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**SELECT**  
**LETTERS**  
**OF**  
**Ganganelli.**

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SELECT  
LETTERS  
OF  
Ganganelli.  
POPE CLEMENT XIV. COLL

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY

C. J. METCALFE, Esq.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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As it is frequently seen that a casket, rough in its exterior, and unpromising in its general appearance, contains many a precious gem; so it must be acknowledged that there have been within the Roman Catholic community, encumbered as is that religious system with superstitious ceremonies, and disgraced by an intolerant and persecuting spirit, some distinguished individuals, whose piety or talents have reflected honour not only on themselves, but also on the hierarchy to which they belonged. To this class of character belongs the celebrated writer of the following Letters, who occupied a distinguished place among the literati of his age, and was rendered eminent by the catholicism of his spirit, still more than by the dignity of his ecclesiastical station. To those readers who may not

have access to a more detailed narrative, the following biographical sketch may not be unacceptable.

F. L. Ganganelli was descended from an ancient and illustrious family, which had long flourished at St. Angelo in Vado, a small episcopal city in the Ecclesiastical States. His father was a physician of distinguished reputation, resident in the duchy of Urbino. The subject of the present brief memoir was born in October 1705, and having lost his father in the third year of his age, was placed by his surviving parent in the Jesuits' College at Rimini, from which he was afterwards removed to one of the monastic seminaries in his native province. Here he early conceived the design of becoming a member of one of the religious orders, and at length accomplished his purpose, on the 17th of May, 1723, by attaching himself to a monastery of Franciscan Friars. He availed himself of the opportunity which his retirement afforded him, to pursue a course of extended literature; in

which his progress was so rapid, that he was considered by the learned Donati and other professors, under whom he studied, a youth of great promise. Nor were their hopes concerning him disappointed: for he discovered a highly cultivated taste, a sound judgment, a well furnished mind, and such habits of application as gave a reasonable pledge of literary eminence. In 1727, he commenced the study of Theology under Father Montalto; in 1728, he was called to Rome by Cardinal Prosper Marefoschi, in consequence of the reputation he had already acquired for learning and piety; and on the 29th of May, 1731, received his degree of Doctor of Divinity, after a very severe and honourable examination, conducted by Father Lucci, who was at that time President of the College of S. Bonaventuré. After this he studied Philosophy at Ascoli, in the same year; at which place he delivered many public theses with great applause, particularly those on "*Religion*," and on "*the Birth of the Messiah*." In con-

sequence of his reputation for Oratory, he was appointed about this time by the Empress Queen of Hungary, to deliver a funeral oration for Cardinal Stampa.

In 1744, he was appointed by Cardinal Annibal Albani to the regency of the College of S. Bonaventuré, of which he had been so distinguished an ornament; and in the same year was selected to deliver a panegyric on Benet XIV. the reigning Pontiff. In succeeding years additional honours and distinctions were conferred upon him, until at length in 1759, he was unanimously elected to the office of Cardinal. But so far from being elated with his new dignity, he continued the same self-denying habits, the same unaffected simplicity of manners, the same literary occupations and pursuits, to which he had before been accustomed. It was not without much hesitation and great regret that he accepted of this dignity. On this subject he writes thus to a friend—"O my books! O my cell! I know what I leave, and am ignorant of what I shall find,

“ Alas ! many troublesome people will come and  
“ rob me of my time ; many interested people  
“ will pay me feigned homage.”

Ganganelli was elevated to the papal crown A.D. 1769, and assumed the title of Clement XIV. On this occasion we again hear him complaining of his heavy burden, and regretting the loss of his tranquillity. “ If you think me  
“ happy, you are deceived. After having been  
“ agitated all the day, I frequently wake in the  
“ night, and sigh after my cloister, my cell, and  
“ my books. I can truly say I look on your  
“ situation with envy.” His administration was but of short continuance, yet it was marked by many important, and some extraordinary events. It commenced at a moment in which the Catholic Church was embroiled with the house of Bourbon, through the insidious arts of the Jesuits. With consummate address, Ganganelli settled these differences, and re-established peace between the Holy See, and the Kings of France, Spain, and Portugal, on the most advantageous and

honourable terms. But that which chiefly distinguished his short administration, was his suppression of the order of Jesuits, which by its intrigues and cruelties had rendered itself obnoxious to all the European powers. He adopted this measure, as he himself affirms, on the fullest examination and most deliberate conviction of its necessity, with the utmost caution; and after having called in the aid of most fervent and oft repeated prayers. He well knew that this resolution would create him hosts of enemies, and when he signed the decree for the abolition of that order, said emphatically to a friend who stood near "I am well aware that I am about to sign my death warrant, but that is of no consequence." He survived this most important act which reflects the highest credit on his integrity, his disinterestedness, and his political discernment, but fourteen months: and it has been supposed by some, that his death was accelerated by poison. It is however certain, that the Jesuits celebrated the event as a triumph, and affected to represent it as a judgment from heaven, on account of his



persecution and abolition of their order. This event took place on the 22d of Sept. 1774, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

The amiable and benevolent disposition of this distinguished pontiff—his high literary attainments—his unwearied efforts to revive commerce, encourage manufactures, and patronize the arts—his strenuous endeavours to promote a good understanding between the Catholic and Reformed Churches, and his truly Catholic spirit, (in the best sense of that term,) all concur to render him deserving of the esteem not only of the members of his own communion, but of the whole Christian world.

The following eulogium not unfitly describes the peculiar features of his character, and the most important events of his life.

1.

Raised by Divine Providence  
From a state of evangelical poverty  
And worldly contempt,  
To St. Peter's Chair,

He still remained the same,  
Unchanged but in external rank,  
To his friends a friend, all things to all.  
But to himself he reserved a life of labour and fatigue.  
Not all his pastoral solicitudes  
Could disturb his tranquillity,  
Nor the unsettled state of the Papacy  
His cheerfulness,  
Nor the most tremendous storms  
His fortitude.

## 2.

Serene amidst a troubled sea  
He strengthened the weak and consoled the sorrowful  
By skilfully managing the sails,  
He was enabled to navigate the vessel of the state  
Amidst the most furious tempests,  
His eye fixed on Heaven,  
He grasped the helm with a firm hand,  
And hoped for better things.

# GANGANELLI'S LETTERS.

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## LETTER I.

TO M. DE CABANE, KNIGHT OF MALTA.

Sir,

THE solitude which reigns in your heart, renders it unnecessary that you should seek any other. The value of cloisters consists alone in the mind being collected there; it is not the walls of a monastery which constitute its merit.

The House of La Trappe which we have in Italy, and to which you wish to retire, is not less regular than that in France; but why should you retire from a world which you might edify? and which will always be corrupt, if abandoned by all good people.

Besides, is not the Order of Malta, in which you live, a religious state, and capable of sanctifying you, if you fulfil its duties?

We ought to reflect seriously when we wish to bring ourselves under peculiar obligations. The

Gospel is the true rule of the Christian; and the call should be very evident before we bury ourselves in solitude.

That is an extraordinary path which leads us from common life, and when we wish to embrace the monastic life, we should fear lest it prove an illusion. I highly honour the monks of the houses of La Chartreuse and La Trappe, but there should be only a few of them. Besides the difficulty of finding many zealous monks, we should be fearful of impoverishing the state by rendering ourselves useless to society. We are not born monks, but we are born citizens. The world has need of subjects who contribute to its harmony, and who promote the prosperity of empires, by their talents, exertions, and virtuous conduct.

These profound solitudes, in which there is no exterior sign of life, are literally tombs.

St. Anthony, who lived so long in the deserts, did not make a vow to remain there always. He quitted his retreat, and came to Alexandria, to combat Arianism and to disperse the Arians, because he was convinced he might benefit religion and the state by his active services rather than by his prayers. And when he had finished his mission, he returned to his hermitage, grieved to carry back there the little blood which old age

## LETTERS.

left in his veins, and that he had not suffered martyrdom.

When you are at La Trappe, you will pray to God day and night, it is true ; but can you not continually raise your heart to him, though in the midst of the world ? It is not the voice which constitutes the merit of prayer. The sovereign Legislator himself tells us that it is not the multiplicity of words which obtains for us the assistance of Heaven.

Many respectable writers have no hesitation in saying that the remissness of monasteries has in part arisen from a too great number of devotional exercises. They thought, with justice, that attention must be wearied by prayers of immoderate length, and that manual labour is more advantageous than a continual psalmody.

The world would not have exclaimed so much against the monks, had they seen them employed in works of utility. We still continue to bless the memory of those who first brought our waste lands under cultivation, and of those who enriched the cities with learned productions, whether relating to the facts of history, or to the time of their occurrence.

The Benedictines of the learned Congregation of St. Maur, in France, whom we commonly call

Maurini, have acquired an honour which will long remain, by having published a great number of works, at once curious and useful. The celebrated P. Montfaucon, by no means one of their least ornaments, filled all Italy with his erudition, when he devoted himself entirely to the study of Antiquity.

St. Bernard, the reformer of so many monasteries which follow his institutes, rendered himself useful to religion and his country, not when he preached up the Crusades, which could only be justified by the intention, but when he gave judicious advice to Popes and Kings, and composed immortal works. He would not have become a Father of the Church, had he spent his whole life in prayer.

Le P. Mabillon, in his famous *Treatise on Monastic Studies*, appears to me to have completely triumphed over the Abbe de Rancé, who pretended that the monks should apply themselves merely to contemplation and psalmody. Man is destined to labour. *There is but one step from a speculative to an idle life*, said Cardinal Paleotti, *and nothing is easier than to make the transition.*

You will do more good in comforting the poor, in consoling them with your discourses, than in burying yourself in a desert. John the Baptist

himself, who was the greatest among men, left the wilderness to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to baptize on the banks of the Jordan.

Do not imagine, my dear Sir, that in speaking of the useful life, I wish to make an apology for Mendicant Friars, to the prejudice of the Monks. Each Order has its customs, and in this case we may say, *Let not him that eateth not, despise him that eateth.* But I confess I esteem the state of the Minor Brethren so much the more, inasmuch as they unite the active life of Martha to the contemplative life of Mary ; and I apprehend, whatever certain ascetics maintain, that this kind of life is by far the most meritorious.

St. Benedict felt that a person ought to be useful to his country, and consequently caused an academy for gentlemen to be instituted at Mont Cassin. He knew the rules of action produced by a love of our neighbour.

If, however, notwithstanding my reasons, you continually feel a secret inspiration, which calls you to the monastic life, you will do in that respect as you please, for I should be fearful of opposing the will of God, who conducts his servants as he pleases, and frequently by singular ways.

I could wish to be with you at Tivoli, and to

contemplate there the celebrated cascade which, dividing itself into a thousand different torrents, and falling with the greatest impetuosity, represents in the liveliest manner the world and its agitations.

I wish you pleasant holidays, and am more than all Ciceronian eloquence can express,

Sir, your very humble, &c:

F. L. GANGANELLI.

P.S. My very humble respects to the very worthy Bishop.

*Convent of Holy Apostles, Oct. 29, 1747.*



## LETTER II.

TO M. L'ABBE FERGHEN.

YOU cannot do better M. l'Abbé, in order to dissipate your troubles and embarrassments, than to visit Italy. Every learned man owes a homage to this country so deservedly celebrated. I shall see you here with inexpressible satisfaction.

You will at first discover the bulwarks bestowed on it by nature in the Appenines and the Alps, which separate us from the French, and which have obtained for them from us the name of Ultramontani. These are majestic mountains formed to serve as a frame to the magnificent picture they surround.

Torrents, rivulets, rivers, without reckoning seas, are other perspectives, which offer to travellers and painters the most curious and interesting spectacles. Nothing is more delightful than the most fertile soil, under the finest sky, interspersed throughout with waterfalls, peopled with villages, adorned with superb towns, and such is Italy.

Were agriculture there in as high esteem as architecture; were the country not divided into small states, all of a different form, and almost all weak and insignificant, we should not find there misery by the side of magnificence, and activity without industry: but unfortunately they employ themselves more in the embellishment of the towns, than in the culture of the fields; and on all sides uncultivated lands reproach the inhabitants with their idleness.

If you enter by Venice, you will see a city unique as to its position; it resembles a vast ship reposing quietly on the waters, to which access can only be obtained by sloops.

This is not the only singularity which will surprise you. Inhabitants masked during four or five months in the year, the laws of a despotic government, which allows the greatest liberty to diversions, the rights of a sovereign who has no authority, the customs of a people who fear even his shadow, and who enjoy the greatest tranquillity, form a series of contrasts singularly interesting to travellers. There is scarcely a Venetian who is not eloquent: collections have been made of the jests of the Gondoliers, which abound with the most brilliant wit.

Ferrara will display to you in its circumference

a fine and extensive solitude, almost as silent as the tomb of Ariosto who reposes there.

Bologna will present you with another picture. You will find there sciences familiar even to the female sex, brought forward with dignity in schools and academies, in which daily trophies are erected to their honour. A thousand different pictures will gratify your taste and your eyes, and the conversation of the inhabitants will afford you great delight.

You will afterwards pass, in the space of more than a hundred leagues, a number of small towns, each of which has its theatre, its Casin (the rendezvous of the nobility,) and some literary character, or some poet, who employs himself according to his taste and leisure.

You will visit Loretto, a pilgrimage celebrated for the concourse of strangers, and the treasures with which its temple is superbly enriched.

You will at length perceive Rome, which might be seen a thousand times with a pleasure ever new. This city, situated on seven hills, which the ancients called the seven mistresses of the world, appears from thence to govern the universe, and proudly to tell all nations that she is their Capital and Queen.

You will call to mind those ancient Romans, the remembrance of whom will never be effaced, on surveying the celebrated Tiber, so frequently mentioned, and which was so often swoln with their blood and that of their enemies.

You will be enraptured at the sight of St. Peter's Cathedral, which connoisseurs call the wonder of the world, as being infinitely superior to that of St. Sophia at Constantinople, of St. Paul at London, and even Solomon's Temple.

It is a pile of building which extends in proportion as we go through it, where every thing is colossal. and every thing appears of an ordinary size. The paintings are exquisite, the mausolea finely executed, and the whole seems to resemble *the New Jerusalem come down from Heaven*, mentioned by St. John in the Apocalypse.

You will find in the whole, and in each part of the Vatican, erected on the ruins of false oracles, beauties of every kind, which will at once weary and charm your eyes. It is there that Raphael and Michael Angelo have displayed sometimes in a terrible, and sometimes in a tender style, the chefs d'œuvre of their genius, by expressing in a lively manner all the energy of their souls; there is the deposit of the learning and

mind of all the writers in the world, in a number of works which compose the richest and largest library.

The churches, the palaces, the public places, the pyramids, the obelisks, the columns, the galleries, the porticos, the theatres, the fountains, the gardens, the perspectives, all will tell you you are at Rome, and all will attach you to it, as to the City which has always been pre-eminently and universally admired. You will not meet there with that French elegance, which prefers the pretty to the majestic, but you will be recompensed for it by the coups d'œil which will continually excite your admiration.

In short you will perceive a new world in all the paintings and statues executed both by ancient and modern artists, and you will fancy it an animated world. The Academy of Painting occupied by the French, will shew you pupils destined to become great masters, and who honour Italy, by coming here to take lessons.

You will admire the grandeur and simplicity of the Head of the Church, the servant of the servants of God in the order of humility, and the first of men in the eye of Faith. The Cardinals by whom he is surrounded, will represent to you

the four and twenty elders who surround the throne of the Lamb, for you will find them as modest in their manners as they are edifying by their morals.

The misfortune is that this magnificent scenery will terminate in groups of beggars, improperly supported in Rome by her too extensive charities, instead of being employed in useful labours ; and thus the thorn is seen with the rose, and vice is too frequently found by the side of virtue.

But if you wish to see Rome in its splendour, endeavour to be there at the feast of St. Peter. The illumination of the church begins by a gentle light, which might be readily taken for the reflection of the setting sun, it displays the finest specimens of architecture, and afterwards ends in undulating flames, which form a moving picture, and last till break of day ; that is accompanied by a double firework, the brilliancy of which is so great, that one would think the stars were loosened from the sky, and falling with considerable noise.

I do not mention the strange metamorphose which has placed even in the Capitol Franciscan Monks, and has caused an entirely new Rome to rise out of the ruins of the ancient one, in order to teach the universe that Christianity is truly the work of God, and that it has subdued the most

celebrated conquerors, in order to establish itself even in the centre of their territories.

If the modern Romans do not appear to you warlike, it is because their present government does not inspire them with valour ; for they have the germ of every virtue, and are as good soldiers as any others, when they carry arms under the command of some foreign power. It is certain they have considerable genius, a singular aptness for the sciences, and they might be thought to be born mimicks, so expressive are they in their gestures, even from their infancy.

You will afterwards go to Naples by the celebrated Appian way, the antiquity of which unfortunately now renders it very inconvenient, and you will arrive at Parthenope, where the ashes of Virgil repose, over which you will perceive a laurel growing, which cannot be better placed.

On one side Mount Vesuvius, on the other the Elysian fields, will present you with singular appearances, and after you have been satisfied with them, you will find yourself surrounded with a number of Neapolitans, lively, animated, but too much inclined to pleasure and idleness to be what they might become. Naples would be an enchanting city, were it not for the crowd of plebeians you meet with there, who have the ap-

pearance of being wretches and robbers, though in reality they are neither.

The churches are richly decorated, but the wretched style of architecture does not correspond with that of Rome. You will take a singular pleasure in traversing the environs of this city, delightful on account of its fruits, its perspectives, its situation; and you will penetrate into its celebrated subterraneous caverns, where the city of Herculaneum was formerly swallowed up by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Should it chance to be burning, you would see torrents of fire issuing from its bosom, which would spread majestically through the country. Portici will present to you a collection of what has been taken from the ruins of Herculaneum, and the environs of Puzzuoli, sung by the Prince of Poets, will inspire you with a taste for poetry.

You must go there with the *Æneid* in your hand, and compare with the Cumæan Sybil's cave and the River Acheron, what Virgil has said respecting them.

You will return by Caserta, which, by its decorations, its marbles, its extent, its aqueducts, worthy of ancient Rome, will become the finest castle in Europe; and you will visit Mont Cassin, where the spirit of St. Benet, after nearly twelve



centuries, remains without interruption, notwithstanding the immense riches of that superb monastery.

Florence, from whence proceeded the fine arts, and where their most magnificent chefs d'œuvre are deposited, will present you with other objects; you will there admire a city *which*, according to the remark of a Portuguese, *should be shewn only on Sundays*, it is so genteelly and so prettily decorated; traces are throughout to be seen of the splendor and elegance of the Medicis mentioned in the annals of taste, as the restorers of the fine arts.

Livurnum, a sea port both well inhabited and advantageous to Tuscany. Pisa, always in possession of schools and learned men of every description. Sienna, renowned for the purity of its air and of its language,—will alternately interest you in a singular manner. Parma situated in the midst of the most fertile pastures will present to you a theatre containing fourteen thousand people, and where each one can hear what is said only in a whisper; and Placentia will appear to you worthy of the name it bears, as a residence, which, by its situation and pleasantness is singularly interesting to travellers.

You will not forget Modena, as the country of

the illustrious Muratori, and as a city celebrated for the name it has given to its sovereigns.

You will find at Milan, the second church in Italy for grandeur and beauty; more than ten thousand marble statues adorn the outside, and it would be a *chef d'œuvre*, if it had a frontispiece. The society of the inhabitants is perfectly agreeable since the French besieged it. They live like the Parisians, and all, even to the hospital and the cemetery, have an air of splendour. The Ambrosian library is interesting to the curious, nor is the Ambrosian ritual less so, especially to ecclesiastics, who wish to know the customs of the church as well as of antiquity.

The account you will receive of the Boromean islands will induce you to visit them. Situated in the middle of the most delightful lake, they present to the sight whatever is most magnificent and pleasing in gardens.

Genoa will prove to you that it is really superb in its churches and palaces. We find there a port celebrated for its commerce and the concourse of foreigners; there is a Doge who changes almost as often as the superiors of a monastery, and who has scarcely any more authority.

At length Turin, the residence of a court where the virtues have long dwelt, will charm you by

the symmetry of its edifices, the beauty of its public walks, the regularity of its streets, the genius of its inhabitants, and thus you will pleasantly finish your tour.

I have just made the tour of Italy, very rapidly, and as you see, with little expence, in order to induce you to come there in reality; besides, with a person like you, mere sketches are sufficient.

I say nothing of our morals, they are not more corrupt than among other nations, whatever malignity may say; there are only shades of difference according to the various governments; for the Roman does not resemble the Genoese, nor the Venetian the Neapolitan; but it may be said of Italy as of the whole world, that with some slight difference, it is here as there, *a little good and a little bad.*

I do not mention the pleasantness of the Italians, nor their love for the sciences and the arts; it is what you will soon know when you associate with them, and especially you beyond any one else, with whom one is delighted to converse, and to whom it will always be a pleasure to say that; I am your very humble and obedient servant,

F. L. GANGANELLI.

Rome, 12th Nov. 1756.

P.S. I have seized a leisure moment, to give you an idea of my country; it is a mere daub, whereas in other hands, it would be a pretty miniature; the subject is worth the trouble, but my pencil is not sufficiently delicate.

## LETTER III.

TO ONE OF HIS SISTERS.

THE loss we have experienced, my very dear sister, of so many relatives and friends, proclaims to us that this life is but a borrowed one, and that God alone is essentially possessed of immortality. The reflection should afford us consolation, that if we constantly adhere to him, we shall be re-united in him.

The troubles you mention would be more profitable to you than pleasures, if you possessed faith. Calvary is here below the place of the Christian, and if at any time he ascend Tabor, it is but for a moment.

My health is always good, because I neither humour nor pamper it; sometimes my stomach would be out of order but I tell it I have no time to attend to it, and it leaves me quiet. Study absorbs all those lesser ailments, of which men frequently complain. It often happens that idleness is the only complaint; many women are ill without knowing their malady, because they have

nothing to do : they are tired of being too well, and this satiety is overwhelming to people of the world.

I am very glad to hear such good accounts of little Michael. He is a plant which, if cultivated with care, will one day produce excellent fruits : all depends on a good cultivation. We generally become every thing or nothing according to the education we receive.

You lament that we do not see each other ; but it is neither our words nor our actions which constitute our friendship. Provided we meet in affections and thought, what signifies it if our persons be far removed from each other ? When we love a person in God, we always see him, because we find God every where ; he should be the centre of every thought, as he is of every soul.

I love you very cordially, and I fully appreciate the letters you write to me ; they recal to my mind a father of whom I knew too little, and a mother, whose life was one continued lesson of virtue. I have never failed remembering them at the altar, without forgetting you there, my very dear sister, whose I am, beyond all expression, very humbly and affectionately.

F. L. GANGANELLI.

## LETTER IV.

TO M. BOUGET, PRIVATE SECRETARY TO HIS  
HOLINESS.

My Lord,

I SHALL not fail to accept your gracious invitation, as to the house of one in whom centres genius, wisdom, and cheerfulness. If ever melancholy intrude upon me, I shall seek your agreeable conversation, of the value of which Benet XIV. was fully aware, and which would have made the same impression upon Saul as the harp of David. You have the talent of relating in a rapid manner with the most lively interest. Things comparatively insignificant, from the turn you give to them, become the subjects of solid conversation.

We have sometimes met at the Trinity of the Mount. Our French Minim fathers deserve to be visited; we cannot but feel attached to them, if we love science and agreeable society, and this

attachment must necessarily encrease when you are found among them.

When you come to see me, I will shew you my reflections on a cause that will interest you. There are all kinds at the Holy Office, some calculated to inspire laughter, others lamentations; but be not afraid, I will not read you the most dismal: the great art of society consists in serving people according to their taste.

Cheerfulness is the true physician of studious people; we must dilate their minds and hearts when they are exhausted with any difficult task. Cheerfulness of soul is as necessary as the budding of trees, if we would see them recover their verdure and flourish: but there are persons, who, like rose-trees without flowers, never present any thing to our view but bark and thorns. When I meet them, I say nothing, and pass on quickly, lest I should be pricked.

Cheerfulness retards old age; we always carry with it an air of freshness, instead of that paleness and those wrinkles, which arise from care.

Benet XIV. would not enjoy such good health were it not that he is always extremely cheerful; he lays down his pen to say some bon mots, and resumes it again, without ever being fatigued.



You have done very well in engrafting some of the Italian cheerfulness on the French; it is the way to live a hundred years. I wish you them, being more than I can express.

My Lord,

Your very humble, &c.

F. L. GANGANELLI.

## LETTER V.

TO THE REV. FATHER THE ABBE OF MONT  
CASSIN.

Most Rev. Sir,

You do me too much honour in wishing to consult me respecting the date of your two manuscripts. I believe them to be of the ninth century, from comparing them with the writing of that period; one of our authors who was then living, is continually quoted in them, an author with whom few are acquainted, and of whose writings some fragments remain on the sacrifice of the Mass.

It is very generous in you to be willing to receive the feeble light of an insignificant Franciscan, whilst you are the chief of an Order perfectly well acquainted with antiquity, and which has given in every part of the world the most brilliant proofs of it, and has thereby acquired the greatest honour.

*Without the Benedictines we should be the most*

*foolish people*, said Innocent XI. (*Odescalchi*). Besides that they constituted the glory of the Holy See, and of different churches for whole centuries, they have still been the fathers and preservers of history. It is amongst them that monarchs found the most august and interesting titles, and that science and the true faith were preserved without interruption, as the most precious depot, whilst the blackest cloud seemed to overshadow the universe. They were never seen, although rich and powerful, caballing in kingdoms, nor engaging in any intrigue prejudicial to states; on the contrary they were their greatest help. It may also be said that, notwithstanding all the wealth and honour they enjoy, public gratitude has not yet repaid them.

If I can be serviceable to you, I will willingly enter that celebrated solitude, whence have issued a whole world of saints and sages. It seems as though, in treading the soil where they resided, we participate their merit.

It would be impossible to add any thing to the profound respect with which I am, &c.

F. L. GANGANELLI.

Rome, 5th March, 1748.

## LETTER VI.

TO MR. STUART, A SCOTCH GENTLEMAN.

I HAVE followed you in spirit, my dear Sir, both on the sea and on the Thames. As long as my mind alone travels in England, I am in no danger of being insulted; whereas if I were to go in person, and in my monkish dress, God knows how the populace would treat me. Confess that the Popes are good people; for were they to retaliate, they would require that every Priest and Monk should be suffered to enter London in his dress, or they would receive no Englishman at Rome. And who would suffer? You first, my dear Sir, who delight in frequently visiting Italy; but I should suffer still more than you I protest, and you may believe me, for I am sincerely attached to the English nation, which has always peculiarly cultivated the sciences, and in which we find much profit; we should lose too much were we deprived of seeing individuals from thence. I have an ardent passion for your great poets and philosophers; we are sublime with them and see

the world under our feet. I sometimes pay nocturnal visits to Newton ; at a time when all nature appears wrapt in sleep, I wake to read and admire him. No one like him unites science and simplicity. It is the character of genius which knows neither boasting nor ostentation.

I rely on your bringing me, when you return, the little manuscript of Berkeley, that illustrious madman, who imagined that the world had nothing in it material, and that all bodies existed only in idea. How delightful the prospect, which reason contemplates, that all learned men who now differ in their opinions, will be re-united, and that *that* reason, after having preserved them incognito, will enlighten them with its rays. How many will be at once surprised and abased who had the vanity to think themselves more than inspired.

The world was always devoted to disputes and errors ; and we should think ourselves happy, that in the midst of so many clouds and contradictions, we have a sure light to guide us in the right road ; I mean the flambeau of Revelation, which, notwithstanding all the efforts of infidelity, will never be extinguished.

It is with religion as with the firmament, which

sometimes appears to us obscure, but which is not on that account the less radiant. The passions and senses are vapours which rise from the bosom of our corruption, and hide from our view the heavenly lights; and the man who reflects, without being alarmed and astonished, waits the return of fine weather. Do we not know that the mists formed by Celsus, by Porphyry, by Spinosa, by Collins, by Bayle, have been dispersed, and that those of modern philosophy will share the same fate. Distinguished people have appeared in every age, who sometimes with arms, and sometimes with fanaticism, have seemed to endeavour to destroy Christianity; they have passed away like these tempests, which serve only to make the sky appear more serene.

It is because men have no principles, that they suffer themselves to be dazzled by sophisms: they consider contemptible objections as completely unanswerable because they know nothing. In religion all is united, all is combined; and lest they should allow a single truth to escape, they find nothing more but abysses and darkness. Man, instead of concluding, at the sight of the wonders he enjoys, that God can doubtless give him possessions more valuable after this life, judges

that the Deity, however powerful, can go no further, and that this world is necessarily the termination of his wisdom and power.

I should like to see a work which proved to a demonstration (and it would not be difficult, provided the author were acquainted with physic and theology) that the universe, as we know it, is truly an enigma. Religion alone can inform us both of the immensity of those heavens, the use of which the infidel cannot comprehend; and of the miseries we suffer, the causes of which the philosopher cannot discover; and of the succession of desires which agitate us, the impetuosity of which we cannot restrain.

We have sketched these great subjects when we have conversed familiarly sometimes at the Borghese villa, and sometimes at that of Negriori.—That time has passed, and part of our lives with it; because every thing passes away, except the sincere attachment with which I am,

My dear Sir, &c.

F. L. GANGANELLI.

*Rome, 3rd May, 1748.*

## LETTER VII.

TO SIGNORA BAZARDI.

Do not consult me, I entreat you, on your son's embracing a monastic life. If I tell you he cannot do better, you will think me an interested person, speaking on behalf of his own order; if on the other hand I tell you that he would do well not to think of it, you will consider it as the advice of a monk disgusted with his state, or convinced that a cloistered life is replete with misery. Thus, madam, I advise you neither way. Each object has two appearances; it is of importance to know which is the best, and to adopt it.

If I foresaw that a candidate for the monastic life would become eminent for learning and piety, I should use every effort to fix him; but as I do not know what may happen, I am very reserved, and never advise any one to become a monk.

I have the honour to be, &c.

*Rome, 13th May, 1748.*



## LETTER VIII.

## TO THE PRELATE CERATI.

I do not pardon you for depriving the public of a number of anecdotes which are familiar to you, and the collection of which would be extremely interesting; in future when I see you I shall take my pencil and write. What would become of science, if all men of learning were to follow your example? conversation would be brilliant, but there would be no reading.

M. Cerati ought to reflect that he is useful, when he speaks, only to those who surround him, and that were he to write, he would be serviceable to the most distant people. A good book becomes the patrimony of the whole world, it is in the hands of the Russian, as well as in those of the Italian. The Pope should oblige you, under pain of excommunication, to make known through the medium of the press, all you keep back from the knowledge of the world. But perhaps, having seen foreign nations, you would no longer be so much of an Ultramontanus, and

do you think you can elude the judgement of a Roman decree? *He has seen much, read much, and retained all*, said the Cardinal Porto Carrero to me lately in speaking of you, *but that will be of no use to us, because he will carry his knowledge with him into the other world.*

Too much has been written; and I grieve at it, when I consider all the productions which libertinism has produced; but enough will never be written when it refers to the excellent things you know. For my part I wish it to be impressed that you cannot be too much admired, nor can I too frequently repeat the honour I esteem it to be,

Yours, &c.

F. L. GANGANELLI.

## LETTER IX.

TO MADAME \*\*\*.

Madam,

TRUE devotion consists, neither in a careless appearance nor a monastic dress. The greater part of devotees imagine, and I know not for what reason, that celestial spirits are more pleased with dark than with lively colours. Angels, however, are always painted either in white or blue. I do not like that piety which makes great pretensions; modesty does not depend on a colour; to be what we ought, it is sufficient for us to be decent in our clothes and countenance.

Besides, observe that if any woman who has been publicly slandered appear angry, enraged with every body, it is most frequently she who is in sable. Singularity is so little allied to true devotion, that we are ordered in the gospel to wash our faces when we fast, that we may not be remarked.

Thus I am of opinion, madam, that you should make no change in the form or colour of your

dress. Let your heart be towards God, refer all your actions to him ; that is the chief point.

The world would not have so much ridiculed devotion, had not the devotees given occasion for it. Almost always animated by a bigotted zeal, they are only contented with themselves, and would wish every one to yield to their caprices, in which alone their piety frequently consists.

Every one truly pious, is patient, kind, humble, thinks no evil, is never angry, and conceals the defects of his neighbour when he cannot excuse them. *He rejoices with those who rejoice, weeps with those who weep*, agreeable to the advice of St. Paul, and is wise only with sobriety, because there should be temperance in all things.

In short, true devotion is charity, and without it whatever we do is absolutely useless to salvation. False devotees do scarcely less harm to religion than even the impious. Always ready to break forth against what is contrary to their opinions, or their humour ; they have a restless, impetuous, persecuting zeal, and they are in general fanatical or superstitious, hypocritical or ignorant. Jesus Christ does not spare them in the gospel to teach us to beware of them.

When you feel, madam, that you have neither hatred in your heart, pride in your spirit, nor singularity in your actions, in short that you observe the commands of God and the church without affectation or a trifling exactness, you may then believe yourself really in the path of safety.

Above all, render your domestics happy, by abstaining from tormenting them. They are our other selves, and we must continually lighten their yoke. The way to be well served is always to have a serene countenance. True piety always preserves the same calmness and tranquillity of mind, whilst false devotion is continually varying.

Bring up your nieces according to their condition, and do not require of them precisely what you yourself do, because you have a particular propensity for mortification.

This subject would require a whole letter. Young people are frequently disgusted with piety, because too great perfection is required of them; and they weary themselves with penitential works, when they have not learned to govern themselves. Common life is the most sure, though it cannot be the most perfect. It is acting a violent part to wish to deny yourself every visit and relaxation. Take care that your confessor be not too mys-

tical, and that his directions do not end in making you a scrupulous, rather than a good christian.

Is so much self-denial then necessary to embrace piety? Religion teaches us what we ought to believe and practise, and there will never be a better director than the Gospel. Mingle solitude with society; and form acquaintances which will lead you neither into melancholy nor dissipation.

Vary your reading. There are many works of a recreative nature, which may succeed those which are serious. St. Paul in giving us rules for an ornamental conversation, permits us to indulge in things lovely and agreeable; *quæcumque amabilia*.

We should serve God like slaves, if we imagined ourselves always transgressing. The yoke of the Lord is pleasing and light. *Love God*, said St. Augustin, *and do whatever you wish*; because you will then do nothing displeasing to him, and you will act in his sight, as a son towards his father whom he loves.

Above all, comfort the poor, especially as you have the means of assisting them. Humanity is the pedestal of Religion, and if we are uncharitable, we are not christians.

I do not advise you to give any thing to religious communities; besides that they will not

fail, it is unjust to impoverish families to enrich them. Many charges you hear brought against the Monks for their rapacity; and there is no need to furnish people of the world with new subjects of complaint on that ground. Our wealth ought to be our reputation, and it should be founded on disinterestedness, and the practice of every virtue.

Although a friend to my Order, I will never engage any one to bequeath us a legacy, or to become a Monk. I am fearful of giving occasion for reproaches and repentance, as I should be fearful of tiring you, were I to prolong this epistle, which has no other merit in my eyes, than the opportunity it affords me of being able to assure you of the respect with which I have the honour to be,

Madam, &c.

F. L. G.

## LETTER X.

TO THE REV. FATHER \*\*\*, A FRANCISCAN  
MONK.

I HAVE scribbled, my dear friend, to the utmost of your wishes. I have endeavoured to unite in this discourse the pathetic, the sublime, the simple, and the moderate; that I may suit all tastes. You must apply yourself to learn and to deliver it well, not only on your own account, but for the sake of the audience, which will be very numerous and respectable.

This little work will bear marks of precipitation, but it will have so much the more fire. My imagination takes fire like a volcano, when I am extremely hurried; I collect all my ideas, all my thoughts, all my perceptions, all my sentiments, and all this bubbles up in my head and on my paper in a surprising manner.

Notwithstanding all the animation you will find in this production, I have observed in it as much order as possible. I shall be satisfied with it, if you are, and I ardently desire it.



The war is raging more than ever; I have heard from Flanders, where the walls are falling like tiles in a tempest. May the French be always victorious! You know how much I love that nation, and am interested in its successes. My existence is misplaced---I ought really to have been born in France, and it is my turn of mind and heart which makes me of this opinion.

Tell no one that you have heard from me. The Monks are cunning; and they might guess your intelligence came from me, were you to bring me to their remembrance.

I am always in the bosom of my thoughts, which are scattered or collected according to the work imposed on me by Providence, and which arise from circumstances. My day is frequently a chaos in which I conceive nothing; I am obliged to pass successively from one pursuit to another; and these are contrasts more dissimilar than white and black, than light and darkness. After that I mix with my brethren talking and laughing, *ab hoc et ab hac*, because I need it to recruit myself, so much am I exhausted. I frequently leave the elder ones to discourse with the young, and we play like children. It is the best mode of relaxation when we leave a profound study, and

it was the method adopted by the celebrated Muratori.

Adieu ; love me ; you should do so since I am, as I have been, and shall ever be your best friend,

F. L. GANGANELLI.

*Convent of the Holy Apostles.*

## LETTER XI.

TO M. \*\*\*, CANON OF OSIMO.

Sir,

RELIGION, which resided from all eternity in the bosom of God, first came forth when the universe sprang out of nothing, and took possession of the heart of Adam. This was its first temple on earth, and from thence the most fervent desires were continually exhaled towards Heaven. Eve, formed in innocence, as well as her husband, partook of the inestimable advantage of always blessing the Author of their being. The birds joined by their warbling in this divine concert, and universal nature applauded it.

Such was religion, and such its worship, when Sin entered into the world, and soiled its purity. Innocence then fled, and penitence endeavoured to replace it. Adam banished from a terrestrial paradise, found only briars and thorns, where he formerly gathered the most beautiful flowers and most excellent fruits.

Just Abel offered his own heart to God as a

burnt offering, and sealed with his blood the love he had for justice and truth. Noah, Lot, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, covenanted to observe the law of nature, the only religion which was then agreeable to God.

Moses appeared like a new star which shone on Mount Sinai, by the side of the sun of justice, and the decalogue was given to him to be put into execution without any alteration. Thunders were the external signal of this new alliance; and the Hebrew nation became the depository of a law written by Wisdom itself.

Notwithstanding the fervour of Moses, Joshua, and all the leaders of the people of God, the Christian religion alone made worshippers in spirit and truth. All that was holy before it existed, belonged to it, and when emanating from the incarnate Word it made its appearance in the universe, it established itself on the ruins of Judaism, as the daughter of predilection, *filia delecta*, and changed the face of the whole world.

Bad desires were prohibited, as well as evil actions; and the purest and most sublime virtues sprang from the blood of a multitude of martyrs.

The Church then took the place of the Synagogue; and the Apostles, who were its columns, had successors who were to continue to the end of time.

According to this celestial plan and divine economy, reality succeeds to shadow, for all the ancient law only represented Jesus Christ ; and sight after death will be the recompense of faith. We shall see God as he is, and shall rest with him eternally.

Thus, Sir, should you begin your work on Religion ; ascend to its source, display its excellence, rise with it to Heaven from whence it descends, and whither it must return.

Religion will only be found in its centre, when there will be no other reign than that of Charity ; for it is neither science, nor its external magnificence which constitute its merit, but the love of God. That is the foundation of our worship ; and we are but images of virtue, if we be not impressed with this idea.

I consider Religion as a chain, of which God himself is the first link, and which is extended to eternity. Without this bond, every thing is dissolved, every thing is overthrown ; men are no more than animals deserving of contempt, and the universe has nothing interesting to us, for it is neither the sun nor the earth which constitute its merit, but it is the glory of being included in the immensity of the Supreme Being, and of subsisting

only through Jesus Christ, conformably to the words of the Apostle, "*All things were made by him, and by him all things consist.*"

Take care that there be nothing in your work unworthy of your subject, and when in your route, you meet with some celebrated infidel or heretic, subdue him by that courage which truth inspires, but without ostentation or animosity.

The cause of Religion is so good an one to maintain, one which unites in its favour all the testimonies of earth and heaven, that it ought to be defended only with moderation. Efforts of genius are not essential to truth. "*It is sufficient to expose religion,*" said St. Charles Borromée, "*as it is to shew its necessity.*" Men who wished to pass for pious people, have either reduced themselves to eating acorns, or indulged in the greatest excesses.

I have studied Religion upwards of forty-five years, and am continually more struck with it. It is too elevated to be the work of man, whatever impiety may affirm. Be filled with the spirit of God before you write any thing, that you may not give the world vain words. If the heart prompt not the pen which expresses holy truths, they seldom reach those of the readers. Penetrate their

souls with the fire which God himself brought on the earth, and your book will produce marvellous effects.

What has rendered the "*Imitation*" so precious and affecting, is that its author (Gersen, Abbé of Verceil in Italy) has introduced in it all that holy charity which inflamed his breast.

Gerson is generally confounded with Gersen; it is however easy to demonstrate that neither Gerson nor Thomas à Kempis is the author of this inimitable work; this, I confess, affords me infinite pleasure; for I am delighted that so excellent a book should be written by an Italian. There is in the Fifth chapter of the Fourth Book, an evident proof, that *the Imitation* was not written by a Frenchman. The priest, it is there said, clothed in his sacerdotal robes, carries before him the cross of Jesus Christ. Now it is well known that the chasubles\* in France differ from those of Italy in their wearing this cross only on the back. But I do not wish to hold a dissertation on this subject, contenting myself with assuring you, &c.

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\* A sacerdotal cloak, worn in sacred ministrations.

## LETTER XII.

TO COUNT \*\*\*.

Sir,

I WAS too much your father's friend, and am too firmly attached to you, not to recal you to yourself, when you are wandering so far astray. Is it possible that that dear child whom I have seen under the paternal roof, so mild, so lovely, so virtuous, should have so totally forgotten what he was, as to become profligate, proud, irreligious? I have the greatest difficulty to persuade myself of it; but I have such frequent assurances of the fact, and that by people who are in the habit of visiting you, that there is no longer any room to doubt it.

Come to see me, I entreat you, and in the effusion of a heart which tenderly loves you, I will tell you not what anger inspires, not what prejudice suggests, I will not load you with bitter reproaches, but I will say whatever the most lively attachment can dictate, to draw you from the abyss into which you have been precipitated by wicked companions.



You will find in me neither an imperious adviser, nor an angry pedagogue ; but a friend, a brother, who would speak to you with the same mildness, with the same tranquillity as he would to himself.

I know that youth is an ungovernable period ; that it is most difficult to disentangle ourselves from the world, when rich and indulging our tastes. But honour, reason, decency, religion, all these should speak more loudly than the passions and senses.

What is man, my dear friend, if he take counsel only of his corrupt heart? Alas ! I should find in myself, as you do in yourself, that which would lead me astray, did I not listen to my conscience and my duty ; for we all partake of falsehood and corruption.

I look for you with the greatest impatience, to stretch out my arms to embrace you. Be not alarmed at the sight of my cloister and monkish habits, the circumstance of my being a monk is the very reason why I should have more charity. We will weep together over the misfortune of having lost a father who was so necessary to you. I will endeavour to give you advice, which shall cause him to live again in your example.

Do not violate his memory by leading an irregular life.

Nothing is yet lost if you deign to listen to me; for I am confident that the plan of life I shall trace out for you, will replace things in their proper order. Do not fear, I will not send you to do penance either among the Capuchins, or the Chartreuses. I am not fond of violent measures. Heaven will direct us. God does not abandon those who return to him.

I shall not leave home to-morrow, that I may see you.

## LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

Is it possible, my dear Sir, that you have not only not come to my house, as I entreated you, but that you even concealed yourself when I called upon you. Ah! what would your father say, to whom you promised, at the time even of his death, that you would have an entire confidence in my advice; that you would consider it a duty always to cultivate my friendship. I ask again, what would he say? Am not I he who has so frequently carried you in my arms; who has watched your growth with the greatest pleasure; who gave you your first instructions, and to whom on a thousand occasions you have manifested the strongest attachment.

Shall I cast myself at your feet to induce you to grant me your friendship? I will do it, for nothing can restrain me when I have to recal a friend to his duty.

If you had not a noble heart and a penetrating mind, I should despair both of your reformation,

and of the success of my advice ; but you partake of a fine understanding, and no common degree of sagacity. Do you indeed suppose that I take a pleasure in rebuking you? it is only false devotees who find a satisfaction in being angry. I have happily read enough of the gospel, which is my rule and yours, to know how Jesus Christ received sinners, and how careful we should be not to quench the smoking flax, nor to break the bruised reed. I have not forgotten that St. John the Evangelist went on horseback, notwithstanding his great age, to seek a young man whom he had brought up, and who had fled from him. Besides, have you not known me long enough to be aware that I am neither haughty nor ill tempered, but that I know how to compassionate the weaknesses of humanity? The more you avoid me, the more I shall believe you guilty. Do not listen to your comrades; let your heart speak, and I will immediately see you; mine urges me never to abandon you. I will persecute you with my love, and will give you no rest till we are brought together.

It is because I am your best friend, that I seek you, at a time when almost all your relations refuse even to hear your name.

If you fear my remonstrances I will say nothing to you, being well convinced that you will accuse

yourself, and leave me no time to speak. Try at least a visit, and if it be not agreeable to you, you shall never see me again. But I know your mind; I know my own, and am very sure that after this interview you will not wish to leave me.

I ought naturally to have a greater ascendancy over your mind, I who have known you for twenty years, than all the young people who surround you, who study only how to devour your wealth and your reputation.

If my tears can touch you, I assure you they are now flowing, and that their sources are the most precious in the universe, religion and friendship. Come and dry them, it will be the true means of proving to me that you still remember your father, and that you are alive to the pains of a friend.

*Rome, 1st Feb. 1750.*

## LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

THE consolation which your three visits afforded me, my most intimate friend, is incredible. The tears you shed in my presence, the confession you made to me, while joining your cheeks to mine, grasping my hand, declaring that you would never forget the anxiety with which I sought you, promising me in the most affecting manner to amend your past conduct, to labour diligently to regain the favour of God; all this can never be effaced from my memory and my heart. I always said to myself: 'He has received a Christian education; he will return to his duty, I shall see him again; his wanderings are only a storm which will disperse.' The calm has returned, blessed be God: it is not me my dear friend, but him only that you must thank.

Since you wish me to give you a plan to direct you, I will simply tell you what my weak understanding and strong friendship dictate; this will be short. The commandments of God, those first

and sublime laws, from which all others are derived may be reduced to few words. Precepts, when they are clear and founded in reason as well as happiness, need neither commentaries nor dissertations.

Read every morning the parable of the Prodigal Son; repeat the Psalm *Miserere*\* with a contrite and humble heart, and that will be the whole of your prayers. Read some Christian authors in the course of the day, not as a slave who finishes his task, but as a child of God, who returns to his father, and hopes for every thing from his mercy. This reading should not be long lest you should be disgusted with it. Accustom yourself to going to Mass as frequently as possible, but especially on Sundays and festivals: you should go there as a suppliant imploring mercy and hoping to obtain it.

Make it a duty to bestow daily some alms among the poor, to repair the injury you have done them by expending in criminal pleasures and superfluities what was their due. You should relinquish the society of those who have led you astray from God, from yourself, from your true friends, and should form fresh connexions sanc-

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\* Psalm LI.

tioned by honour, decency, and religion. It is easy to dismiss vicious companions without offending them. Tell them frankly of the plan you mean to pursue; endeavour to persuade them to follow it; tell them only of the regret you feel for your past conduct; of your good resolutions for the future, and they will soon return no more: or if they come again, it is a proof they have altered their conduct; and then, instead of avoiding them, receive them with greater pleasure than before.

Walk frequently, that retirement may not produce melancholy, and endeavour always to have as a companion either a person of experience, or a virtuous youth. Be alone as little as possible, and especially while your resolutions are not yet confirmed. It might occur, that being the slave of wandering thoughts, and soon the subject of ennui, you may meet with circumstances which would again hurl you down the precipice.

Read some lively, but instructive book, to preserve in you a proper degree of cheerfulness. Melancholy is the rock on which many young persons have split who seemed to be in earnest about their conversion. They draw the parallel between their former dissipated life, and the



serious life prescribed to them, and finish by returning to their sins.

Take an exact account of your debts and revenues, and by economy you will be able to pay all your creditors. A man is always rich when he accustoms himself to privations, as he is always poor when he denies himself nothing.

Settle an annuity on the woman you have seduced, that misery may not oblige her to continue an irregular course of life, on condition that she should live at a distance from you, and you should inform her of your intentions by letter, asking forgiveness for having seduced her, and entreating her to forget the creature, that she may henceforth be attached only to the Creator.

When an opportunity presents itself of enjoying society, you should not refuse it, because it will take up your time properly, and will not expose you to the railleries of a world which seeks only to ridicule piety.

You should dress like every one else according to your condition, being neither too particular nor too negligent. True devotion runs into neither extremes. It is only when it is counterfeited that a person affects to wear a slovenly habit, a drooping head, an austere countenance, a whining tone.

You should send away the servants who were

the accomplices of your intrigues, and partakers of your guilt, lest knowing your foible, they should lay snares to lead you again into the way of perdition, although after having injured them, it would be proper to set them a good example, you are yet too young to leave your heart unguarded.

You should live with your new servants, whose wisdom and fidelity should be well attested to you, as a master well acquainted with the duties of humanity; as a Christian who knows that before God we are all equal notwithstanding the inequality of conditions. You should set them only good examples; you should watch over their morals, without being either a torment to them, or a spy upon them, and you should attach them to yourself by your kindness and gentleness. Nothing is so flattering as to render those happy by whom we are surrounded.

I exhort you to visit the chapel in the interior of the Chartreux, built by order of Cardinal Cibo, whose memory I highly respect. Rather than mingle his ashes with those of his illustrious ancestors, which repose in the most superb tombs, he would be interred among his servants, whose epitaphs he wrote, reserving only for himself these words, replete with humility, *Hic jacet Cibo,*

*vermis immundus*, (Here lies Cibo, an unclean worm.)

This tomb is absolutely concealed from the sight of men ; but God, to whom every thing is known, will make it manifest at the last day ; and this will be an overwhelming reproach to those proud men who are vain even in their coffins.

You should think of taking some charge which would occupy you. We always do evil when we do nothing. Fathom your understanding, consult your taste, examine your heart, and above all, address yourself to God, that you may know what is fit for you, whether a military or a civil life. The ecclesiastical state will not suit you : we should not carry into the sanctuary the remains of a heart defiled with the commerce of the world, unless the will of the Lord should manifest itself in an extraordinary manner ; which is rare, and much more to be admired than imitated.

People will hereafter think of marrying you, and I would advise you not to defer it too long. Marriage, when entered into with purity of heart, preserves young people from a number of dangers ; but do not rely on my finding you a wife. I made a vow, at the time I embraced the religious state, never to interfere with marriages or wills. A Monk is a person interred, who ought never

to shew any signs of life, except on purely spiritual occasions, because the soul never dies.

Your relation to whom I have just happily reconciled you, is a man of wisdom, of integrity, and of honesty; and is best able to direct your choice. Religion and reason ought to be more consulted than inclination, in an establishment that is to last through life. We seldom see marriages prosper which have no foundation but love. That is delightful in Idyls and Romances, but is worth nothing in practice.

I mention neither your expences nor your table: with the principles I have laid down these must of necessity be moderate. Frequently invite some virtuous friend to dine with you: I do not like to see you alone, and I would have you so as little as possible, except when you are at prayer or reading: "It is not good for man to be alone," saith the scripture.

Go only occasionally to your estate. If you were to live in the country, and especially at this time, you would bury all your good resolutions as well as your education. Rural societies only lead to dissipation, and however little you may frequent them, it will terminate in forgetting all you knew, and becoming clownish, ignorant, and unpolished. Hunting, love, wine, are but too

frequently the pastimes of gentlemen who always live in the country. The town polishes the manners, adorns the mind, and hinders the soul from growing rusty. You should not be scrupulous with respect to your hour for rising and going to bed. Order is necessary in every condition, but constraint and monotony almost invariably produce a contracted mind.

If you contemplate religion as a whole, as it ought to be seen, you will not find in it all the puerilities with which it is invested by people of little devotion; and never open those mystical or apocryphal books, which under a pretence of nourishing piety, only amuse the soul with trifling ceremonies, and leave the mind without light and the heart without compunction. *True devotion*, written by the celebrated Muratori, will preserve you from all the dangers of false credulity. I advise you to read that book again and again that you may profit by it.

Do not take advice indiscriminately; for in the diseases of the soul as well as in those of the body, every one wishes to give his advice. Avoid hypocrites as well as dissipated characters; both will prove hindrances to you in arriving at the point we propose. I shall not rely on your conversion till you have been long proved. The

transition from libertinism to the practice of virtue is not easy. On that account I would have you take as your director our good Franciscan, the friend of your late father and mine. He is an excellent pattern of a spiritual life, and if he keep you some time before he admits you to a participation of the holy mysteries, it is that he may be well assured that you are a changed character; and that he may follow the constant practice of the Church. Do not fear his severity, he unites the tenderness of a father with the firmness of a wise director; and he will not load you with forms, which is generally the practice of less enlightened Confessors. If you have sinned through pride, he will point out to you the means of humbling yourself; if through sensuality, he will prescribe remedies to mortify you; thinking with reason that the wounds of the soul are not healed by a few prayers hastily repeated, but by labouring continually at the reformation of the heart. Most sinners, for want of this method, spend their time in offences against God and confessions.

Above all, let there be no excess in your piety, take no violent measures, this would occasion a relapse.

This is, my dear son, my dearest friend, what

I conceived to be my duty to sketch out for you. I could not use more tenderness were I to write to you with my own blood. I should die with grief, were the resolutions you lately made in my presence to vanish. What encourages me is, that you are a man of your word, that you love me, that you are fully convinced I sincerely desire your welfare; in short, that you have experienced that an irregular life is a mixture of chagrin, of remorse, and of torment.

Listen to the voice of a father who declares to you from his tomb, that there is no happiness here below but for the friends of God, and who charges you to keep the word you formerly gave him, to live by the assistance of Heaven like a good Christian. I am much more attached to you than to myself.

P.S. I shall certainly reconcile you to all your family, except, perhaps, the Marchioness of R \* \* \*, who is, I believe, too much of a devotee to pardon you. I shall expect you on Saturday to take chocolate: I will then shew you a letter from poor Sardi, an old servant of your mother's, who is really in want. You do not require much time to get from Viterbo to Rome, especially if you have horses of any spirit.

*Rome, 1st Nov. 1750.*

## LETTER XV.

TO PRINCE SAN SEVERO, A NEAPOLITAN.

My Liege,

I PRESENT you my most humble thanks, for having paid such attention to M. Wesler, on the recommendation of so simple a person as myself, who ranks neither with the great nor the learned. He never speaks but with enthusiasm of all your plans to promote the study of natural philosophy, and the reputation of philosophers. These are always new discoveries equally useful and curious.

Naples is the most proper place for exercising the genius of the learned. It presents every where so many phenomena of every kind, that the attention is wholly occupied by them. Its mountains, its subterraneous caverns, its minerals, its waters, the fire by which it is as it were penetrated, are so many objects for examination.

I am not surprized, my Prince, that the King himself is flattered by your labours and success. Every monarch who knows his glory, knows how much that of learned men is reflected upon him-



self, when he protects them. If minds capable of great undertakings were encouraged amongst us, Italy would again produce great personages of every description. The germ of talents is always there, and it only needs to be cherished to flourish in magnificence.

But the artists begin to lose that creative genius which produced wonders. The best pictures, like the best statues that are now executed, appear to be mere copies, it may be said that they force the pencil to work in spite of itself. There is a coarseness in the drawings, instead of that sweet softness which is admired in our first painters, and we now want that expression which is the very soul of painting.

We are richer in writers. We have still some who for energy of style, and beauty of imagery, may be ranked with the ancients, such is the Abbe *Buonafede* of the Order of Celestines.

For this we are indebted to our language. Its charms are an inducement to cultivate literature, as are your talents to every one to tell you that there is nothing more flattering than the opportunity of assuring you of the sentiments of respect and admiration with which, &c.

## LETTER XVI.

TO ONE OF HIS MONASTIC FRIENDS, WHO HAD  
BECOME A PROVINCIAL.

DIGNITIES affect me so little, that I know not how to compliment those who are invested with them. They are an additional servitude, which must be joined to all the miseries of humanity, and they are the more to be feared from the danger there is of their making us proud. Man is so unhappy as to identify with himself, trifling honours which are mere outside shew, and to forget an immortal soul, to feed on chimerical prerogatives, which last only for a few days. Even in cloisters, where all should be disinterestedness, self-denial, humility, they glory in certain preferments as though they had the command of some kingdom.

I send you these reflections the more willingly, as your turn of mind sets you above all honours, and because you have acquired authority only to make others happy. I am convinced that you will judiciously mingle mildness with severity,

that a cloud will never be seen on your brow, nor inequality in your temper ; that you will always be the brother of those of whom you have become the Superior, that you will seek to place them according to their inclinations and talents, and that you will employ no spies, except to discover the merit of those who are too modest to make it appear.

Thus you will acquire honour by the manner in which you fulfil the duties of your station, and every one will wish to see and detain you, whilst there are Provincials whose visits are dreaded like a tempest. Especially, my dear friend, take care of the aged and the young, that the former may be supported, and the latter properly encouraged. These two extremes appear far removed, and yet they meet, since the young grow older every moment. Observe moderation in all your proceedings, and consider that to yield to an excess of mildness is preferable to too great severity.

Speak nobly of religion, and only at proper times. Those persons are avoided who are continually preaching. Jesus Christ did not preach long sermons to his disciples, but what he said to them was spirit and life. Words have much more force, when they are but a sketch. Let there be no affectation in your manners ; there are some

men who imagine that every thing done by an official person should be precise, and these are little minds.

I shall say nothing to you against duplicity, unhappily too much in use among monks who govern. I flatter myself, from the high opinion I have of your merit, that you will never bring an accusation against any one, without having frequently warned him, and giving him previous information of your design. Be fearful of discovering the guilty, and humble yourself when you do meet with them, by the consideration that man of himself is incapable of doing any good. Be affable : we lose much in the estimation of those we govern when we are too reserved. In a word, be what you wished a Provincial should be, when you were an inferior ; for too frequently we require of others what we are unwilling to do ourselves. Discriminate offences by their motives, by circumstances, and remember that if there be some which ought to be punished, there are others which should not be seen, because every one has his imperfections.

Let your secrets be few, and when you impart them, let it not be by halves, for your confidants will guess the rest, and are not obliged to keep the secret. Have no predilection for one more

than another, unless it be for some one of distinguished merit. We are in such a case authorised by the example of Jesus Christ himself, who manifested a particular affection for St. Peter and St. John.

In short enter the monasteries like a beneficent dew, so that people may regret the time when you shall be no longer in office, and say of you—*Transiit benefaciendo*, (He went about doing good.)

Love me as I love you, and consider this letter as the transcript of my heart.

My compliments to our common friends, and especially to our respectable old man, whose good advice has been very useful to me, and towards whom my gratitude is immortal.

*Rome, 31st January, 1751.*

## LETTER XVII.

TO THE MARCHIONESS, R \* \* \*.

Madam,

IT is doubtless distressing to your dear relation, the Count, that you are unwilling to be reconciled to him, notwithstanding the humble and touching letter he wrote you, and the visit he paid to you.

Is it thus then that God acts with respect to us? and what will the public think of your piety when they see you so incensed as to reject the prodigal son. For my part, madam, who have not your virtue, I ran after him, as soon as I heard he had gone astray, and I hope God will reward me for it.

You continually say, Madam, that he has lost a great deal of money, in short that he is a bad man. But what is the loss of gold itself that it should give you such poignant grief? Your chief regret should be that he has abused his good qualities; and consider that if he be really a bad man, he has more need than ever of the advice and example of the good.

It is a very mistaken idea of religion, that a young man is to be forsaken because he has committed some errors.

Ah! how do you know, madam, but that this profligate may to-morrow be accepted of God, whilst your services may displease him? for there needs indeed but one grain of pride, to spoil the best action. The Pharisee who fasted twice a week was rejected, and the Publican who humbled himself was justified.

Charity, with respect to all men, is always charity; this I will ever maintain, and it is perfectly consonant with the morals taught in all Christian schools and in all pulpits.

Were the mercy of God to depend on certain devotees, sinners would be much to be pitied. False devotion knows only an exterminating zeal; whilst God, full of patience, goodness, long-suffering, waits for amendment of life in all those who have prevaricated.

The blood even of Jesus Christ calls for your kindness towards your dear relation; and it is setting no value upon it to refuse him an entrance into your house.

How do you know, madam, but that his salvation is connected with the crimes of which he now repents? God frequently permits great dis-

orders, to arouse man from his lethargy. You cannot be ignorant that there is more joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, than over the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. Will you then cherish resentment, whilst the angels rejoice. This would be a dreadful kind of piety.

I tremble for all the devotees who are so rigid, for God himself assures us that he will treat us as we have treated others. Have the goodness to read the Epistle of Paul to Philemon, with respect to Onesimus, and you will know, madam, whether it be your duty to pardon.

It is not for us to decide whether the heart of a man who appears seriously to examine himself, be changed. Besides that God alone knows it we ought always to presume it. Would you think, madam, that your neighbours dealt fairly by you, if, being witnesses of your good works, they pretended you only acted from pride? Let us leave to the searcher of consciences the care of deciding on the motive by which we are actuated. The brother of the Prodigal Son is condemned in the eyes of Religion and of Humanity, for not being properly affected at his return.

If I were your Confessor, although this office is not compatible with my labours or my taste,



I would prescribe to you, in order to appease your anger, to write to him who is so odious to you, to see him frequently, and even on condition of forgetting what is past.

If our piety be regulated by caprice, it is but a phantom of virtue; and indeed, madam, I presume that yours has charity for its basis; for I never judge uncharitably of my neighbour.

Should my letter, contrary to my intention, appear to border on the severe, consider that it is less on your relation's account than your own that I have addressed you in this manner, for your salvation depends upon it. Should you not pardon him, when it is presumed God himself has forgiven him? I cannot persuade myself it is so.

I have the honour to be,

Madam, with respect.

## LETTER XVIII.

TO M. DE CABANE.

You will persevere then, Sir, in the resolution of burying yourself at La Trappe, and in thus putting it out of my power to address any thing to you but your epitaph. Since it is your determination, I shall not oppose it ; as you are an experienced person, and are advanced beyond the age when inconsiderate steps are taken.

The men of the world will ridicule you ; but what do they not ridicule ? I know no person's work, undertaking, and even no virtue, which has not its censors. This should console Religious Orders for the hatred manifested against them, and the contempt with which people speak of them.

Too many eulogies were bestowed upon them on their first appearance, a counterbalance was necessary to keep them humble. The founders had only good intentions in the formation of the different institutions found in the bosom of the Church, and even the dress they gave to their

disciples, which the world conceives to be whimsical, proves their wisdom and piety. They thought it the means of hindering Friars from mixing with laymen, and excluding them from profane assemblies. It was natural that a people who embraced a kind of life entirely different from the customs of the age, should have particular dresses.

Thus are they justified in this respect. Ah! how easy would it be for me to make an apology for them, were I not myself a Monk! Let their rules be read, their customs examined, and it must be acknowledged that all that is recommended, all that is observed in their cloisters, leads to God.

If they have fallen from their first estate, it is because all men are weak, and after a certain time, the greatest fervour abates. But nothing scandalous ever became a law in religious Orders; there is always in every monastery some one who protests against irregularities and abuses.

Those who continually rail at the Monks, who wish their possessions to be seized, and that they be banished from all states, are certainly ignorant that they were introduced into the different kingdoms by kings themselves, who idolized them, and loaded them with kindness. They do not con-

sider that if the acts of princes are not sacred, nothing in the world will be spared ; that in short, these monks whom they treat so harshly, gained by the sweat of their brow, their vigils and their labours, the bread which nourishes them.

• Their pretended rapacity is only a calumny. The Benedictines acquired their wealth by cultivating the wastes and the vineyard of the Lord, in periods when corruption and ignorance committed the greatest ravages. The first disciples of St. Dominique, of St. Francis d'Assisi, of St. Francis de Paul, asked nothing from monarchs, whilst they maintained the greatest intimacy with them, and could obtain every thing : of which their present indigence is a proof.

I know that some monasteries, by their misconduct have become corrupt and need reform ; but the accusation should neither attach to the monastic rules nor to the founders. A man who lives as he ought in cloisters, must ever obtain the esteem and deserve the attachment of all good men : for what is a true Monk, but a citizen of heaven, who lives above the world, who offers to God himself, in the person of his Superior, a sacrifice of his senses and inclinations, who desires continually the coming of the Lord : who instructs and edifies his neighbours for their good, who

discovers, by a countenance always cheerful, the joy of a good conscience and the charms of virtue; who prays, who labours, who studies for himself and his brethren; who places himself beneath all by his humility, above all, by the elevation of his hopes and desires; who possesses nothing but a peaceful mind; who wishes for nothing but heaven; who lives only to die, and dies only to live again in eternity.

Such, my dear Sir, will be your future character after a little instruction, since you will no longer have intercourse with men. This is the only thing which concerns me, for I am particularly fond of a man's being useful to his neighbour.

Time, which is to mankind in general an overwhelming burden, will not prove so to you. Every minute will seem a step to bring you nearer heaven; and night itself will appear to you as light as the day through the intercourse you will then maintain with God. *Et nox sicut dies illuminabitur*, (And the night shall be light as the day.)

You will not hear the bell which will call you to prayers, merely as a bell, but as the voice of God; you will not obey your Abbé as a mere man, but as one who is in the place of Jesus Christ.

himself, and who speaks to you in his name ; you will not consider repentance as a task which cannot be dispensed with, but as a holy pleasure which will constitute your delight.

You will omit none of the most minute regulations which subdue the spirit and oppose the will, for a Monk maintains fervour, and preserves himself from ennui only by practising exactly what is recommended to him, and thus, Sir, you will preserve the liberty of the children of God, by doing heartily and with a good will, what appears to be required of you.

I shall be happy to see you according to promise, having no greater satisfaction than to be with the true servants of God, and so much the more as they are now extremely rare.

I can add nothing, &c.

## LETTER XIX.

TO THE BISHOP OF SPOLETTO.

My Lord,

WHAT you sent me on the Relics of the Saints, does honour to your discernment and your religion. There are really two rocks which a true Catholic must avoid, that of believing too much, and not believing enough. Were we to give credit to all the relics shewn in every country, we should frequently persuade ourselves that one saint had ten heads or ten arms.

This abuse, which has acquired for us the appellation of superstitious, has happily taken root only among the ignorant. We know, thank Heaven, in Italy, (and the clergy repeat it often enough) that the mediation of Jesus Christ alone is absolutely necessary; and that that of the Saints, as the Council of Trent formally declares, is only good and useful.

The relics of the blessed deserve all our veneration, as precious remains which will one day be gloriously reanimated; but we acknowledge in honouring them, that they have not in themselves

any virtue, and that it is Jesus Christ of whom they are in a manner fragments, and the Holy Spirit, whose true temples they are, which communicates to them a celestial impression capable of performing the greatest wonders.

The worship we owe to God is, however, too frequently distracted by that which we pay to the saints. Hence it is wisely ordered in Rome, that relics should not be placed on the altar where the *Venerabile* (the Holy Sacrament) is deposited, for fear of attracting the attention.

Our religion which is so spiritual and sublime, is unjustly accused of countenancing abuses, the least vestige of which is not to be found in cathedrals or ancient monasteries.

If a person condescend to listen to the ignorant, who do not seek instruction, there will be no statue but has spoken, no saint but has raised the dead, no corpse but has reappeared; but the enemies of the Catholic religion frequently impute to the Roman Church, the apocryphal facts to which superstition continually gives vent. It is in vain to argue with the common people, they do not recover from their obstinacy, when they are persuaded of something contrary to the doctrines of the whole church.

I lately obliged an Englishman to confess, that



the Protestants made it their business to charge us continually with absurdities, which we reject, and that their manner of judging us was unfair.

Italy had always pastors who lamented the credulity of weak, and the incredulity of strong minds. It is not by the belief of the common people that the man of sense judges of the Faith of a country; but by the dogmas it teaches, either by the catechisms or in the public instructions.

It would be very singular if Rome, the sovereign and mother of all the churches; that Rome, the centre of truth and unity, should teach absurdities. It is worthily revenged, my Lord, in the work you have sent me; I entreat you to publish it, to shut the mouths of the enemies of the holy See, and to shew the whole world, that if there be superstitions in Italy, perhaps, more than elsewhere, it is because the people there have a more exalted imagination, and consequently more ready to embrace without reflection, whatever presents itself to the mind. Take care of your health, notwithstanding the zeal which devours you, and deign to believe me, with infinite respect,

My Lord, &c.

*Rome, 17th Jan. 1751.*

## LETTER XX.

TO MADAME B. A VENETIAN LADY.

Madam,

You do me too much honour in asking my opinion respecting your elegant translation of Locke. Is it possible that in the heart of a city as much immersed in pleasure as in water, a person of your rank should fathom the depths of metaphysics? The greatest proof, that our soul frees itself from the senses, and consequently that it is spiritual, is, when it shakes off matter.

I have read and re-perused, with the greatest attention, the valuable manuscript in which you have so nobly displayed the beauties of our language, and converted with so much elegance, the barren field of philosophy, into an agreeable parterre. The English philosopher would indeed be proud, could he see himself clad with so much taste in an Italian costume.

I should wish, had it been possible, that your ladyship had expunged from his work, the passage in which Locke asserts that matter is capable

of thought. This is not the reflection of a philosopher who has reflected much. The faculty of thought can properly belong only to a being necessarily spiritual and reflective. Matter will never have the privilege of thinking, any more than darkness of enlightening, both imply a contradiction, but people had rather say absurdities, than not say something extraordinary.

I congratulate my country more than ever, on its always having had learned women. It would not be amiss to make a collection of their works and rare qualities. The translation of Locke would hold a distinguished place among them, and the more so as you have discovered the secret of employing occasionally a poetical style, to enliven philosophy, which commonly contracts the brow, and seldom expresses herself but in technical language.

I entreat you, madam, to publish this work, were it only to prove to strangers, that the sciences are always in repute amongst us, and that the females here are not so frivolous as is represented.

How did you discover me in the crowd in which my small share of merit has placed me? There are many Academicians, and especially at Bologna, whose opinion may be considered better than mine. A person is not a philosopher because

he has professed philosophy, and especially that of Scotus, whose captious subtilty is nothing but a continual quibble.

There is more subtilty in one page of our Metaphysicians of the last century, than all the books of Aristotle and of Scotus. It is not the same with Plato, who, in such a time as this, would have been an excellent philosopher, and very probably a true Christian. I find him full of comprehensive materials. He extended his views to the Deity, without their being obscured by the clouds of the ancients.

I could wish, madam, that in the latter pages of your translation, there were no play upon words, which are a disgrace to it. What is majestic in itself has no need of frail charms. Cicero would no longer be what he is, were he to be made to speak like Seneca. Excuse my frankness, but you love truth, and this quality is greater in my eyes than all the rest which adorn you.

If you can diffuse at Venice a taste for philosophy you will work a great miracle. It is a country in which is much mind, even among the artisans; but pleasure is there a fifth element, to which they sacrifice their rest and their time, except among the senators, who are so much occupied, that they may be called the slaves of the

nation. The people give themselves up entirely to amusement, whilst they labour. But I perceive I am insensibly getting on the topic of government; and my letter would soon be guilty of the crime of treason. I know how ticklish the most serene republic is with respect to every thing relating to its ways and customs, as well as to its laws.

I will therefore confine myself, madam, to telling you, what will not be contradicted, and will be conformable to the sentiments of the whole senate; that the respect due to your mind, your birth, your virtues, is inexpressible, as well as that with which I have the honour to be, &c.

## LETTER XXI.

TO THE REV. FATHER LOUIS OF CREMONA, A  
FRIAR OF THE PIOUS SCHOOLS.

My Reverend Father,

To take Bourdaloue for your model in preaching, is to be a candidate for immortality. We wanted an orator of your talents and courage, to reform our pulpit style. We are poets in our sermons rather than orators; and unfortunately, more frequently pantomimical than pathetic; whereas the word of God requires the noblest eloquence and the greatest circumspection.

I am astonished at the manner in which you have translated some volumes of Bourdaloue: I doubt not but our most holy Father will be enchanted with your labours, I know how much he desires a reformation in our sermons. He does not indeed wish Italian eloquence to become French; each language has its peculiar beauties; but he would prefer that an evangelical style should be christianized, and not disfigured by extravagance.

The mouth of a preacher is indeed the mouth of God. Alas ! then, what must we think of him who can utter buffooneries and trifles.

He who cannot find in the sacred scriptures and the works of the Fathers wherewith to move his auditors, is not fit to preach. There are no finer images of the greatness and mercy of God, than in the Psalms and Canticles, no histories more touching than those of Joseph, of Moses, of the Maccabees ; no examples of divine justice more striking than the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, and that of Belshazzar, who saw a dreadful hand writing his condemnation on the wall in awful characters.

In all the books in the world we find no traits of eloquence equal to the reflections of Job ; the attempt to paraphrase enervates them. If the choicest parts of the scriptures were collected, and adapted to the subject, they would form a delightful discourse. St. Paul, a most pathetic and sublime writer, employs only the language of scripture in his epistles, and they are admirable.

We must burn the greater part of our old collections of sermons in order to form the taste of our young preachers. There they search for apocryphal facts, and pagan quotations, and acquire a truly ridiculous style. Feelings of grief

or terror, which are excited merely by the exclamations, tones, or gesture of a preacher, will prove but transient impressions; they are peals of thunder, which lead the hearers to cross themselves, and the next moment excites a smile.

If your method, my reverend Father, be introduced amongst us, you will be the restorer of Christian eloquence, and will be blessed by those who know you.

I had for my spiritual father, a Monk filled with the Spirit of God, and who was grieved whenever he heard certain preachers. When he preached to us himself, it was his heart which spoke; and he consequently made a deep impression upon his audience.

It will afford me the greatest pleasure to see you, when you will honour me with one of your visits; I shall have nothing to do but to listen to you.

I endeavour in the midst of my daily occupations, always to reserve some moments of leisure for myself and friends. The mind has need of this respite, in order to return to labour. The sciences are mountains which cannot be ascended without taking breath.

Take care of yourself, less on your own account than on ours, who wish to read, hear, and admire



you. It is with a desire, so conformable to the wishes of religion and of the country, that I have the honour to be in all the plenitude of my heart, your very humble, &c.

*Convent of Holy Apostles, 1st March, 1753.*

P.S. With respect to the reformation you mention in the Breviary, it would be adviseable to request the Holy Father seriously to apply himself to this object. I am not, however, of your opinion, as to the distribution of the Psalms, I should think it right, were I consulted, to leave the "*Beati immaculati in via*" to be repeated every day. It is a continual protestation of an inviolable attachment to the law of God, which is better put into the mouths of the ministers of God, than certain psalms, which are obscure, enigmatical, and frequently unintelligible to the greater part of the priests.

I would also have the prayers as they are: you will tell me frequent repetition has its evils. But may not the same inconvenience be apprehended from the prayers of the Mass, when it is celebrated every day.

The notes you sent me on the "*Imitation*" are admirable.

## LETTER XXII.

TO COUNT \* \* \*.

I OWE you a library, my dear friend, but you must pay for it. I promised to give you a list of necessary books, and I will now keep my word. This list will be short, since it is not a multiplicity of books which constitutes a learned man. It is of little importance to read much ; but it is essentially important to read well.

The first book which I put at the head of your library, is the gospel, as that is the most necessary and sacred. It is right that a work which forms the principle and basis of religion should be the basis of your reading.

You will there learn what we owe to God, and the wisdom and goodness of the Mediator in whom we trust, and who by his blood has reconciled earth and Heaven.

You have been in possession of this book almost from your infancy, but from the little attention you have hitherto paid to it, it will now excite in your mind sentiments entirely novel.

The gospel when studied with due attention, appears really to be the language of God. We do not find there that oratorical emphasis which characterizes the rhetorician, or those syllogistical arguments which designate the philosopher; all is simple, all is within the comprehension of man, all is divine.

I particularly recommend your reading the epistles of St. Paul. Not only will they inspire you with an aversion for false professors, and for the false devotees, who under an appearance of piety ruin the spirit of it; but they will fill you with that universal charity which embraces all, and which, better than all the masters in the world, renders us good parents, good friends, good citizens. We learn in the school of the Apostle all the economy of religion, *its length, its breadth, its depth, its height*; in short, *the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ*, who would be universally adored if he were more known, and by whom both the intellectual and material worlds were made.

The Psalter should be familiar to you, as the work of the Holy Spirit, a work, which warms at the same time that it enlightens the mind, and which surpasses in sublimity all the poets and orators.

It is not adviseable to overcharge yourself with these writings. The sacred scriptures should not be read without great reflection and reserve; for besides that each text may form the subject of ample meditation, the word of God deserves a different kind of respect than that which is paid to man.

Take care to procure *the Confessions of St. Augustin*, a book written with his tears, and addressed rather to the heart than to the head. To this you should join the collection of select pieces from the fathers of the church, that you may know from experience that Christian eloquence alone can truly elevate the soul, and that you may be persuaded that it is a thousand times more sublime than all profane oratory, because its object is God himself, the source of all greatness.

*The Imitation of Jesus Christ* is a work too full of unction and wisdom to be omitted. It is, notwithstanding what all commentators have said respecting it, an Italian production, (Gersen, Abbe de Verceil being its author) in which will be found all that can edify the soul. Make frequent use of it, as a work the most replete with consolation for every situation in life.

Study attentively *the Introduction to the Christian Doctrine*, a work by Father Gerdil, a Bar-

nabite, as a book which you cannot read too frequently; and connect the history of the Church with that of empires and nations; taking due care not to confound them in your recollections and ideas. We must always leave to the mind the perspicuity which is necessary to judge with wisdom and precision. When you are better acquainted with the French language, I would advise your reading Bossuet's Universal History, and Pascal's thoughts on the truths of religion.

*The Annals of Italy* by the immortal Muratori, *the History of Naples*, by Giannone, *the Campaigns of Don Carlos*, by Buonamici, the periodical papers of *the Abbé L'Ami*, are so many works you should read not to teach you decision, but to think well.

I do not mention books of natural history and antiquities; they are subjects of which no one should be ignorant.

You will remember, my dear friend, that Cicero, Virgil, Horace, trod the soil we now inhabit; that they breathed the same air which we breathe, and that as fellow countrymen, we should occasionally read their writings, especially as they are full of exquisite beauties. You have had a good education, and it will be easy for you now and then to enjoy their agreeable conversation.

I do not forbid your reading our modern poets, provided you read them with caution, and do not run headlong into all their labyrinths, grottos, and groves; these are not the places for a Christian mind. I do not wish you to continue long with the Goddesses of Fable; they are mere fictions, but they conduct too frequently to realities.

I should be better pleased to see you with Pliny's letters, the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, or of Seneca. Sentiments of humanity may be derived from them which cannot be too much cultivated.

This is, my dear friend, all the library to which I would limit you; because I am of opinion, that books should be had for use and not for ostentation. You may add to them Cardinal Bentivoglio's letters.

I refer you neither to legends, nor to mystical books. You will find the principal saints in the history of the church; and the account given of them in the Apocryphal Books would serve perhaps, only to make you doubt the miracles they wrought, and to diminish the respect due to them. Great men should be viewed only as a whole, and truth needs no support to make it respected.

If I have not mentioned to you books on philosophy, it is because I do not wish to send you

again to school to adopt systems, and learn the art of disputation. I should fear lest you might adopt some strange opinion; and to speak impartially, we cannot with safety embrace any sentiment of the schools.

Philosophy has given rise to more sophisms than reasonings; and it is sufficient for you to have an exact knowledge of the earth and heavens; a clear and precise idea of our duties, our origin, our destiny, that you may be a true philosopher. Reflect in the midst of your exercises and studies on these great objects; and when you shall have decided on a profession, it will then be proper to point out the means of preparing yourself for its duties.

Good night, my pen can go no further; my head, fatigued by the incessant labours of the day, obliges me to stop. My heart alone always feels full of vigour, when it is employed in assuring you how much I am, &c.

*Rome, 31st Dec. 1751.*

## LETTER XXIII.

## TO A MONK SETTING OUT FOR AMERICA.

THE seas then will soon separate us; such is the lot of man in the present life. Some are thrown to the extremities of the world, whilst others always remain in the same place. This, however, is certain, that my heart follows yours, and that wherever you may be it will find you out.

If you were not established in piety, I should tremble exceedingly for you, in a passage where all the words that will be uttered, will not be those of edification, and in a country where all the examples you will behold, will not be models of virtue. America is the terrestrial paradise, where the forbidden fruit is frequently eaten. There the serpent continually extols the love of riches and pleasures, and the heat of the climate causes the passions to boil.

We are so unhappy in the present state as not to know how to restrain ourselves, when we perceive no other Superior than God, unless indeed a lively faith be the principle of our actions; and



thus it is with the Monks resident in America ; having none to preside over and to command them, they are lost, if the gospel reign not in their hearts.

You will, I am persuaded, frequently seek strength of God, that you may be preserved from all dangers. However inclined the negroes may be to gross vices, there is good to be done amongst them, when you can gain their confidence, and impress them with a certain degree of fear.

Consider that God will be as near you in America as in Europe, that his eye sees every thing, that his justice will judge all, and that it is for him alone you are called to act. Lead a laborious and regular life, for if unhappily idleness should possess you, every other vice will soon assail you, and you will be no longer able to defend yourself against them.

Never suffer a word to escape you which may be interpreted against Religion and morality. Even those who appear to applaud, will really despise you, as an unfaithful servant, who laughs at the master whose bread he eats and whose livery he wears.

May God preserve you from covetousness. A priest who loves money, and especially a Monk who has taken a vow of poverty, is worse than a wicked rich man, and deserves to be more rigorously treated.

Finally be social, and win the affections of your parishioners by many kindnesses; let them see that you are governed by true piety and not by caprice. Do not meddle with secular affairs, except with a view to accommodate differences and re-establish peace. I will pray for you to Him who commands the waves, who stills the tempests, and who never leaves his people, in whatever country they may be found. My consolation is that souls know no distance, and that by the ties of Religion and of the heart, we are always neighbours.

Adieu, adieu; I embrace you tenderly.

## LETTER XXIV.

TO THE COUNT OF \*\*\*.

If scruples possess you, my dear friend, you are lost; you will relapse into dissipation, or you will only serve God as a slave. Remember that the Jewish law was a law of fear, but that the *New*, is a law of love. The clay tenement to which our soul is attached, does not allow us to attain to an angelic perfection.

We degrade religion, when we give our attention to trifles. There will be distractions in prayer, so long as men shall continue to pray; faults in their conduct, as long as they are capable of acting, because all men are subject to error and vanity. *Omnis homo mendax.*

Only false devotees are scandalized at, and see Satan in every thing. Fulfil the law without any labour of the mind, without any effort of the imagination, and you will be accepted of God. Nothing retards the soul so much in the way of piety, as ill understood scruples. As too much solitude cherishes illusions, and society dissipates

them, frequent the company of the good, instead of being alone. Besides, be not discouraged when you are tempted, for temptation is a test by which we learn to distrust ourselves, and encreases our excellence of character.

Come and see me, and we will endeavour to discover together the sources of those scruples which torment you. I have nothing more at heart than to see you a good Christian; but I should be grieved if you were to become scrupulous: then every thing would wound you, and you would become insupportable to yourself.

I have always forgotten to speak to you about your good relation. Thus does my forgetfulness continually play me sad tricks, but my heart is not accountable for them. The Marchioness more startled than convinced by my remonstrances, knows not how to act. When devotion hesitates about a reconciliation, we must only look for suspicious demonstrations of friendship. But as in the case of a bad debt we take all we can get, you must content yourself with whatever slight attentions your dear relation may think fit to shew you.

Persevere, my dear friend, persevere. I am animated by your courage, and am delighted that you are satisfied with the guide which I have

given you. Is he not a truly worthy man, and one who leads safely to God? He has wonderful skill in penetrating into the minds of others, and a happy method of acquiring their confidence.

I approve of your reserving something for charities, but I do not like the plan of giving drop by drop; or of subjecting oneself to rules in the distribution of charities, so as to have no reserve for cases of extreme distress.

It is better to pluck one or two families from misery, than to scatter abroad many crowns which comfort no one. And besides, it is proper always to have a sum in reserve for extraordinary causes; by this management we may remedy the most pressing evils.

Do not practise that contracted devotion which, without regarding either birth or extraction, would oblige every person to clothe himself and to live like the meanest of the people.

Charity is humiliating to no one, and it knows how to proportion itself to circumstances and conditions. Giving with pride is still worse than giving nothing. Distribute your alms so as to appear more humble than he who receives. Religion is too noble to approve of those little minds who mingle pride with the obligations they confer, and

who make the importance of their services to be felt.

Do not content yourself with giving, but lend also to the needy, according to the precepts of Scripture. I know of nothing so contemptible as money, if it be not employed in assisting our neighbours. Is the insipid pleasure of amassing wealth, to be compared with the satisfaction of making others happy, and to the felicity of attaining Heaven.

When you are economical without avarice, generous without prodigality, I shall then consider you as a rich man who is within the possibility of salvation. Prevent wants, without waiting till you are asked.

Adieu! it appears to me superfluous to repeat to you at the end of this letter, that I am your best friend and most humble servant. Certainly you do not doubt it, or you would do me a great injury.

*Rome, 19th April, 1752.*

## LETTER XXV.

## TO THE SAME.

YOU ask me why there are days in which, abandoned to melancholy, without knowing the cause, we become a burden to ourselves? and I answer,

First, that it is because of our dependence on a body which is not always in perfect equilibrium.

Secondly, because God would make us sensible that this world is not our happiness: and that we shall always be uneasy, till we quit it, which made the Apostle continually long for eternal possessions.

There are vapours in the moral as well as the physical world; and the soul, like the sky, has its clouds.

The best way to dissipate this gloom is to love employment. We have no leisure either to be sad, or weary, when we are seriously engaged. Study is the element of the mind. *You will not be a burden either to others or to yourself*, said Seneca, *if you love study*. It is inconceivable, how many miserable quarters of an hour there are, in the

course of our lives, from which employment relieves us. You will not be happy in this world, except you know how to *wile* away your sorrows. He who has no troubles, either has had, or will have them, because labours and griefs are the heritage of our first father, from which we cannot hope entirely to preserve ourselves.

I am heartily, &c.

*Rome, 19th April, 1752.*



## LETTER XXVI.

TO MADAME FIGLIANI.

It is not a matter of indifference to keep your two daughters with you; the maternal relation imposes on you the most important duties. The world will continually intervene between you and your children, if you do not take care to banish it, not with that austerity which only excites murmurs, but with that wisdom which gains confidence.

Your daughters will only be hypocrites if you load them with instructions, and if you render their situation uncomfortable, whereas they will love Religion, if by your example and by your amiableness you possess the art of rendering it lovely.

Those who have arrived at twenty years of age cannot be managed like children of ten years old, There are modes of discipline suited to different ages as well as to different conditions.

Cherish in them as much as possible a taste for good reading and industry, but with that indulgence which does not ask an account of every

minute, and that spirit of discernment, which will make a difference between a secular house and a monastery.

Establish your daughters according to their circumstances and rank, not forcing their inclinations, lest they should wish to form alliances with vicious and dissipated characters. Marriage is the natural state of all men ; there are, however, exceptions to the rule when it may be dispensed with.

While you avoid an undue conformity to the world, do not ridicule too freely its customs. Piety becomes a subject of raillery, when it is exhibited under a singular exterior. A wise woman will avoid rendering herself remarkable.

When our birth requires us to adopt a certain style of dress, we should conform to it, but always with that decency which modesty would dictate.

Take care that your daughters enter into society. True devotion is neither rough nor austere. If not rightly understood solitude will but irritate the passions ; and as for young people, it is frequently more safe for them to visit a select society, than to be alone. Promote cheerfulness, that your piety may not appear forced. Let your recreations consist in walks and innocent diversions, and when the season of application arrives, let it not

be devoted to those profound studies or to those abstract sciences which frequently render the sex vain and talkative.

Especially make yourself beloved by them; it is the greatest pleasure to which a mother can aspire, and the highest prerogative she can enjoy, to do good to her children according to their wishes.

Your domestics should possess religion and honesty: they are capable of doing any thing when they do not fear God. We should behave towards them neither with pride nor with familiarity, but treat them both as men and as inferiors. Justice is the mother of order; every thing is in its proper place when equity is observed.

Never punish but with sorrow, and always pardon with pleasure.

Frequent your parish church, that the sheep may be often found with their pastor; this practice accords no less with the holy Canons, than with ancient custom.

Your wisdom will teach you the rest. I rely much on your understanding and good intentions; as you may be perfectly assured from the respectful consideration with which I have the honour to be, &c.

*Rome, 15th Nov. 1754.*

## LETTER XXVII.

TO COUNT ALGAROTTI.

CONTRIVE, my dear Count, so that in spite of your philosophy I may see you in heaven; for I should be grieved to lose sight of you throughout eternity.

You are one of those few individuals who are so distinguished by their genius and their hearts, that we cannot know them without wishing to love them even beyond the grave. No one has more reason than you to be convinced of the spirituality and immortality of the soul. Years are gliding away both with respect to the philosopher and the peasant, and what will be their termination, must surely deserve the attention of every reflecting mind.

You will confess, that I know how to accommodate my discourses, so as not to disgust a cultivated mind, and that if it were usual to preach thus briefly, thus affectionately, you would sometimes listen to the preacher: but it is not sufficient to hear, truth must enter the heart, it must

vegetate there, and the amiable Algarotti must become as good a Christian as he is a philosopher : and I shall then be doubly his servant and friend.

Rome, 11th Dec. 1754.

## LETTER XXVIII.

TO M<sup>gnor</sup>. ROTA, SECRETARY OF FINANCE.

I THINK, my Lord, that to enable us to enjoy each other's society, there should be a fixed time of meeting, I entreat you to inform me of it, and I will certainly not fail to observe it.

There is nothing I more regret than the time lost in the anti-chambers. Time is the most precious gift God has given to us, and man wastes it with a profusion as unnatural as surprising.

Time, alas, is a species of property frequently pillaged, every one takes from us a portion of it, and notwithstanding all my endeavour to keep it, I see it escape from my hands; and scarcely can I exclaim, it is going, ere it has already passed.

I wait your orders to come to your house, and to tell you that if there are particular seasons for seeing you, there are none in which I am not, with as much attachment as respect, my Lord,

Your very humble, &c.

*Rome, 3d Jan. 1754.*

## LETTER XXIX.

TO M. \* \* \* CHIEF MAGISTRATE (*Gonfalonier*) IN THE REPUBLIC OF ST. MARIN.

My very dear Friend,

ALTHOUGH you are only the little sovereign of a very small state, you have a soul which renders you equal to the greatest princes. It is not the extent of empires which constitutes the merit of their possessors; the father of a family may have many virtues and a *Gonfalonier* of St. Marin great reputation.

I find nothing so delightful as to be at the head of a small canton scarcely perceptible on a geographical chart, where neither discords nor war are known, where there is no storm but when the sky is darkened, no ambition but that of preserving oneself in retirement and mediocrity; where all the property is common, because the people assist each other.

Oh how this little spot of earth charms me! how delightful to live there! and not in the midst of the tumult which agitates great cities, not in the

midst of grandeur which oppresses the poor, not in the midst of luxury, which corrupts the soul and dazzles the eye! It is a place where I would willingly fix my tabernacle, and where my heart has long been, by reason of the friendship I bear you.

There is no greater burden than sovereignty, but yours is so light, that it occasions no embarrassment; especially when I compare it to those monarchies, which cannot be governed without, as it were, multiplying oneself, and turning the eyes in every direction.

All persons conspire secretly against a prince, who is at the head of a vast kingdom. At the time he persuades himself that they are paying him court, they endeavour to deceive him. If he be irregular, he is flattered in his excesses; if he be pious, they play the hypocrite, and laugh at religion; if he be cruel, they affirm that he is just, and he never hears the truth.

He must frequently descend into the recesses of his own heart to seek it. But how is he to be pitied if it cannot be found there! The only reason, why history contains the reigns of so many bad princes, is because they preferred to live estranged from the truth. This is the only good friend of kings when they are willing to hear her,



but they frequently mistake her office, considering her only as an importunate monitor, whom they must either expel or punish.

For myself, who have loved her from my tenderest infancy, it seems to me that I should always love her, even though she told me the most repulsive things. She resembles those bitter medicines, which are unpleasant to the taste but salubrious. She is better known at St. Marin than any where else, she is seen but obliquely in great courts, but you see her face to face, and give her a cordial welcome.

I will not send you the book you wished to see, it is very ill written; badly translated from the French, and abounds with errors against morality and the true faith. The author only applauds humanity (for that is the term now artfully substituted for charity,) because humanity is only a Pagan virtue, whereas charity is on the contrary a Christian virtue. Modern philosophy will have nothing to do with any part of Christianity, and thereby demonstrates to reason, that it loves only what is defective.

The ancient philosophers who were not instructed in the faith, and had not the happiness to know the true God, earnestly desired a revelation, and the moderns reject that which they

cannot disprove, but they thereby betray themselves; for had they a right spirit and a clean heart, if they were as humane as they pretend to be, they would agree in receiving a religion which condemns even evil desires, which expressly commands the love of our neighbour, and which promises an eternal reward to all those who shall have assisted their brethren, and been faithful to their God, their king and their country. The virtuous man cannot hate a religion which teaches nothing but virtue.

Thus when I continually see the words legislation, patriotism, and humanity, proceed from the pens of writers who anathematize Christianity, I say, without hesitation, "These men are laughing at the public, and are inwardly neither patriotic nor humane." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth generally speaks.

It is in this manner I would attack modern philosophers, did I feel myself sufficiently strong to combat them. They might inveigh against my arguments, because I should press them closely; but they would not complain of my vivacity. I would speak to them as the most tender friend; concerned alike for their happiness and my own; as an impartial and faithful writer, who was ready to acknowledge their talents, and who is willing

frequently to do justice to the brilliancy of their genius. I have sufficient presumption to think they would love me, although I was their antagonist.

I shall not execute this design, because I do not here realize that happy tranquillity which is tasted at St. Marin; the quietude there enjoyed must have in it something celestial.

This repose must, however, be fatal to the Sciences and Belles Lettres, since I do not see in the immense catalogue of celebrated men, any writers who were citizens of St. Marin. I advise you to stir up your subjects, whilst you are in office; but make haste, for it is not your reign of which it is said, "It shall have no end." There is genius in your country, it only remains for you to bring it into action.

Here is a letter as long as your states, especially if you consider the heart which has dictated it, and in which you frequently occupy an eminent place. Thus do people write and love, when they have been at College together. Adieu.

## LETTER XXX.

TO COUNT \* \* \*.

I WOULD not advise you, my dear friend, to study the mathematics, until you are confirmed in the principles of religion. I fear lest in applying to a science which requires demonstration, you should follow the example of so many mathematicians, who insist on submitting even our mysteries to that test. Mathematics, extensive as they are, prove themselves but finite, as soon as they are applied to the things of God. All the lines which can be drawn on the earth, all the points in which they meet, are infinitely small, in comparison with that immense Being who admits neither of parallels nor resemblances.

Mathematics will give you a sound mind; without them, a man is in want of a sure method of rectifying his thoughts, of clothing his ideas, and of forming correct opinions. It is easy to perceive, in reading a book, even of morality, whether the author be a mathematician; I have seldom been deceived in it. The celebrated

French metaphysician, would never have composed his "*Recherche de la Verité*," nor the learned Leibnitz his *Theodosia*, unless they had been mathematicians. We perceive in their productions that geometrical order, which connects arguments, gives them energy, and above all, method.

So excellent a thing is order, that there is nothing in nature which does not bear its impress, and that without it there is no harmony. Mathematics also may be said to be an universal science, which unites all others, and shews them in their happiest relations.

The views of a mathematician are generally coups-d'œil, which analyze and decompose with precision; whereas a man unacquainted with the science of mathematics, sees objects only in a vague and almost always uncertain manner.

Apply yourself then to the cultivation of this science so worthy of our curiosity, and so necessary, only not in so great a degree as to distract your mind. We must endeavour always to maintain self possession in whatever study we engage.

Had I your leisure and youth, I should cultivate a more extensive acquaintance with geometry. I have always had a predilection for that science. The turn of my mind makes me seek with avidity

whatever is methodical, and I set but little store by those works in which imagination alone can be found.

We have three principal sciences, which I compare to our three essential constituent parts. Theology, which, by its spirituality, resembles the soul; Mathematics, which by their combination and accuracy indicate Reason; and Physics, which by their mechanical operations delineate the body: and these three sciences, which will perfectly harmonize, when kept within their proper sphere, necessarily raise our thoughts towards their Author, the source and plenitude of all knowledge.

I undertook, whilst at Ascoli, a work, the object of which was to shew the perfect harmony of all the sciences. I developed their source, their design, and their mutual relation; but the exercises of the Cloister, and the lectures I was obliged to give, prevented me from finishing it. I have some fragments of it which I will look for among my papers, and you shall read them, if they will afford you any amusement. You will find in them some ideas, some comprehension; but they are mere sketches, which you must fill up in reading, and to which you are fully competent.

Philosophy without geometry, is like medicine

without chemistry. The greater part of modern philosophers talk nonsense, only because they are not geometricians. They take sophisms for truths, and if they lay down right principles, they deduce from them false consequences.

The habit of studying will not of itself produce a scholar, nor will a knowledge of the sciences make a philosopher. But we live in an age in which great words are imposing; and in which people are supposed to have genius, in proportion as they imagine eccentricities. Those writers are to be distrusted who attend more to words than things, and who hazard every thing, that they may have the satisfaction of exciting astonishment.

I will send you at the first opportunity, a work on Trigonometry; and, if necessary, I will prove to you geometrically, that is to demonstration, that I am always your best friend.

*Rome, 22d June, 1753.*

## LETTER XXXI.

TO THE ABBE L'AMI.

I KNOW not how to collect my thoughts amidst the disorder which reigns both in my cell and in my head. All there is confusion, and I must write to an author as methodical as yourself, to arrange such a chaos.

Your last letter on Poetry would appear to me a chef d'œuvre, had you characterized in it the poetical genius of each nation. The Italians are not such poets as the English, nor the Germans as the French. They resemble each other in their principles, but they differ in spirit and enthusiasm. The German poetry is a fire which enlightens; the French, a fire which sparkles; the Italian, a fire which burns; the English, a fire which obscures.

Too many images are crowded together in our poems, and they should be more sparingly used, in order to produce a stronger impression. Nothing excites a reader more than surprise, and this



effect cannot be produced when those things which occasion astonishment are too frequently multiplied.

Happy the sober mind, which in poetry as well as in prose, manages with delicacy episodes and incidents. I am soon tired with a garden in which I see on all sides cascades and groves, whereas I am enchanted if I discover, but as by accident, green-houses and lakes. Violets are more esteemed from being half concealed under a thick foliage. A flower hidden from our view excites more curiosity.

There are no beauties but by comparison. If all were equally magnificent the eyes would soon be tired of admiring them. Nature, which should serve as a model to every writer, varies her perspectives, so as never to fatigue the sight; the most magnificent meadow is found in the neighbourhood of the simplest valley, and frequently a charming river by the side of a bleak hill.

Frequently inculcate these lessons, my dear Abbé, to correct, if possible, in our poets, that profusion of beauties which are but gold heaped up without order and without taste. Your papers are esteemed as much as your genius is admired; and when a journalist has acquired this

double honour, he may speak as a master, well assured that he will be heard.

I was a young scholar, when I lost one of my companions to whom I was extremely attached by sympathy. Alas! after having taken many retired walks together, and made many reflections on things which as yet we did not know, but were desirous of learning, he died; and I could devise no better means of consolation than that of addressing verses to my departed friend, being fully convinced from that time, that we only change our mode of existence when we appear to die.

I especially praised his candour and piety, for he was an example of virtues. But this eulogy, as I have since discovered, offended by excess of imagery. I introduced into it all the beauties of the country, and did not give my reader time to breathe. It was a tree broken down by the weight of its branches and foliage, where no fruit could be perceived.

Since that time I have not dared to versify. I have contented myself with reading the poets, and endeavouring to ascertain their principal faults and beauties. My chief regret has been to find that my work, so full of imperfections, would not descend to posterity, whilst my friend deserved in every respect the honour of being immortal.

Never will he be banished from my heart. Thus it is that true friends possess a sentimental immortality, when they are not able to perpetuate their friendship by works of genius; such is my situation with respect to yourself. Read this by way of relaxation to fill up the place of that attachment which I have pledged to you; and you will find that if I be not a good writer, I am at least a good friend and a good servant. Put me to the proof.

*Rome, 10th Dec. 1755.*

## LETTER XXXII.

TO CARDINAL QUERINI BISHOP OF BRESCIA.

May it please your Eminence,

YOUR Eminence does me too much honour, and manifests too high an opinion of my slender knowledge, in not disdaining to enquire of me how Theology should be studied and taught.

There was formerly but one mode of exhibiting this sublime science, which derived from God himself flows in the midst of the church, like the most majestic and copious river; this was called the *Positive*.

They were contented, no doubt from respect to the sacred doctrine of the scriptures, councils and fathers, simply to state to the students of Theology the precepts of morality, and doctrines of the Gospel. Thus the commandments of God were formerly given without any commentary to the Jews, and they treasured them up in their memory and heart, as that which was most interesting, and constituted their highest felicity.

The Church always agitated by tempests, although built on the holy mountain, the foundations of which

are eternal, saw from time to time rebellious children proceeding from its bosom, who were skilled in sophistry; and it was their artificial language which obliged the defenders of the Faith to use the syllogistical form.

The era is well known in which certain doctors armed themselves with enthymemes and syllogisms to drive within their last entrenchments the heretics who disputed about the interpretation and language of Scripture. Thomas the Angel of the Schools, Scotus the subtle Doctor, adopted the same mode of reasoning; and insensibly their method, sanctioned by their transcendent reputation, prevailed in the universities.

But as every thing usually degenerates, it was no longer possible to re-establish the use of the Positive Theology; and the manner of teaching in the schools, which took the name of Scholastic, turned but too frequently on distinctions and words. They perplexed every topic by their attempts at explanation, and frequently answered nothing by wishing to answer every thing.

Besides that this ergotism was consistent only with philosophy, it had the appearance of rendering doubtful the most certain facts, and this was the rather to be deplored, inasmuch as ridiculous questions were agitated, and disputes were held

even on the mysteries of Religion, the sublime depths of which ought to check every reflecting mind.

However as the Scholastic mode has the advantage of assisting the memory, by giving a form to reasonings, which, apart from the abuses with which they are chargeable, never obscure sacred truths, the reign of which is as lasting as that of God himself, it was thought right to preserve it.

I have always thought too, my Lord, that a modified school divinity, such as is taught at the Sapiientia at Rome, and the first schools of the Christian world, might subsist without enervating morality, and altering established doctrines, provided the professors are perfectly enlightened, and do not take simple opinions for articles of Faith.

Nothing is more dangerous than to propose as an object of Faith that which rests only on opinion, and to confound a pious belief with a revealed fact. The true theologian uses only solid and real distinctions ; and draws consequences only from clear and precise principles.

A truth is never proved more effectually than by the common practice of all churches. This is a circumstance to which most of the modern theologians have not paid sufficient attention. The doctrine of the Eucharist never appears more firmly established than when there is an agreement

on this subject, between the Roman Catholics and Greek Schismatics.

In order that Theology, may be solid and luminous, that is, may preserve its essential attributes, it needs only a clear and simple exposition of all the articles of Faith, and it is then that it appears supported by all its proofs and authorities.

If we wish, for example, to establish the truth of the mystery of the incarnation, it is necessary to demonstrate that as God could act only for himself he had in view at the creation of the world the eternal word, by whom the universe and the ages were made; and that in forming Adam, as Tertullian says, *he already traced the lineaments of Jesus Christ.* This is conformable to the doctrine of St. Paul, who declares in the most express manner, that every thing exists in this divine Mediator, and subsists only by him: *Omnia per ipsum; et in ipso constant.*

We must next prove by the types and prophecies, the authenticity of which are demonstrable, that the incarnation is their object, and that there is nothing in the sacred books which does not directly or indirectly refer to it; we must further shew the time and place in which this ineffable mystery was accomplished, by examining the character of the signs which accompanied it, of the

witnesses who attested it, of the miracles which followed it, and add all the traditions on the subject.

The authority of the Fathers of the Church, the force of their reasonings, the sublimity of their comparisons, are next to be demonstrated, and we must avail ourselves of the school divinity, in order to clear up the sophisms of the heretics, to fight them with their own weapons, and thus to subdue them.

Thus does Positive Theology resemble a magnificent garden, and Scholastic Divinity a hedge thick set with thorns, to hinder obnoxious animals from penetrating and laying it waste.

While I presided over the school of Theology which belongs to the fraternity of Scotus, I was under the necessity of teaching Scotism. It would ill become a private individual to wish to change the mode of instruction in an order of which he becomes a member; this would be frequently attended with mischievous consequences, although fantastical opinions ought not to be servilely embraced.

As for you, my Lord, who as Bishop, have an incontestable authority over the schools, and can give them what form you please, I entreat you to recommend to your theologians not to use the



Scholastic Divinity, but with discretion, for fear of enervating Theology.

I shall think they have complied with your instructions, if I see them repairing to the sources of knowledge, instead of merely copying manuscript theologies ; and if they content themselves with declaring the doctrine of the church without giving themselves up to disputations or manifesting a party spirit.

This spirit, my Lord, is so much the more dangerous, as then private opinions occupy the place of eternal truths which every one should respect ; and men give themselves up to altercations which, under a pretence of maintaining the cause of God, extinguish charity.

Do not permit that, in order to maintain free will, the omnipotence of grace be denied ; or that human liberty be destroyed for the purpose of improving this inestimable and purely gratuitous gift ; or that through too great a respect for the Saints, what is due to Jesus Christ be forgotten. All theological truths are but as one, from the connection they have with each other ; and there are some covered with a mysterious veil, which it is impossible to raise.

The grand defect of some theologians, is to wish to explain every thing, and not to know.

where to stop. The Apostle tells us, for example, when speaking of heaven, that *eye hath not seen, that ear hath not heard what God hath prepared for his Saints*, but they give us a description of Paradise, as though they had been there. They assign ranks to each of the Elect, and they would deem it almost heresy, were any one to dare to contradict them. The true theologian stops where he should stop, and when any thing has not been revealed, and the Church has been silent, he thinks it adviseable not to decide. There will always be an impenetrable cloud between God and man till Eternity commences.

Types ceased with the ancient law, to give place to reality; but complete evidence is not to be found till after death; such is the economy of Religion. It were to be wished, my Lord, that in speaking of God, men always mentioned him with a holy feeling, not as a Being whom they fear, but as a Spirit whose immense perfections excite the greatest respect and astonishment. Thus, instead of saying: *God would be unjust; God would be a liar; God would not be omnipotent, were such a thing to take place*; they should accustom themselves never to join words so offensive to that of God. Let us content ourselves with answering like St. Paul,—Is God unjust? God forbid.

The name of God is so terrible and so holy, that it should never be used in a trifling manner. Is it not sufficient for man to employ his faculties on the phenomena of nature, to dispute about the elements and their effects, without making God himself the subject of their contests?

It is this which has rendered Theology ridiculous in the eyes of Free-thinkers, and which has perhaps taught them to introduce God into all their objections and sarcasms; for how could Theology, which is but an exposition of the providence, the wisdom, in short all the attributes of the infinite, omnipotent, excellent Being, appear a futile science, were it represented only with dignity? Would the knowledge of a grain of sand driven by the wind at pleasure, of an insect which is crushed by man, in short of a world which must itself perish, be superior to the knowledge of God himself, of that God in whom we have our being, motion, and life, before whom the seas are but as a drop of water, the mountains as a point, the universe as an atom?

It is with the grandeur of this immense and supreme Being, that the theologian should begin his course. After having demonstrated his existence to be absolutely necessary, and necessarily eternal; after having traced to him as its source,

the constitution of mind, after having proved that every thing emanates from him as from its principle, that every thing breathes in him as its centre, that every thing returns to him as its end, he displays his immense wisdom, his infinite goodness, from whence proceeds revelation, and the worship we pay to him.

The natural law, the written law, the law of grace then appear each in its rank, according to its merit and chronology. It must be then demonstrated how God has been always adored by a small number who worshipped him in spirit and in truth; how the church superseded the synagogue, how it cut off from time to time the rebels who wished to corrupt its morality and articles of Faith; and how, always powerful in works and words, it has been sanctioned by the most learned doctors, and maintained in its purity, in the midst of the most dreadful scandals and most cruel divisions.

It is necessary that those who study Theology should find true light in what is taught them, and not false glimmerings more calculated to dazzle than to enlighten; that they should be led to the purest sources, under the conduct of St. Augustin and St. Thomas; and that they should lay aside every thing which wears the appearance of novelty; that they should be possessed of evangelical

tolerance with respect even to those who resist the Faith, and that it be impressed on them that the spirit of Jesus Christ is not a spirit of bitterness and authority.

It is neither by invectives against heretics, nor by manifesting a bitter zeal against unbelievers, that men are brought back to the truth ; but by shewing a sincere desire for their conversion ; by never speaking of them but to shew a sincere love for them, at the same time that their sophisms are combated.

It is necessary for a professor of theology to oppose the theologians of Paganism to those of Christianity ; and the rather as this is the surest method of over throwing Mythology, of covering with eternal ridicule the superstitions of the ancients, and of raising on their ruins the doctrine of the incarnate Word.

It is still more necessary that he should not be systematical. He should keep to the church, scripture, and tradition, when he teaches eternal truths, because he is then the deputy of the body of pastors, to instruct in their name, and to exercise their power.

Would to God that this method had been faithfully followed. The church would not have witnessed the most afflicting and obstinate disputes

springing from its bosom, passion occupying the place of love, and hatred of the doctors producing the most fatal effects.

Whence it follows, my Lord, that your Eminence cannot be too attentive in appointing moderate theologians, lest a bitter zeal should do much more harm than good. The spirit of the gospel is a spirit of peace, and it is improper that men whose duty it is to preach it, should be of a turbulent disposition.

If I dare, my Lord, I would entreat your Eminence to cause a system of Theology to be composed, which would form the perpetual instruction of your diocese, and which would be certainly adopted by many of the Bishops. The liberty of the schools should be permitted relative only to indifferent questions, for there is but one baptism and one faith.

Theology is not intended to exercise the minds of young people; but to enlighten and elevate them to him who is the fulness and source of all light.

It is proper to provide the scholars with the best books, relative to the treatises they study. The best way of studying Religion, is to be very familiar with sacred writers, with the councils and fathers. They should learn in the schools not

to wander into error, but to speak of Christianity in a manner worthy of it.

I have nothing to add, my Lord, but that a professor of theology should be a man equally celebrated for his piety and knowledge. Eternal truths should proceed, as much as possible, only out of holy lips. From thence results the blessing of Heaven on the master, on the scholars, and a savour of life throughout a whole diocese. Italy happily always had theologians who corresponded with the purity of its Theology.

Excuse, my Lord, my rashness, which would be unpardonable, had not your Eminence ordered me to give you my advice. I submit it entirely to your understanding, having the honour to be with the most perfect obedience and profound respect, &c.

*Rome, 31st May, 1753.*

**LETTER XXXIII.**

**TO R. P \* \* \*, A MONK, ONE OF HIS FRIENDS,  
WHO HAD BEEN APPOINTED TO A BISHOPRIC.**

AFTER having been the humble disciple of St. Francis, you are at length raised to the rank of the Apostles. I may tell you, my dear friend, that you are only elevated, to become really the servant of all, and that you should endeavour to shine only by the brilliancy of your virtues.

There is no dignity on earth that is attended with a greater degree of responsibility than the episcopacy. A bishop is to watch night and day over the flock of Jesus Christ, and reflect that he must answer at his tribunal for every sheep that goes astray. He must reproduce himself that he may never be tired, multiply himself that he may be in every place, and seclude himself that he may study and pray.

Two things are so essential to bishops, that the office cannot be worthily discharged, without possessing them in an eminent degree; purity, which should render them like the angels themselves, and



which gains them that appellation in the sacred scripture, as appears by the first chapters of the Apocalypse; and knowledge which, in the Gospel gives them the honour of being called the light of the world. As irreproachable characters, they ought not even to be suspected of immorality; but they are moreover obliged to keep others from corruption; and on that account they are called the salt of the earth. As learned men they should be eyes to the blind; feet to the lame, the light of the world. It is not sufficient for a bishop to have virtues, and to consult enlightened characters to know what he should do; he should be able of himself to discern good from evil, truth from error; for he is constituted a judge of doctrine and morals: and if he have not the talent of judging, he will not possess that of governing, and will suffer himself to be deceived.

What consoles me, is, that you are thoroughly instructed, that you will resolve to see every thing for yourself; which is of absolute necessity, if you would not be the dupe, either of hypocrites or informers.

I doubt not but you have already seriously studied the Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, and that of St. Peter to all the believers. By the first, you will have perceived that a bishop must be

blameless, sober, chaste, peaceful, not to live as those Christians whose history is precisely that of the wicked rich man, inasmuch as they are clothed in purple and fine linen, fare sumptuously every day, and suffer Lazaruses to expire at their gates.

By the second, you will have learned not to lord it over any ecclesiastic entrusted to your care; for the spirit of Jesus Christ is not a spirit of authority, but of meekness and humility; so that a bishop should regard the curates as his equals, in the order of Christian charity, although they may not be so in that of the hierarchy. His house should be their place of resort.

Do not satisfy yourself with merely declaring the word of God, from recollecting that St. Paul said, "he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Let there be no sacrament which you do not administer from time to time, that you may shew your diocesans how much you are devoted to them, both in sickness and in health, at their birth and their death.

Especially visit punctually the province entrusted to you, and take care that your visits be not storms which inspire only terror, but beneficial dews which spread around cheerfulness and fidelity.

Should you by chance find some one of your

fellow labourers who has sinned, cast over him the mantle of love, to lead him back to his duty by kindness, and as much as possible, to conceal scandal: if it be a scandalous crime, persuade him secretly to relinquish his situation, and before he takes this step, assure him of a provision.

I will not tell you to entertain for monks a paternal tenderness; this would be to offend you. You owe to them all you are, and it is at their school, that you, as well as myself, have learned all you know. Visit them frequently with cordiality; this is the way to excite among them a proper emulation, and to make them respected. To honour men whose life is one continual labour, is to do honour to oneself. A General who should despise his officers, would render himself worthy of the greatest contempt.

Suffer not the piety of the faithful to be nourished by false legends, and kept up by trifling ceremonies. But take care that they learn to recur continually to Jesus Christ, as to our only mediator, and only to honour the saints as belonging to him. Education is entrusted to you, and you ought to know what is taught.

Be not too easily induced to ordain priests, and especially as Italy abounds with supernumeraries of that order who, carrying even to foreign nations

ignorance and misery, degrade the dignity of the priesthood, and dishonour their country.

Bestow benefices only on acknowledged merit, and especially only on those who are distinguished for knowledge and piety, if those benefices include the care of souls: and see that he who has laboured longest, be preferred before him who is but recently ordained.

Appoint only those who have grown grey in the ministry to the government of your diocese, and who will possess influence from their age as well as their virtues. A bishop whose society and council consists only of young men is despised, since it is easy to manage him at their will. The Pope has but one Vicar General; and consequently one will be sufficient for you.

Let "*My Lord*" be the least of your titles; and let those of *Father* and *Servant*, be much more precious to you; for the fashion of this world passeth away, and all its grandeurs with it.

In short, in the midst of riches and honours, retain only what is necessary for your own wants, and to make you respected, recollecting that St. Paul brought his body into subjection, and that every Christian ought to mortify himself.

Above all reside, and again I say reside. A pastor who is long separate from his flock without reason has no right to eat.

These are terrible truths : but as we are not at liberty to change them, we must submit to or renounce them. Let the poor be your friends, your brethren, and even your guests. You cannot give too much. Almsgiving is one of the most essential duties of a bishop, and it must be discharged in prisons, in houses, in public places; in short, every where, in imitation of our divine Saviour, who ceased not during the days of his mortality, to do good; but especially give with cheerfulness, *Hilarem datorem diligit Deus*; (God loveth a cheerful giver;) and give so as yourself to become indigent.

I have said nothing to you about your domestic occupations, convinced that you will divide your time between prayer, study, and the government of your diocese. Those can never tire of reading the scriptures and the fathers, who know their value, who do not live in dissipation, and who are conscious that the episcopacy is a formidable undertaking, and not a secular dignity.

Listen to every one; render yourself popular, after the example of our divine Master, who suffered the least children to approach him, and spoke to them with the greatest kindness. Frequently visit those of your diocesans who shall have experienced some misfortune, to assist and

console them. It is a disgrace to a bishop, to be acquainted only with the rich and illustrious in his diocese. The lower orders will complain of it, and with reason; for frequently, in the sight of God, they are the most precious.

Should any dispute arise among the inhabitants of your episcopal city, become instantly their mediator. A bishop ought only to know the differences of others for the sake of endeavouring to adjust them.

Examine yourself the ecclesiastics who apply for Orders, and take care that no puerile questions, nor any which are foreign to what they ought to know, be put to them. Take care that your confessors observe the rules of St. Charles in the tribunal of Penitence.

Do not accustom yourself to visit your church but seldom, under pretence of business.

The public is not satisfied with these excuses; they wish to be edified; and who can be expected to pray to God, if not a bishop?

After you shall have spent a life in such exertions, you will find yourself surrounded at the hour of death by a number of good works. They, you know, follow us into eternity, whereas pomp, grandeur, titles, are lost in the night of the tomb, and leave behind but a fearful void. Read fre-

quently what is said to the bishops designated in the Apocalypse, and tremble.

I have, I think, run over in this letter all the duties of the episcopacy; it is for you to reduce them to practice. You have undoubtedly said to yourself, and much better than I have done, all that I have just called to your remembrance; but you have compelled me to give you this advice; it arises, I assure you, from the liveliest friendship, and from a sincere desire of seeing you work effectually for your own sanctification, by labouring for that of others. You should do this both as a monk, and a bishop.

I shall wait till you are consecrated to write to you with more ceremony. Adieu. I embrace you with all my heart.

*Convent of the Holy Apostles, 30th May, 1755.*

**LETTER XXXIV.****TO A TUSCAN GENTLEMAN.**

THE education, my dear Sir, which you wish to give your children, will be but as tinsel, unless founded on Religion. There are circumstances in the course of life, in which probity alone will not be found sufficient to resist temptation, and in which the soul will be degraded if not sustained by a firm hope of immortality.

Man, in order to be happy and wise, must see God from his earliest infancy, as the beginning and end of all things: reason and faith must conspire to convince him that to be without religion or law, is to descend to the level of the brute creation; he must know that truth being one, there can be but one religion; and that if authority did not determine our belief, each one would have his own system and opinion.

It is not by mere ceremonies that you will make your children true Christians. Christianity is the greatest enemy of pharisaism and superstition. The church prescribes duties enough, without



endeavouring to multiply them. Precept is too frequently neglected, to follow men's opinions; because men had rather listen to caprice than reason, and because pride is in perfect agreement with eccentricity.

You will take care to elevate the minds of our three youths, and to convince them that the greatest pleasure of man is to reflect, and to feel his own existence. It is a sublime pleasure worthy of a truly celestial spirit, so that I consider him as an unfortunate being who is unacquainted with this felicity.

The catechism is sufficient to teach the truths of revelation: but in an incredulous age, something more than the alphabet of religion is necessary. You will therefore fill the minds of your children with that refined and pure knowledge, which dissipates the clouds of modern philosophy, and the darkness of corruption.

A few books, well chosen, will render your sons well-informed Christians. They will read them with a religious attention, not so much to fix them in their memories, as to engrave them on their hearts. Your design is not to form youths capable of maintaining theses, but who are, as reasonable creatures, to be convinced of eternal truths.

When youth has studied the principles of religion, it will seldom suffer itself to be seduced by the sophisms of impiety; unless the heart be entirely corrupt.

You should watch narrowly, to keep them unspotted, not by employing informers and spies, but by having your own eyes and ears every where, so as to imitate the Deity, who is not seen, and yet who sees every thing.

Children must not perceive that they are suspected and observed; for they are then discouraged, they murmur, they become averse from those they ought to love, they imagine evils of which they were unconscious, and seek only to deceive. Hence almost all scholars and pupils act only from fear, and are never happier than when absent from their superiors.

Be less the master than the friend of your children; and they will be transparent in your eyes, and will tell you even their faults. Young people have a hundred times entrusted me with their troubles and their faults, because I always treated them with kindness: they will give you the key of their heart, when they know that you sincerely desire their good; and that in reproving them, you inflict punishment on yourself.

There are many reasons which induce me to

recommend to you private education, and there are still more which prevent me from persuading you to adopt it. Private education is generally the safest for morals, but there is something in it so monotonous, so lukewarm, so languishing, that it discourages and absorbs emulation. Besides as it watches too closely, it more frequently makes hypocrites than virtuous characters.

Should you however meet with a tutor who, mild, patient, sociable, enlightened, knows how to unite condescension with firmness, wisdom with cheerfulness, temperance with sweetness of disposition; I would advise you at least to try it, persuaded that you would do nothing but in concert with him, and would not attempt to govern him. There are too many fathers who consider a tutor as an hireling, and who think they have a right to domineer over him, because he is in their pay.

Do not entrust your sons with a man whom you cannot trust as well as yourself; but after that, hesitate not to leave him master of his own plans: nothing disgusts a master so much as that want of confidence which is manifested towards him, and the doubt which is entertained of his capacity. Be careful as to the servants who are about your children: it is almost always by them that youth is corrupted.

Let an amiable serenity continually beam on your countenance and in your eyes, and accomplish all your desires, without constraint and without fear. No one likes stormy weather, and every body rejoices at the sight of a fine day.

Attach pleasure to every kind of study you propose to your sons, by exciting in them a strong desire to learn, and a great apprehension of remaining ignorant.

Take care to unite relaxation with labour, that you may not weary the memories and minds of your children. When disgust is joined to study, an aversion is taken to books, and negligence and liberty alone are sighed after.

Instruct, not by punishing, but by making them love your instructions; and to this end, take care to enliven them by some traits of history, and by some sallies which awaken the attention. I knew at Milan a young man who had become such a lover of study, that he took holidays as a necessary repose, but considered them as days of mourning. His books were his pleasure and treasure; and it was a good priest who, by the resources of his cheerfulness and imagination, had inspired him with a love for all works of taste and erudition. He would have been one of the

most learned characters in Europe, had not death stopped him in his career.

Let their studies be proportioned to their age, do not think of making them metaphysicians from twelve years old. It is not young people who are then brought up, but parroquets which are taught words.

It is with the sciences as with food. The stomach of a child requires a light nourishment; and it is only by gradation that they are accustomed to solid and substantial meats.

Never fail to make an amusing book succeed to a serious one, and to intermix poetry with prose. Virgil is not less eloquent than Cicero; and his descriptions, his images, his expressions, give imagination and elocution to those who possess none. Poetry is the perfection of languages, and if a person be not accustomed to it in his youth, he never acquires a taste for it: it is impossible at a certain age to read verse long together, unless we really have a poetical taste.

Moderate however the study of the Poets; for besides their very frequently taking licences contrary to good morals, it is dangerous to love them too well. A young man who talks and dreams only about poetry, is insupportable in society; he is a maniac, who may be ranked amongst mad-

men. I except those whose genius is absolutely poetical ; and then they are indemnified for this mania, by the honour of becoming Dantes, Ariostos, Tassos, Metastasios, Miltons, Corneilles, Racines.

Let the history of the world, of nations, especially that of your own country, become familiar to your children ; and let not this be a dry study ; but accompanied by short and suitable reflections ; teaching them to judge with propriety of events, and to acknowledge an universal agent, in whose hands all men are but instruments, and all revolutions, effects combined and foreseen in the eternal decrees.

History is a dead letter, if we be acquainted only with its dates and facts ; and it is a book full of life, if we observe in it the influence of the passions, the resources of the soul, the emotions of the heart, and especially if we discover therein a God who, always master of events, produces, directs, determines them according to his good pleasure, and for the accomplishment of his sublime designs.

Our carnal eyes see in the universe only a veil which conceals from us the action of the Creator ; but the eyes of Faith shew us that all which

takes place has a cause, and that this cause is truly God.

Take care that a good system of rhetoric, consisting less in precepts than examples, give a taste of true eloquence to your sons. Make them understand that what is truly fine, depends neither on moods, nor tenses ; and that, if there is, in different ages, a different manner of expressing things, there is but one of conceiving them aright.

Give them the greatest aversion for that puerile eloquence, which, consisting of quibbles, is revolting to good taste ; and persuade them that no gigantic expression or idea ever enters into a fine discourse. Although we should never be tired of true eloquence, man is so whimsical as to be satiated with it ; and we therefore see in these days a singular and frivolous diction preferred to the imposing language of the orators of the last age.

There are men and ages who have in every thing fixed the public taste, and it is on their pictures that your children's eyes should be continually fastened, as on the best models, but not so as to become their slaves, for we should never be the servile imitator of any one.

I like the mind to soar, and be itself, whereas it is but a copy, when it dare not invent. We

have only men of mind, and we should have men of genius, did they not too mechanically follow the beaten tracks. We know nothing great when we are acquainted with but one way. The spirit of invention is an inexhaustible species, when we know how to be bold. "Be yourself, and think in your own way," is what I should frequently say to young people of whom I had the care. It is lamentable to pass whole years in teaching pupils only to repeat.

When your children have come to years of maturity, then will be the moment to speak to them as a friend of the trifling nature of the pleasures in which the world makes her felicity to consist, of the misfortunes they cause, the remorse they excite, the harm they do both to the body and mind, in short of the abysses they dig in their paths, whilst appearing only to scatter flowers.

It will not be difficult to point out the dangers of pleasure, either by vigorous expressions, or striking examples, and to persuade them, that without idleness, the greater part of the pleasures to which they are immoderately attached, would have no attractions. The most brilliant idea of it is formed when we are unemployed, just as when wrapt in sleep, we represent to ourselves a thousand pleasing chimeras.



When a son is persuaded that a father only talks reason to him, and that it is only through tenderness and not caprice that he reproves him, he listens; and his advice has the better effect.

At length, after having raised this edifice, there will be the summit, which I consider as the most difficult thing; I mean the choice of a profession. It is generally the touchstone for fathers and mothers, and the most critical period of life for children.

If you will believe me on this subject, you will give them a year to reflect for themselves on the line of life which suits them, without recommending to them one profession rather than another. The good education they have received, the knowledge they will have acquired, will naturally conduct them to a happy issue; and there is every reason to hope that they will then decide for themselves, according to their inclinations and according to reason.

It will then be necessary frequently to speak to them of the advantages and disadvantages of each profession, and to shew them the importance of faithfully fulfilling its duties, both on account of this world and the other. The priestly and monkish professions will furnish you with ample materials for representing the inestimable

happiness enjoyed therein, when we are really called to them; and the dreadful calamities experienced, when we have the temerity to rush into them, with only human motives. The military and magisterial professions present a multitude of duties to fulfil; and it will be sufficient to expose them to view, in order to convince them of it.

After these precautions, and especially after having frequently implored the assistance of Heaven, your sons will enter with a firm step on the career they have chosen; and you will have the consolation of being able to say before God and men, that you have regarded their inclinations and liberty. Nothing is more fatal than to control the inclinations of our children, we expose them to an eternal repentance, and ourselves to the most bitter reproaches, and even to maledictions which we have unhappily deserved.

Since Providence has given you riches, and you are born of a distinguished family, you should maintain your sons according to their wealth and rank in life, but letting them always feel some privations, and keeping them always within the bounds of modesty, to teach them that this life does not constitute our happiness, and that the more elevated we are, the less reason have we for pride. You will take care to give them mo-

ney, both that they may learn from yourself not to be covetous ; and that they may be enabled to assist the needy. It will be right to take notice of the use they make of it ; and, if you discover avarice or prodigality, you must diminish their allowance.

In short, my very dear and respectable friend, work on the hearts of your sons more than on their minds : if the heart be right all will go on well.

Circumstances will teach you how to govern them. Sometimes you will appear easy, sometimes severe, but always just and honest. A spirit of equity vexes young people who do not wish to become wise, because they feel in spite of themselves, that they can make no reply.

You should allow them proper liberty, so that their father's house may not be their last resort. It is necessary they should delight in it, and find there more than any where else the indulgences and charms they ought to expect from a father who is a friend to order, and naturally beneficent.

My pen leads me on in spite of myself : it might be said to have sentiment, and to experience the sweet pleasure I taste in speaking to you of your dear children, whom I love better than myself, and a little less than you. May God bless

them abundantly : they will be all that they should be, and the education you will give them will blossom for eternity. It is there that the fruit of good advice given to youth ripens, and that worthy fathers are with their worthy sons, to be happy for ever.

*Rome, 16th August, 1753.*

## LETTER XXXV.

TO CARDINAL QUERINI.

May it please your Eminence,

The various reflections of your Eminence, on the different ages which have elapsed since the beginning of the world, are worthy of a genius like yours. I seem to perceive reason weighing all these ages, some like ingots, others like leaves of tinsel. Some are indeed so solid and others so light, that it forms the most astonishing contrast. Ours, without contradiction, is more marked than any other, with the stamp of levity ; but it pleases, it seduces, especially through the good offices of the French, who have communicated to it an elegance, which in spite of ourselves we find truly agreeable.

Our ancients would reasonably have murmured at it ; if however they lived in our day, they would suffer themselves to be drawn along as we are ; and without wishing it, they would be amused with our light discourses, and our pretty writings.

The Roman grandeur does not accord with these pleasing frivolities ; but the Romans of the present day are not so majestic as formerly. The French elegance has passed the Alps, and we have received it with pleasure, at the same time that we were criticizing it.

Your Eminence, who is much attached to the French, will surely have pardoned their graces, detrimental as they may be to the dignity of the ancients. It is only when every age is taken collectively that there is evil, there are sparks and flames, lilies and blue-bottles, rains and dews, stars and meteors, rivers and brooks, this is a representation of nature ; and to judge properly of the universe and ages, we should re-unite the different points of view, and make of them but one optick.

All ages cannot resemble each other : it is their variety which enables us to judge of things ; without this diversity there would be no comparison. I know we should prefer living in an age which presents to us only the grand, but it is best to say that we must take time as it comes, and not continually regret what is past, by attaching ourselves to the car of the ancients. Let us take their taste, and we shall have nothing to fear from our futility.

It is impossible to contemplate without dread the gulph whence all ages spring, and into which they are precipitated. How many years, months, days, hours, minutes and seconds are absorbed by eternity, which, always the same, remains immovable in the midst of changes and revolutions ! It is a rock in the midst of the sea, against which all the waves beat in vain. We are like grains of sand driven about by the wind, unless we cling unmoved to this support. There is that in your Eminence which fixes you, and makes you undertake so many luminous works, which Europe admires, and Religion applauds.

I am never tired of reading your travels, and especially your description of Paris and France. Besides that the Latin may be compared to St. Jerome's, there are admirable reflections on all that your Eminence has seen. What a glance is yours, it penetrates into the essence of things, into the substance of writings, and into the souls of writers. You have had the happiness to see at Paris several great men who still survived, the precious remains of Louis XIV ; they must have convinced you that that age was not praised without reason.

Nothing extends the faculties of the soul like travels : I read them as much as I can, that my

thoughts at least may rove, whilst my body is sedentary. It is certain that I am frequently in idea at Brescia, that city, my Lord, which you enrich by your example and precepts, and where you continually receive homages to which I unite with all my soul the profound respect with which, &c.

*Rome, 10th Dec. 1754.*



## LETTER XXXVI.

TO A CANON OF MILAN.

A panegyric, Sir, upon St. Paul, is no trifling enterprize; a soul is requisite as capacious as that of the teacher of the Gentiles, to celebrate him in a manner worthy of him. His eulogy is that of Religion; he is so identified with it, that he cannot be praised separately.

There is in this great Apostle, the same spirit, the same zeal, the same love. How rapid should be your pen, if you wish to describe his voyages and apostolical labours! He flies as quick as thought, when he is about to undertake a good work; and he breathes only Jesus Christ when he proclaims the Gospel. One would think, by his multiplying himself, that he alone formed the whole apostolical college; he is at the same time on land and on sea, always watching for the safety of believers, always desiring the palm of martyrdom, always on the wing to heaven. No one was so good a citizen, so good a friend: he forgets

nothing; he remembers the smallest services rendered to him; and never does his heart palpitate but with a desire towards the heaven which has enlightened him, an emotion of love for Jesus Christ who has converted him, an act of gratitude towards the Christians who have assisted him.

Panegyric is in general a kind of writing which should not resemble a sermon: there should be flashes in it, but they should shine on a foundation of morality which should be the basis of the discourse. We do not instruct if we only praise; and we do not celebrate our hero, if we seek only to instruct.

The skill of the orator consists in eliciting from the midst even of the eulogy luminous reflections, having for their object the reformation of morals. Especially take care, my dear friend, never to panegyrize one Saint, at the expense of the others: nothing more clearly proves the sterility of the orator. Every illustrious person has his merit; and it is to outrage the memory of a servant of God, who considered himself as the least of all, to exalt his glory to the prejudice of another Saint.

Make no digressions foreign to your subject. Do not forget that it is St. Paul you wish to praise, and that by attending to any thing but his eulogy you will fail of your design.

Let there be no languor in a panegyric ; every thing should be rapid, and especially that of the great Apostle, whose zeal never abated. Your auditors should believe they see and hear him, that they may say : It is he himself, behold him. You should with him display all the power of grace : like him you should put down those who would lessen the absolute power of God on the heart of man ; like him you should thunder against false prophets, and the corruptors of morality. In short you must give a succinct idea of his different epistles, by presenting them burning from the flames of love, and shining with the light of truth.

Let there be no forced comparisons ; they should arise from the subject ; no useless words ; they should be all instructive ; no bombast phrases ; they should all be natural. It is your heart, and not your spirit, which should be the orator in this discourse ; reserve spirit for the academies, when you deliver some eulogy there ; but the dignity of the pulpit, the holiness of the temple, the eminence of the subject, in short the panegyric of Paul, are infinitely above antitheses, rantings, and jests.

Human eloquence is designed to praise human actions ; but there is need of a divine eloquence

to praise divine men. It is not among the poets, but the prophets, that we must gather flowers to crown the elect. I am more than I can express, &c.

*Rome, 13th Oct. 1755.*

## LETTER XXXVII.

TO M. L'ABBE L'AMI.

O, I am by no means of your opinion, my dear Abbé, respecting the book you criticize with so much severity. It is certainly not so meagre a production as you pretend. There are principles views, details, beauties in it, which render it an interesting work. Some inaccuracies in style do not totally disfigure a book. Style is only the bark, and a tree is sometimes good, when the bark is worth nothing. Unhappily in the age in which we live, we are less pleased with facts than words. Phrases too frequently decide the fate of a work. I have perused many pamphlets printed at Paris, which had only a flowing and seductive style. People asked themselves what the author meant, and knew nothing about it. It is not surprising that in a country so singularly attached to ornament and whatever is glittering, they admire a production written with elegance.

There are subjects which of themselves engage

the attention ; whereas there are some we should never read, were they not written in a brilliant style : it is their passport. A skilful writer should know how to make this distinction.

I should be very glad if you were to analyse two works, which have appeared here very recently. *A Conversation with oneself*, and *the Elements of Metaphysics*, the former is singularly interesting, from its raising the soul above the wrecks of the passions and senses. The latter is not less so, inasmuch as it renders palpable its spirituality and immortality. These are two metaphysical productions, differently presented ; *the Conversation with oneself*, with a light which renders it intelligible to every one ; *the Elements*, with a depth which forbids its being read by the greater part of mankind.

I consider your sheets as a stimulus which keeps our Italians from slumbering over science and literature. In a warm climate we frequently need to be roused from study. The mind like the body gets drowsy, if we do not take care to rouse it, and then we have courage neither to read nor to think.

Florence was always a city renowned for literature and taste, and I have no fear of its degenerating so much as you enlighten it. A periodical work

conducted with discernment, enlightens the mind, maintains emulation, and supplies the place of reading many works which we have no time to peruse, or means to procure.

When I read a journal giving an account of the works printed in Europe, I learn the Genius of Nations; and I perceive that the English do not write like the Germans, or think like the French. This variety which distinguishes nations in their manner of writing and thinking, persuades me that the moral world is really a copy of the physical world, and that there are minds as well as faces which bear no resemblance to each other.

Adieu. I leave you to throw myself on the thorns of controversy, where I shall certainly not find so many flowers as are to be met with in your writings.

*Rome, 5th Nov. 1755.*

**LETTER XXXVIII.****TO PRINCE SAN SEVERO.**

My Liege,

The petrifications I sent you, are very undeserving of your thanks. I well know their value, as also the advantage of keeping up a correspondence with a philosopher whose delight it is to study the history of nature, and who admires its phenomena and amusements only when he knows their cause.

The birds you sent for from the new world for the emperor, will be very curious specimens; but I doubt whether, notwithstanding all possible precautions, they will reach our climate alive. A thousand times has it been attempted to import to this country the fly catchers and the humming bird, and the proprietors have as often had the mortification of seeing them expire at some distance from our ports.

Providence, in giving us the peacock, has made a sufficiently rich provision for us, without going elsewhere to seek for winged beauties. America



has indeed nothing more magnificent than our most superb birds; but we generally prefer what is foreign; merely because it comes from far.

You will, my prince, be delighted with the work of M. de Buffon, a French Academician, and with his first volumes which are in print. All that I know of them at present is from having read them very rapidly; but it appears to me admirably written. I am only sorry that the Author of a Natural History should declare for a system. It is the way to raise doubts respecting many things he advances, and to be involved in perpetual controversies with those who are not of his opinion. Besides, whatever is foreign to the account in Genesis of the creation of the world, is supported only by paradoxes, or at least by hypotheses.

Moses alone, as an inspired Author, could rightly inform us of the formation and development of the world. He is not an Epicurus, who has recourse to atoms; a Lucretius who believes matter to be eternal; a Spinoza who admits a material God; a Descartes who lisps on the laws of motion; but a Legislator who announces to all men, without hesitation, without fear of being misunderstood, how the world was created. Nothing can be more simple and sublime than his

exordium, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" He could not have spoken more decidedly if he had been an eye-witness ; and, by these words, mythology, systems, absurdities are shaken, and appear only as chimeras in the eye of reason.

Whoever does not perceive truth in the narrative of Moses is not capable of discerning it. We are continually disposed to attach credit to hypotheses which are not even probable ; and are unwilling to believe that which gives us the highest idea of the power and wisdom of God.

The notion of an eternal world presents to the mind a thousand more difficulties than an eternal intelligence ; and a co-eternal world is an absurdity which cannot exist, because nothing is so ancient as God.

Besides that God is necessary, and the universe is not, on what ground could matter, a thing quite contingent, and absolutely inert, pretend to the same prerogatives as an omnipotent spirit. These are extravagances which can only arise in a disordered imagination, and which prove the astonishing weakness of man, when he wishes to understand more than himself.

The history of nature is a book closed to all generations, if they do not perceive a creating and

preserving God ; for nothing is more evident than his agency. The Sun, magnificent and imposing as it is, the Sun, though adored by different nations, has neither intelligence, nor judgement ; and if his course be so regular, that it is never interrupted for a single moment, it is because it receives an impulse from a supreme Agent, whose orders it obeys with the greatest punctuality.

In vain do we cast our eyes over the vast extent of this universe, we see it absorbed in the immensity of a Being before whom the whole world is as though it did not exist. It would be very remarkable, if while the smallest work cannot exist without a workman, the world should have the privilege of being indebted to itself alone for its existence and beauty.

Reason digs for itself frightful precipices, when it listens only to the passions and senses ; and reason without faith is to be pitied. All the academies in the universe may imagine systems respecting the creation of the world ; but after all their researches, conjectures, and combinations, after multitudes of volumes written on the subject, they will tell me much less respecting it than Moses has said in a single page ; and still they will only tell me things which have no probability. And such is the difference between the man who speaks

only according to his own imagination, and an inspired writer.

From the height of heaven Jehovah laughs at all those senseless systems, which arrange the world at their pleasure : which attribute it sometimes to chance, and sometimes suppose it to be eternal.

We love to persuade ourselves that matter governs itself, and that there is no other Deity ; because we well know that matter is absolutely inert and senseless, and that we have nothing to fear from its effects ; whereas the justice of a God who sees and weighs all, is overwhelming to the sinner.

Nothing is more exalted than the history of nature, when united to that of religion. Nature is nothing without God, and by the operation of God, it produces and vivifies all things ; without forming any part of the material of the universe, in God it lives, it moves, and has its being. Withdraw his influence, and there is no more activity in the elements, no more vegetation in plants, no more spring in secondary causes, no more revolutions in the stars ; eternal darkness takes the place of light, and the universe becomes its own tomb.

Were God to withdraw his hand, the same

would happen to the world, as happens to our bodies, when he stops their motion. They drop into the dust, they exhale in smoke, and we are not even aware of their having existed.

If I had sufficient knowledge to write a natural history, I should begin my work by setting forth the infinite perfections of its Author, I should then proceed to treat of man, who is his *chef d'œuvre*, and afterwards successively descend from substance to substance, from species to species, until I came to treat of the ant, and should shew in the smallest insect, as well as in the most perfect angel, the same wisdom which shines, and the same power which acts.

Such a picture of nature would interest the lovers of truth; and religion itself, which had traced its design, would render it infinitely precious.

Let us never speak of creatures, but that we may draw near to the Creator. They are the reflection of his ineffable light; and they are ideas which at once elevate and abase us; for man is never more diminutive and more honoured, than when he considers himself in relation to God. He then perceives an infinite Being of whom he is the image, and before whom he is but an atom :

two apparent opposites to which we must be reconciled before we can form a just idea of ourselves, and if we would not fall into the sin of apostate angels, nor that of infidels, who sink themselves to the level of the brute creation.

Your letter, my Prince, has led to these reflections; and I confess to you at the same time, that I never experience more satisfaction than when I find an opportunity of speaking about God. He is the element of our hearts, and it is only in his love that the soul rejoices.

I have happily felt from my earliest years this great truth, and I consequently chose the cloister, as a retreat where, separate from my fellow-creatures, I might the more easily hold converse with the Creator. Worldly society is so tumultuous that it scarcely admits of that abstraction of mind which unites us to God.

I intended only to have written a letter, but it is a sermon; except that instead of finishing with *amen*, I shall conclude with the respect which is due to you, and with which I have the honour to be, &c.

*Rome, 13th Dec. 1754.*

## LETTER XXXIX.

TO M. \*\*\*, A PAINTER.

IN proportion, my dear Sir, to the expression there is in your pictures, you may congratulate yourself on your works. This constitutes its distinguishing excellence, and renders excusable many defects which would not be allowed to pass in an ordinary painter.

I have spoken of your talents to his Eminence the Cardinal Porto Carréro, and he will recommend you as you wish in Spain; but nothing will make you better known than your own genius; it is as necessary for a painter as for a poet. Carracci would have done nothing notwithstanding the boldness of his pencil, had he not possessed that rapture which produces enthusiasm and fire.

We recognize in his pictures a soul which speaks, which warms, which ravishes. We appear to be transformed into himself by the admiration we bestow upon him, and to be filled with the truth of his images.

Let this great man whom you have chosen as your model, breathe in you ; and you will afterwards make him live again on the canvass. Were you but his shadow you would deserve to be esteemed. *There is some reality, even in the shadow of a great man.*

Nature should always be kept in sight by every painter ; and to represent it truly no efforts are needful. We become extravagant amongst painters, as amongst poets, when we force the mind to compose. When the conception of a work takes full possession of the head, we feel ourselves to be drawn on by an irresistible bias, to take the pen or the pencil, and give ourselves up entirely to our inclination ; without that there is neither expression nor taste.

Rome is the school where taste is to be formed ; but whatever pains we may take, we shall never rise above mediocrity, unless we are possessed of a picturesque genius.

It is time for me to be silent, since a counsellor of the Holy Office is not a painter, and there is danger of risking every thing when we speak of what we know but imperfectly.

I am, Sir, &c.



## LETTER XL.

TO THE ABBE NICOLINI.

Sir,

I was very sorry to have been absent from the Convent of the Holy Apostles, when you did me the favour of calling to see me before your departure. I was unhappily on the banks of the Tiber, which the ancient Romans swelled like their triumphs, and which is but an ordinary river as to length and breadth.

It is a walk with which I am particularly delighted, on account of the ideas which it inspires of the grandeur and fall of the Romans. I recal to mind the period in which these proud despots enchained the universe, and when Rome had as many gods as it had vices and passions.

I afterwards retire to my cell, where I contemplate Christian Rome, and where, although the least in the family of God, I labour for its benefit; but it is an imposed task, and on that account almost always tedious, for in matters of

business, man for the most part likes only what he does of his own accord.

I dare not speak to you of the death of our common friend, it is tearing open too grievous a wound. I arrived too late to hear his last words. He is regretted as one of those rare individuals who are superior to their age, and who possess all the merit of former ages. He is said to have left some poetical pieces worthy of the greatest masters. He never mentioned them; a circumstance so much the more extraordinary, as poets are seldom more secret as to their writings than as to their merit.

We have had here for some time, a swarm of young Frenchmen; and you may suppose I have seen them with much pleasure. My room was not large enough to hold them, for they all did me the favour to come and see me; because they were told there was a Monk in the Convent of the Holy Apostles, who was particularly fond of France, and of all who come from it. They all spoke at once; and it was a complete earthquake which exceedingly delighted me.

They do not much like Italy, because every thing here is not yet quite in the French fashion; but I consoled them by assuring them that they would one day complete the metamorphosis,

and that I myself was already more than half changed. I have the honour to be, &c.

*Rome, 24th July, 1756.*

## LETTER XLI.

TO MR. STUART, A SCOTCH GENTLEMAN.

Sir,

If you did not partake of the undulations of the waves which surround you, I should be disposed to accuse you of inconstancy; for we must not forget an old friend who is warmly attached to us. Your conduct reminds me of what I have often thought, that the principal nations in Europe resemble the elements.

The Italian, according to this comparison, resembles fire, which, always in motion, blazes and sparkles; the German, the earth, which, notwithstanding its density, produces good herbs and excellent fruits; the French are like the air, whose subtilty leaves no traces behind; and the English, the inconstant wave which changes continually.

A skilful minister either dextrously manages these elements when it is necessary, or makes them strive with each other, when it suits his master's interest. This has frequently been seen, when

Europe has been in a state of combustion, and disturbed by mutual aggressions.

Human policy pursues war or peace, according to its interests, having nothing more at heart than dominion or self aggrandisement. Christian policy on the contrary knows nothing of the criminal art of sowing discords, though it should ensure by this means the most brilliant success I cannot esteem policy without justice ; for it is Machiavelism put into action ; but I entertain the most favourable idea of a policy, which, sometimes tranquil, and sometimes active, suffers itself to be governed by prudence, reflects, calculates, foresees ; and which, after having retraced the past, reflects on the present, glances at the future, bringing into contact all ages, standing alike prepared for inactivity or exertion.

It is absolutely necessary that a good politician should be perfectly well acquainted with history and the age in which he lives ; that he know the degree of strength and spirit of those who appear on the theatre of the world, that if they be weak, he may intimidate them ; if courageous, he may resist them ; and if rash, he may restrain them.

The knowledge of men, rather than that of books, is the learning of a good politician ; it is of vast importance in business to know who to

employ. Some are proper only to speak, others have courage to act, and every thing consists in not having misjudged in this matter. Many statesmen ruin themselves by an improper confidence. We can no longer keep a secret when it has escaped us, and it is better to err through too much reserve, than by imprudence. *What we have not spoken can never be written.*

The fear of being betrayed renders him pusillanimous who has too rashly made a disclosure of his heart. There are circumstances in which we must appear to tell every thing, when in fact we tell nothing; and in which we must know how to alter our plans without betraying the truth; for that must never be violated.

It is not a mark of weakness to yield when we cannot do otherwise, but of wisdom. Every thing depends on the right knowledge of opportunities and characters, and on foreseeing at once the effect that would be produced by any resistance to our measures.

Self love often interferes with sound policy. We frequently wish to triumph over an enemy from a feeling of resentment, and engage in a bad cause without foreseeing its consequences.

We ought to know how to controul the passions when led away by them, and oppose only a cool

head to those who are most inflammatory ; which seems to have given rise to the saying, *the earth belongs to the phlegmatical*.

We may disconcert the most impetuous adversary by great moderation.

We should have fewer quarrels and wars in the world, were men only to compute what their quarrels and battles will cost. It is not sufficient to have men and money at our disposal ; we must know also how to dispose of them, and we should recollect that fortune does not always favour the brave. We have long pursued at Rome a temporising system of politics, because we are weak, and the course of events is often the happiest means of relieving those from embarrassment who cannot resist. But, as our irresolution is well known, (and it is now a secret of which no one is ignorant) it may even be commendable in a Pope, not indeed to urge august claims, but to prove himself firm ; without this, the Pontiffs will be sure to be oppressed as often as they are menaced.

There are nations which have unfortunately need of war in order to become opulent ;—others to whom it is certain ruin. And from all this I conclude that a minister who takes a proper advantage of these circumstances is really a treasure, and that when a Sovereign has had the happiness

to meet with such an one, he should keep him notwithstanding all court cabals.

I have just lisped on a subject with which you are much better acquainted than myself; but one expression leads on to another, and we are insensibly emboldened to speak of subjects of which we are wholly ignorant.

Thus letters are written, we begin them without foreseeing all that we shall say. The mind when left to its own resources, is justly astonished at its fertility. It is a lively image of the production of a world springing out of nothing; for our thoughts which had no existence suddenly break forth and convince us that creation is not really as certain modern philosophers pretend, a thing impossible. I leave you to yourself, you are much better off there than with me. Adieu.

*Rome, 22nd August, 1756.*



## LETTER XLII.

TO THE REV. FATHER \* \* \*, ON BEING AP-  
POINTED CONFESSOR TO THE DUKE OF \*.

WHAT a charge ! what a task ! my very dear friend. Is it for your destruction, or is it for your salvation, that Providence has assigned you so formidable an employment. This thought should make you tremble.

You ask me what you must do to fulfil its duties ? I answer, Be an Angel.

How many are the dangers and snares laid for the Confessor of a Sovereign, if he have not patience to wait God's time, mildness to bear with imperfections, and firmness to controul passion. He more than any one else should be filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit, sometimes to inspire fear, sometimes to excite hope, and always to disseminate knowledge. He should possess a zeal which is proof against every thing, and an impartial spirit which will enable him to balance the interests of the people and those of the sovereign of whom he has the care.

He should first be anxious to know whether the prince he directs, is acquainted with the duties of religion, and with his obligations to his subjects; for unhappily, it too often happens that a prince comes out of the hands of his instructors, with but a superficial knowledge. He should therefore oblige his penitent to study, and to gather knowledge from genuine sources, not by overloading his memory by frequent reading, but by studying radically what religion and politics require of the man who governs.

There are some excellent works on this subject, of which you should not be ignorant. I know one which was composed for Victor Amadeus, and which has no other defect than that of being too diffuse, and requiring too much.

When the Duke is well instructed (for he must not be stupified with trifling ceremonies) you should recommend him continually to seek truth, and to love it without reserve. Truth should be the compass of sovereigns. This is the way to defeat the base designs of all those informers and court parasites, who maintain themselves by fraud and flattery, and who, a thousand times more dangerous than the worst plagues, involve princes in present and eternal ruin.

You should insist continually on the indispensa-

ble necessity of enforcing the respect due to religion, not by inspiring a spirit of persecution, but by recommending that evangelical courage, which spares the people, and yet prevents the practice of crimes. You should frequently remind him that the life of a sovereign, like his crown, is of no value if he suffer the worship of God to be ridiculed, and do not arrest the progress of irreligion.

You must take care by your firmness, your remonstrances, your prayers, and even by your tears, that the prince of whom you have the management, distinguish himself by good morals, and contribute to their promotion in his states, as constituting the tranquillity of citizens, and the happiness of families, which are the true germ of population.

You should often represent to him that his subjects are his children; that he should be devoted to them night and day, in short every moment, to console and assist them; that he should tax them only in proportion to their property and industry, so as not to involve them in indigence or despair, and that he owes them prompt justice.

If you do not persuade him to examine every thing himself, you would only half fulfil your ministry. We cannot render the people happy but by

entering into particulars ; and there is no way of knowing them but by descending into detail.

Let the people (so despised by the great, who seem to imagine that in a state all are common people but the sovereign) be always present to you as a sacred portion for whom the prince ought ever to be solicitous ; a portion, which is the support of the throne, and which he should guard as the apple of his eye.

Impress upon your illustrious pupil, that the life of a sovereign is a life of labour ; that recreations are not permitted to him as to all other men, but by way of relaxation, and teach him that he must even interrupt his religious reading, and his prayers, if the necessities of the state require it.

You must remind him of the solemn account he will render to God of his administration, and not merely of the judgment which history pronounces on bad princes after their death. It is not a sufficiently Christian motive to fix the attention of a religious prince on this subject, for history is only the voice of men, and will perish with them ; but the thought of an everliving God, who continually avenges the crimes of men, ought chiefly to regulate the conduct of a sovereign. It is but of little importance to most people whether

others speak well or ill of them after their death ; but the sight of an inflexible, eternal Judge, makes the deepest impression on the mind.

You will not prescribe that penitence which consists only in repeating prayers ; but you must apply a proper remedy to cure the wounds you may perceive ; and you must especially endeavour to discover what is the besetting sin. Without this we may confess a penitent for a century, and still remain ignorant of his real character. We must always go to the source of an evil, if we would arrest its progress.

Take great care to confine yourself to the duties of your office, and not to interfere, I do not say merely in any intrigue, but in any court business. It is unbecoming in a Monk who should appear only to represent Jesus Christ, to dishonour that august function by a sordid interest and a horrible ambition.

All your desire, all your views should be directed only to the safety of the prince who places his confidence in you. Astonish him by exhibiting a virtue proof against every assault, and always equally preserved. If a confessor do not render himself respectable, and especially to the court by whom excuses are ever sought for not

being a Christian, he authorizes vice, and is in danger of being despised.

Inculcate deeply on the mind of the prince, that he is responsible to God for all the places he gives away, and for all the evil committed therein, if he do not make a good choice of those who should fill them. Represent to him especially the danger of appointing to ecclesiastical dignities ignorant or vicious people, and of nourishing their effeminacy and avarice, by giving them numerous benefices. Persuade him to seek out merit and to reward those who write for public utility and for religion. Teach him to maintain his dignity, not by pomp, but by a magnificence proportionate to the extent of his states, his resources and his revenues; and to descend at the same time from his rank, to associate with his subjects, and contribute to their happiness.

Often remind him of his duties not with a severe tone, not with importunity, but with that charity, which being the effusion of the Holy Spirit, never speaks but with prudence, seizes the proper moment, and profits by it. When a prince is convinced of the wisdom and piety of a confessor, he listens to him with docility, unless he has a corrupt heart.

If he should not accuse himself of essential faults in his administration, you must speak of

them in general, and thus insensibly obtain a confession of all that is important for you to know. You should frequently insist on the necessity of hearing every one, and of seeing justice promptly executed. If you do not feel disposed to adopt this plan, retire; for these are precepts which cannot be transgressed without becoming guilty in the sight of men and before God.

The office of an ordinary director does not attract the attention of the public; but all eyes are open to the conduct of the confessor of a sovereign. Thus he cannot be too exact in the tribunal of penitence, that those may not approach the sacraments, who, by scandalous actions, rendered themselves unworthy of it, in the judgement of the public. There are not two Gospels, one for the people, and the other for sovereigns. Both will be equally tried by this unalterable rule, because the law of the Lord remains for ever.

Princes are not only the images of God by their power and authority, which they derive only from him, they are still more so, on account of the virtues they ought to possess in order to represent him. A people should be able to say of their sovereign, *he governs us like the Deity himself, with wisdom, with clemency, with equity*; for sovereigns are unaccountable for their conduct

towards their subjects, not to unveil to them the secrets of their councils, but to do nothing to injure them.

Take care especially neither through weakness nor from deference to your fellow creatures, to violate truth. We are not to capitulate with the law of God ; it is of the same authority at all times, and the spirit of the Church is always the same. It still praises the zeal of the great Ambrose with respect to the emperor Theodosius, as it did formerly ; for it varies neither in its morality nor in its articles of Faith.

I pray God with all my heart that he may keep you, and enlighten you in your arduous career, in which you ought to be not a common man, but a celestial guide. You will then live like an Anchorite in the midst of the great world ; like a Monk in an abode where there is generally little religion ; like a Saint in a spot which would prove destructive to all the men of God, if the Lord had not his elect in every place. I embrace you, and am, &c.

*Rome, 26th April, 1755.*



## LETTER XLIII.

TO THE ABBE L'AMI.

I wish, my dear Abbe, for the honour of your country and of Italy, that the history of Tuscany about to be published, may perfectly correspond with its title.

What a fine subject to treat upon, if the writer, at once judicious and delicate, describe the arts as proceeding from this country where they had been hidden for many centuries; and represent in glowing colours the Medicis, to whom we are indebted for these inestimable advantages.

History brings together all ages and men, with the design of producing a perspective, which delightfully fixes the attention. It gives colour to thoughts, soul to actions, life to the dead; and makes them re-appear on the scene of the world, as though they were still living, with this difference, that it is no longer to flatter, but to judge them.

History was formerly written ill, and our Italian authors of the present age do not write it too well.

They only heap together epochas and dates, without displaying the genius of every nation and of every hero.

Most men consider history as a fine piece of Flanders tapestry, at which they give a glance. They are satisfied with seeing the personages it represents, dazzling by the brilliancy of colouring given to them ; without thinking of the head which conceived the design, or of the hand which executed it ; and thus do people think they see every thing, whilst they see nothing.

I deny that history is of any use, when the principal aim is to bring into view princes, battles, and exploits ; but I know not a more instructive book, when we attend to the order of events, and observe how they were brought about ; when we analyze the talents and intentions of those who put the world in motion ; when we are transported by it to ages and regions in which memorable occurrences have taken place.

The reading of history yields an inexhaustible variety of reflections. We must weigh each fact, not like a sceptic who doubts every thing but like a critic who does not wish to be deceived. It is seldom that young people profit by history, because they are never spoken to on the subject but as a course of reading to exercise their memories,

whereas they should be told that it is with the soul and not with the eyes merely, they are to read historical works.

Then we shall discover men who were flattered, and yet who dishonoured humanity ; men who were persecuted, and yet who were the glory of their nation and age. We shall then see the advantages of emulation, the dangers of ambition ; then we shall perceive that interest actuates alike cities, courts, and families.

Historians seldom indulge in reflections, that they may give their readers leisure to analyze, and opportunity to form a judgment of the persons to whom the narrative refers.

There are in all the histories of the world, beings who are scarcely seen, and yet who, behind the curtain, put every thing in motion. The man who reads properly, fixes on these characters, and gives them that honour which flattery too often pays to men in office. Almost all princes, and almost all their ministers, have a secret spring which directs their actions, and is only discovered when they are decomposed for the purpose of estimating their value.

It may be also observed that those great events which astonish the world, have frequently been brought about by men of very inferior, and even

obscure condition. Many women, who appear only as the wives of such a prince, or such an ambassador, and who are not even mentioned in history, have frequently been the cause of the finest exploits. Their advice prevailed, it was adopted, and the husbands had all the honour of an enterprize, which was owing only to the sagacity of their wives.

Tuscany furnishes a thousand brilliant traits, which a skilful hand might draw in a most lively and bold style. The place in which it would be seen that princes, possessing so little power as the Medicis, were capable of reviving the Arts, and re-animating them throughout Europe, would not be the least pleasing. When I figure to myself this era, I seem to view a new world springing out of nothing, a new sun shedding his beams upon the nations. Were this work, my dear Abbé, in your hands, you would give it all the life of which it is susceptible. Adieu, I am just besieged, and will not suffer myself to be blockaded; so much the more as they are visits of decorum, and we must know how to be civil.

*Rome, Nov. 8, 1756.*

## LETTER XLIV.

TO PRINCE SAN SEVERO.

May it please your Excellence,

I always admire your new discoveries. You cause a second universe to arise out of the first by all that you create. This vexes our antiquaries, who persuade themselves that nothing is interesting or beautiful, but what is very old.

It is doubtless right to value antiquity, but we should not I think be slaves to it, so as to exalt beyond measure a thing in itself of no value, merely because it was taken from the gardens of Adrian.

The ancients, like us, made use of things extremely common; and were things to be prized for their antiquity alone, the earth might on this account claim our first homage; for surely no one will dispute its antiquity.

I cannot endure enthusiasts, any more than persons completely frigid. They, and they alone, who steer a middle course between these two extremes, can see and judge properly. The indif-

ference of the apathetic deprives them of taste and curiosity ; and both are necessary in order to examine and decide correctly.

Imagination is still more dangerous than indifference, if it be not well regulated. It causes a dazzling light which intercepts the view, and obscures reason. Even philosophy, over whom this wanton nymph should never gain the ascendancy, is daily sensible of its too fatal impression. The sophisms, the paradoxes, the captious reasonings which follow in the train of all our modern philosophers, have no other source than the imagination. It acts by caprice, and has no regard either to experience or truth.

Your Excellence must be acquainted with these writings, having frequent opportunities of reading the works of the age. England which, from its phlegmatic temperament, should seem to have less imagination than other nations, has often published the most extravagant theories. Their philosophers have raved still more than ours, because it was necessary for them to make greater efforts to overcome their naturally gloomy and taciturn character. Their imagination is like a torch which easily takes fire, but whose vapour affects the brain.

Imagination is properly called the Mother of

dreams, she produces more than the Night itself; and they are so much the more dangerous as, when giving ourselves up to them, we do not believe that we dream; whereas the morning dispels the illusions of sleep.

I always fear lest your chemical experiments should injure your health. Terrible accidents sometimes result from them. But when we are making any new experiment in natural philosophy, we are disposed to pursue it without fear of the issue, as an officer, who, impelled by valour alone, rushes at random into the thickest of the fight.

I have the honour to be, with as much respect as attachment, &c.

*Rome, Jan. 13, 1757.*

## LETTER XLV.

## TO A YOUNG MONK.

THE advice you wish, my dear friend, respecting your course of study, should be analogous to your dispositions and talents. If vivacity of mind be predominant, you should temper it by reading works in which there is but little imagination; if on the other hand your thoughts are heavy, you should enliven them, by familiarizing yourself with books full of fire.

Do not overload your memory with dates and facts, before you have given order to your ideas, and correctness to your reasonings. You should accustom yourself to think methodically and to dissipate, but without effort, all the chimeras which pass through your mind. He who always thinks vaguely, is fit for nothing, because he finds nothing which can fix his attention.

The basis of your studies should be the knowledge of God and of yourself. By thorough self examination you will find in yourself the impress of him that created you; and by reflecting on



the wanderings of the imagination and of the heart, you will perceive the necessity of that Revelation which has renewed the Law in a most efficacious and impressive manner.

You should then give yourself up without reserve to that knowledge which, by the consent of reason and authority, introduces us at once into the sanctuary of religion ; and from thence you will derive the celestial doctrine taught in the holy books, and interpreted by the Councils and the Fathers of the Church.

The reading of these will familiarize you with true eloquence, and you should take them early as models, if you would succeed afterwards in your style of writing and preaching.

You should take advantage of the intervals which will occur in your exercises, to glance occasionally at the most beautiful fragments of orators and poets, after the example of St. Jerome, that is, not like a man who is to live upon them, but as a person who extracts from them whatever is best to adorn his style, and makes them subservient to the glory of religion.

The historians will afterwards lead you by the hand from age to age, in order to show you those revolutions and events which have not ceased to agitate and occupy the world. This will conti-

nually constrain you to see and adore that Providence, which directs all according to its wise designs.

You will see in history in almost every page, how empires and emperors were instruments of justice or mercy in the hands of God; how he exalts and abases them; how he creates and destroys them, being himself always the same and never changing.

You should read again in the morning what you have read in the evening, that your reading may be treasured up in your memory and in due order; and you should never fail, if you would not become prejudiced in favour of a party, to make the reading of a phlegmatic and grave work, succeed to that of a book full of imagination.

This will temper those thoughts which the productions of an exalted mind may have excited, and fix the genius which suffers itself too frequently to be carried out of its proper sphere.

You should cultivate as much as possible the conversation of learned men. Happily Providence has made provision for this, for in almost all our religious houses, monks are to be found who have made a considerable progress in literature.

Do not neglect the society of the aged. They

have in their memory stored with many facts of which they were witnesses, a repertory which it is desirable to examine. They resemble those old books which contain excellent things, although frequently moth eaten, dusty, and badly bound.

You should not be passionately fond of any work, of any author, or of any sentiment, lest your mind should become tinctured with prejudice, but you should give the preference to one writer over another, when you find him more judicious and excellent. Prepossessions and prejudices are the things against which we ought to guard with the greatest precaution; and unhappily the more we study, the more we are liable to be led away by it.

We identify ourselves with an author who has said some good things, and insensibly become the panegyrist and admirer of all his opinions, however extravagant they may be. Guard against this misfortune; and be always more the friend of truth, than of Plato or of Scotus.

Respect the sentiments of the Order to which you belong, that you may neither oppose received opinions, nor be a slave to them. We should not obstinately adhere to any thing which is not connected with the Faith, nor has received the sanction of the Church. I have seen Professors who

would rather be killed than abandon the opinions of the Schools. My conduct with respect to these was to pity and to shun them. Attach yourself to the scholastic method only in as much as it is needful to understand the jargon of the Schools, and to refute the sophists ; for far from being the essence of Theology, it is only the bark.

Avoid disputes : seldom is a subject rendered clear by disputation ; yet you should know how on proper occasions to maintain truth, and combat error, with the arms which Jesus Christ and his Apostles have put into our hands, and which consist in mildness, persuasion, and charity. It is not easy to take minds by storm ; but we may succeed in gaining them over, if we know the art of insinuating ourselves.

Be careful not to fatigue the faculties of your mind, by giving yourself up to immoderate studies : sufficient to the day is the evil thereof ; and unless there is a necessity for it, we should not, by labour prolonged at night, anticipate the next day.

The man who manages his time, and who gives only some hours regularly to study, makes much greater advances than he who heaps moments on moments, and knows not when to stop. When we have no method we generally finish by being

only the frontispiece of books, or a library in confusion.

Love order then, but without being precise, that you may know how to lay aside your work till another time, when you are not disposed to study. The man of study should not labour like the ox, which is yoked to make a furrow, nor like the hireling who is paid by the day.

It is a sad custom continually to struggle against repose and sleep : what is done against the will is never well done ; and what is written with constrained application of mind, impairs the health.

There are days and hours in which we have no disposition to labour ; and then it is a folly to do violence to ourselves, unless we are extremely hurried.

There are very few books which do not discover labour of composition, because people too frequently write when they ought to rest.

The great art of succeeding in our studies, consists in applying ourselves to labour, and resting at proper intervals : without this, the head will be heated, the mind either depressed or exalted, and nothing will be produced but what is either languishing or extravagant. Learn to make a good choice of the works you read, that you may know only good things, and how to make a good use of

them, life is too short to be wasted in superfluous studies : if we do not make haste to learn, we shall find ourselves grown old without knowing any thing.

Especially pray to God to enlighten you : for there is no knowledge but from him, and we are in darkness when we do not follow his light.

Leave events to take their course, and trust alone to your merit for preferment. If places do not seek you, content yourself with the last, and believe me that is the best.

I have never been better pleased than when after chapters have been held, I found myself possessed of no other honour than that of existence : I then congratulated myself on having refused all the honours which had been offered me, and on having only myself to govern.

The advantage of loving study, and conversing with the dead, is worth a thousand times more than the frivolous glory of commanding the living. The best kind of government is that which consists in keeping the senses and passions in due subjection, and in preserving to the mind the sovereignty which is its due.

Add to this that the diligent man knows no ennui ; that he thinks himself young when he is old ;

the hurry of the cloister as well as the troubles of the world, are always at a distance from him.

I advise you then, my dear friend, not only for the advantage of Religion, not only for the benefit of our Order, but for your own satisfaction, to give yourself up to study. With a book, a pen, and your thoughts, you will find yourself well wherever you may be. Both the understanding and the heart present an asylum to man, when he knows how to retire thither.

I am sensible of all the honour you manifest towards me, and so much the more as you might have consulted the fathers Colombini, Marzoni, Martinelli, in preference to me. They are men who from their knowledge and talents, are capable of giving excellent advice. Adieu; and believe me your servant and good friend.

*Rome, 7th June, 1757.*

## LETTER XLVI.

TO THE REV. FATHER \* \* \* MONK OF THE  
CONGREGATION OF THE SOMASQUI.

THE loss, my Rev. Father, which the Church has just sustained, in the person of Benet XIV, I feel so much the more, as I found in him an excellent protector. I came to Rome in 1740, the first year of his pontificate; and from that time he has not ceased to honour me with his kindness. If you were to compose his funeral oration, you would have the finest subject to handle. You would not surely forget that he studied amongst you, at the Clementine College, and there laid the foundation of that sublime and extensive knowledge, which has procured him distinction in the Church, and which will one day associate him with the Bernards and Buonaventurès.

Take care in this funeral oration, that your mind rises with your hero; and that the magnanimity which characterized him be worthily expressed.

Endeavour to be an historian as well as an



orator, in such a manner, however, as that there may be neither languor nor barrenness in your details: the attention of the public should be continually kept up by fine strokes, worthy both of the majesty of the pulpit, and the sublimity of Lambertini.

In vain will you call to your aid all the figures of rhetoric, if they do not come spontaneously. That eloquence alone is to be admired which flows from the source, and rises out of the grandeur of the subject: forced eulogies are amplifications and not eulogies.

Let those virtues which are likely to impress your auditors arise out of the ashes of Benet XIV, and by which they may be formed after his model, and filled with him only.

Let there be no minute details, no extravagant facts, no bombast expressions. Mingle, as much as possible, the sublime with the temperate, in order to form that agreeable variety, which gives grace to discourse. Endeavour to choose an appropriate text, which may announce the whole plan of your oration, and perfectly characterize your hero. The division is the touchstone of a panegyrist; the discourse cannot be excellent, if this be not happily constructed.

Introduce morality with discretion, so that it

may appear to come in of its own accord, and that your audience may be able to say "It could not be better than there; that was its proper place."

Dread common place topics; and let each one see Lambertini, and not perceive the orator. Praise with much delicacy and sobriety, and give to your praises a spring by which they may ascend to God.

If you do not move the soul by happy, new, and striking images, your work will be only an effort of the mind; and you will have made only a simple epitaph, instead of erecting a mausoleum.

Especially speak to the heart, by impressing it with awful truths, which may detach it from life, and make all your hearers descend into the tomb of the Holy Father.

Pass slightly over the infancy of your hero: all men resemble each other, till the time when their reason begins to dawn. Let your sentences be neither too long, nor too short: there is no nerve in a discourse, which is divided into minute parts.

Let your exordium be majestic, without being inflated; and let your first period especially announce something grand. I compare the begin-

ning of a funeral oration to the portico of a temple ; I judge of the beauty of the edifice, if I find majesty there.

Display in the most striking manner, death overturning thrones, breaking sceptres, treading under foot tiaras, tarnishing crowns, and place over these wrecks of human grandeur the Genius of Benet ; as having nothing to fear from the ruins of time, as defying death to tarnish his glory and to efface his name.

Detail his virtues ; analyze his writings, and display throughout a sublime soul, which would have astonished Pagan Rome, which edified Christian Rome, and which attracted the admiration of the Universe.

In a word, flash,—thunder,—but at the same time collect those clouds which may serve to increase the splendour, and form a striking contrast.

My imagination kindles, when contemplating so great a Pope as Benet ; that pontiff regarded even by Protestants, and who could be represented only by a Michael Angelo.

If I have dilated upon this subject, it is because I know you can easily comprehend what I recommend to you. A funeral oration is fine only in proportion as it is picturesque, and as the pencil is guided by force and truth. The greater part of

panegyrics drop into the graves of those who are eulogized, because it is only an ephemeral eloquence produced by a fine mind, and the lustre of which is but tinsel.

I should be grieved to see Lambertini, celebrated by an orator who should be only elegant: we must serve each one according to his taste, and his was always correct and good.

Write, my dear friend, I shall gladly see what you commit to paper, convinced that there will be passages full of fire, which will consume all that is unworthy of such an eulogy. I judge so from the productions you have already shewn me, and in which I have remarked great beauties. It is time that our Italy lost its *concetti*; and assumed a masculine and sublime tone, analogous to true eloquence.

I am endeavouring to form by my advice some young orators, who take the trouble to consult me; and I endeavour as much as possible to give them a distaste for those extravagancies, which continually place in our discourses the burlesque by the side of the sublime. Foreigners are justly offended by so incongruous a mixture. The French particularly are unacquainted with this strange variety. Their discourses are frequently superficial, having much less solidity than surface;

but we generally find in them at least an unity of style. Nothing is more offensive than to soar above the clouds, and afterwards to fall abruptly.

My respects to our little Father, who would have done wonders, had it not been for his deplorable health.

*Rome, 10th May, 1758.*

## LETTER XLVII.

TO THE ABBE L'AMI.

WE have at length, as head of the Church, Cardinal *Rezzonico*, *Bishop of Padua*, who has taken the name of *Clement*, and who will improve the Romans by his piety. It was in spite of himself, and after many tears, that he accepted it. What an office, when its duties are properly fulfilled! He must live for God, for the whole world, for himself, occupied entirely with his great obligations, and having Heaven alone in view in the midst of all earthly concerns. To sustain with dignity this sacred office is so much the more difficult as he succeeds *Benet XIV.* after whom few could appear great.

*Clement XIII.* keeps Cardinal *Archinto*, as Secretary of State. This is the best way to render himself beloved by the sovereigns of Europe, and his pontificate illustrious. It is necessary at the commencement of a reign, to make choice of an excellent minister, or to do every thing oneself. *Benet XIII.* was the most unfortunate of men, in

having reposed his confidence in Cardinal Coscia, and Benet XIV. the most happy, in having had Cardinal Valenti as his minister.

It is essentially necessary for a sovereign, and especially for a Pope, to be surrounded by good men. The knowledge of the most discerning prince becomes perverted when he listens to flatterers. Brass then becomes gold in his eyes, and he preserves in office, whatever it may cost him, the men whom he has once protected.

The discernment of characters is another quality scarcely less necessary to a prince. Men dare not impose on a monarch whom they know to be penetrating, and despise him who suffers himself to be led. There are sovereigns who have done more harm by sloth and weakness, than by wickedness. Persons may grow weary of correcting flagrant injustice, but not of feeling and seeing nothing.

The weaker a prince is, the more despotic he will be, for as power must be lodged somewhere, ministers possess themselves of it, and become tyrannical.

One other quality which I consider as essential to governing well, is to assign to each his proper place. The moral world is governed like a game of chess, where all is conducted in order and ac-

according to rank. If one pawn be placed for another, nothing can result from it but confusion.

A sovereign is not only the image of God by the eminence of his rank, he should be so also by his intelligence. David, although a shepherd, had a superior knowledge which directed him, and he made it appear as soon as he began to reign.

A prince who is all goodness, is but what every one ought to be, as a prince who is all severity, does not cherish towards his subjects the love which he owes them.

Alas ! atoms as we are, we may talk well about the duties of royalty ; but if we were invested with it, how little should we know how to conduct ourselves. There is a great difference between talking and reigning. Nothing can stop us, where we give a loose to our fancy, and let our pens run ; but when we find ourselves overwhelmed with business, surrounded by dangers, encompassed with false friends, in a word, overwhelmed by the heaviest and greatest obligations, we are alarmed, we dare scarcely undertake any thing ; and by an indolence, natural to all men, we repose the task of government on mere subalterns, and occupy ourselves only with the pleasures of arbitrary power.

It is certain that the art of government is ex-



ceedingly difficult. If a prince succeed to an hereditary crown, he becomes acquainted with the dignity, while he remains ignorant of the business of royalty, and is thus easily deceived. If on the contrary he succeed to an elective Crown, he takes on himself a sovereignty to which he has not served an apprenticeship ; and seems as ill at ease in the midst of his honours, as of the affairs of state.

An old man who is placed on a throne, is fit only for a pageant. He dare undertake nothing, every thing excites his alarm, every thing encreases his supineness, especially if ignorant of his successor. This is the situation of Popes, if they are too old. They cannot then attend to the affairs of the Church and State.

But the world will never be without abuses ; if they are not in one place, they are in another, because imperfections are common to humanity. *It is only in the holy city, said the great Augustin, that all will be order, peace and charity ; for that will be the kingdom of God.*

I shall go and congratulate the new pontiff, not as a monk who likes to put himself forward, but as Counsellor of the Holy Office. He does not know me, nor am I anxious to be known by him. I like to remain covered with the dust of my

cloister, and think myself not at all dishonoured by it.

Adieu. Always preserve amongst us the good taste of the Medicis; and your memory will be long cherished, although you may trouble yourself very little about it. I am, &c.

*Rome, 15th July, 1758.*

## LETTER XLVIII.

## TO A PROTESTANT MINISTER.

I AM very much obliged, my dear Sir, by the interest you take in my health. It is very good, thanks to Heaven; and it would appear to me still better, if I could use it in any thing agreeable to you. The pleasure of obliging should extend itself to every community.

I wish with all my soul to be able to convince you that I bear all men on my heart; that they are all infinitely precious to me, and that I respect merit wherever it is found. If your nephew come to Rome, as you give me reason to hope, he will find in me a person most zealous and anxious to testify to him all the affection I entertain for you.

The Roman Church, my very dear Sir, is so perfectly aware of the merit of the greater part of the ministers of Protestant communities, that she would be happy ever to receive them within her bosom. She would not revive past quarrels; she would not reproduce those stormy times, in which each one, impelled by passion, overstepped the

bounds of Christian moderation, but she would endeavour to re-unite them in one creed, founded on Scripture and Tradition, such as may be found in the writings of the Apostles, Councils, and Fathers. No one regrets more than myself the evils you suffered during the last century : the spirit of persecution is most odious to me.

How much would the nations gain by a happy union? For this, if it were necessary, I would shed the last drop of my blood, grieved that I had not a thousand lives to give, might I but die a witness to so wonderful an event. That period will arrive, my dear sir, for the time must come when there will be but one and the same faith. The Jews themselves will enter into the bosom of the true Church ; and it is in the firm hope of this, founded on the sacred scriptures, that they are tolerated at Rome, in the full exercise of their religion.

My soul, God knows, is entirely yours, and there is nothing in the world I would not undertake to prove to you as well as to all your denomination, how dear you are to me. We have the same God for our Father, we believe in the same Mediator, we acknowledge as indisputable the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, Redemption, and we sincerely wish each other to go to Heaven.

In point of doctrine, there are not two ways of arriving there. There must be on earth a centre of unity, as well as a Head who represents Jesus Christ—The Church would be in reality shapeless, unworthy of our homage and attachment, if it were only a headless body.

The work of the Messiah is not like that of man. What he has established must remain for ever. He could not cease one instant to assist his Church; and you, sir, are too enlightened to consider the Albigenses as pillars of the truth, upon whom you may rely. Do me the pleasure to tell all your brethren, all your flocks, all your friends, that Cardinal Ganganelli has nothing so much at heart as their happiness in this world and the other, and that he wishes to know them all, to assure them of it. Nothing can be added, &c.

*Rome, 30th Jan. 1769.*

**LETTER XLIX.****TO COUNT \* \* \*.**

I WRITE to inform you, my dear friend, in the solitude in which you have spent some weeks, that brother Ganganelli, who always loved you tenderly, is made a Cardinal, and that he himself knows neither how, nor wherefore.

There are events in the course of life for which we cannot account; they are brought about by circumstances, and ordered by Providence, which is the mainspring of every thing.

However it may be, whether in purple or not, I shall not be less entirely devoted to you, and I shall be always delighted to see and to oblige you.

I sometimes feel my pulse, to know if it be indeed I myself, being truly astonished that fortune has raised me to one of the highest dignities, has not given the preference to one of my brethren, there are many of them whom it would well have suited.

Every one says in speaking of the new Cardinal

Ganganelli : It is incredible, that without intrigue, without cabal, he should have attained that honour ; it is nevertheless very true.

O my books ! O my all ! I know what I leave, and am ignorant of what I shall find. Alas ! many troublesome people will come and rob me of my time ; many interested people will pay me feigned homage.

As for you, my dear friend, persevere in the path of virtue. We are superior to all dignities when we are truly virtuous : perseverance is promised only to those who distrust themselves, and temptation ; whoever is presumptuous must expect falls.

When I think that the public papers will deign to mention me, to send my name beyond the Alps, to tell different nations when I have the head ache, and ambled, I smile with pity. Dignities are snares which are only dazzling to those who suffer themselves to fall in them. Few persons know the vexations of grandeur : we are no longer our own ; and act as we may we shall have enemies.

I think with S. Gregory of Nazianzen : He imagined when the people thronged to see him pass, that they took him for an extraordinary animal. I am not accustomed, I confess, to this usage ; and if this constitute what is called grandeur, I

would willingly bid it adieu. I consider all men as my brethren; and am delighted when the most unfortunate speak to me with freedom.

Men will say that I have plebeian manners, and I am not afraid of this reproach, for I am only apprehensive of pride. This is so subtle that it will do its utmost to penetrate and to possess me; but I will keep in view my own nothingness; and that of all surrounding objects: this is the best way to subdue self-love.

Do not take it in your head to pay me a compliment when you come to see me: that is a merchandise which I do not like, and especially on the part of a friend. But here are visitors, or in other words, all that is disagreeable to me, and which has rendered me for some days insupportable to myself. Grandeur like tempests has its clouds, its lightnings and its whirlwinds; I long for a calm, and an interval of serenity. I am without reserve, and beyond all expression, as well as in past times, your good and true servant, &c.

*Rome, 3rd Oct. 1759.*



## LETTER L.

TO MY LORD \* \* \*.

I AM not accustomed to see a mind like yours, the dupe of modern philosophy. Your knowledge should preserve you from the sophisms it engenders, which reduce us to the wretched condition of brutes.

If there be a God, as Nature proclaims in all her works, there is also religion. If there be religion, it must be incomprehensible, sublime, and as ancient as the world, since it emanates from an infinite and eternal Being : and if it have these characters, that religion must unquestionably be Christ's ; and if it be Christ's we are bound to acknowledge it as divine, and receive it with our whole heart and soul.

Is it credible then that God should have constructed the Universe in so glorious a manner, merely to gratify the eyes of a multitude of men and beasts, who are to be confounded together in one common destiny ; or that the understanding which resides in us, which combines, which calculates, which extends beyond the earth, which

rises higher than the firmament, which recalls all past ages, which penetrates into ages to come, which has in short an idea of what is to last for ever, should shine for a moment only to disperse afterwards like a vapour.

What is that inward voice which continually tells you, that you are born for great things? What are those desires which are continually renewed, and which make you feel, that there is nothing in this world which can satisfy the heart.

Man may be compared to an invalid, who ruminates on his own griefs, in proportion as he is estranged from God; and the light of his reason which he stifles, leaves him in the midst of tremendous darkness,

The same truth which assures you of your own existence, I mean that inward witness of which you are conscious, assures us of that of God; and you cannot receive a lively idea of this without being impressed with that of religion. The worship we pay to the Supreme Being, is so blended with this idea, that our mind is only satisfied when it renders him homage, and when we conform ourselves to the order which he has established.

If there be a God, he must necessarily be beneficent; and if he be beneficent, you ought by the most just consequence, to thank him for his mercies.

Neither the blessing of existence, nor that of health, comes from yourself: seven and twenty years ago you were nothing, and you have suddenly become an organized body, enriched by a mind which commands it like a master, and leads it at its will.

This reflexion should engage you to seek the Author of your life; and you will find him in yourself, when you are willing to search yourself, and in every thing which surrounds you, without any of these objects being able to boast that they form a particle of his substance; for God is simple, indivisible, and cannot in any respect be identified with the elements.

If the religion he has established have taken different forms, if it have been perfected since the coming of the Messiah, it is because God has treated it like our reason, which at first was but a glimmering light, and which developing itself by degrees, at length shines as the perfect day.

Besides, is it for man to interrogate God as to his conduct? Is it for him to regulate the ways of Jehovah, to prescribe to him his mode of operation? God communicates himself to us, but always reserves to himself the right of acting as a master, because there is in reality nothing that is not subjected to him. If he manifested to us his designs clearly in the present state; if the mysteries which

astonish us, and arrest our attention, were developed to us here, that would be the intuitive vision which is reserved for us after this life, and death would be useless. We shall have full evidence only in heaven (*cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum\**), and we wish to anticipate this moment, without considering that every thing is regulated by infinite wisdom, and that we have nothing to do but to submit and adore. The infidel does not alter the designs of God when he dares to rise up against him, he even promotes his plan, that vast plan in which evil concurs with good, for the harmony of this world and the happiness of the next.

Nature and religion are equally derived from God, and they have both, (although in a very different manner,) their mysteries and incomprehensibilities; and for the same reason that we do not deny the existence of nature, although its operations are frequently concealed from us, neither can nor ought we to deny that of religion, notwithstanding its obscurities.

There is nothing here that has not a dark side, because our soul, encumbered with a body which darkens and oppresses it, would not be capable of seeing every thing. Here it is in a state of infancy, and it must have days proportioned to the weak-

\* Then shall I know even as I am known.

ness of its sight, till death disengages it from the weight which overwhelms it. It is like a tender bird which continues to pant and cry out in its nest, till it has learned to soar and fly.

The gradations of religion are admirable in the eyes of the true philosopher. He sees it at first like a twilight, arising from the midst of chaos; afterwards like the dawn which announces the day; at length the daylight is manifest, but it is surrounded by clouds, and he feels that it will not be perfectly serene, and in its meridian splendour, till the morning when the heavens shall be open to us.

Has then the infidel who, without principle censures revelation, one of his own which assures him that what we believe is absolutely chimerical? But at what time, and in what place did this secret light come to enlighten him? Was it at the instant when he was governed and absorbed by his passions? Was it in the midst of the amusements and pleasures in which he generally passes his life?

It is astonishing, my lord, how men abandon all the authority of tradition, elude the force of the strongest testimonies, blindly to follow two or three individuals whom they consider as masters of infidelity. They wish for no inspiration, and yet consider them as inspired; whence it is easy to conclude that the passions alone attach them to

infidelity. People abhor a religion which imposes restraints, when they wish to follow the torrent of vice, and to float with the stream of a world covered with surges and foam.

Christianity is a superb picture drawn by the hand of God, and presented by him to men ; it was at first only sketched, until the time when Jesus Christ came to finish it, and to give it the lustre and colouring it is to have through Eternity.

Religion will then be the only object which will fix our regards, because it will be in the essence of God himself, making a whole with him, according to the expression of St. Augustin.

This gradation is conformable to the progress of human life, and is carried on by succession. Thus God has varied the forms of religion, because we are in a world which varies ; and he will fix it in an immutable manner in heaven, because there no change is known. These are combinations and proportions which render conspicuous the wisdom of the Supreme Being. Religion being intended for man, he has determined that it should follow the progress of man, according to the different modes of his existence.

We see nothing of all this, while we are terrestrial ; and you would judge of it as I do, were you

disengaged from all those pleasures, and all those riches, which materialize you in spite of yourself. Christianity is spirit and life; and we are prodigiously far from it, when we are engaged only in what is bodily. Souls become luminous at death, only because they no longer inhabit bodies which surround and eclipse them. True philosophy does what death will do, by disengaging man from all that is carnal; but it is not modern philosophy which knows only the existence of matter, and which considers metaphysics as a science purely chimerical, although it is more certain than natural philosophy itself, which is proved only by the senses.

I do not enter into the proofs of religion, because they have been so frequently stated in immortal works, that I should do nothing but repeat their arguments. Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end of all things, the key of all the mysteries of grace and nature; so that it is not surprizing that people wander into a thousand absurd systems when they have not this sublime compass. *I can, not give you a reason for any thing in natural any more than in moral philosophy*, said the celebrated Cardinal Bembo in writing to a philosopher of his time, *if you do not acknowledge Jesus Christ*. The creation of this world is inexplicable, incom-

prehensible, and even impossible, if it had not been framed for the incarnate word : for God can have no other object in all he does, but what is infinite. On this account Jesus Christ is called by St. John the *Alpha and Omega*, and the Apostle tells us that the world was made by him. “ *By whom also he made the world.*”

Study attentively this God-man, as much as a creature is capable of doing it ; and you will find in him all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom, and you will perceive him to be the first link of a chain which unites all things visible and invisible, and you will acknowledge him to be that divine influence by which justice and holiness are nourished in the heart.

The infidel can never answer satisfactorily the question what is Jesus Christ, that man at once so simple and so divine, so sublime and so abject, so pure in the whole course of his life, so great at the moment of his passion, and so magnanimous in his death. This question must however be fairly met. If he be only a man, he must have been an impostor, for he declared that he was God, and that thence proceeded his sublime virtues, thence his Gospel, which forbids even the least equivocation ; and how can we account for his victories or those of his disciples in all parts of the world ?



But if he be God, what must we think of his religion, and of those who dare to oppose it?

Ah ! my lord, this is a subject with which you should seek an acquaintance, rather than with all the profane sciences to which you are devoted. Human sciences will end, "*Whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away ;*" and there will remain only the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which will rise above the abyss in which times and elements will be swallowed up.

Consider yourself ; and this view will necessarily conduct you to truth. The least motion of your finger indicates to you the action of God on your person ; this action announces to you a Providence ; this Providence informs you that you are dear to the Creator ; and this information will conduct you from truth to truth, till you arrive at the knowledge of revelation.

If you are neither your own Creator, nor your final end, you must necessarily have recourse to him who unites these two qualities in himself. Ah ! who can this be—if not God ?

Religion will always be sure of gaining ground in the esteem of all those who have principles. We must trace its source, analyze and follow it to its final result, if we would know its truth ; but

the impious disfigure it, dishonour it, and put a mere skeleton in its place. I am no longer then surprized if the ignorant, and those who judge according to fashionable minds, are fearful of it.

I expect, my lord, from the rectitude of your mind and the extent of your capacity, a judgment more solid than that you have hitherto entertained of christianity ; lay aside all systems and opinions with which you are unhappily filled : enter, like an entirely new man, on the path which tradition will open to you, and you will judge quite differently : return from the prejudices you have imbibed to yourself : for you have not yet judged of it. For my part, I act really according to the dictates of my mind and heart, when I assure you of all the affection with which I shall through life continue to be your servant,

CARDINAL GANGANELLI.

*Rome, 29th Nov. 1768.*

## LETTER LI.

TO MY LORD \* \* \*.

FOR the last four months I have been neither to myself, nor my friends, but to all the different Churches, of which, by divine permission, I am become the head, and to all the Catholic courts, many of whom, as you know, have important transactions with the Holy See to regulate.

It is impossible to have a more litigious time to become a Pope, and it is on me that Providence has ordered this overwhelming weight to fall. I trust that Providence will sustain me, and give me that prudence and strength of mind which are alike necessary to govern according to the rules of justice and equity.

I am labouring to acquire the most exact knowledge of the affairs which my predecessor left unfinished, and which call for the most careful investigation.

You will confer on me a real pleasure if you will bring me what you have written on things re-

lating to this subject, and entrust them to me alone.

You will find me as you have always known me, as much a stranger to the grandeurs which surround me, as though I did not know them even nominally ; and you may speak to me as freely as you formerly did, because the papacy has inspired me with an increasing attachment to the truth, and a fresh conviction of my own nothingness.

*Rome, 21st Sep.*

## LETTER LII.

TO THE REV. FATHER \* \* \*, A MONK.

IF you think me happy, you are deceived. After having been agitated all the day, I frequently wake in the midst of the night, and sigh after my cloister, my cell, and my books. I can truly say that I look on your situation with envy. My only encouragement is, that Heaven itself has placed me in St. Peter's Chair, to the great astonishment of the whole world, and that if it destine me to any important work, it will sustain me.

I would, God knows, give every drop of my blood, that all might be peaceful, that every one might fulfil his duty, that those who have offended might reform, and that there might be neither discord nor the suppression of any Order.

I shall not proceed to extremities, unless urged thereto by powerful motives, that posterity at least may do me justice in case the age in which I live should refuse it. It is not this, however, which chiefly occupies my mind, but eternity, formidable to every one, but especially to popes.

I will send you my answer on the subject you wish. You will know that I do not forget my friends, and that if I do not see them as often as formerly, it is because business and cares, like sentinels, are to be found at my gate, in my chamber, in my heart.

Remember me to all my acquaintances: I think sometimes of their astonishment on hearing of my elevation.

Tell him especially with whom I studied, that he did not prophesy well, when he said to our companions that I should certainly go and finish my days in France. There is no appearance at present of the accomplishment of that prediction, unless I should indeed be destined to very extraordinary things. I am always your affectionate

CLEMENT.

*Castel Condolfo.*

## LETTER LIII.

TO THE ABBE FRUGONI.

Sir,

I AM surprised that you have thought proper to dedicate your last poems to me, who am no further acquainted with the art of poetry than to speak of it in a vague manner, that is to say, as those who have not made it their study. This however does not prevent me from admiring all you give to the public, and from feeling my mind enkindled at reading a beautiful poem. There are odes which can scarcely be read without catching something of the spirit of their Author.

Besides we must be insensible to the beauties of nature, not to feel the images which our great poets pourtray. There are some, for example, in our Metastasio, and in your compositions, my dear Abbe, which would arouse the most senseless soul. We are introduced into a new world, enriched with new charms ; which has so much the more advantage over our finest flowers, as the latter fade in a

few days, but magnificent verses are handed down to posterity.

I endeavoured, whilst at college, to compose some small rural poems ; but I was so dissatisfied with them, that I had the merit of burning them as soon as I composed them. One advantage, however, derived from them was, that they gave me a greater facility of thought and expression.

It is with poetry, as with good instruments, which should only be touched by skilful performers. Bad poetry, is like a piece of music executed by a wretched musician. Every thing grates upon the ear, offends the taste, and distresses the mind. There is no one who is sensible of the transports of genius, whom the beauty of the psalms does not render, in spite of himself, an enthusiast. I confess to you that I am a poet whenever I repeat the psalms.

What energy, what imagery, what majesty ! We are no longer confined to matter, we are no more ourselves ; we are transformed into the prophet ; or to speak more properly, we become divine.

But how grievous is it, to see poetry, which was originally intended only to celebrate Jehovah (since Moses who makes so noble a use of it was the most ancient of writers) descending from such



sublimity, to deify mortals, frequently more brutal than the brutes themselves.

Poets, for the honour of poetry which has rendered them so sublime, should be careful never to profane it. They should have had more respect for their art, than thus to degrade it by versifying at random. Every one wishes to celebrate in verse the object of his passion ; and hence have arisen a profusion of poems as indecent as ridiculous.

Every science that passes beyond its proper bounds, draws in its train a thousand inconveniences. The Creator has assigned limits to all things, and he has ordained for the harmony of the universe, and of society, that those limits should be respected. Without this there would be a dreadful confusion in the universe.

The errors of infidelity arise from a wish to give to philosophy the attributes of theology ; and from pretending that theology, like mathematicks, must proceed by demonstrations.

It has been thus with poetry, which being divine in its origin, as having God alone for its object, has become wholly terrestrial, by the abuses which have crept in. Men have even been so impious as to employ it against God himself, whilst its institution had no other design, than to do homage to Jehovah, and this is really its highest dignity.

To address beautiful verses to perishable objects, is to bury diamonds in the sand. Poetry then becomes unnatural, and the poet renders himself truly contemptible.

The sciences, like the arts, have no real grandeur, but when they are traced back to their first cause.

You did not expect, my dear Abbe, that a poem would procure a sermon, and so much the rather as men do not generally preach on Parnassus, and poetical licences give poets more liberty than they ought to take.

If all your poems are like that which you have just addressed to me, I applaud the genius which has made you a poet. I will shew it to our common friend as you desire, and I am persuaded he will be as pleased with it as myself.

It must be confessed that the country in which you live (Parmesan) contributes much to excite poetical rapture. I have crossed it more than once with the greatest pleasure, and felt that if I had really been a poet, I should have celebrated those beautiful plains, and those magnificent flocks which constitute their ornament. Thus it may be seen that you have introduced into your poems whatever is most pleasing at Parma, at Colonne, and their environs.

Here is very poor prose in return for beautiful verses; but as a poet like you, has the talent of embellishing every thing, you will invest even this letter with decorations, and will be disposed to receive with pleasure the assurance that I am, with much esteem and friendship, &c.

*Rome, 10th March, 1753.*

## LETTER LIV.

## TO THE SAME.

I THINK, my dear Abbé, that you really wish to make me a poet, by attaching me to your delightful verses ; but it is an enterprize that will not succeed. I enjoy more than any one else your poetry, but I have neither that fire—which is found on Mount Parnassus, nor that enthusiasm which frequently blazes more than Vesuvius itself.

I think the person for whom you interest yourself, will succeed at Naples. I have strongly recommended him to Prince San Severo, the protector of the Arts and Sciences, and who is as obliging as he is well informed ; but your protégé must labour, and especially at first. I have used every argument to persuade him that the art of sculpture suffers no mediocrity, and that he must have two souls, in order that he may put one at least into his performances.

I should much wish that he may hereafter revive those great artists who have almost made our finest statues speak. The sculptor has the advantage of

relief, which the painter has not ; but the painter has on the other hand the benefit of colouring, and thus have the Arts, each in its kind, their advantages and inconveniences.

If you can make me a hymn in praise of a Saint whom some good nuns wish to celebrate on the day of his festival, you would greatly oblige me.

It relates to S. Cajetan, with whose life you ought to be well acquainted ; for I suppose you are familiar with other deities, besides those of Parnassus.

Send it me, I entreat you, as soon as possible. It is to be set to music, and sung by several voices, not in the Church, but in the Convent, so that they wish to have it in the purest Italian.

Consider that however diligent you may be, you will not prevent those who earnestly desire this hymn, from feeling a great degree of impatience.

Five or six strophes will be sufficient, and especially from your hand, since by your precision and energy, you have the faculty of saying many things, and very forcibly, in a few words.

Precision, and the faculty of reducing into a very small compass a multitude of objects and beauties, is an admirable talent.

Prose is very defective when it is slovenly, but in poetry it is intolerable. There must not be an useless epithet; and every word as far as possible should be a thought: it is this which renders Tasso an admirable poet. He gives full play to his imagination, by his wonderful manner of compressing his thoughts. It is not the same with Ariosto and Dante, who alternately conduct their readers through the most flowery fields, and the most barren deserts. The reading these Authors really resembles a long voyage, in which we meet with some pleasant and some tedious places.

It is to please you that I have dwelt so long on the subject of poetry; as well as to procure myself the highest gratification, that of assuring you of the inviolable esteem I have vowed to you, and with which I am, &c.

## LETTER LV.

TO THE ABBE GENOVESI.

AT sight of the metaphysical ideas with which the production which you sent me was replete, my thoughts on the subject were powerfully excited, and I represented to myself, according to my weak talents, man as he is, and as he ought to be. I saw him at once so diminutive and so great, so weak and so mighty, that I gloried in him and yet was humbled.

You shall judge for yourself if I have conceived of him aright. I add to this letter the picture which my perception or my imagination has drawn of him; and if you find there what you wish, I shall be delighted to have been able to second your intentions, and to contribute to the work you are about to publish on Man and on God.

It is not of so much importance to say new things on this subject, as to say them well. Men frequently disgust metaphysical readers, by affecting to be abstract. The more natural and simple things are, the more beautiful do they appear.

Metaphysics, to be just, should relate only what we feel, when they refer to the faculties of our soul ; otherwise we rove amongst the regions of chimeras.

The greater part of metaphysicians, both ancient and modern, have thought proper to establish systems ; and this has brought a degree of ridicule on metaphysics ; a science in itself very simple and full of truth.

It is not with the eyes of the mind, as with those of the body. What I see in idea, my neighbour does not perceive, our ideas having a thousand different causes. Hence arises that great diversity of opinions amongst philosophers, and the persuasion of Malebranche, that we see all in God ; and that of Locke, that all our ideas proceed from the senses.

I approve your observations so much the more, as you are not systematical, and do not wish to oblige others to adopt your mode of thinking : all your ideas appear to me proper, your principles clear, your conclusions just ; so that your work may be said to be the production of a sound judgment and of solid reasoning.

If, after having published it, you meet with controversialists, it will be a proof that you have not convinced them, and a warning to you not to

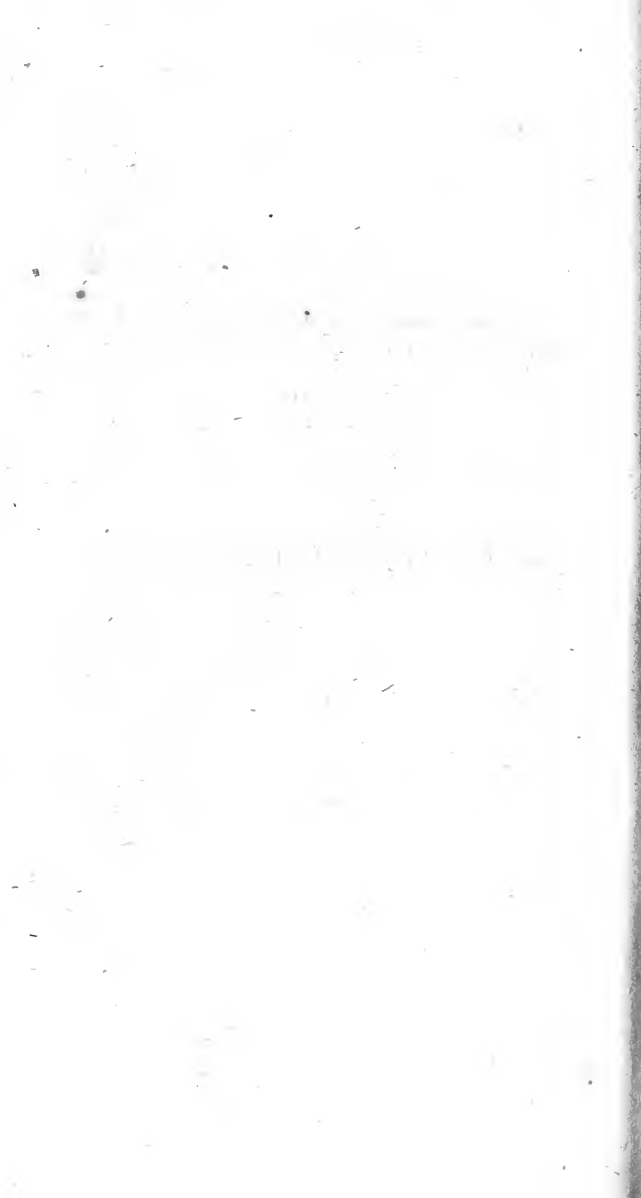


answer them. There are amongst writers barking dogs, and we must be content to let them bark on. They would remould all men, with whom they did not agree.

As your book is to appear in Latin, I have thought proper to address to you the observations you request, in that language, which is as familiar to me as the Italian. If you find in them any thing worthy of your work, it will be easy for you, by merely adapting the style to your own, to introduce them. You will confer upon them real merit, by your manner of appropriating them.

This will perhaps be the first time, that a pen of gold and of lead have been employed in the same work ; but you wished it, and I cannot refuse when called upon to prove to you the whole extent of my esteem and attachment.

*Rome, 22nd June, 1755.*



## A PICTURE OF MAN.

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MAN presents himself under so many different aspects, he unites so many contrarieties, that he must necessarily appear a being wholly celestial; or an entirely animal creature. By his soul he is allied to God in the most glorious and intimate manner; in his body he partakes of nothingness in the most humiliating and sensible manner. Now he is a day which cheers us with its brightness, and now a night which terrifies us by its darkness.

From these opposite views it follows that the man of Lucretius is not that of Descartes, nor the man of Spinoza that of Pascal; and that if we would judge of ourselves according to our real qualities and imperfections, we must appeal to religion for an exact knowledge of what we are.

Christianity, secure from every danger, and always maintaining a proper medium, shews us man on the earth, and in the bosom of God, as in a

double centre whence we proceeded, and to which we must all return.

The glances of every child towards heaven from the moment of its birth, the tears with which he bedews his cradle, prove in a striking manner that his origin is at once earthly and divine. If his soul, like a flower which expands by slow degrees, is insensibly developed, it is because dependent on a body which is slow in its progress.

At length the instant arrives when reason dawns; and then it is but a spark which produces a flame or a bright and beneficent light, according to the manner in which it is governed, and the objects to which it is attached. I now refer to the passions, the senses, and education, which are so many circumstances influencing men in a greater or less degree. If sensible objects govern him, he becomes the wretched sport of every surrounding object; if on the contrary spiritual things govern him, he is king of himself, and his reason shines in all its glory. Then God appears always present to him, and creatures are in his sight but as perishing goods, which he must use as though he used them not. The modes of education; the climate in which they are born; the impressions they receive; the objects which surround them, are so many moulds in which they take different forms :

thus the man born in the Indies, is not the European : thus the man educated by Aristotle is not the man formed by Newton : the essence is the same, but the shades are so different, that an entirely different manner of thought and perception is produced.

We should also consider as the effect of a particular Providence the happiness of being born under a government which rectifies our thoughts, and in the bosom of a family which instils into us principles of wisdom.

It is certain, that every man, in whatever country he may be born, is indebted to God, to his neighbour, to his country ; and that he should endeavour to instruct himself in the truth, that he might not be the dupe of a false religion, and that he might be secured from superstition. It is not less certain, that if he be a simple citizen, he should labour by his exertions and his talents, to render himself useful to society ; and that if he be of an elevated rank he should pay a tribute to the public, either by his industry, his beneficence, or his valour. He who recompenses society in these three ways, is truly a great man, and gratitude owes him statues.

The man who lives by himself, lives almost always in an enemy's country : heated blood, an

eccentric imagination, contending inclinations, and inflammable passions, keep up an intestine war, the consequences of which are frequently most fatal. Life is spent in this inward conflict, when we would govern ourselves with wisdom, for there are two men within us, the earthly man and the spiritual man, which are continually warring against each other, and which only agree when an enlightened understanding, and an upright heart, are the pilot and rudder. Thus is man an object of admiration or of pity, according to his actions.

We should never finish, were we to detail his defects and contrarieties. His soul, his mind, his reason, his will, like the four elements, although they have nothing material in them, are contending with each other, and hence result tempests, and volcanoes which disfigure the image of the Creator; for the more we examine man, the more we know that he cannot have so much grandeur and majesty, without being the emanation of a Supreme Intelligence.

When man controuls his passions, and grants them only a reasonable liberty, he deserves the homage due to virtue, and it is then that he announces himself to be truly the sovereign of the animal creation. The different conditions in which we are placed, when our reason is in exercise, are

so many means of arriving at perfection. But it is of importance to make a good choice, otherwise we become monsters in society, and disturb the harmony which should subsist among reasonable creatures. But man, almost always seduced by sensible objects, is frequently deceived respecting his vocation; and hence arises the shock of so many different passions which put him out of humour with himself, which disturb families, which agitate empires, and which obscure virtue.

Thus we seldom see man in a true light. We imagine indeed it is he; but it is only an assemblage of extravagancies, tastes, and opinions, which he has borrowed from the authors he reads, and from the persons whose company he frequents. Study itself most frequently serves only to make him unnatural, by taking from him all that was his own, and by rendering him a factitious person.

St. Augustin said that man, considered in his essence and in all his relations, is an enigma the most difficult to explain. Indeed almost always unlike himself, he escapes from the pencil, when we wish to take his portrait. On account of his dependence on a perishable and carnal body, his thoughts like his blood are agitated, and participate in its fluidity. God alone could unite so intimately an indivisible soul to a substance wholly

composed of parts,—an immortal spirit to a mass of flesh destined to return to dust ; in short thoughts to feeling, ideas to fibres, and affections to nerves.

It is sufficient then to consider and descend into ourselves, to see a continually new prodigy ; but we find there nothing but a frightful abyss, if God do not occupy the first place. Each of us should erect to Him a throne in his own heart, otherwise it becomes a chaos in which there is neither order nor symmetry.

The soul surrounded by the senses, is like a king environed by his guards ; but if this sentinel suffer itself to be vanquished, and be not careful to repulse those vices which would usurp the sovereignty, and render themselves masters of the place, the man then experiences within himself the most cruel anarchy.

Hence it is that there are so many materialists, and so many bad men. We stifle within ourselves the germ of immortality, and the soul becomes whatever it pleases, provided we follow the torrent of our passions. In vain does conscience, that faithful monitor, lift up her voice ; we resist her authority ; and pronounce that intellectual substance a mere chimera, which may be justly styled the mother of our thoughts, our reasoning powers, and our affections.



Man talks extravagantly when he attributes these astonishing operations to the inert mass of his body, and dares to give the honour of them to the sharpness of his bile, or the quick circulation of his blood. None but a spiritual Being can produce immaterial ideas. We might collect together whatever is most subtle in air or in fire; we might agitate it in every possible manner, but we should never form a syllogism of it. Flame, however radiant and penetrating, has never yet developed a single thought, or a single judgment. Ah! how can that thought which traverses the world in the twinkling of an eye, which subjects the universe to its observation, which with the most rapid flight, rises even to the Infinite Being, which has neither situation, figure nor colour, which imperiously commands my whole body, and enforces obedience to itself, how can this be a part of the same body?

Was it then more difficult for God to create spirits than matter? Ah! why if he be essentially omnipotent could he not produce intellectual beings? Ah! why, if a thought be really spiritual, should not the soul that engenders it be so also? Well may we then apply to this subject that passage of Horace.

“Fortes creantur fortibus

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— — — — — nec imbellem feroces  
 Progenerant aquilæ columbam."

We trace their sires; nor can the bird of Jove,  
 Intrepid, fierce, beget th' unwarlike Dove.

FRANCIS.

In order to fulfil his destiny according to the plan of his Creator, man must necessarily be at once terrestrial and spiritual. Without a body he could not enjoy the material world which he must inhabit: without a soul he could not know or arrive at the possession of the Deity. As a compound being he is at once subordinate to the elements, and superior to the universe. It is he who applies the sciences to a thousand pleasing and useful purposes; who makes use of them with the greatest success to rectify his ideas, to enlarge his mind and to arrive at the knowledge of the Supreme Being.

The earth without man, is only a vast desert; or rather, a tomb: it has need of his hand to be cultivated, and of his society that it may be inhabited; so that she considers him with reason as her master and sovereign. She is also ready to acknowledge his authority and recompense his

labours, by offering to him in the course of the seasons, the fairest flowers, and most precious fruits.

It is melancholy, that this man whom the earth obeys as her king, leaves every where vestiges of his crimes and errors : We see no country which has not been saturated with blood shed either by hatred or fanaticism, by love or ambition. Virtue has never appeared in the world, but as lightning flashing out of the thick gloom of a tempest.

Perhaps, however, man is not so wicked as we imagine : Idleness has prompted him to more excesses than perverseness. The opportunities of doing ill, are greatly multiplied with a man who is without employment ; and if women are reproached with being loquacious or slanderous, it is because they are generally unoccupied. I have not pretended to paint man as he is ; but I have said enough to give a just idea of his nature, and to make him acknowledge that he is an entire being when united to God ; and that on the contrary, he is nothing when detached from him.

Reason without religion, like those bright exhalations which appear at midnight, enlightens only to conduct to some precipice.

The present age exhibits the most melancholy examples of those who, notwithstanding their

genius and knowledge with which they are adorned, appear to forget God, to chase and worship phantoms.

Every one must naturally revolt against such an absurdity ; but the title of Philosopher given to those who call in question the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, imposes on the multitude, and causes the most pernicious sophists to be considered infallible oracles.

Let man retire into himself, let him examine into his soul, his heart, his conscience, in short all his faculties ; and he will find the strongest arguments in favour of religion ; but in order to this, it is necessary that he subjugate his senses, and maintain the dominion over his passions ; for these are so many liars, so many impostors, who incessantly preach up Materialism, and boast of the love of pleasure.

How sad is it to have within ourselves, that which is capable of rising to Jehovah, of maintaining the most sublime intercourse with him, and of rendering ourselves immortal, whether by cultivating the sciences, or by distinguishing ourselves by acts of beneficence, and yet destroy such precious germs.

Most men are but abortives ; they either contract their hearts by attaching themselves only to perish,

ing objects, or stifle their genius by employing themselves only in useless occupations. The most sublime sciences are not worthy of our souls, if they lead not to God as their beginning and their end.

All these miseries arise from the false estimate which is made of the excellence of the human soul, from man's priding himself in what ought rather to humble him, from the original defilement of his nature by the touch of sin. Death which awaits him from his first breath, will alone teach him the importance of rising superior to all sensible objects ; but death never warns us of our errors, till it is too late to correct them. We still think ourselves only in our cradle, while death is opening our sepulchres, and causes us to descend into them, at the very time in which we are forming future projects ; the rapidity with which the moments flow between our birth and our death is inconceivable. I compare them to a flash of lightning, which issues from a cloud suddenly to re-enter it ; so that it may be said in a figurative sense, that every man is born and dies in the space of a day. His birth is the twilight, his infancy the dawn, his manhood the meridian, his death the evening. Then, with respect to him, all objects disappear, and an eternal night envelops him in

darkness, unless illuminated by that uncreated light, with which the righteous shall be replenished and crowned.

This great object should not be lost sight of for a moment. If man would be what he ought, let him frequently represent to himself Death holding the fatal urn in which all generations are reduced to ashes. This it is which should fix our attention, if we would live as Christian Philosophers. Thus man is whilst here, only like a shadow which passes away; and it is in eternity we should contemplate him, if we would form an exalted conception of his nature. It is certainly a grander object than the firmament itself, to behold at its birth and its death that worm called man, pass in the twinkling of an eye into the bosom of God, at the moment when the earth shakes under his feet, and a temporal life is taken from him to give place to one entirely divine.

It is astonishing that man, born as he is to such high destinies, should have so little curiosity to know them, and incorporate himself with the vilest and most contemptible objects, whilst expecting in another world to be united to God himself.

Philosophers have not considered in proportion to the importance of the subject, the moment when man will no longer be any thing on the earth, in

order to be perfect in eternity. Their thoughts seem to have been bounded by the tomb, and an immortal soul which should naturally have succeeded in idea, which, disengaged from the ties which, confined it here below, seems no longer to have either existence or duration.

I know that the night of the tomb is a chaos which we can never disperse whilst we languish in this vale of tears. I know that notwithstanding all that faith has revealed as certain on this subject, we shall be filled with the greatest surprize when we enter upon an eternal state. It is a gulph in which all our reason is lost, and which we shall never know till we see it.

As often as we see a fellow mortal entering the region of the dead, we should feel assured that all the faculties of his mind then acquire a surprizing activity which serves to make him sensible to an unspeakable degree, either of eternal happiness or misery.

Man passes into futurity, as he came into this world, without knowing where he is going. When we have lost sight of the world to which we have been accustomed, another will present itself, but so extraordinary and sublime, that it has no relation to the present.

In vain should we apply to the sciences, to ele-

vate us by means of religion, to the uncreated Being ; this life is, properly speaking, only the life of the body, so much do our senses and our necessities tyrannize over us ; but the life to come is in reality the life of the soul. There it will expand in perfection, no longer encumbered by a mass of flesh which retarded all its operations, and so confounded it with terrestrial objects, as to suffer itself to be enslaved, if care be not taken to silence the passions. Thus we must unite the present and the future, earth and heaven, in short this world and the other, if we would know man perfectly ; for he really belongs both to the present and the future life, we see only his shadow, if we do not follow him beyond the grave. There it is that we must follow him if we would know his grandeur and see him as a new Phenix rising out of his ashes all superb and radiant ; he will then learn that his destiny was not to vegetate, but to live in the Being of beings.

If man were habitually to consider himself as he will be at death, he would hasten to complete his existence by the fervour of his desires ; he would wish frequently to converse on that happy moment, when he shall put off this miserable life which retards his glory and felicity.

Death, to which we have naturally so great an



aversion, is however the brightest and most glorious moment of man's existence, if he have fulfilled his task on earth with fidelity, according to the laws prescribed by religion.

I compare the good man, when he dies, to the sun, which, after having been covered with a thick cloud pierces at length through mists and fogs, and shines with the greatest lustre; the wants of this life, like the passions, are so many clouds which enwrap us, and conceal from ourselves the sight of our greatness and faculties.

I am not surprized that death has been the subject of continual meditation to Christian Philosophers. When properly viewed, it offers to man nothing but what is great and consolatory. But we only judge of it by the horror of the tomb, that is, only by that which relates to our bodies; and then it exhibits to us the most dreadful scene. This it is which caused St. Charles Boromie to say, that if death were the enemy of the body, it was the best friend of the soul, and that man did not rightly understand his own interests, when he did not desire it.

Ought we to hate a moment which will fill us with glory and happiness. The body is a frail edifice which must necessarily be thrown down, that the soul may find its own centre. It is like

those scaffoldings of which architects make use in building a palace, but which they take down when the building is perfected.

Conscience no doubt generally reproaches us, when we have so great a dread of death. It is doubtless, formidable on account of the judgments of God which are always impenetrable ; but God is mercy itself, who desireth not the death of a sinner, and who assures us that he will forget all our iniquities, though they were multiplied like the grains of sand upon the sea shore, if we sincerely return to him.

Death in the eye of faith is not the destruction of man but a second creation, much more astonishing than the former, because instead of the miseries which attend us from our birth, we shall find in a dying hour consolations and treasures which the eye has not seen, and which now we cannot know.

## LETTER LVI.

TO M. L'ABBE FRUGONI.

It is from the library of his Eminence Cardinal Passionéi that I send you these reflections,\* written as you will easily perceive in great haste. If you find in them any thing useful, so much the better for you ; if not, so much the worse for me.

It will not be the first time that I have written things fit only to be erased. I will own to you that I frequently erase my own productions, and that it is this which has prevented me from composing any work, joined to the fear of increasing the multitude of writers of the age, already a thousand times too numerous.

This must be balanced against former ages, when there were no writers ; for all the past ages should be taken collectively, so that one may furnish excuses for the other, and that there may

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\* The reflections to which Ganganelli here refers are those on Style, which will be found at the end of this letter.



be an alternation of light and shade, of vice and virtue.

It is always with the liveliest emotions that I enter that rich and magnificent library with which you are perfectly well acquainted, though it is a place in which I feel myself so insignificant a being that I am utterly ashamed. So many excellent authors by whom I here see myself surrounded, seem to reproach me with incapacity; happily no one hears them but myself, otherwise I should be too much humbled.

This library is enlarged every day by the care which the Cardinal takes to augment it. It is his delight and treasure, and the attempt to deprive him of it, would be to annihilate him. A passion for good books is an honourable one, especially when their contents are impressed on the memory and the heart.

Foreigners of every country contribute no less than books to increase the knowledge of Cardinal Passionéi. No individuals of a certain rank come to Rome without hastening to visit him, and communicate any information they may possess. Even French ladies, celebrated for the productions of their genius, are anxious to secure to themselves the advantage of being frequently with him, and receiving from him due attention.

For my own part, I continue to reside in a snug corner, content with admiring him at a distance : This is the only part a simple Monk should act.

It would not be the same with you if you were to come here. The Cardinal who particularly esteems you, would consider it a feast to receive you, as I do to assure you of the inviolable and respectful attachment with which I have the honour to be, &c.

*26th June, 1758.*

## REFLECTIONS ON STYLE,

SENT TO THE ABBE FRUGONI, WITH THE  
PRECEDING LETTER.

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STYLE being the manner of expressing our thoughts, and giving them their colouring, particular care should be taken to render it analogous to the different kinds of writing. One species of composition requires a plain style, but another a sublime style.

Every writer has a style of his own ; and whatever address he may use to vary it, connoisseurs will not be deceived. The Creator, who has not made two things alike, has diversified, not only our countenances, but also our opinions and ideas, as well as the manner of expressing them. He has intended that each mind should bear its own peculiar impress ; and this wonderful difference, which characterizes every individual, proves the infinite resources of a Being to whom nothing is difficult ; and who doth whatever seemeth him good.

Authors may very properly be compared to Sculptors and Painters. The pen of Writers resembles the chisel of the Statuary, or the pencil of the Artist. Thus every book, every discourse, every letter, is a picture and a work in relievo. If the style be bold and animated it may be compared to Sculpture, if on the contrary it be highly coloured, we may pronounce it a well executed painting.

Agreeably to these comparisons, a library is a gallery, in which all the books are so many portraits. Some of these are emblems of the heart, others embody the understanding; these render the soul palpable, all impalpable as it is in itself, and those enrich the imagination with the most beautiful images.

Every scientific writer should be on his guard against a florid or highly ornamented style; simplicity of style is most suited to scientific subjects, unless we wish to seduce our readers; and then we are quacks, not philosophers.

Style is a species of Magic, which is but too often successfully employed for the purpose of causing paradoxes to be received as truths, and sophisms as sound argument. By this stratagem the greater part of infidels and heretics have subtilly diffused their venom. Their works are

frequently so well written, that their contents are read for the sake of the style, and their harmoniously constructed sentences procure them many admirers.

Some works require a masculine style, such as orations and pleadings; but others, a grave and pathetic style, such as prayers and works of devotion.

History, being a picture which requires light and shade and lively colouring, it should be written with energy and truth, sometimes exhibiting objects in the strongest light, at other times softening them, scattering flowers at discretion, and always pourtraying Virtue in her loveliness, and Vice in her deformity.

I do not speak here of Romances, the best of which are worth nothing; because that like most of our theatrical pieces, they are almost all gigantic figures, and have generally the same termination. Besides it is morally impossible for a person who employs fiction to inculcate truth, not to act a double part, and consequently to become unnatural.

The style of Academical works should be brilliant, because they are solely within the jurisdiction of the imagination. They must contain meteors which dazzle, cascades which astonish, and



skilfully arranged lights which present objects in the most attractive form. The expressions should be so well put together that they should reciprocally embellish each other, as all the flowers which compose a nosegay relieve each other, so as to form an agreeable whole, capable of satisfying the eye. But frequently too great an effort of mind is employed to render a work interesting, by which means the painting becomes unnatural, and betrays too much labour.

With respect to the style of sermons, they offend against all rule, if they be not pathetic, nervous and sublime. St. Chrysostom has pointed out to us the path; he who, ever conversant with Deity, richly furnished with scriptural knowledge, and an intimate acquaintance with the human heart, speaks, thunders, awakens, and leaves sinners speechless with terror and remorse.

If a preacher only administer instruction, he does no more than prepare the mind, if he only touch the passions, he leaves but a transient impression, but if he pour forth unction, at the same time that he diffuses light, he has discharged the primary duty of a preacher.

Panegyrics, like funeral orations, should unite the style of the pulpit and of the academy; but to succeed in them the mind should only discover

itself in the choice of terms, and serve as a colouring to genius.

Genius alone can produce such works, as are at once simple and sublime, historical and polemical, instructive and affecting: morality should be their very soul, but it should appear voluntary, so that no effort or affectation may be perceived in the orator.

I have read scarcely any good funeral orations, because, after the exordium, the writer goes in search of fancy, which when sought by us can never be found.

A writer will often find under his pen that which he is seeking at a great distance; and then, instead of being surrounded by his own thoughts, he finds himself encompassed with foreign productions, which have a languid or forced appearance, like those plants of the south, which are brought into northern climes.

The epistolary style, is distinct from all others, and, being subjected to scarcely any other rules than those which each one prescribes to himself, according to his imagination, his taste, his caprice, or his humour, has nothing positively determined. Amongst females, it is generally more natural, because having seen and read less than most men, heir letters are transcripts of themselves.

Besides, the style of letters differs according to the rank we occupy, and the persons with whom we correspond. Thus when I write to you, my dear Abbé, I adopt the conversational style. It was that which Cicero employed in writing to his friends, but that is a model of which I fall very far short.

Although letters may be of great depth, and on highly interesting subjects, the epistolary style requires that we do not grow dull on the subjects of which they treat. Since it ought to resemble conversation, it must necessarily be simple and light.

Letters written in too flowery a style, are generally studied compositions, and these are not the best. The pen, in all letters of friendship generally runs without constraint; if it meet with a flower in its way, it gathers it; but does not stop to find it.

Our Holy Father (Benet XIV.) has the talent of epistolary writing with much more precision than is usual in our language. I have seen some of them in which there appear to be only thoughts, and no words. This is the effect of an imagination equally strong and lively, which expresses itself only in sallies of wit.

We have general rules for all the different kinds

of style ; but one certain principle is that every one has his own which it is often best to preserve. Nature, which is generally fettered by principles, is replaced by art, and we meet then only with factitious geniuses. There would be much less monotony in writing, if men were not to adhere too servilely to what they learn at college. It is by happy efforts that the yoke of ancient rules is broken, and this is almost always the part of genius. Every one who composes with too much method, generally writes very coldly ; a sparkling imagination is extinguished if encumbered with shackles.

I see no reason why all sermons should be moulded into the same form. The eloquence of the pulpit would take a bold flight, if it traced out for itself the best plan. Were I a preacher, I think I should not confine myself to divisions and subdivisions. We do not observe this constraint in the fathers, who were the most eloquent of men.

When the mind and heart are filled and warmed with their subject, it is easy to instruct and move without a first and second part.

Every discourse should doubtless have a natural geometry, that it may have order and not be a crude mass, revolting to the auditors ; but a clear understanding is sufficient, and then a man may

flatter himself that he will not be mistaken in this respect. Every one has in his reasoning powers an excellent course of logic, which it is only necessary to bring into action.

I do not pretend to say that rules of eloquence should not be given, and on the best manner of composing discourses; but it is dangerous to lay so much stress upon them, as to prohibit all departure from them.

The greatest painters prescribed rules for themselves, and we must endeavour to become our own models instead of being always imitators.

THE END.





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