

**THE LIFE OF THE
BLESSED PAUL OF THE CROSS**

Founder of the Congregation
Of the Barefooted Clerks
Of the Most Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ
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CHAPTER XXIX

Of His Spotless Purity

Father Paul well knew that the Beloved of souls, the Divine Spouse, takes His greatest delight and dwells most willingly in those who, by their purity and spotlessness, are like so many white and fragrant lilies in the Church of God, “*who feeds among lilies*” (Cant. 2:16). Therefore, he was always most careful to preserve his innocence and purity unspotted. He practiced what he said with deep feeling to others, “*I would rather die than be violated.*” Up to the time of his death, he preserved his virginity unstained. Our Lord so disposed that the virtuous Father, without being aware of it, gave us a certainty that he possessed this gift, and that he had carefully guarded this precious treasure all his life. Speaking one day of his early years, he said, as if reproaching himself, that he had been lively and rather too much so; however, he added, “But not...” – giving clearly to understand by his words that God had preserved him from striking against those rocks on which so many young men are so miserably wrecked. On another occasion, at the time when he was suffering at Orbetello that very painful illness we have mentioned, thinking that no one heard him, he was pouring forth his soul affectionately to God and said, “You know, O Lord, that your Paul, through your grace, is not conscious of having stained his soul with wilful sin.” As he spoke these words, they were heard by Father Fulgenzio of Jesus, one of our religious, who for his spirit of prayer, sweetness, and prudence, was very dear to the servant of God, to his and our great consolation, and from him has been transmitted to us this sincere attestation of Father Paul’s innocence. Our Lord, as if He wished to manifest, by unusual and miraculous signs, the servant of God’s purity, ordained that, more than once, several persons should perceive a perfume and most fragrant sweetness, not to be compared to any ordinary scent, either in kissing his hand, in approaching him, in taking hold of his handkerchief, wet with perspiration after he had been preaching, or of any sign of the Passion which he had worn, or in entering the rooms inhabited by him, as is attested in the Processes. At Aspra, in Sabina, Doctor Felix Bruschi, having received the good Father in his house, perceived, as soon as he departed, in the room which he had inhabited, a singular fragrance, and considering it something extraordinary and wonderful, he called his family, saying with amazement and a deep

feeling of devotion, “Smell, smell what a perfume! What a fragrance! Oh, what a fragrance!” The same thing occurred at Fianello, when Signora Juliana Angelini and Antonia Pacelli, on entering the room Father Paul had occupied during the mission, immediately smelt a sweet perfume, unlike anything they had ever before experienced; and what is more, this scent, like something supernatural, caused in them a special devotion, by which they were more than ever confirmed in the opinion they entertained of the holiness and spotless purity of the servant of God.

The same wonderful fragrance was noticed in other rooms occupied by him; and one who for a considerable time had the consolation of being near him attests that, besides the fragrance emitted from his body and his habit “which I myself (these are the witness’s words) have perceived by remaining with him, especially in the Retreat of the Presentation at Orbetello, and that at Toscanella, when I served him as secretary and was obliged to be near him, the same fragrance was perceptible in the cell where he slept.” The same is attested by another religious, who, without being told of it by anyone, which might have caused it to be considered imagination or prejudice, more than once perceived an unusual perfume in Father Paul’s room; and once, when the servant of God left the Retreat at Cerra, the sweet perfume of the room he had occupied was perceptible for six months; and the religious, having mentioned this fact to the Father Superior, was told by him that he had noticed the same thing. Thus, our Lord more and more manifested the purity of His servant and made it an object of veneration. Paul, who knew very well how precious is this great treasure, renounced constantly and generously, in order to preserve and possess it, all the allurements and the great hopes that the world offered him, and among them an honorable and advantageous marriage, as we have said.

Many dangerous occasions and violent assaults, however, were not wanting to him, and one whose virtue was less solid and strong would have tottered, and perhaps have fallen. When he was one day at prayer in a Church, an immodest child went and placed himself at his side, and by indecent actions dared to tempt him to sin; the chaste youth who had, with a fervent love for holy purity, sincere charity and prudent discretion, that he might not cause scandal to those who were present, left the place and the hellish tempter without saying a word. By his hatred of sin and growing more fervent in the love of God, Paul continued his prayers with greater devotion. On another occasion, as he was leaving the Church when there was a great crowd, a bold and wicked

woman suddenly approached him and tried to tempt him; he resisted with the constancy of a hero, conquered and confounded the guilty woman, and after gaining the victory affectionately thanked God, who had preserved him in such danger.

It must not be imagined that his having preserved this heavenly lily, pure and unstained, was the effect of a cold and slow temperament, or of a torpid and obtuse mind. On the contrary, the servant of God was of an ardent and sanguine temperament, of a brisk and lively disposition. He was not wanting, especially when young, in that vivacity, beauty, and gracefulness, which expose innocence to greater danger, in proportion as it is less cautious and reserved. We may therefore conclude, that the preservation of so precious a treasure was in him entirely the effect of vigilance, circumspection, and a great love of virtue. So much the more because he did not always afterwards live hidden and, as it were, buried in solitude, but was obliged, for the execution of those works to which he was led by the Spirit of God and by that zeal which is the true child of charity, to converse on many occasions with persons of every kind; and in order to heal, by the most precious Blood of our Redemption, souls infected with sin, he was constrained by necessity to see and consider closely those frightful wounds which may cause injury to a less cautious physician, who does not provide himself well with those heavenly remedies that keep the abominable infection at a distance. The good Father, in order to rescue a soul that was miserably plunged in the horrible pit of this infamous vice, had no dread of approaching with great affection, confiding in divine assistance, those who had fallen; and, united by love to that God who is purity by essence, he rendered every assistance and did all in his power to enable the sinner to arise from the mire, and to wash himself in the bath of sacramental confession, without receiving the least harm from these efforts. The many different avowals that he had to hear never in any way troubled him, nor distracted his mind; nor in speaking to so many persons of all ages, sexes, and conditions, did he ever feel the flame of impurity enkindled in his heart, and as an act of gratitude to the Divine Goodness, who had preserved him, he told his confessor that from the time he was young, God gave him the grace to hear so many things against purity and yet to remain cold and unmoved as marble. It is, however, true that the servant of God, to live more closely united to God, and more remote from dangers, retired in the beginning to a solitary place and led most joyfully a life of solitude during all that time that obedience and charity for his neighbors would allow. And as he well knew that the lily of purity is not in safety unless it be

protected by the hedge of mortification, he undertook and persevered in that penitential life, which caused him to be sometimes considered a great sinner. He attended specially to the mortification of the appetite, for it was his maxim, and it was always on his lips, "He who does not mortify his appetite does not know how to mortify his flesh." However mortified he knew his passions to be, and however great the gifts of God, he never relied on himself, but always practiced the greatest caution, and, as far as he could, avoided conversing with women. It was his saying, that the breath of woman is poisonous. He used also to call women "basilisks that kill by their glances, enemies that do not fly away at the sign of the cross like the devil." Therefore, he concluded that it was necessary to keep as far as possible from women. He added, "As it is impossible that tow should not burn if it is put close to the fire, so it is impossible that a man, remaining near the fire, that is, near woman, should not fall; for as long as we have our bones covered with this skin," he continued, "there is always cause for fear. Therefore, we must be always cautious. Many persons advanced in years, and who, for their merits, might be called pillars of the Church, have, in this way, fallen into sin, and shall we then trust in ourselves? Charity to all, but particular intimacy with no one."

That he might have no chance of even meeting them when he was in solitude, if he heard that there were women in the neighboring forest, gathering wood or mushrooms, etc., the good servant of God would not leave the enclosure and deprived himself of this little recreation to avoid every shadow of danger. Thus, he fears who loves much, and to this extent is he cautious who always has in sight this treasure, which is preserved in weak and brittle vessels, as long as we live on earth.

He went so far, though he was of a most grateful disposition, as to show a great dislike for the presence of ladies, even benefactresses, in our retreats. If he went to speak to them, in accordance with their pious wishes, he went as if by force, and disengaged himself very quickly after a few words. This custom of speaking to women in few words, which he taught to others, he himself practiced with great exactness. He repeated with great fervor this admonition, "*With women, let your words be few and reserved.*" In fact, his words were all serious, devout, and solid. Nor did he dispense himself from this observance, however virtuous and pious the person might be to whom he spoke. As soon as he had said what was necessary, he modestly retired. The time that he was obliged to spend in conversing with these persons was a most instructive

and efficacious lesson for everyone who saw him, according to the expression of a good priest, who deposes it in the Processes, having himself noticed him to be, through his angelical modesty, rather an angel than a man. He would not have raised his eyes without believing that he had committed a serious fault, and it could reasonably be said that he would rather have had his eyes plucked out by the executioner than have fixed them on the face of a woman. His whole conversation breathed gravity and heavenly devotion, and was very quickly brought to an end. Hence was derived the great edification that he gave, of which the remembrance is still alive among us and elsewhere. Among the more singular facts, it is related that at the time the good Father lived at Monte Argentario and went down to Orbetello for works of charity, a Spanish lady began to confess to him and placed herself under his direction to be guided in the path of Christian virtue. This lady was singularly beautiful, and, as was commonly said, was the most fascinating woman in Spain. The servant of God had to hear her confession not only in the Church, but more than once at her house, when she was ill. He had also to speak to her on other occasions, when politeness required it. Nevertheless, he never looked at her, nor saw her face, and only recognized her by her voice.

But, as purity, which, like an innocent dove, is always in fear of snares, requires the greatest caution, these were not the only precautions that this most chaste servant of God took when he was obliged to speak with women; he would always have the room door open in which he was speaking, and placed himself in a situation where he could be seen by others, who were thus enabled to be so many witnesses of his modesty and purity. His companion was absolutely obliged to be in sight. It was his maxim that the companion is like the guardian angel, and that when two go, one protects the other. Though he might have to see persons of high rank, he never departed from this rule, which he had prescribed to himself. He once had to converse with a princess, who wished to consult him on the state of her soul; the door was closed by someone, and the good Father perceiving it, began to speak aloud, saying, "Open the door, open the door, for it is against the Rule of my Institute to be in a room with the doors shut." The mature age of the person did not make any difference to him. He was always constant in adhering to his praiseworthy rule. When he was giving a mission in the Diocese of Acquapendente, he was received at the house of a lady, who, in order to speak with more facility to the servant of God, asked him to go to her apartments. Father Paul refused to do this, because the rooms were not in

sight, but at a distance. The lady added, with simplicity of heart, "I am old, and you are older than I." "Never mind," said Father Paul, "never mind. I cannot, I cannot, if I am not in sight of my companion or some other discreet person." He was so particular in the observance of this virtuous practice, that one day he went so far as to say to one of his spiritual daughters, and our benefactress, "I do not trust myself; in this point I have been perhaps too particular and have even failed in civility." The servant of God showed that he well understood that politeness in a religious requires, before everything else, the exact fulfillment of his Rules.

However short his discourse might be, it appeared always troublesome and long to him, and he seemed like one afraid of fire. And though in his later years, being somewhat deaf, he had some difficulty in understanding, he would not on this account allow them to approach nearer to him than he judged proper, and he often made use of this excuse to avoid speaking with women. He could not always, it is true, avoid speaking with spiritual persons of a different sex, and his charity would not allow him to leave any soul deprived of consolation that had requested it; but he used the same caution with these persons as with others. He would have the door open and the companion in sight as much as possible. If these persons wished to speak to him more than once and had placed themselves under his direction, though sometimes he yielded, yet he was most watchful lest under the pretext of spirituality some sort of attachment should creep in. He wished that the direction should be entirely holy, heavenly, and given only for the love of God, for, as he felt in his heart, he did not wish to be a thief. These are his words: "I have been, and am still, a sinner and wicked, but a thief I have never been, for I have always been careful not to steal from God the love that is due to Him, to give it to creatures. Nor have I ever wished that others should be thieves on my account, loving me with a love that did not spring from pure charity; let us give to God what belongs to God."

The good Father directed at Orbetello for many years Donna Agnes Grazi, who afterwards died in the odor of sanctity; and as this lady was a benefactress to the retreat, she received all our religious in her house. Father Paul had to remain there occasionally when he went to Orbetello on business of charity, but he always conducted himself with such circumspection and reserve, that this lady, though of great virtue, said to Father Fulgenzio of Jesus that she owed great obligations to Father Paul, for he had greatly benefitted her soul, but that he had mortified and humbled her extremely, treating her always with harshness and the greatest reserve, forbidding

her even to approach to kiss his hand. For the same virtuous and holy reason he refused to allow his hands to be kissed by other women, and purposely wore long sleeves that his hands might be concealed, and that he might keep them under the sleeves in a modest manner. He would have the habit long enough to cover his feet. Finally, he not only omitted nothing which could contribute to the protection of this holy virtue, which, like clear crystal, is tarnished by the slightest breath, but which could render him a living example of purity and chastity in the eyes of all, of the strong and the weak, of well-disposed persons and also of the malicious, before whom we are obliged to show an irreproachable life. This was the manner in which Father Paul conducted himself in conversing with women, and he never dispensed himself from these rules. When he was old he seemed to wish to exceed the exactness he had practiced in his youth. In his journeys, though he always walked modestly and quite recollected in God, if he perceived people coming at a distance, as if he feared that his eyes might in some way deprive him of the profound peace of his heart, he composed himself with greater modesty, and he used to say, "I am more afraid now than when I was young." And with the same sentiments he wrote to a devout person, "I can do nothing for you, with the devout women you name, for I do not speak, nor will I speak to them, excepting when I am in the confessional. I fear more now that I am old than when I was young, *Martin, flee.*" It clearly appears in this servant of God, who greatly loved purity of heart, that in proportion as his love increased, so also did his fear. When he had fulfilled the duties of charity or politeness in conversing with women, he thought no more about them than if they had not been in the world. A lady asked him to recommend her to God in his prayers, and Father Paul promised to do it; the lady added that she wished him always to bear her in mind in his prayers and never to forget her. "Oh, no!" answered Father Paul, "When I have spoken to women and have tried to help them as far as I am able, I recommend them to our Lord, and then endeavor quickly to forget them." This answer did not seem very polite, but the servant of God said that by this roughness the beautiful lily of purity is preserved, and he believed, on the contrary, familiarity with persons of a different sex to be a thorn that may wound it.

In order to know how greatly the servant of God loved and valued this angelic virtue, it is not necessary to see the reserved and serious manner in which he conversed with persons of a different sex, when he was obliged to do so; but on all occasions, from his words and method of acting, it was easy to perceive that he showed a deep love in his heart for holy purity. His

conversation was always most guarded; and however cheerful he might be at recreation, his words were like silver, well purified in the fire of the love of God. He seemed even to have a repugnance to pronounce the word “woman” or “female,” but when there was a necessity for showing of whom he was speaking, he found some other expression which could be sufficiently understood.

As holy modesty guards the heart and leads in the end to great delicacy of conscience and love of God, the revered Father, fully aware of the advantages that spring from modesty, endeavored to regulate every action, word, and movement by the most exact modesty, so that he became a living portrait of this holy virtue, and it sufficed to see him to have an esteem for it. It is not easy, therefore, to express how great were his pain and distress in the time of sickness. As he was destitute of strength, he was obliged to be assisted like an infant on those occasions, “*in which*,” (I will use the expression of St. Ambrose) “*the demands of nature had to be met*,” in which men of great spirituality and learning, knowing the miserable condition of man, are greatly humbled and confounded. He mildly complained of this his state, and said that he had been ashamed on one occasion to show his side, on account of some disease, even to his mother, and now, with great repugnance, he submitted to what gave him extreme pain. “Oh, what a mortification is this illness to me! But I am content, because God wills it so.” And on these occasions he raised his eyes to his crucifix and remained recollected in prayer, as his companions noticed, and showed them more than ever the living affection he cherished in his heart for holy purity and modesty.

A man who so highly valued holy purity and innocence, and who was well aware that it is impossible, without them, to diffuse the sweet odor of good example, was certain to desire and procure that his sons should possess this virtue in an eminent degree, and should guard it with all jealousy. All the desire of his heart seemed to be that his religious should shine in holy purity. He wished them to become, through this virtue, like so many angels, and never to neglect any means of protecting this virtue, which is easily lost by him who is not careful, for “*We hold this treasure in fragile vessels*” (II Cor. 4:7). He inculcated holy modesty at every time, in every place, because “we are always,” he said, “before the eyes of God, who is everywhere present.” He strongly exhorted us in our behavior, our manner, and our dress to form in ourselves a copy of the singular modesty of our Blessed Savior. He not only advised custody of the eyes and

mortification of the appetite, but that every action should be regulated by that virtue which gives to all things their due proportion, propriety, and fitness; and he recommended even the most minute observances, which, however, were all suited to this end. He wished that the habit should be worn shorter in traveling, but at other times it was to be long enough to cover the feet. When the religious were alone in their rooms, or reposing on their straw beds, he desired them to have their feet covered. He disapproved of immoderate laughter, which often proceeds from levity. Seeing an ecclesiastic one day laughing more loudly than was becoming, the good Father, with a serious countenance, reprov'd him, saying that the wise man is scarcely heard to laugh, and confirmed the advice by the words of the Holy Spirit: "*The prudent man smiles gently*" (Ecc. 21:20). Then turning to them all, reminded them that in due time and place recreation is necessary, but it must always be taken with religious modesty and gravity. On another occasion, he said to the same effect: "We have always reason to weep and not to laugh, like those who are in a miserable exile, far from their country." Rendering his counsel more efficacious by his example, he was always most moderate in this and showed, even in trifling actions like these, a great love of virtue.

He would have considered himself wanting in the affectionate care of a vigilant and attentive Father, if he had not, above all things, recommended to his dear sons great caution in conversing with women, which he always knew to be a very perilous thing, and, therefore, he often inculcated and repeated the advice of St. Paul, "*But the younger widows avoid*" (I Tim. 5:11), expressing with great energy the desire of his heart.

His religious were not the only persons to reap the benefit of the salutary advice that he gave regarding holy purity, but by words and example the servant of God sought to inspire in all an affection and esteem for it; and more particularly when he was speaking to religious persons, he showed an earnest desire that they should remain faithful to their heavenly Spouse, like chaste and innocent doves. He wished them to keep themselves, with all diligence, far from every danger of offending, not only against purity, but the smallest rule of exact modesty. He went so far as to obtain from the Divine Goodness the miraculous cure of a religious, that she might not be subjected to the examination of medical men for a disease that afflicted her. This nun belonged to the Monastery of St. Anne at Ronciglione. Having perceived a small swelling in her breast, she concealed it for a long time through her great love of holy modesty. But as the disease

increased, she was obliged by the Mother Superior, who knew of it, to inform the medical attendants and allow them to use the necessary remedies. The examination was made by two physicians and two surgeons, and all agreed that she had a cancer. One of these attendants applied to it an ointment which, instead of relieving, increased the evil and inflammation seized the part with pustules and little worms. To the great happiness of this nun, the servant of God, Father Paul, went at that time to give the exercises in the Monastery of St. Anne. Being informed by the poor nun of her serious illness, he said, "Alas, such a disease is not suited to the spouses of Jesus Christ. Therefore, without using any other remedy for three days, anoint yourself with the oil of the lamp that burns before the Blessed Sacrament; have faith and fear not." This nun obeyed with humility and confidence, and after three days was perfectly cured, never afterwards suffering any inconvenience from that part. Thus, Almighty God clearly showed how pleasing to Him was the singular and ardent love that His servant bore to holy purity.

The sorrow that he felt in his heart when he saw little esteem for this virtue, which makes us become, as it were, angels on earth, can be easily imagined. A lady presented herself to him at Rome, dressed in a manner that was unbecoming. Fr. Paul did not see her, but hearing it from others, without looking at her, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground, he reproved her with great liberty, joined with holy prudence. He did the same on other occasions, for, with serious words, animated by the Spirit of God, he reproved in women the pernicious abuse of not being sufficiently covered. Hence it followed, that persons who knew him, aware of the great abhorrence he entertained for immodesty, were very careful to appear before him with great modesty and decency, for fear of receiving some reproof from the servant of God. Not only in private conferences, but in public, and from the platform, Father Paul, full of zeal, sought to enkindle in others a great love for holy purity. He exclaimed with much energy and force that women, even Christian women, seemed to have forgotten the holy laws of modesty and decency, to induce them, mindful of their obligations, to cover themselves more modestly. Persons that confessed to him were remarkable among others for their modesty and devout seriousness. At Orbetello particularly, where, during many years he labored for the glory of God, the fruit of his holy words was manifest. He heard the confessions of many persons who had placed themselves under his direction. Among them were ladies of distinguished rank; the servant of God made them become mirrors of modesty. If they were single, he would have them excel, particularly in

holy modesty, reserve, and the most edifying bashfulness. If they were married, he did not forbid them to dress in a manner becoming their state, but they were always to be adorned with modesty, and he added, “If your husbands wish you to act differently, you are not obliged to obey in this, but you are under a strict obligation to dress very modestly and decently.” Those ladies who did not appear in modest attire, he told with the greatest warmth of his zeal that they rendered themselves guilty before God of the injury they caused to souls, and hence it was that his penitents wore dresses as high as the throat, and military men, when they saw them, used to say, “These are penitents of Father Paul.” Those, therefore, who practiced the servant of God’s counsels, greatly edified their neighbors by their virtue and modesty.

Among the many, who profited by the words of Father Paul, was a lady who seemed to make no account of his declamations against immodesty from the platform, nor of his private admonitions. She dressed herself so immodestly that the ladies of Orbetello themselves could not endure it. But as she would not cover herself to her own merit, she was obliged to do so to her great mortification. The esteemed Father predicted to her that our Lord would punish her and cover her with confusion, and so it happened. Being attacked with a burning fever, she became covered, especially on the breast, with disgusting scabs, so that, against her will, she was obliged to be covered, and also to bear all the confusion that followed from it, for everyone believed this disease to be a chastisement of her impudence and a punishment of the opposition she had made to the servant of God’s advice.

Great and wonderful was the zeal with which this fervent servant of God combated the vice of impurity when he spoke of it openly. His words, though they were very circumspect and his opinions well considered, seemed to be so many darts hurled against that idol of abomination, and his reasonings were all directed to show the deformity of that vile monster, which, however, seems to be adored by many. From the ardent zeal with which Father Paul exhorted souls to the love of holy purity, from his words, which all breathed purity, and from his exemplary modesty, everyone who knew him was convinced that to defend this virtue from any attack, he would have given his life; therefore, it sufficed to name Father Paul, and to make known the advice he had given, to arrest the passion of a wicked young man who was attacking a chaste young girl. After the servant of God had given a mission at Valentano, in Montefiascone, before he left, a young girl of that place presented herself to him. Father Paul, enlightened by God for her greater good,

told her he had an important piece of advice to give her, and when she showed a great wish to hear it, he added, “My child, be on your guard, for you are to suffer a great combat and persecution with regard to purity.” He then encouraged her to have great confidence in God, who by His grace would render her victorious. After four years had passed, being alone at home one night, she was attacked by a wicked youth, who wished to deprive her of the treasure of holy purity; she saw no means of escape, when fortunately she remembered Father Paul’s words, and taking courage said to the man, that through charity he should respect Father Paul, who had desired her to preserve her virginity unspotted. At these words, as if a torrent of water had fallen on the flames of passion, the young man immediately gave up his wicked attempt, became confused, and departed without injuring the chaste young girl. Seeing the wonderful effect that Father Paul’s name had produced, on three other occasions, when she was attacked and had no human assistance at hand, she had recourse to Father Paul, invoked his name, and always gained a victory.

As if in reward of his spotless purity, and the diligence with which the good Father sought to make it loved and valued by all, our Lord granted him the singular privilege of knowing those who had miserably lost this most precious jewel. If any person infected with the opposite abominable vice approached him, he often knew it, for God caused him to perceive a loathsome stench as a sign of this abominable sin. From the time that he gave himself wholly to the love of God, His Divine Majesty was pleased to grant him this gift of discerning impure persons by the stench they emitted, and this was sometimes so strong and so disgusting that the servant of God could scarcely endure it, as it happened once especially. When a certain woman came to his confessional to make her confession, he perceived at once so pestilential an odor, that he thought it would kill him. Full of charity he sought to cure such disgusting wounds, and disposing these poor penitents for forgiveness, afterwards he washed them in the Precious Blood of our Lord.

If we knew how many persons he freed from this accursed vice, we might form a voluminous history of these conversions alone. He gained them all by his charity, mildness, and meekness. Charmed by these qualities, they returned to God so sincerely and heartily, that he was comforted in depriving hell of its prey, and they were filled with consolation. However mild and discreet the servant of God was in his behavior to these sinners, he never would permit ecclesiastics, who had become stained with the horrid vice, to advance into the sanctuary till they

had put themselves to a sufficient trial, living in unspotted chastity. If they did not promise to act in this manner, he courageously refused them absolution.

As the vice of impurity is easily contracted by those who live with little caution in this world, which may be called an infected country, '*rooted in corruption*' (Cfr. II Peter 1:4), the good Father failed not to suggest precautions which all secular persons should use. He taught them particularly to make use of temptations as occasions of acquiring a greater degree of purity. "Lilies," he wrote, "become whiter and more odoriferous when planted among thorns, than in the open soil; I mean that holy virginity becomes more white, pure, and odoriferous before God amidst the thorns of combats and the most horrible temptations."

And in another: "Regarding impure temptations, the Divine Majesty permits them, that you may exercise yourself in the humble consideration of your true nothingness, and may know that if God did not assist you, you would be capable of everything that is most horrible. Be, therefore, cautious, fly all occasions of conversing with the other sex, except through great necessity. Guard your eyes, your heart, and all your thoughts. Be modest and sedate, day and night, in your whole conduct. Be most jealous of this virtue of holy modesty, and an ardent lover of it. Trust no one, and, above all, have great diffidence in yourself."

He also writes similarly to another person: "At night sprinkle your bed with holy water, lie down to rest with great modesty, well covered, and well composed. Do not sleep lying on your back, but on the right side; keep the crucifix near you, and when you are attacked by the horrid temptation, take it in your hands, kiss the sacred wounds, then lift it up and say, 'Behold the cross of Jesus Christ, fly you accursed devils, I command you, in the name of the most Holy Trinity and of Jesus Christ, my Savior, and of ever blessed Mary, the mother of God.'"

As he knew that the good order of the family generally comes from the vigilance of parents, and that by their bad example and negligence the children sometimes learn vice before they understand it, he exhorted them, in the first place, to be very watchful and to love holy purity themselves, and then to give holy example to their children. The following are his words: "Trust not yourself; for cedars of Lebanon have often fallen. Though they be relations, sisters, servants, you must fear and fly.

"You must entirely break off the intercourse with the person you name; I see that there is a hidden attachment, and that false zeal, or the devil under this pretext, lays a snare for you, to

make you fall down some precipice. Such battles are only gained by flight... You should never keep young servants; I speak of women; your sons are growing up; I have been a missionary, and I know the great dangers and difficulties this causes. Even with your daughters you must be most cautious, and leave to them an everlasting example of great modesty.” Further, according to the advice of the Holy Spirit, he desired that special care should be taken of daughters. “The advice,” he says, “that you ask regarding the good education of your daughters, you already know perfectly well; young girls are precious jewels that must be rarely seen, as the relics of saints are seldom shown. Prayer, spiritual reading, the frequent reception of the holy sacraments, with due preparation, and particularly the flight of idleness; this, believe me, is a rule that will make you holy as well as your daughters.” With inexpressible fervor and zeal he recommended parents not to let their young children sleep with servants of any kind; and he advised them as much as possible to avoid letting brothers sleep with brothers, or sisters with sisters, but to let them all sleep separately. “Great care,” he said “is necessary in bringing up a family.” Much more did he exhort parents to be greatly on their guard, never to perform any action, or say a word, in presence of their children that is in any way contrary to holy purity and exact modesty.

When he gave these exhortations, the singular love which he had in his heart for holy purity clearly manifested itself exteriorly. As experience, accompanied by wise reflections, attentive readings, and the light of God, showed him the occasions in which incautious souls most easily fall, full of zeal, he detested and denounced the abuse of conversations, the profane custom of courting, and other similar things, that may be occasions, especially to youth, of staining their souls with the abominable vice. He detested with greater zeal the abuse by which some ecclesiastics debase themselves, their rank, and their sacred character, in allowing women to take their arm. He gave on this subject to a priest kind and efficacious admonitions in private, and he judged it expedient to make known to a lady, to whom a priest had given his arm, that in his opinion she had better not again give that priest admittance into her house. We have reason, then, to say that the love cherished by the venerated for holy purity was very great, and that neglecting no care or precaution, he preserved unstained in himself that most pure lily, which he so earnestly desired that others also should preserve.

CHAPTER XXX

Of the Servant of God's Obedience

The easiest method of gaining, in a short time, the victory over all the enemies of our salvation is to obey: *“The obedient man will speak of victory.”* The soul, that gains such victories, afterwards tastes the sweetness of the spirit and of the hidden heavenly manna: *“To him who overcomes I will give the hidden manna”* (Rev. 2:17). But the easiest manner of practicing obedience is to keep the heart close to God and united to the Sovereign Good; for then the soul, at every call of obedience, determines at once to do what is commanded. Like wax, which when brought to the fire, melts and takes the impression and form that are given it, the soul abandons her own will to execute that of her Beloved. *“My soul melted when my beloved spoke”* (Cant. 5:6). As Paul was much devoted to the divine exercise of intimate communication and loving conversation with God, our Lord gave him a most exalted esteem for this great virtue; and he always sought to offer to God those sacrifices with which, as we give to God in them the best part of ourselves, namely, our own will, He is most pleased. These are acts of ready, entire, simple, and affectionate obedience. From his youth, even before he took the habit of the Passion, knowing the hidden treasure contained in holy obedience, he made a vow to obey not only his parents and other lawful superiors, but everyone who commanded him, according to the advice of the Prince of the Apostles: *“Be subject to every human creature for God's sake”* (I Peter 2:13). While he was devoutly praying one day in Holy Week in his parish church, on hearing those great words sung, *“Christ became obedient for us even unto death”* (Phil. 2:8), his heart was so struck that he kept saying to himself: “Jesus was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, and ought not I to be so.” He then made a vow to obey all men for the love of God; and though, by the advice of his spiritual director, he had obtained a dispensation from it, he nevertheless obeyed, besides his parents, sisters, and brothers, even the persons who waited on him; and even in taking his food he wished to have the merit of holy obedience; he therefore depended on his family, and took no refreshment unless he was requested to do so; and though he was the eldest, and heir to the property of his uncle who left it to him, though he generously renounced it, he asked as an alms from his family the scanty nourishment of which he partook. The obedience of the young Paul displayed itself particularly in executing with the greatest

exactness whatever his bishop chose to order him. Having placed himself under the direction of that great man, Bishop Francis Gattinara, we may say that he did not take a step that was not regulated by obedience. Even in indifferent things he would not take a determination without the blessing of this worthy prelate. When Count Campi Patrizio of Alessandria, for the sake of the consolation he felt in discoursing with Paul whom he believed to be so dear to God, sometimes invited him to dinner at Castellazzo or Alessandria, Paul would not enjoy this pleasure unless he had the bishop's permission. Paul would not receive the favors of this pious gentleman without the merit of holy obedience. But when in the company of this his guide, Paul went to visit the Count, sat at his table with great humility and modesty, keeping his eyes cast down, receiving everything gratefully, tasting everything through politeness, but eating very little through mortification. He was once invited by a letter from this gentleman to go to Alessandria, as he wished to consult Paul on a weighty matter of conscience. The good youth replied that he would willingly go if he obtained leave from the bishop, who was his superior, and on whose commands he depended. Though the servant of God did not make his novitiate, the exercise of obedience and mortification of his own will, enjoined him by the directors of his own conscience, was for him equal to the severest noviceship that can precede the religious profession.

The new soldier of Jesus Christ, being thus exercised in holy obedience from the beginning of his fervent conversion to God, showed afterwards in the regulation of his whole life the progress he made in the perfection of this virtue. He was most obedient to all his superiors, in whom he recognized the person of God Himself. This is not the time to call to mind the obedience with which he executed every wish intimated by the Sovereign Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ; for to fail in this would be a very serious fault, and this sort of obedience is practiced by those who have not so much virtue; but we must remark that the servant of God obeyed with extraordinary faith, love, and humility. The mere mention of the Sovereign Pontiff filled him with respect; he uncovered his head and bowed, and I may even say, that every nod, every wish of the Vicar of Jesus Christ was to him an inviolable law. He believed he could do anything when the Supreme Pontiff honored him with a command. This lively faith and simple obedience gave him, as we have already said, strength to give, at an advanced age and when in a convalescent state, after an illness he had suffered a few days previously, a mission at Rome, in

the Basilica of St. Mary at Trastevere. This also produced wonderful effects in another severe illness that was judged to be incurable; for the servant of God, hearing from his companion that the Supreme Pontiff had said with a great feeling of charity: "I do not choose that he should die now; tell him that I give him a reprieve, and that he must obey. I will not have him die this time." The humble servant of God, weeping through devotion and consolation, turned to our Crucified Lord and declared with lively faith, as we have elsewhere said, that he would obey his Vicar; he immediately became better, and afterwards regained his health so far as to be able to rise from his bed and celebrate holy Mass.

With profound respect and sincere reverence, the servant of God also obeyed the Prelates of holy Church, the pastors of souls, and ecclesiastical superiors; whenever he could, he assisted them by holy missions, spiritual exercises, and other works of charity, for the good of the souls committed to their care. He himself executed their orders as long as he was not prevented by his serious infirmities, which was for the space of fifty years. He never allowed himself to be so far carried away by fervor, that obedience had not at once power to stop him, even in the greatest excitement of preaching and moving the people. Sometimes on the platform, when he was exciting the people to compunction, and in order to obtain the result desired by his zeal, he was severely disciplining himself. The single word "obedience," uttered by the Vicar General of Sutri, sufficed to make him give up the instrument which that good priest wished to take from him. There was not one among those whom he venerated as his superiors to whom he did not show exact obedience and submission. Though it might seem to him that he was treated with indiscretion, he did not for this dispense himself from the practice of that virtue, the merit of which he knew to be so much the greater, as the command is more hard and severe. We have elsewhere related what he had to suffer in the hospital of San Gallicano, where he faithfully practiced the advice of St. Paul, "*Obey your human masters with reverence*" (Eph. 6:5), taking all harsh treatment in good part.

As Father Paul was the Founder and Superior of his Congregation, it would seem that he had more reason to command than to obey; but as charity is ingenious in always finding means of exercising that virtue which is so pleasing to God, Father Paul knew well how to unite the authority and rank of superior with an obedience that was exact and most fruitful in merit.

After the Congregation had been founded, and the religious exercises arranged, the good

Father, though the superior of all, was most obedient to the signals, and punctually attended the choir and the other duties of regular observance, to the great edification of the community. It was his holy custom always to obey his spiritual director in such a manner, that, giving up his own will, he blindly followed holy obedience. After he had Father John Baptist for his companion, he obeyed him with the simplicity and docility of a child, as his superior; and when he could be his confessor and director, Father Paul, in all things, placed himself under his direction, and, as long as he lived, confessed to him and was directed by him, so that from that time it might be said that he did not take a step without his permission. He thus wrote to one of his penitents: “This morning, as it is the day, I will ask Father John Baptist to let me go to Orbetello, and if he allows me, it will be tomorrow that I shall be in San Francesco; and if not, we must have patience.” We have already said that Father John Baptist, like a skillful workman, labored with hard and repeated blows to make of the soul of Father Paul a stone more and more pleasing in the sight of God, that it might be placed afterwards in the heavenly edifice. With sharp and biting words, and a contemptuous, severe, and rigorous manner, he humbled, mortified, and thwarted Paul in his most innocent inclinations. The servant of God preserved his humility and tranquillity, and sometimes said to his companion, who was more than once present at these mortifications, “Father John Baptist won’t let me eat; we must have patience; he does it for my good; he mortifies me, and I am extremely obliged to him because he seeks the advantage of my soul.” Regulating himself by faith, every director he had exercised over him the same authority and was readily obeyed by him.

After his good brother’s death, he took for his confessor Father John Mary of St. Ignatius the Martyr, and to this religious he rendered the same obedience as he had done to his brother. Father John afterwards deposed on oath: “After the death of that servant of God, I came into the office of his confessor, and I can affirm that he was most submissive to what I said to him, and most obedient to what I commanded.” And he adds that in the latter days of his life, the servant of God sometimes omitted to communicate, fearing some irreverence on account of the attacks of vomiting which seized him; but when he sent him word, through the infirmarian, that he was to communicate, because this irritation might be the work of the devil, the humble servant of God immediately obeyed, receiving Holy Communion on the appointed days. His obedience, which had for its rule those instructive words of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, “*Be subject*

to every creature for the sake of God” (I Peter 2:13), was not satisfied with this. He allowed himself to be ruled by his companion, in his office of infirmarian, as if he had been a child. These are his companion’s words, to which he deposes with the greatest candor and sincerity. He is better able than many others to bear witness in favor of Paul, having been continually occupied with him: “I was appointed to be his companion, therefore, Father John Mary said to him, ‘Obey Brother Bartholomew in everything as regards yourself,’ and the poor old man in consequence obeyed me like a child. If I told him not to eat more than three chestnuts, he ate only three. The servant of God liked fruit very much, and if I told him to eat one, or a half of an apple or pear, he would not eat more; of cherries I gave him about five or six, and he was satisfied. Sometimes I told him to go to bed, and at once he obeyed. When it was time to rise, and he wished to do so, if I told him to remain quiet a little longer, he obeyed; in a word, he was like a most obedient child in everything. When he was disgusted with food and could relish nothing, he would have liked to eat a raw onion or a little garlic. If I said I would not give it to him, he shrugged his shoulders and did not reply, only saying: ‘Patience, this shall be for the love of God.’ And sometimes he added: ‘You do well to mortify me thus. I am obliged to you.’ In a word, the things in which he obeyed me are so numerous that I cannot name them. I know well that I was greatly astonished and edified, as also were the religious who were present. I must confess that in truth I prohibited Father Paul many things, or caused others to do it, to try his obedience, to see what answer he would make. I have been always edified, for the servant of God, in all things that were either commanded or refused by me, showed the greatest obedience and docility.”

He had for infirmarian and assistant another brother, who commanded him even more resolutely, and, as he himself deposes, said to him with greater liberty, like one who possessed absolute authority: “Father, take this; go to bed; Father, you must say your Office, it is the time,” and similar things, which would have been indiscreet with a person less virtuous than Father Paul. The servant of God obeyed, and sometimes said most pleasantly when he was with seculars: “Ah, I am obliged to obey; see how he orders me; what am I to do?” Sometimes, in the same pleasant manner and with gaiety, he said: “Oh, what patience one must have with you!” and then said no more. On one of these occasions, when the brother said, “Perform the obedience, Father,” he said, “When obedience is in question, we must submit.”

Any one who, under pretext of his office or employment, desired to exercise his obedience

always found him ready. In the time of illness he was most exact in obeying the medical men and fulfilling their orders. Remedies were sometimes ordered for him, which, from his personal experience, or from his observations on the illnesses of other sick persons, whom he had always loved to wait upon, console, and assist charitably, he very well knew would be of no benefit. He took them, however, three or four times or more, and then wisely laid them aside, saying: "I have obeyed, and feel that they do me more harm than good; I have taken them through obedience, but our Lord does not will that they should do me good." This obedience sometimes cost him very dear, but he was not displeased on this account. He rejoiced in being able, to his own cost, to practice that virtue, which our Lord, for our love, exercised so far as to die on the Cross. After his long journey, in 1787,¹ to visit our retreats founded in the country, the poor old man, after his return to the Retreat of St. Angelo, was seized with a serious illness caused by fatigue. The religious, wishing to do for him all that was in their power, called in the aid of physicians. When they saw his state, they judged it proper to apply two large blisters, six fingers wide, to his thighs. The servant of God foresaw that these blisters would put the whole frame of his body in agitation, and would bring on his usual pains of sciatica, gout, and rheumatism, and he said so plainly; but as his opinion was not listened to, he submitted to that of others and obeyed the physicians; but it happened just as the poor sick man had said; the blisters caused most dreadful pains, which tormented him for forty successive days, and which he endured with wonderful patience, never uttering a word of complaint. He showed no less virtue in obeying a physician at Orbetello in another illness. The servant of God, by his severe penances, his numerous journeys made on foot through rains, winds, and fogs, without cloak or hat, and by the great fatigue he had undergone in missions, by his continual disciplines with chains, in a word, by every kind of austerity, had brought on an attack of excruciating pain, which rendered him incapable of moving in bed. The surgeon of the King of Naples, who was then at Orbetello, chose to make use of mercurial ointment, which the servant of God objected to, as he knew the violence of the remedy and did not wish to try it, as it was hurtful to him; but to obey the surgeon he overcame himself, and submitted to this treatment, of which, for the rest of his life, he felt the unfavorable effects. Such was the obedience of Father Paul, most prompt on every occasion, and always exercised with great presence of mind and tranquillity, the effect of his ardent desire to accomplish in all things the most holy will of God.

¹ This date is incorrect.

It seemed as if the Divine Goodness condescended, after the venerable Father's death, to give a visible attestation of the docility His servant had practiced during life; for when the mask had been taken with plaster, his mouth remained open; and though his body was as flexible as if he had been alive, his companion could not, with all his efforts, succeed in closing it, but feeling himself, as he attests in his deposition, inspired to speak to Father Paul's corpse, as if he had been alive, said: "Father Paul, you always obeyed me during life, I desire you to obey me also after death. As a mark of obedience, close your mouth." After these words he closed the mouth as he had tried to do before, and it did not again open, as various persons attest who were present. It might have happened accidentally, but the witnesses who depose it thought they perceived in it something supernatural.

The obedience of the servant of God being, as we have seen, so exact and virtuous, the spirit of Father Paul had certainly the characteristic of that true wisdom which, according to the Apostle St. James, lets itself be guided and ruled, for he passed his whole life in continual obedience to the holy will of God, manifested to him by the mouth of his superiors and directors, and his very death was a death accepted in the spirit of resignation to the loving dispensations of the Divine Majesty. It does not seem possible that he, who had made such progress in the safe school of obedience, should not have taught the practice of the same lessons, and should not have guided, by this easy, short, and safe path, those persons whom he governed and directed. In fact, from the sentiments he expressed in a letter to the Congregation, inculcating the practice of this holy virtue, we may know the great wish he felt that all should love obedience. "Ah, my dear brethren," he writes, "let there be, above all things in you, true and perfect charity, uniting your hearts in such a manner, that you may have only one heart and one will in God. Give yourselves so into the hands of your superiors, that they may do with you what they please, when it is not opposed to the divine law, *"may that never happen,"* and to the holy observance of the Rules and Constitutions. You know that Jesus Christ was obedient unto death, and the death of the cross; therefore, you ought to die to yourselves, burying your own opinion and judgment. Renounce, my dearly beloved, your own understanding, knowledge, and will, giving yourselves, like dead men, to your superiors. So long as you do not give yourselves, like corpses, into the hands of obedience, you will never taste what it is to serve God. Pant as eagerly after the destruction of your own will as the hart after the fountain. Let it seem to you that you have lost that day in

which you have not resisted your own will and submitted it to another. Often offer your will in sacrifice to God, and you will feel the greatest satisfaction. The more obedient you are, the more tranquil and indifferent you will be to one office or another, for you will be truly espoused to holy obedience and will love it in Jesus Christ, who is the Sovereign King of the obedient. Thus, you will render yourselves more capable of assisting the holy Church and our poor Congregation by prayer; for Jesus hears the prayers of the obedient.”

Writing in the same sentiment to a devout person, he expresses himself: “Our sweet Jesus allowed Himself to be clothed and stripped by the ministers of death at their pleasure; they bound and unbound Him, pushed Him to this side and that, and the most meek and Divine Lamb submitted to all. Oh, sweet meekness of Jesus, our supreme God! Continue to prepare yourself in every way like a meek little lamb; rejoice when your designs, though good, are frustrated; the time will come when God will enable you to bring them to true perfection.”

He wrote to a religious: “Well, my child, how are you? Does not your heart wish to ascend on high? But you must have patience and wait till the Divine Spouse gives you permission. I hear from Sister N. that you are ill of fever. I believe that you wish to be most obedient, and even after death. You know well that you do not have leave to quit your prison yet and go home to your country; for the poor Father, whom the Divine Majesty has given you to direct your soul, would wish, if it should so please God, to be with you to wish you a safe journey to heaven. And do you wish to leave me so soon, when the need is greatest. Let the work of the Congregation be completed, and then go in peace. I grant you permission. Laugh a little at my folly. ...I hope the Divine Majesty will forgive this foolish talk of mine.” The folly of the servant of God was holy folly, wiser than any earthly wisdom, and the worker of wonderful effects. The nun to whom he wrote recovered her health, and proved how efficacious were the lessons given by him who was both a most meek disciple and an excellent master in the virtue of obedience.

CHAPTER XXXI

Of Father Paul’s Profound Humility

Though every building is sustained by the foundation, and from its depth and solidity derives

whatever it possesses of security, stability, and firmness, nevertheless, that part of the building which is underground has ordinarily neither beauty, ornament, nor splendor. But in the holy city of God, of which every soul is a figure which forms in herself, by the grace of God, a most noble temple to the Divine Majesty, even the foundation is beautiful, noble, and entirely formed of precious stones; therefore, it not only gives to the edifice most lasting firmness, but also adds to it beauty and splendor, and it is also most beautiful to behold with all the application of the mind and consolation of the heart. This foundation is formed by holy humility. We shall easily understand how profound and excellent was the virtue of humility in Father Paul, if we consider that he was truly a Christian who, with the light of faith, continually meditated on the Passion and death of the great Son of God, where, as in a divine school, every virtue is learned of which Jesus crucified is a most perfect example and master; but in a special manner the virtue of humility, which by St. Paul is called the virtue of Jesus Christ, "*that the power of Christ may dwell in me*" (II Cor. 12:9), as being that which shone forth most brightly and clearly in our Divine Redeemer. In the Passion we see the ineffable humiliation of the great Son of God, who, being the Lord of Glory, the only-begotten Son of the Divine Father, and God equal to the Father, deigned to become, for our love, the opprobrium of men and the abjection of the people, and to die on an infamous gibbet between two malefactors.

In this divine school, therefore, Father Paul conceived a most high esteem for holy humility, and practiced and possessed it in so perfect a degree, that the practice of it seemed to be not only easy but natural to him. Employments the most contemptible in the eyes of men, the most atrocious insults, the most painful affronts, were all received by him with the same evenness of mind, and he seemed to derive from a food so bitter to our corrupt nature his most agreeable nourishment. True, it is that this virtue, which by its nobility and beauty, infuses esteem and veneration even into the hearts of those who do not practice it, drew towards him, against his will, great marks of respect, love, and gratitude; it is also true that, during the greatest part of his life, he had to exercise the office of superior, and to see all the members of his Congregation receive from him orders, advice, and direction; but amidst honors he seemed as if he were a dead man, unable to raise himself from the ground, so firm was he in holy humility. In his office of superior his whole method of ruling, and the spirit of his government, was true and cordial humility, the beloved daughter of holy charity. Without affectation, without effort, or artificial

manner, he so well united to authority, which always seems to carry with it something hard and burdensome, the sweetness and affability of humility, both in his voice and conversation, and in his manner and behavior, that humility might not become contemptible, and that authority might be beloved, esteemed, and venerated.

As much as this servant of God loved humility, did he detest and abhor, with the deepest hatred, the accursed vice of pride. His fear of being surprised by pride was constant and great, for, from that sin all others proceed, and he sought by every means in his power to keep at a distance from it. Bishop Gattinara of Alessandria, from the time he began to guide him, told him, as a wise director, that he must always guard against pride, vain glory, vanity, and presumption, and attend to the acquisition of true humility; that these vices may be compared to the little stone that threw down the great statue seen in a dream by Nebuchadnezzar; and as it struck down this great figure, which in all its greatness was broken to pieces and crumbled to dust, in the same manner, said the good prelate, these vices, though small, may, by increasing, cause the destruction of great sanctity. It is not to be expressed with what devotion, esteem and veneration Paul listened to the words of this wise prelate. He made them his constant rule, and when he became Founder, he used to say to his religious: “Children, and most dear children, be very vigilant over yourselves; remain passive in your nothingness; know that one little grain of pride is sufficient to bring down to the ground a great mountain of sanctity; therefore be humble and enter deeply into the knowledge of yourselves.”

Almighty God, who intended to raise him to great perfection, in order to ground him in that virtue which sustains the spiritual edifice, had given him a great knowledge of himself, and with so strong and clear a light kept before the eyes of his mind the sight of his own nothingness and miseries, that once when he was in interior dereliction, he said: “Our Lord has taken from me all other graces but the grace of knowing myself.” From this knowledge it was, that though, after undertaking, when about nineteen years of age, that new and fervent mode of life which he termed his conversion, he had not, as far as he knew, committed even a venial sin deliberately. He nevertheless always considered himself a great sinner, feared much regarding all his own works, and judged everyone to be better than himself. If it had been permitted, he would always have walked, as he said, with his hat in his hand, because he met in the streets so many persons, though he did not know them, who served God much more faithfully than he, who did nothing

that was good. For this reason, before the Rule had been approved, he always had his head uncovered through his lively faith in the Divine Presence, as well as through respect and veneration for the servants of God, whom he met without knowing them. The more he advanced in virtue, the more he thought himself filled with vices. Compared with him, every other person was not only good, but a saint; wherefore, when he had heard the confession of some great sinner, he had no sooner given absolution than he would, as he said, have knelt down to recommend himself to his prayers. And as he always had a graceful and pleasing manner of saying, with true humility and simplicity of heart, things which can never suit one who speaks with an air of mystery and ostentation, he added: "Compared with me, policemen may become, and may be declared, doubles of the first class, with an octave." So low was the opinion he had of himself as expressed in words that proceeded from the abundance of his heart.

As he thought himself so wicked and abominable, there was no person, however base, from whom Father Paul withdrew, or whom he considered unworthy of his friendship. He went so far as to embrace the executioner in public at Orbetello, as if he had been one of his dearest and most intimate friends. As the mind, when it takes delight in good things, ingeniously finds out images that strongly express and keep constantly before it these thoughts, Father Paul, full of the consciousness of his own unworthiness, imagined himself to be a horrible dragon under the sacerdotal vestments. As he went to the holy altar to celebrate, he kept repeating these words to himself: "*The hour is at hand, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners*" (Mt. 26:45). Fully persuaded that he was full of defects, though he could not usually find out any special failing in himself, he humbled and annihilated himself before God and others, to the great edification of those who saw him.

As the proud man, even from the best things and the things of God, wickedly takes occasion of fostering his pride, and converts into poison even the sweetest and most fragrant flowers, so, on the contrary, Father Paul, who was truly humble, took from everything an occasion of humbling and confounding himself. The dispensations from the practice of observance, which his infirmities obliged him to use, the requisite obedience to his confessor and to the physician, what humiliation did these things cause to the saintly old man! From time to time, urged by the interior conviction of his soul, he said with tears in his eyes that he did nothing good; that for his sins Almighty God had justly deprived him of the consolation of following the community; that

he was a pest and of no service except to give bad example and fool others in the service of God and holy observance. It is true that he did not become discouraged nor disheartened, but sought out new motives for confidence in the Divine Goodness; he was however deeply penetrated with holy fear at the sight of so many miseries. “Oh, poor Paul,” he would say, “with so many years of life, so many sacraments, with so many benefits, so many graces, so many Masses, missions, spiritual exercises, so many confessions, and other sacraments administered, how will he go before the tribunal of God! But I will not be afraid, ‘*The Lord is good to those hoping in Him, and to the soul that seeks Him*’ (Lam. 3:25). I confide in the infinite merits of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. I abandon myself wholly and entirely into the arms of the Divine Mercy. May the Divine Will be accomplished in me, by me, and over me, now and for ever.”

From this deep sentiment of his own misery proceeded a great contempt of himself, which from his youth was planted and deeply rooted in his heart by the grace of God, from whom alone can proceed sentiments so contrary to that esteem which each one is too ready to form of himself. The older he grew, the more he seemed to himself to be worthy of universal detestation. On this account he willingly employed himself in fatiguing, abject, and contemptible labors, as if they alone were suited to him. As long as he had strength, he would not allow anyone to sweep his room or make his bed for him, though he was half crippled. He often washed the dishes, cooked, waited on the sick, ate on the ground, knelt before the religious when they left the refectory to go to the church, and weeping and beating his breast with great humility, said to them, “Pray for this poor soul of mine.” On many occasions he asked pardon of the religious, especially on Maunday Thursday, before Holy Communion, saying with great feeling, “I ask pardon of Father Superior, of the priests, the ecclesiastics, and the brothers, for all the bad example I have given; pardon me for the love of God, and pray for me, who am full of imperfections and vices; pray for this poor soul of mine, for on my account the Congregation does not increase.” And in saying these words he wept bitterly. He was accustomed on these occasions to kiss the feet of each religious, but when he was more than usually infirm and could not practice this act of humility, he would say, “I should wish to kiss the feet of all the religious, but I cannot. I will kiss those of Father Superior. If I cannot do what I wish, I will kiss the ground, and thus, I intend to kiss the feet of all.” It is true that such acts are not rare nor extraordinary, but the spirit of humility and deep sentiment of his own miseries, the tears, the

sobs, the fervor with which the servant of God spoke and practiced such acts of humility were quite singular and peculiar to him. Therefore, at the sight of him the religious were touched and edified, and when any seculars happened to see him, they were lost in admiration to behold this good old man throw himself on his knees before them, earnestly and with tears begging them to recommend him to our Lord, saying, “Pray to God that I may save my soul.” Even among the novices he practiced these acts of humility with so much feeling, that it caused edification and devotion not only in public, but very often also in private. He asked pardon first of one, then of another, fearing, through his disagreeable manners, as he said, that he had given some occasion of annoyance. He did it with much more feeling when he clearly perceived that anyone was dissatisfied with him. The servant of God once gave a mild correction to a brother, who did not take it in good part, as he should have done, but sought to excuse himself, showing a little impatience and even anger. The servant of God, perceiving with holy foresight that this brother was to be gained by means of humility and mildness, bowing his head and extending his arms with great humility and affection, asked his pardon, saying: “Have compassion on me, brother, and have patience.” This humble mildness had so great an effect, that this brother entered into himself, repented of his want of virtue, and was edified with Father Paul’s humility. He sometimes asked pardon of the brother, his companion, when he should rather have reproved him, for, as he himself attests, he sometimes exercised the good Father’s patience, and yet the poor old man spoke to him with great humility, and sometimes took his hand suddenly and would have kissed it had he not quickly withdrawn it. Once Father Paul knelt down to ask his pardon, saying, as he was accustomed to do on such occasions, “Pray for this poor soul of mine, that God may show it mercy.” He said this, added the brother, with such a sentiment of humility that it made me weep.

In order, however, to show more clearly the feeling with which he practiced these acts of virtue, it will be well to relate here the expressions he made use of in a letter to one of our religious: “As I have a little time to spare, I ought to ask your pardon, which I do on my knees, if I write to you sometimes in a tiresome and melancholy way, expressing myself badly, for, believe me, I am in a most deplorable state, and may God preserve everyone else from such a state, *‘but I deserve to suffer in this way’*, and it is a miracle that *‘I am not confounded’* entirely. I have, for the most part, great difficulty in bearing with myself, and there are days (these, as we

have observed, were days of great desolation and tormenting interior dereliction), and almost all my days are such, when I do not know how to bear myself. Yet with great labor I endeavor to bear with others, but I always fail; therefore, pardon this poor man eaten up with vices. Pray for me and give me your blessing.”

It was because he was deeply convinced of his miseries and sins, as he said, that he so often declared in words, which came from the bottom of his heart and were the sincere language of his most humble soul, that he was the scum of the world. He often said that he was ignorant, that he had not studied. He wished this to be believed and made it known to all, even the youngest. Nor had he any fear of losing that esteem which he abhorred extremely. Once, when he went to make a visit to the Retreat of the Presentation, he assisted at a dissertation in philosophy, given by our young students. When he had left the room where the dispute had been held, he expressed to the Father Superior that he was pleased with the students; the superior said, “They would have been to be pitied if they had not done more, for they have had suggestions,” as he expressed it, “from your reverence.” The servant of God replied, “Suggestions from me? Do they not know that I have no sense?”

He always had a great opinion of what was done by others, and though he had a quick and penetrating mind, solid judgment, and great talents, one would have thought, to judge from his own opinion, that he was stupid, clumsy, and fit for nothing. He therefore said, when he spoke of anything done by others, “How well you have done this. I never should have managed it so well.” In everything, when the affair was of consequence, he took advice and willingly embraced the opinions of others, saying with great humility, “Father or brother so and so has good judgment; I am a poor ignorant man and can succeed in nothing.” Everyone can imagine how much these expressions confounded the religious who well knew the prudence and wisdom of the good Father. Much more were they astonished and edified by the protestations that he was constantly making that he was a horrible sinner. He said from his heart that he was the stench, the pest, the scandal of the Congregation; that he was like a raven amidst so many doves; that he was most unworthy to wear the habit; that he merited to be expelled as a scandalous person, to be forgotten, shunned, and abandoned by everyone as a filthy lump of dung; and that only the charity of his brethren could endure him without treating him as he deserved. Frequently, as if grieved to the heart, he repeated, “In the Congregation I leave you nothing but the stench of my

vices and bad example.” He feared to join the common recreation, lest, as he said, he should give bad example to the religious. Sometimes he said that he was a sink of vice, from whom nothing could proceed but putrefaction and filth. More than once he humbled himself even below the condition of beasts. Speaking with a religious, he said, “Today is the Feast of St. Ignatius. I have recommended myself heartily to him, for he is my friend.” “Certainly,” was the answer, “he is your friend for you are also a Founder.” “Be silent,” said Father Paul, “for though St. Ignatius is a great saint, I am worse than a beast.”

And, as in the exercise of holy virtue, he was cheerful and often facetious. Being one day at the Retreat of Terracina, on the Feast of St. Anthony, Abbot, after celebrating Holy Mass, he went and knocked at the superior’s door. Father Superior, hearing the servant of God ask whether he had blessed the beasts in the retreat, felt surprised and answered that he had not yet blessed them. “Then,” said the servant of God, between tears and smiles, which showed his conviction of his own miseries, as well as the pleasure he took in this pleasing act of humility, “when you go to bless them call me, for I have told brother Bartholomew, my companion, to put some ribbons on me, that I may be blessed. For I also am a beast.” And after these words he retired to his room, contrite and humbled. He even thought himself worse than assassins, saying, “I am worse than Mastrillo, the famous assassin; if I were known as I am, stones would be thrown at me.” He knew that wretched man well, and through compassion for his soul had long sought after him to help him to rise from his unhappy state. “Pray,” he would say, “for this poor sinner, for there is no one like me on earth.”

With the same sentiments, and with a vivacity such as cannot spring from affectation, he expressed himself in his letters, from which we will make a few extracts for the reader’s edification. “Let it suffice to you to know,” he writes to a devout person, “that my deplorable miseries increase without end and without relief. God be blessed. Do not speak of me but to recommend me to God, and to have me recommended. I wrote, two or three posts since, a letter to Sister N., in which, with the greatest plainness, sincerity, and humility, I showed her my poor soul at the foot of the cross, asking an alms. I showed it to her, horrible and disgusting, pouring forth filth on every side, meaning to signify my imperfections, that she might recommend me to God, but I have received no answer. Thanks be to God.” With the same feeling of profound humility the servant of God writes: “I have celebrated the feasts as usual, always plunged in the

ocean of my misfortunes and miseries. On the third of the coming month of January, I complete forty-three years; I wish I may not see the forty-fourth. I shall not be more perfect, for up to this time I am destitute of virtue. Oh, how it grieves me to live thus! I wish to leave the world soon, but may the Divine Will be one in me, and in all things.”

In another he says: “Paul’s infirmities are such that God knows them; his soul is all sickness and wounds, from which nothing proceeds but the filth of numberless imperfections and diseases. Ah! God knows where my most dangerous sickness will lead me. Let us pray God that it may bring me to a happy death.” Hearing that a holy soul thought he had some light regarding the good state of his interior, he answered: “I make no account whatever of what N. says of me, it is most likely the locution of his own mind. Certainly I am dear to God, and why? Precisely on account of being the wicked wretch I am.” He added, “That Jesus came not to call the just but sinners. Oh, how dear are we sinners to Him, and I more than others, because I have made Jesus weep more than all others. Tell all this to N., and tell him that Paul says all this with veritable truth, as he knows it in God.” “I rejoice in God,” these are his words in another letter, “for nails that keep me on the cross, though they are little, for I am not only little, but a most filthy and disgusting little insect.”

Writing to a worthy priest, he opens his heart to him: “Mine is horrible nothingness, which seems to me more horrible than hell, on account of the wickedness that may bring forth an infinity of sins. Ah, my Lord Jesus Christ, beware of me, for I shall be worse than Luther and Calvin if You leave me one moment! Oh, how greatly I fear myself!” Again he wrote: “I am more and more confirmed in the belief that, though our Lord will infuse great light into our young men, He will not give it to the wicked old man, ‘*grown old in sins*,’ (Cfr. Daniel 13:52) (which reproof he applied to himself). I see that I merit a thousand hells, and I greatly fear to lose the Supreme Good. Ah! pray for the most wretched sinner in the world; pray that God may be appeased!”

Through this most sincere humility he wished that others should not speak in praise either of him or of the Congregation. “Do not,” he writes to a penitent, “talk about me to the religious, say only what is purely necessary, according as the conversation may lead. The humble soul should speak of her Father with humility and reverence, and never with studied praises, which displease God, for to God alone is praise, glory, and honor due.” And to the same, “If you speak of me,

such we speak with disgust and also with compassion.”

“For this work,” (the foundation of the Congregation) he says in another, “we must thank God, and speak of it with great humility, for we have nothing to do with this work, as it belongs entirely to God. When shall we be so humble that we shall make it our glory to be the opprobrium of men and the abjection of the people? Ah! when shall we become attached to the breast of the charity of Jesus, our dear Spouse? When shall we become so little, that it will be our greatest delight to be the last of all, cast down in our nothingness, and we shall grieve to be esteemed and honored.”

The Ven. Father felt grieved to fill the post of superior, as if he had been an ugly statue, offensive to the eyes of all. “I wish to continue as subject,” he wrote, “for I know not how to govern, and, thanks be to God, the subjects do; and then the superiors of the retreats will not have to dispute with me, who am nothing but imprudence and ignorance.”

Persuaded of his incapacity, he desired that another religious, appointed visitor by him, and in all things subject to him, should treat him as the last of the subjects. He writes to him thus: “You will make the first visit in this retreat and, as I am the last, I wish to submit myself to it; you will therefore examine minutely into my conduct and I will receive every correction and penalty.”

Though Father Paul was consumed with zeal for the salvation of souls, he undertook the direction of them unwillingly, as we have seen, and this came from his considering himself incapable of this office. “I tremble,” he wrote, “when I think of directing and not having abilities for it. I am not fit to direct even an ant, and God knows that I have never been so presumptuous – I have always refused to do it, excepting when I have ascertained it to be God’s will, after long prayers and many tests.”

This humility made him always very vigilant and attentive in separating what was precious from what was worthless in the works he performed, attributing to God all the good he effected by his means, and to himself all the evil that he perceived. “Oh, what great things have I told you,” he writes, “but they are not mine, they are the works of the great Father of mercies! In the holy exercises the Divine Mercy has poured forth abundance of grace and heavenly lights, not on account of my poor labors, which are altogether offensive in His sight, but through His pure

charity and infinite mercy. Do not trouble yourself any more about the mission that has been interrupted at Pitigliano. I have adored and loved the will of God, and I remain quiet. Let us pray for him who has thrown cold water on his poor neighbor, and I fear much that it is I who have caused it by my sins. The graces obtained by that nun, and also by her brother, are certainly miraculous graces, but they have not been obtained through my means, though I was sent for, for I am a wicked man, more likely to provoke the Divine Majesty to chastise than to bestow graces. I do not wish to hear any more about these things. Give the glory to Jesus and to Mary, from whom the grace proceeded.”

He lost no opportunity of increasing in humility, and found an occasion for humbling himself in everything. The regularity, the exactness, and the fervor of the religious, who were, however, his pupils and his children, confounded him. The humble servant of God was able to say, with perfect truth, which virtue was always extremely dear to him: “In our poor retreats, Almighty God is served with great fervor, and from the information I have received from him who directs them, it is wonderful to witness the spirit of fervor with which they labor to acquire virtues, especially the young, who would do too much if they were not restrained.” This greatly humbled him, and he wrote: “Two of our most experienced religious request me to remain till Christmas, to celebrate it here in the retreat, for the consolation of all, and to keep them, as they say, in greater fervor of spirit in these holy days, though they have no need of me, because their fervent devotion and piety reproaches my tepidity. For merely to see them so devout in their holy exercises, practiced with so much readiness, modesty, and silence, is truly a subject for offering thanks to God.” And in another: “Let us ask the Divine Majesty to grant perseverance to the servants of God, who live retired here, who lead truly the lives of saints, and they will be my accusers on the day of judgment.”

With the same conviction of his miseries, this great servant of God wrote: “Amidst the storms and the desolation, justly merited by my crimes and tepidity, I experience some feeling of consolation, ‘*only*’ in the superior part, to witness the fervor, the regularity, and the good order, both in spiritual and temporal, that exist here. Thanks be to God. This is the case at St. Angelo. It is so in this Retreat of St. Eutizio, where everything goes on admirably. What excellent children, what holy young men! Oh, God, ‘*in truth unfeigned,*’ I am greatly ashamed to be with them at recreation and the acts of the community.”

Lastly, the wonderful works, which our Lord wrought to make known his virtues, were for him a subject of great humiliation. To a person who had written to him of having a vision of him in his absence, accompanied by holy effects, he answered: “I do not speak without reflection. I feel sensibly my dreadful miseries, the scourge of the merciful justice of God, and I also feel effects contrary to what you say. God makes Himself understood in various ways, and what He seems to work by me, or in my person, is the work of the Angel Guardian, who operates intellectually through Almighty God, in my person, for as the effects produced are not bad, but good, and proved to be so during so long a time. If they were my own, they would be horrible effects, caused by a devil in the flesh, to whom one could not trust.” And without relating here some other passages of his letters, it will suffice to say that he often calls himself with a sentiment of profound humility, a base and vicious old man, a wicked old man, plunged in vice, wretched, a great sinner, most needy, a stinking sepulchre, entirely unworthy of the apostolic ministry he exercised.

CHAPTER XXXII

Of the Manner in Which Father Paul Sought after and Suffered Contempt, Outrages, and Every Sort of Insult

The heart of the servant of God, being thus, as it were, oppressed with the burden of his own miseries, felt some alleviation in manifesting them to others. As he kept up in his heart a continual desire of humiliation and contempt, our Lord was pleased to afford him the opportunities that he sincerely desired and looked for. From the time that he was a secular, after he knew the value of holy humility, he wore his hair rough, his beard long, neglected his dress entirely, and hung from his hat a piece of a dirty handkerchief, and went through the country of Genoa, where he then resided. The insults and scoffs, which he desired, were not wanting to him, for the rude boys and the idle people, who saw him, vied with each other in hissing at him and making game of him, while the fervent youth rejoiced in his heart to be so treated in imitation of his beloved Redeemer.

But these were slight insults in comparison with those which he had afterwards to endure, increasing always in the love of holy humility. We have already said that as he was clothed, or

rather covered, with merely a rough tunic, without a cloak, barefooted, his head uncovered, he was sometimes taken for a madman, for a great sinner, deserving of that heavy penance, which they supposed had been laid upon him by a confessor, and on that account he was loaded with abuse, chased away, and rejected with great contempt. The servant of God found in these insults his consolation, his repose, and his peace, and by their means united himself more intimately to our Lord, who was pleased to become Himself the outcast of men and the abjection of the people. Insults, scoffs, and derision were to him precious gifts, and he considered them as his best friends, who most ill treated him.

A priest who had made himself remarkable by insulting him, fell dangerously ill and died. The servant of God went to visit the sick bed, as if he had been a great benefactor, assisted him during his illness, and never left him till he had breathed his last. Another priest reproved him publicly in church and said most unreasonably that he ought to inveigh against sin in preaching and not against the sinner. Father Paul, though certainly he had not given any cause of offense, went to his house humbly to ask pardon, doing what the priest ought to have done.

The humility and charity of the servant of God were more strongly manifested towards those who persecuted him for a long time, and sought to throw discredit upon him in every way, and towards those who sought to take away both his life and reputation, as may be seen where charity is treated of in the course of the story, as if injuries were a great act of kindness, of which he was bound to retain the remembrance, and to practice towards those who insulted him the most affectionate acts of gratitude and good feeling. It was his constant custom to remember those persons who had ever injured and calumniated him, to recommend them to our Lord by a particular prayer. So pleasing to him were injuries and contempt, in which, by the light of faith, he saw an abundance of heavenly treasures. Through this same desire to be contemned, he used to imagine himself, with great satisfaction, coming to a stop in the midst of his sermon on the platform without being able to say a word; and it seemed sometimes that this would happen to him. When he was younger and more vigorous, he heard confessions all the morning during the mission, and also after dinner not knowing how to refuse his assistance to the poor sinners that had recourse to him, nor did he leave the confessional till the bell rang for the sermon. The poor Father, feeling himself much fatigued, and his head confused, thought it very possible that he might remain on the platform without knowing what to say, as was natural. Lovingly embracing

his own abjection, he greatly rejoiced in the thought of such an event, because he would then be considered really as an ignorant man, which he desired.

The truth was, however, that he kept his subjects well prepared. If, sometimes he did not prepare himself as much as seemed necessary, because thought charity for his penitents he dispensed himself from it, as is usually the case in missions, because he had only God in Zion and trusted only in God, as soon as he mounted the platform to preach, our Lord infused into him so much light and inflamed his heart with so great fervor, that the force of his presentations and the fire of his words made the audience melt into tears. Thus, the Divine Goodness showed His approbation of the charity of His servant and of the labor he underwent for the goal of souls.

As our Lord always preserved the knowledge of the truth in his faithful servant, his love for contempt, his delight in his own abjection and his ardent desire for humiliation were never diminished. This virtuous desire possessed his heart till his death. He desired to die with all the external signs of a great sinner, and often begged with deep humility that when he was near death, he might be placed on the ground, or on a little straw with a rope round his neck and a crown of thorns on his head, to die, as he said, like a true penitent. And that after death, he might be buried without any mark of distinction.

When he was at the Retreat of St. Angelo, he said many times, weeping: "My body ought, after death, to be burned under a chestnut tree, like that of a beast. But I am a son of the Church, and therefore it may be buried in a sacred place." When he was seized with his last illness, he often requested, and ordered also, that if he should die in the hospital, where there was no burial place, his loathsome corpse (these are his words) should be put into quicklime, and his bones taken and carried by an ass to the Retreat of St. Angelo to be buried at the feet of his brother John Baptist.

Whereas the character of the proud man shows itself at once when he is reprov'd, for he becomes angry, resents blame, and like a delirious patient, turns against him who charitably seeks to cure him, Father Paul, on the contrary, who was truly humble, and a sincere lover of contempt and abjection, at the very time he received corrections showed the docility and virtue of his soul, receiving them with perfect peace and tranquility. His brother, who knew better than anyone the perfection with which he bore them, often gave him occasions of great merit. It will be well here to show by what spirit this good Father was led, and why he was so severe. Father

John Baptist was naturally of a very austere and rigid disposition, and Father Paul was, on the contrary, sweet and mild; it easily happened, therefore, that he found occasions or excuses for reproving his brother, when there was not a shadow of fault. But the reason why Father John Baptist so often reprehended Father Paul was the ardent desire he had of his perfection. This servant of God, being always recollected and always inflamed with ardent desires of perfection and sanctity, wished to promote in himself and others, and more particularly in his dear brother, a great diligence in the practice of the most perfect virtue. He said himself one day to a religious, afterwards Father Paul's confessor, "I wish to be irreproachable myself, and that others should be so also."

Father John Baptist also knew Father Paul's virtue to be very firm and sound, and that like good metal, it would bear the heaviest blow. He considered Paul a saint, and said so to others but very rarely, as he was extremely reserved in his words. Knowing, therefore, that he could rely upon him, he humbled him in private and in public, without much ceremony. If Father Paul was relating at recreation anything that could in any way turn to his praise, though he moderated his expressions judiciously, and sometimes spoke in the third person to conceal himself, Father John Baptist scolded him, interrupted his conversation, and said with severity to him, "*For not he who commands himself is approved, but he whom God commands*" (II Cor. 10:18). Father Paul either kept silence or humbly left the recreation. But if his brother had already gone, through consolation and joy for the correction he had received, he said joyfully to the religious, "Oh, he has given it to me."

Seculars sometimes came to the retreat, and among them a priest of great virtue, his friend, to whom, when Father Paul was ill, he gave an account of his indisposition, as is customary on such occasions. If Father John Baptist was there, he was ready to humble him; the archpriest of Vetralla, who is now dead, was present on one of these occasions and has deposed that, when the servant of God was speaking of his illness, Father John Baptist came in and reproved him sharply. Yet the good old man was only explaining in very moderate terms the pains he suffered in his legs. Father Paul, at the unexpected reproof, took off his biretta, bowed his head, and with great submission and humility received this rebuke without being troubled or excusing himself, only replying: "I was telling the archpriest about my illness." Father John Baptist immediately departed without waiting for another word. This pious priest was much edified by the great

humility and patience of Father Paul. If he was taking a little food to strengthen himself, Father John Baptist found some cause for reprovng, mortifying, and humbling him. Or he immediately took away what was before him, when Paul appeared to eat with relish, or looked severely upon him, or said with harshness and roughness, "I shall witness your mortification." When the poor old man was resting at the hours the Rule allots for repose, though he often deprived himself of it in part, Father John Baptist, who occupied the next room and slept little, and after praying almost all night, wishing to go early before the community rose to adore the Blessed Sacrament and remain before it, had to pass through Father Paul's room, took the liberty of turning the window wide open saying, "Sleep, sleep, death will come and will find you sleeping," or else, "What a cowardly Founder you are!" The servant of God, who usually slept little, on account of diabolical vexations, rose nevertheless at once, without complaint, to obey his brother, though fatigued nature would willingly have taken a little rest at break of day. Father John Baptist seemed to seek occasions of mortifying him, and knew how to find a fault even when there was not even its shadow. A canon of Ronciglione came to our Retreat of St. Angelo to attend His Eminence Cardinal Erba, who condescended to honor that solitude with his presence. After the cardinal had departed, he suddenly threw himself at Father Paul's feet, saying: "Father Paul, I want a favor for my brother. I wish to have the sign you wear on your breast." The servant of God, who never knew how to refuse what was asked in this manner, felt a great inclination to yield, but nevertheless, through the low opinion he had of himself, would not give the sign that was requested; he excused himself by saying: "I cannot, for it is sown to my habit." The canon replied: "I will not rise till I have obtained it." "Canon, it is sown all round," answered the servant of God. The canon, quickly taking a penknife, loosened the stitches, took it away, and mounting his horse, departed. Father John Baptist, who was present, observed everything, and looking at Father Paul with a severe countenance, said to him: "Oh, you have given away your emblem, you have committed a fine act of ostentation, your sign will work miracles!" After saying these words, he went away, and the servant of God, bowing his head, said: "This is the first, it is nothing. What will come after will be worse." In short, Father John Baptist, always and in all things, endeavored to perfect his brother more and more in the practice of humility and mortification. On some days, his rigor seemed almost to be excessive, so frequently did he reprove Father Paul.

On one occasion, a mission was given at Tolfa, and for some reason Father John Baptist was reproving Father Paul, as was usual. The good old man, turning to one of his companions, said with a smile, "This is the sixth sermon today." Father John Baptist then added with severity, "Yes, yes, turn it into ridicule and make a joke of it," thus preserving that authority which he always exerted over Father Paul's virtue.

These mortifications were so pleasing to the servant of God, that when Father John Baptist departed to another life, he wept bitterly and was almost inconsolable, not so much for having lost in his brother a comforter, a counselor, and an example of great virtue, as because he had lost one who sharply corrected him. He went about saying, with tears in his eyes, "Now that my brother is dead, who will mortify me, who will correct me? I have just reason to weep, for he who corrected my faults is dead." And he often repeated, "Who will reprove me for my defects?" It was indeed most edifying and touching to see in Father Paul so much love and tenderness for his departed brother, joined with so great humility and so low an opinion of himself. Though with perfect uniformity he submitted to the most wise dispensations of Almighty God, he felt great pain at being deprived of him, who could at any time correct him. But this is the conduct of God's servants, to esteem more the wounds given by true friends than the treacherous kisses of enemies; to value the corrections of those who wish our good and to avoid the adulation of those who flatter us.

Father Paul was always most averse from hearing himself praised and from every kind of flattery. If any of our religious, on hearing anything related regarding them, appeared to think highly of his conduct and to value him, saying, "It is well with you, happy you," he immediately became serious and melancholy, changed the conversation, and sometimes went away. It is enough to say, that he bore with great patience the severity and continued harshness of Father John Baptist, but he could not endure that his brother should praise him, though ever so little, a thing, in truth, very remote from his natural inclination and from his custom. Let us hear it from a witness who was present, and who deposes to the fact on his oath. "Father Paul, being on a visit at recreation with the religious, when I was also present with a secular priest, uttered something that might turn to his praise. The conversation was on useful and edifying subjects. Father John Baptist, without reflection, said with a sort of cordiality, quite unusual in him, 'What wonder is it, if such things happen to you?' Father Paul, on hearing these words, changed at once his gaiety

into sorrow, burst into tears, and said in a voice stilled by tears and sobs, ‘This is the way to send me to hell, and to throw me under the feet of the devils.’ Having said this to mortify him, and to make him perceive his fault, Paul ordered him not to appear again in his presence, or to come near his room. That he might not enter the room unperceived, Father Paul shut himself up therein. This lasted three days, when, on the third day, Father John Baptist seeing the door open, secretly knelt down on the threshold, saying, “Are you yet pacified? I am come to ask your pardon,’ and crawled on his knees to the middle of the room. At this sight the servant of God, whose heart was most meek, changing his severity into affection, tenderly embraced him.”

In this recital everyone will perceive, besides the profound humility of Father Paul, the virtue of his good brother Father John Baptist, and will know more clearly the good reason Father Paul had for esteeming him so highly. Many other records remain of the singular virtues of Father John Baptist. It is not, therefore, surprising that our servant of God valued him so much, and often said to his companion: “Father John Baptist is a holy man, secret in his works; your reverence will know everything. I know that he is continually in prayer, that he constantly weeps, and sometimes when I see him, hides himself, that he may not be seen even by me. He has the gift of tears and is always conversing with God.” This is the same as to say that he was truly guided by the Spirit of God and was perfectly fitted for the sublime office of teaching Christian philosophy and evangelical humility.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Of the Abhorrence Entertained by the Good Father for Honors, for Every Mark of Esteem

It is indeed most easy for him who allows himself to be led away by deceitful appearances and the passing glories of this miserable life to seek eagerly after honors and to take great delight in them. But he who is taught in the school of truth and of heavenly wisdom thinks of things in an entirely different manner, and follows a path entirely opposite to that of worldlings. Hence it was that Father Paul, who, as we have seen, possessed the true spirit of God. He diligently avoided honors and removed occasions which might turn to his esteem, as much as he loved contempt and reprehension. He gave holy missions because such was the will of God, and only

for His glory, taking care to attribute nothing to himself. He saw wonderful conversions effected, but he did not on this account take off the eye of his soul from the knowledge of his own nothingness. He did not grow vain with popular applause, which he abhorred as a plague, and as soon as the mission was over, left that same day, if possible, or early the following morning, to avoid the praises of the people and prevent their following him. He used to say with great feeling that he departed from missions like a chastised dog, persuaded that he had been an obstacle to the good of souls, and, at the end of the mission, with great sincerity and deep humility, he publicly asked pardon. And as the good Father was not ignorant of the snares of the enemy of mankind, who, if he cannot prevent us from doing good, tries to ruin those who are the instruments, and attempts to destroy, by the poison of vain complacency, those who endeavor to restore life to the sinner, he would have the same practice always observed by our missionaries, and woe to him who should fail in this. The Founder even counted the hours of their stay, and, says a witness who had reason to know, “If they delayed ever so little, they received a severe reproof.”

His ardent affection for holy humility appeared most visibly, and could, as it were, be seen in his heart at the time that he was preaching the word of God. For it was evident that in preaching he had no object but to make Jesus Christ crucified known and sincerely loved. If he preached, animated by true charity, he would willingly have kept silence, in order to preserve himself in humility. “Concerning this,” says his confessor in his deposition, “I remember a holy contest that Father Paul once had with Father Leonardo, that fervent missionary and great servant of God. They were both at Acquapendente, and it was earnestly requested that one or the other would give a sermon. Father Leonardo wished Father Paul to preach, and Father Paul, on the other side, desired that Father Leonardo would do it. Paul’s words and prayers were so efficacious, that the good Father yielded, and Father Paul was full of delight that this apostolic missionary, who was so deserving, should have precedence in the sacred ministry. Father Paul, wishing to draw further profit from this meeting, humbly asked Father Leonardo to give him some advice or maxim for his guidance in holy missions. At first Father Leonardo refused, being a man of profound humility, but overcome, at length, by the virtuous importunity of Father Paul, comforted him and said, “I am of the opinion that to be good missionaries our interior must be well ordered.” This pious and holy instruction pleased Father Paul so much that he engraved it in his heart and never forgot it. Thus, he gained double fruit from his humility.

The same spirit of humility, by which the Ven. Father was guided, caused him to avoid those places where he was honored. If he knew that he was esteemed in any place, he was very attentive that the handkerchiefs and towels he used should not be changed. If he perceived that this had been done, he immediately asked for it again, which he did at Celleri, where he was venerated with particular devotion. Nor was he satisfied till that which had been taken through devotion was restored to him. If he saw that seculars wished to kiss his hand through the esteem they had of him, he drew it back quickly, even though they were men; and during the last years of his life, when, on account of his lameness, he was carried in a chair by two brothers, he said to them anxiously, "Go on, do not stop, make haste."

So wonderful was his low opinion of himself, that he considered himself the most miserable man upon earth, unworthy of being esteemed, or of being in any way remembered. He sought, therefore, by every means in his power, to blot out every memorial that might remain of him after death. He said from his heart, "If I were able, and it were allowable, I would efface my name from the Pontifical Briefs, for I do not wish any remembrance of me to remain in the Congregation." He found out that in the Retreat of the Presentation, some writing, or attestation, were preserved, which it is thought were sent for by Father Fulgenzio of Jesus, one of our religious, from Alessandria, drawn up in due form, in which papers was contained an account of Father Paul's life, of his extraordinary penances, and other virtuous actions, that they might be of use for general edification, and especially for that of the Congregation. At once he set off to that place. When he arrived at the retreat to make the visitation, he gave a strict order that all the papers that in any way regarded him should be given into his hands. The order was so precise and given with such determination, that Father Superior and a brother, who had possession of these writings, thought they could not avoid obeying. They were quickly copied, word for word, and then the originals were given up to the servant of God, who burnt them, saying with deep feeling that he would not have any memorial of himself retained.

It was once told him that in the life of Bishop Emilio Cavalieri honorable mention was made of him. He asked for the book and the place, as if he wished to read it. But without looking at a single word, tore out of the book, with holy indignation, those pages in which he was named, protesting that his name was unworthy to be remembered and that he would not have it remain to posterity. This book is still kept at the Retreat of St. Angelo, and is a beautiful proof of the

profound humility and fervor of spirit of Father Paul. Our religious, who knew his feelings, were greatly perplexed when they wished to place in the octagon before the sacristy of Sts. John and Paul the inscription under the bust of Clement XIV, in which, among other words, are the following: "*Paul of the Cross, Founder, the Others His Companions.*" More than once he wished to hear it read before it was carved, but the superior at that time, bringing it to him copied in very small writing, always left out the word "*Founder,*" hoping that the servant of God, from his defective sight, would not perceive it. The good old man tried to read it himself but was never able to succeed from his bad sight. If he had done so, he certainly would not have allowed that word to be used, though it was done with the advice of prudent persons, who deserved attention. Though the servant of God made such efforts to remain concealed, his virtue, like a bright light, shone most brilliantly and was well known. Therefore, he was considered to be a holy man, and he himself could not help perceiving it, though it caused him much regret. "Oh, how greatly are they deceived in me," he would say. "But I have no intention of deceiving anyone, and if our Lord were to grant me to remain in purgatory till the end of the world, He would show me great mercy." It was a most painful wound to his heart to hear or to see that he was esteemed, or his actions valued. A letter once came from Bishop Emilio Cavalieri to Father Fulgenzio, in which the good prelate said that his brother, who was dangerously ill and almost dying, had been instantaneously cured by the application of an emblem of the Institute that the servant of God had worn, made to his breast by the same prelate, who also by this circumstance showed the opinion he entertained of the virtue and sanctity of Father Paul. Father Fulgenzio thought proper to read the letter to Father Paul, who on hearing it, began to weep through regret that this fact should be known, and that he should be esteemed. On another occasion the Master of Novices, then Father Peter of St. John, when Father Paul was at recreation in the novitiate, said to him in confidence, "Father, if you die at a distance from this place, leave an order in your will that your heart be sent here, for we wish to have it." These words were so painful to the servant of God, that as an ocular witness testifies, if they had given him a wound in the heart they could not have hurt him more, and with an inflamed countenance, and his eyes filled with tears, he said with a loud voice, as if he were ready to tear his heart from his breast, "My heart deserves to be cut into small pieces and thrown to the birds to be devoured, for it has never known how to love God. Ah, this heart deserves to be burned, and that its ashes should be scattered to the winds, because

it has not loved God!” Weeping he left the recreation and retired to his room.

The marks of esteem that he received from seculars were no less displeasing and painful to him. In the beginning, when he was at Mount Argentario, when he went down to Orbetello, the commander and all the officers showed the veneration they had for him. They made room for him when he passed, and by other demonstrations showed the esteem they felt for him. Only souls that are well instructed in the school of holy humility can understand the pain that these proceedings caused to the servant of God, who by his words, gestures, and humble manners refused these honors and even made use of entreaties to obtain that he might not be mortified with such marks of esteem, of which he believed himself to be quite unworthy. When he was being carried to Ceccano in a chair, as he could not walk, a woman, during the time that persons were speaking to him, cut off a piece of his cloak. The good servant of God, perceiving it, looked at her with a severe countenance, saying, “What are you doing?” and added that she ought not to have done such a thing. When he was traveling, it often happened that the people, with a holy indiscretion, cut his cloak and his habit. What pain did this cause to the good Father! He desired to fly as quickly as possible from the place when he saw himself honored, and perceiving it said in jest with holy humility, “They have cut my cloak, thinking me to be the Father Abbot, and I am the cook. Oh, if they knew me, they would run away as from a contagion. God wishes me to be confounded and humbled. May His most holy will be done!” Or he would say, “These good people are taking useless trouble. Oh, God, how blind they are! The judgments of God are different from those of men.” Turning to those who had the cloth in their hands, “Go,” he said, “go, make stockings for your poultry.” When he was being carried in a chair on another occasion, some men from Ceccano, where he had to give the meditation, showed great affection and devotion towards him. The good Father, entirely occupied with the knowledge of himself, said, sighing, “Ah, poor me! Who knows how much more pleasing to God are these persons than I am. They think they are carrying something precious, and I am nothing but a dead dog, and worse – worse.” The more Father Paul avoided honors, the more they were offered to him against his will, for honors follow true virtue, as the shadow follows the body. Thus, by a loving dispensation of God, the perfections of His faithful servant was rendered more manifest to the general edification. He was in high esteem, not only with the people and with uneducated people, but with wise and learned persons, occupying high dignities, and especially with many bishops,

who had him in their dioceses, or knew him by reputation. But when he was honored by these persons, he was greatly mortified, because by divine light he knew and respected, with deep veneration, the episcopal dignity. Though he was old, infirm, and afflicted with pains, he knelt down at the feet of bishops, and with lively faith said, "Let me kneel, for I know what the episcopal dignity is." But the bishops of greater merit and zeal, who highly esteem a laborer that faithfully toils in the vineyard of the Lord, and takes some share in cultivating that district, which is confided to them by Almighty God, gave to the good Father unusual marks of their affection, satisfaction, and esteem. This continually increased his regret, his mortification, and his interior humiliation. Once when the servant of God was passing through Anagni, he met with the bishop of the city, and the bishop of Ferentini. These worthy prelates, with condescension and that spirit of evangelical humility so becoming to these who are the successors of the apostles, accompanied the servant of God through the city, placing him between them. The poor Father was obliged to yield and obey, but said afterwards to his director, "I never experienced such shame and confusion in my life as on that occasion." But in order to know more clearly how far are the servants of God from the maxims of the world, and what is taught by the sublime philosophy of the Gospel, it was sufficient to see Father Paul returning from the audiences of Clement XIV. This Holy Pontiff could not have given him greater marks of his affection, tenderness, and, I might almost say, of the veneration he had for him, as has been named elsewhere. He spoke to him confidentially, made him sit down in his presence, and called him "My papa," with expressions of warm affection. Yet the humble Father left the audience mortified, humbled, and interiorly afflicted, and even wept bitterly, for it seemed to him that his affairs were prospering, and that God wished to reward him in this world. To console him it required all the efficacy of the words and authority of his spiritual director. He could with good reason say to us afterwards for our instruction, "You see what favors they bestow on me; the Pope treats me with great charity, and yet these things do not make me vain, for I return home like a beaten dog, full of confusion and humiliation." When His Holiness sent anyone to visit him, which he often did, the servant of God, humbled and confounded, exclaimed, "*Whence to me?*" (Lk. 1:14), I am the least among the sons of the Church!" or, "I am the least and poorest son of holy Church. Therefore I place myself under the Holy Father's feet." He was answered from the Pope, that the Holy Father placed himself at his feet. "Oh, God!" exclaimed Father

Paul, “How is it possible that the Vicar of Christ should humble himself to a poor creature like me? What great humility in the Holy Father! The Pope is a holy man.” Sometimes he was told, because His Holiness commanded it, “The Pope sends you his blessing and desires you to bless him.” At these words the servant of God, as if horrified, cried out, “What! The Holy Father, who is the fount of benedictions and possesses it in himself, wishes to be blessed by me? Oh, God! What humility.” And he was quite confounded and grieved to see himself so greatly honored. As the proud man at every slight honor exalts himself and becomes excited, this truly humble soul, on the contrary, became more and more humble amidst honors, and more wrapped up in his own nothingness.

From the very graces our Lord bestowed on him, he took occasion to humble himself profoundly. He was lame and unable to walk, loaded with pains and troublesome infirmities, and though he suffered with unconquerable patience, he believed that our Lord was punishing him for his grievous sins. Our Lord, who sometimes treats His servants with holy playfulness, when Paul, conversing familiarly with some of his friends, was seeking his own humiliation, worked by his means a miracle, which caused him still more mortification and confusion. When, during the summer season, he was giving the spiritual exercises in the Monastery of St. Ann at Ronciglione, he was taking his meal one morning in the company of several gentlemen and an ecclesiastic of the city. As the flies were numerous, and more troublesome than usual, these gentlemen tried to chase them away. The servant of God, perceiving their tiresome occupations, said, “I am a great sinner, but if I were a holy soul, I should send away these flies. I knew a holy man, who, by doing this,” and he made a sign of the cross with his hand, “made all the flies disappear.” Scarcely had Father Paul said this, than the flies disappeared and did not again disturb the meals during the whole time that the servant of God remained there. The poor Father, who did not expect such a prodigy, was so confused, that during all that morning he had not courage to speak again, but those who witnessed the circumstance were greatly astonished and edified.

As the foundation of the Congregation was a signal mark of his great piety, and ardent zeal for the glory of God, all who knew the humble heart of Father Paul could easily imagine the torment it caused him to be considered Founder of the Congregation. It was so painful to him that he could scarcely bear to hear the name; it was a great offense against him to call him

Founder. He said openly that it had never entered his mind to found. "I had no intention of founding the Congregation; my idea was to remain hidden and retired, doing penance, and serving God unknown. This is not the work of men; men have nothing to do with it. It is God's work entirely. Jesus Christ is the Founder of the Congregation of the Passion, and I have been, as it were, a courier and lackey, who carries letters and messages for his master." An eminent cardinal one day honored our Retreat of St. Angelo with his presence, and in visiting Father Paul, who was staying there, asked him with pious curiosity how he had contrived to found the Congregation. Father Paul answered with great humility. "Your Eminence, these are long affairs." "But," added the cardinal, "you are the Founder?" Father Paul, humbling himself still more deeply, replied with tears in his eyes: "The Founder, Your Eminence, is Christ crucified; I have defiled the work with my imperfections."

Through the great grief he felt when he was called Founder, either in letters or in conversation, he could not help mildly complaining of it, and he said, in confidence with tears, to one of the religious: "Oh, if they who call me Founder and show some sort of esteem of me knew what stabs they give my heart, and what pain they cause me, through compassion they would refrain from saying such things. Nor would they give the least sign of their good opinion, for truly they confound and annihilate me, and would make me fall into dejection and pusillanimity, if I did not keep myself up by lively confidence in the infinite goodness and mercy of God and in the infinite merits of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. For by this esteem, and by reminding me of the foundation of the Congregation, they place before me my ingratitude, and recall to my mind that I have defiled and hindered the work of God by my sins. This is one of the griefs and interior trials that I endure on these occasions." If he was closely pursued by questions from those who wished with devout importunity to know who the Founder was, he concealed himself as well as he could. One day in Rome, when waiting in an antechamber for the audience of a prelate, the servants of that dignitary surrounded him, asking who was the Founder of that Congregation, and Father Paul answered, "A poor sinner." They repeated their question, and the servant of God always replied, "A poor sinner." They could not draw any other answer from him, as he was much annoyed by their questions.

Through his profound humility the office of General President was most painful to him. He would have done anything to remain a subject, but being obliged, as long as he lived, to bear the

burden of the superiorate, he had to submit to the holy will of God, and make humility lovingly yield to holy charity. He protested, and during his latter years more frequently, that he was not capable of such a charge, that the Capitulars could not in conscience elect him, adding, that when the new superior was chosen, he should retire to Monte Argentario, and taking off the emblem, which is the distinction of the Professed, should make his novitiate and place himself under the direction of the master of novices, like every other novice, and write on the door of his cell, “Paul is dead.” When the time for the Chapter was come, kneeling before the Capitular Fathers, he begged them with tears and sighs not again to impose this burden upon him, entreating them earnestly on the contrary to give him a penance for his faults, and even to imprison him; he made renunciations full of humility, but all in vain, for the Chapter did not accept the renunciation, and in the end, his confessor, by the spiritual authority he had over him, obliged him to accept the office. Even the last time that he was elected General Superior, shortly before his death, he made his resignation, and it was most affecting and edifying to see that saintly old man, bathed in tears, appear before the Chapter with a rope round his neck to ask pardon and confess his faults in the presence of all the Capitular Fathers. He even entreated them to give him a severe penance, declaring that he had never known how to govern the Congregation, and that he deserved to be expelled from it as one unworthy to wear the holy habit. No one could see him without being moved by the vivacity and sincerity, with which he expressed the sentiments of his heart by the burning tears which accompanied his words, and the deep conviction that he showed of what he said. When elected General Superior, afterwards, against his will and without regard to his great repugnance, of which he made to God a noble sacrifice, it seemed as if his heart would melt away in weeping, and his eyes were two fountains of tears. In words interrupted by sighs and weeping, he said in public that it was a chastisement of the poor Congregation that a poor miserable sinner had been elected for their superior, full of vices, and who was going to the grave loaded with his defects. Since God permitted it, he would die under the load of fatigue to serve the poor Congregation, and as the religious advanced, as is customary, to promise obedience and kiss his hand, he embraced them with the affection of a most tender father, pressing each one to his heart, addressing to him humble words that proceeded from a heart filled with a lively appreciation of the weighty obligations that the office of superior brings with it, and of his own unworthiness and incapability. “My brethren, help me to bear the burden. By the

observance of the holy rules, you will give me consolation and become holy yourselves. I have always desired to retire to the novitiate, to prepare myself for death, for so far I have done no good.” When he was obliged, as is usual, to give notice of the election in circular letters, he could not, even in writing, refrain from expressing those sentiments which were so strong and so deeply fixed in his heart. “The judgments of God,” he wrote, “are inscrutable, the ways of God and the paths in which He guides us are unsearchable, and the dispensations of His Providence are incomprehensible. This consideration made the Apostle St. Paul exclaim: ‘*O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways*’ (Rom. 11:33). This consideration also terrifies me, and makes me tremble when I reflect, that I, who am so weak, ignorant, and above all, so wicked, have been obliged by holy obedience, enjoined in the Chapter, notwithstanding my resignation, to accept again the office of your General Superior.” These sentiments were deeply engraved in his heart; he greatly abhorred titles and marks of respect. He sometimes said, “How this Very Reverend disgusts me!” All his desire was to be treated frankly and with filial confidence. As he behaved with great cordiality and singular humility and sweetness, so that he could not be known for superior but by his charity, his kindness, and the splendor of his virtues; he was an implacable enemy to every other demonstration. When he went to make the visitation in the retreats, and the bells were rung, as is usual, this was a motive of profound humiliation. When he visited the retreat at Terracina, the last time that he was in the Province of Campagna, the religious, full of consolation and joy, came out to meet him, and at the same time testified, by ringing the bells, their respect, veneration, joy and love for their esteemed Father and visitor. Though he was deaf, he perceived the sound in a confused manner and asked what that noise was. He was told that the bells were ringing on account of his arrival and for a good beginning to the visitation he was going to make. The servant of God, with holy zeal and words that affected everyone, then said: “Why do you ring? Why do you ring? Ring for the dead, for I have never done anything good.” And, gifted with extraordinary strength, left the religious, though he had not before been able to move on account of his pains, and walked quickly to the church, reciting with abundance of tears the psalm Miserere and striking his breast, asking God’s mercy, nor did he cease until he reached the church. All the religious who were present were much moved in beholding the man of God, rich in so many gifts, humbling himself so profoundly and entertaining for himself so much

contempt.

In the most trifling practices of religious observance, the spirit of his humility also shone forth. Though he was the father and superior of all, he kissed, with great and astonishing humility, the hand of the superiors of the retreats when he arrived, and showed great respect for all the religious. He trusted all except one, and we will show from his own words who this one was. "I have confidence in all except Paul," as he used to call himself. And he also said of himself, "My soul, you are farther from sanctity than heaven is from earth; you are more loathsome in the sight of God than dead dogs are in the sight of men." Thus, he remained annihilated in himself, in his nothingness, in his miseries, repeating often those words of St. John the precursor, "*I am not*" (John 1:20), meaning that he was nothing and esteemed himself such.

All these traits of virtue and of profound humility, practiced with so much sweetness, are truly worthy of no small degree of admiration. To say the truth, in reading the records that remain to us of the saintly Founder, what surprises me more than anything is this: that the servant of God, by a special and singular privilege, amidst so many honors, in giving missions so famous, accompanied with applause and approbation corresponding to the great benefit he effected, never had a thought of pride to disturb that most humble opinion he had of himself. Hence, speaking to his director, and opening his heart with all frankness to him, he could say: "By the grace of God, pride never comes near me." And he said on other occasions, "I should think I was a reprobate and damned if a thought of pride came to me." He believed his miseries to be so great, that to have a thought of pride amidst them would be insupportable boldness, worthy of severe chastisement. He spoke of them to others, as if all must be convinced of his great unworthiness, going so far as to say that it was almost impossible that pride should assail him, and that he should think himself almost damned if it did come near him. Explaining, by a simile, the deep sentiment of his soul, he compared himself to a poor ragged beggar, covered with loathsome wounds, who, standing in a circle of nobles and gentlemen, could not have any feeling of pride. Hence he never had occasion to accuse himself of pride. "I, so great a sinner," he said, "to be proud! God keeps open before me a great book, which is the knowledge of my sins." If anyone chanced to speak of his presence as necessary to the Congregation, he used to reply, "If I thought myself necessary in this world, I should think I was damned. Our Lord needs no one." And of so little use did he consider himself, that we cannot read, without tears, the

words which he addressed in his last illness to his companion: “How burdensome am I to the community! I am sorry to see you in continual exercise for me. I wish to send for the prior of the hospital of St. John, to see if, through charity, he will receive me into the hospital like the rest of the poor.” “And I answered,” says the companion in his depositions, “that it was not true that he gave us trouble, for he gave us consolation, and that we should grieve for his death when God took him from us, because he was a support and a comfort to us; that he did more for us in this way, sick as he was, than the whole Congregation together,” and this was true. Father Paul wept at these words, and striking his breast, said with deep humility: “It is your charity which makes you bear with me, for I deserve nothing; I deserve that you should leave me like a beast, for I am a worse sinner than the bandits.” Saying this, he turned to the Crucifix in his room, and striking his breast, said, “*My fault, my greatest fault.*” Then, taking his companion’s hand, he said, “My dear brother Bartholomew, how greatly am I obliged to you!” This feeling that he was useless, burdensome, and troublesome was deeply fixed in his heart; he repeated it three times on different occasions, with great humility, and received everything as done out of charity to a poor miserable creature.

XXXIV

Of the Meekness and Kindness of Heart of the Servant of God

Our Lord, Who is the Sovereign Master of virtues, in telling us that we should learn of Him to be humble, and also to be meek and gentle of heart, wishes to teach us that kindness and meekness go hand in hand with humility. From this, as from an excellent root deeply buried in the earth, proceeds the sweet fruit of these virtues. Father Paul, having received from God a degree of humility so great and so rare, everyone must perceive that it was that very humility which produced in him that great kindness of heart by which he gained all those with whom he conversed, appeased immediately those who were unjustly irritated against him, and made himself the master of hearts, a virtue certainly very necessary to him who has to govern others and labor in the apostolic ministry, and which, in the servant of God, was so much more meritorious and excellent, as he was by nature warm, lively, and enterprising. It happened more

than once that one or other of our religious, through want of virtue, or a transport of passion, failed in respect towards him; and he, bearing all with tranquillity, serenity, and sweetness, gave, by his silence, a mild reproof to him who insulted him without cause. A superior of one of our retreats ordered that on a festival certain work should be done by the brothers, about which he was too eager, urged by a zeal that was not regulated by discretion. The good Father heard of this, and on account of his obligation as General Superior, and because he was deeply moved by seeing the honor of God in some degree outraged by this work, meeting the superior, said to him in a gentle manner that such work on that day was a scandal. At these words, uttered with so much mildness, the superior became enraged and lost all respect for the good Father. He did not complain nor reprove him for behavior so improper and so unjust; but turning to an ancient religious who was present, with great patience said, "What do you say of this man, Father?" On another occasion, when Father Paul was at the house of one of our benefactors, Father Paul said to the superior of another retreat that he did not approve of a project of his, because it did not seem to him reasonable; the superior would not be persuaded, nor would he yield, but on the contrary expressed his anger against the good Father in disrespectful terms. The modest Father did not employ his authority to silence him, as he might have done, but, all meekness and gentleness, placed his reasons before his eyes, that he might in time acknowledge his error and become sensible of the affection entertained for him by his superior and Father. Generally on those occasions he kept silence. If afterwards anyone who had offended him went to ask his pardon, he received him kindly; and if he thought it a suitable time, said to him, as he did to one of our religious, "We are yet alive!" wishing to remind him that it was necessary he should mortify his passions, which are never better known than at the times we ought to conquer them. Not infrequently he was beforehand with those who had offended him, going to meet them with the affection of a father, and showing them all the tenderness of his charity. He acted in the same manner with those who disobeyed his orders, though they were precise and important. He did not fail to admonish and correct him who had been in fault, but he did it with great peace and sweetness, saying quietly, "Why have you not done such a thing?" or, "For my sins I do not deserve to be obeyed; patience, God wills it. May His most holy will be done." If there was no chance of admonishing, or if the time was unsuitable, he was silent towards the person in error and said, "We must bear the Cross and have patience." Or, like a physician who delays to give a

remedy in the heat of fever, knowing that it would prove useless, “He is not now fit to receive correction; we must wait for a suitable time.” And, in many circumstances, knowing that we must charitably bear the burden that the weakness of others throws down, he said with great wisdom, “Such a one does not possess solid virtue; he has not practiced virtue. I must practice it” Thus, he regulated his conduct with holy discretion, and in all his words was humble, gentle, and sweet, entirely conformed to the most meek and humble Spirit of Jesus Christ.

When he met with greater obstinacy and resistance, the servant of God showed more gentleness and with holy industry found out the most ingenious ways of gaining an entrance into hearts, which he sought to gain, in order to lead them to God. In one mission he told the men from the platform, that, for the sake of order, they must go into a different place from the women; but, standing like columns, they would not move. The servant of God then, without another word, came down and threw himself at the feet of those who opposed him, begging them to go to the place he wished. They could not resist such humility and gentleness, but immediately obeyed. The curate of the place, who was observing everything, said afterwards to Father Paul: “Oh, how well you acted by doing as you did. On another occasion a missionary wished to employ authority and commands, and great disorder followed.”

The servant of God showed even greater meekness and humility towards a rude and insolent man, for, when he was at the Retreat of St. Angelo, after he had assisted through charity and nursed in the retreat a young man (*carbonaro*²), who was ill, not allowing him to depart till he was perfectly cured, the young man’s father, who perhaps imagined that the reception of one great benefit gave him a claim and a right to ask for another, was offended because the servant of God had not kept him as long as he thought proper, and went to complain of it to Father Paul, presenting himself before him in an angry manner, loading him with insults and abuse, and entirely forgetting the respect due to him on so many accounts. Father Paul merely replied, with great gentleness and meekness, “Do you not see, brother, that he has been charitably assisted, not only during his illness, but even until he was perfectly recovered?” and was much more inclined to ask pardon than to reprove the man as he deserved.

It would be fitting to relate here those conversions of obstinate bandits and other criminals, whom Father Paul gained to God by prostrating himself very humbly at their feet, kindly caressing them, pressing them to his heart, and other actions full of charity and sweetness. But as

we have related them elsewhere, the reader can look them over again, to convince himself more completely that the most inflexible obstinacy was generally overcome by that most humble gentleness which Father Paul practiced so well, becoming daily more perfect in the exercise of this sweetness and mildness; for he knew by experience that harshness and undue severity disturb the peace of souls, trouble consciences, throw souls into dejection, and often even into despair, while meekness, patience, gentleness, and humility are like a sweet melody that tranquilizes the fiercest dispositions. They are like the whistling of a gentle breeze, in which the Spirit of the Lord is felt, Who invites souls that are burdened to take refreshment and repose in the bosom of His goodness.

CHAPTER XXXV

His Instructions and Maxims for the Acquisition of Holy Humility

The charitable Father did not wish to enjoy alone the treasures contained in humility, but desired that all might participate in them. He inculcated its practice to all, particularly to his Congregation and his good penitents. Almost in every letter addressed to his penitents, the servant of God recommends them to cast themselves down into their nothingness, to humble themselves to the dust before God, and with great earnestness to seek and to ask of God the precious treasure of holy humility. The more advanced his penitents were in prayer, the more did he inculcate this great annihilation.

“Be humble,” he writes, “for one little grain of pride is enough to destroy a great mountain of sanctity...”

In another, “God is pleased with those who are little, and who become as little children. He keeps them in His divine bosom and nourishes them with that divine milk of holy love, sweet as new wine, which inebriates those who drink it; but this is a holy drunkenness, which makes us become wiser...”

“Humility and self-contempt free us from delusions. I hear that Father Thomas has succeeded well in the exercise, therefore I beg you to give him good advice, that he may avoid vain-glory...”

He wished humility to be the test of good prayer. “We see,” says this spiritual master, “that this prayer produces effects and desires conformable to the state and vocation, therefore there is no fear of delusion provided that the consciousness of our own nothingness exists, and goes on increasing, to have nothing, to be able to do nothing, to know nothing. Ah! the deeper we penetrate, the more horrible nothingness we find to annihilate in the infinite all. An ‘N’ and an ‘A,’ these two letters contain all perfection.”

He teaches the same doctrine in another letter. “May the grace of the Holy Spirit be always with you. Yesterday, the 9th inst., I received your letter, dated the 6th of last September. In reply I tell you, first, that I rejoice that you have interior and exterior sufferings and humiliations, and I rejoice that they are dear to you; you begin to be a disciple of Christ. It is true that what you practice are only little drops of suffering, but even in these you must humble yourself greatly, considering that in comparison of the sufferings endured by the true servants of God, yours are nothing, much more if you weigh them in the scales of the holy Cross of our Savior. Remain, therefore, in your own nothingness. Second, prayer, which humbles the soul, which inflames it with love, and which stimulates it to virtue and to suffering, is never a delusion. Third, fly, as from a plague, from those satisfactions which puff up, which cause vanity, which make you think yourself to be something, for they come from the devil. Therefore thank God, Who gave you light to drive them away and to know them. The right remedy for avoiding these delusions is true humility of heart, contempt, to annihilate oneself, and fly into the strong tower of the side of Jesus, and there take shelter and ask for help. Fourth, the light in your understanding, you mention, which inflames your will, is suspicious if it causes vanity. Therefore, disregard the extravagance you name and place yourself in the Divine Presence with lively faith and affectionate attention, conceiving a most high idea of the Divine Majesty, humbling yourself as much as you can. If the devil makes any tumult, go on keeping yourself in annihilation by the remembrance of your sins, your miseries, not daring to advance, but remaining fixed in the knowledge of yourself, and then the devil will be deluded; but you must be faithful in doing as I tell you. St. Francis Borgia, before he entered upon his sublime contemplations, used to spend two hours in meditating on his own nothingness and misery. True consolations and light from God are always accompanied with profound humility, with such a knowledge of ourselves and of the Divine Majesty that the soul completely annihilates itself, and would cast itself down under

the feet of all. They cause also heavenly intelligence, though not always, peace, love, joy, the practice of virtue, and the love of grace...”

Writing in conformity with these great principles that were so deeply rooted in his heart, he says in another letter, “Let us remain in our nothingness and not arise till God lifts us up Himself. Oh, when God wishes to raise up a soul, what sweet violence does He offer! I say sweet, but so strong, that the soul cannot resist. Continue, then, the presence of God in pure faith, and remain in the knowledge and meditation of your own nothingness, of your sins, miseries, etc., as well as you can, leaving your soul always free to follow the sweet inspirations of the Holy Spirit. I add, that though it may seem to you that you rejoice in sufferings and contempt, make no account of this; for even in this the devil may be concerned to raise vanity in the soul. It is better to esteem your own feelings and understanding as nothing but to remain in fear and on your guard, thinking of nothing but of executing the Divine Will. The world is full of snares, the truly humble alone can avoid them. Do not trust to yourself; though you think that your prayer produces good effects, do not make yourself a judge in your own cause. Diffident in yourself, adore the great Father of Lights in spirit and in truth. Blessed is the man who is always timid and fearful. Thus is it written, “To do good, and to believe that we do nothing good is a sign of great humility; there are, however, first degrees of humility. He who knows himself thoroughly, and knows God, is truly humble of heart. May God grant this to all. Amen.”

“He who makes himself the least,” he says in another, “including great doctrines in a small space, shall be the greatest; he who annihilates himself the most, shall be most exalted, enriched, and shall have a more certain entrance into that great closet, into that great wine-cellar, into that royal apartment, from which we pass to the secret closet, where the spouse converses alone with her heavenly Spouse.”

In order that even defects and faults might be of use for the acquisition of virtue, he writes to a devout person, “If some dust of imperfection clings to your soul, be not disturbed, but burn and consume it in the fire of the love of God, humbling yourself and tranquilly repenting, but with a humble, strong, and hearty repentance, and then continue in peace.”

He was most anxious that all should preserve holy humility of heart, from which proceeds gentleness of disposition, mildness in conversation, interior peace, and every good gift. In recommending its practice, he explained himself by very well-chosen similes, that his maxims

might be better understood. "Imagine," he said, "that there is a great Lord, who, when at table with his friends, hears someone knock at the door with a great noise and with violence; he sends a servant to see who it is, and hearing that a poor man is so presumptuous, he is annoyed by his impatience and importunity and sends him away without an alms. Soon after another comes, who knocks at the door, but very modestly and humbly. Then the master says to the servants, 'Go to that poor man who asks charity so humbly and give him an alms.' The third comes and knocks so softly that he is scarcely heard, and the master sends him a good sum of money. Finally, a poor leper comes, who does not dare even to knock, but throws himself on the ground, waiting till the master sees him. The gentleman comes out of his house to go and amuse himself, and sees this poor leper. 'What are you doing, poor man?' he says, 'Why do you not ask charity?' 'Ah, sir,' replies the leper, 'you are so great and good a gentleman, and I am only a poor ragged man, covered with leprosy. Therefore, I do not dare even to speak.' The gentleman then calls his steward and says, 'See that this poor man is cured and clothed, and give him a pension for his life.'" Then, making the application, he said, "Thus our Lord acts with us; the more we humble ourselves in His sight, the more He enriches us with His divine graces, and this we must do, particularly when in prayer we find ourselves dry, desolate, and abandoned; then we must greatly humble ourselves before God, acknowledge our unworthiness, and ask with humility the help and assistance of the Divine Goodness, suffering with humble resignation all that it pleases Him to send us, and to permit that which is contrary to our wishes." He used another expressive simile for the same intention. "Imagine you see a sculptor who sends to the forest for a piece of wood to make a fine statue. The servants carry the wood to the shop, but in a rough and unformed state. The sculptor begins to smooth it, and takes, first the axe, then the plane, and lastly the chisel, and what does the wood do? How does it act? Certainly it does not resist, but allows itself to be carved till it becomes a beautiful statue. In this manner," he added, "the Divine Artificer works, Who, to remove from a soul her imperfections, wishing, as it were, to polish her, allows the devil to torment her by temptations, then tries and purifies her by aridity and desolations. If she has patience and longanimity in bearing these trials, she advances to perfection and becomes a beautiful statue, worthy to be placed in the gallery of heaven."

As it is very easy for him who receives honor and applause to take in them some vain complacency, which, the more pleasing it is to the palate of self-love, is so much the more

poisonous and hurtful to the soul, the wise Father, who had the salvation of his children at heart, watched diligently to find out if they abhorred, like true servants of God, the praise and approbation of men. If he ever perceived that anyone took pleasure in the honors that were rendered him, or other similar demonstrations, he did not fail to give him at once the antidote to the poison, that it might not gain an entrance into his soul. He advised him to make no account of such honors, but to love and greatly esteem holy humility. He removed from his mind the idea that he was holy, if he had conceived it. He forbade him to go into those places where he was esteemed and considered holy. Finally, as he ardently loved holy humility and the contempt of himself, he endeavored by advice, conferences, and letters to induce everyone to walk in '*a spirit of humility.*' On this account he was most averse from singularity and could not endure ostentation, which is the nourishment and incentive of pride, but wished each one to walk in the common way with fervor and exact fidelity.

His charity did not lose sight even of those who had abandoned him, after all the labor he had endured for them. In answering a person who, after leaving the Congregation, signed himself with some little ostentation in a letter addressed to Father Paul, Archpriest, Advocate, Theologian, he taught him in an ingenious way that he should glory only in the humility of Christ Jesus, subscribing himself Paul of the Cross, N. N. N., as if he meant to say: Paul of the Cross, who is nothing, who knows nothing, can do nothing, desires nothing, and wishes for nothing in this world but "Jesus Christ and the cross." This was all the wisdom that the servant of God practiced himself and taught others: to lead a hidden life in Jesus Christ and glory in contempt, insult, and in the Cross of our Divine Redeemer. This, to conclude in the words of this truly humble man, words full of learning, of spirituality, and of efficacy, this is a short method of becoming enriched with new and admirable gifts and graces, and of increasing in the love of God: namely, to behold with the eye of faith our own horrible nothingness, and as if terrified by the sight, to fly away '*to the inner desert,*' into the abyss of the Divinity, plunging therein our own horrible nothingness, receiving *passively* the divine inspirations, and with entire abandonment to God, allowing the Divine Majesty to carry on His divine work in the interior of the soul, in which '*the divine birth takes place.*' He who makes himself the most ignorant in this divine wisdom is most learned; here we understand, without understanding this, I say, because it cannot be explained. Oh, sacred ignorance, which makes us lose sight of all the wisdom and

greatness ‘*of this world,*’ learn in the school of the Holy Spirit the science and wisdom of the saints!

CHAPTER XXXVI

Of the Supernatural Gifts Granted by God to Father Paul, and First of the Gift of Prophecy

That light and power, which was granted by our Lord in such abundance to His first followers, and our great masters, by which they penetrated into the obscurity of the most hidden things, and worked great and astonishing miracles, though it continues to retain all its power of proving to every intellect the truth of our holy religion, yet the Divine Majesty deigns to renew the communication of His gifts, to grant His servants, even in times the farthest removed from that happy beginning, light to know and predict hidden things, and strength to work wonders, that by the goodness of their lives, that most pure religion, in whose bosom alone true and perfect virtue, as its unchangeable property, fructifies, increases, and is nourished, may receive an increase of heavenly splendor.

Our Lord was pleased to bestow gifts of this kind on Father Paul in abundance, as may be seen in the whole course of his life. Though he sought by every means to hide them, our Lord, for His greater glory, made them manifest and visible. Following the traces marked by the Divine Beneficence, since we have already spoken of the sublime virtues with which it adorned the soul of Father Paul, we will now speak of the gifts, *freely given*, which were bestowed upon him in great abundance. We will, in the first place, mention the gift of prophecy, which embraces the knowledge of hidden things, as well as the foresight of those which are to come. In both these ways, Father Paul possessed this great heavenly gift, as we have already witnessed in his life, and now we have to manifest it by a few facts, which we will select from a great number, for it would occupy too much time and space to relate them all. We have already observed how precious and true were the predictions made by him even at the time that he was living at Castellazzo. After he came to Monte Argentario, and in various places to which our Lord called him, while for many years he carried on the exercise of holy missions, the gift of prophecy was

often visibly manifested in him.

When he was at the Hermitage of Holy Mary of the Chain, near Gaeta, before he was a priest, some women had recourse to the servant of God, being in affliction because they had heard no news of their husbands who were on board ship; Father Paul desired them to return in three or four days for an answer. In the meantime, he and his companions offered up special prayers to God. The women returned, and Father Paul, with as much clearness as if he had seen it, told them that the ship, the sailors, and master had been in great danger of being taken and made slaves by the Turks, but that our Lord had liberated them, and that in four days more the ship would return to Gaeta, and the sailors would arrive safely at home. All this was perfectly true and was fulfilled according to the words of the servant of God.

Sigr. D. Fabbio Grazi, of Orbetello, the chief benefactor of our first retreat, was nearly at the point of death with a dangerous disease of the chest, which seemed to destroy every hope of life. He had received the last sacraments, was given up by the physicians, and seemed very unlikely to last much longer. His death being considered certain, a carpenter, named Joseph Buggiada, was ordered to make the coffin. Father Paul, being then at Orbetello at the house of the Grazi, was called to assist the dying man. In the morning, as Father Paul went to say Mass, he passed the carpenter's house, near that of the Grazi, and saw the coffin that was being made and asked for whom it was prepared. He was answered that it was for Sigr. D. Fabbio. Father Paul then said, "This time he will give a kick to this coffin." And, in fact, D. Fabbio recovered from that illness and survived a considerable time.

In the Monastery of Mount Carmel at Vetralla, in 1690, the disease and epidemic of tuberculosis gained an entrance, and several of the good nuns died of it. Every precaution was used to guard against the danger of infection, but several other nuns took it, and first one and then another died. During the infection of 1743, there were five or six nuns suffering from it, who all died in a few years of hectic fever, and the last, after an illness of several years, died in 1753. Everyone can imagine the affliction of these nuns, on account of the loss of their sisters, and of the fear that the disease might become general among the younger nuns, and that the monastery would fall into discredit, without the hope of anyone wishing to take the habit there. While they were in this fear and affliction, Father Paul went to give the exercises in that monastery, and being asked to pray that the convent might be freed from that infection, the

servant of God, moved with compassion on account of their affliction, exercised his charity, offered up prayers to God, and to gain more easily what he desired, had recourse to our Blessed Lady, who is the treasurer of all graces. On the second of July, the Feast of the Visitation, Paul sent for some water and blessed it with the relic of our Blessed Lady; he drank some of it, and desired all the religious to drink of it. Then he said with great resolution, “Be now at rest, this disease will not trouble you in the future; others will, but not this.” He added, “Fear not, subjects will not be wanting.” And, in fact, there have never been in the monastery fewer nuns than the appointed number, and sometimes they have been obliged to refuse those who wished to enter, not having any room. Phthisis, up to this time, has never shown itself in any religious, though there are in that monastery young nuns who have suffered daily from fevers, some for six, and some for about fifteen years, without, however, showing any symptom of consumption, as various physicians assert. What is more surprising is that when Father Paul made the prediction, there were actually in the monastery two nuns by names of Sister Teresa Margaret of the Most Blessed Trinity and Sister Figlia Maria of the Sacred Heart, both considered consumptive, or inclined to consumption since March of that same year. The first, Sister Teresa Margaret, had several times spit blood in quantities and was herself greatly afraid she should die of consumption, though she had drunk of the water blessed by the servant of God. Speaking to Father Paul, she made known her agitation, and he said, “You will die soon, but your death will be a sweet sleep;” and, in fact, on the last day of December, 1753, after the good nun had heard Mass and received holy communion, on returning to her cell, she felt herself attacked with fever, which was considered malignant. As the disease was judged to be very dangerous, she received the Holy Viaticum and all the sacraments. Being near her death, according to the servant of God’s prediction, she enjoyed great tranquility of soul and continually cried out, “*I will sing of the mercies of God forever. Come, Lord, and do not delay*” (Cfr. Ps. 30:13). By these and similar exclamations she testified her ardent desire of entering into that ocean of sweetness, of which she experienced a delicious foretaste. Turning to the infirmarian and the nuns who were present, she said joyfully, “The words of Father Paul are verified, when he said that my death would be a sweet sleep; quick, quick, I cannot wait longer!” After a short time, towards one o’clock, she died with the song of holy love on her lips, as the servant of God had foretold, and went to be united with her sweet Spouse, never again to be separated from Him. Father Paul was then at

Sutri, and was giving the exercises to the nuns in that convent, and without knowing of their death by any natural or ordinary means, he said to one of the nuns at Sutri, "A nun is dead at Vetralla, and she is now in Paradise." This nun, who heard it, wrote at once to a nun at Vetralla. The wonderful gifts of the servant of God were more clearly made known by the circumstances that regarded the happy nun, Sister Teresa Margaret, who died of something perfectly different from consumption, though she was threatened with and even attacked by it, and also by those relating to Sister Figlia Maria of the Sacred Heart, who still lives and enjoys excellent health.

Father Paul made a similar prediction in the convent of Farnese, to which he had gone to give the exercises. As he was hearing the nuns in the confessional, according to rule, a nun by the name of Sister Cecilia of the Heart of Jesus, then a novice, came to his feet. This poor religious, while she was making her noviceship, was attacked by a disease which soon became confirmed consumption. She had spit blood in quantities several times, she was eaten up by a slow fever which brought her nearer to the grave daily, and showed all the other marks of this incurable complaint. Deeply afflicted to see the way of her so greatly desired profession closed, she remained in this state six or seven months, till she was near the end of her novitiate. Father Paul, who had been informed by the nuns of her state and requested to persuade her to resolve on returning home, when she was in the confessional, said to her charitably, "My child, I have bad news for you; you must return home, for, with this complaint upon you, the nuns cannot admit you to your profession." The novice burst into tears, as she felt great regret at the idea of leaving religious life, and she said, to express the firmness of her resolution, "Oh, no, never!" Father Paul, touched with compassion for the fervent novice, then said, "Well, have faith, I will bless you." He then blessed her with his crucifix, told her to make the sign of the cross and anoint herself with oil from the lamp of the Blessed Sacrament, and assured her that she would be cured and would make her profession, and that she need not fear. That instant the fever ceased; from that time no more blood was seen. She recovered her health, made her profession, and for twenty years, that is, from the time the servant of God spoke to her till the day of the deposition to this fact, she has never again suffered from that complaint.

Not so favorable, though no less true and certain, was the prediction he made to a religious of another monastery about the year 1761. Father Paul went during Lent to give the exercises for the last time in the venerable Monastery of St. Lucy at Corneto, and as he knew that at the last

carnival the nuns had given a representation, he scolded them very much, because, as he said, it was very unbecoming of the spouses of Jesus Christ to dress themselves like men for a recitation. He told a nun, by name Mother D. Angela Roselia Ricci, who had taken part in the play, that in punishment she would suffer for a length of time great aridity of soul, as, in fact, it happened after the servant of God's departure, and the nuns used to repeat, "Father Paul spoke the truth." But as the punishment came after the exercises, the nun, perhaps, thought little of Father Paul's prediction when he spoke to her and had little fear of his reproofs. One morning when she entered the confessional, breaking through the usual order in going, without the servant of God knowing it from any religious, she was immediately asked whether she had made a resolution not to act a part in any representation? She answered at once, "Yes." "How is that?" said Father Paul, "When you have already prepared one for this year?" The religious was astonished, for it was most true that she had prepared another play, had copied out the first act, and distributed the parts to others who were to take them; and of all this she had not said a word to the servant of God, nor had the other nuns told him that this nun was then going in.

As we have here mentioned Father Paul's opinion with regard to plays acted in convents, it will be well to add what he wrote on this subject to the superioress of another monastery: "You have done extremely well to put an end to plays; and when such occasions happen, or any others that are hurtful to the soul, endeavor with great firmness to prevent the offense of God, without fearing tongues, and if persecution happens, remain in silence, recollected in God, dead to all things but God."

Father Paul predicted, with great firmness, that a certain secular priest, by name D. Antonio Calvasi, an ecclesiastic of great virtue, who lived and died at Rome in the odor of sanctity, would be able again to celebrate Mass. This good priest had lost the sight of both eyes, so that he could not distinguish any object. In this afflicted state, he was deprived of the consolation of saying Mass, which grieved him much. Being one day invited to dine with his friend, Sigr. Antonio Frattini, one of our kind benefactors, and meeting there on the same day Father Paul of the Cross, these two servants of God had no sooner met in the house of this gentleman, than they embraced one another with such affection, that they appeared to be friends of long standing, though they had never seen each other, nor met before. After these mutual embraces, they stood affectionately side by side, when suddenly Father Antonio fell on his knees at Father Paul's feet

and told him, with tears in his eyes, that from his blindness, he was no longer able to celebrate Mass, but wished Father Paul to bless him and pray for him, that God would again grant him his sight, that he might celebrate once more and then die in peace, if it pleased God. Father Paul, with great confidence, taking the crucifix and with his face inflamed like a fire, placed his other hand on Father Antonio's head, blessed him and said with great fervor and recollection, "Be of good courage, for you will say Mass to the honor and glory of the most Blessed Trinity, and of the Blessed Virgin." With still greater fervor, he repeated, "Yes, you will say it; you will say it." In fact, the day after this happy meeting, Father Antonio was taken to the Church of St. Rocco, where he used to celebrate Mass before he lost his sight, and going into the sacristy, told the sacristan he wished to celebrate Mass. The sacristan, knowing his misfortune, asked if he could see. Father Antonio answered, "God will look to it." The sacristan, more to satisfy the pious priest than anything else, presented the missal to him, and opening it, placed it before him, upside down. Father Antonio looked at it and soon perceived that it was upside down. He turned it, and immediately recovering the sight of the eye on the canon side, he celebrated holy Mass, and continued to celebrate it as long as he lived, saying the Mass of the Blessed Trinity and of our Lady, according to the dispensation obtained from the Pope.

Agatha Frattini was in great danger of death, from a sore throat, which prevented her from swallowing the least thing, and from uttering a word. She remained two days in this painful and dangerous state, when, through devotion to Father Paul, she wished to be visited by him and gave a sign of her wish as well as she could. No sooner did Father Paul receive the messenger in the hospital of St. John Lateran, than he went quickly to the house, and on arriving blessed her with great charity with the crucifix and the picture of the Blessed Virgin, and then, with great confidence, said, "The gathering will burst tonight," and repeated, with greater energy, "Yes, it will burst. Jesus and Mary will grant us this grace in their mercy." The prediction was fully verified. In the succeeding night the abscess in her throat burst and discharged such a quantity of matter from her mouth, that she felt greatly relieved. Though she was quite well, later in the same night, a second abscess burst during a fit of coughing, and then again a third, which discharged a great quantity from her mouth. At the close of the night she was quite well, as Father Paul had foretold. That night the servant of God, who was anxious for the cure of this pious lady, was watching in prayer for her.

To Sigr. Antonio Frattini, who was asking the prayers of the servant of God on undertaking a journey into Tuscany, he plainly said that he might go and our Lord would preserve him from all danger both in going and returning. This pious benefactor found out the efficacy of the servant of God's prayers, and the certainty of his prediction. On his way, he escaped the imminent danger of falling down a precipice, when the horses taking fright, rushed from the road towards the precipice. When they had reached its edge, the foremost horse, as if arrested by an invisible hand, stood still, trembling, and remained so till Antonio and his companions got out on the other side and sought a place of safety.

Many persons, to their great comfort, experienced the truth of the servant of God's predictions. The two young daughters of a poor mother had left her in the company of a bad man. The afflicted woman had recourse to Father Paul, and he assured her that the unfortunate girls were then at Ginevra, but they would return, as well as the man who, like a hellish vulture, had led them away, and that they would repent. All three returned before a month had elapsed, and in returning showed true signs of repentance, and gave afterwards in atonement for the scandal that edification which was required.

He foretold to Venturino Lucchetti of Terra di Vallerano, that his only son, whose life was despaired of on account of a putrid fever, would recover, and that he need not fear. When Venturino returned home, he found his son better, and in a few days he had the comfort to see him cured.

He predicted to Giovanna Maria Sbarra that her brother, Philip Sbarra, whom she had left at home ill of a quotidian fever, would recover, and that at her return home she would not find him in bed, but in the square. In fact, Giovanna Maria, on returning home the following day, did not find her brother in bed, asked where he was, and was told that he was out of doors quite well. Then speaking to her brother and asking how he had been cured, they found by comparing notes that at the precise time that his sister was speaking to Father Paul, Philip improved, became free from fever, had rested at night, and rose the next morning cured.

He predicted to Father John Mary of St. Ignatius, who, when a youth, came to ask the habit. He had for many years suffered from a violent disease in the eyes. Paul told him that he would suffer no more from it, saying to him with a joyful countenance, "Be joyful you will suffer no more." In fact, he suffered no more from it then and afterwards, and Father Paul himself

observed, when some years later he saw his eyes perfectly cured, “You have changed your eyes; they were very large before, and now they are natural.”

To Father Valentine of St. Mary Magdalene, who feared he should become useless through the rupture of a blood vessel in his chest when he was studying, and because he was subject to a vomiting of blood, Father Paul predicted with certainty that his illness was nothing, and added, “When I say anything for certain, believe that I know it; you are to be a missionary, and this is a trial from God.” And though the disease went on increasing, and with fever coming on, the medical man thought consumption would inevitably follow. Nevertheless, the religious now sees Father Paul’s words, which he confirmed also on another occasion, perfectly verified, for he occupies himself in missions without any inconvenience to his chest, however great may be his labors in preaching and speaking.

He foretold to Sig. D. Nicholas Costantini, canon of the cathedral of Corneto, our kind benefactor, that he would be cured of a tumor which had grown to great size in his left knee and kept him in bed with great suffering. Paul comforted him with these words, “Be of good courage, Canon, for on Friday, the day dedicated to the Passion of our Lord, you will be cured. But I tell you that the mission will not be for you this time, and you will rise from bed the day that we depart.” Everything happened as the servant of God said, and even on the Friday, when the pain was very much worse, Father Paul again reassured him, saying, “Canon, take courage, have faith, for you are cured.” Scarcely had Father Paul left the room, than the tumor burst, and the hard part of the flesh became detached of itself, matter and congealed blood coming away in great abundance. Father Paul was summoned again, and he exclaimed, “Long live faith! Did I not tell you that you were cured? Let us praise God.” From that time he went on improving, but he was not allowed to rise from bed till several days had elapsed, and when he did leave his bed, it was on the Monday, following that Sunday on which Father Paul ended his mission.

He foretold the cure of D. Joseph Suscioli, canon of the cathedral of Sutri, his intimate friend, who was in bed, suffering greatly from an accident that happened to him when he was going to pour out some wine into a glass at table. The neck of the bottle broke suddenly in his hand, and feeling the glass wound his wrist, he shook his hand intending to throw down the bottle, without perceiving that the string of the bottle was twisted round his finger. By the violent movement of his hand, he struck the bottle against the table and his wrist against the broken glass, which

caused a larger and more painful wound. The injury, becoming worse and worse, brought him at last near death, as the corruption from the wound extended up the arm and had almost reached the shoulder. The medical men tried various remedies; a painful wound had been made on the elbow to relieve it, and, in the course of the treatment, a whitish substance, as long as the hand, was extracted from the wound. The poor invalid, growing worse, received the Holy Viaticum. Father Paul went more than once to visit his sick friend, and one day, while he was still in this state, the servant of God entered his room an hour after the wound was dressed, and as he came in appeared joyful and said with a cheerful countenance, "What will my religious say, Canon, when they hear that you are cured?" He approached the bed, began to squeeze the wounded arm in various places, without the sick man suffering any pain, as was natural. Then, with great charity kissed the arm three times, in those parts where it was uncovered, and departed. The sister-in-law of the canon, who was present, confident that Father Paul had cured it, wished to unbind the arm, but the canon wisely opposed this, and would not allow anyone to do it but the medical attendant. Being called, he came at once, and having unbound the arm, pressed it in different parts, and saw three drops of matter issue from the wound. Observing it closely, he saw that the wound, which threatened to cause death, had been cured by skill much more efficacious than his own, because it was miraculous. The fingers of the hand which had been benumbed recovered power, and the following day the canon rose from bed, and, without applying any remedy except keeping his arm in a sling, by the advice of the physician, who would not be wanting in caution, the wound soon became perfectly healed. Thus, the religious of the Passion were full of delight to hear that one of our kindest and best benefactors was cured.

The special charity and the lively gratitude with which Father Paul regarded his benefactors made him pray for them with great fervor, and often obtain from God the desired effect, and foretell with supernatural light that they would recover their health. Besides the benefactors of whom we have spoken, we must here mention what happened to D. Pompeo Angeletti, a most charitable benefactor of all the poor, and especially of Father Paul and his Congregation. This old man was at Ceccano, had reached the age of eighty, and was leading his life '*in an upright old age*' when he was seized with a complaint in the chest, which gave great cause for fear because of his advanced age. His nephew, D. Charles Angeletti, afterwards secret chamberlain to Clement XIV, canon of St. Mary Magdalene, went to Father Paul, who was then at our retreat.

There he told him of his uncle's dangerous state and begged him to recommend him to God in his prayers. Father Paul answered that he would certainly recommend him to God, and added that he would not die that time. He then desired him to tell the sick man that he must remain in bed that day and the day following, but that on the third day he might get up, be shaved, and expect him, for he would dine with him. The message was given to the sick man, and through his high opinion of Father Paul, he felt sure of his cure. He obeyed the servant of God's order, remained in bed that day and the day following. On the third day he rose from bed free from fever, was shaved, and waited in expectation that Father Paul would dine with him. The servant of God went, and, with mutual consolation in this cure, these two friends met again, and from that time D. Pompeo remained in good health and survived nineteen years more, dying *full of good days*. Another time, Captain Angeletti, father of D. Charles, fell sick while Father Paul was at the Retreat of St. Angelo. D. Charles wrote to him, telling him of his father's serious illness, and the servant of God replied that he greatly regretted the illness of the venerable old man, for thus, with good reason, he called this pious and charitable benefactor – but exhorted him to keep up his courage, for he hoped that our Lord would restore his health that time. It was so. The captain recovered and lived several years longer. He was ill again in 1765, and the son, from his devotion and confidence in Father Paul's prayers, immediately gave him notice of it. The servant of God, who received light from heaven, could not answer as before, but wrote to D. Charles that he must be resigned to the Divine Will and be ready for any blow that might come from the loving hand of God. Therefore, he clearly understood that the death of his father was at hand. The captain died of that illness.

Father Paul was going to give a mission at Viterbo, when Count Peter Brugiotti, one of our benefactors, who had a great devotion to the Founder, came to visit him in the Retreat of St. Angelo. They began to talk of things regarding the mission, as it is believed, when, in the midst of the conversation, the servant of God suddenly said, with great eagerness, "Ah, Lord, do not permit such a thing in a person I love so much. You know that I did not desire to go to this mission!" The count was alarmed and began to fear that Father Paul was predicting the death of his father, then indisposed, whom the servant of God tenderly loved. He asked Father Paul if it were so. The servant of God answered, "No." The good missionary went to Viterbo and began the mission, and when he was preaching often uttered this exclamation, "Ah, Lord, do not permit

such a thing!” Another day, a little before the time he was to mount the platform, he left the house where he was lodging and met the count, who asked where he was going? “I am going,” said the servant of God, “to Bishop Abbati.” The count replied, “The bell has rung for the mission, you can go later.” “And, supposing he is not alive afterwards,” said Father Paul. “Now, I will go now; for I should not be in time afterwards.” He went at once to speak to the good prelate. As Father Paul left the bishop’s room, he was heard to say, “Oh, what a terrible misfortune, what a misfortune!” and in this affliction went to preach on death, perhaps to unite with the lesson Divine Providence was about to give. He was still preaching when a note was presented to him which told him that the bishop had been killed by an accident. The servant of God told the people of it, recommending to them the soul of their affectionate pastor. Partly from the suddenness of the accident, and partly from the sermon of the fervent missionary, who seemed to have wished to dispose the people to hear this news and to profit from his advice to be prepared for death, the whole audience burst into tears, and there was a general and an extraordinary commotion.

Father Paul foretold other deaths with that certainty which divine light gives. He was called one day to visit an archpriest who had a slight indisposition. He went, and as he entered the house, heard the bell which rings at mid-day. He knelt to recite the Ave Maria and the usual prayers, as is the pious custom of all good Christians, and at that time had an internal locution, in which God manifested to him that the archpriest’s death was very near, and that he must help him to prepare for his last passage and remove from him every hope that the trifling nature of the illness led him to cherish. The servant of God faithfully fulfilled the duty of ambassador of the Supreme and Divine Majesty, spoke to the archpriest with all possible charity and affection, and told him distinctly that he would die of that illness. A few days later the archpriest died.

When Father Paul was giving the exercise in a Capuchin convent at Farnese, as he was preaching one day, kneeling on the altar steps, he suddenly cried out, “Oh! you that are sleeping, in a few days you will die.” A nun was actually asleep, but naturally could not be seen by Father Paul. After the sermon, the exercises being over, the servant of God went to Ischia. The nun fell sick, and the others sent for Father Paul to come back to the convent; he at once replied that it was God’s will this nun should die. A few days later, she did die.

Father Paul, being in Rome about 1761 or 1762, was called by the coachman of the

Angeletti, in whose house he was residing, to visit his sick wife, who for five years had been confined to her bed from the effects of a humor which, on account of remedies used at a wrong time, had entered into her system. When he reached her room with her husband, he told her with other good advice that in her pains she must have recourse to God and repeat His holy name, a name of virtue and of salvation. As the woman in her impatience sometimes named the devil, she thought her husband had told this to Father Paul, but in truth the man had said nothing about it, as he assured his wife, when she gave him a look as if to reproach him. From the esteem this woman felt for Father Paul, and from the holy words with which he comforted her, she took courage to ask him to intercede with our Lord for her cure, or at least, for the grace of being able to communicate in the church. As for her cure, Father Paul answered, that she must not think about it, for our Lord intended this illness to be her purgatory, but that He would grant her the grace to go to communion in the church the following Sunday. Having encouraged her to recommend herself to God, and to think continually of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ, he left her. But the husband could not understand how his wife would be able to do this, since even for the short time that it required to make her bed, she was obliged to be lifted by four persons and placed on a chair. Following Father Paul, he asked him what he thought of his wife's state. He answered that her disease could not be cured, and that on the eve of our Lady of Mount Carmel she would die, ordering him not to say a word about it to her for fear of alarming her too much. All took place as Father Paul had foretold. The following Sunday, having recommended herself to God, she rose up, dressed herself, and without any inconvenience, went to the Church of Our Lady the Liberatrix, to perform her devotions. After she reached home, as if her pains had allowed her a short respite that she might communicate in the church, according to the servant of God's prediction, she felt herself again attacked by them, and they continued without much change the whole week. The 15th of July, the eve of our Lady of Mount Carmel, arrived, and the husband remembering Father Paul's other words, went home several times to see how his wife was, but found her always much the same, without any great increase of her disease or any symptom of approaching death. "In the evening of that day," as he adds in his deposition, "when I returned home, I found that her illness had become worse, insomuch that she had received Extreme Unction, and becoming worse and worse, she died about midnight," exactly verifying the servant of God's prediction.

In 1761 or 1762, the servant of God wrote to Father Thomas Struzzieri, who was then at Corsica, as theologian to Bishop de Angelis, that Almighty God, irritated by the grievous sins committed by Christians, was preparing a severe chastisement to punish their offenses against Him. The two following years a scarcity of wheat prevailed throughout a great part of Italy, by which many persons died of hardship and hunger.

Many years before the prophecy was verified, Father Paul foretold that the church and house of Sts. John and Paul would be given to him, and the event took place as follows. The servant of God, being in Rome for the affairs of his Congregation, went one day to St. Pantaleo ai Monti, to meet D. Thomas Struzzieri, and then devoutly ascended with him the Santa Scala. Having taken the road that leads to St. Gregorio, they made the little ascent of Monte Celio to reach Sts. John and Paul. When they had reached the top, Father Paul asked Father Thomas what church and house that was? Father Thomas answered that the church was dedicated to St. John and St. Paul, and that the house belonged to the Fathers of the Mission³, who had their novitiate there. Then Father Paul, almost as if in a rapture, began to exclaim, "O God! My house, my house; it is to this house that I am to come, to remain." Neither Father Thomas nor D. Francesco Casalini, his friend, to whom he confided what had happened, could imagine to what Father Paul's words alluded. But when the church and house of Sts. John and Paul were given to the servant of God and to his poor Congregation by Clement XIV, of holy memory, it was made known by what light the servant of God spoke, and the truth of his prediction was manifested, and much more clearly, when, after his death at the Retreat of Sts. John and Paul, his venerable corpse was placed in the church itself.

With the same clearness, Father Paul more than once predicted the state of life which different persons were to embrace or the degree of perfection which our Lord destined for them. We will relate a few facts, and omit all the others which do not seem necessary after all that has been said of the gift of prophecy. When the servant of God passed through Civita Castellana, or remained there, he was charitably entertained by Dr. Ercolani, our kind benefactor, among whose daughters there was one, named Elizabeth, whom Father Paul used to call his little nun, though the child was only about seven or eight years of age at that time. The child disliked that name very much, as she had a great horror of the religious state, and she resolutely replied, "It is of no use to call me that, for a nun I will not be." The servant of God, laughing, asked her why she

would not be a nun, and she answered, "Because I wish to stay with my mother." The servant of God said, "Yes, for now." But the child, more firm in her idea, answered, "I will always stay with her." When Father Paul had departed, Elizabeth, through the esteem she felt, even at that tender age, for the servant of God, began greatly to fear that his words were a true prediction; she began to cry and said to her mother, "You will see, Father Paul tells me this because I am to be a nun." Her mother, accommodating herself to the weakness of that age, comforted her, saying, "I do not wish it, you shall not do so," and the child, taking courage from these words, said, "Say always that you do not like it, and then I cannot be a nun." Thus, she comforted herself. Once, however, it seems, the servant of God took from her every hope of remaining at home, for, calling her, as usual, the little nun, her pious mother said to Father Paul, "How do you think she can be a nun, when she is always ill?" The servant of God replied, "Be tranquil, Mamma will take care of it," for thus he named our Blessed Lady out of tender affection. The little girl who was present, greatly disturbed, answered, "But I will not be a nun." The servant of God, holily jesting with the innocent child, said, smiling, "Do not be afraid that they will make you prioress; you are too little." The child was not persuaded that she could embrace that state, nor was she freed from her aversion to the religious life, but retained her repugnance till she was nineteen years of age. In the meantime, our Lord, who disposes all things *'powerfully and gently,'* caused the infirmities from which she suffered to increase greatly. Her mother, despairing of human remedies, took her to Rome to visit a picture of our Blessed Lady, which, under the name of our Lady of Carmel, is venerated at the Arco di Costaguti. During this visit, the young girl was freed from all her pains, and at the time of her cure, our Lord gave her a vocation to the religious state, and thus the servant of God's words, "Mamma will take care of it," were verified. It is true, that after three months she was again attacked by her pains, but this very circumstance proved more clearly the prophetic spirit in which Father Paul had spoken. Though the devout young lady suffered from all her other pains, she never again suffered from that which had been the greatest, and which would certainly have prevented her from taking the habit. To follow the interior voice of her vocation, she entered the venerable Monastery of our Lady of Mount Carmel at Vetralla, and made known her ardent desire to be received by these excellent religious. But these good mothers had a difficulty on account of the habitual delicacy of the postulant. Father Paul, going to the monastery for the profession of a nun, sent for Elizabeth Ercolani, through the prioress,

and when the young girl came into the servant of God's presence, he said, "Child, how are you? Do not be afraid, you will live and die in the religious habit." Then striking the threshold of the grate with his hand, he said, with great firmness, "You will be a nun here." In fact, at the end of the year, on the very day of the prediction, she took the religious habit in that venerable monastery, as Father Paul had predicted. He also foretold in that prediction that she would be able to follow the Rules and Constitutions, which was also verified. For, notwithstanding her indispositions, which still exist, the nun, who now bears the name of Sister Maria Vittoria of the Holy Ghost, has always been able to follow the community practices in wearing woollen clothing, in partaking of the common food, in attending the choir, and in similar observances, which might appear beyond her strength. This she has continued for sixteen years. When, on account of any greater indisposition, she enjoys those privileges which are charitably granted to every other on such occasions. It has been observed that she never recovers her health as before until after some time she leaves off remedies and returns to the regular Rule of the community.

The servant of God made other predictions, which, from the certainty with which he spoke, and from their perfect fulfillment, show with what light he foresaw what he said. But for brevity's sake we pass them over, and add only one more of this kind, which, from its particular circumstances merits to be related. This was made to Sister Maria Crocifissa, now a nun of the Passion, and superioress of the monastery under the invocation of the Presentation of our Blessed Lady, founded at Corneto.

There was in Rome a certain Canon Carboni, who held a canonry at Evora in Portugal. Being an ecclesiastic of charity and zeal, he was trying to found a monastery under the title of our Lady of Sorrows, and kept up for this purpose a correspondence with Sister Maria Crocifissa Costantini, then a nun in the Monastery of St. Lucy at Corneto, as he wished to make use of her as foundation-stone of the holy work, which he was contemplating. It appeared likely that the negotiation would soon come to an end and the monastery be founded. In the meantime Sigr. Domenico Costantini, brother of Sister Maria Crocifissa, going to Rome in 1751 or 1752, went to visit this good canon, who told him that he had already obtained from Benedict XIV, of holy memory, all the necessary faculties for opening the monastery, showed him the house prepared for this purpose, and added that he would himself go to Corneto, or send someone else, to bring with all due care and convenience, the nun, Sister Maria Crocifissa, place her in the monastery,

and thus begin the foundation. Sigr. Domenico returned to Rome and Father Paul soon after came to his house. As he had directed Sister Maria Crocifissa in the way of God, he inquired of her from her brother. Sigr. Domenico answered that they should soon lose her, because she was going to found a monastery in Rome. The servant of God then said at once, "I know Canon Carboni very well, and he will do nothing in the work he is now contemplating at Rome." "How so," said Sigr. Domenico, "for all is arranged; the house is ready, the necessary permissions have been obtained, and he expects that in a few days the new Office of our Lady of Sorrows will come out, according to the petition which has been made." "Well," answered the servant of God, "I say again, that this affair will fall to the ground, and Sister Maria Crocifissa will not leave Corneto, but will remain for a work that I have to do." Sigr. Domenico, astonished at these words, told his sister what had passed with Father Paul, and she replied, "I have given my word to that worthy gentleman, and I cannot retract my promise." But it was soon seen with what light the servant of God spoke, for the canon was summoned to Portugal, and thus the affair of his monastery was terminated. It was not, however, understood for what work Father Paul wanted Sister Maria Crocifissa. At that time Sigr. Domenico had no thought of founding a monastery, which he did afterwards. He had a young brother, a secular, who, he thought, ought to embrace the married state in order to have children and keep up the family. He therefore thought of procuring for him an honorable settlement, promising to leave to any children he might have the inheritance of their common patrimony. This brother, however, being carried away by sudden death, and every hope of succession being thus at an end, Sigr. Domenico began to think of founding a monastery of nuns of the Sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he did at last, after spending much time and labor in accomplishing it. When the monastery was finished, another part of the prophecy was fulfilled. Sister Maria Crocifissa, as Father Paul had long before foretold, and afterwards on various occasions confirmed, was one of the nuns, a special indult having been obtained from Clement XIV to allow her to pass from the Monastery of St. Lucy to that of the Passion, where she was also elected superioress.

We will close this chapter with the prediction that Father Paul made of the exaltation of Clement XIV to the supreme pontificate. The servant of God had never known by sight, nor spoken to, Cardinal Ganganelli, when in 1766 he had for the first time the honor and the consolation of paying him a visit in Rome, during which he was so much delighted and edified

with his virtues, and had at the same time so clear a light regarding his exaltation, that on leaving the audience he said to his companion, “Oh, he will be Pope.” When he returned to the place where he was staying, which was the house of the Angeletti, our benefactors, he said more explicitly: “Ganganelli will not finish thus. This cardinal will not stop here, he will go farther, *‘arising higher.’*” He several times repeated this and added that he hoped he would greatly benefit his poor Congregation. In 1767, the servant of God, again returning to visit the cardinal, told him frankly what our Lord in His exalted designs intended to make of him. The cardinal, as Father Paul’s companion, a priest who was present, attests, replied smiling, “We always wish to have things according to our own way.” The cardinal, through his great condescension, went to the Hospital of our Lord Crucified to visit Father Paul, who was confined to his bed by a fluxion in his legs. After he had remained some time conversing devoutly and cheerfully with Father Paul, before he left, as a mark of his tender regard, he affectionately embraced the servant of God, saying, “Father Paul, I should like to do something for your Congregation.” Father Paul, then, with great energy and fervor, replied, “The time will come, my Lord Cardinal, and you will do it.” Bishop Charles Angeletti, when he heard that Father Paul had said this, believed that he had predicted the pontificate to him, and from that time felt firmly convinced of it, as he himself attested to Clement XIV, when he was raised to the pontifical chair. Being asked one day by His Holiness if he had imagined that the choice would fall upon him, he frankly replied, “Yes,” because he remembered what Father Paul had predicted.

On several other occasions the servant of God, speaking according to the interior light God gave him, frankly said what our Lord put in his heart. But when, after the death of Clement XIII, the cardinals met in conclave, Father Paul explained himself distinctly to his confessor, and said that when he had said to Cardinal Ganganelli, “The time will come, my Lord Cardinal,” he had spoken with an extraordinary impulse and with supernatural light. When the Holy See was vacant, the servant of God prayed, and procured prayers, that the will of God might be accomplished in the exaltation of the Sovereign Pontiff, and it was then understood by those who did not know it before, that he had knowledge of the future election and exaltation of Cardinal Ganganelli. In order to be ready to go to Rome immediately after the election, Father Paul said to Sigr. Romano Tedeschi of Ronciglione, with that confidence which he felt, “You, who are at Ronciglione, by which the couriers pass, if you hear that Ganganelli has been made a Pope, send

a chair for me, for I wish to go and kiss his feet.” In the meantime, Sigr. Antonio Cenci of Capranica came to our Retreat of St. Angelo, of whom Father Paul asked the news from Rome and who was considered likely to be Pope. Antonio replied that reports favored Cardinal Stoppani. The servant of God said with a smile, “Oh, no, no; you will see Ganganelli, Ganganelli.” This was a month before the election of the Pope. There came also from Rome to the same retreat, Father Joseph Hyacinth of St. Catherine, one of our religious, for the General Chapter then at hand. Going directly to ask Father Paul’s blessing, he was asked by him: “What is said in Rome regarding the election of the new Pope?” The religious replied that Cardinal Stoppani was likely to be elected. “Oh, no,” said Father Paul, “he will not be Pope.” “Who then will be?” said the other. “Ganganelli,” was the reply. “How does your reverence know that Ganganelli will be Pope?” The servant of God looked serious, and like one who is recollected in God, said, “I know it, I know it for certain, as certainly as I hold this handkerchief in my hand.” He had reason to say so. As he afterwards said to his confessor several times, that he received clearer lights than he had about the foundation of the Congregation. As he said, he considered it as certain as a thing he held in his hand, through the light that our Lord gave him interiorly.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Of His Discernment of Spirits

The discernment of spirits, of which the Apostle St. Paul speaks to the Corinthians, is a supernatural gift, by which, penetrating with extraordinary and marvelous light into the interior of hearts, a right judgment is formed of consciences to guide and regulate them well. Father Paul possessed this gift, and it was manifested in him, even when he was a youth, as had been seen and as may be seen in many other facts of which we are about to relate a few.

When he was at the Hermitage of the Our Lady of the Chain, near Gaeta, there was in that town a married woman, who profess spirituality and was generally considered to be holy. It was said that she was constantly in prayer, and that she received from God and from our Blessed Lady singular favors and even extraordinary visits. Her director, as well as others, had a high opinion of her, but the servant of God, having heard and examined her with the attention that was

required, decided that she was deluded. It was seen after some time, that he spoke through the spirit of God, for it was clearly manifested that the woman was miserably deceived. Before Father Paul had any knowledge of Sigr. D. Luigi Pennacchioni, he, who was afterwards a priest, went, as he himself attests, to see Paul with some companions, Leonardo Ercolani, Dionisio Dionisi, and an ecclesiastic named Luca Dari. To each of them he manifested, in private, secrets which were hidden in their interior, and which were of great importance, penetrating to the knowledge of them by the light God gave him. He did the same, as the same witness asserts, for some women, discerning what was shut up within their hearts.

Among his religious, the Founder so clearly and so many times penetrated the hidden secrets of their souls, and for their advantage declared them to them, that some of them dared not appear before him if they had committed any fault, even secretly, for fear he might have seen them in the same manner as Eliseus saw Giezi. Many other most worthy ecclesiastics and seculars of great integrity attest that they have known from their own experience this great gift in Father Paul.

A gentleman, during the time he was governor of Toscanella, was perplexed about a case which he had to bring before the Tribunal of Rome. On one side he would not betray truth and justice, and on the other, fearing that the information, without great caution, might ruin two principal families of the town, was inclined to give it with some reserve, without injuring truth or justice. After reflection, this seemed to him the better way. Not to err, however, in so important an affair, he desired the advice of some servant of God, and confiding his intention to Dr. Federico del Bene, he advised him to go to Father Paul, who was then at the Retreat of Our Blessed Lady at Cerro, three miles from Toscanella, and offered to accompany him. They went together, and when they arrived, found the servant of God seated at the feet of the crucifix which he used to carry with him on missions. As soon as he saw them, he said, "You are welcome, Governor; do as you have determined regarding you know what, and it will be well for all." The governor and the physician were greatly astonished at this speech and understood well that Father Paul had, with supernatural light, penetrated into a secret which he could not know by human means. They conceived a greater esteem for him, and this went on increasing when the governor saw that by following the advice received in so extraordinary a manner from Father Paul everything succeeded happily.

It was of more frequent occurrence that Father Paul, by supernatural light, knew the sins of those who confessed to him before they spoke. A good ecclesiastic, canon of a cathedral, being ill in 1749, wished to make a general confession to Father Paul, who was then at his house. The servant of God began to assist him with great charity, and that the confession might be easier to the penitent, Father Paul told him to do nothing but answer yes or no, for he would make his confession himself. In effect, besides suggesting to him all that he had done and committed, in some things he did not put the question, but said with confidence, "You have done this." It was precisely as the Servant of God said.

Father Paul also revealed to a countryman, who was confessing to him a great sin he had committed. He went to the Retreat of St. Angelo, with a letter from his master, to make a good confession to Father Paul. The servant of God received him kindly, began to hear him, and told him, without troubling himself, it would suffice for him to answer sincerely the questions he put to him. The peasant was not satisfied with this offer, but replied that for his comfort he wished to say what he remembered, for in his examination he had employed fifteen days. Father Paul, therefore, with great patience allowed him to say what he wished. The man finished speaking as if nothing else remained. Then Father Paul began to say to him, "The sin that you committed in the bushes at Fallari, in such a year, and on such a day, pointing out the precise time and repeating it three times. At these words the peasant, terrified, began to tremble seeing himself before a man who so deeply penetrated into his interior by the light of God and perceived that sin, which he had not remembered. But, encouraged by the servant of God's charity, he completed his confession and felt great consolation and peace of heart.

The good Father embarked one day at Santo Stefano to go to Piombino in the royal sailing ship, commanded by Captain Michele Fanciullo, and through an adverse wind, not being able to reach Piombino that evening, the sailing ship touched the ground in a bay called Torre della Troja in the States of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. When arrived there the servant of God preached a long sermon to the sailors and said among other things, "I do not know how it is that Almighty God has not caused us all to be drowned in the sea, for on board there is a sailor who has not been to confession for seven years." At these words, animated by great zeal, the sailors and the master were all terrified, but no one made himself known to be the person of whom the servant of God had spoken, though each one reckoned up the accounts of his own conscience.

The following morning they arrived at Piombino, and the master and the sailors would wait no longer to go to confession. All, one after the other, made their confessions to Father Paul. It was not known then of whom Father Paul had spoken, and this man, who had the greatest need of healing his wounds with the balm of confession, after his confession, told his companions that Father Paul had penetrated his heart and discovered his interior, for he was the unhappy man that had not been to confession for seven years.

When Father Paul was preaching during the missions, he several times, in the fervor of preaching, turned to one side and, pointing with his staff to one particular spot, said, "I see you; while I am preaching penance, you are offending God." Each time that Father Paul said this, it was known afterwards that a wicked young man was making love precisely on the spot pointed out by the heavenly light of the fervent missionary, though he could not have seen him.

During his last illness, an ecclesiastic in holy orders came to the Retreat of Sts. John and Paul, wishing to speak alone with the servant of God. He was introduced by a religious, and after he had spoken to the servant of God, "I saw him," says the same religious, "leave Father Paul's room very much mortified. He called me aside and asked me, 'Tell me who is this Father.' I answered that it was Father Paul, our Founder. 'But he is a saint,' he replied, 'for he has told me things that have astonished me; he has the spirit of prophecy. Oh, what a saint he is!'"

To complete what belongs to the discernment of spirits, it would be proper here to say how greatly the servant of God was assisted by our Lord in forming a just and wise judgment of the consciences he directed. Of this we have elsewhere spoken and have caused the reader to observe the great profit drawn by souls from following the counsels of Father Paul and giving themselves, under his direction, to the exercise of holy prayers in which this servant of God was so sublime a master.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Of the Miracles Wrought by God Through the Intercession of Father Paul

Our Lord, who alone has the power of working things that are really miraculous, "*who alone works great marvels*"(Cfr. Ps. 136:4), delights also in working them by means of His beloved

servants, and making His power wonderful in His saints, “*God is wonderful in his saints*” (Cfr. Ps. 67:36), deigned in these latter times to work by means of Father Paul of the Cross singular graces and prodigies. We, for the edification of the devout reader, will relate a few of them here, without again mentioning those which we have related in the course of this history, leaving the others which have been deposed to in the Processes, by which we perceive clearly that from youth he was favored by God with the gift of working miracles.

When Father Paul was at the Hermitage of St. Anthony on Monte Argentario, a poor man went one day to see him, whose hands and part of his face were covered with a loathsome disease, like a leprosy, to recommend himself to the servant of God to be cured. Father Paul gave him his blessing, after which he went back to his house at Portercole. He slept quietly that night, and the next morning found himself perfectly well, without knowing what had become of the scabs of his loathsome and troublesome disease.

Sigr. Antonio Danei, an ocular witness, deposes that being once with his brother, Father Paul, at Naples, the servant of God blessed a sick man, already given up by the physicians, in the street of Santa Lucia, and the blessing was so efficacious that the next morning it was made known, contrary to all expectation, that the sick man was cured.

When the servant of God was making the visitation at our retreat at Terracina, a priest named D. Giuseppe Pontecorvo of Sonnino in the Diocese of Piperno, who for nine years had been infected with an obstinate and most troublesome disease, resembling leprosy, was taken to him. The poor priest came, assisted by two persons to enable him to walk. When brought before Father Paul, he explained his pitiable state and said that after many remedies his disease continued to trouble him greatly, and it did not allow him to rest nor to take necessary support and nourishment. Father Paul, desiring in him, above all things, an increase of virtue and perfection, counseled him to have recourse to God, our true physician, and to bear with patience the disease that afflicted him. Then placing his hand on the priest’s breast, he touched the diseased part with his hand and blessed him. D. Giuseppe returned home to Sonnino, and, on merely scratching, the crusts of disease with which his body was covered fell off at once, and at that time he was freed from the complaint without suffering any more from it.

A religious and priest of our Congregation, named Father Cosimo, who is now dead, was some years ago at the Retreat at Vetralla, when a tumor, or swelling, of extraordinary size

appeared on his knee. Sig. Girolamo Cosimo, a medical man of great skill and greater charity, was called to make every effort to save him. Every remedy was tried, but in vain, to reduce the tumor. It was resolved to make use of the knife. The evening before the day fixed for the operation, Father Paul went, as was his custom, to visit the religious. Having entered his room, Paul desired to see the tumor, and moved with compassion for the sick man, who greatly dreaded the knife, made over him, with his thumb, the sign of the cross. The tumor, though immensely large, and of an obstinate kind, suddenly disappeared. The surgeon came the next morning to use the knife. Having unbound the knee, he found it cured and the swelling gone down. At this sight, full of wonder, he said, "There is nothing here; what has happened?" His wonder ceased when he knew that Father Paul had cured him with a superhuman remedy.

In the city of Orbetello, Sig. D. Atanasio Grazi was in bed, ill of gout, when Father Paul, having to go from Monte Argentario into the town, went as usual to the sick man's house. Having entered the apartment to pay him a visit, he told him at once that he would get better. Approaching the bed, Paul made the sign of the cross on the painful foot with the thumb of his right hand and the sick man was instantaneously cured and rose from bed immediately.

We will here relate another cure, wrought by Almighty God by means of Father Paul, in the same house of the Grazi at Orbetello, in favor of a person whom, with holy charity, he had previously induced to practice holy prayer and to lead a recollected life in union with God. As her own words in her deposition are very expressive in their simplicity, we will hear them from her own mouth: "I was in bed, seriously ill of dropsy on the chest, and having been given up by the physician Dr. Giacinto Pippi, Father Paul came to my room to visit me. He asked me how I was, and if I wished to recover. I answered that I was very ill, and regarding my recovery, I said that I resigned myself to the will of God. Then Father Paul raised the crucifix which he wore on his breast, told me to sign my chest with it, and then left immediately. I did as he told me, and immediately felt as if my chest opened. I was that moment perfectly cured, and I said, 'I am cured.'" She was, in fact, perfectly cured, and the pious lady who gave this testimony still lives. She was obliged, however, by her family, through excessive caution, to remain in bed two or three days longer, without any necessity, as she herself added.

We must not omit a wonderful cure wrought by God, through the merits of His servant, and attested by a great bishop, Palombella, Bishop of Terracina, a prelate of great learning and piety,

who made no difficulty in writing to Father Paul himself in these terms: “Sig. Grattinara recommends himself to your prayers. He had a young daughter ill, and having recommended herself to God, she recovered immediately by the application of one of your letters. ‘*To the greater glory of God.*’”

When Father Paul went to Arlena, a little place in the Diocese of Montefiascone, to give a mission, he found there a married woman, by name Girolama Ricci, who for three years had been afflicted with such great deafness that she was not only prevented from hearing conversation, but even the sound of the bells. The poor woman was very wishful to be cured from her troublesome deafness, and the more so because her husband tormented her with reproaches. One night when Father Paul was leaving the church, she followed him, and, encouraged by her faith, took the servant of God’s cloak and touched her ear with it. Father Paul, who was always on the watch to preserve the treasure of holy humility, perceiving what the woman had done, said to her reprovingly, “Now what have you gained?” But it was of no use for the servant of God to seek to hide the miracle which God wrought by his means, for the woman that moment was perfectly freed from her deafness.

Maria Maddalena Bruzzesi, of Caprarola, in the Diocese of Civita Castellana, had suffered in 1767 for more than a year from a serious illness, judged to be tuberculosis, because, besides fever, she had a cough and a continual spitting of blood. Seeing all natural remedies useless, she had recourse to Father Paul, who was then at the Retreat of St. Angelo. Going to that solitude with her sister Vittoria, she recommended herself to the servant of God with great fervor to obtain by his prayers the health she desired. Father Paul, with his fervor and words inflamed with holy charity, encouraged her to confide firmly in the Divine Mercy, and before she left, gave her two little pieces of cake, that she might eat them on her return home. The woman, on her arrival at home that evening, ate the cakes to obey with all simplicity the servant of God, who cured her with supernatural and heavenly skill. She then went to rest, and that night, a thing unusual to her since she had been attacked with that malady, she slept very tranquilly, whereas before, all her nights were uneasy. She rose in the morning, and feeling a great tendency to cough, began to cough and to spit blood again. After spitting a quantity of blood, she felt as if something became detached in her chest, and then spit from her mouth something like a stone, scarcely less than a nut, and afterwards was free from fever and from the other symptoms of that dangerous illness,

from which she has never suffered since. The invalid, being relieved from her sickness, showed the stone she had thrown up to a physician in Caprarola. Telling him all that had happened, the physician said, "Some saint must have prayed for you, for, without a miracle and a special grace, this could not have happened." Thus was the faith of this devout woman rewarded.

A girl named Gertrude, daughter of Domenico Ruggieri of Sutri, aged ten or eleven years, showed also a most lively faith in Father Paul's merits, and received in recompense the grace she desired. This little girl had a disease which for more than a year had tormented her in her right hand. The surgeon of that town, and another from Ronciglione, after trying every remedy, had given up the case as desperate. The poor little girl suffered greatly, but obtained neither a cure nor relief. The pain increased daily, and she felt corresponding pains, chiefly in the side and in the right shoulder. Her mother, pitying the innocent child, exhorted her to have confidence in Father Paul, and to have recourse to him when he came to Sutri, that he might bless her with the sign of the cross. When Father Paul came to Sutri, the woman with her little girl went to him and begged him to bless her hand. The saintly Father did so with a relic he had with him, and exhorted the little girl to have patience and trust in God. The child, not content with the benediction, ran after Father Paul to obtain something which he had used. Though the servant of God was surrounded with a crowd of devout persons, who flocked to see him and kiss his hand, she found means to penetrate through them all, approached him, and in the act of kissing his cloak, fixed her teeth in it and brought away a good piece. Delighted with her pious theft, she ran joyfully home, made her mother unbind the hand, put the piece of cloak upon it, and then had it bound again. After two days she told her mother that the hand pained her. "Be quiet, child," said the mother, "for Father Paul is curing you." In effect, the hand was unbound and found free from swelling, with the wound healed and also pliable and free to be moved about in any way. The mother and daughter, greatly delighted, acknowledged the cure to proceed from the servant of God's intercession. The mother said to her, "You see, child, that Father Paul has cured you." Her mother exhorted her to say daily a Pater and Ave in memory of the benefit received by means of the servant of God. The child answered that she would, and from that time began and continued to say it. If sometimes she failed to recite it, she felt at night, after going to bed, a pricking in the hand, as if for a warning and reproof of her forgetfulness. With all simplicity she said to her mother on such occasions, "Feel my hand prick." When asked by her mother if she had said the

Pater and Ave and perceiving her fault at once, said: “Ah, poor me! I have forgotten it.” Deferring no longer to remedy her failing, she recited the Pater and Ave and was speedily freed from the pricking she felt.

Signora Anna Amati, a widow at Falvaterra, in Veroli, had a son who was greatly troubled with a serious rupture. When Father Paul was for the last time making the visitation at the Retreat of St. Sosio, near Falvaterra, the pious woman carried him to the servant of God, trusting that by giving him his blessing, he would cure him. In fact, after being blessed by Father Paul, the son was immediately freed from his malady. Signora Teresa Spagnoli, now dead, wife of Sig. Vincenzo Mattia of Terracina, perceived in her left breast a tumor, which was judged to be cancerous, and she was obliged, to her great suffering, to submit to treatment for it. After various remedies, it was judged expedient to use the knife. That she might have better assistance, her husband took her to Rome and put her into the hands of excellent surgeons. After various consultations the knife was used, and after a long course of treatment, she did not recover perfect health, but felt some relief. But on her return to Terracina, she was, after some time, attacked with another tumor, as large as an egg, in the right breast. The poor lady was in great sorrow and affliction. She wished to conceal it from her husband, for fear of grieving him, but, by the wise advice of her confessor, resolved to make it known to him. For the happiness of this pious lady, Father Paul was then at our Retreat of our Lady of Sorrows, near Terracina, and having recourse to him with confidence, she made known her malady and her affliction. He heard her, and then said, “Signora Teresa, say nothing about your malady to anyone.” He then blessed her and sent her home full of confidence. After her departure, Father Paul said to his companion, who was present all the time, “This is a great misfortune, but I hope she will be freed from it.” On her return home she was freed from all pain in the part affected and after three days, on looking to see how the malady was going on, she found herself perfectly cured. What is very wonderful, not only had the tumor in her right breast entirely disappeared, but every mark caused by the knife in the left breast had vanished also.

Tomaso Pistojesse, of Soriano in Civita Castellana, was unwilling, I do not know for what reason, that Father Paul, with his religious, should found the retreat connected with the Church of St. Eutizio at Soriano. When working with two other companions near the retreat, to annoy the religious, he sang profane and abusive songs. While he was singing, he was suddenly attacked

with confusion of mind, great oppression in the heart, and pain in the eyes, so that he could not see. Father Paul passed, in going to Soriano, and seeing him raving with pain, caused him to be brought near to him, placed with confidence one hand upon his head, and at the touch the oppression of heart suddenly ceased, his mind became clear, the light of his eyes returned. He was perfectly cured. Thus, the servant of God practiced the revenge of the saints.

Father Paul, in passing through Ceccano, in the Diocese of Ferentino, in making the visitation to the retreats of the Province of Campagna, met with a poor woman, one of whose hands was crippled. All the remedies tried had been useless. With lively faith, she cut a little piece from the servant of God's cloak, applied it to the hand, and after an hour's time she had again the use of her hand and was enabled to fulfill all her domestic duties.

Father Paul used often to bless water with the relic of our Blessed Lady, and then give it to the sick, that they might drink of it with devotion. Through this blessed water our Lord wrought various wonders, some of which we will relate. Sig. Domenico Marchetti of Sutri was in danger of death from a malignant tumor in the throat, which after various remedies remained as obstinate as ever, when a person named Mattia Maire went to the Retreat of St. Angelo to tell the religious of the pitiable state of their dear benefactor. Father Paul immediately assembled the religious and all recited together the Litany of Our Lady for the sick man. He then blessed some water with the relic, gave it to Mattia, telling him that they had delayed sending for help too long, and he must make haste if he wished to find the sick man alive. Otherwise, he would not be in time. Mattia made haste, and on his arrival found him not only at the last extremity, but not even showing any sign of life. They had put a candle near his mouth, as is customary, in order to ascertain whether life still exists. Nevertheless, the messenger came in and said that he brought blessed water from Father Paul. A priest who was present took the water and put a spoonful into the dying man's mouth. Scarcely had he swallowed it than he revived and was soon able to take a little broth. That same day he was out of danger, and in a few days he was perfectly cured.

Sig. Giuseppe Maceroni was ill of malignant fever at Terracina, and so violent was the disease, that in a few days he was reduced to the last extremity and given up by the physicians, who said that he could only recover by a miracle. The sick man's mother had, at the beginning of his illness, sent to ask Father Paul, who was then at our retreat at Terracina, to celebrate some Masses to obtain the recovery of her son. But seeing the illness worsen, she went early one

morning to the retreat to seek consolation from the servant of God, and arrived precisely at the time Father Paul was going to the altar to celebrate Mass. The pious woman waited to hear it, and when it was ended, going into the sacristy, she threw herself at Father Paul's feet, weeping bitterly and crying out that her son was going to die, and that the physicians gave no hope. Therefore, he must think about it, and she entreated much more earnestly because, through grief, the father was in danger of dying with the son. The servant of God, moved with compassion, encouraged her and said, "Let me make my thanksgiving after Mass, and then we will speak." Father Paul went to make his thanksgiving, and after some time returned with Father Nicola of Santa Corona, a priest of our Congregation, to whom Father Paul said, with his countenance all on fire, "Sig. Giuseppe will not die." Entering the sacristy, he said to the lady, "Signora Maria, be happy, your son will not die this time; I will give you some blessed water; go home, give him a small spoonful and do not fear that he will die, for as soon as he has taken it he will improve. Before giving this water, say an Ave and a Gloria Patri, in honor of the most Blessed Trinity. And believe me, even if he were in his agony, he would not die, but would begin to mend."

The lady felt comforted by these words, and having received from Father Paul a little bottle of water, full of confidence in the cure of her son, returned home, where she found some remedies prepared for her son. She, who believed she had with her the true remedy, cried out, "What are remedies! What are remedies! This is the true remedy." She showed the little bottle of blessed water, given her by Father Paul, saying to those who were present, "Kneel down, all of you, and say an Ave and a Gloria Patri for Father Paul ordered it." Having said these prayers, she gave her son a small spoonful of the water. At the same moment he began to improve, and in a few days was quite cured and was able to go to the retreat to thank the servant of God and relate to him his illness and his cure. Father Paul answered with profound humility that he had no part in it, but it was due to the fervent prayers of his mother and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. The news having spread abroad of this cure through the water blessed with the relic of our Blessed Lady by Father Paul, many persons had recourse to the servant of God, to obtain some for their sick friends, in the hope that they would receive health from it. When it was given them to drink, wonderful effects followed, some of which we will relate.

At Fondi, Signora Evangelista Goffredi, aged 86, had been seized with a fit. When some of the blessed water was given her, she recovered her speech, which she had lost. At Pastena, there

was a poor woman who had miscarried and was in great danger; she received the Holy Viaticum and was thought to be near her end. She took a little of the water and was cured.

At St. Giovanni in Carico, which is in that part of Naples which is bounded by the Campagna, a person was most dangerously ill, had received the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, and was at the point of death. He was so happy as to receive a little of the water blessed by Father Paul. After drinking it he immediately recovered. The physician, who had given it, went to our Retreat of St. Sosio, at a little distance from the town, to visit the servant of God, to whom he related the wonderful event and said, as if transported with surprise at what he saw, that he would no longer use any remedy for the sick but this blessed water.

At Valentano, in the Diocese of Montefiascone, a man named Peter Paul Bartolaccini had been given up by the physician, and was more dead than alive, through a long and dangerous illness, contracted in the marshes of Tuscany, which, besides other bad effects, had so affected his throat that he could not swallow either food or drink. From his opened throat everything came out instead of passing into the stomach. In the meantime Domenico Francesco Barlini of Pianzano arrived, carrying with him an emblem of the Passion used by Father Paul, and having asked the sick man's wife about Peter Paul, whom he did not know to be ill, on hearing the woman tell him, with sighs and tears, the state of her husband, went to the room where he lay, and saw that he had rather the appearance of a skeleton than of a living man. He could not speak and gave few signs of life. Moved with compassion, he touched him, formed the sign of the cross on him with Father Paul's emblem, and then departed. After Domenico Francesco had left, the sick man fell asleep and slept for five hours, during which it seemed to him that a charitable person, in order to remove the disease which had taken such possession of him, was pulling the old skin from his bones to cure him. When he awoke, he was quite well, and with great joy he clapped his hands and called his wife, assuring her that he was cured. Asking for his clothes, he rose and dressed himself, perfectly free from the malady that had oppressed him.

The servant of God, as we have said, recommended the use of the oil of the lamp which burned before the Blessed Sacrament, and through the great faith and devotion towards this most Adorable Sacrament, which was so strong and fervent within him, and which he sought to enkindle also in others, many graces were obtained, some of which we will name. In Sutri, a poor man named Fulcinelli was confined to bed by a cancer, which consumed one leg, and

wished to receive a visit from Father Paul. The servant of God was conducted to him by Canon D. Giuseppe Suscioli. Entering into the sick man's room, he told him that he wished to sign him with the oil of the lamp that burned before the Blessed Sacrament, adding, "You ought to have all confidence in Jesus Christ, for the Holy Gospel assures us, that when He was alive on the earth, '*power went out from him and he healed*'" (Lk 6:19). The oil was brought, and the good Father began to sign the sick man, and, wonderful to relate, as Father Paul went on signing him with this oil, at that moment new skin was formed and the wound became healed. When he had finished, the gangrene entirely disappeared and the wound remained perfectly healed. Therefore, the sick man, entirely cured, rose from his bed.

These, among many others, which we have omitted, are the wonderful cures obtained by those who had recourse with confidence to the servant of God, and which manifest very clearly that Father Paul had received that gift which is called the gift of healing and extraordinary confidence of obtaining what he desired. There are other works, no less marvelous, which God, by His omnipotent virtue, wrought by means of His servant.

In a year of great scarcity of wheat, Father Paul was at Civita Castellana, at the house of Signora Girolama Ercolani. This pious woman, conversing with the servant of God, complained of the scarcity of wheat and said to him, with all confidence, that she had not even enough wheat for use in the house. "How shall we be able this year," she added, "to assist the poor? We shall be obliged to send them away without the usual alms of bread." At these words the servant of God, as if touched to the heart by that tender compassion he had for the poor, burning interiorly with charity and with his countenance on fire, with strong arguments and expressions, counseled the lady to give the usual alms, encouraging her to hope strongly and to confide in that God who has promised superabundantly to reward works of charity. Encouraged by these words, the pious lady began to distribute bread bountifully to the poor, to those who came to the door as well as to other needy and unknown persons. The grain did not diminish, which was miraculous, as Signora Girolama and her daughter witnessed. There were thirty quarts of grain measured exactly when the alms was commenced according to Father Paul's advice, and it was then November, and there were thirty quarts of grain in the magazine after this grain had been constantly used for the house and for the relief of the poor. This multiplication was, therefore, with reason, considered a real miracle, wrought by God, at Father Paul's intercession. The good lady and her daughter

were so much the more certain of it, as one or the other constantly had the keys.

A similar multiplication took place at the Monastery of St. Lucy at Corneto in 1749. In that year, D. Angela Margarita Forcella, a nun well experienced in domestic affairs and in the consumption of grain that was made there, was in charge of storing the grain. Having weighed everything carefully, she perceived that the grain could not last the season. Therefore, with confidence in the servant of God's sanctity, she suggested to Sister Maria Anzovini, who had the care of the magazine, that she should tell it to Father Paul, that by his prayers he might obtain from God that the grain should last the season. The good sister obeyed with simplicity, and carrying the message to the servant of God, he assured her, in reply, that the grain would be sufficient, but that when she entered the granary, she must never fail to recite the Creed on her knees, five times, in honor of our Lord's Passion. The sister never omitted this devout practice, and the grain not only sufficed for the season, but was even more than necessary, not without a miracle.

What we are going to relate is also a prodigy. One morning in January, about an hour before dawn, Captain Michele Fanciullo, then a boy, was on the shore of the Pino near Orbetello, drawing a fishing net with several sailors. As it had rained all night, and the weather was still rainy, the sailors and the master were all wet, and in this state were working. In a short time they saw Father Paul come up from the Retreat of Monte Argentario, which was three or four miles distant from the shore, barefooted, without a hat, as he used to walk in those early times, and approaching the fishermen, "Children," he said, "what fish have you taken?" They answered that they had good fishing, but in the meantime they noticed him attentively, and with wonder, for it seemed to them that he was not at all wet. Captain Michele Fanciullo, to satisfy himself, touched with his hand the servant of God's cloak and found it quite dry, to his great astonishment, seeing that in a walk of three or four miles, taken among wet trees and in the rain, which was then falling, the servant of God was not the least wet, walking uncovered as he did.

The servant of God was sick and was carried on a chair, by the help of eight persons, from Fianello to Borghetto on a day which threatened rain every moment. When they were on the road, it began to rain, but God, through the merits of His servant, and to reward the charity of these good Christians, wonderfully defended from the rain, not only Father Paul, but also all the others who carried him, so that the rain did not in any way touch them. Having several times to

pass the brook, they went with their shoes and stockings on into the water, and came out without being at all wet. Father Paul, to awake in them feelings of gratitude for so great a benefit, asked them if they were at all wet, and full of surprise, acknowledging the miracle, they answered, “No,” as was the case.

More wonderful still, because accompanied by many astonishing circumstances, was the miracle that our Lord wrought in favor of a pious Christian, named Mattia Maire of Sutri. He was sent by the Vicar General Picciotti to carry a letter of great importance from Sutri to Monteromano, where Father Paul was giving the holy missions. When he reached the river Biedano, he found it so swollen and heightened by the rains, and by that which was then falling, that there was no means of passing over it, without the risk of being drowned. The carriers themselves, who were very well able to ford and were in great haste to continue their journey, were stopped and dared not risk the passage. While Mattia was thinking what he could do, a guard came up on horseback, and hearing from him the reason of his going to Monteromano, full of confidence, said with simplicity, “Now I shall see if Father Paul is a saint.” Taking the bridle of Mattia’s horse, he prepared himself to make the dangerous passage on his own horse. The water covered the horses, so that nothing was seen but their heads. Mattia and the guard, as was natural, were completely wet, but they passed the river safely. When Mattia arrived at Monteromano, he presented the letter, and all who saw him were amazed, not knowing how on such a day he could have passed the Biedano. But the wonder ceased, when it was known that he had passed with confidence in the merits of the servant of God. Father Paul, having with kindness ordered refreshment for Mattia, gave him the answer, telling him to return to Sutri immediately. He opposed this, and all who were present said that on account of the rain then falling the river must be still more swollen. The hour was late, and that it was not fit to send back that poor man, so lately escaped from such great danger. But Father Paul insisted, saying that the Vicar General would certainly send another person if he did not receive the answer, so important was the business. “Depart,” he said, “I assure you of the divine protection.” At these words, Father John Baptist, Father Paul’s brother, who was present, said, “But do you assure him that he will pass the Biedano safely?” “Yes, I assure him of it; and,” he added, “even though the water should be as high as the tops of the trees, let him pass and fear nothing.” Mattia, animated by these words, pronounced with such great firmness, and confiding in the merits of the servant of

God, departed. When he reached the river Biedano, seeing the carriers who had not dared to risk the passage, he entered the water at once. The horse, wonderful to relate, walked on the water, as if it had been dry land, so that the carriers, who were on the opposite bank, could see the horse's shoes as he lifted up his feet. At this sight, they began to exclaim in astonishment, and like people of little piety, who frequently attribute to the devil the wonderful operations of God, cried out, "The devil must be carrying you, for we can see the horse's shoes." Mattia, passing the river thus easily, without even wetting his shoes, and continuing his journey, arrived safely at one o'clock in the night at Sutri, and found that the Vicar General, fearing some accident had happened, was just sealing another letter to send it to Father Paul by another messenger, precisely as the servant of God had predicted.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Other Supernatural Gifts Granted to Father Paul

Father Paul, a man truly humble of heart, was enriched with other gifts by our Lord, who delights in bestowing His graces and gifts on him, who, from them, takes occasion to humble himself more profoundly in the presence of his Benefactor. Father Paul had that gift, which St. Paul calls "*gift of tongues*," and we have seen how, when preaching at Orbetello, he was understood by all the soldiers in the garrison, though some of them were Germans and only understood their native tongue. We have also good reason to affirm that he had from our Lord what St. Paul calls "*word of wisdom*," for in sermons, in instructions, in familiar conversations, and in conferences, he spoke of God and of heavenly things as one who feels in them great relish and enjoys their delicious sweetness. And he also caused that others, who listened to him with good dispositions, should taste of it. He had a wonderful faculty of rendering clear and intelligible the most sublime and hidden things, and particularly the interior operations of divine grace in chosen souls, the effects of intimate and loving familiarity with God, and the safe path of contemplation. He had always at hand similitudes and comparisons, which at the same time cleared up the obscurity of recondite things, and infused veneration and high esteem for them with a strong desire to reform the life and purify the heart. Many have experienced this, who

have had the consolation of conversing with him.

We have elsewhere seen that, through the great furnace of love which burned in Father Paul's heart, two or three ribs on his right side had risen up. We have heard from many witnesses that when he spoke of prayer or other spiritual matters, his countenance became inflamed and on fire. When he celebrated the mysteries of our Redemption, he seemed to be carried out of himself by the ardent love that burned in his breast. Sometimes, in giving Benediction with the holy pyx, his countenance was so inflamed that it seemed to be on fire. When he celebrated the holy Sacrifice, or performed the sacred functions, he was seen to be bathed in tears, with a bright color resembling a seraphim. Speaking to a devout person of spiritual things, he became so fervent that his face was not as before, but all brightness, like a sun, that cannot be looked at. Sometimes in the servant of God the attraction of interior sweetness that carried him to the Supreme Good was so powerful that he was seen to rise from the earth and remain for a considerable time suspended in the air. We have elsewhere related that when he was once celebrating Mass in the Church of St. Lucy at Corneto, shortly before or after the consecration, he was raised up in the air almost two palms, a most sweet fragrance being perceived, to which no other perfume can be compared. Another time, during the mission at Latera in Montefiascone, when he was giving a discourse in the sacristy of the parish church to all the priests of the place, exhorting them to give good example and to hear confession with true zeal for the salvation of souls, he became inflamed with holy fervor and was seen to rise from the ground and go round the sacristy in the air, as if he were flying.

Of all these gifts, the gift of tears was most habitual in our saintly Father. "It is true that the love of God does not consist in tears, but in serving the Divine Majesty with justice, with strength of soul, and with humility. Nevertheless, when the water of true tears, which are those that proceed from true prayers, is given from heaven, this helps to enkindle more strongly the fire of the love of God and to keep it alive, and the fire assists the water to give coolness. Thus, the water of tears, being united with the divine fire, it cools and even freezes all the affections of this world." All these are the words of St. Theresa, that great mistress of prayer.

Our good Father had a great gift of these tears, as many witnesses attest in the Processes: "From youth, and even from his early years," says his confessor, "he had the gift of extraordinary prayer joined with that of tears." So great was his interior compunctions, the

abundance of his affections and his tears, that it is not easy to describe it. It was perceived that from the love that burned in his breast, his heart became easily softened. If he sometimes heard offenses against God related, he was grieved, he wept, beat his breast, sighed and groaned, saying, “My sins are the cause of it; my infidelities are the things that arouse the anger of God.” On every other occasion when he spoke of God, as he used to do almost continually, his face became on fire and he burst into tears of devotion. If he spoke in public or in private of the sacred passion of Jesus Christ, he then seemed to melt away, like wax before the fire. In visiting, as he often did, the most Blessed Sacrament, he was usually seen to shed tears of love and tenderness. In celebrating holy Mass, he was bathed in tears, and generally he did nothing but weep. If he sang Mass on great solemnities, in which the mysteries of our Redemption are commemorated, his devout chanting was joined with affectionate tears.

CHAPTER XL

Of the Esteem for Sanctity in Which the Servant of God Was Held

Though Father Paul was most desirous of being in the world like a dead man, whose life is hidden in Christ our Savior, and though he sought by every means in his power to hide himself from the eyes of men, to live to God alone, nevertheless, the exercise of virtue was in him so great and continual that it proved him to be a man of great sanctity and perfection. This opinion was commonly entertained of him while he lived. After his death, the fame of his virtues and his innocent and perfect life increases and spreads every day to the greater glory of God. We will not relate here the esteem and veneration which the religious, his children and beloved pupils, had for him, among whom, without the shadow of flattery, I may say there were men of great learning, especially in the interior ways of our Lord, of experience in the direction of souls and of true virtue. It will suffice to say that having him constantly before their eyes, not only did not diminish, but increased their opinion of his exalted virtues, and hearing his discourses continually inflamed them more and more with the holy love of God.

Extraordinary was the opinion entertained of him by many nuns in the numerous convents, where he gave the spiritual exercises, especially by those nuns that were most advanced in the

school of prayer, of interior conversation with God, and most experienced in virtue. These nuns considered and venerated Father Paul as a most sublime master in all the ways of holiness and as a man of heroic virtue.

Thus, many other persons of solid virtue, who, remaining in the world, *“with their heart set on higher things, they were disposed to ascend step by step from the valley of tears”* (Cfr. Ps. 83:6), seeking the fulfillment of the holy will of God, devoutly attached themselves to Father Paul, and always showed the highest esteem for him, for they saw that on all occasions he sought God alone, and guided them with wonderful sweetness and mildness, to execute in their state the holy will of our Lord. But omitting these, who, however, would merit a distinct mention, for brevity’s sake we will only name the opinion entertained of Father Paul by the people of those places where he lived or gave holy missions. We will speak, lastly, of some more considerable personages, who showed a remarkable esteem and veneration for him.

From the time the servant of God lived at Castellazzo, he was, as we have said, universally considered to be a saint. The innocence of his life, the austerity of his penance, the regularity of his habits, his charity, the fervent zeal with which he promoted the glory of God, were, according to the testimony of eye-witnesses, the cause of his gaining against his will the esteem of all and a high place in the consideration of every kind of person. Leaving all the other testimonials from which we have faithfully collected all the expressions used in this history, it will suffice to cite the words of Father John Baptist of Alessandria, former Provincial of the Order of Capuchins and an eye-witness, with whom all the other witnesses concur exactly. “The public opinion,” he says, “regarding Father Paul, was that he was a saint. It arose from his exemplary and penitential life, from his zeal for souls, as he applied himself to teach Christian Doctrine, and also to preach with the permission of Bishop Francesco Gattinara, then bishop of this town. The same idea was entertained of him by all sorts of persons, priests, religious, and nobles, and among others by Father Girolamo of Tortona, one of our Capuchins, who for some time was his confessor and recommended him afterwards to another Capuchin, Father Colombano Genovese, who was at Ovada or Savona, where Father Girolamo perceived to what a height of perfection Father Paul had attained. I know that he spoke of him as a man of sublime contemplation and perfection, and demonstrations of this were made by the great concourse of people who went to consult Father Paul on the interests of their souls. This opinion has been always universal and constant, and as

for myself, I have never thought differently of him, nor have heard that others did so.”

The reputation of the venerable servant of God was not bounded within the limits of his country and the neighboring places; but, as the light, wherever its splendor penetrates, makes us distinguish objects clearly, the bright virtues of this man of God, enriched with gifts and grace, gained for him universal esteem in the places where he was well known. When, with his brother, he was at the Hermitage of our Blessed Lady of the Chain near Gaeta, both were considered as saints. The help of their prayers was sought with great earnestness, and they were consulted as the true servants and intimate friends of God.

At Orbetello and the neighboring places, where he was better known from the length of time that he passed at Monte Argentario, he had the reputation of a saint, with both citizens and soldiers, for they saw his penitential life, his zeal for the salvation of souls, with the uninterrupted exercise of other virtues. Nor did this esteem diminish, but it constantly continued. When Father Paul, in his extreme old age, returned to Orbetello, on occasion of making a visit to the two retreats founded on Monte Argentario, the people, remembering his heroic virtues, rejoiced to see him, went to meet him, crowded round to kiss his hand, and, through devotion, cut off small pieces from his cloak, and made many other demonstrations of veneration and esteem, which the piety of the faithful teaches them to practice towards persons of special virtue and goodness.

To say much in a few words, Father Paul bore this reputation universally in the places where he gave missions. A discreet witness was able to say, “It is enough for Father Paul to show himself on the platform – the mission is made.” It was not necessary that the servant of God should give missions to gain this reputation of singular goodness. It sufficed that his virtue and merit should be known for the fame of his sanctity to be spread and divulged. This happened, not only in the ecclesiastical states and the marshes of Tuscany, where he labored in the apostolic ministry, but in the provinces of the Campagna, where many of our retreats are founded. The demonstrations of respect and veneration that the people gave him when he went for the last time to make the visitation, and chiefly those which he received at Pagliano, at Anagni, at Ferentino, Veroli, Terracina, Frosinone, Ceprano, and also at Fondi, are undoubted marks of the esteem for sanctity in which he was held. Persons of every kind flocked to him, asking his blessing, and giving him the name of saint, and they vied with each other in obtaining something which he had

used.

At Rome, where the virtue of the servants of God is so clearly distinguished, Father Paul had a great reputation for sanctity. From the time Bishop Struzzieri began to know him, which was when the servant of God first came to Rome, and remained there some little time for the affairs of the Congregation, he was held to be a saint. "I began," he writes, "to esteem him when I began to know him. And from that time I also knew that he was esteemed by others and considered to be a holy man." The reputation and knowledge of the holy life of the good Father, and of the heavenly gifts granted to him, becoming more known, esteem for him increased, and it extended into Tuscany, into the kingdom of Naples, through Lombardy, Piedmont, Genoa, and other kingdoms. This esteem was not merely felt by ignorant and uncultivated persons, but by men of wisdom and of great discernment, and as witnesses unanimously testify it has kept up and increased since his death, and shows itself by the veneration with which the servant of God is spoken of and by the pictures, pieces of the habit and cloak, or other things used by him that are constantly requested. In order to show more clearly the venerable Father's reputation for sanctity of which those were best able to form a correct judgment, who are more enlightened in spirit by the practice of virtues, by wisdom, and experiences, we will here name some personages worthy of special mention, who had a high opinion of Father Paul. The venerable Father Leonard of Port Maurice, a missionary, as all know, full of the Spirit of God, was with Father Paul once in a place where Father Leonard had given a mission. The people had a great wish to hear again the words of life from the mouth of that fervent missionary. He would not preach himself, but entreated Father Paul to preach because of the esteem he had of him. A contest of holy humility therefore arose between the two missionaries, which had its origin in the esteem and veneration which these servants of God had for each other.

The venerable Father Charles of Motrone, a servant of God of great reputation, because of great virtue, as everyone knows, was once at Civita Castellana, at the house of Signora Giroloma Ercolani, and speaking to that pious lady, he said, "I have heard a certain Father Paul of the Cross named, a great servant of God, reported to be the Founder of a new Congregation, whom I have never been able to see or to know." He manifested his desire of seeing him. Scarcely had Father Charles finished speaking, than there came a knock at the door, and it was Father Paul himself, who, having come to Civita Castellana, went to the house where he was charitably

lodged. Father Charles, being told of it, showed pleasure and satisfaction corresponding to the great desire he had of seeing him, ran to meet him on the stairs. When they approached each other, Father Charles asked, “Are you Father Paul?” and Father Paul, “Are you Father Charles?” They then affectionately embraced one another, remained in silence for some time, deeply penetrated with the lively sentiment and amiable sweetness of holy, fraternal charity, to the admiration and edification of all who were present. They then went up stairs and spoke together with the greatest confidence and perfect cordiality, showing to each other their mutual esteem and veneration.

Father Charles came once to our retreat at Cerro, where the Founder then was, and being met by Father Paul outside the retreat, he was no sooner seen by Father Charles, than he knelt down and would not rise till Father Paul gave him his blessing, though he only obtained it after a long contest, proceeding from holy humility.

Dr. Bartolomeo del Monte, a true servant of God, and a missionary of great zeal and usefulness in assisting his neighbors, deserves to be mentioned here with distinction. Every time that he went to Rome, at the time Father Paul was there, he not only went to visit him, but remained with him in private conversation, in which he manifested his interior to him, in order to receive advice from the wise Father. He sometimes said he had come to receive his blessing. Other ecclesiastics also, and especially excellent religious, showed the same opinion of Father Paul. The Rev. Father Mirani, Abbot-General of the Olivetan monks, often visited him and venerated him as a saint. Father Tomaso Maria Mamachi, now master of the Apostolic Palace, when his heavy occupations permitted, made from time to time visits to the good Father when he was sick, showing great esteem and veneration for him. Father Paul, who before he had the consolation of conversing with him, had formed a high opinion of him. After he knew him and spoke to him, he conceived extraordinary affection, respect, and veneration for this excellent man. The Rev. Father Tomaso Maria Buxadors, then General of the Order of Preachers, afterwards cardinal of the holy Church, the Father Abbot Gioanetti, now Cardinal and Archbishop of Bologna, showed a particular esteem for him. In a word, many ecclesiastical superiors, both cardinals and prelates, considered Father Paul to be a saint. Bishop Gattinara, who had, so to speak, the keys of the servant of God’s heart, knew all its secrets and directed him when he was at Castellazzo, said that the world would be amazed to hear the graces that God

imparted to His servant. Bishop Emilio Cavalieri, Bishop of Troja, a man of profound learning and singular virtue, as we have seen, had Father Paul come to Troja, through the opinion he had formed of his virtue after hearing him spoken of, and found that he had not been deceived in forming his judgment from the common opinion held of him. Bishop Pignatelli, Bishop of Gaeta, wished that Father Paul, before he was a priest, should give the exercises to his clergy at Gaeta. So great was his opinion of him, Bishop Eusebio Ciani, Bishop of Massa and Popolonia, who had experienced the usefulness of the servant of God in giving missions in his diocese, speaks to him in a letter dated March 10, 1740. "To serve so excellent and holy a person, I at once performed and granted what you desired." In a word, all the bishops who employed him to labor in their dioceses, either conceived a great idea of him or were confirmed in that which they already entertained. We will not repeat here what has been said of the esteem shown for Father Paul by wise cardinals. I will only add what is said in the Processes in these terms: "Among the cardinals in his early days, who showed a high esteem for the servant of God, were their Eminences Cardinals Cienfuegos, Corradini, Rezzonico, afterwards Pope, and Crescenzi; and in later years, Annibale Albani, the Pope's Chamberlain, Gentili, Besozzi, Erba, Odescalchi, Guadagni, Vicar of Rome, Sagripanti, Oddi, Valenti and Gonzaga, Secretary of State; and later still, Marco Antonio Colonna, Cardinal Vicar, the Cardinals Pirelli, Boschi, the two brothers Rezzonici, De Zelada, Migazzi, delle Lanze, Pallavicini, Secretary of State, and Pallotta," ...all cardinals, who, by their endowments, were, and are, the ornament and the glory of the Sacred College. Finally, we are obliged by every duty to make mention here of the esteem in which the Supreme Pontiffs held him. It will be well to hear it from a witness who had the best means of information regarding it. He says, "Benedict XIII not only received him kindly to his audience, but gave him permission to associate companions with him, and to live with them wearing his habit of penance. After ordaining him priest, joining his hands, he gave thanks to God, saying, 'Thanks be to God.' Clement XII declared him apostolic missionary "*for all of Italy and adjacent islands.*" Benedict XIV greatly loved and esteemed him, receiving him to his audience with the kindest marks of paternal affection, going so far as to take the memorials from Father Paul's breast with his own hands, and honor them with his own handwriting. Once when the servant of God, to obtain a favor for the Congregation, had made use of the medium of a cardinal, the Pontiff mildly complained, saying, "Father Paul, when you want anything, come

direct to me.” In fact, besides other graces and privileges, he graciously approved for the first time, by apostolic rescript, the Rules of the Congregation, and finally, by his Brief of 15th April, 1746, confirmed them for the second time. Shortly before his death, he said to our religious in his illness, “We can do nothing more, but, nevertheless, we are ready to help you by every means in our powers.” Another well-informed witness adds that the same Pope, at the time that he wore the pontifical hat, through his esteem for the servant of God, asked Cardinal Albani how Father Paul was. The same witness adds, “Clement XIII succeeded to the Apostolic See, who had greatly favored, honored, and esteemed the servant of God, and had greatly aided the holy work of the Congregation, and had received Father Paul at his own palace in Rome when he was cardinal. He continued after his election to love and favor him in everything he could, protesting that he was a benefactor of the Congregation, and granting him, among other graces, permission to open the house in Rome.” When Clement XIV, who, when a cardinal, had greatly esteemed him, was raised to the pontifical throne, it is impossible to express the attention and marks of esteem that he showed him. I lay aside all attempt to remember the expressions which he gave to the servant of God, whenever he went to an audience, never receiving him without making him sit down in his presence, or in his own room, or on one of the seats of the pontifical throne, never permitting the servant of God to kiss his feet, making him keep on his biretta, and humbling himself, with a rare example of condescension, to pick it up once when it had fallen, making him take chocolate in his presence, even kissing his forehead, sometimes accompanying and supporting him with his arm, till he reached the hackney coach. We know the high esteem and opinion of sanctity in which he held the servant of God, and when he sometimes sent word that he placed himself at His Holiness’s feet, the pontiff used immediately to reply, “And I place myself at his feet.” Sometimes, when the Pope asked after Father Paul’s health, he used to say, “How is my papa?” When he was going into the country to Castel Gandolfo, he used to send Bishop Angeletti to ask Father Paul’s blessing in his name. During his attacks of illness, he sent him to visit him almost every day.

Finally, extraordinary were the marks of favor that, in proof of the great esteem and opinion he had of the servant of God, His Holiness Pope Pius VI, happily reigning, showed him in these latter times. Having honored Father Paul nineteen days after he was elected Pope with a most gracious visit, kissing his forehead, placing the biretta on his head, and bestowing upon him also

a Bull, in confirmation of the Institute and the Rules, and of all the graces and privileges already granted, with others in addition, expressing his ardent desire to comfort the servant of God before he died. When he heard that he was about to pass to another life, he sent him his apostolic benediction *‘for the moment of his death,’* and no sooner heard of his death than he said to Sig. Antonio Frattini, his *‘chief chamberlain,’* we do not wish you to be melancholy on account of Father Paul’s death, for he was a great servant of God, and we hope he is enjoying God in Paradise; and as he died on so great a feast as that of St. Luke, we read that *‘he constantly embraced the dying of the cross in his body’* (Cfr. Col. 1:24), and this servant of God has well imitated him. After the servant of God’s death, the fame of his sanctity went on increasing and spreading, as we have said, and as is manifest from the many postulatory letters of illustrious cardinals, zealous bishops, and worthy General Superiors of religious Orders, addressed to the Holy See to request the beatification and canonization of Father Paul.

CHAPTER XLI

Of the Graces Obtained by the Intercession of Father Paul after His Death

The Divine Goodness, to show that the death of Father Paul had been truly precious in His eyes, and to make known also the heavenly glory that his blessed soul was enjoying in heaven, besides having, by various apparitions, assured different pious persons of it, granted also, after his death, many graces to those who had recourse with confidence to his intercession. Leaving other apparitions and visions, we judge it well to relate one, which is wonderful in all its circumstances.

In the house of the Signori Gori at Oriolo, there was a little girl about six years of age, daughter of Sigr. Costantino Gori and Signora Teresa Leoni, by name Paula, who had received this name for the following reason. When her mother was with child, and near to childbirth, she became very dangerously ill and seemed likely to die, with danger also to the infant. When Father Paul had notice of it by an urgent mail, he answered that they should take the oil of the most Blessed Sacrament and sign the dying woman with confidence and she would certainly be freed from danger and would be safely delivered, which, in fact, happened. In memory of this grace the child received the name of Paula. After the servant of God’s death, the child took the

measles, which turned inward, caused a great gathering on the eyes, which, swelling enormously, appeared like two pieces of red flesh, discharging matter in abundance, which led the afflicted mother to believe that they were entirely diseased. The child remained in this painful state five or six months, almost deprived of sight. Many remedies were applied, but in vain, and the only relief the poor child felt was from being allowed to put on her head a biretta used by the servant of God, or to apply to it also his picture on paper. If one or the other fell off, she earnestly begged her mother to replace it. In her pain, on account of the relief she received, and that which she so surely hoped for, the picture and the biretta were highly valued. This innocent child remained constantly in bed with the windows closed, when one Monday, as her mother entered the room, the child said to her, "Dear mother, I have seen Father Paul." The mother answered, "You have seen his picture." "No," said the child, "I have seen him and he has told me that on Thursday I shall open my eyes." Being asked to say more clearly what the servant of God had told her, she related that he said, "Little Paula, do you know me?" "Yes," she answered. The servant of God continued, "Who am I?" "You are my Father Paul," she replied, for with holy innocence she called him, by whose means, in the great peril of herself and her mother, she had happily come into the world. The servant of God added, "I will cure you; on Thursday you will open your eyes, but tell no one except your mother." The prediction was exactly verified, and Father Paul kept his promise. The following Thursday, fever came on, her eyes opened, she became perfectly cured. Her eyes were clear, healthy, and free from the smallest spot, contrary to the expectation of the medical attendants, who asserted, that from this complaint, if the child did not die, she would be either blind or terribly disfigured. It is to be remarked that this child had never seen Father Paul's front face, nor any picture on canvass, yet when questioned by her parents regarding his stature, complexion, the color of his hair and eyes, she answered exactly, pointing out all the distinctive marks of Father Paul. If anyone in jest, or to be more certain of the truth, contradicted something as not true, she persisted with firmness that it was as she had said and had seen, and not otherwise,

Of the other graces granted through the intercession of the servant of God, we will select a few, for the greater glory of the Divine Majesty, who was pleased to work them. When the corpse of the servant of God was exposed in the Church, a young girl named Gertrude Marini, who had been tormented for three months with a troublesome fluxion in her cheek, without

receiving any relief from remedies, nor from the change of air which had been ordered for her, was in a very bad state of health, and in order to come to the Church had to overcome great difficulties, for being in bed she was greatly weakened. She felt much repugnance to rise and go the distance from the Church della Consolazione, near which she lived, to that of Sts. John and Paul. But encouraged by the neighbors and by her mother and sister to have recourse to the intercession of the servant of God, who had lately died, and to go to the place where his blessed corpse was, she consented at length. Reaching the Church, she was not able at once, from the crowd of people that surrounded the corpse, to draw near and kiss his hand, as she desired. But no sooner had she the happiness of approaching and touching his blessed body with her cheek, than she was perfectly cured, and so returned home to the surprise of those who had seen her ill.

Gertrude, widow of Giuseppe Moscatelli of Pianzano in Montefiascone, had a little granddaughter named Maria Catarina, the child of Anna Maria, her daughter, and a baby of nine months old, in a pitiable state from a painful scurvy that covered her with wounds. Her face was quite disfigured with this disgusting disease, and she suffered greatly, particularly in the eyes, which bled and were always shut. Everyone can imagine the sufferings of the poor little creature and the distress of the grandmother. In December of 1775, Gertrude had, after Father Paul's death, a rosary which the servant of God had used, and hoping to obtain, through his merits, the cure of the child, she put it round her neck and actually obtained what she desired, for, at its touch, the disgusting scales fell from her face, her eyes opened and became clean, moist, and perfectly clear, and remained quite healthy afterwards.

Letizia Ruspantini of the Grotte di San Lorenzo in the Diocese of Montefiascone, in 1776 suffered from a painful fluxion in her ears. A tumor had formed, and it was thought that it must be ready to burst. The excessive pain made her weep continually. Fortunately, she thought of applying to her ear a picture of Father Paul. No sooner had she done it, than the tumor disappeared and Letizia was cured.

At Orbetello, Maria Giuseppa Gagliardini had, in 1776, on the 27th of December, brought into the world an infant, on whose eyelids two small tumors, the size and color of a myrtle berry, had formed, which rendered it frightful. Having recommended herself to Father Paul, she took with great confidence a picture of the servant of God, applied it at night to the infant's eyes, and left it for the whole of the night. The following morning she went to see how the infant was, and

behold she saw that one of the tumors had disappeared. She recommended herself to the servant of God to obtain the completion of the cure, and coming back saw, to her unspeakable consolation, that the other tumor had also disappeared. The child was perfectly free from this infirmity and was not again subject to it.

At Ischia, in Acquapendente, in June of 1778, Signora Rosa Linda Castiglioni was attacked with spasmodic pains proceeding from the stone. In this state of pain and danger she took an emblem of the Passion that Father Paul had used, which she kept as a relic, and applied it, recommending herself with great confidence to the servant of God. The pain instantly ceased; but as it returned another night with equal violence, she was ordered the operation of the syringe. Feeling great repugnance to this, she had recourse again. With lively confidence in Father Paul, and after recommending herself to him for some time, a stone came away without any operation and she was freed from pain.

Maddalena Ciancaglione of Bieda in Viterbo, in September of 1775, was afflicted with a pain in her back, which, three months before, had fused in that part and tormented her greatly. One day the pain increased so much that the poor woman could get no rest. Remembering that she had in the house a picture of Father Paul, who was then dead, she took the blessed picture and with great faith and devotion said to Father Paul, "Have the charity to make this pain leave me, for I can bear it no longer." Scarcely had she uttered these words, than she felt the affected part touched by an invisible hand and the pain removed. She was perfectly cured and has suffered no more from it.

A sister in the Convent of St. Bernard at Nepi suffered from a most acute pain in her shoulder, and was so tormented that she could not rest at night if she lay on that side. She had also a great palpitation in the artery, which, with the other infirmity, rendered her unfit for her duties. The good nun applied to the part affected a little piece of Father Paul's handkerchief, and behold, she slept tranquilly, lying on the affected side. She was freed from all pain and from that time has been always able to rest on that side which before was so painful.

In the Convent of St. Clare at Civita Castellana, Sister Maria Innocenza of Jesus, a nun professed many years, had never been able to keep Lent because the abstinence food caused vomiting and other symptoms. She regretted having to use dispensations which were, however, judged necessary, and she wished to be able to follow the community. One day in October of

1775, she felt herself interiorly urged to recommend herself to Father Paul, who had shortly before died at Rome. She went before a picture of the servant of God and with all confidence said to him, "My Father Paul, you were so great a lover of regular observance, obtain for me the grace to be cured so that I may follow the Rule of my Institute." After this prayer she obtained the grace, was perfectly cured, and, in November that same year, was able, in Advent, to eat abstinence food and fast. She has continued it on all other fast days, both of the Church and of the Rule. She now, to her great comfort, feels better when she eats abstinence food, which injured her so much before, a thing which, in the opinion of a skillful physician, could not happen naturally, much more as no medical art assisted in the cure.

Maria Diana, wife of Nicholas Reali of Soriano, had been tormented from April of 1776 with heart trouble. She suffered so much pain that she could not rest day or night. She was obliged to spend them all in most troublesome watching. When she ate anything necessary for her support, the pains increased so much that she felt as if she must die every moment, and she generally rejected what she had taken. Many remedies were applied, but with little or no relief, for, if one day she was a little better, the pains returned with such violence, that the poor woman thought she must die. She was considered to be in continual danger of death. In this state she continued for many months, until February of 1777, when she felt herself moved to recommend herself to Father Paul of the Cross. She had recourse to Father Paul with great confidence of obtaining a cure; and to revive her faith in a greater degree, took a small piece of Father Paul's habit, and putting it in a little water, swallowed both together. It was then two o'clock at night. She went to bed, slept quietly, rose quite well the next morning, has never suffered any more from this complaint, and now enjoys good health, considering Father Paul as a great saint. At Pereta in Soana, many women were in danger of death in childbirth, and on a little piece of Father Paul's habit being applied, they were safely delivered.

Giacomo Miniocci of Bieda in Viterbo, in June of 1776, was attacked with a carbuncle of a very bad sort, from which it was thought he must die. He was twice bled, but received no relief, and on the fifth day the pain that he had in his side increased so much that he could not rest at all. It was thought that opening the vein again might relieve him, when a woman suggested to him to recommend himself to Father Paul of the Cross. She offered to bring him a picture of the servant of God, which she did. He took the picture, and applying it to the part affected, the pain ceased

instantaneously and the sick man was perfectly cured, rising the next morning in good health.

Margaret, wife of Giuseppe Fanti of Soriano, had been ill all April of 1778, with daily fever and pains in her bowels, which gave no rest, and allowed her scarcely to take any nourishment for her support. All remedies being useless, her husband brought her a picture and some of Father Paul's hair. She placed the picture on her chest and the hair on her head, and the fever and pains ceased.

At Ischia, struck by paralysis, Maddalena Battella's jaws were dislocated, and her mouth open so that she could neither eat nor swallow, nor utter a word. She remained fifteen days in this state, no remedy availing her. Two teeth had been taken out to assist her in opening her mouth. Having the use of her senses, a picture of Father Paul was offered to her by a good priest, and with great fervor she recommended herself to the servant of God, saying, "Ah, Father Paul, give me a little of your faith, for I wish to confide in you." Signing herself with the blessed picture, she felt her jaws restored to their position, began to eat and to swallow and to speak so as to be understood.

A youth of Bassano, of Sutri, by a fall had broken his arm. As the case had not been carefully attended to, he did not recover the use of it. According to the opinion of the medical men to whom he presented himself in Rome, there was no hope of a cure. Seeing every human remedy useless, he resolved to have recourse to the servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross. Going to his sepulchre, he prayed with confidence, and immediately began to be able to use his arm. He left for Bassano, and in a few days was cured, and then, full of consolation, returned to the sepulchre to render thanks for the favor.

In November of 1770, at Pereta in Tuscany, Rosa Spadini, a young woman about thirty was ill in bed with an inflammation of the chest and a severe pain in the head. Various remedies had proved useless and she was given up by the physicians. In this danger, a piece of Father Paul's habit was brought to her, applied to her head and to her chest, and immediately she fell asleep and slept for two hours, placidly and soundly, after which she felt greatly relieved, free from fever and headache, and soon recovered perfectly.

We have it in the Processes that many, after recommending themselves to the servant of God to make a good and holy confession, experienced in confession remarkable compunction and were greatly comforted. We will relate what happened to Sigr. Venerando Colombo, of the

parish of Sts. Celso and Giuliano in Banchi, by profession a silversmith in Rome. He had for some time desired to make his general confession, but though he went for this purpose to several churches, most likely through the work of the enemy who puts obstacles in the way, he had never done it. When, hearing of Father Paul's reputation for sanctity, he came on the 22nd of October, 1775, to his sepulchre, and kneeling before it, said, with confidence, "Father Paul, if you are the servant of God you are said to be, obtain for me true contrition for my sins." Scarcely had he pronounced these words, than he felt himself shake all over, and his heart became inflamed with singular fervor. Comforted by the hope that his prayer had been heard, he went to a confessor, telling him what had happened and asking to make his confession. As it was late, the confessor put him off to another day. Returning home and going to rest, he awoke several times in the night, hearing some one say to him interiorly, "Go to confession at Sts. John and Paul." When it was daylight, he went to our Church and, finding a confessor, opened his heart to him. The day following, leaving his house and wishing to come back to finish his confession, when he reached Campidoglio, it began to rain. He did not know whether he ought to go on in the rain, but, with courage and confidence in the servant of God's merits and invoking his help, he went from Campidoglio to Sts. John and Paul in the rain and, wonderful to relate, he himself saw that, though it rained very much all around, he was not the least wet. When he reached the church, his clothes were quite dry. Having finished his general confession, he felt great spiritual consolation, attributing it to the servant of God's intercession, the gaining what he desired.

About two months after the servant of God's death, at Pomerance in Volterra, Maddalena, widow of Marcantonio Biondi, obtained through Father Paul's merits a wonderful cure, which we had better hear from the witness who drew his deposition from the attestation of the surgeon, and from a letter of the Bishop of Volterra. "Maddalena, aged seventy-three, had long suffered from a skin disease with ulcers in the right foot, beginning from the exterior malleoli, extending to the corda magna and to the tibia, and as high as the half of the tibia and fibula." It must be remarked that this wound came when Maddalena was thirty, and it had never been possible to prevent the continual breaking out of the wound, as the skillful surgeon attested on oath. "The remedies used during the last three years," says the witness, "were always useless, though Domenico Bartolini, the surgeon, and his predecessors had used all the best specifics and remedies of the art. For if she improved a little, it was only for a short time, and this proceeded

from the part being diseased by the length of the complaint, or from the infirmities of the patient, insomuch that being visited by Bartolini on the 18th of November, 1775, the disease was found to be worse than it had been. Maddalena, having obtained a small piece of Father Paul's vest, instead of the remedies ordered by Bartolini for the wound, put this little piece upon it, and then, without any dressing, bound up the leg. Feeling that it did not hurt her, she did not unbind it and passed the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of that month remaining on both the mornings of these days in church on her knees. On the evening of the twenty-fifth, through curiosity, she wished to unbind the leg and see how it was. To her astonishment, she found it perfectly healed of all the wounds, flexible, not swollen, but natural like the other. The following day, Bartolini, being told of it, affirmed that this could not have happened without a miracle.

A few months after Father Paul's death, Dr. Lottario Arrighi of Castel del Piano in the Diocese of Montalcino brought from Rome a picture of the servant of God. There was a child named Giovanni Giorgi, who for two or three years had her right eye so obscured and darkened, that if she shut the left, no longer distinguishing objects, she saw nothing but confused shadows. Many said it was the beginning of cataract. As soon as she knew there was a picture of Father Paul, she ran to the house of the doctor, and kneeling before it, earnestly begged him to restore the sight of her eye. Leaving the house, continuing to pray, she entered the church while a function was going on, and, to make trial whether she had received the favor, she shut her left eye. To her great consolation, she felt the effects of the benefit she had obtained, for she saw clearly and distinguished those who were in the church and the six candles at the altar. After the function at which she was present, she went back to Sigr. Arrighi to venerate the function⁴ and to thank the servant of God. From that time forward, her sight became so clear that she could, even with her right eye, do those things that require the best sight, as threading a needle, etc. She began to do fine work, as she had desired, in order to gain in her state of poverty an honest livelihood.

Many other wonderful graces might be related here, especially those which were attested on oath by those who received them, and by others who witnessed them. But as we determined to use only the Processes, and even of the Processes we have not judged it necessary to relate all the graces granted by our Lord at the intercession of His servant, we will here finish our little work,

⁴ Perhaps the lady went to church to attend the "function" and then returned to the doctor's house to venerate the "picture" of the servant of God.

fully convinced that from what we have said, with the gifts and graces that have been described, as with a bright and shining light, proportioned even to the sight of persons who understand the least in spiritual things, our Lord is accustomed to attract veneration and esteem to the virtues of His faithful and beloved servants. May others, having them always before their eyes and walking faithfully in their footsteps, be united with them forever in God, who is the blessed end of our journey and the center of the most perfect and holy union.

SUPPLEMENT
to the
Life of B. Paul of the Cross

Being a collection of letters written principally by the Very Rev. Father Dominic of the Mother of God, or addressed to him, illustrating the way in which the foundation of the Congregation of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ in England was first thought of and afterwards effected.

INTRODUCTION

It having been found that the Life of the Blessed Father Paul of the Cross would exceed what could be contained in two volumes of this Series, and yet not suffice for three, the Editor made a kind offer to the Passionist Fathers now in England to fill up the vacant space with whatever matter they might propose as suitable. The Very Rev. Father Eugene of St. Anthony, Provincial of the body in England at this time, has, in consequence, presented the following letters, written principally by Father Dominic of the Mother of God and Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus, his successor in the office of theological lector at Rome, and different English friends, with whom they corresponded on the subject of the first foundation of the Congregation in this kingdom. These were in part found among the papers left by the late venerated Father Dominic, or contributed by such of the above-named friends as had preserved some of them. We regret that many have been destroyed, or lost, which would have given greater continuity and completeness to the collection. It has been thought well, for the better understanding of these letters, to give some introductory details concerning the various writers of them, which will prevent such frequent interruptions of the reader by long notes, as would otherwise be necessary. These details have been furnished, principally at the desire of the above-named Provincial, Father Eugene, by the Rev. Father Ignatius of St. Paul, formerly the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer, now Rector of the Passionist House near London, who was one of the first Englishmen with whom Father Dominic conversed and one of the persons best acquainted with the other writers of these letters.

It was in the month of March, 1830, between five and six weeks after his conversion to the Catholic faith, that Mr. Spencer entered the English College at Rome to study for the priesthood. He had not been there more than two days when his acquaintance was sought by Miss Letitia Trelawny, who was then in Rome with her father, Sir Harry Trelawny, a venerable old man of seventy years of age, head of one of the most ancient and respected families of Cornwall, who was at the time preparing to receive ordination from the late Cardinal Odescalchi, afterwards Cardinal Vicar of Rome, who finally resigned all his dignities and ended his holy life as a Jesuit Father. Miss Trelawny was the first of her family who had returned to the faith of her ancestors. This had happened by an extraordinary grace when she was quite a child, we believe about eleven years of age. Her father, who, though head of the family and owner of the Trelawny property, was a clergyman, and held two of the family livings, respected the conscientious convictions of his daughter, and used, when the distance was not too great, to send her to Mass at the Carmelite's convent at Llanherne in Cornwall in his own carriage, although he himself yet remained devotedly attached to the Church of England, or rather, we may say, to those remains of the ancient faith which yet exist in that Church and distinguish it honorably from the other bodies of religionists in this country. His heart and feelings, in fact, had always been Catholic, and his conversion seems simply to have been a natural adhering to what he had always loved, the first moment he knew where it really existed. He would say little about his conversion to Mr. Spencer but this, "I found my religion in the Catholic Church, and of course I joined it."

Who knows what hidden treasures of the same kind our holy Church, without knowing it, may yet possess in England, which will, in God's time, be developed as this was? He had now been twenty years, since the time of being received into the Church, always desiring to officiate as one of her priests, but withheld by certain difficulties, which at length, at this advanced age, he overcame. In the early part of the summer of 1830, he passed through the successive steps of ordination, from the tonsure (when this Cardinal, his attached friend, cut off some of the old man's few remaining white locks) to the priesthood. For this last step he had to be prepared by learning to perform the ceremonies of the Mass; no easy task for one at his age. The Cardinal had to find him a teacher; and, as Sir Harry Trelawny occupied apartments in the Dominican convent of Santa Sabina, which lies not far from the Retreat of Saints John and Paul, he applied to the General of the Passionists to appoint one of his Fathers for this service. The choice fell on Father

Dominic, then theological lector there, probably to gratify his well known predilection for England. But Sir Harry could not talk Italian; Father Dominic as yet knew no French; so they could not converse. It was Miss Trelawny who discovered the heavenly flame of charity for our people, which had been for more than seventeen years consuming that heart, and conceiving justly that Mr. Spencer, recently brought to the knowledge of Catholic truth, must be engrossed with the desire of imparting this blessing to his country people, and would be delighted to meet with a heart, in this respect, like his own, she made it a point to introduce him to Father Dominic, and thus was begun that mutual friendship which lasted till the death of Father Dominic in 1849. We will not say terminated then, for in the Catholic Church friends bound together by such ties are not divided but more closely linked by death. In the autumn of this year Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps came to spend the winter in Rome. It is not known, perhaps, to our readers what there was to unite this warm heart to Mr. Spencer's. As the latter has explained, in a short account of his conversion, which he wrote at the request of the Bishop of Oppido, in Calabria, who wished to encourage the faith, and animate the charity of his diocesans, by making known to them the case of one so mercifully rescued from the chains of error, Mr. Phillipps had been the instrument by which it pleased God to lead Mr. Spencer to the faith. (This account Mr. Spencer wrote in English. It was translated for the Bishop by Dr. Gentili, whose friendship Mr. Spencer had lately formed, and who was at the time convictor in the Irish College, where he was following his studies of Theology, and at the same time preparing himself, by the practice of our language, for the mission in England. The English narrative was afterwards printed by the Catholic Institute.)

On his arrival at Rome, as what interested these two friends in the eternal city was not so much its treasures of bygone days, not its pagan antiquities, nor its wonders of art, not so much even its holy places and relics of ancient departed saints, as its living treasures of grace and piety, Mr. Spencer took him immediately to Saints John and Paul. The following letters will abundantly prove how well he calculated on the result of bringing together two such spirits as these. It falls in with the object of this preface to give some details of Mr. Phillipps' conversion, of which we believe no genuine account has ever yet been printed. Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps is the eldest son and heir of Charles March Lisle Phillipps, Esq., of Garendon Park, Leicestershire, formerly member of Parliament for that county. He was placed, when quite young, for his education with the Rev. Mr. Hodgson, an intimate friend of Dr. Ryder, then Bishop of Gloucester, near which town Mr. Hodgson had a living, where he received his pupils.

Little Ambrose had heard a good deal about Catholics, as all English children must who grow up in families like his, where religion is seriously attended to. But it need not be said that the most of what he heard was descriptions of their fraud, their cruelty, and superstition. This had excited his curiosity to see for himself what these Catholics were. His first opportunity was offered him at this school, which an old French priest, the Abbe Giraud, who was acting as missionary in the little Chapel at Gloucester, used to visit once a week to give lessons in French. The little boy used to ask leave to walk part of the way home with the Abbe, and plied him with abundance of questions, which the old man simply answered, and thus began to enlighten his mind with the truth, the first gleams of which he eagerly pursued, catching at every occasion of learning more and more of the Catholic religion. On Dr. Ryder being translated to the See of Lichfield, his tutor was called, by his friend and patron, to Birmingham, where he became minister of Christ Church. He brought his pupils with him, and it was here that, at the age of fourteen, after three years' search after truth, in which he had none to assist him but God, who promises that those who seek in simplicity shall find, Mr. Phillipps was received into the Church by the Rev. T. M. Macdonnell, pastor of St. Peter's Chapel, Birmingham. It might be three or four years afterwards that Mr. Spencer, then Rector of the parish of Brington, in Northamptonshire, first heard mention made of the strange, and to him inexplicable, fact of this youth's conversion, and of his devotedness to his new creed, little thinking that this was an instrument prepared by God to bring him, too, to be a devoted lover and servant of that faith which he then reckoned himself bound to oppose, and, as far as in him lay, to uproot in these kingdoms. This conquest was gained on the 29th of January, 1830, the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, the greatest champion which the Church has produced for the conversion of Protestants. After his visit to Rome, during the autumn and winter of this year, that is, in the summer of 1831, Mr. Phillipps returned to England and in 1833 was married to Miss Laura Clifford, niece to the late, and cousin to the present, Lord Clifford. In one or two of his letters Father Dominic, by mistake, calls her niece to Lord Clifford, probably from seeing Lord Clifford so much older than Mr. Phillipps, and supposing that his cousin would be too old to be his young friend's wife. In one of his letters Father Dominic, in a strain of great fervor, calls down blessings on Phillipps's marriage, and on himself, wishing him a numerous and holy offspring from his marriage and great successes to attend him in his efforts to restore our divine religion in England. If, after reading this letter, one should go to Grace-Dieu Manor,

Mr. Phillipps' residence, and see him there, after twenty years, in health and happiness with his wife, surrounded by their twelve promising children, and then accompany him round the neighborhood, and in a district where, at the time when this letter was written, hardly one Catholic existed but himself, one should visit the great Cistercian Monastery, and the many flourishing missions which have arisen under his protection, though yet he has but very limited means, the whole country breathing, as we may say, a Catholic air, one might well say the good Passionist's prayer has been greatly blessed; and one might picture to oneself a bright future, not only to that neighborhood, but to all England, when his other constant and fervent prayers for this country shall have borne their full increase.

We now proceed to say something of another person who bears so distinguished a place in Father Dominic's thoughts and letters at the period of this correspondence. It is the Rev. James Ford. His acquaintance with Mr. Spencer first began in the year 1820, when both were traveling for information and amusement in Italy, before entering on the profession to which both were destined, of clergymen of the Established Church. When, at the close of 1822, Mr. Spencer, having received deacon's orders from the Protestant Bishop of Peterborough, began to act as Curate of the parish of Brington, near Northampton, where he was subsequently Rector. Mr. Ford had for some months past been settled as Curate of one of the churches in the town of Northampton. Their acquaintance was thus renewed, and it grew into a most affectionate friendship, of which the entire end and aim seemed to be their mutual improvement and advance in virtue and devotion and in the fulfilment of their duties as pastors of the souls with which they judged themselves to be entrusted. In one passage of these letters it will be seen that Father Dominic speaks of Mr. Spencer as the disciple and Mr. Ford as the master; saying to Mr. Phillipps, that as he had succeeded so well with the one, he wished he might with the other, and, in fact, these expressions might well be applied to them. Mr. Ford, before the time of receiving orders in the Church of England, had retired to the sea side, to prepare himself for this step by reflection and by reading such works as Anglicans would recommend on such an occasion. He there was, as it seems, overpowered with a sense of the great truths of religion, and devoted himself, with ardent zeal, to spiritual exercises, as he understood them. Among other things, meeting with some discourses of Bishop Beveridge, and other old Anglican divines, on the excellence of fasting, he entered on its practice with such vigor that he was soon reduced to

extreme weakness, and obliged, by medical authority, to discontinue it, but in other respects most warmly followed out the movements of devotion which had been awakened in him. When Mr. Spencer first met him again in Northampton, he well remembers how he was astonished at the change he observed in the happy bright youth he had known in Italy. He saw the same amiable, winning character, but there was a total renunciation of all amusements, and even of society, that he might be without reserve occupied about his flock. Mr. Spencer has often been heard to repeat, that it was principally to the conversation and example of Mr. Ford, that he owes the renewal in his mind of feelings of early piety, which had for many years lain dormant, or rather had been wholly quenched, and the first awakening of zeal in his heart for the salvation of others. Who can sufficiently wonder at the depths of the unsearchable counsels of God? Mr. Spencer now more than twenty-three years a Catholic, this friend of his still an Anglican clergyman, now Prebendary of Exeter. It would be irrelevant to the object of this preface to enter on a discussion of causes which might be considered as leading one in a course so widely distinct from the other. It is enough to say, that three or four years after this renewal of their friendship, Mr. Ford was married to an amiable young lady of fortune, in the neighborhood of Northampton. It was his friend Mr. Spencer who married them. He was afterwards much reduced by illness. He had to relinquish his cure, and had been, with his lady, spending some time, for the recovery of his health, at Pisa, when Mr. Spencer, after his conversion, came to the English College at Rome. This led Mr. and Mrs. Ford to take a journey to Rome to see him, and, at the same time, to see the wonders of that city, which Mrs. Ford had never visited. They spent a week together, and it was during this time that Mr. Spencer took this friend likewise to Father Dominic, with whom he had several conversations in the beautiful garden of SS. John and Paul, to which allusion is repeatedly made in the following letters. From the details just given, and a consideration of the circumstances of this new acquaintance, it will appear not wonderful that the heart of Father Dominic should have been moved with such overflowing tenderness and affection towards Mr. Ford, as he expresses in his letters. For nearly twenty years he had been praying unceasingly for the conversion of England and burning with most ardent desires to work at it in person. Here was the first Englishman, not a Catholic, with whom he had conversed, and it was one whose winning appearance and manners, whose beauty of character, and the intelligence of whose conversation added exceedingly to the impression which this interesting circumstance would

naturally make on his feelings. In reading the letters which he afterwards addressed to him, and what he wrote about him, we seem to see an overwhelming torrent of affection breaking out, as though from a vast reservoir held up and accumulating for many years. Can it be that the object of such affections and of so many prayers will not at length receive that light and grace which has been so earnestly implored and, we trust, is now yet more earnestly implored for him by that loving soul? We put forth these details in the hope that others may be moved to join in the assault on heaven in his behalf and prevail with Almighty God to glorify His own mercy and to honor holy prayer by crowning these prayers of Father Dominic in due time with success.

We now pass on to another person whose letters form a considerable part of this collection, Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus (*del costato di Gesu*) who, succeeding as he did to Father Dominic's office as theological lector at Rome, when the latter was sent by the General to govern the new house of the Passionists at l'Angelo, near Lucca, seems also to have inherited a great portion of his zeal for the conversion of England. He received the habit of the Passionists in May 1818. He was a man of great learning and of amiable characters which gained for him the affections of all his brother religious, but especially of his own students. He wrote many works of instruction and piety, as *Le Armè della Fede* ("The Arms of Faith"), *La Scuola di Gesu appassionato* ("The School of the Suffering Jesus"), *Istituzioni di Eloquenza Sacra* ("Instructions on Sacred Eloquence"), a work in two volumes, intended specially for the students of the Congregation, and *Sante industrie per conservare il fervore concepito negli Spirituali Esercizi* ("Holy Plans for Keeping up the Fervor Gained during Spiritual Exercises"). The last of his works, which he completed just before his death, which happened in 1844, was the life of the venerable Monsignor Strambi, Bishop of Macerata and Tolentino, of the Congregation of the Passion. His correspondent, Mrs. Edward Canning, who, as it may be seen by the few of her letters to him which have been preserved, was one of the most devoted instruments which Providence put into action for bringing the Passionists to England, was daughter to Mr. William Spencer and grand-daughter of Lord Charles Spencer, brother to the grandfather of the present Duke of Marlborough. She has written an interesting account of her conversion, entitled "Recollections of a Convert," printed in French and English; also a little treatise on the cross, full of pious and beautiful sentiments. She is pleased to recount the fact that it was in her house that Father Dominic sought and found his first lodging when he came to England to remain. She then

lived at Brompton.

It may be well, in fine, to give some account of the way in which the Congregation of the Passionists has advanced and prospered in England since the period of this correspondence, and how far Father Dominic's glowing expectations were realized before his death, and have been since. There is no doubt he underwent great and painful disappointments, and so, likewise, the Congregation, to which he belonged and which he took such delight in planting in this kingdom, has had to struggle forward through many troubles and much discouragement. Does this, however, intimate that the fervor and joy with which he had looked forward through so many years to being led by God to labor and to die in England, and to plant his Congregation here, were inordinate, that his was not a true vocation to this enterprise, and that his hopes for the Congregation will not finally be realized? By no means; otherwise, we might argue that even the first vocation of the apostles was not true, and that the fervor with which they corresponded with it, especially the ardent feelings expressed by St. Peter, were displeasing to our Lord. For they had little thought then of the sort of conflicts which were before them. When their tribulations first arose, they too were beat down and disheartened; but they rose again and accomplished their mission, and the Church which they planted has triumphed over all her enemies. Father Dominic used often to say, "I looked forward always to difficulties and trials in England, but if I had known how great, and what they were to be, I hardly know whether my courage would have borne me up to face them. Is not this according to the usual dealings of Providence? Almighty God works with instruments, not of angelic perfection, but weak, as are all men. The weak things of the world He chooses to confound the strong; He suffers these weak instruments oftentimes to droop, to faint, to complain. See how Moses speaks again and again during the passage through the desert. How Joshua was cast down at the unexpected repulse before Hai, But God's work was accomplished, and His faithful servants were rewarded and glorified. Instead of giving, in all cases, to those whom He chooses for the execution of His great designs a clear knowledge from the first of what they will have to encounter, and the courage and graces necessary to accomplish their work to its perfection, He often puts before them but a partial view of their difficulties, and bright prospects of the good they will work, and of the glories to follow; so that they willingly, and with joy, follow His call, and it is afterwards through tribulations and contradictions that He perfects their virtues, ripens them for their crown, and often gives them their crown, too, by

taking them out of this world before they have seen much of the fruit of their toils gathered in. It seems clear that Father Dominic hoped quickly to see Mr. Ford converted. This gentleman was the first object on which his zeal for our people was actively exerted. Had he known at that time, that after nearly twenty years, he should die in Ragland, leaving Mr. Ford where he was, it might have greatly checked the ardor of those prayers for him, which God, we will yet hope, chose should be offered for that soul in order that in His own good time, He might enlighten him by answering them. So, likewise, when, after twenty-eight years of sighs and disappointed hopes, Father Dominic set foot in England, he fully expected that he should at once begin his missionary career, that ample good speedy would be the blessed harvest, and that he should soon be surrounded with a large troop of zealous young English Passionists, eager to labor under his direction. He often related how, under a severe disappointment of his expectations of quickly beginning to work in England, he had been comforted by an interior voice, which he believed came from God and which in words, distinctly pronounced within him, or, at least, by a clear impression on his mind, repeated to him the promise made by God to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 12:2). But how did it fare with him? When first he landed in England, in 1841, he had expected to be immediately put in possession of the house at Aston, near Stone, destined for his first foundation. He had to return without even seeing it. After nearly twelve months, he returned again with a companion and was lodged at Oscott College. One of his letters written to Mr. Phillipps, the day after his arrival this time, with an accompanying few lines from Mr. Spencer, places him before us full of eagerness to begin his work. He had, however, to wait there between four and five, to him, long, weary months, before seeing the scene of his labor. At length he came to Aston on the 17th of February, 1842. There he began to work among the people, especially in the neighboring town of Stone, giving instructions and preaching with wonderful zeal and assiduity, even before he could be well understood in English, and extraordinary was his success during that first year or two, while he remained fixed at home, not being yet able to undertake missions conformably to our Institute in other distant places. By the way in which he expresses his feelings, in the records which he wrote of his proceedings at that time, and which, according to the practice of the Congregation, are preserved in a book at St. Michael's Retreat, Aston, it is evident that he was indulging bright visions of that town soon becoming almost all Catholic; but his patience had to be exercised here again. During the

succeeding years, some of his first converts slackened and went back; few were added to the number, and he was almost regretting that such forward steps had been taken at the commencement. But all seems now to be resuming brighter promise than ever. On occasion of his funeral, when his body, having been conveyed from the place of his death, was borne, accompanied by a procession of his brethren through that town of Stone, to be interred at Aston, some of the old Catholics, his first friends, observed the feelings expressed by the people, and when they heard many of the Protestants, who had so often in that first year of his work among them followed him with nicknames and ridicule through the town, now speaking of him with heartfelt respect, they felt as though he was now making his entry in triumph to take possession of the hearts which he had so zealously laid siege to, but which had till then repulsed him. It made them entertain bright hopes of better days; in fact, what may not be expected, for Stone, now that the Bishop of Birmingham is founding in that town the novitiate of the Sisters of Penance, and the ground on which Father Dominic built his little school is soon to be occupied, as we understand, by no less than fifty religious sisters. With the same ardent hopes did Father Dominic commence his work at Woodchester, the place where, as he relates himself in his preface to the first volume, a second foundation was given to the Passionists by the generosity of Mr. Leigh, the convert, on the recommendation of Cardinal Wiseman. He would surely have been greatly mortified had he known then that so soon after the consecration of their splendid church there, his brethren would have to quit this foundation. This has been the case; but how well has God made compensation. Almost at the very same time, the Benedictines made over to the Passionists the possession of their house at Broadway in Worcestershire, which has become the novitiate of the Congregation in England. And the Oratorians gave them, with princely generosity, their beautiful church and house at St. Wilfrid's, near Cheadle, which now is their house of studies. As in the realms of bliss there are known no jealousies, no personal or selfish feelings, whatever there may be of such feelings even in the true servants of God here below, our good Father is well content with seeing the work he began at Woodchester ably and happily carried on, not, indeed, by his own brethren, but by the children of St. Dominic, who now occupy that house.

Had he written his preface a few months later, he would not have omitted mentioning the new prospects which had then opened to him, when he was called, in the year 1848, by Cardinal

Wiseman, then Pro-Vicar Apostolic of the London District, to found a house in the vicinity of London. Perhaps not one of his undertakings inspired him with greater joy and hope than this. Oh, if he had had this to speak of in his preface, he would indeed have given vent to expressions of gratitude to his Eminence, who became thus, a third time, the patron of our Congregation in their most important establishment. He used, however, to say that no foundation of ours went on well which was not founded on the cross. According to this sentiment there is nothing to make us doubt of glorious results at St. Joseph's Retreat. Father Dominic, before he died, had to undergo the mortification of detaching his affections from the first house which had been given him at West End, Hampstead, and resolving on a removal of the Community to the Hyde, near which it now exists. It was not long before the prospects which this new position offered to his zeal again quite captivated his heart. Though his constitution was quite broken and he was filled with infirmities, he would sometimes speak of the large District which was now to be the immediate object of his care, as if he were a young man beginning life full of buoyant hopes. Had he foreseen the disappointments, the discouragements, and the train of crosses through which his successors have had hitherto to make their way towards their full establishment in this place, his ardent, eager spirit would have had some more rough shocks. God, however, was satisfied with the amount of labor now gone through by this His servant, and on the 27th of July, 1849, he died as any true Passionist might be pleased to die, in the midst of his work, on a journey to visit one of our houses. Not alone, indeed, for he had with him one of his own priests. Excepting this, he died as one abandoned by all men and all things of the world. The London foundation, and the Congregation in general, in England will, we trust, have to fight and struggle, but come out of all their troubles in due time, strengthened and improved by each successive blow, accomplishing again and again the type chosen by our Lord to represent the way in which all that is good has ever been matured in His Church. "Amen, amen, I say to you, except the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, die, itself remains alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

As we have made mention of other foundations in England, we must not overlook another to which Father Dominic gave some attention before his death, but did not live to see it in an advanced state. This is St. Anne's Retreat, Sutton, near St. Helen's, Lancashire, where a beautiful church has been built for the Passionists, with a religious house adjoining it, by Mr. John Smith, a railway contractor, at his own sole expense. This gentleman is a most remarkable

case of successful industry, combined with noble generosity. He takes delight in recounting how, after being brought very low by untoward circumstances, he had to begin life again by going to work as a laborer, without a sixpence in his pocket, at the first making of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway; how, his employers, seeing he knew what he was about, enabled him to employ a few men under him; how from this step he came to be a contractor on a small scale, then on a great scale, and at last to realize large sums. He always wished to do something for his religion. He has given twelve good acres of ground to the Congregation of the Passion and built upon them a handsome gothic church with a tower and steeple, all in stone, which, as he loves to say, will stand for ages, and a portion of a monastery adjoining to it, sufficient for the present small community. The Passionists then have five establishments in England, abodes prepared for the numerous family, the 'gens magna,' which was promised to the good Father. As he was approaching his end and felt his vigor gone, he used to say, "I shall not see in my lifetime the promise accomplished. I suppose it is to be seen after my death." There are, in fact, a greater number of students and of novices than ever they had in his days. May these, by their virtue, realize the ideal which the good Father must have formed to himself of the new generation of Passionists in England. While speaking of the development of the Congregation of Passionists in England, we will step back, as it were, for a moment, and take a glance at the state of Father Dominic's first establishment, the Retreat of the Holy Cross, at Ere, near Tournay, which he intended as a stepping-stone towards England. We will simply state, as a sign of its prosperity, that, during this present year, it has sent forth two filiations. One has been established in the Diocese of Arras, in France, between Boulogne and Calais; another in the Province of Limburgh, in Holland.

Besides these we may here mention one made directly from Rome, sent last autumn with Dr. Connor, Bishop of Pittsburgh, in North America, consisting of a company of three priests and a lay brother, to found a house in that town, or rather near to it, opening to us a way to the new world and, we trust, to many souls a way to a better and eternal world.

While speaking of the way in which Father Dominic's bright hopes have been, in so many instances, first disappointed and almost crushed, and then justified and realized, we reserve for the conclusion of our remarks the achievement which, though perhaps one of the least difficult and laborious, may perhaps be confidently affirmed to be the most honorable and glorious of his

life, especially of his career in England, that is, his receiving into the Church Dr. Newman and his companions at Littlemore. To call Dr. Newman a convert or a conquest of Father Dominic, we should consider incorrect. We will here express the hope that one day a circumstantial account may be given us by the only hand which is capable of giving it, that is, by his own, of the steps by which that great mind was led to the point where it has now found its rest; our disposition would be to say that Almighty God reserved to Himself to bring about that conversion, from which He proposed to draw the great results we hope for, as He thought fit Himself to work that of St. Paul, though in so different a way. The change in one case being as remarkably gradual as in the other it was sudden. He was, however, pleased to honor the ministry of His Church in both cases, and what Ananias did for Saul, Father Dominic did for Newman. In general Father Dominic labored and left it to others to reap. Here another, not man, but God Himself, had prepared and cultivated and watered and then called this faithful patient lover of England to gather in, without labor, this sheaf of England's choicest wheat, full-ripe. We regret that we have not original letters by which to illustrate the entire story of this transaction, which, as far as it went, was what we may call a finished perfect work. Two letters, however, will be met with in the series, one of which, particularly, will give an idea of what the joys of his heart must have been when he saw this work finished, by showing what he felt at the first distant prospect of such a conclusion, when he could have had no idea that he was the chosen instrument to bring it about. The main circumstances of this interesting narrative are as follows. About the beginning of the year 1841, while Father Dominic was settling the first house of the Order in Belgium, a letter appeared in the "Univers," from a young member of the University of Oxford, which overwhelmed with surprise those who had not been in the way previously to mark what was going on there, that is, who knew not the gradual but rapid progress of many of the brightest spirits of the place towards Catholicity. Father Dominic could not resist the impulse of endeavoring to forward this work of grace. He wrote a long answer in Latin to the writer of this letter, whose name was yet unknown to him. A reply in Latin was returned, to which allusion is made in a letter from Mr. Spencer, dated from Barmouth, in 1841. To this Father Dominic replied in a Latin letter, of which a translation is given in its place. The writer of the first letter in the "Univers" was Mr. Dalgairns, one of Newman's companions at Littlemore, now priest of the London Oratory. He kept the lead of his associates in the great race for truth, which from his

writing that letter he may be supposed to have had then. He was the first of the community of Littlemore who saw his way to be received into the Church. This took place at Michaelmas, 1845, and it was St. Michael's Retreat, Aston, where Father Dominic then lived, to which he was drawn to seek admission into the Church. The short correspondence, four or five years before, and one visit paid by Father Dominic to Littlemore, gave him sufficient acquaintance with him to make him the object of his choice for this important service. Father Dominic was preparing at the time to go to Belgium to visit the house of Ere, and asked Mr. Dalgairns whether it would be agreeable to his friends and himself that he should on his way pay them a second visit at Littlemore. It being agreed to, he went to Oxford, and reached it late, Oct 8, 1845. He had traveled outside a coach in heavy rain and was found by Mr. Dalgairns and another of the community, who went to bring him to Littlemore, drying himself at a fire in the inn. On reaching Littlemore at eleven o'clock at night, the first thing he had to do was to go again to the fire. While there, as he writes, Mr. Newman came into the room, knelt down to ask his blessing and the favor of being received into the Church, as did also Mr. Bowles and Mr. Stanton, and the whole community received the holy communion at his hands the following day. Who can doubt that Father Dominic felt now that all his prayers for England, all his disappointments and labors, past and future, were more than repaid by this unlooked for joy? And who will say that such a feeling was mistaken or exaggerated? We conclude with expressing the humble desire, and asking the pious readers of this preface, to pray that God will grant that all Father Dominic's brethren who succeed him may follow the example of his self-devotion to the work to which they are called, and may confidently wait, as he did, for the fruit of their labor from the hand of God, who sooner or later will crown with rewards, beyond their expectations, all who serve Him with fidelity and perseverance.

LETTER I

To the Rev. Father Dominic of the Mother of God*

From Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

36, Piazza di Aracoeli, Rome

Nov. 29, 1830

(* In the original text, the order is "From" and then "To".)

Rev. Father,

I cannot find words to express the great consolation I received from reading your very beautiful prayer for our unhappy England. It is a soft plaint, which seems to come from that heavenly Dove, spoken of by St. Paul, which intercedes for us with unspeakable groanings. Oh! if all the English Catholics had the same zeal and the same compassion for their own miserable country; it would be at least permitted to us to hope for its approaching conversion! Let us pray our good Jesus to inspire the same sentiments into their hearts. It appears to me a good sign of the will of God, regarding England, that a priest of the most devoted Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and one too who lives so near the house of our great Apostle St Augustine,* should entertain such affectionate sentiments towards our country. Oh, I really hope that the time is coming when God will show His infinite mercy on the land of so many saints and so many martyrs! Only fifty years ago, to offer to God the most Holy Sacrifice in England was judged a crime deserving the severest chastisement of the law. But lo! religion is persecuted in France and the French priests have no place of refuge. God, who does all, softens the hearts of the heretics; the British Parliament, with the consent of its august and clement King, repeals this impious law, and the priests of France flee into England. Behold the first step towards the conversion of our country. I owe my conversion to a French priest; and how many others can say the same! At this moment the Catholic faith is daily increasing in England, and I have reason to believe that within fifty or eighty years, this my dear, but unhappy native land will be entirely Catholic.

Let us always pray for this to our dear and divine Jesus, through the intercession of His most holy Mother, and our English Saints, St. Bede, St. Winefride, St. Dunstan, St. Edmund, St. Anselm, St. Thomas, St. Hugh, St. Alban, St. George, patron of England, and all our holy protectors. Rev. Father in Christ, I hope you will always remember me,

Your friend and child in Jesus Christ,

Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

Mr. Phillipps alludes to the Camaldolese Convent of S. Gregory on Monte Celio in Rome, where S. Augustine lived when he was sent to England. It stands close to the Retreat of Saints John and Paul.

LETTER II

To F. Dominic
From the Hon. George Spencer
English College, Rome
June 14, 1831

Dear Rev. Father,

As this is, I think, the third or fourth letter which I ever undertook to write in Italian, it may be expected that you will find a good number of mistakes in it. Nevertheless, it is my duty to thank you in some way or other for the news you send me of your happy arrival at Lucca, and also for the friendship you testify towards me at present as during the past. Yesterday, I received your letter, which would have made me ashamed of not having yet fulfilled the promise I made you to go and become acquainted with the Father Lector of Saints John and Paul, your successor, had it not been for the interior feeling which told me, that this fault in me did not happen through any forgetfulness of your person, which will be always dear to me, but through a defect in the manner of disposing of my time. I do not wish to excuse myself by saying that I had no time, because there is always time for everything, if we do but employ more skill and promptness in managing our affairs. And here is the proof of it in the present case. As soon as your letter came, I prepared for this duty. Yesterday evening I had the pleasure of being introduced to the new occupant of your room. Although I was disposed to be rather melancholy at seeing no longer there my so much esteemed friend, yet I experienced great pleasure in finding a successor so worthy of him and so deserving of regard in every respect. I thought of what you had said to me about him; and it appeared to me that you had described him exactly. He seems to me to be a person full of piety, prudence, and learning. I should say that his character is more like that of my countrymen than the greater part of Italians, as his manners are more serious and reserved than is ordinarily to be found amongst them. In both characters there are many things to be admired, especially where grace and the Spirit of God holds dominion. We have reason to thank the Lord who lets us see how varied are the perfections of His servants. I received in due time the little prayer for the conversion of England, which was exactly conformable to my wishes. I took it, together with the book of devotion and a relic of Father Paul of the Cross, to the young person for whom I had asked it. The exchange was altogether in her favor. Instead of a prayer book that

was clumsily got up useless, and even hurtful, she was now in possession of one well bound, beautiful and new, and what is more, full of devotion. She begged me to give you her respects and thanks.

With regard to your proposal of my publishing an account of my conversion, it has often occurred to my mind to do so. But I think the proper time for this has not yet arrived. In the first place, I should like to become more perfectly grounded than I am at present in the exact knowledge of the religion which I have embraced, before publishing anything which perhaps might compromise me. Still, if I were commanded by my superiors to do so, I should have no fear in undertaking it with the assistance of God. When I return to England, it is probable that much will be said against me by Protestants; and that not only Catholics, but likewise my own family, and all who wish me well, or take an interest in me, will request me to write an account of my conversion, in order to stop the mouths of those who, by a perversion of facts, will seek to calumniate both me and the religion I profess, my family itself, and all who treat me favorably. If I published anything now, there are many to be found who would do all in their power to counteract its effect and to load me with ridiculous and perhaps calumnious insinuations. What would my family say? See what you have brought upon us and yourself by your indiscreet writings. You see, then, I should prefer to wait until they themselves oblige me to write, to clear myself from aspersions which will bring dishonor on my name and theirs; and then I shall have them on my side, instead of their being against me. In the meantime I wish to give myself up entirely to acquiring more completely the spirit and knowledge of religion, and so adorning my mind and heart with the wisdom and virtues of Christ, without thinking of other people's affairs, unless when a favorable occasion presents itself. Thus do my superiors direct me, and by acting thus I hope God will recompense me with abundant fruit in due time. Notwithstanding this rule I have laid down for myself of remaining tranquil, I find myself led to do a good deal without seeking occasions. Yesterday I received a copy of a letter written by Prince Hohenlohe* to Miss Letitia Trelawny, which gives me something to do as I will now explain. This Prince, concerning whom I have spoken to you, is famous for the miracles he has wrought in favor of diverse persons who have asked his prayers in corporal maladies especially, and also in the matter of conversion. By means of a family named Millingen who were Protestants, but now are partly converted, Miss Trelawny found an opportunity of writing to the Prince, to beg his prayers for

her own family, and through her great charity towards me she was pleased that mine should partake in the same good, and likewise that of Phillipps. In fact she wrote to him in favor of all, and the Prince replied, with the greatest kindness, that at eight o'clock in the morning he would pray for all these families according to the following order:

On the Feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, June 21, for the Trelawny family; on July 20 for that of Spencer; on the 21st for that of Phillipps; and on the 22nd of the same month for that of Millingen. Miss Trelawny begged his prayers also in behalf of Lady Clifford, daughter of the Cardinal, who was then grievously ill; and the Prince says he must pray for her next Sunday, June 19. But God has otherwise ordained. This lady died a month ago, consequently his prayers must avail for the repose of her soul. I give you this information very briefly, not doubting but that we shall have the benefit of your particular prayers at these times. I must now conclude this letter, which I send on the same sheet with one which I write to Miss Trelawny, who will take the trouble of forwarding it to you. Believe me to be, with all the respect and love I am capable of,

Your most devoted servant,
and I presume to say, brother in Christ,
George Spencer

* Prince Hohenlohe was a German nobleman and priest of great piety and virtue. Many years back he used to be applied to from all parts for his prayers, and many well-attested cures were worked by his intercession. He died a holy death about the end of the year 1849. During the latter years of his life he was not much spoken of.

+ Mrs. Millingen was an English lady, who was living at Rome at that time with her daughter Miss Cornelia Millingen. She was a convert and brought up this daughter Catholic. They were intimate friends of Miss Trelawny.

LETTER III

To Mr. A. L. Phillipps
From Rev. Father Dominic
L' Angelo di Tramonte, near Lucca
July 16, 1831

Dear Sir,

As a favorable opportunity presents itself to me by the departure of the Very Rev. Father Vincent, a Dominican, who is about to be sent to England by Sir Harry Trelawny, allow me, my dear Mr. Phillipps, to offer you my sincerest and humblest respects, and beg you at the same time to transmit the enclosed letter to Mr. Ford, the Protestant clergyman, who is well known to you. Sir Harry Trelawny, who is now here at Lucca, has informed me of your happy arrival at Paris; I hope by this time you will have reached England, where, perhaps, you will be able to breathe a more tranquil air. I should like to hear frequently something about your health and about the progress our holy religion makes in that Island, which is never absent from my poor heart. Ah, who will give me the wings of the dove to fly thither?...I hope... Oh, happy day! Oh, happy moment! I rejoice in the hope of one day being able to reach it. O dear England! O beloved nation! When shall I see thee! And when shall I behold thee returned again to the loving bosom of our Holy Mother the Church! Then shall I be able to say, *'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation'* (Lk. 2:29). I hope and wait for the time of the Divine mercies. *'It is good to wait in silence for the salvation of God.'* I am here at Lucca in the role of superior of this new house called dell' Angelo di Tramonte. I am very well in health, very contented, waiting in silence and hope for the time appointed by God. Mr. Spencer has written me a long letter, mentioning amongst other things the days on which Prince Hohenlohe has signified that prayers are to be offered up for you, for Mr. Spencer, and for the Millingen family. These days will be on the twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second of the present month. During them we shall make a triduum, and we hope Sir Harry Trelawny and his daughter will be here. I beg you not to forget me in your prayers, as also to do me the honor of believing me to be irrevocably,

Your devoted humble servant,

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

P.S. Be so kind as to direct Mr. Ford's letter, since I do not know where he is at present.

LETTER IV

To Rev. Mr. Ford, Protestant Clergyman

From Father Dominic

Ritiro dell' Angelo di Tramonte

July 16, 1831

Allow me, my dear Mr. Ford, to direct to you this humble letter in attestation of the warm affections I bear you, and the sincere desire I have of serving you. I can assure you, from the time I had the honor of making your acquaintance in the domestic garden of our house of Saints John and Paul at Rome, I have never forgotten your person, nor shall I ever hereafter be able to forget it, carrying it, as I do, engraved on my heart. You may then easily conceive what are the ardent wishes, what the prayers, I daily present to the Lord...I hope you have received the two very long letters I sent you. I should be glad to hear something about them, as also I should like to know whether there is anything in them concerning which you have difficulty. These I beg you to state to me with all freedom, and I promise to give you satisfaction, as far as circumstances and my poor talents permit. You may do the same as often as you are in difficulty about any point whatever of the Catholic doctrine. My dear Sir, we live for truth, and not for sophisms; if we seek truth simply, we shall easily find it, and it will free us from our bonds. O my God, O my sweet Redeemer, what are we doing if we do not faithfully follow Thy teaching? Ah, my heart, what dost thou seek if thou dost not seek thy God? My soul, what art thou doing if thou dost not think of thy salvation? Ah! what does it profit me to gain the whole world if at last I lose my soul? My God, grant that no one may be lost; grant that in company with my dear Mr. Ford, I may arrive at the possession of Thee; grant that the whole world may be united in one fold under one shepherd. *'Let them be of one fold and one pastor'* (Jn. 10:16). This, my dear Sir, is the prayer I continually offer up to the throne of the Divine Majesty. May God, of His goodness and through the merits of Christ Jesus, deign to hear me.

Through means of Mr. Spencer, I received your salutations, which were very grateful to me, but it will gratify me still more to see your own handwriting. Whenever you wish to write, the direction is as follows: 'Lucca, per l' Angelo di Tramonte.' I shall wait impatiently for an answer to this. Meanwhile I beg you will do me the honor of believing me to be,

Your most humble, devoted, and obedient servant,
Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

LETTER V

To Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps
From The Rev. Father Dominic
L'Angelo di Tramonte
October 19, 1831

Honored Sir,

Yesterday, Sir Harry Trelawny arrived here and presented me your compliments, which were more pleasing to me than you can imagine. I do not know whether you have received another letter which I sent you through that Dominican Father whom Sir Harry Trelawny sent to England. There was likewise enclosed in it a second for Mr. Ford, a Protestant minister with whom I had already treated in Rome on matters of controversy; I have not yet received an answer. I would wish most ardently to get some information concerning this minister, Mr. Ford. Oh! how much I have at heart his eternal salvation! Oh! how much I have at heart the return of that Island to the Catholic faith! If, with my death, I could obtain such a grace, oh, how willingly would I die! Well, I hope, *'in hope against hope (Lam 3:26). It is good to wait in silence for the salvation of God.'*

You complain of my letter being too short, but I did not think I ought to extend it farther, in order to leave room for Miss Trelawny to write on the same sheet. For the rest, oh, how willingly, would I have opened my heart to my dear Mr. Phillipps! Would to God I might have the happiness to see you again and enjoy your sweet conversation; but can I hope? I beg you to tell me what you think yourself on this point. I also beg you will give me some information regarding the state of the Catholic Religion in your Country. Does the course of conversions still continue? are churches founded? are the clergy good and zealous? Etc. Oh, beloved England! *'Who will give me wings to fly, and I will fly?'* You have requested me to say something of what we treated of in Rome, but what can I say? Ever since I left that city, I have been able to learn

but very little regarding our common friends, my dear English gentlemen, who are there. Here I am in this little corner of the earth, occupied about anything but what occupied me in Rome, but still I am content, because this is the most amiable will of our loving God. The Honorable Mr. Spencer has written to me once, but it is now some time since. I believe he is still in Rome. With regard to the other affairs of which we treated in our agreeable conversations, I scarcely know what to say – I would prefer to speak by word of mouth, rather than to write about them. I shall therefore wait the moment when either you will return here, or I shall have the pleasure of coming into that part of the world where you are.

I hear you are about to get translated and published in English that little work which I had the honor of presenting to you when in Rome, entitled: *Il Pianto dell' Inghilterra* (“The Lamentation of England”), and that you intend to add also a preface. I thank you for the honor which you are pleased to confer on my productions, an honor which I am sure they do not merit. If this be your intention, I beg you will add some suitable remarks, and, amongst other things, inform the reader that the largest part, which terminates with these words, ‘*I await to welcome you in the Lord,*’ was written in the Holy Week of 1825; the second part, which is shorter, was written two years later, when the writer was immersed in grief at not seeing even a ray of hope with regard to the state of England, and this is the reason why, in this part, you find expressions which are stronger and more emphatic, expressive of the most profound affliction of the heart.

In it there are some things which may perhaps hurt too much the feelings of our dear departed brethren, especially what regards the intercession of Mary. It would be well to add some suitable notes in these places. You might say, for instance, let not our separated brethren be offended if they hear from the mouth of a Catholic phrases expressive of Catholic sentiments.

The third short part which commences, ‘*O how good is the God of Israel,*’ was written just at the time when I received the intelligence of Catholic emancipation in England. These remarks seem to me necessary, in order to account the better for the diversity of style and expression, which will be observed.

At present I have neither time nor occasion to occupy myself in matters of controversy, nor in the study of the English language. If God is pleased that I should occupy myself in these things, it will be for Him to present me the opportunity and afford me the proper means. You will excuse me if I do not write with my own hand; I am acting in obedience to your commands; for,

if you remember well, you told me, before leaving, that I should cause some one to copy the letters I sent you, in order that you may be able to read them.

I finish this, my letter, by begging ardently to be recommended to the Lord in your holy prayers, and of promising to do the same also for yourself, your family, and for all our beloved England. I beg you to do me the honor to believe me to be, what I always am,

Your most humble and devoted Servant,

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

LETTER VI

To the Rev. Father Dominic

From Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

Garendon Park

Oct 29, 1831

My Dear and Very Rev. Father Dominic, my beloved friend in Jesus Christ,

Several weeks have passed since I received your letter, so interesting and so much desired by me. I should have answered it sooner, if I had not been so engaged in going from one house to another of my friends and relatives, to pay them visits after my long absence in Italy when I was not able to do so.

I hope, Very Rev. Father, you have not thought that I had forgotten your kindness and friendship shown me in the past year when I was at Rome, and had the pleasure of visiting you in your Retreat of Saints John and Paul. Ah! I always remember it and always shall. It is impossible for me to forget those happy conversations I had with your Reverence and those words full of unction and grace, which I heard from your lips. Ah! what beautiful things you told me, nay, I might say, promised me regarding the conversion of our dear England to the holy faith! Of this, namely, of the conversion of England, I can say much. I believe it will one day arrive, and that this day is not far distant; nay, I can assure you that we see every sign that we can desire, that this event, so much desired, is very near.

Surely there is much yet to be done, nay, very much, for the obstacles are not few; but our

most divine Catholic religion makes constant uninterrupted progress; nay, greater and greater progress every day, so that we may be sure that the entire kingdom will, in a short time, return to the Faith.

Your beautiful and devout "*The Lamentation of England*" I have translated into English and published, and I doubt not that the publication of this Tract (*trattato*) will do a deal of good. I read a little of this to one of my friends, a Protestant minister, and he greatly praised it and appeared much edified. I hope, my Dear Father Dominic, that your health is better than it was in Rome. I remember you were suffering there from a fever, but I trust that the air of the vicinity of Lucca has done you much good, and that it will put you into condition one day to come to England to preach and to establish here your holy Congregation of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have received some letters from time to time from our good friends, Sir Harry Trelawny and his daughter, in which they have told me much concerning your new Retreat of L'Angelo, near Lucca, and of your labor among the good people of that neighborhood. I would wish now to give you some information of the state of Catholic affairs in England. This year we have made great progress. Seven or eight new missions have been founded, from which we have received great good and spiritual fruit. All these missions have been established in the district of our Bishop, viz., the Midland District of England. There have been many conversions of Protestants. In the town of Leicester, the metropolis of our county, more than a hundred persons have embraced the Faith this year. And last Sunday our good Bishop administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to them, and I was very much edified.

Our political affairs go on badly. Of these it will not be so interesting to you to receive news; but it seems to me that even in these things Divine Providence works for the good of the Church and for the extirpation of heresy. We may say that England at this moment stands on the brink of a revolution. All the bonds of society are convulsed and, as it were, broken. In various parts there are secret incendiaries. In some towns insurrections of the people, with the loss of life amongst the inhabitants; it seems to me that the people are raving for the destruction of the Protestant Church, as well as for a reform in the laws and constitutions, so that we may say that England is disorganized by a revolutionary spirit. We who are of the aristocracy fear this spirit very much, a spirit which springs from the pride of human nature and from that fatal science of the world

which so much predominates in England; but at the same time I cannot do otherwise than recognize the hand of God in all these events, and I doubt not but that from these troubles the Lord will bring round the overthrow of heresy and the greater exaltation of the Catholic Church. My very dear friend, I hope you always continue to pray for the conversion of England; much yet remains to be done before our entire conversion, but to the hand of God nothing is difficult. I hope also you continue to pray for me, who am a poor sinner. What a consolation will it be for me if you will have the charity to pray for me! Oh, my friend, pray for me to Jesus in the most holy Sacrament, and to Mary, our most sweet mother! Recommend me, in particular, to the prayers of your young men, who are so edifying and so powerful with the Lord. I can not say what a great consolation it has been for me to receive that letter of filiation to the Order of the Passionists.* Sometimes it seems to me as if I had for my special protector your venerable Father Paul of the Cross, and I have had tokens by no means equivocal of his goodness and his powerful intercession. But, Oh! when will England be converted? Ah when? *'May Your kingdom come.'* I wish to live for nothing else but for the conversion of England. Nothing else but the extension of the kingdom of Christ ought to occupy the heart of a Christian. What else but this have we promised in our baptism, when we made a vow to renounce the devil and to follow the standard of our Redeemer? What else do we intend but this as often as we sign ourselves with the sign of the most holy Cross? Such is my desire, to spend all my life and to make every effort for the conversion of England. But who am I that I should form this desire! I who am so great a sinner and unworthy altogether of doing anything for God. To be employed in the services of such a Lord is really too great an honor for me. But the weaker I am, the greater will be His glory. Oh! then pray for me...I shall be impatient to receive accounts of you, so that I hope you will have the goodness to write me another letter (longer than the former) and at your earliest convenience. The letter to Mr. Ford, which you enclosed in the one directed to me, I have not sent because I do not know where he is.

When you write to Mr. Spencer, it will be easy to find his address. I am now at the end of my paper.

Very Rev. Father, I humbly ask your blessing and your prayers once more; in the meantime, with every sentiment of Christian friendship, believe me always to be,

Yours most affectionately in Christ and Mary,

Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

*The General of the Passionists at this time, from whom Mr. Phillipps received the patent as a benefactor of the Congregation, which he calls his letter of filiation, was Father Antony of St. Joseph, who received the habit in 1787. He was elected General in 1827, and held the office twelve years. He died in 1849 in the office of first Consultor General. The name of benefactor in the sense here meant, is given to certain friends of the Congregation, of whom there will be one, sometimes two, in the principal towns of Italy, which these religious are used to visit. They on their part are ready to give them hospitality and to perform for them such good offices as they are in need of; being admitted, in return, to a participation in the spiritual goods of the Congregation.

LETTER VII

To Father Dominic

From the Honorable and Reverend George Spencer

English College, Rome

Dec. 29, 1831

My very dear Father Dominic,

I have received your second letter, and I lose no time in commencing a reply, although this being the Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, the protector of our college, we are so much occupied, that I shall not be able to finish it at once. Immediately on receiving your first letter about Mr. Ford, I wrote to him, directing my letter at once to himself, but either through my fault, or the fault of the post, it has not reached its destination. I hope, however, that this blunder will not have frustrated your charitable intention regarding him, for in writing to Mr. Phillipps three weeks ago, I told him what you had requested of me on his account, and suggested that he also should write. It seems to me that God may be pleased to make use of that dear friend of ours to bring to its completion the undertaking you have begun with so much zeal, that of converting Mr. Ford. I begged Mr. Phillipps to avail himself of this occasion to open a correspondence with Mr. Ford, from which good might result. I sent to Mr. Ford a miniature which he had ordered here, through Mr. Sisk of this college, who accompanied Mr. Phillipps to England. I sent him your papers by another hand, that is, by an English lady, and waited long before being informed that he had received either.

At the request of the painter, who feared he had lost his labor, I wrote to Mr. Ford in the month of November, and some days ago I received his reply. I here translate and send you what he says of your writings. "The reason," he says, "why I delayed so long a time acknowledging the receipt of your parcel is that I wished at the same time to send in full my opinion concerning the MSS., but, to tell the truth, they are so long, and I am at present so much occupied, that I have not been able yet to read more than the half. They contain a series of arguments which require much reflection, and it seems to me better to defer my judgment than to speak inconsiderately on an affair of such importance. When you write to Father Dominic to Lucca, present him my respects, assuring him that I am always full of love and esteem for him, and tell him that his labors for my good will not be lost, if he will accept the serious attention with which I shall treat his pious and talented papers as some compensation for his trouble."

Although I cannot translate his words elegantly, you will understand from this sentence, as I send it, the state of our friend. As he has under his care a parish in the town of Exeter, I believe he must be very much occupied, and for this reason does not set himself with more earnestness to study the great questions of Catholic truth.

What we have to do is constantly to pray to God that He would give him more grace to see the importance of it, but it seems to me that we must have patience before we see the fulfilment of our desires for England. Conversions go on always increasing. I have heard of the conversion of a nobleman of the House of Lords, and of a noble lady, who, they say, are very zealous. Here, in Rome, two servants have been converted lately, but the greater part remain insensible. For us this is an exercise of patience; we must go on working thus till God vouchsafes to bless our labors.

Regarding the cardinalate, the report of which the Protestant gentleman has spoken at Lucca has not yet reached my ears. I do not believe the Holy Father has any thoughts of it, as I have not even been presented to him since he was made Pope, excepting in company with the whole college when he was in the neighborhood of Monte Porzio, on which occasion he did not say one word to me in particular. I can assure you, it would give me the greatest displeasure. My prayer is that God would grant me a life like that of His Son and the apostles, in poverty and tribulations for the Gospel. I must submit if it be his will to raise me to any high worldly dignity, but it would be to me the same as to say that I am unworthy of the heavenly state which I long for upon earth.

Jesus Christ sent the apostles in poverty. St. Francis Xavier, St. Dominic, and so many other great missionaries preached in poverty, and I wish to do the same if it be the will of God.

Recommending myself to your constant prayers,

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

George Spencer

LETTER VIII

To Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

From the Reverend Father Dominic

L' Angelo di Tramonte

Jan. 15, 1832

J.X.P.

Dear Sir,

A little after I had posted the last humble letter, which I addressed to you, I had the honor of receiving your most esteemed one, dated Oct. 29th. You cannot easily imagine what sweet consolation it brought to my heart. In it your very person seemed delineated. I read the real sentiments of your truly Christian heart. How dear also to me was the happy news with which you favored me, concerning the progress of the Catholic religion in your country! Ah, yes! I hope to see all England not only Catholic, but holy, as it once was. The Divine Goodness will vouchsafe to overcome all the obstacles that intervene; *'the crooked way will go straight, and the rough ways smooth'* (Lk. 3:5).

With regard to what you write about Mr. Ford, I wrote immediately to Mr. Spencer, who answered that the place where this gentleman lives is Exeter, and that it is sufficient to direct as follows: Rev. James Ford, Exeter. He has there the care of souls in a parish. He wrote to Mr. Spencer, who had the kindness to translate a passage of his letter where he makes mention of me. I will repeat it just as Mr. Spencer translated it. "The reason," he says, "why I have so long delayed to inform you of my having received your parcel is this, because I wished at the same

time to give you in full my opinion of the MSS., but, to say the truth, they are so long, and I am at present so occupied in various things, that hitherto I have not been able to read more than half. They contain a series of arguments which require much reflection, and it appears to me better to defer my judgment than speak inconsiderately on so important an affair. When you write to Father Dominic at Lucca, give him my compliments, assuring him that I am ever full of respect and love for him; and tell him that his labors for my good shall not be lost, if the careful attention with which I shall peruse his pious and talented writings will serve as some kind of return to him." So far the aforesaid minister, from whose words it may be argued that he is not altogether alien from the truth, but rather has need of a strong grace to touch his heart and make him apprehend the importance of the affair, nothing less than his eternal salvation being concerned therein. "It belongs to us," adds Mr. Spencer, "to pray God to grant him more grace to see the importance of it." "It appears to me," continues the same, "that God perhaps wishes to make use of our dear friend (Mr. Phillipps) to bring to a conclusion the enterprise you commenced with so much zeal of converting Mr. Ford." I say the same, my very dear Mr. Phillipps. It seems to me, also, that God wishes to make use of you to bring to our holy faith Ford the master, as He made use of you to bring to it Spencer the disciple. I shall not fail to get prayers offered up to God for this end. You ought to be engaged in the field of battle, and I hope that finally we shall have the victory. Oh, what a consolation it would be to me to hear that Mr. Ford has become a Catholic! I know not what more agreeable thing could befall me, except it were the conversion of all England. Oh, happy day, when wilt thou arrive? Oh, moment the sole expectation of which is enough to fill my heart with a sweet delight! Oh, delay, how sad thou art to me! *'How long shall I cry out through the day, and you will not listen? Will you be angry forever, Lord?'* (Ps. 79:5) – No, no! I hope, I hope, I hope... *'I await your salvation, Lord.'*

I confess, my dear Sir, that I cannot touch this subject without feeling my heart moved. Ah, England, England! How long, how long? *'Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged!'* (Ps. 119:5) Compassionate my folly; I shall never die content until I see England again returned to that mother from whom she was taken away four centuries ago. One thing I hope, and it is this, that dear Mr. Ford is one day to be one of the strongest supports of your new-born Church. Ah, I could go on without ever finishing, but I must needs finish.

This day, the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, Mr. Spencer begins in Rome his

apostolic ministry; today he makes his first sermon to the Roman people in the Church of the English. Oh, what a fortunate commencement! Certainly that ought to be salutary which commences in the name of the Savior. Oh, how great are my expectations! God, without doubt, has not shed so many graces on that soul to serve for his own profit alone; I rather believe that He has done it in order that he might carry the holy name of Jesus ‘coram regibus, et gentibus, et filiis Israel.’ Most sweet name of Jesus, be thou in his mouth and in that of my dear Mr. Phillipps, as oil poured out, which may softly and efficaciously penetrate the hardest marble, and so also may it be one day in the mouth of Mr. Ford. I hope, I hope...

I am very well in health, amidst a people of true followers of Jesus Christ, where it appears to me God is served in spirit and truth. I place great confidence in the prayers of these good Christians, whom I endeavor to interest in behalf of our dear England.

A few days ago I received a visit from Miss Trelawny, while staying in a village where I was giving my first mission.* Within a few days I hope to see her again, together with the baronet, her father. What excellent people! I conclude, because I think I have fatigued you enough. When shall I be able to see you again? Tell me something about it. If you think proper to honor me frequently with your letters, be certain you will do me one of the most agreeable things in the world. Ah, if you could give me in your answer a favorable account of Mr. Ford! I hope...

Adieu, my dear Sir, I shall never forget a person so dear to me as yourself, of whom I am, and shall ever be, invariably and constantly,

The most devoted, humble, and obedient servant,

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

* The village in which Father Dominic gave his first mission was in Pieve di S. Michele di Moriano, Diocese of Lucca. This mission began on the 27th December, 1831, and lasted twelve days. His companions therein were Padre Bernardo della Vergine Addolorata and P. Pio del Nomedì Maria, who is now first Consultor General. The employment of Father Dominic was that of catechist, which he fulfilled with the greatest diligence. The mission was attended with much fruit.

Before this mission Father Dominic had been to give a Retreat to the clergy of Camajora, in the same Diocese of Lucca, together with Padre Antonio di S. Giacomo, actual Provost General. It lasted nine days and succeeded well. On the 28th of March, 1832, he went to the city of Pisa, together with F. Bernardo, to give a Retreat to the ecclesiastics about to be ordained. April 8th, 1832, he proceeded to Lucca itself to give a Retreat there in the hospital of the Invalids. It lasted ten days and afforded great comfort and satisfaction to the poor inmates. August 26th, of the

did a great deal of good, and the parish priest at their departure said, amongst other things, "I never could have believed that so much good could be effected in so short a time."

LETTER IX

To Father Dominic of the Mother of God
From the Hon. and. Rev. George Spencer
English College, Rome
April 7, 1832

My dear Father Dominic,

It is fifteen days since I received your letter, and I do not know whether you have yet heard anything in reply on my part. The reason of my not having written to you at first in person was, that I have been under the hands of the physician, on account of a spitting of blood which came on, and on account of which they put me in bed for twelve days, without allowing me to write, or read, or speak, or eat, or move, more than was absolutely necessary. I felt no pain or bodily sickness, but when a blood vessel, though small, is broken in the lungs, great care must be taken for fear of the consequences. Thanks be to God, these days of perfect rest have turned out well with me. I am now up again and feel nothing but an extreme weakness, which naturally follows from privation of one's ordinary food and so many days passed in bed.

I hope the sickness has happened to me not unto death, nor to deprive me of that strength with which I hoped to serve God in His vineyard, but for His own greater glory, this being a much more effectual admonition than all that can be gained from words or books, to make me see my own perfect nothingness without the continual support of the Divine arm. I do nothing else but pray God, and I beg you also to unite with me in this prayer, that the Lord may give me true humility. Then I am sure I shall be more and more strengthened for all the works to which He shall call me in His service. While I lay under this sickness for the first three or four days, before I could tell what turn the thing would take, I saw clearly how wretchedly poor were my health and my strength. I hope in God never to forget the lesson. There was never any imminent danger, but only a fear that, if the complaint was not presently cured, a dangerous affection of the lungs might ensue. Now they give me good nourishment, and I have nothing else to do than

regain my strength, which I hope to do before long, as I have suffered nothing in health, and the rupture of the blood vessel appears to have been a thing purely accidental.

When I received your letter I sent it to Miss Trelawny, begging her to write a proper answer, as she knew as well as myself the probability of my ordination, etc. I wrote myself to P. Develaschi the information which he will have communicated to you about the Church, which the bishop has assigned me in England, but I told him nothing definite about my approaching ordination. It is true I hoped, the news of my illness in England might probably lead to my return to my native country within a short time, but when I spoke to the rector, he said he did not think of my being ordained till Christmas, and that I should return to England towards the Easter of 1833. I cannot tell whether my illness will make my superiors in England think that the climate of Rome does not suit me, and that I ought to return immediately to be cured. I myself do not attribute this attack to the air of Rome, nor do I see why I should return for this cause, but perhaps God intends in this manner to incline the will of my superiors, and certainly I shall return Him thanks, whatever way He may choose to bring me back amongst my brethren.

I have not had any letters directly from Phillipps, but I have heard news of him, that he is well, and that religion progresses in his neighborhood. Everything conspires to give us hope that the light is about to shine over England, but the moment is not arrived. This pestilence which is so grievous in London, and other large towns of England, will, it appears, produce great spiritual good, and, we hope, lead to penitence and amendment, not only Protestants, but also Catholics.

Recommending myself again to your prayers, recommending likewise our college, and the whole English Church,

I remain,

Your most attached friend and servant,

George Spencer

LETTER X

To Father Dominic of the Mother Of God

From the Same Mr. Spencer

English College, Rome

May 21, 1832

Dear Father Dominic,

I am in Retreat, waiting for my ordination, but I cannot dispense myself from the duty of giving you notice of the day and place appointed for this ceremony, and for my first Mass, that I may have the advantage of your prayers, as you promised me. I have also to thank you for your two letters, and for the very great concern you have always shown for my temporal and spiritual welfare.

In reply to your invitation to L'Angelo* I need only relate the circumstances in which I find myself. Ten days ago I received orders from my bishop, Dr. Walsh, to proceed to England without delay. When that letter was placed in my hands, I was at Fiumicino with our rector. The bishop already knew the circumstances of my illness and my partial recovery, and simply on account of my health had resolved to hasten my return to my native country. You know the value and security of obedience and will agree with me, that I ought not to doubt of anything.

As it belonged to the rector to determine the day of my departure and the mode of traveling, he thought proper that immediately after my ordination I should proceed by sea. The first festival day that presented itself for the ordination was that of St. Philip Neri. Judge, then, what was my joy when, after that day had been fixed upon, I discovered that it was also the Feast of St. Augustine, the first Apostle of England, sent by St. Gregory. Moreover, the rector who gave me this news, had, without being asked by me, thought of requesting the cardinal vicar (which request was in fact granted) to perform the ceremony in the Church of St. Gregory, on the Celian Hill, the very place from which St. Augustine took his departure for England. It seems to me that Providence wishes to give me some good omen. It is enough if I have faith and humility. The rector intends also to present me on that day to the Holy Father to receive a blessing, which we hope may be in some way efficacious, like that of his great predecessor.

With regard to the visit to the Retreat dell' Angelo, which you propose to me, how great a pleasure would it be to me to pass days and months in your society, and under your direction, but it appears God does not choose it at present. May His holy will be done. I have to return to England without our being able to see each other first; let us content ourselves with the hope of beholding one another for eternity in heaven. It is better for us that He should not grant us in this

world all the consolations we desire. If you feel any regret at my inability to visit your house, you may console yourself, and even rejoice for my sake, that my health is such that my superiors think me able to return to my country, if not as a missionary, at least according to my ability, to do something for the cause of God. Nothing need be apprehended from the voyage because God, who calls me, can give me the strength necessary to correspond with His holy call. I do not doubt, therefore, to find myself safely in England in two or three months, and if God is pleased to preserve me from accidents until my arrival there, may His holy will be praised for ever. In fine, I recommend myself again to your prayers, and beg you to believe me always,

Your most devoted friend and brother in Jesus Christ,
G. Spencer

P.S. Mr. James Ford has lately written to me, and, as always, speaks of you with expressions of sincere affection.

*Father Dominic, having heard of Mr. Spencer's illness, invited him to the Retreat of L'Angelo, in Tramonte, near the city of Lucca, the metropolis of the small duchy, that by the benefit of that soft and temperate climate he might more easily be restored to health.

+ The rector of the English College at Rome, during all the time that Mr. Spencer remained there, was Dr. Wiseman, now Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

LETTER XI

To Father Dominic of the Mother of God

From the Same Mr. Spencer

Casa Saladini Arsina, Lucca

June 4, 1832

Dear Father Dominic,

I need not explain by letter how I was detained in Leghorn about ten days, waiting the arrival of the steamboat to carry me to Marseilles. The interesting part is that Providence has thus

procured me the unexpected pleasure of passing some time with my dear friends in this house, and also of visiting L'Angelo before going to England. On Saturday afternoon I came to Lucca. Yesterday, after having said Mass at the altar of the Holy Face of our Lord in the Cathedral, I made my way hither. The weather being unfavorable, and being still obliged to take great care of my health, though, thanks be to God, I am greatly recovered, I could not undertake to make an excursion today, but tomorrow, please God, I will come to see you at L'Angelo, and by the advice of Miss Trelawny, I send this letter today to give you notice of my visit. I shall leave this place in a light carriage of the country, and hope to start at half-past six a.m., after having said Mass and taken collation. Miss Trelawny tells me I shall be able to reach L'Angelo at about half-past nine. What I propose to myself is to pass Tuesday night with you and your community and to return to Arsina after dinner on Wednesday. It is probable that Sir Harry Trelawny and his daughter will accompany me as far as Pisa on my return to Leghorn; in this case we shall leave this place very early on Thursday, in order that I may say Mass again in the cathedral of Lucca; we shall remain in Lucca a few hours to see the holy places, and then I shall return to Leghorn, and my dear companions will retrace their steps, unless Miss Trelawny should be disposed to accompany me as far as Leghorn, that we may together visit the Madonna di Montenero. Thus I tell you my plans so that, if you have any suggestion to make for their improvement, I may be able to avail myself of it. What pleasure do I promise myself in seeing you once again; but it is not the pleasure which I seek, and I wish you to think of nothing but of preparing me better, by your advice and discourse, for worthily accomplishing the great work which God has given me to do. What need has a newly-ordained priest of support, that he may with due devotion and affection perform the holy functions with which he is charged. Let us, therefore, pray that this visit to L'Angelo may be for my spiritual good and for our mutual consolation. If the weather should be bad tomorrow morning, do not expect me; I must submit to the will of God and not hazard catching cold. But I trust the weather will clear up and that nothing will interfere with my plan.

Believe me, your most devoted friend and brother in Jesus Christ,

G. Spencer

LETTER XII

To Mr. Phillipps

From Father Dominic

L'Angelo di Tramonte, Lucca

June 6, 1832

Dear Sir,

I have written you two letters since the one I sent by the Irish Dominican priest, but I have heard no account of either. They must have been lost by the way, or for want of a proper direction they missed their destination. I have received an answer, however, to that which was sent by the aforesaid priest, and also to the one I wrote in union with Sir Harry Trelawny and his daughter. You cannot easily conceive what consolation your valuable one of the 19th of October, 1831, afforded me. I could not contain myself for joy while reading it, and seeing therein described the dispositions of your heart as well as learning the happy progress of our holy Catholic religion in your Island.

No less was my consolation in seeing again, quite unexpectedly and when I was least thinking of it, our dear Mr. Spencer, who, by a loving disposition of our good God, came here on occasion of his journey to England. I received intelligence of his sickness with extreme sorrow. I likewise heard of his ordination, which was accompanied with many circumstances which seem all to announce the great things God intends to work by his means, and which you may learn from his own mouth. I had written to him, begging him to visit us here for some time, in order to reestablish his health by a change of air, but he had answered me that this was impossible since, immediately after being ordained priest, he had to go to England by sea. I had placed my soul in peace, adored the Divine dispositions, and offered to God a sacrifice of the hope of seeing him again, at least for the present, when, the other day, I received a letter from him, informing me that he was here with the Trelawnys. You may imagine the joy I felt; I set out from home immediately and went to visit him. Yesterday I had the happiness of conducting him to our house, dell'Angelo, where he is now staying till tomorrow. I thought proper to profit by this convenient opportunity of sending you a letter, that I might have the sweet consolation of again seeing your handwriting, and hearing accounts of yourself and of the progress of religion in that

kingdom which has interested me so much for more than eighteen years.

I beg you, therefore, to do me the great favor of communicating to me some intelligence concerning yourself and our dear England. What, then, is my dear Mr. Phillipps about? I believe his heart is lighted up with a holy flame, as that of the apostles on the approaching Pentecost. Oh, may this blessed fire inflame it to such a degree as to enable it to consume, by its ardor, the iniquities of the English people. May it burn with holy love and ascend to the loftiest height of Christian perfection. This is my prayer for you during these days. I beg you also to pray for me, that God may convert me entirely to Himself and make me a fit instrument to do something for His glory. Ah! my sins and my want of correspondence with His Divine grace render me unworthy of receiving more and incapable of doing any good. Still I hope in His Divine Mercy.

What is the state of our beloved England? I have heard unfavorable news regarding its political condition, and this has caused me extreme affliction; but God is powerful enough to draw good even from evil. And I seem to behold amidst all these troubles certain rays that announce the light which will in a short time be spread throughout those regions. Ah, my God, “I enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.” Grant, O Lord, that the blind may open their eyes to behold the light of Thy truth. May the Divine light dissipate the fearful darkness which libertinism and heresy have spread over those countries. ‘*The islands await you and will call upon your name. Lord, pardon your people, and do not abandon your name in shame.*’ Oh, how often do I repeat these things from my heart to the Lord for the universal Church and for England in particular! May His Divine Majesty vouchsafe to hear my voice through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen, amen, amen! I endeavor to interest in this matter all the pious souls I happen to converse with, and certainly in this Duchy of Lucca, there are a good number, and I hope their prayers will be heard.

I have been here for this year back, in quality of superior of our house, in which we have opened a novitiate. At present there are twelve novices, who give good hopes. They assemble every day in a chapel, over the altar of which hangs the devout picture you were so kind as to leave expressly to the Passionist novices for the purpose of interesting them for England. I trust they will not fail to present their petitions to God, night and day, for that kingdom. I continue to be busy in preaching, and endeavor as well as I can to lead souls to God. But I can do very little. I know, however, that God can do all things, and I shall be able to do all in Him, ‘*I can do all*

things in Him who strengthens me' (Phil. 4:13). How willingly would I go to England along with dear Mr. Spencer! But the time destined by the Divine Mercy for this is not yet arrived. I hope, however, that it will arrive. I hope one day to see with my own eyes that kingdom which for so many years I have borne engraved on my heart. '*I know in whom I have believed, and I am certain*' (II Tim. 1:12). Oh, what a sweet consolation for me is the thought of being able to embrace, again, my dear Mr. Phillipps! O wished for time! O happy day, when wilt thou arrive? Ah, how every hour of delay appears to me a thousand years. I beg you to give me some good hopes on this head. I shall remain impatiently looking for your answer, and waiting at the same time for the happy moment wherein I shall see you again, either here in Italy or (what I should still more desire) in England. May God vouchsafe to comfort me; may God also be merciful to us both, that so we may meet together in the company of all our dear Englishmen above in heaven to praise and bless the Divine Majesty throughout all ages. Amen.

I am, my dear Sir,
and will ever be, your most humble,
most devoted, and obedient servant in Christ,
Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

LETTER XIII

To the Rev. James Ford

From Father Dominic of the Mother of God

L'Angelo

June 6, 1832

J.X.P.

How is my dear Mr. Ford? How desirous I am to hear from him! It is now some months since I wrote to him, sending my letter under cover to Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps, but I have had no reply. I have, however, had the consolation of receiving your obliging compliments through Mr. Spencer, and yesterday he read to me that part of the letter which you last addressed to him, in which you made mention of me. I assure you, my heart was filled with an inexpressible joy on

hearing the good dispositions of your heart and your zeal for our holy religion. Oh, how did those Christian words you used pierce my heart, *‘These things are in my heart always, in my mouth frequently; this is my better wisdom: to know Jesus and him crucified!’* Ah, then, my dearest friend, you seek only our Lord Jesus Christ; if it be so, you must infallibly find Him. *‘Everyone who seeks finds’* (Mt. 7:8). This is the promise of the very Truth itself. But, dear Sir, if you wish with certainty to find Jesus, seek Him not amidst the ties of flesh and blood. Whilst the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph sought Him amongst their kinsfolk they found Him not; then only did they find Him when they turned to the holy temple of God. *‘They found him in the temple’* (Lk. 2:46). Thus it is, thus it is, my dear friend, flesh and blood not only cannot conduct us to Jesus, but they are obstacles to our finding Him. *‘Go out from your land and away from your relations,’* was said to Abraham, *‘and go to the land I will show you’* (Gen. 12:1). *‘Hear, O daughter, says the Lord to our souls, hear, O daughter, and incline thine ear, forget also thine own country and the house of thy father’* (Ps. 45:10). *‘The enemies of a man are his family,’* are the words of the same, our Lord Jesus Christ. If, then, my dear Sir, you would find Jesus, go to His holy temple, to that temple which was built by Himself and founded on a rock, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. This is that ark which alone can save us from perishing in the waters of the deluge; this is that pillar and ground of the truth; this is that supreme tribunal to which we must appeal. *‘There, everyone who asks, receives; who seeks, finds; and who knocks, it is opened’* (Mt. 7:8). But out of it all search is useless. But, I think I hear you say, here is the great question, where are we to find this Church? Ah, dear Sir, it is not difficult to one who seeks with a true desire of finding it. It is set on a very high mountain. In consequence it is visible to all; it can be found by all who seek for it with a true heart. In the writings which I have had the honor to send you, there are some things which may assist you in this enquiry. But you say that you have not yet had time to consider them with due care. Yet, my dearest Sir, I hope you will easily find time, if you reflect that our most important affair is that of our salvation. What will it profit us to think of others if we neglect ourselves? I know that you labor much for the benefit of many erring souls, that you seek to bring them back to the right path, but I would not that your own soul should suffer. Ah, no, my dear Sir, our own salvation should be our first object, and then that of others.

Whenever there may be difficulties in these writings, or in whatever other way obstacles may

arise, I pray, I conjure you, by the love you bear to our Lord Jesus Christ, not to be held back by them, but to propose these difficulties, and if you will honor me so far as to propose them to me, I will endeavor, to the best of my ability, aided by the Divine grace, to satisfy you. Do not fear that I shall be wearied or annoyed; no, dear Sir, may God grant that I may be enabled to be of any service to you. How willingly would I give my very life for this end, if it were necessary. I know that you represent to Mr. Spencer the disagreement of our theologians on the dogma of justification, as an obstacle, but the disagreements which there may be on this matter certainly do not regard the substance of the dogma. They only regard the manner of explaining it, which, in truth, is of but little importance, provided all be agreed, as they are, on the dogma itself, and all are disposed to submit their judgment to the infallible judgment of the Holy Catholic Church. And, supposing any one of them not to be so disposed, he, from that moment, ceases to be a Catholic. If, then, you have upon this, or on any other points, special difficulties, I again pray you to propose them with your wonted candor, and I, in simplicity and good faith, will endeavor to satisfy you. Oh, how easy it is to find the truth if we proceed thus! Dear Sir, I abhor all those questions and disputes which proceed not from a heart sincere and loving the truth. We are not born to dispute, but, truly, to save our souls. And this should be our only concern. *‘What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul?’* (Mk. 8:36) I have never forgotten you from the time when I had the honor to make your acquaintance, and you may imagine how heartily I recommend you to the Divine Goodness.

Yesterday, I had the consolation to see here in this our house, dell’ Angelo, our friend Mr. George Spencer, who is still with us till tomorrow, when he is to depart for England, whither he will bear with him the half of my heart, if not indeed the whole; since if the heart is more where it loves than where it lives, I may venture to say, that, loving England so tenderly as I do, my heart is more there than in Italy or in Lucca. May God vouchsafe to draw to Himself all the hearts of the children of Adam. Amen.

By a most happy and unexpected concurrence of circumstances, there happens to be also in this house Don Gaetano Nuti, the priest from Pisa, with whom you had so much conversation during your stay in that city. He offers up unceasingly to the throne of the Divine Mercy fervent supplications in your behalf, and I hope his prayers will be heard through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

If you should think proper to honor me with an answer, the address is ‘Al P. Domenico Superiore, Passionista, Lucca, per l’Angelo di Tramonte.’ You may write in English if you choose, because I am able to understand that language, though I am not able to write or speak it for want of practice. I shall, therefore, reply in Italian, a language which you understand perfectly.

I beg you to favor me with your address, that my letters may reach you with security. I hope you will remember me, a poor sinner, full of miseries and iniquities, and will pray to the Lord for me, as I can assure you that I shall never forget you, hoping one day to embrace you again in this life, and to live eternally with you in heaven to praise and bless the Divine mercies for ever. Amen.

I am, my dear Rev. Sir, and will for ever invariably be,
Your most humble, most devoted,
and most obedient servant in Christ,
Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

LETTER XIV

To Father Dominic
From Mr. Phillipps
Garendon Park
July 27, 1832

Jesus, Mary, Joseph

My very dear and beloved friend F. Dominic.

I had yesterday the great consolation of receiving your very sweet and amiable letter, which you have had the kindness to write to me by means of our dear friend, the Rev. Mr. Spencer. You will have great pleasure in hearing that this good and noble priest is now in England. You will derive no less pleasure from the consoling news of the great improvement in his health. I trust confidently in the Divine Goodness that within a little it will be completely reestablished. Mr. Spencer is now with his noble father, Lord Spencer, for the first time since his happy conversion to the holy faith. I hope he will make some impression on the heart of his father; he will at least

have a very powerful, nay an all-powerful, means in the holy and divine Sacrifice of the altar. He writes to me that during his journey from Italy to England, he did not fail one single day to approach the Divine Altar, and that all his consolation is placed in this treasure of the Holy Mass. Oh, how powerful is the hand of the Lord! and with what sweetness and facility does He change the hearts of men! I cannot think of the conversion of Mr. Spencer without the greatest admiration for the goodness of our most amiable Jesus. Oh! what a thought! only three years ago this our friend was a Protestant minister of this heretical Church of England, and now he is a zealous and most pious Catholic priest! This is truly the work of the same hand that in past ages stopped St. Paul in the course of his opposition to the holy Church of God. It appears also to me that God looks for something great from him; indeed I have no doubt of it. And here, my dear Father Dominic, is another proof that the Lord has heard the prayers which you have not ceased to pour forth these eighteen years in behalf of poor England. I have received safely all your other most sweet letters, and am sorry that I did not answer them sooner; I beg your pardon and hope to write more regularly for the future. Yours are to me a truly heavenly consolation and give me great courage in the way of the Lord; I beg you for the love of God to give me often these favors; above all, I pray you to tell me all your ideas regarding the conversion of England; it will afford me real edification; especially tell me all you learn from God in holy prayer respecting this matter, or whatever else is connected with England. I remember well all you told me in the holy city of Rome, and this remembrance serves at once for a consolation and encouragement to me, and not only to me but also to many other good priests and servants of God here in England. What you told me of that vision of the Venerable Father Paul of the Cross, in which he saw so many delightful things in England, and amongst the rest the foundation in this kingdom of the Order of Passionists. This is a most consoling thing and gives us assurance that the time of the Divine Mercy is not far distant. I have related this vision of the Ven. Father to many, both priests and laics in England, and the relation has given them great courage and a secure confidence that all will go well. I will tell you, my dear Father in Jesus Christ, a thing I heard only last Sunday. In this county of Leicester, at a distance of about twenty miles from Garendon, there is a monastery of Dominican Friars. It is new, and the only one in England. Well, in the garden of this monastery there lives a holy man, full of pious simplicity, who acts as gardener. This man often says, "The conversion of England is at hand. The young priests of England will see that

happy day, and will say Mass in the old churches, which for three centuries have been in the hands of heretics!” What a beautiful prediction! How is it possible that God should permit so many of His servants to be in such error? I cannot believe it, but on the contrary am full of hope and confidence. On the other hand, the idea of the approaching conversion of England does not rest solely on the prophecies and visions of servants of God. Even daily occurrences give us reason to hope for it. In every part of England new missions are opened; the Catholic bishops have begun no less than five during the two past months of May and June. What is more, there are numerous conversions every day. But some one will say: if you have no other signs, the epoch for the conversion of all England is distant indeed. But I reply: no, no, it is not so distant as you imagine; what we see now is the dawn of the clear day that begins to open on this dark kingdom. But the interval between the dawn and the rising of the sun is not great; so it will be with England, according to my opinion. Ah, my dear and beloved Father Dominic, I often think of you, and I cannot express how sweet and consoling is the remembrance of you and of all the kindness you have shown me. I am very much pleased to hear that you have recommended England to the prayers of so many good people in Lucca, and that your novices pray for it before that picture of the Blessed Virgin. Let them pray also for me, a most miserable sinner, that Jesus may grant me the grace of serving Him with my whole heart, and of suffering a thousand deaths rather than offend Him by one single mortal sin. Let them pray likewise for me to my beloved Mother Mary, through whose patronage and protection I hope to gain my eternal salvation. And you, my dear Father Dominic, pray for me and remember me in the holy Sacrifice of the Altar. I shall never fail to unite my poor prayers to yours, and especially the Office of our Lady, which I say every day. I have a small picture of Ven. Paul of the Cross and do not fail to recommend myself every day to his prayers and protection. From this practice I derive great consolation because, by reason of that paper of filiation you gave me in Rome, I consider him as my father and protector. That Passionist heart you gave me now hangs over my bed and serves as a remembrance of you and of the Passionists. The day will come, I have no doubt, wherein you, my dear Father Dominic, will come here into England to found the Order of Passionists, and I hope to assist you in this holy enterprise, if my sins do not render me unworthy. But pray for me; I cannot tell you how much the enemy of souls makes me suffer on this head; I entreat you to offer up your holy prayers for me. Jesus and Mary will reward you for it. I beg you to

recommend me to your angelic novices, that they may pray for me to the Queen of Angels; I hope they also will come some day into England. I have translated your *Lament for England* into English and had it printed. I assure you great edification has been the result,

Adieu my dear Father Dominic,
ever yours most affectionately in Jesus,
Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

LETTER XV

To Ambrose L. Phillipps, Esq.
From Rev. F. Dominic
Lucca, L'Angelo di Tramonte
August 17, 1832

J.X.P.

My very dear Mr. Phillipps,

May Jesus and Mary reign always in our hearts.

I could not easily express the overflow of joy which I experience at the sight of your most beloved handwriting; you may, however, imagine it by what, as you tell me, you feel at the sight of mine. "*Judge by what you yourself experience.*" I am going to write to you again in obedience to your injunction, without which I should not have taken the liberty to do so for fear of being too troublesome.

Not being content with enjoying your most amiable letter all myself, I no sooner had received it than I read it to all our religious in this house. Then I read it also to the novices, who, as one might say, were beside themselves for the exceeding consolation it gave them. I have not the least doubt that the religious, no less than the novices, will continually pray to the Divine Majesty for you and for our dear England, and I hope that God will vouchsafe favorably to hear the prayers of these good souls. I endeavor to interest in the cause, as far as I am able, persons of both sexes and of every class, specially when I meet with good Christians. I shall have engaged about a thousand to pray for England. I hardly ever write to anyone without imploring of him to pray for England, but especially when I write to our religious and our nuns of the Passion. All

tell me that they do it and will do it perpetually for the time to come. This gives me great consolation and always increases my hopes of the return of that kingdom to the Holy Catholic Faith. In regard to your wish to know more particularly what I think of England, I can only assure you that for eighteen years till now I have always entertained the most lively confidence in the recovery of that kingdom and never lost it, even during the time when there did not appear a ray of hope; as you may infer from that prayer entitled the Lamentation of England, which I wrote precisely during those years. This hope has been always on the increase since I had the happiness of making acquaintance with you and with Mr. Spencer. Much more it increases on my hearing the good accounts which you are so good as to give me. As to any special revelation on this subject, I am not the person to receive such favors, nor have I sought for them, being content with the revelation given us through the divine Scriptures and the holy Church. I am a poor sinner, not worthy that God should make known His divine secrets through me. I do not on this account, however, lose my hope, which rests not on my merits but on those of my Lord Jesus Christ. I hope then much, very much. *'I know in whom I have believed'* (II Tim. 1:12). As to the entire return of England, if we mean a mathematical entireness, I look on this as a thing very difficult. I should be exceeding happy at a moral entireness. So I am not discouraged at seeing that the progress is somewhat slow and not so immediate as we should wish. It may be better that the work should go on more or less slow, but with maturity and reflection, and that thus the ground should be gained, as we say, inch by inch. If the nation declared itself Catholic in a mass there would be reason to fear that many would do it for secondary motives and without reflection. But advancing at a slow pace, we walk more securely. Any way, this is a work of God's own, and we have to let Him take His own way, having a care on our part to follow faithfully the path which the Divine Mercy lovingly points out to us.

Oh! how consoling to me have been the happy reports which you have given me of our dearest Spencer! Ah, my God, who could sufficiently praise Thy bounty for all the graces which Thou sheddest on that pure soul! Every time that I reflect on the profusion of graces which God pours forth on that heart, I feel myself filled with courage and cannot do less than praise the Divine Goodness. I am confident that such graces cannot be for his own salvation alone, but for the salvation and conversion of many. I hope that God will make use of him, as formerly He did of S. Augustine for the conversion of England, and perhaps of other nations likewise. If you have

the opportunity of seeing or writing to him, I beg you to convey to him my most sincere regards.

Not less does the sweet hope console me, which you give me of coming to England to found there our Congregation. Oh, happy day, when wilt thou come? when? oh, when? It is true that I am an instrument too inadequate for so holy a work. But God can make use of whom He pleases, and that is my consolation. If I had abilities equal to my wishes, I should be fit for great achievements; for as to my desires, God knows whether they be great or not. Ah! could I but sacrifice my life and give my blood for my most beloved brethren of England. I hope, however, that if I give not my blood, I shall at least exhaust my strength for them.

You are happy since you have it in your power to do that which I, at present, cannot. Ah! my most dear, most loving, friend, work away as you do on a great scale for the glory of God and for the salvation of our brethren, '*There is a reward for your work*' (Gen 15:1). And what reward is this? '*I am your reward exceedingly great.*' God will be your reward. And do not suppose that because you are not a priest, you are less capable of working. You can do perhaps as much, perhaps even more than if you were a priest, teaching by your example not only seculars but ecclesiastics how one must live to be a good Catholic. Do not be alarmed at the troubles which you tell me of. No, my dear Sir, those are precious gems, which God gives to His faithful servants. The way of the cross is the only way which leads to heaven. Be of good courage then. God is faithful and will not permit that we should be tempted above our strength. Like a loving father, if with one hand He smites us, with the other He supports us. In the time of the greatest difficulties, revive your confidence and say with Job, '*Although he should kill me, I will trust in him*' (Cfr. Job 13: 15), or with David: '*I hoped in the Lord, let me never be confounded.*' (Ps. 30:2).

I went yesterday to see Sir Harry Trelawny, who is staying in this Duchy of Lucca, and I gave him and his daughter your dear letter to read. You may conceive what was their consolation, particularly as they knew nothing till now of the arrival of Mr. Spencer in England. Miss Trelawny charged me to give you her respects and to ask you about your family, particularly about your sister. She wishes to know if she perseveres in her good intentions of becoming Catholic.

If you will kindly answer me, I assure you that you will confer on me a most especial favor. But if this should draw you away from other more profitable occupations, I beg you not to

inconvenience yourself. You will answer when it is convenient. If you find it easier to write in English, pray do so; for though I cannot yet speak English, I understand it tolerably well. I write to Sir Harry Trelawny in English, and he answers me in English, but I make blunders. If it pleases God that I should learn that language well, He will give me the means for it.

Is there any hope of again seeing you in Italy? Be it however in Italy or be it in England, I hope before my death to embrace you, and I hope, in the end, to be your companion everlastingly in the glory of the blessed in heaven. Adieu, my dear Mr. Phillipps. I am unchangeably,

Your most devoted and most obedient servant,

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

LETTER XVI

To Father Dominic

From the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer

Wolverhampton

September 1, 1832

My dear Father Dominic,

I begin for the first time a letter to you in English. I hope you have so far advanced in your knowledge of our language, since I saw you, that you will have little difficulty in understanding me. At least you will be able to read an English letter better than I can write one in Italian. God grant that this event of your receiving an English letter may be a step towards the accomplishment of your long continued wishes, to be at length, not only a correspondent with England, but one of her apostles. It is now six weeks since my happy landing at Plymouth. Since that I have spent some weeks with my father, who received me with the greatest affection. I have found also my brother Lord Althorp, my former superior, the Protestant Bishop of London, and all my other relations and friends disposed to treat me in the same way. None of them, as yet, have shown any disposition towards the Catholic religion. All are contented that I should continue to exercise my ministry with diligence as long as I do not interfere with them. And what is more than this, Dr. Walsh, my bishop, had, as I found, already begun to correspond with my

father and explained to him the way in which he intended to dispose of me, and obtained from him a full consent to his plans. You will rejoice with me at these happy circumstances, which at least give comforting prospects for the future, howsoever insufficient at present to satisfy my wishes. Soon after I came home, I sent to Mr. Ford the letters which I brought for him from yourself and Abbate Nuti. In his answer, he appeared well pleased with both; but as yet he does not alter his mind on the all important subject of the Catholic Faith. He declares, however, that he is still ready to hear and weigh our reasons. So let us persevere to the end in our prayers and hope for good success with him and many more...

(Oscott College, September 11) I have been traveling about from place to place since I began this letter and not had time to go on with it till now. I had almost determined not to send it at all. Though it is not such a letter as you deserve from me, it is better than none, and it will be enough to assure you of my love and esteem for you, which I trust will never fail, but go on increasing every day... I must now conclude.

I am your affectionate friend,
George Spencer

LETTER XVII

To the Rev. Mr. Ford
From the Rev. Father Dominic
Lucca, l'Angelo di Tramonte
Feb. 6, 1833

Reverend Sir,

It is already some time since I wrote this answer to your amiable letter, and I should have dispatched it immediately, but I have not been able to find a convenient opportunity. Now, however, that an occasion has been presented to me, I will avail myself of it with feelings which you may easily imagine. Ah, my God! would that I might go in person where my letters go! Oh! that I might have the happiness to embrace my dear Mr. Ford! Would that I could send my heart as easily as I send my sheets. If I might at least express on paper correctly the tender affection

which I entertain for you, I am sure it would make some impression on your heart, warm and pious as it is. Permit me at least, my dear Sir, to pour out my heart on this paper and to describe to you my sentiments with the sincerity which your goodness encourages. You well know that one who loves also fears. And one who fears and loves, cannot but express his fears to the person he loves. I fear, my dear Sir, and what do I fear? I fear for your eternal welfare. I fear that months, years, nay, your whole life should pass by before you resolve on taking that step which would nevertheless be so necessary. And if this were to be the case, what would become of my dear friend? Ah, good God! I know well what we are taught by persons of authority, that although, out of the true Church there is no salvation, it may yet happen that one will be saved, who, although materially out of the Church, nevertheless belongs to it really, provided always there is in him good faith, founded on invincible ignorance of his error. Such a one, though he may seem to be out of the true Church, may be said to be of it because, having entered it by holy baptism, he has never gone out from it, for no one can go out from the Church without his own fault. Such a one, if he lives conformably to the light which God gives to his children and keeps himself from offending God, does not lose the grace which he received in baptism and may be saved. This I know and believe. But here is the great question: Does this inculpable ignorance always exist? Oh! how easily may this ignorance become culpable, especially in persons who study. And will it be an excuse for anyone in this case. No, my dear Sir, no more than the enemies of our Divine Redeemer deserved to be excused. For, although these were in some way ignorant of His divinity, *'If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory'* (I Cor. 2;8), yet their ignorance was culpable, was sinful. What if such were the case, my dear Sir, with you also? Ah! my heart trembles at the thought. In this case you would be forever lost. What would avail under this supposition all the good works which you are continually engaged in? Alas! all would be lost, and lost forever. Be not angry, I beseech you, dear Sir, with one who loves you as he does himself, and would, if it were necessary, shed the last drop of his blood for your eternal salvation. Tell me, then, do you discover anything in your heart which opposes these lights which God would impart to you? Yet it is not necessary that you should tell it me. I will rather say, examine yourself dispassionately before God, to whom nothing can be hidden, whether any human motive withholds you from becoming a Catholic. Would it be perchance your affection for your wife and children? I do not think so, for you would have no

need to be separated from them. Would it be the shame of confessing that you have hitherto been deceived, the fear of being called by other Protestants a shallow, inconstant man, without force of character? Or is it the principle that a man must follow the religion in which he is born? or any other similar cause? Ah, my dear friend, if this were the case, what would become of you? You might say in your defense that you have carefully examined into the truth and have followed the religion which seems to you true. Yes, you might say this to me, or to others like me, but could you say it as well before the Divine tribunal, at which we must one day appear? Dearest Sir, what would it avail us to appear innocent and seem holy before men, if we are not so before God? Well did St. Francis of Assisi say, "Such we are, as we are before God."

My good Sir, years pass and pass too quickly. Our death is every moment approaching more nearly. Our life is a shadow, a breath, a nothing. And what if death surprised us in a state in which we would not wish to die? Ah, let us reflect that the time of this present life is given us solely that we may employ it well in seeking the truth, till we find it, and following it when found. Ah, then, my dear, my very dear Sir, seek the truth with all possible ardor, if you have not yet found it, and embrace it the moment you have found it. '*Work while it is day, lest darkness overtake you*' (Jn. 9:4).

I acknowledge myself to be troublesome and intrusive. But believe me, it is love which makes me so. You will never be able to conceive into what anguish this throws my heart. Ah, if this very moment God left it to me to choose whether to go to heaven (which I have never deserved), leaving you in danger of being damned, or to remain with you exposed to danger, but yet with the hope of gaining you, I should without the least hesitation choose the second alternative. God, who knows my heart, knows that I lie not. There does not pass a day, there does not pass an hour, so to say, that my dear Mr. Ford comes not into my mind. I know not how it is, but it must be allowed that it was a strong tie which bound me to you the first time that I had the honor to know you. When I reflect on the force of it, I am obliged to confess that the hand of God alone could have framed it. Such being my conviction, I embrace this sweet bond, and regard it as something sacred and divine. Yes, I hold it so fast that it seems to me it never can be broken by any created power, neither by angels nor by powers, neither by things in heaven nor by things on earth. But, alas! this very bond must by main force be broken if we are not to live eternally united in heaven. Ah! how the fear of this terrifies me! Ah, my God, let it never be! My

sweet Jesus, by Thy most sacred passion, and by Thy most precious blood, let not that tie be burst asunder, which Thy hand has bound on me so powerfully. These are my continual prayers, my dear Mr. Ford. And what are yours? Are they not the same? I believe it... but then... what can keep us asunder?...

My dear Mr. Ford, I beg you, by the love of our dear Redeemer, condescend to read the papers which I send you, and then by the same love, I beg of you to let me know what effect they may have produced upon your heart. If you have any fresh difficulties, whether in relation to these papers or on any other point of the Catholic faith, I beseech you, for the love of God, do not count it too much trouble to note them diligently and forward them to me by the first opportunity. If in anything I can be of service to you, I will never refuse, while God preserves to me this my thread of life unbroken to labor for the benefit of one I love so much. I shall await the result in silence with the greatest anxiety. Ah! if I might but receive by your first letter the knowledge which my heart longs for! If not by the first letter, may I receive it, at least, before I finish this my frail life. I hope it. Amen, amen. 'Fiat, fiat,' through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and glory for all ages, world without end. Amen, amen. I am, for evermore,

My dear Reverend Sir,
Your most devoted, most obedient servant,
Dominic of the Mother of God,
Priest of the Congregation of the Passion

LETTER XVIII

To Mr. Ambrose Phillipps
From Rev. Father Dominic
Retreat of S. Mary of Pagliano
Feb. 6, 1834

My most beloved Mr. Ambrose Phillipps,

Having, for some affairs of mine, taken a journey to Rome, I had the honor of receiving your

message through Lord Clifford, who also gave me the consoling news of your having married an excellent young lady, his niece, who is pregnant and near the time of her delivery. May God vouchsafe to bless with fulness of His graces this marriage, as He once blessed that of Abraham with Sarah, of Isaac with Rebecca. May there spring from it a numerous race of saints, who may cause the religion of our fathers to flourish again in that Island, which never ceases to be the beloved object of my desires. Ah! dear, beloved England! If the blessings of heaven upon thee shall be according to what I wish thee, thou wilt indeed be blessed. And if they descend on my dearest Mr. Phillipps according to the same rule, what will be his lot? He will be a hundred and a thousand times blessed. Like another David he will overthrow with his sling the proud giant, and will enrich himself with his spoils. He will be another Moses, who will bring his people from under the hard slavery to which their fatal separation and schism have subjected them; a new Paul, who will spread the light of the gospel from one end of the kingdom to the other. Oh, dear Sir! you may conceive if ever I forget you. I assure you that I never approach the sacred altar without offering for you the spotless victim to our heavenly Father. It seems to me as if I had not the power to offer it to His Divine Majesty but in your company. Thus may He vouchsafe to accept the offering which we unite in making to Him of His only-begotten Son; and by the merits of this well-beloved Son, may He deign to cast a look of mercy on our dear separated brethren, and so bring them back to the fold. *'There will be one sheepfold and one shepherd'* (Jn. 10: 16). Oh, happy day when this shall take place! Shall my eyes see thee? Yes, I hope it. *'I know in whom I have believed'* (II Tim. 1:12).

And our dearest Spencer, how is he? I hear that he is busily occupied, and that his labors are blessed by God with most abundant fruits. Oh, my God! what consolation did I experience at hearing this! If you have the opportunity to see him, I beg you to present him my most sincere respects, and tell him to be so good as sometimes to remember this poor servant of his, who never can forget him. Would that I could perform the part of Moses while he so worthily performs that of Josue!

Allow me now, my dear Sir, to tell you something about myself and how we are in Italy. I have been twice in danger of death by a violent inflammatory illness. At the first attack I lost about eight pounds of blood, which I was all the while offering in union with the most precious blood of Jesus for the conversion of our dear England. I received the holy Viaticum. All thought

that I was near death. But to tell you the truth, I little thought it, because I never thought I should die before seeing my England Catholic. Many times death has come near me, but I have always laughed at it, and it has not dared to make a closer approach. I am now convalescent. I am not in stout health, being threatened with disease of the chest; but what of that? *'For when I am weak, then I am strong'* (II Cor. 12:10).

It is more than a year since I have seen the Trelawny family. A few days ago, however, I saw at Rome a granddaughter of the baronet, who has lately become a Catholic, and I hope that her brother will shortly do the same.

I had hoped to see you again in last September, as Monsignor Acton told me you would be coming to Rome at that time. My hopes have, however, been in vain. Am I then not to hope to see you again in this life? No, I will hope to see you again in this mortal life, and then to live with you in our heavenly country. If you think well to answer me, the direction is as follows:

Roma, per Paliano,

S. Maria di Pugliano.

I am, Sir, always and invariably,

Your most devoted humble servant,

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

LETTER XIX

To M. Ambrose Phillipps

From the Rev. Father Dominic

Paliano

March 17, 1836, Feast of St. Patrick

J.X.P.

Honored Sir,

I have received a letter from Father Angelo McMahan, the Carthusian monk, whom I knew in Rome, and who is now residing in the Great Chartreuse of Grenoble in France. This Rev. Father tells me that you are desirous of receiving letters from me, as also of seeing a house

founded for us Passionists in England. With regard to my letters, I have from time to time written to you, but it's now three years since I have received any answer. The last time that I wrote to you was when I had the honor of a conversation with Lord Clifford, who gave me accounts of you and, among other things, said that you had married one of his nieces, and that this your lady was pregnant and near the time of childbirth. This gave me great consolation, as I hoped that thus you would not only have heirs of your name, but that the piety and religion of your heart would descend to the children whom God would give you. I begged the same Lord Clifford to offer you my respects when he should have returned to England. At the same time I wrote to congratulate you, but I have received no answer. Perhaps the letter has been lost. But is there hope, my dear Sir, that I shall see you on this earth? Is there hope that I shall cross the sea and convey my body to that Island whither, twenty-two years ago, I sent my heart? Ah! beloved England, shall I one day see thee? And shall I see thee brought back to the one fold of the Catholic Church? I hope it. Twenty-two years I have cherished this hope. I have never abandoned it, and hope never to abandon it for the time to come. I have endeavored to interest in this object all the good souls which I have met with in these parts, and I have found many so fervent that they willingly offer themselves as victims to the Divine Goodness, ready to suffer all that a creature can suffer without offending God, provided God will show mercy on the nations separated from the Church, especially on our dear England. Of these souls I have found many. One of them, a few days ago, not a little reanimated my hopes by telling me still to be expecting the time fixed by Divine Providence and not to fear because God and the Blessed Virgin take thought for that Island efficaciously, and I shall one day be satisfied. O my God, when will be that day? When, when? Ah! my dear Sir, let us pray that it may be soon. I, for myself, can do nothing, but you can do something. Do then what is in your power, and God will be with you.

How fares our dearest Mr. Spencer? It is three years since I heard of him, though I have written to him. The reason may be because he knows not the direction of the letters. But if you, or anyone else, should wish to write to me, you can direct the letter to Rome, at the Retreat of Saints John and Paul. Though I do not live there, the religious of that Retreat will take care to forward it to me wherever I am. I entreat you to give me the consolation of again seeing your handwriting, and to send me accounts of your family and of the Spencer and Trelawny families, of the state of the Catholic religion in those parts. Above all, I beg you to tell me if there is any

hope for me to come thither some day and once more in this life to embrace you and, likewise, my other dearest friends in England. May God give us the grace at least to be united in the heavenly court. Adieu. My dear Sir, I am, irrevocably,

Your most humble, devoted servant,

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

LETTER XX

To Rev. Father Dominic

From Ambrose Lisle Phillipps, Esq.

Grace-Dieu

April 5, 1836

I.H.S.

My dear and beloved Father Dominic,

The day before yesterday was Easter Day; and among the graces and consolations which our Lord sent me on that day, certainly not the least, was that most interesting and most amiable letter which I received from you. Accept in return my most affectionate thanks. I assure you, dear Father, that I not only received your last letter, written more than a year ago, and your amiable message sent me through Lord Clifford, but I also wrote to you a long letter, addressed as you directed me. So that if you have not received one, it is the fault of the post and not mine. To say the truth, I am too much interested in keeping up my friendship with you, my dear and Very Reverend Father, to be able ever to forget you. You are always present in my heart, and in the remembrance of you I find a sweetness and consolation which I cannot express. Moreover, I always continue to cherish the hope that one day, and that, too, through my means, however unworthy, however great a sinner I may be, you will come to establish your holy Order in England, and will see that Island for which you have, for twenty-two years, offered such fervent and loving prayers. Oh! my friend, continue praying. I am confident that the extraordinary progress of the Catholic religion in England, during the last five years, is owing almost entirely to your prayers and to those of your holy Order of Passionists. I assure you there is nothing

which would give me greater consolation than to establish this Order in England. Meanwhile, pray that I may not be unworthy in the eyes of my blessed Jesus one day to accomplish this work, which I so ardently desire.

My dearest Father, I hope to embrace you once more in England. Meanwhile, I salute you in the heart of Jesus and in the heart of Mary. What you tell me about the conversion of England is most consoling. What that devout soul assured you the other day, that God and the Blessed Virgin take thought efficaciously for England, is a thing which really makes me beside myself. Yes, I am sure that Jesus and Mary do take thought efficaciously for our dear England. What little I can do to advance the good cause in my country, I do and will do always with the help of Mary, my dear Lady, to whom I daily consecrate myself with new fervor. During last year I have joined with Lord Shrewsbury in founding a monastery of Trappist monks near Grace-Dieu. You have no doubt heard of this Order. It is very austere. The monks follow the Rule of St. Benedict without any mitigation. They eat neither flesh nor fish, nor butter, nor eggs. They never speak except at a certain hour every day. They sing the Divine Office and preach in their Church. They now wear their white habit, and it is the first time that England has seen the monastic habit since the pretended Reformation of the sixteenth century. The monks sing their Office at midnight. On Easter Day I was present at the divine praises at that solemn hour and was filled with consolation such as I cannot express. It seems that our Lord will do great good in England by means of these monks. In this neighborhood there are at this time a great many conversions. In less than a twelvemonth, or thereabouts, more than three hundred Protestants have embraced our divine faith in the parish of Grace-Dieu alone; and in every part of England the Catholic religion is making great progress, so that the heretical ministers are raging with a degree of hatred and violence which can hardly be expressed. In this mission of Grace-Dieu we have already formed a Catholic school to educate children in the principles of the true Church, and it will console you when you hear that there are at present one hundred and sixty-six boys and girls in it. And the most extraordinary thing is that these children are all born of Protestant parents. Nevertheless, their parents are well satisfied at seeing them educated in the Catholic faith. It was a most consoling thing to me to see these children come in procession to visit the most Blessed Sacrament in the Sepulchre, on Maundy Thursday, and to reflect that only one year ago they were without the light of faith. Blessed for evermore be God and His most holy mother, Mary.*

One of the most convincing signs to my mind of the near conversion of England is the general opinion which actually prevails among all classes of Protestants, that the time is approaching when the Catholic faith is destined to prevail a second time in this kingdom. Yes, the devil knows well that the time is drawing near when he will be bound by the chains of that angel who from all ages is predestined to bind him and bury him in the abyss. Meanwhile, pray, pray, excite everyone in Italy to pray; with prayers we can do all things. Write to me often, and believe me that I am always united with you in spirit in your holy Order, of which you will remember you gave me the diploma. Pray for me, for my wife, and my children; pray also for the conversion of my father, who is yet Protestant. My dearest wife salutes you, and I assure you that I am, and ever will be, my most dear, beloved Father Dominic,

Your most affectionate friend in Jesus and Mary,
Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

* The fact of three hundred Protestants having been received in one year at Grace-Dieu may seem to some incredible, but it was really so. In one day there were received fifty-two. When Mr. Phillipps says that the one hundred and sixty-six children of the school were all born of Protestant parents, of course it does not mean that all the parents were still Protestants. But that many of the parents, not yet converted themselves, were pleased to see their children in the school.

LETTER XXI

To Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps
From Rev. Father Dominic
Retreat of S. Sosio, Martyr
May 27, 1836

J.X.P.

A.M.D.G.

Honored Sir,

On my return from a mission in a town of the adjoining kingdom of Naples, I found your very dear letter of the 5th of April.

You cannot easily conceive the sweet and charming emotion it produced in my poor heart.

Oh, my God, I seemed to see the heart of my dear Mr. Phillipps poured out upon those pages and breathing a most sweet odor of Jesus Christ. Oh! that my heart might in like manner be poured forth on this paper! It is true, it would not diffuse the like sweet odor, because it is far, indeed, from being impregnated, like yours, with divine holy love. Yet I would hope it would at least send forth an odor, and that powerfully, of holy love for all my dearest English, to whom I have from my early years consecrated all the affections of my heart and, in a special way, for my dearest Mr. Phillipps and his dear family, which I know not yet with the eyes of my body, but which I know well indeed with those of faith. Tell me, dear Sir, shall my eyes indeed see that dear family of yours, which I love so much without having seen them? Yes, yes, you answer; and the time will not be long. But when? I reply, when shall it be? Soon, soon, you tell me to hope. But, alas! this soon is very far off to me, as every hour seems to me a thousand years, till I see my dear England and may shed my blood or, at least, be spent with labor for it. You tell me you cannot at present, but that you expect abundant means to enable you to undertake the building of a retreat for us. I shall pray God you may soon have them. I will add, meanwhile, a remark which will, I think, much facilitate the thing. Do not think that so much is required to prepare a house for a few poor Passionists. It is not necessary, that it should be as that of Saints John and Paul. I should be content to live in a house fit for a peasant, built in some open field, or in a wood. Nay, I should be happy in a cabin made of straw, or in a cave dug out in some rock, at least till some little dwelling might be provided, built of stone. We should not need either to go with a numerous community; we might come at first two or three persons, and with these commence God's work. Add to this, that for us nothing is needed but only and simply a dwelling. There is no need to think of providing funds or income, as we live on the voluntary offerings of the faithful. In other words, we live on what is furnished us by Divine Providence from day to day, through the charity of the faithful. *'Having food and clothing, with these we are content'* (I Tim. 6:8). I am perfectly confident that God would not suffer us to die of hunger, if once we were there, though we should have nothing but a poor hut or a cavern to shelter us. That Heavenly Father, who gives food to the immense family of the birds who *'neither sow nor reap'* (Mt. 6:28) would certainly be well able to feed three or four poor Passionists. I say thus much, if you have had sufficient means, before receiving those future resources you expect, to found a house of Trappists and to establish a school for education, where there are already one hundred and sixty-six children learning the Catholic faith, how much rather might you be able to prepare a dwelling

for three or four Passionists! For the present a cottage would suffice, such as those in which I imagine your peasants live, and a little chapel to celebrate Mass, which would require but very little expense. For our living afterwards and our food, God will attend to that; you need not have a care for income or resources of any kind.

I am also most confident that, if there came three or four of our religious to England to open a house, there would not be wanting, certainly, charitable persons, who would charge themselves with providing us with a poor common sort of house where we might live with less inconvenience. I know that the English nation wants neither money nor generosity towards the ministers of the Gospel. In this way, after you have, so to say, laid the first stone for the establishment of the Passionists in that kingdom, there will not be wanting, certainly, some one to lay a second, a third, and a fourth, and then say, my dear Sir, is not God able to clothe and feed us? Oh, yes, we must trust in the Divine Goodness. “When I sent you,” says Jesus to the apostles, “without bag, without provision, was anything lacking to you to live?” I am, therefore, more than sure that nothing needful for life (and this is all we speak of) would be wanting to the poor Passionists, even though they should come to England without any sort of provision. I should take an exceeding great delight in the working out of this enterprise so long desired. And I shall be happy also, if it pleases God, to employ your person, so fondly dear to me, to carry it out; and it would be some displeasure to me, if this work for the glory of God was to be executed by means of anyone besides. I am then in anxious expectation of a favorable reply. Oh, my good God! Oh, that I might immediately receive your letter, in which you might say to me, “Father Dominic, come with two or three companions. God will provide!”... I hope it.

In this case, however, you would have to address yourself to our Father Superior General, who is that same Father Anthony of St. Joseph, who sent you that patent of benefactor and of filiation to our poor Congregation.

I learn from your dear letter the immense progress which our holy religion is making in England, and the part which you bear in this work for the glory of God. Oh, how I rejoice at it! But my happiness is not complete yet. And what is wanting to complete it? You can easily conceive it is the entire return of the whole kingdom to the Catholic faith. I shall not die happy if my eyes do not first see England Catholic.

Not less consolation do I receive from the news you give me of the birth of your children. O my God! vouchsafe to make my dear Mr. Phillipps another Abraham, father of many faithful

souls, and his wife another Sarah, mother of consolation to the children of the Church. How dear to me are the salutations you send me, as well from yourself as from this your lady. Yes, my dear Sir, I will remember always, '*eternally and beyond,*' both you and your dear family, which God has given you, and which He will multiply to you for His own glory and honor.

I will not fail to pray for your father, and I will endeavor to engage to do so all the good souls around us here, that they may offer a sweet violence to the Divine Heart in behalf of all our separated brethren, but especially those who belong to your family, as also to the Spencer, Trelawny, and Millingen families.

What is the news of our dearest Mr. Spencer? If you have occasion to see him, I beg you to present him my kindest regards. The same I say of Miss Trelawny, who, as I hear, is in trouble, but I know not where she lives.

We have already two Irishmen, Passionists, very good, one of whom has already made his profession and is studying philosophy in this house. The other is still a novice. I hope that one day they may be able to go to England to preach the word of God.

I write to you, my dear Sir, with all liberty and prolixity, depending on your goodness to excuse me; as you tell me you wish it. I beg you to do the same by me, who am, and always shall be,

Your most humble, devoted, and obliged servant,
Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

The above letter was never sent. Father Dominic thought it right to send it to the General for his approbation, and we here subjoin an extract from the General's letter in reply. These letters were found among Father Dominic's papers (original English editor).

LETTER XXII

To the Rev. Father Dominic

From the Most Rev. Father Anthony of St. Joseph, General of the Passionists

Saints John and Paul

May 31, 1836

J.X.P.

Dearest Father Consultor,

I have read yours of the twenty-fourth of this month, and that enclosed for Mr. Phillipps. I am much edified at your boundless confidence and courage, and if I had three or four good companions for you, I should have no difficulty about sending your letter to Mr. Phillipps, just such as it is. But, *'herein is the task, the effort.'* Your paternity is strong in spirit, and I pray God to increase to you this blessing; but you have a weak body, so that you cannot risk the fatigue of catechisms, and can hardly go through a course of private exercises; without a miracle, then, you certainly could not stand what you offer this gentleman to undertake; but supposing you might expose yourself to such labors and stand them, and I could make up my mind to send you, I know not whether it would be so easy to find you companions of a like spirit and courage with yourself, when we came to the trial. I fear it much, nay, very much, and without this what should we gain? To trust in God is all well; but to send religious on such an enterprise, without the necessary spirit and courage, is certainly not consistent with sound and holy prudence, which must never be separated from confidence.

It will give me pleasure that Mr. Phillipps should maintain his good intentions; I also will not fail to pray to our Lord to open the way for effecting His and our wishes; wherefore, when your paternity writes to him, let him see that you and I also have a grateful sense of his good wishes and readiness to serve us, if it should please God to open a way. I also approve that, in order to facilitate the affair, you should tell him there is no need of a house like Saints John and Paul, but that a habitation will suffice with little cells and a little church, and so forth. Keep to general expressions and do not come so much to particulars, nor speak of the attempt as so perfectly easy. And let us not have such bursts of zeal, otherwise he might be roused to excessive ardor for the cause all at once, and then what will be done? I send you back, then, the letter that you may remodel it a little, as I do not think it prudent to send it just as it is...*

* In consequence of this letter from the General, the former letter was never sent by Father Dominic, and another was written in its place, modified in its expressions. We prefer publishing the suppressed one, as showing in a more characteristic form the spirit of the writer.

LETTER XXIII

To the Rev. Father Dominic

From the Honorable and Rev. George Spencer

West Bromwich

Sept. 3, 1836

My dear Rev. Father,

It is now a good while since I received your most encouraging and yet mortifying letter; encouraging by its direct tendency to inspire anyone with new zeal for the service of God, and mortifying by being calculated to put me to shame, seeing that I, living on the spot, have so much less ardor for the conversion of England, my own country and under my eye, than you have, though a stranger and at so great a distance; and also as I find myself so often tempted to weariness, and actually growing weary of troubles which you are so earnestly longing for. Indeed, I have remarked, ever since I came back from Rome, how the pious souls there continue to pray and labor for the conversion of England with all the power they can apply to the work, while in England people in general seem hardly ever to think of it as a possibility. Indeed, I find myself, as at first sight it appears, suddenly altered for the worse since I came home and had to begin contending in my own person for the Faith.

I know that difficulties I must meet with in this work; but before I came to the point of encountering and feeling their weight, I formed a very imperfect idea of what they are, and though I know that in a day God is able to change the face of this whole country, I find it not easy to imagine this being actually done, while living in the midst of it, and seeing with my own eyes and observing in so many directions marks of worldly mindedness and of an unbelieving proud spirit which the new religion of Protestantism has engendered here. From a distance, as from Rome, one does not see these things so plainly. The carelessness of some and the bigotry of others among Protestants are so great and so obstinate and incurable that it appears almost in vain to attempt anything with them. If we had bright examples of piety and holiness among the Catholics to put before them, it would be the most effectual means of moving them to attention. But we have to lament continually the coldness of the generality of our own body; the great vices and scandals of a great many, especially of the poor Irish, who come to settle in England and form a great part of our congregations; and the quarrels and jealousies, and disunions, which prevail so widely and so commonly, even among the clergy. I find from all these causes a great disappointment of the bright hopes of speedy progress which I entertained when first I came to England. Being disappointed and baffled in my too sanguine expectations, I have had a hard

struggle to keep up my spirits, particularly as about a year ago I was attacked with a return of the complaint of spitting of blood, for which I had to leave Rome, and was obliged for a good while to give up all active exertions. Though I can get on very well again now with preaching and working in a moderate degree, I am still incapable of that kind of continual animating activity by which I kept up my spirits for two or three years.

What I have now been saying will perhaps throw a gloom over your kind heart. But do not consent to it. You must, I am sure, have seen when we were together that I was extravagant in my ideas and plans. I do not know how I could have learnt to know myself perfectly without some internal mortification; so be thankful with me that I have been disappointed. I have never given way to despondency, and, please God, I shall rise again into a state of ardor and confidence, I hope, more desirable and more acceptable to God than ever I have known, as being built on a better foundation of humility. The report which you heard of my brother's conversion, you will probably before now have heard contradicted. There was no foundation for it. None of my family, nor of Phillipps's, have intimated as yet a doubt about the Catholic religion arising in their minds. It is marvelous how they can continue all together in this way so long, tottering on the sandy foundation of their Churches, without seeming to suspect they are in the wrong. God has His own wise purposes in all this, and we must put from us afar off all murmuring and discontent. If we are not comforted with obtaining what we wish for in the full and brilliant success of our labors, how clear it is we have cause in this very circumstance to be most thankful on our own account, though we have to be afflicted on account of the poor souls which refuse the light. As far as we ourselves are concerned, certainly their obstinacy ought to be looked upon only as the means of acquiring new humility and with that all perfections.

God will best know when it is suitable to His wise purposes to bend their minds. But I need not give you admonitions how to regulate your feelings about England, for which you continue to entertain such earnest charity.

Whether the Passionists will find a settlement here depends on His will alone.

You must have heard that Phillipps has founded a monastery of Trappists, an Order which would seem amongst the least likely to find their way into England. But here they are, and they are flourishing and looked upon favorably by all the people. An opening may soon be made for you as unexpectedly. We may reasonably conclude that it is the purpose of God to bring this about. By His having inspired your Venerable Founder, yourself, and so many others of His

children with such desires and prayers for this end, I am fully in the disposition to assist in bringing you and some of your companions among us, if the occasion is offered. In fact, after receiving your letter, I was for some time revolving in my mind how this might be done. I have had thoughts of a large town in my neighborhood (Dudley), where I have been for two years at work establishing a mission, but have been obliged to give up my active exertions because of my illness last year. As yet that place has not a chapel nor regular missionary establishment. Only a Methodist Chapel has been hired, and a priest lives there who was formerly my companion here. I have fancied that a religious house might be placed there as well as anywhere else, and so two objects gained at once. I mentioned my idea to my friend, but it did not appear possible to be accomplished, at least for the present, and I have nothing immediate to propose.

The idea you had that my brother might assist us is, of course, to be abandoned; I can only say that the object has a place in my heart, and if it were the will of God to make me instrumental in bringing it about, how happy should I be.

Dr. Walsh, the Bishop of this district, is very desirous of seeing all sorts of religious Orders established within the bounds of his jurisdiction. Some of our secular clergy give way unhappily a little to the jealousy which you well know does sometimes exist against the Regulars; the Jesuits particularly have been discountenanced in some quarters of England. Our Bishop has no feeling of this kind, and only desires to see Catholic missions established in all places by whatsoever persons are disposed to do it in due order. He is about to take a journey to Rome very shortly.

I saw him today, and understand that he may probably be in Rome about the first of November. He will be mostly in company with Doctor Wiseman, the Rector of our College. If providence should open to you a way to communicate with him in person, he might be led to pay particular attention to your wishes; but of course you cannot command your own movements, nor be able to get to Rome. In an affair of this kind, we must not be too eager to force circumstances into correspondence with our plans, but rather let our plans be guided by circumstances. I do not see why you should not, without impropriety, lay your history before him and tell him all the extraordinary things which seem to connect your Order with England, and let him judge what to say or do. I leave at his disposal all my property and means of all sorts; if he is induced to employ any of them in your behalf, he may. I will tell him, if I can, before he goes, that I have written to you thus. This may be a sufficient introduction for you to him if you choose

to avail yourself of it.

We must commend the matter to God and our Blessed Lady, whose blessed patronage I am thankful to say I have learnt to appreciate and value more than I did when I was at Rome, since I have been involved in so many perplexities in which help like hers was so necessary.

I beg now to be remembered, with all belonging to me, in your holy prayers.

I am, my dear Rev. Father,

Your most affectionate and obliged,

George Spencer

LETTER XXIV

To Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

From Rev. Father Dominic

Saints John and Paul, Rome

March 4, 1837

J.X.P.

My very dear Sir,

In the course of last spring, I received your very kind letter of the 5th of April, 1836, to which I replied by a long letter, in which I told you many things relative to our project of coming to that country, to which for twenty-three years my heart has been bound. From that time to this, I have not heard from you again. But a few days ago, I received a note from Lord Clifford, in which that worthy gentleman tells me, among other things, that you desired to hear from me. He also gave me information of three churches which you had already built in your neighborhood, one for the Trappists, one for the use as a Catholic school, and a third near your own house. He added that at the coming Easter would take place the dedication of all these three churches. I rejoiced in the Lord at such happy news, and I returned thanks to the Divine Goodness for having deigned to afford you the means of doing so much good. I hope in a short time to be able to pay my respects in person to the said Lord Clifford and to obtain from him some additional information regarding my dear Mr. Phillipps and our dear England.

I am now going to give you some account of myself and of our affairs here. By the Divine

Mercy I enjoy good health, and am always doing what I can for the conversion of my dear separated brethren of England. But finding myself at such a distance and deprived of means to do more, I am obliged to content myself with the following exertions. First, I have written a great variety of works, which may with time be of some use towards the object; secondly, I have prayed as much as I could and have tried to engage more than a hundred truly good souls, whom I know here in Italy, to do the same; and I assure you that very many of these pray so unceasingly, and with such fervor, that they give me every reason to hope that our most merciful God will soon open the gates of His infinite mercy. Many of these are so earnest (in this work) that day and night they do nothing else than raise their pure hands to the throne of the Almighty and offer continually the victim of the adorable holocaust in the sight of God for the salvation of their separated brethren. Ah! if these poor afflicted people could see the interior of so many pure souls, if they could listen to their prayers, if they could behold the sacrifices which these make for their eternal happiness, they would cease, I think, to look upon the Church as a prostitute, a cruel step-mother, but would soon acknowledge her for that chaste spouse of the Holy Ghost, which can contain within its breast no other heart than that of the sorrowing dove, which mourns continually the loss of her dear young ones, for the safety of which she would be always ready to give the last drop of her blood.

My dear Sir, I can assure you that my heart, although so hard, has been much moved and softened at this consideration. Ah! if I could! Ah! if I was permitted, I would wish to cry out aloud and to make myself heard to the hearts of my dear separated brethren. I would wish to tell them so many things, that finally I would either cease to live by continual cries or else they should cease from their obstinacy. But I cannot, I cannot make myself heard. For charity's sake, since at least you may be heard, tell my dear separated brethren that in the Catholic Church there are thousands of hearts that languish for them. Of them I can safely say that, if even the glory of heaven were offered to them by our good God, they would refuse it to remain still longer on the earth, in order to lend assistance to those who are obstinately determined to perish. *'I wished to be cut off from Christ for my brethren'* (Rom 9:3). I have seen myself at the point of death; the only thing which caused me sorrow was that I had not been able to labor so much as I desired for the salvation of my brethren. If this be the case with me, who am so wicked, what will it be with so many holy souls whom I know and with so many others with whom I am not acquainted? Ah! let us hope that their prayers will not be made in vain. I hope, I hope: *'I know whom I have*

believed and I am certain that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him against that day' (II Tim. 1:12).

So much the more I am determined to hope, as there begin to appear some rays of cheering light, not only from the consoling information which I have received, among others, from Dr. Wiseman, with whom I spoke some months ago, but also from the prospect of my soon coming near to my dear England. If I cannot actually come to it, I will get as near it as I possibly can, that I may behold, at least at a distance, that Island, which for twenty-three years I have carried engraved on my heart. You will perhaps know that a foundation has been offered us at Boulogne in France. Many indeed are the obstacles which this holy work meets with; many are the efforts of the infernal enemy to hinder it, but I hope they will be frustrated. Who knows if I may not, in the approaching spring, come at least on a visit and embrace in England my dear Mr. Phillipps! Ah! my God, may this come to pass!... Oh! happy day!... Oh! how shall I express my feelings when it comes? I do not know myself; but I am sure my joy will be excessive, and tell me, my dear Sir, will you not also rejoice? I cannot but think you will. Well, today I shall go to Lord Clifford and hear what he has to tell me. If I can, I shall also give Dr. Wiseman a call.

My search after Lord Clifford and Dr. Wiseman has been useless, because I have not met with either one or the other. But I hope I shall be able to see them before I leave Rome, where I am now giving a course of exercises in a college. After Easter I shall return to the retreat of my residence. If, however, you will reply to this, direct your letter to Saints John and Paul, and the religious will take care to send it to me. I hope that yourself and family all enjoy perfect health. May God vouchsafe to render you another Abraham, the father of many believers, and your wife another Sarah, a mother of consolation and joy to faithful souls. May the fruits of your holy marriage be as young olives which will be a crown for their parents in time and for eternity in heaven.

I know nothing now about Miss Anna Letitia Trelawny and her family. If you have an opportunity of seeing them, I beg you to give them my respects. Some months ago Mr. Spencer wrote me a very long letter, wherein he gave an account of his occupations and apostolic labors, the fruit of which, however, he said did not correspond to the desires of his ardent zeal. I answered, encouraging him as much as I could. I do not, however, know whether he has received my letter. In case you should see him, present him my respects. One of his cousins, a Catholic lady residing at Boulogne, is anxious to get us there. Many other English, and not a few French,

have the same wish. I hope the Divine Majesty will at length comply with the desires of so many pious souls and give also to me the unspeakable consolation of embracing again my dear Mr. Phillipps in England.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
your ever most devoted, most humble and obedient servant,
Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

P.S. After the above letter had been finished; that very worthy nobleman, Lord Clifford, was pleased to come in person to pay me a visit in this house of Saints John and Paul. He spoke to me about you, and about the great things you are performing for the glory of God, and also about a miraculous cure that has occurred in those parts. Praise be to God for all, for ever and ever. Amen. Adieu, very dear Sir. I hope to embrace you either in London or Boulogne. I see the devil is making all imaginable efforts to hinder my going, but I hope they will be overcome by the power of the Almighty and the intercession of our dear Mother Mary. Adieu, adieu, etc.

LETTER XXV

To Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus

From Mrs. Canning

Place d'Alton, No. 24, Basse Ville, Boulogne-sur-mer

Tuesday, March 14, 1837

(Written in French)

Very Rev. Father,

I am not sure that it will not be an indiscretion on my part, but I am so desirous to thank you myself for your remembrance, which is very precious to me, and to tell you myself how my heart is devoted to you, that I cannot resist it. From the first moment that the Abbé Bernard had spoken to me of the Passionists and of their views on England, my heart was with you. I said at once, Oh, that I might be useful to them! I said it, however, rather with an ardent wish than with the hope of ever seeing this wish gratified. After Monsr. Bernard's letter, giving me this hope, my longings and my prayers were to gain from God the grace to become worthy to be of some little service to you. What a grace! what a glory for me! if at length our good God is about to grant it to me.

I know not, my Rev. Father, whether you are as yet aware that I am your countrywoman. Yes, Italy, dear Italy, gave me birth. An Italian Cardinal gave me holy baptism and my first blessing – an Italian priest consecrated me to the Blessed Virgin, when I was but a day old, that is, recommended me in a special way to her – the first prayers which obtained my conversion and all the graces which God has given me were offered for me in Italy. O saints of my native land, how often has my heart thanked you. With what gratitude do my thoughts revert to those moments which my memory cannot reach! The only day which I call properly my feast, in the course of the year, is the day of my baptism, when your countrymen, my Reverend Father, who are also mine, prayed so earnestly for me. Judge, then, how thankful I must be to Monsr. Bernard for having put me in correspondence with you; how much also I have to thank you yourself for consenting to accept any help from me. After Monsr. l'Abbe Haffreingue had paid me his little visit, I kissed the scapulars which he brought me from you; I took them as a pledge that my prayer is heard. But, can you guess, my Very Rev. Father, what I am so bold as to ask of you? A little letter from yourself, to tell me that you accept me, not as a lady of the world who offers her mite to your holy work, but as your daughter, a daughter of the Passionists; what a happiness! as one entirely devoted to you – as a kind of novice to whom you need only say or send word what I can do and I will do it. If our Divine Savior inspires you with the thought to accept such an offer, I shall think myself invincible. To venture to make this offer, I ought, humanly speaking, to have much more power, much more wealth, much more influence, more health, and, above all, more virtue than I shall ever possess. But, wretched as may be the instrument, if God chooses it, it will do all that this good God wills that it should do. I feel so powerfully drawn to you and your holy work. It is a happiness so far beyond my hopes to bear the least share in it, that at the same time that to be as the smallest grain in the scale will content me, yet nothing which God shall tell you to ask of me seems to me impossible. O Saints of my native land, what are my obligations to you, and what shall I not owe you yet! Through you the first graces, the first benedictions reached me; through you will come to me the greatest consolation which I can have in this world; that is, to do something for the glory of Him who has done so much for me, and the consolation of still belonging to you. Your prayers have blessed my first moments, and your prayers will bless my last, by gaining for me the grace before that moment to merit heaven.

I am working for you, my Rev. Father. I am embroidering you a rochet⁵; a very inferior one indeed. Such as it is, I expect that your good Fathers of Boulogne will count themselves my debtors for it, since needle-work is the thing in the world which I do the worst and most against the grain. I shall soon recover the language of my first years which I have been allowed to forget, that I may be able to ask their blessing. I ask you yours, my Very Rev. Father, and if I do not ask your holy prayers, too, it is that our good God seems to tell me that I have and shall yet continue to have them.

Your most devoted daughter,
Louisa Canning (born, Spencer)

LETTER XXVI

To Mrs. Canning

From the Abbe Haffreingue

(Without date, but evidently written after reading through the preceding letter of Mrs. Canning.)

Madam,

According to your permission, I have taken the liberty of reading your letter, the contents of which I entirely approve. I now have reason to think that it will prove not to have been a groundless hope on my part that Providence had destined you to second this great, this important enterprise of the Passionists in behalf of your country. You will then second it, Madam, with the piety and zeal which belong to you; you will make this your leading pursuit. Both the Passionists and your humble servant will reckon on your influence and your activity. It would be well that before they come you should write to your friends in England to prepare them. Do not forget, Madam, that, in taking upon you to support a great undertaking, you must expect to meet with a thousand contradictions, and these from persons who ought to second it. The works of God have no other way of advancing; they go forward in the midst of crosses and difficulties; but I believe you have too much faith and perseverance to be surprised or discouraged at this...

In haste your most humble servant,

⁵ A vestment like a surplice.

Haffreingue.*

* It may be well to state that the Abbe Haffreingue is a priest of Boulogne, remarkable for his spirit of noble enterprise. He is now drawing towards a happy termination, a great undertaking to which he has devoted the latter portion of his life; that is, the rebuilding of the Cathedral at Boulogne, which was destroyed in the great French Revolution, and the restoration of its ancient Episcopal See, which since the destruction of the Cathedral has been annexed to that of Arras. He lends his hand to all good works which are within his reach. Among others he has a remarkable zeal for the conversion of this country. More than thirty years ago he began an association of prayers for the conversion of England, which had considerable extension. It was this direction of his zeal which made him take up with great ardor the project of bringing the Passionists to Boulogne as a stepping-stone to England. Difficulties arose to prevent the accomplishment of this purpose, which ceased for a time to be so interesting when the Passionists had obtained a house, with the same view, in Belgium. But Monsr. Haffreingue still remains their devoted friend. It was from this house that Father Dominic took his departure to cross the first time into England, and he is now earnestly desirous of their settling near Boulogne, for the sake not of England so much as of his own people.

LETTER XXVII

To Mrs. Canning

From the Rev. Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus

Rome

April 7, 1837

J.X.P.

Madam,

I can only attribute to a mistake caused by your charity the terms in which you express your high regard for me and your desire to receive letters from me, who am a poor religious, without any sort of merits to recommend me. Wherefore, I can only say, Madam, that your gracious and benevolent letter has penetrated me with feelings of the deepest gratitude. I beg to offer you my thanks.

You tell me that the establishment of the Passionists at Boulogne and in England is the object of your prayers and of the continual desires of your heart. I have been greatly rejoiced to learn from you this earnest and charitable desire you have, that our institute may quickly be planted in

foreign kingdoms. I pray God to increase the faith which He has given you and the love you have for His most holy passion, of which the Passionists are preachers, their vocation being to preach Jesus Christ crucified and thereby to convert sinners and sanctify souls. I feel all the utility and importance of this establishment, but I cannot dissemble to myself its great difficulties, especially after the non-success of several attempts made by the Abbé Bernard and the Abbé Haffreingue and other distinguished ecclesiastics, who ardently desire it and have taken a most lively interest in it. I pray that their attempt may be crowned with the success which their apostolic zeal deserves; we will omit nothing to become worthy that God should graciously accept this united prayer, and to animate with new zeal those who are so devoted to the holy work. The offer which you, Madam, make of your faculties, your possessions, your influence, and of yourself, to the Order of the Passionists is of infinite value in our eyes; your intentions are too commendable not to merit our gratitude and the approbation of God, who will not fail to reward them. We are truly thankful to you for all your charity, and for the trouble which you have already gone through for the Passionists, and for the offer of aid towards their traveling expenses into France and in all their other wants, in a manner worthy of a true Christian and faithful follower of Jesus Christ. I indulge the hope that God will grant you that greatest of all consolation that you wish for in this world, namely, to see the Passionists at Boulogne. Then, when they are established in some proper place in that district, enjoying your favor and kind protection, they will certainly communicate to you their spiritual goods and will regard you as their mother, as now they look on you as their sister in Jesus Christ, and their benefactress. Till this happy day comes, let us constantly pray God to hasten it!

I have not the honor, Madam, to know you, but since first I heard you spoken of I have been in admiration of the life which you lead, so conformable to the truth and to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I render thanks to God, as often as I remember you, and I never go to prayer without praying also for you that He who has begun the good work in you may make it perfect unto the day of Jesus Christ. Then I pray that all which concerns you, your circumstances, your health, may be equally prosperous.

I regret that my occupations have not allowed me to send you this letter, which you asked of me, sooner, and that my ignorance of the French language has not permitted me to write in a manner more suitable to your station. I beg you to excuse me, Madam, and to accept the feelings of high regard with which I have written these few lines.

In fine, Madam, I beg you to write in my name to the Abbé Bernard, as soon as possible, to say,

1. That I have received his last letter of the 1st of March.

2. That we must not any longer press for a formal approbation by the French government of our establishment in France, for, considering the present position of affairs, the sovereign Pontiff will perhaps not insist on this condition; the Father General consents to this establishment, provided the government simply grants toleration to the Passionists in France and permission to wear the proper habit of the Order; and provided also the Bishop of Arras is willing to allow this establishment in his diocese.

3. That the foundations in Belgium and in England will be treated of after the Passionists have been settled at Boulogne.

4. That I thank him for his zeal concerning the translation and publication of the Meditations on the Passion, and for the copy which he commissioned Father Magallon to give me.

5. That I have sent to Lille a small case with some relics, images, and Agnus Dei's, directed to the Abbé Bernard.

6. That M. le Chevalier Drak is charged with bringing to Rome the books of which he speaks in his letter.

I salute you in Jesus Christ, and all the brethren who are with me salute you. Salute the Abbe Haffreingue in my name. Pray to God, Madam, for me, and accept the assurance of my high regard.

I am your most humble servant,

Ignatius of the Side of Jesus, Passionist

LETTER XXVIII

To Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus

From Mrs. Canning

Boulogne

1837

If I could make so bold, Very Reverend Father, I should wish to speak to you on your affairs.

I say make so bold because, in the first place, you must know far more about them than I, who have just missed seeing the bishops on their return, and it is rather from you I ought to ask how you find them disposed towards your holy enterprise; secondly, because all that I could say to you would be concerning my holy cousin, Mr. Spencer, who has spoken to me, half under the seal of secrecy and wholly under obedience of his bishop, without whom, said he, he would not consent to take the least step towards the object which he would love the best in the world. The account, then, which I am about to give you of my doings may lead to something or nothing, just as Divine Providence will dispose of matters; but I would not wish you to act upon it, nor to mention it in England before hearing from my cousin himself, for he gave me no commission, and my eagerness to tell every thing is perhaps an indiscretion, which, however, I trust God will excuse in consideration of its motive.

Being then in England, I was determined I would make acquaintance with my cousin, whom I had never seen. The superior of the convent, where I was on a visit, wrote to him, and he came, I think forty miles to see me. We talked a great deal about our dear Passionists; he seemed to me to be to the full as devoted to you as I could wish, but all under the orders of his bishop. He said he had two projects in his mind if his bishop agreed. First, there was a Mission a few miles from where he lives, without a chapel. He was ready to give either £100 a year for the mission, or £2000 all at once to build the chapel, and he added that if Lord Clifford would give what they said he intended to give in England, instead of at Boulogne, altogether there would be a nice little sum to begin with. His second project was that Father Dominic should come with two or three others, and that all should live with him till Providence should open a way. But after saying all this, he would, as it were, retract it, adding, I can do nothing without my bishop and you must not even speak of it before I see him. After staying nearly three days at the convent, he took me to his house that I might see his Father Confessor; all this on account of the Passionists. This Father Confessor, says he, is the bishop's right hand. I was delighted with him; he seemed as zealous in your favor as we could be. He was suggesting that the bishop should give you the old college of Oscott, as he had built a new one which might be entered next year. He said that there was great need in England of a house where priests might make retreats. In short, I am persuaded that in him you will have a powerful advocate with Bishop Walsh.

My cousin took me also to dine at the college with Dr. Weedall, whom perhaps you know, as he has been a long time at Rome. He spoke to him about the project, and he saw nothing to

object to in it, but recommended silence till his Lordship should come.

This, my Very Reverend Father, is all I have been able to do in England at present. I have put off writing to you one day that I might see Mr. Haffreingue. He told me there was nothing as yet concluded at Boulogne; but he will speak to you himself about all that.

My cousin is all of the mind that you should come at once to England; but he will probably himself write to Father Dominic. I say again, I have no mission, and I should not have written to you at all before knowing something more positive, if I was not anxious to thank you for your good letter and for your box, which each and all have given me such pleasure.

The above letter is translated from a copy of the original kept by Mrs. Canning, The copy has no date, but it must have been written in the summer of 1837.

LETTER XXIX

To Rev. Father Dominic

From the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer

Wolverhampton

March 15, 1838

My Dear Father Dominic,

I came today from my house at Westbromwich, on a visit to my Bishop, Dr. Walsh, and he tells me that he is on the point of sending a young alumnus to the English College at Rome.

I have not time to write a long letter, but still I must not omit so convenient an opportunity of making you once more recall me to your mind, so full of charity to all, but especially to me.

I can never think of you without thinking of the conversion of England, which I hope is not far distant, although prejudices and indifferentism and vices are still terribly abundant everywhere. But, God is supreme, and if He is mindful, as I hope He is, of the ancient saints of this kingdom and of all those glorious martyrs who, in the years of persecution, have shed their blood for the diffusion of the true faith in our country, who can say that He may not, in a short time, change everything? You will believe that I have learnt with great satisfaction what has been done lately at Boulogne, in France, towards establishing in that city one of your houses. But it

seemed to me, and also to Mrs. Canning, my cousin, who wishes to cooperate with all her power in this work, that if a house is to be founded for England, why not in England itself? Mr. Haffreingue, the French priest who has interested himself in this affair at Boulogne, has given us to understand that, having no other design than the good of England in this foundation, if it were possible to transfer it into our country, he would willingly consent.

I do not know how this may be brought about, but I am confident that our Bishop has a very great esteem for the Order of Passionists, and that if an opportunity should present itself, he would be glad to see them in his Diocese. And I have to tell you that a short time ago a rich Catholic gentleman died, leaving the residue of his property to our Bishop. The heirs-at-law have disputed the will, but there is great reason to hope that the Bishop will gain the cause, and then he will be in possession of about £150,000 sterling.

All of you must pray that God may give success to His cause, which is at the same time that of the Church, and then, if it be the will of God that you should labor for England, that the Bishop may be directed by him to employ for this object a portion of this money.

Finally, I beg you to constantly renew your prayers for my family every Friday, if not otherwise engaged. I offer up my Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for my family and also for that of Phillipps, Trelawny, Millingen, and Trail. I pray you will make a perpetual memento of this intention in your Mass on Friday, and recommend me to other holy souls, of whom you know and direct so many.

On Thursdays, also, I regularly say Mass in honor of the most holy Sacrament for the conversion of England. It seems to me that nothing is more necessary for opening the currents of grace upon this kingdom than to make reparation for all the outrages and insults which people of all sorts, as well as private individuals, the parliament, the king, and the laws themselves, have offered to this great mystery for so many years. If you are willing to join from time to time in this intention, I shall be very much pleased.

Now it is time to finish.

Believe me your faithful friend in Jesus Christ,

George Spencer

LETTER XXX

To Mrs. Canning

From Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus

Saints John and Paul, Rome

Aug. 21, 1838

Madam,

Your letter of July 29 shows how uneasy you condescend to be on my account, and I take occasion hence to thank you for your tender concern for me, begging you at the same time not to be afflicted about me, since, after all, we must see and accept everything in God and from the hand of God, who disposes all things with love and wisdom for our good. Our good God gives me that portion of health which I have need of for His glory, and I ask no more. My last, being written by another hand, was not on account of my great debility, but from want of time. For the present I am, thank God, tolerably well, though in a weak and precarious state. I bless God, however, for treating me with so much mercy, and I hope He will not take me out of this world without my first seeing the Passionists settled either in France or in Belgium.

I do not understand why the Abbé Bernard looks on the establishment of Passionists in the Diocese of Tournay as a hopeless affair, after my having already twice written to him that it will be taken in earnest into consideration under the new General, the present one being at the close of his office, and that everything promises a favorable result.

I do not know what to say about your coming to Rome. If God inspires you to take this journey for His glory and for the salvation of your soul, or to find in the holy city some new incentive of piety, devotion, and faith, I approve it with all my heart; but if it be but a journey for curiosity and your own satisfaction, for greater liberty or pleasure, to have something to talk of on your return, and to be able to distribute relics among your friends, then, Madam, allow me to say, it seems to me, that for such trifling advantages, it is not quite conformable to Christian simplicity to expose oneself to so much dissipation and expense; still less does it agree with that interior recollection, with that habit of hidden retirement, with that estrangement from the tumult of the world, which are the pearls of great price, composing the treasure of an interior soul, such as I suppose, Madam, yours to be. I should not have taken this liberty if you had not asked my opinion; and I do not now intend to give it to you as an infallible law nor to cross directly your pious intentions. Therefore, consult your confessor. Meanwhile, be consoled at, perhaps, not

seeing the Passionists at Rome, as there are well-grounded hopes of your seeing them soon in France.

The Foundation at Boulogne has never been set aside or abandoned, but only delayed, on account of circumstances with which the Abbe Haffreingue is well acquainted. In an instant Almighty God can smooth all these difficulties and render all easy. Let us be souls of great faith, great confidence, and great prayer, and we shall see wonders.

If Mr. Phillipps comes to Boulogne, tell him, if you please, to honor me with a few lines on the state of affairs in England. Tell me what steps must be taken to negotiate an introduction into that country, since next year the Order will have a new General, and it would be well that there should be found in readiness some elements or rudiments of information on an affair of such importance. As to the books which I wished for, I intended to have given up the thoughts of them, because it came into my head that perhaps you would not tell me the cost of them, nor let me pay for them. But as you are so good as to press me so kindly to tell you what I want, I do so, fearing, however, that at last I shall become burdensome to you. I have, then, for a particular reason, a pressing want of the Bible lately printed at Lyons, in small 8vo. and of the book called *Concordantice Bibliorum* of the last edition at Lyons. I know not how to repay all your charity. If my poor prayers will suffice, be sure, Madam, that in my spiritual exercises and my sacrifices you hold a special place at the head of all my friends, and that I continually ask our Lord to make you all His own, to detach you entirely from this fleeting world, and to fill you with His Spirit, so that your passage through life may be accomplished with the flight of an eagle, without ties to hold you back. O I entreat you, ask of our good God the same thing for me! Do not forget to join to this your prayers for our entrance into France and England. Salute the Abbé Haffreingue, the Abbé Bernard, and Mr. Phillipps, if you see him.

When I shall have received the books to the following address, “Roma, Santi Giovanni e Paolo de’ Padri Passionisti,” I will give you notice.

Meanwhile, believe me to be with sentiments of gratitude and veneration, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

Ignatius of the Side of Jesus, Passionist

LETTER XXXI

To Mrs. Canning
From Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus
Rome
Jan. 22, 1839

J.X.P.

Madam,

Your last letter, dated from England, has been for me a subject of high and sweet consolation, capable of making me for a time forget the anguish which is at every moment caused in me by the afflicting spectacle of a world which goes daily more astray. I have blessed our Lord for His mercies towards us, and especially for the precious opening which His Divine Providence is now making for a colony of Passionists in England. He has not forgotten His ancient prediction in favor of an Island which one of our Popes used to call the land of saints... I have not yet spoken of this matter to Lord Clifford; but I have sent him a note to invite him to an interview on the subject. However, what you tell me is enough to convince me of the good state of things, and to make me look on our settlement in England as a thing very feasible. I have given your letter to the Father General and also to Father Dominic. They have determined on the answer to be given you on the principal point, about which there will be no delay.

It is above all necessary that your honored cousin, the Rev. Mr. Spencer, or Mr. Phillipps, or both together, should address a letter in form of a petition to the General Chapter of our Order, which will soon be assembled in Rome. In this letter they must state, 1, the need and the desire of the people of such or such a district or county to have some Passionist missionaries; 2, the consent of his Lordship, the Bishop of the place to their establishment in his diocese; 3, the approbation, at least passive, of the government; 4, an account of the place which is offered for our lodging; that is, a very poor house and a little church; 5, what support we may reckon upon from persons of distinction, who should be mentioned by name. The conclusion of the petition must be a formal request to the venerable Chapter for three or four religious missionaries to be Catholic apostles of England.

This petition may be drawn up in French, but it must be in a handwriting legible and intelligible to a set of poor Italians, such as we are, and on the paper which will unfold, in the form of a Roman memorial; that is, with the name of the petition on the front page, which must

be blank, headed only with the address to the Rev. General Chapter, in the following form. 'To the Venerable General Chapter of the Passionist Fathers'; the whole enclosed in an ordinary envelope, addressed to the Most Rev. Father Procurator General, resident at Saints John and Paul, Rome. This envelope, for the sake of economy, may and ought to contain what you will be pleased to answer me individually; I mean the inside of the envelope itself, without any farther paper, as our most Rev. Procurator will convey it as it is to me, provided the petition has another envelope equally directed to the most Rev. Procurator General.

The members of the approaching Chapter, with whom I have already spoken, are very well disposed. Therefore, do not lose time, but dispatch the document as soon as possible. For if we let pass this occasion of treating an affair of this importance in a full assembly of the Fathers who have a voice in such matters, the execution of the purpose would be indefinitely retarded.

Let us hope that our Lord will hear the prayers which I have caused to be made by our religious for this holy undertaking, and that He will accomplish the designs of infinite mercy on misguided England, where the triumph of His grace seems approaching, as we may judge by the conversions which are multiplied there, as well as in America and Asia. Let us have confidence in God, dear Madam, and we shall reach the haven as though borne on His Almighty arms. You, who labor like an apostle for the glory of God, and of this new, or at least not ancient, Congregation of the Passion, may count on the prayers of all its members by virtue of your title of benefactress. For myself, I entreat you incessantly to continue the efforts of this zeal for His glory, but tempered by peace, resignation, and humble submission to His unchangeable decrees. Amen.

I have written to the Abbe Haffreingue to renew the negotiation for Boulogne, as a house there would be of no small advantage as a port or a depot or stepping-stone to England. I am eagerly awaiting his reply. I think you might give him a stimulus.

I am still in expectation of the two volumes, of which you speak, and which you are so kind as to promise me as a present, notwithstanding my reluctance to burden you thus. You shall be informed as soon as I receive them, and I have the honor to offer you, by anticipation, the assurance of my heartfelt gratitude.

Let us, then, not desist, while waiting for our Lord's time, lifting up our suppliant hands. He knows when and how He has to act by us for His own glory, which thus becomes our glory too.

Be so kind as to remember me to the excellent Mr. Spencer and the zealous and dear Mr.

Phillipps, whom I salute from my heart and to whom you will oblige me by communicating this letter immediately, so that they may, without loss of time, attend to the drawing up of the petition in Roman form, as I have explained above.

Do not forget me, I beg, in your holy prayers; depend on mine which are due and pledged to you, as, I must at all costs prevail with our good God to make you a saint, if you are not one already; that you may be all His, and that dissolved in Him, you may no longer perceive that you are yourself. Amen.

In the pleasing expectation of a charitable answer I am, Madam,
Your most humble and obedient servant and sincere friend,
Ignatius of the Side of Jesus, Passionist,

LETTER XXXII

To Rev. Father Dominic
From Monsignor Acton (Afterwards Cardinal)
Monte Citorio, Rome
April 7, 1839

Very Rev. Father,

I have not been able to find the translation of Mr. Spencer's letter, and I now remember that I sent it with the original to Propaganda. I will take care to get it back, and, meanwhile, I enclose you these few lines as a petition, having been earnestly entreated by the same Mr. Spencer to interest myself in the bringing about a happy conclusion of this affair.

With most profound respect,
I am your most devoted and most obedient servant,
C. Acton

COPY OF THE MEMORIAL OR PETITION, which is alluded to above, drawn up by Monsignor Acton and presented by Father Dominic to the General Chapter, led, as we shall see, by the succeeding letter from Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus, to the first formal resolution to effect a foundation of Passionists in England.

Most Reverend Fathers,

The Rev. George Spencer, apostolic missionary in England, knowing how great is the zeal of the Congregation of Passionists for the conversion of that kingdom, it having been an object so near the heart of your venerable Founder, begs most respectfully to state that circumstances appear to indicate that the moment may be approaching in which our Lord, in the counsels of His mercy, is preparing something great in favor of that same kingdom, in which anciently there flourished, in such magnificence, all the religious Orders of the Church. It would be of the greatest advantage if there could be brought thither also the devoted sons of the venerable Father Paul, who, by their example and by their prayers, might be the instruments there of great good. Mr. Phillipps, a Catholic proprietor, is willing to make an offering of a house in the county of Leicester, which might lodge six or seven religious. A devout lady, recently converted, engages to give every year the sum of fifty pounds sterling, two hundred and twenty-five Roman dollars; and there are grounds to hope that farther resources will not be wanting from the alms of the faithful. Your memorialist hopes that your most reverend assembly, taking this affair into consideration, will be pleased to accept an offer, which promises so well, and to enter on negotiations for carrying it into effect In this hope, he offers the assurance of his profound veneration, etc.*

*We think it well here to append in a note an extract of a letter from Monsignor Acton to Mr. Spencer, received a short time previously to the presenting of the above memorial. It does not bear directly on the principal matter treated of in this correspondence, that is, the foundation of the Congregation of the Passion in England; but it will show how zealously interested the pious writer was in the great object which the Congregation, after the example of their Blessed Founder, had so much at heart, and which drew them to our shores, the conversion of England.

Rome, Dec. 8, 1838

Hon. Rev. and Dear Sir,

Nothing could be more consoling to me than the interesting accounts given me by Lord Clifford of your meritorious exertions in the great cause which excites all the wishes of your heart, and all the energy of your cooperation, the promotion of religion and the extinction of error in our common country. But, as the conversion of men is the work of Divine grace, you have very properly instituted a holy association of persons, joining together in prayer, to obtain from the great Giver of all good gifts that which on the part of man alone can meet but with

obstacles. Moved by your pious example, I have requested from the Nuns of several communities in this country one communion every week to that great intention. Miss Hartwell, a convert, and now a Nun of the Discalced Carmelites, has, at my request, introduced this devotion in her Convent and begged it in other Convents of her Order. A venerable Bishop in this country told me he had been in the habit, for many years, of praying for the conversion of England. Everything seems to indicate that God, in His mercies, has some design upon that country, whose influence over a great part of the world must have been permitted for some good...

God bless your endeavors and crown them with success. Recommending myself to your worthy prayers, I beg leave to remain,

My Dear Rev. Sir,

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

C. Acton

Letter XXXIII

To Mrs. Canning

From Father Ignatius of the Side of Jesus

Saints John and Paul, Rome

April 12, 1839

J.X.P.

I can at length write to you, Madam, with assurance and with the most sweet consolation, that the establishment of the Passionists in England is determined on. The General Chapter has received and granted the petition of the Rev. Mr. Spencer, presented in his name by Monsignor Acton, and has decreed that some Fathers of the Order should go to that much loved Island, to effect the foundation of a house of Passionists, and at the same time to work at the salvation of souls under the authority of the Bishop. But it was considered necessary to ask for a little time, in order to provide all that will be proper, as well for their journey as for their lodging here. Nevertheless, if this arrangement and this delay in any way put out of course the measures taken by the Rev. Mr. Spencer, or are of any inconvenience to him or to Mr. Phillipps, the Father General is willing to send the Fathers destined for this mission at once. Meanwhile, I beg of you to write to me immediately something positive, which may regulate our course. Father Dominic

and Monsignor Acton have likewise written to Mr. Spencer in the same terms and beg for a decisive answer. Be so good also as to tell me how the journey must be made, and all else which you judge necessary for me to know. I thank you in the name of the Chapter and of the whole Order, for all the interest you constantly take about us, and I entreat you to persevere in it until the holy work is accomplished. Blessed be our good Lord who has accomplished our wishes and our prayers. Have the kindness to write to me and to pray for me. It only remains for me to renew to you the assurance of my gratitude and of my sincere esteem.

I am, Madam,
your most humble servant,
Ignatius of the Side of Jesus, Passionist

What the circumstances were, which delayed the execution of the above decree, does not clearly appear from any letters preserved. Whatever the case might be, when, sometime later, the offer was made of an immediate settlement in Belgium, this was accepted and acted upon.

LETTER XXXIV

To the Rev. Father Dominic of the Mother of God

From the Hon. And Rev. George Spencer

St. Mary's College, Oscott, near Birmingham

March 5, 1840

My dear Father Dominic,

I write to you in English, not doubting that, as you told me some years ago, you would be able to understand me in that language. You are by this time quite familiar with it, especially as you will have been studying it with new zeal, since circumstances have opened to you a nearer prospect of coming to England, or, at least, near it. I have not been so happy as to have much to do in forwarding your present prospect of coming almost within sight, we may say, of the land of your pious desires. I have not been worthy of this honor, but in seeing the work carried on by others who have risen unexpectedly to undertake it, I have a better assurance that Almighty God is ordering all things for you, than if I had exerted myself more to forward your coming. Since the Chateau d'Ere has been given to your Order, to found there a Ritiro, I have done nothing but

mention your intended settlement there in a Catholic magazine, published at London every month, and, without my asking for contributors, some sums have been sent to me voluntarily, in all amounting to thirty pounds sterling, or about seven hundred and fifty francs.

And now I must entreat your prayers for myself; I have been, for nearly a year, placed in the college of our district, where I have the religious instruction of about one hundred boys of the best Catholic families of England and Ireland. Nothing can be of more importance to the country than that a holy spirit of piety should be poured forth in this house, from which priests are furnished to a large portion of the country, and so many youths brought up for the most distinguished Catholic stations. I hope you also pray continually for my family. None of them have yet begun to turn to the Church. But we must not despair. God is certainly pleased by our perseverance and He has power, when He chooses, to satisfy our long, continued desires.

May God, in His mercy, bring you at length to help us.

I am your affectionate friend,

George Spencer

LETTER XXXV

To Mrs. Canning

From Rev. Father Dominic

*Freidmont, near Tournay

June 19, 1840

J.X.P.

Madame,

I assure you I could not withhold my tears on reading your very dear letter. With great pleasure we will say Mass, according to your intention, on the 23rd of June. That is the day of my baptism, Ah! Madam, how happy I am at having left the beautiful Italy to come to this country. I care nothing for the beauty of the country. I care only for the fulfilment of my prayers. It is now twenty-six years and a half, Madam, that I have been desiring to leave Italy to see our most beloved England. Oh! how near am I now to seeing it! I hope it...

But would it not be possible, Madam, to see you at our house at Ere? I hope also for this. For the present allow me to offer you my respects, with those of my companions, who are with me

here. I beg you, to excuse my bad writing and my mistakes, for it is the first time of my writing in French.

I will expect you, Madam, at Ere, and am
Your most humble and obedient servant,
Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

*At Freidmont is a large establishment under the care of the Brothers of Charity. They have the charge of at great number of lunatics. This is their principal object, but they also give accommodation to priests who wish to live retired. It appears that Father Dominic and his companions stayed with these good Brothers some days while the house at Ere, which is about four miles distant, was being prepared to receive them. A close friendship was thus formed between the two houses, which still continues. One of the Passionist Fathers goes to Freidmont every week as confessor to the Brothers.

LETTER XXXVI

To Mrs. Canning
From the Abbé Bernard
Enclosing the Above
Lille
June 20, 1840

Excellent Protectress of the Missionaries,

I have just received this letter from Father Dominic, directed to you, enclosed in one for me, and, as it was not sealed, I have read it and add a word of my own.

You also will, no doubt, shed tears on seeing that he and you were baptized on the same day! God was preparing his work long before!

And now how are these poor people to get on at Ere? Belgium will give them nothing; nothing but an alb or two for their chapel. They have neither chalice nor ciborium. I am going to lend them my chalice till Providence sends me some funds.

Father Dominic's confessor foretold, before he left Rome, that he would have to suffer great hunger. I would wish not to be the occasion of it.

During the time I was with the Fathers, I thought I could see that they are men of the greatest

merit, whose dependence is solely on the cross.

They have already made acquaintance with the Jesuits at Brugelette, and I believe they will become attached to each other, but all that does not give bread.

Would that Mrs. Canning and Mr. Spencer might bring them some pounds sterling out of the stores of England.

Yours most sincerely in Jesus Christ,
Bernard, Priest

(The Abbé Bernard is now Vicar General of Cambrai.)

LETTER XXXVII

To Father Dominic

From the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer

St. Mary's College, Oscott, Birmingham

June 19, 1840

My dear Father Dominic,

How wonderful are the ways of God, that I should now be sitting down to write a letter in English to you on the affairs of the English mission, in which I see you engaged as fully, I hope I may say, as myself. I will not spend more time now in expressions of my joy and admiration at these circumstances. We have no leisure, thank God, for useless words. The thing is to proceed to business. When we have, both of us, worked a little longer up hill, against the difficulties which beset us both, in working in our respective spheres for the common cause, we shall in due time have the comfort of talking them over, and relating to each other the merciful ways in which God has helped us through them, as I trust confidently He will. I have today received your beautiful letter of the 11th June. I was intending at the first moment of spare time to write to your excellent friend, Monsr. Fiévet Chombard, in answer to his letter, in which he gave me notice of your being arrived with some companions at Lille.

The principal object of my letter would have been to speak of the young man whom I proposed as a subject for your Institute. Monsieur F. told me that as you had arrived, I had

nothing to do but to send him at once. Mr. F. said that you would want someone to teach you how to pronounce English. I have no idea of doing anything in this way without my bishop, so I asked Dr. Walsh. He, being informed that Dr. Wiseman was a great friend to your Institute and was interested about your settlement at Ere, recommended that as Dr. Wiseman is coming very soon as our Coadjutor Bishop, we should wait to receive his advice about it. I entreat your prayers for this college, where I hope it will not be long before I see you.

I am yours most truly,
George Spencer

LETTER XXXVIII

To Father Dominic

From the Right Rev. Wiseman (Now Cardinal)

St. Mary's College, Birmingham

Sept. 28, 1840

(Written immediately after his arrival in England from Rome, as Bishop Coadjutor for the Central District.)

Very Rev. Father in Christ,

If, on my way through Belgium, I did not go to visit you, this was not only for want of time but also from my having heard from a French priest, who was coming from Tournay, that one of your community, whom I naturally concluded to be your Paternity, was actually in England. I hoped then to find you here but have been disappointed. It seems to me that the moment of your coming to England is not far distant. Our good Bishop, Mgr. Walsh, has already fixed his eyes on the house and mission of Aston Hall, situated in the country, and not far from the residences of the Earl of Shrewsbury and of Mr. Phillipps,* formerly a convent of nuns, afterwards a Franciscan house, and therefore well suited for the purposes of a religious community. There is annexed to it a very extensive piece of ground, which may yield at the rate of £40 a year, fit for the pasture of cows, as, in this country, people use a great deal of milk, and, moreover, an annual stipend of about £80 for the support of the church and mission. The house, with its garden, is surrounded by a moat, which may be filled with running water, so that it is a perfect retreat. The only difficulty which I foresee is in regard to the service of the parish, since it is necessary that there should be instructions given and confessions heard in English. Under the circumstances,

however, I recommend to your Paternity to write on the subject to the Most Rev. Father Provost General to obtain his permission for you to come and examine everything. If you think fit, you may also forward to him this my letter. The relics, which were given me in charge at Rome for your Paternity, are coming with my luggage by sea and will soon be here.

I recommend myself earnestly to the fervent prayers of all your community, as also of the community of Saints John and Paul. I am, with every sentiment of sincere respect,

Very Rev. Father,

Your most devoted humble Servant,

N. Wiseman

* There appears here a geographical mistake. Mr. Phillips's residence in Leicestershire is at a very considerable distance from Aston. This mistake would be very natural, as Cardinal Wiseman had but just arrived from Italy, and as yet could have seen very little of the Midland Counties of England.

LETTER XXXIX

To Rev. James Ford

From Father Dominic

St. Mary's College, Oscott

Dec. 2, 1840

J.X.P.

My dearest Sir,

Do you remember still your old servant and faithful friend in Jesus Christ, Father Dominic, the Passionist? On my side, I can assure you that I have never forgotten you from the first moment that I had the honor to know you in Rome. Eight years had already passed since I heard any news about you, though I have constantly asked after you, and I know not whether you have received a long letter which I addressed you in answer to one which I received from you in Lucca, when this very day, since my arrival here for a short visit, Mr. George Spencer has given me an account of you. I have been consoled at this, though not in the degree that I should have desired. When will it be allowed me to hear the news that you have determined to embrace the Catholic religion? Yes, this would indeed console me. I hope it. I know that you are good, that you love Jesus Christ and His religion from your heart. You cannot then but be afflicted at seeing

this most holy religion profaned by so many, who lacerate and tear it into pieces, as I may say, sparing nothing of that which it possesses, however holy. Its dogmas, the most sacred and the best established, of the Trinity, of the Incarnation of the Word, etc., are called in question. Every Protestant assumes the right to examine everything, even to the symbols of the faith, and to correct that which our fathers have settled and so many martyrs have sealed with their own blood. What way is there left to put to silence these innovators, who become more numerous every day? I can see no other way than to fall back upon the venerable, unshaken authority of the holy Catholic Church, which, being founded by Jesus Christ and based upon a firm rock, has not changed and will never change, but, more steadfast than the sun, remains always the same. Let her voice be heard and it is enough. Ah! if all the true lovers of Jesus Christ would come to this point and would make common cause, what a happy result might be hoped for. But if people will follow no road but that of examining and if each one will set himself up as supreme judge of faith, we shall dispute in vain. There remains no authority to put to silence proud insubordinate spirits. Every Protestant will think himself to have a right to protest anew against his own particular church, since the founders of Protestantism have taken the liberty to protest against the definitions of the universal Church. In this way, where will matters end? Ah! may the end be to make an end of protesting against the Catholic Church, and all will end well. I know that many wise Protestants begin to acknowledge the truth of what I say. I hope you also will do so. Would to God I could go to see you! How much might I say to you on this subject! I cannot, however, do so. I must, in a few days, return to my residence in a new house, which we have opened in Belgium, near Tournay. Could not you come thither? How much I should desire to embrace you and open to you my heart and my desires; I hope to see you again before I die. I hope, too, yes, I hope to see you in heaven, with your good lady and your dear children. I hope you will one day be not only a Catholic but an apostle of the Catholic faith. But when, my dear Sir, when? Take notice that years pass by, and that eternity approaches, which will never pass. Let us not uselessly waste the time which God gives us to work out our own and others' salvation. '*While we have time, let us work*' (Gal. 6:10). Ah! if I could with my blood cooperate to the salvation of the precious souls redeemed by Jesus Christ, how gladly would I shed it. But I am good for nothing. If I am good for anything, I wholly dedicate myself to the service of my dear Mr. Ford. I am then, Sir, and always shall be,

Your most humble and obedient Servant in Jesus Christ,

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

A few lines added by Mr. Spencer.

St. Mary's College, Oscott

Dec. 3, 1840

My dear Ford,

Padre Domenico, having given me this letter to put into the post, I am happy to have the occasion of once more reminding you of myself. I don't know whether you ever have had distinct information of my being established here ever since April, 1839. I find this a place which agrees better both with my feelings and taste and my health, than any that I have yet been in, I think. I hope I may hear again soon of your welfare. You may imagine with what pleasure I greeted Father Dominic in England after twenty-seven years of longing desires on his part to come here. He has as yet no habitation here, but I trust it will please God to accomplish at length his wishes and to place him among us. One of the first topics he spoke of after entering this house was yourself. God grant you and I and he may be one. With my best respects to Mrs. Ford,

I am yours most affectionately,

George Spencer

I wish you would come again this way and see me here.

LETTER XL

To Father Dominic

From Mr. Phillipps

Grace-Dieu Manor

Dec. 3, 1840

(Written in Italian)

My dear and beloved Father in Christ,

I have heard this moment that you are at Oscott. Oh, what delightful news. Oh, how much I rejoice in the Lord at it! At length an apostle, a man of God, is come into England. We have seen at last accomplished the prophecies of your venerable Founder, Father Paul of the Cross, regarding the foundation of your Institute in England. We see at length the effect of so many prayers offered to God by your Institute for the conversion of this kingdom. Oh, thanks be to God, the giver of every good. Oh! thanks be to Mary, to whose intercession we owe this and many other favors. But, my dear Father, you are at Oscott, and will you not come to Grace-Dieu to see and embrace again your friend and brother, who loves you so much in Jesus Christ? I cannot believe that you will return to Belgium without first seeing me. It would be too much cruelty. Come, then, and give me this consolation. I shall say no more at present, as I hope to see you soon and to speak to you *'face to face.'* My wife sends you her best compliments, and desires to see and become acquainted with you.

I am yours most affectionately,

Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

LETTER XLI

To Father Dominic

From the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer

St. Mary's College, Oscott

Feb. 4, 1841

My dear Father Dominic,

I am well aware that you must be spending your time in much anxiety and fears about the accomplishment of your holy enterprise of settling in England; but these fears will have been tempered by confidence in God. In flying to God for relief and help, you will have been gaining so much increase of grace and wisdom, as will make you more and more fit to do great good in England, when the happy time comes at last of your being fixed among us. I might have given you some satisfaction sooner, but I have not been solicitous about doing this, for the same reason as I mentioned above, because I know that you have communion with God, and he is your

comforter, and you have prudence, charity, and patience, and will not, like some, quickly imagine that you are forgotten and neglected because some exterior observances of civility are omitted towards you. I am led into the neglect of many duties as a correspondent, from not making the most of my time, so as to find leisure for writing letters, besides attending to my employments here. I sincerely desire that it may please God that in a more substantial way I may show my friendship for you, and my wish for your success. I was hesitating for some time whether to write anything for the public on the subject of the Passionists. There was some danger of opposition being roused on the part of some who might take advantage of the existing laws, which forbid the entrance of religious Orders into England. But after consulting several prudent persons, I have determined to write confidently. I was too late to have a letter inserted in the Catholic magazine for the present month of February, but notice has been given in it, that a letter from me on the subject of prayers for the conversion of England and the prospects of the Passionists in England would appear in the next number at the beginning of March. If this has as good an effect as when I said something about the Passionists about a year ago in the same magazine, I shall have enough for your wants to send you very shortly. I give you notice of this now, in order that you may, with your brethren, pray for me that I may write and speak on this and on every subject as it may please God, and that He may prevent ill-disposed persons from opposing our good designs. I have seen Mrs. Gandolphy since you were here, and she promised something towards the expenses of your brethren traveling from Rome. Others have also promised to contribute. We must, therefore, go on trusting in God. Dr. Wiseman is now in Dublin, where he was invited to preach and to meet the Catholic bishops of Ireland, who are assembled together. He writes in great joy at the spirit which he sees rising among them, to exert themselves for the conversion of England. You will soon be working with us in person, I trust. Till then, you must work for us by your prayers more and more, and, above all, that we may be worthy to become instruments of such a great work as the salvation of souls.

I am, my dear Rev. Father,
Yours most affectionately,
George Spencer

LETTER XLII

To Father Dominic

From the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer

St. Mary's College

April 8, 1841

My dear Father Dominic,

I have not been much of a helper to you as yet, but I have some intelligence to send you, which will show that God is raising to you better helpers than I am. I have not written many letters to individuals about you because, firstly, the place which is intended for you by Dr. Walsh is not yet vacant. I do not know whether there is any immediate prospect of having it at our command, till which time it would not be worth while that you should take your journey here or bring subjects from Rome. In the second place, I was waiting to see what the effect would be of my writing two or three letters about you in the Catholic magazine. Among others, I wrote to Mrs. Hutchinson of Edinburgh, the lady who sent me the first donation of ten pounds last year, and asked her whether she knew anything of the prospect to which you alluded in your last letter, of an opening for the Passionists in Scotland. She told me that Sir William Stewart, lately a convert to Catholicity, is the person from whom there are expectations of a place for you. Since she wrote, I have had a letter from Dr. Gillis, the Coadjutor Bishop of Edinburgh, who enclosed to me a letter written to him by Sir William Stewart, to tell him that he can give ground for your brethren in various places. He mentions three. First he speaks of a spot which Dr. Gillis and he had looked at together, and thought would do very well for a house or a church, but here there would only be two or three acres of indifferent pasture ground. There is another place near the town of Dunkeld, where there would be thirty acres, partly wooded, a most beautiful situation, and capable of being made productive, but no house. Sir William, however, would give assistance in building one. Another place there is, where there is a small farm and house (the only one vacant on the property), which he would give about September, or sooner if really necessary. Sir William Stewart adds these words: "You may believe that I should do everything in my power to add to the comfort and supply the wants of these good men. I say so sincerely, and I hope you may count on it." Dr. Gillis, in sending me this letter, says that as far as he is personally concerned, he should be delighted to see the Passionist in the district. I have written today to Dr. Gillis, to tell him that I should send you an account of these proposals and to assure

him that you would not be wanting in zeal to correspond with them. You will be able to hear a good deal more about Scotland from Mr. Edgar. When I mentioned this letter from Dr. Gillis to Dr. Walsh and Dr. Wiseman, who both are in the house, they said it was very pleasing, but they will not hear of losing you from this district. You must, however, get brothers from Rome sufficient for both objects, and though we have some delay, God will bring it all about.

I am happy to tell you that the Oxford people are making most rapid advances towards Catholicity. The circumstances of their progress are not public. Dr. Wiseman knows them, but is not allowed to tell them. He declares positively that soon there will be most astonishing things brought to light, such as the most sanguine people have not thought of. So we have only to wait in patience, pray, and sanctify ourselves, and soon God will call on us to do something for the good cause, better than we have yet done.

I am yours most affectionately,

George Spencer

LETTER XLIII

To Father Dominic

From the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer

St. Mary's College, near Birmingham

June 8, 1841

My dear F. Dominic,

You have had to be meriting graces for England by the exercise of patience. It is a happy thing to be assured that all our affairs are in the hands of God; for without that assurance, in such a case as yours, we might be discouraged. But you will not be discouraged, I trust, because you will have a happy confidence that God, who brought you thus far towards the fulfilment of your long cherished desires, will not fail to complete His work, if you only continue patient and faithful, unless it be indeed that we in England prove unworthy of having the presence of you and your companions among us, and you have to seek your reward elsewhere. But yet I hope that we shall, none of us, be disappointed, but that God will give us full compensation for all the time during which we have been waiting. Mrs. Canning came here as she told you she would; but it

was not the will of God that she should succeed in her wishes of opening the way for you, at least not at this time. Dr. Wiseman had nothing to say to her, except that he and Dr. Walsh were still in the same mind as they had been since the time that you were here; still desirous to have you and your brothers settled in the District, but unable as yet to put into your hands the house which they intend for you. The Priest who is placed there cannot yet be removed; but Dr. Walsh is himself now in the neighborhood of that house, and intends to take measures on the subject before he returns. But he is hindered again from proceeding as he would wish about that or any other affair by an attack of illness, under which he is now laboring. All will be right in due time. I should be very sorry to lose you from our district by reason of this delay; though, if it be God's will that Scotland should have the benefit of your first labors for this kingdom, I will not be jealous of the preference which God gives to that people by sending you there. Whichever place you come to first, I trust it will not be long before you can send a new colony to the other. I have heard no more since I last wrote to you about the prospects in Scotland. I entreat you not to lose courage, but to go on working for us by your prayers, more and more earnestly, until you have to begin laboring for us in person. God has His own plans and will not be hurried by us. I beg you will give my respects to Mons. Fiévet Chombard and the Abbé Bernard. I hope I shall one day make their acquaintance personally.

I am, my dear Father Dominic,
Your faithful servant in Christ,
George Spencer

LETTER XLIV

To F. Dominic
From the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer
St. Mary's College
July 3, 1841

My dear F. Dominic,

Your letter, which I received yesterday, expresses such feelings that I am convinced you will soon attain your end; for that perfect conformity to the will of God and that readiness to sacrifice

or delay our most favorite schemes, if it be His will, is the great thing necessary, I believe, to make Him remove all difficulties and give us all that we wish. Dr. Wiseman tells me today that in three weeks' time he and Dr. Walsh will be together in Belgium. They are going to pay a visit, I believe, to Lord and Lady Shrewsbury, who are staying at Spa. Dr. Wiseman will also desire to see Monsgr. Fornari at Brussels. Certainly, not the least object they will have will be to see you and your community at Ere. I hope they will be able to arrange everything with you for a speedy establishment in England, which, as far as I can judge, is just ripe for the entrance of such as you are. Only continue now till you come to prepare yourself for the trials and disappointments which the prejudices of Protestants and the coldness and indifference of Catholics will certainly occasion you. Only persevere to the end, trusting in God, and if all others disappoint you, He will not. I am going, next week, to join Mr. Phillipps and his family in North Wales, where he is about to spend some time on the sea-coast. I shall be there till the end of our vacation. I do not like being so long out of the way of my work, but it is reckoned advisable for my health that I should go. I hope to be preparing, while there, to return with better dispositions, more wisdom, and more humility to my post. I will forward your letter to Mrs. Canning by the next post.

I am,

Your faithful friend and servant in Christ,

George Spencer

LETTER XLV

To F. Dominic

From the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer

Barmouth, North Wales

July 23, 1841

My Dear F. Dominic.

You cannot yet have heard of the fate of your letter to the Oxford men. You do not yet know whether it ever was sent to them, and I now send you already a long and beautiful answer, which I am sure you will be delighted with. I sent your letter to Mr. Bloxam of Magdalene College, and it is by him that this answer has been forwarded to me. He tells me that the author desires that his

letter should not be published, but, of course, you did not think of doing this. From reading this answer to you, and from other writings which are being published from Oxford, it seems to me, more and more, that we ought to do everything in our power to encourage them, and that it would be a great advantage if the Holy Father could be made acquainted with their position and induced to give them encouragement. But the main thing is that we should continue constant in our prayers and never cease till circumstances are brought round, and they are, in one way or another, united with the Church.

You will, I hope, soon see Dr. Walsh and Dr. Wiseman; I trust they may make arrangements for your quickly coming to England. In the meanwhile, what a comfort it is to you that you have already begun your work for us by this correspondence with Oxford.

Believe me,

Yours most sincerely,

George Spencer

P.S. I am staying here with Mr. Phillipps and his family during our vacation; but I shall, I hope, be at St. Mary's College again before the Assumption.

LETTER XLVI

To Father Dominic

From Dr. Wiseman

Aug. 2, 1841

(Written In Italian)

Dear beloved Father,

I write to you, as I promised, to inform you that I am in Belgium with Dr. Walsh, and that next Friday we shall be at Brussels, where we expect you in the house of the Apostolic Nuncio to speak about our common interests. Will you be so kind as to write a line in answer directed hither?

Believe me,

Your most obedient servant in Christ,

N. Wiseman

LETTER XLVII

To the Community at Littlemore

From the Rev. Father Dominic

Ere, near Tournay

1841

(This letter is written in Latin, as Father Dominic had not yet learnt to write English. It is his second letter to them. The first we have not seen and as that was rather a controversial letter, it is not so suitable to this collection, which is intended to display the feelings and movements of F. Dominic's heart towards England, as the moving power which under God brought the Passionist here.)

J.X.P.

Most dear Brethren in Christ,

Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer nor His mercy from me. I cannot, my dearest brethren, contain within my breast the excess of my joy. I cannot restrain it from breaking forth into exterior signs of gladness. It is right that my heart and my flesh should rejoice in the living God. I would wish I had innumerable tongues, that I might duly and worthily praise the Divine Goodness for the multitude of tender mercies which this same Divine Goodness has abundantly poured forth on my most beloved English people. Whatever grace, whatever good it pleases God to shed forth on you, I reckon as so much conferred on myself. My heart is so bound to you that I look on you always as a part of my heart. I have always most ardently loved you; I have always longed for you in the bowels of Jesus Christ. But forgive me, if I have not always had so good an opinion as I have of you now, since I have begun to observe you more closely, that is, since I have read your works, especially that dearest letter which you have sent to me, your unworthy servant. I speak in the plural number, first, because I know not who is the author of it; secondly, because I believe you all are of the same mind and of the same judgment. The reasons which moved me to an unfavorable opinion were these: 1. because I read in all books that England was infected with the errors of Protestants, and that the Anglican Church was not simply schismatical but almost entirely Calvinistic; 2. because many years ago, about twelve, while I lived at Rome, I knew a certain priest or, more properly, a *minister* of the Anglican Church with whom I entered into controversies regarding religion and faith, and he certainly was

not so well disposed towards us. He did not admit the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, nor the authority of councils, especially of the Tridentine, nor the veneration of the saints, nor transubstantiation, etc., and asserted that the Roman Church, and all others in communion with it, had fallen into many and most grievous errors. This being the case, I thought all other ministers of the Anglican Church who profess the faith of the thirty-nine articles, to have the same opinions, and consequently that those articles actually contained the doctrine of the Calvinists and other Protestants. This was the cause of my groans, and at the same time of my bad opinion of those articles and of all who followed them. On one part, a desire of your salvation pressed me on; on the other, the prejudiced judgment I had formed was greatly against me. Hence my groans, hence my sighs and tears, hence the bitterness of my heart. I do not mean that I ever lost my hope of your conversion and salvation, but I did not think you so well disposed. But let us give unceasingly thanks to God. Your numerous works and writings, great and small, but principally your dearest letter, addressed to me, have brought me light, joy, and gladness. Not that I think everything accomplished; there appear yet some things to be desired. Would that it were true that the Anglican bishops had maintained the faith of Cardinal Pole in its integrity! We should have to examine whether Parker and his successor did retain the faith of Pole; but I am unwilling now to dwell on this question. What I have thus far learnt of your dispositions is so delightful, that it surpasses all expectation. He who has begun the good work, He will complete, confirm, and establish it. To Him be glory for ever. Amen. May God bless these dispositions, may He cause these seeds of salvation, these pledges of glory to shoot forth by the dew of His grace. Truly I may say that you are not far from the kingdom of God.

I thank you, dearest brethren, for your good will towards me. If you have yet anything which may increase my gladness concerning your welfare, I beg of you refuse not to impart it to me. Above all, tell me if there are many in the English Church who agree with you, and who, like you, are so well disposed. Oh, how happy should I be to be assured of this! I hope, however, it is the case, and I think I may gather it, not doubtfully, from your letter. Fear nothing, dearest brethren, on my side. I am prepared to accept and explain all that comes from you in good part; although some things may not be quite exactly correct; hoping that God Himself, of His goodness, may give you not only a perfect understanding of Catholic dogmas, but also strength, by virtue of which you may at length break through the bonds, if any there be, which keep you still severed from us. Then will we together sing with joy – the snare is broken and we are

delivered. It seems undeniable that one of these snares to be broken is the profession of the thirty-nine articles. For although they might in a manner be explained in a Catholic sense, yet you yourselves well know that they may equally, nay, more easily be understood in a sense not Catholic; therefore, as you very well remark, the Catholic Church does not admit nor approve them, as it never did admit the dissembling professions of faith of certain semi-Arians, which, though they did not exclude the Catholic sense, were yet not sufficiently removed from the sense the Arians. A profession of faith must be clear and open as you yourselves acknowledge and declare. Let us hope that God will grant to us that we may together profess with the mouth what we together hold with the heart, so that not only with one mind but with one mouth we may glorify God and gladden the Church after her so many groans and so many tears shed at the most bitter tearing away from her of the children which she had borne to Christ. I hope I shall not see death before all these things are accomplished. What joy will it be, not only on earth, but also before the angels of God. What will be my joy! What my exultation! What glory will accrue to God most high from so happy an event! What advantage to the holy Church of God! What may not be hoped for from this union! What might we not do for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Now we labor separately for the conversion of the heathen, especially in Asia, where our brethren labor unto death; then, as I hope, we shall labor in the vineyard of the Lord in perfect union. Oh, how good and how pleasant it will be for brethren to dwell together in unity! But when, my dear brethren, will that day dawn? I hope it is not far distant. Meanwhile, let us all pray together, let us weep a little over our sins, and the sins of our forefathers, that God may have mercy on us, because we are greatly filled with contempt. Our enemies have laughed us to scorn. All the heretics, all the incredulous, all atheists, all infidels meet together against the Lord and against His Christ. All tear to pieces the bosom of the Church. We might, and we ought, to oppose an impregnable rampart against their efforts; but while we are divided, we cannot so effectually resist them. We must labor, then, that first this most desirable union be obtained. For my part, I would not refuse to shed all my blood. Tell me, brethren, if I might do anything for so great a good, and most gladly will I spend and be myself spent for you. Meanwhile, let us together pray to God that He would bring to nothing our enemies. I have never hitherto ceased to pray for you, nor will I cease for the time to come; nay, I could not cease if I would. Do you also pray, most beloved brethren, for me, and for the salvation in common of us all. I hope sometime to see you and to speak with you, that our joy may be full.

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

LETTER XLVIII

To Mr. Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

From Rev. Father Dominic

St. Mary's College, Oscott

Feast of St. Bridget, October 8, 1841

J.X.P.

My dearest Sir, most beloved in Christ,

Here I am again in England, come here to stay, as I hope, and to work all the time of my life for the glory of God and for the salvation of the dear souls redeemed by the most precious blood of Jesus Christ. Yesterday evening I arrived here at Oscott with one of my companions, a Passionist priest, Irish by birth. I have left at our house in Belgium six religious and two novices. That foundation goes on well, and there is plenty to do for the glory of God. I hope now for plenty to do here. I do not know how long I shall have to stay at Oscott, nor when I shall be able to go to our mission because I have not yet had time to speak with either of the two bishops who are here. I hope, however, soon to see you again either here or at our future house; for I know not if I shall be able to go to you at Grace-Dieu. If I cannot go there in body, I will gladly go in heart to embrace in Jesus Christ yourself, as well as our good Doctor Gentili, whose labors I hear have been blessed by God with great successes. *'He is my brother; may he increase a thousand, thousand times.'*

I have brought with me from Belgium a quantity of manuscripts, which in due time I will do myself the honor of presenting to you. I should wish to have a few copies of the paraphrase of the prayer of Jeremias. If you think well, you might send them here to Mr. Spencer or bring them yourself to our future house.

I entreat you to give my most respectful compliments to your worthy lady, your sister-in-law, etc. Believe me what I am, and always shall be inviolably,

Your most humble servant in Christ,

Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

The following few lines from Mr. Spencer to Mr. Phillipps are written on the same sheet as the above, the day after (editor).

St. Mary's Coll.

Feast of Saints Denys and Comp., MM.

1841

My dear Ambrose,

Having the commission of forwarding this letter from Padre Domenico, I add a word of my own, though I have not much to say except that all goes on here as usual. Padre Domenico tells you he is uncertain when he is to go to his mission, and so am I. I tell him the beginning of his mission is to exercise patience. No wonder, after the devil has kept him out of England twenty-eight years, that he should keep him shut up and silent in England for some twenty-eight days or even weeks. He can always be learning English. It is a wonder that he is here at all, and at that we must rejoice.

I look forward, as to a happy epoch, to your next visit with Mr. Sibthorpe. Your labor is not lost in bringing these men here. The effect will, I trust, be seen soon springing up.

I am your affectionate brother in Christ,

George Spencer

I make my first preaching in the cathedral tomorrow.

LETTER XLIX

To Rev. James Ford

From Rev. Father Dominic

St. Mary's College, Oscott

Feast of St. Andrew, Avellino, Nov. 10, 1841

J.X.P.

My very dear friend in Jesus Christ, Mr. Ford,

Behold, at length the hour so much desired by me has come; that is, the hour of my coming to England, not to see it only for a few days but to remain and to spend in it what little period of life it pleases God to grant me. After twenty-eight years of desire, His Divine Majesty has vouchsafed to grant my prayers. I shall never be able sufficiently to thank nor sufficiently to correspond with the Divine Goodness for so great a favor. My duty is to do all I can. I will therefore seek to employ all my weak powers for the glory of God and for the salvation of my dear brethren in Jesus Christ. Now, since you are yourself one of those most dear to me on this earth, and particularly in this Island, I was scarcely landed when one of my first thoughts was to enquire after you. I asked several persons, but no one was able to give me any account of you or to tell me where you now are. At last, Mr. Spencer has advised that I should write a letter, which he would send to one of his friends, who would certainly know the place of your residence and be able to forward it to you safely.

Here I am, then, dear Sir, about to give you some account of myself and a trifling token of the esteem I entertain for you. I am come here to England with a companion, a Passionist priest, by birth an Irishman, being invited by Dr. Walsh and Dr. Wiseman, in order, after having learnt the English language, to work at founding a house and novitiate, where we may train some subjects who also may labor in the vineyard of our Lord. Now I am staying at Oscott with my companion, expecting the time for going to our mission. This is all that I can tell you of my present position. Oh! how desirous I am to know something of yours, and especially what are your sentiments regarding our union in one sheepfold under one shepherd. I know that this union is ardently desired by all good Christians and is promoted very diligently by the wisest and most zealous members of the Anglican Church. This last night I have had the sweet consolation to sing Matins at midnight with two most respectable gentlemen, who were formerly ministers of the Anglican Church, and shall continue the same practice every night. You may more easily imagine, than I can express, what a pleasure is this to me. But how much greater would the pleasure be if I could have you also for a companion in singing the praises of God. But can I hope it? Yes, I hope it. I hope it. This hope I have always kept alive in my heart, from the first moment that I had the honor of knowing you. I should not be able easily to go and see you at your house. It will be much more easy for you to come and see me in the house which I hope shortly to have, not far from hence. I shall, therefore, be expecting you, and at the same time expecting the moment when I shall know or see that which my heart so much desires in regard to

you.

If you are so good as to answer me, you may direct the letter to our dearest Mr. Spencer, who will take care to forward it to me. I beg you to believe me, what I invariably have the honor to declare myself,

Your most devoted and obedient servant in Jesus Christ,
Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

The following lines are added on the same sheet by Mr. Spencer.

My dear Ford,

You will join us, I am sure, in our satisfaction here, at seeing Padre Domenico at length among us, as he announces to you. I hope, indeed, it will not be long before you and he may see each other once more. I should be myself, also, truly happy to see you. Let us hear where you are and how circumstanced. Would it not suit your health, and so conduce to the advancement of whatever work you are about, to take a trip this way sometime? I heard of you at Northampton some time ago. I went to visit my brother at Althorp, on Michaelmas Day. At Northampton, where, of course, I spent some time, I made my regular call on Miss Jewel, who said she had seen you. I think she told me where you were, but I cannot remember. It is to her that I intend enclosing this letter for you, as Father Dominic states. The place to which Father Dominic is going, in order to establish a house of his Order, is Aston Hall near Stone, Staffordshire, where there is a large house, which once was a monastery but has been for some time in the hands of the Bishop, untenanted. It seems just prepared for him. I do not know when I heard from you, or you from me. It is a long time, and I shall be very happy to see your writing once more; much rather to see yourself. Give my truest regards to Mrs. Ford. I hope you will never suffer my not writing to you for so long to lead you to the idea that I forget you and her and the many happy days we have had together once. I long to renew such intercourse as that used to be with you; but how is it to be? God knows, and to Him I will never cease to pray for it.

I am, yours most affectionately in Christ,
George Spencer

LETTER L

The following letter is the only one which we shall now produce, written by Father Dominic in English without correction. It will be judged how well he succeeded in learning English for a man who was so far advanced in age before beginning.

To. J. D. Dalgairns, Esq.

From Rev. Father Dominic

Littlemore, near Oxford, Aston Hall

S. Linus Papa et martyr, Sept. 22, 1845

J.X.P.

'Blessed be God who has not set aside my prayer nor His mercy from me' (Ps. 65:20). It will be more easy for you to imagine than for me to declare the pleasure which your kind letter gave to me. Oh, what happiness, what joy to my heart! Come, then, my dear Sir, come, and I shall be happy to receive you, not only into my poor house but also into my heart. Do not think that a very long time will be required for confession and other things necessary. Two or three days, and perhaps one day only, might be sufficient. *'God gives abundantly to all and does not hold back'* (James 1:5). The way of coming may be this. You may go to Birmingham first; when you are at Birmingham, take the train for Stafford, in the Liverpool station, or line. Our house is far from the Stafford station, five miles, situated in a little village called Aston, and is well known by the name of Aston Hall. In the afternoon there are some coaches going from Stafford to Stone, which pass not far from our house. You may come by them or you may walk, as you please. Suppose you prefer to walk, you may leave your luggage in the house of Mr. Antonio Vitta at Stafford, and he would think of them and send them here by some conveyance. I hope it will not be difficult to find our house, since, by the grace of God, you have succeeded to find out the way to heaven. Come, then, come. I shall remain at home waiting for you. I was to go next Sunday to Cheshire for a retreat, but I shall send there one of my companions in my place.

Will you be so kind as to present my best respects to the Rev. Newman, Mr. St. John, and to all your holy companions of Littlemore. Oh, my dear Littlemore! I love thee. A little more still, and we shall see happy results from Littlemore. When the Reverend, learned and holy superior of Littlemore will come, then I hope we shall see the beginning of a new era. Oh, yes, yes. We shall

see again the happy days of Augustine, of Lanfranc and Thomas. Yes, yes. England will be once more the Isle of Saints and the nurse of new Christian nations, destined to carry the light of the Gospel *'to the nations, to kings, and the children of Israel'* (Acts 9:15).

I am afraid to tire you with my bad handwriting. *'I do not wish to write with pen and ink; I hope to see you soon and speak face to face. Greet everyone by name and pray for me.'*

Your most faithful servant in Jesus Christ,
Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist

P.S. I hope you will receive in time this letter. I have received yours, three days after it was written.