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Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality

**THE WILL OF GOD
IN THE SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE
OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS**

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Rome 1990
Passionist Generalate
P.zza SS. Giovanni e Paolo, 13

Original Title:
La volonte' de Deiu dans les lettres de St. Paul de la Croix. (Revue d'Ascetique et Mystique, 27 (1951) 132-174.

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PRESENTATION

Father Viller, S.J. wrote this most informative and penetrating study in 1950. It has proven to be most valuable in introducing the spirituality of abandonment to the Will of God, the Father, as practiced by Jesus during his earthly sojourn. His research also offers insight both into the original doctrine and mystical experience of St. Paul of the Cross as well as the charism proper to the congregation founded by him.

The particular charism of the Passionists is to live and to promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus “the most stupendous manifestation of Divine Love,” the remedy for the evils of mankind and the basis for living as the just ones of God. This means to contemplate and to cultivate in one’s personal life that very same commitment with which Jesus fulfilled the Father’s will (Heb. 10:5-10).

An attentive reading of this study will reveal how the teaching of St. Paul of the Cross on abandonment and on the Passionist charism serve as a strong stimulus for us to collaborate wholeheartedly with the Will of God in serving our brethren and in fulfilling the mission given us by God.

Other references to the writings of St. Paul of the Cross have been added to the notes of the author. These will provide a further insight into his spirituality. In fact, his letters could serve as the basis of a book which would be as valuable as that of Jean-Pierre Caussade’s “Abandonment to the Divine Will.”

For a general overview of the doctrine on the Will of God in the traditions of spiritual theology see Viller; “Dictionnaire de Spiritualite”, ‘Abandon’, vol. III, col. 2-25.

The author begins this study by quoting a letter of St. Paul of the Cross regarding St. Vincent Mary Strambi. The latter was born in Civitavecchia on Jan. 1, 1745. He was ordained as a diocesan priest in 1767 and became a member of the Congregation of the Passion in 1768. He was an outstanding professor of dogmatic and pastoral theology as well as a renowned preacher of his time. In 1786 he wrote and published the first biography of St. Paul of the Cross. He became bishop of Macerata and Tolentino on July 5, 1801; he died on Jan. 1, 1824 and was canonized in 1950.

INTRODUCTION (1)

When Joseph Strambi of Civitavecchia sought to reclaim his son who had joined the Passionists against his father's wishes, St. Paul of the Cross wrote to him to point out that neither he nor any of his religious had influenced the young priest to become a Passionist, but rather had dissuaded him on the score of his delicate health; however, they had had to bow before a vocation coming so clearly from God:

“Ought I set myself against the will of God”, he wrote, “and assume the grave obligation of having to give an account to the tribunal of God for the soul of Don Vincent? I do not have the heart to commit so grievous a sin, nor do I feel willing at present to command Don Vincent to return home. Souls belong to God, and I do not want to oppose His Holy Will. I never sought out your son. If of his own accord, he wants to leave, I will not hold him, but in conscience I cannot command him to leave. If God is not calling him, he will himself decide to return, but if God is calling him, who are we to stand in the way?” Then, without discussing whether Vincent would do more good in the world than in religious life, he added, “I tell you only that God has no need of man, and that the greatest good He demands of each is the accomplishment of His Holy Will. That is what Don Vincent is seeking, and I cannot prevent him” (2).

It is because this letter manifests so well the exceptional esteem that St. Paul of the Cross had for the Divine Will that I have quoted the principal portions of it at the beginning of these pages in which I intend to show the place of the Will of God held in his spirituality.

If I choose this subject, it is surely because the doctrine of the Will of God shows up as so salient a part of St. Paul's thought, and as the central idea that explains and dominates the whole.

As characteristic as it is of his teaching, however, I do not maintain that it distinguishes and sets St. Paul apart from the spiritual writers of his day. I would say, instead, that it is precisely through this doctrine that he comes the closest to his contemporaries and immediate predecessors and becomes part of the strong – but not sufficiently studied – spiritual current of abandonment to God; through it, he is preeminently a man of his times.

There is a second reason, also, as cogent as the first, and this is to attempt to understand the importance of this teaching of his, and to see its wonderful harmony with what is truly the original source of his spiritual life: participation in the Passion of Our Lord, and union with the suffering Christ.

This doctrine the saint presents to us is not neatly arranged in a formal treatise in which the parts are explained with all their implications, but in letters that are written hastily, in personal terms, in great numbers and addressed to different sorts of correspondents. The edition published by Fr. Amadeus of the Mother of the Good Shepherd at Rome in 1924 includes 1882 letters, and others have been discovered since. It is true that there are purely official letters among them pertaining to the Congregation of the Passionists or to some particular retreat, but the greater number are spiritual letters.

The writer of these letters does not concern himself with pure theory. In giving directions he makes very few explanations, but proceeds largely by allusions and an appeal to principles –

with a completely practical aim, therefore, like a physician giving a prescription. The man, however, has an experience that is so profound and well-rounded (he is obviously the greatest mystic and the greatest spiritual leader of 18th century Italy), his sanctity is so evident, he has so much benevolence and kindness that, without in the least minimizing the demands of the perfection to which so firmly he directs all his correspondents, he is still the most encouraging of guides and the most heartening of masters.

If we look only at the way he lived, we would expect to find rugged and steep the way which he travelled himself and sought to lead others to. But when we read his letters this impression disappears almost entirely, so well does he know how to say just the right word of comfort to reassure and console, and the right heroic word to stimulate and support. He belongs truly to the line of great directors: he possesses so much skill, prudence, balance and good sense that he is never at a loss for words, no matter how often he protests his incompetence or manifests embarrassment (3) in handling a more involved case. Besides, he uses a language that is so simple and direct – the language of the people in proverbs – that, despite its elevation, his thought is very rarely obscure and its main points can easily be understood.

The most striking thing about him is what I would like to call his sense for the essential, a trait that I have not found in the same degree in any other spiritual director. This man who is always in poor health, always under pressure, who is compelled to act quickly because he has no time to waste, puts his finger immediately upon what is fundamental. We might think that he is incessantly on the search for short cuts and telling methods (4). Without fear of repeating himself, he has a talent for insisting upon what is important. We have here, it seems to me, a trait of character worth singling out; but lest my observation be only a vague and subjective impression I will rely on the texts.

The emphasis that he places on the Will of God is truly remarkable. We can say of him what has been said of St. Ignatius of Loyola, that he was “a man of the Will of God.” Both seemed to have an “obsession” with the Will of God. Often, at the end of his letters, St. Ignatius would beg his correspondents to obtain for him the grace of knowing the will of God better that he might fulfill it more perfectly. The great saint of Lombardy habitually asked prayers, instead, that the Will of God would be accomplished in him and outside him. While the former, following the example of the Apostle, often used ejaculatory prayer, “Lord, what will you have me to do”, the latter repeats more readily the words of the Saviour, “Fiat voluntas tua.” In other words, the spirituality of St. Paul of the Cross is orientated more to the Will of Good-pleasure than to the signified Will of God.

Like his contemporary St. Alphonsus de Ligouri, St. Paul makes frequent use of the terms ‘uniformita’ and ‘uniformarsi,’ but these two words which, in St. Alphonsus’ language, designate active conformity of one’s will to the Will of God, in St. Paul’s, usually refer to a passive conformity. The reason, perhaps, is that St. Paul for the most part directed contemplative souls like his own, and his personal attraction as well as his experience with the souls of others led him, not indeed to neglect the necessary active conformity, but to focus more of his attention upon the passive aspect of conformity.

1. PERFECTION AND THE WILL OF GOD

There are two factors that strike us. First, while, to be brief, we can reduce the definitions and occasional descriptions which St. Paul gives of perfection to two kinds; one, identified with complete conformity to the Will of God, the other, consisting in the acquisition of the virtues, still it is certainly the first kind that is the most ordinary and the only important one, the one which we must consider definitive and the most representative of the Saint's thought. The other is secondary and accessory and appears only as an explanation and development of the first. Two reasons lead me to this conclusion:

a) among the virtues which he incorporates into the spiritual edifice of perfection and which are, as it were, its foundation-stones, he always mentions union with the Will of God under some form;

b) whatever he calls it, this union with, or conformity to the Will of God is for him the supreme essential virtue, the one that most pleases God and occupies the most important part of the spiritual life.

Secondly, while the various definitions and references in which St. Paul clearly identifies complete conformity to God's Will – and that alone with perfection, undoubtedly give proper attention to active conformity, still it is passive conformity and its fundamental attitudes that he insists upon the most often; he relies upon it so fully, indeed, that it is true to say that the one expression that most appropriately and exactly characterizes his manner of going to God and of directing others to Him is the way of abandonment. There is a letter to Thomas Fossi after he became a Passionist, written on the 8th of October 1772, in which St. Paul of the Cross says without any qualification, "Perfection consists in acquiring true virtues" (5). But the words that follow indicate clearly the essential role that he gives to the Will of God, "And prayer does not consist in having consolations, tears... one does not give strong men the nourishment of infants; after the fall comes the hard winter, and it is very true that the best thing is to take whatever God sends, and to allow oneself to be governed entirely by His infinite Goodness (always doing our part and fulfilling His divine Will in all things)".

Thirty-three years earlier, on June 11th 1739, he had written to Vittoria Fossi, the wife of the same Thomas, "He who is the most humble and patient and obedient and charitable, and the most abandoned to the divine Will, he is the most perfect" (6).

St. Paul, indeed, never fails to put conformity to God's Will among the foundation-stones of perfection (7). To Laura Gianotti he addressed the following lines of March 19, 1734, "Practice the holy virtues; humility, obedience, mortification – interior and exterior – are the foundation-stones. Love self-contempt. Above all, form for yourself the important habit of abandonment to the Will of God" (8). There we can see the essential role of abandonment.

Again and again, self-contempt enters into his definition, together with accomplishment of the Will of God, "True perfection consists in this; the accomplishment of the Will of God, and self-contempt" (9). Whenever he would define what was for him the most important thing in the spiritual life, he would say, similarly, "The principal point of the devout life is contempt of ourselves and perfect union with the Divine Will. May His Majesty grant it to all" (10). In a letter to Agnes Grazi, he tells her to ask St. Frances de Paula for herself and for him a profound annihilation before God," with true contempt of ourselves and a total union with, and transformation in the divine Good-pleasure" (11).

Whatever the value he attached to self-contempt, I fully believe that the two elements of this definition do not have the same importance in his thought. Does he not tell us which one is essential for him when he says to mention only one instance, “Our sanctification and perfection consists in doing perfectly the holy Will of God” (12).

In a letter to Sr. M. Cherubim Bresciani, a Poor Clare of Piombino, St. Paul describes three fundamental degrees of passive conformity, “True love of God is exercised on the Cross of the well-beloved, Jesus Christ. And the true manner of being enriched with graces in the midst of interior and exterior sufferings is to nourish oneself with the divine Will. This is important; it is great perfection to resign oneself in everything to the divine Will; it is greater perfection to live abandoned with deep indifference to the divine Good-pleasure; the greatest and highest perfection is to nourish oneself, in a pure spirit of faith and love, on the divine Will” (13).

The reader may be led to believe, solely on the strength of these lines, that our saint consistently considered abandonment more elevated than resignation, and that the union with the divine Will of one who nourishes himself on it brings him to abandonment. It is true that certain texts keep such a distinction clear, those for example in which he affirms that holiness consists in being totally united to the Will of God; (14) that perfect, total union with the Will of God is the highest degree of perfection, and “he who is the most united and transformed into the divine Good-pleasure is... the holiest,” (15) and also those texts in which he declares that abandonment implies perfect resignation.

But he speaks more usually as if there were no precise distinction between these three notions; resignation, abandonment and union with the Divine Will. He is forever mixing them up, confusing them and shifting from one to the other. These three words, if they are not perfect synonyms, at least seem equivalents and indicate simply nuances that are barely distinguishable, or better three aspects or three directions of one and the same virtue. Since he takes each in its widest sense, or, if I may call it that, in their complete perfection, namely, resignation in all things, abandonment in all things, union with God’s Will in all things, he very often uses one for the other.

Resignation he conceived of only as animated by perfect charity, and this in an absolute sense, true resignation includes in itself perfect charity (16). So there is no need to be surprised when he calls resignation “the treasure of treasures,” (17) and we know that he said the same thing of charity, “I rejoice in Jesus Christ to learn that you live always more desirous of loving the dear Jesus; your desire will be accomplished, because the Lord will grant you the great gift of holy love, which is the treasure of treasures” (18).

With the logic of the saints, at the very start he sets his course toward perfection, and never strays from it; it is toward the most perfect that he makes sure to direct, as swiftly as he can, the chosen souls who are who are under his direction. He would believe he had done them an injustice if he spoke to them of resignation which stopped half-way, accepting God’s Will only grudgingly or for any motive that was not the most perfect, as if there were no other way of acting.

Obviously he is not thinking of any division of the three degrees of perfection when he tells us that “resignation is the virtue which pleases God the most,” (19) and that “he who is the most resigned is the most holy” (20). There is no appreciable difference between resignation and

abandonment and union, or between resigning oneself and abandoning oneself and uniting oneself. In fact, St. Paul says as well, “You will be as pleasing to God as you live the more abandoned” (20a).

He is also evidently equating abandonment and union when he repeats that “the best way is to live abandoned to the divine Will” (21). This recommendation seems to say that abandonment is the best way, at least for the difficulties raised by Thomas Fossi in the letter to which the saint was replying. But it is absolutely the best way in itself that he is discussing in his words to D. Damiano Ciarelli, of September 3, 1748, “Your Most Reverend Lordship does very well to abandon yourself in all things to the Most holy Will of God, which is the most perfect thing that one can do” (22).

St. Paul’s insistence on passive conformity is so evident that I need only to mention it; I have not dwelt on it at any length. The remainder of this article will simply put it in clearer light. For the present, I am content to make a few remarks.

As impressive as the number of allusions to passive conformity already is in all the texts which treat directly or indirectly of perfection, more significant still is the manner in which our saint develops the three principal attitudes of passive conformity as degrees of perfection. St. Paul of the Cross evidently makes perfection consist in the accomplishment of the divine Will (23) and very often he expresses his own desire to do the Will of God. But to do the Will of God is an ambiguous expression, it can mean passive conformity as well as active conformity. One example will be sufficient to prove how easily this assertion applies. We read in a letter to a religious, August 9, 1757, “It is many years ago that I asked the Lord in my poor cold prayers that He would make me do His divine Will perfectly, for I wished to nourish myself on His Will in all happenings” (24). Now, to do the Will of God in all happenings and to be nourished on it is first of all to accept it and to be abandoned to it. The words of Our Lord, “My nourishment is to do the Will of My Father,” have always been interpreted in the sense of passive conformity (25).

Abandonment is at one and the same time “perfection,” “the means of perfection,” and “the short cut to perfection” (26). “Embrace the Will of God lovingly in every sort of anguish, this is the great formula for arriving quickly at perfection” (27).

Sometimes, he puts emphasis on the acceptance of trials, “the misfortunes of the world, when they are accepted as from the loving hands of God with resignation (*rassegnazone*) to His Holy Will, serve to make us run farther in the way of the divine precepts” (28). Again, abandonment is joined to the virtues and to the attitudes that necessarily go with it, “When you conduct yourself as a completely guileless child reposing on the loving breast of Jesus Christ, mystically leaving all your cares and desires and even good intentions to disappear, keeping yourself in a true interior solitude with true humility of heart and perfect abandonment to the divine Good-pleasure, then you will most quickly become holy” (29).

He wants to help Agnes Grazi advance “in holy love”, so he recommends to her “to abandon herself more and more,” just as if the progress of abandonment would measure the progress of love (30). This recommendation to abandon self more and more is a frequent one (31).

Thomas Fossi also received this instruction, “The more you nourish yourself in the divine Will, accepting every trial without looking at the creature but considering it only as a gift from

the Creator, the more easily will you accomplish something worthwhile, and fly to perfection by the shortest path” (32).

Once St. Paul reminded Agnes Grazi, “In keeping with the present condition of your spiritual development, you ought to lose sight more and more of creatures and images of being and to become more impressed with the knowledge of your own real and fearful nothingness; when this grand despoiling has been accomplished, you must wish to die ever more to self and to every created thing, to put your nothingness in that All which God is, and to lose yourself there, so absorbed that you forget self and every creature.” Then he concludes, “the short cut to arrive at true union with God is what I have already told you and repeated so many times, both in letters and by word of mouth, he who studies the science of his nothingness is prepared to know the true All which is God” (33). We might think that here we are far from the Will of God. By no means. In this same letter, the saint tells us immediately after the passage we just quoted, “This nothingness produces a continual abandonment and complete resignation to the divine Good-pleasure that leaves to God the care even of one’s own perfection, and lives despoiled of attachment to every consolation” (34).

This study of the ideas of St. Paul of the Cross on perfection gives such emphasis to passive conformity that we are convinced his spirituality is a way of abandonment. A more detailed examination will confirm such a conclusion.

2. WAY OF ABANDONMENT

In his Letters, we find – and it strikes the eye at first glance – the essential characteristics of the way of abandonment, just as Pere Piny has described them in the second chapter of his work *Le Plus Parfait*, published in 1698. The habitual formula Pere Piny uses to sum up those characteristics, “to allow God to act by accepting whatever He does,” well describes its two fundamental aspects.

a) Complete acceptance of the Will of God is, for St. Paul of the Cross, a first necessity. He practiced it himself, and manifested it to an extraordinary degree, “Even if I should find myself thrown like a criminal from one prison filled with serpents into another full of dragons and basilisks, I ought to remain silent and approve God’s disposal of me as excellent” (35).

Nor does he seek to justify at any length this Will of God imposed on him as the best thing (36). All that God has done is well done. In the face of events, there is no point in wanting them to be different than they are. It is all too clear that every complaint goes contrary to the Will of God. Therefore, he recommends accepting all things, especially trials, as coming directly from God and not from creatures (37), seeing all things by the light of faith (38) in God or in the Good-pleasure of God (39). To accept all from the loving hands of God, to see all things in the Good-pleasure of God, this is the way to find consolation in everything, “because in God, there is no pain, but only comfort, joy and light-heartedness” (40).

A submissive acceptance, “we must bow our heads before the Will of God, this is the rule for our perfection” (41), and adore the dispensations of God (42). A tranquil and peaceful acceptance (43). A loving acceptance, that kisses the hand that strikes us (44). A complete acceptance (45).

b) Allowing God to do what he wants to do; this is the other aspect of abandonment. St. Paul of the Cross reminds us that we must trust ourselves completely to God (46), put ourselves entirely in His hands and, in the saint's most habitual expression, "leave Him the care of everything" (47), we should repose in Him in everything (48), surrender all our worries to Him, even about our perfection; (49) and "putting all worries in God's hands" (50) retain only that of pleasing Him and of doing His Good-pleasure (51). We are to be content if all our plans, even good plans, are upset (52) provided only that the Will of God is accomplished. We are to let ourselves be guided by Him, by Providence, (53) as though we were children; in order that He may do with us as He desires, "we must willingly allow ourselves to be fashioned by Him" (54).

To certain restless souls too much inclined to agitation, to self-analysis and introversion (like the good Thomas Fossi, a wealthy landowner on the isle of Elba and father of a family, but later on a Passionist), he recommends not thinking of themselves in too great detail (55), "advance toward the good, with the simplicity of children" (56).

There are certain expressions he uses that indicate clearly the peace and tranquility of a soul that has so placed all its cares in God, "to repose on the loving breast of the heavenly Father," to repose in the divine will (57).

Of itself, the expression, "to allow God to act," underlines the passivity of abandonment. This passivity can be more or less pronounced. When he addresses contemplative souls, as is often the case, the mystic flavor of abandonment is more evident. His words to Fr. John Mary of St. Ignatius, "Allow yourself to be led by God in a passive way" (58), show us how far it can go. We are very well informed of the role that he gives to abandonment in contemplative prayer. Undoubtedly, no one has shown more clearly than he at what point the spiritual current of abandonment has aided souls to arrive at contemplation.

c) Abandonment in prayer (59-60). St. Paul of the Cross directed more than one soul called to contemplation, for example, Agnes Grazi. We have his letter to her in which, learning that she could no longer meditate or make the composition of place, he gives her a very clear direction for her prayer that actually consisted in abandonment to the guidance of God (61). Abandonment is here set forth as the best preparation for contemplation, the essential disposition for gaining it. He also had under his directions souls that had already arrived at contemplation, among others Sister Columba Gertrude Gandolfi. The counsels he gave her for her prayer are no different from those he repeated many times to Agnes Grazi (62). In prayer, abandonment is the normal disposition for a contemplative soul. Since the contemplative soul is passive under the action of God and since contemplation is the action of God alone, the soul (63) has nothing else to do but to permit God to perform His divine work in it.

"To allow God to act," in prayer (64). Now, this special direction for contemplatives is so much in accord with St. Paul's general teaching on the Will of God that it seems only a counsel of abandonment to, and perfect union with the Will of God. "We must arouse ourselves only when and as God wishes. In our nothingness, we must respond to the touches of God's love, and when the soul feels itself drawn, it ought to run after the divine sweetness, and as soon as it can return, to become absorbed in its own real nothingness, with true nudity of spirit. You already understand what I am saying; to explain it further, you must, with God's grace, detach your spirit from all created

objects, keeping your will dead in the loving arms of God, so that the Most Holy Will of the Supreme Good may live alone in us” (65).

In short, that is the only direction that St. Paul of the Cross would give to these two classes of souls, those on the way to contemplation, and those who had already arrived there. But there is a wide variation in its formulation, so it is perhaps best to give the principal ones.

One idea dominates them all, this is that the contemplative soul must “allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit” (66), and as St. Paul repeats so often to Agnes Grazi, “to make prayer not in one’s own way, but in the Holy Spirit’s way” (67).

Therefore, it is necessary to “yield to the attractions” of the Holy Spirit, “to accept His attractions,” “to obey His attractions” (68), “the divine attractions” (69), to allow oneself to be moved by that “loving breath of the Holy Spirit,” as soon as one feels it (70).

It is God who is the Master. Without resisting His action, without any curiosity of spirit, we must “allow Him to accomplish His work in us,” “to allow Him to perform His loving deeds” (71).

And as it is God who is the “place of Prayer” (72), we are to allow the soul “to immerse itself entirely in the Supreme Good” (73), “to lose itself in God” to be lost in, and overwhelmed by the Immensity of God (74), “to let our nothingness disappear in the infinite All of God” (75). This last expression is the most frequent, but it also has its variations, “to let one’s fearful nothingness disappear in the joy of Our Savior” (76).

All these expressions – and I have not even tried to be comprehensive – highlight very well the roll of God in contemplative prayer (77) and therefore the indispensable docility of the soul to the divine action. But to give these expressions their exact sense and to prevent misunderstandings, it is necessary to read them in context, alongside of the other counsels that go with them and enable us to see, at a glance their real meaning.

St. Paul of the Cross knows well that if God does His part, man must also do his. In the very letter in which he tells Sister Columba Gertrude Gandolfi that her prayer is passive, he reminds her to do her part (78). And man’s role is to eliminate the obstacles which can interfere with the divine action, that is, by practicing all the virtues, faith and especially charity. It will be detachment from all created things, that fundamental humility which consists in keeping oneself in one’s nothingness, and in holding nothing back from God. Does not St. Paul make the perfection of prayer consist in this fundamental disposition, “keeping oneself in one’s nothingness... in order to hold nothing back from God” (79)?

This is how he described the role of man to a master of novices in speaking to him about infused prayer and the manner of preparing souls for it, “Since it is a free gift of God, no one should think he can lead another to it by sheer force of arms, as the saying is. But all the care of the master ought to be to train them in a firm habit of virtue and true humility of heart, knowledge of their own nothingness and contempt of self, true blind obedience and to see that they develop a great love for this virtue and above all for true and perfect abnegation of their own self-will in everything, personal mortification of their inclinations, their own opinions,

sympathies and antipathies. These are the fundamental virtues for the spiritual edifice and for obtaining the gift of holy prayer and union with God; otherwise one builds on sand” (80).

The point on which he insists the most is humility and the necessity of keeping oneself in one’s nothingness (81). We can say that every time he gives a soul the counsel of abandoning itself in prayer, he gives it at the same time, by way of counterpart that of annihilating itself profoundly. Sometimes, he even adds – and this is a characteristic point in his mystical doctrine – that the soul should not come to prayer unless clothed with the sufferings of Christ, and to enter prayer, so to say, through the door of the Passion.

It is sufficient to read, in order, all the successive letters he sent to Sister Columba Gertrude Gandolfi to be impressed by the frequency with which these three counsels recur. We ought to cite at least one example, “Continue your prayer in the manner in which God is leading you, and be very obedient to the loving attractions of the Holy Spirit, do not lose sight of your fearful nothingness that you may hold nothing back from the Blessed God. Go to your prayer immersed in your own nothingness but clothed with His sufferings, in pure faith and nudity of spirit, despoiled of images and let your spirit make a grand flight of love that will lead you to the heavenly Spouse” (82).

St. Paul of the Cross, who wishes that man do his part in the way of contemplation and sets up as it were a constant counterweight to whatever excess passivity could bring, took great care to apply the same precautions in the general practice of abandonment. He manifests, in this as in everything, his perfect balance of judgment. No one who has ever read him attentively could entertain any least suspicion that he overemphasizes passivity.

Pere Piny remarks that the way of abandonment “is not so passive with regard to God, accepting whatever He does, that it is not also very active on its own part. It asks of each of us that we perform, whether externally or internally, all there is of duties, obligations and employments. The Will of God, in effect, enjoys the role of primary cause so far as we are concerned, but it does not exclude – what am I saying – it demands our cooperation as secondary causes, therefore the application of each one to all that duty dictates. But this activity ought to be accomplished without haste, without anxiety of spirit, without solicitude or worry” (83).

St. Paul, at once an enemy of all excess and so judicious, never omitted to recommend to those he directed everything demanded by active conformity with the Will of God. When we read his correspondence with Thomas Fossi, we may be surprised at the frequency with which he recalls him to the duties of his state; for certain periods, this advice is found in almost every letter he writes him. No one highlights as he does the necessity of spiritual combat and the exercise of virtues. (84).

d) Union: the end obviously sought by all those who preach the way of abandonment is to be united with God perfectly, intimately, and as inseparably as possible. Conformity, or uniformity with the Will of God, according to Pere Piny will go so far as “being transformed, as the mystics say, to the Will of God, and possessing no other will than that of God” (85). Now, this is what St. Paul of the Cross wrote to Thomas Fossi, “All your prayers, all your exercises ought to be directed toward uniting you closely to the Divine Will.” And then, after having advised him to see all his sufferings in the Will of God and to take everything immediately from His hands, he

adds, “Embrace His most holy Will with holy affections, espouse it with the ring of faith and charity... This is the noblest, most fruitful, holiest exercise a soul can perform” (86).

But union ought to go further still, even to “a total transformation in the divine Good-pleasure” (87). To Sister Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, whom he was reassuring in her interior trials, he wrote, “I rejoice in God... that the sovereign and infinite Goodness has led you to the state in which you now are, that is to say, in naked suffering, a happiness devoid of every pleasure, a love without joy, so that your soul, free from attachment to every satisfaction may place its happiness in being united to the Good-pleasure of the great heavenly Father who is the consolation of consolations.” And he concludes, “Keep yourself, then, hidden in Jesus Crucified without desiring anything but to be completely transformed by love in His divine Good-pleasure in everything...” (88).

St. Paul has nowhere indicated his deepest thought on union with the Will of God more clearly than in these words, “I do not want to resist the most holy Will of the Most High, and I can tell you that I have no other thirst, that I can desire nothing else, ask for no other grace for myself but that of doing, of being totally united, and transformed by love in the ever adorable Will of the heavenly Father, and I desire most intensely that my nourishment be to do His most holy Will in the midst of any and every suffering, any and every trial” (89).

e) Not to think about the future: abandonment implies the absence of solicitude about the future. St. Paul of the Cross repeats it as do all the partisans of the way of abandonment. “Do not think of the future, that is to say, about misfortunes, events that the imagination places before us, but make them disappear in the Will of God... without anxiously thinking of tomorrow” (90). He told Father Fulgentius of Jesus, June 23, 1746, “Do not think of the future, but serve God without reservation” (91).

So also, he did not want anyone to try to predict the future, “To claim that one knows the future is to put oneself in danger of being deceived...” (92). But he desired that a person use the present moment to the fullest. One of his favorite thoughts was that one must look on each day and each instant as if it were the last, “so that such a thought might arouse us to press on to holy perfection,” (93), to each action as if it were the last (94), to celebrate Mass as if it were the last (95). We must live at the present moment, love God at the present moment, as if it were the last of our life (96). We must do the Will of God at the present moment (97). “Happy is the soul that rests in the bosom of God without thinking of the future, but sets itself to live at the present moment without any care but that of doing His most holy Will in every happening, and in accomplishing it faithfully in all the duties of his state” (98).

3. FRUITS OF ABANDONMENT (99)

If anyone had asked St. Paul of the Cross why he had such a predilection for abandonment, I think he would have replied with his customary brevity that abandonment facilitated for the better his own spiritual life because it is, as we already know, the most perfect, quickest and best way. If someone pressed him to give a more precise answer, he would have doubtless added that abandonment is the best means of putting and maintaining ourselves in peace, which is, of all the ways that lead to God, the simplest and surest. This is at least the answer that he gives us in his

Letters. To develop his thought on these three points will permit us to delve more profoundly into his teaching and to account better for the place that abandonment holds in it.

a) Peace: In a letter to Thomas Fossi of 18 June 1766, St. Paul made of abandonment “the shortest path” to perfection. But he will reach it only by a detour, “I am privileged to tell you and to repeat that the short cut to the acquiring of that true peace which is the offshoot of love of God, from which all the virtues flow as from an eternal source, is to take every trial, temporal or spiritual pain, sickness or infirmity of whatever sort they may be... from the loving hands of God, regarding and receiving every unfavorable event as a gift and treasure which is offered to us by the Heavenly Father and to repeat the Holy words of Christ Jesus, “Ita, Pater quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te,” and in this way to be always joyful and to take pleasure in the fact that His most holy and eternal Will is being accomplished in us; in short, I have just told you the shortest path to holy perfection” (100).

A short cut to perfection, abandonment is also at the same time, a short cut to peace. Peace is for St. Paul of the Cross, indeed, a matter of great importance which he protects at all costs (101) by allowing nothing to trouble him (102). Of all the goods of the soul, it is the most precious, that which the devil seeks first of all to steal from us, because “he fishes only in troubled waters” (103).

In fact, we should not allow any fear or preoccupation to interfere with our peace (104). It is absolutely necessary to keep one’s heart tranquil (105), and even if the world goes to pieces, we should not lose our peace (106). For it is indispensable “for acting well in everything and for maintaining oneself ‘in sinu Dei’,” (107) because “it gives the soul more opportunity to exercise the holy virtues” (108); because it is “the most efficacious means of keeping oneself in the interior kingdom”; because, by assuring recollection, it is “the great joy which makes us sons of God” (109). Now, peace is the fruit of abandonment (110). The whole problem of interior recollection is spotlighted by these lines. In attributing to peace the power of making us more and more sons of God, our saint simply makes us recall what a privilege he considered recollection to be.

The reason is that in fact, if peace and recollection are not identical, they are at least gifts well nigh inseparable, If there is recollection, there is peace. And peace, if it is to endure, must of necessity associate itself with recollection; it is not only an indispensable condition, it is the necessary introduction. See the beginning of a letter to Teresa Palozzi, of March 29, 1759, “I rejoice in the Lord that you continue always recollected and in interior peace” (111). “Recollection,” he says in another place, “is tranquil, peaceful, without commotion, without effort” (112). “Continue to keep yourself recollected in God, with tranquility of spirit, without ever letting yourself become troubled about anything” (113). He does not seem to make any distinction between “keeping one’s heart in tranquility,” and “keeping one’s heart recollected” (114).

Recollection – he wants to make a good deal of it. The term by which he frequently designates it enables us to understand it very well. He calls it adoration in spirit and in truth (115). It is, in effect, “the sacred desert,” “the interior solitude in which God speaks to the soul words of eternal life and conserves the soul in perfect tranquility” (116). It is prayer, in all its degrees, into which one enters only through the door of the Passion. It is the perpetual cause of progress, because it unceasingly renews the soul and makes it to be reborn to a new life, “Every

time that the soul recollects itself united to God in the interior temple of its spirit, it is reborn to a new life of love in the divine Word, Christ Jesus” (117).

This new birth, this continual deepening of the interior life, is spoken of in many passages (118). At each repetition, his thought becomes more explicit, “The more often you center yourself upon God, in the most profound depths of interior solitude, the more often you will celebrate the divine mystical birth in your interior temple and you will be reborn at every moment to a divine life, godlike and holy, and ‘fiet in te Divina Nativitas’” (119). This is indeed the way he taught perfect participation in the mystery of Christmas (120).

It seems that St. Paul attributes to abandonment even the most remarkable of the effects of interior recollection, “How we ought to bless and glorify the divine mercy which does not permit us to feel any consolation and so mixes bitterness with every nourishment that could satisfy us and bring us joy. This is one of the greatest graces that His divine Majesty accords to those who are the most dear to Him. Let us nourish ourselves, then, on this divine Will and immerse ourselves often in this bath all of fire, the divine love. As often as we resign ourselves to the divine Good-pleasure, we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, and made sons of God” (121). To abandon oneself fully and from the depths of the heart, one ought to have a heart that is recollected and turned toward God. “To rest on the breast of the heavenly Father” (122), “to rest ‘in sinu Dei’” (123) to rest in the arms of Jesus and all such similar expressions apply as well to interior recollection as to prayer, peace and abandonment. These four things, so intimately united to each other, we must not only bring to life in ourselves, but conserve, develop and make habitual.

We are masters of our peace. We are ourselves the cause of our disquietudes. If we do not have peace, it is obviously our own fault. “It is because we do not receive with tranquil submission all that happens as coming from the loving Providence of the Supreme Good” (124).

It is truly “the short path to keep our hearts in peace” (125), and “there is no other”; “one must willingly put ones’ spirit in tranquility” and “preserve it in a holy indifference toward any happening whatever,” “rejoice in God with the higher part of the soul that things go as they do” (126).

St. Paul of the Cross seems to indicate yet another short cut to peace; complete detachment, “For the love of Jesus Christ, make yourself, dumb, deaf and blind, and you will have a deep peace” (127).

To a religious who was letting herself get involved in details he wrote, “If you want to gain imperturbable peace, the short cut to keep yourself in it is to imitate that holy monk who had received a large bundle of letters from his home and country. Without opening them, he threw them into the fire, saying, “Go into the fire, thoughts of home and distractions. Do the same. Make a packet of your reflections, fears, pettiness and minutiae and throw them into the fire of the divine love” (128). There is no doubt that complete detachment is necessary for one who wishes to abandon himself perfectly (129).

It is in the Will of God and in abandonment that we must take refuge if we wish to preserve peace. “Your Reverence ought, in all happenings, hide yourself in the impregnable fortress of the

Divine Will; it is certain that then neither winds nor tempests can any longer interfere with the peace and tranquility of spirit that are so necessary to do all things well” (130).

Often he used another comparison, “I intend to act as the vine-dresser or gardener when he sees a storm threatening, rain and hail beginning to fall, and lightning and thunder; he takes refuge in his cottage and remains seated there in peace until the storm has passed. So I wish to act, and mean to do with the grace of God, and to keep myself in repose and tranquility under the protection of the divine Will” (131).

It is not only peace, but also joy, the full flowering of peace, that St. Paul of the Cross demanded of an abandoned soul, “Never make room in your heart for afflictions and much less for melancholy which is the ruin of peace” (132). We should walk in the service of God without faint-heartedness or excessive fear, “with great gaiety” (133). The joy of abandonment, completely disinterested, “is due to the knowledge that the Will of God is being accomplished in all things” (134). The soul does not seek its own satisfaction, but it acts in such a way that all its delight is “the delight of the Most High” (135). When one looks for no other consolation than that of “pleasing God,” and of doing his Will, (136) when “one wishes nothing but what God wishes,” (137) one always has a real motive for being contented in God (138).

b) Simplicity: abandonment in the simplest way. Because it is the remedy for every evil, because there is no difficulty that it cannot resolve, abandonment helps the spiritual way to become greatly simplified.

It is the best remedy for every evil. There is no suffering, interior or exterior, that is not sweetened by “the balm of the divine Will” (139). So Saint Paul counseled abandonment in the sufferings both of body and of soul. To Father Francis of Jesus and Mary who was recovering from a sickness, he sends this wish, “I hope that the beneficial air of your home will help you, but abandonment (*rassegna zione*) will be even more profitable” (140). The principle is so general and its realization so practical that he repeats it on every occasion, “The best remedy in difficulties is to adore and to love the Will of God in events” (141).

The “sure path” in trials whatever they may be, “is to keep oneself submissive to the divine Will and to allow oneself to be scourged by that loving hand” (142). “The short cut to be healed is a true peaceful resignation (*rassegna zione*) to the divine Will, living completely in repose in the arms of the Savior” (143).

To answer the difficulties of Thomas, a man always uneasy and always being tried, St. Paul of the Cross wrote him, “I can tell you nothing else but that resignation (*rassegna zione*) to the divine Will is a very efficacious means in all evils, trials, unpleasant happenings. When one receives and considers them in the divine Good-pleasure, they take on a different appearance of peace and consolation. ‘*Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum*’” (144).

He assures Don Erasmus Tuccinardi that news “always seems good to him, provided that the most holy and adorable Will of God be done” (145).

There is nothing astonishing, then, that patience, which he identified with loving resignation and abandonment, is so important, “It accomplishes a perfect work” (146). “It ought to suppress all complaints, to be silent and peaceful. These two words; to suffer and to be silent, are the short cut and the rule to become holy and perfect quickly” (147).

Abandonment is recommended to so many people and under so many conditions that we can almost look on it as a unique and, so to speak, universal point of direction.

One day, when Thomas Fossi had asked him question after question, our saint contented himself with replying, after acknowledging his gifts, “As for the other points in your letter, so numerous and varied, I want to say that one single thought will answer all. This is to put everything in the divine Good-pleasure and to regard all happenings as coming from the hand of God... lose sight of everything save the duties of your state. And with the ejaculatory prayer, ‘Fiat voluntas tua,’ keep yourself at peace” (148).

Another letter of the same Thomas Fossi contained only difficulties that Saint Paul had already answered. Why give a new counsel? “Not to leave your questions unanswered, I tell you to apply yourself to live in everything and despite everything abandoned (*rassegnato*) in every event and infirmity” (149).

To a woman who recommended to his prayers the affairs of her home, he gave this simple principle, “The best remedy is to adore and love the Will of God in events which come one after the other. In this way the heart will keep itself in peace and the soul will be enriched with merits and virtues” (150).

The Will of God is, for St. Paul of the Cross, the means for resolving all interior difficulties. Making use of an expression which he had borrowed from St. Francis de Sales (151), he wishes us to put to death in the Will of God all that is opposed directly or indirectly to that Will, all that is an obstacle to progress, all that hinders the spiritual life; desires, fears, sufferings, anxieties, disquietudes, afflictions of every kind, movements of nature... Let us cite one or two examples, “Make all your sufferings disappear in the divine Good-pleasure” (152). “Make all your agonies, and worries disappear in the divine Good-pleasure” (153).

It is important to take note that St. Paul makes all these obstacles of the interior life disappear, either in the divine Will or in the fire of divine love: the two expressions are for him, entirely equivalent. “You should make these fears disappear in the fire of divine Love” (154). “Do not forget to make your sufferings and agonies, whatever they be, disappear in the fire of holy love” (155).

He even came to use the two formulae at the same time, “As for the desire that concerns your own person for the work you mention, make it disappear in the holy love and in the divine Good-pleasure” (156).

He also made use of other analogous formulae, for example, “make all your worries disappear on the loving breast of Jesus” (157).

We should not be surprised to find St. Paul so often recommending that we make our desires disappear. He who so often manifested his intention of doing the Will of God or of wanting to see it done, is convinced that we ought to reduce to this one single desire all our other desires, even good ones, as well as useless or worrisome desires.

“To go surely, the best way is always to make our desires disappear in God” (158). His correspondence with Thomas Fossi is full of recommendations of this sort, “Cultivate your desires by reducing them to the one and only desire of doing in all things the most holy Will of God. As for the rest, cast them into the fire of holy love” (159). His thought is expressed somewhat differently according to the needs of his correspondent, “You are full of holy desires and pious resolutions. Very good. But the point is that you ought to make them disappear in the divine Goodness, ready, however, to accomplish them whenever the Savior should wish, leaving them in a corner of your heart so that these desires and resolutions may not interfere with what is necessary for your present state. If God wishes something else for you and your children, He will make you know it with strong and clear lights, and even with prodigies if that is necessary to make you know His most holy Will clearly” (160).

When Thomas Fossi became a religious, the Will of God was indicated by obedience, “As for working, or having desires for it, one who lives under obedience can live tranquilly and in repose, ready to work or to rest, to go or to be silent... as God will dispose directly by means of his superiors. St. Ignatius replied to one of his own, a great servant of God and apostolic worker, who had told him he had a great desire to work, to aid souls and go to India, ‘As for me, I do not have any inclination, and if I were as you, I would incline myself to have no inclination. This is the reason; we are totally in the hands of the Pope, and it is his right to decide to use us in the manner which pleases him the most. We have only to obey!’ I say the same thing to your reverence” (161).

But indeed he praises the submission of all one’s desires to the Will of God when writing to all his correspondents, “These desires of love that you experience in reading the lives of the saints are excellent signs; cultivate them, but with complete abandonment to the divine Will” (162).

This counsel holds true also for faults, imperfections, failings. One must cast them into “the fire of divine love” (163), “let them be consumed there,” (164) and “make them disappear there” (165). Be sorry for them, humble yourself for them, but without disquietude, and take up the combat “with more fervor than before” (166). For example, this is the recommendation given to Mother Mary Innocence of the Sorrowful Mother, “If you fall into any faults not seven times, but a hundred and ten times, do not for that lose peace and confidence in God, but humble yourself gently with a loving sorrow and a sorrowful love, with only one word or two – God will teach them to you. There you have the short cut to destroy imperfection” (167).

c) Abandonment is the sure way; if St. Paul of the Cross was preoccupied with advancing quickly, he was even more so with advancing well and advancing surely. He was an advocate of short cuts only if they were at the same time safe. No one sought to avoid, for himself and for others, “deceptive paths” as much as he. The clear lucidity of his judgment and his prodigious humility protected him from illusions. No one opposed tenseness and excessive efforts of head and heart as much as he. But if he was unconvinced it was either necessary or possible to acquire perfection by “sheer force of arms” (168) he still demanded an energetic cooperation from everyone. He reminded contemplative souls that “this divine work” – of contemplation, “to be sure, must pass through the door which is Jesus Christ our Lord, and His most Sacred Passion” (169). He wrote to Agnes Grazi who was too readily impressed by imaginative visions and interior locutions that – “to remain in prayer in pure faith, absorbed in God, without images and without visions, is the surest way” (170). He does not hesitate to ask her to retrench certain

visions that she might advance – more surely and give more glory to God (171). He gives Thomas Fossi the following counsel, “Do not think about yourself too much, but go forward to the good, follow in the footprints of Jesus Christ. Continue your prayer, always make it on the divine mysteries of the most holy Life and Passion of Jesus, our life. That is the sure way...” (172).

Now this shrewd man, so prudent and so well-informed, does not hesitate to declare that the way of abandonment has a sure outcome. To a lady who was afflicted, he wrote, “Support everything with courage, patiently and perseveringly, as long as it shall please God, without seeking to live or die, but resign yourself entirely and in everything to His holy and divine desires because this is the sure path to succeed in obtaining the glory of heaven without any illusions” (173).

This is not the only statement to such effect. He wrote to Agnes Grazi, “The cedars of Lebanon fell because they did not have enough fear of themselves and were obstinate in their own opinions. He who lives abandoned to God will not perish” (174). “he who reposes in God with confidence and true humility will not be deceived” (175). “He who puts himself in the arms of Jesus will not fail” (176). And to Don Erasmus Tuccinardi, “God who is the guide of souls in abandonment will lead them to the harbor” (177).

Abandonment is happiness already here upon earth. A way that leads so surely to peace and so surely to heaven, which heals all evils and enables us to endure all trials easily, is manifestly a way of happiness. “Nourish yourself with that divine Will because in doing so you will in time experience an anticipation of Paradise” (178).

St. Paul extolled the happiness of abandoned souls (179). Abandonment is for him truly, “a very efficacious remedy to remain contented in God before all the happenings which occur within us or outside us” (180).

But it is time to end this chapter, already too lengthy, for each paragraph only seems to repeat what the preceding one said in slightly different formulation. St. Paul of the Cross never perfectly distinguished, one from the other, the reasons which so strongly uphold the way of abandonment.

4. WILL OF GOD, PASSION OF CHRIST AND SUFFERING

Why did St. Paul of the Cross make abandonment so far-reaching? What did he contribute to give so much depth and extent to the doctrine of the Will of God? For reply, we need look only to his teachings on the Passion of Christ and the suffering of the Christian as a participation in it. These teachings may be summarized in the following way:

- a) they furnish abandonment with a favorable climate in which to develop freely;
- b) the reasons for which our sufferings assimilate us to Christ in His passion continually reinforce abandonment.

a) We touch here upon the very summit of his thought. The clarity and vigor with which he writes, in his own brief way, about the efficacy of the Passion on souls necessarily attract attention.

“It is a very good and holy thing to think upon the holy Passion of the Lord, to make prayer about it, and this is the means of arriving at union with God” (181). The Passion is “the most efficacious means to exterminate vices and to plant true piety” (182), “the most efficacious means to convert even the most obstinate souls” (183), “to destroy iniquity and to cause the soul to rise to a great holiness” (184). Preaching the Passion is a very efficacious means for the conversion of sinners and the strengthening of the just (185). The most hardened souls do not resist its action (186).

There is a greater intensity when it is a question of the relationship between the Passion and perfection “It is all in the Passion. It is there that one learns the science of the saints” (187). It is a fact of experience that suffering is intimately bound up with perfection. The great saints have arrived at their great perfection by remembering the Sufferings of Jesus (188). The greatest tribulations are for the greatest servants of God (189). The trials that Thomas Fossi endured were a manifest sign that God wished to make him a saint (190). When God wishes to lead a soul to sanctity, he sends him suffering. St. Paul never tires of repeating this to us. Suffering is at once the sign that one is the friend of God (191), and that one is advancing in God’s way (192). It is at one and the same time the means and the mark of sanctity.

To his brothers and sisters to whom he was giving the formula of abandonment, he said, “Be of good heart in tribulations and understand that they are the most certain signs that one is the friend of God (193). Without ever a variation, he wrote forty-six years later, “Do not be afflicted by the trials that you suffer, because they are the clearest signs that you are much loved by God” (194).

The Cross is the way that leads to holiness, (195) a preparation for perfection and for union with God. St. Paul seems to hold an equation between suffering and holiness, just as he held an equation between the Will of God and perfection (196).

But for this equation to be real, he always presupposes, although he says so only occasionally, that one welcomes suffering as perfectly as possible, that is to say, with abandonment, or in other words, as the Will of God, “The way of the saints is to submissively endure trial for God” (197).

Even if he did not understand how anyone could reasonably misuse suffering, he did recognize that it was necessary to learn how to suffer. But to learn how to suffer is to learn how to abandon oneself to the Will of God. And according to what has been said this is manifestly to advance in perfection. The good use of sufferings then, is identified with the practice of abandonment. “He who knows how to suffer in silence and in peace is not far from being perfect” (198).

One must make use of the Will of God to use suffering well. The strongest motive that we have for accepting the sufferings that God sends us is to see in them the Will of God (199). We must consider all our sufferings in God’s Will (200), and make all our pains disappear in the divine Good-pleasure (201). The real manner of supporting the hardest sacrifices or the most

severe interior pains is to be persuaded that God has willed them from all eternity (202). Again, we must undoubtedly prefer the sufferings that God wishes to all those that we would like (203).

By a very remarkable coincidence, he said that “the balm to heal all suffering is the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ and union with, and total abandonment to His most holy Will” (204). The Passion has the same healing power that he recognized in the Will of God, in abandonment and in union with that Will.

It is principally in suffering that we should resign ourselves, abandon ourselves and unite ourselves to the Will of God. Resignation presupposes suffering because it is simply an acceptance of it and is exercised truly only on the Cross (205). It is in difficult things above all that we should abandon ourselves, in trials that we should unite ourselves more intimately with the divine Will and be nourished on it (206).

So many souls have reached abandonment by the way of sufferings that we can truly say that abandonment is a normal development in a life of suffering, and that a life of suffering very easily becomes a life of abandonment.

Among the advantages of the way of abandonment, does not Pere Piny find that it is a “sort of true interior martyrdom,” that it is the way that is “the most crucifying, that in which we carry the Cross with the holiest of results” (207)?

b) The imitation of Christ, which gives its value to suffering, adds to abandonment a new force which constantly increases its grandeur.

If it is from the ocean of the Passion of Christ that we ought to draw all the virtues, the sufferings of Jesus are the most efficacious means to establish souls in the love and in the fear of God (208). The Passion, which is the work of love, supremely so, is the most powerful motive for love. St. Paul of the Cross require suffering, if one is to arrive at the perfection of love (209).

Love is the most powerful force of the spiritual life, and we must grow unceasingly in love (210). Now if true love comes from the cross, it is also on the Cross that it must be exercised (211). And to give God positive proof of our love, we must pass through the ordeal of pure suffering (212). The short path to arrive at love of our Lord is to let oneself be lost in the ocean of His sufferings (213).

Therefore, “love has the power of uniting.” It compels us to imitate the suffering Christ. It is love which determined St. Paul of the Cross to make the suffering of Jesus his own, (214) and to desire up to the day it was granted, to feel in his soul and body the actual sufferings of the Passion of Jesus (215). When one loves, one necessarily imitates.

He considered it an incontestable truth that the whole life of Christ was one only of sufferings. The words of the Imitation, “Tota vita Christi crux fuit et martyrium,” (216) impressed him deeply and he repeated them more than once (217). The conclusion that he drew was very simple; our lives, as Christians, ought to be, like the life of Christ, lives of suffering. And that was for him the Will of God.

“Since the dear Jesus had willed that His most holy life here below...be always amid... pains, trials, fatigues, difficulties, agonies, contempt, calumnies, sorrows, whips, blows, thorns and a most bitter death on the Cross, so I am made to see that, in attaching myself to Him, I should lead the same sort of life in the midst of every suffering. With what rejoicing my poor soul embraces every sort of suffering” (218).

It is a principle for him, therefore, that suffering makes us resemble Christ: And in his usual manner, he repeats this thought in all kinds of ways: He wrote to a sick woman, “His Divine Majesty wishes to make you a portrait of Jesus Crucified” (219). He said to another sick person that she lives “a life entirely conformed to the heavenly Spouse, Jesus Christ” (220). He exclaimed quite simply, “Substantially, the rewards that God gives to His servants here below are crosses, anguishes, trials of every sort to make them thus resemble His Son, Jesus Christ” (221).

The more we suffer, the more we are made like Jesus. Likewise, the more we suffer with patience and abandonment, the more our suffering approaches that of Jesus, and consequently the more it makes us resemble Him (222).

The more our suffering resembles that of Christ, the more it is pure and naked, the more it is without comfort and these expressions seem quite synonymous so much the more we will be made like Christ Suffering, and the more our suffering will be perfect (223). This suffering without any comfort, “God grants only to souls that are dear to Him” (224). It is truly the mystical death which leaves souls so agreeable to God, (225) or rather the “short cut” that leads there. It helps us to make great progress in perfection.

St. Paul of the Cross repeats the words of St. Ignatius of Antioch, that suffering turns us into disciples of Christ (226). That is a saying that he meditated on profoundly, and from which he sought to draw all its implications.

The example of Christ, which is the true motive for accepting suffering, is also the most elevated motive for practicing abandonment. It is because Christ abandoned Himself, because He made His nourishment the Will of His Father, that we ought also to make of it our nourishment. It is because Jesus has suffered and kept silent, that we also ought to suffer and keep silent (227).

“He who wishes to be holy, loves to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ faithfully, to become the reproach of men, the abjection of the people, because he recognizes himself as guilty of treason against God since he has sinned. He who wishes to be holy loves to be hidden from the eyes of the world. He takes the sweet for the bitter, and the bitter for the sweet. ‘My nourishment is to do the most holy Will of the Father in all things.’ And because this is done better in suffering than in rejoicing, since in rejoicing self-will always seeks itself, the true servant of God loves naked suffering, accepting it without any intermediary purely from the Will of the Lord” (228).

The imitation of Christ enraptured the soul of St. Paul of the Cross. But it also produced this wonderful effect: it left his soul completely disinterested and turned to God. Whatever his suffering might be, he never withdrew into himself, but accepted the full strength of his sorrows. His soul kept its peace and, if possible, its joy.

His teaching on this point, as on the others corresponds completely to his own practice, “I would like you, even in your grief, to annihilate yourself, to make nothing of it, not to fix your thought upon it or look it, as they say, in the face; above all, I would like you not to show it externally, or at least to do so as little as possible, and with as serene and joyful a countenance as you can, like those who truly love the Holy Cross seek to do. I tell you not to look your sorrows in the face, nor to fasten your thought upon them I mean, with the higher part of the soul; for you know already that the lower part cannot help feeling them, otherwise they would not be sorrows. I say this that you may not lose sight of the Sovereign Good, but may remain upon the Cross as a victim of love, completely united to the gentle Jesus, and entirely inflamed and consumed by the fire of His infinite charity” (229).

CONCLUSION

As for St. Paul of the Cross’ abandonment, at once so elevated and so simple as he practiced it heroically in his own life (230), in all things attaching himself only to the Will of God, and in his direction of souls making it one of the essential notes – we would like to know its origins, and to be able to say under what influences it was conceived. One fact is certain. No matter how far back we read in the writings of the saint, we find his doctrine on abandonment complete as well as on the Passion of Christ, and it is difficult to notice any appreciable variation in the rest of his life. From the first day of his retreat in 1720, during which he wrote the Passionist rule, he manifests his ardent desire to unite his sufferings to those of Christ, “I know that, by the mercy of our dear God, I desire to know no other thing, to taste no consolation save only the desire of being crucified with Jesus” (231). He went so far as to desire to actually suffer the pains of Christ (232), to desire to suffer always more (233), to be always in suffering (234).

Suffering was so dear to him that he did not seek any relief (235) except in the lower part of his nature (236). In fact, he asked Our Lord not to deliver him from his sufferings (237), except the temptations that go contrary to God; (238) he was afraid that he would be freed from them (239). His love for the Passion made him pray to die for Christ (240) and to become a martyr (241). The crosses of Jesus were the joys of his heart; (242) the joy of suffering was such that it made him forget hunger and cold (243).

He felt a real “contentment that the Will of God was done” (244). His soul willingly embraced sufferings because it knew that they were the Will of God. Without the explicit mention of the word abandonment, we have there, already, all the elements: perfect acceptance of suffering and complete union with the Will of God. The soul that is perfectly indifferent “dreams no longer of either suffering or of rejoicing. It remains fastened only upon the Will of its beloved Spouse Jesus,” (245) preferring to be crucified with Him that it might be conformed to Him, whose whole life was one only of suffering. One sentence expresses his whole thought, ““May the Will of our dear God be done in all things” (246).

It is, then, the mystery of the years of his formation preceding 1720 that we must try to penetrate, if it is at all possible. We know that the influence of St. Francis de Sales, (247) who is the starting point for the spirituality of abandonment, upon St. Paul of the Cross was quite extensive during this period of his life. As evident as it may be, and as considerable as it may seem, I do not think it alone is sufficient to explain the astonishing development that the founder

of the Passionists gave to the doctrine of abandonment. I remain persuaded that we must look nearer the saint's own time and that it would be valuable to take the trouble to study the spiritual current of abandonment in Italy at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, that spiritual current of which the Letters of St. Paul of the Cross are one of the most precious monuments.

NOTES

- 1) References to the letters are indicated by giving the volume and page of *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, 4 vols., in 80, Roma, Scuola tipografica Pio X. It is unfortunate that the alphabetical table of contents, valuable as it is, is limited to only a few key words. Throughout, I have made use of the excellent works of Fr. Cajetan of the Holy Name of Mary, particularly the one entitled ‘*Doctrine de Saint Paul de la Croix sur l’oraison et la mystique*,’ Louvain, coll. Museum Lessianum, 1932. In this work the author makes an excellent point of the direct influence upon St. Paul of four great mystics: Tauler, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross and St. Francis de Sales. But it seems to me that in his attention to the resemblances, he has not given enough consideration to the divergences or to what is characteristic and personal in St. Paul of the Cross’ own experiences, and has not, therefore, thrown sufficient light upon the saint himself. It is underestimating a man as original as the founder of the Passionists to try to make him too dependent upon his predecessors. The role of the Passion in his mysticism is also much greater than Fr. Cajetan states. He ought to have studied St. Paul of the Cross in himself and for himself, to describe, for example, that loving and sorrowing contemplation of which the saint had already spoken in his retreat diary of 1720, “God gave me to understand that the soul that He wishes to attract to a high union with Himself by means of prayer ought to pass through the way of suffering in prayer.” (1,9) (Cfr. M. Villers, S.J., “Mysticism of the Passion in St. Paul of the Cross,” in *The Passionist* VII, 3, May, 1954, pp. 213-226. Translator’s note.) It would have been well also to treat the spirituality of the saint as a whole.
- 2) To Joseph Strambi, September 30, 1768 (IV,75).
- 3) He knew by experience that contemplative souls are not easy to understand, and, for that reason, to direct. “The most elevated souls are not able to express what they understand, although, they do understand it. If it were easy to understand it would not be the work of God.” (To Sister Columba Gertrude Gandolfi. Aug. 3. 1756 (II,497).
- 4) There were many expressions he used to introduce what was important, “what must never be permitted,” – “never lost sight of” – “we should consider it important”, or “take very much into account...”
The seventeenth century, much before St. Paul of the Cross, made conformity with the Will of God a short way to attain perfection. Rev. P.J. de Guibert, in his ‘*Lecons de theologie spirituelle*,’ Toulouse, 1943, t. I,6e lecon, “Perfection et conformite a la volonte de Dieu,” p. 208, remarked that in the 17th century, a whole series of works on conformity with the Will of God were published as short paths to arrive at perfection. He cites Benedict of Canfeld, ‘*Regle de perfection contenant un abrege de toute la vie spirituelle reduite au seul point de la volonte de Dieu*,’ Paris, 1609; Paul de Lagny, ‘*Le chemin abrege de la perfection contenu dans l’exercice de la volonte de Dieu*,’ Paris 1662; Eusebus Nieremberg, ‘*Vida divina y camino real para la perfection*,’ Madrid, 1633 (a French translation by Pere d’Oultreman appeared under the title ‘*Chemin royal pour arriver bientot a la perfection*,’ Douai, 1642); Gaspard Druzbecki, ‘*Tractatus de brevissima ad perfectionem via, hoc est de praesenti divinae voluntatis intentione, executione, apprehensione*,’ Kalish, 1662; Alexander Piny, ‘*Etat du pur amour on conduite pour bientot arriver a la perfection par le seul fiat*,’ Lyon 1676.
- 5) I, 805.
- 6) II, 62.
- 7) The “foundation stones” most commonly mentioned are found in the following passage, “If your Reverence applies yourself to a total denial of self, to a thorough interior and

exterior mortification, to a complete abandonment to the divine Good-pleasure, and a real detachment from everything created, with these foundation-stones, you can build a palace of perfection.” (To Marianna Eleonora del Pozzo, Dec. 12, 1735 (II, 51). Other accounts III, 598; 663; IV, 261; 292. Sometimes there is only one “foundation stone”, “love of our own self-contempt and knowledge of our own nothingness are the foundation-stones of the other holy virtues” (to his religious, Nov. 30, 1760, IV 268). “Knowledge of yourself and of your own miseries and of your own nothingness, of your inability to do or know anything is the foundation upon which you should erect the edifice of your perfection” (to Thomas Fossi, Oct. 8. 1772, I, 804). “Always love more and more the fundamental virtues you spoke about to me, which is humility of heart: N.,N., N.” (To Rev. John Mary of St. Ignatius, Aug. 25, 1757. (III, 164).The three N’s stand for the three “nothings” of the preceding text.

- 8) L, 528. He sent Sister Mary Crucified a list of the virtues which those preparing to receive the Passionist habit ought to practice. He was careful to mention in a special way “total abandonment to the divine Good-pleasure.” (May, 1774 (II,321).
- 9) To Laura Giannotti, March 19, 1734 (I, 528).
- 10) To Don Erasmus Tuccinardi, Nov. 29, 1730 (I,86).
- 11) I, 397.
- 12) To Sister Columba Gertrude Gandolfi (II,52).
- 13) Dec. 18, 1743, (I,491).
- 14) To Agnes Grazi, June 21, 1742 (L,286).
- 15) To the same, Dec. 8, 1742, (I,292).
- 16) To D. Dominic Panizza, April 2, 1750 (III,18); also to Thomas Fossi, Feb. 20, 1749 (I,574).This motive of charity... will often be the Passion of Our Savior which inspires charity. By abandoning yourself peacefully to the will of God and by being willing to live a sorrowful and dying life for love of the Passion and death of the Savior, who for love of us made Himself so poor and then died on the Cross, you would be more dear to God than if you would lead a penitential life in the desert of the Theobaid, and you would die very holy.” (To his brother, Joseph Daneo, Nov. 2, 1756 [II,553]).
- 17) To Sister M. Louise of the Passion, Feb. 7,1761 (III, 553).
- 18) To Teresa Palozzi, Aug. 22, 1756 (III, 356). St. Alphonsus de Liguori seemed to admit that resignation included perfect charity. The celebrated fourteenth chapter of *The Holy Monk*, “Concerning resignation to the will of God,” commences with these words, “St. John Chrysostom says that the perfection of the love of God consists in resignation to His Divine Will.” St. Francis de Sales is less clear (*A Treatise on the Love of God*, book IX, chapter. 4: “The union of our will with the Good-pleasure of God through indifference”). The precise equivalent of this resignation of St. Paul of the Cross is the ‘*resignatio sui*’ of the Middle Ages, such as one finds, for example, in St. Gertrude, ‘*Insinuationes Divinae Pietatis*,’ III, 54, or in the ‘*Imitation of Christ*’, III, 37. The word “resignation” in the narrow modern sense is a poor translation. It is much better translated as abandonment. Fr. Cajetan of the Holy Name of Mary has taken into account that resignation and abandonment mean the same thing. In the alphabetical table of contents of ‘*Doctrine de Saint Paul de la Croix, sur l'oraison et la mystique*’, the word “abandonment” and the word “resignation” have the same references. The same author in his work, ‘*Oraison et Ascension mystique de St. Paul de la Croix*,’ Louvain, 1930, coll. Museum Lessianum, ch. 3, pp. 150-160, has a long paragraph in which he attempts to describe the attitude of St. Paul of the Cross toward the Will of God...: during his forty years of desolation: and which he entitles “Patience and Resignation to the Divine Will.” Is this saying enough? It would

- be much better, certainly, to say, “Perfect abandonment and Complete Union with the Divine.”
- 19) To Agnes Grazi, March 18, 1738 (I, 207). Elsewhere it is humility which is the virtue that pleases God most. Here is what he writes Agnes Grazi, “If one wants to be pleasing to Mary most Holy, he must humble himself more because Mary was the most humble of all creatures and that is why she pleased God more by her humility.” (I,349) He wrote to her, August 30, 1736, “There is nothing which pleases God more than to annihilate oneself and abase oneself in one’s nothingness. And this frightens the devil and puts him to flight.”(I, 150) Must one hold a certain fluctuation in the preferences of St. Paul of the Cross and say that sometimes it is abandonment and sometimes humility which most pleases God? It is possible; I believe, however, that he attaches more importance to abandonment than to humility. Witness the following lines; where he declares to a religious that if God has sent her sufferings, “It is that she may be exercised in suffering more than on other occasions. These are principally humility of heart and love of one’s own abjection, patience and constancy in suffering in a holy silence of faith and love. Patience contains in itself a perfect work and a true resignation (*rassegnazione*) to the treasure of treasures.” (To Sr. Mary Louise of the Passion, Feb. 7, 1761 [II,625]).
 - 20) To Dominic Panizza, April 2, 1750 (III,18).
 - 20a) To Sr. Maria Cherubina Bresciani, Oct. 2, 1750 (I, 506).
 - 21) To Thomas Fossi, June 26, 1756, (I,674).
 - 22) II, 642.
 - 23) I limit myself to these references: To Agnes Grazi (I, 157;178 217; 223; 315; 326); to Thomas Fossi (I, 611; 647); to the prioress of the Carmel in Vetralla, Feb. 9, 1756 (III, 94); etc.
 - 24) III, 484.
 - 25) To Maria Calcagnini, Dec. 1770 (III,833).
 - 26) Is it necessary to mention that at the same time, Pere de Caussade was professing exactly the same doctrine? “You do well to attach yourself strongly and almost solely to the excellent practice of entire abandonment to the Will of God. It is there that perfection lies for you.” (Abandonment to Divine Providence, Bk. I, Let. 1).
 “You want me to point out to you the swiftest and surest way to arrive at perfection... complete abandonment, blind, absolute, there it is for souls like you, the crown and the summary of perfection; perfection consists in pure love and, for you, the exercise of pure love consists in abandonment...” (ibidem, Let.2).
 “With regard to some souls who have acquired the habit of avoiding every deliberate fault and of accomplishing faithfully the duties of their state, one can reduce all perfection practically to this one maxim; exercise a continual resignation to all God wills, a complete abandonment to all the dispositions of His Providence... Yes, Heavenly Father, accept everything; Yes and ever yes. This he says and says again by the habitual disposition of his heart, without needing to pronounce it even interiorly. There in a few words, is the great and swift way to the highest perfection...”(ibidem, Bk. 2, Let. I).
 - 27) To a religious of a monastery at Vetralla (IV, 321).
 - 28) (II,703).
 - 29) To Sr. Maria Cherubina Bresciani, Oct. 1750(I,506).
 - 30) June 13, 1738 (I, 209).
 - 31) To Agnes Grazi, (I, 180; 265; 324); Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, Feb. 1765 (II,303).
 - 32) Feb. 20, 1749 (I,574).
 - 33) To Agnes Grazi, Aug. 4, 1740 (I,256,257).

- 34) I, 257.
- 35) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Sept. 14, 1755 (II, 482).
- 36) To Girolamo Ercolani, Feb. 22, 1738 (II,584). If St. Paul of the Cross refers only in passing to the “motives for abandonment” a line suffices to summarize it for Agnes Grazi, “God is your guide, your father, your master, and your spouse. But he often comes back to the fact that God wishes only the better, that He does all to lead us to the better.” (to Thomas Fossi, June 13, 1760 [I,717]) that He disposes events for our spiritual advantage (to Agnes Grazi, I,330), and for the greatest good of souls (to Girolamo Ercolani, Feb. 1751 [II, 589]); Everything that happens is good (to Agnes Grazi, Dec. 8, 1742 [I, 292]). Everything He sends us is excellent because He wishes it. As to our sufferings, God is pleased with them from all eternity (to Thomas Fossi, June 16, 1756 [I, 671], to a religious of Vetralla, [IV, 321]). In the face of any events, whatever they be, one has only to keep silence and approve because “the works of God are all perfect” (To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Sept. 18, 1743, (II, 442)). We need only say the words of Our Lord, “My Father, may it be done according to Thy Will.”
- 37) To Thomas Fossi, June 16, 1756, July 1756, June 18, 1766 (I, 672, 760, 768-769).
- 38) To Girolamo Ercolani, Feb. 29, 1750 (II,584). To a religious of Vetralla, (IV,321).
- 39) To Agnes Grazi, (I,330). To Thomas Fossi, June 16, 1756, (I 671).
- 40) To Teresa Palozzi, Jan. 1, 1767 (III,407).
- 41) To Thomas Fossi, Aug. 26, 1736, (I, 536), To Agnes Grazi, (I,316; III, 756).
- 42) IV, 165.
- 43) To his brothers and sisters (I, 54); to Maria Giovanna Venturi (II,39); to Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (II, 318); to Dominic Anthony Ercolani (II, 746); to a religious of Corpus Domini (IV, 54 & IV, 67).
- 44) To Thomas Fossi, (I, 611).
- 45) To the same (I, 752); to Agnes Sagneri (IV, 10).
- 46) To Agnes Grazi (I, 326).
- 47) To Agnes Grazi (I, 110,159,326,333); to Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, (II, 315); to Girolamo Ercolani (II, 584).
- 48) To Agnes Grazi (I, 110).
- 49) To Agnes Grazi (I, 257).
- 50) To Thomas Fossi (I, 756).
- 51) To Teresa Palozzi, Oct. 26, 1764, (III,396).
- 52) To Agnes Grazi, Nov. 29, 1736 (I, 159).
- 53) To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, June 3, 1766 (II, 309).
- 54) To Sr. Maria Cherubina Bresciani, Oct. 19, 1740, (I,476).
- 55) To Frances Lucci, Feb. 8, 1736, (I, 383); to Francis Anthony Appiani, July 16, 1738 (I, 417); to Thomas Fossi, May 30, 1752 and March 1758, (I,615 & 639).
- 56) To Thomas Fossi, Aug. 26, 1737, Dec. 12, 1738, Jan 10, 1749, (I, 542,547,573).
- 57) To Polycarp Cerruti, Aug. 2, 1741, (II, 274).
- 58) Oct. 10, 1759, (III, 176).
- 59-60) I am not referring here to abandonment in contemplative prayer. But we should at least indicate the general connection between abandonment and prayer, in all its degrees.

First of all, St. Paul of the Cross agrees with St. Francis de Sales when, in his 18th Discourse, on the Sacraments, he says about prayer, “Do not go to prayer preoccupied with the desire to be consoled or satisfied, because that would be to fail to keep your will united and adjusted to that of Our Lord.”

So St. Paul makes clear that abandonment is a fruit of prayer. “You must pray because you are subjected to many happenings, and that you may receive them all with abandonment.” (To Marianna della Scala del Pozzo, Nov. 11, 1728, [I,41]. He says of himself, “I do not desire anything else but to do the Will of God and it is to that end that all my prayers tend.” (To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, July 13, 1756 [II, 490)). Prayer is thus an exercise of abandonment, an exercise of the Will of God. Coldness, dryness, desolation have this advantage that they oblige us to practice abandonment continually. The Will of God “is accomplished in desolation better than it is in consolation.” (To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, Dec. 8, 1762, [II, 295]). Thus he advises us often to make acts of abandonment when there is coldness in prayer. (To Teresa Palozzi, July 26, 1757, [III,363]; Aug. 31, 1758, [III, 367)).

- 61) Dec. 16, 1733, (I, 103,104).
- 62) This is an example, “Walk always with real poverty of spirit, with the sole guide of holy faith and without any other help than simple and complete abandonment to the divine Will.” (To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Oct. 14, 1755 [II, 484]).
- 63) To Sr. Columba Gertrude, Aug. 3, 1756, (II, 496).
- 64) To the same, Jan. 25, 1755, (II, 469); to Sr. Mary Crucified of Jesus, July 31, 1770, (IV, 100).
- 65) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, March 29, 1747, (II, 446).
- 66) To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, Aug. 10, 1741, (II 289).
- 67) Aug. 4, 1734; April 19 and Oct. 3, 1736, (I, 113; 135; 155).
- 68) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Aug. 3, 1756, March 26, 1763. (II, 496; 511).
- 69) To the same Dec. 21, 1754 (II, 467).
- 70) To Teresa Palozzi, April 28, 1763, (III,383); cf. (II, 289).
- 71) To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, Sept. 3, 1754, (II, 291-292).
- 72) To Thomas Fossi, Oct. 23, 1764. (I,753).
- 73) To Mother Mary Crucified (II,322); to Lucy Burlini, Aug. 17,1751, (II,724); to Fr. John of St. Raphael, Aug. 17, 1753, (III, 191).
- 74) To Agnes Grazi, Oct. 13, 1741, (I, 275).
- 75) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Jan, 25, 1755, (II, 459).
- 76) To the same June 26, 1762, (II, 510).
- 77) We know that the habitual contemplation of St. Jane de Chantal, the prayer of simple regard, or “recollection in God,” was entirely in keeping with her abandonment to the Will of God. There was, as she herself, says, “a simple looking at God and her own nothingness with entire abandonment to His holy Will; it is necessary to remain contented and tranquil in the effects of this gaze, without making any act of the will.” (Questions addressed to St. Francis de Sales...in ‘Oeuvres completes de Sainte Jeanne de Chantal’, Paris 1875, t. II, p. 41). It is likely that the repose in God “In the silence of faith and love,” we meet so often in the correspondence of St. Paul of the Cross was very close to the prayer of St. Jane de Chantal. It is already passive prayer. It is also probably, on the other hand, that the prayer to which he directed Teresa Palozzi, when she was unable to meditate (July 13, 1757, [III,362], was an act of the prayer of simple regard where the presence of God is felt, “keep yourself interiorly in pure faith without images, with a sweet and passive attention to God whom you have within you, because you belong more to God than to yourself.” We notice the extremely strong statements about the presence of God which the Saint more than once makes to Teresa Palozzi; “It is by faith that God dwells within us.” (June 19, 1757 [III, 359]. “Do you know that it is a truth of faith that God is as near to us as we are to ourselves, nearer to us than our covering of flesh.” (Aug 31, 1758, [III, 367]).

- 78) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, June 26, 1762 (II,509).
- 79) To Thomas Fossi, June 27, 1770 (I,796).
- 80) To Fr. Peter of St. John, Oct. 24, 1764, (III, 439).
- 81) We remark that as man's role in contemplation is to remember his nothingness, even in the simple advance to perfection, self-annihilation and humility hold a large role. He says in a letter to Agnes Grazi, March 8, 1736, "God calls you to a very high profession, and to arrive there, your cooperation is necessary. This is done by annihilating yourself before God and your neighbor in a spirit of true and very simple humility, with a profound detachment from all creatures, a complete transformation in the Divine Pleasure, and a total abandonment in the abyss of His infinite bounty." (I,132). We have there a very good resume of his general direction to a contemplative. The dispositions outside of prayer will not differ from those which must accompany prayer. Similar indications are found again and again in his correspondence. He says, for example, to Agnes Grazi, "If God does not teach it (infused contemplation), we cannot put ourselves in it." To Thomas Fossi, "After long trials the Divine Majesty will grant lofty prayer to souls well purified – not indeed all – but to a small number according as it pleases His Divine Providence." (June 2, 1753 [I, 625]. To a religious, "Since you tell me that you do not understand what this contemplation is to which God brings great and generous souls, who are very dear to Him, I tell you that, if you are faithful in supporting with patience, meekness and great resignation, the spiritual and bodily suffering which God permits in your regard, and if you accept them immediately from His Divine Hands, then certainly the Divine Majesty will grant you the grace of knowing how to contemplate and meditate on the holy Sufferings of Christ, and to imitate His divine virtues. That in itself is a rich contemplation. The other, God grants freely to whom He pleases. It is a way not open to all, but to privileged souls who are dear to Him – very dear. (Feb. 15, 1766 [II, 267]).
- 82) Aug. 3, 1756, (II, 496); July 13 & Aug: 21, 1756, Aug. 13, 1757, March 26, 1763, (II, 489; 499, 503, 511, S22). It would take twice the number of references if I mentioned all the texts where only the two principal counsels were indicated.
- 83) A. Piny, O.P., 'Le Plus Parfait', edition Noel, Paris 1919, ch. 2, pp. 15-16.
- 84) To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, June 21, 1768, (II,316).
- 85) 'Le Plus Parfait', ed. Noel, Paris, 1919, p. 18.
- 86) July 11, 1765, (I, 760), "To espouse the divine Will" is an expression that will be found elsewhere; to the same Thomas Fossi, Aug. 4, 1751 (I,607), and May 16 1750, (I,59).
- 87) To Agnes Grazi, Dec. 8, 1742, (I, 292); to Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, July 16, 1754, (II, 457); to Sr. Maria Angela Cencella, Dec. 19, 1762, (III, 612).
- 88) Sept. 18, 1743, (II,442).
- 89) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, July 16, 1754, (II, 457).
- 90) To Girolamo Ercolani, Feb. 22, 1750, (II, 457).
- 91) (II, 87); cf. To Sr. Mary Innocent of the Sorrowful, June 21, 1757, (III, 480).
- 92) To Agnes Grazi, Sept. 19, 1740, (I, 262).
- 93) To Mary John Venturi Grazi, July 29, 1751, (II, 23); to Mary Angela Cencelli, Sept. 22, 1760 & Dec. 18, 1761, (III, 600 & 604).
- 94) To Teresa Palozzi, Oct. 26, 1762, (IV, 337).
- 95) To Fr. Anthony of St. Teresa, Jan. 12, 1765, (III, 717) to a new priest of his congregation, Dec. 12, 1765, (III, 743).
- 96) To Marianne Alvavez, Jan. 15, 1735, (I, 530).
- 97) To Thomas Fossi, May 14, 1749, (I, 578).

- 98) To the same, Aug. 31, 1754, (I, 645-646). The very comparisons which he uses to mark the profundity of abandonment are very instructive. If they highlight its passivity, they also show the love and the confidence which ought to animate it. The most ordinary one is that of the tiny infant who rests on his mother's breast (I, 209,220,756)... It is from St. Francis de Sales (Treatise on the Love of God, bk. IX, ch. 14; "as a tiny infant in his mother's arms" and, Discourse II; "... this soul which has abandoned itself... in the arms of Our Lord as an infant in the bosom of his mother.") There is the one of the lamb which allows itself to be shorn without resistance. (I, 476). There is another, more expressive, "You will do well to throw yourself as if dead in the arms of divine mercy." (To Sr. Mary Crucified of Jesus, July 31, 1770, [IV, 100]). He said the same to Sr. Mary Crucified Costantini, Jan. 9, 1768," I desire that your will should be as if dead in the always adorable Will of God. Be as if dead and buried in the divine Good-Pleasure, without complaining of anything." (II, 312). Without doubt the strongest is the following, "The ship is on the sea without sails and without oars, yet it is guided by the great Pilot, who without anything else will bring it safely to port. It is beaten about by tempests and by winds because thus the power and the wisdom of the great Pilot who guides it." (To Don Erasmus Tuccinardi, Nov. 29, 1730, [I,86]). This comparison is found in a letter to Agnes Grazi, "Put yourself in the hands of God, entirely abandoned to Him as a ship without sails and without oars." (July 29, 1739, [I, 236]).
- 99) I had thought at first of entitling this chapter "Advantages of Abandonment," after the example of P. Piny, who in 'Le Plus Parfait' shows us 18 reasons why, according to him, the way of abandonment is superior to other interior ways. But I confess that this title would hardly have been in the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross and that without doubt, when referring to a way that is so disinterested, identified with the way of pure love, having no other end than pleasing God, it would be better not even to speak of advantages. It is, to tell the truth, only a question of words. But it seems to me that instead of multiplying reasons that uphold the way of abandonment, we should look less for numbers than for depth and following the mind of St. Paul, keep to what is essential.
- I have not insisted, for example, on the fact that St. Paul of the Cross often saw in abandonment an efficacious means of obtaining all sorts of graces. (To Nicolina Pecorini Martinez, Feb. 16, 1726, [I, 62]; to Sr. Mary Cherubina Bresciani, Dec. 18, 1743, [I, 491]; to Don John Bernardine Forlani, June 7, 1748, [II, 703J). He tells us indeed, and it is characteristic that God's Will brings His grace with it; when God gives us a task to do, a mission to accomplish, He gives us the means to do it. The Venerable Fr. Balthazer Alvarez, when he was named confessor for St. Teresa, asked God for the gift of prayer to direct his new penitent, and it was granted. (To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Aug. 3, 175b, [TI, 497]).
- 100) June 18, 1766, (I, 768-769).
- 101) To Thomas Fossi, July 25, 1754 (I, 644).
- 102) To Mary Grazi, (II, 48).
- 103) To Teresa Palozzi, March 7, 1765, III, 399).
- 104) To Thomas Fossi, July 15, 1758, (I, 695); to Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, July 16, 1754, (II, 458).
- 105) To Fr. Vincent of St. Augustine, March 9, 1765, (III, 302, 303).
- 106) To Agnes Grazi, August 10, 1733, (I, 101).
- 107) To Fr. Joseph Andrew of the Conception, Nov. 6, 1764, (III, 260).
- 108) To Teresa Palozzi, Dec. 15, 1765, (III, 403).
- 109) To Fr. Fulgentius of Jesus, Dec. 9, 1747, (II, 126).

- 110) To Teresa Palozzi, June 8, 1758, (III, 365).
- 111) March 29, 1759, (III 368).
- 112) To Thomas Fossi, Feb. 3., 1756, (I, 697).
- 113) To the same Sept. 23, 1756, (I, 697).
- 114) To the same Feb. 3, 171756,(I, 663-664).
- 115) To the same Sept. 23, 1747, and May 16, 1750, (I, 558,589); to Canon Paul Sardi Aug. 18, 1760, (III, 122); to Teresa Palozzi Dec. 17, 1761 (III, 381); to Sr. Rose Mary Teresa of the Crucified Redeemer, April 8, 1758, (III, 515).
- 116) To a Passionist about to be professed, written on June 30, 17b3, (III,664).
- 117) To Sr. Mary Cherubina Bresciani on Dec. 15, 1761, (I, 526).
- 118) To Thomas Fossi, Dec. 29, 1768, (I,787,788); to Lucia Burlini, Aug. 17, 1751, (II, 724,725); to Anna Maria Calcognini, Dec. 31, 1768, (III, 820); to Sr. Mary Cherubina Bresciani, Dec. 15, 1761, (I, 526); Cf. Cajetan of the Holy Name of Mary, Doctrine***... p. 56.
- 119) To Fr. Bartholomew of St. John, Dec. 24, 1767 (III, 348).
- 120) To Teresa Palozzi, Dec. 17, 1761,(III, 382); and Dec.24, 1763 (III, 386).
- 121) To John Francis Sancez, April 2, 1762 ((II, 404).
- 122) To Sr. Mary Cherubina Bresciani, June 18, 1749 (I, 504); to Anna Maria Calcognini, May 23, 1769 (III, 824).
- 123) To Fr. Joseph Mary of St. Lawrence, Nov. 17, 1764, (III, 701); to a religious March 20, 1759 (III 546).
- 124) To a Superior April 15, 1766 (III,780).
- 125) To Thomas Fossi, June 13, 1760 (I, 717).
- 126) To Marianna Girelli on Sept. 24, 1768, (III, 755).
- 127) To Fr. Lawrence of the Side of Jesus on Nov. 22, 1768,(IV, 86), the combination of these same three adjectives to describe complete detachment is also used in Letters to Don John Anthony Lucattini on Aug. 28, 1751, (II, 816); and to Thomas Fossi on March 20, 1749, (I, 576).
- 128) To a religious on March 24, 1767, (III, 835).
- 129) This importance given to total detachment is one of the common characteristics of the spirituality of abandonment. Pere de Caussade has written, “Do you want me to show you the shortest and surest way of arriving at perfection... Detach yourself from all your own opinions, from all pretensions, from all scrutiny, from all introspection, from all that you can call ‘yours’, and you will be delivered over without reserve and without return to the good direction and to the Good pleasure of God.” (Abandonment to Divine Providence, Bk. 1, Letter 2). Who could count the numberless passages in which St. Paul of the Cross asks his correspondents to “detach themselves from every creature,” “from all that is not God”? concerning detachment from oneself, I will cite only this text to Agnes Grazi, “Happy is the soul that is detached from its own joy, its own feelings, its own judgment.” (March 17, 1734 (I, 107). This counsel concerning modesty, given to Teresa Palozzi, is also quite significant, “A true servant of God ought not to care for anything on earth that will one day be buried.” (July 13, 1757, [III, 361]).
- 130) To Fr. Joseph Andrew of the Conception on Nov. 6, 1764 (III, 260). He says almost the same thing again, “In case of such happenings, one should take refuge in the strong fortress of confidence in God and be resigned to the all holy Will of God, without looking to see what is coming... (To Dominic Anthony Ercolani on June 7, 1749, [II, 742]). elsewhere, this impregnable fortress is the Sacred Heart of Jesus (in two letters to Agnes Grazi, [I, 238; 283]).

- 131) To Don John Francis Sancez on Dec. 31, 1765, (II, 412-413). The tempest mentioned here was the persecution the saint was subjected to. The same comparison was used in a letter to Marianna Girelli on May 24, 1768, (III, 753).
- 132) To Teresa Palozzi, on July 4, 1761, (III, 380).
- 133) To Sr. Mary Cherubina Bresciani on Aug, 29, 1744 (I, 495). He also adds, as if to indicate the source of his joy, “with a great confidence in God, wholly abandoned, and resting on His paternal bosom.”
- 134) To Teresa Palozzi on Oct. 16, 1764 (III, 396).
- 135) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi on March 18, 1755, (II, 473).
- 136) To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini on Dec. 2, 1762, (II, 295).
- 137) To Thomas Fossi on June 13, 1760, (I, 718).
- 138) In the correspondence with Teresa Palozzi, who had a fiery temperament (III, 410) restless, agitated, officious, there are many counsels about peace, “These disturbances are always born of an evil root and that is why one should immediately humble oneself and become abandoned to the divine Will in every untoward event. Take all troublesome things as coming from the loving hand of God and let all anxiety perish in the fire of divine charity.” (March 13, 1764, [II, 387]). He urged her to recollect herself before every action, “Put your heart at peace before you begin doing anything.” (Oct. 17, 1764, [III, 395]). “Do everything with great peace, without anxiety or haste because they are the ruination of devotion, as St. Francis de Sales says. “Rest then, in peace by thinking about God, work, cook, wait on everyone, lie in peace... What a short path to sanctity.” (Sept. 3, 1759, [III,372]). Teresa Palozzi accused herself of coldness in the service of God, and St. Paul replied by asking her to check and see if she had not been “dissipated in her exterior senses.” (June 20, 1759, [III, 370]). On the relation between peace and abandonment according to Pere de Caussade, see ‘Abandonment to Divine Providence’, Book I, Letters 1 & 10.
- 139) To Girolamo Ercolani, Sept. 30, 1758, (II, 615).
- 140) January 14, 1749, (II, 767).
- 141) To Lucretia Bastiani Paladini, July 28, 1766, (III,59).
- 142) To Sr: Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, June 24, 1760, (II, 506).
- 143) To a religious, Oct. 7, 1760 (I, 713).
- 144) Feb. 19, 1760 (I, 713).
- 145) Nov. 29, 1730, (I, 86).
- 146) To Maria Giovanna Venturi Grazi, June 20, 1760, (II, 30); to Sr. M. Louise of the Passion, Feb. 7, 1761, (III, 625).
- 147) To Teresa Palozzi, Dec. 7, 1755, (III,355).
- 148) July 21, 1764, (I, 752).
- 149) Aug. 21, 1764, (I, 752).
- 150) To Lucretia Bastian Paladini, July 18, 1766, (III, 59).
- 151) As soon as a soul that has abandoned itself to God’s good pleasure notices in itself any movement of the will whatever, it immediately makes it disappear in the will of God. (St. Francis de Sales, Discourse II. It is also found in the ‘Treatise on the Love of God,’ Book IX, ch. 12.
- 152) To Thomas Fossi, Aug. 13, 1757, (I, 686).
- 153) To Marianna Girelli, Sept, 24, 1768, (III, 755).
- 154) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Dec. 13, 1764, (II, 515).
- 155) To a religious in the Monastery of Corpus Christi, Aug. 1, 1769, (IV, 53).

- 156) To Sr. M. Clara of St. Philip, Mar. 21, 1757, (III, 465-466).
- 157) To Sr. M. Cherubina Bresciani, Oct. 2, 1950 (I, 506).
- 158) To Agnes Grazi, Aug. 17, 1739, (I, 238).
- 159) Feb. 14, 1752, (I, 611).
- 160) Dec. 15, 1754, (I, 647).
- 161) Jan. 1, 1773, (I, 807).
- 162) To Anna Cecilia Anguillaro, Aug. 27, 1754, (III, 215).
- 163) To a religious, Nov. 29, 1769 (IV, 58).
- 164) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Jan. 31, 1756, (II, 487).
- 165) To a religious, June 17, 1769, (IV, 51).
- 166) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, Jan. 31, 1756, (II, 487).
- 167) Nov. 5, 1757, (III 482).
- 168) To Don Francis Anthony Appiani, July 16, 1738 (I, 418). He also said, "It is necessary to gain our perfection not in our own way, but as it pleases the Lord." (to Thomas Fossi, April 6, 1758, [I, 691]). This was perhaps a reminiscence of St. Francis de Sales, "If we are holy according to our own will, we shall never be truly holy; it is necessary to be holy according to the Will of God." (Letter to President Brulart, Sept. 1606, ed. Annecy, T. 3, p. 214).
- 169) To Sr. Columba Gertrude, July 13, 1756, (II, 489); to Don John Anthony Lucattini, May 25, 1751, (II, 808).
- 170) July 11, 1738, (I, 211-212).
- 171) To the same, June 21, 1741, (I, 286).
- 172) May 30, 1752, (I, 615).
- 173) To Agnes Sagneri, March 29, 1768 (IV, 10).
- 174) Jan. 30, 1740, (I, 251).
- 175) To Agnes Grazi, March 7, 1737, (I, 177).
- 176) To Don Francis Anthony Appiani, Nov. 26, 1736 (I, 403).
- 177) Nov. 29, 1730 (I, 86).
- 178) To Sr. Marianna of Jesus, Dec. 28, 1765, (II 737).
- 179) To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, Sept. 3, 1754 (II, 291).
- 180) To Mother Prioress of the Corpus Christi Convent, Aug. 13, 1769 (IV, 54).
- 181) To Marianna della Scala del Pozzo, Jan 3, 1729 (I, 43).
- 182) To the Abbot Conte Garagni, Jan. 10, 1741 (II, 213).
- 183) To the same, Dec. 10, 1742, (II, 234).
- 184) To a Bishop, July 6, 1741,(II, 270).
- 185) To Pope Clement XIV (IV, 203-204).
- 186) To Don Cesare Macali, Oct. 2, 1750 (III, 72).
- 187) To Thomas Fossi, Sept. 23, 1747, (I, 558).
- 188) To his brothers and sisters, Feb. 21, 1722, (I, 54).
- 189) To Teresa Palozzi, June 19, 1757, (III, 359).
- 190) To Thomas Fossi, July 17, 1758, (I, 695).
- 191) To Faustina Giannotti, May, 23, 1768, (III, 65).
- 192) To Thomas Fossi, Sept. 1743, (I, 552).
- 193) Feb. 21, 1772, (I, 54-55), Often St. Paul of the Cross proposed to his correspondents ejaculatory prayers, and particularly acts of abandonment. v.g., to Laura Giannotti, March 19, 1734, (I, 528); to Thomas Fossi, June 13, 1760 (I, 717-718), he counsels the "Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra." Her suggests to Fr. Vincent of St. Augustine some

- aspirations to the divine Will, March 9 1763, (III, 302); the same to Teresa Palozzi, June 19, 1757, (III, 358).
- 194) To Faustina Ciannotti, May 23, 1768, (III, 65).
 - 195) To Thomas Fossi, May 26, 1759, (I, 704).
 - 196) He wrote to Fr. Fulgentius of Jesus, “You know that true holiness is not separate from pains and tribulations.” (Dec. 15, 1746 [II, 115]). Note also this line to Agnes Grazi, “The more one advances in the service of God, the more suffering increases.” (April 17, 1734, [I, 117]).
 - 197) To Maria Girelli, Dec. 28, 1768, (III, 756).
 - 198) To Sr. Marianna of Jesus, Dec. 28, 1765, (II, 736).
 - 199) To Fr. Vincent of St. Augustine, March 9, 1765, (III, 302).
 - 200) To Thomas Fossi, July 11, 1765, (I, 760).
 - 201) To the same, Aug. 13, 1757, (I, 686).
 - 202) To Anna Maria Calcognini, Dec. 1770, (III, 833).
 - 203) To Anna Maria Cecilia Anguillara, May 10, 1768, (III 218).
 - 204) To Thomas Fossi, Aug. 31, 1751 (I, 645).
 - 205) To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, Jan. 14, 1769, (II 318).
 - 206) To Sr. M. Cherubina Bresciani, Dec. 18, 1743, (I, 491).
 - 207) ‘Le Plus Parfait’, Ch. 16 & 17.
 - 208) To Don Cajetan Gionnine, Jan. 25, 1748, (II, 644).
 - 209) To Sr. M. Cherubina Bresciani, Jan. 18, 1753, (I, 512). To be crucified with Christ “is the most efficacious way to arrive at perfection of holiness, to a pure and shining love. “(To Marianna Civelli, April 1769, (III, 758).
 - 210) To Agnes Grazi, (I, 329).
 - 211) To Sr. M. Cherubina Bresciani, Dec. 18, 1743, (I, 491).
 - 212) To Anna Maria Calcagnini, Dec. 12, 1769, (III, 827).
 - 213) To Sr. M. Clara of St. Philip, Jan. 18, 1757, (III, 459).
 - 214) To Sr. Columba Gertrude Gandolfi, July 10, 1743, (II, 440) to Sr. Mary Crucified of Jesus, July 2, 1770, (IV, 99).
 - 215) To Agnes Grazi, March 15, 171736, (I, 134); to Sr. M. Cherubina Bresciani, Nov. 17, 1739, (I, 465); cf. To Signora Dorotea, Feb. 9, 1756, (III,415).
 - 216) ‘The Imitation of Christ’, (II, 12, 7).
 - 217) To Agnes Grazi, Aug. 29 1737, (I, 194); To Thomas Fossi, (Feb. 20, 1749, (I, 574).
 - 218) To Agnes Grazi, Aug. 29, 1737, (I, 194. We should note the circumstances of this statement, for they give us – St. Paul of the Cross is so sparing in confidences – one of his personal experiences: “...: You recall that yesterday, in our devout conference, I confided to you that sometimes I undergo a great storm; I first found myself before my Love, before the Blessed Sacrament (mio Amore Sacramentato): my soul flew away in spirit to attach itself to this infinite charity, exposed on the altar for the adoration of the people, and I heard the Savior address to me this sweet word, “He who attaches himself to me, attaches himself to thorns.”
 - 219) To Maria Angela Cencelli, Dec. 9, 1760 (III, 602).
 - 220) To Sr. M. Louisa of the Passion, Jan. 5, 1762, (III, 627).
 - 221) To the same, Oct. 5, 1762, (III, 629).
 - 222) To Girolamo Ercolani, July 31, 1751, (II, 592).
 - 223) To Agnes Grazi, June 29, 1743, (I, 298). He speaks also, and here we touch upon his mysticism of the Passion, of a “prayer without consolation.” (To the same Oct. 3, 1736, [I,

- 155]). To Sr. Marianna of Jesus (Mar. 19, 1768), [II, 738]), where one must “imitate Jesus agonizing in the Garden.”
- 224) To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, Jan 1, 1765, (II, 300).
- 225) To the same, June 15, 1765, (II, 306).
- 226) To Agnes Grazi, Oct. 3, 1736, (I, 153); to Anthony Coccia, Jan. 10, 1768, (IV, 25).
- 227) To Agnes Grazi, Oct. 12...(I, 330); to Teresa Palozzi, Aug. 21, 1763, (III, 384).
- 228) To Thomas Fossi, July 7, 1752, (I, 616-617).
- 229) To Agnes Grazi, Aug. 4, 1738, (I, 216). He tells her likewise “that one must not look at consolation but rather at the God of consolation.” (Sept. 26, 1740, [I, 264]). In short one must look at God alone to be indifferent to suffering or joy, as St. Paul so readily repeats, because indifference is synonymous with abandonment, abandonment to God in joy as in suffering, having only God in view and being detached from all creatures.
- 230) The words which he wrote in 1736 are applicable to the entire life of St. Paul of the Cross. “My place and my rest is the Will of God.” (To Agnes Grazi, Oct. 11, 1736, [I, 157]). The Saint always looked for the will of God and “for nothing else.” (I, 318). In 1741, in view of the scarcity of vocations, he resigned himself to the dispersion of his congregation, it was the Will of God, “I see the work begun, but I see also great evidence that it could die at birth; because I do not see the means by which the servants of God will come who are to be the foundation stones to build this spiritual edifice: it could be, however, that once I, who am an obstacle, have been taken away, His Divine Majesty will provide them.” And he added, “I am but to resign myself and abandon myself readily to see the beginning and the end of this work if God so wills.” (To Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, Aug. 10, 1741. [II, 290j). During his last years, in the midst of sickness which kept him in bed and forbade all exterior action, he had only one word and this indeed the result of the efforts of his whole life, “I rejoice that in me and through the Will of God be done.” (To D. James Mary Massa, March 1, 1775, [IV, 165j).
- 231) Nov. 23, 1720, (I, 2).
- 232) Dec. 6, (I, 7).
- 233) Dec. 10, 11, 12, 13 (I, 9).
- 234) Dec. 21 (I, 11).
- 235) Nov. 25, (I, 3).
- 236) Dec: 10, 11, 12, 13, (I, 9).
- 237) Dec. 15, 16, 17, 18, (I, 10).
- 238) Dec. 23, (I, 14).
- 239) Dec. 21, (I, 12).
- 240) Nov. 26, (I, 3).
- 241) Dec. 26 and 29, (I, 14 & 16).
- 242) Nov. 26, (I, 3).
- 243) Nov. 27, (I, 4).
- 244) Nov. 25, (I, 3).
- 245) Dec. 21, (I, 13).
- 246) Dec. 21, (I, 16).
- 247) St. Francis de Sales is in fact the author St. Paul of the Cross quotes most frequently. A Letter of 1726 shows us that on that date the ‘Treatise on the Love of God’ was shown by him to Nicolina Peccorini Martinez, May 26, 1726, (I, 164). We know by the witnesses of the process of beatification (Cajetan of the Holy Name of Mary, ‘Doctrine’ ... P. 11), that, while still in his father’s house he read St. Francis de Sales assiduously and knew his doctrine thoroughly.

