

SAINT PETER DAMIAN

APOLOGY FOR HAVING RESIGNED THE EPIS-
COPATE

Apologeticus Ob Dimissum Episcopatum

SABBATISMUS

Saint Peter Damian (1007–1072)
Apologeticus Ob Dimissum Episcopatum · Apology for Having Resigned the Episcopate

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SCHOLIA 33

Excusat se B. Petrus Dam. apud pontificem, quod tenuitatis suae sibi conscius, episcopatu se abdicarit; ne quis autem illi hoc inconstantiae ascriberet (non enim licet semel susceptum deponere regimen), breviter respondet, et multorum Patrum exemplis, qui delato episcopatu uti noluerunt, ostendit magis tutum cepisse consilium tanto onere se levandi: rem praeterea arduam, maximeque laboriosam aliis praeesse, et episcopatus fungi munere declarat.

Dilectissimis apostolicae sedis electo, et virga Assur HILDEBRANDO, PETRUS peccator monachus servitatem.

Ferunt, qui in rimandis rerum desudavere naturis, hoc lyncibus naturaliter insitum, quia cum post terga respiciunt, protinus illum qui praecesserit obliviscuntur. Continuo videlicet, et mens simul perdit quae oculus videre desierit. Et cum haec bellua tanto visus acumine ferarum genus omne praecellat, ut et lapideos penetrare parietes valeat, hoc laborat vitio; quia quodcunque illud est, a quo semel oculos avertit, ad memoriam postmodum non reducit. Quorum videlicet animalium quamdam vobis esse similitudinem dicerem, nisi me magnitudinis vestrae reverentia prohiberet. Mirum est enim, quia tam acuta prudentia, imo, quod longe gloriosius est, tam sincera et ferventissima charitas, quae me suscipit affectuose praesentem, nunquam sive per stylum, sive per verbum visitare dignetur absentem. Porro quoniam a vobis scripta non mereor, si mihi cum aliis negotium ageretur, dicerem; quia illa, quam Apostolus dicit, charitatis epistola, non est apud vos in tabulis cordis carnalibus scripta (II Cor. III), sed imis, ut aiunt, ceris erasa. Sed dum attendo quid loquar, considerandum est nihilominus quibus loquar. Quapropter dum uti loquendi libertate non audeo, ori digitum superpono. Querela igitur expostulationis hucusque producta, in quod propensius scatet animus, breviter inferam.

Benedicta omnipotens dispensatio conditoris, quia ad vos nuper ascendens duorum episcopatuum, unius regendi, alterius visitandi mole depressus, praerupta Alpium juga transmissi, moxque sarcina tribulationis abjecta, exoneratus et liber, ad dilectam solitudinem tanquam fugitivus postliminio repedavi. Libet itaque sub quadam mentis energia, quasi diu stipitibus attritos agitare pedes, durisque catenis edomitas sublevare cervices, illudque propheticum alacriter decantare: «Dirupisti, Domine, vincula mea: tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis (Psal. CXV, 17).»

Blessed Peter Damian excuses himself before the pontiff, because, conscious of his own inadequacy, he abdicated the episcopate; lest anyone, however, should ascribe this to inconstancy on his part (for it is not permitted to lay down a governance once undertaken), he responds briefly, and with the examples of many Fathers who refused to accept the episcopate when offered, he shows that he has taken the safer counsel of relieving himself of so great a burden: furthermore, he declares it an arduous and most laborious thing to preside over others and to discharge the office of the episcopate.

To the most beloved chosen one of the Apostolic See, and rod of Assur, HILDEBRAND, PETER, sinner and monk, [offers his] service.

Those who have labored in investigating the natures of things report that this is naturally instilled in lynxes: that when they look behind them, they immediately forget that which has gone before. That is to say, the mind at once loses what the eye has ceased to see. And although this beast surpasses all kind of wild animals with such sharpness of vision that it can even penetrate stone walls, it suffers from this defect: that whatever it is from which it once averts its eyes, it does not afterwards recall to memory. I would say that you bear a certain resemblance to these animals, if reverence for your greatness did not prevent me. For it is a wonder that such acute prudence, and indeed, what is far more glorious, such sincere and fervent charity, which receives me affectionately when present, never deigns to visit me when absent, either by pen or by word. Furthermore, since I do not deserve letters from you, if I were dealing with others, I would say that that epistle of charity, of which the Apostle speaks, is not written on the fleshy tablets of the heart in your case (2 Cor. 3), but, as they say, has been erased from the deepest wax. But while I attend to what I am saying, it must nevertheless be considered to whom I am speaking. Therefore, since I do not dare to use the freedom of speech, I place a finger on my lips. Therefore, having extended the complaint of this expostulation thus far, I will briefly introduce that which my mind more eagerly pours forth.

Blessed be the omnipotent dispensation of the Creator, for when I recently came up to you, weighed down by the burden of two bishoprics—one to govern, the other to visit—I crossed the steep ridges of the Alps, and as soon as the load of tribulation was cast off, unburdened and free, I returned to my beloved solitude like a fugitive returning home. It is a pleasure, therefore, with a certain energy of mind, to move my feet as if long chafed by stocks, to lift my neck as if tamed by harsh chains, and to joyfully chant that prophetic verse: "You have broken my bonds, O Lord: to you I will offer the sacrifice of praise (Psalm 115:17)."

Nostis plane, tumque tenetis haec in me projecta fuisse onera, non suscepta; et, ut ita loquar, retiaculum non ingressus sum, sed violenter opertus. Quapropter occasione nacta, pondus libenter abjeci, quod ultroneus ante non subii. Et quia vos apostolica sedes, vos Romana estis Ecclesia, ad deponendum reddendumque quod bajulare nequiveram, integrum mihi visum est non adire fabricam lapidum; sed eos potius, in quibus viget ipsius Ecclesiae sacramentum. Sub persecutione quippe Judaica ubicunque erant apostoli illic esse primitiva dicebatur Ecclesia. Nunc etiam cum Simon ille, veternosus videlicet trapezita, malleos et incudem reparat, cum Romanam urbem velut officinam sibi per monetarios pestiferae negotiationis usurpat, quo vos Petrus vobiscum fugiens attrahit, illic esse Romanam Ecclesiam omnibus indubitanter ostendit. Unde ego cum ecclesiasticum vobis regimen renunciare disposui, non erravi; quia Romanae, quae vos estis Ecclesiae, quod suum erat digne restitui: et ut vobis me confessum esse confitear, pro hac refutatione centum annorum poenitentia mihi est consequenter injuncta; per illa nimirum remedia, quae monasticis sunt regulis instituta. Quod si parum videtur, vos etiam superaddite: ultro etiam et carcerali, si placet, custodiae mancipate. Post tot quippe vagationis et noxiae libertatis excessus, quid restat, nisi ut me religationis atque silentii censura coerceat? Sed hic forte blandus ille tyrannus, qui mihi Neroniana semper pietate condoluit, qui me colaphizando demulsit, qui me certe aquilino, ut ita loquar, ungue palpavit, hanc querulus erumpet in vocem: Ecce latibulum petit, et sub colore poenitentiae, Romae subterfugere quaerit accessum; lucrari machinatur de inobedientia otium, et caeteris in bella ruentibus hic sibi degeneris umbrae quaerit opacum. Sed hoc ego sancto Satanae meo respondeo, quod filii Ruben et Gad Moysi ductori suo respondisse noscuntur: «Nos, inquiunt, armati, et accincti pergemus ad praelium ante filios Israel, donec introducamus eos ad loca sua; parvuli nostri, et quidquid habere possumus erunt in urbibus muratis propter habitatorum insidias; non revertemur in domos nostras usquequo possideant filii Israel haereditatem suam, nec quidquam quaeremus trans Jordanem, quia jam habemus possessionem nostram in orientali ejus plaga (Num. XXXI).» Hoc itaque modo comitaturus quidem vos, arma corripio, sed vobis duce Christo, post bella victoribus, mox recedo. Hoc igitur dicam electo Domini, quod Berzelai quoque Galaatides descendens de Rogelim David locutus est regi: «Paululum procedam famulus tuus ab Jordane tecum; obsecro ut revertar servus tuus, et moriar in civitate mea (II Reg. XIX).»

You know well, and you hold it to be true, that these burdens were cast upon me, not undertaken by me; and, so to speak, I did not enter the net, but was violently ensnared. Therefore, having found the opportunity, I have gladly cast off the weight which I had not previously taken upon myself voluntarily. And because you are the Apostolic See, you are the Roman Church, it seemed right to me, in order to lay down and return what I could not bear, not to approach a structure of stones, but rather those in whom the sacrament of the Church itself thrives. Indeed, during the Jewish persecution, wherever the apostles were, there the primitive Church was said to be. Now also, when that Simon, namely the old money-changer, prepares his hammers and anvil, when he usurps the city of Rome as a workshop for himself through the minters of his pestilential trade, wherever Peter, fleeing with you, draws you, he shows without a doubt to all that the Roman Church is there. Hence, when I decided to renounce the ecclesiastical governance to you, I did not err; because to the Roman Church, which you are, I worthily restored what was its own: and, to confess that I have confessed to you, for this refusal a penance of one hundred years was consequently enjoined upon me, through those remedies, of course, which are established in the monastic rules. And if this seems too little, you may add more: even willingly commit me to the custody of a prison, if you please. Indeed, after so many excesses of wandering and harmful liberty, what remains, but that the censure of confinement and silence should restrain me? But here, perhaps, that flattering tyrant—who has always sympathized with me with Neronian piety, who has soothed me by striking me, who has surely caressed me, so to speak, with an eagle's talon—will burst forth complainingly with these words: "Behold, he seeks a hiding place, and under the color of penance, he seeks to evade coming to Rome; he schemes to gain leisure from disobedience, and while others rush into battle, he seeks for himself the shade of a degenerate shadow." But to this, my holy Satan, I answer what the sons of Reuben and Gad are known to have answered to Moses their leader: "We," they said, "armed and girded, will go forth to battle before the children of Israel, until we bring them to their places; our little ones, and whatever we may possess, will be in walled cities on account of the snares of the inhabitants; we will not return to our homes until the children of Israel possess their inheritance, nor will we seek anything beyond the Jordan, because we already have our possession on its eastern side (Numbers 31)." In this way, therefore, I will indeed accompany you and take up arms, but once you are victorious in battle with Christ as your leader, I will soon withdraw. Therefore, I will say this to the elect of the Lord, which Barzillai the Gileadite also said to King David as he was coming down from Rogelim: "Your servant will go a little way with you beyond the Jordan; I pray you, let your servant return, that I may die in my own city (2 Kings 19)."

CAPUT II.

Quod episcopatus deponi possit aliquando.

Hic mihi fortassis objicitur, semel acceptum dimitti regimen non licere. Ad quod breviter dico quod sentio; quia plerique pontificatus jura non deserunt, et de sinistris sunt: quotquot autem legimus recta intentione dimisisse, certa spes est eos de aeterna cum Christo societate gaudere. Neque hoc dicimus, ut passim deseri episcopatum liceat, nisi videlicet id fieri necessitas magna compellat. Enimvero beatus Valerius dum sibi providet successorem, magnum Augustinum Hipponensi Ecclesiae inthronizat antistitem. Lucidus Ficoclenis episcopus dum propinquum sibimet obitum imminere cognoscit, ad coenobialis portum convolat ordinis, ac sacerdotalis infulas dignitatis monachicis mutat induviis: et ut noveris quid sibi conversio ista contulerit, sicut authentica Registri testatur historia, sub ipso migrantis obitu Spiritus sancti gratia laetissimo relucebat in vultu. Cui nimirum et antequam moreretur, beatus apostolus Andreas apparuit; et qua hora migraturus esset ex corpore, nuntiavit.

Quid beatum Adelbertum martyrem dicam? Qui nimirum quoniam Bohemiensis Ecclesiae postposuit cathedram, monachum induens, triumphalem martyrii meruit invenire coronam? Utque ex industria de caeteris sileam, quidam sanctus poenitens, cujus me ad praesens vocabulum fugit, jam ante septennium fere episcopatu dimisso, tandem angelo visitante praecipitur, ut ad episcopatum redeat; sed recusat, donec admonente eodem angelo, beatus advenit sub celeritate Remigius. Sic itaque ne deceptio potuisset forte subripere, etiam tuta formidans, humano cessit imperio, qui ad angelicum prius oraculum rigidus stetit.

Episcopus etiam ille Sabinensis, qui solium pontificale deseruit, et Farfense monasterium, contempta sacerdotali dignitate, construxit, quam nobilis in Christo vir fuerit testis est antiqua traditio, quae sanctitatis ejus insignia celebrat; testis moderna devotio, quae piam ejus memoriam in benedictione frequentat. Quanti scilicet et prius et postmodum in eadem sede usque ad vitae terminum perdurarunt, et tam operosum fructum Deo nullatenus attulerunt.

Nec te, felix Bonite, praeteream, qui hac duntaxat occasione percepta, quoniam de manu regis, laici videlicet hominis, traditionem Ecclesiae te suscepisse contigerat, cathedram contempsisti, atque ad remotioris vitae custodiam te protinus contulisti. Quid, rogo, iste faceret, si tormenta, quibus nostri cruciantur episcopi, et ipse perferret? Si scutatorum et lanceatorum turmae post equitantis terga confluerent? Si eum tanquam gentilis militiae ducem in procinctu positum armati undique manipuli constiparent?

CHAPTER II.

That the episcopate can sometimes be laid down.

Here perhaps it is objected to me that it is not licit to relinquish a governance once accepted. To which I briefly say what I think: that many do not desert the rights of the pontificate, and they are of the left hand; but as for as many as we read have resigned with a right intention, there is a sure hope that they rejoice in eternal fellowship with Christ. Nor do we say this so that it might be licit to desert the episcopate indiscriminately, unless, that is, a great necessity compels it to be done. Indeed, the blessed Valerius, while providing a successor for himself, enthroned the great Augustine as bishop of the Church of Hippo. Lucidus, bishop of Ficole, when he recognized that his own death was imminent, fled to the harbor of the monastic order, and exchanged the insignia of sacerdotal dignity for monastic garments: and so that you may know what that conversion conferred upon him, as the authentic history of the Register testifies, at the very moment of his passing, the grace of the Holy Spirit shone most joyfully in his face. To him, indeed, even before he died, the blessed apostle Andrew appeared and announced at what hour he was to depart from the body.

What shall I say of the blessed martyr Adalbert? Who, indeed, because he set aside the see of the Bohemian Church and put on the monastic habit, deserved to find the triumphal crown of martyrdom? And, to be silent about others on purpose, a certain holy penitent, whose name escapes me at present, having already resigned his episcopate about seven years before, was at last commanded by a visiting angel to return to the episcopate; but he refused, until, at the admonition of the same angel, the blessed Remigius arrived with speed. And so, lest deception might perhaps creep in, fearing even safe things, he yielded to a human command, who had stood firm before the angelic oracle.

Also that bishop of Sabina, who deserted the pontifical throne and, having scorned the sacerdotal dignity, built the monastery of Farfa, how noble a man he was in Christ is witnessed by ancient tradition, which celebrates the marks of his sanctity, and by modern devotion, which frequently honors his pious memory in blessing. How many, indeed, both before and after, remained in the same see until the end of their lives and brought no such laborious fruit to God at all!

Nor shall I pass you by, O happy Bonitus, who, having perceived this one occasion—namely, that it had happened that you received the tradition of the Church from the hand of a king, a layman—despised the see and forthwith betook yourself to the observance of a more remote life. What, I ask, would that man do, if he himself were to endure the torments by which our bishops are afflicted? If troops of shield-bearers and lance-bearers were to flock behind his riding back? If armed companies were to surround him on all sides, placed as if he were a leader of a pagan army ready for battle?

Et quem decuerat reverentur incedere cum choro psallentium, audire cogeretur hinc inde perstreptentium tinnitus armorum? Unde fit, ut modo pontificem non comitentur, ut dignum est, diversi clericorum ordines; sed castra potius, et armati telis vibrantibus bellatores. Pensemus etiam quale hoc sit, quia haec nonnulli et inviti perferunt; et tamen eos, quos tolerant, praediis ac facultatibus Ecclesiae, velint nolint, charius emunt. Quotidie regales epulae, quotidie apparatus, quotidie nuptiale convivium, et unde refrigerare debuerant indigentes, rubentium tabularum recreant gestatores. Et cum episcopus dispensator, et promus debeat esse pauperum, ad eorum mensam affluentibus deliciis, alieni ructant; cum et illi, quorum est tota substantia, procul exclusi, famis inopia contabescant.

Inter omnia porro haec mala illud excedit, et diabolicam propemodum videtur aequare nequitiam, quia praediis in militiam profligatis, omnique possessione terrarum, insuper etiam et decimae, ac plebes adduntur in beneficium saecularibus. Quae profecto liberalitas inhonesta, et indigentibus adimit unde vivant; et dioecesanos etiam deterret, ut decimas non persolvant. Una scilicet res et illis subtrahit 445 corporale subsidium, et istis periculum providet animarum. Quod totum in male munifici caput redundare, nulli dubium est; si tamen eum ad hoc propria vanitas trahat, non necessitas antiqua compellat. Et quidem plurima suppetunt, quae de episcoporum multiplicibus aerumnis apponerem, nisi me epistolaris compendii regula prohiberet.

Sed, o facinus! adeo me sola sedes apostolica cruciat, ut ab his omnibus me dicendis avertat. In qua nimirum sede, cum admirari soleamus reverendae majestatis antistitem, nunc despicibilis personae cernimus Mintionem. Haec venerabilis ille vir expertus fuerat, Petrus videlicet Apsarensis [Ausarensis uti in sup. op. corr.] episcopus; qui episcopatum dimisit, et de Sclavonico regno Italiam navigans, littoribus Anconitanae urbis applicuit. Hic mihi, dum totius circa se regni reverentiam conquestus exponeret, ac molestae inquietudinis taedia numeraret, inter caetera unum intulit, quod vos latere non patior. Quidam, inquit, degener quidem moribus, sed majorum titulis insignitus, sui generis consanguineam nuptiali sibi foedere copulavit. Quid plura? Prohibitus perstitit, excommunicatus adhaesit, totumque ecclesiasticae censurae vigorem, nugarum puerilium fabulas deputavit. Cui certe hoc ad divinae indignationis indicium contigit, ut panes de nuptialibus mensis in plateas ante canum ora projecti minime tangerentur.

And he, whom it would have befitted to proceed reverently with a choir of singers, would be forced to hear on this side and that the clash of rattling arms? Whence it happens that now the pontiff is not accompanied, as is fitting, by the diverse orders of clerics, but rather by camps and warriors armed with vibrating spears. Let us also consider what sort of thing this is, that some endure these things even unwillingly; and yet, whether they will or not, they purchase those whom they tolerate more dearly with the estates and resources of the Church. Daily there are royal feasts, daily preparations, daily a wedding banquet; and from what ought to have refreshed the needy, the bearers of ruddy tables are recreated. And while the bishop ought to be the steward and provider for the poor, at their table, with delights flowing, strangers belch; while those whose whole substance it is, excluded from afar, waste away from lack of food.

Among all these evils, however, one surpasses them, and seems almost to equal diabolical wickedness: because estates are squandered on military service, and every possession of lands, and moreover even tithes and parishes, are added as a benefice for the laity. This dishonest liberality, indeed, both deprives the needy of their means of living and also deters the diocesans from paying their tithes. One and the same act, that is, both subtracts corporal subsidy from the former and provides a peril for the souls of the latter. That all this redounds upon the head of the ill-bestower, there is no doubt; if, however, his own vanity draws him to this, and not ancient necessity compels him. And indeed, many things come to mind which I would add concerning the multiple tribulations of bishops, if the rule of epistolary brevity did not prevent me.

But, oh, what an outrage! The apostolic see alone torments me so much that it turns me away from saying all these things. In which see, indeed, while we are accustomed to admire a prelate of reverend majesty, we now behold Mintio, a person of despicable character. That venerable man had experienced these things, namely Peter, bishop of Apsaros [corrected to Ausaros as in the work above]; who resigned his episcopate and, sailing from the Slavic kingdom to Italy, landed on the shores of the city of Ancona. He, while explaining to me his complaints about the reverence of the whole kingdom towards him, and enumerating the weariness of troublesome disquiet, brought up one thing among others, which I cannot suffer to be hidden from you. "A certain man," he said, "degenerate in morals, but distinguished by the titles of his ancestors, joined to himself in a nuptial bond a kinswoman of his own family." What more? Though forbidden, he persisted; though excommunicated, he clung to her; and he considered the whole force of ecclesiastical censure to be childish trifles. To him, certainly, this happened as a sign of divine indignation: that the loaves from the nuptial tables, thrown into the streets before the mouths of dogs, were not touched in the least.

Insuper, o divinae animadversionis pavenda severitas! dum rigidus stat, dum praeceptis se sacerdotalibus non humiliat, qui vigilare sibimet ad salutem noluit, in cubiculo dormientem repente de coelestibus irruens fulgur exstinxit. Sic sic divini furoris expertus est moriendo sententiam, qui vulnere suo dum viveret adhibere contempserat medicinam. Hoc autem diximus, ut quam sanctae auctoritatis vir ille fuerit, qui episcopatum deseruit, monstraremus.

Sed tum ista prosequimur, illud etiam nobis consequenter occurrit, quod et ipse nobis nuper, venerabilis Hildebrande, dixisti: et quanquam non magnopere hujus videatur esse negotii, quod versatur in manibus, tamen dum quomodolibet hoc apicibus tradimus, ne vorago funditus oblivionis absorbeat, quasi rem fluctivagam paxillulis alligamus. Ut enim te retulisse memini, haec tibi, ut ejusdem verba ponamus, Novariensis Ecclesiae narravit episcopus. Cum, inquit, in Teutonicorum partibus cuidam episcopo conviator incederem, et imminente jamjam refectionis hora, ille quid mihi quasi decenter apponeret non haberet, aestuare coepit et anxie quaerere unde mihi posset in itinere positus, subvenire. Cumque hinc indigentia stringeret, illinc charitas animum dilaret, in arcto positus quid prorsus ageret ignorabat; cum ecce repente grues, ut litteram invicem congruentes exprimunt, parili serie quasi diversa utrinque sub uno duce castra componunt, super verticem nobis turmatim volitare coeperunt. Tunc episcopus in fervore fidei constanter erectus, ait: Domine, praecipe unam de gruibus istis ad nos dejici, ut servus tuus de benedictionis tuae munere satisfaciat charitati. Mira exauditionis divinae celeritas! vix verbum ore depromitur, protinus 446 non parvi corporis grus terra tenus ante ora nostra demergitur; sicque fides, quae per dilectionem operabatur, impletur. Haec tibi referenti continuo percunctatus, aio: Eratne spiritualis ille episcopus? Tu, ut nescio, quo pacto didiceras, carni propriae vivere hominem, respondisti, ut liquido pateat, non vitae rectitudinem, sed fidem charitati conjunctam hanc obtinuisse virtutem.

Addidisti etiam, quia beato Leone sedis apostolicae praesule referente, cognoveras, aequae carnalis et inconsideratae conversationis episcopum exstitisse, qui tantam extra meritum gratiam a Domino fuerat consecutus, ut virtutes ac signa frequenter ostenderet; ultro etiam cum magnae auctoritatis imperio ex obsessis corporibus daemones effugaret. Inter quae nimirum signa virtutum, et illud aliquando contigit, ut eodem sanctae memoriae Leone praesente, daemoniacus astitisset; cumque praefatus episcopus nequitiae spiritum abire praeciperet, ille autem quibusdam verbis pervicatis superbiae resularet, tandem per nomen Christi terribiliter adjuratus, reniti ultra non potuit.

Moreover, oh, the dreadful severity of divine punishment! While he stood rigid, while he did not humble himself to the priestly precepts, he who was unwilling to watch over himself for his salvation, a thunderbolt rushing suddenly from the heavens extinguished him as he slept in his chamber. Thus, thus in dying he experienced the sentence of divine fury, who while he lived had scorned to apply medicine to his own wound. We have said this, however, to show what a man of holy authority he was who deserted his episcopate.

But as we pursue these matters, that also consequently occurs to us which you yourself, venerable Hildebrand, recently told us: and although it may not seem to be of great importance to the business at hand, nevertheless, while we commit it to writing in some way, lest the abyss of oblivion swallow it completely, we tie it down with little stakes, as if it were a thing tossed by the waves. For as I remember you related, the bishop of the Church of Novara narrated these things to you, to use his own words. "When," he said, "in the German lands I was traveling as a companion to a certain bishop, and as the hour of refreshment was now imminent, he, having nothing to set before me that was fitting, began to be agitated and to seek anxiously whence he, being on a journey, might be able to assist me." And while on the one hand need constrained him, and on the other charity expanded his spirit, being placed in a tight spot he was at a loss for what to do; when behold, suddenly cranes, as if expressing a letter by their congruent formation, arranging themselves in a like series as if forming diverse camps on either side under one leader, began to fly in flocks over our heads. Then the bishop, standing firm in the fervor of faith, said: "Lord, command one of these cranes to be cast down to us, that your servant may satisfy charity from the gift of your blessing." O, the wondrous swiftness of the divine hearing! Scarcely is the word brought forth from his mouth, when forthwith a crane of no small body is plunged down to the ground before our faces; and thus faith, which worked through love, is fulfilled. When you related these things, I immediately inquired, saying: "Was that bishop a spiritual man?" You, as you had learned I know not how, replied that the man lived for his own flesh, so that it might be clearly evident that not rectitude of life, but faith joined to charity, had obtained this power.

You also added that you had learned, from the report of the blessed Leo, pontiff of the apostolic see, that there had been a bishop of equally carnal and thoughtless conduct, who had obtained such great grace from the Lord beyond his merit that he frequently showed forth virtues and signs; moreover, he even drove out demons from possessed bodies with the command of great authority. Among which signs of virtues, indeed, it also once happened that, in the presence of the same Leo of holy memory, a demoniac stood forth; and when the aforesaid bishop commanded the spirit of wickedness to depart, and it resisted with certain stubborn words of pride, at last, terribly adjured by the name of Christ, it could resist no longer.

Cumque caput miseri hominis huc illucque concuteret, capillos in altum pavendo quodam horrore subrigeret, os quasi ad evomendum quibusdam conatibus aperiret, protinus se objecit episcopus: Nequaquam, inquit, per os egredieris, ut niteris; omnino frustrabitur quod moliris, per posteriora te exire praecipio: nam oris tibi aditum non permitto. Per sordidos igitur meatus, immunde habitator, egredere, et foeda post te, ut dignus es, vestigia derelinque. Vix verba compleverat, et continuo nequissimus spiritus fluxu ventris ejectus est.

CAPUT IV.

Episcopi cujusdam misericordiam in pauperem miraculo Deus remuneratur.

Alius item episcopus, ut et ipse dixisti, oppido sitiens, vinum sibi afferri praecepit. Cumque pincerna totum quod erat in vasculo funditus exhausisset in poculum, et episcopo detulisset, ecce pauper importunis illud sibi dari precibus flagitabat, dicens, quia prae ariditate nimia nisi biberet, cominus exspiraret. Econtra minister asserebat, et nil se in vase residuum reliquisse, et in eo loco vinum aliud reperiri nullatenus posse. In his igitur fortis episcopus angustiis deprehensus, et cum hinc videlicet sitim differre non posset, illinc autem se bibere, alio periclitante, impium judicaret, avertit se a se, fratrique laboranti in necessitate succurrit. Praecepit igitur pauperi vinum dari; sed jam quo magis spes bibendi omnino defecerat, eo sitis episcopi atrocius saeviebat. Mandavit itaque ministro, ut vinarium vas requireret; si forte aliquam consolationis stillam, vel perexiguam reperiret. Qui diutius abnegans, nihilque se reservasse constanter affirmans, tandem non spe erectus, sed imperio magis oppressus, paruit; et vas, quod vacuum reliquerat, vino plenum, nimirum admiratus, invenit.

Abbas quidam, ut mihi relatum est, suavis edulii concupiscentia ductus, naupredam sibi praecepit acquiri. Cumque ministri dicerent, hoc genus eo loci difficile posse reperiri, exstitit qui diceret, unam tantum in venalibus Naupredam se vidisse propositam, nullo pacto minus quam viginti nummorum Papiensium solidis coemendam. Jussit abbas numerari pecuniam. Coquorum autem diligentia perfunctus, et laute decoctus abbati piscis apponitur; sed antequam tangeretur, ecce pauper ad januam hoc potissimum sibi dari quod abbati esset appositum anxie postulabat.

And when it was shaking the head of the wretched man to and fro, raising his hair on end with a certain dreadful horror, and opening his mouth with certain efforts as if to vomit, the bishop immediately intervened: "By no means," he said, "shall you exit through the mouth, as you are trying; what you are attempting will be entirely frustrated. I command you to exit through the posterior parts, for I do not permit you entry to the mouth." "Therefore, through the sordid passages, unclean inhabitant, go forth, and leave behind you foul traces, as you deserve." Scarcely had he completed the words, and immediately the most wicked spirit was ejected in a flux of the bowels.

CHAPTER IV.

God rewards with a miracle the mercy of a certain bishop towards a poor man.

Likewise, another bishop, as you yourself have said, being exceedingly thirsty, ordered wine to be brought to him. And when the cupbearer had completely emptied all that was in the small vessel into the cup and had brought it to the bishop, behold, a poor man was demanding with insistent prayers that it be given to him, saying that because of his extreme dryness, unless he drank, he would immediately expire. On the other hand, the attendant asserted both that he had left nothing remaining in the vessel and that no other wine could by any means be found in that place. Therefore, the strong bishop, caught in these straits, and since on the one hand he could not, of course, postpone his thirst, while on the other he judged it impious for him to drink while another was in peril, turned away from himself and came to the aid of his brother suffering in need. He therefore ordered the wine to be given to the poor man; but now, the more the hope of drinking had entirely failed, the more fiercely the bishop's thirst raged. And so he commanded the attendant to check the wine vessel, to see if by chance he might find some drop of consolation, however small. The attendant, after refusing for a long time and constantly affirming that he had reserved nothing, finally, not raised by hope but rather compelled by the command, obeyed; and, marveling greatly, he found the vessel which he had left empty, full of wine.

A certain abbot, as it has been related to me, led by the desire for a sweet delicacy, ordered a lamprey to be procured for him. And when his servants said that this type of thing could with difficulty be found in that place, one appeared who said that he had seen only one lamprey offered for sale, to be bought for no less than twenty solidi of Pavese currency. The abbot ordered the money to be counted out. Then, prepared with the diligence of the cooks and sumptuously cooked, the fish is served to the abbot; but before it could be touched, behold, a poor man at the gate was anxiously demanding that the very thing which had been served to the abbot be given to him.

Mox, ut erat, integrum piscem, nihil haesitans vir Domini, mittit ad pauperem. Illico pauper, qui videbatur cum ipsa paropside plena pisce, in sublime se extulit; et librata manu, velut exenium portans, coelum cunctis videntibus penetravit. Unde liquido comprobatur, quia quod indigentibus datur, Deo transmittitur, et quod in sinu pauperum occultamus, in coelo reponimus.

Illud etiam, quod nunc addimus, quanquam non sit miraculum, ab aedificatione tamen, cui famulatur omne quod scribimus, non est alienum. Episcopus quidam naupredam sibi parari praeceperat, qui paulo post dum inter ipsa missarum solemnia sacris altaribus devotus assisteret, ecce naupredae memoria illecebrosi gustus eum tentavit affectu. Ille, ut erat insignis animi, talia se pati posse in obtutibus occulti, et omnipotentis inspectoris erubuit, expletisque regressus officiis, febreticum animae piscem pauperi tradendum esse mandavit. Sic profecto canicula voluptatis, quae sub mensa corporis, utcunque potuisset vivere, ad sancta sanctorum impudenter irrumpebat, poenitentiae fuste mactata, meruit interire.

Pauper quidam paterfamilias unum duntaxat nummum in loculo possidebat, quem ad emendum aliquid, quod cum pane comederet, expendere gestiebat. Cumque siccus et aridus a lautioribus alimentis, hoc diu negotium in mente versaret, interim pauper advenit, misericordiam postulavit. Ille haerens animo, velut in quodam erat meditullio constitutus. Nam si daret, carni metuebat afflictatae; si retineret, culpam incurrere formidabat denegatae misericordiae. Tandem vicit spiritus carnem, et evangelicam imitatus viduam, sub pauperis specie bono debitori Deo suam fenerat quantitatem (Marc. XII; Luc. XXI). Redit domum, panis, qui solebat, apponitur. Pauper quidem mensa, sed bona spe dives erat conscientia. Damnum siquidem carnis compensabat lucro pietatis; cum ecce vir quidam ignotus, et quem antea nunquam viderat, festinus et anxius ligatos linteo in manu ejus viginti denariorum solidos posuit, dicensque sibi a Domino suo missos, tanquam qui ab eo expectaretur, incunctanter abscessit. Cumque hic attonitus vellet inquirere, ille disparuit.

CAPUT V.

Damianus ob aetatis gravitatem episcopatus labores refugit.

At once, the man of God, without any hesitation, sends the whole fish, just as it was, to the poor man. Immediately the poor man, who was seen with the very dish full of fish, raised himself on high; and balancing it in his hand, as if carrying a gift, he ascended into heaven in the sight of all. From this it is clearly proven that what is given to the needy is transmitted to God, and what we conceal in the bosom of the poor, we lay up in heaven.

That which we now add, although it is not a miracle, is nevertheless not foreign to the edification which all that we write serves. A certain bishop had ordered a lamprey to be prepared for him, who a little later, while he was devoutly assisting at the sacred altars during the solemnities of the Mass, behold, the memory of the lamprey tempted him with the feeling of its alluring taste. He, as he was of a distinguished mind, blushed that he could suffer such things in the sight of the hidden and omnipotent inspector, and having returned after completing his duties, he commanded that the feverish fish of the soul be given to a poor man. Thus, indeed, the little dog of pleasure, which could have lived in any way under the table of the body, having impudently burst into the holy of holies, was slain with the club of penitence and deserved to perish.

A certain poor head of a household possessed only a single coin in his purse, which he was eager to spend to buy something to eat with his bread. And while, dry and parched from more sumptuous foods, he turned this matter over in his mind for a long time, meanwhile a poor man arrived and asked for mercy. He, hesitating in his mind, was as if placed in a kind of central point. For if he gave it, he feared for his afflicted flesh; if he kept it, he was afraid of incurring the guilt of denied mercy. At last, the spirit conquered the flesh, and imitating the widow of the Gospel, under the guise of a poor man he lent his amount to God, a good debtor (Mark 12; Luke 21). He returns home; the bread, which was customary, is set before him. The table was indeed poor, but his conscience was rich with good hope. Indeed, he compensated for the loss of the flesh with the gain of piety; when behold, a certain unknown man, whom he had never seen before, hurried and anxious, placed twenty solidi of denarii tied in a linen cloth in his hand, and saying that they were sent to him by his Lord, as if he were expected by him, he departed without delay. And when the astonished man wished to inquire, the other disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

Damianus shrinks from the labors of the episcopate on account of the gravity of his age.

Idcirco autem nomina hominum non appono, quoniam ordo peractae rei facilius
 448 haesit animo; nomina vero, curis aliis intervenientibus, fateor, interceptit oblivio. Nec magnopere curamus videri aucupes nominum, dummodo non excidat series et ordo gestorum; quanquam et haec eadem gesta, quae scribimus, quia in transitu audire nos contigit, utrum inoffensam fidei lineam teneant, certum per omnia non habemus. Ne igitur sine nominibus digesta narratio nares fastidiosus lectoribus contrahat, a talibus interim supersedeo. Et certe salubrius est, ut omissis omnibus, ad me redeam, me defleam, me jugiter meis oculis anteponam. Ecce enim jam oculi caligant, et solito amplius phlegmatis humores abundant. Rugae subeunt, et dentium ruinam gingivae minantur. Caput denique, quod canis hactenus spargebatur, cigneo jam albore nivescit; vox raucit, virtus deficit; et, heu pro dolor! sola in me vitiorum radix ignorat penitus senectutem. Enimvero quotidie mortem prae oculis teneo, et jam tribunali tremendi iudicis quodammodo praesentatus assisto. Jam sub quadam mentis imaginatione perversi spiritus truci vultu, exhorrenda specie me sub extremo spiritu palpitantem terribiliter impetunt, jam sancti angeli blandi, ac nivei, quasi qui auxiliuntur, accedunt.

Quiddam porro non longe antehac evenisse comperi, quod dum mihi saepe movet mentem, solet exaggerare formidinem. Quidam namque poenitens sub peregrino habitu in nostris partibus exsulabat: qui perquisitus, quae eum exsiliari culpa compelleret: Cum convicaneo meo, inquit, ad ligna caedenda pergebam, et ecce trabalis magnitudinis serpens duobus attollens squamosa colla capitibus, sinuosis flexibus obrepebat. Qui nos ut eo ambulantes aspexit, continuo scintillans oculis, et tanquam linguis exacuens ora trisulcis, in nos impetum fecit. Cui protinus conviator meus librata securi, unum caput abscidit, moxque ferramentum ex ejus manibus cecidit. Protinus serpens in furoris rabiem implacabiliter efferatus, in sublime se erigit, quod solum remanserat caput attollit, auctoremque proprii vulneris mordicus apprehendit; quem mox ut invasit, sinuosis eum spiris implicuit et involvit, totumque hominem suis viribus vindicans, in subterraneae specus latebras asportavit. Sed dum traheretur ille, quod solum poterat, me flagitat, in me clamosas voces ingeminat, ut vel ipse sibi promptus adjutor accurrerem; vel securim, quae in meis erat manibus, porrigere festinarem. Ego autem infelix et degener, ultricibus flammis obnoxius, et ipse potius a serpentibus merito devorandus, vae mihi homicidae! contremui; et cum manibus esset agendum, causa dictante, non pedibus, fugam paravi; ideoque a sacerdotibus injunctum mihi hoc exsilium patior, meque ut revera mortis illius auctorem deflere compellor.

Therefore, I do not add the names of the men, since the order of the events has stuck more easily in my mind; but as for the names, I confess that, with other cares intervening, oblivion has taken them. Nor do I greatly care to seem a hunter of names, provided that the series and order of the deeds do not fall away; although, as for these same deeds which I write, because it was my lot to hear of them in passing, I am not entirely certain whether they hold to an unblemished line of faith. Therefore, lest a narrative arranged without names should cause fastidious readers to wrinkle their noses, I shall for the time being refrain from such things. And it is certainly more salutary that, omitting all else, I should return to myself, weep for myself, and constantly set myself before my own eyes. For behold, my eyes are already growing dim, and the humors of phlegm abound more than usual. Wrinkles are appearing, and my gums threaten the ruin of my teeth. Finally, my head, which until now was sprinkled with gray, now whitens with a swan-like brilliance; my voice grows hoarse, my strength fails; and, alas, what sorrow! only the root of vice in me is utterly ignorant of old age. Indeed, I keep death before my eyes daily, and I stand already, as it were, presented before the tribunal of the tremendous judge. Already, in a certain imagining of my mind, perverse spirits of fierce countenance and horrifying appearance terribly assault me as I tremble at my last breath; and already the holy angels, gentle and snow-white, approach as if to help.

Furthermore, I have learned of something that happened not long ago, which, as it often moves my mind, is wont to exaggerate my dread. For a certain penitent was living in exile in our parts in the guise of a pilgrim; when asked what fault compelled him to be an exile, he said: 'I was going with my neighbor to cut wood, and behold, a serpent of the size of a beam, raising its two scaly necks and heads, was creeping along with sinuous twists.' When it saw us walking there, its eyes flashing and, as it were, sharpening its mouths with three-forked tongues, it immediately made an attack upon us. My companion at once, balancing his axe, cut off one of its heads, and soon after the tool fell from his hands. Immediately the serpent, implacably roused to a rage of fury, raised itself on high, lifted the one head that remained, and seized the author of its wound with its teeth; as soon as it attacked him, it entangled and enveloped him in its sinuous coils and, claiming the whole man with its strength, carried him away into the recesses of a subterranean cave. But while he was being dragged away, he did the only thing he could: he begged me, he repeated his clamorous cries to me, that I might either run to him as a ready helper, or hasten to hand him the axe that was in my hands. But I, unhappy and degenerate, subject to avenging flames, and myself more deserving to be devoured by serpents—woe to me, a murderer!—I trembled; and when I should have acted with my hands, as the situation dictated, not with my feet, I prepared for flight; and for this reason I suffer this exile enjoined upon me by the priests, and am compelled to weep for myself as, in truth, the author of that man's death.

Quae nimirum gemendae calamitatis historia ita totum cor meum tremefacit et concutit, ut immensam cordis mei formidinem, nec stylo tradere, nec valeam sermone proferre. Meditor enim saepe, ecce homo, et bestia, duo pariter in spelunca. Non mediator intervenit, non ereptor accedit, ferinum sane cor pietas 449 non emollit; praesertim cum rabidae voracitati hoc etiam superadditur, ut illatae contumeliae gravis ultio compensetur. Quaeso, quae rei hujus tunc species erat, imo quae mens miseri hominis esse poterat, cum praeda factus esset hosti nescio misereri; cum evadendi spes nulla superesset, sed potius cruentis dentibus in escam traditus, ferinam protinus ingluviem satiare? Hujus ergo formidolosi casus speciem in mea saepe mente depingo, moxque draconem illum totius crudelitatis auctorem, quomodo rapiat ac devoret animas, pavida consideratione pertracto, illum saepe versiculum repetens, quem Propheta cantabat: «Ne quando, inquit, rapiat ut leo animam meam; dum non est qui redimat, neque qui salvum faciat (Psal. VII).» Tam brevis scriptura quam longam formidandi materiam sanis mentibus praebet?

Porro autem et ante annum in non longinqua ab hac regione villa contigisse dicitur, quod quidam agricola vix erumpente crepusculo, mature surrexit, enormis draconem magnitudinis vidit, quem quia lignum putavit, mox se super eum ad sedendum quasi in trabe composuit. Commota protinus bestia caput attollit, hominem cruento ore pervadit, sicque viventem sub momento rabida voracitate deglutiit, et ut corda nostra gravior adhuc formido concutiat, atque ad metuenda super nos divina judicia pervigil nos sollicitudo compellat; plerumque videmus honestioribus ac juste viventibus viris ista contingere cum econtra carnales et incompositi videantur homines, ut supra meminimus, etiam virtutibus corruscare.

Nam, ut non diutius immorer, quidam ab Hierosolymis rediens, hoc sibi suisque comitibus contigisse narravit; quia cum itineris labore defessi, secus viam nocte quiescerent, repente leo terribilis dormientibus supervenit. Presbyter autem piae opinionis, et honestae vitae, qui etiam quater jam a Dominicae sepulturae visitatione redierat, sociis undique circumfusus medius quiescebat. Irruens igitur immanis bestia, neminem ex his qui sibi prius occurrerant, tetigit; sed caeteros supersiliens, et tanquam projecta ligna contemnens, solum presbyterum signanter appetiit, praecipitanter invasit, caeterisque leonibus, qui non procul aberant, praedam suam cruentus venator exposuit. Quem clamitantem, et sociis audientibus horribiliter mugientem, subito devoraverunt; et e vestigio conviatores ejus usque ad turrim, in quam tremefacti conscenderant, sunt secuti.

This story of a lamentable calamity so makes my whole heart tremble and shake that I can neither commit the immense dread of my heart to the stylus, nor express it in speech. For I often meditate: behold, a man and a beast, two together in a cave. No mediator intervenes, no rescuer approaches; piety certainly does not soften a beastly heart, especially when to its rabid voracity this is also added: that a grave vengeance for the injury inflicted must be exacted. I ask, what was the appearance of this event then, or rather, what could have been the state of mind of that miserable man, when he had been made prey to an enemy that knows not how to pity; when no hope of escape remained, but rather, delivered as food to bloody teeth, he would immediately sate its beastly gluttony? Therefore, I often depict the image of this dreadful event in my mind, and then with fearful consideration I ponder how that dragon, the author of all cruelty, seizes and devours souls, often repeating that little verse which the Prophet sang: 'Lest at any time,' he says, 'he seize my soul like a lion, while there is none to redeem or to save (Psalm 7).' How long a matter for dread does so brief a scripture provide to sound minds?

Moreover, it is said to have happened a year ago in a village not far from this region, that a certain farmer, having risen early at the very break of dawn, saw a dragon of enormous size, which, because he thought it was a log, he soon settled himself upon it to sit as if on a beam. The beast, immediately stirred, raised its head, seized the man with its bloody mouth, and thus in a moment swallowed him alive with rabid voracity; and, so that a still graver dread might shake our hearts, and a vigilant solicitude compel us to fear the divine judgments over us, we very often see these things happen to more honest and justly living men, while on the contrary carnal and disordered men, as we recalled above, are seen to shine even with virtues.

For, not to delay longer, a certain man returning from Jerusalem narrated that this had happened to him and his companions: that when, weary from the labor of the journey, they were resting at night beside the road, a terrible lion suddenly came upon them as they slept. Now a priest of pious reputation and honest life, who had already returned four times from visiting the Lord's sepulchre, was resting in the middle, surrounded on all sides by his companions. The huge beast, therefore, rushing in, touched none of those whom it first encountered; but leaping over the others, and scorning them as if they were logs cast aside, it pointedly sought out the priest alone, attacked him headlong, and, a bloody hunter, exposed its prey to the other lions that were not far off. As he was crying out and, in the hearing of his companions, roaring horribly, they suddenly devoured him; and immediately they pursued his fellow travelers all the way to the tower into which they, terrified, had climbed.

Quod utique infirmis mentibus satis videtur esse terribile, ut merentes praemia virga coerceat, et super eos qui digni sunt gratia coelestis invigilet disciplina.

CAPUT VI.

Quod servus Dei civitatem conflalandam praedicat, sibi ipsi vero non consulit.

Illud etiam non dissimili dignum videtur esse formidine, quod religioso quodam Pisanae dioecesis abbate referente, cognovi (Vide scholia ad calcem opusculi). Aiebat plane quia proxima hac aetate transacta contigit, 450 ut esset in quadam Teutonicorum urbe servus Dei sanctae conversationis, et bonae famae, qui juxta monasterium in cellula morabatur. Huic sane revelatum est, quia nisi populus per poenitentiam quantocius se a sua pravitate compesceret, infra triginta dies tota eorum civitas incendio subjaceret. Qui nimirum visionis suae mysterium non solum episcopo civitatis innotuit, sed et per omnem populum sine mora divulgare curavit. Illi autem in pravitatis suae malitia perdurantes, virum Dei arbitrati sunt delirare, et intentatas Dei minas omnino parvipendentes, dedignati sunt sua facta corrigere. Porro vir Dei pretiosiora quaeque monasterii jubet in recessus abditos conveyi, ubi possent ab ignibus illibata servari.

Quid verbis immoror? Tandem lugubris ille dies advenit, et a septem urbis regionibus ultor ignis exoritur. Et ecce monachi ad servi Dei cellulam anxie prouunt, eumque imminente periculo, non segniter exire deposcunt. Ille autem recusat omnino, divinoque iudicio cuncta committens, quid Deo de se placeat immotus exspectat. Ignis ergo globis in astra furentibus, cuncta occupat, cuncta pervadit et non modo caetera quaeque succendit, sed et monasterium, heu! taedet dicere, ipsumque servum Dei cum tota sua cellula conflagravit. Quod profecto Dei iudicium non tam discutiendum est quam timendum. Quis enim humanae mentis intuitus divinorum iudiciorum penetrare valet abyssum, cum sit utique terribilis in consiliis super filios hominum? (Psal. LXV.) Quis enim credere potuisset, ut is, qui per revelationem meruit agnoscere periturae urbis excidium, semetipsum ignoraret flammis simul atrocibus exurendum?

This indeed seems terrible enough to weak minds: that the rod should restrain those who deserve rewards, and that heavenly discipline should watch over those who are worthy of grace.

CHAPTER VI.

That the servant of God foretells the city will be burned, but does not consult for his own safety.

It also seems worthy of no small dread, which I learned from the account of a certain religious abbot of the diocese of Pisa (See the scholia at the end of the work). He was saying plainly that in the recent past it happened, that there was in a certain city of the Germans a servant of God of holy conversation and good fame, who lived in a small cell next to a monastery. To him it was revealed that, unless the people quickly restrained themselves from their depravity through penance, within thirty days their entire city would be subject to fire. He certainly not only made known the mystery of his vision to the bishop of the city, but also took care to spread it among all the people without delay. But they, persisting in the malice of their depravity, thought the man of God was raving, and altogether slighting the threatened menaces of God, they disdained to correct their deeds. Furthermore, the man of God orders all the more precious things of the monastery to be carried away into hidden retreats, where they could be kept unharmed by the fires.

Why do I linger on words? At last that mournful day arrived, and from seven regions of the city the avenging fire arose. And behold, the monks anxiously rush forth to the cell of the servant of God, and as the danger was imminent, they urgently demand that he come out. But he altogether refuses, and committing all things to the divine judgment, he unmoved awaits what may please God concerning him. Therefore, with globes of fire raging to the stars, it occupies all things, pervades all things, and not only burns everything else, but also the monastery—alas! it is tedious to say—and it consumed the servant of God himself with his whole cell. This judgment of God indeed is not so much to be discussed as to be feared. For what insight of the human mind is able to penetrate the abyss of divine judgments, since He is indeed terrible in His counsels over the sons of men? (Psalm 65). For who could have believed that he, who by revelation deserved to know the destruction of the city about to perish, should be ignorant that he himself was to be burned at the same time by the cruel flames?

Haec igitur et his similia cum mente considero, cum subtili meditatione pertracto, dum quid mihi adhuc imminet, nescio; tremefactis certe totis visceribus obstupesco; moxque ad lacrymas redeo, et si fletus aliquando prae cordis duritia non erumpit, mens tamen ipsa moerore gravius contabescit. Perpendo saepe quale sit insatiabilibus subjacere draconibus, inimicis infoederabilibus interesse, in morte vivere, in ignibus habitare. Illud etiam, quomodo ad cruciandos impios hoc prae caeteris electum sit elementum, ut cum favilla dissiliens, in quolibet membro, vel ad momentum tolerari non possit, ultrices flammae miseros homines hinc egredientes absorbeant, et infinite patens vorax gehenna concludat. Ex quibus nimirum plura suppeditat animus eloqui, nisi me prohiberet epistolare compendium diutius immorari. Ex qua tamen occasione quiddam nunc redit in mentem, quod non piget breviter adnotare.

Duo viri de primoribus Faventinae civitatis ex hoc saeculo ante non parvum tempus egressi, cuidam diacono simul apparuere per visum, qui nimirum ferreis casulis in more sacerdotum talotenus ad ima defluentibus videbantur induti. Percunctatus autem diaconus, utrumne, inquit, vos, qui in illa vita estis, jugiter Dominum benedicitis? Responderunt: Nos, qui apud inferos aeterno igne cruciamur, nunquam benedicimus Dominum. Plane, quod sollicitudinis meae pondus accumulat, et frater ille, cujus ante meminimus, ut conjici potest, tunc 451 stabat, cum revelationis prae-sagium meruit; tunc in aliqua forte culpa jacebat, cum discrimen incurrit. In lubrico siquidem positi, repente prolabimur; et nunc mundi sub momento temporis inquinamur.

Unde et illud nunc ad memoriam redit, quod in Beneventana olim urbe constitutum audire me contigit. Princeps denique ejusdem civitatis presbyterum habebat sanctae conversationis virum, et in divinis officiis, ac praecipue in solemnitate missarum indesinenter assiduum. Qui dum quotidie sacris mysteriis reverenter insisteret, angelus Domini ex consuetudine veniebat, et vidente principe, sacramentum Domini corporis ex offerentis manibus assumebat. Sed, o ruinalis vitae hujus lubrica et incerta conditio! nam qui angelicis fruebatur mundis obsequiis, in foedae luxuriae voraginem repente prolapsus est. Quid plura? Peragendi sacri mysterii tempus advenit, presbyter consuetudine foris exigente compellitur; sed graviter intus, conscientia remordente, torquetur; ornatur, accedit, trepidat, palpitat, tamen offerre praesumit. Ecce angelus, ut assuetus fuerat, venit, et inspectante principe, spongiam infectam aqua super caput illius expressit, totumque corpus ejus tergendo purgavit.

Therefore, when I consider these and similar things in my mind, when I treat them with subtle meditation, while I do not yet know what is still imminent for me; certainly, with my whole inward parts trembling, I am struck dumb; and soon I return to tears, and if weeping sometimes does not break out because of the hardness of my heart, yet the mind itself wastes away more heavily with grief. I often weigh what it is to be subject to insatiable dragons, to be among unreconcilable enemies, to live in death, to dwell in fires. Also that, how this element was chosen before all others for torturing the impious, so that while a flying spark cannot be endured in any member even for a moment, the avenging flames absorb the wretched men departing from here, and the infinitely gaping voracious Gehenna encloses them. Concerning which things indeed my mind supplies more to say, unless the brevity of the letter prohibited me from lingering longer. From which occasion, however, something now returns to my mind, which I do not regret briefly noting.

Two men from the first ranks of the city of Faenza, having departed from this world not long ago, appeared together in a vision to a certain deacon, who indeed seemed to be clothed in iron chasubles in the manner of priests flowing down even to the ankles. Now the deacon inquired, "Do you," he said, "who are in that life, continually bless the Lord?" They answered: "We, who are tortured in the eternal fire among the infernal, never bless the Lord." Plainly, what accumulates the weight of my anxiety is that both that brother, whom we mentioned before, as can be conjectured, was then standing when he deserved the presage of revelation; then he was lying perhaps in some fault when he incurred the danger. For placed in a slippery spot, we suddenly fall; and now we are defiled in a moment of time by the world.

Whence also that now returns to memory, which it happened that I heard once established in the city of Benevento. Finally, the prince of the same city had a priest, a man of holy conversation, and incessantly diligent in divine offices, and especially in the solemnity of masses. While he daily reverently insisted on the sacred mysteries, an angel of the Lord used to come by custom, and while the prince was watching, would take the sacrament of the Lord's body from the hands of the one offering. But, O slippery and uncertain condition of this ruinous life! for he who enjoyed the pure services of angels, was suddenly plunged into the abyss of foul luxury. Why more? The time for performing the sacred mystery arrived, the priest is compelled by external custom; but he is tormented within, his conscience remorseing; he is adorned, he approaches, he trembles, his heart beats, yet he presumes to offer. Behold the angel, as he had been accustomed, came, and while the prince looked on, he squeezed a sponge soaked in water over his head, and cleansed his whole body by wiping it.

Expletis autem mysteriis, eandem spongiam rursus expressit, omnesque sordes, atque squalores quos ex corpore illius ante contraxerat, membris ejus omnibus iterum superfudit. Hoc viso princeps admiratus obstupuit, presbyterumque semotis omnibus secrete convenit. Inquisitus itaque presbyter, si noviter aliquid criminis admisisset, primo quidem quasi perhorrescens facinus, abnegat; deinde male sibi conscius, ac principis auctoritate compulsus, tandem corruisse se nocte praeterita in quamdam ejusdem principis cubiculariam confitetur.

In eadem rursus urbe vidi monachum cui nomen erat Madelmus, qui nimirum juxta monasterium degens in cellula, inclusus, sive solitarius dicebatur. Hic mihi retulit, quia in sacrosancto paschali Sabbato, Resurrectionem praecedente Dominicam, in Ecclesia, quam frequentare consueverat, quatuordecim plus minus lampades adornavit, et aqua supposita praeter unam, omnibus oleum superfudit. Cumque caeteris satisfactum esset, sed deficiente oleo, una remaneret; petivit ab abbate, sed impetrare non potuit. Tandem in fide non haesitans, aqua lampadem implevit, lumen adhibuit, quae profecto per totam noctem cum caeteris nihilominus radiavit; et cum naturale sit aquae ut ignem semper exstinguat, illa fovebat. Tunc abbas advocatus in testimonium, signum virtutis admiratus expavit, seseque oleum non dedisse confusus erubuit. Porro et alias quasdam monachus ille dicebatur ostendisse virtutes. Sed vae illi! clausis oculis securus incedit, et versuti hostis laqueos non attendit. Nam postmodum hic in luxuriae voraginem corruit, et qui eatenus magnae reverentiae principi, ac civibus fuerat habitus, publice virgis caesus, et sub inhonesto ludibrio turpiter asseritur decalvatus.

CAPUT VII.

Quod res sit maxime ardua aliis praeesse.

Haec idcirco dixerim, ut liquido pateat, quia in hoc vitae mortalis itinere gradientibus multae supponuntur insidiae, diversa occultus hostis scandala contegit, multa viscaria struit, plures laqueos atque tendiculas nostris quotidie gressibus anteponit. Dicant ergo mihi, qui volunt episcopare, plebibus te regendis expone. Sed qui meipsum nequeo inter tot gladios ac tela protegere; quo pacto et alios possum ex captiosis latentium insidiarum laqueis expedire?

But when the mysteries were completed, he squeezed the same sponge again, and poured over all his members again all the filth and squalor which he had previously contracted from his body. Seeing this, the prince was amazed and struck dumb, and secretly met the priest, all others being removed. And so the priest being questioned, if he had recently committed any crime, at first indeed as if abhorring the deed, he denies it; then conscious of his guilt, and compelled by the authority of the prince, at length he confesses that he had fallen on the past night with a certain chambermaid of the same prince.

Again in the same city I saw a monk whose name was Madelmus, who indeed living in a cell next to the monastery, shut in, was called a solitary. He related to me, that on the holy Sabbath of Easter, preceding the Sunday of the Resurrection, in the church which he was accustomed to frequent, he prepared about fourteen lamps, and having placed water beneath, he poured oil over all except one. And when the others were satisfied, but oil failing, one remained; he asked from the abbot, but could not obtain it. At length, not hesitating in faith, he filled the lamp with water, applied the light, which indeed radiated through the whole night no less than the others; and though it is natural to water that it always extinguishes fire, it cherished it. Then the abbot, called as a witness, was amazed and trembled at the sign of virtue, and blushed in confusion that he had not given the oil. Furthermore, that monk was said to have shown certain other virtues. But woe to him! he walks secure with closed eyes, and does not attend to the snares of the crafty enemy. For afterwards he fell into the abyss of luxury, and he who until then had been held in great reverence by the prince and the citizens, was publicly beaten with rods, and is basely asserted to have been shorn under dishonest mockery.

CHAPTER VII.

That it is a most difficult thing to preside over others.

I have said these things for this reason, so that it may be clearly manifest, that for those walking in this journey of mortal life many ambushes are placed, the hidden enemy covers various scandals, sets many snares, and daily places many traps and snares before our steps. Let those therefore say to me, who wish to be bishops, expose yourself to ruling the peoples. But I, who cannot protect myself among so many swords and weapons; in what way can I also expedite others from the captious snares of latent ambushes?

Deponenda est ergo sarcina, quam bajulare non possum: meliusque est pondus abjicere, quam cum detrimento Domini, cujus sum servus, fractis cervicibus interire. Sufficiat nunc ad testimonium hoc solum beati Hieronymi, quod, necdum hora transacta, sub oculis habuisse me memini. Dum enim de otioso Ecclesiae pastore tractaret, adjecit: «Illico, inquit, indignantis Domini responsione ferietur: Serve nequam, quare non dedisti pecuniam ad mensam, ut ego veniens cum usuris utique exegissem illam?» (Luc. XIX.) Quod idem doctor protinus exponens, ait, id est, deposuisses ad altare quod ferre non poteras. Dum enim tu ignavus negotiator denarium tenes, alterius locum, qui pecuniam duplicare poterat, occupasti. Hoc ego sancti viri consilium, fateor, libenter arripui; et onus, cui succumbere compellebar, abjeci. Imo pecuniam, quam duplicare non poteram, negotiator ignavus ad altare deposui.

Fuit, fuit olim, sed jam elapsus est tempus, ut modestiae pudor, mortificationis insigne, digna severitas, et sacerdotalis genii valeat censura servari. Nam ut me solum digne coarguam, videtis ipsi quia protinus, ut ad vos venio; ecce sales, ecce facetiae, lepores, urbanitates, dicacitates, volumina quaestionum, omnesque verborum inanum pestes insolenter erumpunt, quae nos, non jam sacerdotes, sed potius oratores, ac rhetores, sive, quod inhonestum est, scurras ostendunt. Mox enim, ut verba conserimus, paulatim quaedam lenocinia confabulationis alternae subrepunt, quae omnem animi rigorem indecenter emolliant, et severitatis robur in excussum risum, et turpia joca dissolvant. Hinc est, quod mens extra se sparsa confunditur, acies cordis obtunditur, lux divini amoris exstinguitur, terror in alios, et reverentia sacerdotalis amittitur; et quod periculosius est, recte vivendi linea, quae aliis ad exemplum proponenda fuerat, non tenetur.

Quod si nos, vel pudore, vel metu in haec declinare contemnimus, mox inhumani, rigidi et quos Hyrcanae genuerint tigres saxei judicamur (PLIN. lib. VIII, c. 2). Reprimo calamum. Nam, ut turpiores attexantur ineptiae, pudore suffundor, videlicet venatus, aucupium, alearum insuper furiae, vel scacchorum, quae nimirum de toto quidem sacerdote exhibent mimum; sed praecipue oculos, manus, et linguam, quasi mimum verum simul efficiunt, sicque conditos, et qui suavius sapiant, cibos daemonum mensis apponunt. 453 Hic plane, si quid mihi de venerabili Florentinae sedis episcopo contigerit, recolo, alienum esse ab aedificatione non credo.

Therefore the burden must be laid down, which I cannot carry: and it is better to cast away the weight, than to perish with broken necks with the detriment of the Lord, whose servant I am. Let this alone of the blessed Jerome suffice now for testimony, which, not yet an hour passed, I remember I had before my eyes. For while he treated of the idle pastor of the Church, he added: "Immediately," he said, "he will be struck by the response of the indignant Lord: Wicked servant, why did you not give the money to the table, so that I coming should certainly have required it with usury?" (Luke 19). Which same doctor immediately explaining, says, that is, you should have deposited at the altar what you could not carry. For while you, a sluggish merchant, hold the denarius, you have occupied the place of another, who could have doubled the money. This advice of the holy man, I confess, I have gladly seized; and the burden, to which I was compelled to succumb, I have cast away. Nay, I, a sluggish merchant, have deposited at the altar the money, which I could not double.

It was, it was once, but now the time has elapsed, that the shame of modesty, the mark of mortification, worthy severity, and the censure of the priestly genius can be preserved. For to rebuke myself alone worthily, you yourselves see that immediately, as I come to you; behold salts, behold witticisms, charms, urbanities, dicacities, volumes of questions, and all the plagues of vain words insolently break forth, which show us, no longer as priests, but rather as orators and rhetoricians, or, what is dishonest, as buffoons. For as soon as we join words, gradually certain allurements of alternating conversation creep in, which indecently soften all the rigor of the mind, and dissolve the strength of severity into shaken laughter and base jokes. Hence it is, that the mind scattered outside itself is confounded, the edge of the heart is blunted, the light of divine love is extinguished, terror over others and priestly reverence is lost; and what is more dangerous, the line of living rightly, which was to be proposed as an example to others, is not held.

But if we, either by shame or by fear, disdain to decline into these things, we are soon judged as inhuman, rigid, and stony ones whom Hyrcanian tigers have begotten (Pliny, Book 8, Ch. 2). I restrain my pen. For, that baser ineptitudes should be woven in, I am covered with shame, namely hunting, fowling, and furthermore the furies of dice, or of chess, which indeed exhibit a mime of the whole priest; but especially they make the eyes, hands, and tongue as if a true mime at the same time, and thus they place foods, seasoned and which they may taste more sweetly, upon the tables of demons. Here plainly, if anything concerning the venerable bishop of the Florentine see occurs to me, I recall it, and believe it is not alien from edification.

Dum aliquando sibi essem comes itineris, vespertinum tandem subeuntes hospitium, ego me in presbyteri cellam semovi; is autem in spatiosa domo cum commean-
tium turba resedit. Mane autem facto, a meo mihi Agasone significatum est, quod
praedictus episcopus ludo praefuerit scacchorum. Quod profecto verbum, velut
sagitta, cor meum acutissime pupugit, et indignationis vulnus infixit. Hora autem,
quae mihi videbatur electa, conveni hominem, et acriter invehor. Hoc igitur initium
sermonis arripiens, aio: Librata manu virgas exero, plagas infigere quaero si sit qui
terga subjiat. Et ille, inferatur, inquit, culpa, non recusabitur poenitentia. Rectene,
inquam, tuique erat officii, vespere in scacchorum vanitate colludere, et manum
Dominici corporis oblatricem, linguam inter Deum et populum mediatricem, sacri-
legi ludibrii contaminatione foedare? Praesertim cum canonica decernat auctoritas, ut
aleatores episcopi deponantur. Et quid prodest ei, quem efficaciter auctoritas damnat,
etiam si iudicium extrinsecus non accedat. Ille autem ex diversitate nominum, defen-
sionis sibi faciens scutum, ait: aliud scacchum esse, aliud aleam. Aleas ergo auctoritas
illa prohibuit, scacchos vero tacendo concessit. Ad quod ego: Scacchum, inquam,
Scriptura non ponit; sed utriusque ludi genre aleae nomine comprehendit.

Quapropter dum alea prohibetur, et nominatim de scaccho nihil dicitur, constat
procul dubio utrumque genus uno vocabulo comprehensum, unius sententiae aucto-
rita e damnatum. Tunc ille, ut mitis est animi, perspicacis ingenii, redditis rationibus
humiliter acquievit, culpam nullatenus iterandam certa pollicitatione constituit,
inungi sibi poenitentiam postulavit. Cui mox praecepi ut ter psalterium meditando
percurreret, ac duodecim pauperum pedes sub totidem numismatum erogatione
eorumque recreatione lavaret. Hac scilicet ratione perspecta, ut quoniam haec culpa
cum manibus potissimum, et sermone committitur, lavando pauperum pedes, suas
potius a culpae contagio manus ablueret: et imprimens alienis vestigiis ora, pacem sibi
cum Domino, quem per flendos jocos offenderat, reformaret. Hoc autem diximus,
454 ut quam inhonestum, quam absurdum, quam denique foedum sit hoc in sacer-
dote ludibrium, ex alterius emendatione noscatur.

While I was once his companion on a journey, entering at last an evening lodging, I withdrew myself into the priest's cell; but he sat in the spacious house with a crowd of fellow travelers. But when morning came, it was signified to me by my groom, that the aforesaid bishop had played at the game of chess. Which word indeed, like an arrow, pierced my heart most sharply, and inflicted a wound of indignation. Now at the hour, which seemed to me chosen, I met the man, and sharply inveighed against him. Therefore seizing this beginning of speech, I say: With poised hand I bring out the rods, I seek to inflict blows if there be one who may submit his back. And he said, "Let the fault be brought in, penance will not be refused." "Was it right," I say, "and was it of your office, to play together in the vanity of chess in the evening, and to defile the hand that offers the Lord's body, the tongue that mediates between God and the people, with the contamination of sacrilegious mockery? Especially since canonical authority decrees that dicing bishops should be deposed. And what does it profit him, whom authority effectively condemns, even if judgment does not approach from without?" But he, making for himself a shield of defense from the diversity of names, said: that chess is one thing, dice another. Authority therefore prohibited dice, but by being silent it conceded chess. To which I: "Scripture does not put chess," I say; "but it comprehends the genus of both games under the name of dice."

Wherefore while dice is prohibited, and nothing is said by name concerning chess, it is certain beyond doubt that both genera are comprehended under one word, and condemned by the authority of one sentence. Then he, as he is of a mild mind and of a sharp genius, having given reasons humbly acquiesced, established with a certain promise that the fault was by no means to be repeated, and asked that penance be enjoined upon him. To whom I soon commanded that he should run through the psalter three times in meditation, and wash the feet of twelve poor men with the bestowal of as many coins and their recreation. By this reason indeed perceived, that since this fault is committed especially with the hands and speech, by washing the feet of the poor, he might rather wash his own hands from the contagion of the fault: and impressing his mouth upon the footsteps of others, he might reform peace for himself with the Lord, whom he had offended through lamentable jokes. Now we have said this, so that it may be known from the emendation of another, how dishonest, how absurd, how finally foul is this mockery in a priest.

Praeterea, dilectissimi, ut ad id redeam pro quo scribere ista proposui, nolite mihi de caetero esse molesti, ut quietis portum, in quem a Christo per vos gubernante relapsus sum, deseram, et spumantes procellarum cumulos, confragola volumina, Scyllaeam voraginem denuo sulcare contendam. Quamvis enim ego miser, et ille sit sanctus; quia tamen par mihi quodammodo cum Samuele sit causa (Reg. VIII, 16), non dispar promatur super utrumque sententia. Ille siquidem principatus deseruit dignitatem, David tamen unxit in principem. Nos etiam ad ejus exemplum, apostolicae sedis, auctore Deo, cupimus pontificem ordinare, ac protinus a proprii pontificatus arce recedere.

Ecce, dilectissimi, dum uberioris vobis alloqui verba protraxi, epistolaris regulam brevitatibus offendi. Si quis igitur me laciniosae velit prolixitatis arguere, arguat potius impatientem silentii charitatem: nec ignoret, quia illic est succincta prolixitas, ubi sic styli currentis scriptor extendit articulum, ut tamen totum pleni pectoris non explicet votum. Stephanum quoque, quem inter primos in mente gestamus amicos, in epistolae calce subnectimus, utque memoris non sit immemor obsecramus. Ille miserum Petrum de manibus eruat Hildebrandi, ad cujus imperium magno Petro patuit carcer Herodis.

SCHOLIA

Illud etiam non dissimili dignum videtur esse formidine quod religioso quodam Pisanae dioecesis abbate, etc. Id quod hoc loco sanctus cardinalis narrat de quodam Dei servo incluso, qui et praeviderat incendium, quo in cella sua exustus est, hoc ipsum mihi videtur quod Marianus Scotus hisce verbis expressit (Chron. l. III, aetat. VI, sub ann. 1058): «Podelbruna civitas cum duobus monasteriis feria sexta ante Palmas igne consumuntur.» In monasterio autem erat Paternus nomine, monachus Scotus, multisque annis inclusus, qui etiam combustionem praenuntiabat, in sua cella ambiens martyrium, combustus est. Feria secunda post octavas Paschae, eziens de Colonia, causa orationis eundem locum visitavi, ob bona quae narrantur de ejus sepulcro.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum.

Furthermore, most beloved, to return to that for which I proposed to write these things, do not be troublesome to me for the rest, that I should desert the port of quiet, into which I have slipped back by Christ governing through you, and contend to furrow again the foaming heaps of storms, the rugged volumes, and the Scyllaeen abyss. For although I am wretched, and he is holy; yet because my cause is in some way equal with Samuel's (1 Kings 8:16), let a not dissimilar sentence be brought forth over both. For he indeed deserted the dignity of the principedom, yet he anointed David as prince. We also, following his example, desire to ordain a pontiff of the apostolic see, God being the author, and immediately to recede from the height of our own pontificate.

Behold, most beloved, while I have drawn out the words of a more abundant address to you, I have offended the rule of epistolary brevity. If anyone therefore wishes to rebuke me of laciniose prolixity, let him rather rebuke charity impatient of silence: nor let him be ignorant, that there is a succinct prolixity, where the writer so extends the point of his running style, that he yet does not unfold the whole vow of a full breast. We also subjoin at the end of the letter Stephen, whom we carry in our mind among our first friends, and we beseech that he, being mindful, should not be unmindful. May he rescue wretched Peter from the hands of Hildebrand, at whose command the prison of Herod was opened to the great Peter.

SCHOLIA

"It also seems worthy of no small dread, which from a certain religious abbot of the diocese of Pisa," etc. That which the holy cardinal narrates in this place concerning a certain servant of God shut in, who had both foreseen the fire by which he was burned in his cell, this very thing seems to me to be what Marianus Scotus expressed in these words (Chronicle, Book III, Age VI, under the year 1058): "The city of Paderborn with two monasteries is consumed by fire on the Friday before Palms." Now in the monastery was Paternus by name, a Scottish monk, shut in for many years, who also foretold the conflagration, and seeking martyrdom in his cell, was burned. On the Monday after the octaves of Easter, departing from Cologne, I visited the same place for the sake of prayer, because of the good things that are told concerning his tomb.

Blessed be the name of the Lord.