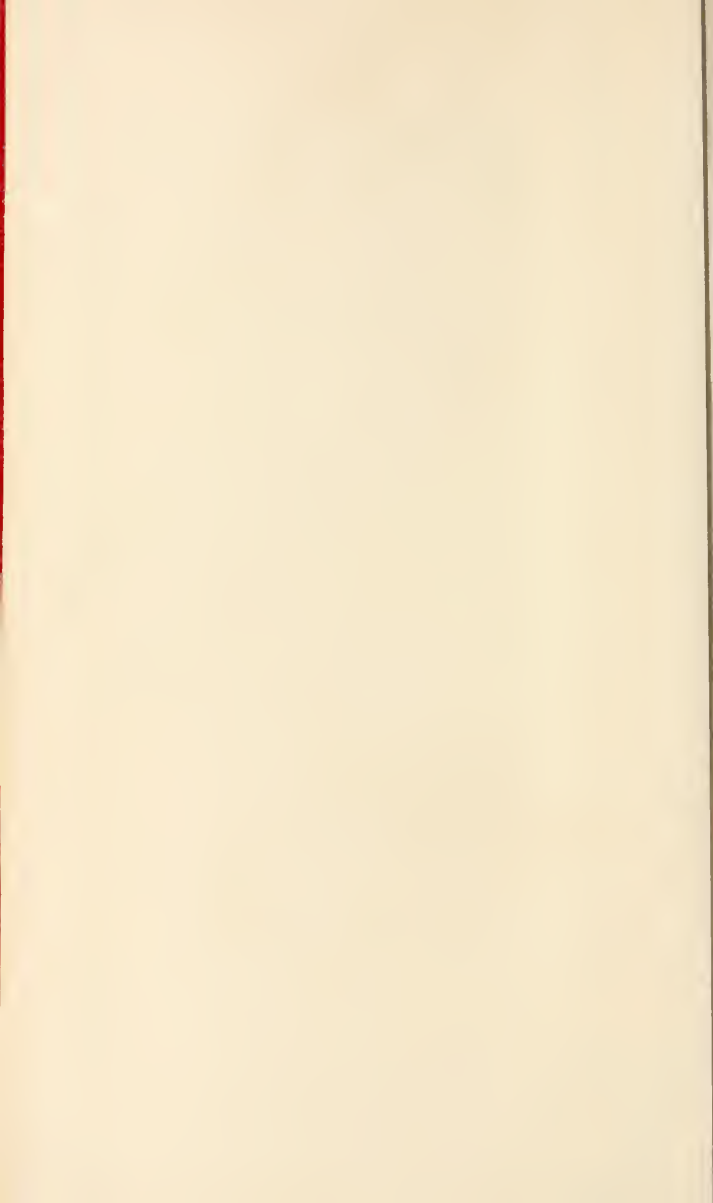
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LETTERS

OF POPE

CLEMENT XIV.

(G A N G A N E L L I.)

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

*ANECDOTES OF HIS LIFE.*

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH.



*The Fifth Edition.*



VOL. IV.



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DISCOURSES,  
AND OTHER  
INTERESTING PIECES  
OF  
*POPE CLEMENT XIV.*

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# DISCOURSES, &c.

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## A DISCOURSE UPON RELIGION.

PREACHED AT ASCOLI, ABOUT THE YEAR 1732.

*Filii, audite me ; timorem Domini docebo vos.*

My sons hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

**A**T a time when Fortune is every where preaching up the love of Wealth ; when Pleasure is extending her alluring voice to ensnare us in her toils ; when a love of glory presents all the honours of this world to intoxicate us with vain incense ; when all the objects which surround us, adorned with the beauties of nature, are only so many echos which repeat seducing delights, and invite us to attach ourselves to this world ; Religion enjoins us to be employed only about God. *My sons hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

How truly eloquent is this divine language! What an immensity of things contained in a few words! This is not the language of a person who endavours to mislead us, nor the eloquence of an orator who employs pompous language to surprize our credulity; it is Religion herself, the daughter of Heaven, the mother of all virtue, who is come down upon earth to establish a holy union between God and man, and to display to us a spectacle infinitely more excellent and affecting than all the beauties which are scattered over this immense universe.

I see this holy Religion issuing like lightning from the bosom of the Almighty, and darting an unerring light from pole to pole with the greatest splendour and majesty. All nations and people, struck with the prodigy, and undoubtedly transported with admiration, fly to pour forth before her the humble homage of their hearts and minds, and forgetting this world and all its creatures, are only employed in contemplating this magnificent object. No, my brethren, that is not the case; the most incredible blindness, and the most trifling objects

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jects, which shew but a momentary glare, make even Religion disappear, although surrounded with all the glory of God. There are none but some few privileged souls, whom the world even looks upon with contempt, who listen to her voice. They will lend an ear to the singing of syrens and the hissing of serpents, but they will shut their ears against the voice of Religion, who calls upon the whole human race with the utmost tenderness, and recommends to them, above all other things, to fear the Lord. *My sons hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

There is no mother more tender than Religion, none that can more sincerely comfort her children, nor any one more capable of executing any thing that she undertakes for their happiness.

Monicha, that incomparable woman, is much admired, who shed such torrents of tears over her son Augustine; and, that she might not abandon him, crossed the seas, with the most heroic courage, from Africa to Italy, only employed about his conversion, waiting with a holy anxiety for the moment when the needful

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grace should come to change his heart. Nevertheless, O ye Christian hearers, Monicha only presents to your view a spark of that fire with which Religion is inflamed, when she is employed in the preservation of a sinner.

I see the earth and the seas witnessing the zeal of the great apostle, and that fervor with which the succeeding disciples were animated, who have been employed from age to age in spreading abroad the sacred truth, even into the most barbarous islands, and into the remotest corners of the earth. In one place, we see them, like happy tempests, effectually terrifying the wicked and the worshippers of idols; in another, like beneficent clouds pouring forth the blood of Jesus Christ in copious streams. From their holy mouths we hear Religion herself incessantly repeating, with the most affecting tenderness, and the most ardent charity, *My sons, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

It is, as if she had said to all mankind, I will not teach you to handle the globe and the compass, but I will teach you to lay hold of the Cross of Jesus Christ, as the only steady support to be

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confided in upon all occasions. I will not instruct you in the rules of human policy, which is frequently nothing but the art of deceiving; but I will shew you the direct path which leads to Heaven. I will not teach you how to know the course of the stars, nor to discover the secrets of nature; but I will convince you that the figure of this world passeth away, and that there is nothing more dangerous than forming with it too warm an attachment. I will not give you a description of this earth; but I will mark out to you the very small space of it which you will occupy at your death; because it is the idea which should detach you from the pursuit of the honours and the pleasures of this world. I will not inspire you with a love of conquest and triumphs which inspires and animates the heroes of the age; but I will inflame your minds with a love of eternal happiness, and teach you to overcome yourselves.

Such is Religion, my friends, and such is her conduct with regard to us. She spares no pains, no watching nor toils, when she is engaged in penetrating our hearts with the fear of the Lord. Sometimes she lays open her

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Tribunals to conciliate us with Jesus Christ ; at other times her Tabernacles to sustain us by his most sacred body.

What has this all-divine Religion not done for us, to testify her affectionate zeal and love? She received us most cordially into her bosom at the very instant of our birth ; carried us into her sacred Temple, to be impressed with the seal of Christianity, which nothing in this world can ever deface ; she has followed us step by step, and as soon as we could speak, put into our hands the alphabet of those Holy Truths which we were born to read ; she has communicated to us the grace of the Holy Sacraments, and has interested herself most wonderfully for our salvation, by prayers, by sacrifices, by festivals, and by instructions.

Alas ! if you do not recollect her by all these efforts of zeal and tenderness ; if you are not sensibly affected by all these proceedings ; it is because you unfortunately will not judge of this Holy Religion, but from the ridiculous deformed pictures which have been drawn of her by Impiety and Fanaticism ; it is because you believe she is filled with a bitter intolerating  
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zeal, while she is Charity herself: it is because you imagine her to have a persecuting spirit, though she is the greatest enemy to persecution; it is because you have represented her to yourself as having the thunder always in her hand ready to strike impenitent sinners, although she never employs canonical punishments, until every gentle means has been fruitlessly attempted, and is exceedingly grieved at being compelled to come to such extremity.

Learn to know her and you will find her gentle and patient, ready to meet the straying sheep to lead it back to the sheep-fold; unsuspecting of ill, and enduring all the imperfections of human nature in the hope that mankind will correct themselves; praying continually for them, that they may obtain pardon from Heaven. You will find she is without passion, without cruelty, without peevishness or ambition; in a word, you will find her worthy of him who has rendered her his image and his oracle.

Ye Christian hearers, the name of our Holy Religion has been abused by those who have represented her as taking pleasure in punishing

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or tormenting. Alas! her greatest pleasure is in disarming the anger of an offended Deity. The prayers which she addresses day and night to Heaven, has no object in view but to beg for the remission of sins, and to intreat mercy for offending sinners.

It can be nothing but the blackest ingratitude, or a total ignorance of her true character, which could represent her in an unfavourable light. The great misfortune is, that some people confound Religion with her ministers, and make her responsible for their faults. O Holy Religion! where are thy accusers? Thou mayest truly boast, that thou hast no enemies but men whose lives are scandalous, or whose minds are prejudiced; only men who are seduced by their passions, or misled by a pernicious ill-grounded philosophy.

Religion would not have met the smallest opposition, if she had permitted mortals to follow the bent of their own inclinations without scruple or restraint. She would not have appeared superstitious, severe, and even cruel, but because she requires a purity of morals and a submissive obedience to the will of God.

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But if an earthly Sovereign whom you have chosen as a master to rule over you is not odious, even when he enacts rigorous laws for the support of good order, and employs his power in punishing those who disobey his mandates; wherefore should Religion who acquaints you with the orders of the Almighty, and who only turns you away from committing crimes to drag you from the empire of your passions, and to make you happy; wherefore, I say, should she appear so deserving of your hatred?

To make you sensible, on the contrary, how much Religion deserves all our love, it is sufficient, my dear brethren, to explain in a few words the good effects which she has produced since she began to exercise her august ministry.

It is through my means, she will tell you that your Princes, who were formerly barbarians, are now become refined; that slavery is abolished; that every man has his value in the eyes of the great men of this world, and that their property is become common, if I may use the expression, by the reciprocal cares which they take to comfort one another; it is through

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me that you have learnt to forgive injuries; that your greatest enemies no longer seek vengeance, but to do good for evil; that revilings are stopt, calumnies stifled, hatred lulled asleep, excesses checked, and scandal punished; it is by me that the ties of marriage are rendered sacred and indissolubly binding; that parents tenderly love their children, and the children, filled with respect for those who gave them birth, obey their commands with pleasure; that a proper subordination is preserved in all ranks and conditions; that justice is diligent, innocence supported, indigence assisted, virtue praised, zeal admired, and piety followed.

It is by my means that man is distinguished from the beast; that the sciences are looked upon as valuable, from the excellent purposes to which they are applied; that men give *unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's*; that good faith governs in commerce: candour is found in courts: the mind extends itself beyond the heavens; the heart purifies itself; the body spiritualizes itself, and the soul renders itself divine.

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It is by my means that gentle manners govern society; that hearts are united in the sacred bonds of friendship; that falsehood is hateful, and truth triumphant; that man ceases to love the creature, that he may turn his eyes to his Creator; that the sacraments unite the Christian with the Man-God; that earth becomes a heaven; death a great gain; eternity the dwelling of glory, and the centre of all happiness.

It is by my means that you participate in the good works of all virtuous men; that you have as many intercessors as there are of the elect; that the church militant suffering and triumphant, forms but one and the same society, of whom God is the chief, the first principle, and the life.

It is I, who, always filled with compassion for the sinner, without being repulsed by his odious crimes, assist and support him, even on the bed of death: It is I that revive his hopes, when he would give himself up to despair; that fortify his mind when ready to sink under grief and depression; that comfort him when all the world seem to have forsaken him: It is I that receive his dying breath with all the zeal of the

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most affecting charity, and accompany him in spirit even unto eternity, remembering him when he is in the presence of God, and no longer any thing upon earth, but forgotten by all mankind.

Let me ask you, then, my brethren, if Religion appears by these features to be the step-mother her enemies affect to represent her; a monster who has occasioned a thousand mischiefs, and that deserves to be destroyed.

Such blasphemies, undoubtedly, make you shudder with horror, and more especially, when you recollect that this Divine Religion judges nobody upon earth, never despairs of the conversion of sinners, and knows neither false pretences nor dissimulation: that she dreads extinguishing the smoking flax; that she tolerates her enemies, and opposes them only with tears and prayers, as Jesus Christ tolerated the schismatics and infidels of his time; when you see her descending even into dismal dungeons to bring assistance, both spiritual and temporal, to the most heinous offenders, and charitably embracing all sects and communions, praying equally for Jews and Pagans.

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All corners of the earth are filled with the good works of Religion, and the pious monuments which she hath erected. Has the world ever seen a society actuated with such zeal, such beneficence, such charity?

Religion recommends to us to weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that are in joy; she makes herself all things to all men; and thinks herself equally bound to discharge her duties to the foolish or to the wise, and seeks every opportunity to exhort, to encourage, and to oblige them.

Religion should be seen amidst the holy austerities, which she requires of the sinner to obtain favour in the sight of God, mixing her tears with his, and giving him at last the kiss of reconciliation, leads him with triumph to the altar, in transports of joy and gladness.

Alas! O Holy Religion, that thou who art so deserving should be so little known; and that man, who should kneel down and kiss thy footsteps, can be so ungrateful as to abuse thee! There is no real virtue upon earth but what is inspired by thee, and yet to hear what is said by thy enemies, we might be induced to believe



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lieve that thou art the cause of all the misfortunes which happen in the world, for they are not afraid to apply to you what has been said of the Religion of the Pagans. But are you so dim-sighted as not to be sensible that the more Religion is sacred and respectable, the more will wicked men abuse her holy name, to disguise their passions, and deceive with the greatest address? It is because she is justice herself, that the unjust affect to be religious that they may not be suspected; it is because she preaches up disinterestedness, that man who is governed by greedy desires, assumes her name to conceal his horrid avarice; it is because she condemns even an appearance of any thing vicious, that the wicked wretch covers himself with her cloak on purpose to commit crimes unpunished; it is because she recommends humility and self-denial, that the ambitious man wears her garb, that he may pass unknown.

Never confound Religion with those men who make profession without the practice, and then you will form the highest idea of her in your own mind.

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You will see her in St. John, and not in Judas ; in St. Peter, and not in Ananias ; in St. Paul, and not in Simon Magnus ; you will see her in Athanasius, and not in Arius ; in Augustine, and not in Pelagius ; then you will find her charitable, magnanimous, and worthy of God himself.

It is not the way to know a picture to judge by the shades. Religion is like the firmament, the more it is examined, the greater number of stars will be discovered ; like the sea, the more it is observed, the more it appears to be immense ; like fine gold, the more it is tried in the furnace, the greater will be its lustre.

How shall she be passionate who forbids all passion ? How shall she employ Falsehood, who condemns the least equivocation ? How shall she become a persecutor, whose distinguished character is to be for ever persecuted ? Jesus Christ, when he established his Religion, foretold nothing to her but crosses, contradictions, and disappointments. He did not say to her, Go and declare war against sinners and wicked heretics ; but he told her in the person of his Apostles : *Behold, I send you forth as lambs*

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*lamb among wolves: Whosoever will not receive you, pass to another city, shaking the dust from off your feet.*

Behold how Religion has been announced in the world, and in this manner is she always announced by those ministers who know her, and wish to make her universally loved.

Open her books, enter into her temples, hearken to her instructions, and you will find that her language is only the language of charity; she employs no authority but persuasion. It never was Religion, but it was false zeal who, pretending to imitate her, seized fire and sword, to compel heretics to abjure their errors, and Jews to become Christians.

Religion anathematizes all who have a persecuting temper, or a spirit of party zeal. The enemy of cabals, of violence, of accusations, she loves only peace and goodwill; and although she thunders against errors, she spareth those that maintain them, and solicits their forgiveness with the Princes of the earth, and the God of the Universe. Her zeal consists in never entering into terms of capitulation with Error; she suffers every thing rather than to  
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give up a single iota of her belief, because she teaches no article as a matter of faith, but what God himself hath revealed; and multitudes of martyrs are seen to issue forth from her splendid and fertile bosom, and expose themselves to all the fury of fire and sword, rather than admit of an alteration in the will of Jesus Christ.

The records of Religion, my brethren, are deposited with us, and if you find there any traces of blood, but the blood of her disciples, which has been shed in defence of her Holy Truth, it is with injustice that I extol her gentleness and charity. But you will see no deeds of hers but effusions of charity, solemn acts of the most singular benevolence; examples of patience, mildness, and forbearance.

From morning until night she waits the repentance of the sinner, stretching forth an assisting hand, ready to drag him from that precipice on whose brink he hangs suspended.

Thousands and thousands of times hath she softened the rage of the Father, who would not have forgiven the offending son; thousands of times hath she restrained the severity of a Superior who refused to listen to a penitent Friar; a  
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thousand times hath she filed with words of peace and gentleness the mouth of the man of power, when ready to burst forth with keen resentment.

If there are false devotees, who disfigure the charms of true Religion, you are the more to blame if you trust to the picture drawn by them, when the supreme Legislator, who has warned you against these men, that lay a burden upon others, which they themselves would not touch with the end of their fingers: against these men who start at a gnat, but can swallow a camel; against these men who appear dressed in sheeps' cloathing, but who are inwardly ravening wolves; against these men who affect to hide their heads in darkness, that they may seem to spend their time in fasting; against these men who believe themselves better than their neighbours, and think they are so, because they believe that long prayers are necessary to obtain forgiveness.

Far, far is Religion from Hypocrisy, Fanaticism, and Superstition: sincere, gentle, patient as her divine chief, she knows no other arms but persuasion; continually calling to mind  
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the words of her heavenly master, *It shall not be with you as with the Princes of the earth.*

Alas ! that I cannot excite that love and gratitude in your hearts, which you owe to this Holy Religion, who hath neither spot nor blemish, and who preserves herself undefiled here upon earth amidst vice and error, and will only quit this world to return to the bosom of God ! She is like a river that will flow back to its original source ; a sun that will pass into another hemisphere.

If, my brethren, you have ever given credit to the calumnies with which our Heavenly Religion has been blackened, or if you have had any share in so foul a deed, go this day and acknowledge your errors before her altars ; embrace them as a sign of the new alliance which you wish to engage in with her from this time forth. Consider that it is this Religion that hath made you Christians, and will lead you to heaven if you faithfully follow her engagements. Think that in the last day she will rise up against you, as a witness that will weigh you down, if you have not faithfully practised the  
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precepts which she enjoined. She will then be the queen, of whom the scripture speaks, sitting at the right hand of God in all her splendour: *Regina a dextris tuis, in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate..*

We ought to place our confidence in Religion, while we are here on earth, if we would have nothing to dread at the last day; but what can we have to fear if we serve under her standard? The martyrs, in following her footsteps, believed themselves invulnerable amidst the most cruel torments, so far did the ardour of their charity deaden the sense of pain. With Religion, every thing we do is excellent, but without her, the most splendid actions have not the least merit.

Come, then, and listen to her as the oracle which you should attend, if you desire to learn to despise the figure of this world, which passeth away, and prefer God to every thing which is not God's, and dread to give him offence. This is what Religion has declared to you this day by my mouth, and what she will incessantly repeat until that moment when God shall call you

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you to give an account of your conduct. *My sons, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

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## REFLECTIONS

UPON

Z E A L.

ADDRESSED TO A BISHOP.

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the passions which converted the terrestrial Paradise into a field of briars and thorns, and overflowed the world with a torrent of vices and errors, that in some sort obliged the Deity himself to manifest his vengeance by an universal deluge, Religion, as pure as that Heaven from which she descended, has still preserved herself without spot or wrinkle.—Under the natural law, I consider her as a young orange-plant, which as yet shews only a green stalk; under the written law, I behold



behold her shoot forth buds ready to unfold ; under the law of Grace, she produced abundantly flowers and fruits, that on every side spread the most delicious perfumes. Or rather let us say, that at her beginning, she is only a faint glimmering of the dawn dispelling the darkness ; in her growth, an Aurora announcing the brightest day ; in her perfection, the sun himself, by the activity of his rays, fostering and fertilizing the seeds of all the virtues.

An object so magnificent, which traced out in the moral order a picture of the most beautiful works in the natural ; which shewed us an intellectual world in the midst of the material, which raised the soul upon the wrecks of the body, which spiritualized the senses, which made the thoughts divine, in a word, which placed man by the side of his Creator, ought doubtless to have had the most zealous panegyrists, the warmest defenders. Accordingly, in the different ages of the world, we have seen the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs, become a spectacle to angels and men, in order to support, at the expence of their fortunes, of their repose, of their very lives, that  
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Holy Religion with which their hearts were filled. They required not the death of the sinful and the impious; on the contrary, they laid down their own lives to establish the rights of Religion, knowing that it ought to be announced only with gentleness and charity.

If the ancient law often struck prevaricators with death, it was a law of terror given in the midst of thunders and lightnings, calculated to intimidate, and the Jews, on whom it was imposed, were a nation whom it was necessary to awaken by extraordinary chastisements; but the new law springing up on Mount Calvary from the very blood of the Man-God, who prays even for his murderers, and dies for his enemies, teacheth all men that Christianity is truly the work of peace, of gentleness, of charity; that no man can be the servant of Jesus Christ, who is animated with a spirit of hatred and persecution; that to be zealous, according to the rules of the Gospel, we must not bring down truth to a level with error, but bring back those who controvert its precepts and doctrines by example and instruction.

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Jesus Christ has given us the best rules possible with regard to zeal, by the manner in which he treated the Sadducees and Publicans. He ate with the one, he tolerated the other, and shewed no resentment except against the Scribes and Pharisees, because, attached solely to the outward observances of the law, they had not its spirit, and even took occasion from it to despise and to hate all those who did not observe their trivial practices of devotion, and to boast without restraint of their own merits. Accordingly they were the first to put Jesus Christ to death, while the Sadducees, who denied the Immortality of the Soul, had less share in that dreadful guilt: which is a proof that false zeal is often more dangerous even than incredulity. No humanity can be expected from a fanatic, who, at the very time that he sacrifices you to his hatred, thinks he is doing God service. *Putat se obsequium Deo præstare.*

St. Paul, before his conversion, because animated by false zeal, breathed blood and slaughter against the Christians. He had consented to the death of Stephen, and, hurried on by a spirit

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spirit of Fanaticism, was become the most fiery persecutor of the rising church.

Had all the ministers of the gospel been careful to take Jesus Christ for their model, had they seriously considered that sinners were kindly received, the Samaritans and Sadducees patiently borne with by that divine Saviour, we had seen no excess in the bosom of the church, nor had the enemies of Christianity ever been able to bring against her the unjust reproach of being a persecutor.

The evil springs entirely from a propensity to dispute, which is almost always engendered by pride. Under a pretence of defending the interests of God and the Church, men become seekers of themselves, and take for real zeal the effervescence of a boiling blood or heated imagination. This is so true, that I have known men in their youth of a most impetuous zeal, which twenty years after was entirely relaxed, because they began to be cooled by old age. Prejudices are another cause of Fanaticism. If we be not cautious, they take such deep root in us as even to incorporate with our nature; and should we unhappily  
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be persuaded that a simple opinion of the schools is an article of faith, we would sacrifice our lives in its support. Such have been the scenes in ages of ignorance, where men anathematized and butchered each other for particular opinions which were not those of the universal church.

Obstinacy has produced in all ages evils so much the more dangerous, as it has often been found joined to the most imposing appearance of piety. Lucifer, Bishop of Cagliari, was a man of the greatest zeal and most rigid morals; but yielding to an excess of Fanaticism, he refused to communicate even with those for whom the church retained an indulgence worthy of his charity.

The spirit of intolerance and persecution often springs from entire ignorance. Men suffer themselves to be led by the blind, and fall with them. This fault is inexcusable in the ministers of a God who recommends to those who are to guide his people to be the light of the world. We ought to make a great distinction between ignorance and simplicity. The first draws after it a multitude of mischiefs

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chiefs, especially when it inclines to Fanaticism. A man, in that case, only listens to himself; and, as he knows nothing, commits evil without perceiving it.

Whatever may be the origin of false zeal, it is always an abomination in the sight of God, though its enormity may be increased or diminished in different degrees. But could men have distinguished the toleration of persons from the toleration of errors, that zeal had never been known. No Christian whatever, is, on any occasion, allowed to set error on a par with truth, and confound the heretic, the unbeliever, the pagan, with the faithful, who are marked with the sign of faith; but the practice of Jesus Christ obliges us to support the men, of whatever communion they be, to live peaceably with them, and not to torment them on account of any system of belief they may have adopted.

The characteristics of true zeal, are gentleness and persuasion. An air of severity to unbelievers, never fails to irritate rather than convert them. The Saviour of the world, our pattern and our head, commands the pastor to

seek the lost sheep, to bring it back upon his shoulders, and not to quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. We know the answer made by that Man-God to the Apostles, when little instructed in his doctrine, they wanted to bring down fire upon Samaria. *You know not what spirit you are of*, said he to them; *I came not to destroy sinners, but to save them.*

We see persons, animated by false zeal, kindle into rage, and assume a murdering aspect and tone, when they see or hear of a man who has the misfortune to be out of the right path. But true zeal, which is according to the knowledge of God, is only enflamed by the spirit of charity, and never shews itself but with the mildest look, never expresses itself but in the kindest terms.

When St. John the Evangelist, the gentlest of mankind, recommends to us not even to bid an enemy of Jesus Christ *God speed*, he only means to inform us that we must absolutely renounce the company of every man who we foresee may possibly pervert us.

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Instead of following the example of Rome herself, the metropolis of the world, which tolerates the Jews in the public exercise of their Religion, instead of imitating the conduct of the sovereign Pontiffs, who receive the Protestants with the greatest demonstrations of friendship, these men almost never speak of unbelievers but to load them with imprecations. It was not thus that the Fathers of the Church acted, who, in their writings, preached up no other doctrines but concord and charity; who made themselves intercessors for the guilty, in order to obtain their pardon from the judges and emperors.

Our Lord himself, when he prayed for his executioners, taught us how his cause is to be avenged. There would not have been so many clamours against the Catholic Church, so much animosity between the different communions, had the spirit of the gospel been the guide of our hearts and understandings.

It cannot be disputed that every one ought to use his utmost endeavours for the salvation of his brethren, either by instruction or ex-



ample ; but they are not to be constrained by violence nor authority.

Faith and works are pleasing to God only so far as they are voluntary. If we force a man to do penance, to pray to God, in a word, to adopt a Religion which his heart rejects, we render ourselves guilty in the eyes of the Lord, for it is in no case allowed to harrass consciences. *It shall not be with you, saith Jesus Christ to his Apostles, as with those who bear rule in the earth.* He desires that all who listen to him should do it sincerely, and we have never seen that during the course of his mortal life, he forced any one to come and hear him. He even suffered the young man to depart who seemed desirous of following him, because Religion is designed only for those of a willing mind, *Hominibus bonæ voluntatis.*

If we forcibly enlisted in the Church those who have no inclination to enter it, we should only make prevaricators and hypocrites. These words, *compelle entrare* (compel them to come in) are taken from a parable, and never meant that we ought to oblige men to be Catholics or  
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Christians against their wills; but only that we ought, by preaching, to use the most powerful persuasions that they may enter into the road of salvation, and especially represent to them that their eternal happiness or misery is at stake.

But a party spirit is so much more dangerous, as it assumes all forms, even that of piety, in order to exercise its tyranny. They who are actuated by it really seek only after dominion. When they meet with resistance they are inflamed by the love of Religion, for which they have little regard;—they are hurt by the wound given to their pride. But this is a false principle;—a party spirit makes visionaries pretend to inspiration, and Fanatics give themselves out for martyrs. Such were the heads of the sects; such were formerly even in the bosom of the church some false zealots, who contended for things not interesting to the faith. Ecclesiastical History furnishes many examples of this kind sufficient to make us tremble: for what is more dreadful than to see good men fall a prey to a zeal displeasing in the sight of God,

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and condemned by the church, as equally hurtful to Religion and the rights of society?

Nothing is more admirable than true zeal. If it sometimes breaks out, as that of Jesus Christ against the profaners of the temple, it is because the man, who comes even to the feet of the altars to insult his Maker, ought to be checked; and that the love of truth is not to be confounded with party spirit. That love animated the martyrs, the Fathers of the Church, and all those who opposed error with vehemence, yet without persecuting its authors.

A sovereign who is a real Christian ought, doubtless, to stop the course of impiety in his dominions; but he ought not in defence of the honour of a Religion which is entirely charity, to punish with death those who are unhappy enough to attack it, unless when they raise seditions, and disturb divine worship. For what is Christianity but the effusion of divine love, of that love which on the Cross pardons even blasphemers, of that love which hospitably embraces the Turk and the Indian: in a word, of that love, which, becoming all things

things to all men, never desireth the death but the conversion of a sinner.

What happy changes should we have seen, if, instead of tormenting heretics, we had con-jured them with all possible tenderness not to depart from the centre of unity! If we had cleared up their doubts with gentleness, listened to their objections with patience; and in a word, spoken to them the language of Religion herself with whom there is no respect of persons, and who neither bears a bitter nor a haughty spirit!

Methinks I hear this divine Religion call loudly to all those who have been persecuted by party spirit; "It is not by me you have been  
 "persecuted: sprung from the bosom of the  
 "Father of Mercies, I recommend only cha-  
 "rity; being the fruit of divine love to man-  
 "kind, I desire only their salvation; breathing  
 "nothing but self-denial and humility; in imita-  
 "tion of my divine Master, I lay myself at the  
 "feet of the whole world, and after his ex-  
 "ample preach only a spirit of gentleness and  
 "peace.—Though inexorable to vice and error,

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“I have no other arms but tears, prayers, and  
“censures purely spiritual, to bring back sin-  
“ners.”

Imitate that divine Religion, my Lord, in your treatment of the unbelievers by whom you are environed: gain their confidence, exhort them like the most tender father to open their eyes to their wanderings, and in every circumstance testify to them, that you bear them a sincere and ardent good will. Then will you have fulfilled your ministry, in a manner worthy of the Apostleship. If they do not accomplish your desires, at least they will admire your charity, and will not say, that the church loves to persecute, which is in fact blasphemy, because always assisted by the Holy Spirit, she never can act from passion.

The Holy Bishop of Geneva, who hath been the most vigorous champion against the Protestants, never shewed any zeal but what was actuated by charity. We ought always to distrust the spirit of darkness which transforms itself into an angel of light, to accomplish our seduction, and fill us with hatred to the ene-  
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mies of the Faith. We must remember, that St. Paul recommends to us a proper prudence, and tells us in plain terms, that some things are lawful which are not expedient, *Omnia mihi licent, sed non omnia expediunt.*

The great rule to which we ought strictly to adhere, is to imitate the practice of Jesus Christ himself, in whose divine life are found every rule of conduct and the pattern of every virtue. Without this we shall sometimes follow our passions, sometimes our prejudices, sometimes our resentment, sometimes our caprice; and give scandal to the good at the very time we think we edify them.

Above all do not entertain a belief, that I have the least intention to speak a single word against the zeal, with which every minister of Jesus Christ ought to be filled, that he may combat error, and draw men from the road of perdition. I blame only rash, impetuous, persecuting zeal. He who sincerely loves the church, makes no terms either with licentiousness or error, and never entertains either resentment or hatred against the persons even  
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most firmly attached to their perverse opinions.

Such a man does not excuse but lament them; and, far from avoiding them, endeavours by gentleness, by persuasion, to gain their confidence, and make them confess their mistakes.—In a word, he engages them at least not to publish their erroneous systems, that the infection may not be communicated.

The conclusion is, my Lord, that you see those mis-taught men who live round you, and believe me, that if you receive them with open cordiality, you will touch their hearts. If they abstain not from spreading their errors out of reverence to the Deity, they will at least do it in consideration of your kindness. Do them every favour in your power, and constrain them by your charity to acknowledge and to publish that the spirit of the church is really a spirit of peace and gentleness, and that a true Minister of the Gospel, like his Master, waits for the repentance of sinners, and would lay down his life to gain them eternal salvation.

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Such are my sentiments, and when you compare them with the Gospel, you will allow them certainly to be just. If I had time I could quote the conduct of the Church, the letters of the Holy Fathers, and above all those of St. Augustine, to prove that we must always maintain charity even towards those whose doctrine and manners are most corrupted;—it is the surest method to bring them back to unity, and consequently to truth.

But with these things, my Lord, you are as well acquainted as I, and by them ought you to be guided, if you would fulfil your duty with fidelity. I wish it for your own sake, and the peace of your Diocesans, for all of whom you ought to bear a tender regard.

OTHER  
REFLECTIONS

UPON  
PREACHING.

ADDRESSED TO THE SAME PRELATE AFTER  
THE FOREGOING.

**A**S to the manner of preaching, we should dedicate much more of our attention to correcting the morals of the people, than in discoursing upon mysteries. Subjects of contemplation, especially if they are sublime, elevate the mind, but leave the heart totally unaffected; while on the contrary, practical discourses influence the conduct of men, and lead their inclinations to that tenor of life which they recommend.

The mysteries of the Christian Religion make a grand and most magnificent picture  
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with a mixture of light and shade, which should be presented from time to time to the view of the Faithful, as the most complete proof of the greatness and the incomprehensibility of the Deity ; but evangelical morals being the proper guides to our practice, which should affect all our actions and become the very substance of them, ought to be exhibited daily, because we should continually behave like true Christians, and prove by all our works that we hold to our Religion invariably.

Attention should be had to prevent preachers from giving vent to invectives against people of a different persuasion, whom we do not think in the bosom of the church. Abusive declamations dishonour our sacred ministry, and only irritate ; it was neither the language of the Apostles, nor of Jesus Christ.

There cannot be greater moderation than what was employed in the recital which they gave of the passion of their heavenly Master. They did not pronounce the least imprecation against Pilate, against Caiphas, nor even against  
Barab-

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Barabbas, that notorious robber that was preferred before Jesus Christ. The truth needs only to be displayed with strength and understanding; it is not by apostrophizing Luther or Calvin, or the other Sectaries, that we can hope to bring the Protestants back into the bosom of the Church. The established principles with the leading proofs, upon which our belief of the truth depends, should be displayed, and no other weapons employed but mild reasonings, supported by the strength of authorities.

If our preachers would frequently read what St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Corinthians upon Charity, there is no doubt but their sermons would be much more moderate. It is so natural to confound caprice and passion with zeal, that we cannot be too much upon our guard against whatever can excite or promote such dispositions.

I knew a young preacher here, who, according to custom, held conferences with the Jews, on purpose to instruct and affect them, and who never reproached them but to have an opportunity

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portunity of introducing figures of rhetoric, and giving wing to a fiery imagination. I represented to him that it was odious to employ the chair of truth for such purposes; he confessed that he was wrong, and corrected himself. Let us thunder against vices and against errors, but let us spare the persons. The Church, who preaches only to recommend charity, has not given us a right to abuse our neighbours.

I wish to God, my Lord, that my weak Reflections may be of any use to your Lordship. One thing certain is, that they are agreeable to the doctrines of the Gospel, and to humanity; and of course they contain the very best rules for our conduct.

OF THE  
SPIRIT  
OF  
THE CHURCH.

**T**HE SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH is no other than that of Jesus Christ, *i. e.* A SPIRIT OF PATIENCE, OF MILDNESS, OF PEACE, OF HUMILITY, OF JUSTICE, OF DISINTERESTEDNESS, OF POWER, OF TRUTH.

I. A SPIRIT OF PATIENCE, which consists in a gentle treatment of sinners, and all men of whatever communion they may be, without offering them injury or vexation in any manner whatever. This is the example set us by Jesus Christ himself, our august Legislator, while he gave the Sadducees and Samaritans only demonstrations of his goodness. This he has enjoined to us, by commending to his Apostles *not*

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*to extinguish the smoking flax, and declaring that he came to save, not to destroy sinners.* Accordingly we see that the Apostle, always animated by the spirit of the Church, was the most patient of men towards sinners, and that he recommends forbearance as a virtue absolutely necessary to whoever would be a Christian. He knew none but spiritual arms; and if he inflicted the ecclesiastical punishment upon the incestuous person at Corinth, he still preserved for him all the charity possible, of which he gave him an effectual proof, by hastening his reconciliation;

This was the conduct of all the Saints, who were far removed from any thing of what is called spirit of party, or caprice; they listened solely to the dictates of Religion, whenever they were to deal with heretical or even impious persons. "Let us bewail those who go astray," said St. Augustine; "let us endeavour to bring them back to their duty, but never give them room for complaint; for we were not sent to strike, but to instruct and to reprove with mildness, but with firmness."

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These words of St. Augustine are the more admirable, as he always confirmed them by his example. We know how he wanted to treat the Donatists; he even was willing to quit his own See, and engage the Bishops, his colleagues, to do the same, in order to make room for them, provided they would consent sincerely to abjure their errors.

II. A SPIRIT OF MILDNESS. Never was the Church acquainted with that anger which ariseth from hatred and prejudice. She always disavowed those impetuous Ministers, who, stirred up by indiscreet zeal, treat those who go astray with asperity: being persuaded that even they cannot ascribe to themselves the happiness of having known the truth, and persevered in virtue.

Jesus Christ, by declaring himself *meek and lowly of heart*; and St. John the Evangelist, by recommending to the Faithful only concord and charity, give us a perfect knowledge of the Spirit of the Church.

St. Paul, in his advices to Titus, requires that a Bishop be not soon *angry, non iracundum*; because

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because he was persuaded that the Church, always inspired by the Holy Spirit, can never act from passion.

Thus men ought not to impute to the Church certain excesses of which History has preserved the memory, and whose bare recital is entirely repugnant to the maxims of the Gospel.

A SPIRIT OF PEACE. The Church, though always agitated, dreads disputes and dissensions; remembering that Jesus Christ, her august spouse, hath left her no other inheritance here on earth except peace: *Pax vobis*.

If some ministers trouble it, and delight in fomenting dissensions, they no longer act in the name of the Lord: they are then followers of their own passions, and desire to make the Lord subservient to their iniquities. Jesus Christ hath so clearly explained to us his doctrine and his will, that it is easy for us to know when a man speaks really in his name. Therefore the Apostle expressly says, *If even an angel from Heaven should bring us a new Gospel, let him be accursed; there is but one Faith, one Hope, one Baptism: and whoever breaks the unity excommunicates himself, and deserveth*

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not to be a child of Jesus Christ and of the Church. If any desire to see that spirit of peace with which she has always been animated, let them read her canons, which breathe only wisdom and moderation. But, unhappily, the accusations brought against her are borrowed from the enemies of the Catholic Religion; and then she is believed to be of a turbulent and persecuting spirit. If Judas betrayed Jesus Christ; if Peter denied him; if, in after ages, there were Ministers of the altars of a restless temper; is it not the height of injustice, upon account of those abuses, to censure the Gospel and the conduct of the Church?

The Saviour of the world commanded Peter, who cut off Malchus's ear, to put up his sword into the sheath, in order to teach all ages that his reign is the reign of gentleness and peace. If he saith that he is come to bring war, he speaks only of that which we ought to make upon our passions, and the oppositions we are to put between the flesh and the spirit, that we may live a life entirely spiritual.

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At his appearance in the world the angels immediately proclaim peace to all men. *Pax hominibus.*

IV. A SPIRIT OF HUMILITY. When the Church beholds her Divine Head kneeling before his Apostles to wash their feet; when she hears him say that it shall not be with them as with the princes of the nations, and that they shall be called neither masters nor lords, but that they shall be the servants of all; how could she feed herself with vain pride?

No Minister of the Gospel can be ignorant that the authority of the Apostles and their successors is not an authority of dominion, but only of persuasions, and that when sinners give scandal, and abandon themselves to pernicious excesses, their only weapons are prayers, tears, and the canonical penances.

The Spirit of the Church is not to be judged by the external pomp and ridiculous haughtiness of some of her Ministers; but by her preaching and practice among those who follow her rules, and do not depart from their duty. There is no age, no year, no day in which she does not launch her thunder against

ambition and vanity, which is so true, that she reckons pride among the mortal sins, as being one of the greatest and most dangerous.

If we fix our attention only upon offences, we shall, doubtless, see the Church surrounded with clouds, because we are not in Heaven; but when we consider the Church in her original state, when she issued from the bosom of God himself, and the manner in which she always regulated her practice as well as her decisions, we shall see her meek, humble, patient, continually praying for her greatest enemies, giving examples of the deepest humility, beginning with her Head, who makes it his glory to be stiled the Servant of Servants, and who ought to be so in practice, that he may be able to say with Jesus Christ, whose vicar he is upon earth, *Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.*\*

V. A SPIRIT OF JUSTICE. The Church has always made it a duty, in imitation of her Divine Master, to *render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*; and for this reason St. Paul recom-

\* Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of heart.

recommends to all the faithful to reverence all powers, declaring that all of them spring from God: *Omnis potestas a Deo*. For this reason he positively enjoins that prayers be made for all in authority.

Accordingly the Church pays peculiar honours to sovereigns, not out of fear, but in obedience to God, and from a principle of conscience. And we see that whenever they appeared in her general councils, she received them with the most profound respect; by this example teaching all nations, that their masters are really representatives of the Divinity, and hold their power only from Heaven: *Omnis potestas a Deo*.\*

She pays tribute to whom it is due; and if she sometimes opposed princes, with a firmness that might be mistaken for disobedience; it was only when they attempted to corrupt the principles of morality, or the faith.

The zeal which she testifies for the preservation of her immunities is prudent and reasonable, because enjoying only the usufruct of the pos-

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\* All power is of God.

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sessions bestowed on her, she is obliged to maintain herself in the full possession of it, that the successors may not be left without resource and subsistence: but if force be used to deprive her of her domains, in that case she only opposes to it representations and prayers; and it then becomes her duty, according to the precept of Jesus Christ, to give not only her coat but her cloak also, rather than rebel against authority; remembering that she hath nothing in full property, that she may not contradict what God saith to his disciples, *carrying with you neither gold nor silver.*

To these sketches let me add, that the Church is extremely rigid in the doctrine of Restitution, and that she never entered into a compromise with any person upon that head, it being her desire that justice should be strictly performed.

VI. A SPIRIT OF DISINTERESTEDNESS. It is a melancholy consideration that the avidity of some ministers has given room for those who do not trace things to their source, to believe that the Church is actuated by a strong spirit of self-interest;—she who knows no other treasures

sures but good works and the riches of grace ;— she who has always been contented to receive as alms what men have been pleased to bestow on her ; and who has constantly warned the bishops and priests that they have no right to more of the riches they possess, than what will supply them with bare necessaries, and that the overplus belongs to the poor.

We see in the Acts, that the Christians, who were so inclined, came to lay their possessions at the feet of the Apostles, but they themselves never took the least step to procure them. Such is the Spirit of the Church, she receives when men give, but she makes it a law to require nothing. If, as St. Paul saith, a priest must live by the altar, it is just that the Faithful furnish him wherewithal to subsist.

When, therefore, certain priests or monks abused the simplicity of the Faithful, to extort from them wills in their own favour, and shewed a rapacity, which must be abhorred by every man who is acquainted with Religion, this was far from being the act of the Church. On such occasions her name was abused, in order, more effectually, to answer the purposes of fraud.

If we would see the real spirit of the Church in this manner, let us turn our eyes on St. Augustine, who, more than once, offered to his congregation to give up to them all his churchlands, and he and his clerks to live upon the offerings and contributions, as was the custom among the Levites under the ancient law.

We learn by his sermons that he often refused legacies which had been legally bequeathed to him, either from unwillingness to impoverish families, or a knowledge that the ministers of the altars ought to be contented with a little.

If it happened that a father, incensed against his children, disinherited them at his death, and bestowed his fortune on the Church, he rejected it with a holy indignation, as a fruit of bitterness and wrath, in the full persuasion that it is unlawful to profit by the wrong done to another.

Thus acted Aurlius, Bishop of Carthage. A man having bestowed his possessions on the Church, afterwards had children contrary to his expectation; immediately that illustrious and worthy Prelate restored to him the whole,

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to which he thought himself obliged by the law of God.

If it was necessary to commence a law-suit, in order to secure a contested succession, St. Augustine immediately abandoned it, being unwilling that a community established by him should go to law for perishable riches. “We have neither stores, nor strong box,” said he, “because had we any thing more than bare necessaries, it would be the property of the poor.”

It is not to be doubted that the Church then spoke by his mouth, and for the honour of Religion, which abhors avidity, it could be wished that all the ministers of the Lord had always acted and thought in the same manner.

Tell me how can a society, founded by a legislator born in a stable, and who, during his mortal life, had not where to lay his head, entertain any attachment for perishable riches? For her children she desires only food and clothing, and this is so true, that she asks of God only necessaries for the day: *Panem quotidianum* (daily bread.) A Bishop commits murder, saith St. Bernard, so often as having it

in his power to relieve a poor man who endureth hunger, he acquits not himself of that important duty.

It is not contrary to the Spirit of the Church to possess riches, because the Apostles themselves accepted them; but she uses them as if she used them not according to the example of her august head. Besides, she has always taught that the possessions she enjoys, in their origin, are the alms of the Faithful, in their use, the patrimony of the poor.

VII. A SPIRIT OF POWER. By this we mean not a rash resistance to the powers which God has established, nor a profane ardour for war and battles, and the employment of arms, which are put into men's hands by a spirit of revolt; but an evangelical firmness which repulsing error treats mildly those who go astray, and thunders against the vices, while she solicits pardon for the guilty.

Accordingly when it is said that the Church ought sometimes to employ power, it is meant her Spiritual Power; which is so true, that the first Christians suffered themselves to be butchered, rather than rebel against the edicts of the Emperors;



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Emperors; and the most Holy Bishops in all times solicited the pardon of Apostates, desiring only their conversion.

That Spirit of Power, which animates the Church, appeared with all its lustre in preaching. Even in the Courts of Kings, she loudly proclaimed, with holy intrepidity, the terrible truths denounced against sinners; and she employed, but always with prudence, the spiritual arms which God put into her hands, whenever she judged those methods necessary, to make the rebels against her authority, re-enter into themselves; for she was always sensible that indiscreet zeal may do much mischief, and that commonly silence and patience are the best remedies.

VIII. A SPIRIT OF TRUTH. The Church cannot bear with error, though she tolerates those that are infected with it, and this by the example of Jesus Christ, who, during his residence on earth, bore with patience being beset by Sadducees, Samaritans, and Publicans, who were the infidels, the schismatics, and the open sinners of those times.

There cannot be quoted in the succession of ages, a single instance where the Church came to a compromise with error.—She always opposed a wall of brass to all the heresies invented by the Spirit of Pride; she always preserved herself a pure virgin in the midst of corruption, without dreading threats or torments. The Holy Spirit, by teaching her all truth, gave her power to resist all errors.

Nothing can be more admirable, than to see all the sects successively fall at her feet, and disappear like those storms, which, after threatening universal destruction, are dissipated in a moment.

In vain have attacks been made in every age on the great truths of Religion taught by the Church, they will never be demonstrated to be false. Accordingly we see that heretical and impious persons employ only sophisms and ironies when they assail the doctrines and mysteries of religion: this is their whole resource, and to men of sound judgment, this is the best proof, that they have no solid reasons to urge.

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Ecclesiastical History shews us the Church in every age still immaculate in her practice and her faith. The more she abounded with ministers destitute of her spirit, the more did she appear divine in the eyes of the unprejudiced and dispassionate. Had she been a society merely human, she must naturally have suffered herself to be carried away by the torrent of vices and errors: but her incorruptibility, notwithstanding so many offences in open defiance of virtue, proclaim the excellence of her original, and the prerogatives with which she has been invested by the Deity. Though faith be daily decaying, she remains the same now that she was in the days of the Apostles: she always teaches the same truths, and is always ready to suffer martyrdom, if an attempt be made to deprive her of them.

These are truths easy to be demonstrated, and which it is necessary to set in a conspicuous point of view, when we would labour in the conversion of our erring brethren. Unhappily they have confounded the Church with her Ministers, so far as to charge her with a thousand

and iniquities, upon which she looks with horror. As it would be the greatest injustice to attack temporal power under the pretext that there have been princes who in the most enormous manner abused their authority, so it is a violation of all the rules of equity, to impute to the Church the excesses of a few of her ministers.

The sanctity, and consequently the moderation of the Church once proved, the next step is to demonstrate that she neither has made, nor can make any innovation in the Faith; first, because as being the spouse of Jesus Christ, she cannot err; secondly, because the day, the hour, the moment of her error would be known, it being impossible that in a society dispersed over the whole earth, innovations should creep in without any protestation against them; afterwards it ought to be explained in what consists that spirit of meekness, with which the Church was always animated, and proof adduced that far from abhorring that toleration which protects the persons without winking at the false doctrines of heretics,

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tics, it has always been her doctrine, and that such men cannot be harrassed, without a departure from her maxims.

Above all, it would be necessary to shew great charity towards them; and out of condescendence to their weakness, from a love to peace allow them every liberty in things not inconsistent with morality and the faith.

Discipline being in certain points discretionary, can never be changed on a more necessary occasion, than when we have it in view to recall into the bosom of unity an innumerable multitude who have broken from it.

What an acquisition would it be to the Church, did the Protestants again return into her pale! they would mingle their lights with ours; and this would form a league the most admirable and most efficacious for the overthrow of infidelity; but it would be necessary to receive them with an effusion of tenderness capable of demonstrating our sincere affection, and never to hint the least reproach for what is past.

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This is an event we ought all to desire with the most lively ardour; for nothing is more afflicting than to see a wall of brass between Christians, who believe equally the great mysteries of the Trinity and Redemption, i. e. the fundamental points of their common Religion.

The Church, like a tender mother, who always remembers the children that have been seduced from her, never loses sight of this reunion. Were the Protestants well acquainted with her good affection there is no doubt but they would feel for her pain, and eagerly hasten to relieve it by a sincere return; but unhappily they have formed to themselves the most hideous picture of the Romish religion, by supposing her of a persecuting spirit. Yet they ought to know, that in Rome herself, the Protestants are treated with the greatest kindness; and that from the manner in which they are received there, they may be persuaded that she really disapproves of the persecutions stirred up against them by Fanaticism in those unhappy  
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times, when both sides listened only to the dictates of blind impetuous zeal.

Would to Heaven it were granted us, even at the expence of our own blood, to hasten the return of our brethren, for whom we feel all possible tenderness! Woe to those who would retain the least animosity against them! Charity ought to be the characteristic of the Catholics; because it is inseparable from unity, and he is destitute of that virtue who loveth not all mankind with sincerity, or who suffers the natural aversion he ought to have for errors, to inspire him with hatred against the persons of their maintainers.

OF THE  
S P I R I T  
OF THE  
R E L I G I O U S O R D E R S.

**I**F the different institutions which set up as instructors to edify mankind, and whom Religion looks upon as troops that are one day to increase the armies of Heaven, were of a temper which made them exclude the rest of mankind, they ought to be cut off from the field of the Lord, like parasitical plants that come up to usurp a possession, of which they are not worthy; but all the Religious Orders have the true Spirit of the Church, and they can have no other without being gross prevaricators.

It is not from the exclamations of Heretics and Freethinkers, nor from the abuses which have gradually crept into cloisters, nor from  
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the tyranny of some superiors of convents, that we should judge of the Religious Orders, but from the rules established by their different founders, which should not be confounded with subsequent explanations of their constitutions; and the rather, because it is not always a spirit of wisdom and equity which interprets and comments upon the original institutions.

There is not a single Religious Order which may not boldly expose itself to the strictest examination, if it appears dressed only in its first rules which were dictated by the institutor.

I will begin with the Order of St. Benedict, which presents itself after having subsisted without interruption for twelve centuries, notwithstanding the ignorance and corruption of the intervening times, till it has descended to the present, and I find it replete with wisdom and discretion. Nothing is to be seen but peace, gentleness, charity, and such moderation even with regard to those who desert from them, that their sacred founder does not choose that they should be pursued or disturbed; judging, and with reason, that a vicious monk, is an open precipice in a community

munity, where all the rest may throw themselves headlong; and that nothing is so proper as to cut off an infectious or diseased sheep from the flock, lest the whole should be tainted.

From hence the Councils have called the Rules of St. Benedict, *The Holy Rules*, adding, that they were composed by the same kind of spirit which the Church employed in dictating the Canons. Among the many precepts which they contain, they chiefly include an obligation to bodily labour, because the first founders of the different orders wished that their disciples should live as the Apostles lived, by engaging in employments which would procure them subsistence.

If they have not always been engaged in mechanical employments, it is owing to their being encouraged by objects much more deserving their attention, for they thought it was their duty to dispel that darkness and ignorance which overspread almost the whole world till the ninth or tenth century, where notwithstanding the truths of Religion, which are invariably

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riably the same, the greatest part of the Ecclesiastics sunk into the most slothful idleness.

Then the Friars of the Order of St. Benedict were seen to employ their whole time in endeavouring to restore the light of the Gospel, and to spread themselves abroad in cities, as well as in the country, which they rendered habitable by constant cultivation. There are a number of cities in Europe that owe their existence to the disciples of St. Benedict, who employed a most indefatigable zeal when they were engaged in improving the face of the country, or the understandings of men.

With views somewhat different, the Rules of the Orders of St. Dominick and St. Francis were not less prudent. These illustrious Saints who came to revive the spirit of repentance, at a time when it seemed to be entirely lost, thought very wisely to second the zeal of the Ecclesiastics, or to make up for the smallness of their number, that the Church had occasion for a *Corps de-reserve*, from whence they might draught auxiliary troops when it was found necessary.

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It was with this view that the Sovereign Pontiffs approved of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders: and it must be acknowledged, that the Friars of these Orders discharged their duty with success, and that a multitude of dioceses, even to the extremity of the earth, have been the theatre of their apostolical labours.

Francis d'Assise, that poor man, whose native simplicity marked him out as an object of derision, for a number of Freethinkers, who endeavoured to expose him to ridicule, has composed a set of rules, every article of which displays his good sense; they are reduced to a small compass, but contain most excellent instruction. It does not appear that he was a fool by recommending to his children even to dispose of the sacred utensils to relieve the sick, if the abilities of the community were insufficient for that duty; and in saying that it is much more pleasing in the sight of God to have the poor assisted than his altars decorated.

Having no language but the language of the Gospel there is nothing extravagant in the laws

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laws which he has established. He knew the faulty methods which were employed in the direction of the Monks, and on purpose to expose the ridiculous customs at a general chapter, he assumed the tone, demeanour, and gait of Friar Elias, who had a conceited manner; yet this Friar Elias was a Monk exceedingly capable of governing.

If all the Religious Orders have not been steady in keeping exactly to their rules, by giving into some excess of severity or remissness, it is because there is no society, except the Church, which has the privilege of infallibility, and that men are naturally subject to changes. Besides, why should we be surprised to see that the Religious Institutions have declined, since the Christians of the first ages were so different from the present? I confess that they have been too much multiplied, and that the Lateran Council very prudently endeavoured to restrain the number, because it is extremely difficult for a great assembly of people to preserve a proper fervour in their devotions, and because the state should not be depopulated to people communities.

I do not mean to enter into an examination of all the rules by which monasteries and convents are guided; I only propose, that they should be enquired into before a suit is commenced against any Religious Order. The world judges only from appearances, otherwise they would not constantly rail against the abuses of the cloister, and, far from attacking the essence of the regular institutions, they would approve of their purposes and motives.

It is not the Roman Catholic Religion only which dedicates a part of her children to retirement: China, which is quoted every day as a model of excellent government, has its Bonzes, and Turkey its Dervises. It would be cruel in any Government to prevent those people, who have a particular desire for solitude, from following such an inclination. It is true that sovereigns should enquire whether the number be not too great, and finding that to be the case, then to have them reduced.

The institution of St. Ignatius had never been attacked, if they had adhered to the rules of their pious founder, which breathed nothing but what should lead to the salvation of souls ;  
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but the generals of the order who succeeded him, put their hands to them, and intermixed worldly politics with the most edifying regulations. We frequently see texts sadly corrupted by some people, who pretend to expound them.

Undoubtedly there are some constitutions wherein the omissions of the institutors have been most prudently supplied; but at the same time I know that there are some, who, instead of improving their rules, have rendered them more unintelligible, and have annihilated the true spirit of the founders.

Such is the natural vanity, or turbulent disposition of man, that he will perpetually introduce something of his own, into whatever he is engaged in. He does not chuse to be led by the hand, and yet nothing better can be wished for than to have a good guide.

All the Religious Orders were founded upon disinterestedness, and those means which have been employed to obtain possessions were not advised by their founders. This is so true, that the vow of poverty has always been placed as the very basis of their rules. St. Augustine refused

refused a number of donations which were offered to his Monastery; and if they had been received in later times without opposition, it was because they knew that the mendicant state exposed them to a number of inconveniences, especially in an age when they only seek to ridicule those who wear the garb of penitence, and trace the footsteps of the Apostles by their uncommon simplicity.

It is with great injustice that some people alledge that the Friars, who possess considerable property, ought not to enjoy it, because they do not perform the same services they did formerly. Children every day enjoy the rewards which were bestowed on their virtuous progenitors; and the privileges of nobility which gentlemen inherit, is a favour granted to the memory of their ancestors.

There ought to be only one rule for judging; but with some people, it is enough to be a Friar, to be in the wrong; alluding to the errors of particular persons, and some scandals, which are inevitable in numerous societies, they charge the vices of a few individuals to the whole Order.

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When Reason assumes the balance, and weighs things with impartiality, it will still be found that there are vices in cloisters; but at the same time she will see that virtue greatly predominates. Victims may be seen there sighing under irrefragable engagements, and she will acknowledge that the world has sacrificed them; she will see jealousies and altercations there, but she will recollect at the same time that there were jealousies and altercations even among the Apostles, because it is not in human nature to be perfect; and if among the disciples of Jesus Christ himself, one was found to betray him, and another to deny him, it is by no means surprising that the founders of the Religious Orders should have some unworthy subjects, and likewise some apostates among their children.

Every Religious Order, like Religion herself, by its rules, forbids every kind of excess or abuse. It is only by making the rules bend to their inclinations that Monks can become vicious. Happy the man who sees things only as they ought to be seen, and never speaks but from reason and experience!

There is no establishment of any kind into which some abuses have not found admission, and every institution which contains greater advantages than disadvantages ought to be preserved.

There are so very few people of a right way of thinking; their conduct, or their reasonings, are so little guided by principle, that we should be guarded against the greatest part of their observations.

One thing is very unfortunate, that neither the universities, nor all the masters in the world, can make us capable of thinking correctly; it is a natural combination which is born with us, a manner of viewing things which depends upon our constitutions.—They may rectify our ideas, but they cannot entirely change them to make them better if they are essentially vicious. The mind of man is like his sight; if there is a radical disorder in his eyes, he will always see badly or very imperfectly whatever pains are taken to obtain a cure.

I am very far from alledging that they who do not see the Religious Orders in the same light that I see them, must therefore think  
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wrong, but I believe upon good grounds that they judge very improperly who find fault with the institution. That languor which benumbs their senses would neither be visible in their studies, nor in their want of attention to their duties, if care was taken to encourage emulation! and if the different Governments kept them employed in useful labours, either in the education of youth, or in composing histories, which we very much want; or in perfecting philosophy, which in many of our schools is still very defective.

There are great resources in a numerous society, where different geniuses, subjected to wise laws, contribute to the same purpose. By a free communication of sentiments and ideas they inform one another, and find in society what never could be had in solitude.

There are employments likewise, which can only be attempted in communities: I speak of works which require deep inquiry and perseverance, where solitude is necessary to prevent interruption, and companions to procure assistance.

A community is a little world, which is always renewed and never exhausted, so that when a writer happens to die, he is easily replaced by another.

The illustrious Muratori in a letter to a Barnabite, his intimate friend, expresses himself in the following manner: "I perceive if I had  
" been with you, I could have found a great  
" many resources in my labours, that my judgment would have improved by assistance,  
" which is not to be procured in solitude, and  
" in a word, that my works would have been  
" much more correct. Distractions are inevitable while we live in society, but in the  
" cloister a man is always master of himself." It was thus that great man thought, whose judgment is so respectable in the eyes of all those who know how to estimate real merit.

If a list was to be published of all those people in the Religious Orders, who have made themselves celebrated either for their eminent virtues, or for their taste in the arts and sciences, we would not hear the world constantly repeating, that *the Friars are useless Members of Society.*

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It is certain that the greatest part of them do not publish their works, because fortunately every man has not talents for shining as a writer. An inundation of books and writers is undoubtedly a scourge. To have good authors there should be only a limited number, because there are many more people of erroneous, than truly sound judgment. We must expect to see every kind of paradox and sophistry printed, when too much is written.

If authors had no greater fault than that of repeating what has been said before, I would readily forgive them, provided that whatever they serve up again for the entertainment of the public, should be truly good. To relish some kind of truths, it is necessary that they be presented with the appearance of novelty. Like a suit of clothes which cannot be endured when old, but may be worn again most cheerfully when turned. It is an old picture new varnished.

From such observation I conclude, that every establishment which has eternal salvation and the public good as the principal objects of its attention, that it ought to be respected; and

that every Religious Order which has been instituted with such views, cannot have its original regulations attacked, but from a disregard to truth, and a want of common sense.

Mankind ought not to judge from the antipathy or disapprobation of individuals, for by the same rule, the wisest planned orders, and the most useful institutions must be suppressed. Our judgments should be regulated by some general standard, and if we do not attend to comply with it, we shall be led to declare in favour of prejudices, at the very time we think we are combating against prepossessions.

It is inconceivable how much the judgments of men are affected by custom. At a time when Religious Orders were held in the highest esteem, every writer took up the pen in their favour ; but in an age when they are no longer relished, every book that is published attacks them with fury : so that between the two extremes we should endeavour to find some certain rule to guide our judgment.

I know, for I have always laid it down as a law to myself to be impartial, that great numbers of Monks and Friars may be a burden to

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some States, but it is a duty of the Sovereign to examine the advantages and disadvantages, and to regulate their number accordingly, and more particularly those that live upon charity.

It were to be wished, that the greatest part of the Friars were provided for by endowments, that they might not be exposed to the caprices of an unfeeling public; but I should desire no more for them than the greatest moderation, that they might not be prevented from attending to their duties. We but too commonly see those who live in abundance, please themselves by indulging in a life of idleness; though riches do not suit with the vows of religious poverty, and it is by no means right, that a man who has formerly renounced the conveniences of life, should enjoy them like people who live in the world.

Every Religious Order ought to be employed in some useful purpose, for in a well regulated state we should not have people who only pray, but likewise people who are active for the good of the community. A kingdom whose inhabitants were entirely speculative, would soon sink

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to ruin. Heads and hands are wanted to make commerce and abundance circulate through the whole, and every man, who is a native of the State, should contribute to the happiness and good order of his fellow citizens.

If the Friars published some works among the many with which they have enriched the public, which people now a days would not attempt to read, from their being so filled with absurd and ridiculous questions, it was much less their fault than that of the age in which they lived. Some people who composed wretched books about two hundred years ago, would write very well in the present age, so that it is with reason we say, the human genius depends much upon the taste of the times in which we live. An age which has no passion for study, can never inspire a spirit of emulation; nor the age of bad philosophy produce any but wretched philosophers.

I am always distressed when I see the efforts of genius thwarted for want of proper encouragement. The Order of St. Francis alone, has produced a multitude of learned men, who would be much better known and in greater  
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estimation, if the times in which they lived could have corrected their manner of writing and teaching. It is thus we ought to judge of men, and lament their misfortunes, rather than insult them when they have been so unlucky as not to have had that assistance they so much wanted.

There are a great number of questions which Scotus, surnamed the Subtil Doctor, would not have handled if he had been our contemporary. I do not fear to assert, that he would have been one of our most eminently learned men, had his genius been differently cultivated; like a plant which produces only indifferent fruit, while it vegetates amidst thorns in a poor stony soil, but if transported to a kinder climate would repay our care by its superior excellence.

The sentiments of mankind depend upon such a variety of circumstances, that all their windings and turnings should be examined before we pretend to affix a value to them. The greatest part of the authors who wrote during the barbarous ages, if they were to return at present, would tear in pieces their own

works, that they might give us some more excellent than their former writings. To live in an age of taste and emulation is a greater incitement for an author, for although he may have but indifferent abilities, he imperceptibly acquires both learning and taste, and finds himself capable of writing with precision and wonderful accuracy.

Perhaps we shall be looked upon as Gothic by succeeding ages, for we have no reason to believe that we have attained the summit of perfection. It is very possible that men may express themselves in some future period much better than we do at present, and likewise discover many things of which we are ignorant. Human reason never rests at one point; it rather runs retrograde than remains inactive, which was very evidently seen immediately after the age of Augustus, when the masculine eloquence of the greatest masters was neglected, to run after puns and quibbles.

The different ages proceed at a very irregular rate; from whence it is, that the Religious Orders have at some times been highly  
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praised, and at others equally decried; but Religion alone, which never changes, must fix the standard of their merit. She grieves most certainly when she beholds men, who have renounced this world, still retaining the same dispositions, and her sole desire is to see them amend their lives; but she can distinguish what constitutes the essence of rules from their abuse.

A Friar, who upon a pretence of having a respect for his Order, attempts to vindicate every abuse which has been introduced, deserves no attention. We should never pretend to shut our eyes against whatever is reprehensible, but if the Evangelists have ingenuously related the treachery of Judas, and Peter's denial of Christ, it must be with a very bad grace that we can pretend to vindicate all those of the Order who stray from their duty. It is nothing but an insolent presumption which can induce the members of Religious Communities to defend the guilty. The Records of the Order of St. Benedict, have not been thought a discredit to the Order, by relating that some of the Monks attempted to poison their founder.

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The tares are mixed with the good grain in the Religious Institutions, as well as in the Church.

It is necessary for the honour of Religion and the good of kingdoms, that a Society which becomes infamous, either from its intrigues, ambition, or immoralities, should not only be reformed, but suppressed. A Religious Order becoming useless to the State, is a sufficient reason for its being abolished. The edification and advantage of our neighbour, was the principal view of the founders of all the different orders; let us second their intentions, and labour without ceasing to discharge faithfully the duties of the Pastoral Functions with which we have been intrusted. These are my reflections upon the Regular Institutions, and such are my desires.

OF THE  
DIFFERENT NATIONS,  
AND PARTICULARLY OF  
THE ITALIANS.

**A**S far as the life and occupations of a Monk would permit, I have studied the several nations who inhabit our own quarter of the world ; and from the sketches of them, I have seen either among the foreigners with whom I have had occasion to be acquainted, or the accounts of travellers, or lastly the pictures presented to us by history : I have remarked that there is a similarity and harmony of character, by which they are closely united, and that their difference is much less owing to a dissimilarity of genius, than to the degrees of light, in which they are seen.

It follows, that according to my view of things, a Laplander would have the same talents with an Italian, were his education and climate equally favourable.—Hence comes it that in all countries we find just thinkers and equitable judges. We know not how extensive the capacity of a peasant's soul may be, because it is presented to us under a rustic outside, and incrustated with a rude bark. We even ordinarily judge that soul to be less than nothing; and yet there is room to believe, that it is capable of doing wonders, were proper opportunities offered for the display of its powers.

Sextus Quintus and lately Cardinal Alberoni would have remained for ever buried in themselves, had not lucky accidents struck fire from the flint. The world is a vast field, in which the different geniuses of men are so many seeds scattered at random, which fructify or miscarry, according to the wind that blows. If it be favourable, they become trees equally magnificent in foliage, and excellent in fruit; if unfavourable, they present only a frightful sterility.

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The soul, by its union with the body, is reduced to a dependence upon the ages, the seasons and elements. In some it always remains in a state of infancy; because it has found no hand to rear and give it strength; in others it acquires a perfect manhood: because care is taken to surround it with every thing proper to vivify and illuminate it.

Conformably to these observations, we may freely conclude that an Englishman, carried into Spain, and receiving the education of a Spaniard, would become much less industrious; and that on the contrary, a native of Madrid transplanted into London, and brought up there, would have an entirely different way of thinking.

The several countries form so many distinct points of view, which determine the operations of the mind. So closely are the moral and natural world connected here below, that we often behold wonderful actions, which notwithstanding are to be attributed merely to the influence of external causes.

An ancient philosopher justly said that our senses are so many windows through which we  
receive

receive all kinds of impressions, and that our soul being naturally indolent, almost always contents herself with looking through these openings, instead of reflecting back upon herself. If she fixes her looks invariably on the north, she perceives none but chilling gloomy objects; if on the contrary, she turns her eyes to the south, the prospect inspires her with warmth and cheerfulness.

A sublime genius suffers not his thoughts to be guided by such views; accordingly he is ranked in the class of phenomena, and the more justly as we are insensibly led captive by sensible objects. From our infancy, we have some ideas, though originally introduced by the most trifling incidents, which direct us, during the whole course of our life, and inspire us either with courage or cowardice, rashness or superstition.

The generality of mankind may therefore be said to be only an assemblage of circumstances. Some judge ill only because they have frequented the company of men who had an erroneous cast of thinking; others have a sound understanding only because they have had the  
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good luck to read a work that struck them, and gave them principles. The Englishman is an enthusiastic admirer of his own constitution, only because the word *liberty* has been buzzed into his ears from his infancy: the Chinese believes himself the greatest of mankind, only because it is incessantly repeated to him that he has more invention and more industry than all the Europeans together.

When a cause is brought before a tribunal, it would be natural to presume, or even to look upon it as a certainty that all the judges would see it with the same eyes; yet it engenders as many different opinions as there are persons; because one has heard his grandfather say that things ought to be so; and because another has distorted his understanding by an affectation of singularity, the offspring of mistaken pride.

For example, I have several times remarked that a book which met with the most general applause, yet displeased some men only, because they would not swim with the torrent, and thought it derogatory from their dignity to suffer themselves to be carried away by the judgment of the public.

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The soul must secure herself from a thousand things if she would preserve her empire ; above all she must watch against all the prejudices with which she is beset by the passions, even before she has the power of reflection, and in this she can succeed only by interrogating her reason, and comparing one thing with another : she ought to adopt the sentiment of the French philosopher, and subject every thing to a methodical doubt. But this is a much more difficult matter than men imagine, and hence comes it that so many souls, which had the best dispositions, stop in their journey, if I may be allowed the expression, and a thousand inconveniences prevent them from ever arriving at the point for which they set out.

It follows that the man is much indebted to Providence, who finds in his climate, his education, the form of his government, means to raise him above the sentiments of the vulgar. This is a second life a thousand times more valuable than the first, especially if the principles he has imbibed be founded in true Religion.

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From this I never detach my idea of man, not because I am a Monk, but because it is certainly agreeable to reason and experience that we lose the greatest part of our existence, if we know not the truth in the point most essential both for this world, and that which is to come.

My soul, by making the body every moment sensible that she is its sovereign, and obliging it to obey her pleasure, teaches me that I am not a being merely material, and that there is certainly some part of me which must survive my muscles and my nerves. My thought then is too valuable to be abandoned to chance, and the substance which produces it too sublime not to be applied to serious objects. And it is an indisputable truth, that none but such as are immortal ought to fix our desires, and none but such can completely satisfy them.

When a man says that our being born in one climate rather than another is a thing merely casual, he speaks like a scholar of Lucretius or Epicurus. An eternal, all-ruling Providence has determined the birth of one man rather at Peking than at Rome, and this for reasons which,

which, though eternal, are unknown to us, because they are the secrets of the Divinity. Accordingly we neither can nor ought to reproach any person with the lowness of his origin, nor the miserable state in which he was born. Shall I ask an ear of corn why it grows in a barren field rather than in a well cultivated soil? The hand of the Creator hath sown according to his will, and he will reap according to his pleasure.

It is the property of Reason, as being the growth of every climate, to form just views and exact decisions, unless a snare be laid for her, and she be deceived.

The opinions of men which have taken their birth almost entirely from the prejudices of infancy or country, ought to be dumb in presence of the truth, because that is a truth which, the same in Siberia as in Holland, exists in all climates, in some more concentrated, in others more diffused, but always existing, always bounding triumphant over the flood of crimes and errors in which the world lies drowned.

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Some have only an oblique, others a direct view of this truth, and what is amazing, we often think we have found her when we have only met with Falsehood. Accordingly philosophers have for whole centuries successively misled one another in their researches, and their mistakes have been the more fatal, as they looked upon themselves to be the sole oracles of the universe. When Imposture dares to give herself out for Truth, we see only false principles, which are taken for the best beaten roads, and we plunge into a gulph of errors.

When nations are thoroughly examined, it is difficult to judge which deserves the preference. Great virtues are commonly accompanied with great faults, in order to instruct man that he ought at the same time to be high-minded and humble, and to keep him in a just medium between confidence and fear. The nations which give the least signs of extensive intellectual powers, and who, from being deeply immersed in ignorance, are kept in obscurity and almost buried in oblivion, are seldom acquainted with great crimes, which seem to accompany the most sublime actions.

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Hence comes it, that heroism scarce ever exists without atrocity ; and when we analyze the high feats of all those conquerors who are extolled as prodigies of valour and genius, we ordinarily find them shaded by the blackest horrors.

Accordingly it may be said, that Italy is not now dreadful for its crimes, because it is no longer famous for great exploits. Parcelled out into a number of distinct shares by the different states within its circuit, it can neither extend its territory, nor raise its head as at the time when it was renowned for being the assemblage of every moral virtue and every crime.

The Romans, of whose stock, considering them relatively to their power and valour, we are only very feeble shoots, finding no bounds to their authority, and giving laws even to the world, signalized themselves by every method in order to make their names immortal. They were at the height of joy, provided they were talked of, and all the earth acknowledged their empire and trembled at their name.

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Christianity, which blotted them from the earth, by confining their descendants within the circle of truth, no more permitted those renowned robberies, miscalled exploits; and the humble virtues then succeeding to those ebullient sallies which were entitled magnanimity, but which had no other principle than pride, Italy entirely lost every thing that had acquired her the most brilliant lustre. It naturally followed upon the division of a dominion as extensive as absolute, that the love of glory should decay, and opportunities of rising to distinction became less frequent. A country necessarily becomes pacific, when it ceases to be powerful, as it is unable to oppress, and unwilling to be oppressed; but men, even in their degeneracy, always preserve something of their ancient original; the Italians having no opportunity to distinguish themselves by brilliant victories, tried to acquire glory by the arts and sciences. If we trace every age from the fall of Pagan Rome, we shall find that this has always been their ruling passion. We love to make a noise in the world by some means or other, he who is not Cæsar, wishes to be Sextus Quintus,

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Quintus, and he who is not Virgil wishes to be Tasso.

The manners insensibly took a tincture from the wonderful change which happened in Italy, when the Capitol fell prostrate at the feet of the disciples of the Cross, and the triumph of Christianity was complete. Then the martial virtues disappeared to make way for the pacific; and as every thing degenerates, and the most excellent things are always accompanied by their abuse, the bodies and minds of the Italians sunk in effeminate softness.—Not that the Gospel, that book truly divine, authorizes sloth and sensuality, of which, on the contrary, it is the greatest enemy, by continually recommending mortification of our appetites, but as this visible world unhappily strikes us more than those things which we do not see, and the penance commanded us in the sacred books is not an object of celebrity as were the fatigues endured in the fields of Mars, the modern Romans cannot rival the fame of the ancient.

There are only a few souls deeply impressed by Heaven, whom nothing stops in the career  
of



of salvation ; but the greatest number abandon themselves to idleness.

Thus among the Italians, they who neither cultivate the sciences nor arts, and who are not animated by the spirit of Christianity, which prompts to the most glorious actions, remain in oblivion. Formerly all the Romans only composed one individual ; the exploits of a single man reflected lustre on the whole body, and every member had its share in the glory ; and this was the reason of their becoming so renowned.

When men have not important common interests, and are under different masters, each of whom has his peculiar mode of governing, great actions stand single ; and if a hero starts up, he is so only for himself ; the nation is not inflamed by his example. This is exactly our position ; the Venetian receives no pleasure from the glory of the Roman, nor the native of Milan from the Neapolitan. Subject to different sovereigns, they are much more inclined to lessen than exalt each other's reputation.

Hence it necessarily happens that emulation grows torpid, and the Italians are deprived of

the grand springs which prompt almost all men to distinguish themselves,—Money and Glory. The less extensive territories a sovereign possesses, the less is his trade and the fewer are his subjects, consequently the less are the rewards of merit in his power. Besides, how many are there who will do nothing if they are not paid!

From this display of facts it is visible that we are constrained by necessity to be indolent, our different states are too limited to carry on wars or to awaken a spirit of industry.

However, after so many wars and revolutions, it is no small matter to be what we are. Thanks to the Christian Religion, which, by furnishing us with the means of being humbly beneficent, and of sanctifying ourselves, hath put us in a capacity of gaining a more solid and durable glory than all that the Romans could acquire.

Were this world eternal, and were there no other life but that which we enjoy here below, it would be a disadvantage not to be a Roman; but Christianity, by joining us in the most intimate union with God himself, by shewing

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us the whole world as indeed a beautiful but a momentary spectacle, communicates to us a greatness infinitely superior to that of all the Pagans. It is not to the man who can take towns and conquer kingdoms, that the Faith gives the title of Immortal; but to him who, in the midst of all the creatures, beholds only the Creator, and who may defy the whole world to separate him from this grand object.

Thus the Italians, considered in this view, far from being inferior to the Romans, have the greatest superiority over them; and if they do not bear arms as formerly, we must lay the blame entirely on the nature of their government, and the trammels put upon them, by not suffering them longer to be masters of the world.

Nothing expands the ideas so much as being master of a vast empire. Were the Romans, who most signalized themselves, now alive in this city, the seeds of their valour would be choaked in their own bosom, because they could not find opportunity to give them birth. Great men owe their being known entirely to circumstances. Every country contains some

whose worth will never be known, for want of that assistance which would have placed them in a conspicuous view on the stage of the world.

These reflections ought to make us excuse I know not how many nations who give no signs of life. For example, it is certain that a people, too far distant from the centre of the sciences and arts, cannot acquire an equal degree of knowledge and taste with those who are at the fountain head; and had Michael Angelo, with all his genius, and Danté with all his fire, been born in Finland, the one would not have been so renowned a painter, nor the other a poet.

Besides good and ill, perfections and defects are so evenly balanced among all mankind, that want of learning is often compensated by natural genius; and want of genius, by judgment and good sense. The most brilliant actions are not always the most estimable. A nation observant of its word, and attached to its duty, is, doubtless, superior to another distinguished for valour, but distinguished for treachery and perfidy. Conquests are not always

ways founded on justice; in History we read of many heroes who were only renowned robbers.

Thus on a proper estimate of every circumstance, each nation ought to be content with its lot, and the corner it inhabits, and the portion of genius allotted to it by eternal wisdom. The most enlightened is subjected to the greatest multiplicity of wants, and by far the most ambitious.

The warlike were not the happy nations, besides that victories are often attended with the ruin of the conquerors, fortune and glory are not always at our disposal. A single defeat makes many victories be forgotten.

These are truths which cannot be denied by men who are acquainted with the nature of things as well as with the human heart.

It is with nations as with works of painting and sculpture; some have colouring, others relieve, and in order to form a true judgment, and not be deceived by a false view, they must be seen in their proper light.

One thing certain is, that the vices, like the virtues, enter into the great body of the Uni-

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verse, in order to fulfil the designs of infinite wisdom. Thus the things that creep, as well as the things that fly, poisons as well as the most salutary medicines, the hand-worm as well as the elephant, the thistle as well as the jasmine, contribute to form a wonderful whole, which presents to us a picture like that mixture of sun-beams and clouds often seen in the sky.

Every individual is a picture in miniature of the nation in which he was brought up. He is a pattern of a changeable stuff, the texture of which is finer or coarser, according to the degree of pains that has been used to give it a gloss.

It may be said, still pursuing the same comparison, that the French and Italians have more than once passed under the calendar, and that this gives them that lustre which dazzles foreigners.

A DISCOURSE  
UPON  
SUPERSTITION  
DELIVERED BEFORE  
*THE TRIBUNAL OF THE HOLY OFFICE,*  
BY THE  
REVEREND FATHER GANGANELLI,  
THEIR CONSULTOR,

Before he reported a Cause which was presented to have Judgment passed by that Tribunal.

**M**ANKIND, notwithstanding the hardness of their hearts, dare not appear openly vicious without suffering, and therefore, in some degree to conceal their perverse dispositions, they endeavour that their vices should assume the semblance of virtue, which has produced false conscience, false modesty, false honour, false probity, and, in one word, hypocrisy.

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Even Religion, pure and holy as she is, could not find protection from these perfidious imitations. Superstition is seen walking in her steps; under a pretence of extending and supporting Piety, she destroys the very spirit of Piety, and by the whole tenor of her conduct exposes her to contempt and ridicule. It is inconceivable what a number of subterfuges and trifling means she employs to carry her point. The more sublime Religion is, the more she is debased by superstition; for which reason our divine Legislator never ceases to exclaim against the Pharisees, who made Devotion a pretext for supporting a thousand superstitious customs, which they substituted instead of the essence of the law. They fancied for example, that they honoured God by saying their prayers in public, that they might be seen of men; they employed much time in saying long prayers; they made a merit of their fastings and giving alms: they put on demure countenances, and forbid even the most indispensable employments to be exercised on Sunday.

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Such were the superstitions of the old law, to which false devotees have unhappily succeeded, who by their hypocrisy and ignorance, dishonour the new law. It is fruitless to join the Council of Trent, and tell them that the mediation of Saints is only good and useful; and that there is not any virtue even in the most respectable images; it is of no avail with them, to quote whatever God himself hath said, that all who call upon him shall not be saved; and that we are but whitened sepulchres when our piety is all outward shew; that if our intentions are wicked, so will likewise be all our actions; they forget their duty to Jesus Christ, that they may be occupied about his servants; they pray to images in the persuasion that they have the power of granting their requests; they repeat many prayers, and think that such practices, which are only the bark of the law, are of sufficient avail to justify and save them.

Thus Superstition, which I must beg leave to call an ape, that counterfeits and mimicks Religion, does the more harm, because it lulls sinners into a false security; it takes offence at

every thing which does not agree with its prejudices ; and frequently conceives an aversion against the true servants of God, because they are not seen to pay attention to trifling ceremonies, and are observed to possess that joyful security which characterizes the true children of God. The superstitious man is he who sees the mote in his brother's eye, but does not perceive the beam in his own ; it is this unjust brother who is offended with the paternal heart, which overflows with joy at the return of the prodigal son ; this prevaricating judge, who will not enter the judgment-hall, for fear of defiling the passover, and who condemns the Man-God to death ; this Pharisee, who is offended with Jesus Christ for having cured the man of the palsy upon the Sabbath : this presumptuous man, who thinks himself different from the rest of mankind, because he fasts two days in the week ; this splenetic being, who secretly murmurs against the sinful woman, because she sacrificed a perfume to the Saviour of the World, which she might have sold for the benefit of the poor ; this hypocrite, who is offended at seeing the Son of God eating with

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Publicans and Sinners, and behaves to him as to a contemptible parasite.

Such are the effects of Devotion ill understood, or rather of Superstition. It is she that, with a madness which she takes for a meritorious zeal, looks upon all who have the misfortune to believe revealed truths, to be under the yoke of heresy, and this, without having the least compassion for their situation. It is she that feeds upon false miracles, false legends, and is perpetually sounding the alarm against all who will not believe in them : It is she that confounds opinions with established principles ; who denounces damnation without mercy against all those that are not of her opinion in matters which have no relation to the Faith. It is she that takes darkness for light, and is afraid of being misled by every attempt that can be made to instruct her, and it is she that imagines she does what is pleasing in the sight of God when she is persecuting innocence, or judging ill of her neighbour.

It is not at all surprising that the Pagans were superstitious, since their Religion was Superstition itself ; but it is truly astonishing

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to see the enlightened disciples of Christianity, neglecting their essential duties, to attend to fables and trifling ceremonies. God forbid that I should be thought to confound the ceremonies which are universally practised by the Church, that are so many important symbols; nor those rites which serve to correct our reason, and humble our pride! I only refer to certain customs and prejudices, which some individuals, the victims of a flighty imagination, or of gross ignorance, have added to the common belief, and which have been censured by all the councils.

Such has been that strange perverse credulity which has prevailed more or less in all ages, that has made some people believe in spirits, visions, and conjurations. It consists with the Faith to believe that the dead, by the express permission of God, may appear again, and that they really have appeared according to the irrefragable testimony of the Old and New Testament; that some privileged souls have been favoured with extraordinary revelations which have discovered to them things that were to happen; that the devil employed magicians

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magicians to fascinate the mind of Pharoah; and that he has oftener than once exercised his infernal malice by supernatural operations, in which he himself was the principal agent. But it is no less certain, that the greatest part of the apparitions, visions, and sorceries, of which we hear, are nothing but the produce of distracted imaginations; and when we come to examine them by the light of truth, they are found to be the effects of ignorance, knavery, or fanaticism, in those people who pretend to magic or inspiration.

I am satisfied for example, that the Revelations of St. Theresa should be looked upon as supernatural, because they carry with them every characteristic of truth, and are quoted by the Church as satisfactory evidence, but I think quite differently of Mary d'Agreda, and many more whom weak enthusiasts take for wonders.

We may see in that work 'On the Canonization of Saints,'\* by the immortal Benedict

XIV.

\* The Abbe Baudeau, known by his different useful works, has given us an excellent abridgement of that learned Treatise. It is entitled, 'An Analysis of the Work of Benedict XIV. upon Beatifications and Canonizations, &c.'

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XIV. and in which I congratulate myself for having had some share, how very reserved we should be on the subject of visions, and especially those that we have from women. The more the imagination is engaged, the more we should distrust every thing which appears to be uncommon. We are naturally very fond of the marvellous, as we have frequently mentioned, which is an effect of the desire of an immortal soul to rove after what is sublime, as its natural sphere, and proper element.

Besides, as Benedict XIV. himself has said, it is not at all surprising, that the solitary Recluse who gives himself up to immoderate fastings, and whose sole employments is his heavenly cares, should imagine that he has seen the Court of Heaven in his sleep, and while his mind has been filled with the idea, he has spoke of it when he waked, as a thing very wonderful; and thus it is, that a disturbed imagination persuades itself of a thousand things which never existed. Every Enthusiast mistakes phantoms for realities. When I was young, I knew a man who had such a frantic  
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love for Tasso, that he wanted to persuade me that he saw him every night, and heard him repeating verses. But it is yet more extraordinary, if you will hearken to the common people who hear and see miracles at all hours, and in all places, as if the old and new law which has been confirmed by so many prodigies, actually had occasion to have their sanctity and their origin proved.

What is very distressing, and ought indeed to make us humble is, that superstition and prejudices are to be found in all the different classes of men. Every man pays a tribute to imbecility; and even he who appears hardy enough to set all at defiance, and to doubt of every thing, is exposed to display a little-ness of soul which is a disgrace to common sense.

From whence we should conclude, that we cannot be too much on our guard against every thing we are told as wonderful, or the effect of inspiration. The false devotees find their account in encouraging ignorance, and in becoming



coming the slaves of a degree of pharisaical zeal, because they then find means of supporting themselves in that foolish pride which will not listen to reason, but persist in living without a desire of reforming their hearts.

Let us attend at present to the reflections that I have been making, as they are connected with the cause which has been presented, and which I am now about to lay before you, as the best means to prevent our becoming dupes to the marvellous stories which it is said to contain; and to discover, that illusion has been the origin of all the facts which have been related as prodigies, and quoted with so much zeal.

The more true and holy that Religion is, the more requisite is it that we undeceive the Faithful in whatever relates to Superstition; it is for the very same reason that St. Paul expressly recommends to Timothy, to give no ear to tales and fables. He well knew, that men are naturally inclined to be led away by illusions, and readily catching at things which have an extraordinary appearance, immediately declare them to be wonderful.

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These errors prove the necessity of having a Religion that must be obeyed ; without which we should have as many superstitions as we have individuals, for every one has some folly or weakness of his own, that leads him into the greatest errors, if he is not prevented by a tribunal which always exists, and by its laws keeps him in restraint.

FIRST  
DISCOURSE  
ON THE  
FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS.

PREACHED AT ASCOLI.

*Adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus. Vulgate.*

Ps. 131.

— We will worship at his footstool. E. Tr.

Ps. 134.

**M**AN is only a shadow of himself; his soul, enveloped in the thickest darkness, scarcely differs from the instinct of animals; his inordinate passions conspire against him; his rebellious appetites establish anarchy in his heart; virtue is his torment, vice his delight; every object by which he is surrounded, tends to seduce or to lead him astray; he forgets whence

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he sprung, and to what he is destined, in order to abase himself to that earth which he treads under his feet; the voice of conscience is stifled; he erects Monsters into Deities; and to him the true God is as if he did not exist; in a word the Creator himself repenteth of having made him.

What a picture, O Christian Hearers! What a group of errors and crimes! Man is no more a being formed in righteousness and holiness, of pure desires and Heavenly thoughts, but the slave of the most shameful passions, who hath lost his prerogatives, his titles, his dignity, to bury himself in the horrors of idolatry.

Such were we without the grace of the Redeemer, who came to re-establish us in our rights, and to engrave upon our hearts, in characters indelible, the august title of Christian. We then sprung even from the bosom of death; our soul assumed new life; and in the transports of the most lively admiration, and the greatest joy, we have seen the word of God himself, the express image of his person; in a word, his own son, begotten from all eternity in the splendour of the Saints, unite his  
nature

nature to ours, and by a prodigy so ineffable, elevate our Human Nature in the most glorious manner.

O Earth, so long watered by the blood of the just and of the prophets; O Earth, for so many ages stained by a multitude of crimes; I behold you purified, renewed, in such a manner that you may be compared to Heaven itself.—The Holy One came to rest upon your clay, and has made of it a matter more precious than gold and jewels, he makes you the habitation of Saints; and imprints on your surface his sacred feet, in such a manner that we distinguish his footsteps, and hasten to adore him: *Adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus.*

Great God! Man was then destined to be thy brother and co-heir. By the Incarnation, thou raisest him to Divinity, while thou abasest thyself to the earth, and reconcilest us to thy Eternal Father.

I think that I behold a combat between Divine Justice and Mercy, and the latter victorious. In fact, what greater mark of goodness can the Deity bestow, than to despoil himself of all his glory, to come and dwell among men, after

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after having taken upon him their nature and their infirmities?

Our creation, wonderful as it was, when the Almighty breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, is not to be compared with the glory to which we are raised by the Mystery of the Incarnation. Our bodies being deified, become worthy of rising one day in Glory, and are the Temples of the Holy Ghost.

What a revolution in the world! Jesus Christ, by his birth, cancels the sentence of death, which condemned us to everlasting torments; and man, who had lost all his prerogatives in the person of Adam, and had no other appanage than a free will more inclined to evil than good, a concupiscence which incessantly sets his passions in a ferment, a sign of malediction written on his forehead, is restored to his dignity, again enters into possession of his rights, and finds a God of Mercy in that avenging Deity who had made him the object of his wrath, and devoted him to destruction.

What a remarkable epocha in the succession of ages is the birth of a Man-God! Ye Historians, efface from your writings whatever hath

no relation to this great event: ye Orators, employ your eloquence only in celebrating it: ye Righteous, be transported with the extatic joy, the Heavens open to your desires: ye Sinners, lift up your heads, by this Nativity ye are pardoned, ye are healed.

On this day, Nature, attentive to contemplate her author under the veil of a mortal body, teacheth all men what ought to be their sentiments. But alas, while the Heavens testify their joy by songs of praise, and this divine mystery so long predicted by the prophets, is accomplished; O Mortals, ye remain insensible to the great event; the birth of an earthly prince affects you more than that of the Son of God; and if you prostrate yourself to adore him, it is only an outward ceremony, in which the heart hath no share.

Illustrious shepherds of Bethlehem, Holy Magi from the East, you will one day rise against this guilty generation, which is less attentive to the coming of the Messiah, than to a transitory glory, a perishable treasure. Yet, my brethren, there is no salvation except by this Divine Messiah; and he is the person  
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whom the Davids, the Solomons so earnestly desired to behold; he it is whose countenance makes the happiness of the Saints, as it will one day be the terror of the wicked. His Mercy has now placed him in a cradle upon the earth; but at the end of time his Justice will set him upon a fiery throne in the clouds, in order to judge the quick and the dead.

O Christians, let us keep both these events in view, that we may not be buoyed up by vain presumption, nor fall a prey to despair.

Did man perfectly know all the honour which he now acquires, the earth would appear to him as nothing. He would behold only Jesus Christ, and confess, with the Apostle, that all is contained in the Divine Saviour, that all was made by and subsists only in him : *Omnia per ipsum et in ipso constant.*

Before our birth we subsisted in this new Adam, who, predestinated from all eternity to be our Mediator and our Life, waited only for the moment pointed out in the eternal decrees to clothe himself with a body. Thus did the Most Holy of all Virgins become his mother by the operation of the Holy Spirit; and Jesus hum-

humbled himself to be the Son of Mary, that he might become our Head and our Father.

How many miracles at the time and after the accomplishment of his divine mystery! The earth was covered with prodigies; and the Incarnation confounded the Jews, and struck the Pagans with dismay, in order to form the happiness and glory of Christians.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, hast thou then forgotten the prophecies which so often proclaimed the coming of a Deliverer, and wilt thou be so unhappy as not to know him who is to appear in the midst of thy walls only to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the sick, and raise the dead?

Alas! my brethren, alas! this unfortunate city will become entirely reprobate; she will put to death the man who came to give her life, and, as a punishment of her crimes, nothing shall remain of her but a heap of dust, her synagogue shall be destroyed to make room for an everlasting Church.

Such will be your lot, O degenerate Christians! who know not the Messiah, or neglect the observation of his law. Those mean garments



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ments in which you now see him clothed will turn into flames to consume you; the manger in which he is laid shall be transformed into a throne too terrible for you to behold; and his weak hands which can scarce open, will dart upon you destructive thunder from every quarter. The day of Mercy will then be past, and succeeded by that of Vengeance.

Great God! what misery to the sinner who has not profited by the unspeakable mystery of thy Incarnation; who hath not found wherewithal to obtain his pardon in the whole effusion of thy blood, though one drop be sufficient to save the whole world! who hath not appeared at the manger where our divine Saviour was born, except to receive there anathemas and curses!

May we be now carried by Faith to this Holy Place, may Faith supply what cannot be perceived by the senses: O delightful spot, a thousand times more worthy of admiration than the palaces of kings, fill me with holy extacy; let me exult with joy when I behold thee, and may my heart be for ever inviolably attached to thee.

There it is, my brethren, that ye ought to be every day in spirit, and not in the palaces of the great, where are met only instances of injustice, inflexibility and pride; not in those accursed places where you dishonour the members of Jesus Christ; not in those criminal houses, where ye game away the money of the poor, the wages of the artisan, even the substance of your children: not in those schools of perdition, where nothing is learned but a philosophy entirely Pagan, according to the rudiments of this world and the tradition of men: *Secundum elementa mundi et traditionem hominum.*

I acknowledge, O Christian hearers! that I cannot prevent shedding torrents of tears when I reflect upon the small number of those who profit by the coming of our Saviour. Some are ashamed to imitate, others to acknowledge him, and scarce any but finds a pretence in himself to withhold his adoration.

But what is this Messiah, if not omnipotent, eternal, and infinite?—What creature can fulfil his offices?—What other Being but God  
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could cancel the sin of Adam, and satisfy Divine Justice so grievously offended?

My soul hurries with ungovernable and astonishing rapidity from one subject to another; but how can a man keep his mind within just bounds, when the whole world is swallowed up in the contemplation of so great a mystery! How is it possible not to be moved at the remembrance of a man made God! If David broke out into the most extatic transports before the Holy Ark, which was only the figure of the Messiah, what ought to be our rapture? Every thing invites us to bless the Holy One of Israel, and to bless him in a manner that shall proclaim all our joy, and all our happiness.

Ye sacred domes echo that joy by which ye are animated; ye Ministers of the Altars loudly repeat that eternal Hallelujah which the Elders of the Apocalypse sing without ceasing round the throne of the Lamb; imitate the angels in the expression of your hymns and of your sentiments. Ye rivers, ye fountains, ye cedars of Lebanon, bless the new-born Lord. He chooses poverty for the sole ornament of his cradle,

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that every thing may answer to the Cross on which he is one day to expire. What a contrast between the stable of Bethlehem and the palaces of the Great. Would we not imagine that on one side we saw gods, on the other the vilest of slaves, forsaken and suffering? But how many virtues reside in that august retreat, which is beheld by Faith as the most Holy Tabernacle. All the perfections of the Eternal are there assembled; that is, to use the expression of St. Chrysostom, infinitude is comprehended within finite bounds.

O incomprehensible mystery! every thing there appears inferior even to man, and yet all is worthy of God. Let us abjure our honours, let us tread our riches under foot, let us hasten to Bethlehem, to sacrifice our pride, our luxury, and offer up ourselves with Jesus Christ, who veils all the splendor of his majesty, that the meanest of mankind may have access to him.

Is this your conduct, ye who, directed by vanity, behold the orphan and the poor only with eyes of contempt; ye who make it a rule always to appear under a brilliant outside, and think that you would derogate from your dignity,

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nity, did you mix with the croud of the unhappy, who yet are your brethren, notwithstanding all that you do to make it a matter of doubt to yourselves?

O Holy Humility of the Man-God! come this day and inspire those haughty sinners, who, believing themselves to be of a different original from mankind, refuse to acknowledge their equals; come and dissipate their illusions, scatter the clouds of that criminal incense by which they are blinded, and lay them at the feet of those whom they vouchsafe not a single look; come and warn them that their end approaches, and that their ashes, mingled with those of the meanest of men, shall remain in eternal oblivion. Come and present to them the Son of the Most High, with no other company than the indigent and the beasts of the field, without any place to lay his head; come, and by this spectacle, confound their reason and their pride.

Nothing but this precious humility, my brethren, is sufficient to make us profit by the Mystery of the Incarnation, especially as it is the foundation of all virtue. The want of this

makes us offended at the apparent meanness of the Messiah. The heretics and infidels opposed this ineffable mystery, because they could not be persuaded that a God had so far abased himself as to appear under the form of a slave: by this same principle of pride were the Jews prevented from acknowledging the Messiah, and by this were they transported even to crucify him.

Let us then, my brethren, hold in abomination this unbappy pride, which lifts itself up against the Mystery of the Incarnation, i. e. against the doctrine of our Religion most capable of bringing comfort, and the foundation of all Truth; for the Messiah is not a detached being; but infinite, omnipresent, the author of life and motion, and for whom all things visible and invisible really subsist.

Let us, then, never separate Jesus Christ from any of our actions; let them all be animated by him, for without him all things are defective.

Otherwise, my brethren, the Mystery of the Incarnation would have been superfluous. But it was impossible that we could be saved by any  
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other method than by the sacrifice of a Man-God, who, at once Priest and Victim, offers and is offered.

Ye are conscious of it, O sacred altars ! on which is wrought every day that unspeakable miracle, ye who really possess the very person that was born in Bethlehem, and whose birth we this day celebrate : he is under the form of bread, as before he appeared under the veil of flesh, but always really Man, always really God.

It is matter of astonishment, that this great object can be effaced from your hearts and understandings, and that the most trifling objects should make you forget a God who was made man for our salvation ; a God who continually dwells in the midst of us, to be our Mediator with his Father, and obtain our pardon.

O boundless charity of my God, who hast loved us so much as even to give thine own Son for our Intercessor, as cried St. Augustine in the lively transports of his gratitude, when will we return thee love for love ? The least that we can do is to sacrifice ourselves for him. If then

we desire that he really live in us, let us from henceforth act only in him, with him, and by him.

When, O Lord, shall we enjoy this happiness ! when shall we be entirely separated from ourselves, so as to be attached only to thee ! when shall we be transformed in thee, so as to make only one and the same essence ?

This, O my God, was thy desire, as thou hast so excellently shewn in the sublime prayer which closes thy sermon after the supper, and this day it is ours. Our sole wish, our only desire is to be intimately and eternally united with thee.

My brethren, do you not feel yourselves inflamed with this love ? How powerfully would it influence our souls, were we properly acquainted with our own interests, and perfectly convinced of the greatness of Divine Mercy. The Deity hath twice created us, for what but a second creation can we name a mystery that draws us from the grave of sin to bestow upon us a life altogether divine. In vain doth the philosophy of this age endeavour to deny original



ginal sin, in vain doth it attempt to throw doubts upon the great mystery which makes the object of the present solemnity; every thing proclaims that we really inherited the sin of our first Father, and that the Son of God actually came to expiate it.

Till then we saw in our own hearts, and around us only the most dreadful misery, and we had no longer hope. But thou, O Lord, opened to us the Heavens, when the Earth was ready to swallow us up, and as we had not in ourselves the power to go and seek thee, thou humbledst thyself to find us. Eternal thanks be given unto thee for it. Yes, my brethren, the old law gives place to the new, and not fear but love constitutes the ruling character of the true Christian. O my God, how is it possible not to love thee after all that thou hast done in our favour? What greater gift couldst thou bestow than thyself? Man must be very ungrateful not to be penetrated by a blessing so extraordinary: let us seek the cause only of this insensibility in ourselves; more affected with the good things of this world than with that eternal hap-

piness which is kept in store for us, we live a life entirely earthly, and every thing that bears a relation to Religion, to its mysteries, to its festivals, to its solemnities, becomes to us a matter entirely indifferent.

O incarnate Word! thou light of our souls, thou by whom the worlds were made, thou, our Hope, our Life, and our Salvation, vouchsafe to impart to us the fruits purchased by thy assumption of our nature, if it be thy will that we should be animated with thy love; thou alone canst supply what is wanting to enable us to come unto thee. Only through thy mercy and all-powerful grace were the Saints well pleasing in thy sight, and rendered capable of profiting by the Mystery which on this day is celebrated by thy whole Church.

There is nothing, O Christian Hearers, that ought to fix our attention and our hearts equally with that Mystery, which incomprehensible as it is, brings us near to the Divinity, so as to make us partakers of his nature; *Divinæ consortes naturæ*. By the light which it diffuses over the minds of those who make it the object  
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of their meditation, we will see that what has hitherto employed our attention is a mere illusion and chimera, and that we have been too long a prey to our passions and appetites. Let Faith, therefore, be from henceforth our light and our guide: then its candle, dark as it seems, will set before our eyes the Mystery of the Incarnation, not as the subject of our comprehension, but as an object of our adoration, and convince us of its truth.

May Heaven grant that the Incarnate Word from henceforth become our way, our life, our truth; may he be born in our hearts, as he this day was born in Bethlehem, to unite us with himself, and make us happy in time and in eternity.

“The world is hateful to me,” said St. Bernard, “without the sight of Jesus Christ.” This ought to be the language of all Christians, the sole end of whose existence here is, in their practice, to express the image of their Redeemer. Jesus Christ is our light, our peace, our comfort, in one word our happiness.

This ought to be the continual subject of meditation during your whole lives, and especially at the time destined to honour the Nativity of our Lord.

God of all mercy rend the deceitful veils which prevent us from contemplating thee; cause all nature, of which thou art the principle and the life, to speak to us only of thy self; and let all creatures be converted into so many mirrors, reflecting to our eyes the image of thy wisdom and goodness. Behold in us only the resemblance of thy Divine Son, who this day was born to expiate our faults, and merit our pardon.—Elevate our minds to the sanctuary where thou dwellest, by disengaging them from all terrestrial objects, to which we have been attached from the moment we saw the light.

If our birth resembles that of Jesus Christ, by the weakness and humiliation by which both are accompanied, what a difference if we dare to compare them in their principle and their effect! the one is defiled by the spots of original sin; the other is pure as Holiness itself:  
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the one brings with it only misery and misfortune ; the other is the source of the happiness of mankind.

As these great truths ought to be the food of our souls, I exhort you to nourish yourselves continually with them, that they may become rooted in your nature, and transform you into him who came to save us, and for whom we ought always to breathe.

SECOND  
DISCOURSE  
ON THE  
FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS.

*Verbum caro factum est.*

And the word was made flesh.

St. John, ch. 1, v. 14.

THE ineffable, profound, and ever to be adored Mystery which Christians celebrate on this day as the most august and solemn of all ceremonies, gives us, my dear Brethren, the highest idea of the Supreme Being, by teaching us that the ways of God are incomprehensible. In fact, what man is there who is not struck with astonishment at sight of the Incarnation? Who is the mortal that dares to think of sounding the profound abyss? If we cannot deter-

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determine in our own minds what the sun is, which is perishable, it ought not to surprise us to find that the Eternal God is incomprehensible : a Being, who is not limited either by space or time, and who depends upon himself alone ; - who, always immense and infinite, has acquired nothing by the creation of this world, and will not lose any thing when it shall be destroyed. How shall I, then, O omnipresent Goodness, speak this day of thy word, which is as old as thou art, though proceeding from thee ; which is the character of thy substance, and the splendour of thy glory.

O my God, do thou silence my senses, and strike dumb my haughty and presumptuous reason, exalt my heart even unto thyself, that I may be able to draw some rays from the fulness of thy light, which may descend upon my hearers, that they may know him whom thou hast sent, who is our Way, our Truth, and our Life, and whom we should look upon in this world as our Light and our Support.

I ask not, O Lord, for that kind of eloquence which flatters the ears, and pleases the minds of men ; the subject which ought to engross our  
present

present attention is of itself too great for human language to attempt. We dare not venture to speak of it from an apprehension that we shall not find expression; and in making the attempt, we suspect that our ideas must be found unworthy of so profound and sublime a mystery.

Thus then, my Brethren, I shall pay no attention to words and phrases, that I may tell you plainly the Incarnation is, at one and the same time, the humiliation of the word, and the exaltation of man. Here then, O Christians, admire the infinite mercy of the Son of God, who subjected himself to the lowest debasement to exalt us; who reduced himself to the most terrible indigence to enrich us; and who submitted to the hardest slavery to procure our freedom. My thoughts are so entirely absorbed in this subject, that I remain transported and transfixed with astonishment. We must be able to open the bosom of God himself, the eternal sanctuary of the Divinity; to lose sight of all ages and distances; to spread ourselves abroad in this immensity, and survey this purely intellectual eternity which constitutes the essence of  
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the Supreme Being to form a just conception of his greatness and perfections. We must, in the next place, look back upon our own diminutive being, the miseries of our condition, the horrors of our nothingness, so as to be sensible of the contrast between us and a God, who of himself fills all space, and who has condescended to take upon him the figure and nature of a slave.

Ye Heavens, if I enquire of you the nature of this Mystery, you will answer me that the Almighty, who created you, who sustained you upon the immense void, and who has stretched you out like a mantle, is truly incomprehensible in his works, in his actions, and in his ways. Ye Angels and Heavenly Spirits, who form the Court of the Eternal, if I might venture to ask you how the Almighty could assume a body like unto our bodies, you prostrate yourselves before him, you adore him, and teach me by your example that every creature ought to be silent in the presence of his Creator, and that the birth of the Man-God is a mystery of faith, and not a subject of vain curiosity.

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God Almighty cannot be greater by any degree of exaltation, but adds, in some sense, to his glory by his humiliation. What an object for our admiration, to see the Eternal himself under the veil of a mortal body, or in the appearance of earthly bread, reduce himself to a kind of annihilation. Then the whole faculties of my soul are as if they were not, and of my whole existence, there remains nothing but an extatic admiration.

But when I reflect that this unspeakable prodigy was accomplished for my sake, my heart flames with the most ardent love. For the Eternal Word, my brethren, does not seem to lay aside his Divinity, but in a degree to render our nature divine. He comes to intermix his eternity with the short space of our duration, to protract our life beyond the existence of time ; he comes to unite his Almighty power to our weakness, that we may become invincible ; he even descends to us, that we may be exalted to him, and placed at the fountain of all light and of all treasures.

This is so true, that before the Incarnation, no mortal could penetrate into the Heavens, and  
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that man, oppressed with a weight of sorrows, had no other means of escaping from them : but scarcely was the coming of the Messiah proclaimed, when the earth, which was covered with thorns and brambles, because of the sin of Adam, leaped for joy, and saw a cloud of Patriarchs and Prophets, both by their words and actions, foretell the coming of their sovereign Deliverer.

So soon as he appeared, mankind beheld the greatest of all good things heaped upon them, the rivers of an almighty and miraculous grace pouring upon them from all quarters ; even the splendour of Jesus Christ became the splendour of all true Christians. They were seen cloathed with the lustre of Justice and Holiness ; even in the deepest caverns, even to the remotest corners of the earth ; even upon scaffolds, the glory of the Incarnate Word was displayed. It was for his sake they suffered, for his sake they died, and by this double sacrifice we are taught that we ought to sacrifice ourselves to the Man-God, to live as he lived, and at least desire to die as he died. We have not escaped from the slavery of sin, but to be sub-  
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jected to the will of our Deliverer. He has not exalted us to the rank of being his friends, his brethren, and co-heirs, but upon condition that what was wanting in his passion, in us should be fully accomplished: *Adimpleo eo quæ desunt passionum Christi, in carne mea.*

It is your memory, O inexplicable Mystery, which the Church commemorates this day; it is to you that we owe the invaluable happiness of our deliverance and exaltation. By your means we are no longer under a law of dread and terror, but under a law of love; and through your divine love we have an almighty intercessor with God, who is continually soliciting our conversion; through you we are become living tabernacles, wherein Jesus Christ reposeth, and worketh great miracles in our favour.

Grant, O Incarnate Word, that in these days of Health and Benediction, our adorations may not be solely outward and transitory, but like unto the adoration of the shepherds, and the Wise Men, may they fix the reign of Jesus Christ for ever in our hearts, in whom we have life and salvation, and through whom alone we can plead any merit. *So be it.*

## PANEGYRIC

OF

ST. REPARATA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

PROFANE genealogies, ye who feed human pride, chimerical nobility, that makes us forget the clay from which we were taken, and the original sin which defiled our soul from the moment of our conception, you will not intrude into this place to tarnish the eulogium which I consecrate to Truth. Nothing that bears a relation to terrestrial things ought to enter into the Panegyric of a personage entirely celestial, the world has nothing in common with sanctity.

The Heroes of Christianity resemble not the great men of the earth: the Elect are born in the bosom of the Deity. There the Eternal himself sketcheth the great models which he is

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to offer to the earth, that we may imitate them ; that he may form and prepare those sublime souls that from age to age come to enlighten and edify the world ; and keep as a deposit, under the seal of Righteousness and Mercy, the fountain of all graces, the seed of all virtues, in order to form, when requisite, Apostles, Martyrs, Doctors, Anchorets ; in a word, it is there, O Christian Hearers ! that he delighted to create St. Reparata your illustrious Patroness and to make of her a vessel of honour and election.

Profane History hide thy head, thou who hast nothing to offer us but instances of false virtues ; thou whose heroes, a thousand times less deserving of praise than of pity, were prompted to their exploits only by a contemptible principle of pride, on whom the philosophers diffused only an uncertain light proper to lead them astray.

Would we behold a light without clouds, and see virtues without fictitious ornament, we must turn our eyes to the History of the Church ; that history whose uninterrupted series of  
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actions the most memorable, and most worthy of our imitation, resembles the continuity of those serene days, which, in the most smiling season, charm us with their purity and lustre.

Such were the excellent qualities, the sublime actions of the illustrious Reparata; always humbling herself below the world; always rising above the creatures; always destitute of the riches of the world; always abounding in the treasures of Heaven; always courageous in the midst of the greatest conflicts; always victorious over her appetites, her passions, and over tyrants; she appeared rather an angel than a mortal being; she had a body only to make it spiritual, a soul only to render it divine.

O my God! thou beheldest this spectacle as the work of thy grace; for thou directest the feet of thy servants when they tread in the paths of virtue; thou loosenest their tongues when they bless thy holy name; thou openest their hands when they distribute their alms; thou fillest their hearts with thyself when they are inflamed with the ardors of Charity; and,  
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without changing countenance, deliver themselves up to executioners, and all the horror of torments.

But for me, who have no other merit than barely the desire of being able to imitate the Saints, how shall I dare to speak to you of a soul entirely Heavenly, who was always in communion with God, and who sighed during her whole life for the possession of him alone.

Yet, that I may not disappoint your expectation, and in order to second your zeal on this solemn day on which we are assembled, I shall shew that your illustrious Patroness, after obtaining the most distinguished powers from Heaven, merits the greatest honours upon earth, and that, if we do not take care to imitate her virtues, they will serve only to our condemnation.

Holy Spirit! I can neither begin nor finish such a picture, if thou tracest not the design, if thou dost not guide the hand and the pencil by which it is to be executed. The words of every Minister of the Gospel are only empty sounds, unless rendered effectual by thee; and all human eloquence only a barren multiplicity



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plicity of words, if thou do not render them fruitful, and give them life. O thou who inspirest the prophets, and who directest the tongue of preachers, I put up to thee this petition in the name of the most excellent of all creatures, in the name of Mary, whose intercession is so powerful with God.

## PART FIRST.

Religion being really incompatible with every thing terrestrial and carnal, knoweth no riches or grandeur but such as are purely spiritual, and have God himself for their object. Hence comes it that Nature and Grace are always in opposition, and the desires of Christians have no resemblance to those of the worldly-minded.

Reparata was a striking example of this truth: a stranger to her family upon earth, she lived only to undeceive mankind and to teach them that there is nothing desireable, nothing great, nothing perfect, but the treasures of grace.

Were it possible here to call from the dead the souls of all those who were ac-

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quainted and lived with her, they would be so many witnesses testifying to you that her spirit was invariably attached to that of Religion, that her heart was always united to that of Jesus Christ, and that her whole person was the most lively expression of Charity: they would tell you, that she existed only by that virtue.

Thus be not astonished, if the earth was in her sight only a grain of seed driven at the pleasure of the winds; if a world entirely intellectual and divine, was alone sufficient to satisfy the immensity of her desires; if her pity comprehended the whole human race, without excepting even an individual.

In vain were establishments proposed, riches displayed, and the glory of this world set before her in all its splendor; nothing less than the Divinity could fix her attention; her eyes only beheld his Providence; her ears only heard his voice, and thus she, in the strongest manner, reproaches us with our unhappy indifference for the blessings of Heaven: for alas, you know that almost all our affections are entirely carnal, and if we do occasionally invoke our  
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Maker, it is for the most part by rote, not from love. We remove from us as far as possible, that Supreme Being in whom we breathe, and by whom we exist, while we rush with impetuosity on the objects he has forbidden, while we make ourselves as many Gods as there are creatures, and think not of the Creator.

Why cannot I here display to you the infinite riches of which that God is the dispenser, whom you thus cast from your remembrance? Why cannot I lay before you those boundless consolations which he bestoweth on his Elect, and shew you all the blessings of which he is the fulness of the spring; then would ye know that there is no happiness but in being his faithful servants.

Man plunges from gulph to gulph, saith St. Augustine, when he departeth from the true God, his light becometh darkness, his life an actual death, his existence non existence.

Of this your glorious Patroness was so fully convinced, that she applied herself to give all who approached her a thorough conviction of those great truths. None could converse with her without being edified, without being in-

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spired with a portion of her piety, and acknowledging that God was the true element of her understanding, and of her affections.

O blessed Saint, why art thou not still alive, especially in this corrupted age, when God himself is looked upon only as an ideal Being; thou wouldst restore almost extinguished faith to new life, and we should see the most glorious ages of the Church renewed. Men would listen with eagerness to thy voice, and what efforts would they not make to imitate examples so persuasive as thine.

Yet, my brethren, if you had faith, you would look upon your glorious Patroness as always living; you would be convinced, that all those Saints who pass in succession through this world in order to purify and instruct it, are ever present before God, ever ready to succour you when they are invoked with a humble and contrite heart.

By their sufferings the lightnings are stopped in their course, the thunders are extinguished in the hands of the Almighty, our evils are mitigated, and there still remains a hope of returning sincerely to God.

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The honour which we pay to the Saints is not a barren Apotheosis, like that of the Pagans. We are assured on the testimony of the Church, which cannot deceive us, that their intercessions open a fountain of mercies to all who have recourse to them. And how should they not be powerful, how should they not be beneficent, who deified in Jesus Christ himself, participate in a manner ineffable of his power and goodness? He is a fruitful vine, of which they are the branches, a Tree of Life, of which they are the boughs, and from which they receive nourishment and vigour.

It is only in Jesus Christ therefore that you are to consider your illustrious Patroness, if you would desire to find her all powerful, and have recourse to her meditation without derogating from his, who is by way of eminence our Redeemer.

What a view to the eyes of faith is a boundless, eternal, infinite Being, uniting with his essence the elect in all ages, to make them live for ever with him a life entirely miraculous and divine, to shew them one day in the face of the whole earth, shining with glory and majesty!

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Then will you behold that Protectress herself whom you this day solemnly invoke, rise up against you, if you do not use your utmost endeavours to follow her virtues. But let us not, by sorrowful reflections, obscure the glory of so great a day. Considering the excellent qualities for which you are distinguished, I am fond of persuading myself that ye will render yourselves worthy of the intercession of the blessed Reparata, and that the more you advance in age, the more you will labour to imitate her love for penance.

There is no other method of imploring with success the succour of the Saints; for neither can they be glorified by the praises lavished upon them, nor by any eulogium such as this I now pronounce. An imitation of their virtues is the only panegyric that can be agreeable to them; otherwise they would resemble the great men of the earth, who are only desirous to gratify themselves with a vain incense, without considering how it is offered to them. If I do not here pursue the thread of the history of the Saint whom we celebrate, it is from a dread of laying before you facts not sufficiently au-  
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thenticated. Truth is never honoured by falsehood. Religion stands neither in need of fictitious legends, nor of suppositions; and it is sufficient for your instruction and edification to know, that your glorious Patroness was sanctified by the spirit of penitence, and the love of God.

The Divine Being made her heart a sanctuary for the reception of all his treasures; and from that moment her soul was invigorated by a strength truly celestial; and full of heroic courage, she openly defied the rage of the tyrants who endeavoured to corrupt her religion.

God predestinated her from all eternity to serve as a spectacle to angels and to men, by the greatness of her faith; and in order to obey his decrees, in the transports of unexpressible joy, and a love entirely divine, she is inflamed with a holy ardour to mingle her blood with that of Jesus Christ, that she might reign eternally with him. Vanquished nature was astonished at her courage, and had not time to complain and to speak. The body of our illustrious Saint was perfectly united with her soul, and if



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I may use the expression, lamented its wanting the faculty of desiring the glory of Martyrdom. At last she arrived at the place of her sacrifice, she embraced the scaffold on which she was to be offered; she affectionately kissed the sword that was to deprive her of life; now she received the fatal blow, and while her body was stretched upon the earth, her soul flew to Heaven, there to live for ever.—O blessed Saint, united with the essence of Jesus Christ, obtain for us from God, though we be unworthy to suffer, to gain the kingdom of Heaven by martyrdom; at least, to make a sacrifice of our appetites and passions, and to love penitence and its holy austerities; obtain for us by the assistance of Jesus Christ, the power to imitate thy zeal for Religion, thy charity towards our neighbours, and lastly, thy example in all things. We this day make a vow to that God who sees and hears us, to exert our utmost endeavours to resist the illusions of the evil spirit; and to support with patience and resignation, all the evils of this deceitful world.

[*The Second Part is wanting.*]



A DISCOURSE,

Pronounced in the Year 1741,

AT THE GENERAL CHAPTER

OF THE

*BROTHER MINOR CONVENTUALS,*

BY THE

REVEREND FATHER GANGANELLI,

IN PRAISE OF BENEDICT XIV. WHO PRESIDED  
THERE.

MOST HOLY FATHER,

WHEN I reflect upon the sovereign dignity, with which you are invested; the worthy actions with which you are surrounded; the multitude of kindnesses which you are incessantly bestowing; and lastly the glory which you enjoy, which shines with greater lustre than your diadem, and which cannot fail to assure

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you of immorality; I confess that I have not courage to utter a single syllable, and would wish much more to have my heart impressed with whatever such great objects are capable of inspiring, than attempt to display in what manner I am affected.

My fears still increase when I consider that whatever I can say will very soon become public in a city, which it is very difficult to please, and which having seen true eloquence born and perfected in her bosom, if I may use the expression, will look with disdain upon a panegyric which issues from the obscurity of a cloister, and will be thought still more indifferent because it cannot keep pace with the very high opinion which she entertains of the greatest of all Pontiffs.

I cannot conceive how it has happened that I should be selected upon this occasion, when so many celebrated personages of the different Religious Orders have employed the most elevated thoughts, as well as the richest expressions, and with the greatest success, most Holy Father, to declare to you all their love, and all their admiration!

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Besides, I do not expect to stop the sun's course ; and although I was intimidated upon recollecting the difficulties which I experienced on a former occasion, when I was obliged to offer public homage to a Prince of my Church\*, I could not decline the desire of my Superior General, who has thought proper to employ me to acknowledge an infinite number of kindnesses, which the immortal Benedict XIV. has been pleased to confer upon him and his Order. His lively gratitude could not be restrained, but must shine forth in expressions of thanks, and the only thing for which he deserves to be blamed, is his having chosen a man who is still covered with the dust of the schools to be his interpreter, and who has neither the practice nor abilities which are requisite for speaking in the presence of Sovereign Pontiffs.

But it is the duty of a Friar to obey, and rather than fail to give a proof of my obedience, I must expose myself to become an object of censure to those men, who, as Cicero says, set

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\* Ganganelli speaks of the Panegyric of Cardinal STAMPA, which he pronounced at Milan some years before.

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themselves up as Critics in the midst of company, and in gay festivals.

But let us lay aside all thoughts of fear, and, animated with the fruitfulness of the subject, think only of the honour and satisfaction of celebrating the greatness, the learning, the prudence, the generosity and genius of the great Pontiff, who condescends this day to unite with us as one of ourselves.

If I cannot introduce into this encomium all the dignity which the subject deserves, I will at least employ all my power to prove the desire I have to render it such as it ought to be ; but as I cannot depart from the limits which are prescribed to me, I shall much less attempt, O Most Holy Father, to extol the very great reputation which you have acquired, both by your immortal works written in the service of the Church, and your fame in the Republic of Letters, than to recollect those benefits with which you have so frequently and so nobly enriched us, and which you have this day completed, by condescending to preside at a general assembly of our Order, with a love and zeal which is truly paternal.

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If, as Xenophon says, we ought not to estimate a benefit by what it is only in itself, but by the dignity of the person who bestows it, it is my duty, in a very particular manner, to attend to this important object.

May Heaven grant that this discourse may correspond with the ideas we have of the eminent virtue and extensive liberalities of the immortal Lambertini, and the full extent of our gratitude! Every time I reflect upon the ancient splendor of the Religious Congregations, which neither the succession of ages, nor the revolution of times have been able to deprive of their lustre, I have raised my thoughts even to the Supreme Being, as the fountain from whence this glorious prerogative has flowed. It is upon him alone that I can cast my eye, when I reflect upon the honour which the Order of St. Francis has acquired, by producing a Patavinus, whose extraordinary merit, the decay of human affairs has neither been able to change, nor put out of date;—by bringing to light a Bonaventura, whose extraordinary gentleness corresponded with his wonderful eloquence, and who, by his profound and extensive knowledge, de-  
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served to be called the Seraphic Teacher;—by training a Sextus Quintus, whose memory will remain to the latest posterity, as that of a prince, who was capable of governing the whole world with steadiness and prudence,—and lastly, by peopling different kingdoms and states with multitudes of illustrious personages, equally valuable for their learning and sagacity. But above all, and what we esteem the highest honour that could be done to our order, O Most Holy Father, is, the zeal with which you have condescended to come and preside at this assembly, and to express yourself to us in words which deserve to be written in letters of gold; *that notwithstanding the business and embarrassments with which a Sovereign Pontiff is constantly oppressed, you have yielded to our desires, that you might be engaged in attending to our interests, and in procuring our tranquillity.*

There can be no better proof of kindness than when the affection of a prince makes him seek opportunities of bestowing his bounties;—then, the subjects, penetrated with gratitude for  
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what has been done, are encouraged to hope in future.

It is in this manner, O Most Holy Father, that you have distinguished yourself with regard to our Order, and the more remarkably, that you have torn yourself away from most important business that you might yield to our entreaties.

You were scarcely acknowledged Sovereign Pontiff, when you testified a desire of presiding in our Assembly, and, notwithstanding your solicitude to attend us, you condescended to submit to our delays, and, without hurrying us, have preserved your kind purposes in our favour. A remarkable instance of goodness, of which we are truly sensible, and never can forget!

What shall I not say upon this occasion, of the kind attention with which you have even prevented our desires, by entering into our affairs with as much zeal as if they were your own, and in preferring our Order to all the other Chapters, that you might honour our Assembly with your august presence. What renders

renders this instance of your goodness still more deserving of our grateful attention, is, your having made your appearance with all the lustre of Pontifical Majesty, and most unexampled kindness. In fine, to embrace us in your paternal arms, and to make us rejoice in your presence, you have consented to put off business of the greatest importance, and to bestow upon us a part of your time which is so precious.

What a subject for triumph to the Order of St. Francis, the having the felicity of seeing in her bosom, in the qualities of Spectator, President, and Father, a Sovereign Pontiff, who by the nobleness of his ancestry, some of whom have their names inserted in the Catalogue of Saints, but more particularly by his own merits, adds a new lustre to the splendour of the Tiara!

How shall I enumerate his virtues? his nights spent in study; his apostolical labours; his admirable compositions? Even at the time when Lambertini took his degrees, there was no student to be found who could be compared with



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with him, he was so greatly superior to all his cotemporaries, so much did his genius tower above all others.

By this means it was, O Most Holy Father, that you merited the esteem of Clement XI. who was perfectly capable of distinguishing worth and abilities, and knew how to put a just value upon yours, and to whom you have given an eternal evidence of your gratitude, by dedicating to him one of your immortal compositions. All the world knows how that Holy Pontiff, Benedict XIII. loved you, and the honour which he conferred upon the Sacred College, as well as upon himself, when he clothed you with the Roman Purple. It was at a time when Religion congratulated herself on finding in you so excellent a model, Science a master, Learning a judge, Bologna a citizen and protector, and, in one word, the World a prodigy.

From whence it is, that the eminent situation to which you have arrived has not been ascribed to the caprice of fortune, but to the sublime and singular qualities which rendered you  
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deserving, and made you to be compared with the Sun, whose beneficence equals his brightness.

You, Most Holy Father, make amends to the whole world for the sad misfortune which it experiences by seeing men, who are both weak and vicious, rising every day to the highest dignities; men who may be compared to those vapours which are exhaled by the heat of the sun, that produce nothing but obscurity, and of whom Boëtius said, that they do nothing but cover the eminent ranks which they attain, with dishonour. Would to Heaven that men were sought after for honours, and not honours for men!

But after having slightly hinted at the surprising qualities which have placed you upon the Pontifical throne, I hope I may be allowed, Most Holy Father, to repeat with what joy and satisfaction that great event was received in this city, and indeed, in the whole Church.

I recollect that happy and ever memorable day when we heard of your promotion; a general expression of joy overspread every coun-

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countenance, and every man's eyes plainly declared what passed in their hearts. That universal gladness which could no longer be restrained, bursting forth from all quarters, endeavoured to shew that there never could be an opportunity more favourable for its being displayed. Then it was that the name of Lambertini, flying from mouth to mouth, excited the most happy sensations, and that we could not perceive night succeeding the day, so splendid and numerous were the illuminations which public joy had lighted up on the occasion.

What emotions, what a picture to see the innumerable multitude of spectators who ran in crowds to see the most venerable and most beloved of all Pontiffs consecrated! We then saw the houses ready to fall to the ground with the weight of the swarms of people who flocked even to the very roofs. There was not the least space left unoccupied, even some that were insecure, tottering and leaning over, were covered with people, who exposed themselves to the hazard of falling and being crushed in pieces. The whole streets were filled, even the  
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Vatican was too small, and very few could have satisfied their curiosity if it had not been for the laborious efforts of the guards, who were every moment like to be buried under the feet of the immense croud, whom they endeavoured to restrain.

No age was exempted from a desire of witnessing such an uncommon triumph. The children threw themselves headlong into the crowd, that they might be the first to observe you, the young people to point you out, the aged to admire you, strangers to know you, and even the sick, disobedient to the orders of the physicians, dragged themselves along, as if they had been certain that by securing a sight of you their healths would have been restored. Some were heard loudly to declare, that since they had seen you they had lived long enough; and others, that it was from that moment they had a desire to live.

The joy of the people, like violent flames, but irregular in their motions and undulations, seemed sometimes to relax that they might burst forth again with double lustre; and if they desisted at intervals in their expressions  
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of applause, it was because they were desirous to render their plaudits worthy of the merits of Benedict XIV. Mothers congratulated themselves on their fruitfulness, on seeing, with joy under what sort of a Prince and Father those men and citizens, whom they should bring into the world, were to live.

Rome, thou didst view this grand spectacle from the summit of thy lofty hills, and seemed to exalt thyself still more from the joy with which thou wast transported, than by the immense prerogative of being the metropolis of the whole world. Thou didst expect, in that moment of joy and peace, to recover what thou hadst been deprived of in preceding ages by the contentions of the Great; and foresawest from that time, that Concord, which frequently changes, would become fixed; and though different nations and states would not consent to acknowledge that thou art the centre of true Religion, they might at least unite to bless and admire her new Chief.

It is but just that the Pontifical dignity, which neither procured you a distinction to which high birth is intitled, nor the qualities of  
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the heart, nor the advantages of genius, nor the reputation which you enjoyed in the Republic of Letters, nor all the eminent virtues which you possess, should procure for you such honours, and that your elevation became a period of joy and gladness to the whole universe.

There was no rank could suit you but that of Sovereign Pontiff; you would have been improperly placed in any other, and you now give us a most authentic proof, Most Holy Father, by deigning to descend to meet us with so much goodness. It is a favour of which every province, every kingdom, nay, the whole world, would be vain of; and it is an act of condescension which, at the same time that it distinguishes our Order with the greatest lustre, gives an additional splendor to your exalted virtues.

What a glorious period for us! What a lively and everlasting joy will it not occasion! Most Holy Father you could not but be sensible of this, when our deputies from France, Spain, Poland, Germany, and indeed from every country in the world, had the happiness to be presented to you. It might have been said that whatever was around them, even things inani-

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mate, partook of their happiness : then it was that every one of them exclaimed, “ O happy journey ! how are we not recompensed for all our troubles and fatigue ! what favours have we not witnessed ! what noble things are provided for us ! what wonders shall we have to relate to our fellow-citizens ! ”—When we return home to our own country, how great will be the crowds and how silent the audience, when we shall say to them, “ Yes, we have seen him, that excellent man, that beloved Pope ! and we have had the happiness to view him as our President and as our Father.”

O Holy Order of St. Francis, if you can, learn to value so great a kindness !

It is with much satisfaction that you love to recollect the number of illustrious Pontiffs who have presided at your assemblies ; the number of Kings likewise who have honoured you with their august presence, for the Order was but newly instituted, when Gregory IX. of the ancient and illustrious family of Conti, presided successively at the election of four Generals ; Innocent IV. at the assemblies which were held at Genoa and Avignon ; Alexander  
IV.



IV. assisted at that assembly where St. Bonaventura was elected General, that eminent personage who was equally useful to the Church and the Order of St. Francis.

You cannot forget that crowded General Chapter at Ricti, where Nicholas IV. several Cardinals, Charles II. King of Sicily, and Queen Mary, were desirous of attending: nor the assembly of Anagni, where Boniface VIII. displayed his regard for the Order, and when, according to his desire, the Cardinal Minius, of Pisa, was chosen General.

You must be pleased at recollecting the general Chapter which was held at Mantua, when Martin V. a prince descended from the family of Colonna, presided; and the election of a General at Barcelona, where Peter King of Arragon assisted.

Lastly you may boast of having King Rupert with Queen Sencia as spectators of your assemblies in Naples; and that Nicholas V. the Meccenas of the age; Sextus VI. who was one of your own children; and Benedict XIII. of the illustrious Order of Dominicans, presided at your general Chapters.

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But notwithstanding all the glorious advantages which render your Order immortal, that of holding Benedict XIV. this day in your bosom, is infinitely the most valuable, because he has condescended to invite himself to this Assembly, and to declare with his own mouth that he ardently desired it, on purpose to give us all the consolation and assistance of which we could have any occasion.

If princes, on account of their distinguished rank, can find no retreat nor escape the public attention; even in every place where they stop, or in the most remote parts of their palaces, they are exposed to all eyes; if on the elevation of a Pope, some are tormented with the apprehension of losing their employments; or that they shall not procure one; and if others entertain a firm persuasion that they shall either preserve or acquire something; or lastly, if a society of any kind is exposed either to praise or censure, according as the Sovereign happens to be pleased or displeased with them, what regard, Most Holy Father, ought not the favour which you have this day conferred, to reflect upon us, by your appearing among us,

and by the eminent kindnesses with which we have been distinguished?

So far is your ancient and steady friendship for us from being changed or extinguished by your new and elevated dignity, that on the contrary it has been displayed more than ever, and in a manner so superior to our thoughts, that we could not presume to flatter ourselves with the hope of it.

The grateful acknowledgements which we owe to you did not begin only at the period when we experienced your kindness, but at the very instant of your promising them, for from that moment we knew that they were certain. Thus the Order, by whose desire I now address you, date the kindness which you have this day bestowed upon us, on that happy day when you condescended to assure us that you would indulge us with such a favour.

What a favour! our affairs settled, our children comforted, and our glory more splendid than at any other period; the presence of Lambertini, who deserves the esteem and attachment of all good people! What more could we possibly desire?

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But what most delights us is the moderation with which you condescend to preside over us, being satisfied with pointing out to us the person whom you wish we should elect to be our General, without laying our inclinations under any restraint.

Likewise as your views comprehend not only the present, but the time to come, and as the desires of a Pontiff, whose sole wish is to do good, and who loves only the truth, are orders which compel us to comply, we have not hesitated to regulate our choice by the recommendation of your Holiness; and the rather, as the kindness which you have expressed for us, is a continuation of that friendly zeal with which your illustrious family has honoured us from the beginning of our institution.

I speak here of facts which are recorded in the most solemn and authentic manner, the proof of which may be seen upon a stone, which was engraved in the time of St. Francis himself, whereon it is attested that the plague having made such dreadful ravages in the city of Bologna, that the whole family of Lambertini were carried off except one single shoot,

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whom they owed to the powerful prayers of our glorious Founder.

A valuable monument which I admired at the time of my making profession at Bologna, and which I ordered to be brought to this city, as if I had had a foreknowledge that I should have occasion to mention it on the present conjuncture. A precious epoch, which we shall never forget, and which securing the preservation of your illustrious House by the prayers of Francis d'Assisa, has procured for us in the revolution of time, the most learned of all Pontiffs, and the most zealous in favour of our Order.

Pardon me, Most Holy Father, if this discourse does not correspond with the lustre of your virtues, nor the immensity of your beneficence; but who among the most sublime and eloquent of Orators could praise you equal to your merits?

Notwithstanding the barrenness of my imagination, I shall persuade myself that I have fulfilled my intention if I have spoken in such a manner as to prove agreeable to your Holiness. But what is of much greater importance to us  
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than the honour of having composed an excellent discourse, is to wish, Most Holy Father, that you may continue to live as long as we desire, which cannot fail to happen if the number of your years should equal the number of your virtues. The Church, the city of Rome, and I dare say our Order, will enjoy the greatest happiness.

Please to accept our grateful acknowledgements for all your kindness to us, which we shall ever retain a sense of, and which will remain more deeply impressed upon our hearts, than if it were engraved upon a monument of brass. "It is no less honourable," says Plutarch\*, "for a King, than for an individual, to accept of small gifts, than to bestow great presents."

\* Non enim est minus regium atque adeo humanum parvula accipere, quam magna largiri.

A DISCOURSE

OF

*CLEMENT XIV.*

AT THE

CHAPTER OF THE F. F. MINOR CONVENTUALS,

Assembled for the Election of a General,

18TH MAY, 1771.

**I**T is assuredly, with the greatest satisfaction, that we this day find ourselves in the midst of you our dear children: your presence recalls to us the pleasing remembrance of that peaceful retirement we enjoyed amongst you from our earliest youth; of those happy days, when no avocations prevented us from frequenting with you the sanctuary of the living God, and with you walking in the steps of your pious founder. Whenever the former union which reigned  
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among us occurs to our thoughts, we feel the reviviscence of that tender friendship which we have always entertained for you.—Doubt not then, that the sight of you fills us with unspeakable joy; especially at this moment, when we see you assembled in the name of the Holy Spirit, and employed in a business of the greatest importance to your Order, for which we entertain an uncommon regard.

In fact, you are now to choose from your own number a man, who by the universality of his virtues, may be a model to your whole body, and who may be able to keep its members steady in the most laudable practices, always conformably to the wisdom of your rules: an act of the utmost moment, the whole difficulty of which we comprehend, and for which, consequently all possible attention, disinterestedness, and discernment are requisite; but we are freed from all apprehensions by our knowledge of your disposition for the good of your Order: and the wisdom which has directed you in former elections, gives us a favourable omen of the attention you will pay to the present: in a word, our knowledge of the virtue

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of each individual, fills us with the firmest persuasion ; for the eyes of the virtuous are the most sure and infallible discerners of the most worthy. United by the bonds of charity, they join to the merit of thinking modestly of themselves, and a freedom from presumption, the talent of perceiving without difficulty the merit of others. Thus neither private interest, nor prejudice, nor party spirit, nor any other cause can warp you from your true glory, nor from your most important good.

You think justly, that to provide for the general welfare is labouring for the particulars ; that your Order will be happy and flourishing, only while piety and learning are there in full vigour ; and that it will attain to that sublime degree of virtue only, when it has found a head adorned with integrity, science, firmness and piety. Only that man is destined to lead others to every species of virtue who has first practised what he requires of them ; who has given manifest proofs of obedience and humility ; who to prudence joins simplicity, to severity mildness, to Religion and piety a tender and compassionate charity ; who according to the  
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circumstances can reprove and entreat, encourage and instruct ; in a word, who has the gift of exciting and fostering fervent devotion, and of transfusing into the children the spirit which animated their illustrious father. We are not insensible, that for a man to unite so many and so excellent qualities in his own person, is something great and extraordinary ; but of this your Order can furnish remarkable examples. Not to speak of those who in former times were at the head of your Order, and deserved every praise ; he who till this moment was clothed with this important office, and whom we see here present, has acquitted himself in such a manner, as to secure our perpetual esteem and good-will.

Such are the patterns of the new General whom you are about to elect. Clothed with their dignity, let him be the representative of their merit ; let him continually propose to himself, let him have incessantly before his eyes, the actions and the counsels of your first founder, as the luminous torch which is to guide him in his course ; but above all let him seek and implore the assistance of Heaven ; let him address

himself to the Giver of Holiness and of all virtue, to God, whose Minister and Servant he is designed to be: let him put himself under the protection of that Being who grants to all those that put their sole trust in him, grace without measure to execute what he requires.

Yes, our dear children, believe that the man whom you know capable of all this, is the person pointed out to you by the Lord, and whom it is his pleasure you should elect. Shew that you have no other thoughts, no other inclinations, than those inspired by the Holy Ghost, whose descent upon the Apostles at this moment, so happily employs the attention of the whole Church.\*

In giving your suffrages, listen only to his motions and dictates: grant us this consolation; and by so incontestible a proof of virtue, increase in us the good opinion which we have conceived, and the singular affection we bear to you.

Of however long standing that affection may be, we feel it rekindle with increasing  
ardour,

\* This Discourse was delivered on Whitsun-Eve.

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ardour, and take new root in our heart; but what still strengthens it is the ease with which we can add new lustre, and be useful to your Order, since notwithstanding our unworthiness we have been raised to St. Peter's Chair.

Shew us then by the choice you are now to make, that our paternal affection and tenderness can no where be better placed: the satisfaction we expect from your filial zeal. In recompence we promise, that your General shall find in our protection, and that of the Holy See, all the assistance necessary for promoting the splendour of your Order, and to make learning and piety flourish among you.

B U L L

FOR THE

UNIVERSAL JUBILEE,

WHICH WAS GRANTED AT

THE ACCESSION OF CLEMENT XIV.

TO THE PONTIFICATE.

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CLEMENT XIV.

TO ALL THE FAITHFUL IN JESUS CHRIST,  
TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME,  
HEALTH AND APOSTOLICAL BENEDICTION.

SEEING that we have been exalted by an impenetrable decree of the wisdom and goodness of God, and that without any merit on our part, to the eminent rank of the Apostleship, we most gratefully acknowledge the greatness  
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of his benefits, and at the same time are intimidated with a dread of his judgments.

Every time that we seriously reflect upon the importance of the charge which has been entrusted to us, we are terrified at the thoughts of the heavy load which has been laid upon our shoulders, and alarmed at the knowledge of our insufficiency; our heart cannot withstand the sighs which incessantly escape from us, nor our eyes the torrents of tears with which they continue to flow; we tremble every instant, and were it not for the confidence we have in his help, who has imposed upon us this formidable burden we should lose all courage. This it is which has made us have recourse to the ardent vows of all the Faithful in the Christian World, to their public and most fervent prayers, their fastings, their alms-givings, and all other their good works, to supplicate the Divine Mercy, that he may be graciously pleased to confirm in us what he hath already begun, to fill our hearts with the knowledge of his blessed will, to shed upon us the spirit of wisdom and understanding, learning and piety,  
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prudence and fortitude, that we may be enabled amidst the innumerable duties of our administration to choose always that which is best, and to execute in the sight of God whatever good things he hath ordained. Let us then unite together in our prayers to the Almighty Father, that he may be pleased to watch over the vine which he has chosen and planted, and to support those people who walk faithfully in the way of his commandments in this strange land, by the gifts of his Grace, and guide them prosperously to the eternal happiness which he has promised.

To obtain these favours more successfully, we have resolved, according to the ancient practice of the Sovereign Pontiffs, our predecessors, to open the treasures of Divine Grace, that we may draw down the Heavenly Benediction upon us at the beginning of our Pontificate.

Wherefore, trusting in the mercy of Almighty God, and in the influence of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and in virtue of the sovereign power of binding and loosing which,  
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notwithstanding our unworthiness, we have received from the Most High, we hereby grant, by these presents, as has been the custom to grant in the year of Jubilee to those who shall visit certain Churches in Rome or out of Rome, a plenary indulgence and remission of all their sins, to all faithful Christians of either sex, in whatever part of the world they happen to be, who shall in the space of fifteen following days, or two weeks, reckoning from the time appointed by the Bishops, their Vicars of Curates, &c. . . . . , . . . . . [What follows is the set form.]

May the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, upon whose power and authority we depend, intercede for you with the Lord. May the Almighty and most merciful God himself grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, time to become sincerely penitent, hearts continually repenting; that you may lead an irreproachable life, obtain the grace and consolation of the Holy Ghost, and a constant perseverance in good works; in virtue of whose  
mercy

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mercy and clemency we give you, with all possible affection, our Apostolical Benediction.

We likewise will that in all places, &c.

Given at ROME, St. Marie Major, under the Fisherman's Ring, the 12th December, 1769, and the First Year of our Pontificate.



AN

ORIGINAL LETTER

IN ANSWER

TO M. VOLTAIRE'S OBJECTIONS

TO THE

AUTHENTICITY OF GANGANELLI'S LETTERS.

SIR,

I LATELY perused a book entitled the *Historical Memoirs of the Life of the Author of the Henriade*, &c. containing a most virulent attack upon the authenticity of the celebrated Letters of Pope Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) which have met with such applause through all Europe.

That the Philosopher of Ferney could never bear the thoughts of any man but himself acquiring

quiring an eminent degree of literary reputation, is a fact too well known to be insisted on, especially at present, when his scurrility against our Shakespeare is in every body's mouth.

Voltaire is an Historian, a Poet, a Critic, and, strange to tell,—a Moralist; it is therefore unpardonable in any man but Voltaire to write History, Poetry, Criticism, or Morality; still a greater crime to succeed in the undertaking.—What Mr. Pope said of Addison may with infinitely more justice be applied to him, that he is a man who,

“Turk-like, can bear no brother near his throne.”

Long accustomed to adulation, and having had the honour to be flattered by a Prince who, not contented with being a great Monarch, had the weakness to desire to pass for a great Poet, he grows more covetous of engrossing the admiration of the world, in proportion as he feels his powers decay.

It has long been his favourite aim to make France pass for the first of nations, not that he cares for his country, but his vanity makes him  
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look upon himself as the first man in France, and he is ambitious of being esteemed the first man in Europe.

Several other reasons, very little to the honour of our author's heart, might be assigned for his inveteracy against the Letters in question.

His excessive irascibility, which seems rather inflamed than cooled by the frost of old age, and his violent hatred of Christianity, have made him endeavour to decry a work, in some parts of which he is censured, though in the most tender and polite terms, while the whole breathes the meek spirit of that Religion against which he has set his face from his earliest youth.

But let us take a cursory view of those boasted arguments which he displays with so much pomp, and examine whether they be sufficient, as he exultingly says, *to unmask the counterfeit Ganganelli, and depose the self-created Pope.*

He sets out with observing, that the phraseology, the turn of expression in these Letters is entirely French; that is, the Editor has taken pains

pains to render Ganganelli's thoughts into elegant French, and he has succeeded: *Ergo* he is an impostor, and his work an original, not a translation from the Latin and Italian, as is pretended by the said Editor.

But Voltaire, if I mistake not, at a time when it was his *interest* to compliment the English nation, did them the honour to translate into easy elegant French some passages from the *barbarous* Shakespeare, and other of their *wretched* writers. Would it be just in a Frenchman, unacquainted with the Originals, to say the phraseology, the turn of expression in these passages, is entirely French? *Ergo*, Mr. Voltaire is an Impostor, and wants to palm upon us an Original Piece for a Translation. Our Bard's own practice has long convinced England, and now convinces France, how easy a matter it is to give a translation the air of an Original.—Let him take his Shakespeare from that dark corner in which he is confined, turn over the leaves and ruminate,

“ How here he sipt, how there he plunder'd snug,  
“ And suck'd all o'er like an industrious bug,”

and

and then let him boldly say, that the phraseology and turn of expression being entirely French, are sure marks of originality.

But, continues our Critic, the translator ought to have deposited the originals in some public library.—To this the answer is easy; what if they who were in possession of the Originals allowed the Editor only copies, and refused to part with what they might look upon as a valuable treasure.

He has quoted in his Preface some respectable names as vouchers of their authenticity.—Is it to be supposed that a man of the Marquis de Caraccioli's rank would lend his name to an imposture? Would he not rather take fire at the injury done to himself, by using it as a cloak for so scandalous an imposition?

The Marquis, the Abbé Lami, and several others now alive were immediately concerned, they were bound in justice to themselves and to the public, to discover the fraud, if there was any; yet they have been silent.—Voltaire alone, though entirely uninterested in the matter, had the honesty to prevent the world from being misled.

How

How these gentlemen relish the charge of being *accomplices after the fact*, so plainly brought against them by the candid Philosopher of Ferney, I cannot pretend to say. In all probability they will think it below them to attack this toothless Dragon, who now can only hiss, without being able to bite.

But our author is so very difficult, that he declares he would not be convinced, even though the original Letters, with Ganganelli's signature, attested by all who knew his handwriting, had been shewn to the whole sacred College, and deposited in the Vatican Library.

All Europe agrees that Voltaire is slow to believe, especially where the evidence is strong. It is well known that he has the art of shutting his eyes against the most undeniable truths. To common minds the testimony he rejects would carry irrefragable conviction: but Voltaire's is not a common mind.

The reasons he brings in support of this disbelief, are extremely curious: we shall examine them in their order.

I. He alledges that he has been intimate enough with Count Algarotti to know that he  
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never had the least correspondence with Ganganelli when Friar, Consultor, Cardinal, or Pope.

Did Algarotti tell him so? Voltaire saith it not, but every body knows him well enough to be sensible that he would not have failed to make the best use of such a declaration.

Did Algarotti communicate to Voltaire all the letters he received? Or was Voltaire his secretary? A man must be very intimate with another indeed, before he can know every individual with whom his friend corresponds, or that friend must be more indiscreetly communicative than Venetian noblemen generally are.

This, therefore, rests solely upon Voltaire's word, in a matter which it is next to impossible Voltaire should know. Had the thing been as is represented, Algarotti, if alive, would have publicly exposed the imposture; if he be dead, it would have been detected by those who had the care of his papers.

II. It is objected that Ganganelli, writing to a Mr. Stuart, expresses some fondness for the English Poets,—This is the more unpardonable, as,

as, if I remember right, the good Pope has never offered incense to the Muse of Voltaire. But, says our author, Ganganelli did not understand a word of English. Again I put the question how does he know that\*? Can you, Mr. Voltaire, say that you was intimate enough with Ganganelli to know what languages he did or did not understand? Perhaps Ganganelli never was in England; but many men have been known, who, though never out of their own country, were yet capable of reading the French, Italian, Portuguese, and German Poets.

Some years ago there was at Utrecht a countryman of Ganganelli's, who, though he had never been in England, nor could pronounce a word of the English language, yet could understand any book in it, and actually translated Pope's *Essay on Man* into Italian verse.

After all, why might not Ganganelli be acquainted with the English Poets through the medium of translation? For, though the Italians can boast of a Tasso, far from joining Voltaire  
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\* Ganganelli was private Secretary to the old Pretender.



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in calling Milton a *fool*, they have translated him into their own language. Like the English, they can be just to merit of a foreign growth. Some of Milton's and Addison's pieces were written in that language, and they have made the tragedy of Cato their own; nor are these the only English Poems that have appeared in an Italian dress.—But it is needless to spend time in a pompous display of Bibliopological learning. Suffice it to say, that the English Muse has strung anew the Italian lyre, and from her lamp re-kindled the flame of Poetry on classic ground.

Give me leave, before I conclude my observations on this objection, to tell M. Voltaire that many in England profess themselves passionate admirers of his writings, who do not understand a word of French; if he would not find fault with these, and accuse them of folly and absurdity, what can he build upon this passage of the letter to Mr. Stewart?

III. His next objection is, that in these Letters Sir Isaac Newton is praised for the simplicity and modesty that appear in all his writings. And, with M. Voltaire's leave, no person, ex-

cept himself, in the least acquainted with that great Philosopher's Works, will find any impropriety in the eulogium. Through the whole you will not meet with the least ostentation, the least *fanfarrnade*. Compare his performances with those of some other philosophers where *I is the little hero of each tale*, and every wild whim, petty discovery, palpable plagiarism, or wretched blunder, is ushered in with the most ridiculous airs of importance, and the most fulsome strokes of self-adulation.—It appears from the very passage alluded to, that the Letter-writer, far from being unacquainted with Newton, had read his works enough at least, to enter into their spirit, and discover the true character of their immortal Author, who was no less amiable for the goodness of his heart, than admirable for the vastness of his genius. One would think, continues the objector, that Ganganelli mistook Newton for a Benedictin, profoundly versed in History: give me leave to tell Mr. Voltaire, that Newton has written several works which demonstrate that he *was* profoundly versed in History.\*—But perhaps

\*His Commentary on Daniel, and his Chronology.

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perhaps with these our *bel Esprit* is entirely unacquainted.

IV. It is said that the author of the Letters takes the Bishop of Cloyne for one of the writers against the Christian Religion, and classes him with Spinoza and Bayle.—The fact is otherwise. He calls Berkley a *Wrong-head* for denying the existence of matter, but says nothing of that Bishop having written against Christianity.

V. It is alledged that Spinoza never mentioned the Christian Religion. It may be so; but Spinoza was a professed advocate for Materialism; he denied an Omnipotent and Omniscient Creator; he therefore endeavoured to destroy the pillars on which all Religion, natural and revealed, is built, and consequently may be fairly reckoned among those authors who have endeavoured to destroy Christianity.

Voltaire continues, “and Bayle has composed no work *expressly*, on so respectable a subject.”—What a pitiful subterfuge! What a Jesuitical quibble! As if no man could write against Christianity, or advance doctrines ut-

terly subversive of it, unless in a treatise where that design was formally announced in the title page.—Voltaire himself is an instance of the contrary.

VI. The sixth objection is that Ganganelli has quoted, as from Danté, a passage not to be found in that author.—Allowing this to be true, how does it affect the authenticity of the Letters? Or is Voltaire now so staunch a Catholic, as to maintain the Pope's infallibility, with regard to points of fact, and that not only after but before his promotion to the Papacy\*?—Verily it would seem that the good Father *Adam's* lessons have not been thrown away, and that, though held up by his patron as an  
object

\* When the controversy between the Jesuits and Jansenists ran high, the former procured from the reigning Pope the condemnation of five Articles extracted from Jansenius's Works, the Jansenists, to elude the decree, maintained that these Articles were not to be found in his Works. The Jesuits, unable any other way to put their antagonists to silence, opposed to them the authority of the Pope, who, in his Decree, had affirmed them to be really contained there; upon which the Jansenists denied the infallibility of his Holiness in points of fact.—This controversy was carried to the most indecent lengths.

object of ridicule in public, he has been listened to with docility in private.\*

It could be wished, however, that M. Voltaire, who, perhaps, looks upon himself to be as infallible as any Pontiff that ever filled the Apostolic Chair, had never quoted a more respectable book than Danté's for passages not to be found in it, and that too from worse motives than those by which the venerable Ganganelli was actuated.

VII. In a letter to a Venetian lady, Ganganelli censures Locke, for saying that a power of thinking might be *superadded* to matter. This, far from being an objection, is a confirmation of the Letter-writer's being a good Catholic, as Ganganelli certainly was, for to such a man this opinion of Mr. Locke must appear abominable heresy. How would M. Voltaire have triumphed could he have convicted the *pretended* Ganganelli of heterodoxy?

#### VIII.

\* Father Adam was a poor Jesuit, to whom Voltaire gave an asylum in his house, but generosity not being our Philosopher's character, he made the poor wretch the butt of his satire. He commonly introduced him to company, with saying, "Gentlemen, this is Father Adam, but not the **FIRST** of men."

VIII. In another to Cardinal Quirini are some strictures on the French nation, which seem to provoke our Philosopher to such a pitch, that, to use the words of Shakespeare, he can no longer *buckle his rage within the belt of rule*, —After quoting the passage, he asks his correspondent, “Seriously do you believe that the Pope wrote this *Rhapsody* against the French *in their own language?*” I beg leave to answer for his correspondent. “Seriously I do not; and for this plain reason, that the title-page of the French edition of these Letters declares them to be translations from the Latin and Italian, and therefore that *Rhapsody* was *not written in their own language.*”

IX. Ganganelli has been mistaken when he mentions Cardinal de Tournon as having taken a voyage to China:---“This,” says Voltaire, “is a palpable blunder---the name of the person in question was Maillard, and his cap was sent after him to China; it did not arrive till poor Maillard was exiled to Macao, and he could scarce fit it to his head before he expired: what was worst of all, the Chinese did not know any thing about Cardinal’s Caps.” These are,

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no doubt, horrible blunders, and sufficient to ruin the reputation of any work in Christendom. The *pretended* Ganganelli calls him *Tournon*, when his name was *Maillard*; but Voltaire himself, in his second volume of his age of Louis XIV. gives this very person the name of *Maillard de Tournon*; and Ganganelli here has committed no greater mistake than a certain author of *Historical Memoirs* has done, when he tells us that a Francis de Voltaire was born in 1694, though all the world knows that personage's real name to be Francis *Arrouet* de Voltaire. But Ganganelli does worse, he calls him *Cardinal Tournon*, when he was actually in China before his promotion to that dignity. I cannot well tell how to get over this difficulty, it is really alarming. What, to give a man the title he died vested with, when we speak of his actions before he acquired that title! Luckily, however, our Critic has fallen into the same blunder he here so unmercifully censures. "Seriously, says he, do you believe that the *Pope* wrote that Rhapsody against the French?" When the date of the letter itself shows that it was not written by his Holiness Pope Clement XIV.



XIV. but by his Eminence the Cardinal Ganganelli.

The last objection brought against the Pope's Letters by this celebrated Wit is occasioned by a remark made by the writer upon the substitution of the word *Humanity* instead of Charity, whence our author *pro solita humanitate sua* concludes the Editor, as he calls him, to be *inhuman*.---What would Voltaire think, if, because he carefully avoids the word *charity*, it should be asserted that he was *uncharitable*.

Such are the objections of this celebrated Genius against the Letters in question.---Give me leave, however, to urge farther in their behalf only this consideration, that except the Hypercritic of Ferney, they have met with as many admirers as readers, through every country in Europe, and it is not to be doubted but their intrinsic merit will bear them up against the feeble attack he has made upon them.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

April 15, 1777.

FINIS.







HEed

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Clement CW

Lethbridge

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