

Copy of the Letter written by King Philip the Vth
to his Son King Lewis, from St. Ildefonso the
14th of January 1724.

IT having pleased the Divine Majesty through infinite Mercy, my well beloved Son, to make me sensible for some Years past of the Nothingness of this World and the Vanity of its Grandeurs, and at the same time to raise in me an ardent Desire of eternal good things, which without any Comparison ought to be preferred to those of this Earth, which God gave us only to be considered in that View; I have judged, that I could not make a better Return to the Favours of so good a Father, who calls me to serve him, and who has bestowed on me through my whole Life so many Marks of a visible Protection, by which he has delivered me as well from the Infirmities that he has been pleased to lay upon me, as from the difficult Occurrences of my Reign, during which he has protected me and preserved the Crown against so many united Powers who attempted to wrest it from me; than by sacrificing to him and laying at his Feet that Crown, to think only of serving him, to bewail my past Offences, and to tender my self the less unworthy to appear in his Presence, when he shall be pleased to call me to his Tribunal, much more tremendous to Kings than to other Men. This Resolution I have taken with the greater Ardour and Joy, because happily for me I found the Queen, whom God has given me for my Spouse, entertain at the same time the same Sentiments, and determined with me to trample under Foot the Nothingness of the Grandeurs and perishing good things of this Life. We have therefore some Years resolved, both of us with one Consent, by the Favour of the most Holy Virgin Mary our Lady, to put this Design in Execution, and I now set about it the more cheerfully, because I leave the Crown to a Son whom I love with the greatest Tenderness, who is worthy to wear it, and whose Qualities give me certain Hopes that he will discharge all the Duties of a Dignity, much more terrible than I am able to describe it. Yes, my beloved Son, make your self sensible of all the Weight of that Dignity, study to perform all that it requires of you, rather than suffer your Eyes to be dazzled with the flattering Splendour of what surrounds you. Think, that you are not a King on any other Condition, than to see that God is served, and that your People are happy: That you have above you a Lord who is your Creator and Redeemer, who has heaped Benefits on you, to whom you owe all that you have, and to whom you owe even your self, Employ your Vigilance therefore for his Glory, and exert your Authority in whatever may tend to promote it. Protect and defend the Church, and the Holy Religion, with all your Might,

and even with the Hazard, if need be, of your Crown and of your Life: Spare nothing that may serve to extend it even to the most remote Countries; deeming it a Felicity incomparably greater to have them under your Command for propagating the Knowledge and Service of God in them, than for the Extent to which they may enlarge your Dominions. Prevent as much as possible Offences against God in all your Kingdoms; and use all your Power that he may be served, honoured, and revered by all that shall be subject to your Dominion. Preserve ever a great Devotion to the most Holy Virgin, and put your self as well as your Kingdoms under her Protection; seeing you cannot by any other Means better obtain what may be needful for you and for them. Be always, as you ought, obedient to the Holy See, and to the Pope as the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Protect and defend ever the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition, which may be call'd the Bulwark of the Faith, and to which it owes its Preservation in all its Purity in the Dominions of Spain; so that the Heresies which have afflicted the other Parts of Christendom, and produced such horrid and deplorable Ravages in them, could never be able to get Footing here. Bear Respect always to the Queen, and consider her as your own Mother, not only as long as God shall continue my Life, but after my Death, if it be His Will to take me first out of this World, answering as becomes you the affectionate Friendship she has constantly shewn you; be careful to support her that she may not want any thing, and that she may be respected as she ought by all your Subjects. Love your Brothers, looking on your self as their Father, since I substitute you in my Room; and give them such Education as is worthy of Christian Princes. Do Justice equally to all your Subjects, high and low, without Exception of Persons. Defend the low against the Violences and Exactions that may be set on foot against them. Redress the Vexations the Indians suffer. Ease your People as much as you can, and in so doing supply what the turbulent Times of my Reign would not permit me to do, and which I most sincerely wish I had done, in Return to the Zeal and Affection which they have always shewn for me, which I shall always keep impressed on my Heart, and which you ought even to bear in Mind. To conclude, have continually before your Eyes two holy Kings, who are the Glory of Spain and of France, St. Ferdinand and St. Lewis: These I propose to you for your Example, and they ought to move you the more, because you are illustrious by their Blood, as they were great Kings and at the same time great Saints: Imitate them in each of those Glories, but may their Example lead you