

The Saints and Servants of God.

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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.

VOL. II.

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“Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in  
universo mundo.”—*Antiph. Ecclesiæ.*



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We hereby approve and sanction the Series of Lives of the Canonized and Beatified Saints, the Servants of God declared Venerable, and others commonly reputed to have died in the odour of sanctity, now in course of publication by the Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, and we cordially recommend it to the Faithful, as calculated to promote the glory of God and of His Saints, the increase of devotion, and the spread of our holy Religion.

Given at Westminster, the Feast of the Nativity of our B. Lady, A. D. 1851.

*N. J. Carr. W. W. W. W.*



TO  
THE REGULAR CLERGY  
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND,  
THE CHILDREN  
OF ST. BENEDICT AND ST. BERNARD,  
ST. DOMINICK AND ST. FRANCIS,  
AND THE SONS  
OF THE HOLY IGNATIUS,  
THE GREAT MASTER OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE  
AND THE NURSING-FATHER OF SAINTS AND MARTYRS,  
WHO,  
IN THE STRAITNESS AND NEGLECT  
OF THEIR UNHONOURED CLOISTERS,  
OR THE CHEERLESS SOLITUDE  
OF THEIR HIRED LODGINGS,  
HAVE JOYFULLY EMBRACED THE POVERTY OF JESUS,  
AND EARNED BY LOVING ZEAL  
THE CROWN OF MARTYRDOM,  
AND WHO,  
THROUGH SCENES OF AWFUL SACRILEGE,  
AND TIMES OF BITTER PERSECUTION,  
THROUGH THE LONG AND WEARY VISITATION  
OF ACTIVE MALICE OR OF COLD CONTEMPT,  
HAVE PERPETUATED,  
AMONGST THEIR UNWORTHY COUNTRYMEN,  
THE BLESSED LINEAGE  
OF THEIR HOLY FOUNDERS.

ST. WILFRID'S,  
FEAST OF ST. BERNARD,  
M DCCC.XLVII.



## PREFACE.

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AT page 91 there is a statement respecting the infrequency of the communions of the Fathers of the Desert, which is not quite correct, or at least which is so worded as to leave an erroneous impression; as Benedict XIV. has shown at length in his Treatise on Heroic Virtue.\* The misconception, which is not an uncommon one, has arisen from the supposition, that the Solitaries of the Desert were so circumstanced by the fact of their seclusion, that they could not participate in the sacraments. It is, however, easy to show that this hypothesis does not rest on any solid foundation.

The first, and by far the largest, class of those who retired into the deserts of Egypt and Syria consisted of monks living together in monasteries under the

\* Vol. I. p. 306. Orat. Transl.

rule of an abbot. There is no want of historical evidence that these were accustomed to assemble in church at stated times for the purpose of hearing mass and receiving communion. Thus, in the rule which St. Pachomius, the founder of the monastic life, gave to the monks of Tabenna in the Thebaid, who were in number about sixteen thousand under one superior, it is enjoined that the holy sacrifice should be offered up on Saturdays and Sundays, and that the brethren should communicate. Again it is related that in the desert of Nitria there dwelt five thousand solitaries, distributed into fifty monasteries. They had a Church served by eight priests, which was large enough to contain the whole body, and thither they all resorted on Saturdays and Sundays to celebrate in common the divine offices. In like manner the solitaries of Scetis, who were renowned for their excessive austerities, had several churches in which they assembled. There is still extant a discourse, which the Abbot Theonas delivered to them, on the subject of com-



munion. In it he combats the error of those monks who communicated only once a year, on the ground that they were unworthy to approach the divine mysteries, "unless their souls were free from every spot and blemish; forgetting that it is by the reception of this sacrament we attain to the sanctification and purification of our souls." He then concludes; "It is more fitting that we should every Sunday partake of the Heavenly Bread, as the medicine for our infirmities, humbly acknowledging our inability ever to merit so great a grace, instead of vainly and presumptuously persuading ourselves that by the end of the year we shall have become worthy to receive these holy mysteries." It is needless to multiply instances: the above are sufficient to prove that the monks who lived in community, were in the habit of communicating at least once a week.

We now come to the solitaries who lived, each one by himself, in *lauræ* or cells. They were men who had previously passed a long time in some mo-

nastery, when their faults had been eradicated and their virtues matured by the exercises and mortifications of community life. Hence it frequently happened that they fixed themselves near a monastery, and lived under obedience to the abbot. Thus we read in Surius, that the Abbot Gerasimus presided over a monastery to which was attached a *laura* of seventy cells. With regard to the manner of life followed in the *lauræ*, St. Cyril relates that for five days in the week each one remained silent in his cell, tasting nothing but bread, dates, and water, and on the Saturday and Sunday they all came to the church where they received the Eucharist; after which they retired to the convent and partook of some boiled food and a little wine. Rufinus again, after having spoken of the monks of Nitria, who lived in community, continues; "There is another spot in the heart of the desert, distant about nine miles from Nitria, which is called the Cells from the great multitude of them which are found in every direction each separate from the

other. Hither come those who, after having been trained in the monastery of Nitria, and habituated to the practice of every religious virtue, desire to lead a more retired and hidden life; for this desert is very extensive, and the cells are at such a distance from each other, that nothing can be seen or heard." He further adds that each one had a cell to himself, that the strictest silence was preserved, and that they met only on Saturdays and Sundays in the church.

It is clear from all this that the solitaries of the *laura* had the same facilities of participating in the Sacraments which were enjoyed by the monks who lived in community.

Besides those who led a life of solitude in the *lauræ*, there were others who shut themselves up in cells, either within the precincts of a monastery or in its neighbourhood. They very seldom came forth from their prisons, except it might be to assemble together in church, especially on the more solemn festivals.

In addition to the opportunities afforded to them at these times of receiv-

ing the Sacraments, we are told by a very exact writer,\* that “a priest used sometimes to go and say mass in a cell occupied by only one solitary, that he might have the consolation of communicating. The anchorites were also allowed to keep the Blessed Sacrament in their cells, that they might receive communion according to their devotion.” St. Basil alludes to this latter custom in a letter written about A. D. 370, to Cæsaria, a patrician lady. He is defending the practice which prevailed during the times of persecution, of permitting the laity to communicate themselves in the absence of a priest or deacon. “All the solitaries of the desert,” he says, “wherever there is no priest, keep the Eucharist in their dwellings, and communicate themselves.” This custom must have seemed a very natural one to the Egyptian anchorites, for St. Basil continues: “At Alexandria and in Egypt almost all the laity keep the Eucharist at their homes, and, when they please, administer it to themselves.”

\* Bulteau ap. Marin Vies des Pères des Déserts, tom. iii., p. 370. From this latter work, and the Treatise of Benedict XIV. alluded to above, all the instances which have been cited are taken.

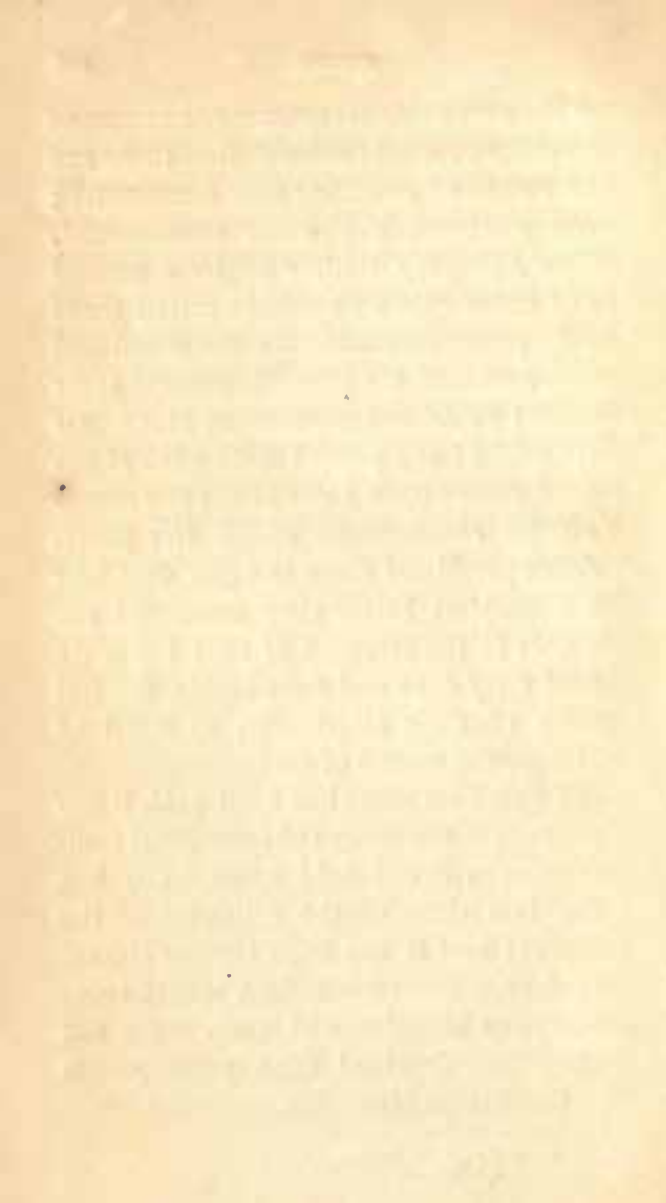
There now only remains for us to consider the case of those anchorites who retired into the farthest recesses of the desert, where they lived in complete and perpetual seclusion from their fellow men. Such a one was St. Paul, the first hermit, who, to escape from the persecution which was then raging, fled away in early youth into the desert of Egypt, and there lived in such entire solitude for nearly a century, that he would have died unknown, had not God, by a special inspiration, guided St. Antony to the place of his retreat. Such a one, again, was St. Mary of Egypt, who, in penance for the sins of her youth, hid herself for forty-seven years from the sight and memory of men in the wilderness of Syria. "With regard to this class of solitaries," as Benedict XIV. observes, "it certainly cannot be proved that they came at stated times to the churches which were at a great distance from them, or that a priest had access to them." On the other hand, it would be rash to infer that they were wholly cut off from the Sacraments. Some of

them may have long retained in their possession the Blessed Eucharist, which the laity, in times of persecution at least, were permitted to carry away to their own homes. Others were, through a particular providence of God, visited by pious and religious persons, who administered to them the Sacraments; as we read of Zosimus, a monk of Palestine, who brought the communion to St. Mary of Egypt at the eve of her death. Again, there were some who received communion through the ministry of angels. This favour, of which there are so many instances in the later ages of the Church, was granted to St. Onophrius, who passed seventy years in the deserts of Egypt without seeing or speaking to any one. He was at length discovered by St. Paphnutius, to whom he revealed that God had fed him every Sunday with the Bread of Life by the hands of an angel. Sozomen, in his Ecclesiastical History (l. vi. c. 29), relates the same thing of Marcus, one of the solitaries of Scetis.

It must also be remembered, that,

while communion is necessary as a means in order to attain eternal life, there are two ways of receiving this Sacrament ; one spiritual, the other sacramental. Now Almighty God, who by a special and extraordinary vocation called these holy persons to embrace the eremitical life, could, if He pleased, sustain their souls by spiritual communion alone. Or He might have poured forth such abundant graces upon them in the few sacramental communions which His providence permitted them to enjoy, that, like the prophet Elias, they journeyed onwards in the strength of that heavenly food forty days and forty nights, the full term of their pilgrimage, to the true Horeb, the mount of God.

To sum up what has been said, it appears that the charge of infrequent communion will not hold against any but the last class of the solitaries of the desert ; and it has been further shown, that even these anchorites, whose vocation was singular and rare, were not altogether deprived of a participation in the Divine Mysteries.





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THE LIFE  
OF THE  
BLESSED PAUL OF THE CROSS.



THE LIFE  
OF  
B. PAUL OF THE CROSS.

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BOOK II.

CHAPTER IV.

OF FATHER PAUL'S HOPE.

THE world is a sea which is constantly agitated by winds, and troubled by tempests ; but, through the infinite mercy of God, we possess the blessing of hope, which, like a secure anchor holds firm the vessel of our hearts, and prevents them from being tossed about by the storms of disorderly affection, or immersed in the waves of tribulation. To the holding fast of the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor to the soul, sure and firm, and which entereth in, even within the veil, where the Forerunner Jesus hath entered before us. In proportion as the souls of the elect are subjected to the rudest trials, so our Lord, who never permits any to be tempted above their strength, infuses into their hearts a greater degree of hope, to assist and encourage them.

Now Father Paul of the Cross had been chosen by God for a life of toil and suffering, in imitation of Him of whose childhood it was written, " He was in labours from his youth," and of whose manhood, " He came into the depth of the sea, and a tempest

overwhelmed Him." Hence we may reasonably conclude that our Lord, who with such infinite wisdom disposes all necessary means for obtaining the destined end, had gifted His servant with a marvellously firm hope, which should endure, without shrinking, the severest ordeals. It was enough to treat familiarly with the venerable Father, to become aware of his complete trust in God, and his utter abandonment of all things in the hands of his loving Lord. He imagined himself, as he once said in confidence to a friend, to be a little infant in the arms of its mother, who lifts up her child in play over the brink of a precipice, and as no one would suppose that she meant to let her infant fall, so he could never believe that Almighty God would suffer him to be thrown down into the abyss of hell. He walked through this valley of tears with eyes always looking upwards, as one who is waiting trustfully for the heaven he sees above. Those around him often observed that, as he gazed upon the sky, he broke out into touching exclamations, such as "How beautiful is yonder country, and it is all for us." At other times, with tears in his eyes, he said "Nothing in this life can please me that is not God; all that I hope for, all that I wish for, is to go and enjoy Him, and this I trust to do through His pure mercy, by His bitter Passion, and by the dolours of my Mother Mary." While taking a walk with one of his brethren, and discoursing upon indifferent subjects, he suddenly exclaimed, as he lifted up his eyes to heaven: "Do you see that glorious country above? It will one day be

ours." Then he fell into an ecstatic silence, and it was some time before he recovered himself. He was once asked, when in Rome, to go and see the Villa Pinciani. "I care not," he replied, "to see it, because I know of a better and more beautiful one." The person who invited him, believing that he spoke literally, enquired where it was. Then Father Paul pointing to Paradise, said, "These are my true delights, and my only pleasures." He sometimes repeated with deep feeling, "What more glorious sight can there be than the starry firmament? and that is but the pavement of the heavenly country which I hope to see one day. Nothing in this world can console me, nor can anything give me pain or trouble. It seems a thousand years until I can repose in my Sovereign Good. Hence it was that the servant of God took such pleasure in speaking of heaven; and that, whenever the subject was introduced, his heart appeared to leap within him. It was the greatest consolation to hear him converse upon this happy subject; for he treated it in so lucid a manner, and explained so clearly the enjoyments thereof, that many learned persons said, "Father Paul speaks better theology than we do." Father Marc Aurelio, of the Blessed Sacrament, a man of profound doctrine, of sublime genius, and of singular union with God, after hearing him speak of Paradise, bowed his head and said, "This Father of ours must experience the delights of heaven to describe them so well."

In order to adapt his language to the understanding of others, he sought to explain, by a

similitude, the happiness of the blessed. He said that the soul would become quite transformed in God, and God in the soul, so that it would, so to speak, be completely divinised. He added, "If a drop of fresh water thrown into the sea becomes so swallowed up and absorbed by it, that it can no longer be distinguished from it, in the same way a beatified spirit, which is immersed in the boundless ocean of the Godhead, is in a certain manner deified by being united, through love, to God Himself."

Father Paul had proved in his youth, by his generous renunciation of the inheritance left him by his uncle, how stedfastly he had determined to confide in no earthly support, and to possess no riches out of God. And therefore it was, that the Divine Goodness provided His servant with all that he required, and gifted him moreover with imperturbable peace of mind, and unclouded tranquillity of spirit. It is not to be supposed however, that our Lord did not try his fidelity, by frequently withdrawing His interior sweetness, depriving him of His illuminations, and hiding Himself as if in wrath. For many years the venerable father was plunged into a terrible darkness, in which he was constantly agitated by fears and doubts, respecting the certainty of his salvation, but faithful to God, he clung to Him all the more trustfully, when he seemed most abandoned and forgotten by His Mercy. His brethren, when they entered his room suddenly, often found him uttering with profound sighs, such words as these, 'O Lord, do what Thou wilt with me; torture



me as Thou pleasest, provided Thou dost not remove Thyself from me for ever." At other times he exclaimed with inexpressible ardour, "Thou fliest from me, O Lord, but wherever Thou goest, I go, and I remain always. Lord! let Thy holy will be done in me, I will suffer whatever Thou pleasest, for I shall never cease to belong to Thee. Flee from me as Thou wilt, I shall always follow Thee." It was easy to surprise him in these outpourings of his heart, as all who wished might enter his room at any hour, and in the last years of his life the saintly old man was so deaf, that he could not hear the noise they made in approaching. If he was ever asked the cause of his loving complaints, he answered "I am in a state which I pray to God may never be experienced by another." Then when he thought himself alone again, he turned to the crucifix and continued, "I prize Thee so highly O infinite Goodness of my Jesus! Thou fliest from me, O my God, but I follow Thee and I shall be ever Thine." Far from relying upon the good works he was so continually performing, he rested all his hopes upon the infinite mercy of God, and the merits of his loving Redeemer. "There," said he, frequently, as he pointed to the crucifix, "There are all my hopes." And if any of his brethren in conference with him manifested a fear of ever reaching Paradise, he would reply that he also trembled, but that the thought of the merits of Jesus dissipated all his terror. He always kept before his eyes, a devout image of his crucified Lord to animate his faith, and to encourage him to confidence. In

proportion as his trials increased, so did the servant of God strengthen his faith, and so likewise, did he continue to hope against hope in our Lord, offering up from the depth of his interior darkness, ejaculations of perfect conformity and abandonment to His most holy will. Often did he repeat, that though he found himself in a sea of tribulation, he could bear to have them increased tenfold without losing his confidence of being saved, through the Passion of Jesus and the protection of Mary. Sometimes he said, "What will become of poor Paul? I am full of miseries, but I hope to be saved. I trust through the Passion of Christ, I trust through the intercession of our Lady of Dolours, that I shall one day reach Paradise." And again, "I know how miserably ungrateful I have been to God, but yet I confide in His mercy, that He will receive me into His Paternal Bosom." This then was the wondrous secret, whereby Father Paul found peace in the midst of the most violent interior warfare.

The feelings of the heart are not easily concealed, nor could those who heard him speak of the Divine Goodness, fail to perceive by his inflamed and animated countenance, that he was almost out of himself with love and astonishment. The same sentiments were expressed with great vivacity in his letters, and we believe that the few extracts we have gathered from them, will be of no little edification to the reader. "Dear Father Fulgenzio," he exclaimed, addressing one of his congregation, "terrible are the trials which I have to endure, *'etiamsi occideret me sperabo in Eum.'*

A shipwrecked mariner at the mercy of the ferocious waves, may not truly say, One thing alone is my comfort, that I should lift up my eyes to the Lord." Another time to a devout soul he wrote, "I see new combats preparing for me, and who knows how I may meet them. Clouds are gathering, darkness is increasing, terrors are awakening, devils are assaulting me with temptations, and men with the malice of their tongues; within there is nothing but fighting, and desolation, and wearisomeness; not to mention other points which are indescribable. Ah, how much more desirable is death than life. May it please Almighty God, that all this may open for me the road to a happy eternity. I know not how to endure myself, but I do not lose my faith, and trust that God will perfect His work in me." He made use of these words in another letter to Father Fulgenzio, "All the world is against us, so Father Tommaso tells me; I rejoice at it, because we shall be in greater favour with God. I thank the Divine Goodness for the prosperity of our Ritiro at Terracina, and I feel assured that He will never permit them to want, while they are faithful to Him."

He wished his own childlike trustfulness to be shared by all the souls whom he directed. "If your eternal salvation," he wrote to one of them, "were in your own hands, you might well tremble, but being in the hands of your Heavenly Father, what cause have you for fear?" And to another, "The prison walls are falling fast, and the poor prisoner will soon fly away with the

joyous liberty of the children of God. Sigh for that blessed country, your eternal home. Let your spirit take its flight of love thither; but, above all, let it drink eagerly of the chalice of the Saviour, let it be inebriated, and with what? with love and with suffering. One little drop of one's own torments thrown into the sea of sorrow of the Divine Spouse."

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## CHAPTER V.

OF FATHER PAUL'S MARVELLOUS COURAGE IN UNDERTAKING ENTERPRISES FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

FATHER PAUL was not one of those teachers who preach with earnestness what they do not care to practise; gifted as he was by Almighty God with a high esteem for the theological virtue of hope, he carelessly undertook, and undauntedly carried out the most heroic enterprises for the Divine glory.

The history of the Congregation of the Passion furnishes sufficient evidence of the bold and trustful spirit with which he achieved whatever the designs of Heaven marked out for him. His first simple exposition of his inspirations to his superior, the bishop of the diocese, his perfect obedience when sent by his authority to the Pope, his weary journeys barefooted and bareheaded along the rough roads, and the lonely wastes, amid the mountain passes between Lombardy and Rome, and his arrival at the pontifical palace, when the one hope that had been his support under all

trials was taken from him, and he was turned away as unworthy to kneel at the feet of Christ's Vicar upon earth; every step that he took showed the most complete diffidence in himself, and the most unbounded confidence in Almighty God. If any one of those who, seeing this youthful hermit wandering through the streets of Rome in his uncouth and penitential dress, had asked him why he had come there alone and friendless, in that abject and neglected garb, and had been told that his object was to found a new and strange congregation, which should be specially employed in reviving in the minds of men the memory of the most holy passion and death of Jesus Christ; that he desired to establish not one retreat only, but many houses of this new institute, and that he expected to obtain from the Pope faculties necessary for commencing this great work, would not such a person have been inclined to laugh at and scorn an idea so extravagant, and a project so visionary? But, if the inquirer had proceeded to ask where were the patrons who supported him, the companions who were to join him, the funds upon which he relied, and further, what were his talents, what the gifts which he possessed for carrying out an enterprise which would doubtless have to encounter many obstacles, and to struggle against many difficulties, and if the answer of this poor youth had been, once more, that he had no friends, no protector, no companions, that he had scarcely one small coin in his possession, that he knew little of the Latin language, and had never learned from books anything concerning the government

of orders, or the rules of religious houses ; but, notwithstanding his ignorance, his poverty, and his weakness, he had so firm a faith in Him alone who was his Friend, his Treasure, and his Power, that he might not doubt of success in the work he was inspired to do—would not his interrogator decide either that he was a fanatic and a madman, or that his heroic confidence was a supernatural gift from God ? That it *was* a supernatural gift the sequel clearly proved, for this obscure and unknown young man was permitted to found a congregation, of which he saw before he died twelve different houses ; he was enabled to obtain approbation of his institute from several successive pontiffs, and after many years of suffering and contradiction, he was strengthened to consummate and fulfill the wondrous designs of God's hidden providence over men.

When Father Paul saw the congregation in any danger or difficulty, he used to say, "It is on account of my sins that we do not prosper," but he would add, with great animation and confidence, "Take courage, we shall see ; I know very well what will become of the congregation ; my sins alone hinder its progress ; still it is the work of God, and must make its way in time."

In order that nothing might be wanting to confirm his hope, Almighty God was pleased to give His servant the strongest assurance that he was fulfilling the designs of Heaven, by means of several persons remarkable for their sanctity and learning, particularly the two holy bishops, Mgr. Gattinara of Alessandria, and Mgr. Cavalieri, of

Troja. Both of these prelates recognised the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, in the conduct of Father Paul, and they both gave him their counsel, their direction, and their fervent prayers. It is, indeed, believed that Mgr. Cavalieri offered up his supplications in behalf of the then budding institute after his death, for Father Giovan Battista, a man who was reserved in his conversation, and not at all inclined to be credulous, related, that a servant of God being in prayer, beheld in spirit the bishop's soul going up to heaven, and perceived, that after thanking the Blessed Trinity for his eternal salvation, he petitioned for the maintenance and progress of the Congregation of the Passion.

Thus did Father Paul, with that hopeful spirit of his, go joyously onwards through all the toils and fatigues of his long and laborious life. It is not to be supposed that he did not feel their wearisomeness. God even gave him a keener perception than most men of the bitterness of his trials, in order to enhance the merit of his crown, but at the same time He bestowed upon His servant a bravery and fortitude which encouraged and even consoled him under his heaviest burdens. In his last years, while walking in Rome with his confessor, he ingenuously exclaimed, "O, what sufferings! what rude treatments have I met with in this city!" And in the last journey which he made to the retreats of Monte-Argentaro, upon the road between Rome and Civita-Vecchia, his companion, speaking to him in the pleasant strain which Father Paul used when he compared him-

self, out of humility, to a beast, inquired if he had ever carried burdens along these roads, and he replied in the same tone, "Burdens, aye, whole cart loads. I went about, in the beginning of my work, from Rome to Monte-Argentaro always on foot, through the piercing cold of winter, and the burning heat of summer. "O, what suffering!" he added, "the trust I always placed in God was the only support of the congregation, otherwise it must have sunk under the opposition which it had to encounter."

Since a true knowledge of the gifts of God only renders more lowly the heart that receives them, Father Paul recognising the light and strength which he had been vouchsafed from on high, was careful not to attribute to himself the smallest particle of what he had performed. If, haply others spoke of the good he had wrought amongst sinning souls, and of the merit he had thus acquired, he quietly replied, "I have no confidence but in the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ." Looking mournfully upon the crucifix, he said he had never done anything well, that he had spoilt every good work, that he was a sinner, and deserved hell, and yet when he thought of the love and goodness of Jesus, he was filled with consolation, and threw himself entirely into His merciful arms.

Full of this confidence, he pursued his course with untiring patience. He did not neglect any ordinary human means to ensure the success of his labours, for that he said would be tempting instead of honouring God, but he used all as instruments, while he relied upon Heaven alone for



the result. He had often upon his lips those words of Christ, "Without Me you can do nothing;" and, again, the text from St. James, "Every best gift, and every perfect gift is from above."

He earnestly recommended to his religious an utter diffidence in themselves, a simple trust in God, frequent prayer, and the recollection of the Divine Presence, saying, "If we were men of prayer and truly humble, looking up to God for all things, He would make use of us poor and miserable as we are, to do great works for His glory." This was indeed, under all circumstances, the conduct of Father Paul. When he had done all that Christian prudence suggested, he gave up to God alone the care of himself and his congregation. This, too, was his constant practice in the foundation of the different retreats. The expense of his first building at Monte-Argentario, was estimated at more than a million Roman crowns, and he had scarcely a farthing in his possession when he began it. Nevertheless, full of faith, he commenced the work without delay, and himself marked out the plan upon the ground with his little stick.

When he afterwards found it was necessary to have another retreat for the novices in a more healthy part of the mountain, he did not hesitate to commence a new edifice. He invoked the assistance of God, chose a suitable spot for the building, and, beginning with a small alms which he had given him, was speedily enabled, by Divine Providence, to pursue and complete his design.

In every other foundation God was his inexhaustible treasury. He possessed nothing of his own, and yet he undertook to raise edifices, poor indeed, but still provided with decent churches, and with every requisite accommodation for religious communities. In these enterprises he had often to struggle with all that fierce opposition which the works of God are sure to meet with from devils, and even sometimes from good men, who are actuated by a false zeal, or deceived by calumnious representations. In such tempests as these, Father Paul never lost heart ; he did not appear even over anxious for success, but, with his hopes in the hands of God, and his eyes fixed upon heaven, he waited for providence to take care of its own work. The same steadfast faith was his rule in all his missionary labours ; when he was once convinced he was doing God's will, he paid no attention to his own weakness, his infirmities, or his danger. He went to preach in the Maremme, when the air was known to be most injurious, and when he was already suffering from a feverish attack, and it was a striking lesson in Christian confidence to see him going through all sorts of perils, with no other protection but his trust in God. "Through the help of Providence," he wrote to one of his brethren, "I have returned from the mission safe and sound, after all that I had to fear from the violent tempests of wind and rain, and the almost impassable state of the roads."

It was a matter of astonishment, not so much to our fathers, who so well knew his courage, but

to many seculars to find the servant of God setting off for a mission when he had scarcely strength to stand. He no sooner reached the platform than he appeared a perfectly different man, so marvellously was he revived and supported by Him who gives force to the helpless, and makes His power triumph over weakness. He was not, however, accustomed to commence a mission without being perfectly assured of the will of God. He was most unwilling that either he or his brethren should intrude themselves, through an irregular or capricious zeal, without the legitimate call of superiors. If his services were demanded, he rejoiced in the Lord; if they were not wished for, he resigned himself with perfect indifference.

Upon this subject he wrote thus to one of our fathers: "Father N. writes me word that the mission to the infidels is nothing but smoke, because there seems now no fitting opportunity for it; I adore and bless the Divine Will, and hope for some greater work for the congregation: these are secrets of Providence. God who knows our wants, will not permit our subjects to be cut off from us, while there are so many calls for them." Thus does one, whose heart is united with God, abandon himself entirely to the guidance of His Holy Spirit. "*Qui adhæret Domino unus spiritus est.*"

## CHAPTER VI.

OF FATHER PAUL'S SUCCESS IN INSPIRING OTHERS WITH  
CONFIDENCE IN GOD, JOINED TO HOLY FEAR.

FATHER PAUL used all his endeavours to infuse into the hearts of others that unshaken confidence which so completely possessed his own. In this manner it was that, during his missions and spiritual exercises, he gained to God the most hardened sinners. After having roused the terrors of his audience by laying before them the awful truths of faith, he allayed their fears with the most consoling pictures of the mercies of God, He dwelt especially upon the merits of the Passion of Christ, and while he revealed the depths of love and tenderness which are hidden in the sufferings of Jesus, his hearers were melted into tears, and thus his sermon always ended amidst sobs and groans, and one universal cry for pardon. It would scarcely be possible to relate the numerous conversions which were the fruits of such sermons as these, but we will briefly recall a few instances which may give some idea of the efficacious impression produced by the loving voice of the Good Shepherd, tenderly calling back to the fold His wandering sheep. Father Paul was giving a mission in a certain town, and one night, after the last sermon, he was returning home quite worn out with his labours, when he met a man who was standing thoughtfully, with his head

buried in his hands, in the attitude of one who is in need of help and consolation. The servant of God could not pass his sorrowing brother without giving him a word of comfort, so he gently said to him, "Would you like to come to confession?" The man replied, "O yes, Father." "Come then," returned the missionary, "come home with me." The poor penitent made his confession with the most extraordinary marks of compunction; he accused himself with so many tears and sighs, that the holy father almost expected to see him die of grief at his feet. Desirous of discovering the particular means God had made use of to touch his heart, he asked him what had first moved him to repentance. The man replied that, as he was travelling through the country, he went to church to hear one of the discourses of the mission. The whole sermon struck him extremely, but when the preacher at last raised the crucifix in his hands and exclaimed, "Behold this divine blood! Behold these precious wounds! Behold these arms which created heaven and earth, outstretched upon the cross to receive repentant sinners!" he had felt entirely overcome at the remembrance of his outrages against his loving Redeemer. After reciting this touching instance of God's compassion upon a soul which had so long neglected Him, Father Paul shed many tears, and exclaimed in the ardour of his zeal, "O, if I were only thirty years younger, I would go all over the world preaching the Divine Mercy."

The same soothing motives of hope and of confidence won the heart of an unhappy sinner, who

had determined to die in his guilt ; but, after listening to a sermon of Father Paul's, he was so struck by the goodness of God, that he went immediately to confession, and led ever afterwards a life of true penance.

The servant of God was accustomed to receive his penitents with the greatest affection, and when he saw them penetrated with sorrow, he would encourage them, saying, " Be of good heart, and cast away all fear and doubt ; I take upon my own shoulders the sins of your past life ; think now only of the future, and leave the past to me." The devil once tried to disturb his peace of heart, and shake his confidence, by saying to him, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament : " Unhappy man, you have taken upon yourself the sins of others ; you will be sorry for it at the judgment-day." But the venerable Father calling to mind that *Jesus Christ est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris*, went with child-like simplicity to the feet of His Lord, saying, " Behold, O my God, how I have loaded myself with the sins of others for Thy love, do Thou look to them ; I unburden myself of them to Thee." Having thus placed his load upon the sacred shoulders of that loving Redeemer who bore with the wood of His Cross the weight of of all our sins, he was perfectly tranquillised ; and he persevered in the same affectionate and encouraging demeanour towards all who sought his aid. This was the reason why Father Paul's penitents went about speaking openly of the tender treatment and kind reception they met with from him.

1 The fame of his gentle and winning ways spread

far and wide, so that not only during missions, but at other times, many robbers and criminals used to come eagerly to seek at his hands peace and reconciliation with God.

Amongst numerous instances which are related in the Processes, the following is sufficient to inspire hope in the most abandoned. The servant of God arrived late one night at Mont'-Alto, and went straight, according to his custom, to visit the Blessed Sacrament. As he left the church, he observed a man leaning against the doorway, whose countenance told a tale of desolation and despair. Father Paul asked him why he stood there, and the miserable wretch no sooner heard his voice, than he felt moved to open his whole heart to him, and he exclaimed, "Ah, Father Paul, I have made a compact with the devil, and this very night he is to come and carry me away." The good Father, full of compassion for this unhappy man's fate, used every argument to induce him to confide in the Divine Goodness, and to convince him that it is never too late to return to God. At length the despairing sinner beheld a ray of hope in the abyss into which he had fallen; he took courage, and resolved to throw himself confidently into the arms of God's infinite mercy. He followed Father Paul to a retired spot, confessed himself, and was happily delivered from the power of his dreadful enemy.

The influence of the servant of God over these hardened sinners was so remarkable, that a priest deposed in the Processes that he seemed to have been specially sent by Almighty

God for the conversion and salvation of these men.

But as the virtues of a generous confidence and trusting faith are necessary, not only to bring sinners to repentance, but also to encourage holy souls to take lofty flights up the mount of evangelical perfection, so Father Paul differed widely from those directors who guide souls by means of fear, and keep them always in a state of pusillanimity and cowardice. He inculcated courage, confidence, and holy freedom. He was a great enemy to scruples, and to every thing which disturbed the peace of an intimate union with God. There was nothing he had oftener upon his lips in conferences and conversations upon perfection, than words of encouragement and consolation.

The witnesses who deposed in the Processes, have preserved, for our edification, the words which we are about to quote, so that the reader may at least have the comfort of knowing his sentiments, although he can no longer hear his voice. He was in the Retreat of the Presentation, at Monte Argentaro, when one day, at recreation he thus spoke to his brethren: "I well know that young beginners in the Divine service are apt to be discouraged on account of the imperfections into which they fall. But whenever you find yourselves inclined to fear, lift up your hearts lovingly to God, and be assured that your defects are in the sight of His infinite goodness but as a few threads of tow cast into a sea of fire. Figure to yourselves," he continued, "a burning furnace, as vast



as the hemisphere we inhabit ; if a piece of tow were thrown into it, would it not be so absorbed in the fire as instantly to disappear ? Now, our God is a consuming fire, as it is written, ' Deus noster ignis consumens est,' and our imperfections, compared with His goodness, are what a piece of tow is to the furnace. When, therefore, we have fallen, let us humble ourselves sorrowfully in His presence, and then, with an act of unbounded confidence, let us throw ourselves into the ocean of His goodness, where every failing will be cancelled, and doubt will be turned into love."

To a Religious who was of a timorous disposition, he said : " Where is the father who, carrying his little child in his arms, would let him fall to the ground on purpose ? And if even an earthly parent could do this, our heavenly Father could not. Courage must be your motto in the service of God." These exhortations were made with so much earnestness and vivacity, that none could doubt he had received a singular gift for encouraging and animating souls to heroic acts of virtue. And to him might well be applied those words of Jeremiah the prophet, " The Lord has given me a wise and discreet tongue for the consolation of the timid and the weak."

The confidence which the venerable Father reposed in God, was accompanied by that holy fear which is the beginning of wisdom, and which gives stability and security to the spiritual edifice. He used to relate with trembling awe, those examples in Scripture of men who had once been holy, but who, neglecting the Lord in little things

fell by degrees into greater, and were at last eternally reprov'd by God. The state of abandonment in which this servant of God often found himself, furnished him with constant motives for fear, and thus it was that his hope was hindered from becoming presumption.

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## CHAPTER VII.

OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANCE AND LOVING PROTECTION  
BY WHICH OUR LORD SHOWED HOW PLEASING IN HIS  
SIGHT WAS THE LIVELY HOPE OF HIS SERVANT.

To Father Paul's confidence in God must be attributed, more than to any other cause, the marvellous fruit of his missions. He was accustomed to prepare himself by study of the matter he was about to preach, but far more by interior recollection and union with God. Upon this subject he used to say: "Would it not be an act of simple folly for any one to let fall a drop of spring water into the ocean with the expectation of making the whole sea fresh? Just as absurd is it for a soul to believe herself capable of the least good, without the help and special assistance of God. From the moment we attribute to ourselves the least credit in what we perform, God humbles and confounds us, and ceases to employ us to do great things for His glory. Science without true humility only puffs us up; but humility, united to prayer and confidence in heaven alone, causes

God to work wonders through us in the conversion of souls." In this manner did Father Paul engage in his favour the assistance of God, who so visibly aided him, and by whose powerful protection he appeared to be completely overshadowed while he was labouring for his neighbour's good.

With equal clemency and mercy the Almighty watched over him in all the difficulties attending the foundation of his institute. When he was forsaken by any of his companions and disciples, it was natural that he should be somewhat pained, for it cost him much to direct and instruct them, and it was not an easy matter to have them ordained in those days, when the congregation had not yet obtained the privilege of receiving orders upon the title of poverty. Nevertheless, Father Paul, who well knew that God Himself cultivated those chosen plants, which like flowers growing on Calvary, and watered with the Blood of our blessed Redeemer, were to diffuse around a sweet odour of Jesus Christ, was never agitated, never cast down, but reposed all his care upon his Lord, and with an act of confidence in Him, exclaimed: "Every tree that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." "Few and good!" he would say, "God has no need of any one—I trust entirely to Him—the congregation is His own. His were the lights which were given me to found it. It is for Him to look to its advancement."

With the same hopeful feelings he consoled himself at the death of any religious, who seemed one of the pillars of his little edifice. When he

found himself in temporal privations, he used to say, "I am not afraid; I have found by experience that God has always provided for us. When we were two he gave us enough for two, when four for four, and so on; verifying His own Divine words, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added to you;' and 'Be not solicitous, saying, what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, &c.'" Some of our dear brethren who were persuaded that there would be a difficulty in living at Rome, advised the venerable Father not to begin that foundation with so numerous a family as thirty-three; but the servant of God replied that he trusted to Providence, who would never let them want, as in fact the sequel proved. What happened with regard to the Roman Retreat, was experienced at all the other foundations. All were begun in great poverty, and although, as a loving trial of the faith of His servant, Almighty God permitted them for a short time to suffer some little privations, yet in the end He always furnished them with a sufficient provision. And it is a source of much gratitude and praise to God, that in those days our Religious never sought alms, but subsisted upon what was spontaneously offered them; and that in the times of the greatest scarcity, there were always persons found who, moved by an impulse of charity, brought them all they needed.

It sometimes happened that when the dinner-hour came, the supply of bread failed, but the providence of God could not fail; and as if to

encourage us to live without a thought of earthly things, He sent relief when it was least expected. Thus, upon a festival day, at the Retreat of S. Maria del Cerro, the rector of the house was coming out of the church, when he met a pious person, who asked him what his religious were doing. The Father replied that they were at table reading, not eating, because they had no bread ; upon which the other brought forth a basket of provisions which he had with him, and sent it in to the monastery. The rector, full of gratitude, said that on this, as on many other occasions, Providence had always taken care of them.

Father Paul seeing the powerful protection of heaven thus constantly extended over his little congregation, earnestly exhorted the rectors to throw aside all excessive anxiety to see their houses well provided, and recommended them to be solicitous rather to preserve amongst their religious a spirit of prayer, of retirement, and of exact observance. He told them that since God had enabled them to found twelve Retreats, they need not fear lest He should now forsake them. "Let us only be faithful to Him," he continued, "and let us not doubt." He did not object to the collection of alms which were made at certain times ; but he enjoined the collectors not to be importunate, saying, "These poor good seculars do not like to be teased, and we are in danger of losing the true spirit of our vocation by going about too much." He was not alarmed when the season proved adverse, and the harvest scanty ; and he once wrote in these words to a benefactor,

“The frost has ruined the vines, and it is feared there will be a scarcity of corn, but the granaries of our heavenly Master can never fail.” He wished to see his feelings shared by all those whom he directed, or who came to him for advice. He did not find fault with the ordinary means for procuring money suggested by the rules of prudence, but he never could approve of the methods made use of by some, which he said helped to excite avarice, and to delude those who had conceived expectations from them. “As to the lottery tickets,” he wrote to a friend, “I beg you to renounce so silly an idea. That is not the way to provide for a house which is to be a nursery for holy souls. I never had the folly to ask you for any numbers. Absit!”

To accustom him to this total independence of earthly support, Almighty God tried him in various ways. Out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, who guided him, he made his first journey to Rome without the slightest provision; but when amidst the Genoese mountains he was fainting from want, and had no means of procuring relief, Providence sent him, as we have elsewhere related, some police-officers, who received him with the most affectionate charity. Encouraged by the loving care of his Lord, he ever afterwards made his voyages without taking any money with him, and when an alms was offered him, he generally refused it in favour of the poor. In his extreme old age, when he was in need of some particular restorative, our Lord, who holds in His hands the hearts of men, moved a pious person to take him,

an alms with the express condition that it should be spent in procuring some delicacy for the venerable Father. The infirmarian, who found this happen upon several occasions, went about saying, "God provides this servant of His with every thing that he wants, because he relies upon Him alone." He was travelling once with two of his brethren towards Valentano, and by some mischance they lost their way in a wood; they wandered about till they were completely exhausted with fatigue and want of nourishment, not having taken any food for four-and-twenty hours. But God at length looked down upon the needs of His servants, and provided for their relief. He so disposed that a pious lady, who resided at a short distance, observed the good religious, and immediately conceiving that F. Paul might be amongst them, she resolved to go out to meet them. It seems that her husband at first was not much pleased with this proceeding, but conquered by the fervent charity of his consort, he consented to accompany her, and gave the Fathers a pressing invitation to take some rest and refreshment at his house. His compassion and devotion were so excited by the sight of them, that he insisted upon washing Father Paul's feet, and perceiving that several large thorns had entered into his flesh, he extracted them with no little pain to poor Paul, as may be easily imagined. They were all treated with the greatest hospitality, and when they took their leave, their host and hostess felt as if they had been entertaining our blessed Lord Himself.

The good signora was amply recompensed by God for her charity; for when some time afterwards she was attacked by a severe illness, which placed her life in imminent danger, Father Paul knowing her situation by a miraculous inspiration, and being aware also that she was suffering violent temptations to despair, resolved to go to her assistance. When he reached the house, he found her in a profound lethargy; but he immediately went up to her, and accosted her in an authoritative tone, "Angela, what are these doubts which pass through your mind, and why do you despair of your eternal salvation? Do you forget how good God is?" and he went on suggesting to her various motives of hope and confidence in the Divine Mercy. These words produced an instantaneous effect upon the sick person. She roused herself from her lethargy, and began to enjoy a sweet confidence in the mercies of God, joined to a lively sense of the Divine Goodness, and before long she was perfectly restored to health.

Another time F. Paul was again on his way to Valentano, and had courageously undertaken the journey on foot, although he was suffering from an attack of fever. He lodged one night in a monastery at Bolsena, and intended to proceed to his destination the next morning. But upon rising he found his strength so prostrated, that it was impossible for him to walk much further. He therefore resolved to embark on the lake below Bolsena, and thus to spare himself some fatigue, by performing as much of his jour-



ney as he could by water. Father Fulgenzio of Jesus was with him, and they went down to the lake together, to entreat a boatman to transport them out of charity on their way to Valentano. This man, with a harshness which is not often used towards religious, positively refused to take them, although Father Paul offered him a note, by which he could procure payment for his trouble, and renewed his solicitations in the most humble manner. At last, seeing no resource but in Providence, he recommended himself and his desires to God, trusting to have from Him what he could not obtain from the rude and cruel boatman. At that moment a gentleman on horseback made his appearance, and coming up to the servant of God, asked if he were Father Paul. The venerable Father replied in the affirmative, and added that he was waiting to cross the lake, but could find no one to take him, because he had no ready money to pay for his passage. The gentleman no sooner heard this, than he went up to the boatman, gave him the price he asked, and then returned to take leave of the religious. Father Paul, whose heart was sensibly alive to such an act of kindness, thanked him most warmly, and offered to celebrate a mass for him; but his benefactor said he would not put him under such an obligation, and only recommended himself to his prayers. When the good Fathers reached Valentano, they knew not where to find a lodging; but here again Providence was their refuge, and they soon met with a gentleman of the place, who took them home to his own house, and treated them

with all possible hospitality. The servant of God, when he called to mind all these instances of the affectionate care of his Lord, melted into tears, exclaiming, "I ought to burn with love for God, to correspond with the tender thoughtful charity He has shown towards me."

The Divine protection was exhibited still more strikingly in the miraculous preservation of the holy Father's life upon several different occasions. When he was quite a young man, he was once attacked by robbers, who intended to take away not only his property but his life. He had recourse to prayer to God for preservation, and then, with great humility he entreated the ruffians to spare him out of charity. Strange to say, those merciless hearts were so moved by his petitions, that they contented themselves with taking his money, and then left him in peace. Another time he was travelling with a lay brother, and, as they were both very tired, they sat down under a tree to rest, when suddenly the holy Father rose and said, "It is not well for us to be here, let us go somewhere else." No sooner had they left the tree, than it fell to the ground without a moment's notice, and must have inevitably crushed them had they remained there. Our Blessed Lord in His wondrous goodness and compassion for those who trust in Him, gives them even more than they ask, as a reward for their confidence. The servant of God met a master fisherman once, on the sea shore near Portercole, who gave him a history of his misfortunes, saying that for three or four months he had caught nothing, that the ex-

pense of keeping his men at work had made him run into debt, and that his nets instead of coming up full of fish, were often destroyed with holes which were torn in them by the rocks; he ended by imploring the holy Father to help him by at least blessing his fishing-tackle. Touched with the distress of the poor man, Father Paul sought the aid of Our Blessed Saviour, who had had compassion on His own Apostles in a similar conjuncture, and, with his usual devotion to Mary, he desired the people to recite her Litanies: then taking his crucifix he blessed the sea and the nets, and told them to have a lively faith and God would assist them. He pursued his journey, and the fisherman that very night went out with his boats, and caught so much fish that he was enabled to pay all his debts, and to send a generous alms to one of our Retreats, out of gratitude for the benefit he had received.

During the year 1766, there was a great scarcity of grain in the city of Corneto, and our benefactor Signor Domenico Costantini, found that the provision in his magazine would not nearly suffice for his family and dependents, until harvest time. Father Paul arrived at Corneto just when this fact was discovered. Signor Costantini begged the assistance of his prayers, and conducted him to look at the corn in the granary. The servant of God blessed it with much fervour, and desired his friend not to fear. After his departure the grain was all threshed at once, and, wonderful to relate, the small quantity of flour which it produced, lasted until the month of August, not only for the main-

tenance of the family, but for the support of the work-people in the country, and for the liberal supply which those good souls always distributed to the poor. This prodigious increase was recognised by all to be a miracle wrought through the faith of Father Paul. Alluding to all these signal favours God had bestowed upon him, the Holy Father used to say, "If God had only opened my eyes to see the perils I have escaped, and the favours I have received through him, some day or other I must have fallen dead with love and sorrow at the foot of His altar." We have now seen why it was that he desired nothing upon earth but continual sufferings and tribulation, because he was sustained by that hope which made him seek all his comfort in heaven, and without which the life of one who loves God would be inconceivably wearisome, tedious, and intolerable. It was hope which gave him that lofty and generous soul; it was hope which inspired him with courage and energy in the greatest difficulties, it was hope which made him often say "God will help us; our Lord has supported us in so many trials, He will carry us through this;" it was hope which bore him up, and strengthened him and consoled him in his undertakings because it was inspired and animated by that Divine Charity which the Holy Spirit had so abundantly infused into the soul of His servant, as we are now about to see.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## OF HIS CHARITY TOWARDS GOD.

GOD is charity, and he that abideth in charity abideth in God. God is Himself love, and he whose happy faith it is to lead a life of love lives in God and God in him. His soul being one with his Lord, partakes abundantly of the Divine communications, and becomes so much richer, by how much more it is closely and perfectly united with God, so that it may be truly said, he is most holy who has most love. The Divine Goodness, who intended Father Paul to perform great things for His glory, deigned to enkindle in his heart a wonderful fire of charity, to enable him more efficaciously to increase in the souls of others those flames which Jesus came to cast upon earth. And well did the whole course of his life prove how fervently he loved God, and how sincerely he cherished his neighbour for the love of God.

From the moment that he began to taste the sweetness of God, his whole heart, all his pleasure and all his delight were centered in Him. When quite a youth he could not resist pouring forth to his intimate friends the amorous effusions of his heart, which consisted in touching protestations of his faithful unwavering love. And hence it was, that in his tenderest years, his greatest happiness was to be in the house of God, to serve at

the holy sacrifice of the mass, and to assist at the sacred functions. He was to be seen there perfectly recollected and immoveable, and with so singular a gift of prayer, that it was already accompanied with tears of devotion. Our Lord, who wished him to become strong by following the path of tribulations, disposed him by spiritual consolations for the trials he was to encounter in the foundations of the congregation, which, as he said, was to commence at a time when the whole world was in ruins.

And, as sincere charity always brings with it burning zeal, the young Paul received so strong a hatred for offences against God, so eager a desire of exterminating sin, that he went about with a crucifix in his hands, preaching and calling upon all to return to the love of their good God. In his transports of fervour, he desired that his body, as well as his soul, should be sacrificed to love; he tortured his flesh with the most cruel austerities, and as he once said, jestingly, of himself, through his continual fasts and other mortifications, his skin cleaved to his bones. This, however, did not induce him to relent, but his constitution, which was never strong, at last gave way, and the poor youth fell into an illness from which he only recovered with great difficulty.

His heart was so strongly agitated with this absorbing charity, that he seemed unable to contain it within his breast, and the two ribs on his left side became considerably elevated. It is not known precisely at what time this extraordinary palpitation began, but it was remarked that it

went on increasing, sometimes with more, sometimes with less violence, but never ceasing as long as he lived. It was deposed by those who were his constant companions, that upon Fridays it became more impetuous, and caused him more pain, so that sometimes he let fall sighs and groans which inspired devotion in all who heard them. And although the servant of God endeavoured to conceal the cause of these sufferings, he could not prevent the elevation of his side from being noticed by others upon several occasions.

The following deposition was made under solemn oath in the processes, by a learned professor of medicine. "I believe the charity of Father Paul of the Cross to have been particularly intense and heroic, insomuch that it prevented his heart from remaining in its natural circumference, and caused an enlargement in the left ventricle. The palpitations and pains which he suffered, sufficiently proved this to me. But I was more strongly confirmed in my opinion about ten years since, when I was called to attend Father Paul during his illness at the retreat at Vetralla. Upon that occasion I had to bleed him in the right arm, and I noticed that the ribs of the left side were curved and raised higher than those of the right; desiring to be certain of this fact, I examined and felt with my hand this curvature and elevation, which I found to be exactly what it appeared. It was then that I took the resolution, that if I happened to be present at the holy father's death, I would cause his body to be opened, under the firm conviction that his heart would be found

impressed with some sign of the Passion, of the archangel St. Michael, or some other supernatural mark, which had occasioned the above-mentioned elevation and curvature." To the same cause, namely, the love with which he burned for God, may be attributed the extraordinary heat of his chest, which often made the woollen cloth which he wore next him appear scorched, as if it had been next to a fire.

Father Paul being thus inflamed with heavenly love, continued always increasing in ardour. By the practice of the most heroic acts of virtue he purified his soul, and removed from it every stain which could lessen the fervour of his charity. He was particularly diligent in keeping far from him the least thing capable of displeasing God, and his confessor attested that he once said to him, "Since my conversion," (he always applied the term of conversion to the commencement of his penitent life, when he was about nineteen years of age,) "I do not remember having ever committed a mortal sin, or even a deliberate venial one."

He was most exact in the observance of the Divine law and of the evangelical counsels. His heart was so completely given to God, that he had no affection left for creatures, and he told his confessor, "I am wicked indeed, but I am not a thief; I have zealously preserved all my love for God, and in saving souls, I have cared only that they should love Him." He appeared never satiated with thinking of his Sovereign Good; for many years he had practised the pious custom of



walking always in the Divine Presence, and of adoring God everywhere by faith. "If I were asked," he again said to the same confessor, "at any moment of what I was thinking, it appears to me that I could always reply, of God." Out of his tender affection for God, he was constantly feeling the most eager desires to burst from the earthly tenement of his body, and to be face to face with his only Good. His companions sometimes told him that he would do much for God's glory by remaining on earth, but he impatiently replied, "No, all I wish for is to be united to Him."

This burning heart of his was frequently throwing out, as it were, sparks of love, by the most touching and fervent aspirations. He had a great devotion for repeating the Trisagion, which he said was a song from heaven. During his illness, he used to break forth into such impetuous exclamations, and such floods of tears, that those who heard him wondered at his strength. Even the seculars who charitably entertained him at their houses, observing him through pious curiosity, often beheld his countenance inflamed, and his eyes wet with tears. When the servant of God thought he was discovered, he would try to conceal the cause of his emotion, by saying that he suffered from violent internal agitation. In order to bear ever in mind that he belonged entirely to Jesus crucified, he dropped his family name, and assumed that of the cross. He wrote to one of his friends, "I have no longer the name which you give me in your letter, but only that which I

sign below." But he went to still further lengths than this, for, by way of consecrating himself more visibly and painfully to his Lord, he marked upon his breast with a red-hot iron a cross, with the letters J. C. The impression remained till his death, and was then distinctly seen and observed by several persons.

Father Paul's highest happiness was to speak of God and of His greatness. He thoroughly abhorred worldly discourses, and with singular dexterity he generally contrived to cut them short directly they were started. He conversed about heavenly things with marvellous sweetness and grace ; he became gradually more and more excited, his countenance grew inflamed, the colour came into his cheeks, and he looked like a seraphim. The most intelligent persons listened with astonishment when he treated of the divine attributes and perfections. He went into the depths of that profound abyss, saying how impossible it was for any human intellect to comprehend the infinite, eternal, immense God, and how all that we could conceive of Him in this life, was nothing compared to what He was in Himself. He lamented and deplored with bitter tears the ingratitude of men who corresponded so coldly to the unbounded goodness of God ; and he would repeat, "What ! A God made man ! A God crucified ! A God dead ! A God hidden under the sacramental species ! Who ? a God !" And then he was for some time silent in a sort of ecstatic stupor. He then continued to exclaim, "O, burning charity ! O, passionate love ! Who ? and for whom ? O, un-

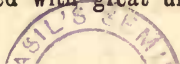
grateful creatures! How is it that you love not God! I would that it were possible to set all the world on fire with love. Ah! for a little strength to go out into the open fields preaching my dear crucified Jesus, our good Father dying upon the cross for us sinners!"

Although the servant of God spoke with all this vivacity of feeling, he truly believed himself to have not so much as a spark of love in his breast; and he wrote thus to a devout soul: "My dear daughter in Christ, I reply to your letter to-day, as we have already celebrated the first vespers of the octave of our infinite love in the Blessed Sacrament. I would fain say great things to you, but when one loves not, one cannot speak of love; there is a language which love alone can teach. I read your letter at Orbetello, and on my return to the retreat towards evening, my spirit wished to say many things to your heart, but earth is silent before the greatness of God, *Sileat terra*. Much I meant to say, but I am dumb. Listen, O my daughter, to the Divine Spouse, and let Him teach you. I would desire to be consumed with love; but what do I say? I speak of what I know not. Ah! my good God, teach me what I ought to say, I would fain be all on fire with love. More, I would sing in those flames, and magnify the great mercies which increas'd love has imparted to your soul. Tell me, then, my daughter, should not the poor miserable father be grateful to God for the superabundant graces He has bestowed upon His child? It should indeed be so, but I know not how to feel it. To be convulsed

with love for this great God is little ; to be consumed for Him is little ; what, then, shall we do ? Ah, let us lead a life of prolonged agonies for the sake of our Heavenly Love. Alas ! do you think I have said what I ought ? No, for I would say much more, and I cannot. Do you know what consoles me ? It is that our great God is that Infinite Good which He is, and that no one can love Him or praise Him as He deserves. I rejoice that He loves Himself infinitely. I rejoice in His essential Beatitude, which none can deprive Him of. But I am foolish ; would it not be better that, like a moth, I should precipitate myself into the flames of charity, and be reduced to nothing in that Divine All ? But this is a work of love, and I, through my wicked life, am unworthy of such a transport. My thirst is so great, that whole rivers would not slake it ; only the ocean could satisfy me—the sea of the flames of love. Tell this to your Divine Spouse.”

In a letter to another pious person, he exclaimed, “ O sweet embraces of love ! O Divine caresses, when shall we burn like seraphim and be consumed with love ! ” And again : “ What shall we do, my daughter, to show our gratitude to our sweetest Jesus ! Ah, I desire that such a fire should be enkindled in us, as would burn all who came near us, and not only them, but all people, tribes, tongues, and nations, in a word, every living creature, that all might know and love the Sovereign Good.”

Being invited to profess some novices, the venerable father preached with great unction from



the text, "Go you also into my vineyard;" he then gave the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and in doing so his countenance became so inflamed that it seemed all on fire.

He went upon one occasion to the Carmelite convent at Vetralla, and discoursed to the nuns upon the love of God, taking for his text those words of the Gospel, "He that thirsteth, let him come to Me;" and the fervour with which he spoke appeared to transport him out of himself. Wishing to excite confidence in those religious, he told them that frequent communion was a most efficacious means for uniting themselves with God, and that they were to cast doubts boldly away, which words were of great service to the holy virgins, and appeared to have been specially inspired by God, as some of them suffered a great deal from pusillanimity and fear. To this day the community speaks of the sermon on "He that thirsteth," &c., and gratefully recall the fervour and devotion it introduced amongst them.

He was in Rome on account of certain affairs of our congregation, in the month of May, and was lodging with some of our benefactors, when one day, after the hour of repose, his companion, who was accustomed to wait till the holy father called him, after expecting him for more than two hours, at last went straight to his room to look for him. Upon entering, (these are the very words of his attestation in the processes,) he seemed to find himself in paradise, so great was the consolation given him by the sight of the servant of God, whose face darted forth rays like the

sun. Approaching the bed, he exclaimed, with simplicity, "I see now, Father, why you did not call me—all for your reverence, and nothing for me." The good Father, in whose soul the divine favours always produced their right effect, namely, an increase of holy humility, replied, "Be quiet, and mind you say not a word of this to any one."

Another time Father Paul was discoursing on spiritual matters in the house of Signora Maria Giovanna Grazi, our great benefactress at Orbetello, and he suddenly began to speak with wondrous ardour and impetuosity. The pious lady raised her eyes to look at him, and saw to her surprise a marked alteration in his countenance, it beamed so brightly that she was obliged to turn away. He presently concluded abruptly, saying to his companion, "Let us retire," and he went quickly to his room, leaving the Signora filled with wonder and devotion.

Once, in his hermit days, when he was with the Bishop of Troja, they were one day contemplating together the dolours of Mary, when Paul proposed that they should recite the symbol of the apostles, and upon pronouncing the words "Incarnatus est," he was so overcome with the piercing thought of the wondrous abasement of the Son of God, and of the bitter woes of Mary His Mother, that he lost his senses in a violent transport of love. Not less admirable is what we are about to relate. Father Paul had given a mission at Fabrica, and, upon its conclusion, left to preach another at Corchiano. He was followed on his road by seve-

ral gentlemen of the former place, who accompanied him out of affection for his person. As they went along, the venerable Father was full of cheerfulness and holy joy. When they arrived at a place called Cinque Cerque, Father Paul began to admire the landscape, which was then adorned in its brightest spring dress of flowers and herbs. He was led to speak of the beauty and amenity of that joyous sight, and making use of the visible creatures to raise his thoughts to the Omnipotent Creator, he alluded to the greatness of God, and exclaimed, "O great God! O grandeur of God!" So saying, his body was completely carried away by his spirit, and just as he was lifting up his arms to heaven, he was elevated about two palms from the ground, and remained in an ecstasy for some time. Those who accompanied him were moved to tears by so marvellous a sight, but he upon returning to himself, quietly and prudently went on talking as if nothing had happened.

As the servant of God continually fed his soul with the contemplation of the Divine Perfections, he could never weary of speaking about them to others, and hence, when he was amongst his brethren, his conversation, even in times of recreation, was always of God. He introduced the subject simply and naturally, he relieved it occasionally with some little pleasantry, then he went on talking in his winning way of the love of God, and of union with Him, adding an appropriate anecdote or fact that had come under his notice. It must be allowed that in this power of his, he had, so to speak, a celestial art, so that none who heard

him could help being delighted. They would have liked the recreation to have had no end, and they came away from it as recollected as from a meditation. His conversation produced a still more wonderful effect upon a pious lady, who was listening to him when he was quite young, and before he had attained that vehemence of charity, which God infused into his soul at a later period. But he spoke even then with so much sweetness and unction, that his devout hearer, following the loving attraction of the Divine Goodness, was transported out of her senses by his words.

One of the strongest proofs of the reality of Father Paul's charity, was his jealousy of God's honour, and the acute pain he suffered at the sight of the offences committed against Him. The hatred he had for sin is not to be described; he could not hear it named without shuddering. When he preached on the malice of mortal sin, his internal sorrow showed itself in the pallor of his face, and the agitation of his whole person. None could doubt in beholding him, that if he might have sacrificed his life to prevent a sin, he would willingly have done so. When he heard of any particular outrage against God, or knew that the holy Church was suffering, that the rich and great set an evil example to the poor and lowly, or that the priests neglected to correspond to their high vocation, he wept, and groaned, and sighed, and struck his breast, saying: "My sins are the cause of all this, my infidelities are moving God to anger." He would willingly have braved the most cruel and barbarous of deaths, to remedy



the disorders of Christendom. His greatest cross in his illnesses, was his inability to do anything to prevent offences against God. With tears in his eyes he cried out, "Ah, if I could only work! but I am not able, I am no longer a labourer." While he had any strength left him, he used to go out into the open country, preaching with such tender compassion the sufferings of the innocent Lamb immolated for our sins, that several worthy ecclesiastics said of him, "This good father will one of these days drop down dead in the middle of his meditations on the Passion." In his sermons, with an utter disregard of human respect, he inveighed against the disorders which were most prevalent. If any persons sought to impede the fruit of his missions, he opposed them with all the indignant zeal of his apostolic character. Thus, when he was preaching in a certain town, where the principal person of the place gave anything but good example, Father Paul boldly sent him word not to dare to disturb the good order of the missions, or hinder its fruit by his wicked actions. With the same holy liberty, whenever he saw God offended, he feared no danger, but freely reprehended the guilty, and the miraculous effects produced by his corrections, clearly proved that he was inspired by God. He was once travelling in the Roman Campagna, when he met a labourer ploughing the fields, who because his beasts were not quite so docile as he wished, uttered the most revolting blasphemies. The servant of God with great charity gently admonished him, and tried to persuade him to acknowledge

his fault. But the wretched man, unmoved by his paternal advice, continued his dreadful language, and then turning his rage against Father Paul, he seized a musket which was near, with the intention of firing upon him. The good father, more terrified at the blasphemies with which God was insulted, than at the danger which threatened himself, raised his crucifix in his hands and said : "If you will not respect your Saviour, at least these beasts will acknowledge Him." At his words the oxen, as if they understood and wished to repair the outrages offered to their Creator, fell down on their knees before the servant of God. The ploughman at this prodigy entered into himself ; he threw down his weapon, and casting himself at the feet of Father Paul, he asked his pardon, and begged to be allowed to follow him and to make his peace with God.

The truest test of perfect charity is a willingness to suffer for the object beloved. Father Paul often repeated upon this subject a reflection he had made in his hermitage of the Annunziata, on Monte Argentaro. "One day," he said, "being very cold, I wished to light a fire ; accordingly I picked up in the arbour some dry well-seasoned sticks, and found that in a short time they made a great blaze. And why did they ignite so easily ? Because they had been long exposed to cold, and frost, and sun, and heat, and so had become quite dry and withered. Thus," he added, "does it happen with our souls ; if we want them to burn with the fire of Divine love, we must let them be purified by trials and hardships, by temptations and persecu-

tions." In the same strain he wrote to a pious person: "O my dear daughter! happy is that soul which is detached from its own pleasure, from its own feeling, from its own understanding. This is indeed a lofty lesson, but God will teach it you, if you place your whole contentment in the cross of Christ, and in dying upon that Cross to all that is not God. As for the contempt, the slights, and the derisions you have to bear, receive them all with the greatest gratitude, and let them form a pile upon which you are to be immolated as a victim of love."

Our Lord was pleased to give his servant Paul many opportunities of suffering for the glory of His name and the promotion of devotion towards His life-giving Passion. His whole life was spent in labours and fatigues, and in the journeys to and fro to found new Retreats, and to direct those already established. He founded altogether fourteen houses, including the Hospice at Rome, and the Convent of Passionist nuns at Corneto. Many other works he also undertook for the Divine glory, and in all of them he had to encounter much opposition and many vexations. One was the project of a Penitentiary for women, concerning which he spoke to Pope Clement XIV., but which was never completed, on account of the benefactor changing his design. Still greater, however, were the labours and sufferings of his apostolic life: witness the missions which he preached in towns and villages, the exercises he gave to monasteries, the colloquies, conferences, and correspondence he held with so many persons,

all of which abundantly prove that his charity was always working and never growing weary in the Divine service. Like a docile child, he left everything to the amorous guidance of the Spirit of his heavenly Father. Before all his enterprises, he sought with great earnestness to purify his heart, and to keep his intention fixed upon no other end but God. He often repeated with deep feeling, "*Propter magnam gloriam Dei.*" He had learnt from his early director, the wise and holy bishop Gattinara, the practice of making an examen upon purity of intention in his actions, many times during the day. He derived so much profit from this exercise that he said to his confessor, "It seems to me that I have always acted from a pure motive, and I have often renewed my intentions twenty times in one sermon." He had so high an esteem for this virtue that he said, "I should consider myself a reprobate if I robbed Almighty God of His own gifts."

The hardest of all the trials love has to bear is suffering; it is like water thrown upon a fire to put it out, but the charity of our servant of God was too strong and too glowing to be easily extinguished. In the first years of his dedication to the service of God, it pleased the Divine Majesty to visit him with many special lights and graces, but at the same time He was preparing for him greater crosses and trials. In his interior revelations he was permitted to hear these words: "I will show thee what great things thou shalt suffer for My name." In a vision he saw a discipline with golden chains, upon which was

inscribed "Amor," to signify that his scourge was to be one of love. Upon one occasion, while praying before the Blessed Sacrament, his spirit took a loving flight towards Jesus, when a voice said to him, "Son, he who approaches Me approaches thorns." Another time, he was standing absorbed in prayer in the sanctuary of the most Holy Trinity at Gaeta, when an angel came to him with a golden cross, and our Lord interiorly said to him, "I will make thee another Job." With these and similar favours did Almighty God, who disposes all things with admirable sweetness, prepare His servant for future afflictions. And these Divine inspirations inflamed his heart with so ardent a desire for suffering, that he used to say he had an insatiable hunger for crosses. It was not long before our Lord began to satisfy his cravings. No sooner was he clothed with the holy habit, than he was tormented during many hours of the day with the most horrible desolations, temptations, and internal derelictions, insomuch that every one else appeared happy compared to him. As he advanced in years, the frequency and intensity of these spiritual martyrdoms increased, and he said in confidence to his confessor, "For fifty years I do not remember to have passed a single day without interior darkness. We read of souls having desolations for five, ten, fifteen years, but as for me, I cannot think of it without shuddering." And he spoke this because out of his great humility he feared having been guilty of some hidden infidelity, and he said with St. Austin, "Many things have my eyes known, which I know not."

When he contemplated his interior, he used to tremble from head to foot with the fear of being eternally lost, and he said he should feel joyful if he were sure of remaining in Purgatory till the end of the world, because, then at least he should one day see God. He would have been thankful to die with the feelings of contrition of many of the poor sinners whom he assisted in their last moments, so great was his terror and apprehension of the awful judgment. At these times nothing could console or relieve him, and his confessor found no better means than changing the discourse, for in his case words of comfort only increased his pain. He often repeated in the bitterness of his heart the lamentation of the prophet Jeremias, "He hath shut up my ways with square stones, he hath turned my paths upside down," and those of Ezechiel, "Lamentations and canticles and woe." In this sea of sorrow, his usual exercise was perfect abandonment to the Divine Will. Having read that St. Gertrude recited daily a corona, composed of the words "Fiat voluntas Tua," he began also to practise a devotion so acceptable to God. With equal sentiments of conformity he exclaimed, "Just and true are Thy judgments, O Lord. Thou hast done all things justly, for we have sinned and disobeyed Thy law." God once showed him an immense heap of crosses, and at the same time taught him to cast his little will into the vast ocean of the will of God; the holy father obeyed, and the crosses vanished. Thus then it was that he spent his time between suffering and love, realizing what he wrote to a devout

soul, "One of the clearest signs we can give of loving God, is to seek nothing but His Divine pleasure, and to follow promptly the least sign of His will. Just as melted wax in the hands of an artificer, such ought the soul to be in the hands of God. My soul is liquefied that my Beloved may speak." If in this resignation to the Divine Will he found no sensible sweetness, he derived at least, much esteem for suffering. Hence he often replied to those who asked him how he was, that he was well; he felt no pain in his gout, nor in his sciatica, nor in his rheumatism, nor in any other of his illnesses, because he remembered that by suffering he pleased God and merited for himself an abundance of glory in the next world, to which the troubles of this were not worthy to be compared.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### OF FATHER PAUL'S PERFECT CONFORMITY TO THE MOST HOLY WILL OF GOD.

It was impossible to mistake in our venerable servant of God, the true mark and countersign of a soul that really loves. "*Fideles in dilectione acquiescent illi.*" The will of Father Paul was so united to the will of God, that he seemed to have no other rule for his life or guidance for his conduct. This was his sphere, his centre, his repose, and his resting-place; hence he was never agitated,

never disturbed, and when anything did not succeed with him, he only said, "Leave all to God, let His will be done, I desire neither more nor less than what God desires, for time and for eternity." He expressed the same sentiments under all misfortunes. "May the most amiable will of God be done!" he exclaimed, meekly bowing his head. And he often quoted our Blessed Lord's words in the Gospel, "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me," and, again, "My food is to do the will of My Father." He well knew that this is the true secret of gaining the heart of God, and interesting Him in our behalf. "He will do the will of them that fear Him;" and that he who opposes the Divine Will, can never enjoy peace. "Who shall resist Him and have peace?" In all the troubles and difficulties he met with in the commencement of his congregation, this was his only resource. Raising his eyes to heaven, in an attitude of the deepest submission and confidence, he would say, "The will of God," then taking off his cap and reverently bowing his head, he would add, "Fiat voluntas Tua;" with a smiling countenance, he would explain himself, saying, "When God sends us crosses and misfortunes, we must bow down and humble ourselves, because, if we raise our heads, He will give us ten strokes where he only intended one, and if we lower them, He will hardly give us one where He intended ten."

Many and bitter, however, were the trials which the servant of God had to endure, in order to render his conformity perfect and heroic. Our reader



can hardly have forgotten how his life was interwoven with sufferings, and how many sorrowful events happened to wound his heart. He bore them all with uncomplaining meekness, and when the congregation to which he had sacrificed his whole life was threatened with dissolution, he abandoned his work to God's pleasure without a murmur. "The institute is born," he wrote, "but I see that it is not improbable it may die in its very infancy. I prepare myself for all, and resign myself to behold this work done or undone, just as God wishes." In another letter he said, "On my return from Rome, where our affairs have progressed according to the Divine Pleasure, and to my entire satisfaction, because I wish for nothing but the accomplishment of the Will of God," &c. His maxim was to receive all afflictions straight from the hands of God, without so much as looking at the instruments through which they came. He made use of the following similitude, "Suppose," he said to his brethren, "you had gone into the garden to gather fruit, and a heavy shower of rain came on, what would you do? Without doubt you would seek shelter in the shed. So, when there is a storm of tribulations and vexations, where should you take refuge but in the holy will of God, under whose shadow nothing can hurt you?"

To a soul whom he directed, he wrote, "My daughter in Christ, when, O when, shall we be dead to all, that we may live only to God! O precious death, more desirable than life, death which renders us divine, because it transforms us

into God through love. St. John Chrysostom says, 'Silentium quod lutum præbet figulo idem ipse præbe Conditori tuo,' words of deep import, signifying that we are to imitate in our conduct to God, the silence of clay in the hands of the potter. It is equally passive whether he puts it to an honourable or an ignominious use, whether he breaks it in pieces, or fashions it into vases for the galleries of kings. Bear in mind this lesson."

"The desires which God gives us for the good of souls and the assistance of holy Church, are excellent, but you must let them be consumed in the flame of the love of God, from which they proceed, and wait until He produces their effects; in the meantime cultivate the best of all desires, which is that of pleasing God in all things, and nourishing yourself with His holy will. Feed upon the will of God, and drink the chalice of Jesus with your eyes shut, so that you may not see what is inside; let it be enough for you to know that it is the cup of your sweet Jesus. Above all, form to yourself a constant habit of resignation, by making frequently such acts as these, O beloved Will, O most holy Will of God, I love thee! May the most sweet will of my Heavenly Father be ever blessed! O most Holy Will, O most sweet Will, be my food! The food of my Jesus was to do the will of His Father, mine shall be the same.

"The last part of your letter pleased me extremely, showing me how much God does for your soul. O, what graces! O what gifts! Now it

is that you feel what is really sweet and precious. The time will come when you will know no other food but crosses, which were the food of your Saviour. Nourish yourself with them plentifully, and be in peace, for this food requires to be digested in interior solitude."

From all that we have said of the charity of the venerable Father, we may well conclude that his was a love burning in a heart detached and purified from every earthly affection, a love which raised itself above all meaner things, that it might delight in God alone, a love which, although tried by the most terrible desolation and abandonment fastened itself generously to the cross, and followed Jesus unto the darkness and the bitterness of death, without ever seeking comfort or relief. It was this love which gave to all the virtues of Father Paul, their heroicity, while it left him to suffer from the absence of all sensible union with God, and with the piercing thought that he might possibly not be in possession of the only good he valued, and out of whom he could not find either repose or peace.

In this manner it was, that his charity fortified with the food of tribulation, while it became strong under temptations, indefatigable in labours, imperturbable under misfortunes, left him always ill-satisfied with himself. In the acts of love which he made in the superior part of his soul, he was permitted to feel no sweetness or consolation in the inferior part, so that he was continually plunged into an overwhelming dread of having lost God, and in this state of profound grief,

between suffering and loving, he passed the greater part of his life. When he heard any one speak with unusual energy of the loss of God, he endured so terrible a martyrdom, that he confessed he would rather have suffered death. He was once giving the exercises at Vetralla, and when he came to the meditation on hell, penetrated with horror at the idea of eternal reprobation, he exclaimed, "Never to see God! Always without God!" with a thrilling emphasis on the words *never* and *always*, which seemed to tear his very heart, and then he added, with fresh terror, "O how miserable a necessity, to hate for ever Him who has loved us from all eternity!"

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## CHAPTER X.

OF THE GIFT OF PRAYER POSSESSED BY THE SERVANT OF GOD, AND EXCELLENT ADVICE WHICH HE GAVE TO SOULS, IN ORDER TO DIRECT THEM SAFELY IN THE WAY OF HOLY PRAYER.

THE interior school, in which B. Paul learned lessons so sublime, was holy prayer: and this was the heavenly furnace, in which his soul became so greatly inflamed with the love of God, who is an inextinguishable fire of charity. Our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 29.) In prayer, his love went on constantly increasing; to prayer he felt himself drawn with the greatest sweetness, and to prayer he gave himself entirely; showing

clearly by this means, how sincerely he loved God, according to the words of St. Chrysostom, "Prayer is a sign of great love."

Our Saint's love for holy prayer cannot be expressed in words; in prayer was his strength, in prayer, his repose, in prayer, his treasure. From his early youth, he had been accustomed to rise in the night, and go barefooted with his brother, John Baptist, to an Oratory, under a staircase, to recite there the Divine office, and converse with the Divine Majesty, in the silence and tranquillity of those nocturnal hours. Afterwards, it may be said that prayer was his continual exercise, and to keep himself united with God, his constant employment. Besides the time that he devoted to it, with the other Religious, he usually rose early in the morning, to converse longer with God in prayer, and sometimes to prepare himself to celebrate Mass, inflaming his heart with a great increase of love and desire of Jesus in His Sacrament. He lost not a moment of the time left at his disposal, but jealously profited by it, to unite himself more closely to God, and more lovingly plunge himself into that Ocean of Goodness. For this reason, he loved to be alone, and to enjoy the peace of solitude; and if sometimes he had reason to leave the house, he diligently endeavoured to return thither speedily, that he might enjoy God in tranquillity. The time of sickness was for him a precious time of more continual recollection; he wished to be left almost constantly alone, and with his windows closed, and thus he spent his time in reciting vocal prayers, or in conversing

silently in holy recollection with God : hence his companion often said to him, as he himself attests, "Are you always praying?" and he answered, "Such, at least, is my intention." Frequently, says the same witness, I entered the room, and he never saw me ; but I found him in deep recollection ; and sometimes, on calling him, he seemed to awake from a profound sleep, and I purposely said, "I am sorry to have awakened you," when he replied, "I was not asleep, it is my custom to remain in that position," but his custom was, to be in prayer.

In order to conceive a just idea of B. Paul's gift of prayer, we must hear his Confessor, to whom he confided the secrets of his soul, following that wise and useful maxim of devotion, which he taught to other souls in these words : "Be secret from creatures, excepting your director and spiritual Father;" adding that this is one of the most certain signs and effects, left by the true gifts of God. The Confessor says : "From the beginning of his conversion, he several times told me, that our Lord had granted him a great gift of prayer, and that he felt himself so absorbed in God, that he would have desired never to separate himself from Him." He was often ravished "extra sensus," in sublime ecstasies ; hence, one day a good Capuchin lay-brother said to him, "Father, it seems to me, you wish to mount up to heaven." From the beginning, he gave himself to meditation on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ, and such, and so great was his interior compunction, so abundant his affections, and so copious his tears, that it

would not be easy to describe them. Our Lord, accommodating Himself to his spirit, as he was then only a beginner, showed him in frequent visions, the mysteries of His holy Life and Passion; and finally, in saying the holy Rosary, Jesus showed Himself to him, as a beautiful Infant. Soon, however, He deprived him of these more sensible graces, and began to visit him with graces more spiritual, and removed from the senses; hence the visions granted him were intellectual, and understanding was infused into his soul by the way of impression; in the same manner as the form of the seal is imprinted on soft wax; and in such communications, God made him understand so many, and such great truths, regarding the mysteries of the holy Faith, that, as he used to say to his director, a room full of books would not have sufficed to explain them. From this source therefore, we may believe to have proceeded that heavenly knowledge of the things of God, with which he was adorned, and which, with so much clearness and fervour, he used to impart to others. Besides the truths of Faith, our Lord made known to him the tribulations with which He should try him, and the great work of the foundation of the Congregation, in which He intended to use him as an instrument. By these lights and heavenly graces, his mind was so strengthened, comforted, and encouraged, that he would have passed on, amidst swords and hatchets. He told me, that not knowing how to explain otherwise to his director, what he received from our Lord, in these intimate communications, and

the effects they produced in him, he made use of the following similitude, "Imagine that you have in your hands, a dish of very fine gold, and that you pour therein, the essence of the finest, rarest, and most exquisite perfumes, that afterwards you plunge into it, a fine cambric handkerchief, and smell it on taking it out; it is certain that this handkerchief would send forth a most delicious perfume, composed of all scents; it is thus with my soul when it receives these close and secret communications." His Divine Majesty continued to anoint and perfume him, for the space of twelve years, with the unction of His mercy; and during this space, He also occasionally visited him with aridity and great desolations, to prepare him for the conflict; but they were not so frequent, nor of so long duration. God, who "*est ludens in orbe terrarum,*" was pleased, if we may so speak, lovingly to divert Himself with His servant, and He left him during the remainder of his life, that is, for the space of about fifty years, in those most horrible derelictions, aridities, and interior desolations, giving him, however, now and then, though rarely, and for a short time, some interval of comfort, during which he appeared inflamed like a seraph, and spoke with such fire and ardour of heavenly things, that he enkindled the same fire also in his hearers, and was himself greatly strengthened and encouraged, to bear heroic generosity, his interior martyrdom. During the period of his greatest darkness, after giving me an account of his soul, he said to me, "Though I am in so miserable a condition, that



I seem to myself to be without faith, without hope, and without charity, and not to possess even that natural light which other men have, so that I seem to be like a beast, nevertheless, if I were asked at any time whatever, "What are you thinking of? it seems to me that I should reply, that in the depth of my soul, I have none but God present with me." Hence, we may conclude, that his prayer was more continual, noble, excellent, and sublime, in proportion as it was more hidden, and deprived of all sensible pleasure, and he used to say, "It seems to me impossible not to think of God, our minds being entirely filled with God, and we ourselves wholly in God." And to some one who did not clearly understand this, he said, "But we have these truths in the Pater noster; do you not say, *qui es in cœlis*? This spiritual heaven is our soul, and there the Divine Majesty has His throne; how then is it possible to forget God, and not to love Him?"

It is not surprising that he who so continually practised this divine exercise of prayer should have discoursed so well upon it, and on the manner of performing it; he was an excellent master therein. When he was speaking to any one of prayer, and persuading him to practise it, he expressed himself with so much grace and unction, that he seemed to communicate to him the spirit of prayer. He always spoke excellently on prayer, like a great master, and immediately understood whatever was said to him regarding it; but before answering, he seemed to be lost in thought, and then said: "That is enough—I understand—you

must do so and so." And he very often by some similitude explained the manner in which this soul should act conformably to the spirit of God, who is the sovereign master of prayer, and adapted to her necessities. In order to excite in every one a love of prayer, he was never tired of saying, that in holy prayer the soul is united and transformed into God by charity and love; and in saying this, the affections of his heart were so vehement, that he declared his desire of being wholly absorbed in God, and his countenance became inflamed, a mark of the greater fire that burned in his breast. He would have desired that every one should give himself to prayer, and to conversing with God. He was, if I may so speak, inconsolable because so few knew the treasure that is found in prayer, and in union with the supreme good; and he was convinced that the road to precipices is easily opened when prayer is abandoned. He never failed to give all sorts of persons suitable advice to guide them in all the different ways of holy prayer, in order not to impede the sublime works and the delicate operations of divine grace, in that intimate communication and familiar converse that well-disposed souls enjoy with their most loving God. Those, however, with whom he more freely poured forth his heart, and his intense desire of seeing the practice of holy prayer extended, were the religious of his congregation. To them, in order that they might be well disposed for the grace of holy prayer, and might always preserve the fruit of it, he recommended particularly to keep themselves

in the presence of God ; not by a dry and sterile exercise, but lovingly, tranquilly, and quietly, that they might be imbued with the spirit of God, and he inculcated its frequent remembrance as a powerful means of keeping the soul closely united to God in holy charity. He repeated with great feeling the advice given by God Himself to Abraham : “ Walk before me, and be perfect ; ” and that beautiful promise made to the faithful soul : “ I will espouse thee to Myself in faith. ” Sometimes he would say, “ *Status divinus oritur in anima, ex continua Dei memoria,* ” adding, that silence and retirement were two most powerful and efficacious means to raise the soul to God, and totally inflame it with the love of the Sovereign Good, confirming his opinion with Divine authority : “ *Sedebit solitarius et tacebit, quia levavit super se. Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet, Omnipotens sermo tuus, Domine, a regalibus sedibus venit.* ” And in explanation of these words he said : “ When the soul keeps her passions in subjection, when she keeps herself recollected in God, when she walks in lively faith, which form the silence and the midnight that God requires, then the Divine Word is born in the soul by a nativity wholly spiritual, wholly divine. ”

And as by dissipation, the most precious treasures are lost, and the most profound recollection destroyed, he earnestly recommended souls, who possessed such gifts, to proceed with great caution and circumspection, endeavouring to maintain interior recollection, even in the midst of occupa-

tions, turning frequently to God interiorly, and resting in Him, and keeping a guard on the senses, chiefly the eyes; since, as he said, "He who stands at the door, or at the windows of a house, sees indeed, what is done outside, but not what goes on within; on the contrary, he who keeps retired in the house, knows all that is done therein." And he added, "He who shall practise modesty in looks, shall acquire recollection of heart." As our venerable Father knew, that to the faithful soul is promised an increase of talents and divine gifts, he admonished souls who had the gift of prayer, to be faithful to our Lord by the practice of holy virtues, and chiefly humility, trying to keep their secret according to those words, "*Secretum meum mihi,*" (*Isaiæ xxiv. 16.*) and to humble themselves on all occasions. "We must, he said keep always in our own territories, and within our own boundaries, which are nothingness and sin, then God will more readily draw us into His own, and absorb us wholly and entirely in His infinite immensity." He used often also to exhort devout persons to keep the temple of the soul well guarded, having always burning before the altar of the heart, the three lamps of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and also to keep the fire of Divine love always lighted on the altar of the heart, remembering the command of God in the old Law: "*Ignis in altare semper ardebit.*" These were his most frequent instructions and exhortations, to souls who had the gift of prayer; and he used to make use of parables and similitudes, to engrave them on the minds of his hearers; and to imitate our

Blessed Saviour, on such occasion he would say, "Jesus Christ, the Master of Truth, spake not to them without parables;" therefore do you listen to this parable, &c.

Those souls who had not the gift of prayer he exhorted to exercise themselves during the day, in aspirations and ejaculations to God, taking advantage of what they saw and heard. "If, for example," he would say, "you see flowers on going into the garden, say to one of them, 'Tu quis es?' it will not reply, I am a flower; no, it will say, 'ego vox,' I am a preacher, who preaches the power, wisdom, goodness, beauty, and prudence of the great God." He recommended, that afterwards, as if they had received such an answer, they should allow it to sink deeply into the heart, that it might be entirely penetrated with it.

He was, as we have said, an enemy to scruples, which so greatly disturb the mind, and prevent it from relishing the sweetness of the Divine Law. He wished that all should burn with the fire of Divine love. "Lose yourselves," he would say, "entirely in God, rest your soul in the Divine bosom of the Heavenly Father." As a remedy against other interior troubles, he exhorted all to invoke the Holy name of Jesus; and in order to explain by an appropriate similitude, the wonderful effects of peace and tranquillity that follow, from the invocation of this Name of salvation and grace, he used to relate, that being once at a place near the sea, for the good of souls, he was invited by some fishermen to witness the fishing, and when he went, he saw that as the sea was rough they

threw oil into it from time to time, and where it fell the waters became calm, and the fishermen could see the fish and catch them. He, who well knew that everything contains instruction for him who is inclined to profit by it, drew from this an important lesson; that is, that when the soul is agitated like the sea in a storm, we should frequently throw oil upon it, by the invocation of the most holy Name of Jesus, of which it is written in the Sacred Canticles, "*Oleum effusum nomen tuum.*" Cant. 1, 2.

How excellent a master was the servant of God in that science which he continually studied at the feet of Jesus Crucified is known yet more clearly from his letters, which preserve to us with the greatest fidelity not only his sentiments but all his words. It was his maxim, that each one ought to have the food that suits his stomach; therefore he guided souls in the manner he knew to be most profitable to each. To beginners, as a tender nurse, "*Lac potum dabat,*" and he thus wrote to a Master of Novices regarding them. "I received your valuable letter this morning, and I rejoice to hear of the favours granted by God, to these His servants, especially to Father N., who, though he begins to have the gift of prayer, must be carefully watched, that he may not relax in the practice of virtue, and the imitation of Jesus Christ; taking always to prayer some Mystery of the Passion, without however making efforts to meditate, except by sweet colloquies and soliloquies; and when God attracts to the silence of love and of faith, "*in sinu Dei,*" which is the

prayer spoken of by your Reverence, the soul must not be disturbed by reflections from such a state of repose and quiet; but above all, ground them all well in humility, and hatred of themselves—for of this, “*nunquam satis.*” According as souls advanced in the way of holy prayer and virtue, he encouraged them to good, with a spirit of wise discernment by suitable instructions. He wrote to one of these, “Your letters rejoice me much in God, and give me reason to bless that Sovereign Goodness, who shows such mercy to the child His divine Providence has confided to my care; and I desire great fidelity to the Supreme Good in order to correspond with favours so sublime, which prepare the soul for still greater gifts, for lights yet higher and more sublime, by which the soul will become more enamoured of God, will acquire greater virtues and will practise them in a more heroic degree; for when the soul is more enlightened, in holy faith and in prayer, it becomes more closely united to God, and by means of this union with the Sovereign Good all gifts come to the soul; she works great things with true humility, and self-annihilation, and this annihilation prepares her soul to be entirely absorbed in God, in holy contemplation; for the Divine Lover draws her to Himself, and entirely divinises her, if I may so speak, by means of this holy union with His Divine Majesty.

“I desire also, that you should exercise yourself much in the perfect knowledge of your nothingness, and then I wish that you should immerse this nothing in the great All, which is our good

God. Oh, most happy loss, by which the soul, losing herself wholly in God, finds her advantage. Ah! how great a lover of Truth is our Sovereign Good, since He is the God of Truth, and he who knows, and remains in his own nothingness, knows the truth by means of holy contemplation, in which is learned this great Truth of our own nothingness, and of the Divine All, which is God; for the soul is entirely immersed in the infinite love of the Supreme Good.

“In my other letters I have given you rules for holy prayer, to guide you in it, because God gave me the light. My child, the present state of prayer, in which God has placed you, does not require many words. Love speaks little; the tongue of holy love is the heart which burns, consumes, and dissolves itself entirely in God, and cannot express in words its ardours which make a continual sacrifice of love in the living soul, and this sacrifice is a holocaust; that is, every thing is consumed and reduced to ashes, in the Divine fire of Infinite Charity, and by one word, one glance of love in pure faith, great things are learned. Oh, how much I wish to say, but have not time; my mind loses itself in the immense ocean of the infinite Greatness of God! Courage, let us serve God generously; let us exercise great virtues, God will be our strength, and will give us the victory. I recommend you not to lose sight of the Life, Passion, and Death of Jesus our Life. Take notice, my child, that now you are not to meditate as you did at first, but according to the holy rules I have given you. Love is a unitive



virtue, and makes the sufferings of its Beloved its own. Do not make use of the imagination, it is not now the time, but of pure and holy faith : make a nosegay of the sufferings of Jesus, and carry it in the bosom of your soul ; remain wholly immersed in God, in pure faith, and by some word of love, remind Him how much He has done and suffered for us, and let those sufferings and that love sink deeply into your heart, remaining in that sacred silence, that sacred amazement which enkindles greater love for God. Unite with the sufferings of Jesus those of most holy Mary, and the soul, wholly immersed in those sufferings and sorrows, is both loving and sorrowful; sorrowful and loving. Love will teach you every thing, if you keep well entrenched in your own nothingness."

When a devout person began to feel interior trouble and desolation of mind, he encouraged her to be faithful, and to profit by the precious opportunity of serving God more perfectly. "As for your soul (he writes in another letter), a little winter is necessary, for this purifies the earth and the air from noxious vapours, and benefits also the human body ; and though it strips the leaves from the trees, it is that they may take deeper root. Spring comes afterwards, when everything recovers, everything flourishes. Every degree of prayer must have a preparatory purification. Great fidelity is necessary in all the exercises of prayer and of virtue, chiefly of sublime resignation, and to remain 'in sinu Dei,' without sensible comfort, but in the superior part of the soul rejoicing without relish in the accomplishment of

the will of God. In this manner winter passes on, and flowery spring arrives, and 'the voice of the turtle is heard in our land,' " &c. He was most careful, if a soul was called by God from meditation to a more sublime prayer, in advising her to let herself be guided by God Himself, who knows well what is good for each one ; and he wrote as follows : " I do not tell you to do this ( speaking of prayer ) in my way, but according to the way of God : leave the soul in holy liberty, that she may receive the divine impressions as it may please God. Prayer should be made by the movement of the Holy Ghost, for such is the will of Infinite Goodness."

" If God ( he says in another letter ) wishes to deprive us of all things, let us leave ourselves in His hands. Do not give up the practice of holy virtue, quit not the holy presence of God, and do not forget the Passion of our dear Jesus ; but we must meditate upon it in His way, not in ours. Rules have been given, but God is the Master, let us abandon ourselves to Him, confide in Him, and strip ourselves of all things, and God will clothe us according to his pleasure."

Giving the same instruction, full of wisdom, he writes : " Leave the soul at liberty to take strong flights towards the Supreme Good, according as God draws her, like the moth which flutters around the light and then flies into it ; thus let the soul fly around and into this divine light, and be entirely consumed therein." Again he writes : " I understand that you cannot meditate as before, nor make the composition of place, and that your mind

suffers if you try to force it : Deo gratias. Act, then, thus: remain in the presence of God, with a pure, simple, and loving attention to this immense good, in a holy silence of love, resting your soul in this holy silence in the loving bosom of the Eternal God ; and when you cease to feel recollected, awake your soul sweetly by some dart of love—O Infinite Goodness ! O Infinite Charity ! My dear Lord, I am thine ! O Infinite Sweetness !—such as these, or others, as God may inspire you. But take notice, that if in forming one of these darts of love the soul is filled with peace, and becomes recollected in God, nothing more is necessary but to continue this loving silence, this repose of the soul in God, which includes excellently all the acts that we can ever make ; and when this peace or recollection is not felt, and the soul cannot meditate, you must leave her so, but must always keep up a loving attention to God in the superior part of the soul. In such a case, then, remain before God like a statue in its niche, detached from every consolation.”

There was no soul, however highly gifted, to which the servant of God, who was a perfect master in mystical theology, could not give the most sublime and perfect instructions to guide her in prayer and an intimate communication with God, as we might have perceived from the letters already cited in which we see grouped together as it were a treasure of heavenly learning, and as we shall see more clearly in other letters that we shall now add in their proper place.

“ Viri adoratores,” he wrote, “ adorabunt Pa-

trem in spiritu et veritate ; notice this well, for in these words of Jesus Christ is contained the perfection of holy prayer, which does not consist in delights and spiritual consolations, but in spiritu et veritate, that is, in true, pure, and simple nudity and poverty of spirit, detached from every sensible comfort, and reposing as a naked and pure spirit, in the infinite Spirit of God ; et veritate, which consists in remaining in our poor and naked nothingness, without robbing God of anything."

To another devout soul, "After you have entirely annihilated, despised, and lowered yourself in the depth of your nothingness, ask permission of Jesus to enter His Divine Heart, and you will immediately obtain it ; place yourself there as a victim on that Divine Altar, on which the fire of holy love continually burns, and let these sacred flames penetrate to the marrow of your bones, and even entirely consume you ; and if the gentle breeze of the Holy Ghost raises these ashes to the contemplation of the divine mysteries, give liberty to the soul, to become entirely immersed in this holy contemplation. Oh, how pleasing to God is this practice !"

In order to be more easily understood, he explained by beautiful similitudes, the instructions that he gave ; "The infant, after playing lovingly and caressingly on its mother's neck, rests on her bosom, and falls asleep, without however ceasing to move its little lips in sucking milk ; thus, the soul fatigued with affections, should take rest in the bosom of the Heavenly Father, and not

arouse herself from this attention of faith and love, without the permission of her Supreme Good."

To another devout person, he wrote ; " You must remain entirely immersed in God, and lose this little drop of your poor soul, in that immense ocean of charity; repose there, and receive whatever God communicates to you, without losing sight of your own nothingness. In this divine solitude everything is learned. In this divine interior school, more is learned by being silent, than by speaking. St. Mary Magdalen fell at the feet of Jesus through love, there she was silent, she listened, loved, and even melted with love. Take with you this prayer and interior recollection in your business, your occupations, and in every place. Go out of yourself, and lose yourself in God, go out of temporal things, and lose yourself in eternity. I am on the sea-coast, I have a drop of water hanging from one finger ; I say to this water, ' O poor little drop, where do you wish to be ? ' hear the answer, ' In the sea, in the sea, ' it answers, and what do I do ? I shake my finger, and let fall this poor little drop into the ocean. Now, I ask, this little drop is in the sea, is it not ? Certainly it is, but find it if you can ; it is lost in the sea, its centre. Oh, if it could speak, what would it say ? Make the conclusion, and apply the parable. Lose sight of heaven earth, sea, sands, and every created thing, and let this drop, your soul, which God has given you, lose itself in its source, which is the great omnipotent God."

" My child," he writes to another, " this is a

very sublime science, only understood by the humble of heart ; remain, therefore, in annihilation and total contempt of yourself, desiring, above all things, that you should be thought of, and esteemed, as a drain from a dunghill, near which all hold their noses, that they may not perceive the stench ; and with these sentiments of entire annihilation, plunge with great confidence into that abyss of every good, and leave that Infinite Goodness to perform His divine operations in your soul, that is, to penetrate it with the rays of His divine light, to transform it through love, entirely into Himself, to make it live by His most Divine Spirit, to make it live a life of love, a divine, a holy life. Let the poor moth, after flying round this divine light with the wings of affections, humiliations, and, above all, of lively faith and charity, cast itself into this most divine light, which is God Himself, and be therein entirely destroyed, and burnt to ashes ; then will it live a life, not its own, but in, and of, the life of its Supreme Good. These are the sublime works of His Divine Majesty, in souls that annihilate themselves, that make themselves little, that give to God all the glory of His gifts, and give them back by a humble and loving offering in His Divine sight, like sweet-smelling incense. Read all these sentiments with attention, but read them with a humble, simple, and open heart, like a mother pearl, or a shell that receives the dew of heaven, and then shuts itself up closely, goes to the bottom of the sea, and there gives birth to its pearl."

And as it often happens, as St. John of the Cross deploras with great compassion and zeal, that souls find an obstacle in going freely to God from those very persons who ought most to assist them, and promote their good, our Saint has left excellent instructions on this point, in writing to direct one who was little understood by her Confessor, and little assisted in the path of an interior life. "When your Confessor has dismissed you, depart in peace, and immediately cry out lovingly, like a child, according to the parable I gave you, Ah, Father, Ah, great Father! showing to Him this, the pain, anguish, and fears, that the voice of your Confessor has caused in you; you will then immediately feel a most sweet attraction, which will make your soul take flight into the depths of that divine solitude in which she will be entirely absorbed in God, and her anguish, fears, and scruples will be consumed in the furnace of holy love; repose there, and if the Divine Spouse should cause you to slumber, sleep in peace, and do not awake without His permission. This divine slumber is an inheritance that the Divine Father grants to His beloved. In this slumber of faith and love, the science of the Saints is learned, and the bitter mouthfuls of adversity are quickly digested. O silence! O holy sleep! O precious solitude! Humble yourself more and more, remain always in true poverty of spirit, strip yourself, as I said, of all His gifts since they are soiled with your dust, and make of them a sacrifice of praise, honour, and benediction to the most High, keeping yourself in your own nakedness. Such a

sacrifice must be made in the fire of love, without ever quitting the sacred desert."

Above all things, Father Paul earnestly desired, that souls possessing the gift of prayer, should well understand that prayer ought not to be a subtle and barren speculation, but a practical school of holy virtues, and that he who enters the path of holy prayer, enters into the treasures of God to enrich himself in his poverty; he wrote therefore to one of his spiritual children, "I thank the Divine Mercy, that your mind does not depart from the remembrance of the sufferings of your heavenly Spouse, but I should wish that you should allow yourself to be entirely penetrated by the love with which He has suffered these things. The short way, therefore, is to lose oneself entirely in the sea of these sufferings, since, as the Prophet says, the Passion of Jesus is a sea of love and of sorrow. Ah, my child! this is a great secret, made known only to the humble of heart! In this great scene, the soul fishes for the pearls of virtues, and makes the sufferings of her Beloved her own. I have a strong confidence that the Spouse will instruct you in this divine fishing, and you will be taught it in interior solitude, free from all images, apart from everything created, in pure faith and holy love. I have touched on these points, because I see that our sweet Jesus invites you to this; you must therefore leave your soul at liberty, to take those flights that the Holy Ghost shall urge her to take, being most obedient to His sweet attraction. I will just say to you this, which will serve as an example for you. When the soul



is in this sweet solitude, this holy silence of faith and love, if she feels any interior movement or impulse of charity, to pray for the necessities of the Church, or of the world, in general, or in particular, she must do it at once, but when this sweet interior exclamation has ceased, she must resume her sacred repose in God, and if it become changed into the slumber of love, and faith, it will be better. I hope that His Divine Majesty will make you understand what I say, if you keep yourself well exercised in humility, and cast down in your nothingness."

"The movements of Holy Love," he writes to a soul that was greatly favoured by the Divine Goodness, "with which His Divine Majesty assails your heart, you must not allow to go out of your interior; for our sweet Jesus, in His Sacrament, keeps it with Him, nor could it love Him unless it possessed the living Fountain of pure and holy love, which is the Holy Ghost, according to the words of our Divine Redeemer, "*Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre ejus fluent, aquæ vivæ, hoc autem dixit de Spiritu, quem accepturi erant credentes in Eum.*" Thus, when you are seized with such transports which are singular grâces of pure and holy love, lose yourself in that Infinite Good, and there act as an infant, and sleep the slumber of faith and holy love, in the bosom of your heavenly Spouse. Love allows of few words. Observe, however, whether this sovereign grace of prayer, which the Almighty gives you, produces in you a clearer knowledge of your own absolute nothingness, a love of being concealed from creatures,

and known only to God, with a lively desire of His greater glory, and contempt of yourself, accompanied with all the virtues, patience, meekness, and tranquillity of heart, and perfect charity towards your neighbour. These are the fruits which He desired should be drawn from prayer, not consolations or delights."

"Endeavour," he writes in another letter, "to practise true poverty of spirit, by living absolutely detached from all sensible consolation, whether interior or exterior, that you may avoid falling into the vice of spiritual gluttony. We must live detached from our own enjoyment, from our own understanding, and from our own feeling, so as not to fall into curiosity of spirit, but to practise more perfectly true poverty of spirit." And to give the instruction with greater authority, he proposes the great example of our Divine Master. "Jesus prayed three hours on the cross; this was a prayer truly crucified, without comfort from within or without. Oh God! what a great lesson! Pray to Jesus that he would imprint it in your heart. Oh! what a subject is this for meditation. I have read that when Jesus was agonizing on the cross, after the three first flames of love, that is, after the three first words, he remained all the rest of the time in silence, till the hour of mercy and then he prayed. I leave you to consider what a painful prayer this was." "Repose," he says with the same sentiments, "on the naked Cross of our sweet Jesus, and make no other complaint than this infantine cry, 'Pater mi, Pater mi, fiat voluntas tua,' and then be silent, and continue your

repose on the Cross, till the precious time of true mystical death arrives, for in this happy death, more desirable than life, you will find yourself as St. Paul says, 'quite hidden with Jesus Christ in God,' and you will be in that most sublime solitude that you desire, with a total separation from everything created. It is now the time for silent, tranquil patience, suffering with sublime resignation the agony you now feel, which conducts to mystical death. As our venerable founder knew well how to unite the sublimity of heavenly wisdom with vivacity of mind and pleasing manners, in a letter to Father Thomas of Jesus, afterwards Bishop of Todi, he speaks excellently well, but as if in jest, of this mystical death, and shows at the same time his excellence as a master, and the perfection of the soul of this servant of God." The life of the servants and friends of God is, to die daily, "*quotidie moriemur ; mortui enim estis, et vita vestra est abscondita cum Christo in Deo.*" This is that mystical death, that I desire in you, and as, by the celebration of the Divine and sacred mysteries, I have entire confidence that you will be born again in Jesus Christ to a new and divine life, I desire also that you should die mystically in Christ daily more and more, and let the many moths that fly through your mind of things of no importance, disappear in the abyss of the Divinity. "*Et vita tua abscondita sit cum Christo in Deo.*" Many years ago, I was talking to a poor sick Neapolitan, who said to me: "Father, listen, I have only one thing in my head that I think of." "What do you think about?" I asked. "I think of

death," he said. "You do well," I answered, and gave him suitable instructions. "My dear Father Thomas, think in your head of mystical death; he who is mystically dead thinks of nothing but of leading a divine life, he desires nothing but God, the greatest and highest good; cut off all other thoughts, though they may be of good things, to have this one only which is the great Good, and wait without inquietude for God to dispose of you; retrenching everything from without, that it may not be an obstacle to the divine operations which are carried on in the secret closet, where no creature human or angelic can enter, for God alone dwells in that inward part, or essence and sanctuary of the soul, where the powers themselves watch attentively the Divine work, and the divine Nativity which is celebrated every moment in him who has the happiness to be mystically dead. I am in haste, &c. This note is very mystical, and is not suitable to weak persons, but to strong souls, and you must speak of these things "cum grano salis."

As in the exercise of holy prayer, the most painful difficult and dangerous steps are those when the soul is put to the trial of her fidelity, and called upon to divest herself of everything that is not God, this great director did not fail to give instructions very useful to souls who are in this state of interior purification. "It is not necessary, "he writes to one of our order," "that all souls who arrive at close union with God, by holy contemplation, should walk in the same way as Brother N. I have read something on this subject,

especially in one author who is the Prince of Mystics; it is true that such purgations are usually undergone, *alius quidem sic, alius vero sic*. God has ways beyond our understandings, and he makes sure of the finest files which cut through and remove all rust, and are purely spiritual, and of such sufferings it is true that they are often *amariores inferno*, if I may say so; and because they are more pure, more penetrating, and more free from every consolation *intus et foris*, they prepare the soul in a most sublime manner for holy union with God, because they make her feel more deeply, by experience, her own nothingness, insomuch that this trial is often like the pain of loss (*pœna damni*). Oh, how much is there to say on this point! Almighty God permits this trial in Brother N. for His own divine ends, and he gives marks of advancement. Notice, however, if he has a secret esteem for this purgation, for it would be pernicious; or if it leaves him in a deep knowledge of his nothingness, which makes him praise the Divine Mercy. Almighty God also permits these things, that your Reverence may learn the science of the Saints and may become skilful in holy direction. Another kind of file will be used for you, and it is already present; love will be the executioner, and let it act, for it is practical, and when it martyrs you, you will require very great help and strength, which God gives, else the trial would be too great." With the same charity, he animated those who felt a disgust for virtue. "It is an excellent sign, he writes, that your Reverence has, as you tell me, a repugnance

for all good works ; this is a trial of fidelity, to which God puts you, that every moment you may gain new jewels and pearls, to be set in your crown of glory."

As it is very easy to become attached to God's favours by that defect, which mystics call spiritual gluttony, the prudent director, besides what we have quoted, wrote on this subject, " You must not look too much at other graces, nor stop at them, but at the Divine Fountain, whence the streams flow : they are good, because they issue from the fountain, but the living fountain is better. Plunge and lose yourself more and more in God, with a pure and simple love, reserving nothing to yourself, not looking at sensible consolation, of which you must make a sacrifice to God, placing such favours in the censer of the heart, and in the fire of the purest divine love, and offer the incense of gratitude to the Most High, you yourself remaining in true nakedness of spirit." With the same spiritual wisdom he wrote, " Trees that are planted on the margin of running streams, receive refreshment from these waters, and let them pass by, while they stand firm where they are planted ; thus the soul should receive the impression of these gifts, but she must remain, without further reflection, immoveable in God, who is the Supreme Giver ; otherwise, by remaining in reflection on favours and consolations, she would be in great danger of illusion." The gifts of God leave the humble soul filled with a deep sense of her own nothingness, with a love for contempt, a fervent zeal in the practice of every vir-

tue, and they bring with them also secrecy from all creatures, except the Director and spiritual Father. The soul should not rest in the gifts, but in the Giver. When we go into a garden, we do not gather leaves, but fruits ; thus, in the holy garden of prayer, we must not attach ourselves to the leaves of sensible consolation and devotion, but rather gather the fruits of the imitation of the virtues of Jesus Christ." "The touchstone of prayer," he says to a nun, "are the effects it produces."

He speaks more at length to another devout soul. "My dear child, you must know that prayer is most perfect when it is performed in the interior, in the essence of the soul, which 'prays in Spiritu Dei' in the spirit of God. This is sublime language, but when God pleases He makes even stones speak. Let, then, this immense God rest in you, and you in God. Oh sweet, oh divine work! God feeds, if I may so speak, for I have not terms, upon your soul, and your soul feeds on the spirit of God: 'Cibus meus Christus est et ego Ejus.' There can be no delusion in this Divine work, for it is a work of faith and love. If I could speak to you personally, I could perhaps explain myself better ; but it is best to be silent in these mysteries. Listen: you must be just to each side, keep to your own, which is horrible nothingness, capable of bringing forth every sort of evil possible, and leave to God that which is his, for everything good is from Him." Thus he desired that even from the most sublime prayer should be gathered the fruit of humility.

Our Lord, who is the God of peace loves to converse familiarly with souls that are peaceful and tranquil; "factus est in pace locus ejus:" and on this account F. Paul earnestly recommended peace of heart, especially to persons of prayer. "Come, my child," he writes to one of his penitents, "be at rest in the most loving Heart of Jesus; do not lose peace, if the whole world should be destroyed." "One of the best marks," he writes to the same, "of your being in a good way, is to be tranquil in the assaults and contradictions of creatures; be strong in this, and laugh at all the attempts of hell. Endeavour, more than ever, to show your fidelity to His Divine Majesty, by resting on the Cross with great equanimity of mind, trying with all your power to be quiet, serene, and tranquil, without complaining; try to drink lovingly the chalice that Jesus Christ Himself offers to you; for though it seems bitter to our sensuality, it is sweet to the spirit. What I recommend you is to keep your heart in peace, without trouble; even if the world should be turned upside down, maintain your peace of heart. Nothing can separate us from God but sin; that we will not commit; Vivat Jesus, therefore, let us keep our hearts fixed on Heaven."

† In order to preserve peace of heart he desired, as the reader will have seen, that his penitents should make no account of fears, useless reflections, and above all, of scruples; and in his letters he also gave excellent advice. He wrote to a religious: "Experience will teach you that



those vain fears of sin are real follies ; they should be consumed in the fire of love. Make great account of that special grace of keeping the heart contrite and humble, I beg of you."

To a devout person, he writes, " Make a bundle of all your reflections, fears, and useless puerilities, and cast them into the furnace of Divine charity, where they will be immediately consumed ; and do you continue solitary in your own interior, reposing your soul in peace in the bosom of the great heavenly Father."

To a nun he writes, " Be very careful to keep your heart always tranquil, for the devil fishes in troubled waters."

" I perceive the storm of scruples," he writes to another, " that the devil has raised in your mind ; if you will practise obedience, it cannot do you the least injury. God permits this trial, that your soul may be more purified ; and believe me, the sufferings you feel render you more and more pure in the Divine sight. It is a malicious suggestion of the devil that makes you think you sin in every thing ; it is not true. Humble yourself before our Lord, and then sweetly reviving your faith, hide yourself entirely in God ; fly to the uttermost depth of that sacred desert, of which I spoke, lose yourself entirely in that Supreme Good, and let yourself be wholly consumed in that sacred furnace of love, and believe me that that Divine fire will consume all the clouds and dust of scruples, and your soul will become more and more pure, more and more beautiful, in the eyes of your Divine Spouse. In that sacred furnace

you should remain in the silence of faith and love, like a victim offered in holocaust to the glory of God, our Supreme Good, without reasoning in the least, or reflecting on these scruples; but constantly despising them, repose in peace in the Divine bosom. From the merciful visits that our sweet Jesus makes to your soul, in which you need not fear delusion, you can tell how much this sweet Spouse loves your soul, and you may also know that these scruples are the work of the devil. In the temptation of scruples say, Yes, my Jesus, yes, I hope that Thou hast pardoned me. I do indeed hope it. My confessions have been well made, my spiritual Father has said it; I believe Thy minister, not the devil, who seeks to destroy me, and rob me of holy peace. Courage, therefore, my dear soul, God has pardoned Thee, hope in Him. Oh dear Father! oh my God! in Thee I hope, I believe in Thee, I love Thee; go, infernal spirit, depart from me, no more scruples, no more fears, no more doubts, but let the love of my Spouse Jesus reign in me. The love of Jesus for ever!"

As holy recollection is an excellent disposition for performing prayer well, and as it is also a certain sign that prayer has been well made, he earnestly recommended souls to preserve interior recollection during the day, and to avoid dissipation. "Keep your mind clear and pure from every imagination, and detached from all created things, that it may be better disposed to unite itself with a fervent will to the Supreme Good."— Thus he wrote to a devout person.

“My very dear F. Rector,” he wrote to one of our order, “I will say to you only one word, walk before God, and be perfect; love to be alone interiorly, reposing in the spirit of God, in the sight of your own nothingness, and you will do all things well, mixing and uniting action with prayer.”

“Use every effort,” he says in another letter, “to remain in solitude, and to be a true inhabitant of your interior. Your prayer should be continual, and in this, he says with the same sentiment, you understand me. The place of prayer is in the spirit of God; in God we should chant the Divine Office, in God we should do everything.”

Prayer twenty-four hours a day; this he had written in the rules given for the guidance of a nun, and he thus explained it, that is, to do every thing with the mind and heart raised to God, remaining in interior solitude, and reposing in pure faith holily in God.

With a greater diffusion of spiritual learning, he writes to a person of prayer, “I wish your heart to be more and more consumed as a holocaust to the Supreme Good, in that sancta sanctorum, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, plunging the ashes of the holocaust into the boundless ocean of Divine charity. Now, more than ever, it is the time to die to everything that is not good, to converse with greater love alone with the Supreme Good. What do you want with creatures? Remain alone as much as possible, hidden, shut up, buried, in the great cabinet of the Sacred Heart, where the Divine Spouse gives us to drink of that new wine which inebriates, comforts,

strengthens, inflames, exalts, and raises us on high to the contemplation of the Sovereign Monarch, where is learned the true science of the saints, which is taught to the truly humble. I beg of you to be truly detached, hidden, and annihilated. In the Heart of Jesus we feel compassion for His sufferings, and the soul purifies herself in that bath of His Blood which inflames her with love. Continue to practise interior recollection, for no aridity can prevent it; it is not necessary that we should feel the consolation of the Divine Presence; but it is of great consequence to remain there, in pure faith, detached from all satisfaction in our own comfort."

With no less fervour he writes in another letter: "Your Reverence, in order that His Divine Majesty may work more and more His wonders in your soul, should keep yourself as much as possible, in profound abstraction from everything created, in true poverty and nakedness of spirit, and in true interior solitude, letting the flocks of the powers and affections depart, '*ad interiora Deserti*;' and if they lose themselves in God, allow them to do so, for they are happily lost in their Source. O infinitely rich loss! O sacred Desert! in which the soul learns the science of the Saints, like Moses in the solitude of Mount Horeb."

— He wished and taught that persons of prayer, even when they are favoured, should use every term of respect and profound reverence towards the Divine Majesty. "When the poor little moth," he says in another, "is fluttering round this divine light, eager and anxious to burn and

totally consume herself therein, let her not omit to speak to Him, with great respect and gratitude, of the wonders that He has wrought for us in becoming man, suffering and dying, and the like. One or two words may cause the soul to be wholly enraptured, and enamoured, and languishing, and sorrowing through love and grief. The world has always been the enemy of God, and of him who converses with Him, remains united to Him, and discourses familiarly in his interior with Him, as one friend does with another."

F. Paul desired, therefore, that souls should, as far as possible, fly from intercourse with people of the world, and avoid mixing in it. "Begin, with great generosity of soul," he says to a devout penitent, "to trample under your feet all human respects, and be not ashamed to be a servant of Jesus Christ. Look upon the world with the same horror with which you would behold a criminal hanging from a gibbet, and be assured that nothing is breathed therein but an atmosphere poisoned by the numberless sins committed therein, for which we ought to weep with tears of blood."

To remove souls to a still greater distance from the infection that reigns in the world, almost universally, he advised those whom he directed, and especially religious persons, to have a great love for solitude, in order to enjoy continual intercourse with God. "I could not hear," he writes, "more agreeable news than that you have consecrated yourself entirely to the service of Jesus

Christ. What do we want with this world, where nothing is breathed but air poisoned with sins?"

"I beg of you," he says elsewhere, to shut the door upon all creatures, keeping yourself closely entrenched in the closet of your heart, in converse alone with your Beloved. You must converse with others when charity or necessity require it, and not otherwise."

"The choir and cell," he wrote to a Religious, "are the earthly Paradise of the true servants of God. Let these three only be the places in which you delight; the first is the choir, the second your cell, the third, and the chief, is the interior triumph of your soul." Writing to another nun, he says, "The parlours are the destruction of monasteries."

Knowing the great advantages that are derived from silence, he had a most high esteem for it, as the best means of acquiring the true spirit of prayer. "Preserve silence like a key of gold, that locks up the great treasure of the other virtues that God has given us."

Though he most earnestly desired that his penitents should be entirely devoted to God, for he had the true spirit of God, F. Paul required, above all things, that they should fulfil the obligations of their state, and condescend to others as much as possible, avoiding, as far as they could, making their devotion burdensome and annoying to others. He wrote to one of his penitents, a married person: "Each one ought to lead a holy life in his own state, and he who has a wife should not live like a Capuchin." He says to the same,

“You are your own master, to take your journey to the Holy House when you please; I say, however, ‘*qui multum peregrinantur, raro sanctificantur.*’ I think that you will serve God better by watching over your family, and the interests of your house.”

To a lady who lived with her family, he writes: “It is best to obey your father regarding your communions, and thus you will make to God a sacrifice of your will, and will keep holy peace with your father, whose intention we must believe to be good. Those great servants of God, the ancient hermits, communicated very rarely, but as they were well-disposed, they received so great an abundance of blessings, that in a short time they made great advances towards perfection.”

He writes again to the same, “When I come down, I hope that I shall be able to open for you the way to remain before Jesus in His sacrament; in the meantime go and dwell there, and if your superiors, your father or uncle forbid you to do it, obey in silence, and be there in spirit in your room. This is the way to practise the virtues of Jesus, who became obedient unto death, and the death of the cross.”

To another, also a daughter of a family, he writes, “I must add, that you should not remain so long in Church in the morning, but, having duly made your thanksgiving, return home quickly, that no one may have to complain,”

In order that each should have time to fulfil exactly the duties of his state, he suggested that the time to be devoted to prayer should be pro-

portioned to the state and employments of every one; he therefore wrote to a married man, "As regards prayer, if you cannot give so much time to it, never mind; 'semper orat qui benè agit.' Attend to your occupations, you will thus perform every duty, and remain, attentive to God, often plunging your soul into the immense ocean of His Divinity."

To preserve his penitents and spiritual children from all the delusions that they might fall into in an interior life, he required, as the foundation of prayer, a solid, well-grounded faith, fruitful in virtuous and holy effects. "Seek," he writes, in one letter, "to render your prayer constantly more interior in pure faith, with great self-annihilation, not looking at consolations but at the God of consolation."

"Of what use," writes the venerable Father, are these imaginations of visions? Oh! they are useless things, in which the devil plays an ugly game! the malicious wretch is not in a hurry, but goes on quietly the better to deceive." In another, "These visions, elevations, splendours, and the like, the more frequent they are, are the more to be suspected; 'It is better,' says a great Saint, 'always to reject them, to drive them away with constancy, and never trust to them, chiefly in regard of women, whose imagination is more lively.' By acting thus we do wisely, for if they are from God, they will have their effect, even though they are rejected; and if they come from the devil, which is more probable, by repelling them we free ourselves from delusion." "These locutions," he



says to a religious," that your Reverence mentions, are most dangerous, nor can I approve of them, and I will tell you why, through that little experience God has given me. What necessity is there that God should make known to a novice, that He requires from the novices greater fervour in Communion? Does not their Master know it himself, through the lights God gives him for his office? and besides, does he not know that God is greatly offended, chiefly by sacrileges? Therefore, do you not see that such a locution is not necessary? God does not make revelations, but propter magnam gloriam suam, and for the wants of holy Church; and what we can learn from holy books, by the experience God gives us, and much more by the lights He gives to those who have offices, we need not wish to know through locutions. When God speaks to souls by intelligences and impressions, in an angelical manner, without any expression of articulated words, but by most sublime communications (and these are not subject to deceit, being purely intellectual), He does it always with great majesty, and the effects it produces are inexplicable; when, however, they are locutions, articulated intus, and are from God, or from the Angel (as is usually the case) who speaks in the name of His Sovereign Master, they are also accompanied with majesty, with suitable and magnificent words, which work what they express, and always leave wonderful impressions, with heavenly intelligence, elevation to God "intus et foris" And as, out of a hundred, and perhaps a thousand of these articulated locutions, there will be scarcely

one or two that are true,—and it is difficult even for great spiritual masters to know them, and discern the true from the false,—those of their own spirit and those of the enemy who knows how to feign effects in appearances, as if they were from God, therefore the best method to take is to order him who has them to drive them away, to humble himself before God, and to protest that holy faith and holy books are sufficient for him, with the instructions of his spiritual Father, who speaks to him in God's name. By acting thus, he gives glory to God, distrusting himself, humbling himself, considering himself unworthy of such graces ; and he frees himself from all delusion, for if they are from God the good and holy effect is infallible, for the soul receives it, however much she may do to drive them away ; while she practises that obedience which is so dear to God, and frees herself from delusion.

In writing to a person of prayer, he says : “Yesterday afternoon I received your letter, and as it does not seem to me necessary to answer all the points singly, I say to you only this : the things of God and His gifts, give a deep knowledge of that infinite Majesty, and a deep consciousness of our own nothingness, so that the soul would cast herself under the feet, so to speak, of the very devils, so low is the opinion she has of herself ; they cause a great detachment from all things, a strong love of the Cross and of suffering, great condescension in all that is not sin, with exact obedience ; they infuse a deep peace and heavenly intelligence ; they give a great attraction for holy

prayer ; sometimes they cause all these and other effects, sometimes in part ; but what is certain is, that they always bring with them the low esteem of oneself, and deep veneration and respect for the Majesty of God. The works of the devil seem, at first, to bring some little devotion, but it does not last, and they generate a secret presumption and esteem of oneself ; they bring, if not at first, after some short time, disquiet of mind, agitation of the passions, hardness of heart, and self esteem, from which proceed a disadvantageous opinion of others and love of one's own ideas. Such as these and others are the effects of the devil's works. What was most admirable was, that though he had so great zeal for the salvation of souls, and assisted them with the fervour of charity, devoting himself wholly to their service, he was nevertheless ready to give up the direction of them whenever it pleased God, keeping himself in great detachment from them, for he sought nothing but God. "I have always had," he writes, "for a maxim to live detached even from the direction that God wills I should give to souls, and for this reason, I hope that God will not permit me to deceive myself. But how much I wish to give up all things, and to leave this most sublime, but most laborious and dangerous exercise for learned and prudent priests ! which I practise who am all darkness and deformity ; this I say as it is, and as I feel it."

"We must fear," he writes to a devout person, "that fierce beast, self-love, which is a dragon with seven heads, that meddles with everything.

There is nothing that I fear more, and it makes me watch over my heart, for I dread that it may become defiled with it. The love of God is jealous, a grain of inordinate affection to creatures is enough to ruin everything." "Hear my child," he says to the same, "the less you can communicate with me, the more opportunity you have to do it with God, the more you are deprived of the consolation of conversing even with your spiritual Father, the more abundant will be the consolations of the Holy Ghost."

As the good Father thought he stood in need of the lights of others, and wished to be instructed and corrected, he writes in another letter, "Give a full account of your soul to your spiritual Father; tell him how I have guided you, for I wish it much, and I submit everything to his charitable censure; I give leave, and I wish that my letter may be shown to your confessor, and I should be glad if he would correct my errors, for I know myself to be very ignorant and imperfect."

Through this most noble detachment he wished for nothing from the persons he directed, but the greater glory of the Divine Majesty, their sanctification, and the aid of fervent prayers. "Do not think," he writes to a spiritual daughter, "of sending me anything, for I do not wish it: practise holy poverty and detachment from all things." In another he says, "I beg of you not to send me anything more, I wish for nothing but the charity of your prayers." We see clearly, therefore, that this man of God was truly animated with that spirit of intelligence which, being the foun-

tain of sanctity, requires that the chaste delight of souls should be in holy discourses, pure and burning with the fire of charity, and the flames of heavenly love; a Spirit that by His penetration goes to the depths of hearts, to discern their different dispositions, always rich in eloquence, in persuasion, in sweetness, and in grace; and which, while He is in Himself one, and most simple, multiplies Himself in its wonderful effects, making Himself all to all: now He ascends on high, speaking of the most sublime sanctity with the perfect; again, with the weak, like an affectionate nurse, He seems to grow little, and lose Himself; a Spirit, in fine, who, being the master of all truth, speaks with firmness, with truth, without knowing any doubt or hesitation in His infinite knowledge, but because He loves souls most tenderly, speaks always affectionately, and shows Himself, as it were, all humanity, all benignity, and most earnestly desirous of their good. With this Spirit the servant of God was animated; hence the various instructions that he gave so appropriately and wisely; the great facility with which he entered, and as it were transformed himself into the state of each soul, to give to each a more suitable assistance, the facility, the eloquence, the clearness with which he explained the most secret mysteries which God, in His infinite charity, works in the sanctuary of the soul; the certainty, the consistency, the constant stability of his teaching; these cannot be the effects of the human spirit, as unable to perceive, with its defective sight, the immense light of the

most sublime truths, as it is weak, variable, and inconstant in its thoughts and ideas.

By means, then, of holy prayer, this excellent Master endeavoured to form a collection of heavenly and uncontaminated souls, entirely consecrated to Divine love and union with God, without however neglecting to give due application to the different obligations of each one's state. Nor was he satisfied unless he saw practised that advice which St. Paul gives us, in speaking of himself, "but our conversation is in heaven," and if, with earnest desire and assiduous care, they did not endeavour to keep their hearts in heaven, conversing with the blessed, and with God Himself, as he himself always tried to do, and so diligently, that a Priest of our Congregation, a very spiritual man, said, that Father Paul, whether alone, in company, in retreat, or travelling, was almost entirely absorbed in God; and by his exterior modesty, showed the elevation of his soul, and his union with the Divine Majesty.

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## CHAPTER XI.

OF THE MEANS HE TOOK TO PRESERVE AND INCREASE  
THE GIFT OF HOLY PRAYER.

In order to keep up a loving intercourse, and close communication with God, and to become more and more in love with the Divine perfections, B. Paul delighted in reading holy books, especially

the Scriptures, in which God Himself speaks and manifests His will to us, some works of St. Augustine, the works of St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, and others. He preferred that the books he read should begin with the letter S., that is, that they should be composed by Saints, according to the advice of St. Philip Neri, and he taught this also to others. He took especial delight in reading the pious John Tauler, into whose meaning he penetrated with great light; he often, therefore, spoke of him, and with so much pleasure, that at the mere mention of Tauler, his countenance became inflamed, and he shed a flood of tears of joy and devotion, clearly showing that the doctrine of this great man, where he treats of the union of the soul with God, of repose in God, of annihilation in God, and the like, had become entirely his own; for he experienced in himself what he read in Tauler. He exhorted others also to profit by the sublime doctrines taught by that author, to lead the soul to union with God. He wished that the reading of this book should not be a speculative and barren study, but should be well reduced to practice; hence he said one day to a Rector: "My dear Father Rector, now is the time to dwell in the depth of Tauler, I mean in interior solitude, and take the repose of love "in sinu Dei;" there you will learn to perform well your office of rector, and to become a Saint." These were usually the books that B. Paul read; but he had continually open before his eyes a much larger book, that of all visible creatures, in which pure and loving souls, by means of visible things, as so

many letters formed by the beneficent hand of the Creator, read the greatness of invisible things, and the infinite perfections of their beloved Lord. Hence it was, that when walking sometimes in the enclosure, he seemed to hear a voice crying out and reminding him of his obligation to love God. Once especially, when he was living in the Retreat of St. Angelo, on going out, and seeing the beautiful flowers in the garden, he struck them with his stick saying, "be silent, be silent;" for it seemed to him, as he said, between smiles and tears of consolation, that these flowers said to him with a loud voice, "love thy God, love thy God." This exercise, which he found most useful, he recommended to one of his penitents, to whom he said in writing: "Recreate your mind with some lawful amusement, with necessary repose, by taking a walk alone, and listening to the sermon, that the flowers, the trees, the grass, the sky, the sun, and the whole world, will preach to you, and you will see that it will be a sermon of love and of praise to God, which will lead you to magnify the greatness of that Sovereign Artificer, who gave you your being."

The Ven. Father listened most willingly, and as often as he could, to this sermon, and once, when he was leaving a place where he had given a mission, and saw that the people were accompanying him, he said to them with a holy liberty, that they must leave him alone, for he also wanted to hear a sermon. When they turned back Paul began to contemplate the flowers and the grass, and it seemed to him as if they said, "Love God,



serve God, glorify God,' and thus the fervent missionary listened to a sermon, mute indeed, but very eloquent to a soul that loves, and desires to increase in love.

In this contemplation he enjoyed the sweet fruits of solitude, where God is more easily found and more tranquilly enjoyed. One day he had gone into the wood near the retreat of St. Angelo, after vespers, and had walked far into a thick part of that forest, that he might not be disturbed in his sweet conversation with God; but as the students went out to amuse themselves, as is usual at vacation times, they saw the good Father accidentally walking under the trees, without his hat, and approaching him, they saw that he was entirely absorbed in God. One, more courageous than the others, seeing him with the rosary of our Lord in his hand, said, with confidence, "What does the rosary say?" And he, with all simplicity and openness of heart, showing his rosary, told them, that he was yet at the commencement, and that he had stopped at those very words, "Pater noster," contemplating their profound signification, without passing on, though he had been already walking alone some time. In this manner, under the shade of trees, his soul reposed in God, our most loving Father, and he tasted the sweetness of those words, Pater noster, in which he took great delight; hence, in spiritual conference with religious, he exhorted them to make their prayer in these words, "Pater noster qui es in cœlis," and then added, "Say this, 'Pater noster,' and then be silent, and

let your interior work." It is no wonder that Father Paul had so great a love for solitude, wherein he found such benefit, and enjoyed such sweet converse with God.

By his own choice, he would never have abandoned solitude, but would have spent in it, as in a sepulchre of life, in which we die to the world, to live happily to God all the hours of his life; hence, with all truth he could write to a devout soul :

1. "When I have nothing to do, I do not stop.

2. "When I have fulfilled my duties, I must retire, and let myself be seen but little, and I hope to do it more and more, as I have made strong resolutions in these holy days, because God wills it. He who talks much with men, becomes less a man.

3. "I cannot come to Orbetello, for I am suffering more and more from my dreadful miseries, and I have resolved, that without necessity I will not descend from the mountain; and I have most firmly determined to bury myself here, except at the time of the missions."

From this great love of solitude, he left other places as quickly as he could, when he was obliged to visit them, and it appeared clearly, that nothing but the glory of God could detain him. He anxiously sighed for his return to the retreat, even when his health seemed to require that he should remain longer.

His affection for solitude never diminished, and in the last years of his life he wished to retire to

the noviciate, and there end his days, hidden from all eyes. "I shall not have the pleasure of seeing the little building down there," he writes, "for in spring there is the chapter, and after that, with God's help, I shall fly to the noviciate. It is not expedient to employ me in labour, for as I am so near death, I wish to retire from everything; as long as I could I have served, now I can do no more."

It is, however, most true that when he quitted his material and visible solitude, he carried with him always that interior solitude of the heart, in which he conversed lovingly alone with his Lord. He made use even of his journeys to recollect himself more and more in God, and he seemed, as he went, to be entirely absorbed in that Supreme Good, whom he tenderly loved. "Scarcely," thus deposes a witness well worthy of credit, "had he quitted the retreat, and the inhabited part of the country, when he devoutly recited the Litany of our Blessed Lady, and some prayers for the souls in purgatory, with his companions, and after saluting the holy angels, with the proper antiphon and prayer, he went on for some miles in silence, during which time he was seen to be bathed in tears, and his face so bright and so inflamed, that he seemed like a seraph. Breaking silence at last, he fervently exclaimed, 'Dear brethren, sursum corda. All that we see is our property, what belongs to the Father, belongs to the son; all things belong to God the Father, therefore all is ours, for we are His children.' Again, on seeing trees, springs, and grass, full of holy fervour, he exclaimed 'Be silent, be silent; preach no more.'

When he saw any village in the distance, he taught the practice of kneeling, and sending the angel guardian to visit Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament in that country.

Though Father Paul in his interior so greatly enjoyed Almighty God and His infinite perfections, he knew that the Divine Spouse loves secrecy and humility, which jealously guard Him, and he endeavoured to make no exterior demonstration, and to conceal himself from the eyes of men, that he might be more pleasing to God. He was cheerful, frank, the capital enemy of hypocrisy, falsehood, and affected manners, and also of that weakness, into which beginners in devotion sometimes fall, imagining that it consists either in bending their neck affectedly, or some other external act. At the time in which he made his prayers with the community, he was most careful to abstain from any mark of devotion, such as sighs, groans, and extraordinary prostrations; and except, by tears, which proceeded from the furnace of love, that burned in his heart, and ran sweetly from his eyes without any noise, he gave no sign of the interior communications he received from Almighty God. He disapproved of singularity in others, with a just and holy liberty, and he seemed as if he could not tolerate them, for he wished each one to keep his secret jealously to himself.

On account, however of his interior recollection, his external appearance and behaviour, without his perceiving it, gave great edification, and moved every one who saw him. It was very manifest that he dwelt in the world with his weak and cor-

ruptible body, touching the earth with his feet only, but that his heart was in heaven, and thus each one was edified, as our Lord had foretold in speaking familiarly to his interior, as one friend does with another ; for one day, feeling a strong desire not to give bad example to his neighbour, but to edify, through a good and holy intention, he was thinking over the means of carrying out his design, and he heard in his heart a locution so clear and distinct, that he could not doubt of its coming from God, and it was said to him, “ To please me alone, thou shouldst keep recollected, for good example to others follows from it in consequence.” This locution was indeed most strong and efficacious in him, for all his life he endeavoured to keep recollected, and to converse familiarly with God, feeling sure that he cannot diffuse an odour of death, who remains united with his Lord, who is the Lord of virtues and of life. This interior exercise, this loving discourse and intimate communication with God, gave birth in him to a great and entire detachment from all earthly thoughts, and every affection of flesh and blood, and therefore he could write as follows : “ I perceive that already the memory of our poor house is nearly extinct in this country, and I cannot express how greatly I rejoice in God for this ; why, I cannot, and ought not to say.”

As it is impossible to raise oneself to God, without generously detaching oneself from the world, nor to enjoy tranquillity and profound interior peace, without renouncing the inclinations and mortifying the passions which seek their food

on earth, this truly enlightened man, who was skilled in the science that makes saints, required from those who put themselves under his direction, the same detachment that he himself practised.

He wrote to a rector, "I have thoroughly examined the letter of Br. N., and I see that there is no necessity for his going to his home, and it is a stratagem of the devil, to make him lose the merit he has so far gained." He continues, with his usual prudence, to say, that the affairs on account of which religious men wish to go home, may be very well arranged by means of other wise and charitable persons, and he concludes, "Let him abandon himself into the affectionate arms of Jesus, and help his parents by his prayers, which will do more good than he himself could."

"I do not like," he wrote to a penitent who had been married, "that you should make such frequent memorials of your late wife, it is better to pray for her, and keep your heart in great detachment, and your mind and imagination free from any representation."

In the same spirit he wrote to a nun, "I will not fail to pray for Sig. G. C., and for your mother, and for the whole family, but, remember, that you are dead, and that the bells have already tolled as a sign of it."

It was noticed in his life how well his letters and the instructions he gave to others, agreed with his own method of acting in regard of his relations, who for many good reasons would have merited special consideration. Though they were

of honourable and noble birth, as we have said, they were in great difficulties, and we may say, in real want. His mother was a widow, left with a family, and after her death, a brother and sister were left, who merited every kindness and compassion ; but Father Paul, who had forgotten his country, and the affections of flesh and blood, not only never went back after 1727, to Alessandria, or Castellazzo, but never even sought any help or temporal provision for his relations. It was not that he did not love them, for virtue and ordinary charity require it, but he wished, that in his love, natural feeling should have no part, and he held in suspicion every coin that was not the pure gold of charity. Mindful, however, of the real duty of well-ordered Christian piety, he encouraged them by his letters, to suffer willingly their precious trials, as he called them, and to confide in God who is infinitely rich, but he never asked anything in their favour, though he might so easily have helped them, as he enjoyed the friendship of great princes and Sovereign Pontiffs, who, through their charity and condescension, would have favoured him in everything. True it is, that his brother Sig. Joseph Danei, an honourable gentleman, wrote to Mgr. Thomas Struzzieri, who had been of our order, and was then Bishop of Amelia, to recommend some affairs to him; and in the letter, he frankly told him that he had at first applied to Father Paul of the Cross, but that he had answered, that he could not, and would not mix in such affairs, that he was dead, and they must consider him so, and not think about him ;

words truly worthy to be meditated on and admired by all who know how much it costs to detach oneself from honourable and virtuous parents, and which show also how jealously Father Paul kept his heart, for the holy love of God, to whom he had entirely consecrated it.

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## CHAPTER XII.

HIS CHARITY AND TENDER COMPASSION FOR HIS NEIGHBOUR, IN FAVOUR OF WHOM HE OBTAINS HELP AND RELIEF FROM GOD, EVEN BY MIRACLES.

THE beloved disciple, whose words are a complete and perfect instruction, for the practice of holy charity, left this written, "*Si quis dixerit, quoniam diligit Deum, et fratrem suum oderit, mendax est; Qui enim, non diligit fratrem suum quem videt, Deum, quem non videt, quomodo potest diligere?* (John iv. 20.)—If any one shall say that he loves God, and has in the meantime, an aversion to his brother, he is a liar; for it is not to be believed, that he, who does not love his brother, whom he sees, will raise himself up to the love of God, whom he does not see;" and he concludes, "*Et hoc mandatum habemus a Deo, ut qui diligit Deum, diligat et fratrem suum.*—We have received from God this commandment, that he who loves God, must love his brother also." With all reason, therefore, it is said, that the true and certain mark of the love of God, is the love of our



neighbour, and that he who loves his neighbour most, loves God the best also. In this love of his neighbour, the virtue of the venerable Father Paul of the Cross shone out brightly. He had a very compassionate heart, and from his youth, as much as he could, he lovingly assisted the poor of Jesus Christ. He went so far sometimes, as to take the bread from his own mouth to relieve them and assist their necessities. During the first years, after he left home, he was several times in want of a little bread, that he might not die or faint from hunger, and when Divine Providence sent him an alms through some charitable person, he immediately gave it to some other poor person, who came to him, as it happened, more than once; for the man of God never thought of the necessity which he was suffering, without the hope of any other provision for himself, as he travelled without money or any provision. As he grew in years, he increased in compassion, and sought their relief by every means. Travelling one day with some gentlemen, who went with him through devotion, they stopped when it was time to take refreshment, and two or three poor people then came to them. Father Paul, moved with compassion, took the best fish and the bread, and would have given the food to them, had he not been prevented by his companions, who promised that the poor should receive necessary relief. In proportion as the servant of God gave food and nourishment to the love for the poor, that burned in his heart, by relieving them, so much the more did it increase and strengthen, and oblige him,

by a sweet and amiable violence, to continue and increase the assistance and alms to the poor as much as he could.

He required, that in our retreats, alms should be given to the poor who came to ask it, and besides this, in the retreat at Rome, two days of the week were assigned, on which bread and soup were given to all the poor that came to receive them. He was most anxious that this practice should not be neglected, and often repeated with great affection, "Let what is left in the refectory be given away at the door; it is the property of the poor." And as at Rome, in the retreat of St. John and Paul, the poor came in great numbers, and the remnants from the table were not sufficient for them all, the good Father ordered, that whenever bread was made for the religious, an oven full should be made also for the poor, to be given at the door, and it was certainly beautiful to witness the miracle of holy poverty, that those who possessed nothing, and lived by alms, should be able to relieve the poor who flocked to them in such numbers. As charity feels as its own the wants of others, and in proportion as our neighbour suffers, it feels his burden and his sorrows, and eagerly seeks to relieve him, so Father Paul, in those years, when the poor people from the want of corn and other provisions, were in the greatest need, melted with compassion and tenderness, and seemed unable to find any rest because Jesus Christ's poor were not relieved as he desired. In the scarcity of 1764, to excite a still greater fervour of charity in his congregation, and teach them how to find

means in their poverty to help the poor, he wrote a circular letter to all the retreats, in which he clearly shows the tenderness of his charity; exhorting us strongly to find new methods of mortification in a penitential life, that "*fieret refectio pauperis, abstinencia jejunantis.*"

Not satisfied with the relief he had procured for the poor by that letter, he made one day in the retreat of St. Angelo, where he then was, a discourse, in which, inflamed with charity, and most deeply penetrated with compassion, he showed on one side the misery of the poor, who had nothing to appease their hunger, and on the other the mercy of God, so loving towards us, that He provided us sufficiently, and freed us from the difficulties and toils to which they were subject, and then added, that it was not right that we should be exempt from the universal scourge, and that we ought to be the first to feel for the wants of our neighbour, to clothe ourselves with the bowels of compassion, to make the sorrows of our brethren our own, and give them part of our own food, though scanty, and thus share in the common calamity: that it seemed to him proper that the religious should only receive half their usual portion, and that only half the quantity of oil should be use in cooking, in order, that what through the love of holy charity was taken from the religious, should be distributed at the door to the poor, nor did he ever cease most earnestly to inculcate, that the poor ought to be helped. And that, out of the great number that came, not one should be forgotten by his

charity, he ordered the brother appointed to the kitchen, not to dismiss any one unrelieved, though they came in such crowds, and he also said, "Give my soup to the poor, and the small loaf also, and put a piece of bread for me in the refectory. Do you understand?"

Often, in that year of want, on entering the refectory, thinking more of the misery of the poor, than of his own refreshment, he said, "We shall not die of hunger; let him who wishes to leave his soup, or little plate of herbs, with half a loaf for the poor, do it with God's blessing," and saying this, full of compassion for the sufferings of his dear brethren, not being able to restrain his tears, he wept bitterly, through the grief of his heart. These exhortations, and much more the example of the servant of God, had the desired effect, and the religious vied with each other in holy emulation, to deprive themselves in part at least, of the provisions and bread given them in the refectory, that they might be given to the needy.

The servant of God must have felt great consolation in seeing so much charity for the poor in his children, and so great readiness in assisting them as far as they could; but though it was very pleasing to him, that they showed themselves on this occasion, by the excellence of their charity, true disciples of Jesus Christ, nevertheless, his heart seemed to be inconsolable during these calamities of the poor. Like a tender mother, who speaks of nothing more willingly than the wants of her children, to give vent to her affec-

tion, and obtain compassion for them, he often spoke with his eyes bathed in tears, especially at recreation time, of the sorrows and want suffered by the poor. He had a particular devotion to go himself to the door, and give alms with his own hands. He went to the kitchen, and said humbly to the cook, "Brother, give me a little bread to give to the poor," and then went to comfort the person who was waiting for an alms.

As he was almost crippled, and rather dragged himself along than walked, it caused no little emotion and fervour, to see that venerable old man receiving strength from his devotion, carrying alms to Jesus Christ's poor. Sometimes he exercised this act of charity, humbly kneeling before them. One day, while he was living in the retreat of our Lady at Cerro, a poor man came to ask an alms at the time the religious were dining; the good Father told the porter to let him wait, and in the course of dinner the servant of God kept putting away what was brought to him and reserving it in a dish, and after dinner he himself went to the door, and gave it affectionately with his own hands to the poor man, and kneeling down before him with his head uncovered, and with tears in his eyes, he begged him to eat it, giving him spiritual refreshment at the same time, by charitably consoling and encouraging him to suffer his poverty and misery for the love of God.

The servant of God was greatly comforted, whenever he could make an offering of love to his Lord and Saviour of what was given him for his own support; hence, when he was in Rome,

though his food was most scanty, and from morning till night he took only two slices of bread, and drank very little wine, he desired that his poor brethren should benefit by this abstinence, and he ordered the religious brother who was his companion to give in charity the bread he himself ought to have had to eat, and the wine also to a certain person; and joining to holy charity the practice of true humility, which is its foundation, and what renders it worthy of a reward and crown, he added, "Give him what you should have given me in charity, for I do not deserve it, who am a great sinner." He desired to help every one that came to him, and had not the heart to send any one away discontented. His companion had perceived this virtuous inclination, and though he was much edified by the servant of God, yet as he did not equal him in the extent of his charity, he was careful when he was living in the house of SS. John and Paul, as he himself attests, not to take poor people to him, for he was always moved with pity, and ordered them relief. Though the Retreat in the beginning was very poor, and there was difficulty in procuring necessary support for the Religious, the servant of God measuring his power rather by his tender charity and confidence in God, than by the small quantity of provisions he had, ordered that something should be given to all. Amongst others came a gentleman, who made known to him the misfortunes which had happened to him; F. Paul could not refuse him relief, and calling his companion, he told him he wanted thirty pauls. The companion asked

him what he wanted thirty pauls for, telling him that he should consider we had hard work to live; the servant of God humbly asked, that at least twenty might be given him; and thus as well as he could, he comforted that poor man. He would have had a certain amount of scruple if he had not tried to help the poor. Once he heard the bell ring at the door, and running thither saw two poor men; but as he was thinking of other things, he said to them, "go on ringing, the porter will come, and will give you charity;" he then retired to his room. But, as if he had just committed some serious fault, he said, as his companion heard, "I am very sorry I did not give alms to those poor men, but if they return, I will atone for the fault;" and it was known that he felt great sorrow and displeasure; so much did he fear the shadow of a fault against fraternal charity.

He could not endure that things which were spoiled and bad should be given to the poor. One day, when he was at the Retreat of St. Angelo, a brother asked his leave to give something to the poor, which was spoiled, and B. Paul severely reproved him, telling him that it was against charity to give to the poor what is prejudicial to health. It is not surprising that B. Paul showed such true and cordial love for the poor: he remembered what Jesus Christ has said, that what is done to the poor He takes as done to Himself, and, with the eyes of faith, he considered in each poor man, the person of Jesus Christ. On this account he relieved them with so

much readiness and respect. On another occasion, when at his Retreat, five poor men came to ask an alms, and he ordered the cook to give it them immediately, adding, "Look at their foreheads, where all the five bear the name of Jesus Christ engraved."

As he knew what treasures are to be found in poverty united with virtue, he desired to relieve not only the temporal wants of the poor, and give them bodily assistance, but also to help them spiritually, for the soul is often no less weak and needy than the body. When he spoke to his beloved poor he encouraged them to bear their misfortunes, and said to them, "Take courage, poor of Jesus Christ, for Heaven belongs to the poor; woe to the rich, for their riches will cause them greater torment in hell, (quoting to this effect some texts of Scripture) if they have not made a good use of them."

As this true disciple of his Divine Master, all love and charity, could not do alone what he wished for the poor, he laboured in their favour as much as he could, making use of the opportunities that the giving of holy missions and similar employments afforded him. On one occasion, when F. Paul was giving the exercises publicly in a city, in 1759, he found out that the poor were in distress, because they were obliged to pay back the loan of corn received for their nourishment, during the past winter, from the public deposit, without having the means of repaying it, as the harvest had been very scanty that year. The law was just going to be carried



into effect against them, and the poor creatures were reduced to extreme distress. F. Paul, moved with compassion for them and their misery, recommended so earnestly and forcibly from the platform, to those gentlemen that governed this public office, to grant some delay, and showed so tender and cordial a compassion, that he moved the hearts of the Vice President, and all the gentlemen who had anything to do with the affair, and obtained that payment should not be called for until the following year, to the universal consolation of the poor. He grieved deeply when the poor were abandoned. When the Servant of God was staying in a Retreat, some poor came to the door to ask alms. F. Paul, who was present, said to them kindly, as it was harvest time, "Why do you not go and glean?" "Oh Father, that God would grant that we might be able to go; the masters will not allow it, because they want the corn for the black pigs." The Servant of God was on fire with holy zeal, on hearing that beasts were preferred before Jesus Christ's poor; he went to his brother, Father John Baptist, who was perfectly versed in holy Scripture, to ask him to find quickly that text where our Lord in the Old Testament commands, that to the poor shall be given full liberty to glean, and then wrote a letter to the Ecclesiastical Superior of that place, representing strongly to him, the greatness of the disorder, and how outrageous a thing it was to prevent the poor from gleaning, to give food to unclean animals.

More willingly, and with greater fervor, did the

Servant of God exercise his charity, when there was question of helping persons who, for want of relief, were in danger of falling over some horrible precipice of sin. Though he was poor, and the Retreats of the Congregation were also poor, nevertheless, made rich and ingenious by his charity, he many times found means to assist poor girls, who were in danger of losing their virtue. This office of charity he exercised in Orbetello, a city greatly attached to F. Paul, and much beloved by him; and first with one, then with another sum of money, given him as an alms, he placed in security the honour and innocence of more than one. Once, in Rome, he was received through charity by some kind benefactors, who lodged him in their own house, and as he went out early to say Mass, according to his custom, in returning he met two poor girls, who asked an alms. The good Father, who had shortly before received a piece of gold in alms, but had not the money himself, turned to his companion, full of charity, and ordered him to give the money to these poor girls, and for the security of their virtue, to recommend to them the holy fear of God, and devotion to the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ. Once, when he was at the Retreat of St. Angelo, a poor woman came, who had an opportunity of settling her daughter in marriage, but had no means of providing her with what was necessary to complete the arrangements. The poor creature had recourse to Father John Baptist of St. Michael the Archangel, brother of the servant of God. This good Father who was also all

charity, told F. Paul, who at once ordered the Rector of the Retreat to give the poor woman a quilt, a mattress, and I believe also a pair of sheets, with a sum of money, which was done, and through this charitable donation, her daughter was enabled to marry at Bieda. Thus F. Paul sought to help his neighbour by every means. And as his reputation was high, and he was considered a Saint, he obtained on this account for his brethren, whom he loved tenderly in Jesus Christ, what one less esteemed than he would have found it impossible to gain.

And now, to my great consolation, I have to speak of the charity with which the servant of God particularly loved the city of Orbetello, and of the extreme gratitude with which he endeavoured to make a return for the charitable reception, and the alms, which, from the beginning, he had received from its inhabitants. At the time when the States of Tuscany were besieged by the Spanish troops, under the command of General the Marchese de las Mines, by some evil reports and falsehoods the mind of this gentleman was so highly exasperated and irritated against the people and citizens of Orbetello, that he had not only ordered that the vineyards should be laid waste, the vines cut down, and the country desolated, but also that the city should be bombarded, without reserve or compassion. All was ready, a great quantity of mortars prepared, and a strong detachment of troops ordered against Orbetello; when F. Paul, hearing of the misfortune that threatened the city, moved on one side by com-

passion, and on the other by the hope of obtaining everything from that general, over whose mind our Lord had given him a spiritual influence, went to the General, and began to dissuade him from the undertaking, assuring him that the people of Orbetello were not of that bad character, that malicious persons had represented them to be, that they were honest, civil, and well behaved, and that they would be ready to surrender to him on conditions, so that he might himself ascertain the truth of what he said. But, as the General, who had begun the undertaking, did not yield nor revoke the order, F. Paul said so much, and begged so humbly, and so efficaciously, that this gentleman could resist no longer, and said openly to Father Paul, that he granted his request, adding these precise words, "I do it for you, Father Paul." The order was withdrawn, and everything suspended, nor had the General to repent of yielding to Father Paul's advice, as charitable as it was just, for when the place was surrendered, and he entered Orbetello, seeing the character of the inhabitants, and perceiving the falsity of the calumnies, he said to the Venerable Father, "You are right, Father Paul ; I am very well pleased with these people, and am obliged to you for what you made me do ;" and by saying this, he showed how useful it is, even to military men, to have persons, who in the heat of certain resolutions, which repentance alone can repair, will speak in time for the truth, and for innocence.

With much more difficulty, he obtained from the Governor of Longone the pardon he asked for

a poor man condemned to death, and it required a miracle. He was a poor soldier, and having been sentenced to death for desertion, a great crime in the army, there seemed to be no hope of obtaining his forgiveness; for the Governor had this peculiarity, that when he had once sentenced a criminal to death, he admitted no one to an audience till the sentence was executed. On the very morning when it was to take place, he was in his own room, sitting, his sword on the ground, and leaning, I do not know why, with his head on the hilt, waiting immoveable in this position, till the news should be brought him that the man was dead, having given strict orders that in the meantime no one should come to him. F. Paul being at Longone, was entreated by the officers to interpose with the Governor in favour of the poor man. The good Father knew not how to refuse to perform this act of charity for a soldier, for whom he witnessed such compassion in the officers. He went immediately to the Governor's palace, to speak to him and ask the favour, but was told by all his court that he could not have an audience, as there was a strict order to admit no one. The servant of God did not lose courage, he again begged and entreated that they would tell his excellency that it was F. Paul, and that he wished to speak of an affair that would not admit of delay. Seeing such perseverance, and knowing the merit of the servant of God, though they had given him many refusals, they finally consented to take a message to the Governor, who, contrary to his custom, permitted him to enter. On his

entrance, the Governor said: "Well, Father Paul, what do you want?" "Your excellency," he replied, "I wish this condemned man to be set free." "I cannot do it," said the Governor. F. Paul then set before him the reasons that could move him to clemency, and again with greater force begged him to forgive the criminal, but the Governor, inflexible, always replied, "I cannot, I cannot." The servant of God, seeing that he could not obtain the favour from man, emboldened by his charity, hoped to receive it from God, and, inflamed with holy zeal, he said: "Well, since your excellency will not grant this favour, let God do it;" and as he spoke, he struck his hand against the wall. Scarcely had he ceased speaking, than the palace began to shake from its very foundation, and the Governor was seized with such fear and terror, that, turning to F. Paul, all trembling, he said: "Father Paul, the grace is granted;" and thus this soldier was liberated who was on the point of being executed. When the servant of God could do nothing else, he had a wonderful and most efficacious secret by which he sought to obtain relief for his neighbour: he made by prayer fervent recourse to God, in whose hands are all the hearts and all the destinies of men, and the dominion of every other creature; and through his desire that the harvest might be abundant, he prayed himself, and wished others to beseech the Divine Goodness to bless the fruits of the earth, and grant that they might produce an abundant harvest, as he could not bear to see the poor people in want. By this means he

miraculously obtained relief for more than one place.

He was once giving a mission in Canepina, in September, 1750; and as in that year it was perceptible that the harvest of chestnuts would be very poor, as the leaves of the trees were yellow and withered, and the husks spoiled by the great dryness of the season, the people who derived their chief support from the chestnuts were in great affliction and consternation. F. Paul, full of compassion, felt a great desire to help these poor people. Feeling in himself a great confidence in God, he sought to infuse it also into the people, and from the platform said in public: "Fear not, my people, recommend yourselves to God, and trust in Him, for I hope that the harvest of chestnuts will be abundant this year." In fact, after the mission and the departure of the servant of God, most unexpectedly, as the season was far advanced, copious rain fell, which so greatly invigorated the trees, that they produced a more abundant harvest than had been before witnessed. He obtained by his prayers a similar benefit for the people of Vallerano, to whom he was giving a mission in the same year and season. The chestnuts in that territory had suffered even more than at Canepina, the trees had lost nearly all their leaves, and the husks, besides being very small, were withered, and as it were burnt up; every one expected that the first rain would bring them to the ground, and that there would be no harvest at all. F. Paul, who desired to confer at the same time two benefits on these people, repeated often

to them: "Be converted, my people, and I assure you that God will give you a good harvest of chestnuts." Not one word of the servant of God fell to the ground; everything was verified; and the very abundant harvest that followed was attributed to the prayers of F. Paul, who was comforted by Almighty God in his desire of assisting these people temporally, because they courageously resolved to profit by the mission. Through this charitable compassion he wrought by the power of God other miracles in favour of his suffering neighbour. Antonio di Parmiglio Galli, of Bieda, was carrying, one day, to the Retreat of St. Angelo, lime and other materials for the building, when he was seized on his way with so violent a toothache, that he was scarcely able to reach the place; and whilst his companions went into the Retreat, he remained outside, and, unable to endure the excessive pain, threw himself on the ground as if in despair. Just then F. Paul came out at the door, and hearing that poor Antonio had so dreadful a toothache, he went to him most compassionately, and asked him to go and take some food with the others in the stranger's room. Antonio replied that he could not masticate any sort of food in the state he was. The servant of God begged him again, however, and in the end almost obliged him to go in. When he entered the room, F. Paul gave him with his own hands a piece of bread, and told him to eat it through obedience. He began to eat, but, as was natural, the bread increased the pain, which was excessive before. F. Paul then made the sign of the Cross



on the suffering cheek, and then, as if in play, and smiling, gave him a slight blow, saying: "Does it hurt you now?" The pain immediately departed, and Antonio exclaimed, "Ah, Father, I am alive again!" "Well then," said F. Paul, "eat with the others." Antonio began to eat, and did so without pain, and with the greatest facility, as if he had never had the toothache. When he was going away, wishing to kiss F. Paul's hand, he seized it almost by force, and as he kissed it, the decayed tooth from which he had suffered fell into the hand of the servant of God, as if it were to be a visible and clear testimony of the wonderful and charitable cure wrought by that blessed hand. Antonio left the Retreat perfectly well, and never again suffered from toothache.

By the same motive of charity, Father Paul wonderfully cured a sick woman. He had gone to Orbetello to visit the mother of a family, who was very ill; she had a young daughter, who, if her mother died, would have been left in want—a dangerous thing at her age. The heart of the servant of God was touched by the mother's suffering and the daughter's danger, and when he left the house he said to his companion: "I feel great compassion for that poor sick woman;" and he showed also a great desire to help her: in fact, as was known afterwards from this Father Fulgenzio, F. Paul appeared miraculously the following night to the sick woman, who was wonderfully cured.

## CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE SERVANT OF GOD'S CHARITY TOWARDS THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION AND TOWARDS ALL THE SICK.

If the servant of God's charity was great towards all, we ought most certainly to say that it was extraordinary towards the Congregation whose members he tenderly loved as his dear children, and in his humility respected as servants of God, more fervent and virtuous than himself. It is impossible to express the marks of cordiality, affection, and the most refined charity, that Father Paul gave on all occasions to his Religious. He who has seen it can do no less than say, with great gratitude, that Father Paul's charity was the charity of a Saint, and so well were we all persuaded of this truth, that it was said amongst us, when he was alive, "There is no charity like that of our Father." No one had recourse to him, who was not consoled in affliction, comforted under humiliations, reassured in perplexities, and immediately assisted if he was in any necessity; inso-much that his brother and director, Father John Baptist of St. Michael the Archangel, used to call him, with holy cheerfulness, the Mamma of mercy. The servant of God did not, however, wait till persons had recourse to him, but prevented the requests and even the wishes of every

one. He was most watchfully solicitous to foresee and provide, in the instructions he gave those who were in office, for the wants of each, and he inquired closely into them. He desired that to each and to all should be charitably given what was required, and as much as was possible according to our poverty, and that no one should have reason to complain. Not only by words but by letters he often told the Rectors, that with confidence in God, they must give the Religious all that is prescribed and allowed by our holy rules ; and he had a most persuasive manner of gaining the hearts of these superiors and leading them to act according to the spirit of Jesus Christ. He had an especial love and compassion for the novices, as tender plants requiring greater cultivation and more consideration. He would not allow the penance to be given them, to fast on bread and water. He writes as follows to Father Fulgenzio the Master of Novices, a man of holy life : “ We see, and it is practised by all, that every one mortifies himself by leaving something ; if the portion be so scanty, when something is left scarcely anything remains. For much restriction must not be allowed, it is detestable, but the medium is discreet, and I saw when I was in Chapter, that all was done well, and I hope it will continue. Oh how necessary is vigilance that the young may keep up their strength, otherwise we should have a hospital, and few would persevere ! I know that you are cautious in forbidding the little chains and other penances beyond the rule, and I know practically your charity, prudence,

and discretion. Do not be surprised that I speak so much of this, for God makes me feel it much, and I assure you, that from the keeping up the strength, of the young especially, the rules are better observed." When young men came to take the habit, and he was at the Retreat of the Noviciate, he immediately shewed them all the tenderness and charity of his heart, and was filled with consolation to see them, from the stormy sea of the world, placed as it were in security in the harbour of regular observance. Towards the young ecclesiastical students, who have not generally that perfection and steadiness of mind which is found in the far advanced, the wise and prudent Father shewed a great affection and care, and as much as he could cultivated them himself, and directed them in the spiritual life. When he was in the retreat of study, he often listened to their conferences, and often also made to them exhortations full of affection and efficacy, and on all occasions he gave them much paternal advice. On every occasion he shewed his interest in the young, his strong wish for their spiritual benefit, and his consideration for their health.

General, indeed, for all was his paternal affection, his diligence and most affectionate solicitude. He required the food to be prepared according to poverty certainly, but with cleanliness and holy charity, that the Religious might keep themselves in health, and serve God and their neighbour; and his charity was so attentive, that even the least things did not escape his notice. He even went so far as to teach the superiors and cooks

how to prepare Lenten food, and said that when he was at Monte Argentaro, in the first beginning, he was the cook himself, but that was indeed simple cookery that he performed when he was alone, or with his brother John Baptist, at Monte Argentaro, for Father Fulgenzio of Jesus, who is now dead, used to relate that he was one of the first companions of the servant of God, and that when he went to be received into the Congregation and take the habit, Father Paul, as a sign of joy, and to strengthen his new companion and excellent novice, put a pot full of vegetables on the fire, and this was to be all their dinner ; but beginning with great fervour to speak of heavenly things, he forgot his pot and the fire and his cookery all ended in smoke. If the Religious were going to travel, his charity was most ingenious in their behalf ; with great exactness, especially if the journey was long, he gave them a sort of itinerary that they might know the precise spots where they could rest and refresh themselves from the fatigue of their journey. He desired them to take some light provisions with them, that they might not feel faint. He contrived that out of the things belonging to the Retreat, those should be chosen most suited to their wants, and he himself took care that those little things should be prepared which would be for the greater comfort of his poor Religious.

He truly seemed what he was, a most tender Father, so great were his charity, affection, and attention ; he neglected nothing, and seemed to be engaged on a most important affair, for in his eyes whenever charity was in question everything was

of importance. When the Religious returned from any journey he received them affectionately, embraced them with great charity, compassionated their fatigue, and, if they had been absent several days, he required an account of what had been done, but in so pleasing and kind a manner that it delighted them. He ordered dinner or supper to be prepared for them, according to the time of their arrival, and with special charity, "Poor Religious!" he said kindly, "they have been labouring." When our Missionaries were going to cultivate the vineyard of the Lord it was easy to see that he accompanied them with his heart and with his charity, and he omitted none of the regulations and advice by which he hoped everything would succeed well, without injury to their health. He recommended them to take necessary repose, saying "If our Lord granted you extraordinary strength you might remain two or three days without food, but as you have not such strength, you must take necessary refreshment." He also exhorted them to labour with holy discretion, that in them might be fulfilled the words of the Holy Ghost, which he quoted with his usual fervour, '*Honestavit illum in laboribus,*' and then also he added will be verified that our Lord '*complevit labores illius.*' When they returned to the Retreat from holy Missions, after the good success of their work, then it was that his charity knew no bounds; the greatest marks of affection and distinction were for the Missionaries, he embraced them, he kissed their foreheads, lavished a thousand caresses on them, and immediately desired

that food should be prepared for them, telling the cook that he must treat the Religious with holy charity, and as if he feared the cook should forget or be unable to give them the necessary refreshment, he sent for the Rector and gave him the order, and to be more sure went in person to the kitchen to give distinct orders. He often used to repeat those words of the Apostle, "Duplici honore digni habeantur maxime qui laborant in verbo." He earnestly begged the Religious to refresh themselves, and take the food and sleep that they required for the restoration of their strength; "and I remember," says a witness, "that on one occasion, though he was then infirm and almost crippled, he would wait upon us at table himself." He ordered them to take additional rest several nights, and all these things the servant of God performed in so pleasing a manner that he gained the hearts of all, and engaged them to persevere with new fervour in the apostolic ministry. He used to say, as if in justification of all these demonstrations: "A Missionary is of more value than a Retreat, through the great good he brings to souls." He sometimes also said, "It is better to lose a Retreat, than a Missionary."

The good Father could not bear to see any one suffering more than is required by the rule, and if he saw that one religious had greater difficulty than the others, his compassion was excited, and he tried to relieve them. For this purpose he even deprived himself of food, taking it from his own mouth to give it to others. This happened par-

ticularly at the time of novenas of great devotion in the congregation, when the religious each usually deprive themselves one day of their portion, eat sitting on the ground, and practise similar mortifications, on which occasions F. Paul often gave up his portion, and sent it to one of his children, for fear he should suffer too much.

Above all, the charity of the servant of God was wonderful and special for the sick. He had great devotion in visiting and assisting them, and waiting upon them himself, whether they were religious or externs. He had made a good novice in this holy practice, at the hospital of St. Gallicano, named by him in a letter, "A furnace of charity—there is none greater." During the long space that he lived in the retreat of St. Angelo, to keep up as well as he could a custom so holy, and a practice so dear to our Lord, each time he went to the neighbouring town of Vetralla, he visited the sick, going to the hospital with others, which served as a stimulus and example, to the edification and consolation of the people.

At Vetralla, also, the servant of God showed his tender and loving heart towards the sick, and our Lord granted him the consolation of knowing how much good is effected by charitably visiting them. One day, as he was returning from Vetralla to the Retreat, he asked on the way, urged by his ardent charity, whether there was any sick person in the neighbourhood, and hearing that there was a man ill, he quickly went to him, and very opportunely, for he found the poor man seriously ill, and in danger of death, without having



made his confession. The servant of God without delay began to assist him to dispose himself for the great journey to eternity; he heard his confession, and was most strenuous in desiring that the curate should be sent for, to give him the other sacraments, as death was approaching; and in fact, after two or three days, the sick man died, having had the happiness of making his confession at the last hour to a man of such charity and zeal.

In the visits that Father Paul made to the sick, knowing the danger, he told them clearly to prepare to die, and abandon themselves into the loving hands of God, and he would have considered it a great sin to flatter them, and a sin completely contrary to that openness of heart, and sincerity in words, which he so greatly loved in himself and others. Nor did he think it lawful, as some wrongly imagine, to deceive persons on account of their distinguished rank. No less to them than to others, he gave notice in a becoming manner, but with the true liberty of the servants of God, that they must dispose themselves for a happy death. When he was at the retreat of St. Angelo, a person of distinction fell dangerously ill, in a neighbouring town. The venerable servant of God hastened thither, through his zeal for the gentleman's soul, and some days after he had returned home to the Retreat, he was heard by a devout friend, exclaiming with great grief, and sighing, "Oh, I did it in time! I told him clearly that he must prepare for eternity! he allows himself to be deceived, and believes those who flatter him!" and continuing to refer to the sick man,

he said, "Ah, if I could go, but the night and the long distance prevent me!" The good priest, his friend, was edified to see such zeal in the servant of God, for that soul, and when the following day, he heard that the sick man was dead, he believed that Father Paul, by supernatural light, had been made aware of the imminent danger in which he was.

Feeling persuaded of the fruit which is reaped from visiting the sick, according to the words of the Holy Ghost, '*Non te pigeat visitare infirmum, ex his enim in dilectione firmaberis,*' he used to say to our religious at Rome, who went to the hospital, "Oh, what a great vineyard is the hospital; great good may be done for the sick; blessed are they, let them then go to visit the sick. Ah, if I were not deaf, and so infirm, how gladly would I go, but God does not will it, and I am content;" and in saying this he showed a deep feeling of charity which animated all to the holy work. More than once, with great fervour of charity, he said, "If for our sins, our Lord should send the plague in my time, I would be the first to quit my solitude to help in everything and everywhere my poor neighbours, suffering from such a disease, and I would help them as long as I had breath and life."

Every one can imagine easily, how extremely tender would be Father Paul's charity for the sick of the congregation, if it was so great for all others. He used to say, that the sick required either a mother or a saint; in fact, Father Paul had the heart of a mother towards the sick, be-

cause he had the charity of a saint. Often in the day he visited them, he waited upon them with incomparable affection, and he was all attention that nothing might be wanting of medicine, food, or any other remedy, going so far as to deprive himself of the little refreshments given to him or prepared for him, of which he stood so much in need. When he was in good health, he himself prepared remedies for the sick, and gave them with his own hands; he kindly assisted them, and performed all those offices for them that his paternal charity dictated. He would almost have considered himself guilty of grievous sin, if, when going about, he had not several times visited the sick, though not in danger, nor did he dispense himself from it, on account of his other weighty duties. He asked each one how he felt, if he wanted anything, if he had all necessary assistance and charity, if in due time and place he was provided with what he required, and if he could serve him in anything; and to his words he united such marks of affection, that his heart seemed to be melting with tenderness and compassion, which clearly proved his great love for God and his neighbour. And in order that the sick might know how to avail themselves of the treasure that is hidden in sickness, he suggested powerful motives of loving resignation to the Divine Will, to suffer the disease with patience, from the example of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, that the sick man might abandon himself with holy joy to the will and pleasure of God, and might well understand that that was the proper time to

practise virtue, in imitation of the apostle, who said, 'Cum infirmor, tunc potens sum. Virtus in infirmitate perficitur.' This was his principal end in visiting the sick, that each one might be spiritually assisted, and that the holy Sacraments might be administered carefully and in time. He did not allow any one to be left alone who required assistance, and was in affliction, that he might not be deprived of necessary spiritual and temporal aid. When he was obliged to lie in bed, if he could by any means rise, he dragged himself, or was carried by others, to visit those who were sick, and it was indeed a touching sight to see the good old man walking with crutches, or carried in the arms of others, proceeding to the infirmary ; and if he could not leave his bed, he sent others in his place to see how the sick were, whether they wanted anything, if they were assisted and relieved, if they were treated with charity, if he could be of any use to them in anything. In effect, he behaved like a true father, or even a tender mother towards all, especially the sick. As the charity of God, who is the Sovereign Master, and perfect model of charity, embraces all, so the charity of the servant of God, which was a fire lighted up by the Holy Ghost in his heart, knew no restriction nor reserve ; it embraced all, and was most affectionate, not only towards priests and missionaries, but also to students, lay-brothers and even the boys and workmen that he employed in the Retreat. During a great epidemic predicted by the Saint, which in 1759 attacked our retreat of St. Angelo, and carried off a

great number, the sick amounted to seventeen. Amongst them were three seculars who worked in the Retreat, and were happy enough to ascertain by experience the extent of Father Paul's charity; for the good Father immediately ordered that they should be waited upon like the religious, visited by the physician, helped by all the remedies that were judged necessary, and attended night and day, without ever being left.

True charity penetrates by its beneficial effects, even when at a distance, to every place where it can find nourishment for its kind and holy desire of relieving others. Hence, when there were sick in the retreats, when Father Paul could not be present, he visited them in spirit by the compassion and tenderness of his heart. He wrote pressing letters to the rectors, and with great charity recommended to them the care of the poor sick. He often said, "Poverty is good, but charity is better."

In convalescence, he wished that the religious should act with discretion, for the recovery of their strength, therefore he disapproved of their applying, or kneeling too much, and so weakening themselves, or preventing their speedy recovery and perfect cure. He required the same spirit of charity in all the superiors of the congregation. He used to say, and he repeated it also in the chapter room, after a general chapter, when the capitulars were present, that the sick should be treated with great charity in proportion to their wants, and that expense should not be considered, but that in case of necessity the sacred vessels

should be pledged or even sold. Thus he clearly showed that he loved all for the love of God, and in a more special manner those of whom he had the particular care, as he had learned in the school of charity, in which all is according to order. He made use of every occasion to practise this virtue so strongly inculcated by our Divine Redeemer, and, even in the last moments of his life, gave extraordinary signs of his tender charity, as may be seen in the course of the history, thus disposing himself to enter happily into the immense ocean of divine charity and heavenly sweetness.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### OF THE CHARITY OF THE SERVANT OF GOD FOR THE SPIRITUAL BENEFIT OF SOULS.

IF Father Paul was so anxious for his neighbour's good, where bodily health and life were concerned, much greater, and beyond comparison, was his care and solicitude when the soul and its eternal felicity were interested; for he knew well, that as the soul is the chief part of man, so the principal and best part of charity should be exercised towards the soul, for the sake of future and eternal happiness. To ascertain in some degree, how constantly this internal fire kept him in motion for the good of his neighbour, we must see him in his missionary duties; when he had to go

forth into the field to fight against sin, the cruel enemy of souls, nothing could keep him back. In the last years of his life, he went out when he was suffering greatly from his usual infirmities and pains, and sometimes with fever upon him. It was always very well known, that he sought nothing but to rescue souls from the slavery of sin and bring them to God. He spared himself neither by day nor night, he spent almost all the time either in reconciling enemies, and settling their differences, in hearing confessions, or in prayer, with that difficulty to himself, that can easily be imagined, as the poor missionary was sometimes troubled and oppressed by the disease which as we have said he had upon him. Very short was his repose, and he often spent whole nights in hearing confessions, without closing his eyes. All seemed to wish to confess to him, not only a great number of distinguished persons, but also the most uncultivated in mind, the fiercest souls, beggars, and wretched persons, all wanted Father Paul, because he showed for all a most singular charity. Those, however, to whom Father Paul seemed most tender and affectionate, were the greatest sinners and the most defiled souls. Like a compassionate physician, he took an especial care of such souls, because he knew they stood in greater need of it. He used to say, that banditti and similar persons were his greatest friends, and, in fact, he loved them all with a boundless charity, and they perceiving the servant of God's affection, and knowing the benefits they received from him, became strongly attached to him. To

gain them, the servant of God treated them in the most sweet, mild, and persuasive manner, he caressed them, embraced them, and seemed to become their father to free them from the hands of the devil and the monster sin, so that it had become a proverb, that for a great sinner, Father Paul's charity was required, and it was said, "As for you, you want Father Paul."

If we were to attempt to describe the wonderful conversions wrought by God through His servant, on this sort of people, we should require an entire volume; it will suffice to relate a few of them, for from these and others already related, we can imagine how great was the charity of Father Paul for these poor lost and almost despairing people. In 1756, there was at Canino a certain man who lived in sin with a woman, and neither the zeal and efforts of the parish priest, nor the orders of ecclesiastical superiors had sufficed to make him quit her, though they had anxiously endeavoured to remove so great a scandal and sin. The servant of God, when on a mission, in order to gain this wandering soul, sent for him, received him with great charity, embraced and affectionately kissed his forehead in the public room of the house where he was staying, in the presence of several persons, and then led him to a room apart. This poor sinner was so touched with the kind and affable manners, and the efficacious words of the servant of God, that he immediately resolved to change his life; and what he determined upon he faithfully executed, he removed the scandal,



abandoned his sinful course, and became sincerely converted to God.

We will relate another wonderful conversion. When Father Paul was travelling on business from one country to another, he saw at a distance a band of soldiers with their muskets on their shoulders, and to one of them he made a sign to wait for him, and as the man did not understand, he said aloud to him, "Wait for me; wait for me; you are to be mine." At these words all of them stopped in amazement, not understanding the meaning of these words; but he who had been called was more surprised than the others. When Father Paul came up to them, he immediately went to embrace the one to whom he had made a sign, and kissing him, said, "My son, I wish to cure you; you are not well, and you need a physician to cure you; I am the physician, and will do it." The man, much more surprised, answered, "I am well, and I wish to God that I might be always so." Father Paul then replied, with the tears falling from his eyes, "You will not escape from my hands; you are to be mine, and not the devil's." The poor man understanding then what sort of disease was meant, and seeing himself thus discovered by the servant of God, through supernatural light, since what Father Paul said was quite true, conceived in his heart a great esteem for him, and afterwards a sincere desire to confess to the blessed Father; but as he had to perform a duty imposed upon him by his superior, he said, "He could not then go to confession." Father Paul then answered, "For

your soul's sake, you must leave all things ; fear not, I will speak to your superior." He took him to a place apart, and having prepared him for confession, began to hear him but, behold another miracle—Father Paul held the crucifix in his hands, and, as if he read in those most sacred wounds the sins of the penitent, manifested to him his sins one by one, the soldier acknowledging himself guilty of them. Our Lord, who, like an affectionate pastor, recalled to the fold that lost sheep, by so great a miracle, gave the poor sinner so deep a conviction, horror, and detestation of his crimes, that during the whole time of the confession, which occupied about four hours, he did nothing but weep, and felt afterwards such satisfaction and happiness, that he could scarcely contain himself for spiritual joy.

Another miserable sinner had given his soul to the devil, and the time agreed upon with the malicious tempter having already expired, he was in the last degree of despair. To his great happiness, he prostrated himself before a man full of that charity of which he had so great need in his deplorable state ; this was Father Paul. On seeing him, the servant of God felt in his heart a particular impulse, which strongly urged him to assist and comfort him. He immediately heard him with great tranquillity and patience, put before his eyes his dreadful situation, and after he had recalled and detested the infamous compact, made him make the profession of faith, to recover the Divine Grace—with what consolation we may easily conceive.

The venerable servant of God had a good opportunity of employing his charity for the benefit of some poor apostates, who, flying from a fold where they are vigilantly watched, fall into the greatest errors. By his zeal and charitable endeavours he obtained the return to religion of two apostates, one of whom, besides apostacy, had been guilty of homicide. Our Lord, who knew the charity of His servant, and had granted him a heart so sweet, kind, and loving, to compassionate poor sinners, once sent some to him, even in a miraculous way. When he was giving a mission, a man came to him, just as he was taking off his vestments, after celebrating Mass, and with a loud voice, cried out, "Father Paul, hear my confession, for I have not confessed for ten years." The servant of God answered, "Why do you give yourself a bad name?" And turning to those who were present, said to them, "Do not believe him, he says that to get the first turn in the confessional." The penitent, who had a strong desire of finding a remedy to his already festering wounds, thought of nothing but of speedily putting himself into the hands of a skilful and charitable physician, and replied with firmness, "I say that I have not confessed for ten years." The servant of God then in a low voice told him to wait till he had made a short thanksgiving, and then to follow him to the house immediately. The penitent obeyed, and when in the house, Father Paul took him to his room, and heard his confession. But in that confession the Divine mercy took a loving revenge; for when the number and enormity of the sins were exces-

sive, then grace abounded more ; and this man, so far from God before, received from our Lord so deep contrition, that he began to strike his breast violently with a large stone he had purposely brought with him, and would not have ceased, if the servant of God, perceiving it, had not made him put it down. But we must make known how this poor man determined to confess, for it was an extraordinary circumstance. As he was going to the Mission, to listen, perhaps through curiosity, to the Missioner, the devil, as he himself related, appeared to him, threatening him, and wishing to carry him away. Any one can imagine how terrified the poor wretch was. He travelled on as well as he could to the place, and stayed there for the night, during which he heard a voice which said to him, " Go to confession, go to Father Paul." He did not know the Missionary's name, but learned it then, and made use of it the following morning to call him by it. By the same charity he obtained from a bandit that, laying aside his ferocity, he would pardon a man whom he had resolved to kill. The servant of God going one day to Orbetello, found one of the principal gentlemen in that place in a great state of terror, not daring to go beyond the city gates, because a famous chief of banditti, who had a den and place of security in Magliano, under a different government, distant about ten miles from Orbetello, was watching and waiting for this person to leave the gates of the city, as he was positively determined to kill him. Many gentlemen interposed to appease this ferocious and sanguinary man, but in vain ; for, en-

couraged in his boldness by the company of others of the same character, who were with him, he was implacable, and would not hear a word of pardon or reconciliation. Father Paul, hearing of it, animated with the charity that burnt in his breast, said he would go in person to find this bandit, and speak to him, though he did not know him. He therefore took his crucifix, and armed with that lively confidence with which his charity inspired him, took the road to Magliano, though every one tried to dissuade him from it, and told him he would incur great danger. But the servant of God, having in the crucifix an unconquerable weapon and defence, went to the place, and finding him in a small house, asked him if he was such a person; but he already supposed it, from the manner in which he was armed. He answered rudely, and with a troubled countenance, that he was the same. The servant of God then kneeling down with the crucifix in his hand, said, "I am come on purpose to ask a favour of you, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, and I shall not depart till I obtain it." He answered angrily as before, enquiring what he wanted. "Nothing," replied the servant of God, "but that you pardon such a person, and do not injure him." At these words the heart of the bandit was entirely changed, and quite touched and subdued, he immediately said, "Oh Father rise! I cannot refuse it to you; you alone could obtain this. Yes, I pardon him from my heart." Father Paul, whom experience had made very cautious, and aware that he must continue to strike as long

as the iron was hot, for the security of so Christian an action, drew out a paper, which he had purposely brought, and which contained the promise and concession of pardon and peace; he read it, and presented it to be signed by the bandit, who immediately acceded. The venerable Father, seeing so good a disposition for a complete conversion, with his usual fervour, sweetness, and persuasiveness, began to speak to him of God, and the wicked man was touched, repented, and immediately asked to confess to the servant of God. Father Paul, who sought nothing so eagerly as to carry to our Lord's feet this soul as a rich and noble prey, heard him with great charity; and in the meantime, some men of his company coming in, the bandit ordered them never again to injure in any manner that person. The ardent zeal of Father Paul was not satisfied with having gained the chief, he took occasion to speak of God, and of His goodness to those poor sinners also; and our Lord gave such efficacy to his words, that they changed the hearts of all. Pierced with contrition, they all asked to confess to him, and thus Father Paul gathered abundant food from his charity, and left those poor people comforted.

In Orbetello our Saint's friends were expecting his return and not seeing him appear they believed him already dead, but when he actually returned, their consolation was no less than their surprise, and it was greatly augmented at the sight of the peace and pardon signed by the bandit, by which the gentleman, their fellow citizen, was reestablished in tranquillity, and he himself expressed

great gratitude to Father Paul. To confirm his new penitents in their holy resolution, Father Paul used with prudent and industrious charity to take them with him from one mission to another. Amongst the converts who faithfully followed him, as long as the venerable Father judged it proper, there was one who by an enviable death ended his days in the hands of the servant of God. This man had been a blasphemer, a homicide, and a scandalous public sinner. The servant of God being informed of this man's bad character, when he was giving a mission at Vetralla, with great prudence and charity endeavoured to gain an entrance to his heart, sending for him, shewing him great marks of affection, and persuading him to be present at the sermons. This poor sinner could not resist such marks of love and charity, and went to the sermons, where the Divine mercy was waiting for him, and enlightened, moved, and penetrated by the efficacy of the divine word, he made his confession to the servant of God, after which he was greatly changed and began to live as a good Christian. The holy Father, however, who like a skilful physician knew how greatly his penitent, newly restored to health, stood in need of preservatives, and of care to confirm him more strongly in his holy resolutions, took him with him on his other missions, and the man, becoming more and more attached to the charitable and affectionate Father of his soul, and valuing most highly his advice and instructions, continued to lead a good life till his death. After following Father Paul for some

time, he went to serve in the public hospital of Vetralla, where, after greatly edifying the whole people, by the extreme charity and attention with which he treated the sick, he fell dangerously ill, and the servant of God hearing of it went to visit him. As soon as the sick man saw him, he cried out "Ah Father, how greatly am I obliged to you!" And he answered, "To our crucified Lord you owe all obligations," and encouraging him by good and holy advice to hope in the mercy of our Lord and in the blood of Jesus Christ, he said "Accept death willingly for your sins, for thus you will satisfy for much of the punishment due to them in Purgatory." The man comforted by the servant of God's words, was inspired with new confidence to ask pardon of God for his sins, by means also of Father Paul's prayers, in which he greatly trusted, and with the sentiments of a good Christian, departed to another life.

By his great charity he brought to repentance a famous bandit, who was afterwards his penitent for the space of eight years, and led so holy a life, and with such purity of conscience, that, as F. Paul said, he did not find in his ordinary confession necessary matter for absolution. The servant of God, to confirm him in his holy resolutions, had ordered him, when he went near any place where F. Paul was giving a mission, to go to him. He immediately did so as soon as he received the notice; and it was beautiful to see this man, formerly haughty and ferocious, become obedient and submissive to F. Paul as a meek lamb. If it happened that the servant of God was hearing



women, he placed himself before the confessional with his arms folded in the form of a cross on his breast, to the great edification of all the people ; and he remained so till the venerable missionary called him, and having heard him in front of the confessional, sent him away in peace, always roused to new fervour in the divine service.

It was frequently seen, that many converted by the servant of God persevered for a number of years, and others even to the end of their lives kept up their holy resolutions, and left at their death well-grounded hopes of their eternal salvation. Truly might he be considered happy and fortunate, who on going to hear F. Paul, yielded to the divine calls ; but, on the contrary, he who continued obstinate and inflexible, not unfrequently drew upon himself the divine malediction, as may be seen in the following instance, besides many others we have related. At Caparbio, a man gave scandal by living in sin with a woman of bad reputation. This man was taken ill at the very time when the servant of God was giving a mission in the place. The good missionary used every effort to make him break these bonds of death, and forsake sin. He feigned sincere repentance, but, horrible to relate, after seeing the missionary, he returned to his sins the night following ; the poor wretch, however, struck by the omnipotent hand of God, died miserably that same night. From this dreadful case the servant of God took occasion to deliver a powerful sermon on the pains of hell, to the great terror of his

hearers, who were moved still more on account of the fatal occurrence that had taken place.

In giving the spiritual exercises, as well as in missions, the venerable father had wonderful power in converting and arousing souls to fervour, through the boundless charity of his heart. He was so often summoned to convents of nuns to give the spiritual exercises, that he could not remember the number of times, and in every place God gave him grace to assist greatly the souls of His spouses; and in all the monasteries where he had given the exercises we may truly say, that he left the good odour of the virtues of Jesus Christ, for the nuns admired in him a great zeal, a close union with God, entire detachment from created things, and a wonderful talent in the direction of souls. He happily succeeded in banishing from convents discord, which, when it has once gained an entrance into those holy places, is usually more lasting and more dangerous. If he found any nun that had lost the grace of God, then it was that F. Paul used every exertion to reconduct that strayed sheep to the fold of the Good Shepherd. The good Father would have wished to see in every monastery the most exact observance, perfect peace, and entire tranquillity, and to leave the nuns inflamed anew with the love of their heavenly Spouse; and through his desire that without any disturbance they might exactly keep their holy rules, he sometimes obtained of our Lord by his prayers that they should be miraculously freed from venomous animals which infested them, which was the case

with the nuns of Farnese. We have relating to this a letter from Cardinal Charles Rezzonico, in which he says to him: "It would grieve me if this letter of mine should find you gone, and unable to console those good nuns, who ask of me the favour that you may enter their monastery, to free them from the annoyance they endure from serpents and vipers, which have gained an entrance there, for they hope that God would bless the curse that you would pronounce on these hurtful reptiles. If this letter should find you at Farnese, pray console them, for I give you leave to enter the enclosure." The servant of God willingly did what the nuns and their pious protector desired, and our Lord so visibly showed the effect of His servant's prayer, that those reptiles immediately left the monastery, and from that time, wonderful to relate, have never again entered its precincts.

Thus we see how the servant of God's charity was always in motion for the benefit and tranquillity of souls; he was never fatigued, nor ever thought it necessary to take rest and recreation, which he said were reserved till after death; and he gracefully added, that for the dead we say 'Requiem æternam,' wishing and asking for them the desired repose.

The value of souls, considered in the light of loving faith, in the Heart of our Divine Redeemer, was the noble source of that great zeal shown by him for the salvation of those souls; hence he never dispensed with himself in helping and relieving them in their spiritual wants, however great were the labours and difficulties he had to

suffer, very frequently undertaking fatigues far above human strength, deriving fresh vigour from charity. Going once to the royal garrison of Longone to give a mission, and the ship having touched land towards evening about half way, the servant of God, to make his prayers in quiet, and employ himself without molestation in sweet converse with God, retired to a rock near the sea ; but as this rock was partly washed with the waves, his feet slipped and touched the sea, without his falling into it, by a special favour of our Lord, who preserved him in this danger from drowning, the sea being very deep in that place : but as in falling he struck his leg violently against the rock, he was a good deal bruised and hurt. F. Paul did not lose courage for this, but, trusting in God's providence, continued his journey, and on arriving at Longone, began his mission with great fervour. It was wonderful to see, that when not on the platform, he could neither drag himself along nor stand, so that he was obliged to lie in bed, and to lift him up four persons were required ; yet when the hour for preaching had arrived, and he was on his feet, as if he did not feel or had forgotten his pain, he went to the platform, and preached with his usual energy, efficacy, and fervour, moving with great agility whenever the spirit of his discourse led him to do so.

As his apostolic zeal was displeasing to those who are enemies of the light and the truth, some persons conceived so great a hatred against him, that they sought his life. In one place he inveighed against sin with all his zeal, to hinder the

offence of God, and courageously deprived some sinners of the occasion of their poisonous gratifications; but they, like the delirious patients, who are furious against the physician that compassionately cures them, in return for an action which was all charity and love, resolved to destroy the servant of God; and, almost out of themselves with hatred and ill-will, gave to him, and to his brother, F. John Baptist, poison in the soup which was their dinner, and was made of a few beans. The poor missionaries took it without being made aware of the circumstance, and, as the poison was very strong, they would certainly have died, if God had not by His special protection preserved them. Our Lord, to whom a life was extremely dear that was wholly employed in the good of souls, helped His faithful servants; they speedily rejected the poison with the soup, and acknowledging the favour of their preservation from our Lord by the intercession of ever blessed Mary, under whose protection they lived, they continued their holy missions with new courage and fervour.

As a careful merchant profits of every opportunity of increasing his worldly gains, Father Paul allowed no time to pass uselessly, in which he could help his neighbour. His ardent charity was not confined to the promotion of their spiritual good, by missions and spiritual exercises, but besides this, his holy zeal exerted itself in labouring for souls on occasions which either presented themselves or were sought by him, chiefly in travelling and in paying or receiving necessary visits. He who does not know the true charac-

teristic of the charity of God's servants, need only observe attentively how they behave in administering fraternal correction, regarding which Jesus Christ gives us in His Gospel a special precept; for, as correction is in itself a nauseous food to the palate of our corrupted nature, charity alone can sweeten and render it pleasing and agreeable, in order that our poor, sick, and needy neighbour may not abhor and reject it with disgust. In this very occasion our servant of God showed that he had the true spirit of God, which is sweeter than honey, "*Spiritus meus super mel dulcis.*" In correction he did not disguise the evil nor flatter, but if necessary he made use of fire and sword; he knew, however, how to use them with so great discretion and skill, learned in the school of holy charity, that it was truly admirable. He did not abuse nor terrify; he never allowed himself to be carried away by passion, but with perfect control over himself he discreetly mixed together wine and oil, severity and sweetness, and with wonderful prudence knew so well how to combine rigour with mildness, that he usually obtained his desired object. He used words so full of kindness, that they manifested a heart full of true affection, and plainly showed the strong desire he had of the good of the person corrected, and at the very time that he was obliged to use some degree of severity, he accompanied his words with great marks of charity, and thus gave evidence that he had no other aim than the spiritual advantage of his neighbour.

In writing, no less than in speaking, he used

the same charitable method of correction. Wishing to correct one of his spiritual children, he thus writes to her : "Is it possible that after so many admonitions you will not mortify yourself, and be silent in word and writing, whatever I may say to you ? For a penance enter into the Heart of Jesus ; no, rather remain at the door of this great Heart, and humble yourself, and ask pardon for so many imperfections and acts of ingratitude, and then when you have leave enter in, make yourself little, and afterwards burn and consume therein, and allow the wind of the Spirit of God to carry away with it these ashes on high, and lose them in the immense abyss of the Divinity. Amen." Wishing to reprove one of our religious for a fault, he writes thus : "I know that F. N. has written to a friend in Orbetello, without having the charity to console poor Paul, who has always loved and esteemed him, and the others have done the same. I do not know the reason, unless I attribute it to my sins." It was his maxim, that reproofs given with sweetness cure and heal every wound ; on the contrary, those given harshly, in place of curing one, make ten more, and so greatly had he at heart this most just sentiment, that he desired that the exhortations given to a religious family should be made with all sweetness and mildness. "I have heard," he writes to a superior, "that your reverence in the examinations and chapters makes very strong exclamations, as if you were giving a mission to a parcel of whiskered and mustachod gentry, but, dear Father Rector, why do you do so ? I praise

your zeal, and I know that it springs from a strong wish for observance, but the truth is, that our religious are very good, therefore there is no need of such exclamations.... Work with sweetness, speak with peace of mind, do not force your voice, and believe me that it will strike more, and will do more good, and the religious will be better satisfied."

If those who were corrected humbled themselves, and acknowledged their faults, his tender heart could not resist this, at the same moment, like a tender mother, he embraced them, and pardoned every fault. Many facts might be adduced in proof of his well-known charity; some few, however, will suffice for the reader's edification. A lay-brother had gone to the Retreat of St. Angelo, to pass to another retreat, where Father Paul destined him to be of the community; the poor brother showed a repugnance to this change, and the servant of God, knowing it, showed displeasure at the want of virtue of this religious; he corrected him, but after the correction returned to his room quite in affliction. Another religious seeing the good Father's sorrow, endeavoured to show this brother his duty, persuade him to go and ask pardon of his fault from the servant of God, and manifest a willingness to obey. Enlightened and convinced, the brother who had formerly been obedient went to Father Paul's room, and cast himself on his knees. The servant of God, on seeing him in this humble posture, immediately embraced him, and said with great affection, "Oh, my dear brother, I have always desired your good;" and after exhorting



him to obedience with great compassion and charity, dismissed him consoled and satisfied.

One of our religious had committed a serious fault, for which he merited expulsion from the congregation. Father Paul admonished him with so much charity, that the religious, overcome by his mildness, acknowledged his error, sincerely detested it, voluntarily submitted to the penance imposed, and amended his conduct to the general satisfaction.

We may say that it became quite impossible for Father Paul to use severity when he saw the religious humbled, and penitent for their faults. One day some students, reprov'd for some fault by the good Father, knelt down, and he then, all joy and serenity, said to them with a smile, "Oh, now, who could scold you? What do you wish me to do? rise up, for you have conquered me;" and with his usual cheerfulness he remained conversing with them, like a most affectionate father.

Even when serious faults were in question, whoever humbled himself and repented from his heart, was sure to obtain pardon. See how he writes on one of these occasions. "I have just read Father N.'s letter, in which he greatly humbles himself; believe me, he moves me to compassion, and if he speaks truly, he desires to amend. Ah! the Divine Shepherd seeks and seeks again for the poor sheep! let us console Him by nursing it, that it may be cured, and may not separate itself from His fold of this congregation; if afterwards nothing else can be done, patience! sibi imputet"...In another, with the same kindness, he

says: "Brother N. greatly moves me, he seems very penitent; he says he should be damned if he went back to the world; he weeps and sighs; I intended to take of his habit, but in the end he has conquered me. He appears very resolute, and it seems to me to be saving a sheep from the jaws of the infernal dragon." Thus he behaved to those who humbled themselves, and he desired that all the superiors should use the same sweet and persuasive method. "My dearly beloved father," he writes to a rector, "I have read your letter to my great edification and consolation, rejoicing greatly in the mercy which our good God continues to show to your soul. I hope your reverence will attend, and will commission one of the religious also, to watch the goings on of Father N., that all things may be provided for. It is true he makes great efforts to do good, notwithstanding the habits he has contracted in the world, and this is a reason that ought to excite in us greater compassion, and lead us to promote his eternal salvation, and be satisfied if he observes our holy rules, saltem, in the essentials, and when he does fail, to look on him compassionately, and correct him with the greatest charity, giving him the necessary remedies, both in the chapter of faults and elsewhere. If we succeed in cooperating to his salvation, what a great gain! what great glory for God!" Thus he speaks and writes who possesses true zeal, who nourishes in his heart the flame of charity, and who preserves an even and discreet judgment, not disturbed nor fantastical. It sufficed to make him change his

language, that he should be informed of the reason of an action, and the correction was then changed into compassion and tenderness; and sometimes he gave it up that he might not give occasion to the least virtuous to fall into some greater fault, imitating the conduct of our Blessed Saviour, of whom it is written in the Holy Gospel, "*Arundinem quassatum non confringet, et linum fumigans non extinguet.*" (Matt. xii. 20.)

As all human minds usually desire to be treated with consideration and delicacy, the servant of God adhered to the same rule of benignity and kindness, when he had to correct secular persons, and God blessed his words, which had wonderful efficacy. Father Paul was giving a mission in a place, where, as usual, he chose four principal persons, who had the charge of pacifying those who were at variance, but after a few days he was told that one of these deputed peace-makers was completely separated from his wife, even in residence. He wisely waited till this gentleman came to his house, to speak of things relating to his office, and then taking him aside, said to him, "How is this? I have deputed you to make holy peace, and I know that you live separated from your wife!" With all sweetness he then exhorted him to join her, but the gentleman sighing most deeply, answered: "Ah, father, it is true, but I have a good reason, for I found my wife almost 'in flagranti crimine.'" The servant of God answered: "Perhaps you were mistaken and deceived by appearances;" and sought by the strongest persuasions, and most prudent means,

to induce him to be united again with his wife, but this man was not then in a state to see clearly, and understand the force of the reasons ; so that the servant of God did not gain his object, seeing that he could not then overcome his obstinacy, he wisely ended the interview, and in the meantime recommended the affair to God. After the mission, as the bishop wished Father Paul to give the exercises to the nuns, he was often visited during his stay in the monastery by that gentleman, who, for the sake of having him in his own house, invited him one day to dinner. The servant of God, who did not lose sight of his object, with great fervour replied : “ What ! am I to go to your house, where holy peace does not exist, when the holy Gospel requires that before anything else peace should be proclaimed and procured in the house we enter, *primum dicite pax huic domui* ; that shall never be.” Touched and penetrated by these few words, the gentleman begged him to go, as he would do all he required. The servant of God answered : “ If you promise to be reconciled to your wife I will come.” He promised that he would willingly do it. “ Well, then,” said Father Paul, “ I will come to-morrow to dine with you, but remember that to-morrow is the first day of the nuptials, that is, a day of special benediction.” The following day, after thus disposing the mind of the offended husband, judging it necessary to exhort the wife to perform those acts of humiliation and virtuous submission that would show her sincere repentance, he went a little before dinner-time to the house to which

he was invited, and finding a good opportunity of speaking to the lady, charitably showed her how she should behave to pacify the mind and regain the affection of her husband, and he hinted to her that with all humility she should ask pardon for her fault. The husband being come home, near the dinner hour, his wife presented herself to him humble and penitent, knelt down and asked his pardon. But, as humility always obtains more than it asks, the husband, overcome by this action of his wife, also knelt, and begged her to pardon him. Father Paul, comforted to see this couple reconciled, told them they must imagine this to be the first day of their marriage, and blessed them, entreating the Divine Goodness to confirm this blessing. After this followed dinner, which truly might be called a banquet of peace and charity ; and, as our Divine Redeemer in assisting at the nuptial feast of Cana in Galilee, carried thither with His Divine Presence all the most precious blessings, so He caused His servant to leave in that house a lasting peace, which is the most desirable of benefits, assisting and animating him for the purpose with a special grace ; for, as the enlightened man of God himself said, " It is very difficult, without a special grace from God, to settle such disagreements between man and wife."

And he had also the same special assistance in those corrections, that with holy liberty and warmth he gave to different persons, who, though freely and severely reprov'd, did not shew the least displeasure at the sincerity and charity of

the servant of God, but took in good part, what, had it proceeded from another mouth, would have perhaps greatly exasperated them. He perceived once that a married lady, who was speaking to him was not sufficiently covered, having on this occasion been led away rather by the reigning bad fashion than by a bad intention, for she was most virtuous ; the servant of God did not fail to represent to her how great an evil it was, that in future she might guard against it, and appear in public adorned with chastity and modesty, as is becoming in a Christian woman. The lady with perfect docility listened to the good Father, and, following his orders, was afterwards a model of Christian modesty.

If ecclesiastics that gave disedification came to him he endeavoured first with respect and affection to gain their hearts, and then freely reprovèd them. In fact, these corrections had a good effect, and one person who had been thus corrected by the servant of God had such respect for him, that he feared to enter his room if he was not dressed very modestly, and in a manner becoming his state. And another, perhaps because he had been reprovèd by the good Father for some fault that he had not discovered to him, said, that before entering Father Paul's room, it was necessary to go to confession. Nor did he think, that because persons were of noble condition and great consideration, they might be deprived of such charitable help, of which they often stand in greater need, as they find few who

have courage to give it them, by a wise and Christian correction.

When Father Paul was staying in the Hospital of San Crocifisso, near St. John Lateran, a prince went to visit him, to whom the servant of God, with that energy peculiar to him when there was question of saving souls from danger, spoke on the abuse of modern conversations, and as words animated by true zeal carry with them clearly the affectionate impulse of holy charity, the good Prince was not offended by the servant of God's discourse, nor displeased with his liberty and sincere zeal, and on leaving his room shewed himself so greatly edified by him, that he said to the religious, his companion, "Truly, Father Paul is a saint." The Church of God militant on earth holds a loving communication of holy charity with the souls of the faithful departed, suffering in purgatory; therefore, good Christians try as much as possible to assist by prayers, sacrifices, alms, acts of mortification, the holy souls in purgatory. Father Paul was most feeling for these blessed souls, and had an extreme compassion for them. He fervently exhorted all, and especially his children, to help them with great earnestness. In the rules written for his congregation, he expresses a desire that all should help those poor souls in every possible way, that they might soon enjoy the Beatific Vision of God; and he remind them, that the Divine Goodness will dispose that we also, after death, shall be helped with charitable suffrages, if in life we take care to assist those souls that suffer so much. He practised the first

what he taught others, and to relieve those blessed souls, offered sacrifices, prayers, and penances, and passed good part of the night in watching for their benefit. The Divine Goodness, who desired to free many of these souls from their terrible sufferings, and crown with merits the charity of His servant, allowed them very frequently to appear to him, at night, with a melancholy appearance, asking, in a piteous tone, for help and relief. The pious reader can imagine how greatly his tender heart was moved by such visits and requests, and how diligently he employed himself to free those chosen souls quickly from their sufferings. Amongst the apparitions witnessed by the servant of God, I will relate one for the general edification, which appears to me very instructive. Father Paul was the friend of a secular priest, who having been frequently warned by him to correct some considerable faults, had not taken due care to follow the advice and reform his life as fully as God required. The priest died, and one night when Father Paul had gone to rest, he heard a great noise close to his room. He was at first alarmed, as is usual in visions that proceed from good spirits, asked who it was, and that instant heard the door open, and a voice reply that it was that priest his friend who was just dead, and who was in purgatory. His fear vanished at this answer, and at the sight of a soul dear to God, as was this, Father Paul asked him why he was condemned to those sufferings? And he replied, because he had not profited as he ought by the advice he had received from him,



and had not corrected those faults which now deprived him of the vision of God ; and then, speaking of his sufferings, said, “ Oh, how terrible they are ! ” and asked how long he had been suffering them. Father Paul asked him if he knew at what hour previously he died, and hearing it, took the alarm, and counting up, told him not more than half an hour. This suffering soul was greatly astonished at this news, believing that it had been already in Purgatory a long time, so severe and painful are those torments. And in proportion therefore, God’s servants, who have strong sentiments of compassion and charity, show pity for them, and a strong desire to relieve them.

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## CHAPTER XV.

OF THE SERVANT OF GOD’S CHARITY EXERCISED IN  
BEHALF OF THOSE WHO WERE OPPOSED TO HIM.

FIRE, when it is well lighted up, is not easily extinguished by water thrown on it, nor by the wind ; and charity, when it is strong, ardent, and generous, does not grow cold, but derives fresh vigour from ingratitude calumny and, persecution ; ‘ *Aquæ multæ non potuerunt extinguere charitatem ;* ’ and such precisely was the charity of the servant of God, resisting the trials of great labours and adversities. He was not called, without particular inspiration, Paul of the Cross, because he was

to suffer much, and render himself worthy of a name so respectable and honourable for a Christian. Men took their part in afflicting the poor servant of God, and with a good intention, as he said, gave him occasion of merit, and, as it were, by repeated blows, made of him a noble statue worthy to be placed in the Divine Sanctuary ; for he, with great fortitude, suffered all for the love of God ; and to all those who ill-treated, vexed, or grieved him in any way, Father Paul offered always in return, just the same proportion of affection and charity. As, from his youth, as we have noticed elsewhere, he had worn a rustic and contemptible habit, and thus covered, rather than clothed, walked barefooted and bareheaded, worldlings seeing that penance which in itself was so edifying and truly' marvellous, understanding little of the guidance of the Spirit of God, easily imagined that it had either been imposed upon him for some enormous crime, or that this mode of life had been undertaken by him through an extravagant caprice, directed by no rule of wisdom ; therefore, they took occasion to abuse and deride him, and sometimes even to throw stones at him ; and God's servant, as if he had become, for His love, insensible to contempt, and dumb, that he might not complain of it, with humility and peace kept silence, and, recollected in himself, prayed for those who injured him, putting thus in practice, with great devotion, the advice contained in the Gospel : 'Orate pro persequentibus, et calumniantibus vos.'

How he behaved on many other occasions, dif-

ficult and dangerous, for a weak degree of virtue, we have already seen in the course of this life, in various places, where we have spoken of many and great troubles, and very heavy injuries, borne with great patience and tranquillity of heart, by the servant of God. And as we avoid repetition, we will merely relate some other acts of singular charity, joined with great patience, under illtreatment.

The first time that he went to Civita Vecchia, though by some he was received charitably, and during the time of his Lent was provided daily with three loaves, as we have said, he found, nevertheless, on this occasion, persons to exercise him in patience; for on going one evening, after Lent, to pray in a Church, he was driven from it in a very insulting manner, with words as abusive as if he had been the vilest and most infamous man in the world; he never opened his mouth, but recollected in himself, with great humility left the Church, recommending to our Lord those who thus insulted him.

Another time, at the baths of Vignone, he was loaded with abuse, and greatly insulted. To such bad treatment the servant of God offered no answer but patience, humility, and sweetness, kneeling down at once before the person who insulted him, and interiorly recommending him entirely to God, without saying a word in his own defence.

When he was advanced in years a letter in angry and bitter language was written to him by a person who wrongly thought himself aggrieved by Father Paul. The servant of God, full of that

charity which is discreet and mild, said cordially to his companion, "I compassionate him;" and to tranquillize this person's heart, and convince him of the truth, he caused a letter to be written to him, in which his prudence appeared no less visible than his zeal, and the sweetness of his charity. The anger of this man was not appeased by the servant of God's reply; but by another letter in the same tone, he again attacked the virtue of the good Father, who judged it expedient to offer no other justification, but in silence suffered all with great patience, and trusting, by God's grace, to gain the person who showed such irritation, said to the same companion, "He will be pacified, you will see." So it was in effect, for seeing the truth, and repenting of his anger, he wrote letters of great humiliation, and came in person to ask pardon. Father Paul tenderly embraced him, and expressed most true and cordial affection for him; and he became so attached to the servant of God, and to the congregation, that he was afterwards one of our kindest benefactors. He had need of greater virtue to bear the unmerited reproofs of a great personage. The Cardinal Bishop of Viterbo, prejudiced by reports against our saint, showed himself, from the commencement of his Episcopate, little inclined to favour him; and wished to send visitors to the Retreat of St Angelo, to make the visitation there. Father Marco Aurelio, of the Most Holy Sacrament, who was then Superior there, showed, with all humility and respect, that, by the Brief of Benedict XIV., we were exempted from such visits; and as he had not the Brief at

hand, sent meanwhile to the servant of God, who was giving a Mission in Porto, for the Pontifical Brief, to show to his Eminence. This did not suffice to change the mind of that Prelate, who, judging that he had a right to make the visitation, desired that his resolution should be carried into execution. The servant of God having returned to the Retreat from the Missions, went the following day to Viterbo, to see his Eminence, and at the same time show him the real truth; but as it easily happens that pious and enlightened persons of the best intentions, are deceived in forming an opinion of others' virtue, and come without reason to an unjust conclusion, which is so much the more difficult to remove, as their zeal is more lively and active, the Lord Cardinal, instead of yielding to the reasons, and condescending to the humble entreaties of the servant of God, treated him in a very harsh and abusive manner, saying he was proud, a hypocrite, and the like; to which Father Paul, without showing any resentment, answered only by words of humility, seeking to tranquillize the angry mind of the Bishop without success, so that he departed from the audience, very much humbled, it is true, but with a tranquil and peaceful heart, as if he had been kindly received; and in going out said confidentially to Count Peter Brugiotti, who had accompanied him to the Cardinal "Let us commend the Lord Cardinal to God, for his life will be very short," as the fact proved, for he died in a few months. The servant of God returned the same evening to the Retreat of St. Angelo, and in giving to the Religious the usual blessing before

reciting the holy Rosary, ordered, but as a witness attests, with the greatest energy, that we should recommend the Cardinal Bishop to God ; from which it was easily known by those who understood well the maxims of Christianity so faithfully and generously practised by Father Paul, that he had been badly received, and worse treated.

Father Paul behaved in the same manner to those who spoke ill of him, and of the Congregation. He knew very well that some Religious of a highly respectable Order threw discredit upon him, and said openly, that he was a hypocrite, and that he did not practise what he had laid down in the Rules. He knew that they opposed with all their power the establishment of the Congregation, and took every means to hinder its progress ; nevertheless, if such Religious happened to come to our Retreat, as they sometimes did, he ordered them to be treated with every kindness, made them sit in the most honourable place in the Refectory, and showed them a thousand attentions and acts of kindness.

As calumny has power to disturb the mind of even wise men, who not unfrequently, under pretence of a necessary justification, give vent to their resentment, and as it may be called the test to try the fine gold of charity, by this precisely the measure of Father Paul's charity was better known ; for to calumny, when not obliged to justify himself, he offered no reply but holy prayer. Being once unjustly accused by one of his enemies, the servant of God, without excus-

ing or justifying himself, abandoning all to God, said, "I am now under an obligation to recommend them specially to our Lord;" and as if he who had calumniated him, merited from him a special kindness, he invariably prayed particularly for any one who had thus persecuted him.

The most acute and painful wounds to a Father's heart, are those that he receives from his own children; and it is a real triumph of charity to overcome, with the same degree of affection and kindness, their ingratitude and evil dispositions. The venerable Founder had even occasions of this kind to signalize his charity, for he had, and always manifested, a strong desire of benefiting those, who, after being brought up with such difficulty, abandoned him, and left the Congregation. Though he was greatly displeas'd, he treated them with extreme goodness. He ordered that they should have refreshments before they left; he gave them what was necessary to clothe them as seculars, according to the condition of each, and with a Father's care not only gave them money, but also some provisions, that they might travel home, or whithersoever they were going, comfortably. It seem'd, indeed, that to obtain some great favour from the servant of God, it sufficed to have offended or displeas'd him.

A certain lady had, without any reason, declared herself offended, because a nephew of hers had entered our Congregation, and allowing herself to be carried away by passion, had on different occasions, by words and deeds, shown the aversion and great hatred she had conceived against the

whole Congregation, and especially the venerable Founder. Being taken ill, and seeing death at hand, she earnestly begged to be visited by Father Paul, who was then in the place. The Archpriest of that place, who was asked to speak to Father Paul, feared to meet at least with some reluctance, so great were the injuries the servant of God had received ; but scarcely had he opened his mouth, than he saw with his own eyes the kind of revenge that the saints take ; without the least difficulty, without saying a word about what had passed, as if he did not remember it, he hastened to perform this charitable act, and spoke to the sick lady with words animated by such ardent charity, that she received from them the greatest comfort, and thus consoled by finding so much spiritual sweetness in the servant of God, she tranquilly expired a few days later.

But the charity of the servant of God was never so clearly proved to be great and heroic as at the time when he went to Rome, to obtain the approbation of his rules. In a lonely street, he met a certain religious, who had entirely lost the spirit of his vocation ; and this man having become, without having received from the servant of God any provocation, fierce and inhuman, began to ill-treat him most shamefully, and taking occasion from the servant of God's meekness to be more enraged in place of being softened, rushed upon him, threw him on the ground, struck him without remorse, and even went so far as to trample upon him, without any sign of resentment on the part of the venerable Father. The



patient man, after receiving these insults, which, as one brought up in the school of the suffering Jesus, he regarded as precious gifts, went soon after to call upon Don Francis Casalini, a worthy priest, his friend, and by this friend, who perceived him to be more thoughtful than usual, he was asked what he was thinking about. Without speaking of the affront he had received, he answered, that he was most deeply afflicted on account of an act committed by a religious man, by which he had unfortunately put himself into a dreadful condition, and into great danger of eternal perdition, adding, that he must not fail to pray to God for that poor soul as he himself did, that our Lord would enlighten his mind, and change his heart, that he might not perish eternally. After words of so great charity, F. Paul said nothing about the person that had insulted him, but Don Francis afterwards heard of the shameful treatment that the humble servant of God had received from that religious. Thus F. Paul returned to those who offended him good for evil with such cordiality, that he could say sincerely, and he several times repeated it, that he loved all in God, and that in his poor prayers, he prayed first for others and then for himself, and daily prayed specially for two kinds of persons; first, for those who had greatly offended him, and secondly, for those who had left the Congregation.

The same sentiments are more clearly expressed in his letters, in which the venerable servant of God opened his whole heart with holy confidence.

“I have returned,” he writes, “from the holy missions, loaded with precious mortifications. The devils persecute me with fury, and men with a good-will, as I wish to believe. It is enough, we must pray much, for tempests rise on every side, and many contrary winds are blowing. Blessed be God.” “My necessities,” he says in another letter, “are very great, especially in the present circumstances, when storms and great persecutions have arisen against our poor Congregation. I believe, however, that everything happens with the good intention of him whom the Divine Majesty allows to afflict us.

“Be not afflicted,” he writes to a devout soul, “to see me despised and slighted, for this happens by God’s permission to humble me, and I rejoice at it. I do not know what the Lord Bishop may have done in this way, I know well that I have laboured for years past in his diocese, and was very near losing my life there; but the poor Bishop is to be pitied, for persecutors and calumniators have not been wanting, especially since the foundation of the Retreat has been spoken of. Blessed be God—this does not grieve me. I was intending to write you a letter, but afterwards thought it better not to do so. It is better to leave to Almighty God my justification, especially as I do not know your sentiments; and when you last wrote to me, you addressed me in very cordial terms, for which I feel greatly obliged to you.”

“I compassionate the mistake of N. (writes the Ven. Father), but I regret the offence he has committed against the Divine Majesty. May God

pardon him ; as for me, he has no cause for affliction, for I love him as before.”

The precious treasure that he had found hidden under the thorns of persecutions and labours, and with which, by God's grace, he had so greatly enriched himself, he desired to make known also to others, and especially to his Congregation, and those persons whom he directed, that they might also become rich ; he wrote to them, therefore, as follows : “ Keep up that love which you feel for holy poverty, and as for the alms you gave to that religious who bestowed upon you the glorious cross of injuries, you have done well.” “ Value the friend who tries you,” he writes to a devout soul, “ as a treasure.” And again : “ You must esteem that person more than a precious treasure, and look upon her in the Divine Will with an affectionate eye, as the person of whom the Sovereign Good makes use to fabricate in your soul a robe adorned with flowers of gold and precious gems, which are holy virtues, especially patience, silence, and the most holy meekness of Jesus. Oh, how much I am pleased with this fine opportunity ! It is enough—never defend yourself—never speak ; but if you say anything, let it be something in her excuse and honour ; and when you pass her, bow your head reverently, as if you were passing an instrument of God's loving hand. The most certain part is to be silent under all, after the example of Jesus Christ. If you do not receive what is necessary, rejoice and say, ‘ Oh how well I am treated by this dear friend and mistress ;’ but say it from your heart. Jesus

will Himself feed you with an invisible food, which will strengthen you more than corruptible meat."

"Seek," he says elsewhere, "for such occasions of assisting your accusers and of benefiting them as much as you can, with greater eagerness than others go to seek for pearls and diamonds."

As he knew well, and by the light of prayer more clearly understood, that charity cannot exist where the actions of others are curiously watched and censured, and their failings discovered, he recommended and desired that no one should observe the defects of others, unless obliged to it by his office, but that each one should think of his own, for thus, said he, charity covers the defects of our brethren. This man of true charity was most attentive whenever the reputation of another was concerned, and every one might believe and be sure, that wherever F. Paul was present, he had a loving protector and vigilant guard, who would defend his reputation and esteem, and take care of him behind his back. If in conversation the defects of others were named, if he knew it to be detraction, he immediately either turned the discourse, or found some excuse, and said that other's faults ought to be covered with the cloak of holy charity, and excused, as caused by ignorance or inadvertence. Finally, he was a man whose soul was full of the most sweet and upright spirit of charity, and as he sincerely wished to help and please his dear neighbour at all times, he could not endure that others should injure or give him any cause of grief and pain.

## CHAPTER XVI.

OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD'S DEVOTION TO  
THE SACRED PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE entire life of the servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, shows clearly that he had planted in his heart those great words of the apostle St. Paul: 'Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in Cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo;' or we should rather say, the merciful hand of God had imprinted them there. He had always a most ardent desire to conform his life to that of Jesus crucified, and to awake in the faithful the remembrance of the cross and death of Jesus our Divine Redeemer. To this tended all the thoughts of his mind, all the ardent wishes of his heart, all his actions, his journeys, his spiritual exercises, his missions. For this same end he instituted, according to the inspiration God gave him, this poor and humble congregation of the Passion, that it might be entirely consecrated to meditate on the Passion and death of Jesus, and to the invitation of the faithful, to call to mind the torments, sorrows, and agony in which the Only Begotten of the Divine Father was, as it were, drowned and submerged. Renouncing every remembrance of the world, to live hidden with Jesus Christ, he abandoned his family name, to take that of the

cross, that he might say with the apostle, whose name he bore, 'Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in Cruce;' and afterwards awakening in the people the too often forgotten remembrance of the sufferings of our Saviour; he added with the same: 'Prædicamus Jesum Crucifixum.' This was all his learning, and he valued no other science than the science and the loving knowledge of Jesus crucified, a science truly profound and sublime, for in our Blessed Redeemer are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God. 'In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ Dei absconditi;' a science not speculative, barren, and dry, but fruitful and delicious, bringing the nourishment of a heavenly life, and of eternal salvation. 'Si quis per me introierit, salvabitur.' God willed that from his youth he should devote himself to promote the devotion and awaken the remembrance of the life-giving Passion. By the direction and command of his bishop, in whose person he venerated with profound reverence the person of God Himself, he preached to the people of Castellazzo, and taught them to meditate on the sufferings of Jesus, and so greatly moved the people to compunction, that they burst into sobs and cries, asking mercy of God, to the astonishment of every one.

When the servant of God began to give missions in various places to which he was invited by the ordinaries, every one perceived that he was burning with the desire of imprinting in the hearts of all the Passion of Jesus Christ. It would require his heart and his tongue to express clearly

the affection with which he himself meditated on the Passion, and the benefit he drew from it. It may be said truly, as more than one witness testifies, that no one spoke of it like Father Paul; he represented the mysteries, either of the Agony in the Garden, of the insults in the tribunals, of the barbarous flagellation, or the cruel crucifixion, in so lively a manner, that he excited an unspeakable devotion and tenderness in his hearers. He never spoke of it without tears of affection and compassion, which caused all who listened to him to weep also. So deep was the feeling, and so sublime the light which he had regarding the love of the Son of God, in giving His blood and life for us, that he often repeated, with extraordinary emotion, "A God bound for me! A God scourged for me! A God dying for me!" and in uttering these words, it was seen, that having entered into the sanctuary of the Divinity, and into an immense ocean of Goodness and Perfection, he was, as it were, entirely absorbed in God, with astonishment and love. Regarding this subject, he said one day, "In the beginning of my conversion, it seemed to me easy to meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ, but now when we have said a God scourged, how can we say anything more?" Wonderful were the conversions that he wrought by this means, and in order to effect them, the man of God would not allow the people to stop at a certain tenderness of devotion, which would go no farther than a few tears, but with that mastery over hearts that God gave him, he animated them to hope in the Divine Mercy, at the

sight of so great goodness, so many wounds, so much blood. He burned with love of God, to correspond to the immense charity of God, who for us has given His blood and life on an infamous gibbet. And though in his sermons he frequently recalled his audience to the sight of Jesus crucified, nevertheless, to teach this holy devotion with greater fruit, he made a meditation on the Passion of Jesus at the end of the sermon; and in proportion as he had terrified them by the discourse, he softened and comforted their hearts by the meditation, finishing all with fervent acts of contrition. Towards the end of the mission, he used to make a special and more solemn commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ. Oh, it was on that evening that the good missionary appeared, through love and sorrowful compassion, entirely transformed into his beloved Jesus, 'qui ex charitate nimia voluit crucifigi;' and so great an effect did it have on the audience, that cries of devotion and weeping were heard to such an extent, that it might be said, 'Magnus erat plancus; et dolebant sicut doleri solet in morte primogeniti.' The servant of God ardently desired, and earnestly begged of our Lord, to die on one of these evenings, embracing the crucifix, which grace was granted him, but in another manner; for if he did not die on the platform, whilst he was meditating on the death of his dear Jesus, and embracing His holy image, he died embracing in spirit Jesus, the Man of sorrows, united and conformed to Him, for he was afflicted in his whole body, and on the very day of his death



promoted this holy devotion, as we shall soon relate. Not only at the time of the missions, but in giving the spiritual exercises to the people, or in monasteries, amongst the other meditations, he daily made one on the passion of Jesus, with his usual fervour, and desired nothing more than to imprint it in the hearts of all. Very often he made upon it devout discourses to all the community of the Retreats, where he happened to be, and his words seemed to pour a new balm of devotion into the hearts of his children, and to light up a new flame of love towards our beloved Redeemer.

In the last two years that he resided in Rome, at the Retreat of Saints John and Paul, though often suffering from his infirmities, he endeavoured, through his desire of promoting the spirit of virtue in his religious, to make those devout discourses which we call examens, accompanied always with wonderful persuasiveness. It will be, I think, very pleasing and useful, to relate here the sentiments that proceeded from that blessed heart, expressed in one of these, as we find it in the processes.

In 1774, on the 14th of September, on the feast of the Exaltation of the holy Cross, he made, though he was indisposed, a discourse to the whole community, explaining these words of the Apostle St. Paul: 'Nos autem gloriari oportet in Cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi;' and through the lively desire which he had of imprinting on the hearts of all those heavenly words, with an inflamed countenance, and with extraordinary power, he sought to lead them to live crucified to

the world, as was specially required by the obligation of their state and profession. "You, my sons," said the affectionate father, "must live crucified to the world, that is, hate whatever the world loves;" as he continued the discourse, his devotion and love of the cross becoming more and more inflamed in his heart, he exclaimed, and often repeated, bathed in tears, "Oh, dear cross! 'Oh, amaritudo mea amarissima, omnis gratiæ plena!'" and so great were the tenderness and fervour with which he uttered these words, that he drew tears from the eyes of all. Desiring to end his discourse with great fruit, he said, with deep feeling, and repeated twice: "In order to obtain this great benefit, I propose to you two maxims, and imprint them well on your minds; the first maxim, never to complain, never to justify yourselves; the second maxim, to labour, to suffer, and be silent; put these in practice, and you will be saints." Then giving us his blessing with his crucifix, after previously addressing to our Lord, as if He were in this image, a most tender colloquy, he dismissed us, and we retired in tears. Thus concludes a witness who was present: "As the tongue speaks from the abundance of the heart, and words are so many flames of the burning heart, he caused to be felt, if I may so say, the fervour of his charity, and the love that he bore to his crucified Redeemer. In private conversations also, and in spiritual conferences, the servant of God always inculcated meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ; he desired that by this door an entrance should be

gained to the delicious pastures of the soul, 'Ego sum ostium,' he repeated with great feeling, 'ego sum ostium.' He said that a soul that enters by this door walks in security; in the Passion there is no delusion; and again he said, there is no delusion. He used in his explanations very appropriate similitudes, to excite a great esteem for the sacred mysteries of the Passion. "Imagine that you are seriously ill; I, who love you tenderly, come and visit you; after saying a few words of sympathy and consolation, I should certainly look at you with compassion, and through love of you make your sufferings my own; thus, when we meditate on the sacred Passion of Jesus, seeing Him in such affliction, we ought to compassionate Him, and then, through love, to remain looking upon Jesus in so great torments, and through compassionate love, make His sufferings ours." "Figure to yourselves," he said on another occasion, "that you had fallen into a great river, and some one through compassion, threw himself into the water to swim and save you, what would you say to such goodness? More, even more; imagine further, that on leaving the river, you were attacked by assassins, and the same person, through his great charity, interposed himself to receive the blows and wounds, and preserve your life; what would you do at the sight of such love? It is certain that you would make his sufferings your own, that through love and compassion you would run to console him, and to cure his wounds. Thus it should be with us, in meditating on Jesus, drowned in a sea

of sorrows, to save us from the deep ocean of perdition, seeing Him all wounded and bruised to give us life and health, we ought to make His sorrows ours through compassionate love, to sympathize with Him in His griefs, and give to Him all our affections." Such discourses as these greatly moved those who heard him, and very often affected them to tears ; and sometimes merely to hear him read some book, treating on this tender and devout subject, caused all the hearers to weep, as it happened even in the refectory, when the good man, during the time of meals, read according to rule ; and then he was so inflamed with love, and read with such devotion, if the book spoke of the Passion, that he himself could not restrain his tears, and the religious who were listening, wept with him.

As he knew well that the thought of the Passion of Jesus is for all a strong and invincible weapon, to defend us from the wounds of our fierce and implacable enemies, he proposed to all, and strongly recommended, meditation on the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, both to seculars and religious, to spiritual persons and those engaged in the world, being himself firmly convinced that whoever thinks on the Passion of Jesus Christ, keeps far from sin. "How can it be possible," he said, "to offend a God scourged, a God crowned with thorns for us, a God nailed to the cross for us ; and how is it possible, that, thinking deeply on these maxims and truths of faith to-day and to-morrow, we should offend God ? It is not possible. By these sentiments," he used to

say, "I have converted the most obstinate sinners, thieves, and all kind of persons, in whom, when I heard their confessions after a course of time, I could not find matter for absolution, so great had been their change of life, because they had been punctual in meditating deeply on the bitter sufferings of Jesus, as I had recommended to them. He used also to say, condescending with wise discretion, to those who had not yet tasted the sweetness that is proved in drawing near in spirit to the sacred wounds of our blessed Saviour, which are fountains of life and sweetness....." "Begin with a quarter of an hour in the morning, and before you leave your room make your prayer ; you will see that everything will go well with you, and you will keep far from sin."

Though he earnestly recommended this prayer to all, he desired it to be performed especially by ecclesiastics, whom he reminded that St. Bonaventure used to say, that "he did not seem to himself to have fulfilled his duties if on any day he did not think of the Passion of Jesus Christ." To husbands and wives, in order that they might serve to each other as an example and stimulus to piety and virtue, and then might in unison practise it with great fervour, he used to say : "The most important affair that you have on hand, is your own soul, therefore, before leaving your room in the morning, make at least a quarter of an hour's prayer on the Life, Passion, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh how greatly does heaven rejoice ; and what delight do the guardian angels take, to see husband and wife

making holy prayer together ! therefore do not omit this pious exercise ;” and to his words he added such grace and efficacy, that these persons were quite overcome and excited to fervour, in practising so useful a recommendation.

As letters are lasting witnesses, that preserve with perfect fidelity all the words, the expressions, and sentiments, that, coming from the heart, were noted by the pen of the servant of God, from them each one of our readers may gather how great and continual was the ardour of Father Paul’s zeal in promoting devotion to the sacred Passion of our Lord. “Pray” he writes, “for our poor Congregation, which is always mourning for the sufferings and death of its Beloved ; and would to God that there were many great workmen, who like loud trumpets of the Holy Ghost, might go and preach all over the world, that there might not be so many sins.....“ We see,” he says elsewhere, “by experience, more and more visibly, that the most efficacious means of converting even the most obstinate souls, is the sacred Passion of Jesus, preached according to the method, which the infallible and uncreated Divine Goodness has approved through His Vicar on earth.”

To a devout person, he says : “I thank the Divine Mercy that your soul never departs from the remembrance of the sufferings of the heavenly Spouse ; I wish, however, that you should allow yourself to be entirely penetrated by the love with which He has endured them. The short road is, to lose ourselves wholly in the ocean of these sufferings, since, as the Prophet says, ‘the Passion

of Jesus is a sea of sorrow and pain.' Ah my child! this is a great secret manifested only to the humble of heart; in this great ocean the soul fishes for the pearls of the virtues, and makes the sorrows of her Beloved her own. I feel a strong confidence that the Spouse will teach you this divine method of fishing, and He will teach it you when you are in interior solitude, free from all imaginations, detached from every earthly affection, abstracted from every created thing, in pure faith and holy love." To a religious man he writes: "Do not doubt that you are 'in sinu Dei intus, in the passive way;' it is a short road to annihilate and drown oneself in the infinite All, passing however through the Divine Gate, which is Christ Crucified; making His most bitter sufferings our own. Love teaches all things, for the most bitter Passion is the work of infinite love."... And in another letter he says to the same Religious: "The point that your Reverence does not understand, of making through love the sufferings of our sweet Jesus your own, the Divine Majesty will make you comprehend when it pleases Him. This is wholly a divine work. The soul entirely immersed in pure love, without imaginations, in pure and naked faith, when it pleases the Supreme Good, finds herself in a moment immersed in the ocean of her Saviour's sufferings, and in a glance of faith, sees them all without understanding; for the Passion of Jesus is entirely the work of love, and the soul being lost in God, who is charity, who is all love, feels both grief and love—for her spirit is entirely penetrated with a sorrowful love

and a loving sorrow : Opus Dei, no one fishes here unless our Lord teaches it. I have explained myself very imperfectly, but I have said nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing; to have nothing, to be able to do nothing, to know nothing, and God will draw from this nothing, the work of His greater glory."

"When our sweet Jesus," he writes to a spiritual person, "shall have taken deeper root in your heart, you will sing, 'pati et non mori,' or 'pati aut mori,' or even better, 'nec pati, nec mori,' but only an entire transformation into the Divine Will. Love has an unitive power, and makes the sufferings of its beloved its own. If you feel yourself wholly penetrated within and without by the sorrows of your Spouse, rejoice; but I may say that this joy takes place in the furnace of Divine love, because fire, which penetrates even to the marrow of the bones, transforms the soul into her beloved, and joining love and grief in a sublime manner, grief and love make a loving and sorrowful union, so close, that love is no longer distinguished from grief, nor grief from love, so that the loving soul rejoices in her sorrow, and triumphs in her sorrowful love. Remain in the knowledge of your nothingness, and be faithful in the practice of holy virtues, and chiefly in imitating our sweet and patient Jesus, for this is the great aim of pure love. Never fail to make the sacrifice of holocaust of your whole self to the Sovereign Good, and this sacrifice must be made in the fire of divine charity, kindled in that sacred bundle of myrrh which are the pains of Jesus; and all this must be done



with closed doors; that is, at a distance from everything sensible, in pure and naked faith."

In another, like a great spiritual master, he says: "In the time of aridity, arouse your mind sweetly with loving acts, and then rest in God, without feeling Him, and without enjoying Him, for then the soul more clearly proves her fidelity. Make a nosegay of the sufferings of Jesus, and keep it in the bosom of your soul, as I have told you. Sometimes you may make an affectionate and sorrowful commemoration of them, speaking sweetly of them to our Lord: O my dear Jesus, how swollen, bruised, and defiled with spittle, do I behold Thy sacred countenance! O my love, I see Thee all wounds! O my sweet Jesus, how disjointed are Thy sacred limbs! Ah, what pains! what sorrows! O my sweetest love! Thou art one entire wound. O dear sufferings! Ah, dear wounds! I will keep you always in my heart!"

As the Venerable Father had always been accustomed to keep before his eyes, whilst he remained in his room reading, praying, or writing, the devout representation of our crucified Lord, and to wear it on his breast whenever he quitted the Retreat, that he might always bear in mind the sufferings and death of Jesus, he knew by experience the great benefit produced by such a practice; he also recommended it earnestly to others, teaching them the method of profiting by it. "In the solitude of your room," he writes, "take the Crucifix into your hands, kiss the sacred wounds with great love, beg our Lord to give you a little

sermon, and then listen to the words of eternal life that He will speak to your heart—listen to what the thorns, the nails, and the Divine blood will preach. O what a sermon!”

In order that souls which he directed might find occasion, even from things that conduce the least to devotion, to call their beloved Redeemer to mind, he wrote to a person in the world: “Wear a string of pearls when you go out if you like, but when you put it on, remember that Jesus wore cords and chains round His neck. Wear this ornament purely to please God, and be confounded, saying,—Jesus was bound with ropes and chains in His Passion, and I wear pearls: teach this also to your daughters.”

As all suffer either much or little, Father Paul, in order that each might know the true remedy, would have wished to make known to all this great sentence, which he wrote in another letter: “The meditation of the Sacred Passion is a precious balsam that sweetens every sorrow.”

As on the Feasts of the Holy Cross we celebrate the memory of the triumph gained by our Blessed Lord in His Sacred Passion, he celebrated these feasts with extraordinary fervour; he sang Mass, gave holy communion to the ecclesiastics and laics, and performed the whole function with abundance of tears, and a most tender sentiment of devotion. He taught to others a very sublime and devout method for celebrating them with great fruit. “And what are you doing?” he writes to a soul of sublime prayer. “Did you celebrate very solemnly the Feast of the Exalta-

tion of the Holy Cross which took place the other day? You answer yes; but who knows whether you have well understood me? The feast of the Cross is celebrated every moment in the interior temple of the true lovers of our Crucified Lord, and how is it celebrated? I will tell you as well as I can: do you know how? This feast is spiritually celebrated by silent suffering, without support from any creature; and as feasts are kept with joy, so the feast of the Cross is kept by its lovers in suffering silently, with a joyous and serene countenance, that this feast may be hidden from creatures, and known only to the Supreme Good. In this feast we feed on a delicious banquet, nourishing ourselves in the Divine Will, in imitation of our Crucified Love. O what sweet food! This food is seasoned in various ways, with bodily or spiritual pains, with contradictions, calumny, and contempt from creatures. Oh, what a sweet flavour to the palate of the soul which tastes it in pure faith and holy love, ‘in silentio et spe!’”

With great fervour of devotion and tender compassion he also celebrated the feast of our Blessed Lady’s Dolours, which are so closely united with the bitter pains and death of Jesus; and on that day, opening his heart to a devout person, he says in a letter: “Friday is the feast of the Dolours of my blessed sorrowful Mother; recommend me very much to her, that her griefs, and the Passion of my Jesus, may be impressed on my heart, which I so greatly desire; and I should wish to imprint

them in the hearts of all, and then the world would burn with holy love."

In the feasts and joys of holy Easter, he exulted with delight in the Resurrection of his Beloved, but he remembered also the pains He had suffered, as a most efficacious encouragement to suffer with Him, and thus merit to rejoice afterwards with Him. "The great prescription," he wrote to a devout soul, "which you desire for keeping Easter well, is this: resignation to the will of God in all things; often to repeat these acts; to behold with the eye of faith all interior and exterior sufferings as excellent things, because God wills them; not to think of the future, that is, of the pains, sufferings, and other events that fancy puts before us, but to lose them in the will of God. The prescription goes on further, and I go to the end: all sorrows and sufferings must be bruised with patience and in silence, then a pill is to be made of them, kneaded with the balsam of the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, swallowed by faith and love, and digested by the heat of charity." However much the servant of God had at heart and recommended meditation on the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, and to make the sufferings of Jesus one's treasure, the wise director left, however, to souls the holy liberty of following in prayer that path to which God called them. He thus expresses himself to a pious soul: "I desire greatly that the Passion of Jesus Christ should be the subject of your prayer, and that in these loving colloquies the soul should be immersed in God, but understand me well, I wish the soul to

be left free, and that the loving attractions of the Holy Ghost should be followed ; and therefore I repeat what I have written—we must pray, not according to our way, but in the way of God. Yes, my child, when the soul rejoices to find herself alone with God, with pure and loving attention to God, in pure and lively faith, reposing in the sweet bosom of her Beloved in the sacred silence of love, where the soul speaks more to God by this holy silence than if she actually spoke—in such a case she must be allowed to remain thus, and not be disturbed with other exercises, for God then carries her in His loving arms, and gives her entrance into His wine-cellars, to drink of that sweet wine which maketh virgins to spring forth Oh, what great language is this.’ Thus wrote this wise director, who, however, generally counselled all souls of prayer to enter by means of the Sacred Passion of Jesus, as the gate, shown to us by Incarnate Wisdom Himself, to a close union and sweet conversation with God. In fine, we may say, that the servant of God, whether in preaching, speaking, or writing, always carried out this great resolution of preaching Jesus Christ, ‘et Hunc crucifixum.’ He had Jesus Christ Crucified in his mind, Jesus Christ Crucified on his tongue, and with Jesus Christ Crucified he began every action, and even every letter, putting before each these great words, ‘Jesu Christi Passio,’ and with Jesus Christ Crucified he happily ended all his undertakings. We may therefore say, that it was Father Paul’s continual exercise to promote

and inculcate devotion to the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ.

During the last months of his life, though so weak and exhausted that he could hardly speak, he made use of the charitable visits paid to him to speak of Jesus Christ and of His Passion; and the very day on which he died, a gentleman of Ravenna having gone to see him, introduced by a Camaldolese monk, the good old man, though he could not speak without great difficulty, took in his hand a small picture of the Crucifixion, and with his hand and eyes made signs to this gentleman, wishing him to understand that we must always keep the Passion of Jesus before our eyes, and that he might, as F. Paul wished, preserve the remembrance of it, he gave him the little picture, as he was accustomed to do to others on different occasions. On Friday, which, as every one knows, is the day of the death of Jesus Christ, the servant of God was seen to change colour, becoming pale and livid; the palpitation of his heart was stronger, sometimes even so vehement, that he seemed to have scarcely any pulse; and thus he manifested evidently what impression the sufferings of Jesus made on his soul, for even his body participated in it. When on that day he visited the Via Crucis, it was easy to see that he accompanied, with a heart sorrowful and pierced with compassion, his Lord in this journey of pain and sorrow. During the days of Holy Week, which our mother the Church consecrates chiefly to meditation and grief for the death of our Divine Redeemer, it is impossible to express in words with what sorrowful

compassion for Jesus the servant of God was penetrated. At the approach of these holy days, he felt an ardent desire to perform the sacred functions that commemorate the Passion of Jesus Christ, and though he was suffering violently from his infirmities, he begged God to grant him strength to perform these sacred functions, and our Lord was pleased to hear him, giving him as much strength as was necessary to go through them, though he did not accomplish this without great difficulty, for the increase of his merit. When the functions were ended, as if his body began anew to feel all its weakness, being no longer sustained by that fervour of devotion which possessed and supported him during the ceremonies, he was obliged through indisposition to lie in bed. The spirit of devotion in which he performed these ceremonies was remarkable: when he blessed the palms, he did it with such feeling, and such lively faith, that he usually wept, and his countenance changed. On Maunday Thursday, he used to make to the whole religious community a devout discourse or meditation, which he did also in Rome the year before his death, with extraordinary fervour, and a great impression on all, in preparation for Easter, which he was going to celebrate with his religious. He spoke with exceeding great ardour, as if he were sending forth flames from his burning heart. He often broke out into great exclamations, saying, "O goodness! O charity! O love of the great Son of God!" and by these words the hearts of his hearers were so penetrated, that they wept bitterly

After the meditation, he asked pardon of all, and with such a sentiment of humility, weeping, sighing, and striking his breast, that the religious might have believed him to be what he wished to appear and believed himself to be, a great sinner, if they had not known him to be a great servant of God ; therefore, it could not possibly be otherwise, than that they should be confounded and touched.

He began mass with an abundance of tears, even as if his heart were melting away ; and he continued quite recollected in God, and absorbed in the sublime mysteries of our holy religion. When he came to the consecration, or to the reception of the Sacred Host, and of the Precious Blood, he was again all bathed in tears, and his face became so inflamed that it seemed like a fire. At the communion of the religious, in uttering these words, 'Ecce Agnus Dei,' so great were his affection of devotion and his flow of tears, that words were rather expressed in weeping than articulated. Sometimes he carried the Sacred Host in the mysterious procession of Maundy Thursday, and when he placed it in the sepulchre, he did nothing but weep ; so that as we have said, he completely wetted the humeral veil, and the corporal on the altar also ; after the sacred minister had locked the tabernacle of the holy sepulchre, Father Paul took the little key, put it round his neck with great devotion, tenderly kissed it, and said, "This is the key that secures my Treasure, my Good, my God."

As his soul was pierced with sorrow, his body



on these occasions was more than ordinarily weak, he could not even take his usual food, and with great difficulty swallowed only a little soup. On Good Friday began again the sighs and tears with which he accompanied the sacred functions. In uncovering the crucifix, he showed more than ever the affection of his heart. It is not possible to express the feeling with which he went through this function, whoever has seen it, will know well what I mean; with his eyes bathed in tears, his countenance on fire, and a tone of voice both faltering and touching, he said, 'Ecce lignum Crucis.' Lame as he was, he would kneel down, and made so great an effort that he succeeded, though with considerable inconvenience to himself, in making his adoration, and when he reached the feet of Jesus crucified, he seemed ready to expire, and deposit his soul in the wounds of his Beloved. Returning after the functions to his room, every one can imagine how deeply imprinted in his soul he bore the whole course of the insults, the sorrows, and the agony of our Blessed Redeemer. One year when he was suffering more than usual from the pains that had become habitual to him, the lay-brother who was his companion persuaded him to take his food in his room, instead of the common refectory. He yielded to this wish, but when the scanty refectory that on this day is given to the community, was brought to him, he wept bitterly, saying, "What, do you wish me to eat, dear brother, when I am thinking of the sorrows of ever Blessed Mary! Oh, dear Mother, what grief was thine in seeing thyself deprived of

thy dear Son, and in seeing Him afterwards dead in thy arms ! Ah, what a grief to Blessed Mary ! to return to Bethania after burying her beloved Son ! and do you wish me to eat ?” he repeated, “ when I am thinking of this !” and again becoming absorbed in the contemplation of this great sorrow, he burst into a flood of tears, which prevented him from eating, and exclaimed, “ Oh, dear Mother ! how is it possible for me to eat on this day ! thou wast so oppressed with grief, and there was no one to give thee consolation !” he thus finished with sighs and tears, and with these holy considerations went to the secret chapel, to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. All these things occurred almost annually. And though for a great many years God kept him in a state of aridity and desolation, like gold in the crucible, nevertheless, on those days, as if the abundance of his desolation and interior communication with God, could not all be contained in the superior part of his soul, the superabundance of it appeared even exteriorly ; for he was bathed in tears, and his face was first pale as a corpse, then red and inflamed, and every now and then he burst into tears. We find these sentiments of tenderness, love, and compassion, expressed in a letter written by him on one of these holy days.

“ It is not now the time for writing,” he says, “ but for weeping. Jesus is dead to give us life ; all creatures are in mourning, the sun grows dark, the earth trembles, rocks are split, the veil of the temple is rent, my heart only is harder than a stone. I will say nothing more than this,

keep close to the poor Mother of the dead Jesus. By a miracle she does not die, she is entirely absorbed in the sufferings of Jesus ; imitate her, ask dear Magdalen, and the well-beloved John also, what they feel in their hearts. Let the ocean of the sufferings of Jesus and Mary inundate your soul. I remain at the foot of the cross, and thus subscribe myself the crucifier of Jesus Christ, Paul.”

He used to say in the same sentiments, “ These are days when even stones weep ; and what ! the High Priest is dead, and must we not weep ? we could not otherwise have faith ! O God ! ” and in saying these words, he was pierced with sorrow, so that an ocular witness, worthy of all credit, was able to say with truth, that on these days, as well as on the Fridays destined by the holy Church to renew in her children the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus Christ, one must either avoid going to Father Paul, or go prepared to weep through devotion in hearing his inflamed discourses. It is not, therefore, astonishing that our venerable founder did and suffered so much ; the thought of our Lord’s Passion was a stimulus, an encouragement, and a most sweet consolation to him. Listen to the deposition of one of his friends and benefactors. “ I remember that, conversing one day with Father Paul, amazed at the sort of life he led, I said to him, ‘ How do you manage, Father Paul, to lead such a life ? ’ and he replied, ‘ God has suffered so much for me, it is not much that I should do something for His love.’ And he has often made me this answer, when I have

put similar questions to him." Paul had always his crucified Love in his mind and heart, and from Him derived constant force and vigour to sustain him amidst labours, that he might not yield to attacks, nor lose courage at the obstacles he encountered. He faithfully carried out the loving designs of Divine Wisdom, and united to his Divine Redeemer, and affectionately looking on his Divine Redeemer, he may be said to have led a life wholly animated by lively faith, love, and compassion for the Incarnate Word, who has so greatly loved us, and has suffered so much and so willingly for our love.



## CHAPTER XVII.

OF FATHER PAUL'S EXTRAORDINARY DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, TO THE ANGELS AND SAINTS.

THE great Mother of God, the ever-Blessed Virgin Mary, may be called the loving protectress of all religious orders, which are like chosen vineyards planted by our Lord's hand in His Church, and watered most abundantly with the fertile streams of His grace, according to those words which are so applicable to her, 'posuerunt me custodem in vineis,' and she well shows by her maternal affection, and by her powerful protection, how great care she takes of them, and how many graces she obtains for these mystical vine-

yards of the Lord. All religious orders have constantly recognized her as their Mother, and their Sovereign Protectress, because from her they have obtained a thousand favours and signal graces. Some, however, amongst them, acknowledge much greater obligations to the Queen of Heaven, because she herself has given them a beginning, either by communicating the plan of the institute, by showing the form of the habit, or in some other way, graciously co-operating in their foundation. This special favour was granted to the little congregation of the poor barefooted Clerks of the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, for the great Mother of God condescended to appear to Father Paul, who was chosen by His Divine Majesty for this work, and to show him the habit of mourning and of penance, which they were to wear. She herself, the most loving Mother, called him to lead a retired and penitential life in the solitude of Monte Argentaro. She always protected the congregation, and by means of so powerful and merciful an advocate, most signal favours and distinguished graces have been received, from which the new institute has derived its establishment and its perfection, as we shall soon see. Father Paul seeing that our sweet Lady acted towards him as a most tender Mother, endeavoured to prize highly her affection, and to correspond with it in the best manner he could, not to be an ungrateful son to so great a benefactress. All his love, after God, was given to Blessed Mary. The great desire, the satisfaction and delight of his heart was to find a means of making to this

great Lady offerings to honour and please her. He daily recited the holy Rosary, but with singular devotion, and he would not omit it, even when dying. Every year on the 15th of August, he made her a tribute of that hour of prayer, usually called the hour of the Rosary, and he made it at night from seven till eight. Even when ill, and in bed, he would always continue this holy practice, and earnestly begged the brother assistant to call him at that hour, and he made use of the alarum that he might not make a mistake, so much did he fear not to be exact in this devout practice, though he slept very little at night.

All the feasts of the ever-Blessed Virgin were for him days of the greatest recollection, devotion, and fervour. He had a particular devotion joined to a very devout interior attraction for the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin; he said several times, "The holy Church has not declared herself on this point, but I would give my blood, and sacrifice my life in torments in defence of it, and if in this manner I did not become a martyr, I should at least give great glory to this great Lady, and how happy should I be could I do so!"

The devout sentiments of his heart on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary, may be known from a letter which he wrote on that occasion. "This great heart of the Infant, Blessed Mary, which after the heart of Jesus, is the sovereign of hearts, has loved, and loves God more than all heaven together. I mean more than all the angels and saints who have been, are, or shall

be, and therefore desire to love God like the heart of this great Infant, and to do it, cast yourself in spirit into that bountiful heart, and love the Sovereign Good with that most pure heart, with the intention of practising all the virtues she exercised."

He prepared by novenas of great fervour for the feasts of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin in the temple, and of her glorious Assumption into heaven. He desired that the whole religious community belonging to the Retreats at Monte Argentaro, where the church is dedicated to the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, should make this novena with him, and he prescribed the plan of it; the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, and amongst other prayers, the psalm, 'Jubilate Deo omnis terra, psalmum dicite nomini ejus,' was sung, because in that psalm was shown the path in which God had made him walk, and it commemorated also the singular graces he had received from the Blessed Virgin, who had always assisted and protected him. He did all in his power to be present at this novena in the Retreat of the Presentation. How often when old and crippled, did he quit the Retreat of St. Angelo, or of St. Mary del Cerro, and go through bad roads, and unfavourable weather, in the month of November, to Monte Argentaro, to celebrate that feast with greater recollection. It is not easy to describe with what devotion and tears he celebrated it; his heart seemed to melt like wax before the fire, through the love he bore to his dear Mother, and his gratitude towards her. When the feast drew

near, it seemed to him, through his interior joy and spiritual cheerfulness, as if the very air derived fresh sweetness, according to the expression of the Prophet Joel ; ‘*In illa die stillabunt montes dulcedinem, et colles fluent lacte.*’ “The feast of the presentation, he said himself, before his death, “was always considered by me, ‘*dies celeberrimus, atque sanctissimus.*’” On that day he was penetrated with most tender devotion, and he used to say, that this holy day was the happy day and anniversary on which he had said farewell to the world ; and on that same day he ardently desired to be for the first time clothed with the habit of the Passion, and thus offer himself in the flower of his years to the Divine Majesty, in imitation of that great Queen, who in offering herself in the temple, made of herself a sacrifice so agreeable to the heart of God.

He celebrated every year with equal devotion, the feast of the glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. He preceded it by a preparation of forty days, which he called the Lent of our Lady. During that time he daily recited the whole Rosary, practised various mortifications, one of which was to abstain entirely from all kinds of fruit ; nor would he ever dispense himself from this rule, however necessary he might feel it to take fruit, which was perhaps the only food that suited his stomach.

In the nausea, the weakness and pains from which he suffered, it is certain that the venerable Father, always a lover of mortification, sought to overcome himself even in this, and contradict that



little natural inclination ; therefore if the Brother assistant, even out of this time of Lent, gave him any fruit he seemed to accept it, but through mortification ate only half or a third part, and left the rest, with so much natural simplicity that it did not seem to be mortification but a natural action. During the Lent of our Lady, he made a loving offering of all kinds to this great Queen, and though he felt a great dislike for every other kind of food and an inclination to vomit, and it appeared to him, especially in the latter years of his life when his weakness was greater and his infirmities more serious, that fruits alone best suited his stomach, he would never give up this devout practice, but willingly deprived himself of them for the love of the Blessed Virgin. Once in the year 1767, being scarcely recovered from a dangerous illness, and actually suffering from a tedious convalescence and disgust for food, a beautiful apple was offered to him which was the very thing he could best relish, but the servant of God, always intent on pleasing this Sovereign Lady, would not even taste it because it was during his dear Lent : and as he knew how to season his mortifications with cheerfulness, he said, smiling, to one of the priests who was present : “ I am like a famous chief of robbers, who, on a Wednesday, would not eat the meat put before him, because he said he was making the Wednesdays of St. Anthony, and he had just committed a homicide.” Thus spoke Father Paul, because he really thought himself the chief of sinners.

The power of his example in leading others to

embrace a similar practice of abstinence, may be inferred from what he himself writes: "It will suffice, that the abstinence from fruit commences on the 1st of August, for those who wish to keep it, but all will do it for they greatly love our sweet Lady and Mother, Mary." The nine days immediately preceding the feast, he spent in a most fervent Novena, adding other exercises of mortification and penance, recommending their practice also to all the rest of the Congregation, since which, they have been introduced into all the Retreats from the example and counsel of the venerable Father. On the day of the great feast or triumph of the Queen of heaven and earth, the heart of Father Paul was all joy and cheerfulness, tenderness and devotion towards this great Lady, and it was easy to see from his exterior, chiefly in time of Mass, that he would sing as long as he could, though it cost him no little difficulty sometimes, since he generally did nothing but weep through devotion and delight. On that day he wished the Religious to feel an universal joy; he ordered that the food should be better than usual, and that fruit should be put on the table, saying, that it was to be eaten through devotion. From some of his letters, written on this great solemnity, which fortunately have been preserved, we clearly see how great was the fervour of his devotion on this day. "The great triumph of the Blessed Mary is already at hand, but I have not courage to speak of it. The riches of this Sovereign Lady are so great, and she is so deep an ocean of perfection, that the great God

alone, who has enriched her with such treasures, can know it. That great wound of love with which her most pure heart was sweetly pierced from the first instant of her Immaculate Conception, increased so much during the course of her most holy life and penetrated so deeply, that it caused her blessed soul to quit the body. Thus, this death from love, more sweet than life itself, put an end to that great sea of dolours which this great Mother suffered during the course of her blessed life; not only during the sacred Passion of Jesus, but also in beholding the many offences committed by ungrateful men against the Divine Majesty. Thus we rejoice and exult in God our Good, in the great triumph of holy Mary our Queen and Mother, we rejoice that she is exalted above all the choirs of Angels and placed at the side of her Divine Son. In the great and divine Heart of Jesus we may exult in the glories of Holy Mary, loving her with the most pure Heart of her Divine Son, and if Jesus permits it, take flight into the pure heart of Mary, and congratulate with her, rejoicing that so many pains and sorrows are ended, and ask grace to be always swallowed up in the immense ocean of Divine love, from whence flows that other sea of the sufferings of Jesus and the dolours of Mary. Let us be pierced through by these pains, by these dolours, and let the sword, lance, or dart be well tempered that the wound of love may be deeper, for the deeper the wound of love, the sooner will the prisoner be freed from the dungeon. I am an abyss of darkness, and know not

how to speak of such marvels. He who wishes most to please our blessed Lady must humble and annihilate himself the most; for, because Mary was the most humble of all creatures, she pleased God more than all by her humility."

And in another: "The great feast of the triumph of our dear mother draws near, O sweet death! This great queen died through love, a death more desirable than life. Ah, on that blessed day recommend fervently poor Paul to her. I desire nothing but to be entirely transformed into the Divine Will!" The sweet and merciful Mother of God used to bestow many gifts upon him, but in the way best suited to the true friends of her crucified Son, that is, by obtaining for him occasions of practising patience in tribulations, and purifying his charity in the midst of sufferings. Father Paul's greatest afflictions usually occurred during these Novenas, or the Lent of our Blessed Lady; then he remained in bed, unable to rise, then he was oppressed by external pains, contradictions, and the most cruel assaults of the devils, and then he suffered terrible dereliction and tormenting desolation of spirit; hence he, who well knew this, used to say, "Now we are entering upon our Blessed Lady's Lent." During the last years of his life, our loving Mother seemed to treat him with more sweetness, and to give him more consolations. In 1769, on the Vigil of the Assumption, Clement XIV., of holy memory, sent him word by his own confessor, that the favour he had asked, of the approbation of the Institute, and the confirmation of the rules, had been

granted: in due time the Brief was issued, and on the Octave of Our Blessed Lady's Presentation, the Bull was sent to him. In 1773, on the Vigil of the Assumption again, the same Pontiff sent to him the minutes of the Brief, drawn out as the instrument made for the concession of the Church and House of SS. Paul and John. Lastly, in 1775, the servant of God having presented a supplication for a renewed approbation of the Institute and rules, to His Holiness Pius VI., the business was concluded, and the sending forth of the Bull agreed upon, on the day of the Vigil of our Blessed Lady's Assumption; and from these new graces the servant of God derived an increase of love, and great fervour of devotion.

To show his gratitude to the great Mother of God by perpetual demonstrations of his filial affection, Father Paul caused several churches to be dedicated in her honour. The first church built by the servant of God on Monte Argentaro was dedicated to our Blessed Lady, under the title of her Presentation in the Temple; and to the great Mother of God, under the same title, was dedicated the church of the first monastery of our nuns at Corneto. Two other churches were dedicated to our Lady of Dolours. Other churches already built, and dedicated to our Blessed Lady, and offered to F. Paul, that he might build retreats for his religious annexed to them, he accepted very willingly, because the new foundation was placed under the special protection of his most loving Mother. Finally, wherever there was our Blessed Lady's name, and where there was the

most devout remembrance of her, there was F. Paul the happiest, because, after Jesus, all his hopes were in his Blessed Mother.

When he was going to make for the first time the great vow, the distinctive mark of our Congregation, and thus lay, if I may so speak, the first stone of the Institute, our Lord would not have him make it elsewhere than in a very devout chapel, dedicated to our Blessed Lady, where is venerated a picture of her, painted, it is said, by St. Luke. For having one day, at the time when he first came to Rome, entered the church of St. Mary Major, he felt when before that most devout picture of our Blessed Lady, venerated in the Borghese Chapel, a sweet inspiration to make for the first time a vow to promote in the hearts of the faithful, devotion to the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, and to endeavour to associate companions in so holy a work, and he did it as if offering it by the hands of our Blessed Lady, with the greatest consolation of soul, and confidence of corresponding to it with all fidelity, being under the protection of the ever Blessed Virgin. These are all marks of the great devotion he entertained towards his Sovereign Benefactress.

Indeed, in order to know his filial affection, it sufficed only to look at him when he uttered or heard mentioned the name of holy Mary, for he immediately took off his berettino, and with humility and special reverence bowed his head, as if he were actually humbling his heart before the throne of that Queen, and he wished others to do the

same when the name of Mary was pronounced. If afterwards he began to speak, as he often did, of this great Lady, it is impossible to express the confidence that his words inspired. He said with great feeling, "Mary must remedy these things," with similar expressions, that indicated not only his confidence, but also his great love and reverence. In his necessities, besides having recourse himself with all confidence to his dear Mother, he requested devout persons to pray also for him, and exhorted them to do it with lively confidence. In public, in his sermons, he spoke of her with the most profound respect, and with unspeakable joy praised her perfection, and he would have wished that every one should have shown great devotion towards her.

The Dolours of Mary, in particular, were most vividly and profoundly imprinted in his heart. He always wore round his neck the devout little habit of our Lady of Sorrows, and in missions fervently promoted the devotion to her Dolours. Though he was not in the habit of making processions, he sometimes, to increase devotion in the people towards the sorrows of our dear Lady, took them in procession to some church where our Lady of Sorrows is venerated. This he did at Ischia, the first time he gave a mission there. With all the people, he went to visit the Church of the Servants of Mary, and on arriving at the church door, made a very fervent discourse, wept bitterly, and severely disciplined himself. Compunction and tears were general amongst the people, and from that time sprang up a new

fervour of filial devotion, and of tender loving compassion for our Lady of Sorrows, which remains even to this day.

To all, generally, he recommended meditation on the Dolours with great fervour. With the same zeal with which he promoted the remembrance of our Lord's Passion, he promoted the devotion to the Dolours; for, as he said himself, if we go to the Cross, there is the Mamma; where the Mamma is, there is the Son. It was certainly enough to soften the hardest hearts to hear him speak of the bitter dolours of Mary. He meditated and considered them with filial piety, great compassion, and devotion. He sometimes imagined tender dialogues between the loving Mother and the suffering Son, but with such deep feeling, that the hearers were dissolved in tears of compassion and grief. He compared the sufferings of the Son and the griefs of the Mother to two seas, and said that we pass from the first to the second. "The grief of Mary (these are his words) is like the Mediterranean Sea, for it is written, 'Magna est velut mare contritio tua : ' from this sea we pass to the other boundless sea of the Passion of Jesus, in whose person David says, 'Veni in altitudinem maris;' and here the soul enriches herself, and fishes up most precious pearls of the virtues of Jesus and Mary." With the Passion of Jesus he had always in his mouth the Dolours of Mary, and said, that his hopes lay in the Passion of the Son, and in the sorrows of the Mother. Though he spoke of them constantly, he always seemed to say something new, because he always spoke of them with



new affection, so deeply was he penetrated with them in his heart. Most frequently when he spoke thus, he wept bitterly, and changed colour, becoming first red, then pale ; he then burst forth into these words, which came from the profoundest depths of his heart, " Ah, poor Mother ! Ah, dear Mother ! " On Good Friday, as we have said, oppressed by grief, and spiritually drowned in the bitterness of that great day, he could not even take food. Often he was heard to say, that Mary's greatest sorrow was when she saw her beloved Son dead in her arms, and saying this, he cried out, more by tears than words, with the affection of a truly loving heart, " Oh, grief above grief ! " He himself related in reference to this, that on one occasion, our Blessed Lady was seen in that most sorrowful act of receiving into her arms the lacerated body of so dear a Son, and through her great sorrow and affliction, her face was like that of one dead. We do not know precisely who had this vision, but we find it deposed in the processes, that the servant of God, speaking one day with a priest, a dear friend of his, on the Passion of Jesus and the Dolours of Mary, drew from his sleeve with a countenance all on fire, as was customary with him when he felt devotion, a little picture, representing our Lady of Sorrows, drawn by Cavaliere Conca, who, being at the same time a skilful and excellent painter and a good Christian, painted it with great skill and devotion, at the request of the servant of God, who begged him to express her grief as strongly as he could, saying to him :

“Here, I give it to you because it is not sorrowful enough—I have seen her in greater sorrow ;” and with these words gave him the holy picture, which is now preserved in the monastery of Mount Carmel, at Vetralla.

In the last years of his life also, this most merciful Mother condescended to show herself to her faithful servant pierced with grief, as she was at the time of the most bitter passion of her dear Son ; for in the retreats of Saints John and Paul, when, after mass, he was making his thanksgiving in the room next the little chapel, where he celebrated, she appeared to him with a sword through her heart, and tears in her eyes ; and speaking of her dolours, gave him so deep a sense of them, and used words of such tenderness, that they would even have rent a heart of stone. She gave him to understand, that her sufferings were beyond measure terrible and overpowering, from the ardent love she bore to her Son, and the incomparable amplitude of her soul, capable of a sea of sorrows ; the Queen of Sorrows complained of the false devotion of those who say they are devout to the Blessed Virgin, and then outrage by sin her Beloved Son ; and with great force and tenderness exhorted her dear servant to promote, as he always did, devotion to the sacred Passion of her Son, and to her dolours. This Mother of Mercy desiring to help a poor priest, whose soul was in a wretched condition, manifested to Father Paul his necessities, and this priest having come into his presence afterwards, the servant of God, who saw his interior, said to him with a tone of

certainty, "You appear to me as ugly as a devil." At these words, the priest entering into himself, and acknowledging his dreadful state, prostrated himself in confusion and grief at the venerable Father's feet, promising to amend his life, and thus showed the truth of the apparition of our Lady of Sorrows, who wished to draw him from the path of perdition. It is not therefore surprising that the servant of God, after such visions, and so deep a perception of the dolours of the Blessed Virgini, spoke of them with so much affection, tenderness, and compassion. As he knew what a treasure true devotion to our Blessed Lady is, he ardently desired that his children should enjoy the abundance of it. He inculcated, and with great fervour recommended, that they should be devout to our dear Lady. "Let them take," he says in the rules, "for their chief protectress, the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and bear towards her a due devotion; let them often call to mind the most bitter sorrows endured by her during the Passion and death of her dear Son, and let them, by voice and example, promote in others devotion towards this great Lady."

In a special manner he taught them true devotion towards the Mother of holy purity, to preserve ourselves pure and chaste. "Let them keep," he says to his religious in the same rules, "their interior recollected in God, and let them be armed with a filial and fervent devotion towards the Mother of God; let them endeavour to imitate her sublime virtues, and in so many dangers implore

her powerful protection." To engage this loving Mother to protect us with maternal care, he ordered that every night in the Retreats of the entire religious community, before going to rest, the Rosary and Litanies should be recited, with the Antiphon, 'Tota pulchra es, Maria,' that the day might happily end with an offering to the Queen of Heaven, of this spiritual crown of flowers, and that each might go to rest more tranquilly under her protection. Further, he ordered that in the noviciate, every day after vespers and spiritual reading, the novices should make a devout procession through the Retreat, reciting the holy Rosary, to place thus early under the protection of the heavenly Queen, these plants yet tender in piety and a religious life. The servant of God was delighted when he saw devotion to our Blessed Lady flourishing amongst us. And that each one of our religious might be encouraged to recite the holy Rosary, and have recourse to Mary, by the treasures of indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiff, he obtained, some weeks before his death, from Father John Thomas Mary Boxadors, then general of the illustrious order of Preachers, a permission to erect in the noviciate the society of the Rosary, with the faculty for the master of novices pro tempore, of ascribing all the religious who might wish to avail themselves of so great a benefit.

It was most edifying to see the poor old man in his last illness, already prostrated, speaking to the father general with so much vivacity and spiritual fervour, and showing such sweetness for the good

of his dear children. On that same occasion, he said to the Father General, that he left our poor and little congregation, under the protection of the order of St. Dominic, so vigilantly guarded by our Blessed Lady, and seemed quite delighted to have had the consolation of speaking to this good superior, and of commending to him before his death, the rising Congregation of the Passion.

Having received the holy Viaticum on the 30th of August, he wished to make known to all his dear children, that he left them under the mantle of the Blessed Virgin, his dear Mother, and said these words, which each of us should always keep in his heart: "Thou, O Immaculate Virgin, Queen of the martyrs, by those dolours which thou didst feel in the Passion of thy most beloved Son, give to us all thy maternal benediction, for I place them all, and leave them under the mantle of thy protection." He wished, as we have mentioned, that the religious of the Passion should also promote in others, devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and he left it written in the rules, as an indispensable duty. "It will be likewise the duty of our religious," he says, speaking of missionaries, "to promote in the faithful a filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God." Happy he who so greatly esteemed this devotion, and with it found Mary always kind and loving towards him, and with our dear Lady found also life and salvation from that Blessed Lord, who deigned to become her Son; 'Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino.'

Father Paul desiring to make many friends in

heaven, and to have many intercessors with the Divine Majesty, as he knew the power of the prayers of the saints, and had great diffidence in his own unworthiness, determined to have among the angels and saints many advocates who might pray specially for him. He honoured with particular devotion the Prince of the heavenly host, the archangel St. Michael; he chose him for the protector of the whole congregation, and ordered that in every Retreat the religious should recommend themselves to him after the rosary, reciting the 'Antiphon, Princeps gloriosissime,' with the corresponding prayer, and to encourage his children in this devotion, the good Father said that, at the time in which the foundation of the Retreats of the Presentation at Monte Argentaro was opposed, the Archangel Michael was seen by a holy person, standing, as it were, on a globe of fire, with an unsheathed sword, in the act of defending the rising congregation and new Retreat, and in memory of this apparition, an altar was erected in that first church, in honour of the holy archangel. He also venerated the angel guardians, and especially his own, with particular devotion. Wherever he was he saluted the angel guardian of the place. When he mounted the platform during a mission, he saluted the angel guardians of the people, and begged them to assist his audience, and he said that he was greatly helped by these blessed spirits, who cooperated with him for the good of his hearers. When he was at the Retreat, and met any of the religious, his first salutation was for their angel

guardian. It was several times observed by persons who did not know his interior, that on joining the general recreation, he made a profound bow to all the religious with a joyous countenance that inspired devotion; the good Father seeing that the religious were surprised, told them frankly that he did it chiefly out of respect for their angel guardians, who were with them. He wished each one of us to be very devout to his angel guardian. He introduced the pious custom of saluting the holy angels at the commencement of the morning and evening recreation, with the Antiphon, "Sancti Angeli Custodes nostri," &c., and its corresponding prayer. And that each one, by a confidence of obtaining through the angel guardians great graces and favours, might increase in devotion towards them, the good Father related the assistance which he had himself received from his good angel. He said, that once when in the act of falling from the platform, with the danger of severely hurting his head against a stone, from the accidental breaking of a plank during the warmth and fervour of the sermon, he felt his head borne up in the air, and then laid softly down without any shock, which there must otherwise have been; and when he related this favour, he said, weeping, "And yet I have always been and am ungrateful to God after so many benefits." The Venerable Founder received other special graces and favours from the holy angels. He went once to the Retreat of the Presentation, at Monte Argentaro, during the winter, and after walking a short distance, he felt quite exhausted from the fatigue of the journey

and his own weakness, and was seized with convulsions and shiverings. He was obliged to throw himself on the ground, not being able to continue his walk ; but he did not on this account lose his confidence in God, but full of faith, turning towards his blessed Lord, said : “ Lord, I should not like to die here, without the assistance of my Religious ; ” and after these words he totally abandoned himself into the affectionate arms of Divine Providence. Feeling himself suddenly lifted from the ground, he opened his eyes, and seeing two most beautiful angels, exclaimed with a heart all gratitude, love, and joy : “ Oh, the great Providence of our Lord ; ” and thus supported by the holy angels, without perceiving the distance, he arrived in a very short time at the Retreat.

He was once travelling with his companion and brother, Father John Baptist ; the season was a very severe winter, the country was all frozen, and the journey long, unfortunate, and full of suffering. The servant of God felt a natural repugnance for this journey ; but as the glory of God was concerned, he overcame every obstacle with great confidence. Having begun to travel, he preceded his companion, by a wretchedly bad road, opening a path by his footsteps ; but after walking a long time, both of them became, from the cold, their weakness, and fatigue, almost incapable of proceeding farther. Father Paul felt severely his own discomforts, but his heart was much more deeply wounded by compassion for his poor companion ; the venerable Father, with live-



ly confidence, had recourse to the holy angels, and humbly begged assistance from them, and behold, he felt himself taken by the hand, and carried immediately to the end of his journey ; but not seeing his companion when he arrived, as one grace encourages us to ask for another, he again turned to the holy angels, and begged them to help his companion. These blessed spirits, who are so full of charity, did not delay to comfort blessed Paul entirely ; and he soon saw his companion before him, and asking him what he had suffered in the journey, was answered, that after he himself had disappeared from his eyes, he had suffered nothing, for he had been carried by an invisible hand to the place where they stood. The servant of God, much more animated by such wonderful graces and favours, had recourse, with great confidence, to the help of the holy angels ; and often when travelling, not knowing what road to take when he came to a highway, he used to recite on his knees a Pater and Ave to his holy angel-guardian, and then took the road to which he felt himself inspired ; and thus he happily arrived at the end, with the assistance of that holy angel whom he so greatly venerated, and so heartily loved.

Among the saints he had chosen for his special protectors, first, St. Joseph, the most pure spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and the great master in converse with God and holy prayer. When he built the Retreat of the Noviciate, apart from the other retreat of the Presentation at Monte Argentario, he caused the Church to be dedicated to the

glorious Patriarch, St. Joseph, supplicating him to be the protector of those devout youths, and their master, in an interior life. He venerated also, with special devotion, St. Peter, the great prince of the apostles ; St. Paul, a vessel of election chosen to carry the name of Jesus Christ over the whole world, and preach the glories of his crucified Lord ; St. Luke, the great example of mortification ; St. Blaise, protector of the city of Orbetello, St. Francis, the living image of Jesus crucified ; and through veneration for this blessed saint, every year, when he was at the Retreat of St. Angelo, on the day of his feast, he went usually to visit the saint in the Church of the Capuchin Fathers at Vetralla : and among the female saints he venerated with special affection St. Mary Magdalen, to whom he bore a very fervent devotion, sang Mass on the day dedicated to her, and made it a feast of the rule. He used to say, to encourage others in this devotion, that after the Blessed Virgin, this great saint was, of all the women, the one that loved God most ; he also honoured specially St. Catherine of Genoa, that great prodigy of Divine love.

During the Novenas in honour of our Blessed Lady and other Saints, the servant of God was always present, and assisted at them with great modesty and recollection. If he could not walk, he was carried in people's arms, or in a chair, and when he could not move from bed, he said to his companions who asked his leave to be present at these holy functions : " Yes, go, and pray go for me, and I shall assist in spirit at the devotions,"

and he said the same on the Saturday when permission was asked to go to the Litanies which are sung by us on that day, and thus he always shewed his great devotion and veneration for the Saints.

True piety omits nothing that contributes to God's honour, and to that of His Saints, therefore the venerable Father venerated also with great devotion the holy relics of the Saints, who had been living members of Jesus Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost; he would have them carefully kept in the church, nor did he allow them to be worn without due respect, from his veneration for them. When relics were to be kissed, the good Father, who in his old age had all the fervour of holy devotion, not being able to go down to the church, begged others to have the charity to carry him. And thus the servant of God sought to make many friends in order to be well received by them, after his passage from this vale of tears to the tabernacles of eternal rest.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE PRUDENCE OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF  
GOD.

THE prudence with which our Lord enriched the soul of His servant, was that true and excellent prudence of which the Apostle St. Paul speaks, and he gives a perfect description of it in reprobating and detesting the vain and hurtful prudence of the world; a spiritual prudence, which in proportion as it has a lively desire, and firm resolution of preferring by a noble choice its blessed end, spiritual and eternal things, to those which are vile, fading, and transitory, has also a clear and enlightened eye to discern that which is best, and knows how to give to every act of virtue a certain grace and discretion, which is most pleasing to God and to the truly wise. His heart desired nothing but God: therefore in his whole conduct he sought nothing but the paths that lead directly to God, and the means of accomplishing in all things, the will of His Divine Majesty. From his youth, having, by divine inspiration, formed the design of giving himself entirely to a life hidden in God, and to familiar intercourse with the Supreme Good, he quitted whatever could be an obstacle to it, and having retired from the world far from the noise and

tumult of business, in the quiet of solitude, he laboured day and night in seeking after Almighty God, and enriching himself with those treasures, which are found in God alone. To obey the voice of our Lord, who wished to make use of him for the holy work of the congregation, he wrote as we have said, the Rules, in which he breathes everywhere, not only the love of God, a strong desire of His glory, but also prudence, wisdom and spiritual sweetness; and the whole wonderfully contributes to form in the little Congregation, men, entirely dead to the world, who live by the spirit of Jesus Christ, and may, in due time, called by a lawful vocation, leave their solitude to preach penance with fruit amongst the people, and awake the nearly extinguished remembrance of the Passion and Death of our Divine Redeemer. It is true that the Rule, besides requiring us to rise each night to sing the Divine praises, to sleep upon a little straw, and to fast often, imposes many other austerities painful to our weak nature; nevertheless it gives so many spiritual helps, and so efficaciously leads us to conversation with God, that the religious who is faithful in its observance, finds his delight in it; nor does he grow weary of the multiplicity of exercises; for, being all at appointed times, and all regulated by holy obedience, one exercise gives great helps to practise another, and all give one another the hand mutually, so prudently are they connected together and regulated. Yet when Father Paul wrote these Rules he had no experience in the rules of religious orders, nor had

he read any other rules; but the Spirit of God that guided him, infused into his soul that prudence which is never wrong in its regulations.

As, moreover, the good Father knew, that as the little Congregation grew and its members increased, he could not on account of human weakness promise himself that all would have that great fervour and strength of constitution that a very austere Institute requires; he agreed, on the approbation of the rules and the confirmation of the Institute, that some practices of austerity should be mitigated, nor could he doubt that it was the will of God, when the Sovereign Pontiffs Benedict XIV. and Clement XIV. gave him to understand that they not only gave their consent and approbation to this, but felt particular satisfaction from it. He was, however, always of opinion that the houses should be founded, as much as possible, in solitude. He knew the great injury to our spiritual profit that too much conversation with seculars causes, unless there be necessity for it. It was always his custom, after assisting his neighbour by missions and other exercises of charity, to retire into solitude to enjoy a little sweet repose, and increase his fervour by employing himself tranquilly in conversing with and enjoying Almighty God, that he might be able in due time to return to the assistance of his neighbour without injury or danger to his soul, which he greatly feared. As from the falls of others he had learned like one who knows how to derive instruction from them, and had become deeply convinced that it is necessary for evangelical

labourers, after working for their neighbour's good, to retire from time to time into solitude, he would have the houses founded in remote places, especially reflecting that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, said to His disciples when they returned from the missions: "Venite seorsum in desertum locum, et requiescite pusillum." Therefore, as he, after labouring some time in giving holy missions, retired into solitude, he desired that the same practices should be observed also by our religious and missionaries, "otherwise," he used to say, "we shall be like a candle, which consumes itself in giving light to others." In order to establish the Congregation happily, and direct it well, it is impossible to express how the servant of God laboured, and how happily he succeeded in his holy undertaking, and without wishing it, showed himself to be a master of Christian prudence.

Of all the springs from which he drank abundantly the waters of intelligence and the science of life, the chief was holy prayer. Before anything else, when he had to deliberate on business, he had recourse to God, invoking the aid of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of true counsel, and he used to say on this subject, "Scientia sanctorum, prudentia," and our Lord, who delights in humble souls that fly to Him, and gives the good spirit to them that ask Him, helped him that he might not err, and very often infused into his soul lights so clear and so abundant, that the directors to whom the servant of God communicated them, were astonished. Monsignor Emilio Cavalieri, a man of

that merit, sanctity, and learning which we have described elsewhere, when he heard the youthful Paul, in a conference, felt interiorly moved, and could not restrain his tears, which ran down in streams from his eyes. He said firmly, "Paul, this is entirely the work of God, and you will see it established by means which you never thought of." Thus he spoke of the Congregation, and wished to be one of the first to take the habit of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

As Father Paul found in God the source of all light, he was constantly more and more animated to have recourse to Him in every perplexity. But he did not on this account neglect the means, nor omit that care which Almighty God wills that man should employ, and which He accompanies with His loving benediction; the servant of God, therefore read good books with great attention, first of all the Sacred Scriptures, which he deeply meditated; he also read ecclesiastical history, and the lives of the Saints, and like an industrious bee, collected for his own direction and that of others, those facts which are most instructive. Very often, and almost always when he was in his little room, if not in actual prayer he had in his hands some book of edification and instruction, One day a brother entering his room, found him with a book of lessons from holy Scripture in his hand, and said to him with filial confidence, "Reverend Father, are you amusing yourself?" "Amusing myself!" said the servant of God, "I read for profit." As he read with a strong desire to become better acquainted with the paths that



lead to God, and as he united application with extraordinary intelligence, he found as it were, a treasure of a thousand facts most useful in practice, and being gifted by God with a most happy memory, he drew from it for the benefit also of others, those sentences and instructions which were best adapted to the necessity, and made upon them excellent reflections, which he uttered always with deep feeling; and though what he said was often well known, when he spoke it seemed quite new from the energy and unction which accompanied his words. No one who is at all versed in ecclesiastical history or devout books, will be quite a stranger to the fall of Origen; but it was delightful to hear it from the mouth of this saintly old man, who spoke of it with holy fear and great earnestness: "When I consider," he said, "the fall of this great man, I think how great is human weakness, imagining to myself, as Origen himself says, that he was, as we also all are, a vessel of glass sustained in the air by the hand of God, if it is left for a moment by the beneficent hand of God it falls to the ground, is broken into a thousand pieces and not a trace of it remains." A truth, very useful to lead us to distrust ourselves, and ground ourselves in holy fear, on which every edifice of sanctity is well founded.

As Father Paul well knew, that he who depends too much on his own ideas and lights, either deceives himself, or opens to the devil a wide gate to enter in with his artifices and deceits; he was always very desirous of receiving advice. With singular humility and docility he had recourse on

all occasions to wise and enlightened persons, and with regard to this used to repeat often with great respect, these two sentences of the Holy Ghost, "Ego sapientia habito in consilio," and "Fili, sine consilio nihil facias." We have seen how, in undertaking the work of the Congregation, he sought in all things the advice and direction of his Bishop, and of other men according to God's own heart. During the whole course of his life afterwards he took, always, first the advice of his director, and as long as his brother F. John Baptist lived, consulted him, though advice often cost him very dear, and he had to purchase it at the price of great humiliations. If on these occasions, some good counsel was suggested to him, he immediately yielded with admirable docility and allowed himself to be turned to any side without difficulty. Nor did he desire that a resolution should be taken one way or the other, but quite satisfied with knowing what ought to be done, said, full of humble gratitude and with great cordiality, "You are right, you speak well, I am a poor ignorant man, I have not the light of God." One who did not know him would have taken him for a man without talent; so deep was the feeling with which he pronounced these words. Having found, as he believed, the right way to God, he immediately undertook it, unless the importance of the affair in question urged him again to have recourse to God by fervent prayer. He did this himself and engaged others also to do it, especially those souls known to him, who dwelt in the interior sanctuary and conversed intimately with

God, the true light and fountain of all wisdom ; it sometimes happened that our Lord gave to him extraordinary light to know that which was hidden from human understanding, and then the servant of God, though at first he had yielded with all docility to the advice of others, said with holy liberty, that the thing must be done differently from what they had agreed upon ; and the effect clearly proved that the Spirit of God was with him, and led him as it were by the hand by ways exceeding the light of ordinary prudence.

We must not believe that the servant of God failed to use the necessary means for the good success of his undertakings ; but he did not place his confidence in them, but in our Lord ; he was not, therefore, fond of employing in his affairs many recommendations and entreaties, for he wished his business to have an unfavourable or prosperous termination, according to the pleasure and will of God, who regulates all things discreetly and wisely ; and when he saw that the efforts made and means tried were useless, he quietly resigned himself to the will and sovereign dispensations of his Lord. By this prudent method of acting, the servant of God obtained the desired establishment of the Congregation. When in his counsels there was no room for doubt, and it seemed that the deliberation had been made according to God, Father Paul took great care that everything should be punctually performed. He was a great enemy to delay, which may often ruin the most useful designs, and prostrate the most important and well-planned affairs, and he

tried to have business quickly despatched. He recommended this also to others, and used to say that having once consulted Mgr. Cavalieri, Bishop of Troja, to know if the diligence he employed in his affairs was according to the will of God, the good Prelate replied, "We read of the Angels, 'Ite angeli veloces,'" and by this the servant of God was greatly confirmed in his good custom of labouring diligently, after consultation and due deliberation. He reaped great benefit from this, for he was thus able by God's assistance, to carry to perfection many things, which by slowness and delay would have failed or been imperfect. This he knew himself, and he used to say sometimes, "If I had not taken care, this would not have been done." It was pleasant to have any business to do with the servant of God, for what he could do to-day he never put off till tomorrow. If he had two days' time to do anything, he did it on the first day, and said: "Who knows that there will not be something else to do tomorrow," and added 'Bis dat, qui cito dat;' let us get rid of thinking about it." This he used to say when he gave letters to be answered by his Secretary, and when the letters were sent off he said, "Now it is done, let us think no more of it." The wonder however was, that in this solicitude he never lost that tranquillity which in the opinion of the servant of God himself, was indispensably necessary to terminate affairs happily. He used to say, that to dispatch business quickly, a peaceful heart and tranquil mind are necessary, and these qualities accompanied all his operations.

## CHAPTER XIX.

OF HIS PRUDENCE AND WISDOM IN GOVERNING THE CONGREGATION, AND IN EVERY OTHER OCCASION.

It would be proper to speak here of the prudence and discretion constantly evinced by Father Paul, of his indefatigable vigilance in the government of the Congregation; but as in the first part of the history we have given some idea of these qualities, we will endeavour to be as brief as possible, and will say nothing, except that the government of the Venerable Founder clearly proved that a prudence entirely according to the heart of God is most efficacious for keeping up good order in a community, and for promoting advancement in virtue. He had the art of winning over every mind, and of entering into all hearts, which is the true secret in order to direct the wills of others to the glory of the Divine Majesty; and thus having God always in view himself, and aspiring to Him continually, he led to God along with himself, the whole of the little Congregation, keeping up always an ardent desire of pleasing God and making Him a perfect sacrifice of the holy work he had undertaken. With tranquillity of heart and presence of mind, even at an advanced age, and we might say to his last breath, he always sought the spiritual advantage of the Congregation, giving with great earnestness, sick and

even almost dying as he was, most important advice in word and writing, that all might turn to God's greater glory.

In his missions, no less than in the government of the Congregation, he displayed a rare prudence, full of wisdom, as the devout reader will have perceived. And in the regulation of the missions, of which we have elsewhere given an idea, and in the wonderful and frequent conversions that followed from his missions, the charity of the good Father, being then all activity, and most ingenious, made him find many different means of gaining souls to God, taking each in the way best suited to it; sometimes by practices in themselves trifling, such as a short quarter of an hour's mental prayer, or meditation on death, placing oneself on the ground, in the position in which corpses are placed. He succeeded in detaching from the love of vanities some women who were on the way to perdition through following them, persons who, as all enlightened men know, are not without great difficulty induced to make this renunciation. But prudence, animated by true zeal, and accompanied by much prayer, obtains everything with the help of our Lord.

When he met with great obstinacy in the wandering souls whom he sought to lead back to God, how greatly then did the good Father exert himself! how active was his charity! what efforts, and all holy, did it suggest to his heart! When giving a mission at Pitigliano, in Tuscany, he was informed that an old woman there had two daughters, who bore an implacable hatred to a certain

man, and desired his death, because with an excess of barbarity he had killed his wife, the sister of the two girls, and daughter of the old woman. Father Paul knew well how difficult it would be to make peace, and to obtain the pardon of these wretched women, who believed they had so much reason to hate their enemy. Nevertheless, confiding in God, he began to attempt the reconciliation by sending for the mother and the two daughters. But scarcely had they heard the proposal for peace, than, full of ill-will, and quite enraged, they disrespectfully opposed the missionary, and hating even the remembrance of the murderer, began to cry out furiously, "Ah, the traitor!" nor could the good missionary then say anything more about forgiveness to souls so ill-disposed. He continued his sermons, and preaching one night on peace, took in his hand the crucifix, and began to declaim with great energy against those who obstinately refused to pardon, saying: "O thou soul! take notice that if thou refusest peace, Jesus Christ will turn His back upon thee!" At this sermon one of the widow's daughters was present, but not she, nor the other sister, who, perhaps because they feared the cure and the remedy of their festering wound, avoided the charitable physician. These words were not uttered in vain for this girl, for, feeling herself struck by the threat, returning home, she said to her mother and sister: "I will make peace, for I do not wish Jesus Christ to turn His back upon me;" words which made an impression on the hard hearts of the mother and sister. No sooner

did F. Paul hear of this, than, in order to keep alive in these souls the spirit of charity which had begun to be enkindled, he sent for all three, and having kindly exhorted them to make peace, they agreed to do it; the Father then added, that with every precaution, he would have the murderer, who was then at Montalto, brought to the place. He sent at once, arranging everything with the greatest discretion, that the man might come and conclude the peace, and might not on the other hand endanger himself, or give occasion to any tumult. When he arrived, he made him stop at a safe place in a church outside the village, and which had the right of sanctuary, and then sending for the lawyer and the women, he waited for them to conclude the treaty of peace, which was universally desired in the country, where the murder and the hatred were both well known. The women came, but scarcely had they heard of the arrival of the murderer, than, calling vividly to mind the cruel murder of the departed woman, and feeling anew a violent passion of hatred enkindled in their hearts, they could not contain themselves, but furiously exclaimed: "That traitor is come—we wish him dead!" At these words, the poor missionary, though surprised, did not lose courage, but desiring, if he could not then entirely extinguish the fire of passion, at least to arrest its flames, that they might not make a greater conflagration, intoned aloud the Litanies, and desired the people, who were there in great concourse, to answer; and whilst these women were obliged to keep silence, the zealous mission-



ary begged our dear Lady, who is a loving peacemaker, to obtain the grace he desired of a truly sincere and Christian peace. After the Litanies; the good Father kindly asked these women if they would make peace for the love of God, and their hearts being changed, they all replied that they would. F. Paul immediately departed with them, followed by the people, to meet the murderer; but alas! as they were passing the place where the dreadful murder was committed, the old widow, as if she saw her dead and murdered daughter before her, said with a burst of anger, "In this place that traitor murdered my daughter," protesting that she would not on any account grant pardon. But the servant of God, who had already experienced the efficacy of recourse to our Blessed Lady for preventing the rage and furious exclamations of that woman, kneeling down immediately, again intoned the Litanies, to which all the people answered, and then with a sweet and amiable manner asked the woman, "Now will you make peace?" The old mother, and much less the daughters, could no longer resist, but their anger being calmed, they again promised to conclude finally the peace so greatly desired by the venerable missionary. As the man of God with discreet prudence judged it expedient that the murderer when he presented himself should appear, at least exteriorly, penitent for his crime, he went to him before the women saw him, and told him, that when he made a sign, he should come into the church, and in an attitude of great humiliation, ask pardon of his mother and sisters-in-law

for the horrid crime he had committed ; then having lighted some candles before a miraculous image of our Blessed Lady, venerated in that church, he gave notice to the women that the penitent man was come to ask their pardon. But again carried away by a violent burst of passion, they could not overcome themselves ; and the widowed mother, more furious than the others, cried out again, “ Ah, the traitor that killed my daughter ! ” The patience of the good missionary was not wearied out by this new assault, nor did he attempt with indiscreet zeal to extort their consent by force, nor would he use towards them words of resentment or bitterness, which would only have increased the wound ; but again using the remedy that had first relieved it, with a firm hope of obtaining a perfect cure, he intoned once more the Litanies with his usual fervour, and as he wisely judged, so it happened, for the women, renouncing entirely the hatred that had possessed their hearts, and giving place therein to the mildness and sweetness of holy fraternal charity, conceived sentiments entirely different, pardoned their enemy, and became reconciled to him : and the peace was so sincere, and accompanied with so great a blessing, that when F. Paul was again passing through Pitigliano, this widow, after he had made a short discourse to the people, presented herself to him, saying, “ Father, I am the woman that made peace. Ah, Father ! since then I have always enjoyed the peace of Paradise ! ”

By the same spirit of prudence and discretion, he contrived in another mission that a work should

be undertaken and completed for the glory of God. He had gone to give missions at Ischià, in the diocese of Acquapendente, where it was necessary to build a new church, which had been several times discussed, but as the opinions of the citizens were divided, for many years they were unable to bring about an affair so glorious to God, so advantageous to souls, and of such benefit to the country. Many great servants of God who had gone to preach the Lent in that place had with zeal sought to unite the minds of the people, and move them to the holy undertaking; they went so far as to renounce and apply to the building the alms of their sermons, but nothing was determined upon notwithstanding. The servant of God, however, going thither, and having greatly at heart the building of the church, inasmuch as the Bishop in sending him thither had given him by letter a special commission for this, to obey the prelate, and because he knew how greatly a decent church, proportioned to the number of the people, would contribute to the glory of God, and how much it was desired by good persons, at the end of a sermon, all on fire with holy zeal, made a short exhortation to the people there present, and spoke with so much fervour and persuasiveness, that all were moved and roused to fervour, and the work was determined upon. In the progress of time, much opposition was raised, which is always the case with works glorious to God; and scarcely had the pious resolution been made, than some one declared himself contrary to it. But the servant of God, who had always for his object the

greater glory of God, did not on this account lose courage or confidence, but with energy and lively faith vigorously promoted the holy work. As long as he was there, he tried by sweetness and humility to gain that person; but after he had left, hearing by a letter from Canon Scarzella that the work of God was hindered, he animated him to courage by telling him that he must continue with fervour the good work on which he had entered, and not fear, because it was the cause of God, bringing forward to him the example of St. Theresa, who, in proportion as she encountered opposition in founding her monasteries, became more earnest in prosecuting the work, ascribing the contradiction to a manifest sign that the work begun would turn out to God's greater glory. This letter passing from hand to hand, finally reached Pope Clement XIII., of pious memory, who condescended to read it; and through the excellent opinion he entertained of the servant of God, immediately ordered that what was determined upon in the council at that place, regarding the building of the church, should be executed, and contributed also himself munificently to the beauty of the House of God, giving, without being asked by any one, a hundred pistoles. Every difficulty being then overcome, the commenced building was happily continued, and it was a consolation to see how the people, remembering Father Paul's advice, vied with one another for three years in carrying materials for building the temple in honour of the Divine Majesty: strangers who happened to see the work, could not restrain

their tears through devotion and tenderness. During the work, stones were once wanting, and the work was interrupted ; but on that occasion it seemed as if our Lord wished to show visibly His approbation and acceptance of this holy work, for suddenly, without any apparent reason, a great mass of stone broke away, which, without any expense, provided for the immediate wants of the building. Thus the magnificent church was built, which cost no less than twenty thousand crowns, a considerable sum, contributed by the voluntary alms of pious persons, who were won by F. Paul's mild and sweet manners, and animated to the holy work by his fervour. The Bishop gave him cordial thanks for this, in a letter which follows. " I know not what words to use, nor how to thank your Reverence for the great good you have done in Ischia by your holy missions, having brought the people to peace and union, and universal compunction, and besides, for having moved them to the great and pious work, so much wanted, of building the church. For these things, and many others that I do not mention, I shall be eternally obliged to you. I am not able to make a return for so many benefits, and so much good done by your Reverence to my people, but God will do it superabundantly in His time, from whom alone I know that your reverence expects the reward of so many apostolic labours. Begging you to remember me in your prayers, which I request as a charity, full of obligations and esteem, I sign myself ".....Thus God blessed His servant, and gave a happy issue to his holy designs, conceived

in the ardour of charity, and regulated by Christian prudence.

The great prudence of this man of God in every holy work appeared manifestly on many other occasions when he had to labour for his neighbour's benefit, one of which I will relate, because it is accompanied by difficult and contrary circumstances, and may serve as a proof evincing the discretion of his prudence. The Spaniards were besieging the fortresses of Tuscany, Orbetello and Montefilippo, and the army for the most part was encamped on the plain at the foot of Monte Argentaro, when the servant of God was staying at the Hermitage of St. Anthony. He often descended, moved purely by his charity, to the Spanish camp, to assist the sick or wounded soldiers, and help them to die happily; he also went through charity to Orbetello and the neighbouring places. Every one knows what suspicion in time of war may be created by a man who, in the dress of a hermit, goes first to the enemy's camp and then to the besieged places; but as the servant of God in his whole conduct clearly proved that he sought nothing but the service of the Divine Majesty, and the good of his poor neighbour, and caring nothing about mixing in or knowing earthly affairs, made use of every prudent precaution, he was not only never suspected, but had always free access to the camp and the besieged places, and was beloved, revered, and esteemed by all, especially by the Spanish general, de las Minas, who had chosen him for his spiritual father. So true it is that prudence, united with true piety, not only renders us dear to God, and merits for

us the reward of eternal life, but makes us also pleasing and agreeable to persons of good sense, who with a dispassionate eye behold the conduct of others.

That the members of his Congregation might employ themselves with greater success for the glory of God in holy Missions, he left them in the Rules excellent instructions, in which, as much as in other things, he displays his rare prudence; thus he laboured in order that the toils of his Congregation might be blessed by God, as were his own; and this copious benediction always accompanied Father Paul, so that at other times, besides the Missions, he did great good in directing souls in the way of perfection, and leading them to God. Amongst the many proofs that might be here alleged, I will relate one fact in particular, which seems to me the most edifying. A young girl went to him to confession, and made known the state of her conscience. After he had heard what she had to say, knowing well the way to lead that soul to sanctity, he placed her in a great school of undeception, and imposed upon her, for a penance, that every morning, for so many days, shut up in her room, she should put a coverlet on the ground, lie down upon it as if dead, and remaining there for a quarter, or half an hour, as she pleased, should go on repeating to herself these words: "Perhaps, in a short time, I also shall be dead." The penitent obeyed, and faithfully practised what Father Paul had imposed, and happily experienced how well adapted to her was the exercise prescribed by her wise counsel-

lor, for she received such an abundance of heavenly light from God, in the serious consideration of that tremendous passage, that she immediately dedicated herself to a life of holiness.

By this same means he also gained to God a woman of wicked life, who, after practising for three days the advice given her by the venerable Father, returned to him entirely changed, and truly converted to God.

As it is very difficult to give a just regulation and direction regarding wills, without offending in any way against the laws, or the rights of any person, or without giving occasion of offence to those who have real or pretended interest therein, Father Paul, guided by that prudence which, with a clear and pure eye, looks on every side to avoid dangers, was not accustomed, and was most averse, to having anything to do with wills ; but having to advise one of our Religious, whom he had long directed, he gave him such a plan of a will as may serve as a model and formula for every Christian testament: " I greatly approve of your Reverence's making your will before your profession, and I should wish you to make at least the minutes of it in your own handwriting, before entering on the probation of the Noviciate, to avoid distractions. This testament must be made 'cum grano salis,' and under the direction of N. First, you must begin this testament with great sentiments and expressions becoming an Ecclesiastic and son of the Congregation, that this testament may serve as an example to the house, and to posterity for ever. The first points must contain salutary



advice to your sons, your daughters, and your posterity; recommending them never to omit at home meditation daily in common with the family and the married daughters in the sacred Passion, the frequentation of the Sacraments, alms, and mercy towards the poor, humility in dress, and in behaviour chiefly towards the poor, and servants, et reliqua, which you can explain better than I can. Having thus arranged spiritual affairs for your family and posterity for ever, go on to speak of temporal things, leaving your son your heir, which he is by right; do not load him with legacies, and leave none, excepting of some trifle; and believe me, it is a mistake to load heirs with obligations and legacies, for generally they fail to fulfil them, or delay it long, and God, the most just judge, chastises families so severely for this, that they go to ruin, and are rooted up for ever from their foundations. I am old, and have experience."

The servant of God's charity, which put his prudence in action, never allowed him to omit any opportunity of assisting his neighbour. He industriously made use of every occasion to speak of God, of eternity, and of the soul. In visits of civility he would not lose his time, but sweetly endeavoured to gain something by them, and found means to do so from all things in a pleasing and graceful manner. Father Paul was this; a man of great mind, of good and enlightened judgment, with a sincere and affectionate heart, truly, therefore, a man of prudence, and of wisdom. On account of these gifts highly talented persons, and men of much wisdom, had recourse to him

for advice. Many Bishops, Prelates of the Roman court, Princes and Princesses, and even the Sovereign Pontiff, Clement XIV., deigned to consult him. One day in particular, when the holy Father was speaking to the servant of God on the state of our holy Church, the venerable Father, who ardently desired that his Holiness, when in the enjoyment of the necessary peace and time, should seek to remove from our Lord's vineyard the abuses and disorders that may creep in almost imperceptibly, and who knew the favour with which the Pontiff regarded him, took courage to propose to him a plan of reform, which was highly approved by the holy Father, and judged to be entirely conformable to the Spirit of God ; and he, with all frankness, declared that God gave him also the same ideas, saying, " You see, Father Paul, how our thoughts agree." In this plan, among other things proposed by the servant of God, one of the chief was, to introduce the practice and habit of mental prayer ; because, as he said, irregularity of morals comes from the want of prayer. Such were the counsels of Father Paul, counsels truly worthy of a man who seeks God alone, and His glory ; hence recourse might well be had to him, in order to know the ways of God.

## CHAPTER XX.

OF THE SINCERITY AND SIMPLICITY THAT FATHER  
PAUL UNITED TO PRUDENCE.

WITH so much greater security might every one have recourse to Father Paul, and with so much more facility receive light from his advice, as the servant of God was at an immense distance from every artifice, and from everything approaching to flattery or falsehood. He united in himself, by an admirable combination, the prudence of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove, but in such a manner, that he seemed to wish that there should be less of the prudence of the serpent, than of the simplicity of the dove, because this virtue was extremely dear to him, and he practised it with great delight, not only in what referred to Almighty God, who was always the sole object of his aim, and of his intentions, directed to His greater glory, '*propter magnam gloriam Dei,*' as he said, but also in everything concerning his behaviour to his neighbour, towards whom he always showed such frankness and openness of heart, that it was quite delightful. He abominated all sorts of duplicity and artfulness, and used to say so. "I greatly detest duplicity and dissimulation;" and what he had on his tongue, he had also in his heart. "I am a Lombardian," he

would say, "and what I have in my heart, I have also in my tongue." Jesus Christ says, 'est, est, non, non.' There was no action in which he did not evince this truly evangelical simplicity, by which all who conversed with him were edified. The Sovereign Pontiff, Clement XIV., scarcely became acquainted with him, when he was Cardinal, before he conceived a strong affection for him, and the reason was, as he said, because he found in Father Paul a man made after the old fashion, who went about everything with veracity and frankness; and when he became Pope, he used to say, "I know Father Paul; he is a man of great simplicity." He had so great a horror of falsehood, that he would rather, as he said himself with strong feeling, let his head be cut off, than tell one single lie; and it was plain from his love for truth and frankness, that he could not endure lies and dissimulation in others. So great an enemy of falsehood was he, that one day, when he was staying at the house of one of our benefactors, being told that a servant had said to some one that enquired for him, that he was not at home, to prevent his being annoyed by some visit, he severely reproved him, and showed him the horror we ought to have of lies.

The servant of God, being himself so sincere and upright of heart, knew not how to judge ill of any one, particularly of a Priest; and he said one day, speaking confidentially to his companion, that he could not think ill of Priests, though in his long experience he had been a witness of terrible cases in the persons of some amongst them,

who after leading a wicked life, died wretchedly, like beasts, in the filth of their sins; so far was he from forming a bad opinion of others, from that goodness and simplicity of heart, which our Lord had given him. Hence it was that it seemed to him strange to meet with persons who acted with duplicity; and that it did not enter his thought he should be ever deceived. When, in managing the affairs of the Congregation things were made to appear as if already done; and he afterwards found that it was quite the contrary, he felt much grief, because things were not done with holy evangelical simplicity. Sometimes, to express his sorrow more strongly, he said, "In treating of so many affairs, they have endeavoured to make me lose that holy simplicity that I brought with me from the womb of my mother." This simplicity of his, as it was really virtue, never injured him, but, on the contrary, availed him much in business, and in assisting souls. If there was question of direction, confessions, missions, or other affairs relating to God's glory, and particularly of the government of the Congregation, he was all attention, caution, and circumspection. He thought of everything, foresaw everything, knew how to remove cleverly every obstacle to God's wish, and clearly showed that his simplicity did not proceed from want of talent, or stupidity of mind, but from great innocence of morals, and extreme purity of heart; and that wherever he might be, he knew well how to act with due reflection and discreet discernment.

It is true, indeed, that this simplicity and cor-

diality greatly smoothed the way for those who watched his conduct, in order adroitly to enter into his heart, and extract from him some information which he alone could give. The good servant of God, who had no idea of what others thought of his sanctity and virtuous life, easily gave credit to the cunning protestations of those who dexterously questioned him, that they asked information for the sake of the religious that would follow, or to satisfy themselves that the congregation was the work of God, and similar excuses. He sometimes related what had taken place in him, but as soon as he perceived that it might turn to his praise, and cause astonishment to others, he quitted the recreation with marks of displeasure, or cut short the conversation, and if any persevered in begging him to go on speaking, he replied, 'Non plus sapere, quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem,' or turned off the discourse in some similar way; and thus he kept in concealment the secret of his heart, which he well knew how to hide in God, when he knew it to be right. In fact, though he was so extremely cordial, sincere, and open, he never spoke, but to his directors, of the singular graces, the intimate communications, and the sublime gifts with which God had enriched him; and if he found out that anything had been written or printed in praise of himself, or of his conduct, he either tore it up or threw it into the fire, as we shall mention more at length later. From this great anxiety to keep himself hidden from the eyes of men, we regret that we are deprived of the greater part of

the most beautiful traits, and of the most edifying circumstances of his interior sanctity, from which proceeds the first and principal rectitude of virtuous actions. He had for his director and confessor, his brother and faithful companion, Father John Baptist, of St. Michael the archangel, as long as he lived, and as Father John died before Father Paul, and during his life was as careful to keep in profound silence the secret of his virtues, as he was diligent in assisting his brother to become a great saint, very little information has come to us, in comparison with that which we might have gained, and if Father Paul had not been for many years in darkness, in desolation and dereliction, and had not believed himself in that state to be full of miseries, infidelities and sins, so that he sometimes spoke of them either through the fear of going astray, or his sincere desire of receiving light and advice from others, we should have known much less, for he would not have opened his mouth to manifest even that little regarding himself, which is a matter of so much edification to us.

Prudence and simplicity are often placed in such painful and difficult circumstances, that it seems very difficult to unite them together, so that a just attention to one may not be an obstacle to the other, or offend against its holy frankness; but whoever is guided by the spirit of God keeps the virtues in perfect concord and true harmony, acting uprightly, according as the case requires. Father Paul therefore joined to a discreet prudence a holy liberty, nor did he ever, for

the sake of the deceitful maxims of worldly prudence, and detestable policy, betray the truth, or in speaking it, rob it of the just liberty that belongs to it, whatever danger he might thereby incur, of displeasing those who prefer to be flattered by a traitor, to being charitably admonished by a friend. Once, when ill in bed, he was visited by two religious of a certain order, who recommended themselves to his prayers. Father Paul who well knew to whom he was speaking, and felt in his heart a great desire of benefiting them, replied, "Yes, I will do so," and with great liberty, added, "You need the Divine help, for you are grown very tepid, and no longer preserve the spirit of your institute."

An illustrious personage, of high rank in the Church, went often to visit Father Paul, and enjoy his sweet and agreeable conversation; the good Father, though he might expect to offend him in some degree, did not fail to represent to him with prudence and holy probity, how pernicious to the soul are certain conversations which imprint on the mind the ideas of dangerous objects, and make bad impressions, and when no other evil proceeds from them, cause a difficulty in fulfilling the duty of holy prayer, and keeping the mind recollected in God.

Perhaps his words had not the desired effect; for one day with greater clearness, he showed him the great evil that such conversations cause to the Church of God, as our neighbour is not edified by them. "What," he said amongst other things, "will the servants say, when they see their



master converse in this manner?" This personage, considering the sincerity of heart with which the servant of God spoke to him, caring nothing for the complaints and repugnances of self-love, was charmed with his words, returned to him quite changed, desired to speak to him alone, and expressed his wish to take him for his spiritual Father, and place himself under his guidance. The good Father, encouraged by the effects his words had produced, without fearing to displease the gentleman or become troublesome to him, continued always with the same sincerity, to say to him what was proper, according to the spirit of God, and not according to the fallacious ideas of the world. This liberty, though always accompanied with great moderation and respect, did not always please, for truth cannot always put in our mouths what is pleasing and agreeable, and however useful his advice might be, it was not always well received, nor acted upon with docility. It is true, that he who would not be guided by the sage counsels of the servant of God, had great cause for regret.

A certain gentleman, a great friend of his, caused himself to be inscribed among the nobility of a city in the pontifical states, for the greater glory of his honourable family. The servant of God could never approve this resolution, which breathed too much of the spirit of the world; therefore he said clearly, "This is not prudence, it will not last, and will have a bad end; these things are not pleasing to God." This prediction was soon verified, for in a few years this

gentleman failed, was obliged to sell the palace he had bought at great expense in that city, and retire much humbled to his native place.

A young ecclesiastic went one day to visit the good Father, who was in Rome at the hospital del SS. Crocifisso near St. John Lateran, and desired his advice, as to whether he should receive holy orders or not. Father Paul told him not by any means to be ordained, but for a year to prove himself, and in the meantime to recommend himself fervently to our Lord. This youth, who was perhaps one of those who ask advice in order to find a counsellor according to their own will, did not abide by the prudent answer of the servant of God, but procured his promotion to the subdiaconate; he had however, great reason to repent of it, for the bishop did not judge it expedient to raise him to the higher orders, and thus he found himself in such great distress, that he used sometimes to say, "How much happier should I be, had I acted according to Father Paul's advice."

The venerable Father had need of greater courage to speak candidly the sentiments of his heart to a personage of great consideration, and of high dignity in the Church. This man wished to ordain as priest one of his neighbours, who was of mature age, and who, up to that time, had been a secular, engaged in most honourable but worldly employments, for he thought he could renounce, in his favour, a very good bishopric. He asked Father Paul's advice, but the servant of God having in view only the glory of His Divine Majesty, openly disapproved the design, and opposed him-

self with great fervour and resolution to these intentions ; he said to him with holy liberty, that the wish to ordain his nephew, did not in his belief, proceed from the spirit of God, but rather from earthly affections, and that it was not expedient to ordain him thus at once, but an attentive examination must be made to see if he had a vocation from God, and it must be put to the test, by employing him in the service of the Church and in the exercise of ecclesiastical functions, and therefore he thought it well that he should assume the ecclesiastical habit, and apply himself seriously to sacred studies, in order to learn the ecclesiastical spirit ; and he concluded by saying, that if he did not act thus, he would never give his approbation in an affair of so great importance. " To pass so quickly," he said, with great warmth, " from the sword to the altar, from the world to the pastor of souls, Oh, no ! this cannot be." The sincerity and candour of the servant of God were not very pleasing to this gentleman ; he appeared offended at the opposition made to his resolution, and, as it often happens, thought him scrupulous, who possessed a most wise, discreet, and enlightened mind ; and he did ordain his nephew. When Father Paul heard this, he shrugged his shoulders, and said, " The uncle will not obtain his wishes, the nephew will remain as he is." It was so in effect, for the uncle died before he could make the renunciation, and the nephew remained merely a priest, deprived of a large fortune, of which he was in possession before he embraced the ecclesiastical state. We thus see how safe in

advising is he, who, in order not to err, retires into the interior sanctuary of his heart, and there, with all humility and confidence, consults the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude.

Thus, then, lived Father Paul, always an enemy of that deceitful prudence and worldly policy, so much practised by those who love to make a vain appearance, and seek always to conceal themselves under lies and deceit. He was always governed, directed, and assisted by a prudence that had nothing of the world about it; hence we may say of him, 'Dedit illi scientiam Sanctorum, honestavit illum in laboribus, et complevit labores illius.' (Sap. x. 10.)

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## CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE JUSTICE OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF  
GOD.

THOUGH every just soul that continually nourishes itself with sweet meditation on the Divine law, is like a tree, that being fortunately planted near a copious stream of water, fails not to yield its fruits at the proper time and season, yet all the servants of God do not produce equally the same fruits of sanctity, justice, and perfection, but each according to the opportunities afforded by his employments, his profession and state of life, in such a manner however, that when it is necessary, or when there is occasion to practise

other acts of virtue, they are practised and produced with so much ease, exactness, and perfection, that though their exercise may not be habitual, it is evident that their true spirit and strength exist. Thus we see, that though the venerable servant of God had few occasions of showing how anxiously he desired that every one should have what by right belonged to him, since he had little to do with contracts, or in any other way to exercise that kind of justice called commutative ; nevertheless, on every occasion, like a true servant of God, he exactly fulfilled every duty that he had to perform towards his neighbour, to whom he would not, if possible, owe any debt, but that indispensable one of always heartily loving him, according to the advice given by St. Paul ; ‘ *Nemini quidquam debeatis, nisi ut invicem diligatis.*’ When artists or workmen had done any work for the congregation, he insisted upon it that their claims should be satisfied, and he used to say that the poor live by their labour, therefore, they ought to be at once paid. He would not allow any dispute to be held with them about the amount of their wages, but desired that what was due, should be immediately given to them, and sometimes more, for he said, “ These poor mechanics are badly off, and have no means of relief but their labour,” and added, that God had provided for us in other ways. If any debt was incurred for the wants of the Retreats, he was all anxiety that it should be paid, and that the creditors should be satisfied as soon as possible.

Of the money given in alms to the Congrega-

tion, he was not to be called a most faithful guardian, but rather a distributor as charitable as he was just and exact. Though his parents were highly respectable, as we have said elsewhere, they were in great poverty; his brother, Joseph Danei, several times had recourse to him, but the good Father from his delicacy of conscience and detachment from his relations, did not consider it lawful to help them, though he felt compassion for them and loved them in Jesus Christ. Among the letters that his brother wrote, I will cite one addressed to one of our Religious, which may serve as a proof of the virtue of the servant of God. "I cast myself at the feet of your Reverence, supplicating you, for the love of the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, to deign to exert yourself for this poor family, to visit us and give us some relief in the great indigence from which we are suffering, on account of the scarcity that has prevailed, and exists even now in this part. I have several times applied to my good and reverend brother Father Paul Danei of the Cross, your founder, but he has always replied that he is bound by his holy vows, and that he has abandoned all his relations in this world for the love of his Lord. He tells us to derive courage in our tribulations, from a true and perfect resignation to the Divine will of God, and that if we do this, our Lord will inspire some holy soul to help us in our great poverty; therefore I hope He will make use of your Reverence to relieve this humble family, since He has taken from us all our fortune, leaving us only the antiquity of our

house of Danei. I tell you this as a secret, that you may not tell the Very Reverend Father for he does not wish to know anything about his relations, and it is more than a year since we heard anything of him, whether he is well or says mass, and it will be a pleasure to us to hear good news of him. I should have come in person to the feet of your Paternity to ask relief, but I cannot leave my poor sister, who for the greater part of the year has been in bad health. Glory be to God for all." Father Paul might have spoken a word to the sovereign Pontiff, then Clement XIV. his affectionate father and benefactor; or applied to some other friend, but he never would do it, through the fear of following the suggestions of affection for his relations.

With regard to the Congregation, he watched always with a truly paternal care and sincere love of justice, to see that the Religious were well treated and had all the little comforts prescribed by the holy Rules. He would not allow the Rectors to make certain retrenchments, which distress the poor Religious. Once, in particular, on going to make the visitation in one of the Retreats, he found that the Rector on account of the great expense he had incurred in carrying water to the garden, had not enough afterwards for the maintenance of the Religious, and provided them very scantily with food and clothing, from which they suffered great inconvenience; the servant of God judged him to merit reproof, admonished him strongly, and said amongst other things, that the garden was made for the Religious, not the Reli-

gious for the garden. If they were sick he would have no expense or labour spared for the recovery of their health. When they had sufficiently recovered their strength, to avoid the danger of tepidity and relaxation, he sweetly recommended them to resume holy observances. "Brother, how do you feel?" he would say, "it seems to me that you are well, so that you may now begin again the community life with the others."

He required from all, punctuality and promptness in rising at night to Matins, and in the morning to Prime; but he would not allow the Religious to be deprived of the least part of the repose allowed them by the holy Rules. Regarding this, it is related in the Processes that in the Retreat of the Presentation, the Father Rector, then Father Fulgenzio di Gesu, a man of great fervour, who slept very little, rung Prime about a quarter of an hour before the time; Father Paul heard of it, and on visiting that Retreat, said publicly, that he absolutely forbade them to ring before the proper time, giving as a reason, that the religious ought to have everything given to them as it is prescribed in the holy rules. Finally our good Father, with all zeal, required that the Religious should take pains to fulfil their duties exactly, but he was equally earnest that they should be deprived of nothing that is allowed, according to our poverty; and showed always a strong desire of offering to our Lord, among other sacrifices that of justice and equity, in which His Divine Majesty takes great delight.

Though Father Paul always endeavoured per-



fectly to fulfil the duties of justice to all, he was not, however, always treated in the same manner by those who were bound to do it; more than once he met with a bad return, and was even injured, but would never show any resentment. When he took possession of the Retreat of SS. John and Paul, in that part of the gardens which was assigned for the enclosure, there was a vine-dresser who was greatly annoyed at having to leave, and through spite, before he went away, not only greatly offended all the Religious and the servant of God with words dictated by passion, but went so far as to offer various insults. The Rector thought himself obliged to have recourse to the Treasurer begging him to restrain such audacity by his authority, and that worthy Prelate ordered the man to be arrested, which was done. As soon as the servant of God heard of it he disapproved of the Father Rector's conduct, nor would he admit of any justification when he heard of the proceedings of the vine-dresser, and he afterwards wrote a note to the above named Prelate, begging him to pardon the poor man his fault; this note arrived in time to be of great use to the poor man, for the Treasurer had resolved that he should be flogged three times, but for the sake of the servant of God, whom he greatly loved, he pardoned him and set him at liberty. On leaving his prison the vine-dresser, by order of his Lordship, went to the servant of God who received him with great charity, and treated him with special kindness as if he had been a particular friend, and refused to receive any

compensation for the injuries and insults he had received. Thus Father Paul acted, giving to each one his own, as readily as he was patient, forbearing, and generous in pardoning offences against himself.

He had more frequent opportunities of practising that part of justice which ought to be exercised by a good Superior, that he may, in a manner pleasing to God, distribute rewards, assign employments, and inflict punishments when necessary. As he had the dignity of Superior from the time the Congregation was founded till his happy death, he plainly proved that he was never guided by passion, and that he had no regard, excepting to the merit of each. He was most attentive to find out the inclinations, the talents, and the virtues of his subjects; he watched carefully over all, and made himself acquainted with everything particularly at the time of his visits, that he might not, as he said, sin by omission, and he often repeated that the sin of omission sends Superiors to hell. When, from the exact enquiries he made, he found that the Religious were quiet, humble, obedient, and fond of solitude, he esteemed, encouraged, and praised them. He was much pleased with those who, when sent out by obedience, returned as soon as possible to the Retreat, and said, that by staying away from solitude, its spirit is soon lost, and that he shows the true spirit of the Congregation of the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, who loves to remain in retirement at the foot of his crucifix. When he had to confer the offices and employments of the Congregation,

he would have the merit and abilities of each person distinctly pointed out, that the most worthy might be elected. He did not allow that charges were titles of exemption and chairs of repose, but held as a maxim that the Superior was obliged to endure insults and sufferings for the service of the Congregation, or the Retreat ; he often repeated it, and insisted that, from amongst the most able, the most worthy should be chosen, either because he wisely judged that from the greater prudence, virtue, and good example of the Superior, great benefits are derived for the community, saying, "On the Superior depends the good order of things," or because he wished justice to be done to the merit of each. It sometimes happened that he proposed for some dignity a subject whom he considered worthy of that employment, and was told it would be useless to elect him, for he was determined not to accept it. "It does not matter," answered the servant of God, "on that occasion I will do my duty, for he deserves it." As by the light of God, and from his long experience, he was well aware that the spirit of nationality causes in Religious orders, diffidence, discord, tepidity, and complete confusion, he was its declared enemy ; and, whenever he had reason to fear that any one was actuated by this bad spirit, he raised his voice with the liberty and authority of a Father, severely reproved him, and protested that he could not, and would not, by any means, tolerate the introduction of such an abuse into our Congregation. He not only took care to keep great evils at a distance from our Congrega-

tion, but diligently sought to remove those smaller disorders that resemble little foxes, and devastate the vineyard of our Lord, doing more injury in proportion as the prejudice is less perceptible. He used the appropriate remedies for both. He corrected and punished, but always in a spirit of virtue and holy charity, that is, with the spirit of God. When he saw that a subject, on receiving correction, took it in good part, and humbled himself, his heart was immediately touched, he animated and encouraged him, showing him the love of a true Father, and even of a most affectionate Mother, saying with the Apostle, "*Tanquam si nutrix foveat filios suos.*" (1. Thess. ii. 7.) If it happened that delinquents corrected again and again, and penanced, were hardened and obstinate, the grief he felt at cutting them off was most bitter ; but in order not to fail in any duty of a good Superior, making use of the faculties granted by the Supreme Pontiffs to the general Superiors of the congregation, he sent them away from it; and gave them their dismissal, lest, like infected sheep, they might spread the contagion of their bad example amongst the flock of Jesus Christ. However useful a subject might be, if he were not a lover of religious observance, the good Father preferred that he should go away rather than remain in the congregation. "I am more anxious about observance," he would say, "than for a great number of subjects." He was well persuaded that no man is really necessary, and said, speaking of himself, "If I thought myself necessary in this world, I should believe myself to be

damned," and resolutely repeated "Few and good: it is better that we should be few but good," or he said "We must be the chosen grain," or "The small flock is the best guarded by the shepherd." Whoever offended against observance wounded him, if I may so speak, in the apple of his eye. With fortitude above all human respects, having God before his eyes, he refused to yield to any requests he judged to be unreasonable and not conformable to the rules of the Institute; if any one persevered, he opposed him with moderation, but also with manly courage; he was firm as a rock in defending and supporting the edifice of our Lord. He went so far as to make answer to the Superioress of a Monastery, who asked him to allow one of the religious to be visitor, that she had better not make any such application to the Lord Bishop, for rather than permit a thing so contrary to the rules, he would leave the Retreat near the city where the Monastery was. His companion, a lay-brother, through his intimacy with him sometimes said, in order to make him yield, "But, Father, you might do this;" and he replied, "I am bound to keep up holy observances, and as long as I live I will never give this bad example." As he spoke so he wrote, and he was the first to practise what he desired others to perform. "I will not," he says in one of his letters, "and I ought not, to meddle in temporal affairs, which I do not understand and for which my occupations give me no time." In another "My vocation prevents me from answering for children at baptism, and I will never do it on any account

whatever." And he answers another person, "Regarding the marriage you speak of, I cannot 'juxta regulas' speak one word, but I will recommend it to God."

He desired to communicate the same zeal for exact religious observance, to religious persons not belonging to the congregation; hence he wrote to an Abbess: "It is most true that the observance of the rules approved by the Pope is to be preferred to the observance of the constitutions approved by the Bishops; but as these are all founded upon the rule, and are its wall and defence, it is necessary in order to observe that well, that the Constitutions also be exactly observed; therefore let them say what they will, but do you with courageous constancy cause them to be practised, and especially never permit that the door be kept open and that the nuns speak from it to the ladies you name, for gentlemen will sometimes come with the ladies; and however it may be, it will be in the greatest degree pernicious to the souls of your religious, and you will have to render an account to God for it."

In correcting the negligent, the venerable founder who was truly upright and just, treated all equally, and shewed no respect of persons, not sparing even his own brother, Father Anthony of the Passion, now Don Anthony Danei. Though Father Paul loved him tenderly in Jesus Christ, he never allowed himself to be influenced by affection, nor drawn to partial condescension. It will be well to hear from Father Anthony's own mouth the manner in which he was treated; these

are his words : " I myself have experienced both the sweetness and severity exercised by Father Paul in administering, correcting, and inflicting penances, for he never forgave me one, declaring that he did not regard flesh and blood, and he has even imposed upon me penances for months ; and when asked to have compassion on me, he said that in what relates to the punishment of the faulty, he had no brothers." This good priest could not easily adapt himself to our solitary and penitential mode of life. Father Paul often took compassion on him and virtuously passed over his failings, but when any strong remedy was necessary he employed it. And that he might in those hours when he was not employed in any duty of holy obedience, enjoy the quiet of his own room and spend his time usefully in praying or studying, he told him resolutely that he would have him do this, and forbade him to go without leave beyond the limits of the enclosure during the time for walking alone. The poor brother, who was of a very melancholy temperament, thought this command very severe, and when an excellent secular priest and great friend of Father Paul came to the Retreat, Father Anthony begged him to intercede for him with Father Paul, to obtain a dispensation from this order, and they both went for this purpose to the servant of God's room. Father Anthony represented to Father Paul the difficulty he felt in obeying ; but the servant of God, who for many years had closely watched his brother's conduct, and had borne with him with great patience and charity, believ-

ing the time to be come for making a determination, which however painful to himself, was most necessary for the sake of good order, said to him : " You are not suited to our congregation, your cell suffocates you, and you are delicate ; it would be better for you to go home to your own country, where as a priest you may do good," words, which greatly edified the good secular priest, as they were uttered with the spirit of God ; and after this conversation Father Anthony was honourably and charitably dismissed, as Father Paul preferred to be deprived of one of his beloved brothers, rather than show a partiality unworthy of his integrity and exact justice.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

OF THE GRATITUDE OF THE SERVANT OF GOD TOWARDS  
HIS BENEFACTORS, OF HIS LOVE FOR HIS FRIENDS,  
AND HIS AFFABILITY AND KINDNESS TO ALL.

The spirit of God shows itself more than ever sweet, amiable, and adapted to maintain in society a mutual friendly feeling to the satisfaction of all, when it makes the souls guided and influenced by it attentive in fulfilling even those duties, which, though their violation does not offend against strict justice, are omitted by many without scruple, but not without some derangement of that perfect harmony and right order which includes the exact practice of every virtue. One of these duties is



the obligation of lively gratitude, and sincere acknowledgment of benefits received; for the Apostle St. Paul, the great master of Christian wisdom, says: 'Grati estote.' Father Paul, animated by this spirit, always showed himself deeply sensible of the smallest kindness, and most attentive in making what return he could to those who benefited him. He acknowledged the smallest favour he received, and valued it much more than it deserved. To use the words of a witness: "He appeared as if he would have given the whole world if he had had it; and, as if he desired to place in Heaven any one who had done him a kindness, he preserved a most lively remembrance of it, and on all occasions did what he could to make a return." As he had frequently received an alms from soldiers, as we have said, he was so attached to these sort of people, that he called them his friends, declared himself much indebted to them, and distinguished them in his missions, treating them with special charity, and making them take rank before others, that they might make their confessions, and thus receive for their souls that remedy of which they are often in the greatest need.

If the virtuous soul of Father Paul was so strongly bound by the benefits received in a passing way, every one will be able to imagine how much he felt indebted, and how greatly he desired to show gratitude to those benefactors who maintain us throughout the year, and who are always ready to help and even receive into their own houses the poor of Jesus Christ. I cannot ex-

press the affection and tenderness with which the servant of God spoke of them, nor how greatly he was interested both for their spiritual and temporal advantage. When he recommended the religious to pray for these dear benefactors, it seemed as if his heart, entirely steeped in love, wished to infuse into his sons the affections of charity and gratitude that he experienced. He never ceased to inculcate that they should think of their benefactors when they were conversing with God, to obtain for them every good gift. He was not satisfied with having ordered and laid down in the rule that several times a day benefactors should be prayed for specially, and that the same should be done at night, several times a week, but he wished that every religious should consider them as affectionate fathers, and thus bear them always in his heart, to pray with greater fervour, and more frequently in their favour. When they were in any urgent necessity, then the charity and gratitude of the servant of God were all activity; he desired the whole community by assiduous prayer to do a sweet violence to the heart of God, to obtain the desired graces for our kind benefactors. If they came occasionally to the Retreats, though the good Father used to receive every one with kindness, he treated benefactors with particular cordiality and charity. If one of them was sick, the servant of God when he was able, went to visit him, and with the heart of a Father encouraged him to suffer willingly for the love of God; and if he became worse, and in danger of death, F. Paul, when informed of it, hastened to dispose the sick

man for a happy death, and in assisting him showed such earnestness and charity, that he seemed to wish to open Heaven for him at once, that he might go and receive the reward of his alms. After their death, he caused suffrages to be made, to hasten their possession of an eternal reward, and of the Beatific Vision of God. Nor did he ever forget them, but continued to pray for them, and desired others to do the same; and he expressly commanded in the rule, that once a month the holy sacrifice of the altar should be offered, and the Office of the Dead recited for departed benefactors, and the same is now practised. Not satisfied with this, as the fire of charity was always burning in his heart, and he felt continually new motives for gratitude, he ordered shortly before his death, with the consent of the Capitulars of the last General Chapter, that on all the doubles of the second class, in each Retreat, Mass should be sung for benefactors, and that, besides the suffrages we have named, an anniversary should be made during the Octave of All Souls, with the recital of the office, and the celebration of a 'Missa Cantata' for all departed benefactors. Finally, the servant of God showed that he had deeply rooted in his heart the above-named words of the Apostle—'Grati estote.'

And as by gratitude to benefactors he acknowledged the goodness of God Himself, who moved their hearts, and offered to Him a sacrifice of his affectionate and virtuous heart, our Lord was pleased constantly to increase his benefactors, among whom were even distinguished persons.

We cannot refrain from mentioning here the great kindness, particular affection, and esteem, with which Benedict XIV. regarded him; and the venerable servant of God, besides always speaking of that Pontiff with profound veneration, and besides constantly praying for him, felt at the holy Father's death, that deep grief which was called for by the loss of a Pontiff of so great piety, wisdom, and learning, and of a Father and most kind benefactor. To engage others to be grateful towards a Pontiff to whom the Congregation owed its first establishment, and to whom, then more than ever, we could show our gratitude, by multiplying our entreaties at the throne of God, he recalled to us on that occasion, with deep feeling, the great benefits we had received from his clemency, applied particular suffrages to his soul, and never afterwards spoke of Benedict XIV. without marks of profound veneration and tender sentiments of gratitude. Clement XIII., who, as Cardinal, had favoured F. Paul in every way, and had even, when he went to Rome on business connected with the Congregation, received him in his own palace, giving him distinguished marks of kindness, when he was raised to the Pontifical chair, granted several favours to the Congregation, and bestowed special benefits on the servant of God; and the servant of God, favoured in so many ways by this great personage and holy Pontiff, endeavoured by his prayers and those of the Congregation whilst he lived, and also after his death, to make the return to him, with the Divine Goodness, as indeed this holy Pontiff himself de-

sired, who was a man of so great humility and piety. Of Clement XIV. I shall say nothing, but that our Lord had infused into his heart so much esteem and affection for F. Paul, that his greatest consolation in his illustrious position was to be able to assist the servant of God, whom he tenderly loved, and looked upon, I may say, as a Father. We have elsewhere spoken of F. Paul's love and veneration for this holy Pontiff. At his death, he would most willingly have gone to assist him, had not his habitual infirmities prevented him. After his death he appeared almost inconsolable, feeling as if he were an orphan without his beloved Father. He ordered a solemn funeral service immediately in the Church of SS. John and Paul, and during the whole function, which lasted several hours, he remained at the foot of the catafalque; and it was beautiful to see that venerable old man, deeply recollected, penetrated with grief, shedding abundant tears for the death of this great benefactor, and remaining motionless, offering to the eternal Divine Father the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, sacrificed on the altar for the soul of him whom he loved more than his own life. He never ceased lamenting the great loss that the Church had sustained in the death of this great Pontiff, spoke with profound veneration of his virtues, and expressed his amazement at the humility and charity of that great soul. He had a most high opinion of him, and with good reason, for humility is the foundation of the building, and charity the roof of the spiritual edifice, and according as the foundation

is deeper and the roof more elevated, the edifice of perfection is more secure, more noble, and more magnificent.

But the thoughts that occupied Father Paul's mind, the affections, strong desires, and sighs of his heart during the time the see was vacant, he alone could fully describe. He continually besought Almighty God to provide His Church with a vigilant and holy pastor, and to provide also for him, who considered himself as the poor orphan of an affectionate and compassionate Father; and God heard him, by placing in the pontifical chair, to the universal happiness of the Church, the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI. The Holy Father soon manifested his great charity and condescension, and the kind feeling God had given him for the poor congregation of the sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for Father Paul its founder. Nineteen days after his election, he went to the church of SS. John and Paul, to adore the Blessed Sacrament, exposed there for the adoration of the Quarant' Ore, and afterwards admitted all the religious into the sacristy to kiss his foot, giving to each one marks of his regard; and afterwards, with singular kindness, went to Father Paul's room when he was ill, and then it was that the servant of God exclaimed, in expressions that came from the depths of his heart, '*Unde hoc mihi, ut veniat Vicarius Christi ad me!*' He took a special and most affectionate interest in everything that concerned the holy Father; he desired that prayers should be constantly offered for him, ordered that the Litanies should be recited every day for this

good Pontiff, and when he was near death, having no means of showing the deep sense of gratitude he felt, ordered that a devout little print of our Lady of Dolours, which he had greatly venerated, should be presented to His Holiness, as a testimony of his profound respect and lively gratitude; urged to this, partly by his love, and partly by his knowledge of the great goodness and excellent heart of His Holiness. After his death, it was taken to his Holiness, and the holy Father was much pleased with the attachment of the servant of God, and the little present sent to him.

It is not surprising that Father Paul, when almost dying, had so lively a remembrance of the Sovereign Pontiff, the vicar of Jesus Christ upon earth, and our most kind Father. It would have shown great ingratitude not to remember him in those circumstances, when, as he was quitting this life; he could no longer evince his grateful feelings here. The benefits he had received had been continual, and very considerable, and all were present to his mind, more particularly that of the apostolic bull, published to confirm anew the institute and the rules, and sent to him by the holy Father a few days previously; therefore, I may say that even if he had wished he could not at that time have forgotten them. He remembered then his dear benefactors also, and especially those who were near to him in Rome, giving them in dying the greatest marks he could of his love, and of his acknowledgment of the great favours he had received from them.

Both in words and in writing Father Paul evinced the goodness of his heart and his lively

gratitude. All his letters in answer to his benefactors, or in which some benefit is mentioned, contain lively sentiments of acknowledgment and humble gratitude, and he shows it more vividly when he speaks of the many great and signal favours received from the supreme pontiffs for the confirmation of the rules and of the institute, from the Cardinal Protectors, and the Abate Count Gargani, who greatly exerted himself for the success of the first foundations ; his letters may be read after those of Cardinal Altieri. He promises them all that he will remember them in the holy sacrifice ; he wishes them to participate in the prayers of the congregation, and says that he hopes with firm confidence that our Lord will reward them abundantly. In fact, he omits nothing that can appertain to true and perfect Christian gratitude. That a man full of the spirit of God should have shown gratitude so strong and sincere towards those benefactors who have given to the congregation its establishment and perfection, or have supported, defended, and assisted it, or continually succour it, and maintain the religious by their pious alms, is not anything very astonishing, but it is surprising that when he was superior, for every small service done to him by his subjects, he showed as much feeling and gratitude as if he had received a great favour. "If any brother of the congregation," says a witness, "assisted the servant of God in mounting the staircase, because he was unable to support himself alone, on account of his infirmities, he thanked him, saying, 'May God reward your charity,' and similar expres-



sions." Thus, when during illness he was visited in bed by his religious, at their departure he thanked them for their visit, saying, "God reward you for this charity," which he did also, whenever they performed any little services for him, even by shutting or opening the window. But his companion expresses himself the best of all; "It appears to to me," he says, "that I ought not to pass over in silence the great gratitude that Father Paul evinced towards me for the assistance I rendered him; he constantly said, that he was greatly obliged to me for the little I did for him; and he always thanked me a thousand times with most affectionate words, full of humility and charity. About three hours before his death he called me, took my hand and, pressed it strongly, saying to me, 'Ah, dear brother!' as if he wished to give me the last farewell."

From what has been related, it is evident that Father Paul, though he had spent a great part of his life in solitude, nevertheless understood proprieties perfectly well, and how to fulfil all the duties of society, which derive from the Spirit of God a new degree of nobility, and a new excellence, and render him most pleasing who practises them. He was very far from that worldly intercourse which is not becoming in persons consecrated to God, but he knew well, when opportunity required, how to fulfill all the duties of society, and he felt pleasure in the friendship of those who possessed the Spirit of God; he treated them as true friends, opened to them his heart, exerted himself as much as possible for their good, and had a special esteem for them.

With all others, his manners were sweet, amiable, and cordial, and there was no fear that he would omit any marks of respect due to any person, therefore, all who went to visit him were perfectly satisfied. It was wonderful that the good Father, even up to a very short time before his death, should have preserved such sweetness and affability of manner, and so much mildness in his words. He used to say, ‘Reddite omnibus debita; cui tributum, tributum, cui vectigal, vectigal, cui timorem, timorem, cui honorem, honorem;’ and whatever intimacy or authority he might possess, he never thought it right to dispense with this law. The venerable Father directed spiritually a lady of high rank and great virtue, who, seeing herself treated by him with much respect, mildly complained to him, that in word and writing, he gave her the title of excellency, and expressed a wish to be treated without ceremony. The servant of God answered as usual; “St. Paul says, ‘Reddite omnibus debita, cui honorem, honorem.’” In using expressions of esteem, and giving titles when due, his manner was most graceful; it was evident that he did it with the frankness, humility, and simplicity of a heart full of the Spirit of God; hence, that which is sometimes in others, affectation and courtesy, was, in the good Father, natural character, sincerity, and a virtuous disposition. What he practised he wished to be performed also by his sons. He recommended them to treat all with due respect, because, as he said, justice requires it. Speaking once to his confessor of the great charity shown by a princess to the

congregation, the servant of God warned him, that when he had to go to her, he must not fail in his duty. "Treat her with respect," he said, "and give her her title of excellency, for this is proper, though the princess treats us as her brethren."

If it happened sometimes that any of our religious made a mistake, or offended persons of consideration, by a want of politeness, he, who like an affectionate father, bore the burden of the failings of others, endeavoured to satisfy, as best he could, for their deficiencies.

The Princess Albani was residing at Soriano, and one day the Father Rector of St. Eutizio, which is very near, sent to the lady, I do not know for what reason, a brother, as simple of heart as he was rough and uncouth. The good Father, who was then at the Retreat of St. Eutizio, heard of it, and immediately hastened to apologise to her Excellency, because he feared this good brother might have been wanting in manners.

It was enough that any one, even without reason, should consider himself offended by our religious, and not treated with the esteem and respect he merited, for the servant of God immediately to order that his pardon should be asked. The Bishop of Viterbo believed, perhaps from the suggestion of others, that one of our religious, a man of great virtue and merit, had not treated him with due respect. Father Paul heard of it, and though he knew perfectly well that his Lordship was mistaken, he desired the subject to go and ask his pardon humbly. That worthy prelate,

seeing so much humility and respect in the poor religious when he presented himself, and in the venerable Father, who, bringing up his sons in the true school of the humble, had sent him to his feet, received him with great courtesy, and was not only greatly satisfied, but also edified with him.

This was Father Paul's manner of acting, and thus he treated persons of consideration. For himself, however, he did not desire any consideration, he abhorred every title, and every mark of esteem; he considered himself as a dead and putrified dog, the worst of all men. Hence it was, that amongst other acts of affability, he was always the first to offer a salutation, and when he met any one in travelling, he was always the first to take off his hat, and said that this ought to be done, because the poor man is the image of God, and through reverence to the holy angel guardian who accompanied him. These are, it is true, small acts of virtue, but they are marks of a well-formed and virtuous heart, and of a soul that fears to give any small offence to God, the first Author of good order, and therefore neglects nothing. *Qui timet Deum, nihil negligit.*"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE FORTITUDE OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT  
OF GOD.

THE necessity of the virtue of fortitude, in order to attain, by the practice of Christian virtue, to the possession of heaven, will be easily understood by every one who seriously reflects that our life is a perpetual warfare with powerful enemies, who obstinately dispute the passage with us, and that no one obtains the reward, but he who doing violence to himself, combats faithfully with holy fortitude, and truly Christian courage, to the end, but this strength and courage can come to us only from God, who is our protector, our help, our strength, and our true life. Father Paul very clearly comprehended these great truths, for from his youth he kept his heart closely united to God, and thus obtained from God that strength which is so necessary for generously undertaking great things for the glory of His Divine Majesty, and for bearing with invincible patience all the difficulties that are to be met with in the path of the most perfect virtue. There were not wanting to him many great and different occasions of practising fortitude and acquiring new strength and new courage, and in all things he acquitted himself with great fidelity, and fighting manfully to the

end, gave to God new proofs of his love, and gained for himself new and rich crowns of merit.

His quitting the world in his early years, renouncing everything he had or could have, and embracing a plan of life so severe and penitential, which would have terrified any less generous heart, was certainly an act, as every one sees, of great and generous fortitude. He knew all the difficulties of the undertaking for which he was preparing, and persons were not wanting, who, to dissuade him from it, said to him, that by going about so badly clothed, with his head uncovered, and his feet bare in the great forests and cold of Lombardy, he would not be able to persevere, and without doubt, his feet would be frozen and fester, and he would be obliged to have them cut. Paul did not yield to this counsel and reasoning, nor was he alarmed, but taking new courage from the difficulty of the undertaking, rejoiced interiorly and exulted for joy, esteeming himself very happy in meeting with occasions of suffering for the glory of God ; so courageous and intrepid was he even then, and nothing less was required to found our congregation. A great and arduous work was in question ; the institute was to be founded in the greatest poverty, at a time in which the world was abundantly furnished with most exemplary and useful religious orders ; opposition and contradiction were sure to rise, and, in effect, they were of many kinds, and vigorous ; the labour was continual and very painful, but the good servant of God, believing he could do all things in the power of that God who interiorly strengthened

him, undertook the holy work, promoted it with all his strength, and to bring it to perfection, made more than once, in the severest winter, long journeys without money or provisions, and always barefooted, suffering unspeakably, without ever becoming wearied, till the work was accomplished, nor would he ever avail himself of any assistance, unless he were completely powerless. Nothing could restrain his fervour when he thought it necessary to travel, not even the coldest weather of the season, rains, nor falling snow; nor would he allow himself to be influenced, though on every other occasion, he was very docile, by the intreaties of his kind benefactors who wished to keep him from undertaking such journeys, even for the sake of enjoying for a longer time the consolation of receiving him in their own houses.

Once, when on his way to Rome, after passing the night at Ronciglione, in the house of a man as charitable as he was rich, he intended to continue his journey the next morning, but the snow was falling copiously. This pious benefactor tried every means to induce him to remain, or at least, if he would go, to make use of the carriage which he himself offered him. But the servant of God, though he showed himself grateful for the charity of his benefactor, excused himself from remaining, and from receiving any help; and barefoot as he was, his head uncovered, and without a cloak, he set out for Rome in the midst of the snow. After his departure, his friend went to the window, and saw that the servant of God, after taking a few steps, was quite covered with snow, and

nevertheless courageously pursued his journey, to the great wonder and edification of him who was watching him.

In the many journeys that he performed, as he had to travel over mountainous and dangerous roads, his feet, when he reached Rome, were often covered with wounds, so that he left the trace of blood on the stairs, and in the antechamber of the palaces he visited. Sometimes, through toil, fatigue, and weakness, he became quite exhausted, and his strength totally leaving him, he was obliged to lie down on the ground, but after a short rest he rose up courageously, and continued his journey.

He toiled for forty-nine successive years, which were required to elapse before he obtained a confirmation of the Institute from the Apostolic See, which, in its deliberations, always proceeds with wise caution ; and he sacrificed his life, worn out with penances and insults, to the benefit of this holy work ; nor did he ever cease, up to the time of his death, to make efforts, and to labour, as much as he could, to obtain for it, by a new confirmation, that greater stability and firmness he desired. It is difficult to express, how much he suffered, in going to Rome, and returning so many times. He had no house there, no particular benefactor ; he could not obtain his desired end, in order to return quickly to his beloved solitude, and take with him the wished-for favour. During his latter years, when he was going to Rome, he sometimes said in confidence to his confessor, “ Oh, what labours and what sufferings I have endured



in that city!" He arrived sometimes almost, crippled by his infirmities, and was obliged to walk through Rome, leaning on his stick, to mount many staircases in the palaces of noblemen, and to wait long in antechambers; and thus he became so weak, that he could scarcely stand. But this was the least; the greatest suffering was, to have to endure from all sides insults, refusals, scoffs, and derision. As he was clothed in so poor and mean a style, it was difficult for those who did not see things with the penetration of the spirit of God, to know the great merit of the man who made so abject an appearance. The first time he went to Rome, as we have said, to prostrate himself at the feet of Innocent XIII., he was rejected by some of the servants as a beggar. Another time, he went with his brother to have an audience of a great Cardinal; but, as this gentleman knew that he went to him to beg him to intercede for him, and obtain the approbation of the Rules, he would not admit them to an audience. The servant of God was greatly afflicted by this refusal; and as he knew that our Lord willingly receives the most despised poor, he entered thus mortified into the Church of St. Charles in the Corso, and began to pray, and was affectionately comforted by Almighty God in his interior, and assured by a strong light that he had been heard in all he asked. He went in the evening with his brother to his lodgings, and as it was late at night, the Lord Cardinal had gone to bed, but he could not sleep for agitation, nor find peace; and not knowing how to account for it,

it occurred to him to call his servants, and when they were assembled, he began to pray with them to our Lord, that He would vouchsafe to free him from this uneasiness; and having recourse also to the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, they recited the Litany in her honour, after which this pious Cardinal remembered the refusal he had given two days previously to the two monks, and felt convinced that this caused his interior uneasiness; he therefore ordered his servants to make a diligent search the next morning, and bring them to him, which was done. When the two good brothers were introduced, the consolation of the two servants of God, and of his Eminence, was reciprocal, for the Cardinal recovered his peace of mind, and Father Paul obtained what he desired, and thought himself well compensated for the repulse he had received. This worthy prince afterwards showed every desire to help on the holy work, as we see by a letter of the 7th August, 1751, in which he says, "As I regard with particular esteem and affection your holy Institute, and the good subjects that compose it, you may be sure, that whenever I have an opportunity of promoting its increase, I shall always employ for that purpose both my labour and my money, chiefly on account of the spiritual benefit that I am thus certain of promoting in my poor neighbour for the greater glory of God."

He had many greater insults to endure in different places. Once, in Leghorn, he was taken for a thief; for having arrived late, and being fatigued with his journey, not knowing whither

to go for shelter, he entered a Church, but the sacristan seeing him so wretchedly clad, and in so miserable a state, took him for a suspicious person, drove him out, and would not listen to his prayer to be allowed to pass the night there; but this was not all, for, on leaving the Church, he remained in the porch for shelter; but being believed to be a wicked man, not to be trusted, he was also driven from the porch. He was treated worse by two foreign priests, in the canal of Pisa, when he met them in the same vessel; for having heard them utter some unbecoming words, Father Paul, strongly moved by the honour of God, and fraternal charity, with all sweetness and humility entreated them not to use words so ill-suited to the mouth of a priest. Irritated by an action which ought to have pleased them, they vomited forth against him such abuse, such insults and mockery, that those who heard them were horrified. The humble servant of God, without answering one word, without being in the least discomposed, even preserving a very peaceful and serene countenance, and keeping his mind interiorly fixed on the consideration of the insults received by Jesus in His Passion, and on the knowledge of his own ingratitude, humbled himself, and sank down into his own nothingness, where he found that tranquillity and repose that our Lord gives to the humble of heart. Whilst he thus humbly kept silence, a gentleman who was in the vessel, and from his appearance and dress seemed to be a person of distinction, turning to the two priests, reproved them, to the

regret of the servant of God, who rejoiced in his humiliation, and said to them, "Mind what you are doing; you are insulting this poor servant of God, and who knows what God will one day make of him? who knows how many companions he will perhaps have at a future day?" This good Christian seemed to speak with a prophetic spirit in taking the part of the young Paul, who kept silence, and pitied those who insulted him.

Our Lord, who, in proportion as He takes delight in the humility and patience of His servants, hates and detests those who insult and dishonour them, sometimes took vengeance on those who showed contempt of the venerable Father, and opposed his holy intentions. When Father Paul was giving, for the second time, a Mission in a city of Tuscany, six persons, instigated by the wicked spirit, joined with another, who was an apothecary, to do whatever they could to show spite to the servant of God, and hinder the benefit of the Mission. When he was actually on the platform preaching, they struck the bronze mortar with heavy and repeated blows, and made so much noise, that the people who were farthest from the platform, could not hear the sermon. The servant of God noticed it, and sent an order that the noise should be stopped. They answered that they were at home, and that they would do what they pleased. At this answer the servant of God was silent, and after a short prayer, he said that they had better take care, for God would punish them, and so it happened. One of them fell down dead as he was in the act of open-

ing a door, and the others all died in a short time. These were not the only persons stricken by the avenging hand of God; for the chastisement of the Lord fell also on many others of the people who in that Mission did not receive the word of God with good dispositions, and benefited little by it. The servant of God, penetrated with grief to see those poor souls despise their remedy, burning with zeal for the glory of God, shaking the dust from his feet as he left the place, predicted that the chastisement of God would soon visit them. Not one word of the fervent Missionary fell to the ground. God sent an epidemic, by which five hundred persons died, without reckoning the Jews, who resided in that city.

The Divine Goodness, which, having purified like gold, the virtue of Father Paul, went on working it, and bringing it to a more perfect representation of our Blessed Redeemer, if it struck with one hand, kept him with the other strong and firm, comforted him, and constantly infused new vigour into his heart, by which he generously undertook, for the glory of God, the execution of those designs which He Himself deigned to inspire. Father Paul, who knew how lovingly the Divine Majesty protected him, and how near at hand He was to assist Him, never spared himself, nor allowed himself to be deterred by any human respect or base fear when the glory of God was in question. Often, as it usually happens in Missions, he was praised and commended for his preaching by the wisest and most religious persons, but was scoffed at and derided by libertines;

he cared for nothing, however, but with a firm foot passed by everything, and used to say on these occasions, that we must go on, as St. Paul says, 'per infamiam et bonam famam,' and thus advance towards God. Very often also it happened, that when he applied a remedy to the diseases of consciences, removed scandals, and proximate occasions, several of those wolves, who saw their prey taken from them, were greatly irritated; but the venerable Father allowed them to rage and howl, and in the meantime provided a place of safety for those converted souls, that the scandal might be removed; and if it was necessary, he ordered that a public and sinful life should be ended by lawful marriage.

If, in giving missions to soldiers, he sometimes in the regiments met with persons consecrated to God, who, having abandoned their heavenly profession, had entered the lists as soldiers, to the dishonour of their rank and dignity, the zealous Father then greatly exerted himself to free them from this miserable state, so unworthy of their character; and as the Captains, intent only on temporal advantages, and fearful of a defeat, refused to lose any of their men, Father Paul, with great courage, had recourse to the General, or to some superior officer, and, from their piety and rectitude, obtained what others, through motives of interest, refused him. In one word, he showed on these occasions the heart of a priest, and the courage of a saint. The good servant of God acted with the same firmness in confession, when it was necessary to repress the obstinacy or

insolence of any one. He was, as we have said, all charity and compassion for his penitents; but when it was necessary, he knew how to use the wine of salutary severity, as well as the oil of compassion and sweetness. He was condescending as long as he could be so; but when condescension would degenerate into baseness, he had a heart of iron to resist any person, and to refuse or delay sacramental absolution in regard of those who were undeserving of it.

As the servant of God had during his life, the various offices, all important and difficult, of Missionary, Superior, and Founder, and in all desired to please the infinite Majesty of God, and fulfil his obligations in spite of everything that opposed him, he had, in all, much to bear with, and to suffer. When he obtained from the Holy See permission to found, he accepted, with due reserve and mature deliberation, the foundations offered to him; but that was the very time when hell seemed to be let loose upon him, and though he felt most deeply the warfare that was carried on against the work of God, he was, notwithstanding, always intrepid and courageous.

The fury of the storm then raised against the Congregation, and the proceedings of the servant of God, in so dangerous an occasion, may be known, better than from our account, from some of his letters, in which he opened his heart to one of our Religious of great virtue and wisdom, and the second of his companions. "Our affairs," he says, go on as usual, the storms have not yet

subsided, but we shall gain the victory in Christ, after suffering great inconveniences.”

In another, “ Our affairs are always in a tumult. All the communities are united in opposition. Oh how I regret it! I have written and written again to prevent the lawsuit. ‘*Servum Domini non oportet litigare.*’ It seems as if the devil wished to make a great gain to our disadvantage. I have declared that I do not wish for Retreats with lawsuits, but in peace. The prayers must be fervently continued.”

It would appear as if the servant of God had been sufficiently tried, and by the labours we have described, might have gained for himself a very glorious crown of merit; but our Lord treated him as one of His friends, making him partake abundantly of the chalice of His sufferings. He often visited him with long and painful sickness, and supporting him on these occasions with the strength of His arm, made him an example of patience. When yet a secular, after he gave himself up to a life of penance, he fell into a most dangerous illness; but when he was recovered, he did not, on that account, relax anything of his severity. He had other attacks successively, caused by the fatigue of Missions, the difficulties of travelling, the labours of penance, or the unwholesomeness of the air in the places where he gave Missions; and in all he was seen to bear his sufferings with patience and longanimity, and what is more, with joy and alacrity of mind. And as he knew that it is only by the help of grace that sickness and suffering can be made agreeable,



often, in the beginning of a fever, seeking to draw from the loving visit of our Lord the benefit designed by God, he went to visit Jesus in His Sacrament, and remained there for some time, weeping, sobbing, and asking for pity and mercy on his soul, and then, bathed in tears, went to lie down on his sack of straw, having received from Jesus, in His Sacrament, strength and courage to suffer the illness God had sent him. We have more exact information regarding the illnesses of the servant of God, either from some of his letters, or from the witnesses examined in the processes. He had one long illness in 1727, and another in 1732. In 1741, having gone to give the holy Missions at Piombino when the air was not well purified, he had scarcely given the holy benediction before he was seized with a violent fever. He immediately went back to Monte Argentaro. But as he became worse, he was removed to Orbetello, to be cured, and there was brought very near to death. Father John Baptist of St. Michael, his brother and inseparable companion, assisted him, and could not conceal his grief and regret at seeing himself so near losing a brother so dear and so virtuous. But Father Paul with strength of soul encouraged him to vanquish all the affections of flesh and blood.

In 1742 he had another illness, in which, as the servant of God himself writes, he went, 'ad portas mortis,' and another in 1749, contracted in giving missions at Porto, in a place where the air was not good. I pass over various others, which all served as a fire to refine more and more the

virtue of the servant of God, and make him more acceptable to our Lord. It may be said, in short, that after fifty years of his life had elapsed, his illnesses were frequent and most painful, through habitual infirmities, which tormented him up to his death, and had been contracted by his exertions in promoting the glory of God, and particularly by a journey from Rome to Orbetello, made in 1745, which brought on a serious illness, that left behind it pains and tormenting sciatica, as we have said before. During his illness, and when attacked by the most violent of his pains, he suffered with a courageous soul, and was so far from yielding, or allowing himself to be overcome by impatience, that he even spent the time in singing joyfully. He had met with a very beautiful but mournful chant for our Blessed Lady's Litanies, and by singing this he comforted himself when the pain was greatest. He practised this pious exercise of singing devout prayers that he might not disturb others with complaints, and to prevent himself from making any exclamation through the violence of the disease and of the pain. If sometimes when the pain was most severe he had cried out suddenly, it seemed to him that he had been wanting in patience, and immediately he began to sing aloud, and in the mission tone: 'Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis.' His devout custom of singing was so frequent, that at last one of our benefactors, when he had F. Paul in his house, found out his illness by his singing. Not only by singing did he endeavour to prevent the signs of pain that might have rendered him

burdensome to those who assisted and visited him, but, possessing his soul even in the midst of pain and weakness, he recreated the minds of others in the spiritual conversations that he held with some joke or amusing narration.

Once when confined to his bed, at the Retreat of St. Angelo, and so ill that he could not even turn himself, he related, smiling, what had been predicted to him by a celebrated military man. "I remember," he said, "that Marshal Garma, the General at Orbetello, said to me 'Father Paul, you now take long journeys barefooted, and you are continually labouring in missions, but know, that when you are old, Jesus Christ will cripple you in one of your limbs, and will thus reward you in this world :' and," he added, "see how it has been verified." From this manner of conducting himself in sickness, every one who saw him received great edification, beholding such serenity amidst such pain and anguish. From the peace and tranquillity with which he suffered, he appeared in bed like an innocent babe, lovingly abandoned in the arms of Divine Providence, and it was well understood that from the depths of his heart came those expressions by which he declared that his illness did not displease him. "I am willing," he said, "to remain thus all my life ;" and to a person who asked him how he felt, he replied, "Let us thank God ;" looking upon the pains of sickness as presents and precious visits from our Lord. With all these infirmities, if his pains were in some degree mitigated, he went to the holy

missions; and so great was his fervour in the work of God, that when he took his staff in hand, he seemed no longer lame, and continued the apostolic ministry with great courage and generosity of soul.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE VEXATIONS OF DEVILS, INTERIOR DESOLATIONS,  
AND OTHER TRIALS OF HIS HEROIC FORTITUDE.

THE devil, either because he envied so much virtue, or foretold the losses that the servant of God would cause to the kingdom of darkness, sought to torment and mock at him in every way. "The Retreat ( he speaks of the first, that of the Presentation ) is almost finished, and in Lent we hope to enter. Oh, God! what a tumult of devils! .....and God knows what I feel interiorly." And in another: "It is not very long since a poor old man of the Congregation, and old in sins, heard in the night distinctly sounds of whistling in his ears, which awoke and made him tremble; but all passes away, 'et nihil vobis nocebit. Nolite timere, nolite metuere: Dominus enim pugnabit pro vobis. Alleluia, alleluia. alleluia.' The devil is terrified by the alleluia, a sound come from Paradise." He also writes: "I am in the arms of the Divine Mercy, severely scourged by the ministers of His justice, and much more by my sins." The Divine Majesty was pleased to manifest to him, by a clear locution, as he said to his

confessor, the permission he had given to the devils to torment him, mercifully to dispose and prepare him for the great combat and victory. Our Lord then said to him : " I will cause thee to be trampled on by devils ;" and the prediction, as it was true, was fulfilled with all exactness. The devils, besides tormenting the servant of God with disturbances, horrid hissing, and frightful noises, as if many pieces of artillery had been discharged, often awoke him to his terror and dismay : they sometimes spitefully drew the covering from him, sometimes in the form of a cat they walked on his bed, and often appeared under horrible forms of a furious cat, a large mastiff, and a frightful bird, and in many ways tormented and mocked at him.

Even during the times of his most painful illnesses, they did not spare the afflicted and sorrowful servant of God. He had been forty days and nights suffering dreadful pain, confined to his bed, in the house of one of his benefactors at Orbetello. He had been unable to close his eyes in sleep, when one night, through great weariness and weakness, the pain having subsided a little, he began to doze, and immediately the devil began to make a horrible noise by loudly opening and shutting a warming-pan in the room. The poor invalid awoke, and with great courage and resolution threatened the devil, showing marks of contempt. The devil, who is a proud spirit, immediately departed, and for some time did not disturb him. F. Paul, who knew well how to unite devotion with vivacity and a joyous spirit, when he

was relating this to his confessor said, smiling: "What do you think of it? The proverb tells us not to arouse a sleeping dog, and a poor man that had not slept for forty days and nights to be aroused in his first sleep! Is this a proper thing?"

One night he was suffering severely from gouty pains, when the devil, to increase his torture, took the great toe of the foot that was the most painful, and twisted it with such fury and spite, that the servant of God seemed to be suffering one of the torments of hell. The most ordinary and furious attacks by which the devils assailed, and attempted to disturb him, were always made when he was exerting himself for the glory of God, the advantage of the Congregation, and the good of his neighbour. If he began to pray or say his office, then hell seemed to be unchained; if he took his pen to write to any person on important business, the devil showed his rage by the noise he made; if at recreation he spoke, as was his custom, of the interior kingdom of God, the devils vented their rage upon him when he retired to his room.

When his heart was most strongly occupied with the desire, and his mind with the thought, of the establishment of the new monastery for the nuns of the Passion of Jesus Christ, at the time that the rules composed by him in 1770 were under review, he generally passed the nights without sleeping; and one night, when he had raised himself up to sit on the bed, he suddenly felt himself seized, and his head violently struck against

part of the wall which formed a corner near the bed, with so much noise, that the infirmarian, who was sleeping in the next room, awoke terrified. When the Venerable Father was asked by his confessor the next morning how he felt, he replied with equal discretion, grace, and vivacity, "God does not allow that the devil's operations should do much harm, but they do not, however, do any good,"—adding in confidence, "this monastery torments the devil." And at the time of the Missions, during those few hours of rest which are so necessary to refresh the fatigued head, his room was filled with devils, trying to disturb him in that short repose. The wicked spirits could not endure the loss suffered by the kingdom of darkness of so many souls, which sincerely returned to God by means of F. Paul's sermons, and more especially of the Meditation on the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, and they were forced to acknowledge it; for when a worthy priest was exorcising a possessed person, the devil cried out that he could not bear the Mass that F. Paul celebrated, and being obliged to say if any other thing tormented him in the servant of God, he furiously cried out, "The Passion—the Passion!" In order to succeed better in their wicked designs, the devils sometimes assumed a human form, and thus presented themselves to deceive and afflict him even to the last degree. Shortly after the death of his brother, Father John Baptist, Father Paul fell seriously ill. One night he saw in his room six or seven persons, who said they were physicians, who, having heard in the neighbourhood of his

illness, had come to tell him to prepare for death, for there was no chance for him ; and they could speak so much the more resolutely of his approaching death, as, by an apparition of his deceased brother, they knew that he was to die on the following Wednesday. But as the true servants of God, who suffer life in patience, and have death in desire, are not alarmed at the announcement of approaching death, Father Paul, observing that amongst those who gave themselves out for physicians there was not his own physician, Dr. Mattioli, said quietly, that so many physicians were not required to give him this warning, for it would be enough if Dr. Mattioli spoke to him ; and the devils, confounded at not having been able to disturb the tranquil uniformity of the servant of God with the Divine Will, disappeared in an instant.

One night, the Venerable Founder was staying with a companion in the house of a benefactor, when, on their retiring to rest, the devil appeared in the shape of a terrible man of gigantic height. The companion, terrified, said to the servant of God, "Do you see?" and the Venerable Father, accustomed to the molestation of devils, answered, "Be quiet, and do not be afraid, he is not come for you," And it was known the next morning whom the malignant enemy had intended to strike, for F. Paul's legs were black from the blows he had received the previous night. Not only this companion, but many others also, on different occasions, perceived the attacks made by the devils on him. Sometimes he arrived at the Retreats so exhausted, that he could scarcely



drag himself along, as it once happened when he went to the Retreat of the Presentation, which he could scarcely reach, having in a place called la Feniglia been beaten by devils, who, drawn up visibly in ranks, like so many soldiers in the act of making some culprit run the gauntlet, cruelly struck him; and sometimes it happened that he was obliged to lie in bed, pale and emaciated as a corpse, without the reason being known. From these facts may be inferred the degree of courage necessary for Father Paul to persevere courageously and fight continually.

He knew well, however, that with such an enemy he must not shew nor entertain fear, but have good courage animated by lively confidence in God. From a youth he had learned thus to resist and foil his efforts; for even in the first years that he spent at Monte Argentaro, when he went at night to Portercole to help souls, or was passing the night in church before the Blessed Sacrament, the devil envious of the good done by the servant of God, tried to disturb and frighten him by making a noise in the church at night, but he remained intrepid, made no account of the noises and persevered in his prayer all night without moving, and the following morning employed himself in hearing confessions, with that fruit that might be hoped for after such a preparation. On other occasions when attacked by devils, he did not call any one as he might have done, through a wish not to shew any fear of the proud spirit; but taking the crucifix with faith and devotion, had recourse to the holy Name of Jesus, well

knowing that this is a name of salvation and of victory, and he pressed to his neck the rosary of our Blessed Lady by means of which hell has received so many defeats, and with great firmness intimated commands to the devils that they should depart, and they obeyed in spite of themselves, though they soon returned to give him new annoyances.

Besides the external molestations with which the wicked spirits tormented the servant of God, they had other methods, very afflicting and tormenting, of making him suffer in his interior more deeply ; they sometimes caused in him, weariness, melancholy, and sadness, and so greatly oppressed him, that one day he said to his confessor, "To day, I have felt strong impulses to run wildly, like a fugitive through these forests ;" sometimes they set the bile in motion, and made him feel so strong an emotion of anger, that though he resisted, he felt great pain, and seemed to be burdensome, even to himself, and for fear of allowing some word of impatience to escape his lips, he then remained quite alone, suffering in silence for the love of God, who thus ordained it. Sometimes they assailed him with despair so violently, that it seemed as if they would force him to kill himself, and conferring one day with his director, regarding his interior, he told him, that he had been violently tempted to throw himself out of the window.

His greatest troubles, however, were violent temptations regarding the mystery of predestination, with which the devils tormented him, and

made every effort to lead him into despair. They sought, in every way, to embarrass him with different sophisms on this mystery, and did this with so much power of persuasion, that the poor servant of God had much to do to fight and resist generously. From his youth, that his virtue might not even then be without the precious treasure of suffering, he had been troubled with this violent temptation, but having consulted Mgr. Gattinara his director, upon it, he was at that time freed from it. When afterwards he he entered upon the painful martyrdom of his spiritual derelictions, the devils returned to the attack with greater fury, and with more vigorous efforts sought to give some colour of truth to falsehood, in the state of darkness in which he then was; but the grace of God, who never permits any one to be tempted beyond his strength, always mercifully supported His servant, that he might, amidst so many combats, remain victorious; and thus the attacks availed nothing, but to multiply his crowns, and render him skilled in that science, which he was afterwards to employ for the good of so many souls.

The servant of God, accustomed to fight with the devil, and gain the victory over him, gave excellent instructions for overcoming this furious enemy. He said, that we must oppose, resist courageously, and despise him, as he wrote once to a master of novices, who had a novice whom the devil troubled: "I am not surprised at my troubles, or at the attacks of the devil, for in the end it is written, 'multa flagella peccatoris,' but I

feel great compassion for these innocent children, The enemy must be opposed, the truth, as it is said, must be shown him, he must be tormented with rigorous commands...they must be written, pronounced verbally, by some one in a stole, and fixed up in the room with great faith, and this must be done with great authority 'in nomine Jesu Christi.' "

"Last night" he wrote to a religious, "I received your letter. It displeases the devil much that you should write to me, as your letter shows me; you may know clearly why he is thus enraged, without my telling you. Arm yourself more and more, with faith, confidence in God, and profound humility of heart; renew the orders to the devil, command him in the name of Jesus Christ to depart from you, and go to the place appointed him by Almighty God for his pride; fear nothing. These diabolical apparitions, with the horrible temptations that accompany them, are excellent signs, and the suffering that your soul feels, serves as a fire to purify her more, and render her more and more disposed for the union of love with the Divine Majesty. Oh what a great work is this. I beg of you to use, regarding this subject, the advice I gave you in another letter, and I now repeat the same; profound humility, silence, reverential annihilation before Almighty God; this is a rule for ascending on high. When your soul is more deeply sunk in interior solitude, and in a more profound repose of love in the bosom of the heavenly Father, make the cry of a child and shew him what you suffer from the devil's fury.

He knows it already, but He desires that you should tell it to Him, with an infantine cry. Tell Him, with profound annihilation, not to allow the devil to molest you with those frightful apparitions, but enable you to abandon yourself to His most holy will, which must be your continual food ; for our sweet Jesus always nourished Himself with the will of His Father, in a sea of sufferings. Take courage, be careful never to allow yourself to be terrified by the devil, remain hidden in God ; nothing can hurt you ; never leave off prayer when you see those phantoms, but remain firm and constant, and do not arise from the place of prayer ; then the devil will go away in confusion ; be of good courage ; God wishes to make you a saint. May Jesus bless you.”...

As the devil, when he conceals himself the most, is the most dangerous, and when he transforms himself into an angel of light, does most injury ; the Good Father, continually watching over the progress of his children, wrote as advice for one of them : “ As regards Brother N. I also hope that his conduct is according to God, but the devil deceives much by a great and false pretext of good. From these combats may arise a hidden pride, therefore it should be made known to him, that if for a venial sin he would deserve Purgatory with horrible pains, what a great thing it is, that the Divine Goodness should exchange such a punishment for these small drops of bitterness ; let him then humble and resign himself, and abandon himself to God with great confidence, and remain always in his nothingness.”

This lesson, so entirely suited to him who professes the spirit of God, was exactly practised by Father Paul, when, as we have seen, he was molested by devils, opposed by men, and stricken by God with painful sickness. But all this, to say the truth, was the smallest, and least painful part of his grievous sufferings. That which pierced his heart and caused him great interior torment, and a struggle of death, was the lively fear of having lost God, and of being deprived for ever of His Beatific Vision. Our Lord, that His faithful servant might more anxiously seek after Him, had withdrawn from him that sweet spiritual communication, with which He used at first intimately to converse with him. He had taken away that abundant light with which He formerly visited him, and had, as it were, hidden Himself in the heart of His dear Paul, without his being aware of it. Poor Paul, who, from his youth, charmed with the Divine perfections, had most ardently sighed for union with God, had abandoned every thing in order to enjoy Him more, and would have sacrificed a thousand lives to please Him, seeing now, as it seemed to him, God displeased, God far from him, God lost, could find neither rest nor consolation. With the greatest vehemence, his soul was carried towards God, but at the same time, he seemed to be powerfully repulsed; afflicted and terrified, therefore he knew not what to think of himself. To explain his state to his director he used to say, "Imagine you see a poor shipwrecked man, who, after the ship is lost, is supporting himself on one of the broken planks,

and at every wave and every gust of wind, trembles and fears to be drowned; or that you see a criminal condemned to die, who is waiting, with constant palpitation of the heart, till he is conducted to the scaffold, such is my state.....”

On this account, writing to one of his religious, he said to him, “I am in many combats, but God does not manifest them exteriorly. Often even in sleep, (I tell this as a secret to your heart,) even in sleep I suffer, and awake all trembling, and for many years I have been in this wretched state. However, this seems nothing to me, in comparison with a great cross, that for many years I have borne without consolation; it seems to me like a hail-storm that cuts down everything, and I am like one that is almost always in the depth of the sea, in a violent storm without having any one to offer him a plank to save himself from shipwreck, either from on high or on the earth; there is still a ray of faith and hope, but so slight, that I scarcely perceive it.”

Sometimes, amidst his trials, like one who lifts his head above water, he sang with holy enthusiasm and true joy of heart :—

“ Nella Croce il santo amore  
Perfeziona l'alma amante,  
Quando fervido, e costante,  
Gli consacra tutto il cuore.

“ Oh se io potessi dire  
Quel tesoro alto, e divino,  
Che Il gran Dio uno, e trino  
Ha riposto nel patire.

“ Ma perchè è un grande arcano  
 All' amante sol scoperto,  
 Io, che non sono esperto  
 Sol l'ammiro di lontano.

“ Fortunato è quel cuore,  
 Che' sta in Croce abbandonato  
 Nelle braccia dell' Amato,  
 Brucia sol di santo amore :

“ Ancor più è avventurato  
 Chi nel suo nudo patire,  
 Senza ombra di gioire  
 Sta in Cristo trasformato.

“ O felice chi patisce  
 Senza attacco al suo patire,  
 Ma sol vuole a se morire  
 Per più amar chi lo ferisce.

“ Io ti do questa lezione  
 Dalla Croce di Gesù :  
 Mà l' imparerai tu più  
 Nella santa orazione. Amen.”

From the great dereliction of which we have spoken, arose in him so great a fear of damnation, that he sometimes trembled from head to foot, and shuddered. “I must not,” he said, “think of my state, for I am horrified.” Sometimes, again, “What will become of poor Paul! shall I be saved? Ah, my affairs go on very ill, yet I hope to be saved; hope is a precept, therefore I ought to hope for my salvation.” When the servant of God spoke thus, it was easy to see, from



his face and mode of expression, that his words came from the depth of his heart, and if he was always sincere, he then more than ever evinced the candour of his soul.

If, when in this state, he had occasion to speak in public of the loss of God, by miserable condemned souls, he appeared terrified, trembled from head to foot, and his hair stood on end; but in this great terror and violent tempest, his soul kept a strong hold on the anchor of holy hope, and in such tormenting trials he was entirely resigned to the Divine Will; he raised his eyes and his heart to God, and said, weeping, and striking his breast, "Oh, how much I love God! I love Him: we must always love Him, even when he chastises us."

On many other occasions, with tears in his eyes, resigning himself entirely to the will of God, he said, "I rejoice, my God, how good Thou art! I seek nothing in this world but Thee, oh my God." And by a wonderful effort, that love alone knows how to make, Paul's soul was carried more ardently to God, in proportion as it seemed to him that he was rejected by God; so much the more anxiously did he seek to please Him, as he figured Him to himself irritated and angry. It was wonderful to see how, in this very state of terrible dereliction, he had a singular gift of consoling and encouraging whoever had recourse to him in this or in other trials. It sufficed for them, so to speak, to open their mouths, and he, immediately understanding their necessities, encouraged them with great fervour, enlarged their heart, comforted them,

suggested remedies and appropriate methods for overcoming the temptations, and disposing them to receive the grace of God ; so that one who did not know what passed in his interior, would have thought that he was favoured by God with extraordinary graces and tokens of favour. But, as he who is a master in virtue practises it also when deprived of those comforts which are usually granted to those who are less strong, and not so far advanced in a spiritual life, the good Father in comforting others, remained in a sea of bitterness. Our Lord did not let him see the treasures contained in his soul ; He gave him no light to understand his own state ; and he could not, from that of others, be certain of his own ; even from reading he could derive no comfort, and said to his confessor, “ My interior state is so dark and obscure, and my path so interwoven with fears and terrors, that I find no book capable of comforting or tranquillizing me. I am reading the Mystical Treatise of Thaulerus, I find something there, but not all that is necessary in the sea of storms in which I am plunged.”

Our Lord, who desired to form in Paul a soul that should live entirely to grace, and yield in nothing to the inclinations of nature, showed great jealousy of his heart, and seemed to oppose him in everything, that he might not lean on anything, nor rest in any creature, but like an affectionate dove, direct his flight always to God, and in the bosom of God alone seek his repose. In fact, as the confessor of the venerable Father wisely remarked, our Lord, in keeping him for so many

years in a state of suffering, and often confined to his bed, not only deprived him of the little relaxation, that nature, worn out with labour and continual application, enjoys in breathing a little fresh air, or in taking necessary nourishment without disgust, but seemed also to contradict him in those inclinations which are more innocent, and come from a virtuous principle.

Our venerable Father desired to lead a life hidden and unknown, attending to his own sanctification by conversing alone with the Supreme Good in perfect tranquillity; but our Lord willed, that, quitting the solitude and retirement in which he would have gladly ended his days, he should labour in founding the new congregation, and should several times present himself at the palaces of the great, to speak with them, and to promote the success of the holy work.

Father Paul, when he knew the will of God, through his desire of executing it, and his natural fervour and activity, would have wished to see this edifice founded immediately, and raised for the glory of the Divine Majesty, but our Lord, trying and refining more and more the virtue of His faithful servant, made him wait twenty-one years for the first confirmation of the rule, that gave to the new institute a fixed form, and did not console him by the other confirmations that gave to the new congregation the necessary completeness and perfection, till after forty-nine years had elapsed; for there were as many from the year in which he began to receive companions, till 1769, when Clement XIV., of holy memory, by his bull, ap-

proved the institute, and confirmed the rules of the congregation of the Sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. It happened in the same manner, when the foundation of new retreats was in question, for though the venerable founder proceeded with great caution and judgment before he accepted any new foundation. When he ascertained the will of God, he would have desired to see erected immediately a house, in which God might be praised day and night, and in which virtue and innocence might be more secure, under the garb of rigid penance, and might also give to others an example of virtue and nourishment for body and soul; but our Lord so disposed it, that many difficulties arose, which prevented the venerable Father from enjoying that consolation which not unfrequently accompanies the execution of virtuous undertakings. Having seen with his own eyes the great fruit which is gained for souls by means of missions, and especially by recalling the remembrance of the Sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, without heeding the burden of labour, or the loss of health, he would have gone everywhere to enkindle the fire of Divine love, and destroy all the wicked fruits of vices and sins; but our Lord, taking great delight in the excellent dispositions of His servant, often kept him sick in bed, or half crippled in his room, with that mortification and suffering that can only be understood by one who possesses lively zeal.

That sacrifice, however, which to souls that have enjoyed an intimate and affectionate intercourse with God, is beyond measure afflicting, is

the privation of the sweet presence of their Beloved, the horrible abandonment in which God seems to leave them, when He refuses them the sweet feeling of His presence ; hence, they suffer a species of martyrdom, so much the more painful, as it deeply afflicts the soul, without that comfort and sweetness that divine love brings with it ; and even from the greatness of love becomes more tormenting and terrible. And because our Lord saw how great and strong was this love in His servant, and the desire of always conversing intimately with him, He left him for so many years in aridity, darkness, and horrible dereliction. It may be said, that He deprived him of everything that could console him ; and, as it were, with a sharp sword, penetrating even to the division of the soul and the spirit, separated him completely from everything that had not its origin in the life of the spirit, and of heavenly graces. It cannot be denied, that amidst so many thoughts, cares, and anxieties, and under the weight of so many sorrows, the presence, advice, and help of his dear brother, Father John Baptist of St. Michael the Archangel, were a comfort to him ; but our Lord wounded him even in this tender point, in which the sentiments of nature and grace were united, that he who was to be great in fortitude, and an example to others, might feel the blow and the trial more severely. God, however, prepared him first to receive with perfect submission the dispensations of His loving Providence ; for, when he was celebrating mass in July 1765, our Lord spoke interiorly to him, by a clear locution for two succes-

sive days, "Prepare thyself for one of the greatest of trials," and this was precisely the loss of Father John Baptist. The degree of pain that this loss would cause him, can only be understood by one who knows what it is to lose in a brother one who had been, and was, his faithful companion in all his labours, journeys, and penances, who had been the depositary of all the secrets of his heart, and who, for his great virtue, was esteemed and venerated as a saint by Father Paul. But so much the more painful as this loss was, so much the more meritorious was the submission to the Divine Will, with which Paul endured it. Deprived of the consoling presence of his brother, afflicted and grieved, he continually made new progress in the sublime school of suffering, disposing himself thus to accomplish his sacrifice by a death which he met, not only with resignation and unconquerable patience, but even with joy and cheerfulness of mind.

When he saw it near at hand he looked upon it with great intrepidity ; he spoke of it like a person who expects his true repose in death, and said, "Sometimes this fear presents itself to me, but it departs immediately when I think of the Passion of Jesus Christ." One day, during his last illness, speaking of his approaching death, animated by the spirit of God, he said, with great generosity, '*Si appropriavit tempus nostrum moriamur fortiter*, and added, "Cowards fear death. Behold me, O my God: I willingly accept death from the hands of my heavenly Father, as a last penance for my sins. How

happy is it to die by our Father's hand! I am guilty of high treason, therefore I receive this sentence willingly as a last penance for my sins.'"

When the hour had come for him to leave this land of exile to go into the repose of eternity, he was so humble, patient, and meek, in the midst of his pains and anguish, that he seemed to be a true representative of the man of sorrows, Christ Jesus; for, without lamentation or complaint, like the '*agnus mansuetus qui portatur ad victimam, sic non aperuit os suum,*' living and dying with most humble and tranquil resignation to the Divine Will; hence he showed in himself that by patience is perfected the work of sanctity, '*Patientia opus perfectum habet;*' and he taught by his example to all, that which he often inculcated in conferences, that the Cross must be carried with resignation and joy, and he took great delight in those persons who acted in this manner.

## CHAPTER XXV.

SENTIMENTS OF FATHER PAUL ON THE VALUE OF SUFFERING, AND THE METHOD OF SUFFERING IN A HOLY MANNER.

As Father Paul was taught in the school of suffering by lessons so constant, so strong, and efficacious, it is not surprising that he gave such sublime instructions on the excellence of suffering, and the method of profiting from sufferings which he termed precious. It will be very edifying and useful to read and consider them attentively. "What a great honour God does us," he writes, "in making us walk in the path by which He made His Divine Son walk."

"Make great account," he says in another, "of these exterior and interior trials: the little garden of Jesus will then be flourishing by the virtues that are exercised."

"When the Cross," he adds, "is most afflicting and wounding, it is the best; when suffering is most deprived of comfort, it is the purest; when creatures oppose us the most, we approach more nearly to the union with God. The servant of God that is not crucified, what is he? Too much sugar causes worms in infants. The life of Jesus Christ was all a cross. In these great sweetnesses and elevations of mind there is always danger that the devil will play us some trick."



He is not worthy of divine contemplation who has not suffered and vanquished some great temptation. Trials are beneficial, and of great use, to keep the balance steady."

"In consolations every infant seems brave ; but in great trials strong souls are put to the test, not the effeminate."

As he had a great wish and a special gift to make himself well understood, he explained, by beautiful similitudes the precious effects of suffering. "Afflictions, fears, desolations, aridity, abandonments, temptations, and other trials, are an excellent broom, that sweeps from your soul all the dust and mire of the imperfections that are concealed from you."

"Work, suffer, be silent : do not complain, do not show resentment ; these are maxims of the saints, and of high perfection."

"Has your Reverence ever seen a rock in the sea beaten by a storm ? A wave comes furiously, and strikes it ; what happens ? There is the rock. Another more furious wave comes, and strikes it on every side ; what becomes of it ? There is the rock. After the storm, if your Reverence notices the rock, you will see that the waves of the storm have washed and purified it from all the defilements it had contracted during the calm weather. Henceforward I wish you to be a rock ; a stormy wave comes ; be silent. See, a hundred, a thousand come ! Be silent, and the most I give you leave to say in the midst of the storm is, Pater mi : Father, I am thine. Oh dear, oh most sweet Will of God, I adore Thee ! .

“The statue must be struck with hammers, and polished with sharp chisels before it is placed in the great gallery.

“The holy Gospel says, that if the grain that is sown does not die, it remains, and brings forth no fruit. But the poor grain that is sown to die, and bring forth fruit, what does it endure? Rain, snow, wind, and sun : thus the soul is a grain that God sows in the great field of the Church ; and that it may bring forth fruit it must die, by suffering, pain, contradictions, and persecutions.”

These little trials, corporal and spiritual, are the first little steps of that high and holy ladder, which is mounted by great and generous souls, which they ascend step by step, till they reach the top, where they find the purest suffering without comfort from heaven or earth ; and if they are faithful in not seeking consolation, they pass from this pure suffering to the pure love of God without mixture of any other thing. But very few and rare indeed are the happy souls that reach the step I speak of. Ah, a soul that has received heavenly favours, to find herself stripped of everything ! Yet more, to go so far as to seem to herself abandoned by God, to think that God no longer loves her, no longer cares for her, and that he is very angry ; hence it appears to such a soul, that everything she does is ill done. Ah, I cannot explain myself as I could wish ! It is enough for you to know, my child, that this is almost the pain of loss, if I may so speak, a pain beyond every other torment. But if the soul is faithful, what treasures does she gain ! These

storms pass away, and she reaches the true, sweet, beloved embraces of the Divine Lover, Jesus ; then God treats her as His spouse ; then are celebrated between God and the soul the sacred espousals of love. Oh what treasures ! But you, my child in Jesus, are not yet at the first step of this ladder. I have written this, however, that you may not be alarmed if God should place you in any state of pure suffering without comfort ; but then, more than ever, be faithful to God, and never leave off your accustomed exercises.....”

To lead others to suffer willingly, with sweetness of heart and tranquillity of mind, he wished them to receive trials from the loving hand of God, as from their source. “You cannot have,” he wrote, “more certain signs of the Divine love towards you, than the sufferings which he permits and bestows.”.....

“I adore the Divine will which keeps you in the state of sickness. I know also that when you were a secular, you had good health, but you were not then so much loved by God, as you now are. His Divine Majesty loves you as a child, and even as a beloved spouse ; therefore, He bestows on you great gifts. Long illnesses are the greatest graces that God bestows on the souls dearest to Him.”

“I feel deeply the news of the dangerous illness of your pious sister, the nun. Tell her to rest quietly on the bosom of her heavenly Spouse, who loves her much, and to remain on the cross of her sickness with a peaceful mind, and as silently as

she can. Tell her, also, that I have well understood her, and what she suffers from bodily pain are blows of love that embalm the soul, and if she were to die from such blows, it would be a death more desirable and more precious than life itself."

"The short way to acquire that peace which springs from the love of God, from which flow all virtues, as from a perpetual fountain, is to take every trial and affliction, spiritual or temporal, and all misfortunes of what kind soever, to take them, as I said, 'sine medio,' from the loving hand of God, looking upon, and receiving every adverse occurrence as a gift and treasure that the heavenly Father bestows upon us, and often repeating the sacred words of Jesus Christ, 'Ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante Te.' Almighty God, from His eternity, has been pleased, and has willed that your Reverence should suffer these bodily afflictions from the devils, and from other creatures. Behold them, then, with the eye of faith, and embrace the will of God with ejaculatory acts and darts of the soul.

"Beholding, with the eye of faith, the greatest trials and storms, spiritual and bodily afflictions, beholding them, as I said, with the eye of faith, as jewels sent by holy love, they are no longer bitter, but most sweet and pleasing.

"The remedy in your tribulations is the balsam of the Divine Will, which must be embraced and loved, both in prosperity and adversity."

"Act," he says in another, "like the vine-dresser or gardener, who, when the storm comes,

retires into the<sup>d</sup> hut till it has passed away, and all is tranquil. Let us then, amidst so many tempests, evoked by our sins and those of the world, remain retired under the golden covering of the Divine will, delighting and rejoicing that in all things the Divine will is accomplished."

Prayer was the great secret he taught for learning well, and for deriving virtue and strength to abandon ourselves to the loving will of God, but a prayer truly interior and fervent.

"One day, I was reflecting within myself, at the feet of Jesus Christ, that the food which is taken at the royal banquet of the Cross is hard of digestion to the animal stomach; therefore sleep must be taken, for we digest better sleeping than walking; but simple sleep does not suffice, great heat is needed for good digestion; therefore, by sleeping in the fresh air, we run the risk of not digesting well; it is better to sleep near some oven. I know no better place than to fall asleep, satiated with the Cross, on the sacred Heart of our blessed Saviour, the furnace of holy love."

This venerable Father, and wise spiritual guide, did not mean that a person ought to be insensible in sufferings; but he taught that we should not give way to the interior opposition of reluctant nature. "When you feel," he says, "the assaults of passion and anger, then is the time to be silent. Jesus was silent in the midst of His sufferings. 'Jesus autem tacebat.' O holy silence, rich in great virtues! O holy silence, which is a key of gold, keeping in safety the great treasure of holy virtues."

“Almighty God, in creating the fishes, made them dumb, because they were to remain in the waves of the sea, to teach us that he who sails amid the storms of this world must be dumb, as if he had no tongue; never complaining, nor justifying himself.”...

Speaking particularly of sickness, besides what we have already mentioned, he exhorted souls, with great earnestness, to acknowledge it, and make use of it, as a loving visit from our Lord. “Sickness is a great favour that our good God bestows. It makes us know what we are. Here we find out who is truly patient, humble, mortified....In sickness, when the body is weakest, and most mortified, the spirit is most inclined to raise itself to God.”...

“In what regards bodily diseases render an entire obedience to the physician; tell him your infirmities sincerely, with modest and clear expressions, and with all brevity; and having said what is necessary, cease to speak, and let him do what he will. Do not refuse remedies, but take them in the loving chalice of Jesus, with a pleasant countenance. Be grateful to your attendants, and take what they wish you to have. Remain in your bed, as on the cross: Jesus prayed three hours on the cross, and His was truly a crucified prayer, without comfort from within or without. Oh God, what a great instruction! Beg of Jesus to imprint it in my heart. Oh what a subject is this for meditation!”

To souls of prayer, it is an almost incredible affliction to be mortified by their Con-

fessors. The man of God taught them how to profit by so excellent an opportunity of merit. "Our good God, in the mortification that He permits, intends that you should die, by a mystical death, to all that is not God, and should conduct yourself like a dead person, without tongue, eyes, or ears; and as a corpse, when buried, is trampled on by all, let yourself like a dead and buried person, be trampled on by all, and made the opprobrium and abjection of the people. I rejoice to hear that your Confessor treats you harshly, that he is strict and severe. Oh what a good friend he is! God wishes now to put the finishing stroke to the statue, and beautify it for the gallery of heaven; and He therefore permits that he who ought to give some spiritual consolation should use the finest and sharpest chisel to polish the statue well. Oh, what a great work is this! Beg his Divine Majesty not to deprive you of such an instrument till the work is finished that God wishes to perform in you."...

To another he says, "Make no account whatever of the distress and fear that your Confessor causes in you; telling you that you deceive yourself; that instead of purifying yourself, you become more defiled, and similar things. Listen with profound annihilation, with humility and silence, humbling yourself even lower than hell, were it possible—quietly, sweetly, and peacefully. When your Confessor has dismissed you, go away in peace, and immediately cry out like an infant, according to what I told you here, Ah Father! ah great Father! thus manifesting to Him your pain and

distress, and the fear caused by the words of your Confessor, and you will immediately feel a most sweet attraction, that will lead you into the depth of that divine solitude in which the soul will be quite absorbed in God, and her distress, her fears and scruples will be consumed in the furnace of holy love; rest there; and if the Divine spouse should cause you to slumber, sleep in peace, and do not awake without His permission."...

A man who so well understood the value and merit of suffering could not but be displeased with the complaints of certain weak and cowardly souls; hence he wrote, "You complain without reason, saying that you have crosses and sufferings; believe me, you do not know what it is to suffer. May God preserve you from suffering one single day what a poor soul has to endure that I cannot name."...

"I do not like you to think so much of your little trials, darkness, and aridity. The pure and true love of God makes us always consider little and trifling that we suffer for the Divine love."

"Believe me, if you think you suffer much, it is a sign that you have a very small degree of love for our Lord; for the true mark of Divine love is to suffer great things for the Beloved, without thinking that we suffer at all."

"I beg you to make known your treasure as little as you can. You know of what treasure I speak?—that of precious suffering. The pearl is formed in the shell, but when the shell has received the dew of heaven, it closes, goes to the bottom



of the sea, and there forms the beautiful pearl. Understand me well. The pearl of true virtue is formed at the bottom of the sea of suffering, and in the sea of the knowledge of your own nothingness ; and from these seas we go on to swim, or I would say, to plunge ourselves into the boundless ocean of uncreated immense love.”...

Finally, as it were, epitomizing in a few words the sublime doctrine of suffering, he wrote sometimes, “ Put in practice these two precious words, Suffer, Be silent. This is a short road and rule to be soon holy and perfect.”...And this was the very path by which the Divine goodness conducted Paul to perfection.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THE TEMPERANCE, GREAT MORTIFICATION, AND  
ABSTINENCE OF THE SERVANT OF GOD.

To maintain ourselves in that wise and discreet moderation which forms in our interior a sweet harmony of tranquillity and peace, and in the exterior accompanies all our actions with grace, due proportion, and decorum, it is necessary to be firmly established in that virtue, which has for its office, to repress, regulate, and moderate, all emotions, and more particularly those which, if not repressed and conquered, cause disturbance, trouble, and disorder ; and in proportion as the natural character is quick and ardent, in the same

measure, like a willing and high-couraged horse, it requires to be restrained and wisely regulated by the rein, that it may not run into danger. Father Paul, who well knew what our Lord required of him, not only endeavoured to reduce to due moderation all the impulses of the exterior and visible man, and of the interior, which, being hidden, is known only to the most pure eyes of God, but sought also with great fervour, by means of the exercise of holy and generous mortification, to die to the inclinations of nature, in order to live according to the Spirit of God, in Christ Jesus our Redeemer and Master; and he wrote in holy confidence to a person whom he directed, "I should wish always to keep in hand a sharp sword, to cut and entirely destroy the weeds that keep growing up in the garden. You understand me; I mean that I wish to keep my soul stripped of everything that is not God." And in another, "St. Ignatius often said this, Ignatius, overcome thyself; Ignatius, overcome thyself. Oh, what a great counsel is this! what a great point of perfection!"

With these great maxims, he constantly mortified himself, and bore everywhere the mortification of Jesus Christ in his body, of which, together with his soul, he had made a living, noble, and pleasing sacrifice. We are not going to repeat here the austerities practised by him during the course of his life, and chiefly in the commencement of that new course of penances, which he termed his conversion, but we will give merely a glance at his manner of conducting himself in taking food, and other necessary refreshment, and for the

common edification we will relate some particular acts of virtue, which have not yet been named.

He was always most temperate in the use he made of food and drink. When he was in health, he took the same nourishment as the others, and at the fixed hour, but very sparingly, and of common, coarse, and ordinary food. "In the morning," his companion testifies, "he was satisfied with a little soup; he did not like to have many kinds of meat; and whoever did not want him to eat, had nothing to do, but to put many things before him; often he has said to me, 'In charity, give me very little if you wish me to eat, for when I have taken the soup, I have dined.' He took the portion of salt fish or eggs, but in a very small quantity. 'Very little,' he said, 'suffices, when one can eat a little bread.' When he was not at the Retreat, he took a little of what was placed before him, but very sparingly; his benefactors pressed him to show that he appreciated their charitable affection; but he praised everything, said the meats were extremely good; and then eating a little soup, and very sparingly of something else, sent away the rest, with some good excuse, or left it on the plate; and thus he took so little that it scarcely sufficed to support him. His manners were so pleasing and obliging, and he was so joyous and open-hearted, though always recollected within himself, that the person who had invited him, was not offended, but, on the contrary, edified. Amongst those who had the consolation to have an example of penance at their table, was his excellency, the Marchese de

las Minas, who, through his love and veneration for the servant of God, often asked him to dine with him. Father Paul, though very averse from such entertainments, thought he could not refuse, and went, but as a true religious and servant of God. He contrived that the dinner should afford him a fine opportunity of mortification, for he scarcely ate anything, and returned to the Retreat almost fasting; and yet it is to be remarked, that this nobleman gave splendid banquets, having with him a great number of the most distinguished officers of his army. The general could not avoid noticing Father Paul's mortification and abstinence, and once complained of it to him. One day, his excellency, had a small dish of new peas, a great rarity, as they were then out of season; he divided the peas, and gave half to Father Paul. The servant of God eat two or three, and then dexterously gave the rest to the servant who waited at table. The general perceived this act, and said, in Spanish, to Father Paul, "Do you not eat these vegetables which are so good?" Father Paul, seeing himself discovered, was not disconcerted, but answered his Excellency in so humble and pleasing a manner, that the nobleman, instead of being displeased, was greatly edified.

In the houses of his benefactors, where he was most intimate, he mildly complained, that the dishes were too numerous, and the food too delicate, and said that he was satisfied with herbs, roots, or bread, flavoured with garlic. In all the journeys that he performed on the business of the congregation, and for any other holy work, and in

all the missions, he took with him, as his inseparable companion, the strong desire and virtuous practice of mortification; and thus, even though he did not speak, he taught to others who saw him the practice of Christian virtue. It is true, that in the missions, where the fatigue was great, he seemed to need more support, but when he was alone with his good brother, Father John Baptist, his repast during the missions consisted of nothing but soups made of vegetables; and it is said, that when giving a mission at Pereta, there was no other food but wild endive, boiled, and very little bread; nor would he ever mix wine with his water, unless obliged by obedience to the priest, D. John Baptist Rossi, and for many years he continued to eat abstinence-food, even during the missions.

The rules having been approved by Benedict XIV., in which it is said, that when the religious are absent from the Retreat, and particularly during the holy missions, they must practise the advice contained in the Gospel, 'Manducate quæ apponuntur vobis;' he conformed himself to the holy rule, that he might not be singular, and bring confusion on his companions; but he was always most moderate in his food, taking nothing but soup, and a very little of something else. But his weak stomach did not always allow him to take even that small quantity of nourishment; for, after the missions had continued some days, fatigued and exhausted by labour, he lost his appetite, and could take no food without disgust, and it was then necessary to give him some other

nourishment, which being of a coarse kind, was more pleasing to his penitential spirit, and more suited to his stomach, which for so many years he had nourished with such rigid austerities.

The friends, in whose houses he resided during the missions, seeing his want of appetite, procured for him little things that he might like ; but if he tasted them through politeness the first time, he deprived himself of them afterwards through mortification. When he was ill, which was during many years, he took care that his sickness should not be a pretext for relaxing in virtue. He would not allow fish or anything else to be bought for him. His companions seeing him in as great need of food as he had a disgust for it, thinking that the good Father when old and infirm, ought to be treated with that charity which he would have ordered to be shown to others, had something prepared for him as sick, and carried it to him, or dressed for him carefully some food of the community. The servant of God, who was most grateful, showed pleasure at this act of kindness, but to mortify himself, did not touch it, or left it, after tasting. If anything was sent him as a present, that happened to be suited to his appetite, which felt a disgust for other food, he expressed his obligations to his benefactor, and prayed for him, and then deprived himself of the whole or a part, desiring that it should be given to some other religious, causing his abstinence to be conducive to the comfort and charitable relief of his sons. If some choice kind of fish was sent him by a friend, Father Paul mortified himself, when

it was placed on the table, and loving to be unknown, concealed his mortification by saying, "I prefer small fish to large ones." He could not bear to eat meat, and when it was ordered took very little, and left the rest under some specious pretext. He ate a little bread and salt, when through indisposition he was unable to eat vegetables, garlic, leeks, and other coarse food, and used to say, with a great sentiment of devotion, that such was the food of the ancient monks; and sometimes he presented a part to his companions, as a present of mortification and poverty. However indisposed he might be, he almost always fasted in the evening, taking at most an egg, nor did he ever take the small quantity of food he allowed himself, without sorrow of heart; and with a deep feeling of compassion, he said, in imitation of the great father of solitaries, St. Anthony, of whom St. Athanasius writes, that in the act of taking food he felt greatly ashamed, because he saw that the generous and noble efforts of the soul are restrained and tied down by the wants and sufferings of the body; "Let us go and do the work of asses;" but as he was a man, he was obliged also to eat. It seems, however, that he was always obliged to do violence to himself, and when in sickness, he had also, as was usually the case, a disgust for every sort of food, and an inclination to vomit, he was obliged to make a great effort to take anything in the way of support, and when he had taken a little, he was unable to take what was necessary for his support, and said to the lay-brother, "Brother, take this away, if you

wish me to retain the little I have been able to swallow." And as this often happened, the brother once said, "You always say, 'take away, take away, quickly,' because you will not overcome yourself, and force yourself to eat." Father Paul, then, without saying another word, went on eating in order to obey his infirmarian humbly and exactly; but in the act of swallowing down the mouthful, so violent was the effort of his stomach in rejecting it, that the brother was much grieved to have been the cause of this suffering, and he perceived that when he asked to have the dish removed, he was incapable of taking more food.

In order that the time spent in nourishing the body, might not be without special profit to his soul, the venerable servant of God contrived, when he took his scanty meal, to refresh his soul also with some good consideration. If he was at the community table, which he always attended when he was sufficiently well, he listened to the spiritual reading, kept himself in great recollection, and was often bathed in tears, from the devotion of his heart. Sometimes he was absorbed in God, and did not know what he was eating. One day in particular, when he was at the Retreat of St. Angelo, he ordered the cook to make soup of rice or paste for the community. The cook obeyed exactly, but after dinner, the good Father meeting him, reproved him for not having obeyed in regard of the soup. The cook and another religious who was present, were much surprised at this reproof, as the soup had been taken to table, and the good Father, as well as the others, had eaten of it.



The cook thought he must justify himself, and told the father how it was. Then, the good Father, with great simplicity, replied, "Have patience, I did not notice it.

What he practised himself, he always taught to others. He desired that all, in taking their food, should keep their hearts raised up to God.

"At the time that the senses of the body are performing their functions," he said to one of our religious, "the soul can perform hers by tending towards God, and loving Him; thus we may, whilst we are eating, love God with the soul, converse with men, and discourse interiorly with God at the same time; and by this means we are not led away so as to exceed in these animal actions, we become superior to all the things of this world, and there is no danger that the allurements of created things should draw away the affections of the soul."

So far we have spoken of the plan of life pursued by Father Paul in exactly practising the rules of holy temperance; we will now speak of some more particular austerities, by which he mortified himself in the use of food and drink. He was persuaded that our Lord required from him great penance. "You are not right," he writes to a devout soul, "that God does not require great rigour from me. One like me, who has so greatly offended God, ought to perform great penance; but I do not perform it—God requires penance from me." For many years he fasted three times a week on bread and water, that is, when he was at Monte Argentaro. He

began this fast before he had any companions, and continued it for some time after, with his brother, Father John Baptist, though he wished the others to fare better. He would have continued this severity if he had not been prevented by the physicians, about the year 1743, when, on account of his pains and infirmities, it was judged necessary to dispense him from it. For many years he drank water always : he desired to continue this, but when he was at Orbetello, Captain Grazi, seeing him one day weak, emaciated and pale, said to him : "Father Paul, this is not an air to live in on water only." The servant of God yielded to the advice of this charitable gentleman, and began to make use of wine, but of very little, 'propter stomachum;' the wine was always mixed with water, and if, on the one hand, he gave some little support to his stomach, on the other, he maintained the vigour of his soul, and the practice of holy mortification. Though he had moderated in some degree his first rigour, yet in the first years when he was at Monte Argentaro, in order to remain unknown and retired, without going in search of alms, he had very little refreshment, and fed on herbs and vegetables, which were often without the necessary seasoning. Of that which our Lord sent him he partook most sparingly, so far as to feel hunger, and this he did often during the whole course of his life. From that early time he suffered from weakness of stomach, but he made no account of it, and went on without taking any remedy. And when he was at Mount Argentaro, he chose for himself to

say the last Mass, to give place to others, who, on account of being young subjects, would have had to wait. In his last years he suffered from the same weakness, and he sometimes said to his confessor, smiling: "I feel as if my inside was gradually going away." In the latter part of his life, he sometimes took a little chocolate in the morning, but of so weak a kind, that it was much more like coloured water than a strengthening beverage, and thus practised exactly the instruction that St. Augustine had received from our Lord, to take food as medicines are taken: '*Ut quemadmodum medicamenta, sic alimenta sump-turus accedam.*' He rejoiced not only in suffering hunger for the love of God, but thirst also, in memory of that burning thirst that Jesus suffered on the Cross. We have said elsewhere, that for many years, after preaching the Mission, he would not even take a mouthful of water, but went before the Blessed Sacrament, to refresh himself at the fountain of life; but afterwards, being obliged by the physicians, he had begun to drink, to moderate the heat caused by preaching. He could not, however, feel satisfied after giving up this practice of mortification. "Ah," he said, "the physicians have done me an injury, for formerly I often found water that quenched my thirst."

Our loving Lord treated him in a similar manner on another occasion. He was travelling in the extreme heat of summer, returning from a Mission with F. Fulgenzio di Gesù, and through the fatigue of the journey and the heat of the season, they

were tormented by a burning thirst. At last they came to a spring of fresh water, and the servant of God said to his companion, in whose virtue he had all confidence: "Shall we perform an act of mortification by not tasting this water? Yes, for the love of a crucified God, enduring thirst on the Cross, let us make a sacrifice of abstinence from it." F. Fulgenzio, who was a willing companion to Father Paul in the practice of devotion and mortification, cheerfully acceded to the fervent proposition. They performed the act, and our Lord was so much pleased with this mortification, that the servant of God was replenished with heavenly consolations, which made him exult with joy during the rest of the journey. Thus God rewards him who for His love deprives himself of the small satisfactions he might derive from creatures. F. Paul, who well knew this, often offered such sacrifices, which were so much the more acceptable to God, as they were painful to his appetite.

When he was staying at the Hermitage of our Lady 'della Catena,' near Gaeta, besides the great austerities with which he accompanied his slight refecton, it was his custom never to ask for anything, but to live solely on what was spontaneously offered; and if no one provided anything, the Venerable Father suffered hunger in patience and humble silence, and day by day distributed to the poor what he saved by his penance and mortification, and with greater joy in proportion as the food with which he had been provided was more delicate. His Lordship the Bishop one day sent

him a pasty, but when the good Father saw it on the table, in the spirit of humility he said to his companions, that food so delicate did not seem suited to them, and, exhorting them to make an affectionate offering of it to our Lord, desired that it should be given in charity to the first poor man that passed by. When the order was executed, and the pasty given to a poor peasant named Angelo, he, seeing something offered to him which he had perhaps never even tasted before, thought they were making a fool of him; but when he was assured that they were serious, he refused to take the whole, contenting himself with a part, and would only receive the rest when he heard that F. Paul had expressly ordered it. Angelo departed joyously, and another monk, named Biagio, who lived in the Hermitage with F. Paul, followed him. Not having the servant of God's mortification, this monk allowed himself to be overcome by gluttony, and he asked for and received from the peasant part of the pasty, which he ate very secretly, without the servant of God knowing anything about it from any one. When he returned to the Hermitage, Father Paul severely reproved him, telling him that he had let himself be carried away by gluttony, and, seeing himself discovered, he thought that another companion, who had seen him follow the peasant, had said something to the servant of God, and went to complain of it to him. But when he heard that nothing had been said, he was much confused for what he had done secretly, and edified with F. Paul's virtue, who, by so many examples

and instructions, authenticated by graces, and supernatural gifts, exhorted others fervently to the practice of holy mortification.

The servant of God was fond of fruit, but he made use of this innocent inclination to mortify himself very painfully. From his youth, when at Castellazzo, he resolved never to taste muscatel grapes, which were in an arbour in the garden, and he faithfully kept this resolution, and deprived himself of the slight refreshment they would have been to him ; and we may say, that in place of them he substituted the gall and vinegar, which he then began to drink every Friday, in memory of Jesus Christ's Sacred Passion. During the whole course of his life, when he did eat fruits, he took them with singular mortification. Though they were of excellent quality, he would take a pear or an apple of ordinary size, and only eat the half of it ; and even though he felt a disrelish for food, and, being unable to taste anything else, fruit would have contributed to diminish these uncomfortable sensations and this nausea, he nevertheless deprived himself of it, to the great edification even of those who were well practised in mortification. His mortification went so far, that we cannot recall without emotion an act which he performed in his last illness. He had been suffering two months, without being able to taste any kind of food. The physician who attended him well knew that a little fruit would probably have diminished his nausea, but he did not dare to suggest this to him, for, as his great friend, he was aware that during that time, which was the

space between the Visitation of our Blessed Lady and her glorious Assumption, our good Father used to practise particular abstinence, in honour of the great Mother of God. He therefore judged, that unless he were obliged, he would not be persuaded to taste fruit, of which he always deprived himself during that Lent, as he called it; he wished, therefore, being a discreet person, and of delicate conscience, to consult some of the religious, to know if he should do well to oblige him to it. Having asked the opinion of two priests, they told him, that in Father Paul's state of weakness and disgust for every kind of food, the attempt ought to be made, and some fruit given to him to assist him in his extreme necessity. The physician returned to F. Paul's room with the two priests, and frankly told him, that he must try whether his irritated stomach would not receive and retain some kind of fruit. The Venerable Father then with grace and vivacity, as if he had entirely forgotten his disease, full of candour and sincerity, replied: "But I have presented them to a lady!" The physician and the priests, greatly edified by his virtue, ventured to add, that our Blessed Lady accepted the offering he had made to her, but that she would also be pleased if, through obedience, he made the trial. The poor sick man showed that he was just as docile with most virtuous indifference as he was devoted to mortification, but he could only take half a plum, as his stomach, so much weakened by his penances, could not bear more. Hence the nausea and irritation went on increasing, till at last he could not even take a

mouthful of broth, or a spoonful of wine, and with great violence to himself took a little toast and water, and thus died exhausted, leaving a great example of that mortification, of which he had been a master. The servant of God could not be ignorant that a life of so great austerity was a great means of attaining that penance to which he aspired with all his heart ; but he was so far from making a great account of it, and placing his confidence in these mortifications, that in reflecting on what the saints have done, he was greatly confounded, and humbled himself, and in one of his letters wrote confidentially as follows to a religious of great virtue : “ St. Gregory the Great lived upon a few vegetables, as I have seen in the ancient inscription, where there is a picture of St. Sylvia, the Saint’s mother ; and in our times there is so much delicacy and fear of being ill through holy and discreet penance ! St. Gregory, of a noble house, young and delicate, was satisfied under the care of these holy monks with a few vegetables, sent him as an alms every day by his holy mother ! My dear Father Master, this circumstance humbles me to the dust with shame.” Thus spoke this man of so great mortification.

We must acknowledge, however, that his good brother, Father John Baptist, greatly assisted him in this holy exercise. He not only joined him in his mortifications, suffered hunger through rigorous fasts, and macerated his body, till his stomach was greatly weakened and he contracted a serious illness of which he died, but he also watched vigilantly over his brother’s conduct, and took



every opportunity of making him perform some noble act of mortification. He sat near him in the refectory. If, when his brother was eating his small portion, or some fruit of which the community had partaken, he happened to perceive that he liked it, he immediately took it away, before he had scarcely begun to taste it. Truly the patience of a saint was required to sustain trials so constant and so severe, inflicted on a poor man that suffered so much from want of appetite, and weakness of stomach, but Father John Baptist knew better than any one else how solid was Father Paul's virtue, and he freely gave the blows of a master hand, to bring it to perfection. The servant of God, on all these occasions, sweetly and humbly shrugging his shoulders, bowing his head, and joining his hands, allowed himself like an infant, to be guided by this great master of mortification.

Not only in the Retreat did Father John Baptist make use of the absolute authority that his brother gave him over himself, but even in the houses of benefactors he lost no opportunity of trying and mortifying him. If his friends pressed him, and Father John Baptist, who well knew, however, how to unite politeness with sanctity, forbade him, Father Paul did not presume to take a mouthful of what was offered. Behold the true manner of loving in God, to help one another mutually to become rich in the treasures of holy virtues, and chiefly of holy mortification, which may be called a treasure, hidden and uncared for.

Father Paul, wished this virtue to be great in his religious ; he exhorted them never to leave the table without having made some sacrifice to God ; and when he saw any one immortalized, the good Father, as if wounded to the heart, spoke to him, and by his sweetness and persuasiveness induced him to conquer his appetite, to overcome gluttony, and practise a discreet mortification and abstinence, which he, according to the opinion of the Fathers, considered one of the foundation-stones of the spiritual edifice.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### OF THE OTHER AUSTERITIES AND EXTRAORDINARY PENANCES PRACTISED BY FATHER PAUL.

GREAT, certainly, and extraordinary, was the exercise of mortification we have described, but the fervent spirit of the servant of God was not satisfied. He afflicted his body in many other ways, and in penance was more admirable than imitable. As he was so badly clothed, and went bareheaded and barefooted, he felt all the inconveniences of the seasons extremely ; in winter, he was benumbed with cold, and in summer, walking a long distance under the rays of the sun, when the heat was excessive, he suffered from great weakness and exhaustion, and often, as was very likely to happen in wild and rugged roads, pricked or wounded his feet, but, that he might feel more

pain, he sometimes allowed the thorns to penetrate deeply without removing them, causing to himself thus great pain and difficulty in walking. If any one, noticing the thorn, expressed compassion, Father Paul said it was nothing, when Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master had had so many sharp thorns in His head.

That charity which led him to offer to God these bodily sacrifices, made him also ingenious in finding new methods of tormenting himself. We do not know precisely all the penances, that he performed in the different solitudes, where, during the first years he resided with his good brother, Father John Baptist, for these two servants of God who were so anxious to be pleasing in the eyes of our Lord, with equal diligence avoided being seen by the eyes of men. It is narrated in the Processes, however, that Father Paul, even when at home, disciplined himself so severely and so often, that his brother John Baptist, who was then a secular, was frequently obliged to take the discipline from him, lest he should faint under the blows. And, as the desire went on increasing of offering new sacrifices of his body to his wounded and lacerated Redeemer, imitating those saints, who, with magnanimous and extraordinary fervour practised penances rather to be admired than imitated, he even went so far as to roll himself naked in a thorn bush, which was seen by some hunters, who, going to the chase on Monte Argentaro, and hearing a noise in the bushes near the Retreat where Father Paul was then staying, thinking at first it was caused by a

wild boar, softly advanced, holding their muskets ready to fire on the side where they heard the noise ; but when they were close to a bush where the noise was greatest, they perceived the servant of God, who was rolling himself amongst these thorns. At this sight the hunters were amazed, and Father Paul greatly confused at being discovered performing such an act of penance. Father John Baptist, his brother, the imitator of his virtues and the companion of his penances, was also found beating himself severely. These incidents were necessary to make known to us, if not distinctly, at least in some degree, the penances of God's servants. In a similar manner, it was ascertained by an ocular witness, who remained sometime in his society, that on Fridays, beside the discipline which was usually taken on other days also, Father Paul, about midnight before he began the Divine office, bound round him an iron belt wider than the hand, armed with iron points, and kept it on the whole of Friday, till the midnight of the following Saturday ; and during that time, he remained retired in his room in continual prayer, without going to table with the others, a thing which could not cause much admiration, as there were then few companions in the hermitage of Saint Anthony, Nor was the penance less rigorous and severe, with which he afflicted his innocent body, when he dwelt in the hermitage "della Catena," for we know from a good priest, who was then his companion, that he always wore next to his flesh, shirts of iron with points, and

often severely scourged himself with disciplines of iron.

As the venerable servant of God very well knew that the fruit of Missions entirely depends on, and proceeds from, the grace of God, who is much pleased with the sacrifice of prayer, joined to holy mortification, as sweet-smelling incense mixed with chosen myrrh, during the Mission he practised some very extraordinary and painful penance. When he was giving a Mission at Caparbio, in Tuscany, his charitable benefactress waited till he had left the house, and then, going to make the bed, saw, to her great edification, that under the mattress were hidden an iron heart, armed with sharp points, a ball similarly provided with longer points, two little chains, and several disciplines of little stars and hooks, and that all these instruments of penance were stained with blood. When Father Paul returned, seeing that the bed had been moved, contrary to his expectation, he expressed great sorrow, because, by that means something might be known of that penance which he wished to be known to God alone.

On another occasion he was giving a Mission at Bassano, an estate belonging to the Giustiniani family, and was staying in the house of one of our kindest friends. Before the evening service, one day, he begged the master of the house to allow no one to enter his room, for, as he wished to study a sermon, he could not admit persons to an audience. Very soon after a person came, earnestly asking to speak to Father Paul. The friend said that the time was inconvenient, and

that she might come again ; but as she renewed her entreaties, and expressed a great anxiety to see the servant of God, at last, overcome by her importunities, he went into the room where Father Paul was, to tell him, and found him on his knees at the foot of the crucifix. The gentleman was not surprised to find him preparing himself by prayer, for he well knew that, from that fountain of light, more than from study, Father Paul derived his sentiments and words ; but seeing that the servant of God, perceiving that some one had entered his room, was dexterously concealing a piece of iron, on which he had been kneeling, he noticed it more closely, and saw that it was covered with iron points. Father Paul, thinking that he had cleverly concealed his penance, said, " See, I study my sermon at the feet of this crucifix," Thus the servant of God, an inveterate enemy of ostentation, sought to conceal himself, and it was a fortunate accident that made known some of his penances.

But notwithstanding all his care, we have great proofs of the rigour of his mortifications. Our Lord has so disposed that many of the instruments he used have been preserved, and the very sight of them horrifies delicate souls. Besides an iron shirt four fingers wide, armed with iron points, a discipline is kept at Gaeta, which was taken from him by his Confessor, D. Erasmo Tuccinardi, at the time that the servant of God was not a Priest. It is composed of several little cords joined together, about a foot long, ending in seven lashes, at the extremity of each of which is a heavy oval

piece of lead, surrounded with seven iron points, and it is all stained with blood. This good Priest, moved with compassion, took it away, for, as he said, Father Paul scourged himself most severely with terrible blows. In his room, at the Retreat of St. Michael the Archangel, a wooden cross is kept, armed with points to the number of 186, of which the good Father made use, wearing it next to his breast, to keep more vividly in his heart the affectionate remembrance of the sufferings of Jesus, and compassion for them. I do not mention the shirts of camel's hair, nor the discipline of iron wire, which are preserved, because they are less painful instruments, though from Father Paul's hand they received great power to afflict his body. I will speak of one instrument with which Father Paul scourged himself so fervently, that he felt the effect of it in his health during his whole life. This was a chain made of several links of iron, not much smaller than those that are worn by the prisoners at the galleys, which the venerable Father used at Mission times, led by the spirit of penance, to make to God a sacrifice of his body; taking, therefore, the long chain, he made of it, as it were, a handful, or a heavy scourge of several lashes, and scourged himself so severely, that it was distressing to see him. Once, when he was disciplining himself, a person ran to the platform, without Father Paul's perceiving him, to take away this instrument of penance, but to his sorrow he found out, on this occasion, the strength of Father Paul's arm, for he received so violent and heavy a blow, that the

arm which had been struck was lamed. The servant of God, however, on perceiving it, made the sign of the cross on the arm, and miraculously cured it, as if our Lord had communicated a wonderful virtue to that hand, which was offering to Him so great a sacrifice of penance, as a sign that He accepted that made by His faithful servant.

The servant of God finding that these chains were kept at the Retreat of the Presentation at Monte Argentaro, took them, and threw them away, saying, "Since you have lamed me, I am determined you shall not hurt any one else." Great indeed, therefore, must have been the fervour with which Father Paul was accustomed to use them.

In giving Missions latterly, he made use of a discipline of steel wire ; but he used it with so much compunction and fervour, and with so true a spirit, that the people who heard him were greatly moved. Sometimes, especially when he preached on hell, he appeared on the platform with a rope round his neck, and a crown of thorns on his head, so closely pressed in, that the blood ran down his forehead. The servant of God, who so greatly loved secrecy, would have desired to perform this part of his penance in some desert, or solitude, but he knew by experience, that to strike rustic and ignorant people, of whom the audience is in great measure composed, and who understand little of the instructions and arguments of the discourses, though given in a style like his own, striking, animated, and touching, and also very clear and intelligible, such practices



are of great utility, and that by these sensible things sinners are more easily roused to repentance, for external penance is the means of awaking interior repentance. The effects proved that our Lord blessed the holy efforts of His servant, for, in the Missions, wonderful conversions of the most erring souls took place, as we have said. The war which Father Paul had declared against his body, never allowed him to take that repose that would seem absolutely necessary after so much toil and labour, but converted that very repose into a new means of penance and mortification. From the first years after he gave himself entirely to God in his father's house, he slept on the ground, or on a little straw, and for a pillow had nothing but a few bricks, or a hard stone. Young as he was he broke through his repose in the night, and in the severest winter rose to pray with his good brother, Father John Baptist. When he was at St. Anthony's, it was often seen that instead of sleeping on his poor sack of straw, he went out of the Hermitage at night to a place where there are two rocks between the Hermitages of the Annunciation and of St. Anthony. These rocks formed a species of grotto, which the servant of God entered, and remained in this silence and darkness till midnight when he went back to the Hermitage to recite the Office with the rest. After the Rules had been approved, to avoid singularity, he retired at night to his poor cell, but if he was not ill, he always took his rest on a sack of straw, but so hard and uncomfortable, that it might rather be called a torture than a comfort ;

he would have it so, however, and rigorously prohibited that the straw should be changed, at least at the Retreat of St. Angelo. As he applied himself much to the exercises of the holy Missions, and all the penitents seemed to wish to confess to him, he slept very little at night, at those times. To keep himself wakeful, he tormented himself with an instrument called a "canetto," well known to persons brought up in the school of mortification; and in some Missions it was noticed that he slept on his knees, leaning against the bed, as was seen several times by the Canon, D. Joseph Suscioli, his dear friend, who is also dead. It was not possible to understand how he could support such fatigue, allowing a repose so short, and so painful to his wearied and weakened limbs. It is true, that in the latter years of his life, he no longer practised that extraordinary rigour with which he began; but his infirmities and habitual weaknesses were a great penance, perhaps more severe than any other; at least it is certain that these penances are most acceptable to God, because in them there is nothing of our choice, according to the doctrines of the saints, to which Father Paul so entirely conformed himself, that he wrote on one occasion, "This sickness is a grand discipline, a grand hair-shirt. Oh how pleasing to God are the disciplines that His Divine Majesty sends us!"

And for this reason, under the wise direction of his brother, seeing that he had lost his health, and become the prey of pain, it was right that he should remove those penances and mortifications

which might at first seem excessive, as his Confessor observes, adding that though he was destitute of strength, "nevertheless," these are the Confessor's own words, "he earnestly begged to be allowed again to wear his instruments of penance, and I, reflecting on his continual infirmities, which were no slight discipline, on the attacks of the devils, and the spiritual dereliction in which our Lord kept him, besides his great anxiety and solicitude about governing the order, constantly refused him this permission."

By this obedience he was obliged to give up his holy custom of going on foot, as he had done for so many years, with such suffering as every one can imagine, contracting thereby those diseases and habitual infirmities which afflicted him during a great part of his life. Nor could it be otherwise in so many journeys, long, frequent, and difficult, through snow, rain, frost, and mud, barefooted and bareheaded, the very mention of which causes horror. He tried, it is true, to go on foot, even when he was lame, but finding it to be a complete impossibility, he was obliged to use conveyances, or a horse.

Almighty God showed more than once, by miraculous signs, how greatly He approved of the discreet and wise conduct of His servant, and justified his real necessity. He arrived one night at Sutri, much fatigued and exhausted by the Missions he had given, and our benefactor, D. Joseph Suscioli, his great friend, sought to make him pass the night there; but the servant of God humbly refused the offering, and said resolutely that he

wished to return to the Retreat of St. Angelo. This charitable friend, not being able to persuade him to remain, wished to procure him a conveyance, as he saw that it was impossible for him to walk the distance from Sutri to the Retreat of St. Angelo, which is many miles. He asked an inhabitant of the city to oblige him with a conveyance. This person said he would have gladly obliged the Rev. Canon and Father Paul, but that it was not possible, for one of the horses was lame in one leg, and he had no other to put in its place; and what this gentleman said was true, for the horse had been ill fourteen or fifteen days, and did not improve, with all the remedies and care that had been employed. During their conversation, the gentleman felt an impulse to offer the carriage and horses, in the confidence that God, by His blessing, would give success to the journey, as it was for Father Paul; and quite changed, he suddenly made the offer. When put to the carriage, the horse was so lame, that it went, as it is said, on three legs. But scarcely had the servant of God entered the carriage, and gone a few steps, than the horse became perfectly sound, and never again suffered from that troublesome lameness; and this event was considered miraculous, not only by the horse's master, but also by the man who had the care of it.

Our Lord showed him a very similar favour when he was returning from the Mission at Tolfa, for when he passed through the Allumière, to go to Corneto, the receiver of rents, seeing him unable to go that distance on foot, offered him a car-

riage, which Father Paul accepted with lively gratitude. But soon after they had set off, one wheel of the carriage came off, and was so entirely out of order, that all the spokes were coming out of the axle ; and when the driver perceived it, he was at a loss what to do, for he could not continue the journey with the wheel in that state, especially as the road was bad and rough, and he could not put the wheel in order, as he had to keep in the horses, which were eager and restless. But the servant of God, when told of the accident, persuaded the man to leave the horses, and look at the wheel ; and to remedy the urgent necessity, gave him a woollen girdle, such as Religious wear to keep up the habit when travelling, recommending him to use that. Any one can imagine what the driver would think when so thin a cord was offered to him, where a strong one was necessary ; but he did not presume to oppose Father Paul, and with a certain air of derision, he tied and bound the servant of God's girdle round the spokes, as he wished. The event proved to the driver how advantageous it is to obey God's servants. The horses never moved, and the wheel served for the whole journey, as if it had been sound, and gave great cause for wonder to Signor Domenico Costantini, at whose house the venerable Father dismounted, when he heard from the driver the whole account of the wonderful fact, wrought by God, in favour of Father Paul. If the servant of God could not always exercise those acts of mortification, and perform the penances he wished, he maintained

to the last that spirit of penance which had led him to do and suffer so much during his life, and which sometimes urged him to perform acts of virtue most worthy to be admired, even in the person of the greatest saints, and which we have purposely reserved, in order to conclude this chapter to the particular edification of the reader.

He was at Gaeta when he was asked to assist a poor dying man, named Antonio Alvares, who lived under the castle in that city. The poor sick man, as a consequence of the disease from which he was suffering, vomited from his mouth loathsome evacuations into a basin which Father Paul held. Nature had a horror and repugnance for a thing so disgusting ; but as charity dreads nothing that pleases God, ' *Horrere nescit charitas,*' the man of God, gaining a complete victory over himself, took from the basin repeatedly, a handful of these disgusting evacuations, and swallowed it ; and then, after so splendid a victory over himself, bravely continued to render his charitable assistance to the poor dying man. At other times, the servant of God, to overcome himself, had gone so far as to suck the loathsome wounds of the sick. He who overcomes himself with so great generosity, renders himself master of himself, and of the world, and shows so great a hatred for the allurements of earthly things, and for himself, that he can say : *Mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo.*

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## OF THE POVERTY OF THE SERVANT OF GOD.

A SOUL which truly relishes God, and knows by the strong light of faith, the immense treasures contained in God, the Fountain of all good, hates whatever is not God, and unites himself so much the more closely to God, as he detaches himself from creatures. Thus Father Paul of the Cross, as he began, from his youth, to have an intimate communication with the Divine Majesty, showed that he made no account of earthly things, and in order to enjoy true liberty of spirit, courageously despised whatever could embarrass him. Fully satisfied with the riches that are found in God, he chose to live in the greatest poverty of earthly goods, and thus honour and imitate, at the same time, the poverty of our Divine Redeemer, who chose to be born poor, to live poor, and to die on the cross, naked and abandoned, in extreme poverty. From his youth he renounced, as we have said elsewhere, the inheritance left him by his uncle, and with deep feeling protested that he desired no inheritance but his crucified Lord. Having made this generous renunciation, he clothed himself with that meanness that has been described ; and it truly excited compunction, as a witness says, to see him, rather covered than clothed, with a common cloth, called *arbagio*, of a

dark colour, barefooted, his head uncovered, without any sort of cloak, and go thus in summer and winter, through rain, ice, and snow.

He would have nothing, even then, but what was purely necessary ; and his Divine Majesty, to confirm him in that holy resolution, so ordained it, that once, when he was in retirement, conversing with God, and preparing himself, by prayer and silence, to write the holy Rules, he could not rest, because he had by him a beautiful apple, given to him by a pious person. He gave it away as soon as he could, and made the holy determination to live on what should be charitably given him in alms ; and if, when travelling, money was offered to him, he generally refused it with humility. After he had retired to Monte Argentaro, in order to ascertain the extent of his poverty, it is enough to know, that when he was at the hermitage of St. Anthony, he was so poorly lodged, that he and his brother, Father John Baptist, slept on the hard boards ; and when it rained, the rain fell on Father John Baptist, who probably had yielded to his brother the least uncomfortable situation ; and neither of them could sleep much, owing to the great noise made by rats, which rendered that hermitage a place little adapted for the tranquillity and repose of night, but very suitable as a continuation, during the night, of the exercise of penance and mortification of the most innocent inclinations of nature. When they went to our Lady “ della Catena,” as they relaxed nothing of their most austere poverty, they gave great edification by their generous detachment. “ The



poverty of these two good brothers," deposes a witness, was extremely dear to them. "They wore no shirt, but only a tunic of rough and coarse cloth, which, when thoroughly wet with perspiration or rain, they were obliged to change and have dried, and in the meantime they put on an old and torn tunic of the same cloth till the first was dry. They went barefooted and bareheaded; they slept on the ground, and had nothing in their room but a few paper pictures; and whatever food remained over and above, they caused to be distributed in alms by me, reserving nothing to themselves for the following day. They had a great aversion to money, and never received money in alms, though it might be offered."...

It will easily be inferred how diligent were these good brothers in the most perfect practice of poverty, when they had offered it in sacrifice, and promised it to the Divine Majesty, if they had before so great a love for this virtue, and esteemed it their treasure. Speaking merely of Father Paul, and leaving others to relate the virtues of that great servant of God, his brother, we may affirm, that in all his actions, he always exhibited forth the beauty of holy poverty, and showed great jealousy of it. He was poor in his food, poor in clothing, poor in his all, poor in everything that appertained to his use. It was not sufficient for him to depend on his brother, and ask permissions from him, which he practised with extraordinary virtue, as long as he lived, though he was always Superior, and was never bound to ask such permissions; but he also desired that his

beloved poverty should be his inseparable companion in his entire method of life. His nourishment was most poor, and the servant of God rejoiced in receiving it as an alms. He sometimes humbly asked of the Religious, when they were seated at table in the refectory, a little bread through charity; and then kneeling down at the door, he modestly ate it, and remained in that humble position till the meal was ended. Even when ill, he liked to eat poor food. He did not wish fish to be bought for him, but at those times ate a little dried, or tunny fish, and desired his companions, who, urged by charity, wished to procure for him at least a little fish instead of the other coarse food which was injurious to his health, to do nothing of the sort; for it seemed, to the delicacy of his poverty, that that would be bad example, which was a discreet and reasonable dispensation, clearly required by his serious infirmities; so great a lover was he of this virtue. It happened that the companion had to go before the Sovereign Pontiff, Clement XIV., and when the holy Father enquired after the servant of God, the lay-brother said to his Holiness, (they are the words of the same brother, who deposes the fact,) that Father Paul had a great disrelish for food, and could not eat, that he gave him a little dried fish, which he ate. The holy Father wept through compassion and tenderness, saying, "Poor Father! he is so ill, and he eats dried fish!" and told the companion to take every care of him. But the good Father always repeated, "Spend nothing for me, or at least very little."

He begged that the remedies might not be expensive, but poor, as he was himself. He always said, "We are poor; therefore let us act like poor people."

He would also be poor in his clothing. He rejoiced in wearing an old and used habit, especially when he was at the Retreat, and he took it as an alms. A local Superior once had not thought of furnishing him with a habit for winter; that which he had had become very thin, and the good Father, being old and infirm, suffered much from cold, which increased his pains; yet even in this necessity the servant of God would not have a new habit, but contented himself with receiving, as a charity, one that had been worn by a lay-brother.

This was not, however, the occasion in which he practised, with the greatest perfection, that poverty which was so dear to him. Hear how he himself writes, in confidence, to one of our Religious. "My very dear friend, I write on Good Friday, and trusting in the sacred Death of our Lord Jesus Christ, I inform your Reverence that I shall send back one or two of the habits that your Reverence will send, though there are not any here; and for two or three years I have had no summer habit. I am going, on Low Monday, to give a Mission at Viterbo, in this thick one, and I have no other than this, which was given me, as an alms in the Retreat of St. Eutizio; I will wear it all the summer, if I live." It was his custom to keep in his room no habit but that which he was actually wearing; and when the

new habit was given to him, he gave up the old one. Of those emblems we wear on the breast, he had usually none but those he was wearing; and in all other little things that he used, poverty always shone forth, nor would he allow them to be renewed, though they were of little value, saying that they were good enough.

He who wished to see a true portrait of holy poverty, would have been satisfied to see Father Paul in his cell in the solitude. A little wooden table, a few straw chairs, a small straw bed, with a woollen covering, on boards, supported by wooden legs, a crucifix, and a few devout pictures, mostly of paper, were the valuable furniture of this holy man, who was truly one of Jesus Christ's poor. His mattress was so hard, that after sleeping on it one night, says his companion, one felt as full of pain as if one had slept on stones. He always, when he could, chose the least comfortable of the rooms. When he went to Rome, at the time that we had the Hospital of SS. Crocifisso, he took for his own the smallest room, which was so narrow, that his little bed was only just contained between its walls. When taken ill, he was obliged to remove, but did not stay away; and in the end, he took so small a room that he could scarcely pass from one side of the bed to the other; and in this room he received the visits of all, even Princes and Cardinals, who, through charity and kindness, went to see him when he was ill, in much greater happiness, than if he had dwelt in a magnificent palace. When the Church and Retreat of SS. John and Paul

were given to him by Clement XIV., the servant of God desired the lay-brother, his companion, to give him the worst room, and complained to him because he had not put him in the infirmary, on the ground floor, which was not at all suited to his infirmities ; and being afterwards put in the Superior's room, he begged so earnestly and anxiously that a room might be given him on the same floor as the infirmary, that those who came to see him might not disturb the tranquillity and recollection of the Religious, that it was necessary to yield to his wish, and he was removed to a room that Cardinal Pallotta, then Treasurer General, knowing his delicacy, chose for him himself, that he might feel no difficulty when he saw it was larger than the others. The room which Father Paul inhabited longer, and more willingly than any other, was that which is situated at the side of the Church of the Hermitage of St. Angelo, at Monte Fogliano ; and this, of all the rooms which he inhabited in the Retreats, is the poorest, and therefore was perfectly suited to his ideas ; it rather resembles a prison than a room, having a low ceiling, with only one little window, guarded by a grating. He never allowed it to be whitewashed, though he loved cleanliness, and had for a maxim, that we must be poor, but clean, nor would he ever change it, though in summer he suffered terribly from heat there. He could not bear handsome furniture in a cell, and would have nothing that was not also used by the others. His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar, Colonna, the true father of the poor, visiting him one day,

and seeing his poverty, especially regarding his bed, sent him a covering of white cloth, which was very good. Father Paul's ardent affection for holy poverty would not, however, allow him to make use of this charitable gift; and though a Canon came several times to tell him, from his Eminence, that he must use it, he could not be persuaded, till one day, when his Eminence was coming, the brother that waited on him told him that the Cardinal would have reason to feel offended if he did not see the covering on the bed; but, as if it were a crime in him, Father Paul felt as much ashamed as if he were a thief, taken with stolen goods in his possession. When the Cardinal was gone, he had it taken off, and afterwards gave it to a friend, who provided him, in exchange, with one of a common kind.

If his poverty was so jealous and delicate in refusing those things that did not appear to him completely ordinary and common, much less did he permit that there should be anything superfluous in his room, and amongst the poor he would be the poorest. Once it was made known at the Retreat of the Presentation that the good Father was going there. The lay-brother, who had charge of the rooms, prepared him one, putting something in it that was not necessary. As soon as the servant of God saw it he was greatly displeased, desired that all should be taken away, declaring that otherwise he would not remain there, and spoke with so much fervour and feeling, that it was necessary to obey at once and satisfy him. He had once ordered a common desk, to contain

the writings of the Congregation, but as the lay-brother made it with some kind of ornamental work, though common, and of small value, the true friend of poverty would not on any account have it in his cell.

From the great affection that he cherished in his heart for the virtue of holy poverty, he very frequently reminded the lay-brother his infirmarian, that he would have nothing in his room that was not absolutely necessary. "Bring me nothing," he said, "that is sent to me by my friends; make use of it for the religious." When anything was sent to him, he made a thousand protestations, that it did not belong at all to him, that he was poor, and that he received as pure charity all that was given him or made for him. When he wanted even the smallest thing, he asked for it as a charity. As a poor man, he was most careful of Jesus Christ's property; and he went so far as to write on little scraps of paper letters to confidential persons, in imitation of those great saints who on such little shreds left most edifying letters, rich in spirituality, and in precious treasure of heavenly learning.

Much more averse was he from keeping money; he would not even have anything to do with counting it. In his visits, as he had to be informed of the receipts and disbursements of the alms of the Retreat, he wished that the money should be counted, but usually ordered others to count it, showing a disgust for the sight of money, though he said, in the gratitude of his heart: "Behold, without our possessing anything, our Lord deigns

to provide us with what is necessary." When sometimes money was given him in alms, he did not take it, but desired his companion to receive it; or, if he was at the Retreat, caused it to be given to the Father Rector, or some other priest amongst the religious, and said with a great love for poverty, "I do not keep money, nor will I keep it." If it was any considerable sum, he had it placed in the hands of the apostolical treasurer.

The treasures contained in holy poverty are neither known nor appreciated by him who is not a lover of it. F. Paul, who had always practised it, kept up in his heart a great esteem and affection for it, and sought in every way to counsel and teach its practice to his children of the Congregation. He had always a great zeal for holy poverty, and held this great maxim, that in the Congregation, the spirit of holy perfection would be maintained as long as the true love and exact observance of voluntary poverty should exist; and that if this should be absent, cupidity would put everything into confusion, and there would fail, '*sanctioris disciplinæ vigor et studium.*' He used, therefore, to call holy poverty "the invincible rampart of the Congregation," because, as long as this existed, the spiritual edifice of religious virtue was in perfect safety. He spoke with ardent affection of this beloved virtue of his; he sometimes exclaimed, "O what a happiness is community life!" and said also, "In a community life a great treasure is contained." Exhorting his religious in words that came from the depth of



his heart, he said: "I recommend to you holy poverty. If you are poor you will be holy; on the contrary, if you seek to become rich, you will lose the religious spirit, and regular observance will no longer flourish among you." Sometimes he added: "The sons of Jesus Christ's Passion ought to be stripped of all created things, and our Congregation ought to shine forth in this, to be poor in spirit, naked, and deprived of all things." With his usual fervour he often said: "If our brethren of the Congregation keep up the true spirit of poverty, the Congregation will always maintain its vigour—I shall always say so. If I were at the point of death, I should leave three things behind as counsels: that if the spirit of prayer, the spirit of solitude, and the spirit of poverty are preserved, the Congregation will shine both before God and man." He was most watchful to prevent the introduction of even the shadow of an abuse contrary to holy poverty. He would not allow any legacy to be received, however specious the excuse might seem; and on a certain occasion he wrote as follows: "Mr. N.'s sister-in-law wished to leave a legacy of a thousand crowns to one of our Retreats, for the celebration of a daily Mass. We cannot accept this, as it is against the rules and vow of poverty; so this affair is at an end: our good God will, however, raise up other means to enable her to finish the work she has begun." Thus he determined on every similar occasion. He once heard from the Rector of S. Eutizio, that a kind person wished to leave a house at Soriano for the Congregation, with the

sole obligation of saying one Mass annually. The house seemed very convenient as a hospital for the Retreat, but the good Father told the Rector not to engage himself in such a treaty, as he did not wish to open the way for any sort of income to the Congregation.

Neither infirmities nor pains prevented him from carefully guarding this his dear treasure. He was sick at the time that a particular Congregation was deputed by Benedict XIV. to examine the rules, and one of the Cardinals was trying to obtain permission for the house of study to possess property; and in his illness he wrote a most earnest letter to the same Cardinal, to entreat him to prevent such a grant being made to a Congregation of poor barefooted Monks. In the same spirit of poverty he made a powerful opposition to prevent Clement XIV. from granting to our Congregation the power to receive bequests of goods, to be afterwards sold for the wants of the Congregation itself, as the holy prelates deputed by His Holiness to look over the rules were thinking of doing. He said so much, and prayed so earnestly, that at last it was settled as he virtuously desired.

His vigilance made him notice carefully that in the building of the Retreats everything should be conformable to holy poverty; and if he ever remarked any small excess, he was not satisfied till it was removed. In building the Retreat of St. Sosio, a benefactor superintended the building, and, for I know not what reason, made the great door rather superb. The servant of God thinking

it not conformable to holy poverty, complained much about it, disapproved of it, and it was never satisfied till it was altered, though the order of the building might be destroyed ; preferring rather to guard poverty jealously, than to keep to the symmetry of the edifice.

It is true that the good Father accepted the Retreat of SS. John and Paul, where the dormitories and cells are larger than is customary in our Retreats, but he accepted it, because the Sovereign Pontiff had given it to him ; and he took care that it should not serve as an example in the building of other Retreats which might be erected.

As he who loves, fears, the servant of God who had a singular love for holy poverty, feared the slightest fault against it ; and kept even every danger at a distance. With great zeal and fervour he prohibited the religious from keeping anything superfluous in their cells, and much more particularly did he take care that no eatables should be kept there ; it is not possible to express how earnestly he recommended superiors to attend to this. And that the practice might be established, he expressly inserted it in the rules, where he forbids even the greater superiors from keeping such things in their rooms. " Oh," said he, " how necessary it is, that in this superiors should be attentive, for on this much depends."

Every one will understand from this jealousy how painful to his heart was every failing that he witnessed against holy poverty ; he did not conceal it ; nor was he basely silent when it was necessary

to speak and cry out, that those abuses might not enter in, which, though at first sight small, are capable, like little foxes, of ruining the vineyard of the Lord, but he denounced them with great force and courage.

He wished, as we have said, that the poor religious should be treated with all charity, in regard of food, but watched diligently that no abuse should be introduced contrary to the strict poverty we profess. He often reminded the cook to be properly economical, and reprov'd him, when he was not so; even in coarse food, he would have a just proportion considered, and even in this his jealous poverty could find delicacy.

As poverty is most pleasing to God when it is most exact, the venerable servant of God carried his vigilance into the most minute things, and charitably expressed displeasure as was proper. If oil, paper, or anything else was used beyond what was necessary, if more fire was made than was required, if candles were burned longer than was proper, he remarked it, and he went so far as himself to notice whether the wicks of the lamp were too thick, and said with great feeling, that this was against holy poverty. If anything was broken through negligence, as it happens, he gave a reproof and a penance, in order to remedy as well as he could the injury to holy poverty. These, it is true, seem small acts of virtue, but they are really proper, and even necessary attentions, to keep at a distance those abuses which insensibly disfigure and deform the countenance of holy poverty, which is in itself so beautiful; hence the saints have been

enamoured of it, and even the Saint of saints Himself, who came on earth to lead a life of the greatest poverty.

Through the love entertained by Father Paul for this virtue, little known in the world, he was very far from asking anything, and often refused what was offered him as a present. When he gave missions at Camerino, the gentlemen appointed to assist him, and watch over the good order of the mission, wished at the end to make a demonstration of their satisfaction, by sending him a present worthy of their magnificence and charity, but the exemplary missionary persevered in refusing it, and merely to show his gratitude, accepted a little chocolate. He humbly thanked a lady who offered him some fine white pocket handkerchiefs, but it was not possible to persuade him to take them. Even with persons of the highest consideration, he showed that liberty, which his love of poverty gave him. Cardinal Portacarrero, after Father Paul had given missions in his bishopric of Sabina, offered him a purse of money as a mark of satisfaction, and under the name of alms ; but the good servant of God would not accept anything, though the Retreats of the Congregation were very needy.

He showed his moderation still more manifestly in the reserve with which he asked favours of the Sovereign Pontiff. We have elsewhere noticed the condescension and clemency with which several Pontiffs treated him, but he never abused it, and was most reluctant in asking. It is not known, that he ever asked anything for himself, or for his

relations, with the exception of spiritual favours. And though sometimes the Sovereign Pontiff, to give him courage, almost urged him to ask, though he was pleased with the liberality of his Holiness, and grateful for it, he was very averse from asking, because he was content to possess his poverty as a most rich treasure. Benedict XIV., of holy memory, in a secret audience to which he admitted him, kindly asked if he wanted anything, and desired him to ask for something; and Father Paul made no request, but that he might be allowed to celebrate mass an hour earlier than was customary, a very useful privilege for one occupied in holy missions, or for one who travelled much, like Father Paul.

Once, after he had obtained the Retreat of SS. John and Paul, the servant of God went to an audience of Clement XIV., with the rector of that Retreat; as the wants of the religious were very great, the rector asked Father Paul to show to his Holiness, in the course of conversation, the wants of the Retreat, and the great outlay that was required, especially then, when everything was in its commencement. Father Paul seemed to be convinced and persuaded. When they were admitted to the audience, the holy Father, beginning at once to speak of the Retreat of SS. John and Paul, asked him how they went on, or whether they wanted anything there, which seemed to be a fitting occasion for manifesting the wants of the Retreat. The servant of God replied, that they were even too well off, and would say nothing more. When he returned to the Retreat, the Rector asked him why he had not told His Holi-

ness of their wants. "What we have is sufficient," he replied, "we are poor;" as if he would have said, "poverty, to which nothing is wanting, has nothing of poverty, but the name and the honour." Pope Clement XIV. was well aware of this moderation and great reserve of the servant of God in asking, and even mildly complained of it to him, saying one day, "I admire your modesty, but you carry it too far." It is true, that sometimes on account of our poverty, he was obliged to ask something in charity, but he asked with so much reserve, discretion, and humility, that one of his benefactors attests, that he was obliged to urge him to ask, even when want was pressing upon him. He desired all our religious to use the same reserve, and greatly disapproved of importunity and indiscretion in asking. He did not, however, disapprove of quests being made beyond what was customary in our necessities, to employ the means that offered, of furnishing ourselves with necessary provision. In short, Father Paul was poor in effect, but much more in affection; he loved to experience the effects of holy poverty, and it was his greatest delight to consider himself one of Jesus Christ's poor.

The esteem was so great, and the affection so sincere, that he cherished for this virtue, that he rejoiced in learning that his relations were reduced almost to extreme poverty; and though he felt deeply the misfortunes of his neighbour, he seemed not to know how to be sorrowful on this occasion, because he looked upon poverty suffered with perfect resignation and patience, as a real treasure. He caused Father John Baptist, their and his brother, to

write the following letters, which we cite the more willingly, as they clearly show the perfection of the good Father's soul, which is also evinced in a postscript added by Father Paul to a letter written by Father John Baptist. "Father Paul has read, and has caused me to read your pious letter; as he is occupied this post-day, he has ordered me to reply; and I say to you, with all sincerity, that the way in which our Sovereign Lord continues to make you walk, is the way chosen by Wisdom itself and increated Truth, Christ our Lord, who, being Himself infinitely rich, and Master of all the goods of nature, grace, and glory, nevertheless became poor, as St. Paul says, was born, lived, and died, stripped of all things, and always poor. Happy then will you be, if you know how to make a virtue of necessity, and to rejoice in heart and will; for poverty renders, you like unto that great Lord, who says in His Gospel, "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Oh, from how many evils of sin, and worms of conscience are you preserved by being oppressed with corporal necessities! These must urge you to aspire more and more to the eternal felicity of heaven. I believe that the merciful eyes of God have looked upon Catherine with that charity you mention, in order that the affair of her marriage might not succeed, to prevent her from going into a world where all is abomination, and to preserve her entirely for Himself in a single state. If our brother Joseph takes care of his conscience and of the household, it is impossible that God, who is Infinite Goodness, and who never abandons us in our ne-



cessities, should allow you to want what is necessary, in order to live in your poor and abject state, in which He wishes you to remain, that you may die rich in grace. You may rely upon our prayers, and to-morrow, Wednesday in Holy Week, I will say mass for you all. We are well, and after Easter we shall go out for missions. Continue in these good sentiments expressed in your letter. And may God bless you. I salute you all in Domino, and am, &c., John Baptist of St. Michael.”

P. S. by Father Paul. “Read this letter with attention, for it is written with the light of God, and by one who is so greatly and so constantly assiduous in prayer, that he has not his equal in the congregation ; fear nothing. God wishes you to be very rich in grace in this life, and afterwards in eternal glory, therefore, He ordains for you the poverty you experience, because this is the safest path to eternal salvation. I also will celebrate mass for you all to-morrow. Never doubt of the Divine assistance, for otherwise you would offer too great an injury to the Father of Mercies. Continue to live piously, to frequent the holy sacraments, prayer, meditation on the Sacred Passion, spiritual reading, and the flight of worldly things, and by doing this, you will witness miracles ; and since the poverty we profess by vow keeps us from helping you, you will have assistance directly from God. I rejoice that Joseph conducts himself well ; happy he, if he persevere ; he will sing for ever the Divine mercies.”

“ I have adored the Divine Will in the account you gave me in your letter of the first of last September, of the death of our sister Catherine ; I hope she has been received into the bosom of the Divine Mercy, as our Lord has taken her to Himself, after she had been well prepared and strengthened by the holy sacraments, and especially after making her general confession, not only when in health, but also in her last sickness. These are clear signs of her eternal salvation, and we must not desire revelations to have a certainty of it, for this displeases God. The truth is, that the great poverty in which she has lived together with you two, and the scarcely less than extreme distress she experienced during the latter days of her life are great marks of her predestination to the glory of heaven ; therefore you have great reason to rejoice in our Lord, and to be more and more encouraged to patience in your trials ; for after these momentary afflictions there is prepared for you, by the Divine Mercy, an eternity of happiness ; and I strongly hope, in the infinite merits of the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ, and in the Dolours of Mary, that we shall sing all together for eternity the mercies of Almighty God, and shall say with the prophet, ‘ *Lætati sumus pro diebus, quibus nos humiliasti, annis, quibus vidimus mala.* ’ ”

In another of his letters, entering completely into the sentiments expressed by his brother, Father John Baptist, he thus writes to his family : “ Poverty, which is so greatly abhorred by the world, is a precious jewel, rich in every treasure

before God. I write in haste, and I beg of God to shed abundant blessings on you." Men, who speak of the advantages of holy poverty with so much affection, energy, and feeling ; men, who in their whole lives have practised it with so much care and fidelity, clearly show that in detachment from all things, they found that true Good, who alone is capable of consoling and satisfying the amplitude of the heart of man, than which He is infinitely greater." 'Major est corde nostro.'

END OF VOL. II.





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