

these solicitations he at last yielded, but although he had full authority to exercise the rites of Roman Catholicism, he now encountered so many unpleasantnesses in the Protestant community of his native city that he finally quitted his fatherland, and returned to Florence, where he was entrusted with the education of the son of the Grand Duke Cosmo III. Gradually becoming entirely devoted to a religious life, he took orders and in 1677 was named Bishop of Heliopolis and Vicar Apostolic in the north of Europe. He thereafter employed his leisure in composing a series of theological works. But it is upon the value of his anatomical and geological writings that his fame mainly rests. In 1667, soon after first settling in Florence, he published the anatomy of the head of a dog-fish and discussed the question whether the "glossopetrae," or sharks' teeth, found in the rocks, belonged to such fishes, or were mere mineral concretions, produced by some process within the stone in which they lie. Though he inclined to believe them to be truly of organic origin, his statements were made with so much timid reservation as to show how cautious even the acutest intellects were constrained to be in touching on any subject likely to rouse the orthodox prejudices of the age. Two years afterwards, however, having meanwhile enlarged his acquaintance with the rocks and fossils of Northern Italy, he proclaimed with frank boldness his conviction that the fossils were once living things, and that they and the strata containing them revealed a record of part of the history of the earth.

In 1669 there appeared in Florence his treatise