

humility, cling to him with all the strength of your devotion. Regard me as his servant, your brother servant, a companion for your journey to the homeland where we are fellow heirs, if I have loyally fulfilled the service for which I was sent to you, if I have done all I could that you might win the heritage of salvation. This is my answer to your enquiries. I shall concern myself with your needs and my own when I return.

LETTER 153

TO PETER THE VENERABLE

To the lord Peter, Abbot of Cluny, the humble affection of Bernard.

I RECEIVED your letter and was overjoyed that such a man as you are like myself. When and where shall we have a suitable opportunity for the meeting and talk which you suggest? In the meantime I send these few words in answer to yours, and will gladly send more if I can be sure that I will not be troublesome to you. How could a person like myself dare to approach you, unless you should stoop to give me access to your presence?

LETTER 154

TO THE SAME

BECAUSE I am sure that you realize how unwilling I am to oppose your Reverence in any way, I do not hesitate to make any suggestions to you that I believe are necessary. Concerning the monastery of St. Bertin, I could wish that you would act with greater moderation than you have done. Even if you were able to bring it into subjection to yourself quite peacefully and without any opposition, even so I do not see what you would gain. I do not believe you are a person who would find any pleasure in an honour which is accompanied by such a burden of responsibility. As it is, since you cannot claim this monastery without great trouble and disturbance, it seems to me that reluctance to stir up strife affords you an excellent pretext for retiring gracefully from the attempt.

LETTER 155

TO POPE INNOCENT II

This letter concerns the misdeemeanors of a young man called Philip. When the See of Tours fell vacant through the death of Hildebert in 1133, Geoffrey, Count of Tours, expelled the Chapter from the city. His reasons for this rather high-handed behaviour are difficult to divine. When the Chapter met, elsewhere than in their own city, one party of them elected, quite

uncanonically, a young monk of Fontaines-les-Blanches, by the name of Philip, a nephew of Hildebert's predecessor, Gilbert. Philip went off to Anacleus to have his election confirmed. He then returned to Tours and took possession of his See. The other party in the Chapter had in the meantime elected a certain Hugh, who was consecrated at Le Mans. Philip fled from Tours and took with him the treasure of the Cathedral. When the matter was referred to Pope Innocent he entrusted St. Bernard with Apostolic Authority to institute an enquiry into the matter. The upshot of this was that Philip's election was annulled by St. Bernard. The supporters of Philip appealed over St. Bernard's head to Innocent himself. It is at this juncture that the saint wrote the following letter. Innocent supported the decision of St. Bernard, and Philip sought refuge with Anacleus. He later repented his misdeeds, became a monk at Clairvaux, and was Prior there when the saint died.

MAy the members share in the health of the head! May the balm that was poured over Aaron's head until it flowed down his beard, reach to the very skirts of his robe! If the sheep are scattered when the shepherd is smitten, when he is well and strong may they return to their pasture without fear. What I mean is this. The city of God has been rejoiced by messages of your many glorious successes. It is therefore only right that your triumphs should invigorate the whole Church; that when God honours the chosen of his people, they too should feel themselves honoured and all the stronger for the increase of vigour in their head. The Church has suffered with you, therefore she ought to reign with you. This is something worthy of you and necessary for us. If the arm of justice was not shortened, if zeal for it did not languish in times of fear and suffering, shall we give up now when victory is within sight? Shall the courage that shone in weakness fade away in the time of triumph?

2. With what a strong hand was that noble monastery of Vézelay set in order!¹ The Majesty of the Apostolic See did not even consider giving away one inch to the insane rabble of armed people, to the frenzied fury of undisciplined monks, or to what is more powerful than all this, the forces of mammon. What shall I say of St. Benedict's?² Was the anger of a king able to shackle the liberty of spirit armed and stirred against flesh and blood? So also were the churches of SS. Memmius and Satyrus wonderfully transformed from synagogues of Satan to sanctuaries of God, whether wicked men liked it or not.³ And at Liège too, a choleric and furious king was

¹ The monks of Vézelay rebelled against the authority of the Abbot of Cluny when he tried to impose an Abbot upon them.

² This was the Abbey of St. Benedict on the Po. The trouble was similar to what happened at Vézelay.

³ St. Memmius was a famous church of Canons at Châlons. Innocent II made them follow the Rule of St. Augustine. St. Satyrus was a church of secular Canons at Bourges. Owing to their worldly lives they were expelled by Innocent and replaced by Augustinian Canons.

unable to enforce, with his barbaric and menacing sword, acquiescence to his shocking and shameless demands.¹ Who can praise enough the shafts that have been just lately hurled by the same hand, although from afar, against the disturbers of the Church of Orleans? Truly the arrow of Jonathan did not turn back nor was his sword returned empty. At the word of this the King was troubled, but not all Jerusalem with him. Rather he mitigated his wrath at last, ashamed and fearful to be armed in vain against the Lord and against his anointed. Because of all this the majesty of your name fills all the earth and your greatness is above the heavens, but such a good beginning deserves the ornament of a worthy end. This is what all who love you eagerly hope for, this is what they beg may soon occur.

3. With a like zeal and with an equally powerful arm it is necessary that the Church of Tours should be immediately succoured. Unless you bring it speedy aid, she also will be on the point of perishing. They say that the spirit of Gilbert lives on in Philip, that he is heir to his ambition as well as his nephew by blood. The prolonged agony of his mother Church indicates clearly enough how that young man is consumed with the lust to rule. The wretch has disembowelled her in order that he may beget honour for himself. By God's will an end has been put to his misdeeds at last, if the authority of the Apostolic See should be pleased to ratify what has been enacted against him at the demand of justice, under compulsion from his wickedness, for the preservation of peace. God forbid that you should put to shame the loyal children to whom you graciously committed the settling of this business. God forbid that raging ambition should find a protector in the defender of innocence. How great is the audacity of this man to attempt such a thing, how great his madness to hope for it! Twice over has the wretch despised the Apostolic mandate, and now even more brazenly he is venturing to present himself before justice itself in your person. Who does not see clearly that despairing of his case he is impiously planning to undermine the tower of your strength with the power of his riches. But there is no danger of this, for he is Innocent whom he is tempting, and the son of iniquity will have no power to injure him.

4. While we sigh for your presence, dearest father, we recall the memory of your kindness, and in this we find our consolation for your absence. You are ever in our hearts, often on our tongues. Your name is the salt of all talk, it is sweet to the ear, becoming to the lips, refreshing and warming to the heart. It is extolled at meetings of holy men, it is the chief topic of their conversation, their prayers are full of it, it is an invitation to prayer. We are all anxious for you just

¹ Lothar at the Council held at Liège made it a condition of his support for Innocent that the right of investiture should be restored to him. The situation was saved by St. Bernard, who fearlessly rebuked Lothar and reduced him to submission.

now and pray for you and yours that the Eternal God, for whom and on behalf of whom you are labouring in time, may hold you worthy of everlasting memory.

LETTER 156

TO POPE INNOCENT II, CONCERNING THE ELECTION OF PHILIP
TO THE SEE OF TOURS

The text of this letter gives the impression of having been hastily dictated to an incompetent scribe.

I HAVE called a meeting, venerable father, to settle the quarrel of Tours, and I have convened it at Blois since it is in the neighbourhood and both convenient and safe for those concerned. When we met in that place the opponents of Philip's election advanced many reasons against it. So as not to bother you with all the details, the two chief arguments against the election were that the candidate was under age and that there was a defect in both the number and the status of the electors, since all the archdeacons, the dean and cantor as well as all the priests of his church and most of the clergy, in fact all the persons of any consequence in the Church, had been expelled from their homes and the Church, and could not therefore be present. On the other hand, they maintain that their election of Hugh was fair and canonical because he was the choice of those best qualified to elect. They deny that it is any valid argument against their election to say that it was held outside the city and church contrary to the usual practice, for the persecution rendered this necessary; or that the representatives of the other party were not present, for they had been informed and summoned, but had refused to come. They say that the place chosen had been agreed upon by both parties, but that their opponents stole a march on them by anticipating the day and hurriedly electing Philip on the quiet without them knowing anything about it: that they did not even wait for any of the suffragan bishops, who are more in favour of their election and have given their assent to it.¹ To this the party of Philip reply: We have a full and adequate answer to all this if only a day convenient to us is chosen. We do not deny that the present day is the one appointed, but we affirm that our candidate was not informed of it. Since the case concerns him personally, he ought to be cited by name. To this the others reply: Not at all, the dispute is between the electors concerning the election and not between the candidates concerning the See. It is a matter for the litigants to decide, it is they who should be cited, and it would

¹ *nam nec de suffraganeis episcopis quoniam expectatum, sine vero eos magis favore electioni et assensum prohibuisse.* Eales: 'Nor did they wait even for any of the suffragan bishops; but these are said to favour the election, and to have assented to it.'

be a most serious and improper thing to count the candidates amongst the litigants. No one was excluded by the letters of citation, and it is quite enough that Philip was summoned generally with the others. In fact you were clearly told to seek him out.¹ But he had gone away and was not found, so that it was exceedingly improbable that he should be present on the day. But there was nothing to be gained by absenting himself, for the case could be settled without him. And if you say that he should have been allowed to speak for himself as the matter chiefly concerned him, we can only reply that the fault is either his for disappearing or yours for not finding him. If a man chooses to be absent, not only from his city, but even from his kingdom and country, or what his intentions may be for so doing, is no concern of those whose duty it is to send out general letters of citation to the church and city. If he has any confidence in the justice of his case, what is there lacking for a fair trial? We see him surrounded by a crowd of supporters, men experienced and skilled in litigation. He even has armed men to guard him, as though he would have any need for these! He also has the support of bishops and an excellent promoter. Was he then so unprepared? If so, why this large crowd of supporters? And if he was unprepared, the judge offers him all he can need. These things we say, if it should appear that Philip really was ignorant of the day; but how can he now maintain that he has not been informed of the day and place of the hearing since the Abbot of Clairvaux himself told him when he met him hiding in the Sec of Cambrai, as he chanced to be passing by eighteen days ago?

2. When I had heard all this it seemed best both to me and to the religious and wise men, bishops, abbots and clergy, who were with me, to put an end to this prolonged ordeal of the Church and tolerate no longer the subtrefuges and delays of those who cared only for their own interests and nothing for the fate of the Church. We therefore decided that, in the interests of justice, the case ought to be opened immediately and that the pretexts for further delay were not valid. Thereupon the partisans of Philip, having but small confidence in their case, adopted their usual evasive tactics, and appealed. Then we produced the Apostolic rescript which commanded us to settle the case definitely and obliged both parties to abide by our decision. But the partisans of Philip refused to pay any heed and walked out. They were twice recalled, but they refused to come back. So we turned to the other side, but with full judicial procedure, and proceeded with the case as you commanded. When we had received canonical proof of the two points mentioned above, examined all the witnesses, and offered Mass for guidance,² we quashed the election of Philip on the

¹ . . . *quoniam vobis manifeste denunciatum fuerit eum querere*. Eales: . . . although you cannot deny that it was openly announced by you that Philip was being sought for.
² . . . *post peracta sacrificia*. Eales: . . . and completing all formalities.

authority of the Apostolic Sec. With regard to Hugh, since it is evident that he was elected while still below sacred orders, we leave the decision of his case, as is proper, to your mercy.

LETTER 157

TO PHILIP, THE INTRUDED ARCHBISHOP OF TOURS

In this very 'Bernardine' letter, the saint addresses himself to Philip. Almost certainly it was written before the previous letter, when Philip had gone to Rome to have his election ratified by Anacletus, but before he had returned to Tours, and been forced to retire again.

YOU are causing me great sorrow, my dear Philip. I beg you not to mock at my grief, because, if you do not see why I should grieve for you, then there is all the more reason why I should do so. Whatever you think of yourself, I think that your condition calls for a whole fount of tears. My grief is no matter for mockery, but for sympathy. My sorrow has no mere human cause, it is not occasioned by the loss of any fleeting chattels, but of you, Philip. I cannot better describe how great is the cause of my sorrow than by saying that Philip is the cause of it. When I have said this, I have declared what is a great source of distress for the Church, who once cherished you in her bosom when you were growing like a lily, and blossoming with every heavenly gift. Who would not have said then that you were a youth of fair hopes, a young man with great gifts. But alas! how your blossom has faded. From what great hopes has France fallen who gave you birth and nourished you! Oh, if you did but know, even you! If you set yourself to learn, you soon will know grounds for grief; and then in your grief, my grief will bear fruit. I would say more were I to follow my inclination, but I do not wish to say much while I am still uncertain, lest I be like one bearing the air. I have written this, so that you should know how greatly I care for you, and that I am always at hand if God should inspire you with the wish to talk to me and afford me the pleasure of your company. I am at Viterbo and you, I hear, are in Rome. Be so good, I beg you, to answer this letter and tell me how it strikes you, so that I may know what to do, whether I should grieve more or less for you. And if you scorn everything I have said and refuse to hear me, I will not lose the fruit of this letter, for it proceeds from charity, but you will have to answer for your contempt before that fearful tribunal.

¹ *A quanta spe decidit Francia*. Wakin Williams (*op. cit.*) sees here a reminiscence of the *Quanta de spe decidit* from the *Henauithinor* of Terence (II.iii.9).

LETTER 158

TO POPE INNOCENT II

Written on behalf of the Bishop of Troyes, who had got himself into trouble by trying to reform the clergy.

THE insolence of the clergy is being everywhere a nuisance and troubling the whole Church. The cause of it is the negligence of the bishops. The bishops throw what is holy to the dogs, and cast pearls before swine, who turn upon them and tread them down. But it is only right that they should have to suffer for those they foster. Because they do not correct those whom they endow with the riches of the Church, they have to put up with their misconduct. The clergy fatten on the sweat of others, they devour the fruits of the earth without charge, and so 'malice distils from their pampered lives'. The old saying of Scripture is true even to-day: 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to take their pleasure'. The mind accustomed to delicate meats, and uncultivated by the rake of discipline, contracts much filth. And if you attempt to clean it away, they will not permit you to so much as touch it with your finger tips, but act like those of whom the Scripture says: 'A people well loved and pampered, would throw off the yoke and revolt against their deliverer'. Now 'false witnesses have stood up to accuse', men who delight to be for ever carping at the lives of others, while neglecting their own. Your son pleads with you for the Bishop of Troyes whose only fault in this quarrel is, so far as I can make out, to have rebuked the faults of the clergy. So much for the bishop. Now I must make my own excuses. The letter in which you were good enough to beg me to come to you when you could quite well have ordered me to do so, did not arrive before the Nativity of Our Blessed Lady. Therefore I do not say I have bought a yoke of oxen or a house or that I have married a wife, but I confess quite simply that, as you very well know, I have children and must nourish them, and so I do not see how I could come to you without grave scandal and danger to them.

LETTER 159

TO BERNARD, MONK OF THE CHARTREUSE-DES-PORTES-EN-BUGEY

YOU earnestly entreat me and I firmly refuse you, but only because I want to spare myself, not because I scorn you. I wish I could compose something worthy of your zeal and intelligence. I would give you my very eyes, even my life, were I able to, my most dear friend, for I especially have every reason to love you spiritually in

Christ with all the power of which I am capable. But how can I find the ability, let alone the leisure, to do as you ask? It is not as though you were asking me to do some little thing that would be quite easy and ordinary. You would not be so insistent were it only a small matter. You many letters, and the vehemence which animates them, are a clear enough indication of how serious you are in the matter and what great store you lay by it. And the more anxious I feel you to be, the more diffident do I become. Why so? Simply because I do not want to bring forth an absurd mouse in return for your great hopes.¹ This is what I so much fear, and this is the reason for my delay. It is not surprising that I should fear to give you what I should blush to see published. I am most unwilling to produce what I should regard as more fit for contempt than for publication. Who would wish to give anyone something that it would shame him to give and be no advantage to receive? I willingly give you what I have, but I am not so willing to lose it. Everyone knows how disappointing it is to receive something small when something great has been expected. And what is received with disappointment is not given but lost.

2. It is your endeavour, as a man of leisure and freedom, to seek on all sides fuel for the fire that burns within you, so that you may burn the more, and thus fulfil the words of the Lord to you: 'What would I but that it be kindled?' I have nothing but praise for this, but I beg you to look where you may not be disappointed in receiving. You are mistaken if you think you can find anything in me to satisfy you. It is I who should beg from you. I know very well that it is more blessed to give than to receive, but only if the gift is creditable to the giver and useful to the receiver, such a gift as I doubt whether I have got to give. Were I to give you what I have, I am afraid that you would feel ashamed to have asked for it, and would regret having received it. But still, perhaps it would be better for you to make your own excuses for me, that your own eyes should provide you with evidence of the truth of what I say. And so I will accede to your impotency, so that you may have no doubts about my insufficiency. It is a matter between friends. I will not try any more to spare my modesty, I will forget my own foolishness in trying to satisfy your demands. I am having copied a few sermons I wrote recently on the first verses of the Song of Solomon, and as soon as they are ready I will send them to you. When I have the time, when Christ sees fit to calm the storm of cares that beset me, I shall continue with them, but you must encourage me. I send my devoted greetings to my lord and father, your Prior, and to your other brethren, and I humbly beg them to remember me before God.

¹ *parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.* Horace, *De Arte Poetica*. 'The mountains will give birth and an absurd mouse be born.'

LETTER 160

TO THE SAME

My dearest Bernard, I cannot hide my sorrow nor can I disguise from you any longer the grief which I suffer. I have not forgotten my long-standing promise to you, I have for long had the firm intention and great desire to pass by you, so that I may see again those whom my soul loves and, in their company, find consolation for my journey, relief for my labours, and healing for my sins. But in punishment for my sins it has come about that regretfully I find that I am not able to do so. I acknowledge this not as a fault, but as a punishment for my faults. I beg you to understand, man of God, that it is not at all that I do not care for my friends, nor is it that I am lazy or negligent in the matter, but simply that I am prevented by the work of God which I cannot ignore. My vexation gnaws at me like a worm, and my grief is ever with me. I am troubled enough on other accounts but, I must confess, on none so much as on this. It vexes me more than all the labours of my journey, than the discomfort of the heat, than the anxiety of my responsibilities. Now that I have exposed my wound to my friend, it is your business to have pity on me and relieve me by sharing my burden. I implore your prayers, and the prayers of the holy men with whom you live. I am sending you the sermons on the beginning of the Song of Solomon, as you have asked me to do and as I have promised. When you have read them, I beg you to write as soon as you conveniently can and tell me whether you think I should continue with them or not.

LETTER 161

TO POPE INNOCENT

This letter was written on behalf of the Carthusian Bernard, to whom the two previous letters are addressed, when he was chosen to be Bishop of Pavia. In the event he became Bishop, not of Pavia, but of Bellay.

I HAVE heard, venerable father, that Bernard of Portes, a man beloved of God and men, has been obliged by your invitation to shoulder the burden and work of a bishop. It seems very likely to be true, for it is a thing highly becoming to your apostolate to place a hidden light where all men may see it, so that he shall live not only for himself but bring others too into the light. How long is one who can give light to others to burn and shine in hiding? If it should please you, let him be set upon a candlestick that he may be a burning and shining light to others; but let it not be where the force of great winds prevail lest (which God forbid) the light should be put out. Who does not know of the effrontery and turbulence of the Lombards? And who

knows it better than you? You know better than I do how weak is the power of the episcopacy in those parts, and what an ungovernable household it is. I cannot think what a young man, broken in bodily health, accustomed to the peace of a hermitage, would do amongst such a turbulent, uncivilized, and tempestuous crowd of people. How could such perversity and such sanctity, such craftiness and such simplicity, ever mix? If it should please you, let him be kept for a more suitable See and for a different sort of people who could benefit by his rule. Do not allow the fruit which he will be able to give in due season be lost through too great hurry.

LETTER 162

TO THE SAME, ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH OF ORLEANS

FOR how long will the misery of the Church of Orleans appeal in vain to the heart of the father of orphans and the judge of widows? For how long shall the noble virgin of Israel lie prostrate in the dust, deprived not only of her husband, but even of her children? And for shame! there is none to lift her up. How long will it be before you attend to the children and their mother who are crying after you for mercy? I refer to those who have lost their homes and goods, and have only been able to save their lives by flight. Why do you stay that strong hand of yours, which has never before failed to avenge the down-trodden and smite the arrogant? Why are you hesitating to rescue the afflicted from the power of the bully and mete out vengeance to the haughty? If you must delay, let it not be for ever. Help when it comes late should come with all the greater strength and should afford succour all the more effectively. If it should so please you, may it be some compensation for your delays that those who have proudly abused the patience of the Apostolic See may gain nothing by it in the end; and that those who have suffered so patiently, trusting in you, may at last have no reason to regret their patience.

LETTER 163

TO CARDINAL HAIMERIC, ON BEHALF OF THE SAME

TO his special friend, Haimeric, by the grace of God Cardinal Deacon and Chancellor of the Apostolic See, that he may shine with the light of wisdom and virtue, from Brother Bernard of Clairvaux.

IF I did not already know your great compassion for the afflicted and your disgust for the shameless, I would implore you in season and out of season on behalf of Master William of Meun and his companions. I would compel you to take action against their oppressors and calumniators. But it is enough to have mentioned it to you; now it is up to you to prove that it really is enough!

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THE LETTERS OF
ST BERNARD
OF CLAIRVAUX

TRANSLATED BY

BRUNO SCOTT JAMES

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